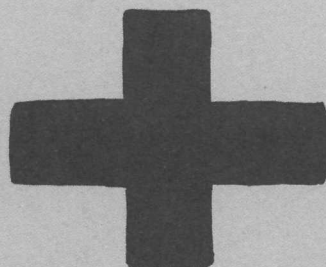




Part 2

Black Women's Agenda
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Barbara Harris

**On Rejecting
God's Agents**
Richard Mansfield



Commentary:

**Those 'Irregular
Ordinations' of Roman
Catholic Women**

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VOL. 65 NO. 3 MARCH, 1982

THE WITNESS

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For Automation

An individual — a wealthy investor, a welfare client, a retiree, a child — may consume more than he produces. Society as a whole cannot long consume more than it produces. Farmers must produce wheat before the rest of us can eat bread.

Mechanization or automation increases productivity (the output of goods and services per hour of labor). Computers increase office productivity because computers can search records fast and do arithmetic fast. If the working hours and total employment remain the same, the only way to increase total production is to increase productivity.

Mechanization may reduce the total number of jobs in a particular industry. For example, mechanization in coal-mining between 1910 and 1970 reduced the number of jobs for miners. Because mechanization permitted higher wages for miners, the United Mine Workers did not oppose mechanization.

Automation can reduce employment in one industry without reducing total employment. Building robots provides some employment. If automation reduces prices, consumers can use the extra money to buy more goods and create more jobs in other industries.

Sometimes the alternatives are to modernize the plant, reducing the number of jobs, or to shut down everything. In THE WITNESS, auto makers have been criticized for installing robots, and steel makers for not modernizing their plants. The main reason for modernizing a steel plant is to produce steel with less labor.

Labor unions, by pushing for higher wages, give employers an incentive to automate. A General Motors executive has said, "For each dollar-an-hour wage

increase, we'll install a thousand more robots in our production lines." His purpose is not to punish workers for daring to request a raise, but to make a profit for GM's million, mostly middle-class, stockholders. By encouraging automation unions have contributed to prosperity.

Richard W. Cole
Sharon, Pa.

(Mr. Cole encourages automation as a social good which more unions ought to affirm, since it increases productivity. But what is happening now is only partly the fault of unions. The "robotization" of heavy industry is accelerating at a furious pace and with projected fatter profits, while millions of workers stand to be automated right out of the workforce in the next decade. This, at a time when the government is with equal swiftness washing its hands of any retraining or regulatory responsibilities. THE WITNESS position is that we should be more worried about the workers, their families and their communities than about GM's stockholders. — Eds.)

Liked 'Eurocommunism'

One of the first articles that caught my eye in the November WITNESS was "Eurocommunism, Puzzle to U.S. Leadership." I felt that David Snider's article did an excellent job of presenting in an objective manner information which helps to bring about a better understanding of the political climate of Europe. I was so intrigued with it that I impulsively gave my copy to our minister, to whom I have given a gift subscription for next year. I then realized there were some articles I had not read, and am requesting a duplicate copy.

I am indeed grateful for the way in which you approach many of the critical issues of our day. A truly Christian publication cannot shut its eyes to the widespread suffering in our world and claim to be Christian. I wish that your circulation could be multiplied many times. Your contributors are courageous, thoughtful, and objective

as they deal with the Moral(?) Majority(?) and other political and moral hazards that we encounter in our daily lives.

Donald L. Tarr
Salinas, Cal.

Responses Revealing

I found the November *Letters* to be exceptionally interesting, especially the notes of either strong objection or strong praise for THE WITNESS.

I could not help but think of the passage in Matthew warning that the coming of Christ into this world is like a sword that will separate people from one another. It is an unsentimental reflection, yet central to the reality of Christian proclamation, and the impact of THE WITNESS and the issues which it demands be given proper attention is surely evidenced by the strong responses of readers.

I continue to appreciate THE WITNESS, as do several others I've introduced to it over the past two years.

The Rev. Stephen O. Voysey
Staten Island, N.Y.

Misrepresenting Gospel

The Anglican Communion is leading the group of mainline churches that is precipitously losing membership. Yet, the exit is being continuously "greased" by those who misrepresent the Gospel.

The concept of progressive social reform does not exist in the New Testament: In fact, it is obvious that neither Jesus nor his apostles were in the least interested in transforming the social structure of their day. The entire thrust of their teachings was toward inner change within individuals (a process that would, of course, ultimately have its effect on institutions). Yet — we have the clarion call of those (such as THE WITNESS) who constantly disparage government leaders, misinterpret American objectives, and turn the Christian message into some sort of rallying cry for social reform.

Is something being missed? Is the radicalizing of our congregations the

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THE WITNESS EDITORIAL

Facing Up to Realities

The destructive influence of the economic crisis can no longer be neglected by religious and human rights groups in the United States. The crisis cannot be explained away by laying the blame on OPEC and workers' wage demands and big government. The fact that our world is in the midst of creeping stagnation is no longer in doubt. There is increasing evidence that the current economic crisis is likely to come to a head at any time during the next few years.

We must face up to the realities of monopoly and competition, excess production and consumption and the resulting stagnation, idle productive capacity and underinvestment, surplus profits and underconsumption, unemployment and inflation, militarism and imperialism and development and dependence. These are the causes of our problems.

Stagflation, it should be noted, is a new phenomenon. In contrast to the depression of the 1930s when consumer's prices declined by more than 16%, in the 1970s they increased by 86%. Another

critical and distinct factor is the expansion of debt, both public and private, during the past 30 years. Contrary to what most people understand, while public debt has grown 4½ times, private debt has grown 17-fold (four times more rapidly than the public debt.) In the 1970s, corporations and wealthy individuals introduced new forms of gambling such as stock options, interest rate futures, precious metals, and foreign currencies, which spurred on private debt.

Religious and human rights activists have tended to focus on moral issues such as racism, sexism, the arms race and the environment without connecting such critical issues to the economic crisis. Every issue has an economic dimension with moral consequences. To understand the whole truth of any social issue requires that the economic dimension be included. Now is the time for intelligently planned and carefully organized teach-ins and speak-outs that connect the economic crisis of our world with the struggle for peace and justice.

(H. C. W. and the editors)

Roman Catholic Women Who Celebrate Eucharist



As most WITNESS readers are aware, Roman Catholic women have been engaged for some time in a struggle to achieve ordination in their church, spearheaded by their Women's Ordination Conference. In most recent developments, many Catholic women claiming the call of a priestly vocation have been ordained by their communities. The decision was not made lightly, and not without risk.

The Magisterium was threatening excommunication. Reported the *Hartford Courant*, "As far as church officials are concerned, those who take part in a Eucharist without a priest are heretics who have excommunicated themselves and should not be going to Mass." Archbishop John F. Whealon of Hartford, the leader of Connecticut's 1.4 million Catholics, was quoted in the *Courant* as saying, "I would have to tell anyone doing that, if they are Roman Catholic, then they are breaking the canonic rule of the church and in danger of severe punishment."

Many other hard questions emerged: Can and should the community call a woman to full liturgical ministry? Can an ordained minister be kept a secret? Is such a person, validated by a community, solely a priest for that community?

THE WITNESS asked five Episcopalian women priests to comment on the "irregular ordinations" of their Roman Catholic sisters, with regard to theological implications, the issues of authority and validation, and how these actions differ from the first "irregular" Episcopalian women's ordinations.

