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# THE WITNESS



**MYTHS ABOUT DEATH** Charles Meyer

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# Letters

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## 'Hedonism' challenged

Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning in his January response to WITNESS letters about the homosexual issue, says he was intensely moved by the anguish conveyed.

The bishop said that some Episcopalians must have unequivocal assurance that "their church will not disintegrate into hedonism," if homosexual demands are satisfied. It troubles me that the bishop chose to use "hedonism" without some qualification, for the implication seems to be that hedonism and homosexuality are synonymous. Homosexuals, like everyone else, are varied in their makeup. They, too, are business professionals, politicians, athletes, authors and artists; yes, and clergy. They too are scholars, and good citizens and can be friends with as genuine affection as that which we are told existed between Daniel and Jonathan. They have the same sensitivities and dreams common to most, and also enjoy the pleasures of this life — as we all do — but is this necessarily hedonism?

The bishop says he is a leader but then qualifies this by saying it is not his nature or within his right as bishop to "yank" or "dictate." But can't he express how he personally feels? *Revelations* cautions us to be either hot or cold and warns against being lukewarm — or a mugwump. Even if his honest opinion should come down decisively on the side of caution and censure where Gays in the church are concerned, at least everyone would know how to proceed.

How is it that the Episcopal Church has spoken so boldly on such issues as apartheid, Star Wars and Nicaragua, and yet begs for more and more time for study and dialogue on this issue, which has been bandied about in the public arena now (in psychological studies, church conferences of all denominations, and TV talk shows galore) since the early 1960s? Can nothing positive at all be gleaned from these?

As Barbara Harris states in her fine column on the bishop's response, "The prophetic pastor must speak to dispel the myths (about homosexuality) so the truth may be known."

Fundamentalist conservatives are continually reminding all of us (which is their God-given right) that St. Paul tells us homosexuals will never be admitted to heaven. But why don't our bishops and priests, when occasion may arise, also add that Christ himself never alludes to the matter, and that none of the major or minor prophets have made it an issue? At least this might bring a little balance into the picture.

I think we all appreciate the bishop's sincere desire to treat all fairly. But it is within his power, and I believe it is his duty to ensure (and actively encourage) the right of every sheep in his flock to expect unqualified acceptance and respect.

**John Manola**  
Wilmington, Del.

## Applauds PB

We are in the debt of THE WITNESS that the exchange of correspondence with the Presiding Bishop on homosexuality has taken place. Even the *Living Church* has picked it up, and recognized its value.

The discussion of homosexuality has touched every city and hamlet of this country. It often comes up in my pastoral calls on parishioners in their homes.

When I am asked "Do you believe in ordaining homosexuals?" My reply is that I believe in ordaining persons who feel called of God, and the church feels are responsible persons about their lives and the ministry they feel led to conduct. I make it clear that we do not ordain a sexual orientation, whether it be hetero or homo.

I did appreciate Barbara Harris' "Speaking the truth in love." However, "a leader does not seek consensus, he or she makes it," is a bit simplistic.

Leadership is a difficult ministry with which most of us have wrestled through our ministry. Sometimes it does seek consensus where consensus is the need. Sometimes it is prophetic, speaking into a situation when the prophet feels the word burning like fire in her/his bones. The problem is knowing when is the time for each. I feel like a friend of mine who said, "It would be far easier to begin the sermon, 'In the name of Joe, Stella and the kids,' than to say, 'In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'" How presumptive to feel that one always speaks with the authority of the Divine Name.

It appears to me that leadership is that fine line between being so far ahead that those whom you would lead can't see you, and falling back into the crowd and conforming to their life style. I applaud the Presiding Bishop for trying to lead.

**H. Paul Osborne**  
Pampa, Tex.

## Kudos for anniversary

Your January issue announcing your 70th anniversary year was terrific. In appreciation I am enclosing a check for \$70. You certainly have continued the courageous stance taken by the early editors and people like Vida Scudder. I loved the last paragraph quote from Bishop Irving Peake Johnson on the back cover; I am sure that those words still ring true.

Also, I did so much appreciate your open dialogue with the Presiding Bishop about lesbians and gays. Barbara Harris' column as usual hit the nail on the head.

When I first read the response from Bishop Browning I was vaguely disturbed. He "waffled" and took the safe way out by not offending people. He does not mention that 10% of our population is gay.

I had the opportunity of giving a presentation about homosexuality at the Philadelphia Board of Education

recently. I spoke as the mother of a creative, sensitive child (now an adult) who has been abused and scorned because of her sexuality. I also spoke as a former teacher who knows how important it is to help the gay child in school. In addition, I spoke as one who has worked for years for peace, justice and understanding of all peoples.

We, as a society, and especially those of us within the church, have a lot to do to educate and sensitize the public about homophobia. Only then can we all be whole.

**Mary Austin**  
Philadelphia, Pa.

## New church birthing

Once again I honor THE WITNESS for the continuing dialogue with the Presiding Bishop on the issue of homosexuality. Thanks especially to Barbara Harris for her clear and forceful analysis of Bishop Browning's response.

At present our church is focused on itself as an institution. I'm not certain that it was ever much different except in fits and burps. It is interested in preservation, and the Presiding Bishop reflects that interest in his definition of his office.

The prophetic and pastoral ministries of the church are particularly narrowly conceived at this moment.

We are entering a new era, a refinement of the Renaissance. Now the image of God is, literally, in the individual, rather than in the gathered, worshiping community founded by Christ. It is a moment of individual exploration and search for dignity and power. It is not a time, particularly, for strong institutions.

The withering controversies of the past few decades have diminished the church's hold on individuals, primarily, I think, because the church gathered has continued an ancient behavior, namely, the willingness by majority vote to trample a minority. Contemporary reality is such that all our insti-

tutions have lost moral authority by engaging in this type of activity. It has just been renewed by the Vatican in its hateful document on homosexuality. But it is carried out on local levels in all denominations.

The hope for justice, and the passionate commitment to each individual as the image of God are not likely to be found when the church as institution is scrambling to recover what has been lost. It may be that the Presiding Bishop is correct — the only thing to hope for is that we share our pain.

Some of us, however, are tired of sharing pain, and staying with those whose high calling in life is agony. Some find the divine revelation within the individual, and the possibility of celebrating that so compelling that it has to happen even as the usual forms are allowed to pass away. There is a new church being born at this moment — in the eddies and backwaters, out of focus, out of view — that's where the thrill of life is and is to be found.

**Richard Kerr**  
San Francisco, Cal.

## PB fails on two scores

In his recent letter concerning homosexuality, the Presiding Bishop argues that "the pain on both sides is real; neither side has cornered the market on anguish." The *two* sides he refers to are gay and lesbian Episcopalians, and Episcopalians "disillusioned and confused about their homosexual sisters and brothers." He says that he believes that his ministry is to build bridges between the two sides.

I believe that this view is both morally and theologically inadequate. While it may be true that people who oppose homosexuality experience pain and anguish, their pain is not morally equivalent to that of the gay man or lesbian. Current study makes it plain that gay men and lesbians do not choose their homosexuality, any more than heterosexual persons choose to

be heterosexual. The gay man's or lesbian's suffering may include being denied housing, or a job, or visitation rights with one's own children, and being cursed, or spat upon, or beaten, or even murdered — all of these acts being justified on the basis of something one did not choose — who one is.

But being anti-homosexual does not in itself produce any of these consequences, and the suffering involved is not related in the same way to one's very *identity*. Thus even to imply that the anguish on the two sides is somehow equivalent is morally inadequate.

Secondly, I find it difficult to see our Savior as teaching us in all cases to build bridges. Christ calls oppressors to judgment; he does not try to get them to "enter into dialogue (with the oppressed) for mutual understanding and acceptance." Thus, I believe that the view expressed in the Presiding Bishop's letter is also theologically inadequate.

I am not urging insensitivity to the anguish experienced by anti-homosexual people; I do urge less insensitivity to the very real differences between that suffering and that of gay men and lesbians. We ought to oppose oppression and abuse in whatever circumstances it occurs, seeking not rapprochement, but justice.

**Clyde Nabe**  
School of Humanities  
Southern Ill. U. at Edwardsville

## Women in sexist role

Re Suzanne Hiatt's December article on the consecration of women bishops: It is not just the men we are fighting, especially the bishops. It is women too.

We are not all united in the cause of equality for women. Some of the strongest opponents of ministry by women, both lay and ordained, comes from other women who are locked into the traditional sexist role and cannot see

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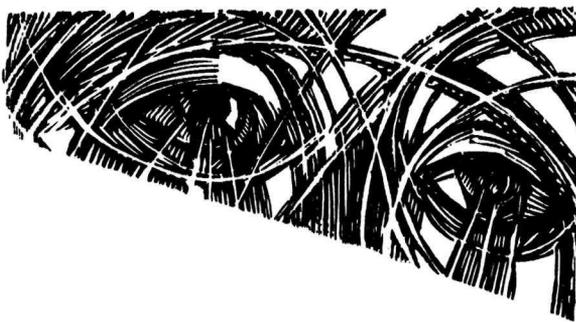
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## A questionable U.S. Attorney General

*Our guest editorial this month is by the Rt. Rev. H. Coleman McGehee, Jr., Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan and former chair of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.*

Attorney General Edwin Meese represents an alarming and dangerous approach to the legal system of the United States.

