

Editorial**Voter Registration**

A virtual revolution has been taking place in the South. Religious News Service reports that the Voter Education Project (VEP) headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., has announced that the number of blacks elected to office in the South has increased by 1,800 per cent over the past nine years.

John Lewis, the VEP executive director, says the number has risen from 72 to 1,307 in 1974.

He describes this increase as "astounding," which it is. Still it is only a beginning since the number of blacks holding office still represents less than 2 per cent of more than 79,000 state and local officials in the South.

Yet the work of VEP is to be commended. Begun in 1962 it has made voter registration and education grants to more than 1,000 local minority organizations and provided technical assistance to many other local groups.

What is obvious is that the VEP has made it possible for the black voter in the South to register and vote, ensuring a better balance of representation.

Similar work has been done in Monroe County by the Coalition for Voter Registration. Since 1972, this group has registered more than 38,000 voters through its mobile registration program.

The coalition says it registered one fourth of all voters registered in the county in 1973 — nearly 8,000, as compared to 1,000 who went to the Board of Elections for that purpose.

The benefits of such work is obvious and most come under the heading of citizen participation in government. And never has a nation more needed more of its citizens taking a greater role in its destiny.

The Deepest Cut

What is perhaps the deepest tragedy of Watergate has been unfolding slowly. We don't mean the constant implications of wrong-doing that keep bringing the matter closer to the President's office.

The most calamitous aspect of Watergate is the undermining of faith in many aspects of official and business life that it has engendered among the general populace.

For instance, concerning the energy crisis, many Americans find it easier to believe the Shah of Iran than the top official in our country working on the problem. In addition there is a smoldering body of opinion that the whole crisis has been concocted for the good of the oil industry.

Members of one political party, far removed from any of the chicanery connected with the Washington administration, are paying for the crimes of others. Voters either do not trust Republican candidates or they are scuttling their candidacies to send a new kind of mandate to the President of the United States. Either way it is an unhealthy basis for the selection of representatives.

It is nothing new for the populace to be leery of politicians, although often such wariness has borne unfair criticism. Not all politicians are dishonest — just as not all doctors, or all lawyers, or all plumbers, or all taxi-drivers are dishonest.

But right now anyone would have a difficult time indeed trying to convince masses of Americans of this. And that is the most serious wound that the Watergate coverup and ramifications has inflicted on the nation.

Mrs. Meir

Without getting into the problems of Israeli politics, either internal or those produced by outside forces, it was gratifying to see Golda Meir decided to stay on as prime minister.

If for no other reason, it is important for Mrs. Meir to continue in the limelight to show the world that a woman can run a government — even one thoroughly enmeshed in crucial world problems.

Mrs. Meir is not the first woman head of state and hopefully she will not be the last. In the meantime she provided proof positive that a woman's place is not always in the home.

**'Vision' Seen
School Need**

Editor:

Two episcopal observations reported in *Courier-Journal* urge comment (2/13/74).

Bishop Hogan's apt sense of analogy in speaking of Regionalism must be commended as a refreshing departure from the trite aphorisms ordinary in Ordinaries. In extolling the work of the North Region committees and the concept of regionalism, he used a visit to the optometrist as an inspiration to this metaphor.

"I see the region as bifocals," he said, "to overcome the myopia of parochialism. Regionalism begins the extension of our vision beyond our own backyard."

On another page and another but not unrelated subject, the bishop speaks less picturesquely:

"I reaffirm my personal dedication to the apostolate of the Catholic school and pledge the best efforts of my office to insure that in this diocese they will be worthy of the uniqueness which we bishops have claimed for them."

There are those of us in another region, the Southeast, who would put a question to him. Statistics developed recently (and repeatedly the last few years) in the consolidation effort of three parishes in this area, show emphatically and convincingly that, despite earnest and well-formed consolidation designs, these schools will inevitably close in a predictable time. The case is the same, with only temporal differences, generally. Only a miraculous upward shift in enrollments will alter this.