On the following pages are responses from the Rev. Betty Bone Schiess, a feminist activist priest in the Diocese of Central New York; the Rev. Nina Alazraqui, associate vicar at St. Alban's, Brentwood, Cal., and director of the Centro Consejero Cristiano; the Rev. Flora A. Keshgegian, interim priest at St. Paul's Newton Highlands, Mass., and a doctoral student in theology; the Rev. Carter Heyward, associate professor of theology at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge; and the Rev. Canon Nancy Hatch Wittig, a feminist priest serving in the Diocese of Newark.

Take Back the Church, Indeed

by Betty Bone Schiess

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, of the Women's Ordination Conference, has two recurrent dreams. In the first she does not have to spell her name when she makes a phone call. In the second she wakes one morning to find that *The New York Times* headline reads, "Pope Repents." Of the thousands of Roman Catholic women who join Ada Maria in spirit, hundreds are ready for ordination, some are clearly called to the priesthood by their communities, some are already celebrating the Eucharist. Next October there will be a convention in Cleveland where 5,000 or more women are expected to gather to "take back the church."

They believe, as we do, that to deny ordination to one qualified woman is to deny all women their rightful place in God's creation. Many believe, as we do, that feminist issues are the most important issues of our time, that the church has acted in collusion with other institutions to diminish women, that the church dare not speak to other social issues until it cleans its house vis a vis women, that society cannot change until the church does, so strong is the church's hold on our minds, our hearts and our spirit. Many believe, as we do, that institutional misogyny undermines our faith.

I joined 200 Roman Catholic women as they demonstrated during the last meeting of their bishops in Washington, D.C. Before the demonstration began across from the White House, I had a remarkable conversation with an older nun. For almost a lifetime she had enjoyed the respect of her bishop. They agreed on many things — anti-nuclear efforts, El Salvador, Poland, prison reform, poverty — everything but the ordination of women and birth control. She had terminated her contract to work on women's issues. She was not alone. Other demonstrators had left their dioceses to form new communities, to study for advanced degrees, to work for ordination.

What a demonstration it was! With horns and speeches and new hymns, we marched to the Washington Hilton where bishops peeked from behind curtains to hear women speak from a sound truck about sexism in the church where "women's bodies are seen as evil," where "women are still seen as less than pure during menstruation." "Sexism is a sin. Take back the church," went the litany.



It is hard to tell what effect the demonstration had on the bishops. They may have their curtains drawn permanently. We know from experience that change in the establishment will not be easy, that ecclesiastical overkill is already underway, that the Vatican has intervened in Catholic America in an unprecedented way precisely because women at last are claiming the faith as their own. Hans Kung, who supports the ordination of women and birth control, has had his license to teach revoked; William Callahan of "Priests for Equality" has been silenced; Robert Drinan, the Jesuit supporter of "Freedom of Choice" and the Equal Rights Amendment, has been removed from public office; the Episcopal "dissident" who spoke of the "smell and sound and sight of perversion" during our ordination in 1974 has now been re-ordained by Cardinal Cooke; inquisitions in the guise of seminary reform are underway. One report suggests that "Catholic seminaries in the United States have, in some instances, been seen by church officials as breeding grounds for dissent from official church teaching, especially in the areas of human sexuality and birth control and the volatile issue of the ordination of women." (*UPI*, 9/24/81) Andrew Greeley trivializes the effort to ordain women and Sister Theresa Kane has been criticized for the way she dresses and ignored for her bravery in confronting the Pope.

And we Episcopalians are not so innocent. Having ordained women half way, we now put women's issues on the back burner. We will meet in General Convention and at a gathering of the Coalition of Human Needs in states which have not yet ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. We will speak about hunger and poverty, forgetting that it is women and children who are hungry and poor and that women do not stand a chance until equally protected under the law. At the very least, we could stay away from states which oppose full enfranchisement of women. We seem willing to accept bogus ecumenical excuses as justification for holding back on ordaining women to the priesthood in Great Britain. Our "conscience clause" (allowing bishops to ordain women or not as their conscience directs) remains intact. Our consciences may not. Rebecca West may be right when she says that "men would rather be ruined by one of their own than saved by a woman," and Sally Kempton was certainly right when she said that the "enemy has outposts in our mind."

Never mind. That great sanctifier of human behavior, the church, has been shaken at its roots by women. Neither

popes nor principalities nor the timidity of some, can stop us. I long for the day when Roman Catholic women do not have to celebrate the Eucharist covertly, when the hierarchy repents and says that birth control is a moral imperative, not a sin, when we at last satisfy the ancient promise that we are all one in Christ. But in the meantime, how beautiful it is to see women taking initiative in calling the church to repentance. I rejoice as a woman, as a priest, as a defender of the faith.

* * *

New Ordinations Pose Hard Questions

by Nina Alazraqui

When the Archbishop of Canterbury placed his hand on my shoulder asking: "My dear, should I call you Father or Mother?" I raised all my 5 feet, 1 inch and smiled: "Your Grace, I have two children. Do, please, call me Mother." It never occurred to me why I was singled out from my fellow priests co-celebrating at the altar. We had all gone to seminary, been duly examined, and were fully and legally ordained together. Why is it that some people assume that the whole issue of women's ordination is either so complicated as to be aligned always with the subjects of power, justice, feminism or frustration or so simplistic as to be worried about how one should be addressed?

Our Roman Catholic sisters' courage and determination to re-examine their relationship with the church is a much broader theological issue than the mere celebration of so-called "irregular" or "clandestine" Eucharists. These issues are not only worthy of their examination, but it behooves Episcopal women priests to study them also.



What is it that our sisters are doing and more importantly, what are they saying by their actions? Is there a new theology of the Eucharist? What is the church, or rather where is the church? Are our sisters merely knocking at the doors of a patriarchal and outdated institution begging to be admitted? Or, rather, like the remnant of true Israelites, are they involved in a process of exodus from a pharaonic system which oppresses both male and female alike?

I remember growing up during the "*Roma locuta, causa finita*" years when the authority of the Magisterium was

unquestioned. Our sisters are saying those years are incompatible with the reality of the adulthood of the world and the personhood of formerly marginalized people. The Vatican Declaration on Women Priests insultingly refers to women "feeling that they have a vocation" and condescendingly recognizes the "nobility" of the attraction and deems it "understanding." In effect, it says that all this could be translated into a genuine vocation if the subjects experiencing those feelings were equipped with male genitalia.

Responding to the call of the Spirit and experiencing the denial of vocation by their church, our sisters have several choices:

- Imitating our own struggle to get themselves irregularly ordained, a futile move in view of their own situation;
- Quietly waiting another 2,000 years (risky considering the prospect of "limited nuclear wars");
- Abandoning the church altogether, or
- Going to the roots of their own tradition and seeking validity there, which they seem to be doing.

These women are saying that their authority resides not at the top of the pyramid, but inside the circle of community of gifts. In procedures similar to those found in the Comunidades de Base springing up everywhere there is oppression, our sisters are breaking bread and acting out their priesthood inside the circle of equality which recognizes the authority of the Giver of gifts.

In the process they are leading the exodus and are determined not to exchange the onions of Egypt for new onions of oppression. They are not knocking at the door, they have left the doors behind; they are not asking for validation, they have gone to the roots and found their authority there. Leaving behind a patriarchal structure with all its idols, these women are now sojourners in the desert, a chosen remnant, a holy people who have adopted, as Mary Daly puts it, a new Trinity of Faith, Hope and Love.

Faith, not as blind acceptance of dogmas and traditions fashioned by centuries of male dominance, but as "ultimate concern." Hope, as a "communal creation of the future" rather than a passive expectation of a change of mind by the Magisterium, and Love, above all Love. The love which dares to challenge structures oppressive of both those who must endure them and those who impose them.