I speak from three perspectives: as a former law student myself; as a former Assistant Attorney General of the State of Virginia; and as a religious leader.

When I was a law student, I was taught in Constitutional law that there are three Constitutions: the Constitution as it is written; the Constitution as I interpret it, and the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States — the law of the land.

Attorney General Meese, however, has encouraged public officials to disobey Supreme Court decisions with which they do not agree on the grounds that those decisions apply only to the parties in the cases decided.

As a former State Assistant Attorney General, I am astonished at a recent statement made by Mr. Meese that, "If a person is innocent of a crime, then he is not a suspect." I can imagine such a statement being made by an official of South

Africa or a Latin American dictatorship, but by the Attorney General of the United States? Mr. Meese apparently believes that only criminals become police suspects — and this belief is not mere rhetoric, it is the basis for everyday deeds on his part. These deeds are based on the dangerous view that most constitutional guarantees which protect the accused are merely obstacles to law enforcement.

As a bishop, I am appalled by the views advocated by Attorney General Meese in the area of Church and State, which our ancestors were so careful to separate. Edwin Meese advocates teacher-led prayer sessions in the public schools even though our public school children represent a multiplicity of religious and non-religious backgrounds. Their families are assured, in our democracy, of protection against the imposition of any particular religion or religious beliefs. Edwin Meese also advocates direct governmental financial support to teachers in religious schools although decision after decision in the courts of our land have prohibited public funds in sup-

port of such religious activities.

As a religious leader, conscious of the civil and human rights of all persons regardless of race, color, creed or nationality, I am shocked that Edwin Meese opposes the Voting Rights Act of 1982 which outlaws discrimination; that he opposes a 20-year-old executive order which promotes minority employment in the Federal Government; and that he continues to work at slowing down civil rights enforcement.

By all of these actions, Edwin Meese is knowingly or unknowingly (it matters not) dismantling the fundamental freedoms that the Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantee each one of us; the integrity and independence of the Supreme Court of the United States; the ancient maxim of "innocent until proven guilty;" the separation of Church and State; freedom of speech, and the hard fought gains of the Civil Rights Movement.

The question in my mind is: Should such a person be serving as the Attorney General of the United States? ■



Impediments to decision making:

## Eleven myths about death

by Charles Meyer

**F**rom Baby Doe to gerontology, medical decision making in the area of withholding, refusing or withdrawing life support has become increasingly difficult. New technology has had the most obvious impact as patients, families and physicians are offered more and ever newer diagnostic and life-prolonging equipment. CAT scanners are being supplanted by Magnetic Resonance Imagery using no radiation. Lasers are treating everything from eyes to arteries. Twenty week fetuses that were considered untreatable are now kept alive with new respiratory equipment.

But even though technology has increased our treatment options for trauma and long-term illnesses, it is usually *not* the determining factor in making decisions. Rather, there exist a set of subtle, extremely powerful myths about death which inform and direct our choices regarding life support.

These myths are indicative of the collective beliefs about life and death in U.S. culture. They are frequently used as impediments to decision making.

Whether based on medical tradition, social obligation or religious teaching, the death myths influencing our decisions are indelibly embedded within the collective psyche. They flash through our minds when the doctor

tells us the patient's condition is poor. They are the screens through which we hear the diagnosis of serious illness. They are the standards against which we weigh our response to a terminal prognosis.

The death myths most prominent in our culture are:

**1. Only old people die.** Conversely stated, "Young people should not die." Neither assumption is true. Anyone who has experience in hospitals knows that death is no respecter of age, and there is no guarantee of lifespan given with conception.

Further, it is ageism at its worst to think an old person has "lived his/her life" and is more accepting or more deserving of death than a younger counterpart. In fact, it is entirely possible for the situation to be quite the reverse; the aged person may be more vital and have more to live for than the youth.

This myth can result in young persons being subjected to extraordinary efforts from intubation to chemotherapy just because they are young, or old persons prematurely being denied further treatment because they are old. The myth also serves to reinforce our own wish for a long life, and to defend against our fear of our own death coming "prematurely."

Whether we like it or not, people of *all* ages die. Each death is sad, tragic, acceptable or a relief based on the quality of the person's life and the kinds of relationships

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s/he has had. Each situation, therefore, needs to be evaluated on *those* criteria, not on a myth that presumes it is “okay” for old persons to die, perhaps intimating that the elderly want to die or even ought to die.

**2. Medicine can cure everything.** Even in the face of long-term illness when the patient is finally about to die, panicked family members frequently ask “Can’t you *do* something?” This reflects a strong expectation that medicine can find and cure all illness and physicians are or should be omniscient.

Most physicians do not act to reinforce this image. The myth persists because we want to believe that drugs, medical technology, and their physician purveyors can prevent or cure the effects of disease, aging and self-inflicted injury (smoking, diet, lifestyle).

In addition, the medical community has frequently oversold the efficacy or advisability of a particular technical or therapeutic “breakthrough.” Thus, particularly Western cultures have acquired unrealistically high expectations of what technology can do. The current promotion of the artificial heart is the latest example of such a media event. Heedless of the availability, advisability and ruinous financial cost of such a device, the heart is proffered as another example of medical technology’s ability to cheat death — and so this myth is reinforced.

It is more honest to be realistic with patients and ourselves about the limits of tests, treatments, medications, and prognoses.

**3. Life is always the highest value.** The initial presumption in nearly any accident or illness is always in favor of preserving life. But once the patient is stabilized and the prognosis is clear, other considerations take effect. It is at this point that the meaning and quality of life as the *patient* experiences them are of the highest value in making the hard decisions of treatment and life support.

However, most family members or friends do not know what the patient values because they’ve never talked about what the patient wants done in terms of life support, organ donations, or experimental treatments. It is almost as though people hear this myth as a religious command — an injunction from God to keep breathing.

In fact, in nearly every religious system, while longevity is highly prized, it is not nearly as valued as the virtues of love, faithfulness, forgiveness and compassion. It is the ability of the patient to participate in these quality activities that ought to be the standard for life support decision making.

To presume that life is of the highest value supports our own refusal to see death as an acceptable outcome for the patient — and for ourselves.

**4. Money should not be a consideration.** Many people believe it is crass and insensitive to give the cost of treatment any weight in medical decision making. In our “bottom line” society they emotionally recoil at the prospect of finances determining treatment, preferring to spend “whatever is necessary” to save the life of a loved one.

But what of the young couple whose baby is dying, yet can be kept alive a few more hours or days in our high tech Intensive Care Nurseries? Or the elderly woman maintained by a respirator in ICU whose husband is barely subsisting on Social Security? And what of the use of medical resources devoted to these dying patients (not just for comfort but for continuing active treatment that is much more than palliative) that could be used for taking care of other, curable patients, for research, or for reducing hospital costs for everyone?

The honest, if uncomfortable, truth is that money is *already* a consideration. It will continue to play an even greater role as healthcare rationing becomes a reality given a limited amount of resources and a virtually unlimited demand.

Yet, sensitively done, consideration of the family’s or patient’s financial situation is a *very* caring gesture, as is weighing the effect of treatment on the cost of healthcare to the entire community, indeed to the nation.

**5. Death is evil. Death means failure.** While the church is responsible for promoting the former myth, the medical/healthcare profession is responsible for the persistence of the latter.

Many people, desperately attempting to make some kind of logical sense out of their illness, have been told by the religious community that good is always rewarded and evil is always punished. They then extrapolate that since they are sick or dying, they must have done *something* bad to incur the punishment of a wrathful God.

In fact, sickness and death are *amoral* occurrences. They have nothing to do with good/bad, right/wrong, punishment/reward. We get sick. We die. Welcome to Earth. The death rate here is 100%. One out of one dies. The only thing “good” or “bad” about death is the manner in which one responds to it. Death, like any other amoral occurrence is merely an *occasion* for good or evil to become manifest. That manifestation is shown in our *response* to the event, not in the event itself.

Likewise death has nothing to do with failure. Assuming one has done everything necessary (not possible, but necessary) and the patient’s condition is said to be “incompatible with life,” it is understandable that the person dies. The death has nothing to do with the ability of the physician or nursing staff. In fact, it seems the height of

arrogance to assume that we (patient, family or physician) have “failed” when death, a natural process, has followed its normal route.

This does not imply that death is not often sad, angering, relieving, unfair, or crushing. It is all this and more in emotional terms. The problem arises in treating death as though it should not happen, denying it as a logical, even acceptable outcome of the patient’s illness.

Death might more easily be tolerated if we saw it as a form of *healing*. Death as healing transposes its symbolic meaning from that of evil enemy to that of an acceptable, and at times even welcomed, friend.

