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THE WITNESS

March 9, 1975
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Letters to the Editor

The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters.

Thank you for your letter and note. I have no idea how long my old *Witness* subscription had to run, but anyway want to contribute to the cause. We have greatly appreciated the articles and wish you lots of good luck with it.—*John O'Hear, Greenville, Delaware*

May I correct a news item in the January 12th issue of *The Witness* which reads as follows: "Betty Schiess has had approval for the regularization of her priesthood from the Standing Committee and the Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Central New York. She awaits Bishop Ned Cole's response."

It was not the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Central New York which asked me to regularize what happened at the service in Philadelphia on July 29. The Standing Committee on that day in November recommended to me the Rev. Betty Bone Schiess, deacon, for ordination to the priesthood.

At our Diocesan Convention that weekend, there was a resolution that the Convention urge the Bishop, the Standing Committee, Commission on the Ministry and all other appropriate bodies of this Diocese to work as swiftly as possible toward completing the Philadelphia ordinations if possible.

Upon advice from my Chancellor and the actions and the opinions of the House of Bishops, we have concluded that completion of the Philadelphia event can come only when the General Convention so authorizes.—*Ned Cole, Syracuse*

Bishop Ramos explains how his liberal orientation is based on childhood experiences which were intensified as he grew up, went to college and seminary, and then was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church, a Church he now says falls short in basic ways from its duty.

My dissatisfaction is that this able and well educated man knew what the Episcopal Church was from the outset and yet he took up its most responsible office knowing that his conscience forced him to disagree.

The answers I find for his doing this are not flattering

to him. He either took the office knowing that he must change the fundamental conservatism he knew existed or else he figured he could change his way of thinking enough to be comfortable as an Episcopalian.

What he seems to miss is that the Church is a body of men and women who over the years develop a way of serving God that is comfortable to them. If that is wicked, I am sorry. Not all churchmen have found the Episcopal Church incapable of carrying out at least some part of God's work, so I cannot think that it is so bad as to deserve being made over in one generation, especially by men who knew all about the rules when they joined.—*Henry Meigs, Philadelphia*

I am unhappy with the content of *The Witness*, now in "sheep's" clothing. It has lost its slow, quiet, humble pace, which brought me strength and evangelical fervor in times past. I pray each day to understand and discern what is God's will in these times. I am having difficulty with your direction, but pray with you.—*Bob Browning, Fort Myers, Florida*

I wish to subscribe to *The Witness* (check enclosed). The general Christian Community and our Episcopal Christian Community, especially, have been in need of the honest appraisal of Christian witness past, present, and future provided by the revived publication of *The Witness*. Well done!—*Sandy Abrams, Parkesburg, Pennsylvania*

Among the Many Who Have Helped us as consultants in charting a course for *The Witness* are the following: J. C. Michael Allen, Jesse F. Anderson, Sr., Barry Bingham, Sr., Eugene Carson Blake, Richard N. Bolles, Myron B. Bloy, Jr., Alice Dieter, Ira Einhorn, Norman J. Faramelli, John C. Fletcher, Richard Fernandez, Judy Mathe Foley, Everett Francis, David A. Garcia, Richard E. Gary, John C. Goodbody, William B. Gray, Michael P. Hamilton, Suzanne R. Hiatt, Muhammad Kenyatta, Roy Larson, Werner Mark Linz, James Parks Morton, Charles L. Ritchie, Jr., Leonard M. Sive, William B. Spofford, Jr., Richard Taylor, Paul M. van Buren, Frederick B. Williams, Gibson Winter.

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‘Fools and Children Speak the Truth’

by Robert L. DeWitt

In the public arena, it seems chronically difficult to come by that precious commodity called “truth.” Is this because truth is so elusive, or because we have developed structures and procedures that effectively deflect the truth in its efforts to reach us?

Truth has easier access to those who are uncomplicated in their openness to it, to those who have no stake in deflecting or distorting it. Who was it, after all, who first declared the obvious — that the emperor was wearing no clothes? In that famous story, the child’s testimony ran counter to that of the older, more informed members of the community. The credibility of the child was fragile compared with the authoritative “wisdom” of his elders. Nevertheless, his testimony coincided with the truth.

