

General Convention '85 • William MacKaye

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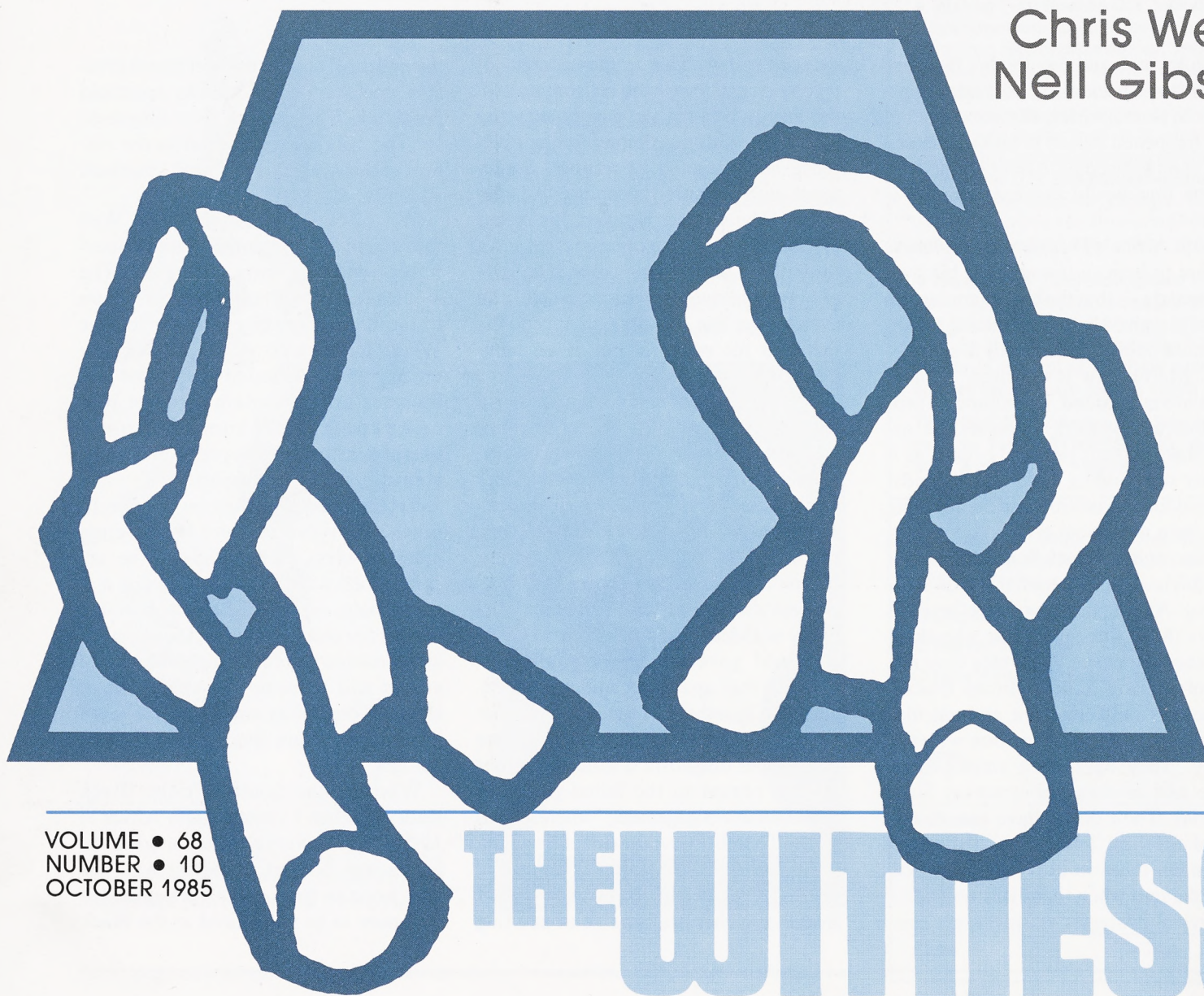
NCC on racism

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Chris Weiss

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Editorial

The tragedy of South Africa

by John Shelby Spong

*(Our guest editorial this month is by the Rt. Rev. John Shelby Spong,
Bishop of Newark.)*

Inch by inch and day by day the tragedy of an irrational blood bath comes closer in South Africa. Similar disasters have happened before in human history and yet no one seems to have learned the lessons that would prevent grim repetition.

South Africa's President P. W. Botha appears to believe the myth of his own propaganda — that the unrest among the Blacks is caused by communist agitation and must be responded to by a show of force. Martial law is declared. Human rights are suspended. Even funeral processions are banned. Funerals, he argues, have become political events, as if activity surrounding a death in the midst of a budding revolution can be anything other than a political event.

In the ranks of Black South Africans it is a difficult and cruel time of self-purging. Among the oppressed there are always those who survive or who think they keep the peace by serving their oppressors. Many South African Blacks, by motives both innocent and calculated, are guilty of collaboration with the enemy. They have been employed as police and as minor government functionaries. Their duties have not always served the best interests of their own people but these roles were understood and tolerated when there was no hope.

Survival strategies, however, are con-

demned today. This is the moment of revolution and those who collaborate with the enemy become the enemy. Pent-up rage turns with murderous frenzy upon those now targeted as traitors. Sometimes mob execution is captured on television. The suspect is taken, his or her clothes ripped off, gasoline poured, and a torch lit — all in living color. The government uses these atrocities to justify an even harder line, blindly oblivious to the fact that the real violence is an inhumane, cruel apartheid.

The government announces that it will negotiate with no Black leader who urges civil disobedience, or condones violence, or seeks to overthrow the law and order that crushes the Blacks. The only Blacks who fit the government's criteria have no following. How does one negotiate with a person who represents no one?

Even the Reagan administration, certainly not identified around the world as a liberal government, officially announces that apartheid, and not the reaction to apartheid, is the real issue that needs to be faced and removed. But, once that proper diagnosis is articulated, our leaders retreat to the failed policy of "constructive engagement," where, joined by the Thatcher government of England, they walk the sidelines of this moment of history. The United States and Great Britain together are capable of exerting

the political, economic, and moral pressure necessary to dismantle apartheid peacefully. They are not yet willing to do so. The only alternative left to the victims of this system is to smash apartheid violently.

White South Africans are afraid. Well they might be. Human oppression inevitably reaps its own whirlwind. The Whites fear that if political power flows to the Blacks, revenge for the violence Whites have meted out to Blacks will be the payment required of them. That fear becomes a more certain prospect with each passing day. Whites are also victims of apartheid, for oppression kills the humanity of the oppressors.

Yet there remains a tiny ray of hope. In times of revolution there is a fleeting moment when change can still be accomplished with goodwill. Perhaps it is not too late, even though most observers believe the clock on South Africa stands at one minute before midnight. Moderate voices still seem to be hanging on to shreds of credibility among the masses of increasingly angry Black people. It will not last.

Who are the South African Black leaders? When I visited South Africa in 1976, the universally acknowledged leader was Nelson Mandela, who has now been in prison for 20 years. He continues to be recognized as the Black

chief of state in absentia. Imagine the political power Mandela must have to maintain the leadership of a people with whom he has had no direct contact for 20 years! Mandela speaks to his people through his wife, who lives under a ban; through his children, and through his friend Bishop Desmond Tutu. But it is he who speaks. Unless he is executed or debilitated by torture or injury, Nelson Mandela will, in all probability, be the first head of the Black South African government and Desmond Tutu will be its spiritual leader. But this can only happen if change comes quickly.

How does one convince a government that the only way to save its life is to give it away? That action, so much at the heart of the message of the Gospel, is in fact the only way to avoid the tragedy that is imminent in South Africa. Sometimes the Gospel is good politics.

The lessons of history are clear: Power is either shared or it is taken away. Oppression always breeds revolution against and hatred for the oppressors. Revolutions once begun have a life of their own which cannot be contained. The present South African government is doomed. The only real question is when, not if. Perhaps a more urgent question is, *how*? Will it be a voluntary stepping down, a gracious giving away of oppressive power? Or will it be a violent

overthrow with power being seized by the masses? Will it be a direct confrontation or will it come through the expensive process of sabotage and guerrilla warfare, that will bleed the nation dry, leaving it spent and in despair?

If Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela retain the power of their leadership there is yet a slim chance for peaceful transition. But, peaceful or not, there must be and there will be a transition. No one should misunderstand that.



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Letters

Overreliance on force

Alice Dieter's article in the July issue, "When is a Peacemaker a Terrorist?" is a troubling account of what is happening in too many law enforcement officials' mind-set these days. The overreliance on force, guns, armaments, and confrontation in the face of resistance to *any* "official" policy is a reflection of inner weakness and lack of full confidence in the rightness of those policies and/or laws that must be upheld. I think that the police officers attending the conference on terrorism in Boise would have been better served to have participated in the "Peaceful Settlements" conference being held down the hall. They would be better prepared to maintain the peace by studying peace instead of terrorism. I commend THE WITNESS for its forthright stand on major issues we face as Christians in this troubled world.

Major Herbert W. Runner
Boise, Idaho

IVF dialogue essential

I very much appreciate the further discussion of the In Vitro Fertilization issue by David Ames, especially his and George Annas' call for a national debate to determine desperately needed national policy guidelines. (September Letters to Editor). I also concur with his recognition that the church needs to deal with the issues now.

