Title: *The Witness*, January to December, 1997

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The Witness

Volume 80 • Number 1/2 • January/February, 1997



Jubilee economics

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Responding to the Right

THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING YOUR wonder-filled magazine. Articles by Chung Hyun Kyung speak to my mind and my heart. I've been waiting for her message and teachings for years and years — maybe all my life. I'll be 80 in the year 2,000! That's a long time to wait for a woman to speak in a way I can understand. Perhaps I was not truly ready to see and comprehend all she writes. And there are others who have helped along my way and most have been loving, wise, elder women. For each of them I am grateful to God.

Thank you for keeping *The Witness* alive.

Janet Miriam Wallace
Northport, MI

THANK YOU SO MUCH for your conversation with Jim Wallis. I am where you are and have gown increasingly uncomfortable with *Sojourners'* shift, taking "leadership" with a national program and the abandonment of a rich heritage from the Left.

I think that we must all be open to discernment, growth, change, evaluation and the leading of the Spirit — yet I find that I cannot follow where *Sojourners* is going.

Thanks too for the Stringfellow reprint. I appreciate deeply every issue of *Witness* that comes to our home.

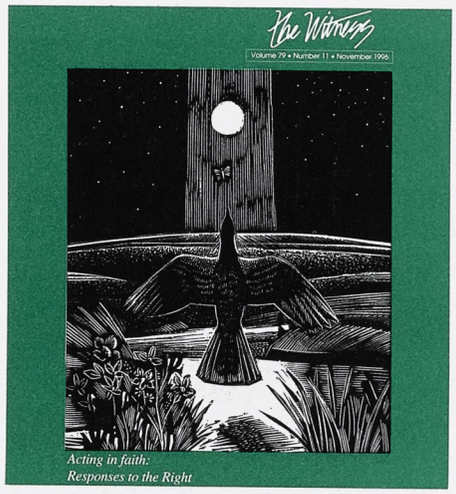
Willie Righter
Dayton, OH

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS for your conversation with Jim Wallis.

Your Lefty *compadre,* saved by the Sandinistas,

Pio Celestino
Harlingen, TX

[Ed. note: A decade ago, Pio Celestino was severely injured in a truck accident in Nicaragua. The Sandinista government provided medical treatment.]



Acting in faith:
Responses to the Right

LAST NIGHT I READ THE CONVERSATION between Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann and Jim Wallis. I have been thinking and thinking about it today.

In the interview, I felt that *The Witness* sounded defensive, as if you were holding to a label for dear life, fearing that your identity would somehow change if you let go of this boat we call "the Left." I understand why, but I would encourage you to reconsider.

What is the real mission? Isn't it to live and proclaim a radical Gospel on behalf of all who are oppressed — and to communicate that message to as wide an audience as possible? In my opinion, most of our political labels — be they Right or Left, liberal or conservative, have lost their original meanings. You did a good job of explaining who you recognize as the Left, but I sense that this community has much more meaning to you than it does to the people you are trying to serve. Furthermore, identifying *The Witness* in this way, may actually do more harm than good by polarizing your position and alienating those who you most need to reach and engage.

I don't agree with all of Jim Wallis' views, but he is completely correct in saying that the people in trouble want to talk about issues and solutions. The strength of *The Witness* is its willingness to engage in debate on behalf of the oppressed. I believe that if we truly follow Jesus, this debate must lead us to a place which is beyond any political or ideological boundary, and which continually transcends all institutions and affiliations — even the church. It takes great courage to leap into an unknown, murky place where the former labels no longer serve and old friends are not at our side — yet that is exactly what I believe we are called to do. Your voice is needed there — I hope you will go courageously and unencumbered.

Elizabeth Adams
Hartford, VT

In need of a labor movement

TREMENDOUS! It is great coverage! Could you tell me how to reach the ACORN organization referenced in it?

Joseph Kujovsky
Lebanon, PA

[Ed. note: ACORN's national office can be reached at 739 Eight St., SE, Washington, D.C. 20003; ph. 202-547-2500.]

Witness praise

KEEP MY VERY FAVORITE PUBLICATION coming in my mailbox! What a delight it is to see a copy of *The Witness* when I pick up the mail. Have looked at the Table of Contents before I unlock my front door!

Elsie Kalenius
Des Moines, WA

THANK YOU for your personal note on my receipt. It made me feel like I still belonged to the mission of *The Witness* after almost 50 years. It has always expressed my ministry as a priest of the Episcopal Church. I changed my ministry in 1938 from Evangelical and Reformed (now UCC) to Episcopal because of the CLID.

In the 1940s Bill Spofford asked me to join the Editorial Board. I left it when I was called to be Episcopal Chaplain at Syracuse University; and Rector of Grace Church at which parish I was consistently "inclusive" till I retired in 1977.

My retirement has been in a southern situation where I could continue my calling to reconcile those unreconciled to each other and to God in Jesus Christ. Thanks to God's grace, Marie and I continue to try.

Please send *The Witness* for one year to each of our daughters.

Marie and Walter Welsh
Yaupon Beach, NC

P.S. Needless to say, *The Witness* is a paragon of reality. Among the myriad reli-

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gious claims of loyalty and devotion you must make God sigh with relief.

EVERY ISSUE OF *THE WITNESS* shouts that it is in the faces of those desperately in need, that Christian presence and love shine most clearly. Right on!

Orlando Barr
Grahamsville, NY

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for the four issues of *The Witness* you sent and which arrived today in fine shape (the envelope was not much to look at, but the magazines are OK).

I plan to show them to our rector on Sunday and see if we can make them available on our church book table. God bless you in all that you are doing.

Art Funkhouser
Bern, Switzerland
<100602.260@CompuServe.COM>

LOVE THE MAGAZINE — it's "doable" and compassionate and challenging.

Nancy Cogan
Iowa City, IA

Family history

AS EPISCOPAL CHAPLAIN working at an ecumenical campus center, I have struggled with defining ecumenism and integrating the meaning of that into my ministry for the past three years. Your recent issue on family reunions was enlightening.

Every year, for over 50 years, my husband's family has been gathering on Memorial Day for a reunion. The event is held in a tiny white frame church in the middle of the Missouri woods.

One leaves the curving asphalt ribbon of rural highway long before reaching the destination. A gravel road winds through miles of a National Forest thick with native oaks and pines introduced to Missouri by the impoverished workers in the Conservation Corps of the 1930s. May apples and Virginia creeper cohabit with poison ivy and feathery wild dogwood in tangled triumph.

A sudden clearing announces church property. The late model cars of earlier arrivals seem anachronisms.

The cook in every family carefully carries specialties of the house to the common buffet; a long table set up under a huge oak that has been a faithful observer to the gathering from the beginning. Best efforts are proudly displayed: fried chicken, potato salad, baked beans, deviled eggs, vegetable casseroles, fruit salads, homemade pies, cakes and cookies.

Family members decorate the headstones of relatives long gone in the little graveyard directly behind the church. It is truly a time that the living and the dead are in communion as old stories are retold and memories shared.

Then grace is said and all go through the buffet. However, that is where participation with the whole ends. The meal is shared with one's immediate family. Some families bring folding tables and chairs, others bring blankets and sit on the ground. A few stand under the great oak. There is something special about that immediate family unit, the one with whom tradition, customs and quirks have been shared for each member's lifetime. It's a comfort level, knowing what's expected and what to expect, a greater sense of belonging.

And now I feel a greater understanding of ecumenism. As Christians, we are like my husband's extended family. We celebrate our unity, sharing the rich heritage of salvation through Jesus Christ. The baptism, crucifixion and resurrection of God is our common history. And like my husband's immediate family, we claim our diversity in faith traditions. We sit at table with those most like ourselves. We cling to the rituals, customs, values and traditions of the denominations we grew up in or adopted as our own.

The rich and intricate fabric of Christendom would be so less colorful without the various threads of each faith tradition, and those many hued threads would be worthless fragments if not woven into the greater cloth.

Susan Carrell
Springfield, MO

Nice connection

Detroit News striker, Kate DeSmet, spoke to the machinists union in Minnesota this fall and was greeted by a man who had just read *The Witness* labor issue [9/96]. He told here that his father had sent him the issue and that he had cried when reading the profile about her.

Classifieds

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1997-98 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Nonviolent Alternatives

Nonviolent Alternatives will offer three 1997-98 programs, including four weeks in India in June/July, three weeks in Lakota communities in June, and four weeks in India in Jan., 1988. Contact Nonviolent Alternatives, 825 4th St., Brookings, SD 57006; 605-692-3680 or 605-692-8465.

Bishop Spong at Kirkridge

Bishop John Spong will lead a workshop on "The Story of the Cross Viewed Through Jewish Eyes" Feb. 14-16 at Kirkridge Conference Center, 215-588-1793.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

If you have liked the Church Ad Project ads which appeared in the November and December issues of *The Witness*, you can obtain a catalog by calling 800-331-9391.

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The Witness

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A new organization is linking church people with working people's need for union representation and a wage they can live on.

Cover: Kateri Tekakwitha of the Iroquois *(1656-1680), by Robert Lentz whose images are available through Bridge Building Images, 211 Park St., Burlington, VT 05401.*
Back cover: Practice Random Kindness *by Sara Steele, Syracuse Cultural Workers, Box 6367, Syracuse, N.Y. 13217; 315-474-1132.*

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Poetry can be sent directly to Leslie Williams, 2504 Gulf Ave., Midland, TX. 79705.

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Sounding the *jubal*

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Jubilee is a sound in the wind. The horn is being winded as the millennium approaches and we can listen and wonder what its fulfillment may mean in our lives.

South Africans celebrated the tenth anniversary of their *Kairos* document by studying jubilee. Radical Christians in the U.S. are wrestling with it. The pope is preparing a Jubilee 2000 proclamation. Jewish scholar Arthur Waskow is inviting a jubilee conversation across religious boundaries. And a Canadian has created a jubilee homepage.

In every case, people are lifting up the biblical imperative that in the fiftieth year, land ownership will revert back to the original owners, captives will be freed and the land will lie fallow for one year.

Jubilee is a strikingly simple antidote to our current crisis of hoarded wealth and widespread economic slavery.

The question, of course, is can it work? Does it have practical application or is it simply a whirlpool of nice ideas that will keep people of goodwill circling pointlessly for years?

During a recent conference on jubilee economics at Kirkridge, Ched Myers suggested that for an enslaved people, the jubilee requires conversion — the same conversion experienced by the Jews in the wilderness during 40 years, a period of two generations. It requires the imagination to believe that our salvation is not in the storehouses of Egypt or the vaults of Chase Manhattan. It requires an understanding of grace, the grace offered by the creation that feeds us.

"How do we become a society that doesn't hoard wealth but redistributes it?" Myers asked. "The only way to be a non-Egyptian people is to rely on manna, an economy in which everyone has only enough."

For Americans to appreciate the meaning of the jubilee requires that we first understand the degree to which we have been enslaved by the spirit of Egypt with its amassed wealth. We know the economic abuse in the third world, but at home it's subtle, the rewards are significant and the denial reflexive.

Most *Witness* readers, however, are alert to the suffering here at home. We hope that the recent series of *Witness* issues (from the need for a labor movement [9/96] through fasting in Babylon [12/96]) have helped illustrate the problems. But it was still shocking to me to notice an article titled "The return of slavery" in *Dollars and Sense* [11-12/96]. And Jim Wallis, recently returned from a book tour that swung through the south, told folks at Kirkridge that he'd heard that Mississippi is using federal block grant money (available for local development projects) to build prisons and that prisoners in Georgia are being used to clean public schools, thereby eliminating service level jobs. In addition, he said, defense contractors are among those bidding to privatize the management of hospitals, schools and prisons.

So what is our covenant with the Creator? How do we move beyond denial and despair? What would the reverberation of the *jubal* mean to us?

Returning the land

There are difficulties with modern application of the jubilee. Nzome Akuda, of the United Church of Christ, is writing a book on some of its limitations.

Clearly return of the land to the original owners raises questions. Early in the session at Kirkridge, one participant called out, "Yeah, but what about the land rights of the Canaanites?" Similarly when retiring Episcopal Church Publishing Company board member Michael Yasutake broached jubilee with folks in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, they e-mailed back, asking, what would returning the land mean? The indigenous people never held title to it.

Our Bible study at Kirkridge was aided by Jeanne Gallo's description of the advocacy work Wellspring is doing with fishermen in Glaucester, Mass. [*TW* 4/95]. One of the economic threats fishermen experience, she said, are corporate fishery enclosures in the sea. Raised to believe that the coastal shoreline and the sea were held in common, I was startled to realize that the government leases out the sea for corporate use. Suddenly the power of fences, deeds and enclosures was transparent.

A community ethic

There are several ways that jubilee ethics are consistent with indigenous understanding of land: the invitation to let the land lie fallow for one year restores balance; it seems to recognize the spirit of the land and its need for time to breathe, its creatureliness. And, as Myers pointed out, it also forces us to remember the gift that is woven into creation: even without sowing, reaping and marketing, the earth can provide for us.

An unexpected grace in Myers' teaching was the biblical image of discipleship

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

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as leading toward wholeness in community, not simply a quick trip to Calvary.

Within me there is something that twists our shared theology into a message of despair: "Things are horribly unjust. We are called to act and to the cross. The process is unendurable. Perhaps I should just self-immolate as the Buddhist monks did during the Vietnam War."

I realized I wasn't alone in my despair, when a widow at the conference spoke about money that she will soon receive from a land sale. She said she felt a need to pass the money on, yet was unsure how she might live out her old age since her husband has died and she has no children. She even wondered if she should commit suicide when she is "no longer of use."

Chuck Matthei, a community development advocate who addressed the Kirkridge group [p. 12], worked out a compromise that allows her to invest in community development with a return that provides her livelihood and then shifts her money into full service when she dies.

We need an ethic that calls us to accountability in a way that enhances life. The church has either condoned wanton consumption or its justice advocates have brinked on condemning the desire for bread and roses. I realize only now that, when Jesus instructed the rich young man to give away his wealth, he still presumed the rich young man could have "enough" within the community.

So, does jubilee have practical application? How do we get there from here? Does it require a grand movement that will sweep away the institutions of oppression for a new society?

Beyond despair

The lack of such a grand movement has thrown some into despair. Thomas de Zengotita recently lamented in *The Nation* that there is no political reflection going on. While he's right to blast celebrity culture and excessive "busy-ness," I believe he's mistaken that "no one really has any idea what's going on anymore, let alone what to do about it" [12/2/96]. His implication that we are dazed, self-absorbed and without a collective will sounds to me like nostalgia for a white male liberal tradition. What some see as selfishness in post-modern personalism, *The Witness* staff takes as hope.

What some see as selfishness in post-modern personalism, The Witness *staff takes as hope.*

We believe that our best chance for keeping the level of hope above the level of despair is in acting out of our hearts rather than from codified principles. We may also keep our hope alive by focussing on the work that we undertake — whether it's running a soup kitchen, displaying political art or investing in a revolving loan fund. We can intercede for all those in pain throughout the world, but we need a way to pull back and to focus our efforts in order to avoid complete paralysis. In all likelihood our focussed acts will grow organically toward a larger justice, just as Wellspring's shelter for women has resulted in creative efforts to support the local economy.

In this way, we may avoid the grandiosity and the discouragement of attempting to manage all the world's affairs simultaneously. This is important in relation to jubilee; there is an implicit call to rest and perspective. Arthur Waskow writes that observing the sabbath helps us remember that, despite our drive to good works, we are not God.

At *The Witness* we take our hope from an image that Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung put forth during a recent visit to our office. She speaks of the ant and the spider as models of resistance. The spider throws the web of connection between communities of ants who are building subterranean communities of life that promise in the long run to replace and undermine the dominant system.

It is our conviction that this is not a time for justice-seeking people to succumb to the idea that nothing good is happening, that the movement is languishing. The work of the spirit that will liberate us all is underway. As Amata Miller says, "We are at one of those watershed times in human history when everything's going to be different in the future. But we're just on the crest, we don't know what's going to come next. I think we're living through the dark times; it's critical that we nourish hope in one another. I see all these alternatives being born" [p.31].

Miller echoes Episcopal bishop Steve Charleston, who says: "When we look to the future, we're going to see the emergence of a new vision of the church and spirituality that's going to come from the ground up. It's like a deep spring welling up from the earth, coming up and giving life and nourishment to local communities first and then merging with others that are doing very similar things around the world" [*TW* 4/94].

This is not a naive assertion. We are not blind to the power and cruelty of the economic principalities nor to the seduction of consumerism. The death-dealing and the enslavement are real.

Yet we are beginning to free ourselves of Egypt's hold. *The Wall Street Journal* acknowledges that Madison Avenue is losing its grip on our psyches. Like the ants, we are building. With the help of the spiders, we'll work with some awareness of the work being done far and wide.

"There is a hope that is rising," Myers told us. "A very, very old story is being remembered and re-animated. This story only lives if we keep telling it, singing it, enacting it." TW

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Imagine the Angels of Bread

by Martin Espada

This is the year that
squatters evict landlords,
gazing like admirals from
the rail
of the roofdeck
or levitating hands in praise
of steam in the shower;
this is the year that shawled refugees
deport judges
who stare at the floor
and their swollen feet
as files are stamped
with their destination;
this is the year that police revolvers,
stove-hot, blister the fingers
of raging cops,
and nightsticks splinter
in their palms;
this is the year
that darkskinned men
lynched a century ago
return to sip coffee quietly
with the apologizing descendants
of their executioners.

This is the year that those
who swim the borders undertow
and shiver in boxcars
are greeted with trumpets and drums
at the first railroad crossing.

— *from* Imagine the Angels of Bread *by Martin Espada (Norton, 1996)*

Glastonbury Echoes

by Elizabeth Jones Hanley

Crumbling walls
shadows of tree branches
laced with sky
Echoes
Concentric rings drifting
day to day
year to year.

Today
the shadows drift
down the abbey path
into the church
for the offices of the day.
Echoes
between then and now
sun and shadow
drift
through the years.

Elizabeth Jones Hanley lives in Hallsville, Mo.



Creative economics:
an ecumenical survey

by Camille Colatosti

Elaine Villarreal, a 28-year-old mother of a five-year-old girl, was, as she explains, "up to the top of my head with bills. We were doing fine for a while. I was working for $4.65 an hour and my husband made $7. But when he got hurt and couldn't go to work, we were falling behind. We didn't know what to do." Then she met Michele Meyer and Winnifred Crackel of First Steps Child Care Consultants.

They wanted to help Villarreal open a day care center in her southwest Detroit neighborhood. Villarreal, who volunteered at her daughter's Head Start program, saw this as both the answer to her financial worries and a way to fulfill a community need. In her neighborhood, where the median family income is $9,870 a year, there are 6,000 children under the age of six and only one licensed day care center.

For 20 years, Meyer has run a child care center in the affluent Detroit suburb of Birmingham. In February 1995, beginning what she calls a "volunteer task," Meyer and her partner Crackel decided to help bring child care to low-income areas of the city. "This has been a faith experience for me," says Meyer. "This is an opportunity for me to give back to the community the many gifts that I have received." With support from her parish, Birmingham's Holy Name Catholic Church, Meyer contacted All Saints Catholic Church in Detroit. All Saints was deciding whether or not to purchase and then rehabilitate two houses.

"The week All Saints was making this decision," Meyer remembers, "we called to see if they would allow us room to meet. Instead, they offered us the possibility of helping someone purchase the houses—and our project was underway."

Villarreal was interested. "But," she says, "I couldn't get a loan through the bank. Then we found the McGehee Fund of the Episcopal Church. They gave us a break and now things are going my way."

The McGehee Economic Justice Fund is just one of many community development financial institutions nationwide. A fund of the trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, it loans money to parish- and community-based projects in lower income neighborhoods throughout the eastern half of Michigan. The Fund took its first investment in April 1991 and is now approaching $2 million.

In the above example, two women from a suburban Catholic church helped a woman from an inner-city neighborhood receive a loan from an Episcopal community development fund. Villarreal used the loan to purchase a house that was rehabilitated by another Catholic parish in order to open a day care center for low-income families. This example models the partnerships being formed by people of faith across the country as they conceive new ways to invest in low-income communities.

> *"We were doing fine for a while. I was working for $4.65 an hour and my husband made $7. But when he got hurt and couldn't go to work, we were falling behind. We didn't know what to do."*
>
> *—Elaine Villarreal*

Institutions of faith—Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Quaker, among others—play an increasingly large role in community development. Some dioceses establish their own community development financial institutions, like the McGehee Fund, which make loans to projects that traditional banks may see as too risky. Others contribute to community development banks and credit unions, which then fund individual projects.

Still others establish their own economic justice organizations—such as the Quakers' American Friends Service Committee. These devote staff and institutional resources to specific community projects. No matter the approach, however, all efforts serve as catalysts for larger community development and alternative investment.

To McGehee Fund executive director John Hooper, "this work is necessary in order for the low-income neighborhood to survive." He explains, "Development, in the sense of creation of housing or businesses or commercial strips, needs to happen everywhere, but in lower-income communities, the corporations and banks are not interested." This is why institutions of faith must step in.

"We have very clear mandates in Scripture," he says, "to go beyond the emergency work of providing food, clothing and shelter. We need to help people get into the mainstream economy by ownership, or at least by decent housing. We also need to work with those who will create some struc-

Camille Colatosti teaches English at the Detroit College of Business. Photographer **Jim West** lives in Detroit.

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tures that will give poor people a part."

Funding community programs

One important structure that religious institutions have helped develop is the National Association of Community Development Loan Funds (NACDLF), a group of 46 community financial institutions. Last year, 19% of the NACDLF's $204 million came from religious investors. These funds make it possible for religious institutions to invest in the community while relying on the expertise of the NACDLF.

Allyson Randolph, director of development and capitalization for the NACDLF, explains, "A congregation may make loans to a member institution. Let's say they make a loan to a Delaware Valley credit union. The Delaware Valley institution then loans money to a housing project and laundromat, after it assesses the risk. In this way, the congregation is not directly involved in making decisions about which loans are sound and which are not."

Randolph sees this as a positive alternative to what she describes as the "kinds of investments religious institutions made in the 1960s and 1970s. They loaned funds directly to projects, but they were making the loans without expertise and as a result lost money."

Amy Domini, a founding member of the Investment Committee of the Episcopal Church, agrees that using a national intermediary, like NACDLF, makes a great deal of sense. "In this way," she explains, "there is a secure backing."

Domini is part of a national effort of the Episcopal church to invest endowment and operating funds in community development. "We don't invest in specific projects," says Domini. "Instead, we invest in intermediaries who then invest in projects."

To Domini, the program has been successful. "Our investments have had a tremendous ripple effect," she explains. "A loan of $10,000 can leverage $100,000. This program also unified the church. Constituencies that were less likely to find common ground found it because all agreed with the investments."



Elaine Villarreal, with her daughter, is launching a daycare center with church help. Jim West

Recipients of the Episcopal funds include the Self-Help Credit Union of Raleigh, N.C., which focuses on cooperative business lending in Appalachia; Blackfeet National Bank of Browning, Mont., which invests in Native American businesses; and other community development and women- and minority-owned banks. These service high-risk neighborhoods and, as Domini explains, "appear to serve them well."

The Episcopal effort grew from a 1988 initiative, calling for the establishment of a national community development fund. According to Brian Grieves, Director of the Episcopal Church's Peace and Justice Ministries, "We've had a national committee working on this since 1989. The work never took the direction of fundraising, as originally proposed. Instead, the national church invested $7 million. We also challenged local Episcopal sources to reach out and match our funds."

To an extent, the investments of the Episcopal Church reinforce those of one of the nation's largest, faith-based alternative loan funds, Partners for the Common Good 2000. Initiated by the Christian Brothers, Partners for the Common Good applies the ethical principles of "common good" to investment choices. Today, its 99 investors, the maximum number legally allowed a limited partnership, remain primarily Catholic: 68 women's congregations; 19 men's congregations; eight heath care systems; three Protestant denominations, including the United Methodist Church and the American Baptists; and one partners group—the Christian Brothers Investment Service. Investors come from 21 states and the District of Columbia to raise, in 1995-96, a total of $7,902,668.

Partners use funds to make business and housing loans, as well as investments in low-income credit unions and commu-

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nity development banks in the U.S. and abroad. Among the Partners' projects is a business loan to ACCION, Texas, Inc., in San Antonio—a program that provides credit to small businesses—and a housing loan to the Oikos Community Development Corporation in Dayton, Ohio. The latter rehabilitates and constructs housing for low- and moderate-income families.

To Allyson Randolph of the NACDLF, the need for institutions of faith to join investment programs like Partners for the Common Good continues to expand. "More and more there is a credit gap in low-income communities. As government sources dry up, there is a need for low-income people to seek help from the private sector. They need alternative loan institutions to increase access to private money."

A direct staff approach

While some institutions of faith make loans to specific programs, or invest endowment funds in national community development financial institutions, others provide assistance in the form of direct staff. The most developed example of this approach comes from the Quakers.

The Quakers' American Friends Service Committee, founded in 1917, runs 22 international programs and 43 in the U.S. There are approximately 800 employees all together: 150 in the national office and many more in the AFSC's nine regional and multiple local offices. While a Quaker board oversees the AFSC, the staff consists of both Quakers and individuals outside of the Quaker religion. Local committees, composed of staff and volunteers, determine programs.

Emily Kawano, the National Representative for Economic Justice, describes the program's purpose: "AFSC has a fundamental belief in the infinite worth of every human being. So we work with groups who are the most marginalized. We want these people to determine the kind of assistance and support they need."

Programs are wide ranging. In Syracuse, N.Y., for example, a network of worker cooperatives formed to provide mutual support. There, Howie Hawkins, an AFSC employee, coordinates 12 worker and buyer cooperatives. "We want to replace exploitative businesses with businesses that distribute what people need," he explains.

The city showed that it could renovate homes but not for the homeless. The city showed that it had money to spend, but not for the homeless. We took over the buildings and were arrested on Christmas Eve in 1989 and Easter of 1990.

— Terry Messman

In rural West Virginia, AFSC's New Employment for Women provides education, job training and counseling for low-income women.

Other AFSC projects take the form of direct action campaigns that, in some cases, lead to the formation of new institutions. Terry Messman, program director for the Homeless Organizing Project of AFSC and editor of *Street Spirit*, a monthly newspaper reporting on homeless activism in California, helped form Oakland's Dignity Housing West. This non-profit corporation built 46 units of permanent housing for the homeless. But Dignity Housing West had a difficult and contentious beginning.

A few years ago, activists occupied buildings in Oakland's Preservation Park. "The city was spending millions of dollars of its own and Department of Housing and Urban Development money to refurbish Victorian homes for office space," explains Messman. "They were doing this right in the heart of homelessness. We thought this was a real injustice. The city showed that it could renovate homes but not for the homeless. The city showed that it had money to spend, but not for the homeless. We took over the buildings and were arrested on Christmas Eve in 1989 and Easter of 1990."

The action had the desired effect. The city of Oakland gave Dignity Housing West one lot valued at $250,000 and another valued at $800,000. Dignity Housing West also attained one million dollars from the state of California's rental housing construction program, and 2.4 million dollars in federal low-income tax credits.

Dignity used the money and land to build one 26-unit development, and another 20-unit building. Each contains two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments. The buildings feature on-site day care and head start programs, as well as job training and placement services.

Messman describes the community that grew in the housing development. "Early on there were a few people who had drug problems and they were hurting the quality of life for everyone. We took action to remove them. After that, the families made use of the services available and found jobs—virtually every one of them—even though we didn't case manage them to death. We didn't require that they do this. They just did it."

Two years ago, Messman launched a newspaper called *Street Spirit*. Reporting on homelessness in California, the AFSC prints 25,000 copies a month. Homeless vendors sell these for $1 an issue, and keep the proceeds. To Messman, the paper "represents $25,000 worth of justice that people give the homeless every

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month. This is not charity. It's work. It's a job with dignity. Many of our vendors have sold enough papers to be able to afford to move into apartments."

The papers also help educate policy makers—city council members and mayors in California—about homeless issues. "The paper gives homeless people a voice," says Messman. "It makes it possible for new ideas to be heard."

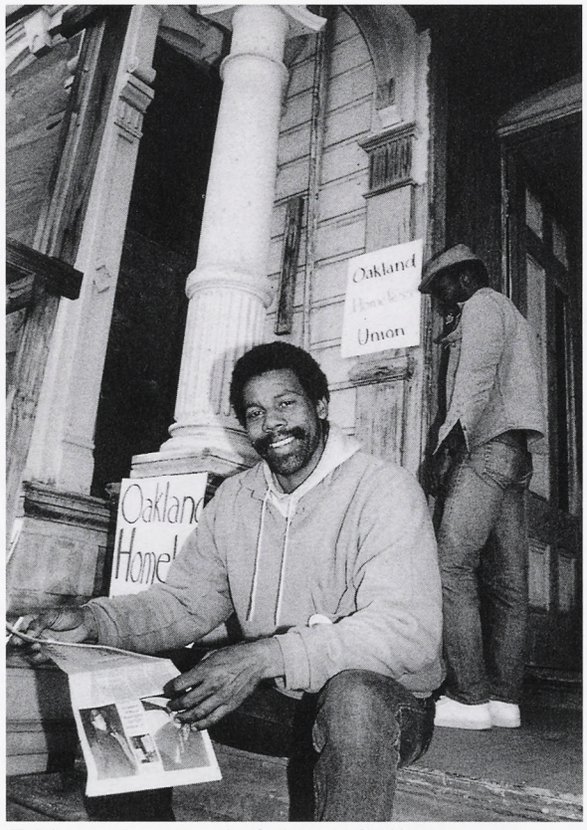
Local currency

Listening to, exploring and testing new ideas is at the heart of community development. One of the most innovative, and potentially controversial, efforts may be found in the local currency movement that operates in a few dozen communities across the country. While community development financial institutions provide access to capital, local currency projects, explains Greg Coleridge, director of the AFSC's Economic Justice Program in Northeast Ohio, challenge the foundation of America's corporate culture.

Working in coalition with people of many faiths—including other Christians, Jews and Muslims—Coleridge emphasizes the importance of the local economy. "There is a whole movement away from businesses being rooted to a place and people," he explains. "As we move to globalization, a euphemism for corporatization, we need to resist that and form alliances that are people-based. We also have to question the inevitability of giving corporations unlimited rights. And we need to try to control our economy locally."

To that end, Coleridge directs the distribution of local currency in Akron, Ohio. Modelled on a program developed in Ithaca, N.Y., six years ago, the Akron system began producing a directory in 1994 listing goods and services that participants may exchange for local currency.

"The program starts from the notion that everyone's services are worth the same amount," says Coleridge. "We chose $10 an hour, the average wage in our county." The local currency system is based on hours. People earn whole, half, quarter and tenths of hours. These hours can then be bartered for other services.



Taking to the streets in Oakland, Calif. Courtesy AFSC

Coleridge tells the story of a woman who needed her drain unplugged. "She contacted someone in the directory who is a general handy person. This person had a snake to unplug her drain but he was too busy to help. However, he was willing to lend the snake to a third person who could do the work but lacked the equipment. The woman agreed to pay the snake owner one-quarter of a local hour. The man who did the work will earn his pay in a combination of local hours and bread. The woman bakes bread."

People involved in the program gather together monthly for a potluck dinner. They share ideas, food and strategy. An unexpected benefit has been the enhancement of community spirit. "The social aspects have really grown," explains Coleridge. "People are involved in sharing parts of their lives with each other."

Spiritual aspects of the program have also developed, Coleridge explains. "We are certainly called to see the dignity and worth of every person and that transcends how economically we see people. Everyone has the potential to help each other and sustain the natural world. We emphasize high touch over high tech. We realize that we all have something to contribute. We emphasize that all work, particularly that which is helping other people, is important. Everyone can contribute to the economy."

These examples are just a few of the many that exist nationally. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), for instance, is, like the AFSC, involved in job training and placement. Its Project Hope in Mississippi and Alabama helps participants prepare for and find work. Both the ELCA and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod are involved in "housing ministries" around the nation.

The work will continue as institutions of faith try to bridge what McGehee Fund director John Hooper describes as "the gap between theology and practice." By investing in the community, says Hooper, "the church in the city or the church in the rural area can make a difference. People can cross over and lend some of their affluence to help others. The church can also discuss economic questions in a very practical way: in terms of responsibilities that people who have money owe people who don't." TW

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Taking back the land, an issue coming home

by Chuck Matthei

"You don't seriously believe that you can talk to Americans about land reform, do you?" a Ford Foundation staffer recently asked me.

But we have to find a way to talk about it, because the patterns of ownership affecting the poor in this country are every bit as skewed as they are in any third world country on earth.

I believe it's possible to get such a discussion going, but we have to speak the only language that people of differing perspectives can speak together and that's the language of anecdote, which is certainly a biblical lesson. They can't talk about their faith in abstract or theological terms, because that immediately highlights the differences in theology. They can't talk about their politics because they'll quickly define themselves in opposing camps. But they *can* talk about real places, people and projects.

If they talk practically and without exaggeration, but with evident willingness to grapple with the practical demands, then people of different perspectives can and will come together.

If we want to talk about something as radical as land reform in the U.S., we've got to do two additional things.

First, we've got to accept from the outset the discipline of financial responsibility. If you stand up in an American audience today and say, "I want to talk to you about the plight of the poor. I want to talk to you about justice. I want to talk to you about the public interest," 90 percent of the audience thinks, "This is another one of those liberal, bleeding hearts. The best of them are good-hearted people. Back in the 1960s when the economy was strong, we could give them some money and a little bit of headroom, but don't let them near the helm of the ship of state today. They'll wreck it on the financial rocks."

Second, in a society where the perception is that public and private interests are fundamentally antagonistic, and in a society where people are so highly individualized, you have to begin by acknowledging the legitimate interest of the individual. If you start by talking about the public interest, people draw in their emotional wagons. They assume that their own personal interests are at risk.

If you affirm those interests, you can introduce a parallel set of communal interests.

Owning a home

If you ask the average American, "What do you want in material terms?" Most will tell you, "I want to own my home." So we go into communities and say, "We understand that this aspiration is fundamental and widespread. What is challenging us is that the opportunity has never been available to everyone and is available to fewer people today than it has been. That contradiction calls us to make a new effort."

We've talked to owners and renters. We've talked to rich and poor, east and west, black and white. We've said to them, "You tell us you want to own a home. That's the American dream. What does that mean to you?"

We heard three themes coming up over and over again. Interestingly, we heard the same themes coming from black and white, rich and poor, and east and west. People said, "I want a place that I can live in that nobody can put me out of. I want to be able to invest an hour of my labor, or an honestly earned dollar and feel that I have something for what I've done. I want something to leave for my kids. I want them to be able to stay here, or if they can't stay here, I want them to be able to get started somewhere else."

There are no property rights advocates, no matter how vitriolic, who are prepared to have their neighbors pollute their groundwater. None of us believe in private property in the simplistic sense that public discourse would suggest.

We acknowledge this tradition, saying "People want lifetime security. They want fair equity for their investments. They want a legacy for the next generation. These are understandable and legitimate interests."

And *then* we say, we will respect them and protect them, while asserting that the community has a parallel set of interests, rights, and responsibilities. The community has an interest in making sure that that opportunity is as widely available as possible and it has a right to guide those decisions about distribution and develop-

Chuck Matthei is president of Equity Trust, Inc., a non-profit organization working on land reform and community development finance. For a **Syracuse Cultural Workers'** catalogue call 315-474-1132.

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ment which affect, not how you live day by day, but how the entire community will evolve, for all of its members, over the generations.

Community interest in private property

If the individual has a legitimate desire for equity, having made an investment of labor or capital, then doesn't the community have a legitimate economic interest in that portion of the property value that comes not from one's personal investment, but from the community, from society as a whole?

Property value comes from many different sources, not just the effort or the investment of one party. It is an active business relationship between the individual and the community.

The day in Washington, D.C. when the *Washington Post* headlined plans to install a new subway line in one of the poorest, most bombed-out neighborhoods in the country affected property values dramatically. With a clean and relatively efficient system like Washington's, transportation becomes a substantial amenity. Subway construction is not a city initiative in financial terms, because almost all the money for subway construction will come from the federal government, so it's really taxpayers all over the U.S. who are going to contribute to building a subway system. And because they make this social investment, there will be a tremendous windfall profit to the owners of the properties which surround these new subway stations. Who are these people? In a neighborhood like this, you can assume that 90 percent of them are absentee landlords. Most of them haven't even been maintaining the properties to decent standards of habitation.

If you finish your story at this point, most Americans will say, "Hey, it's the luck of the draw. They won the real estate lottery. They bought 123 Elm Street at the right moment and now their number has come in. I wish it were me." People are very tolerant of windfall profits in this society. But you *can* tell the rest of the story. You can say, "As the property values rise, so will the cost of housing to a low-income tenant. These people won't be able to afford that cost, so they'll end up in the street. And the same taxpayer who just built this subway and created that windfall for the landlords will be asked to pay emergency shelter subsidies or rent subsidies to keep these people from ending up in the street."

That's when the discussion begins to change, because the red-blooded American who's very tolerant of windfall profits is not comfortable with being asked to pay twice!

'Alternative' no longer

Religious groups have a unique opportunity in this conversation. The individual has interests, the community has interests and there is the divine interest, the original interest, the creator's interest.

The church has an ability to engage these questions, to frame the most basic issues of a moral economy. To do that you have to do several things which are usually not part of the church's engagement with these issues. You have to make sure that everybody is at the table, the social justice committee and the financial manager, the business interest, the trustees, the administrators. Then we have to be clear that we are not talking about alternative economics. We're talking about the life of this community. We're not alternative anymore. These principles are practical.



Earth Song **by Robin Silk Oak** **Courtesy of Syracuse Cultural Workers**

The economic role of land

In this culture, we've lost almost all perspective on the role of land in an economy. It's refreshing to go to the third world where everybody knows that land is fundamental.

Here we don't talk about it, but I think a very sound argument can be made that it's no less important amongst us today than it is in El Salvador or the Philippines or Kenya. We just don't remember.

Who has an interest in the property? The individuals have an interest, the com-

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munity has an interest, the wildlife, the plants, the environment itself has an interest, and the next generation has an interest.

Under the environmental interests, what uses will be permitted, required or prohibited? Who has access to that property? Is it singular access? Is it shared access? Is it unlimited access? Is it access for certain purposes or for certain periods of time? And what about governance, who participates in decisions relating to that property?

If you live here, you have an interest in occupancy. Maybe I am an abutting neighbor — I do not have an interest, a legitimate interest in walking into your home in the middle of the night. But I do have an interest in making sure that your septic system doesn't pollute my groundwater. If you can get people into that kind of discussion, leaving alone what they think are the available legal forms or the market constraints, then you can craft a vision of a relationship that is just.

Land trusts

We work with community land trusts where a democratically structured community-based, non-profit corporation owns the land in perpetuity. The land is

Regaining tribal land

A sign in the middle of the Oneida reservation near Green Bay, Wisconsin proclaims 34 acres of natural area to be "HONOR Acres."

A national human rights coalition focusing on American Indian issues, HONOR raised $5,000 for the down payment to hold this land until the Oneida Nation could free up funds to complete the purchase. These "First Acres" launched a crucial piece of HONOR's work: its land program.

"We figured inch by inch, acre by acre, we would try to help tribes get their land back," explains HONOR Director Sharon Metz. "The centerpiece of everything that Indian issues are about, always have been about and always will be about is land," she says.

"That's because Indian nations still have land that non-Indian America wants. And the land is held collectively as tribal land, which runs counter to the philosophy of a capitalist society."

HONOR's board of directors began looking at how much Indian land had been lost and how it was still threatened. They decided the thing to do was simply give the land back.

"We sidestepped the politics, the court suits, the long protracted discussions," recalls Metz. "You simply buy land, and give it back. In the case of churches, we encourage them, if they have land within the original reservation boundaries of tribes, to give it back. Nothing could be simpler."

In a 1994 success story, the Oneida Nation received the old parish hall of Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in the village of Oneida, plus the two acres on which it is built, after six years of negotiations with the Diocese of Fond du Lac.

Under terms of the agreement, the Oneidas will restore the building, a longtime center of community life for the Oneida Nation. The church will have first call on the building's use, but it will be available to other groups as well. At 110 years old, Holy Apostles is one of the oldest American Indian Episcopal Churches in the United States. (The first group of Oneidas were Episcopalians who essentially brought the church to Wisconsin from New York in 1822.)

HONOR also promotes land resolutions drafted by Indian attorneys, including Episcopal Bishop William Wantland, that congregations, dioceses or other church bodies may adopt to support the policy of giving land back. To date, only the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan has passed such a resolution.

"There's nothing that makes churches more nervous than talking about land," contends Metz. "We're all standing on Indian land. If we open that can of worms then we have to recognize how the land was gotten, and then we have to do something about it."

HONOR was national in scope, even in its beginnings as a tiny sub-program of Lutheran Human Relations, a pan-Lutheran racial justice group. When it split off to become its own organization, it adopted five principles which it affirms today: to affirm sovereignty in government relationships; to affirm and support Indian treaties; to build intercultural understanding; to protect the earth and the life thereon, now and for the future; and to treat all people with respect.

HONOR's 1,600 Indian and non-Indian members live in all 50 states and six foreign countries. The organization is in the process of setting up an office in Washington, DC, to achieve a higher profile and faster turnaround for advocacy. Metz estimates that at least 50 percent of HONOR's revenue comes from membership dues: $25 for individuals, $50 for organizations, and $250 for patrons. For more information on HONOR membership or the Land Program, contact HONOR, c/o Sharon Metz, 6435 Wiesner Rd., Omro, Wisconsin, 54963; 414-582-7142.

—Karen Bota is a freelance writer in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. and promotion manager for The Witness.

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no longer a marketable commodity. It's held in trust for future generations. But it's made available to you, because you live today. We give you a lifetime, inheritable lease. Your children can live there and your children's children. There is only one qualification: they must actually use it. For as long as they will make it theirs, in real terms, it is theirs. But they can't move to California and keep control of the tract in Michigan. You can build upon that property — making an investment of labor and capital, putting something of yourself into this and we will respect that — you will build equity. But the community will reserve for the common good, the social appreciation in site value. If you build a house, you build equity. If we build a subway, we will reserve that increase in value to serve the common good.

In farm country

We've also begun working in the last year with the community-supported agriculture (CSA) movement. There are about 550 of CSA farms now that have an enrolled membership of about 45,000 households. Ninety percent, if not more, of those farms, even some of the most successful, have unresolved land tenure issues and no reliable sources of financing. The goal is not only to mobilize resources to meet their need, but over time to use public-private land tenure relationships to push for a higher standard in the whole field of agricultural preservation.

We're also working with conservationists. There are now 1,200 local land conservation trusts in the U.S. They have many structural, legal and practical similarities to land trusts. They have some fundamental differences, too, and none is more important than class.

There is an enormous turnover underway in religious properties. The Catholic religious orders will have to sell almost everything they own in the next 15 years. The median of age of nuns is 68 and rising. And absent something that nobody sees on the horizon, all their real estate holdings are going to have to be liquidated.

What we find when we work with these communities — and it's true in the Protestant churches as well — is that when a particular property comes into question, the people who have been reading the theology of the environment say, "The earth is sacred. Save it."

Everyone empathizes in a very general, ungrounded, impractical way, but the administrator says, "We can't manage it anymore" and the treasurer says, "We can't afford to just give it all away."

Most people feel either you keep it or you give it away, but if you can't do one of those, the market takes it. So we're in the process now of developing a program that will focus specifically on the disposition of religious lands. We can design a process leading to a result that is a realistic disposition of the property, but also an appropriate measurable expression of faith.

Some church activists in Iowa did a survey and found that institutional churches own 200,000 acres of working farmland in Iowa. That's not counting all the other kinds of properties that they own. That's just working farmland in production today. Virtually none of them have any appropriate policies for land stewardship and disposition.

Churches treat property — whether they've held it a long time or it comes because some parishioner dies — as just another capital asset, as a cash equivalent. There is a real need for the church to develop a theological understanding and practical policy for how they are going to deal with land that is under their stewardship.

We're in the process now of looking for a graduate student to work with us in designing a simple curriculum segment that could be introduced into environmental education and social studies curriculae to talk about what property ownership means to individuals and how it affects communities. There must be 10,000 environmental education programs in this country and not a single one talks about the nature of property.

Patterns of ownership

What are the patterns of ownership? We don't have good data in this society, but there are interesting examples of grass roots initiatives. The Appalachian Landownership Study trained a veritable army of volunteers and sent them into 70 counties in seven states. They documented the fact that across the southern Appalachian coalfields, the prevalence of absentee ownership averages 75 percent. And then they looked at tax assessments, which were highly skewed because of the political influence that goes with that kind of a maldistribution of ownership. At this point, the coal companies are turning land over to lumbering companies to clear cut. But there are community groups trying desperately to buy and preserve the forests.

The Woodland Community Land Trust built housing units in east Tennessee. They are attempting to purchase neighboring forest and we're trying to connect them with conservation groups and schools that can train residents in forest management.

A church role

Churches can play a key role in financing these initiatives. They can devise stewardship policies for the land they own now and the land they will inherit. They can also revive the biblical teachings that stress grace over merit in economic dealings. They can help us proclaim that jubilee economics are "alternative" no longer. TW

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An acceptable year of the Lord

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

On the day of atonement — you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family (Lev. 25:9-10).

These are becoming familiar words. Occasionally they resound like a trumpet, but mostly the jubilee notions have been creeping steadily and quietly into conversation, even in popular church parlance.

One reason, apart from the raw urgency of the times, that makes it appropriate, is the series of momentous anniversaries prompting reflection and reconsideration. Personally, I was drawn into serious consideration of this biblical theme in connection with the Columbus Quincentenary in 1992, thinking of the 500-year occupation of the continent. Much that follows, arose for me in connection with a grassroots process of theological reflection which issued in a document, "From Kairos to Jubilee."

In the last couple years we have also passed through 50-year anniversaries of significant postwar military and economic arrangements. So, for example, the Jubilee Plowshares marked the fiftieth of the Hiroshima bombing with a dismantling action against a fast attack nuclear submarine at Newport News; they are currently in jail. And the "Fifty Years is Enough!" campaign seeks to dismantle, for the sake of justice, the global economic structures, namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, concocted by the powers at Bretton Woods in 1944. These are instances where the jubilee program of periodic deconstruction is entirely appropriate.

Now comes the millennium. Mainline churches eager to avoid the apocalyptic millenarianism of the right-wing sects, are gravitating toward jubilee images on which to hang evangelism and celebration. Needless to say, since the jubilee legislation is so radical in both its critique and its remedies, this represents an opportunity for teaching and transformation.

It also abounds with danger. It's easy to imagine the appropriation of jubilee language by the churches played out as a domestication. Jubilee's fundamental economics can be washed out and its terms eviscerated, reduced to little more than "celebration" or a "big anniversary."

To seize the opportunity in church and society requires both a rigorous biblical literacy and concrete practical improvisations with actual economic development in the jubilee line.

Mainline churches eager to avoid the apocalyptic millenarianism of the right-wing sects, are gravitating toward jubilee images.

Biblically, the jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25 was drafted toward the end of exile in Babylon. It envisioned the new order which was possible in the rebuilding and restoration, in the return to the land. Its provisions drew upon more ancient prescriptions for the Sabbatical year. They were adapted and consolidated from the exodus tradition (Exodus 16), from the covenantal code of the tribal confederacy (Ex. 21:2-6; 23:9-11), and from the deuteronomic reform movement which flourished under the monarchy (Deut. 15:1-18).

Together, the cycle of sabbatical and jubilee years included such provisions as allowing the land to lie fallow (that the earth may "rest" and "so the poor may eat"), the cancellation of debts, the freeing of slaves and the redistribution of lands and houses, restoring them to families by whom they'd been lost or sold in the interim.

The voice of Isaiah, prophet of reconstruction and return, heralds the acceptable year in jubilee images (61:1-4). Jesus, says Luke, makes Isaiah his inaugural text and infuses the realm of God with the spirit of the jubilee.

Ched Myers observes that the rampant scholarly consensus is that the jubilee was mostly a nice idea never really enacted. He suggested this is a more insidious domestication, a sophisticated evisceration. But if it was never enacted, he asks, then why is it so fundamental, so retold and reiterated, so represented across such a variety of the traditions?

Why should Jesus fuse it into his proclamation of the reign of God? At the very least we ought to receive it, perhaps not as programmatic legalism but as provocative spark to the imagination. We look to the jubilee and sabbatical traditions for hints, clues and root assumptions.

Root assumption: the earth is the Lord's, an economy of grace and sufficiency. "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me"

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is author of *Seasons of Faith and Conscience,* (Orbis, 1991). Artist **Judith Harkin** lives in Eugene, Ore.

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Judith Harkin

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In the most ancient version of the sabbatical prescriptions, the fallow year was so that the poor might eat of field and figtree and vine (Ex.23:10-11). In the rest of earth was the fruit of justice. Such fundamental connections must be understood. Justice to earth and justice toward one another go hand in hand. Jesus once provoked a confrontation with the authorities in precisely this regard. In publicly plucking the grain with his disciples, he wasn't violating the sabbath in the least. He was renewing and enacting it, that it might serve both creation and human life.

Realism about the fall: debt is slavery. The form of slavery these regulations envision, be it among Hebrews or foreigners, is indentured servitude —

Left\adj.: the side of the body in which the heart is mostly located

— Webster's Collegiate



The Witness

The heart still beats in the church!

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An acceptable year of the Lord

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

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Bill Wylie-Kellermann is author of *Seasons of Faith and Conscience,* (Orbis, 1991). Artist **Judith Harkin** lives in Eugene, Ore.

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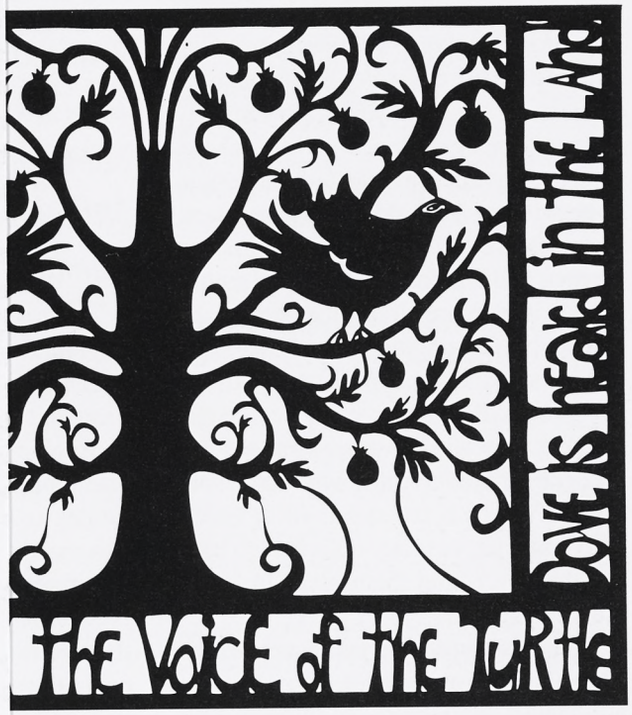
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Judith Harkin

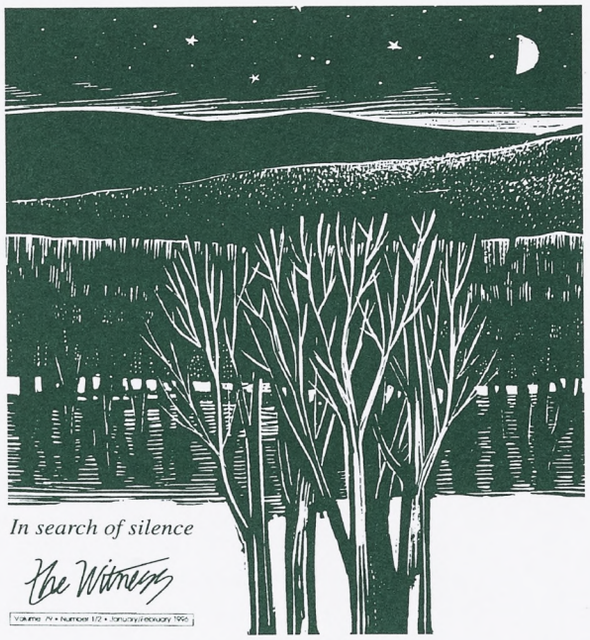
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Realism about the fall: debt is slavery. The form of slavery these regulations envision, be it among Hebrews or foreigners, is indentured servitude —



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An acceptable year of the Lord

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(Lev. 25:23). Economically, there is no structural assumption more radical in all of scripture. No idea more at odds with our own cultural presumptions. The earth is a sacred gift. One cannot finally possess it. We think of the utter amazement attributed to Chief Sealth: "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? This idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?"

Of course, the grace of God's ownership is not some synonym, a divine stand-in, for state ownership. Here is the commonwealth of creation — the gift at the heart of things. Jubilee measures assumed that one was not buying the land itself, but a portion of access (Lev. 25:13-17).

The jubilee spirit can now be seen afoot in the growing land trust movement which holds land in common trust, removing it from the speculation of the market, but guaranteeing access in lifetime inheritable rights. Or it may be recognized in the host of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farms now dotting the planet. These are realities. They are being lived and enacted.

A realism about the fall: capital consolidates. The jubilee regulations are anything but naive. They foresee that capital consolidates with capital. Land is added to land and houses to houses. They recognize the perpetual need to renew the equality of access. They provide inventive mechanisms which restore lands to families driven off by debt.

Look around. Here's a theological affirmation easily demonstrated — whole continents have been consolidated and usurped and people have been ripped from homelands. Simply notice the huge transfers of capital from south to north, of houses added to houses and lands to lands. If we call this a jubilee time, it's because we are as realistic as the jubilee code itself.

Root assumption: the earth shall rest. In a creation-based rhythm, the land too must enjoy a sabbath rest — the seventh year fallow time (Lev. 25:1-7). This takes a measure of faith in God, of trust in earth. We are, perhaps, to consider the birds of the air, who neither sow nor reap, but for whom God provides. This is the spirituality which Arthur Waskow, a founder of New Jewish Agenda, proclaims as the basis of personal, social, and ecological renewal [*TW* 1/96].

Moreover, the earth has its limits of exploitation and use. Indeed there are stern warnings that the land, denied its rightful sabbaths, will enjoy those sabbaths in a judgement of human desolation. In this view, the Babylonian exile is itself a consequence of dishonored sabbaths and its duration is measured by their number (Lev. 26:34; 2 Chron. 36:21-22).

The earth is in fact dishonored. Human beings are out of synch or indifferent to the rhythms and so more and more the earth is up against its limits. Earth may indeed, let us be warned, take its rest in our desolation. Or perhaps we will learn the honest delights of limits, of rest and re-creation.



The time of singing **Judith Harkin**

In the most ancient version of the sabbatical prescriptions, the fallow year was so that the poor might eat of field and figtree and vine (Ex.23:10-11). In the rest of earth was the fruit of justice. Such fundamental connections must be understood. Justice to earth and justice toward one another go hand in hand. Jesus once provoked a confrontation with the authorities in precisely this regard. In publicly plucking the grain with his disciples, he wasn't violating the sabbath in the least. He was renewing and enacting it, that it might serve both creation and human life.

Realism about the fall: debt is slavery. The form of slavery these regulations envision, be it among Hebrews or foreigners, is indentured servitude —

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people selling themselves or their families into slavery simply to live. It is the bondage of indebtedness.

It takes little imagination to recall the massive third world debt by which whole nations have come into bondage. Austerity measures and structural adjustments are enforced by the IMF or others which squeeze the life out of people. In our own country we see cities which are similarly jammed, their mortgages held elsewhere. And in a certain sense the federal deficit, even without a World Bank agreement, enforces its own structural adjustment on women and children and welfare recipients. Prisoners are hired out at slave wage to the big corporations, and workfare schemes do the same for the poor still on the streets. But oddly, even among the affluent, a certain "enslavement" may be recognized among those who have sold themselves onto the treadmill of credit card bondage, virtually oblivious to having thereby bound themselves in servitude to a system.

Root assumption: you were freed. The sabbatical and jubilee provisions are predicated on the exodus. "Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you" (Deut. 15:15; cf.Ex.. 23:9, Lev. 25:42).

The "release" from bondage is envisioned as a permanent and ongoing feature of the new order, whether among the tribal confederation of Canaan, under the established monarchy, or coming home from exile. Within the structured rhythm of life, slaves are "released" (Deut. 15:12-18, Ex. 21:2-6) and debts forgiven (Deut. 15:1-7).

In Matthew, Jesus tells the parable (18:21-35) of the unforgiving servant who, unable to meet a large debt, cries out to the king for mercy. The king in compassion releases the debt, but then the servant turns around and squeezes a compatriot who cries for mercy using exactly the same words, now without effect. When the king hears the second servant has been thrown in debtors' prison he is infuriated. The original debt is called back and the first servant is thrown in prison as well. The free grace offered the one who had been forgiven and freed (in the spirit of jubilee and God's realm) is to be taken in earnest. It is nothing less than the new basis and new pattern of our life together.

There are stern warnings that the land, denied its rightful sabbaths, will enjoy those sabbaths in a judgement of human desolation.

Realism about the fall: institutions and loopholes. There is a keen spirit of jubilee and sabbath, but legislative codes assume the need to institutionalize and structure it into the liturgical, economic, social life of the people. This suggests that we not simply acknowledge or acclaim the spirit — our work of construction and rebuilding must embody new assumptions in our own institutions (religious ones come to mind).

Even so, the provisions foresee their own circumvention. The lender will see the year of release on the horizon and become tightfisted (Deut. 15:9). The spirit must be urged again (15:10-11). Or the slave will be released, but without resources, and fall immediately back into debt bondage. A further provision is invented: those released must be given a "stake" — animals, grain, and wine — to begin anew (Deut. 15:12-18). In our own history, one large experiment of this sort was the promise of 40 acres and a mule in the Reconstruction. African Americans, ostensibly freed, fell back into the bondage of economic slavery in the plantation system because this visionary promise of jubilee proportion was subverted. Reconstruction failed, the promise of land and resources unfulfilled. Imagine how radically different our history might be had it been kept.

The questions remain now in the present tense. What kind of stakes can be offered today through economic development loan funds, or assorted equity trusts? How could the capital of church pension funds be mobilized to give the poor a stake? Here is another place for the graces of economic imagination.

Root assumption and confession: Jesus is herald of the jubilee. In the fullness of his own time, Jesus proclaims the reign and realm of God — shot through with the jubilee spirit. Its signs are the forgiveness of debt, release from captivity, from the strictures of the purity code, from blindness of all varieties, from sin itself. He practiced release from bondage to death itself.

Then as now, of course, grace is a summons and choice. We had best recall Jesus' rejection at the inaugural proclamation in Nazareth, acted out finally in the crucifixion. That, of course, is realism in the knowledge that certain assumptions we confess are at utter odds with the presumptions of our culture. Nevertheless, and even moreso, let us be realistic about the abundant power of grace, the economy of sufficiency and imagination, whose name is realm of God, whose emblem is resurrection. TW

Lenten program offer!

During the last five months, *The Witness* has examined our economic crisis, the consequent rise of the Christian Right and steps that people of faith are taking to nurture themselves and the wider community. Singly or in combination these issues provide excellent material for study and discussion. Call Karen Bota, who can design a study guide series to suit your parish's needs at 313-962-2650 on Tuesdays or Fridays.

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Robin Hood index

Large economic disparities within a society are harmful to overall public health, according to a recent study by Harvard public health professor Ichiro Kawachi, Bruce P. Kennedy and Deborah Prothrow-Stith. The study, dubbed the "Robin Hood index," suggests that 1)societies that permit large differentials in income also under-invest in health initiatives; 2)such societies have little social cohesion, resulting in minimal health benefits for the have-nots; and 3)large income disparities contribute to higher levels of frustration and stress, resulting in poorer health.

"America is at the top of the United Nations as the country with the greatest disparities between the rich and the poor," Ichiro Kawachi told Harriet A. Washington of *Emerge* magazine (11/96), adding that even "if our income gap narrowed to the point of Great Britain's during the 1980s, we would reduce our national mortality rate by 7 percent."

Dismantling patriarchy

A new consciousness among women will help dismantle patriarchy in church structures and shape new forms of church for the next century, said Theresa Kane, RSM, in her workshop "A New Millennium: Women Breaking Through a Patriarchal Church," at the Call to Action National Conference Nov. 15-17 in Detroit. First, women must "be" and act with a more assertive mindset, Kane said. Conditioning starts early, and for women this often means a focus on the relational aspects of their world and a repression of their own identities. Women must develop their own gifts and use them in a public and visible way, as men are taught to do. Second, women must join — or create — and promote new systems, forms and structures which meet their needs. From designing and participating in feminist liturgies to bringing into being new groups and communities, women must assume public leadership roles and be visible in proclaiming what they believe. Finally, women must name gender discrimination and proclaim it as an expression of idolatry. The patriarchal church system holds up ordained men as the golden calf was held up as the image of God to be worshipped. By women's silent participation in this system, Kane said, they are promoting and perpetuating institutionalized inequality. Women must name and confront discrimination in a spirit of respect, friendship and mutuality. They also need to know when to confront and when to retreat. Just anger creates a just society, Kane said, not hatred and revenge.

— Karen Bota

Hunger and debt

The chronic hunger of 800 million of the earth's people, in a world which produces adequate food for everyone on the planet, is tied to third-world debt, according to Martin McLaughlin of the Center of Concern. "Many food-deficit developing countries must export much of the food they grow, to service debts they owe to creditors in the industrialized world," McLaughlin writes. "This debt has more than quadrupled since 1974, to a total of $2.068 trillion in 1996."

Immigration issues

Twelve essays discussing immigration as a civil rights concern are featured in a special issue of *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict and World Order.* Contributors include Sara Diamond ("Right Wing Politics and the Anti-Immigration Cause"), Nestor Rodriguez ("The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration, Transnational Communities and the State") and Linda Miller Matthei ("Gender & International Labor Migration: A Networks Approach"). Send $14 to *Social Justice*, P.O. Box 40601, San Francisco, CA 94140.

Slowing down

"Eknath Easwaren considers slowing down to be one of the cornerstones of a spiritual life. Why? A clue lies in the Chinese ideograph for 'busy,' combined from two other ideographs: 'heart' and 'killing.' When we become too busy, we lose touch with our hearts, with our bodies, with the present moment."

— Melissa West, "Mothering as a Spiritual Path," *SageWoman* #36

Magda Trocmé dies

Magda Trocmé, who worked with her pastor husband Andre Trocmé to hide and shelter some 5,000 Jews in the village of Le Chambon, France during World War II [see *TW,* 4/96], died October 10, 1996 in Paris at the age of 95.

— *Reconciliation International*, 10/96

Navajo justice

"The Navajo form of banishment is what we call killing with eyes. If a person perpetrated wrong in a community, everybody would watch everything he did. While he slept, there was somebody there to watch him. At some point, the person would say, 'Why is everybody watching me?' They'd say, 'Let's talk about it. Do you understand what happened? You finally realize that we are trying to allow you to recognize that there is a problem. We see the problem. Let's talk about it, let's get rid of that problem. Let's kill that monster and allow you to continue to live within our society.' The whole objective is to allow people to stay within the community by using banishment through eye contact."

— Philmer Bluehouse, in *People of the Seventh Fire* by Dagmar Thorpe, $14, Akwe:kon Press, phone 607-255-4308, fax 607-255-0185.



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Forgiving third world debt

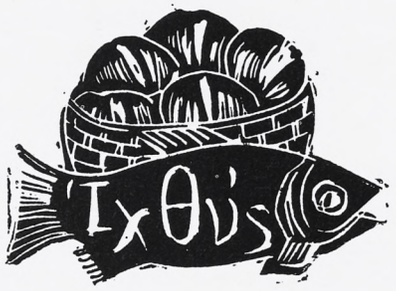
by Marie Dennis

The global economy is not structured "as is" inevitably, nor is it divinely ordained. Perhaps the most important gift of working seriously and concretely toward jubilee is the way in which this work encourages and strengthens us to reject the myth of its immutability. On a recent journey through Mexico and Brazil I witnessed community after community devastated by economic hardship. Thousands of small businesses have closed in Mexico; villages have been abandoned by every person free to seek work along or across the U.S. border; in both countries the cost of living has skyrocketed while wages remain very low and unemployment very high. At the same time I saw tremendous hope — people struggling to survive and to create alternative forms of economic life.

Brazilian economist Marcos Arruda strongly encouraged us to keep on with our work for the jubilee, saying this system is unsustainable; our collective efforts should offer alternatives, and we should press the system toward jubilee.

My work in this area began when Maryknoll missioners around the world voiced their growing concerns about the negative impact of global economic forces on their communities, especially in Latin America, Africa and the Philippines.

A few years ago, during the fiftieth anniversary of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), we joined a broad effort initiated largely in the impoverished southern hemisphere to demand reform of these institutions. Because our religious traditions have had much to say about economic justice and jubilee, it seemed important to create a forum for religious organizations and institutions to work together in formulating concrete strategies for education and advocacy toward change.



Helen Siegl

In 1994 the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and IMF was formed. From the beginning, the focus of the Religious Working Group was on the need for debt relief for poor countries and for radical change in the structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and IMF.

Some important statistics

Seventy percent of world trade is controlled by 500 corporations. One percent of multinationals own half the stock of direct foreign investment.

There were 18.2 million refugees in 1992.

