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THE WITNESS



On the advent of the bishops' economic pastoral

John Burt interviews
Rembert Weakland

Commentary:
Sheila Collins
Manning Marable

Letters

Questions 'gullibility'

I liked Grant Gallup's "Weep no more, Our Lady" in the August WITNESS, and he gave us an instructive catalog of tears in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. But I want to say another word for tears and even one for the "gullibility" Gallup decries.

The tears he cites are principally tears of suffering and some of "joy at a sinner turned from a life of futility." But tears can also be a means or a sign of inner healing. Something called "the gift of tears" is part of the Christian tradition and can be a significant step in spiritual growth. As John Donne said, tears imply a tender heart, "and the Holy Ghost loves to work in Wax, and not in Marble."

Gallup says this is an age of gullibility. If so, there's a potential beneficial aspect. As some people are liberated from the confining orthodoxies of science and medicine, they are open to accepting the reality of events, abilities and styles of healing which aren't necessarily measurable or experimentally repeatable.

Such openness may not translate immediately into social action or change. Yet acceptance of alternatives to the scientific medical establishment, for example, could be pretty revolutionary and empower the poor to enjoy and maintain good health. *That* might "put down the mighty" from some seats and "exalt those of low degree."

The Rev. Edward M. Berckman
Indianapolis, Ind.

Gallup Responds

Gullibility is a technique of swallowing whole, one that the liberating gospel teaches us to name, even in those who strain out gnats of religious dissent and swallow camels of secular orthodoxy. I

hope we don't confuse it with innocence, or simple taste, or an openness to surprise and experiment, in religion, medicine, or science. It's certainly true that the dromedary of the medical industry is no more palatable than the exhumed woolly mammoth of medieval religion, and to reverse the metaphor, gobbles up too much into its hump.

Yes, the modern medical center has pretensions, as well as Lourdes, and faith has healed at each, in spite of that. But the intertestamental bible's stories of Bel and the Dragon inspire us with Daniel both to laugh at religion that is wired up for tricks, and to feed our fearsome dragons of science and medicine a few hairballs, that they might burst open so that we can, as Daniel said, "see what you have been worshipping."

Grant Gallup
Chicago, Ill.

Fed up with women

Your September issue, stories and photographs, have increased my gorge beyond the limit. I am a veteran of 35 years of Catholic social action in the Episcopal Church. I have marched thousands of miles and engaged in hundreds of hours of Civil Rights demonstrations, including the 1963 March on Washington. I have been imprisoned in that cause, knocked down, and generally reviled. I have repeatedly, and as recently as this current year, demonstrated against nuclear armaments at the gates of the local air base. My curate and four of my lay people have been arrested for felonious trespassing at that base. I have agitated and said Mass at the Mexican border for immigration justice. I have brought my parish into the sanctuary movement, and we are now harboring political refugees

from Central America.

I was formally investigated by the FBI in 1953 and have an extensive, long-standing dossier with them. I have demonstrated against Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell with many members of my parish. I organized the Southern Arizona Friends of Farm Workers in the early '60s to support Cesar Chavez, and the Farm Workers' flag hangs in my sanctuary. The list goes on, and it would be indelicate of me to extend it. There was a time I would have voted in the General Convention (I went to three of them as a deputy) to ordain women to the priesthood. I defended that vote to this parish, and women and girls serve here at the altar.

But, you and *The Episcopalian*, and a whole host of others have gone too far. I am fed up. The September issue replete with tender and emotional pictures of female priests embracing and blessing and standing about in ill-fitting vestments, is a dead-horse-flogging I can no longer bear.

Women's ordination is neither the only issue before the church, nor the most important. The Roman Catholic Church resisting female ordination (whether wisely or unwisely) still manages to be the most important voice for justice in Asia and Latin America, and for nuclear disarmament in this country. At the same time, the ordaining of women in the Episcopal Church has brought no benefit whatever to the church's witness to the world, no wonderful redemptive outburst which has led the church to higher ground. Whether or not women ought to be ordained to the priesthood is no longer important, if it ever was. You, and the women themselves, have forgotten how to win and then shut up. The issue has now simply become a pain in the neck.

The suffering of women through not

being given equal opportunity in the Episcopal priesthood is petty and unimportant alongside the real moral questions. Those questions are, clearly, the preservation of life, absolute and immediate nuclear disarmament, attacking world starvation, justice in mines and factories through fair wages and decent conditions, abolition of the death penalty, the stopping of elective abortion. Beside those and connected issues, the matter of female ordination is pale, whimsical and silly.

If every active cure in the Episcopal Church were filled by a woman (a not unlikely development in the next 100 years), no more than 8,000 or 9,000 jobs are involved, many of them underpaid. Thus, no significant number of women have suffered in any appreciable degree by being denied ordination in this church.

If I see one more picture and read one more story of an overaged, divorced, discontented woman, fearful of her empty life, standing in a tasteless, hand-knitted stole, wagging her hands over the bread and wine on the altar, I am going to return to males-only at this parish altar.

**The Rev. Canon John C. Fowler
Tucson, Ariz.**

September delighted

I was delighted to read the article, "Justice, peace issues at Democratic convention," in the September WITNESS. The ecumenical efforts by Grace Cathedral, Glide Memorial Methodist Church, and St. Patrick's Catholic Church were largely ignored by the secular press.

On occasion, I have worshiped at both Grace and Glide. Each church was unique. At Grace I saw and heard the bagpipes celebrate the birth of a new parish by leading the delegation in singing *Amazing Grace*. At Glide I heard a rabbi lead the congregation in the "Lord's

Prayer" with feeling unexcelled in any all-Christian setting that I have ever experienced.

The article gave an inspiring revelation of how bodies with divergent modes of worship could join in a common effort to support the beliefs to which we all subscribe. It was warming to read of the participation by a rabbi whose sensitivity on social issues parallels that of our Christian beliefs.

The excerpts from Mario Cuomo's address, "The Stewardship of Political Power," delivered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine gave some concept of the relation of religion to politics. It was like a breath of fresh air.

The articles on the status of women in the church were all thoughtfully written. They pointed out that there is progress, but it is painfully slow. There are now women clergy and there will soon be Episcopal women bishops. Recently, a Black woman bishop was installed in the Northern-California-Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church. May the female Episcopal bishop be ordained soon!

Thank you for an excellent, thoughtful, challenging publication.

**Donald L. Tarr
Salinas, Cal.**

Exuded vitality, hope

What a fantastic September WITNESS with those gorgeous snapshots on the cover! I very much liked the 10th anniversary issue, "Daughters of Prophecy," (on women's priesthood) but history seems to have bitter overtones in the recalling.

The September issue showed life and the present, and every article — from Barbara Harris' superb recounting of the day to Mario Cuomo's enlightened essay on political power, from the visual Demo-

cratic Convention to Kenyatta's sensitive "Dear Momma" — exuded vitality and hope and the vision of a bright future in the 10 years to come.

I've needed an issue like that after so many describing gloom and destruction, though I know only too well it is all around us. Thanks!

**Annette Jecker
West Milford, N.J.**

Next: R.C. Women Priests

Your coverage of the 10th anniversary of the ordination of the Philadelphia 11 has been wonderful. I only pray that someday you will have the opportunity to cover the anniversary of the first women priests of my own Roman Catholic tradition.

**Barbara A. Jensen
Baltimore, Md.**

Faith Scudder's Core

Vida Scudder is indeed, one of the "Holy Righteous ancestors." Recalling her life so filled with the quest for social justice is a needed vista for our times. However, I found myself somewhat discomforted by Gordon Greathouse's article about her in the July WITNESS. While focusing on her varied social concerns, he fails to catch the essence of her being which is best seen as spiritual, liturgical and sacramental. She was a sort of secular monastic who truly caught the dialectical contradiction of being a citizen of a heavenly city in an alien, temporary abode.

Vida Scudder was a devout Anglo-Catholic with a regular prayer and Eucharist life. This old fashioned Anglo-Catholic faith with its developed social and theological I.Q. enabled her to espouse a socialism neither sectarian or

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Pastoral on economy signal event

This month the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is scheduled to release the first draft of a pastoral letter on "Catholic Social Teaching and the American Economy." It is a signal event. Its subject matter and the consultative process already initiated by the bishops make it bid fair to equal or exceed the widespread and important public discussion and debate generated by the bishops' 1983 peace pastoral.

A tentative timetable has the second draft scheduled for spring 1985 and the third and final one in November 1985, after further hearings and discussions both within and beyond the church. Thus, there will be a full year of debate, led by the largest and most influential Christian body in the country.

We heartily commend our sister denomination for the special appropriateness of the topic for Christian debate. And the discussion process, which like the Peace Pastoral, appears carefully designed to engage both the

churches and society, is worthy of praise. The first draft — if it at all probes the realities of our current economic life — should come as a healthy antidote to a presidential campaign whose dominant theme was the return to prosperity. This collective illusion into which the populace has been drawn has marvelously papered over, for the moment, the deepening economic and social malaise of the country.

