

THE WITNESS

Battling unjust immigration laws

Aurora Camacho de Schmidt

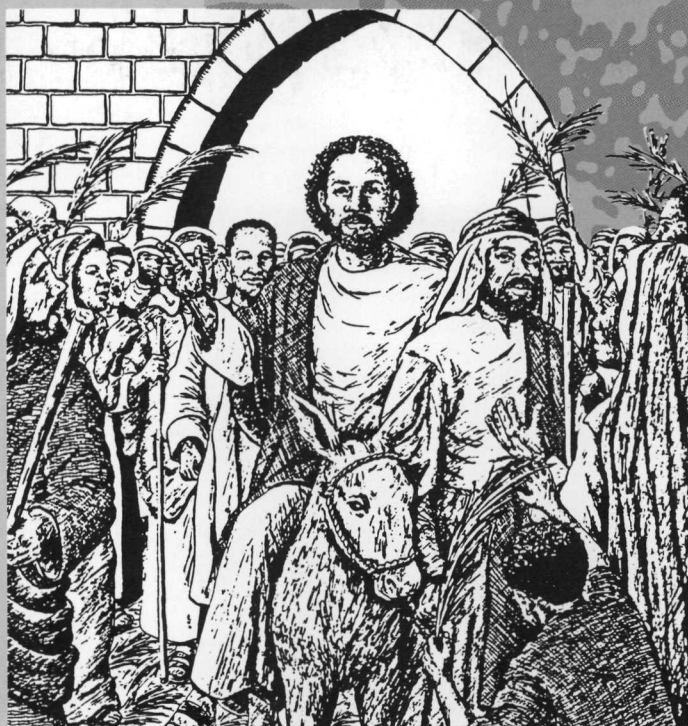
Can liberal churches grow?

James Mikulski

Kittredge Cherry

Feminist missionary in Canterbury's court

Susan E. Pierce



Letters

Will we make it?

Your "Whither A Luta Continua" article (January) went right to my heart. Paul Washington's words were particularly impressive. Will we *all* "make it?" The Holy Spirit alone must draw us forward to truly love one another. I accept and embrace Barbara Harris as my bishop. She and Desmond Tutu can bring redemption to our organized religions.

I also wrote to Parker Rossman about his slavery piece in that same issue and thanked him, sending on articles I wrote on the subject for further documentation.

It recalls an experience I had on the Sinai desert, when I asked my guide, "Why do some Bedouin tents have a white flag?" She replied sadly, "That means they have a marriageable daughter ready for trade. A 12 or 14-year-old girl is traded by her father for a dromedary or a few goats. According to Moslem law, a man may have up to four wives and a wife means free labor, so it's to his advantage."

When women use the word "bonding", it is well to recall those of our sisters who, like Hagar, was a bond-woman. Even Sarah, in driving Hagar out of her household, was responding to cultural expectations dictated by men. Sarah and Hagar were caught in the male web which is as long as recorded history.

That web still exists today. A reporter in New Delhi tells of buying a woman for less than the price of an equal pound of mutton. In some places, then, it's cheaper to buy a woman than meat.

White flags are everywhere for those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel the bonding.

**Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler
Institute of Women Today
Chicago, Ill.**

Bumbletime again

Mr. Bumble read, marked, learned and inwardly digested much of the church comment about the election of Barbara

Harris as a suffragan bishop, then paraphrased his earlier observation re "the law": "If a church supposes that . . . the church is an ass — an idiot."

When queried as to which "side" he applied his unbowlerized Plain Elizabethan English, he expressed astonishment: "Why to all of them, jointly and severally, except Ms. Harris!"

"She applied for the job, had a new picture taken, received CEO approval (aka diocesan), prepared her campaign material, subjected herself to group interviews; the electors who wanted her worked hard, won in a close election against a well-known local cleric. Those displeased with her election should have said their words before the event and on the floor of the Convention, studied their tactics and fielded a more to their liking, and electable, candidate. Upon losing they should have gathered *a la* Democrats, and planned to nominate, support, and field a more electable candidate next time."

But Mr. Bumble, you seem to chastise only her opponents as sour grapes losers?

"Indeed not. Her supporters are equally deserving of my kinder and gentler terms. They expect too much. They are unfair to her personally, with their grossly effusive praise, raising in themselves and others expectations that are unlikely to come to pass, and place a monkey on her back. One advocate said: 'It is far more than an election. It is really an embracing of the feminine spirituality. And that is going to be a monumental change.' Her election is no more than the elections of Meier, Thatcher, Bhutto or Gandhi or confirmation of S. O'Connor or E. Dole were embracings of feminine politics or law.

"The opposition smacks of Chicken Little. This sect has been electing highly unqualified White male bishops for centuries: White males with much church administrative experience, much service

as clerics, two or three 'earned' academic degrees, husband of one wife, who nonetheless supported racism, sexism, military action, gunboat diplomacy, crusades, slavery, destruction of the environment, oppression of the laborer, and who support social action only as paternalists or 'Junior League' type involvements, who were distinguishable in no serious way from non-Christians. If this sect elected only the 'right person' to be bishop, whether male, female, of whatever epidermis, marriage status, employment history, sexual orientation, it would have only 1%, maybe 1.5%, as many CEOs (aka bishops) as it does!"

So, Bumble, since you are displeased with her supporters and opponents, and think so little of the current crop of this sect's leaders, what would she have to be to generate real enthusiasm in you, and her election to be truly significant?

"Well, since you ask: If she had told the CEO of that sect that she would agree to be vice-CEO only if he would move from Weston to live in public housing, and let her live in his palace in Weston, then her election would have some significance! That would be real apostolic succession! Feminine spirituality? No, just Christian and apostolic witness."

**McRae Werth
Blue Hill, Maine**

Joyful day remembered

There have been a number of stories in the media on progress toward the consecration of the Rev. Barbara Harris as the first female bishop of the Episcopal Church, but the date of her elevation was assured on Jan. 24. It was a joyful day of celebration for those of us who have prayed for the removal of racism, sexism — all that keeps us from knowing the love of Christ in the Church.

You of THE WITNESS are honored in the support and encouragement you have given to Barbara Harris, and through her,

to all of us. Congratulations and thank you.

Sara L. Morrison
Washington, Iowa

Ambrosian parallels

Recent letters in THE WITNESS protested that Boston's Bishop-elect Barbara Harris lacks experience. Perhaps I can help put this in perspective.

In 374 C.E. the episcopal election in Milan resulted in the selection of a Roman civil administrator as bishop. He was an unbaptized Christian at the time, and in the span of a week he was baptized, confirmed, ordained deacon, ordained priest, and consecrated. This is somewhat less than Barbara Harris' nine years as a priest. It did not seem to impair significantly the episcopal effectiveness of St. Ambrose.

Ambrose is an interesting parallel for Barbara Harris in a number of other ways as well. He brought to his office considerable experience from activities other than ordained ministry. He was renowned for his eloquence. He grappled with the problems of the faith and the great issues of the day. He was not afraid to confront secular authorities in the interest of justice. And, of course, he became a great bishop.

No doubt there were disgruntled Milanese as well, asking whether "such a person" was "the best-qualified shepherd for this far-ranging, historical diocese." It is a legitimate question. Allow me to suggest that the appropriate answer, now as then, is "yes."

Alan S. Hejnal
Upland, Cal.

Admonishing the Pope

In response to the excellent article in your January issue by Monica Furlong on "The Pope's lost battalions," let me recall this Pope's first visit to the United States, during which he appeared in

Notre Dame University's stadium, and was carried on TV nationwide.

The huge stadium, with the Pope at one end, was filled with the faithful and the curious. When his speech was completed, members of the audience were welcome to use microphones, available to all, to make comments or ask questions. A nun, dressed in a blue habit, asked with due deference, "Your Holiness, when can we expect nuns to become priests?"

The Pope was prepared and answered softly but firmly. "Sister dear," he intoned, "if Christ (not God, as Monica Furlong's article recalls his saying on the same subject) 'if Christ had so intended, then at least one apostle would have been a woman.'"

"Oh, yeah?" said a woman, watching TV that day in Tucson, Ariz. In a letter-to-the-editor of that city's evening newspaper, she related what was seen and heard on TV. Then she added, "If Christ's intentions are to be a precedent, then all Roman Catholic priests today should be Jewish."

The Rev. Shirley Heermance
Columbia, Mo.

Surprise prison visit

Would you please send me a copy of the article entitled "The ordeal of Alejandra Torres" by Elaine Silverstrim? It appeared in the February 1988 edition of THE WITNESS. Through a series of strange but wonderful circumstances I have had the experience of visiting Alejandra in San Diego at the Metropolitan Correctional Center. She told me about the article, and I would like very much to read it. Thanks for being who you are and being there!

The Rev. Patricia Backman
Fallbrook, Cal.

What price 'inner peace'?

Having just read "Detention in El Salvador" and "Trafficking in human lives"

(January) with mounting feelings of pain, grief and distress, my eye landed on the item, "Symptoms of inner peace" in Short Takes. This gave me the same sort of jolt I get when I am watching a painful documentary on TV and then some inane commercial comes on. Can *inner peace* and *compassion* possibly be compatible?

