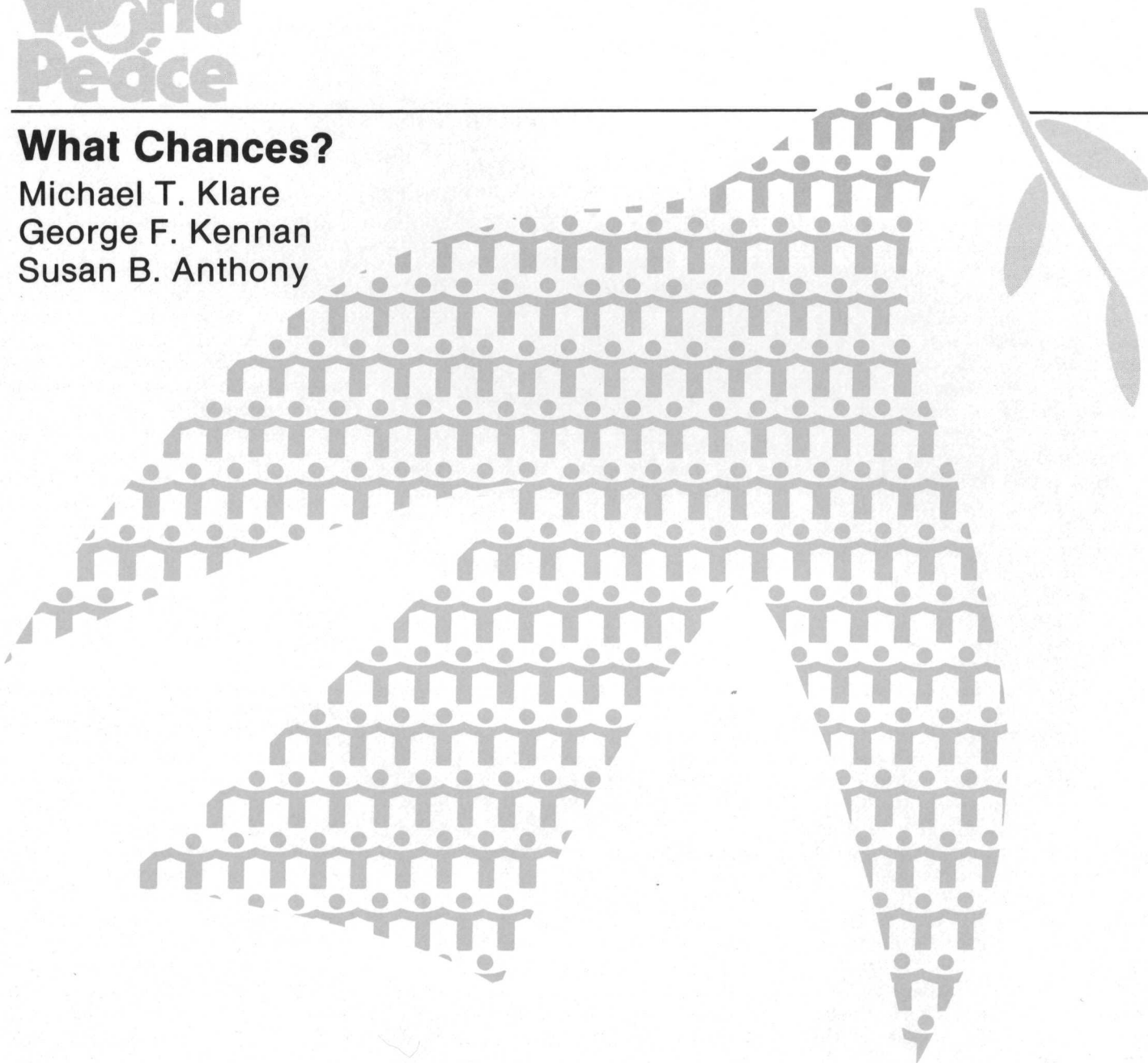


THE VOL. 66 NO. 6 JUNE 1983 WITNESS

World
Peace

What Chances?

Michael T. Klare
George F. Kennan
Susan B. Anthony



LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Jubilee Ministry Wronged

As always, it was good to read retired Presiding Bishop John Hines' thoughts in the March issue of THE WITNESS. But about the Jubilee Ministry, the record needs setting straight. He says, "The forces that strove to help extend or recreate a socially active ministry of the national church did a heroic job, but they were too little and too late. Even though having been guided by some astute minds of people, they didn't get started soon enough. They didn't understand sufficiently the financial structuring the General Convention goes through, and therefore, they came up with their proposition too late to get it budgeted adequately."

This is simply wrong. The Standing Commission on the Church in Metropolitan Areas, which originated the Jubilee Ministry, understood the General Convention's budgeting structure very well, but was defeated by it. The budget proposal was entered into the process before the deadline of June 1, 1981, but the whole idea of a major new commitment to poor and oppressed people was actively opposed by Presiding Bishop John Allin and his "administrative group" who pretty well control what finally gets to the Program Budget and Finance Committee of General Convention. Thus the Jubilee Ministry was refused admittance to the developing budget. For perhaps the first time, the elected Executive Council rejected the P.B.'s proposed budget for the Triennium at its February, 1982 meeting because not a dime had been included for Jubilee. The resubmitted budget in June, 1982 included a pittance for Jubilee which was increased at General Convention, but woefully, only to \$250,000.

At New Orleans, the earliest day the Standing Commission and its related legislative committee in each House

could hold hearings was the first Monday. Then both Houses had to act on the proposal before Program Budget and Finance went to press with their budget on Thursday. That was not possible.

It is a matter of deep concern to many that the present national budget process puts the real power almost completely in the hands of the Presiding Bishop. If a Standing Commission is trying to put into the proposed budget something the 815 staff does not favor, it might as well save its energy. It will lose the battle before the General Convention ever convenes. Significant reform of the budget process would seem to be in order.

When one couples this learning with one of John Hines' WITNESS observations about the next P.B.: "I doubt if the church is well enough to pick the kind of person who will give it the kind of leadership the next decade is going to require," the outlook is not hopeful for major new program commitments to groups (like poor people) having no significant constituency in the Episcopal Church. But then, look out for the Spirit and wonderful surprises!

**The Rev. Jack Woodard, Member
Standing Commission on the Church
in Metropolitan Areas**

Bishop Hines Responds

I owe Jack Woodard and those with whom he worked, an apology for downgrading their persistent efforts to get the Jubilee Ministry adequately funded. Had I realized that Jack was so intimately involved, I hope I would have restrained my impetuous (and unsupported) judgment of the matter, for I know well that Jack has been over every inch of the budgeting process many times during the years he served the National Church with distinction.

However, his well-reasoned letter snuffs out the small glimmer of hope, concerning the Episcopal Church and the poor, that had appeared. For if the budgeting process at "815" is so dominated by an administration group powerful enough to reduce to near ruins the well-articulated hopes of General

Convention's strong Standing Commission on the Church in Metropolitan Areas, it may just be powerful enough to cut the ground from under Jack Woodard's eloquent plea "Look out for the Spirit and wonderful surprises." And that would be darkness, indeed.

**The Rt. Rev. John E. Hines
Black Mountain, N.C.**

Parenti Article Biased

I found Nat Pierce's article in the February issue most thought-provoking. I have known Nat from several General Conventions and, in particular, as I served as Co-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Committees and Commissions before whom he appeared in support of the creation of the Joint Commission on Peace.

On the other hand, I suggest that for your publication to reflect freedom of expression of various points of view, you should have an article pointing out the oppression which seems inevitable in the Marxist dominated countries where even freedom of religion is not practiced, in response to the biased article by Michael Parenti. He seems to equate capitalism with oppression. ("Capitalism: System Without Spirit," February.)

In my two visits to the People's Republic of China in recent years, I had the very strong feeling through what we were told, as well as what we observed, that they practiced quite a different brand of communism from Russia and its satellites.

Their new constitution guarantees both the right to believe in and worship a supreme being and the right not to so believe, but the churches are open with increasing attendance. A most interesting observation, however, is that they seem to be practicing more and more capitalism in the encouragement of small businesses operated for profit and farms operated for profit.

After reading the Parenti article, I turned to the Special Offer on the back page where it appears two of the three offers are further attacks on capitalism.

I did not mean to ramble on at such

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THE WITNESS

Editorial

We Oppose the Death Penalty

The political climate in our nation has begun to turn sharply against Death Row prisoners with the election of a President who openly favors capital punishment.

