


THE WITNESS

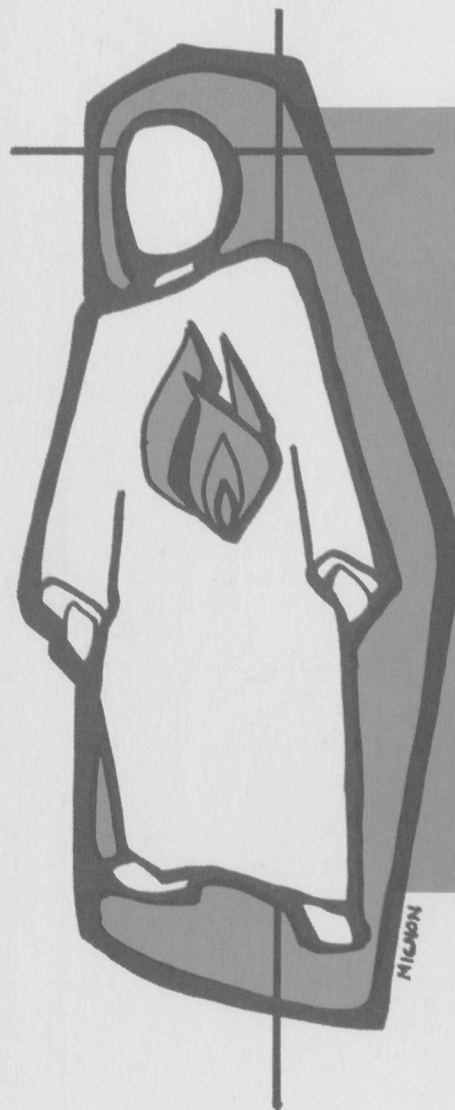


A willing
spirit
sustain
in me,
O God.

Joint heirs:
A modern parable
David Gracie

Possum Bend's Bee
Nancy Callahan

And responses to new
Bishop-Elect Barbara Harris



MILTON

Letters

'It's gonna happen, guys'

As usual, THE WITNESS pulls no punches. Your coverage of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church says, in effect, what I agree with explicitly: The adoption of Resolution B-022 on Episcopal visitors is disgusting. It was a sacrifice of Gospel values to the secular value of "unity."

This emphasis on the value of unity has not always been characteristic of the Anglican Church. The fear of schism does not sit comfortably upon a communion that is itself a product of schism; it is perhaps time to remind Anglicans that their communion originated in circumstances that, at bottom, concerned the marital antics of King Henry VIII of England. Better, I should say, to risk schism in the cause of equality than in that of baptizing lust.

Moreover, it seems that the Anglican concern about breaking the apostolic succession and thereby invalidating priestly orders may be far too late. Not so many years ago, a group of Anglican priests sought ordination in the Roman Catholic Church because of their opposition to the ordination of women to the priesthood. At the time, it was reported that these men hoped to be ordained conditionally, thereby giving at least tacit acknowledgement of the validity of their original ordination. It didn't happen: they were unconditionally ordained into the Roman Catholic priesthood — and they consented to this — suggesting thereby that their original Anglican orders were invalid. It does not seem too much to assume that this was based upon an opinion that the Apostolic succession had already been broken, so that their orders were invalid. I'm sure you get the idea.

In short, the position of the Presiding Bishop and his supporters seems to me, absurd. This is the sort of maneuver one might expect to see in an industrial cor-

poration or a political party; but the Church?

At least the vote was not unanimous. But it's gonna happen, guys. Women have been ordained to the Anglican priesthood; one day (may it be soon!) they'll be consecrated to the Episcopate; and one day one of them will occupy the throne now held by Bishop Browning. And one day, all this is going to happen even in the Roman Catholic Church, of which I am an ambivalent communicant.

All this will happen to the greater glory of God, and She will, I'm sure, bless us all — extra strong, on that day.

Pierce Barker
Owings, Md.

Threatening to stay

Often for me to read THE WITNESS is to feel that I have fallen down the rabbit hole and landed in Wonderland: everything is topsy-turvy and nothing makes any particular sense to me. I felt that way as I read the September issue, especially articles dealing with General Convention. The things I was most thankful for you deplored (except the Michigan economic justice plan). The Episcopal visitors plan, the rejection as an intentional policy of the ordination of practicing homosexuals, the rejection of the blessing of homosexual unions, the dropping of *Sexuality: A Divine Gift*, the adoption of a position on abortion which affirms the reality and sanctity of life of the unborn child are all things I was glad for. I felt the tide was beginning to shift, and that we who hold to historic, orthodox Christianity were having a positive impact on the church. The authors of the first three articles were, however, dismayed by these outcomes.

For months, the watchword of THE WITNESS has been "inclusive," yet that word was not used at all in the September issue. Indeed, your editorialist, James Lewis, wonders if "we are wait-

ing for the dominant male, heterosexual power structure to be converted or die off." You want those of us who disagree with you to change our minds, go away, or die.

If the Episcopal Church is to be truly inclusive, then it must include those of us who hold to conservative theology. It cannot be inclusive if the only accepted theological positions are a variety of liberal positions. If you are true to your call for inclusiveness, then you must include us, and let us be true to our convictions.

Please recognize that those who hold that Christianity is a revealed religion are not uniform in opposing women's ordination. Some say that women ought not be ordained to any office; others hold that Scripture supports the ordination of women to all offices, while a few of us believe that Scripture affirms that women can and should be priests and deacons, but that it is not in God's will that they serve as rectors or be ordered bishops. (I am among those who hold this last position.)

One of the leaders of the Renewal Movement in the Episcopal Church once said, "We are not threatening to leave. We are threatening to stay." We would much rather be spending our time and energy on how to best reach out into the world in evangelism and service, but the fundamental nature of what Christianity is and where it gets its authority from is at stake, so we will continue to stay, and to work, and to pray for a church faithful to God and true to Scripture, the Creeds, and the faith of Christians down through the ages. We were here first, and we will stay.

Charles Sutton, Jr.
Gladstone, N.J.

Keep House in order

During General Convention a question hit me and would not leave. U.S. Bishops won't raise the question, clergy can't

THE WITNESS

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THE WITNESS



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raise it, so we lay people must: Why doesn't the House of Bishops admonish, warn or chastise those bishops who espouse doctrines and teachings and perform and advocate performance of certain rites which are not in compliance with the standards and aims of Christian behavior espoused by the Episcopal Church?

Federal judges have a great deal of power, yet they are monitored by higher courts and by Congress. Congressmen who do not meet certain ethical standards are chastised by their peers. The Pope recently took action against an Archbishop who did not "conform." Bishops are accountable to no one. No one grades their performance.

Have we not become Congregationalists, or maybe a better word would be "diocesanists," with each bishop doing "his thing," being accountable to no one for his opinions and pronouncements? If bishops are so independent, do we really need a General Convention? Let's stop the proceedings at the diocesan level at which practically all of the functions of the church can continue to be carried out. This would save a lot of money which would do more good elsewhere.

I challenge the people in the scarlet shirts — exercise your responsibility in keeping your house in order so that the flock you lead will know what this great church stands for, and at the same time, restore respect for your leadership. A leader is a leader only so long as people follow. Such action just might slow the flight to other denominations.

John C. Wilson
Charleston, S.C.

Doesn't address 'A' word

Thanks for the good coverage of General Convention and the reproductive choice resolutions. When you quoted me you correctly identified me as working for national IMPACT. However, while in

Detroit, and whenever I work on abortion-related issues, I am not on IMPACT time. IMPACT does not address the "A" word. I work on the issue in my capacity as a member of the Boards of the Episcopal Women's Caucus and the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights. I'm sorry I neglected to be clear about which hats I was wearing when you interviewed me.

Kathie Ragsdale
Alexandria, Va.

'Daughters' available

I had not realized that your "Daughters of Prophecy" issue on the 10th anniversary of women priests in the Episcopal Church was still available. I would like to obtain a copy. My original was loaned to a friend and didn't come back.

Ruth A. Meyers
St. Joseph, Mich.

(WITNESS readers take note: "Daughters of Prophecy" contains an article by Bishop-elect Barbara C. Harris — crucifer at the ordinations of the Philadelphia 11 — in which she reflects on the spiritual and prophetic significance of the event. This special issue is rapidly becoming a collector's item. Limited copies available at \$1.50 each. — Ed.)

Ranks with 'Nation'

Congratulations on a marvelous magazine. My wife shares THE WITNESS with me. I rank it with *The Nation* in a sane perspective of our world. I am sending a donation to use in any way you choose.

Ernest Gantz
Long Beach, Cal.

No moral validity

I am a very concerned Episcopalian, expelled by the Somoza regime in 1978 because of my active participation in the struggle against that regime, and today

actively outspoken against the Communist regime of Ortega and his gang of scoundrels. I am not interested in THE WITNESS, although I had tolerated it up until the recent Convention, when I saw with much shame and sadness that you honored Miguel D'Escoto, who is nothing but an opportunist and a traitor.

For your information the undersigned was not allowed to enter Nicaragua two years ago when I went there to give the last rites to my mother. I was interrogated, humiliated, and expelled within three hours after my arrival, simply because I am one of the thousands of Nicaraguans who are disenchanted with that oppressing regime which is much worse than the Somoza regime.