**6. Where there’s life there’s hope.** This myth is patently untrue. Where there’s life there is quite often the opposite of hope — agony, fear, excruciating pain, anger, frustration, loneliness and despair. The sentiment really expressed here is that where there is biological activity there is reason for optimism that the person may recover, even against all odds.

The questions to be asked are: “What is life?” and “What is hope?” Is life merely the exchange of air being forced into stiffening lungs, or blood being pumped inside a human cavity? Is it biological activity mechanically produced or substantially supported? Again, the quality of life standard (as judged by the patient if competent or by the patient’s significant others if incompetent) applies. Increasing numbers of people believe that life is not life if there is no quality of relating, of experiencing and enjoying, of being.

“Hope,” also, is quite often confused with “optimism.” Optimism demands the patient get well (not just better) and return to the former state of health. The meaning of hope, on the other hand, was expressed by a cancer patient who commented: “It’s okay with me if I live and it’s okay with me if I die. Because either place I’m loved.” Hope implies that death is as acceptable an outcome to one’s condition as life. Hope embraces and affirms both life and death as parts of a greater whole of existence. Hope sees life not as a problem to be solved but as a mystery to be lived, and death as a part of that mystery.

**7. Suffering is redemptive.** Some people will refuse pain medication, withhold the palliative measures needed to increase comfort, or deny the existence of pain because they see the suffering as cleansing, deserved, or redemptive. Usually based on a conservative theological or philosophical tradition, followers of this myth conquer their own helplessness in the face of illness and death by assuming discomfort and pain are spiritually or psychologically helpful to the patient.

It is sometimes true that suffering can be an occasion for

redemption, for the healing of memories, relationships, hurts, fears or guilts. Pain and illness often are the precipitators of change in behavior or perspective on the person’s lifestyle. But suffering is also quite often the occasion for unquenchable bitterness, debilitating despair, collapse of faith and disintegration of personhood.

Once again, in an attempt to make sense of an illness, people want to believe there is some purpose, some plan, some reason for the horrible suffering they or their loved ones are enduring. But suffering as related to illness in the hospital is as amoral as the virus, bacteria or bodily condition that is its cause.

**8. You don’t die until your number comes up.** This myth reduces God to the clerk in the deli section of the local supermarket. The implication, of course, is that God personally decides the time of death for each individual based on some unknown formula having something vaguely to do with guilt, suffering, retribution and, only occasionally, with mercy. Thus it is thought to be inappropriate to make life support decisions because the person will die when God is ready.

The truth is that people largely choose their time of death. People die around anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, meaningful days for them; and they often wait to die until their loved ones leave the room. To believe this myth is to posit an all-controlling, capricious God, and to avoid responsibility for life support decisions.

**9. It is God’s will.** This myth covers everything from birth defects to hemorrhoids. It assumes powerlessness and futility on the part of patients and families to decide life support issues. Yet people would rather believe it than to accept personal responsibility for illness or the capriciousness of disease. This myth is not only a convenient method of avoiding the life support issues, but also reinforces a system of healthcare that leaves all decisions in the hands of the medical practitioners.

In fact, it is theologically inconsistent to believe that a loving, compassionate God wants people sick or dead.



Probably the best discussion of this myth is found in Leslie Weatherhead's book entitled, appropriately enough, "The Will of God."

**10. Pulling the plug is suicide/murder.** Many people refuse to make a decision to withdraw hydration, nutrition or respiratory maintenance because they believe such an act constitutes murder. Likewise, to designate a personal directive such as a Living Will may seem tantamount to suicide. The underlying presupposition is that it is improper to take any control over one's own death. To do so is to usurp the power and prerogative of an all-controlling God.

In fact, not to decide is to decide. Not to make a Living Will or withdraw artificial support mechanisms is to decide to abdicate responsibility. It is to relegate the burden of decision making to someone (physician, hospital, committee, court) less qualified to make it, and refuse to accept our ability and responsibility as "co-creators with God" to share in the rational determination of our destiny.

One could just as easily argue that *not* to "pull the plug" or make a Living Will designation is to stand in the way of Nature, God or the normal procession of life to death.

**11. To die of dehydration or starvation in a hospital is inhumane, cruel and immoral.** When many people think of food and drink they imagine sitting down at a table with barbecue and beer (at least in Texas we do.) But that image is vastly different from the reality of the dying patient, or even the vegetative non-dying patient, who is maintained by artificial nutrition and artificial hydration.

Instead, picture blue humming boxes sucking high calorie pastel liquid from bags and bottles and forcing it through clear plastic tubing into the patient's nose or directly into the stomach or intestine. This artificial support is parallel to the use of a respirator that artificially pumps air in and out of failing lungs.

For increasing numbers of people, to die of dehydration or starvation while being kept comfortable with the large array of palliative drugs is far preferable and much more humane than the prolonged dying by incessant medical intervention that is demanded of patients by misinformed relatives and practitioners.

It is clear that these death myths at one time served a proper and meaningful role in medical decision making. As a part of our previous presuppositions about life, death and medicine, these myths stood to call all the available resources to the service of life at any cost. At a time when the technological armamentarium was minimal and the major courses of treatment were palliative, the myths prescribed and underscored the medical/legal/theological ethical system of their day. But current technology has changed the perspective about and meaning of the con-

cepts of life, death and medicine. As these concepts are revised in light of even newer treatment options, we will need to develop a different, more flexible set of "death myths" to guide our decisions.

Different from the old, the following guidelines facilitate, rather than impede, decision making in the area of withdrawing, withholding, or refusing life support.

- Aggressively seek information. Good decisions begin with good facts. Patients and families need to talk to the physician, and listen actively, critically when s/he answers. Many families complain that their physician did not tell them everything, when in fact they themselves did not want to hear and did not listen.

They need to ask as many questions as necessary. The physician works for them and they have a right to know all of the information gathered. They are also free to get a second opinion, or even a third given the time constraints. Many physicians will request or encourage another opinion anyway. Having heard their best experienced conclusions as to diagnosis and prognosis, the decision regarding treatment and life support is then up to the patient/family.

- Aim for a balance. If the patient is competent, one ought to consider first what s/he wants done. If the patient is incompetent it will be up to the significant other to determine what the patient would want done. In every situation the wishes of the patient should be given priority and honored wherever possible.

Next, balance off the wants and needs of the patient with those of the family. It is important that no unilateral decisions be made. Both the desires of the patient and the desires of the family/significant other need to be considered and a consensus carefully reached. Sometimes it is appropriate to consider the needs of the larger community as well: e.g. Will this expenditure of healthcare (respirator, neonatal or ICU bed space, dialysis, heart surgery) limit the available resources for less catastrophically ill patients?

- Consider the ethic of love and the ethic of need. Jesus' suggestion that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves implies putting ourselves in the position of the person from whom life support is about to be withdrawn. What is the most loving thing to do (for the patient, family, community) in this situation?

Another major ethical premise of the Old and New Testaments is always to come down on the side of the needy, dispossessed and helpless. It may, of course, be difficult to determine who is the most needy in the particular situation. (Is it the dying infant, the grieving family, the respirator-bound adult, the anguishing spouse?) But, combined with the ethic of love, the ethic of need can be a helpful tool for clarifying decisions.

• Can does not imply ought. This clearly revolutionary maxim is nearly anti-Western. The West was built on “can implies ought.” If we could build a railroad across the country, we ought to do so. If we can put a person on the moon, in a space station, on another planet, we ought to do it. Our new medical technology, however, is permitting us to do things that in some cases we ought not to do.

Boundaries will have to be carefully drawn using this statement as a guide, particularly in the realm of life support decision making. When faced at the bedside with a decision about withdrawing, withholding or refusing machines, I.V.’s or CPR, this maxim may assist many persons in allowing death to take its natural course.

• Be there. Continuity and support are vital. Whether you are the caregiver or the significant other, don’t just make the decision and leave. Often families decide to withdraw treatment and then quickly absent themselves from the scene. Likewise caregivers participate as helpers in the high drama of the decision making and then find other things to do.

While the decision is itself important, it is of equal import to support that decision with contact and constant support. Be by the bedside of the dying patient, or the patient who has made a withdrawal or withholding of treatment decision. Agonize with them, cry with them, remember with them as they lay dying. Of course it is difficult to be present as the wishes of the patient or family are carried out, respirators removed, dialysis stopped. But for all involved — patient, family and staff — it will help preserve the dignity and love with which the decision was made.

• What is medically or legally right may not be ethically right. Just because a procedure is medically “indicated” or legally “propitious” does not mean it is the procedure or action of ethical choice. Such decisions are frequently relegated by default to medical and legal personnel on the assumption that these persons have some expertise in determining the appropriateness of a particular action.

Patients and families, especially in a crisis, may turn first to external guidelines from physicians or attorneys hoping to find some solid ground on which to base their opinion of what is “right.” Often it is only after some confusing, disappointing or conflicting medico-legal advice that they begin to ask what is “right” for *this* person, given who s/he is and what s/he wanted.

