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Clergy has a political role to play

"Clergy should stay out of politics."
This is what the person who called me wanted to say. The call was prompted by a reference in a sermon to the fact that many of the people who are supporting Gary Hart are looking for a new direction for our nation.

I was illustrating the idea that there is, a hunger for new direction. My remarks were seen as those of a minister who had entered into politics. This view, that clergy should stay out of politics, is an expecially strong tradition among evangelical Protestant Christians.

tion among evangeneral Frucesam Christians.

The phrase arouses old fears that someone will get into office from an-other denomination, and impose their religion upon us. I comes with a fear that political involvement by the cler-gy will divide the church.

gy will divide the church.

THIS VIEWPOINT is that clergy have a privileged position which they should not use of political purposes. It also comes out of the belief that clergy should stick to the things of faith, but should stay out of practical matters about which they know nothing.

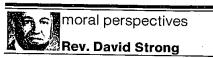
Regardless of all such warnings, clergy become invovided in politics. Often the costs are high, such as when a nin is forced to leave her order to hold a political office, or a minister is attacked because he/she takes action regarding the arms race. It is sensitive issue for clergy.

The problem is that no one clearly determine where to draw the line between the secular and the sacred. Does debate on prayer in public schools belong in the U.S. Senate or in the church? Is the issue of Las Vegas style

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ing assistance may list with the bureau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings call the bureau, 642-7272.



gambling in Detroit a political or a re-

gamoing in Detroit a political or a re-ligious concern? Alcohol consumption and pornogra-phy are typically items for the preach-er to speak about Because they deal with Individual morality. What about the political policies which advance or slow the arms race? Where is the line which separates the secular from the

I WAS ONCE very involved in sup-porting a public school millage cam-paign. I do not remember anyone criti-cizing me for this action. Another time I was involved in a workshop which op-posed the institution of a peacetime

posed the institution of a peacetime draft.

Interestingly enough, widespread conscription in Europe was the major reason that many immigrated to America to find freedom of conscience and freedom of their religious practice concerning war. Yet, active involvement of clergy in such issues as peace and war are often met with the phrase, "Ciergy stay out of politics."

First, we have to acknowledge the fact that there are no longer clear-cut inter. There is no place where we can stay that this issue is a sacred issue, and that one is secular.

Our American tradition in recent year is to err upon the side of being

who is precise with details and has an orderly approach to work for four hours a week to handle clerical and fit-ing duties. Must be over 18-years-old.

JOURNALIST/COORDINATOR JUNNALIST/COORDINATOR —
The Court Community Service program for Oakland County needs someone dependable and efficient with excellent writing and critiquing skills for the newsletter. Six months commitment is necessary and mileage is reimbursement. careful and cautious about the sacred imposing its belief upon the secular: no religion in the public schools, and nothing of what we find in Europe, a party associated with a religious position. This careful and cautious position is probably good, but it is being challenged to be seen to be seen to be seen and of the concerns which affect people on a daily basis, they will be invovied in politica.

THE SAFEST issue are social service, where we distribute used clothing, canned goods, and provide counseling and health care. However, once one moves from the perspective of a local community to a world view, it is obvious that feeding the bungry, clothing the naked and providing medical care are all political issues.

We are among the 10 percent who use 40 percent of the world's resources. One clergy man observed that we cannot continue to do this without militarily opposing those who would seek to change this imbalance. This quickly becomes a political issue.

Third, the most interesting phenomenon is the manner in which the issue gets turned around. Political figures can use religious issues to further their own position or to challenge the elec-

own position or to challenge the elec-

tion of a political foe. Religious groups vow to defeat those senators who voted against prayer in the public schools. There is a certain hypocray bere, that clergy are encouraged to speak about prayer in the public schools and are told to stay away from the lasue of the arms race or Central America.

are told to stay away from the Issue of the arms race or Central America.

WE HAVE TO admit that clergy themselves lives in a very political role. It's not much whether they are right or wrong morally, but whether the people in their parish support or oppose their stand. Billy Graham supported Predicent Nicon. This did not particularly bother Graham's constituency. It did bother his conservative constituency when he went to the Soviet Union and spoke about peace.

When clergy say only those things which are liked by the constituents, they destroy the prophetic nature of their call. Jeremiah was imprisoned because he called his nation to repent. Season who act is the constituents. The prophetic elements reflects the nature prophetic elements reflects the nature prophetic clements reflect the nature prophetic elements reflect the nature prophetic sone who act to change history. Greggy cannot totally stay out of political if they decide to be true to their own regions roots. They must risk the displeasure of misunderstanding of persons in order to exercise their proper role and authority. The must be true to their calling.

Clergy and their political invoviement is a sensitive issue. It will continue to attract controvers, It appears to be an increasingly important issue in our time.

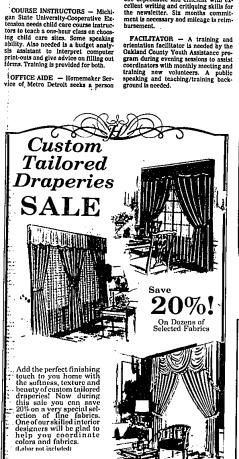
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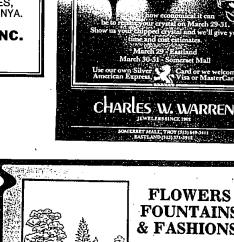
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