In the fall of 1982, New Jersey and Massachusetts restored the death penalty for certain crimes, and in February of this year Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina introduced a capital punishment bill in the Senate. Seven men have been executed since 1977, and bills are being introduced in state legislatures to limit legal defenses against that penalty.

We do not believe that the current drive in favor of the death penalty reflects the noblest ideals of the American people, nor that this drive reflects accurately the reality of declining numbers of death sentences carried out in our nation until 1977. Such a reality must, we would suggest, represent a deeper public aversion to executing a human being at the hands of the state.

For a span of nearly 40 years following World War II, the number of executions in the United States had steadily declined. Controversy about the death penalty increased greatly during the 1960s and the

courts became more strict in looking at it. Along with this, popular movements to abolish the death penalty grew in visibility and strength. From 1968 - 1977 not one death sentence was carried out in the 50 states of this nation, even though defendants continued to receive the penalty and were transferred to Death Row to wait.

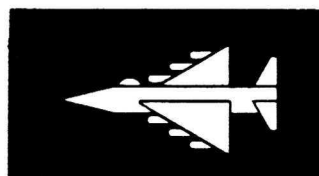
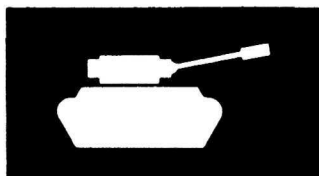
Today more than 1000 men and 13 women, the largest number in our history, are waiting on Death Row. Poor people and minority group members are disproportionately represented. The disparity in racial composition is especially notable in the Southern states. In 1982, Amnesty International called attention to a study which concluded that in Florida, Blacks who killed Whites were nearly 40 times more likely to be sentenced to death than Blacks who killed other Blacks — an unmistakable manifestation of racism in applying the death penalty.

Furthermore, statistics have never shown conclusively that the death penalty reduces crime. The notion of deterrence assumes that potential criminals exercise rational judgment in deciding whether or not to kill, whereas in

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"We dare not neglect the issue of conventional weapons and conventional wars."



An Open Letter to the U.S. Peace Movement

by Michael T. Klare

Dear Friends,

For the past year or so, the American peace movement has devoted its energies to the struggle against nuclear weapons and nuclear war. This approach has aroused a great many Americans who fear a cataclysmic war between superpowers, giving the peace movement real political clout for the first time in years. Because we face a tremendous risk of extinction, and because only with large numbers of supporters can we hope to turn around the military policies of the Reagan administration, we dare not slacken the tempo of our educating and organizing efforts. While we dare not diminish our antinuclear activity, however, we must not neglect the issue of conventional weapons and conventional war.

Technically speaking, conventional weapons are "conventional" only because they kill through means other than nuclear fission: They may be as familiar as a standard handgun or as gruesome as cluster bombs and napalm. Conventional arms are not as useful as nuclear arms in killing very large numbers of people rapidly — but nothing else about them should lead us to think that they are otherwise more "humane" or acceptable than nuclear weapons, or that they are any less devastating in their effects on unprotected human bodies.

Michael T. Klare is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., and author of several books, the most recent being *Beyond the "Vietnam Syndrome": U.S. Intervention in the 1980s*.

At root, our opposition to conventional weapons must be moral: The loss of *any* human beings through warfare is an abomination, whether they be killed by conventional or nuclear weapons. Naturally, we tend to become especially disturbed by the slaughter of large numbers of defenseless people — hence our profound outrage over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But conventional weapons can also be used to level whole cities — witness Beirut in 1982 and Dresden in 1945 — and we must not forget that at least 25 million people have died in conventional wars since the end of World War II.

Morality aside, there are compelling strategic reasons why the peace movement — while retaining a primary focus on nuclear weapons — must address the issues of conventional weapons.

- **Nuclear wars are almost certain to begin as conventional wars.**

While some analysts postulate that a nuclear war can begin as an unanticipated, unprovoked "bolt out of the blue" (BOOB in the technical literature), most experts agree that a nuclear war will grow out of a conventional war that blows out of control. Although no one can predict the exact chain of events, it is likely that a nuclear war will begin when a local conventional war attracts the participation of the nuclear powers, one of which resorts to the use of nuclear weapons when its conventional forces face defeat on the battlefield.

The quantities of arms sold to the Third World in recent years are nothing short of staggering. Between 1974 and

1981, according to the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, the United States, Soviet Union, and Western Europe provided Third World countries with 18,211 tanks and self-propelled cannons, 29,266 troop carriers, 4,852 supersonic combat aircraft, 29,795 surface-to-air missiles, and equally large quantities of other weapons.

And recent sales to the Third World have been marked as much by the *sophistication* of the weapons supplied as by their quantity. No longer are the major powers providing only their obsolete hand-me-downs. They are selling their most advanced and powerful weapons. These deliveries have transformed the combat environment in the Third World into a high-risk battlefield.

• **Conventional conflicts are becoming more frequent, and are more likely than ever to trigger a superpower confrontation.**

Sadly, it appears that more and more countries are prone to employ military means to solve disputes or expand their wealth and power. Already, in 1982, we have witnessed several major conflicts, including the Falklands war, the ongoing conflict between Iraq and Iran, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Despite their high death tolls, these conflicts seem to have prompted no noticeable decline in warlike behavior on the part of any of the world's governments. In fact, most nations are expanding their arsenals on a scale unlike anything we've seen since the years preceding World Wars I and II. Moreover, both superpowers are deploying more and more forces abroad, and appear more inclined than ever to intervene in local conflicts involving their allies and clients.

• **Conventional arms are becoming more deadly than ever before, thereby eroding the "firebreak" between conventional and nuclear arms.**

At one time, there was a clearly defined gap or "firebreak" between the most powerful conventional weapons and the smallest nuclear weapons, making it easier to halt the escalation before it reached the nuclear level. But technological advances are erasing this firebreak by making conventional arms more powerful and nuclear arms less indiscriminate in their effects. For example, large cluster bomb units (CBMs) of the type used by Israel in Lebanon can kill all unprotected humans in a very large area, while new "mini-nukes" of the type developed by the United States can confine their destructive effects to an area of just about the same size. It is becoming that much easier for military commanders to justify crossing the increasingly narrow gap between these "near-nuclear" conventional weapons and the smallest mini-nukes, thereby igniting a chain reaction leading to a full-scale nuclear war.

• **More and more nations are acquiring large arsenals of conventional weapons, thereby increasing the intensity of local wars.**

Not only are the major powers acquiring more and more conventional arms of their own, they are increasingly selling such arms to other nations — including many that are likely to figure in future regional conflicts. Between 1970 and 1979, for instance, the United States sold \$77 billion worth of arms to Third World countries, approximately 25 times the amount delivered in the preceding decade. More important than quantity, however, is the quality of the weapons. The United States and other major suppliers are now selling their most advanced arms to overseas customers, including many "near-nuclear" arms of the type described above.

Further, conventional arms transfers bind the fate of the recipient to that of the supplier, thereby increasing the risk of superpower involvement in local wars arising in the Third World. The big powers inevitably acquire a particular interest in the survival of regimes to which they have sold large quantities of their most advanced weapons. Should any of these countries face defeat in a local war, the credibility of their supplier is inevitably threatened, thus producing pressures to intervene. These pressures are bound to increase, moreover, if there is any risk that the supplier's military secrets will fall into the hands of an enemy. Indeed, many U.S. lawmakers voted against the AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia precisely out of this fear. In the Middle East, *both* superpowers have established close arms-supply relationships with potential belligerents. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, both the United States and the Soviet Union transported arms directly to their allies in the war zone, narrowly averting a head-on collision. Next time, we may not be so lucky.

Clearly, each of these factors by themselves makes a nuclear war more likely; together, they make one a near certainty. The final conclusion appears inescapable: *The only way we can really hope to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war is to prevent the superpowers from intervening in a localized war that has the potential for escalation.*

An effort to halt the development of "near-nuclear weapons" and prevent their proliferation to foreign governments is as essential to the antinuclear effort as the campaign against nuclear weapons themselves.