If I am hearing correctly our sisters are also asking us: How free are you? Who still is your authority? Have you merely played with changing structures of oppression by passing through the doors and becoming one with the oppressor?

While congratulating our sisters and rejoicing in their witness let us ponder these issues under the authority of the same Spirit.

Seeking Equal Rites for Women

by Flora Keshgegian

Soon after the *National Catholic Reporter's* issue on women in the Roman Catholic Church was published, I was co-leading a workshop on women and spirituality. During that workshop, one of the women present introduced herself as the subject of *NCR's* cover story about the woman ordained by her congregation. Mary, as I shall refer to her, told us that she felt enough trust in the group that she chose to share her secret. Her trust was a blessing.

Later on in the workshop, my co-leader and I shared some of our own spiritual journeys. As I did so, I found myself formulating my remarks in relation to Mary and what her presence called up in me. I spoke of my priesthood in the Episcopal Church and how that was not complete somehow as long as my Roman Catholic sisters could not be ordained. I reflected, too, how we women are caught in the conflict between our own visions of God, the church and ministry, and those of the official structures. We claim our own authority, and yet look to the hierarchy for validation. We assume we are accepted, only to come up against another wall of rejection.

It is that on-going reality of oppression and discomfort that is the lot of women priests — whether underground or above ground. Key issues for both Episcopal and Roman Catholic women are ones of authority and validation. What is the nature and locus of authority in the church? Is it the hierarchy that validates me, or God, the community, my community, myself? The issues are similar, but the context is different for Episcopal and Roman Catholic women.

Episcopal women challenged the hierarchy to grant us ordination and in most places in this country and in a few places around the world, we achieved that aim. Authority was conferred upon us in ordination. The church deemed such ordinations valid. Now some of us are discovering that that is not enough. Rejecting the authority of hierarchy alone and the validation of patriarchal structures, we are trying to find ways of living in and around those structures while seeking new forms of priesthood and new sources of validation.

The reverse process seems to be operating with at least some of our Roman Catholic sisters. They have found themselves in communal groupings that recognize and validate their priesthood. These groups are claiming authority to be the church. Yet many of these Roman Catholic women continue to present themselves to the

official church structures in the hopes of being granted ordination.

I wonder sometimes, though, if what they hope for would not in fact invalidate what they already have. Women seeking liberation today are clearly in transition. Part of that process is the need to claim our own authority — not over and against or in isolation from institutions and men — but with enough space of our own to know, name and bless our own beings. That is what it seems to me the Roman Catholic women are doing in their communal groups. I fear the loss of that.

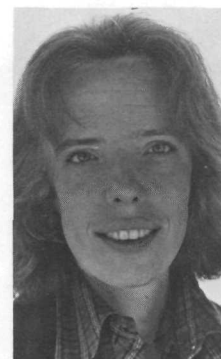
It is only when we women in the church can validate ourselves — truly and fiercely — that we will be free of the church and for the church. Then the issue will be whether the institutional church can be free and authentic enough to respond to Mary and her sisters.

Chipping Away At the Rock

by Carter Heyward

As a Christian priest and woman, I rejoice in the integrity, wisdom and courage of my Roman Catholic sisters in their bold response to God's call. Their "extra-canonical" celebrations of the Eucharist constitute a strong *moral* challenge to the Magisterium's traditional exclusion of women from ordained ministry, a stance justified theologically by the sacramental efficacy of Christ's maleness. The traditional position has served the *immoral* effect of symbolizing, and reinforcing, women's "otherness" from Christ.

A legitimate and credible theological response to these sister-celebrations must be rooted in the recognition that *good theology reflects what is actually happening among people, as well as what once happened and what people believe ought to be happening*. The value of history (what once happened) and of our vision of the unfulfilled realm of God (what ought to be happening) is actualized only in relation to human life as we live it now. What this means for Roman Catholic women is that the historical tradition which connects an all-male priesthood with hierarchical authority and sacramental validity has to



be seen theologically in relation to both the contemporary life experiences of women, whose bodies and souls are theologically and morally objectified (objects of men's fears, projections, hatred, doctrines, discipline), *and* the utopic expectation of Christian feminists that, in the realm of God, "no man shall be called Father" (and no woman "Mother"!) but rather all women and men shall be sisters and brothers in the Spirit.

This suggests that feminist Roman Catholics, both women and men, are obligated — morally (in terms of what is actually right today) — to uphold the traditional teachings and practices of the church *only* insofar as this tradition enhances — positively, constructively — the contemporary situation of women and men: their needs, talents, hungers, calls, as well as their aspirations and expectations for God's realm to break in among us. To idolize tradition is to bow to false gods. To become so wrapped up in our own feelings or our own sense of the present that we lose touch with the past and with the future is to lose the perspective that makes moral choice possible. On the other hand, to understand the past, sorting out its liberative and oppressive dimensions in light of present experience and future hope, is the path of wisdom, the crucible of good theology and tradition as it is being shaped even now by these faithful women and their brothers in the Spirit.

The fact is that Roman Catholic women are *not* full "communicants" of their church. Not in a church in which its celibate male leader, elected by celibate men, declares that only men can be ordained because Jesus Christ was a male. Such men threatening "excommunication" are threatening to murder the dead. Theologically, Roman Catholic women (and perhaps Christian women in general) are not taken seriously as fully human or fully alive persons in Christ. This is orthodoxy, plain and simple. If they are to celebrate their full humanity in Christ, Roman Catholic women have no actual choice except to stand *against* orthodox practice and teaching.

Our sisters and brothers are doing just that in their celebrations of the Eucharist without "benefit" of episcopal hands. They have a far more efficacious benefit: the power of the Holy Spirit which is enlivening communities of faithful women and men, calling for response, demanding action, shattering traditional restraints insofar as they promote injustice, and pushing for a thoroughgoing radicalization of Catholic practice and doctrine.

Of course, the men who rule the Roman Catholic Church *cannot* recognize, much less affirm, what these women are doing without admitting implicitly that a fundamental and huge rock of catholic tradition is crumbling; the rock (I call it "misogyny") which has been historically the cornerstone of clericalism as well as anti-female and anti-sexual

teachings. Our sisters cannot expect to be affirmed by these men. They know that better than I. Happily, their expectation is not for clerical affirmation, but rather for the increase of the realm of God. In this, may they go well — and may the rest of us, especially we Episcopal women priests who are tempted to conform ourselves to an orthodox priesthood, look and see what is happening among our Roman sisters and join them in chipping away at the rock.

Institutional Misogyny Undermines Wholeness

by Nancy Hatch Wittig

As I begin to gather and sort out my thoughts on the plight of my Roman Catholic sisters who seek ordination, I am overwhelmed by *deja vu*. How familiar it all sounds and how wearisome it all seems.

I know by heart the arguments pro and con concerning the ordination of women, and I know the feelings they stir up within my soul. On the one hand, the rhetoric seems silly and vacuous. On the other hand, the arguments, whether destructive or noble, are poignantly real. There are of course



a myriad number of theological views being discussed: from tradition to validity, with the question of authority thrown in for good measure. It all seems as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" to one who has so recently crossed the fiery and painful path herself.

A primary question arises, then, amidst the noise of the fray. For what purpose do these women, or does any woman or man, stand up and out of the crowd for recognition by an institution bound to earthly ways? The institutional church's purpose is to transcend human predicaments and to be moving always toward that which is of God. The church's purpose is to proclaim the Good News to all people, without reservation, leaving no person unmoved.