It seems clear that the basis for moral decision making must be primarily other than legal and medical, though those disciplines may offer helpful information. The place to start is with the desire of the patient.

• Death is a form of healing. As stated earlier, rather

than the evil enemy to be battled at any cost, death can be seen as a form of healing; a logical, even welcome alternative to a debilitating life. To view death in this manner requires a broader perspective on life, and assumes an attitude of acceptance of both life and death as a part of a larger existence. The more we view death as an acceptable form of healing, the more we will treat our terminally ill patients with the respect and dignity that their dying demands.

• The Bible is not a model for morality. It is a mirror for identity. There is not much information about respirators in Genesis, Leviticus, or Revelation. It is clearly inappropriate to look to the Bible to tell us specifically what to *do*. It is, however, important to look into the Bible as a mirror to see who we *are*, to determine what kind of covenant people we are with our peculiar God, to watch how we interact with God and one another, and to use that information to make our ethical decisions more in line with that historical tradition and reality.

• Examine your own death. How many people reading this article have: a legal, binding will? A durable power of attorney? A Living Will? Made their funeral arrangements and paid for them? Made a decision regarding organ donation? Are registered with an organ bank or procurement agency so that donation is likely to happen?

Often those persons who claim to be on the forefront of assisting others in ethical decision making have done little regarding their *own* death. Studies have shown that if people have not faced these issues in their own lives, they are much less likely to even *hear* persons who are in crisis or dying allude to them.

If we are to be truly helpful to others in exploring the ethical implications of life support decision making, it would be well for each of us to make our own decisions first.

The issues discussed here are not theoretical or rhetorical. The question is not “if” we will have to make these decisions, especially about life support, but “when?” Some 70% of American deaths now occur in healthcare institutions. That means that death is frequently medically assisted and decisional, rather than spontaneous or “natural.” As this medicalization of death continues to grow, we will be forced to make life support decisions more often, either at the time of the dying, or in an advanced directive such as a Living Will.

Preparation, especially at the parish level, through education, dialogue, and decision making *now* will facilitate our decision. If we do *not* make our choices and preferences known now, then others will make the decisions for us, and we will deserve the kind of technocratic terminal healthcare we will get. ■

# Short Takes

## 'New poor' unique

A major Catholic relief agency reported recently that during the past three years it has awarded more than \$2 million in grants to two groups — industrial workers and farmers — that it classifies as the "new poor."

According to the report by the Campaign for Human Development, adjustments in the U.S. economy — a shift from an industrial-based economy to one with more service orientation — and a major agricultural crisis have left formerly productive workers unemployed. The industrial workers, said the report, have formed organizations "to protect their jobs or obtain new ones." They seek such measures as job training, plant buy-outs and a halt to home mortgage foreclosures. Family farmers have formed organizations to achieve moratoriums on bank foreclosures, change commodity market practices and form buyer-seller co-ops.

The two groups of "new poor" are unique, said the report, in that factory workers have accumulated some "capital" in the form of work skills, good work habits and home equity. Similarly, farmers have acquired "capital" in farm land and equipment. Current economic conditions, however, have rendered the factory workers "unemployable." Farmers are "income-poor" and "are likely to be forced off the land."

**Religious News Service 3/11/86**

## Hold that tiger

A scholar, resting beside a roadside, awoke to see the tail of a large tiger protruding between the rocks beside him. He screamed, waking the tiger, who growled, as he grabbed its tail and held on fiercely until help came in the form of a passing Buddhist priest with a heavy stick.

The priest refused to kill the tiger with his staff because he did not believe in killing anything. The scholar asked if the priest would hold the tiger's tail while he did the killing. The priest agreed — but the scholar began to walk away. "You have convinced me. I shouldn't kill anything." And he left the priest holding the tiger by the tail.

**NCC's Ecu-link 1/87**

There never was a good war  
or a bad peace. **Ben Franklin**



## Aids for prison ministry

Did you know that

- the majority of women in prison are young, poor, unskilled, women of color, single and mothers of dependent children;
- the arrest and incarceration of women has nearly doubled since 1974;
- property-related, not violent, crimes account for virtually the entire increase;
- nearly 20% of all persons arrested in the United States are female?

These facts are included in an excellent pamphlet providing guidelines for those involved in ministry to incarcerated and post-release women, published by the Justice for Women Working Group, National Council of Churches. It includes tips on how to start a ministry, how to help women in the presentencing, incarceration, and post-incarceration phase, and tips on training volunteers. Prepaid price for the 6-page brochure (1 to 24) is 20¢ each.

A more comprehensive 191-page training manual entitled *Women in Jail and Prison*, published by the same group, is available for \$9. Marge Christie, noted Episcopal laywoman, was part of the original consultation that led to the writing and publication of the manual, representing the Episcopal Church in the effort.

To order either publication, make check payable to NCC, Women in Prison and send to NCC Justice for Women, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 572, New York, N.Y. 10115 (212-870-2385).

## Two views of life

If we look at our life as some precious treasure we must hoard, the demands made by others of our life are like losses. And death is a final loss, a final failure to hold on to our life. But if we look at our life as a treasure we must share, every service we give to others is a fulfillment of our life's purpose. And death is the final giving, the total giving.

**The Rev. Edicio de la Torre,**  
Catholic priest imprisoned by Marcos  
Quoted in *The Other Side*

## Quote of note

People generally quarrel because they don't know how to argue.

**G. K. Chesterton**

## Slim compensation

The U.S. Department of Labor is rewriting the laws of physiology and anatomy, mandating which of our body parts are essential and which, in the long run, don't count. Civilian federal employees injured on the job recurrently receive medical benefits and reimbursement for missed work time when they lose any of about a dozen body parts, such as legs or eyes — plus a lump sum to compensate for the lost part. According to anonymous sources within the government, the DOL is considering axing the lump sum for those organs deemed "not necessary for the production of income." The targeted parts? Lungs, testicles, tongue, breasts, and larynx. Nothing an ordinary worker couldn't do without.

**Dollars & Sense 3/86**

## Famous last words?

The Iran scandal prompted the Rev. James J. Doyle, professor of theology at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, to submit the September, 1986 cover of *Fortune* magazine as a Short Takes item. It features a beaming portrait of Ronald Reagan next to the President's words, "Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere." The cover story title is *What Managers Can Learn From Manager Reagan*. We are indebted to Doyle for this entry, and welcome submissions from other WITNESS readers who may come across similar ironies related to current social issues.

# Why fast for Lent — or anytime

by Glenda Hope

**F**asting is a spiritual discipline common to every major religion and many smaller ones. Yet it is considered foreign, even weird, to many of us. But fasting is a way to raise questions about what we take for granted. Properly approached, it can help us expose those phony hungers we now experience as so real and urgent that we feed them to the neglect of our *real* hungers.

A religious fast is not the same as dieting or weight watching, as admirable or necessary as that may be. The fast as a spiritual discipline is always undertaken in the context of prayer and reflection, and for most of us, is best done in community. When I know that there is at least one other person abstaining from food or drink, except water, for 24 hours, it helps me resist the temptation to focus on the unpleasant feeling in my stomach.

Neither does fasting have anything to do with spiritual pride. There is a danger in doing it just for the act of achievement. Nor is it a sign of greater spiritual strength over those who are not fasting. Rather, it is undertaken in a spirit of repentance, of knowing that there are many phony layers of hunger and false satiation that I need to cut through before I can be in touch with my genuine hungers.

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**The Rev. Glenda Hope** is a co-director of San Francisco Network Ministries, an urban based ecumenical ministry focusing on low-income, elderly, young adults, homeless and AIDS-impacted of the city. She is also pastor of Seventh Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Fasting undertaken in the context of prayer and reflection — not just as a grim act of will or a pious exercise — is a means to greater freedom. That is what was happening with Jesus in the wilderness during his long fast. John of the Cross said that it matters not whether the sparrow is held by a chain or a thread. Whatever the restraint, it keeps the sparrow from flying. And so with us. Fasting can be training for flight, an exercise for liberation.

Let me give a few examples — certainly not of the depth experienced by Jesus after 40 days, but perhaps closer to the life experience of most of us.

I am part of a covenant community which corporately undertakes bi-weekly fasting. The first day, I rather quickly began to argue with myself about its validity, even its rationality. Why was I doing this? I don't really eat that much, nor do I spend much money on food. Even if I gave the money to the poor, it wouldn't help much. I work hard and need to be nourished, etc., etc.

What suddenly came clear was the strong feeling that I was *entitled* to eat whenever the least bit hungry. Clearly, it would not endanger my health to go 24 hours without food; and it would improve my health to go that many hours without coffee. No, the feeling of entitlement was the key. For most of us, immediately available food is not regarded as a gift but as a right, even while others starve. We have lost the sense of wonder and the gift of gratitude. We no longer honestly pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." We de-

mand it or take it unthinkingly. Fasting may help us restore some sense of wonder, of thankfulness, of delight for even the simplest food.

