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THE WITNESS

MATTERS OF

life

A N D

DEATH

New birth technologies • Charles Meyer • Sharon Curtin
Death on skid row • Jeff Dietrich
Sanctuary under attack

Letters

Tutu quotes informative

Thank you very much for the December, 1984 issue of *THE WITNESS* containing excerpts from various addresses by Bishop Tutu. I had not seen these quotations before and found them most informative. The article concerning the Free South Africa Movement in February was nice, but you should probably note for your readers that Randall Robinson, Walter Fauntroy, and I were meeting with the Ambassador in his office at the embassy when we refused to leave and were arrested.

Mary Frances Berry
Commission on Civil Rights
Washington, D.C.

Liked cover combo

I like everything about *THE WITNESS*, as I should have told you long ago. I welcome the freshness and seriousness of each issue. Now I want to tell you of my appreciation of the cover of the December issue. Your photo caught the wonderful, open, evangelical, genial personality of Bishop Tutu and matched it with that great quotation from Thomas Merton, which is appropriate for the season and for the photo subject. Splendid!

Don Hetzler, Exec. Scty.
Associated Church Press
Geneva, Ill.

Bravo from Mexico

Thanks for that beautiful December issue of *THE WITNESS*. What a witness to the meaning of this holy season!

May Bishop Desmond Tutu also get a Peace Prize from the Lord at Christmas. I copied Thomas Merton's text to give deeper meaning to my own wishes, sent to friends concerned about those "who do not belong", during Christmas. And I also liked Gary MacEoin's comments on liberation theology.

Betsie Hollants
Cuernavaca, Mexico

Paired Tutu with King

I put up a Martin Luther King bulletin board in my classroom this year to celebrate his birthday and paired him with Bishop Desmond Tutu. *THE WITNESS* cover and inside pictures and quotes in the December issue make up the Bishop's section, and I'll save the articles to use when I teach *Cry the Beloved Country* this spring.

Nellie Browning
St. Louis, Mo.

Much needed information

Yes, it is painful to learn about how the poor of the Third World are persecuted, detained, tortured and murdered for no reason save that they are seeking to live in a way that befits their dignity as children of God. (See Bishop Tutu in his remarks about apartheid, December *WITNESS*.)

And particularly noteworthy for me was Gary MacEoin's article, "Liberation Theology under Fire." It does seem to be an issue that is splitting mainline Protestantism and traditional Catholicism over and against the praxis of liberation theology. I am striving to somehow reconcile the Christ of the Nicene Creed with the Jesus I see in the poor, the disenfranchised, the powerless (having been active in the Catholic Worker movement for the past three years).

Thanks for a much needed December informational issue.

Carolyn W. Reynolds
Santa Rosa, Cal.

Commends format

I am impressed by your tribute to Bishop Tutu. He is a great inspiration for us all.

Your magazine has a nice format and legible print — helpful to those of us with not-so-good eyesight!

Sarah J. Tesch
St. Paul, Minn.

Note from Bishop Tutu

Thank you very much for your kind message of congratulations on my being awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize.

I have been deeply humbled and yet elated by this signal honor which I recognize is given to me in a representative capacity, for it belongs to all of us who are committed to the struggle for justice, peace and reconciliation in South Africa and in other parts of the world. I receive it too on behalf of the voiceless and marginalized ones of the world who have their noses rubbed daily in the dust and whose human dignity is trodden underfoot and who often lack the most elementary human rights that are taken for granted in most normal and free societies.

I pray that the world will become a more secure home for all of us and that we will learn that God intended us to live in harmony and interdependence and that we will desist from the madness of spending such large amounts on instruments of destruction when a fraction of that budget would enable millions of God's children to lead full lives of dignity and peace.

The Rt. Rev. Desmond M. Tutu
Bishop of Johannesburg

Lot of hogwash

I regard the article in the October *WITNESS* attempting to justify abortion-on-demand biblically and traditionally as just a lot of hog-wash. It is scholastically shaky and theologically unsound. Dr. John Harvey, Virginia Seminary, has written an answer to it which utterly destroys the Mss. Blair, Wilson-Kastner, Steinem work. There is no biblical or traditional justification for abortion-on-demand. To put any more attention on what they have in *THE WITNESS* is, in my opinion, a sheer waste of time.

Whenever I see these proud and strident feminists screaming, "We have a Constitutional right to an abortion," I always

think of the proud and strident Southerner, after the Dred Scott decision, screaming, "We have a Constitutional right to our slaves." Think about how the pro-abortion people regard human life.

The Rev. Paul E. Mericle
Silver Spring, Md.

Offended by pro-choice

I received a copy of your January WITNESS and wish to have my name removed permanently from your files.

As a hospital chaplain and Director of Hospice Care, I am offended in the extreme about your article advocating "pro-choice." The letter to the editor, "Need action on local level," reveals that you are promoting the killing of unborn infants with no consideration of many factors. Does anyone, with no social control have the right to kill another human? I believe not and since I see the aborted babies I can see that they in fact are the murdered ones. The lucky ones are found in the neo-natal nursery.

The Rev. Hal I. Meyers
Rouses Point, N.Y.

Proposes experiment

Pro-choice abortions make sense when a simple observation is made in one's kitchen. Carefully break two chicken eggs into a frying pan. Those white blobs on the yolks indicate that conception has taken place. As the eggs fry, those white blobs do not writhe in pain because they are not far enough along toward becoming chickens.

Those pro-life groups who claim that life begins at the moment of conception and that abortions are murders, should consider the possible consequences. Truth in advertising laws could require all food with chicken-egg contents to use the terminology "unbornchickens" on their labels. Caviar: unbornfish. Restaurant breakfast menus: Toast and two unbornchickens, any style. Revised cookbooks: Beat your unbornchickens until stiff. Christmas/New Year: unbornchickennog.

Easter on the White House lawn would tell visiting children to hunt/roll unbornchickens. Their questions would require instant sex education. Who would teach it? Public schoolteachers? Electronic clergy? Nuns/priests? Hostess/host?

World hunger and world overpopulation are twins. The Malthusian theory is correct. "When population exceeds the ability of the environment to support it, nature reduces the increase by people dying from starvation, disease, overcrowding, crime, war and lack of pure water."

Females should not be used as breeding animals to increase numbers and powers of religious/political coalitions. (There is money in baby production and the items babies use.)

Ethel S. Abbott
Rochester, N.Y.

Seeks more light

I was wondering if I could get a copy of the article on Abortion by Beatrice Blair and Patricia Wilson-Kastner (October WITNESS). As a new recipient of your magazine I found the dialogue in the January Letters to the Editor section interesting but needs more illumination.

Thad Butchen
Bigfork, Montana

(Others like Thad Butchen, who just joined THE WITNESS circle of readers and feel left out of the dialogue discussing previous articles, may wish to order back issues for \$1; e.g. abortion, October; Bishop Tutu, December. Write THE WITNESS, Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002. — Ed.)

Possesses treasure

I did appreciate immensely your sending me a copy of your WITNESS special issue, "Daughters of Prophecy," and I read it from cover to cover, marking and smiling and experiencing both exhilaration and deep pain. It is a marvelous edition and one which I have saved for my own "posterity file" (including the portions

of the September '84 issue which also relate to the anniversary).

It is a treasure which I am deeply grateful to have in my possession. Thank you so much for sharing it with me, as one who while not Episcopalian, has felt in my bones and blood as if this entire struggle has been mine as well.

The Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers,
Associate General Secretary
The United Methodist Church

Self-interest is key

I support the views expressed by Sheila Collins about the bishop's pastoral on capitalist economics. However, I would like to offer a few words in defense of Adam Smith. As I learned it in school the free market is based on an individual's "self-interest," not "greed" as Ms. Collins stated. Admittedly, greed is a perversion of self-interest that is dominating capitalism as we know it.

Whenever I consider my motives for doing anything it always comes down to looking out for my self-interest. To do otherwise would seem to be a most unnatural act. The task at hand is to broaden our understanding of just what our self-interests really are. For instance in looking out for my own welfare I would also look out for the welfare of my wife and children as well as my parents, grandparents, grandchildren, greatgrandchildren . . .

When I see or hear about conditions of severe poverty and starvation in the world I am personally offended because I know that it is only a matter of coincidence that these people are suffering such indignities and not I. People in positions of political or economic power who allow these conditions to exist are not playing the game of mutual respect and are a menace to the self-interests of everybody.

It is in my self-interest to live in a peaceful and harmonious community. In this age of worldwide trade and com-

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Hunting the heretics

"A civil priesthood or government, hunting after political heresy, is an humble imitator of the inquisition." — John Taylor, speaking against the proposed Sedition Act of 1798.

The nationwide crackdown by the U.S. Government on the Sanctuary Movement pits the Church in dramatic confrontation with the State. This latest manifestation of the Reagan "revolution" in criminal justice strikes at the heart of the Biblical mandate to take in the stranger and shelter the persecuted.

Further, the indictment by a Federal Grand Jury of 16 people, including two priests, a pastor and three nuns, was largely made possible by informants placed in the sanctuary groups, who wore concealed tape recorders at church services, public meetings and private discussions. Scores of Guatemalans and Salvadorans were swept up as a result. And many more sanctuary workers described as "unindicted co-conspirators" are now put in the position of testifying against their priests, neighbors, fellow parishioners, and other sanctuary workers — or going to jail

themselves.

Now comes an "Episcopal connection." The Rev. Henry Atkins, chaplain at Rutgers, was asked by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to have the six refugees sheltered at St. Michael's apply for political asylum. Atkins and his supporters have refused, since 96% of those who have so applied have been turned down and immediately deported, to face torture and death in their homeland.

Sanctuary activists like Atkins believe the families they shelter to be eligible for asylum under the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980, which states that asylum should be given those fleeing persecution in their own lands or to those who have good reason to fear such persecution. The INS views Guatemalans and Salvadorans as "illegal aliens," seeking greater economic opportunity.

Sanctuary as a theological position is ancient, as are its issues: Loyalty to the sovereign vs. fidelity to one's conscience; proving one's "patriotism" vs. opposing unjust laws or orders. As Chicago pastor Sid Mohn put it, "When the church has to break the law in order to provide refuge for

homeless people, the struggle for justice has reached a new stage. Now the pastoral has merged with the political, service is prophetic, and love is a subversive activity."