We earnestly hope that the bishops will not limit themselves strictly to a treatment of economics without examining the deeper assumptions of our economic system itself. To do so would be to grant implicitly the autonomous nature of economic life, conceding to its laws and movements a loftiness unwarranted either by history or our religious tradition. The special contribution which our Judeo-Christian heritage brings to such a debate is a deeply moral dimension that places *all* economic theory and practice (as well as our social, cultural and political practices and traditions) under the

scrutiny of larger human and social concerns. Those concerns derive directly from the biblical doctrines of creation, stewardship, and the sacred community. They teach us that the Creator made us *all* in the divine image; that we are to share as stewards of that creation, which really belongs to the Creator; and that in the human community the needs of the least shall be treated with priority.

This should free persons in the Christian tradition from the need to conform to suppositions elevating our present economic system (or, for that matter, any other) to a position beyond questioning. For example, in the year ahead, the bishops ought to ask whether the use and deployment of huge amounts of private capital is becoming destructive of communities and counter-productive for working people; whether "the economy" increasingly requires, for its "health" (as if it is some kind of "being") the existence of a permanent underclass, as in

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WITNESS solicits views on economy document

The first draft of what promises to be a controversial document, a pastoral letter on "Catholic Social Teaching and the American Economy," will be made public by the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States, meeting in Washington, D.C., in mid-November.

Even before it has seen the light of day, the anticipation of what it may say has generated criticism. *Fortune* magazine has editorialized, "Continuing to act out the axiom that God intended them to be social planners, the bishops are once again on the secular stage and once again threaten to unclarify the issue."

Former secretary of the Treasury, William Simon, and Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, have brought together a group of Catholic laypersons (including Gen. Alexander

Haig and Clare Booth Luce) to monitor what they perceive to be the liberal distortions on Vatican II. One of the members of that group, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., retired chief of Naval Operations, states his fear bluntly: "The bishops seek to appeal to the good in man. But that makes them unrealistic . . . They fail to see that what works most efficiently is that which flows from greed."

The New York Times has reported that one White House advisor, fearing the worst, suggested that the Reagan administration, tardy in developing a response to the bishops Peace Pastoral, had "better be out in front of this one." And perhaps prosperous Catholics should "take a bishop to lunch."

At the suggestion of THE WITNESS, the Rt. Rev. John H. Burt, retired Bishop of Ohio and current chair of the

Urban Bishops Coalition of the Episcopal Church, spent an hour in conversation with the Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Milwaukee, who chairs the committee of bishops who are drafting the Pastoral on the Economy. Their conversation is reported in the adjacent pages.

Debate on the pastoral's contents will ensue over the next year. To involve readers in that debate, THE WITNESS invited two commentators to describe what they anticipate — from a woman's viewpoint and from a Third World posture. Sheila Collins, noted Methodist writer and theologian, and Manning Marable, educator and columnist, offer their readouts of what is to come and urge readers to compare how well they guessed after the document emerges.

'Policy suggestions will jar'

— Archbishop Rembert Weakland
in interview with Bishop John Burt

Bishop Burt: I don't suppose you would give me an advance look at the long awaited Economic Pastoral.

Archbishop Weakland: No. Our committee has agreed not to divulge the text until the bishops meet. But I will say this: The central debate will focus on the ethical and moral questions implied in economic decision-making. We do not believe, as some do, that economics is by nature morally neutral. In truth, of course, the economy is very much a part of the whole social scene. Even though economics has its own laws, it does intersect and intertwine with ethical and moral issues affecting all human beings in the nation. There is a growing awareness of the demands of the Gospel that affect our most fundamental life choices, as you yourself know. Since Vatican Council II, our Catholic population has become more conscious of how the Gospel mandates should affect their lifestyle. The Sermon on the Mount and its perspectives continue to challenge all of us in new ways. More and more, Catholics are asking what the beatitudes mean for them. These reflections go beyond the realm of academic analysis and consist in practical application to today's world as well. What precisely did Jesus mean in those stark statements about the dangers of riches? Does that say anything to us today? Thoughtful people are agonizing over these questions.

Burt: How long ago did the bishops decide to do a Pastoral Letter on the American economy?

Weakland: We made the decision during a meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1980. That was, incidentally, the same meeting we also authorized the preparation of the Peace Pastoral. We had just issued a letter on "Marxist Communism" and a sequel on "Capitalism" appeared appropriate. It seemed only natural for the bishops in the United States, truly the leading nation in world economy, to reflect on the nature of that particular economy and not just the Communist system. The pastoral was not approached in a negative atmosphere or with negative prejudices; rather the bishops were simply recognizing the fact that we in the United States were passing through a new and critical moment in our economic history, one quite

different from previous economic changes. It also had to be admitted that our economic positions affect other nations, especially Third World countries, in decisive ways. These new dimensions called for new reflections.

Burt: The Peace Pastoral came out first, of course, two years ago. Did you learn any lessons from that experience?

Weakland: Yes, indeed. The Peace Pastoral convinced us of the importance of getting extensive feedback from a broad spectrum of opinion before the document is cast in final form. The second and third readings, followed by discussion, were especially helpful. So the Economic Pastoral will be debated in both the spring and fall of 1985, following its introduction this November, before we plan to put it to a vote. Another thing we learned was the need to set up instruments for education and dissemination of the document after it becomes adopted.

Burt: To whom have you listened?

Weakland: We have listened to roughly 100 different people — economists; union leaders, both men and women; laboring people, including people from the garment industry; business leaders; moralists; theologians; workers with the poor. Most of them came at our invitation. But some groups solicited us for a chance to testify. No one we invited turned us down.

Burt: Did you listen to religious spokespersons from traditions other than Roman Catholic?

Weakland: Yes. The National Council of Churches selected a number to testify. There was another hearing with Jewish leadership.

Burt: What about the voice of women and women's issues?

Weakland: We heard from those concerned about the feminization of poverty. There were also women among the economists who testified. Of course, you know our next Pastoral Letter will be on the role of women.

Burt: What about testimony from Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities?



Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, who chairs the Roman Catholic Bishops' Committee responsible for the economic pastoral, speaks with parishioners.

Weakland: We tried our best to hear their concerns. I think our efforts were adequate.

Burt: Are we due for some surprises when the pastoral comes out?

Weakland: Well, the subject, as you know, is complicated by nature. It is also vast. The document is not written to be a popularization of the topic. And it is at this point far too long.

Burt: I understand from *The New York Times Magazine* that the letter will focus on four areas: employment generation, adequate income for the poor, U.S. trade with developing countries and economic planning. Is that accurate?

Weakland: No, not really. *The Times* failed to stress that the Economic Pastoral is divided into two sections. The first and most important one is the biblical and theological vision which some secular reporters like to jump over to get to the second section where that vision is applied in the four broad areas you mention.

Burt: Were you influenced much by the recent Canadian bishops' "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis"?

Weakland: Well, we studied it, of course. But that paper had very modest biblical and theological undergirding. It was a product of the Commission on Social Affairs only and not voted on by the entire Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Burt: Has the Simon/Novak "watchdog committee" of Catholic laymen bothered you much?

Weakland: No. There was a similar committee monitoring the Peace Pastoral during its months of preparation. They have a legitimate right to do what they are doing. I have met with Michael Novak three times and with their entire committee one day here in Milwaukee.

Burt: Are you going to identify any "villains" in the American economic scene?

Weakland: Well, the letter will have many things that challenge present arrangements, even as the Gospel does. You cannot avoid that — thank God. Much of it will draw on Catholic social teaching that is pretty sharp on matters of human injustice. We won't have "ad hominem" attacks but there will be policy suggestions that will jar.

Burt: You've just returned from the Vatican where, I assume, you showed a draft to Pope John Paul. What was his reaction?

Weakland: Actually, I did not see the Holy Father. I did share the document with Cardinal Casaroli and with staff of the Pontifical Commission on Peace and Justice. And they were encouraging and supportive of what they saw. The decision not to show the Pope the letter was made because if he didn't react we would be disappointed, while if he did react, his comments would be quoted over and over again and would prejudice further discussion.

Burt: Do you think the current debate among presidential candidates, cardinals and others over the role of religion in politics will help or hinder the reception of your letter?

Weakland: I really cannot say. But one thing I know: It was wise to delay the release of the first draft of the Economic Pastoral until after the election. Had we not done so, the letter would already be a political football.

Burt: Most Episcopalians and other Protestants feel uncomfortable if their bishops or bishop types draft position papers without involving lay representatives in the process. What have you done to include such views in the drafting process?

Weakland: Well, in the Roman Catholic Church our polity places the teaching responsibility in the hands of bishops. But our drafting staff in Washington is about one half priests and one half lay persons. The consultants we have engaged to work with the entire process include lay economists and lay moral theologians. There is a member of the economics faculty at Harvard and one from Notre Dame, for example.

Burt: Why do some people fear what they think you may say?

Weakland: One reason is the widespread fear of government involvement in the economy. There is fear that we are going to recommend some sort of return to the "New Deal." Since the church is concerned with the plight of poor people, there is the assumption that the section of our document on planning for their welfare is going to be an attack on the present economic system. There is also fear by some that the committee will somehow declare the free-market system as intrinsically evil and incompatible with the Gospel. The committee has certainly not approached the matter in this way, but has been, from my personal point of view, quite even-handed. The fear that the good which the capitalist system has produced will be overlooked in the light of difficulties which have surfaced may be a legitimate one, since Catholic social teaching does not and has not excelled

in enthusiastic encomiums to economic systems. Actually members of the committee recognize these goods and would hope that through reflection on deeper societal values some of the results that might be less desirable could be reduced or eliminated.