Between 1980 and 1993, Fortune 500 corps eliminated nearly 4.4 million jobs. During that same period their sales increased 1.4 times and assets 2.3 times. Average CEO compensation increased by 6.1 percent to $3.8 million.

The world's 500 largest industrial corporations employ .05 percent of world's population, but control 25 percent of the world's economic output.

— courtesy of Grace Boggs

When we are asked why we are concerned with the third world debt, we respond with information that is by now familiar to many: Northern banks, bloated with petro-dollars after the oil crisis in the early 1970s, pressed Southern countries to accept loans; many of those loans were immoral or unwise in the first place — at times made to corrupt and unrepresentative governments that never used the money to benefit their people; rapidly rising interest rates and failed development projects exacerbated the indebtedness; even payments on the debt were insufficient to prevent debt burdens from mushrooming.

The story continues. In the early 1980s, after Mexico threatened to default on its debt and trigger an international financial crisis, the commercial banks quickly protected themselves, reaped tax benefits from claimed losses and sold off as much debt as possible at discounted prices on the secondary market. But the debt remained on the books. Meanwhile, other debt mounted as well. Much of the overseas development aid from wealthy countries to poor was in the form of loans — and projects funded by the international financial institutions (the IMF and World Bank and regional development banks) were always supported by loans.

Furthermore, *more* loans were needed by poor countries in order to make payments on their debt and keep their economies going. Soon the crisis came to a head. Country after country was wrapped in a straightjacket of debt. Enter the creditors, led by the IMF. "We will open doors for you to new loans," they said, "but first you must let us help you restructure your economy." Step by step, the economies of debtor countries were reworked. The steps were standard: Downsize government (usually social programs, education and health care were the first to go, although the long-term problems with that choice have become increasingly evi-

Marie Dennis works for the Maryknoll justice and peace office.

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dent); tighten credit; open markets to foreign competition; privatize; produce for export rather than local consumption, and more. Rarely were citizens consulted, though they were the first to feel the devastating effects.

The IMF would say that they were promoting responsible financial management, and that is a real need, but inherent in the reforms were a set of assumptions that the only direction in which a country can go is toward free market capitalism. As economies began to adjust, inflation would come down, which was good, but the human and environmental costs were terrible; and as growth began to occur it benefited the elites and foreign investors, and never reached the majority of the people. Conditions were terrible for the working class — we see it in this country now — temporary jobs with no benefits, labor unions suppressed or controlled, wages kept low, aggressive depletion of environmental resources, agribusiness that depletes the land, etc.

Religious groups all over the world are saying that the debt crisis has to be addressed in a moral way. The debt is providing a handle for the unjust control of poor countries' economies. The debt has long ago been paid. In fact, given the reality of colonial exploitation, many believe that the debt is really owed from north to south.

There are a few glimmers of hope on the horizon. Bilateral and multilateral lenders are finally admitting that the debt burden is a serious problem. The World Bank and IMF recently approved a debt reduction initiative for the most highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs). It is a very small step; whether or not it can make any difference is yet to be determined.

But the real hope for me is in the global South. People there are working for, *clamoring* for, change — and they are surviving in spite of the system. TW

Asian and African demands

This list is excerpted from the Center for Society and Religion in Sri Lanka's compensation demands for:

1. Forcible occupation of our lands during several centuries. Such use of force in international relations to subjugate peoples is wrong, not only today (as in the case of Iraq against Kuwait in 1991) but also over the centuries, in this instance since 1492 and 1498 (when Vasco da Gama opened the way for western colonization of Africa and Asia).
2. Take-over and use of our lands for plantations, for timber, for minerals, for settlement of European peoples.
3. Removal of our resources such as gold and silver, diamonds, gems and pearls, copper and tin.
4. Transformation of our economies making land use and production suit the interests of the colonizers and their companies.
5. De-industrialization of our countries, which had been self-reliant.
6. Control over trade, imposing unfair terms on relationships of trade, that continue to the present day and contribute to the growth of our "external debt."
7. Damage to our environment, the destruction of our forests, degradation of our lands and waters.
8. Harm to our peoples by slavery, semi-slave conditions of indentured labor, inhuman treatment of workers in plantations, mines and factories.
9. Contribution our peoples have made to the build-up of the economy and capital of the colonizing countries and their companies through all the above factors.
10. The degradation of our women and men due to the despising of our humanity, our cultures and our languages.
11. Despising our religions and destroying the places of worship and libraries, and sometimes the forcibly imposing their religions on our peoples.
12. Removal of our artistic and cultural treasures.
13. Persons from our countries who served in colonial wars.
14. Children born of soldiers during the wars and around bases as in the Philippines.
15. Damage caused by colonial wars; in more recent times to the Vietnamese — for more bombs dropped on them than during World War II.
16. Displaced populations, refugees.

The compensation can be in the form of:

1. Return of our art treasures.
2. Return of the gold and silver taken from our countries.
3. Cancellation of our debts.
4. Return of our land to us.
5. Rewriting history to be more holistic and true. Rewriting the economic history of international relationships taking these factors into account.
6. Rethinking our religious and theological perspectives to be respectful to all humanity.
7. Support for reducing social inequalities and a fair distribution of resources.
8. Suppport for a fair distribution of land among peoples of the world.
9. Withdrawal of undue pressures from the World Bank, IMF and GATT.
10. Change of trade relations and "foreign aid" into something more equitable and less damaging to our trade balances.

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The new global economy

Like it or not, we all are active participants in the global economy. Take a look in your cupboard or at the label in your clothing. A very few of us reap huge profits. Some of us reap greater choice of goods and services. The vast majority of us, however, give more than we receive. Even in the U.S., at least 50 percent of the population has seen resources decline during the last 15 years. And if you factor in environmental quality, we have all experienced a deterioration. Just how resources are transferred is one of the discoveries of the workshop *The New Global Economy, A View from the Bottom Up*. Who pays and who benefits are the age-old dilemmas. Where does one stand, individually and collectively? What are the options?

The New Global Economy gives participants opportunity to wrestle first-hand with an announced plant closing, an anti-immigration proposal and an environmental hazard. Scenarios are put in the context of the increased power of transnational corporations, the burden of debt on nations, and the drive for free trade.

The global economy is perhaps most frequently described in terms such as inevitable, beyond everyday understanding, complex, and as having a life of its own. Those of us not carrying the title of economist, banker, corporate executive or high-level government official frequently are intimidated by those terms.

Developed by the Resource Center of the Americas in Minneapolis, *The New Global Economy* is one of the most exciting educational tools around. Many participants describe themselves at the beginning of the workshop as either very tiny, overwhelmed by or ill-informed about the global economy. At the end of the exercise, there is energy from the insight, information and active participation. Once someone is informed, there is the potential to challenge the system with confidence, to question the prevailing economic dogmas, and to change. The change may be institutional or individual, monumental or minuscule, but it is only with change that there will be truly a new global economy.

To arrange for Groundwork to facilitate *The New Global Economy* for your parish or group, call 313-822-2055. Or you can order the materials from Resource Center of the Americas, 317 17th Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; 612-627-9445, fax: 612-627-9450.

— Margaret Weber serves on the staff of Groundwork for a Just World, a Michigan-based justice and peace organization.

Some jubilee resources

* A web site! http://www.lights.com/jubilee.
* Arthur Waskow on Internet: Awaskow@aol.com.
* Equity Trust, Inc., Church Mathei, RFD 1, Box 430, Voluntown, CT 06384; 860-376-6174.
* Share the Wealth/Movement for a New Economy, 37 Temple Pl., 3rd floor, Boston MA 02111; 617-423-2148.
* Institute for Sustainable Development, available on the Internet, search for sustainable.
* Community Sustained Agriculture, Bio-dynamic Farming and Gardening Assoc., P.O. Box 550, Kimberton, PA 19442; 800-516-7797.
* Religious Working Group, c/o Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office, PO Box 29132, Washington D.C. 20017; 202-832-1780.
* Fifty Years is Enough Campaign, 1025 Vermont Ave NW, Washington DC 20005; 202-879-3187.
* Oxfam International, 1511 K St NW, Rm 1044, Washington DC 20005; 202-393-5333.
* Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Ave., Rm 1000, Silver Spring MD 20910; 301-608-2400.
* Jubilee 2000, P.O. Box 100, London SE1 7RT, United Kingdom; 0171 620 4444 x 2169; j2000@gn.apc.org.

Articles available from Kairos/USA:

"The Jubilee: An Announcment of Imagination in Times of Marginalization," presented by Israel Batista.
"From Kairos to Jubilee," by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer.
"An Ecumenical Jubilee: What It Might Mean for the Churches," by Konrad Raiser, General Secretary of the WCC.
"On the Way: From Kairos to Jubilee," a U.S. Kairos Document.
"*Maka Ainana* — The Eyes of the Land," by Kaleo Patterson.
Contact Kairos USA, Joan Elbert, 5757 N. Sheridan Rd., #16A, Chicago IL 60660; 773-275-5410.

Books:

Whole Life Economics, by Barbara Brandt, New Society Pub., 1995.
Fifty Years Is Enough, ed. Kevin Danaher, South End Press, 1994.
When Corporations Rule the World, by David Korten, Kumarian Press and Berrett-Koehler, (155 Montgomery St., San Francisco, CA 94104), 1995. Korten proposes elimination of corporate tax breaks, enforcement of anti-trust laws, refoming corporate charters, stripping corporations of their "human" rights.

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Advocating for a living wage

by Karen D. Bota

"Churches and synagogues are on the front line doing all the crisis work — we're providing the soup kitchens, we're providing the shelters," said Kimberley Bobo, executive director of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. "My church runs a soup kitchen 365 days a year for 200 people, and half the people who come work either part- or full-time, and yet they don't earn enough to be able to even feed their families. They've got to get jobs that pay living wages and have benefits."

The National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice was formed just a year ago in response to a need to mobilize the U.S. religious community on the rights of workers to organize to improve their wages, benefits and working conditions. "It became increasingly clear that there was a real interest in the religious community, partly because I kept getting calls from people around the country saying, 'How could we do a similar organization in this area?'" said Bobo, who founded and built a local Interfaith Committee in Chicago over the past five years.

Obviously she was right. The committee's mailing list today includes 5,000 people of faith — Christians, Jews and Muslims. "We've done no direct mail," Bobo said, "and that's in less than nine months."

The committee was just an idea in Bobo's head last December. At the same time, the new leaders of the AFL-CIO showed a recommitment to organizing and coalition building. Bobo saw a need for a structured way for the religious community to be involved in working on labor issues. In addition, continued deterioration of wages and benefits, particularly for low-wage workers, made it clear to Bobo that the time was right for the creation of a national organization for people of faith seeking justice for workers. The organization incorporated on February 14, 1996, had its first board meeting at the end of March, received 501(c)(3) status in May, made a public announcement of its establishment September 9, and mailed its first newsletter, *Faith Works*, in October.



Clergy join poultry workers burning lists of Case Farm's "broken promises" on August 17, 1996 in Morgantown, N.C.

"If you get out and talk to low-wage workers, the number one reason people want to organize a union is that they want to be treated with respect," Bobo said. "People tell stories of not being able to go to the bathroom when they want to, or being screamed and cursed at regularly, or being sexually harassed, or of workers being treated like they have no brains." At union rallies respect is a common demand, according to Bobo. "Many workers view having a union as at least one way to force the company to respect them."

An impressive 13-page document lists in detail the organization's workplan. Program priorities include supporting and organizing local interfaith committees; assisting with field placements for seminarians, novices and rabbinical students; and developing congregational resources on worker issues. A six-session study guide for congregations was published last spring, and last fall's newsletter included Thanksgiving service bulletin inserts. Plans are underway for issuing a Labor Day statement and bulletin inserts for Labor Day 1997.

An important committee focus is the Poultry Workers Justice Project. At a press conference in Washington, DC, just before Thanksgiving, the committee called on the U. S. Department of Labor to set up a special investigative task force to look into the poultry industry and its abuse of workers. "They announced that, in response to us, they are setting up such a task force," Bobo said. "It's a major victory which we're very grateful for." The press conference was a long-time dream for Jim Lewis, an Episcopal priest who has worked with poultry workers for nine years, and who is a board member of the committee.

Karen D. Bota is a freelance writer in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. and promotion manager for *The Witness.*

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"We've adopted as our slogan that the religious community says more grace over chicken than it says over anything," Lewis explained. "We give thanks to God, we give thanks for the hands of the person in the kitchen who cooked it. But we frequently don't think of the hands that have to deal with it both on the farm and in the process plant."

More than 200,000 workers are engaged in poultry processing in mostly small towns from Delaware to Texas. These low-wage workers, primarily African American and Latino, often toil in unsafe and unsanitary conditions with few benefits and no union representation.

The committee is organizing local interfaith committees in poultry communities, organizing fact-finding delegations of religious leaders to meet with workers and management in poultry plants, and developing ethical standards for employee relations in poultry plants. The committee is working closely with a multi-union organizing effort to assure that poultry workers are allowed the right to organize and bargain collectively.

For Lewis, another important part of the poultry project is getting Episcopalians to acknowledge the right of workers to form unions and do collective bargaining. "The right of workers to organize themselves seems to be way out of the range of most Episcopalians," Lewis said. "We're much more a management church. The challenge is getting folks to see the connection with labor."

In Sussex County, Delaware, where Lewis works, the economic base is poultry. Lewis takes small groups of Episcopalians there to do Bible study with people who are working and living at risk.

One group met with strike leaders and workers in a local poultry plant. "It was eye-opening to these people," Lewis said, "doing that in the context of Scripture: Where do we discern God's movement in this, particularly for our church?"

He has done similar small group Bible study, taking groups to meet with other persons living at some kind of risk in the county, such as prisoners, gay people and farmers.

"It changes the way folks think and feel," he said. "They've never sat down with someone who has been threatened that they'd lose their job or did lose their job for organizing, or a farmer who will lose his contract if he speaks up. That kind of fear and intimidation — they've yet to confront that."

An additional focus of the committee plans is the Religious Employers Project.

"This area is clearly going to be huge for us — the whole area of religious employers, both hospitals and nursing homes," said Bobo. "Unfortunately, these institutions are as viciously anti-union as their for-profit counterparts. It's an awful situation, and we've got to figure out some way to prevent religious institutions from spending hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to buck the unions, and unions spending equal amounts of money going after religious institutions, because it doesn't help either institution and it certainly doesn't help low-wage workers."

Despite the litany of abuses cited for low-wage workers, the committee is not anti-business. The organization is exploring ways to recognize good employers, and to work with others to help them become more ethical and avoid unnecessary conflicts with workers.

Neither is the organization uncritically pro-union. The organization does not believe that everything unions do is correct or worthy of support, Bobo says.

One of the challenges in working with unions leaders and religious leaders is that many of them don't know one another at all, said Bobo.

"There's a whole different language the two communities use that sometimes makes it difficult for them to understand each other. The values are frequently the same but the language and ways things are described are very different."

Another challenge in working with unions is that many of them — because National Labor Relations Board process hampers union elections — have made some tactical decisions to try to move quickly, to send in a whole team of organizers to knock on doors.

"It's referred to in union circles as 'the blitz model' of organizing," Bobo said. "They're going to do it so fast that the company doesn't know what hit them and the company doesn't have time to hire a union-busting law firm to fight it. That whole blitz model has some real advantages and has clearly helped them win some things, but it's a model that flies in direct conflict with trying to build a base of community support which tends to take a longer period of time. It's a challenge: how do we recognize the difficulties created by the National Labor Relations Board and the need to do things quickly and yet, on the other hand, the need to take the time to build community support?

"One of the exciting things in the union movement right now is the desire and interest in bringing in lots of new, younger organizers," Bobo said. "But a number of the newer, younger people are not personally comfortable with religious stuff. There's a challenge in working with them to understand the values and strengths that the religious community can bring."

"I believe this is a God-given moment," said Lewis. "With a lot of people working, but not getting the right kind of benefits, people are confused, angry and searching. It gives the church an opportunity to work in that confusion." **TW**

For more information on the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, contact Kim Bobo at 1607 W. Howard, Suite 218, Chicago, IL 60626; 312/381-2832; email: nicwj@ipc.apc.org.

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Closing the books on the Cooke embezzlement

The final word on the $2.2 million embezzled from the Episcopal Church by former treasurer Ellen Cooke is that all but $100,000 of the stolen money was recovered — but at an expense of $322,000 in legal, auditing, asset-recovery and other costs, according to a treasurer's report made to the denomination's executive council this past November. The news came as council members voted to accept a $40.5 million budget for 1997 that contained a $3.4 million deficit.

The council approved using program cuts and surplus funds identified during a treasurer's office examination of church accounts to cover the shortfall in budget revenues. The 1997 budget is predicated upon a $1 million increase in receipts from dioceses, despite the fact that diocesan giving has been on the decrease in recent years.

The 1997 budget restored funds to dioceses in Latin America, the Caribbean and the western U.S. as well as to the Episcopal Council on Indian Ministries.

— based on an Episcopal News Service (ENS) report

Rwandan bishops replaced

The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) has formally recognized four dioceses in Rwanda vacant, urging that church leaders "set in motion legal procedures to elect bishops to those four vacant sees." The dioceses' bishops abandoned their jurisdictions following the 1994 genocide.

The ACC is a body of representatives from throughout the Anglican Communion which meets every three years to consider issues before the church. It has no jurisdiction over members of the communion, just as the Archbishop of Canterbury has no jurisdiction outside of England. The council's action in this case is unprecedented, taken in response to a request from church members in the four abandoned Rwandan dioceses who had asked that some authority declare them vacant.

Efforts by the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, to persuade the four bishops "to return to their dioceses or resign" had been rebuffed because the bishops said they feared reprisals, according to a report by Carey to the ACC's meeting in Panama last October. The council also heard from Carey's special envoy, David Birney, a bishop in the U.S. church who had just completed an extensive visit to Rwanda and to its Anglican churches.

"There is danger of the church being shut down," Birney warned.

ACC delegates from Africa said they did not see how the Anglican church could be an instrument for justice, reconciliation and peace in Rwanda without the active leadership of its bishops.

— based on ENS and Anglican Journal *reports*

Lutherans to study "sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all"

The 11,000 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) will be studying economic life this year with the aid of a new 117-page document called *Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood For All*. The document is intended to help Lutherans "apply our faith to our thinking about economic life and to our actions in the world as they concern money," said Ingrid Chrstiansen of the ELCA's division of Church in Society, which authorized the document's distribution. It defines "sufficiency" as "providing for people's basic physical and emotional needs so they can live in dignity."

— ENS

Halt U.S. military aid to Indonesia, NCC demands

Following the announcement that the 1996 Nobel peace prizes would go to two East Timor activists, Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo and José Ramos-Horta, the National Council of Churches has renewed its call for the U.S. government to halt military aid to Indonesia. Interviews with the two peace prize winners have convinced NCC officials that conditions in East Timor are worsening, according to Larry Tankersely, director of the NCC's Southern Asia office.

An estimated 200,000 citizens of East Timor — a third of the population — lost their lives when Indonesia invaded the former Portugese colony in 1975. Since then, the Indonesian government has encouraged Indonesians to settle there, "resulting in a gradual, yet alarming marginalization of the indigenous East Timorese by taking away jobs and land," a 1995 NCC board resolution noted.

— based on an ENS report

Ordination transcends sex, Presbyterian council rules

Opponents of women's ordination in the Episcopal Church may disagree, but according to the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta an ordained man who becomes a woman through a sex-change operation is still ordained.

The decision came in response to Presbyterian minister Eric Swenson's request for a name change — to Erin — following a sex-change operation last fall. The Georgia body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) was not of one mind about Swenson's status, however — the vote upholding Erin's ordination was 186 to 161. According to Anne Sayre, the presbytery's associate for justice and women, the group decided it had "no grounds either theologically or morally" for revoking the ordination.

Swenson, 49, is the father of two adult daughters.

— based on a report from Ecumenical News International



Sexuality in the household of God

by Charles Rice

Ourselves, Our Souls and Bodies: Sexuality and the Household of God. **Edited by Charles Hefling. Boston: Cowley, 1996.**

We are offering a new course at the seminary in which I teach called "Ministry and Sexuality" because it has become clear to those who teach pastoral theology that reflection on sexual being and practice is essential preparation for ministry. In fact, it is in the context of a class on ministry that questions of sexuality are most fruitfully discussed. Charles Hefling and his colleagues have given us a book which is a major contribution to the ongoing dialogue to which the church's bishops have called us.

Hefling tells us that "the book is intended to be less a manifesto than an *eirenicon*." That attitude gives us a profoundly useful, sometimes inspiring, book. The authors assume that the conversation about human sexuality is important to the church. Though the most interesting thing about us may not be our sexuality, it is, as Susan Harris says, "right up there." These authors assume that we must, somehow, talk about it, if we are to be the church which our baptism implies. Further, the authors of these 17 essays see the discussion of sexuality leading inevitably to speaking of God. In fact, this is a profoundly theological text, a fine example of what Owen Thomas calls "theology done backwards."

The value of this book lies to a large degree in the variety and richness of its material. We have here examples of skilled and focussed exposition of Scripture, pastoral reflection, closely reasoned theology, personal testimony, historical essay, and wonderful writing on such topics as taboo, usury, politics, and English common law — and questions: Why do some believe homosexuality is wrong? What is sex "good for"? What are we to make of "natural law"?

But this is not a potpourri. The editor and the authors assume that there is an Anglican approach to questions of sexuality. They assume that we are a church, and that the Anglican communion comprises not only gay and lesbian persons but people with a great variety of opinions on questions of sexuality. They also assume that we intend to keep on being one community and that this community is profoundly sacramental in its self-understanding and in its mission.

Marilyn McCord Adams writes: "On balance, I think, the church can best become more articulate about human sexuality if she takes neither rules nor ideals but sacraments as the model. The old Prayer Book catechism defined a sacrament as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." More broadly, though, all creatures reflect divine being and goodness; our common call is to express the image of God impressed on us, to be outward and visible signs of divine love in a broken and confused world. From this sacramental perspective, the fruitful questions to ask would be: How can we live as heterosexual and homosexual persons so as to be sacraments of divine love in a broken and confused world?"

Hefling asserts that questions of human sexuality are not abstract, ideological matters; they are questions about our life together and they lead relentlessly to questions about God and the shape of our life together with God. Such assertions are, it would seem, tacitly admitted by those on all sides of specific questions about sexuality and its practice. We must talk about sex because we care about God and about our life together with God in the Church and on mission with Christ in the world.

The Rev. Charles L. Rice is a professor of homiletics in the Theological School of Drew University and interim rector of St. Peter's Church, Morristown, N.J.

Independent legal investigation into *Penthouse* allegations launched

Long Island bishop Orris Walker has handed the investigation of allegations that William Lloyd Andries and four other male priests participated in sexual orgies on church property to an independent legal counsel. Walker asked that O'Kelley Whitaker, retired Bishop of Central New York, assist the investigation and that Bishop James Ottley of Panama serve as bishop-in-residence at St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church to counsel distressed parishioners. Andries had been rector at St. Gabriel's, a congregation made up of largely West Indian and Panamanian immigrants, for 17 years.

The allegations were made by two Brazilian men in the December issue of *Penthouse*. They claimed that Andries lured them to this country with a promise of jobs and then recruited them for group sex with other priests on church property. Andries, who denies the orgies but admits sexual involvement with one of the two men, resigned both his priesthood and post at St. Gabriel's following publication of the article.

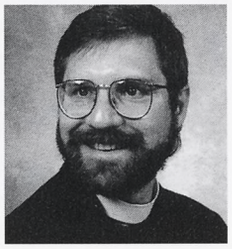
The only other priest named in the *Penthouse* story, Howard Williams, coordinator for children's ministries at the Episcopal Church's national headquarters, resigned his position as a result of the article. Although the two Brazilians do not claim that Williams was involved in the sexual encounters they allege, Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning said he and Williams agreed that the publicity surrounding the *Penthouse* scandal had irrevocably compromised Williams' effectiveness as coordinator.

— based on reports from ENS and Episcopal Life

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New Vital Signs advisory board

We'd like to introduce to our readers the eight men and women we've recently recruited to give us regular input (via a private electronic meeting) about issues and concerns* The Witness *should be addressing as it covers the Episcopal Church in this Vital Signs section of the magazine. Covering a wide spectrum of geographic location, each is active in areas of Episcopal Church life of special interest to* Witness *readers.



Ian Douglas has a special interest in both global mission and church history. He is on the faculty at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., where he directs the Anglican, Global and Ecumenical Studies program. He was a volunteer for mission in Haiti and currently chairs the national church's Standing Commission on World Mission.

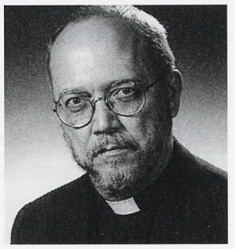


Elizabeth Downie, for many years a church musician, is the rector of St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Fenton, Mich., in the new Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

She is strongly interested in liturgical reform, having chaired the national church's Standing Commission on Church Music. She is also a longtime member of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.



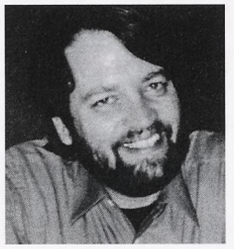
Gayle Harris brings a strong background in urban and interracial ministry. A member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, she's the rector of Saints Luke and Simon Cyrene in Rochester, N.Y.



Emmett Jarrett has made racial and economic justice a particular focus of study and activism during the past decade. He is past president of the Episcopal Urban Caucus and is now rector of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Stone Mountain, Ga., outside of Atlanta.



Gay Jennings is Canon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Ohio where she serves as case manager for sexual misconduct. She's been a strong advocate for reform of the church's disciplinary canons and an active member of the Episcopal Women's Caucus.



Mark L. MacDonald specializes in multi-cultural ministry, a field he has pursued for many years. He is leadership development training coordinator for the Diocese of Minnesota's Indian Work Commission, vicar of St. Antipas in Redby, Minn., and St John in the Wilderness in Red Lake, Minn.



Muffie Moroney is a lawyer in Houston, Tex., who brings a special interest in church structure and justice issues. She helped found the local chapter of the Episcopal Women's Caucus. She is chancellor of her inner city parish, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.



Altagracia Perez serves on the President's Commission on AIDS and is rector of St. Philip the Evangelist in Los Angeles. She was coordinator of youth ministries in the Diocese of Chicago.

National anti-racism dialogue scheduled for Jan. 20

Last May, 1996, Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis issued a call for an Episcopal Church-wide dialogue around issues of racial justice to begin on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of this year. They were prompted, in part, by an open letter to the national leadership of the Episcopal Church issued at Thanksgiving, 1995, by Edward Rodman, coordinator of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, which for the past decade has been pushing for national initiatives in the area of anti-racism.

Rodman referred to the public's suprise at the verdict in the O.J. Simpson case and "the furor" that surrounded the Million Man March. "The failure to have been prepared for the possibility of a *not guilty* verdict," Rodman said, "may be the ultimate lost opportunity for our generation, if the goal is to address the issue of racism. This is depressing because there has been very little true dialogue surrounding the obvious issues that this verdict has raised."

An ad hoc committee appointed by Browning and Chinnis has produced a 138-page resource to provide congregations and other groups with models and ground rules for approaching this difficult conversation. Fifty-eight dioceses sent representatives to receive training in how to teach church members to lead the discussions at a December workshop held in Stony Point, N.Y.

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Our readers tell us . . .

Singing praises for the dead

by Mel Schlachter

We lost three saints this past autumn. If there is indeed a mystical "rule of threes," like everyone's grandmother used to say, then we should have a respite from the deaths of humanity's treasures. All were men of uncommon faith: Henri Nouwen, Sept. 12, Edwin Friedman, October 31 and Joseph Bernardin, November 15.

Henri Nouwen

Nouwen, a Dutch priest, theologian and psychologist, known for packing lecture halls when he was on the faculty of first Yale, then Harvard, left us more than 30 books that were as simple as they were profound. I remember first reading *The Wounded Healer.* "*This* is a bestseller?" I thought. "It's so obvious." He was one of those rare people who had a gift for noticing what was in front of all our noses.

His early book, *Genesee Diary* — the daily markings of a priest spending a few months with silent Trappist monks — revealed the holy as much in the bakery, or looking for building stones in the stream, as in the chapel.

Nouwen manifested a quality that he shared with the two other saints: If we are open in our faith-search, then we will be led necessarily to a sense of identification with the "least" of the earth and a quest for justice. He left academia in the early 1980s, first for a theological center in Latin America, then for a community which includes mentally handicapped people, L'Arche, in Toronto. He was not so much a helper as he was a fellow traveller through the same earthbound existence.

Edwin Friedman

Friedman, while serving as the rabbi for a congregation in the Washington, D.C. area, trained with the pioneer of Family Systems theory and therapy at Georgetown University, Murray Bowen. He eventually left synagogue leadership and worked as a family therapist, a consultant and a teacher.

He held training seminars out of his home in Bethesda, and wrote the book *Generation to Generation* — thereby saving the lives and ministries of countless clergy. He described how the church "family" functions as an emotional system.

Friedman was most interested in our growth as "differentiated" individuals who (unlike rugged individualists) can still stay in relationship with others. He had no small hand in popularizing the phrase "non-anxious presence," which conveys his hope that we can stay connected to other people even when they are different from us or would seem to threaten us. His collection of parables, *Friedman's Fables*, leads gently toward his vision of the individual within community.

Our culture is full of examples of people cutting themselves off from those they don't like or disagree with. Politics has become more interested in righteous posturing, exclusion and vilification than in keeping the body politic intact with mutual respect. Friedman taught that an individual with some sense of differentiation can take a position without needing others to agree, without having to make them agree, without having to distance from or submit to someone who generates an emotional reaction.

Joseph Bernardin

From countless stories related by those who knew him, Cardinal Bernardin, like Friedman, cared as much for the process of dialogue as he did for the content of belief. For people who feel a deep sense of righteousness about particular beliefs, this is maddening. It is seen as wishy-washy, not standing for anything. "We should be *fighting* rather than having coffee with the opposition," they say.

To such critics, Bernardin had the terminal flaw of wanting to talk to the opposition, as when he went to pray at the bedside of the dying man who had falsely accused him of sexual abuse. A deep and growing Christian faith led him to a deep sense of justice for the least and most vulnerable in our society. Archbishop Desmond Tutu called him a beacon for the oppressed.

Bernardin's ability to listen well and his genuine desire to listen to everyone meant that authority, for him, was horizontal as well as vertical. Though a leader in a hierarchical church, he nonetheless exhibited a deep faith in God speaking through everyone, not just established authorities. For some of his colleagues in red, even to enter into dialogue with women about their roles in the church meant that one was questioning the church's authority, but Bernardin did not think the church's authority under God was so fragile that the baptized could not speak frankly with one another, irrespective of rank.

So it has been a hard autumn for the kind of moral leadership that cares more about people than causes, more about justice for all than privilege for some, leaders willing to lead by example while staying connected with all sides. Pray that the winter of the absence from our midst of saints such as these will be short and temperate. TW

Mel Schlacter is co-rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Troy, Ohio.

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The heart of jubilee

by Marie Dennis

***Proclaim Jubilee!* Maria Harris (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996)**

> Forgive everything we can,
> forgive debts,
> forgive trespasses,
> forgive sins, forgive family,
> forgive world debt!

In her extraordinary book, *Proclaim jubilee!*, Maria Harris probes the intersection yearning to happen between a broken creation and the biblical prescription for its repair. Identifying the jubilee tradition as a "richly textured vital response" to the complex issues of our era, she invites us to explore the core teachings of this tradition, but above all the comprehensive spirituality it offers.

She includes a concise, readable overview of the recent scholarly work on the jubilee. However, for such a small book, Harris draws on a remarkable range of authors and disciplines to identify ways in which the spirit of jubilee is already being explored and enacted. For example, she includes Thich Nhat Hahn and Gandhi, Thomas Berry and Wendell Berry, Alice Walker and Annie Dillard, Martin Buber and Abraham Heschel, Gustavo Gutierrez and Hannah Arendt.

She organizes their wisdom on the need for jubilee around contemporary themes: liberation (as passionately demanded in revolutionary theologies and popular movements of the twentieth century), connectedness (the need for a "thicker listening," the attentive mindfulness of being peace), suffering (the constant which demands not only deep silence and ritual, but active intervention), imagination (the realm of vision so stifled in our culture), and repair of the world. By the latter Harris means a religious vocation that puts our fingerprints on the shattered vessels of the modern world and ensures that "our lives and our work will have meaning to ourselves, to the next generations, and to our fragile planet."

To each of these modern queries the biblical response is "jubilee." The prescriptions are familiar to us: let the land lie fallow; forgive everything; proclaim liberty; do justice; and sing a new song, the Canticle of jubilation. Yet Harris takes them with new depth and breadth.

For example, in the instruction to let the land lie fallow, we honor our relationship to the earth, but we also pay similar reverence to the "the tiny country each of us comprises, whose geography we know so well." We need to listen to the creation that surrounds us, but also to the creation and the land that we are. With this turn, Harris makes of jubilee a call to contemplation. In these times we need to become a people whose "every activity has an underlying residue of receptivity, quiet, and contemplative being." Sabbath means that we live in time, in the present; that we stop; that we recreate in community - in order that we might move toward rich, precise, positive practice for justice.

Jubilee teaches us forgiveness, especially of debt, but forgiveness as a way of being in the world. "Forgiving and being forgiven are part of the human situation, a 'necessary corrective' to evil, and part of the connectedness that illuminates a common destiny."

A third leg of the jubilee tradition concerns liberation of the captives. Harris is quite concrete in recognizing those at work on behalf of prisoners, the anti-death penalty activism of folks like Helen Prejan. She goes deeper, though. jubilee frees us to go home, the place where we learn "the 'thicker times' of presence that care and sabbath teach — where loneliness can be relieved through community." To go home is to honor traditions and ancestors, to return to parents, to risk honestly removing the barriers between us and our roots.

Justice is another fundamental jubilee response. The community or nation is called simply to find out what belongs to whom and give it back. This enactment — religiously, socially and economically — brings freedom in turn to the doers of justice themselves.

And finally, by jubilee we are invited to sing. Imagine! jubilee a summons to art and music. Clearly, this work must go beyond mind to visions and dreams who language first comes in poetry. Harris invites us to notice the jubilee artisans among us already.

In that very way, reading *Proclaim jubilee!* makes one want to sing! In his foreword Walter Brueggemann notes Maria Harris' remarkable facility with words and images, as well as her creative articulation of a new relationship between biblical texts and the demands of our own reality. I agree. *Proclaim jubilee!* offers soul-deep substance to nourish the variety of contemporary projects now using the language of jubilee in our move toward the millennium. TW

review

Marie Dennis works at the Maryknoll Justice and Peace office in Washington D.C.

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We're on the crest, we don't know what's going to come next. It's critical that we nourish hope in one another. I see all kinds of alternatives being born."



Amata Miller

On the crest of change

by Marianne Arbogast

Amata Miller became an economist, and not a music professor, because the sister who was dean of her college won an argument with the music teacher.

"In the days when I entered the community, you did what you were told," says Miller, a member of the Roman Catholic Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) sisters of Monroe, Mich. "In my wildest dreams, I would not have sat down when I was in my 20s and said, 'I'm going to study economics and learn how to put it together with my faith.' But having been called to do that, I can look back and see why it happened."

Now chief financial officer of Marygrove, a small IHM college in Detroit, Miller is nationally recognized as a gifted educator in the field of economic justice, speaking and serving on the boards of projects like the Shorebank Corporation, Partners for the Common Good Loan Fund, Mercy Housing Corporation and Earth Trade.

She lives on campus with two other IHM faculty members, a 12-year-old Haitian boy in the U.S. for long-term medical treatment, a dog named Farmer Jack (after the supermarket lot where he was found) and two cats. A talented musician, she plays organ and piano and belongs to an IHM music ensemble. Miller exudes energy — she speaks briskly and forcefully, her words struggling to keep pace with her thoughts.

"What has been happening since the 1980s is this tremendous number of alternatives growing from the bottom up. They're invisible to most people because they don't hit the mainstream press, and the people doing it are too busy to write about it. But things like cooperatives, worker-owned businesses, community development credit unions, community development banking institutions, affordable housing providers — all these kinds of things are growing in sophistication and networking and in linkages to the private system, so that what you've got is a whole alternative economic order which is beginning to be in place. It's still very small, and some people ask what difference it can make in the face of global corporations, but it's having its transforming influence."

Miller grew up in the northwest Detroit neighborhood in which she now lives and works, in a milieu of faith-based social consciousness. Her parents sponsored Austrian refugees and frequently hosted international guests. Her mother, a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, was an early advocate of disarmament.

Upon graduating from high school, Miller joined the IHMs, taking up college studies at a Marygrove campus in Monroe. After teaching grade school for five years, she was sent to Berkeley, Cal. to earn a doctorate in economics. Living in Berkeley in the early 1960s was "a very powerful, transformative experience," Miller says, "and also very lonely."

At a time when nuns were normally forbidden to carry money or go out without a companion, Miller found herself on her own in a highly secular environment.

"I grew up in a Catholic subculture," she says. "It was the first time I had to explain all the categories that organized my life to people. I was fully robed, so I looked like a non-conformist of sorts, but I was a conundrum to them because to

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

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many of them, faith was a relic of barbarism. I can remember thinking, what they are after is basically what Christianity is all about — simplicity, community, integrity — and yet we have done such a bad job of presenting Jesus Christ to the world that they don't even think of looking there. I had to strip away all the stuff that was part of what it meant to be a nun, to figure out what was important and what wasn't."

Her studies were equally challenging.

"Economics is a very difficult field," she says. "It was a long, hard struggle. I kept thinking, something's wrong here — but I had to get far enough along before I could unpack it and figure out what the problems were."

When Miller returned to Marygrove in 1967, she says, her challenge was to teach economics from the perspective of social justice. "It was quite an unusual opportunity. There were no books — we had to create everything ourselves."

The labor bore unexpected fruit when, after teaching in a summer masters' degree program on religion and social issues, Miller started receiving invitations to speak to groups across the country. As interest in economic justice mushroomed, Miller found herself in great demand as a speaker, consultant and board member for fledgling projects.

In 1976, she left Marygrove to serve on the IHM leadership team.

"We were building a retirement fund, I was meeting with money managers and I got into the whole field of alternative investments and socially responsible investing," Miller says. "I couldn't just talk about it — I had to do it."

After 12 years of congregational leadership, Miller spent six years in Washington, D.C. with Network, a faith-based social justice lobby. She returned to become Marygrove's financial officer in 1994.

Although she prefers teaching to administrative work, she feels deeply committed to the survival of the college, which has focused its mission on the education of low-income women.

Miller considers herself "a Christian communist."

"I would like to live in a world in which we each contributed according to our ability and received according to our need. But if you ask me, as an economist, if we can ever have socialism in the U.S. — no, not in an individualistic society, it would be almost impossible. But capitalism has many faces and it does not have to be as selfish as ours. Our form of capitalism is probably the least social-justice-oriented of any capitalism in the world, with the exception of Japan. We don't have to have 25 percent of children under six living in poverty."

I'm hopeful because I meet people all over this country who are asking the important questions, trying to figure out how to put their faith and their life together, deepening their prayer and taking action.

The time is ripe for jubilee, Miller believes.

"Clearly, globally and nationally we have got to do some redistribution. In the U.S. we have unprecedented inequality. In the past 10 years we have reversed the trend of 40 years: From 1945 to the mid-1970s, the different income groups grew together. Now they are growing apart. Something structural is happening in our economic system that is very different."

It is important to identify and support local economic justice initiatives, Miller believes.

"Everybody's not going to be an innovator, but those innovators need a lot of people behind them. Somebody's got to be writing the newsletters, telling the story, contributing $10, helping put posters up. We've got to have our antennae up, to be open to think about different ways, and we've got to nourish them."

We can all examine the institutions in which we work, Miller says, "subverting them with different principles. If you start applying the principle that everybody's value comes from being a human person, not from what they do or how much money they make, then you've got to put different people around the table when you make decisions. You've got to ask questions about whether the CEO is supposed to get 145 times what the average worker gets. You've got to deal differently about relations between men and women and white and black. Once people have a taste of doing things differently, it starts rippling out."

Miller no longer accepts speaking engagements that are not connected with a plan of action.

"We don't have time to just sit around and talk to one another any more," she insists. "I always try to integrate the principles of justice and the analysis of the situation with what we can do.

"I'm hopeful because I see so much happening in the grassroots. I meet people all over this country who are asking the important questions, trying to figure out how to put their faith and their life together, deepening their prayer and taking action. I believe we are at one of those watershed times in human history when everything's going to be different in the future, but we're just sort of on the crest, we don't know what's going to come next. I think we're living through the dark times and I think it's critical that we nourish hope in one another. I see all kinds of alternatives being born." TW

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The Witness

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Grieving rituals: learning to let go

Fasting in Babylon

I REALLY LIKE YOUR MAGAZINE; it reminds me of *The Wittenburg Door*. We really need alternative religious media to give balance to the hucksters.

I also really like your themes and I find a lot of important material in between the seams of indulgent lefty babble. There, I said it!

Basically, the leftism that's in *The Witness* seems inserted and artificial. It seems gratuitous and pandering — none of it needed in order to have challenging things to say. More openness and mixed evaluation seems to be in order in a religious magazine. Life is not political, at least it's not politically coherent.

In Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's reflection on fasting [12/96], we get slamming of America and a conspiracy theory. I think the obvious truth is that we use as much resources as we do simply because we are the world's #1 valuer of resources. The rest of the world knows that materialism is of only minor interest to the core value of culture and so they have less. We don't keep this up due to military power, but from the fact of our material convictions, the illusions of our needs, which the rest of the world seems happy to let us have.

Jeff Potter
Williamston, MI

Jubilee economics

OUR FRIEND, Elaine Silverstrim, just sent us the Jan./Feb. edition of *The Witness*. I have read about half of it and felt impelled to drop you an e-mail note. SSAP (Sustainable Society Action Project) has put on seven annual conferences in the series "Delaware Valley Conference on Evolving a Sustainable Society." These conferences are held in late Fall at colleges in the Philadelphia area. Each conference has a theme in relation to sustainability. The theme for the Eighth Annual Conference will be "Ethical Issues in Sustainability." It is slated for November 1997, at either Rutgers-



Camden Campus or Swarthmore College.

At present, we are interested in making contact with others in the Delaware Valley who are concerned about sustainability, and have ideas relating to the ethical issues involved. Evolving a sustainable society is too important a project to be left to secular humanists, by default. We can be reached at SSAPinc@aol.com; 525 Midvale Rd., Upper Darby, PA 19082; 215-352-2689.

Ernest & Elaine Cohen
Upper Darby, PA

Witness praise

I HAVE ENJOYED MY FIRST TWO issues of *The Witness* so much that I wish to share it with a friend. (Subscription enclosed.)

Lily DeYoung
Plainsboro, NJ

YOUR MAGAZINE IS ONE I READ avidly from cover to cover. It gives me much to think about. My mother grabs it as soon as she can — she promises to return it but doesn't. Frankly, I think one of the reasons she visits me is to steal my copies!

Anne B. Shaw
Adelphi, MD

I FIND YOUR EFFORTS ILLUMINATING as it seems I am far from Christians who are working on issues of economic and social justice. Many do not comprehend how to treat others as human beings. I feel as if I am surrounded by people who refuse to understand that righteousness is *not* a virtue, but a sin, and a mortal sin at that. (I was raised Polish Catholic at SS. Peter & Paul Church on Detroit's west side where I also attended eight years of Catholic school.) I treasure my roots and have nurtured and sustained my own sense of spirituality in doing so. I am a follower of the earth wisdom/mysteries.

Christina Pacosz
Clover, SC

I AM ENCLOSING MY CHECK for a $35 sustaining membership subscription plus $12 for back issues. Your magazine is helping me find my way to faith and my path in the world, at last. It is truly a gift from the Spirit for me.

Anne Eversoll
Murphy, NC

I'VE LOVED YOUR MAGAZINE for years. Time to stop borrowing it!

Elizabeth N. Pierce
Fremont, CA

I LOVE *THE WITNESS!* I don't agree with every viewpoint expressed — sometimes even Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's, but I have never been *fed* as much by any publication, month after month.

Eve Vitaglione
Raleigh, NC

WITH EVERY ISSUE *The Witness* sets a new kind of measurement for my Christianity and causes me to rethink segments of my living. I am grateful for your leadership. Your magazine certainly plays a big part in reminding me that my God has to be much larger. Thank you for your example of always pushing the envelope.

Betsy L. Willis
Zionville, NC

Spreading the word

FINALLY HAVE GOTTEN to your Nov. issue which really interested me — especially the dialogue with Jim Wallis — letting go of the "either: or" — "this way: that" is the hardest thing for us westerners to do. The freedom that comes when we finally do is not only bliss, but energy is free to pour into us.

On another note — in terms of spreading the word about *The Witness* — would it work

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for loyal subscribers to send in names of potential readers, to whom you could send a complimentary issue? Here are my names.

Elvira Latta Charles
Washington, CT

[Ed. Note: Thank you so much! It's *really* helpful to us when subscribers suggest others who might like the magazine. It's not just anyone who would like a magazine that is condemned by critics as a "pagan, New-Age left-wing rag."]

Advent letter

THANK YOU FOR SENDING the Advent Letter. I've reread it several times. We all need the give and take of people in our daily lives. Somehow we manage to keep a balance. Your letter also shows that we are not alone in our struggles.

During the season just before Christmas, I noticed the constant repetition of carols — even on the classical music station — of Northern European origin, nearly to the exclusion of those from other areas of the world. I also noticed the lack of people of color in the collegiate choirs that appeared on TV, with the exception of the group from two black colleges. Their participants were represented by not only blacks, but Asians, Native Americans, and a few Caucasians. Am I the only one who notices little inconsistencies?

Keep up the good work; I find *The Witness* challenging and interesting.

Jean Seals
Parkchute, CO

POSTED ON THE NET: "If you subscribe to *The Witness,* you will already have read the following 'Advent letter' excerpt. The words speak to my own heart and mind with remarkable clarity, as do most of the journal's offerings. I pass them along with joy, with recognition and with enormous thanksgiving. They are, for me, a gift to treasure and to share."

Dianne Smith
Edgartown, MA

I SAVORED YOUR WONDERFUL Advent letter. I love your process as well as your product (clearly an intimate relationship there!) Delighted with picture of Jeanie (had imagined her a short-haired blonde!) — and came down on Jim Wallis' side in the dialogue re: The Left.

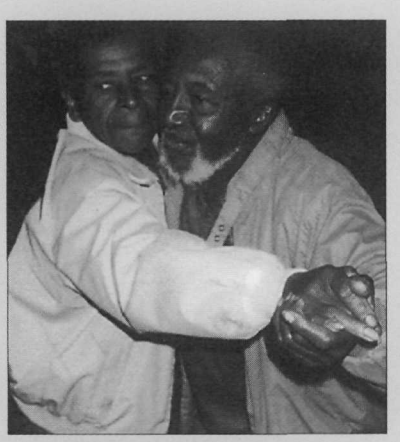
Barbara Potter
West Buxton, ME

Apoplectic in Florida

A visitor recently noted how lovely the church, good the music, cogent the sermon — until he saw *The Witness* on our reading table. The man became apoplectic. "How could you have such material here to subvert your parishioners?" I replied that Anglicans practice comprehensiveness.

He complained to Bishop John Howe about the radical he is nourishing here.

Pierre Whalon
Fort Pierce, FL



Corrections

Juanita and Wally Nelson, profiled in our December, 1996 issue tell us that while they have been together for 50 years, they are not married.

The artist who produced the image "The time of singing" in the January, 1997 issue is Judith Hankin of Eugene, Ore.

The area code for the Kirkridge Retreat Center, where the Jubilee Economics conference was held last November, has been *changed*. The correct number is 610-588-1793.

Classifieds

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1997-98 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Travel education

Celtic Pilgrimages 1997. Prayer and study programs to Ireland July, Sept.; to Wales May, August. Emphasis on deepening relationship with God through lectures by outstanding scholars; visits to holy sites, worship. Sr. Cintra, Convent St. Helena; 134 E. 28th St.; New York, NY 10016; phone 212-725-6435; fax 212-779-4009.

Out of the Whirlwind

The Center for Progressive Christianity's second national forum, "Out of the Whirlwind — Part II," will be held May 1-3 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Houston, Tex. Focussing on "Building Community With Our Differences," the conference will explore questions of inclusion and discipleship from a progressive Christian perspective. For conference information contact Helen Havens at St. Stephen's, 1805 Alabama, Houston, Tex. 77098; 713-528-6665.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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The Witness

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Cover: Lamentation by Nicholas Poussin (1594-1665).

Back cover: Community members digging a friend's grave in Madison County, N.C. Photographed by Robert Amberg/Impact Visuals.

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Poetry can be sent directly to Leslie Williams, 2504 Gulf Ave., Midland, TX. 79705.

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Respecting 'the freedom of the dead'

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

A therapist in the Detroit area visits her own grave site each year on her birthday. Friends say she is blonde and coiffed — not especially alternative, yet she takes a lawn chair and lemonade to recline above the soil in which she expects one day to be embedded.

This image flies in the face of most Americans' death avoidance. As several articles in this issue make clear, our society has taught us to surrender one of the most intimate moments in our lives to professionals who whisk our loved ones away, embalm them, dress them, transport them and bury them without much involvement from us.

A few years ago I was part of a women's circle learning about "death, change and transformation." In the course of it, a woman in her forties told us there had never been a funeral for any of her family members in her lifetime. If burials happened, it was without the family's presence. She did not know where or if her grandparents had been buried.

Suddenly, despite the church's imperfections and the petty deceits or false tranquility that can mark its ceremonies, I was grateful to have been raised in it.

My own father's unexpected death in 1974 was excruciating. But, with my mother's help, we faced it. We knew it. We surrendered to it in the context of a community. As per my father's instructions, we were washed in Romans 8 and hymns by Bach. In the tears and the confusion, we let my father go. The ancient language of the liturgy wove into our pain, assuring us of the companionship of generations and of a faith that was clean and taut.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

I had taken this for granted, never imagining that some Americans endure all their losses, even the most permanent, alone.

Rather, I had been conscious that Christian ceremonies — at least those of European Americans — can be pretty tame. I long for an even more honest acknowledgment of the enormity of death. Perusing the Book of Common Prayer and the New Zealand Prayer Book, I wonder if the church doesn't turn too quickly to prayers that promise quick release into life everlasting.

In the Celtic funeral described by Dan Berrigan in this issue, the chairs that held the coffin are kicked over. Chants, prayers and movements are used to send the dead on their way and to cleanse the space of the living. There is no naiveté about the claims of death. No muting of death's greed. Likewise, in the African ritual, described on page eight, attention is paid to sending the dead on their journey, to denying them the ability to wreak havoc among the living. For several days, the routines of the living are interrupted by the wailing and prayers that accompany death. Strong invocations for protection follow.

A woman in her forties told us there had never been a funeral for any of her family members in her lifetime. She did not know where or if her grandparents had been buried.

This paradoxical impulse — to wail for the dead and yet to release them — appeals to me.

This same impulse, I think, accounts for Bill Stringfellow's decision to conduct an exorcism immediately after burying the ashes of his companion Anthony Towne on Block Island, R.I.

Stringfellow later wrote:

"What is involved, in the end, is learning to respect the freedom of the dead to be dead; honoring the dead in their status as dead people, and refraining from harassment of the dead — by refusing to mythologize or enshrine them."

In the course of my women's circle, we were asked to find ways to grieve for and let go of the deaths of individuals and the little personal deaths that we had survived but still dragged along behind us.

After a day spent in silence, one woman — a medical student — observed that plants and animals, as well as people in some cultures, have a sense of give and take, a sense of cycle, a willingness to be part of the give-away that moving through life requires. She wondered what healing powers would be unleashed if human beings chose to give themselves back to creation, even surrendering their bodies to the soil.

There are people in this culture, some in this issue, who are helping us find ways to reclaim the burial process from the experts. They are inviting us to wash and bury our own dead.

Meanwhile, no one has told me what the therapist on the lawn chair thinks about. Picturing her surrounded by the starkness of death, yet reclining in the manner of the living — lemonade in hand — I imagine she is finding a way to respect the freedom of the dead by considering the way in which she will live. TW

editor's note

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Burying the executed: healing the living

by Camille Colatosti

Two hours from Atlanta, on 260 acres of red Georgia clay, stands Jubilee Partners, a nondenominational Christian service community of nine adults. Their primary work involves helping to resettle refugees who have just arrived in the U.S.

Jubilee Partners also runs a small prison ministry. As Robbie Buller, volunteer coordinator and prison ministry coordinator, explains, "Some of us visit prisoners on death row and work as paralegals. We sometimes transport families to visit prisoners, and we organize other activities in opposition to the death penalty."

In the 1980s, when the state of Georgia was performing a number of executions, Jubilee became involved in burials.

"If the prisoner's family is too poor to bury the prisoner," explains Buller, "the state will bury the body on prison property. But when we found out how they do it we were appalled. We asked for permission to bury the people here and we established a cemetery plot.

"When the prison buries people," says Buller, "the only marker is a prison I.D. number—no name. We felt this was so disgusting and dehumanizing. It was really a way to justify the death penalty. It's as if the prison is saying, 'This isn't a human being. This is just someone we executed, a number.'



Jubilee Partners carry a casket to the cemetery. Don Mosely

"We felt this person was a child of God. He may have been a wayward child of God but still he needed to be shown respect. We've buried five prisoners on our plot."

Before each burial, a minister who has worked with the executed prisoner and knows him well performs a memorial service at the grave site.

"People remember who this person was and what this person was like," says Buller. "The person is memorialized in a respectful and loving way."

The five prisoners share space in the cemetery with several homeless people. Jubilee Partners shares a sister community relationship with the Open Door Community in Atlanta, a Christian community that invites 25 to 30 homeless people to live with them. As people age and die, they have also been buried in Jubilee's plot.

"Digging the graves is a long, arduous process," says Buller. "We dig by hand. Our ground is red Georgia clay with a lot of rocks mixed in. During the mid-1980s, we were working with Central American refugees who were fleeing death squads in El Salvador. The refugees would help us dig the graves. It was ironic that people who had fled their own country to avoid execution were helping to bury people executed by this government.

"To dig the graves, we have to use a pick axe. As the Central Americans would dig, they would say, 'This is for my mother. This is for my father.' They would remember executions of their own family, people who had been killed at the hands of their government in El Salvador.

"Later, they would participate in the memorial service. Then they would say that this was the kind of service they were not able to have for their own family members.

"In El Salvador," Buller continues, "family members could not reclaim the bodies without risking their own safety. Participating in the memorial services that we had, the refugees were able to reconcile what had happened to their own family members." TW

Camille Colatosti teaches English at the Detroit College of Business. Photographer **Don Mosely** is a founder of Jubilee.

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Mothers

by Dorothëe Sölle

Two women on a summer evening
sitting on the terrace
they drink wine and tell each other stories
about their mothers

Says the young woman
now she avoids all the places
where she was with my father
she takes detours
so she won't be reminded
no i'll never set foot there
she says it hurts too much

Says the older woman
my mother seeks out the places
where memories grow
she lures the dead closer
never forgets a date
it hurts but it doesn't occur to her
to protect herself

This is how they chat about their mothers
who could hardly sit
drinking wine alone with a friend
under the moon
in the evening
she threatens
and the others laugh
she serves her master
but she is fully free
I'd like to be ariel
she is a woman
born of air

Remember

by Christina Rossetti

Remember me when I am gone away;
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me: you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.



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Grieving: a gift to community

by Malidoma Patrice Somé

A non-Westerner arriving in this country for the first time is struck by how little attention is given to human emotions in general. People appear to pride themselves for not showing how they feel about anything. A husband might lose his job yet deploy tremendous effort to show some modicum of indifference. A couple has a crisis in relationship, yet unless seen together, it is impossible to tell what turmoil they hide inside. And the worst case of all is witnessed when someone dies. It took me the longest time to figure out that a long line of cars with headlights on in the middle of the day meant someone had died. As attractive as the modern world is with its material abundance, it is repulsive with its spiritual and emotional poverty.

What overflows in the West is barren in the indigenous world, and vice versa. Among the things that the indigenous world can share from its abundance with the modern world are spirit and emotion.

There are countless ways of expressing emotion because countless ways are needed. No one is supposed to repress emotion. If death disturbs the living, it offers a unique opportunity to unleash one of the strongest emotional powers humans have: the power to grieve. Yet, anyone who has had an opportunity to participate in a grief ritual in another culture would be shocked by the effort deployed by people in this culture to prevent themselves from feeling anything when someone dies.

People die in newspapers, in television reports. People die on bulletin boards. But they are rarely shown dead. To an indigenous person, showing a picture of a person alive and saying that this person is dead is anachronistic. Why hide death?

Knowing how to weep

People who do not know how to weep together are people who cannot laugh together. People who know not the power of shedding their tears together are like a time bomb, dangerous to themselves and to the world around them. The Dagara tribe understand the expression of emotion as a process of self-rekindling or calming, which not only helps in handling death but also resets or repairs the feelings within the person. This is needed because death, and the sudden separation around it, puts the living in a state of emotional debt, loss and disorientation. The unresolved energy produced by the death of a loved one translates itself emotionally as grief. And grief is in fact owed to the dead as the only ingredient that can help complete the death process. Grief delivers to the dead that which they need to travel to the realm of the dead — a release of emotional energy that also provides a sense of completion or endedness, closure. This sense of closure is also needed by the griever who has to let go of the person who has died. We have to grieve. It is a duty like any other duty in life.

People who do not know the power of shedding their tears together are like a time bomb, dangerous to themselves and to the world around them.

One of the most sophisticated rituals designed by the Dagara for its own people is the funeral ritual.

The invocation itself looks very simple, involving the throwing of white ash by a priest called the ash thrower. The house where the death occurred is circled with a ring of that ash to prevent evil spirits from penetrating the room where the invocation is taking place.

There are three elements in the funeral ritual that are in constant interaction: the musicians, the mourners and containers, and the assembled villagers. This interaction is needed to maintain the power and the energy that steers the grieving. The music group consists typically of two xylophone players, one single drummer and two singers. These singers are improvisers whose function is to recreate, through their singing, the history of the family up to the death that resulted in the separation. The singing theme combines the deeds and the sorrows of the family.

Words stir the grief when they concentrate on the absurdity of the cycle of life and death with love in between. But words carried by music have an even greater impact on the display of grief. The xylophones weep the tune, the drum dramatizes the circumstances, and the singers verbalize the event. Everybody else then becomes free to express his or her own emotional response whichever way it comes to him or her.

The dead person is seated a few yards away from the weeping crowd on a wooden stool freshly built from a special tree. The same tree is used to build a

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Malidoma Patrice Somé was born in a village in Burkina Faso, West Africa. He is initiated in Dagara ancestral tribal traditions. A former college professor, he teaches with Robert Bly and Michael Meade. This article is adapted from *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community,* Swan Raven & Co., 1993; P.O. Box 190, Mill Spring, NC 28756; 800-366-0264. Distributed by APG. Artist **Cheryl Phillips** lives in Detroit.

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shrine around the dead. The dead person is dressed up in full ceremonial regalia. The shrine is decorated with colorful fabrics and with the sacred objects that belonged to the person now dead. The shrine represents the place from where the dead reach out to the great beyond.

Two women elders are consecrated to take care of the corpse. They each sit on one side of the corpse with fresh leaves in their hands representing the new life that has started for the dead person. They also use these leaves to chase flies away from the dead body. These women elders, although they weep discreetly, must be inattentive to what is happening outside the space in which they sit. This is because they are accompanying the dead person, collecting all the grief poured into the space and loading it on the soul of the dead one as it readies itself for the grand departure.

A place for turmoil

Between the shrine and the people there is an empty space that represents turmoil. It is the place of chaos and turbulence. It is the place where disorder must be acted out. It is the sacred space. In it every form of emotion is permitted, encouraged and expected. People are free to get angry and to shout out loud to God and to any spirit. People are free to make any absurd comment they have as long as it pertains to the phenomenon of death and how they feel. They can dance their emotions, run around in response to a strong urge or just weep their guts out.

Behind the singers and the musicians stands the crowd of people who have come to join in the ritual after hearing the initial wailing of the women. In fact, every person in the village is obligated to join in the expression of grief that follows death. Strangers who happen to pass by the ritual space during the grieving must either join in or walk to the place where the deceased is seated to pay respect before continuing with their business. This means that death stops every activity pertaining to life and disrupts the continuity of human feeling and relationship.

Death is chaos visiting the quiet of human life. Consequently, it is criminal to pursue business as usual knowing that someone in the village has died. Such behavior would indicate that one is used to death — which is impossible. For no one can get used to the idea of death, and to villagers, no one is supposed to get used to it. Not to participate in the ritual means one is evading what one owes the dead (and this is criminal since it traps the dead between here and beyond). Not to participate can also pollute one's life because the living cannot live peacefully until the dead are really dead, gone to the realm of the ancestors. Death requires the suspension of normal activities.

The people who gather for the funeral ritual are grouped in specific ways. On one side of the musicians are the male villagers, the female villagers on the other. The mourners grieve. The containers make sure the mourners do not go beyond the ritual space nor do anything that is harmful to themselves or to the villagers. Mourners are usually close relatives of the deceased. Their feelings, a combination of the desire to join their loved one in the great beyond and a deep frustration with life's vicissitudes, make them prone to a lot of violent displays. They are insane in a way.



SOSAD **Cheryl Phillips**

Containing the chaos

Keeping their insanity bearable requires a trail of people who are not as upset. These containers typically are relatives who come from afar. They are there to keep the sacred space alive, to contain the chaos within it by assisting the mourners. Thus, the whole village attends the funeral in order to help the family and relatives express their grief. The villagers also take this opportunity to bring their own unfinished business with their own dead relatives. In the largest sense, the ritual is not only about this one dead person but a ritualized process that encompasses all the dead of the village up until then.

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Any persons who enter the ritual space must first walk three times past the dead in a straight line. At the fourth passing the newcomer must walk toward the dead twice and make an offering as a presentation from themselves and their own dead relatives and parents before joining the gathering. Offerings, or give-aways, are usually in the form of cowry shells or domestic animals.

People notice when you don't go to a funeral ritual. Sooner or later a death will occur in your own family, and you'll find that the relatives of those people whose funeral you didn't go to will hesitate before they come to yours. If they come, they come to make a statement about your declining sense of community, and they will do that in a singing fashion. In their song they will describe how the person was not at their relative's funeral. They will emotionally harangue you on social ethics pertaining to death and the responsibility that weighs on everybody who learns about the death of anybody. Consequently, a person's social failures are brought out in the course of funeral ritual, and as a result create an occasion for a special kind of grief. Death reminds the person who is not paying his or her social dues to the community that he or she must repent and grieve for past failures.

The xylophones produce a musical space so that the wailing that accompanies grief can happen in melody. After a while the drummer enters, creating a rhythmical space. Cantors speak to each other as if no one else is there. One cantor will come forth, with a very incisive statement about humans being trapped in a world in which they are not in control because of the mighty power of death. They will go on to sing that the family whose relative has died has been chosen in order to have everyone remember that our death may be next. Another cantor will respond very quickly with a short sentence sung at a high pitch, and as he sings, all the men will initiate a chanting pattern that will then be taken up by the group of women, finally involving the whole group of family members, relatives and villagers.

While the group is involved in chanting its sorrow, individuals may get in touch with areas inside themselves that require specific grief attention. These are moments when individuals separate from one of the groups and allow themselves to be carried away by the energy surging in them. People feeling this deep grief wail in the direction of the shrine and within the space of chaos in an attitude of despair. As they near the shrine, the sacred place representing the great beyond, other people will touch them on the shoulder. The touch is a reminder that they must throw their grief into the sacred space of the shrine and return to the village to gather more grief. They must not walk into the sacred space of the shrine. To walk into the sacred space of the dead without being consecrated is to join with the soul of the dead as it gathers the fuel of grief to march into eternity.

The ritual is not only about this one dead person. Individuals may get in touch with areas inside themselves that require specific grief attention.

The members of the immediate family of the dead are called *kotuosob,* which means the-center-of-the-heat people or primary mourners. People are assigned to look after them for the duration of the ritual. These caretakers will mimic exactly what the relatives do. For example, if a relative begins to run off, they will follow until it becomes necessary to remind the relative that he or she is moving out of the ritual space. Most of the time these actions end in the form of a rhythmical dance that consists of pounding the ground with the feet and jumping up and down in cadence to the drum.

Funerals go on for at least three days and three nights if the departed one is an adult. Children's funerals last one day. Adolescents' funerals last two days and one night.

There is yet another category of people whose role it is to downplay the emotional intensity of the relatives' grief. In contrast to those who assist the members of the primary family stirring their grief, this other group acts out the whole ritual as if it were a joke. They call this group *laluoro*, or the joking partners. The Dagara believe that grief can kill when it is carried up beyond a human level of intensity. These joking partners are needed to balance the energy of grief to an appropriate human level.

Joking partners will always leap at a primary member who goes wild and will ask for cowrie shells, for instance, or remind the person of the fact that he brings food to someone (the dead) in the compound who is not hungry. They can also be seen at the shrine talking to the body of the dead. It is not surprising to hear them say to the dead, "Now let me see you do as you used to do if you're a real man," or "I've always asked you to be quiet, and you have never listened. Now you are still and quiet without my asking, and I am the one making all the noise. How about that?"