The Good News of Jesus, who is the Christ, calls each of us — man, woman, child — to a wholeness as God's own. We are to be a part of the on-going creation of God. We are to love neighbor as self, bind up the bleeding wounds, comfort the lonely, the sick and the captive, and feed the empty. It is an all-consuming task.

And so the call to priesthood has been heard through the

haze by women. We hear the call and we are responsive. That women should be excluded as a category from this task is ludicrous, destructive, and damning to the body of Christ, whose purpose is to show forth the wholeness of creation. It *does* make a difference then that the institution, a part of the body of Christ, forbids and restricts this calling.

The experience of women sharing with one another our "living" reality has taught us that we have a reality that has been ignored and/or misunderstood by the church as a predominantly male institution. As Christian women, we know this even before we are able to articulate it clearly.

When we become aware of this, we can do no other than want to be a part of and enrich the church's experience and expression toward wholeness. It *does* make a difference, I believe, when a woman opens her hands with her brother to celebrate the Eucharist. It *does* make a difference for God's people to experience and know the wholeness of creation.

We women do believe most earnestly that God has set about, "to create new heavens and a new earth." I can only wish success for my sisters in Christ as they stand upright and glorify God — claiming their inheritance as God's people. ■

Zapped

"The only frustration I felt . . . was that my vocabulary was not potent enough." Sonia Johnson, "The Woman Who Talked Back to God", Ms, November, 1981.)

For all who wish to talk back to God
singly or in committee,
some suggestions for improving
your invective.

First forswear "----you"
and all the fecal aspersions
as trite and all too tasteless.
In insult as in praise
the Holy One deserves our best.
Therefore eschew vulgarity,
lacerate with literacy,
impale on images
bursting like raisins from a Christmas pie.

Say you're as awesome as a worm
undulating underneath the hearth,
as glorious as a schoolgirl
stifling a giggle.
Say you're as merciful as an overseer
with a hickory stick;
your heart is tender like cinderblock.
Say it
if you dare to run the risk of
being zapped into a mess of
scrambled-eggs-and mushrooms or
a cinnamon-glazed doughnut
for God to have for breakfast.

Of course she may invite you in,
butter you a piece of toast,
listen and
give you what you ask.
There you run the greatest risk of all.
—Gloria Cushing

Fate of Hispanics Still in Suspense

The last issue of THE WITNESS left readers hanging in suspense as to the fate of Maria Cueto, Steve Guerra and three other Hispanics subpoenaed before a Federal Grand Jury in Brooklyn. (See "Prosecution Re-evaluating Charges Against Hispanics", February.)

At that time, the prosecuting attorney's office had sent them home while it pondered the jailing of the five, four of whom had served previous sentences for refusing to testify before a previous Grand Jury. At this point, the suspense simply continues to mount. Technically, Cueto, Guerra, Andres and Julio Rosado and Ricardo Romero, who had again refused to testify before the Grand Jury, could be called in and sentenced to jail. But as the WITNESS went to press Feb. 15, no word had been received that the five would be re-summoned.

Neither, however, have their cases been dropped, said Michael Deutsch, attorney for four of the defendants, who remains only "cautiously optimistic" that the prosecution will not proceed with the case.

Deutsch also noted that books and records of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and the Rafael Cancel Miranda High School and Borinquena College Program in Chicago had been subpoenaed recently. Guerra had been associated with these programs before moving to San Francisco. "These are bank

subpoenas, against which we have no defense," Deutsch said. "The bank has the right not to comply, as in the Cardinal Cody case, but banks usually do."

"The bank subpoenas are an attempt to overturn the tax-exempt status of the school, which currently enjoys a not-for-profit status," Guerra explained. "The school has been in existence since 1973, and has served as the hub for the struggle for democratic rights for the Puerto Rican Community in Chicago," he said.

The Grand Jury investigation has taken its toll in the disruptive effect it has had on the defendants' work in their respective communities. Chicanos Ricardo Romero and Maria Cueto have made three trips from Colorado and two from Texas, respectively, and Guerra, a Puerto Rican, has made three trips from California to answer court summons.

On the positive side, Guerra attributes the fact that the five had not been jailed to the immediate intervention and support of church and community groups. Each day that goes by shortens the life of the present Grand Jury, and therefore the jail sentence of the five, should they be interred. The Brooklyn Grand Jury terminates at the beginning of August of this year. THE WITNESS will continue to monitor the case, as developments warrant.

Shaliach:

Women As God's Agents

by Richard Mansfield

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, "Come, ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

"For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison and you visited me."

Then shall the righteous answer saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick or in prison, and visit you?"

And the King shall answer and say, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

— *Matthew 25: 31-40*

The passage from *Matthew 25: 31-46* reminds me of the trips I have made to Israel over the past few years. I remember being struck by the fact that much of life in Palestine has been unchanged since the time of Jesus' ministry. For instance, one sees shepherds in the same dress of Jesus' time, tending their flocks on the hills of Judea. Once when I was walking

through the Kidron Valley just below the walls of Jerusalem, I looked up on the hillside and saw a shepherd tending his flock, but the flock was made up of both white sheep and black goats. I wondered about the Scripture references to separating sheep and goats. Here they seemed to be kept together. I later found out that it was at night that the shepherds separate them, because the sheep with their wool coats could be left unsheltered in the cold winter nights of the Judean hills, but the goats could not survive the cold and had

to be sheltered in the shepherd's tent.

Jesus' examples came from everyday life, but the misinterpretation of Matthew's passage involves the reason for the separation of the sheep and goats, the reason for God's judgment, rather than the judgment itself. Many preachers try to steer away from or gloss over God's judgment, but if we believe in justice at all, we have to believe that God's judgment is real, as real as an everyday fact of life, like the shepherd separating the sheep and the goats. But what is the reason in this passage for

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God's judgment? "I was a stranger and you welcomed me or did not welcome me. I was naked and you clothed me or did not clothe me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink or did not give me drink." And in this story, both those who are accepted and those who are rejected say, "When did we do this? We cannot remember." And Jesus answers, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

For many years church preachers and secular humanitarians have used this passage as a piece of ethical teaching, inculcating concern for the victims of famine and oppression and injustice throughout the world. Of course the whole ministry of our Lord points to our calling to minister to the hungry and oppressed, and the whole Gospel points to that necessity. But is this what is really being referred to? Closer examination seems to indicate a more specific concern. The passage is an assertion of a certain Judaic principle in the time of Jesus: Acceptance or rejection of an accredited agent involves the acceptance or rejection of the sender of that agent. It also involves the further assertion that acceptance or rejection of the accredited agent, like the acceptance or rejection of the sender, will be validated at the last judgment. This principle is repeated many times in the Gospels in relationship to Jesus, who was sent by God, and in relation to the disciples sent by Jesus.

The parable of the wicked tenants is probably one of the best known examples of this principle. These wicked tenants refused to give the owner of the vineyard the produce of the vineyard, and so he sent some of his agents to collect what was due him, and the wicked tenants beat the agents and killed others of them. And so finally the owner of the vineyard sent his only son, saying, "Surely they will respect him," but when the wicked tenants saw the son coming, they said, "This is the inheritor,

let's kill him and the inheritance will be ours." In this allegory, it was clear that the owner of the vineyard was God, his Son was Jesus Christ. His agents were his prophets and messengers, and the wicked tenants were the people of God, who rejected God's agents, even God's son. And the story says how those who rejected those that were sent to them were, in turn, rejected by the sender, God.

