

THE WITNESS

Savings & Loan fiasco: Picking up the pieces

John H. Burt

Two faces of U.S. cities

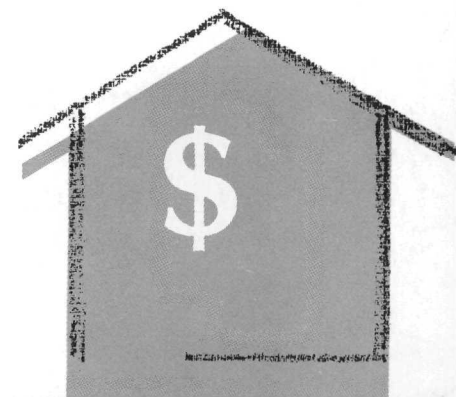
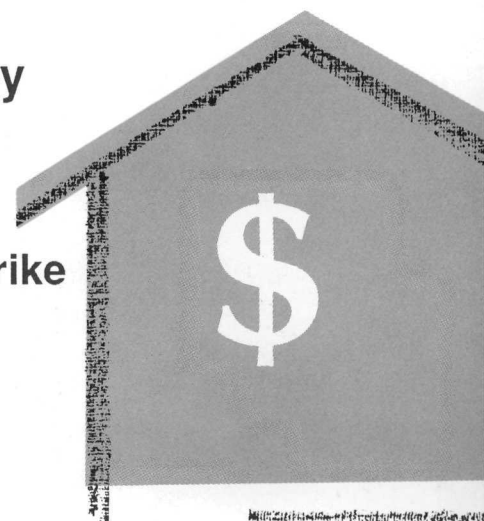
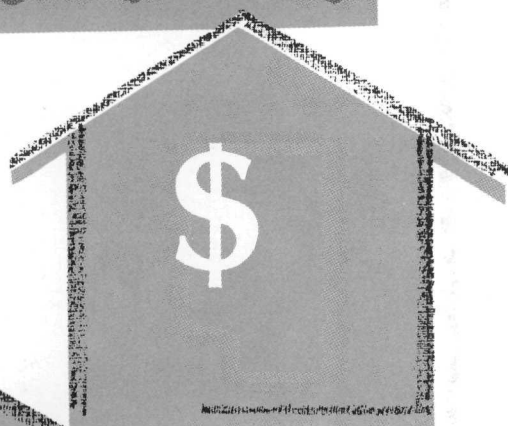
John V. Moeser

Sci-fi and theology

Parker Rossman

and . . .

update on UMW strike



Letters

Unsung hero in coal war

In your excellent coverage of the coal miners' strike against Pittston, one significant name was omitted — that of the Rev. R. Baldwin Lloyd (called "B" by everyone who knows him), Executive Director of the Appalachian Peoples' Service Organization (APSO).

B was arrested on May 24, at the same time that Bob Thacker, Rob Goldsmith and I were. However, B and the Rev. Richard Hayes of Buchanan were arrested at the Lambert Fork Mine in Dickenson County. There were no newspaper people present; most of the media attention has been focused on Moss No. 3 in Russell County where the three of us were arrested.

B chose to remain in jail overnight, joining miners who were protesting on behalf of Dickenson County school teachers and bus drivers who had been told they would lose their jobs because of loss of revenue due to the coal strike. (The County Board of Supervisors got the message and found the funds from other sources.)

Since that time B has represented APSO and the 15 dioceses that make up the APSO coalition as a member of the ecumenical committee meeting to formulate ways for the church to be present with and show support for the miners. He has offered pastoral support to the clergy of the dioceses whose congregations have been unhappy with their involvement in the strike; has visited with miners and their families in Solidarity City (the tent city set up to house visiting miners), and raised funds through APSO for the Binns-Counts Community Center in its efforts to feed up to 1,000 visiting miners and their families each day.

In addition, B and members of the APSO staff stayed with the Daughters of Mother Jones as they kept vigil for the three jailed union strike leaders; B was one of a limited number of persons al-

lowed to see the three in their cells.

B also helped raise funds for the bus trip to Pittston headquarters in Greenwich, Conn. B suggested to Bishop Heath Light of Southwestern Virginia that he and Bishop Art Walmsley might lead a delegation from the Diocesan Clergy and Spouses Conference to the coalfields. Both bishops agreed and were accompanied by 20 or so clergy and their spouses to participate in the Bible study at St. Mark's and to visit with miners on the picket lines.

B appeared in the Dickenson County Court June 27. The judge continued his case until Dec. 19, saying if there were no further charges against him, he'd drop the case.

Pansie L. Murray
Roanoke, Va.

Reporting excellent

Thank you for the excellent and disturbing reporting on the "War in the coal fields." Blessings.

Verna J. Dozier
Washington, D.C.

Coverage disappointing

I am from Wise County, Va., so I eagerly grabbed THE WITNESS issue on war in the coal fields. Michigan papers have not given much about what is going on with the UMW strike. What a disappointment. Neither did you. Eichenlaub's article gave some sense of what is happening, but the other two articles were more personal reactions than substantial information. Simpson's degenerated into the purple prose that has labeled liberals as "bleeding hearts."

You need to preface the three articles with information about the issues. Only one sentence hinted at the problem: "These miners are striking over the fact that they can't get a contract out of Pittston." Perhaps there is more to it than that. Perhaps the UMW cannot get a sat-

isfactory contract. I doubt if Pittston has refused to offer any contract at all. Also, your writers seem indignant that pay and health benefits cease when a union goes on strike. That is a fairly common occurrence in strikes. Why should it be different in this situation? You need to state your position on the issues more clearly.

Nancy Hummel
Dearborn, Mich.

(We tried to set forth the issues and our position on them in the July-August Editorial page, which prefaced the articles. If doubt remains, we are carrying an update on the strike and re-confirming our support for the striking miners in this issue. See page 5. — Ed.)

No caped crusader

Thank you for the July/August WITNESS, and for being there for the folks in southwest Virginia. If justice is to be done it will be because mainstream America can understand what this struggle is about and know that this is a movement with origins in the working class of the Appalachian region. We who are solidly entrenched in middle-class America need to know that we are not the authors of this story nor are we the leading actors. We are called to be servants and not get in the way of one of the most powerful political statements to come out of that region in nearly a quarter of a century.

I think that in many ways your issue was right on in getting that message across.

However, I am distressed and embarrassed by the piece entitled "From Bible study to civil disobedience." I am portrayed as the caped crusader wheeling in by batmobile and saving all those poor helpless folks in southwest Virginia. Such a portrayal discounts the stories of folks who live in the coal fields. The community of St. Mark's and the Bible study group from that parish were there before I came and will be there long af-

ter this sojourner has gone home.

All too often, the mainstream church has assumed that there is a need to be missionaries to the oppressed, whether in Appalachia or some other Third World area. The story on the Bible study group perpetuates that pernicious mythology about the Appalachian region. It is also factually inaccurate, but the most distressing thing about the story is that it gives the false impression that somehow only people from outside the region can make a difference. That is unfortunate because it puts an inaccurate spin on an otherwise very informative issue of THE WITNESS.

The real story of St. Mark's Bible study group is that it has empowered all of us to be a community, nourishing each other and lifting one another up. It was for me a place where my sisters and brothers took seriously *Matt. 25*: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" and by that act made me a stranger no more.

Uncas McThenia
Lexington, Va.

Eichenlaub responds

My story, "From Bible study to civil disobedience," as edited for space restrictions may appear to support McThenia's contentions.

What I discovered on my trip to southwestern Virginia and wrote about reflected the fact that all of the events reported on came out of the group workings of the St. Mark's Bible study group.

McThenia's name is prominent only because he had the time and it was his job as a Jubilee intern to serve the Episcopal community of St. Mark's and Southwestern Virginia.

Frank Eichenlaub
Redford, Mich.

Octogenarian writes

I cribbed from your July-August WITNESS some statistics to write a letter to the editor of the *Anchorage Daily News*

about the Pittston Coal strike. What a good magazine. I've ordered a subscription for a friend. I'm glad I found you.

I am 80 years old, a member of the State Commission on Aging. I'm the granddaughter of a lady who, with her husband and nine girls and two boys homesteaded in Kansas and believed in women ministers. She and her husband were hot against slavery and Grandpa fought in the Civil War. The slaves got to vote, but Grandma and her nine daughters could not.

Mellie Terwilliger
Tok, Alaska

First and last

This is the first, and doubtless the last letter I will write to THE WITNESS. I only want to correct a mis-statement by Jan Nunley in the July/August WITNESS. First, I am not "of the Prayer Book Society," and not even of the Evangelical Catholic Mission. I was at the Synod solely on my own, as a "fellow-traveller," a term you will comprehend. And second, I don't recall "sniffing" — but if I did, they were residual tears about the same things you consider your greatest triumph.

The Rev. William H. Ralston, Jr.
Savannah, Ga.

Direct quote

I would like to correct the version of my remarks at the Fort Worth Synod which appeared in your July/August issue ("ESA says 'weed 'em and reap'").

I said: "If we are not willing to admit that [in the matter of remarriage of divorced persons with a previous partner living] we have changed a dominical injunction — and that is what we have done, even if for good reasons — then we ought not to tell our Lord what we think he ought to have said about all the other sexual issues which he never addressed." I read this from a note which I still possess.

Incidentally, my name in religion is John-Charles, all one, as the hyphen suggests. 'Charles' is not my surname.

John-Charles, S.S.F., Bishop
St. Elizabeth's Friary
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Nunley responds

William H. Ralston, Jr. was listed as a representative of the Prayer Book Society in press materials provided by William Murchison, press director for the Synod and ECM. Perhaps the right hand knoweth not what the other right hand doeth.

