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THE WITNESS



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reader

Letters

Why not 'truck stops'?

Reading Sam Day's fine article on H-Bomb trucks (February WITNESS) was like coming on a recognition scene in hell. I know I've seen one of those doomsday dragoons somewhere on the road; now I'll keep the death watch, and hope against hope to turn it to a life watch! At the same time, let me bring up a few things I thought were not as well examined as the trucks.

"We cannot stop the arms race by stopping trucks." Who says so? The statement goes by like the afterwind from the Titanic Trailers. But as Judge Spaeth wrote in granting our Plowshares appeal (I paraphrase): *The defendants did not romantically imagine that by entering GE and damaging a few empty warheads, they would stop the arms race. They thought only that their action might be joined to hundreds of others, and thereby create a new atmosphere in which peace might become possible.*

Why rule out, a priori, civil disobedience? Why not create "truck stops," where weary drivers can snooze and be offered coffee in front of many or even hundreds of folk, who believe the Cargoes of Carnage have no place on a civilized landscape?

Further, the little insert "Truck Vigiling Legal" hits my eye like a plastic flower in a mortuary. Why indeed do conscientious people go to the Department of Energy, to be assured that their consciences need not get in trouble? I really don't see the value of consulting the fox who's guarding the hen house, to ask permission to watch him pick out his entree.

Then comes a conclusion I want to cavil at — about the contacts helping focus "on the policies themselves, rather than the people who carry them out." This is a distinction that makes Descartes look like the inventor of Elmer's glue.

If we separate the policies from the people, *in casu*, aren't we doing the people,

truck drivers, police, the indignity of declaring them irrelevant to their moral decisions? And then where does old fashioned conversion of heart (ours and theirs) go?

The words on "success" sure are consoling, if I knew what they meant. How in effect, do the truck watchers take on the trucks, and "sometimes win"? Do you mean they stopped one of the trucks in its hellish tracks? But how do you stop them by knowing they're whizzing by? I thought you had either 1) to hitch a ride (which is what we're doing in effect, if we do nothing), or 2) sit down in front of (which of course good folk have done for a long time in front of the train tracks).

Finally, my experience over the years is that the scandal before the churches these days is not violence. It's non-violence. This is what sends sacred-property-owners and investors and churchgoers up the wailing wall. And closes pulpits off from those who dare sit down or stand up or march off or pour blood or climb fences or do any of those other awful things that offend the lords of the sabbath. Meantime, of course, the cargo snake along in the night, delivering to your doorstep or mine, a sizeable and serviceable package of damnation. And this is, by implication at least, and by silence, and by tax payment, as it should be. Thus has the intemperate gospel of the provocative rabbi been replaced by a coy minuet of good manners. Alas and alas.

Dan Berrigan
West Side Jesuit Community
New York, N.Y.

Sam Day responds

There are two reasons why we H-bomb truck watchers are discouraging civil disobedience at this stage. The first is that we haven't figured out a way to stop the trucks without serious risk to life and limb. The couriers are heavily armed, and the convoys travel at 55 miles per

hour. It's not at all like hammering nose cones or even stopping trains. We are genuinely afraid of encouraging conduct that might lead to people getting killed.

The second reason is that before I can watch trucks or you can stop them, we both have to know where and when they are coming. And the only way this can be done (unless you have a private pipeline into the Department of Energy) is by getting a lot of people involved in staking out the H-bomb production plants, tracking the convoys from town to town, and organizing roadside vigils. The job of organizing has only just begun. Few of the people doing this vital work are yet prepared to contemplate even the possibility of stopping the trucks, even if a safe way of doing so could be envisaged. The consensus is overwhelmingly against civil disobedience among those most deeply involved in raising public consciousness about the H-bomb trucks, even though many of them have engaged in civil disobedience in other areas.

Having made those points though, let me go on to concede Dan Berrigan's major point, which is that civil disobedience should not have been excluded *a priori* from the trucks campaign. It does not seem right or practical or even ethical now, but he is right in pointing out it should not have been excluded as a matter of principle. Nor should we truck watchers, in our desire to build the campaign rapidly, seek support and respectability by distinguishing our actions from the actions of those who directly challenge the laws that sanctify the production of nuclear weapons. No success in raising public awareness of the H-bomb trucks is worth the price of undermining support for and understanding of the principle of civil disobedience — and so we must keep ourselves open to that route. Thanks to Berrigan for his gentle reminder — and for his example.

Samuel H. Day, Jr.
Nukewatch
Madison, Wisc.

Schell lauds Moore

I was deeply moved by Bishop Paul Moore's "Meditation for a Nuclear Age" in the January WITNESS. His definition of prayer as an activity in which we engage the "totality of our being," throwing ourselves open to the whole world, so that the world's "roughness" assaults the soul, was enlightening and helpful. How often we engage only a part of our being — our intellect but not our emotions, or vice versa — and so offer only a crippled response to events. Also original and profound were Bishop Moore's reclamation of such elemental and even "primitive" notions as the creation, the fall, the apocalypse, the descent into hell, and the holy mountain as starting points in our thinking about the nuclear peril. A great deal has been written about the nuclear question, but much of it is in one crucial way or another inadequate to the awful subject it is dealing with. For me, Bishop Moore's words had a weight equal to the subject. In the scales in which the survival of our species will be measured, these words will count.

Jonathan Schell
The New Yorker
New York, N.Y.

Pope right about sex

I am responding to a Short Take, "Pope Wrong About Sex," in December. I do not know who Tom Fox is nor the context in which his views originally appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter*, but I do know that I was deeply disturbed to find in your context extremely strong and one-sided words criticizing Pope John Paul and Catholic Church teaching.

I am uncertain as to the motivation and purpose of your printing Fox's opinion concerning the Catholic Church in an Episcopalian publication. Clearly, THE WITNESS shares with its readers only one side of the coin. In contrast to the structure and content of *an article*

whose author contributes to open discussion and debate concerning a given topic (for example, William Stringfellow's "the Politics of Pastoral Care: an ecumenical mediation concerning the incumbent Pope" which appeared in your February '84 issue), your selective use of *a quote* does not lend itself to the open forum. Rather, it merely serves to support a benign view toward artificial birth control while simultaneously supporting an unfavorable view toward the Pope and Catholic Church teaching.

Finally, Fox falls far short (as well as THE WITNESS in giving full expression to his lament) in challenging the Pope and Catholic Church teaching. It is not the intent of the Pope to inflict pain (unnecessary or otherwise) "on millions trying to live the Catholic faith." Rather, it is the solemn duty of this lone individual, chosen by the Holy Spirit, to faithfully lead all followers of Christ. In so doing, the Church must continuously go through an agonizing struggle to state the mysteries of the faith in language that, at the very least, sets up definite barriers to error. There is nothing necessarily logical or even prudent about this arrangement; it is simply a matter of *trust* and faith in a loving and merciful God. As with any church teaching, "let him or her who can accept this teaching do so."

Peter M. Tinebra
Wichita, Kan.

Next, how disinvest?

I would like to commend you on an excellent December issue. Your coverage of Bishop Desmond Tutu and his witness was outstanding. You also presented a good overview of the South African situation and the disinvestment response. I would like to order five additional copies to use in our mission.

Our Diocese of Spokane in convention has approved and urged disinvestment in South Africa by both individuals and church bodies. However, implementing

that resolution is more difficult than passing the resolution. There needs to be more information made available as to the companies actively involved in South Africa and the process by which individuals can go about disinvesting and making their influence most effectively felt by the corporations involved. This is a follow up topic that might concern your magazine.

Dick Hall
Prosser, Wash.

Seeks creative solutions

I am writing in response to your articles and letters about abortion.

I believe that we should look at the reasons women have abortions and help those women handle their problems in a creative fashion. I can hear the Saver of my life say, "Dear mother, go to my body, the church, they will help you. If you need to finish your education, they will care for your baby with love. If you need more money for food or clothing, they will share theirs with you. If you need a place to live, they may well have an extra room till you have your child, get a job, and get on your feet. If you are disappointed about the new home you cannot afford, they will show you the joy of realizing that people are dearer than things." That is what I find in scriptures — a Lord calling Christians to live in such a way as to support life.

I have found groups of Christians living that way. These groups show real concern for Central American refugees, the condemned murderer, the victim, the great numbers threatened with nuclear holocaust, the unborn and the troubled mother. I praise and thank God for these groups and these will I support. My prayers are for these groups and for your group. May you have the grace to leave behind the cold proof texts and find the warm blood of Christ softening your hearts.

Pat Stevenson
Conneaut, Ohio

The Holy Waste

Early months of 1985 have witnessed a stirring of the patterns in the nuclear gridlock between the United States and the Soviet Union. Soon after the year began they reached agreement to resume negotiations at Geneva — a significant accomplishment. In mid-March, the mantle of Soviet leadership passed to an able, personable leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, signaling hope for a more flexible USSR. But also in March, both houses of the U.S. Congress agreed in close votes to authorize and fund 21 additional missiles. Days earlier, the nation's Roman Catholic bishops had sent a letter to all members of Congress, asking rejection of the presidential request.

Buried in the back pages of most newspapers the week of the vote, was the news from Kansas City that four nuclear weapons protestors, including two Roman Catholic priests, were sentenced up to 18 years in prison. They had broken into a Minuteman II missile site to try to disarm the weapon.