Many people have told me, with considerable justice, that an exclusive antinuclear focus is the best way of mobilizing large numbers of people against the Reagan war machine. I would argue, however, that we will not succeed in linking our own movement with those of poor people, workers and

minorities unless we address the economic issues that affect them so intimately. And we cannot discuss the economic effects of military spending unless we address the issue of conventional weapons — for conventional arms, and the forces of intervention, consume 85% of the Reagan war budget, while nuclear arms consume only 15%. Real cuts in the defense budget that would free up more federal funds for domestic programs and economic revitalization, call for

significant reductions in U.S. conventional forces. While we should in no way slacken any of our efforts to stop the nuclear arms race, we need to remember that an *exclusive* focus on nuclear weapons prevents us from seeing the inescapable links between conventional and nuclear war. Only by adopting a flexible approach that encompasses both nuclear and conventional issues can we hope to address those factors which most threaten world peace today.

Keep the Bomb, Ban the Shelters

by Tony Heyes

The author, a free-lance writer from New York, lost both parents in the Liverpool blitz in World War II and has had strong opinions about wars and who profits from them ever since.

Sure, I would like it if the nuclear bomb had never been invented. I would also like it if the telephone, transistor radio, and the wheel had never been invented. Oh, that I could still be a private person and travel at my own speed. But they were invented, and like all technology, once here there is no way to ban it. Our only hope is for conditions that will prevent its use.

Consider what we have to have in order to ban the bomb:

1. Complete control of all the raw materials and technology: *Impossible*.
2. Complete trust among those who have control of the means: *Impossible*.
3. Elimination of competitive forces and divisive philosophies that cause people to fight: *Impossible*.

Consider what has to happen to prevent its use:

- Elimination of the incentive to fight, i.e. the ability to win: *Possible*.

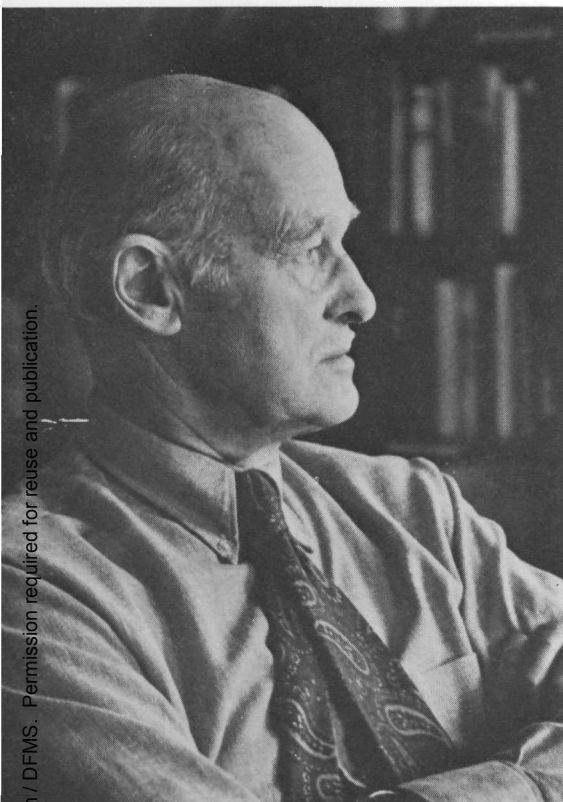
The only thing that will restrain a potential aggressor is the sure knowledge that he will lose. Why has this not worked in the past? Because there was no such condition. Those who started and hoped to profit by wars rarely got killed in them.

The virtue of the bomb is that for the first time in history, those that start the war are sure to lose and get killed in it. In the past when bombs were dropped, the people who got killed were the poor who lived around the targets, such as factories and docks. The vast majority of the army who died were of the working class and they were all young. This time the rich and the old who have the power will also go, so will their own families. There will be no property left for those who in previous wars profited from it. It is the best situation we ever had for the prevention of a major war. Does anyone think there would have been a war in the Falklands if Galtieri's Buenos Aires and Thatcher's London were threatened by nuclear extinction?

It is the first time any government — capitalist, socialist, or communist — has ever spent so much money on a program that will treat everyone equal, rich or poor, Black or White, young or old, male or female. The only threat is from people who think they can win and that they won't get killed.

To maintain our new found security we must insist that those who can start a war, or vote for a government that does, or stands in any way to benefit from it, is bound to die in it.

This means outlawing *shelters* and any other means of escape. At last man has collectively pooled his resources for a consequence that will treat all people equal. Don't permit any deviation — **BAN THE SHELTERS.**



George F. Kennan, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, is Professor Emeritus, Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, and Co-chair, American Committee on East-West Accord. The accompanying is a chapter from his book, *The Nuclear Delusion*, reprinted by permission of Pantheon Books. Copyright© by George F. Kennan.

One Christian's View of the Arms Race

by George F. Kennan

The public discussion of the problems presented by nuclear weaponry which is now taking place in this country is going to go down in history, I suspect (assuming, of course, that history is to continue at all and does not itself fall victim to the sort of weaponry we are discussing), as the most significant that any democratic society has ever engaged in.

I myself have participated from time to time in this discussion, whenever I thought I might usefully do so; but in doing so, I have normally been speaking only in my capacity as a citizen talking to other citizens; and since not all of those other citizens were Christians, did not feel that I could appeal directly to Christian values. Instead, I have tried only to invoke those values which, as it seemed to me, had attained the quality of accepted ideals of our society as a whole.

In this article, I would like to address myself to some of these same problems more strictly from the Christian standpoint. I do this with some hesitation, because while I hold myself to be a Christian, in the imperfect way that so many others do, I am certainly no better a one than millions of others; and I can claim no erudition whatsoever in the field of Christian theology. If, therefore, I undertake to look at the problems of

nuclear weaponry from a Christian standpoint, I am aware that the standpoint in this instance is a primitive one, theologically speaking, and that this places limitations on its value. This is, however, the way that a great many of us have to look at the subject; and if primitive paintings are conceded to have some aesthetic value, perhaps the same sort of indulgence can be granted to a layperson's view of the relationship of nuclear weaponry to his own faith.

I

There are, I believe, two ways in which one may view the nuclear weapon, so-called. One way is to view it just as one more weapon, like any other weapon, only more destructive. This is the way it is generally viewed, I am afraid, by our military authorities and by many others. I personally do not see it this way. A weapon is something that is supposed to serve some serious objective of governmental policy, one supposed to promote the interests of the society which employs it. The nuclear device seems to me not to respond to that description.

But for those who do see it this way I would like to point out that if it is to be considered a weapon like other weapons, then it must be subjected to the same restraints, to the same rules of warfare, which were supposed, by inter-

national law and treaty, to apply to other forms of weaponry. One of these was the prescription that weapons should be employed in a manner calculated to bring an absolute minimum of hardship to non-combatants and to the entire infrastructure of civilian life. This principle was of course offended against in the most serious way in World War II; and our nuclear strategists seem to assume that, this being the case, it has now been sanctioned and legitimized by precedent.

But the fact is that it remains on the books as a prescription both of the laws of war and of international treaties to which we are parties; and none of this is changed by the fact that we ourselves liberally violated it 30 or 40 years ago. And even if it were not thus prescribed by law and treaty, it should, as I see it, be prescribed by Christian conscience. For the resort to war is questionable enough from the Christian standpoint even in the best of circumstances; and those who, as believing Christians, take it upon their conscience to give the order for such slaughter (and I am not saying that there are never situations where this seems to be the lesser of the two evils) — those who do this owe it to their religious commitment to assure that the sufferings brought to innocent and helpless people by the military operations are held to the absolute minimum — and this, if necessary, even at the cost of military victory.

For victory itself, even at its apparent best, is a questionable concept. I can think of no judgments of statesmanship in modern times where we have made greater mistakes, where the relationship between calculations and results have been more ironic, than those which related to the supposed glories of victory and the supposed horrors of defeat. Victory, as the consequences of recent wars have taught us, is ephemeral; but the killing of even one innocent child is an irremediable fact, the reality of which

can never be eradicated.

Now the nuclear weapon offends against this principle as no other weapon has ever done. Other weapons can bring injury to noncombatants by accident or inadvertence or callous indifference; but they don't always have to do it. The nuclear weapon cannot help doing it, and doing it massively, even where the injury is unintended by those who unleash it.

Worse still, of course, and utterly unacceptable from the Christian standpoint as I see it, is the holding of innocent people hostage to the policies of their government, and the readiness, or the threat, to punish them as a means of punishing their government. Yet how many times — how many times just in these recent years — have we seen that possibility reflected in the deliberations of those who speculate and calculate about the possible uses of nuclear weapons? How many times have we had to listen to these terrible euphemisms about how many cities or industrial objects we would “take out” if a government did not do what we wanted it to do, as though what were involved here were only some sort of neat obliteration of an inanimate object, the removal of somebody else's pawn on the chessboard, and not, in all probability, the killing and mutilation of innocent people on a scale previously unknown in modern times (unless it be, if you will, in the Holocaust of recent accursed memory)?

