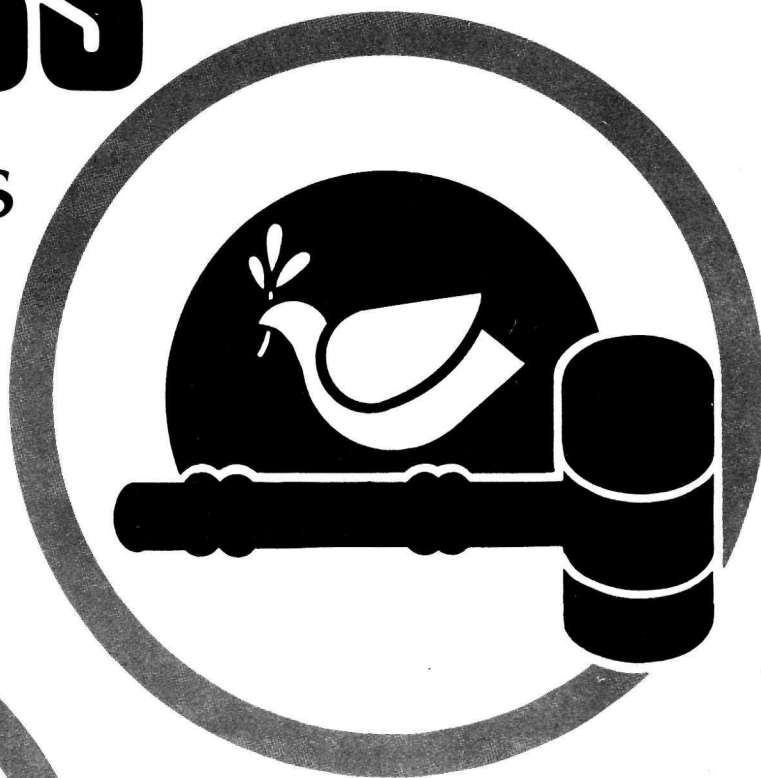


THE WITNESS

VOL. 66 NO. 2 FEBRUARY, 1983

With Liturgies
and Justice
for All...

Nathaniel W. Pierce
Pauli Murray



Our Ideal New Presiding Bishop

A collage by:
Episcopal Women's Caucus
Union of Black Episcopalians
Integrity
Episcopal Peace Fellowship
Hispanics
Asian-Americans
Episcopal Urban Caucus



LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Hopes to Offer Sanctuary

The article about Salvadoran refugees (December WITNESS) was very moving and an eye-opener. Why has there been so little coverage about INS practices?

We hope to move our local church to provide sanctuary or perhaps become a stop on the underground railroad.

Helen Kemper
Philadelphia, Pa.

Light in Dark Times

We happened to read a friend's issue of THE WITNESS and were deeply moved by the article describing the plight of Salvadoran refugees. A grass-roots church movement to harbor refugees in defiance of law is astonishing and hope inducing in a culture where civil religion is synonymous with unenlightened compliance with repression. That some North American churches are willing to act on behalf of Central American victims of our State Department's collusionary policy, is surely a light in these dark times.

Phillip and Jan Rogers
Bronx, N.Y.

Required Reading

Your November issue largely covering the church's September General Convention in New Orleans proved even more enlightening than I'd anticipated and should be in the hands of all churchpeople.

Your format of presenting interpretations by Ed Rodman, Marge

Christie and John Cannon, with "color" by Mary Lou Suhor, enabled these differing viewpoints to be thoughtfully considered for some time to come.

"Changing the Angle of Vision," the editorial's title, might well have served for the theme of your coverage. I personally felt that the editorially-heard "whisper" (of the church building faithfulness in attempting to speak through the poor) was more than a whisper. Indeed, at this GC, I saw a new spirit of reconciliation working to build new coalitions and overall unity that presages at last a real turning point away from our former dichotomy of "personal pietism vs. social action" to a prayer-grounded, activist thrust towards Jesus' beloved, the poor.

Best of all was Canon Burgess Carr's "Next Steps Toward the Year 2000" wherein he summed up the rationale for our society's current bewilderment with his superb recap of former prophecies which have raised expectations that still remain unfulfilled. His forceful outline of some of the issues confronting us, e.g., "The inseparable triad of hunger, poverty and injustice. . ." and his call to Christian protest and equipment of ourselves as a "eucharistic fellowship" gave a vitally-needed perspective.

Canon Carr's article, and the whole issue, should be required reading for all of us committed to Gustavo Gutierrez's belief that "The poor is the place of the encounter with God."

Thank you for raising my hopes once again!

Julie Wyatt
West Texas Diocesan
Hunger Committee
San Antonio, Tex.

Need to Integrate Ideas

Paolo Friere, in his critical volume, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, reminds us of the foolishness of adopting a "banking theory of knowledge" wherein one makes one deposit after another and rarely, if ever, draws on her/his account. Burgess Carr reminded us of the prophetic words spoken by the National Council of Churches in the

1960s in its report entitled, "The Triple Revolution." Words, I fear, largely lost after being deposited.

We are so taken by speaking and writing, our capacity/willingness to integrate ideas is diminished daily. Indeed, fully recognizing the implied anti-intellectual bias implied, perhaps we need to develop better methods for integrating the part of the Gospel we do understand rather than continuously seeking new light about truths only faintly perceived.

Is there an inverse relationship between the reading and intellectual debate of today's ideas, and our capacity to live as Christians with at least modest ability, but ability nonetheless, to act in a caring and prophetic manner?

Richard R. Fernandez, Director
Northwest Interfaith Movement
Philadelphia, Pa.

Can't Serve in Diocese

I am writing as a seminarian and as a woman who until recently was from the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. On the personal level, my interaction with the diocese has been less than satisfactory. Having been denied the opportunity to serve the people in the geographical area in which my faith was nurtured and seeing firsthand the disorder into which the diocese has plunged, has caused me anguish as I experience the brokenness of the church. (See "Diocese Invokes 'Conscience', Bars Women to Priesthood" in November WITNESS.)

I feel it is imperative that the Bishops of Province III respond to the breach of canon law in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Not to do so would be to ignore the fracturing of the diocese, to allow the damage to individuals to continue, and to jeopardize the validity of canon law. I trust that God will grant the Presiding Bishop courage to break the silence surrounding this issue.

Anne Elizabeth Gilson
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.

THE WITNESS

EDITOR
Mary Lou Suhor

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Robert L. DeWitt

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Richard W. Gillett
Hugh C. White

STAFF
Ann Hunter
Susan Small
Bonnie Spady
Lisa Whelan

PUBLISHER
Episcopal Church Publishing Company

ECPC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR
H. Coleman McGehee

VICE-CHAIR
Barbara Harris

SECRETARY
Helen Seager

TREASURER
Robert Potter

ASSISTANT TREASURER
Robert Eckersley

Otis Charles
Robert L. DeWitt
Steven Guerra
Suzanne Hiatt
Mattie Hopkins
Joan Howarth
James Lewis
Joseph A. Pelham

THE WITNESS is published monthly. Editorial office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002. Phone (215) 643-7067. Subscription rates \$12 per year. \$1 per copy. Copyright 1983 by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Printed in U.S.A. ISSN 0197-8896.

THE WITNESS

Editorial

Worldwide Unemployment and Human Rights

In our concern over the double digit jobless rates in this country, we miss the wider picture: Unemployment is a worldwide phenomenon of depression proportions. By the middle of 1983, unemployment will reach about 17.5 million throughout Europe; one-sixth of all Europeans will be unemployed.

And forecasts for industrial nations pale beside those for the Third World. Between 300 and 500 million are unemployed in the developing world, (pressing 20 to 30% in many countries). By the turn of the century, only 17 years away, the demographic figures suggest 900 million to 1 billion.

U.S. unemployment meanwhile continues to rise. There is a new word in the American lexicon: *exhaustees*. The word does not mean tired, worn out or lazy, but rather refers to those workers who are in the growing army of jobless who have used up their unemployment insurance benefits and now must find some new way to stay alive.

