

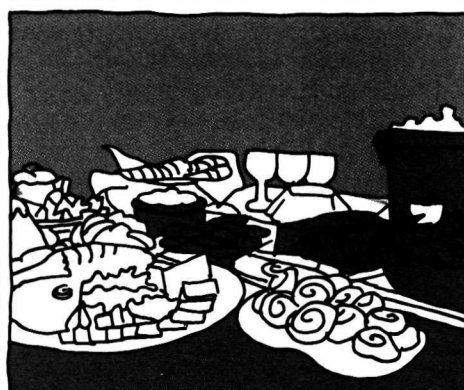
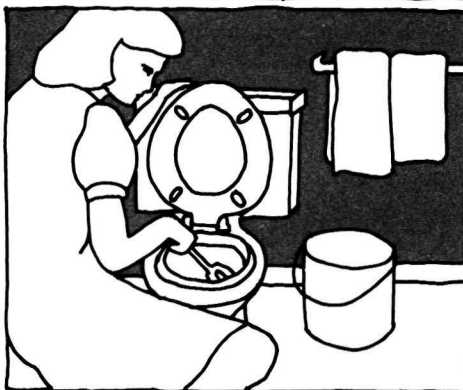
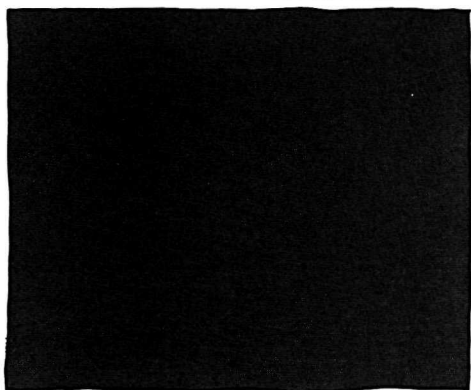
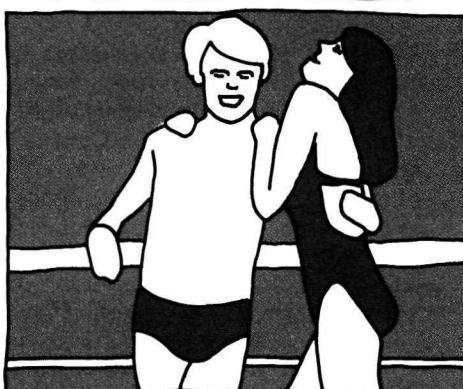
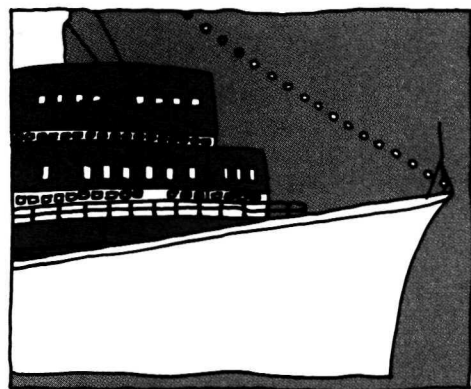
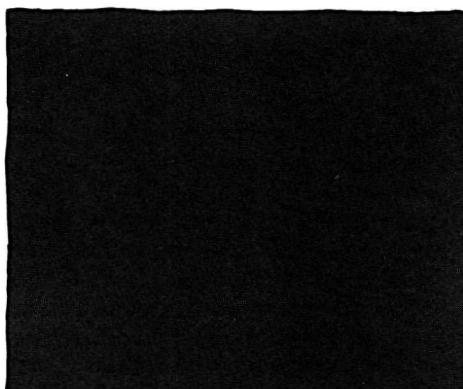
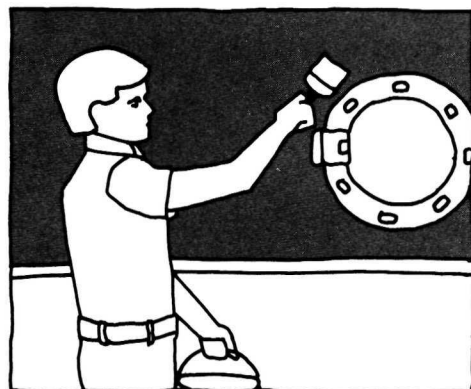
# THE an ecumenical journal of social concern WITNESS

VOLUME • 67  
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APRIL 1984

**Exclusive Interview:**  
**Maria Cueto, Steve Guerra**  
**Enroute to Jail**  
• Joan Trafecanty

**Ships of Success/Crews in Despair • Frank Joyce**



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# Letters

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## Nuclear Shell Game?

I must again, with sorrow and cause, call into question your "Death Train" article of last July. Recently I heard a young man tell of his duty in the Navy, assisting in the movement of nuclear weaponry to seaports. He said that only twice in his enlistment had he known such arms to move by rail. Further, he said that most of the time arms were trucked out in unmarked vans, or sometimes disguised. One truck he recalls was stenciled and painted with a popular dog food trade mark.

Jim Douglass of Ground Zero has rightly rebuked me in previous Letters to the Editor for neglecting the spiritual side of arms. What I should like to warn here is that a great shell game may be under way. As we gird for the quest of stopping a "death train," nuclear goods in fact hie down the highway. I assume the Reagan administrators will use game theory here to pick routes by choice, while the Roosevelt administrators were driven to it.

My friend also said that he had once opened fire on some people he termed "demonstrators." "I hit five or six of them," he added, "and you should've seen the FBI and CIA men just crowd in."

The power to stop this madness certainly lies in the heart. The most direct way to stop the making of arms is not to pay for them. The most money for arms is voted by Congress. You elect the Congress. What the heart wishes here turns ultimately on the ballot, and what it works. And faith without good works is hollow. By your vote, close the nuclear purse.

Those of us who love railroads will thank you for ending a curse.

**David Jones  
Okemos, Mich.**

## Douglass Responds

It is true that the "White Train" from the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Tex., final assembly plant for all U.S. hydrogen bombs, may not be seen as often at a particular Navy weapons storage area as the unmarked vans that David Jones' ex-Navy friend speaks of. The White Train is the means of delivering large concentrations of nuclear weapons to transshipment points, from which unmarked vans take over to distribute them further in smaller loads.

Even the Department of Energy has acknowledged that trains are the principle means of transporting nuclear weapons from Pantex to their destination. These trains, now becoming recognizable to the people of this country, are nothing new. They have been going through the heart of it for 20 years, filled with holocaust weapons. What is new is that the trains are finally becoming the focus for prayerful, non-violent resistance.

The point of our finally becoming conscious of the Death Trains moving across this country is to take responsibility for what is in them, refusing all further cooperation with this evil.

I have no argument with David Jones' wish to elect members of Congress who will refuse to cooperate with nuclear weapons, in sufficient numbers for weapons funding to be cut off. But I believe we also have a personal responsibility to refuse all cooperation with this global sin and crime every time the government asks each of us to fund nuclear weapons (on April 15) or depends upon us to remain silent (as we have for 20 years) when the White Train carries another load of hydrogen bombs through our midst.

It doesn't matter if the government starts playing shell games with its holocaust transportation system. So far it has

tried the strategies of rerouting the trains to avoid our vigils — more vigils spring up on the new routes — or rushing the trains through at speeds far greater than their legal limit of 35 mph, which draws further attention to our reckless nuclear policy. If a shell game is next, it would simply emphasize that a government committed to more nuclear weapons lives in fear of its citizens knowing and realizing too much. Such weapons must be hidden and protected from the people they are supposed to protect, who find the stark realities of the White Train and its cargo intolerable.

The point of being by the tracks is to break through our silence. If a government says or implies "there are no Jews in those boxcars" or "no warheads in that White Train" it has the burden of proof. All of us have the responsibility to stop such trains through our presence at the tracks. It is a deep sign of hope that we are beginning to do so.

**Jim Douglass  
Silverdale, Wash.**

*(In a recent run of the Death Train from Amarillo, Tex., to the Trident base in Bangor, Wash., 51 non-violent peace activists were arrested, including 35 who blocked the tracks and stopped the train for 2½ hours in Portland. Among those arrested were the Rev. Nat Pierce of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and WITNESS author Jim Douglass. See related story this issue.—Eds.)*

## Shaul 'Ray of Hope'

Dick Shaul's article "Christian Faith and the Crisis of Empire" (January WITNESS) is a beacon in the foggy political weather we've been having lately. If hope is, as St. Paul says, "the evidence of things not seen," Shaul has given us a ray of hope by helping to make clear what is really happening in the

world today, that is, what God is doing in our time.

Dr. Shaull has made the evidence speak through the eyes of faith. He has stripped away false religiosity, pomposity, and the self-righteousness that comes with the wrong use of power. In giving us a fresh way to read the Bible in our times, he has made it possible for us to find its true prophetic use by reminding us of the bias the Bible has for the poor, the downtrodden, the dispossessed and the marginal peoples of the world.

That he includes women in his list of people who may contribute to the insights needed for "the relation of faith to issues of imperial power," is a further indication of the keen sensitivity of Dr. Shaull's analysis. Reading this article gave me renewed courage and refreshed vigor for the struggles that I am involved in locally, nationally and globally.

Reading the article also swept me back through the past 30 years of my life: Dick Shaull has been doing this kind of writing and theologizing since the early 1950s. In 1955 my reading for the three-week voyage to the then Belgian Congo (now Zaire) included a copy of his *Encounter With Revolution*. It helped prepare me for what was already happening there, and for what would eventually engulf the whole continent of Africa. Dick Shaull's work is a rich vein in my life which I acknowledge with this word of appreciation for his continuing effort to help us see with the eyes of faith.