"What a waste, what a monumental waste for the four of you," the judge reportedly told the protestors at their sentencing. He was apparently referring to their choice in registering such foolish protest with subsequent severe personal consequences.

These events of early Spring offer a welcome opportunity to examine where we as Christians find ourselves vis a vis the threat of global nuclear war.

First, despite some cooling down of the incandescent rhetoric of the last few years, and a willingness at least to talk, the basic presuppositions about our leadership role in the arms race have

changed not at all. The Soviets are still viewed as unyielding ideologues out to conquer the world by any means open to them. Deterrence — the strategy of building whatever numbers and types of nuclear weapons it takes to "deter the Russians" — still firmly controls the minds not only of the President and his administration, but of the vast majority in Congress. No significant headway is detectable towards the proposition that nuclear war is unthinkable and that the planet would not survive it.

We must not be seduced for a moment into thinking that the arms race is abating. Indeed, the opposite is true: weapons buildups move ahead every passing day; the technology to deliver a supposedly decisive nuclear strike without significant retaliation gets more refined year by year.

Yet there continues to ferment in hearts and minds across the continent the yeast of a different view of this conflict — that the presence of even a single nuclear weapon on earth is folly, and constitutes mortal danger to the present and future of every living being:

The courageous refusal of tiny New Zealand to accept in its ports U.S. ships carrying nuclear weapons; increasing restiveness of some NATO countries, particularly Greece and Spain in that alliance; more and more active resistance by church people and others to the presence and transportation of nuclear weapons in the United States; and perhaps most significantly, an increasing activity against the arms race on high school campuses.

Yes, it is there — alive in the hearts and minds of millions of people around

the world — this hope and determination that the nuclear madness must, in the last analysis, be banished.

Lutheran theologian Joseph Sittler, writing recently in the *Christian Century*, offered a moving call for Christians to appropriate the power of Jesus' parables of the kingdom of God to confront this nuclear evil. The parables, Dr. Sittler said, have the power and the genius to address the most central perversion of humankind: they "shock the mind into opening to the unenvisioned possible; they madly exaggerate in order to jolt the consciousness of the religiously secure; they are an assault upon the obvious." The obvious, in this case, is that we must rely upon nuclear weapons for our "security."

Thus, the pearl of great price, for which everything else is surrendered; the search for the lost coin, for which the whole house is swept; the grain of mustard seed, smallest of all, planted in faith; the "holy waste" of precious oil used to anoint Jesus. "What a waste," said the judge, as he sentenced the four nuclear protestors. Maybe — but a holy waste with the efficacy to move us to the very belief in the power of God for a new world.

We who hope for such a world suffer less from a crisis of faith in it than from a crisis of will to help bring it about. But we can be inspired by those who offer themselves, in sacrifice, to political lobbying, to education, or to non-violent resistance. It is what Jonathan Schell calls "pre-emptive repentance" a repenting of the crime of nuclear war before we commit it, and finding in that repentance the will not to commit it. ■

THE WITNESS

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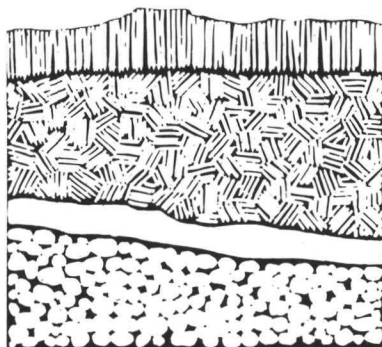


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Quotations from Bill Stringfellow

When Bill Stringfellow died in March, THE WITNESS lost its prophet-in-residence and the church lost its prophet-at-large. (See "Requiem for a theologian, advocate, friend," April issue.)

Stringfellow began his long association with THE WITNESS in the second issue of the revived magazine. In Oct. 13, 1974 he described how the "terrible mystery of the Holy Spirit" began to be exposed to him when he began to read the Bible seriously. "Biblically," he wrote, "the Holy Spirit means the militant presence of the Word of God inhering in the whole of creation. By virtue of this redundant affirmation of the biblical witness, the false notion, nurtured in my childhood, that the Holy Spirit somehow was possessed by and enshrined within the sanctuary of the church was at last refuted."

Thus freed from "religiosity," he set out as a lay theologian to unlock that Spirit by writing about "episodes and persons, known or overlooked, past or present, which were part of the history of the Holy Spirit and therefore the untold story of the church." Following are excerpts from that story. Rest, Bill.

Gospel not welcome

A most obstinate misconception associated with the gospel of Jesus Christ is that the gospel is welcome in this world. The conviction — endemic among church folk — persists that, if problems of misapprehension and misrepresentation are overcome and the gospel can be heard in its own integrity, the gospel will be found attractive by people, become popular and even be a success of some sort.

This idea is curious and ironical because it is bluntly contradicted in Scripture, and in the experience of the continuing biblical witness in history from the event of Pentecost unto the present moment. During Jesus' earthly ministry, no one in His family and not a single one of the disciples accepted Him, believed His vocation or loved the gospel He bespoke and embodied.

Since the rubrics of success, power, or gain are impertinent to the gospel, the witness of the saints looks foolish where it is most exemplary.

"Living with Defeat" 5/77

Accountability forfeited

Part of the process of secularization which has been happening, by which institutional survival becomes an end in itself, involves the abolition of accountability of the institution and its officials to human life. Such accountability



William Stringfellow

is the elementary subject matter of law. In the church the integrity of both canon law and the common law ecclesiastical (in which, anciently, the conception of equity originated) is as an expression of that accountability in at least minimal terms applicable to all within the body of the church. In the world or in the church, where accountability is forfeited for the sake of the security of the institution, lawlessness becomes endemic.

That was what was going on in American society throughout the Johnson and Nixon administrations, not only in war and Watergate but, more basically, in the politicalization of technology. If somewhat less conspicuous at this moment,

the overthrow of accountability to human life continues to be the reality of the secular order in America with respect to any of the great principalities of politics, commerce, science, education or the military. Now this is imitated in the Episcopal Church.

— “The Embarrassment of Being Episcopalian” 2/78

On ordination of women

The ordination of women to the priesthood has much to do, both as symptom and cause, with the Episcopal Church crisis. This was fated as soon as a woman publicly affirmed her vocation to the priesthood. That affirmation required every male priest and, for that matter, every layperson in the Episcopal Church to reexamine their various comprehensions of the priestly calling and, further, to consider why there is a priesthood vested in the church at all.

It is essential to the integrity of the church — that is, it spares the church conformity to the world — to ask and re-ask rudimentary questions such as these, no matter how threatening that may be and no matter the tumult or consternation the same may provoke. Thus I greeted the historic ordinations in Philadelphia and in Washington with gladness and with gratitude.

“A Matter of Conscience” 5/79

The politics of Psalm 22

Any public execution is, obviously, a political event in a straightforward and literal sense, but the public execution of Jesus Christ has political connotations of immense, complex, and, indeed, cosmic scope. This becomes apparent, for example, when the images of the Twenty-second Psalm portray the powerless victim threatened by predatory beasts, a familiar biblical way of designating political principalities and powers. It is, after all, in the name of Caesar, the overruling principality, that the sovereignty of the Word of God over Creation is disputed and mocked.

The political reality of the Crucifixion is accentuated in the Psalm where it is announced that the cry of the forlorn is heard and heeded. Notice the circumstances: the scene is the Judgment, with the whole of Creation in assemblage and with all who fear the Lord of history gathered in an act of praise. The attribute which chiefly distinguishes Christians is, simply, that they fear the Lord *now* or already — before the Day of Judgment. That means specifically that they acknowledge that they live and act in the constant reality of history being judged by God.

In Psalm 22, the word in the cry of Jesus from the Cross is an assurance of the efficacy of the Resurrection. To become

and be a beneficiary of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ means to live here and now in a way which upholds and honors the sovereignty of the Word of God in this life in this world and which trusts the Judgment of the Word of God in history. That involves freedom *now* from all conformities to death, freedom *now* from fear of the power of death, freedom *now* from the bondage of idolatry of death, freedom *now* to live in hope while awaiting the Judgment.

— “A Lamentation for Easter” 4/81

God is no secret

(There exists) an elementary confusion between the church and God which fosters idolatry of the church, and that renders the Christian faith merely religious. In one diocese recently I heard quoted something I had written about this peril in *A Private and Public Faith*:

The religious suppose that only the religious know about God or care about God, and that God cares only for the religious. Characteristically, religion is precious and possessive toward God . . . and conducts itself as if God really needs religion, as if God's existence depends upon the recognition of religion. Religion considers that God is a secret disclosed only in the discipline and practice of religion.

But all this is most offensive to the Word of God. The best news of God is that God is no secret. The news of God embodied in Jesus Christ is that God is openly and notoriously active in the world . . . (It is this news which the Christian Church exists to spread. Where the church, however, asserts that God is hidden in or behind creed or ceremony . . . (or) confined to the sanctuary, then . . . the church, forsaking the good news of God's presence in history, becomes a vulgar imitation of mere religion.