Burt: But isn't there a suspicion by some that you may make American business a whipping boy for our economic inequities?

Weakland: I can only say, in response to that fear, that the committee has probably consulted that area of the economic community more than any other. We also recognize the complexity of economic decisions and the valid differing analyses of the same factual data by different economists. Each decision demands a trade-off and it is not easy sometimes to assess the results with absolute accuracy. But business is not the only actor involved — government and labor have their role and responsibility as well.

Burt: Will you comment on the *Fortune* magazine attack? The editors of that magazine contend the real reason you've delayed issuing this letter is that you "do not wish to dramatize the fact that [your] economics are well to the left of every candidate you could name except maybe Jesse Jackson and that the document [you] produce will be a paean to planning."

Weakland: That the word "planning" is a sensitive one is true, since it means different things to different people. The committee is well aware of all the problems connected with that word; but planning exists everywhere in life, in the field of economics as well, because it is part of the very rational nature of the human person. To avoid a discussion of that phenomenon would be naive today. As for the *Fortune* criticism, one senses here an undercurrent of old secularism: "Religion stay out, only we secularists have anything to say about society. Leave ethics out. The human person and society are well-functioning machines where decision-making need be done only on the basis of what makes the most profit." The *Fortune* article indicates that there is a certain resentment if the church communities suggest that economics is but one aspect of the whole social fabric and not isolated from it.

Burt: One final question. How will the Economic Pastoral affect the Roman Catholic Church?

Weakland: There is no question that the church must also examine itself and its practices as an economic actor with the same kind of responsibilities as any kind of big business. We have to think in international, global terms. The church is already a multinational moral force and so it is already in place to examine and speak about the moral implications of economic issues. ■

Commentary:

Pastoral welcome, long overdue

by Sheila Collins

I welcome the bishops' pastoral on the economic system. It is long overdue — by about 200 years. Perhaps if the bishops had had the foresight to respond to Adam Smith when he first proposed the theory of the “invisible hand” of the free market as a system which was contrary to Christian principles (since it was based on the engine of individual greed), it might have made a difference. Having more temporal power in those days, the bishops might have been able to enforce their pronouncements.

But I wonder what practical difference the bishops' pastoral will make to Barbara, who called me the other day, desperate and frightened. Barbara is Black, the mother of a 17-year-old son, drug-dependent, living with an abusive husband, jobless, about to be evicted from her windowless apartment below a “greasy spoon.” She is suffering from lupus and a leaking heart valve. Barbara is the excess baggage, a member of the “un-productive sector” that the Reagan administration has cast out into the cold. Barbara is also kind, intelligent, proud, sweet-natured, and a child of God. But

economic analysts are not interested in those latter characteristics. In fact, they don't even count her in the unemployment statistics, since she has long since given up looking for work.

I knew Barbara when she was bright-eyed, when her skin shone like polished bronze and her Afro framed her head like a halo. The Barbara I knew spoke proudly of her son and of her intention to go back to school so that she could get a better job. Her deterioration began when her secretarial job was restructured from under her by the church bureaucracy she was working for. She was replaced by a fancy new word processor. At about the same time, she lost the apartment she shared with her mother and son in a low-income housing project. The project, it seems, was being closed for renovations (they called it urban renewal), and residents were forced to find lodging elsewhere.

When I think of the bishops with secure tenures, sitting in well-furnished rooms to hear the testimony of well-tenured theologians, economists and business leaders, I think of Barbara and what she would have to say about the economic system in which we live.

To be fair to the bishops, they did hear from a few of the poor (or their representatives), and there is one woman

consultant (out of a total of 13) on the drafting committee. But a staff member of the U.S. Catholic Conference who worked on the Pastoral Letter admitted that the bishops had “gone out of their way” to listen to the voices of the business community, so that they could not be accused of being biased.

The business community does seem to be exhibiting some anxiety about the bishops' pastoral. Any critique of the failures of our economic system which comes from leaders who have access to the masses (especially to working and middle-class Americans who might be beginning to wonder about the morality of a system which is throwing them out of work, poisoning their waters and threatening their future with nuclear weapons), is bound to draw the ire of the business establishment.

In spite of not having seen the bishops' pastoral, I can assure the business leaders that they need not worry. There will be slaps on the wrist, to be sure, and calls to reorder our national priorities; but there will be no call to the barricades, no clear understanding that in a world of such gross disparities there is only one of two sides to be on. The fact that the bishops have purposely left the release of the letter until after the elections tells me that whatever concern the letter may express for the poor, it will resound in

Sheila Collins is a writer, educator and social activist. She served as national rainbow coalition coordinator for the Jesse Jackson campaign.

the life of Barbara as a tinkling cymbal.

For the bishops to refuse to commit themselves on the economic question (while speaking up loudly on the abortion issue) prior to the most important and fateful election of this century, is to side with the forces of injustice, militarism and oppression represented in the Reagan administration.

The “preferential option for the poor” articulated so eloquently by Latin American theologians of liberation, and reiterated by the Canadian bishops in their “Alternatives to Present Economic Structures” implies a commitment, not just in words, but in deeds.

To make an option for the people like Barbara is to commit oneself and one’s resources to the political vehicles which have the best chance of reversing the widening gap between rich and poor and the alarming militarization of our society. There is no neutral, lofty “religious” ground in 1984. The bishops, it seems, have chosen.

Since the bishops are being silent until after the election, I want to express a little of what I wish they would have said.

“As bishops of the church, we are required by our understanding of the Gospel and our function as God’s mediators to stand with the poor and oppressed; for our own Lord said in his great parable of the Last Judgement: ‘Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.’

Through the lens of poverty we see a world system dominated by U.S.-based multinational corporations, whose value base is the maximization of individual greed, not the dignity and equality of all human beings as children of God. This system has permeated every aspect of our corporate life — defining our religious practices, our esthetic tastes, our leisure time pursuits, our approach to domestic distribution and consumption, our foreign and military policy.

This system poses as the best of all

possible worlds, as the logical outcome of human evolution, while attempting to hide from consciousness the terrible toll it has extracted from its human and non-human subjects: the unnecessary deaths of 20 million Black slaves; the near genocide of the native inhabitants of North America; the underdevelopment of much of the Third World; the near depletion of the topsoil and forests of this country; the poisoning of our water and air; the violent deaths of 50,000 El Salvadorans in the last four years and 100,000 Guatemalans in the last 30; the denigration of women and the sanctioning of violence against them; the production of weapons that can wipe out all of civilization.

Standing with the poor and oppressed, we feel no need to extol the virtues of capitalism, for that is done every day by those who control the consciousness industry. Rather, our mission is to confess the church’s complicity with this system in providing the ideology for European expansionism, for the denigration and economic marginalization of women, and the treatment of non-Christians as subhuman “heathens,” who either had to be converted or eliminated.

Standing with the poor and oppressed, we denounce as contrary to God’s will and purpose for human life an economic system which places profits over people and military dominance over peace. We commit ourselves to a world economic/political system that makes the dignity and equality of all human beings and the conservation of the precious resources of the earth its first priority.

We recognize that such a stand carries risks, that it entails choosing sides and

therefore incurring the enmity of many who may be members of our churches. We do this not out of hatred for those who stand in the way, but out of great love for the suffering.

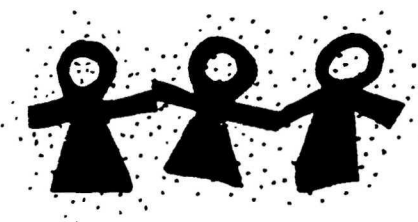
We begin this process by taking our vows of poverty seriously. Henceforth, all rectories are to be turned over to organizations of community residents, 75% of whom must be victims of poverty, and at least 50% of whom must be women, to be used to uplift the poorest sectors of those communities. In addition, all schools, convents and seminaries which are running at less than 75% capacity are to be leased to such community groups for \$1 a year.

From now on, all of our churches are declared sanctuaries for the victims of U.S. oppression — whether they be fleeing the violence in Central America or Haiti, or the violence lived as the homeless in the midst of so much abundance.

Our priests and religious are encouraged to engage in voter registration campaigns, especially with low income people, so that they can register their desire for change in an informed and peaceful manner.

Henceforth, our religious education will consist not only of the practices and doctrines of the church, but will include education about the multinational, multi-racial world in which we are called to be Christians. The history texts used in our parochial schools will be scrutinized for the ways in which they leave out or distort the histories of Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, women, Jews, Asians, Arabs, and the working class.

Finally, we pledge ourselves to preaching and living a theology of the incarnated Word and the immanent Kingdom, to seeing the face of Christ and therefore the gifts of ministry in all of the common people. We pledge to bring concrete hope and literal salvation to the millions who have given up that their voices will ever be heard.” ■



Flaws anticipated in document

The forthcoming U.S. Roman Catholic bishops' economic pastoral should have a profound impact upon the nation and the world — all the more reason to regret that the letter may be profoundly flawed, both in its theoretical understanding of capitalism and in its suggestions for creating new economic arrangements.