While I paraphrased Bishop John-Charles, I am hardpressed to understand what interpretation other than that of homosexual unions could be understood from his particular phrasing. If there is another, perhaps he would clarify this for all the church.

Jan Nunley
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.

More fun now?

I'm enclosing another donation for your yearly fundraising effort because you say that it is running low this year. I can remember the time a number of years ago when I felt THE WITNESS was too tame and when I didn't contribute. Either I'm mellowing or you folk are becoming more fun.

John Kavanaugh
Detroit, Mich.

Belles lettres

In the last few months, you seem to have developed a regular feature out of Letters to the Editor about why people cancel their subscriptions to THE WITNESS. This feature is becoming one of the most enjoyable in the magazine.

One letter in the July/August issue was a classic. You were told you should run

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THE WITNESS

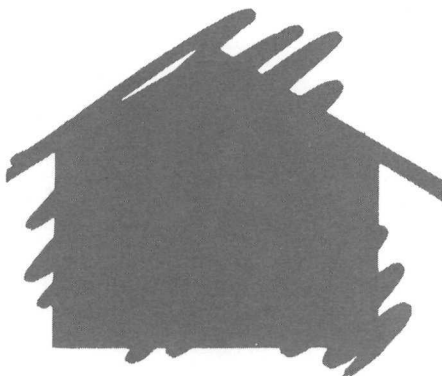


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A stand for justice in the coal fields

THE WITNESS is proud to stand with more than 240 religious leaders who signed an ecumenical statement supporting the United Mine Workers in their strike against the Pittston Company. The declaration, which was endorsed by eight national heads of religious denominations and 54 bishops, was made public at a march and rally in Abingdon, Va. Sept. 9. Fifteen Episcopal bishops were among the signers. The Commission on Religion on Appalachia and its Episcopal member group, Appalachian Peoples' Service Organization (APSO) have been active in gathering signatures.

The rally was another sign of growing support in church communities for the suffering of miners and their families in the months-long strike which has brought visits to the coal fields from Jesse Jackson and Cesar Chavez, among others. THE WITNESS devoted its July/

August issue to stories about the coal strike.

Unions across the country have also sent delegations to Appalachia. Most recently 700 United Auto Workers from Detroit organized a car caravan to Southwest Virginia and presented a check for \$100,000 to show solidarity.

Key issues center on health benefits and pensions for retirees, and job security. Pittston has been accused of union busting in its attempt to sub-contract with non-union personnel, posing a "do or die" situation for the UMW. Many believe that the PATCO traffic controllers' experience, the Eastern strike, and the current conflict are examples of an intentional effort to disorganize organized labor, portending a modern-day class warfare of a magnitude similar to the Civil Rights struggle of the '60s.

The recent ecumenical statement sums up the present UMW situation:

As leaders of diverse religious traditions from the Appalachian region and the wider national community, we have watched with great concern the strike of the United Mine Workers against the Pittston Company.

In the early weeks of the strike, many religious leaders pledged their support to the UMW in its nonviolent struggle to secure a just settlement with the Pittston Company. Now the strike is more than four months old. Lost wages, lost health care benefits and community divisions increase the toll of human suffering with each passing week. Among many in the coalfields, this continued suffering has led to deep frustration and despair, increasing the potential for violence. Yet in spite of this frustration the miners, their families and neighbors have remained steadfast in their struggle.

It is at this critical juncture that we recommit ourselves to the miners and their legitimate representative, the UMW. We strongly affirm their demon-

strated commitment to nonviolence. We call upon all people of faith to support and nurture that commitment.

Our spiritual traditions recognize the rights of workers and impel us to support the vulnerable. The churches support of workers' rights does not automatically translate into support of a particular union in a specific dispute. In this strike, however, the actions of all involved have made it clear to us that the miners represent the vulnerable party not only in the relationship with Pittston, but in relation to the courts and the power of the State as well.

Among the relevant considerations:

- The union has led the struggle to raise living standards, improve mine safety, and secure benefits for retirees and widows. The history of the mines prior to unionization was one of frightening injustice.

- The UMW successfully negotiated a contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association that provides re-

duced labor costs in return for job security provisions. After the Pittston Company refused to accept this contract, the UMW worked an unprecedented 14 months without a contract before calling a strike.

- On Feb. 1, 1988, 14 months prior to this strike, the Pittston Company cut off health coverage to retirees, widows and disabled miners even though they had been guaranteed health benefits for life through prior contracts. In early June, the Pittston Company offered renewed health coverage to its retirees; however, the offer substantially reduces benefits while increasing costs for the retirees who are on largely fixed incomes.

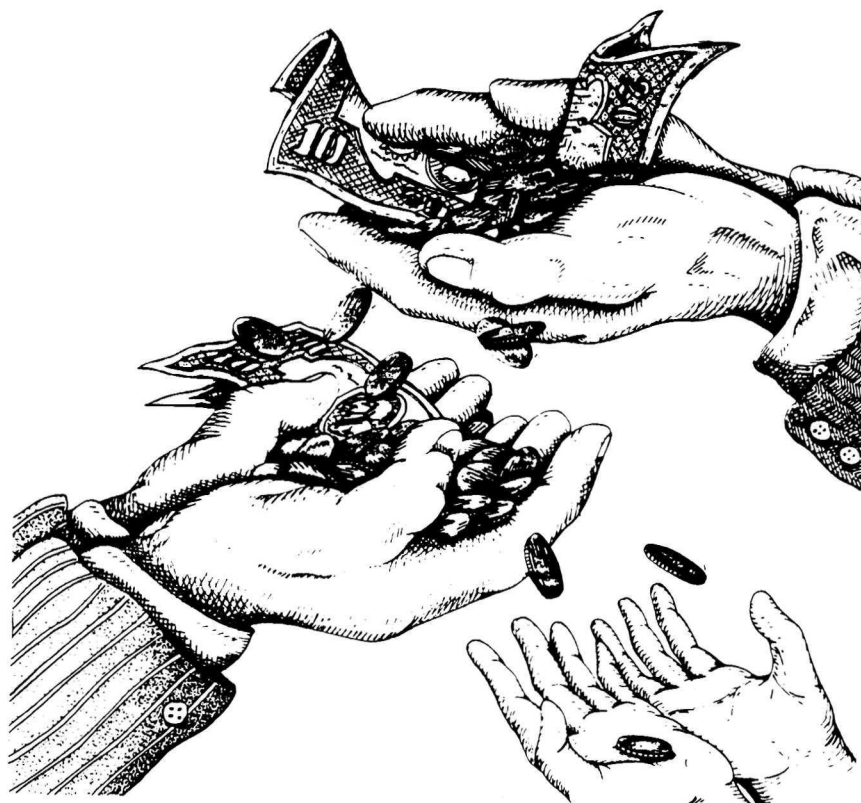
- The Pittston Company appears to be attempting to undermine the workers' union by transferring coal reserves to non-union subsidiaries and by demanding the right to subcontract many coal operations to non-union entities.

- Although there have been incidences

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Activists salvage S&L ‘bailout’

by John H. Burt



This past summer, the U.S. Congress passed landmark legislation designed to save hundreds of failing banks across the country. By the time President Bush had signed the \$166 billion Savings and Loan “bailout” bill into law on August 9, one of the most powerful business lobbies in the nation, the U.S. League of Savings Institutions, had been administered a drubbing at the hands of a coalition of poor people and some liberal religious groups.

The Rt. Rev. John H. Burt, retired Bishop of Ohio, is a member of the Urban Bishops Coalition and serves on the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

ACORN (the Associated Community Organizations for Reform Now) was a principal reason for the defeat. This enterprise is presently the largest low income membership organization in the country with a roster of over 75,000 black, white and Latino families in 26 states.

“When we started making our proposals for S&L reform, we felt a lot like David taking on Goliath,” recalls Brian Maney, Washington ACORN staff member. To achieve victory, ACORN had organized grass roots people in all parts of the nation. Among other things, ACORN helped create the Financial Democracy Campaign (FDC), a coalition of

over 200 civic, religious, labor and business organizations (including the Urban Bishops Coalition of the Episcopal Church). ACORN then went on to mobilize District of Columbia-based housing and civil rights organizations as well as the AFL-CIO to give active support to their agenda. Soon organizations such as the NAACP, SCLC and the Urban League came aboard.

The purpose of their combined effort was to insist that the emerging S&L bailout legislation, in addition to protecting depositors, must reflect some serious renewed commitment to affordable home ownership in the United States. ACORN also argued — unsuccessfully — that the government should not soak all taxpayers to pay for the follies of certain irresponsible S&L institutions. ACORN felt the cost of the bailout should be borne chiefly by the people who benefited most from the climate of high interest rates and deregulation which helped cause the crisis in the first place.

Last February when President Bush first issued his plan for S&L reform, he called it “the fairest system that the best minds in this administration can come up with.” Yet not one word in his proposal referred to the national housing crisis — the very dilemma that S&Ls were created to solve. ACORN and their FDC partners felt that the original Bush plan ignored most of the basic problems torpedoing the thrift industry. The plan did nothing about the large number of S&Ls hiding their insolvency with book-keeping tricks, nor did it try to get deposit insurance out of the bailout business and restore it to its original purpose of protecting small investors. And it did not open financial institutions and their regulators to public scrutiny and participation. Indeed, the ACORN-FDC coalition predicted that the result of the Bush plan unamended would likely increase concentration of ownership in the financial service industry, with large institutions swallowing up small-town savings

and loans.