Although these reminders appear to have no connection with what is going on, they are very effective in grounding an individual at the extreme end of expressing grief. No one escapes the emotional energy triggered by such a ritual.

Everybody gets the opportunity to shed some tears, and regardless of the purpose for which the tears are shed, the dead will have plenty of tears to swim in on the way home to the other world. TW

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Fire workers, get a raise

CEOs who presided over massive lay-offs earned higher salaries than their counterparts in corporations which did not cut jobs, according to an Institute for Policy Studies report. Executives of the 22 firms which laid off at least 3,000 workers in 1995 received an average pay raise of 13.6 percent, while raises for executives of large firms in general averaged just 10.4 percent. Salaries of these higher-paid executives averaged $244.5 million in 1995.

— John Rodwan

Investors confront Texaco

Religious shareholders in Texaco, who have been challenging the company's social responsibility performance since the early 1970s, met face-to-face with Texaco Chairman Peter Bijur just hours before Texaco's November announcement of a $170 million settlement of racial discrimination lawsuits. Over 70 investors who are members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility called on Bijur to implement 16 anti-discrimination measures, and notified him of their plans to file shareholder resolutions on these concerns. Religious investors will also submit a shareholder resolution on Texaco's operations in Burma, a country run by a military dictatorship notorious for human rights violations.

***— The Corporate Examiner,* 12/10/96**

Prisoners of Conscience Project

Retiring *Witness* board member Mike Yasutake, Director of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project (IPOC), was recently honored at an evening of tribute sponsored by five organizations concerned with prison human rights issues. A Japanese-American citizen, Yasutake's imprisonment in U.S. internment camps during World War II led to a lifetime of advocacy on behalf of political prisoners in this country. Contributions to further this work can be sent to IPOC, 2120 Lincoln St., Evanston, IL 60201.

Power and church giving

Church member giving patterns are connected to power dynamics in congregations, according to a new book by John and Sylvia Ronsvalle (*Behind the Stained Glass Windows: Money Dynamics in the Church*, Baker, 1996).

"We encountered many congregational leadership boards that valued the status quo more highly than expanding the support base of the church," Sylvia Ronsvalle said. "Because the issues of money and power are often closely connected, these leaders were willing to keep their congregations at a maintenance level rather than risk a shift in the congregation's power structure."

The Ronsvalles also suggest that the church has failed to adequately address the responsibilities of wealth.

"Seminaries have not trained pastors in either the practical or the spiritual aspects of money," John Ronsvalle said, adding that many pastors feel pressured to make people happy, rather than challenge them. "In the resulting void, church members' attitudes toward their increasing resources were influenced more strongly by consumer advertising than by any religious perspective."

Gay/lesbian marriage

The Hawaii Equal Rights Marriage Project (H.E.R.M.P.), on the brink of winning equal rights and protections for gay and lesbian couples, is facing a financial crisis which may severely curtail their activities at a crucial moment in the campaign. Send contributions to H.E.R.M.P., P.O. Box 11690, Honolulu, HI 96828.

— Walt Gordon, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota

Printers cut pollution

Four Illinois printers — in a state where printing is the largest manufacturing industry — have voluntarily agreed to reduce pollution by using inks made from soybean oil, using water-based solvents, recycling ink and paper and improving energy efficiency. The printers hope to enlist at least 250 additional shops in their Illinois Great Printers Project, which has been endorsed by Printing Industries of America (100 Daingerfield, Alexandria, VA 22314) and several unions.

***— Chicago Sun Times,* 9/17/96, reported in *Initiatives,* 12/96**

Peace teams

Opportunities to join peace teams and short-term delegations to various countries are offered by a number of peace and justice organizations. For information on trips to Iraq, Cuba, Chiapas (Mexico), Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal and the Middle East, contact Michigan Peace Teams, 1516 Jerome St., Lansing, MI 48912; 517-484-3178.

Taking people seriously

"America is a conservative country in so many ways. It's deeply racist, it refuses to interrogate corporate power, it's deeply homophobic, it's deeply patriarchal.

"So institutional religion is generally conservative — that's true anywhere, and it's true in the United States as well. But there's also a prophetic wing among these religious traditions.

"It's the responsibility of progressives to respect folk — and to respect them is to take them seriously, not to trash them. And by taking them seriously, you bring your critique to bear, but you also recognize that there are some elements in who people are and where they are that you can build on."

— Cornel West in an interview with John Nichols, *The Progressive,* 1/97

short takes

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A kaleidoscope of grief: Readers tell their stories

'Keep the coffin closed'

It was 1986 and I was a brand-spanking new deacon, ordained only three weeks. It was the first "liturgical event" for which I had to assume full responsibility in terms of planning and leadership — the funeral of a colleague in AIDS activism and education. His name was Jimmy Mack. He was 26 years old and dead too soon, a beautiful bud killed by an early frost. I was 36 years old and full of ideas and opinions about what the church was, and who clergy ought to be, and how things should run, and, in the way only the newly ordained can be, myself.

"We are Anglicans," intoned my field education supervisor from seminary, to whom I had turned for advice. "We believe in the Resurrection. The focus is not on the body, but on the spirit." "On the spirit not the body" I dutifully wrote on my note pad. "So, the first thing you must remember is to keep the coffin closed during the service," he continued in his BIG voice, the one he always used when he wanted to impress you with something of importance. The top of my pad read, "KEEP THE COFFIN CLOSED," circled and underlined — twice.

That night, I went to the funeral home to talk with Jimmy's mom. I swear to you, the first thing she said to me was, "Okay, so we'll have the funeral service in the chapel right here in the funeral home and," she added without stopping for breath, "we'll KEEP THE COFFIN OPEN."

I tried not to look startled or concerned. "Oh, Ms. Mack," I said, ever so pastorally, "you know, well, we're Anglicans. We believe in the Resurrection, and . . ." She was way ahead of me. "Yeah, yeah, yeah," she said, "I know what we are. We are in denial, is what we are. We're in the midst of the biggest health crisis ever to hit this country and nobody wants to pay attention." I gulped. She continued.

"Look at my boy." she said, her voice heavy with sorrow and laced with anger. "Look at my beautiful, beautiful baby boy. Look what AIDS has done to him. I want EVERYONE to see. I want EVERYONE to know what we're dealing with here. I want people to pay attention to what AIDS has done — is doing — will do — to EVERYONE — if we don't pay attention."

She — her voice and body — began to move from the heaviness of grief to a wonderful, powerful energy. "So, I believe in the Resurrection, yes, but I also believe in REALITY. Let's give Jimmy one more of those 'teaching moments' he always talked about. Let's let him give people the best education possible. Let's keep the coffin OPEN."

Blue hair. Green hair. Black fingernails and lipstick. Red coats made of feathers.

"Yes, ma'am," I agreed softly.

So much for the "solid ground of Anglican theology."

Case closed. Coffin open.

The funeral service was the next day at noon. I thought I looked magnificent in my never-been-worn-before cassock, surplice, tippet and hood. I paled in comparison, however, to the . . . well, the proper term is "congregation," but it was a bit of a stretch to find its application in this setting.

I should explain. Jimmy Mack had been a radio announcer. All of his friends were either employed by the entertainment industry or engaged in what was euphemistically referred to as "the arts." How to describe them . . . funky? Not a good Anglican word, but most appropriate for the occasion. Blue hair. Green hair. Black fingernails and lipstick. Red coats made of feathers. Somber black dresses with outrageously colored, floor length silk scarfs. And, that was just the men! Some of the women wore beautiful black hats with heavy veils draped over their faces.

The local radio station had a satellite system set up in the balcony of the funeral home chapel. I had been instructed that they were going to announce that the next hour would be a tribute to Jimmy Mack. It would begin with "his song" and continue with an uninterrupted selection of his favorite contemporary hits. Then, I was to begin the service in good Episcopal fashion: "straight up BCP," as his mother had said.

There we were. Me looking for all the world like the proper Anglican priest. They looking, well, funky. The coffin was open, and Jimmy Mack looked like a mere shadow of his former self.

The music of Martha and the Vandellas floated down from the balcony like a surreal angelic choir, "Jim-my, hey Jimmy! Jim-my Mack, when are ya comin' back?" Heads bobbed and weaved to the music. Row upon row of green and red heads and heavily veiled black hats nodded in time to the beat. Occasionally, someone dabbed a tear from a heavily

Artist **Ralfka Gonzalez** lives in San Francisco, Cal.

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mascara'd eye. Someone in the back began sobbing uncontrollably and several folk rushed to console the bereaved. "Hey, Jimmy, Jim-my, Jim-my Mack, when are ya comin' back?"

Then, the music stopped. What seemed like an eternity suspended in the bubble of a microsecond suddenly burst onto my head and I jolted into action. I stood up and moved into the silence. The pain of the present reality joined with the ancient lament of the words of Job. "I am Resurrection and I am Life, says the Lord." I began. "Whoever has faith in me shall have life, even though he die."

In that marriage of ancient and modern, the words I had heard so many times before suddenly seemed more real. I understood them in a completely new way. I found new strength, new hope, new meaning to the power of the resurrected spirit of Christ, who was suddenly very present in the midst of these, his *anawim*. Their modern psalm of lament had not escaped his ears. He was there among us, in the middle of our grief and sorrow, in the midst of the epidemic of fear and denial.

That was the first of hundreds of funerals and memorial services I would perform for people who had died of AIDS. It certainly was the most bizarre, but it was not the most creative. The "teaching moment" Ms. Mack wanted so much to provide one last time for Jimmy was not just about the reality of AIDS. I learned that, if I truly believe that liturgy is "the work of the people," then people are infinitely more important than rubrics. That has freed me to make each service I perform a relevant and unique tribute to that person's life. And, that has helped me to fill my self with the power of the resurrection and not my own sense of power and control.

—Elizabeth Kaeton, Diocesan Canon Missioner to The Oasis, Newark, NJ



Ralfka Gonzalez

'I don't need that'

Twelve years ago, I was mourning the deaths of my grandfather and a teaching colleague. I went to the All Saints' Day eucharist to hear their names included in the prayers, but was still left feeling incomplete.

At the close of the service, as I sat in the pew thinking, one of the priests who had celebrated the liturgy came by and handed me something, saying, "Here, this is for you."

Thinking it was kleenex, I replied, "I don't need that."

With a laugh, he answered, "Maybe, but it is for you." And then he left.

Inside the red tissue paper lay two bulbs. When I caught up with their giver, I asked what I was supposed to do with them.

"I see you going outside at night and quietly planting them in a place which you go by regularly. You don't have to tell anyone about what you're doing, but they will be a reminder for you that life comes out of death."

"What are they?"

"Oh," the priest answered with a smile, "You will have to wait and see."

Ever since that All Saints' Day in 1984, I have gone out and planted bulbs—daffodils, tulips, narcissus, bluebells, whatever will grow wherever I have lived. I have planted bulbs for countless people whom I love and who have died.

I do it in broad daylight now, around my yard and house. I plant upwards of a couple of dozen bulbs. Maybe I weep as I plant them. I always pray. When they emerge from the ground in the spring as daffodils, tulips, narcissus, bluebells, I will rejoice in their colors and beauty, for those flowers speak to me of resurrection and life. *—Lee Alison Crawford, Saint Mary's Parish, Northfield, VT*

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Ninety on a dirt road

When I was in high school there was a Roman Catholic nun who encouraged, upheld, mentored, and generally urged me to greater and greater heights.

After I graduated she fell sick, retired and waited for the end.

When I found out about her illness I started going to see her every week, bringing daisies. I was the only one of her former students who came to see her regularly.

Well, I moved away and did not see her as often. One day I got a call from the convent. She had passed away. They asked if I would like to come to the requiem mass. I thought I was okay, until I found myself doing 90 on a dirt road while driving to the requiem and starting to cry.

I remember crying like hell throughout the whole service. After everyone had left I went up to the altar. I gave her a formal salute, said a few words, turned and walked away. I planted daisies in my garden which are there to this day some 20-odd years later.

— Paul Courry, Orangevale, CA

Living imagination

When I was a practicing psychotherapist, a client and I performed a grief ritual that was very simple. We went to her favorite park. We found a place where it was okay to burn. She showed me several pictures of her father, who had been a sexual abuse perpetrator, and told me what each picture represented to her. One by one, she placed each picture in the fire.

When thinking about the creation of ritual, I use this guideline:

Remember the intention.

Use your intuition.

A ritual should benefit all and harm none.

Keep it simple.

Stay balanced.

Keep in touch with your feelings and with the other people.

Honor the power of words.

Keep the imagination alive.

Attend to detail.

Rituals should be incorporated into life as much as possible. Many churches do a fine job of ritualizing transitions.

—Barb Chandler, Sacramento, CA

The power of conviviality

Recently the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, D.C. delivered a powerful psychic punch to my emotional gut. Yet, when I returned home to Boston, I found myself able to sleep. I think my unforeseen tranquility had something to do with the nature of the power present.

The power most present there was not like the power that needs to tower higher than all the rest, the power memorialized in phallic marble standing pointedly at one end of the quilt. The power most present there was not like the power managed in a domed building at the other end of the quilt. The power there was not violating, excluding or diminishing. The power there did not wear me out by igniting my many and varied instinctual reflexes to protect. The power there filled me full.

A simple quilt panel near the center of the AIDS memorial quilt says it best for me: "So many heartaches. So many hearts to restore." The powers and principalities that flanked the AIDS quilt crush those affected by AIDS as much as the virus that causes AIDS. But souls crushed by AIDS, and the politics around it, reconfigure and coalesce in a powerful way that shatters darkness with light.

And what's the quilt's power? Conviviality. Martin Luther, in speaking of how Christ offers counsel and help, suggested a fifth way beyond the preached word, baptism, the eucharist and the forgiveness. Namely, mutual conversation and consolation.

The only power I could hold onto more powerful than the power of wasting and dementia that killed Craig, more powerful than the power of a health maintenance organization that abandoned him, was the power released when Craig's father, a good old boy from Maine, reached across Craig's quilt panel for Tim, Craig's lover; a lover Craig's father previously knew as, and, in fact, called a queer.

At the quilt, I discovered again that the power of conviviality is stronger than the powers and principalities.

So you haven't been to the quilt? Not so fast. You've been there if, at any time, you found the hand of a fellow struggler wrestling with and for you during your sickness unto death, amidst your dealings with despair, while you fended off the powers and principalities.

Remember these quilt panels of your experience. Sew them together and see a piece of the promised land.

Take your tired bones and sleep on that.

— Bill Wallace, rector of Emmanuel Church, Boston, MA

Christmas grief

The Saether Funeral Home in Blanchardville, Wis. holds an annual "Day of Remembrance" in early December. The funeral director sends invitations to everyone who has lost a family member during the year.

As people arrive, they are invited to write the name of the deceased on a red ribbon and to hang it on the Christmas tree. The service begins with a prayer and a Christmas carol. There is a video (about 10 minutes long) about the grieving process. Then there is a litany of remembrance and a candle-lighting ritual. There is a time for refreshments and conversations.

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People are invited to take their ribbon from the Christmas tree and hang it on their own tree at home, or to put it in a special place so that their loved one is symbolically present during the holidays.

The event is held at the funeral home so that everyone feels equally welcome to participate. Prayers are led by three clergypersons — over time every church in the area has an opportunity to assist. A local parish nurse or hospice volunteer leads the litany.

— Janice.Mynchenberg.
parti@ecunet.org

Dreaming of a church

When I was elected bishop, suffragan in the Diocese of Newark, it became apparent that I was going to have to do some church closings. As one can imagine, there are all manner and sorts of issues to be considered and emotions to be lived with and honored.

I asked Corin Morris to help me develop a service that would reflect truth, emotion and human concerns. The service is an opportunity for me, representing the diocese, to confess ways that we have fallen short and ways that we might have been remiss in relating to the congregation. The congregation pronounces its absolution and then likewise acknowledges ways that it has fallen short in the Common Prayer of Confession. I, representing the diocese, then pronounce absolution.

Together, we realize that we are being resolved by God, but it seems important also to acknowledge that we do it in an Incarnation Way.

The service reads in part:

For the life and witness of this congregation let us bless and praise the Living God: Thanks be to God.

For the worshipers who have prayed and sung in this place for over a century:

the faithful few who dreamed of a church in this place;

the steadfast supporters during the years when many moved away;

the faithful few who have struggled to sustain a ministry here;

For all these saints of God, let us bless the Lord: Thanks be to God.

— Jack M. McKelvey, suffragan bishop, The Diocese of Newark, Newark, NJ. Copies of this service are available, call 201-622-3870.



The burden bearers **by Marek Czarnecki of Bristol, Conn.**

Welcome to the catacomb

Christians in ancient Rome met and worshipped amidst the grave niches — tangible reminders of death and separation from loved ones. Perhaps because of this age-old witness, worshipers in the modern electronic catacomb called LUTI welcome the presence of the loved dead into their community.

Conceived and brought into being by Louie Crew, LUTI began in 1991 as a mailing list for gay and lesbian Christians and their friends — an electronic sacred space where all are welcome and valued as beloved children of God. Many more people read the articles, and contribute their prayers and spiritual presence to the community, than those who raise their voices in the electronic discourse. Yet each presence is felt and valued.

When did we first welcome the dead to that silent community? It seems that they have always been with us. But now, when any member suffers the loss of a loved one, we give that one a formal welcome to the LUTI catacombs and an invitation to take a seat in the rear pews. There all our catacomb "angels" reside and watch over us. It is rumored that even Elvis sings out in psalms from the flickering shadows of the catacomb depths!

—Ann Carlson
<acarlson@widomaker.com>

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The Dove Mound at "The Highground" Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project in Neillsville, Wis. Another Dove Mound was recently constructed in Vietnam as a memorial for the Vietnamese dead. David Giffey

Blood brothers: combatants share wounds

by Tom Boswell

"Nothing gets swept under the rug forever," Mike Boehm says, alluding to the wounds of wars and the wounds of families.

"I had this fantasy, before I went over to Vietnam, of being wounded, seriously, but not too seriously. I guess basically so my father would love me."

Boehm, a carpenter from Madison, Wis., had "what most guys lusted for" back in 1967, a 4-F deferment for reasons of health. But he lied his way into the army and went to Vietnam in January, 1968, in time for the Tet offensive.

Abused by his father and addicted to alcohol, Boehm bluntly admits he was too "shut down" to empathize with or even think about the Vietnamese back then. "It wasn't until I overcame alcohol that I got outside of myself and thought about Vietnam," he says.

Now Boehm spends much of his time thinking about and visiting Vietnam, part of a process of healing his own internal wounds by tending to the wounds of the country he helped devastate. A year ago, Boehm took the process of reconciliation a giant step further by bringing the dove of peace to Vietnam—literally.

Boehm and 13 other volunteers from the U.S.—primarily veterans—worked side-by-side with Vietnamese vets in fashioning a 25-acre park devoted to peace and reconciliation. The park, located in rural Ha Bac Province about 35 miles northeast of Hanoi, will soon include a sustainable fruit farm, fish ponds and buildings. The centerpiece is an earthen mound, similar to Native American effigy mounds, in the shape of a dove.

"People in war inherently have incredible feelings of guilt. Guilt because they killed people or guilt because they themselves did not get killed. I guess I have guilt feelings too, because I watched, in a few months, a very beautiful country decimated by munitions."

— David Giffey

The park is patterned after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park at the Highground in central Wisconsin.

Nguyen Ngoc Hung, a North Vietnamese combat veteran, had visited the Highground in November, 1990, while on a tour of reconciliation. The park had a profound impact on Hung. He stood on top of the dove mound at the Highground, burned incense, and prayed for his brother, missing in action since the war.

Tom Boswell is a writer and photographer living in Madison, Wis.

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Boehm later learned of Hung's visit and invited him back to Wisconsin, where the idea was forged to create a similar park in Vietnam to promote the spiritual healing of both countries.

Boehm and the Madison Friends Meeting (Quakers) raised over $30,000 for purchase of the land and construction of the Vietnamese park. The dedication ceremony took place on November 11 last year, Veterans' Day in the U.S.

The ceremony began with Vietnamese veterans and U.S. volunteers pairing off to plant trees. Soil from the Highground memorial, which had been blessed by a Native American spiritual leader, was mixed with the soil of the peace park. Betty Boardman, a 78-year old Madison Quaker who had delivered medical supplies to the North Vietnamese in 1967, planted flowers with Mrs. Ho Thi Hanh, former director of the Women's Union of Quang Ngai Province. Hanh made the 500-mile pilgrimage to the peace park in hopes that a similar park could be built near her home at My Lai, where 507 Vietnamese civilians were massacred by American soldiers in 1968.

With Nguyen Ngoc Hung translating, Boehm read a congratulatory letter from Ann and Emily Morrison Welsh, the widow and daughter of Norman Morrison. Morrison, the Quaker who immolated himself in front of Robert McNamara's office in 1965, is considered a hero in Vietnam. Another vet then read the poem *Emily* by To Huu, in which the poet has Morrison explain to his daughter why he sacrificed himself. Written in 1965, the poem is required reading in all secondary schools in Vietnam.

"Art speaks a language that words can't," says David Giffey, the artist and veteran who designed the original Dove Mound. Raised on a Wisconsin dairy farm, Giffey was a combat journalist in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966. Today he has a national reputation as a painter of icons for Greek Orthodox churches.

After returning to Vietnam for the dedication of the peace park, Giffey wrote: "Separated by 9,000 miles, the Dove Mounds are silent alternatives to abusive power, ignorance, hatred and misunderstanding, the engines that drove the U.S. government's war machine."

While in Vietnam last year, Giffey met with fellow artists and spoke to students at the Fine Arts University in Hanoi.

"When you go as a soldier, the military precludes any kind of education about the culture of people you're supposed to overcome and destroy," Giffey said.

Hung, the Vice Director of Hanoi's foreign language institute, who spent six years fighting in the jungle, agrees.

"There was no communication whatsoever between Vietnamese and American soldiers during the war," Hung said. "When we saw them, we only shot at them.

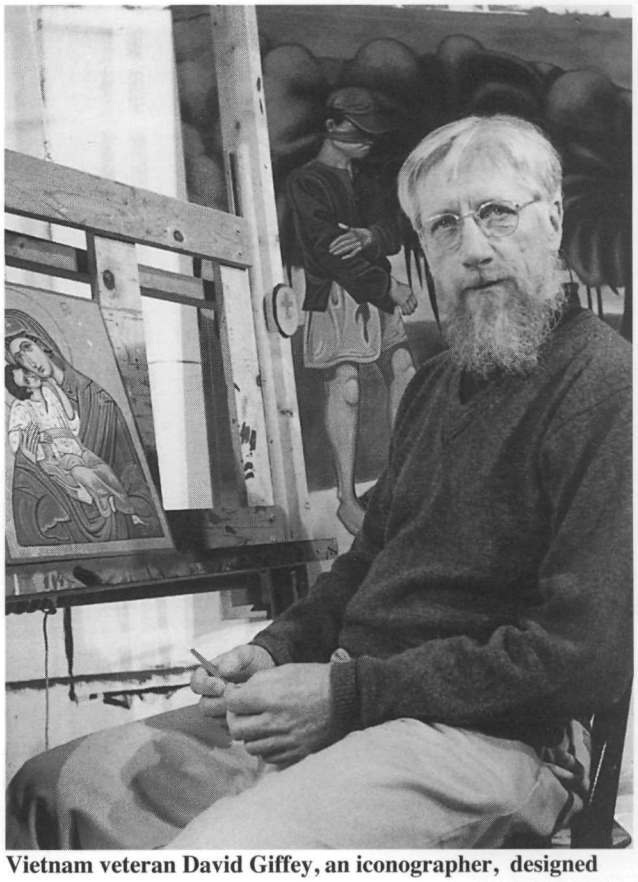
"In 1990, for the first time, I went to America and I met veterans and their organizations and their families. It was then that I learned more about Americans and the suffering of veterans. I realized the possibility of building a bridge between veterans of Vietnam and America."

Boehm's first experience of building peace with Vietnam occurred in 1992. He joined a small team of veterans who helped the Vietnamese build a medical clinic near Saigon. It was an experience that brought Boehm in contact with other vets who, like himself, were suffering from the wounds of war in substance abuse and suicide attempts.

"Going back over, I was kind of afraid," he recalls. "I didn't think I had any trauma because I wasn't in combat, but it was overwhelming! Of course, there were the Vietnamese and their stories, and their attitude that the past was the past. One of the things that stayed with me is that they don't hate us. I couldn't picture myself *not* hating, if that had happened to us."

Returning to Wisconsin, Boehm organized the Indochina Support Group to raise capital for a revolving loan fund for development ventures in Vietnam. Funds are funneled through the Women's Union in My Lai to poor women in the region for small agricultural and economic development projects.

"It bypasses a lot of bureaucracy and gets right to the people who need it," Boehm says about the loan fund, which



Vietnam veteran David Giffey, an iconographer, designed the Dove Mound. Tom Boswell

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has raised over $14,000 to date.

The Vietnamese-American Peace Park is also intended to serve as a tool for local economic development. Fruit and fish sales can be used to maintain the park and to sustain the local farmers caring for it.

But the main purpose of the park is to provide a place for spiritual reflection, a place where former warriors can unload their grief and pain, and a place where former foes can meet and commit themselves to peace and friendship.

"It was really thrilling to see the men from the two sides hugging each other, all of them in tears," Boardman recounted after the dedication ceremony.

"Vietnam vets, like other vets, have a reputation for being crazy, and of course it's true," says Giffey. "War does make you crazy." More than 58,000 Americans were killed there, and more than 59,000 Vietnam vets have since taken their own lives, he notes.

"People in war inherently have incredible feelings of guilt. Guilt because they killed people or guilt because they themselves did not get killed. I guess I have guilt feelings too, because I watched, in a few months, a very beautiful country decimated by munitions. I also saw a beautiful culture decimated."

But in some ways, coping with the war has not been as difficult for Vietnamese veterans, Hung says.

"Unlike American veterans, we returned to a very warm welcome by the population," he says. "Veterans were given the best care from the community because the government was too poor to take care of them."

Still, there are an estimated 300,000 Vietnamese soldiers missing, Hung says, and the government lacks the resources to locate them, which requires a lot of understanding and cooperation from veterans and their families.

"Unlike America, Vietnam had 4,000 years of fighting against foreign domination," he says. "There is a sense of purpose here. We want Vietnam to intermingle with the rest of the world. We want to develop our country. We want to make peace."

Helping to rebuild Vietnam has given Boehm a sense of purpose, too.

"All we hear about is our own pain and suffering," he comments. "People have got to hear another voice."

Boehm is committed to raising another $30,000 to complete the Vietnamese-American Peace Park, and then will help begin another park at My Lai, as well as economic development projects.

Through hard work, commitment, courage and art, these Wisconsin veterans have begun the long process of healing themselves while helping to heal a small country ravaged by war. At the peace park last November 11, Giffey performed a ritual. With a pipe provided by a Native American spiritual leader, he prayed to the heavens, the four directions and to Mother Earth for guidance and blessing. After the prayer, the pipe was filled with tobacco and passed about, from veteran to veteran, from Vietnamese to American. After smoking the pipe, the group gathered together and released ten white doves.

Later, Boehm recalled that special moment: "We stood there, on that hill, veterans, peace activists, farmers, government officials, teachers and children, all of us transformed by what we had done. After two years of hard work we had created the physical manifestations of a deep spiritual need between our countries — the need for healing, and most important, the need for hope." TW

Contributions to the Vietnamese-American Peace Park can be sent to: Religious Society of Friends, 1704 Roberts Court, Madison, WI, 53711. Make donations payable to Madison Friends Meeting and specify that your donation is for the Peace Park.

A Celtic passage

by Daniel Berrigan

I have a story to tell about a ritual on Clare Island, which is off the west coast of Ireland. It was one of the most devastated areas during the famine of the 19th century.

The winters out there in the North Atlantic are very cruel and the worst tragedy is the loss of young fishermen who go out with their fathers and are lost in the great winter storms. This loss is compounded with the fact that there's a Celtic idea that the sea is in charge. Once someone is swept overboard, efforts to recover the person are minimal, because it's looked upon as a curse to try to draw someone out of the sea. And you risk further trouble.

A friend of mine, Patrick O'Brien, was a new priest and his first parishioner, the daughter of a shepherd who had died 30 years before, was taken very ill that first winter. The helicopter was unable to arrive to take her to the mainland. They had to risk the boat. He went over with her — in her very bad condition in a very primitive open boat. In the middle of the storm, he was swept overboard into the January waters. Because he was the priest, they labored to recover him. He ended up in the hospital with the dying woman. He had pneumonia and barely, barely recovered; she died.

He got back on the island in time for the funeral. He was a new priest and he was very attentive to the pre-Christian Celtic ceremonies.

So it happened like this. In the little house where her father had lived and then

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Daniel Berrigan is an anti-nuclear recidivist, poet and mystic living in New York where he works with cancer and AIDS patients. He told this story for *The Witness* on a late summer night on Block Island, R.I.

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Courtney Davis

she had lived, they set up the box on two chairs between the hearth and the table. People gathered all through and outside the house. O'Brien celebrated the eucharist at the kitchen table. At the end of it, he knew enough to know that his part was over. He just joined the other people in the congregation.

Two men came forward and they kicked over the chairs, one in the direction of the hearth and one in the direction of the table. (We were later informed this was so the ghost would not return either to the hearth or the table.) Then they picked up the box, which had been sealed, and proceeded outdoors. They were followed by the entourage of people around the cottage. Chanting, they paced out — three times — a Celtic rune, which means that they did not finish the circle. In the Book of Kells, the rune is always an incomplete circle which ends mysteriously in another round and eventually the circle is completed, but it's never one circle. It's more like a maze. This was so that the ghost could not return to the house.

Chanting, they paced out — three times — a Celtic rune, which means that they did not finish the circle. This was so the ghost could not return.

Well, they proceeded upward to the cliffs, the priest in the background. When they got near the cliffs a few of the men went down on hands and knees and began to move into the underbrush which is similar to Block Island's — the Atlantic does not allow for great trees. Because the soil is so thin, they cannot bury the dead; they shove them into the underbrush and leave them there.

The Celtic custom is that the daughter is buried on top of the father and the son is buried on top of the mother. So two people went in and they cleared the underbrush and found the grave of her father, the shepherd.

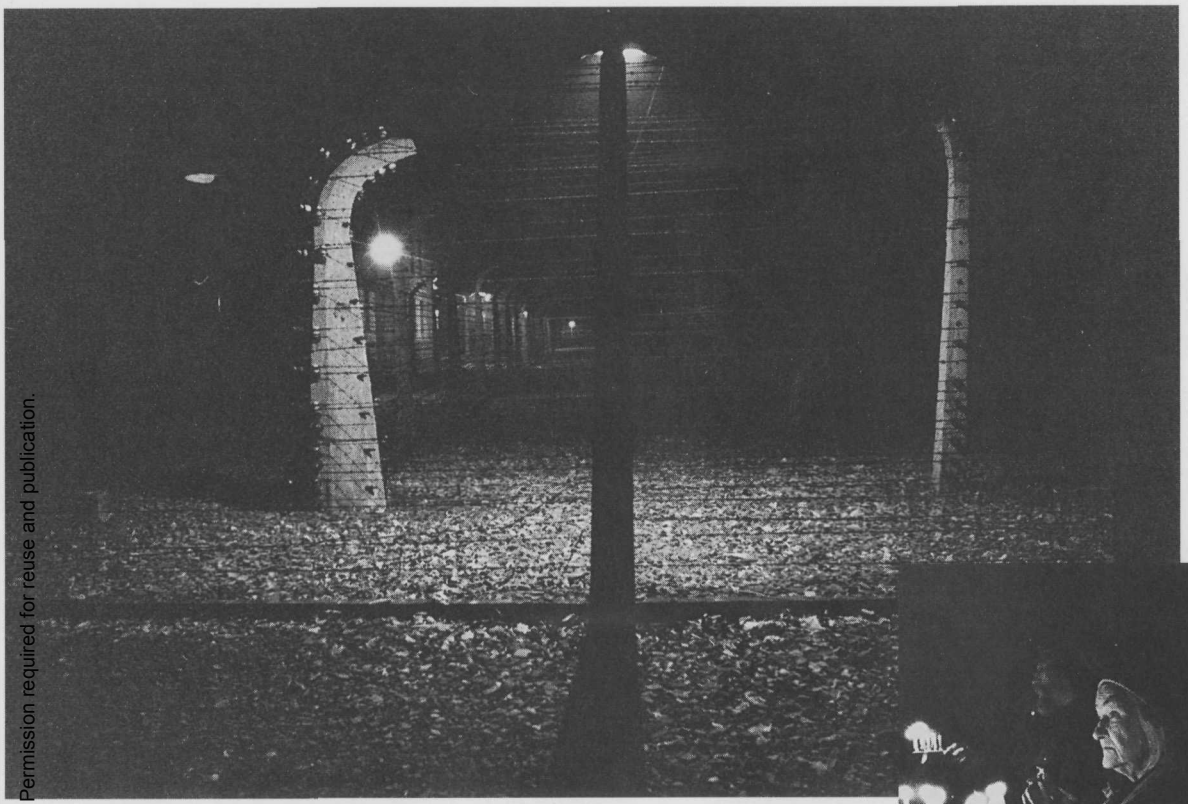
They signalled to the people waiting to shove the box in to follow. They came in and the priest was foremost, as he told me. When they tried to justify the box of the daughter, the boards of the father's box broke apart and he was revealed. They could see that his hands were incorrupt; they were folded as on the day of his funeral. The priest said that they were just as fresh as his own hands.

So there was great tumult. The word passed back about this miracle.

Patrick O'Brien, a new priest, was confronted with this incredible dilemma: What do we do now? Everybody was looking at him. And he said in a kind of quasi-panic, "Close it down!" And so they did. They replaced the boards and they shoved the daughter's box on top of the father's box and they repaired back to the house for the funeral feast.

As he was listening to the conversation that was going around during the meal, my friend realized that these people were not really amazed that the hands were incorrupt. He heard that the shepherd had healed people and sheep. But their understanding of the incorruption finally came clear, when he heard them say, "Well, no wonder. He never took any money. He was poor like us." TW

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Auschwitz to Hiroshima



Chanaka at Auschwitz

Interfaith pilgrimage for peace and life



Bombed church, Mostar, Bosnia



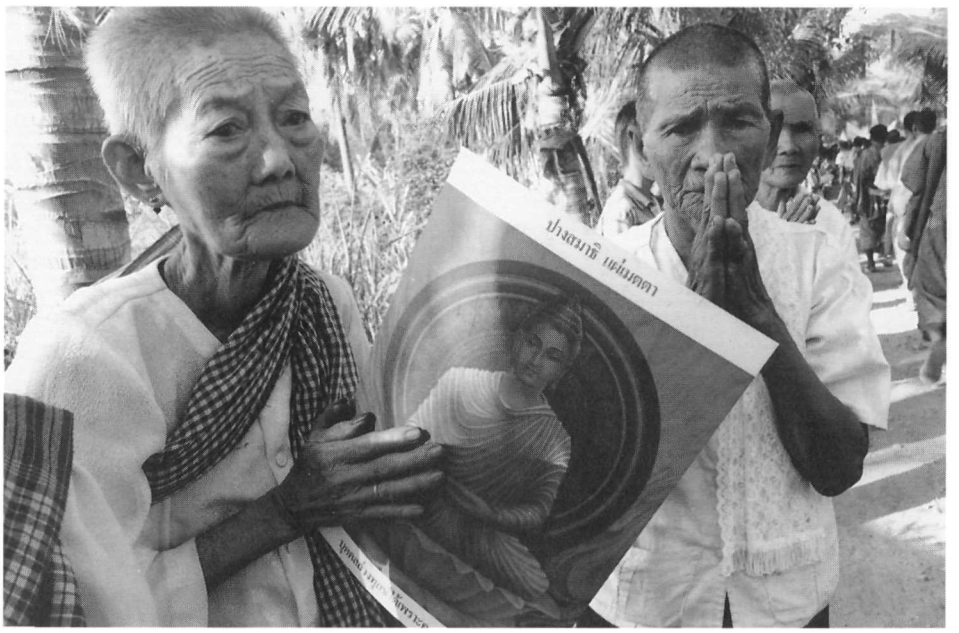
Lipic, Croatia

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Chanting in Czechoslovakia

Photographer Skip Schiel, of Cambridge, Mass., joined the Interfaith Walk For Peace, sleeping in churches and temples, praying and always walking from December, 1994 until August, 1995.



Praying for reconciliation in Cambodia

The walk was organized by a Japanese Buddhist order, Nipponzan Myohoji, to mark the 50th anniversary of World War II.



Cambodian boy with peace crane



Lotus, Hiroshima Peace Park

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Caring for your own dead

by Camille Colatosti

"We do a passable job of teaching our kids about money, politics, maybe even sex," says Lisa Carlson, executive director of the Funeral and Memorial Societies of America (FAMSA). "But we don't teach anything about death and dying."

According to Carlson, more than half of the population gets funeral information from funeral directors, which leaves the survivors vulnerable to hard-sell tactics. The funeral industry, she explains, is concerned about the funeral industry, not about families who are suffering a loss.

Carlson is a consumer advocate who has been monitoring the funeral industry for more than 15 years. The non-profit and non-sectarian FAMSA represents 147 memorial societies in the U.S. Their goal is to provide consumers with information about simpler and less expensive alternatives to traditional funerals. Often, these alternatives are more meaningful for families than those services promoted by the funeral industry, says Carlson.

Founded in the 1930s, societies provide educational information to individual members, who pay a one-time fee of about $25. Most memorial societies conduct price surveys of the funeral homes in their area and some negotiate discounts for members. All offer a wide range of funeral planning information so that people will understand the alternatives available to them.

While funerals provide closure to those suffering the death of a loved one, they also leave people in unnecessary debt. For, as Carlson explains, directors try to sell the most expensive funeral possible. Often homes will hide the inexpensive caskets or refer to them as "welfare coffins."

When Carlson's husband died, the funeral director told her quite clearly, "I'm in business to make money."

Carlson speaks of others with similar experiences. A widower whose wife recently died of cancer was disappointed to learn that he could have obtained a cheaper monument for his wife's grave. A grieving widow felt taken advantage of when she learned that the funeral director hadn't told her about free grave markers available for U.S. veterans from the Veterans Administration.

"Industry magazines encourage funeral directors to use subtle pressure to sell more expensive services than families may initially seek," Carlson says.

"We do a passable job of teaching our kids about money, politics, maybe even sex. But we don't teach anything about death."

— Lisa Carlson

Too many funeral homes

"There is a glut of funeral homes in this country," says Carlson. "Competition is fierce and the sales tactics of funeral homes can be very aggressive." And the costs keep increasing. According to the National Funeral Directors Association, the average funeral cost $4,500 in 1994, the last year for which figures are available. This figure does not include the cost of the burial vault, fees for opening and closing the grave, the cost of the grave site itself, nor the monument. Together, these add an average of $3,500, bringing the total to $8,000 for most families.

Henry Wasielewski, a retired Catholic priest who founded the Interfaith Funeral Information Committee, believes that there are "five to ten times more mortuaries than are needed. As a result, consumers overpay for services."

The American Cemetery Association notes that there are 22,500 funeral homes and 100,000 cemeteries in the U.S. Each home averages 100 to 150 funerals a year. Yet, averages can be deceptive. Larger, chain funeral service corporations might provide as many as 1,000 funerals a year, while privately owned homes host fewer.

In the past decade, an influx of chains to the funeral market has increased costs significantly. "Usually funeral prices double after a corporate acquisition," notes Wasielewski. Chains acquire funeral homes, cemeteries, florist shops and product manufacturers. In this way, the funeral home controls every aspect of the death industry. Service Corporation International, a $1.2 billion company, the largest of the funeral home chains, owns over 1,494 mortuaries, 275 cemeteries and 102 crematoriums.

In some markets, chains attain a near monopoly and set prices as they choose. According to Karen Leonard of the Redwood Memorial Society, "After SCI bought funeral homes in Dallas, prices on traditional funerals and minimum services doubled. In Houston, where SCI performs some 7,000 funerals per year, the cost of a funeral ranges from $8,000 to $14,000."

Wasielewski argues that a complete funeral and burial should cost no more

Camille Colatosti teaches English at the Detroit College of Business. Artist **Dierdre Luzwick** lives in Cambridge, Wis.

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than $2,200. Many funeral homes present services that are optional as if they are essential. For instance, embalming — removing the blood and body fluid and replacing them with a preservative — is not required by law in most states, except for death by certain communicable diseases and shipment of the body by common carrier — airlines, bus lines, and trains. In fact, embalming is practically non-existent outside of the U.S. and Canada. Additionally, many cemeteries charge for a vault to encase the coffin below ground. While some manufacturers claim that vaults — made of concrete, steel or fiberglass — offer permanent protection for the body, there exists no evidence of this and vaults are not required by law.

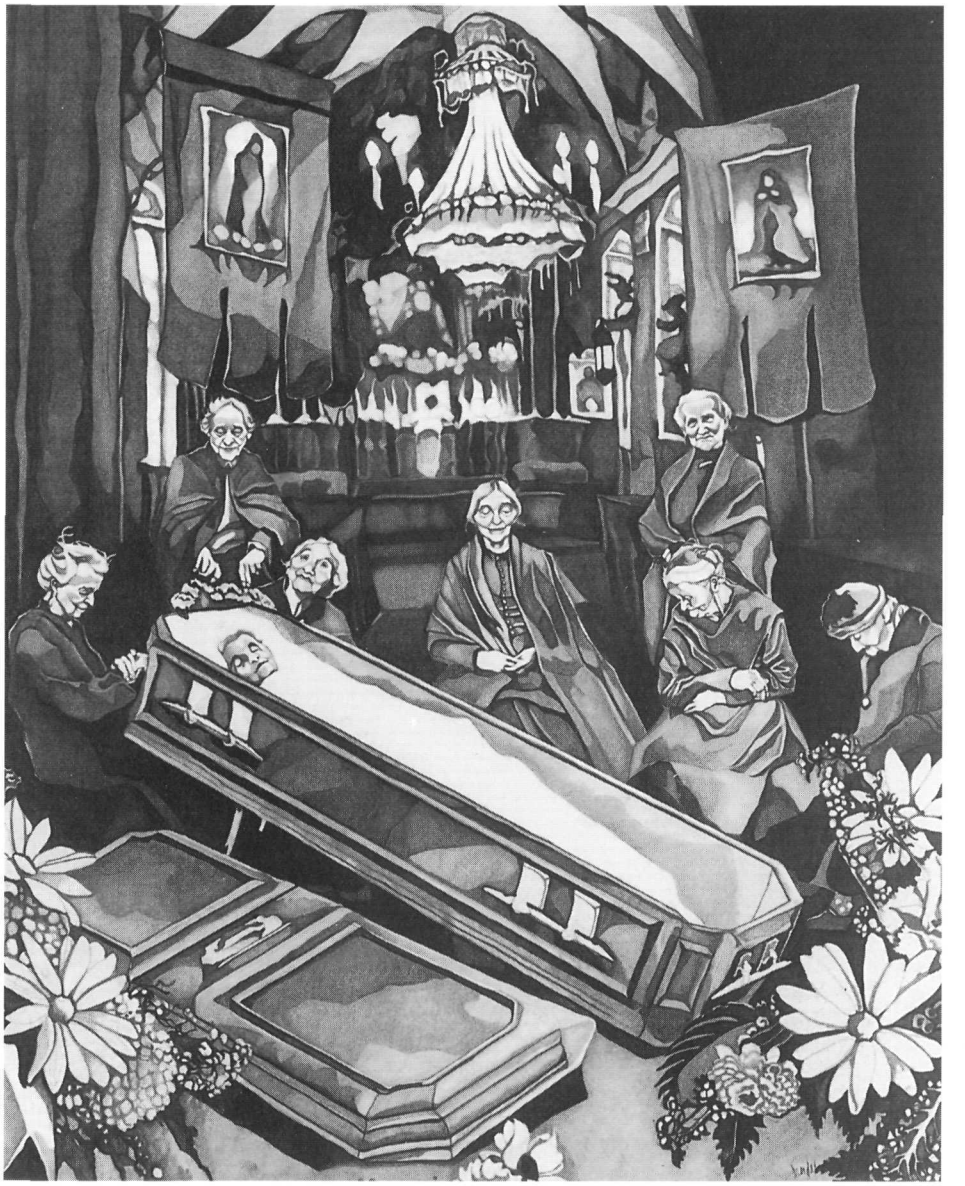
To educate consumers on ways to avoid high costs, Wasielewski helps to maintain a detailed website titled "Funerals and Ripoffs" (http://www.xroads.com/~funerals/). Other groups warning of funeral ripoffs maintain similar sites. The Funeral and Memorial Societies of America has its own web page (http://www.funerals.org/famsa), as does the Alzheimer's Association (http://dragonet.com/funeral/a.html). Originally intended exclusively for Alzheimer's families, and now accessible to all, The Funeral Help! Page offers practical suggestions for each major step in the funeral arrangement process.

Non-declinable fees

Consumer advocates point to two areas in which the industry exercises a particularly heavy hand: caskets and non-declinable fees.

Caskets are often one of the most expensive products for a funeral. They can cost up to $33,000. Often, caskets are marked 300 to 900 percent over wholesale.

Wasielewski notes that "metal caskets should cost $350 to $900." He urges anyone who is being charged more than this "to obtain a casket from a casket store or a national distributor."



Dierdre Luzwick

Wasielewski also warns against protective seal caskets. These are, he explains, "destructive and fraudulent." While the gasket used to make the seal costs about $8, it can add several hundred dollars to the cost of a casket. Worse, the seals can damage the body by trapping active anaerobic bacteria which produce enormous amounts of gas. The gas can bloat the body and actually burst the seal.

Lisa Carlson objects to the industry's non-declinable fee. "This is a fee for which the consumer gets no tangible benefit. It is a cover charge."

Ironically, the non-declinable fee resulted from a consumer victory, the Funeral Rule of 1984. Passed after 10 years of public pressure on the Federal Trade Commission, the Funeral Rule requires funeral directors to disclose prices over

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the telephone, something many hesitated to do. It also requires directors to give a general price list to anyone who asks for it. It makes it illegal for funeral homes to tie fees for their services to requirements that a casket be purchased from them. It also prevents homes from charging a handling fee for a casket bought elsewhere. In addition, the Funeral Rule prohibits directors from making claims about the preservative nature of certain caskets; no casket stops the natural deterioration of the body. Funeral directors must also provide families with a statement of services purchased. In this way, directors are prevented from charging families for services they did not request.

Unfortunately, the Funeral Rule also allows directors to charge a non-declinable fee for staff services. Carlson explains, "When the FTC wanted funeral directors to put together a general price list itemizing the services that they provide, the directors argued that some services couldn't be itemized—planning the funeral, obtaining the permits and death certificate, and writing the obituary. The FTC decided to allow funeral directors to charge for these services by including a non-declinable fee for staff.

"The old practice, before the Funeral Rule was instituted, was to wrap the cost of labor into markup on caskets. Well, they still mark up caskets and now they also charge a fee."

Nationally, the non-declinable fee averages $125 per funeral. Among the industry chains, however, the fee averages $2,365.

Carlson is currently working with a coalition of consumer groups to petition the FTC to prohibit this fee. The coalition will propose charges tied to actual transactions, such as an hourly fee that clarifies consumer services.

Consumer advocates point to one other abuse of the funeral industry: pre-need plans. Pre-need plans sell consumers a funeral years before it is necessary. While consumers believe they are set for death, prices are frequently not guaranteed. The family may end up paying additional money to the funeral home.

According to the Interfaith Funeral Information Committee, "Consumers spend two to five times more when buying funerals on a pre-need basis, resulting in $5 billion worth of overcharging."

"Caring for your own dead takes away the sense of helplessness."

— Lisa Carlson

Worse, sometimes the industry simply sells plans that are not honored when death occurs. According to Christy Heady of *Consumers' Digest,* "The FTC has yet to provide any restitution for the more than $50 million lost by pre-need consumers over the last five years." Currently, $20 billion is invested in pre-need funeral and cemetery plans. The potential for abuse is enormous.

"You can do just as well if you set aside the money in your own bank account," says Lee Norrgard, senior investor analyst for the American Association of Retired Persons. "To make sure that money doesn't go through probate at your death, set up an account as payable on death to the funeral home or set up a joint account with a family member who has a right of survivorship." In this way, you control your funds.

Alternatives

Consumer advocates urge people not only to plan ahead, but to consider a wide range of alternatives. Jack Springer, executive director of the Cremation Association of North America, reminds consumers that more and more Americans are opting for cremation—over 20 percent. Caskets are not required. Boxes made from corrugated fiber or hard cardboard are often used and cost as little as $10. Ashes can be kept in an urn or scattered in a desired location.

Carlson suggests a radical alternative: organizing funerals without a director. A second edition of her now out of print *Caring for Your Own Dead* will be available this spring. In it, she describes her experience of her husband's funeral. When the funeral director tried to charge her a $350 service charge for his help, she told him to go home; she would handle the arrangements herself. She bought a simple box for cremation and transported it herself to the crematory.

"I knew I needed to stay involved," she explains. "This helped me say good-bye."

A pediatric nurse in California reports "that the parents who handle the funeral arrangements for their children have a dramatic improvement in healing from grief," adds Carlson.

While many states allow family members to handle funerals, some do impose restrictions. For example, in Connecticut, a funeral director must sign the death certificate. In Illinois and Indiana a funeral director must also obtain all the necessary permits. And in Michigan, a funeral director is required for all aspects of the arrangements. Memorial societies can supply families with the particular requirements of their state.

"Caring for your own dead takes away the sense of helplessness by having something physical to do," Carlson concluded. "And in most states, it is possible for everyone to do this." TW

For more information: The Funeral and Memorial Societies of America, PO Box 10, Hinesburg, VT 05461; 800-765-0107. The Cremation Society of North America, 401 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611; 312-644-6610. The Interfaith Funeral Information Committee, Phoenix, AR; 602/253-6814. Consumer Caskets USA, 2335 West 38th St., Erie, PA 16505; 800/611-8778.

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Seventh woman joins bishops at controversial moment in ordination debate

by Herb Gunn

The Diocese of Indianapolis elected Catherine Waynick bishop-coadjutor on January 11, making her the seventh woman elected to the episcopate in the U.S. church and the ninth woman to be elected bishop in the worldwide Anglican communion. Waynick, 48, is rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Pontiac, Mich. Pending the required support of her election across the Episcopal Church, she will be consecrated in June.

Waynick will be joining the ranks of the Episcopal Church's bishops barely 40 days before the denomination's 1997 General Convention, which will be struggling with divisive ordination issues — specifically, whether all dioceses will be required to accept the ordination of women and whether dioceses may continue to ordain homosexual men and women.

"I realize that I have not always been in the same place with many of my sisters on some of these issues," said Waynick. "I find myself in a real place of tension over actions like insisting that the remaining four dioceses [who do not allow women to be ordained] bring themselves up to speed *right now* over [the ordination of women]."



Cate Waynick

Waynick explained that she would prefer to "see the church pray daily for the conversion of people" who oppose women's ordination than to pass a rule and end the discussion.

Waynick said she would likely oppose a resolution in her own diocese making women's access to ordination mandatory.

"I think the most powerful witness about all kinds of issues that trouble us, like the ordination of women and the sexuality issue, is not to figure out exactly what the right answer is and try to force everybody to do the same thing. I think maybe our most powerful witness is to acknowledge that we have this tension — that some of us are going to do one thing and some of us are going to do another — and we are going to keep talking with each other and we will, *by God*, love each other.

"If anybody thinks that there's been a time when we have not had homosexual clergy in the church — they are dreaming." Waynick explained. "I think it is silly to say, 'Here is a category of people whom God simply cannot possibly call to ordination.'"

But with equal passion, Waynick opposes any move to resolve the controversy through an action of the General Convention. "I have real difficulty thinking that any individual person's conscience, or even the conscience of the majority, should automatically become the conscience of the church. Things are not that easy.

"I can't see that it would be effective to have legislation at this point mandating the ordination of homosexual persons. I think it would be counter-productive because it would have the effect of shutting down at least some of the folks in that discussion from wanting to talk anymore.

"If we refrain from making that kind of decision, we can keep the conversation going — *if* we are willing to tolerate what some of us do and what some of us will not do.

"Eventually, every diocese in this church is going to ordain women — gladly," Waynick added. "It is going to happen. I have absolutely no fear that the ordination of women is going to be a footnote in the history of the church. But I want us to do it because people have a change of heart, not because they have been beaten over the head."

***Herb Gunn** is editor of* The Record, *the newspaper of the Diocese of Michigan.*

Malcolm Boyd to preach at Pasadena conference

Malcolm Boyd, author of *Are You Running with Me, Jesus?*, will be the featured preacher during the "Beyond Inclusion" conference at All Saints' Church in Pasadena, Calif., April 11-13. Boyd is poet-in-residence at the Los Angeles Cathedral Center and chaplain of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles' AIDS ministry. His memoir after coming out as a gay man and priest, *Take Off the Masks*, was published in 1978.

"Beyond Inclusion: Celebrating Gay and Lesbian Commitments and Ministries within the Episcopal Church," is a national conference being held to explore the full participation of gay and lesbian church members. Keynote speaker will be Andrew Sullivan of *The New Republic*. Among the theologians, ethicists and other church leaders who will be exploring the history, theology and practice of church inclusion are Marilyn McCord Adams, Michael Battle, and William Countryman.

Call Louis Fleming at 818-583-2752 for more information.

Vital Signs

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'Humma, humma, humma': remembering Gloria Brown

by Betty A. Coats

Longtime economic justice activist and former Episcopal Church Publishing Company board member, Gloria Ann Humphrey Brown, died this past Christmas after a long illness. She will be sorely missed by the many folks around the Episcopal Church with whom she made common cause, both for her valuable insight and for her steadfast good humor. We asked one of Brown's close friends and colleagues, Betty Coats, to prepare this tribute.



Gloria Brown

Sister Gloria *in excelsis Deo*. You lived our Episcopal liturgy: respect the peace and dignity of every human being; pray for the sick, the friendless and the needy; let not the hope of the poor be taken away. Like the followers of the North Star to freedom, this liturgy was your guiding light. You had passion and compassion for each child of God. The Episcopal Church in the U.S. owes you a debt of thanks. You were our queen of economic justice.

Over the years you travelled the highways and tributaries of our great land, cajoling, nudging, advocating for parishes and dioceses to become more socially responsible with the great resources under their stewardship.

You saw "The Michigan Plan" for economic justice passed by the 1988 General Convention in Detroit as a challenge for us as a church to be what the Lord was calling us to be. How fitting that you, a Detroiter by birth, should have been the one appointed to help see that the plan was implemented.

You had been "in training" for this role for at least two decades. Armed with a master's of social work degree from Detroit's Wayne State University, you worked for the city of San Francisco and in Washington, D.C. at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. You then served on the faculties of three Califronia universities. In honor of your academic contributions, the University of Southern California at Los Angeles awarded you an honorary doctorate in psychology.

In 1987 you were hired as staff officer for the Coalition for Human Need at the Episcopal Church Center in New York. A year later you began your tenure as staff liaison to the church's Economic Justice Implementation Committee and the pioneering work which eventually led to a consultation on economic justice with the Archbishop of Canterbury in London.

Other involvements included your participation as a founding member of ABIL, the church's organization of Asian, Black, Indigenous Indian and Latina women, and serving as a delegate to the World Council of Churches meeting in Seoul, Korea.

In 1992, in response to the Los Angeles uprising, the national church "loaned" you to the Diocese of Los Angeles — your home since marrying Willard Burdette Brown in 1968. There you focused your full-time energies on making one of your dreams a reality by helping to found the Episcopal Church's first diocesan credit union [*TW* 3/96]. This past fall its assets totaled more than $2 million. Your commitment to this project remained strong even as your health began to fail.

We in the congregation at your memorial service last December broke into laughter as we were reminded of one of your classic invocations, "Humma, humma, humma." We remembered your laughter, your joy of singing in the pick-up choir at meetings of the Union of Black Episcopalians, your invitation to friends to "caravan" with you at church gatherings, meaning to stop and chat with most any and everybody as you all swayed together through a room.

Each of us who was blessed to know you will treasure our own special memories. You were a beautiful Christian Sister Sojourner too briefly by our side.

Gloria Brown's family has requested that contributions in her honor be made to the recently established Gloria Brown Scholarship Fund at the Episcopal Community Federal Credit Union, 840 Echo Park Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90026.

C of E endorses Jubilee 2000

The Church of England Synod has unanimously endorsed the Jubilee 2000 campaign to persuade the world's banks and governments to remit the unpayable debts of 40 of the globes's poorest countries. The Synod's action, taken in recognition of the millenium, came last November. It followed upon the heels of an appeal from George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, that Western nations lift the burden of Mozambique's debt. Mozambique, after Rwanda, is the poorest country in the world. Carey noted, however, that Mozambique's debt crisis cannot wait for the millenium. "Mozambique's problem is now," the primate said.

— Anglican Communion News Service

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Boundary wars

by Debra Trakel

***Boundary Wars: Intimacy and Distance in Healing Relationships,* edited by Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, Pilgrim Press, 1996.**

Perhaps it is just that I am from the Heartland, but I find the title *Boundary Wars: Intimacy and Distance in Healing Relationships*, to be a bit of an over-statement. Maybe there have been a few border skirmishes of disagreement between and among feminists, neo-feminists and non-feminists about boundary issues in pastoral and therapeutic relationships. Or perhaps there have been some inquiring salvos fired from one position or another to get discourse started. But "war"? Conceivably it is a well-hidden guerilla war, but I don't see it. I think maybe it is an East Coast phenomenon (those of us from the Midwest are always convinced there are such things as "East Coast phenomena.")

Taking in the intriguing title I opened the book and found it to be equally provocative and alternately irritating, tantalizing, insightful and outrageous. In short, this is a book that is guaranteed to chafe everyone who reads it somewhere. It's a must -read for all of us in the healing professions, ecclesiastical or secular.

Katherine Ragsdale has edited a book that occasionally calls into question what most healing professionals of whatever stripe would call unquestionable. Several of the authors, notably Carter Heyward, Beverly Harrison, Miriam Greenspan and Ragsdale herself, raise questions (e.g., Should there be sexual intimacy between clients/parishioners and the helping professional?) that I believe have been asked before and definitively answered.

Looking at the law in my own home state of Wisconsin and perusing the codes of ethics of all the organizations that represent various kinds of helping professionals, I find no ambiguity. And, frankly, I think that some of the authors in *Boundary Wars* have gone so far to the left that they have met the right. To suggest, as Harrison and Heyward do, that those who are vulnerable are victimized by protection, sounds suspiciously similar to the old Republican saw that the poor are held in poverty by welfare.

But as I read the book, paying special attention to those authors whose positions push my own, who question that which is generally accepted among professionals, and with whom I generally disagree, I am reminded that the Pope was adamant in his refusal to believe Galileo's suggestion that the sun did not orbit the earth. And the Pope was wrong.

Boundary Wars allows me to read the arguments of the "other side" in the privacy of my own room so that I can, at least, hear them.

I spend a fair amount of my time these days working with clergy perpetrators, survivors and the parishes that are devastated by clergy abuse. I have heard all of the self-serving arguments. To a recent divorcee one perpetrator said: "What you really need to heal is sexual intimacy — with me." To a woman in trouble in her marriage: "Let yourself experience the joy of real love — with me." To a single woman concerned that maybe sexual intimacy with her priest was wrong, "Yes, there are rules against this but this is pure love, a gift from God, so it's ok for us."

I heard strong echoes of these rationalizations from some of the authors in *Boundary Wars*; Heyward and Harrison certainly, but even Fredricka Thompsett gives voice to the whine I hear from so many priests: "If I can't be free to be as intimate as I wish to be (read in romantic or sexual for 'intimate'), then there can be no intimacy in ministry." NOT!

I'll grant the point that it is sure possible for any helping professional who has not done their own work to hide behind "boundaries" and "rules" so they don't have to deal with their own intimacy issues. I don't think that Marie Fortune, Karen Lebacqz and Ronald Barton, among others, are suggesting that helping professionals become disembodied automatons ruled solely by professional codes of ethics and/or insurance companies.

But the best clergy and therapists I know are able to be authentic, genuine and even intimate with their clients and still understand that there are always some pre-defined boundaries. As 12-steppers say, "It's not either/or, it's both/and."

Boundary Wars is a well-edited attempt to, with pun intended, walk the boundaries and even push out the ends a bit on issues of intimacy and distance within helping relationships. I found myself internally cheering and jeering as I read the book. I rarely find myself quite so stimulated by non-fiction. I'd highly recommend it to anyone who would either like to raise their blood pressure or their consciousness about critical issues that face helping professionals.

Debra Trakel is a priest and licensed psychotherapist. She serves as priest-in-charge at Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Wisconsin Dells, Wis., and as the Bishop's Assistant for Pastoral Care for the Diocese of Milwaukee.

LI priest arrested on drug charges

As the investigation of charges in *Penthouse* magazine that priests in the Diocese of Long Island engaged in homosexual rituals in a Brooklyn church continues, the diocese is being forced to face up to another clergy scandal — this time centering on a priest accused of dealing drugs.

Chester LaRue, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn, was arrested along with three other church employees for the criminal sale and possession of cocaine on January 17. The arrest came three weeks after LaRue was hailed as a hero for fighting off two bandits at the church. Police now say that the fight apparently resulted because LaRue was protecting his supply of drugs. — *ENS*

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Calling death a 'sister'

by Nancy Hastings Sehested

***The Spiritual Care of Dying and Bereaved People*, by Penelope Wilcock, Morehouse Publishing, 1997.**

St. Francis welcomed death, calling this inescapable visitor a "sister." Cardinal Joseph Bernardin echoed this same sentiment in his dying by greeting death as friend. Even for those of us who are among the faithful believers in life everlasting, death often barges into our lives more as intruder than welcome guest. Emily Dickinson poetically described our sense of death as interruption: "Because I could not stop for Death, He kindly stopped for me." Becoming more hospitable to death is difficult in a society that usually quarantines this visitor to hidden away hospital rooms. Penelope Wilcock invites us to accompany Sister Death as she walks beside dying and bereaved people. Wilcock is certain that this journey will bring us closer to life, to a sense of awe and wonder in the deep mysteries of God. She invites us to take off our protective shoes and go with the dying onto holy ground.

Drawing from years of experience as a hospice chaplain in England, Wilcock offers a detailed and thorough book for anyone who by profession, choice or circumstance finds themselves in a position to be a spiritual care-giver to a bereaved or dying person. She begins this guide by speaking directly to us about our resistance to making this journey with the dying. To offer spiritual care to another requires reflection on our own spirits. Confronting our helplessness, Wilcock calls us to "no longer act to save them," to keep clear that this dying is "theirs, not ours," and to lay down our "achieving" to make way for "accepting." For a Christian, she says, seeing the dying person in a state of vulnerability opens the way to seeing the suffering God who loves us.

A caring team comprised of medical personnel, social workers, chaplains, therapists and volunteers all working in concert to create an environment of care, healing and comfort is the ideal in Wilcock's experience. She encourages team members to see themselves as clearing "the road along which God may come." This is possible through an integrated awareness of the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of each individual patient.

In creating a hospitable space, Wilcock leaves nothing to chance or even to common sense. She boldly charges through every aspect of sight, sound, smell, and feel to the environment: the cleanliless and the beauty of the room is addressed, the color and texture of the caregivers' clothes, the body language and smells for carer and patient alike. She knows well that the spiritual is mediated through the physical and hopes that a "gentle, healing and accepting environment" will be created.

As a pastor who has little access to a working team of caregivers, I found the minute detailing of ways to attend to the room environment the least beneficial. However, I found Wilcock's examination of the interplay of communication through word, silence and touch to be most helpful. Wilcock offers ancedotes, practical suggestions and theological reflection on the many paths of conversing with people who are dying and grieving. She invites us to practice the art of listening, to dance between the human and the divine, developing our skills of sensitivity to what is needed in a particular moment. She encourages the use of a variety of forms of prayer and ritual, including litanies, candles, special symbols of meaning and music. Sharpening our "spiritual linguistics" skills is crucial to understanding the pastoral care needs of another. Intuition and flexibility are required to be a loving presence and companion of spirit life.

Wilcock has respect for all paths to God. She looks for ways to connect to our common humanity, especially as she describes the aspects of grief and the loss of self identity that often accompanies dying. She upholds the uniqueness of each person as the guide for the specific ways we find to offer the healing presence of spiritual care.

"Spirituality is all about who one is, and that is found only in reationship and with other people, the ones who make up our world, and with that foundational reality that belivers call God." She emphasizes careful discernment to know when to discuss sensitive concerns like reconciling and forgiving others, handling financial matters, and talking about ongoing medical needs.

This book will probably appeal most to those who are hospice chaplains, especially those working with a team. Yet even those of us who are not part of a structured team can benefit from the stronger emphasis on keeping the needs of the dying and the bereaved person uppermost in our actions. Pastors, counselors, friends and family members will find much to encourage them. TW

review

Nancy Hastings Sehested is a Baptist pastor, teacher, and retreat leader in Clyde, N.C.

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The church can't even take charge of the funeral liturgy. The funeral director has to tell you when the ritual is over because you don't know!



Jeff Dietrich

Keeping the experts at arm's length

by Marianne Arbogast

A quiet ritual takes place when someone dies in the hospice room at the Ammon Hennacy Catholic Worker House in Los Angeles. Community members, summoned by the one who has been keeping vigil with a dying guest, gather to read Scripture and offer prayers. When the liturgy is completed, they wrap the body in a sheet and carry it out of the hospice room. It is important to them to take part directly in this ancient work of mercy, rather than surrender to the undertaker all contact with the dead.

