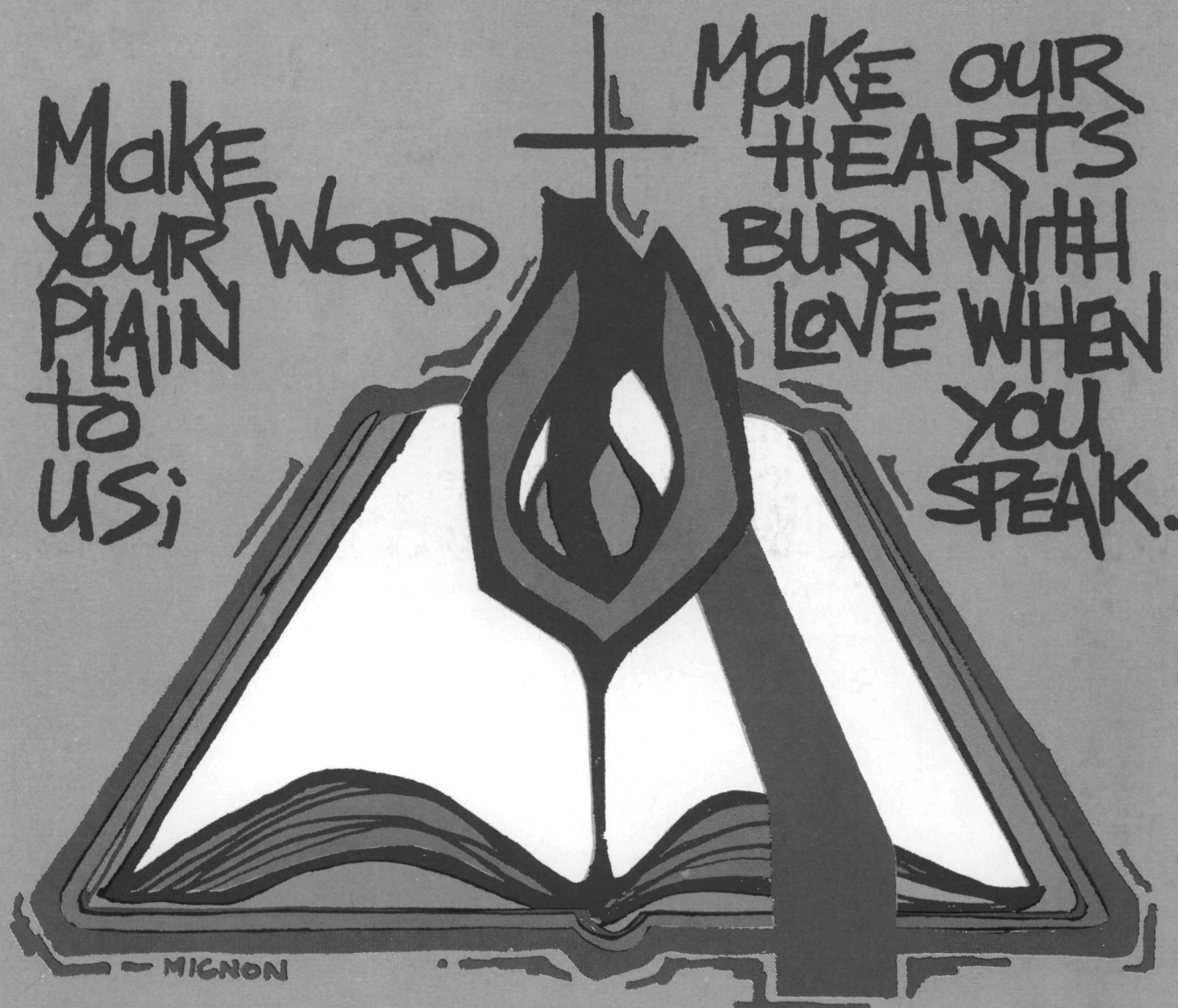


THE WITNESS



**'Chicken kingdom'
maims workers**

Katerina Katsarka Whitley

**Matthew Fox's
last workshop**

Shepherd Bliss

Letters

Life on the power edge

The December issue of THE WITNESS was full of useful information and good reporting. THE WITNESS continues to be the strong publication that inspires all of us.

Increasingly as the days pass, I find myself feeling very good about my own past association with the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. When the critics of Barbara Harris speak about her writings and pronouncements, and liberal/radical associations in negative tones, I say "They are anything but, and she's where the church should be, and praise the Lord for her courage of convictions."

I know on the one hand it has been necessary to defend Barbara against all the garbage and innuendos, lies, and propaganda that have come from those who would not see her become bishop.

There is, however, and always has been, a certain truth which is in our Book which states how protesters will react against those who would do the will of the Lord (*Matt. 10:17-22*). We should not be surprised. The level that resistance has reached is indeed a shock, especially coming from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

But justice and love are not given to us by those who would live in darkness. Power is not shared willingly. Our job is to continue to witness, to work, to live on the power edge. I have no doubt that Barbara, as bishop, and THE WITNESS and ECPC will persevere as agents of justice and builders of a true community. Our inspiration and internal strength to do the will of God is not based on the abstract, but on the concrete lives of those we read about and remember in the THE WITNESS. It is a great list and it will grow. We can only progress from

strength to strength. I for one, believe that the struggle will continue and that together we can and will win.

The Rev. Canon Kwasi A. Thornell
President,
Union of Black Episcopalians

WITNESS unfair

The statement by the Board of ECPC on Ms. Harris' election is quite remarkable on many counts. You condemn the alleged "smear campaign" which you allege has been launched against Ms. Harris by "certain conservative groups" namely the Prayer Book Society, Episcopalians United and the Evangelical and Catholic Mission. You suggest that they have attacked her on a personal level, that they have used a "McCarthy-type" campaign to smear her. Yet you do not offer one shred of substantiating evidence that what you say is true. That

Time magazine's report on Harris 'simpering, value laden' — Hiatt

(Time magazine ran a one-page story Dec. 26, 1988 about Barbara Harris' historic election as Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts. The Rev. Suzanne R. Hiatt, professor of pastoral theology at Episcopal Divinity School, wrote the following to Time's Letter to the Editor section, critiquing its story, and sent a copy to THE WITNESS. -- Ed.)

It is hard to know where to begin in protesting *Time's* simpering, value-laden reportage of the election and confirmation of Barbara Harris as a Suffragan Bishop in the Episcopal church. If there is a "worldwide crisis" in Anglicanism brewing over Bishop-elect Harris, it is a concoction largely mixed by journalism such as yours.

First, you cite the old "ecumenical argument" that Rome will no longer seek reunion with Anglicans if we take a certain action, in this case they may not ask us back for "several hundred years". If Rome wants us back at all they might begin with a gesture of good faith by amending the 19th century Papal decree

pronouncing the ordination of all Anglican clergy (male and presumably female by extension) "totally null and utterly void". As the holder of an honorary degree from a Roman Catholic College, I do not despair of good relations with my Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, though I don't expect an invitation to the Vatican any time soon. I can live with that.

I can also live with non-recognition of my bishop in the Church of England. In fact all my sister priests from all over the world and I have lived with that all the years (15 in my case) we've been ordained to that office. As in the case of Rome, non-recognition by Canterbury

has not impacted the ministry of the many women priests outside the British Isles very profoundly. In fact a number of us have managed to exercise our priesthood in England over the years, despite the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London and Parliament itself. Non-recognition will not be new to a Black American woman or the people ordained by her. It will be as always hurtful and insulting but not serious.

As for her ministry being unrecognized throughout the world as your article implies, there are women priests in Anglican churches in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Antipodes. Bishop-elect Harris could

would seem to me to be in keeping with McCarthyism itself.

You use *Gal. 3:28* as the text which is fulfilled in Ms. Harris' election, yet you also say that Jesus "favored" certain groups. Is this not inconsistent? Either we are all one in Jesus or we must accept that Jesus favors some people over others. You seem to want the text to fit your causes, but will not let it apply to the whole church.

My reason for not supporting Ms. Harris has nothing to do with sex, race, class or any of the other "isms" you throw at anyone who does not agree with you. It has to do with her not having the qualifications which the church has required of its bishops in the past i.e., her lack of experience as a rector of a parish, her lack of seminary training, her apparent unwillingness to accept those who do not hold her party lines as seen in her suggesting that one conservative group was

demonic, for example.

There are some in the church who are honest, faithful, loving believers who, right or wrong, cannot accept this action. Let us all love one another enough not to trample their feelings under the heel of the boot of blind liberalism.

The Rev. George F. Weld, II
John's Island, S.C.

Jesus had no Ph.D.

I am astounded that those who dissent on Barbara Harris' election as bishop, set up standards for her, and themselves, that neither Jesus Christ nor his disciples, nor Mary nor Joseph, could meet — none of whom had been to college or seminary (or whatever was commensurate for their day).

"He came to his own and his own received him not." Of course not, the temple high priests had questioned his credentials: He hadn't been to college or

rabbinical school, had continued to work in the marketplace, and all his disciples were common workers and hadn't been to college or rabbinical school either, and they continued to work at their jobs, off and on. The more things change, the more they remain the same!

"As ye would have done it to the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me." (And if you don't think the sexist/racist priests, bishops and standing committees don't think Harris, a *woman*, a *Black* woman, is "the least," you need your head examined!

Neither Jesus nor his disciples had "10 years of parish experience" either, and neither could have met the 1988 standards for bishop, according to the conservative clergy and laity in Episcopal Church land.

Abbie Jane Wells
Juneau, Alaska

(More letters on page 14)

make an extensive world tour without facing the sting of non-recognition in her own churches. There are ordained women deacons in nearly all Anglican churches, including the Church of England, indicating that the movement is toward rather than away from the ordination of women on the world scene.

I have neither the time nor the inclination to do the research necessary to refute your statement that she is "apparently the first divorced person ever elected an Anglican bishop." On the face of it the assertion sounds too sweeping to be verifiable. In any case she is certainly not the first divorced person to be an active bishop in the American Episcopal Church. I can think offhand of two others right here in New England. Furthermore, Ms. Harris' chief challenger and one other candidate in the recent Massachusetts election were divorced persons, one re-married. Had the runner-up been elected I doubt we would have heard

much about his divorce; we didn't during the election process.

