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# THE WITNESS

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## Church Flouts Boycott

I read with interest the article by Mary Lou Suhor on her experiences with the Associated Church Press around their holding a meeting in a state which had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment (June WITNESS). I agree that it is most important that Christians listen to the importance being placed on the boycott of these states and act on it.

But now the Episcopal Church itself is breaking the boycott! Flagrantly and knowingly. The Office of the General Convention has announced that we will meet in 1982 not in Milwaukee in ratified Wisconsin, but in New Orleans in non-ratified Louisiana.

What can we do? Certainly, at least, we must write, we must protest, we must make our voices heard. And we have leaders who are supposed to be committed to this very issue: Bishops Paul Moore, Otis Charles and Coleman McGehee are all three sponsors of the Religious Committee for the ERA. We need to turn to them to ask them to make their membership on this important committee not just a signature on a letterhead, but a primary focus of their work with the Church.

Ms. Suhor has certainly shown us how and why the issue is so important. But why is the General Convention, in particular, such a priority?

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church is one of the largest denominational meetings held in this country. Its very size and the large amount of publicity it generates will all the more focus attention upon our meeting in an unratified state.

The size of the General Convention is

so large that only a few cities can accommodate the meeting. It also follows that New Orleans has only a limited number of conventions this size which it can draw. The presence or the absence of the General Convention will be much more impressive financially to the city and the state than will the smaller conferences that might boycott the city.

The timing of the change in meeting site is of great importance. The resistance for other groups to change the site of meetings in the past has come from the difficulty of planning for such events and the impossibilities of changes once decisions have been made. We can stop that planning now.

One of the most important issues is that the site is being changed from a ratified state to an un-ratified state. If the Episcopal Church supports such a change now, it gives credence to the expressed belief of the leaders in these states that churches will treat ERA and women's rights as a passing fad. The change will have terribly disheartening meanings for those in denominations such as the American Baptists who are trying to have their conventions moved out of unratified states.

I am horrified at the prospect of the ERA winning extension and our finding ourselves one state short of ratification at the end of the extension period in 1982 with one of the holdouts being Louisiana.

**John Preston**  
New York, N.Y.

*(For those who wish to write concerning the General Convention's flaunting of the ERA boycott: the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Diocese of New York, 1047 Amsterdam Ave., New York, N.Y. 10024; the Rt. Rev. Otis Charles, Diocese of Utah, 231 East 1st Street, South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111; the Rt. Rev. Coleman McGehee, Diocese of Michigan, 4800 Woodward Blvd., Detroit, Mich. 48201).*

## Intends to Quote

I'm forwarding a copy of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation resolution on Religion and Human Dignity

adopted by the membership at the UUWF Biennial convention in Chicago last year. A nearly identical resolution on Women and Religion was subsequently adopted at the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

You can see why the article by Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Women's Reformation in Motion," (May WITNESS) is one I would like permission to copy for circulation to the UUWF Administrative Board and to Paul Carnes, president of the UUA. Meanwhile, I intend to quote from it, in a speech I'm giving next week, and to use that wonderful sentence from Georgia Fuller's article in the same issue: "We believe that our living and thinking is the raw data for theology."

I'm also enclosing my check for a subscription.

**Nancy S. Prichard**  
Executive Director, UUWF  
Boston, Mass.

## Martyrdom Revisited

Your July issue moved me to write. That may be your best yet. I read, in sequence, Berrigan's letter from jail, your editorial on the Council action re Cueto/Nemikin. The Skinner and Thorman articles which followed were excellent, but Stringfellow's related exactly to what I was thinking — one of the best things I've read in years.

But my thoughts involve the issues raised by your article about the Council's treatment of Ms. Cueto and Ms. Nemikin. I think the Presiding Bishop and Council are failing to recognize what, in this area of the Law vs. the Individual Conscience, is of prime importance.

The Anglo-American law system, one of the glories of Western Civilization, has established basic principles concerning the authority to demand truth, openness and cooperation from citizens called upon to testify before courts. Without these, the judicial system could not possibly function. Thus, the finding of contempt and the severe sentencing of the two women is understandable. But the courts are, and must be, much concerned with

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# THE WITNESS

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## Puebla: 'Twixt Fear & Hope

Robert L. DeWitt

With the passing of Pope Paul VI, a dramatic chapter in history has come to an end and an even more crucial one is about to begin. The unique influence of that office and its incumbent on world affairs and on public opinion is difficult to exaggerate. As THE WITNESS goes to press, the process is already underway for the election of a new pope.

One of the legacies which Paul leaves to his successor is the dynamic, indeed, volatile situation of the church in Latin America. Traditionally, that church has been one of established privilege, with little concern for the great majority of its people — the wretched, the campesinos, the Indians.

But the church through its apostolic traditions and scriptures always bears within it the seed of its own reform. So it is that in Latin America, a major reformation may be in the making — a sign of which is the Conference of Latin American Bishops in October in Puebla, Mexico. It is not solely a "religious" reformation, but one which sees religion as incarnational, that the concerns of faithful piety cannot be divorced from the injustices that afflict people's lives. Church and society alike are the domain of God.

Such concerns can be counted upon to elicit opposition from the established order. There was considerable unease in the Vatican under Pope Paul and elsewhere throughout the Roman Catholic Church over how "radical" the documents issuing from Puebla might be. Efforts have been made to influence that conference toward moderation, lest it precipitate changes both in church and state which would not be welcomed by those in positions of power.

But the church in Latin America has not quite reached the point of reformation. It is in a situation similar to that period which preceded the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Long before Luther's time, the Waldensians and the Albigensians with their

doughty communalism were groping toward a way of reforming the church. So also were the Lollards in 14th century England, with Wycliffe and his restoration of the Bible to the common people. Even the winsome and obedient Franciscans in the 13th century were knocking humbly at the gates of structures and practices which were demeaning the people of God. In the 15th century, strident figures like Savonarola were storming those same gates. The church is properly and always in a process of reformation.

So it is, vividly, in the church of Latin America. As some have said, in that vast area there was not class conflict so much as the continuing collision of two civilizations, two races: the conquistadores from Spain and Portugal who preempted the people and their land some centuries ago, and the Indians of those ancient tribes who have been in a condition of servitude ever since the conquest. Yet, regardless of the genesis of the conflict, it paid its inevitable and tragic tribute in the familiar coinage of marginalized humanity — poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, loss of freedom. As can so commonly be traced in the annals of colonial conquest in the Western world, the cross accompanied the sword, and has been its beneficiary ever since.

Then in recent years we have learned how the historic diplomacy of the sword has been augmented by the dollar diplomacy of modern giant corporations, making even more tragic the oppression under which the Third World struggles. Consequently, in Latin America conditions are crying for reform. Forerunners of such a reformation have been in evidence. The Cuban revolution has given hope to many in other countries of Latin America. The revolutionary Che Guevara of Argentina and the guerrilla priest, Camilo Torres of Colombia, have become folk heroes. And a rising crescendo of meetings, papers, speeches, and actions by both bishops and priests have with increasing daring

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# Reclaiming the Bible Through Storytelling

by Sheila D. Collins

When I attended seminary, theology began deductively, with abstract syllogisms composed by men, usually with German names — men who had never had to change and wash dirty diapers, sit for six hours in the welfare office, stay up all night with a sick child, pick cotton in a dusty field, sell their bodies for a living, or work all day in the mills and then come home to do the dinner, the laundry, and the dishes.

Such men had wives and secretaries to take care of their bodily needs. Their sons and daughters went to Harvard and Oberlin (or their German equivalents), not to Pleiku or the Scotia mine pits. There were paid handsomely to spin out beautiful theories which only their peers could understand. They claimed that their theories were derived from the Bible, and it took them hundreds of pages to explain why. I believe it took them hundreds of pages because their process was inherently unbiblical.

If theology is to be meaningful for us, it must not start with abstractions, but with *our stories* — just as the early Hebrews and Christians of the Bible began with theirs. Somehow, our churches got the order reversed. How many of us were taught as children to memorize Bible stories and verses before we ever understood or had a chance to articulate our own story? We

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**Sheila Collins** is with the National Division of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. The above is excerpted from Document #3 of a series distributed by the Secretariat of Theology in the Americas in New York, and is a result of Ms. Collins work with the TIA Women's Project, "Women, Work and the Economy."

cannot appreciate the meaning of another's experience — especially if that experience occurred two and three thousand years ago — until we have asked the right questions of our own.