I disagree, however, that IVF-ET and Artificial Insemination by Donor should not be limited in their application. If it is true that "justice is concerned with the equitable distribution of resources" then what are we to say to a nation which, with 5% of the world population, uses 35% of the world's non-renewable natural resources? With world population estimated to reach the 5 billion level by 2000, ought we to be using increasingly precious healthcare resources to produce

more babies? Ought we not to encourage adoption of the ones already in need of food and nurture? Or ought we to allow the marketplace to determine our ethical systems? If one has enough money to purchase the technology and support its use, ought one to have access to it?

Secondly, there is indeed a greater threat to the traditional meaning of the family by the use of AID than by IVF only with married couples. It seems clear that the desired family would include a husband, wife and offspring. Where that is changed (or challenged) by death or divorce, then other natural arrangements follow. The use of donor sperm is the deliberately chosen intrusion of a third party into the family structure. Moreover, its use with single or homosexual couples *begins* with a deliberate alteration of that structure.

That David Ames and I, Episcopal priests, are debating these issues is a good sign and a further indication of the necessity for immediate wider discussion at the church and national levels. Only in that way will we come to a meaningful consensus that includes the needs of all God's people.

The Rev. Charles Meyer
Austin, Tex.

PBS may be right?

One wonders why the Gallup Poll commissioned by the Prayer Book Society is seen as such a threat that it must be constantly denounced. If the PBS is only a "band of malcontents" it is certainly attracting a lot of ecclesiastical attention, so much so that it is obviously still regarded as a threat to the Establishment. A press release from the Diocesan Press Service, resolutions from dioceses, and now a full page article in the July WITNESS — surely this is overkill?

If this poll is a bad thing, ignore it. The fact that Barbara Harris and others feel it

necessary to denounce it at great length makes me think that the PBS is touching a nerve that is still there. Could it just be possible that all this hostility masks the fact that some of the liberals in the church are afraid that the PBS might just be right in some of its views?

Dorothy W. Spaulding
McLean, Va.

Column evoked smoke

From things written by her and about her, I had come greatly to admire the Rev. Barbara Harris. So, as a life-long dissenter (and frequent carrier of signs protesting Jim Crow laws, loyalty oaths, U.S. participation in Vietnam, and our greed-based political and economic establishments) I was so dismayed that I had to light a cigarette (trying desperately to stop smoking, after a massive heart attack) when I read that Harris finds it difficult, if not impossible, to justify the existence of dissenting groups "particularly within the church."

I believe Our Lord Jesus Christ founded a group which strongly dissented against both the Pharisees and Sadducees who controlled the religious establishment of that time.

I should admit that I am not an Episcopalian. I am a Roman Catholic, of one of those dissenting groups who adamantly close our ears to the damned hymn-singing so widely promoted in our church these days, and silently (and stubbornly) and devoutly pray our beloved 16th century liturgy, in Latin.

Dick Lyon
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Agrees with Harris

Thanks for continuing to bring us commentaries on issues of social justice which confront a church wanting to speak to the terribly complex world in

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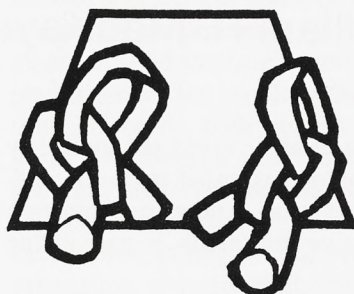


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Church shifts to liberal mode

by William R. MacKaye

Let's begin this report on the 68th General Convention of the Episcopal Church with a multiple choice quiz. Who said this:

"The prevailing policies concerning national security of the majority of nations are creating life-threatening idols and not security. The major result of policies for national security among nations has been increasingly oppressive national debts. The resources of earth needed for the support and development of life and just living conditions among the peoples of earth are increasingly mortgaged for an illusive defense depending upon destructive weapons. The human race is suffering from a madness and idolatry."

Are those words from a convention speech by (A) the progressive-minded Presiding Bishop-elect, Edmond Browning; (B) Bishop John T. Walker of Washington, the runner-up in the PB race; or (C) the outgoing Presiding Bishop, John Maury Allin?

If you correctly circled (C), identifying the sentiments as current views of the sturdily conservative Allin, you would be starting to spell out what this 1985 convention seems to have said, with a singular unanimity on all but a handful of issues, to and for the church it guides: After a decade of retrenchment, it is time for Episcopalians to turn once again to

the problems of the world and, guided by the insights of the Gospel, try to do something about them. And a condemnation of excessive militarism is part of the package.

The mood of the church, at least as it was evidenced in Anaheim, Cal., Sept. 7-14, was signaled dramatically by the pattern of voting for Presiding Bishop, which indicated that the election of a liberal to the church's top office was never in doubt. The bishops ignored a request from the House of Deputies that they break with tradition and publish the totals of their balloting in closed electoral session in St. Michael's Church, two miles from the convention center. But sources said that the race was between the two most progressive candidates from the beginning. Bishop Walker reportedly led Bishop Browning on at least two of the four ballots, but Browning clinched the election when support swung to him from earlier backers of the other two nominees, Bishops William Frey of Colorado and Furman Stough of Alabama.

The House of Deputies lost no time in acceding to the bishops' choice of new leader. Within nine minutes of receiving the envelope containing the victor's name, a House of Deputies' committee recommended Browning's confirmation to the full house. Confirmation was voiced by a roar of *ayes* and a lone shout of *no*.

Similar overwhelming assent threaded its way through most of the supposedly divisive issues the convention faced:

- The church's two-house legislature

spurned a more mildly worded resolution on apartheid in South Africa and ordered the Executive Council's financial officers to sell all investments in companies doing business in South Africa; it called on the independently governed Church Pension Fund and other church institutions to disinvest as well. It voted unqualified support for the stance of Johannesburg's Bishop Desmond Tutu and raised a voluntary offering in support of his work.

- It established a permanent Standing Commission on Peace, authorized the formation of an Office for Peace within the Executive Council staff, and called for an end to military meddling by the United States and other nations in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America. Peace in the region, said the convention, is to be found not in armed intervention but in negotiations along the lines set out in the 21 points of the Contadora Group of Latin American nations. In other actions, the convention condemned the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") and its revival of chemical warfare weapons development.

- It unanimously called on church people to deal with compassion and understanding toward victims of AIDS and their families and repudiated attempts to condemn AIDS victims. Bishops and deputies were clearly influenced in their stance by Bishop William Swing of the San Francisco-based Diocese of California, where AIDS is especially rampant, and by representatives of the Parsonage,

William R. MacKaye is former religion editor of the *Washington Post* and longtime observer of Episcopal affairs.

the California diocese's ministry in San Francisco to gay men and lesbians. Most convention-goers accepted and wore the snippets of rainbow-colored ribbon that Parsonage representatives distributed as a symbol of solidarity with AIDS victims. Few were unmoved by Swing's announcement that he now receives the consecrated wine of holy communion following the congregation's communion to demonstrate his confidence that AIDS is not spread by the common Eucharistic cup.

• The bishops overwhelmingly approved a resolution stating that they would accede to the consecration of a woman bishop when one was elected, and asked Bishop Browning to immediately communicate this intention to the primates of the Anglican Communion around the world for their comments and counsel. Many of the self-governing churches of the communion, including the parent Church of England, do not yet ordain women to the priesthood.

Deputies who were members of the frequently fractious Committees on National and International Affairs and on Social and Urban Affairs discovered as soon as they began to meet that there were almost no issues on which they were closely divided. They were prepared to reject with unanimity or near-unanimity the conservative-backed resolutions referred to them and to send to the floor recommended for passage a broad selection of liberal-backed proposals. Virtually all the legislation sought by The Consultation, the coalition of 11 progressive-minded, church-related agencies (including THE WITNESS' parent Episcopal Church Publishing Company), was adopted, and five of the nine deputies elected to the Executive Council had the explicit endorsement of The Consultation.

The only major pieces of legislation backed by those seeking to build a forward-looking church that failed were a resolution which would have stated explicitly

that sexual orientation was not a barrier to the selection process for ordination (narrowly defeated by lay deputies in a vote by orders) and a resolution authorizing experimental use of inclusive language lectionary readings, which the bishops rejected. The defeat on the sexual orientation and ordination resolution was clearly related to some lingering homophobia among lay people at the convention. However, both houses passed a parallel resolution which stated more generally that "no one shall be denied rights or status in this church because of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, or age, except as otherwise specified by canon."

More to come

Further General Convention coverage, including photos of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company dinner and guest speaker Sturdie Downs, Bishop of Nicaragua, will appear in the November issue of THE WITNESS.

The failure of the inclusive language measure seemed largely the result of legislative mismanagement by its backers. No bishop spoke effectively in its defense, and opponents were unchallenged in their contention that inclusive-language lections amount to a rewriting of the Bible.

What accounted for this opening to the left at the General Convention after a decade or more of moderate conservatism? The best guess of a variety of bishops and deputies is that the church has now absorbed and made its own the institutional and theological reforms initially propounded in the 1960s and early '70s. Ironically, one of the best sources of evidence of this shift of attitude in the church is to be found in the survey con-

ducted by the Gallup Organization at the behest of the stridently conservative Prayer Book Society. Despite the continued carping by PBS leaders about the unacceptability of "priestesses," the society's own survey confirmed that 75% of the laity of the Episcopal Church favor the ordination of women. The church's practice is in line with these lay attitudes: 83 of the 98 domestic dioceses have now ordained women to the priesthood and four more intend to when a suitable candidate presents herself, leaving only 11 dioceses where women's ordination is still disapproved, according to information collected at the convention.