Again, on one fast day, I went to the supermarket. There surged within me an almost irresistible impulse to go up and down the aisles grabbing things and piling them into my basket, eating some in the process. Everything — including things I have never bought and probably never will — looked not just appealing but essential. What well-schooled, mindless consumers we are — captives to an economy geared to glut and hedonism. Fasting, if it helps to free us from that consumer captivity, is training toward liberation.

Another reflection that came to me after the supermarket experience was this: What must it be like to know all those tempting foods are there and that you will *never* be able to buy them, know that your children are never filled, are being stunted by malnutrition? Day after day you may only look at those shelves, not touch. Fasting is a way to help us establish some small empathy with the hungry of the world, to imagine what is their daily despair.

Consider El Salvador: According to statistics, almost 75% of Salvadoran children under age 5 suffer from malnutrition. At heart of the misery is an extremely inequitable distribution of land. More than 40% of the nation's peasants are landless, and some 63% of families lack water; 33% live in one room shacks.

"We must seek ways to make the dis-

tant sufferings of hunger concrete enough in our own lives to make us know our world includes the suffering poor," Edward Farrell counsels in *Disciples and Other Strangers*. "The world of the suffering poor includes us, the suffering rich. Fasting is not a matter of our helping or loving those who are needy. It is a matter of knowing how each of us is needy. The slave-making forces at work in our world exempt no one. Fasting is an act of resistance against our own slavery. It is not a good deed, but an act of self-interest in its most profound sense."

Which leads me to note that fasting may reveal how much of our eating and drinking is nothing more than habit, not a necessary intake of nourishment. Which of us does not worry about weight? Neither is eating necessarily relished, savored as sensual pleasure; nor is it necessarily a source of thankful prayer, of sharing with those we love or those in need. Just an unthinking habit which has taken us captive. Paul notes that as a Christian, "there are no forbidden things for me, but I am not going to let anything dominate me."

What does dominate me? Moving beyond eating and drinking as habit I can begin to ask, where else in life have I abdicated thoughtfulness and control? Why am I about to make this pur-

chase? Is it something I want or need or will even use? Or am I behaving as a well-trained captive consumer? Why am I watching this TV show, really? What is my genuine hunger?

A sensitive man told a wonderful story recently in our church. For a period of time he regularly went to the movies, never questioning that. It became a habit. Then he got involved with some people who were interested in knowing his thoughts, in calling forth his creativity, in sharing his warmth and love. He saw that his real hunger was not for watching someone else's fantasy projected on a movie or TV screen, but for interacting with others — thinking, creating, questioning, growing, giving, living, loving. Now if he goes to a movie it is because he chooses to do so, not because he unconsciously expects it to satisfy some deeper hunger.

Each of us has that same sort of story to discover, that hunger to touch, that restraint to break. Fasting is a means to discover the restraints which keep us from flying.

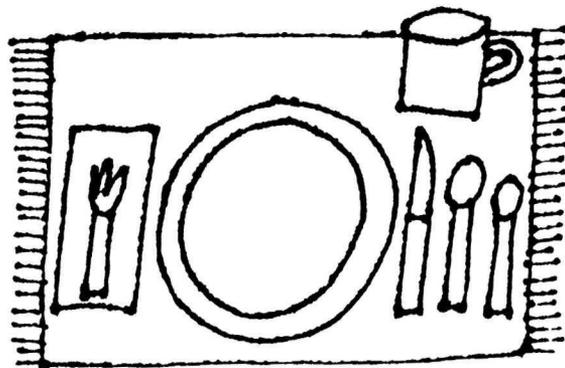
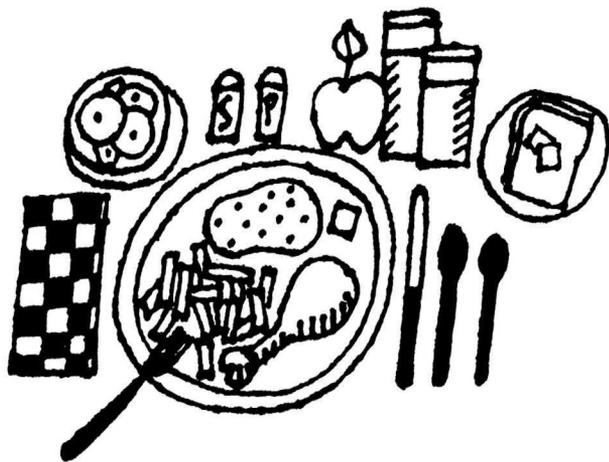
Fasting, carried out with prayerful reflection, in some inexplicable way may allow us to touch the deepest hunger of all, to become more aware of the false gods we substitute for the Living God. I believe this is what was happening with Jesus in the wilder-

ness. He was tempted to lesser ways than the way of self-giving love. He was tempted to use his power to dazzle, to establish himself securely, to operate within the world's accepted hierarchical order with himself at the pinnacle and others subject to him, rather than to live and work toward the egalitarian peaceable commonwealth of God. He was tempted to comfort rather than courage, to reasonableness rather than risk, security rather than total self-giving love.

He refused. It was not a once-for-all refusal. It never is. He would spend much time in fasting and prayer throughout his life, because he knew how easy it is to lose awareness and find a false hunger with spiritually empty calories.

His answers show he knew that our deepest hunger is the hunger for God. Food did not rule him, nor comfort, nor the temptation to dominance, nor ease, because he knew clearly what his real hunger was. Farrell has said it well: "When something or someone greater is present, we forget food. Lovers grow thin. Fasting is a sign of someone, something greater in our psychic center and consciousness. It uncovers our hidden capacities for greater strength, greater freedom. Fasting creates room within, enabling Christ to fill us with his hunger, his thirst."

Our world is hungry for Christians



who develop enough imagination to be able to put themselves in the places of those who are hungry for food and pure water and who cry, "Give us this day our daily bread." Our world is hungry for free people, willing to join together in regular, sustained, reflective spiritual disciplines which issue in purposeful action for the liberation of others. The world is not hungry for any more religious people willing to sit tied to a perch, chirping.

Fasting is not an end, it is a way. It is not a goal, it is a vehicle for getting there. It is not an act of heroism nor self-deprivation. Fasting is a way to experience our own frailty and mortality in a culture which denies that death is a reality. "Now that we know how to fly planes the size of mountains, it is time to learn to walk again. Now that we know how to prolong life indefinitely, it is time to learn to die again," James Carroll suggests in his book, *Contemplation*. Only then will we be truly free. Fasting is a way to help us confront our mortality without flinching, to look at the nothingness of death and know that God is in the center of it.

And it is a way of experiencing in our bodies some solidarity with the last, the least, and the lost. Clearly, this happened for Jesus. Having embarked on the way of genuine discipline, he came "armed with the power of the Spirit," proclaiming: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Such a clarity, such a calling, are the dangers of prayer and fasting. To be "armed with the power of the Spirit" is to be unable any longer to sit around chirping, tied down. Once you have flown, there is no turning back. ■

## Pearls

### To women aware in male institutions

**You are pearls:  
you began  
as irritants.**

**The ocean pushed  
your small, nearly  
invisible  
rough body  
through an undetected  
crack in the shell.  
You got inside.**

**Happy to have a home  
at last  
you grew close  
to the host,  
nuzzling up  
to the larger body.**

**You became  
a subject  
for diagnosis:  
invader, tumor.**

**Perhaps your parents  
were the true invaders  
and you were born  
in the shell —  
no difference —  
called an outsider  
still.**

**You were a representative  
of the whole  
outside world,  
a grain of sand,  
particle of the Universe,  
part of Earth.  
You were a growth.**

**And you did not go away.**

**In time  
you grew  
so large,  
an internal  
luminescence,**

**that the shell  
could contain  
neither you nor itself,  
and because of you  
the shell opened itself  
to the world.**

**Then your beauty  
was seen  
and prized,**

**your variety valued:  
precious, precious,  
a hard bubble of light:  
silver, white, ivory,  
or baroque.**

**If you are a specially  
irregular and rough  
pearl, named baroque  
(for broke),  
then you reveal  
in your own  
amazed/amazing  
body of light  
all the colors  
of the universe.**

**— Alla Bozarth-Campbell**



## Self-fulfillment: with a little help

“Self-fulfilling” is defined as “attaining fulfillment by virtue of having been predicted or assumed beforehand.” Why is it, then, that some folk find it necessary to work so hard at helping self-fulfilling prophecy along?

The question is prompted by a recent spate of miniscule ads that appear with regularity in a popular church journal. For the past several months, insertions have warned: “The election of women as bishops threatens to split the Anglican Communion. Remind your bishop of his duty to bind us together, not divide, by sending him a piece of string.” Alternate insertions have called attention to the fact that the election of women as bishops may happen soon and a registry of those who oppose such a step, clerical and lay, is being compiled. The sponsoring organization then requests support for its work.