If all the unemployed people in the state of Michigan lived in one city, that city would be the 11th largest in the nation.

Today's scenario bears a chilling resemblance to the great depressions of 1873-93 and 1929-

40: bankruptcies, the beginnings of bank collapses, cutbacks and layoffs. Around-the-block lineups for food stamps, public assistance and unemployment claims are a familiar sight. Break-ins and holdups burgeon; soup kitchens and shelters for the homeless are strained beyond capacity.

The problem everywhere in the world is greatest for those just arriving at working age. On the principle of "last come, last served," young people find it extremely difficult to elbow their way into an ever-tightening labor market. When they do find jobs, they are frequently near minimum wage and sometimes displace older workers drawing higher wages.

A number of solutions to the problem have been proposed, but none offers much help. Wage concessions, shorter hours and job-sharing are at best stop-gap, at worst not true solutions. We are in the midst of a great social turmoil — one that calls for basic structural change. Fundamental human rights are at stake.

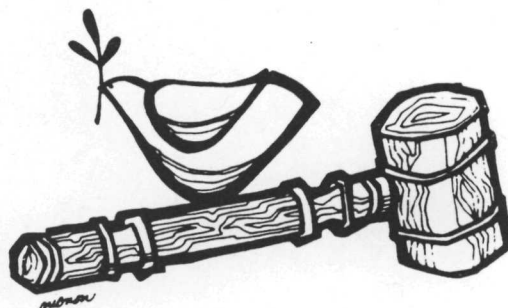
The people of the world have always been interdependent, related, connected, but never so intimately as today. Planet Earth will not survive if, as some

Continued on page 6

Vietnam War Vigils: 1969, 1982

When Does Prayer Become Political?

by Nat Pierce



Authentic prayer must be fully integrated into what we are and what we do. Often, however, prayer can become a substitute for substantive action: We pray for our enemies but hate them as much as ever.

Prayer by its very nature requires the pray-er to be open to God's initiative and direction. The pray-er should always be prepared to respond in concrete ways.

To be sure, there is danger in our prayer life of imitating the hypocrites by praying on "the street corners for people to see us" (Matthew 6:5). But Jesus' warning speaks more to motivation. Sometimes public witness is inherent in the very act of prayer. We saw an example of this recently at the Washington Cathedral.

The stunning Vietnam War memorial

was dedicated on Nov. 13, while earlier in the week a spoken memorial was initiated by our National Cathedral. There a group of volunteers gathered to read the names of those who had died — an effort which required 21 hours per day for three days.

In undertaking the spoken memorial, the cathedral was following through on the mandate from the Episcopal General Convention to observe "Sunday, Nov. 14, 1982, as a day of special remembrance of all Americans who served in the Vietnam War, and as a day of prayer for reconciliation of those divisions of our nation caused by that war."

I have yet to hear of any controversy about this witness of praying for those who died in Vietnam, but I was reminded of a time in 1969 when such was not the case.

At that time I opposed the war in Vietnam as a senseless waste of human life on both sides. I was a young seminarian then, and it was difficult to translate my convictions into

meaningful action. It seemed to me, though, that the least I could do was to pray for those who had died.

On June 18, 1969, I traveled with a group of Quakers and Episcopalians to Washington, D.C. to do just that. Later some would accuse us of mixing prayer with politics, but as the recent report of the Episcopal Joint Commission on Peace reminds us, this mixture is inevitable for the mature Christian. Our act was as political in that time as Billy Graham's prayers in Moscow are today. Incarnational theology will not let us escape this reality.

We gathered as a group on the steps of the Capitol building. The names of the war dead to date had already been entered in the Congressional Record and we had a copy of this. Five Congressmen who shared our concern for those who had died joined us at the noon hour. I later wrote in the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Newsletter: "The reading of names of the dead is to the participants a litany — a litany of intercession. We pray for those who have died and we pray for peace."

The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce is rector of Grace Church in Nampa, Idaho. In 1969 he was the Co-Director of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. He was appointed to the Joint Commission on Peace in 1979 and recently reappointed to serve until 1985.

Christians who offered such prayers of intercession on the steps of our nation's Capitol were a visible reminder that young men had died and were dying. The governmental authorities did not like such prayers. No less a person than the Chief of the Capitol Police, J.M. Powell, came to order these unauthorized prayers to cease at once, and he brought his bullhorn for those with hearing impairments. The prayers continued, and the praying Christians were arrested, some 34 in all.

It was the first time I had been arrested under such circumstances. It was quite an experience and I felt very nervous. Yet, I took comfort in my feeling that it was right to pray for the Vietnam War dead on the steps of our nation's Capitol. Sometimes God listens to unauthorized prayers, I think.

The arrests put the matter before the courts and the case was heard by Judge Harold Greene of the District of Columbia Court of General Sessions. On June 20 Judge Greene stated the obvious: "No public official can have the power to prohibit assembly on property belonging to the people." He went on to say that any group has a legitimate right to assemble on the grounds of the Capitol to put their grievances before the Congress, and indeed, even to pray. All cases were dismissed. The government did not appeal the ruling. The reading of the war dead continued uninterrupted by arrests.

The courts probably did more to preserve our democracy during this difficult period than any other institution in our society.

The scene then shifted to our great cathedrals. On Sunday, August 3, 1969, two people rose from the congregation at St. John the Divine in New York at the end of the prayers during the morning liturgy. One was Pfc. Thomas Hawkins of the Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth, N.J. The other was Miss

Margaret Pearson, a member of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.

As reported by *The New York Times* on Aug. 4, the two approached the altar bearing a red folder which contained a list of the 161 men from the Episcopal Diocese of New York who were killed in Vietnam before 1967. Those who had died since that cut-off date were not included as the list would have been too long.

Pfc. Hawkins and Miss Pearson approached Canon Edward N. West who was the celebrant for the service. Canon West took the folder and read the names while 200 worshippers bowed their heads in silence. At the end of the reading, Canon West offered this

prayer: "Almighty God, remember all thy servants who have laid down their lives. May they rest in peace. Amen."

The EPF and Canon West were immediately attacked on the editorial page of *The New York Times* for what they had done. For example, the Rev. Peter Chase, himself a canon of the cathedral, wrote in a letter published several days later:

What a shame that the best the Episcopal Peace Fellowship can do for peace is to have a list of departed servicemen's names read during a cathedral service — names of men who gave their lives on a military mission assigned them by the elected representa-



Donald E. Smith, Jr., of Annandale, Va., 16, was perhaps the youngest of the volunteer readers of the names of Vietnam War dead at the Washington Cathedral in November. He read a section that included his own father. Joining him in the vigil was his step-father, Col. John Browne.

tives of the nation and who had a sense of obligation and responsibility to their country notably absent in the peace group, whose role for peace seems only to protest.

Surely the departed servicemen deserve more gratitude and appreciation than that.

The New York Times printed our response:

It was Canon Edward West and not members of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship who read the names of the dead in Vietnam.

Further, these names were not merely read. They were offered up to God as part of a religious service, after which the celebrant prayed for all who have died in combat. Canon Chase commented that it was a shame that this was the best the Episcopal Peace Fellowship could do for the cause of peace; we agree, although probably for different reasons.

If American soldiers have died in vain in Vietnam, it is not the messenger of this news whom Canon Chase should criticize, but rather the American Government and its policies which sent them there to die.

Canon West was one of the few truly courageous religious leaders of that era, which will come as no surprise to those who know the man. The search for other great cathedrals where there was a willingness to pray publicly for the individuals by name who had died in Vietnam continued for some months, a search, I might add, which included the National Cathedral. Praying for those who had died was too controversial in 1969, however. Canon West and the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine turned out to be the notable exception, and took the risk.