I see the Bible, not as a set of facts or propositions to which we must twist our experience to fit, but as a guide or primer to participating in the creation of our own biblical history. The mistake (or perhaps the deliberate tactic) of the official Christian church was to make us believe that biblical history stopped at the end of the first century A.D., just as our schools have taught us that American history began with Columbus or the Mayflower. To the extent that those of us who call ourselves Christian still find important the cluster of meanings surrounding the Exodus, the entry into the Promised Land, the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, we participate in shaping the continuation of that story, just as surely as did Moses and Miriam, Peter, Priscilla and Paul.

Theology begins with our stories: What we do with our time; how we feel about our children, our husbands, our bosses; how we feel about money and who gets it; what we do when we get up in the morning; how we make it through the day; what pains us, enrages us, saddens and humiliates us; what makes us laugh; what enlightens and empowers us; what keeps us holding on in moments of despair; where we find separation and alienation; where we find true community and trust.

When I say that theology starts with our stories I am not saying anything new. Testifying is a cherished tradition and telling our stories to one another is

what women have always done — over the garden fence, at the food co-op, down at the pump. The tradition is the same, only the structure and significance we give to it are different.

Testifying in church usually signifies you've already been saved. One isn't supposed to talk about troubles unless one's already found Jesus and arrived in the Promised Land. But if you're still in the Wilderness, it's pretty hard to see your way through. And if you're still in bondage back in Egypt, you might not even know there is a liberator who has just been found among the bullrushes. Yet if the Hebrews had not preserved the stories as they went along — stories of groaning and complaining; stories of despair — if they had had no rich oral tradition to preserve the sting of the lash, the memory of having sown while another reaped, how would they have known what the taste of liberation was all about? How would they have recognized it when it came?

Our churches, promulgating a pietism which is false to the continuous reversals of our experience and to the experience of those in the Bible, have not offered us women a place to speak our bitterness. And if we have not been able to name our pain, to see the collective parameters of our oppression, how shall we be able to name the Kingdom which lies past our suffering except as that "Jubilee Land" to which we return beyond the veil of death?

By telling our stories we must force our churches to hear what we have suffered and the ways in which we have gotten through. We must pull them away from their domesticity and otherworldly preoccupations and force them to deal



with the nitty gritty of bread and justice. But we cannot tell our stories as we have done in the past — as an endless litany of individual disasters and unimportant gossip. We must come together in a new way: consciously, politically. Our stories are of individuals, but only as they are told collectively do they move us forward.

In the process of telling our stories as a conscious, political act, we begin to define ourselves and our reality. We cease, thenceforth, to be defined by the men who run our churches, by the corporations who project our images, or by the men in Washington who seek to control our destinies.

The Hebrews told their stories as a conscious political act in order to define themselves over against the dominant cultures of their day. The early Christians who preserved the stories of Jesus paid for these political acts with their lives. They told the story of Jesus in such a way as to set him over against the imperial, emperor worshipping cult of Rome. The story was so powerful that Rome had finally to coopt it in establishing Christianity as a state religion under the emperor Constantine. Women were part of the power of that early story. Perhaps that is why it was so subversive of both established religion and the state. Women were the first to tell the world of the events of the resurrection. They traveled around as preachers and teachers of the new message, refusing to play the tradition-bound roles of breeder and domestic.

Subversive language, however, has to be constantly reinvented because it is continually being coopted by the powerful. We can no longer afford to use some of this language; for example, the royal male language for God, nor the language of the “blood of the lamb” or the “suffering servant” for Jesus. Cut off from the socio-political context which charged original Christian language with its significance, that language, in the hands of a male-dominated clergy, used by a church which reinforces powerful business interests and allies itself with the state, has become a weapon of cultural imperialism. Notice how the emerging coalition of the Right — composed of John Birchers, the Ku Klux Klan, large insurance companies and frightened housewives — is using the language and institutions of Christianity against everything that Jesus stood for: against the implicit faithfulness found among the pariahs of his time (in our age it is the gays); against the strength, courage and independence of women; against the rights of the poor and oppressed; against communities of new families, formed for the purpose of sustaining one another even though they may not be related by blood.

So much of the old language has been corrupted beyond recognition that we must write our own dictionary from the words which express best our own experience and the experience of the as yet unarticulated lives of our sisters past and present. This does not mean that we throw out the Christian tradition. On the contrary, what we must do is learn to reappropriate that faith history in a new way. Some language will have to be discarded; other language turned inside out. But we cannot find the handles of reappropriation until we have gone through the process of collective, politicized storytelling and the collection of language for a new dictionary.

In the process of collective storytelling we begin to see patterns; networks of oppression connecting women in Harlan, Ky. with women in

Altoona, Pa. and upstate New York. If we go far enough, we unravel the skein which leads us back to our great grandmothers, across the country to women in Chicago and on the Cheyenne Indian reservation in Wyoming, to women in the Bantustans of South Africa and women in the countrysides of Puerto Rico and Chile. We begin to ask ourselves: Why these patterns of defeat? Why after a century of struggle is our land more devastated than ever; why after the advent of birth control and women's liberation are more 13, 14, and 15 year olds having babies than ever before and why are women in Puerto Rico, New York, on Indian reservations and in Appalachia being sterilized in large numbers? Why are women, as a group, losing ground according to every socio-economic indicator available? Recognizing that our oppression is so widespread, our defeats so redundant, relativizes our suffering. We no longer feel ashamed of our failure to live up to the individualized standards set by the men in Washington or Madison Avenue, knowing that our oppression is a small part of the systematized repression of the majority of the earth's people.

Such knowledge is powerful. We begin to identify not with the privileged, whom we have always been taught to emulate, but with the common people of the earth. It was such identification Jesus talked about in his Sermon on the Mount. A colonialist church has never been able to understand the meaning of those passages which speak of the first being last and the meek inheriting the earth. Such knowledge is the beginning of Wisdom, who is personified in the Old Testament as a woman, wild and unladylike, shouting aloud in the streets for bread and justice because no one in the synagogues, the courts or the legislature would listen.

As we collect our stories they begin to shape themselves into a body of experience — a kind of litany — which can no longer be denied. They become the means for a collective self-expression which feeds and strengthens those who are able to hear, just as the

stories of the Hebrews in bondage in Egypt, in flight and in temporary restitution, repeated generation after generation, have strengthened the diaspora. Just as the stories of Jesus, told and retold, sustained the early Christian community through persecution.

Through the telling and retelling of our stories the inessentials are gradually sloughed off — those inessentials like varied colors and shapes of leaves — until only the veins, the life-bearing vessels remain. It is then that we begin to see the patterns of triumph, steadfastness, salvation, and liberation inherent in them. As the early Hebrews and early Christians looked back over their lives and discovered these patterns, so we discover what it was in women's experience which has kept women going through tragedy and devastation, through the daily rituals of feeding and caring. We discover the secret which keeps hope more alive in the oppressed who are conscious of the source of their oppression than in those who do the oppressing. Only then can we name that which has brought us through as the God of our experience, and distinguish with any clarity the true prophets from the false.

The process of discovering and naming that God is the process of our own liberation or salvation. It is the Kingdom of God Jesus spoke about as being like a mustard seed in our midst. Salvation for us is dynamic, this worldly. It is not a static, blissful realm beyond the cares of this earth. We were never promised a life free from fear and struggle. We were offered the hope that by committing ourselves to the struggle for a righteous society in solidarity with the wretched of the earth we would discover the secret of life. Remember what Jesus said to his disciples?

*Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from*

*heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they will put to death; you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair on your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.*

"By your endurance you will gain your lives." Jesus didn't mean by that that we

## Filmstrip Features 4 Women's Stories

**"Come a Long Way to Stand Here", an hour long filmstrip and cassette tape through which four poor women tell their stories, has been developed by the Project on Women, Work and the Economy of the Theology in the Americas. Aimed at exploring the relationship between Christian faith and the economic and political realities facing women today, the filmstrip comes with operating instructions and an extensive discussion guide. The guide includes Bible study material and action suggestions.**

**Funded by Church Women United and the National YWCA, "Come a Long Way to Stand Here" is designed for use with small groups of women. It may be ordered from the Project on Women, Work and the Economy, Theology in the Americas, 475 Riverside Drive Room 1268, New York, New York 10027. Rental fee is \$30. The filmstrip and materials may be purchased for \$60.**

would gain individual wealth and prosperity as so many pseudo-Christian evangelists would like us to believe. Rather, it is in the midst of the struggle against debased and deformed human existence with its demands for moral sensitivity, self-discipline, solidarity and the constant resetting of one's sights upon the vision of liberation that one is closest to the pulse of the universe, to the secret of human life. Feminist theologian, Rosemary Ruether, has pointed out in her book, *The Radical Kingdom*, that "such a struggle even in its outward failure and disappointment, is recollected as a time of fellowship, commitment and ecstatic hopefulness as the highest point of living."