**Peggy Cleveland  
Willits, Cal.**

## Christians vs. Indians

The American Indians were better Christians before the coming of Christianity. Columbus found them to be "gentle beings, souls of hospitality, curious and merry, truthful and faithful, walking in

beauty and possessors of a spiritual religion." Furthermore, every early explorer was welcomed in peace. Nevertheless the mistreatment of Indians began with Columbus. Remember the date, 1492.

The gentle beings were worked to death in mines, digging for gold. Those who tried to hide in the jungles were found and shot if they refused to work. When the island now Haiti was depopulated, Columbus sent his soldiers to nearby islands for more slave laborers.

According to Dr. Richard Drinnon, history professor at Bucknell University, in 1492, there were one million Indians on the U.S. continental area. By 1890, there were only 250,000 Indians left alive after the massacre at Wounded Knee. (*The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building*, The New American Library, Inc.)

When Columbus came in 1492, Europe had already had Christianity for 1,178 years, figuring from the Church Council at Arles in 314 A.D. Christianity already must have been well spread by that time for some British bishops attended that Council.

What was Christianity teaching the Europeans in all those centuries? The evangelism of force, imparting fear by the use of stocks and stakes and starting wars against nations to establish the Faith, once and for all delivered to the Saint from which nothing shall be added or subtracted? Or just depopulate a whole race such as the American Indians in the name of the Prince of Peace? You bet that was it.

**Vine Deloria, Sr.  
Pierre, S.D.**

## Inspires Tax Resister

It might interest you to know my third protest letter to the IRS as a tax resister takes its main theme from Henry H.

Rightor's article, "The Judas Generation" in your January issue. I'm always inspired by the content and quality of the articles printed in the magazine. Your prophetic voice is needed and is doing more good than you know.

**Larry Lange  
Devil's Lake, N.D.**

## Open Letter to Fox

Dear Peter Fox/Editors,

It was an honor to read your remarks pertaining to your reasons for resigning your commission in the December WITNESS. You point out the material losses sustained through your decision to relinquish your commission, along with substantial financial benefits, in protest over current U.S. foreign policy in Central America. You rightly point to the swelling ranks of Central American refugees cast homeless as a consequence of the policy you protest. We all decry these indecencies.

About these things we share a hope that the misdeeds will be halted and perpetrators restrained, if not brought to justice. Here our aspirations are shared; yet, our respective experience is different. Whereas you have *upon your own initiative* voluntarily sustained personal material loss in protest to the policies of our government, I have in no way sought the material and psychological loss sustained through wandering homeless in America along with others similarly displaced as a direct result of the policies of this government.

The government encourages the worst proclivities of a society predicated upon individual attainment at the expense of the community, and strengthens the least humane tendencies of an economic system which historically has been shown to cast out into the street millions

*Continued on page 23*

## The Cost of Principle

*"There has been no showing or indication in any of the papers presented to me that these women (Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin) are other than what they appear to be — persons legitimately engaged in the work of their church. There has been no showing that they are themselves involved in criminal activities or engaged in crime. There has been no indication that they belong to FALN, or condone or espouse its terrorists' views . . . It does not appear to me that coercive incarceration beyond six months' duration is justified in situations of this kind."*

—Judge Robert L. Carter,  
Jan. 23, 1978

With the above words — and finding no guilt in these women — Judge Carter freed two Episcopal Church workers after they had served almost a year in prison for refusing to testify before a Grand Jury investigating FALN bombings.

Today, one of them, Maria Cueto, again has been sentenced — this time to three years in jail, for that same act of conscience. So it is that we are still witnessing the reverberations from that event of seven years past when the National Episcopal Church opened its files to the FBI during a nocturnal visit to its headquarters,

consented to by Episcopal administrators.

Five Hispanics, including Cueto and Steven Guerra of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, will begin serving three-year jail terms April 10 for refusing to testify before a Grand Jury which they felt was trying to repress freedom of dissent. (The government had asked for 15 years, and had elevated the charge from civil to criminal contempt.) The other defendants are Andres and Julio Rosado, Puerto Ricans, of New York, and Ricardo Romero, a Mexican American, from Colorado.

At the end of the liturgical season of Lent, it is not difficult to find biblical associations in the case, as the Gospel message depicts a Christ badgered by his enemies with trumped-up charges and false trials.

Maria and Steve were flown nine times across the country for legal proceedings, their family life and community work disrupted.

Over the long period as the case was pending, the FBI was actively intimidating families and potential

employers of the defendants with periodic visits, so that it was impossible for them to hold jobs. Toward the end of 1982, the FBI picked up four of the five in a flurry of arrests across the country. Unable immediately to locate Romero, they labeled him a fugitive, although he turned himself in voluntarily when he discovered he was sought.

Maria, treated as the worst kind of criminal, was arrested at a department store lunch counter by seven FBI agents, who handcuffed her and took her to prison where she was put in maximum security, her bail set at \$50,000. She was denied a visit by a priest, and was not released until 72 hours later.

The charge then as now, was never more than refusing to testify before a Grand Jury.

Their final trial carried its own share of indignities. First, the government asked the presiding judge to try the case before an anonymous jury, intimating that jurors hearing the case might need special protection. Secondly, the five found that they were being labeled "the unincarcerated

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## THE WITNESS

an ecumenical journal  
of social concern



**Grand Jury  
Resisters**  
**Steve Guerra**  
**Maria Cueto**

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Exclusive Interview:

# Grand Jury Resisters Enroute to Jail

by Joan Trafecanty



Steven Guerra \*



Maria Cueto

For more than two years, THE WITNESS has been following events in the case of five Hispanic Grand Jury resisters, two of whom have strong ties with the Episcopal Church. Maria Cueto was formerly director of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs and Steven Guerra is a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

An appeal of their three-year sentence for criminal contempt of the Grand Jury was recently denied, and by the time this issue of THE WITNESS reaches most readers, they will have begun serving their time in federal prison (scheduled for April 10). They were interviewed for THE WITNESS in late February by Joan Trafecanty, a free-lance journalist and former assistant in ECPC's Los Angeles office.

Maria Cueto spent 10 months in prison in 1977 for

refusing to testify before a similar Grand Jury investigating alleged terrorist activities of the FALN. She denied being an FALN supporter or having knowledge of the group, and said she believed the government was using the Grand Jury process to intimidate Hispanics, especially those who espoused independence for Puerto Rico. In addition, she argued that cooperation with the Grand Jury would endanger the trust which she as a church representative had established with grass roots Hispanic groups.

Steven Guerra has served on the ECPC Board since 1979, and was particularly involved in the Episcopal Urban Bishops' hearings in Chicago and in the recent open hearings sponsored by the Ecumenical Committee on the Future of Puerto Rico.

The interview follows.

**JOAN TRAFECANTY:** Do you think that the issues have changed, Maria, since the first time you went to jail?

**MARIA CUETO:** No, I don't think any of the issues have changed. The information that they seek from me in this present subpoena is what they sought in '77, concerning my work with the church, the people that I knew and the grants that we made.

**TRAFECANTY:** Steven, you're the only person of the five who wasn't involved in the original case. How did you get pulled into this?

**STEVEN GUERRA:** I believe there

are a number of factors. In '77 I was a teacher at the Puerto Rican School in Chicago. Maria was already in jail then. I didn't know much about Grand Jury resisters at the time, but I was asked to sit in on a couple of meetings. Soon I began to lead the local opposition to the Grand Jury. Ultimately, I was directing the national campaign with very little experience. We were pretty effective in opposing the Grand Jury — to the extent that we won furloughs for the prisoners over holidays, for example. Because we were effective, I became the target of a probe. The FBI cut my car off on the street on a number of occasions and jumped out and tried to talk to me.

Another reason for the subpoenas, I think, is to send a warning to the church. For the four or five years after the first Grand Jury resisters were released I became active with the church not only around Puerto Rican independence, but social issues in general. The government wanted to tell people in the church to keep their distance from these issues or accept the consequences, which could mean imprisonment without having committed any crime. It's clear that the Grand Jury, which originally was intended to safeguard the rights of individuals, is going to be used as a principal tool of political repression. The Grand Jury is the most foolproof mechanism for

putting a person in jail. You don't have to do anything other than not testify.

**TRAFECANTY:** What do you think is the government's motive in prosecuting you?

**CUETO:** I think it's mainly because they haven't been able to accomplish anything through the years. We were the scapegoats in '77, and I think the government has to show something every so often. That's what is happening now. We are proponents of independence for Puerto Rico. The government feels threatened by that. We're some of many who are going through this.

**TRAFECANTY:** Besides the five of you, how many others are being prosecuted?

**CUETO:** There are five more now who have already started the legal process on criminal contempt charges. Until recently there were some still jailed on civil contempt over the same question. So the government is expanding its fishing expedition.

**TRAFECANTY:** Do you have any idea how many people have gone through the Grand Jury process over this issue?

**CUETO:** In the United States, about 20. In Puerto Rico — I lose count there.

**TRAFECANTY:** Why is the government so threatened by the Puerto Rican independence movement?

**CUETO:** I think the United States has a great deal to lose with Puerto Rico. It's militarily strategic in the Caribbean. The United States is able to exploit its resources and mobilize the people whenever it chooses. It controls that country. It would lose a lot if it lost Puerto Rico. The government doesn't want to do that. They will keep it at all costs. The independence movement in Puerto Rico is growing and it's growing in the United States and sooner or later they will have to deal with the consequences of what the people in Puerto Rico want.

