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# THE WITNESS

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Always room at these inns  
Robert Hirschfield

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In with the old  
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# Letters

## God for heterosexuals

Malcolm Boyd contributed a rather idyllic picture of committed gay relationships in his article in the October WITNESS. He described one that he blessed in a church ceremony and faulted those churches that refused to do likewise.

In order to reconcile homosexuality with Christianity, we have to make a number of assumptions I find impossible to make. One would be that Jesus and St. Paul were either (a) wrong about sexual morality or (b) ambiguous. I think we can quickly dismiss (b). If (a) is true, then it follows that the promise of Jesus, stated repeatedly in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of the Gospel according to St. John (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13) is, in fact, worthless.

We know that the promise was not meant to cover less essential questions. But what about such an essential question as heterosexuality vs. homosexuality or bisexuality? Does Boyd have such a poor opinion of sexual relations and the institution of marriage and the family as to believe that these are not essential questions? I am sure he does not. Then clearly, they must be covered by Jesus' promise. And the teaching and tradition of the Church — indeed of all mainline Christian churches until very recent times — has been clear and unequivocal on the subject of homosexuality.

If we dismiss Jesus' promise as worthless, that can only mean we deny the divinity of Christ. If Jesus is merely human and his opinion no more infallible than our own, then Boyd can devise any kind of sexual morality he wants.

If we believe that the purpose of this life is simply to have as much pleasure as possible before we die, then any prohibition of homosexual activity would be difficult to defend. But that is not the purpose of this life, according to God's clear and unequivocal word.

The situation of those Christians born with a homosexual or lesbian inclination is unhappy at best, tragic at worst, unless they can find sexual fulfillment in a more sublimated love for others. But the world is full of people who, for one reason or another, are deprived of full sexual fulfillment, whether they are trying to obey God's word or not. Why does God allow undeserved suffering? This has been a tough question since the time of Job.

To the question of homosexual activity, as to that of all forms of extra-marital sex, one answer is that God has a very profound and powerful interest in preserving the integrity of heterosexual marriage. Jesus certainly had that concern, even to the point of forbidding sexual activity in the mind. And both seem to have believed that any kind of extra-marital sex would be destructive to that integrity.

The situation of those with a *hopelessly* gay or lesbian orientation remains difficult, but it is as no means as difficult if they retain their faith in the goodness of God and the ultimate fact that the trials of this life are as nothing when compared to the joys of the life to come. This, as I read it, is the message of Jesus.

John Cort  
Roxbury, Mass.

## Boyd responds

Funny. I find John 14:26, 15:26 and 16:13 to reaffirm the continuing revelation of God in the world by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to keep instructing and strengthening us.

Sad. John Cort seems to deny the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in Biblical scholarship that, in the matter of human sexuality, for example, opens up radical (root) insights and also opens our hearts to the love of God in Christ.

Curious. I don't find my gay relationship with Mark Thompson, described in

the October WITNESS, as "a rather idyllic picture." In fact, the point is that it's not unlike many other relationships, gay and heterosexual. "Pleasure" (for some obtuse reason is highlighted by Cort) is clearly not the point of the gay relationship I've written about in detail. The relationship embraces responsibility, maturity, support and caring.

Jesus, of course, was healthy and alive, and is a role model of a person who celebrated pleasure — drinking wine, visiting the home of Martha and Mary, calling his followers' attention to the lilies of the field, and enjoying dinner parties. I do not denigrate pleasure. But it is cynical beyond belief for Cort to accuse gay relationships of being shallow, under the label of "pleasure", and so deny others their dimension.

What is outrageous is Cort's message to gay people: "Suffer!" Without scriptural validation (while claiming it), he says sexual-loving fulfillment is intended by God only for heterosexuals. Cort's "gospel" is exclusive, not inclusive, and is clearly not Biblical in orientation. If the church is to speak about the love of God to searching and troubled women and men, and grow as it wishes to do as a viable spiritual institution in today's culture, it must repudiate Cort's "gospel" as a travesty. I prefer the message of Jesus, which has never spoken of my "hopelessly gay" orientation. Indeed, the gospel of Jesus Christ gives me hope, affirms my being, and I am grateful for it.

The question is: Will the church choose the "gospel of churchianity" over the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Malcolm Boyd  
Santa Monica, Cal.

## Thankful for inclusion

Thank you once again for including me and my needs openly in the Christian community by printing Malcolm Boyd's "Blessing gay relationships" in the October WITNESS. Indeed it is for

the sustaining "ordinariness," as much as for the love, in a committed and blessed relationship that many lesbians and gay men long. So do many "straights," except that for them such relationships are not only permitted, but encouraged (even when they do not want them) and supported.

With gratitude for your commitment to THE WITNESS and its continuing blessing in my life.

**John W. Swetnam**  
Durham, N.C.

## Gays are blessed

In response to Patrick Schwing's letter (September WITNESS) saying the Episcopal Church should bless committed same-sex relationships, I am happy to tell WITNESS readers that in my church, Calvary St. Andrews, a joint congregation of Calvary Presbyterian and St. Andrew's Episcopal churches, gay and lesbian couples are blessed in their covenant with each other. Canon Walter Lee Szymanski, who ministers to the gay and lesbian community in Rochester, N.Y., is authorized by the Diocesan homophile ministry and the Bishop to conduct such blessing. Pre-blessing instruction and counseling assessment is required for all couples. We hope that we are only the first church among many who will agree that supporting gay and lesbian Christians in loving commitment to each other is truly following Jesus' call to love one another.

**Katherine H. Burnett**  
Rochester, N.Y.

## Get activists off track

I am sad and bitter and angry over your editorial of October, but much more so because of what prompted it.

I have written to THE WITNESS previously about protests and railroads. Now comes a Brian Willson, surely an activist of courage and vision, in a tangle with a train. As I feared and ar-

gued against, a body tried to change physics, and tons of engine took off his legs.

I am not trying to undo the instinct — unravel the idea of protest against what is unquestionably wrong — or sling mud. But there was blood on the tracks in a situation where there should not have been. And a person who could contribute much to this cause is reduced.

I beg you, do not urge on anyone else the false heroics of blocking trains. Other methods must be done. Flesh will not stop steel wheels. Martyrs will not stop trains. To say otherwise is to strew blood. I mourn in my complaint.

**David Jones**  
Okemos, Mich.

*(Jones errs by blaming the victim. A train did not slice off Brian Willson's legs. An engineer driving a monstrous load of munitions did not wait, as the Department of the Navy alleges he was directed to do, until all the activists were removed from the site. Perhaps martyrs will not stop these trains. But the U.S. government can stop this ruthless, despicable mutilation by honoring non-violent resistance and the Constitutional right of U.S. citizens to engage in any of its various forms. — Ed.)*

## Too hard on slavery

Professor Charles V. Willie's otherwise fine article "Constitutional wrongs" (September WITNESS) comes down too hard on our country for not having disposed immediately of that despicable institution of slavery. It's clear to all of us now (I hope) that slavery is intolerable, but it wasn't so abundantly clear then. In *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, Raimundo Pannikar says, "We should not commit the katachronism of judging a past era with ideas current today." One of the dangers of doing so is that we may draw the conclusion that we're hot stuff, that we are so much more enlightened. We're not, really.

Consider our current lack of respect for human life. We fail to see the divine spark in all human beings; we should see it regardless of their political beliefs, police records, illness, or age. And yet we persist in the unspeakable crimes of nuclear "deterrence," capital punishment, "euthanasia," and abortion.

May our children's children have more mercy on us than we have on our parents' parents.

**William J. Evans**  
Irvine, Cal.

## Willie responds

William J. Evans states that past practices of oppression should not be judged by contemporary knowledge and understanding. In 1787 when the Constitutional Convention provided for a democratic nation that also embraced slavery, the idea that ownership of human beings is immoral existed then and many years earlier and has been a major component of the Jewish/Christian tradition.

Apologizing for past wrongs does not enable us to learn from them and may facilitate the same practice in the future.

Sin by our forefathers, by our contemporaries and by progeny is sin and should not be tolerated at any time.

**Charles Willie**  
Cambridge, Mass.

## Clear prophetic throat

Prof. Charles Willie adeptly approaches the distinction between church vs. state and religion vs. politics in "Constitutional wrongs." He points out in a very powerful way the need for input from the religious community into the politics of our day. Indeed, the question he raises is, if those who comprise the religious communities have nothing to say about our life together in this country, then who does? The church is chal-

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# Editorial

## Peace on earth, goodwill . . . 45 years late

*(This month's guest editorial is by the Rev. Seiichi Michael Yasutake, a Nisei [second generation Japanese-American] who works with Refugee/Migration Ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. During World War II, the U.S. Government moved his family from their home in Seattle to two concentration camps in the West while his father was placed in Department of Justice Camps elsewhere. Yasutake spent one and a half years in these camps before being released to attend college.)*



S. Michael Yasutake

Some 45 years after the forced removal of approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans from their homes by the U.S. government during World War II, the House of Representatives has finally passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1987. The U.S. government has offered official apology for the unjust act and \$20,000 restitution each to 60,000 surviving internees. If the Senate version of the bill (S. 1009) passes, it will go to the President, whose advisers are recommending a veto.

In a separate move, a class action lawsuit against the U.S. government is going through the courts claiming 22 points of violation of constitutional rights of Japanese-Americans. And in another series of cases, a U.S. District Court judge cleared the wartime conviction of Professor Gordon Hirabayashi who defied internment. The judge declared that the government had engaged in misconduct and concealment of evidence in a racially-motivated action to expel the Japanese from the West Coast.

During World War II, religious

communities, succumbing to fear and prejudice, went along with the prevailing mass hysteria. There were some notable exceptions.