The 1982 Report of the Joint Commission on Peace, which was received by the General Convention,



Sandie Fauriol, Reader
Vietnam Vigil, 1982

offers this insightful comment: "When modern war breaks out, genuinely patriotic criticism is too often swamped by a tide of uncritical war emotions. In the face of such events, the Hebrew prophets stand as a mighty example of faithful response."

Today, it must seem incredible that praying for the Vietnam war dead in 1969 would provoke such controversy, that it would lead to the arrests of those who dared to do such a thing on the steps of our nation's Capitol. But such were the times, such was the "tide of uncritical war emotions." Perhaps the present controversy over a memorial which simply lists the names of war dead of Vietnam on black granite is even now a residual of those earlier events.

I sometimes wonder what might have happened if churches and cathedrals all over this country in 1969 had prayed by name for those local sons and daughters who had died in Vietnam. Would the war have come to an end sooner? Might there have been fewer names to read in our National Cathedral during those November days in 1982? □

Editorial . . .Continued from page 3
knowledgeable theoreticians are forecasting, the division of labor in our society will split into two categories: a rich and powerful "knowledge class" and a "serf class" that performs menial services. No solutions to unemployment must be allowed that do not maintain and extend human rights worldwide. Meaningful work is a basic human right.

The economic and political decisions of the United States — the most powerful nation on earth — deeply influence world trends. As committed Christians, our responsibility is to have a global vision and advocate solutions that will embrace the whole human family.

(H.C.W. and the editors)

To George Herbert At the 10 O'Clock Service

Knocked from a horse I have not been,
No more than you were.

Not even

Knocked from the comfort of a padded pew
Deep in the suburban captivity.

And yet something
Impels me, tremulous,
Toward the abyss, the mystery
Of that ancient pain.

I turn and turn

Rattling the cage of my complacency,
Those ropes of iron strands
That stand

Between me and some dark beyond.
And like George Herbert, tender, angry priest,
I rave, and grow more fierce and wild
In my mind's own imaginings.
Inwardly, passion can prevail.

But outwardly I am, like George
One of God's frozen chosen.

How to thaw

My Anglican inheritance?
How to pierce through
Centuries of the soul's propriety?
Pierce to the wounds that heal?

— Anne C. Fowler

Congregation Explores Femininity of God

The Rev. Pauli Murray, noted civil rights activist and co-founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW), retired as priest-in-charge of the Church of the Holy Nativity in Baltimore early this year after reaching the age of 72. A pioneer in efforts against sexism and racism, she was in a unique position at Holy Trinity to explore the issue of sexist language in worship.

Ten of the 12 members of the Advisory Council were women — including both senior and junior wardens — and the staff included one woman priest and two women who were perpetual deacons.

“While this came about more through default rather than by design or commitment, it was also true that Holy Nativity was one of the churches that consistently supported women’s ordination and articulate feminism is a strong current within the multiracial congregation,” Dr. Murray said. During Pentecost, she arranged a



The Rev. Pauli Murray

series of two sermons on “The Holy Spirit and God Language,” and set a dialog with the congregation on the third Sunday inviting their response. The accompanying article

is taken from her second sermon; the box carries key questions probed.

Pauli Murray put the experiment in context for the Holy Nativity membership as follows: “By the power of the Holy Spirit, a small band of disciples went out and preached a radically new Gospel in language that was understood by people of many foreign tongues,” she said. “In time that Gospel encircled the world. This congregation has been at the cutting edge in our church — in liturgy, in the ordination of women, in the calling of women to serve. It seemed appropriate, therefore, that we take a further step and explore some of the new developments in theological research that point to rediscovery of the feminine dimension of the divine in Scripture.”

The WITNESS shares this experiment with its readers, and eagerly awaits Pauli Murray’s autobiography, her current project for Doubleday.

The Holy Spirit and God Language

by Pauli Murray

I beheld the working of the blessed Trinity in which, beholding, I saw and understood these three properties: the property of Fatherhood, and the property of Motherhood, and the property of Lordship — in one God . . . The human mother will suckle her child with her own milk, but our own beloved Mother, Jesus, feeds us with himself and with the most tender courtesy does it by means of the Blessed Sacrament. (“Revelations of Divine Love,” by Dame Julian of Norwich, commemorated in the Church Calendar, May 8.)

For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty. (Wisdom of Solomon 7:25)

The above texts — one taken from the Wisdom literature written in the latter half of the first century before Christ and the other a Christian classic written in the late 14th or early 15th century — express the hunger of humankind for a feminine dimension of the divine absent from our formulation of the Holy Trinity as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we were to go to the other extreme

and speak of God the Mother, Daughter and Holy Spirit, probably we would be shocked; yet this juxtaposition of language dramatizes the effect which sexual imagery has upon our concept of God. In reflecting upon this theme my purpose here is to call attention to the growing tension in Judeo-Christian tradition between a rhetoric which undeniably emphasizes the maleness of God and the results of biblical research within the past 15 to 20 years which point to the rediscovery of a long neglected "feminine dimension of the divine" in scripture. Our dilemma is: How shall this feminine symbolization of God be expressed?

When Paul says, "So then brethren . . . all who are led by the Spirit are sons of God . . . When we cry 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Rom. 8:14, 15b-16), he seems to be speaking of a community in which women have no place and of an attribute of the divine which excludes all feminine experience. In the Old Testament lesson, when God says to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," ignoring their counterparts Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, it has the same effect upon many thoughtful women as the words "I am the God of White people" would have upon the Black members of a congregation.

Such passages led biblical scholar Phyllis Bird to comment, "the Old Testament is a man's 'book' where women appear for the most part simply as adjuncts of men, significant only in the context of men's activities. . . a collection of writings by males from a society dominated by males. These writings portray a man's world. They speak of events and activities engaged in primarily by males (war, cult and government) and of a jealously singular God, who is described and addressed in terms normally used for males."

Consequently, we have inherited from a male-oriented tradition metaphors such as God as Father, Lord, King and husband. However, recent biblical scholarship has uncovered female imagery in the Old Testament, long ignored, sometimes mistranslated, and generally repressed, but which provides scriptural basis for symbolizing God as "Mother" as well as "Father." Consider the opening verses of the Book of Genesis:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The Earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the water.

This is the image of God's life-giving power associated with birth, including the birth of human beings. It can be seen as the image of a mother hovering over her child, an image captured by the 20th century Black poet and co-author of the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing,"

James Weldon Johnson. In his sermon-poem "The Creation," Johnson writes:

*And there was the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corners of the earth,*

*. . . This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image.*

Old Testament scholar Dr. Phyllis Trible has discovered that while the Bible overwhelmingly favors male symbols for deity, there are also expressions of God in female images "such as God the pregnant woman (Isa. 42:14), the mother (Isa. 66:13), the midwife (Ps. 22:9), and the mistress (Ps. 123:2)." Trible found that the theme of God as Mother, "who conceived, was pregnant, writhed with labor pains, brought forth a child and nursed it" was "not a minor theme on the fringes of faith. To the contrary, with persistence and power it saturates scripture." In the Song of Moses found in Deuteronomy, recounting the history of Israel, Moses says of Israel, "You were unmindful of the Rock (Creator) who begot you and forgot the God who gave you birth." (Deut. 32:18) Here God is depicted as both father and mother, for while the Jerusalem Bible translates the second part of the text as "the God who fathered you," Trible points out that the Hebrew word used in the second phrase "only designates a woman in labor, and this activity the poetry ascribes to the deity."

The Book of Isaiah frequently uses maternal symbols for God as the compassionate mother. When Zion/Jerusalem lamented, "The Lord has forsaken me: my God has forgotten me," God answers, "Can a mother forget the infant at her breast, or a loving mother the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." Again, when the nation of Israel is defeated, Yahweh (God) cries out, "I have kept silence and held myself in check; now I will cry like a woman in labor, whimpering, gasping and panting."