II

These things that I have been talking about are only those qualities of the nuclear weapon which violate the traditional limitations that were supposed to rest even upon the conduct of conventional warfare. But there is another dimension to this question that carries beyond anything even conceived of in the past; and that is, of course, the possible, if not probable effect of nuclear warfare on the entire future of

civilization — and, in a sense, on its past as well. It has recently been forcefully argued (and not least in Jonathan Schell's powerful book, *The Fate of the Earth*, 1982) that not only would any extensive employment of nuclear weapons put an end to the lives of many millions of people now alive, but it would in all probability inflict such terrible damage to the ecology of the Northern Hemisphere and possibly of the entire globe as simply to destroy the very capacity of our natural environment for sustaining civilized life, and thus to put an end to humanity's past as well as its future.

Only scientists are qualified, of course, to make final judgments on such matters. But we nonscientists are morally bound, surely, to take into account not only the certain and predictable effects of our actions but also the possible and probable ones. Looking at it from this standpoint, I find it impossible not to accept Schell's thesis that in even trifling with the nuclear weapon, as we are now doing, we are placing at risk the entire civilization of which we are a part.

Just think for a moment what this means. If we were to use these devices in warfare, or if they were to be detonated on any considerable scale by accident or misunderstanding, we might be not only putting an end to civilization as we now know it but also destroying the entire



product of humanity's past efforts in the development of civilized life, that of which we are the beneficiaries and without which our own lives would have no meaning: the cities, the art, the learning, the mastery of nature, the philosophy — what you will. And it would be not just the past of civilization that we were destroying; we would, by the same token, be denying to countless generations as yet unborn, denying to them in our unlimited pride and selfishness, the very privilege of leading a life on this earth, the privilege of which we ourselves have taken unquestioning and greedy advantage, as though it were something owed to us, something to be taken for granted, and something to be conceded or denied by us to those who might come after us —conceded or denied, as we, in our sovereign pleasure, might see it.

How can anyone who recognizes the authority of Christ's teaching and example accept, even as a humble citizen, the slightest share of responsibility for doing this —and not just for doing it, but for even incurring the risk of doing it? This civilization we are talking about is not the property of our generation alone. We are not the proprietors of it; we are only the custodians. It is something infinitely greater and more important than we are. It is the whole; we are only a part. It is not our achievement; it is the achievement of others. We did not create it. We inherited it. It was bestowed upon us; and it was bestowed upon us with the implicit obligation to cherish it, to preserve it, to develop it, to pass it on — let us hope improved, but in any case intact —to the others who were supposed to come after us.

And this obligation, as I see it, is something more than just a secular one. The great spiritual and intellectual achievements of Western civilization: the art (including the immense Christian art), the architecture, the cathe-

Hope

Like children,
Breathless.
Hushed.
We gather
At dusk
To glimpse
The firefly —
Night's apostle
Of hope,
Faith's fragile
Lunacy.

— Madeline
Ligammare

drals, the poetry, the prose literature —these things were largely unthinkable without the faith and the vision that inspired them and the spiritual and intellectual discipline that made possible their completion. Even where they were not the products of a consciously experienced faith, how can they be regarded otherwise than as the workings of the divine spirit — the spirit of beauty and elevation and charity and harmony — the spirit of everything that is the opposite of meanness, ugliness, cynicism, and cruelty?

Must we not assume that the entire human condition out of which all this has arisen — our own nature, the character of the natural world that surrounds us, the mystery of the generational continuity that has shaped us, the entire environmental framework, in other words, in which the human experiment has proceeded — must we not assume that this was the framework in which God meant it to proceed — that this was the house in which it was meant that we should live — that this was the stage on which the human drama, our struggle out of beastliness and savagery into something higher, was meant to be enacted? Who are we, then, the actors, to take upon ourselves the responsibility of destroying this framework, or even risking its destruction?

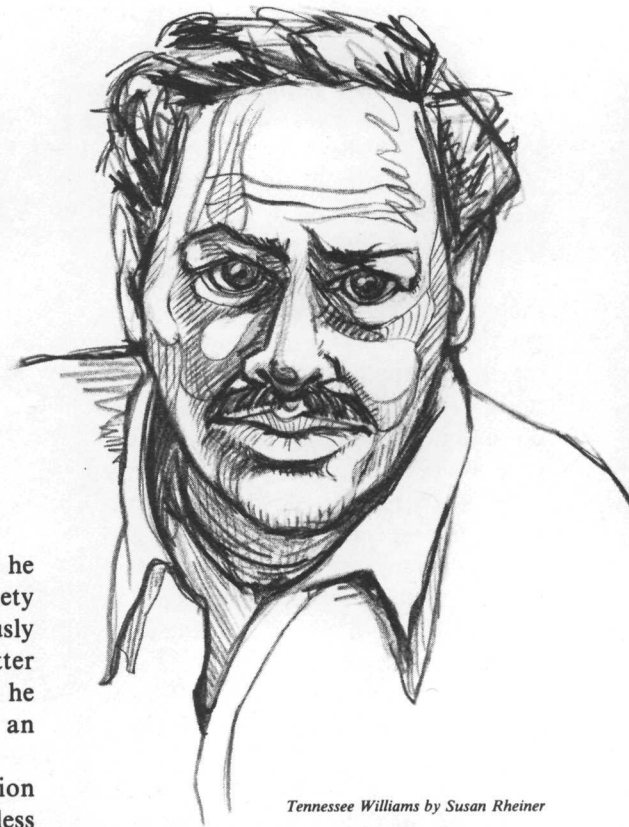
Included in this civilization we are so

ready to place at risk are the contributions of our own parents and grandparents — of people we remember. These were, in many instances, humble contributions, but ones wrung by those people from trouble and sacrifice, and all of them equal, the humble ones and the momentous ones, in the sight of God. These contributions were products not just of our parents' efforts but of their hopes and their faith. Where is the place for these efforts, these hopes, that faith, in the morbid science of mutual destruction that has so many devotees, official and private, in our country? What becomes, in that mad welter of calculations about who could take out whom, and how many millions might survive, and how we might hope to save our own poor skins by digging holes in the ground, and thus perhaps surviving into a world not worth surviving into —what becomes in all this of the hopes and the works of our own parents? Where is the place, here, for the biblical injunction to "honor thy father and mother" — that father and mother who stand for us not only as living memories but as symbols of all the past out of which they, too, arose, and without which their own lives, too, had no meaning?

I cannot help it. I hope I am not being unjust or uncharitable. But to me, in the light of these considerations, the readiness to use nuclear weapons against other human beings — against people whom we do not know, whom we have never seen, and whose guilt or innocence it is not for us to establish — and, in doing so, to place in jeopardy the natural structure upon which all civilization rests, as though the safety and the perceived interests of our own generation were more important than everything that has ever taken place or could take place in civilization: this is nothing less than a presumption, a blasphemy, an indignity — an indignity of monstrous dimensions — offered to God! ■

The Gospel According to Tennessee Williams

by Malcolm Boyd



Tennessee Williams by Susan Rheiner

When Tennessee Williams was found dead recently in a New York City hotel room, immediately he occupied center stage once again on front pages and the TV News, and in our collective consciousness.

A controversial artist who led a turbulent life, America's premier playwright intimately knew his priest-grandfather's Episcopal rectory when he was a youth. Later, plays written by Williams were to be the source of innumerable sermons in Episcopal churches from coast to coast.

The plays of Williams have loomed large in my own consciousness. It was my privilege to see Laurette Taylor in *The Glass Menagerie* in the '40s in the Biltmore Theatre in Los Angeles. And to see Jessica Tandy and Marlon Brando in the original Broadway production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Geraldine Page and Paul Newman in the New York opening of *A Sweet Bird of Youth*, Bette Davis in a Detroit tryout of *The Night of the Iguana*, and the original New York production of *Camino Real* in 1953. What extraordinary theatrical — and theological — riches!

Malcolm Boyd, social critic, author of 20 books, and a book reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times*, is writer-priest-in-residence at St. Augustine-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Santa Monica, Calif.

Williams recognized clearly that he “existed outside of conventional society while contriving somewhat precariously to remain in contact with it.” No matter how brilliantly shone his celebrity, he understood himself to be eternally an Outsider.