Ms. Harris' lack of a college degree and her lack of experience as a full-time parish rector may be unusual but she will not be unique among American bishops, let alone world bishops, in these regards. Neither qualification is mentioned in the canonical requirements for episcopal orders. Most American bishops are awarded honorary degrees upon their election to the episcopate. Bishop-elect Harris already holds a D.D. from Hobart-William Smith College and will surely be awarded additional degrees over the next few years.

As for your characterization of the 72-year old WITNESS magazine as the voice of the Episcopal Church's "hard left," it does ring faintly of red-baiting. How would one define the "hard left" of a church sometimes called "the Republican Party at prayer"? Would it be those Episcopals who believe in a gradu-

ated income tax or the right of working people to organize unions? The only specific position you cite as an example of this "hard left" posture is advocacy for the ordination of homosexually-oriented persons. Is human rights advocacy an exclusively left-wing activity?

Your article does point out Bishop-elect Harris' humor, competence and proven ability to exercise imaginative leadership. You do acknowledge that these gifts will be useful to her and the church in the future. For that much at least I thank you. My real quarrel with your reporting is its tone and the way in which it leaves a general impression of the Anglican Communion that I know to be inaccurate. If your reporting about an institution I know so well can be so off the mark, how can I trust what you tell me about situations with which I am less familiar.

The Rev. Suzanne R. Hiatt
Cambridge, Mass.

THE WITNESS

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THE WITNESS

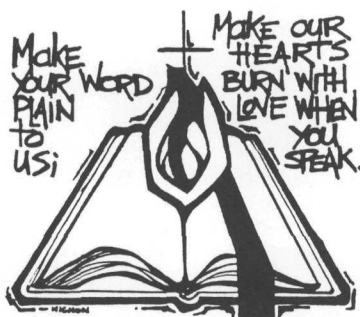


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Credits Cover graphic Margaret Longdon, design TSI Visuals; photos p. 6, 8 Drew Wilson, *The Virginian-Pilot*; photo p.7, Laura Allen; cartoon p.9, *Journal of Women's Ministries*; photo p. 11, Marat Moore from *Feminizing Unions*; Fox photo p. 13 courtesy Friends of Creation Spirituality; graphic p. 21, Huck.

Editorial

Workers, unions merit advocacy

The time is ripe for an official Episcopal Church resolution supporting workers and unions. The Rt. Rev. John H. Burt, board member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, in a recent study of church literature going back to the '30s, found that the only such relevant pastoral pronouncement came from the following two brief paragraphs in a 1982 Labor Day message issued by the Urban Bishops Coalition:

We reaffirm the right and desirability of workers in the United States to organize and form unions. Without giving our blessing to the behavior of any particular union or any particular issue between labor and management, we insist that in an adversarial workplace, where one class of people owns the property and another sells only its labor, collective bargaining is a just avenue to the adjudication of relationships. It provides a route that avoids control by one side of the rights of the other.

Therefore, we decry the growing wave of anti-unionism mounting in the nation today which asks people to forget the struggles that led to this form of negotiation as a just way to settle differences. We urge church people and others not to judge this issue on the basis of a particular case but rather on the basis of the fundamental principles involved. As long as the workplace is organized by the artificial divi-

sion between ownership and labor, it is necessary to support the right of workers to organize and to negotiate for their rights as employees. We reject any notion that one class of people can be trusted to hold the interest of another class of people in higher priority than their own self-interest. To endorse such a notion is to invite the renewal of abandoned forms of exploitation and to regress to paternalism.

One example of the renewal of abandoned forms of exploitation, given the decline of unionism, has been a radical deterioration of health benefits. In the past, most Americans won health insurance as a fringe benefit through their jobs because of hard-fought union struggles. But today over two-thirds of the uninsured in the United States are workers or children of workers. In a recent publication, Dr. David Parish, assistant professor of internal medicine at Mercer University in Macon, Ga., reported that "a large percentage of sea-

sonal workers, the self-employed (plumbers, painters, etc.), workers in small companies and low income workers do not carry health insurance. Workers who make near minimum wage and do not have employer insurance find coverage for themselves or their dependents unaffordable. A worker earning \$700/month (\$4/hour) would spend over 28% of his/her gross income to purchase a low budget \$150/month family health insurance policy. Workers whose companies pay part of their insurance but nothing for dependent coverage are often forced to cover themselves but not their children." (*Blueprint for Social Justice* 1/89)

Unions were once perhaps the strongest advocates for health care. But now almost 40 million people have no health care coverage.

This issue of THE WITNESS carries articles which offer a glimmer of hope — the feminization of unions and subsequent strengthening thereof, and the growing interest of women in non-union plants in organizing to obtain goals. Also, the international ramifications of union solidarity become evident in the African mineworkers' struggle and the Shell boycott story.

A resolution by Executive Council urging support of workers and unions, which might be ratified at next General Convention, would be most helpful, indeed. And, remembering the recent history of the Shell boycott resolution, it will require careful tending and continued support to carry the day.

Special Harris issue in April

Barbara C. Harris, Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Massachusetts and former executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, won the necessary majority of votes from Diocesan standing committees by Jan. 3. Her election was almost certain to be approved by diocesan bishops, and her consecration has been scheduled for Feb. 11 in Boston.

Since the date conflicts with closeout of our March publication, THE WITNESS will produce a special issue analyzing the event in April.



Perdue worker shackles chickens at the Lewiston, N.C. plant.

‘Chicken kingdom’ maiming workers

by Katerina Katsarka Whitley

In rural North Carolina the road stretches between fields of cotton, soybeans and tobacco. Traffic is sparse and drivers greet each other with a wave of the hand. They don’t have to know one another; they are just being neighborly.

In the northeastern part of the state friendliness is as characteristic as poverty, but one is more visible than the other. In our small towns one rarely sees the homeless, pitiful bundles that disturb the passersby of northern cities, but misery hides in homes crowded with single women and many children.

Katerina Katsarka Whitley is editor of *Cross Current*, the newspaper of the Diocese of East Carolina, and is a communications consultant for the Presiding Bishop’s Fund for World Relief.

I usually see them at the post office in the beginning of the month, when the food stamp line is longer than the one for postage stamps. Sometimes they stop me in the supermarket, these single mothers I used to know as girls in high school.

“And what are you doing now, Sheila?” I ask.

“Working at Perdue,” is usually the answer.

Perdue is the “chicken kingdom,” as they call it in these parts. One of the company’s poultry processing plants is in Robersonville, just a few miles down the road from where I live. Most of my White friends don’t even know these places are there, except when driving

through, they catch the oppressive odor of the plant. The other plant, the largest owned by Perdue, is near Lewiston, an hour’s drive away. This plant is the pride of the county commissioners, and employs about 2,000 people at a starting pay of \$5 an hour, a high wage here for unskilled workers.

But, unless one is a worker at Perdue, it is hard to see what is going on inside. The processing plants are like fortresses. Guards stand at the gate, and are surprised when anyone asks to enter. The appropriate supervisor has to be contacted on the phone and then, after a long wait, one only sees the public relations person. Recently the Rev. Jim Lewis, director of Christian Social Min-

istries for the Diocese of North Carolina, and I tried to visit the Lewiston plant. We were told to come back in two months for a pre-arranged tour. But the invitation never came.

Why all the secrecy? Women who have worked in chicken processing factories tell me they are not pretty places. The chickens, an unbelievable number of them, are hung 30 a minute on the conveyor belts by hooks, and are then dipped into boiling water that removes their feathers. They pass in front of the women at dizzying speed, women who do the same job every minute, eight hours or more every day. The names of their tasks are not pretty either: debeaking, deboning, eviscerating, gizzard skinning, wing-tagging.

So what? It is a job, after all, in an agricultural area that at best has only seasonal employment, and it pays well. County politicians and the unemployed rejoiced to see Perdue come to north-eastern North Carolina.

But one is left to wonder how high the health costs of a job have to be before it is no longer worth the pain. The manual activity that brings packaged chicken parts to supermarkets and makes food preparation so much quicker than in the past exacts a tremendous toll on the health of the workers. Ninety percent of the Perdue workers are women, and they are almost always Black.

The eviscerating and trimming are done with lightning speed. A woman must perform the same motion — lifting her arm to cut or pull parts — on 90 chickens a minute. The line has gotten faster and faster — in 1979 it moved 56 chickens a minute. Workers said that the line is slowed when a guest, like a commissioner, or even Frank Perdue himself, is ushered in, but the rest of the time it is unbelievably fast. The pace of work causes carpal tunnel syndrome, a painful swelling of the lining of the tendons in the wrist, the result of repetitive action.

The work environment is difficult. The



Sarah Fields-Davis

women have to wear layers of clothing against the extreme cold in the plant, three pairs of gloves to protect their hands against sharp tools and shattered chicken bones, boots to be able to stand in the streams of hot and cold water mingled with chicken fat, and ear covers to protect them from the noise.

Now the U.S. government plans to do away with the USDA inspectors who walk the floor constantly “because Perdue has a good record,” said Sarah Fields-Davis. That will result in a speeding-up of the line to 120 chickens a minute, she said. It seems impossible to visualize.

Fields-Davis is the director of the Center for Women’s Economic Alternatives (CWEA) in rural Ahoski. With six other women who work at the Center, she tries to educate poor Black women in 17 counties about the hazards of the workplace and their rights as employees.

CWEA was started in 1984 by community organizers Beulah Sharpe, a Black woman who had experience in organizing workers, and Cindy Arnold, a young, White Duke University graduate who was determined to make a difference in the lives of poor, rural women. Sharpe died from a heart condition after the Center was established and Arnold went on to define and expand the work. She has since gone to Texas to work for the rights of other poor people.

But present director Fields-Davis con-

tinues to be a thorn in the flesh of the “chicken kingdom.” She came to North Carolina as an activist from the coal mining region of West Virginia. When her deaf son had nowhere to go to school, Fields-Davis found a law on the books requiring the Board of Education to educate any deaf children in the state, and helped herself and other parents who previously had to send their children away to school. She was instrumental in getting the services of a nurse/midwife for the area. She had to contend with “a lot” of trouble with the Klan, she said, which moved her to seek legislation to make the activities of the Klan illegal in her county. Fields-Davis was so effective that then-President Jimmy Carter invited her to a White House conference of 300 women gathered to deal with issues affecting women. In 1985 the Ford Foundation sent her to Nairobi for the Conference on the Decade of Women.

A new person on CWEA staff is Earlene Barkley, who has worked with Head Start in New Jersey and organized day care workers in North Carolina. She is in charge of the Poultry Project and makes it clear that her first concern is the worker.