“Let the Dead Bury the Dead” 6/79

Controversial Bishop Pike

In his writing and speaking, coincidental with the heresy controversy, (Bishop Pike) kept returning to Saint Paul's admonition concerning the frailty of the church and the transience and relativity of churchly institutions and traditions as “earthen vessels” to which no ultimate dignity could be imputed and to which no justifying efficacy must ever be attributed. And, consistent with that, his growing awareness of Christian origins rendered the servant image of Jesus compellingly attractive to Pike. As James A. Pike became less and less religious, it can be said that he became more and more Christian. . .

It was Bishop Pike's obsession for authenticity — as that came to supersede and transcend his regard for authority — that threatened and enervated his peers in the church. It was this which made his being obnoxious. He had become more concerned with the Jesus of history than with prospering the church establishment; he actually raised questions which posed the Gospel against the church. The church would have to somehow be rid of his presence.

A blunt way to put the issue that arose between Pike and the Episcopal Church is that Pike was too diligent, too conscientious, too resolute in his vocation as a bishop. If that caused bafflement and provoked hostility among many fellow bishops, it nonetheless was recognized as Pike's virtue elsewhere. . .

By the time Bishop Pike reached the wilderness in Judea, he had died in Christ. What, then, happened there was not so much a death as a birth.

— *The Death and Life of Bishop Pike*
William Stringfellow & Anthony Towne (Doubleday)
Excerpt in THE WITNESS 4/76

The church and homosexuality

If General Convention asks serious questions about homosexuality and the priesthood, then it opens Pandora's box to disclose all those *other* questions about sexuality and the priesthood:

- If homosexuality is categorically reprehensible and a disqualification for priesthood, why has the church, in truth, ordained so many homosexuals over the years and, indeed, centuries?
- If the General Convention censures or bars the ordination of homosexuals in future, what is to be done about those already ordained? Shall they be exposed and defrocked?
- Similarly, what shall be done about bishops who are homosexual?
- How many clergy homosexuals have been induced or coerced into marriages in order to feign heterosexuality?
- If, at the same time, homosexuality is deemed a threat to the married priesthood, is not celibacy — which St. Paul counseled — a greater threat? And is not heterosexual promiscuity also a direct corruption of the married priesthood?
- Is bisexuality incompatible with priesthood?
- And what of other items, apart from homosexuality, to which the New Testament sometimes caustically calls attention, which may have pertinence to the ordained ministry, like love of money, drunkenness, vanity in performing priestly functions?

“Sexuality and Priesthood” 7/79

Quiet purge of clergy

On the matter of money and priorities, one learns of the quiet purge that has been taking place among the clergy; the weeding out of priests who are suspected of social conscience, prophetic tendency or ministry among the dispossessed, the neglected, the rejected, the unpopular, the imprisoned. The excuse for coercing or terminating such clergy is commonly an asserted shortage for funding their salaries, or, as it is sometimes put, a surplusage of clergy. There is, in truth, neither. If anything, there is a shortage of clergy to fill vacant or abandoned positions and there is a plethora of new ministries for the ordained waiting to be undertaken. But there is a refusal to allocate funding to support such ministries, and there is a practice of manipulating clergy compensations to conform clergy or eliminate those who do not conform.

“Let the Dead Bury the Dead” 6/79

On papal utterances

The Acts of the Apostles is, simply, the chronicle of the confrontations between the Apostles and the Apostolic Church and the ruling authorities. The witness and ministry *pastorally* of the new Christians is beset by hostility, harassment, surveillance, arrest, imprisonment, sometimes execution, persecution . . .

Papal utterances concerning the sanctity of life sound hollow or hypocritical to many people who note the quietness or coyness of the Vatican on Grenada, or El Salvador, or, for that matter, Lebanon, or the increasing probabilities of nuclear calamity.

And, to me, most ominous and alarming are the official Papal inquests into some of the women's religious orders. These parallel investigations affecting the Archbishop of Seattle (who has refused to pay taxes for war) and kindred bishops, and the attempts to manipulate the governance of the Jesuits. Are these what they seem to be — attempts to intimidate factions or persons or powers within the church who are apt to be critical of the Pope and his ambivalent politics?

It is a melancholy scene that attends John Paul, one in which a politics is practiced that has a kind of anti-pastoral emphasis, or in which a pastoral ministry is professed which is anti-political. There may be no *timely* remedy for this extraordinary shortcoming or confusion in the ministry of John Paul. But I commend, to one and all, that a fit remedy is awaiting application. It is in the politics of pastoral care articulated in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

“The Politics of Pastoral Care” 2/84

Rendering rulers accountable

The watchword of Christmas — “peace on earth” — is no more a sentimental adage but a political message. Indeed, it is an eschatological utterance, which exposes and confounds the sham of rulers who translate peace as Pax Romana or Pax Americana. Or who calculate peace in balances of power. Or who propound peace in nuclear computations. Or who, as Revelation puts it, “with bombast and blasphemy” still seek to induce human beings to hallucinate peace while they prosecute the commerce of war with barbaric zeal and guile.

The first century Christians, persecuted though they were for it, were right: the secret of Advent is the consolation of the Second Coming. The Advent news is political. It celebrates the assurance that in the coming of Jesus Christ the nations and the rulers of the nations are judged by God, which is at the same time to affirm that they are rendered accountable to human life.

— “The Politics of Advent” 12/75

Grandiloquent bishops

The Apostolic ministry begins in pastoral concern for each member of the whole church and reaches into the very interstices of the body of the church. Simultaneously, it addresses the worldly regimes of the principalities and powers, as well as all people everywhere, at once exposing every need and vouching for the redemptive vigilance of the Word of God in the world. Thus, a bishop (as I am sure many bishops realize) is dialectically positioned between church and world. This is really not a situation of grandeur. Maybe that is why, too often, where the office of bishop has been rendered grandiloquent it has lost pastoral integrity for either church or world.

— “The Politics of Pastoral Care” 2/84

Advent preempted by quacks

The depletion of a contemporary recognition of the radically political character of Advent is in large measure occasioned by the illiteracy of churchfolk about the Second Advent, and in the mainline churches, the persistent quietism of pastors, preachers and teachers about the Second Coming. That topic has been allowed to be preempted and usurped by astrologers, sectarian quacks and multifarious hucksters. Yet it is impossible to apprehend either Advent except through the relationship of both Advents. The pioneer Christians, beleaguered as they were because of their insight, knew that the message of both Advents *is* political. That

message is that in the coming of Jesus Christ, the nations and the principalities and the rulers of the world are judged in the Word of God. In the Lordship of Christ they are rendered accountable to human life and, indeed, to all created life. Hence, the response of John the Baptist when he is pressed to show the meaning of the repentance he preaches is, “*Bear fruits that befit repentance.*”

— “Advent as a Penitential Season” 12/81

Manger as political statement

The most poignant part of the Luke account — “*And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*” (Luke 2:7) — constitutes, within itself, a political statement identifying Jesus with those who have no shelter or who are homeless, vagrant, destitute or otherwise deprived. That, and more audacious identifications with human need, become redundant during the historic ministry of Jesus.

Then notice that this simple aspect of the birth of Jesus — he was laid in a manger — political statement as it is on its face — is exposed by the angel of the Lord as a sign to the shepherds of the coming of the Savior or Messiah (Luke 2:10-12).

— “Christmas as Parody of the Gospel” 12/82

A lifestyle of resistance

For human beings, the only way to cope with the predatory quality of the technocratic regime is by confronting, comprehending, resisting and transcending the reality of death at work in this world. It is that which is the whole concern of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In that concern the issue is not how death can be defeated, but how the power of death is broken and confounded in the life of the Word of God in this world, and, thus, how human life is emancipated from servitude and idolatry of death in the American technocracy or in any other society whatsoever.

That means that the biblical lifestyle is always, in some sense, a witness of resistance to the *status quo* of politics and of economics and of everything in society. It is a witness to resurrection from death. Paradoxically, those who embark on the biblical witness constantly risk death empirically — execution or exile, imprisonment or persecution, defamation or harassment — at the behest of the rulers of this age. Yet those who do not resist the rulers of the present darkness are consigned to moral death — to the death of their humanness. That, of all the modes of death, is the most ignominious.

— “The Nation’s Destiny and the Problem of Hope” 6/76

A Luta Continua — the struggle continues

by Barbara C. Harris

Point, Counterpoint

It has been nearly eight years since the House of Bishops gifted itself with a caudal appendage (translate “monkey tail”) to the canon permitting ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate. Broad interpretation of the so-called conscience clause in some quarters surpasses poetic license and serves only to fuel the fires of continued opposition to church law.

Point: Excerpt from a letter to Phillip Mantle (Province V Youth Network), with copies to all Bishops of the Fifth Province, from William Louis Stevens, Bishop of Fond du Lac, re a resolution by the Youth Task Force: “The Task Force, as indeed everyone in the Episcopal Church, should be aware that the canon permitting ordination of women to the priesthood is strictly a *permissive* canon (emphasis, the bishop’s). It was not intended in any way to be a mandatory canon. Therefore *each bishop and diocese in the Church is given freedom to formulate policy and to act in regard to this matter according to conviction and conscience* (emphasis mine). Any ‘resolutions’ or anything of the sort which segregate, exclude or any way penalize the dioceses or persons who do not affirm the ordination of women to the priesthood are clearly against the spirit and intent of the canon.”