He knew intimately the alienation and loneliness experienced by countless people in modern-urban-technological culture, whether they reside in Chicago or Tokyo, London or Houston. Williams noted in his autobiography that perhaps the major theme of his writings was “the affliction of loneliness that follows me like a shadow, a very ponderous shadow too heavy to drag after me all of my days and nights.”

But there is also “A Gospel According to Tennessee Williams.” In *Camino Real*, he allowed as how in such a place many were lonely, yet it would be inexcusably selfish to be lonely alone. He understood the need of community, belonging, acceptance — and yes, love.

Keep moving, keep growing, is a recurring theme. Byron in *Camino Real* exclaims: “Make voyages, attempt them, there's nothing else.” This sense

of movement takes on spiritual meaning in Tom's speech in *The Glass Menagerie*: “I traveled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches. I would have stopped, but I was pursued by something.”

Always, it seems to me, Tennessee Williams understood Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven* better than almost anybody.

*I fled Him, down the nights and
down the days;*

*I fled Him, down the arches of
the years;*

*I fled Him, down the labyrinthine
ways*

*Of my own mind; and in the
midst of tears*

*I hid from Him, and under
running laughter.*

One senses an openness of Williams to grace, as part of a deep religious

“Blanche’s exit line in Williams’ A Streetcar Named Desire: ‘I have always depended upon the kindness of strangers,’ becomes a universal statement as well as a personal one in our present age of refugees of every kind who pour across borders and through city gates.”

sensibility in his work. His message — if one wishes to call it even that; perhaps “theme” is better — is inherently implicit. His work tends to leave us caught up in what C.S. Lewis once described as “an unforgettable intensity of life — haunted forever with the sense of vast dignities and strange sorrows and teased with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.”

Brother George Every, in his excellent book *Christian Discrimination*, spoke eloquently about implicit religious communication: “A distinction ought to be made between religious art and art on religious subjects. The poetry of the 15th century French poet Villon has been called extremely religious, though he himself was a sad scamp; and we can speak of the deeply religious outlook implied in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, which was for some time officially unprintable. In such a case we mean that the work implies an outlook on life which is

religious and not humanist; which recognizes, as the great religious traditions recognize, the weakness and sinfulness of man, and his need for redemption.”

Such *praeparatio evangelica* has long been understood in terms of cultural and intellectual statements of identifiable human and moral problems. Art of this genre has been hailed because it touches people — it states their problems, even if it does not solve them, and shows some touch of glory in the life they are living.

Tennessee Williams spoke tenderly and knowledgeably of grace when he referred to Rose, his sister, who was confined to mental institutions for much of her life: “After all, high station in life is earned by the gallantry with which appalling experiences are survived with grace.”

Grace was like a flickering flame on the outer fringes of his consciousness, but something to be yearned for rather than grasped. He wrote of “the sense of guilt that must always shadow my life.” And, “I live like a gypsy, I am a fugitive. No place seems tenable to me for long anymore, not even my own skin.”

Yet he said that he did find an answer in Blanche’s exit line which he wrote for *A Streetcar Named Desire*: “I have always depended upon the kindness of strangers.”

This becomes a universal statement, as well as a personal one, in our present age of refugees of every kind who pour across borders and through city gates.

Who is not a refugee? Jesus was born one, dependent upon charity, in flight from tyranny, homeless and hungry. Many of us are refugees of vastly

different kinds: from peace in crowded, violent, impersonal cities; from meaning in a secular age that just may be bent on self-destruction; from love in a time when fundamentalistic report cards on the human condition try to hold sway over thanksgiving for God’s creation. It appears that all of us are increasingly dependent upon the kindness of strangers; and strangers upon *our* kindness.

Williams knew vulnerability intimately. In *The Glass Menagerie*, a broken glass unicorn is presented as a loving gift. In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Maggie tells Brick: “Of course you always had that detached quality as if you were playing a game without much concern over whether you won or lost, and now that you’ve lost the game, not lost but just quit playing, you have that rare sort of charm that usually only happens in very old or hopelessly sick people, the charm of the defeated.”

Chance, in *Sweet Bird of Youth*, says: “I don’t ask for your pity, but just for your understanding — not even that — no. Just for your recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all.” One finds a line of incredible transcendence in *Camino Real*: “The violets in the mountains have broken the rocks.”

The Rev. T. Lawrence Shannon, a defrocked Episcopal priest, becomes a tour guide for a while in *The Night of the Iguana*. The following lines, which Williams gave Shannon, might serve as an epitaph for Williams himself:

“I haven’t stuck to the schedules of the brochures and I’ve always allowed the ones that were willing to see, to see — the underworlds of all places, and if they have hearts to be touched, feelings to feel with, I gave them a priceless chance to feel and to be touched. And none will ever forget it, none of them, ever, never!”

Goodbye, dear friend. Go in peace. ■



Would You Believe . . .

Christians Flock to Liturgy In the Soviet Union?

by Susan B. Anthony

We hear much in the United States about “atheistic communism” but little about the practice of religion in the Soviet Union. On a Citizens’ Exchange trip, Dr. Susan B. Anthony, grandniece of the noted suffragist, had an opportunity to observe and participate in services of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches there, and to interview

Archbishop Makary, world ecumenical figure, in Kiev, as she sought signs of Russian spirituality.

As we go to press, the Rev. Richard W. Gillett of the Church and Society Network, contributing editor of THE WITNESS, is on a tour of the U.S.S.R. and will report on the socio-political aspects of his trip in future issues.

Christianity does indeed transcend not only national cultural differences, but economic and political systems. That was my first and last impression during a journey to the Soviet Union in 1982. I saw this while attending services and heard it during interviews with people such as Archbishop Makary of the Ukraine, a leader of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as the world ecumenical and peace movements.

I worshiped God with brother and sister Christians, some of the more than 40 million Russian Orthodox members, whether in an obscure, small onion-domed church in Moscow, or at the grand St. Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev. I saw the glory of the Risen Christ in the

golden-spired Sts. Peter and Paul Fortress Cathedral in Leningrad. I grieved with the suffering Christ a few yards from the cathedral in the jail cells that had confined the great novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky in 1852, and the Russian literary giant, Maxim Gorky in 1905.

One of my bonds of unity with Soviet Christians was forged when a young woman on our Citizen Exchange Council tour rushed up to me in a hotel lobby during our first stop in Moscow. She said, “You’re the only member of our tour who would have a Catholic Bible with you. There’s a young Russian waiting down at the Metro station — praying that I will bring a Bible to him.”

I told her that my Bible was at the bottom of my suitcase, jammed in under luggage of 37 other tour members. I didn’t even know if I could get at it. But somehow I did, and dug through my clothes for my well-worn Bible. I inscribed it for the Moscow Roman Catholic and gave it to her to take it to him.

Just an hour before our departure from Moscow I walked down to the Russian Orthodox church near the Hotel Cosmos with George, the

Ukrainian-born Russian Orthodox member of our tour. We entered the lighted church, obviously in the midst of the Divine Liturgy. The face of Jesus was spotlighted in a full-length ikon behind the altar. Two scarlet-clad priests with long white hair were celebrating. At this midweek service the majority of the 25 worshipers were *babushkas* (elderly women), in simple working clothes, and one young man. All of us stood, except one woman who prostrated herself on the floor during the reading of the Gospel. George stood behind me, quietly weeping. “This is my religion,” he said. “I guess I get emotional about it.”

The numinous quality of that Russian Orthodox Mass, immediately after the gift of my Bible to a young Muscovite, seemed to convert my secular tour into a spiritual pilgrimage. The climax of the pilgrimage awaited me in Kiev where I met, interviewed and was blessed and anointed by Archbishop Makary of the Ukraine.

I questioned him in the grand drawing room of the Kiev chancery. Hospitably, he had served me tea in a filigreed silver glass holder, and cookies and candies. We sat under crystal chandeliers which



Dr. Susan B. Anthony, author, theologian and lecturer, is currently counseling in private practice in Boca Raton, Fla.

lit up the gilded carvings, the rich brocades and colors of the room. The Archbishop's merry blue eyes and frequent laughter contrasted with the somber black of his hat or *klobuk*, black veil and black robe.

The Russian Orthodox church, he said, is well established inside the Soviet Union. "According to our constitution we can profess any religion we like, and confess our Lord Jesus Christ."

Of the estimated 50 million Christians in the U.S.S.R. today, the Russian Orthodox lead with more than 40 million adherents. Of the other 10 million Christians, 6 million are Protestants and 3.5 million are Roman Catholics. There are also 45 million Moslems in the country.