The most dramatic references in Hebrew tradition to a female figure who personifies attributes of God are found in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, written between about 250 B.C. and the early years of the Christian era. In a well-documented study, Dr. Joan Chamberlain Engelsman points to the recent upsurge of scholarly interest in the role of Wisdom in the Old Testament "as well as a widening discussion of the affinities between Wisdom and Christ as they were developed in the New Testament." In Jewish religious tradition overlapping the early Christian era, Wisdom is not only associated with

the Spirit, depicted as God's helper, and with God from the beginning, but there are also remarkable similarities and parallels between Wisdom (whose Greek name is *Sophia*) as the Wisdom of God and the attributes ascribed to Christ as the Word of God in the New Testament writings of Matthew, Paul and John. We can give only a few hints of these parallels:

In *Proverbs*, Wisdom says:

*The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of old,
When he established the heavens, I was there. . .
When he marked out the foundations of the earth,
I was there beside him, like a master craftsman,
delighting him day after day. . .*

Hear the resonance of this passage in the Nicene Creed's affirmation of the pre-existent Christ — "begotten of his Father before all worlds."

In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, believed to have been written by a Hellenistic Jew during the latter part of the first century before Christ, Wisdom's divine characteristics are recounted in a hymn of praise:

*I have learned both what is secret
and what is manifest,
for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.
For in her there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy,
unique in its kind yet made up of many parts,
subtle, free-moving, clear, unpolluted, distinct,
invulnerable, loving what is good,
eager, unhindered, beneficent, kindly towards men,
steadfast, unerring, untouched by care,
all-powerful, all surveying, and permeating all*

intelligent, pure and delicate spirits.

*For wisdom moves more easily than motion itself,
she pervades and permeates all things because she is
so pure.*

*For she is a breath of the power of God,
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;
therefore nothing defiled can enter her by stealth.
For she is a reflection of eternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God
and an image of his goodness.*

*Though she is but one, she can do all things,
herself unchanging, she makes all things new;
age after age she enters into holy souls
and makes them friends of God,
for nothing is acceptable to God but the man
who makes his home with wisdom.
She is more radiant than the sun, and surpasses
every constellation of the stars,
Compared with the light of day, she is found
to excel; for day gives place to night,
but against wisdom no evil can prevail.
She spans the world in power from end to end, and
orders all benignly. . .*

*Wisdom it was who kept guard over
the first father of the human race when
he alone had yet been made; she saved him after
his fall, and gave him strength to master all
things.*

Now compare these images of the female figure of Wisdom with Paul's depiction of Christ as "the image of the
Continued on page 19

Questions for Dialog With the People

1. Think back to your earliest mental picture of God. What did God look like to you then? Can you remember where you got that picture of God? Has your mental picture of God changed since then? In what ways? Repeat this thought process with respect to Jesus, both the historical Jesus and Jesus as the Risen Lord. Repeat this process with respect to the Holy Spirit.

2. The biblical tradition has used many images of God and God's relation to humanity that are drawn from family life. What positive things do you see in this? What negative things? The Bible has also used many images of God that are taken from nature. For you, are the "nature" or the "familial" attributes the most important?

3. When you were a child was one person of the Trinity more prominent for you than the others? If so, which one? Did this change as you grew older? If so, how?

4. (a) Write down five adjectives that for you are very important ways of describing God the Father. Do the same for God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

(b) Write down as many adjectives as you can that describe a mature human being. Compare the lists in (a) and (b).

5. Look once more at the lists you drew up in question 4. Ask yourself, for each adjective, is this a masculine or feminine characteristic, or both?

6. List the attributes you associate with the idea of father. Then list those you associate with the idea of mother. What differences seem to emerge? Why?

7. Now try to visualize God as mother. What different characteristics would seem to emerge from thinking of God as mother? How is this image different from thinking of God as father? Does God as father in the biblical tradition also have "mothering" qualities?

Compiled by Mary Louise McIntyre of Baltimore, doctoral candidate in theology at the Catholic University of America. McIntyre has used as a resource Rosemary Ruether's "Mary: The Feminization of the Church."



Our Ideal New Presiding Bishop

What characteristics would you like to see in the new Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church?

THE WITNESS asked that question of seven constituencies whom it serves: Women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Homosexuals, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

We initiated the poll mindful that the Joint Nominating Committee for the Office of the Presiding Bishop will meet in April to review a draft of a profile for the position, and has welcomed suggestions from members of the church-at-large.

The constituency responses appear in full on the following pages, with these items especially worth noting:

- Most of the issue-oriented groups specify that *their* issue is not *the* issue (although, indeed, they are caucused to assure advocacy for their causes). In other words, they hope that the new P.B. will be sensitive to their issue *and* the others as well.

- Perhaps the most provocative response came from the Episcopal Urban Caucus, which proposed that nothing less than restructuring is called for to produce the best possible candidate. The House of Bishops offers too restricted a slate from which to choose, EUC contends, and the times call for two posts: a Presiding Bishop who will rule over the House of Bishops, and a President of the Episcopal Church as well.

- A repeated hope was that the new P.B. have a global vision to match concerns for the domestic scene.

- Theologically, the constituencies seek a candidate at peace with self as well as an effectual advocate of peace; a leader rooted in the Gospel; a person of the Spirit; a prophetic reconciler; one familiar with the theology of liberation.

Responding from the various constituencies were: Ms. Carol Cole Flanagan, of Erie, Pa., General Convention coordinator for the Episcopal Women's Caucus; the Rev. John M. Gessell of University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn., president of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship; Dr. Deborah Harmon Hines of Meharry Medical College, Nashville, president of the Union of Black Episcopalians; Ms. Marsha Langford of Pasadena, president of Integrity; Byron Rushing of Boston, acting executive director of the Episcopal Urban Caucus since June, 1982; the Rev. Floyd (Butch) Naters Gamarra, rector of St. Mary's in West Harlem, N.Y., Hispanic concerns; and the Rev. Seiichi Michael Yasutake, a Nisei (second generation Japanese American), for Asian-American concerns. Dr. Yasutake is casework supervisor of the Episcopal Social service agency Cathedral Shelter of Chicago and on staff at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Evanston, Ill.

THE WITNESS will forward these responses to the Joint Nominating Committee, and urges readers interested in the forthcoming election to make their views known both to our magazine, and to the Committee before its April meeting: Write Committee Secretary Charles M. Crump, 100 N. Main Building, Suite 2610, Memphis, Tenn. 38103.

'Jubilee Time' Calls for Restoring Justice

by Carol Cole Flanagan

In the election of a Presiding Bishop, as in the idea of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-12) we have a periodic opportunity to restore justice as we undertake anew the historical project of freeing our captives, liquidating debts and restoring property. We can view the ingredients of a just and viable society in the light of changing circumstances, recognizing in change the possibilities for conversion.

For a Presiding Bishop, overseeing the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, participating in Ecumenical Councils, and pastoral supervision of the church in general, and its bishops in particular, is a tall order. If God's words are to be truly spoken and truly heard then we must have a Presiding Bishop able to live and move among the outcasts of our day as readily as among the princes of our church. We'd like to find him celebrating with members of Integrity as well as preparing meditations for the House of Bishops. Discernment! Let us find him with the tax collectors and the fishermen, rather than with the Scribes and Pharisees. It is our experience that there would be a good deal less pastoral work to be done if we had strong prophetic leadership.

We observe that we often confuse "to do good," with "to make nice." Avoiding confrontation, we distance ourselves from our Hebraic tradition of self-criticism and repentance, exhortation and encouragement. We adopt a high-minded neutrality which supports the status quo. We make nice. The Conscience Statement of Port St. Lucie was nice. Harmful and short-sighted, but really very nice. To do good, we must have an iconoclast, whose vision can draw us toward that metanoia which permits God's will to be done on earth. Many women retain what Daniel Maguire refers to as "an appropriate horror of non-flourishing human life." It is essential to us that we have a Presiding Bishop with the courage to *act*. If the church is to respond to the desperate human need in the church and the world, we must have someone who is at peace with power. Not to be conceived of in zero-sum fashion, power only increases when given away.