As we redefine ourselves through the telling of our stories, discover the sources and patterns of our oppression, and name the God of *our* salvation, we begin to reappropriate the Christian tradition and the special folkways in which it was transmitted in a way which is truly empowering and liberating.

Perhaps when Appalachian women begin to share the stories of how their sons were dragged off to a war in South East Asia, fought to propitiate the American male God of power, they can identify with that Sarah of ancient times who watched in the same immobilized way as her husband, Abraham, took the son of her old age to the mountains as an offering, in the mistaken notion that God demands the sacrifice of the innocents for the sins of the guilty.

Perhaps when Black women share stories of how their sons and husbands were taken from them through slavery, hunger, dope, war and the criminal justice system, they can gain strength through remembering Hagar, Abraham's concubine, who, through the jealousy of Sarah, was banished to the wilderness with her infant son but because of her faithfulness was promised by God that her son would live to establish a nation.

Perhaps when Appalachian women begin to share stories of their aunts who, driven from the farms to the cities during

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# Why Extend the ERA?

by Joan Whipple Howarth

The Equal Rights Amendment is in trouble. The proposed amendment would correct the 200 year injustice of Thomas Jefferson's "all men are created equal" by adding to the constitution the simple principle of equality between men and women. The ERA was passed by well over two-thirds of Congress and sent to the states for ratification six-and-a-half years ago. Thirty-five states have ratified it, but three more are needed to meet the requirement of endorsement by three-fourths of the states. Public support for the ERA is growing (recent polls indicate that majorities in both ratified and unratified states support it). Votes in the legislatures of as yet unratified states are becoming increasingly close.

The ERA is in trouble, however, because in its resolving clause Congress included the "traditional" seven year limit for ratification by the states. That seven year period will be up on March 22, 1979. The realities of state legislative calendars mean that the ERA will not be voted on in even one non-ratified state between now and then, let alone three. In other words, unless Congress votes to extend the seven year limit, time has already run out for the ERA.

Some 90,000 people marched in Washington on July 9 to show that the issue is alive and to demand that Congress vote the extension. Backers of the ERA extension concede that it will not be easy to convince enough of the 98 men in the Senate to withstand the pressure of the threatened anti-ERA

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**Joan W. Howarth** is a law student at the University of Southern California and a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. She works with the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation (NCARL) and Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW).

filibuster. (Senator Muriel Humphrey is a firm supporter of the ERA and the extension. Senator Maryon Allen of Alabama, who also replaced her husband, James, in the Senate following his death recently, is opposed.) The key to building public pressure is to explain the extension issue for those who support the ERA principle but are hesitant, distrustful, or just plain confused about the extension.

Even before discussing extension, however, it is important to put to rest the myth that passage of the ERA is not really needed, since women's rights have been and can be advanced through anti-discrimination legislation. Certainly important victories have been made, but this piecemeal approach has left gaping holes. For instance, in many states today the common possessions of a married couple are legally considered the property of the husband, resulting in countless economic inequities. Consider, for example, the family farmers, who together spent a lifetime working a farm. If the wife dies first, the husband keeps the property without problem. But if the husband dies first, the wife must pay inheritance tax on her own farm, often an amount so large that she is forced to sell.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act, often cited as a reason that the ERA is unnecessary, prohibits sex discrimination in employment but does *not* include the federal government. Last year, the Supreme Court upheld the right of a *public* technological school in Philadelphia to deny admission to Susan Vorshheimer *solely* because she is female, in spite of the fact that there is no other comparable school open to her. No wonder the gap in pay scales between men and women continues to widen. The ERA is more than a symbolic issue. It is the necessary first step

toward correcting these pervasive patterns of economic injustice. An extension of the ratification period is the necessary next step for survival of the ERA.

The ERA passed by Congress is in two parts: The substantive text that the states are considering (see box), and a procedural "resolving clause" which sets out the mechanism for ratification, namely that the ERA would become part of the Constitution when ratified by three-fourths of the states, which had seven years to consider it. The issue, then, is simply whether Congress has the authority under the Constitution to extend the ratification period it set in 1972.

This question has never been raised before. In the past 100 years, only one other amendment has been seriously considered by Congress but not ratified by the states. That was the Child Labor Amendment, which was dropped when Supreme Court rulings made it unnecessary. Also, the tradition of the seven year limit has relatively recent origins. It was first attached to the 18th Amendment (Prohibition), and has been attached to all amendments since, except for the 19th. (The ERA will be the 27th Amendment.)

The House Judiciary subcommittee charged with investigating the possibility of extension called on constitutional experts to analyze the issue, as well as ERA advocates and attackers to present their points of view. A majority of the subcommittee and later the full Judiciary Committee were convinced by scholars from Harvard, Yale, Columbia and other law schools, as well as lawyers from the Justice Department, that an ERA extension is not only legal, but also desirable.

Starting point of the testimony was that the Supreme Court has already interpreted the Constitution to give

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## THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

### Section 1.

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

### Section 2.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

### Section 3.

This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

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Congress control over setting ratification periods, limited only by a standard of "reasonableness" which reflects "an appraisal of a great variety of relevant conditions, political, social and economic . . ." Certainly the same political, social, and economic conditions that prompted Congress to propose the ERA in 1972 are just as reasonable today.

Equally compelling legal arguments for extension come out of an examination of the purpose of the seven year limit. When Congress attached the seven year period to the ERA, it did so almost without discussion, merely following the tradition started with the 18th Amendment. When the limit was first attached, however, it was discussed in detail. The stated purpose was to prevent the free-floating through state legislatures of proposals that had gone stale and lost vitality. It was essentially a housekeeping measure. One Senator pressed for a time limitation "so that we will not hand down to posterity a conglomerate mass of amendments floating around in a cloudy, nebulous, hazy way." When members of the 91st Congress discussed attaching the seven year period to the ERA it was for the same purpose — to prevent a proposal from "roaming" around the states indefinitely.

Phyllis Schlafly and other ERA opponents characterize the ratification process as something like a timed race, a constitutional Beat-the-Clock, where the point of the deadline is to make the

task at hand more difficult. Certainly the limitation has had that effect in this case, but the *purpose* is to ensure that state legislatures will consider the amendment while it is still a matter of national concern and interest. Active interest in and support for the ERA is probably at its highest level since it was introduced. Since the ERA has not grown stale, the ratification period should be extended, to allow the debate to run its course.

The history of the seven year limit reveals two more interesting legal points for extension. When the seven year period was first used, it was incorporated right into the text of the amendment, which was voted on by the states. Beginning with the 23rd Amendment however, Congress removed the seven year provision from the text, placing it in a procedural "resolving clause." The ERA takes this form. The state legislatures consider only the substance of the amendment; Congress retained consideration of the time period for itself.

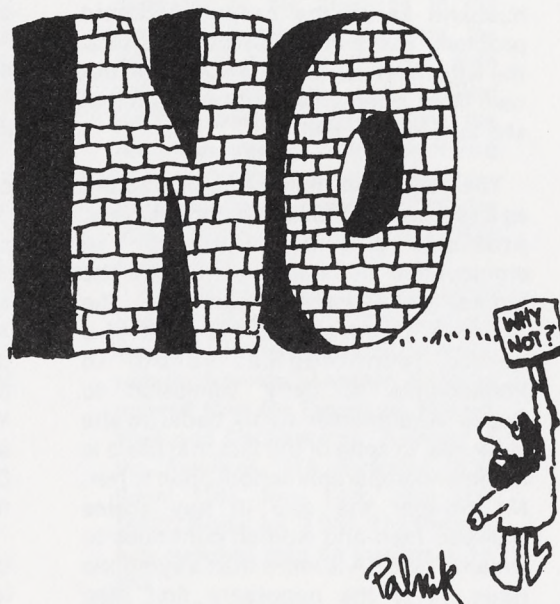
Legal scholars point to yet another indication in the language of the ERA that extension is entirely appropriate. When the seven year period was first used, the language stipulated that the amendment would become part of the

Constitution "only if" ratified within seven years. Congress eliminated the "only if" language in the 25th and 26th Amendments, and in the ERA. The clause simply states that the amendment would be valid "when ratified . . . within seven years . . ." Government testimony suggested that this revision reflects the change from using the seven year limit as a deadline, to understanding it as setting out a guaranteed minimum period in which states may act.

All of this shows that Congress has the *power* to extend the ratification period. Even after understanding the legalities involved, some supporters of the ERA *principle* remain unconvinced about *extension*. It is, after all, a new idea. Some fear that extension could set a dangerous precedent to come back to haunt us if, for example, an anti-busing or anti-abortion amendment is ever passed by Congress.