"Many thousand 'open' or active churches function in the Soviet Union," the Archbishop said. The figures range from 7,500 to 10,000, according to our tour booklet. In Czarist days there were 77,676 Russian Orthodox churches. Russian Orthodoxy was then a state religion, with 95% of the population adhering to it.

Active churches are distinguished from those that function as museums, such as the Dom in Riga, the huge Kazan Cathedral in Leningrad, the ikon-rich Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow or others that are simply closed.

An important indicator of religious renewal in the Soviet Union, Archbishop Makary said, is the doubling of the number of theology students from 1,000 to 2,000 in the last five years. This includes 1,000 correspondence course students who cannot get to either of the three Russian Orthodox seminaries, or the two graduate theology academies. "Applications for admission have been running three or four times the number of available spaces in these institutions," our tour booklet said.

Some of those applicants are now women, according to the Archbishop.



Archbishop Makary

"For the first time in history, the Russian Orthodox Church is admitting women to the theology academies. They are being trained theologically for their work as choir directors. Some 40 women have been admitted to Leningrad's theology academy. Soon Moscow will open its doors."

The Russian Orthodox, like the Roman Catholics, declared women saints long before they permitted them to study God in academies.

"We do not have many women saints. But we do have some — one of the very first saints in the history of our church is Princess Olga, who was called 'equal to the apostles' by the church. That is the highest title that could be given anyone. She was given this title because she played an exceptional role in bringing Christianity to Russia. She was the grandmother of the great Prince Vladimir. She had a vast influence upon the choice that was made later by the Prince in bringing Christianity to Russia in Kiev in 988." The millennium of the introduction of Christianity will be celebrated in 1988.

The Russian Orthodox have not modernized their liturgy, Archbishop Makary observed.

"We are interested in preserving the liturgy as it was in the course of many centuries," he said. "Slavonic is the language we use — a classic language in Russia — a beautiful language for singing and reading. Some Soviet

academicians are saying that it is the purest language in the history of Russia. I think that we will continue to prefer this language for our liturgy for the time being."

The interior quality of religious life in the Soviet Union interested me more than the numbers of believers. I asked the Archbishop whether the great Russian soul, manifested by the saints and portrayed by Dostoevsky and other writers, survived the revolution.

Archbishop Makary said that unlike the West, all Russian monasteries and convents are contemplative, rather than active or apostolic. He didn't say, but I would guess this is not a matter of virtue only, but of necessity. The church in Russia is not permitted to proselytize; hence there is no real place for evangelizing or even teaching religion, outside of the seminaries and academies. The 20 monasteries and convents that do exist are not divided into various orders or congregations.

There is a stable interest in the monastic life among believers, he said. Some 50 to 60% of the monks and nuns are from 20 to 40 years old. Like contemplatives everywhere they dedicate most of their time to prayer, the core of their life.

One of the functions of the monks and nuns is to provide spiritual direction for lay persons. Called *staretz* or elders, they are very popular and venerated among the believers. The *staretz* is, he said, like Father Zossima in *The Brothers Karamozov*, whose "love-in-action" teaching inspired Dorothy Day's work for the poor and peace.

The monasteries are supported by free donations of the believers. There are no wealthy, land-owning monasteries as there were before the Revolution. The famous Cave (Pechersky) monastery in Kiev for example, in Czarist days, owned thousands of producing acres. Today religious live frugally with neither state support nor

that of royalty and nobility to provide them with land and money. Yet nothing is done to hamper the existence of the monasteries, insisted the Archbishop. "They have all the opportunity they need to lead a normal monastic life."

I asked the Archbishop if he had anything he would like to say to us Americans.

"I think it is especially important," he said, "that the Americans and the Russians come together more often. I think it is beautiful that now I have this opportunity to sit together with you, to speak with you, to share our common interests, and to express toward each other our sympathy, our love; and I

think that if this kind of possibility would come more often, if we could meet more often, I think we could become more dear to each other. If that's the case, we would try to do everything possible not to inflict any kind of harm on another person whom we know, and whom we love, and whom we respect."

He concluded, "If men and women will gain peace inside themselves, they would save many thousands of people who are living around them. I think that the spirituality of peace within oneself is exceptionally helpful for the cause of peace. It could be the strongest weaponry which could really fight the

arms race."

The Archbishop fit my interview into a day which included a three hour liturgy at 6 p.m., and a four hour Divine Liturgy the next day at St. Vladimir to celebrate the Ukrainian feast, the Blessing of the Flowers.

Five of us from our tour walked down the hill from our hotel to St. Vladimir to attend the last half of the evening liturgy of the vigil feast. The crowd was so dense in the cathedral that we arranged to meet outside afterward. I squeezed through the men and women worshipers trying to locate the altar and the Archbishop.

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Russian, U.S. Stereotypes Harmful

The Russian stereotype assailing the minds of many Americans, is a demeaning caricature of the Russian people. It alleges that Russians are ill-mannered and swaggering; bellicose and militaristic; dishonest, unreliable, deceitful, duplicitous, cunning, and atheistic; that they trample on all that is humane, on respect for the individual, on tolerance for dissent, on compassion for the suffering, on spiritual refinement; and that, like a bear, they are dull-witted but powerful and only respond to displays of vastly superior force, and even then with belligerent reluctance.

That there have been or are Russians who fit this mold is undeniable, as do some Germans, Italians, Japanese, and Americans. But I ask you whether a people embodying only these features could have produced their rich folklore; writers like Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Pasternak, and Solzhenitsyn; the composers Glinka, Balakirev, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, and Shostokovich; painters such as Ivanov, Perov, Repin, Surikov, Levitan, Serov, Vrubel, Kandinsky, and Chagall; and the ballet immortals Nijinsky, Plisetskaja, Nureyev, Barishnikov, Makarova, and Godunov, to name only a few?

The answer must be that during the last two centuries Russian society, carefully considered, yields about the same ratio of talent and degeneracy or creative flight and obtuseness as any other. It may even be that the Russians have produced more than their share of great masters. And

culture typically does not flourish in a vacuum. It requires the warmth of a great tradition, the air of a cultivated audience, and the light of sensitive criticism.

Let me share with you the Soviet stereotype of Americans. It is also inaccurate, demeaning, and self-serving. But with their wand of class-consciousness, the Soviets tend to divide Americans into a large group of poor workers oppressed by a smaller clique of the evil wealthy, especially those financiers, manufacturers, and suppliers of armaments.

The *capitalist* American is opportunistic, exploitative, and ruthless; permissive, apathetic, and narcissistic; he is intellectually shallow, irreverent toward his heritage, and obsessed with an amoral technology; and he is easily satisfied with the trivial and tawdry in the arts and uncritically swayed by charisma and rhetoric in politics. Most importantly, he is naive, inconstant, and thus dangerous in his behavior. That is, he is capable of unpredictable and illogical responses which, on the international plane, may well risk war and even the future of mankind to protect his position and ego.

This image fits Americans little better than our Russian stereotype does their people, but both nonetheless underlie much thinking and decision making.

— Gary L. Browning
Associate Professor of Russian
Brigham Young University

Can Law and Religion Find a Better Relationship?

by Henry H. Rightor

Law and religion have had an on-and-off relationship in the Western world since the time of Moses.

In the United States, religion has done far more than supply law with its values; that is, what is “right” and what is “wrong.” Love of God and love of neighbor have provided powerful religious incentives for obedience to law. Secular religion has supplied similar incentives through love of country and through the religious ideals and values it adopted. Law, in turn, has done far more than protect religious freedom. It has often provided religion with guidelines for its social and political concerns, through such humane legislation as Civil Rights.

When there has been this kind of interaction between law and religion, it has not only permitted the two disciplines to help each other accomplish their separate purposes; their interaction has also permitted them to share a common purpose and function, the ordering of society. Whenever they have accepted social responsibilities together, a close relationship has developed between the legal and religious communities.

The founders of our nation, certainly

The Rev. Henry H. Rightor, J.D., D.D., practiced as an attorney and served as a representative in the Arkansas State Legislature prior to ordination. He is Professor Emeritus of Pastoral Care and Canon Law at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria. The above is a chapter from an unpublished manuscript looking for a publisher.

those responsible for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, were well aware that an orderly society needs the particular contributions that religion can make.

It is the First Amendment of the “Bill of Rights,” often called “the soul of the Constitution,” that guarantees “the free exercise” of religion.