Such “exegesis” does not always go unchallenged, however.

Counterpoint: Excerpts from a letter to Bishop Stevens from the Rt. Rev. John H. Burt, Bishop of Ohio, retired, with copies to all Bishops of the Fifth Province: “From one perspective you are, of course, right. All canons dealing

with ordination are permissive in the sense that no bishop has to ordain anyone his conscience forbids. The same can be said of other canons — remarriage after divorce, for example. But it is only in that sense that this canon is permissive. It is in every way binding as a part of the official law of our church. Those delegated to administer church law (bishops, Standing Committees, priests, etc.) have an obligation to see that canon law is obeyed.

“I happened to chair the Committee on Theology when (at Port St. Lucie in 1977) we drafted the ‘Statement of Conscience.’

“As you may recall, we were addressing the problem of the personal dilemma faced by any bishop, priest, deacon or layperson whose conscience was afflicted because of ‘the decision of General Convention to authorize the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate.’

“At Port St. Lucie when a question was raised during the debate as to whether this Statement purported to give license to disobey the canons, we said emphatically ‘no.’ Bishop David Reed, authorized to speak for our Committee, said:

‘The purpose of the conscience statement is to assure such a person that he still belongs in this Church, despite holding an opinion contrary to General Convention . . . This does not condone actions directed against the Church. While the Church is big enough to include those persons with troubled consciences, it still expects the same faithfulness and loyalty of them as it does of any other member of the Body of Christ . . . The Conscience



Statement was a positive expression of love and acceptance not an invitation to anarchy . . .

“As you can see clearly, neither the committee on Theology nor the House of Bishops in adopting the Conscience Statement intended that anyone — bishop, priest, deacon or layperson — has authority to disregard or flaunt the canons. The Committee did imply that one need not personally be required to carry out things which the canons direct if his or her conscience says ‘no’ . . . It is a bishop’s freedom to act or not to act depending on the promptings of conscience that is permissive. Permissiveness is not attached to the canon itself.

“To sum up, our Committee on Theology said: 1) Respect each other’s conscience on the matter of women’s ordination; 2) If you administer the Church’s law but for reasons of conscience cannot support Canon III 9.1, do not leave the Church but step aside so someone else can act for you in the matter; 3) See that women have all the privileges of consideration for ordination and deployment guaranteed them under the canons even though you yourself may not be ready personally to receive their ministry.”

My Point: That such debate must ensue in A.D. 1985 gives new meaning to the ancient anguished words of the prophet Habakkuk (1:2): “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and thou wilt not hear? Or cry to thee ‘Violence!’ and thou wilt not save?” *A luta continua.* ■

Short Takes

Half of Senate Millionaires

At least half of the members of the Senate today are millionaires. That has changed the nature of the body. We've become a plutocracy. The dependence on party and leadership just isn't there. The Senate was meant to represent the interests of the states; instead, it represents the interests of a class.

— Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan
New York Times 11/25/84

World of the poor

One day, a theology should develop that comes from the poor themselves. But it seems to me that this theology remains a project; it has not yet become a fact. Liberation theology is just one step along the way in this search. I see it as a kind of theological crutch, to be used until the poor create a theology out of their own experience, their own world.

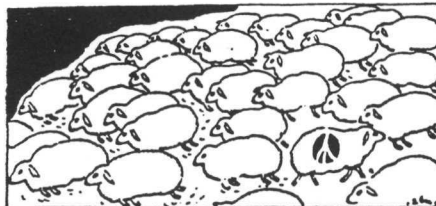
After many years of attempting to be close to the poor people of my country, and to reflect on their lives, and on my own life in relation to theirs, I am more strongly convinced than ever that there is a *World of the poor*. It's not easy to explain. Being poor is a way of loving, of spending one's free time, of making friends. It's even a way of thinking, and its logic is very different from ours! To be committed to the poor means to enter the world of the poor — and this is very difficult, almost impossible. To work with the poor, to participate in some of their struggles, is quite possible. But to live with them and become a part of their world is very difficult indeed.

— Theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez
Latinamerica Press

Re civil disobedience

"It is possible to violate laws and regulations governing property without committing violence against human beings. Our imaginations in this area are underdeveloped. If we want to take part in liberation movements, then the militarism that dominates us is our main enemy."

— Theologian Dorothee Solle



Ojibway on missiles

In the name of the Native American people, I ask the government of the United States of America, so called by the great-great grandchildren of immigrants who came to my land 492 winters past, to take from our Mother the Earth these machines of fire that destroy earth and human life throughout the lands of all people. I act today, as the Old Ones have said I must, to take our stand, to make our land calm once again.

The trees must remain green, the waters must be crystal, the sands are to be pure and warm once again.

The sage and sweet grass, where the deer and elk lay their heads, must once more be safe and soft for them. Where the children shall walk and grow must be peaceful and warm; no bad shall they hear, and only good things, their eyes shall see.

The circle we form which knows no end, as our feet touch our Mother the Earth, shall not feel the hurt and destruction of fire.

The winds are pure, and the Grandfathers have told us the time is now when peace must come from the North Wind, where the Old Ones have gone and only they, with the Great Spirit, know what is tomorrow.

— Ojibway activist
Larry Cloud-Morgan
One of the "Silo Pruning Hooks"

One of Tutu's finest hours

In 1978, during the Lambeth Conference — the gathering of Anglican bishops throughout the world — Bishop Tutu emerged as a world leader. A major issue before the bishops was the question of ordaining women to the priesthood. Many wondered how the African bishops would vote on this issue, since the status of African women was generally quite low. Bishop Tutu, who has opposed oppression of every form, led the battle for sexual wholeness in the ordained ministry of the church. The African bishops followed his lead, and they became the crucial votes that legitimized the priesthood of women in the provinces of the Anglican Communion. It was one of Desmond Tutu's finest hours.

— Bishop John Spong
Diocese of Newark

Patriarchal sexism

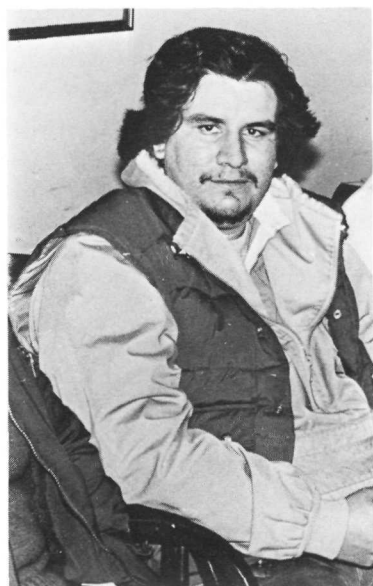
While we note with appreciation the Roman Catholic Bishops' 1983 peace pastoral and applaud their current undertaking on the U.S. economy (which some observers see paralleling the Medellín document in importance), we are distressed by the bishops' decision to undertake a pastoral focused not on patriarchal sexism in the church, but on the topic they were advised to avoid: women in church and society. At this juncture in the history of the church, women should be the primary definers and describers of their situation.

The bishops opted, however, to retain actual drafting to themselves while consigning women consultants to their customary subordinate role. In so doing they illustrate the very problematic of women's situation. We believe it imperative, therefore, that women in the church assume responsibility to develop a pastoral that in content and in the process of production will demonstrate that women are coming of age, listening to their own experience, struggling to define their own reality and selfhood and roles, and recommending redress for the injustices they have suffered.

— Pauline Turner
NARW Probe Vol. XIII, No. 1

Letter from prison

by Steven Guerra



Steven Guerra, a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, is serving three years in prison in Anthony, Tex. for refusing, as an act of conscience, to testify before a Federal Grand Jury investigating the FALN. Though never charged with a crime, he and four other Hispanics have been labeled "FALN terrorists" by the FBI — a label which has cost them an early parole. Others in prison are Maria Cueto, Julio and Andres Rosado, and Ricardo Romero. Guerra sent this open letter to THE WITNESS recently.

Well, my friends, this year is nearly done. It's getting to be Spring again, just like when we turned ourselves in. Once more around the track, and maybe it will be time to jump back into a new life. Julio Rosado once told me that you forget about prison two months after you leave. I don't think so this time. We will be leaving too many friends behind.

Yes, one year has passed, and it is time to write, to remind you, to remind myself, that I/we are still alive, still fighting. For weeks now I've pondered what I would say. Can you understand how difficult it is to write from prison? How do I share my most intimate feelings, knowing the enemy (they really are the enemy) is constantly looking over my shoulder?

If that were not enough, I must also resist my own temptations, for they are many. When one writes from jail there almost always exists the desire to cry, complain, rant and rave.

Here amid the depredations, the hatred and ignorance (how do you deal with a guard who calls Blacks "jigaboos"?) and the treachery, it is much too easy to see the hour of the ovens just on the horizon. Objectivity becomes strained and one can easily mistake sunset for oven glow. One becomes almost apocalyptic. I believe I could write a new "book of revelations" — not inspired by a holy spirit, but by the cruelty of man to fellow man. I shall not write that book; it would hurt too much.

On the other hand, when so many well-meaning friends seem to hang on to your every word, the temptation to see yourself as a prophet also becomes alluring. Since I am not (I can't even grow a decent beard), I will not try that either. Instead I will try to cram two years' experiences into one letter.