This scenario was reenacted during the decade of America’s involvement in Vietnam. Student groups, underground newspapers, church and peace organizations, all raised a chorus of protest against that tragic war and the official accounts given of it. Those in the best position to “know” — military and government officials — sternly opposed those objectors, criticized their credentials, and continued to delude most of us. Time proved, however, that truth was on the side of those who could be open to it, who had no stake in distorting it.

We now find ourselves in a comparable situation. An almost identical one, in fact. The Ford Administration, echoed by parts of the media, is informing the public that the distressful situation in Vietnam is attributable to the infractions of the Paris Peace Agreement by the North Vietnamese. After all, the administration is in the best position to know. Or is it?

This issue of *The Witness* includes an article by Peggy Case. Her credentials are impressive, but are not those of an “expert.” She stands in the tradition of those who are open to the truth, and who seek it both through concern and involvement. As Americans and as churchpeople, we have learned to respect such credentials in our search for the truth — and in having the truth find us.

Vietnam: Still America's War

And The Beat Goes On

by Peggy Case

For most Americans, the Paris Peace Agreement was nothing more than a cease fire and a withdrawal of American ground forces. It is therefore easy for many to believe that the U.S. has lived up to its part of the bargain and only the "communists" are violating the Agreement. A look at the actual Treaty which the U.S. signed will make it clear that the U.S. has never implemented most of it. After two years of violations, we should not be surprised if "the other side" is escalating the struggle to force the full implementation of the Agreement.

Almost immediately following the signing of the Agreement, the United States and Saigon governments began systematic violations which have continued to this day. The war never ended. It continues to rage on in South Vietnam and Cambodia. It is fought by the forced conscripts of the Thieu and Lon Nol armies, led by U.S. advisors and paid for largely by American taxpayers.

What does the Paris Peace Agreement call for? Among other things it stipulates the following things:

1. *A cease fire in place, with the armies of the PRG (the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, commonly referred to as Vietcong), and Saigon, respectively maintaining control over the territories they controlled at the time of the signing of the Agreement in January of 1973.* Nevertheless, immediately after the treaty was signed, the U.S. began to call all army personnel of the PRG "North Vietnamese aggressors". Yet Saigon officials bragged to a group of conservative U.S. congressmen that they had succeeded in capturing 770 new hamlets since the signing of the peace agreement (House Committee on Foreign Affairs Report 93-1196, July 15, 1974). The PRG attempted for eighteen months to end these violations through negotiations, and

offered only basic defensive resistance. Finally the PRG began to re-take the land it legitimately held on January 27th of 1973. In recent months the armed forces of the PRG have recovered almost all of the lost territory. We must keep in mind that at the time the Agreement was signed, the PRG controlled most of the countryside of South Vietnam.

2. *Total withdrawal of all U.S. and other foreign military forces, advisors, equipment, etc. and removal of all mines. New aid to be given only through the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord with the agreement of the two South Vietnamese parties, no introduction of new military equipment except on a one-to-one replacement basis for worn out things.* Yet, the U.S. continues to have military personnel advising Thieu's army in South Vietnam. Saigon police are still trained by the U.S. New weapons and planes have been given to Thieu on a consistent basis for the last two years. The land mines have never been removed. It is important to note that North Vietnam is not listed anywhere in the Agreement as a foreign country, and the conditions which apply to U.S. aid do not apply to aid which passes from the northern to the southern zones of Vietnam. Only the persistent efforts of the American peace movement have caused any reduction in military spending for Cambodia and Vietnam since the agreement was signed.

3. *The people of South Vietnam are to be guaranteed all democratic rights — freedom of speech, freedom of movement in all areas of the south, freedom of the press, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of residence, etc.* However there is not a single one of these freedoms which the people in the Saigon area have. They are forced to live under a totalitarian regime. All opposition political activity is severely restricted. The "pacification" program designed to control every movement of the population has resulted in the forced removal of thousands of peasants from their land. Millions now live in refugee camps behind barbed wire or on the streets of Saigon. It is illegal for them to return to their villages to farm. Anyone attempting to do so is simply shot, or jailed if caught. In spite of these conditions, thousands are able to escape to the PRG territories where they are given land to farm and free health care. Unless they are able to bribe officials, all men in Saigon territories are forced into the million-man army. The desertion rate is very high. Stories of life in the liberated zones have come back to the Saigon areas, and the contrast draws thousands of people into the struggle

for peace. The problems for the PRG of coping with all the people arriving with the diseases, scars, illiteracy, and fear that go with life in Thieu's Vietnam are incredible. Humanitarian aid to the PRG (medical aid in particular) from many parts of the world is needed now more than ever.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has stated (Report 93-620 on fiscal year 1974): "The evidence of political prisoners in South Vietnam is beyond any reasonable dispute — only the numbers are in question." Reliable and objective sources suggest there are a minimum of between 40,000 and 60,000, contrary to a specific term of the peace agreement which called for the release of all political prisoners.