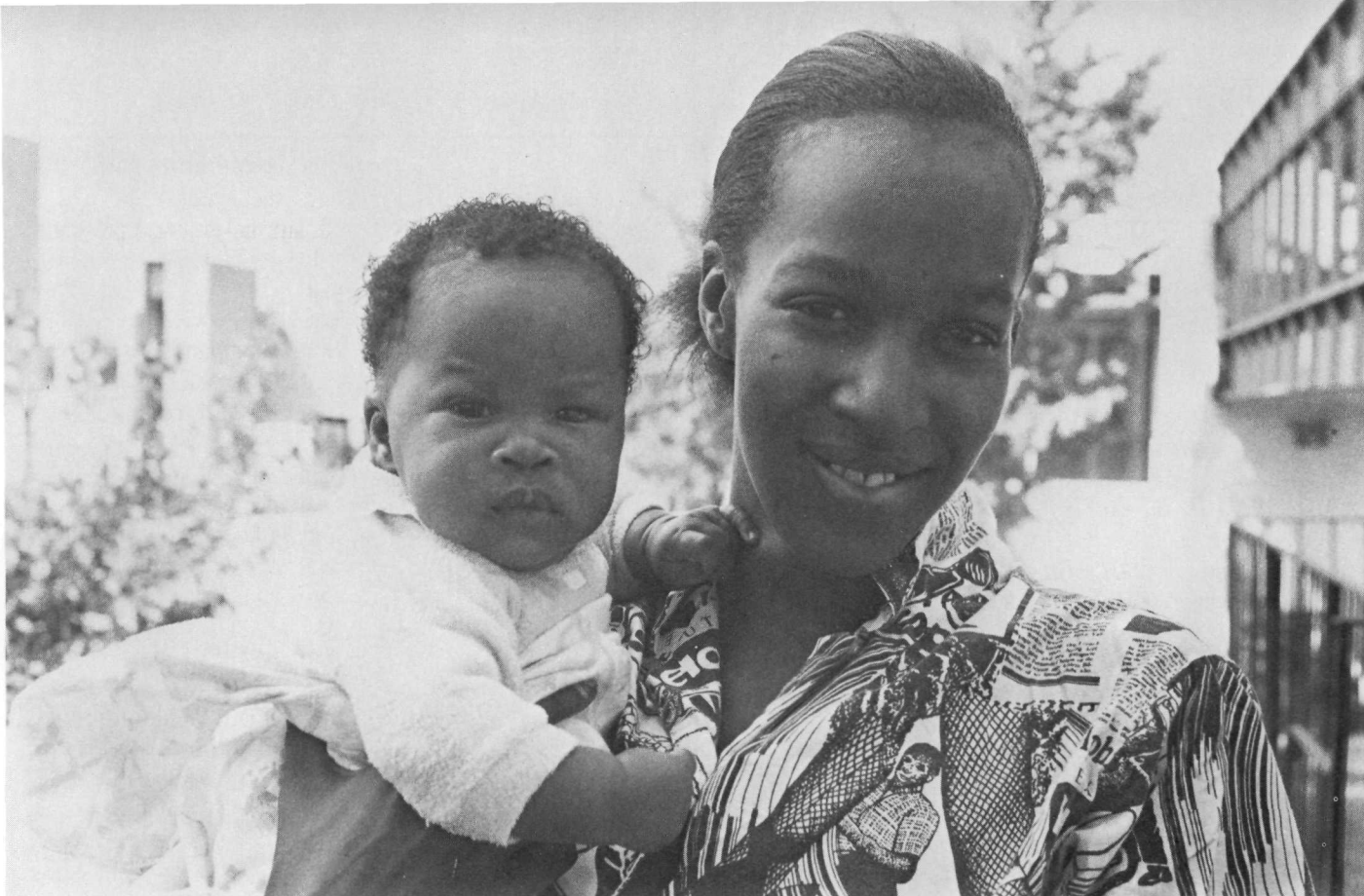
In 1942, the year of the expulsion of Japanese-Americans, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), in a message issued to "Quakers and other Christians" blamed themselves for allowing the U.S. government "to arrange this evacuation in direct violation of our heritage of social and racial justice." On July 31, 1942, as the press accused the government of coddling the Japanese in "summer resort camps," the International Convention of Disciples of Christ publicly criticized the government, asserting that mass internment based on "race, color, or ancestry is a form of reprisal no more to be condoned in the United States than in Germany," and noted, "No such steps have been taken against persons of German or Italian ancestries.

The time is ripe for the public to begin redressing one of the more obvious violations of human rights

in U.S. history. Organized efforts toward this goal are finally beginning to coalesce.

In 1986, a group of religious organizations led by AFSC filed an amicus brief in support of the class action lawsuit. The brief said, in reference to the wartime U.S. Supreme Court's complicity with the government's action, "The disturbing presence of this court's most disreputable and dangerous precedent in modern times . . . cannot be dismissed or ignored as from another era . . ." Major church groups such as the Episcopal Church and the National Council of Churches of Christ have gone on record in support of the congressional redress bill. The lobbying effort needs to continue. Justice delayed is justice denied.

The Holy Child, born in a stable, grew up with the mission of setting free those in captivity. Redressing past social wrongs is a way of welcoming the Child into our modern society in the continuing struggle for justice. ■



Cheery accommodations at the Saratoga Inn prompt a smile from Paula Pierce, shown with her daughter.

## Always room at these inns

by Robert Hirschfield

**D**iane, once a clerk-typist for the Internal Revenue Service, now homeless and a resident of the Saratoga Family Interfaith Inn in Queens, New York City, compared the Saratoga to the Holland Hotel, a Times Square welfare hotel where she and her three children lived previously.

"At the Holland, you couldn't walk up a flight of stairs without someone trying to sell you drugs — sometimes even a security guard. Here, there are regulations against drug use. And the guards, or security aides, as they call them, try to help you and talk over problems with you. They are not abusive like they are in the hotels."

The Saratoga, with 200 families, is the largest of three

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**Robert Hirschfield** is a New York City-based free lance journalist. For the last five years, he has written about the problem of homelessness for a variety of religious publications.

transitional residences operated by Homes for the Homeless, an interfaith project launched by the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The Prospect Family Interfaith Inn in the South Bronx houses 80 families, and the newly-opened Island Interfaith Family Inn on Staten Island hopes to eventually house 110 families. But these are just a fraction of the estimated 5,000 homeless families living in the city.

The families are sent to the Inns from the city-run welfare hotels and from congregate shelters where great numbers of beds are bunched together in large spaces. Some families were burned out of their homes. Others were the products of double evictions, first by landlords, then by relatives or friends. The Island and the Prospect chiefly house pregnant mothers, whereas the Saratoga mainly houses families with teen-age children.

The Inns provide each family with a clean room — in rare cases, two — and a bathroom. While there is a limit set at three or four children, overcrowding remains an inevitable but manageable hardship. Free daycare and intensive counseling, both lacking in the welfare hotels and congregate shelters, are also available. But the most important and elusive goal of the Homes for the Homeless program is to find permanent housing for its residents.

"We are here," said Sister Joan Kirby, a Roman Catholic nun and the project's executive director, "to put the shelters out of business."

Homes for the Homeless came into being a few years ago when Leonard Stern, a New York industrialist, came upon some homeless men sleeping by City Hall and brought the matter to the attention of a policeman. The policeman told him, "If you have any feeling for these people, don't have me send them to the shelters."

Stern decided to investigate the shelters. They so horrified him that he sought out the Very Rev. James Morton, dean of St. John the Divine, where there was a homeless advocacy program already underway. Stern told Morton that his company, Hartz Mountain Corporation, would supply the start-up money for an alternative program to the shelters. Homes for the Homeless was the result. Its funding, apart from Hartz Mountain Corporation, comes from federal, state and city sources.

"The project," said the Rev. John Redic, director of the Prospect Inn and a Church of God in Christ minister, "comes out of a concerned Christian perspective. The security aides, for instance, were chosen for their social service background. We want compassionate people working for us."

The residents at Prospect Inn are mainly Black, single-parent families. Mae Grider, the teacher who runs the preschool program at Prospect, works in a large, bright area equipped with a library, a fish tank, tables, blocks and a hamster. Grider said, "The children here need more emotional support than ordinary children. Any change is harder for them to adjust to."

Over at the Island Inn, administrator Judith Kahan, a former educator troubled by woeful literacy levels of the homeless, combines Montessori teaching methods with these of project Headstart for her own preschoolers. "In Montessori, you have extremely defined educational components — you must play with certain blocks in a certain way — whereas Headstart emphasizes nutrition and parental involvement. Our children need both," said Kahan.

But, Kahan cautions, "I can't undo in six months the damage done by society."

Some of this damage is caused by drug abuse. Many of

those who did drugs in their old neighborhoods and in the shelters will continue to do drugs no matter where they are.

"We try to provide help for those doing drugs," said Redic. "We link up users with substance abuse programs." Drug dealers, however, are a different story — they are not permitted to remain at the Inns.

Residents are often victims of family violence. Some of the women and children have been physically and psychologically abused all their lives. No counselor can erase their traumas, but the good ones can build compassionately around them.

"I was alone and pregnant when I came to the Prospect," recalled one young mother. "I didn't want to live anymore. The counselors helped me. They talked to me, they listened to me, they cared." If nothing else, young mothers like this will leave the Inns with more resources — high school equivalency diplomas, a degree of emotional stability and, hopefully, a place to live — than many of them would have previously thought possible.