The simplistic Reagan ideology (good vs. evil; us against them) threatens to embroil those with opinions on the subject of religious and political freedom in a skirmish, if not a battle, of historic proportion.

Slowly but surely the Department of Justice, the FBI and CIA have been using a chimerical fear of "terrorism" and "imported violence" to overcome traditional resistance to inquisitorial methods of justice. While no one of religious principle condones the violence spawned by terrorist acts, consider what has been happening in the interest of "National Security":

- Since 1981, the CIA has been permitted to eavesdrop on organizations in the United States as long as it believes it may learn "international intelligence" in the process;

- In 1983, FBI Director William Webster proclaimed stopping terrorism a priority of the FBI and obtained permission to abolish distinctions

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THE WITNESS

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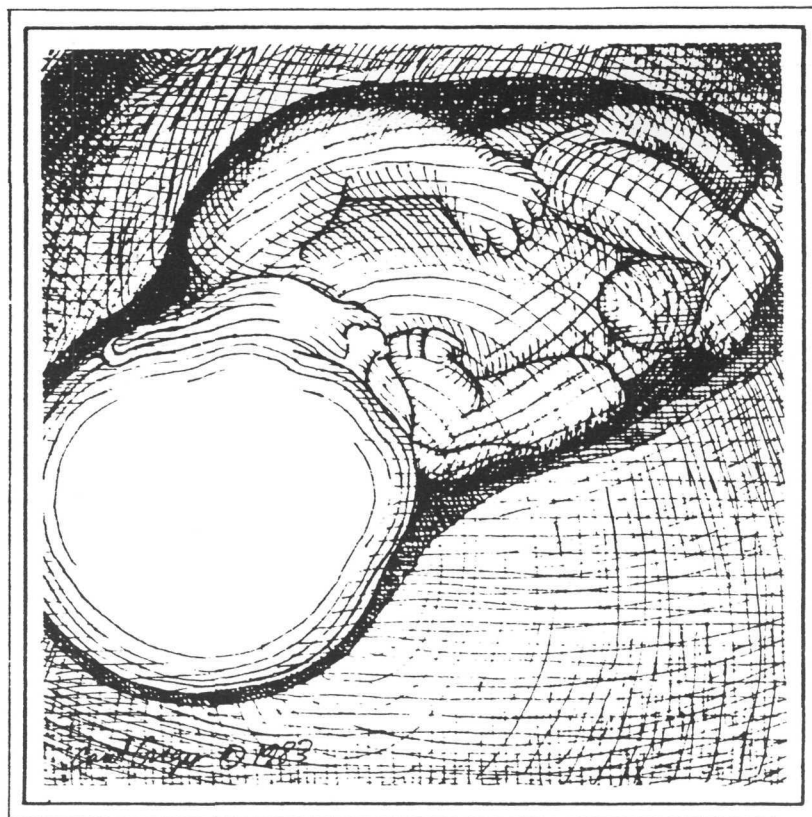
MATTERS OF **life** A N D **DEATH**

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A question of ethics:

In vitro fertilization

by Charles Meyer

By now most everyone has heard the joke about why it is that “test tube” babies are so expensive. They have a “womb with a view.” But for those contemplating having such a procedure, “in vitro fertilization” is anything but funny. It is indeed the end of a long, agonizing process of failures.

Having had no success with the usual natural reproductive process, such couples seek the counsel of qualified infertility

specialists who work through a regimen of fertility drugs, specialized testing and careful regulation to attempt conception. Only after these attempts have utterly failed do couples move on to the technique of last resort — In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer (IVF-ET.)

Contrary to popular understanding, IVF-ET is not a simple or even frequently successful process. After the couple fills out a lengthy application form, undergoes a personal interview, and completes an extensive fertility screening workup, the woman is given a regimen of hormone therapy to stimulate the follicles to mature and produce eggs.

Careful monitoring by ultrasound

imaging and measurement of hormonal blood levels tells the physician when the follicles are mature. At that time the woman comes into the hospital or outpatient clinic and undergoes a surgical procedure (under general anesthesia) called a laparoscopy. Inserting a sterile instrument into the abdominal cavity, the physician first finds the egg sacs, penetrates them and, hopefully, retrieves some eggs. The eggs are then placed in a culture medium in a petri dish — *not* a test tube. (“In vitro” means “in glass.”)

The husband, who has refrained from ejaculation by any method for three days, must now provide a semen specimen. Because he is under considerable pressure to produce the specimen, and

The Rev. R. Charles Meyer is Director of the Department of Pastoral Care at St. David's Community Hospital, Austin, Tex. He has also served as a prison chaplain and pastoral counselor, and is the author of several magazine articles.

Who will be in control of the new reproductive technology? In vitro fertilization, sperm donors, surrogate mothers will surely emerge as issues at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in September. The following two articles provide background data.

may not be able to do so, some programs use frozen sperm collected at an earlier date. Otherwise the specimen may either be collected at home and brought to the in vitro facility or obtained in the masturbatorium. The husband's sperm is then added to the egg already in the culture medium.

Assuming fertilization has occurred, the cells, now fertilized embryos, are kept in a controlled environment for approximately two days. They are then transferred back into the woman's womb without the use or necessity of anesthesia. After several hours of bed rest the patient returns home, where she may be continued on bed rest for two more days. It is hoped that during this time the embryo(s)

will successfully implant in the uterus. From this point on a pregnancy continues as any other would.

Even though IVF-ET is medically the least controversial and ethically most benign of the new reproductive techniques (surrogate mothering and surrogate embryo transfer raise far more troublesome issues) the process does present some problems.

Who, for instance, ought to be considered appropriate candidates for IVF-ET? Most programs in the United States limit their services to married couples using their own gametes. But what about the single woman who wishes to have a child using donor sperm? What about unmarried couples or lesbian couples who wish to have children? The lack of consensus on what a "family" is further confuses the issue and makes determination difficult. Certainly the traditional image of the family has been challenged by single parent families, couples living together and couples consisting of two divorced parents with children from both marriages.

I believe it is clear that IVF-ET should be practiced. The technology is no longer experimental (insurance companies are beginning to cover it as a medical expense), it is available in many communities and it is a relatively effective treatment of last resort for infertility. However, because of our lack of information about the babies produced by this technique (estimates run from 700-1000), I would argue that its practice generally should be limited to married couples (man and woman) using their own gametes in order to maximize the chance of both physical and emotional success for the child. Boundaries can always be expanded; they can only with great pain and difficulty be drawn back. In addition, single and homosexual couples have other means of procuring children, including adoption.

Should the technique be used simply as a matter of convenience? Suppose a

couple wishes to have a baby, all physiological systems are intact and working but they wish to use IVF-ET and transfer the embryo to a surrogate to carry for them for a fee? This way the couple could continue to maintain their jobs, keep a secure income and avoid all the medical risks to the woman while at the same time managing to "have a baby."

As a culture, we are used to "convenience items." We have become accustomed to having things the way we want them and when we want them. "Have it your way" is our national motto. But I think it would be inappropriate to extend this manner of life to producing children. It cheapens the process and reduces the child to yet another commodity to be acquired in the game of life. IVF-ET, in my opinion, ought to be limited to use by couples with significant physiological fertility defects such as diseased or nonexistent fallopian tubes, or oligospermia, or whose only way of becoming pregnant is considered to be IVF-ET. This consideration would allow the use of surrogates for women for whom pregnancy is contraindicated or dangerous and who wish to use their own eggs and their husband's sperm. Women with inheritable genetic defects or diseases who would wish to "adopt" an embryo using their husband's sperm and a donor egg could also use this technique.

One of the major determining factors in any ethical dilemma is the risk/benefit ratio, more properly referred to as the harm/benefit ratio. Are the risks of the hormone therapy, the surgical laparoscopy under general anesthesia, the incredible emotional stress of the couple undergoing this procedure together as a last attempt to have their own biological children, and the risks involved in the extra-corporeal handling of the egg, sperm and embryo worth the potential result?

Obviously the answer to that question varies with the persons involved. If you are the infertile couple the response is almost invariably affirmative. If you are

an objective observer looking at the statistical rate of success ranging from 10% to 20% your reply may be less enthusiastic. Add in a cost factor of from \$5,000 to \$7,000 per attempt and the response appears even dimmer.

I believe that for those couples who can afford it, both financially and emotionally, the harm/benefit ratio is well within the acceptable range. Although the success rate of a "normal" pregnancy is considerably higher, an average healthy couple has a comparable chance of *achieving* a pregnancy each month and the costs, while somewhat more for IVF-ET, are not outside the parameters of reasonability, especially when compared with those of adoption. Clearly, for those couples struggling and desperately wanting their own biological offspring, IVF-ET is a viable, even desirable treatment for infertility commensurate with other conventional means.

Certainly the most problematic issue involved in IVF-ET, as with all the new reproductive technology, is the status of the embryo. Some want to argue that the embryo is fully a person with all the rights and protections which accrue to any other member of society. Thus, as a person, the embryo is subject to informed consent, child protection laws and, one would assume, inheritance laws. If this is the case, how will they be treated? If more than one egg is fertilized and the couple only wants one child, what is to be done with the rest? If they are not all transferred back into the woman how will they be kept? If frozen (as in the Australian case of recent note) and the couple dies do they inherit property? If destroyed, has abortion occurred or has murder taken place?

Others have argued with equally compelling force that the embryo is not a person but rather is human life. Thus it is entitled to the proper respect in its handling and treatment, but does not accrue the rights, protections or duties normally associated with fully developed persons.

It is important to be very careful with this determination. It has, I believe, been treated much too cavalierly by proponents of both viewpoints and has resulted in confusion and defensiveness rather than clarity.

It seems clear to me that the President's Commission on Ethics was accurate in its evaluation of the embryo as human life and thus due respectful treatment. This designation in no way denigrates the status of the embryo and in fact protects it from capricious or disinterested handling. It seems ludicrous, however, to impute personhood to the eight-celled embryo with all the rights and protections of a fully developed child. If such were legally the case a couple who conceived on Dec. 31 and spontaneously aborted Jan. 1 could claim two tax deductions.