Does the Bishop really believe this miracle of newly ascending enrollments will happen?

Failing such a miracle, the optometric analogy applies here as well as in his first instance. It becomes a tragic myopia that refuses to see the handwriting on the wall. The present concept of Catholic education in this country must yield to a radical new vision that looks beyond our parochial "back yards" to begin planning for the day when we parents must send our children into the public school system. That means a responsible Catholic commitment to participate in and improve the public system. This ought to be our ecumenical mission as gifted Christians in any case. It means getting out of the expensive secular education business, and bending our Catholic educators' energies and talents effectively into a concept of education, adult, teen-age and juvenile, that

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"...YEAH, JUST GOT HERE ABOUT AN HOUR AGO... LOOKS LIKE A GREAT PARISH... NO... NO TROUBLE WITH THE OLD BOY SO FAR..."

trains our Catholic "people of God" for that participation, a participation that looks unselfishly to the common weal.

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**Woman's Place
In the Bible**

Editor:

Actually the Bible has very little to say about marriage, or woman's place in society or the home. The Old Testament is almost completely silent in this regard and the New Testament has few words to offer. One Old Testament word, "helpmate," which appears in Genesis 2:18, may denote a subordinate place for women. But this may even be a vain "dispute about words" (11 Tim. 2:14), since the same word can also be translated "helper-fit" or equal person!

The New Testament would seem to place women in a subordinate position when we read, "wives be submissive to your husbands" in Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; and 1 Peter 3:1. We would not want to take these passages out of their context, however, or place undue emphasis upon these words. The Bible also says "slaves be submissive to your masters" (Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; Titus 2:9; and 1 Peter 2:18), yet we know that slavery is not right or desirable! The intent of the Biblical directive is that slaves only be submissive when a situation of slavery is unavoidable.

All human institutions are subject to change and may be tolerated and even approved of by God (1 Sam. 8:22; 12:19-25; Mt. 19:7-8). Paul speaks of marriage as a human institution, as he groups marriage with other worldly concerns and says "the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31). As a human institution, Paul compares marriage to the institution of slavery in an analogy in 1 Cor. 7:21: "Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity."

Since a wife is no longer her husband's property as she was in Paul's day (1 Thess. 4:4), what would the apostle say to the Church of today?

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**Inaction Aids
Anti-Life Drive**

Editor:

The abortion controversy is a

black and white issue. On the one side, largely successful so far, are the anti-life and population control people who have caused millions of lives to be destroyed and whose activities are now menacing the retarded, the chronically sick, and the senile. On the other side are those who believe in the worth and dignity of all human life. The Catholic Church, of course, has always been not only pro-life but has seen each human soul as immortal and each human life as thereby precious as a temple of the spirit. In view of this perfectly clear-cut distinction, why is it that so many Catholics are not motivated with a righteous anger to fight against the insidious death peddlers?

One reason, understandable but not justifiable, is that most good people see the areas of love and sex in such terms as tenderness, devotion, mystery, basic decency, motherhood, family life. But these correct sentiments and attitudes are blasted when one encounters the barbarism and crudity of the abortion issue. The really ugly distastefulness of the whole battle may make some people shun involvement. It is certainly true that the abortionists' camp is a world of pervasive destructiveness and evil, a world of nightmares.

It is sickeningly evident when one realizes the tremendous extent and financial power of the anti-life movement. And it is evident if one sees photographs of movies of abortions, as many right-to-life people do now and then.

But these reasons, if they are indeed operative, cannot be allowed to justify inaction. Abortion is a terrible evil that must be fought with God's grace as a buckler and shield — as we must fight all other anti-life movements that menace elements of our population. Edmund Burke's famous dictum that "the only thing needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing" has never had a more appropriate application. We must not allow the children of darkness to be wiser than the children of light. We must not walk through the battlefield with a rose in our teeth.

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