Read the Documents

These are only a few of the provisions of the Agreement which are violated every day. Anyone who has never seen the document should certainly read it.

The Saigon economy is in a state of total collapse, with rampant unemployment, massive hunger and disease. Visitors to Saigon are shocked to find barbed wire on all street corners and thousands of armed police and military personnel controlling every movement of the population. The press has been closed down, journalists put on trial for criticizing the corruption of the Thieu regime, and those who dare to demonstrate for peace are brutally beaten and jailed. Enough Americans of all political persuasions have now visited Saigon to confirm the horror of the regime which the U.S. government continues to finance. And enough people of integrity have visited the north of Vietnam and the liberated territories of the south to confirm the progress which accompanies peace and a government which enjoys the support of its people.

Critical Turning Point

Indochina, particularly Cambodia and South Vietnam, is at a critical turning point now. The next few months will show not only what the U.S. is willing to do to continue to control Indochina, but also show the strong determination of the people of Indochina to win peace and freedom. Since July of this year many neutralists (the "Third Force") in the cities of South Vietnam have been waging a difficult and strong mass struggle against the Thieu regime. The demands of the movement cover a broad spectrum of opinion, but the most widespread demand is for the full implementation of the Paris Agree-

ment and peace.

A significant number of Americans were never fooled by the "peace is at hand" propaganda of Kissinger, and they have continued to work diligently to bring peace to Indochina and end the U.S. intervention there. The United Campaign for Peace in Indochina, which represents many church forces and peace groups, in coordination with the Coalition to Stop Funding the War, which leads the lobbying effort in Washington, have succeeded in cutting \$1.5 billion worth of aid. The administration has requested that \$300 million in supplemental military aid to Vietnam and \$225 million to Cambodia be added to the budget.

News about offensives becomes prominent every time the administration thinks its war effort is threatened either by the resistance of the American people, or the rising movement of the people inside the Saigon and Phnom Penh controlled areas. The American public has learned to be skeptical of the Administration's versions of the events in Vietnam. The liberation forces continue to fight against U.S. intervention and to protect their territories, and as the failure of the Agreement is now clear to all, we can expect them to do little else.

Time on Their Side

We are the decisive element in ending the war. The people of Indochina will never stop fighting for their freedom from foreign aggression. They have fought for that freedom for two thousand years. Time is on their side. We can participate in prolonging the agony and human suffering there and at home by allowing our tax money to fund a vicious dictatorship, bombers, prisons, and a mercenary army. Or we can act to end it now.

What can you do? Write, phone, and visit your Congressperson and demand an end to all U.S. aid to Thieu and Lon Nol, and the full implementation of the Agreement. Make it clear that you oppose all forms of U.S. involvement. Contact a local peace group which is part of the United Campaign for information on how to become involved locally. For information on the groups nearest you, and further resource materials, write the Indochina Peace Campaign, 181 Pier Avenue, Santa Monica, California, or Clergy and Laity Concerned, 235 East 49th Street, New York, New York. Visit your local media and press, and insist that they report accurately what is going on in Indochina, and stop relying uncritically on wire service reports. Provide the press with alternative sources of information and a copy of the

Peace Agreement.

America's war must be ended by the American people. The people of Indochina will determine a bright future for themselves.

Peggy Case: committee organizer, Pontiac Ecumenical Ministry, Pontiac, Mich.; worker, the Indochina Peace Campaign since its beginning.

Source Material:

Documenting the Post-War War, available from:

American Friends' Service Committee
112 S. 16th Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19102

The Second Year of the Paris Peace Agreement and other issues of *Indochina Chronicle*, available from:

Indochina Resource Center
P.O. Box 4000-D, Berkeley, CA. 94704

Hostages of War, available from:

Indochina Mobile Education Project
1322 18th Street N/W
Washington, DC 20036

Semantics Antics

The Pentagon has responded to a Wisconsin congressman's charge that American pilots flying supplies to the embattled Cambodian government are getting combat pay. Not so, the Pentagon explains. They are only getting "hostile-fire pay."