ACORN and the FDC did not see all of their proposals accepted in the legislation. Opposition to their reforms was formidable. The attitude of Senator Phil Gramm of Texas was typical of many in Congress who tried to derail what the *New York Times* called “a new populist movement.” He denounced supporters of the affordable housing measures as promoters of “cut-rate financing who are out to make the taxpayers pay for a multibillion dollar slush fund for housing subsidies.” These self-serving groups, he railed, “will grab the plum properties,

“The bad news is that the amendment which would have taxed the rich more heavily to pay for the bailout failed . . . The good news is that the bill’s affordable housing program now guarantees low and moderate-income consumers a stake in the S&L bailout process.”

leaving the taxpayer with the pits.”

Despite such opposition, ACORN and the coalition won three sweet victories which, if honored in practice, should certainly make a difference to millions of low and modest-income Americans. These include:

1. An Affordable Housing/Cash Advance provision which requires that a percentage of the profits of Federal Home Loan District Banks be used for \$7 billion worth of loans to developers of low and moderate-income housing and first-time home buyers. This proposal was strongly opposed by the S&L lobby and squeaked by in the House of Representatives with a margin of only two votes. Though opposed by a major-

ity in the Senate, it miraculously survived again in the House/Senate Conference Committee compromise and was in the final bill which the President signed, despite the fact that he was strongly against it and had threatened at one point to veto the entire measure.

2. An Anti-Redlining Amendment that obligates public disclosure of the Community Investment Act ratings of all banks and S&Ls and, in addition, expands the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act to require banks to supply information not only on loans made but also on loan *applications* as well. Information about the race, gender and income level of every applicant is to be made available for public scrutiny.

3. An Asset Disposition provision which gives non-profit housing developers the right of first refusal on residential properties acquired by the government when it takes over insolvent S&Ls, and provides for below-market financing to enable non-profit enterprises (including churches) to purchase these properties.

ACORN’s only serious loss during their lobbying effort was a proposed Kennedy-Morrison amendment that would have taxed the rich more heavily to pay for the bailout. That amendment, however, never made it out of the Rules Committee. So the average taxpayer will still have to pick up the tab for a disaster that neither he nor she created.

The good news is that the bill’s affordable housing program now guarantees low and moderate-income consumers a stake in the S&L bailout process. As a result, in the coming decade this could mean assistance in financing \$2.5 to \$5 billion worth of affordable housing each year.

During the next four years, federal home-loan banks across the country will have to set aside \$50 million each year for rate-reduction subsidies on mortgages for low and moderate-income housing. From 1995 on, the banks will have to set aside \$100 million a year.

These loans will be available through local S&Ls working with private builders, nonprofit organizations and others who sponsor affordable housing projects. Rather than paying the going rate for mortgage money, qualifying loan applicants will get subsidized mortgages — 6 to 8% for fixed-rate money in a 10% market. Subsidies like this can mean the difference between buying or not buying a house for thousands of financially pressed families.

Under the final language of the bailout bill, priority will now be given to loans for:

- Homeownership for families whose income is 80% or less of the area median income.

- Purchase or rehabilitation of housing owned or held by the U.S. government.

- Purchase or rehabilitation of housing sponsored by nonprofits, state and local governments, local housing authorities and state housing-finance agencies.

Sponsors of affordable rental housing also will be assisted in constructing, rehabilitation or purchasing rental housing, as long as at least 20% of the units are occupied by “very low-income households.”

In another key provision, lobbied for hard by ACORN and its allies, affordable-housing advocates got a foot in the door of what the *Washington Post* calls the “S&L bailout bill’s treasure trove of real estate,” the new Resolution Trust Corporation. The RTC, within hours of the President’s signature, began taking over upwards of \$100 billion worth of property from insolvent S&Ls. Its task

will be to sell these holdings, including everything from Texas condominiums to Florida resorts, at the best price. But for those single family residential properties in the RTC portfolio that are at or below Federal Housing Administration limits on value (\$67,500 in many areas, higher in others), the RTC will now have to give local public agencies and non-profit organizations a “first look” before selling to private bidders.

The Savings and Loan financial rescue — the biggest in the nation’s history — is expected to cost a minimum of \$159 billion over the next 10 years and, including interest, at least \$285 billion or more over 30 years, which works out to about \$1,000 for every taxpayer. By any measure, this is scandalous.

Responsibility for such a tragic mess must be laid in large measure on Reagan Administration decisions to deregulate the industry. Because of deregulation, S&Ls across the country began flirtations with investments in glitzy developments, in shopping centers that were never built, in junk bonds bought to finance leveraged buyouts, and in lavish salaries for executives. These scandals and other high-flying “miscalculations” all but wrecked public confidence in an industry that was originally formed expressly to provide access to the historic American dream — home ownership.

It will take years to undo all the damage and restore the S&L system to honesty, solvency and public confidence. But the recent lobbying efforts of ACORN and FDC did seize the rare chance this crisis offered to restructure the way high finance does business and restore some much-needed public priorities in the financial industry. It has also helped rebuild some fresh assurance that depositors’ savings are protected and that such a calamity as the bailout need not happen again — if, that is, the public takes advantage constantly of the consumer policing provisions that are now part of our banking law.

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 Councillor 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

Power and the future of cities

The future of cities in the industrial belt depends to some degree on our ability to pierce the definitions of the fiscal crises that have paralyzed us, to resist the cuts in our services and facilities and jobs, and to exert the not inconsiderable force of an aroused people. Having recognized the large role that government action has played in determining our fate, the question will be, in whose interests will government act in the future? And that in turn will depend on how forcefully the people of the cities push their interests and demand their due, on the platforms, at the polls, and in the streets.

Frances Fox Piven
THE WITNESS 9/82

After death your hair and fingernails keep growing, but the phone calls taper off.
— Johnny Carson

Nurturing hope

We do have hope, and we have to keep nurturing one another's hope, even if we have different strategies. My own belief is that what we do makes a difference although not the kind of difference that we can always see. If it makes no difference whatsoever in the things we do in the struggle for justice — no difference in the ultimate movement toward the realm of God — then it is just a game.

Life is a lot like driving a car in the fog. Your headlights only show up the next 10 feet, but that's all you really need to see. If you drive the next 10 feet, then your lights will show up another 10 feet. I'm a real believer in seeing the next step. We don't have to see the whole thing, we'll just stand still. But if we see the next step only, then is it possible to see the next one? We have to believe that in taking this one, the next will open up. Everything depends on our being faithful to the next step, however great or small it may seem to be.

Christian ethicist Margaret Farley
Trinity News 1989



Do not be indifferent to anyone's problems. Make the sufferings and humiliations of all your brothers and sisters your own. Live on a global scale, or better still, take the whole universe.

Dom Helder Camara

NOW march set Nov. 12

THE WITNESS magazine will be among those groups sponsoring NOW's Mobilize for Women's Lives march Nov. 12 in Washington, D.C. from noon until 4:30 p.m. The goal is to let the Supreme Court, President Bush and Congress know that the majority of Americans will not tolerate the dismantling of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and that abortion must be kept safe, legal, and funded.

Nov. 13 has also been designated National Training/Lobby day in D.C.

While THE WITNESS will not sponsor a delegation as such, readers are asked to march with their local delegations. For further information: NOW Center, 1000 Sixteenth St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Bush drug program unreal

President Bush's plan (for drug enforcement) pays no attention to the economic and social roots of the drug crisis. Instead, \$7 billion earmarked for the "new war," nationally and internationally, is allocated to law enforcement — "more jails, more police, more prosecutors and harsher penalties." The remaining 30%, allocated to prevention, education and treatment, provides so small a part of needed services that drug abuse treatment providers have called the plan laughable . . . The same President who recently vetoed minimum wage increases fails to recognize the connection between drug abuse and the desperation caused by poverty, unemployment and lack of hope.

The Bush plan continues Reagan's fund-slashing by taking money from already crippled social and economic programs to pay for the anti-drug crusade. The plan proposes cuts in juvenile justice programs, public housing, and assistance to immigrants — all programs of particular benefit to people of color and to the poor.

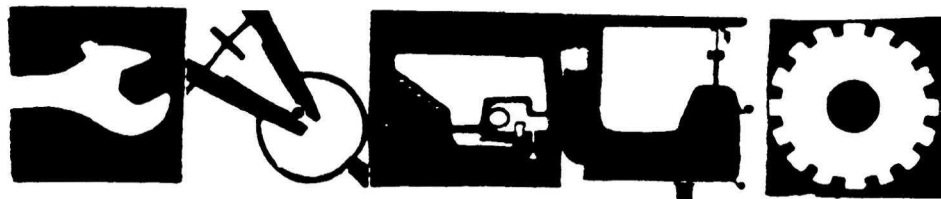
Linda Thurston
AFSC Penitentiary Project

One camel does not make fun of another camel's hump.
— Guinean proverb

U.S. role in drug war

Despite several publicized sting operations, little has been done to confront virtually institutionalized drug money laundering in the United States, which provides a profit haven for drug traffickers. Moreover, 95% of all precursor chemicals used in cocaine production come from U.S. companies. In both cases, appropriate legislation exists, but enforcement remains lax.

Coletta Youngers
Christian Science Monitor 9/11/89



The two faces of U.S. cities

by John V. Moeser

Not long ago, Bill Moyers introduced a series of programs on PBS entitled, "A Walk Across the Twentieth Century." The first program focused on his hometown. It was the title of that program that caught my eye. It was called, "Marshall, Texas; Marshall, Texas." As I watched the program, it became clear why. When Moyers was growing up in this town, he began to discover that two worlds existed side by side — one white and one black; one much more affluent than the other. To illustrate the deep separation between these two worlds, he noted that growing up in that small town at the same time as himself was James Farmer, the founder of CORE. Yet, they did not meet each other until years later, after they left Texas and became involved in national politics.