Again, to the obvious discomfort of PBS leaders, their survey showed less resistance to merger of the Episcopal Church with other denominations among Episcopal lay people in general than among bishops and deputies to the convention. It showed virtually no support (about 5%) for a general ban on abortion. "Episcopalians tend to be somewhat more liberal on this issue than the general populace," a PBS report on the survey conceded. About the only comfort for the PBS in its survey was a broad support among Episcopal lay people — about 8 to 1 — for permitting congregations that so desire to continue using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and scant support for church advocacy of "political change" in the United States. (Only 18% of the lay respondents said the church was an appropriate agent of political change, in contrast to 52% of the bishops surveyed, 58% of the lay deputies and 60% of clergy deputies.)

Some of the shift in the tone of the convention is clearly attributable to the fact that women, who are 55% of the membership of the Episcopal Church, have finally made their way into its highest councils in significant numbers. For the first time a woman, Pam Chinnis of Washington, was elected vice president of the House of Deputies and possible successor to the newly elected president,

the Very Rev. David Collins of Atlanta, when he retires from office. Judging from their given names, 165 of the lay deputies — more than a third — were women, as were 23 of the clerical deputies. The four-person deputations of two dioceses, Alabama and Oregon, were composed entirely of women.

The Episcopal Church traditionally relies on symbolic gestures to proclaim its mind. Several additions the convention made to the official calendar of feast days testify to shifting readings of the church's past. Episcopalians were bade to keep fresh the memories of Martin Luther King Jr. (April 4 or Jan. 15); David Pendleton Oakerhater (Sept. 1), a Cheyenne Indian who was a deacon and missionary among his people; Kamehameha and Emma (Nov. 28) the native king and queen of Hawaii who brought Anglicanism to their islands; and Aelred of Rievaulx (Jan. 12), a 12th century abbot whose "Treatise on Friendship" may or may not have been a celebration of homosexual love, depending upon what historian one follows. In a telephone interview, the Rev. Canon Charles Guilbert, who chairs the Standing Liturgical Commission's subcommittee on the calendar, said only the pressure of time had prevented the submission of the names of five additional women to the calendar. The 1988 convention, he said, will be asked to include Lucy; Bridget of Kildare; Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing; Julia Emery, the founder of the Episcopal Church Women; and Evelyn Underhill, the English mystic of the early 20th century.

Now that the Episcopal Church's leaders in convention assembled have called upon the church to develop new appreciations of its past and move into more pointed encounters with the world of the present, it rests upon the people of the church and the Executive Council to turn policy into practice. The coming three years should prove interesting times in the life of the Episcopal Church. ■

Convention Resolution Supports Hispanics

Maria Cueto, Steve Guerra and three other Hispanic prisoners of conscience who have refused to testify before a Grand Jury remain incarcerated at this writing as the U.S. Government appeals a July 31 decision by a federal court which would have set them free.

For a while there was hope among supporters that the five would have been paroled in time for Cueto and Guerra to attend the Episcopal Church General Convention in Anaheim, where Guerra was to receive the William Stringfellow Award at the Episcopal Church Publishing Company dinner Sept. 10. Guerra, a member of the ECPC Board of Directors, has been imprisoned since April 1984, with the other Hispanics. Cueto, former director of the Episcopal Church's National Commission on Hispanic Affairs, was honored with an ECPC award at the Denver convention, along with her secretary, Raisa Nemikin. They had been jailed previously for refusing to testify before an earlier incarnation of this Grand Jury investigating bombings by the FALN, a Puerto Rican independence group. No evidence has ever been presented to link the five to the FALN, nor have they been indicted for any crime.

A General Convention resolution supporting the five passed the House of Bishops by standing ac-

clamation and the House of Deputies as well. It reads:

Resolved, that the 68th General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirm its solidarity with Maria Cueto, Steven Guerra, Julio and Andres Rosado, and Ricardo Romero, respecting their right of conscience in their refusal to testify before a federal Grand Jury, and be it further resolved that this convention:

1) applaud the decision of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, July 31, 1985, which found that the prisoners have been unfairly deprived of parole by reason of an "arbitrary and capricious" guideline, such guideline having been "predicated upon an unconstitutional presumption that the petitioners (prisoners) were involved in the substantive offenses that the Grand Jury was investigating;"

2) now urges the federal Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. to affirm the decision of the lower court releasing the prisoners on bond pending final determination of the case;

3) communicate immediately by telegram to the Attorney General of the United States this convention's concern at the security treatment accorded the five prisoners and requests that their treatment be downgraded to that of prisoners convicted of no violent crime.

Short Takes

Spirituality and social action

In social and political situations, Christians are not called simply to pick up the pieces — to minister to the poor and to fill in the gaps of the social system — but to challenge the social system and to question its fundamental values. This is a fundamentally spiritual task and, therefore, the people who think that spirituality is a way of opting out of the social struggle could not be more mistaken. In fact, if you attempt to enter into such an important and difficult enterprise, asking fundamental questions about the social order, then you need *more* spiritual resources rather than fewer. Spirituality is necessary to the survival of what I would call the “prophetic role” of the church in being critical of and questioning the values of society.

Without deep spiritual resources, social action can become simply reformist tinkering, which in middle age tends to turn into its opposite and end in disillusionment. But without a commitment to social change, spirituality can simply become a form of opting out of reality.

— The Rev. Kenneth Leech
Race Relations Officer
Church of England
Trinity News, 7/85

Need history of peoples

I believe that the desire for power is inculcated in children in the schools through education in general, and specifically in the way history is taught. In the schools, children learn the history of power as the power of domination and conquest, instead of learning that power is necessary insofar as it is the power of service. If we do not have the consciousness of what service to our fellow beings is, power will continue to be utilized as the power of domination. We will continue to find ourselves caught up in violence. These are the problems that educators must consider in depth; government leaders should be deeply concerned about them, too... Instead of teaching the history of wars, a new subject should be created — the history of peoples. There is a history, unwritten and untold, yet deeply lived: the history of humanity, the history of peoples.

— Adolfo Perez Esquivel
Fellowship, July/August 1985



“Civilization in the real sense of the term consists, not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.”

— M. K. Gandhi
Quoted in *IFOR Report*

On Christian worship

Of course, there may well be a sermon; but monotonous and monolithic worship, where the focus is upon one person, who throws sermons like stones into a lake of listeners, trusting the ripples to reach to all, is questionable. Instead, *in genuinely Christian worship*, all are somehow together engaged... in the act of ‘hearing each other into speech,’ and everyone, even the least gifted or the most reticent, is truly expected to sing, to share, to pray, to help, to “understand” to “weigh” what is said and done and to say the “Amen.”

— Hendrikus Berkhof
Christian Faith

Quote of Note

We cannot give an irresponsible and un-Christian consent to the demonic use of power for the destruction of a whole nation, a whole continent, or even the whole human race. Or can we? The question is now being asked.

— Thomas Merton

‘Nation behind me’

We sucked from our mother’s breast the thirst for human dignity, the yearn for liberation. I find strength from the knowledge that each step I take, the nation is behind me. I find my strength in the knowledge that whatever is done to me is not being done to me as an individual, but it is being done to me as a symbol.

To me, the more vicious the acts of terror are, the more they confirm a recognition of our position. If such anger and sadism are directed at me, then the impact of the struggle of my people is getting somewhere. And we shall get there.

— Winnie Mandela
Quoted in *N.Y. Times*

(Winnie Mandela, apartheid foe and wife of Nelson Mandela, has lived in forced exile in a Black township in South Africa since 1977. Her home has been raided by police, and recently, set on fire.)

Naming the evil

If a person employed in any phase of the production of nuclear weapons were to ask me whether I believed they were committing sin, I would answer “yes.”... The destruction of all life on our globe is now possible. This must surely be the ultimate blasphemy and idolatry against God, because it is murder of the sister and brother and counter to all that God has willed for creation... *will it help* to call this, the ultimate evil, sin? Yet it seems the very least that we can and must do, and if people are scandalized and shocked... so much the better. They *should* be, and obviously up to this point have not been... in a world where almost one billion people are hungry, ill-housed, illiterate, and disease-ridden... we are being deceived and misled in a sinful way when we are told that continued expenditure on nuclear and Star Wars technology is necessary to protect the peace and well-being of people...

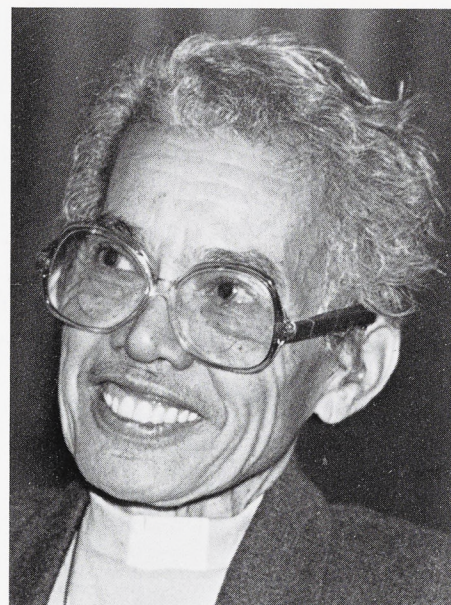
But all others who by silence condone this weapons system in its entirety and who by their tax contributions make its escalation possible are also committing sin. All of us who are thus involved are cooperating directly in heinous sin.

