

were aware that they were full members of Christ's new creation. It seems clear, from reading between the lines in some of Paul's letters, that this scandalised contemporary society. Western society today would, on the other hand, not be all that scandalised were all Christians to behave as if Christ were really present in each one of them, men and women alike. This has always been part of the Church's faith, and

were all the Church wholeheartedly prepared to bear witness to this part of its faith and officially to ordain women, then mankind would see that the Church *really* believed that the Good News was all-embracing and to be preached to all humanity. Then—and only then, I think—we would be able to offer Christ to the battered wives and to their battering husbands.

EILEEN WILKS

**RIGHTS: A Handbook for People under Age**, by Nan Berger, *Penguin Education*, Great Britain, 1974. 160 pp. 60p.

As the title says, the book is not written about people under age, but for them. It is not intended simply as a source of information, but is calculated to provoke thought and discussion concerning what rights actually are, as well as how they operate in different spheres. Thus the book begins with a chapter which looks at definitions of rights, and distinguishes three kinds: social, legal and human. Following sections deal with rights at home, school and work, on the street and when in trouble. In conclusion, there is a regionally based list of organisations.

The book very much resembles a modern day secondary school text book: attractively layed-out, it represents some sort of solution to the dilemma faced by every writer of a book on rights: the people most in need of the information are those least likely to read it.

The book leaves no doubt as to the injustices and resultant actual or potential conflict evident in the sphere of people's rights. It is made clear that women and black people are treated in an inferior way; that there is need to organise in the work situation because rights will not be handed over without a fight; that the police and courts back up those wielding power through the law to maintain the status quo in their own interests; that ordinary people have little say in how things are run. And it is also strongly suggested that people under age are discriminated against as a group.

What the author fails to do is to suggest a significantly radical solution to all this. The basis on which the book is written is that information and dis-

ussion will raise people's consciousness of where their rights are being denied, or are absent altogether. And then, it is suggested, further discussion and the establishment of democratic decision-making and free choice will result in a resolution of injustice. Parents, for example, should help their children 'to strive for independence and the right to think as they wish', and teachers should treat their pupils as 'friends and colleagues'.

Such a programme for change, I would argue, fails to come to terms with the situation as it is, and hence is inadequate in its approach. Firstly, it is a great deal more difficult than the author suggests for people in a so-called democratic, free society to come to understand the extent to which their freedom is circumscribed.

Secondly, the injustices of our current society do not represent a temporary aberration which can be corrected by the creation and extension of choice and democracy within the existing order of things. Inequality is built into this order.

A recognition that this is so presents a choice that is real. On the one hand, an attempt can be made to do a patch and repair scheme on the structure, so people can live rather more comfortably and freely within it. This is the choice adopted by Nan Berger. Another option is to organise with others (a process which may, indeed, involve a temporary loss of individual freedom and choice) to do away with the structure in its entirety and to create an alternative one, in which it will no longer be necessary for anyone to write books about other people's rights.

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