I am sad for you, because there have been many important issues on which you were brilliant and accurate. In my estimation today you no longer have any moral validity.

The Rev. William Muniz
El Paso, Tex.

Catholic cousin writes

Your magazine is *so fine*. As a Roman Catholic, I'm learning beautiful things about our Episcopal "cousins."

Sister Louise Udovick
St. Paul, Minn.

Torres to San Diego

I write with great joy to let you know that in August, Alejandrina Torres was transferred to the San Diego Metropolitan Correction Center and into its general population. The victory we celebrate is a great one because our struggle for her humane treatment has been long and arduous. Your articles and prayers as well as your letters have helped to lift her spirits in difficult times, so we wish to encourage you to continue writing at

Continued on page 15

She's female, Black, and powerful

The Rt. Rev. William B. Spofford, retired Bishop of Eastern Oregon, who frequently contributed to THE WITNESS when his father, William Spofford, Sr. was editor and continues that practice, sent us the sermon he preached in Oregon Cascades the day after Barbara C. Harris' historic election as Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts. Excerpts follow.

On September 24, I received a phone call from my Diocese of Washington informing me that Barbara C. Harris had been elected Suffragan Bishop of my first and interim diocese, Massachusetts, on the eighth ballot. This is, of course, a historic step in the ongoing Reformed and Catholic Church, at least as we have known and experienced it. Although, since we accepted the validity of females being eligible for the diaconate and presbyterate at the Minneapolis General Convention in 1976, we all knew that the logical and inevitable next step was the episcopacy. But when it happens we still have to pause and think of the meaning. In the past several Episcopal elections women have always been nominated and, consistently, have run well.

Now Massachusetts has elected Barbara Harris to be one of its bishops. She is female, she is Black, and she is powerful.

Personally, I rejoice in this call. Having for the past two decades been a member of the House of Bishops and done some of the debating on this particular issue, I rejoice that, at last, we will have a sister-bishop in our brotherly house. When the priesthood was opened to the female gender, I recalled that there are two things priests may do that, in our polity or governance, others may not; they are, to celebrate and to absolve.

Experientially, for me at least, those gifts and actions in life most often came from the females I knew, such as my mother and my wife, than from the males. If that gender did it well, then it seems logical that functionally they had a claim to be about that grace-giving.

By the same token, the role of the episcopate is to

manage and govern the household. For, if you take the biblical imagery of Body, A House of Many Rooms, Bread-making, we are talking about those things which were taken care of by my mother and my wife. The male of the species was out making money so that the household could be managed and governed. So it seems to me that the episcopate is, functionally, fitting for the female gender.

This is not to say that there aren't a lot of historic and governance issues to be worked out. But as the House of Bishops welcomes more women from other dioceses into its deliberations and meditations and decisions, I am confident that we will find a rich complementarity that is befitting a God who plans that, in eternity, there will be no differentiation between male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free. The Body and the Household will be made up of those who know and admire and love God and who are helpers in the Kingdom of such a Body and such a Household. And we are reflecting that, I pray.

Grace from God comes to persons, despite the secondary characteristics they may have. May Sarton, poet and novelist, gives as much grace in her writings as any theologian of our time; the late Black novelist Zora Neale Hurston does the same. How great that the God we can and do know can use all sorts of material and it seems, has never established private reserves in historic creation. So I say rejoice. We welcome our sister, Barbara, and know that she is a forerunner of others. *Laus Deo.*

Tons of mail hail Bishop-elect Harris

“**T**he purple slippers from Bishop Spong’s 81-year-old mother — perhaps that was the most unusual gift. And look at the cards the Sunday School kids at St. Peter’s on Cape Cod made for me — one of them drew a tank inside. Then there was my fall from grace, the ‘excommunication’ notice I received from the Continuing Episcopal Church in Denver, but then that was quickly followed by greetings from Robert Schuler of the Crystal Cathedral. Here, take the folders and see for yourself.”

With those words Bishop-elect Barbara C. Harris delivered to THE WITNESS hundreds of letters, cards, and telegrams which had arrived in the first few days after the mass media announced her historic election as first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion.

All this was but a small part of the responses received at the Ambler office, where phones rang incessantly, the post office box was bursting at the seams, and floral delivery trucks were frequent visitors a full two weeks after the news was announced.

Following the outpourings of love and support, a common theme seemed to be “this is the first time the front page of the newspaper — or the evening news — has ever made me cry tears of joy.”

And there were common regrets: Would that Mattie Hopkins, Pauli Murray, Jan Pierce, Virginia Ram, Brooke Mosley, and many others had lived to see this day.

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On behalf of the Organization of Black Episcopal Seminarians, I would like to express our joy and congratulations at your recent election as bishop. An old African proverb says, *You can judge a nation by how well it treats its women.* In reference to the Anglican community, the true test in the future will be how well it treats its first woman bishop. Nonetheless, it was God who called you, and it will be God who will sustain you on your new journey. — **Simeon E. Newbold, Sr., Convenor, OBES**

As Governor, it is an honor to congratulate you on your historic election as Suf-

fragan Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts. I read of a recent sermon in which you took the text from Isaiah: “Behold, I am doing a new thing . . .”

It is this willingness to risk “new things” that empowers your compassion and sense of justice with a special grace worthy of the highest recognition. As a minister, as a writer and as a champion for the deprived and the dispossessed, you have served your church and its community with distinction. I am confident that your ministry will continue to flourish, and I commend you for the spirit of humility which marks your response to this new challenge. — **Robert P. Casey, Governor of Pennsylvania**

The Good News proclaimed on TV, radio and press was followed by literally hundreds of requests for interviews, graciously turned down while the church pursues a quiet, prayerful time to secure the necessary assenting votes to confirm the election. Many communiques to Harris carried clippings from friends who proudly enclosed how the story had played in Peoria . . . Middletown, Tenn., and even the Sandwich Islands.

Whole groups signed their names to some letters: Clergy of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia; UBE chapters from across the country; students at Virginia Theological Seminary; campus ministers celebrating at Florida State University; General Theological Seminary fans; ecumenical social action representatives in Washington, D.C.

Several cards recalled personal alliances in common cause: “Remember when we picketed at Girard College . . . our struggles as members of ESCRU . . . our mutual concerns with the AFL-CIO in the old days . . . when we demonstrated at Holy Trinity . . .”

Certain cards showed special care in selection. Two Catholic nuns in Oregon and the Rev. Sue Hiatt in Cambridge, Mass. chose the same one: A mouse hauling elephants up a steep hill. Another card cover bore the inscription: “At a Congressional hearing Mother Jones was asked, ‘Where is your home?’ She answered, ‘My address is like my shoes. It travels with me. I abide where there is a fight against wrong.’”

A selection of greetings follows. — **Mary Lou Suhor**

We give thanks to Almighty God on the occasion of your election. A solemn, significant and sobering journey lies ahead of you. As you have beautifully noted, the “winds of change” produce different consequences. On the one hand, new challenges and duties emerge. On the other, resistance and controversy result. However, always remember that those whom the Lord truly calls, the Lord also equips and empowers. It should be clear to even the most adamant critic that the election to the episcopacy of a Black female nurtured in Philadelphia and engaged in ministry in North Philadelphia, is “the Lord’s doing” and for those who truly know the Lord, “it is marvelous in

our eyes." Peace, power, love. — **The Rev. Van Bird, Philadelphia**

I wanted to write to you and say how excited and pleased I am over your election to the episcopacy. A friend called me from California on Sunday to comment that the "Goddess energy" must be extremely high in Philadelphia! Know that I wish you well as you journey on and regret that your new role takes you away from here. I would have liked the opportunity to share in ministry with you. — **Bishop Susan M. Morrison, United Methodist Church, Valley Forge, Pa.**

Allow me to express my unbridled delight in seeing another woman, like myself, succeed in a male-oriented field — religion. I'm sure that you and I both have the same roadblocks in our chosen profession.

I wish that God will bless you, and all those who are dear to you. May God be in your life daily, and may you continue in your professional success! Warmly — **Rabbi Chana Timoner, Wallingford, Conn.**

Congratulations from the Women's Ordination Conference and the Women-Church Convergence. Just as your ordinations in Philadelphia and later have had a massive impact on our lives as women in the (dreaded word Roman)

Catholic Church, your being a bishop now will have a similar effect. We rejoice with you. We consider you extremely valid, and celebrate with you as you become a role model for us of what a liberating bishop can be. And I know you won't confuse the Roman Catholic Hierarchical Patriarchal Papal powers and principalities with the People of God. Thank you for paving the way for all of us. — **Ruth Fitzpatrick, Fairfax, Va.**

The church will be more whole, more complete, more Christlike with you in Episcopal Orders. Many throughout the world rejoice with you and for the church.

I enclose a gift. In 1976, my mother, who is now 81, four-foot-nine and 75 pounds began knitting purple bedroom shoes for all new bishops. I am bishop #713. Every bishop since 713 has purple clad feet courtesy my mother. She has also done them for the Presiding Bishop, for Canterbury, and Capetown.