— Paul Surlis
Christianity and Crisis, 8/26/85

The many lives of Pauli Murray

by Carma Van Liere

During General Convention, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company presented its Vida Scudder Award posthumously to the Rev. Pauli Murray, noted attorney, author, feminist, and first Black woman to become an Episcopal priest. Murray died July 1 at her home in Pittsburgh, but had been informed about the award before her death. Below, Carma Van Liere presents three facets of this remarkable woman's personality.



The Rev. Pauli Murray

*We have returned from a place beyond hope;
We have returned from wastelands of despair;
We have come to reclaim our heritage;
We have come to redeem our honor!*

These words appear in a poem titled "Psalm of Deliverance (to the Negro School Children of the American South in the Year 1959)," by Pauli Murray. She lived their challenge in her own life, to become an inspiration to all. She is a role model not only to her own race, but also to women whose aspirations may be thwarted because of their sex, and to those who think that they are too old to achieve some cherished goal.

In 1973, at the age of 63, Pauli Murray sought admission to holy orders in the Episcopal Church, at that time just made possible for women, and entered General Theological Seminary in New York City. In January 1977, she was one of three women and three men ordained to the priesthood in Washington Cathedral, the first Black woman to be so ordained.

In 1977, on Lincoln's birthday, she conducted the service and celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the Episcopal Chapel of

the Cross in Chapel Hill, N.C., the same place where church records show that her grandmother, Cornelia Smith, "one of five servant children belonging to Miss Mary Ruffin Smith," had been baptized on Dec. 20, 1854. For servant, of course, read *slave*.

Dr. Murray tells the story of Cornelia Smith Fitzgerald in a marvelous reconstruction of her family's history, *Proud Shoes*. Cornelia was the daughter of Harriet, a slave who was the personal maid of Mary Ruffin Smith — and of Mary's own brother.

Mary was understandably torn between regarding Harriet's five children, four of them her own nieces, as property, and regarding them as kinfolk. She still had not solved this dilemma years later when one of Cornelia's daughters came to visit her and a friend commented on the girl's strong family resemblance to the Smiths. Many slave-holding families were aware, but not always willing to admit, that some of the slave children were the offspring of the master or of his sons.

One indication of Mary's ambivalence about the little girls was that, instead of having them attend the religious services on the plantation for the slaves, she took them to the Chapel of the Cross with her, where they sat in the balcony. When Cornelia, the eldest sister, was confirmed in the chapel at the age of 12, another member of the confirmation class was the daughter of the president of the University of North Carolina.

Carma Van Liere is a free-lance writer based in Kalamazoo, Mich.

It was with this same grandmother that little Pauli went to live at the age of three when her own mother died. Pauli's mother had been a trained nurse; two of her mother's sisters, who lived with Pauli and her grandparents, were school teachers. Grandfather Fitzgerald, now blind, had also been a teacher. Murray tells how he had struggled to go to school in Pennsylvania. His family was free, but even Northern White folk strongly opposed to slavery were not at all sure they believed in teaching Negroes to read and write.

But he persisted, and eventually was able to attend for a while Ashmun Institute, a college founded by a White man.

In this atmosphere of respect for learning and fascination with the past, Pauli, born in 1910, grew up near Durham, N.C. She heard stories about life on a Southern plantation before and during the war, about life in a free Negro family in Pennsylvania, about grandfather's service in the Union Army, which eventually resulted in his blindness. *Proud Shoes* helps the reader to see clearly where little Pauli got the drive that was to take her into many areas of endeavor in which she was often the first Black, or the first woman, or both — and to lead her at the age of almost 70 to ordination.

She knew early on that she wanted to be a writer. After graduation from Hunter College in 1933, she began writing. She admired the poetry of Stephen Vincent Benet, especially the long narrative poem *John Brown's Body*. So she wrote to him, sending him drafts of her poetry; and he guided and encouraged her.

But her poems were not published until later (*Dark Testament*) because her life was about to take a different turn. At this time she became involved in the real-life tragedy of Odell Waller, a Black sharecropper in Virginia who quarreled with his White landlord over 52 bushels of wheat. In the heat of the dispute, under conditions strongly suggesting self-defense, Waller shot his landlord. The man died, and Waller went to the electric chair. He had been inadequately defended in the courts by an inept lawyer and denied a chance to appeal.

*Some day the poet and warrior
Who grapple in my brain
Shall lock in final contest
And I will be ground under.
For I must sing, and yet
I wield a sword whose point
Shall find my breast when all is done.*

Murray became involved in the Odell Waller case, interviewed him in the death house, and the life-long struggle between the poet and the warrior took a turn toward the warrior. She decided to change her goal from *belles lettres* to the law.

Her application to the graduate college of the University of

North Carolina was denied in 1938 because of her race. In 1941, she became one of two women to enroll in the Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C., where she was president of her class. In 1944 and again in 1948, Harvard Graduate refused to admit her because of her sex. Understandably, she became active as a fighter against racial and gender discrimination.

Believing, with Martin Luther King, in Gandhian non-violence, she became a Freedom Rider and was arrested in Petersburg, Va., for refusing to move to a segregated seat on an interstate bus. Rather than pay an unjust fine, she spent several days in jail.

After Howard University, she studied law at the University of California and at Yale, where she earned her doctorate in 1965. She was the first Black deputy attorney general of California; a distinguished professor of law at Brandeis University; and spent two years in Ghana (1960-61) as a senior lecturer at Ghana University Law School.

Another struggle with which she became involved during this period was the women's movement. She was one of the founders of the National Organization for Women. In an article in *McCall's*, she said, "I know that Black women put down women's lib — they say that Black women should stand behind their men. But Black males have been so unimaginative that all they have tried to do is imitate White male dominance. To identify power with masculinity is reactionary."

*For this I love you most —
Bent to your cross
You stagger up the unending hill,
Yet turn to lift my load
And bless me with a smile
So crossed with pain,
That were my heart stilled
It would throb and beat again.*

The poem, "Memo in Bronze," echoes still another voice speaking to Murray. In the 1970s, two things happened that made her rethink the goals of her life. One was Watergate, which brought to light the lack of strong moral and spiritual values in our national affairs. The law no longer seemed to her sufficient. The other was the death in 1973 of a close friend. Unable to get a priest to her sick-bed in time, Murray read the service for the dying from the prayer book but, as a lay person, was unable to administer the sacraments. This experience motivated her to enroll in Virginia Theological Seminary and brought her eventually to the altar in Chapel Hill where her grandmother had knelt some hundred years before. ■

(Lines above from *Dark Testament* quoted with permission from Silvermine Publisher, Comstock Hill, Norwalk, CT 06850.)

Decade to eradicate racism

The National Council of Churches' new policy statement on racial justice addresses an unfinished agenda in U.S. churches. Following are excerpts from the statement, currently being studied by its 31-member denominations, including the Episcopal Church.

Definitions

Prejudice is a personal attitude towards other people based on a categorical judgement about their physical characteristics, such as race or ethnic origin.

Racism is racial prejudice plus power. Racism is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others. This use of power is based on a belief in superior racial origin, identity or supposed racial characteristics. Racism confers certain privileges on and defends the dominant group, which in turn sustains and perpetuates racism. Both consciously and unconsciously, racism is enforced and maintained by the legal, cultural, religious, educational, economic, political and military institutions of societies.

Racism is more than just a personal attitude; it is the institutionalized form of that attitude.

Institutional Racism is one of the ways organizations and structures serve to preserve injustice. Intended or not, the mechanisms and function of these entities create a pattern of racial injustice.

Racism is one of several sub-systems of domination in the modern world. It interacts with these other sub-systems to produce broad patterns of oppression and exploitation that plague the world. Among these sub-systems are class and sexual oppression. Women who are victimized by racism face a compound burden. They not only have to deal with oppression due to their racial origin or identity, but they are also confronted with economic and political exploitation and oppression based on their sex and/or class.

Racism in U.S. history

Racism in the United States can be defined as white racism: racism as promulgated and sustained by the white majority. White racism is not peculiar to the United States; it permeates much of the world. The complete dominance and institutionalization of white racism in the United States make "reverse racism" nearly impossible because the victims of racism lack power.

The colonists who invaded North America came with some preconceived notions of economic exploitation and white superiority. They institutionalized racism by the cre-

ation of dual economic, educational, social and political systems that made clear distinctions between Europeans and Africans, Asians, Hispanics and Indigenous People. To the colonist, life was significant only if it was of European ancestry. Africans were enslaved, maimed, and killed. Asians and Hispanics were paid low wages, imprisoned and slaughtered. Indigenous People were removed from their land and massacred.

From the early colonial years through the westward expansion, the general pattern of racial exploitation and oppression continued. This westward expansion did not end at the Pacific Ocean; it continued on with Western imperialism extending to the Hawaiian Islands, the Philippines, Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Even now racial exploitation is still clearly visible in U.S. international policies and practices towards Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific Islands and the Middle East.

Racism in the church

During the early colonial years and through the westward expansion, in the United States the general pattern of most Christian traditions was either to condone, participate in and develop a religious rationale for racism, or to keep silent. Yet, at points in U.S. history, some national and local churches were exceptions to this pattern and championed the call for equality, human rights and the dignity of all people.

Within many of the denominations, there have been prophetic streams which have advanced the cause of justice in the face of slavery, racial segregation, religious intolerance, racial violence and human suffering. At other times the church has been silent in the face of appalling injustice.

Racial injustice still continues in both the church and society. Christians must no longer assume that racial justice is a matter of overcoming individual attitudes and personal bigotry, nor that well-intentioned and non-racist attitudes can, in and of themselves, effectively eliminate racism. Christians must acknowledge that, despite their good intentions, religious and societal structures, institutions and systems can and do perpetuate racism. They must confess that by its style of organization and management the white institutional church excludes those who are victims of racism.