The first problem I foresee is the failure of the bishops to approach the relationship between capitalism and Christianity historically, rather than emphasizing the present day economic crisis in a chronological vacuum. Every economic system exists within a larger social constellation, in which cultural institutions, social mores, and the state influence and are influenced by the processes of production and distribution. In their letter on Marxism, the bishops had no difficulty understanding that social political economies should be analyzed theoretically, despite their tremendous variations. But on the more sensitive question of Western capitalism, Archbishop Weakland stated in a recent speech, "the committee, after lengthy discussion, decided to avoid a theoretical analysis of capitalism similar to the paper on Marxism, because the reality is so diversified and diffuse that no single theoretical position is adequate or all-embracing."

This theoretical lapse creates difficulty in understanding the reasons for racism, world hunger, poverty, and systemic unemployment. Why do Afro-

Americans experience twice the unemployment rates of whites, and have over three times the percentage of families below the poverty level? Why do Black infant mortality rates in U.S. ghettos exceed those of some Third World countries? Why have the majority of U.S. financial institutions and U.S.-based multinationals refused to divest from the South African system of apartheid? No meaningful discourse on modern capitalism can occur outside of a political and social context.

The pastoral letter, written from the perspective of the oppressed, would unearth the roots of capitalism as a social system, and explore its historical relationship with the Catholic Church, and in more general terms, with Christianity.

Christianity presents a strikingly different way of perceiving human beings, their labor, their relationship to the environment and to each other. Capitalist production and the hegemony of capital over labor create an "economic" human being preoccupied with accumulation of capital, who demands that the political apparatus serve the economic order. Christians, on the other hand, are concerned with the moral and social aspects of humanity. If economic arrangements promote social injustice, suffering, or immorality, the church must condemn them, even though they generate profits for an elite.

From the beginning of the rise of capitalism, the Catholic Church attempted to mediate the ideals of Christ vs. a cultural and socioeconomic reality which prized the primacy of unfettered, private economic production and capital accumulation from mass exploitation. There was nothing deliberately hypocritical about this. The Catholic hier-

archy made earnest attempts to serve both masters and slaves, and later, managers and workers. The church usually accommodated itself to many political systems, from bourgeois democracy to fascism. All too often, clergy rationalized and justified the brutalities of capitalism simply to retain a social base within a society.

In the United States, the inherently contradictory position of the Catholic Church was most apparent in the issue of racial segregation. "Jim Crow" was not simply an oppressive social system of unequal race relations, but a particular type of "racial capitalism." The color line perpetuated sharecropping, the infamous convict leasing system, and political disfranchisement of poor whites and nearly all Afro-Americans. Here was a blatant social example of capitalist exploitation and race prejudice, cemented by poverty and lynching, which demanded a moral critique. But once again, the institutional church attempted to serve both the exploiters and the exploited.

On a global scale, in the capitalist-colonial nations in the Third World, church leaders frequently supported the systems of economic exploitation, political terrorism, and racism. But as oppressed social classes in Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean began to reject capitalist economics, the hierarchy began to recognize that its historic complicity with systems of exploitation had to end. Years before, Roman Catholic leaders in Europe, pressured by the rise of trade unions and mass social democratic parties, began to address the proletariat. Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) defended the right of workers to organize against capital, and advocated

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by Manning Marable

humane working conditions. In *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), Pope Pius XI condemned the excessive profits of corporations, and urged Catholics to advocate "a more equitable distribution of goods."

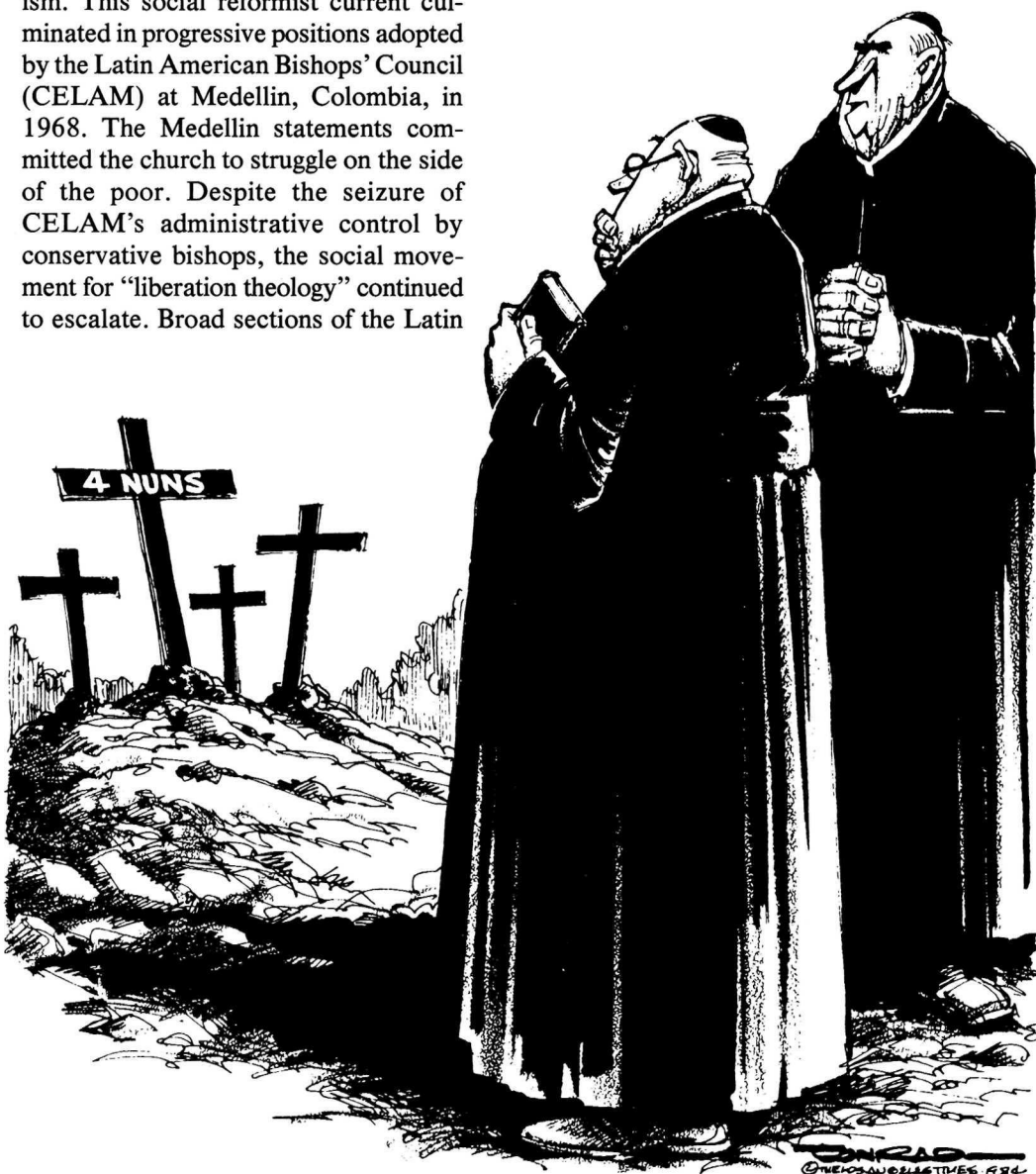
U.S. bishops followed their European counterparts, failing to address the central contradiction of race, but nevertheless expanding their discourses to include social contradictions created by capitalism. In 1919, the U.S. "Bishop's Program of Social Reconstruction" was announced, which advocated "minimum wage legislation, government regulation of public service monopolies, growth of industrial cooperatives, equal pay for women, just wages, public housing and insurance programs, and the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively." Eleven years later, in the midst of the Great Depression, the American Bishops' Administrative Board issued a strong attack on the periodic unemployment cycles inherent to capitalism. "Unemployment is the great peacetime physical tragedy of the 19th and 20th centuries," the statement declared, "and both in its cause and in the imprint it leaves upon those who inflict it, those who permit it, and those who are its victims; it is one of the great moral tragedies of our time."

But it is within the broader context of liberation theology, the recent rigorous criticisms by John Paul II of monopoly capitalist exploitation, and the world rise of a politically involved clergy, that the U.S. Catholic bishops' economic pastoral may be best comprehended.

Vatican Council II, called by the liberal visionary Pope John XXIII, was the beginning of "liberation theology." The theological edifice of Aquinas at

long last gave way to the modern world. In the Caribbean and Latin America, the church increasingly began to attack the systems of political oppression and economic dependency generated by capitalism. This social reformist current culminated in progressive positions adopted by the Latin American Bishops' Council (CELAM) at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. The Medellin statements committed the church to struggle on the side of the poor. Despite the seizure of CELAM's administrative control by conservative bishops, the social movement for "liberation theology" continued to escalate. Broad sections of the Latin

American clergy openly condemned capitalist exploitation, embraced liberation movements, and spoke a social language akin to Marxism in advocating



"WE CAN ONLY PRAY THEY WERE FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION THEOLOGY OF CHRIST, NOT MARX!"

constructive pastoral programs among the rural masses and the working class.