In the particular passage above, the author of Matthew uses the word "brethren" added to the least of these, which is the tipoff of who is being referred to. This is so even though there



"Clergy call me looking for a new assistant and they invariably say, 'Our parish isn't ready yet for women.' I used to accept that. No more. Now I ask, 'Why not? How long is it going to take? How much are you trying to bring them along as a leader of that congregation?'"



were many women disciples of Jesus in those times. So "brethren" referred to women as well as men. Sexist language began a long time ago. But we know that when the Gospel of Matthew records Jesus as saying, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me," he is talking about what has been done unto his disciples, men and women, the accredited agents sent by him.

So on further examination it seems clear that Jesus is referring to the way the disciples of Jesus are received. They are the ones who are hungry, thirsty, sick, naked, and, as many of them were,

"in prison." Jesus sent them out, as we know, with nothing provided for them. They were completely dependent on those to whom they preached and ministered for their support.

That the passage is limited in this way, not referring to all the world's poor and oppressed but only specifically to Jesus' disciples, may be a disappointment to many, but I think we must interpret the Scriptures as they were intended to be and in the context that they were delivered, or else we preach our own words and not God's and change the basic meaning of revelation. But this interpretation of the passage does not make it any less significant to us today in our lives and in the life of our community of faith, the church. In fact, how some of those who are sent to the church and the world in God's name are received and treated today is a crucial issue for the church.

Now, our seminary — Bexley Hall — is not that different from all the others. Most seminaries have seen a dramatic increase in the number of women preparing for ordination. This presents all the churches represented in our seminary with a tremendous opportunity and problem. Episcopalians were the most recent to allow women to be ordained, but now all the churches represented here face the more difficult problem of the *de facto* discrimination against women. Women face the painful and dehumanizing problems in being received as God's ministers, agents, both in their field work and in their attempts at finding placements after graduation. A woman is told by her field work supervisor, after she has preached, that she should be more feminine in the pulpit or, in other instances, that she is being too sexually provocative. Another one who administers the chalice at communion in her field work parish, has parishioners refuse to receive communion from her.

In most of our polities it is the local

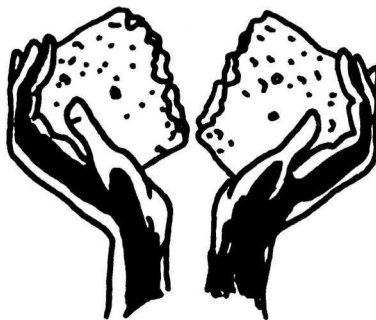
congregation, the pastor and the laity who make the decision on whether to hire a pastor or an assistant. A great majority of them will not even consider interviewing a woman. Clergy call me looking for a new assistant and they invariably say, "Our parish isn't ready yet for women." I used to accept that. No more. Now I ask, "Why not? How long is it going to take? How much are you trying to bring them along as a leader of that congregation?"

The reality of the situation in the Episcopal Church is that there are some assistantships and missions open to women. First placement has not been a problem. Many of the mission churches are open to them because nobody else will go since the mission is not a viable one. And so the woman who goes there is slated for inevitable failure. But when it comes to placing a woman as a rector or head pastor of a self-supporting parish, it is practically impossible. And that is why women who have their seminary degree, have been ordained, and have had experience in the parish ministry, in other words, fully accredited agents of God by the Church of God, are in fact rejected.

It was my hope that the recent struggles of the Episcopal Church over the ordination of women would have raised its consciousness about accepting women and affirming their full personhood in the body of Christ. But alas it seems that many feel that we have somehow taken care of that problem now that we have dealt with the ordination question. The fight over ordination has in fact hidden some of the deeper issues involved in fully accepting women into the body of Christ. We must deal with and fully examine some of the misogynous tendencies of our theological formulations and the sexism in the language of our worship. And in the whole struggle itself, it seems that what was really involved was totally missed

by even some of those who supported the ordination of women. I am infuriated by some of my colleagues who I hear saying over and over again in meetings and from their pulpits that now that we have taken care of the women's issue, we should get on with the *true* mission of the church.

First of all, we have only just begun to deal with the women's issue in the church, but in essence this kind of remark and attitude is the worst kind of putdown: to somehow say and imply that the struggle of the church to accept the full personhood of women is not part, and an essential part, of the true mission of the church. Over and over I



hear how we now need to put all this behind us and get on with ministering to the poor, the friendless, and the needy, as if we should somehow be ashamed that we have wasted our time on some sort of meaningless church infighting. And many of my colleagues use Matthew 25 to justify what is, in their minds, the true mission of the church that we should get back to, when in fact it refers to how God's accredited agents, those who the church has ordained, are received and treated. How can we minister to the oppressed of this world when oppression and discrimination exist in the body of Christ? How can we witness to God's love to the world when we, in fact, reject in many concrete ways the ministry of ordained women in our

own midst?

This to me is why our Lord spoke of God's judgment upon those who did not receive his agents. If we cannot receive God's messengers and their message, then how can we hope to carry it to the rest of this broken world? The struggle for women to be accepted fully in the church has brought a new reality to the judgment of God upon the people of God. This struggle has not been some churchy spat with no meaning to the world, nor has it been an attempt to be trendy by jumping on some secular liberation movement bandwagon. Until we all realize that this issue involves what is basic to our mission and ministry as a church, we will never receive redemption as a church. For make no mistake about it, we all stand under the judgment of God and God's word. There are many things, good things, that contribute to our oneness in Christ as many different denominations, but unfortunately we also share oneness in our failure to measure up to God's calling on this issue.

My hope for the church is that it too can face up to its own oppression of women and deal with both its open and latent sexism, that it will stop trying to justify itself by trivializing the women's issue and listen to the Gospel as we have received it from our Lord Jesus Christ, to realize that we, the church, stand under God's judgment.

The Gospel lesson in Matthew 25: 31-46 says two things, it seems to me. First, that God's judgment is as real as the everyday happenings of our lives, and secondly, that how we receive God's accredited agents has a lot to say about how God receives us, says a lot about our relationship with God. In other words, it calls us to be passionately concerned about justice, both in the church and in the world, and it calls us to witness to God's love and acceptance through how we treat and receive others, especially God's agents, which include our sisters. ■



William Spofford, Sr.



Vida Scudder



Bishop William Scarlett

Nominations Sought For Three Awards

WITNESS readers are invited to submit nominations for three awards to be presented by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company during the General Convention in New Orleans in September. The awards are named in honor of William Scarlett, Bishop of Missouri from 1930 to 1950; Vida Scudder, prolific writer, educator and social activist, and William Spofford, former editor of THE WITNESS.

Candidates are being sought whose action/involvement has been pointed toward the root causes of oppression, deprivation, and need, and who emulate the courage shown by Scarlett, Scudder, Spofford—who were at the cutting edge of social mission during their lifetimes.

Nominations should be sent to the Rev. Joseph Pelham of ECPC Board of Trustees, 1 Joy St., Boston, Mass., 02108 to be received by April 15.

Brief biographical sketches of the those in whose honor the awards have been named follow:

Bishop Will Scarlett's entire ministry was spent on the cutting edge of Christianity's response to the issues of injustice, discrimination and

oppression in the world of men and women. He was a ceaseless battler against the abuse of power, both in the church and in the social order. He coupled this intensity with a profound devotional life which he shared weekly in the Cathedral with the clergy of the Diocese of Missouri and any others who sought it. Bishop Scarlett was the founder of the Church League for Industrial Democracy.

Vida Scudder wrote these words in her autobiography, *On Journey* (1937): "For the ultimate source of my socialist convictions was and is Christianity. Unless I were a socialist, I could not honestly be a Christian, and although I was not sure I dared call myself by that name, I could use no other."