The tone of the ads would suggest that they are only part of an overall campaign to whip up sentiment against the natural elevation of women to the episcopate, which is implicit in the now neutered canons governing ordination. A mere \$20 will get you a subscription to the organization’s newsletter which, I am sure, gives the full “scoop” on the “dangers and evils” inherent in such elections. The ads, however, remind me of the flogging to keep alive such controversies as use of the 1928 Prayer Book.

Now I am aware that there is real

opposition to women bishops in some quarters, just as there is continuing opposition to women priests and deacons some 12 years and 700 or so ordained females later. However, these particular opponents of women in the episcopate need to bear in mind a couple, three realities.

No matter how many opponents register, formally or otherwise, any election and subsequent consecration that take place will express the clear desire of a majority. Given the election and concurrence process by which this Episcopal Church operates, it would be well nigh impossible to impose the will of any minority on the larger body.

For those of you who have just joined us for the umpteenth singing of this refrain, the election of a bishop in the Episcopal Church in the United States requires concurrent *majorities* on four levels. Within a diocese the person elected must receive the *majority* vote on the same ballot of the clergy of that diocese as well as the lay deputies from all the congregations of that diocese. In some dioceses a two-thirds majority in both orders is required by local canons. The candidate must then receive the *majority* vote of the priests and lay people who make up the Standing Committees of *all the dioceses of the Episcopal Church*. Finally, a *majority* of all the bishops with jurisdiction must give their approval. Failure to achieve *majority* support on any of these levels

would prevent consecration from taking place. That sounds to me like overwhelming support for anyone elected — male or female.

Secondly, divided opinion throughout the Anglican Communion on the role and place of women in the ministry of the church already has been evidenced by the decision of several provinces to ordain women and others, notably the Church of England, to decline to do so. Refraining from electing women as bishops is not likely to heal these existing divisions as more and more churches struggle with and seek to resolve the question in light of their own clergy needs. The Anglican Communion continues to hold together in its loose confederation of branches. Lambeth 1988 will, in all likelihood, be a replay of previous once-a-decade conferences as regards reaffirming the inviolate autonomy of each church within the communion to govern its own internal affairs and to determine who is to be its ordained clergy.

All of which leads me back to the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. That four point resolution, now intact 100 years, specifically upholds “The Historic Episcopate, *locally adapted* in the methods of its administration *to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His (sic) Church.*” Anybody care to mess with that? ■

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# Holding Canterbury accountable

by Richard Mansfield

**I** believe that the Church of England's refusal to allow women priests of the Anglican Communion, ordained abroad, to celebrate the sacraments in English churches is a momentous decision with far-reaching implications. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that a province of the Anglican Communion has officially voted not to accept the legitimate sacramental ministry of ordained clergy from another province of the communion.

Ironically, at the very time the Church of England and other Anglican Churches are negotiating with the Roman Catholic Church for acceptance of our orders, our "Mother Church" is now saying that the orders of some of the people in other Anglican Churches will not be accepted within its jurisdiction. Just when the Anglican Communion is trying to sponsor substantive ecumenical agreements with other communions, our own communion has now sustained a major division within its own house.

How can we witness to Christian unity in general and the acceptance of each church's orders in particular when we have this basic disunity and division in our own communion? The

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**The Rev. Richard H. Mansfield, Jr.**, is a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford, Conn. and former Dean of Bexley Hall Seminary.

implications of the decision demand a call to solidarity with our sisters.

For example, I received a note recently from a priest-friend in England, mentioning that he would like to arrange a clergy exchange with a priest in our church for a couple of months. Actually I had been thinking of such an arrangement for myself. I have been granted a three-month refresher leave by my parish and diocese to do some writing and I wanted to spend some of that time in Europe.

An exchange with a Church of England priest would prove a worthwhile experience and make this financially feasible as well. But I cannot. And I am going to write my friend and say to him that as much as I would like to be helpful, I cannot be involved in finding him an exchange. In fact, I will encourage him not to come to the United States.

If my sisters cannot avail themselves of such an exchange neither can I. It would be like patronizing a lunch counter or belonging to a group or club that only serves or accepts White Anglo-Saxon persons and excludes Blacks and Jews. Therefore, I cannot promote or accept any invitation to perform my sacramental ministry in the Church of England when it refuses to accept the sacramental ministry of my sisters. The decision actually raises questions about whether any of us in the Episcopal Church should invite Church of

England priests to perform their sacramental ministries in any of our churches.

This saddens me greatly. This decision also might have implications for Lambeth Conference a year and a half from now. Should our bishops go? If they do, should they practice their sacramental ministries while there? If not, should Lambeth take place? A number of years ago the General Convention of our church had to change its site when it was learned that many of the original location's hotels would not accept Blacks. Our church, in effect, said we are not going to meet in a place that will not accept all of our people. It is not an identical analogy, but in principal, is it all that different? There are no women bishops (yet) but a bishop celebrates Holy Communion by the fact he is ordained a presbyter as well as a bishop. Should our bishops be meeting in a province of our church that refuses to accept some of our presbyters because they are female?

This is the issue of ecclesiastical integrity and moral conscience that has unfortunately been thrust upon us by the General Synod of the Church of England. It threatens the very existence of the Anglican Communion. How can we say that we are in communion with each other if we do not accept each others orders? There is, in fact, no order as well as no communion. And we in this church must not think we have full

communion with the Church of England if our sisters' orders in this church are not accepted.

The Church of England has a perfect right to decide for itself whether it will ordain women. And it has decided to ordain women as deacons. But its Synod cannot say that it is in communion with us if it does not accept some of our order by not accepting some of our ordained priests. They cannot have it both ways. There will be some who will argue that we broke communion with the Church of England by breaking with tradition and ordaining women. Or they will argue, probably wisely, that if members of the Church of England permit women priests from other Anglican churches to practice their sacramental ministry it will force them to ordain women. But none of these arguments change the fact that the Church of England has disrupted the ecclesiastical order, communion and unity of the Anglican Communion.

I hope that the Church of England can somehow reverse this unfortunate action. And until it does, I hope that every member of our church, especially male presbyters, no matter how they personally feel about the ordination of women, will stand in solidarity with our ordained sisters to protect the integrity of our church's orders and its moral conscience. ■

## Back Issues Available:

- **Central America:** Major stories on Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica. Bishop Sturdie Downs of Nicaragua tells WITNESS readers, "If you only knew about the interventions by the United States, how your country created a National Guard and how the multinationals exploited us, you would be in the streets protesting" and analyzes the economic interests behind his statement. Jim Levinson adds a Jewish perspective on Nicaragua. Jim Lewis gives an eyewitness report on the militarization of Honduras. Anna Grant Sibley describes the de-neutralizing of Costa Rica.

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**To order, fill in coupon below and mail to THE WITNESS, P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002.**

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**T**HE WITNESS, now celebrating its 70th year, might have died in Chicago in 1918 had it not been for the Rev. Charles J. Shutt, who kept the publication alive even as his own health was deteriorating.

Shutt, who served as managing editor under Bishop Irving Peake Johnson, was the only professional journalist on staff at the time, having worked on newspapers in New Orleans and as editor of the *Iowa Churchman*. In the first years of THE WITNESS, Shutt did all the editorial work from his rectory at St. John's Church, Mankato, Minn. THE WITNESS was then sent to Hobart, Indiana to be published in tabloid form.

When THE WITNESS combined its editorial and publishing operation and moved to Chicago, Shutt went with it, even though he was suffering from a rheumatic condition which was affecting his voice. The managerial and mechanical areas became Shutt's responsibility and he held the paper together during the Johnson years. To meet deadlines he frequently went to the plant to set type.

Shutt was 57 years old when he died of pneumonia in 1920. He had been a member of the Board of Editors of THE WITNESS from its inception in 1917.

These facts came to light when Charles Shutt's son, Philip, wrote THE WITNESS recently to say that at 79-years-old he might be "the only living contact with the early history of the magazine."

Phil Shutt was to follow in his father's footsteps, both in the ministry and as a



Charles J. Shutt



Philip L. Shutt

journalist. The younger Shutt worked on the magazine under William Spofford's term as editor.

Now historiographer for the Diocese of Springfield, Phil Shutt told THE WITNESS in a telephone interview, "I've always been a little nonplussed about my father's contribution to THE WITNESS. I have often felt his journalistic skills were not remembered or valued. When we moved to Chicago, World War I was still going on and I was only 10 or 11 years old, but I remember how pressured my father was. And certainly my mother's memories corroborated this."

Shutt said that he had sent the only photo of his father to St. Luke's, Des Moines, where his father was second rector. Thanks to Ginger O'Keefe, parish secretary, the photo was made available for this issue that we might celebrate the unsung editor's life and ministry.

Phil Shutt's own career with THE WITNESS as News Editor under Bill Spofford began ingloriously when he arrived late for work the first day. At that point THE WITNESS had moved to New York. "I got lost on the subway," he said. "The office then consisted of two rooms in a second story loft on Liberty Street near the Wall Street area. My duties covered not only writing but also handling subscriptions and advertising.