"It's a sense of empowerment," explains long-time community member Jeff Dietrich. "Our desire is to keep experts and professionals — morticians, doctors and police — at arm's length as much as possible. We need to be able to face this essential experience of life which is death."

For the past four years, Dietrich's community has offered hospice care to AIDS patients and others who come there to die. Some have been soup kitchen patrons; others have come from the AIDS clinic where Kieran Prather — a Worker community member who died of AIDS two years ago — received treatment, and where Catherine Morris, Dietrich's wife, continues an ongoing ministry. A current guest is a long-time friend of the community dying of Lou Gehrig's disease.

Community members give baths and change diapers, keep night vigil and pray with their dying friends. They have created their own wake and funeral rituals, and have buried the cremated ashes of Prather and several others in the gardens surrounding the house and nearby soup kitchen.

Some of the homeless people in their neighborhood have taken to calling their home a "death house," Dietrich reports. "When even the down-and-out begin to reject your dinner invitations, you have to wonder," he wrote in *The Catholic Agitator*, the Worker newspaper he edits. "I guess it doesn't help that we live in an old, three-story Victorian that could easily pass for the Addams Family mansion."

But he quotes Ivan Illich's assertion that because our homes have become inhospitable to death, they are inhospitable to life as well.

"The things that used to be done by communities and households are now done *for* us, and we feel like we don't have the resources to deal with these experiences ourselves," Dietrich says. "We're alienated from our own lives — and then we need to seek out professional counseling to help us integrate experiences that should have been mediated by faith and community."

Dietrich speaks from experience. When his brother committed suicide in 1973, he felt the collusion of inner and outer forces preventing him from facing his grief.

"I just wanted him in the ground, thinking that his burial somehow would end the pain," Dietrich says. "Of course, the funeral industry was most obliging in helping me avoid any contact with the experience of my brother's death. I felt like a sleepwalker, unconsciously going through the motions. It took many years before I could wake up."

In contrast, when a child who had lived with the Worker community died of cancer, Dietrich saw people respond to death in a way that was direct and pro-

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

found. The body was brought back to their home, which was soon filled with Latina women from the neighborhood.

"They prayed their rosaries, chanted their litanies, and sang songs," Dietrich says. "They were familiar with death and unafraid. By their very presence, these women created a sense of intimacy and reverence."

A nephew's death confirmed his belief in the value of hands-on participation in funeral and burial rites. At Dietrich's urging, permission was obtained to bury his nephew at a family cabin in the mountains of Oregon. His other nephews stayed up through the night to dig their brother's grave, sharing tears, stories and a bottle of Jack Daniels. The body was brought home, and neighbors and friends were invited to vigil with the family and help with the burial.

"We had a big party and a big bonfire around the grave," Dietrich says. "People stayed up all night talking about John and warming themselves around the fire and having a few drinks, and it was an incredibly cathartic experience."

The church has abdicated its responsibility to help people face death, Dietrich believes.

"The church can't even take charge of the funeral liturgy," he says. "The mortician is in charge, arranging people around the casket, telling you how to carry it. Nobody lowers the coffin into the ground. The funeral director has to tell you when the ritual is over because you don't know! You *should* know when that coffin goes into the ground that the liturgy is over. That should be the most profound kind of ending experience you can have."

At Hennacy House, community members maintain personal, direct involvement with those in their care — before, during and after death.

"Some people are more attuned to washing people and changing diapers, caring for people in that intimate way, while some of us pray it doesn't happen on our watch," Dietrich admits. "But I think everyone is open to being challenged in that area."

Throughout the dying process, community members meet regularly to pray in the hospice room. Sometimes, family members of the dying person have joined them.

"There have been profound reconciliations," Dietrich says. "Families that have been separated for years over someone being gay have come together. We have had families come and live with us, and be there around the deathbed."

In every death you encounter, you're preparing yourself for your own death. When we see ourselves in the context of a life that has a beginning and an end, we begin to reflect on why we're here.

The core of their deathbed liturgy is a personalized version of the rosary, which recalls significant events of the person's life in place of the traditional joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries.

"When Kieran died, we recalled his time as a Benedictine novice; we recalled his struggle for integrity to be both gay and Catholic; we remembered his commitment to justice in El Salvador and how he first met the Catholic Worker while in jail for a civil disobedience protest," Dietrich says.

He sees the liturgy as a way to confess faith and combat fear.

"When you have had a relationship with a person, you want to be with them at the point of death and after death — there's a kind of transition period. You develop rituals so that you don't feel frightened and can feel somewhat comfortable with this experience of being with the dead."

Although an undertaker prepares the body for burial, it is returned to Hennacy House for the wake, which usually begins with evening Mass and dinner. The community keeps vigil through the night, then holds a funeral in the morning. Whenever possible, they transport the body to the church themselves.

Hospice work has deepened community, Dietrich says.

"Sometimes it is grueling, and you're exhausted physically and emotionally. It forces you to be more intimate with one another, to appreciate each other more, and to be more gentle with each other. You have to constantly remind one another: This is the force of death, and it's going to take its toll.

"But it brings you into a deeper contact with life. In every death you encounter, you're preparing yourself for your own death. When we see ourselves in the context of a life that has a beginning and an end, we begin to reflect on why we're here."

For Dietrich, who joined the Catholic Worker as a Vietnam draft resister 26 years ago, ministry to the dying and the dead is a natural outgrowth of a vocation to resistance.

"We see our work of opposing nuclear weapons and caring for the poor and caring for the dying as all of a piece," he explains. "We are very influenced by William Stringfellow, who believes that death has its place, but we become so fearful of death that it becomes a principality and a power itself. If we can become more intimate with that experience and less fearful, we can become more profound signs of life." TW

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Hamlet: What man dost thou dig it for?
Grave-digger: For no man, sir.
Hamlet: What woman then?
Grave-digger: For non neither.
Hamlet: Who is to be buried in't?
Grave-digger: One that was a woman, sir;
but rest her soul, she's dead.

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The Witness

Volume 80 • Number 4• April, 1997



Raising kids with conscience

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Women's ordination

LIKE MANY PEOPLE throughout the Church, I applaud the recent election in the Diocese of Indianapolis. I am glad the people of that diocese had the ability to elect whom they deemed most suited to serve them as bishop, an ability we must not take for granted since it is not present in all dioceses of this Church. However, I am deeply disturbed by the position the Bishop-elect has taken against requiring the equal application of canons pertaining to the ordination of women.

The canonical proposals before General Convention only clarify what already exists. They do not add to the body of canon law. Bishop-elect Waynick states she would likely oppose a resolution in her own diocese making women's access to ordination mandatory. The Church has already spoken on this issue in the canons governing our common life. Title III. Canon 4 states "No one shall be denied access to the selection process for ordination in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these Canons." Title III. Canon 8. Sec. 1 states "The provisions of the Canons of this Title for the admission of Postulants and Candidates, and for the ordination to the three Orders, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, shall be equally applicable to men and women." What could be more clear?

The four bishops may of course hold a particular theological view on the ordination of women and they have the freedom to exercise conscience. They have not and will not be required to ordain women (another bishop could ordain in their stead — a compromise offered and flatly refused). They have not and will not be required to receive the sacramental ministries of women. There has always been another way as modeled by Bishop Montgomery in Chicago which was commended by the House of Bishops in 1987.

What is crystal clear to me is that while these bishops may use conscience as a shield, they really must not, in conscience, use conscience as a sword, and the Church must not permit this. They may be shielded from having to ordain a woman, but they must not be allowed to penalize an entire diocese, its congregations, its clergy, its men, its women, and its children by preventing women from testing their vocation, by refusing to ordain them, by refusing to license them, or by preventing parishes from calling them solely on account of their sex. The individual conscience of a bishop must not be used to tyrannize an entire diocese. The true exercise of conscience does not inflict pain and damage on others. If conscience is a sensitive regard for fairness and justice, the four bishops' appeal to conscience might be better given some other name.

Twenty-three years ago, I began the discernment process for ordination as a priest. I never believed I had the right to be ordained or the right to be called to a particular position, but I did believe I had the right, authorized by this Church, to be treated in the same way as my brothers.

At each point along the way, I was considered by virtue of my gifts and skills and what I had to offer the Church, and once ordained, whether I was a priest in good standing. This must be the experience of all women. Fair and consistent consideration should not be an accident of geography. If so in Indianapolis, why not in Fort Worth? If so in Virginia, why not in Eau Claire? If so in Olympia and Ohio, why not in Quincy and San Joaquin?

Like the Bishop-elect, I too pray daily for

Classifieds

Position wanted

Bilingual (Spanish) layman seeking ministerial position in NYC area. Three years as Director of Religious Education. Seven years as Youth Minister at inner-city parish. Five years as a Substance Abuse Counselor. M.A. in Theology. Available to begin Aug. or Sept. 1997 — earlier negotiable. Excellent references. Fernando Arzola, Jr., 239 East 21st St., N.Y., NY 10010. Day #212-475-1966.

Positions open

The Equity Trust, a small, nonprofit organization with innovative programs of land reform and community development finance, and special initiatives on community supported agriculture and stewardship of religious lands, seeks a loan fund manager and an office manager. Compensation modest, according to need; room and board provided. Contact Chuck Matthei, 539 Beach Pond Rd., Voluntown, CT 06384; 860-376-6174.

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1997-98 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Travel education

Celtic Pilgrimages 1997. Prayer and study programs to Ireland July, Sept.; to Wales May, August. Emphasis on deepening relationship with God through lectures by outstanding scholars; visits to holy sites, worship. Sr. Cintra, Convent St. Helena; 134 E. 28th St.; New York, NY 10016; phone 212-725-6435; fax 212-779-4009.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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the conversion of people who oppose women's ordination and I have done so for almost 25 years. I also hold the conviction that there are times when prayer must be buttressed by action of the Church that says the obvious in unequivocal fashion — that all God's children are equal and are to be treated with dignity and respect.

Gay Jennings
Cleveland, OH

Witness praise

GREAT MAGAZINE — wonderful to connect to Anglican perspectives of Generous Spirit.

Rosalind Westaway
B.C., Canada

WE BOTH ENJOY YOUR MAGAZINE immensely. It keeps us mentally aware of many issues which concern us. Well done!

Rheta Weidenbacker
Philadelphia, PA

YOU KNOW, I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE in my beliefs. [Subscription enclosed.] Thanks for sharing with me.

Stephanie Anna Maier
Gambier, OH

I LOVE *THE WITNESS* and though I don't always agree, it opens my eyes to events that I have never given a thought. Keep the faith and share it too.

Jacqueline Hansen
Grand Junction, CO

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE BEING without *The Witness*. A quotation from a book written by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's father catalyzed my decision to seek the priesthood 30 years ago. Jeanie's editorials, along with a stream of engaging themes and articles, feed my faith and expand my vision of ministry.

James T. Elliott
Kirkland, WA

Correction

If you save back issues of *The Witness*, please cross out the last seven lines of Dorothee Sölle's poem in the March issue. They were printed in error.

Witness announces co-editorship

FOR THE FIRST TIME in its 80-year history, *The Witness* has co-editors! At a recent Episcopal Church Publishing Company board meeting, members voted to support a motion that I made which named Julie A. Wortman co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*. In my view, the change in titles recognizes a welcome and recent change in staff dynamics. For the first time in my six-year tenure, I have another staff member as interested in the whole operation as I am. Julie has opinions about the budget, the printer, the work flow, as well as editorial content. She is willing to help carry responsibility for the magazine's soul *and* its body.

I am glad for Julie's creativity, vision and irreverence. I've come to truly appreciate the fact that she sees long-term, while I act in a relatively short time-frame. At the same time, I can often push things into being, while she actively considers backup options. Julie is very good at calling out other people's opinions about decisions. Under our new structure, Julie will take more responsibility for planning and production. Hopefully, this arrangement will free me to read other publications and to broaden our scope of vision.

It's important to note that *The Witness'* staff is extremely small. Julie and I work most closely with Marianne Arbogast, who works two days a week, and Marietta Jaeger, who works 35 hours a week. Marianne offers vital contributions to the spirit of the magazine both in her writing and in her editorial input. Marietta interfaces with subscribers, printers, landladies and office machinery, helping to keep everything in motion. In addition, Karen Bota consults with us a couple days a week in an attempt to increase our subscriber base. The other folks listed on the masthead are invaluable, but extremely part-time.

Many of us on the staff were influenced by the series of issues that we did culminating with *Fasting in Babylon: getting the life you want* [12/96].

I was devastated to discover that the logical trajectory for Julie in this process is moving her household to Maine to live among the Greenfire community this April. But, with the board's approval, we will maintain our working relationship long distance. Technology will both aid and hinder us. I look forward to occasional long walks on the coast she will share with others in Tenants Harbor. And it can only aid *The Witness* to weave the survival efforts of east coast fishermen into the stories of unemployed Detroit auto workers.

While adjusting our organizational structure and making our computers compatible for long-distance work, we decided to also change printers, mail houses and perhaps office buildings (to see whether we could prevent ourselves from living into the lives we want by having massive strokes?).

Generally these days, our emotions lie close to the surface and our physical health and sleep patterns show signs of stress, but we still insist that on the other side is a more contemplative life that will allow for regular exercise, prayer, public witness and thanksgiving. We hope with all our hearts that our lives will begin to move more organically, in accordance with our limits, our gifts, our communities and our vocations.

We pray that it will be so even as we watch the bottom line with some fear, knowing that Bill Spofford's endowment of *The Witness'* work will not last forever. *The Witness,* which has been a feisty word in an often complacent church, will see the year 2,000. Whether it will live into the next century will depend on people's interest in subscribing and donating to the magazine and on God's grace. It is right that this is so.

The co-editors of *The Witness* give thanks for the staff, the subscribers, the board, the contributing editors and Vital Signs advisors. It is a privilege to attempt to speak the truth in a way that recognizes all that is wrong, but upholds hope for the future and confidence in God's word throughout history.

—Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

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The Witness

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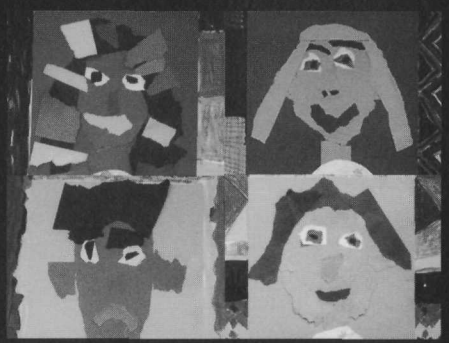
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Cover: Creating a healthy community, David Fichter, detail of L.A. mural sponsored by the Social and Public Art Resource Center. Courtesy of Syracuse Cultural Workers; catalogues available for $1, call 315-474-1132.

Backcover: Self-portraits by 1st graders at Friends School, Detroit. Collage art under Kristi Bell's supervision. Photographed by Jim West.

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

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Sharing values with our kids

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Adults with a responsibility to rear children speak in the first person throughout this issue about decisions they have made in an effort to instill a sense of conscience in their kids. Their social locations and their burning issues vary, but in each case they are searching for a balance that affords children safety and joy as well as a sense of responsibility to confront that which is not right in our world.

Writers in this issue examine ways that race, gender, sexual orientation and peacemaking commitments affect their children. A coherent theme throughout is an appreciation of the beauty and vulnerability of children. The tension is in identifying how much children can/should bear in the course of struggles for justice. The freedom to ask the question, of course, introduces relative privilege; we recognize that not all families can choose whether to put their kids at risk. But this does not invalidate the question. How do parents and elders know how much to ask of their children?



M.O.R.

As Bill and I thought through these questions in our own family, we realized that in baptizing our children we had committed them to renouncing evil. Speaking and acting in their name, we have signed them up for discipleship. When our daughters come of age, they can discern whether their understanding of vocation and witness will mirror ours. In the meantime, we'll do our best with the help of friends, family and school communities.

It's unlikely that there are any right answers. We learned recently of an Indian reservation where the teen suicide rate was becoming alarming. When church folks considered what to do, the elders did not ask for government programs or radical political action, they asked to reinstitute "hymn sings." They explained to the Episcopal priest that his predecessor had prohibited hymn sings — sessions of song and spontaneous testimony — that the elders believed could revive the hearts of their youth.

This issue offers some voices that intentionally lean into prevailing views. It becomes more complicated as some writers engage in critiques of viewpoints within their own subcultures — for instance, Jeanne Heyer challenges an ethic she adopted from Daniel Berrigan 15 years ago (p. 22). Her critique from within needs to be read carefully because it rests on some assumptions which may not be shared by all readers. In fact, some readers probably need the original challenge (in this case Berrigan's) more than they need the response. Similarly, on the book review page a black grandmother and a white grandmother's assessment of a new book vary because of their life experiences (p. 29).

We lay all these views before you. We are glad for the variety of communities attempting to address the central question of how we raise kids with conscience and we welcome your responses.

As is mentioned in several of these pieces, how each of us decides to live our lives will affect the children. My clearest sense of what life is meant to be is rooted in my recall of my parents' delight when students, guests from overseas, and the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus came to our table. My siblings and I learned to show respect, to listen through accents, to watch for the glimmer of holiness in simple stories. From my parents' hospitality, I drew conclusions about upside-down gospel values; if they hadn't opened their table, I suppose it wouldn't have mattered much what my father preached from the pulpit. TW

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Catalogues for M.O.R. Stamps are $2 (write HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860).

Dinner at the Advocate!

The Witness will hold its General Convention dinner at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia on July 18. We alert readers now, because we would be delighted for subscribers as well as Deputies and Bishops to join us.

The church, which celebrates its centennial this year, has a long history of advocacy regarding race and gender issues (about which there is more to say in an upcoming issue). Not only will we enjoy the Advocate's hospitality this summer, but we can also make a contribution to its survival, since its gorgeous and elaborate structure is in danger of literally falling down!

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O.J. and white supremacy

by Eugene Rivers

The O.J. trial demonstrates the racial divide. As the decision came down on that fateful day, black women and white women were *not* together. What happened for many black women, is not that they loved O.J. What was deep in the black community is that, as one black woman pointed out, "Had Nicole been black, there would have been no story."

In the black community — in the barbershops, in the bars, far removed from the white overseers, where we could be honest and talk the truth — we said to ourselves, "Boy, these folk ain't no good. I mean, there's a boy Kennedy, in a car, driving from a party, drunk, not with his wife, car goes over the bridge into the water. He gets out, first thing he does is call a lawyer. *Then* he calls the hospital. And not only does he not go to jail, he gets reelected and becomes a credible candidate for the presidency."

O.J.'s crime is that he did what white boys do and, like them, he can pay to get off. What inflames it is that he was accused of murdering the icon of white supremacy.

The church was no less divided than America. The blood of Christ was not heavy enough, not deep enough, to bridge the chasm when the deal went down.

So we need to discern and exorcise the principality, the demonic spirit, that divides the church and the entire national experience: white identity.

Where did this mythological, powerful symbolic construction come from? How did you, not being white, not coming from a land called "White," become white? Where did this construction come from and how did it assume the force it has? It splits the country in two and is now poised to generate civil war in the U.S.

Two hundred years ago, you were Irish or German or Scottish, but at some point, you were sold a bill of goods that you were not simply Irish but *white*.

Being Irish makes sense. You can talk about Irish culture, German culture, Scottish culture. But there is no white culture. This ideological construction was demonically inspired.

Here we are today, stuck with rebellion everywhere, because that white thing has collapsed on itself. The crackers are saying, "You all told me if I was a white man, there would be a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." These boys got a level of fury that's scaring y'all.

I empathize with those white boys, because they've been lied to. They ain't wrong. They might be illegal, but them boys ain't wrong.

The church now is in a unique position to be the church of Jesus Christ for the first time. But you are either going to be the church or you're going to be white, apostate, and usher in apartheid! It's going to be war. Blood's going to run in the streets for real.

You got the white militia coming hard and you got Louis Farrakhan on the other side. Both of these phenomena are poetic justice. You get what your religion deserves.

Farrakhan has flipped that Christian thing on its head. As much as Farrakhan makes me sick, I can't jump on the boy too bad. Farrakhan says, "There ain't no Christianity in America. It's the old white tribal religion, the white warrior God."

We are in a dangerous place. And it's idolatrous. The thing about this white racist ideology is that it is the most pernicious form of sin because it's based on pride. God can deal with a thief, deal with a liar, deal with David messing around with Sheba, but child please don't get arrogant, proud and idolatrous. Pride is an ideology and a conception of identity which is against God in its essence.

White racism, white supremacy is so demonically entrenched that people would rather waste money than invest in social programs which could alleviate suffering and be more cost effective. Oh, it's deep.

I'm suggesting that a radical conversion to biblical faith frees us from the burden of the demonic spirit which now binds us and renders us unable to live as rational human beings. All of you are going to be speaking in tongues before this is over — you will need the anointing of the Holy Spirit to even know how to construct this conversation.

We're talking about 300 years of history developing this thing that is so deeply entrenched in the cultural psychology of the nation and the church. We're talking about a roaring lion of white supremacy. It is violent and it can only be dealt with in the most discerning way. We're talking about God, who gives the church the power to discern how to exorcise a level of violence and irrationality that is caving this country in on itself.

Those of us who consider ourselves progressive are going to be forced to levels of prayer and contemplation that we haven't assumed were central, because this is more dangerous than anything else we have undertaken. God is calling us to be his people. He's calling us to turn our backs on the idols, to turn our backs on any conception of reality which elevates the creature over the creator. We must pray as a political act of resistance. TW

Eugene Rivers is pastor of the Azusa Christian Community in Boston, Mass. This essay is adapted from a talk he gave at the May, 1996 Stringfellow conference in Lexington, Va., which was co-sponsored by *The Witness*.

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Tour 5

by Robert Hayden

The road winds down through autumn hills
in blazonry of farewell scarlet
and recessional gold,
past cedar groves, through static villages
whose names are all that's left
of Choctaw, Chickasaw.

We stop a moment in a town
watched over by Confederate sentinels,
buy gas and ask directions of a rawboned man
whose eyes revile us as the enemy.

Shrill gorgon silence breathes behind
his taut civility
and in the ever-tautening air,
dark for us despite its Indian summer glow.
We drive on, following the route
of highwaymen and phantoms,

Of slaves and armies.
Children, wordless and remote,
wave at us from kindling porches.
And now the land is flat for miles,
the landscape lush, metallic, flayed,
its brightness harsh as bloodstained swords.

Robert Hayden was born in 1917.



This month's poem marks the completion of Leslie Williams' year as poetry editor for *The Witness.* We are grateful for her contributions, and we congratulate her on the release of her new book, *Night Wrestling: Struggling for Answers and Finding God* (Word Publishing, 1997).

Eagles & chickens

Perched by a great king's throne was an eagle. Each day she would soar through the clouds. The people would look up with pride.

But one year the kingdom was overthrown. The people were enslaved and the eagle captured. Before her death, she laid three eggs which were placed in a chicken yard. When they hatched, all of the chickens laughed. "Oh my! Big old heads! Stubby little necks! What ugly chickens!" The eaglets began to droop.

A year passed. Then a captured eagle was tossed into the barnyard. He was hurt but he flapped his wings incessantly. The chickens laughed. "What are you doing, you dumb, ugly chicken? Chickens can't fly!"

"I am not dumb or ugly and I am not a chicken," responded the eagle. "Eagles were born to soar."

A few roosters were incensed by this chicken's bad attitude, and pecked at the eagle until he was bloodied. But one morning the chickens found the great eagle perched atop the barnyard fence.

A young eagle who believed himself a chicken said quietly, "Please come down from there or you'll get us all in trouble."

"My brothers, come with me," said the great eagle with power and authority. Two of the young eagles rose into the air. The last young eagle, however, still hugged his big wings close to his sides. The great eagle knew that this brother's young spirit had been corrupted before it could grow strong. "I will pray for you, my brother," the great eagle said. "Your real destiny is in the skies."

Teaching eagles to fly

by Ruth Seymour

My children have heard a long version of this story several times. I'm glad. It has been circulating for years among African American educators and storytellers. It shows up in urban classrooms and in the Sunday schools of the black church — for obvious reasons. Here is a tale about physical difference as positive, about self-definition in the midst of cultural oppression, and with an over-ground railroad. It's "The Ugly Duckling" with Harriet Tubman and African kingdoms thrown in for good measure.

But those chickens.

Raising two African American boys in this predominantly Euro-commercial culture, I often feel like an old black-and-white film clip of Dorothy's aunt in *The Wizard of Oz*. I'm non-stop bustling around the henyard in a small protective circle, shooing away pesky chickens with my broom — just trying to hold open some small time and space in which my little eagles can grow big enough to know and defend themselves, or just laugh and fly away.

Chickens.

When my first child was a baby, and just old enough to respond with giggles and hand waves to the oversized humans around him, the chicks started hatching.

A European American neighbor, whom we had known for a half-dozen years, cooed at our baby and then popped up with: "Hey, Niles, gimme five."

He said it in some kind of jive voice I had never heard from him, and I felt the unexpected soft slap: After all these years of book chats, intellectual exchange and neighborliness, this gentleman didn't see my beautiful Niles; he saw a black baby.

It was Niles' first brush with a chicken, at least in my presence. But over the years, I watched the "Gimme five!" chicken surface at unexpected moments for both of my boys, coming always from slightly nervous and friendly European American adults.

No big deal. But now that Niles is 10, and watching the phenomenon with his preschool brother, I bet he can already sense the oddness, and recognize the moment for what it likely is — a tiny peck of involuntary prejudice. Just a little moment of, "You're different. I'm nervous." Just a tiny, little peck.

That's a chicken. An invalidating, depersonalizing, but otherwise insignificant moment. It's just that there are so many of them.

One good eagle can take care of hundreds of chickens more effectively than years of eager swatting with a broom.

But an eagle! Now that is something else. That is antidote, *better* than antidote. An eagle is the intoxicant of truth. It is a moment or person that makes all chickens look really silly. One good eagle can take care of hundreds of chickens more effectively than years of eager swatting with a broom. The mere shadow of a swooping eagle reduces hundreds of cackling chickens to obvious impotence. A few words from an eagle can help us dare to flap and climb.

Chicken: Something wrong with us

Ruth Seymour teaches journalism at Wayne State University in Detroit and raises Niles and Kahlil with the help of their dad, Kim Heron.

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made us slaves.

Eagle: Moses and the children of Israel.

One of the first Bible stories I told my older son was of Moses and the Israelites in bondage. We spent a *long* time in Egypt with God's chosen people, thinking about what they built (and with bricks of straw!), and of the fact that they were helpless to protect themselves. The books we read showed powerful, gold-adorned, brown-bodied Pharoahs.

Then the books told of the whole power of God that helped a stuttering Moses speak, rained frogs on kings, parted deep water with invisible hands and led the children of Israel into their heritage and freedom.

Before anyone else told my son about field slaves and bloodhounds, I wanted him to know slavery as, unfortunately, universally human. To be a slave is not the historical property of black Americans, nor is the capacity to oppress the property of whites.

Over the course of history, we have all been eagles and we have all been chickens. We're all in good company.

Today is the question: Will my kids choose to be eagles or chickens?

Chicken: Images of African American kids on TV.

It's Friday night and Niles is watching "Clueless." It is an inane teenage sitcom, and his near-favorite. The two African-American teen boys always wear bright, silly clothes and huge fuzzy hats. (The Euro-American kids are faddish but essentially elegant.) I walk by, and yell at the TV screen:

"Why are you dressing those handsome young men like that? Why are just the *black* kids dressing like that?"

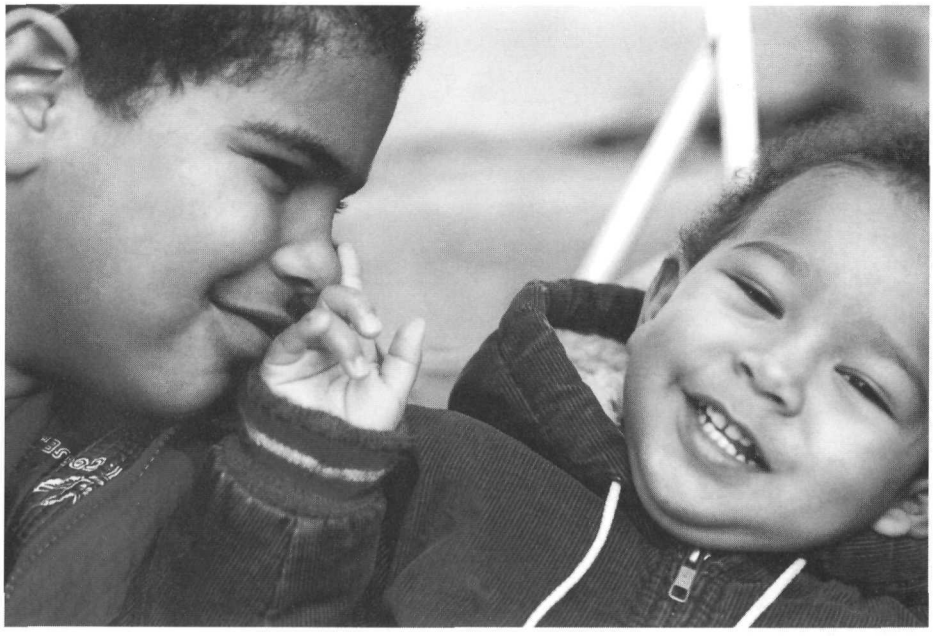
My preteen son sighs. "Mom, that is *cool*. That is what is *in*. They look *good*."

At this point the chickens are way too fast for my broom.

Eagle: Large and ordinary heroes.

One of my mom's friends recently complained that kids today don't have heroes and heroines — everyone famous is tarnished. Another friend just said, "Well, then, I guess it's up to us to be their heroes."

I, for one, think Mandela is holding up magnificently as straight-out hero material. But perhaps the best part of the Eagle and Chickens fable *is* its insistence on the eagle within, along with its suggestion that God will not leave any of us stranded forever in a chicken yard. We can *always* count on some eagle arriving out of the blue and telling us to start flapping.



Niles and Kahlil

In our family, the eagle came in the form of a strike. For the last 20 months, my husband and a couple thousand other newspaper workers in Detroit have been on strike against both Gannett and Knight-Ridder: two mega-giant companies.

For the strikers, this was a question of union-busting. But Niles was just nine years old. He wept in fear when we told him that Dad was about to go on strike. In the next days Niles saw his own very gentle father stand up to riot police and semi-trucks. In the next months he saw families of all occupations and races trying to help each other, and some families who were not even a part of the unions working to organize rallies and support groups. He saw friends, and parents of his school friends, arrested. By age 10, he eagerly sold strike newspapers on street corners and to strangers at labor conventions. He continued to go uncomplainingly in old shoes and without school hot lunches.

There was an eagle flapping inside our child. My husband and I look at this son, and are genuinely amazed. We have to admit that these hard months have made him stronger and more confident than we ever could have invented ways to support on our own. Which suggests that, one more time, maybe God really does know, even better than we do, how to grow yet another good and strong-souled black man.

I bet He'll send an eagle down after the preschooler, too. TW

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'Icons of white supremacy'

By Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

"White women are oppressed — you spend your life distorting yourself to conform to some white supremacist image, so you can't function right. Your brain ain't straight. Women are imposed upon to distort their natural being to conform to a politically oppressive and demonic construct that not only damages white women, but destroys the self-identity of millions of other women. Black women get bleaching creme and do all kinds of things to themselves to conform to a demonic conception of identity.

"The whole notion of white beauty which drives the culture is the multi-million dollar business of white supremacy in the most violent way."

— Eugene Rivers

My kids have been raised to sing outside the gates of defense contractors. They have watched people, including their Dad, get arrested during prayerful protests. They have climbed wood piles by strikers' fire barrels and made up clapping games to the political chants they hear.

They understand in their bones the meaning of social location. In Detroit, when very little, they asked about the "broken houses," the charred, gutted homes that stand on every block in this city where 6,000 homes a year are bulldozed in the aftermath of the flight to the suburbs. When we visited an affluent area when Lydia was three, she asked, "Do these people know how lucky they are?"

Raising them, we have watched the plumbline and tried to ensure that their participation in the risks we take was not invading their dreams or destroying their faith in the goodness of life. Our thinking was that at their baptism when we made promises to renounce evil, we made these promises for them until the day that they can choose for themselves. This implicates them in the forms of resistance that we have chosen: urban living, nonviolent witness against militarism and corporate abuse, as well as occasional hospitality to people who sometimes drag spectres of nightmares along with them.

Our kids also get their share of days on the beach and they are surrounded by a community of folks who know how to sing and write poetry and throw themselves down sledding hills with abandon.

We have recently, however, been blindsided. And I have found myself ill-equipped to deal with a major challenge that faces them in this most segregated urban area in the nation.

White liberal ideology and training made us unable, for years, to acknowledge even to ourselves that our kids were often excluded at their Detroit schools because they are white. At the same time that they reported being discriminated *against*, they were learning in school and at home about the oppressive role white people have played in our national history. It began to appear that, despite some of their actual experiences, the adults in their lives believed that people of color could do no wrong and white people were always in a position to apologize.

White liberal ideology made us unable to acknowledge even to ourselves that our kids were often excluded at their Detroit schools because they are white.

By the time Lydia was seven, she was in agony. She used to slam into her closet and cry when she came home from public school. In class, kids would cluster around her and stroke her hair and she managed the unasked-for attention, but on the schoolbus she was regularly insulted for being white by several kids, including the driver's granddaughter.

Ironically, moving our daughters to a private school committed to justice concerns only reinforced the mistake we were making at home. Classes in civil rights mentioned a few white folks who acted heroically for justice, but the conversations were not broad enough to suggest that African Americans could ever be powerful or act wrongly. Meanwhile, all the schoolchildren were painfully aware of white people's involvement in the decimation of Indian communities, slave trade, lynchings and ongoing racism.

In skits about Rosa Parks, our kids each had repeated opportunities to tell their black classmates to go to the back of the bus. One can only imagine how their early elementary school classmates felt about them and how my daughters felt about themselves.

There was never a point of validation for Lydia's and Lucy's experiences living in a black dominant city where white skin is often greeted with hostility at city pools or grocery stores.

My daughters are blonde-haired, blue-eyed kids. In their bodies they represent the "icons of white supremacy" that Eugene Rivers speaks of. Through no choice of their own, they are a visible symbol of "them that gets."

Only in the last year, though, have I learned to open my mouth in their defense. I am fighting now to find a place for them to stand.

I've pondered the experiences of black

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parents who had to send their kids to predominantly white schools — how did they encourage self-respect in their kids? Part of what they did was prepare their kids for the hatred and rejection many would turn on them because of their skin color. They taught their children that those who show race hatred are dangerous and *wrong*. They counselled their kids to take their educations and rise up. They retold stories about the strength of their ancestors who resisted and survived.

From their example, we have finally realized that we need to teach our children about slavery in the context of world history — a devastatingly cruel system based on power and wealth, not solely skin color. We are starting to teach them about their Irish and Scottish ancestors who left their homelands after land was ripped from them, who travelled on ships in which at least 20 percent of the passengers died, who arrived here as indentured servants.

I still feel a little crazed sorting this out: I'm not asking for revisionist history; I know our kids have to learn that the overarching reality today is a white racist structure. I'm not excusing historic or current atrocities. But I've come to understand that a breadth of history is necessary. My kids need to understand that people with light skin have not always and in all circumstances wielded power and that Africans and Native Americans have not always been victims or incapable of wrong doing. My work in this area is not aided by the response of some friends, white liberal parents, who suggest that the only problem is me. I feel more hope in conversation with the parents of Lucy's African American classmates. It isn't easy for us to trade viewing points, but we do agree that it is not good for our children to be cast as simply victim or oppressor.

When Lucy, now 7, came home this month describing a skit in which she was separated by race and gender and in which her African American classmates were told to work harder in the fields, I had the clarity to tell her I was angry; asking the kids to act out the skit was wrong. Her affect improved immediately. "It just makes fights," she said, adding that (understandably) one of her classmates had turned toward her, saying, "White people are poison."

I hope that we are beginning to do what many African Americans, including Eugene Rivers, have been urging white folks to do — to give up their "white" identities for real ethnic ones. I get nervous, because "white guilt" is so familiar to me that I don't know what all the implications of shedding it may be. But for starters, I want my daughters to understand how complicated our nation's and their families' histories are. They'll need to work at rejecting white privilege and the privilege/oppression that can come to those who look like the "icons of white supremacy."



Lydia and Lucy

I am optimistic that the school will make some changes.

In the meantime, I know that I will. My kids will learn that their ancestors loved Scotland and Ireland and left only because they could not find a way to stay and live. Some of these same ancestors were directly involved in stealing Indian land. One apparently owned slaves. Some were Quaker abolitionists. And others, I believe, were Indian and African American themselves.

We will continue to try to demonstrate ways to work to change our society, but we'll also encourage them not to be passive in the face of undue hostility. They can stand their ground and take pride in who they are. They'll be taught to expect the respect their humanity deserves. TW

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Complicating the stories: an interview with Robin Kelley

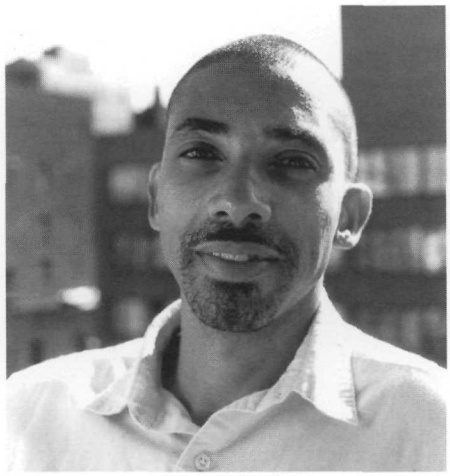
by Jane Slaughter

Robin D.G. Kelley teaches about the history of black working class people at New York University. He is the author of Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class *(1994) and the forthcoming* Don't Talk About My Mama! Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America. *He writes and researches from the standpoint that black history is not complete without the stories of how black people buck racism in myriad daily acts of resistance, outside of formal organizations or movements. He is co-editor of a new 11-volume series for young readers that he calls "subversive":* The Young Oxford History of African Americans. *He wrote the final volume,* Into the Fire: African Americans Since 1970, *in which he explores the best and worst of contemporary life, from hip-hop to black intellectuals. Thirty-four-year-old Kelley lives in New York City with his wife, painter Diedra Harris-Kelley, and their six-year-old daughter. In the dedication to* Race Rebels, *he writes, "To my two best friends, Diedra and Elleza, who taught me more about resistance than I ever cared to know."* The Witness *asked Kelley what he's learned about raising a young African American resistance fighter.*

Jane Slaughter: What are the obstacles to raising children of conscience?

Robin Kelley: Other than the outside world?

That's a hard question, because I find the irony, at least here in New York City, is that the more privileged you are, the easier it is. It's a very strange situation. My daughter goes to a really good public grade school where social justice is just part of the curriculum. They take the kids



Robin Kelley

on field trips and teach them about social justice. They have parents who devote a lot of time to the school. If I say I'm going to go into my daughter's classroom and give a presentation around social justice, they let me do it.

The other thing about being relatively privileged, living downtown in Greenwich Village: She doesn't see injustice on a day to day basis. No, I take that back. Actually she does. We're surrounded by homeless people, we're surrounded by police officers that are always stopping black people in the streets.

She witnesses that. It's not a matter of life and death for her. It's just something she observes.

J.S.: If it's not part of your own life to have to fight for something ...

R.K.: ... it becomes almost like a hobby. We tell her about ourselves growing up in Harlem and she can't believe that *we* were poor. She has no conception of that at all.

But we can't get away with anything, whether it's about the environment or about racism and sexism. My daughter's always on her p's and q's.

Now there are other barriers. One is the crass materialism that just dominates this culture. My daughter doesn't watch television, and not watching television has been fantastic for shielding her from certain things.

J.S.: Besides sending her to this school, what do you and Diedra do to try to get the social justice messages across?

R.K.: We take her to a lot of places. We take her to talks. She's heard Cornel West lots of times, Angela Davis, Toni Morrison. We go to poetry readings. She's very into the visual arts. The shows we see are often shows where the pieces are about social justice, and we have conversations about it.

If something comes up that's kind of retrograde, we talk about it. She's into Barbies, so when *The Nation* had an issue with Barbies on the cover, she wanted to know what it was about.

Reading about the terrible working conditions of the people who make Barbies kind of opened her eyes. It didn't convince her to get rid of her Barbies, but it kind of convinced her that maybe she shouldn't buy any more.

We're constantly talking to her, but the thing I'm afraid of is — you can't impose too much on her because then she'll become a neoconservative.

J.S.: Sometimes I wonder if by constantly taking our children to meetings where they sit in the back of the room with a book, or dragging them to picket lines, we're creating resentment, a backlash against politics.

R.K.: Once in a while we take her to

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demonstrations and rallies, but we don't do a whole lot of that. In fact I have cut down a lot on my own speaking and traveling just to be home. I think it's more effective to be home and able to converse and play than it is to go for massive exposure. There's got to be a balance between exposure to things and having some time to reflect.

But Elleza takes this stuff very seriously. Here's an example.

For the King holiday, I went into her class and talked about Dr. King and what he represented. I asked them, "What would each one of you do to continue King's legacy?" Elleza's idea was to start a newspaper about King's ideas. All the kids in the class would write articles about what they've seen and what they're doing and what they've learned.

And the second thing she would do is lead a sit-in in the White House. She drew this picture where her class is all sitting in the Oval Office and Hillary is tapping Bill on the shoulder saying, "You've got to do something, boy." The kids have a big banner saying, "Give the homeless what they need."

J.S.: How did you talk to the kids about King's ideas?

R.K.: The two things I emphasized were that the vision King had of social justice was not one limited to black people, nor was it limited to the United States — it was a global sort of vision. I demonstrated why emancipation in the south could transform all of the country and the world.

J.S.: Was that hard to do for six-year-olds?

R.K.: I played games with them; I created stories about children. By putting them in different spaces, we showed how segregation didn't equally oppress white people, but it did limit their mobility and movement and relationships — even as children. I talked about why King took a position against the Vietnam war.

We talked about why a war across the Pacific Ocean could have this huge impact on little children in the United States, and who really benefits from that. Then we talked about war, and that war is not just a mistake; war is about making some money for people, but not for everybody. These are brilliant little kids.

You can't be afraid as an educator or as a parent to complicate the stories. There are different stories and they contradict each other.

J.S.: Were you concerned with how to get the message across without leaving the impression that all white people are bad?

R.K.: That's exactly what I had to do, because Elleza is the only African American child in her class.

In a school that's 50 percent black and Latino, in the special program for gifted and talented that she's in, she is the only black child. It's difficult for her; she's always the one who's looked to, to have all the experience and knowledge of black people *in the first grade*.

When I did this game, the white kids weren't necessarily white; they were whatever I assigned to them. I emphasized that everyone who participated in this movement for social justice for African Americans wasn't black. There were white people involved. Was it because they just felt sorry for black people? That's part of it. But part of it was because many of these white people recognized that the movement was also for their own liberation, their ability to treat all people with humanity.

Racism is the result of people not knowing. It's the result of a certain *kind* of knowledge that's imposed on people. The trick is, how do you reverse that knowledge so that white people don't have to see themselves as just white? Or believe that they're better than anyone else because they have certain privileges? Because when they don't achieve in that framework — there's enormous pressure — they feel like even a greater failure than people of color who are expected not to achieve. Whiteness itself is both a mark of privilege and a mark of oppression.

And if they allow their skin to dominate them instead of trying to break out of it — one way to break out is to participate in movements against racism — they'll never feel really comfortable with themselves.

There's a cost to identifying yourself as a white person only, and not fighting against racism.

Second, not all white people are bad. Many white people who are silent on the matter are silent out of fear and intimidation. I shared with them some of my own research, from *Race Rebels*. There were some white people who went to the back of the bus, and sat and were arrested or ejected because they wouldn't move from the back of the bus. Who were these people, what were they about, what movements were they a part of?

This was shocking to the kids, to hear that white people were arrested.

It's too complicated to reduce to "white people are bad and black people are good."

With kids, you can't be afraid as an educator or as a parent to complicate the stories. I'm always doing that with Elleza. She's sometimes frustrated, but she doesn't ever allow one story to be the dominant story.

Every time they think they understand it, throw something at them that makes them think, well, maybe that's not really the case.

There are all these different stories and they contradict each other. TW

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Sacrifice: Isaac's view

by Erika Meyer

Some years later the Lord decided to test Abraham, so he spoke to him.

Abraham answered, "Here I am Lord."

The Lord said, "Go get Isaac, your only son, the one you dearly love! Take him to the land of Moriah, and I will show you a mountain where you must sacrifice him to me on the fires of an altar" (Genesis 22:1-2).

I was sitting in the seminary library. I needed to focus on my work for theology class. Instead, a sense of heaviness pervaded me, a gravity that over the semester had become insistent. I was tired of it and wanted to know what was wrong with me. On the desk sat a clean piece of notebook paper. I decided to draw a picture — perhaps my psyche might throw me a bone of insight. First came a stick-figure priest and an altar table and then a second stick person. This figure was a girl. She lay across the altar. I recoiled at the thought that the girl on the altar was a sacrifice, but it was too late; my insight had come.

A girl of 13 with a big imagination. She reads books about the ghetto. She wants to be a gangleader's girlfriend. She wants to smoke pot and make out like the characters do in The Cross and the Switchblade *before the gang members repent and get saved. Of course it is sad to say good-bye to her friends. Her leave-taking is melodramatic, her girlfriends cry for her, even some boys promise to write. She is riding high.*

It was the new year 1977. My father and mother and the two younger children were preparing the house for sale in Ohio. My older brother and I were already in Detroit. I had arrived early to start school with the new semester. For the time being, I was living with Larry and Carolyn Strayhorn and their six kids. I remember the middle child voicing her embarrassment at having a white girl move in with them, but the older girls were friendly.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people (Acts 2:44-47a).

The Strayhorns were members of the church my parents had decided to join. The Church of the Messiah, a product of the charismatic movement of the 1970s, was different from most Episcopal churches: Many of its members lived communally, inspired by the description of the early church in the second chapter of Acts.

There were roughly 100 people, counting children, that were living "in community." Community members lived in nine large homes. My family would become part of a household in the vicinity of the church. The church also ran an elementary school which was open to the neighborhood. The older children and teenagers fed into the public school system.

There are three other eighth graders from church at her new middle school. They seem very young to her. They surprise her on her first day of school by praying together in the carpool. They are clearly goody-two-shoes and she will steer clear of them.

Her new classmates mistake her for a substitute teacher. She sits in wonder at the constant mayhem of her homeroom. The real teacher, a tiny black woman, arrives. At the front of the room, she yells for order, finally gives up. The noise is an assault; the class will always be more or less out of control. There are no Messiah kids with her. She had thought that was what she wanted. She knows that she is in over her head; she waits to cry until after school when she is alone.

Maybe if I had not been so intent on proving that I was 13 going on 18, I would have talked to someone. The idea that I could handle a situation was a shock to me. But I had embraced the role of the rebellious "p.k." (preacher's kid) with gusto and I would not deign to talk to my parents or anyone else. At the same time, my father was the measure of all things to me; I admired his decision to move the family to Messiah and I wanted to be tough for him.

In the midst of all that was good, the teenagers had to deal with some overwhelming situations involving issues of race, class and sex that the Messiah community had not yet begun to name.

The rumors and threats start in the first weeks. She is supposed to be a prostitute. She has had a baby. The girls in her class call her "rich bitch." A group of them say they are going to cut off her hair in the bathroom. Someone wants to fight her. But true mortification hits when a white lady math teacher pulls her aside to lecture her about her reputation; she is speechless with the teacher. She tells no

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Messiah's youth group in 1977. Erika Meyer is in the back row, third from the left.

one what is happening at school.

The life at Messiah held lots of appeal for me. I loved the high-energy folk music in our worship and our commitment to simple living. I loved eating rice and beans and finding clothes at the thrift shop. I loved singing grace around the dinner table; even sharing a bedroom with four people in it was fine with me. Probably the same things that would be attractive about any Amish or Mennonite community were present at Messiah. In many ways we were a Spirit-filled community like the one described in Acts.

But in the midst of all that was good, I believe the teenagers had to deal with some overwhelming situations in school and on the buses and on the streets. Situations involving issues of race, class and sex that the Messiah community had not yet begun to name; issues that can still, 20 years later, overwhelm and silence me.

My worst times in Detroit were in those first months; my high school experience the next year was a big relief. I attended a magnet high school for the whole city, which meant a more integrated and middle-class environment. I still had to navigate the buses and streets but at least in school I did not feel like a target for racial and class hostility.

But beneath the relative peace of high school and burrowed under my feelings about Messiah, was the image of Isaac, the image of a child offered as a sacrifice for his father's faith. Part of me understood my experience in this way, and years later the image of sacrifice was still there pressing for recognition.

Without Isaac surfacing in me, I could not have known to climb down from the altar. Climbing down has meant engaging my siblings and others about their experiences and finally telling my parents about the hardships I faced in our move to Messiah. It has also meant writing my story to hold up the often unspoken and unknown costs of discipleship borne by children and teenagers.

Sacrifice need not be a dirty word when children are concerned; but the *intended* sacrifice a parent or community asks of a child may not be the *actual* sacrifice that the child takes on. Our own ideals may make our children vulnerable to harm which is unknown to us. By all means let us make sacrifices together, but with care and discernment so that our children do not end up feeling that they have become the sacrifice. TW

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- Economic justice, 5/94
- Money, 3/92
- Jubilee economics, 1/97

Ethics
- Is it ever okay to lie?, 4/96
- Christians and animal rights, 10/93

Family values
- Holy matrimony, 12/95
- Family values, 12/94

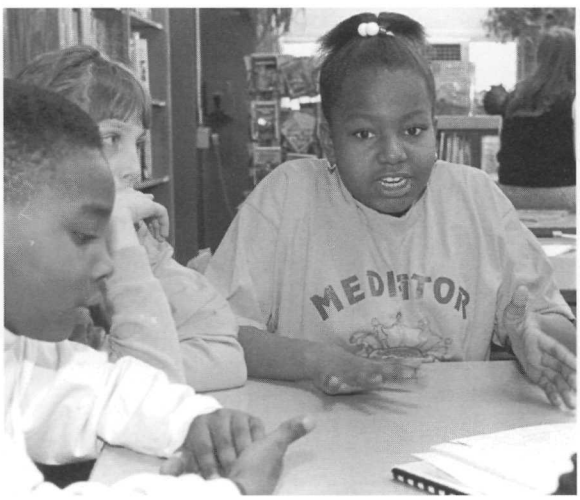
Government
- The New Party, 11/95
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- Caesar and the widows and orphans, 4/93
- Hospitals, 6/96
- International youth in crisis, 7-8/93

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Reaching for resources

by Karen D. Bota

These resources may be helpful to families who are discussing and looking for creative ways to deal with a number of complex justice issues.



Carolina Kroon/Impact Visuals

Conflict resolution with 4th and 5th graders in NYC.

Racism

Colors of Harmony (5767 Foser Rd., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110; 800-283-5659) offers a variety of multi-cultural resources such as books, toys and other educational items through catalog sales.

Different and Wonderful: Raising Black Children in a Race-Conscious Society by Dr. Darlene Powell Hopson and Dr. Derek S. Hopson, Fireside.

Teaching Tolerance: Raising Open-Minded, Empathetic Children by Sara Bullard, editor of *Teaching Tolerance* (a magazine for educators, published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, with resources and ideas for promoting respect for diversity). She includes suggested family activities, organizational listings, recommended reading and other resources.

Center for Healing Racism (P.O. Box 27327, Houston, TX 77227; 713-738-7223) provides publications and workshops for community groups.

Race, Rage and Family: What Do We Tell the Children? is a special report published by *Parenting Magazine* (307 Howard St., 17th floor, San Francisco, CA 94105).

The Values Library Series, published by the Rosen Publishing Group (800-237-9932) for secondary school students, bolsters cooperation, tolerance, self-esteem, citizenship and compassion. The *Coping With: Facing Challenges* series helps young people confront bias, verbal abuse, discrimination, cross-cultural and interracial relationships, sexual orientation and a bigoted parent.

Peace and nonviolence

Children's Defense Fund (202-628-8787) produces a variety of curricula, activity books, materials for youth and children's books related to justice issues.

Children's Creative Response to Conflict (Box 271, 521 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960) develops programs, a newsletter, and other resources for teachers and parents.

Making the Peace, an innovative 15-session violence prevention curriculum for young people developed by the Oakland Men's Project. Also available: *Days of Respect: Organizing a Schoolwide Violence Prevention Program* and *Helping Teens Stop Violence.* For ordering information call 800-266-5592.

Parenting for Peace and Justice Network at the Institute for Peace and Justice (4144 Lindell Blvd., Room 124, St. Louis, MO 63108; 314-533-4445) provides workshops and video training, a newsletter and many resources for families seeking wholeness, peace and justice. Local PPJN coordinator can help form and nurture local family support groups.

Peacemaking in the Home workshop includes singing, training in conflict resolution, dealing with anger, setting up family meetings, and prayer. New: Families *Creating a Circle of Peace*, a booklet by the Families Against Violence Advocacy Network/Parenting for Peace and Justice, addresses the concerns of parents and others who want to take a stand for peace and against violence. Includes 40 pages of stories, suggestions, activities and resources to help families live out their pledge. E-mail: ppjn@aol.com.

Peacemaker Training Institute at the Fellowship of Reconciliation (P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960; 914-358-4601) trains youth 17-25 who are seeking to create nonviolent alternatives in society to become more effective peace and justice advocates. E-mail: fornatl@igc.apc.org.

Episcopal Church Children's Ministries Cluster (212-922-5212) has created the Children Against Violence Project. Available resources for home or Sunday School include *Treasure Magazine: Kids for Peace — Making a Non-Violent USA*, for children ages 5-13. A leader's guide is available.

Urban Family Magazine, a source of hope and progress for today's African American Christian, is online. Reach their Website at http://www.netdoor.com/com/rronline/uf. The current issue contains an article on raising nonviolent children in a violent world.

Youth in Peacemaking, published by the ELCA with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, addresses nonviolence, justice and related themes. Call the ELCA (800-328-4648 — ask for #69-9946) or Presbyterian Church USA (800-524-2612 — ask for #DMS 259-92-917).

Gender

In Amazing Grace, Dial Books for Young Readers, Grace is a young African American girl who, with the encouragement of her mother and grandmother, holds on to her belief that she can be anything she wants to be, despite others telling her she can't.

The National Women's History Project, (7738 Bell Rd., Dept. P, Windsor, CA 95492,

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Karen D. Bota is promotion consultant at *The Witness.*

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707-838-6000) promotes understanding of women's roles in American history and society though books, videos, newsletters, posters and teaching materials.

New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams (P.O. Box 3620, Duluth, MN 55803; 218-728-5507) is a bi-monthly magazine created and edited by young women ages 8-14, with news, commentary, health information, activities and good ideas. This same group with their parents publishes bi-monthly *New Moon Parenting.* New Moon has a Website: http://www.newmoon.org.

Resource Book for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults in the Episcopal Church, published by the Episcopal Church Children's Ministry Cluster (212-922-5212) provides a collection of articles on gender, racism, white privilege, environmental stewardship and more.

The Girl Who Loved Caterpillars, The Putnam and Grosset Group, retells a 12th century Japanese story of a free-spirited girl who is resolute in her own identity and will not cave in to society's strict ideas of the roles of women.

The Wonder of Boys by Michael Gurian. A practical book that teaches what boys need to grow into strong, responsible, and sensitive men. Available through Courage to Change (800-440-4003).

Economic justice

Seeds of Simplicity, a national nonprofit group specializing in the development and distribution of simplicity-themed learning materials for children and their families, is a program of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy at Cornell University. Curriculum packets and other resources help foster consumer will-power in children and adults.

Fresh Produce is a quarterly two-page newsletter published by Franklin Research and Development for kids on money, the economy and socially responsible investing. Available from Franklin Insight (711 Atlantic Ave., Boston, MA 02111).

Kids, Money & Values: Creative Ways to Teach Your Kids about Money by Patricia Schiff Estess and Irving Barocas, Betterway Books, teaches good habits, attitudes and skills regarding money. The book includes activities, tips, role-playing games and projects, and is coded for ages preschool through pre-teen.

The children's book *The Table Where Rich People Sit* by Byrd Baylor, illustrated by Peter Parnall, Scribner, teaches the message of stewardship and what it means to be rich.

United For a Fair Economy is a national organization that draws attention to the growth of income and wealth inequality in the U.S. and to implications of this inequality for America's democracy, economy and society. The organization offers workshops, trainer training, and a variety of presentations focusing on the particular issues of a group. Visit their Website: http://www.stw.org. E-mail: STW@stw.org.

100 Things to Do for the Earth and *We Can Do That: Hunger Awareness Activities That Work* are available from the Office of Global Mission of the Methodist Church (410-727-6106).

Eco-justice

Beyond Leaf-Raking: Learning to Serve/ Serving to Learn by Peter L. Benson, Abingdon Press, includes 135 project ideas related to the environment (800-251-3320).

Faith-Based Environmental Justice Resources for Youth & Children, a comprehensive listing of education resources, has been compiled by the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Resources listed are produced or recommended by denominational offices and other partner religious organizations. To order, call 800-762-0965.

Families Caring at Home, In the Community, For the Earth by James McGinnis, Mary Joan and Jerry Park, Institute for Peace and Justice, offers a wide range of family activities and program ideas for helping families to be more compassionate and caring towards one another and towards their community and the world (314-533-4445).

Just Family Nights: 60 Activities to Keep Your Family Together in a World Falling Apart, edited by Susan Vogt, Brethren Press. This inter-generational resource offers fun and educational activities to promote family unity and foster healthy values. Environmental stewardship, justice and social action are among the issues addressed (800-441-3712).

Old Turtle by Douglas Wood, illustrated by Cheng-Khee Chee, Pfiefer-Hamilton Publishers, tells a charming fable that promotes an understanding of the earth and our relationship to all beings that inhabit it.

Gay and lesbian issues

Are You Still My Mother? by Gloria Guss Back, Warner Books, addresses the emotional needs of parents with gay children, including a discussion of phases they are apt to go through (shock, anger, guilt and self-depreciation), and gives some advice on handling difficult situations.

In *Beyond Acceptance: Parents of Lesbians and Gays Talk about Their Experiences* by C. Wirth Griffin, Prentice-Hall, parents tell how they came to deal with the fact that they had lesbian or gay children.

Fund for Human Dignity/National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (666 Broadway, Room 410, New York, NY 10012; 212-529-1600) provides informational pamphlets including *Questions About Homosexuality, Answers to a Parent's Questions About Homosexuality, and Combating Homophobia.*

Growing Up Gay. A 55-minute video by TBR Productions (P.O. Box 2362, Boston, MA 02107) that presents what it is like to grow up gay in a heterosexist society.

Positive Image. Parents of lesbians and gays speak out in this 30-minute video by the Federation of Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P.O. Box 4087, Hollywood, CA 91617; 800-4-FAMILY).

Now That You Know: What Every Parent Should Know About Homosexuality by Betty Fairchild and Nancy Howard, HBJ, is a recommended book for parents.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc. (P.O. Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024, 213-472-8952) provides gay and lesbian support pamphlets: *About Our Children* (facts), *Can We Understand?* (a guide for parents), *Coming Out to Your Parents* (for young adults and parents) *Why is My Child Gay?* (11 scientists respond). TW

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Report from Baghdad

[The following account was written by Brad Simpson, a graduate student at Northwestern University.]

I traveled to Iraq in December with the fourth delegation of Voices In the Wilderness, a campaign to end the economic sanctions against the people of Iraq. Nothing could have prepared me for the overwhelming suffering I witnessed. Malnutrition is epidemic throughout the country, reaching 50 to 60 percent of the population in areas outside Baghdad. Hospitals have set up malnutrition wards to handle the flood of victims, but lack the medicines and supplies to treat patients. In Iraq's leading children's hospital, doctors reported having only 10 percent of the chemotherapy drugs needed to treat childhood cancer victims, whose numbers have increased five-fold since 1991. [Doctors classify the rise in childhood leukemia as an epidemic and blame it on tons of radioactive debris left by the nearly one million depleted uranium-tipped shells fired by the U.S. during the war.]

Surgeons with whom we spoke bemoaned the impact of the embargo on intellectual and scientific life in Iraq. Many had not seen a medical journal or textbook in five years. Nearly every professional in Iraq can relate similar stories. The work of Iraqi poets and artists these days reflects the deep bitterness and desperation engendered by the embargo.

The entire country lacks spare parts for machines of every description; at al Qadissiysa Children's Hospital in Saddam City — Baghdad, 75 percent of the infant incubators lie useless for want of parts. More than half the country lacks potable water, and much of what the poor routinely drink is infected with Cholera, Typhoid and E. Coli bacteria, leaving malnourished children especially vulnerable to disease. According to the United Nations' own statistics, nearly 600,000 children have died from starvation and disease as a result of economic sanctions.

The psychological toll of the sanctions is more difficult to measure, but extends beyond the increases in crime and divorce. Our government-appointed guide explained that he had not visited his brother in six months, though he lives just down the street. He feared humiliating his brother, who was too poor to offer the obligatory tea that is a measure of one's hospitality in many Arab countries.

The U.S. media has sought to portray U.N. Resolution 986, the celebrated oil-for-food agreement approved on Dec. 9, as the potential savior of Iraq. Iraqis without exception explain that U.N. 986 will not begin to meet the overwhelming needs of the civilian population, and does nothing to repair the infrastructure of the country or reopen the intellectual and academic lifelines for many professionals.

'No food right'

The U.S. objected to the recent World Food Summit declaration affirming food as a human right. A U.S. statement filed at the end of the summit declared that "the United States believes that the attainment of any 'right to adequate food' or 'fundamental right to be free from hunger' is a goal or aspiration to be realized progressively that does not give rise to any international obligations nor diminish the responsibilities of national governments toward their citizens."

— *Z Magazine*, 1/97

Return the power

"What I learned from almost 30 years of teaching supposedly ignorant and debased ghetto children was that, given a chance and *pushed* to set aside their self-hatred, a very large number of them were capable of powerful and subtle thought. I learned what Chicago teacher Marva Collins learned: that ghetto kids have an appetite for Plato and Shakespeare undiluted, but no appetite at all for lifeless, scientifically selected reading materials.

"In my opinion, we have to radically decentralize government-corporate schooling, return the power to design and assess programs to the local level, and ensure that every form of training for the young aims at producing independent, self-reliant minds; good characters; and individuals who get fighting mad when called a 'human resource' or told their main function is to be part of the 'workforce.'"

— John Taylor Gatto, *The Sun*, 2/97

Army ads on-line

Channel One, already under fire from national education groups for its commercialized educational programming, has received additional criticism for running a Web site with direct links to an advertising site — the Army's recruitment home page. "Children in fifth and sixth grades are too young to understand the consequences of fighting in wars and shouldn't be exposed to glamorous military recruitment ads," said Harold Jordan, coordinator of the national Youth and Militarism Program of the American Friends Service Committee. A recent review of the Web site by the Center for Media Education concluded that Channel One violates an on-line advertising principle that "content areas for young people should not link directly to advertising sites."

Methodists challenged on inclusion

A "Statement of Conscience" calling for greater inclusiveness of gay and lesbian persons in the church is being circulated by a group of 15 United Methodist clergy among other clergypersons of their denomination. For more information, write "In All Things Charity," c/o Broadway United Methodist Church, 3344 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL 60657.

Short takes

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Risks and rhythms with city kids

by Butch Naters Gamarra

Raising children with conscience and according to the gospel's values, for me, means putting my family first. People need to peel off the layers of guilt-conditioning that say you are selfish if you take care of yourself and your own. I know from experience how families go down the tubes while one is busy being superpriest. It is so easy to forget that Jesus already saved the world. We forget the meaning of "love your neighbor as yourself."

My wife Jennifer (who is also a priest) and I have made the decision to be intentionally present to our family, especially to our daughters Elizabeth, 16, and Katalina, 3. We go to fewer meetings, give up certain political, diocesan and community involvements that aren't making a difference. We do not need to be political for the sake of being political.

To raise children with conscience one needs to be home. The teaching of gospel values is done by example in words and deeds. For instance, one teaches respect by respecting the child. With Katalina this means spending time in conversation, playing, praying, talking about God and Jesus, reading and telling stories, including Bible stories, going for walks to the video store and then sitting with her to watch Sesame Street and Winnie the Pooh, being there for baths and meals, bedtime and waking.

One has to be there to set these foundations, to set boundaries and to teach discipline. More important, however, is teaching about love and forgiveness and learning to say I am sorry. All of this has to do with the love of Christ. It is a conscious decision to put our child in the hands of God and to trust that.

Like most children, Katalina and Elizabeth are great emulators. We try to relate to each other in God-centered ways. We work hard at eliminating double standards. We teach the kids about accountability and responsibility. We are big on respect and good manners. The environment we provide at home is essential. It carries over and withstands the influences of pre-school, high school and beyond. Wherever the Spirit is welcomed and invited, positive and powerful things take place. It does not mean that all is rosy and problem-free, but we learn to deal with difficult situations with the power of God's Spirit.