Today there is very little evidence of any dramatic improvement in institutional efforts to combat racism, because very few churches can see the racism implicit in their own structures. If it is to be effective in creating racial justice, the church must examine its own structures and determine the extent to which those structures contribute to the perpetuation of racism.

Scripture affirms our oneness. The distinctions and similarities of theological interpretation within the family of God must be appreciated. In welcoming racial and ethnic diversity within our Christian churches, we must learn to share our beliefs and traditions, some of which are blessed with unique cultural perspectives. No longer can we accept only one dominant theology which fails to recognize the value of the theologies of others. We worship one and the same God in an enriching variety of ways.

For the necessary transformation of our structures, racial ethnic people and their efforts must be seen as critically important by the entire church.

Although we laud the development of racial ethnic departments, commissions and caucuses, we are dismayed by the sporadic nature of the theological, financial, and political support they have received and perfunctory acknowledgment that has been given them by the leadership of the church. Clearly, the ostensible "liberalism" of the church has not reduced racism within its administrative, operational or programmatic life. Only as our institutions, their employees and leaders begin to reflect openly and honestly on the diversity of our communities will we be able to transform our churches into more inclusive communities of God.

Institutional racism continues to enforce racist decisions in the hiring and firing practices of our communions. We must take active and deliberate steps to reshape the systems and so eliminate the attitudes and policies that sustain racial prejudice. We must also respond accordingly to personnel staff about their culpability.

Our educational materials still contain racist images and graphics, negative stereotypes, and critical "omissions" of accurate portrayals, descriptions and histories of the diverse communities in the United States and in the Third World. Also, concepts which perpetuate racial injustice remain unchecked, such as teaching the oppressed that justice will come through patience and tolerance. In the context of the struggle for racial justice, such "patience" and "tolerance" can be negative and patronizing. Therefore, we call upon the churches to educate their membership about how these concepts are seen from the perspective of the oppressed.

We affirm the need to be extremely sensitive to the content of educational materials. We commit ourselves to an ongoing assessment of these materials for negative and exclusi-

vist content, racial stereotypes and demeaning graphics and terminology.

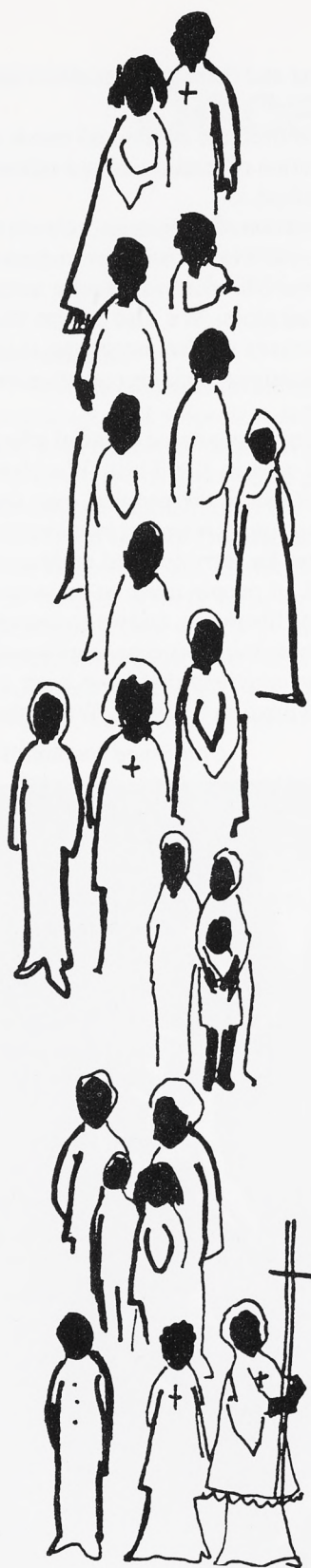
If racism is to be eliminated from the hearts and minds of people of faith, the transformation of seminaries and schools of theology and religion is critical.

We affirm that the transformation of seminaries, schools of theology and religion will become evident with the inclusion of racial ethnic people as directors, trustees, faculty members, professors and administrators. We also affirm that intensive recruitment is necessary so that access to these institutions and many other ministerial training opportunities will be available to all people.

Today there is an increase in proselytizing of racial ethnic people in the United States and in the Third World by missionaries who denigrate or ignore the peoples' own theologies or faith traditions. We strongly urge that missionaries from racial ethnic communities be recruited and employed. We affirm that the dignity of all people must be reclaimed through their empowerment and liberation, and we encourage the development of a two-way mission process to eliminate paternalistic giver-receiver assumptions that have been insidiously ingrained within the mission tradition. We further

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A cloud of witnesses

by Barbara Harris

To understand the role of lay and ordained Black women in the life of the Anglican Communion, it is necessary to reflect on history, focus on what is and is not happening today, and try to create a vision for the future.

As I began thinking about the subject, a verse from the 68th Psalm leapt to mind: "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of women who bore the tidings." Incidentally, the Psalm goes on to note: "kings with their armies are fleeing way; the women are home dividing the spoils."

It is tempting to romanticize the role of any group of women in the life of the church. However, the truth is that, until recently, women's role has been greatly proscribed, sorely limited in scope, even denigrated, and there are some among us who feel that this is as it should be. But despite limitations and proscriptions, history offers considerable evidence of the determination, perseverance, and creativity exhibited by many Black women who served the church.

An appreciable amount of information concerning Black women in the church has been passed down through oral tradition. Few definitive works have been written, and these deal largely with women in the United States. Most of the women we know anything about were engaged in educational and missionary work, primarily in the southern United States. After the Civil War, northern churches and abolitionist societies sent teachers to the South. In 1865 the General Convention established the Protestant Episcopal Freedman's Commission to undertake educational and missionary work in that region. It recruited and supported lay and clergy teachers, and especially sought Blacks because they were paid less than Whites and could board free with Black families. It was estimated that five Black teachers could be sustained for the cost of one White. They were considered just as efficient, and were seen to have a greater "moral effect" as role models for young Blacks.

About one-third of the Episcopal

missionary teachers were Black women. Noteworthy among them were Cordelia Jennings Atwell and Mary E. Miles, both well-trained and dedicated to their calling. Results of their work, undertaken in the late 1800s, endures today.

Atwell, for example, was educated at what is now Cheney State University near Philadelphia, where she attended the still-active Church of the Crucifixion. The private school she founded was later incorporated into Philadelphia's public school system. The name of Cordelia Jennings Atwell is also etched in the history of institutions we know today as St. Paul's College, Virginia Theological Seminary, and Virginia State University.

Miles began her ministry as a Presbyterian missionary in Africa, where she married an English missionary, became an Anglican, and taught in schools in Sierra Leone and Liberia. She is credited with developing one of the most extensive Episcopal Church educational ventures in rural Virginia, where she founded four mission schools with 11 teachers and 600 students. Out of this work emerged a Black Episcopal mission.

No historical reference would be complete without tribute to distinguished educator and stalwart churchwoman, Artemisia Bowden, who lived from 1879 until 1969. Born in Albany, Ga., Bowden was appointed by the Bishop of Western Texas to assume administrative and teaching duties at St. Philip's School in San Antonio in 1902. Many have referred to her as the "savior" of that institution, which is, today, an accredited Junior College and a unit of the San Antonio Junior College District. Bowden gave 52 years of service to St. Philip's and was personally responsible for its survival through the depression of the 1930's.

Little has been written about Black women religious, although some entered upon vocations in the few communities open to them around the turn of the century. The first Black nun took vows in

1887 and Dora Alexander was made the first Black deaconess about 1900. My own life was deeply touched by the remarkable work of two Sisters of the Transfiguration who operated a boarding school and home for girls in the section of Philadelphia where I grew up. Sisters Leila Mary and Bertha Esther appeared without fanfare and quietly molded the religious education of many young Black women from the community. When the two died, within 48 hours of each other, their work unfortunately died with them. The school closed immediately and only a chapel altar at St. Barnabas' Church in Philadelphia dedicated to their memory remained until that parish merged with another. With today's decline in vocations, there are even fewer Black Anglican women religious except for the Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret in Haiti and some communities in Africa.

A paper written for the Episcopal Church Women's History Project by Joyce M. Howard tells of the cadre of Black women who trained and worked under the auspices of the Women's Auxiliary of the National Council of the Episcopal Church. These women graduates of Windham House and the all-Black Bishop Tuttle School held degrees in Religious Education. Many functioned as social workers, teachers of Christian and secular education, nurses, recreational directors, day care and nursery workers. Attached to parishes and missions, they also organized churchwomen as an effective force in their local congregations through the Altar Guild, the choir, church school and Girls' Friendly Society and Daughters of the King branches. Their modest salaries were not paid by the church but came from contributions of other women through grants from the United Thank Offering.

Esther Virginia Brown and Fannie P. Gross-Jeffrey, two "Negro" Field Secretaries, roamed the country during the 1930s and '40s as liaisons from the

national staff of the Women's Auxiliary. They interpreted the Women's Auxiliary program and recruited missionaries, nurses, teachers, and social workers. Howard reports that these women did much in the way of breaking down "the wall of brazen racism within the church that exhibited itself in such ways as segregated seating in conferences and meetings and the proposing of commendable works without the accompanying funds to implement them creditably."