The more conservative Catholic hierarchy was forced to counterpose its social vision against capitalist excesses while steering clear of Marxism. Pope John Paul II's Sept. 3, 1984, statement on liberation theology criticized priests who "transform the fight for the rights of the poor into a class fight within the ideological perspective of the class struggle." The Pope denounced Marxism for creating regimes which denied "basic freedoms" by "totalitarian and atheistic" means. However, it was too late to return to the status quo ante of pre-Vatican II. As journalist Peter Hebblethwaite observed, John Paul II's recent statement remains "one of the most radical documents ever to emanate from the Vatican. In its anxiety to refute liberation theologies . . . it is obliged to borrow their clothes." The statement unambiguously criticizes "the scandal of the shocking inequality between the rich and poor." Even more radical was John Paul II's speech in Canada on Sept. 17. The Pope denounced "imperialistic monopoly," and the exploitation of the poor by the world's wealthy classes.

And on the U.S. scene, clergy in growing numbers had become involved in anti-nuclear weapons campaigns, tenants' organizing, poor people's interests, and anti-racist mobilization. The absence of a mass socialist, labor, or Marxist party is the principal reason that the new activism of U.S. clergy has not moved as far to the left as it has elsewhere. The national political culture is heavily and almost exclusively pro-capitalist, and the acquaintance of U.S. workers with socialism is nearly nonexistent. With the lack of a democratic left alternative, the church does not have to speak "the language of Marxism" as in Latin and Central America. Nevertheless, as the crises of unemployment and poverty fester, the U.S. Church is

Capitalism's toll in human terms

What is the crisis of capitalism creating in political, social and human terms? In the past six years, many Western capitalist democracies have attempted to resolve the systemic crisis of their economies by bringing to power conservative parties.

Reaganism finds its ideological counterparts in Thatcherism in the United Kingdom, the Progressive Conservatives in Canada, and other rightist parties in West Germany and Japan. Reaganomics represents a calculated effort by capital and the upper middle classes to resolve the crisis at the expense of those social classes which can least afford austerity — Blacks, Latinos, poor Whites, blue collar workers, single women with children and the elderly.

Reagan's 1982 welfare reductions increased the number of poor Americans by 2.2 million, reaching a total of 35 million Americans in poverty by mid-1984. Since January 1981, 1 million people have lost food stamps, and child nutrition programs have been cut 28%. A total of \$120 billion was reduced from programs which directly aid people, and real wages of all employed dropped \$380 billion since 1981. Conversely, households earning over 80,000 annual income received an additional \$35 billion after taxes.

A rise in national unemployment of 1% over a one year period translates into 37,000 additional deaths, including 650 additional homicides, and 920 additional suicides. Each time U.S. unemployment climbs 1% annually, 4,000 additional Americans are admitted to state mental hospitals. A 1% rise in unemployment costs \$20 billion in tax revenues, and \$68 billion lost in national production.

Only in these stark terms can we begin to comprehend the human suffering and social chaos which capitalist economics creates.

Of course, the present crisis is directly related to the massive expenditures on both conventional and nuclear weapons. The major beneficiaries, again, are the large corporations. Profits before taxes for defense contractors are over 50% higher than in the civilian sector.

Who pays for these military expenditures? One half of a nuclear aircraft carrier reduces the Medicaid budget by nearly \$2 billion; two Trident submarines cut \$2.3 billion from the food stamp program, and \$687 million in nutrition assistance to women, children and infants. Forty-six M-1 tanks would provide funds for 500 new city buses for mass transit. One F-16 jet fighter would cover the salaries of 1,000 public school teachers for one year.

Further, U.S. arms producers increased sales to Latin American regimes by 300% between 1969 and 1978; sales to African states soared by 2000% in the same period. Since 1970, U.S. client states in the Third World which maintain capitalist economies spend an average of 5 to 8% of their gross national products to purchase conventional weapons, of which 80% are made by U.S. corporations. These same client capitalist states spend only 1% of the GNP for public health and barely 2 to 3% toward public education. Thus, the needs of world capitalism perpetuate systemic poverty and illiteracy among Third World people, and reinforce authoritarian political structures which sanction human exploitation.

M. M.

pushed forward, lagging behind Third World Catholics but far ahead of U.S. middle-class congregations, toward a unity of social vision and social reality.

A century from now, Americans may view capitalism as we now view slavery, apartheid and Jim Crow segregation — an irrational, wasteful, and immoral socioeconomic system which oppressed millions for the material benefit of the few. Catholics and Democratic socialists alike perceive the elements of what comprises a just society — full employ-

ment, income maintenance for the elderly and the poor, universal healthcare and education, and the absence of political, racial and gender oppression. The Christian road toward socioeconomic transformation might begin with a serious reflection of Christ's "stark statements about the danger of riches," as Archbishop Weakland has commented.

If Christianity is indeed a theodicy, the demand to relate one's faith to the immediate material and social problems of the world necessitates a choice. Faith

in the ability for good to triumph over evil demands a “reckoning with the dominant form of evil” over people’s immediate lives, as theologian Cornel West states. And James Cone’s major essay on “Black Theology and the Black Church” speaks to all American Christians under capitalism. “The time has come for us to move beyond institutional

survival in a capitalistic and racist society and begin to take more seriously our dreams about a new heaven and a new earth. Does this dream include capitalism,” Cone asks, “or is it a radically new way of life more consistent with African socialism as expressed in the Arusha Declaration in Tanzania?”

In short, the praxis of a socially in-

involved Christianity must inevitably include a call for a humanistic and democratic transformation of the political economy of capitalism. It means taking the living legacy of Christ seriously in one’s daily life. The path toward human emancipation, the unity of spiritual and secular egalitarianism, may be the praxis of democratic socialism for our time. ■

On being authentic

by James Lewis

I remember an older woman in a previous church I served who objected to the fact that her parish was serving a free noon meal to people in need.

She was not a cruel or unfeeling person. She just thought that the church, by offering the meal, was inviting dangerous people into the building. She was particularly fearful of people who had been in jail.

One day, while shopping at a local supermarket, she spied a friend in the next aisle. Going to greet her, this woman absentmindedly put a small food item she had in her hand at the time into a bag she was carrying. She inadvertently forgot that it was there. Minutes later she was arrested for shoplifting, put in a police car, driven to the county jail, fingerprinted and placed in a cell. A phone call from this 80-year-old woman brought quick action. She was released and the charges dismissed. It was all a mistake.

I will never forget her response. She told me that she never realized how it felt to be in a jail cell and how it hadn’t dawned on her how close all of us are to jail because of a mistake.

From then on, I noticed a changed attitude on her part to patrons of our

meal. She seemed more empathetic toward them. Many of us have had similar experiences. We have had a change of heart or mind about some issue because a personal experience has jolted us right where we live.

For example:

A group of people in St. Louis oblivious to the environmental debates over dioxin suddenly get involved because the chemical surfaces on the lawn of *their* daycare center.

A woman confronts her own prejudices about homosexuality when her son tells her *he* is gay.

A man, critical of people on welfare because he says they are lazy and don’t want to work, sees how wrong he is when he is without work and forced on welfare.

A woman, who takes pride in saying she’s not a feminist because women are taken care of, is shocked by the sexism she discovers when her husband leaves her and *she* is unable to get credit or a loan because she is a woman.

A number of years ago, a white man dyed his body black and lived in the city in order to feel what it’s like to be Black. He wanted to walk in the Black man’s shoes. His experiences provided copy for a best-selling book.

But the truth is that no one can ever really walk in anyone else’s shoes. The man with dyed skin couldn’t really be Black. And, anyway, why did *he* need to

feel blackness? And why did a white world need a White man’s rendition of what it’s like to be Black? Blacks, like Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker, Malcolm X and Sojourner Truth, have been telling us what it’s like to be Black in the United States for years. Isn’t that truth enough?

Do we have to be oppressed to understand oppression?

Do we have to be addicted to understand an addict?

Do we have to be female or Black or Hispanic or Jewish or disabled to understand what it is like to be a minority or a second-class citizen?

Is the measure of truth grasped only by *my* experiences, what *I* feel and what *I* see? I hope not.

We certainly learn, as my friend did, by our experiences. But finally we must admit that we can’t experience enough in one lifetime to understand what all of life is about. We have to learn by listening to and honoring other people’s experiences quite different from our own.

Of particular importance is listening to people who have lived on the underside of life — the outcasts — the oppressed — minorities — the shunned — those on the fringe — those outside of our experiences. They teach us the most — if we listen and don’t demand that their experience be ours before it is accepted as authentic.

It is authentic in and of itself. ■

The Rev. E. James Lewis is a member of the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights and sits on the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

Revolution in the workplace

by Richard W. Gillett

The question of work may well be the critical global social issue of the last two decades of the 20th century. Not only in the Western industrialized nations, but also in the socialist nations and in the Third World, the question inexorably rises to the top of the list of the world's complex problems. In most of the Western nations, unemployment is now running at about 10%. In the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc nations, questions of worker alienation, relationship to bureaucracy and trade union independence are becoming increasingly critical, calling into question long-held political assumptions and practices. In the Third World where there frequently is almost no governmental cushion to sustain the jobless, unemployment figures are astronomical: in Kenya up to 25%, in Mexico 30 to 40%, in Chile 25%.