Furthermore, it is not true that, as a newspaper reported recently, American military men in Thailand are violating Congress' ban on advisory and combat activities by making bombing recommendations to the Cambodians.

All that's happening, according to the Pentagon, is that "items of intelligence interest" are identified and "passed on." It is up to the Cambodians to make "the judgment of what should be done."

Reassuring is it not, that our military establishment has not let its semantic defenses down?

—*Philadelphia Inquirer*

Editorial page, February 12, 1975

The Church's Untold Story

The Church In Exile

by William Stringfellow

Evidence continues to mount that the controversy in the Episcopal Church opened by the Philadelphia ordination transcends the specific fate of any of the 11 women priests which that event supplied the Church. The matter, now, goes far beyond any conceivable adjudications in ecclesiastical courts; and, moreover, it surpasses the general policy question about ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate, including any prospective action — one way or the other — which the Minneapolis General Convention might undertake.

What has come to be at stake is whether the Episcopal Church any longer retains a temperament and capability for significant change. The issue is whether this Church which has boasted a heritage in conscientious protest and renewal, still possesses a genius for change, not only respecting women as priests, but in *any* way, for the sake of remaining a Church faithful to the gospel. Or, to put it theologically, is the Episcopal Church today viable enough to respond affirmatively to the urgency of the Holy Spirit?

The immediate disputes affecting the Philadelphia priests and the practice of ordination of women, while in themselves important, carry connotations of extraordinary consequence for the foreseeable future of the Episcopal Church. The hope for an Episcopal Church in America which is constantly renewed, dynamic, passionate about human need, audacious in society, biblical in witness, sacramental in living as a community, given to celebration, prophetic, eschatologically ready, now attaches to the particular causes so traumatically raised by the Philadelphia ordinations.

No Expected Breakaway

I am not implying the prospect of schism. Though it is a possibility, and though the provocation for schism is very great, I do not expect a dramatic, formal breakaway and the separate gathering of a new Church. Nor do I anticipate that the shortcomings of incumbent ecclesiastical leadership in the Episcopal Church in coping with the present controversy with timeliness, compassion, common sense, theological responsibility or imagination will result in censure, repudiation, impeachment, abdication or replacement of that leadership. More probably, if those in highest authority in the Episcopal Church persevere in failing as leaders, they will, increasingly, just be ignored by rank and file clergy and laity and thus find their authority rendered morally impotent by their own failure. Out of such a situation, what is most likely to emerge, instead of schism, is a new Church within the old Church, a confessing movement within the Episcopal Church, an extempore Church exemplifying the change refused by the official Church, a Church-in-exile.

This likelihood is, actually, an ecumenical phenomenon. There are similar developments throughout American Christendom right now, notably in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and in the Roman communion. The birth of exile Churches in multifarious places and circumstances bespeaks the mobility of the Holy Spirit, I believe.

Within the Episcopal Church, a Church-in-exile is already happening. There are congregations which have invited women priests to officiate. There are standing committees which have opposed the intransigence of their own bishops and have sought ratification of the Philadelphia ordinations, while others have acted to certify new ordinands from the swelling ranks of women deacons ready for the priesthood. One of the 11 has been called to a parish to serve as priest, and there are other congregations contemplating similar calls. Two women have been called to faculty positions at an official seminary. Whenever opportunity has occurred to publicly identify with the Philadelphia priests — to share the dignity and risk the humiliation of the struggle — hundreds upon hundreds have gathered.

The Debacle Last Time

Meanwhile, despite what seemed virtual hysteria prompting the summons of bishops to “emergency” session at Chicago last August, a majority of the bishops now appear resolved to await nebulous developments at Minneapolis. As one bishop, recently put it to me: “We

are going to ‘tough it out’ — we are going to ‘stonewall it.’ ”