The Field Secretaries would go to a diocese at a bishop's invitation to work from one to six months, helping with problems, visiting institutions, including correctional facilities; leading groups in mission study and setting up summer conferences. Gross-Jeffrey recalled preaching at five different missions one Sunday.

It is important to note that Black women have been in the vanguard of those serving the Episcopal Church since its antebellum days in the United States, when this branch of the Catholic faith had even less appeal to Afro-Americans than it does today. While these women were not accorded the status, recognition or support they merited, they were a living example of Ephesians 4:11: "His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry."

Perseverance, determination, creativity, and a sense of vocation do not belong to history alone. Black Anglican women continue to struggle to witness effectively in church and society. What is needed is a keener appreciation of the gifts women bring. We come from a variety of backgrounds with an abundance of skills ranging from administrative to pastoral. Our spiritual formation has been forged in the crucible of rejection and molded in a thrice-jeopardized community of oppression for being Black, female, and often poor.

A few Black women hold responsible

paid posts at the diocesan and national church level, but a recent survey shows *no* Black women in power positions in the Episcopal Church or the Church of England. In that respect we are not unlike most Black lay and clergy men.

Increasing numbers of Black women are on vestries, commissions on ministry, and other diocesan and national boards and committees. However, most continue to find the greatest opportunities for service through traditional groups such as the Altar Guild, church school and choir, or the beleaguered parish secretary who keeps the parish machinery moving.

It is important to remember that the Black woman's agenda differs from that of White women struggling to claim prominence in this Communion. In taking their rightful place, Black women must not be seduced by the personal power game operative in the White feminist movement. Our agenda is to develop and strengthen community so that we all benefit. The Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) has become a forum for more and more laywomen to find self-expression and support. I would like to see UBE, currently headed by a laywoman, Deborah Harmon Hines, become international and provide a forum for Black Anglican women around the globe.

Another significant U.S. development is the formation of the Conference of Black Clergy Wives and Widows, which has become an important support network for frequently isolated women as well as a vehicle for sharing ways in which women can better support their spouses. Its continued growth is an essential ingredient in the life of the Black church.

Black women in Holy Orders remains a thorny problem for many. I do not intend to argue the validity of women's ordination. That has already been settled in some branches of our Communion and

no good theological case can be made against its universal adoption. The number of ordained Black women remains small. There are 12 U.S. women priests and about 11 deacons, and 10 or more at seminary or other study programs. Other countries have even less — one in Kenya, three in Uganda, and one Jamaican ordained, and working in Canada. But that they exist at all is encouraging. Most have come with an abundance of gifts for ministry and skills honed in other fields. Their late vocations show a maturity often lacking in certain younger males more interested in playing church than in being church. And no discussion of ordained Black women can pass without mention of the Rev. Pauli Murray, the first and foremost Black woman priest, and an outstanding lawyer, educator, author. (See story this issue.)

Acceptance for Black women is hard-won, right from the early stages of aspirant and postulancy, through ordination and deployment. Even after deployment, some suffer the isolation and loneliness of the field missionary without ever leaving home. Some Blacks on Commissions on Ministry even find it difficult to envision women as pastors and proclaimers of the Word. I have frequently found the matter to be more of a problem for Black clergy, many of whom are bound by aspects of traditional Anglicanism that enslave the mind and stifle the spirit, than for laity.

We are not all saints; we are not without our warts; we are priests, with the same human failings as men in Orders, subject to the same errors in judgment, the occasional lackluster sermons and the sense of frustration and despair. I have preached at two Black women's ordinations — one a 65-year-old deacon, one a younger priest. In charging them I reminded them of their marginality in a male-dominated, racist church. Yet I encouraged them both to remember that while their Anglican heritage gave them

the melody of their song, their Black religious experience, which knows no denomination, gave them the lyrics and the courage to sing it. Their role models must come from other denominations where Black women have long been evangelists and ministers, particularly the not-too-far-removed United Methodist Church where Leontyne Kelly has been consecrated a bishop.

I will not go into the election of women to the episcopate because it also requires wrestling with the necessity of increasing the number of Black male bishops elected as coadjutors and diocesans.

What then does the future hold? Most congregations are more than 60% women and women are likely to remain dominant in our churches. So great a cloud of witnesses should be utilized to its fullest human and financial potential for the task of building up God's kingdom on earth.

Because I am sensitive to cultural differences I refrain from proposing any absolute model for enabling the full ministry of Black women — ordained and lay — in this loosely bound Communion we call Anglicanism. For example, more women priests would alleviate the dearth of U.S. Black clergy vocations as there is no glut of Black American clergy, but this may not be true in other countries.

I urge the whole church to "cast away the works of darkness" as represented by the vestiges of colonialism and to develop models relevant to its corner of the vineyard. I hope the words of the 68th Psalm quoted at the start will be recognized throughout the church as a living reality. Who knows whether we Black Anglican women, like Esther, the beautiful queen, "have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" ■

(The above is excerpted from a presentation given before the Conference on Afro-Anglicanism held in Barbados in June.)

Racism . . . Continued from page 13

affirm that the white community needs Christian mission as much as the Third World.

Our health and welfare institutions and programs (i.e. hospitals, homes for the aged, child care centers, outdoor camps, etc.) must also be free of racist policies and practices. We commit ourselves to include these church-supported institutions in our strategy for racial justice along with community-based and church-supported projects.

Racism in the United States

Economics is the heart of racism in the United States. We pledge support for the development and full implementation of aggressive social, economic, and employment policies that protect the economic well-being and job security of all people, mindful of the particular economic insecurities facing racial ethnic people.

We support the advances made in the area of civil and human rights and in equal opportunity.

We believe that the nation should provide a system of quality education that is accessible and affordable to all of its people.

We have determined that many private schools, especially many of the so called "Christian" academies, promote and practice racial segregation and instill racist value-systems in their students. We find this type of instruction antithetical to biblical precepts and extremely dangerous to the social and faith development of young people. We call for the elimination of these administrative and curriculum policies.

We commit ourselves to work for quality education for all people and to press for the financial resources necessary to support this vital system.

We recognize and deplore the negative impact that bigotry, racial stereotyping and racial discrimination have on the quality of family life in this society. We also commit our-

selves to provide support, resources, and educational materials that clarify the variety of images and roles within racial ethnic families in an effort to correct the stereotypes and biases that have distorted public perception, eroded interpersonal relationships and destroyed family structures.

We abhor the pervasiveness of violence in the United States, and we are particularly concerned about the violence that is perpetrated against racial ethnic communities.

We pledge ourselves to the eradication of the root causes of violence in this nation.

We recognize that the United States is a nation of voluntary and involuntary immigrants, with the exception of Indigenous People. However, immigration policies and practices have historically been racist and discriminatory. We support a fair and just immigration policy, the extension of rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution to immigrants and refugees, and the removal of the racist and inhumane stigmas forced upon immigrants.

The media shape our thoughts, influence our decisions and alter our perception of the world. Because of technological advances, on one hand the media have enhanced our understanding of ourselves and of the world, and on the other they have tended to lend themselves both consciously and unconsciously to the perpetuation of racism through non-coverage, poor coverage, negative stereotypes and misinformation. Instead of amplifying existing racism, the media can help to combat it, and we commit ourselves to call them to that kind of responsible role in this country.

Benediction

We commit our churches, our resources and our lives to the cleansing of racism and genocide from our world. As we focus our attention upon the evils of national and international secular racism, we must also, emphatically and intentionally, focus equally upon the evil resident within ourselves.

In order to concretize this commitment, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. commits itself and calls upon its member communions to commit themselves for the next decade to racial justice by eliminating racism from church structures and to initiate and support efforts to eliminate it from society.

It is our hope that the power of this action will create a condition of trust, hope and love among all people of good will. Although this action seems limited, the intent is to begin a serious and strenuous effort to eradicate racism by letting the world know by our actions that we are committed to justice for all of humanity.

We affirm our love and affection for the people of the world, for the people of this nation and for generations yet to come by offering this document as the starting point of a new way of life. ■

The immovable

(S) he,
Unmoved,
moves through life
Without pain or joy,
Hate or love,
Uninvolved.

I,
Knowing despair and delight,
Rejection and acceptance,
Closed to indifference,
Open to pain,
Am more to be envied.

— Jean C. Higgins

Forging global networks for women

by Chris Weiss

Forum '85 — the Non-Governmental Organizations Conference held in Nairobi at the end of the UN Decade for Women — was full of spiritual highs and physical lows. It has taken me a month since the July meetings to sort out my impressions and learning experiences.

One thing was obvious: What went on at the official UN meeting running simultaneously was largely ignored by the women of the Forum. Until governments are more representative of women's interests, it was realized that little can be done in a political arena. So our Forum went about forming lines of communication that did not rely on governmental structures.

I was in Kenya three weeks on scholarship with 35 other women who have started and/or direct organizations for low income and minority women. It was winter when we arrived. This meant cool nights and a temperature during the day between 65 and 68 degrees. In our New Chiromo Hotel, the bathroom was down the hall and the hot water in short supply. Our group did not have to fear moving out to be replaced by UN delegates, (as others experienced); no one wanted to come to the New Chiromo.

People in Kenya were very friendly, particularly in the rural areas. However,

in Nairobi, they tended to be more reserved and saw us as rich Americans who could be counted on to pay double the Kenyan price for many things. Some of the Black Americans in our group were confused and disappointed by this attitude. They viewed their trip as "coming home" and were upset at being seen as "differently colored Americans." Curiously, although Kenyans were generally knowledgeable about the civil rights struggle in our country, they had little understanding of how Black Americans got to the United States.