The Episcopal Women's Caucus looks for someone with discernment, vision, and courage, with the confidence to

empower us all to do good.

Active opposition to the ministries of women is now being colored with benign neglect. In Northwestern Pennsylvania where the ordination of women has been inhibited, conscience is used by rectors to excuse canonical disobedience. In Southwest Florida authority is used to deny women the opportunity to serve as lay readers on the basis of sex.

In many places, churches claiming to support and affirm the ministries of women just aren't "ready" to receive them yet.

After decades of courtship, and more than six years of marriage, the relationship has yet to be consummated. A new Presiding Bishop must face the fact that as long as the church remains an unresponsive lover, women will express their dissatisfaction with their feet. Women clergy and laity alike wrestle with clericalism, sexism, racism, the authority of the laity, the nature of ministry, a meaningful role for Triennial, and the development of new models of ministry. Women actively seeking creative ways of responding to human need do so with no visible means of support.

A Presiding Bishop must also understand that the concerns of women are not the concerns of a minority, nor are they confined to the status of women in the church. Peace, hunger, poverty, domestic violence, the plight of Third World countries, ecology, and the challenge of the New Religious Right must be added to those already noted. Of special concern though, is that at the root of many such evils we find social domination based on the fundamental male/female split. How else "Mother Nature," and the "rape" of the earth?

Not only are a majority of the victims of hunger, poverty and domestic violence women, but the fascism, sexism and racism of the New Religious Right will soon reach dramatic proportions. The establishment of so-called Christian schools and the expectation that 51% of U.S. school children will be enrolled in such institutions by 1992 is no small matter for many of us.

As a church we have struggled much. Now is the time to survey those things we have done, those things which we have left undone, and to institute correctives. Let us have a Presiding Bishop committed to restoring justice, that the mission of the church may go forward through the ministries of *all* its members.



Church Needs a President

At the upcoming Fourth National Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus one of the issues that work groups will consider is how the Caucus can influence the selection process of the next Presiding Bishop. Out of those deliberations may come an action proposal endorsed by the Caucus. At the Assembly in February, I will suggest that the Caucus adopt a strategy along these lines:

First, at this time, we say to the nominating committee and later to the House of Bishops: Yes, the P.B.'s duties include initiating, developing and implementing the policy and strategy of the Episcopal Church (Title I. Canon 2. Sec. 4. (a) (1)). The next P.B. cannot be confused about what the church is called to be. The P.B. must have a clear understanding of his "response to God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying love for us." Policy and strategy are our proclamation of the Gospel; our policy and strategy are for the struggle for justice and peace. The ultimate evaluation of the policy and strategy occurs at the



Judgment; until then we are told that they are authentic when they bring us in closer contact with the oppressed and the violent to whom we proclaim active liberation and peace.

The next P.B. must lead us to follow Him — into the desert, into the garden, onto the Cross. The next P.B. should come to this leadership with qualifications that are as emotional and irrational as they are intellectual. He should have experienced poverty, oppression and violence firsthand; and thought through it all. The next P.B. should say, I have been poor; I have been oppressed; I have been unemployed; I have been imprisoned; I have been beaten; I am not White; I am not male.

Which gets to the second line. The pool of possible candidates — the House of Bishops — is just too small. Ninety-nine and forty-four one hundredths of the people are denied even applying. It's too late this go 'round. But not too late to begin a new look at our structure of leadership for our national church. The office of Presiding Bishop of the House of Bishops needs to be separated from the office of president of the Episcopal Church. We need a leader to help us proclaim a Gospel that is "integrally related to work and struggle," to help us share the sufferings of the poor and "empowered by that sharing . . . proclaim by word and

by Byron Rushing

example the freedom and joy which is God's purpose for all people." Let the House of Bishops elect their leader; in 1997 let us all elect a president of the Episcopal Church.

Aware of Racial, Cultural Differences

by Floyd (Butch) Naters

The following article gathers the opinion of Hispanic clergy and laypeople, primarily from the Northeast, who were polled over the Christmas holidays:

First of all, a Presiding Bishop must be God-centered, a pastor, a spiritual leader. From a Hispanic perspective, a candidate should be open and sensitive to cultural and racial differences. Since the Presiding Bishop is also a pastor to Third World people both here and overseas, such a bishop needs to know and understand our history, our struggles and our theology of liberation. Liberation theology is not another buzz word nor just one more theological cliché — but rather a human quest to put into theological perspective the struggle to survive in oppressive and dehumanized societies.

A candidate for this office needs to have a clear vision of the state of the world beyond the United States, Europe and Middle East. Especially crucial is knowledge of Latin America. How many North Americans, and clergy in particular, truly understand what is happening in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua? How many are aware of the racist immigration policies that welcome Eastern Europeans with open arms while Haitian refugees are washed up on the shores of Florida, and Central Americans are shipped back to dictatorial military governments?

A candidate for this office must be willing to take risks in



Credits

Cover, Beth Seka; graphic p. 4, Margaret Longdon; photos p. 5, 6 courtesy *Cathedral Age*; Murray photo p. 7, Susan Mullally; Rushing photo p. 12, Don West; Hines photo p. 13, Gunter's Studio, Nashville; graphic p. 16, Bonnie Pierce-Spady.

the Lord's name and with the Lord's power. Such a person must have this church confront and eradicate the sin of *racism* which permeates every level of this church as it does our society. Such a person must truly understand the issues that affect minorities as well as the structure and dynamics of the political system that creates and maintains instruments of deprivation.

The candidate must be an advocate for the human and civil rights of all people, for the Gospel impels us in this direction. Corollary to this is the desire to empower and share leadership, to get beyond the paternalism, the tokenism and the politics of divide and conquer.

We also hope that the new P.B. will understand and speak the language of Cervantes as we do the language of Shakespeare. We look for someone who will be committed to mission and evangelism and spiritual nurturing of people; someone who will create the ambience where there can be more Hispanic clergy; someone who would advocate the election of a Hispanic bishop for the Hispanic people in the United States.

We look for someone who will address the problem of urban ministry and the decay of our cities, where the poor live and are now being displaced. As a church we have very little staying power in our involvement with issues affecting poor people's lives. We look for someone who will go beyond the faddish and trendy "modus operandi."

A P.B. candidate should possess the ability to inspire and move the church to pour itself out. This person hopefully will lead by example. We also look for someone who will be committed to the building of ecumenical bridges; we can no longer afford the luxury of just doing our own thing in witness to this broken world.

Above all, we look for someone who is rooted in the Gospel of the Lord of life. And finally, we look for someone who is willing to be the servant of all. God willing, maybe this time around, the church will elect its first minority P.B.

Woman, No; Black, ???

by Deborah Harmon Hines

In an unofficial poll of the leadership and membership of the Union of Black Episcopalians, a sort of "shopping list" developed of characteristics that the Union considers paramount in serious candidates for Presiding Bishop. The criteria listed fell into either one or two major categories.

First and foremost, a candidate for P.B. must be of the

Spirit. This person must be lead by the Holy Spirit in the ways of God, preaching in the name of Jesus. As one frequently visited by the Spirit, the candidate would be sensitive to the injustices of this world.



The candidate would not hesitate to speak out about and go after the insidious evils that afflict and divide humanity. Within our own church these demons are lack of equal employment opportunities for minorities and women, especially at "815," (the Episcopal Center) and no strong affirmative action program. The candidate must have concern for the total membership of the Episcopal Church, not

just the White majority, but the Black, Brown, Red and Yellow peoples who enrich this church by the special gifts they bring to it. The candidate must unequivocally stand for the total involvement in the life of the church on all levels by all of its members. Good candidates would have already demonstrated their convictions on this issue by the constituency of their present staffs. A candidate for P.B. should be sensitive to the social injustices of racism, sexism, classism, hunger, poverty and unemployment, as they ravage this country and the world.