The freezing of embryos poses another major ethical dilemma. While the technology is still considered experimental with humans, the practice has a long and successful history with animals, particularly cattle. It appears to be only a matter of time before the freezing of human embryos could be considered routine.

The benefit to the couple is in relieving them of the pressures and medical risks of going through another month of hormone treatments, laparoscopy, and sperm production. There also is some evidence to indicate that the woman's body may be more receptive to implantation if she has not undergone the hormone treatments necessary to stimulate the follicle. Thus, if embryos could be successfully frozen, the woman could simply have the embryo(s) thawed during her next monthly cycle and transferred without the aforementioned risks and possibly with a better chance of achieving a pregnancy.

At this time, however, I do not believe we have enough evidence regarding the technology, the effects on the children born from this process, and the effects on the families producing them to warrant

its general use. (To this date only three children have been born from frozen embryos.) The process is still experimental and the cost is highly prohibitive. In addition, while there are many situations where this process would be convenient, it seems to me to be an area where the technologically possible is not necessarily ethically desirable.

One of the primary guidelines for ethical consideration is that "can does not imply ought." Convenience, in my opinion, is not reason enough to justify the further risks to the embryo, regardless of how one views its status. What for instance would happen if the couple, during the first transfer, achieved a pregnancy and wanted no other children? Would the frozen embryos be sold, adopted out, destroyed? I would argue that just because we *can* provide this procedure does not mean we *ought* to do so.

The issue of selection, or screening, during the transfer process raises more questions. What if some of the embryos are found to be polyspermic (fertilized by more than one sperm) or appear to be dead? Polyspermic eggs seldom develop and usually die before birth. If they do develop they are always anomalous and incompatible with life. Dead embryos which are transferred may interfere with the implantation or growth of normal, live embryos in the womb. Should we then transfer back *all* embryos, regardless of their status? If we do not, if we screen the embryos for death and polyspermia and delete these from transfer so as to enhance the possibility of pregnancy are we practicing abortion and/or genetic selection? Furthermore, if the embryos appear to be "abnormal" or "improperly developing" ought they to be transferred?

I think it is fair and reasonable (both to the woman and to the other embryos) not to transfer dead or polyspermic embryos back into the womb. One could argue that by doing so we are mimicking nature's selection/screening process. "Abnormal"

or “improperly developing” embryos are quite another matter, however. Embryos that appear to the gamete physiologist (the person trained to culture and incubate the embryos and ready them for transfer by the physician) to be “abnormal” or “improperly developing” have been known to implant successfully and grow into perfectly normal fetuses. Likewise, embryos that appear “perfectly normal” may develop anomalies and produce abnormal babies.

At issue here is our societal judgment about imperfection. Will we allow or tolerate persons who are less “perfect” (physiologically, psychologically, spiritually, politically) than ourselves? Is there a difference between accepting acquired imperfection (accident, disease, self infliction) after birth and congenital imperfection before birth? If the congenital imperfection is known (“abnormal embryos,” ultrasound, amniocentesis) before birth then is there a duty to the society and the couple not to be “burdened” with such a child?

It seems clear that what appear to be “abnormal” and “improperly developing” embryos ought to be transferred back. Not only is their further development uncertain, but also to delete them makes a frightening statement about our demand for cultural heterogeneity. In addition, should abnormalities be found in the first trimester, the couple could still opt for abortion. Thus, deletion of such embryos

at the transfer stage seems patently premature.

An issue that is frequently ignored, not only in IVF-ET but also in other medical dilemmas, is that of justice. Given a limited amount of health care resources ought we to be investing our time, expertise and money in a procedure that has a small success rate, is capital intensive requiring new facilities and personnel, and serves only a very small segment of the population — and not a “sick” one at that?

Critics argue that dollars would be better spent on health care for our increasing elderly and indigent populations (especially in skilled nursing facilities), providing better prenatal, neonatal, and well baby care, and supporting continuing research into the causes of infertility. If couples *really* want babies there are hundreds available for adoption through various agencies, especially Asian and Third World infants and those with what we who are whole call “defects.” It seems genetic arrogance to demand that the only acceptable offspring is one of biological replication. In addition, access to the procedure is available only to those in a certain economic strata who can afford it.

Advocates (and I count myself among them) believe that the procedure is akin to any other elective medical decision. Qualified hospitals (and possibly even clinics) ought to offer it as a part of a range of services available to the community. It indeed adds to the research into infertility and, through the income generated by it, permits the expansion of other programs such as elderly care and indigent services. Equal access can be assured through a combination of personal funds and third party payers (including the medical facility itself.) Most importantly, this relatively benign procedure which is being constantly improved allows previously infertile couples to produce their own child who is wanted and loved. Furthermore, such couples

should not be criticized for wanting their own biological children any more than other couples who have children without first seeking to adopt.

Finally, the “slippery slope” question. If we permit IVF-ET and, as will surely happen, gradually expand its parameters where do we end up? Do we find ourselves with a hundred Henry Kissingers or J.R. Ewings or Frank Sinatras? What does this mean for the image of “the family”? What are the emotional, political and economic dangers here?

The answer is a clear, unequivocal and resounding: “We don’t know.” Certainly IVF-ET alone offers no threat to our culture or lifestyle. It is primarily a medical procedure that treats infertility by becoming an external fallopian tube. Engaged with other new technologies such as artificial insemination by donor, surrogate mothering, frozen sperm, ova and embryos, and surrogate embryo transfer, the procedure becomes part of a major challenge to our beliefs and values surrounding parenting, family structure, reproductive choice, and societal norms (particularly concerning perfection.)

Thus it is extremely important with IVF-ET, as with each of the new bioethical decisions placed before us by rapidly expanding medical technology, to think about, understand clearly and discuss widely the parameters permissible to us. Carefully chosen boundaries which are open to reasonable and studied expansion will inhibit the negative consequences and enhance the positive uses of this process.

Resource

Good Genes: Emerging Values for Science, Religion and Society. A group study guide edited by David A. Ames and Colin B. Gracey, 1984. 140 pages. \$3.95 plus postage/handling. 10 or more, \$3 each. Forward Movement Publications, 412 Sycamore St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. ■

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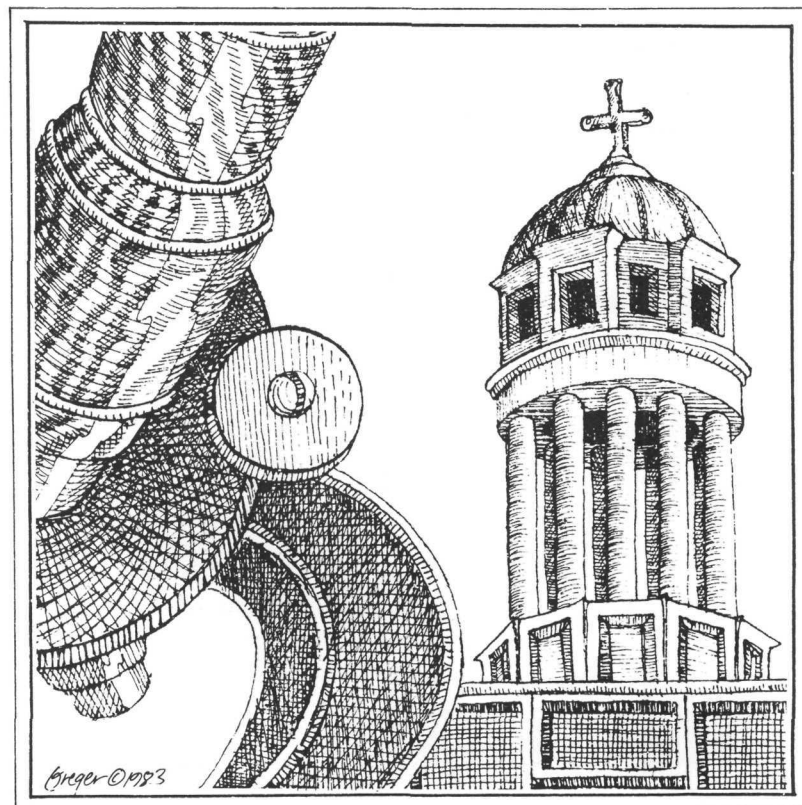
New reproductive technology: Who will be in control?

by Sharon Curtin

The new reproductive technology is raising questions that threaten to create a legal, moral, and social nightmare. For pro-choice advocates it complicates an already emotional issue. The perceived conflict between the rights of women and the rights of the fetus has now been extended to concern for the rights of the early embryo — sometimes with little concern for women.

The question of just when life begins, just when the embryo becomes a person, is unanswerable. In the 1973 Supreme Court decision (*Roe v. Wade*) the crucial language stated, "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

This doesn't stop any of us from trying to give an answer based on personal convictions, strongly held moral values, questions of control or power, or even ideas of sin and punishment. Most of the arguments as to when personhood begins are convictions masquerading as the truth. Not that the bioethicists, biologists, lawyers, and theologians are not presenting what they believe to be the truth, and in some cases very convincingly. But in my research for this article I realized I nodded yes to the arguments supporting my position and disagreed with evidence that did not support my commitment to women being in control of their own destiny, including their reproductive destiny . . .



I would like to present a few examples of the problems created, both human and ethical, by advances in reproductive technology. They are selected without any pretense of objectivity or hope of presenting a complete picture. I simply want to draw the bare outline of the increasingly complex ethical, social, legal and human problems we face when we speak of reproductive rights.

Emphasis on fertilization

According to most of the books and articles I could find on the new repro-

ductive technology, it seems that the emphasis in research is devoted to developing new methods of conception. The new techniques of fertilization are rapidly becoming almost commonplace; the resultant children are no longer called "miracle babies."

Yet there is still no safe and sure method of birth control. In fact, the last major advance in contraception was the "pill." Most of the other available methods — including the sponge, condoms and the cervical cap — have been available in some form for hundreds of years.

Most women suspect that until women control more of the research process, contraception will continue to have low priority.