If that fear is realistic, the damage has already been done. Should the time come when support in Congress for an anti-busing amendment is so strong that Congress wants to extend its ratification period, it will know that it has the power to do it. A troop of constitutional scholars has already testified that extension is legal. In the current debate, the only question is whether Congress supports the ERA enough to want to give it this extra push. In the horrendous possibility of a similarly worded anti-busing amendment, extension would be decided by the degree of Congressional opposition to busing, and by the corresponding willingness to give the amendment the extra support of an extension. The way to defeat an anti-busing amendment is to build support for integration, not defeat the ERA extension. It is the height of naivete to expect that busing foes would oppose an anti-busing amendment extension, merely because the ERA extension was never passed. Defeat of the ERA is too great a price for such illusory protection.

In fact, concern about the apparent growing strength of conservative politics is another reason for vigorous





support of the ERA extension. Defeat of the ERA would be the great victory yet for those who are fighting for the "good old days," when labor unions were powerless and abortions illegal; when gays were institutionalized or jailed, and different races never mixed, certainly not in school. To withhold support from the ERA extension procedure in order to prevent possible future injustice is like burning a Vietnamese village in order to save it; it just doesn't make sense.

Conservatives have succeeded in holding back the ERA with well-financed campaigns that play on fears and insecurities while confusing and distorting the issues. Thousands of voters are only now understanding that the ERA is not about unisex toilets.

ERA opponents have not only distorted the issues, but they have had perhaps unprecedented success in manipulating legislators' capacities for opportunism. The prime tool has been the March 22 deadline. The deadline creates the perfect situation for stalling by ERA opponents, joined by those undeclared legislators who instinctively avoid having to vote on anything controversial. Instead of debating the issue, they are running out the clock.

Equally significant, the deadline has turned the ERA into a "tradeable" issue. Legislators believe they will not be held accountable by the ERA lobby because the issue will have disappeared on March 22. This explains why so many state legislators who were publicly on record for the ERA (including several who campaigned as pro-ERA candidates with pro-ERA money) felt safe to trade off their ERA commitments when the time came to vote, in exchange for support from ERA opponents on other issues. For instance, in North Carolina, where four publicly committed pro-ERA votes switched at the last moment, two will not be up for re-election until 1980; in South Carolina, where three switched, none will be up for re-election before 1979; in Florida, where four switched, two will not be up until 1980. *In each of those states, it was the switched votes that made the difference.* In Nevada, after the Senate

unexpectedly passed the ERA, 11 publicly committed pro-ERA legislators switched sides to defeat it in the House. Eight of the 11 were elected with the help of pro-ERA money. An extension will allow time for the defeat and replacement of these turncoats, who believed themselves shielded by the March 22 deadline.

Extension will also heighten the economic impact of the boycott of the 15 non-ERA states. The National Organization for Women (NOW) has been joined by over 200 organizations (including the Episcopal Church Publishing Co., publishers of THE WITNESS) in refusing to bring conferences or conventions to non-ratified states. The impact of the boycott has been staggering; both Louisiana and Missouri have tried court action to force NOW to stop it. One Illinois state legislator testifying against the extension, complained that the state was already losing too much money because of the boycott, and the extension would only prolong the losses. (In Illinois, by the way, the ERA has been passed by a majority of both houses, but a new state constitutional provision requires a three-fifths margin.)

Those who say that the ERA has had its chance should look again at the history of this country, and remember that justice for oppressed groups has never been won quickly or easily. The first organizing conference for women's suffrage was in Seneca Falls in 1848; the suffrage amendment was not finally incorporated until 1920, after 72 years of struggle. Of the 15 states that have not yet ratified the ERA, seven did not ratify the women's suffrage amendment until several decades after it was certified as part of the Constitution. In fact, five of those states have only endorsed it within the last 10 years. Mississippi to this day has not ratified the women's suffrage amendment. Abolition of slavery was debated for decades, and the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments were won only after Civil War.

The ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1923. It took almost a half-

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**DATES OF RATIFICATION  
NINETEENTH AMENDMENT  
(Women's Suffrage)  
BY NON-ERA STATES**

Alabama	1953*
Arizona	1920
Arkansas	1919
Florida	1969*
Georgia	1970*
Illinois	1919
Louisiana	1970*
Mississippi	Never
Missouri	1919
Nevada	1920
North Carolina	1971*
Oklahoma	1920
South Carolina	1969*
Utah	1919
Virginia	1952*

\*Ratified only after the amendment had been certified as part of the Constitution in 1920.

— NOW/ERA Information Packet

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century of pressure to get it passed. In the six-and-a-half years since being proposed by Congress it has been ratified by two-thirds of the states, representing 75% of the country's population. It is now only a handful of votes away from final ratification.

Today's extension drive is the culmination of all those years of struggle. If Congress does not pass the ERA extension, the women's movement will not pack up and fade away, but equality between women and men will have been dealt a serious blow. As NOW has declared, this is truly a state of emergency for women's rights. Friends and colleagues must be alerted; sermons delivered, letters written. Now is the time to write women into the Constitution. Write, phone, or telegram Washington today.

Mailing addresses for Congress are:

Sen. _____	Rep. _____
Senate Office Building	House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510	Washington, D.C. 20515

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# Lambeth: An Outsider Looks Inside

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The Rev. Patricia Park is on the staff of St. Paul's Church Richmond, Va. She traveled extensively prior to the Minneapolis General Convention of the Episcopal Church on behalf of women's ordination. She recently attended the Lambeth Conference and was interviewed by THE WITNESS upon her return from England.



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## Pat, invitations to Lambeth were not easily come by. How did you happen to get there?

It all goes back to the Episcopal Women's Caucus meetings earlier this year. Our agenda included discussion of bishops and what, if anything, Lambeth might say about women's ordination and women and the episcopacy. After the debacle of Port St. Lucie our fears were that when the bishops gathered, our liberal friendly supporters would forget women. It became clear that we needed to send women, particularly women priests, to Lambeth. It was agreed that I should go and that we would ask Martha Blacklock (Archdeacon, Newark) if she would go too. How we got the money, press credentials, tickets and accommodations would take too long to tell. Suffice to say that in six weeks it was all accomplished.

## Were you there in time for the opening?

Yes, and would you believe that Martha and I were randomly assigned

front row seats in the Cathedral for the opening Eucharist? One of the many "acts of God" while I was there! We were in our collars, which obviously made people nervous. Our seats were in the west end, facing toward the middle, and as the bishops processed by we greeted each other eye-to-eye. They moved past us quickly, into the inner sanctum. Archbishop Donald Coggan preached, calling upon the bishops to listen to God and what God has to say about the world and the church.

## There was evidence of sexism at Lambeth?

From the beginning it was clear that women — wives, presswomen, laywomen, and certainly ordained women made the conference uneasy. Marion Kelleran, Cynthia Wedel, Barbara Ward, and an Indian M.D., Dr. Lucie Oommen, who was an observer, were the only women participating in the conference. Some others served as interpreters.

But sexism is not yet a conscious sin of the church. During the two weeks I was at Lambeth it was interesting to note that speakers became aware of their sexist language only toward the end. In England, sexist advertising is much more obvious than it is in the United States. For instance, the British Railway had a billboard telling the businessman how to keep his wife from spending too much money in London by buying her a round trip ticket for one day.

The Church of England will be voting on ordination of women in November. Because of their unresolvedness there seemed to be a desire to keep the issue as low key as possible, so as not to pressure the church. On the other hand, the secular press was very interested. Both the *London Times* and the *Telegraph* ended up running editorials opposing, albeit gently, women priests.

## Did the press interview you?

Yes. On Monday, the press arrived — BBC, the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, the

*Guardian*, radio, and even *Time* magazine. Both Martha and I gave many interviews and answered questions all day. When I was on BBC, the interviewer asked if I thought that God, when he was creating the world, wanted women priests. I was so offended by the way he stated the question that I simply said I didn't believe God was a "he." The interviewer was so thrown by this that it completely broke down the conversation. And someone had told me, "This guy is cool. You can't say anything to throw him. If you want, you can even be a little exciting." So I felt free to say what I thought — which I didn't think was all that bad! Yet this thought that God wasn't a "he" threw him. He said, "Well, I guess I've been wrong all these years." And I replied, "I guess you have!"