Where do I start? Perhaps it is with how I am doing. I'm doing OK. I suppose

it depends what time you ask. If it's at 5 a.m. when I am awakened (from that bit of total freedom I call sleep) to go mop floors and clean tables in the kitchen — watch out — no evil creature out of Greek, Norse or Aztec mythology was ever worse than I. If it's at 12:30 when I am done for the day and I am rushing for the phone, then I am sweetness and light. In between I undergo a daily metamorphosis.

But perhaps your question was, how are you *really* doing? Then I will tell you, I am still swinging. For the longest I thought it was enough just to survive, to put my mind on hold, to accept the regimen, to throw my hands up and say "OK, I recognize your authority over me, I will not rock the boat, I will simply survive." Now I realize how wrong such thinking is. I do not simply wish to survive — I want to live, and to live I must consciously resist. For here survival is made up of a million little humiliations: Learning to say please just right, asking questions always (for statements are not allowed); having to accept obvious lies with a smile and a thank you. What one tends to forget is that constant accommodation dulls the spirit. It eats at you like a cancer. At first you don't even recognize it, it's so very subtle. After all you want to be reasonable, you don't want to be a knucklehead, you want to survive, no problems, do your own time, etc. So, you compromise a bit here, a bit there until you have nothing left and then you begin to forget who you were. Thus you're successfully transformed (not rehabilitated but transformed) into # blank blank blank or whatever label they choose to give you. In short, you choose either to compromise or to resist (become an asshole, a problem, a complainer and a pain).

Everyday I look into a mirror and say to myself, "to compromise a little is to

capitulate a lot.” It becomes a prayer to the human spirit, a ritual whereby I assert my humanity.

So, how am I? I guess the answer is I am strong, well, incorrigible, intransigent and still thoroughly human. Thank you for asking. I need such questions from time to time to remind myself. Everything here conspires to make me forget. I’ll close now. More tomorrow.

* * *

Well, here I am again. I think before all else I’ll start with something I wrote a while back during darker times. I once read that “writing is a lot like risking a somersault in the air; you never know if you are going to land on your feet or break your neck.” Since I have no one here to share my “stuff” with (I’m not sure if I’m a poet or a poetaster) you will have to tell me the current state of my health. Here we go:

A conversation

My love
if someday
someone
asks you
why was he born,
towards what end did he live?
share with them my poems,
for
feeble as they are
in them
you may find
the tenderness of my soul
the humanity I buried,
deep within a wounded heart,
the dignity
of so many unspoken dreams.
Ask them
to read them
carefully,
that they may come to understand
that even while in chains,
we armed ourselves,
with courage, with hope.
Tell them
my love
that we hated poverty
that we loved humanity,
that we were born
and we lived
because
we loved them.

There it is. I’m not sure it’s good, but it’s the truth. Funny, before I came to jail I never thought about writing. It was at best a necessary evil. Now it is a tool. It is a saw I use to break free, the straw I breathe through while buried alive. It is the hammer I use to destroy time, to smash it up in little bits and sweep it under the door until the next day dawns and I begin anew.

As I said, I’m not sure it’s good, but honestly, that does not even matter. For in many ways this is not reality. It is like painting in the dark and never having a light turned on — the act alone suffices. So don’t feel you must be gentle; just try and understand.

Often I am told here to stop talking about the street, about “when I get out.” “Deal with now,” they say. “This is reality.” But how can this be reality when you can be punished for kissing your wife too often in the visiting room (perhaps five times in six hours, it being the first time you’ve seen her in a year)? And at the same time, getting oral sex in a bathroom for a pack of cigarettes is accepted and to a certain degree, condoned. To everyone who says this is reality, I’m sorry. This is not. This is madness, and in such a context writing constitutes an exit from the insanity we know as rehabilitation. After having seen prison from this side for a year I can now safely say that to expect rehabilitation from jails is about as likely as expecting a gorilla to fix your broken Swiss watch. Oops! Excuse my ranting — I promised none of that. Where were we. Oh, yes, prison — an interesting subject to read about, but what a hell to live in.

It is made infinitely worse by the fact that 90% of the time is such a total departure from reason. Nothing works the way it is supposed to. Kindness is weakness; reading, except for trash and porn, a near crime. I believe that was my most difficult adjustment to make from life to this wasteland of humanity.

On the street I was reasonable (or so I

believed). I always thought if you were kind, kindness would be returned. If you were willing to sit down and seriously look for solutions almost any problem could be resolved. Put those ideas in storage with your books and clothes when you come to jail. For nothing in jail works the way it is supposed to, nothing is free and nothing is reasonable.

I’m getting ready to close now. I’ve not even tried to get to the question of humiliation and violence. It’s difficult to describe and harder to believe. How does one feel when forced to strip naked and told to “bend over and spread your cheeks. *Wider inmate!*” It’s not something one ever gets used to. How can I describe the rage I felt when I was told by my compañera of the near rape of Alejandrina Torres by “correctional officers” in the Chicago M.C.C. Those things are perhaps best saved for another day, when I can look you in the eye and you can see my anger, my hatred, my sadness.

I’ll really close now. I’m getting tired and it’s getting noisy again. But before I do I want to thank all of you across the country who have helped by sharing your strength with me. From a young boy in Saranac Lake, N.Y. to a minister from Burlingame, Cal. — I send you all my love and the pledge of an unbreakable will.

My compañera always told me I lived in a fantasy world of books and ideas — that was dangerous and made me vulnerable. It probably was true, but it was my hopes and my dreams that kept me thoroughly human.

And now it is those same hopes and dreams which keep me moving forward. As I’ve said, I am well. Prison has been difficult, no doubt about it, but I once read that a blow that does not kill you makes you stronger. One year later, I am not dead, I am infinitely stronger. I thank you for your prayers, I thank you for your faithful friendship in these dark times. I look forward to the day when I

Continued on page 16



Tips for grassroots lobbyists

by Alex McGehee

They number five hundred thirty-five. They are mostly White and mostly male. Together with an executive they decide our involvement in Central America, the number of MX missiles pointed at an enemy, and the nation's social commitment to the poor. The outcome of these issues of major concern to all citizens is determined by actions of the United States Congress.

Although almost 70 members of Congress call themselves Episcopalians, the voice of the church speaking to Capitol Hill is quite small. The Episcopal Church employs one person to represent its views on national policy to the Congress.

That person, the Rev. William L. Weiler, faces a formidable task. He must convey the church's message to a legislative body composed of nearly 400 committees, subcommittees, and coalitions, not including the offices of over 500 individual members of Congress. "We are tremendously stretched," says Weiler.

One of Weiler's colleagues sees the problem in stronger terms. "With the number of Episcopalians who are members of Congress, that we have only one

person on the Hill who represents the Episcopal Church is a disgrace," says the Rev. Craig Biddle. Biddle directs an interfaith legislative coalition called IMPACT.

Short on staff, Weiler uses IMPACT to monitor legislation and help strengthen his lobbying efforts. He approaches Congress not just as an Episcopalian, but in a combined witness with 15 other Christian and Jewish groups. In addition Weiler calls upon several volunteers from the Episcopal community who are experts in specific legislative areas.

Both Biddle and Weiler stress the need for active lay involvement to move church issues on the Congressional agenda. IMPACT maintains a network of over 11,000 people who work on local and national levels. Coordinated by congressional districts, the membership contacts legislators when key issues are pending.

During the battle over funding for the MX missile in March, IMPACT alerted clergy in districts where undecided swing votes were identified. Clergy notified their parishioners and members of Congress received the persuasion directly from home constituents.

Through powerful lobbying efforts of his own, President Reagan ultimately

won the fight for his "Peacekeeper" missile, but only by a slim legislative margin. Facing an uphill battle in the House, Reagan airlifted his chief Geneva negotiator, Max M. Kampelman, back to Washington and made personal phone calls to a number of lawmakers. The President invoked the deity trying to convince one Southern Democrat to change his mind. The House of Representatives approved \$1.5 billion for 21 more MX missiles by a vote of 219 to 213. A change of heart by three legislators would have tipped the balance the other way.

The MX got another boost from supporters who used a tactic similar to the IMPACT effort. Martin Marietta Corporation holds a major contract for the MX. The company's chairman and presidents of each corporate division sent letters to hundreds of employees strongly "urging you to write, wire, or telephone your Senators and Representatives to support the 'Peacekeeper' (MX) program." The letters came complete with stamped postcards, lists of congressional delegations, and a colorful brochure describing in detail the benefits of the deadly weapon.

Most members of Congress discount an organized, pre-printed mailing like the

Alex McGehee is a broadcast journalist based in Washington, D.C.

Martin Marietta campaign. But a personal, brief, well thought-out letter can be an effective lobbying tool. "They all go through the process of evaluating the mail before they vote," says Gary Serota, director of the Congressional Management Foundation. "If you bother to write you have a disproportionate impact on the thoughts of your representative."

He estimates only 5 to 10% of an entire district's population takes the trouble to write. The priority by which members look at mail, according to Serota:

- 1) VIP letters from important organizations or persons.
- 2) Handwritten personal letters (because of the substantial time commitment involved).
- 3) Typewritten letters that appear to be personal.
- 4) Computer-generated mass mail.