Has research focused on fertilization because it is somehow more glamorous and dramatic? Is it because, as one scientist suggested, medicine always prefers to discover a “cure” which has immediately apparent results — i.e. a baby where none was thought possible — rather than emphasize prevention — i.e., better education in order to prevent the most common cause of infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease? It is ironic, and tragic, that at a time when maternal and child health programs are being cut, more money goes into test tubes than into nutrition programs for the health and well-being of women, infants and children. Why is it more valuable to develop more and more sophisticated techniques for invitro fertilization than to provide good prenatal care which might prevent retardation or low birth weight?

Frankly, I find this emphasis indefensible, both morally and logically. First of all, while we all recognize the touching desire to have children, we must also recognize our duty to women and children at risk. Even more importantly, I think that the emphasis on fertilization implies that women who do not have children, who cannot conceive, are somehow flawed, even diseased. This society does not recognize that a woman can be a woman of accomplishment and a valuable member of the society, unless she somehow fulfills her traditional biological role.

At the same time, but to a lesser degree, the implication is that a man who does not or cannot father is less than a man, not virile and potent. What may be a couple's sincere and simple desire to have a child becomes clouded by acceptance of these sexual stereotypes, and this cloud is seeded by a medical establishment which encourages such a belief system by focusing research re-

sources and energy on fertilization rather than ways we can nurture, encourage and celebrate the people that exist.

Rights, responsibilities

A surrogate mother in Michigan delivered a baby last year who was both microcephalic and mentally retarded. On being presented with this “less than perfect child” the man who paid the surrogate \$10,000 to carry “his” child insisted on blood tests that might show he was not the father. The test results were announced on the Phil Donahue Show. The buyer was *not* the father, it would seem that the mother and her husband had had intercourse around the time of the artificial insemination.

The would-be father treated the episode on the level of a business transaction. The product was poorly manufactured, not what he wanted, and he sent it back. But what if the child had been normal and he had only discovered that he was not the father after five or ten years? Do children like this come with a warranty?

Where is the spontaneous acceptance of life in this transaction? What is going to happen to this child nobody wants? Who is responsible — the technique, the father(s), the mother, society?

Presently, partly because of this case, the Michigan legislature is considering two proposals: that parents who contract with a surrogate bear all parental rights and responsibilities; and a rival law that makes all surrogate parenting a crime.

In France, a woman sued to retrieve her dead husband's sperm. The sperm bank refused her request on the grounds that the dead man had left no instructions. The judge ruled that “this secretion containing the seeds of life” was part of the estate and should be given to her.

Again, one can sympathize with the woman's desire to carry a child without approving the decision to declare, as a matter of law, that sperm are somehow the beginning, the seed, of life. The primacy of the male is clearly implied.

The implication that property rights are involved is also worrisome; does this mean that, under community property laws, one could claim a share of sperm, eggs or embryo? Or arrange for birth without the consent of an ex-spouse and later sue for child support? I am also reminded of a man I once heard explaining why he expected his wife to be monogamous: He didn't want anyone infringing on his gene pool. The idea that one person's reproductive products can be another person's private property brings up the question of who, eventually, will make such decisions.

Facing this question, judges in some jurisdictions (notably Michigan) have refused to consider involving “unusual” or “artificial” reproduction; they have said that the legislature must decide.

Ethics and the embryo

Can embryos inherit? Are they persons, perhaps in the same way that corporations can be persons under the law? How long is the research facility obliged to protect the embryos?

The Rev. Donald McCarthy of the Pope John XXIII Medical Moral Research and Education Center in St. Louis — a conservative Catholic think tank — called, in testimony before a Congressional Committee, for the endowment of civil rights to every embryo. These included the right not to be frozen, the right not to be destroyed, and the right not to be created at all except as a consequence of “personal self-giving and conjugal love.”

Every woman should find that demand insulting. Here is a man pleading for the civil rights of the embryo — an entity whose individual humanity is disputed and ultimately unknowable — in a society that refused to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. I cannot understand how he can deny me my right to equal protection under the law and the right to control my own reproductive life, yet argue for the

Continued on page 19

Does the U.S. have a free press?

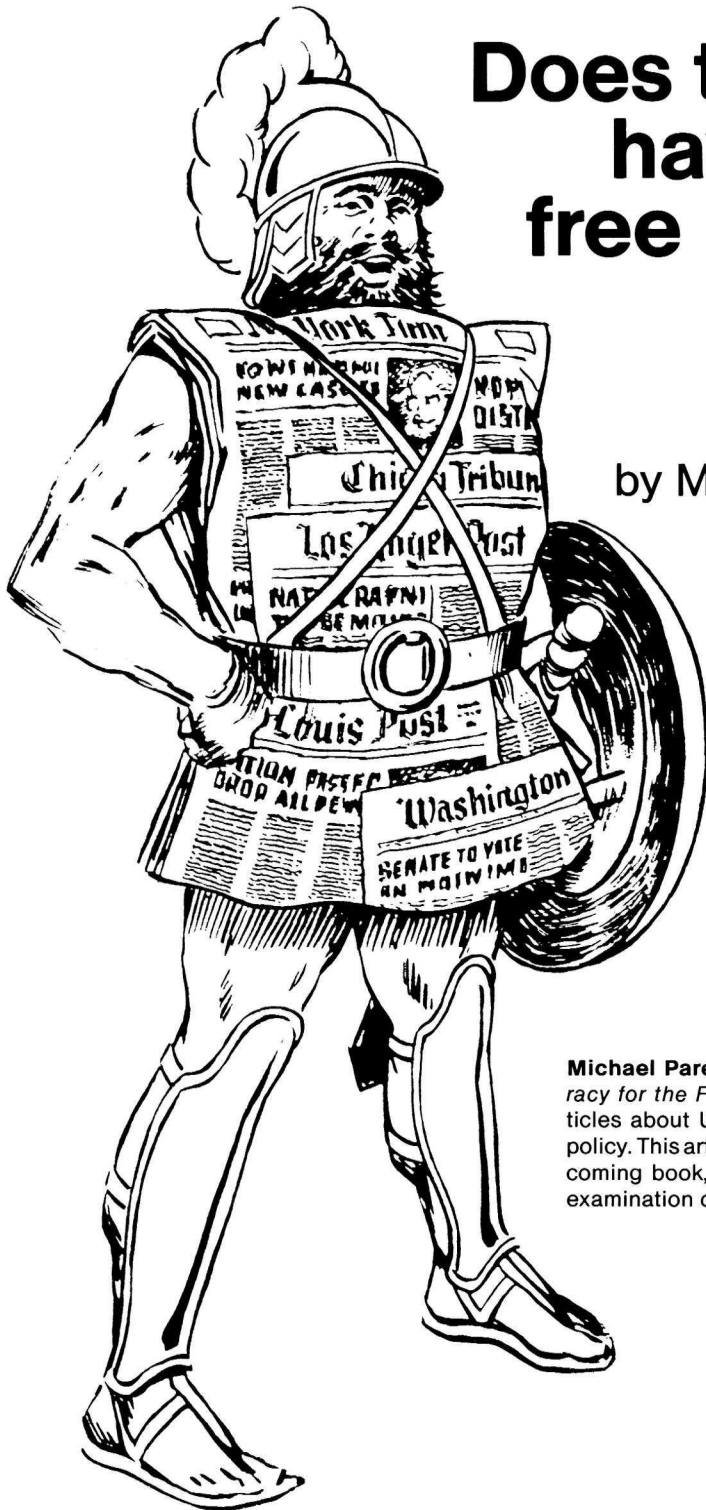
by Michael Parenti

Michael Parenti is the author of *Democracy for the Few* and other books and articles about U.S. political life and foreign policy. This article is adapted from his forthcoming book, *Inventing Reality*, a critical examination of the U.S. news media.

It is commonly believed that the United States is a society endowed with “a free and independent press,” but the reality is something else. Who specifically owns the mass media in the United States?

Ten huge business and financial corporations control the three major television and radio networks, 34 subsidiary television stations, 201 cable television systems, 62 radio stations, 20 record companies, 59 magazines including *Time* and *Newsweek*, 58 newspapers including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*, 41 book publishers, and various motion picture companies like Columbia Pictures and Twentieth-Century Fox. Three quarters of the major stockholders of the three broadcast networks are banks such as Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty Trust, and Bank of America. These banks, in turn, are controlled mostly by four economic empires: the Mellons, the Morgans, the Rockefellers and the DuPonts — the same family groups that dominate the financial, mining, manufacturing, agricultural and oil industries of the United States and much of the world.

The overall pattern with regard to the U.S. news media is one of increasing concentration of ownership and earnings. According to a 1982 survey, independent newspapers are being gobbled up by the big newspaper companies at the rate of 50 or 60 a year. Ten newspaper corporations earn over half of all newspaper revenues in the United States. The giant newspaper companies buy up not only independent papers but other giant companies that might control dozens of newspapers themselves. In 1978, Gannet Corporation, one of the biggest, de-



scribed itself as "a nation-wide newspaper company with 78 dailies in 30 states."

Less than 4% of American cities have competing newspapers under separate ownership; and in cities where there is a "choice," the papers offer little variety in editorial policy, being mostly politically conservative. Most of the "independent" newspapers rely on the wire services and larger newspapers for syndicated columnists and for national and international news. Like local television and radio stations, they are not really independent but quite dependent on the big news producers.

As with any business, the mass media's first obligation is to make money for their owners. Although declining in numbers, newspapers continue to be a major U.S. profit-making business, employing over 432,000 people. Through mergers, staff cutting, and reliance on central news service, the large conglomerates show handsome profits. In 1980, for instance, the annual advertising revenues of newspapers in the United States was \$15.6 billion, with many billions more going to radio and television. A typical medium-circulation newspaper makes a 23% profit each year. The American press can hardly pretend to be a critic of giant U.S. corporations and exorbitant business profits, since the press enjoys profits that equal those of most oil companies.