For example, Symptom 2 of Inner Peace is "an unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment." I have to say I do not think I "enjoyed" the above two articles. Symptom 4, "a loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others" — what does this mean, when we are talking about people who are enslaving or killing or terrorizing or torturing other people? Symptoms 5 and 6 — "a loss of interest in conflict" and "a loss of the ability to worry" — I suspect might be considered by psychotherapists to be evidence of "flat affect," or "dissociation," which are symptoms of pathology. But perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps I should cancel my subscription to WITNESS because it is *loaded* with stories about conflict, and I should be losing interest in conflict if I'm getting "inner peace." And what if nuclear arms are proliferating and George Bush promises more of the same?

I think this definition of "inner peace" is totally inadequate for Christians. I think Jesus would flunk such a test. And I still believe *there can be no peace without justice*. Not even "inner peace." Does anybody else wonder about that?

Lauren Sullivan
Lompoc, Cal.

Amnesty a sham

I would like to follow up on the excellent article by Susan E. Pierce, "Confronting racism in Japan" (January).

In honor of Emperor Hirohito, in whose name Korea was conquered, colonized and terribly exploited, the Japa-

Continued on page 23

THE WITNESS

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THE WITNESS



Table of Contents

- | | |
|----|---|
| 6 | Battling unjust immigration laws
Aurora Camacho de Schmidt |
| 10 | Athens church joins 'overground railroad'
Mary Lou Suhor |
| 12 | Raising Lazarus: Can liberal churches grow?
Kittredge Cherry & James Mitulski |
| 16 | The encounter of world religions
Owen Thomas |
| 20 | Feminist missionary in Canterbury's court
Susan E. Pierce |

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Editorial

On the road to Jerusalem

This month's cover carries artist Thomas Daye's concept of a Black Christ riding into Jerusalem midst the acclaim of the crowds, celebrated liturgically as Palm Sunday.

Throughout the ages, artists have tried to capture the person of Christ in various ways, many of them controversial. Witness the female Christa, with breasts, and Scorsese's characterization in "The Last Temptation of Christ." And so will the humble carpenter from Nazareth "in whom there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free" continue to confound and renew us as we struggle to become an *alter Christus* on our own paths to salvation.

On Palm Sunday, Christ's entry into Jerusalem was a joyful event, accompanied by the huzzahs of the crowd. "And yet," wrote theologian Romano Guardini in his classic, *The Lord*, "suppose a Roman officer in shining armor had trotted by just then on his blooded mount, his orderly troop behind him, a fragment of that great army which bore the power of Rome across the world. What would he have thought had he seen the poorly dressed man on his donkey, a coat as a saddle, the heterogeneous crowd about him?

"This, then is how it is when God descends. The apparent folly and danger of it are so great that the just and orthodox prepare for legal condemnation . . . (Those who greeted Jesus were) simply the average crowd as it is to be found everywhere in workshop, store and street, a crowd in which we all could

find our place . . . How difficult it is to recognize the self-revealing God, to steer clear of the scandal to the worldly sense of propriety and righteousness!"

On Feb. 11 in Boston, Barbara Harris began a similar journey to Jerusalem when she was consecrated Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts, and first woman bishop in the Anglican communion worldwide — an event which marked a quantum leap for African-American and women's history.

The Rev. Paul Washington, homilist, reminded the church that this Easter moment had not come without many Good Fridays in between for Blacks in this country.

And the Rev. Van Bird at a dinner the night before the event, registered confidence that "in God's time, the People of God will adjust to this new reality — and the church will continue her witness in the world, strengthened and enriched by this experience." That time will be hastened, he said, if we are mindful not only of the historical significance of the event, but also the theological, revelatory and prophetic meaning, pondering two things:

"God's methods, means and timing of revelatory and prophetic interventions in human history — religious and secular — have usually been contrary to our expectations, filled with mystery and paradox, and have forced us to choose sides. Therefore, we should not be too surprised that Barbara has been chosen as God's means of speaking to the church in this historic moment.

"It is most important that we, supporters and dissenters alike, remember that God does not always nor even usually call us because we are finished products or perfect instruments for service. Barbara's gifts are many and well-known. However, that is not why she was chosen. They are but ingredients in a life journey that God will now take and mold and re-mold into a new vessel, a new instrument, a new person whom God can use in the years ahead in a new way. Not only do we have this treasure in earthen vessels, but if the vessel becomes cracked, God, like a potter, does not cast it away. God reshapes it into a new vessel."

Therefore, Bird charged the new bishop, "when the church ordains and consecrates you a bishop in the Church of God, remember that the God who created and redeemed and has now called you to a special ministry will begin the task again of accepting who you are, as you are, and making you into what God would have you become. Your only obligation is to be faithful and obedient."

Surely Harris faces trials ahead in her episcopate, but the grace of God and prayers of "the crowd" will carry her through the dark nights. Meanwhile during this Eastertide we celebrate the Kairos, the new birth, the new prophetic moment for the Church. Let the hosannas and alleluias ring!

(*THE WITNESS* will run a special issue on the Harris consecration in April. See notice page 9.)

The spirit of the law vs. the law of the Spirit

Battling unjust immigration laws

by Aurora Camacho de Schmidt

*... to oppression, plundering and
abandonment, we respond with life*

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The Solitude of Latin America, 1982

When the new Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was signed into law in November 1986, some three and a half million Latin American undocumented immigrants were in the United States. They were here and have kept coming here because of what author Gabriel Garcia Marquez calls “the persistent advantage of life over death.” They came mostly because they had to, not because they wanted to.

The immigrants came to a nation increasingly intent on fortifying itself against their presence, and yet eager to use their cheap and reliable human power. They saw themselves as saving their lives, feeding their families, surviving. But some of their hosts saw them as a danger to national unity and sovereignty, usurping jobs, spoiling neighborhoods, taxing social services, useful only as a disposable labor supply.

They crossed the border aided by smugglers and often risked their lives in the process. Over one million of them fled war and had to traverse more than one foreign country to find refuge. Young men turned the hunt by the U.S. Border Patrol into a game of high stakes

requiring wit and resolve. But helicopters, electronic sensors and weapons made for unequal encounters.

When women arrived in large numbers, the United States knew this migration was permanent. Women came to build a community, to plant the seed of their children in the new, hostile home. Not even a law designed to starve them out could uproot them again. They came to stay.

What the law said

President Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act three years ago. The law offered the possibility of legalization to undocumented people who had arrived before January 1982, and to farmworkers who could prove they had worked for at least 90 days during the year before May 1986. At the end of the application period, close to three million immigrants — perhaps less than half the total undocumented population, which also includes Asians, Europeans, Caribbean peoples, etc. — had applied for temporary residence. This program could not have been implemented without the help and constant vigilance of organizations representing the immigrants’ interests. The lure of legalization attracted support for a legislative package that contained a dangerous provision: employer sanctions.

The logic of employer sanctions is simple and one-dimensional — if we want to stop illegal immigration, let’s stop employers from giving jobs to illegal immigrants. Too bad things just don’t work that way. During eight years of debate, churches, civil liberties groups, minority organizations, and law-

yers’ organizations — not to mention employers — have opposed employer sanctions. They warned Congress about the discriminatory power of the policy: All minorities and foreign-looking persons could be suspect at the job site. Some opponents explained that the nature of a restructuring global economy is extreme flexibility. In the name of higher profits, transnationals can send jobs abroad — to Taiwan, northern Mexico, South Korea — or create substandard jobs in its nooks and crannies, where workers have no protection. The idea that employer sanctions would “save jobs for Americans” and stem the flow of illegal migration was unfounded.

Yet the precarious political balance of legalization and employer sanctions allowed a bad law to pass. Growers, the most notorious employers of undocumented labor, lobbied hard and got to have their cake and eat it too. Employer sanctions were not implemented in the fields until last December, and several programs make it possible for agricultural employers to recruit new legal temporary foreign workers.

The sponsors of IRCA wanted “to regain control of our borders.” The ostensible motive for immigration reform was “to protect jobs for Americans,” but the old racism and chauvinism of the Nativist movement was at work again. Even the legalization program was reluctantly given, and thus fraught with problems. There is no way of estimating how many applications will be successful and how many will be denied in the end. IRCA became the expression of the fears of people who could not imagine a future pluralistic society.

Aurora Camacho de Schmidt, a citizen of Mexico and permanent U.S. resident, is a staff writer for the Information Services Dept. of the American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia. From 1979-85 she was AFSC’s National Representative for the Mexico-U.S. Border Program.

Effect of the law

Employer sanctions make IRCA an instrument for *control*. Every employer must check documents that prove authorization to work in the United States for anyone hired after November 1986. The employee and employer must both sign a piece of paper, the I-9 form, attesting to the fact that documents have been presented and the employee has a legal right to work. Failure to ask for documentation or to sign and keep the I-9 form results in fines and even prison terms. False attestation or use of fraudulent documentation by the employee can bring even heavier penalties.

According to a November survey conducted by the General Accounting Office (GAO), which must study the implementation of employer sanctions and report to Congress once a year for three years, a large proportion of all employers — 22% — do not know anything about the law. Half of those who do know are not in compliance before inspection. And, more disturbing, of all employers surveyed by the GAO, 16% are engaged in illegal discriminatory practices as they attempt to comply with the law — for example, refusing to hire legal residents who are not citizens.

The law has effects the GAO research team did not see: loss of jobs, and, more frequently, the acceptance of substandard jobs by many undocumented people. The GAO has the authority to recommend termination of the employer sanctions provisions if they cause “widespread discrimination,” but not if they simply oppress undocumented immigrants. The organizations that helped implement the first phase of the legaliza-



I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU TOOK ME IN

tion program refer to the people not included as "residual population," estimated to number over three million. These people have always lived clandestine lives, but the law has given them a new degree of illegality, and this makes them vulnerable to exploitation. At the same time, the existence of this large group as a labor reserve jeopardizes the interest of poor U.S. workers, who cannot compete with them for substandard wages.