I am convinced that Moyers could have selected any city in the United States and treated it the same way he did his hometown. Each city wears two faces, one relatively prosperous and upbeat; the other abjectly poor and despairing. A study of my home could easily be called, "Richmond, Virginia; Richmond, Virginia."

What I fear is that instead of a single city emerging with larger proportions of Americans becoming full participants in the urban economy and political system,

there are two cities drifting farther and farther apart with the life of one seldom impinging on the other.

I want to take up here some of the historical forces contributing to this bifurcated urban society.

In an effort to encapsulate population change in the United States, I suggest that, insofar as urban growth is concerned, there have been three important trends. The first trend is urbanization. From 1800 to the Second World War, people moved to urban areas in search of jobs. Ironically, initial efforts to industrialize were directed at an agricultural economy. The manufacturing of farm machinery created jobs in cities and threw farm labor out of work as a result of the mechanization of agriculture. The direction of population change was basically from South to North because the northern manufacturing belt captured most of the growth.

The second trend — suburbanization — can be traced from World War II to about the mid-1970s. Population in central cities was declining and suburban growth was exploding. However, the vast majority of suburbanites still worked in the central city, and suburbs were essentially bedroom communities.

Also, during the post-World War II years, metropolitan areas were becoming increasingly segregated along both racial and class lines. Seldom could middle-class black families take advantage of FHA loans for new housing located in white suburban neighborhoods. Most of

the public housing was concentrated in the central cities. The phenomena of the two housing programs, therefore, reinforced the racial and class distinctions between city and suburb. More and more, there were two worlds, the booming and affluent suburbs and the declining and poor core city. Generally speaking, the suburbanization trend led to a bifurcated society. Finally, during this second period, the move from the South to the North continued. Black migration out of the South was heavy after World War II.

The third trend is the most recent, first emerging in the mid-1970s. It was during this third period that, momentarily, urbanization came to a halt. The reason was that rural growth began to exceed urban growth. Scores of newspaper and magazine articles focused on the back-to-the-country movement. Small towns began to grow. Professionals living in large cities and suburban areas began to worry over the congestion and the hurry of urban life. In retrospect, this so-called rural renaissance was much ado about nothing, because large chunks of rural America were still faced with population losses. The rural growth areas were located just outside the suburbs surrounding the nation's largest cities. These areas are known as the "exurbs." I call this third trend "exurbanization." Between 1970 and 1980, the fastest growing areas in the United States were the exurbs. Their population expanded 46% in that 10-year period, contrasted with 32% for

Dr. John V. Moeser is Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Virginia Commonwealth University. Portions of this article appeared earlier in *Richmond Lifestyle*.

suburban areas and a 5% decline for central cities

What is contributing to such significant exurban growth is the development of office parks. Attracted to the large tracts of undeveloped land, low taxes, and availability of water and transportation routes, businesses and industries are locating farther and farther away from the city center. Residential development soon follows and the result is that people can live close to work. In the 19th century, cities were compact and people lived within walking distance to everything they needed, which historians refer to as the "walking city." Now what we are beginning to see is the development

of a new urban form — the "walking exurb." People still commute to the city for work, but increasingly people are commuting across suburban/exurban lines without ever setting foot into the city. As intersuburban or interexurban commuting becomes more pronounced, the ties connecting the city to the region beyond may begin to dissolve. If this happens, the city is in trouble. Ever since cities began losing population, they began to lose political clout, particularly in state legislatures. Sometimes, however, the city could rely on commuting ties to compensate for lost political power in the state assemblies. But what will happen as fewer and fewer people commute

to the city for work?

Interestingly, during this exurbanization phase, another demographic trend took root — gentrification. During the early '70s, younger professional, single people and childless couples began to move to the central city. The downtown corporate economy provided employment opportunities for a highly educated work force which often sought housing in nearby neighborhoods. This movement was reinforced by the 1973-74 oil embargo when rising energy prices caused some Americans to consider the amenities and economies of city living. Quickly, older houses were renovated,

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The phenomenon of urbanization



During most of our history as a nation, we have experienced urbanization. The first census taken in 1790 indicated that about 5% of the population resided in urban areas, and 95% in non-urban areas. By 1820, the urban proportion had increased slightly to a little over 7%. But between 1820 and 1870, the urbanization rate tripled, so that by 1870, 25% were urbanized. Of course, this was due to the industrial revolution.

By 1920, half of the U.S. population resided in urban areas, and presently, about 75% is urban.

In the Western experience, increases in urbanization have always been associated with industrialization. This is in marked contrast to what is happening in much of the Third World. There, industrialization is lagging behind urbanization. Also, the rate of urbanization in the Third World is not as great as some demographers were predicting only because the rapid increase in urban populations is matched with large increases in rural populations as well. Still, the growth of cities in the developing nations is staggering.

While urban population in the Western world increased 275% in the past 50 years, in the Third World it increased 675%.

In 1920, the Third World's urban population represented 25% of the total urban population in the world; by 1980, about 50% of the world's urban population was concentrated in the developing countries; by 2025 it is projected that 76% will be found in the Third World.

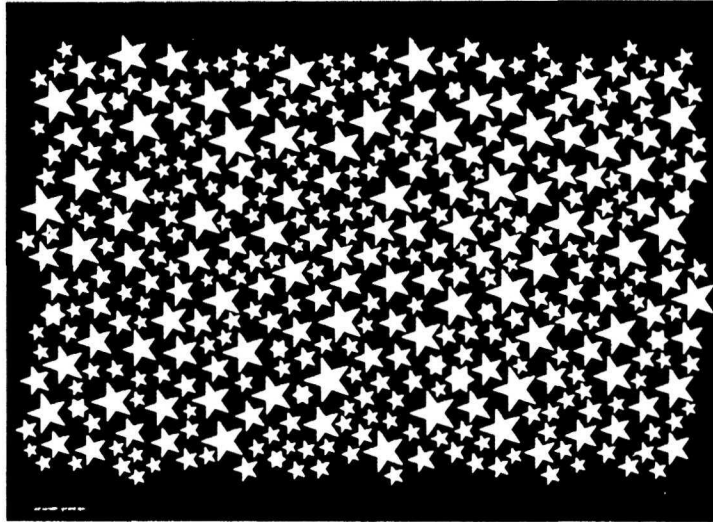
Currently, the three largest cities in the world are not Western cities, but cities located in Asia and Latin America. Tokyo heads the list, with 17 million, followed by Mexico City and Sao Paulo, each with 16 million.

New York has 15 million people. Mexico City is expected to have 37 million people by the year 2025. Only 12 years from now, London, which was the second largest city in the world in 1950, will not even be in the top 25. The largest cities will be located in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. What is most distressing is that the largest urban growth rates are recorded most often in those countries with the lowest levels of economic development. — J.V.M.

Science, science fiction, and religion:

The theology of imagination

by Parker Rossman



In each generation, theology is influenced by the dominant philosophy of the time. So our minds are likely to be stretched a bit by the provocative opinion of Marvin Minsky. Minsky, a computer genius at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, says that when the intellectual history of the 20th century is written, science fiction writers will be considered our greatest philosophers — instead of the existentialists, linguists, analysts, or other academic types. A recent book review in *The New York Times* discussing the imaginative science fiction of Ursula K. LeGuin makes essentially the same point.

Science fiction seems to be asking the great questions of our time. Because the minds of our academic philosophers in the universities are not soaring to the

heights which a space age calls for, says Minsky, they are failing to stimulate our imaginations with immense visions the way science fiction does.

In Garrett Green's charming book, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination*, Green sees "faithful imagination" as the point where God communicates with and inspires human beings. Religion, like science, is reshaped from time to time by a new paradigm — for example, shifting from a model of a flat world to a round one. Our "religious vision of 'what the world is like' is embodied in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments," Green says.

The word *heart* in the Bible — "love God with all your heart" and "blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" — should be understood as "imagination," according to Green. It is a creative sort of imagination that can envision a more truly Christian future

Parker Rossman, a widely-published freelance writer and author of numerous books, lives in Connecticut.

for the world and for each of us. In the Christian drama, Green says, God seeks to capture the imagination of the faithful to inspire us, to set our hearts and minds on fire.

We can stretch our minds a bit more by reading the Russian philosopher Berdayaev, who said: "God did not send Christ to help us to be 'good' in the moral sense, so much as to help us to be more creative." True goodness — as well as justice — requires creative imagination to conceive of and empower a better future.

Scientists and science fiction writers are increasingly asking religious questions. Scientists are admitting that their great discoveries, like religious experiences, came through inspiration, flashes of creative insight, and faithful imagination. The scientist seeks to be faithful to science as the theologian seeks to be faithful to God.

Madeline L'Engle, noted Episcopalian novelist, theologian and science fiction writer, ponders how religion and science view the universe in her book, *A Stone for a Pillow: Journeys with Jacob*. In one of the essays in this collection, she notes that certain concepts of theology seem to parallel those of scientific theory (see box).

The late theologian Richard Niebuhr may well have been right when he said that the next great era in theology would come in dialogue with the sciences. Organizations and institutions like the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton have emerged to explore the possibilities of such dialogue. However, there is a great shortage of theologians with an adequate imagination and foundation in science.

It may be easier for scientists to do some theology. Groups like the Order of the Academy of Christ, based in England, seek to recruit young scientists with imagination who will be faithful to both God and the scientific method. Computer specialist Jenny Day

is among those in the order seeking to put their imagination to work in a quest for a theology based on a contemporary philosophy of science. She has helped form a Christian education program for children which is rooted in science fiction and wonders if some congregations could become science-fiction exploring communities, or "think-tanks."