Most newspapers, magazines, radio and TV networks, and movie studios in the United States are themselves giant corporations or subsidiaries of larger corporate conglomerates. Consider *Time* magazine — whose editors, according to one ex-*Time* reporter, "have never been shy about its incestuous relations with the captains of industry." *Time*, along with five or six other national publications, is owned by Time Inc., a colossal multinational company with yearly revenues of \$2.5 billion. Time Inc. also owns several large publishing firms in the United States and has investments in

others in Germany, France, Mexico and Japan. In addition, Time Inc. owns lumber and paper industries and is one of the biggest landowners in the United States. It also owns a marketing data company, a furniture manufacturer, several real estate and land development ventures, a group of Chicago suburban newspapers, American Television and Communications Corporation, and other television interests.

The news media in the United States are run like other corporations, by boards of directors composed mostly of persons drawn from the moneyed strata of society. Representatives of the more powerful New York banks sit on the boards of the three major networks and control all

"The American press can hardly pretend to be a critic of giant U.S. corporations and exorbitant business profits, since the press enjoys profits that equal those of most oil companies."

network financial functions. The directors of media corporations are often partners or directors of banks, insurance companies, big law firms, universities and rich foundations. They are linked with powerful business organizations, not with public interest groups; with management, not with labor; with high-ranking government officials, not with political protesters.

In the smaller towns and cities the pattern is the same. Almost any newspaper is part of the business and political establishment of the city or town. The same is true of most local radio and television stations.

While having an abundance of numbers and giving the appearance of great diversity, the U.S. news media actually offer a remarkably homogenized fare. News services for dailies throughout the

entire nation are provided by the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), the *New York Times* news service, the *Los Angeles Times-Washington Post* news service and several foreign news services like Reuters. The ideological viewpoint of these news conduits are much the same, standardized and narrow in the kind of information they allow the American public to receive. The same conservative commentators, along with an occasional liberal one, appear in newspapers coast to coast on the same day.

Many newspapers in the smaller cities publish editorials and political cartoons supplied by the central news services, and other features that specialize in blandness and in the implicit acceptance of the existing system and existing social conditions. The blandness disappears, however, when law and order, communism, the Soviet "threat," labor strikes and minority unrest are discussed.

More and more newspaper space is given over to "soft" rather than "hard" news, to trivialized features and gossip items, to stories about movie and television stars, to crime, scandal and sensationalism. Television, radio and newspaper coverage of national and local affairs is usually scant, superficial and oriented toward "events" and "personalities," consisting of a few short "headline stories" and a number of conservative or simply banal commentaries and editorials.

Pouring into editorial offices and news rooms across the United States from the centralized news-service syndicates are photographs, news features, women's features, comic strips, sports columns, advice to the lovelorn, horoscopes, book reviews, and film and theater reviews. Whichever newspaper one reads or television station one views, in whatever part of the United States, one is struck by the indistinguishable and immediately familiar quality of the news and political views presented and of the people pre-

senting them. One confronts a pre-cooked, controlled, centralized, national news industry that is in sharp contrast to the "pluralistic diversity" of opinion and information which is supposed to prevail in the United States.

Americans are taught that they live in a society that has a free market of ideas where information, images and viewpoints circulate freely. But the notion of a free market is a misleading metaphor. A "market" suggests a place of plentitude, choice and variety, with the consumer moving from stall to stall as at any bazaar, sampling and picking from an array of wares. The existing news media market of ideas is more like the larger economic market of which it is a part: oligopolistic, standardized, and most accessible to those who possess vast amounts of capital, or who hold views that are pleasing to the possessors of capital.

To be sure, there is a vast array of magazines and other publications in the United States, magazines for motorcycle owners, for brides, for fishing, hunting and outdoor life, for home furnishing, for people who want to lose weight, for people who want to lift weights, for music fans, movie fans and sports fans. Relatively few of these have anything to do with meaningful political and social affairs; most are devoted to the distractions of mass media entertainment and consumerism. That there is a diversity of trivial publications does not mean there is a diversity of ideas, ideologies, and political information.

None of the above is to be taken as an invitation to lose heart and lapse into discouragement and quietude. Making ourselves aware that the news media are not free and independent, not neutral and objective, is a necessary first step in defending ourselves from the media's ideational manipulation. What can we do?

First, seek out alternative media like progressive, listener-supported radio stations and publications like THE WITNESS, *Sojourners*, the *Nation*, the

Guardian, *Monthly Review*, the *Progressive*, the *Daily World*, *Political Affairs*, *CovertAction*, and others. Many religious, environmental, minority, student, peace, gay, and women's groups and labor unions have their own newsletters and newspapers which reach millions of people and often carry important articles on issues suppressed by the business-owned media. It has been the alternative media, and not the mainstream media, that first raised critical questions about environmental devastation, nuclear power, inequitable economic policies, the arms race, military spending, U.S. intervention in the Third World, repression of dissent at home, corporate class power and the like.

As the alternate media and the democratic forces of this society have generated momentum around particular issues, the major media have had to respond — often reluctantly, insufficiently and disingenuously — but respond they must. If the owners of most of our media could have their way, the press would concentrate on human interest stories, cheery announcements about economic recovery, and patriotic editorials about the need to keep America strong. But to maintain its credibility, the press must give some attention to the realities people experience; it must deal with questions like: Why are my taxes so high? Why is the river so polluted? Why must my son register for the draft? The me-

dia's need to deal with these things — however haphazardly and insufficiently — is what leads conservatives to complain that the press is infected with "liberal" biases.

Also, to maintain its credibility and its appearance as a neutral and objective institution, the press allows the public some limited access, in the form of letters-to-the-editor and guest columns, and on local broadcast media — guest commentaries and call-in shows. Even the letters that do not get published and the calls that are heard only by station managers have an impact — sometimes.

In sum, to create a more democratic climate of opinion in our country we must (1) alert ourselves to the way the media manipulates, evades, and packages the news; (2) support and strengthen alternative media with subscriptions and contributions, recognizing them as a crucial and liberating source of information and analysis; (3) talk back to the major media, exposing their biases and distortions whenever possible, taking advantage of what few outlets we have in them; (4) continue to struggle for social justice, creating a reality that influences the controlled image field in which the media operate. We do not have the luxury to feel discouraged. The democratic forces of our society have won victories in the past against tremendous odds, and we will win more in the future. Indeed, the future itself depends on it. ■

SUSTENANCE

Sustain: 1. to give support or relief to; 2. to supply with sustenance: nourish; 3. to keep up: prolong.

Help us support, nourish and prolong

THE WITNESS

with a

sustaining subscription, \$25 yearly. (See order card this issue.)

How to invest in peace

You don't have to shoulder a gun or build an atomic bomb to be part of the Pentagon's military machine. Without realizing it, you may already have signed up simply by joining a church, attending college or participating in a pension program.

That's because, unless they take special steps to avoid it, most institutions are apt to hold investments in companies that profit from and help perpetuate the nuclear arms race.

It doesn't have to be that way. A growing number of individuals and institutions, including churches (the latest example being the Roman Catholic Diocese of Milwaukee),

are re-examining their portfolios and weeding out investments found to be socially undesirable.

And they are discovering in the process that investors can also do well by doing good. Says Robert Rodale, an advisor of the Calvert Social Investment Fund, which avoids companies that manufacture weapons, pollute, promote nuclear power or operate in South Africa: "I can't think of any standards that are better than social standards. And it appears that looking for companies that are doing good work is compatible with looking for companies that are performing well."

You and your church can do the same. The accompanying

table, compiled by Nuclear Free America of Baltimore, Md., with assistance from Nukewatch in Madison, Wisc., identifies the 50 publicly held U.S. corporations most deeply involved in the nuclear weapons industry. It is derived from contract data provided by the U.S. Department of Energy, which is responsible for nuclear warhead production, and the U.S. Department of Defense, responsible for nuclear weapons systems.

For more information on socially responsible investing, including an "Invest in Peace Kit" available for \$7.50, write Nukewatch, 315 West Gorham St., Madison, WI 53703.

— Sam Day/Nukewatch

TOP 50 U.S. Nuclear Weapons Contractors

Allied Corp.
AT&T Co.
AVCO Corp.
Boeing Co.
DuPont
EG&G, Inc.
Eaton Corp.
Exxon Corp.
FMC Corp.
Ford Motor Co.
General Dynamics Corp.
General Electric Co.
General Motors Corp.
General Tire & Rubber Co.
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.
Grumman Corp.
GTE Corp.

Harris Corp.
Honeywell, Inc.
IBM Co.
ITT Corp.
Kerr-McGee Corp.
Litton Industries, Inc.
Lockheed Corp.
LTV Corp.
Martin Marietta Corp.
McDonnell Douglas Corp.
Monsanto Co.
Motorola, Inc.
NL Industries, Inc.
National Distillers & Chemical Corp.
North American Philips Corp.
Northrop Corp.
RCA Corp.

Raytheon Co.
Rockwell International Corp.
Sanders Associates, Inc.
The Signal Companies, Inc.
The Singer Co.
Sperry Corp.
Teledyne, Inc.
Tenneco, Inc.
Texas Instruments, Inc.
Textron, Inc.
Todd Shipyards Corp.
TRW, Inc.
UNC Resources, Inc.
United States Steel Co.
United Technologies Corp.
Westinghouse Electric Corp.

Death on skid row

by Jeff Dietrich

I knew that something was wrong the minute I drove up to our soup kitchen. The Fire Department ambulance was in the parking lot, its red light flashing like a pulse beat and the two-way radio blaring instructions to the paramedics. The paramedics had already been there 20 minutes before I arrived and they continued to work as I observed their actions, spare and efficient to conserve precious time, not a moment to lose.

Glen was holding Chris as she sobbed in his arms. "It's Ron," she said. "There was a fight about a place in line, and Ron tried to run away but the other guy caught him and tripped him, he hit his head as he fell . . . No, I've never seen the guy before. He just took off around the corner."

Ron's breathing had stopped before the ambulance reached the scene, so they had to hook him up to an aspirator. There were electrodes connected all over his body, recording information that was being monitored by doctors at County Hospital. The paramedics worked feverishly with syringes and bandages and IVs. "Give him some adrenalin" . . . "Yes, he's

lost electrolytic fluids" . . . "Connect the heart stimulator" . . . "This is unit 38, over, request permission to . . ."