Central American refugees are not recognized as such by the U.S. government, and thus fall under the category, "undocumented worker." IRCA hurts these refugees by destroying their livelihood in the United States when they cannot go home.

Legislators are surprised that people would not choose to go home in spite of such hardship. But the new level of difficulty must be endured, because there are no options. The war in Central America has intensified, and the prospect of economic recovery is farther away than ever. For example, U.S. dollars sent home by Salvadoran refugees are now the third largest source of revenue for the country. The capacity of Salvadoran refugees to contribute to the life of those at home is an element in the political equation.

Mexico is another case. Its crushing foreign debt means no margin of subsistence for poor people and no prospects of growth in the near future. But while U.S. foreign policy wastes opportunities to cooperate in Mexico's economic stability and to help end the war in Central America, the government treats refugees and immigrants — the symptoms of these problems — as a plague to be eradicated.

Rather than causing undocumented immigrants to return home, the net effect of employer sanctions is to trap them in substandard jobs and inhuman living conditions. For my employer, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC),

an organization working for peace and justice, this is hard to accept.

Resistance to the law

On Nov. 22, 1988, the American Friends Service Committee went to court in opposition to the employer sanctions provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act. The AFSC claimed that the law violated its right to the free exercise of religious beliefs. Since Quakers believe in the sanctity of all life and the equality of all human beings, the AFSC as an employer could not engage in discriminatory practices.

Seven individual co-plaintiffs joined the suit, most of them Quakers, and myself, a Catholic. Either as prospective employers or employees, we would not sign a paper designed to exclude people we know and love who happen to be undocumented immigrants and refugees. As I am also an immigrant who left Mexico to get married 21 years ago, the action took on a profound personal significance. But I joined the suit to express a communal rejection of a law that is unfaithful to the vision of the people of the United States. We hope that the court will exempt us from employer and employee obligations under IRCA. We also hope that the law will be publicly debated again, now that we can document its cost in human suffering. The fact that over 25 different religious organizations have joined the suit as friends of the court may give the government and the public pause.

The AFSC has been involved with Mexican farmworkers for three decades, and its Mexico-U.S. Border Program has observed the development of immigration policy reform and the changes in Latin American immigration since 1979. Later on the AFSC started programs in public education and networking on Central American refugee issues, bringing a direct understanding of the region based on AFSC's international programs.

Working with the Border Program, I

was part of that history for five years. And I have come to agree with Catholic theologian Henri Nouwen's statement that the spiritual destinies of the United States and Latin America are intimately bound. I see this in the phenomenon of undocumented immigration, in the mystery of people twice rejected who dwell among us.

No solution in sight

Because of employer sanctions, the IRCA is an explosion with aftershocks. Federal policy is designed to eradicate a class of human beings from U.S. society, giving the signal that it is appropriate and good to do so.

The great abstractions of policy have a human face in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, which is the closest point of entry by land for Central Americans. The Valley contains some of the poorest urban areas in the United States. The 1982 Mexican economic recession brought new levels of unemployment to this traditionally Chicano area of rich land and poor people.

In November 1988 the authorities of Cameron County in the Valley asked the Federal government for help. An unprecedented influx of refugees had been arriving in south Texas for the last few weeks, and was straining the area's capacity to provide basic services for them and the Valley's own people. Because of employer sanctions, many more refugees have been forced to file for political asylum, even when the chance of getting it is negligible, since that is the only way of acquiring a temporary work permit. Nicaraguans, already a large proportion of asylum applicants, came in even larger numbers after Hurricane Joan. The Harlingen office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service was swamped, and so were the poorly funded projects for free legal representation.

On Dec. 12, INS Commissioner Alan Nelson promised to send more adjudicators to Miami, Los Angeles and Harlingen in the Valley to expedite the proc-

essing of political asylum applications and proceed with deportations when necessary. Most asylum applicants from Central America know that they are simply "buying time" — three or four years — before their petition is denied. Nelson's decision could reduce this period to 30 days. On Dec. 15 Nelson made "an administrative decision," banning refugees from traveling outside the Lower Rio Grande Valley, prohibiting filing for asylum in a place other than their point of entry, and denying them work authorization. The goals of this policy, according to the INS, were to deal with scores of frivolous applications, restrict travel to Miami and Los Angeles, and discourage new migration.

In a matter of days thousands of refugees found themselves stranded, crowding cheap motels, camping outside a local shelter or in a condemned building with neither electricity nor plumbing. These were very cold, damp days. Many children were sick with respiratory infections. And most of the refugees faced deportation within 30 days after a routine application for asylum. While there were heroic gestures of welcoming on the part of the community, even those favorably disposed towards the refugees felt angry and powerless. Many people saw the Central Americans as a potential criminal threat and a health hazard.

On Jan. 6 a lawsuit was filed on behalf of the immigrants, resulting in a temporary restraining order, later extended until Jan. 31. On the same day the chief of the local Border Patrol announced that the number of arrests of undocumented border crossers *had not* diminished under the new policy.

Meanwhile, the exodus of people from the Valley was felt in Miami and Los Angeles. In Miami, refugees had to vacate a baseball stadium they had been living in so that spring training could begin. The community remembered the mass arrival of Cubans in the Mariel boatlift eight years ago. On Jan. 13,

Florida Senator Bob Graham wrote to President Reagan: "Florida has suffered enough. We've been strained to the breaking point by crisis immigration." Miami officials asked for Federal aid "to seal the borders." In mid-January, amidst riots in the Black neighborhoods of Overtown and Liberty City, Black leaders expressed resentment towards the preferential treatment of Nicaraguans and other Latinos.

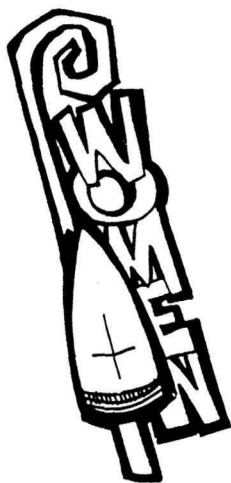
Late in December, the Border Patrol in California announced the use of Dutch-trained dogs to detect concealed immigrants at border crossings. Makeshift labor camps in California's North County were bulldozed, even though most dwellers were newly legalized immigrants and had no place to go. A local resident expressed the feelings of the community about the camp population, mostly Mexicans: "They're bush people . . . they don't know how to flush a toilet, they don't know how to take showers. They are animals." On Jan. 25 the news broke that the Immigration Service planned to dig a four-mile ditch in the Otay Mesa area of the California-Mexico border near Tijuana. Defended by the Justice Department as a drainage to benefit Mexico and a deterrent to drug traffic, the ditch was finally acknowl-

edged by local Border Patrol officers to be a means to stop undocumented immigrants.

No easy solution is in sight. Ironically, as long as the war in Central America continues, a harvest of refugees will come to the center of power. As long as communities in Mexico are unable to sustain young life, undocumented workers will follow the steps of other generations going north. As long as the economy of the United States functions in a way that inexhaustible labor reserves can be marginally incorporated, the illegal workers will serve an economic purpose and continue to boost profits.

The fact of the matter is that over three million men, women and children who live in the United States have been declared legally expendable. Over one million of these are refugees from Central America. If the people of the United States cannot see their way through all the dilemmas posed by undocumented migration, they can now see the effects of a law built on injustice. This is why the AFSC went to court.

Taking exceptions to employer sanctions, the AFSC stands with undocumented men, women and children. It affirms their act of migrating as an option for life. **TW**



Coming up in **THE WITNESS** April issue

Theological and sociological implications of the Barbara Harris Consecration Feb. 11 in Boston.
Featuring:

Li Tim Oi
Rosemary Ruether
Robert L. DeWitt
Monica Furlong
J. Antonio Ramos

Nan Peete
Carter Heyward
Paul Washington
Marjorie Farmer
and others . . .

Subscribe for a friend on the handy card this issue.

Athens church joins

A life and death struggle is underway for two Central American refugees in Athens, Ohio, with the Church of the Good Shepherd at its center. The congregation is determined that the legal process in which the two are engaged with the Immigration Service will result in life.

But to date, hearings for asylum in the United States for Amadeo, from Honduras, and Maria Teresa, from El Salvador, have been denied. And they remain hostages in litigation where only some 3% of the appeals are allowed asylum in the United States.

"It's a long and tedious process," said the Rev. E. Francis "Mike" Morgan, rector. "The government claims in these cases that they are economic refugees who come to this country for good jobs. But in so many instances, as with Amadeo and Maria, deportation would virtually be a death sentence."

Amadeo was a union organizer in Honduras, where four of his co-workers were killed. The corporation for which he worked was later implicated in the murders by a Catholic radio station there, he said. He fled the country in 1985, fearing assassination. He was an outspoken advocate of land reform, and believes his country is exploited by transnational corporations which plunder it for agricultural cash crops and minerals. Part of his job as a union worker was to push for fair wages. He received the equivalent of \$12 for a workday that could last up to 16 hours.

Maria, a skilled seamstress, worked in a pants factory in El Salvador before her sister and brother-in-law were both murdered by death squads because of their opposition to government policies. Eight children survive. Maria was visited afterward by death squads who told her the same thing would happen to her. She fled, leaving a teenage daughter behind.