Both our daughters spend time in the churches where we work. In my case, that means they are in the midst of people from all different backgrounds, cultures and races. They hear different languages. Like the kids in my parish, they are at risk in that when we walk outside, we never know what's going to happen. The risk that we take comes with the exercise of our vocation. It's a risk that everyone who has a vocation to work in the city where there are certain dangers takes. But we trust that they are God's children. We also know that part of God's caring for children is for their parents to be vigilant.



Katalina and Elizabeth

Katalina is a free spirit. She says hello to everybody. She doesn't notice urban decay, but she does sometimes say that trash on the street is "yucky." I wish we could offer her more space. When she visits her grandparents in the suburbs, she rolls in the grass and runs. But we're happy. Katalina walks the streets with us. She talks to cab drivers. She's a city kid.

Elizabeth takes subways now that she is 16. She had to learn to get around; you can't live in the city and be a prisoner. She is a loving, ethical, moral and responsible young woman. She is also a typical teenager; she loves music, goes to dances and hangs out with her friends. She dyes her hair different colors and dresses like her peers. She is a good student and an actress-singer.

We are working at setting a foundation based on the love of God and the values of the gospel. We have seen and experienced the power of God's love and Spirit in our children. We are encouraging them to love and respect, to share and be kind. So far our children have lived according to that expectation. We have also taught them that God is with us always. We trust that. And, therefore, our life together is joyous. TW

Butch Naters Gamarra is a *Witness* contributing editor and Episcopal priest at St. Stephens, Boston, Mass.

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Shaping our future

by Elizabeth Kaeton

My maternal grandmother had 20 pregnancies and 22 children. Only 15 lived to be adults. I asked her once why she had so many children. She said, "Children are a dream of the future that we live today."

Make no mistake: This was not the romanticism of a woman wistfully living her life through her children. Neither was this an expression of saccharin, Hallmark-card sentimentality. For a woman who came to this country at age 13 from the poverty of her war-torn village in Portugal, this was a powerful political statement. Children were her opportunities to create a new community, to give form to possibility, to participate in the vision of peace and justice.

Her name was Maria. I named my third and last-born daughter in her honor. She was, for me, a model of womanhood. She exemplified what it meant to be a mother and to be connected to the future, yes, but even more to shape and mold the future through the present and active formation of the values and behavior of our children. I learned from her that to be a parent was to be a primary architect of society.

If we haven't learned the power of the humble role of parenthood, the family court system knows it well. "In the best interest of the children" is often not about a standard of justice — especially in gay and lesbian families. In 1976, I lost custody of my two children in what was described as the first open lesbian custody case to be heard in that county court. It took five years, countless educational sessions with the family court system, and thousands of dollars in lawyers' fees to convince "the powers that be" that their standard needed expansion in scope and definition.

In that time, however, I learned to hear my grandmother's sage aphorism in a deeply personal and yet highly political way. In the midst of the deep pain and anguish we felt, being separated from our kids for no other reason than the fact that we were two women who loved each other, we also realized that we had an opportunity to make the future different for ourselves, our children and our community. We realized that this is the way women have been architects of our culture and society for generations.

Children are an opportunity to create a new community, to give form to possibility.

Beyond our personal yearnings and needs, if we, as lesbian women, were going to have any influence in creating a new community, if we were going to give form to the possibility of new constellations of family, if we were going to participate in the vision of peace and justice for our culture and society, children must be an integral part of our lives.

In the fourth year of our custody battle, we decided to explore all of our options while continuing to pursue custody of our children. We researched foster care, adoption and insemination. We made phone calls, visited adoption agencies and women's clinics, and talked to legal experts. And we prayed. Without ceasing.

By the end of that year, we found our 11-room home filled with children. My daughters came to stay for the summer and announced they were not going back to their father; by the end of August, the court system agreed. We were approved as adoptive parents of a profoundly retarded Downs Syndrome child. We became foster parents of an 18-month-old boy and two sisters who had been physically and sexually abused by their mother's boyfriend, as well as two brothers whose mother had an emotional breakdown. At once, our life was wonderfully chaotic and deeply fulfilling. Providing love, nurture and stability for our children was probably the most radical, revolutionary act we could have performed.

Our biological and adoptive children are remarkable young men and women. Our eldest daughter is married to a wonderful man and they are working on making us grandmothers. One of our middle children is a card-carrying Republican. All of our children are fiercely committed to the concept of family, but their understanding of that notion is different than many of their contemporaries. The values and beliefs they learned at home are now the vehicle of increased tolerance of diversity, if not change and transformation.

"Children are the dream of the future that we live today." As my grandmother experienced, not all of our dreams live to see fruition. I'd like to think that our daughter, Maria, is more than the dream her great-grandmother had when she came to this country at just about the same age as my daughter is now. I'd like to think that Maria's children will be able to dream a future beyond anything she could ask for or imagine. For such, I believe, is part of the peace and justice of God. TW

Elizabeth Kaeton is canon missioner to The Oasis, a ministry with and to gay men and lesbians sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Newark.

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We are family

I remember years ago as a child watching my family react when Uncle Jimmy came into a room. He was a wonderfully flamboyant gay man — from every angle. Little whispers would go around the room about his clothing, where he went on vacation, what his partner did for a living. They were not unusual topics, but the tone made all the difference. It was that little snicker, that sly look passed from nephew to niece to uncle to aunt that taught me more about homophobia than I ever want to remember — Uncle Jimmy's life was the subject of humor and even disdain. I did not want that to happen to me. Ever. My parents did not take part in the subtle gay-bashing, but neither did they oppose it.

Their motto, "Live and let live," was not enough for me as a child, and it is not going to make it today. I learned that it must be okay to make fun of gays and lesbians. I also learned over the years that silence is a great enforcer. If nothing else, it tells me that you don't care. It may also tell me the issue is so terrible that polite people do not speak of it to their children.

If I had been reared in a perfect world, my parents would have embraced Uncle Jimmy with as much love and acceptance publicly as I suspect they did privately. And age-appropriate answers might have been given to a child wondering where the mommy was in that family — and how come they didn't have children?

There were so many aspects of life that I *was* encouraged to appreciate — books, music, food, the outdoors, even interests my parents and siblings did not share. There were moments in which my family was pro-active in their concern. Why do we stop short at people who seem different? How do we teach tolerance, the first step — and love, the second?

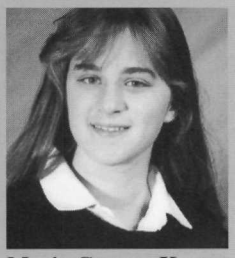
Tolerance can only be a first step. I tolerate what I cannot change. I am letting some element of life co-exist with me because I have no choice, e.g. pain, frustration, sickness, even death. But what about people? Is it enough to co-exist, to "live and let live," to put up with someone? It is fear and the unknown that hold us back. I cannot simply pick up a book about people to learn more about them — I must live with them, sharing their hopes and dreams, triumphs and failures. That's step two; that is when fear is put aside and understanding replaces tolerance.

This is what we are about at **We Are Family,** trying to make the world a safer, more accepting place of gay and lesbian people. Sometimes our success begins in small ways. A year ago, a comfortable, politically conservative businessman and public servant from a small town in South Carolina received a copy of the first issue of *Plain Talk,* our periodic journal directed towards people who deal with youth. His response was to pick up the phone to say, "Thank you! This is what I want my children to see so that they will have a chance to understand." His children are being given a far different message from the one I received 30 years ago.

— Warren Gress is program director of We Are Family, a non-profit organization in Charleston, S.C. (803-937-0000).

'Mia has two moms'

I have two parents of the same gender who love each other (and me!). I consider my situation normal, but I have felt the effects of other people's ignorance and prejudice. It is hard for me to believe that there are people who consider the fact that I have two mothers "abnormal."



Maria Conroy Kaeton

In the eighth grade, there was a student who decided to make an issue out of my home situation. She decided I was a "freak," and that all freaks should be ignored. She was even able to convince some of the other kids in my class to do the same. It really bothered me when other students in the class would not talk to me.

However, when they realized that knowing this fact did not change who I was and that it is not the gender of the parents that matters but rather the love and stability at home, everything went back to normal. It also helped when people realized that she was going through her own family crisis at the time. I guess, in part, she was experiencing a lot of hurt and anger, a lot of frustration and fear, and she took it out on me. I guess that's how prejudice works sometimes.

I don't know if growing up with two mothers has made me more aware of prejudice or not. I have some great friends with parents of different genders who are very aware, very sensitive. Come to think of it, though, most of my friends are from "different" families: African-American, Philippine, and mixed races. I've always gone to a school which had a lot of diversity and which was either affiliated with a religion or where ethics and justice were taught.

I would not change my situation even if I were given the chance. I love my family very much and I know that they love me. Why would I change that?

— Maria Conroy Kaeton, 15

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But what of the price of peace? I think of the good, decent, peace-loving people I have known by the thousands and I wonder.

How many of them are so afflicted with the wasting disease of normalcy that, even as they declare the peace, their hands reach out with an instinctive spasm in the direction of their loved ones, in the direction of their comforts, their home, their security, their income, their future, their plans — that five-year plan of studies, that 10-year plan of professional status, that 20-year plan of family growth and unity, that 50-year plan of decent life and honorable natural demise.

"Of course, let us have the peace," we cry, "but at the same time let us have normalcy, let us lose nothing, let our lives stand intact, let us know neither prison nor ill repute nor disruption of ties." And because we must encompass this and protect that, and because at all costs — at all costs — our hopes must march on schedule, and because it is unheard of that in the name of peace a sword shall fall, disjoining that fine and cunning web that our lives have woven, because it is unheard of that good men should suffer injustice or families be sundered or good repute be lost — because of this we cry peace and cry peace, and there is no peace. There is no peace because there are no peacemakers. There are no makers of peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war — at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake.

—Daniel Berrigan,
No Bars to Manhood, *1970*

The price of peace

by Jeanne Heyer

When I was young in the peace movement, I knew what needed to be done. I and some of my fellow peacemakers were possessed by a vision of social justice remarkable in both its clarity and its arrogance. I believed in myself as one of the prophets, one of the movers and shakers who would tumble the bestial social order with the force of our moral purity. My friends and I were somehow more "real" than the rest of our brothers and sisters; more lit with passion and surety and risk; we were the sacrificial lambs whose lives would be spent so that others might live. We held the fate of the earth and our collective souls in our hands. We were the redeemers. And we were sure.

Now I am not so sure. Now that I am a parent I weigh things differently. I continue to believe that our redemption is joined irrevocably to each other, and will not be purchased without cost or risk or blood. Each of us has a responsibility to bear some of that cost, to play our part in the risk of redemption. Though I cleave to my belief in the necessity of moral purification and meaningful self-sacrifice, I am distrustful of what I have come to perceive as movement grandiosity. I recently rediscovered a famous passage written by Daniel Berrigan during the Vietnam war. While I wonder if he would see things differently almost 30 years later, it remains a piece that moves me profoundly. Its power and my great respect for the author remain undiminished. His passage is only one manifestation of a "culture of heroics" that thrives within the peace movement; there are many more contemporary examples. Berrigan's call for personal sacrifice, his challenge to peacemakers to "up the ante," cannot be easily silenced or denied. Much of his exhortation resonates loudly in my own heart.

And yet, there is something that jars; a righteousness that allows the peacemaker to sacrifice family in the name of a large vision. It seems to me that a crucial distinction must be made between self-sacrifice and "other-sacrifice," and that this is a distinction often overlooked by many in social justice movements.

If the cost of a decision is borne by you, if the "blood" that you shed is your own, this is self-sacrifice. "Other-sacrifice" occurs when the cost of your choice is borne by another. Berrigan alludes to this kind of sacrifice when he mentions the "peace-loving people who cry out for peace. . . but whose hands reach out with an instinctive spasming in the direction of their loved ones." If these "loved ones" include dependent children, I suggest that Berrigan's challenge (and others of its nature) have crossed the line from self-sacrifice to promoting "other-sacrifice." When we allow another individual (or group) to bear the cost of our vision we enter ground that is fraught with peril. With each choice to sacrifice another, the possibility of social justice is diminished.

Perhaps there is a certain faithfulness in Berrigan's "peace-loving people" who reach for their loved ones. What if this desire to protect and nurture, this "instinctive-spasming" is exactly that — a God-given reflex that serves to protect

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something precious. Is it not part of the evil of war, the parting of parent and child, this whole-hearted consent that even our most precious bone and blood may be sacrificed to the god of war and global supremacy? Why have we as a nation agreed to pay this price, to accept this "collateral damage"? Should we not be building a different way — one that honors the deepest instincts of our hearts? What if more soldiers said "no" to war because they had small children, or a partner pregnant with new life? What if more soldiers said that war is not worth sundering any family; not ours here or theirs on distant shores? Perhaps there are times when reaching toward hearth and home, invoking protected space, is a courageous and faith-filled act.

But how do I know what (and when) to protect, and what to risk? What are the needs of my daughters and how do they "stack up" against the resounding need of the larger human family? I have too few answers.

I know what I want for my children, however. I want them to love this earth they've found themselves on, to know God in the warmth of spring rain and the tartness of wild grapes. I want them to have this time of innocence, to walk without fear, to learn this love. This is an easy lesson in the sacred circle of prairie and fir and wild orchard that surrounds our home.

But there is another lesson to be taught, of balance and responsibility, of faith that speaks in the dark. Of justice that draws itself up, hand over hand, like water from a well. This lesson I feel ill-equipped to teach. Outside my window sunset washes newly fallen snow with apricot and lavender, and the moon rises silver and lovely. There is beauty here to make the heart ache. Here it would be easy to relegate to our peripheral vision those who live daily with fear and gunfire, and without food. Their voices haunt me, waft on summer breezes between the chase-and-tickle laughter of my daughters, keen in the trees on cold winter nights, plead for bread when I scrape leftovers into the compost pile. My children must learn to hear their voices. I dread this lesson though, I do not want to teach it. Early last summer we handed out leaflets urging the lifting of economic sanctions against Iraq. My five-year-old asked to be included because she was worried that the Iraqi children wouldn't have enough to eat. We had been leafletting for perhaps 10 minutes when she offered a leaflet to a man who snatched it from her, muttered "filthy pigs" and threw it on the ground. She came to me with hurt and confusion in her eyes, wondering why he had called her a "filthy pig" and why he didn't care that the children didn't have enough to eat. I don't remember what I said — only the ache I felt as I saw some of her innocence leave her, a loss I am not yet done grieving.



Linnea



Rachel

And there are other voices inside me, too; older, quieter voices. What of innocence? they whisper — this too is necessity, this wide-eyed delight in being. This is the bedrock on which my children will dance and love and fight. Dance gracefully, love and fight fiercely and tenderly.

I do not mean to imply that sacrifice is not required, just that we make sure we sacrifice only what is ours to give. The God I know is not the God of Abraham sacrificing Isaac. I am wary of any movement that rewards this sort of "other-sacrifice." When I can imagine that my path and God's are one and the same — I may risk injuring someone who did not choose to be "sacrificed." As Sam Keen writes in *Hymn to An Unknown God,* "there is a high degree of correlation between true believers, known gods, and high body counts." Too often people committed to a cause provide powerful reinforcement to one another that we are indeed righteous and we don't have time to occupy ourselves with such trivial matters as whose turn it is to put the kids to bed or who does the diapers. We can be expensive people to live with.

When we align our eyesight with God's, when we protect large causes by sacrificing small people, we stand in danger of perverting our rightful relationship

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with God. When we see ourselves as the prophets who will singlehandedly bring the kingdom into being, we commit the sin of pride. We lose humility. We forget that the ground we stand on now has been purchased by our forebears, that we in our turn will do good or ill, but this ground will outlast us. The salmon will spawn; the bear, the wolf and the lynx will lick and smell and mate yet again, the new moon will rise and the dogtooth violet sprout in the springtime loam long after we as individuals and perhaps even as a species have lived out all our lives.

Even if we destroy all these precious creations and they too disappear, I have to believe that the force which first pulled life out of the primeval ooze will endure and recreate a new (and perhaps wiser) life yet again.

All of our buildings and bridges, our demonstrations and discussions, our freedom rides and families are but articulations of God's lasting urge to create, articulations that are sometimes graceful, sometimes clumsy, but always fleeting. Everything we presume to know and everything we separate ourselves from is part of this force, and will return to it. We too are creations, charged not with formulating the final outcomes, but with serving in some small way the power of love and faith on this earth. This is our rightful place, a returning to humus, to ground.

A community rooted in humility considers very carefully the question of who pays the cost of sacrifice. Such a community reminds its members that this question is at the heart of right relationship with God, the earth, and each other. I pray that these gaps in my certainty will be fertile ground in which my daughters can live and grow justly, humbly and joyously. I pray that this will be bedrock for later, when their eyes open to hate and ignorance (as they must); when faith and love and sight are not so easy. TW

Overabundant love

by Jerry Berrigan

I am young and childless. But I do know, from the receiving end, a tad about conscientious child-rearing. I and two fine sisters, Frida and Katy, were raised in the context of a biblical community dedicated to resistance to the arms race by means of direct action. Since their wedding in 1973 our folks have collectively spent about six years separated from each other and from us three, all for saying, in the strongest possible nonviolent language, No! to omnicide and YES! to life.

Our family has anguished. There is a 1984 photo of my mother with Katy on her shoulders (not yet 2) and Frida in front of her. Frida is wearing sunglasses to hide her tears. We all wept then, and again and again subsequently. That day Momma was sentenced to three years for a Plowshares action.

The second Beatitude blesses those who mourn, and promises their comfort in justice. Our mother served 26 months, during which time Frida and I entered adolescence and Katy her formative years. A difficult time for us all, yet we emerged. If not unscathed, perhaps strengthened.

Jeanne Heyer's argument, as I read it, boils down to this: In the name of no higher good does one have the right to sacrifice others, especially children. The means are the ends; doing violence to children in the name of nonviolence is both ludicrous and reprehensible.

This is very true. The question is, however: Does sacrifice necessarily do violence to one's family?

Two considerations first. Popular understanding of family is false, antibiblical. The Lord's Prayer begins *Our Parent*; it follows that we are all brothers and sisters of one another. If this is real, we must live accordingly, in a common distribution, in defense of our defenseless sisters and brothers the world over.

Another issue: The question of whether and to what extent to deprive children of material goods or of more fundamental needs is entirely a first-world problem. Parents in the third world and in war zones have no choice, and our comfort, our false security, is built upon their grief. Nonviolence is rejection of the weapon of privilege. In living and raising our progeny honestly and nonviolently, we must not only affirm the good in life, but denounce the evil, and confront it. Not to do so is to ignore it, and live in delusion.

Again, therefore: Is the cross an act of violence on loved ones? No, indeed, if carried out in a spirit of love. To the contrary, not to accept the cross is to live a lie (essentially, that our lives are more valuable than others') and convey it to the next generation. A great disservice, one with far-reaching, pathological ramifications.

Our parents shared with us their best approximation of truth, which found its most necessary and radical exercise in *agape*. We three recognized the need for people to stand against nuclearism, thus leading a life of integrity in a culture of insanity.

We made out Okay! At all times we enjoyed an overabundance of love, and all of our needs (to be distinguished from wants) were always met. What more could a parent hope to give a child?

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The justice 'summit':

Just *who* is resisting change?

by Julie A. Wortman

Some 550 Episcopalians who work on peace, economic justice and environmental issues gathered in Cincinnati this February for what national church organizers had billed as a "justice summit" — an important opportunity, as one promotional mailing explained, "to shape the peace and justice agenda for the Episcopal Church for the next triennium and beyond by developing specific strategies for action by the upcoming General Convention."

It proved to be an opportunity that was largely missed.

The summit's sponsor was a committee created by the church's national executive council to address the sprawling array of justice concerns that continue to vie for national church attention despite relentless programmatic consolidations and belt-tightening. The committee has adopted the World Council of Churches' handy theme of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (or JPIC, pronounced "J-PIC") as its own in an effort to get church justice groups to work together — largely through regional JPIC committees, but also through national gatherings like the Cincinnati summit.

National church money may be tight for events like this, but the JPIC committee and its staff managed a rich program. Summit workshops addressed a range of timely topics — racism and AIDS, living wage campaigns, how to organize faith-based credit unions, farmworker justice, women and poverty, environmental stewardship, the voluntary simplicity movement — to which the keynote address by Chile's ambassador, H.E. Juan Somovia, applied a global lens. Steve Charleston, former Bishop of Alaska, and theologian Verna Dozier revived flagging front-line spirits with blood-and-guts visions of Gospel commitment, while Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis assured participants that the church desperately needs their witness.

A commemorative video of Browning's own "public witness" during his tenure as presiding bishop — from his "there shall be no outcasts" proclamation on behalf of gay and lesbian church members to his opposition to the Gulf War and examples of solidarity work in El Salvador, Cuba, Japan and Palestine — brought glad tears to many eyes tired of reading about reactionary bishops and misbehaving clergy and treasurers.

But the real substance of the gathering was in the summit's assemblies, to which participants were randomly assigned. The design was for assembly members to bring their justice concerns to the table and then to find interlocking strategies that would hold up the JPIC commitment to building coalitions.

Summit participants bent to their work with gusto. "My issue is inclusion," stated Aura Almanzar, one of a delegation of 20 Hispanic activists who had travelled to Cincinnati from New York City hoping for a strong voice in the proceedings. "I find that Hispanics in the church are ignored — and the church ignores the issues that affect us, such as immigrant rights and the need for people to be paid a living wage for their work."

In the same subgroup MacDonald Jean of Haiti, an Episcopal priest who serves in Haiti's senate, stressed that "the victims of the *coup d'état* have not yet found justice" and that the church should respect Creole as "a language of the people."

In quick succession others spoke to other needs — for serious conversation about racism and AIDS, for better ways to prevent violence against women, for expanded public policy advocacy, for more attention to welfare reform, for stronger commitment to environmental issues.

Then came the strategies for church-based response. By this time, peoples' creative juices were flowing: If the church wants to be more intentional about environmental concerns, maybe it should reorganize its provincial structure according to bioregions; if the church's Euro-centric, straight, economically privileged, male-dominated congregations want to avoid recognizing their biases against people of color, women, gay men and lesbians, immigrants, and the economically disadvantaged, maybe it is time to challenge those biases in a way that can't be ignored — through revising the *Book of Common Prayer* to make it more welcoming to these people; if corporations are responsible for so many injustices, why not ask the trustees of church investments to be more intentional about investing the portfolios in their care in a more socially responsible way?

Participants reached the end of their deliberations tired, but enthusiastic. "The whole church should be having these kinds of conversations," said Anita Collins, a parish educator from Akron, Ohio.

A team of facilitators then bundled up all the newsprint and trooped off to compile reports that would form the basis of each assembly's input into the summit's final "town meeting."

The next morning, when assembly participants saw the results of the facilitators' efforts to "boil down" their proposals, things rapidly began to fall apart. Advocacy for prayerbook revision had become support for inclusive language liturgies; socially responsible investing got buried and bio-regions were never mentioned.

"What you've given us generally reflects what we talked about yesterday,"



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a priest from Long Island pointed out in Assembly #2, "but minus the passion and the details." Heads nodded vigorous agreement.

A member of the JPIC committee in the room explained that the committee's General Convention resolutions had already been filed. At this point, he said, the only way the committee could bring the concerns of the summit to the deputies and bishops meeting in Philadelphia this summer was in the form of a greatly condensed summary of the summit's proceedings that would be part of the executive council's traditional state-of-the-church "report" to the convention. He added that time limitations required that the town meeting scheduled for later that morning be confined to a brief report-back from each assembly's facilitators.

So much for shaping the church's peace and justice agenda by getting General Convention to consider concrete strategies for church-based action.

"But we want the church to *do* something, to *move*," another frustrated participant responded. "Why is it so hard to get these ideas before the church?"

A little imagination and a lot less investment in institutional protocol would have allowed the summit's JPIC organizers — mostly longtime peace and justice activists themselves — to see that it didn't have to be as they seemed to think.

It still wasn't too late for the organizers to get out of the way and allow the creative coalition-making they had helped unleash come to full term — in a real town meeting. The General Convention deputies attending the summit (proudly introduced by the organizers at the beginning of the event) could have been brought forward and anointed bearers of the group's resolutions — there was still time for that.

Instead, our organizers fell into the trap institutional leaders so often do when "followers" actually think for themselves: They began blaming the people they were trying to lead — or is it manage?

The facilitator for Assembly #2, Kwasi Thornell, typified this phenomenon when, during his town meeting "report-back," he defined his group's resistance to the abbreviated reports as indicative of people's unwillingness to surrender their own particular special interests. "We went back into our group this morning and went back to business as usual," he said.

Participants in that assembly looked at each other in disbelief. Yes, they had complained because most of their proposed strategies had never made it into the report. Yes, they had asked that those details not be lost. And, yes, they had expressed frustration with a process that seemed hell-bent on putting a lid on their input.

The summit's organizers fell into the trap institutional leaders so often do when "followers" actually think for themselves: They began blaming the people they were trying to lead — or is it manage?

Assembly #2 was not the only one in which, as another unhappy facilitator characterized it, "blood was spilled." From the report-backs it emerged that participants in every one of the five assemblies had responded with similar frustration and confusion to the mechanistic "synthesizing" work of the facilitators. This should have been a clue that the "business-as-usual" charge should more properly have been directed at the summit's organizers.

Sure, people had their own concerns and hadn't abandoned them in the process of looking for JPIC-inspired connections. And, as one disgruntled black facilitator chided, it was absolutely true that the white folks in the room were getting a taste of institutional manipulation that people of color have routinely run up against. But if he and the others on the summit design team had been listening during these three days, they would have been keenly aware that the assembly participants were more than willing to expand their thinking. As one man said at the end, "I've been converted to welfare reform as an issue I need to take up and make my own. I invite you to take AIDS, my issue, and make it yours."

Perhaps the institutional leadership at this summit understood that the proposals coming from the Hispanic contingent for a beefed-up national Hispanic office didn't have a ghost of a chance of being accepted, given the climate of organizational downsizing and streamlining currently gaining momentum in the church. Perhaps they knew that "prayer book revision" had been officially determined "untimely" by the current chair of the church's Standing Liturgical Commission. Perhaps pushing for more, not fewer, resources for supporting the Jubilee program seemed to them unrealistic, given the state of the national church budget.

But the fact was that the summit's organizers had hyped this event for months as a chance to help the church respond more effectively to social, economic and environmental ills — and more than 500 people who care passionately about these issues had responded to the call. Assuming that the JPIC committee was really committed to enabling "the people in the trenches to shape the peace and justice ministries of the Episcopal Church," as JPIC committee chair Arthur Williams claimed, it owed participants a chance to debate and prioritize together a final set of recommendations. That, afterall, is what most people think a "town meeting" is for.

"One of the great battlefields of this church is the battlefield of the law, of the tradition," Steve Charleston stressed during a morning reflection on Matthew's gospel. "If we are exclusive," he said, "tradition is not law but tyranny. If we are inclusive, tradition is justice." Who imagined at the time that he wasn't only referring to church battles between progressives and conservatives, but to the foibles of institutional progressives themselves?

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Jubilee in a light bulb

by Amory B. Lovins

When the earth was without form and void, and darkness moved upon the face of the waters," the first creative act was: "Let there be light!" Artificial light has uplifted people by letting them read and write after dusk, spreading the fruits of written culture from scholars to everybody. Light illuminates in more ways than meet the eye. But most lamps are still incandescent — and waste 95 percent of the electricity they use.

Now we can see to it that "the light is good" by substituting compact-fluorescent lamps, which use only one-quarter as much electricity to produce the same amount of light for at least 13 times as long. The new lamps' extra cost is usually more than repaid by avoiding a dozen replacement lamps and trips up a ladder to install them, so the electrical savings are better than free.

In the U.S., such a lamp costs $7-$11 wholesale, much less to make. Over its life, it saves about $40-$60 worth of utility fuel, lamps and labor. Thus it creates many tens of dollars' net wealth — and it frees up for more productive uses hundreds of dollars' investment in electric supply. But the lamp can do much, much more.

If the saved electricity comes from a coal-fired power station, this one lamp over its life will prevent the emission of a metric ton of carbon dioxide, which threatens to change the earth's climate; at least eight kilograms of sulphur oxides, contributing to acid rain that kills fish and trees and to air pollution that harms people and buildings; and also nitrogen oxides, heavy metals and other pollutants.

If the saved electricity comes instead from a nuclear power station, this one lamp over its life will avoid creating half a curie of strontium-90 and caesium-137, and other long-lived radioactive wastes, plus about 25 milligrams of plutonium — equivalent in explosive power to 385 kilograms of TNT, and also radiotoxic enough, if evenly distributed into human lungs, to cause at least 2,000 cancers.

If the saved electricity is made from oil, one such lamp can save some 200 liters: enough to propel a superefficient car for nearly 11,000 kilometers — five times from Athens to London — or to carry a person from Athens to Stockholm in an efficient jet.

Giving away such lamps in a poor country like Haiti could increase the disposable income of an average household by perhaps as much as one-fifth. The reduced electrical demand could cut India's peak load by more than one-fourth, make electric service far more reliable, and boost national development. In fact, since one-fourth of global development capital goes to electrification, and most Third World debt is energy-related, energy efficiency is a prerequisite to sustainable development — in all countries, rich and poor.

By displacing costly new hydroelectric dams, efficient lamps can prevent the flooding of Brazilian rainforests, Chinese farmlands, and Native Canadians' hunting-grounds. Such lamps, plus similar electrical savings in other uses, can also bring solar electricity within economically feasible reach for more than one milliard (a thousand millions) people in remote villages.

In effect, we are *paid* tens of dollars per lamp to accept these benefits. That saved money can enrich electric utilities as well as customers. Southern California Edison Company, for example, has *given away* half-a-million such lamps to its customers, because that's cheaper than *operating* its power plants. The utility's revenues fell, but its costs fell even more.

Energy efficiency saves tax-free money that largely recirculates in the local economy, supporting local jobs and multipliers. That's among the most powerful known engines of economic development. Simple household energy savings encouraged by the Osage (Iowa) Municipal Utilities (population 4,000), for example, saved so much money that the utility prepaid all its debt, built up a big surplus, cut its tariff by one-third, thereby attracted two factories to town, and kept in town more than $1,000 per household per year — money that had previously left the rural area to buy utility inputs — thus creating an island of relative prosperity.

In the U.S., efficient new lighting equipment, fully used in existing buildings, can save at least one-fifth of all electricity used nationwide, cut short-term net costs by $30 milliard per year, and displace 120 huge power stations costing $200-plus milliard.

Adding the most efficient motors, appliances, windows, etc., now on the market brings the total potential savings to *three-fourths* of all U.S. electricity now used — at a cost far below that of just *operating* an existing coal or nuclear power plant, even if building it cost nothing. Similarly, saving three-fourths of today's oil costs less than finding new domestic oil or importing oil. And proven ways are available to finance and deliver these new technologies quickly and reliably to those who need them.

The energy efficiency revolution, finally, is key to making the coming solar age practical and affordable. Rediscovering our solar heritage — Socrates' advice to make our homes warm and sunny in winter but cool and shaded in summer was brought to a high art in such sophisticated passive-solar cities as Olynthus, Priene, and Delos — and grafting modern efficiency technologies onto it offers good news, indeed, for all people and for the earth. TW

Amory B. Lovins is research director of the Rocky Mountain Institute, an organization which addresses itself to the global environmental crisis through promoting decreases in energy use. He is author of *Soft Energy Paths* (1977), a seminal work whose political impact experts say was comparable to that of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Contact the Institute at 1739 Snowmass Creek Road, Snowmass, CO 81654-9199; 970-927-3851.

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Proposed amendment to Title IV draws criticism

by Karen D. Bota

An innocent-seeming executive council proposal to amend the Episcopal Church's Title IV disciplinary canons to specify mediation as an alternative to litigation in church disputes has been widely challenged by critics who say the resolution is short-sighted and that the council's action amounts to an "end run" around established committees and commissions.

The resolution in question proposes that parties involved in a Title IV dispute (except one related to an imposed sentence) may agree to mediation at any time during proceedings. John McCann of Lexington developed the resolution in response to council's anxiety that passage of two resolutions at the church's triennial General Convention this summer which would compel all dioceses to ordain women and license them to serve could lead to attempts at enforcement through presentments and ecclesiastical court trials.

"The executive council is interested in assuring the church of the existence of an alternative to the ecclesiastical court approach to resolving our disputes," McCann explained in an on-line discussion of the issue via Ecunet. "Successful mediation is less expensive than a trial, measured both in dollars and in pain."

Mediation, however, may not be the answer in all Title IV disputes, critics of the executive council action were quick to point out. "Mediation only works if the two parties are on an even playing field," Nancy Hopkins, a church consultant on sexual misconduct, wrote in an Ecunet posting.

"Since sexual misconduct is essentially an abuse of power, I believe strongly that attempting to deal with it in mediation is entirely inappropriate," Hopkins said.

The pressure on the victim to cooperate with mediation because of the disparity in power is likely to be overwhelming, agreed Anne Clarke Brown of Plymouth, Vt. "No matter how well intentioned, [mediation] could work more often to the advantage of the party with most power in the system — particularly in cases of sexual misconduct," Brown wrote. "I also fear it could be a way of moving such cases back behind closed doors."

Another problem with the resolution, some critics say, is that it bypasses the committees and commissions that since the last General Convention have been meeting to study issues and bring forth recommendations.

"Individual members of executive council certainly have the right to put forward resolutions to convention, but I do object to executive council as a whole ignoring committees and commissions and backing these individual projects," noted Jane Garrett, co-chair of the sexuality dialogue committee, during the Ecunet debate.

Finally, some questioned the executive council's apparent fear of ecclesiastical trials. "There are times when a trial may be the most appropriate course of action although very difficult and painful," pointed out Gay Jennings, co-chair of the General Convention's legislative committee on canons, who noted that the aim of the church's disciplinary proceedings is to seek the truth and to provide justice.

"The purpose of ecclesiastical trials is not to preserve peace, although I'm all for peace," Jennings said. "Peace without justice is no peace at all."

Freelance writer **Karen D. Bota** is *The Witness'* promotion consultant.

Porter leaves national staff

In a surprise move, Diane Porter, the Episcopal Church's senior executive for program since 1992, resigned her post effective March 15. She did not indicate specific plans for the future. — *ENS*

Families valued

by Connie Bradley

***Families Valued: Parenting and Politics for the Good of All Children,* by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer. Friendship Press, 1996.**

This book advertises that "a father explores how the needs of children can change personal and social priorities." Its inspiration stems from the theft of an old, hand-me-down tricycle. When 3-year-old Hannah is concerned about leaving her bike outside, her father dismisses the fears, only to have them subsequently realized. Father and daughter were disillusioned. Discovering it later vandalized, little Hannah tearfully wonders aloud, "Why would anybody do this?" Touched by his daughter's loss of innocence, Nelson-Pallmeyer determines to become sensitive to the voices of children.

So far, so good. But *Families Valued* proves a drawn-out collection of father-knows-best dissertations, peppered with anecdotes that give insight into a many-faceted author who has retreated from conventional lifestyle, choosing instead a commune of shared parenting, part-time employment and co-op networking.

Nevertheless, this book is a thorough, articulate work and one to be commended for its endeavor to diagnose America's ills. But to a 63-year-old, black woman like this reviewer, there are few revelations. Is it not common knowledge that society is in crisis, that poverty is bad for children and hampers their education, that parental neglect and instability in the

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home have a negative, dysfunctional effect on all classes of children, that welfare is demeaning, that politics are devious, that violence is a belligerent response to a hostile environment, that crime is bred by lack of gainful employment and equal opportunity, and, yes, that for the future of our children, we must become ecology-minded?

These are the everyday dilemmas that plague America and resist being resolved.

It is no surprise that Nelson-Pallmeyer is critical of the Christian Coalition whose elitist members advocate personal responsibility. Yet, he concedes that his concerns about children and morals have something in common with the religious right. Unlike the homophobic, chauvinistic fundamentalists, however, Nelson-Pallmeyer endears himself to the reader with a lack of self-righteousness and an honest assessment of his own prejudices. He acknowledges deserving no pat on the back for being relieved to hear that his daughter shuns one of her black classmates not for his color, but because a learning disability makes him a bore.

Though not overtly about race (and quick to point out that welfare and poverty are not the exclusive domain of blacks), a book discussing families values in America cannot avoid race issues. Chapters include "Poverty-bred Prejudices"; "Men and Violence"; "Race, Poverty and Politics"; "Values, Prisons and Policies." Predictable conclusions are drawn as to the harm of ethnic stereotyping or the failure of a prison system that's become a profitable industry rather than a rehabilitating influence.

Nelson-Pallmeyer also explores the debilitating effects of institutional racism. Wrestling with affirmative action, he does not recommend its elimination but commends revision. Quoting such prominent African Americans as Cornel West, William Julius Wilson and Jesse Jackson, Nelson-Pallmeyer names economic stagnancy, corporate irresponsibility, and governmental neglect as the culprits in the struggle of poor people to better provide for their children.

To his credit, Nelson-Pallmeyer does more than just identify what's wrong. He devotes a chapter to proposals that funding be increased for children's programs that work, that support be given childrens' advocacy, that welfare be replaced with a national family policy, that public TV be funded and advertisers regulated, that income tax be regulated and social security benefits reflect income.

At book's end, I was reminded of the beginning. After his daughter's bike is stolen, Nelson-Pallmeyer laments that this would have never occurred in his boyhood neighborhood. But you can't go home again. Time brings change, and simple solutions for complicated problems are in themselves a trap set by the American state of flux. That was the case, for example, with integration. By the time it became a norm, cynical blacks had decided no longer to submerge their true identities to interact with patronizing whites.

Nevertheless, *Families Valued*, despite repetitiveness, is well-documented and well-meaning. Transcending its pages is the spirit of a caring man. Perhaps the future does lie in the idealism and dedication of people like Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer who, among other things, listen to and value the observations of children. TW

Another viewpoint

[Joan Elbert, a friend of Connie Bradley, offers a different perspective.]

I'm considerably older than Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer but grew up with the same small-town, white middle-class mentality. I could have used his insights while trying to raise four white kids in Maywood, Ill., where "white" became the minority. I eventually learned these concepts the hard way from people like Connie Bradley with whom we joined in struggle in the sixties and seventies. Young parents today have no "civil rights" or "anti-war" movement to challenge their mindset. To most people of color there is nothing new raised here, but unfortunately, most white folks in this country need a dose of Nelson-Pallmeyer's analysis.

Nelson-Pallmeyer's style is often anecdotal. This is effective in getting the reader to identify with ordinary situations and understand their more systemic ramifications. His suggested solutions sound simple. That's the beauty of them. People who understand the complex problems of society often feel cynical and helpless. So-called simple solutions (what we buy, how we live) do have an impact, as long as they are seen as part of a quest for institutional as well as personal modification.

I'm convinced that parents need to really listen to their children and pay more attention to their instincts. It may be true that "it takes a village to raise a child," but I believe a child can also raise a village. Think what black youth, particularly Fred Hampton [a Black Panther leader], did for the village of Maywood and beyond.

—Joan Elbert is the staffperson for Kairos-U.S.A. in Chicago, Ill.

review

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Youth: 'They aren't pod people.'

by Marianne Arbogast



Sheryl Kujawa

Young people weren't beamed down here! They are who they are because of us.

Why don't young people come to church? Why aren't they more committed to social change? Don't ask Sheryl Kujawa unless you are prepared for a challenging reply.

"They aren't pod people, they weren't beamed down here!" she responds to the frequently voiced complaints. "Young people are who they are because of us. Are we calling young people to a higher sense of moral conscience than we, in fact, are willing to live out?"

Kujawa, the national Episcopal Church's program director for Ministries with Young People, believes that the church must recognize its own reflection in its youth.

"We have to look at our own conversion issues — personal and social," Kujawa says. "It is very difficult to hear people criticize the spirituality of young people when they haven't moved to social conversion themselves — when they think, 'I'm a nice person and that's all that matters,' and they design programs to keep young people thinking like that, and then wonder why they don't want to make a better world."

If the church wants young people to be socially conscious, inclusive and respectful of others, it must start by respecting and including them, Kujawa insists.

When they raise questions about violence or sexual ethics or forms of worship, "we don't always want to talk about it, and one way is to maintain all the control," she says. "A lot of our pedagogy is stuck in keeping young people passive and therefore marginal. If young people were empowered to talk about and work for their own needs, I'm not so sure the adult church would be willing to accept that. Adults would have to give up the ability to make all the substantive decisions, to have all the worship meet our needs, to frame which questions are important."

Taking young people seriously would require a far greater commitment of time, energy and resources than the church has so far been willing to provide, she believes.

"Because the Episcopal Church does not do a lot to nurture leadership for ministry with young people, there are about 10 job openings for every applicant," she says. "There is a lot of rhetoric in this country on the importance of children and youth, but work with youth is not seen as a status occupation."

Instead, she says, it is relegated to seminarians and committed but overworked volunteers, or regarded as a stepping stone to bigger and better things.

Kujawa, whose seminary field education placement with a youth group in 1981 sparked a long-term vocational commitment, views her ministry as "a privilege."

"People have told me I could be a normal priest," she says, her voice deadpan. With five graduate degrees, including a recent doctorate in American Religious History from Boston College, Kujawa clearly could take her pick of a wide range of ministerial posts. "But being engaged with young people this long, it has become not just a placement — it has changed completely the way I think about ministry and leadership, the way I view church, the way I interact with people of all ages.

"I've learned much more about how

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

the various kinds of oppressions in our society impact marginalized people — they impact young people profoundly. Once you get working with young people, you really become part of their lives. It goes beyond program and retreats — it's an opening up into the human condition."

Young people need adults who are willing to listen and support them in their own vocations, Kujawa says.

"I was fortunate enough to have mentors who were willing to spend the time and energy to work with me as companions on the journey," she says. "They never told me what to do, but were willing to entertain my questions."

Her Roman Catholic parents were a strong influence in her life, Kujawa says. "They had a deep faith and tried to live their life by those principles, and they were always very encouraging of their children. They thought that girls or boys could do anything they wanted, and they would support them in their life plans."

What Kujawa wanted, from the time she was five, was to be a priest. "The ordained people I was around were ebullient; they enjoyed what they were doing, they had purpose and commitment — that and the clothes, I liked the outfits," she adds.

A family friend, the dean of a Roman Catholic seminary, encouraged her conviction that women could be priests, but it was not till she read of the first ordinations of women in the Episcopal Church that she saw it as a genuine option.

After graduating from Episcopal Divinity School, Kujawa served as youth coordinator for the Diocese of Massachusetts, and then for the province, before joining the national church staff.

Kujawa oversees the cluster of offices which includes children's ministries, youth ministries, and ministries with young adults, and takes particular responsibility for ministries with high school age youth.

She coordinates the triennial Episcopal Youth Event, which brings together high school students from almost every diocese in the church for "an experience of participating in the Episcopal Church in the fullest sense." Students take a major role in planning the sessions.

"At the last Event, I had to be out in public very little — my role was really to support people around the edges," Kujawa reports. "That meant to me I did my job."

I've learned much more about how the various kinds of oppressions in our society impact marginalized people — they impact young people profoundly.

Inclusion and empowerment are central themes in Kuyawa's ministry.

"Everything we develop is based on a shared leadership model with young people — our bias is to have more young people than not," she explains. "We try to develop schedules and lifestyles so that how late we stay up, and who calls us when, is not built around standard business procedure. We have to stay up and talk to people at 2 a.m. because that's when they're up. It's an access issue."

With the Youth Ministries staff, Kujawa has developed and followed a strategic plan mandating racial and ethnic diversity in all aspects of national youth ministry.

"In terms of appointments, committees and design teams, we want a major representation of people of color, so that European Americans are one ethnic group among many, and there's not just one of anybody," she says.

After nine years of effort, she reports some victories. The program "has changed the ways significant adult leaders and young people think about issues of race and culture," she says. "In this generation, we now have people coming in on the national level who know of no other way to think, but to look around the room to see who is represented and who is not."

One-third of the participants in the last National Episcopal Youth Event were people of color, Kujawa adds.

Kujawa fields numerous phone calls from parents and church leaders looking for help with youth ministry.

"People are very, very concerned about the nurture of their children," she says. "I am glad to see the interest, but we haven't moved yet to make the changes needed to find leaders to meet the needs."

She urges all adults to consider what they might have to offer young people.

"The people I know who are good mentors have more people who want to engage in this process than they could ever listen to," she says. "There is a great need for healthy adults to do youth ministry — not people who can't do any other job, or are psychologically unbalanced, or think they are adolescents themselves. We typically recruit parents, but young people benefit from adults of all types and ages — not just 24-year-olds with guitars. Anybody who is thoughtful and considerate and likes kids should think about it." TW

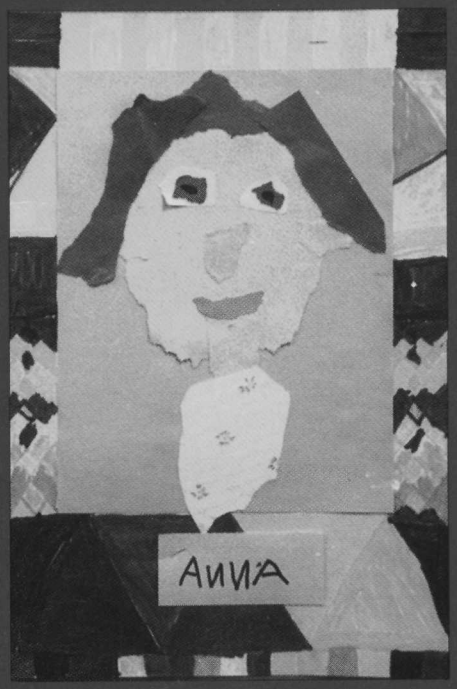
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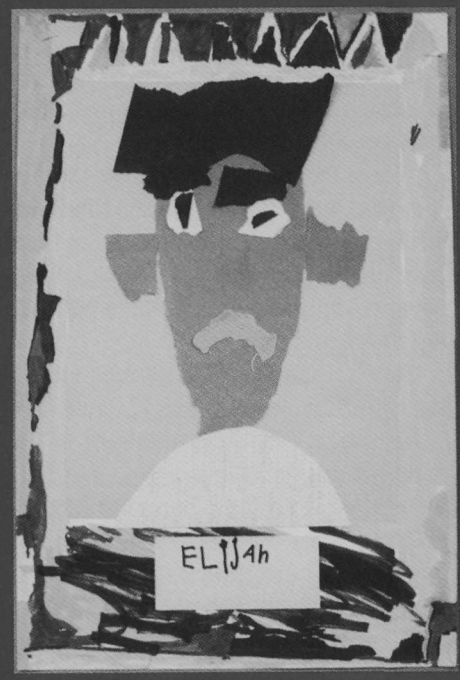
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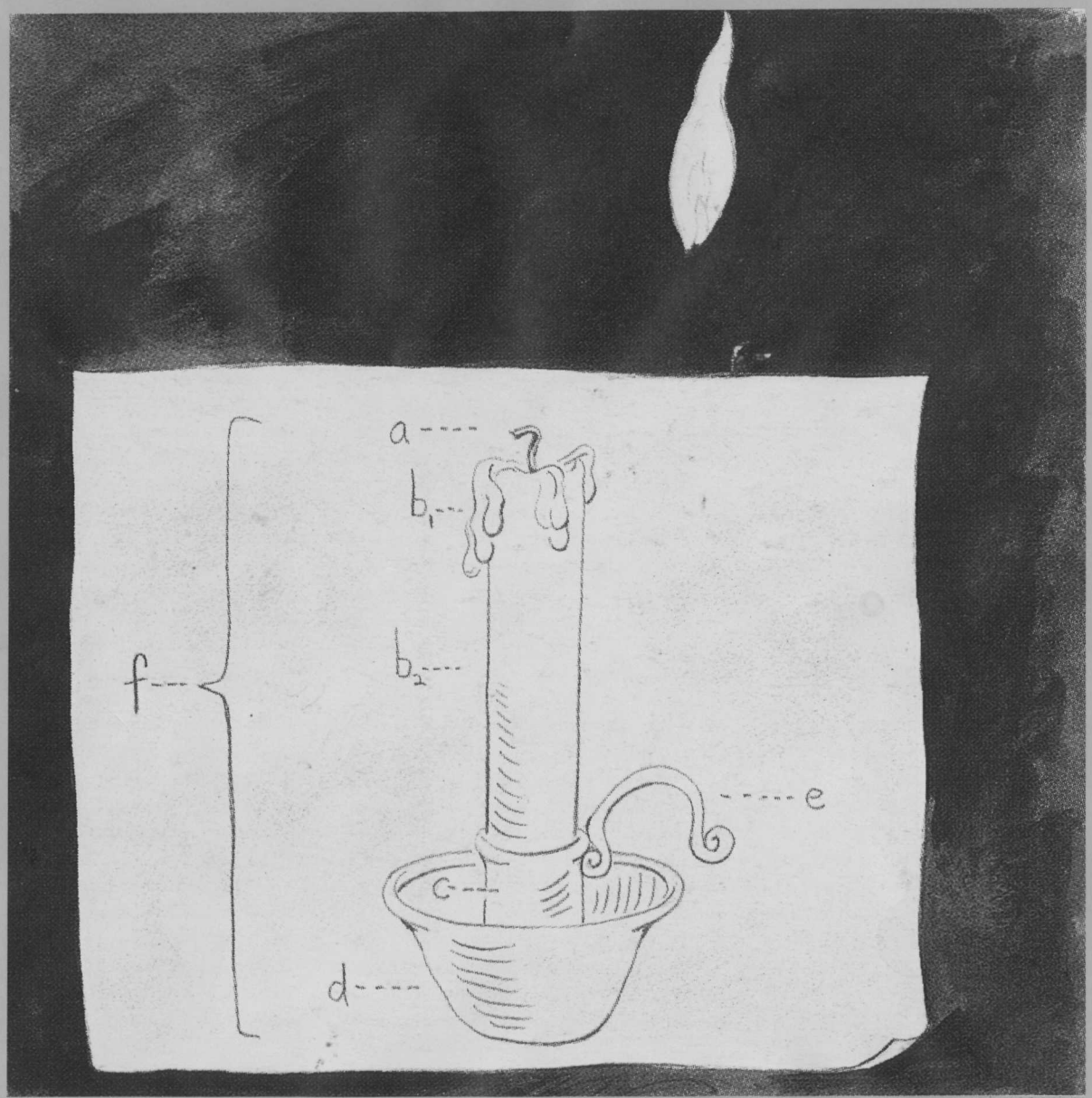
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Church structures and leadership: looking for spirit-filled change

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Grieving rituals

I'VE JUST RECEIVED YOUR MARCH '97 issue, all about death. Exceptionally timely since I am remembering the first anniversary of the death of my last grandfather (I have had three). One thing that concerned me, and perhaps someone there can just quickly answer: In the article, "Blood Brothers," the Native American spiritual leader is not mentioned by name, though practically everyone else is. What is the reason for not including this leader's name? By their request, or vagueness, or what? I think it is essential whenever possible to honour our leaders with their names, unless they have a reason to be anonymous.

Mayne Ellis
Victoria, BC



AN OPEN LETTER to The Rev. Cate Waynick from a member of her parish:

You told me I wouldn't like what you said in your interview for *The Witness* [3/97]. Well, you were right. Not only do I not like it, but I am deeply saddened by it. My sadness is caused by the fact that I personally know you to be an advocate for justice. I can cite many, many instances where you have boldly taken and spoken unpopular positions with the hope of righting injustices. I also know that you make decisions thoughtfully and prayerfully. But I am concerned that the first words to the church-at-large after your election do not convey the sense of justice which I know you to hold so dearly.

You have gone through an ordination process in a diocese where the bishop and standing committee considered all the gifts and skills that you bring to the ministry. You were encouraged by the bishop in response to your call to the ordained ministry. You were called to and have served as rector of a parish that was free to consider your candidacy. You did not suffer at the "conscience" of your bishop. Many would say that you have been privileged. I believe it is more than privilege. I believe it is your right. I believe that same consideration is the right of all women. However, when the right is enjoyed by only a few, then the few who enjoy it are privileged. That is unjust. I implore you to openly confront those bishops who deny other women the same right which you have exercised.

You, and the other women bishops, and women clergy throughout the Church, represent to many of us the promise of justice. When my friend from Fort Worth recently visited our parish, your presence at the altar made her weep. She cried for her ordained friend who was not allowed to function as a priest in Fort Worth where she lived. She cried for her daughters who have not seen a woman celebrate the Holy Eucharist. She cried for the women who are called to be priests in her diocese, but who will be denied. She cried in anger that you are still "in tension" over the issue. The bishop in her diocese has institutionalized his conscience. He has used his ascribed power to do that. As a result, she is not able to act upon her own conscience. Her position, her own theology with regard to ordained women, is negated. She is oppressed. This is a blatant, flagrant misuse of power that has been shrouded in the cloak of "conscience." The use of ascribed or authoritative power to oppress others cannot be tolerated. I know you believe that power should not be used to oppress others because you've told me so. I know you believe that power should not be used to oppress others because I've seen you confront it.

So, dear Cate, please, in this very beginning of your episcopacy, confront and question why only the ones with the ascribed power have the right to exercise their conscience. Hold them accountable. Do not allow your colleagues in the House of Bishops to deny women the opportunity to explore their call to the ordained ministry. Do not allow them to make a mockery of the canons. But most of all, please continue, as you have always, to not allow yourself, for one minute, to languish in the ranks of the privileged.

Bonnie Anderson
Bingham Farms, MI

Clergy misconduct

I APPRECIATE YOUR ONGOING coverage of clergy sexual misconduct, especially the article by Patti Klindiest (December 1995) and Gay Jennings' review of *Restoring the Soul of a Church,* Nancy Myer Hopkins and Mark Lasser, Ed. (Nov. 1996).

What remains mysterious to me is why as a church we continue to tiptoe around the role bishops have played in the perpetuation of clergy sexual misconduct. "Things were different 10 years ago," people say, as if that could explain and excuse former failures to take effective action.

I know of a bishop who remains adamant to this day concerning one case of repeated, confessed, predatory misconduct, that the damage to the accused clergyman's career is of more serious concern than the damage to scores of targeted women and their congregation.

I know of another bishop who to this day maintains that although he had a confession, his failure to take strong disciplinary action was justifiable because he believed the perpetrator had "only put his hand down (the complainant's) blouse."

Within the last year I heard another bishop excuse his failure to act, saying he "forgot" the previous reported history of misconduct and so did not consider a current complaint serious. And of course we have all heard more and more about cases in which bishops are themselves perpetrators of sexual misconduct. Yet it remains very difficult, not to mention costly, to hold these bishops ac-

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countable for their behavior either through canonical disciplinary procedures or civil action. It is impossible for a diocese to require the resignation of a bishop, even if he/she has confessed to repeated acts of sexual misconduct, and, amazingly, under current Church Insurance Corporation policy, bishops are exempt from having to complete the background check required of other clergy.

I believe the good efforts of many to bring about justice in the church and make it a safer place for all people are bound to fail until we have the honesty to face the role bishops have played in the perpetuation of clergy misconduct and the courage to institute through canon law methods of holding them accountable for their actions and for their failure to act.

Pamela Porter
Heath, MA

Church renewal

AS I LOOK AT OUR EPISCOPAL CHURCH today, I am saddened and angered because we have inflicted a serious spiritual illness on ourselves, namely our constant and deeply self destructive criticisms — of our own Church. What, in the name of God, is the matter with us, to act in such a way?

Organizations such as the Episcopal Synod, the (1928) Prayer Book Society, the Christian Challenge group, Episcopalians United, and other groups, proclaim inaccuracies, deliberate distortions and just plain lies about our Church. These organizations neither care nor know about the logical and theological mistakes that they are making.

But I myself do know, from my own experience, that our great Church is vibrantly and gloriously alive, in so many parishes in this nation. Since 1992, I have served in four dioceses, Chicago, New Jersey and Bethlehem, and am now in Northern Indiana. Here are some facts about parishes that flourish mightily.

In this diocese there are eight parishes and missions where attendance, and stewardship, are doing very well indeed. My neighboring parish, St. Andrew's in Valparaiso, where Dean Patrick Ormos is rector, is so jammed with worshipers every Sunday, at several services, that you had better get there 15 minutes early if you want to get into a pew. This is also true, most Sundays, at my wife's parish in Lockport, Ill., St. John's.

I recently attended the convention of my own diocese, Chicago. The Spirit produced a day of loving fellowship for clergy and laypeople. In the diocese, the deeply imaginative ministry of Fr. Sam Portaro, at the University of Chicago, is especially encouraging. And Fr. Tolliver, at St. Edmund's, in a difficult area of Chicago, is showing us all how much an urban parish can do to maintain and improve its neighborhood.

In the state of New Jersey our Church is doing very well, also. It has become a sport among negativists to constantly attack Bishop Spong of Newark. But, to judge from the vitality of his very diverse diocese, where he has now been bishop for over 20 years, he is doing precisely what a bishop ought to do. In Fort Lee, at Good Shepherd, Richard Gressle took his parish's name seriously and he and his members created as fine a ministry to those with AIDS as any parish anywhere; he recently moved to Nyack, N.Y.

And at St. Mark's in Teaneck, N.J., Lucinda Laird is rector of a most lively parish, filled with small kids. She has made an excellent video of children asking questions about God, and she has her own TV program.

In the diocese of Bethlehem, the superbly pastoral episcopate of Mark Dyer ended recently; he did so much to fill Bethlehem with active grace. When I took a service at Grace Church, our parish in Kingston, I saw a lot of older adults, but no children. But as soon as my sermon was finished, a cloud of 40 or more lively kids came rushing up from the undercroft, to worship with their parents. All praise to Mr. and Mrs. David Laquintano!

These experiences, and quite a few others, give me such great hope for the future of our Church. But the chief ground of this hope comes from getting to know our younger clergy. My own generation of priests tended to be a bit arrogant, and rather uniform in attitude. But today's young priests are a marvelous group. Their educational and life experience backgrounds are very diverse, and they are experts at looking at our world with a critical eye. And their commitment, to God and the Church, is profound! I deeply believe that a most blessed renewal of our Church is just around the corner.

Alex Seabrook
Laporte, IN

Classifieds

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The Witness

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A chicken-or-egg choice

by Julie A. Wortman

A number of years ago a Roman Catholic publication ran a cartoon that showed a huge, Trojan-horse sized Easter egg in the process of being pecked open from within. Ropes and tape in hand, dozens of lilliputian-sized clerics on tiny ladders were scaling its ornately decorated surface in a vain attempt to patch the rapidly multiplying cracks — as scores of interested onlookers, mainly women, eagerly sought glimpses of the emerging life within.

The appeal of that image was strong to Roman Catholic women and men disheartened and wearied by "inerrant" Vatican pronouncements about women's ordination, marriage for clergy and homosexuality. The life force that gave us the church, it proclaimed, is not yet finished with its creative work.

This is good news, as anyone with much experience of institutional church structures and leadership is well aware. The problem, says organizational theorist Margaret Wheatley (p. 14), is that the unpredictability of that creative work scares most of our leaders to death. Newton's vision of a machine universe, kept running smoothly by a master-technician God, offers a more comforting vision of rational order and the possibility of control. Comforting, but problematic.

Shifting ground

Newton's scientific understandings are being superceded by those of the "new sciences," shifting the very ground under our feet. This is not a machine universe and chaos is not the enemy. Natural, living systems demonstrate their life through self-creation and the irrepressible search for connections.

In the Episcopal Church, the efforts of those in the world mission commmunity give us a glimmer of how the "self-organizing" life force at the core of human endeavors is manifesting itself (p. 20). Their motley coalition will be coming to this summer's General Convention with a proposal for an Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission. Instead of giving massive attention to how to restructure old programs and mechanisms for more effective world mission, it focuses on goals. Groups would be invited to sign on to the goals, even though organizationally they may be apples and oranges. The coalition recognizes and accepts difference as it affirms common cause. Passion for meaningful faith-based connections worldwide, not the national church, would drive the work and the decisions about means. It's an organic, not mechanistic, organizational structure that makes sense.

Signs of life

The national church's Standing Commission on Structure will also be coming to the General Convention with a proposal of its own (p. 26). These recommendations, however, seem disengaged from any compelling sense of purpose. And that is the problem. The search for the best structure, the most helpful mechanism for pursuing a goal should never be the first — or an isolated — question. Focus on the chick, not the egg.

Everywhere in the church people and groups are self-organizing themselves around lively passions — around economic justice, around Native Americans' need for self-determination. Will our leaders stop trying to organize the church and let the church organize itself?

Historical theologian Fredrica Thompsett believes this is a "liminal," threshold time for a change in leadership models (p. 22). Many have long hoped that women could help make the shift and in many ways they are. But the forces of patriarchy and orthodoxy — preserving the beloved egg by boiling it and killing the embryo inside — are still strong and, as one report from Texas indicates, angry (p. 27).

Nurturing the prophetic

We in the churches are long overdue for leadership that values the life within. For educator Parker Palmer (p.8), this means attending to the connection between spirituality and action in the world. Spirituality, he says, "is primarily an effort to penetrate the illusions of the external world and to name its underlying truth — what it is, how it emerges, and how we relate to it."

Sounds like the basis of "prophetic leadership" to me, although the church is full of those who would manipulate a call to deeper spirituality in the service of *status quo* piety.

My thoughts remain in flux. As I write this I sit surrounded by packed boxes and the distant hum of a washer in spin cycle — the last load of washing before the moving van arrives to pack up my family's goods and cart them 960 miles to Tenants Harbor, Maine. A new life awaits us there, one among friends attempting to live with intentionality lives of faith and conscience. Together we are reinventing our lives, attempting to know life — and God — before it is too late. Maybe we, like so many others in so many other self-organizing ways, will be helping to reinvent the church. TW

editor's note

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

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Leadership means to be led

by Henri Nouwen

Let me tell you about an experience connected with my move from Harvard to L'Arche. It was clearly a move from leading to being led. Somehow I had come to believe that growing older and more mature meant that I would be increasingly able to offer leadership. In fact, I had grown more self-confident over the years. I felt I knew something and had the ability to express it and be heard. In that sense I felt more and more in control.

But when I entered my community with mentally handicapped people and their assistants, all controls fell apart, and I came to realize that every hour, day, and month was full of surprises — often surprises I was least prepared for.

When Bill agreed or disagreed with my sermon, he did not wait until after Mass to tell me so! Logical ideas did not receive logical responses. Often people responded from deep places in themselves, showing me that what I was saying or doing had little if anything to do with what they were living.

Present feelings and emotions could no longer be held in check by beautiful words and convincing arguments. When people have little intellectual capacity, they let their hearts — their loving hearts — speak directly and often unadorned. Without realizing it, the people I came to live with made me aware of the extent to which my leadership was still a desire to control complex situations, confused emotions, and anxious minds.



Ida May Sydnor

It took me a long time to feel safe in the unpredictable climate, and I still have moments in which I clamp down and tell everyone to shut up, get in line, listen to me, and believe in what I say. But I am also getting in touch with the mystery that leadership, for a large part, means to be led. I discover that I am learning many new things, not just about the pains and struggles of wounded people, but also about their unique gifts and graces.

They teach me about joy and peace, love and care and prayer — what I could never have learned in any academy. They also teach me what nobody else could have taught me, about grief and violence, fear and indifference. Most of all, they give me a glimpse of God's first love, often at moments when I start feeling depressed and discouraged. TW

The people I live with made me aware of the extent to which my leadership was still a desire to control complex situations, confused emotions, and anxious minds.

This essay by the late theologian, **Henry Nouwen,** is from *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*, Crossroad, 1996. Artist **Ida May Sydnor** works through the Southwest Community Center in Philadelphia, Penn.

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Novaya Zemlya

by Alla Bozarth

Explorers at earth's
pinnacle below the Pole Star
may, without going mad,
hear directly the growl
of the Great Bear,

see sunrise in a solar mirage
hours before it happens,
encircling the world
in a single hour
they believe to last days.

All inner adventure
begins here.
This is the place
of illusion and
unfinal reality.

No one escapes
the caution:
all things are
fashioned oddly,
the joints of the universe
mysteriously hinged.

Do not, therefore, attempt
to name things too clearly,
or imagine the crystal vision
you see to be precisely itself.

All things are born
and flow again
in realms of the magi.

— *from* Stars in Your Bones: Emerging Signposts on Our Spiritual Journeys, *by Alla Bozarth, Julia Barkley and Terri Hawthorne (Northstar Press of St. Cloud, Inc., 1990).*



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Seeking new leadership — from within

by Parker Palmer

One of the most remarkable speeches ever delivered on the floor of the U.S. Congress was given in 1990 by Vaclav Havel, playwright, dissident, and then president of Czechoslovakia:

What I'm trying to say is this: We must all learn many things from you, from how to educate our offspring, how to elect our representatives, all the way to how to organize our economic life so that it will lead to prosperity and not to poverty. But it doesn't have to be merely assistance from the well educated, powerful and wealthy to someone who has nothing and therefore has nothing to offer in return.

We too, can offer something to you: our experience and the knowledge that has come from it. The specific experience I'm talking about has given me one certainty: Consciousness precedes being, and not the other way around, as the Marxists claim. For this reason, the salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness and in human responsibility. Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which this world is headed — be it ecological, social, demographic or a general breakdown of civilization — will be unavoidable.

I don't know if there has ever been, from a more remarkable source, a stronger affirmation of the role of spirituality in the world of human affairs than Havel's words, "Consciousness precedes being," and "The salvation of the world lies in the human heart."