Another is Anglican Brother Richard Kirby, an interdisciplinary scholar with a brilliant and fascinating mind and an intense Christian commitment. He puzzles, bewilders and irritates many people because of the way his mind moves quickly from discipline to disci-

"Scientists and science fiction writers are increasingly asking religious questions. Scientists are admitting that their great discoveries, like religious experiences, came through inspiration, flashes of creative insight, and faithful imagination."

pline, idea to idea, dream to dream. He has edited a book entitled *The Significance of Science Fiction* and organized groups and conferences around that theme.

Science fiction, Kirby finds, is "a serious part of human culture, science, intellectual life, philosophy, religion . . ." and is central to the culture of the younger generation. As universal language and myth of the 20th century, science fiction embodies the hopes and fears of youth worldwide.

The Mission to Mysticism, another book of Kirby's, lists what 14 scholars found to be the "spiritual aphorisms" of science fiction:

Science fiction is part of the contemporary search for the human

soul . . . it is a vehicle for spiritual development . . . bestows the peak experience of awe and wonder . . . seeks a new reality with a consciousness . . . it is the modern heir of romanticism, poetry, and mysticism . . . it remythologizes the Bible . . . stands at the perimeter of all human knowledge, bringing together science, religion, art, philosophy, and much more . . . stands on the threshold of infinity . . . is the conscience of science, its advance guard . . . is a laboratory of the imagination, of creativity, or problem-solving . . . explores human character and personality in new dimensions.

Kirby points out that science fiction, like all art and literature, can be employed crudely, its genius exploited. What then should be the Christian response and involvement towards the millions of young Christians who read and are influenced, even seduced, by science fiction?

Kirby insists that our response not be negative, because Christians are already present in this world of science fiction as readers, viewers, writers and interpreters.

Ian Gibson, an aspiring young British science fiction writer, said in an interview that he would like to make a Christian witness in the science fiction world. Science fiction, said Gibson, is "able to create more powerful images and therefore can give us a clearer picture of the purpose which God has intended for us. It can also give us a greater understanding of the enormity of God's creation [and] serve the purpose of guiding humankind, by showing the different paths which we can take into the future."

When asked if there was room for Christ in the galactic adulthood of humanity, Gibson replied, "Humankind has already reached out into space and

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particularly those in more historic sections of cities, and, just as quickly, housing values in these neighborhoods began to skyrocket.

As neighborhoods gentrified, longtime residents of these areas, many living on fixed incomes, no longer could afford the rents or property taxes and were forced to leave. Urban analysts at first viewed gentrification as a godsend to cities but soon saw that while gentrification was good for the tax base, it wasn't good for low and moderate income populations living in those neighborhoods. Moreover, the movement into the city of younger professionals was not counterbalancing the movement of middle-class families out of the city. Cities were still caught with a net loss. Gentrification simply slowed the rate of decline.

About the time that gentrification began to set in, cities also began to see attention given to downtown renewal. Interest turned to the excitement of central business districts and city waterfronts and harbors. Festival marketplaces, street fairs, concerts, art and crafts exhibits, ethnic celebrations, and a host of other events, programs, and building projects, including new office buildings, restaurants, and high cost housing units — all of these undertakings have given new life to the city. Perhaps some Americans were beginning to realize what Europeans have known for centuries — that cities were the heart of civilization; that, as Lewis Mumford once said, "mind takes form in the city."

Yet, in spite of all this attention, our cities remain deeply troubled. The most troubling fact of all is that in the midst of urban renaissance, all the hoopla over downtown rejuvenation and festival marketplaces, there is a growing segment of our city populations which is desperately poor. This is the second face of urban America.

Public choice economists can extol the

virtues of the private market and how all of the many governments within a single metropolitan area produce competition and how competition contributes to more efficiency and higher quality services. Doubtless, governments are in competition with each other. But public economists seldom address the immobile Americans, the millions who cannot afford to move, and are trapped in a cycle of poverty and confined to an inner city ghetto. They have no choice but to take whatever is available, even if that is an abandoned house with no plumbing, heat



or electricity. And then there are the mobile — those with no neighborhood at all; who roam the streets in a constant search for warmth and food, in a mobility born out of a struggle to survive.

This notion of cities having two faces is reflected in a recent report of the National Housing Task Force, which was established by Congress to reexamine national housing policy. The 26 members of the Task Force, who were drawn from business, banking, community service organizations, and state/local government, noted that the 1949 Housing Act called for a decent home for ev-

ery American family. They observed that, not only have we as a nation fallen short of that goal, but we are losing ground. The report points to the growing numbers who are:

. . . huddled on grates or wrapped in cardboard boxes — the "homeless." Mothers, fathers and children. . . forced to the streets — the "new homeless." And the families who owe rent they cannot afford and may not be able to pay . . . the "near homeless."

With shrinking federal assistance over the past 10 years, the loss of political clout in the state legislature, and a shaky tax base, many American cities today are hard pressed to address issues of substandard housing, deteriorating neighborhoods, and a host of other critical concerns. Public/private partnerships have developed out of necessity and while such ventures can be potentially very positive, the primary beneficiaries, it seems, are most often private businesses. The public interest somehow gets lost.

Currently, another major obstacle found in cities is that instead of a sense of overall community, there is a plurality of communities, one for the race, one for the class, one for the elderly, one for the transients, and so on. Also, as urban societies become more complex, urban institutions become more differentiated. Loyalties are directed to particular institutions or groups, seldom to the larger community. Often these sub-loyalties are shaped by economic necessity or by prejudice and discrimination. Exclusion rather than inclusion is the norm. Less by choice than by lack of choice, large groups of people may live in the middle of the city, but not participate in the mainstream of life.

The ethical response to our problems today involves merging the goals of self-fulfillment with public consciousness. Nothing less than a fundamental alteration of attitudes is required, but such a

change is difficult, given the rampant materialism of our time, which evaluates personal worth in terms of buying power, which measures personal fulfillment in terms of economic gain, which diverts attention from human suffering to self-sufficiency, and which sustains the sub-loyalties in a city to the benefit of the rich and the detriment of the poor.

I do not believe that people acquire a new perspective or develop vision by willing it so. Vision requires a change of

personal values which, in turn, are reflected in a re-thinking and re-shaping of social structures and institutions. The church has much to say about personal and social change. The Gospel is all about such change. The life of Jesus is a powerful testimony of God's love for the individual and the community. Had Bill Moyers developed a program called, "A Walk Across the First Century," I suspect the first installment could well have been entitled, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem." It

was the city of Passover and palm leaves, but also the city of suffering and crucifixion. We hear Jesus' lamentation, "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together," but we also hear God's declaration, cast in the image of a city: "Behold, the dwelling of God is with all humanity and God will dwell with them and they shall be God's people and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more." **TW**

Genocide

The nation which nearly destroyed the original population of our continent and imported millions of slaves to toil without pay or human status in its fields of cotton and sugar cane, now unheedingly completes the genocide of its poor and minority citizens with the birth of thousands of drug and alcohol affected babies.

This new generation of Americans will never be able to dream or to plan for the future or even for tomorrow, to complete high school or to earn more than the sub-marginal minimum wage, to balance a budget or a checkbook, to appreciate the beauty of a sunset, wonder at the stars, or participate in a mutually caring relationship.

Many of those who survive to adulthood, lacking the ability to develop a conscience or to act except on immediate impulse, to understand the meaning of such concepts as loving commitment, life and death, will become tomorrow's abuse victims, suicides, and criminals against the intrusion of whom more fortunate citizens will erect chain fences and install guard dogs.

In my state of Oregon
which is still struggling to recover

from the crippling Federal budget cuts of Reagan's eighties, it is estimated that one in every ten children born last year was affected by drugs, alcohol, or both; yet no arrangements exist for the screening or reporting of Crack or FAS/E babies, and almost none for the care of their addicted expectant mothers.

As the years pass, these children will require ongoing care and multiple special services which already overburdened agencies and school systems are totally unprepared to provide.

Meanwhile, Congress continues to appropriate billions of taxpayers' dollars for Star Wars, Stealth, and new super secret spy satellites — but few, if any, for health care, affordable housing, or treatment programs.

Truly, we are evolving on the fast track into a two-tier society composed of the affluent and of an underclass which will increasingly be unable to meet those criteria by which human life has always been defined.

Mary Jane Brewster

Part II

Nicaragua: A people longing for peace

by Ann Robb Smith

“**B**ienvenido a la Patria de Sandino” proclaimed the red letter sign that hung across the balcony at the entrance to the airport in Nicaragua.

Coming into Nicaragua from El Salvador this summer was like coming into light after darkness, into dawn after a long and scary night. It had been tense in El Salvador — a country struggling under the control of a repressive alliance of the right-wing political party, ARENA, and the military. Heavily armed soldiers were stationed on almost every street corner and convoys of trucks and jeeps went by constantly with sirens screaming. We had been given instructions by our guides from the Center for Global Education not to drink the tap water because it was polluted, not to go out at night and not to mention the names of the people we interviewed for fear of bringing threats, arrests or even possible assassination upon them. We were under constant surveillance; our personal belongings were searched. We heard gunfire almost every night.

In Nicaragua, the atmosphere was completely different. It was open, friendly, relaxed. Few soldiers were around. People spoke freely. We could report their names and take their pictures. The tap water was pure.

The city streets were safe at night. One evening several of us went to Benjamin Linder Park to swing on the swings. Children played on the grass and

lovers embraced on park benches. Instead of gunfire, we heard music and people laughing.

We were somewhat apprehensive because as U.S. citizens, we could be perceived as supporting the Contra war and therefore not welcome. But that was not the case. Everywhere we went we were greeted graciously and with kindness and hospitality by friendly people. Why then, has our country waged such unrelenting war against them?