The soupline loops around our building up the far end of the parking lot over to the Regal Hotel, down the parking lot around the back of the Regal and down the alley again. So there was Ron lying in the parking lot between Hospitality Kitchen and the Regal Hotel, half naked, blood pouring from his head, tubes and wires connected to his body as 800 men file past to see if he's dead yet, gawking and staring like indifferent mourners at a premature funeral.

About four blocks from our kitchen is a small cement shack in the middle of a parking lot. On the side of the shack is a spray-paint graffiti message: "Why is God hiding?" The graffitist calls us to the realization that for the men on skid row, for the poor and oppressed of the world, Christ is in hiding. He is still entombed. There is no one on skid row who has heard the Good News of the Resurrection. On Fifth Street and on Sixth Street, on Gladys and San Pedro, Christ is still being crucified and hauled into the paddy wagon and brought before the magistrate. And in the back lot between Hospitality Kitchen and the Regal Hotel His body was placed in a red and white Fire Department ambulance and taken to County

Hospital where He was pronounced dead on arrival. From there His body, after being washed and wrapped in a linen bag, was taken by the County Coroner to the morgue where it was placed in a drawer in the large refrigerator unit. After three months, when no relatives could be located, the County Coroner released the body to us.

Father Luis at St. Joseph's Church gave us the burial plot. So we were able to provide for Ron's last remains some measure of dignity that was not accorded during his life. It is difficult for any of us to deny our responsibility for Ron's death. It is scandalous that a man should die because of an argument over a place in line for a bowl of beans. It is sinful, it is immoral that we continue to deny the poor of the world what is rightfully theirs: decent shelter, food and clothing.

Soon it will be lunch time and 800 men will shuffle by the spot where Ron died. Some, I am sure, have already forgotten what happened here that day; it has blurred into their memory — the distinctive features inseparable from a thousand other similar tragedies. Some weren't here and others just don't care. I don't suppose that we will erect a monument in our back parking lot, but it seems important not to forget.

Jeff Dietrich is a member of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker. He is author of *Reluctant Resister*, which describes his experiences after he was jailed for participating in the non-violent blockade of an arms bazaar in Anaheim, Cal.

Saturday's sonnet

Dead, they said, and I had seen the tomb
 of skull receive the eyes, all focusing forgot.
 Muscles tensing one last time; tongue dumb.
 The life escaped — the life whose health I sought.
 "God loved your father; thus God took him home."
 (I was, unwilling, being comforted.)
 "God gave to him his deepest wish, to come
 from earth before becoming invalid.
 "Do not begrudge that answered prayer. But grieve
 as is appropriate and needful, too."
 I pressed my father's eyes and turned to leave,
 wanting to more adequately do.
 Our mighty God grieves with us sorrowing ones.
 And in the morning resurrection comes.

—Muriel Thiessen Stackley

He died smiling

A man in our town died.
 With furtive smiles the family announced:
 "He died peacefully, without pain,
 Without bitterness — without protest."
 Neighbors were pleased with that summation:
 "How nice for him. How nice for you."

'Twas recorded of Jesus:
 "He was in agony on the cross;
 his body wracked with pain.
 Bitterly he cried out to his god:
 "Why hast thou forsaken me?" "
 Upon reading that, a follower felt distressed.
 "It is not right, it is not fair!
 That is no way for the Great One to go!"
 So, he inserted into the record:
 "Father, forgive them." And,
 "Into thy hands do I commend my spirit."
 Everyone heaved a sigh of relief.
 "There, that's better. Now everything is
 Neat — peaceful — victorious."

Why this obsession with peace
 in a man's dying moments/dying?
 How could it make any difference to Almighty God
 (Or, to the destiny of our eternal souls)
 Whether we spend our last moment
 Smiling, praying, and in resignation, or,
 In anger, tears, and bitterness?
 Surely, it is not crucial to our eternal destiny
 That we put on an act to satisfy
 The fears, the anxieties, the guilt of the human race!

—Eldred Johnston



The robin's egg

In memory of my husband Tony.

There it lay —
 Broken in two;
 A shell of a lovely
 Ivory blue.

"Dead." I thought.
 No. Not right.
 Not dead but changed
 For morning flight . . .

Dead? Not at all!
 Not it; not We —
 But twice born
 To life eternally.
 — Madeline Ligammare

Flesh

I have a wound
 Open
 Draining, sore, blood
 It will never heal.

Vanished are the pretenses
 Of wellness
 Especially specialness,
 exempted superiority
 Impervious to failure
 No longer a perfectly defended island.

To everything living I now belong
 Flesh
 Oozing and dying.

With a hushing humility and fully filled
 gladness
 I now belong
 And finally
 Am alive.

I have a wound
 It will never heal.
 Thank God.

— Michael Dwinell

A Luta Continua — the struggle continues

by Barbara C. Harris

'Play It Again, Sam'

A recent telephone call started me humming a "moldy oldie" ballad that begins, "It seems to me I've heard that song before; it's from an old familiar score . . ."

This tuneful sense of *deja vu* was brought on by my caller's questions: Did I know that somebody named Jane Watkins (Associate Development Officer) in World Mission at "815" (the Episcopal Church Center — 815 Second Avenue, New York) was slated to take an all white team of women to Kenya in April to "train" women of that country in life skills and how to talk to their tribal chiefs? Could I believe this?

No, I didn't know it. Yes, I could believe it. And what's more, I wasn't the least bit surprised 1) that it could happen in 1985 or 2) that it could be done under the auspices of the church through a department concerned with "world mission," for all that the designation of activity implies.

In fairness — although, admittedly, fairmindedness was not my primary emotional response at the moment — I tried to check out a few facts. Unfortunately, Jane Watkins was out of the country at press time. A couple, three phone calls, however, did reveal some interesting bits of information.

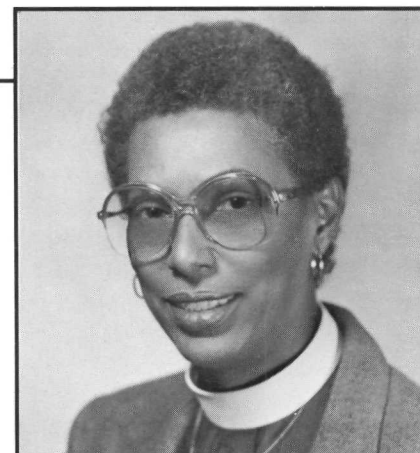
First, there seemed to be a general lack of knowledge concerning the whole endeavor, some wry amusement and some confusion of this group with the delegation scheduled to attend the UN-

sponsored end of the decade conference on women to be held in Nairobi in July. (The latter group does boast two Blacks out of five delegates representing the Episcopal Church at that gathering.)

Secondly, while funded by World Mission in Church and Society, the responsibility for training efforts of this kind normally seems to reside with the Education Coordinator for Women's Ministries, who now well knows the impropriety of sending out such an unrepresentative squad. Thirdly, some knowledgeable persons on the national church staff thought the whole thing so ludicrous and/or inconsequential as not to question or protest it.

Aside from the dubious merit of such a program and the questionable stewardship it reflects, the church at large is due some answers to what now sound like age old questions. For instance: How was the team selected? What, indeed, of western cultural values based on a Myers-Briggs course model of interpersonal relationships are to be imparted to Kenyan women who, in turn, ostensibly will go into village communities to pass them on? Does taking life skills and assertiveness training to an ancient survival culture smack of carrying coals to Newcastle? What image of catholicity does an all white group convey?

A late report did indicate that Verna Dozier, the distinguished and charismatic educator out of Washington, D.C., who first had been asked to accompany



the team to conduct Bible study, would be going along to help design the training and/or to train the trainers. She, indeed, is a stellar addition to any group going for almost any purpose. Verna Dozier, however, is not and never would claim to be the only skilled and talented Black woman in the Episcopal Church and available for service. An in-house telephone call could have uncovered a roster of able Black women in fields ranging from education, administration and public policy to housing, vocational trades and journalism, to say nothing of religion.

Perhaps overriding all of this is the question: when will Western missionary mentality give way to authentic mission mindedness that will release this church from presumption, insensitivity, insufferable arrogance and rank stupidity? Confronted with "gems" of "mission activity" such as this, one almost wishes the church would return to contemplating or picking lint from its ecclesiastical navel. At least that way it would not so blatantly expose its vintage RACISM, which is not only alive and well, but seemingly hale and hearty to boot.

Would love to hear an indignant *au contraire* from 815 saying none of this is true and that I am all wrong. Meanwhile, since I suspect more than a germ of truth in what I've heard thus far, I'll simply say, "Play it again, Sam. *A luta continua.*"

Continued from page 11

rights of the embryo. It makes no sense, not morally and not logically.

Do we have any moral obligation to the embryo? I think the best answer comes from Rosalind Petchesky in *Abortion and Women's Choice*: "We do have a moral obligation to nonpersons — to fetuses, animals, trees, and all organic life . . . The problem is, of course, that the survival of these living things may conflict with some important rights and needs of actual persons, and that in the face of such conflict we must give priority to actual, conscious human beings over other forms of life."

The creation of embryos outside the body of a woman raises a number of other questions. Does the embryo have the right to be implanted? What about embryonic research? What about genetic manipulation? Since it is now possible to select donor eggs and sperm, parents could select boys over girls, blondes over brunets, blue eyes over brown eyes. For example, a German clinic allegedly claims that its donors include "no fat men, no long ears, no hook noses . . ."

Practicing genetic engineering has implications other than those in the moral realm. In the field of agronomy scientists are now warning that, in our search for perfect plants, we are "engineering out" some disease and drought resistant strains in favor of plants that are bigger or faster growing, plants which are more dependent on technology to survive. They require more irrigation, more fertilizers, more pesticides. Some of these trends may be irreversible. There is a significant drop in the varieties of seed corn available, for example; and presently no replacement seed exists for the native prairie grasses being destroyed by agribusiness and strip mining.

We constantly ask ourselves what kind of society, what kind of future, we want. Is it necessary to use a technique simply because we know how to do it? Are we making decisions ethically or

according to some idea of expediency? Do we really want the kind of society that puts the rights of the embryo ahead of the rights of a woman to live a full, complete and responsible life? Who will be in control over the issues of abortion, pregnancy, the birth process? Can a society not care for its weak and disabled, neglect its poor, ignore the needs of children and women — can such a society be expected to make ethical

choices?