To the north of Nairobi, the land is hilly and heavily agricultural, with lots of subsistence farming. Most of the work is done by the women with hoes and machetes, growing crops for family use and sometimes for sale in the markets that spring up everywhere. Some villages have communal coffee bean farms, a privilege denied under European rule.

The best exchanges in our group occurred with the women of Kenya. Several of us represented U.S. rural women's groups and were able to share some commonalities. A woman who had invited a group of us for dinner apologized on the way for the dirt road, afflicted with ruts. I remarked that it was very much like the road to my house in West Virginia. She clearly did not believe me at first, but my friend from South Carolina who had visited me confirmed my statement.

A peak experience for many of us was

a visit to a self-help water project in Karweti, started in 1968, roughly five years after independence. While its major goal was to provide running water to the homes of villagers and thereby (literally) lift the burden of carrying the water from the backs of the village women, those leading the tour admitted that a new breed of cattle had been introduced that needed more water to produce milk and the coffee bushes needed spraying. Possibly, without these economic incentives, the women might have had a harder time convincing the village of the need for pipes. However, the project today produces running water for 416 families. The water is pumped up to storage tanks and fed by gravity to the village homes. All the pipes were laid by the villagers, who sold produce and livestock to buy equipment. The project also serves a school of approximately 1500 children and the Miiri Women's Home Craft Self-Help Project.

I was inspired by the spirit of achievement as the people described their 15-year struggle to have running water. Next they are going to get electricity to the homes, and they think it will take another five years. I believe they will make it.

As we arrived, we were greeted by the village women, singing and dancing. We jumped down from our buses to join them and danced down the road to the water tanks. They sang in Kikuyu, their tribal language, and some of them also spoke

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Swahili and English. One of the songs was familiar to us — “Amazing Grace.” We were treated to a huge lunch of traditional African foods, then visited the new building that they built for meetings and workshops.

I was so impressed by the strength and vitality of these women and others. With little access to birth control, their families average from 8 to 15 children and they are responsible for the domestic work — tasks familiar to Western women — but they also do all the farming and much of the heavy labor around the village. About half of them are the heads of households, as their men have left for employment in the urban areas (a situation similar to rural West Virginia). They refer to their men as their “big babies.” Culturally, it isn’t possible for the men to assist in jobs that are perceived as “women’s work”; the result is that large numbers of unemployed men have little to do. Groups of them congregate in Nairobi and some form gangs that cause the streets to look like armed camps at night. Clearly, it isn’t only developed countries which are facing a crisis in the adequate functioning of the nuclear family.

Forum ’85 was just that, a forum for women of every nation to exchange information and views around three themes — equality, development and peace. There was no intention of adopting an agenda or action plan. Women’s groups submitted workshop topics related to the themes six months before the conference and the coordinating committee’s role was simply to organize the time and place for the workshops.

In my work in West Virginia, I am vitally interested in exploring the kind of economic development that works best for women. If we were the state planners and experts, what kind of economic climate would we create to produce adequate financial resources for women and their families? There has been considerable critique of development policies

**Hanah Muthoni
Kinuthia grinds
millet in a
display
demonstrating
the preparation
of native foods
at NGO
Conference.**



that affect women in Third World countries, but women in developed countries have been slow to apply the same analysis to their own rural areas which often present the same challenges. So I went to learn and listen and to share some of the experiences that have worked for women in West Virginia.

Some of the most exciting analysis was done by a group called DAWN, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era — an international group of women who had been meeting for about a year. They produced a document entitled “Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women’s Perspectives.” In their definition of Third World, they include all women who suffer under oppressive systems. They linked the rise in militarism and

religious fundamentalism in the world to the oppression of women, since these two systems rely on patriarchal structures that give men power over women and children. They projected a vision of a world in which both men and women participated equally, and defined the obstacles that keep that vision from occurring.

I felt that those of us who direct grassroots projects had quite a bit to offer to the debate, since we have the “front-line” experience that either confirms or denies the analysis. DAWN members and, the Leadership Forum met one evening to begin an important discussion on the implications of our collective work, both from the analytical side and the practical application.

Another highlight was a workshop



Quadrangle at the University of Nairobi which served as a gathering place for participants of the NGO Conference.

called "Perspectives on Spirituality for Women." Some 30 women of all religions and faiths, from all over the world, shared experiences of spiritual commitment to their work. We shared prayers for those who had affected our lives and listened as an American nun said "A second-hand religion will not sustain us today. The religion of childhood is not enough. My religion must keep pace with the other areas of my life and we must take the necessary steps to see that it does." She called for a redefinition of religious belief and a commitment by women to reclaim the church from patriarchal domination. The "amen's" resounded from the Christian, Moslem, Jewish and other women in the room.

There were some frustrations at the conference. Every time slot had roughly 45 workshops to choose from and I wanted to attend at least five. Also, there were so many women that often the workshops were over-crowded. The For-

um only ran seven days. However, there were no workshops on the weekends, so there was little opportunity to continue discussions. With such a wealth of information and material, I felt cheated that I was only able to squeeze in as much as I did.

However, I came home having achieved my goal, that of learning and listening. I have ideas for research, projects I want to try, reading to do. I have new friends, and I need to make connections again with this international women's movement.

For that is what it is — a movement of women who have had enough of being second-class citizens, in putting up with abuse, discrimination on the job, and decisions taken out of our hands by men who think they know better. We find that we have similar problems and some of us have begun coming up with solutions. Rural women around the world in particular face similar situations in their

everyday lives — lack of transportation and health care, abandonment by men, poverty and hard work to survive economically. We were able to talk across race and class lines and occasionally listen to another point of view. This is not to say that the disputes between the Arabs and Israelis, refugee women, and Black and White women did not emerge. But a spirit of independence and self-determination infused all the discussions.

I know that many of us went to our respective homes with renewed confidence. I also believe that there is a growing international movement around issues of economic justice, health and reproductive freedom, educational alternatives and peace initiatives.

We now face the work to be done with new resources, information and communication with other women doing the same work. It is not just "women's work;" it is work for all of humankind. ■

'Karibu nyumbani'

A Swahili 'welcome home'

by Nell Braxton Gibson

For me as a Black American, returning to Africa for the International Women's Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, held special significance. I was to be part of a world-wide conference in which I was a member of the dominant culture — a new and overwhelming experience. More than 10,000 women gathered to work toward peace, justice and equality. In the midst of the conference, I had the rare opportunity of joining several hundred women of color in expressing our collective needs and concerns around these issues. In setting goals for the conference, the Women of Color Caucus found there was much more to unite us than there was to divide us.

Sheila Collins, author of *A Different Heaven and Earth: A Feminist Perspective on Religion*, had written an article for a group called Clergy and Laity Concerned which described experiences in the Jesse Jackson campaign that were similar to those we found at the Nairobi conference. She spoke of meetings between the Black and White women during the Democratic National Convention in which White women were asked to speak in the interest of all women. Collins said, "The White women listened with repressed, and sometimes overt hostility. Some, referring to their prior civil rights record, claiming they had 'paid their dues' . . . Others saying that Black women should let them (White women) negoti-

ate this out with the White male leadership. . . .

"The meeting ended with no resolution . . . Black women left frustrated and disheartened that, once again when it came to a question of political power, the much vaunted 'sisterhood' that feminists speak of is a sisterhood in rhetoric only, (that) by dividing along the color line — by failing to understand that the unified Black community is its most important ally — the organized feminist movement failed both its own stated goals and the larger movement for peace and justice of which it is a part."

In Nairobi the Women of Color Caucus gathered to discuss putting forth a platform which addressed the following issues:

- supporting all United Nations initiatives, resolutions and conventions on behalf of women, especially those promoting international peace and co-operation.

- reducing the military budget and using the released funds for the overall development of society and the equality of women.

- influencing the trans-national corporations which adversely affect women's employment and conditions of work.

- recognizing the key to women's equality, economic independence, and guaranteeing the basic right of women to equal pay for comparable value, and the right to full employment and a guaranteed income.

- eliminating all forms of racial oppression and discrimination against women and supporting full economic,

social and political rights for foreign and undocumented workers.

- supporting all nations which improve the quality of life for women such as control of police brutality and the right to decent housing, health care and quality education.

- eliminating sexual violence and insuring women's rights to choose in matters of sexuality.

- providing moral and material aid to women struggling for their democratic rights and for their national independence throughout the world.

- working toward international peace by halting intervention and aggression, withdrawing all nuclear missiles, and negotiating by lateral arms control agreements, including the militarization of outer space.

The platform was endorsed by the Women of Color Caucus and some progressive White women. But several leading American feminists asked us to abandon that part of our position which supported the right to a free and unoccupied homeland for Palestinian women (who were part of our caucus) and to join them in denouncing the U.S. position on apartheid. Even the South African women (also a part of our caucus) agreed that we could not abandon our Palestinian sisters in order to join the American feminists, that unless the American feminists were willing to join us in denouncing both apartheid and the occupation of Palestine, we could not join them. Their response was that unless we came over to their side, we would not be taken seriously because they had the ears of the media. The groups did not come together and

Nell Braxton Gibson is executive assistant to the Episcopal bishop of New York, and representative to the Executive Council for Province II.

missed the opportunity to work alongside one another toward effecting world peace.

At the end of the conference, it was the Kenyan women who worked into the early hours of the final day to bring about acceptable solutions to many of the issues that had been left unresolved. Those of us who participated in the caucus meetings with them learned much from our Kenyan sisters about diplomacy.