She says that the Project is moving slowly because the change must come not from a pre-packaged plan or a set of strategies designed by the Center, but from the women themselves wanting to get involved to bring about change.

“We are moving out of isolation,” Barkley added. “I see the work as moving out of the local level and bringing together organizers from different states.”

Can the effort be successful?

“Without question,” she answered. “The feeling comes from the workers — not right away, not in a year, but we’ll have progress.”

Her sympathy and hope are focused on the workers. This past summer, Don Mabe, Perdue’s president and chief executive, outlined the company’s objec-



"Draw-handler" extracts chicken entrails at Perdue's Accomac, Va. plant.

tives in the *Perdue News*: "To maintain our sales at \$1 billion, to improve quality, to lower our costs, and to keep our property in better shape." Nowhere does he mention working conditions.

Barkley concedes that businesses must make a profit and nobody wants Perdue to close down — just change its ways. The Poultry Project organizers are asking for the following modifications, which they say will be simple to implement and effective:

- Redesign the tools.
- Slow down the line.
- Rotate the workers to different jobs.

After four years, changes still have not occurred at Perdue. But the Center has won litigation for many workers who were fired because of illness caused by the assembly line conditions.

Fields-Davis and Barkley and their community organizers move with intelligence and purpose in an environment hostile to Blacks and unskilled workers. There are also women in these counties who are members of the Center's board despite their comfortable jobs and better living conditions.

Director Fields-Davis said that "things are going great at the Center." They are expanding fast, trying to educate women who work at the Emporia plant in Virginia doing deboning, a task which is hard on the workers' hands.

"It would be very easy to talk about poultry from the standpoint of the consumer," Fields-Davis said, "and from an environmental position," noting that salmonella has been a health hazard in these plants and chicken feather dust creates polluted air, but added, "there is little emphasis on the worker."

This is the vacuum the Center tries to fill. "We are proposing flooding the Industrial Commission with workers' compensation complaints to get their attention. We also need to get a safety net for those workers who will talk to the media," said Fields-Davis.

It is a hard reality. What makes my life easier — the deboned chicken breasts that are so easy to cook — takes a toll on the health of those who prepare them. Must we remain silent and enjoy our convenience? Who will speak out for the worker? **TW**

Back Issues Available:

• **Healthcare in the 1990s — Who can afford it?:** A penetrating analysis by hospital chaplain Charles Meyer, showing how seven recent changes have sent healthcare prices soaring, making it unavailable to the poor, the elderly, the medically indigent. Highly recommended by Maggie Kuhn of the Gray Panthers as a resource. Includes guidelines on how churches can deal with ethical and technical implications. Also in this issue: Roberta Nobleman's account of incest, "Call it not love," a social problem largely ignored by the churches.

• **God and Mother Russia:** Episcopal priest William Teska interviews Konstantin Kharchev, USSR Councilor for Religious Affairs, on how *perestroika* affects religion; major articles by Sovietologist Paul Valliere, Bill and Polly Spofford, Mary Lou Suhor on their visits to the USSR; statistics on major religious bodies in the USSR; Dr. John Burgess' assessment of the 1986 Human Rights Seminar sponsored by the National Council of Churches in Moscow. (28 pages)

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Short Takes

Top religion story of 1988

In the year marking the millennium of Christianity in Russia, the Soviet Union took some significant steps toward increasing religious freedom, while the Russian Orthodox Church, having survived decades of persecution and atheistic propaganda, appeared to obtain a new degree of cultural status and influence. The government-sponsored celebration of the millennium of Christianity in June, in which churchpeople and secular academics (and significantly, Raisa Gorbachev) participated, offered vivid evidence of a rapprochement between church and state. More tangibly, the Soviets reopened some churches and monasteries, freed some religious dissidents, allowed a new influx of Bibles into the country, authorized some church groups to perform charitable work and permitted favorable discussions of religion in the media.

"The time has come," announced a Communist Party publication, "to put an end to a suspicious and unfavorable attitude towards believers and their ideals of care for people, love and moral self-improvement." This *glasnost* for religion — the muting of official atheism and the emergence of religion as an element in national discussion — is the top religion story of the year in the view of the *Century's* editors.

The Christian Century 12/21-28/88

Gee whiz, folks

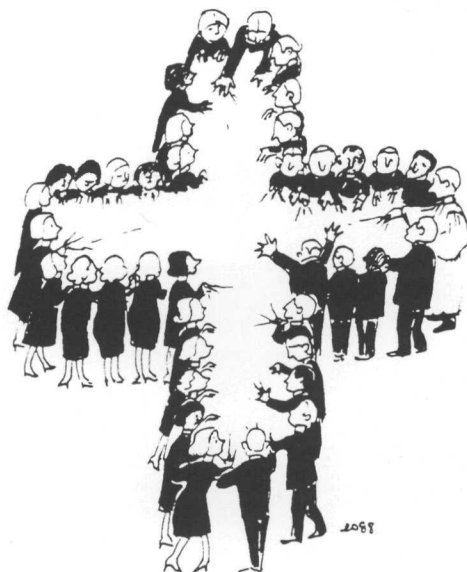
Capt. Will C. Rogers III, commanding officer of the U.S.S. Vincennes, commenting (in the *San Diego Union*) on the downing of an Iranian airliner last July by his guided-missile cruiser: "We had a lot go right. Everyone is focusing on what went wrong."

The Progressive 1/89

Quote of note

Nothing is really work unless you'd rather be doing something else.

Sir James Barrie



Journal of Women's Ministries

"Will everyone stop pulling in different directions? After all, we agree on the basic shape!"

Shell loses pesticide suit

A jury ruled Dec. 19 that Shell Oil Co. was responsible for cleaning up three decades' worth of pesticide pollution at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a project that could cost up to \$2 billion.

The verdict was a victory for 250 insurance companies, which argued that Shell knew of the pollution at the facility northeast of Denver and therefore was not covered by its 800 different insurance policies any more than a homeowner who set fire to his own house would be.

The verdict, reached on an 11-1 vote after five days of deliberation, seemed certain to set a precedent in determining who will pay for cleaning up pollution — the polluter or the polluter's insurance companies. The Congressional Office of Technical Assessment estimates that the cost of cleaning up all toxic dumps in the country will be \$100 billion.

The Philadelphia Inquirer 12/20/88

Gorby merits response

In his speech to the United Nations Dec. 7, Mikhail Gorbachev seized the political initiative from a dormant Reagan Administration, outlined his vision of a new world order and set the foreign policy agenda for 1989 and beyond. Gorbachev's proposals — unilaterally cutting conventional military forces, re-deploying thousands of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe in a defensive posture, converting military enterprises to meet domestic needs, placing the UN and its agencies at the center of a new alignment, welcoming the Palestine Liberation Organization's position vis-a-vis Israel, revising emigration rules for Soviet citizens and allowing Third World debtor nations a 100-year moratorium on loan repayments — all are in the U.S. interest.

Gorbachev's proposals and their timing confront the community of cold-war pundits, officials, and other assorted experts with an unprecedented choice. Conventional skepticism — are Soviet reforms sincere? — seems increasingly displaced from reality in a world where, as Gorbachev said at the UN, the bell now tolls for all of us. If the old reflexes win out again, we may lose the chance to seize reforms that are clearly in our interest.

The Nation 12/26/88

Courage is fear that has said its prayers. Anon.

No doctors in this house

White South Africans have one physician for every 326 people. For Blacks, the ratio is one for every 3,400. There are only 20 Black dentists and 70 Black pharmacists for a Black population of some 25 million. The infant death rate among Blacks is about 100 per 1,000 births. The White infant death rate is 14 per 1,000.

Medical Education for South African Blacks

The feminization of unions

by Ruth Needleman

Unions will never be the same. Millions of new women in the work force are rewriting labor's agenda and transforming the culture of unionism in America. Two-thirds of all new workers are women. Two-thirds of all new union members are women. And these trends will continue into the next century.

Faced with declining membership in traditional manufacturing strong holds, unions have sought to recruit this growing female constituency. Industrially-based unions have established white-collar departments, appointed women to organizing positions, and introduced a new language of female concerns into their resolution books and bargaining packages. Unions historically rooted in female occupational areas, service industries and the public sector have also revised their practices and made structural and programmatic accommodations to address women's issues.

Female involvement at every level of union activity and decision-making will strengthen the trend within organized labor that historically has advocated greater rank-and-file participation, greater internal democracy, more collective and community-oriented practices, and more progressive stands on national and international issues ranging from budgetary priorities to peace and disarmament. The attitudes, style of work, scope of concerns and political preferences of today's female union activists — tomorrow's union leaders — will help rekindle a social unionism like that fostered by the CIO at the height of its

organizing campaigns — a social unionism that is needed today to inspire workers and galvanize a movement. What's more, if past experience is any indication, women will conscientiously take on a lion's share of the day-to-day organizational work required to rebuild that movement.

What evidence supports such claims? Drawing on existing research, surveys and studies, this article will explore the potential that growing female labor participation holds for transforming union life and influence in the decades ahead.

Changing female participation

More women are in the paid labor force than ever before — 54.6 million, representing 57% of this nation's female population. That compares to less than 34 million women in the labor force in 1972 and 24 million in 1962. Their numbers have increased by more than a million a year since the 1960s, with the largest increases among married women, women of child-bearing age, and mothers. Today women constitute 45% of the work force, compared to 37% twenty years ago. By the year 2000, the U.S. Department of labor predicts a 25% increase in the numbers of women in the job market; more than 80% of women between the ages of 25-54 will be working.

This dramatic change in the composition of the U.S. work force reflects a variety of developments: changes in labor markets, in family structure and in levels of income as well as a transformation of cultural values and assumptions.

The decline in real income for families with only one wage-earner, along with the increased dislocation of male manufacturing workers, has forced record

numbers of married women into the labor force. Rising divorce rates and the increase of female heads of households have also affected participation rates. A steady rise in service occupations over manufacturing since the mid-1950s has intensified the demand for female labor. Between now and the year 2000, eight of the ten occupations that will produce the most jobs are in traditionally female labor markets — mainly service, unskilled and low-paying. Equally significant is the expansion of part-time and temporary work, historically a female ghetto.