Not unless we closely monitor those who make the decisions and not unless women play a central role in the process, insisting on the right to choose a path celebrating life and grounded in ethics.

Sharon Curtin is Editor of *Conscience*: the Voice of Pro-Choice Catholics. This article is reprinted with permission from the September/October 1984 issue of *Conscience*.

Reaching out

No law and order
rigorist was here, man:
protect society against
all them filthy bodies
that's what you've got to do —
cleanse a leper? —
you must be joking:

it's easier to
raise the dead
according to
the rabbis
And I should think so too

in any case
let them in and
they defile the
nation, so stands
to reason you keep
them out for sure
just touch a leper
matey and hey presto
the whole darn country
ends up
impure

then
he came, befouled
in leprous rags
and for a moment
just stood there
we watched and saw him
kneel and plead
with: if you
want to you
can do it
the only one
I can turn to
now is you

we saw
a blazing anger
rise up within
him no gentle
Jesus meek and
mild on view
he broke the
law, went right
up and touched
him — I'm not kidding —
be clean, he said,
that's what I want for you

before him priests
had power to
protect the nation
by hiding all the
lepers out of view . . .
now thoughtful politicians
do all this for us
at airports, in homes
and factory raids
through cops in pubs
manhandling gays
and blacks, the poor,
and winos too

but there are
others, the Christ
among us, who are
reaching out
to touch each
leprous hand,
lift up each
fallen head as
in uncondemning
whisper they
dare proclaim the message
God

loves
you
too.

—Colin Winter

(Colin Winter was Anglican Bishop of Namibia from 1968 until his death in 1981. An outspoken critic of apartheid and advocate of social justice, he was expelled in 1972.)

Victims warn about surveillance

If you're non-violent, peaceful, open, democratic, that's no assurance you won't be the subject of surveillance or infiltration," Attorney Allen Ramo warned religious leaders attending a Consultation on Political Dissent and Human Rights sponsored by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company recently in Los Angeles.

Ramo, attorney for the Livermore Action Group, cautioned, "We aren't facing surveillance from just one agency. The state and local police, private security agencies, the FBI and other federal agents are now working in coordinated fashion." He described the surveillance experienced by non-violent participants of the Livermore group, a coalition opposing nuclear weapons manufacturing and deployment.

Two days after Ramo spoke, dramatic confirmation of his words was provided when a federal grand jury in Arizona indicted 16 persons, including three nuns, two priests and a minister, all active in the sanctuary movement. The charges include conspiracy, bringing aliens into the United States illegally, and concealing, harboring or shielding them. One of those indicted, John M. Fife, a Tucson Presbyterian pastor, said his reading of the action showed that the government had placed four Immigration and Naturalization Service agents in his church, and that they were equipped with electronic listening devices to gather information.

At the Los Angeles Consultation on Dissent, church representatives listened to five victims of government harassment, surveillance or grand jury im-

prisonment. The victims were from a nuclear protest group, two Puerto Rican independence groups (including a grand jury resister), a Central American refugee center, and a Mexican liberation group. The Consultation focused on their experiences rather than the merits of their particular causes.

Prior to their testimony the consultation heard Frank Wilkinson, executive director emeritus of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, himself jailed in 1961 for refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Wilkinson stated in the keynote address that we are in a period of increasing erosion of the civil liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. "Much of our difficulty comes from the retreat of liberals, even church-minded liberals", said Wilkinson. He stated that although HUAC was abolished in 1975, the government in effect established in 1981 a new HUAC, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism (headed by Sen. Jeremiah Denton). "They are trying to put the 'terrorist' label on social change", he said.

That statement rang true to those in and beyond the Episcopal Church who have followed the case of the five recent grand jury resisters, Maria Cueto and Steven Guerra among them. The five have been in federal prison since last April for refusal to testify. Although labelled "FALN terrorists" by the government, they have never been charged with any crime. Referring to their case in the wider context of the history of grand jury abuse in this country, Chicago attorney Michael Deutsch, denounced what he

called an increasing tendency to use grand juries for political internment. "It begins to look like internment practices without trial in Northern Ireland or South Africa," Deutsch said. He reminded his audience that four of the five grand jury resisters, including Episcopalian Maria Cueto, had previously served jail sentences for civil contempt of a grand jury. Since the government had to know they would not talk this time either and since there were no new charges, it was obviously a way of getting some effective advocates for Puerto Rican independence off the streets, the attorney asserted.

In brief remarks, consultation convenor Richard Gillett of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company reminded participants that "our greatest supreme court justices in America, interpreting the Bill of Rights, have historically upheld the need for us as a nation to maintain ourselves open to the possibility of change, even radical change." He stated that in our religious history the proponents of a new thrust toward building the Kingdom of God on earth have almost always been at the edges of society: the outcast, the marginalized, the poor, the seldom heard-from. "It is our religious duty to safeguard the opportunity for prophetic voices and actions," he said.

Meanwhile, through its Task Force on Political Repression, chaired by Episcopal Bishop Antonio J. Ramos, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company plans to hold two other consultations in Chicago and New York. Expanded educational strategies to alert the wider religious community to the growing harassment being experienced by religious

and secular activist groups are under discussion.

Donations are still being sought for the

Diocese supports Hispanics

The Diocese of Bethlehem passed a resolution supporting the five Hispanic Grand Jury resisters at its recent convention and donated the Eucharist offering of \$700 to assist their families. Text of the resolution follows:

WHEREAS Maria Cueto, former director of the National Commission for Hispanic Affairs of the Episcopal Church, and Steven Guerra, a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, are serving three-year prison sentences for refusing, as an act of conscience, to testify before a Grand Jury, and

WHEREAS Maria Cueto has stated that by testifying she would have betrayed the confidentiality of her ministry, and

WHEREAS Maria Cueto, Steven Guerra and three other Hispanics currently imprisoned for criminal contempt have all refused to comply with a court order because of their belief that to do so would jeopardize the confidence laid in them as representatives of the church of Hispanic groups, and

WHEREAS their peaceful and self-sacrificing witness is in accord with the Diocese of Bethlehem's commitment to non-violence, and

WHEREAS our Lord enjoins us to support those who are prisoners (Matt 25: 35-40)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this convention ask members of the diocese to support these prisoners with prayers and messages of support, and be it further

RESOLVED that the offering at the Eucharist at this Convention be forwarded to the Fund for Aiding Hispanic Families to assist prisoners and their families.

families of Maria Cueto, Steve Guerra, and the other Hispanic grand jury resisters. WITNESS readers wishing to contribute

Editorial . . . Continued from page 4
between investigations of organized crime and political or religious organizations.

● Last April President Reagan signed into law a secret intelligence directive ordering 26 Federal agencies to develop counter-terrorism plans and authorize the CIA to create para-military squads to conduct "pre-emptive" raids against suspected terrorists.

● At the end of the last term of Congress, a special bill offering informants rewards up to \$500,000 for information leading to the conviction of "terrorists" was enacted.

● The federal criminal code revision, long the target of criticism by civil libertarians, was enacted. It contains provisions permitting persons accused

should send a tax deductible check payable to the *Diocese of New York* and earmarked "Fund for aiding Hispanic families" to Richard Gillett, 2808 Altura St., Los Angeles, CA 90031.

Those wishing to send Easter greetings to the five prisoners (they cannot accept money in jail) may address cards to them at their present addresses:

Maria Cueto, 15884-053
Federal Correctional Institute
Pleasanton, CA 94568

Steven Guerra, 15883-053
Federal Correctional Institute
P.O. Box 1000
Anthony, TX 79821

Julio Rosado, 19793-053
Federal Correctional Institute
Raybrook, NY 12977

Andres Rosado, 19794-053
P.O. Box 1000
Montgomery, PA 17752

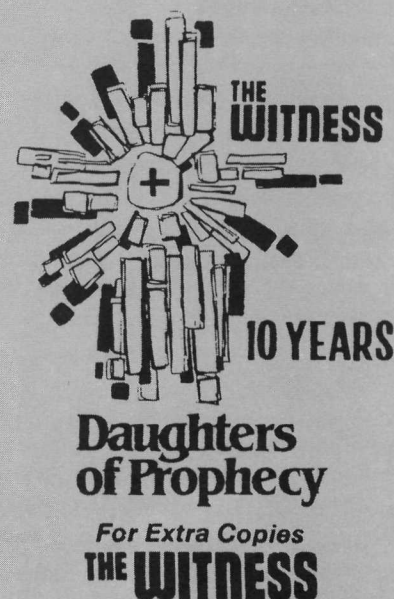
Ricardo Romero, 16208-053
Federal Correctional Institute
P.O. Box H
Safford, AZ 85546

of crime to be detained without bail whenever a judge believes they may represent a "danger to the community" and abolishes federal parole.

Any individual example may sound Big-Brotherish, but not sinister enough to deter or chill the exercise of First Amendment rights. In combination, however, they spell danger.

It is perhaps melodramatic to pronounce the aggregate of these activities a witch hunt at this date, but they certainly point to a "hunting after political heresy" which is but a small step from "an humble imitator of the inquisition." ■

(Written by Mary Lou Suhor, with documentation provided by the Movement Support Network of the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Lawyers Guild.)



will be happy to provide this special 10th anniversary issue about women's priesthood in the Episcopal Church for \$1.00. Write Ann Hunter, THE WITNESS, P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA. 19002 or phone (215) 643-7067.

Short Takes

White-haired saints

It may well be that the answer to the crucial problem of churches in transition is in the hands of the white-haired Simeons and Annas of our congregations! "Grey power" can be a real potential for a new missionary adventure. During my residence in the United States in the last two years, I have noted that whenever you have a meeting to present a burning issue — like U.S. support for repressive regimes in Central America — or to crusade for some vital cause — like the nuclear freeze — you can count on two groups of people to respond: the young and the elderly. The actively "making it" sector of the community may be absent, but the young and the elderly will be there. I think of the little ones who accepted Jesus (because he accepted them) and followed him. The old Simeon and Anna, the only ones available and willing to receive the baby Jesus at the altar of the Temple, naturally also come to mind. They were of the real saints of the earth: *the available ones*.