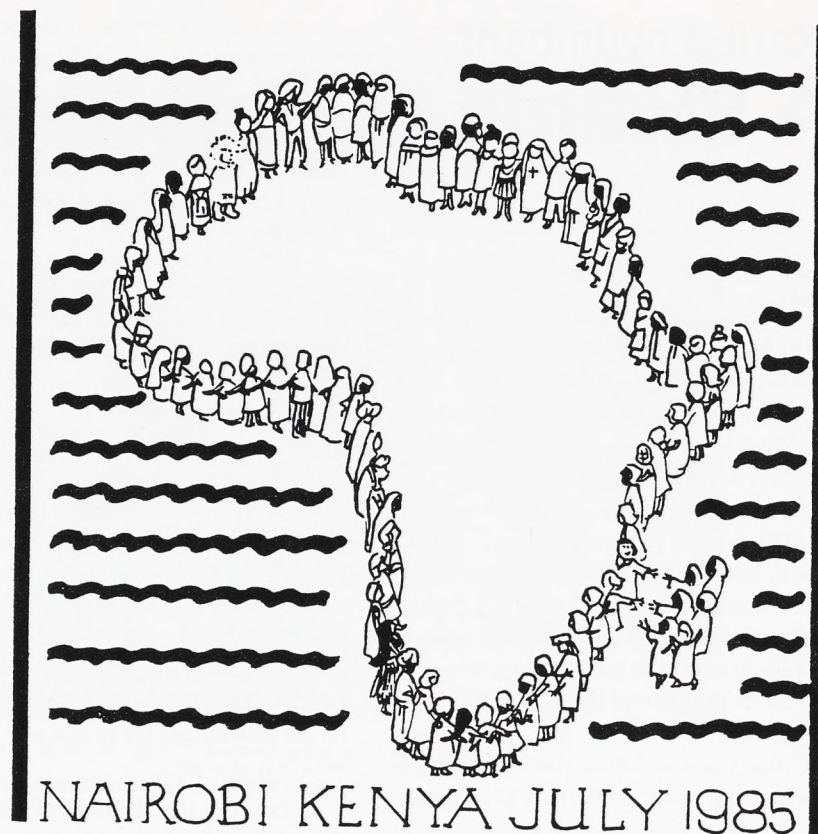
One of the things I had wondered about when I left for Kenya, was whether the euphoria of the conference itself and the tremendous amount of work it took to participate in the workshops would allow time or room for experiencing the culture of the Kenyan people. Determined to do more than simply enjoy the hospitality of the people, I spoke to one of the receptionists who worked at our hotel and requested a tour of the slum area and the city hospital. The Kibera slums are but a stone's throw from the interior of Nairobi and are part of the city proper. Another delegate, Marcia Newcombe, staff officer at the Episcopal Church Center, joined Suferose Oloo, Mrs. Achieng Oneka and me on the tour. Mrs. Oneka's husband was owner of the hotel where we were lodged and had been one of the leaders of Kenya's Mau Mau rebellion. He had served with Jomo Kenyatta as Minister for Information and was detained with Kenyatta for the part they played in the struggle for liberation.

Tears came to our eyes many times as we toured the village. At the sight of hundreds of people in an open field waiting to claim the bodies of their missing loved ones — it was the city morgue. At the joy of coming upon an unexpected group of wedding guests dancing and singing behind the newlyweds — we joined their procession for a while. At the offer of a seventeen-year-old rural mother who proffered us the half ear of corn she had — the only food in her home. At the small girls who ran along side the road, pointing to Marcia and me yelling, "That's

me. That's me." On impulse I responded by pointing to them and yelling, "That's me," meaning that I was one of them. They responded with cheers.

To unleash the deep emotional experiences which the afternoon tour had brought, Marcia and I joined the Kenyans at an all-night disco near our hotel. We danced with young men who explained the meaning of songs sung in tribal dialects. We answered questions about Michael Jackson, Prince and Tina Turner. We acknowledged the special feeling the music brought as it helped us bridge the gap between our two cultures and countries. But I was not prepared for the pain which shot through my heart when one of the young men asked, "Do you have any White blood in you?" I wondered if he hated me when I responded in the affirmative. Suddenly I felt great pain at being so different from the Kenyan people I had come to know and love

and I wondered if the frustration of never knowing from where I originated in Africa would ever go away. As the record ended, I said to my host, "You must forgive me, but I am not accustomed to dancing for such long periods of time without resting. Could we please sit the next dance out while I catch my breath?" He said, yes, but quickly pulled me back onto the floor saying, "Please don't walk away on this song. It is the one which binds our two countries together." It took me a moment to recognize the tune to "We Are The World." As we danced, he gave me a reassuring hug and said, "Welcome home, my sister." Realizing he had not held my "White blood" against me, I remembered something which another Kenyan gentleman had said to my sister delegates, Marcia Newcombe and the Rev. Sandra Wilson, and me, "The blood which unites us is deeper than the water which divides us." ■



Letters . . . Continued from page 4

which we find ourselves.

Of particular note is Barbara C. Harris' essay in the July issue, "That Biased PBS/Gallup Pole," perhaps because the opinions expressed echo my own on the existence, purpose, and goals of the Prayer Book Society. I have just about given up on "the church" as a vehicle for articulating my concerns on social issues. Maybe it's time to "hang in there" and work within the system for change.

Carolyn W. Reynolds
Santa Rosa, Cal.

Right wing nausea

As Senior Pastor of the Peoples' (Ecumenical) Free Church in Portland's slum, I resent the drivel and driveler from West Virginia who said, "Although some innocent people have suffered, I feel that God sent AIDS to punish sinners, and that He sent Ronald Reagan to protect Christians who believe in freedom." (July Letters to Editor.)

I'd like to know how he might explain sickle cell anemia (as it affects Blacks) or for that matter what about Tay-Sachs (as it strikes Jews)? I suppose that curse was rained down upon another group of "sinners" just as Hitler was brought to power to stem the Red tide!

The Rev. Pat Harkins, O.S.L.
Portland, Ore.

Spiritual synchronicity

I send a belated thank you to THE WITNESS for living up to its name. Last November I was to preach my senior sermon at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific on the 200th anniversary of the consecration of Samuel Seabury. In preparing, I wanted also to witness to the 10th anniversary of the Philadelphia 11, which, with Seabury's consecration, I saw as a celebration of the seemingly disordering work of the Spirit to bring about the true order in Christ.

What moved me to speak boldly was the "Daughters of Prophecy" issue which I somehow received in the mail just prior to committing the sermon to

paper. I say "somehow" because at that time I was not yet a subscriber.

When I called a seminary colleague to tell her about the synchronicity, asking if she, too, had received that WITNESS, she said, "Yes, but I received it two months ago!" Whatever the mechanics for my receiving that issue at that time, I'll never know. I do know that I felt in communion with my brothers and sisters at THE WITNESS and was further opened up to deliver a senior sermon that stirred comment and initiated dialogue in the seminary community.

The Rev. Polly Hilsabeck
Oakland, Cal.

Lauds inclusive language

It's hard for me to understand intense opposition to the "inclusive language" lectionary. There are scores of beautiful portraits of both males and females in Scripture. Does the image of the Godhead have to be frozen into the masculine conception exclusively and completely?

Inwardly visualizing the Almighty as the Eternal Father might work well for those individuals who have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed a close and loving relationship with their earthly fathers. Those less fortunate, however, must feel compelled to contrive this fatherly image in order to cope with our spiritual heritage.

One shudders to suppose that many of the faithful cling to the childlike picture of God as a magical Fellow with a long, white beard, seated on a throne, in a material paradise. The Commandment against making graven images seems also to forbid the likening, whether through physical icon or mental image, of the Godhead to limited and familiar worldly

Correction

In the Short Takes story about Fran Toy, the first Asian-American woman to be ordained an Episcopal priest in the United States (August WITNESS), the reference to the Rev. Lee Tim Oi should read the first Anglican (not Episcopal) woman to be ordained a priest in 1944.

beings. In any event, the sincere worshiper should have the option to greater latitude in his or her corporate devotion. The "inclusive language" lectionary idea apparently tenders this wider latitude.

William Dauenhauer
Willoughby, Ohio

Dear comrade letter

I just read the June issue of THE WITNESS. It's really good to find other comrades working so hard for justice in the world. Yours for a Soviet America.

John Burton
Wheat Ridge, Col.

Kudos on ACP awards

Congratulations on the Associated Church Press awards you won with your excellent production of THE WITNESS. You deserve every bit of it, and I'm proud to be a constant reader. The whole April issue on Capital Punishment was a fine combination of personal, public and cultural reflections on this terrible phenomenon, and I'm glad you picked up the piece by Joe Morris Doss from *Blueprint for Social Justice*.

— **The Rev. Joseph H. Fichter, S.J.**
New Orleans, La.

Editorials give hope

Thank you for your words of hope expressed in your editorials of THE WITNESS, May and June issues. I am encouraged to hear that "alive in the hearts and minds of people around the world is this hope and determination that the nuclear madness must, in the last analysis, be banished." I truly pray that this will happen. (May)

I received much consolation from "The hope that we can somehow manage the nuclear arms race . . . is giving way to the determination that we must end it through disarmament. The awakening and further quickening of the Holy Spirit may be humanity's only hope." (June)

Do continue to write such editorials as will strengthen the hope that threatens to give way to despair in these times.

Sr. Agnes C. Prendergast
Adrian, Mich.

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