"In addition, I served as surrogate for Spofford on occasion at meetings of the Church League for Industrial Democracy. It was my first experience with an alleged communist group," he laughed. "Coming from the conservative biretta belt in the Midwest, which was so anti-communist, it was an eye opener for me."

Was he ever fearful of being harassed by the government because he attended

## comes to light through son

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CLID meetings?

"Never," he said. "I was probably rather naive. This group's activities might have been described as left-wing, but I didn't see anything bad about it. But there was a spasm of red-baiting at the time, and Bill was called before the McCarthy committee."

Several other incidents stand out for the former WITNESS news editor, most connected to the Episcopal Church General Convention in Philadelphia in 1946. They reveal that the social gospel message of the magazine was not appreciated in all church circles.

"I had been graduated from Nashotah the year before I signed on with THE WITNESS, and I remember attending a dinner meeting of the Alumni at General Convention. During introductions I stood up and said I was news editor of THE WITNESS. That was followed by groans and cat-calls — a rather uncharitable reaction, I felt.

"I was officially assigned to cover the House of Bishops, but I had also made a crude sign to take with me to display samples of the magazine. We had not made formal exhibit arrangements, and we were finally granted a space in a dim hallway near the bishops' meeting place. There we set up shop, my sign prominently displayed. But I don't recall having many visitors there," he laughed.

"Another experience was even more telling. Two meetings of a partisan nature were scheduled, one of the so-called Anglo-Catholics and the other of evangelicals. Because I knew my editor was at the latter I opted for the Anglo-

Catholics. I thought, as a Nashotah graduate, I would be welcome. But when I attempted to get in, I was peremptorily dismissed by Clifford Morehouse, who was editor of *The Living Church* at the time.

"That made me mad. So I found a window from which I was able to look into their smoke-filled room. There was Bishop Wallace Conkling of Chicago expounding some argument, and I knew some of the clergy and laity. So I wrote a WITNESS article including names of the principals involved. The story created a mild sensation."

Shutt also recalled bumping into Bishop William Scarlett, for whom an Episcopal Church Publishing Company award is named, sitting on the steps at the Bellevue Stratford hotel. He was in "a sandy suit and his red tie

— the hallmark of the bishop."

"I remember a story told about when he went to apply for his auto license, accompanied by a priest-aide who was wearing a collar. The Roman Catholic policeman motioned the priest to the front of the line, saying, 'This way, Father.' But the priest demurred. 'I'm sorry, but I'm with the Bishop of Missouri,' he said, pointing to Scarlett in his red tie, 'and I can't leave him.'"

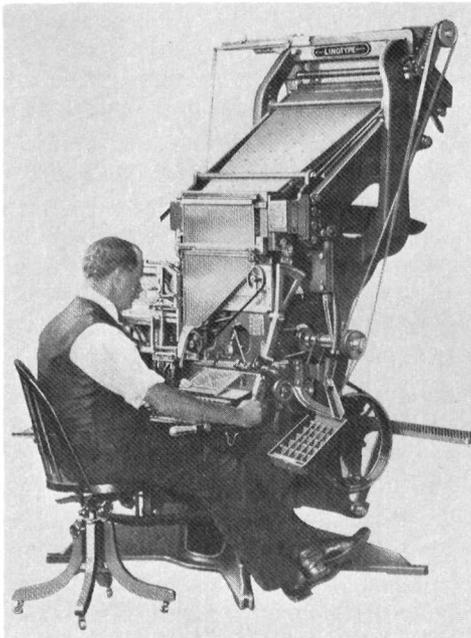
After Shutt left THE WITNESS, he returned to his Midwestern roots, disenchanted by "the aridity of the Eastern establishment." In his working career, Shutt has also served as reading clerk in the Iowa House of Representatives and as chair of the Young Democrats of Iowa during the Roosevelt years. He served in the Episcopal church as a priest for eight years, and before he retired in 1973 he had pursued a career in teaching. Until last year, he was warden of St. Andrew's Church, Paris, Ill. "I'm a perpetual acolyte," he said.

What does he think of THE WITNESS today?

Shutt candidly admits he does not always agree with the editorial policy. "I can accept women priests pragmatically, but not theologically," he says, and adds "I'm sure it's because I am approaching 80 and doubt I can change my opinions.

"However, while I don't agree totally, I believe THE WITNESS has a function in our national church to nudge our social conscience and this it does admirably. I enjoy reading the magazine, and I wish you the very best for the years which lie ahead."

— Mary Lou Suhor



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On liberating the middle class:

## The great American TV ad scam

**L**iberation theology is not confined merely to Christian reflection on the poor of Latin America or Africa, nor only on women and minorities in the United States. It is a call for liberation of that vague but real mass called the American middle class.

Clearly, by comparison with Third World peoples and those nearly destitute populations of the United States, the various segments of the middle class are not poor.

But even Latin American liberation theologians go beyond material considerations to unmask the deeper meaning of poverty: continuing deprivation of human dignity. It is here that one could legitimately maintain that the masses of American people are held in de-humanizing poverty.

The list of major areas of organized life in the United States that carry out the agenda of oppression is too lengthy for discussion here. Only one will be singled out for elaboration — TV advertising and its role in institutionalized injustice and cultural impoverishment.

TV advertising symbolizes most of the things that need to be said about technology, education, business, corporatism, predominant values, national goals and priorities, government and the political process. The same crude techniques which we piously deplore when used by fascist regimes to inculcate ideology and myth into the psyche of the masses are employed daily and with impunity by Madison Avenue's ad hucksters.

The worst form of political-cultural brainwashing is not to know the full extent of one's own predicament, or not to know it to any extent at all. The U.S. people, especially those still too young to remember a time without TV, have been pummeled mercilessly into submission by advertisement for almost 40 years, about the same length of time it takes a totalitarian regime to get its message across so that it will stick.

Permanently turning off their TV sets is not a viable option for the vast majority. They are as dependent upon it

as are hostages to captors. For countless millions, the Big Brother of TV — even perversely enough, the ads — is a welcome moment of total passivity after a hard day of working for the very corporations who throttle the public at night and through the entire weekend. Working America labors to earn enough money to buy the products that pay for the ads that push those same products on behalf of the same corporate masters for whom America works. A treadmill like that would be the envy of any dictator.

The techniques are no secret. They are aimed shamelessly at working on the viewer's guilt, sense of shame, anxiety, desire for superiority, sexual fantasies, vanity and natural tendencies to admire and emulate celebrities from the sports and entertainment worlds. The ads also nag away at the public's hang-ups about socio-economic status.

The pitch and pace of many ads is frenetic to the point of hysteria. There are booms, bangs, smashes, crashes and explosions reminiscent of the battlefield. Frantic voices command captive audiences that they *must* buy the product *now* or forever be consigned to the netherworld of the out-of-step — the worse thing that can happen to a middle-class American.

Most ads are in the form of endlessly repeated commands. "Buy it, America;" "Fix it, America;" "Look out, America, you're losing your competitive edge." The commands are frequently sugared over with catchy tunes and childish slogans. They are drummed into the memory, sometimes year in and year out, until they become an integral part of the millions of brainwashed robots who, sooner or later, do exactly what the marketeers have commanded. By now the viewers do it spontaneously and willingly.

Further, TV ads are a microcosm of similar assaults on human dignity in major areas of American social life. Cloaking themselves in the pious mantle of First Amendment freedoms while hammering the public with mindless slogans like "We do it all for you;" "You're in good hands, America;" "We bring good things to life;" "Winning is everything;" and "Free enterprise," the corporate pushers and their Madison Avenue con artists have succeeded in creating a new generation of narcissists. The millions of obedient souls do what they are programmed to do —

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**Bernard E. McGoldrick** is professor of political science at California State University, Fresno.

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## by Bernard E. McGoldrick

consume things. From Vancouver to Miami, Bangor to Galveston and Duluth to New Orleans the hucksters and their bank-rollers have created an American Gulag of languishing shoppers dying slowly of consumption. No value is too sacred, no human relationship too personal or poetic to be pressed into the service of the commercial culture to “reach out and touch someone.”

*“The U.S. people have been pummeled mercilessly into submission by advertisement for almost 40 years, about the same length of time it takes a totalitarian regime to get its message across so that it will stick.”*

Nor does there seem to be any difference or consequence between advertising toothpaste and advertising the latest body count each night as newscasters solemnly describe the murdered and the mangled. We now have Wall Street Business Briefs which interrupt and pre-empt other equally unimportant fare on TV. After all, we must know, what the high rollers are winning or losing in that peculiar Wall Street ritual which we are to believe decides our fate not only in the marketplace but in life itself.

Even politics is seen as an extension of the advertising business. This is the case not only during campaigns; day-to-day governmental policymaking and debate is geared toward “selling a program or a decision.” The *images* of political parties, programs and policymakers have become more powerful than those parties, programs or persons themselves.