The two never use their last names for fear of assassins "coming in the night," even in this country, and for fear also of placing their remaining families in jeopardy.

"The Church of the Good Shepherd has become the 'church of record' for



'overground railroad'

by Mary Lou Suhor

Amadeo and Maria Teresa, offering food and shelter, since last June," Morgan said. "But we just play a part in an overall ecumenical effort, together with Quakers, Presbyterians, Catholics, etc. in a support group called the Central American Relief Assistance Committee (CARAC)."

"We are not in a 'sanctuary mode' in that Amadeo and Maria Teresa are here legally. However, two bids for asylum before a federal judge in November were not only struck down, but Amadeo was jailed. The judge set an extraordinary \$25,000 bond, which we got knocked down to \$7,000 by a letter-writing campaign.

"Amadeo was judged an 'unreliable' and 'unbelievable' witness, but he was questioned for three and a half hours, which caused him some confusion about specific dates."

Bob Merlino of CARAC described the INS representatives as hostile. "They more or less played with Maria's testimony, questioning her as to whether she 'asked' those who visited her if they belonged to death squads, for example. And one of them shook his finger at Amadeo and told me to warn him he'd better not try to escape or they would put him behind bars for a long time."

After the hearing, Amadeo was transported to the Boone County Detention Center in handcuffs, and spent the first three days in isolation in a small cell, without shoes or socks, he said. Then he was incarcerated with other inmates.

He described his "recreation" to the *Athens News*. "They would take us to a small viewing room, and one of the videos featured a rape scene where they were raping a girl. Here were 19 and 20-year-olds watching this."

Amadeo told the *News* that he communicated with other prisoners through pantomime and broken English, responding when asked why he was there, "I did not rob anybody, I did not kill anybody. I don't drink and I don't use drugs. I am here because I was defending the rights of the people of Central America."

What is next for Amadeo and Maria?

"Both are now back at the rectory and would love to work, but we can't get them a green card," Morgan said. "We are now trying, as part of CARAC's 'overground railroad,' to arrange asylum in Canada. We have filed forms with the Canadian consulate in Detroit. They have a refugee quota and we're hoping Maria and Amadeo will be accepted, but it's a long wait. The Anglican Church in Canada has been helpful in giving us a number of references. They work ecumenically in this effort as well.

"The adjudication is under appeal, but we've been told that there is no way, realistically, that the cases can be won. It is simply a device to buy time to avoid deportation and get them to Canada. Of course, they feel their lives are still threatened and they remain fearful."

Meanwhile, the Church of the Good Shepherd continues to work and pray that the ongoing life and death drama will end opting for life.

Las Calabazas

The foot of the refugee woman,
Maria Teresa
bobs up and down,
up and down stiffly.

Her right leg crossed
over her left, she sits
with a face shuttered tight
in our living room chair
through the long introductions.

I bring lemonade.
With the glasses are gourds
sawed in half to hold nuts.
She bursts into flower
crying, "*Las calabazas!*"

Her words tumble over
each other, "In Salvador
always we use them,
these gourds, for the spoon,
for the drinking.
I know them, these little ones,
know them so well!"

The talk turns to politics,
factions, maneuvers . . .
Maria Teresa fades out,
shuts her eyes, strokes
the bowl of a gourd
like the head of a child.

It burns in my brain
how her hand scooping beans,
dipping water for rebels
at nightfall was bound
to be lopped off,
be dropped in a ditch
with the rest of her parts
by a death squad that drives
an American jeep
if she hadn't escaped.

How our haven, our handshakes
no matter how warm,
can't compare to the steel
of that fact, to this
feel of a gourd
this touch of home ground.

Helen Horn

Raising Lazarus: Can liberal

Can liberal churches grow?

Statistics say no. In the past 15 years, membership in six major liberal denominations in the United States plummeted by 14% to 20 million, while membership in seven major conservative denominations climbed a whopping 44% to 22 million.

Liberal experts say no, too. At Pacific School of Religion (PSR), one of the nation's most liberal seminaries, a professor burst into laughter when we said we wanted to attend a seminar at the conservative Crystal Cathedral as part of an independent study on church growth. The message we got from PSR faculty as well as students was that while Christians should reach out to meet the needs of all people, church growth smacks of forcing our ideas on others — a liberal no-no. We were blocked by the assumption, largely shared by liberals and conservatives alike, that church growth and social justice are mutually exclusive. An unspoken factor was fear: fear of change, fear of failure, fear of success.

But after a semester of engaging the question, "Can liberal churches grow?" we say yes. It's happening at our church through techniques we culled from evangelical churches. Raising the declining membership of liberal churches may require a miracle on the order of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, but it will surely happen if we follow God and our convictions with passion.

We — a gay man and a lesbian —

serve as pastor and student intern in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), a denomination ministering primarily to the lesbian and gay community. Our congregation, Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco (MCC-SF) is located in the heart of San Francisco's largest lesbian and gay neighborhood.

MCC-SF is a non-creedal eucharistic church that uses inclusive language in every aspect of worship. We have a communally-written statement of purpose, which says in part, "While recognizing our connection to the historical Christian church, we believe we are a *new* witness to God's all-inclusive love and acceptance . . . Our vision is that the world will be unified through acceptance and celebration of human diversity." Our church's theology resembles that of many mainline Protestant traditions, influenced by feminist and liberation theologies. However, the worship is characterized by an evangelical fervor seldom found in those churches. At the same service where the sermon decries the sin of sexism, people raise their hands in the air while ecstatically singing choruses usually heard only in charismatic churches. Our congregation strikes a balance rare within our denomination; UFMCC congregations commonly embrace a strict evangelical model, inhibiting their ability to appeal to the unchurched or post-churched. No liberal Protestant church in the surrounding area is larger — yet with a Sunday attendance of about 300, our church is by many standards only medium-sized.

UFMCC developed and grew from a handful of churches to over 250 congregations between 1970-85, the same pe-

riod in which many denominations traditionally termed moderate or liberal suffered a decline in membership. For example, *The 1987 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* recorded, among others, the following declines: the Presbyterian Church USA lost 24%; the Episcopal Church, 16%; and the United Methodist Church, 11%. If stock in corporations declined this significantly, those companies would be in danger of insolvency. During the same period, theologically and politically conservative churches made enormous gains: the Assemblies of God increased 233%; the Mormon church, 86%. This looks like the place to invest! Membership statistics don't tell everything, but if they are an indicator of an organization's future viability, liberal churches may turn out to be the dinosaurs of the 21st century.

While other churches may postpone facing this fate, various seemingly contradictory factors compel us to consider church growth. Every Sunday we see at least 10 "first-timers" at our worship — our small sanctuary was becoming uncomfortably full at the morning service. We also have had a unique incentive in recent years: a majority of the men in our congregation are infected with the AIDS virus. While we are attracting newcomers, many members and friends have died, and more will in the foreseeable future. This attrition could make it difficult to provide the same level of care we have in the past. We are left with no choice but to master the principles of growth, although growth means change, a daunting prospect in a church already relentlessly racked by grief. A line from the regular closing hymn of

The Rev. James Mitulski is pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco, where Kittredge Cherry is a student minister. Both are seminarians at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Cal.

churches grow?

by Kittredge Cherry & James Mitulski

our evening service could become a plea to prevent growth, if addressed to the church rather than to God:

*Change and decay in all around I see!
O Thou who changest not,
abide with me.*

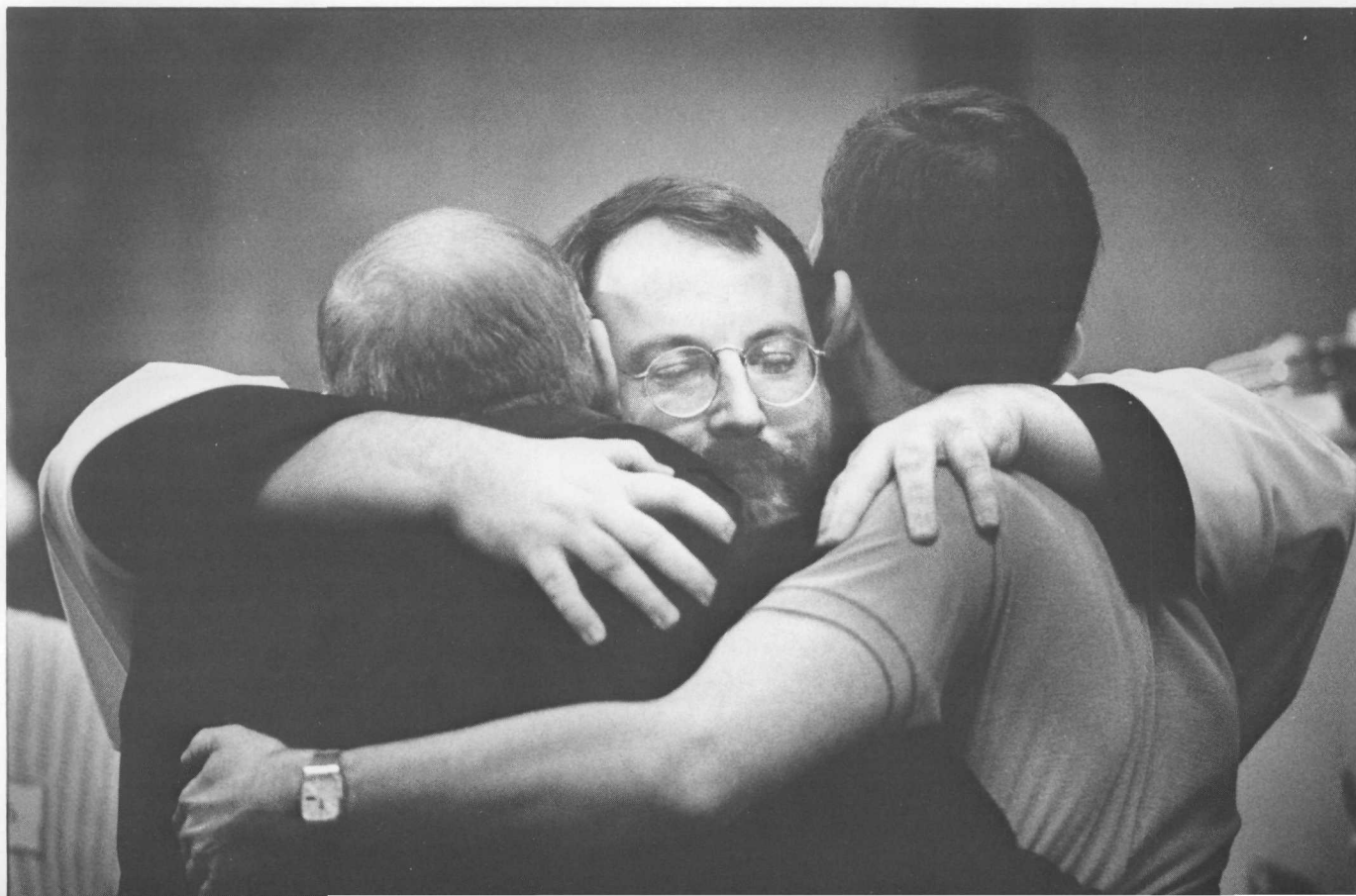
Before we could begin implementing specific church growth techniques, we had to go through a process of theological reflection. Our first idea of where to begin this process was seminary. Since we both attend PSR, we looked through its course catalogue — and found nothing. It seems that only conservative seminaries teach church growth. Fuller Theological Seminary, America's premier conservative seminary, was one of the first to offer courses, and now a Doc-

tor of Ministry degree, in church growth. Similarly, only conservative denominations sponsor church growth workshops. Of these, the most liberal we found was Robert H. Schuller's Institute for Successful Church Leadership at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Cal. It also welcomes members of UFMCC; lesbian and gay couples receive the same discount as married heterosexuals. Schuller built this 10,000 member congregation of the Reformed Church of America from nothing in 1955 by borrowing successful secular ideas to create what he terms "a dynamic shopping center for Jesus," an idea that strikes liberals as nontheology. Despite the difficulty of getting the faculty of a liberal seminary

to take church growth seriously, we finally convinced a professor to sponsor our independent study. We also found three other like-minded students, including one from West Germany.

Our first major class activity was attending Schuller's three-day institute. We learned much, especially about the importance and methods of outreach, but as liberals in a conservative context we had to filter out most ideas and translate the rest. For example, Schuller became passionate about his "possibility thinking" in a debate with the Rev. Robert Pierce (MCC pastor from Florida) during the question-and-answer period: "Believe in the possibility of enjoying heterosexual sex! Heterosexuality has

The Rev. Jim Mitulski embraces parishioners during a service at MCC-SF.



Tom Levy/San Francisco Chronicle

more possibilities than homosexuality, because there's the possibility of children and that holds the possibility of Thanksgiving dinner when the kids come home." However, we hadn't come to receive Schuller's blessing on homosexuality, but to learn about church growth.

While we perceived the church growth institute as painfully conservative, we also discovered there are those who recoil at its liberalism. "For the most part, church growth-ers are seen as the liberals in my denomination," said the Rev. Alan Breems, pastor of a Christian Reformed church in Michigan. He explained the conservative opposition to growth comes from his church's ethnic background and strong covenantal theology, and, his wife Beth added, "The belief that the church is there to take care of us." Thus, church growth is seen as conservative by liberals, liberal by conservatives. They share a common fear that reaching out to more people will compromise their theology.

Ultimately, we looked beyond the conservatism and allowed the Crystal Cathedral to be our catalyst. Schuller's message was that churches grow by reaching the unchurched, which can only happen by meeting their needs. Just as he urged his more conventional church colleagues to re-examine the anachronistic character of their churches' program and worship life, we, too, went away asking ourselves if our church was interesting and accessible to new people, or to those who have been hurt by Christianity and its abuses. Schuller quoted surveys showing that the main reason Americans don't attend church is because it is "boring." He asked if people must grow up in our church in order to understand it. Nobody has grown up in MCC, since it's only 20 years old, and it has an interdenominational flavor. Maybe this is a reason we're growing. Schuller went so far as to criticize the concept of denominational identity as meaningless to the unchurched.

The institute also prompted us to wonder what impact would growth have on our church? Would it dilute our commitment to progressive causes — or to God? The issues raised even caused dissention among the six members of MCC-SF who attended. We became a microcosm of the liberal Protestant establishment, arguing about the value of the conference one night over a spaghetti dinner. The pastor, concerned for the future of the institution, debated with a student intern who wanted to maintain institutional integrity and ethics. These dialogues, and even the tension, proved to be one of the greatest resources for clarifying our values.

We continued to ponder such contradictions in our class at PSR. The question came into sharp focus through Ludwig Moeller, the student from West Germany. Church growth is somewhat suspect there because it smacks of catering to vulgar public tastes. People ordained by state-approved churches such as Moeller's are guaranteed jobs, no matter what the size of their congregations, leaving little incentive for church growth plans. German parish membership is often large, since citizens are ordinarily assigned to a church. But national attendance is much lower than in America and shrinking. Against this backdrop, we saw clearly how U.S. churches fit into American capitalism, with entrepreneur-pastors forced to build congregations so their salaries can keep up with inflation. Being paid directly by the congregation keeps pastors in touch with the people, but it may also keep their mouths shut on controversial issues.

We also consulted a number of written

resources. Predictably, the seminary library contained scant material on church growth. Schuller's book, *Your Church has a Fantastic Future*, succinctly summarizes his philosophy: A church with a positive attitude will achieve positive growth. His advice on preaching, "never be controversial in the pulpit," flies in the face of liberal tradition. He prescribes sermons on self-esteem in place of sermons on social justice.

A speaker at the Schuller institute, C. Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller, articulates a theory of growth based on traditional evangelical values in his book, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church*. But two of Wagner's assertions should distress the liberal reader. The first is the "homogeneous principle." He writes, "a healthy, growing church . . . is composed of basically one kind of people." He quotes Donald McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth*: "People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers." This observation generally makes even the most liberal Christian into a proof-texter — we cry, "What about Galatians 3:28?" Yet while UFMCC membership is diverse in religious background and, to a lesser degree, race and social class, we share a common sexual orientation and marginalization by the dominant culture. As appalling as Wagner's theory on homogeneity is, it accurately describes both liberal and conservative churches.

On the other hand, Wagner's second assertion is less accurate. He separates social service — i.e., feeding the poor — from social action, "the more radical demand to change the structures of society so that the poor and oppressed will get a fairer share of the social pie." He concludes, "To the degree that socially involved churches become engaged in social action, as distinguished from social services, they can expect church growth to diminish." But what about ul-

MOVING?

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tra-conservative Jerry Falwell's Baptist church in Lynchburg, Va. at one end of the political spectrum, or ultra-liberal F. Forrester Church's Unitarian congregation in New York City at the other extreme? Both are lively, politically active, growing churches. Our study group agreed that we don't need to outgrow social action. It is an important mission of the church, a component that we must maintain as we grow.

Here are a few of our specific strategies. Some were refined at the Crystal Cathedral; some originated there. We found that consistency in applying these has paid off:

1. We expanded our Sunday worship schedule to three services, each with a different character. This challenges our congregation to affirm differing tastes in worship while we continue to espouse the same statement of purpose. Rather than dividing our congregation, this change enriches us; we have more liturgical worship in the morning and more evangelical in the evening. We sustain our commitment to lay participation amidst differing styles.

2. We expanded our program life. We hired several part-time staff members to develop programs. Concerned about the underrepresentation of women in our congregation, we funded a women's program coordinator. Our response to the AIDS crisis included a weekend retreat for 100 men. Recognizing the specific needs of these constituencies has kept us one church, in defiance of Wagner's homogeneity principles. When we overcame our distaste for Schuller's "church as shopping mall" metaphor, this diversification proved successful.

3. We expanded use of our building by making it available to over 70 groups which now use it regularly. As the emerging community center in the Castro neighborhood, we find the unchurched turning to us in increasing numbers for life-cycle ceremonies such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

4. We appropriated state-of-the-art techniques from the secular world. We purchased a computer, and our use of desktop publishing and financial development software enabled the most successful stewardship campaign in the church's 18-year history. We also retained a professional fundraiser to help us expand our donor base and launch a capital fund drive for a new building.

5. We appropriated some marketing tips suggested by Schuller. Working with the assumption that most people aren't aware of us, we expanded our advertising in gay and lesbian publications, listed ourselves in several places in the white pages, redesigned our church bulletin with the first-timer in mind, and produced a monthly newsletter that we send to over 1500 supporters.

By consulting our resources, dissecting them in our study group, and trying them out at MCC-SF, we became convinced adherence to our values and our God will ensure growth. It will keep our churches from being boring, the main reason Americans avoid church.