By reducing the time needed to handle household chores, new technologies have also facilitated the move to work outside the home, easing the double burden of women workers. But the most important support and encouragement to women entering the labor market, especially those seeking non-traditional work, has come from the upheaval in social relations and the challenge to cultural stereotypes brought about by the women's movement of the late 1960s and '70s. Organized women, from the early consciousness-raising groups to NOW and the National Women's Political Caucus, have altered irreversibly women's expectations and self-perceptions.

What has not changed, however, is the occupational segregation of women. Well over 80% of female workers hold traditional jobs in clerical, health care, public service and light manufacturing. Because unions concentrated their organizing historically in manufacturing, the vast majority of women were not and still are not union members.

The most dramatic shift in female union membership patterns came in the

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Women account for a growing percentage of organized workers — from 27.6% in 1977 to 33.7% in 1985. And recent surveys suggest that women are more likely to join unions than men.

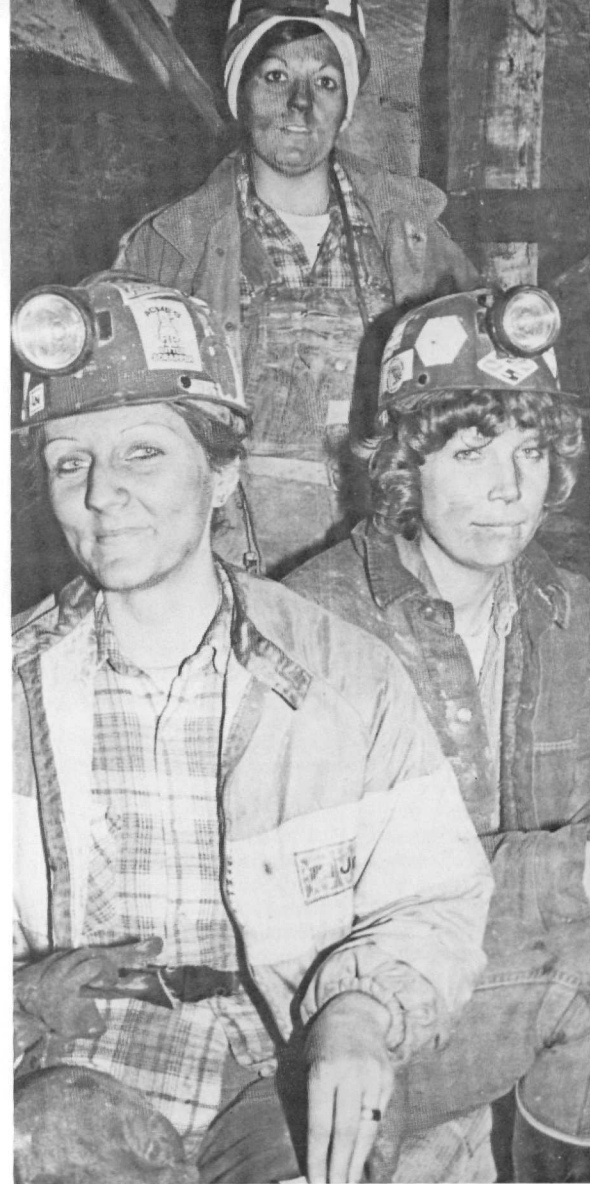
1960s with the organization of public sector and health care workers. Until that point, most female union members were employed in areas of light industry. Today the typical union woman is between the ages of 25 and 44, and works for the federal, state or local government, in transportation, communications or in public utilities. Another important trend in the development of employee associations among nurses and teachers, which involve large numbers of women. The absence of unionization in private sector offices, retail stores, and other service areas, however, explains the very modest overall growth in the number of organized women.

Why were unions so slow to respond to the influx of women into the work force? Until recently, there were relatively few efforts on the part of unions to organize any workers, and even fewer with a special appeal to women. Male union leadership, like society as a whole, still perceived women as less “organizable” — as temporary workers, less economically motivated than men, more identified with their employers than with their peers, and less willing to take the risks and make the commitments that union organization entails. With some significant exceptions, most unions focused their energies on servicing their existing constituencies and did not feel compelled to seek new ones. When confronted with sharp declines in their membership base due to major cutbacks

and changes in heavy industry, unions turned defensively to organizing.

Some of the early attempts at unionization seemed to reinforce popular stereotypes about women, when efforts to organize retail stores, insurance companies and offices met with failure. Unions relied on old approaches with male organizers speaking a “blue-collar” language and fostering a male culture, and meetings conflicted with family obligations or overlooked childcare needs — almost insurmountable obstacles in these early organizing drives. Unions, however, rarely recognized these problems in their approach; they blamed the women. At the same time, management’s stake in maintaining a low-paid unorganized female work force was enormous, and corporations spent millions, broke laws (with impunity) and hired scores of consultants to block union drives. It was a fatal combination — corporate consciousness and union unconsciousness.

Some of the breakthroughs occurred, ironically, in those industrial unions geared almost exclusively to meet the needs of a male membership, like those in auto, steel, even coal-mining. The women pioneers who hired into non-traditional jobs following the enactment of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act had strong economic motivation; they also had perseverance and a sense of entitlement, fostered by the emerging women’s movement. Hardly a single one of these women would have credited the women’s movement; the decision has been their own. But the opening was there, and it had not existed previously. Conditions on the job — a combination of company discrimination and peer resistance — further cultivated a gender-based identification. In order to deal with an unfriendly environment, including inadequate locker, washroom and shower facilities, work shifts hostile to parenting, and conditions threatening to reproduction, women sought out each other for support. Many of the first



women’s caucuses and committees were formed in non-traditional workplaces and in unions with relatively small female memberships. The UAW was among the first unions to promote the establishment of women’s committees; the largest district in the Steelworkers produced a women’s caucus, and in mining, women founded the Coal Employment Project.

In some of the international unions with the largest female membership, there was a tendency to downplay the need for special attention to women’s

Continued on page 22

Roman Catholic theologian silenced by Vatican:

Episcopal parish hosts Matthew

This is my last workshop before going under house arrest,” Dominican theologian Matthew Fox quipped at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Oakland, Calif. in December. “I’ve been giving workshops for 17 years, and I don’t know when I’ll give my next one.” Beneath Fox’s humor and playfulness was a touch of sadness.

The Vatican demanded that Fox cease lecturing, preaching and teaching as of Dec. 15 because of his controversial ideas. Fox has agreed to a semester sabbatical from the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality (ICCS), which he founded 11 years ago at Mundelein College in Chicago and which is now located at Holy Names College in Oakland.

But in the two months before his pending silence, Fox was quite outspoken. On Oct. 20 he held a press conference in San Francisco, which produced articles in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and many of the nation’s newspapers. The week before his silence Fox spoke to a national audience on NBC-TV’s Today show. His supporters also purchased a full page ad in *The New York Times* to detail his side of the conflict with the Vatican and to solicit help.

In what he describes as “an act of good faith” Fox will pull back from his active public schedule for a few months. He plans to go on a “vision quest” under

the guidance of a Native American spiritual leader and visit Latin America and Africa. He will spend time with Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff, who was also silenced by the Vatican. “Perhaps we’ll have a meal at which neither of us talks,” he laughed. Then Fox will examine his conscience to determine whether or not to remain silent.

What has upset the Vatican so much, I recently asked the 47-year-old priest. “The real issue between the Vatican and me is patriarchy,” Fox answered. “I don’t think anyone would argue the case that the Vatican is at home with feminism.” Fox added that feminism “keeps certain people awake in the Vatican” who fear “that the women are coming, the women are coming.”

In the most recent of his dozen books, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* (Harper and Row), Fox writes, “The church is a giant, patriarchal dinosaur that is dying.” In a pastoral letter entitled, “Is the Catholic Church a Dysfunctional Family?” Fox scored the church for its deafness to the suffering of the oppressed and its silence in the face of the “killing of Mother Earth.” Fox notes “signs of creeping fascism” in his letter. Elsewhere he has referred to “the spiritual sloth” in the “current neurotic papal regime.” Fox admitted to this reporter, “It is difficult to be a Roman Catholic in this era. The cry for freedom is strong and cannot be stopped.”

Asked what he would do if given the ultimatum of leaving the church or ceasing to affirm creation spirituality, Fox said he wants to remain within, but he will not abandon creation spirituality.

“Creation spirituality comes from the deep and ancient traditions of the most oppressed peoples, the native or primal peoples of the world,” he explained, “and from women’s experience.” He described it as a movement of Christians and other spiritual seekers which blends social justice, medieval mysticism, feminism, transpersonal psychology, native spiritualities and other progressive movements. “Creation spirituality is in many respects a liberation theology for first world peoples,” he said.

Fox’s accuser in the Vatican is the powerful Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. “Deviant and dangerous” are the words Cardinal Ratzinger uses to describe Fox’s ideas. He has condemned Fox for being “a fervent feminist,” for sometimes referring to God as “Mother,” for hiring Starhawk, a self-described witch, and for affirming homosexual persons. Fox has admitted to each of these allegations, asserting that they are all traditional Christian affirmations. Fox supports women having a more active voice in the church and society and continues to stand by Starhawk.

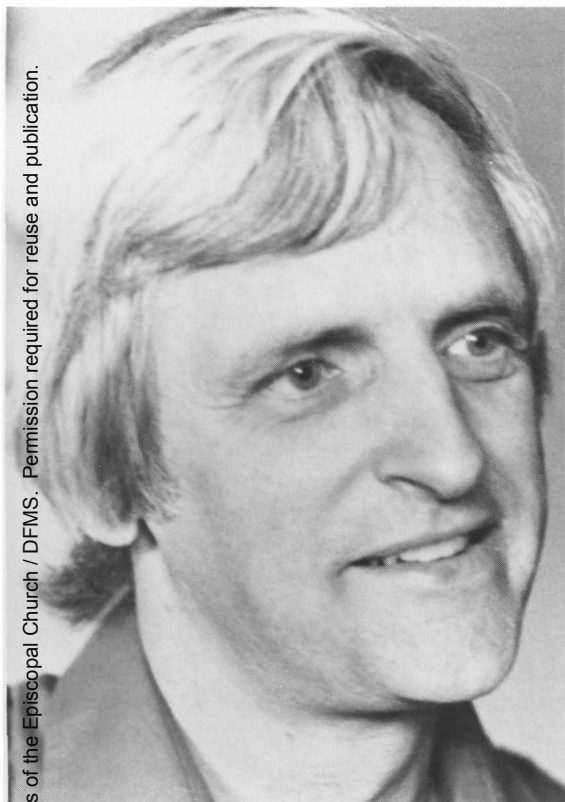
“I hired Starhawk for her feminism and scholarship. Her non-violent commitment to oppose militarism and nuclear madness are admirable. She is a deeply moral and committed person. The essence of her ritual work is play and recovering the humor and strength in the goddess tradition,” he stated.