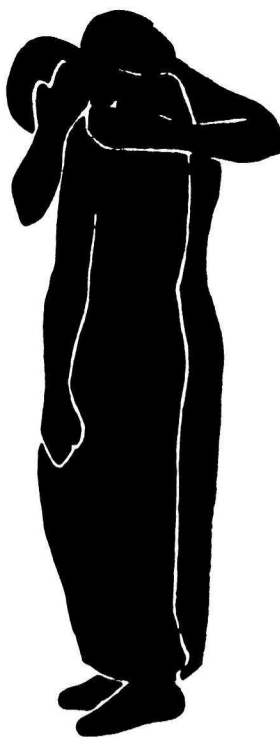
I was surprised to see that Managua was more like a small town than a city. A large part of Managua has not been rebuilt since the devastating 1972 earthquake. Driving in from the airport we

passed empty fields overgrown with weeds, where buildings had once stood. Deserted streets led to nowhere. The cathedral stood in ruins, its roof open to the sky, only the massive walls and pillars remaining. The marble altar was covered with rubble.

There were no skyscrapers in Managua. The Intercontinental Hotel, the old National Palace and the building housing the National Assembly and government offices were the only buildings over two stories tall. The factories we passed were ancient-looking and rusted. The streets were wide and motor traffic was light. There seemed to be as many horse-drawn carts and wagons pulled by oxen as there were trucks or cars. There were even fewer motor vehicles in the countryside. The sight of the *campesinos* riding everywhere on their horses made me think I was on the set of an old U.S. cowboy movie. The corrals, the primitive wooden houses and the dirt streets were all reminiscent of the wild west.

What are we so afraid of? I wondered.

The vast majority of U.S. citizens are ignorant of a critical major change in U.S. warfare strategy. Past strategy was based on direct, overt military action to achieve a military victory. The new strategy — called Low-Intensity Warfare (LIW) — is multidimensional. LIW was developed as a result of the U.S. military defeat in Viet Nam. U.S. analysts decided that defeat came about because of widespread popular support for the Viet Cong. Thus, they reasoned, victory depends on winning the hearts and minds of the people rather than on military might.



Ann Robb Smith is in her final year at the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia and is a candidate for holy orders in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. She traveled to El Salvador and Nicaragua in May and June of this year.

The strategic objective of LIW is the political, rather than purely military, defeat of the enemy — victory is won by using all of the weapons of total war, which includes economic, political and psychological, as well as military ones. Because LIW is total warfare, boundaries are blurred and distinctions between civilian and military personnel disappear. As a result, civilian casualties and suffering are greatly intensified. Villages are bombed, roads and fields are mined. LIW strategy includes threats, kidnappings and assassinations of civilian enemy sympathizers.

Tactics aimed at influencing the hearts and minds of the civilian population include manipulation of the media, misinformation campaigns, the funding of opposition parties and candidates, CIA infiltration of labor unions and human rights groups and the instigation of strikes or demonstrations against the enemy government. Other tactics involve economic embargoes, blockages and diplomatic pressures.

Since the days of the Cold War, the United States has seen the world to be a confrontation between two opposing political-social systems — capitalism (or democracy) vs. communism (or totalitarianism). No distinction is made between communism and socialism. All left-leaning systems are considered communist plots to overthrow democracy and, eventually, to topple the United States.

It is imperative that the U.S. public become aware of this new strategy because it raises profound moral and ethical issues. LIW involves the manipulation and deception of the very people — U.S. citizens — in whose name and interest it is being waged. An intensive public relations campaign is underway to convince the American people that the United States is threatened by communist-inspired revolutions throughout the world. The battle for public opinion is crucial to LIW success. Strategists still

believe that “protesters” brought about the U.S. defeat in Viet Nam. The aim of the public relations campaign is to shape the world view of U.S. citizens to fit the LIW interpretation of democracy vs. communism and create the belief that the United States must be the defender of democracy throughout the world.

LIW is clearly at work in Central America — especially against Nicaragua. The United States has applied direct military action against Nicaragua, but not with U.S. troops. The U.S. has

With national elections some four months away, Nicaragua is trying to combat Low Intensity Warfare waged against it by the United States — a strategy about which most U.S. citizens remain in the dark.

funded and trained the Contras as a mercenary army.

LIW strategy aims to undermine and destroy the economy of the enemy. Ever since the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, they have faced soaring military costs, to the point where over half their budget goes to defense. Subsidizing an army that is not producing goods or crops adds fuel to the inflationary fire.

Due to the war, the U.S. economic embargo and the devastating losses resulting from Hurricane Joan in October 1988, the government has had to cut back drastically on programs for education, housing, employment, health and agricultural development.

It is ironic that the Bush administration would not impose an economic embargo upon China after the Tienanmen Square massacre out of concern for the suffering it would cause the Chinese people. Yet there is no such similar concern for the suffering wrought upon the

Nicaraguans. It is also tragic that the United States has not provided one penny of humanitarian aid to help alleviate the hardships caused by Hurricane Joan.

Agrarian reformer Ivan Garcia believes that Nicaragua has the potential to be self-sufficient and provide the nutritional necessities for its population with the development of proper technology, but the cost of the war has delayed this indefinitely. Inflation, meanwhile, in spite of the government's severe austerity measures, has skyrocketed to 20,000%!

As Ivan Garcia said, “The biggest miracle of all is that Nicaragua is still alive.”

In Managua, we met with Manolo Cordero, Director of the North American Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cordero is a thin, dark-haired man with glasses. He speaks impeccable English. He also understands U.S. strategy very well.

“This is an interesting time in Nicaragua,” he told us. “A time of transition from war towards a political opening. We hope for the end of war even though the Contras still attack. It is a bumpy road to peace.”

“Reagan wanted an ideological cause. Nicaragua was like a bone given to the U.S. right wing. The United States created the Contras and the economic blockade. This has created huge economic problems for us. It has handicapped our social programs.”

When asked about the future, Cordero answered, “There are three or four major events which have had an impact. In '87 the strategic and military threat of the Contras came to an end. They have no base among the people. The Iran-Contra scandal weakened Reagan's control. Countries such as Costa Rica and Guatemala see that they can no longer count on the United States to do whatever it wants unilaterally in Central America so they are saying, ‘We better look for

other solutions. The United States can't always do it.' And even though Bush won the election, the Democrats won Congress and Congress has gotten involved in Central America.

"The new openness and the peace initiatives by the Soviets show a breakthrough in East-West relations. It will be difficult for the United States to deal with two concepts of the Soviets. Is it still the old 'evil empire' or is it a country that makes peace treaties?"

Cordero emphasized that it was very important to end the economic embargo: "It is a matter of cost efficiency," he said. "We need spare parts and we can get them cheaper and quicker from the United States than from the Soviets. You are a natural market for us. And Secretary of State Jim Baker puts pressure on the European countries not to deal with us."

We asked him about Nicaragua's national elections in February 1990. "Bush will do everything he can to disrupt the elections," Cordero said. "He will use the opposition, especially the right wing, to discredit us. Nicaragua has an open door policy for observation by the O.A.S. and the U.N. The European Parliament will send observers too. The United States will have a hard time discrediting the elections."

There has been much talk of U.S. observer teams at the elections. Representative Sixto Ulloa of the National Assembly told us that in order for the elections in Nicaragua to be free, the United States has to stop interfering with the election process. Furthermore, Ulloa suggested, since the United States is so deeply involved, it cannot qualify as neutral or disinterested and so should not be permitted to be an official observer.

LIW strategy in the elections seems to be at two levels. On the one hand, the United States is attempting to influence the outcome by supporting and advising the opposition, while on the other hand working to discredit the elections by an-

nouncing that they will not be free or fair. This could provide the rationale for continuing the economic embargo and even the restoration of military aid to the Contras.

Vice-president Dan Quayle is an active participant in the LIW strategy to influence U.S. public opinion on the elections. He announced in June, while on his tour of Central America (which did not include Nicaragua), that the Nicaraguan elections "would be a sham."

The church in Nicaragua has become a battleground for the hearts, minds and spirit of the people. The contrast between the Roman Catholic Church's stance in El Salvador and in Nicaragua was stark and striking. In El Salvador, we saw a church that stood firmly with the poor. In Nicaragua, we saw a church divided.

One bright, sunny morning we went to the Catholic Seminary in Managua for an interview with the Rev. Anselmo Salamero. Salamero, a Spaniard, has been rector (president) of the seminary for seven years. Prior to that, he had served in a peasant community in Colombia for seven years. We asked him about the Catholic Church in Nicaragua.

"The church is divided into two parts," he told us. "One is completely identified with the Sandinista government. That is the so-called 'Popular Church.' The other is on the edge. Some of us are more opposed to the government than others. We are tolerant of the Popular priests. Most of the priests who support the government are foreigners."

When asked if the seminary included Liberation Theology in its curriculum, Salamero replied, "Liberation Theology promotes Marxist revolution which is materialistic. Marxism is atheistic. This is fundamental. Liberation Theology that deals with injustice needs to recognize that sin and injustice are always with us and liberation is for everyone — the oppressed and the oppressor. The reign of

God is not a liberated country. The reign of God is not obtained in this world."

One of our group asked Salamero, "What do you think of the concept of the 'option for the poor'?"

"It was proclaimed at Nicea that Christ came for all people, rich and poor, excluding no one," he answered. "Rather than make a preferential option for the poor, I personally would make a preferential option for the rich because they can make the changes and modify the structures. In looking for long term solutions, the poor don't count because the decisions are made by those with power and power is in the hands of the rich."