Article I of the amendments does more, however, than guarantee “the free exercise” of religion. It reads, in its entirety, as follows:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The genius of the First Amendment lies in the balance it achieved in the relationship between law and religion. It underwrites a society in which particular religious principles do not become law; at the same time, it makes sure that religion will be free to contribute to law the religious values and motivations that are needed by an orderly society.

This century has seen the growth of a pronounced tendency on the part of both the legal and religious communities to restrict their interests to their separate goals. The result has been a loss of the support they had previously given to the social order. This has not only been costly to society; the two disci-

plines themselves have both been impoverished as they pursued their separate goals without the interaction that had been part of the process of their joint ventures.

Law without the morals and ideals of religion is left to rely on the punitive aspects of adversary civil and criminal procedures for its effectiveness. While this may be euphemistically described as “positive” law, the growing reliance on adversary procedures alone has brought law and the practice of law to the extraordinarily low point they have now reached in public esteem.

Religion, apart from the socializing effects of law, tends to become either an individual pursuit designed to make one “feel good,” or the activity of a limited group concerned with little beyond its own welfare. The accompanying withdrawal of concern that others experience justice and mercy has brought a loss of respect for religion generally in the public mind.

Our social order had long depended on the combined effect of law and religion for its order and grace. Together they had served as the taproots which produced the blossoming of our society. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, an astute observer from another culture, includes our country along with the West generally in his recent prophecy: “There is a disaster, however, which has already been under way for quite some time. I am referring to the calamity of a despiritualized and irreligious humanistic consciousness.”

One may object to this dire prophecy and yet yearn for the grace of a generation that inscribed the words of Emma Lazarus on the Statue of Liberty:

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
be free . . .*

Boldness and confidence were component parts of the grace that inspired this invitation. Such boldness and confidence are almost startling today. They were nourished then by the faith expressed in the motto, *In God we trust* — the motto which still appears, perhaps anachronistically, on some of the coins of our country.

It is neither possible nor desirable for our society to go back to the time of Moses, or the imperial Popes, or the Protestant established churches, or even to the time of our own Founding Fathers in order that a relationship between the two disciplines may be re-established. Each of those eras may have something to teach us. A new basis for the relationship is needed now and in the future, however, if law and religion are to meet their separate needs and, together, help to order a society that is becoming more and more disorderly.

The partnership between law and religion that brought about Civil Rights legislation was a glimpse of what can be in this country. While the partnership did not last long, it illustrated that a renewal of the relationship is possible.

Prerequisites to the development of a new relationship between the two in our pluralistic society are far broader definitions of both law and religion than those to which people generally have been accustomed. Encouraging signs are appearing that suggest the acceptance of such definitions, together with a much more comprehensive view of those who may be said to constitute the legal and religious communities.

I find helpful the definition of law and

religion supplied by Harold J. Berman of the Harvard Law School. He defines law as “the structure and processes of allocation of rights and duties.” Religion, he suggests, is “society’s intuition of and commitment to the ultimate meaning and purpose of life.” In keeping with these broad concepts it would be appropriate to include in the legal community law students, lawyers, judges, legislators and all others who are concerned for the process of allocating rights and duties. Similarly, in the religious community there would be included with lay people and ordained ministers of all denominations, those who profess no formal religion but who are committed to a high standard of ethics and moral action.

The foregoing definitions would not have satisfied either the legal or religious communities in the past. In fact, many who would be included in such a comprehensive religious community today have warred against each other in the past and are at least suspicious of each other in the present. There is a profound change in contemporary society that is, nevertheless, beginning to change the outlook of all legal and religious groups toward each other; that change is the appearance of an enemy common to all law and all religion. The common enemy marches under a banner proclaiming that “life is absurd” — or, to be more precise, that life which aims at more than an individual’s self-realization is absurd.

Significant members of various legal and religious communities have become aware of the dangers this attitude presents to the practice of law and of religion and to society; they are locking arms to resist it; and, more positively, they are sensing a fresh kind of legal universalism and religious ecumenism.

The presence of a common enemy is neither a very elevating nor a continuing principle for a joint venture. The same may be said when the motivating force

for such a venture is shared desperation — and “desperation” is not too strong a word to use to describe many who agree with Solzhenitsyn’s closing remarks in his 1978 Harvard Commencement address:

If the world has not come to its end, it has approached a major turn in history, equal in importance to the turn from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It will exact from us a spiritual upsurge: We shall have to rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life, where our physical nature will not be cursed as in the Middle Ages, but, even more important, our spiritual being will not be trampled upon as in the modern era.

This ascension will be similar to climbing up to the next anthropologic stage. No one on earth has any other way left but — upward.

The temporary alliance between law and religion during the Civil Rights Movement brought hope for a renewal of their old partnership. However, more recent activity by widespread religious groups in this country poses a new threat to the relationship. The groups, usually led by television and radio evangelists, achieved national prominence in 1980 during the summer and fall political campaigns.

Their threat to the relationship lies in the fact that the groups do not seek a partnership in which religion supplies law with certain values, or offers religious incentives for obedience to law. Their purpose, in too many instances, is to take over the partnership and substitute their particular moral principles for the law as it stands in certain places in the Constitution, in legislative enactments, and in Supreme Court decisions.

Witnessing the efforts of such contemporary religious activists as “the Moral Majority” and “the Christian Voice” is

like watching a replay of the action by the religious groups that first brought about the enactment of “Dry Laws” in many of the states, and then secured ratification of the 18th Amendment, proclaimed in 1920. This amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, transportation, importation or exportation of intoxicating liquors.

There is a difference in the earlier and the contemporary religious activists: Today’s groups do not have a single cause. Some are promoting a constitutional amendment that would permit the states to require prayer in public schools. Some are trying to prohibit all abortions by an amendment to the Constitution; others would void the Supreme Court decisions that permit abortion in certain circumstances by having the Congress define human life as beginning at the moment of conception. Some groups are seeking require-

ments by individual states that a biblically fundamentalist doctrine of creation be taught in their schools. Still other groups are backing combinations of such issues on the local, state or national level by appearing before legislative bodies and by giving their support, including substantial financial support, to particular candidates for public office.

The greatest difference between today’s movements and the movement that brought about the Prohibition Amendment is the experience our country has had with that kind of legislation. The 18th Amendment was touted as the “Noble Experiment”; and indeed it was. Never before had any religious groups translated a particular moral scruple of their own, namely, abstinence from alcohol, into a law that imposed their scruple on the nation as a whole.

Surely the intent of those who brought about Prohibition was “noble”; but, just as surely, the effect of Prohibition was disastrous. First, it failed in its purpose to bring about abstinence from alcohol. More significant was the fact that it produced a disrespect for law and the authority of government that survived the amendment’s repeal in 1933 and continues to infect our society today.

At the same time one deplores the “Noble Experiment,” it should be admitted that its sponsors used the political process in accordance with our constitutional system. Those who are again sponsoring the translation into law of their moral scruples, such as the prohibition of abortion, are also within their constitutional rights.

Opposition to their efforts can point, not to their illegality, but to the fact that we have already experimented with the legislation of moral principles. There is good reason to identify the proposed legislation of new moral principles as new threats to a balanced relationship between law and religion. Our history indicates that another takeover of law by such principles would lead to further disrespect for law and the authority of government.

The strongest opposition to those who would have their moral principles enacted into law comes from others in the religious community who want to see law and religion working as partners to support the social order as during the brief Civil Rights Movement.

The two camps within the religious community have long been fearful of each other. Among those who would legislate their moral principles are many fundamentalists who see those opposing them as humanists who would destroy the authority of Scripture by interpreting it. On the other side are those who look on the fundamentalists and their allies as opposed to the intelligent



use of the Bible to cooperate with, rather than to dominate, the law.

The fundamentalists constitute a formidable bloc within the religious community at present. They would be reduced to a much smaller and less effective proportion, however, if the religious community were broadened and substantially enlarged.

Professor Berger, quoted earlier, makes the case for religious and legal communities that welcome and make room for far more than their current members. He is convincing when he suggests that religion is “intuition of and commitment to the ultimate meaning of life.” A great many persons possess this “intuition and commitment” who have never thought of themselves as “religious.” Certainly a number of them would ally themselves with the non-fundamentalists in the religious community who are seeking a renewed relationship with the legal community.

Again there is a lesson to be learned from the Prohibition Amendment: this time a positive lesson from its *repeal*. Many in the religious and legal communities were reunited by their common opposition to the legislation of moral scruples. They were joined by others who did not consider themselves members of either community to bring about repeal of the amendment in 1933. A similar alliance could now be mustered to halt similar legislation on both state and national levels.