**TRAFECANTY:** People will ask, "Well, if you don't know anything, why not go before the Grand Jury and just say, I don't know anything?"

**CUETO:** As I said earlier, none of the issues have changed, and that's one of them — the question of the Grand Jury and how it abuses its power. One could assume the position that you're not hurting anyone by just saying, "I don't know anything," but that's not going to be enough. The FBI insists that you *do* and creates the kind of situation where you're accused of hiding something or lying to them. By not testifying, you don't allow them to create that situation.

**GUERRA:** The fact of the matter is that this action by the government is a method of chilling the opposition. I'm not going to become a willing partner in their efforts to chill political activity. It's not a question of knowing something or not knowing. This is a method of persecuting not only you, but your whole movement.

**TRAFECANTY:** So you see implications for civil resisters in general — the government is going to be coming down harder on people?

**GUERRA:** Oh, definitely. I see it as a principle threat for people who are involved in anti-militarist activities. The people who oppose Ronald Reagan's policies most successfully are from the religious left. I believe the anti-nuclear movement is almost certainly a target in the future for Grand Jury repression. Here in San Francisco one of the main organizations under scrutiny by the FBI is an organization called the Livermore Action Group. They're just a group of people who believe that nuclear power and weapons are unsafe and that they have an obligation to oppose them, not with violence, but with demonstrations and leaflets and civil disobedience. They're not threatening, in any violent way, a nuclear facility. But they say they want to take this issue to the street. What is happening very clearly is that the

government feels that any political opposition of this kind is a danger.

**TRAFECANTY:** The government is trying to connect you with the FALN which has used violence. Do you think that even groups that espouse nonviolence will be targeted, or will it be more difficult for the government to make a case against them?

**GUERRA:** They can still be targeted because it's a mere question of alleged association. It won't matter that a group espouses nonviolence because the government can insinuate that you are somehow associated with violent activities.

**CUETO:** The government would like to make people think that we are the leadership of the FALN, but obviously we are not. Anybody can see that. None of us has been indicted for any part of what the FBI has accused us of in the press.

**GUERRA:** The religious left is certainly not a violent association of individuals. It's a network of Christians who are working for peace and for a better life for those who are dispossessed. They have been major targets of Grand Juries, as in the '70s, and are more and more becoming potential targets, and it's not because they've placed bombs anywhere. It's not because they've thrown rocks through windows. But it's because they stand in active opposition to the government's policies, and this administration, as others before it, sees that as a very dangerous thing. You see, it's a fallacy that people believe that Grand Juries are investigative bodies operating independently of the Justice Department. They operate at the direction of the Justice Department and they become a rubber stamp. They hear only what the U.S. Attorneys want them to.

**TRAFECANTY:** Can you review briefly what's been happening as far as the trial is concerned?

**CUETO:** We were subpoenaed in December of 1981 to appear before the



Grand Jury. We had to go to New York, but they dropped it at that point. About nine months later, in September of 1982, we were charged with criminal contempt. We were arrested, but then released on our own recognizance. The trial started in February of 1983. That trial should have taken a matter of minutes because it was very clear that we had refused to testify before the Grand Jury and that was all that had to be proven in order for us to be found guilty of criminal contempt. But it took eight days because the government wanted to give us a 15 year sentence.

**TRAFECANTY:** Was there a limit on the number of years you could have been given?

**CUETO:** No, it was an indeterminant amount of time. The government needed the eight days to show why we were “dangerous” individuals in order to justify the 15 years. They would bring all kinds of equipment into the courtroom and scare everybody half to death — pictures of the remains of a bombing for instance. They insisted on an anonymous jury because the jurors’ lives were supposedly in danger. They created a real live circus, and all of this was relayed to the media.

**GUERRA:** The viciousness of the government became apparent when Bishop Roger Blanchard testified on our behalf. No one could deny that he is a very gentle person, and yet the U.S. Attorney went after him with a fury. He was asked if he knew that he was, in fact, financing terrorism. The implication was that not only were we the principals in this, but now Bishop Blanchard himself by association was also supporting terrorism. It was shocking that they would do this to a person who they *know* had never committed any type of crime consciously or unconsciously in his entire life. This U.S. Attorney felt so threatened by the fact that this man would dare to support us that he made him also a candidate for attack.

**TRAFECANTY:** Did the judge try to prevent any of this?

**CUETO:** He would try on occasion, but the judge, I think, was more confused than anybody else about what criminal contempt of the Grand Jury really meant. Because it had not been really used before except in cases of organized crime. So everybody was testing this ground and the government used it to do whatever it could get away with. In the end there were several mistakes and abuses that the government and the judge made during the trial. All of that was included in our appeal that was denied recently. The appeals court agreed that there was error, but they referred to it as “harmless error.”

**TRAFECANTY:** So it sounds like you might have grounds to go to the Supreme Court?

**CUETO:** I believe that the Supreme Court only takes cases that challenge the constitutionality of a certain action. I don’t think there’s much chance that they’ll hear it, but I do think we’re going to give it a try.

**TRAFECANTY:** Do you think the fact that religious people have come forward and been supportive of you has had a restraining effect on what the government tried to do?

**GUERRA:** I don’t have any doubt about that. The presence of church people and the fact that people were following the case very closely had a tremendous impact. The church is a very important institution in this society. I believe the government thought that once they said, “FALN, FALN, FALN” — just say it and say it until everybody believes it — that would alienate us from the church. They thought we were going to find ourselves left out in the cold. What happened, obviously, was the government had taken notice of what Bishop Allin did back in 1976 when Maria was the Director of the Hispanic Affairs Commission of the Episcopal Church —

he rolled over, he let the FBI inside of church headquarters to go through any file they wanted to. The government was convinced that the church is not a good ally of oppressed people. But the four bishops who testified at our trial are indicative of a whole constituency within the church which said to the government, “We are not going to run. We shall not be intimidated.” The government took heed of this, obviously. As long as it was just a group of Latinos who have no power, no access to the media, the government would have done what it wanted to do. As it was, our rights were violated in court and they were able to get away with it. I can’t imagine what they would have done if the church hadn’t been there.

**CUETO:** All of us are grateful for the church people who truly have understood what the issues are. The jurors and the judge were impressed by their testimony because they could understand words like “commitment” and “conviction.” I definitely think the judge was impressed by the concern of church people and their willingness to stand with us until this was over. Of course, the government didn’t like their participation because it gave us credibility.

**TRAFECANTY:** Does the fact that you’ve already served time make it any easier to face the reality of being in prison, Maria?

**CUETO:** The only thing it does for me is that I know somewhat of what I can expect inside. Before, I didn’t have any idea. Now, I certainly do. No, it doesn’t make it any easier. You never get used to confinement. You learn to live with it, but you certainly don’t get used to it.

**TRAFECANTY:** How about you, Steven? Do you feel prepared for the reality of going to prison?

**GUERRA:** I think I am. I’ve had to come to grips with it over a two year period. Talking to people — their support



of me — is one of the things that makes it possible to go to jail. The question of presence is so very important. I don't believe that you can be absent from a group of people if they stand with you. I've read a number of books. One was called *Reluctant Resister* by Jeff Dietrich, the peace activist. That was a very good book to read because he was in a similar position to me: Being in prison was an incredibly new experience for him.

You have to decide that the principle is the most important thing in your life. For me, the question of Puerto Rican independence is the motivating factor in my life, and it's for that reason that I go forward without very much fear. It's the most important thing in my life to struggle for a better society for the whole of the Puerto Rican nation.

I've had profound personal talks with a number of people about what they think I'm doing. Across the board, 100% of them have said that it's right. In fact, Bishop Coleman McGehee in his testimony said, "If I were Steven and I were asked to come before this Grand Jury, I would not testify." When a person like him says this, then you know what you're doing is right — that you're not a criminal. That's been absolutely the worst part of it — there's an attempt to paint you as a criminal and to say that you've committed these crimes. But when everybody I respect tells me, "This is the only thing that you can do," there is no question in my mind that I've made the right choice. And when people you don't even know write letters to the judge or sign petitions — you realize there are people who will perhaps learn from this example, and when they're confronted with this situation, they'll step forward and say, "Never. I'll never become a willing participant in the government's attempt to destroy my movement."

**TRAFECANTY:** So you see some good coming out of this? You feel connected to other people who have resisted?



Steven and Nancy Guerra  
"She would have divorced me if I hadn't done this."

**GUERRA:** Oh, yes. In Puerto Rico there's a saying that "Nothing bad happens that good doesn't come from."

**TRAFECANTY:** This must be hard on your wife.

**GUERRA:** No. In fact, she's told me on a number of occasions she would divorce me if I didn't do this. I think she's actually stronger than I am. Most people have strong feelings about someone betraying their principles. From early American history, it was Thomas Paine who said, "I would rather suffer the fires of hell . . . than become a whore to my principles." And that's how we feel.

**TRAFECANTY:** Do you wonder when this will end — perhaps after the three years are up?

**CUETO:** People have asked me when this will end and I say, "Maybe not for a long time." It will go on because what's created this kind of situation is a political question. And until that political question is resolved this is going to continue. It will affect us in different ways. They might not call us again after these three years, but they'll be harassing other people in the same way. So who do we want this to end for?