“Movements make the Vatican very nervous,” Fox notes in talking about the creation spirituality movement, “because the Vatican isn’t moving. Ours are times for holy impatience, disobedience and

Shepherd Bliss, D.Mn., was ordained a United Methodist minister, and worked as a missionary in Latin America. He now teaches Men’s Studies at JFK University near San Francisco.

Fox's last workshop

by Shepherd Bliss



Matthew Fox

discontinuity."

While others in the Roman Catholic Church share Fox's perspectives, he has emerged as the most vocal representative of these ideas in his writing and travels across the United States and around the world.

Among those working with Fox and supporting him in his struggle with the Vatican have been men and women from many religious communities. The Rev. Rob McCann, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church where Fox held his final workshop, is himself a former Roman

Catholic priest. He sits on the board of Friends of Creation Spirituality, which publishes *Creation* magazine whose editorial board includes Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy, physicist Brian Swim, and goddess advocate Charlene Spretnak. This "deep ecumenism," as Fox describes it, is precisely one of the things which bothers the Vatican.

"We were excited to have Matt Fox here at St. John's," McCann said. "We felt part of an historic event and our parishioners felt honored by Matt's presence. His support of women is particularly refreshing. Our parishioners liked the balance of talking, art, dance and the slides of Hildegard de Bingen in Matt's workshop."

At this event, Fox focused on material from *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. He encouraged those filling the church's sanctuary to follow their "heart wisdom." Observing that "our hearts are in our bodies," he began the workshop by taking participants outside on a glorious day to teach circle dances where they looked into each other's eyes while chanting to the earth, air, water and fire.

"We have split the universe from the soul," Fox lamented. "Religion has cut itself off from the cosmos. We need to realize that the world and the psyche are together."

"Scientists are writing some of the most amazing work on mysticism," Fox said, defining mysticism as "an interest in the mysteries." He added, "Radical amazement is how Rabbi Abraham Heschel describes mysticism."

Fox has been criticized as a theologian for not being original, scholarly or deep.

But McCann commented after the workshop, "Matt invited us all into theological reflection — not just the elite theologians. It was exciting for my parishioners and me to recapture the Cosmic Christ, to use the image from Matt's new book. Matt taps the physicist, the mystic and the prophet within each of us."

The Rev. John Conger, an associate at St. John's and a psychologist, reflected, "Matt Fox is the herald of something new — some profound change in the church. His incorporation of feminism seems to be what the war with the Vatican is about. The old guard in the church does not seem to have a clue about women."

On the evening before his final workshop Fox gave his last lecture at the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley — to which 600 people came. Fox rooted himself that evening in the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke and Walt Whitman. He noted that the Cosmic Christ tradition began before Jesus. "Christ was not Jesus' last name." He acknowledged the Jewish heritage of the Cosmic Christ and its presence in various religions, "One of the great contributions of Christianity to the Cosmic Christ tradition is that of the wound. Christ was a wounded man."

Fox followed the wounded theme the following morning at St. John's by talking about the divine child within each of us who is "born in God's image" and then wounded; as Swiss psychiatrist Alice Miller describes, by a variety of abuses. Fox contrasted the Cristos tradition to the Greek patriarchal God Cronos: "Cronos ate his children and is the patron saint of our consumer society."

We consume our youth.”

Fox asserted that the recovery of the mystic tradition, one of his major goals, includes recovering the divine child. “All the mystics celebrate divinity as the child. We were all mystics as children. There is still a mystic inside every one of us — our capacity to make connections. God is a playmate,” Fox declared, “but artists have made God a tired old man with a long white beard. God is a divine child. One of the issues between the Vatican and me is the tired adult versus this affirmation of the divine child. Just as the Vatican has trouble with me calling God Mother, it has trouble with me calling God a child.”

Fox’s spiritual critique goes far beyond the Catholic Church. Though affirming the importance of social action for justice, he challenges those “good-

intentioned persons working intensely and sacrificing much for peace and justice” who suffer “burnout, pessimism, lack of creativity, spirit and imagination.” To those he says, “Behold the universe. Behold its fulsome mysteries. Behold its glory. Behold your connection to all things. Beauty abounds. Partake of it.”

But lest this be confused with the so-called New Age spirituality with which Fox has been associated, he adds, “Certain trends in the New Age are all space and no time; all consciousness and no conscience; all mysticism and no prophecy; all past experiences, angelic encounters, untold bliss, and no critique of injustices or acknowledgements of suffering and death. In short, no body.” Fox adds that the New Age “has raised important questions, but it is too much

light. It leaves out the wounds, the shadow, and says nothing of the struggle for justice.”

When I asked Fox to reflect on his current situation, he responded, “The scientist Thomas Berry talks about three ways of change. The first is re-creation, making alternative models. The second is transformation — connecting the old values with the new. The third is confrontation, which is what is happening with us now. We did not ask for it with the Vatican. We have been busy re-creating and transforming. Now we are getting a response from those who are benefiting from and profiting from the old paradigm. We will continue our re-creative and transformative work for change. And now we are also involved in confrontation. All three are part of the work for saving the planet.” **TV**

Letters . . . continued from page 3

(While critics protest the rise of Barbara Harris to the bishopric, seeing the event as pushing the role of women in the church too far, other women have had troubles simply remaining in the church because of the oppressive atmosphere. A WITNESS subscriber, who asked that her identity be protected, wrote the following letter to us at year’s end.—Ed.)

The church Catholic?

In my parish, where I first came to Christ and incidentally to the Episcopal Church, there is so much discord; I know it’s that way in many churches, or I guess it is.

Our vestry won’t approve a woman curate — too divisive, they contend, although none of them actually will say they just can’t stomach it personally — and they give our priest endless heartache over the perceived threat of some gay people who attend our church (“We don’t want to become THAT kind of church”).

He preaches harsh sermons on inclusiveness and stewardship, and they smile blandly, sign pledge cards for .0025% of

their income and walk right past the occasional minority person who visits. A major complaint among the congregation? He doesn’t touch them enough when he puts the Host in their hands.

They complain that there aren’t enough programs, and this morning after Eucharist I stumbled on our Christian education director sobbing in her office because the very ones who complain had turned her down again in a request for some help running the programs we do have. They’re too busy.

I know this is judgmental. I confess my sin in feeling I’m somehow superior because pettiness bothers me. I know in my heart God has called me to the priesthood, and when I think of seeking approval here to do so, my stomach hurts; that hardly makes me an example of inclusive, Christ-centered love. I believe in the Church Catholic; is this hodge-podge mess it?

Thank God Christ came for sinners. I know which side of the table I’m on; I guess I need to learn to thank God for all these reminders of our need for that boundless, senseless love.

A Texas subscriber

Kudos for Advent letter

How I enjoyed your Advent letter! It fairly vibrated with excitement. Thank you for your good work in providing challenging reading material. Best wishes for the new year from a Mennonite writer.

**Elaine Sommers Rich
Blufton, Ohio**

An annual event?

I don’t remember any previous Advent letters from THE WITNESS, so if this is a first edition, it was wonderful and I hope you will make it an annual event.

It is always a gift to be kept in touch with those you love and admire.

**The Rt. Rev. Robert R. Spears, Jr.
Rochester, N. Y.**

(We have been mailing out an Advent Letter for six or more years now — but due to a limited budget we must send it third class. Lest it be taken for “junk mail,” we have in recent years labeled the envelope — Annual Subscriber’s Letter Enclosed. Our purpose is to be in touch with THE WITNESS family of readers in a more personal way than in our columns. Many thanks! — Ed.)



Boycott makes apartheid unprofitable

by Susan E. Pierce

When you fill your gas tank at the local service station, you could be unwittingly supporting apartheid. Major oil companies like Royal Dutch/Shell (the parent company of Shell Oil) are doing business in South Africa and the Front-line States, fueling the country's repressive apartheid regime. A growing number of religious and secular labor and social action groups have launched a campaign to make people in the United States and Europe aware that they can strike an economic blow against apartheid by boycotting Shell Oil products.

Shell isn't interested in democracy in South Africa. Shell delivers oil to a government that kills innocent women and children in the Black townships . . . They don't have respect for human dignity. Shell should leave South Africa.

**James Motlatsi, President
National Union of Mineworkers**

"Petroleum products are the blood of the modern police and military which enforce racist rule in South Africa, illegally occupy Namibia, and invaded Botswana, Lesotho, Angola, and Mozambique," said Catherine M. Kovak in an issue of the *Corporate Examiner*,

the monthly newsletter of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). ICCR, an ecumenical watchdog group, has been at the forefront of the Shell boycott.

In January 1986, the Free South Africa Movement and the United Mine Workers in the United States started a national effort to boycott Shell in response to requests for aid from the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa. In May of the same year, the South African Council of Churches called for economic pressure on the South African government by the international community. The Shell boycott is now supported by churches and labor organizations in 14 countries.

ICCR announced in June of 1986 that Shell Oil would be added to its list of companies targeted for intensive action. Since then a growing number of organizations have endorsed the boycott.

Royal Dutch/Shell, like many major multi-national corporations, has a long and profitable history of collusion with the government of South Africa. It is one of the largest foreign investors there, with \$450 million in assets.

Shell South Africa and its subsidiaries

have been involved in the petroleum, chemical and mining industries of South and Namibia since 1900. Shell operates South Africa's largest oil refinery, and owns 50% of the offshore station through which most of South Africa's imported oil is delivered. Shell also operates an oil pipeline with the government, and owns more than 900 gas stations.

According to ICCR, Royal Dutch/Shell plays a vital role in keeping the apartheid system alive. South Africa has no oil resources of its own, and its present petroleum stockpiles would only last nine months. The other alternative, processing oil from coal, is very expensive and cannot provide more than 25% of demand.

And anti-apartheid activists have pointed out that since the 1979 United Nations embargo, Shell has been the only major international oil company to continue supplying oil to South Africa, reportedly having received incentives of an extra \$8 per barrel from the government.