There remains an ultimate factor that cries out for a new relationship between the legal and religious communities — on a world-wide as well as a national level. This, of course, is the present threat of nuclear destruction of life on our planet. It is not too much to hope, at least, that the broadest possible legal and religious communities will soon be able consciously to acknowledge the existence of this threat and this opportunity. ■

Letters . . . Continued from page 2

length but have been a reader off and on of THE WITNESS for the past 17 or 18 years, as I have tried to keep up with all points of view in the Episcopal Church through the various publications.

Charles M. Crump
Memphis, Tenn.

Marxists Not Free

On the same day that I read the article on capitalism by Michael Parenti, I also read in the paper about a Vietnamese refugee who struggled 1,560 miles in his escape from Marxist Vietnam.

Although contrasted by some 80 years and thousands of miles, Tevye of fiction, whom Mr. Parenti cites, and Ly Van Tong, a real person, have something in common: flight from oppression.

As Mr. Parenti states, hard work in itself seldom makes anyone rich. It is also necessary to develop and use intelligence. Although *Fiddler on the Roof* is fiction, it would be interesting to know what Tevye and his family did after arriving in America. Although lacking any formal education there would be opportunity unimagined compared to where they came from — even to this day.

Socialism has made a lot of promises but do we see workers flocking to those countries where it is practiced, willing to learn a new language and culture, leaving behind family and country and doing so with perhaps only a 50% chance of success? On the contrary, they flee by the hundreds of thousands from those lands, so much so that walls must be erected to stop the flow.

Marxism sees history in a rigid form of class struggle. Thus society must be restructured. In practice, this means that people are reduced to little more than subsistence level — except for the elitism and exclusiveness of the party members.

People like Tevye wouldn't be spending any time complaining to God in a Marxist society because there would not even be any people like Tevye. They either conform or perish — or they

escape. Marxism attacks a very basic human spirit: the spirit to be free and think as an individual without fear of it being considered a crime.

Dibrell L. DuVal
Tulsa, Okla.

Parenti Responds

Mr. Crump says that oppression is inevitable in Marxist countries, then points to a Marxist country (China) that seems to have a good measure of freedom, especially in regard to religion. My own observations, and those of the Rev. Billy Graham and other religious persons who have traveled to socialist countries including the USSR, are that people are free to worship as they choose. While religious practices are certainly not encouraged, they are not repressed, and in most instances relations between church and civic authorities are good. (See *Susan B. Anthony article on religion in the Soviet Union this issue*. — Eds.)

Mr. DuVal correctly notes that people have left socialist countries, but he should add that it is especially ones like Vietnam and East Germany that had been so thoroughly devastated by war, or underdeveloped countries like Cuba that suffer the deprivations of a U.S. blockade. No doubt, many people are attracted to the cornucopia they think they will find in the United States. Few come in search of so vague a thing as “freedom.” Smaller but substantial numbers migrate the other way: about 2,000 Germans a year move from West Germany to East Germany, and about 60,000 elderly Polish-Americans now live in Poland (yes, Poland) because of the free services and because their Social Security money goes further there.

I would like to add that much of what we call “freedom” is a class-bound experience. Formal legal freedoms are of little use if you and your children are hungry. In socialist countries there is a guaranteed right to a job and old-age pension; people receive free medical care, free education to whatever level

their abilities can take them, and heavily subsidized housing, transportation and food staples. This kind of security — which brings an important freedom from want and misery — still escapes millions of people in this affluent land of ours.

In addition, there is a good deal of discussion and criticism in socialist countries about particular policies. But it is also true that opinions are sometimes censored. And no one is free to advocate a return to the feudal, fascist and capitalist systems that had previously existed. No one is free to amass or inherit private wealth or get rich off the labor of others.

Existing socialist societies have many features we might like or not like, but we should start looking at the system we live under and at what it is doing to us.

Michael Parenti
Washington, D.C.

USSR Christians . . .

Continued from page 14

A Ukrainian woman in a grey worker's dress gestured to me to step ahead of her in line. Smelling of the sprig of mint she was holding, she kept pushing me along until I saw that the worshipers were kneeling to kiss a Crucifix that lay on a bank of flowers held by a deacon.

When the deacon led me around to the altar, I looked up to see Archbishop Makary, under a radiant jeweled miter. He anointed my forehead with oil that seemed to be a seal for my "pilgrimage" — a seal of peace.

I caught my final glimpse of St. Vladimir from our tour bus enroute to the airport. Though it was five hours after the liturgy, crowds of men and women were still walking in or out of the cathedral entrance.

Far to the north of Kiev the next day, Assumption Sunday, I dressed and walked quickly in the chill air of Riga, Soviet Latvia, toward the tallest spire, looking for Mass. But that spire topped an inactive church, the most famous cathedral in Riga, the Dom. Its doors

CREDITS

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were closed because it was now a concert hall-museum. Frustrated and cold I walked through ancient gates on the narrow, winding cobblestoned streets, and found myself behind a small, bent over *babushka* scurrying along, I somehow knew, toward Sunday service. I followed her right into a church, seeing at a glance that it was Roman Catholic. Not only was there a wall painting of St. Therese, "The Little Flower," but a man was reciting the rosary. There were also pews, confessionals, and white-clad priests. This Sunday Feast of Our Lady was filled with men as well as women and children, mostly well dressed.

As I knelt, my neighbor, who was reading from a tattered prayer book, offered it to me. The Mass started promptly at 9 a.m. It was a traditional, pre-Vatican II liturgy. The priest, with his back to us, celebrated in a blend of Latin and Latvian with the choir making responses. The communion line was not packed like St. Vladimir's line for the anointing.

I knelt on hard marble and copied the others, placing my hands under a cloth the length of the altar rail. No communion in the hand here! But I was happy to receive the host with my sisters and brothers in the Soviet Roman Catholic Church. I felt such a bond with these people, as at St. Vladimir, that it became impossible to conceive of bombing them.

The words of St. Paul to the Ephesians came to me, "Make every effort to preserve the unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force." ■

Editorial . . . Continued from page 3
fact most murderers act out of momentary passion from deep-seated aberrations. Moreover, an execution is irrevocable, leaving no revocation for the number of those killed by the state who have been later found to be innocent of the crime for which they were deprived of life.

We are not ready to believe that restoring the traffic in state executions, when that practice had entirely stopped for nine years, would in any sense be progress for the humanitarian goals of the American people. We firmly oppose the death penalty as inhumane, ineffective as a deterrent to crime and inconsistent with the ideal of a modern democratic nation.

What can we do? We should become informed. We should contribute to awakening public opinion by speaking to our fellow workers and neighbors and writing to newspapers. We should witness to legislators, especially when such capital crimes legislation is being considered. We should assure our church leadership, locally, and on a statewide and denominationwide level, of our support in opposing the death penalty. In our land and in our day one of the best ways to testify to the Gospel is to advocate to the state the inviolability of human life.

On the Mount of Olives when the Scribes and Pharisees tested Jesus in regard to the stoning of an adulterous woman, Jesus declared the death penalty wrong by demanding that first the judges and executioners must be sinless. It is our responsibility to see Christ in the convicted as well as in the victims.

(H.C.W. and the editors)

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THE WITNESS supports and commends the Roman Catholic Bishops for their pastoral letter denouncing nuclear war and calling upon Christians to help rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Excerpts from the pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*.

"The nuclear age is an era of moral as well as physical danger. We are the first generation since Genesis with the power to virtually destroy God's creation. We cannot remain silent in the face of such danger . . .

"We feel that our world and nation are headed in the wrong direction. The whole world must summon the moral courage and technical means to say 'No' to the moral danger of a nuclear age which places before human kind indefensible choices of constant terror or surrender . . .

"A nuclear response to either conventional or nuclear attack can cause destruction which goes far beyond 'legitimate defense.' Such use of nuclear weapons would not be justified . . .

"The 'new moment' which exists in the public debate about nuclear weapons provides a creative opportunity and a moral imperative to examine the relationship between public opinion and public policy . . .

"It would be perverted political policy or moral casuistry which tried to justify using a weapon which 'indirectly' or 'unintentionally' killed a million innocent people because they happened to live near a 'militarily significant' target . . .

"We therefore express our view that the first imperative is to prevent any use of nuclear weapons and our hope that leaders will resist the notion that nuclear conflict can be limited, contained or won in any traditional sense . . ."