**TRAFECANTY:** What do you mean by the political question?

**CUETO:** In this particular case, the political question is the independence of Puerto Rico, and the question of whether or not the Grand Jury system violates people's civil liberties. That's not going to change until attitudes change across the country.

**TRAFECANTY:** There seems to be a lot of paranoia in government right now about terrorism — they're building walls around the White House and so forth. Do you think that's all part of the mood of people in power — they're really threatened by someone who supports Puerto Rican independence or is concerned about Central America?

**CUETO:** The United States has its fingers in so many areas of the world — it's upset so many governments through efforts of the CIA. You can read about these incidents in the paper. No one can deny that the government has used less than honorable means to get what they want. I think the paranoia they're experiencing is something that they deserve. As long as those actions continue, then the terror in their hearts will stay.



The 17-car White Train, so called because it is painted a luminescent white to deflect heat from its cargo of nuclear warheads, was stopped for 2½ hours in Portland, Ore. recently by non-violent peace demonstrators. (Photo by Mike Barnes.)

# Demonstrators Stop 'White Train'

by Andy Robinson

## Church People in Vigil

Twelve Roman Catholic bishops recently announced that they would join their people in prayerful vigil along the tracks when the White Train carrying nuclear cargo passed through their communities. Leaders of the effort are Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle and Bishop Leroy Matthiesen of Amarillo.

The bishops also urged their parishioners to join a public protest June 10 along the routes traveled by the White Train.

In a related communique concerning the February demonstrations against the White Train, Mary Miller, executive director of the Episcopal Peace Fellowships told THE WITNESS that the Rev. Nat Pierce was arrested with non-violent demonstrators in Nampa; among other Episcopalians participating but not arrested were Audrey Pierce and the Rev. Harry Grace, who led the people in prayer after the arrests, and the Rev. William Waltz who organized a vigil in Mountain Home, Idaho.

The White Train made an unscheduled stop in Portland, Ore., recently. The train, which carries nuclear weapons and related materials, was delayed here for nearly three hours by a group of people who stood, sat, kneeled and lay down on the railroad tracks.

A network of peace activists armed only with telephones and walkie-talkies monitored the train's progress from the Pantex nuclear weapons assembly plant in Amarillo, Tex., to the Trident submarine base on Puget Sound. Protests and vigils occurred at eight different locations along the route. Fifty-one people in three cities were arrested. The train was actually stopped only once — in Portland.

When the train reached town on Feb.

24 more than 150 people were present to greet it. Many of them were on the tracks, including one man in a wheelchair. Arriving with the train were a dozen city police and at least as many Union Pacific Railroad employees. The train slowed to a crawl as they began picking up the demonstrators and bodily moving them to the side of the tracks. Once removed, many simply got up and moved further down the line to take up new positions.

After 30 minutes of this, a stalemate was apparent. The authorities ordered the train to stop, much to the delight of the protesters, and radioed for reinforcements.

While more law enforcement personnel were being called in, the activists, police and railroad employees debated nuclear arms policy. One policeman urged the protesters to make themselves heard through the ballot box. Another officer was asked if he thought nuclear weapons

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were dangerous. His response: "It depends upon how you use them."

For nearly two hours everyone waited in the driving rain. The police apparently had trouble finding the county jail bus. Eventually more officers arrived, including six on horseback and 20 members of the state riot squad in full battle dress, and the arrests were made without incident. Thirty-five people were booked, charged with trespassing and released. Prior to the arrests, authorities had warned the blockaders that federal charges would be lodged, but only state charges were filed.

The federal government has a policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear materials on these trains. However, David G. Jackson, spokesperson for the Department of Energy in Albuquerque, New Mex., stated that the shipment contained "either nuclear weapons, special nuclear materials

or other classified components."

The protesters exulted in their victory. "We're well-pleased with the results," said Johnny W. Baranski of Portland Agape Community, a local peace group that helped organize the blockade. (*Agape* is a Latin word meaning, *the power of God's love in the human heart.*) "Our objective was to stop the train in a loving and non-violent way and we succeeded. We reached the hearts and minds of those on the train."

Mike O'Sullivan of Northwest Action for Disarmament, one of those arrested, reflected on the need for civil disobedience. "I don't want warheads carried through this area," he said. "[The idea] wasn't so much to get arrested. I would have camped out there. I wanted to see the train turn around."

Many of those arrested are considering a courtroom defense based on international law in general and the Nuremberg

Principles in particular. Many peace activists have compared the White Train to the trains which carried civilians to the gas chambers in Europe more than four decades ago. Roman Catholic Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, of Seattle, has called Trident "the Auschwitz of Puget Sound."

The judgments at Nuremberg and the precepts of international law forbid preparation for inflicting genocide or launching aggressive war. In the 1980s, Mary Kaufman, former prosecuting attorney at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, points out, "the test of the legality of the new technological weapons has to be, *is*, the dictates of public conscience. "And," she adds, "I can't think of a more forceful way of not merely formulating the dictates of public conscience, but expressing the dictates of public conscience, than the act of civil disobedience."

**Union Pacific employees and Portland police dragged demonstrators from the tracks. (Photo by Paul McAdams.)**



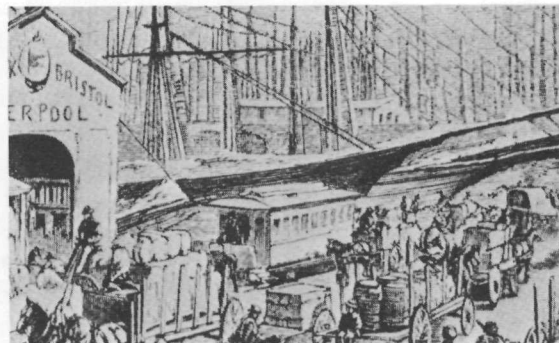


# Ships of Success With Crews in Despair

by Frank Joyce

*Ships crew, in the eyes of many captains and their employers, were species of sub-human. Driven like slaves, taught to obey commands and whips like circus animals, their working lives were briefer than those of men in any other following. From the fecal alleys of slums ashore they were trundled into the galleys of slums at sea. Without rights of any kind, they lived under the threat that they could be replaced in a moment by any one of the hundreds of indigents who continually crowded the docking areas looking for any ship that might sign them on.*

—Description of 19th century transatlantic passenger shipping in John Malcolm Brinnan's *The Sway of the Grand Saloon.*



South Street, NYC — 1800's

It's the twentieth century now, gaining fast on the twenty-first. This is the era of the Love Boat, not the slave boat. So surely in such enlightened times, conditions like those described above are a thing of the past, right?

Wrong. The age of the Love Boat is still the age of the now "modern" slave boat. While tourists are lured to "dream" vacations by TV glamour and ads proclaiming that the crew members who serve them want only "smiles for tips," beneath the luxurious passenger decks is a large and growing multi-national work force of some of the world's most exploited workers.

There is, in a general sense, nothing unique in that. Workers everywhere face an intensifying contradiction between their aspirations for a decent, secure life and the drive of corporate owners for the greatest possible profit. But there is a glamour and romance to seafaring, especially given the Love Boat image, that is different from, say, a steel mill or the data processing department of an insurance company. And there is something quite distinctive about the relationship between seafarers of all kinds and the Protestant church.

As a rule, the institutionalized church, regardless of denomination, has cared little about workers *qua* workers. Some "industrial missions" have come — and for the most

part, gone. But seafarers have enjoyed church support dating back many years. Traditional parish ministries, it was realized, could not adequately serve those whose home is really the sea.

Thus, exactly 150 years ago Episcopalians founded the Seamen's Church Institute based in the Port of New York and New Jersey. Current director is the Rev. James Whittemore. The Institute was instrumental in recent years in establishing as a companion organization, the ecumenical Center for Seafarers' Rights.

Catholics maintain the worldwide Apostleship of the Sea, based at the Vatican. And most port cities have chaplains who regularly visit ships when they call. From England, the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) coordinates the efforts of many denominations ministering to seafarers all over the world.

This ministry puts the chaplains in a unique position to observe and understand the plight of seafarers. In 1982, a conference at the Vatican gave birth to the idea of a workshop to consider the growing pattern of abuses of seafarers in the cruise ship industry.

James Whittemore offered the services of the Seamen's Church Institute and the Center for Seafarers' Rights as primary sponsors and organizers of the meeting. Miami, the center of the cruise ship industry, was chosen as the logical site.

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Support was also forthcoming from the Caribbean Council of Churches, the ICMA and the maritime trade unions, particularly the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

So in January, for three days, a conference room overlooking the Port of Miami was filled with nearly 100 men and women constituting an ad hoc coalition of priests, trade-unionists and academics from Europe, the United States and the Caribbean. They immersed themselves in lectures and workshops concerning maritime law, trade union victories and setbacks, legislative reform, and ecumenical dialogue.

Trade unionists like Capt. Mols Sorenson, head of the Danish Mates Union, who chaired several key conference sessions; Ake Selander, Assistant General Secretary of the ITF and Shannon Wall, President of the U.S. National Maritime Union were able to meet and caucus with leaders of the Caribbean maritime trade union movement like Trinidadian Francis Mungroo of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers Trade Union.

Conference participants were able to visit informally with Port officials, visit a cruise ship and interview crew members at dockside. They also heard moving testimony about conditions on board the ships from Wayne Harwood, a Barbadian and former crew member of the S.S. *Britannis*, and Per Stosveen, a seafarer from Norway.

Contrary to their promises in advance of the workshop, only the Liberians among major Flagship States and ship-owner groups sent representatives. Other owner and government representatives, ostensibly fearing confrontations with trade unionists, reneged on commitments to attend.