Shell has a record of ignoring embargoes. During the 1966-1980 oil embargo against Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Shell

and British Petroleum supplied 50% of the oil needed to sustain the White minority government. The oil was bought and shipped using a series of dummy corporations set up to evade the embargo. In violation of UN decrees, Shell South Africa also owns and operates three subsidiaries in Namibia.

Shell does a booming business with South Africa's military and police. Though precise figures on military and police petroleum use are secret under South African law, it is estimated that Shell supplies 18% of the oil for the South Africa Defense Force. The company provides gasoline, diesel fuel, methanol for jet fighters and helicopters, raw materials for napalm and defoliation agents, as well as materials used in the production of nerve gas for a South African military unit specializing in biological and chemical warfare.

Selling to the military and police is a condition for Shell's continued operation in South Africa. Under South African law, oil supplies are considered "munitions of war." Shell has agreed to allow the government to take over the company's operations in a national emergency, and to abide by restrictions on revealing how much oil it supplies and for what purpose. For its services to the government, Shell enjoys a secure market, favorable pricing laws and special monetary compensation for supplying already-overpriced imported oil.

Royal Dutch/Shell claims, as do many other corporations which do business in South Africa, that it deplores apartheid and that its employment and philanthropic efforts are a positive force for social change. But closer examination of Shell's record as an employer gives a different picture.

For example, Shell was anything but a benign employer at the Reitspruit coal mine, of which it owns 50%. In February 1985, Black Reitspruit miners took time off from work to hold a memorial service for a co-worker killed in a mining

accident. After a disagreement with management over scheduling the service, two shop stewards were fired and two others put on warning; 850 miners went on strike, demanding that the two fired miners be reinstated.

Management responded by sending in agents armed with rubber bullets and tear gas. In the end, 129 miners were fired; others returned to work at gunpoint. Many miners were evicted from their homes and a number were deported. Afterwards union membership at Reitspruit dropped to 18%. The mine owners ignored the resulting worldwide protest.

If Shell won't hear an appeal to morality, perhaps they will hear an appeal to profits.

**The Rev. Cecil L. Murray
African Methodist Episcopal Church**

The Shell boycott has picked up significant momentum since its inception in 1986. The AFL-CIO, National Organization for Women, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and NAACP are among 75 national organizations that support the boycott.

Both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches have endorsed the action against Shell. Last August, the WCC Central Committee encouraged church support for the boycott, which prompted a letter of protest from L. C. Van Wachem, president of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company to WCC General Secretary Emilio Castro. Van Wachem wrote that he found "the singling out of Shell . . . totally unwarranted and unjust," on the grounds that there are seven other oil companies in South Africa besides Shell.

While the WCC was not saying Shell's behavior was worse than other companies supplying oil to South Africa, Castro replied, "Shell cannot claim exemption from the radical criticism that is being addressed to oil companies for their involvement."

He went on to explain that the Shell



resolution had come to the floor during the Central Committee meeting at the specific request of the National Council of Churches. Also, the Episcopal Church passed a resolution at its July General Convention stating:

Resolved, in response to the urgent request of Archbishop Tutu . . . that the 69th General Convention adopt . . . the resolution adopted by Executive Council . . . that the Episcopal Church join with those churches and others who have endorsed the boycott against Royal Dutch/Shell; and that this action be communicated to the widest membership in the Episcopal Church, encouraging the membership to participate in the boycott . . . and that we call for expanding of this boycott to include all international oil companies doing business in South Africa: Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, British Petroleum and Total.

The U.S. churches have supported the boycott since its inception. The first was the Unitarian Universalist Church in 1986, followed in 1987 by the United Church of Christ, and in the summer of 1988 by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, the General Board of the American Baptist Convention and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and the list continues to grow.

In order to counteract the mounting international pressure, Shell hired Pagan International (PI), a Washington, D.C.-

based consulting firm. PI is headed by Rafael D. Pagan, Jr. former head of the Nestle Nutrition Center, where he attempted to defuse a boycott protesting Nestle's methods of marketing infant formula in the Third World.

PI felt it was particularly important to target the churches. ICCR obtained a copy of the "Neptune Strategy," a 265-page document divided into sections targeting religious, educational, media, union, civil rights and other groups, the goal being to keep groups from joining the boycott and divestment campaign or from giving these campaigns support.

According to ICCR, the "Religious Groups Strategy" section of the document expresses considerable concern that religious groups may join the boycott, noting that:

"Mobilized members of religious communions provide a 'critical mass' of public opinion and economic leverage that should not be taken lightly . . . If they join the boycott and pressure for disinvestment, it will become a radically different and far more costly problem than it is now."

The sophistication and skill of PI's tactics were evident in July 1988 in Detroit, when the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church called on the General Convention to adopt the Council's resolution supporting the Shell boycott. After intensive lobbying of Convention deputies by a Shell representative, the House of Deputies voted not to pass the resolution, already approved by the House of Bishops.

However, on the final day of legislation, a caucus of Black deputies countered with a strategy of their own. Lined up three and four deep at all eight microphones on the floor, the deputies claimed as a point of personal privilege that the House reconsider the resolution. As one deputy said, "A common theme throughout this Convention has been 'Pastoral Care . . . Archbishop Tutu and our broth-

ers and sisters in South Africa, whose basic rights and very lives are jeopardized by the evil of apartheid, cry out to us for pastoral care. What if we fail to hear this cry in the wilderness? I prayerfully hope that a deputation that voted against B-052 will be inspired by this cry to move for reconsideration." The measure was put to a vote again and passed.

It would have been a serious reversal for the Episcopal Church not to support the boycott. In May 1988, Archbishop Desmond Tutu came to the National Church Center in New York to plead for support from fellow Anglicans. In a statement, Tutu said: "As the South African government escalates its brutal campaign to silence the last remaining voices for peaceful change, effective economic sanctions are more crucial than ever to hasten the end of apartheid . . . Such economic pressures may be the international community's last available instruments to help bring Pretoria to its senses and justice to our land without which there can be no lasting peace."

During Tutu's visit, Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning pledged support, saying, "We will continue to press for economic sanctions through our Washington office. It is tremendously important that the Episcopal Church in the United States serve as a channel for the church in South Africa."

And Episcopal Church leaders have expressed the church's views to the government. The Rt. Rev. Walter D. Dennis, Suffragan Bishop of New York, told the Africa Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during a hearing on the work of the church in southern Africa: "Our church has developed an unambiguous coherent policy in opposition to apartheid and we continue to expand our witness to our partner church through our support of the comprehensive sanctions legislation now pending before the Senate."

Bishop John Walker of Washington

appeared before the same Committee in June 1988 to add his voice to those calling for legislation to impose full economic sanctions against South Africa. He told the senators: "I wish that the South African government would change without outside pressure. However, when a government refuses to listen to the human cry for justice and freedom, then it becomes necessary for the world human community to make a witness that is loud and clear. Apartheid must end; not gradually, or on some prolonged timetable. Apartheid must end now!"

The effectiveness of the boycott has been acknowledged by the Shell management itself. John R. Wilson, chairman of Shell South Africa, said, "You have to have respect for the anti-apartheid lobbyists and their views. They are right in believing that South Africa can only change by attacking the economy. And of course it is true that the South African economy would suffer a severe blow if a company the size of Shell felt forced to pull out."

Resources

The Peace and Justice Office of the Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017, (800) 334-7626, has developed a Shell Boycott Packet, which contains background information and materials to help an individual, parish or diocese to join the boycott.

Other groups with resources on the boycott are:

The United Mine Workers, Boycott Shell Campaign, 900 15th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 842-7350.

ICCR, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 556, New York, NY 10115 (212) 870-2293.

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company, P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002, (215) 643-7067, has a study packet, "The Case for Divestment," which gives background on the issue of foreign investments in South Africa.

Notes from the Underground Church

by Malcolm Boyd

It is frightfully easy for the church to forget its mission in the world, conform to social norms, take on an imperial attitude, and place the machinery and bureaucracy of its "operation" ahead of the scandal of Christ's gospel. That is when the church's true priorities tumble like ecclesiastical Humpty Dumpties.

But when values become twisted, appearances belie reality, and selfishness wears a mask of holiness, movements come to life that remind the church of its essential vocation. Such movements point out that it is presumptuous to come "to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal."

One such movement in the '60s was the Underground Church. I played a curious role in it because I apparently "named" it. As a speaker to the 1967 meeting of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in Dallas, I reported that a new Christian movement cutting across denominational lines was rapidly spreading throughout the nation, "bypassing official structures and leadership."

This revolution began with a tiny, committed group of men and women and, I noted, was "forcing changes on the church from the middle and the bottom. I went on to explain that about six months before, I first became aware of an "underground church" which was beginning to acquire power. Existing ecumenical

agencies had helped to foster and nurture this groundswell, but they had become too official and inflexible. What I was talking about had already happened in the "basement" of these structures.

I described the people of this underground: "Some go to church and some don't. Those who do are deeply frustrated by existing forms and attitudes, by the ungiving nature of the official church. The movement is deeply concerned about human need. Its religious questions are about poverty, race, war and peace — but with emphasis on doing, not talking."

But what does the Underground Church have to say to us today, when a certain malaise has settled on steeple tops? The church mirrors a social mood of selfishness, a withdrawal into self, a feeling of being not quite able to cope with raw justice and peace issues. A sense of urgency has been dissipated. In human relations, one finds a meanness and ugliness afoot in the land. New energy is called for, stemming from renewed vision.

Shortly after my speech in Dallas, I assembled some voices from "the underground" in a book, *The Underground Church*. One of the voices, The Rev. Robert W. Castle, Jr., evoked powerful images of racism, homelessness and poverty in "Litany from the Underground." His words are as relevant and demanding today as they were then:

O God, who lives in tenements, who goes to segregated schools, who is beaten in precincts, who is unemployed,

Help us to know you.

O God, who has no place to sleep tonight except an abandoned car, some alley or deserted building,

Help us to touch you.

O God, who works all day, who feeds and cares for her children at night and dreams of better days, and is alone,

Help us to know you.

O God, who is overwhelmed by indifference, and apathy, and status quo of so many who are good Christians and in church on Sunday,

Help us to join you.

Racism was, and still is, one of the major issues facing the church and society. In *The Underground Church*, Episcopal priest James E. P. Woodruff wondered if it was the "respectable" church member or "the young Black activist" who bears "the marks of Jesus Christ." He added: "The purpose of the Christian life is sanctification. The failure of the Christian community is that it is uninvolved with suffering humanity. This uninvolvedness leads to decay and sterility and a dedication to traditions. Worst of all, the church is permeated with a morbid selfishness. These are symptoms of pathology."