On Sunday evening we went to a celebration of the Eucharist at a Catholic church in Larreynaga. There we witnessed a Popular priest putting power into the hands of his congregation. After saying a few words to set the theme of the homily, he turned the lectern over to the congregation. Several people responded to his invitation and preached the Gospel. A small young girl, hardly able to see over the altar, prepared for the communion. The priest blessed the elements and took a seat to the side, leaving the consecrated bread and wine on the altar. The people then came up and took the body and blood of Christ themselves.

One afternoon we went to visit a sewing collective in Batahola, a public housing community built by the Sandinistas. The houses are made of cinder blocks, each with a small front porch. They looked substantial and clean. The dirt streets were swept and tidy. (All the streets are clean in Nicaragua. Paper, glass, tin — all are scarce and are saved to be used and re-used.) There were children everywhere.

A Catholic priest and sister have built Batahola into a living community organized around a large center which offers sewing, baking, typing, carpentry and music classes. Funds come from the

church in cooperation with the government, which pays the salary of one staff person. The community center has several buildings with numerous rooms for classes and workshops as well as a large auditorium with a stage.

A sewing class of about 40 women of all ages, from young girls to grandmothers, was in progress. They were measuring and cutting materials at long tables in a big, airy room. The walls throughout the center were gaily decorated with murals of people in native dress, of bright birds and flowers in vivid colors. It was a happy, cheerful place, full of chatter and laughter.

We gathered in an adjoining room to talk with several of the women, asking them, "How do you feel about the

Sandinista government?"

One of the women answered. "Our lives have changed. Women are much more valued. We participate more."

Another woman spoke. "We have more freedom now. Before, women had no rights. It is very different with this government."

A young woman said, "Before, we went from neighborhood to neighborhood, looking for a place to rent. Now we have these houses — made for the poorest."

"Our life is more difficult now," another woman said, "But before there was no war or economic blockade."

We wondered how they could survive with such high inflation and prices. Nicaraguans are creative, we were told.

They make their own clothes, plant fruit trees, raise chickens, and work two jobs whenever possible to survive.

The women wanted to know why we had come to Nicaragua. They wanted to know what U.S. citizens thought of them.

"Our government says you are communists and that you are under the control of the Soviets," we said.

"No. It isn't so," they told us. "We want to live in peace. Tell the U.S. government to stop helping the Contras. Without the interference of the United States our economy would not be ruined. We want to live in peace so our revolution can go forward."

That is the message from the women of Batahola.

U.S. administration moves to disrupt Nicaraguan elections

The Bush administration and its anti-Sandinista supporters have launched a legislative and public relations offensive to influence Nicaragua's February 1990 elections. The administration, members of Congress and U.S. Contra supporters have already condemned Nicaragua's new election reforms.

The administration wants Congress to appropriate \$3 million for the federally-financed National Endowment for Democracy to funnel campaign funds to the Nicaraguan opposition.

Plans for the elections, which were called for in the Esquipulas IV treaty signed in February of this year, are going forward despite the U.S. attempts to disrupt them. Campaigns for president, vice-president, the National Assembly and city councils began in August. Sandinista President Daniel Ortega is running for reelection against opposition candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, publisher of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, and wife

of slain Somoza foe Pedro Joaquin Chamorro.

Chamorro was chosen after much debate. Her candidacy is backed by an alliance of opposition parties — a loose coalition that contains groups from across the political spectrum.

This coalition emerged because reportedly the opposition is so fragmented that no one party has been able to show a large popular backing. And former Contra leaders do not find widespread support.

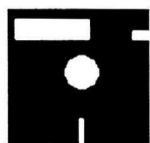
Ironically, opposition leaders are against U.S. aid. Declared Contra leader Adolfo César, who recently returned to Nicaragua, "The worst thing the U.S. government can do is to try and help in a hidden way. That would be worse than not helping at all."

Successful elections in Nicaragua are important to demonstrate the Sandinista government's commitment to democratic principles and the regional peace process. The elections would also invalidate any legitimacy for U.S. economic sanctions and

would be the final nail in the coffin for Contra aid — moves desperately needed to rebuild the Nicaraguan economy devastated by the U.S. embargo, the Contra war, and natural disasters like Hurricane Joan.

To support its effort to carry out a credible electoral process, the Nicaraguan government has invited a large contingent of neutral international observers, among them former President Jimmy Carter. The United Nations observer mission will be headed by former U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson.

Nicaraguans fear U.S. covert action against the election. According to *Central America Report*, an unnamed Nicaraguan diplomat called the presence of monitoring teams crucial. He said, "We do not want to find ourselves on election day with only partisan evaluations. We know that the United States will try to achieve by means of the vote that which it could not realize by war-making: the deposing of the Nicaraguan government."



To potential
WITNESS
authors

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**Barbara Harris:
Bishop**

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Goal of 22-year-old treaty

In an unheralded summer meeting, but one which should have been celebrated by peace activists the world over, the presidents of Mexico and Venezuela made an accord July 10 to strengthen the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The treaty makes all of Latin America a nuclear weapons-free zone — extending from the Rio Grande to the tip of South America, embracing 23 nations with a population of 400 million. Mexico's Carlos Salinas de Gotari and Venezuela's Carlos Andres Peres also proposed to limit conventional arms in the same territory.

Virtually unknown to the rest of the world, the 22-year-old Tlatelolco Treaty is the only arms agreement recognized by the United States, the Soviet Union, France, China and Britain — the nuclear arsenal states. All have agreed not to introduce nuclear weapons into treaty boundaries, nor to use them against treaty nations.

In Mexico City in 1963, I heard Mexico's President Alfonso Lopez Mateos initially propose this treaty. "No bomba en America Latina," came the president's message on the taxicab radio as I ferried between appointments. The proposal received a go-ahead from the United Nations later that year, and in 1967 a conference in the Mexico City suburb of Tlatelolco created OPANAL

(Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America), an agency set up to insure compliance with the treaty obligations.

The treaty expressly prohibits the manufacture, use, testing, acquisition, installation, storage or deployment of nuclear weapons in all the signatory countries. Meeting in 1987 at Montevideo, Uruguay, on the treaty's 20th anniversary, member nations asked: How has the treaty fared? Has it been enforceable? What are its limitations?

Up to now all provisions of the treaty "have been carried out in a normal and correct manner. There has been no problem of enforcement," Francisco Correa of Mexico's Foreign Ministry office told me recently. He noted that some treaties in the past have been ineffective by failing to provide adequate means of enforcement, but "the Tlatelolco Treaty is practical, with clear enforcement provisions."

OPANAL, the treaty's enforcement agency, is composed of a general conference of all member nations, and a council of five members elected by the general conference. All areas of Latin America have representation on the council.

OPANAL is closely tied to the United Nations. The initial proposal for it was first approved by the General Assembly in November, 1963. Reports are regularly sent to the U.N.'s Secretary General and the U.N. must be notified immediately of a violation.

Gregory Bergman, a free-lance writer based in Berkeley, Cal. has published on Mexico and Central America in *The Nation*, *Christian Century*, and *In These Times*.

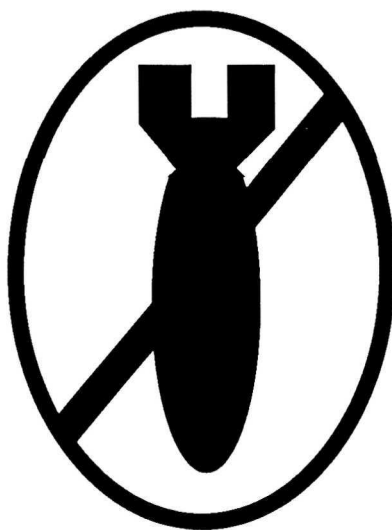
is 'no nukes'

by Gregory Bergman

Treaty members also deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding nuclear activities. IAEA safeguards are based on the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty on Nuclear Weapons, which has been ratified by 130 nations.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco has some notable weaknesses. While Brazil has signed and ratified it, that country has hedged on full commitment through a provision that the treaty will be in full force only when every Latin American country has ratified it. Argentina has signed but not ratified. Cuba has declared a commitment to military denuclearization, and said it favors the treaty, but will sign only when the United States ceases its unfriendly attitude and military presence at the Guantanamo base in Cuba.

Most nations of Latin America lack the infrastructure to make nuclear weapons. However, the picture may change as several Latin American nations, including Brazil and Argentina, become more knowledgeable and sophisticated. Although, says Mexico's Correa, "No danger appears at present," such weaponry may become a matter of national policy in the future. Brazil and Argentina now possess some of the technical and scientific skills needed to produce nuclear weapons. However, both countries signed a Nuclear Safety Protocol in November, 1985. Additionally, Argentina joined with Mexico, India, Greece, Sweden and Tanzania in October, 1986, at



Ixtapa, Mexico, to form the Six Nations Initiative for Peace and Disarmament.

A 1985 joint report of the U.S. Congressional Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Nuclear Proliferation stated that these nations "appear to lack the political and military incentives to produce nuclear weapons."

Although almost unknown in the United States, the Tlatelolco Treaty has had great international influence. In 1986 the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty came into being, modeled to a great degree on Tlatelolco. It includes Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and others.

Other nuclear arms control treaties, international and regional, have evolved over the years. Among them are treaties covering Antarctica, Outer Space, and

the International Seabed. And there are more than 4,000 nuclear-free zones, large and small, throughout the world, including the greater part of Canada and Japan.

Some arms control experts see regional treaties more effective against the spread of nuclear weapons than the International Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The U.N. General Assembly has repeatedly expressed encouragement and support for such regional plans. The Tlatelolco Treaty is one of the first, and best, of those plans.

Mexico's role in initiating the treaty, and the significant part it plays as a member of the Six Nations Initiative for Peace and Disarmament, make Mexico a leader in the international movement to end the arms race.