Among the several threads running through the story of her life, this is the most persistent. From the time she was confirmed by Phillips Brooks in Boston to her death in 1954, she sought relentlessly to place herself in the arena of social action. Teaching, social work, and writing were her three main competing outlets. To her credit are at least a score of books on socialism, literature, religion, and the saints as well as many poems. St.

Francis, more than Marx, was her mentor as she realized that the poor were leading her closer to the reality she sought in her life and through whom she discovered her own capacity to love.

William Spofford, Sr., noted early editor of THE WITNESS magazine, was an Episcopalian priest who not only made history as an investigative journalist, but was also center stage to bear the brunt of the witchhunting and redbaiting of the '50s.

As a reporter he knew a great many whom the world called "great," but he was nourished as well by his contacts with union organizers, and down-and-outers in various urban Skid Rows. His son, Bill Spofford Jr., wrote, "He had a great grace in opening up a friendly, pastoral conversation with those who served him clams in the Fulton Fish Market or the true believers in the bleachers at Yankee Stadium. I have a hunch that the Christ he knows wasn't clearly divine but was always a Wanderer in the dusty roads, meeting people and trying to make them whole, urging them to await the Kingdom and be actively about the business of building it."

Black Women's Agenda

THE WITNESS offers the final installment this month of presentations made by four black women who forcefully expressed their distrust of the feminist movement at a national conference of Episcopal women in Indianapolis in November. This issue features major excerpts from presentations by Mattie Hopkins, Chicago educator and noted Episcopal laywoman, and the Rev. Barbara Harris, priest-in-charge at St. Augustine of Hippo Church, Norristown, Pa., and a member of the Episcopal Commission for Black Ministries.

Last month's articles featured educators Dr. Deborah Harmon

Hines of Nashville and Myrtle Gordon of Atlanta.

All four women, under the rubric, the Black Women's Agenda, put forth how they perceived feminist issues as draining energy from the liberation battle of people of color. The presentations were made at the third national conference of the Episcopal Church's Task Force on Women. The Task Force's concern with empowerment of women for ministry leads it to identify and address those personal and structural blocks that inhibit women's full response to the Gospel. Members of the Task Force are Nina Olmedo Alazraqui, Dorothy Brittain, Marge Christie, Carol

Freund, Lynn Glover, Jan Pierce, Vicki Reid, Mary Robert, Carole Jan Lee, Marceline Donaldson, Pat Merchant Park, Babette Prince and Nell Gibson.

In publishing the Black Women's Agenda, THE WITNESS hopes to extend the dialogue begun in Indianapolis to a broader forum. We invite readers to share their views via Letters to the Editor. Cassette tapes of the complete talks, as well as responses, can be ordered from Conference Corder, 3901 Meadows Drive, Suite B-1, Indianapolis, Ind. 46205. (Two tapes, entitled "The Black Women's Agenda," total cost \$9.75.)

Other Struggles Seducing Blacks

by Mattie Hopkins

Let us take a look at the political, social, and economic results of racism. In "To Hear and To Heed," Dr. Gibson Winter refers to America's being afflicted with a "degenerative disease." That degenerative disease is racism. There are, of course, other "isms" — sexism and classism to name two. But it is racism — the belief in the superiority of one's group over all others, accompanied by the power to exert one's will — that is the ever-present condition of the lives of black people. Please note the dual aspect of racism:



MATTIE HOPKINS

Mattie Hopkins is a member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's Board of Directors, a Chicago public school teacher, board member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, and senior warden of Trinity Episcopal Church, Chicago.

attitude and power. Attitude alone may produce bias or prejudice. It is only when the power is present to exert will

that racism occurs. Therefore, there is no such thing as "black racism." Black prejudice, hate, injustice even. Racism, no!

The history of blacks in America has been one of slavery, three-fifths of a man, no rights which any white person is bound to respect, separate and unequal, last hired-first fired, and triple percentages in unemployment, welfare, poverty, deaths due to poverty-related diseases, self-inflicted and other inflicted crimes. It has been a history of continuous struggle — much failure, some success; one step forward, two steps back.

Although each generation of black folks has moved through the moral suasion phase, the infrastructural dimension of racism has become apparent. We are also aware of the ease

with which we can be seduced into abandoning the fight against racism. From the earliest slave revolutions, through all the movements for liberation in the 19th and 20th centuries, the siren call to fight for the larger causes — world wars, peace, ecology, and now the rights of white women — has haunted us.

Yes, we know that the nuclear arms race is an imbecility that could blow up the whole planet. But if you're black, your stake in the planet isn't that great. All you really care to be certain about is that everybody blows.

Yes, we know that sexism is as tightly woven into the American fabric as is racism. But if all the issues of sexism were settled tomorrow, the degrading, humiliating oppression of racism would continue. It is our experience that every liberating blow struck for black people has magnified as it reverberated upward and outward. Everybody who was oppressed benefitted. On the other hand, everyone else's liberation is at our expense.

Thus when black women come to look at these problems and to set their priorities, a conflict of interest emerges. Sexism is as outrageous a disease among black men as it is among white men. But racism is a disease of white men and women and devastates all our daily lives — both men and women — in ways the battle against sexism alone can never address.

Some political ramifications challenge us today. All over this country new local, state and national maps are being drawn for Congress, state legislatures or city ward districts. Urban areas in the East and the Midwest have lost in population while their suburbs and Southern and Western cities have gained. But the population loss has been from the fleeing white community. In many instances the black population has remained stable or increased a bit. Yet, without exception, every map is being drawn to try to make the lost



-Aegis

representation come from the already under-represented black people.

Now, I ask you, should I be fighting over whether a black man or a black woman should be running, or should my energies be directed to saving the seat? Together we may be able to save the seat. Divided, we shall certainly lose it! Now if somewhere, sometime, the Women's Movement saw the importance of saving representation for black people, some new dynamics might develop. But do not expect that black people — men or women — will accept that a white woman can represent them any better, or even any differently, than a white man.

Poverty plagues the black community. Because of exclusion from the monetary system of this country, just as currencies of African countries are excluded from the monetary systems of the world, a hefty percentage of black people in the so-called "middle class" find themselves employed by one of the branches of government. Thus, when government cuts back, drops programs, refuses bond issues, cuts taxes, the black poor are the first to be hurt and endangered. But also, the black

working person (two weeks from welfare, as the Rev. Jesse Jackson puts it) is hurt and endangered. The lower levels of those hated government bureaucrats are often black people. Black teachers, black social workers, black transit workers, clerks in offices, when laid off are headed for welfare or nowhere.

Concurrently, factories and businesses cut back. We hear great discussions of how productivity must be increased. In simple terms that means how can machines replace people and thus lower the per product cost. Once again the last hired is the first fired.

Then there is the education system to which we as black people have been wedded. For generations it was our upward mobility ladder — the way out. But we did not correctly appraise education either. Education is the reproductive system of society. Through it the *status quo* is maintained. Certain groups are educated for power, others for powerlessness. It maintains the facade of democracy by keeping its lines blurred and indistinguishable, and by allowing a minimum movement among groups and allowing token success from group to group. How can it do this? How can a system that has brought into being a sizeable white middle class of professionals, scientists, theoreticians and politicians, business persons and technocrats, no longer be viable?

The truth is that the education system never lifted up the children of the poor more than a step or two at a time. But the rest of society had a place for them. The illiterate unskilled white workers or farmers could expect their children to become skilled blue collar workers, and the blue collar workers could expect their children to become professionals. And there was still time to acquire land or to create businesses and to build the financial underpinnings for the family.