Many liberals lament that their congregations were reduced when they adopted inclusive language and women's ordination. We suggest they haven't gone far enough: They may have made sufficient changes to alienate some members, but not enough to reach the unchurched and therefore to grow. For example, churches effectively limit who can be members when they limit who can be ministers. The United Methodists and other denominations recently affirmed rules against ordaining lesbians and gay men, causing a surge of interest in UFMCC as their members flee. Churches won't grow unless they are not only for members, but also for the unchurched — or, as we find, the post-churched who come with suspicion bred in other churches. We must sometimes take unpopular stands to embody Christian ideals, but liberal U.S. churches aren't shrinking because of activism. Far

from being too prophetic, we seem pathetic in our unwillingness to stand for anything.

Making liberal churches grow, like the raising of Lazarus, requires an infusion of holy spirit. Our reproach to liberal churches echoes the words of Mary, Lazarus' sister: "If Jesus had been there, my brother would not have died." While disagreeing with conservative values, we admire the fervent personal connection with God that attracts so many new members to these growing denominations. We fear that our liberal churches lose identity — and then members — when we ignore spirituality to concentrate on improving human relations and institutions according to our values.

Our recommendations to the rest of the liberal Christian community are:

- Swallow your pride and approach evangelical church sources with an open mind.
- Make church growth a topic of discussion in liberal contexts: as a course in seminaries and a theme of denominational and inter-denominational conferences.
- In your church's worship and program life, stay close to the heart issues of your congregation.
- Believe you have a valuable message. And if you don't have one, get one!

We believe strongly in the mission of the churches: to enable people's connections with God and each other. Together, these relationships can bond us into radicalizing institutions that can embody God's passion for justice. If we face our fears, stick to our values, and love God with all our hearts, liberal churches will grow. We need to rekindle our hope in miracles. One miracle involved may be our resourcefulness in applying the community organizing skills gleaned from evangelical churches as well as the feminist, gay liberation, civil rights and labor movements. To paraphrase Schuller, liberal churches have a fantastic future. **WV**



The encounter of world religions

by Owen Thomas

World community is not just a nice ideal to which we ought to give lip service. Rather it is an absolute necessity for human survival. Any local strife, whether in the Middle East, Africa, Asia or Latin America, can escalate into an East-West conflict with the terrible danger of nuclear war and the annihilation

of human life on earth. So we live in a society which desperately seeks some measure of world community in order to survive.

The political aspect of the search for world community has claimed the most attention. But ecological issues are not far behind. Ever since the Club of Rome, an international association dedicated to promoting global understanding of political and economic forces, issued its original report in 1972, we have known of the danger of social breakdown as a result of the interaction of five factors: rapid population growth, widespread

malnutrition, accelerating industrialization, pollution of the environment and depletion of non-renewable resources. When combined with the political problems of achieving progress on these issues and avoiding nuclear war, the human prospect is dark indeed.

In the face of these huge, intractable problems, the question of relations between the religions of the world seems fairly simple and not very important; certainly little attention is devoted to it at the highest level of government.

The problem is usually looked at in this way: Religion is understood to be

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only a by-product of culture, a symbolic projection of the values and ideals of a particular culture or group. So religious differences are simply a minor aspect of cultural differences, and they will tend to disappear as science and technology continue to produce an effectively universal civilization based on industrial production and rapid communication.

Furthermore, religion is understood as an entirely private, individual matter. Therefore we can get on with reducing international tensions and promoting economic development and technical advance without muddying the waters with such extraneous issues as religious differences.

This, however, is a typically secular Western view of the relationship between religion and culture. And it appears to Asians and Africans simply to be another example of Western arrogance and cultural imperialism which they have come to detest. They see religion as integrally related to and inseparable from all aspects of life — as the foundation of their culture. Religious beliefs about nature, humanity, society, history, and the divine determine their views of the family, the state, the economic order, and so forth. Furthermore, the peoples of Africa and Asia are not willing to discard religious beliefs to get on with other matters. They see their new independence as an opportunity to reaffirm and revitalize religious traditions as the basis of national and cultural integrity.

Secular Westerners often assume that the age of holy wars is long past. But the 20th century has seen too much bloodshed and war in which religious differences have been a fundamental factor: the partition of India in 1947 and continuing strife between Sikhs and Hindus and Muslims; wars in the Middle East, not to mention conflict in Northern Ireland and other areas. Moreover, there is a widespread conservative revival among world religions today. Witness

the rise of Shiite Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and other Middle Eastern countries, the increasing strength of the Orthodox Jewish parties in Israel, and the emergence of the conservative Protestant New Right as a political force in this country.

It is becoming clear that the problem of relations between religions of the world is a decisive factor in the quest for world community and peace.

In this context, how should we understand the relation between the great religions of the world? In particular, how should we understand the relationship of Christianity to other religions? How do we believe God is related to other religions? Are they part of the divine plan? These issues are receiving increased attention today. Programs in religious studies at colleges and universities are experiencing increased enrollments as young people address themselves to these questions.

There are various Christian attitudes toward other religions, some traditional, some new.

First, there is the attitude that Christianity is the truth and other religions are false. There is some basis in the Bible for this view. According to the prophets of Israel, the religions of the nations are idolatry, the worship of false gods. The Christ of St. John states, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." Peter in a sermon in Acts states, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

This was a common view in the history of the church. Luther strongly affirmed it, and it has been reasserted in our century by Karl Barth and by many conservative theologians. The obvious difficulty with this view is that some other religions share some beliefs with Christianity. Judaism and Islam, for example, assert the reality of a personal creator God. So it is difficult to see how

they can be false.

A view at the other end of the spectrum from the True-False view states, "You can't say that one religion is better than another." This is relativism, one of the most deeply ingrained modern attitudes towards religion. Its popular form claims that all religions are equally true. This is sometimes expanded to assert that any religion which denies that all religions are equally true is guilty of falsehood, thus paraphrasing songwriter Tom Lehrer's assertion: "I hate people who don't love each other!"

The difficulty with this concept is of course that various religions hold views of reality that are sharply different, if not contradictory, and thus could in no sense be equally true. More sophisticated versions of relativism hold that each religion is relative to its own culture, and is the most appropriate expression of the values of its culture. It claims we cannot know the absolute truth, but only the truth for us. We may believe that Christianity is true for us, but cannot go on to assert that it is true for all people. Relativism can also be interpreted to mean that different religions are simply different paths up the same mountain, and that all reach the same goal.

A third view often presented is that all religions have the same essence. The intrinsic nature of religion is hidden under all the multiplicity of outward forms that make them seem so different. This essence of religion may be a matter of doctrine or teaching, moral conviction or imperative, or a particular kind of experience. A popular form of this view is that the essence of all religions is mysticism, the perennial philosophy exemplified by Neoplatonism in the West and Vedanta in the East.

Another version of this view holds that while other religions embody the essence of religion in varying degrees of perfection, Christianity constitutes the purest and fullest manifestation. The main difficulty with this view is that

study has shown that there is no such identical essence in every religion.

A fourth approach to relations between religions is called synthesis, the view that each religion contains some part of the whole truth, and that all these fragments combined will produce the true religion. For example, Bahai, a religious movement with roots in 19th-century Iranian Islam, claims to be a synthesis of the teaching of all the great religious leaders of the world.

The difficulty with this approach is that every synthesis is constituted from one religion's point of view: in the case of Bahai, it is Islamic mysticism. But the various religions apparently affirm contradictory things about the nature of reality and thus cannot be synthesized into one coherent world view.

Another attitude, quite popular in the last century but not so widely held today, sees the history of religion as a progressive evolution from lower to higher forms with Christianity being the highest stage of development. Christianity is seen as the fulfillment of other religions, such as Judaism, based on Jesus' words, "I came not to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them."

The difficulty with this view is that the history of religions does not indicate any such development, nor does it suggest that the deepest insights of Hinduism, for example, are fulfilled in Christianity.

A more biblical version of this development/fulfillment approach, the dominant view among Roman Catholics, asserts that in all of human history God is working out the divine plan of salvation for all people. However, the revelation in Christ is the final truth which other religions perceive less clearly and mixed with error. This is the view developed by Karl Rahner and Hans Küng and enunciated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

This concept seems again to overlook radical differences between religions. It is hard to see how religions with such di-

verse interpretations of human fulfillment can be interpreted as different ways to the same ultimate salvation.

A current debate on the attitude towards other religions centers on the uniqueness of Christ. The most recent proposal, the theocentric approach represented by Knitter and Hick, allows for the distinctiveness of Christ but questions the finality and normativity of Christianity.

Finally, there is an attitude which indicates an approach to, rather than a specific understanding of, the relation of Christianity to other religions — an approach called dialogue. This view encourages serious and open dialogue with other religions, giving testimony to our faith, and listening carefully to the witness of others.

To some, the way of dialogue seems to give up the Christian mission to preach the Gospel to all people, to witness to God in Christ. But there is no contradiction between witness and dialogue. Because we Christians believe we have a truth worth sharing, we are able to witness to it. And we can engage in dialogue because we believe our partner is worth listening to. Only those who have heard the testimony of Buddhism, for example, deserve a hearing from Buddhists. In fact, the Christian church has always learned from other religions and is still learning.

The basis of dialogue is that we are all creatures of God, created in the image of God with freedom and responsibility. We are also sinners estranged from God, our neighbors and our true selves, but capable of being redeemed by God. We share a common humanity, needs, fears, hopes — especially a hope for justice and peace, and an end to war, hunger and oppression.