"Letters rank higher than postcards and petitions rank lowest of all," says Serota. "You often find that people don't even remember having signed a petition."

Episcopal lobbyist Weiler emphasizes the need to thank and commend members of Congress for a vote in the right direction. The tactic builds a relationship of support rather than complaint. Weiler



IMPACT office staff, from left, the Rev. Craig Biddle, director; Barbara Edmondson, executive assistant; and Richard Houston, publications editor.

also sees writing as the key, "providing it is done thoughtfully and with some regularity."

Beyond writing he feels it is important for lay constituents to arrange meetings with representatives and their staff assistants. Weiler suggests this be done in the home district office as well as in Washington. Legislators usually publish district work schedules in local papers and through congressional mailings. Frequent legislative recesses provide ample opportunity to visit with a Congress member.

The church has a vast resource in the area of lobbying. From a base of individual parishes in almost every congressional district comes the voting constituency that means political survival for members of Congress. It is a rare politician who cannot take time for a constituent. IMPACT director Biddle says that adequate preparation is necessary for these meetings.

To help in this work, his organization provides regular legislative updates and educational reports to IMPACT members. But information is also available in

local libraries through publications such as the *Congressional Quarterly*, which provides detailed voting records and much legislative detail. IMPACT fact sheets place an emphasis on human rights, economic justice, and halting the arms race.

Local papers are also often a good source. Letters to the editors of these papers do double duty — they are clipped for the Senator or Representative's reading in the Washington office, and they bear witness throughout the community.

Staying on top of an issue can mean getting involved locally. Biddle suggests outreach through other lay people in one's own church. "A core group who'll make a noise will mean lay people gathered and clergy must listen," he says. Conservative church movements have made effective use of this tactic for some time.

"We're a dinosaur when it comes to the sophistication of the conservative churches," claims Biddle. The marriage of the new right to these churches, performed by a host of television evangelists, has effectively given birth to a vast

Writing/calling Washington?

The Hon. _____
U.S. House of
Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Capitol Switchboard
(202) 224-3121
(This number will connect you
with all House and Senate offices)

White House Switchboard
(202) 456-1414
(202) 456-7639
(Public opinion expressions)

number of new political activists. Their agenda has become embedded as part of the national consciousness.

One positive aspect of such success has been to remind faith and mainline communities such as the Episcopal Church of the connection between politics and parish. As we strive to grow in relationship to God, we must face the injustices of our society's structures. These structures, by their very nature, are deeply affected by political decisions.

"The church has a prophetic responsibility to stand tall on the issues it feels strongly about," says Biddle.

Oregon's Senator Mark Hatfield takes this thought a step further saying, if we are "not pastor to the politician, the

prophetic message will not be received; it will fall on dry ground." But if we are not "prophet to the politician, pastoral responsibility will remain incomplete; there will be no vision; no stimulus for growth; and the people will perish."

A call made, a letter written, an appointment kept, may not seem too significant an action in the congressional scheme of things. But to a government that increasingly puts its faith in a "Peace-keeper" missile; its hope for justice in "constructive engagement," and its charity to the hungry in surplus cheese, we must make our stand. ■

(Address for IMPACT: 100 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, D.C. 20002
Phone: 202-544-8636)

WISC abets church lobbying

The Washington Interreligious Staff Council (WISC) meets bi-weekly on Capitol Hill. A public policy group, the organization provides key support for the Washington Office of the Episcopal Church.

At a meeting in April, task force members of WISC discussed strategies for action on a wide range of legislation affecting the church. Chairing the session, William Weiler opened with a meditation on Maunday Thursday. After brief reflections WISC discussed economic justice and the Senate Budget Committee's plan to put one quarter of federal spending cuts in programs for the poor.

Sue Buckler from the Unitarian Universalist Association reported on the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1985. The bill expands coverage of four major civil rights statutes narrowed since the Supreme Court case of *Grove City vs. Bell*. Sen. Orrin Hatch's amendment to the Civil Rights Act would restrict federal financial assistance for abortions.

WISC members next considered the growing trends toward nationalism in

U.S. trade relations. With the Japanese trade situation in turmoil, House Energy and Commerce Chairman John Dingell has been referring to "little yellow people" during congressional hearings, according to Jaydee Hansen. A member of the United Methodist Church, Hansen also serves on the WISC Energy and Ecology Task Force.

Throughout the meeting a litany of bad news from the White House continued to flow: Reagan requests for \$163 million to produce chemical weapons; disingenuous strategies for funding Contra groups in Nicaragua; administration proposals which would effectively gut the Indian Health programs.

IMPACT Director Craig Biddle reported that over 500 people attended a recent congressional briefing in Washington. A delegation of almost 80 Episcopalians was among them. Clearly the church will need the help of WISC, IMPACT, and an active laity if it is to prevail against an onslaught of regressive legislation.

— A. McG.

Prison . . . Continued from page 13

return and enter the struggle anew.

Every day I sing the Puerto Rican national anthem at precisely 4 p.m. to remind me who I am and why I am here. It is my daily communion with the 28 others.

Please do not worry about me, for I am with a few good people. Remember flowers grow on the sides of mountains as well as in gardens. I'll close with a copy of the first poem I ever wrote in prison:

The first poem

The poetry I write shall not be of guns
or jackboots that march in the night.
The poems of my age will be songs of
a body electric.

They will return my head to the lap
of a silent lover,
They will shine like her eyes
They will dance with thoughts of
freedom,

and announce the breaking of many
new dawns.

I will write of a love which sustained
me,
of a love more pure than
— "Valor y Sacrificio"

My poems shall have the salt of tears,
which burn.

They will remember winter in order to
celebrate spring.

Like candles
my poems should be saved for
darkness,

For they are love songs,
written in the quiet desperation of
solitude,

written for my people,
for my struggle

for my companera
my poems are for you
my love.

I hope you like it. Bye for now. Take care and stay strong. I send you the greetings of Amor y Revolucion. *Ven- ceremos. Viva Puerto Rico Libre!*

Justice, then peace,



Steven

'The Consultation' to debut at Anaheim

Nine Episcopal groups representing peace and justice issues, women, and minorities have formed a coalition to raise concerns that will shape the identity and mission of the church at General Convention and beyond. They call themselves, "The Consultation."

Members include the Episcopal Peace Fellowship; Episcopal Urban Caucus; Episcopal Women's Caucus; Integrity; Union of Black Episcopalians; Appalachian People's Service Organization (APSO); the Episcopal Church Publishing Company; Hispanic Concerns Group; Asian-American Concerns Group, and members of other minorities within and without the church.

"As the 68th General Convention in Anaheim, with changes in leadership, has important implications for our concerns, we have come together over the past two years to do some hard planning and propel forward a so-called liberal church that now floats between vacillation and equivocation on issues of justice and peace," Barbara Harris, ECPC Executive Director and convenor of the group, said.

Recent General Conventions of the Episcopal Church have seen the on-site formation of a broad gathering of progressive forces within the church known as "Coalition. E." This alliance has turned its efforts toward influencing legislation and electing persons to Executive Council and other positions at the national church level.

The Coalition's initial success, most evident at Minneapolis in 1976, began to erode at Denver in 1979 and was all but dissipated during the 1982 General Convention at New Orleans. Goals were not always clearly articulated, communica-



Members of The Consultation at a working session, seated, from left are Juli Beatty, Integrity; Deborah Harmon Hines, Union of Black Episcopalians; the Rev. Barbara C. Harris, Episcopal Church Publishing Company; the Rev. Floyd Naters, Hispanic concerns group; standing, from left, the Rev. Robert B. Lloyd, APSO; Mary Miller, Episcopal Peace Fellowship; the Rev. S. Michael Yasutake, Asian American concerns group; Carol Cole Flanagan, Episcopal Women's Caucus; and Byron Rushing, Episcopal Urban Caucus.

tion between natural allies broke down, and strategies lacked creativity. Meanwhile, conservative and retrogressive factions, reflecting the general mood of the country, have advanced both their ideology and domination of elected offices.

"Liberals within the church have tended to shun the more fundamentalist tactics of conservatives and have been more comfortable with ambiguity and accommodation," Harris said.

The Consultation believes, however,

that "the Shalom of God's reign will not roll in on the wheels of inevitability. It will be brought about by the persistent efforts of those willing to be co-workers with God. It is to that end that The Consultation is committed, and it is to that collaboration with God that we call our church in faith and in hope."

"Odyssey in Faith," The Consultation's vision for the Episcopal Church and the coalition's platform for General Convention will appear in two parts in forthcoming issues of THE WITNESS.

Portrait:

Helen the felon

by James Lewis

Early November is the time when grocery stores begin to alert their customers to the fact that Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Using fancy posters and large newspaper ads, consumers are advised to order their turkeys well in advance. For those women who have the responsibility for the holiday meal, it's a time to plan a menu for family and friends.

For Helen Woodson, however, it was a different story last November. A 41-year-old Madison, Wisc. mother of 11 children, Helen was planning something

quite different. Her plans centered around how to rent a 90-pound, compressor driven jackhammer so that she and three others could assault a 110-ton concrete slab.