#### What else did the press ask?

One of the Rhodesian bishops had told them that women couldn't be priests because it took "blood, sweat and tears," and only men could take that. And besides, he said, men needed women to be their helpers. When I was interviewed right after that, they asked if I knew that in South Africa, women cannot go into the mines, just as they cannot be priests. The press asked those sorts of questions — like vintage 1973 in the States — reducing the issue to sex roles and jokes. The questions concerning ordination were not about sincere commitment within a theological perspective. And I find those "joking" questions very offensive. On the other hand, I feel that you shouldn't take yourselves so damn seriously that you can't even laugh. But frequently when the level of the questions is so superficial you feel that when you answer, you've been had. And I'm an expert on that! I spoke in so many churches in the United States between 1973 and 1976! I find the attitude in England very similar to "before Philadelphia" in the States. Remember, when Philadelphia and the first women's ordination hit, people began to say, "They are not joking!"

#### How was Lambeth structured?

Each day was the same. Eucharist began the day at 7:15 a.m. followed by breakfast, coffee, devotional lecture, plenary group, break for lunch at 12:30; picking up again at 3 p.m., with of course, a break at 4:15 for tea, evensong at 5:45 and dinner at 6:30. Weekends were free.

It was clear from the beginning that outsiders were not welcome. Press accommodations were minimal. We were only allowed into plenary meetings and on some days, the conference did not meet at all in plenary session. No one from the outside could even eat a meal at the university with the bishops. There was no message center for them to receive incoming calls. They had to make all their calls from various phone booths. I describe this to point out the highly controlled setting. One bishop told me it was very confusing. He wondered whether they were there to pray and be a semi-monastic community, or to work hard to provide courageous leadership to the Anglican community. This created a great deal of frustration.

#### What about the bishops' wives?

Well, in the evenings in downtown Canterbury there could be found the

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### What Is Lambeth?

**The Lambeth Conference is a conclave of bishops of the Anglican Communion. That communion consists of 40 national churches from all continents, in communion with each other and with the See of Canterbury (church of England). The Archbishop of Canterbury is President of the Council.**

**The member churches, such as the Episcopal Church in the United States, the Anglican Church of Canada, etc. are called provinces. Lambeth does not have legislative authority over the provinces, but its pronouncements exercise considerable influence. The first Lambeth Conference was held in 1867, and it has met at 10 year intervals ever since.**

other side of the conference. Occasionally bishops could be seen shyly meeting their wives for dinner. Many of the wives were staying in Canterbury or in the surrounding area, since they were not allowed to stay with their husbands. The Chancellor of the University of Kent remarked that the celibate arrangements had not been because of the university's limitations; in fact, he questioned the rationale for it. The living arrangements would have been tolerable, I believe, if some effort had been made to accommodate the women at the plenary sessions. On several occasions bishops' wives came and were escorted out of the building and told to leave.

#### Back to structure, were there any small group discussions?

Yes. The three sections which had individual groups in them were Section 1, *What Is the Church For?*, dealing basically with roots of sexuality, socialism, Marxism, family, and 20th-century technology in relation to human life. Section 2 was entitled *The People of God and Ministry*, and groups in it dealt with training for ministry and the ordination of women, worship and liturgical revision, as well as the function of bishops in the church. Section 3 was called *The Role of the Anglican Church Among the Churches*. Its groups dealt with the authority and independence of the Anglican community and the stance of the Anglican communion in ecumenical relations. The small groups met and reported to the section, then the section back to the plenary for any resolutions dealing with the Lambeth Conference.

#### Which speakers impressed you?

On July 24, the devotional lecture was led by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, known to many Americans as Anthony Bloom. He was followed by the noted economist Barbara Ward, the first and one of the few feminine voices at Lambeth. Her address was called "The

Conserving Society." It was a passionate, hard-hitting call for a reordering of the world's economy and value systems, particularly with regard to disarmament. The next morning she was followed by the Rev. Dr. Charles Elliott, Welsh professor of economics, who laid out the moral choices of society with regard to the future. I believe that these lectures clearly set the tone for Lambeth — the need for the church to become the advocate of the poor.

### **What about the hearings around women's ordination?**

Chairman of these hearings was Archbishop Gwilym Williams of Wales. He announced that there were 50 speakers lined up, each limited to 5 minutes. First was Canon John MacQuarrie of the University of Oxford, who said that he was personally in favor of ordaining women but in typical Anglican compromise hoped that the communion would wait until there was consensus. He was followed by Bishop John Krumm of Southern Ohio, who spoke clearly and well for ordination, followed by Bishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa who spoke, as a black person who has known oppression, for the liberation and recognition of women. Bishop John Walker and Bishop Stanley Atkins were the additional U.S. speakers. In summary, the African bishops were supportive, the English bishops cautious and divided.

The observers from the Roman and Orthodox Churches repeated their positions which had been written and distributed in advance. The Roman Catholic statement was a firm expression of the difficulties surrounding the ordination of women in ecumenical discussions with Rome, but ended on a promising note to continue the dialogue. The Orthodox statement was more strongly worded. It stated that the two subjects to be discussed were "the removal of the *filioque* clause from the text of the Creed used in the Anglican communion, and the ordination of women. The second of these questions has brought our

ecumenical dialogue to a point of acute crisis."

The Orthodox speaker got very emotional. He pointed his finger and talked about how the church should keep women humble.

The hearing brought nothing new.

During the tea break, an African bishop came over to me and said, "Your presence makes our debate more intense." When I told him that I was glad, his face lit up and he said, "Good luck."

### **Were there any socials?**

Oh, yes. On Tuesday the bishops went to London. To Lambeth Palace for lunch, to the Abbey for festal evensong, and to Buckingham Palace for a garden party. They were in their purple cassocks, and their wives were in afternoon frocks and hats. The expansive lawn at Buckingham palace filled with color and pageantry. As much as I hate to admit it, I enjoyed the whole tea party immensely. Watching everyone jockey to shake hands with the Queen Mother and watching Bishop Horace Donnegan (retired Bishop of New York) entertain Princess Margaret was worth the afternoon and the hat I had to wear.

### **Did any sidebar issues impress you?**

Yes, a message sent by the bishops at Lambeth to a service being held at Crossroads in South Africa, which was read at a service being held simultaneously at St. Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, supporting black South Africans. Most blacks in South Africa are welcome in what is called white South Africa as long as they are physically able to provide labor. These men are contract laborers who go home for three weeks a year. This makes a farce of their marriage vows. Recently their wives began to move their families into squatter camps to be near their husbands. The authorities demolished these camps, such as Modderdam, without any compunction, during the rainy and winter seasons. The Crossroads Community is a viable community of 20,000 people with a school and a church. The bishops'

message read in part, "We support your struggle for the right to a stable family life and pray that the authorities will not demolish your homes until they have provided you with adequate alternative housing near the place of work of the breadwinner." The service was moving, and nostalgic of the race and peace demonstrations in the United States. The most beautiful part was when Bishop Tutu sang the plaintive Black African National Anthem and the people joined in.

Then we journeyed to Westminster Abbey to lend support to the prayer vigil for women's ordination. At the Abbey the Christian Parity group was beginning a 24-hour prayer and fast vigil for the hearing on women's ordination. Led by the invincible Una Kröll, the group spent the night in St. Margaret's Church and stayed throughout the rain all day Monday. We couldn't help joking about the exhaustion of being a liberal!

### **How do you assess the role of the U.S. bishops at Lambeth?**

The bishops I had contact with — about 20 — were very concerned about what the people thought back home — which seemed to me like a new tune! The July issue of THE WITNESS carried articles on authority. The difference in the authority of American bishops was that they were a lot more concerned and caring about how their constituencies felt than were bishops from other provinces. There seemed to be much more of a dialogue and a concern going both ways among American bishops, which seemed a different style of authority, say, than English or African bishops. U.S. and Canadian bishops have much more shared leadership.

### **Pat, some say that Lambeth should be abolished, that it has outlived its usefulness, that it is too expensive. What do you think?**

I don't think there should be another Lambeth if it is just going to be a gathering of monarchial bishops representing themselves. But I feel there could be another Lambeth, for two reasons. One is that it should represent

lay people, clergy and bishops throughout the world. It really raised my consciousness in terms of Christian commitment and added an international dimension to my perspective, making me feel I was part of a world-wide church. And I think that this is an important value, particularly today when it is so easy not to have any concern about anything else outside of, say, Richmond, Va.