Program director Kirby, whose order, the Religious of the Sacred Heart, fuses contemplation with social action, likened the saga of the homeless to a story in the Bible. "The Book of Ruth is about homelessness. Naomi was a homeless woman and Ruth became her companion in homelessness."

Echoes of Ruth's devotion are found among the homeless people in the program. Diane, the Saratoga resident who had previously lived with her three children in a welfare hotel, lost her apartment when the \$369 she earned every two weeks proved insufficient after her rent went up to \$400 a month. However, her children had been going to a good school in distant Far Rockaway, in which she wanted to keep them enrolled, so every day she traveled two hours by public transit to take them there and two hours to get them back.

Another Saratoga resident, a single Black father, Al, managed to keep his 7-year-old daughter and himself together as a family while living as virtual nomads in the city. After being flooded out of their slum apartment in the Bronx, they were sent to a congregate shelter in Brooklyn, then to the Holland Hotel before finally winding up at the Saratoga. "It's made me weep," he softly acknowledged.

The program's goal is to have residents in apartments of their own after six months. It is not an easy goal to meet. The dearth of low-income housing in New York confronts the housing search coordinators at every turn. Few apartments in the five boroughs fall into the price range of the welfare rent allotments. A family of two gets \$227 a month; a family of three, \$244; four, \$270, and five, \$281. A Housing and Vacancy survey commissioned by the city found





Children's reactions reveal they enjoy the attention provided by Sarah Jefferson at the Saratoga.

that the vacancy rate of apartments renting for \$200 to \$300 was 1.85% and for those under \$200, .62%. To further exacerbate matters, since President Reagan took office, federal funds for low-income housing have dropped from a high of \$32.2 billion in 1981 all the way down to \$2.3 billion in 1987.

Homes for the Homeless had to come up with permanent housing ideas of its own. It provides part of the funding for the work of the Urban Homesteaders Assistance Board (UHAB), a non-profit corporation based at St. John the Divine. Founded 15 years ago as part of the Cathedral's community outreach, UHAB renovates vacant, run-down apartments in structurally sound, occupied buildings to provide housing for homeless families. The funds Homes for the Homeless gives to UHAB are reimbursed by the state and city-funded Emergency Assistance Rehousing Program (EARP). The organization has also started a shared housing program where families living in large apartments share these apartments and expenses with homeless families. Kirby estimates that approximately 100 families from the Inns now have permanent housing.

All three Inns met with community resistance when they opened. The Prospect, nestled between poor tenements and stately, turreted brownstones in the Bronx, incurred the wrath of brownstone owners afraid of plummeting property

values, and of politicians, who, according to Prospect director Redic, were proponents of the common "not-in-my-backyard" syndrome. Redic met with the Inn's opponents to allay their fears. A year after it opened, Tom Bess of the Longwood Historic Preservation Association, a brownstone owners' group, conceded that neither the community nor property values have been harmed by the Prospect, and Redic has since been appointed to the Association's board.

The Saratoga, which opened in the middle-class Black neighborhood of Springfield Gardens, ran into an outraged civic association whose members felt "dumped on" by the city. The Inn found support among a handful of local clergy, but the civic association went to court to get the Saratoga closed down. However, in a recent decision, the court ruled that the needs of the homeless in this case outweighed the fears of the community, and therefore the Inn should remain open.

In Staten Island's Midland Beach section, pickets, black ribbons tied around trees and telephone threats have underscored community resistance to the Island Inn. But Kirby mentioned optimistically that a few residents of the basically lower-middle class White community have written to express their support and to offer their help as volunteers.

"The quality of a society," Kirby said, "can be measured by how it deals with its least advantaged members." ■

# The bed under the oven

by El Gilbert

She was always talking about plastic, how it got into her head or passed through her body, causing unusual swelling and sinus attacks.

Crazy, they said. Paranoid. Loony. Ought to be locked up for life . . . for her own good, of course. A woman like that is liable to do anything, you know.

She was working as a cleaning lady in a pizza parlor for \$3 a night. Slept on the floor under the oven after everyone had gone.

Huh, what could she clean, they said. She's dirty herself. Nasty hair. Ought to throw her in a tub of Lysol . . . for her own good, of course. A woman like that is liable to have anything, you know.

I was working as a cook in the same pizza parlor when she was there. Twenty dollars a night for 13 1/2 hours. Sweat sliding down my back and off my eyelashes, just missing the cheese.

Most of the time I cooked over \$1,000 worth of pizzas a night, which is a lot of movement, and after 13 1/2 hours of it, the only thing I felt like doing was crawling into a hole and covering it.

One night in particular it was so bad that I was too tired to walk. Shortly after closing I collapsed at a table in the dining room and, as usual, nobody paid any attention.

The next thing I knew there was a hand on my shoulder and someone was calling from what seemed to be far away. Where was I? At home in bed? Where? My neck felt detached as I struggled to lift my head. My eyes watered in the harsh light as I struggled to see. Then I saw her. It was the crazy one.

"You can sleep here," she said. "I have a bed under the oven for you."

"Okay," I said, too weak to protest, too exhausted to even think about calling a cab.

She led me to the spot under the oven. For a brief moment I thought of what they said about her, the possibility of her having something. Something. Lice, bugs or ticks, if nothing else. But I quickly dismissed it from my mind as fatigue overcame my abused body. Who cared, I thought,

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El Gilbert is a poet and free-lance writer who lives in Nashville. Her story appeared earlier this year in *The Mill Hunk Herald*.

easing between the warm heavy quilts on the floor.

Four hours later I woke up reasonably refreshed. It was quiet . . . deadly quiet. I looked around for her, the crazy one, but she was nowhere in sight. Strange. Then it hit me. If she let me sleep under the oven, where did she sleep?

She had to be somewhere, I thought, walking to the washroom, wondering if this was really happening or if it was some kind of weird dream. A dream, that's what it was . . . a weird dream. Sooner or later I would wake up, I told myself. But as I reached for the handle of the washroom, I saw her, the crazy one, her thin frame curled inside a flimsy blanket against the back door. No, it wasn't a dream. It was really happening. The crazy one had given me her only bed, the place of honor under the oven, the place reserved for "house" guests, the place where no plastic could get in and I was safe from invading aliens.

Crazy? Maybe. But if that was crazy, the whole world should be crazy. The whole world should have room at the inn. ■

## Facts about the homeless

- Homelessness will remain a permanent emergency — with more and more money spent on shelters the homeless themselves don't like — unless something is done about its causes: the absence of housing and jobs.

- The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates that there are at least 60,000 homeless in New York City; 20,000 in Baltimore; 15,000 in Philadelphia; 25,000 in Houston; 14,000 in Dallas; 4,500 in Phoenix; 10,000 in San Francisco; and 50,000 in Los Angeles, for a nationwide total of 3 million.

- The majority of homeless single individuals have not spent time in mental institutions. And two-thirds of the homeless in families are children who have no history of institutionalization. Of the 16,640 family homeless who were officially "temporarily housed by New York City," 10,912 were children.

- If our society cannot afford to put a roof over the heads of 3 million people, can it afford to spend millions of dollars on a questionable Star Wars program?

Peter Marcuse  
"Why are they homeless?"  
*The Nation* 4/4/87

# In with the old:

## A neglected natural resource

by Anne C. Garrison



The Rev. Dr. Anne C. Garrison is Assistant to the Bishop of Michigan in areas of alcoholism, racism and human sexuality, and a principal author of a diocesan position paper in favor of celebrating same-sex unions.

What is our most neglected national resource? You yourself may be part of it.

That abundant national resource is the elderly. I'm a member of this group and hence I'm qualified to speak about it. I entered my present profession after retiring from another at 65. Healthy, solvent and fraught with the experience of a lifetime of living, I was appalled at the sort of questions people asked me, like "When are you moving to Arizona?" and "What have you found to keep yourself busy?" If I replied something like "I'm taking a correspondence course in bank robbery," it was clear they hadn't heard me, because they'd say "Oh, isn't that fine. It's so important to keep busy!" People didn't really listen, because *the elderly don't matter*. Retirement is a steel door that clangs shut behind us. Beyond lies a contrived playground we should content ourselves with, and where people hope we are happy.

This is not for me and I hope it is not for you. I made my own move and found to my surprise that what I was being called to from within was the ordained ministry. At the age of 70, I became a priest of the Episcopal Church. For six years I've been fully employed in the ministerial work of my choice, and I am more fulfilled and happy than at any other time of my life.

I am aware that what summoned me out in my old age is not typical. But any one of us with a measure of health and mobility can make the determined search for a continuing occupation responsive to our needs — and I don't

mean shuffleboard and bingo. Rather, I have in mind the opportunities for signing up for the gaps that exist in the services of our communities: grandparenting for children who lack families, tutoring in reading or math or language, hospital visiting, political involvement, to name a few. Most of all, for many of us, there is the adaptation of our own professional skill to new situations.

It is our responsibility, if we are depressed or enraged at being shelved, to besiege the institutions of our society and shout, "I challenge you to match me with an opportunity to serve." They aren't going to seek us out. There are so many of us: over 28 million past the age of 65, with an average of 17 years ahead of us at the time we retire. Fifteen hundred more every day of the year!

Rewarding involvement in our society is a right that is ours only if we claim it. To go through the steel door of retirement into the plastic playground is not good enough. If we prefer to slow down and go fishing it should be by our choice. If we prefer to strike out into new work, the option should be there and the option should be ours. Seventeen years is too long for a game of shuffleboard.

What I'm talking about is taking the initiative and challenging society ourselves. Do not, my sisters and brothers who are elderly like me, accept the valuation your juniors may put on you. If they offer you a sit-down job as ticket-taker for a meeting, you may be justified in saying, "Thank you, but I prefer to be one of the panelists." ■



# The joy of aging

Courage is an affair of the heart. But so is life itself. To face one's future with courage is an assignment one must face "heartily." But this is nothing new. Throughout the years you have been working on that one task: To face your life heartily and with courage.