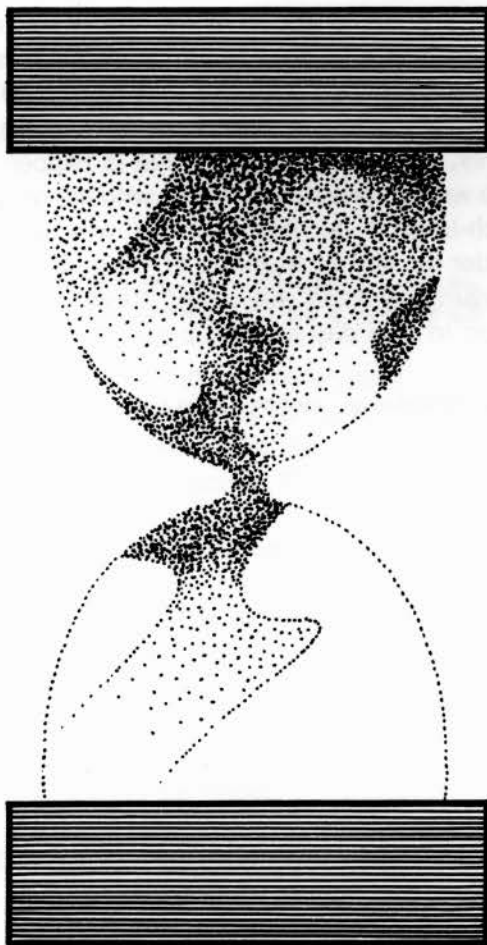
But this is the same scenario projected for the last General Convention at Louisville, and it issued in debacle. And that, in turn, became a basic reason for the Philadelphia ordinations. Given the inherently unrepresentative character of General Convention—I leave aside here, the serious doubt about whether the Convention properly possesses preemptive plenary authority on ordination in the Episcopal Church — there is no reason to assume that this same scenario will have a different outcome in Minneapolis.

The most optimistic Minneapolis expectation, noticing the views aired in the bishops’ theological committee, is for authorization of future ordination of women by the most procrastinating procedure possible, and for a proposed eventual reordination or conditional ordination of the women already ordained. Such would be intolerable not only because it would be an ultimate, paternalistic put-down for women priests and women in general, but also because it would mean, in the cases of the 11, a punitive abuse of the rite of ordination.

Intransigence to change can only aggravate crisis. If any of the bishops suppose that “stonewalling it” until Minneapolis offers a way to win in the present controversy, he misunderstands what is happening. Ironically, the women priests and those who are now becoming a Church-in-exile do not have to win or even, really, consider the matter in terms of winning; they only have to remain faithful to the calling to which they are called by God in this day in the Episcopal Church.

William Stringfellow: author, social critic, attorney and theologian.

Toward The End of Empire 1974



Duci

Like the blind man who sang Odysseus past the rocks and
home free
or the harper his love fled on the threshold of hell her last wail
her frail candle snuffed
or the sublime weeper and wrestler whose tears stain the Book of Job
or those climbers who hang like Calder mobiles from the Himalayan
roof of heaven
or Fanon raging nursing in his body's dark vat the fungus
that fed that he fed on
or Jesus whose eyes meet my eyes like a crossbow anchoring in me
the high wire I must mount and move, toward him, or fall
forever (I will not fall)
like Judas even (the hellish fortitude of no) or Thomas the maybe sayer
or John the divine (one yes is of course)
like like like
Appalachian faces the ingrain and grit of poverty like all souls day
this day

COME NOW MUSE in the universal dimout of wits and hearts light my
so to speak fuse
in the grand manner the heroic tribal manner of the Big Ten from
Homer to Eliot I too would like to tackle something big
not heretofore tried yes though low on the scale of Paradise Lost.
You're the spirit woman the poets invoke when the subject threatens to
crack their pates, the wolf is at the door, and the ego's
flaccid bladder has to fill with new wine
SO COME!

I want to write a poem about Richard Milhouse Nixon known
here and there
on whom judgment seems to hover like buzzards on a scarecrow's
stick arms
Not only did he of recent days nearly shuffle off
but more to my point
judgment darkens his skies a hundred thousand misfortunes gather
from all corners the raunchy wings of ugly cleanup birds beat
over San Clemente
Not only that but
millions of his fellow cits are suddenly producing and donning
hangmen's caps
and
the earthly forms of divine (purportedly) justice signal
Roger All Systems Go
That furiously debated blood clot is for real and on the move like a
moccasin Mohawk in secret glades of New York State

Such trouble!
as you or I or the gate post have never had or (as the poets and proph-
ets love to illustrate only the high fall so low) - are likely to.
I was shocked to see that face in newsprint recently it was
as if a thousand newly dead Vietnamese had risen to stand at his
bedside each contributing to a skeleton a millimeter of
flesh not quite alive
so the medicine men might construct a presentable rag doll
or their art failing
a good mortician job
I was reminded of the 49 c. of Isaiah; *a worm and no man*