She has retired from this task, her eyes having failed. Before retiring, however, I asked her to make a pair for the first woman bishop and I would save them for that happy day. I enclose them from her. You are the last bishop to receive them. She has made about 200 pair and has a scrapbook of letters from bishops. Several years ago the House of Bishops sent her official greetings and thanks. These shoes are designed to keep your

I am happy
that you are
going to be our
new bishop.



feet warm. Others will keep them to the fire. My best. — **The Rt. Rev. John S. Spong, Bishop of Newark**

How refreshing indeed is the breeze, how joyous the moment, and how hopeful the future. The hope and promise you give is substance, not symbol. For all the forgotten, invisible, oppressed and voiceless children of God are rejoicing. Surely you hear their song and see their dance. — **Mary Wostrel, Boston, Mass.**

Thanks be to God! There are many clergy sisters and women seminarians who are absolutely thrilled! As luck would have it, I celebrated and preached in the Church Divinity School of the Pacific chapel on Tuesday. It gave me the opportunity to express my feelings of joy. And I do know, *a luta continua!* — **The Rev. Fran Toy, Berkeley, Cal.**

I first heard about you on National Public Radio and the BBC. I'm writing to tell you how important your election is to me. It gives me a little hope for the

Welcome
Bishop
Harris



Eric

church, which I sadly miss. When I think of you all alone in the House of Bishops, I know that I could not face what you will face there. I hope God blesses you with courage and compassion beyond your natural means. I hope before you retire you have a dozen sisters in that House, and I hope you live to see a hundred sisters in that House. I hope you get a thousand letters like this.

I know you are Black and active in the Civil Rights movement. Please remember that even before you were Black, you were female. When you were only one cell and no color at all, you were a woman. The women of the church and the women of the world need you, Barbara. When times get hard, think of us and know that you have a vast ministry, beyond that of any man including the Pope. You are the only one we have. Don't forget us. — **Amy Davidson, Palo Alto, Cal.**

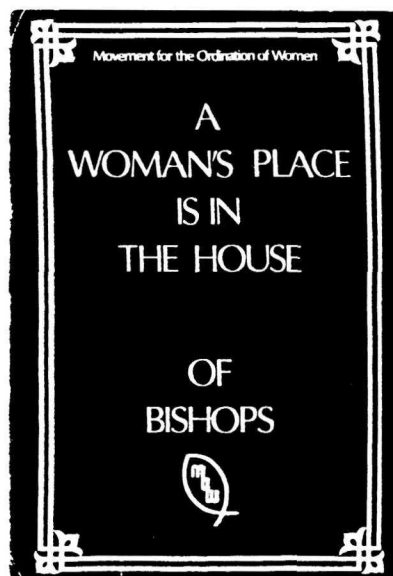
I doubt that there was ever a failed candidate in an episcopal election who was more elated about the outcome. I am absolutely thrilled about what that means for the church in the world as well as the church in this province. Without reservation, I am your enthusiastic supporter. Though I do not know you well, I cannot help but believe that this election will mean some personal sacrifice to you. I thank you for your willingness to pay the cost, whatever that may be. Thank you for your gift of yourself to the church. With appreciation and admiration. — **The Ven. Denise G. Haines, Archdeacon, Diocese of Newark**

The message by Sojourner Truth on the front of this card — *"I'm not going to die, honey, I'm going home like a shooting star"* — may seem puzzling. I am sending it because it reminds me of something Mattie Hopkins would have said. Home she went, called over the Holy Spirit, and said, "Come over here, sit down, I want to talk to you! You've

been doing pretty good so far with Jay Walker, Herb Thompson and Frank Turner. But I've come here to say you'd better do right by Sister Barbara Clementine Harris!"

Holy Spirit said, "I hear you, Mattie. When is the election? Watch me work my show."

You are called to be a bishop in the Church of God for such a time as this — as was Esther's calling. Know that you have a loyal and faithful friend, supporter, and one who has always loved you dearly, in me. — **The Rev. Earl Neil, New York, N.Y.**



Mailgram: We rejoice in your election and send our warmest greetings. — **Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW) London.**

I found messages on my recorder Saturday evening from Debbie Hines and Diane Pollard about your election. What a glorious victory for our church — the whole Church. Lloyd Casson announced the news at Trinity yesterday and the applause was great. I know that your faith,

vision, ability, intellect, integrity, commitment, caring, concern and toughness will serve you well. — **Joyce Phillips Austin, New York, N.Y.**

Just a note so say how honored I have always been to be your friend. You are now creating the footsteps for us and for future generations to walk in. Know always that I am here for you for whatever you may need. You, my sister are held up in love and prayer by people around the world. Love and courage always. — **The Rev. Nan Arrington Peete, Indianapolis, Ind.**

Reading the Los Angeles newspapers Sept. 26, it was a real thrill to see your picture and know that you were the one who had "crashed through the barrier." It was also a thrill to see the expressions on the faces of the women of the parish when they heard we finally had a woman bishop, and she shared (the majority of) their skin color. Another part of the story brings in two of my closest friends, husband and wife UCC ministers who are spending a sabbatical in Wales. An Australian bishop they met, who was at Lambeth, began to lament "the end of the American Episcopal Church." Evidently I had said something to the UCC friends, because their retort to him was "We're sure Barbara wouldn't let that happen." They, too, are WITNESS readers. — **William B. Giles, Pasadena, Cal.**

Just a line, Barbara, to let you know I am a part of the throng celebrating, giving thanks, hoping, and praying. — **Verna Dozier, Washington, D.C.**

What joys we have to look forward to in the days and years ahead. The House of Bishops will, I pray, have made appropriate "accommodations" for you by the time your first meeting arrives. — **Jane Jackson, Oakland, Cal.**



Going the third mile

The ton of encouraging cards, letters and messages that has come to me in the weeks following the Massachusetts Suffragan Bishop election has been both heartwarming and humbling. Greetings have ranged from "Yahoo!" and Hallelujah to rich outpourings of prayerful support.

One arresting letter came from an acquaintance of some years back who has been involved in church renewal over the past two decades. A convert to the ordination of women, he has been able to reconcile two "convictions" — women in ministry and the tradition of the Church — by the recognition "that a profound transformation of our common life together is being wrought by the Holy Spirit . . . and is essentially related to power issues vis-a-vis the Gospel." I quote here excerpts from his letter that put forth a rather unusual proposal:

"The suggestion that I want to share with you for your prayerful reflection is directly related to this renewing transformation that the Holy Spirit is effecting in the church.

"As an evangelical act of renunciation, decline to be consecrated *at this time* so that a number of other renewing transformations can take place in the episcopates, both Anglican and Roman Catholic/Orthodox. Such an act of renunciation would be the most pow-

erful witness that I can conceive that our whole way of relating to God and to each other needs to change *fundamentally* so that we can be faithful to the Gospel and the relationships that are implicit in the Gospel. It would put the lie to the view that the episcopate is to be a place of status and power, even of political power, and that you are in a self-seeking way desiring such power. Perhaps you could begin to minister in Massachusetts as such a Suffragan Bishop-Elect, faithfully showing forth the priesthood in which you share there in your diocese-elect without yet ordaining or confirming. At any appropriate time in the future the diocese and the Presiding Bishop could proceed to act on your election. Meanwhile, much will be happening throughout the church as the Holy Spirit uses your witness to further the true changing of our hearts and minds, not the least the hearts and minds of bishops of the Anglican Communion about themselves and their ministry.

"Frequently in the history of the church a powerful witness has been made by the saints who either refused ordination or accepted it reluctantly because they saw such ordination as an unacceptable compromise with the powers of

this world. I write this to you on the feast of Blessed Francis, the little poor man of Assisi, whose total evangelical renunciation of power continues to bless and transform the world up to our current day. I know that you could do much good for God's Kingdom as Suffragan of Massachusetts; I would prayerfully suggest that God can do even more with you in his service as Suffragan Bishop-Elect."

An interesting way of looking at renewal, I grant you. Frequently, however, it seems that marginalized people are asked to assume additional burdens that the more privileged are seldom asked to bear.

The poor, for example, are expected to be more grateful for grudging handouts than wealthy people whose lifestyles are subsidized by numerous tax breaks. The working poor are penalized for not being able to pay their bills on time, while non-payment by more affluent persons is presumed to be an "oversight." The oppressed are asked to allow for the accommodation of their oppressors and the list goes on. Even when some go the second mile, as our Lord commanded, those in power demand that they go the third.

I wonder if my acquaintance would pose a similar question to a male bishop-elect or, for that matter other men to whom it has been said, "Friend, come up higher."

Joint heirs: A modern parable

by David M. Gracie

Refugees from El Salvador who had been interred for eight years in the Mesa Grande camp in Honduras were ready to send another 1200 of their number back to their native country in August. This organized community of refugees invited a delegation of North American religious people to accompany them on their journey home. I was privileged to be a member of that group.

This was the second phase of a return which had begun last year, when 4500 men, women and children went back to the provinces from which they had been driven out in 1979. Over the years, the Salvadoran military, supplied and advised by the United States, had bombed and terrorized peasant villages in order to depopulate large rural areas where the rebels had support. Now, with the Salvadoran government a signatory to international accords allowing the return of the displaced people, this refugee community had decided to risk the consequences of living again in a zone of conflict dominated by a brutal military regime. Their return has been characterized as a non-violent civilian counter-offensive to the depopulation policy of the army.