Not surprisingly, the conference quickly established that the most exploited seafarers tend to come from nations like the Philippines, Bangladesh, South Korea and Haiti, whose people are generally the most exploited. In particular, they make up the bulk of the crew members on the "hotel," passenger-serving side of the burgeoning cruise ship industry.

Many are technically employed by concessionaires, under contract to the shipowners and operators. Although the practice is patently illegal, many are forced to pay as much as \$2,000 to a "manning agent" to get their jobs in the first place. They are generally promised conditions far different than those they actually encounter when they join the ship — often thousands of miles from where they were "recruited."

Once aboard, they are subjected to 17 to 18-hour workdays, seven days a week, with no time ashore. They eat low quality food which is often alien to their diet, custom and religious preference. They live in cramped, unsanitary conditions and have access to neither recreation facilities nor medical care. Unless it is part of their duties, as in the case of

room stewards, they are forbidden to enter the passenger areas of the ship while passengers are on board.

Safety conditions are virtually non-existent, even in dangerous areas such as boiler rooms. Female crew members are subjected to the most barbaric forms of sexual harassment.

The pay? Often less than 50¢ per hour, including "smiles for tips."

Complaints can produce monetary fines, deducted from paychecks without warning or explanation; physical abuse, or being put ashore thousands of miles from home with no means to return.

Actual protests can bring an even more drastic response. In late April, 1981, 240 Hondurans who had struck the Carnival Cruise Lines ships the *Carnivale* and the *Mardi Gras* while in Miami were summarily declared illegal aliens by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, taken prisoner by armed private security guards, deported by plane to Honduras, and blacklisted.

Reasons for the especially harsh exploitation of seafarers in the cruise ship industry are several. First, shipping is the original and perhaps most basic "multi-national" industry. The corporations who are the shipowners and employers are far better organized and have the power of far more governments at their beck and call than do the employees.

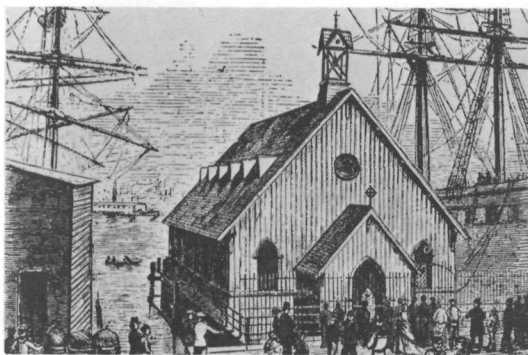
Traditional maritime nations such as Great Britain, the United States and the Scandinavian countries have crews that are generally organized and protected to some degree by unions affiliated with the International Transport Federation, headquartered in London.

In general, however, the unionized segment of the shipping industry, like others, is diminishing. It is depressed by the worldwide economic crisis, the containerization of much cargo, the global oil glut and the inhibiting effect of the overvalued dollar on world trade.

The Love Boats are the exception — ships of success in a sea of despair. They are the only rapidly expanding section of the shipping industry. And their service to passengers is far more labor intensive than the moving of cargo.

For a time, following the advent of mass transoceanic jet travel in 1957, the bottom had dropped out of the passenger ship business. But cruise ships, operating in warm weather areas, using jets to fly in customers from all over the world, have more than reversed the trend. Shipbuilding companies, heavily subsidized throughout the industrial world, are increasingly turning their efforts to producing cruise ships. The hope is that the appeal of The Love Boat TV program, together with the weather and legal, casino-style gambling in international waters will continue to expand the business.

The S.S. *Norway* is a typical Love Boat entry. Formerly



Third floating Church of Our Saviour — 1870-1910

## Episcopal Church in 150th Year Of Mission to Seafarers

**T**he Episcopal Church this year celebrates 150 years of ministry to exploited seafarers. The Seamen's Church Institute, from its earliest days as a floating chapel to the present operation as a full service shorebased agency, has been serving as an advocate for the special needs of the world's merchant seafarers, as well as the maritime transportation community in the port of New York/New Jersey.

Under the direction of the Rev. James Whittemore, who is himself a seasoned bluewater sailor, the Institute operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing a broad range of human services to hundreds of thousands of seafaring men and women.

Founded in 1834, the Institute was first known as the Young Men's Auxiliary Missionary and Education Society. Consisting of charter members drawn from Episcopal congregations in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Staten Island, the Society's aim was to improve the treatment of merchant seamen. In those days along the port's violent waterfront, thieves, crimps and certain boarding-housekeepers conspired to plunder or

shanghai defenseless seamen. Aboard ship, life, too, could be filled with violence and "lost at sea" was not an uncommon epitaph.

To confront these conditions, the Society literally brought the church to the seamen in 1844 by building a floating chapel in the heart of ships' row on Manhattan's East River. Later two other floating chapels were launched. These unique floating churches were so popular with the public that pews had to be reserved for the several hundred seafarers who came to worship at each service.

By 1854, the Society had enlarged its charter to include "lodging and entertainment of seamen for their spiritual, mental and bodily welfare." In 1888, funds from the legacy of William H. Vanderbilt helped provide for the Society's first brick church and its accompanying recreation and residence halls.

By 1902, the Society had organized and procured the first American legislation granting legal protection for seamen. In 1906, the Society changed its name to the Seamen's Church Institute.

Other key dates in recent history:

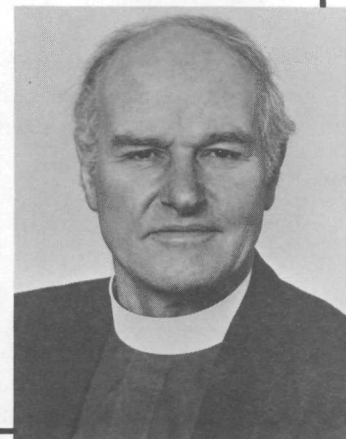
- 1913: A Dutch-Colonial

building was constructed at 25 South St. Known by seafarers as "The Doghouse," it soon became a downtown New York landmark.

- 1916: A full time Merchant Marine school was begun. During the depression, the Institute maintained religious, educational and social services when there was a critical absence of public health and welfare programs.

- World War II: During these years, the Institute was both refuge for Allied merchant seamen torpedoed off the Eastern Coast and a training station for the U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Pool.

*Continued on page 20*



The Rev. James Whittemore

the idle transatlantic luxury liner S.S. France, it was taken out of drydock in 1980 and refitted as a cruise ship, plying primarily the Caribbean. It takes up two full berths in the Port of Miami when docked and its crew numbers a whopping 793 from at least 32 different countries.

With regard to the treatment of its crew, the S.S. Norway is far from the worst of the lot. Under registry of Norway, a traditional maritime nation, the ship and its crew are subject to relatively enlightened laws, regulation practices and labor contracts.

Far more serious problems tend to be found on ships registered under the “flags-of-convenience” system — the original runaway shops. Just as Alabama, Mississippi, Puerto Rico and other depressed and “right to work” areas provide a refuge for those in the United States seeking a “favorable business climate” (that is, anti-labor), so do flags of convenience offer that same climate for shipowners.

In many cases such flag states have no maritime laws, or, where safety and labor regulations do exist, they are frequently not enforced. Even if flag states had the will, the economies of prominent ones such as Panama, Liberia, the Bahamas, India, etc., hardly permit the means to enforce laws applying to ships operating thousands of miles from their borders.

Despite the fact that a large percentage of the cruise ship business operates from U.S. ports, especially in Florida, U.S. laws also offer little protection to the seafarer. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that provisions of the NLRA, Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA, etc. do *not* apply to foreign nationals on foreign registry ships. And U.S. immigration laws can serve as a weapon in the hands of shipowners and concessionaires as dramatically illustrated in the Carnivale incident. Further, the United States has failed and/or refused to ratify several international conventions and treaties which, if observed, would provide improved conditions for seafarers.

Moreover, U.S. safety, health, environmental and sanitary standards, designed to protect the port and the passengers, usually mean for crew members that a superficial face-lift is occasionally given their quarters prior to docking when an inspection is anticipated. In an era when U.S. workers’ basic rights to strike and organize are under relentless attack, it is unlikely there will be much movement toward affording protection for “foreign” workers for the brief time they are in U.S. ports.

In fact, that “briefness” is a part of the seafarers’ problem. Profitability in the cruise ship industry is conditional on achieving the most rapid possible “turn-around time.” The quicker one set of passengers can be disembarked and another boarded the more money there is to be made. Most

crew members must work frantically while in port to refit the ship. And even for those not working, there is usually too little time (4 or 5 hours) to go ashore and accomplish much of anything by way of personal business or recreation.

Finally, in a larger and more basic context, the inexhaustible supply of cheap labor created by keeping entire Third World nations in economic bondage means that there is a limitless supply of workers for whom the adverse conditions on a cruise ship constitute an *improvement* or at least, a desperate necessity.

In some cases, this takes an especially cruel form. In the Philippines for example, it is the law that 80% of the wages of seafarers must be remitted in Western currency to the government, which then pays the families of the seafarer. This, of course, provides the Marcos government with valuable hard currency and an interest-free loan — as it takes its time to convert wages to the local currency and then forward them to the families.

Shipowners of Liberian, Panamanian and other flag-of-convenience registry customarily pay their crew members according to the wage scale of their home country. Haitians, for example, are paid at Haitian wage rates, South Koreans at South Korean rates, etc. Not only is this cheaper for the shipowner but it also serves to reinforce divisions of economics, language, ethnicity and nationality among crew members — making it harder for them to organize.