James E. Groppi, a then-Roman Catholic priest who worked courageously for peace and justice, was another contributor who dealt with racism. He said: "I cannot understand how one who proclaims oneself a follower of Christ could think and act as a racist. Christ worked with the poor, the Samaritans and Publicans, the sinners, the afflicted and all the others who were socially ostracized. He understood their

The Rev. Malcolm Boyd is director of the Los Angeles-based Institute of Gay/Lesbian Spirituality and Theology and writer/priest-in-residence at St. Augustine by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Santa Monica, Calif.

problems; He had compassion for them in their suffering. He was crucified for His associations, for His defense of the unacceptable." Groppi's words apply equally as well today for gays and lesbians who face discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Sharon Murdoch, a Head Start volunteer in Appalachia, described how the Underground Church struggled with the issue of poverty: "It's in there fighting, participating in the suffering, feeling the pain — living with it. It's not afraid to get its hands 'dirty' working with the desperate, and trying to right a wrong."

Writers Michael F. Groden and Sister Miriam Clasby cut deeper, their comments relating as much to today's homeless as to the poor in the '60s: "A hand-out at the door does more damage, perhaps, than good. Sympathy can be a mere palliative; individual kindness risks the danger of obscuring more fundamental responsibilities."

They went on to ask for more radical approaches. "The 'doing' acceptable today is the basic alteration of the institutions, practices and policies of society so that they reflect a more mature sense of justice. The 'way of doing' must attest as well to a recognition of the fact that people are reached today far more decisively by relationship than by logic."

The Underground Church was also concerned with peace, another major issue still confronting us. Daniel Berrigan wrote: "For some of us, peace became the integrating task of existence. We did not chose the task; the task enlisted us. And it was to our shame that as the years mounted and the fury grew, we were not waging peace with the same ingenuity and persistence and skill with which some were waging war.

"At the same time, we found it almost impossible to live 'normally,' to conceive what liturgy might be, or authority, or community, as long as the innocent were being destroyed . . . We could not

undertake good housekeeping in the church, while murder was occurring down the street."

But 20 years later, murder is still occurring down the street. *How* do we muster renewed energy to reject and oppose it? *How* do we keep on striving for peace and justice?

Episcopal priest Layton P. Zimmer addressed the crucial role the Underground Church played for activists: "It is important that the Underground Church is nourishment, focus, and stimulation for the carrying out of one's calling in spite of, or even in opposition to, the guardians of yesterday's safest courtesies. It is important because it is helping people realize their humanity as well as their calling of 'Otherness.' It helps them find and maintain their freedom to dissent, to criticize, and it shares strength to take the hard steps away from rewarding conformity toward the harsh meanings of challenge and change."

The Underground Church touched every facet of society in the '60s. During those years I was very close to the life of American colleges and universities, and for two years I lived at Yale. There was an extraordinary mood of idealism among students, accompanied by a concern for social issues and a personal yearning for meaning.

I soon discovered that students were agonizing about the war in Vietnam and the horrors of racism at home, these feelings unearthed by the thrust of the civil rights movement. Although largely alienated from traditional religion, students cried out for understandable answers to deeply spiritual questions.

During this period, a student poet was invited to read from his work at an ecumenical poetry festival in a campus church. He wrote me later: "I was completely stunned. This group saw a whole new meaning to the word 'religious.' Suddenly, I could smell the dank cellar smell that the early Christians could per-

ceive in their underground meeting places. There was truth and love. I was tired of images of a tired Jesus, a defeated Jesus on a tower of wood.

"How did it happen that the vital, breathing, vibrant social radical that was Jesus was hidden behind stained-glass windows and pious amens blocking out the world that He walked in as a man? I learned that night that Jesus was not dead but had climbed down from that pedestal and left the church to make it in the streets. That night left a mark on me that will not let me rest."

Students didn't know it at the time, but their world had changed significantly. So had they. For one thing, they would never again be so vulnerable, so innocent. In the future they would take a more practiced, if cynical, view of establishments and revolutionaries.

They learned from painful public events such as the May 1970 fatal shooting of students during a protest at Kent State University in Ohio. During that same month, violence was barely averted at Yale when 15,000 outside visitors, along with National Guardsmen, came to New Haven. A student told me: "It's a rage we feel. And we don't want it to destroy us. You don't fight rage with rage. You try to get well."

Since the days of student protests and civil rights marches, what happened to the Underground Church? Its seeds were buried deep in soil, to grow in myriad and mysterious ways. It lives in untold people, in movements and communities that nurture, challenge, witness to the Gospel and proclaim in action the new life in Christ. As Episcopal priest and theologian Carter Heyward said at a Feminist Liberation Theology conference, "None of our stories are solos . . . No more crucifixions. God is with us in our vulnerability."

The Underground Church has learned this and now communicates it to a new generation.

TV

WITNESS consultant to prison

Samuel H. Day, Jr., who has served as promotion consultant to THE WITNESS for more than a decade, was preparing to be tried for nonviolent civil disobedience — entering a missile silo — as we went to press.

Day, co-director of Nukewatch, was one of 4,000 social activists who committed civil disobedience last year. He and a group of “peace planters” scattered seeds inside the fences of missile silos in a symbolic act of reclaiming the land.

Bonnie Urfer, also of Nukewatch, was arrested for civil disobedience at three missile silos and sentenced to 18 months in prison last year. Day, former editor of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* could receive up to 6 months.

“We are prepared to go to jail to challenge laws which sanction nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass destruction,” Day said. “We are ready to face the consequences.”

Day recently edited a book called *Nuclear Heartland*, a guide to the 1,000 nuclear missile silos of the United States, for Nukewatch. The book has won praise from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Century*, and the *National Catholic Reporter*, and rolled off the press on the eve of the “peace planting” in which Day participated.

Nuclear Heartland raises consciousness about the Bomb in our midst. Few Americans realize that “the soil of the North American Great Plains is seeded with a thousand intercontinental ballistic missiles — sentinels of the nuclear age — each built to be launched on 31 seconds notice,” Day said. “The book describes that unseen underground weapon system — how it got there, what it looks like, how it works, how it has affected people who live close to it, and how you can find it for yourself.”

In Cheyenne an anonymous telephone caller promised (but failed to make good on his threat) to “blow away” Day at a book-signing party at the First Congregational Church.

WITNESS readers are urged to buy the book for their own social awakening and to pass it on to the parish library. (\$12.50 from Nukewatch, P.O. Box 2658, Madison, WI 53701)

In the accompanying article, another peace activist, Helen Woodson, who is serving 18 years in prison for disarming a Missouri nuclear missile silo with a jackhammer in 1984, describes her most recent act of nonviolent resistance in prison. She also reveals how the U.S. government is using prisoners to do Data Processing for war industries. For her protest, Woodson was placed in solitary confinement. — **Mary Lou Suhor**

A little bit of light

Let us move inward in concentric circles. On the outer rim is Lawrence Livermore Labs, home of nuclear weapons research and one of the top-20 sites of nuclear and chemical contamination in the nation. Recent news reports have focused on Livermore for the wide-spread drug use and dealing among its staff, for fraud and corruption in its Department of Defense contracts and now for pollution of the groundwater and soil. Of the 16 nuclear weapons facilities that have admitted to dumping toxic wastes, Livermore’s crime ranks third in severity. The government’s response has been to require that the lab make public a list of its hazardous chemicals but only those stored in excess of 10,000 pounds. Radioactive materials need not be listed at all as a matter of national “security.”

Let’s move inward. The middle rim is occupied by Camp Parks, a partially defunct Army base housing various government offices. Recently the Border Patrol announced it is closing its Camp Parks office because of the threat from Livermore’s pollution. But the base will continue to host war games for Army reservists, trucking in the troops, airlifting in the weapons for maneuvers which reduce the landscape to ruts and rubble. Are the soldiers being readied for duty in Central America or the Middle East? Don’t ask; that’s a matter of “security.”

And inward, our concentric circles fast becoming a modern equivalent of Dante’s hell. In the middle of Camp Parks lies F.C.I. Pleasanton, home to approximately 700 federal prisoners. We are enclosed by a high double fence, a jumble of razor wire, and gun-toting officers who patrol in trucks. Running through the fence is a black “security” wire, its alarms automatically activated when some prisoner, in a mistaken notion of his/her “security” needs, approaches the fence.

Still inward. Prisoners must be kept busy to generate the dollars to pay for their confinement, and if this happens to turn a profit, all to “security,” and since UNICOR can get the War Department’s work done cheaply (it has never been de-

in the darkness

by Helen Woodson

nied a requested contract), it also represents governmental "security."

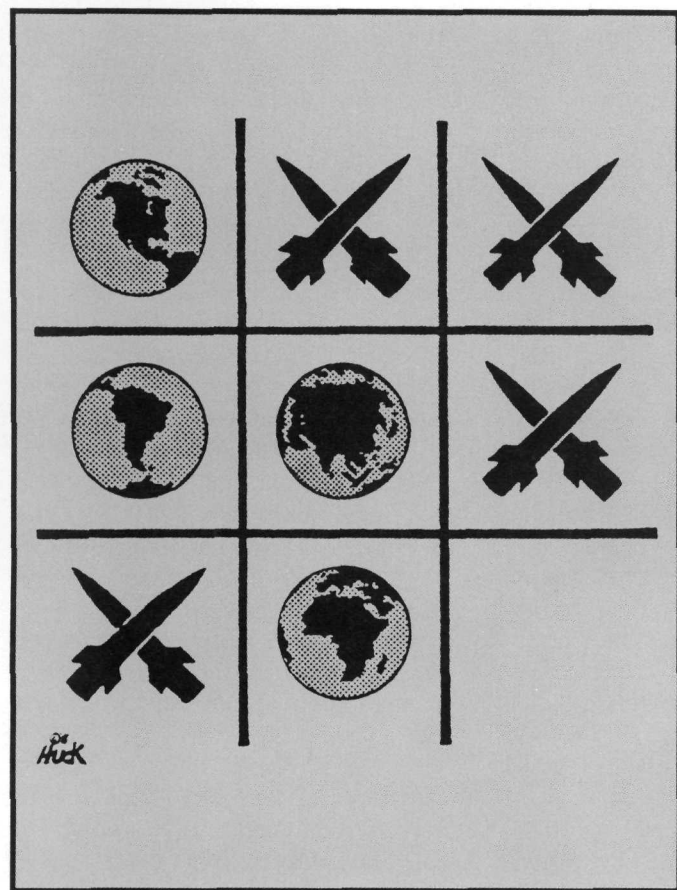
And now we stop, having reached the epicenter from which I have gazed outward into the concentric rings and inward into soul and conscience. So on December 10, in honor of Gaudete (Rejoice!) Sunday, I walked to the rec field track bearing an athletic bag stuffed with sheets, towels and news-

papers doused with flammable nail polish, set the bag in gravel next to the fence and ignited a lovely Advent blaze. Then I hung from the fence a banner reading: "There is no security in the U.S. government, nuclear weapons, chemical contaminants, prisons and UNICOR-military industries. Fences make slaves. Tear them down." And then with toenail clippers, I proceeded to snip the "security" wire, severing it in four separate places. The Gaudete Pruning Hook for sure.