It is impossible to predict what will result from such dialogue. But those who have participated testify that it can be a moving and transforming experience, a way to deeper understanding of their

faith, enhanced by new insights from another faith. Thus some hope that through dialogue we may move toward mutual transformation and become closer. It is probably only through dialogue that we will perceive the best way to understand the relationship between Christianity and other religions.

The urgency of the international political situation means we cannot wait for dialogue to ease tensions deriving from religious differences. However, if Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians can sit down and talk together, it could lead to a relaxation of tensions threatening the existence of life on earth. **TV**

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Short Takes

Pluralism the rule

Other religious traditions have recovered from their colonial subjugations and are now presenting themselves as universal alternatives to the Christian faith . . . These religious traditions have made so many inroads into even the "Christian" West that religious pluralism has become a reality in almost every society. Today there are more Muslims in France than there are Reformed Christians, and more Muslims in Britain than Methodists. Religions are no longer in far-off lands. Further, the minority churches that live in the midst of other faith communities are under much pressure to rethink their own attitudes and relationships with their neighbors. They are becoming more and more convinced that they must seek and build truly human communities with them. They are convinced that they can no longer find answers to the problems of life all by themselves. For good or for ill, a large number of communities will need to come together in order to work for common goals and achieve tangible results . . . There is a developing discovery of the riches of other faiths.

S. Wesley Ariarajah

The Bible and People of Other Faiths
Orbis 1989

Quote of note

People who talk about themselves are bores. People who talk about others are gossips. But people who talk about you are interesting conversationalists.

Singer Lisa Kirk

Share the wealth

What we give to the poor
for Christ's sake
is what we carry with us
when we die.

As Jean Jacques Rousseau says:

"When we die
we carry
in our clutched hands
only that
which we have given away."

Peter Maurin
The Catholic Worker



A dollar of hope

When Mikhail Roshchevsky was 10-years-old, he was evacuated during World War II with his brother, mother and grandfather to the city of Tumin in the Ural Mountains. Wartime destruction had left his home area in the Soviet Union in shambles; his father had been wounded while serving in the Army.

After three years of hardship, the people of Tumin learned that American relief supplies had arrived. Mikhail received some canned food, his friend a pair of pants. When his friend reached into the pocket he found a crumpled dollar bill. Mikhail offered to trade a can of food for it. What his friend deemed a useless piece of paper, Mikhail saw as "a dollar of hope."

Recently Roshchevsky, now a professor of physiology with the Academy of Sciences in Syktyvkar, visited All Saints Church, Pasadena, with three other Soviets, all members of the Soviet Peace Committee, as part of a friendship program.

Stepping to a microphone, he pulled out the 1935 Silver Certificate which he had saved all these years. He promised himself, he said, that someday he would travel to the United States and return it.

Before a deeply moved audience he presented the bill to the Rev. Hans Holborn, (left, above) chair of the Southern California Chapter of the US-USSR Citizens Dialogue.

— Marilee Embree

NOW March set April 9

THE WITNESS magazine will be among sponsoring entities for NOW's March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives April 9 in Washington, D.C. beginning at 10 a.m.

Purpose of the march will be to show overwhelming support for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and to keep abortion and birth control safe and legal.

Attacks launched recently against *Roe v. Wade* would seriously hinder the kinds of reproductive health options available to poor women and women of color.

Participants are urged to wear white, in the tradition of the Suffragists. While THE WITNESS will not sponsor a delegation as such, readers are asked to march with their local delegations.

In addition, April 10 has been scheduled as a Lobby Day for the ERA and against anti-abortion amendments. For further information: National Now Action Center, 1000 Sixteenth St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Tax resistance time

Income tax is not the only way the government raises money for war making. The first telephone tax was imposed by the War Tax Revenue Act of 1914. In 1965, Congress planned to phase out the phone tax. With the escalation of the Vietnam war, however, the tax was raised and extended. Again in 1982, rather than phasing out the tax as planned, Congress extended it to help finance the massive Pentagon buildup.

Synapses Messages 1/89

More bad news

For the average working American, the wages of one working day out of ten goes to finance the military.

If you would like information about war tax resistance, a nationwide network of tax resisters, counselors, support groups are available to help you. For information on telephone tax resistance or other efforts, contact the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating committee, P. O. Box 85810, Seattle, WA 98145 (206-522-4377).

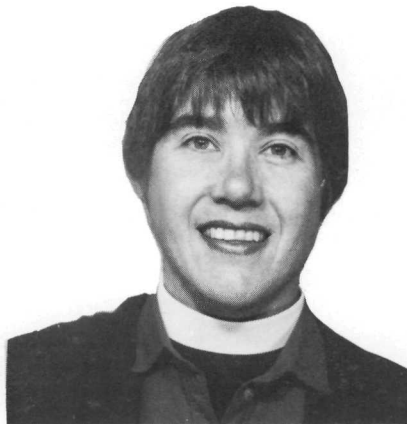
Feminist missionary in Canterbury's court

by Susan E. Pierce

When the Rev. Suzanne A. Fageol was a missionary in the West African nation of Liberia, she lived through several coup attempts. Now, as a missionary in England, she is engaged in a spiritual and moral battle with the Church of England where the weapons are legal briefs instead of bullets. The Church of England does not ordain women to the priesthood and does not permit foreign women priests to celebrate the Eucharist. However, as the pastor of St. Hilda's Community, a London-based group started two years ago by Anglican men and women who wanted non-sexist, inclusive worship, Fageol has openly defied that ban.

Fageol, a U.S. priest canonically resident in the Diocese of Chicago, recently in Boston to attend the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris, the Anglican Communion's first woman bishop, talked about how she came to England and how her St. Hilda's Community ministry has been at the center of the conflict over women's rights in the British church.

Raised in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Fageol graduated from the University of Vermont in 1971. She did missionary work in Malawi in East Africa, then returned to the United States and got a Master's in Divinity degree from Seabury Western Theological Seminary in 1979. She left her home diocese of Chicago, which did not then ordain women, and prepared for ordination under Diocese of Newark Bishop John S. Spong. She was ordained a priest in 1980 by Bishop Leland Stark at her parish in Chicago and returned to the Virgin Islands to work. "But I was longing to go back to Africa," Fageol said. Her prayer



The Rev. Suzanne A. Fageol

was soon answered with a phone call from mentor Spong. "Bishop George Brown of Liberia had a dream that he should bring a woman priest there. He asked Bishop Spong to recommend someone, and he called me. I was on the next plane out," said Fageol.

When she arrived in Liberia in 1982, she said Brown told her, "I have hired you as the first woman priest in Africa." Later that year, the first native African woman priest was ordained in Kenya. Fageol first was on the cathedral staff, and then went to Cuttington College, — which was founded, as was Liberia itself, in the last century by African-Americans freed from slavery. As chaplain, she supervised the school's training program for the priesthood. She smiled at the memory: "It was a good thing I had my textbooks."

Other memories of Liberia were less pleasant. Since the 1980 coup in which an army sergeant, Samuel K. Doe, seized power, the country has been rocked by periodic unrest. During one such time, Fageol was hiding 40 women in her house on the college grounds. "When the

soldiers came on campus, they headed straight for the women's dorm. I was terrified they'd search my house and the women were so scared they couldn't keep quiet."

After three years in Liberia, the bishop urged her to go for a doctorate in African Christianity. "The best place to do that was England. When I arrived in 1984, I realized my mission there very soon," Fageol said, sensing from the start the subtle oppression of women in British society.

Enrolled at the University of Aberdeen, Fageol found herself suffering from culture shock. "I grew up in the Caribbean. Africa was home to me. England was foreign."

When asked if she brought anything from her African experience to her ministry in England, she looked thoughtful. "They required two very different approaches. For example, in Liberia, not being African and coming in at the end of the missionary era, I had a certain amount of privilege, but I would have never presumed to make any feminist statements.

"But in England, a Western culture, I feel more confident about raising feminist issues," said Fageol, noting that many U.S. clergywomen who come to England shy away from causing controversy by openly celebrating Eucharist. Her willingness to take risks, she feels, makes an important pastoral statement: "A lot of people here are happy there's someone like me; they say it's like having an oasis in the desert," she said.

Fageol feels that Barbara Harris' consecration sparked the conflict at St. Hilda's that became a media event.

The trouble started last fall when the

Diocese of London decided to move against the Community. For at least a year, Fageol had been celebrating Holy Communion for Community worship services in the ecumenical St. Benet's Chapel at Queen Mary College in East London, with the college chaplain's permission. However, though the chapel is used by Anglicans, Methodists and Roman Catholics, the owner of the building is the London Diocesan Fund. Reportedly, under the Church of England's Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure of 1963, it is an actionable offense to use any unauthorized form of service. Under that law, it would be illegal for a woman priest to celebrate Eucharist on consecrated ground, because at present no English bishop has authority to license women to officiate as priests of the Church of England.

In October, a law firm representing the Diocese sent a letter to members of the Community stating that if they did not stop holding services in St. Benet's, they would be sued for trespassing. Fageol found the Diocese's timing interesting, because, she said, the services had been taking place for quite some time.

"In 1986, the General Synod voted not to allow visiting women priests to fully exercise their ministry. So St. Hilda's was the culmination of a long history of women wanting to openly celebrate Eucharist. It's been done, but in secret, behind closed doors. We decided we'd had enough — we wanted a place to offer ordained women hospitality and where people could worship with an inclusive language liturgy," said Fageol.