But as the Miami workshop demonstrated, organizing is underway — if not with a vengeance, at least with vigor. And the church, led by the Seamen’s Church Institute, is in the forefront.

That’s hardly unprecedented. As Mark Twain wrote in 1897, in a slightly different context, in *Following the Equator*:

*Captain Wawn is crystal clear on one point: He does not approve of missionaries. They obstruct his business. They make “Recruiting,” as he calls it (“Slave-Catching,” as they call it in their frank way) a trouble when it ought to be just a picnic and a pleasure excursion. The missionaries have their opinion about the manner in which the Labor Traffic is conducted, as about the recruiter’s evasions of the law of the traffic, and about the traffic itself and it is distinctly uncomplimentary to the traffic and to everything connected with it, including the law for its regulation.*

Now, 85 years later, the “missionaries” are at it again. Notable is the unity between the Episcopalians and the Roman Catholics. Catholic Bishop Rene Gracida, who heads the U.S. Apostleship of the Sea from his base in Corpus Christi, Tex., summed it up in Miami at the final

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# Love Boat Food

by Judith Moore

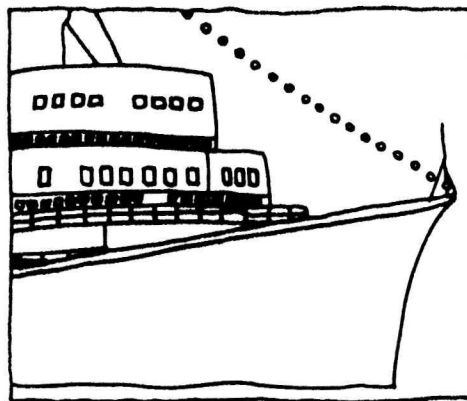
**Y**ou no longer have to book passage on the Love Boat to eat Love Boat food. Today numerous hotels, private clubs, chain motel dining rooms and mid-priced restaurants in shopping malls offer cruise-ship-style brunch and dinner buffets for on-shore diners. These all-you-can-eat buffets, decorated with ice carvings and offering tableside service, charge \$15 to \$30 per person.

Recently when I was on a three-day Love Boat cruise I encountered the gaudy buffet. Food heaped high shimmered under heat lamps, shimmered on crushed ice, bubbled atop steam tables. Lean seafarers from Central America and Asia served. They watched plump White hands empty bowls and platters.

I saw men and women load potatoes, gelatins, marbled red-meat, chicken legs, on foot-wide plates. The ship's food, overdressed, overdone and past its prime, evoked a latter-day Whore of Babylon. Back on land people would not, I thought, eat as they did on board ship. People would not gorge where they meet neighbors. But they do. Open the newspaper. See the advertisements: "All You Can Eat."

Despite *haute cuisine* (stiff, federal, imposing, buttery) and the reformation *nouvelle cuisine* (Zen-style fetishism) an increasing number of Americans fill up at on-land cruise buffets. Anyone who can pay, can play.

It's not cheap. I found my terra firma eat-your-heart-out in Berkeley. Menu



and public gluttony appeared as rich in metaphor at the edge of the Bay as it had between troughs of waves off Baja California. In this pop, eating-out ambience you discover All-American does not mean "egalitarian and inclusive." It means White middle class.

White middle class food starts with the Jamestown Thanksgiving feast, updated. Add northern and western European dishes. Take out garlic. Put in more sugar, more salt, chemical flavor buds, butterfat and milk solids.

It is so much more than food. What it is, is subtle. We are so full of it and surrounded by it we do not recognize its history and politics and psychology. This cuisine is built on nostalgia. The era is long gone that evolved its menu.

The escaloped potatoes au gratin, the potato salad, the cole slaw, the Parker-

house rolls, the Golden Glow salad spread out across the buffet are as likely to bring tears to eyes as to make a mouth water. This is the menu of pre-World War II innocence.

The buffet menu elaborates on Midwestern holiday feasts, on ladies' bridge club luncheons, on the wedding reception dinner. It serves the pickles, salads, hot rolls, savorys and casseroles carried to church potlucks. It spreads out the elaborate gelatins and angel food cakes our forebears called "the funeral meats." It is what they eat in Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* town, Gopher Prairie. It is the food and way of life which Lewis' anti-bourgeois heroine, Carol, rebels against by serving chop suey. Chop suey makes Carol anathema in Gopher Prairie.

We the people, as individuals, families, a nation, are not who we once were. The food has changed too. In the mind this food is the ambrosia of our lost Eden. (In the mouth, it is ashes.) The small farms and orchards that raised its turkeys and pie apples are now agribusinesses. These ag-bus corporations grow food on foreign lands that are used as U.S. plantations, hoed by men and women who are quasi-slaves. You see these landless people ladling food from cruise ship and U.S. restaurant steam tables.

One-third of the U.S. people (80 million) are overweight. In 1982 the overweight spent \$10 billion to get thin. Half the diners heaping plates at the on-land cruise buffet look fat.

Bellies pop out over white belts and stretch shirtfronts. Thighs and buttocks

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Judith Moore is a free-lance journalist based in Berkeley, Cal.



move like heavy machinery under tight skirts. Father looks at mother. He says, "We sure are getting our money's worth, babe."

Look at it:

Above a pyramid of sliced fruits (the cantaloupe is hard, unripe; the orange slices are pithy), the sculptured ice swan arches its neck. The ice dolphin leaps from a sea of radish roses poised over the cantilevered tiers of shrimp, crab legs, crab claws, oysters, steamed clams. (Only the oysters had not been frozen. When the crab, shrimp, etc., are put onto the diner's plate, they melt and leave a briny puddle.)

Walk past molded gelatin salads and desserts. The tomato aspic mixed with black olives and canned "baby" shrimp is formed into a fish. The fish lays on its side stretched across lettuce leaves. The fish's scales are dill pickle slices. Its one big gelatin eye looks up through an olive ring, whose pimento has been removed.

Emerald, topaz and ruby gelatins float with fruit cocktail and miniature marshmallows. They are turned out as toques and turbans and garden party skimmers decorated with mint, orange slices, cherries with stems and aerosol-released whipped cream ruffles. After the first servings are removed, the hats look disheveled. You expect a fallen bobby pin on the cut glass plate.

Smell the macho prime rib, glazed ham and Tom Turkey. Look at Tom's white paper pantaloons, his basted legs akimbo. White clouds puff out along trays set in steam tables. Sauces gurgle and percolate.

Poke at the sea legs. A sea leg, you learn, is reconstituted sole, whitefish, and crab. It is sweetened and pressed into fish stick lengths and striped along the sides with lobster red dye. A sea leg is the essence of ersatz. It tastes awful. But the motive of this cuisine is not to enhance ingredients. It only means to replicate American food dreams on a cost-effective basis.

Appearance persistently beats out essence. As Lewis' unfortunate heroine, Carol, learned in Gopher Prairie, the celebration's credo is: "We know how to have a good time without having too much fun."

In the mouth this food is polite. It does not embarrass by tasting "strong." It is never brilliant or complex, never noisy, never difficult to chew. To its eaters, this food says they have socio-economically arrived. This food assures its consumers they are out of the ghetto, off the farm and on the town. It doesn't talk politics. It *is* politics. It doesn't talk religion. What would be the point?

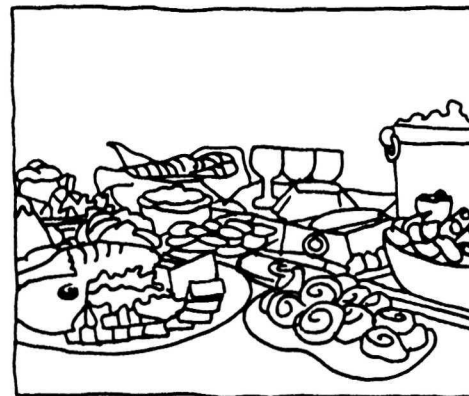
This is an arrogant cuisine. It dominates the globe as the cuisine of First World progress. Like English as language, blonde as beautiful, Muzak as music, and the formula-feeding of babies, this food has become international style.

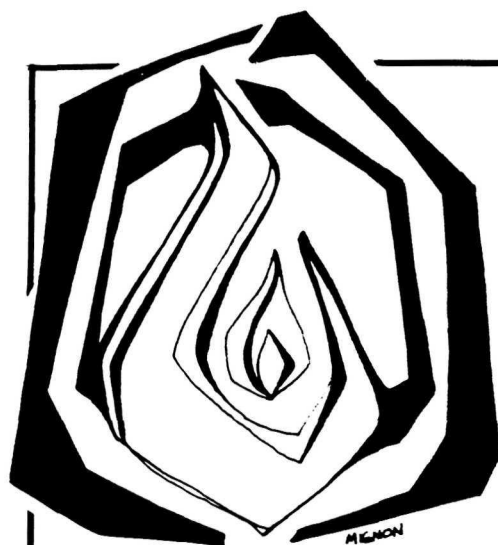
It is the *mal gout* — bad taste — that follows our progress everywhere, carrying wherever it goes its microwave ovens,

walk-in freezers, dehydrated potatoes, cake mixes, unassuageable hunger, White skin privilege and middle class values. Aggrandizement of race, class, longing and nostalgia, carried in sea legs and escalloped potatoes and ruby gelatin, could not have happened without agribusiness, saturation advertising, modern food processing, rapid transportation, First World planting of Third World land.