Matter, he is trying to tell us, is not the fundamental factor in the movement of history. Spirit is. Consciousness is. Human awareness is. Thought is. Spirituality is. Those are the deep sources of freedom and power with which people have been able to move boulders and create change. Havel's images resonate deeply with all the great religious traditions.

But let me say something that Vaclav Havel was too polite to say: It isn't only the Marxists who have believed that "matter" is more powerful than "consciousness" or that economics is more fundamental than spirit or that the flow of cash creates more reality than does the flow of ideas. The capitalists have believed these things too, and Havel was simply too nice to say it. But we can remind ourselves that we have a long and crippling legacy in our own system of thought of believing in the external world much more deeply than we believe in the internal world.

Overemphasizing the external

How many times have you heard, "Those are good ideas, inspiring notions, but the *reality* is ..."? How many times have you heard people try to limit our creativity by treating institutional and economic realities as absolute constraints on what we are able to do? How many times have you waited for a foundation grant before taking a step? How many times have you worked in systems based on the belief that the only changes that really matter are the ones that you can count or measure or tally up externally? This is a human problem, at least in our 20th-century, technological society.

Leaders feel a need to "psych themselves up" even if it means ignoring the inner shadow. Of course, American culture wants to externalize everything, to see the good life as a matter of outer arrangements rather than of inner well-being.

The great insight of our spiritual traditions is that external reality does not impinge upon us as a prison or as an ultimate constraint. The insight of our spiritual traditions is not to deny the reality of the outer world, but to help us understand that we create that world in part, by projecting our spirit on it — for better or worse.

Vaclav Havel has said some hard things to his own people about how they conspired in the domination of a tyrannical Communist system through their passivity. We, too, are responsible for the existence of tyrannical conditions, of external constraints which crush our spirit, because we are responsible for co-creating

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the world through the projection of our internal limitations. The spiritual traditions tell us that we have complicity in the making of the world as it is. We are not victims of the world, we are its co-creators. This is both a source of awesome responsibility and a source of profound hope for change.

Spirituality is not primarily about values and ethics, not about exhortations to do right or live well. The spiritual traditions are primarily an effort to penetrate the illusions of the external world and to name its underlying truth — what it is, how it emerges, and how we relate to it.

The insight that I want to draw from the spiritual traditions, and from Havel, is an insight that may be best expressed in a word from depth psychology — "projection." We share responsibility for creating the external world by projecting either a spirit of light or a spirit of shadow on that which is "other" than us. Either a spirit of hope or a spirit of despair. Either an inner confidence in wholeness and integration or an inner terror about life being diseased and ultimately terminal. We have a choice about what we are going to project, and in that choice we help create the world that is. "Consciousness precedes being."

What does all of this have to do with leadership, and with the relation of leadership to spirituality? I'll give you a quick definition of a leader. A leader is a person who has an unusual degree of power to project on other people his or her shadow, or his or her light. A leader is a person who has an unusual degree of power to create the conditions under which other people must live and move and have their being — conditions that can either be as illuminating as heaven or as shadowy as hell. A leader is a person who must take special responsibility for what's going on inside him- or herself, inside his or her consciousness, lest the act of leadership create more harm than good.



No one becomes depraved in a moment, trust an expert.
Ron English

Projecting light

I'm not talking simply about the heads of nation states. I'm talking, for example, about a classroom teacher who has the power to create conditions under which young people must spend half of their waking hours, day in and day out, five days a week. I'm thinking about a clergy person who has a choice between creating conditions in a congregation which are of the light, or conditions which are of the shadow. I'm thinking about the CEO of a corporation, large or small, who faces the same choice day in and day out — but often does not even know that the choice is being made.

The problem is that people rise to leadership in our society by a tendency toward extroversion, which means a tendency to ignore what is going on inside themselves. Leaders rise to power in our society by operating very competently and effectively in the external world, sometimes at the cost of internal awareness. Leaders, in the very way they become leaders, may tend to be people who screen out the inner consciousness to which Vaclav Havel is calling us to attend. Many leaders' confidence in the external world is so high that they regard the inner life as illusory, as a waste of time. But the link between leadership and spirituality calls us to reexamine that denial of the inner life.

Leaders often feed themselves on "the power of positive thinking" because their jobs are hard. They face many external discouragements. They don't get a lot of reward and so they feel a need to "psych themselves up" even if it means ignoring the inner shadow. Of course, leaders are supported in this by an American culture that wants to externalize everything, that wants (just as much as Marx did) to see the good life as a matter of outer arrangements rather than of inner well-being.

Let me share a remarkable quote from Annie Dillard, from her book *Teaching a Stone to Talk*:

In the deeps are the violence and terror of which psychology has warned us. But if you ride these monsters deeper down, if you drop with them farther over the world's rim, you find what our sciences cannot locate or name, the substrate, the ocean or matrix or ether which buoys the rest, which gives goodness its power for good, and evil its power for evil, the unified field: our complex and inexplicable caring for each other, and for our life together here. This is given. It is not learned.

Annie Dillard is saying, first of all, that the spiritual journey moves down-

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ward and inward, not upward toward abstraction. It moves downward toward the hardest concrete realities of our lives. Part of the gift of feminist spirituality is a reversal of what we traditionally understood spirituality to be, which was up and out.

Annie Dillard is saying that we must go in and down. And she's saying that on the way down and in we will meet the violence and terror we have within ourselves that we project outward onto our institutions, onto our society. She's talking, for example, about our tendency to make enemies by projecting what we hate within ourselves on somebody else because we don't want to go down and in to meet the enemy in our own souls.

Great leadership comes from people who have made that downward journey through violence and terror, who have touched the deep place where we are in community with each other, and who can help take other people to that place. That's what Vaclav Havel is talking about, because the downward journey is what you take when you are "under a stone" for 40 years. That's what you do when you are a victim of oppression.

Naming monsters

I'd like to deal specifically with the shadow side of leaders because those shadows get projected onto institutions and onto our society. I'd like to name some monsters that leaders need to ride all the way down if we are to create less shadow and more light.

One of the biggest shadows inside a lot of leaders is deep insecurity about their own identity, their own worth. This insecurity takes a specific form that I have seen many times (especially in men), and I see it in myself. We have an identity that is so hooked up with external, institutional functions that we may literally die when those functions are taken away from us. We live in terror at the thought of what will happen to us if our institutional identity were ever to disappear.



Helen David Brancato

The tragedy I see in our institutions when leaders operate with a deep, unexamined insecurity about their own identity is that these leaders create institutional settings which deprive *other* people of *their* identity as a way of dealing with the unexamined fears in the leaders themselves.

A simple example makes the point: I am astonished at the number of times I call an office and the person who answers the phone says, for example, "Dr. Jones' office; this is Nancy," because the boss has said to do it that way. The leader has a title and no first name; the person who answers the phone doesn't even have a last name. This is a powerful example of depriving someone else of an identity in order to enhance your own.

Everywhere I look I see institutions that are depriving large numbers of people of their identity so that a few people can enhance theirs. I look at schools and I see hundreds of thousands of students who have been deprived of an identity by the educational system so that teachers and administrators can have more identity for themselves.

But if you're ever with people (or in an organization led by a person) who know "all the way down" who they are, whose identity doesn't depend on a role which might be taken away at any moment, you are with people and in settings which *give* you identity, which *empower* you to be someone. I think that's a core issue in the spirituality of leadership — because the great spiritual gift that comes as one takes the inward journey is to know for certain that "who I am" does not depend on "what I do." Identity doesn't depend on titles. It doesn't depend on degrees. It doesn't depend on functioning. It depends only on the simple fact that I am a child of God, valued and treasured for what I am. When a leader knows that — the classroom is different, the hospital is different, and the office is different.

War talk

The second shadow that is inside a lot of us is the perception that the universe is essentially hostile to human interests and that life is fundamentally a battleground.

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As I listen to everyday discourse, it is amazing to me how many battle images I hear as people go about the work of leadership. We talk about tactics and strategy, about using our "big guns," about "do or die," about wins and losses. The imagery here suggests that if we fail to be fiercely competitive, we're going to lose, because the basic structure of the universe is a vast combat. The tragedy of that inner shadow, that unexamined inner fear, is that it helps create situations where people actually have to live that way. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But some of the best places in our world, some of the best corporations, some of the best schools, are learning that there is *another* way of going about things, a way that's consensual, that's cooperative, that's communal. They are fulfilling a different prophecy and creating a different reality.

The spiritual gift we receive as we take the inward journey is the knowledge that the universe really isn't out to get anybody; the structure of reality is not the structure of a battle or a combat. Yes, there's death, but it's part of the cycle of life, and when we learn to move with that cycle there is a coherence and great harmony in our lives.

Functional atheism

The third shadow in leaders I call "functional atheism." This is the belief that ultimate responsibility for everything rests with *me*. It is a belief held even among people whose theology affirms a higher power than the human self, people who do not understand themselves as atheists but whose behavior belies their belief!

Functional atheism is an unconscious belief that leads to workaholic behavior, to burn-out, to stressed and strained and broken relationships, to unhealthy priorities. Functional atheism is the unexamined conviction within us that if anything decent is going to happen here, I am the one who needs to make it happen. It is the reason the average group (according to studies) can tolerate only 15 seconds of silence; people believe that if they are not making noise, nothing is happening! Functional atheism is an inner shadow of leaders that leads to dysfunctional behavior on every level of our lives.

The great gift we receive on the inner journey is the certain knowledge that ours is not the only act in town. Not only are there other acts in town, but some of them, from time to time, are even better than ours! On this inner journey we learn that we do not have to carry the whole load, that we can be empowered by sharing the load with others, and that sometimes we are even free to lay our part of the load down. On the inner journey we learn that co-creation leaves us free to do only what we are called and able to do, and to trust the rest to other hands.

Fear of chaos

The fourth shadow among leaders is fear. There are many kinds of fear, but I am thinking especially of our fear of the natural chaos of life. I think a lot of leaders become leaders because they have a lifelong devotion to eliminating all remnants of chaos from the world. They're trying to order and organize things so thoroughly that the nasty stuff will never bubble up around us (such nasty stuff as dissent, innovation, challenge, change).

In an organization, this particular shadow gets projected outward as rigidity of rules, procedures, and personnel manuals. It creates corporate cultures that are imprisoning, rather than empowering. What we forget from our spiritual tradition is that God created out of chaos. Chaos is the precondition to creativity and any organization (or any individual) that doesn't have an arena of creative chaos is already half dead. When a leader is so fearful of chaos as not to be able to protect and nurture that arena for other people, there is deep trouble.

The spiritual gift on the inner journey is to know that creation comes out of chaos, and that even what has been created needs to be returned to chaos every now and then to get recreated in a more vital form. The spiritual gift on this inner journey is the knowledge that in chaos I can not only survive, but I can thrive, that there is vitality in that chaotic field of energy.

Denying death

My last example of the shadows that leaders can project on others involves the denial of death. We live in a culture that just does not want to talk about things dying. You see this all the time in our institutional life. You see leaders all over the place demanding that they themselves, and the people who work for them, artificially maintain things that aren't alive any longer and maybe never have been. Projects and programs that should have been laid down 10 years ago are still on the life-support system even though they've been in a coma for decades.

Great leadership comes from people who have made that downward journey through violence and terror, who have touched the deep place where we are in community with each other, and who can help take other people to that place.

There's fear in this denial of death, the fear of negative evaluation, the fear of public failure. Surprisingly, the people in our culture who are least afraid of death, in this sense, are the scientists. The scientific community really honors the failure of a hypothesis because they learn

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something from the death of an idea. But in a lot of organizations, if you fail at what you are doing, you'll find a pink slip in your box.

The best organizations and leaders, I think, are asking people to take action that may sometimes lead to failure, to understand that from failure we learn. The spiritual gift on the inner journey is the knowledge that death is natural and that death is not the final word. The spiritual gift is to know that allowing something to die is also allowing new life to emerge.

Recovering healthy leadership

The failure of leaders to deal with their own inner life is creating conditions of real misery for lots and lots of folks. Too many organizations in our society are in deep trouble around the leadership shadows I have tried to name. One way out of trouble is for leaders to start recovering the power of the inner journey. How might that happen? A few quick thoughts:

It would be wonderful if the phrase "inner work" could become a central term in our schools and in our churches. If we could help people understand that the phrase truly means something. There are things that you can do that constitute "inner work" that are as real and as important as any outer project or task.

A second thing we can do is to remind each other that while inner work is a deeply *personal* matter it's not necessarily a *private* matter. There are ways to be together in community to help each other with that "inner work." I have been very touched in my own experience by the Quaker tradition where they know how to come together around people who have deep "inner work" to do. In *Letters to a Young Poet*, the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke says,"Love is this — that two solitudes border, respect, and salute one another." He avoids the invasive and prevalent notion of "getting in there and fixing each other up" that we have in our culture. But he affirms the possibility of being present to a person's solitude, a person's mystery, while that deep "inner work" goes on.

Finally, since the journey inward is a fearsome one, we need to remember that all the great spiritual traditions, when you boil them down, are saying one simple thing. *Be not afraid!* They don't say you can't *have* fear, because we all have fears, and leaders have fears aplenty. But they say you don't have to *be* your fears, and you don't have to create a world in which those fears dominate the conditions of many, many people.

A new leadership is needed for new times, but it will not come from finding new and more wily ways to manipulate the external world. It will come as we who lead find the courage to take an inner journey toward both our shadows and our light — a journey that, faithfully pursued, will take us beyond ourselves to become healers of a wounded world.

No more 'lone rangers'

by Jack M. McKelvey

[The following reflections by Jack McKelvey, suffragan bishop of Newark, come out of his recent sabbatical research into new forms of church leadership.]

No clergy person and no congregation should be happy with one clergy person working alone. As more and more congregations lose their multiple staffs, redeveloping the interpersonal sharing, planning and resourcing which such staffing once provided through "teaming up" in other ways can infuse new life into tired and staid forms of ministry.

The basic premise of team ministry in this sense is that the resources we have to offer together are greater than the sum of our parts. Self-correction can take place when others review our work with us; a colleagues group can deepen self-reflection; a lectionary group can enrich the study of Scripture and sermon preparation.

But for many clergy this isn't so simple. We have not been trained to reach out in a collaborative style. The lone ranger image is much more familiar and practiced, especially among men. We are comfortable with Jacob's ladder as the symbol of leadership, or the pyramid with the lone leader at the top. In the church, however, some of us are learning that Sarah's circle is another model worth trying. Is it not in Acts that we hear "the community shared everything in common for the building up of the body of Christ"?

The Witness

STUDY GUIDE PROGRAM

The Witness presents multi-faceted topics in a style intended to create conversation. The magazine's study guide program enables small group exchange around myriad societal, cultural and religious concerns by providing thought-provoking study material. The study guide program is a perfect educational resource for any small group which enjoys challenging dialogue and values divergent opinions. The cost is $25 for a study guide packet, which includes eight copies (of one issue) of *The Witness*, plus a helpful leader's guide. For a list of available study guide issues, call 313-962-2650; fax 313-962-1012, or e-mail The_Witness@ecunet.org.

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New Party in Supreme Court

The Supreme Court recently heard arguments in a case brought by the New Party against the State of Minnesota, which is seeking to ban the New Party's "fusion" electoral strategy. Fusion allows minor parties to maximize their influence by nominating candidates who are also running under another party's auspices.

"The specific issue before the Court was straightforward," wrote New Party Executive Director Dan Cantor in *New Party News* (Winter '97). "Can a state prohibit a minor party from nominating the candidate of another party on its own ballot line, presuming that the candidate consents to both nominations?"

The lawyer for the State of Minnesota argued that voters would be confused by a ballot listing two parties for the same candidate. The New Party argued that "any electoral rule that infringes on a minor party's right to association is a violation of the First Amendment."

The New Party presented amicus briefs from the Reform Party, the Republican Party, the ACLU, People for the American Way, the Brennan Center, the Liberal and Conservative Parties in New York, the Center for a New Democracy, and a group of prominent historians.

'Are you decent?'

Nearly two-thirds of households in poverty in the U.S. have a full-time worker in them. The Decency Principles is a grassroots movement, begun in Seattle, to respond to poverty among working people. The project asks every employer, from the big-name corporation to the household that hires a babysitter or a leaf-raker, "Are you decent?" and offers them four challenges:

- Provide a living wage for all workers, lifting them above the poverty line.
- Assure health care and other basic benefits to all workers, prorated for part-time employees.
- Work for access to affordable housing for all workers and their families.
- Work for access to dependable, safe child care for all workers who need it.

When a group decides to launch a Decency Principles Project in a particular area, they are encouraged to initially choose a large employer and prepare a Decency audit questionnaire. The audit does not aim to lay blame on employers who fall short, but rather to challenge them to join in projects to find solutions.

The Decency Principles have already affected public policy and employer practices in Salt Lake City, Seattle, Baltimore, southern Indiana, and Clearwater, Fla. A county commissioner in southern Indiana decided to apply them to businesses requesting tax abatements. In Salt Lake, county commissioners rewrote the requirements for private contractors applying for a large building maintenance contract.

Trinity Parish, St. Louis, helped launch the Decency Principles in Missouri. When the Decency Principles came to Trinity, the vestry's first task was to ask if the parish is decent to all whom it employs. Vestry members reviewed wages and benefits of workers and planned steps toward improvement of remuneration for poorly paid part-time workers over the next few years as a budget priority. The vestry also agreed to ask contractors who bid for work for the parish about their decency as employers.

— Jennifer Phillips, rector, Trinity Parish, St. Louis

More than our work

The current generation of undergraduate recruits is openly asking questions about work-life balance in interviews with corporate recruiters, *The Wall Street Journal* reports (1-29-97). Concerns about issues that impact personal and family life — such as travel, flextime and job location — often surface in initial interviews. "While Baby Boomers have typically kept silent on life-balance matters for fear of being seen as 'uncommitted to the job,' these new recruits see no point in pulling punches," Sue Shellenbarger writes. While some recruiters are turned off by these questions, others say that candidates who ask them know what is important to them, are able to set priorities, and perform well on the job.

Reforming corporate welfare

John Kasich, a Republican Representative from Ohio, has launched a coalition to oppose federal handouts to huge corporations, *The Progressive* reported in March.

"'This is an issue of fairness,' Kasich says. 'Since we reformed welfare last year for people who don't have power and don't have lobbyists, I think it enhances our case to be able to reform welfare for people who do.'"

The group, which includes Ralph Nader, "has identified a 'dirty dozen' — 12 programs that sop up billions of federal dollars. These include the Market Access Program ($347 million), which helps U.S. multinationals like McDonald's peddle their goods to the Third World; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation ($281 million), which underwrites the export of U.S. nuclear reactors; and the International Monetary Fund ($3.6 billion), which strangles Third World economies until they open up to foreign capital."

Down with chants

Eat the State, a "forum for anti-authoritarian political opinion, research and humor" out of Seattle, lists chants "we never, ever, *ever* want to hear again." The top three: 'Two, Four, Six, Eight, . . .!' (We're policy advocates, not Big Bird.); 'Hey Hey, Ho Ho, . . .!' (We're policy advocates, not the Seven Dwarfs.) 1. 'The Whole World is Watching!' (The most embarrassingly and obviously false statement imaginable.)"

— letter from Geov Parrish to* Nonviolent Activist, *1-2/97



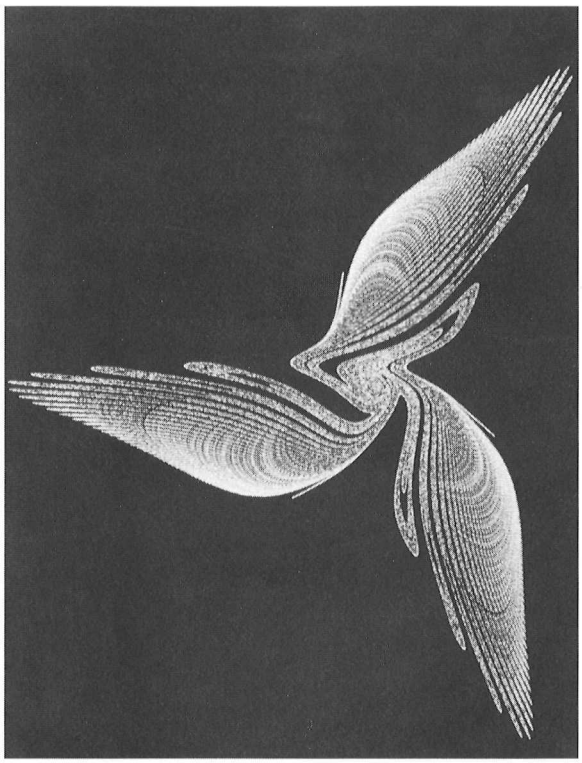
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The 'new story' of self-organization

by Margaret J. Wheatley

Margaret Wheatley has catalyzed a new way of thinking about how to shape and run human organizations. In her 1992 book, Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe, *she suggests methods that run counter to many long-held assumptions about how best to operate a company or institution. Increasingly, faith-based organizations — including a number of religious denominations — have been seeking her help. Her latest book, written with consulting partner Myron Kellner-Rogers, is* A Simpler Way *(1996), one of the few publications in the "Business Management" section of bookstores that one might imagine taking on a religious retreat. Reared in the Episcopal Church, Wheatley now calls herself a "Christian Buddhist." She lives in the mountains of Utah.*

In both recent science and poetry we are remembering a story about life that has creativity and connectedness as its essential themes. As we use this new story to look into our organizational lives, it offers us images of organizations and leaders that are both startling and enticing. It offers us ways of being together where our diversity — our uniqueness — is essential and revered. It offers us an arena big enough to embrace the full expression of our infinitely creative human natures. And for the first time in a long time, it offers us the recognition that we humans are, in the words of physicist Ilya Prigogine, "the most striking realization of the laws of nature." We can use ourselves and what we know about ourselves to understand the universe. By observing with new eyes the processes of creation in us, we can understand the forces that create galaxies, move continents, and give birth to stars. No longer intent on describing ourselves as the machines we thought the universe to be, we are encouraged now to describe the universe through the life we know we are.



A chaotic strange attractor — a shape that reveals the order inherent in chaos — from the work of Mario Markus and Benno Hess, Max-Planck-Institut, Dortmund, Germany.

As we look at life through the lens of human nature and human desire, we are presented with some wonderful realizations. Our own desire for autonomy and creativity is reflected in all life. Life appears as boundlessly creative, searching for new possibilities and new capacities wherever it can. Observing the diversity of life forms has become a humbling experience for many biologists. At this point, no one knows how many different species there are, or where the next forms of life will appear, except that now we even expect them to appear elsewhere in our solar system.

Life is born from this unquenchable need to be. One of the most interesting definitions of life in modern biology is that something is considered alive if it has the capacity to create itself. The term for this is *autopoiesis* — self-creation — from the same root as poetry. At the very heart of our ideas about life is this definition, that life begins from the desire to create something original, to bring a new being into form.

As I have read about and observed more consciously the incredible diversity of life, I have felt witness to a level of creativity that has little to do with the survival struggles that we thought explained everything. Newness appears not for simple utilitarian purposes, but just because it is possible to be inventive. Life gives

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Many designs, many adaptations are possible, and organisms enjoy far more freedom to experiment than we humans, with our insane demand to "Get it right the first time."

George Daniell's work appears on cards from Borealis Press, 800-669-6845.

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The 'new story' and the church:
an interview with Margaret J. Wheatley
by Julie A. Wortman

Julie A. Wortman: Where do you find examples of organizations that are living by the "new story" you write about?

Margaret Wheatley: Self-organization — the ability of life to create itself — is not new, it is just that we haven't had either the lens to see it or the words to name it. People are all the time creating what they need to get something done, going outside the boundaries, ignoring the rules, ignoring roles, but they cover it up because it is not part of the accepted operating procedure. What makes the "new story" feel new is that over time in Western culture we have so lost track of who we are and what's available in our humanity. Welcoming this back into our organizational lives and figuring out how to accept all this creativity seems like a new thing.

J.W.: So the "new story" is also happening in churches?

M.W.: Yes. Churches should be institutions with the greatest awareness of the human spirit and of what we are capable of from our divine selves, yet they get into these incredibly heavy, burdensome structures that are not about recognizing and supporting our divine, creative nature, but instead are meant to insure that a whole doctrine of belief — in some churches a whole doctrine of practice — is maintained. So we move away from affirming this great creative spark in order to achieve compliance and control.

J.W.: In the Episcopal Church, tradition is such a strong piece. I don't sense that you are rejecting the heritage of wisdom that is passed down?



Margaret J. Wheatley

M.W.: No, but if it blocks people from being invited in so that they are just told what's important and what the truth is, then what you've done is lost all creativity. Over time no living being can survive a life that does not acknowledge its creativity. As I understand our own spirits and the spirit of God, I see this constant creating and this constant newness.

J.W.: How would you advise an institution like the Episcopal Church to become more of a self-organizing institution?

M.W.: You mean a more spirit-full institution? I would ask everyone to go back to what some Catholic sisters I know call the "founding energy." What was it they were trying to bring forth? What was it they believed was important enough to give their lives to? And I'd ask them to be in that questioning as a shared inquiry so that as an organization they can develop a sense of what it is they are trying to bring forth in the world. Because if you are just talking about structures and orders and policies you're not talking about the "why."

Once you are clear about your particular contribution to the world, your particular gift as an organization, then you ask the question, "Okay, so how can we organize in ways that would move that gift into the world?" That's where you try to become educated about alternative models of organizing.

J.W.: People in church circles often feel betrayed by the institution because it claims as its purpose something that is very important to them, but then doesn't live up to the promise.

M.W.: I find the contrast between "what we came to do" and "how we can't do it in the structure that we came to," strongest in religious organizations, because that's where the call was the most "spirit-full." We haven't seen that there are alternatives, that there are ways to take this great passion to do good and help it move into the world without all this structure. It's a much bigger dilemma than if you're in a corporation because then you can say, "Well, we really are here only to make money."

It is really important to recognize that the ideas about organization that have been handed down to us for centuries have gone unexamined. Our ideas about hierarchy, performance and control are only one set of ideas, only one world view. As congregations and assemblies we have to understand that we don't have to just tinker with the old models, that a truly radical approach is available if we change our thinking about how organizing happens.

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Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

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to itself the freedom to become because life is about discovering new possibilities, new forms of expression. Two Chilean biologists, Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana, observe that life responds not to "survival of the fittest," but to the greater space of experimentation of "survival of the fit." Many designs, many adaptations are possible, and organisms enjoy far more freedom to experiment than we humans, with our insane demand to "Get it right the first time."

The freedom to experiment, to tinker oneself into a form of being that can live and reproduce, leads to diversity that has no bounds. In my own telling of a new cosmic story, I believe that the great forces of creation are focused on exploring newness, that newness is a primary value embraced by all life, a primary force that encourages life into new discoveries. The need and ability to create one's self is a force we see quite clearly in human experience, but which we have greatly misunderstood in our organizations.

Webs of relationship

The second great force I would like to add to this new story is that life needs to link with other life, to form systems of relationships where all individuals are better supported by the system they have created. It is impossible to look into the natural world and find an individual. As an African proverb states: "Alone, I have seen many marvelous things, none of which were true." Biologist Lynn Margulis expresses a similar realization when she comments that independence is not a biological concept, it is a political concept. Everywhere we look, we see complex, tangled, messy webs of relationships. From these relationships, life creates systems that offer greater stability and support than life lived alone. Organisms shape themselves in response to their neighbors and their environments. All respond to one another, co-evolving and co-creating the complex systems of organization that we see in nature. Life is systems-seeking. It seeks organization. Organization is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Self-organization is a powerful force that creates the systems we observe, and testifies to a world that knows how to organize from the inside out.

Self-organizing systems have the capacity to create for themselves the aspects of organization that we thought we, as leaders, had to provide. Self-organizing systems create structures and pathways, networks of communication, values and meaning, behaviors and norms. In essence, they do for themselves most of what we believed we had to do for them. Rather than thinking of organization as an imposed structure, plan, design, or role, it is clear that in life, organization arises from the interactions and needs of individuals who have decided to come together. We see the results of these relationships in the forms that arise; but it is important, especially because we are so easily seduced by material forms, to look past these manifestations to the desires for relationship that gave birth to the forms.

Self-organizing systems do for themselves most of what we believed we had to do for them.

The new story teaches us that when we join together we are capable of giving birth to the form of the organization, to the plans, to the values, to the vision. All of life is self-organizing and so are we. But the new story also details a process for organizing that stands in shocking contrast to the images of well-planned, well-orchestrated, well-supervised organizing. I can summarize the organizing processes of life quite simply: Life seeks organization, but it uses messes to get there. Organization is a process, not a structure. Simultaneously, and in ways difficult to chart, the process of organizing involves creating relationships around a shared sense of purpose, exchanging and creating information, learning constantly, paying attention to the results of our efforts, co-adapting, coevolving, developing wisdom as we learn, staying clear about our purpose, being alert to changes from all directions. Living systems give form to their organization, and evolve those forms into new ones, because of exquisite capacities to create meaning together, to communicate, and to notice what's going on in the moment. These are the capacities that give any organization its true liveliness, that support self-organization.

In the new story, we enter a world where life gives birth to itself in response to powerful forces. These forces are the imperative to create one's self as an exploration of newness, and the need to reach out for relationships with others to create systems. I could similarly describe them as the forces of creativity and freedom, and the need to join with others for purposes that enrich both the individual and the system. These forces do not disappear from life, whatever approach we take to leadership, organizing, or relating. Even if we deny them, we never extinguish them. They are always active, even in the most repressive human organizations. Life can never stop asserting its need to create itself, and life never stops searching for connections.

We fail to acknowledge these unstoppable forces of life whenever we, as leaders, try to direct and control those in our organization. Life always pushes back against our demands. But instead of learning about life, we tend to see their "difficult" behaviors as justification for a more controlling style of leadership. I believe

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J.W.: I think it would be very difficult to get a denomination to do the kind of self analysis you advise.

M.W.: Well it's not so much analysis as starting conversations and engaging more and more people. It's actually a very low-tech process. We believe it is the way all great change happens. It starts with humble conversations that matter to people, conversations in which they start to share their dreams and frustrations. Out of that comes social action and change.

The big conferences and programs and all the ways we devise for talking at each other are enormously expensive and actually push us farther apart. So we need to figure out how, over time, we can be in a conversation with each other about our deepest desires for this institution. Everything springs from the "agreements of belonging" at the heart of an organization — the agreements about how people have decided to belong together, around what shared faith or beliefs.

Let me offer an example. I have worked a lot with large corporations that are trying to become "learning organizations." They bring in training programs, lifelong learning, learning skills, learning styles. They do all this work in helping people become good learners, but there is not a shared belief at the core of these organizations about the value of learning. The shared belief is more about "Don't get caught making mistakes — you have to make it here on your own so never reveal a weakness." This runs totally counter to learning.

Interestingly, though, in the Army, which is the best learning organization I've ever seen, the attitude is different. One colonel told me, "We learned long ago that it is better to learn than be dead." When you have *that* as an essential agreement you're going to *want* to talk about mistakes so that you can save yourself the next time.

In a lot of churches, we think we hold these wonderful, pure ideas about each other, but if you then look at the institution's structures you realize that some of the beliefs we hold about each other are pretty dark. If you look at all the structure and control, then I'd say that somewhere there is a belief that people can't be trusted, that people can't be trusted as adults, that people want to be told what to do.

J.W.: What is effective leadership in light of this?

M.W.: A CEO once said that the leader's primary task is to make sure the organization knows itself. I see leaders as mirrors for the organization — and conveners so that people can look into the organization's integrity together and see who they are. Most leaders spend their time doing what the organization can do for itself.

J.W.: Is the particular structure an organization chooses important?

M.W.: Structure is not neutral. Structure comes from our beliefs about one another. Hierarchy, for example, comes from a belief system that says some people should have more authority than others and some people are more worthy of asserting dominion. It is a structure that by its very nature and shape disconnects — all those boxes on the organizational chart disconnect. "Management" in such a system is a strategy for mending the brokenness that the system itself creates. That's why management doesn't work.

There is hierarchy in nature, but it is very different. It's a concept of nested wholes. The energy shifts at different levels, but it is not about dominion.

J.W.: The Episcopal Church has a legislative system for making decisions. Most believe that this kind of "democratic" system is a good way for moving forward with decisions.

M.W.: I think legislative decision-making is a cop-out for spirit-based organizations. It shows a lack of faith that the spirit is willing to work with us. Why couldn't church members sit together in silence and contemplation and come to know what to do? This is true for the Quakers and for many indigenous, tribal people — that you sit with it, sit together, sit in silence, in conversation, in dialogue. The being together is about being open to the spirit and believing that its presence is available.

The legislative approach says that it's all in our heads, it's all in our own expertise, it's all in our ability to convince others. But I think the spirit is always hoping that we're going to be willing to listen.

J.W.: So a denomination like the Episcopal Church could make decisions, even at the national level, by sitting together?

M.W.: Yes. It might involve a period of preparation in which local groups first come together — to sit open to the spirit rather than to prepare their positions — but then everyone could come together with that great intent to be available to each other and to the spirit and see what comes forth.

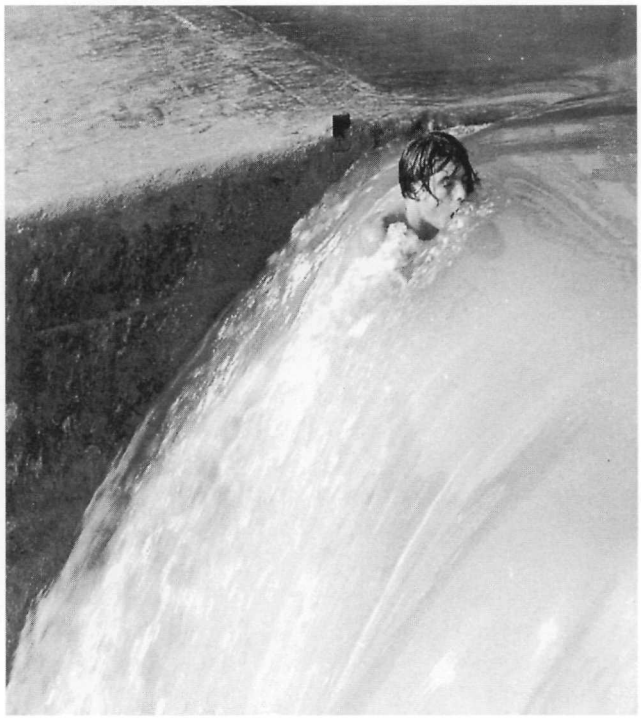
If anyone needs convincing, they can look at the church's history with legislative action and note the times it has led to increased divisiveness and the times it has not. Legislative action just does not give rise to community. It starts with a belief that participants are separated and in opposition and that this needs to be worked out. TW

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that many of the failures and discontents in today's organizations can be understood as the result of this denial of life's forces, and the pushing back of life against a story that excludes them.

As an example of these competing forces, think about how many times you have engaged in conversations about "resistance to change." I have participated in far too many of these, and in the old days, when I still thought that it was me who was "managing" change, my colleagues and I always were thoughtful enough to plan a campaign to overcome this resistance. Contrast this view of human resistance to change with Kevin Kelly's images of life (in *Out of Control*, Addison-Wesley, 1994) as "further processes of becoming and change ... circles of becoming, inflaming itself with its own sparks, breeding upon itself more life and more wildness." Who's telling the right story? Do we, as a species, dig in our heels while the rest of life is engaged in this awesome dance of creation?



George Daniell/Borealis Press

The old story asserts that resistance to change is a fact of life. Locked into a world image that sought stability and control, change has always been undesired and difficult. But the new story explains resistance not as a fact of life, but as evidence of an act against life. Life is in motion, constantly creating, exploring, discovering. Newness is its desire. Nothing alive, including us, resists these great creative motions. But all of life resists control. All of life pushes back, against any process that inhibits its freedom to create itself.

In organizations of the old story, plans and designs are constantly being imposed. People are told what to do all the time. As a final insult, we go outside the organization to look for answers, returning with benchmarks that we offer up as great gifts. Yet those in the organization can only see these packaged solutions as insults. Their creativity has been dismissed, their opportunity to discover something new for the organization has been denied. When we deny life's need to create, life pushes back. We label it resistance and invent strategies to overcome it. But we would do far better if we changed the story and learned how to invoke the resident creativity of those in our organization. We need to work with these insistent creative forces or they will be provoked to work against us.

And most organizations deny the systems-seeking, self-organizing forces that are always present, the forces that, in fact, are responsible for uncharted levels of contribution and innovation. These fail to get reported because they occur outside "the boxes of preconceived possibility." There is no better indicator of the daily but unrecognized contributions made by people than when a municipal union decides to "work to rule." Cities cease running, civil functions stop — even though the rule books and policy manuals were designed to create productive employees. No organization can function on the planned contributions of its members. Without acknowledging it, we rely intensely on individuals going beyond the rules and roles. We rely on them to figure out what needs to be done, to solve an unexpected problem, to contribute in a crisis situation. But we seldom take this experience and use it to question our beliefs about structure, leadership, or motivation.

We also deny these system-seeking forces when we narrow people to self-serving work, when we pit colleagues against one another to improve performance, when we believe people are most strongly motivated by promises of personal gain. When we deny people's great need for relationships, for systems of support, for work that connects to a larger purpose, they push back. They may respond first by embracing competition, but then lose interest in the incentives. Performance falls back to pre-contest levels. In organizations driven by greed, people push back by distrusting and despising their leaders. In organizations that try to substitute monetary rewards for a true purpose, people respond with apathy and disaffection.

It is possible to look at the negative and troubling behaviors in organizations today as the clash between forces of life and the forces of domination, between the new story and the old. Once we realize that we cannot ever extinguish these creative forces, that it is impossible to deny the life that lives in our organizations, we can begin to search for new ways of being together. TW

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Networks and the future church: an Episcopal Church case study

by Ian T. Douglas

The structures of liberal American Protestant churches have morphed over the last few decades from that of large, centralized, self-assured, programmatic organizations to down-sized, disparate, scandal-wracked agencies struggling to find a way forward in a changing church and world. The transformation is not unrelated to the rise of independent conservative Evangelical churches as the new American Christian establishment. Whereas heads of denominations used to have the ear of key players in business and government, Ron Reed now entertains these dons at power breakfasts. This sidelining of the old mainline elite, with concomitant organizational decline, has severely shaken the identity and sense of mission of most liberal American Protestant churches.

Mainline, or now "oldline," denominational structures and the faithful who work in them are not the only casualties of these changes in American religiosity. Ecumenical councils of churches, whose leadership models and *modus operandi* were immediate outgrowths of the big church organizations, have also suffered. The National Council of Churches in the U.S., the World Council of Churches, and most local Christian councils are all struggling with cuts in funding, staff and program.

The future seems bleak to the many who have dedicated their lives to conciliar interchurch cooperation and coordination.

Craig Dykstra and James Hudnut-Beumler, key observers of American religion associated with the Lilly Endowment, have surveyed the history of national organizational structures of American Protestant denominations. They suggest that in the late 18th century to the late 19th century denominational structures were best understood by the constitutional confederacy metaphor. In the first half of the 20th century, big church coincided with big business and big government. The corporation was the dominant metaphor. But since the late 1960s, Dykstra and Hudnut-Beumler say, denominational bureaucracies have acted less like corporations and more like regulatory agencies concerned primarily with adjudicating the distribution of dwindling resources and governance of denominationally related institutions. Further, they see that the faithful in the pews are becoming increasingly upset with the regulatory agency now that the goods produced by the former corporate church, such as the sending and support of missionaries and the development of Christian education materials, have been taken off line. Cries for structural change, both within the denominational structures and outside of them, are heard all across liberal American Protestantism.

Heads of denominations used to have the ear of key players in business and government. Now Ron Reed entertains these dons at power breakfasts. This sidelining of the old mainline elite has severely shaken the identity of most liberal American Protestant churches.

The metaphors outlined by Dykstra and Hudnut-Beumler fit Episcopal Church history. From the late 18th century until the turn of the 20th century the Episcopal Church was organized as a constitutional confederacy. Dioceses functioned independently of each other, coming together only on a triennial basis in General Convention to act on the relatively few areas of mutual concern they shared.

One such area was missionary outreach. Founded in 1821 and reorganized in 1835, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society advanced the Episcopal Church on the Western frontier and outside of the U.S. By the end of the 19th century the Episcopal Church celebrated its contribution of "good schools, good hospitals, and right ordered worship" in urban centers of the East, on the Western plains and in various foreign mission fields.

At the turn of the 20th century, Episcopalian support of the social gospel combined with a rediscovered sense of Anglican establishmentarianism resulted in a new vision, or ideal, for the Episcopal Church, that of a "national church." The national church ideal triumphed at the General Convention of 1919 when the structures of the Episcopal Church were revolutionized. A constitutional change provided for an elected Presiding Bishop. The staff and programs of the Domestic and Foreign Mis-

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sionary Society, the Board of Religious Education, and the Commission on Social Service were centralized in one National Council (Executive Council). A very successful nationwide campaign and diocesan assessment plan provided ongoing financial support. For close to five decades this corporate model of the Episcopal Church successfully advanced its mission of sharing the richness of Anglican tradition — and the riches of American democracy — at home and around the world.

In the 1960s and 1970s the mission of the national church ideal came under attack. The Anglican Congress of 1963 and its manifesto, "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ," challenged the Episcopal Church to move from paternalism to partnership with newly emerging autonomous churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At the same time, the civil rights movement and urban unrest in the U.S. tore at the fabric of the Episcopal Church. The church responded with the 1967 General Convention Special Program that attempted to redirect the national church budget to support the poor and those working for civil rights and social justice. Dioceses who saw the national church as funding the Black Panthers protested by cutting their financial contributions. Many women and African Americans, who had historically been excluded from the decision-making bodies of the national church, called for restitution and reform. In the emerging post-colonial world, the national church's mission of social uplift at home and abroad through Christian moral truths and American democracy seemed hollow and misdirected. Loss of support for the national church ideal resulted in ongoing, severe cuts in budget and program. Today the national church is but a shell of its former self, with many Episcopalians regarding the Executive Council as nothing more than a regulatory agency primarily concerned with governance issues unrelated to the struggles and hopes of individual Christians in their daily lives and home parishes.

Today the national church is but a shell of its former self with many Episcopalians regarding the Executive Council as nothing more than a regulatory agency.

In recent years Episcopalians at the grassroots have begun to challenge national church structures. In 1993, for example, the Diocese of East Tennessee's "Shaping Our Future Symposium" challenged the 1994 General Convention to rework the structures of the Episcopal Church. Such ideas as a unicameral General Convention and the return of the office of Presiding Bishop to that of a diocesan bishop were proposed. But many deputies and bishops at the General Convention believed the symposium's recommendations were driven by a reactionary conservatism aimed at ousting the national church's liberal leadership. As a result, most of the proposals never made it beyond the first steps of the convention's legislative process.

A more promising sign of new life lies in the efforts of other church members to organize themselves into networks of common interest and activity beyond the purview of the Executive Council. One such group with which I have been intimately involved is the Episcopal Council for Global Mission (ECGM). For years church mission groups, some legitimated by the national church and others functioning as independent societies, engaged in sometimes hostile debate and animosity. But recently the world mission lead-

Dioceses stress local focus and identity

Episcopalians are looking for national church leadership that supports and facilitates local ministry, according to an Executive Council report on diocesan consultations held during 1996. After visiting 95 dioceses and participating in roundtable discussions with diocesan leaders, the council identified this concern as the "overarching theme" of their consultations, although there was recognition that in ecumenical and Anglican/global relations, "the National Church must continue to have a primary role."

The report also stated that "there seems to be a movement away from the issues that plague the church to a serious interest in the advent of structural changes, organizational change and a great cry for clarification at all levels."

Episcopalians "want to be understood for who they are and what they are doing," the document stressed. "They want to understand who they are as Anglicans and they want to connect with other Christians and the world around them."

The council's recommendations include: strengthened support for congregational development; strengthening of the Linkage Program between diocesan and national staffs; making networking/facilitating and resourcing a high priority for national staff, with special sensitivity to small churches; better training in the use of QUEST/ Internet and other emerging technologies; and realignment of the current provincial structure.

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ership of the national church and the independent societies in the Episcopal Church agreed that their common commitment to working internationally far outweighed the divisions that separated them. They organized as a network of over 30 education, funding, and missionary-sending organizations in 1990.

The new coalition uses open communication, dialogue, and the sharing of information to improve mission. Arguably one of the most diverse and eclectic networks in the Episcopal Church, the ECGM embraces a wide variety of mission theologies and organizations. Voluntary missionary societies, parishes, dioceses, seminaries, funding agents such as the United Thank Offering and the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, as well as constitutional bodies of the church like the Standing Commission on World Mission (SCWM) all participate in the council as colleagues.

The strength and organizing power of the ECGM as a network in support of world mission became clear at the 1994 General Convention, when ECGM activists successfully lobbied the convention to turn back proposals of Executive Council that seemed to gut the missionary-sending programs of the national church. At the same time, a process was put in place by which the Standing Commison on World Mission, in partnership with the ECGM, would develop new ways to enliven world mission programming in the Episcopal Church. As a result, the standing commission, with the support of the ECGM, will propose to the 1997 General Convention a new Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission.

Emphasizing that the mission of God is one of reconciliation and that unity with each other and with God in Christ is the heart of mission, the proposed new partnership is a vehicle by which all the various Episcopal agencies and organizations involved in world mission could deepen their cooperation and develop shared programs. In this model, the national church would be a key player, but the partnership would not be directly accountable to the executive council, but would work through mutual consultation and consensus with all who choose to participate.

The Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission proposal, although widely supported by the church's world mission community, has strongly challenged the assumptions behind the old "national church" ideal. Thus many adherents of that old ideal oppose the proposal, some because they believe that General Convention money should not support programs that are not directly under the auspices of the Executive Council, and others because they see the partnership as duplicating tasks that should be performed exclusively by the staff of the national church.

Another proposal for revising the way the national church operates, this time from the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church, will also be coming before this summer's General Convention. This commission is calling for changes in the makeup of General Convention legislative committees and interim bodies, the role of the Presiding Bishop and the organization of the Executive Council (see Vital Signs, p. xx). These recommendations, too, have their critics. But in this case, the debate completely sidesteps the question of whether the regulatory agency model of the church works any longer for mission-minded church members.

The Standing Commission on World Mission, on the other hand, will be lifting up a partnership model which just might. If the General Convention endorses its proposal for an Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission, perhaps the church will begin to move beyond a preoccupation with governance to a truly new organizational model — one in which the common sense of mission lifted up by self-organizing networks of grassroots organizations provides the leadership. TW



***Noah's Ark series: Genesis* by Charles McGee** Detroit Institute of Arts

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Enlarging religious leadership: have women made a difference?

by Fredrica Harris Thompsett

Women's religious leadership is a hot topic in the Episcopal Church, my denominational home, as it is today in many other North American churches. Joyful occasions and historic events have been providing ample opportunity to ask if women's leadership in the church has indeed "come a long way." As part of the Ecumenical Decade in Solidarity with Women, more than 600 women joined in an exuberant international celebration and exploration of women's leadership at the Worldwide Anglican Encounter of Women held in Salvador, Brazil in 1992. A 20th anniversary celebration at my home institution, Episcopal Divinity School, marked the first ordinations to the priesthood of 11 U.S. Episcopal women at Philadelphia's Church of the Advocate in July of 1974, and a current issue of *Journal of Women's Ministries* (Autumn, 1996) focuses on women's leadership with the implicitly promising title, "Moving into the Millennium."

I also recently attended a conference where almost 150 ordained Episcopal women clergy responded to an open invitation from three women leaders — Bishops Barbara Harris, Mary Adelia McLeod and Geralyn Wolf (who serve three New England dioceses) — to discuss: "What gifts and differences do we bring to ordained ministry?" The intentional focus was on ordained women, yet as a so-called "lay" woman I have always known that cultural perspectives on clergy women reflect how the gifts and talents for leadership among the rest of us are welcomed and/or tolerated within a religious world that is still largely patriarchal. Years ago when many saints, living and dead, worked diligently for women's expanded and ordained leadership, we hoped to transform traditional patterns of hierarchy and domination in our churches. Are women leaders making a significant difference, or is it too soon to tell?

Reactionary forces

I do need to report from the start that all the news is not good. Although there are more lay and ordained women leaders at work in this country and elsewhere, misogynist elements within church hierarchies have attempted to silence the powerful voices of women leaders. Examples are found in the cries of heresy that greeted Chung Hyun Kyung's address on spirituality to the 1991 World Council of Church's Assembly in Canberrra, and in the harsh attacks by conservatives on denominational women leaders who participated in the 1993 "Re-Imagining" Conference. In her new book, *Leading Women* (1996), Carol E. Becker warns that when women at the top make white male leaders feel uncomfortable, retaliiation "can be surprising, brutal and swift." Feminist theologian Letty Russell cautions that there are many who still act as if "the Lord has spoken only through white, western male theologians." In a sociological study entitled *The Stained Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors* (1995), Sally Purvis describes the difficult work of women clergy striving to meet "transgressive" role expectations both as traditionally gendered feminine women and as spiritual leaders, pastors and administrators. Becker sees this as part of a "Cinderella Syndrome" in which women have to "work twice as hard" even to stay in place.

From glass slipper to glass ceiling?

On tough days, I am tempted to title the research I am currently doing on women's leadership in the church: "Moving from the 'Glass Slipper' to the 'Glass Ceiling'," that is, moving only from the pedestalization of a handful of outstanding, so-called exceptional women, like the patriarchalized Blessed Virgin Mary, to the reality of woman after woman bumping up against unseen obstacles that limit her abilities to rise, let alone stand on level, common ground.

Am I being too gloomy? I don't know. I am a historical theologian and as I face the future, I worry about widespread historical amnesia. This baby-boomer culture of ours tends to validate history only if it is something "that happened to ME!" My faculty colleague, ordained foremother, and historian of women's ordination in the Anglican Communion, Sue Hiatt, suggests in a 1996 article that historically, women are in danger of quitting too soon: "We fight to enter patriarchal institutions and are so overcome with gratitude on our admittance that we fail to continue to work to change and humanize those institutions.

For generations, indeed for centuries, dominant cultures have worked steadily (if not always successfully) to keep women "in their place." Typically, like others whose lives are seen as trivial or marginal to dominant cultural norms, such women were

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"seen but not heard." Today too, many women religious leaders are actually "stuck" in place, seemingly blocked by glass ceilings and plastic cosmetic shields, polite assumptions about where we are best "suited," unseen yet prevalent cultural curbs designed to keep us, structurally yet unerringly, "in our place".

Let me share a few pointed anecdotes. A professional church worker — a single woman in her early fifties — was told by an interviewing church staff member that she did not "fit" the creative, youthful "image" they desired! In the secular world such an exchange would be viewed as legally discriminatory. Another woman, a respected diocesan leader and the rector of a mid-sized parish, was informed by a visiting search committee that they could not "see" her in their "larger corporate-sized" parish. Lee McGee, in her book on women's preaching, *Wrestling with the Patriarchs* (1996), documents cultural resistance simply to "hearing" women's voices. While women in the pulpit may be "seen" and accepted, their powerful voices are not easily "heard," let alone validated.

Limited images

Our images of leadership in the church are far too limited. While many doors have been battered down by some women, and/or patronizingly or liberally opened for others, the struggle for women's leadership in religion is not over. There are those who are unable to pursue fully their vocations whether they are lay or ordained: Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist sisters for whom forms of ordained leadership are not yet options, sisters of color oppressed throughout this land by modern racism, lesbians who are categorically rejected as "fitting" leaders by most judicatory structures, and women who are considered too old, too fat, too single, too working class, too ... whatever!

The best analogy I have for leadership models in the church is to North American standards for "fashion," culturally dominant projections of acceptable "beauty." Such images are too skinny, too narrow, and too shaped by romanticized male fantasies to fit the abundant and diverse beauty of women in this or any land. Instead we need "extra-large" images of leadership to fit the immense work we are given to do! Expansive models of leadership need to be amply tailored to suit the great range and diversity of cultural, racial, ethnic, class and other special gifts women bring to ministry. Feminists and others inquiring into the qualities women bring to religious leadership must not be reductionistic. To convey valid insight our reflections need to be profoundly multi-cultural, valuing the difference incarnate difference makes!



Women in the church **by Meinrad Craighead**

Diverse models emerging

Meanwhile there is some evidence, at least in terms of rhetorical consensus, that diverse models of leadership are emerging under women's influence. Katherine Tyler Scott among others suggests that we are moving from a paradigm of competition to one of cooperation, from a "power-over" to a "power-with" understanding of leadership. In her still influential analysis of power, feminist and witch Starhawk (*Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery*) denotes helpful distinctions among communal types of power: Power-over is linked to domination and control, power-from-within is linked to the mysteries that awaken our deepest abilities and potential. Power-with is social power, the influence we wield among equals.

Saint Paul would have agreed. In the only passage in the New Testament explicitly naming "leadership," Paul commends various "forms of leadership" as God's gifts to the new church, gifts which have everything to do with building up the community, with encouraging a discipleship of equals (I Cor. 12:28). Some church women's groups speak of practicing a "circular" style of leadership based on groups consensus and shared norms for working together. Similarly there are now standard depictions of women's leadership as more relational, connectional, flexible, passionate and nurturing. It is no wonder that clergy women, as at the recent New England conference I attended, speak about encountering and handling frequent projections on them of being their congregation's or parishioner's "mother." They cautioned other women leaders not to fall into the "leadership trap" of the multifaceted nurturer who can always handle at least three things at once. Rather, they advised one another to see such episodes of projection as teaching moments, occasions when loaded assumptions about power can be clarified

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and more realistically distributed among the wider church community.

While some religious leaders talk as if new leadership models are already in place within church structures, I think this is a liminal time, a threshold time when the old "power over" ways are still very much in evidence. Typically when things are calm, church leaders speak effusively of mutuality, collaboration, shared ministries, partnerships, etc. Yet I have found that especially when there are competition and conflict (as there so often are in the church), habitual "power over" ways snap back in place with a vengeance. Leadership has not *yet* shifted to a paradigm of cooperation and liberation. The current situation is transitional at best, one in which paradoxically hierarchical and equalitarian models of leadership are juxtaposed in complex ways. Twenty years from now our sisters and brothers will have the right to ask whether current generations of women in religious leadership have truly made a day-to-day difference in the ways leadership is exercised within church structures.

Gains in imaginations and hearts

What then is "new" about women's religious leadership today? Where are women making a difference as church leaders? Primary gains have and are being made in the most formative and subjective places: that is, in the imaginations of our children and in the hearts and prayers of open-minded women and men everywhere. Massachusetts Bishop Tom Shaw engagingly tells a story about his African-American colleague, Bishop Barbara Harris. Bishop Shaw was introduced to a young girl in a parish where Bishop Harris had already visited. The young child stared at him, looked rather nonplussed, as her mother told her: "This is the Bishop." A few minutes later, the child emphatically declared, "Black women are bishops!" Another precocious child, a young boy, cried out at the installation of a clergyman whose predecessor was an ordained woman, "Where's the *real* priest, Peg?!" Many of us have heard other stories about young children asking, "if men can be priests?" Upon occasion, we have overheard childhood prayers in which God is confidently addressed as a woman. For many, truly, seeing is believing!

The 'rotating circle' at Brigid's Place

Four years ago, a group of women came together at Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, to talk about a new outreach ministry. They wanted to create a space where women could work on their spiritual and psychological growth — and they wanted to pursue this aim in a way that was faithful to their values of mutuality and non-hierarchical community.

What emerged was a Women's Assembly with a "Rotating Circle" of leadership. Once a month, about 30 women gathered to set goals, make policy and establish programs. Everyone was welcome, and all decisions were made by consensus. People were free to rotate in and out of the circle.

The project evolved into Brigid's Place, a ministry with a physical space at the cathedral and a full-time director, Jennifer Elkins.

Brigid's Place has offered experiential meditation and body movement workshops, lecture series on women's poetry and women in the bible, and forums on women in the workplace. About 3200 women participated in their programs during the past year, Elkins says.

"Many are not connected with the cathedral," she says. "I think we have been most successful in giving women who have left the church, for one reason or another, a door back in."

Elkins is deeply committed to non-hierarchical leadership.

Although Brigid's Place now must incorporate in order to apply for foundation funding, the Rotating Circle will retain its authority, she explains.

"We need to fit into the old system — a board of directors with a president, a vice-president, etc. — so our plan is to have that on paper. But we will continue to operate and make decisions just as they've always been made."

Elkins believes that the Rotating Circle has worked well, in part, because of the caliber of its members.

"It's a group of incredibly empowered women, who have done a lot of psychological and spiritual work," she says. "They are here because they are committed to a vision. People who had other motives, like needing power, dropped out early on."

With a circular model, it is important for people "to bring all their feelings to the circle," she says. It is also important for people to be "clear on their own motivations and needs, what they want to bring to the circle and take away," she says.

Elkins' role is to help catalyze and enflesh the group's vision.

"I see myself as a leader in the sense of carrying out the decisions made by the Rotating Circle and giving creative input," she says, "not in the sense of knowing more than others. The women together know much more than I know. I will go to my grave believing circular leadership can work."

— Marianne Arbogast

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It is too soon to say whether these young people will during their lifetimes strive for more expansive models of leadership. Yet Letty Russell once observed, "New leadership makes new naming happen." Diversely incarnate realities of women leaders call forth and suggest new naming patterns, new emphases and creative possibilities for relating and claiming power within community. Inclusive and expansive language in prayer may some day also shape more culturally embracing ways to thinking and behaving that honor women as well as men. Some churches are further along this path than others. Women clergy, of course, are making a difference simply by bringing their diverse gifts of service to many contexts, providing new incarnations of Christ-like love in action. Yet, both lay and ordained women leaders, and those who support their efforts, still have a long way to go in bringing about meaningful change. We must travel this path together as a discipleship of equals, not as lay women led by women clergy.

Cutting across four dimensions

In thinking about the complex dimensions of freeing ourselves from oppressive and restrictive notions of leadership — whether for reasons of gender, race or ethnicity, class, age or ability — it might be helpful to envision change as cutting across four dimensions: the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural. As is the case with the multidimensional efforts needed to combat subversive and persistent forms of modern racism, real gains are needed not only at the personal and interpersonal levels. Stragegies are required for empowering and enlarging access to leadership within institutional structures. Similarly, dominant cultural expectations about leadership need to be challenged so that others may claim, define and offer leadership. To date, while many gains have been made at the personal and interpersonal levels of leadership in the church, widespread institutional and cultural changes are much less in evidence.

New models at the margins

Where there are new models, they are often found at the margins of institutional life. At the edges of "official" church structures there are diverse gatherings and communities of women who persistently work to transform inherited patterns of privilege and domination. Typically assemblies of women are neither well-funded nor encouraged overtly by establishment leaders. For example, the international meeting of women at the Anglican Encounter, sponsored by my denomination in Salvador, Brazil, was largely a grassroots movement among church women. For women worldwide, the powerful presence of women's leadership emanating from the United Nations' Fourth World Conference in Beijing provided another model of women's leadership linked across different cultures and religions. The slogan at Beijing — "Women's Rights are Human Rights" — is particulatly poignant in a world in which poverty and brutality, according to a recent United Nations' survey, increasingly define the lives of women and children. In such large, public, international gatherings, increasingly powerful groups of women seek to name and leverage change on behalf of countless others.

Both lay and ordained women leaders still have a long way to go in bringing about meaningful change.

Closer to home there are models and groups at work to extend women's leadership, health and creativity. One of the oldest models of women's leadership, drawn from and still evident in matriarchal tribal societies, is finding renewed appreciation today as expressed in ceremonies for "wise women" or "crones" whose leadership and influence increase with age and experience. Skilled leadership is also advanced at the grassroots by leadership training events, such as Women of Vision, sponsored by an official Episcopal Church women's group.

There are also groups who choose to support women's leadership without giving any more energy to official institutional agendas. I have in mind Greenfire, an intentional multi-cultural feminist community in Maine. Greenfire offers individuals and churches a creative opportunity to join (as one of the founders, Judith Carpenter, describes it) "a contemplative space in a circle to speak/listen at the deepest levels and thus be changed at those levels." Learning and healing together is a part of Greenfire's intentional path to meaningful change. Similar settings and communities such as Wisdom House — established later in her ministry by one of the eleven Philadelphia Episcopal ordinands, Alla Renee Bozarth, in Oregon — seek to guide women and men toward spiritual health and transformation. These and other communities offer support to women serving in transitional leadership contexts by providing respite and relief for those of us working amid more hierarchical church structures.

Are we headed toward more promising days, times when we can expect the full empowerment of women and other leaders in the church? I hope so. The current situation is at best mixed, promising and transitional. Such liminal times call for boldness and not for timidity. Shedding old fragile slippers, breaking through glass ceilings, and proclaiming new extra-large visions of leadership are all part of the journey ahead. TW

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Challenging corporate mission

by Carol Cole Flanagan

To reorder the national church requires *vision — and lots of agreement about the* purpose of the Episcopal Church in the U.S. (ECUSA). But that is precisely what is absent from a report and set of proposals aimed at restructuring the church that will be considered by the church's General Convention meeting in Philadelphia this July. Prepared by the Standing Commission on Structure, the report does, however, identify "a basic set of guiding General Principles" upon which its recommendations are based, although no concrete, objective data are offered to support them (the commission apparently ignored the church's most recent self-study, namely the 1993 report of the Partners in Mission II Consultation in which representatives from other denominations and provinces in the Anglican Communion offered their observations about the state of our church and issues that need addressing). These principles are:

"#1. This Church is a national church participating fully in the Anglican Communion.

#2. This Church is one diverse community of Christ's reconciling ministry in the world.

#3. The Church will commit to the dioceses and provinces only that mission and ministry which cannot be accomplished effectively by parishes and congregations.

#4. This Church will commit to national structures only that mission and ministry which cannot be accomplished effectively by dioceses and provinces.

#5. *The form of this Church will follow* function and the structure of this Church will follow ministry and mission.

#6. This Church must be structured at all levels so that structures do not inhibit deliberate change."

Luckily the General Convention will not be voting on these principles. The deputies and bishops could easily spend an entire convention debating what it means to be a "national" church alone. Those who wish to see increasing decentralization will be pleased to find the word "only" in #3 and #4, while those who do not will welcome the word "effectively." The concept that "form follows function" arises from the field of architecture, rather than ecclesiology (#5). Is its application to the church useful? If structure follows mission and ministry, can the reverse also be true? Can structure be used to inaugurate new ministry? To advance mission? Although not adequate as standards of evaluation, these may evoke some fruitful thought and discussion.

Role of General Convention

Proposals in the report concerning the role of General Convention are based on the commission's sense that convention should "debate major issues of concern to the Church," and legislate on "only those of major policy concern." The question is, who will determine what is major and what is tangential? It goes without saying that what is major in the minds of some is tangential in the minds of others. Some remember a time when women, who were not eligible to serve as deputies, thought the admission of women was a major issue, while the majority of the men, who were seated, did not.

The commission is content to leave such questions to the "regular legislative process." Given the changes they propose to make to that process, however, we should proceed with caution. For example, the commission proposes to reduce the number of resolutions by requiring that all resolutions be proposed by one deputy and endorsed by no fewer than than two others. Individual deputies would be restricted to proposing or endorsing no more than three resolutions. There are a number of difficulties with this proposal, but the chief is that, while it may improve the quality of the resolutions proposed, it limits access to the process. If the regular legislative process will determine what is "major" and worthy of the convention's attention and what is not, the more open the process, the better.

Program or mission?

Among the more controversial recommendations in the commission's report is the proposed elimination or consolidation of what it calls "Programmatic Standing and Joint Commissions." The report proposes a "reduced and contracted national program in favor of expanded parochial, diocesan and provincial programs." The difficulty is that what is "program" in the minds of some is "mission" in the minds of others.

Let me offer an illustration. Having served for the past six years on the Standing Commission on Health, I am acutely conscious of the dramatic changes in health care during that time, and its increasing impact on our people, especially the most vulnerable. The old social contract has changed, and the pastoral, theological and ethical implications for patients, practitioners, and our church and society are considerable. Following the example of Jesus, the church has been engaged in healing throughout all of its history. We now need to be looking at the role of the church anew. Is this program? Our federal government has eliminated funding for maternal and child health and Aid for Dependent Children. If these neediest are to be served, churches will need to develop strong networks and services. *Training and leadership may help.* However, if we plan a conference to train people, and to develop such a network, is that program or mission?

In addition, under the structure commission's proposed consolidation

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plan, the work of a body like the Standing Commission on Health (other commissions slated for termination include those on the Church in Small Communities, Health, Human Affairs, the Church in Metropolitan Areas, Peace with Justice, and Evangelism) would be subsumed under one of three new commissions. Is this in the cause of efficiency or will it gut the church's corporate mission? Indeed, with the drastic reductions in national staff that have occurred over the past decade, our corporate capacity for mission and program has already been severely curtailed. In spite of much rhetoric, there is no evidence that congregations, dioceses or provinces have the capacity and resources to fill this void, even where they have the will. At the very least, we need to ask the bodies targeted for elimination or consolidation what the effect on our corporate mission and ministry will be. Since these recommendations are not based on hard data, it would also seem prudent to undertake a needs assessment.

Another problematic area in the report is in the area of worship. The commission recommends a single Standing Commission on Common Worship, but absent from the report are proposals concerning the role of doctrine and the role of the Custodian of the Book of Common Prayer. The only provision we have for addressing matters of doctrine is through the unofficial theology committee of the House of Bishops. This is not adequate. The establishment of a body on worship and doctrine would make the relationship between the two more visible and intentional, and allow for the appointment of our best theologians from all orders. Today, much of the actual work of a Custodian of the Book of Common Prayer is done by an Episcopal Church Center staff member, and probably should be. This is not an honorary position or a lifetime appointment.