Those who returned last year are now living in 30 communities in the north of El Salvador. They are reportedly doing well in their reconstruction of village life. Threats, harassment, attempts at forced conscription by the army continue, but the communities have learned how to resist, and they have the ongoing support of churches in El Salvador and of many in the United States. The Going

Home Campaign, chaired by Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Auxiliary Roman Catholic Bishop of Detroit, has been raising money for seeds, for chickens, and for other needs of the returnees. It also organizes visiting delegations like ours. With the eyes of the world upon the refugees and with the presence of international visitors, their safety is measurably increased.

There is a push and a pull in this return. The pull, of course, is the love of the land that is their own. The push comes from conditions of life in a refugee camp — a camp they cannot leave and in which they are subject to whatever the Honduran army may do to them. Within recent weeks a refugee working in a cornfield adjacent to the camp was shot and killed by a Honduran soldier. The first thing we noticed on entering the camp was the slogans painted on the walls of huts, "Soldiers, you are poor too. Do not obey the orders of your commanders." "Military assassins! Stay out of the camp!"

And yet, paradoxically, it is camp life that has provided the opportunity to build the strong sense of community we experienced everywhere. "We are going home richer. We can read now. We read the Bible and know that God doesn't want us to live like this." The manner in which this return was organized and led by the refugees themselves illustrated the strength of their unity.

The caravan that left the camp on Aug. 13 consisted of 36 buses and well over 100 trucks, provided by the United Nations. The lead bus, in which some of us rode, was for the musicians. Four guitarists and one bass player played music of El Salvador and accompanied the songs which had been composed by the

community, including the children, for the return. The music alternated with chants, cheering the Second Return of the "refugee people":

Que viva el Segundo Retorno!

Que viva el pueblo refugiado!

Que viva la solidaridad internacional!

All of this was heard back down the line of buses because of a speaker, which it was my job to hold outside a window of the bus.

The other constant sound was the cheeping of chicks in crates at the back of the bus. These people move with their chickens. Amid all the austerity of camp life, which we shared for two nights, I shall remember the best bowl of chicken soup I ever tasted. It was prepared for us by a refugee family and we ate it in their hut, with chickens constantly crossing the mud floor.

The pride of this refugee community was astounding. In the caravan were two symbols of this pride: the lead bus with the music — and the tractor.

When after extended negotiations and a night spent sleeping on the side of the road, the convoy finally crossed the border, it was the blue and white Ford tractor that got the loudest cheers. It drove through the ranks of Salvadoran soldiers, armed with automatic rifles, and beneath the two U.S. Army helicopters which had been circling the convoy. Our tractor against your guns! Our will to farm again in our land against your military strategies!

In Central America a tractor is called a *chapulin*, a grasshopper, because like the little grasshopper it can chew up so much. The sight of that tractor driving across the border immediately inspired members of the Going Home Campaign to raise money for a second *chapulin* for

The Rev. David M. Gracie is co-director of the Church and World Institute, the center for Protestant campus ministry at Temple University.

the returnees, so there can be one for each of the two villages to which they are going.

This refugee people moved with great pride and negotiated each step of the way its own demands concerning the return. The U.N. was to give each family the exact sum promised them (money to tide them over for the first few weeks at home). Immigration authorities were not to require more forms to be filled out than had already been provided to the U.N. Above all, there was to be no interrogation of members of the community at the border. A slogan on the side of a bus said: *Los criminales deben ser interrogados. No Nosotros.* (Criminals should be interrogated. Not us.)

The refugees insisted on moving as a single unit and on returning to those areas which they themselves had chosen. They also insisted that we be allowed to accompany them all the way home and that the members of their families and the church people with supplies of food for them in El Salvador be allowed to join their convoy when they entered the land. The Salvadoran government said no to these last two demands.

Hundreds of supporters inside the country were stopped at a bridge outside San Salvador by a frightening show of military force and prevented from coming to meet the returnees. We were not allowed to cross the border with them.

The refugee leadership had been

pressing the demand for our accompaniment, as a measure to insure their safety from military harassment or governmental duplicity. But the government appeared to regard us as a great threat. In the Salvadoran press the military fulminated against *los internacionalistas* and the danger we presented to internal order. The 15 of us were, in fact, a humble crew — a couple of Roman Catholic priests, a nun, a young Lutheran church worker, a Baptist pastor and a rabbi . . . not much of a threat to anyone, we were sure. Yet our presence seemed to work as a bargaining chip, other concessions being made so long as we did not cross the border.

It may well have been our presence, and what was being made of it in the media there, that enabled the refugee leadership to meet face-to-face at the border with high ranking officials of the government of El Salvador. One of the refugee leaders compared it to David meeting Goliath. At the final negotiating session, the U.S. Embassy and the U.N. were present, as well as leaders of the churches of El Salvador. It was those church leaders who assumed the role that we were to have played, after the caravan crossed the border. They promised to accompany, to observe, and to advocate for the safe passage of the refugees.

The young men who composed the *directiva* (directorate) of the refugee community reminded me of the civil rights

leaders of groups in years past in the United States. They consulted with their people and then called the shots. They knew, as our Welfare Rights Organization or Southern Christian Leadership Conference leaders had known, that poor people can only succeed if they are bold and united in their demands — and that they must make demands. Otherwise what they are entitled to will be denied them. International law guarantees their right to return home, so they act on that right. Assistance from the U.N. is their right as refugees, so they insist upon it in the exact amount agreed upon. Now in El Salvador they will assert their right as citizens to participate in the political life of their country, no matter how the ruling forces there may feel about that.

The question I struggled with during this week spent in such surprising company, such extraordinary surroundings, was this: Can we accept the fact that these poor and proud people are joint heirs, *coherederos*, members of the same body and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus? It came to me in the refugee camp that the mystery of the Gospel in our day could be expressed by simply substituting the word "poor" for "Gentiles" in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (*Eph. 3:6*).

Paul announced to his world the hidden mystery that the Gentiles were joint heirs with God's chosen people. What is being announced now to North American Christians, those of us who have inherited most of the world's wealth and believe ourselves to be inheritors of heaven, too, is that we have joint heirs — the poor in Latin America. They come to us with their own vision, their own theology of liberation, and their own programs.

Bishop Medardo Gomez, Lutheran Bishop of El Salvador, was present with us in the refugee caravan. He is known as the bishop of the refugees, his own consecration having taken place in a refugee camp two years ago. In an im-

Continued on page 16



Salvadoran refugees wait to cross the border.

Freedom Quilting Bee puts Possum

Until the late 1960s, the town of Possum Bend was unknown beyond Wilcox County, deep in the Alabama Black Belt. Inhabited mostly by poor, uneducated, politically powerless Blacks who were bossed by White landowners, the tiny tract on the Alabama River had fostered White-dominated agriculture since anyone could remember.

It seemed unlikely that an art form in Possum Bend could attract nationwide attention. But the Black women there were quiltmakers. Since the 1800s, they had picked cotton and pulled cornstalks by day, pieced and quilted by night. They were poverty's daughters, at home in the bleakest of cabins. In gaps between the pine logs they would watch the birds fly by. Lying at night on corn-husk beds they would look up through holes in the roof and see the stars or feel the rain and sometimes, snow.

Their way of life required that six, seven, even 10 quilts cover their bodies until morning. Beauty was not their reason for being. The homespun handiworks were essential to keep warm and ward off sickness. But many of the quilts were indeed beautiful. They emerged with bold colors and strong geometry, in inventive, whimsical designs strangely similar to op art, which was popular in the '60s in New York and other cultural meccas.

But New York was hardly in the consciousness of those female fieldhands who gave their nighttime productions such titles as Bear's Paw, Joseph's Coat,

Crow's Feet, Tulip Bulb, Chestnut Bud, Pine Burr, Grandmother's Dream, Tree of Life, Roman Cross, and a full gamut of Stars.

Still, the two worlds merged for a time, and the result was a national renaissance of interest in quilts.

They were trendsetters, these women



Francis X. Walter

of agriculture, who, months earlier, had not even possessed the right to vote. It started on a day in December 1965, when an Episcopal priest, the Rev. Francis X. Walter, got lost in Possum Bend while taking depositions of Blacks who had been harassed by the Whites for participating in civil rights activities.

Dead-ended at the river, he noticed a cabin clothesline arrayed with three of the most enchanting patchwork quilts he had ever seen. Unlike those from his own cultural experience, they were aggressive, angular optical illusions put to-

gether with vivid, primary hues. From his car window he recognized those quilts as op art.

A Mobile native, Walter had come home to Alabama from a New Jersey ghetto parish to head the new Selma Inter-religious Project, funded by several denominations to keep alive the spirit of the Selma-to-Montgomery march. Among the groups contributing to the S.I.P. were the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU).