Richard Nixon my feeling about you is a furious mix
I am reminded on the one hand of a saying with which AJ Muste confounded
the pacifists 35 yrs. ago, If I cannot love Hitler I cannot love
anybody,
then too those rather more famous words which strike even to the
joining place of flesh and spirit, Love your enemies do good

to them who persecute you
On the other hand you have tainted the springs of language Christi-
ans followed your trail of cake crumbs across 50 states of
amnesia right up to the Blight House, Sundays
they licked them up like jackals
then behind closed doors you and they

celebrated obscene rites
at which infants were disemboweled
and demons invoked
and the week's murders laundered by the red butcher's knuckles of your
sacred henchmen

For these reasons I am angry and will be as long as you and I
live
and I am trying to chart my way carefully as Pilgrim
in the Noperson land between Anger and Hatred

I saw in a photo the women of your family hurrying to
your bedside
like 3 frail birds before the storm 3 delicate con-
structions of chicken wire and plumage
with big bewildered eyes staring ahead
as though they saw before them just out of the photo
the Fowlers hand who wrings the necks of birds or
cuts their throats
Such terror there

Your lives too must be a horror
as in you also the clotted cream
of the american dream
goes sour puddles turns to whey
the jewelry of Shahs and Pharaohs stripped from you
you look almost like 3 women being led into the Manhattan
House of Detention
which I am relieved to recall
is now torn down
and a park planted in its foul place

so you need never fear being locked up there
I would never want you locked up there
any more than I would wish Richard Nixon
to taste the sour sorrow
of Danbury Federal Correctional Institute where
my brother and I and many another ward of his stern will
cohabitated

no prison would be of no help to him or you
in peeling away the cumulative
illusions of some 200 yrs. of pseudohistory
so that in the biblical image the
essential soul that red premature infant might
come to term
come to terms
with its prenatal artifices more appropriate to hell than
to the moral etiology of mortals in this world

With all this understood
which I believe must be understood
lest the words which follow be misunderstood
lest I take the usual cyclonic amnesiac way
cutting natural corners stonewalling (in a phrase)
reality

- would like to pray for Richard Nixon

unsure of what words
could win him intercession
and stuttering as in the thin air of
inaccessible reaches
contemplating with horror transfixed before the
bloodstained face of history
before that God who is deaf dumb blind as any idol
whose tears though like sweat on stone I discern hear even
springing
from the victims their rich store & wellspring of
forgiveness for the executioner

So I pray.
there must be better sounds to make
than caw caw yap yap the smacking of jackals' jaws around
a corpse the signaling among crows the jackals have crept
off offal of offal left for the taking
There must be a better silence
than the open jaws of the dead
into which the great bombers have vanished
like demons' provender

Please grant such silence
please grant such words
either is allowable about the white mound
screened by the folding screens
behind which barely breathing our fate is enacted and his

do not I pray
let the earth swallow
nor sheol claim
nor 7 devils return to possess his house & the
last fate of that man be worse than the first

and may the children
who died
be by death
not twisted
in form or spirit
into avenging angels
but retain (in death)
their native sweetness

and lead this one
spared for a space
to a better heart

all of us to a better heart
amen alleluia

♡ Daniel Beninson :)

Network Reports

Oil Companies Withdraw Namibian Operations

Phillips Petroleum Company, target of stockholder challenges on Southern African operations by the Episcopal Church and other churches, has announced it is withdrawing from oil explorations off the coast of Namibia (South West Africa).

The white minority government in South Africa has occupied predominantly black Namibia in spite of the United Nations action canceling the League of Nation's mandate to administer the government in Namibia. The U.S. government does not recognize as legal South Africa's occupation of Namibia, nor does the World Court.

The Church Project on U.S. Investments in Southern Africa, a coalition of church groups including the Episcopal Church, has maintained that U.S. corporations should not seek to develop Namibia's natural resources until a free, sovereign, legal government is in control of the country.

Phillips Petroleum, in a letter to the church challengers, asked that the 1975 stockholder resolution be canceled. "Phillips' decision to withdraw," the letter said, "is attributable to the lack of a foreseeable resolution of the issues of sovereignty which have been recently accentuated."