In our own domestic dining rooms this cuisine's memorializing of frilly gelatin and Tom Turkey is pathos. But when these foods strew their hideous manna across the world, while this food circles the globe with astronauts as "the right stuff," it is aggression.

In our time, ersatz has triumphantly taken the place of *esse*. Transnational inns can replicate the bonhomie of Lewis' *Main Street*. Any small town in the United States and any country in the world can prepare and serve food that does to meat and potatoes what the Hammond organ does to Bach fugues, what that ship of fools, the Love Boat, does to romance. Bon appetit! ■





# Learning God's 'Yes'

by F. Forrester Church

**W**hen I was growing up I believed in God without questioning what I really meant by this. God was God and that was that. My three-year-old son has reached about the same level of theological sophistication that I had achieved at a somewhat more advanced age. You ask him where God lives. He points to the sky and goes on with his business.

In my case, more important than the existence of God was that of the goblins and evil spirits that lurked under my bed at night. About them I knew at least this much. When my mother turned on the light, got on her hands and knees, raised the bedspread, and looked under the bed, they were gone. When she turned off the light and left the room, they returned in force to haunt me.

In my early years God figured in precisely the opposite fashion. When things were going well, when I did not need God, God was there. I believed in God without worrying too much about why I did. When darkness fell and I was troubled, when I experienced what in later years would recur periodically as a dark night of the soul, I could not sense God anywhere.

So it was that I decided that if God did exist, God was not important to me. Other things were infinitely more so. I believed in what I could see, what I could touch, what I could learn, what I could love. Compared to these the wonders of a distant God in heaven held no allure. I found myself believing in the rainbow but not in the pot of gold at the end of it. If it did exist, it was not

important to me. Or, more precisely, I knew enough or thought I did, not to search for it, for such a search would be in vain. By the time I closed in, the rainbow would be gone.

None of this has changed. I still believe in the vanishing rainbow as I do in the dark sky over the mountains. But I also believe in God, and I believe that God is important to me. The God I believe in now is different from the God I did not believe in then. Here are some of the differences.

The God I believe in now does not intercede, like a royal eagle swooping down from on high, to save the day for those who, outnumbered and outflanked, fight under God's banner . . . the God I believe in does not play favorites when it comes to faith or creed. The God I believe in is not male or female or any divine combination of the two. All this I know or think I know. On the other hand, I do not know, and think I will never know, just what the God I believe in is. The God I believe in remains a mystery to me. It is hard to put into words, but let me share with you my own experience of the mystery of God.

If my theology is grounded anywhere, it is upon the principles of humility and openness. As to the first of these — and it may be a truism — the more I know of life and death and God, the greater my ignorance appears. Beyond every ridge lies another slope and beyond every promontory looms yet another vast and awesome range. However far we trek, while cursed (or blessed) with the knowledge of our own mortality, we shall never finally know the answer to the question why. This, by the way, is one of the reasons I cannot embrace a rigidly dogmatic faith. Even should the dogma be

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**F. Forrester Church, M.Div., Ph.D.,** is minister of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City. He is the son of former Senator Frank Church of Idaho.

fashioned wholly according to my own liking, experience tells me that it would not stand the test, my own test, of growth, unfolding truth and time.

This, then, is the lesson of humility. Alone, it is insufficient, teaching us only what we cannot hope to know. On the other hand, openness, the possibility of principle, invites us to probe life as deeply as we can, without regard to limits. So it is that, accepting my smallness while remaining open to explore as fully as possible the unresolvable mystery of my own and our shared being, I find myself growing in faith. The mystery of life becomes ever more deep and wondrous, the gift of life ever more precious and unaccountable. By remaining open to the unknown, one dares to enter further into it. One grows in knowledge, yes, and in ignorance, but one also grows in wonder and, finally, in trust.

My own forays are usually journeys taken in meditation or prayer, but they also may come about through the medium of music, or nature, or some magical moment of human interaction. Losing oneself one finds oneself, and one's whole perspective is changed. Here words begin to fail me. I can only describe the experience as one of mystical union in that which is greater than all of its parts and yet present in each, that which gives meaning to all, beyond explanation, beyond knowing or naming.

This power which I cannot explain or know or name I call God. God is not God's name. God is my name for the mystery that looms within and arches beyond the limits of my being. Life force, spirit of life, ground of being, these too are names for the unnameable which I am now content to call my God.

When I pray to God, God's answer

comes to me from within and not from beyond. God's answer is Yes, not to the specifics of my prayer, but in response to my hunger for meaning and peace. God's answer is not a what or a how or a when but a yes. Choose life and trust life. Grow in service and in love. Take nothing for granted. Be thankful for the gift. Suffer well. Dare to risk much. Consecrate your world with laughter and with tears. And know not what I am or who I am or how I am, know only that I am with you. This is God's answer to my prayer.

As I plunge deeper, in fits and starts, seeking to penetrate the mystery of God, the mystery grows. It grows in wonder and in power, in moment and in depth. There are times when God is not with me, so many times. Times of distraction, fragmentation, alienation, brokenness. But when I open myself to God, incrementally my wholeness is restored. Perhaps that which I call the mystery of God is no more than the mystery of life itself. I cannot know, nor do I care, for the power that emanates from deep within the heart of this mystery is redemptive. It is divine. By opening myself to it, without ever hoping or presuming to understand it, I find peace.

The mystery of God will remain a mystery. That, I suppose, is as it should be. Anything less would fail to do justice to the miracle of consciousness, of love and of pain, of life and of death. Responding to this miracle, responding to God's Yes, I can do no other than to answer "Yes" in return. "Yes, I place my trust in Thee. Yes, I offer up my heartfelt thanks."

(Reprinted with permission by the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, No. 1.) ■

## The Crown of Thorns Is Blooming

On four inches of unlikely stem  
(thorn upon thorn upon thorn)  
comes a bud  
looking for all the world  
like another thorn.

But it will open:  
two precise petals, blood red,  
perfect and perfectly vulnerable  
indelibly stamping the world with  
"Ephemeral; thus inexpressibly precious."

Blood, Life, Tears, Joy, Death,  
Resurrection. All these.  
I marvel that a blossom  
(so small a one)  
sustains the symbolism  
that I desperately suck from it.

Strong it stands  
pushed out of vicious,  
yet sustaining, stalk  
(thorn upon thorn upon thorn).

Lord, God of Creation,  
the Crown of Thorns is blooming.  
If it can bloom  
then I can live  
and not just live, but sing.

—Muriel Thiessen Stackley

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### ***Ships . . . Continued from page 15***

session, "The pluralism of the seafaring world compels the chaplain to be a collaborator. There must be a genuine spirit of ecumenism . . ."

In that spirit and with support from the trade union representatives present, the conference adopted a series of resolutions toward a strategy of action. How successful they will be in improving the conditions for seafarers remains to be seen. While the church is ever hopeful that the "good" shipowners will find it in their moral and economic interest to impose reform on the "bad" shipowners, history and economic reality suggest that a confrontation of some sort will probably be necessary.

Point Nine of the strategy plan adopted by the conference sets the stage for such a confrontation. If reform is not forthcoming, it calls for a consumer boycott of the cruise lines and ships which are the worst offenders against the basic rights of seafarers. Taking a leaf from the farmworker's lettuce and other boycotts, the church and trade union forces in Miami appeared fully committed to the organization of such a worldwide boycott if other efforts fail. At this writing it appears virtually certain that the Seamen's Church Institute and the Center for Seafarers' Rights will soon be heading a major struggle for economic justice which will compel the attention and support of the religious and the secular community.

### ***Ministry . . . Continued from page 14***

- 1960: The Institute opened the Mariners' International Center at Port Newark/Elizabeth, N.J. Today the Center and its sports field is still the only seamen's service facility in the area.

- 1968: The Institute's South Street building was replaced by its present 23-story Manhattan facility overlooking Battery Park. Its services include ship visiting, lodging, postal services, baggage storage, library, personal and career counseling, pastoral care, emergency assistance, a seafarer's rights center, Merchant Marine and Radar Schools, and its Roosevelt Institute of Maritime Studies for shorebased personnel.

Today, increased volunteer participation and parish support at both its Manhattan and Port Newark installations enhance the effectiveness of the Institute's work.

A recent and welcome addition to the Institute's ship visiting ministry is the Rev. Barbara Crafton, who serves as port chaplain out of both Port Newark and Port Elizabeth.

Her two daughters frequently accompany her, to the delight of the seafarers, who are drawn to them like magnets. "You can really tell how much they miss their own children by the way they gravitate toward mine,"

Crafton says.

But her presence is perhaps most appreciated by women who work on the ships, who are "happy to see another woman, just to talk," she said. "There are a lot more women on board ships today than you'd think. Of course they are largely serving as stewards, a traditional women's occupation, but many are now in other roles, like radio operators. Some 30% of the Russian radio operators are women."

Crafton says that loneliness is one



**The Rev. Barbara Crafton**

of the chief problems shared by all seafarers, which leads to broken marriages and family problems. "But women seem to be able to handle loneliness better than men. They are less disoriented by it," she said.

One of the reasons may be that many women set a certain distance from their male companions at sea to avoid sexual assault or sexual complications. "If you are the one lone woman on board ship with 30 guys, you have to set strong limits from the outset. Most of the women tend to have platonic relations with their colleagues; and the most successful keep to themselves. Many people we know feel apart and alienated. Seafarers live it," Crafton said.