It occurred to Walter while gazing at that clothesline that the Black women of Wilcox County could make money by selling patchworks. It could be a collective effort to enhance pride in themselves and involvement in the civil rights movement. Wanting to meet the maker of those Possum Bend sensations, he got out of his car and walked towards her cabin. From her vantage point, however, he was someone to be feared. After all, when movement activities had reached a local zenith weeks earlier, Whites had fired Black workers, put them off the land, foreclosed on their mortgages, called in their bank loans, and run them out of Wilcox County.

Little wonder, then, that Ora McDaniels, gifted artisan, ran out the back and escaped to the piney woods. Three weeks later, Walter returned, accompanied by a Black woman civil rights worker. It was safe for Mrs. McDaniels to meet with him as along as another Black who knew and trusted his White face was present.

By then, he had found that quilting was common among the Black women, who typically sold their quilts to

Nancy Callahan is a writer who lives in Montgomery, Ala. Her book, *The Freedom Quilting Bee*, \$24.45, was published in 1987 by the University of Alabama Press.

Bend on the map

by Nancy Callahan

the county's White women at three for \$5, the buyer supplying scraps and thread. One of his friends in New York offered to hold an auction there. So Walter acquired \$700 from ESCRU, found 70 quilts, and paid \$10 for each one. Not much, but \$10 was more than the quilters had ever made from the sale of one patchwork, with the chance of additional dollars to come.

The quilts from the Ora McDaniels clothesline were mere introductions to what Walter would see during the first months of 1966, not only in Possum Bend but in Camden, the county seat; Gee's Bend, site of the Roosevelt farm project of the 1930s; and scads of county byways. What he discovered was a vein of art passed along by generations.

Each creation was original. Many were two-toned. Often, black patterns dominated white backgrounds. On others, multi-colored designs were back-dropped to black, while the Crazy quilts also used swatches of black.

If a woman had scant material, she tailored her quilts with worn-out blue jeans and shirts. If she lacked one swatch to finish a piecework and the only one available was red, it didn't matter that there was not another piece of red in the quilt. Red was what she had, and completing a quilt for a winter night was more important than wasting money for material to make the quilt artistically correct. Those "mistakes" added a charm that made such quilts all the more aesthetically valuable.

Many of the women rarely had opportunities for education beyond grammar school, but they exhibited a natural understanding of geometry and architecture. Although their lives had been con-

fined to second-class life in the Black Belt, it was as if they had studied at Stonehenge or in Egypt. Among those Tiger Stripes and Stable Stars, the pattern illusions were a challenge to intellect and eye.

Even so, the women were "field-hands," glad to get a \$10 bill. Their response to Walter was overwhelming. On March 26, 1966, more than 60 of them organized the Freedom Quilting Bee. Most all had marched with Martin Luther King from Selma to Montgomery. They had spent time in the Camden jail, protesting their inability to vote. Now, they were voting and seeking to fulfill Dr. King's dream for economic independence from Whites.

The quilt prices went from \$10 to \$15,

\$20 and \$25, \$100 and beyond. By the late 1960s, the group had been befriended by promoters from the East, many of whom spent time at the Bee and gave the women instructions on how to make products acceptable to large consumer audiences.

New York interior designer Sister Parish, who had decorated the White House for Jacqueline Kennedy, placed orders with the women for quilted material to embellish some of the most lavish homes in America. *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland arranged for photographs to be made of the quiltings in the Parish homes for use in her magazine. A trend was set for the patchwork look. All over, grandmothers' quilts were snatched from dusty closets and placed on beds. People



Freedom member Annie Williams at work on one of the quilts.

everywhere were using quilted material to decorate their homes.

Assignments came to the Bee headquarters from New York department stores: Lord and Taylor, Bonwit Teller, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's. Writers filed stories for *House and Garden*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. The faces and fingers of those Wilcox quilters appeared nationally on NBC's Huntley-Brinkley Report.

The women now enjoyed luxuries they had never known: indoor bathrooms, high school graduation rings for their young, new furniture, insulation for their log cabins and college tuition for children whose great-grandparents had been slaves. Also, they were no longer field-hands. Their quilting hours were dictated by the seasons for planting and picking and the spans of sunlight within a given day, but they had evolved as artisans, women of business, executives. They were members of a cooperative, with officers, a manager, and business sessions.

In 1969, with foundation grants and other support, the Bee was able to acquire land to build a central workplace: the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Sewing Center. To survive, the group had to become more commercial, able to produce quilts with specific dimensions and materials and a guaranteed look.



A Lone Star pattern, also called Stable Star, typical of Freedom quilts made in the 1960s.



Freedom's co-manager, Nettie Young, at one of the sewing machines.

Gone were the May Apples and Turn-Arounds and alphabet letters. Gone was much of the original whimsy. But the women knew all too well that feeding their children was the greatest art of all, one that *had* to be preserved.

Today's Freedom Quilting Bee offers products based on a handful of those early renditions — Bear's Paw, Coat of Many Colors, Rainbow, Grandmother's Dream, Grandmother's Choice, and Log Cabin — flawlessly put together in machine-washable polyester.

In 1972, the collective received a contract from Sears to produce corduroy pillow shams. That work has kept the door open. The group also has a longstanding contract with Artisans Cooperative, a handicraft concern in New England. Occasional mail orders continue to drift in, too.

It has been 22 years since Francis Walter saw those confections of Ora McDaniels hanging in the sun. With the demise of the Selma Project in 1972, he went on to other endeavors and is now rector of St. Andrew's Parish, Birmingham. All these years, the Bee's backbone has been its manager, Estelle Witherspoon. Now 72, she finds each day a

struggle.

It is romantic, even charming, to moon about the past glories of the Freedom Quilting Bee, but it is necessary to face the fact that quilt sales have declined in competition with quilts made by poor people in other countries who are paid low wages. The Sears work is down. Stores are asking for quilts on consignment, causing the women to wait for payment.

Sweet memories are not enough. In November 1987, Mrs. Witherspoon sent a letter to friends of the Freedom Quilting Bee, asking for an "Emergency Freedom Fund" to maintain the building, sustain members when orders are down, and train the young.

"We believe," she said, "that if we just keep on keeping on, our day will come and the reward for our years of hard work will be the survival of the Freedom Quilting Bee — long after we have gone."

TW

The Freedom Quilting Bee may be contacted at Route 1, Box 72, Alberta, AL 36720, telephone: (205) 573-2225.

Letters . . . Continued from page 3

her new address: Alejandrina Torres, #92152-024, 808 Union St., San Diego, CA 92101.

Alejandrina now holds a job in the prison commissary where she comes into contact with other prisoners and prison staff. This is the first time, since her incarceration five years ago, in which she has opportunity for some relative peace. Alejandrina will be detained in San Diego pending appeal. The Bureau of Prisons filed an appeal after Judge Parker's ruling which found that the Lexington Unit violated First Amendment rights of the political prisoners housed within it.

Alejandrina sends her gratitude and love for your concern and prayers in the campaign to shut down the Lexington Control Unit.

Nidza Lopez
Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience
United Church of Christ
Chicago, Ill.

The church's shame

Having chosen to stay away from the Episcopal Church for almost 20 years following my confirmation as a boy, I only recently began going to a progressive Anglo-Catholic church in Philadelphia, St. Mark's. After years of activism in the anti-war, civil rights, and lesbian and gay movements, I've entered a religious arena where gay people are still being thrown to the lions it seems.

Our Diocesan Chancellor, John L. Harrison, Jr., resigned in April after being severely criticized for bidding the church to affirm gay unions. Affirm, notice — not even bless, much less marry. Even this decent gesture roused vindictive opposition from church leaders inspired by the agenda of Episcopalians United.

I distributed a leaflet after services at St. Mark's, written to support Harrison but also to be a gay witness in the church. Invisibility is our worst enemy. This was heartbreakingly obvious once more when I opened a recent issue of *The Episcopalian* to find printed "An open letter on homosexuality." But it was not open at all — it was written by

"Name withheld by request." Written, in fact, by a self-described 29-year-old gay male in clear psychic pain, almost praying for the continued condemnation of his sexuality by the church. Making a sad boast, this gay man wrote, "To this day I remain a virgin." This is not Christian freedom, or freely chosen celibacy. The church has sinned against this person's sexuality and spirit.

In the same issue, I found an advertisement reading: "Watch a Magnificent Son rise: Your son can become the man you've always dreamed of if you wisely invest in his education. We brighten futures. St. John's Military Academy." The 29-year-old gay virgin is plainly not the son his father dreamed of, and remains in hiding. Magnanimously, the church allows him to speak in shame out of his closet, while a shining son in uniform is openly displayed in the advertisement.

The "traditionalists" gathering in Episcopalians United may be disgruntled at women priests, but at this late date they can do nothing about that; so they are drawing the line — with a vengeance — at *queers*. Where is the morality of a church that advertises a military academy as a school for Christian manhood, but does everything to break the spirit of a man who is gay? Shame!

Scott Tucker
Philadelphia, Pa.

Slow progress

It was only a small step, but I was encouraged by what the church did at General Convention about greater inclusiveness and acceptance for gay and lesbian persons in the church. Although there was no real change in the status quo, the church has at least made a real commitment to enter into dialogue in the years to come regarding the search that each of us is on in life for "stable, loving and committed relationships and our journey towards wholeness and holiness."