Do you remember your entrance into this world? Of course you don't. But you know it must have been painful, bewildering, cataclysmic. Yet you negotiated the transition with courage. The proof is that you are here, thanks to a heart that faced the unknown with a steady beat, calling forth all the options and experiences that have marked your path ever since.

And these options — how painful, bewildering and cataclysmic some of them have been! It has been said that when we decide, we die — die, that is, to the vistas, the adventures and the possibilities in those options we rejected. Think of all the partners you might have married . . . but didn't. Think of all the interesting and remarkable careers you might have pursued . . . but didn't. You are not a one-talent person — there are many different vocations in which you might have done well. But you didn't. When you made all those decisions you knew well what you were forgoing, what you were dying to. That took courage. Regrets? I hope you have some — not too many, but some. Because that shows you are alive to the good pathways you rejected because you had decided on better ones.

But so many years — perhaps 70-odd — have gone by, and those basic decisions such as marriage and voca-

tion are now behind you. You handled them well. Now there remains one primordial question. Deeper, far deeper than the decision about what you shall *do* with your life, is the decision to *be* the person you are.

When you insistently made your presence known at the gate of life, at your birth, you decided with courage to be who you are. Since then, admiration or envy or self-deprecation have occasionally moved you to think perhaps you would rather be someone else; "If only I were so-and-so! If only I had been born with talent for such-and-such!"

But you have rightly seen these intruding thoughts for what they are — interlopers who do not deserve a hearing. Because they are heretics who deny the cardinal tenet of your creed: That you are the person you are and it is a precious, awesome, distinctive gift to be that person. There never has been and never will be another person precisely like you — you are unique.

While editor of *THE WITNESS* some years ago, I once asked a writer in Chicago to do a piece on aging. The article he submitted began with his saying that for this assignment, he felt he should do some basic research. So he went to see his mother and asked her what she thought about the experience of growing old.

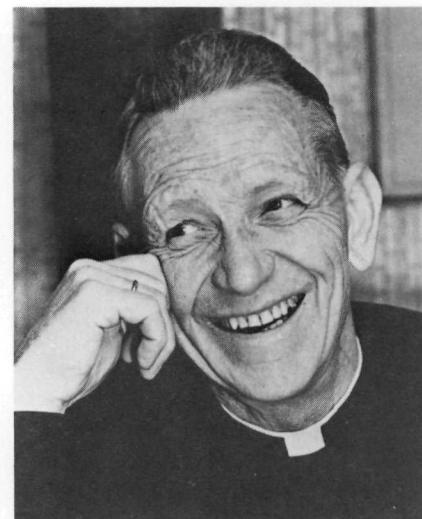
"Well," she replied, "I am all in favor of it. It has many good points. Then she added, thoughtfully, "But most of all, I like the deference."

Wasn't that a wonderful testament of devotion to one's selfhood? For a senior citizen to hear phrases like;

*Continued on page 23*

## Facing the future with courage

by Robert L. DeWitt



The Rt. Rev. Robert L. DeWitt is a retired Bishop of Pennsylvania and Senior Contributing Editor for *THE WITNESS*.

## Part II: The Israeli-Arab conflict

# Arafat and the children

by James Lewis

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; no, weep for yourselves and your children."

Luke 23:28

I was unpacking my bag. It was close to midnight. After the flight from Jordan to Tunisia, I was tired and ready for bed. For two and a half weeks I had been traveling through the Middle East with a group from the United States. Tunis, the last stop on our trip, was the main headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and throughout the trip, there were hints that we might have a chance to meet PLO leader Yasir Arafat.

Suddenly the phone in my room rang. Arafat would see our group right away. Within five minutes, we had all gathered in the hotel lobby, ready to go.

The ride to meet Arafat was like something out of a John Le Carre novel. He moves around and keeps odd hours for security reasons. No one knew where we were headed until we pulled up in front of a house on a dark street. Out front were eight or ten armed men standing under trees and back in the bushes. We carried notebooks and cameras.

After being searched, we were ushered into an office on the second floor. It may have been past midnight, but people were bustling about working as

if it were mid-afternoon. After waiting nervously for about 30 minutes, we were escorted down the hall into an office where Arafat came from behind his desk to greet us.

For the next two hours, we sat listening and asking questions. The following day, when I reviewed my notes, two of Arafat's remarks struck me as significant. The first was about violence. A member of our party had asked Arafat when the PLO would give up armed struggle. He replied calmly and patiently, "Armed struggle? What is our armed struggle in comparison with the armed struggle of the Israelis? Why is Israel depicted as being so weak? They have huge supplies of weapons. They even have a stockpile of nuclear weapons. What is it the Israelis fear while sitting on so much weaponry?" He suggested we ask the Israelis when *they* intend to renounce armed struggle.

The second remark is one that will haunt me forever. Arafat repeated it at least three times during our meeting; "If the United States is unwilling to meet with the PLO, then the United States will have to deal with the typhoon."

The "typhoon" Arafat referred to is the growing radical fundamentalism among young Palestinians — the children, trapped and homeless, caught in the spiral of violence. They become more radicalized with every show of Israeli force.

I had a personal message for Arafat from a young Palestinian boy from Beit Fajjar, a village near Bethlehem.

Our delegation was in Beit Fajjar to help a Palestinian family move field rocks so their land would not be confiscated by the Israelis.

That night, the boy, whom I had met while teaching a group of kids how to play baseball, sat on the floor of the house we were visiting and told me what it was like being a young Palestinian in an occupied land. He and many of his friends had been in jail for throwing stones at Israeli soldiers.

I told him we might meet Arafat when we got to Tunis and asked if he had a message for him. The boy's eyes filled with tears and he said, "Tell him that we love him and want him to come home."

It is the children, the next generation of Palestinians that are the "typhoon" that Arafat pointed out to us. During our trip I saw signs of the storm brewing at a prison and two Palestinian refugee camps in Israel.

Marshall Kaplan, one of the Jewish members of our group, and I stood directly across the street from the central prison in Gaza. Surrounded by guard towers, walls and barbed wire, it was a formidable structure. Marshall and I had decided we would try to get inside or at least talk with a prison official about conditions in the facility.

I said, "Ready, Marshall? Remember now, I'll flash my clergy card and you play my assistant." My only clergy identification was an old printed card stating I was a priest from the Diocese of Michigan.

A very young Israeli soldier dressed in olive green fatigues and carrying an

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The Rev. James Lewis, Contributing Editor to THE WITNESS, concludes a two-part series of articles about his recent trip to the Middle East with the above account.

automatic weapon asked for our passports. We told him we hoped to see the prison because we were concerned about prison conditions in the United States as well as Israel.

For the next 10 minutes people rushed back and forth and phone calls were made. As we waited a military truck pulled up. The soldier next to the driver called us toward him. He asked what we wanted. As we spoke, I glanced through the cab and into the back of the vehicle. In the darkness, I was able to see a young boy. He was seated on a box. His hands were bound behind his back and he was blindfolded.

We did not get inside the prison. Nor was anyone available to answer our questions. I left without being able to explore the one thing that haunted me throughout our trip: Is Israel, like South Africa, incarcerating large numbers of children, denying them their human rights and subjecting them to physical and psychological violence?

At one point in our itinerary a few of us spent an evening with Canon Riah Abu El-Assal, an Anglican priest at Christ Church in Nazareth and an advocate for imprisoned children. He was a gracious man, full of energy which manifested itself in the streams of stories he told — a sign of hope in a very bleak situation.

Riah has been denied permission by Israeli authorities to travel outside the country. Because he is open about his connections to the PLO and speaks out about the Palestinian youth in Israeli prisons, he has become a dangerous voice to the government. His parish church got grants to set up a project to gather information about imprisoned children. Just recently, Riah and project director Karen White released a fully documented report, *Children in Israeli Military Prisons*. It has been circulated to the press and U.S. government officials, but, unfortunately is one of the

many stories not being told by our news media.

I had a chance while in Israel to visit two camps — the Balata refugee camp in Nablus and a huge camp in Gaza. The camps were inhabited by enormous numbers of children. In Balata, one boy showed us scars across his stomach from gunshot wounds inflicted by the Israelis. His mother smiled and said she, and many mothers like her, would continue to fight the Israelis who occupied the land and killed Palestinians. Everyone there had a relative or friend who had been in prison. Throughout the camp, there were people whose homes had been demolished by the Israeli military because their child had been convicted of throwing stones at Israeli troops.

The list of Palestinian grievances is long. Children have been held by Israeli authorities for long periods with-

out charges. They have been beaten, kicked, hung by their wrists, forced to stand hooded, denied adequate sleep, food, water, medical care, baths. One young boy named Hanna, taken to the Gaza prison — called the “slaughter house” — that Marshall and I had attempted to enter, was kicked, forced to hold his arms raised for four days and nights and was soaked with buckets of freezing water until he finally lost consciousness. Later, he was sent to a solitary confinement cell for 20 days. He was regularly beaten and punched in the genitals. During this time, the Red Cross was not allowed to see him. After 60 days, he was released. He was never charged with a crime and never went to court. He has six sisters and four brothers, and three of them have also been imprisoned.

Late one night in Nazareth after a visit with Riah, I remembered the young people in the Balata camp. I thought about the ancient Well of Jacob located directly across the street from the the camp. Tourists came to



Graphic from a poster which urges Palestinians to oppose oppression by non-violently boycotting Israeli goods once a week, eating only homegrown produce and homemade products.