The other reason is that the Anglican Communion does have political power, but it has to get its act together in order to use it effectively. And our act is not together. It seems to me that people don't understand what is going on throughout the entire Anglican Communion, and barely understand their own province. If we got together, say, every five years and people really knew what was going on throughout the Anglican communion, we could use that power to effect change in the world. But if you don't meet, and you don't even know who people are, and contempt and competition are evident — as I think existed among the bishops . . . Well, it takes time for people to get over that, and to come on with some sense of cohesiveness and togetherness. That may be an idealistic dream. But it is for those reasons that I feel that some kind of international meeting of the Anglican Communion should happen. Whether it should be called "Lambeth" or not, I don't know. ■

### Lambeth for Women Priests

As THE WITNESS went to press, the bishops at Lambeth had just approved an affirmative position on the ordination of women. By a vote of 316 "yesses," 37 "no's" and 17 abstentions, they asserted that the Lambeth Conference saw no objection to women's ordination and that it is the prerogative of any province to proceed on the matter.

In response to the known opposition of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, Lambeth noted that it is in the tradition of Anglicanism to hold together in unity a diversity of opinions and practices.

## U.S. Support for Puebla

*The editorial in this issue of THE WITNESS sketches some of the background of the meeting of the Council of Latin American Bishops to be held in Puebla, Mexico in October. Sixty-one prominent U.S. Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians and church representatives, aware of the importance of that meeting, directed the following letter to their "Brothers and Sisters of Latin America."*

We have been following with care the news accounts of the forthcoming meeting of Latin American bishops which will take place in Puebla, Mexico, on the 10th anniversary of the CELAM Conference of Medellin. We wish to share with you our enthusiasm for this meeting and our realization of how crucial it will be in the growth of the Latin American church and our own. Growth is always difficult, sometimes painful. It has been so and continues to be so for us in the church of North America. So we recognize that the road to Puebla may not always be smooth. But because our churches are so interdependent, we wish you to know that you do not travel alone on the road to Puebla.

What we have learned from you over the last decade is vitally important to our own growth toward the fullness of life in Christ Jesus. Following your initiative at Medellin, we, too, are discovering that the Gospel takes on entirely new meaning for us when we read it through the eyes of the poor. We, too, are recognizing the dimensions of credibility and authenticity in that style of episcopal leadership which grows from identification with the poor at the base. We, too, are now learning to create basic Christian communities.

As a result, a whole new vision of how the church is translated into pastoral activity is growing up among us; your own prophetic actions have helped us discover new relations between Christian ministry and appropriate political action. Finally, and perhaps most important, we recognize how costly all this has been and still is for you. Yet the sign of its authenticity and the seal of its godliness is precisely the growing list of martyrs who testify with

their blood that the new church in Latin America is of the poor. For all of this we express our profound gratitude in the name of the first Christian martyr whose Body and Blood we share.

We know that some fear this new course taken by much of the Latin American church. This fear comes both from within the Latin American church and from the wider Catholic world. Yet we pray that your assembly will address our human history with the same greeting the Angel Gabriel brought to the young Mary: "Fear not . . . for you have found favor with God!"

As you prepare for the meeting at Puebla, therefore, we hope you will continue to share with us your experiences among the poor, your creative efforts in basic Christian communities, your commitment to relating theology and political life, your theological reflections on the role of local churches within the unity of the universal church and the sometimes conflictual situations which emerge from that new thrust in the Body of Christ.

We reach out to you in solidarity, aware that we still have so much to learn from you about how involved we are in those very structures of society which have become instruments of your oppression. In a true sense, you have become our conscience. As we move together toward Puebla and beyond, as we learn better how to engage in the world-wide struggle for justice, as we respond in humility to our own need to be evangelized by you, we assure you that we will continue to work with you in the structuring of a new humanity in the Americas: a kingdom of justice, freedom, holiness and peace.

# Is Theological Education Good For Any Woman's Health?

by Beverly W. Harrison and W. Robert Martin, Jr.

Beverly W. Harrison, feminist theologian and associate professor of social ethics, Union Theological Seminary, New York:

*"For me, the initial transformation to what I call "feminist consciousness" was a gift of grace which came in the nick of time, and in spite of some pain, it came easily. What had earlier seemed only my "personal pains" were, in fact, systemic and pervasive realities which had shaped my life below the level of my conscious awareness. Taking the feminist analysis seriously was for me, a way of taking myself seriously for the first time. . .*

*"As a theologian and professional theological educator, my coming of age as a feminist continuously forces reconsideration of my professional commitments. Short of a genuine transformation of the ongoing enterprise of theological education, any continuing effective work in theological education on my part is always, and necessarily, a co-optation of me by the dominant (white-male) power configuration which controls the enterprise. The abiding, haunting question I live with daily is whether the ongoing enterprise of theological education really can be made to be good for any woman's health."*

W. Robert Martin, Jr., former dean of students, Union Theological Seminary, Virginia, and director, Fund for Theological Education:

*"My life has been affected by women and my perspective on what is essential and imperative is being formed continuously. Anyone with any intelligence at all knows that theological education is in no way limited to or just synonymous with seminaries or Departments of Religion. Rather, substantive theological reflection is what broods in and bursts from folk struggling with what it means to be faithful in their time amid their experiences. That is the education that has redemptive currency and theological clout . . .*

*"The impact of women shaping the very substance of Christian nurture above ground and underground is as massive in contribution as it is consistent in quality. The signal role of women of religious conviction shaping consciousness regarding real liberty, real justice, real commitments to civil and religious equity and real stands for peace is incalculably rich and illustrative for each and every person who dares to take up the ministry on this page of history."*

To put the matter bluntly, seminaries and theological schools today must be willing to ask: *Is Christianity misogynist to the core?* And if not, then what sorts of transformations in the substance of Christian self-understanding and teaching would have to follow from a serious address of theological education to questions many women are pressing?

It may be that the inability of many men in seminaries and theological schools to recognize the gift of women's power of vocation arises from unfaced anxieties about the truthfulness of feminist claims that Christianity is misogynist to the core. If this is so, then the half-hearted response that men in theological education are willing

to make to women is an evasion of substantive intellectual issues.

The conventional tendency to identify theological seminaries and theological schools with theological education as such is a grave error which, for us, has mostly negative consequences in the churches. The forthcoming Auburn report on theological study in America will document the way in which eliding the model of theological education to the model of professional education eroded other patterns for the practice of Christian ministry. Some alternative patterns of an earlier period were more inclusive of women. The merging of the scholar-pastor tradition to

the university-based tradition of professional expertise had fateful consequences which we can mention only in passing. For women, already excluded with respect both to ordination and to access to higher education these historical developments only served to prolong exclusion.

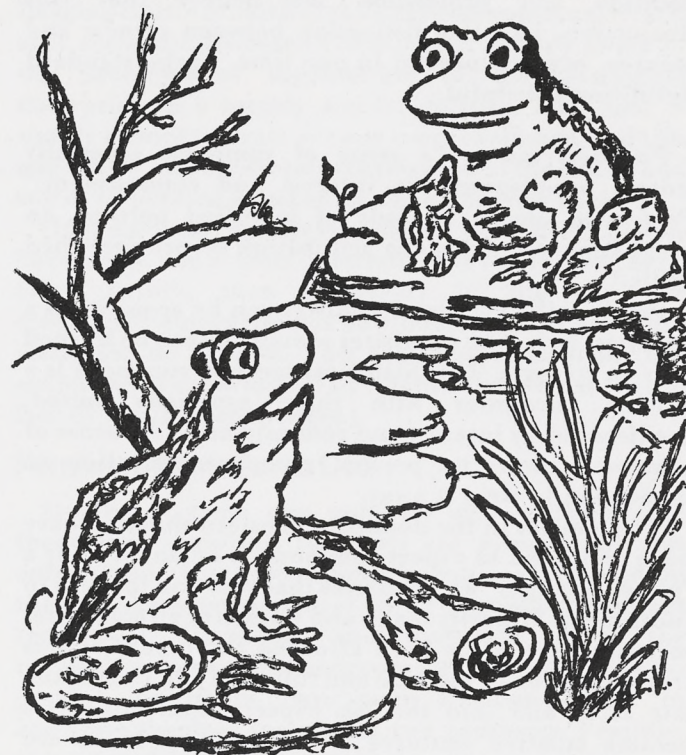
As barriers to women's participation in theological education give way, we acknowledge that women, far more than men, resist easy socialization into existing patterns for ordained ministry and also resist the deeper presuppositions on which existing pedagogy and conceptions of ministry are based. The tension which women's presence creates can be envisaged by contrasting prevailing patterns of *mentor-relations* with the biblical image of *the witness*.

Early on in the Western Church, to become a *mentor* was a cherished quest. Major energies were expended to "shape up" *men* in these ways and amid the wisdom of their *masters*. By contrast, from biblical times forward there is plentiful evidence of the presence of *witnesses* to the present meaning of faithfulness to the Lord, and many of these witnesses were women. Since much depends upon catching the powerful contrast between *mentor* and *witness*, a quick rendering of dictionary definition is helpful: *Mentor* means "advisor, counselor, wiseman always to be modeled." *Witness* means "one who furnishes evidence, a sign, possessor of full knowledge of the matter awaiting judgment."