Even though there was an attempt by a vocal minority to limit the discussion of "relationships" to heterosexual marital relationships, the church as a whole was not willing to do this. The fact that we will be discussing other kinds of com-

mitted relationships in the months ahead is encouraging to me. But progress remains slow, alas!

Thank you for the wonderful job THE WITNESS does in calling us to seek justice for all persons. You are an encouragement to us all.

John L. Harrison, Jr.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Fond memory of Piccard

THE WITNESS says things that can't be said elsewhere — and can start us thinking. So often living in the world today seems hardly connected with the beautiful and expensive buildings, the beautiful formal service.

I have a fond memory connected to THE WITNESS. I happened to have had a granddaughter graduate from Carleton the day Madame Jeannette Piccard was given an honorary degree, many years ago on a cold, misty morning. I remember still her tiny, straight figure in the academic procession. Then that powerful account of her death appeared in the THE WITNESS! Some of the things we live by. . .

THE WITNESS is always a "lift." Hope you feel it too.

Mrs. Eleanor B. Miles
Madison, Wisc.

Query about bishop

I am a professional historian whose research interests deal with the history of the Episcopal Church. My current project is to write a new biography of Peter Trimble Rowe, who was Bishop of Alaska for nearly five decades. Rowe wrote almost no articles for the church press, published no books and made only very brief notations in his diaries. So I need help from individuals who might either possess, or know of, Rowe letters. I am especially eager to track down any of his surviving children. I would appreciate hearing from anyone willing to share anecdotes, personal reminiscences, correspondence or other documents. Contact: Prof. David M. Dean, Department of History, Frostburg State University, Frostburg, MD 21532.

Gracie. . . *Continued from page 11*
 promptu homily at a service by the side of the road he said: "We are all refugees. We are all strangers." When he said it, I realized that the Bible calls us "strangers or passing travelers on earth" (*Heb. 11:13*). Can we accept that? Can we share in the inheritance of refugees? How far down the road can we go with them? I was literally asking myself that question on the road to the border. How much of the bombing or the torture or the death threats could we endure?

Then I asked myself a more familiar question: Can my people even conceive of sharing our rich, First World inheritance with the poor who are south of our borders? If they co-inherit — all those dear children running barefoot or in their flip-flops through the mud and the pig refuse of the refugee camps — would we not stand to lose our share? Is there really enough for all of us to live in decency? And if there is enough, could individualistic North Americans abide the

thought of being co-inheritors with the masses of humankind? Can we even hear the words of Ephesians as meaning we are members of the same body with them and not feel it as a collectivist threat to our individual rights?

In this North-South context, can we hear the Gospel at all? And if we cannot hear it, how shall we inherit anything?

I put these questions in scriptural terms just as the refugees do. Every page of the Bible spoke to them of their decision to return. The parable of the workers called to the vineyard at different hours of the day who all received the same pay was expounded by a lay delegate of the Word like this: "Some returned last year. Some are returning now. Others, for various reasons, cannot go; but they will come later. No one should feel this to be a cause of division within the community. Whenever you come to work with us in the vineyard you will be entitled to the same reward."

The Rev. Luis Serrano, Episcopal

priest from San Salvador, also accompanied the return, along with lay workers from *Diakonia*, the Lutheran-Episcopal-Baptist group that supports refugees in El Salvador. When he preached at a Holy Communion service at which Bishop Gomez was celebrant, he chose as his text the story of the return of the Holy Family from Egypt. It spoke directly to this situation. Rachel was weeping for the children who had died in the slaughters that precipitated the refugees' flight. But, he pointed out, in one important respect, the story of this refugee family is different: They are returning home while Herod is still alive.

They need us to be with them in their return. It must be a joint inheritance.

(WITNESS readers who may wish further information or to make contributions to the resettlement of the refugees may write Going Home/Share Foundation, Box 24 Cardinal Station, Washington, D.C. 20064 (202-635-5540).—Ed.)

Hispanics call U.S. church to action

The flip side of oppression in Central and South America is the suffering which Hispanics experience in the United States, Hispanic Caucus members reminded General Convention in Detroit earlier this year. They issued a call to the church to consider the challenge which the "Rich Man-Lazarus Abyss" represents for the Christian community. Excerpts appear below.

In this Manifesto, we speak to our church both as Hispanics and as Episcopalians: as Hispanics from the perspective of our people, to denounce the injustices suffered by them; as Episcopalians, to challenge our church for a clear and uncompromising option for the poor of this world and of this nation, of which Hispanics are a substantial and growing number. In the midst of suffering, injustice, insecurity, and death that many of our people are experiencing, our message is one of hope because of our faith in the liberating God of the Exodus and of the Resurrection.

• **We are an evident and growing reality.** In 1970 we were approximately 9.1 million; by 1980 we had grown by 61%, to 14.6 million, or 6.4% of the total U.S. population. By the year 2080 we may well be 25% of the population.

We are primarily urban and about two-thirds of us reside in three states: California (31%), Texas (20%) and New York (11%). However, in California we are about 20% of its population; in New Mexico, 37%; in Texas, 21%; and in New York, 9%.

The majority of us were born in this country, or 71% of us on lands which were once ours but which were taken from us, so that today many of us live as strangers in our own land.

Most of us, 75%, use Spanish at home and about 10% do not know English at all.

• **We are the poorest of the poor.** With our sisters and brothers of the Native American and Black communities, many of us belong to the world of the poor in this nation, where we are the poorest among the poor, with 29% under

the so-called poverty line. In order to survive, 45% of our children have to make use of free lunch provided in the school system and over 18% of our families receive food stamps.

While the overall unemployment rate for others is about 5.7%, ours is about 15%. During the last five years we have experienced a reduction in our per family income. A substantial portion of that income is sent to the countries where many of us come from, to our relatives who live much more desperate lives and without which many would starve to death, and where the economies of our impoverished countries would collapse. Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador knows what we are talking about.

• **We are today's "modern slaves."**

Together with the other poor of the world and the growing Third World in this nation, we are victims of a political and economic system built on greed, which produces a few rich and privileged and a mass of poor and deprived, the so-called North-South Divide. We would prefer to call it, in Jesus' own terms, the Rich Man-Lazarus Abyss.

As cheap labor, many of us are today's "modern slaves" whom the recently approved immigration law intends to institutionalize. As migrant workers brought from Puerto Rico in the 1950s and as cheap seasonal labor or *braceros* from Mexico, we joined the ranks of the exploited by a system which maximizes profit and perpetuates unjust structures.

• **We are a people in exile.** Many of us were born here in what is today Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, California, etc. But we are exiles in the very land which was our home and our nation, but no longer is.

Many of us have come here seeking the land of "milk and money" because in our nations to the South, historically poor and exploited, we could no longer subsist or survive.

Others of us came here fleeing the powers of repression, persecution and death, inflicted with the weapons and

monies that U.S. taxes have made possible, or because of the wars raging inside our countries by armies trained and supported by this government. Our numbers are growing, not because we want to come and remain here, but rather because the very system of economic exploitation, greed, and political repression forces us to seek a "new heaven and a new earth" and the "life abundant" which Jesus promises to his children.

• **We are a people with a common history, culture and language.** We are a people — *un pueblo* — and as Hispanics we are of diverse nationalities, with diverse cultures and traditions. Therefore, our destiny as Hispanics in the United States is linked to the destiny of our people in Central and South America.

• **We are a growing minority in the life of the church.** As clergy and laity actively engaged at the local, diocesan, national and international level, we are a growing minority and an increasingly significant force in the life of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

• **We are a creative, prophetic, witnessing and serving presence.** We are

committed to the renewal and strengthening of the life, work, and mission of the church, making it attentive and responsive to the poor and the dispossessed. We commit ourselves to the development of Hispanic ministries, congregations and forms of life and work which are *for* Hispanics and *of* Hispanics. The challenge before us and before our Episcopal Church is to allow and enable us to develop forms of church life which are owned and ministered by us, including the development of new forms of lay and ordained Hispanic ministers accessible to our people.

We call upon our church to be a prophetic advocate for the rights of our people, especially in the present immigration legislation which is discriminatory and abusive. We urge our church not to become an instrument of the Government, not to harass, search and deport Hispanics or others seeking refuge in this country. We support the establishment of a Commission on Racism for the church. We ask the church to reaffirm its position on affirmative action and urge all program areas of the church and Episcopalians in their respective communities to work towards removing all vestiges of historical, racial, gender, and economic injustice.

We call upon the Episcopal Church to support the development of indigenous people as leaders (lay and clergy) for their own people.

We recommend that the church not participate in or endorse any celebration in 1992 of 500 years of Christianity in the New World because such celebration will be tainted by historic greed and racism.

We ask Episcopalians to support all actions by the church which make clear the rights of human beings to direct their lives free from coercion, intervention and other forms of control, especially by the developed nations.

Finally, we pray that the Hispanic challenge which we face today and in the future will be an occasion for rejoicing as we let the poor and depressed of this country evangelize us. We must believe in the God of exodus and of Jesus Christ!

Note to my representative

I'd never give
one dollar
to the Democrats
to maim or murder
your daughter
even though
her father is a
Republican.