The concept that "form follows function" arises from the field of architecture. Is its application to the church useful?

Of CEO's and Chief Pastors

There is merit in the report's recommendation that an executive director be appointed to serve as the chief operating and administrative officer of the Executive Council, with accountability to the chair of Executive Council, an office held by the Presiding Bishop. However, the various references to the Presiding Bishop as "Chief Pastor to the bishops of this Church and their families" are potentially misleading. The Presiding Bishop is the chief pastor of "the Church." In certain circumstances, a Presiding Bishop who serves as a bishop's primary pastor would be abdicating his or her duties to the church at large.

There are also a number of proposals in the commission's lengthy report which seem simple and sensible. For example, the proposal that a member of standing commission can be dismissed if absent from two meetings "unless excused by the Commission for good cause," is a useful mechanism. Likewise, a proposal that the chair of a commission be jointly appointed by the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies is a substantial improvement over the current provision, which makes the most senior bishop appointed responsible for convening the first meeting at which the Chair is elected. The report also recommends greater continuity between the legislative committees of General Convention and the interim bodies, which seems a good one principle to follow.

The Standing Commission on Structure has given us much food for thought. If restructuring is to be more than an exercise in reactive deconstructionism, however, much work remains to be done. Those who view this report as "The Contract on the Episcopal Church" will be pressing us to safeguard the mission of the church, and I agree. Let's not cripple our mission for the sake of a new structure. Let's tailor our structure to fit our mission.

Taking the pulse of the church in Texas

by Muffie Moroney

It is ironic that much recent mischief over sexuality has originated in Texas' several Episcopal dioceses, including a campaign to withhold money from the national church and the presentment brought against Bishop Walter Righter for ordaining a gay man in a committed relationship. Why ironic? If the annual council (convention) of the Diocese of Texas accurately indicates the state of the church's health in this part of the Seventh Province, the institutional patient is moribund indeed. How incongruous that such an unhealthy sector of the church can cause such tumult. The agenda and outcomes of the gathering of some 1,000 delegates and observers that filled an Austin convention center in February surely will be replayed in some form at General Convention in Philadelphia this July.

Hostile territory for women, gays

The council passed a new diocesan canon on "moral discipline" by a vote of 89 to 79 in the clergy order, 261 to 175 in the lay order. It reads, "All members of the clergy, having subscribed to the Declaration required by Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church [affirming the authority of Scripture and the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church] shall be under the obligation to model in their own lives the received teaching of the Church that all members are to abstain from sexual relations outside Holy Matrimony [the physical, spiritual, and lifelong union between a man and a woman]." Based on an Episcopal Synod of America model, the language of this canon has been introduced in numerous dioceses around the church in the wake

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of the dismissal of "heresy" charges against Bishop Righter. Texas' diocesan bishop, Claude Payne, could not say how he expected to enforce the new canon.

Several proposals sympathetic to the status of women and gays were overwhelmingly defeated. These included non-discrimination amendments to the diocesan canons based on national canons that govern rights, status, an equal place in the life of the church, and access to the ordination process (I.17.5, III.4.1); and a resolution addressing problems with the title "Father" for male clergy and proposing forms of address for clergy that both recognize parity between men and women and also promote mature, mutually responsible relationships between clergy and laity.

The Diocese of Texas no longer has an institutional memory of how to disagree in a civil fashion and remain in dialogue. One prominent conservative priest says two churches co-exist here, and he expects his to win.

Other aspects of the meeting only underscored its sexist/heterosexist flavor. For instance, the diocese's highly touted advertising campaign aimed at tripling the current membership in 10 years into a "community of miraculous expectation," features several famous male Episcopalians (e.g., Walter Cronkite and General Colin Powell) - but no females. When asked about that omission, the reply was that only Barbara Bush had been approached, and she had turned out to be a Presbyterian! Presumably Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and U.S. Senator Sandra Day O'Connor (to name a few) just didn't measure up.

Finally, the opening eucharist featured seven male bishops and one female priest as worship leaders. Only the men were assigned places at the altar, so it was clear that asking this woman to participate was merely an afterthought. A front page photograph of the bishops who participated in this service appeared in the diocesan newspaper. The caption, "Starting Lineup," speaks volumes.

Rancor and win-lose fervor

Throughout the council, the generally accepted adversarial model of conducting business, based on votes in which some win and others inevitably lose, case an unpleasant pall. Coupled with rancorous debate, the win-lose model worked to undermine any possibility of building a sense of community. During consideration of the equal rights legislation, for example, a delegate opposed to homosexual rights was allowed to freely impugn the character of gay men and lesbians when using inflammatory language he charged that adoption of the proposal would force parishes in the diocese to accept as church school teachers, youth group leaders, and priests, individuals who engaged in acts of necrophilia, bestiality, and pederasty.

All efforts to introduce compromise legislation were ruled out of order. In a particularly callous exercise of power, the election to the Standing Committee of Philip Masquelette, an esteemed layman known to be an independent thinker, was later summarily ruled invalid. A person few people knew was then elected instead.

Institutional amnesia and denial

An insightful observer noted that the Diocese of Texas no longer has an institutional memory of how to disagree in a civil fashion and remain in dialogue. As one prominent conservative priest wrote me in a letter rejecting a proposal for ways to bring opposing factions together, two churches co-exist in this diocese, and he expected his to win.

Bishop Payne's vision of this diocese as "one church" growing threefold in numbers by the year 2005 is flatly unattainable, short of a miracle. The leadership is in denial over the reality of deepening polarization, making no efforts to encourage bridges between the factions. We are a far cry from "one church," and denial of this fact only reinforces the impression that full membership status depends not on baptism, but rather on one's sex, sexual orientation, and social status. Rancorous disunity does not promote growth, especially when so many both within the outside the institution are made to feel unwelcome.

Muffie Moroney is a Houston lawyer and member of the Vital Signs advisory group.

Witness' dinner to benefit the Advocate

The Witness' General Convention dinner on July 18 will benefit Philadelphia's Church of the Advocate. We alert readers now, because we would be delighted for subscribers as well as Deputies and Bishops to join us.

The historic church, which celebrates its centennial this year, has a long history of advocacy regarding race, gender and economic justice issues (about which there is more to say in upcoming pre-convention issues). It is an honor to be able to make a contribution to the survival of this gorgeous and elaborate structure which is currently in danger of literally falling down!

The dinner will also be a wonderful chance for *Witness* supporters and their friends to share their common vision for a church committed to peace and justice.

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Pursuing the art of leadership

by Berit M. Lakey

Finding effective leadership in this late 20th-century world of global communication, swift technological change, and information overload is a tricky business. Organizations are searching for structures and processes that will help them keep up while maintaining a clear sense of purpose. The church is no exception.

Many books have been written about effective leadership for today's world. I want to introduce three that I have found particularly insightful in my work as an organizational development consultant to churches. The authors are no-nonsense people who function both in the practical world and in the world of ideas — and who also appreciate the spiritual dimension of any organized human enterprise. Even though two of them are behavioral scientists, it is significant that the word "art" is found in the titles of all three books. They all recognize a dimension of leadership that goes beyond having necessary skills or natural charisma: an emotional and intellectual openness that allows one to listen perceptively to a variety of voices in order to develop a deeper understanding of issues and creative strategies for moving forward.

Of the three authors, Peter Vaill most clearly presents the leadership implications of a turbulent environment. His book, *Managing as a Performing Art: New Ideas for a World of Chaotic Change* (Doubleday, 1989) uses "white water" as the metaphor to describe the environment in which most organizations now function, and art forms like jazz and street theater as metaphors for organizational relationships best suited to a chaotic environment. All organizational decisions are based in values, Vaill says, and "leadership is the articulation of new values and the energetic expression of them to those whose actions are affected by them."

The book in my library with the most underlinings and scribblings in the margin is Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (Doubleday Currency, 1990). It presents several "disciplines" necessary for creative organizational responses to an uncertain environment: mental models ("deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations or ...images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action"), personal mastery ("the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience"), building shared vision (gathering "people together around a common identity and sense of destiny") and team learning (until people working together learn something together as a group, not just as individuals, they will not function as a team).

Vaill uses jazz and street theater as metaphors for organizational relationships.

Senge's fifth discipline is systems thinking, "the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice," the realization that there is a two-way relationship between cause and effect, that we are both influenced by and influencing our reality, including our organizational structures. Basic to systems thinking is the perspective that "there is no outside" and that solutions to problems may be found in interactions beyond a system's boundaries. Leaders of "learning organizations" learn from each other and from their members and do not expect personally to have all the answers.

Max DePree's *Leadership is an Art* (Jossey-Bass, 1989) is an inspiring book — short, wise, and simple, not at all what I would have expected from a corporate executive (stereotypes die hard!). He describes leadership as "something to be learned over time" and "more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information." The book is a personal statement about the importance of developing congruence between personal and organizational values, and a rebuttal of the false choice between "the bottom line" on the one hand and people-centered organizational policies, structures, and actions on the other. For DePree "the art of leadership lies in polishing, liberating, and enabling" the variety of gifts people bring to their organizations by fostering participation and building relationships of trust while ensuring organizational accountability and effectiveness.

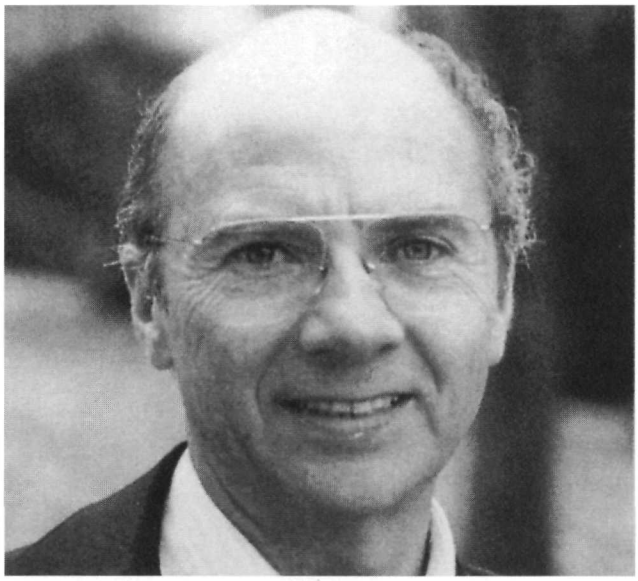
While these three books do not provide blueprints for how organizations should be structured at times of rapid change, they describe real-world experience and an understanding of the need for paradigm change. Most importantly for those of us in the church, they call for leaders who are able to "roll with the punches" without compromising the values by which they want their organizations to live. TW

review

Berit M. Lakey is an organizational development consultant to non-profit and church organizations working in the Washington, D.C. area.

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Jacques Gaillot

By liberating me against my wishes, Rome offers me more than I dared to hope for.

A *virtual* bishop

by Marianne Arbogast

What Bishop Jacques Gaillot likes best about his diocese, Partenia, is that it doesn't exist.

"That's precisely what's interesting," the Roman Catholic bishop explained, through a French interpreter, at the Call to Action gathering in Detroit last November. "Everybody can belong to it."

Gaillot's summary removal as Bishop of Évreux, France by the Vatican in January, 1995, and his assignment to Partenia — an extinct "titular" diocese in the Sahara desert — has borne fruit that is likely the opposite of its official intent. Far from silencing Gaillot — whose advocacy for the marginalized and relaxed approach to church protocol led to charges of disunity — the disciplinary action thrust him into the international spotlight. By popular acclaim, Gaillot has become bishop to Catholics around the world who hunger for a new kind of church leadership.

In the weeks following Gaillot's removal, protest marches were held at cathedrals across France and letters of support poured in from all over the world. His farewell mass in Évreux, near Paris, was attended by more than 15,000 people.

Less than a month later, the bishop launched a web site for the Diocese of Partenia (http://www.partenia.org) which was visited by 165,000 people in its first three weeks on the Internet.

Gaillot reflects on his life and the events surrounding his removal in a new book, *Voice from the Desert: A Bishop's Cry for a New Church*, released in English by Crossroad in 1996.

He notes that the Vatican directive is the second time he has been sent to Partenia.

"Almost 40 years ago now, I was ordered to go there, in the same authoritarian way," he writes. "I was not yet 22 years old, and they ordered me to take up arms — which, needless to say, seemed to me incompatible with my religious vocation — in order to defend the French presence in Algeria. I had to pass back and forth many times over the land of Partenia."

As a conscientious objector, Gaillot was assigned to unarmed service, but his experience in a war zone confirmed his commitment to nonviolent struggle. He also relates that it was "there, around Partenia, that I experienced the shift from a received faith to an interiorized faith."

After his ordination, Gaillot served as a seminary professor and director, and as a diocesan vicar-general, before his consecration as Bishop of Évreux in 1982.

Viewing Jesus as one who "spent his life awakening our freedoms," Gaillot sought as bishop "to make sure that ordinary people got a hearing, to awaken consciences, to reveal individuals to themselves and others."

Leadership blossomed among lay and ordained members of the diocese. The diocesan synod affirmed "an option for the poor and the outcast, both in France and in the third world," and committed itself to live this option in its financial decisions, its ministries, its representatives and the responsibilities entrusted to lay people.

Not everyone appreciated the direction things were taking in Évreux. Gaillot was accused of being a maverick, away from his diocese too frequently and negligent in observing the required courte-

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

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sies on other bishops' turf. His frequent media appearances also drew criticism.

He spoke out on Palestine and met with Arafat, questioned the exclusion of divorced and remarried Catholics, criticized a bishops' statement which legitimized nuclear weapons and embarrassed government officials with a scathing critique of anti-immigrant policies. In *Gai Pied*, a publication which dealt with gay and lesbian issues, he related his meeting with a gay couple "to say a prayer, a sign of welcome and understanding."

To Gaillot, it seemed necessary to meet the world on its own terms.

"If a bishop wants to communicate, to participate in society's debates, he cannot observe delays that were appropriate in the last century," he writes. "When journalists stick a microphone under your nose and cameras are trained on you, should you, if you think you would be performing a useful service by expressing yourself, nevertheless lower the curtain and wait for a painfully drawn up common statement, which won't be issued by the appropriate commission for several weeks?"

Gaillot's openness to modern communications processes precipitated — at least in part — the events that led to his becoming the world's first "virtual bishop." Through the Internet, his perspective and concerns now reach a worldwide audience. A recent browse through Partenia's web site brought up a letter from Gaillot on African refugees and an appeal to support Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical African-American journalist on death row in Pennsylvania. *Call to Action News* reports that Gaillot "keeps five helpers busy fielding messages and responding pastorally to e-mail callers."

Though the French bishops voted to continue Gaillot's salary and have offered him a prison or hospital chaplaincy, he has opted to focus on his role as Bishop of Partenia.

"By liberating me against my wishes, Rome offers me more than I dared to hope for, much more than a diocese, much more than a bishopric," he writes in *Voice from the Desert*. "It offers me Partenia — to me, who previously had been asked to jog only between the rue Saint-Louis and the cathedral, who was accused of seeing, listening and speaking far beyond my authorized limits ... Partenia is a phantom that goes through walls, passes over many lands, and crosses oceans. It cuts through protocol, intolerance and prejudice. As vast as the world, Partenia does not begin or end anywhere."

Upon leaving the bishop's residence, Gaillot moved in with a group of homeless squatters who had taken over an abandoned apartment complex at Rue Dragon in Paris. But, taking full advantage of his newfound freedom, he is away from home more than ever. He has sailed with a Greenpeace ship obstructing nuclear testing and occupied a Paris church with North African immigrants displaced by new French legislation.

While declining to take a leadership role in the protests surrounding his removal, Gaillot is delighted that so many have found the courage to demand a voice in their church.

"They no longer wish to be taken for children to whom one would say, 'You have made a mistake; don't try to understand, just obey,'" he writes in *Voice from the Desert*.

We live in a society that creates outcasts, Gaillot declared at last fall's Call to Action gathering. Eyes twinkling, he concluded a description of the growing homeless population on the streets of Paris: "This can happen to people who have college degrees, people who are in the professions ... It could even happen to a bishop!

"We should be a church of the outcasts and not a church which excludes or makes outcasts," Gaillot said. TW

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The Witness

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Defying presumptions:

gay and lesbian Christians celebrate Jesus' call

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Raising kids with conscience

THE APRIL ISSUE ON RAISING children is wonderful. As a parent, grandparent and teacher, I view the many complexities in raising children today as a challenge to remain centered, watchful and creative in our parenting. I was particularly interested in Jerry Berrigan's firsthand account of growing up in an activist family. Thanks for your multifaceted approach to every topic your publication addresses.

Donna Searle
Reading, PA

SPLENDID AND COURAGEOUS article on the 'Summit'! A good issue in fact. Jeanie, your piece on 'icons of white supremacy' is full of insight, irony, heartbreak — and finally hope. Amazing in two pages.

Charles Long
Cincinnati, OH

"RAISING KIDS WITH CONSCIENCE" is a moving issue. The truth-telling more than balanced the by-now wearying voices of anger and blame. I was especially moved by Erika Meyer's article. Really, it's a miracle she didn't set her face against the life of the church altogether. Many other PKs have done so with less provocation.

The juxtaposition of these articles with Gay Jennings' excellent letter again raises a couple of questions. Am I the only one who has come to despise our internally focused obsessions in the form of opposition to women priests, lesbians and gays, etc.? Am I the only one to suspect that the continued wranglings are excuses not to look outside of our cozy denominational burrows to become fully engaged with the suffering world?

I have begun to think we Episcopalians need our own version of We Are Church. But that, perhaps, is a future issue.

Terence Hughes
Akron, OH



Grieving rituals

YOU DID A SUPERB JOB with my photos — layout, context, reproduction quality — & on the issue totally. I have passed copies to friends.

Skip Schiel-Teeksa
Cambridge, MA

Responding to the Right

OCT. 96 was the *BEST*!!

Joseph A. Lane
San Francisco, CA

Witness praise

THANK YOU! HOW WONDERFUL to have my very own double fix of "indulgent lefty babble" ("she's just gotta have it"). Although none of the content surprised me, I confess the very handsome — correction, *splendid* layout astounded me.

Mary Louise McIntyre
Evanston, IL

A FRIEND SHARED HER COPY of the latest issue. I LOVE what I have seen of *Witness*.

Victoria W. Garner
Silver Spring, MD

I'M A SUBSCRIBER — love *Witness* — This is for my sister.

Joel G. Hill
Hagerstown,MD

I JUST WANTED TO WRITE to say how much I appreciate receiving *The Witness*. Keep up the good work! It is uncanny how you so frequently choose a topic that is of great interest to me.

Tray Davis
Montclair, NJ

I AM AMAZED THAT I HAVE reconciled with Western Christianity through the Episcopal Church. I truly was unaware that a Gospel of love, tolerance, and diversity was coming from the pulpit.

Richard K. Hamet
Dearborn, MI

I RECALL A COMMENT IN one of the renewal notices about folks not having time to read all the publications they get. I'm stacked up — still going through some material I picked up in Ohio, yet hope to be caught up soon, especially with *The Witness,* which is such a good journal. (Tho' I smiled when one letter writer recently commented about the "left" editorial slant being forced or overdone or whatever). We were able (well me anyway) to keep the spirit of the Cincinnati justice summit alive locally with Ed Rodman's presentation of "The Color of Fear" at our parish. Got some people thinking.

James Michael Moher
Nashua, NH

Gloria Brown

OVER THE YEARS I HAVE revisited Lionel Trilling's impressive introduction to George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* — a vivid account of the Spanish Civil War. At one place Trilling mentions Orwell's criticism of

New Detroit office!

The Witness has moved! Check the masthead for the new street/e-mail addresses and phone/fax numbers. Within walking distance for some of us, the new location saves us money and gets us out of downtown just as construction begins on two new stadiums and three casinos. Sweeping the walk and putting flowers in the windows is the beginning of our effort to reclaim this corner from decline and prostitution.

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the English intelligentsia of his day, which he says "was as simple as this: that intellectuals did not think and that they did not really love the truth."

Surely, intending ourselves as ministers, lay or ordained, especially as faithful witnesses to the truths of the prophets, means sincerely being open to these, and means being willing thoughtfully — painfully, if necessary — to appropriate them and their implications and to accommodate the personal changes such truths require.

I know what it feels like to defend my ego, and my personal comfort, against the threatening prophetic truth. For example, I once heard a black woman remark broadly upon white privilege and the history of white oppression. I felt defensive, wanting to be excused from responsibility, from the inconvenience of having to find *me* within the problem, so I said to her, "I feel that you are making me into the focus of evil (as a white man) in the modern world."

She could have discussed the degrees of truth or falsity, and various shades of meaning in between; instead, Gloria Brown looked at me kindly and said what I needed to hear: "Maybe you are," she said. "Maybe you are."

I tend to become angry only at the truth. Though it pained me, I saw, and see, what she was saying. I am indeed privileged as a white, heterosexual male in this world; my obliviousness to how my getting along is — in the context of structured racism — tied to the fate of others has certainly been no help to them. This recognition does not make me feel guilty, but its truth greatly influences my understanding of lots of things, lots of very important things.

Greater than my neurotic need for personal innocence or the comfort I might indulge through denial is Gloria's truth, what we white folks *must* see for there to be a chance for genuine peace and justice, which is after all more important than one's personal serenity.

To be a white person in our time offers the tremendous opportunity to be open to the important truths, to undertake an adventure in faithfulness, solidarity, and decency, to love and trust God and God's truth, but it *is* hard because being white we have the privilege of (so far) not having to face all this if we don't want to. But Orwell knew that the true intelligentsia humble themselves respectfully before truths — especially the inconvenient ones — and I believe Jesus did, too. Doing this is what we who are white must do if we are to be, well, saved.

William Rankin, Dean
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, MA

JEANIE WYLIE-KELLERMANN has done an outstanding job of editing and managing *The Witness* for several years. Her artistic taste and ability show in every issue. They stand out!

I think congratulations are in order upon her announcing co-editorship with Julie Wortman. That should lighten her burden, if it is that. (My own job has been single-handed; I would welcome a co-editor.)

Edna Ruth Johnson, Editor
The Human Quest
St. Petersburg, FL

Call to action

IF *WITNESS* READERS BELIEVE, as I do, that gay and lesbian concerns should be addressed by next summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, they should contact both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the General Secretary of the Anglican communion now:

The Most Reverend George Carey
Lambeth Palace
fax: 011-44-71-620-1070

The Rev. Canon John Peterson
Sec. Gen. of Anglican Communion
acc@ecunet.org
fax: 011-44-1-71-620-1070

The Archbishop of Canterbury does not believe there is any place for same-sex love within the community of the Church [see page 27]. He appears determined to keep issues impacting the life of gay and lesbian people from being considered by the Lambeth Conference, although the conference will be addressing sexuality.

Otis Charles, Executive Director
Oasis/California
San Francisco, CA

Classifieds

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Bishop candidates wanted

The Nominating Committee to Elect a Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark will be accepting candidates' names for the position of Bishop Coadjutor between June 1 and September 12, 1997. Nominations must be submitted on a prescribed form, which may be obtained by calling the Committee's secretary, Louie Crew, at 201-485-4503. Names may be submitted by the candidates themselves or by others. Persons submitting the names of others must confirm their willingness to be candidates. All candidates who enter the process will be asked at a later date to submit resumes and CDO profiles and to complete a questionnaire.

The Diocese of Newark is proud of its diversity. Women and men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, of all sexual orientations, and of all four orders of ministry are encouraged to apply. We seek someone with grace, maturity, a sense of humor, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, compassion, leadership, empathy with the poor and the dispossessed, liturgical perspicacity, and a good mind.

Copies of the Diocesan Profile are available from the Nominating Committee. To request a copy, call, write or fax. All correspondence should be addressed to: Nominating Committee to Elect a Bishop Coadjutor, P.O. Box 30, Newark, NJ 07101. 201-485-4503/FAX 201-485-1095. http://newark.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/coadj.html

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch. Call 313-841-1967.

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The Witness

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Lesbian, gay, and bisexual Christians gathered with heterosexual allies in Pasadena, Calif., to celebrate — and to call the church to justice.

10 **Bringing biblical truths alive** by William Countryman
Gay and lesbian Christians are offering the church a fresh understanding of the biblical call to 'come out' and to spiritual integrity.

15 **Heterosexism, justice and the church** by Patricia Beattie Jung
The church can no longer sustain a condemnation of homosexuality based on its traditional sexual ethic, Jung argues. Heterocentrist presumptions are the problem.

21 **Shifting views on gays/lesbians in *Christianity and Crisis*** by Mark Hulsether
Before its demise in 1993, C&C was a progressive voice on sexuality issues, but the magazine didn't always support gay/lesbian rights.



Cover: III[e] Jésus tombe sous le Poids de la Croix *by Marek Czarnecki, an artist in Bristol, Conn.*

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness' roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical.* For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

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Celebrating the call to integrity

by Julie A. Wortman

Years ago a gay friend told of the time he finally came out to his family. He and his partner lived in a two-bedroom apartment in New York, a city some considerable distance from where each of their families lived. They usually used one of the bedrooms as an office, but whenever a family member announced a visit, they would move the furniture to make it appear they slept separately.

They followed this practice for years, believing, as many of us gay folks do, that if family members knew they were gay, they would be very upset and either renounce them or become consumed with the need to make them heterosexual.

One summer my friend's sister called to say she'd be in town and would like to come to stay. So once again he began the frustrating chore of shifting bureaus and desks — this time in 90-degree heat. Slowed down by the fact that this was a two-man job and his partner was away on business, he was caught trying to haul one particularly heavy filing cabinet between rooms when his sister arrived.

Sweat-soaked and exhausted, he opened the door with resignation.

"Maria, I'm gay," he said bluntly. "I just can't move the furniture anymore."

More and more gay men and lesbians are realizing the futility and spiritual cost of moving the furniture every time the straight world comes to call. We're in the mood to celebrate, not hide, the lives we've furnished with loving care. Love, we've discovered, has a stronger pull than fear. We may lose our families, we may be refused ordination, housing, jobs or the most fundamental of human rights, that of marriage, but we know that none of these things is more worth having than love — because through loving, we come to know God.

What is proving disconcerting for the dominant, heterosexist, largely Christian culture in which we live is that the more gay folks follow the truth of our own beings, the more we are defying this culture's presumptions.

"Maria, I'm gay," my friend said bluntly. "I just can't move the furniture anymore."

By "defying presumptions," I don't merely mean shooting holes in the stereotypes used to mock or diminish us or proving wrong the conviction that Americans are not ready for a lesbian starring in her own show as a lesbian character on prime-time television. Instead, I mean exposing the false presumptions that the dominant culture brings about its own reality to the is-it-okay-to-discriminate-against-gays debate.

As theologian and ethicist Patricia Beattie Jung demonstrates in this issue (p. 15), for example, the sexual ethic which is invoked to prove homosexual sex is "bad" because only heterosexual sex is "good" is proving instead to lack credibility, even for heterosexuals. Likewise, as biblical scholar William Countryman (p. 10) shows, the fundamentalist appeals to Scripture that at first persuaded even liberal Christians that homosexual relationships are sinful no longer have the ring of authenticity — not only because the Bible doesn't say what fundamentalists claim it says, but also because we are coming to realize what the early Christians evidently clearly knew, that Scripture was never intended to be read as a lawbook. As gay and lesbian Christians find the courage to come out and to stand up to the powers and principalities which would deny them life, Countryman points out, they are experiencing the Spirit at work in their lives, an experience that finds confirmation, not condemnation in Holy Writ.

The call to integrity that the gay and lesbian community is hearing these days with such clarity, I believe, is a gift of the Spirit in this age of AIDS. As my partner, Anne (straight people always accuse us gay folks of talking about sex — is referring to my "partner" what they mean?), often says, there is nothing like a funeral for helping people "get real." Tragically, funerals have become all too much a part of everyday life for many gay and lesbian people, but as we face up to untimely deaths — deaths that a significant portion of the straight community regard with some self-righteousness as what we deserve for being homosexual — we are learning life's best lesson: to be ourselves.

This, in the end, is all that matters, and it is a gift we offer the straight world with joy. TW

editor's note

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

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If we unlock church doors, will anyone come?

by Malcolm Boyd

In my slum parish in the inner city of Indianapolis in 1957, no one black could enter the church. There was total segregation. Once I saw a white boy jabbing a penknife in a wooden pole outside the church, repeating over and over again the mantra,"I wish it was a nigger." And in 1962, when black and white protesters engaged in a sit-in at a segregated church-owned restaurant in Sewanee, Tenn., a cross was burned on the lawn outside, and an angry mob surrounded the place. A white, churchgoing supporter of apartheid walked up to us, looked into the face of my colleague, Quinland Gordon, who was black, and said, "I can see the clerical collar, it's white. But the face is so dark I can't tell if it's a man."

There are many stories that document the church's long refusal to be inclusive. One lovely one is about an Episcopal church in Michigan. It had always been segregated. No one African-American could enter, pray or receive holy communion. Finally, in the late 1960s, the parish leadership decided the time had come when it *had* to open its doors simply to appear relevant, to be politically correct.

There were anguished vestry meetings, tears, imprecations. The fatal Sunday arrived. African Americans were now welcome in the holy of holies. The rector, vestry and congregation waited for a black horde to storm the doors. But no one came. No one black *wanted* to be there. Why should they?

The church wishes to evangelize Africa and Asia, but not invite into its communities one of the largest, most visible minorities on home ground in urban America.

The question the church faces today in regard to gay men and lesbians is this: Does it love unconditionally? How *much* does it love? Does it love *enough* to heal the wounds of centuries of persecution, torture and debasement? Does it love *enough* to ask for *forgiveness* for things done and left undone?

Looking out at today's thriving, eclectic, creative, exciting gay culture in all our major U.S. metropolitan areas, do you see gay people knocking down the doors of mainline churches, begging to be let inside? Are gay people saying to the churches, "You possess spirituality and sanctity—please let us be a part of you—we bring you our bodies, our gifts, our money as a sacrifice"?

No. A great many gay people are saying, "You don't have a spirituality we can identify with because it has never included our humanity. Yet Jesus clearly states quite the opposite! Clearly, you don't know us — our needs, our spirituality, our peoplehood. We have long ago gone elsewhere, way outside your entombment in hypocrisy and self-righteousness. And, frankly my dear, we don't give a damn for your pretensions, your empty rituals, your betrayal of your own Savior."

This brings up the subject of evangelism, one of the church's favorite topics. The church wishes to evangelize Africa and Asia, but not invite into its communities one of the largest, most visible minorities on home ground in urban America.

I think the church's focus is all wrong. It isn't a thriving gay population in America's urban centers that is obsessed by the idea of getting *into* the church. It is a church that has been obsessed by racism and sexism that, even at this late date, as we approach the millennium, remains too often obsessed by the idea of keeping gays *out*. No ordinations. No blessing of unions. No inclusivity. No full membership in the body of Christ, not even on the basis of baptism. This, from a church that is increasingly losing the battle of relevancy, of proclaiming the gospel of Christ in a culture increasingly listening to other voices, other songs.

For the Episcopal Church—and, indeed, Christianity in the United States—the focus can no longer be on *whether* the church wishes to be inclusive. The focus needs to be *on the mission field*, attempting to interpret the gospel of Christ so that people will come *in*! TW

Malcolm Boyd, poet-in-residence at the Los Angeles Cathedral Center of St. Paul, is author of *Are You Running with Me, Jesus?* and *Take off the Masks*, a memoir of his coming out as a gay man and priest in the 1970s.These reflections are adapted from his sermon at the Beyond Inclusion conference held at All Saints' Episcopal Church, Pasadena, Calif., last April.

Help spread the word!

Please give us the names and addresses of people who might like *The Witness*. We'll send them a sample copy.

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Founded on the Ruins of Christs

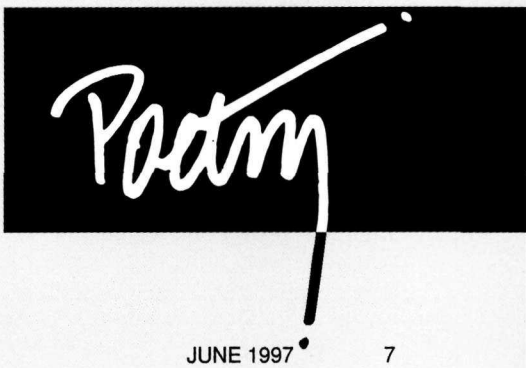
by S.A. Schopfenheimer

Founded on the Ruins of Christs
He has come back to me — here, now, on a day sprung
from my childhood to my virago — defeating all counterfeits
and clamors of hype-men, and he's moving in sweetly, gently,
as in old times, those days warmed by a young sun,
green with freshness, then when nothing stood in our way.

He has wrapped arms around me, spoken of our sacristy,
told me of how it'd be all right, I could sleep through the night,
whispered that it doesn't count what they say or think
or try to push my way, I'm family and he'd stick by me.

I'm keeping him here with me because he tells me the truth,
no fantasy or masquerade in smocks of white or eyes of blue.
No, just uncouth reality, the thin, rugged little Jew who
narrowed Laws down to two, promised me he'd keep
his part though he knew I could hardly even start to keep mine.

S.A. Schopfenheimer lives in Morganton, Ga.



Glimpsing Canaan

by Elizabeth Kaeton

The applause was warm and sustained. The laughter was deep and real. The *Beyond Inclusion Conference*, held at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Pasadena April 10-14, began with a celebration of the eucharist during which Walter Righter preached about the "sea change" which is happening in the church.

"I thought the last 20 years were the most exciting time to be in the church, but I think the next 20 years are going to be even more exciting," Righter said.

This was the family of God finally, *at long last*, having serious conversation about a subject we had too long avoided. We were talking about blessing same-gender relationships, but without the presence of dissension, without the fear of reprisal, without the tension of high emotionalism which clouds intelligent thought and stifles inspiration and insight. We had a *good time*.

It was clear that many of us had already moved *beyond inclusion*. We were there, in a sense, to talk about the journey as faithful pilgrims who had ventured out into the wilderness and had returned only long enough to bring more souls on the pathway of justice.

The five presenters who followed Righter were voices from academia, who raised thoughtful and intelligent insights and questions. The responders, primarily voices from the church's ordained leadership, nuanced the issues raised by the presenters and provoked lively discussion from those in attendance. Ed Bacon, rector at All Saints', led his staff and church members in the design and implementation of the conference.

Marilyn McCord Adams took us through early church history and the formulation of the Trinity as a model for the mystery of relationships in the community of faith. Pattie Beattie Jung [see p. 15] questioned the absence of the perspective of women's sexuality in the development of moral codes and norms as well as in the formation of heterocentrism. The day ended with the voice of Michael Jesse Battle, former chaplain to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who gave us a language and a construct straight from the heart of Africa in his discussion of *ubuntu* or "whole person" theology.

The next day began with Bill Countryman's insight that early Christians read scripture through the eyes of conversion [see p. 10], and he called us to the same task, reminding us that "family values" in the present modern suburban model look very different from "the household" of Christian antiquity, which included wives, many and various children, widows and slaves. Finally, Juan Oliver spoke of the importance and necessity of liturgical rites of blessing same-gender unions, but not before challenging the entire notion of "inclusion" in the household of God. Thundering with a voice heavy with passion and spiced with a Latino accent, Oliver demanded, "How dare you 'include' me in my own house!"

His was not the only voice to betray an impatience with the progress toward the realization of the goal articulated 11 years ago by Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning when he said, "In this church of course there will be no outcasts." In the midst of the pervasive atmosphere of "feel good," murmurs of disquiet and an eagerness to get on with the task rumbled just below the surface.

In response to Pattie Jung's presentation, one woman from Ft. Worth noted with sadness and anger that, in her diocese, the most ardent leaders of the opposition to the ordination of women are gay men. That quickly gave rise to the awareness that despite all the careful, politically corrected balance of presenters and responders, there was no visible lesbian presence.

Taking up another issue, several people questioned, both in large and small discussion as well as in the political action groups, the wisdom of founding an argument for "full inclusion" for gay and lesbian people on the basis of "faithful, long-term, monogamous relationship."

"I'm bisexual," said one man. "Are you telling me that I'm 'beyond inclusion,' that I'm inferior or unacceptable because I have not made a choice for monogamy?"

"I'm a single, heterosexual woman," said another, "and I do not feel called to celibacy. Yet, I am not ready to make a lifelong commitment. Where do I stand in the household of God?"

"Do we need a bishop's permission to bless?" asked one of the responders. "This is an issue of vocational discernment, which needs to be done in the midst of the community of faith, as should all committed relationships." That gave rise to the question, "Why are we taking this to General Convention? Being in relationship, like being celibate, is an issue of vocational discernment, and we already have authorization to bless as the priesthood of all believers. Why are we wasting our time in Philadelphia seeking authority for something which we already have?"

Some participants also asked, "Where are the people of color? Where are our African-American sisters and brothers?"

Elizabeth Kaeton is diocesan missioner to The Oasis, a mission and ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark with gay and lesbian people, their families and friends.

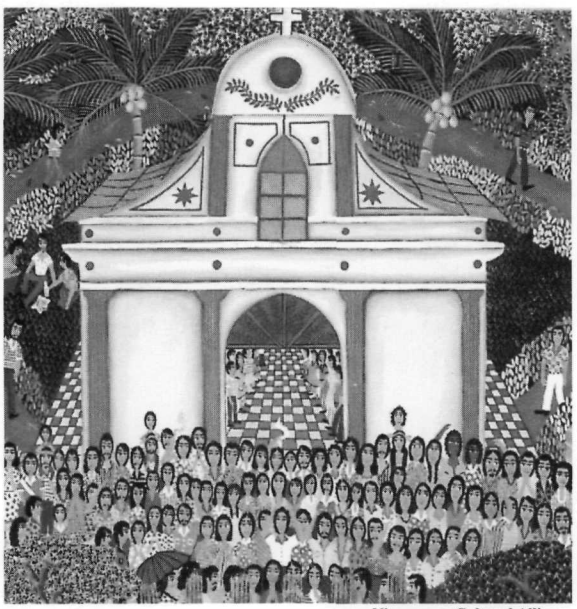
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noting that the current of homophobia runs strong and deep in that community, beleaguered by its own struggle for liberation and inclusion. "How many issues do you want us to fight at the same time?" asked one black gay man with a weary sigh.

Issues of class were also raised. In conversations held in stairwells and lines for coffee and over outdoor lunch tables, voices carried observations of the notable availability of resource and wealth, and what the conference might have looked like somewhere else.

"Where?" I asked, intrigued. "Where is 'our side' of paradise?"

"I don't know," came the response, "but all this obvious wealth makes me nervous."



Nicaraguan Cultural Alliance

El Tope en Dolores **by Edmundo Arburola**

Make no mistake: this was not a gripe session by the hoi polloi. My clear sense was that, as lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual Christians who had gotten a glimpse of the promised land "beyond inclusion," we were anxious to get on with the rest of the journey. There is no turning back now. Indeed, there is even new frontier to discover, and new, related issues to explore. There are new ways of learning how to live together in community with all of our diversity, new languages to learn and new songs to sing.

One only needed to hear the voice of one of the elders of "our tribe," Malcolm Boyd [see p. 6], at the eucharist on the last day of the conference to know that the movement to claim the biblical promise of liberation and inclusion for all God's children will not be denied or delayed. At age 73, his strong voice cracking open with wonder and joy, he seemed to startle himself with the power of his own emotion, practically shouting the benediction of affirmation and acceptance on his sisters and brothers: "Thank God I'm gay!"

As Andrew Sullivan, the keynote speaker said, it's not that gays and lesbians don't have civil rights. We do. Anyone can get married in this country, including people who are emotionally disabled, intellectually challenged, or even criminally deranged. We have the civil right, as citizens of the U.S., to marriage. The problem is that we have been *denied* our rights.

And so, too with full inclusion in the household of God. There is no "second class" status for "the children of a lesser God." Not any more. The full inclusion of gay and lesbian Christians may well be the last great liberation movement for the church and society which we will carry from the 20th century into the new millennium.

We're on the road to the Realm of God, where, indeed, there are no outcasts. In the words of Louie Crew, another of our tribe's "elders": "The meek are getting ready." TW

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Bringing biblical truths alive

by William Countryman

We, the Christian community of faith, have been engaged for several centuries in the process of *moving toward inclusion* — and now beyond it to the celebration of the whole diverse company of those called by Christ. In this long journey, the Bible may sometimes have seemed part of the problem rather than a resource for resolving it faithfully. Again and again, the enemies of openness and of gospel welcome have claimed the scriptures as their chief bulwark against change. The scriptures, we are told, mandate a world just like the one we grew up in; and the Spirit certainly wouldn't try anything new. This happened in the conflicts over American independence and democracy, over slavery, over segregation, over the exclusion of women from authority in the church. And it is happening in the conflict over sexual minorities in the church.

Only powerful cultural presumptions could enable any one to read the Bible as if it mandated modern American suburban family structures. Its dominant picture is that of an ancient slave-holding household, probably polygamous. It used to surprise me that the legalist side of this debate claimed the Bible while actually ignoring it so cavalierly. As I have become more aware of how Christians argued on behalf of slavery in the 19th century, I have become less astonished. The power of our preconceptions to channel and limit our reading of scripture is truly impressive. More and more, I believe that, when we *do* manage to read the Bible with an open mind and heart, it is a gift of grace and not simply an achievement of human attentiveness. Without that grace, we may read the words on the page, but the eye of the mind sees only what it expected to see all along.

Necessity of conversion

No wonder Jesus kept emphasizing the necessity of conversion. Conversion means taking the risk that our presumptions may be wrong, that God may see things differently from us. Conversion means taking the risk that, if I trust God, I might find the world beginning to look different. Conversion means letting go and allowing God to say to us whatever God wants to say, even if it contradicts the preconceptions we have absorbed from our early upbringing. If we approach the Bible in a state open to conversion, we are sometimes astounded to find that what it is actually saying is quite different from what we were taught to expect.

It is time for us to reclaim the Bible for what it is *meant* to be — not a lawbook to reinforce whatever the *status quo* happens to hold dear, but a vehicle of the good news. In doing so, we follow in the footsteps of our earliest Christian forebears, who were anything but fundamentalists in their approach to scripture. There is a widespread American myth about the history of Christianity. It says that fundamentalism represents the original Christianity, that the old rigorism has been gradually collapsing ever since, and that more welcoming, less legalistic expressions of Christian faith are just a compromise with the weakness and unsteadiness of decadent modern people. In actual fact, fundamentalism is basically a product of the modern era, a creature of the age of Hitler, Stalin and Mao, a violent reaction to the uncertainties of a world flooded with change.

Fundamentalists actually have little in common with our earliest Christian forebears, particularly in their use of the Bible. For the fundamentalist, the Bible is a lawbook — a peculiarly organized lawbook, to be sure, but, never fear, the fundamentalist will interpret for you and tell you in detail what it demands of you.

That is not what the Bible was for the earliest Christians. Indeed, their attitude toward scripture was so different from this as to seem quite cavalier. Their interpretations of scripture were so creative and imaginative that I have to tell my students that, for class purposes, at least, they are not to follow their example. (I'm not a legalist, but I do want interpretations to stay pretty closely connected with the text!)

Fundamentalism is basically a product of the modern era, a creature of the age of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, a violent reaction to the uncertainties of a world flooded with change. Fundamentalists actually have little in common with our earliest Christian forebears, particularly in their use of the Bible.

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The only scriptures the earliest Christians had were the scriptures of Israel — more or less what we now call the "Old Testament" and the "Apocrypha," but in the form of many separate documents. These said nothing directly about Jesus. Even as the New Testament documents came into being, most early Christians learned of them primarily through public reading. Most people did not have the chance to study them in detail, if only because copies were scarce and expensive and not everyone could read well enough.

Jesus, not scripture, the center

For these people, scripture was not the center of their encounter with God. That center was Jesus. Jesus had come, freeing people from demons and disease, proclaiming the good news of God's love and forgiveness, *sharing food with all sorts of people*, the "good" and the "bad" alike, demanding *conversion* from everybody, even the religious. Jesus challenged the religious authorities themselves for their legalism and hypocrisy. And he was willing to endure suffering and death rather than back away from his message of release and joy. And God, in turn, raised Jesus from the dead to show that this message of good news was true and reliable. That's where the earliest Christians placed their reliance.

When they encountered Jesus and his message, they found that it turned their worlds around. They experienced *conversion*. From that point onward, nothing could ever seem quite the same to them: God, the world, the meaning of life, themselves. Not even the scriptures! They thought they already knew something about them. They thought they knew at least roughly what they said. But they went back to them with new eyes, eyes opened by the teaching and life of Jesus. And they discovered that the scriptures didn't read quite the same any more.

It wasn't that they were bringing new ideas in and forcing them on scripture. They were simply rediscovering things that they hadn't really paid attention to before. Things that had been in the background moved into the foreground. Things that had seemed enormously important receded almost out of view. These were the same scriptures that they had been reading before, but now their encounter with God in Jesus made them seem very different.



Group from Topeka, Kan., demonstrates at the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 1994. Jim Solheim/ENS

Think of the experience that Luke describes at the first Pentecost: the giving of the Spirit, the speaking in tongues, the prophesying. When Peter is called on to explain this to the gathering crowd, he goes back to scripture, to *Joel's* prophecy of a time when all God's people would become prophets. It was a familiar enough passage of scripture. But how different it became now that it was perceived as a description of the Christians' actual experience! It was no longer a prophecy of some remote future, irrelevant to the life of the moment; it was a description of present experience, charged with the Spirit. From being a background item, it moved into the foreground.

Or think of Paul struggling with his mission to the Gentiles. Jesus didn't just convert Paul in that vision on the road to Damascus. (That would have been embarrassing enough for the enthusiastic persecutor!) Jesus went on to commission him as his emissary to the Gentiles, precisely the people that a faithful Pharisee of that particular era, intent on maintaining purity, would have preferred to avoid. Yet, a few years later, Paul, writing to the Romans, says that the scriptures themselves mandated the bringing in of the Gentiles. Was it from the scriptures that Paul first learned this? No. He learned it from his lived experience of the Spirit at work. *Then* he went back to scripture and discovered that it had been there all along.

I am not trying to set scripture and

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experience at odds with each other. Neither one is transparent by itself. Both are rich and many-faceted. Neither is clear on first reading. What I am saying is that the early Christians, while they knew and valued the scriptures all along, found that the critical element that produced conversion in them was not scripture but their encounter with the good news of Jesus — directly in the person of Jesus or indirectly through Jesus' followers. Once they had come to conversion, they were able to go back to scripture and read it with new eyes, eyes that were now opened by what God was doing in their own time and place.

This is not some new-fangled way of dealing with our tradition as Christians. It is the oldest way possible. And it is where we find ourselves again today, by the grace of God. We have been meeting the good news of Jesus in our common experience as people of faith. We have been meeting the good news as we learn that God loves all people regardless of color or ethnicity, women and men alike. We have been meeting the good news as we discover that God speaks to gay men and lesbians just as powerfully and articulately as to heterosexual people. *It is time now to take our experience of the Spirit at work here and now proclaiming good news, bringing joy out of defeat, hope out of despair, life out of death—and go back to the Bible with it, where we will find that God who is at work among us now has left manifold traces of the same work on the sacred page.*

Calling out and coming out

What do we find if we do that? There are some things in scripture that stand out with particular clarity for lesbians and gay men, because they meet with our experience in such a clear way. And there are things in scripture that "come alive" for all of us now, whatever our sexuality, in relation to the conversion that has brought us to this point, together, today.

For lesbians and gay men, one striking thing about scripture is the importance of the themes of *calling out* and *coming out.* Religion may have a tendency to go to bed with the *status quo* and stay there. But the Bible keeps showing us how God calls people to leave their familiar environment and strike out for some other place or some other way of life. Terah, the father of Abram, was at home in Ur of the Chaldees till he came out to go to Haran. Abram was at home in Haran till God called him to go to Canaan. Moses was at home in the desert until God met him in the burning bush and called him to go back to Egypt and bring the people out of slavery. The list goes on and on — right through Jesus leaving his family and calling on his disciples to leave theirs. Again and again, God says to us, "Come along. You can't stay here. I have other things for you to do."

God, it turns out, has a very strong penchant for bringing apparently unrelated people together and forming them into a community. *We may want to draw lines of race and culture and sexuality and gender and defend them, but God keeps wanting to mix us all up together.*

This cannot have been an easy move for any of our forebears in faith. Terah and Abram became terribly vulnerable when they gave up the familiar terrain and alliances where they had lived so long and moved into strange territory. Moses took great risks in returning to Egypt with major social change on his mind. Jesus and many of his disciples found that their daring led eventually to their deaths. And yet, putting their faith in the God who called, they risked everything. And the risk ultimately proved life-giving, even if it brought them to the resurrection by way of a cross.

As M. R. Ritley has pointed out in *God's Gay Tribe*, this is very closely related to the life experience of gay men and lesbians. We experience God's call to us in a most improbable form — the form of a deeply rooted disposition to love members of our own sex. We experience that disposition, as it matures in our lives, not as sickness or as sin, but as a part of our created and creative humanness. It is deeply involved in all that we are. Some of us have endeavored to root it out — and found it was not only ungrateful but impossible. It meant trying to uproot our *selves*. The effort failed because it turned out to be a betrayal of the God who made us.

Why have people even tried such a thing? Because the world around us (including the churches) told us we should, told us there was something profoundly wrong with same-sex erotic attraction. But once *we took the risk of conversion* and quit listening to the voice of the world in this matter, we found that God was calling us to embrace what God had given us. And we found that our sexual orientation was not in fact wrong or harmful or sinful. Like heterosexual attraction, it *could* be perverted to harmful or sinful ends. But, in itself, it was not wrong. It was even life-giving.

To love another person and be loved in return gives life and joy. Whether the love is heterosexual or homosexual makes no discernible difference. Both reveal the goodness of God's own love for us — the love that created us in the first place and that calls us into communion with God throughout our lives. In other words, love among human beings, beautiful as it is in

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itself, turns out to be a vocation from God, too. We have heard God calling us through our God-given loves.

God is calling each and every one of us. In the experience of gay men and lesbians, this reality becomes particularly vivid and inescapable in our time. God's penchant for calling people out of the familiar and into the adventure of pilgrimage and the risk of living by God's promise is central to the Bible. I believe that the way this scriptural truth has come alive in our lives will prove to be illuminative for other people, too.

Spiritual danger

For gay and lesbian people, of course, "coming out" means more than just taking the risk of leaving one world for another. *It also means getting honest with yourself and the people who are important to you.* It means cultivating the kind of integrity that would enable us to lead a more or less unified existence. The life of the "closet" may be unavoidable in some hostile environments; but we know all too well how dangerous it is to the spirit.

Being in the closet means treating one aspect of your life as so radically unacceptable that it must not be allowed to touch another, more public aspect of it. One danger of this is that it may leave us not knowing who we really are — just playing out a series of roles. And how am I to have a love affair with God, as the mystics urge me to, if I am just a collection of roles? How can I be engaged, involved, in love?

Another danger is that *we will become less than God made us.* For gay and lesbian people, being in the closet always means to some degree accepting the culture's negative judgment on us. Sometimes, as I say, the closet is necessary to a person's survival, but it still has a price. And the price is that it makes it difficult to accept what we really are: God's good gift of creation.

A third danger in the closet, a danger that Jesus emphasized repeatedly in his teaching, is a danger that the habit of concealment may turn into a *habit of hypocrisy.* And, according to Jesus, hypocrisy is the one sin that can place a person beyond hope of salvation. When some of the religious authorities dismissed his exorcisms as works of the devil, he warned them about the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. What, precisely, were they doing that he felt he must warn them against? They had given up all effort to take seriously what God was doing before their very eyes. They looked at the people being freed from the bonds of the devil by Jesus' ministry, and they said, "This is bad because *he's* doing it — and he isn't one of us." As Jesus pointed out to them, they would have made a very different assessment if the exorcisms had been done by members of their own party.

When hypocrisy becomes a way of life, it becomes the way of death. We would rather maintain our own righteousness than accept God's love. Truth ceases to have any value for us. Only the maintenance of a good facade remains. The only hope for us, when we become sunk in such hypocrisy, is to have our lives shattered so that they can be remade.

Coming out of the closet, for lesbians and gay men, has an element of exactly that about it. It means letting go of the dream of being like everybody else. It means letting go of the hope of keeping life safely compartmentalized so that our inner truth need never escape into the public eye. It means letting go of control.

The scriptures' repeated insistence on integrity and righteousness and truth is not just abstract moralizing. It is a fundamental spiritual teaching. You cannot be in touch with God without getting in touch with yourself. You cannot be in touch with either without cultivating a certain reverence for truth as something far larger and more unpredictable than we had ever thought possible before. The choice for integrity and truth over against hypocrisy proves to be the most life-giving one we could possibly make.



The First Supper **by Jane Evershed**

The value of recognizing that gay and lesbian people are fully children of God and fully members of the church is that the whole Christian community gains the advantage of our experience. It is, after all, simply the experience of humanity, wrestling with God's gifts and with our own tendencies to reject them and to try to make a world of our own that is safe from God — it is this universal human

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experience underlined, writ large, made the more inescapable through the particular circumstances under which we live it out.

That's why we are moving "beyond inclusion." This is not about a group of "real Christians" deciding to include some more dubious folk on the margins. This is about recognizing the beautiful diversity of those whom God has called together and how much we need one another.

Intending community

God, it turns out, has a very strong penchant for bringing apparently unrelated people together and forming them into a *community*. We may want to draw lines of race and culture and sexuality and gender and defend them, but God keeps wanting to mix us all up together. We often find the experience painful at first, and we go along reluctantly. But God, in the long run, is not to be denied. And God knows how to give life.

From the beginning, God created humanity to divide and to reunite. Remember the story. When God saw that the first human was alone and doomed to loneliness, God created the second human out of the first. God separated us from one another so that we might be friends and have communion with one another. Separating us, by itself, was not enough. In itself, separation produces all the distress and sorrow that sets one human being against another and one human group against another. God knew that there must also be something to bring us back together. And so *God instituted love.* "Therefore," says the biblical author, "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24AV).

It is a mistake to hear this verse from Genesis merely as the foundation of heterosexual marriage. It actually describes a kind of family life (a matrilocal system in which the husband leaves his parents in order to live in his wife's household) that is scarcely found elsewhere in the Bible or in Christian practice today. The point rather is that God takes us out of our familiar, natal environment, our families and tribes and nations, and puts us together in surprising ways to make something new: an Israel, a church — new communities that overcome the separations of the old. Sexual love is the first and most deeply rooted example of God's penchant for taking the unrelated and making of them a new family, a new nation, a new community of faith. God draws together the improbable, the unexpected, even the oppressed and inimical, and says, "You shall be one family now. You have the opportunity to create something new along with me."

God does not stand still. Jesus does not stand still. The Holy Spirit does not stand still. And their work proceeds still along the lines the Holy and Blessed One laid out from the beginning of creation: Leave the familiarities of father and mother, the Creator says, and cleave to the new family of which I will make you a part. "Who is my mother and brother and sister," says Jesus, "but the one who does the will of God"? What is Israel without its mixed multitude? What is the family of David without its Canaanite and Moabite mothers? What is the church without its unthinkable mix of people who were not supposed to belong together at all?

We are witnessing a triumph of the good news in our very association together. Our ongoing task is the same one given to those people who witnessed this same good news incarnate in Jesus: to live by it and to proclaim it, in season and out of season, as a message of hope for the future. *When we do so, we are fulfilling the deepest bidding of the Spirit.* And if we have seen the flight of the Spirit in our own midst, we need not be surprised to turn back to the Bible and find the traces of those wings on page after page. TW

Canadian bishops on gays

Two-thirds of Canadian Anglican bishops surveyed recently favor some change to their 1979 guidelines on the ordination of homosexual persons, but they have continued to uphold the guidelines "in principle."

The guidelines say all people are equal before God, but "our acceptance of persons with homosexual orientation is not an acceptance of homosexual activity." The guidelines also say the bishops "do not accept the blessing of homosexual unions." They say a gay or lesbian person may be ordained if there has been a commitment to abstain from sex with persons of the same sex.

The survey showed that of 34 bishops surveyed, 19 favor an apology to the gay and lesbian community for insensitivity and hostility originating in the church; 12 oppose the move. Twenty-one say the church should "intentionally welcome and celebrate the presence of its gay and lesbian members"; 10 oppose this.

Sixteen bishops oppose considering recognition of same-sex relationships, while 14 are in favor. But 19 want to "keep open the discussion concerning possible ways to affirm relationships formed by same-sex partners," while 10 oppose.

If the 1979 guidelines were to be replaced, 28 bishops, the largest majority on any of the questions, favor retaining its assertion that "all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are equal before God"; three oppose retaining the statement.

— Anglican Communion News Service

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Heterosexism, justice and the church

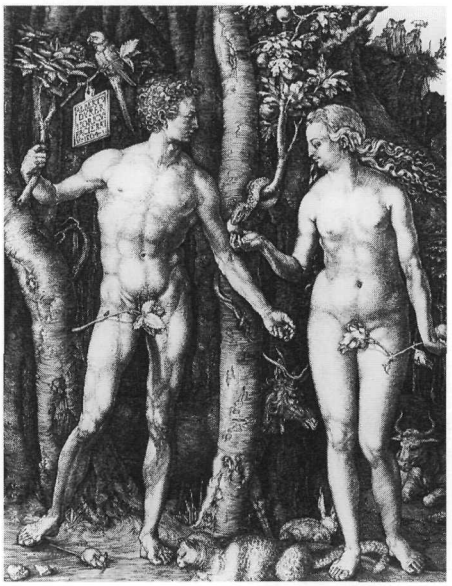
by Patricia Beattie Jung

Heterosexism is a cognitive system of differential behaviors and practices developed in response to sexual orientation. It results in the preferential treatment of heterosexual people and in the prejudicial treatment of all others. Heterosexism is accompanied by hidden costs for gay and straight communities alike, and though it can take a variety of forms, in all cases it hinges on a heterocentric sexual ethic.

By "cognitive," I simply mean that heterosexism is a reasoned, intelligible way of thinking and acting. I do not mean that it is rationally defensible. My point is to distinguish heterosexism from affective or visceral responses to homosexuality and bisexuality. Though it is often accompanied by, and certainly reinforced by, homophobia, it is neither logically nor existentially linked to it. Homophobia is to heterosexism as misogyny is to sexism and as racial bigotry is to racism.

Shaping public policy

By defining heterosexism as a system of behaviors and practices, I want to emphasize that this pattern of differential treatment pervades our culture and shapes our attitudes toward a wide range of public policies. For example, gay people do not have equal access to public accommodations, to housing or to employment opportunities. Unlike their heterosexual counterparts, gay people are not routinely granted access to the joys and responsibilities of parenting, whether as foster, adoptive or biological parents. They are not afforded the opportunity to celebrate their authentic sexual identity or their loves. Society's refusal to license homosexual marriages denies those gay couples who desire it the institutional support which would accompany the civil recognition of their relationships. These include spousal immigration rights, a variety of benefits from social security, veterans, life and health insurance policies and the protection afforded couples by divorce, estate and inheritance laws. Heterosexism in its most extreme expressions denies gay people the right to a "safe haven" other than their closets. Central to the notion of anyone's safe haven is physical safety, yet according to the Department of Justice, gay people are the most common victims of hate crimes in the U.S. The department's own studies show that lesbians experience three times, and gay men experience four times, as much criminal violence as their straight counterparts, all other factors being equal.



The Detroit Institute of Arts

Adam and Eve **by Albrecht Dürer, 1504**

Heterocentrism is the claim that heterosexuality is more than simply part of God's good creative design, that it is the moral ideal or the only normative form of human sexuality, the only orientation which can be proclaimed good.

Hidden costs

Those treated prejudicially because of their sexual orientation as a matter of public policy also suffer in hidden or less public ways. For example, fear of being gay exacerbates the confusion gay adolescents experience about their sexuality. And when internalized, heterosexism fosters self-loathing and self-destructive behaviors. Also hidden among these costs is for some a kind of moral despair. Though heterosexism does not technically endorse such behavior, its prohibition of even just, faithful and loving sexual lifestyles does little to discourage promiscuity among those who find they cannot or will not embody its call to sexual abstinence.

Heterosexism proves costly for people outside the gay community as well. When gay persons come out to their families and friends, responses forged by heterosexism stretch our bonds to the breaking point. Fear of being misperceived as gay inhibits expressions of intimacy between hetero-

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sexual friends of the same sex, especially among men. When supported by the theory of gender complementary, heterosexism reinforces sexist stereotypes among us. And perhaps most distressing, it leaves all of our children more vulnerable to sexual predators because it mistargets our efforts to protect them.

Heterocentrism

Central to this system of discrimination are heterocentric convictions about what makes for good sex. Heterocentrism is the claim that heterosexuality is more than simply part of God's good creative design, that it is the moral ideal or the only normative form of human sexuality, the only orientation which can be proclaimed good. Put negatively, heterocentrism is the view that there is something wrong with, something diseased or evil about, being gay.

Most, though not all, Christians condemn the verbal abuse of and violent attacks against members of the gay community. But because we are divided in our basic moral evaluation of heterosexism, the church is divided about how to respond to the rest of this system of discrimination.

Some of us see the dismantling of heterosexism as an important dimension of the church's work for justice and peace because it is a crucial dimension of the Christian mission to protect the basic human and civil rights of all people, rights which Christians believe are based on our common creation in the image of God.

But I need not tell you that others see these efforts to dismantle this system at best as misguided and at worse as a moral outrage. Some of our brother and sisters in Christ, in fact, explicitly endorse several expressions of heterosexism. It is good, they argue, to discriminate against gay people in regard to any work connected with children, whether teaching, coaching or parenting. It is also just, they argue, to discriminate regarding military service and to prevent the civil licensing of gay marriage. Even the denial of housing may sometimes be justified. Why? Because gay people are perceived to be a threat to the commonwealth in general, to heterosexual marriage and family life, and to children in particular.

Few Christians, including many Catholics, believe any more that heterosexual activity must be open to the possibility of procreation in order to be good. Few judge that oral sex or masturbation is unnatural when practiced by heterosexual people. The conjugal activity of heterosexual couples when the wife is pregnant or post menopausal is not usually judged immoral, either.

One could respond to these brothers and sisters in Christ by arguing, as has the Dominican Richard Peddicord, that there is no evidence whatsoever to support the claim that gay people pose any such threat. Therefore, on the basis of our obligation to respect human rights to religious liberty and to the freedom of conscience, the church should work against any and all forms of discrimination against gay people in the civil arena.

This line of argument is tremendously important. First, it is crucial that we correct wherever possible the misinformation that is out there about the gay community that is still so prevalent. And second, despite the deep divisions within the church about sexual ethics, a politically powerful coalition for the promotion of these basic human rights might be forged around the values of religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

Challenging heterosexism's sexual ethic

But in my opinion, this strategy will never prove wholly adequate because many people in the church united in such a coalition could and most likely would continue only to bless heterosexual marriages and would continue to commend as morally normative only total lifelong sexual abstinence for gay people. The sexual ethic at the base of heterosexism needs to be directly challenged. Only when this ethic is proven untenable will both the civil and ecclesial expressions of heterosexism collapse.

Because all people are made in the image of God, all of us share the same dignity and worth as children of God. Now, of course, respect for this fundamental equality among us does not require that we always and everywhere treat people identically. But it does mean that any preferential treatment bears the burden of proof. So it is perfectly legitimate for us to ask whether discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation can be justified. Since the traditional answer to that question has been "yes," it is also important for us to be clear about what fidelity to the tradition requires of us as Christians. Normally, Christians are biased in favor of the tradition as received and are inclined against its reformation. But the presumption of truth that we ascribe to the tradition remains simply that, a presumption. Therefore Christians can in good faith question the traditional Christian sexual ethic.

Heterocentrism rests on the conviction that sex is only really good under two conditions — when it is open to the possibility of procreation and when it is

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expressive of a communion of persons whose genders are complementary. But these norms of procreativity and gender complementarity are not consistently embodied by those who commend them to the gay community.