## Priest advocate for jailed youths

The Rev. Riah Abu El-Assal, canon of Christ Evangelical Episcopal Church in Nazareth, Israel, has spearheaded a team effort to produce a report entitled, *Children in Israeli Military Prisons*, documenting the plight of Palestinian children under the age of 18 who have been jailed.

Team participants included U.S. anthropologist Dina Lawrence and U.S. journalists Kameel Nasr of California and Karen White of Florida.

The authors note in the preface that while the report is "not a comprehensive study of the subject," it is intended "to focus worldwide attention on the matter." Copies have been forwarded to the United Nations, various international human rights organizations, the World Council of Churches, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and selected members of the U.S. Congress.

Canon Riah said that the report documents case histories of youth who have suffered violence and torture at the hands of the Israeli military authorities and the Shin Bet (the secret security police). The Palestinian children described in the study live in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which have been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 War. Following are excerpts from the report:

All children have the right to childhood, to be free from fear, from physical and mental abuse, and from the threat of bodily harm as they grow up. When the fundamental rights of children are violated in any country or by any government, it is the responsibility of the world community to condemn those violations and make sure those rights are restored. The recent outcry against detention of children in South Africa serves as an example.

This violation of children's human rights has grave moral and ethical implications and violates every international covenant concerning the due process of law and the protection of human rights. For us who are committed to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it also represents the unfortunate probability that another generation is being forced — perhaps irretrievably — even farther away from any inclination or will to resolve this conflict peacefully.

Indications in this research and other published reports on the subject affirm that arrest and torture of children residing in the refugee camps is widespread . . . The modus operandi of Israeli military rule dictates that children, whether held for two hours or sentenced to two months in prison, are subjected to systematic intimidation, humiliation and excessive physical abuse.

The Israeli military authorities do not notify relatives of an arrest and often families of arrested children as young as 10 years old may not discover for many days what has happened to their missing child.

Frequently spontaneous protests by children occur in response to provocative acts by the Israeli military. A "protest" or "demonstration," according to the Israeli military, may simply be three or four children chanting together. "Suspicion" of demonstrating is considered adequate for the Israeli military to respond with force which may include tear-gassing, clubbing or firing assault rifles in the air or at children.

Once a child has been arrested the probability of re-arrest is very great . . . Frequently children are awakened from sleep and arrested at home late at night. Often during questioning children are thrown to the floor and kicked by interrogators towering over them. (They) are called derogatory names, insulted with profanity and obscene remarks, forced into degrading and sometimes sexually obscene acts, slapped, beaten with fists, truncheons or wires, hung by their wrists.

Children, no matter how young, are denied contact with an attorney or the International Red Cross. Most tragically they are denied the comfort of parents or family. These children are detained and imprisoned without the benefit of due process, often without evidence, and are sentenced on the basis of a forced confession in a language they cannot understand.

**For copies of the report, contributions, or further information write:**

**The Rev. Canon Riah Abu El-Assal  
P.O. Box 75, Nazareth 16100, Israel**

see the well, not Balata. I thought about Nazareth, the city Jesus lived in as a child. History blends together in Israel. Visitors stand in awe of the way the past and present embrace — it is the future we are left to wonder about.

Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." The cruel irony in Israel today is simply that children are denied their human rights and being made to suffer because they are Palestinian. The consequences of such treatment are obvious — there is indeed a storm brewing.

A friend gave me a copy of *The Third Way: A Journal In the West Bank*, a brilliant book by Raja Shehadeh, to read as I traveled in the area. Shehadeh, a lawyer and founder and co-director of Law in the Service of Man, a human rights organization, captures exactly what it is like to live in the West Bank.

One segment of the book tells the story of 16-year-old Maha. Maha was a good girl, an excellent student who did not take part in demonstrations. Serious and withdrawn as a result of having lived her entire life under Israeli occupation, Maha seemed an innocent child to her parents — innocent, that is, until she was arrested and convicted by the Israeli military for planting bombs in Jerusalem.

Shehadeh recalls the testimony during the trial, "At the trial, her parents learned all about their quiet daughter's activities. The *fedayeen* (freedom fighters) would collect her between classes and, in free time — there was plenty with the schools so often on strike — they would drive her to various places, amongst them Jerusalem. In her innocent, quiet manner, wearing her school uniform, she would carry the bomb in her school bag and place it where they told her."

Maha proudly admitted to all charges. At one point, when chastised

by the judge for the way she slouched in her chair, she stood and shouted, "You are all scum and not worth the soles of my shoes. I am a *fida'iyyeh* (freedom fighter) and I do not care what you decide to do with me."

Maha's sister Rosie now visits her in prison, and is proud of how Maha encourages other prisoners. Rosie is puzzled as to where her once-quiet sister gets the courage to do what she does.

Shehadeh's book depicts the typhoon Arafat warned us about. Maha is only a cloud in that gathering storm. Shehadeh writes, "Maha is not the only 'Samedeh-turned-fida'iyyeh' (faithful one turned freedom fighter) in prison. She is with thousands of teenagers and men and women, most of them young when the occupation began. No one knows exactly how and when they learned to become freedom fighters — but their number is constantly and rapidly growing."

Roger Rosenblatt (*Children of War*) wrote presciently of the "typhoon" to come: "For the moment, these children are in the hands of others. They are the moved-from-place-to-place, the coaxed and hidden, the dragged-along and swung-into-the-sky, the hugged, the tickled, the slapped, the taught, the scolded, teased, praised, and sometimes the shot-at, and sometimes the decapitated and the killed-for-food. All that can be done to them is done, and they do what they are told. But not forever. One morning the streets through which they skitter now will be theirs to command. They will not think what to do; they will already know. Whatever becomes of them and of their countries will have been decided in some absolutely innocuous moment during these innocuous years, a moment they will not be able to trace. Their thinking done, they will rule largely by reflex, just as their parents did before them." ■

## Back Issues Available:

• **Central America in agony:** Articles on U.S. involvement in the area, including F. Forrester Church, son of the late Sen. Frank Church, on his father's fight in Congress to expose CIA covert activity during the 1970s; Mary Lou Suhor's account of her meetings with women and children in Nicaragua, many of them survivors of Contra violence; and a look at U.S. military build-up in Honduras. Also: Map and chronologies detailing the history of the turmoil in Central America.

• **Eleven myths about death:** Lead article by the Rev. Charles Meyer discusses: Pulling the plug is suicide/murder; To die of dehydration or starvation in a hospital is inhumane; Dying is 'God's will'; Where there's life, there's hope and seven other myths about death which serve as impediments to decision-making concerning life support systems. In this issue also: the Rev. Glenda Hope's reflection, Why fast for Lent — or anytime.

• **AIDS: The plague that lays waste at noon,** plus articles on the rights of gays and lesbians in church and society. Authors include John Fortunato, Zai Sherwood, Anne Gilson, Dom Ciannella, Madeline Ligammare.

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# THE WITNESS CELEBRATES

# 7

## YEARS

## 1967 to 1972 :

It was 20 years ago today Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play — 1967 was the year that the Beatles released their revolutionary album, “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.” But revolution was everywhere in 1967 to 1972, the final years of THE WITNESS under Bill Spofford, Sr. Flower Power was blooming with its message of peace and love, while Black Power was rumbling with its message of confrontation and liberation. “Tune in, turn on and drop out,” said the flower children, while H. Rap Brown, head of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), told his Black brothers and sisters: “You’d better get yourselves some guns. The only thing honkies respect is guns.”

Guns, violence and turmoil were constant motifs in the late ’60s and early ’70s. The great wave of change that had started building in the early 60s now swept over the country full force. The Episcopal Church, like many other institutions, could not escape being engulfed. In fact, under the guidance of then-Presidenting Bishop John Hines (who throughout his career appeared frequently in THE WITNESS and later served as chair of its board), the church took controversial positions in favor of Black liberation, women’s rights and withdrawal from Vietnam. Hines’ determination to involve the church in the fight for social justice made him extremely unpopular with church conservatives. THE WITNESS was a strong supporter of Hines’ progressive agenda.

It was an era of promise, the dawning of the Age of Aquarius. All the old conventions were being swept away. No one was sure what would come next. But those who had held power for so long were not about to give it up easily. The 1967 Summer of Love in San Francisco was the Long Hot Summer as riots ravaged the downtown ghettos in Jackson, Miss.; Detroit, Boston and other cities.

The Vietnam War continued to dominate the national conscience. U. S. planes began bombing Hanoi, North Vietnam’s capital. Martin Luther King proved his power as a leader to people of all colors when he led a peace march in New York City. The country’s conflict was evident when, in the same year, 700,000 marched down New York’s Fifth Avenue in support of the war while 500,000 poured into Washington, D.C. to protest it.

The news abroad was grim. Che Guevara, the great Latin American revolutionary, was cornered and killed in Bolivia. The Shah of Iran crowned himself ruler for life after taking over in a CIA-sponsored coup, and the Biafran civil war, destined to bring misery, death and starvation to millions,

began in Nigeria.

1968 was even a darker year. A U.S. Navy spy ship, the Pueblo, was captured in North Korean waters, causing an international incident at a tense time. Massive student riots paralyzed Paris and Mexico. Anti-war demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago turned into a bloody free-for-all when Mayor Daley gave his police force carte blanche to attack the demonstrators. National T.V. showed police driving crowds of people through plate glass windows; kicking and clubbing fallen, unarmed demonstrators.