*Mentor* obviously underpins movements toward and developments of hierarchical structures and hierarchical justification. *Witness* focuses on faithfulness, not control; on comprehension rather than condescension; on common task, not relegated responsibility.

The valued testimony of true witness and the marked witness of women throughout religious history serves as an appropriate and highly significant base upon which the contribution of women's studies is firmly anchored. The clear connection many women make between witness and ministry can be discerned in the way they describe what it means to struggle to learn the meaning of ministry. A former Roman Catholic woman described her first year in a theological seminary this way:

*I have learned that I want my life to be a ministry. The "whys" are often vague and elusive but that awareness is now constant. I suppose I could wish for it all to be clear, for an absence of doubt. But the question refuses to become static and I'm glad for it. I stumble only to discover I am standing on firm ground. When I least expect it, I find I really am Christ's, not abandoned at all.*



"I told them I'm enchanted, and they believed. I told them I'm a good, Christian woman, and they believed. I told them I'm a God-fearing, Bible-quoting, volunteering, Presbyterian elder, and they believed. Then I told them I wanted power in the church, and they called me a toad."

*This year I have re-met myself as a woman. The women here are impressive in their awareness and strength. I read diaries and social, political and theological works by women. I recognized myself. My vision expanded. My confidence grew. I had been preceded along the way by sisters and I found it to be good.*

What women have contributed throughout religious history is a genuine feeling for community and an abiding commitment toward the establishment of community. This is not a history of mentoring; rather the image is of deep sharing and mutuality, of giving and receiving. It is a history of the praxis of faith, not a history of detached reflection. Indeed, it illumines the possibility of folk in ministry being preachers and prophets, all the while true to their own witness and not just functioning within an expected role.

Through the same sweep of history and into the present women have had to differentiate between

*vocation* and *profession*. We believe that this distinction, like the distinction between *witness* and *mentor*, is much needed in our time. Again, standard definition is helpful.

*Vocation* means "a sense of summons especially suited, pre-disposed by interest and commitment." *Profession* means "a body of qualified persons, an occupation requiring the acquisition of pre-described skills."

Pre-described skills of ministry can be acquired as a technical task. The requisites of vocation can be learned only in struggle. This historical sense of summons is a moving encounter with those especially suited, predisposed by interest and commitment. This sense of summons allows no person, group, organization or institution to strip it away.

White males in the dominant Western churches have been socialized to expect summons to be honored by a "place" or a "job" which carries that vocation forward to fulfillment. Minority males and women of all colors and societies have never been afforded the luxury of this tragic equation of vocation and full-time job. During the late 1950s and into the '60s experimental ministries became creative ventures for many men. If we are painfully honest about it, we have to admit that specialized ministries were an appealing phenomenon that offered many white males the occasion to prove their capacity to function in a secular arena, not validate their deeper sense of summons.

Parallel with that were blacks and Hispanics, women, and storefront sectarian ministers holding down at least one other job as their chief economic mainstay, doing so not as testimony of their ability to "make it," outside the church, but as a commitment to enable them to get at and get on with their primary sense of summons to ministry as the church.

In a time of economic shrinkage and institutional bewilderment, much is to be learned from this history of summons, not just because it helps us make do in an economic crunch but because it has much to teach us about the genesis and care of vocation. The experience of women and previously excluded men offers up the data that contributes to enhancing an understanding of vocation which is not merely equatable to "guild" or "professional group." Women's active and full participation in theological education then, puts a content of reality and vocation into every person's context for ministerial readiness.

All of this should make clear that we are not speaking merely of a survival offering for the growing number of women who are enrolled and will be enrolling in

seminaries. We speak rather of a body of substantial knowledge and experience, discipline of mind and vocation, that can provide a redeeming and holistic right of passage for every woman and man and a feminist perspective for each student enroute to the days of their ministries.

If the deep connection women in theological schools are making between ministry and life as summons and witness is so obvious — and we believe it is — why does resistance to serious discussion of women's studies persist in theological education? Even in the best of circumstances, women's studies are relegated to the margins of the ongoing educational enterprise. At worst, any claims women make upon either the content or structure of the curriculum or on the modes of pedagogy used in the teaching-learning process are treated as rude intrusions or distractions from the serious business at hand.

Admittedly, all educational institutions are slow to change, but institutional resistance at this point can hardly be accounted for simply in terms of general sociological lag. After all, the percentage of women students has risen dramatically each year even in seminaries which do not recruit women (and in some where women's enrollment is explicitly discouraged by "realistic" caution about lack of professional options). One would think the urgency of the matter would be hard to ignore. Furthermore, there is some evidence that in other graduate and professional schools the presence of a critical mass of women is itself sufficient to overcome the wariness and lower expectations which white male faculty have regarding women's motivation and capacity for achievement.

### Defensiveness Persists

In theological schools, however, while one hears testimonials to the quality and ability of individual women, a general defensiveness persists. One rarely encounters enthusiasm about the large numbers of qualified applicants who are female. And at the administrative and faculty level, resistance to affirmative action is even more pronounced. As one national report has it, "The good news is that more women and minority males are being interviewed for positions than ever before. The bad news is that very few are being hired."

We give credence to women's accounts of the *Catch-22* treatment which they encounter in theological schools: Individual women are being affirmed and supported in efforts to ministry; but *if* these women then use this institutionally-bestowed empowerment to raise



women's issues, attitudes toward them change. Everywhere in seminaries women are claiming that support and acceptance is in inverse proportion to a woman's articulateness about issues of sexism. The "good girls" are being rewarded and used against their sisters as evidence that probing questions about what is going on are the result of disturbed femininity.

Another widespread strategy reported across theological education involves discrediting women's questions because they involve "shoddy scholarship" (as if the merit of any question rested entirely on the accuracy of historical detail about how the issue emerged in the past). If that were sufficient grounds for dismissal, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, not to mention many of the so-called modern giants of theology should stand discredited for historical ineptitude and overgeneralization.

Such charges are accompanied often by demurrers that no resources are available institutionally to help women gain the scholarly skills aimed at clarifying their concerns. The suspicion dawns that many seminary faculty and administrators hope that feminist women will fail in their quest to sharpen their powers to carry on their critique of the dominant Christian tradition more rigorously.

This deep level resistance to the implications of women's presence clearly arises from the fact that that presence involves not only a positive claim upon the religious understanding of vocation but a negative judgment on the dominant and established traditions of Christianity as well. Women in the 20th century who have experienced the shock of recognition which comes with raised consciousness are hurled into a hermeneutics of suspicion which makes it impossible for them to suppress awareness of the power of misogyny, and patriarchal exclusivism in shaping both Christian communal praxis and proclaimed message.

Our view is that the bluntness of feminist women's "*J'accuse.*" is the source of much of the anxiety about what women's studies mean for theological education. The fact is that feminist Christian women and post-Christian feminists are *not* divided in their diagnosis of the dominance of patriarchal images, the negative effects of that dominance on women, or the strength of misogyny in the history of Christianity. To both groups, misogyny is sin, and patriarchal exclusivism, palpable idolatry.

Clearly, women's hermeneutics of suspicion involve reopening some assumedly long-settled issues of theological consensus in the Christian community. The lingering fear seems to be that such reopening of issues would be bad for the church, bad for the supposed

flagging clarity of faith of the Christian community. It is as if academically-based Christianity, already aware of the problems of legitimation of the theological enterprise in a largely secular culture, feels that it simply cannot tolerate yet one more challenge, and this one visibly and concretely represented in the bodies and voices of persons engaged in the enterprise itself!

(It should also be observed that if women's criticisms have merit, and if their questions have really never been faced before, then everybody in the academic theological enterprise has new homework to do; there really are no experts. This too, may account for the anxiety level experienced by established scholars in the face of feminist challenges.)

### Feminist Questions Old

Looked at from one point of view, many of the theological questions feminists are pressing are not entirely new. Questions about the sources for Christian theology have been central to all post-enlightenment theological discussion, and questions about the normative character of scripture and tradition vis-a-vis present experience have been front-and-center in academic theology for almost two centuries. Feminist questions drive discussion of the contextualization of theology to a new level of concreteness. They require that the ideological critique of Christian theology be pressed yet a step further; that a conscious disentanglement be made, not only from taken-for-granted dominant political and economic assumptions, but also from the deepest imagery of sexual identity which is closest to all of us.