The Seamen's Church Institute's commitment is to serve the seafarer as a "whole person," in all that this implies. This means extending its ministry to the larger community as well, where many of the issues affecting seafarers must ultimately be resolved. In this regard, maritime safety, education and training, and human rights and port advocacy are four areas of major emphasis for the future. Those wishing to support its work should contact the Rev. James Whittemore, Seamen's Church Institute, 15 State St., New York, N.Y. 10004.



## Short Takes

### Choosing Sides

We might as well admit it: *Nothing* is as distasteful to most Episcopalians as getting into the position of having plainly to choose sides.

Now that's not all bad. The tendency to choose sides too quickly is the source of much evil. Sometimes, choosing sides *at all* is wrong for it often assumes there is a simple right and wrong in an otherwise complex situation.

But we might as well *also* admit there *are* times and issues which demand choosing sides. One of those times is now. One of those issues is militarism generally and nuclear weaponry specifically.

There is a diocesan "Commission of Inquiry" on the issue of nuclear weaponry. Along with its parent, the "Peace Commission," it is exhibiting the normal Episcopalian distaste for choosing sides in public.

There is much concern about not offending people (the Episcopal Church in the Washington area would drastically shrink were all military people, CIA employees, and administration functionaries suddenly to become Baptists!).

But stripped of all the complexities used to befuddle Congress and the electorate, to justify putting the matter solely into the hands of "the experts," the issue comes down to the same one Joshua defined to the people of Yahweh gathered at Shechem: "... choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your forebears served on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)

**The Rev. Jack Woodard**  
Washington, D.C.  
Quoted in *Bread*

### Church and Just Wage

While the church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that everyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Those who serve the church by their labor should receive a sufficient livelihood and enjoy that social security which is customary. The church doesn't say, "if it's good enough for Mother Teresa, it's good enough for you."

—**The Rev. Richard McBrien, Theologian**  
*Initiatives*

## It's our birthday and you get the gift.

Coming in May!  
our special  
10th Anniversary supplement . . .



Ten years ago, eleven women defied the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church of the United States and claimed for themselves the right to be ordained. In the inner-city Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia on a hot summer day, three bishops "irregularly" ordained the eleven to the priesthood. Those three bishops included then WITNESS editor Robert L. DeWitt.

We will examine in a special issue of THE WITNESS • Why the participants chose to take such a revolutionary step • How that historical moment has influenced the present • What it portends for the future.

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Editorial . . . Continued from page 4  
leadership of the FALN" in FBI  
press releases distributed to the  
media.

Soon headlines, even in the  
prestigious *New York Times*, were  
shouting "FALN Trial" and  
"Accused Terrorists" as the  
defendants began to undergo trial  
by newspaper.

Yet the five remained silent.  
Except, perhaps for the question  
addressed to certain church people,  
"Who do you say that I am?" In a  
dramatic day in court, four bishops  
and three layworkers came forth to  
testify as character witnesses. It  
was this testimony that was largely  
credited for the reduced sentences.

To the end, the accused  
remained silent before the Grand  
Jury. Why didn't they talk? What  
harm, if they had nothing to hide?

Bishop Coleman McGehee,  
Chair of the Episcopal Church  
Publishing Company, said, "That  
question may seem reasonable  
enough to those who have never  
been the object of an FBI  
investigation, but members of  
minority, dissident, and alienated  
groups know from grim experience  
that authorities are not above  
bullying, intimidation, and  
harassment."

In their interview in this issue of  
THE WITNESS, Steve and Maria  
warn of a climate of mounting  
political repression which they  
discern will be coming down not  
only on minorities, but on political  
dissenters in general, such as non-  
violent resisters who disagree with  
U.S. policies on nuclear power and  
militarization. Thus it may be that  
in the end, the Hispanics enroute  
to jail will have stood up not only  
for their own people, but for the  
rights of all of us.

(M.L.S. and the editors)

## New Beatitudes

### Blessed are . . .

- those with mental problems;  
they may know the miracle the rest call normal.
- those with serious disability or illness;  
they may cherish this assumption called *being*.
- those who have known addiction;  
they will know the value of possessing one's soul  
in rest and quietness.
- those whose child has died;  
they have withstood the most painful bereavement.
- those who have reconciled their marital problems;  
they may know both forgiveness and faithful love's worth.
- those who have mangled a car;  
they may respect the power they control.
- those whose house is robbed;  
in an empty room their most precious belonging most  
clearly may be seen.
- the aged;  
they know life is more than the carrots  
pursued by the young.
- the unemployed;  
they may realize a fat economy is no substitute  
for social justice.
- the bankrupt;  
they may discover real riches.
- those who are falsely arrested, accused, or imprisoned;  
they may learn that only *one* Judge is competent to  
judge over life and death.

*Blessed are you, if you have gone to war to serve your  
ideal of human civilization's highest achievement; and you  
find yourself abandoned among bodies and lives that are  
blown to meaningless ugly sickening scraps; and you find  
shells of people or of buildings, where souls once dwelt; and  
where corruption, addiction, greed, hypocrisy, power, and  
selfish ambition count more than reason or life; and there is  
no difference between paranoia and reality, fear and rest.  
Blessed are you, for you have made a great discovery. Apart  
from God's Way, this is sinful mankind's highest achieve-  
ment: and it is hell. Blessed are you, for you will know the  
meaning of the words, "God forgive!" "God have mercy!"  
and "God save us!"; and you may turn to God's Way, and  
live!*

— The Rev. John F. LaVoe, Rector  
All Saints Church  
Utica, N.Y.

Letters . . . Continued from page 3  
of its own citizens.

I, along with these people, cannot claim to have experienced any degree of hardship resulting from present policy as a matter of choice. Not a single wandering soul I encountered while at large in America voluntarily chose their plight. Not the young couple curled up in a driving rain, lying on the front steps of a warehouse; not a middle-aged man whose ankles were broken, who painfully staggers unemployable through the streets of New York; not the student in his first year of college who, unable to afford housing, sleeps during the day in his school library; not the mother and her two children forced into a shelter because of financial difficulties.

None of us, Peter Fox, chose our circumstances as a matter of principled protest. Like you, I join in expressing outrage and contempt for those who in their own country enjoy all the benefits of society while turning their backs on the less fortunate.

In degree, you have chosen to join the economically dispossessed at a time when the fashion is for individuals to grab as much for themselves as is (in)humanly possible. This is why I am writing respectfully to you for your courage and convictions and your decency. In principle, Peter Fox, you have chosen what few now choose.

**Michael Paschal**  
Cambridge, Mass.

*(Peter Fox has informed THE WITNESS that he appreciates Michael Paschal's letter, as well as the score of supportive letters from WITNESS readers across the country who wrote to him personally after he resigned his commission in protest of U.S. policy in Central America. Fox, city editor of the Billings Gazette, said that of the mail received at his newspaper following his resignation, two-thirds was supportive, one-third against. — Eds.)*

## Voices to Northwoods

The February issue, as usual, was excellent, especially Michael Parenti's article, "We Win the War and Lose Our Souls" and William Stringfellow's "The Politics of Pastoral Care." My thanks for making it possible for these voices to be heard in our Northwoods.

**Joan Heide**  
Rhinelander, Wisc.

## Co-opting Peace Thrust

I am appreciative of recent WITNESS articles addressing peace and disarmament. At the same time, I am deeply concerned that the Anglican commitment to consensus is co-opting the thrust of peace efforts. Righteous indignation is matched with other points of view in parish and diocesan peace commissions and what has the potential for being a strong voice for change is lost in polite

conversation and lengthy educational approaches.

While we form commissions, study the issues and work for consensus the world rushes ever closer to the extinction of life. Are there those in the hierarchy of our church who have the courage to say "no" to nuclear weapons; to claim the Gospel as a defense and a mandate?

Alas, I am frustrated. We may, one day, reach consensus on something in our church, but on the issue of nuclear war we are indulging ourselves with a luxury we can ill afford.

**The Rev. Ralph Pitman**  
Richmond, Va.

## Seeks Group Rate

Is there a group rate for THE WITNESS? So many of the articles should be read by many, I have proposed that St. Margaret's Guild of the Seaside Parish buy multiple copies and use it as a basis for discussion groups.

Could you send me a bundle of back issues as samples for our group?

**Dr. Prudence Dyer**  
Cannon Beach, Ore.

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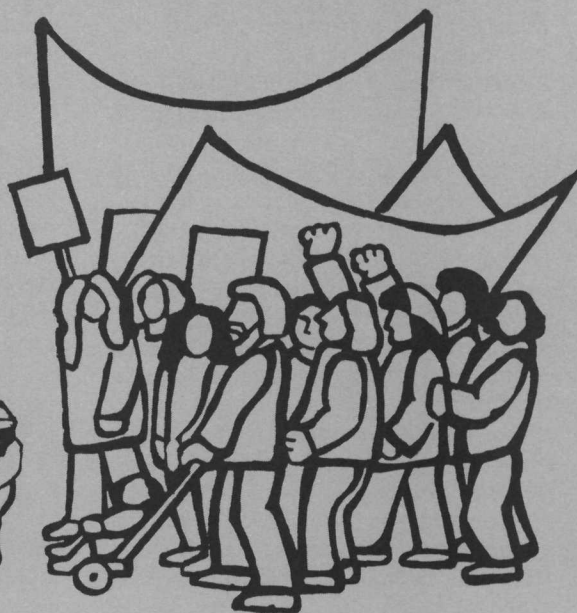
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