Television spared the country nothing that year. Besides the horror of the daily Vietnam slaughter, the nation got to watch Sen. Bobby Kennedy, shot with a handgun, die on a Los Angeles hotel kitchen floor. Starving Biafrans, dying at the rate of 8,000 to 10,000 a day, pleaded mutely from T.V. and newspaper pictures. But one of the saddest pictures of all was of a veiled Coretta Scott King, watching as a simple mule-drawn wagon rolled through the crowded but silent streets of Atlanta, Ga., carrying the body of her husband, Martin Luther King. King had been assassinated in Memphis, where he had come to support a sanitation workers’ strike. THE WITNESS, taking a line from one of King’s speeches, called him the “drum major,” and said, “Martin Luther King is best honored, we think, by standing for what he stood, in as much as it is possible for us to do so.”

It was definitely a mixed year. The Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia, Richard M. Nixon was elected President and miniskirts were in. Grapes were out, because the United Farm Workers, led by Cesar Chavez, were on strike, and a boycott was launched.

1969 had some stupendous highs and lows. Apollo 11 Astronaut Neil Armstrong took “one small step for man, one giant step for mankind” on the moon, and THE WITNESS dutifully noted Episcopalian crewmembers on subsequent lunar landings, while at the same time wondering if the money for moon shots couldn’t be better spent on earth. Back on the home planet, THE WITNESS cheered the Episcopal Church’s decision to pay \$200,000 in reparations to James Forman’s Black Economic Development Council. The church called for a Special General Convention (GC II) to take place the following year, to discuss what social justice programs would be funded. Many conservative parishes and some dioceses drastically cut their donations and even considered splitting from the church.

The year had its share of murders, sanctioned and un-



# Revolution in the air

by Susan Pierce

sanctioned. California dreamin' became a nightmare when Charlie Manson and his grisly family murdered actress Sharon Tate and friends. The usual body count continued in Vietnam — more than 100 U.S. combat deaths in one week. Lieutenant William Calley, on trial for supervising the massacre of villagers at My Lai, was bewildered at being prosecuted for just doing his job. Vice-President Spiro Agnew, king of the erudite insult, blamed media reporters for the way the war was going, calling them “nattering nabobs of negativism” and said anti-war protestors were “effete snobs.” Eight “effete snobs,” known as the Chicago Eight, were acquitted of conspiracy charges after one of history's most riotous trials.

As the country slogged into the 1970s with Nixon at the helm, the bloom was definitely coming off the '60s rose. Except for a few bright spots — the growing women's and gay rights movement — the country was on its way into a major apathy that would eventually result in Ronald Reagan. But it was a lively time in the Episcopal Church, especially at the stormy GC II at South Bend, Indiana.

Protesting had become a dangerous pursuit. Students protesting the U.S. invasion of Cambodia were gunned down at Ohio's Kent State University and at Jackson State in Mississippi. One hopeful note in that year was that socialist Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile, bringing to an end years of oppressive military rule. And President Nixon continued to pull troops out of Vietnam — even the hawks were beginning to sense the quagmire was too deep.

1971 was the beginning of the end for the secret war in Vietnam. The truth came out when *The New York Times* published the Pentagon Papers, which were leaked to the press by defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg. The Papers revealed the magnitude of how the U.S. military had deceived the American people about the war. But Nixon continued to

bomb Cambodia and Laos.

This was also the year the U.S. prison system went on trial. In New York, 10 guards and 32 prisoners were killed when the National Guard stormed prisoners who had taken over Attica in protest over appalling conditions. George Jackson, a brilliant Black man trapped in the penal system, died in a shoot-out in a California courtroom while trying to escape. Jackson's friend and defender, Angela Davis, a noted Black radical activist, was accused of aiding Jackson and went underground for fear of falling into government hands.

The last year of Bill Spofford's WITNESS was another filled with turmoil. White supremacist Gov. George Wallace, while campaigning for President, was shot by a gunman and left permanently paralyzed. Nixon's reelection brought the dismal prospect of four more years, but one night a Black security guard named Frank Wills turned over to the police a group of men he caught apparently burglarizing Democratic National Committee offices in Washington, D.C.'s Watergate Hotel. Unfortunately THE WITNESS never got to follow the Watergate scandal, though Spofford, who had no regard for Nixon or politics, would have loved it. Spofford's health was failing. The hand linotype press he and his wife had labored over for so many years to produce issue after issue fell silent after the August 1972 issue. On October 19, 1972, the Old Man died. But the idea of his magazine lived on, nurtured by a board of trustees, and was revived by the Rt. Rev. Robert L. Dewitt in 1974 to promote the church's most revolutionary issue of the day — the ordination of women. It was an issue Spofford would have supported 100%. His magazine had always been a voice for the oppressed, a conscience for the church and the world. Thanks to his love, dedication and careful stewardship, that voice and that conscience survives today. The following are excerpts from the last five years of Bill Spofford's WITNESS.

## Great things, indeed

Bishop Arnold Lewis, suffragan for the U.S. armed forces, told the recent meeting of the executive council that our government has “no intention of getting out of Southeast Asia” that “we are doing great things there” and that he hopes “we can have trust in our government.”

Harrison E. Salisbury, who went to North Vietnam for the N.Y. Times,

writing on our Lord's Birthday:

“Christmas wasn't a joyous occasion for Namdinh although strings of small red pennants decorated the old gray, stucco Catholic church and a white Star of Bethlehem had been mounted on the pinnacle of the tower. Few Americans have heard of Namdinh, although until recently it was the third largest North Vietnamese city.

Mayor Tran Thi Doan, a petite 40-

year-old woman, regards her city as essentially a cotton-and-silk textile town containing nothing of military significance. Namdinh has been systematically destroyed by United States seventh fleet bombers since June 28, 1965.

The cathedral tower looks out on block after block of utter desolation: the city's population of 90,000 has been reduced to less than 20,000 be-

cause of evacuation; 13 per cent of the city's housing, including the homes of 12, 464 people, have been destroyed: 89 people have been killed and 405 wounded.

No American communique has asserted that Namdinh contains some facility that the United States regards as a military objective. It is apparent, on personal inspection, that block after block of ordinary housing has been smashed to rubble by repeated attacks by seventh fleet planes.

The town lies only 20 miles inland, which may explain why the seventh fleet seems to have made it is particular target. The textile plant, whose most dangerous output from a military point of view would presumably be cloth for uniforms, has been bombed 19 times, but is still operating under great difficulty.

Street after street in Namdinh has been abandoned and houses stand torn and gaping. One deserted street is Hang Thao or Silk Street, which was the center of the silk industry. Almost every house on the street was blasted down April 14 at about 6:30 a.m. just as the factory shifts were changing.

Forty-nine people were killed, 135 were wounded on Hang Thao and 240 houses collapsed. Eight bombs — MK-84's — accomplished this. These are huge weapons weighing about 2,000 pounds."

We are doing great things there, indeed, Bishop Lewis. (William B. Spofford, Sr. 1/5/67)

### **Black power**

Never again will the blackman in America be content with the bones the ruling structure throws him — and this includes the so-called war on poverty and various other temporizing efforts to quell ghetto rebellions.

Black people in America's ghettos are becoming well aware what the white boys gives he can take away. The simple truth of the matter is that ghetto uprisings will continue until blacks establish economic stability and political power, which cannot be

taken or surreptitiously managed. Black people are aware of the tremendous void of sensitivity in so-called "poverty" or "riot" studies which fail to point up the fact that black folk are demanding control of the political and economic forces which manage their lives.

The people who write these reports seem to be afraid to deal with the realities of life and the growing awareness in the black community. They want to go back to the naive "Negro" (pronounced NEEGROW) of yesterday and solve his problems, rather than deal with the black man of today who is demanding fundamental changes. A measure of the value of any political or economic system is its ability to cope with social realities. If white America fails to deal with present day realities, then it must be prepared to face the consequences. (James E. Roberson, Jr. 1/4/68)

### **Poor vs. the "experts"**

Tension between the professionals who think about and carry out research on welfare problems and the poor who must live on a welfare budget provided a dramatic conclusion to a conference on "dilemmas of municipal welfare" at the John LaFarge Institute in New York.

The meeting was chaired by Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the joint center for urban studies, Cambridge, Mass.

Among the participants at the invitational gathering were three representatives of the national welfare organization. Shortly before the agreed time for adjournment Moynihan asked Mrs. Beulah Saunders, vice-chairman of the group, if she would comment on the discussion.

Mrs. Saunders, a Negro woman who had sat silent throughout most of the discussion, replied she felt "out of place with all these big wheels."

"You have all these experts," she said, looking around the room. "I don't know how the hell I got here."

She told the experts on welfare problems that they should "start talk-

ing with the people on the lower level and find out what they think is a good policy."

"The LaFarge Institute is not a place where we abandon the role of the trained intellect," Moynihan countered, referring to the "superior knowledge and superior wisdom" to be found in the experts gathered for the conference.

"But they don't live on a welfare budget," Mrs. Saunders retorted. "They don't know what it is to live on welfare unless I tell them."

Moynihan turned to another conference participant, Merton C. Bernstein of the Columbia school of law, who proposed that one approach to remedying welfare problems is a reform of the committee jurisdiction of Congress.

At this, another representative of the national welfare rights organization, Hubert James, rose and in a voice trembling with anger called the proceedings "unbelievable."

"You folks are kidding yourselves," the young Negro. "We've got people on welfare that have to demand what they're entitled to by law, and you sit here talking about committee jurisdiction." James said he was "sick and tired" of the kind of discussion that had taken place when the real "crisis in welfare is that people are hungry and need food and they can't get it."