On November 12, accompanied by two Roman Catholic priests, Carl and Paul Kabat, and Larry Cloud-Morgan, a Native American, Helen Woodson broke into a Minuteman II missile silo near Whiteman Air Force Base, 30 miles east of Kansas City, and went to work.

For about an hour and a half, these four people drilled away at the huge concrete and steel lid which covers the silo that contains the missile. After celebrating mass, the four, who called themselves the "Silo Pruning Hooks," were

apprehended and hustled off to jail where they were held without bail and in solitary confinement until their February trial.

The scenario was not a new one for Helen Woodson. Between 1982 and 1984 she has been sentenced eight times — nine months of jail time — for such acts of civil disobedience. She speaks of her time in jail as "inconsequential" in comparison to the "12 years I spent in the rather dubious pursuit of higher academia."

On Feb. 22, in a Kansas City U.S. federal district court, a jury of seven men and five women found Helen and her companions guilty of four felony charges — conspiracy, trespassing, willful destruction of property and impeding the national

The Rev. E. James Lewis is vicar of Church of the Incarnation, Ann Arbor and a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

Sentencing statement:

This is a day of life, death and resurrection. Today, March 25, the Catholic Church commemorates the Annunciation — the day of the conception of Jesus Christ. We have also just marked the anniversary of Archbishop Oscar Romero's martyrdom. Additionally, it is the fifth birthday of Jeremy Akiva Imani Woodson. I do not mean to slight either Jesus or Oscar Romero, but I want to concentrate my thoughts on little Jeremy.

Jeremy came into the world on March 24, 1980 but was not legally born because he was, in fact, dead. Doctors put tubes everywhere and hooked the limp brown body to a respirator. When there was still no neurological response 24 hours later, the decision was made to unplug the machines. In preparation a nurse had the thoughtfulness to baptize him, and a few minutes later, brain activity was observed and Jeremy took his first independent breath. Thus his birth was

officially registered on March 25.

When Jeremy came to me two months later, the experts said, "Love him as best you can, because he'll never do anything on his own." They said he'd never sit up and when he did that, they said he would never walk, and when he did that, they said he'd never talk. Now he does, and next, I suppose they'll say he'll never read, but I'm in a betting mood, especially today.

The miracle of Jeremy is not just in the milestones I have described. It is much more in his spirit. Jeremy loves as I've never seen anyone love before, and in his love he spends his days singing, dancing and laughing. The kid is a born resister. When he objects to something, he puts his hands on his hips, stamps his foot and says very firmly but without malice or anger, "I say no!" Turn Jeremy loose at N-5 and his presence alone would conquer the evil.



defense. The verdict could have carried up to 25 years in prison. They got 18 years.

Helen's critics accuse her of neglecting her family. They say that being incarcerated and separated from her children will do them real harm. Her 11 children — one by her own birthing, seven adopted and three foster children — will certainly suffer from her absence, they say.

Helen's fans call her courageous and prophetic. She has become the subject of their admiration. Her response to that? "What we need is company, not adulation."

Critics and admirers agree on at least one thing. It is bad news that Helen and her three compatriots will have to spend

a long time in a prison cell.

But, there is good news in all of this.

It's been discovered, since the defacing of the huge lid by the jackhammer, that irreparable damage has been done. The concrete slab is cracked so badly that, given the nature of air and water, it can no longer protect the Minuteman II missile it covers. It is only a matter of time. The elements will do their inevitable and subversive work. Replacing the lid is too extensive a job and too expensive as well. And so the missile will be rendered inoperative by the spring rains.

As a young boy, I learned a song that was sung on festive occasions when the beer was cold and the camaraderie warm. It went: "Ninety-nine bottles of beer on

the wall, 99 bottles of beer, if one of those bottles should happen to fall, 98 bottles of beer on the wall."

Perhaps there's a party brewing among the faithful who celebrate Helen Woodson's act of civil disobedience as a heroic witness to supernatural obedience. A party would be appropriate. It would give folks a chance to celebrate the good news that instead of 1000 Minuteman II missiles there are 999. When the spirit rises and there's a need to sing, perhaps a new song will be added to the traditional Amazing Grace and We Shall Overcome.

It goes like this: "One thousand Minuteman missiles in all, 1,000 missiles in all. If one of those missiles should happen to fall, 999 missiles in all." ■

Helen Woodson

Two people have taught me most of what I know about celebrating life, not merely existing through it. One of these people is Jeremy. And I have learned from Jeremy that true celebration must embrace and is, indeed, incomplete without all three elements — life, death and resurrection.

Contained in the conception of Jesus are his death and resurrection. Implicit in the death of Oscar Romero is his life and resurrection. I'm not sure how to word this for Jeremy, because for me it has all been resurrection.

So here we are at this point which stinks of death — the death of the missile, the death of the law, the death of the court. Its stench is everywhere, but I find something more.

Nov. 12 was not simply a beginning. In the hour and a quarter of our witness were contained elements of life, death and resurrection. We celebrated.

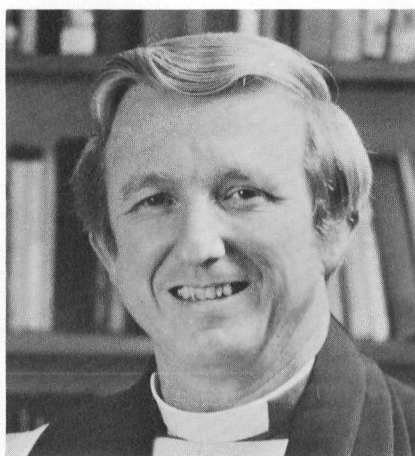
And today is most definitely not the end. Not for us

personally, not for the truth of what we did at N-5. I expect we will go to prison and there we will experience life, death and resurrection. I expect brothers and sisters to continue what we began, at other missile silos, and indeed, the process has already begun . . .

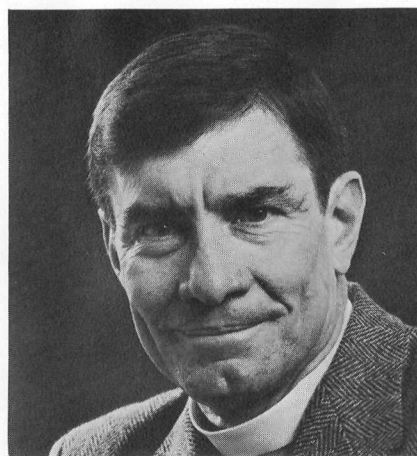
I'm not going to pretend otherwise. I'm scared and I'm sad. The process that began when I hugged my children and walked out the door continues. I must face separation from new friends and from my three co-defendants whom I love very much.

But I think of Jeremy, and I'm in a betting mood again. I'm placing my bet on the whole ball of wax — life, death and resurrection. It's the least I can do for my brothers and sisters and my God. It's the best I can do for my son. Happy Birthday, Jeremy!

Helen Woodson



Edmond Lee Browning



William C. Frey

Four candidates have been nominated for the post of Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, one to be elected at General Convention in September. They are Edmond Lee Browning of Hawaii; William C. Frey of Colorado; Furman C. Stough of Alabama; and John T. Walker of Washington. A propos, a woman priest reflects on "what we expect a bishop to be, so that we recognize bishopness."

Who would walk on water?

by Martha Blacklock

"Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

— Matt. 14:27-28

The daily worship and business sessions of the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops took place in 1978 in the auditorium of the University of Kent, a rather new institution.

I sat in the press gallery, in a balcony around the edge of the auditorium. For people sitting there, the effect was that of peering over a rather substantial stone parapet into a pit, where more than 400 bishops, removed from their natural habitats, did the things bishops do in such

circumstances. Some zoos have a similar arrangement in their great ape areas. This perhaps unfortunate suggestion was reinforced by the bishops, who kept referring to some of their number as primates — the Primate of all Ireland, the Primate of Australia, and on into even more exotic species. They even formed a Committee of Primates to meet between the conferences.

Watching those bishops, I was aware of the feeling we've all had watching great apes: These are creatures very much like me. Different, but not altogether different. What is a bishop? What makes a bishop different from us? What do we expect a bishop to be, or do, or say, so that we recognize bishopness?

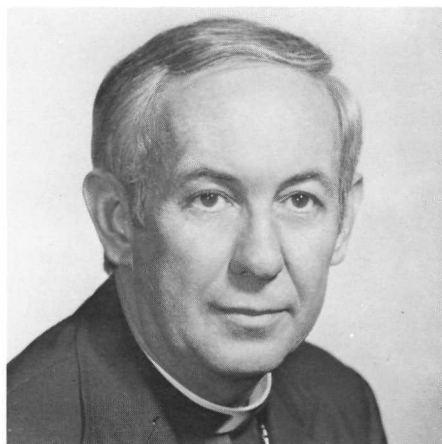
The Lambeth agenda called for the bishops themselves to spend some time

talking about the role and function of a bishop. They barely began, really, but at least some suggestions came out, as they worked on other, less self-absorbed, questions. One idea that surfaced fairly frequently was that a bishop is a maintainer of order. I'd like to look at that idea, in the light of Christ's gospel as we hear it from Matthew, and ask what it might mean to say, "Bishop, be among us as a maintainer of order."

First, what is this order that we might want to have maintained?