The other crucial social issues — adequate housing, hunger, the massive migratory movements of people, the incredible burden upon society of a global arms race, the degenerating urban centers of the world, the basic human need to feel productive and creative — would become much less critical if the core

issue of work could be effectively addressed.

In the United States, the recent economic recovery, while impressive statistically, masks the deeper realities of worker and community devastation unaffected by it. Uncounted in the dropping unemployment figures are over 1 million discouraged workers who have given up looking for work, over 5 million part-time workers who would like full-time jobs, and untold former blue collar workers now working at half their former wages. Receiving only passing attention is the recent substantial jump in the numbers of people who are officially classified as poor, to 35.3 million people in 1983, or 15.2% of the population. Economists say there is little likelihood this will dip significantly, even in a recovery. Furthermore, the recovery has been purchased at a terrible price: the creation of a monstrous federal deficit — a “mortgage” upon future prosperity — and the expansion of jobs through vastly increased military production.

And the issue before us is not simply unemployment. It is work. “We are . . . on the eve of new developments in technological, economic and political conditions which . . . will influence the world of work and production no less than the industrial revolution of the last century,” states the Papal Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, (“On Performing Work,” September 1981). Technology and the coordinated global use of corporate capital are rapidly changing the

patterns of work. In this country, almost an entire industrial work force has become jobless in the recent devastating recession, while the booming “information industry,” based on the invention of the microchip, and the service industries create a demand for a new, different, and considerably smaller work force. It is a work force becoming more and more polarized at opposite ends of the economic spectrum. At one end are the increasingly educated and affluent managers and technicians of this new technology. At the other end are the discarded workers of the obsolescent industrial era, followed by more and more women and more and more minorities, all of whom are progressively more exploited and relegated to the margins of power and influence over their own lives. Even in the more prosperous years of the past decade there was already developing in our society a “permanent underclass,” consisting disproportionately of minorities, who were growing up with no work experience at all.

But flowing in a direction opposite to these currents, both in the United States and abroad, is a growing belief by masses of working people and would-be working people that they should have a voice in decisions made in the workplace — a thirst for *recognition*. Seen in this context, the reigning American political philosophy that the individual alone must bear the ultimate responsibility for finding work runs counter to this trend, and returns to a simplistic 19th century view

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of work — a view that even in its own time lacked full acceptance.

Thus, work will be a central and inescapable issue from now until, and perhaps well past, the turn of the century. Even in the United States, the numbers of people who have lost their jobs in the private sector in the last decade run as high as 70%. They were lost in the most prosperous nation on earth as part of this great shift in work; a disinvestment by private industry in the productive capacity of the American economy. About 32 to 38 million workers have been so affected in the past decade.

It should be obvious even to the most unperceptive churchgoer that the sheer impact of such a loss is staggering. Such is its human dimension that entire communities have been deeply affected, from the Atlantic seaboard states through the Midwest, to the Deep South, and to Southern California and into the Pacific Northwest.

Yet the issue of work is all but unknown as a relevant issue in the American religious community. For example, is the performing of work of any religious significance? Our seminaries briefly raise the question through such classical texts as Max Weber's "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," and they review medieval and Reformation views of work. But once seminarians become pastors, that one-half of a parishioner's weekday waking hours which constitutes a job is almost totally ignored for its place in the Christian scheme of things.

How much does a typical pastor really know, for instance, about his or her parishioner's work life? What Christian education curriculum seriously examines work and Christian life in the modern context, including working wives and husbands who share child care? Both in our contemporary training and in our parish practices, we seem to have ignored the intimate connections between creation, work and human fulfillment, made in the book of Genesis and continued through the Old Testament. The parables of Jesus are overwhelmingly cast into themes of work whose central actors are ordinary working people. We have overlooked the centrality of work as the chief arena where responsible stewardship of God's creation is exercised and participated in by all. Our modern ministry is thus truncated; a ministry largely relegated by theological default to families and their relationships *outside of*, and independent of, their work lives.

It was not always so. In the Middle Ages, the sphere of economics — and therefore, of work — was simply regarded along with society and the state as one part of an organic whole, the *Corpus Christianum*. Of course, that medieval civilization in Europe was an all-encompassing "feudalistic patrimonialism" (Weber) or "patriarchalism of love" (Troeltsch), and a pluralistic church and world today rightly reject such an arrangement. Nonetheless, the ensuing Reformation saw the beginning of a gradual disengagement of religion from

economics as a relevant and biblical concern. Historian R. H. Tawney, wrote that Protestantism had "emptied religion of its social content and society of its soul." With the dawn of capitalism, economics began to be separated from the other social disciplines, including theology, that together underlay the theory and function of the state. In the exhilaration of the discoveries of production miracles wrought by the 18th century industrial revolution, economics in effect became the new autonomous queen of the sciences. It promulgated not only the laws that governed the exchange of goods and services but purported also to find in human nature itself the foundations of the lawfulness of economic phenomena. The universality economists claimed for their abstractions rested on a psychology of possessive individualism.

So extensively have these assumptions prevailed in both church and state in the contemporary Western world, that the profound and comprehensive insights on work promulgated by Western historian and economist Karl Marx remain, 100 years after his death, at the outer fringes of dialogue.

Thus was the groundwork laid for the church's abandonment of any claim to speak authoritatively about work as a religious issue.

Theologically, a recognition of the sweep and profundity of the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and of Creation are more than sufficient foundations for serious engagement with the issues of work as they now present themselves. The whole person and the totality of the human condition are definitively established as the arenas of Christian concern under these doctrines. How the economic system serves the person and the community are therefore proper subjects of Christian concern. Precisely the reverse is the common assumption today; namely, how the person can serve the economic system.

But there is a more serious impediment.



The mainline churches in America are by and large so distanced by their middle-class, mostly White constituencies from the depth and extent of the pain and alienation felt by working people that it is still largely an abstraction of unknown and therefore unfelt dimensions. All the theologizing in the world is useless until we make a concerted effort to identify, and directly engage ourselves with, the affected masses of working people in their struggles. In this regard, the experience of Latin American Christians in their applications of liberation theology is instructive: First comes the engagement with the concrete reality; then, as the "second step," comes the theologizing.

The task before us, therefore, is to attempt, first, to measure the scope of what is happening on the American scene. How widespread is this "economic dislocation"? What impact is it having upon workers, their families, and their communities? How are they coping? What are the long-term effects? What does it feel like to be laid off if you are a Black automobile worker with 20 years' seniority, or a 50-year old woman who has made electric irons for 28 years? What is life like for an 18-year old woman up from rural Mexico to an American-owned plant in Juarez or Tijuana on the border, who is squinting

through a microscope soldering microchips?

What happens in a one-industry town such as Detroit, or Youngstown, or Anaconda, Mont.; or Salinas, Cal. when industry packs up and leaves? What is the spiritual as well as economic cost to families in these towns who pull up their roots and take to the highways in search of a job elsewhere? Most pathetically, what is the cost to the children who watch their jobless father's or mother's dignity and self-esteem vanish before their eyes?

It is not enough, of course, simply to become well-informed about the human effects. We must seek to understand and piece together the major economic and social dimensions of what is happening. "Economic dislocation" is the term used frequently to describe what is happening to the structure and nature of work today. What, for instance, is the significance of the movement away from a blue collar work force and towards a service-and-information society? How widespread is it, and to what extent is there job carry-over from one to the other? What part does the new evolution in technology — in information and transportation systems — play in this? What is the role of multinational corporations? Why is the recent shift of jobs and

capital overseas so extensive? Is there a good side to the new technology? Does automation and the rapidly rising use of industrial robots to do boring and tedious jobs formerly held by workers hold a humanizing promise? And as technology increasingly compartmentalizes the work task, will a sense of satisfaction and pride in work remain with the worker?

These are just some of the questions needing to be addressed.

In this regard, it is heartening, and timely, that the U.S. Catholic bishops, following upon their widely influential 1983 pastoral letter on nuclear warfare, plan to issue for discussion and final adoption, a pastoral letter on "Catholic Social Teaching and the American Economy" in late 1984 and 1985. The results should be a boon to all religious bodies concerned for justice in the work place, and will hopefully help stimulate both a new theology and new strategies on behalf of work and workers everywhere.

Over 100 years have passed since Charles Dickens wrote *Hard Times*, which most vividly depicts the misery and human exploitation experienced by workers in 19th century England. In spite of Dickens' passionate chronicling of the "downside" of the Industrial Revolution, we still remember that revolution more for its "upside," for the way it revolutionized the production process and world trade and commerce, than for the damage it wreaked upon human beings, families and communities. As the quote from the papal encyclical stated, we stand once again on the eve of revolutionary developments in the world of work and production. The churches are one of the few institutions in society with a belief in the dignity of the human person and the innate preciousness of the world community before God; and with a constituency having the potential to make a significant difference in the outcome of this new revolution that is fast upon us. ■



SHORT TAKES

Separation of church, state

Separation of church and state cannot mean an absolute separation between moral principle and political power. The challenge today is to recall the origin of the principle, to define its purpose and refine its application to the politics of the present.