The poor, sick, homeless and victims of our industrialized, mechanized and computerized society will look to our spiritual leaders to make their plight known and to plead their cases. In the world at large the candidate should have already demonstrated social consciousness by speaking out against apartheid in South Africa, U.S. involvement in El Salvador and the proliferation of nuclear arms. The candidate should seek to establish peace in the world without compromising the word of God.

The Episcopal Church, besides being a spiritual entity, is also a political institution. The candidate must be able, secondly, to deal with the politics of the church. As its temporal leader, a candidate for P.B. must be a skilled listener and communicator, a conciliator. The candidate should shun the blanket of insulation that goes with the office of P.B. and actively seek information on the status and effectiveness of the church in delivering the true Gospel and making a difference in the quality of life. The candidate for P.B. must be a competent administrator and chief executive of the corporation guided by Christian principles and not the usual principles of corporate management.

Our unofficial poll also indicated that the Episcopal Church is not ready for a female P.B. In a church that only gives lip service to female priests, where many bishops still refuse to ordain women as priests and some of those that do

do not enforce the placement of female clergy in congregations that “are not ready for them yet,” a female candidate will not be taken seriously. Perhaps by the next election, more female priests will have paid their dues in the “good old boy network” of the Episcopal Church. They will have served as deacons, archdeacons, canons, etc. By 1997 a female candidate for P.B. will be a serious contestant.

Is the Episcopal Church ready for a Black P.B.? In a church where Black clergy have served since the time of Absalom Jones in the early 1800s, which has chosen only two Black diocesan bishops, and where female clergy (500 plus) who have been ordained only in the last few years outnumber Black clergy (under 400) who have been able to be ordained for more than 160 years, I doubt it. The names of one or two Black candidates will surely emerge to show how liberal the Episcopal Church is. However, if the 1982 General Convention, where no Blacks were elected to Executive Council, is any indication, Black candidates will remain candidates. I would like to be proven wrong.

A Bishop at, for Peace

by John M. Gessell

The election by the General Convention of 1985 of the next Presiding Bishop is a matter of intense concern to those of us who are members of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and those of us who have been active in the peace movement in our church.

Episcopalians have begun to put a lot of energy into peace-making and this momentum should not be lost; indeed, it must be increased. To provide the kind of leadership I believe we will need for the last years of the 20th century, I will suggest a few characteristics.



First of all, a Presiding Bishop should be clear about the distinction between presidency and prelacy. The Episcopal Church has rightly been suspicious of the latter and rightly needs the former. A presiding officer must exhibit those qualities of servanthood implicit in the Gospel and commanded by Christ himself.

He should be a reconciler, not a polarizer: one who is deeply compassionate and who can enter wholeheartedly into points of view held by others, but which he himself may not share. He should be skillful in such a way

that he does not alienate others and yet does not appear to agree with the last person with whom he has spoken.

In other words, a prime characteristic of a Presiding Bishop is that he be a person of peace, who is profoundly at peace with himself and with God, and who can be an effectual peacemaker starting with himself.

A second prime characteristic of a Presiding Bishop is that he should possess extraordinary sensitivity to peace and justice issues, in the church, in the nation, and in the world. This is both a personal and a theological attribute, an imperative of the Gospel. As we know, there can be no peace in the world without justice.

Basic to such peace and justice concerns is, I think, the kind of discernment which maintains the tension between the Gospel and the world. Otherwise, faith becomes purely a private matter and is no faith at all. The Gospel, as witnessed by the Scriptures, does not distinguish between private and public virtue. They are inseparable, and the privatization of the Gospel becomes the occasion of its secularization. So long as the church maintains an uncritical relationship to the secular powers — capitalism, imperialism, militarism — its virtue will be sapped and its vital relationship to its own tradition will be eroded.

An implication of this quality of discernment is a commitment to distinguish between the claims of the church and those of the state, to uphold the proper separation of church and state. When the church too easily accepts the claims of the state or conforms to the “American way of life” it merely studies institutional survival instead of the revelation of God’s judgment and of God’s reconciliation with the world. The church must be led to its messianic task of siding with the poor and the powerless and, if needed, to provide sanctuary for the victims of unfairness and injustice.

‘80s Issues Demand Risk

by Marsha J. Langford

There is a joke currently wending its way through the Diocese of Los Angeles: How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb? The answer is six — one to change the bulb, and five to lament because the old one used to work so nicely. That joke, it seems to me, sums up the single most important ability the new Presiding Bishop must have; the ability to unify the church, to bring Episcopalians beyond the issues of Prayer Book and liturgical reform that

have been so devious during the past decade, and to lead us as a whole denomination to the issues we must face if we are to live firmly grounded in the Gospels.

The new Presiding Bishop must be able to confront the realities of the '80s regardless of risk or political expediency: We must be willing to recognize that gay and lesbian people are a reality, women in changing roles are a reality, upwardly mobile Blacks and Hispanics are a reality, families in transition are a reality, and all must be dealt with according to their special needs.



Perhaps more compelling, the new Presiding Bishop must be prepared to respond with courage to the mandate presented to Americans by an uncaring and inhumane government. The new P.B. must have the ability to call Episcopalians to respond to the needs of the poor, the hungry, the unemployed by encouraging the members of our denomination to take an active part in the solution of these problems. Moreover, the new Presiding Bishop must be willing to speak out against life-threatening acts such as the build-up of nuclear arms.

The church is in the business of feeding and nurturing people so that they can attempt to make sense of what is going on in their own lives, and those of their families, friends, neighbors and enemies. As "Chief Shepherd," the Presiding Bishop must be sensitive to these needs through listening and praying with his people so that he can articulate what the Spirit is calling us to become in the 1980s.

'Prophetic Reconciler' With World Vision

by S. Michael Yasutake

In preparation for this statement on the characteristics of a Presiding Bishop, I interviewed by phone across the country some dozen Asian-American church leaders, mostly clergy and some lay, asking for their thoughts. Their comments helped to stimulate my thinking. While I incorporated some of their views, I take responsibility for the opinions expressed here.

I use the term "him" in my text only because at this time it

seems unlikely that a female candidate has a chance of election or consecration, although I would personally favor such with some of the characteristics that I have listed below.

First, I would want a candidate for the Episcopal office of the Presiding Bishop to possess a clear sense of world mission. I view this candidate as one who interprets the Gospel and the church as having societal and global tasks, rather than one who presents Christianity mainly as a matter of individual and personal relationships relatively isolated and sheltered from God's total creation. As a person of Asian parentage, I am particularly sensitive to a sense of mission that incorporates a healthy respect for Pacific and Asian histories and cultures, which constitute a significant part of the world population today.



Second, I want a candidate with considerable experience as an advocate of human rights, one who asserts equality for ethnic-racial minorities and any other group or community whose rights are ignored or denied. This requires a leader faithful to Christ who empowers the powerless and "casts down the mighty from their thrones." It calls for prophetic characteristics in a candidate who would publicly and openly speak up for those being victimized as the result of racism, economic and political injustice and the wasteful arms buildup.

Another quality would be that of reconciler in a society affected by severe social dislocations. One Asian-American church administrator I talked to used the term "prophetic reconciler" — one who is prophetic but at the same time can take on the role of reconciler when faced with those not in accord with his stand, which he would not compromise.

Administratively, a candidate would require the skill to select the most competent staff at the national level, with proven ability to perform in various offices to which they have been called. An important consideration here is that the staff be truly representative of various significant constituencies in the church and the nation. A candidate must avoid making appointments of only "token" minority or other "representatives" in an institutional attempt to conform merely to the letter of the law of equality while missing its spirit.

The core of the Gospel lies in "setting at liberty them that are bruised." A candidate who can proclaim this message for the Episcopal Church could sound a clarion call that would be difficult to ignore.



Dancing Toward Freedom

by Claire C. Hill

The recent Womanspirit Rising Conference at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Gainesville, Fla., provided an opportunity for some 100 women to experience a new authenticity of self.