At the conclusion of his highly emotional remarks he left the room. James was followed by Mrs. Saunders and another members of the welfare organization, despite appeals from Moynihan. since it was only five minutes before the agreed adjournment time, Moynihan said before they reached the door: "We're not going to have a walk-out. This meeting is adjourned." (3/14/68)

### **Church & Chicago '68**

Clergy and churches played important roles in what has come to be known as the Great Chicago War, fought during

*Continued on page 23*



## Those new '3 R' Episcopalians

The announcement of a recently formed coalition, Episcopalians United for Revelation, Renewal and Reformation, has piqued the interest of many in the church who long have been advocates for inclusiveness and justice in the Body of Christ.

The coalition purports to have gathered people from the renewal movements in the church as well as the mainstream "in a historic witness to the authority of scripture and spiritual values as taught by the church throughout the centuries." So far so good, in a church whose benchmarks are scripture, tradition and reason. The aim, according to its chairman, "is to restore the Episcopal Church to its true strength — Jesus Christ." Funny, I thought that's what the church has been about all along.

With a full-time executive director and the blessing of several supporting bishops, Episcopalians United has declared its intent to work with local committees in every diocese to organize church members in the hope of influencing the outcome of legislative action at next year's General Convention. That's okay too. Some of us have been trying to do just that on a less grand scale for the past several years through The Consultation, a coalition of 11 church-related peace and justice organizations.

However, I once had a wise old

great granny who would often admonish people to "come on out the bushes and fight fair." That was her homespun way of getting folk to 'fess up to what they really were about when they were saying one thing and seemingly up to something else. Episcopalians United has stated its aim, purpose and the things which it espouses in ecclesiastical generalities with which few Christians would argue. It states in far stronger terms what it opposes — and boy, is its homophobia showing! Among other things, the coalition opposes the ordination of "practicing homosexuals" and the normalization of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. Regarding the former, so what else is new? The church went around the track on this one at General Convention 1979. It would be interesting to know how Episcopalians United will determine just who is practicing what and with whom since most folk — gay or straight — hold their practice of sex much as they do their toothbrushes, personal and private. Perhaps the coalition plans to organize a "truth squad" or cadres of peeping Toms and Thomasinas in every diocese to bar the ordination gate to gays and lesbians. Neat trick, since they keep on slipping through, and have since the days of Aelred back in 1167.

Re the latter, an increasing body of evidence seems to indicate that homo-

sexuality, and indeed heterosexuality, are human conditions, existing on a continuum, which are the result of prenatal brain formations over which neither the fetus nor the parents have control. For the individual of homosexual orientation, his or her lifestyle is already normal.

Also on the new coalition's list of no-no's are sexual relations outside the sacrament of marriage. Opposing such intimacy is one thing; but, again, one wonders just how Episcopalians United intends to reduce or eliminate its practice in this day and age. They might check with the Vatican on its luck in getting Roman Catholics to refrain from using birth control.

Their board of trustees also has gone on record with a position against the ordination of women to the episcopate because "it is clear to us that the ordination. . . at this time would cause serious division in the life of the Church and perhaps lead to schism in a manner not known heretofore in the church." People who talk about schism always fail to take into account the fact that such separation is sinful and indicates fault on both sides.

The nagging question in all this: Is the coalition going to work through existing renewal groups in dioceses and local parishes to push its agenda? In other words, what is it trying to re-new? ■



## Angel unaware

dear sister  
in jesus  
christ of the street  
you entered his house last week  
distraught and alone  
all your worldly goods  
wrapped up in a plastic  
Lucky's bag  
held tightly, tightly  
under your arm.  
you wanted to do it right, though.  
you looked around  
saw Us-Dressed-Up-For-Church  
put on your threadbare jacket  
looked again  
took it quietly off

the People Sang  
you cried a little, sang.  
at the peace  
a Woman smiled  
took your hands  
mumbled something  
you flinched a little  
thought you were in trouble  
(o dear sister, it is We Who are in trouble.)  
then softly from a young and  
weather-worn face  
the old words  
"the peace of God."

the back of christ was broken  
you jumped, moaned  
walked up  
became one with jesus  
your yellow christmas angel hair  
in a golden toss around  
your head.

you stayed after  
for the organ  
and much later  
as I drove by in my  
Mantovani-d, heated Seville  
I saw you  
dart out of the  
stone church doorway  
cross yourself hastily  
looking for your next  
shelter on the street.

— Leonora Holder

*Letters . . . Continued from page 3*

lenged once again to clear its prophetic throat and give voice to the message of the Gospel as it speaks to our life.

I would also like to reprint the article in our St. Andrew's parish newsletter. It is a message I wish to share. I would add that, over the years, THE WITNESS has provided this kind of service to the church. Keep up the good work.

**The Rev. Jeff Paul**  
Torrance, Cal.

## World hunger nags

Bishop John Spong's article, "The twilight of patriotism" (September WITNESS), could be the beginning of a real solution to the problem of world hunger. As long as we divide the world into well-fed "us" and hungry "them," we'll never do more than put a Band-aid on the problem. We can share what we have and even change our lifestyles so we have more to share, but that's not nearly enough. We have to stop perpetuating the political structures that keep people poor.

Six years ago, at the North-South summit conference in Cancun, Mexico, leaders of developing nations asked that future negotiations between the mostly-poor Southern Hemisphere and the mostly-rich North take place in the United Nations General Assembly, where the one-country, one-vote rule would give them an advantage. But they were outnumbered by leaders of wealthy nations, who decided that major decisions on economic aid would remain with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which the wealthy nations control.

The Third World countries also wanted to form a special energy affiliate to the World Bank, which would funnel credits to meet developing nations' energy needs. France, Canada, Mexico and some of the other wealthy nations supported this proposal, but President Reagan said "We shouldn't seek to create new institutions." And they didn't.

Our loving Creator set us in a world

that provides plenty of food for all. How it must hurt the heart of God when we who claim to love God keep so much for ourselves! Keep on waking people up!

**Ruth Thurston**  
Moab, Utah

## Pride isolating factor

I was excited upon reading "The twilight of patriotism" by Bishop John Spong. Over the past several years, I have come to understand the outdatedness of nationalism and the need for a more global understanding of community and accountability.

But I think there is still cause for concern as we move through this transition. I believe patriotism and nationalism have their roots in a model of dualistic thinking that is a manifestation of spiritual pride: the kind of "either-or" thinking that places one's self in the center of creation and defines anyone else as "foreign," "bad," or "enemy."

To move toward the global community, this dualistic model must be recognized and changed. While geographic sources of chauvinism may disappear, what may emerge are equally polarized groups that coalesce around other issues: religious fundamentalists vs. religious pluralists; racial designations; urban dwellers vs. rural dwellers; economic class systems.

One means to the new social and political awareness that Spong describes is based on individual conversion and change — our personal and prayerful endeavors to repent of the spiritual pride that only isolates and alienates us.

**Judy Miller**  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## '88 elections key

I very much appreciated your September edition on "Shredded rights." The supreme irony of the presidency of Ronald Reagan is that he continually speaks about "getting government off the backs of the people," "less government is good government" etc. Meanwhile, this President has instituted more

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## THE WITNESS

legislation and appointed more judges and others to get government into our private lives and limit individual freedoms than any other in history.

Reagan has also touted family values and the need for women to take seriously their traditional role as the person responsible for caring for children. But then he demands that welfare mothers should not stay at home and care for children, but go to work.

I hope the community of religious folks of this nation stand up in 1988 and demand integrity and rational public policies from the candidates.

**Sally Timmel**  
Washington, D.C.

### Welcome Presby friends

I receive THE WITNESS at my office — the peacemaking section of an ecumenical church council. As a Presbyterian I had never come across it, but am now pleased to pass it on to some of my Presby friends thanks to your generous Christmas three-for-one offer.

**Beth Mable**  
Tacoma, Washington

### Kudos from provost

Thank you for THE WITNESS. Every issue is challenging in the measure it causes me to take of my teaching and formation work in a seminary context. Every issue is encouraging from the

standpoint of the strong faith which each author and each article and each editorial conveys. And each copy I receive is also a promise of a future rich in hope for the ways in which God leads us.

**Toinette M. Eugene, Provost**  
Bexley Hall  
Rochester, N.Y.

### 'Ethical baby' letters due

Ed. note - Due to the volume of mail received on the article, "Having an ethical baby," by Lesley Northup in the October WITNESS, we have had to defer publication of responses until next issue.

# Short Takes

## War addicts need help

I am not an alcoholic. If I were, I would go before the nearest AA meeting and say, "My name is Kurt Vonnegut. I am an alcoholic," God willing, that might be my first step down the long hard road back to sobriety.

I now wish to call attention to another form of addiction, which has not been previously identified. It is more like gambling than drinking, since the people afflicted are ravenous for situations that will cause their bodies to release exciting chemicals into their bloodstreams. I am persuaded that there are among us people who are tragically hooked on preparations for war.

Let us recognize how sick such people are. From now on, when a national leader, or even just a neighbor, starts talking about some new weapons system that is going to cost us a mere \$29 billion, we should speak up. We should say something on the order of, "Honest to God, I couldn't be sorrier for you if I'd seen you wash down a fistful of black beauties with a pint of Southern Comfort." I am not joking. Compulsive preparers for World War III, in this country or any other, are as tragically and repulsively addicted as any stock broker passed out with his head in a toilet in the Port Authority bus terminal.

**Kurt Vonnegut**  
*Fellowship, 9/87*

## Gem from old WITNESS

You say the little efforts that I make  
Will do no good:

they never will prevail  
To tip the hovering scale  
Where justice hangs in balance.

I don't think  
I ever thought they would . . .  
But I am prejudiced beyond debate  
In favor of my right  
to choose which side  
Shall feel the stubborn ounces  
of my weight.