If patriarchal exclusivism has distorted Christian theological visions of divine presence and divine agency (i.e., revelation), then our basic images of the meaning of divine transcendence and immanence really have been distorted. And if our understanding of the work of Jesus of Nazareth has been totally entwined in our preoccupation with patriarchal exclusivism, and the interpretation of his meaning and message systematically distorted by growing misogyny in the Christian community, is any of the supposed Christological consensus defended with such sagacity in the theological schools really a closed issue? The answer is "*no.*" The truth is that the quietest, most unassuming woman cannot ask her questions, borne of self-respect, gently enough, unthreatening enough to prevent some glimmer of awareness that those questions portend a shaking of the foundations.

It is hardly any wonder that some established male theologians, themselves once known for stirring the waters theologically, have taken to the barricades to

proclaim that feminism is the cult of Baal reincarnate. We might well wish that other male theologians, those honest enough to notice in other contexts that in the modern world the label of "orthodoxy" is used less as a truth claim than as a boast, would bestir themselves to resist this *a priori* discrediting maneuver aimed at refusing the urgency of new questions.

So far, few male theologians have sensed the positive possibility for new intellectual challenge posed by the presence of women in theological education. It is this fact, we submit, which is causing women in theological education so much pain. It is this reality, we insist, which endangers their deep biblical sense of answering to God's summons to stand, against all odds, as witnesses to God's presence and continuing disclosure.

From our perspective the real danger is that women's presence in theological education will be domesticated, successfully channeled into patterns of business as usual in the uncritical work of reinforcing existing patterns of professionalization; above all, that the resources for new intellectual ferment which these women's presence portends will be resisted, and a *kairos* destroyed. We submit that dominant contemporary theology is more endangered by complacency and conventionality than by controversy or intellectual ferment.

The greatest tragedy in a life is not death. It is what we allow to die within us or never get born while we still live. The death of genuine feeling and imagination is a death that sucks us down into inhuman disregard for creatures and creation. That is why in the midst of gloom and total despair, the Old Testament prophets spoke of a way opening in the wilderness, of rivers springing out in the desert. The New Testament's ringing benediction is "Behold, I make all things new. Write this down for these words are trustworthy and they are true."

We advocate the particularity of women's studies, the knowledge to be encountered, the wisdom to be experienced, the perspective to be shaped. The urgency focuses not on the *need* for women's studies; rather the urgency is lodged on the *kairos* that requires we terminate the loss to and inadequacy of any formative process for ministry that dares exclude such study. We expect ways to show in the wilderness. We anticipate rivers to flow in what has been a desert. Just imagine!

*(The above article is excerpted from a paper delivered at a Consultation on Women's Studies in Theological Education at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Cal. It first appeared in the newsletter of the Center for Women and Religion, Graduate Theological Union.)*

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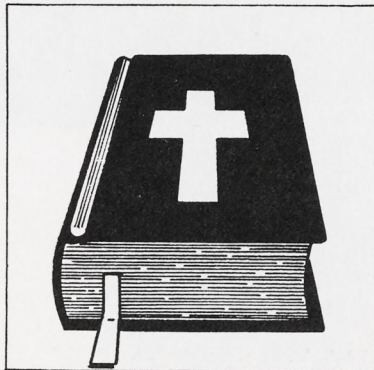
identified the injustices and called for a faithful response by the church. Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru, Juan Luis Segundo of Uruguay, Jose Miguez-Bonino of Argentina and other liberation theologians have been the theoreticians of this ferment.

These were some of the marks of a movement which reached a dramatic pitch in 1968 at the preceding meeting of the Latin American prelates in Medellin, Colombia. That meeting followed closely on the Vatican Council and the exciting days of Pope John XXIII. His successor, Paul, was uneasy about where the tumultuous issues of Latin America, fanned by the liberating breezes of Vatican II, might lead. Paul's unprecedented visit to Colombia just in advance of the meeting was seen by many as an attempt to establish "safe" parameters for the deliberations. Despite that precaution, the documents issuing from Medellin gave expression to the social concerns of the church in strong tones which greatly encouraged those committed to reform. It did much to authenticate the theology of liberation, which understands the mission of the church to be identified with the needs of the poor.

Small wonder, then, that Puebla is attracting a great deal of attention. And it is not surprising that many in authority wish to see the bishops at Puebla back down from the forthrightness of their statements of a decade ago. On the other hand, many who have been taking great risks for reform both in church and in state are looking anxiously to Puebla to confirm and endorse their efforts. It is not yet evident whether the advent of the new pope, such a short time in office, will be a factor in influencing Puebla one way or the other.

Elsewhere in this issue of THE WITNESS there appears a letter of encouragement from North American Christians to the church in Latin America. It is a statement which links the concerns of Latin America to those of both church and society in North America. Are the churches of this continent ready or willing to participate significantly in the pre-reformation movements of our time? For example, is it likely or possible that the deliberations and pronouncements of the Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference will anticipate any of the deep themes of reform to be weighed at Puebla? The realities of oppression and poverty seen so vividly in Latin America are no strangers to the other continents of this globe. The agonizing options for reformation pressing upon the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America are equally options for the Anglican Church throughout the world.

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the Depression, ended up as prostitutes — the only job they could get which would pay them enough to send some back home — only then perhaps will we truly identify with the woman of ill-repute, who bathes Jesus' feet with her tears and whose implicit faithfulness has become a part of the record of salvation.

Perhaps when the day comes that Black and white women, poor and middle class women are able to share their stories — and through that sharing to discover the painful contradictions of women's existence in a patriarchal, competitive and profit-oriented society — then, perhaps, there can be a reconciliation between Sarah the wife, and Hagar, the concubine.

When we have brought to consciousness, articulated, and honed to the essentials the stories of our bondage and liberation, then we can reconnect with the buried traditions in our own folk history. No people is ever willingly, or without resistance, colonized. We should learn to look for those remnants of resistance which are often disguised as passivity,

stubbornness, hostility, and superstition. We can use that wonderful democratic tradition of "testifying" in church to talk about how the coal and textile companies, the family planning experts and the welfare officials are keeping women down, and how, by participating in that sit-in at the welfare office, we are able to get food in our stomachs and spirit for our souls. We can take all those marvelous hymns which give us the shivers when we sing them and change the words around: changing the "I's" to "we's," the male pronouns to generic ones, the "blood of the Savior," to the blood of our sisters and brothers killed in the mines and the floods, and those mansions in the sky by-and-by to the green rolling hills of West Virginia. We can rediscover the forgotten heroines imbedded in our history and name them in our services when it comes time for a recollection of the saints.

A past is important for people who are living in bondage. But it must be their own consciously claimed heritage, not a tradition imposed by their captors. In thinking about my own faith tradition, I prefer to think of Jesus, the Liberator, Jesus the representative of the common people. The term, "Son of Man," it seems to me, originally signified something like "Son of the People." I prefer to remember that throughout the Gospels it was women who held fast to the essentials, as one by one Jesus' male followers betrayed him, disowned him, and finally disbelieved the evidence of his ultimate victory over death and defeat. This is the kind of faith remembrance that gives me strength. ■

### Exposure Is Not Always a Negative Word . . .

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precedent. What is given liberally to two church employees must also be given to a runner for the numbers racket. The judicial system must in its own Godgiven recognition of equal justice for all, work with a broad brush among priests, prostitutes, nuns and drug peddlers.

But justification of the legal action taken by the court should by no means be a controlling factor in determining what is felt or done by people or institutions more directly involved in the lives of the two young women. The court delivered a broad brush ruling based on long-established basic principles of judicial justice. It had not considered and could not, what may have been entirely justifiable personal and religious reasons the women had for doing what they did.

The church has the ability to fine-tune the ethical aspects of the action of human beings. To take the position that what Ms. Cueto and Ms. Nemikin did was somehow wrong in the eyes of the church solely because it was declared civilly wrong in the eyes of the court is a cop-out, and a reprehensible one.

This refers me back to the Berrigan letter. He illustrates in a more obvious way than do Ms. Cueto and Ms. Nemikin, one thing that must be recognized! Civil and criminal law are facts of our life. On the whole, they are currently functioning, I think, as well or better than at any time in our history. If we are going to violate the law deliberately, we must recognize and be ready to accept the consequences. If I am going to be a martyr in that fashion, perhaps for good and valid reasons, let me be a martyr and not cry about it.

Thomas O. Hunter  
Peoria, Ill.

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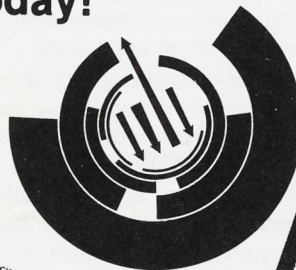
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