Bishop Mortimer Arias of Bolivia
3rd World Sermon Notes

'God screaming at me'

In the book published by Clergy and Laity Concerned called "Hunger for Justice," Jack Nelson describes walking through the streets of Calcutta where "the poverty so enraged me that I wanted to scream at God. Then I came to a painful realization. In the suffering of the poor, God was screaming at me, in fact at all of us and our institutions and the social systems that cause and perpetuate hunger, poverty and inequality."

Barbara Lupo, CALC co-director

View from space

"When you look at the earth from space and see it as a fragile, tiny planet, tremendously sensitive to the depredations of its inhabitants, it's impossible not to think that what we are doing is foolish. There are no national boundaries visible when you look at the earth from space. It's a planet — all one place. All the beings on it are mutually dependent, like living on a lifeboat. Whatever the causes that divide us, the earth will be here a thousand — a million — years from now. The question is, will we?"

Carl Sagan
The Churchman via Common Cause

42,000 to resist invasion

A delegation of religious and peace leaders hand-delivered a message to the office of the secretary of state in Washington D.C., announcing that 42,352 U.S. citizens have signed the Pledge of Resistance, a contingency plan of public resistance in the event of a U.S. invasion or military escalation in Central America.

In an effort to change U.S. policy toward Central America, the delegation met with Craig Johnstone, the deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, for an hour and 15 minutes. The delegation outlined what has become the largest coordinated, nonviolent civil disobedience plan in U.S. history.

"We told him that from now on the pledges of these 42,000 U.S. citizens should be a factor in decision making about U.S. foreign policy in Central America," *Sojourners* Editor Jim Wallis said after the unusually long and substantive meeting. "The domestic cost [of escalation] will be the imprisoning of tens of thousands of U.S. citizens. We mean what we say, and we will do what we promise," Wallis told Johnstone.

The promise of direct action centers on a written pledge called the Pledge of Resistance, which is a personal commitment—initiated by the religious community and made by the 42,352 people who have signed—to nonviolently resist any U.S. military escalation or invasion in Central America.

More than half of the pledge signers have promised to engage in nonviolent civil disobedience by occupying congressional field offices and other local federal facilities until any U.S. invasion or military escalation ends. The rest of the signers have pledged to support those committing civil disobedience by engaging in activities that include demonstrating, leafletting, lobbying, and holding public worship services and vigils.

Quote of note

"Unfortunately, most people have the notion that a religious organization can be serious only if it is authoritarian and the only content it can be serious about is fundamentalism."

— Dean M. Kelly
Why Conservative Churches Are Growing

English women priests 1990?

Following a five-hour debate, the General Synod of the Church of England voted Nov. 15 to introduce legislation to allow women to become priests. A motion moved by the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt. Rev. Ronald Bowlby, passed in all houses — bishops 41-6; clergy 131-98; and laity 135-79.

The vote is the beginning of a complex legal and legislative process which will require Parliamentary approval. It may take until the 1990's before the first women are ordained priests.

The Archbishop of Canterbury told the house that he supported the ordination of women but felt that the time was not yet right for the Church of England to proceed and voted in opposition. The Archbishop of York also felt that the debate was being held prematurely but voted in favor.

— Anglican Consultative Council

Trick of mass insanity

"The supreme trick of mass insanity is that it persuades you that the only abnormal person is the one who refuses to join in the madness of others, the one who tries vainly to resist. We will never understand totalitarianism if we do not understand that people rarely have the strength to be uncommon."

— Eugene Ionesco
Quoted in Trident II Plowshares Newsletter

New quarters for EPF

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship has moved its office from Hearst Hall, Mt. St. Alban's to 620 G Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. New phone number is 202-543-7168.

The move was occasioned when the National Cathedral School, owners of Hearst Hall where EPF was headquartered for the past seven years, needed to use the Hall for school purposes.

The new host, Christ Church, Washington Parish, is a congregation with a history of community involvement, Mary Miller, EPF National Chairperson, said. She added, "and we are now within walking distance of Capitol Hill and most of the organizations with whom we have regular relationships, including the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Washington Offices of the NCCC and the Episcopal Church, Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy."

Letters . . . Continued from page 3

munications my community extends beyond my own neighborhood to include the entire planet. Racial hatred, nuclear weapons, pollution and ecological destruction run smack into my self-interests.

I don't think it is accurate or helpful to blame the problems we are facing on capitalism or to say that capitalism is contrary to Christian principles. Narrow-mindedness, shortsightedness and fear are words that more clearly define the problem. Also, in a capitalist system it is just as important for us to make intelligent purchasing decisions as it is to make intelligent voting decisions. As buyers we must be aware that purchasing cigarettes and highly processed foods not only damages our health but uses up large amounts of energy and agricultural resources. When we make ourselves sick we use up medical resources in an attempt to cure us. So much of what even poor people in America spend their money on is useless and wasteful. To a greater degree than we would care to admit the system we have is the system that we have all helped to make. Let's all examine our own lives and see what changes we might dare to make.

One useful step that the bishops could take is to demystify their religion by demonstrating that the moral teachings of Jesus are not merely a mysterious mandate from God but practical, scientifically testable and valid principles of social behavior that are the keys to maximizing the personal happiness and self-interests of all of us. This might encourage economists to demystify their religion and bring the "invisible hand" into a proper accounting of its activities.

Joe Pacal
Keaau, Hawaii

Collins responds

Call the original impulse "self-interest" instead of greed, the net effect of the interplay of competing self-interest in a capitalist system has been to rationalize and institutionalize the worst of human instincts. It is not that greedy, power-hungry individuals get into the system and pervert the meaning of self-interest,

or that people in positions of political or economic power simply "allow" conditions of poverty and degradation to exist. Rather, *the logic of the system* compels people to act in selfish and short-sighted ways. One could not exist in the intensely competitive corporate world and apply to the workplace the values that Christianity most often articulates. Look at what happens to whistle blowers.

The dynamic of capitalist competition means that some win while the majority (globally speaking) must lose. When there are few controls placed on the accumulation of wealth and power and little long-term national planning in the interest of greater values (such as justice, world peace or resource conservation), periodic recession, overproduction, and misfits between supply and demand will occur. Then we see the terrible specter of farmers dumping wheat and chickens while children starve.

If language is the lens through which we see reality, then Adam Smith gave it away from the beginning. He described the operation of market forces as an "invisible hand," thus personifying a trans-human phenomenon. The most telling indication of our predicament is the way in which the system of production and exchange has in fact taken on a human personality while real humans are replaced by robots and then labeled as the "deserving or undeserving poor."

In American law, corporations are defined as "persons" with all the constitutional rights of individuals attendant thereto. The 14th Amendment has been invoked more often in U.S. courts to protect the rights of corporations than it has been to protect the rights of Afro-Americans for whom the Amendment was originally passed.

I agree with Joe Pacal that it would be useful for the bishops to demystify their religion by demonstrating that the moral teachings of Jesus "are practical, scientifically testable and valid principles of social behavior." They have begun to do that in the pastoral, but I think Jesse Jackson did a more effective job in his presidential campaign. Those of us concerned about poverty, injustice, and war

need to continue that process of demystification and moral economic reconstruction.

Sheila Collins
New Rochelle, N.Y.

Irreligious?

I find your journal, *THE WITNESS*, interesting and logical. It seems to me that you aspire after bringing truth to the public instead of propaganda. I find that concept refreshing though somewhat irreligious.

Frank Conte
Warren, R.I.

'Peace' conference theme

Thank you for publishing Bishop Paul Moore's fine article, "Meditation for a Nuclear Age," in your January issue.

Readers who are concerned with nuclear proliferation and our role as peace-makers may wish to take note of the upcoming annual Finger Lakes Conference, to be held June 23-29 at William Smith College in Geneva, N.Y. Highlighting the conference will be the General Lecture series by the Rev. William Rankin, a national leader in the peace movement.

Courses to be offered will include: The Central American Situation, by the Rt. Rev. Jose Antonio Ramos, former Bishop of Costa Rica; How Can We Sing Mary and Miriam's Songs in a Strange Land?, by the Rev. F. Sanford Cutler, Morristown, N.J.; Increasing Personal Effectiveness, by Mitchell Alegre, Diocese of Western New York; Living Creatively, by J. Bruce Stewart, Director of the Center for Liturgy and the Arts; The Eastern Orthodox Tradition, by Paul C. Cochran, of Manhattan; Studies in Holy Scripture, by George O. Nagle, Chief Chaplain, Dannemora State Prison, Clinton, N.Y.

Dean of the conference is the Rev. Judith Upham, rector of Grace Church, Syracuse, N.Y. Ana Hernandez will be music director.

Persons wishing information may contact Diana Purcell, P.O. Box 492, Wells-ville, N.Y. 14895.

The Rev. Caroline F. Malseed
Moravia, N.Y.

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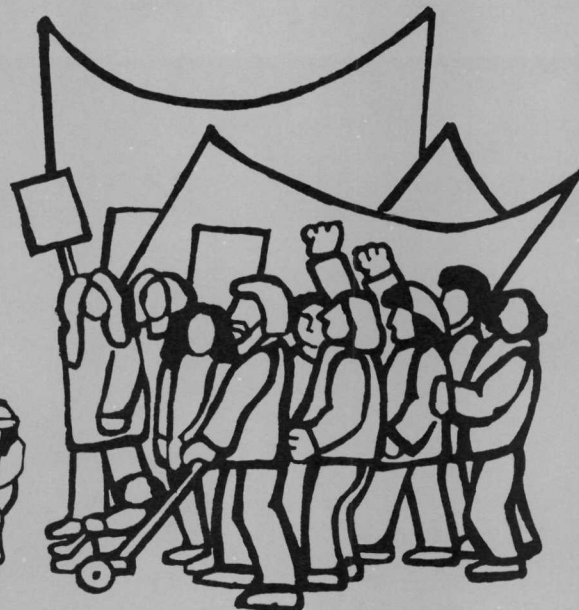
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