So here I am in the hole, charged with attempted escape, arson, destruction of government property and inciting to riot, and someone is certain to ask what practical, effective good it has done. The answer may be none at all, but it was the better. Thus the federal system boasts 78 prison industries managed by a wholly-owned government corporation called UNICOR which, in fiscal year 1987, generated \$319 million, using 15,000 prisoners' labor for \$0.22 — \$1.10 per hour, on mostly military contracts like cables for nuclear weapons, Hawk guidance systems and combat helmets. Here at Pleasanton, ADP (Automated Data Processing) has handled the movement of ships and weapons for the Navy and the maintenance and replacement of ICBM missiles for the Air Force. The plan to double the present prison population and the elimination of parole and good times will ensure an ample force for the future. Inasmuch as UNICOR enables prisoners to earn a little spending money and make payments on their court-ordered fines and restitution, it is their chief source of income, a good and necessary means of affirming sanity and spiritual health in the face of evil.

And one thing more: We are acutely and painfully aware of the cost in human lives of our twisted priorities, our false security, but we all too often forget that the first victims of our own destructiveness are the creatures of nature. During my six months here, I have had the joy of meeting busy ground squirrels, little birds who strut and dance, and hawks and gulls who ride the wind. Let's just say I did this one for them. (F.C.I. Pleasanton, Cal.)

TV



Unions . . . *Continued from page 11*

concerns, in part because being female was not an issue and in part because the top leadership was male. Nonetheless, unions like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers pioneered union child care centers, and once changes began, the predominantly female unions championed issues like pregnancy disability rights, pay equity and flextime.

The 1974 founding of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) represented one of the most important, coordinated efforts to promote women and women's concerns within organized labor on a national level. In addition to its basic program advocating organizing, affirmative action and greater female participation in unions and politics, CLUW has demonstrated a strong commitment to racial equality; it has a 50% minority membership and leadership.

Women in leadership

How far reaching have the changes been? At the highest levels of the trade union hierarchy, there is still only a miniscule showing of women: three members of the 37-member AFL-CIO Executive Council; this represents, however, a 300% increase over a decade ago. There is only one AFL-CIO Department head (Education), and three presidents of international unions (RWDSU, Flight Attendants and Screen Actors Guild). The AFL-CIO has Coordinator of Women's Affairs but has yet to establish a women's department.

On the other hand, at regional, state and local levels, women are entering positions of leadership, with the support of male as well as female co-workers, and in contested elections. The presence of women in state and local labor councils is no longer an anomaly; and most labor organizations now slate women, although the most common job remains recording secretary. One-third of AFSCME's locals are headed by women, and 50% of local officers are female. CWA reports 15% of its locals have

women presidents; the IUE, 12%.

In the workplace women hold large numbers of steward and union representative positions, and not just in departments populated with other women. There are elected female stewards, presidents, and business representatives in majority-male locals. This is an important development and no longer an isolated exception.

It would be wrong, however, to underestimate the roadblocks women confront in becoming more involved in union affairs. They are numerous and more awesome at the top where decision-making power is at stake. The roadblocks, however, are not just obstacles placed in the path of women unionists; many reflect organizational structures and ideological preferences which also discourage male workers from becoming more actively involved and responsible in their unions.

To deal with corporations at the bargaining table and comply with complex laws, procedures and reporting requirements, unions centralized their operations in the 1950s, shifting decision-making away from the local level. Reliance on lengthy arbitration procedures to deal with work problems also tended to disempower workers on the shop floor.

A further discouragement to involvement is the apparent lack of leadership openings. Although turnover rates vary dramatically from local to local, and are lower at the top than at the bottom, union leadership has become a lifetime career for many officers.

Studies on local union participation argue that members tend to get involved if they have adequate information about the union, are given concrete ways of contributing, know someone in office, socialize with current leaders, experience relative job satisfaction, and feel that their efforts will accomplish something. Otherwise, workers do their job and go home.

While all workers have to contend with these factors, they present greater

difficulties for women. Women are the "outsiders," less likely to know someone in office, to be part of the in-leadership crowd to socialize with that circle, or for that matter to be satisfied with their job. Moreover, women have less access to union information, and are prevented by family and home responsibilities from "hanging around" the union hall or the local bar.

Probably the most difficult barrier to surmount is that of gender stereotypes which play a major role in shaping attitudes and voting preferences within unions. Traits dealing with competence are considered male and those relating to emotion, female. Male traits are valued within the world of work and generally coincide with leadership qualities; female traits have been viewed as an impediment to being an effective leader.

For women to overcome these cultural stereotypes and general obstacles, they must usually meet higher standards of skill and knowledge, work twice as hard, and organize a broad base of support within the local. Not every woman in leadership has had to overcome all these obstacles, and many women have attained positions of influence only to discover that to do their job, they have to adopt the same methods and attitudes as their male predecessors. The pressures on women leaders to conform are powerful; studies show that women leaders in token numbers in any organizational framework will experience extreme pressure to act like one of the guys or to maintain a low profile and take a backseat.

But the successful efforts of women leaders over the past decade have changed the attitudes of many of their male co-workers, not only toward

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women but toward the union as well. Women have created openings for involvement, and have shown that organization among rank-and-file workers can produce change. They have raised the expectations of all their members. Women expect more from their unions, feel more a part of their locals, and as a result expect more from themselves as participants. In many cases, as women have moved into local positions of leadership, they seem to have narrowed the gap between leadership and membership which has plagued organized labor in recent times.

Female styles of work

How have women been able to move from the sidelines into leadership? Are they in any way different from the traditional male paths to leadership or the established approaches? The answer is yes and no. Some of the choices women have made reflect their status as "outsider" or minority and are no different than others in their situation would make. But there are also gender specific characteristics.

Women, for example, have identified lack of self-confidence as a major factor inhibiting their greater participation in union activities. Women refrain from running for office or assuming posts of responsibility because they feel they do not have adequate skills, knowledge or ability. In part, this reluctance reflects the internalization of gender-based stereotypes. Women who have run PTAs, church organizations and community groups, raised vast sums of money, and involved hundreds of people in working toward a common goal maintain that they have no skills. Similarly, women who balance a full-time job with responsibility for home and children decline union positions because they are "too difficult."

When women do decide to run for union office, however, in order to overcome their lack of self-confidence, they seek training, education and collective

support. They set high standards for themselves, and therefore tend to be better prepared and more educated when they finally do attain leadership positions.

To get their demands on the bargaining table and their issues on a union's agenda, women have learned to frame their concerns in a way that will appeal to the self-interest of their male co-workers and to the public at large. Within the union, women have argued convincingly that health and safety issues (work load, weight limits, health and reproductive hazards) are not women's issues, but workers' issues. Women have addressed their co-workers as husbands, sons, parents and brothers, showing men that their workplace behavior and needs, like women's, are shaped by family and home life. To the public, women have argued justice, patient care, quality education, improved services, jobs and the fate of this nation's children.

At the level of national politics and international concerns, women have often been associated with progressive causes, advocates of peace and supporters of social legislation. Although few studies exist which probe the priorities and preferences of union women on national issues, a survey of hundreds of local women leaders participating in the summer schools provides an indication of the kinds of leadership we can expect from union women on these issues.

Female union members polled were strong supporters of women's issues: 95% believed in a woman's right to choose whether or not to have an abortion; 95% supported the Equal Rights Amendment; a generous majority supported affirmative action and federally subsidized child care. Only 4% of the women advocated an increase in the defense budget; 70% called for a decrease. 90% urged more spending on education and more efforts to feed the world's hungry and protect human rights. A majority

opposed any U.S. intervention in other countries, and only 9% indicated they would back the sending of U.S. troops.

Conclusion

From the narrowest survival perspective, labor must organize these new women workers — to maintain their numbers, to prevent the use of cheaper female labor to lower wages, and to thwart employer efforts to expand the part-time, temporary and subcontracted work force. To accomplish this organizing challenge, women must be utilized, trained, promoted and welcomed into positions of power. And accommodations need to be made to facilitate women's involvement — adjustments in meeting and working schedules, greater emphasis on training, and a campaign of reeducation to combat gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices at all levels of the union.

But labor's future will also depend on its ability to learn from women activists, from their style of work and their approach to problems. New ideas, new methods, new programs cannot be feared or fought; there must be more openness, flexibility and innovation within the house of labor. Today's leaders must be willing to cede control and share power, not only with women but with rank-and-file activists across the nation. To increase participation, commitment and union consciousness, there must be greater access to information, more democratic decision-making, more concrete channels for involvement, more emphasis on initiative and less on loyalty. Union leadership does not need a set of answers for today's problems; it needs a better approach to solving problems. The answers will follow.

(The above article is excerpted from "Feminizing Unions" (1988), a Labor Research Review publication produced by the Midwest Center for Labor Research, 3411 W. Diversey/Suite 10, Chicago, IL 60647. \$7.00. Reprinted with permission.)

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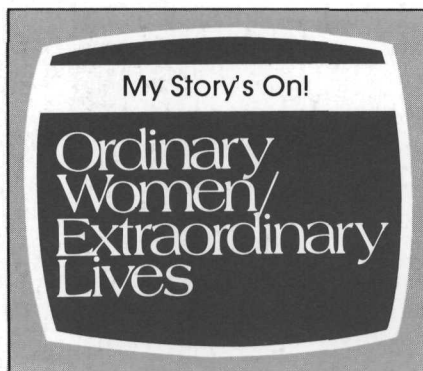
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