The new accord Mexico's president signed with Venezuela is "of interest to all humanity in this period of mankind's journey characterized by the end of the cold war," said Mexico City's *El Universal*, in an editorial July 11. Mexico advocates policies expressing economic and geographic interests rather than military and strategic ones, said the editorial, and "Not to take this forward step now would represent a turning back, a submission to a policy of individual national interest." As *El Universal* saw it, Latin American nations must actively follow policies that strengthen international well-being, because it is very much in their interest to do so.

TW

Imagination . . . *Cont. from page 13*

has, quite frankly, made a mess of it. Space is becoming littered with our refuse just as the earth has, and governments are playing their games of espionage and conflict in Earth's orbit. Unless the church gets involved, we may be looking at a bleak future in space . . . Without Christ we will be a group of reckless children without any adult supervision, trampling over and ruining the entire universe."

Kirby and Gibson have worked together on a research project in science fiction history for the Community of St. Polycarp. The community's mission is to "seek a Christian history of science fiction as a chronology of its theological ideas, its portrayal of God," in film, computer software and art as well as short stories, novels and novellas.

No self-respecting intellectual or Christian, says Kirby, can afford to neglect such imaginative interpreters of the human experience as science fiction and fantasy writers Marion Zimmer Bradley, Pamela Sargent, Brian Aldiss or Arthur C. Clarke. For in such writers, adds Kirby, we see "science fiction as the voice of the Higher Self, and it is a disgrace that so many religious and intellectual leaders ignore science fiction and its implications."

Thinking about a theology informed by a philosophy of science or science fiction leads us one more step towards an empowered spiritual imagination. A global "electronic brain" is emerging as all the world's great libraries are placed in computer data bases, and the world's research institutions are connected by computer networks which are the "nerves" of a community of collaborating scholars. Many brains can now be brought together in a "collective intelligence" to do theological work on a scale never before possible.

This new technology is already transforming research on biblical manuscripts in unexpected ways. Canadian

Chronos and kairos

The concept of subatomic particles plays havoc with ordinary concepts of time. Michael Chester writes:

Actually, one millionth of a second is not so brief on a subatomic time scale. Both the pion with its lifetime of one-hundred millionth of a second and the muon with one millionth of a second are extremely long-lasting. Compare these times with the time that it takes a pion to interact with a nucleon, and they are enormous time spans. Comparing the pion-nucleon interaction to the pion lifetime is like comparing one second to 100 million years. Comparing the pion-nucleon interaction to the muon lifetime is like comparing one second to ten billion years.

Is that any more formidable to think about than comparing the lifetime of a human being to the lifetime of a sun, or the lifetime of a galaxy?

It makes sense only if we think of it all as part of our rootedness in cosmos, our *enkosmismene*. And it knocks our ordinary concepts of chronological time into a cocked hat. Time, as chronology, makes me dizzy with both lack of meaning and unreachable meaning. We need ordinary, chronological time so that we can, for instance, get to the airport or to the office on time, but here time is only an agreed upon fiction so that we will be enabled to get through the day's work with as little confusion as possible. And even in flying across the continent, our bodies are agonizingly jolted with time change and jet lag, so that we become aware that our bodies do function in ordinary time.

Yet, when I think of the pion and the muon, of the great spiral galaxies, and of our own little lives in terms of *kairos* — of rootedness in cosmos, in God's time itself — it opens vast vistas which can be awesome, even terrifying ("What a dreadful place is this!" Jacob cries), but less terrifying than it is wondrous, because God's time is far more real than ordinary *chronos*, and we are part of both.

During our mortal lives, however, *chronos* is not merely illusion. My body is aging according to human chronology, not nucleon or galactic chronology. My knees creak. My vision is variable. My energy span is shorter than I think it ought to be. There is nothing I can do to stop the passage of this kind of time in which we human beings are set. I can work with it rather than against it, but I cannot stop it. I do not like what it is doing to my body. If I live as long as many of my forbears, these outward diminishments will get worse, not better. But these are the outward signs of chronology, and there is another Madeleine who is untouched by them, the part of me that lives forever in *kairos* and bears God's image.

— Madeleine L'Engle

(Reprinted from *A Stone For A Pillow: Journeys with Jacob*, by Madeleine L'Engle © Crosswicks 1986. Used by permission of Harold Shaw Publishers, Box 567, Wheaton, IL 60189)

theologian David Lochhead is creating exciting new software for theological research. He is also experimenting with a theology book published "on line" — readers can add comments and the book remains living and growing as it is continually updated.

A U.S. national conference on theology in the digital age was held in 1987 at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton to explore the wide range of

possibilities for theological research and the life and mission of the church with these new "global-scale" intellectual tools. Science and religion are becoming increasingly interrelated in dialogue, joint research, and perhaps eventually in exploring the spiritual potential of humanity. Scientists may not be ready for this exploration, but the paths are already being blazed in science fiction.

stories on Charles Colson's prison ministry and on Mother Theresa — as though they were in some sense comparable. The question was then raised as to whether one had to subscribe to the beliefs of Matthew Fox in order to be regarded as a committed Christian.

As a devoted reader of THE WITNESS, let me venture one answer to this last question: No. I at least, feel the beliefs of Matthew Fox border on the grotesque, but then I have similar feelings about Charles Colson. However, I submit that what characterizes the community which THE WITNESS serves is our sense of outrage that the views of Matthew Fox have been suppressed, and that he has been forbidden to express them publicly. Within my understanding of the theology of THE WITNESS, it is this sense of outrage that marks the committed Christian.

Frederick W. Keene
San Bernardino, Cal.

Growing pains

I look forward to reading each issue of THE WITNESS. It is the only church publication I spend my money on, although I do subscribe to other periodicals such as *The Nation*, *In These Times*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

I am amused at the negative letters you get, mostly from church people. Most frequently, they criticize THE WITNESS for being "un-Biblical," or not of God. What your detractors fail to understand is that we, both in society and in the church, are going through the growing pains of evolutionary growth from one world view to another. We are leaving what may be called the "patriarchal" era and entering the "feminist" era, with all that implies. It certainly means more than having women ordained to the ministry, although that is a hallmark of it. We must take this step in growth. Without it our planet and our kind will not survive. The nuclear bombs would annihilate us all. It is difficult for many people to leave the old and accustomed,

even though it is sick unto death. But is not that what our own "patriarch" Abraham did, whose call begins our Judaeo-Christian Bible story?

As God called him into the future, so, God today calls us. Thanks to voices like those in THE WITNESS who announce this good news and help to point the way.

The Rev. Clark Wills
Chicago, Ill.

Energized by issue

As I read the June issue of THE WITNESS on abortion, my mind was illumined, my heart deeply moved, and my will to persevere in the struggle for choice was encouraged. Thanks.

The Rev. George Regas
Pasadena, Cal.

One step at a time

Enclosed please find my renewal for one year. Even though there is a saving for two or more years, I no longer do this because at my age, I may not be around more than one year. And so I live each day (and each year) at a time.

I do want to tell you how much I appreciate THE WITNESS. Each issue is filled with thought provoking, well-written testimonies to some person's "witness" for the teachings of Our Lord. Your magazine is well-named. And I especially like your policy of presenting one important social issue each time, whether it be the death penalty, or the Middle East, or the plight of the coalminers. May God continue to bless you in your work for peace and justice.

Ann P. McElroy
Cupertino, Cal.

Shares same woes

I am a retired United Church of Christ minister. I subscribed by a fluke. But I have enjoyed reading each issue all the way through. I find that you have the same kinds of problems that we do in the UCC.

Stuart W. Olbrich
Mountain Home, Idaho

of violence, we've also observed the deep commitment to non-violence which the vast majority of miners and their leaders have maintained.

- The Pittston Company was fined \$47,500 for safety violations which led to the deaths of seven miners in McClure in 1983. Comparatively, the UMW has incurred almost \$10 million in fines for largely non-violent civil disobedience actions during this strike.

- On July 7, the National Labor Relations Board declared this strike to be an "unfair labor practices" dispute. This declaration by the NLRB comes one year after the UMW initially filed complaints, and has yet to lead to any actions against Pittston. The Pittston Company's complaints, by contrast, prompted State and Federal Court injunctions against the UMW within less than two months. This and other discrepancies prompted the Majority Staff of a Congressional Subcommittee to conclude that the implementation of the law was "imbalanced" in this strike.

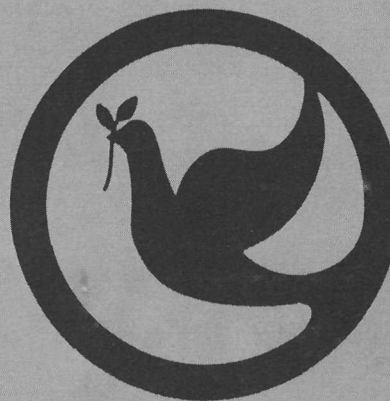
We ask all people of faith to pray for a just resolution to this dispute. Our faith teaches us to stand with the workers is not to stand against other persons, but to stand for justice. This justice must permeate our interactions with one another, and be institutionalized in our courts, laws and labor-management relations. A resolution based on this justice will enable healing and reconciliation.

This situation in the coalfields is urgent. We ask all people of good will to stand in solidarity with the miners and to work for justice and reconciliation in their communities. Our support must be both prayerful and visible, in order to help sustain them in their commitment to non-violent resistance.

How you can help

APSO is currently collecting contributions for school clothes for the children of miners, according to the Rev. R. Baldwin "B" Lloyd, director. Readers interested in helping can make checks payable to APSQ, Box 1007, Blacksburg, VA 24063.

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