Would you
give my money
to the Contras
to take food or life
or a father
from a Sandinistan toddler?
I'll be watching
your vote
for your answer.

— Emma Blosser Hartzler

Short Takes

What is God like?

Walking past a Catholic church in Greenwich Village recently, I noticed in its display window a homemade poster on which was neatly lettered a moral tale that began: "The mystic was back from the desert. 'Tell us,' they avidly asked. 'What is God like?'" I recognized the wording as Tony de Mello's. The parable is included in his collection, *The Song of the Bird*.

In that parable, the people so importune the mystic that, against his better judgment, he puts into writing an inadequate formula he hopes will respond to their question and lead them to God, but instead they make of it a rigid doctrine that they impose on others and are even willing to die for. The tale ends: "And the mystic was sad. It might have been better if he had never spoken."

Thomas H. Stahel, S.J.
America 12/12/87

What's your line?

If you keep on saying things are going to be bad, you have a good chance of being a propheth.

Isaac Bashevis Singer

No way up

The broken elevator has become a symbol for the problems of public housing in Chicago. High-rise projects have worked well for senior citizens but very poorly for families with children. Children soil the elevators. Muggers and rapists and gang members trap their victims in them. In the past, when maintenance was at its worst, residents of all ages had to make the long, health-endangering climb up the stairs almost every day, just to go home.

When the Chicago Housing Authority cannot afford its elevators, that is a sure sign that it needs to get rid of buildings that require elevators.

Chicago Tribune, 2/5/87



Sexual discrimination legal in England

The Rev. Nigel Davies is a deacon. To achieve this, he has had to study long and hard and gain a Diploma in Theology.

After 12 months "probation" within the church, he will progress from deacon to priest. As a priest, a lot more doors are open to him; he might even become a bishop, then possibly even an archbishop.

The Rev. Jayne Tyrer is also a deacon, she has also gained a Diploma in Theology. There the similarity ends, because according to the rules of the Church of England a woman may not progress further. A breach of the Equal Opportunities Act?

No, the church is excluded from this Act, making sexual discrimination legal in England today. In a world of women

managing directors, consultants and even Prime Ministers, is it fair for the Church of England to keep women in what can only be described as a limited role? The Movement for the Ordination of Women thinks not and is actively striving for change.

The above photo and text is from a leaflet designed for MOW by GKG, a London advertising agency helping to promote MOW's aims. Those wishing to obtain copies for distribution, and to inquire about contributions can write MOW, Napier Hall, Hide Place, Vincent St., London SW1P4NJ, England.

Hard to take

Honest criticism is hard to take, particularly from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger.

Franklin P. Jones

Racism against Native Americans

A silent apartheid within

by Craig Anderson

Racism is the greatest challenge facing the church. But we must not be tricked into thinking that the struggle against the pernicious evil of institutional racism is limited to apartheid in South Africa. The greater question before us is not how do we support anti-apartheid forces in South Africa, but how will we confront the racism that pervades all human society? Are we prepared to work for a United States and a world where people of every color play an equal part or will we continue to view non-whites as expendable at the mercy of political and economic forces? The struggle against racism is dramatically engaged in South Africa, but it is being fought around the world: in the Middle East, in Southeast Asia, in Central America, even in some parts of this country.

"Apartheid" (meaning "separation" in Afrikaans) is a separation of life and opportunity founded in a legally established system unique to South Africa. Its roots lie in the Dutch and British colonial conquest of Southern Africa that began in 1652. In a country where 16% of the population (White) controls 87% of the land and where 73% of the population (Black) is denied the vote, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, access to adequate education, housing and health care, South Africa is the only nation in the world to deny political rights to the majority of its people simply on the basis of race.

The Rt. Rev. Craig B. Anderson is Episcopal Bishop of South Dakota. A longer version of this article appeared earlier in *The South Dakota Church News*.

Such institutional racism and injustice have given rise to mounting violence over the past several years. Through individual diocesan resolutions and the action of General Convention, the Episcopal Church has joined with other branches of the Anglican Communion and other churches in denouncing apartheid. Direct aid, economic sanctions, prophetic resolutions and ongoing prayer constitute a world-wide ecclesial call to repentance.

Theologically, a more fundamental understanding of apartheid can be found in the way the word itself is pronounced — "apart-hate." Such "apart-hate" born of "apartness" or separation is the root cause of sin. Its opposite, "righteousness," refers to being "in a right or just relationship with one another and God." The call from apart-hate to righteousness is a call to reconciliation mandated by the Gospel.

While apartheid is unique to South Africa, apart-hate, grounded in sin as separation, is found in all cultures and countries that participate in and perpetuate institutional racism. There is a certain sinful irony that attends our protests against apartheid, because we fail to see the ongoing apart-hate within our own community. While not as blatant as in South Africa, institutional racism pervades our culture and church. Perhaps it is easier to recognize the obvious and distant while missing institutional racism in our own backyard. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, in a recent address to the Executive Council, locating the problem within our culture and church, said, "The issue of institutional racism

keeps coming forward as I travel and meet with church people in this country . . . When I met with the leadership of the National Commission on Indian Work and other representatives of the Native American community, the issue of racism was one of their greatest concerns . . . When I met with members of the Hispanic community in the Southwest, the issue was racism . . . When I met with the Union of Black Episcopalians, the issue was racism . . . I am sure that when I meet with the leadership of the Asian-American community, the issue will be the same."

Institutional racism in the reservation system is experienced by the Native American community in South Dakota. While this system is not as obvious or destructive as South Africa's apartheid system, there are certain similarities. Both Black South Africans and Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people are a "native" population. While the number and percentage of Native Americans is less than 10% of the state's population, this minority group, like Blacks in South Africa, represent the indigenous population of the land. Unlike other minority groups in the United States, the violation of Native American civil rights is more pronounced by the historic and ongoing disregard for treaties made with the Sioux Nation over the past 100 years.

The reservation system has certain parallels with the "Bantustans" of South Africa. Between 1960 and 1982, 3.5 million Blacks were forced to relocate to ten "independent homelands" or Bantustans, which comprise 13% of the land in South Africa. These "independent homelands" are located in areas where the

land is barren, desolate and economically non-viable. Eroded and infertile, the Bantustans mean hunger for those who live there. With no economic base and unemployment approaching 50% in some areas, Blacks are forced to find employment elsewhere, their movements carefully controlled by pass laws.

Reservations in South Dakota represent a small and shrinking percentage of the state's total land. Like the Bantustans, reservation land is the poorest land in South Dakota and provides no economic base. On most of the nine reservations, unemployment exceeds 80%. While there are no pass laws, leaving the reservations means giving up certain economic, legal and health "rights" guaranteed by long-standing treaties.

Life on the reservation reads like a litany of despair. In addition to unemployment and no economic base, the reservations have the highest rates of infant mortality, teenage suicide, alcoholism and diabetes in the United States. Violence is pervasive within reservation culture and affects almost every family. Such conditions create an ubiquitous depression, born of anger turned inward, which results in a culture of despair.

Defenders of the reservation system would no doubt immediately protest that comparing reservations to Bantustans is overdrawn and unfair. However, the pressure of family, band and tribal loyalties combined with economic pressure result in the reservations becoming rural ghettos. Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people are a people of the land. To leave the land is to abandon one's identity and people. Apart from the people and land there is no identity for Native Americans in South Dakota. Such a spiritual and cultural attachment to the land is difficult for non-Native Americans to understand. Ownership and possession of land are foreign to Lakota culture and spirituality. How can one "own" that which gives rise to life itself?

The reservation system is a silent form

of apartheid. There are many layers of the system: The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, tribal government itself and the paternalism of the churches. It should be remembered that the Episcopal Church, along with other denominations, was "assigned" by the government to help "settle and civilize" the Dakota territory over 100 years ago.

"Silent" apartheid means there is no grand design or systematically conscious attempt to bring about apart-hate. None of the institutions mentioned above *consciously* intend separation or segregation. Autonomy, self-determination, national sovereignty and racial identity are offered as justifications for the reserva-

"The reservation system has certain parallels with the 'Bantustans' of South Africa. Like the Bantustans, reservation land is the poorest land in South Dakota and provides no economic base."

tion system. But how can there be autonomy, sovereignty or self-determination without economic self-determination and equal rights? The church, perhaps the most trusted institution on the reservation, participates unconsciously and subtly in this silent apartheid. The call for increasing indigenous leadership in congregations is met with the *external* and imposed answers of new "creative" forms of "non-stipendiary" ministry. Non-stipendiary ministry assumes an economic base for secular employment. With over 80% unemployment, non-stipendiary forms are hardly creative.