... The controversy about the Moral Majority arises not only from its views, but from its name — which, in the minds of many, seems to imply that only one set of public policies is moral — and only one majority can possibly be right.

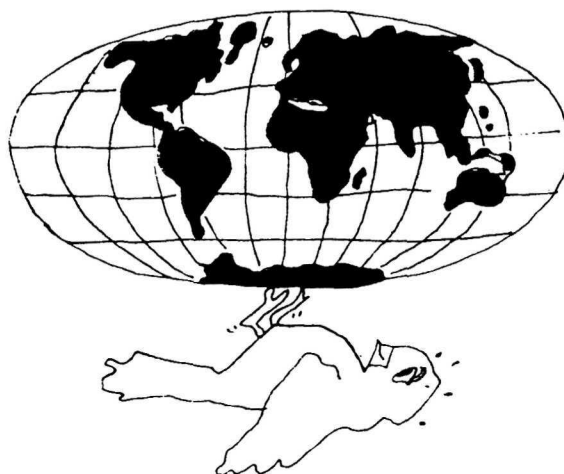
— **Senator Ted Kennedy**
Religion and Public Education
Winter/Spring 1984

Corporations & apartheid

U.S. corporate presence in South Africa dates back to the 19th century. For example, General Electric has operated there since 1894 and Mobil's roots go back to 1897. To suggest that General Electric or Mobil or Westinghouse have been progressive forces in breaking down the apartheid system is spurious.

White South Africans enjoy what may be the highest standard of living in the world as a result of the economic growth brought about with the assistance of foreign investment and technology. Unfortunately this economic growth has not been shared with the Black population.

The inference that U.S. corporations provide employment to a number of Blacks and that U.S. corporate practices in South Africa can change apartheid by serving as a progressive example, must be seen in the context of other facts. Less than 1% of the Black labor force in South Africa is employed by U.S. corporations. A large concentration of U.S. firms are in manufacturing and high technology industries with capital intensive, rather than labor intensive, strategies. Ironically, U.S. capital intensive investments will lessen the economy's dependence on Black labor. In addition, the notoriously deficient Black educational system ensures that better educated Whites



The sparrow's contribution

We are grateful to *Benedictines for Peace* in Erie for this anecdote:

It was a chilly, overcast day when a horseback rider spied a little sparrow lying on its back in the middle of the road. Reining in, the rider inquired of the fragile creature, "Why are you lying upside down like that?"

"I heard the heavens are going to fall today," replied the bird.

The rider laughed! "And I suppose your spindly legs can hold up the heavens?"

"One does what one can," said the little sparrow.

S. Lucille Nachtstheim of Cottonwood, ID, who sent the story suggested, "Doesn't this describe our peace efforts?"

will obtain positions demanding a technical education or background.

Washington, D.C. Councilmember John Ray noted at a conference on investment in South Africa (Boston, 1983), that divestment could bring some suffering to Black employees of U.S. firms, but added that the vast majority of South African Blacks suffer considerably under apartheid. He reminded the audience that slavery in the United States provided full employment for Blacks, but that abolition of slavery did not generate complaints about the loss of full employment.

— **Max Obuszewski**
ICCR's Corporate Examiner
Vol. 12, No. 10

Named Bishop of Nicaragua

The Rev. Sturdie Wyman Downs, dean supervisor of the Pacific Coast Deanery and vicar of All Saints Church, Managua, was elected Bishop of Nicaragua at a special convention Sept. 9 in Bluefields. Bishop-elect Downs, 37, was named on the first ballot in a field of five candidates, all Nicaraguan nationals. When the vote was announced, the congregation rose in standing ovation and the bishop-elect broke into tears.

The Diocese of Nicaragua, currently part of the Ninth Province of the Episcopal Church, U.S.A., will be seeking autonomy at the 1985 General Convention to become part of a new province to include the Dioceses of Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and Cuba.

Taxation sans militarization

Conscientious tax objectors have taken their war on war to a new front: the Internal Revenue Service. They want the same rules that exempt draftees from military service on moral grounds to excuse people who refuse to pay "war taxes."

A bill introduced to the House of Representatives by California Democrat Ron Dellums would provide for just that. The World Peace Tax Fund Act (H.R. 3224) allows taxpayers who qualify as conscientious objectors to earmark the portion of their tax bill that normally goes to the military for a special World Peace Tax Fund.

Right now, people morally opposed to war and the military have three choices when it comes to federal income tax: paying in full and living with guilty consciences; purposely holding their incomes to below-taxable levels; or withholding the military portion of their tax (estimated at 42¢ on \$1 for Fiscal Year 1983). Those who go the third route — anywhere between 900 and 20,000 taxpayers each year, depending on whether you believe the IRS or peace groups — are deemed tax evaders. As such, they're subject to numerous fines, including a new \$500 penalty for "frivolous" filing.

— **Carole Bass**
Cooperative News Service

Millionaire rites, Mobil style

Life is full of astonishing contrasts. In May this year I attended my first annual meeting of a giant American corporation. I was invited to go along with a friend who had a few shares of Mobil stock. She too had never attended a corporation celebrating its rites of spring. It was an odd and in some ways a chilling experience. The world of reality — the world of international tensions, poverty, hunger, wars and revolutions — remained outside the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. Inside the Mobil minions all dressed alike in dark suits checked the shareholders' credentials as we came into the large auditorium.

The theatre-like hall was more than half filled when we arrived. The audience was composed of well-fed men and women in middle life. They were dressed as befitted stockholders of Mobil shares. All seemed to be reading the proxy statement which contained the agenda, the financial reports and stockholder proposals. As the proxy statement had been mailed out two months earlier, it was a little like cramming for a final exam.

Promptly at 10 a.m., Rawleigh Warner, Jr., chairman of the board and chief executive officer, called the meeting to order. After a few introductory remarks he outlined the game plan. A large digital

clock was to be used to limit speakers to two minutes each and flashed red when the time limit was exceeded. He said that this was necessary to assure all the shareholders present a chance to participate in the discussion of the various items on the agenda. Of course, this didn't happen. Two gentlemen dominated the discussion of several of the matters presented but in reality formed a sort of loyal opposition to the management. Outside of the Baptist minister who presented a resolution on South Africa, only a handful of others took the microphones.

Among the first items brought up was the matter of approval of the compensation paid to the executives of Mobil. A rather raw nerve was touched when a shareholder expressed polite disapproval of the cash compensation for the five most highly paid officers of the corporation. From the reports it appeared that in 1983 Warner had received a salary of \$1,644,038 and William P. Tavoulareas, president of Mobil, received \$1,415,500. It turned out that in addition to his salary Warner had received in the past few years Mobil stock worth more than \$3,000,000 under the Mobil incentive compensation and stock option plan. In reply Warner noted that such salaries were customary in business, sports and the entertainment world and suggested that they were well merited.

I could only wonder how any man or woman in the world was worth that much money. By contrast I thought of the little

Mexican-American parish I attend where the parishoners scratch a bare living on or slightly above the poverty level. I also thought of the people my wife and I serve in a shelter for homeless men and women — people without jobs, homes or anyone to care for them. There are estimated to be some 30,000 homeless men and women in the city of Los Angeles sleeping under freeway bridges, back yards and doorways. The world of bag ladies and the homeless is far removed from that of corporate America. I wondered how is it possible to reconcile these two worlds, the world of million dollar salaries and the unemployed woman who has lost her home, her savings and only has the clothes on her back. I decided you can't.

The young Baptist minister introduced his church's resolution on South Africa which was also co-sponsored by the Dominican Sisters, the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries and the United Church Board for World Ministries. Together with the Baptists these groups hold some 21,000 shares of Mobil stock. The proposal noted that Mobil had done some good things in following the plan devised some years ago by Dr. Leon Sullivan. This plan forms the basis for voluntary action on the part of more than 100 companies doing business in South Africa in the fields of health, employment, education and housing. Today the author of the plan has said that it isn't enough and that the goals outlined by Bishop Desmond Tutu, General Secretary of the South African Council of

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dogmatic. This faith provided both ballast and compass for what after proved a stormy journey in her pilgrimage. It was the same faith which mandated work with and the defense of communists and secular radicals possible and real. It was neither gratuitous, condescending nor adventurous (in the sense of self-gratification). Her sense of justice issued from firm theological beliefs with discernible perimeters. It did not partake of that theological anarchism or Trotskyism so prevalent today in Western Christendom.

It is this dimension of theology — ordered and traditional as the seed of Vida Scudder's flowering — which is so absent in the WITNESS article. In this sense the lionization of Vida Scudder without the insight into her spiritual core is almost like the medieval traffic in parts of Saints.

Francis Haitch
New York, N.Y.

Tool for education

Thank you for your most refreshing, energizing and challenging magazine which comes into my convent home each month. I have great admiration for the ways in which you integrate social justice survival issues of Central America, nuclear threat, feminism, classism and racism. I began my subscription as a vehicle to help me with my involvement in my Catholic Sisters' social justice committee. What a find you have been — a real blessing! Keep up your great work of educating for a peace and just church and society.