But racism denied these opportunities to black folk. Land was stolen or

cheated away from our landowners. Jobs were kept at the menial, serving level. Racist unions precluded membership and thus jobs. So education became a must, to jump from illiterate to white collar in one generation, or to be trapped in poverty. Today it is the fashion to scorn public education, to decry its irrelevance, to belittle the teachers. But even though it never did all it was supposed to do, education helped and gave hope. Now with technology and a lowering job market, the aspirations or expectation levels must be lowered. I am always appalled at the stupidity which allows persons who lived through and participated in the 1960s Civil Rights struggle, and who criticize the philosophy, ideas, motivations and/or programs of that era, and blame its demise on one or more of them—rather than on the massive, planned,

governmental and private sector attack on that movement and its leaders to stop it in its track. The police, the FBI, the CIA and the media all worked hand-in hand.

The same massive attack on the education system has been mounted to destroy and discredit public education. And it is in the black community that the options to public education are fewest.

How does one motivate a young black person to go to school when black adults are standing on the streets all day with nowhere to go and nothing to do? Drive through the black section of any city. The hoped-for means of escape have been degraded, the on-level jobs no longer exist, not even the hope is left to carry on. Even so, over the years a larger percentage of black women graduate from high schools and colleges

than do black men. What is black women's quarrel with black men on this score?

And so we develop what John McKnight calls "a useless class." Drugs, prisons, crimes appear as the only alternative to a society which programs blacks that nothing is expected from them, and to expect nothing.

Add to this the resurfacing of blatant public racism — the jokes, the slurs, the names, which for a 10-year period were at least hidden away. Once again top government officials have signalled that this is appropriate behavior. In other words, it's all right to take out the frustrations of one's own life by the traditional method of scapegoating.

So we return to our thesis here. Where is the priority — in what part of the struggle must black women be involved?

'You Don't See Most of Us'

by Barbara Harris

Debbie Hines, in her analysis of the Black Women's Agenda, alluded to the problem of racism in the church — the last place where we should be forced to confront this evil and to contend against it. Yet it is here, clothed in the guise of Christian love, that we find some of its most subtle and insidious manifestations. And given the structure of this Episcopal institution in which we claim membership, whites perhaps, tend to feel that the voices of blacks have been least strident and least demanding of their rights. After all, don't we join you in singing, "We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord



BARBARA HARRIS

hear many of us because you don't see most of us.

In truth, we have within this Episcopal denomination two churches. One is comprised of white congregations, some with a sprinkling of black members — sometimes enough to give them the appearance of being integrated. The other, the church within the church, is made up of black congregations, which in rare instances, will have an easily identifiable and easily counted, usually on one hand, cadre of white members. Communicant traffic is seldom a two-way street; neither is clergy traffic, except in major urban centers and usually, not even there. We are seen in miniscule numbers at diocesan councils and conventions, diocesan ECW gatherings, deanery and

and they'll know we are Christians by our love?" Our voices *have* been both strident and demanding. But you don't

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convocation meetings, and on boards, committees and commissions.

The national picture is even more pitiful, as each succeeding election finds us in a continuing struggle for more than token representation at General Convention, on the Executive Council and in other policy and decision-making bodies of the church. The church seems to reflect the mood of the country as it swings from left or left center to right. Yet, in the quest to claim power I have seen precious few white women radically press to see that that power is shared with blacks. We do not expect it of white men and we are seldom surprised.

So, we're out of sight and thus largely out of mind with regard to the devastating effects of racism on the black church. It is against that backdrop that I would make a few observations about our priorities in this crucial area of our lives. I say crucial because as Myrtle Gordon pointed out, the Christian church is a vital part of our lives and the lives of our families. And let me preface this by saying our well-being in the church is inextricably bound up with the well-being of black men and our black children and our black church. We could look at several areas of the church's life, but I'll focus briefly on just three.

Let us look at evangelism. In the Episcopal Church, historically, where evangelism in its truest form has taken place among blacks, it has been due to the persistence and perseverance of black clergy and some dedicated laity with little or no help from the diocesan or national church structures. Where it has flourished, it has been nurtured in the face of overwhelming odds, but we have seen the rise and development of strong, independent black congregations. In the face of present declining communicant strength, however, we see an emerging mission strategy that makes the church a handmaiden to gentrification as reflected in some

strange and wondrous clergy placements in urban areas that are being reclaimed by whites. On the other hand, we live with the vestiges of white-initiated mission strategies among blacks. This has resulted in a disproportionate number of struggling black congregations, set up for the wrong reasons, programmed for dependence, then written off as having failed their mission. Case in point: the congregation in which I now serve.

Its history reveals that a frail black woman had gathered some other black people in the community around her to worship in an Anglo-Catholic parish in the Norristown community, and they worshipped apart from the whites of the church at a service following the regular service. The rector of the church was distressed by this; this was not right. But



rather than invite blacks into fellowship with the church, on a sunny Easter Sunday, he marched them down to a little plot of land over on the black side of town and said, "I have purchased for you this land on which I will build you a church." So anxious was he to give them *their* church, they broke ground on Easter Sunday, they laid the cornerstone in July and on All Saints' Day, the church and the parish house were open for service.

Recruitment is a problem for us — recruitment of persons for the ordained ministry. There's not much serious recruiting effort going on at the diocesan level to feed potential black clergy into the pipeline. And part of the problem is on our side of the fence as well. Seasoned black clergy cannot in good conscience encourage vocations

among young blacks, when they see no place for them to serve in this church, except to endure the same kind of disadvantages that they have known for many, many years of their ministry — where the maximum salary for black clergy has usually been the minimum norm for any diocese.

Again, as Myrtle has pointed out, traditionally the black church has been the major institution led and controlled by blacks. Black churches have spawned other key institutions in the black community, schools and colleges, burial societies, savings and loan associations and credit unions. I'm speaking of predominantly black denominations: The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. This has been true to a much more limited degree in black Episcopal congregations. But such leadership as blacks have exercised in these places is being eroded by the placement of white clergy as vicars and interim priests in charge of these congregations. Invariably, white clergy impose their measurements, their standards and criteria, upon these congregations and the priorities are seldom the same. I have to say that this is particularly true in the case of white women clergy.

For example, inclusive or non-sexist language liturgy and worship would seem to be an overriding and valid concern of white women in the church, and that's all right. But black people don't have any problem relating to "God the Father" or to "His Son." Jesus Christ is not, to us, just heir or firstborn. Given our background where the kingships of Africa were raped and stolen from us, to us he is "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ the first and last, no man works like him." He is the role model we have to hold up in a community that needs strong male images beyond the "Super Fly" and other characters handed to us by Hollywood. We need the maleness of

Jesus Christ. So, we are too busy trying to reclaim the things of value from the black religious experience to help you rewrite liturgy.

We wish you well. And we're sorry if you feel excluded and put down by "Rise up O Men of God," but to us, that's a challenge for our brothers to come and join us in the struggle. We are busy trying to forge viable communities centered around the one institution from which we possibly can have some direction for our lives and the lives of our community.

Some white women priests are struggling with what they should be called. Some wish to be called "Mother" and that's fine, if you can pull it off in a white setting. But imagine, if you will, a young competent white woman placed in charge of a congregation of middle-aged to elderly predominantly West Indians who are required to call her "Mother." They do it not because they want to but because inherently they respect the clergy role.