Getty Oil Company, a partner of Phillips in the Namibian project, is also withdrawing its operations, as is the Standard Oil Company of California, the last of five American oil companies that have been urged to pull out by church groups.

Timothy Smith, director of the church project, said that the decision of the companies to withdraw "is directly attributable to church pressure. Each company seemed unaware there was a question of sovereignty before churches began raising questions."

The six church groups planning to file a resolution with Phillips own a total of 50,774 shares, with a market value estimated at \$2.1 million.

At the 1974 Phillips' annual meeting a similar resolution, asking for the withdrawal of the company from Namibia, was introduced by the Episcopal Church. It was defeated, with the church resolution receiving approximately 5 percent of the vote.

Women's Attorneys Meet in New York

A group of attorneys met in New York City on Feb. 5 to consider ways and means to secure adequate legal counsel and defense for the 11 women priests. Several members of the group had attended a similar meeting in October. The purpose of this meeting was to share information and discuss legal strategy.

Out of the meeting came common agreement on the objectives of securing as soon as possible to the eleven women priests their freedom to exercise their sacramental functions free from interference and restraint. The attorneys agreed further to seek the use of any civil, ecclesiastical and political resources which would help accomplish that objective.

The attorneys present were John Ballard of Philadelphia, Constance Cook of Ithaca, N.Y., Ellen Dresselhuus of Minneapolis, Emmelyn Logan-Baldwin of Rochester N.Y., Suzanne Nobel of Philadelphia, Frank Patton, Jr. of New York, and William Stringfellow of Block Island, R.I. Six other attorneys from the Midwest and East are in contact with this group but were unable to attend the meeting.

Coalition Asks Changes For Women at Minneapolis

General Convention approval of canonical changes authorizing the ordination of women as priests and bishops is the objection of a new national coalition formed Jan. 17 and 18 in Chicago.

Named the Policy Board of the National Coalition for Women's Ordination to the Priesthood and the Episcopate, the group chose as its chairperson the Rev. George F. Regas of Pasadena, Ca. Co-chairperson is the Rev. Patricia Merchant Park of Alexandria, Va.

Admitting some differences of opinion among its members, the Coalition nevertheless adopted a statement of intent.

The Board intends to coordinate a massive campaign over the next 18 months to secure a positive action for women priests at the Minnesota Convention, for the Board "sees the Church perilously close to schism if the issue

of women's ordination is not dealt with justly, promptly and forthrightly."

Members of the Policy Board are: the Rev. Hunsdon Cary, Jr., Palm Beach, Fla.; Oscar C. Carr, Jr., New York City; the Rev. William R. Coats, Milwaukee; the Rev. Robert M. Cooper, Nashotah, Wi.; Ms. Janice Duncan, Bala Cynwyd, Pa.; Sister Columba Gillis, O.S.H., New York City; Mrs. Marge Gross, Yankton, S.D.; George Guernsey, III, St. Louis; Mrs. Charles M. Guilbert, New York City; Mrs. Marion Kellerman, Alexandria, Va.; Mrs. Marjorie Nichols, Winchester, Mass.; the Rev. Patricia Merchant Park, Alexandria, Va.; the Rev. George F. Regas, Pasadena, Ca.; the Rev. Henry Rightor, Alexandria; the Rt. Rev. Bennett J. Sims, Atlanta; the Rt. Rev. Richard M. Trelease, Jr., Albuquerque, N.M.; the Rt. Rev. John T. Walker, Washington, D.C.; the Rev. R. Stewart Wood, Jr., Indianapolis; and the Rev. Frances G. Zielinski, Evanston, Ill.

The next meeting of the Policy Board has been set for May 8-9 in St. Louis.

Group Meets in D.C. To Develop Defense Fund

Some 50 clergy and lay leaders from cities coast to coast met in Washington, D.C., Feb. 8 and 9 to develop a legal strategy and defense fund for those facing ecclesiastical trials as a result of actions supporting the Philadelphia 11.

Edna Pittenger of Cleveland chaired the meeting. Other participants came from New York City, Syracuse and Rochester, N.Y., Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Minneapolis and elsewhere.

While the group was meeting the convention of the Diocese of Ohio met in Perrysburg to select members of the court which is expected to try the Rev. Peter Beebe of Oberlin.