**Bonaro Overstreet**  
*THE WITNESS, 7/25/57*



## Christmas

When this year's Christ child  
is a small brown boy  
who finds me in the visiting hall  
he clambers into my lap  
and with thumb tucked firmly  
closes his lips upon a sigh  
and stays a while.

And his mother says his name is  
Michael  
and she doesn't mind at all  
if he shares a few hours of his life  
with me.

When time comes  
he grasps me by the ears  
and plants a warm wet kiss upon  
my nose  
and never says goodbye.  
Given this brief epiphany  
it seems quite well to live these years  
when none of the babes are mine  
for long  
and all are ours forever.

**Helen Woodson**  
*Alderson Prison, 1986*

## Quote of note

We have noted the ravages of institutional racism, but have we elected more non-whites to vestries, diocesan conventions and deputies to General Convention? We have set out to be inclusive, but are we calling more women to be rectors of parishes?

**The Rt. Rev. Edmond L. Browning**

## Do you know who you are?

Once upon a time, in occupied Tibet, many of the soldiers showed great cruelty in regard to the subjugated people. The most chosen objects of their atrocities were the monks. So as the foreign forces invaded villages, the monks fled to the mountains. When the invaders arrived in a particular village, the leader of the village reported, "All the monks, hearing of your approach, fled to the mountains but one." The commander became enraged. He marched to the monastery and kicked in the gate. There in the courtyard stood the one remaining monk. The commander glowered at him. "Do you not know who I am? I can run you through with a sword without batting an eyelash." The monk replied, "And do you not know who I am? I can let you run me through with a sword without batting an eyelash."

**Joan Chittister, OSB**  
*National Catholic Reporter, 4/10/87*

## Downward mobility

The downward mobility of Mary and Joseph: from home and job or business in Nazareth — to a stable or cave in Bethlehem — to a time on the lam through the desert with little but the clothes on their backs and a new-born Babe — into Egypt to live as refugees — is rarely thought of. But now with the plight of refugees and the homeless and unemployed or under-employed on a worldwide basis, it is hard to continue to overlook this fact.

**Abbie Jane Wells**  
*Juneau, Alaska*

## Puzzlement

Why does the United States raise tensions and take such risks in the Persian Gulf, ask researchers from the Rocky Mountain Institute. They note that meanwhile, the government is "spending money we don't have, to defend ships that aren't ours, to ship oil we don't use, for allies who won't help, in pursuit of a policy we don't have."

**Brian Ahlberg**  
*Utne Reader, Nov./Dec. 1987*



### **Aging . . . Continued from page 11**

"Let me open the door for you," or "Let me carry that for you," and see such offers as well-deserved tributes to the value of her selfhood is a parable for us all.

Perhaps you know the story of the brash, ugly American who was "doing" Europe one summer. One day his tour schedule took him to the Louvre in Paris. Racing through the art gallery, he was disappointed. He accosted an elderly guard and told him he thought the paintings were overrated and boring. The guard drew himself up and said, "Sir, these paintings have been here for generations. Among them are some of the masterpieces of the world. These paintings are no longer on trial, sir — the *spectators* are!"

Those who see you, meet you, know you, they are the ones on trial, not you. You are a masterpiece, one of a kind. Remember that, and appreciate whatever deference you get. It is deserved.

Still, there is one more upcoming, final chapter in our life story. We have now reached the maturity where the cardinal question no longer is, "What will you become?" but rather, "What will become of you?" And answering that question takes courage, too.

What *will* become of you? For most, there will be a gradual winding-down of your physical and mental capacities. And for all there will eventually come the end of the adventure we call "this life." This is what will become of you. Can you face it with courage? Have you the heart for it?

Our years have been lived out in an era when old landmarks have been blurred, when verities long thought to be eternal have been challenged or discarded, when traditional faith has been overwhelmed by doubt and skepticism. We have slipped our moorings and now find ourselves adrift in unknown waters, with no clearly discernable destination after this life. A few, with an enviable and child-like trust, have managed to cling to a simple and reassuring faith. Not so with most of us.

Well-educated and sophisticated in the ways of this world, born and bred in the manner of modernity, we find ourselves facing "the last things" with no chart, no knowledge, no experience, no assurance. In the words of the German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, we are called to see ourselves as living in a world-come-of-age, and must take upon ourselves the adult responsibility of finding our own way.

But isn't that just what you have been doing all your life? At the end, as at the beginning, you face an unknown future. Your entire life bears testimony to the authenticity of who you are. It demonstrates that it is, indeed, a precious, awesome, distinctive gift to be you. It vindicates the courage you have displayed again and again in facing the hard decisions, the unknown future. The future is never known, else it would be no future. But that fathomless mystery has always shown itself subject to one key — courage. As you have lived, so may you die, and face with courage whatever unknowns may lie in your next chapters. Take heart! ■

### **70th . . . Continued from page 18**

the democratic convention. St. Chrysostom's, the Episcopal church nearest to the Lincoln Park and Grant Park battle fronts, housed a first aid center, manned by young doctors and nurses, many of whom came long distances to donate their services to young people, cameramen, reporters and even official delegates beaten up by the 11,000 cops put into action by Mayor Richard J. Daley.

Amid all the violence, a great scene occurred. The Anglican Bishop of South Africa who is in exile — Edward C. Crowthers — came to Grant Park to celebrate the Eucharist. After the elements had been served to the people in the park, the bishop went to the National Guardsmen.

When a few of the troops indicated

their interest in receiving the sacrament, the commander ordered the bishop to leave. 80 people from the park then approached the troops. Each sought out a man and quietly said, "The peace of God be with you." This done, they turned and left. (9/16/68)

### **The Scene at GC II**

When the microphone was grabbed in a plenary session during the middle of a pedestrian and redundant presentation of clergy deployment methods, the agenda of the Special General Convention changed. Charles Muhammed Kenyatta, Baptist minister and a representative of the Black Economic Development Committee, backed by members of the Black Union of Episcopal Clergy and Laity and a radical caucus of Episcopal youth, led the

confrontation. A pro at his trade, Kenyatta had the convention up-tight in short order. They talked of issues of priorities — race, war-peace, open society — over against house keeping for the church.

After two days of meeting, it is difficult to enter any session without seeing that in the back of all things is the reality of the priorities expounded from the seized podium. The demonstration lasted for about 20 minutes, after which Bishop Hines asked for a vote of the delegates to allow the demonstrators to present their point of view. (9/69)

### **Feds probe GC II funding**

The church's \$200,000 allocation for black economic development projects,

*Continued on back cover*

a move which stirred controversy, has boiled up into a full-scale grand jury investigation . . . Top officials of the church — and newsmen who covered GC II — were called to testify before the panel . . . U.S. attorneys came to South Bend, Ind. from the department of justice in Washington to conduct the questioning of witnesses.

(Bishop Hines) was discovered by newsmen and asked whether the church was caused any embarrassment because it had voted the appropriation and the justice department was now investigating phases of the convention.

He replied, "No comment."

A witness, who refused to be identified, said he believed that the investigation was triggered by "rank conservatives in the church." (10/69)

### Hispanic rights

The Executive council made a grant of \$40,000 at the December meeting to the Alianza Federal de Mercedes in New Mexico. There was strong opposition from some churchmen, including Bishop Kinsolving, who immediately announced that his diocese of New Mexico and Southwest Texas would not pay its \$92,365 quota for 1970 to the national church.

What about the Alianza and its leader, Reies Lopez Tijerina? They are mostly descendants of Spanish conquistadors and indigenous Indians. Their ancestors received some 35 million acres in land grants from the

Spanish crown and the Mexican government in the years before the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded what is now New Mexico to the United States in 1848. But after Americans started moving into the territory, the natives started losing their land. "You hold it," Governor David Cargo told some of the present Anglo landowners, "but the land was stolen originally."

For the past four years, the Alianza, led by Tijerina, had been involved in a series of incidents in the national forest regions of New Mexico, where most of the old Spanish land claims are located. Harassment tactics have kept Tijerina and his allies parading through a series of jails and court rooms on rather insubstantial charges. The leader is presently serving a sentence in a federal prison in Texas for assaulting two forest service rangers. (Tijerina) appeared in New Mexico in the early sixties and started organizing the Alianza. It has been tough . . . The Anglos ruled — and still do.

Like Cesar ("Don't Eat Grapes") Chavez, Tijerina is not fighting merely for civil rights, but to overturn a whole social structure that has ruled the southwest for more than a century. And he has accomplished the first step — made an oppressed people aware of themselves and their potential power. (William B. Spofford 1/70)

### FBI nabs Berrigan

A smiling and handcuffed Fr. Daniel Berrigan ended four months as a fugi-

tive "peace criminal" when he entered a Providence federal building in the custody of FBI agents.

The Jesuit was captured on nearby Block Island by a bevy of federal lawmen who first masqueraded as bird watchers outside the home belonging to William Stringfellow, Episcopal lay theologian, and Anthony Towne, a poet. They co-authored *The Bishop Pike Affair* in 1967.

Convicted last year of destroying draft records at Catonsville, Md. in 1968 and sentenced to three and a half years in prison . . . Berrigan successfully eluded the authorities for four months.

Commenting on the capture of Berrigan, Stringfellow, an anti-war activist himself, said that the priest was "an old friend," but he refused to say how long the Jesuit had been staying at his home. (8/70)

### Episcopalian moonwalkers

Both Navy Capt. John W. Walker and Air Force Lt. Col. Charles M. Duke Jr. are Episcopalians.

Before the launch on April 16, the entire Duke family met for prayer. Dr. William, the astronaut's identical twin, said: "I know my brother had a prayer in his heart at lift-off. He put his mission in God's hands. Charlie asked that it go well and that he perform well, and not let his teammates down." (5/72)

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