As we moved through the weekend of consciousness-raising workshops into closing worship, movement itself became liturgy. One workshop had offered creative body movement to express a psalm of praise. Following Eucharist, concelebrated by the Revs. Alison Cheek and Constance Chandler-Ward, half of the group moved gently from the circle into a dance of jubilation around the parish hall.

In the midst of gladness, for me, there was sadness. Earlier in the day we had pondered the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) in which the woman swept her house, seeking diligently the one silver coin she had lost. In a soft, low voice the workshop leader asked us to identify with that woman: "How did you lose the coin? Why did you let it get lost? You have found it now; pick it up

and look at it. Clean it off and polish it." The sorrow in my reaction is described in this parable of my own:

There was an architect who provided houses for people at the beginning of their lifespans. Each house was constructed in a way to enable the fullest kind of living. The architect said to a certain woman, "This is your house. There is potential in it for the development of many rooms. There can be a room for daughtering, a room for wifeing, a room for mothering, one for working, one for studying, a room for friending. But the most important room in the house is the room of your own. It is located in the center of the house; off it all other rooms open. The life that you live in the room of your own will shape your life in the other rooms. Therefore, live in it fully; live even in the corners."

The woman heard the instructions but she failed to comprehend. She lived in a piece of the room of her own: the most obvious piece — in the center. She didn't struggle to stretch herself into the corners, and so the cobwebs filled the corners instead. Life in the other rooms of the house took so much of her that she spent only her leftover time and energy in the room of her own.

One day after the woman had lived there 48 years, the architect came to visit and upon observing, asked, "Why did you let the corners of the room get filled with cobwebs? Look into the corners now; see what's there. Clean them out and live in them."

The woman was filled with great sorrow — that she had not listened carefully enough to the architect in the beginning and therefore had forfeited some valuable space in her house. She grabbed a broom and with rage she began to knock down the cobwebs from the corners — and then she washed the floor with her tears. Her strength to continue was reinforced by her life in a newly-added room: a room for sistering, where sisters gathered to speak of their struggles.

There ends the parable but the story of the woman goes on.

I feel caught up now by movement. The movement of the dance perhaps. I perceive God as Force: Inside me, beyond me, connected to me by clear ribbons tied taut. I am dancing along, toward Freedom.

New images of God! The Woman sweeping her house, the Architect, Force, Freedom. They all call me to movement, to move into new space in my house. □

Claire C. Hill is an active layperson in Holy Trinity Parish, Gainesville, Fla.

Capitalism: System Without Spirit

by Michael Parenti

In the Broadway musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye launches into one of his many conversations with God by observing: "It's true as you say, God, that being poor is no disgrace. But neither is it such a great honor." He then sings "If I Were a Rich Man," in which he fantasizes about the many advantages of wealth. The sweetest pleasure that comes with being rich, Tevye concludes, would be the chance to sit in the *shul* for hours on end and study the writings of the sages and prophets. And here is the heart of the matter: the contradiction he experiences between his desire for learning and his class experience, between his spiritual need and his material reality. To study God's word and so engage his own mind and spirit, he would need more leisure, more relief from the dawn-to-dusk toil and the cares of poverty.

As Tevye's unfulfilled aspirations might demonstrate, the material and spiritual, often conceived as two things apart and antagonistic, are usually inextricably related. Bad housing and hunger are "merely" material conditions only for people who do not experience them. For others, poverty is a daily misery of the spirit as well as the

flesh, affecting the most intimate areas of life, one's sense of self-esteem, one's peace of mind, the equations of joy and sorrow in one's soul, the ability to concentrate, to work, hope and care for oneself and others, to cultivate one's mind and spirit. Class oppression also dehumanizes the spirit of the rich, often teaching them elitism, exclusivity, acquisitiveness, love of power, insensitivity toward the needy and hatred for anyone who challenges their privileges.

The conservative view would have us ignore the linkage between spiritual and material conditions, positing the spiritual as something "above" the material, something that helps us overcome our material hardships. So today, a millionaire president in the White House, wallowing in opulence, admonishes us (as did his millionaire predecessors) to take firm hold of our spiritual heritage: Old Glory, self-reliance, neighborly charity, family and religion. The *New York Times* reported that President Reagan called for a "spiritual revival." (4/14/82) In doing so, he treats the American spirit as something floating above history, free of any material base, something which — we are left to suppose — can ignore and even overcome plundering corporations, regressive taxation, poverty wages, inflation, unemployment and the destruction of Third World countries.

Poised critically against this conservative view has been an ongoing

dialogue between Christians and Marxists, given new impetus by the strategic alliance of these two groups in liberation movements in the Third World. In early Christian-Marxist encounters, Marxism was wrongfully criticized for having no regard for the spiritual side of life. Certainly most Marxists, as philosophical materialists, have ruled out theological and supernatural questions. Philosophical materialism says that ideas do not exist as independent forces apart from matter, but this does not mean that Marxists are "materialists" in the crass consumer definition of the word. The deepest and highest experiences of the human spirit are of central concern to Marxism. Indeed, at the heart of the Marxist critique is the charge that capitalism is a system which kills the *spirit*. Marxists do not fault the productive capacities of capitalism. No one showed themselves more impressed by the material accomplishments of the system than Marx and Engels who wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce 100 years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together."

But at what price to human life and human spirit? While creating the technological potential for abundance, capitalism continues to bring us economic scarcity and insecurity, oppression in industrial and Third World countries, and environmental

Michael Parenti is the author of *Democracy For the Few, Power and the Powerless* and numerous other books and articles on American political and social life. He is a guest fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies.

devastation — not because of the system's productive limitations but because of the purpose to which capital and labor are put and the social relations so created.

Propagandists have assured us that "capital works in partnership with labor." Marxists argue, however, that one cannot speak of a partnership between boss and worker any more than between master and slave or lord and serf. There are reformers who demand that labor be paid "a fair wage." Marxists argue there can be no such thing as a fair wage under capitalism. For a fair wage would consist of giving workers, as a class, all the wealth they create, minus what is needed for social services and industrial maintenance and growth. But that would leave nothing for the capitalist. There would be no private fortunes, no great accumulations of wealth and power for the Morgans, Rockefellers, DuPonts and Mellons.

Contrary to the Horatio Alger myth, hard work seldom makes anyone rich. The secret to wealth is to have others work hard for you. This explains why workers who spend their lives toiling in factories or firms retire with little or no wealth to speak of, while the owners can amass fortunes from such enterprises without ever setting foot in them.

Class oppression and great concentrations of wealth have existed in all previous class societies. What is unique about capitalism is the *rational* and *systematic* expropriation of labor for the sole purpose of a *perpetual* capital accumulation. The ultimate purpose of work is not to fix the lord's fortress or supply the master's table, nor to make cars or breakfast cereals or perform services for consumers, or sustain life and society, but to make more money for the investor so that he will have more to invest in order to make still more money. Capital annexes living labor in order to make more capital.

Worse still, capitalism transforms all things into its own spiritless image, moving into every area of work, culture, consumption, community and environment to advance its sole *raison d'être* — the accumulation of profit. Capitalism has no loyalty to anything but itself, no loyalty to any particular tradition, nation, church or people, nor to the generations yet unborn, nor to the environment, nor to justice or God or, for that matter, atheism. Human and social values are subordinate to the accumulation process. Capitalism will rely on democratic states or fascist regimes, whatever political system best legitimates and protects its class interests at any given period and place. There prevails a rational systematization of human endeavor in pursuit of an irrational, mindless end. All this was enough to move even a bourgeois scholar like Max Weber to write the stinging indictment: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."

Will getting rid of capitalism make things any better? The Roman Catholic *Pastoral Letter on Marxist Communism* rejects the notion that "structural revolution can entirely cure a disease that is man himself" nor can it provide "the solution of all human suffering." Addressing himself to this argument, Herbert Aptheker, writing in *Political Affairs*, reminds us that Marxism makes no claim to eliminating all suffering "given the myriad of personal, medical and accidental causes of such suffering." Furthermore, to see the miseries of class oppression and poverty as arising from within "man himself" is, as Aptheker says, a case of "blaming the victim with a vengeance."