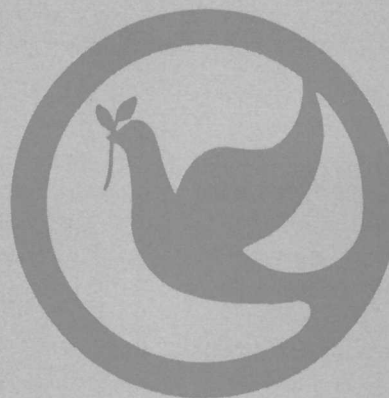
In the Diocese of South Dakota, 88 out of the 129 congregations are located on the reservations. There is an average of one priest for every 7.2 congregations. The typical reservation priest can barely

sustain a crisis approach to ministry, much less develop new and creative programs. It is hardly surprising that such priests, underpaid and overworked, burn out after a few years. Nor is it surprising that forms of preparation for ordained ministry on the reservation turn out to be inadequate when the leadership of the church is called to enable change, transformation and reconciliation. To understand, let alone address, the problems of extreme poverty, despair and isolation requires a modicum of theological understanding and certain ministerial skills. Rather than requiring the least amount of theological education for such ministry, reservation ministry points to the need for thorough theological training that includes a sensitivity and ability to minister in a Third World environment. Such ministry is called to address and transform the forces and institutions of segregation and apart-hate rather than unintentionally participate in new forms of paternalism and ethnocide.

Contemporary philosophy and theology, as well as the behavioral sciences, yield certain insights into institutional racism. Destructive stereotypes inform institutional policies and programs. Cynical typifications of Native Americans include stereotyping them as lazy, drunken and corrupt. Sentimental typifications make them anachronistic "noble savages" who are fascinating subjects for cultural anthropologists.

The result of such stereotypes is that rather than interacting with Native Americans as people, the church approaches them as "problems" that need to be solved. Treating another human being as a "problem" robs him or her of humanity. The label is confronted rather than the person. Vast amounts of money and programs are generated to fix or solve the problems. External solutions which violate Native American culture are applied, e.g., creating government "cluster housing" or buying a person's dignity cheaply through inadequate enti-

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tlements and subsistence programs. In order to survive, dependency on and manipulation of such programs is the Native American response. Dependency is resented and manipulation becomes a way of life. But the money and programs are short-lived and the litany of despair lengthens.

Within the church, ministry “to and for the Indians” perpetuates a we-they separation and deepens dependency. Phrases such as “the plight of our Native American brothers and sisters in the church” serve to underscore that Native Americans in the church are a “problem to be solved.” And yet few in the church

know of the plight. Owanah Anderson of the church’s National Committee on Indian Work refers to the situation as “an ignorance of ignorance.” Few Episcopalians are aware of the plethora of problems that confront persons on the reservation and in the church. The isolation and segregation wrought by “reserving” people further fosters such ignorance of ignorance.

I suspect that most Episcopalians know more about apartheid in South Africa and the 1976 Soweto riots than they do about the ongoing institutional racism on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, or the 1973 Wounded Knee oc-

cupation. It is interesting to note that it has only been in recent years, through a liberation theology developed in Third World nations, that we are now realizing Native American spirituality, with its emphasis on sharing and giving, may have something important to say to the non-Native American churches. Perhaps Native American values of cooperation, extended family loyalties, wholeness and the centrality of religion in all of life may be elements that could transform and renew the entire church. Native Americans have a significant ministry to non-Native Americans that has yet to be realized.

TW

Anglican Church launches witch-hunt

Things are not jolly in jolly old England nor happy in the land of Oz (aka Australia) these days for gay and lesbian Anglicans. The Church of England and the Anglican Church in Australia have taken actions and made statements so strongly homophobic that they bring uneasy echoes of Puritan witch hunts.

Though the U.S. church was typically timid about homosexual rights at July's General Convention, Episcopalian lesbians and gays saw some modest gains, or at the very least, no further regression. In England and Australia, lesbians and gays are fighting for their identity as Christians.

In Australia, their struggle is critical. The church there is divided into five provinces and 24 dioceses. The Diocese of Sydney is the largest and wealthiest — one out of every four Anglicans lives there. But despite the fact that Sydney is the biggest and most cosmopolitan city in the country, and has a sizable gay and lesbian population, the church there is fiercely homophobic and strongly opposed to women's ordination. It was the Archbishop of Sydney, Donald Robinson, a leading opponent of women's ordination, who presented a resolution at Lambeth calling for an international ban on ordaining women to the episcopate.

A "special bill" to permit women's ordination to the priesthood was voted down by the Church of Australia's General Synod in August 1987, winning the necessary two-thirds vote among bishops and laity, but losing by five votes in the clerical order.

The campaign against gays and lesbians has been equally as dismal. Though gay and lesbian groups find support or at least no censure in several dioceses, the powerful Diocese of Sydney generally dictates the church's agenda. In 1983,

the Diocese of Sydney was asked to consider a motion that said "homosexuality is not a bar to any ministry in this church." It was sent to a special committee, which concluded that "willing homosexuality is sinful. God's wrath rests on it." The report went on to say that "if a Christian brother or sister will not abandon this action after admonitions, his or her fellow Christians must withdraw their Christian fellowship."

Not surprisingly, the committee decided that homosexuality "is a bar to the ordained ministry" — indeed to "every ministry in the name of Christ or within the Church of Christ." The report went on to painstakingly spell out the various church positions that would not be open to gays and lesbians, including organist, lay reader, and sexton.

Not only did the report recommend that homosexuals be denied Holy Communion, Confirmation and Baptism, but stated the prohibitions should include "any person who advocates or promotes homosexual practices or a homosexual lifestyle, even if there is no evidence that he or she personally engages in homosexual acts." The committee's recommendations were in direct conflict with anti-discrimination laws passed by the state of New South Wales, where Sydney is located, but the report noted that churches were exempt from it.

The Diocesan Synod voted to endorse the committee's report. It also estab-

lished a counseling service specifically design to "cure" gays and lesbians. An anti-gay purge began almost immediately after the vote. The rector of an inner-city parish announced at the annual meeting that he had "disciplined" some gay parishioners by denying them Communion. Four lesbians were forced out of their churches, including one woman with a degenerative disability who was told that her illness was God's punishment for her homosexuality. She had

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been a member of her parish for seven years.

At the next Synod meeting, Fabian LoSchiavo, a member of AngGays, the gay and lesbian group in Sydney, and Synod delegate, was silenced when he tried to introduce a motion dealing with AIDS. Archbishop Robinson said that though the issue was one the Synod could deal with at some point, LoSchiavo was not a fit person to sponsor such a motion because he "advocated genital contact between people of the same sex."

Despite the best efforts of AngGays to make their plight known, response and support by Anglicans in Australia and internationally has been minimal. The Sydney Diocese is so wealthy and influ-

against gays

by Susan E. Pierce

ential that no other Australian dioceses will oppose it, the same problem which has frustrated the women's ordination movement. Other provinces have taken a position of studied non-intervention.

One of the very few church figures who responded was Paul Moore, Jr., Bishop of New York, who wrote to the General Synod, saying he was "deeply disturbed" by the adoption of the committee report and that barring homosexual people "who are conscientiously being stewards of their sexuality from the life of the Church, it seems to me is directly against what our Lord himself would do."

Things are little better in England. The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, after a year-long court battle, was recently evicted from its offices in St. Botolph's Church, London, where LGCM had operated peacefully for 12 years. The court case came upon the heels of an anti-gay campaign launched by a conservative group called Anglican Biblical Witness to Our Nation, and spearheaded by the Rev. Tony Higton of Essex, a leading opponent of gay and lesbian rights. ABWN distributed a pamphlet denouncing gays and lesbians, and circulated an anti-homosexual article from the *London Sunday Mail*.

But the stage had been set for this orgy of gay-bashing by the Thatcher government a few years ago when the Parliament passed Clause 28, which forbade

local city councils and other government legislative bodies to give money to any group which "encouraged or promoted" homosexuality. This legislation caused gay and lesbian groups to lose a major source of funding. In November 1987, the General Synod of the Church of England passed a resolution which said "sexual intercourse is an act of total commitment which belongs properly within a permanent marriage relationship . . . homosexual genital acts fall short of this ideal."

Given such an atmosphere, it was not surprising that earlier this year, the Archdeacon of London, with the support of the Rt. Rev. Graham Leonard, Bishop of London, challenged St. Botolph's application for a license to allow LGCM to maintain its offices. The case went to court and the rector of St. Botolph's, the Rev. Malcolm Johnson, was prepared to oppose the eviction along with LGCM. But, according to LGCM General Secretary Richard Kirker, Johnson was subjected to such enormous pressure that a few days before the scheduled hearing, the parish withdrew the application. Kirker said that if the parish had not withdrawn, LGCM might have had a chance to successfully argue its case, even though the group was strapped for funds, while the Archdeacon had access to the Diocese of London's multi-million dollar budget.

"No church will have us," said Kirker, "because of the constant threat of being involved in proceedings and a court case."

International support is important to both LGCM and AngGays. AngGays can be contacted at P.O. Box 98, Ensmore, NSW 2042, Australia. LGCM can be reached at BM 6914, London WC1N 3XX, England.

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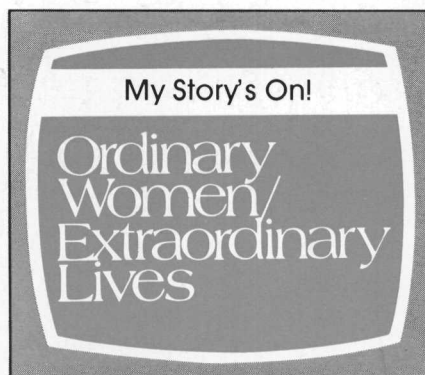
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