She got involved in the Community when "they asked me to act as their priest. At first, there was no Eucharist. We spent time getting to know each other."

The Community had its first Eucharist led by Fageol in 1987, and advertised services openly in *The Church Times*,

the national church paper. Bishop of London Graham Leonard found out about the services taking place at St. Benet's and threatened to fire the Anglican chaplain. Leonard withdrew the threat when the Community agreed to worship in the common room next to the chapel.

The exodus from the chapel, Fageol said, made a strong statement. "There was one candle left burning inside, and all the women were gathered outside. 80 men and women showed up for that service, and word started to get out," she said.

Worship continued in the common room without incident, said Fageol, until one October morning, "out of the blue, in the *London Sunday Times* was a big headline: 'Woman priest defies bishop'." She felt that Church of England conservatives, worried by the July Synod's cautiously positive pronouncement on women's ordination and the September U.S. election of Barbara Harris as bishop, were putting pressure on Bishop Leonard to stop St. Hilda's activities.

The letter from the Diocese's lawyers soon followed, claiming that the chapel and common room were church property and off-limits to the Community. However, said Fageol, the Community made a consensus decision to return the following Sunday. Consequently, Fageol received a letter from Leonard ordering her to cease her activities. It became apparent that returning to the college could leave Fageol and the Community open to prosecution. So, said Fageol, "we had a parking lot Eucharist." On Oct. 29, in the dark and near-freezing temperatures, the Community held services in a parking lot outside the chapel.

"We had international press coverage, and a huge crowd showed up," said Fageol.

According to founding Community member and noted theologian Monica

Furlong, it gave a whole new meaning to worship. "Going to church has never been so exciting," she said.

After their eviction, the Community has found a home in a Methodist church. As St. Hilda's continues to grow, Fageol has found she is called to a full-time ministry. "There are groups all over England that want to start something like St. Hilda's, but they need help," said Fageol. To that end, she used her time during her most recent U.S. trip to find support for her feminist missionary work in England.

Marge Christie, president of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, said the Caucus will give whatever assistance it can and is actively seeking donations to fund Fageol's work in England. Sally Bucklee, Caucus board member and one of the planners of the Women's Witnessing Community at Lambeth, said "Supporting our sisters in other places is a vital part of networking."

Money raised in the United States, said Fageol, will help further the work of St. Hilda's and permit the publication and distribution of inclusive language liturgies and feminist worship models through groups such as Women in Theology, a national network devoted to developing feminist theological training.

None of the furor surrounding Fageol, not even the threat of prosecution under ecclesiastical and civil law in England, has swayed her conviction. She has even decided to suspend her doctoral studies to devote time to her ministry. She said it was crucial that she and the Community not give up. "It was only because the Philadelphia 11 embarrassed the Episcopal church that the church changed. It's so necessary to keep the pressure on."

Those wishing to make donations to the fund supporting the Rev. Suzanne Fageol's feminist missionary work in England may send them to: The Episcopal Women's Caucus, PO Box 5172, Laurel, MD 20707.

The cultural crisis in education

by Manning Marable

A central crisis of the White Western world today, especially its educational institutions, is a cultural crisis.

For centuries, White American and Western European educational institutions have established their curricula and educational assumptions upon a series of ethnocentric distortions. Creative, talented Black intellectuals, writers, poets and scientists are traditionally ignored, while the architects of slavery, racism and economic oppression are championed. For example, Aristotle, the father of modern Western philosophy, was also the earliest defender of slavery and the “natural” inferiority of slaves and women. Do the writings of Protestant reformer Martin Luther provide the sole treatment of religion worthy of study — or should we also turn to the thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jr.? Does Thomas More’s *Utopia* or the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes tell us more about politics than the writings of Frantz Fanon or C.L.R. James? Can a young Black woman or man better learn about life by reading a White novelist, or by reading Toni Morrison, Alice Walker or Richard Wright? Which writer’s work is more relevant to an understanding of humanity: Plato or W.E.B. DuBois?

Dr. Manning Marable, Chairperson of the Department of Black Studies at Ohio State University, is a member of THE WITNESS editorial board. His column, *Along the Color Line*, appears in 140 newspapers

When education reflects the mythology the White West has created for itself, the answers to these questions become obvious. The curriculum in traditionally White, mainstream environments reinforces ethnocentrism and ignorance of nonwhites’ cultural and intellectual creativity.

Black and progressive educators have long recognized that the cultural battleground is absolutely decisive in the broader political and economic empowerment of oppressed people. The values taught to our children largely determine their behavior. If a people are not seen as active creators of culture, playing significant roles within history, they will be ignored within our children’s textbooks and classes.

In America, our economic system rewards people who possess certain values and styles of behavior, such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, initiative, and individualism. But in their most extreme form, reinforced by the constant quest for dollars, such values deteriorate into greed and materialism. Culture becomes anything which can be marketed for a profit. The media reflects the lowest level of public awareness and political discussion — “trash TV,” symbolized by Geraldo Rivera, is the logical result. Sexuality all too often becomes a commodity which can be bought and sold. Religion is marketed by hypocritical televangelists seeking dollars and wealth

more than the salvation of souls.

The cultural conflict is waged most intensely in the field of education — especially on college campuses. White, conservative traditionalists are fighting any changes in the Western Civilization courses to ensure that the next generation of young White people is properly indoctrinated in reactionary, racist values. At Stanford University, after two years of bitter debate, the faculty senate voted to overthrow the university’s Western civilization course requirement. The new required course includes readings by people of color. Stanford’s modest acknowledgement of nonwhite cultures within its curriculum has been denounced by former Education Secretary William J. Bennett, who condemned the university for “trashing the classics” and capitulating to students’ demands.

As America becomes increasingly Black, Hispanic and Asian, academic institutions will be pressured to change their curricula to reflect the cultural values and literature of nonwhites. The phasing out of the Western culture program foreshadows a more intense future struggle over faculty and administrative posts, and the entire curriculum as well. As students begin to read DuBois, Baldwin, Hurston, Robeson and others, they will inevitably acquire a critical perspective on racial issues, which assumes a link between scholarship and social reform.

TV

Letters . . . Continued from page 3

nese Ministry of Justice recently announced it expects to pardon all fingerprint resisters. According to resister Ronald Susumu Fujiyoshi, a United Church of Christ Japanese-American missionary, there are some 300 fingerprint refusers, including 36 whose cases are in progress in the Japanese judicial system. Fujiyoshi and most others whose court cases are still pending will refuse such a "pardon", expected to be proclaimed before the late Emperor's state funeral.

Fujiyoshi and others are insisting that they have done nothing to be "forgiven" for. It is rather the Emperor and the Ministry of Justice that need to abolish all laws that discriminate against Koreans, other minorities and foreigners. In the meantime a Korean youth who turns 16 still must register, and all Koreans and other foreigners must still carry the registration card with them at all times. As Pierce points out in her article, this is just like South Africa.

The public gesture of "amnesty" by the Ministry of Justice is only a public relations act — an attempt to stop the dissatisfaction on this issue by a growing number of concerned people both in Japan and abroad.

I greatly appreciated THE WITNESS' calling attention to the prevailing "civil rights movement" in Japan. It helps in our mobilization of human rights efforts both in Japan and in the United States. I am encouraged by an increasing number of Christians in support of this movement, including my fellow Anglicans in Japan.

The Rev. S. Michael Yasutake
U.S. Committee for Human Rights
of Koreans in Japan
Evanston, Ill.

About congregationalism

John Wilson's characterization of congregationalists (Letters, November) is misinformed and misleading. Irresponsible individualism on the part of congregations, synods, members or leaders is neither the polity nor the practice of congregational churches. With the rest

of the church we depend on scripture, the guidance of the Spirit, the teaching and tradition of the People of God, and careful research and debate in the search for faithful responses to God's calling. It is an injustice to suggest that congregationalists are "accountable to no one for (their) opinions and pronouncements." The name "congregationalism" is an indication that we have understood and structured accountability in a different way from episcopally and presbyterially organized churches. Although with the rest of the church we believe that we are individually and collectively (in whatever collections) accountable to God and to one another, we have structured accountability so that leaders are accountable to congregations and congregations are accountable to other congregations.

In view of John Wilson's concern with bishops who, in his judgment, do not teach the faith or behave in a Christian way, he might better study congregational experience and insights rather than use congregationalism as an epithet. Early Congregationalists had similar problems with bishops of the Anglican Church and with episcopacy.

Lawrence C. Gilley
United Congregational Church
Maxixe, Mozambique

Miserable magazine

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I subscribed for just one year and was terribly disappointed. Barbara Harris' views on abortion, homosexuality, her vicious tone in writing are not in keeping with the posture of a Christian woman. I really do not want that miserable excuse for a Christian magazine in my study.

John Goeb
Milwaukee, Wisc.

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Susan Keller
Adelphi, Md.

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• **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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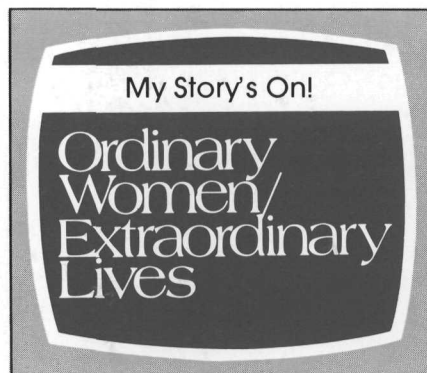
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