The just (if still imperfect) society is achieved in two necessary ways. First, through moral exhortation and personal application of individual will, people must try to overcome selfish,

parasitic and dishonest attitudes. This sounds very Christian and it is, but it is also the social agenda of every Marxist revolutionary society.

But not all the purposeful individual effort can produce a just society without a restructuring of institutional and class interests so that cooperative and generous impulses are made functional, while anti-social ones are made dysfunctional. The problem with capitalism is that it best rewards the worst part of us, the ruthless, competitive, acquisitive drives, giving little reward and often a good deal of punishment — or at least much handicap — to honesty, compassion, fair play, hard work, love of justice and a concern for those in need.

Capitalism, and its various institutional arrangements, affect the most personal dimensions of our everyday life experience in ways not readily evident. A very compassionate friend of mine once trained as a nurse. In training, she had three patients to care for and she enjoyed every moment of chatting with them, tending their needs and lifting their grateful spirits. She felt she had a knack for the work. But when put on a hospital ward she had 25 patients and could not keep up with their calls for assistance. She became anxious and then irritable and convinced that patients were expecting to be pampered. Soon she learned to ignore certain requests and found herself speaking sharply to sick people. The patients saw her behavior as a deficiency in her personal temperament, yet she was the same dedicated and conscientious person she had been before, with the same human nature as before.

What might be overlooked in this story is that the hospital was controlled by a board of directors who drew huge salaries and extracted large profits for the corporate shareholders. (Most hospitals are run on a private profit basis, contrary to the common

God Language . . . Continued from page 9

invisible God, the first-born of all creation," (Col. 1:15), or with the Prologue of John's Gospel on the coming of Christ:

When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things were made; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of the world. The light shines in the dark, and the darkness has not mastered it.

At the beginning of the Christian era, we find that the Wisdom of God and the Word of God were synonymous in currents of religious thought. Philo, the great Jewish philosopher who lived from about 25 B.C. to 45 A.D. during the life of Jesus, and whose work influenced early Christian theology, actually equated Wisdom with the Word but in different books. In one book he wrote, "And who is to be considered the daughter of God, but Wisdom, who is the first born mother of all things and most of all of those who are greatly purified in soul?"

In another he wrote, "For if we have not yet become fit to be thought sons of God, yet we may be sons of His invisible image, the most Holy Word, for the Word is the oldest-born image of God."

According to Engelsman, Philo later transformed the feminine attributes of Wisdom into masculine attributes associated with the male personification of the Word. Wisdom/Sophia was replaced by Logos (Word)/Christ in Christian theology and Wisdom disappeared from the

Christian religion of that time. She concludes that as a result of this transference of attributes to a male figure, overt access to the feminine dimension of the divine was cut off and repressed, and that patterns for this repression were set in the first five centuries of the Christian era, the same period in which the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was being forged.

What are we to make of these new investigations by an increasing number of biblical scholars — male and female, Roman Catholic and Protestant? Obviously, they have important and disturbing implications for Christian theology and the language of faith. They raise the question whether Christians will continue dependency on a relatively narrow image of the divine as male, particularly as a male parent, which may have stifled our faith and limited our experience of God, or whether the time has come for the return of the feminine dimension as one of many images of God, which conceivably may renew and expand the Christian faith.

How shall the church respond? □

Resources

Phyllis Bird, *Religion and Sexism*.

Joan Chamberlain Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine*.

Rosemary Ruether, *Disputed Questions on Being a Christian*.

Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*.

Hearing the Word: An inclusive-language liturgical lectionary for Year C. Published by St. Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 43202, Washington, D.C. 20010 \$15.95.

impression, and even the "non-profit" ones are usually milked by the top surgeons, directors and pharmaceutical and hospital supply companies.) So there had to be cutbacks in staff and one nurse on an entire floor would have to do. Thus the interpersonal experiences of nurse and patient were deeply affected by forces not directly visible to either.

Every time we try to explain history and society as merely personality writ large, or "human nature" doing its thing, we overlook an essential point of Marxist analysis: that the social structure and class order (and the class struggle) prefigure our personal behavior in many ways, generating forces that may be intimately experienced even if remote from the

immediate scene. The task of the social investigator is to penetrate appearances and see the inner qualities and moving forces of things. "All science," Marx said, "would be superfluous if outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided." (Indeed, the reason so much of modern social science is superfluous is because it settles for the rigorous tracing of outward appearances.) To draw the link between the personal and the structural is to move from appearance to essence.

Socialism does not promise utopia. But it does promise what capitalism cannot and has no intention of accomplishing: adequate food, housing and clothing for all, economic security at all age levels (including old age), free medical care, free education at all age

levels and the right to non-exploitative employment. These "merely" material conditions would represent an enormous betterment of life and spirit for millions of impoverished people at home and abroad.

This is one of the goals of Marxism: a society in which people like Tevye can be free from the imprisonment of spirit that comes with economic want, and where they do not have to get rich off the labor of others in order to be able to think, grow and feel fully human. In a just and economically secure world, people like Tevye will spend less time complaining to God and more time developing themselves and serving and loving each other. This is certainly a Marxist dedication. And, for all I know, it may be God's will.

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

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

SPECIAL OFFER TO WITNESS READERS

Order **Must We Choose Sides**, or **Which Side Are We On**, two of the best-selling Study Action Guides on the market — dealing with Christian Commitment for the

1980s — or **Moral Majority Survival Kit**, **The New Right**, for only \$5.00 and save up to \$1.95.

Must We Choose Sides?

1979, 127pp. \$5.95

Explores the role of working people in our economic system. Investigates harsh realities of everyday life. Who owns America? Who pays the price? Six comprehensive sessions help readers examine class background and the myths of capitalism. Group exercises probe individual experience and insight, apply tools of social analysis while engaging in theological reflection.

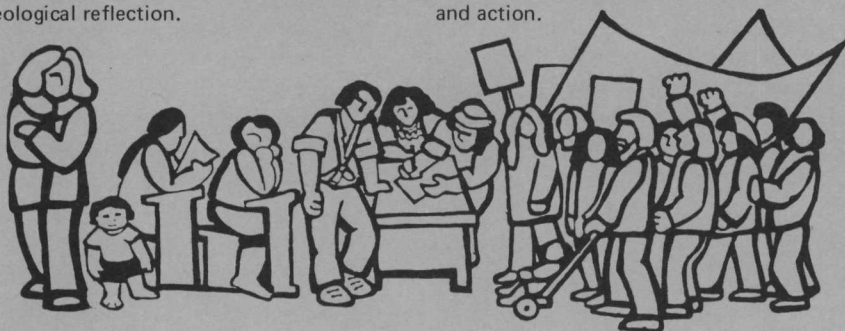
Which Side Are We On?

1980, 172 pp. \$6.95

Deepens understanding of the present crisis — inflation, unemployment, the danger of war. Moves beyond historical critique of capitalism to explore other alternatives. Raises questions for Christian activists. Can we reclaim our radical heritage? How do we confront political and religious ideology? Seven in-depth sessions for group study and action.

The New Right

Keep track of Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority (and how to cope with them) with an authoritative and illuminating report on the New Religious Right. Produced by the Data Center of Oakland, Cal., in association with THE WITNESS, *The New Right: Fundamentalists & Financiers* underscores the role of Right-wing evangelists in the New Right Movement. A compilation of reports and analyses from the nation's leading newspapers and magazines. Up-to-the-minute, authoritative — it's \$6.50, but available to you as a reader of THE WITNESS at the special low price of \$5.00.



Yes, I want to take advantage of your special offer. Please send me the book(s) I have checked at \$5.00 each. Payment is enclosed.

- ☐ **Must We Choose Sides**
☐ **Which Side Are We On**
☐ **The New Right**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Fill out and mail today to THE WITNESS, Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002.)