Even fantasies like Star Wars are described by political con-artists in such ad-world hype as a “selling point” in the Administration’s efforts to intimidate the Russians into buying more time on this planet.

Whether it be TV ads or shows or news — they are all the same money-making fantasy acted out by the same people. Whether it be the nuclear terror or the robotization of education, medicine, government and politics, there is a common thread running through — a definition of the

human person that is incompatible with the gospel of human freedom.

In place of the sweet balm of community, the suburban middle class has bought into a mythic social contract that turns people into objects to be bought and sold in the market. And even child abuse is not confined to physical battering. Taking advantage of small children to hawk diapers and soda pop on TV is thought “cute.”

Another dimension to TV advertising appears to have escaped much criticism: The depressing spectacle of the prostitution of artistic talent. The advertising industry has almost completely taken over recruitment and advancement of talent in popular music, song writing, dancing and basic acting. Aspiring young artists in America, with years of self-sacrificing discipline, training and dedication behind them, must now serve an indentured servanthip, if they are among the few “lucky” ones, in shoving everything from soup to nuts down the ever-consuming throats of the American people. Things have degenerated to the point that the level of talent and performance in the ads is frequently higher than what one finds in the main shows squeezed in between. Even old and respected artists have succumbed to the allurements of big bucks. The artistic and entertainment communities have hired themselves out to the new class of pimps, the TV ad executives.

It is beyond the limited scope and purpose of this article to discuss what passes for news and entertainment on American TV. This wasteland has been traversed by critics for many years. It is clear, for example, that many TV shows are propaganda pieces aimed at winning favorable public reaction to the police and medical professions. The military also buys more than its fair share of prime-time entertainment hours in its efforts to identify itself with the very best in American manhood and womanhood.

The American people are not “mad as hell” at TV ads or the TV industry and they are beyond shouting from the roof tops “we won’t take it any more.”

If this state of affairs — summed up for encapsulation purposes in TV ads as a symbol of political and cultural impoverishment and oppression of the masses of the American people — does not qualify the United States for liberation, then nothing ever could. What is held in bondage by the corporations and their TV lackeys and the faculties of Business Administration is the dignity of the human person. It is also the same human dignity which American propagandists ceaselessly remind us is held captive under communist regimes. But since our bondage is protected by a Bill of Rights, it is viewed as freedom — the freedom to die of an overdose of consumerism and high tech chips. The worst of all illusions is to live and die never having

known what it might mean to be a human being.

It is necessary but insufficient for the organized churches to issue pronouncements on the evils of nuclear weapons and of laissez-faire capitalism. It is helpful and encouraging to know that similar missives are in the works on the evils of sexism. But such admirable preachments never confront the situation at its foundations. Church assemblies and conventions in the United States, especially those of more liberal persuasion, are playing the pluralism game. They appeal to that very process which guarantees that the vested interests will continue to control and perpetuate the functions of the great un-culture. For that process is not democratic to begin with. It is a process that ostensibly invites all viewpoints and philosophies but which at the same time systematically excludes a radical Christian challenge.

Christian challenge in America must be muffled, polite,

courteous, constructive, cooperative and patriotic. A good Christian is a good Boy or Girl Scout. If not, then Christian prophecy soon learns that the velvet glove of open-market pluralism contains the iron fist of authoritarian and, thus of anti-democratic self-interest. The mainline liberal churches, like their right-wing fundamentalist brethren, stop at the water's edge when it comes to talk of Christianity defined as liberation from cultural oppression. This stands to reason. They are an integral part of that oppression.

The church is always an Exodus church. It cannot accommodate itself, as it has in America and the rest of the West, to a phoney pluralism that forever protects the powerful from the masses of the weak and culturally deprived. A place to begin might be a national preaching campaign against TV ads! Merely symbolic? Well, isn't symbolism what it's all about? ■

### Letters . . . Continued from page 3

beyond it. These women are still in positions of power in our parishes and dioceses, exercising their ministry as they view it. And *their* ministry does not include sexual equality at all!

This lack of unanimity needs to be addressed when talking about feminine support for ordained ministry for women, especially consecration to the bishopric. Women are not a united block (nor are the men united against us).

**Marsha Ziegler**  
Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y.

### Accessibility to aid all

Your December guest editorialist, Cyndi Jones, makes a good point. Too many still assume that the Tiny Tims of our society are relatively easy to carry around and they probably won't survive anyhow. So why go for accessible public transportation?

Of course, there was no public transportation in Tiny Tim's day. Maybe if Bob Cratchit had advocated for such, a benefit to the whole of society could have come about while striving to help one segment. This must be part of our current campaign, to help all segments of society — the infirm elderly, mothers and fathers with strollers, hale men

with push carts, etc. — become able to enter our buildings!

Partnering, collegiality, working together — this is the name of the game!

**Harold Wilke**  
Healing Community  
White Plains, N.Y.

### Women priests praised

Increasingly the Episcopal women priests are making a difference in the U.S. prisons. Two of our peace activists who were sentenced to federal prisons in West Virginia and Texas wrote, "The very first full day we were in prison, we were invited by Episcopal women priests to join their prayer groups."

You can imagine what news like this means to the family and friends of newly incarcerated residents. Praise God for the 750 Episcopal women priests and for the church that risked prophecy!

**Sr. Margaret Ellen Traxler**  
Institute for Women Today  
Chicago, Ill.

### Lauds Cueto, Guerra

I was very happy to learn in a recent **WITNESS** of the release of Maria Cueto and Steven Guerra from prison. It is most gratifying to know that there are still people around who truly live the Christian

life (even in adverse situations) rather than be content to merely wear it on their sleeves. Maria and Steven are living proof of this. God bless them both!

**Cliff Nyberg**  
Seattle, Wash.

### Towards authentic lives

Thank you for the discussion of issues and ideas facing us as Christians trying to live authentic lives in today's complex and, in many ways, confusing world. Two basic premises were addressed in the October issue. In "Contemplation: not for mystics only," Glenda Hope directs our attention to the relationship between the psyche and the transcendent God; and in "Apocalyptic theology and the Right," Peter Stiglin reminds us of historical and social facts that we must face as responsible members of the community of God's people.

**Carolyn W. Reynolds**  
Santa Rosa, Cal.

### 'Looked forward to'

This is my "most looked forward to" magazine. The superb writing and clear thinking on the great contemporary issues are much appreciated.

**Lois Waller**  
N. Little Rock, Ark.

# A STUDY PACKET

## THE CASE FOR DIVESTMENT

Prepared by  
The Episcopal Church Publishing Company



Apartheid is a sacrilege and the church can be a tremendous power in destroying it. That was a central theme running through Desmond Tutu's sermon during his enthronement as first Black Anglican Archbishop of Capetown.

To a congregation which reflected the multiracial, multinational character of the Anglican communion, Archbishop Tutu's moral challenge rang out: God demands that the faithful help "crush the oppressor," he said.

The primary course of action taken by churches responding seriously to the Nobel prizewinner's words has been to divest in firms doing business in South Africa — to renounce their complicity in "the abomination that is apartheid."

South Africa's economy has been described by William Teska, an Episcopal priest, as "a system of slavery held in place by terror." It might be argued, then, that divestiture has been urged by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in order to escape the judgment of God upon our profiting from sin — before it is too late.

For those who would engage in serious

study about whether some investments are morally intolerable, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company has prepared a study packet entitled *The Case for Divestment*.

Its contents supply a wealth of testimony to pray and think about, including a summary of the South African Kairos document, by William Johnston; a status report on apartheid and an article on

"The Case for Divestment" by Manning Marable; the exchange of correspondence between a reluctant Church Pension Fund and the Diocese of Newark, committed to divestment; backgrounders on the situation in South Africa, and a rich supply of resources. The packet was designed for study and *action*. Our spiritual health is imperiled by investments in South Africa. ■

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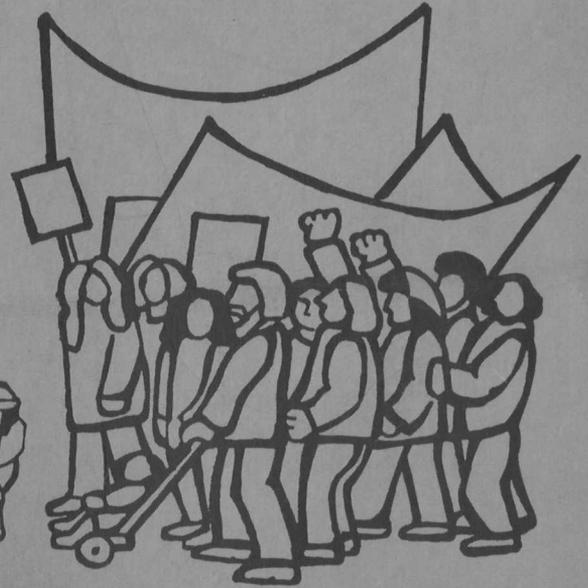


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