The other day I was reading some "Notes for Altar Societies and Sacristans" in a 1938 church calendar — which shows what lengths a compulsive reader can go to — and there I found: "It is the glory of a good sacristan, as of a good housewife, to make the very best of the materials at

The Rev. Martha Blacklock of Stewartville, N.J., describes herself as a mendicant anchoress and "itinerant preacher looking for invitations." She is canonically resident in the Diocese of New York.



Furman C. Stough

his disposition. And the prime motto of a sacristan, as of everyone else who has things to keep in order, must be: a place for everything, and everything in its place."

This idea of order suggests, I think that stability, holding still and order are good companions. Order exists as long as things stay in their places.

A place for everything, and everything in its place. Actually, when we separate that maxim from the prim and irritating tone of voice with which it's usually delivered, there is something very attractive about the notion that there *is* a place for everything. Whether anything is actually in its place or not, there's a kind of comfort in the idea that places exist.

Just about every element of Western culture, as we know it, is based on the belief that order exists, that this universe is the creation of God, who subdued chaos, who constructed an order in which every particle, every being, has a place. Our common assumption for countless generations has been that the created order, the order of nature, is a hierarchy, a great chain of being, from God at the top to nothing at the bottom. And in between, all ranks of creatures. The angelic order, with seraphs, cherubim, powers, arch-angels and so forth, each in place. Then man, a little lower than the angels. Then woman, a little lower than man. And on



John T. Walker

down — animals, vegetables, minerals. It is a model of tremendous, almost overwhelming power. Read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and you will revel in the glorious order of a completed system. Even though our physical sciences no longer support this model, our imaginations, our language, our social customs, our liturgy, almost always take it for granted.

But now, it is the fourth watch, the very dead of night, and you are in a small boat, many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by waves. And the wind moves and tears the water — surging, tumultuous, formless water, and darkness on the face of the waters. And the wind, the Spirit of God is moving over the face of the waters. And there is no order, only terror. Then a presence. A ghost? You cry out!

Did you ever feel that fourth-watch terror, when nothing holds together?

We like to think that sort of feeling is — something we ate. That our ordinary lives are reality. That these other momentary aberrations are only changes in our perspective, perhaps. It's very true that changing our perspective changes the universe, for us. Right now, sitting snug in St. Michael's, Wayne, N.J., we're traveling around the sun at almost 67,000 mph. The Diocese of Newark and everybody in it chases itself around the globe every day. Meanwhile, in us, and

everything else that looks relatively solid, we know that there are galaxies of atoms in which sub-atomic particles are in such motion that they are more patterns of probability than material things at all. How can we talk about place when everything keeps moving?

Whatever we say about the universe we live in, we must know that we say what fits our mouths. Whatever God's order may be, we are part of it — not above it, or outside of it. Our descriptions of what we see are only that — what we are capable of seeing from within.

I'm sure that more than one of you is saying, at this point, what has all this got to do with bishops? No one depends on bishops to keep the solar system in order. What about the church? Let bishops keep the church in order.

We might say that, whatever God's order is, as long as we, the church, proclaim and worship God as creator, we ought to demonstrate our belief by showing the possibility of order in our own activity. I think, here, of the liturgy of Eastern Christendom. No matter what the revolution — political, economic, personal, social or psychic — the liturgy is unchanged, and people can go to church and find the balm of order lacking elsewhere in their lives. I think of our own liturgy. We've agreed on an order of service, we've agreed to play our parts. And what a pleasure it can be — like good dancing — to know one's part, to know one's place, and to fulfill it.

To have a well-ordered church, then, shouldn't we just spell out all the parts, and do them? But how do we know our parts? Are our places chosen, or imposed? Let's look at two categories of ministry, two vocations, which have been seen as either complements or opposites, and ask those questions. Priest and prophet. Prophet and priest.

Do you think God might want you for one of those? Fine. The Commission on Ministry will administer a test. Which would you rather wear — brocade, or

camel's hair? Do you prefer roast lamb, or locusts and wild honey? How about money? If you think clergy salaries are bad, wait till you see what we pay prophets.

Are you called to faithfully help God provide for God's people the taste and touch of God's sure promise present for their need? Or is your job to tell us that without justice in our lives our worship is blasphemy in God's sight?

Which are you? If you would have a well-ordered church, you must find out. Know your place, and stick to it. If we take you for a prophet, don't play priest. If we expect a priest, don't play prophet.

Back on the boat again. You see it's not a ghost. It's far worse. A living man is walking on water. A human being, like you, is walking on the sea. Ghosts might walk on water; people don't.

Peter, half-drowned with fear, you hear a familiar voice. "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." The voice that named you, Peter, when you were Simon, simple Simon, going who knows where when you met Jesus Christ. Who turned you around, named you Peter. Rock.

Rocks sink even faster than people. Who is this, who names you Rock and then walks on water before your eyes? How can you know your place? How can we ever have order if we must be two things, at least two things, at once?

The voice says, "it is I," — or, translated differently, "*I am*." If this is new creation, Peter, who are you?

You test the voice. "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water."

God of order, if this is your chosen one, your servant, your beloved, and our deliverer, would you ask something so unreasonable? So disorderly?

Come, Rock, walk on water. Lazarus, get up. Anyone who would be first must be the last. Who is most important — the servant or the served? I'm here as one who serves. Who is my mother? (That should be simple enough.) You are. You are. You are. God of God, Light of Light, King — in three languages — on a cross,

stripped, hanged, spat on, dead. Bread that is bread is flesh. This wine is blood, of a new covenant, a new agreement, a new order of grace, that flows and streams, and always, always moves.

To keep this order is not to hold still, but to balance, to find equilibrium in motion, to walk on water.

Come. So Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water, and came to Jesus.

It's frightening, of course, and there are boats a-plenty. Ready-made, and watertight as human craft can make them. Everything in place. There are so many times when we're sure we can't survive without a boat. And other times we'd just rather not get our feet wet.

But do we really want to be in a boat where the rich sit high and the poor hang on the sides, or would we walk with Jesus on the water? Will we stay in a boat where profit, and only profit, sets the course, or will we hear Christ call, and walk on water? Will we stay in a boat where Blacks still ride in back, or can we all get out and walk? Can we stay in a boat where there's a place for everyone, and everyone's in his place, her place, whether it really fits or not? Or will we walk on water — an exercise that will use every part of us — and come to Jesus?

We can hear many voices calling "ride this boat, this boat" but only one voice calls across the moving water, "Come." And when, in death, we have no choice, but feel our little boat of bone and breath sink and dissolve, won't we be glad of the practice when we can step without a moment's doubt or hesitation onto that rolling water towards the one who calls us.

So, bishops, when I ask you to maintain order, I mean, get out of the boat. It's bishops and children first. Lead us to know that we can dare to hear Christ's call. Keep order — keep the faith. Walk on water.

Sometimes you will fail. We will fail. And learn, then, that to fail is not to be

For Cecily and Stacey

— and all the others —

I am nobody going nowhere
in the no man's land
of the juvenile system;
I am your son or daughter,
born a special creation of God,
one of a kind, never to be duplicated
in all eternity,
only to die
after a speeded-up life span
played in rapid motion sequence
in an exploitive, manipulative world.

Entrusted since early childhood
to frequently overworked,
underpaid caretakers
by pressured parents
forced to work long hours
to provide the essentials
of food and shelter,
formed by the cults of advertising
insidiously inserted into hours
before the TV,
pushed into premature responsibility
and independence
by the exigencies of life,
I finally struck a snag,
and wound up here in "shelter" care,
a number on a computer card,
one of 50 cases to be processed
on a goal-oriented work plan,
a folder in a topheavy stack of files,
a cipher on a time sheet.

I am nobody going nowhere
in no man's land,
my future already past,
my destination, oblivion.

Does anybody care?

— Mary Jane Brewster

forsaken. At the very moment you hear, "O, half-believer, why did you doubt?" you will feel the arm of your salvation holding you close.

So take heart. It is Jesus Christ who calls you. Have no fear. ■

(These reflections were part of a sermon preached at a celebration of the installation of John Spong as Diocesan of Newark.)



William Spofford, Sr.



Vida Scudder



William Scarlett

Nominations sought for three awards

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

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

Nominations should be sent to the Rev. Barbara C. Harris, Executive Director, ECPC, P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA. 19002, to be received by June 1.

Brief biographical sketches of

those in whose honor the awards have been named follow:

Bishop Will Scarlett's entire ministry was spent on the cutting edge of Christianity's response to the issues of injustice, discrimination and oppression in the world of men and women. He was a ceaseless battler against the abuse of power, both in the church and in the social order. He coupled this intensity with a profound devotional life which he shared weekly in the Cathedral with the clergy of the Diocese of Missouri and any others who sought it. Bishop Scarlett was the founder of the Church League for Industrial Democracy.

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

Among the several threads running through the story of her life, this is the most persistent. From the time she was confirmed by Phillips Brooks in Boston to her death in 1954, she sought relentlessly to place herself in the arena of social action. Teaching, social work, and writing were her three main competing outlets. To her credit are at least a score of books on socialism, literature, religion, and the saints as well as many poems. St. Francis, more than Marx, was her mentor as she realized that the poor were leading her closer to the reality she sought in her life and through whom she discovered her own capacity to love.

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

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

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