Before the Washington meeting ended, the group adopted a Statement of Affirmation and Invitation consisting of a background statement (reprinted on the back cover of this issue), and the following series of affirmative statements:

1. *We affirm* the validity of the ordination of the eleven women priests in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974.
2. *We affirm* the right and obligations of those women priests to exercise their priesthood, sacramentally and otherwise, as their proper ministry to people both within and without the Church.
3. *We will defend* their right to do so, and will assist

financially and otherwise in their legal defense where this right is challenged.

4. *We affirm* the significance of this issue in the life of the Church because of its direct linkage with such strident concerns of our society as sexism, racism, and institutional oppression in the economic and political realms.

5. *We pledge* ourselves, during and beyond this issue of the ordination of women, to the support of the social mission of the Church.

6. *We invite* others to join with us in this statement of affirmation and support.

At a meeting of the group's advisory committee it was decided to circularize this statement widely, urging people to sign it and return it with a contribution for the women's defense and action fund to Box 359, Ambler, Pa. 19002. Checks should be drawn to "Church and Society, Inc.," marked for the women's ordination fund. The statement is going out over the names of the members of that committee: Peter Beebe, Donald Belcher, F. Sanford Cutler, Carlyle Gill, Edward G. Harris, Flora Keshgegian, Lee McGee, Edna Pittenger, Kitty Porterfield, Betty Rosenberg, Ralph Shaw, Ann Smith, Lucy Talbot, Wynona Thompson, Theresa Ward.

Task Force on Hunger Sets Training Sessions

Norman Faramelli, chairman of The Episcopal World Hunger Task Force, is convinced the Church must involve itself in the political arena if it is to carry out its mission to the outcasts of the world.

"Relief work must be more than assistance with pity and compassion," said Faramelli. "The hunger issue demands a redistribution of wealth and resources."

The Task Force is holding training meetings in Denver, March 4-8 and in Louisville, March 16-20. Representatives from every province in the Episcopal Church have been invited.

"In the training meetings," Faramelli said, "we will link the personal and political dimensions of the hunger issue with the expectation that out of these meetings a network will be formed which will move beyond lifestyles and relief, as important as these considerations are, to the fundamental issue of social justice."

Among the leaders for the Denver and Louisville meetings are Steve Brooks of the Food Research Action Center, New York, and Arthur Simon of "Bread for the World," Washington, D.C.

Statement of Affirmation and Invitation

The Board of Directors of The Episcopal Church Publishing Company wish to associate themselves with the editorial staff of *The Witness* in supporting the following statement:

It is important today in the life of our Church that the relationship be made clear between the attention being given the ordination of women, and the perennial concerns of the mission of the Church.

The ordination of women is an important theological issue. We attest that exhaustive study and debate have established the theological necessity of the ordination of women. It is required by the proper understanding of the nature of God and of the divine intention in the incarnation. Our concern here, however, is in the relationship between the ordination question and our understanding of mission.

The scandal of the ordination issue, as seen by many people in and out of the Church, is its being a tempest in a teapot. Many wonder how, with the very continuance of the human species in question, we can justify our expenditure of time and effort on an intramural concern of the Church.

The ordination of women *is* an issue with its focus within the Episcopal Church. But this issue is also illustrative of and directly related to other concerns of national and international importance.

This issue tests the freedom of the Church to be responsive to human needs and the claims of justice. In the Episcopal Church, throughout Anglicanism, in Protestant denominations and in the Roman Catholic

communion, this issue is opening up the deeper question of the rigidity and insensitivity of the authority structures of the Church. Where authority becomes identified with injustice, in or out of the Church, there is an urgent issue of Christian mission.

Therefore, we see a direct line from the ordination question to the problems resulting from unjust structures elsewhere in our society. The problems of poverty and famine, of racism and sexism, of oppression between nations, of environmental exploitation, are not separate problems that lend themselves to separate solutions. Rather, they are all related, inter-locked in the social, economic and political structures of our society. Like the ordination issue, these issues test the ability of authority structures to respond to the claims of justice and human need.

We see the ordination question, then, as integrally related to the social mission of the Church today. The Church must seek to model in its own life what it seeks to achieve in its mission. We are committed to the ordination of women because resolving that issue leads into the deepest concerns of the social mission of the Church.

Readers of *The Witness* are invited to submit reports on a wide variety of subjects and events looked at from many perspectives. Send reports to *The Witness/Network Reports*, 17187 Wildemere, Detroit, Michigan 48221.

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company

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