I also team teach a Women's Studies course through various state universities here in rural Minnesota as adjunct faculty. Of course, I was greatly appreciative of your Special Issue, *Daughters of Prophecy*. Alla Bozarth-Campbell is a personal friend who has also ministered to me in her priesthood. I will be sharing that particular issue with the classes.

Sister Michelle Meyers
Hutchinson, Minn.

Left out Colson, too

Pathetic! How else can I describe your efforts to function as a *Christian* ministry. After reading a recent issue, I thought of writing you because of my having found the name of Christ but once (and that only used incidentally) in the entire issue. But then I looked over the "letters" section of another issue and found someone had written about the absence of the word "Bible" in an entire issue. Obviously, I had a change of mind about writing.

And how could you write about prison ministries (June issue) without one mention of the Prison Fellowship under the leadership of Charles Colson?

J. W. Dunn
A.P.O. Miami, Fla.

Poem saved sub

I had decided not to renew my subscription because I have eight back issues piled up that I haven't had time to read. But my July issue arrived, and what to my wondering eyes should appear but a poem by Alla with a message clear — a challenge, a warning, a vision of hope that God safely guides me to an unseen new home. Even though I grow weary and sometimes lose way I need only remember my God-given name . . .

This is the best I've read of Alla Bozarth-Campbell's poems. Thank you for printing it, and renew my subscription for another year.

Mary Ann Brown
Minneapolis, Minn.

Barb under saddle

As a non-believer in a holy-seer, male or female, I must respectfully decline your most generous offer to subscribe to THE WITNESS.

I do think, however, that your magazine, judging from the promotional mailing, has the potential to be a constructive barb under the saddle blanket of the ex-cowboy actor. For that I applaud you. Good luck!

Bob Corbett
Camden, S.C.

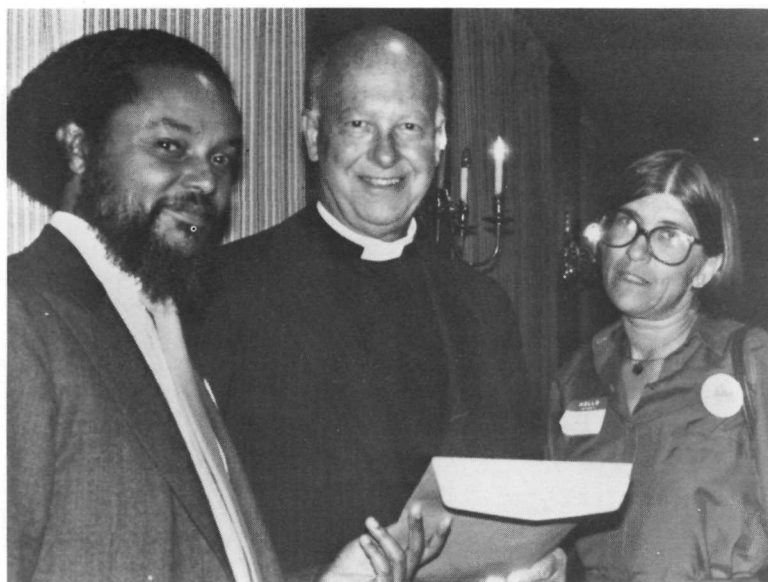
by Lawrence Carter

Churches, should be adopted. These call for the housing of work-force families near the place of employment, affirming Black trade unions, recognizing the right of the worker to labor wherever the best price can be obtained, calling for labor mobility and opposing any ultimate implementation of influx control. And finally the proposal called for the implementation and/or increase of activity on each of the Tutu principles or take the necessary steps to withdraw from South Africa.

It wasn't a complete surprise when Warner rejected this proposal out of hand remarking that the management and a majority of the stockholders opposed the resolution and moved on to the next question.

By coincidence, the following Sunday Bishop Tutu preached in All Saints Church in Pasadena. Hearing this profoundly spiritual and charismatic man of God show the relevance of the Gospel as it applies to the Black South African, one could only reflect once again on the strange and amoral world of corporate America.

The meeting droned on smoothly and in accordance with the game plan. Then came the climatic moment when the retiring president, Tavoulareas, was to give a preview of the wonders that lay ahead for the Mobil Corporation. As the auditorium lights were being dimmed and the spotlight centered on the podium, my friend and I left. It was time for lunch, but we weren't very hungry. ■

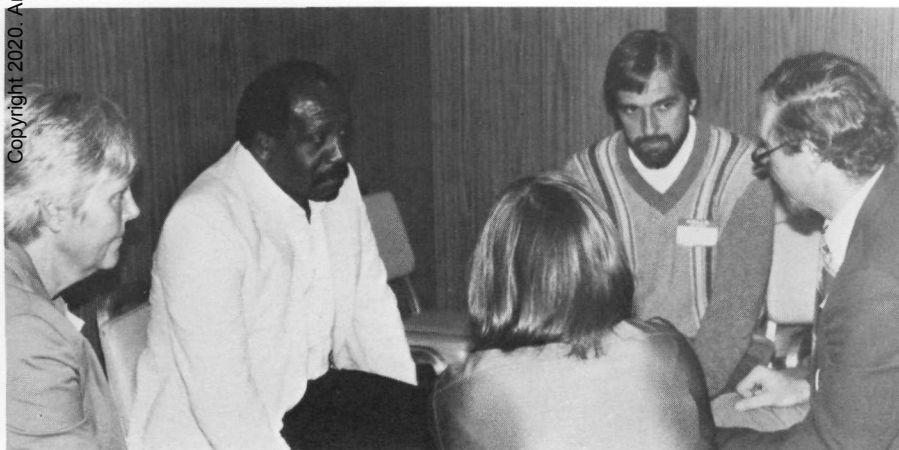


Episcopal urban caucus on candid camera

The Rt. Rev. John Burt, who conducted the interview earlier in this issue of THE WITNESS, was keynote speaker at EUC's fifth national assembly in Detroit recently. He is shown at top with Byron Rushing and Anne Scheibner, EUC president and vice-president, respectively.



Center, the Hon. G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams, former Governor of Michigan, left, greeted the Caucus at its opening banquet. The Rev. Edward Rodman of Boston, right, who is serving as interim EUC executive, prepared a working document embellished by delegates, calling for greater regional and local activities aided by field secretaries, to be supervised by a coordinator and central office.



Bottom: A discussion group ponders the Caucus agenda. EUC members urged that candidates for Presiding Bishop have a "personal track record" in social and economic justice; lobbied for a better run Jubilee ministry; opposed the sale of national church headquarters in New York at this time. Resolutions asked that U.S. policy toward South Africa be debated in the presidential election; deplored the treatment of five Hispanic Grand Jury resisters (including Maria Cueto, former church employee and Steven Guerra of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company); affirmed the Rev. Judy Upham, under fire for allowing homosexuals to conduct religious services in her parish; and supported the concept of pro-choice before birth and the right to full life after birth in the abortion debate.

Editorial . . . Continued from page 4
ancient Greece; whether the work experience itself is becoming less and less a vocational expression and more and more a grim endurance test of meaningless motions and rituals; whether there may need to evolve in economic life, a far-sighted planning for the needs of all, democratic in nature and making working people the *subject* of the economic system.

In both the Canadian bishops' statement of January, 1983 and in the Papal Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, the bishops have — if they will use them — clear guides. "Work is for the person, and not the person for work", states Pope John Paul II's encyclical. And the principle of the priority of labor over capital (which his encyclical asserted and the Canadian bishops followed) is nothing less than the biblical witness itself calling us back to the chapters of Genesis, the prophets, and the book of Acts. According to them we are called to give moral shape to our society, to help move it closer, in likelihood, to the Kingdom of God.

So let the debate begin. Let us in the Christian community also enter it to learn and to listen. But let us enter it knowing that our religious heritage allows us to offer a clarity and a vision that such a debate will surely need as it moves through the year ahead.

(R. W. G. and the editors)

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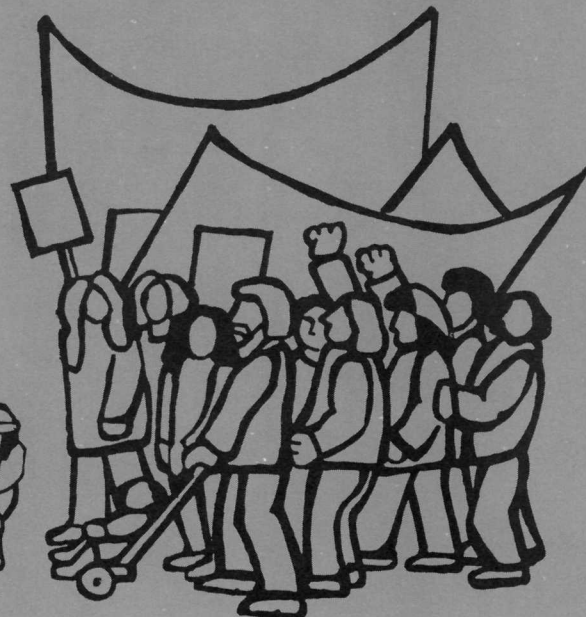


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