One of the functions of the black pastor is that of guidance. As Edward Wimberly says in his slim volume, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church*, "As a symbol in the black church, the black pastor provided affirmation of the fellowship's identity, its purposes, its values and its goals. The black pastor inherited his or her function out of a matrix of social and historical circumstances that made the pastor unique in the entire community. As a symbol, the pastor was supposed to help make life meaningful for the souls under his or her care. As a result of this function, the pastor was expected to help the congregation make some sense out of the chaotic experiences that made life so frustrating" in the black community.

The pastor's task was to bring to bear upon black persons in crisis, and black persons at risk I might add, the ideas and values that traditionally enabled black people to survive in a world of

hostility and oppression. Now I would suggest to you that the expertise for this role was forged in the crucible of the

5 Resolutions on Racism Passed by Conference

INDIANAPOLIS — The issue of racism which commanded much of the attention at the third national conference of the Episcopal Church's Task Force on Women was the subject of five conference resolutions, two of which addressed complex questions of the ordained clergy.

The five were passed at the conclusion of the conference at which black and white church women had grappled with the topic "Claiming Our Power." The conference put forth the resolutions as a means of demonstrating the common ground that had been discovered in the exchanges.

Two — directed to the church's Council for the Development of Ministry — urged "that the process of selection and rejection of candidates for ordination be monitored for affirmative action" and that "serious action be taken on both the recruitment of minority persons for ordination and the competition between black clergy and white women clergy for appointed and other positions at local, diocesan and national levels."

The group also asked that the recently-devised "affirmative action" policy, which the Executive Council has accepted in principle, be extended to all church committees.

Two other resolutions praised the National Council of Churches and the church's Standing Commission on Church Music for their sensitivity to both sexist and racist concepts in lectionaries and hymnals.

The final action asked that a planned national conference on racism — sponsored by the Coalition for Human Needs — include one of the black women panelists from the Task Force conference among keynoteers.

—Diocesan Press Service

black religious experience. Yet, insensitive bishops place a white person in that kind of situation and expect

them to fulfill that role. And for a white clergy person, so placed, to presume to fill that role is ludicrous. This is not to say that white clergy have nothing to offer in a pastoral sense, but what we are saying is that they can't do it in the same way.

Yet, the presumption is that here is a sharp person and this is what they need. "You want a priest, so here's a priest and be quiet." But the person, the white clergy person, if serious about combatting racism — and I say this to white women priests — should refuse that kind of appointment, and tell the bishop to go look for a black person to lead that congregation. But if you're so desperate for your place in the sun that you will be insensitive to the wrongness of your being there, then that's an indication of your complicity in the sin of racism.

Our agenda in the black church is to build strong congregations that are not only centers of worship, but centers of nurture, centers of guidance, centers of leadership development, resources for survival and models of the extended family. We have a parenting function and responsibility, a pastoral care function and responsibility, a crisis intervention function and responsibility and the preaching of good news to the poor, in tangible forms. So do you. But we come at it with different priorities, born out of different needs and different experiences.

Our "box work" (missionary work) is cut out for us, right here at home. And a part of that box work is to equip the saints for the work of the kingdom, including the claiming of our power as people of God in the household of faith.

And in closing, I will leave with you the one bit of lyrical verse I always use in discussing racism with whites, by our poet laureate Langston Hughes. Some of you have heard me use it before. "Seems like what drives me crazy, don't have no 'fect on you, but I'm goin' keep on at it, 'til it drives you crazy too." ■

Letters . . . Continued from page 2

sole purpose of our faith? Your title — THE WITNESS — should stand for something really meaningful, *i.e.*, encouraging people in their faith. Little wonder that many are becoming disillusioned with religion when they find love twisted into bitterness, success perverted into envy, and a person's salvation taking a back seat to some sort of economic or social "justice." Christianity does not preach a class solidarity that could be used against the rich, but a doctrine of love, faith and reconciliation.

As I see it, you have a golden opportunity to turn those readers — mesmerized with the political scene — back to our most important endeavor: that of witnessing to others the saving grace of Jesus.

Donald L. Adams
Yarmouth Port, Mass.

Opinion Verified

THE WITNESS was subscribed for me by a cousin, over my objections. It is in every way incompatible with my very serious interest and concern for my country and, of course, my church. I am anti-E.R.A. Phyllis Schaffley is my ideal of a great woman and lady. (I am a member of her Eagle Forum.) I have not sent any money to the National Episcopal Church for 10 years due to its support of Communist organizations, et al. I resent the record of the bishops' "taking the ball and running with it" over the Gallup poll indication that 43% of the laity preferred to keep the book of Common Prayer (intact! or with minor changes.) I am a devout church-goer and faithful to my parish. I wanted it known that I was not remiss in allowing

Credits

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my subscription to THE WITNESS to expire. The one year convinced me I was right about my original opinion of it.

Mary T. Taylor
Wilmington, N.C.

Flower Children in '80s

Reading Miriam Pickett's article, "Where Have All The Flower Children Gone," in a recent issue of THE WITNESS touched a very responsive chord in me. We, too, had moved to a more suburban environment once we had children and we, too, seemed to be caught up in the endless details of raising our children — homework, soccer games, ballet lessons, PTA carnivals.

My friends reinforced my preoccupations, and to a certain extent fueled them. What if my children were the only ones on the block who weren't going to camp and were in city public schools? But, for the sake of my social values, was I denying them experiences they not only deserved, but needed in order to grow up to be happy, well-rounded adults?

These struggles seemed to be taking place in an increasingly hostile environment. It was easy to be idealistic in the '60s because idealism was "in." Now we are in the "supply-side" '80s. The poor are no longer oppressed; they are lazy, using all their energy to defraud the food stamp system. We close schools to build bombs and everyone nods in agreements. Maintaining a social conscience in the '80s is harder because it is truly countercultural.

We are also more practical — trying to raise children certainly does that for you! But we felt isolated in this struggle to maintain a social conscience. We often felt we were one family struggling alone against the tide.

Then we learned of the National Parenting for Peace and Justice Network started by Kathy and Jim McGinnis of the Institute for Peace and Justice in St. Louis. This is a network of families struggling to maintain their social conscience at the same time that they raise their children and try to create affirming environments in their homes.

We found the words to express the meaning we searched for and we were no longer alone in our struggle. There were other families across the country who were trying to do the same things — create priorities that run counter to television advertising and shopping mall materialism; respect all people, whatever their sex, race, or economic class; learn the importance of moving out of ourselves, even out of the security of our own families, to a hurting world.

Miriam Pickett asks: "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." The National Parenting for Peace and Justice Network is one way. WITNESS readers interested may write NPPJN, 2913 Locust St., St. Louis, Mo. 63103.

Wendy Bauers Northup
Richmond, Va.

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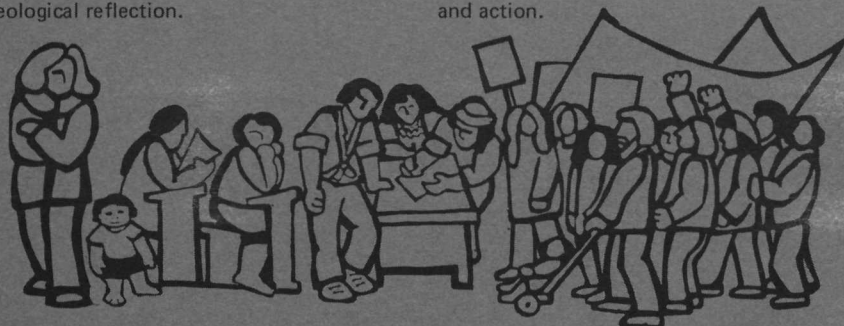
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