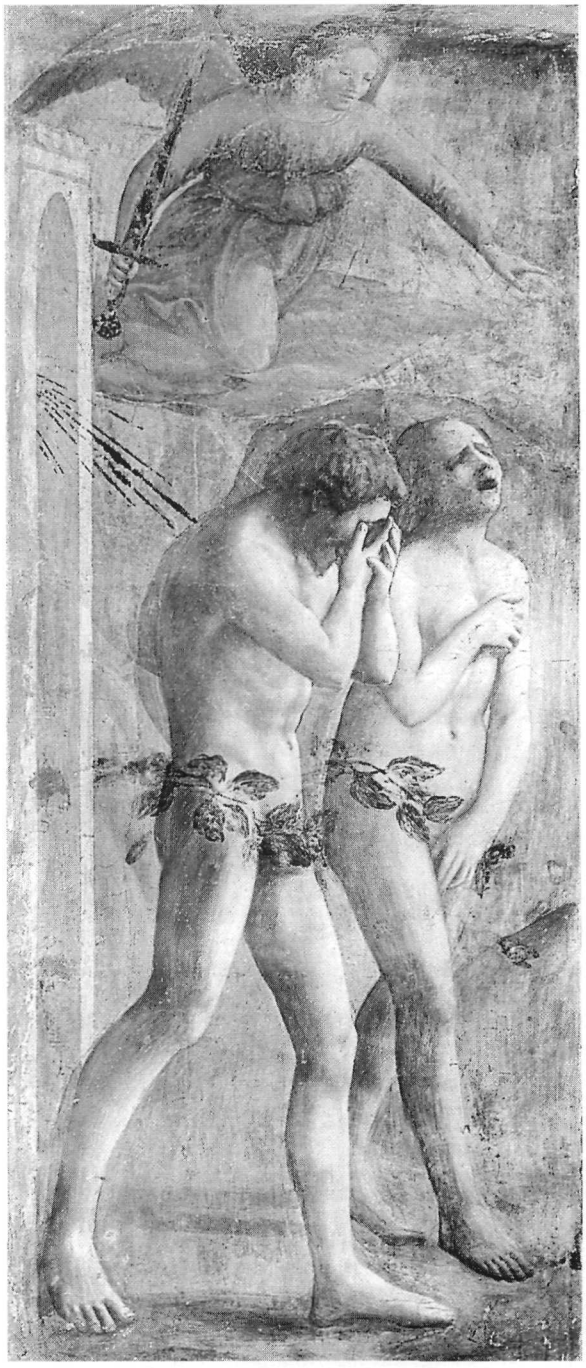
Few Christians, including many Catholics, believe any more that heterosexual activity must be open to the possibility of procreation in order to be good. Few judge that oral sex or masturbation is unnatural when practiced by heterosexual people. The conjugal activity of heterosexual couples when the wife is pregnant or post menopausal is not usually judged immoral, either. On the level of practice, few heterosexual Christians believe that use of artificial contraception, the decision to be sterilized, or the choice to remain child-free are in themselves morally problematic.

Similarly, gender complementarity is highly contested among heterosexual Christians. And even among its proponents, not many argue that heterosexuals are immoral if they do not adopt lifestyles which foster human completion through gender complementarity. For example, not many would judge the lifestyles of heterosexual singles, widows or the men and women who live in religious communities to be unnatural.

Uncompelling norms

Now, of course, these inconsistencies on the level of practice could be interpreted simply as a sign that sin abounds, but I believe that they signal the abysmal failure of the church's traditional sexual ethic to prove compelling. These norms simply don't make sense to people any more, and for good reason.

These teachings about what makes for good sex are not comprehensive of modern understandings of reproduction, sexuality or relationship. Specifically, the conviction that the possibility of procreation is essential to good sex does not take adequate account of female sexual physiology as well as all the other non-physiological aspects of relationships. Similarly, assertions that gender complementarity is essential to good sex simply beg the question posed by the experience of authentic two-in-one-flesh unions enjoyed by many faithful gay and lesbian Christians.



***Expulsion* by Masaccio, 1427**

Womens' sexual experience

Traditional teachings about the sexual significance of procreativity rest on the equation of male sexual experience with human sexual experience. Most of the time, when men have an orgasm, it is accompanied by ejaculation. But there are relatively few points of continuity between reproductive processes and erotic responses in women. When female sexual experience is taken seriously in our effort to think about what is human sexual experience, then the natural relationship between sexuality and procreativity is recognized to be variable and irresolute. The connection between sexual pleasure and reproduction is more accurately seen as periodic and seasonal — if not downright capricious! — rather than essential.

Like their practice of mutual masturbation, the oral and anal sex enjoyed by many gay couples are usually presumed by heterosexists to be sorry substitutes for penile-vaginal intercourse. It alone is the real thing. Not only because it alone is potentially reproductive, but also because it alone engages an "other" sufficiently different that the love signed in the union can be truly seen as "other regarding." This, of course, begs the question, the question that is posed by taking the gay experience seriously. As gay people have interpreted their sexual encounters to me, they can and do authentically sign the communion for which sexuality was designed by the Creator.

For these reasons it is legitimate to conclude that the church's teach-

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ing on sexual ethics is not credible.

Biblical wisdom

For many Christians, just such a rationale is thought to reside in the Bible and what it has to say about human sexuality. But careful study reveals that biblical wisdom does not justify this ethic for three main reasons. First, even though tradition normally illumines biblical interpretation, this particular element of tradition — the traditional teaching on sexual ethics — actually shrouds the scripture in misinterpretation.

Consider if you will the heterocentric interpretations of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. They have obscured the true witness of this text against sexual violence in general and against same-sex gang rape in particular. This word does not speak against homosexual relationships per se, just as the word found in Judges 19, which reveals the story of an other-sex gang rape which is nearly a perfect parallel to the Genesis account, does not reveal God's judgment against heterosexual relationships per se.

Second, texts traditionally cited as for heterocentrism do not, in fact, support that conviction. For example, the Yahwist creation account found in Genesis 2 does not reveal the design of creation to be exclusively heterosexual. Were that the case, then the text would need to reveal sexual differentiation to be both the cause and the solution for Adam's loneliness. But Adam was lonely long before Eve was created. The passage as a whole, particularly Adam's exclamation that Eve is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, emphasizes the partners' similarities, not their differences. In fact, the passage is silent about the purpose of sexual differentiation. It is also silent about whether homosexual persons can experience the companionship for which sexuality was created. Placards which read Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve, simply jump to a conclusion which cannot be established on the basis of that text.

A special category of sinners?

Finally, the key to most biblical arguments for the retention of heterosexism is a theologically problematic and morally suspect interpretation of Romans 1. In our process of interpreting this passage two important insights about human sexuality surface. Christians today understand that sexual orientation pervades and is central to our sexual experience and that our sexual identity is at the core of our personhood. When these two contemporary insights are combined with the possibility that Paul's remarks could entail of all same-sex desires, they inescapably generate two conclusions which even Paul recognizes to be problematic. Together they suggest that gay people are sinners in a way that differs fundamentally from everybody else and that gay people, worst of all, have been abandoned by God at the very core of their being.

Such conclusions must be named as morally irresponsible and profoundly problematic for deeply theological reasons. They need to be treated like those interpretations of New Testament texts which reinforced slavery and which continue to reinforce the oppression of women. They clearly contradict the overall message of Paul's letter to the Romans, the Pauline corpus as whole and the rest of the biblical witness, both about the depth of sin among us and about the abundance of God's love. The Bible provides no compelling argument either for the retention or against the abolition of heterocentrism.

The conclusion of this analysis is short and sweet. Heterosexism lacks the proof which any form of just discrimination requires. In both its civil and ecclesial expressions, it ought to be dismantled. TW

Homosexuality and the Bible

Walter Wink, *Homosexuality and the Bible* (Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960), 16pp. $1.50; bulk rates vary — 1000 @ $.30 each.

With this little tract, Walter Wink (aided and abetted by the FOR) is attempting to alter the bitter debate raging in our congregations and denominations over homosexuality. Revising material he has published previously in various venues (see, for example, *TW* 12/95), he acknowledges frankly where scripture condemns homosexual behavior, but demonstrates in plain fashion how Christians, whether liberal or fundamentalist, actually affirm and practice today few of the sexual mores exhibited in scripture (for example, allowing polygamy, mandating leverite marriage, or condemning intercourse during menstruation). The biblical material reflects various sexual mores, he says, but does not assert a sexual ethic. Instead, the bible knows only a love ethic, which must be brought to bear on the mores of any given era. In that task he claims Jesus' freedom in the Spirit to "judge for yourselves what is right."

None of this is to question biblical authority, but to bring the nature and character of that authority down to discussion in the pews. In fact, Wink treats the great debate as an opportunity to clarify the meaning of biblical ethics. This pamphlet is so useful because it is written in plain speech, free of jargon. Moreover, it is priced to move and designed for mass mailing. Blanket permission to copy is granted, but at their bulk rates, one could readily flood a congregation or even a denomination with a needful resource. —*B.W-K.*

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Stalkers Home Page

Personal information has become a hot commodity for Internet entrepreneurs, Curt Guyette writes in *The Metro Times* (1/8-14/97).

"Someone can find out your address for $6," Guyette reports. "Unlisted phone numbers go for $9. A list of the neighbors living next to you is $11. Real estate filings can be found within two days, criminal histories in a week. Worker comp searches, bankruptcy filings, driving histories — all are available in a matter of days. And it is all legal."

Computer technology has made such information cheap and accessible, Guyette explains. "Searches that a decade ago could take days, weeks or even months of legwork by an experienced investigator can now be done instantly, for almost nothing."

Among those raising warning voices is Glen Roberts, who runs the "Stalker's Home Page" on the Internet (Web site: http://pages.ripco.com:8080/~glr/stalk.html).

Bugged bugs

If that isn't enough cause for concern, a recent news story revealed that the Japanese government is paying scientists $5 million to remove the wings and antennae from roaches and implant electrodes which cause the insects to respond to remote-control commands (*The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 1/10/97).

"The potential applications of this work for mankind could be immense," said assistant professor Isao Shimoyama, head of the research team at Tokyo University. Roaches carrying mini-cameras could be used on surveillance missions, Shimoyama explained.

Anti-union training

A recent brochure in our mailbox invited "management representatives only" to a Union Avoidance Seminar, to be held in three Michigan locations this year. Sponsored by Miller, Johnson, Snell & Cummiskey — a Grand Rapids law firm "specializing in union avoidance and employment law matters," the seminar promises a "full-day, interactive training session" covering topics such as "Recognizing Union Activity," "Staying Union Free," and "When Your Customer Supports the Union."

Reforming corporate welfare

John Kasich, a Republican Representative from Ohio, has launched a coalition to oppose federal handouts to huge corporations, *The Progressive* reported in March.

"'This is an issue of fairness,' Kasich says. 'Since we reformed welfare last year for people who don't have power and don't have lobbyists, I think it enhances our case to be able to reform welfare for people who do.'"

The group, which includes Ralph Nader, "has identified a 'dirty dozen' — 12 programs that sop up billions of federal dollars. These include the Market Access Program ($347 million), which helps U.S. multinationals like McDonald's peddle their goods to the Third World; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation ($281 million), which underwrites the export of U.S. nuclear reactors; and the International Monetary Fund ($3.6 billion), which strangles Third World economies until they open up to foreign capital."

More family values

"Perhaps the most insidious example of the perils of cross-media corporate domination is provided by Disney/Capital Cities/ABC.

"Disney's activities have occurred with special dispensations from the FCC. The merger required seven waivers. Commissioner Rochelle Chong was quoted as saying, 'I think it's great that a major network like ABC would be thinking of combining resources with a family-oriented company like Disney.'

"Values do play a role in the decision to approve media mergers, but they are not the 'family values' alluded to by Chong. Rather, they are the calculating values of profit and multinational domination. Disney, this 'family-oriented company,' was listed among the 10 Worst Corporations of 1996 by the *Multinational Monitor* for its exploitive labor practices in developing countries. Some of the clothing sold in promotional blitzes was found to be manufactured in Haiti and Thailand by people paid less than the legal minimum wages there, essentially pennies an hour. Child labor was involved. Disney was also criticized for its use of factories in Myanmar that result in support for the dictatorship there."

— John Rodwan

Death penalty activist dies

Patsy Morris, one of the first people to document the connection between race and capital punishment, died in March. Dubbed "the Queen of Death Row" by *Time* magazine in 1979, Morris worked for 20 years to obtain and monitor legal representation for inmates on Georgia's Death Row. She wrote extensively on death penalty issues and befriended many death row inmates. A fellowship for recent law graduates to continue Morris' work has been established at the Georgia Appellate Practice and Educational Resource Center, where she worked.

Simple lifestyle

A *Simpler Living Alternative Calendar* offering 366 days' worth of thoughts and tips for simplifying our lifestyles is available from Alternatives for Simple Living, a non-profit organization which provides resources to help people of faith resist consumerism. To order a calendar (usable in any year) or resources for simplifying holiday and wedding celebrations, contact them at 3617 Old Lakeport Road, P.O. Box 2857, Sioux City, Ia. 51106; 712-274-8875, fax 712-274-1402.

Short takes

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Blessing same-sex unions

The desire to celebrate the commitment to a life together arises from within the baptismal community as it seeks to support all its members, including those who are lesbian women and gay men, as they endeavor to form and deepen their Christian identity by making mature commitments, sharing their gifts with the community, and receiving the support of the community. And having followed carefully the discussion about heterosexism in the church, and with consciences formed by Scripture, tradition, reason, and the experience of and belief in the equality of people, we came to believe that there is no justification for the exclusion of gay/lesbian people from full participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the community. While few of us would agree with every sentence of the Consultation's report, all of us feel that our collaborative work should be shared with the bishops and deputies attending the 72nd General Convention as part of the ongoing discussion in the church.

We present the Rite contained in the report as "a work in progress," and not many of us would be comfortable using it as it now stands. Can clergy canonically preside at the celebration of such commitments? Although the General Convention in 1979 passed a resolution against the ordination of homosexual persons, the church has not written into its canon law or rubrics any prohibition of such ordinations. Resolution A-104sa, passed by the 1991 General Convention, moreover, was offered as a compromise because the convention was unable to reach an agreed-upon policy regarding such ordination. The resolution, even though arising out of the Ministry Committee of the House of Bishops, seems to acknowledge, first, that the prior issue to be resolved is not ordination, but the church's sanction of the faithful commitments of homosexual persons, and second, that there is a discontinuity between the church's traditional teaching regarding marriage and many of its members' experiences.

... It is from [a] perspective on the value of commitment that we have produced this Rite.

— excerpted from The Report of the Second Consultation of Episcopalians on Same-Sex Unions (July 1996)

Liturgy in progress

An excerpt from "A Rite For the Celebration of Commitment to a Life Together" produced by the Second Consultation of Episcopalians on Same-Sex Unions (July 1996):

The couple stand. The Presider and the sponsors (and, if desired, the congregation) may lay hands on the couple. The couple may stand at the table with right hands joined upon the Gospel book or Bible. The Presider may bind their hands together.

Presider:
Praise and thanks to you, O God,
Creator and Sustainer of the world.
You spoke and the heavens came into being, the earth and everything that lives.
You looked and found it good.
The world was charged with your glory and mercy.

Praise and thanks to you, O God,
Liberator and Healer of the world.
You have broken down the wall of division, calling together by the law of love those who were apart.
For this, Christ died, giving birth to a new creation.

Praise and thanks to you, O Lord our God.
You renew the face of the earth.
Pour your Holy Spirit upon *N.* and *N.*
Let them love each other openly without fear, a joyful sign of your new creation in justice, love and peace.

Deacon: People of God, give praise to God.
People: Blessed by God who appears to us in their love.

Presider:
The living God bless you.
May you flourish together
and rejoice in your friends.
[May God bless your children.]
May God grant you the goods that endure and bring you everlasting joy.

And the blessing of the Living God,
The Source, the Word and the Spirit,
be upon you now and forever. *AMEN.*

The Liturgy continues immediately with the Peace. The couple kiss and the congregation welcomes them by greeting them and each other. During or after the exchange of the Peace, the following anthem (Ps. 85:10,22) may be sung.

Mercy and truth have met together,
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

The service continues with the Eucharist. The couple may present the offerings of bread and wine.

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Shifting views on gays/lesbians in *Christianity & Crisis*

by Mark Hulsether

On the same day last summer that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) voted to exclude all non-celibate and "unrepentant" gays and lesbians from its leadership—a constitutional amendment that was officially approved by in March by Presbyteries throughout the nation—I happened to be working on the chapter about gay and lesbian issues in a book that I am writing on the history of *Christianity and Crisis* magazine. This started me thinking that if *C&C* were still in existence, it would certainly be preparing to weigh in on the Presbyterian vote. Until its demise in 1993, the magazine was one of the central forums for mainline Protestant debates about a wide range of social issues, and its legacy deeply informed on going Protestant controversies about sexuality.

But *C&C* did not always support gays and lesbians. In fact, for C&C's first 30 years after its founding in 1941, it hardly addressed gay/lesbian issues at all. Even during the 1960s, when *C&C* began to turn from its original preoccupations with the Cold War toward more radical stances on civil rights and foreign policy, writing about sexuality (either straight or gay) was a low priority for *C&C's* overwhelmingly white male leaders. When homosexuality did come up overtly, *C&C* took a fence-sitting stance and homophobia often lurked just below the surface. Gay/lesbian sexuality made even *C&C*'s most libertine writers uncomfortable. In 1963, these writers, led by Harvey Cox and Tom Driver, convinced *C&C*'s editorial board to lift its anathema against premarital sex, at least for "responsible" straight couples. Part of their discussion centered on a document by British Quakers who proposed that sex should be judged not by the presence or lack of wedding vows, but by whether the sexual acts would "express and encourage the responsible behavior of the whole person" or, on the negative side, "whether they involve exploitation." It defended responsible gay/lesbian relationships in the same terms as heterosexual ones, and Driver's review generally supported its approach. However, Driver qualified his endorsement and called for humor to "put sex in its place," and he was largely thinking about gays. Although he was untroubled by unmarried straight couples having sex, he spoke as follows:

> *Homosexuality is odd. All sex is odd, but homo-sex is odder than most. And funnier.*
> *— Tom Driver in* C&C, *1963*

"[Gay partnership] can be a serious and responsible relation. But the matter cannot be left there. ... Homosexuality is odd. All sex is odd, but homo-sex is odder than most. And funnier. The homosexual doesn't know what he's missing. Bigger joke: for emotional reasons, he can't know. The guy is trapped. ... Are we to take this trap as fate (bad), or destiny (potentially good), or as a devil of a predicament from which there might be a way out? The minute we opt for fate and/or destiny we play acolyte to the bogus rituals that surround homosexuality. There is a whole literature and psychology built on this, and it's just plain cockeyed."

Because Driver did not reject gay/lesbian relationships categorically, this position was *C&C*'s most positive (or least negative) stance on the issue before the 1970s, rivaled only by statements criticizing the harassment and criminalization of gay men, as when a pastor lamented that police harassment had hounded one of his gay parishioners to commit suicide. These critiques gave similarly mixed messages; in this case the pastor implied that homosexuality was like a disease, since he asked whether those who harassed gays would also harass the mentally ill. Given that *C&C*'s board almost never agreed with Ronald Reagan on anything, it is fascinating to note that they backed him on one gay rights issue during the 1960s when an editorial cautioned liberals not to attack Reagan for appointing gays to high posts in the California state government,although his "traditional values" made this tempting. But beyond such articles, *C&C*'s only explicit writing on homosexuality came when its conservative minority attacked liberal "permissiveness." Richard John Neuhaus mentioned a book which defended gay rights entitled *The Lord Won't Mind*; he stated that this "might serve as the theme of much recent writing on Christian ethics." For Neuhaus, to defend gay/lesbian rights was to extend contextual ethics to the point of absurdity.

Mark Hulsether is a professor of religious and American studies at the University of Tennessee. A longer version of this article will appear in his new book, *From Liberal Preaching to Radical Teaching: Culture, Politics, and Religion in* Christianity & Crisis, *1941-1993* (U. of Tenn. Press). Artist **Robert Lentz's** icons are distributed by Bridge Building Images, P.O. Box 1048, Burlington, Vt. 05402; 802-864-8346.

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Moving towards pride

In the early 1970s, *C&C* began to write about gay/lesbian movements in roughly the same terms as black power and feminism, which were the two major issues (along with anit-imperialism) being embraced by *C&C's* radical wing at this time. An early article by *C&C* contributing editor James McGraw took a standpoint within the gay pride movement. He denounced the *New York Times* for suggesting that gays would prefer to be straight, adopted the word "faggot" as a defiant point of pride somewhat like black nationalists used "nigger," and generally insisted that the problem was not the "sickness" of gays, but homophobia and oppression by straights. McGraw's boldest argument was implicit in his title, "The Scandal of Peculiarity." Readers with a minimal knowledge of academic theology could immediately recognize his pun on "the scandal of *particularity*"—a shorthand term for the problem of conceptualizing how Jesus could have a special relationship with God (in orthodox Christian doctrine, equal status in the Trinity) given his human incarnation in general, and his execution as a criminal in particular. In other words, McGraw implied that theologians who could see God revealed through Jesus' embodied human life should also be able to see God's will and blessing expressed through (responsible) gay lifestyles—and implicitly McGraw compared the oppression of gays and lesbians to the suffering of Christ.

Although McGraw did not develop this last point explicitly, his general drift was unmistakable. He compared Troy Perry's founding of the Metropolitan Community Church, a predominantly gay and lesbian denomination, to James Varick's founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion. In both cases, people left established denominations because of discrimination, and they "took Jesus with them, as he always feels more at home with the rejected."

After McGraw broke *C&C*'s silence, articles in a more scholarly voice defended gay/lesbian rights. A widely reprinted article by James Nelson provided a broad compendium of biblical and theological defenses. Nelson argued, for example, that the actual sin in the leading biblical proof-text used to condemn homosexuality, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, was inhospitality to strangers and homosexual *rape*. (If it were about heterosexual rape, how many people would conclude that all straight people should be condemned?)

In an early article James McGraw implied that theologians who could see God revealed through Jesus' embodied human life should also be able to see God's will and blessing expressed through (responsible) gay lifestyles.

There should be no obstacle to adopting these understandings, Nelson continued, because the "Protestant principle" of reforming received traditions in light of "God's invitation to human wholeness" had led Christians to revise other aspects of biblical teaching in light of changing thought: For example, they had not maintained biblical understandings of astronomy such as the theory that the sun moved around the earth, nor biblical teachings justifying slavery and polygamy, nor biblical prohibitions against eating shellfish. (Virginia Ramey Mollenkott later added that the first church council to explicitly ban homosexuality, in 1179, also imposed sanctions against moneylenders, heretics, and Jews.) Similar changes were needed now in relation to sexuality. This was a matter of justice for gays and lesbians, but also of self-interest for the society at large, since homophobia (and its connection to male sexism) caused unhealthy repressions in straight people.

Deconstructing 'heterosexual'

There was a submerged tension in Nelson's article between the changeable social and cultural constructedness of sexuality—always being reformed by the "Protestant principle"—and the appeal to fixed gay/lesbian orientations which must be accepted as natural and unchangeable. A key early article by Carter Heyward addressed this tension explicitly. Heyward highlighted the constructedness of the "boxes" in which people play out sex and gender roles, including the categories "gay" and "straight." Yet she insisted, "These categories—boxes—are real. We live in them." And she argued that it was appropriate for her at this time and place to identify as a lesbian feminist.

The most important "box" to deconstruct was "the single box labeled 'heterosexual'" that defined male and female roles in sexist ways and presupposed hierarchies of exploitation. A key problem with the straight box was that it often short-circuited the creative power of passion and its associated drive for mutuality, which refused to flow in the channels it proposed. Feminism in general, and lesbian feminism in particular, was for Heyward the most creative current box in which to situate herself because of the way it criticized such dominant social patterns and highlighted the positive role of mutuality and passion.

Of course, in the churches at large such positions were extremely embattled, and for the rest of its existence, *C&C* often reported on the progress of gay and lesbian ordination rights, as well as conservative counterattacks such as the case

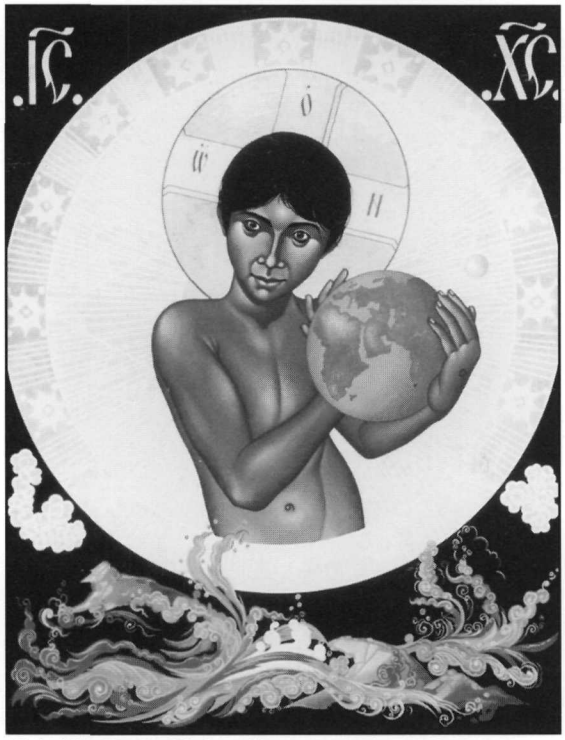
of a United Methodist minister named Rose Mary Denman who was hounded out of the church when she came out as a lesbian. One of *C&C*'s most influential articles on this subject was by the prominent theologian John Cobb, Jr., who deflated conservative pretensions to be upholding "biblical values" with their rule (mainly designed to exclude homosexuals) that all clergy must embrace "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness." Cobb pointed out: "The Bible reflects and sanctions several ways of dealing with sexuality, ranging from the multiple wives and concubines of the patriarchs and kings of Israel to the lifelong chastity that seems to have been favored by Jesus and Paul. But I do not know where the exact pattern now being proposed [including tolerance of divorce, which was explicitly condemned by Jesus] is reflected or supported."

Voices of backlash

Occasionally voices of backlash appeared in *C&C*'s pages. A Methodist bureaucrat received space to answer Cobb by restating the party line, and Yale Divinity student John Espy attacked Nelson's article, arguing that the biblical idea of purity "clearly excludes homosexuality" and that "only heterosexual relationships are natural."

In addition, letters to the editor characterized homosexuality as "lust" and suggested that *C&C* should "hate the sin but love the sinner." A southern ecumenical leader described gay/lesbian sexuality as a "perversion of the flow of nature." If so, Nelson's reasoning was backwards: to affirm homosexuality was actually a *refusal* to "accept and affirm one's own sexuality." During 30 years of pastoral counseling he had "experienced most homosexuality as a conflict in identity, such as a male not being willing to affirm or accept maleness. If one fails to accept one's sex given by nature, then all the other identities are up for grabs such as ethnic group, race, regionality [sic],etc. ... As for ordaining homosexuals (or lesbians) we are (in primitive terms) making a person potent. To put the blessing of the church on an impotent person does not bestow potency."

C&C did not present these hostile responses as an equally legitimate pole of a balanced debate. In 1977, a special issue on Homosexuality and the Church opened by answering a new subscriber who, having read Nelson, had written to ask whether *C&C* had published articles on the other side of the issue. One might debate the proportions of honesty and evasion in the editor's reply: "No, there is no previous issue of *C&C* arguing the other side of the question."



***Holy Wisdom* by Robert Lentz**

Their rationale was forthright: while realizing that "many readers will disagree ... and some will object strongly," they still planned to be advocates for gay-lesbian concerns. The real theological problem, they said, "[is not] reconciling acceptance of homosexuality with the scriptural passages that appear to condemn it, but rather how to reconcile condemnation of homosexuals with the criteria of morality that are truly central to the Christian message."

By the late 1970s gay/lesbian issues were among *C&C*'s top priorities, so that a pseudonymous Presbyterian minister "Calvin Gay" could begin a 1978 article attacking homophobia with the disclaimer, "this article covers ground already somewhat familiar to *C&C* readers ..." *C&C* continued to give strong attention to gay and lesbian issues for the rest of its career, with AIDS becoming a major concern. At times its writers tried to shame the mainstream into rethinking their homophobia, as when Louie Crew described how one local church had treated him in an article called "At St. Luke's Parish, the Peace of Christ is Not For Gays." At other times, *C&C* became one of the few safe spaces in Protestant journalism to express simple outrage at the mainstream, as in a piece on "The Last Committee on Sexuality (Ever)" which denounced and withdrew from the whole "dialog" process in which straight Christians debated whether gays and lesbians are sick.

Drawing on both themes, Crew wrote about a friend who was dying of AIDS, but could not find any sense of peace because he believed that God hated him. "I am an atheist to the God he feared," said Crew. "I believe that kind of a God is a fraud [but] if that God turns out to be real, let the sucker burn me." However, his friend saw angels at the foot of his bed. It signaled that at least God, if not God's reputed followers in the churches, had a message of grace for gay and lesbian people. TW

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Travelling mission continues

by Karen D. Bota

Jane Spahr contends that in the six years since she was denied a call to be co-pastor of a Rochester, N.Y., congregation because she is a lesbian, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has become even more exclusive of gays, lesbians and bisexual people. With Amendment B, the so-called "Fidelity and Chastity Amendment," the denomination has revised its Book of Order, part of the church's constitutuion, to require all unmarried ministers, deacons and elders to be sexually celibate.

The amendment's passage has reinvigorated Spahr's ongoing work with the project That All May Freely Serve. The grassroots effort works within the confines of current church policy through education and dialogue to convince churches and presbyteries that the Presbyterian General Assembly must give presbyteries the right to ordain qualified candidates for ministry, regardless of their sexual orientation.

That All May Freely Serve is an evangelism effort launched by Downtown United Presbyterian Church (DUPC) in 1993, with the goal of winning approval for Spahr and other openly gay and lesbian ministers to serve the congregations which call them. In 1991 DUPC had invited Spahr to be one of their four co-pastors in full knowledge of her sexual orientation, but the Presbyterian Church's Permanent Judicial Commission eventually issued a ruling denying DUPC's call based on a 1978 policy reached following a church-wide study of homosexuality and the ministry. Spahr, a member of the Redwoods Presbytery in California, was allowed to remain a minister in good standing because she had been ordained in 1974, prior to the study.

"We've visited churches, faith communities, colleges, universities and many seminaries, all across the United States. We're teaching a different model of partnership to deepen the work — regional evangelism is what we're trying to do,"

— Jane Spahr

Today, That All May Freely Serve is a joint mission project of the DUPC and the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon, Calif., with 6,500 on its mailing list. The connection with the Tiburon church allows Spahr to remain in good standing in her Redwoods Presbytery, and models effective congregational partnership.

"We've visited churches, faith communities, colleges, universities and many seminaries, all across the United States," Spahr says.

Ordained elders, deacons and members of Presbyterian churches — heterosexual and gay — travel in teams and address Sunday adult education forums, specially-called meetings, groups in dorms and chapels, and anywhere else they can share their experiences.

"We're teaching a different model of partnership across this country to deepen the work — regional evangelism is what we're trying to do," Spahr explains. "We've answered thousands of letters as well as speaking. It's been an amazing process."

After General Assembly this year, the group decided to enter phase two of their work. "Besides educating and advocating all across the country, in our next phase we are going to set up evangelists in four areas: New York City, Baltimore, Chicago and here in northern California," Spahr says. Each region's evangelist will work differently, but each will work toward hiring open persons who down the road, it is hoped, will be ordained or installed as pastors of a church. Spahr plans to visit those regions three times this year to help them organize and raise funds.

"It will be a grassroots effort all across the country," says Spahr. "We've found educating makes such a big difference."

Spahr is pleased that many Presbyterian congregations have begun putting forth "covenants of dissent" in response to Amendment B.

"Church members are rising up, and that's very exciting to hear," she says. "It's going to change the system."

Karen D. Bota is a freelance writer living in metropolitan Detroit and promotion consultant for *The Witness*.

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Chastity and church

by Bill Wallace

Recently, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., passed a new policy on sexuality. Henceforth, all ordained and lay leaders must limit sexual activity to the union of man and woman in marriage. And, if said leaders are single, they must live a celibate life.

I hope the Episcopalians don't follow the Presbyterians. My parish, Emmanuel in Boston, would be up the creek without a paddle in terms of institutional compliance. There would hardly be any staff and little vestry left. We'd be looking to find new facilitators for most parish commissions. The choir would be little more than a quartet. And, if the policy were to be placed over the rest of the parishioners, we'd be a pretty lean bunch. There is an upside. If Emmanuel traveled this straight and narrow path (puns intended!), I would have more time on my hands. No same-sex unions. Few weddings. Of the straight couples whose marriages I've solemnized since coming to Emmanuel, few would have made this chastity cut.

More exasperating than the church's determination to put its head in the sexual sand of social change, at the expense of a quicker suffocation, is the reality that, once more, the church seems to be right about the wrong things.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from his prison cell in the concentration camp at Tegel, on July 28, 1944, reframed the meaning of chastity: "The essence of chastity is not the suppression of lust, but the total orientation of one's life towards a goal. Without such a goal, chastity is bound to become ridiculous. Chastity is the [sum and substance] of lucidity and concentration."

The life and death of Jesus were the consequence and culmination of such a life of chastity. Jesus practiced and preached that purity is not an unsoiled life, but a life lived single-heartedly for others. The gospels, more or less, are comprised of two basic parts. First, a curt account of Jesus making his way to Jerusalem by means of a singled-hearted ministry of and message about religionless compassion over against the religious observance of ritual cleanliness. Second, a detailed account of what happened when Jesus got to the holy city. The end of Jesus was brought about by his announcement, in word and deed, that the hallowed houses of God are in opposition to God's compassion for all humanity; and, that this disparity demands a change of heart. What religion calls repentance.

Yes, the Presbyterians will prove, if they are as bad as their word, that a large number of ordained and lay leaders live unchaste lives, as do the leaders of all religious establishments. But they will fail to see that our unchastity has little to do with sex and a lot to do with neglect of those in need. Again, the church will be wrong in regard to the right things.

So what does it really mean for us to live a truly chaste life, that is, to be right about the right things? It's the courage to move the context of chastity out of the nicely appointed bedrooms of the morally confused, morally constricted middle class into the world of others who, in one way or another, are suffering.

Then, how chaste we are, how chaste we aren't, will be related to what strength we have or don't have to submit to a spiritual life emblematic of the executed Jesus, who was there for others at all costs. "The transcendental," Bonhoeffer said, "is not the infinite and unattainable tasks but the neighbor who is in reach in any given situation." And yes, what went for Jesus will go for us. We'll die. The truly chaste church goes out of business, that is, the kind of business the church is usually about: preservation, importance, power, control, envy, pride, property.

A couple of weeks ago, I visited the Boston Living Center, a community exclusively oriented to offering hospitality to those with HIV and AIDS. While taking a tour of the facility and its programs, the guide said that they had the opportunity to buy their building at a great price. "But," the guide said, "that would be a bad symbol; a mark of permanence. Our goal is to close down for lack of clients."

Would that the church was chaste enough to have such a sense of an ending.

Bill Wallace is rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Boston, Mass.

Dine with *The Witness* at the Advocate!

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company and *The Witness* staff invite readers to their awards dinner on July 18, 1997 at 6:30 p.m. at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia. The event, which will benefit the historic church, takes place during the Episcopal Church's triennial General Convention and is a wonderful opportunity for *Witness* supporters and their friends to share their common vision for a church committed to peace and justice.

The dinner will also benefit Project H.O.M.E., an organization devoted to providing housing and job training for Philadelphia's homeless citizens. H.O.M.E.'s Back Home Cafe staff will prepare and serve the meal.

For information on making reservations call *The Witness* at 313-841-1967.



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Women priests in England: an update

by Berit M. Lakey

When the Church of England began ordaining women to the priesthood in 1994, hundreds of women were ready and waiting in the wings. Two years later, more than 1,600 women had been priested. A recently completed survey conducted by the National Association of Diocesan Advisers in Women's Ministry estimates that by now more than 10 percent of the clergy in the Church of England are women.

The Association's survey was reviewed at the group's annual get-together this past April. The 35 women who attended represented about 80 percent of the English dioceses. All but two were priests and most had worked within the church for many years before being ordained. They rejoiced in finding that almost one-quarter of the women priests in the Church of England as of July, 1996 were rectors or vicars, but they also worried about the obstacles facing the majority of women if they want to move from being assistant curates into more responsible positions.

The stories shared by the Advisers showed that many bishops are uncertain about what kinds of jobs are "suitable" for women, and moreover that the "old boys network" and prejudices held by those who control a large number of positions often result in women not being aware of possible openings, many of which are never announced. Other issues facing women clergy include lack of recognition of their levels of pre-ordination experience and professional skills, maternity leave, and housing. In addition, discussions about the progress experienced by women clergy in the Church of England indicated that women's lack of self-confidence and knowledge about how to maneuver in a church system entrenched in tradition also serve as obstacles to their promotion.

Some structural obstacles to the advancement of women priests emanate from the wings of the church that continue to oppose the ordination of women. Parishes that vote to oppose the ordination of women on theological grounds and parishes that vote not to accept women as their rectors/vicars are allowed officially to register these positions and be excused from considering women clergy and from civil sex discrimination laws that otherwise cover the church. Parishes opposed to women's ordination may also request visitation by one of the "flying bishops" in England who have been approved for ministry to those parishes who on the grounds of conscience cannot accept women priests (otherwise known as "the other integrity"). Many of the participants in the Advisers conference feel that the church has undermined the long-range position of women clergy by bending over backwards to avoid offending these forces and hope for, but are not optimistic about, the demise of these provisions.

Many who work in women's ministries in England feel that the church has undermined the long-range position of women clergy by bending over backwards to avoid offending those who continue to oppose the ordination of women.

As a group, the Advisers in Women's Ministry are beginning to realize their need for strategic thinking about how to continue the struggle for the empowerment of women in the church. Some are weary of "becoming like the men" and resorting to manipulative power struggles, while others worry about being used by the powers-that-be to deflect pressures for further change.

Still others feel that further change is inevitable. While most bishops have appointed an adviser related to women's ministries, usually a clergywoman, the advisers have varying degrees of influence and little, if any, power. Many feel the tension of being accountable both to their bishop and to women who are struggling with issues "on the ground."

The conference, led by Janice Robinson of the College of Preachers at the National Cathedral in Washington (and a *Witness* board member), culminated in the formulation of a vision statement that will serve as a guide for the work of the Association in bringing about further change in the Church of England. They will work toward relationships within the church at all levels that are characterized by partnerships that demonstrate mutuality and willingness to engage our differences, and that encourage creativity in our individual ministries; structures that make room for and encourage creativity in the organization of ministry and where women are both welcomed and sought for senior positions, including that of bishop; relationships and structures that are rooted in prayer and combine to focus the work of the church on the spread of the Kingdom of God and the Gospel in the world.

Berit M. Lakey is an organizational development consultant to non-profit and church organizations working in the Washington, D.C. area.

Matthews elected leader of Canadian diocese

Victoria Matthews has been elected diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Edmonton, making her the first woman elected diocesan bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada. She was also the first woman elected to the episcopate in the Canadian church, having been elected suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Toronto in 1993.

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Earthkeeping ministries

by Anne E. Cox

The first North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology (NACCE) in 1987 ended in squabbling among various factions of Christian environmentalists and produced no clear statement on the topic. A decade later, we now have a clear and concise articulation of strategies for addressing earth-human relations from the organization.

NACCE sponsored A Congress of Earthkeeping Ministries, subtitled "Discerning the Signs of These Times," in September, 1996. It was designed to discern "the stumbling blocks preventing Christian individuals and churches from taking a right relationship to Earth," and then to propose strategies for addressing them.

The more than 100 participants in the Congress considered four critical movements — science and cosmology, Christian ecofeminism, ecojustice, and alternative economics. The report from each "town meeting" summarizes current trends, a vision for the year 2000, the challenges to achieving this vision, and strategies to help churches overcome the identified obstacles.

Many of the strategies in the summary report can be quite helpful for individual congregations or judicatories committed to working toward an ethic of care for all of creation. They tend to be specific and manageable, such as using creation-centered liturgies in Epiphany, on St. Francis Day and Earth Day and holding worship services outdoors as a strategy to break open the tendency in many congregations to objectify the earth.

The Christian Ecofeminism group specifies studying Celtic Christianity and the lives of medieval women saints along with praying for the peaceful death of outmoded institutions in order to nurture an earth-honoring spirituality.

Some of the strategies specifically recognize the connections between various justice issues. The Alternative Economics group encourages churches to participate in international work camps as a way of making connections that break through the dominant-culture North American world view of "unlimited growth."

Similarly, the Ecojustice group encourages practicing inclusion by forming "partnerships with churches in Black, Hispanic and Asian neighborhoods," which is a strategy that also reveals the Eurocentric perspective of the participants in the Congress.

NACCE endorses the strategies reported in this summary as ways to address "the greatest moral issue of our time — our continuing destruction of the Earth."

The challenge I see is getting from a good, clear document to reality. Just because NACCE endorses the strategies does not mean that they will filter to congregations, especially since few have even heard of NACCE, and are unlikely to seek it out — indeed, each of the four town meetings identified complacency and resistance to change on behalf of the planet as major stumbling blocks in the churches.

The missing piece in the document is a clear strategy for organizing national church bodies, dioceses, presbyteries, synods and conferences. NACCE's mission statement includes building church partnerships facilitating regional and local earthkeeping ministries. Unless the organization is specific in its strategy for doing just this, the stumbling blocks they identify will continue to trip up efforts to halt our continuing destruction of the Earth and bring life into balance.

Anne E. Cox is a *Witness* contributing editor in Tenants Harbor, Maine. Copies of the Summary Report are available for $5 from NACCE; PO Box 40011, St. Paul, MN 55104; 612-698-1349; email: 75202.1215@compuserve.com.

Four candidates announced for presiding bishop

The 29-member joint nominating committee for the election of a presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church announced a slate of four nominees for presiding bishop in mid-April. The four bishops are: Frank Griswold of Chicago, Robert Rowley of Northwestern Pennsylvania, Richard Shimpfky of El Camino Real (California) and Don Wimberly of Lexington (Kentucky). The election will take place at the church's General Convention meeting in Philadelphia this July. *— ENS*

Carey provokes Outrage over anti-gay stand

Ten members of the English gay/lesbian activist group Outrage invaded Lambeth Palace on April 20 in protest of the airing of a television documentary in which Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey ruled out the possibility that the Church of England would sanction or bless same-sex relationships.

Group members roughly confronted Carey as he escorted dozens of bishops and other church leaders around the palace grounds during a photo opportunity arranged for press. The dignitaries had gathered at the archbishop's official residence to participate in preparations for the 1998 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which is scheduled to address some issues surrounding human sexuality.

"The discipline of the church has not changed," Carey said in the protested broadcast. "The discipline of the church is that we recognize two lifestyles. One is marriage and the other is celibacy, and there can't be anything in between and we don't recognize same-sex marriages."

Following the Outrage incident a Lambeth Palace spokesman said: "The archbishop's view is that this sort of illegal and disruptive behavior is unacceptable and does not make a significant contribution to this or any other debate."

— Episcopal and Anglican Communion news services

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Our readers tell us

Health care reform needed

by Jane Slaughter

Remember health care reform? It was only four years ago, in 1993, that Congress and the rest of us were debating how to clean up the mess that leaves the U.S. with some of the worst health statistics in the developed world and 100,000 deaths each year from lack of care.

Vicente Navarro, M.D., author and professor of health policy at Johns Hopkins University, sat on Hillary Clinton's Health Care Reform Task Force back then, arguing forcefully — and against the odds — for a "single-payer" plan that would eliminate the need for insurance companies and provide care for all.

Of course, the insurance companies had their way, no new plan was passed, and in the time since 1993, the corporate takeover of medicine has accelerated, with for-profit hospitals gobbling up non-profits.

Navarro, who was Jesse Jackson's health care advisor during the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns, says, "The large insurance companies are basically running the health sector of this country. The insurance conglomerates are forcing people into HMOs [health maintenance organizations] in a system whereby profit is the major motivation. In the health sector, profit and need do not coincide."

Navarro left his native Spain in 1962 because, he says, "Franco and I were incompatible, and he was more powerful than I was."

Formerly a cardiac surgeon, for many years Navarro has devoted himself to such projects as his book *Dangerous to Your Health: Capitalism in Health Care.* Today, he stresses, "The majority of Americans do agree that health care should be a right. But just because they want something doesn't mean they're going to get it. The problem is the political system, which is heavily, heavily corrupt."

Navarro points out that both Democrats and Republicans are funded by insurance companies and the rest of big business. "Health care is one of the most successful industries in this country now."

What happens when a business mentality dominates health decisions? First, the percentage of people who have insurance through their jobs is declining quickly, from 80 percent a few years ago to 60 percent today.

Second, "there is no evidence," says Navarro, "that the for-profits are more competent or more efficient than non-profits. What happens is that for-profits choose the 'best' patients, so that they get the young, the healthy, and exclude the chronic, the elderly, and that is allowed by law. Sometimes people who are more in need, who are more vulnerable, are those who have less opportunity to pay for medical services."

Third, such companies do less for those who make it into the system. "The evidence we have," says Navarro, "is that clinical practice in the U.S. is changing much because doctors have to look over their shoulders at what the HMOs, most of which are controlled by insurance companies, will allow them to do.

"Many times also doctors are seduced into the system by making their salary dependent on how much they can save for the company. The doctors have an extra incentive not to spend much, because they themselves will get part of that saving." Several surveys show HMO patients far more dissatisfied with their care than are traditional fee-for-service patients.

The single-payer model Navarro continues to advocate is based on the Canadian experience. There, he says, residents, through their taxes, pay into a medical trust fund that eliminates the need for insurance companies. The government is the "single payer" to doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes, which remain in the private sector. Patients have complete freedom of choice as to their providers. Every Canadian carries a health security card which is all they need to receive free care at any facility in the country. Everyone is under the same system—from the prime minister to the unemployed.

"We spend 20 percent of health care expenses on administration and profits," says Navarro, "while in Canada they spend less than 9 percent. If we were to save that 11 percent, we could provide comprehensive coverage for everyone" — including the 40 million people now uninsured.

The main forces backing single-payer during the 1993 fight were the unions, senior citizen organizations (though not the huge American Association of Retired Persons — "They had too close a connection with Prudential," says Navarro), and the American Public Health Association.

The churches, Navarro says, were not on board.

"The sense of morality the churches have is very opportunistic, in that they do not confront the sources of power in this country. Their sense of the moral tends to be very individual and never touch on collective responsibility." TW

Jane Slaughter is a freelance writer in Detroit, Mich.

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Same-sex marriage

by Kristen J. Leslie

***Same-Sex Marriage, Pro and Con. A Reader,* Andrew Sullivan (Ed.), New York: Vintage Books, proj. 1997, $14.**

Last week I received a phone call from Nell. She was calling to remind me of her anniversary. Four years ago she and her partner stood in front of a chapel filled with friends and family and exchanged sacred vows. It was not the first same-sex wedding I had attended, but it was the first at which I officiated. In 1993 I did not know all the issues surrounding the debate. Now I do. Andrew Sullivan, a senior editor for *The New Republic*, has gathered legal briefs, scriptural references, essays, poems, editorials and excerpts from congressional hearings which document two thousand years of opinions on same-sex marriage.

Sullivan sets the stage by placing the discussion in its globally historic context. From Plato through the middle ages, to deviant marriage patterns in 17-19th century Chinese society, lesbian rituals in Dahomey (West Africa), and contemporary practices in Sweden and Denmark, Sullivan makes it clear that this is neither a new issue, nor a Western one. The anthology includes chapters on the religious issues, court cases, arguments for and against same-sex marriages, the Defense of Marriage Act and the Hawaiian challenge, same-sex parenting issues, and concerns of polygamy and adultery.

The debate about same-sex marriages could easily be seen in the larger debate about the place of lesbian women and gay men in society. Instead, Sullivan asserts that "[w]hen we talk about the same-sex marriage debate ... we are also talking about the marriage debate."

The majority of the arguments in this volume are tied to marriage: who can get married, why they get married, interracial marriages, marriage for procreation, marriage and morality, and who actually has jurisdiction over the legality of the marriage.

Same-sex marriage, according to Sullivan, is both a civil rights matter and a religious matter, and he attempts to document both the secular and religious aspects of the debate. The religious argument predictably starts with the most often cited scripture lessons: Gen. 2, Lev. 20, Rom. 1, and 1 Cor. 6. Sullivan's choice to use the translation from the King James Version, because it is the most gripping English translation ever printed, does not convince me of this translation's merit. An excerpt by John Spong represents a liberal theologian's struggle with the church's refusal to work with the issue.

On the other end of the spectrum, Dennis Prager, a conservative Jewish voice, writes about how gay liberation threatens the health of society. I was left wondering if there was not a less rabid voice who could better elucidate a sane conservative view (Prager suggests that the next step after gay liberation could be incest liberation). As a theologian, my own fairly high expectations of this religious discussion were not met. Sullivan seems to allow the voices to represent the polar opinions. This is not true elsewhere in the book.

The civic/legal canons rest on Supreme Court cases and some lower court hearings. Sullivan starts by pulling together 10 of the foundational court cases which not only chart the history of the same-sex marriage debate, but present the major arguments. I was surprised by the variety of issues that have influenced this debate: the right of privacy, interracial marriage, sex discrimination, sodomy, and equal protection under the law. The current debate seems to be focused on the Defense of Marriage legislation.

There are many reason why I find this book valuable. Most strikingly, it names the complexity of the issues. Sullivan attempts to take the discussion out of a dichotomous pro and con, liberal vs. conservative context, allowing the variety of voices to paint the shadows and intricacies. In this volume you can find radical/liberal voices opposed to same-sex marriages and conservative voices struggling with protecting their rights to privacy and protection from governmental meddling. Both queer theorists and political conservatives use the issue of family-first to argue their points.

Clergy, politician, and lawyer alike could benefit from reading this volume. Those preparing for same-sex marriages could benefit because it may help prepare them for the arguments they may hear. This volume is not geared toward the couple who needs a helpful resource for planning a same-sex wedding. Nor is it a comprehensive book for those interested in a theological discussion. It is a good book about what has ruffled peoples' feathers when it comes to two people of the same sex who want the state and the church to recognize their commitment. TW

Kristen J. Leslie is completing her doctorate before assuming responsibilities as associate professor of pastoral theology at Yale University.

review

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The efforts for institutional change must go on, but we must find ways of surviving — and more than surviving, celebrating with each other.



Melanie Morrison

Celebrating with each other

by Marianne Arbogast

Ten years ago, Melanie Morrison gathered with some friends in the living room of a fellow United Church of Christ pastor, to pray while his congregation voted on whether or not he should resign. The vote was split and the pastor — who had recently been outed as a gay man — left the congregation.

A similar vote, 34 years earlier, echoed in Morrison's memory. When she was five, her father — also a UCC pastor — had left his congregation after half the members voted against his decision to welcome an African-American family into the church.

"It was a very formative experience for me," Morrison says of the controversy which uprooted her family from their home in Maywood, Ill. and took them to East Lansing, Mich. "There were phone calls at night and my father was accused of being a communist."

Morrison's lifelong commitment to fighting racism and her own experience as a lesbian and a Christian led to her current ministry with Leaven, a non-profit organization which offers resources on racial and sexual justice. Morrison grew up hearing about *Koinonia* Farm, the interracial community founded by Clarence Jordan in Plains, Ga. in the 1940s. When she joined *Koinonia* after graduating from college, she found her faith both deepened and challenged. "At *Koinonia* I discovered the Bible — and I also discovered that the Bible had some things in it that really weren't talked about in my church," Morrison says. "I was really shocked to discover that this Bible, which I was finding so liberating through the lens of people like Clarence Jordan, was dripping with sexism."

Unwilling to sacrifice either faith or feminism, Morrison decided to study Scripture intensively. In her final year of seminary, she fell in love with a woman — a Dutch exchange student — for the first time.

"Even though I came from a progressive background, from a family that has proven to be enormously supportive, it was frightening," Morrison says. She and her partner remained mostly closeted, coming out only to a carefully chosen few. These included Eleanor Morrison, Melanie Morrison's mother and a professor at Michigan State University who had written books on human sexuality.

After several years of a trans-continental relationship, Morrison moved to the Netherlands in 1981. She lived there for six years, going to school to maintain her visa and pastoring a Dutch Reformed congregation. She was active in the resistance to the placement of NATO cruise missiles on Dutch soil, and wrote about the peace movement for the Fellowship of Reconciliation and for *Sojourners*.

The latter commitment precipitated a personal crisis. When *Sojourners* ran a piece asking readers to protest anti-gay legislation, but added that they did not condone homosexuality, Morrison registered a protest — without speaking in the first person. Later, when the magazine published an article condemning homosexual relationships, Morrison was stunned.

"I was enraged, but I was also horrified at how I had lost my voice," she says. "Here I was, pastor of a congregation where I probably could have been out, but I wasn't encouraging other people to tell their stories, because I was not willing to tell my own."

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

A year later, Morrison and her partner separated and she returned to the U.S. After a year of solitude, house-sitting in the country and reading Audrey Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Carter Heyward and Barbara Deming, Morrison decided that she needed to be out more publicly.

"While I have the privilege in the UCC of being able to do that without losing my ordination, finding work as a pastor is another matter," Morrison says. "Seminary teaching jobs are also hard to find."

She began talking with her mother about their mutual desire to work with church people on gay and lesbian justice issues, and together they established Leaven. Their first work was to meet with a small UCC congregation near Kalamazoo, Mich., whose pastor, Cyril Colonius, had just been outed as a gay man. After half the members voted against him, Colonius and Morrison decided to begin a new ministry.

"It was not our intention to found a gay and lesbian congregation, but a congregation that from its inception would be open to all people," Morrison says. Phoenix Community Church drew worshippers from many backgrounds, many of them gay and lesbian Christians who had long felt unwelcome elsewhere. Phoenix did not initially pursue denominational affiliation, but after two years, the congregation decided to join the UCC.

"We sent word, all excited, to the Association Church and Ministry Committee — and we didn't hear anything back," Morrison says. "This was my denomination! I got on the phone with the chair of the Committee and asked, 'How do you think this feels?'"

Phoenix was accepted only after a year-long process of dialogue and visits to the UCC congregations in the region.

"People got up and very vulnerably told their stories," Morrison recalls. "We met with all kinds of responses, some of them very unkind. On the day of the vote, there was a long conversation at the microphone, people witnessing for and against our inclusion while we sat there, voiceless and voteless. Amazingly, there were 29 votes against Phoenix's membership and 92 for it."

Meanwhile, a national church agency had contracted with Leaven to develop and write a human sexuality curriculum for local congregations. The Morrisons also led workshops and retreats, and developed "intensive seminars" in which participants meet for four to eight months for study and reflection. Although seminars on feminist theology and spirituality were popular, Morrison was troubled early on by the lack of racial balance.

"It became clear to us that we could not adequately deal with sexism and heterosexism without also looking at racism," she says. "Unless feminism is truly about liberation for all women, it becomes just another form of self-aggrandizement for women of privilege."

While I have the privilege in the UCC of being able to come out without losing my ordination, finding work as a pastor is another matter.

With Anita Stallworth, an African-American chaplain at Wayne State University, Morrison created and led a seminar called "Difficult Conversations" as a forum for interracial dialogue about racism. Another seminar, "Doing Our Own Work," offered a chance for white women to examine their own participation in racist structures.

Morrison believes such conversations are critical.

"So many of us have what someone has called 'multiple and shifting identities,'" she says. "I'm not just a lesbian — I'm white, North American, well-educated. When any of us get stuck in only one piece of that it usually results in false naming. For example, I'm distressed by how often I hear white gay and lesbian people speaking of 'the' gay or 'the' lesbian community, as though it's monolithic and white."

Morrison disputes the notion that those who suffer prejudice are more likely to understand it in other forms.

"I do believe that the experience of marginalization is often a door to empathy, but it does not make one immune from marginalizing others," she says. "The nature of structural power is that it's invisible to those of us who hold it."

Morrison, who lives with her partner, April Allison, on land that they plan to share with a Leaven retreat center, is the author of *The Grace of Coming Home* (Pilgrim Press, 1995). She is also currently finishing work on a doctoral dissertation which focuses on lesbian women's experiences of Christianity.

"A core Protestant principle has been the recitation of some Pauline statements like 'We are all sinners saved by grace,'" she says.

"Lesbian women bring deep suspicion to such statements. There is politics to sin and grace. In the way the church works and the way doctrines function, some of us are more sinners than others. Something that needs to be named 'sin' is the very practice of attributing sin to socially designated vulnerable targets."

A co-founder of CLOUT, Christian Lesbians Out Together, Morrison believes those who struggle toward full inclusion must not put their lives on hold in the meantime.

"We must claim our rightful place here and now, and find ways of caring for each other and ourselves. CLOUT gatherings are joy-filled, outrageously irreverent, fun-filled times. The efforts for institutional change must go on, but we must find ways of surviving — and more than surviving, celebrating with each other." TW

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Candlelight AIDS march

Jim Solheim/ENS

The Witness • 7000 Michigan Ave. • Detroit, MI 48210

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Austin, Texas

General Convention issue 1997 in Philadelphia

The Witness

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A witness to the world:

How will the church work for change?

See inside for: ***• an assessment of the candidates for presiding bishop • analyses of the 1967 General Convention Special Program and 1988 economic justice program and what went wrong • an interview with Chung Hyun Kyung***

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Spirituality of leadership

I REALLY APPRECIATED READING Margaret Wheatley's article on Church self-organization. Margaret's is such a refreshing view of future Church! I would, though, like to see her integrate into her vision the darker side of the institution as it expresses the sinful side of our nature — leaving room for the redeeming action of God.

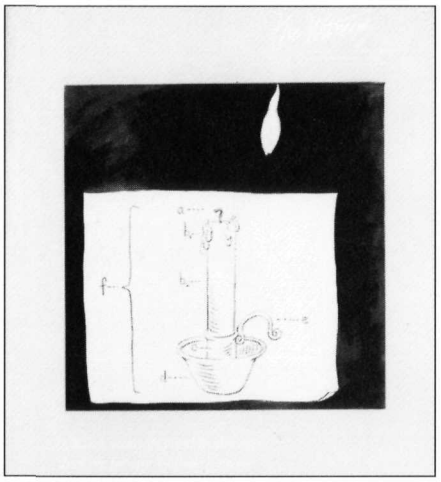
Actually I think we have given sin a really bad rap. Where would evolution be without death? Where would the Church be without sin? Where would reform be without resistance? A bit like basketball without an opposing team and a basket five feet high.

Margaret is suggesting that we need a "new story." I am suggesting that we need to update our understanding of the Genesis story. Eve is the hero, the classical hero who dares not only to tempt fate but to take control of fate. Since her courageous struggle things would never again be the same. The gates to the Garden are closed forever.

And speaking of villains — it's pretty hard to have a good story without a villain, either Margaret's "new story" or Genesis. Who put the serpent in the Garden? The cards were stacked in favor of eating the fruit. We would never be able to turn the page to the next chapter if she hadn't gone ahead with that great and wonderful experiment. "Oh happy fault that has deserved so wonderful a Redeemer."

So our story can't go on without antagonists. We can't have love without selfishness. We can't have yin without yang. We can't have thesis without antithesis. We can't have Relativity without Quantum. We can't have good without bad.

Even starting all over things don't really get any better. Creativity, autonomy, choice mean the potential for evil. And evil becomes incorporated into social structures. Like a snowball rolling down a hill it gathers more



mass, more force until all of our evil is somehow focused into our scream, "Crucify him. Crucify him." How really unlovely of us! But (and that's really a theologically loaded word) in the larger perspective of faith we do not have the last word.

The Word that God speaks is not contrary but subsumes all of ours. "Crucify him. Crucify him" becomes "He is risen." Life is always greater than the sum of its parts. The person transcends brain and liver and toenails. God transcends the Cosmos. Redemption transcends human potentiality. Church transcends people and structures. In that, there is hope.

A reasonable analysis would predict that there is no way out of our social problems. Rich get richer. Poor get poorer. Pollution, etc., etc. We shouldn't have to worry about the end of the world coming from an outside force. We are hurrying to do it ourselves.

It doesn't really seem that the Church will ever be able to recover influence within the next generation, that it can ever be "creative and autonomous" enough to create structures to bring it into the 21st Century. But thankfully, we don't have the last word and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A joke is really a tragedy until the punchline puts it in a larger perspective and we can relax with the relief of a triple Easter Alleluia. Now, death, where is your sting? The tomb is empty. He is risen.

We may have tried to capture Jesus within the stone walls of our Church. We may be dismayed to find churches are empty and Jesus not there. But he transcends all reasonable analysis: He has gone before us into Galilee.

George McMahon
Detroit, MI

Raising kids

I HAVE READ YOUR APRIL "Raising kids with conscience" issue. Your magazine raises more thoughts than I can convey in this letter, but I will share a few.

I started laughing before reading Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's "Icons of white supremacy," because I thought that I knew what she was going to say. Instead, I realized that as someone who has not played basketball with and against black people most of her life, she was handicapped in appreciating the extent of reverse racism by angry black people.

I was somewhat troubled by the article by the Berrigan boy, because I could not believe that he was realistically assessing the impact on his family of having his mother imprisoned for three years.

I particularly enjoyed "The price of peace" by Jeanne Heyer. When I finished reading that article I assumed that it took a great deal of open-mindedness to publish it. As the father of six- and eight-year-old children who live and attend school in a safe, white suburban setting, and as someone who used to think of himself as far closer to the ideology of the Christian Left than I am, and as someone painfully aware of the consistently safer and comfortable choices that I have made in terms of how I live my life, her article was of interest to me.

In the circles that I am familiar with, it seems there are far more people who follow the path that my wife and I have followed than the one followed by some of you. Nonetheless, even us "sellouts" or "compromisers" can benefit from your magazine, and thus I'm enclosing a contribution as payment for additional magazine gift subscriptions.

Paul Van Oostenburg
Grand Rapids, MI

Jubilee economics

THE JAN./FEB. ISSUE of *The Witness* was superb. I enjoyed it very much. All the articles

were well written and well thought out. I am so pleased there is a magazine in the Church taking up the issues you do so competently.

Robert S. Shank
Tucson, AZ

YOUR JUBILEE ECONOMICS ISSUE is superb — so critical in raising up creative alternatives to the neo-liberal policies under which the peoples of developing countries are suffering. These people who walk the "way of the cross" each day desperately need to hear, proclaim and celebrate the song of Jubilee, beginning again in justice.

People here in Nicaragua continue to teach me and the world the importance of forgiveness — forgiveness of those who have killed, maimed and impoverished family and friends. Would that the people of the World Bank, the IMF and other lending institutions could in this time of Jubilee learn the lesson of forgiveness from their brothers and sisters in the South, forgiving the overwhelmingly enormous debts that keep people here enslaved and that are killing more each day.

Am grateful to see the way folks continue to struggle for justice up there — we *do* feel connected — each of us doing our little bit certainly adds up (that 100th monkey, no?!)

Kitty Madden
Matagalpa, Nicaragua

Witness praise

YOUR FINISHED PRODUCT IS most attractive. I think Bill Spofford would be mightily proud in seeing today's issues.

Edna Ruth
The Human Quest
St. Petersburg, FL

FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, I have read *The Witness* in seminary libraries or by borrowing copies from friends. However, I have now decided it is time to subscribe and add my support to you in this small way. Though a former Baptist (now convinced Quaker), I have a strong sense that *The Witness* gives voice to people from many traditions who are attempting to live radical lives of faith.

Brian Cole
Berea, KY

I HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN RENEWING my subscription to *The Witness.* Once again, may I congratulate you on both the journal's work in reflecting theologically on major issues, and the collective effort which makes *The Witness* such a challenging and cover-to-cover read!

I am a member of the executive committee of the *Jubilee Group*, a network of socialist Christians mainly in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, (Ken Leech is probably one of the best known members of the Group and well known to *Witness* readers). We are currently reviewing our whole approach to publications and communications, and are thinking of launching a journal rather than occasional briefings. *The Witness* is an inspiration to us and is an example that it is possible to produce a journal that is contemporary and colorful, clear but not simplistic, passionate and yet not self-righteous, positive yet also realistic.

Paul D. Butler
London, England

Classifieds

Doctor of Ministry program

Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) is a graduate school seminary serving Christ's Church and the world. As such, EDS is committed to transforming the world through struggles for peace, justice, compassion and reconciliation.

The Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program at EDS is designed for lay and ordained leaders in the Church and in the wider society. Most D.Min. students are mid-career professionals seeking a renewal of their vocation, vision and purpose in the context of challenging theological study and spiritual inquiry.

Areas of emphasis: Anglican, Global and Ecumenical Studies, Congregational Studies, Studies in Feminist Liberation Theologies.

For more information contact the Admissions Office, 617-868-3450, ext. 307; 99 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Bishop candidates wanted

The Nominating Committee to Elect a Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark will be accepting candidates' names for the position of Bishop Coadjutor between June 1 and September 12, 1997. Nominations must be submitted on a prescribed form, which may be obtained by calling the Committee's secretary, Louie Crew, at 201-485-4503. Names may be submitted by the candidates themselves or by others. Persons submitting the names of others must confirm their willingness to be candidates. All candidates who enter the process will be asked at a later date to submit resumes and CDO profiles and to complete a questionnaire.

The Diocese of Newark is proud of its diversity. Women and men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, of all sexual orientations, and of all four orders of ministry are encouraged to apply. We seek someone with grace, maturity, a sense of humor, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, compassion, leadership, empathy with the poor and the dispossessed, liturgical perspicacity, and a good mind.

Copies of the Diocesan Profile are available from the Nominating Committee. To request a copy, call, write or fax. All correspondence should be addressed to: Nominating Committee to Elect a Bishop Coadjutor, P.O. Box 30, Newark, NJ 07101. 201-485-4503/FAX 201-485-1095. http://newark.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/coadj.html

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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The Witness

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8 When only the church remains: struggles in Philadelphia by John E. Midwood
Despite glittering towers in the center city, Philadelphia's neighborhoods are in real distress. Will the 1997 General Convention of the Episcopal Church have anything to say to these residents?

12 Channeling money to those whose cities burn: a retrospective on the GCSP by David L. Holmes
In 1967, when riots tore U.S. cities apart, the Episcopal Church launched a program (GCSP) intended to build strength within marginalized communities — no strings attached. The program shook the church with consequences that persist. Holmes admires the initiative; the views of Harold Lewis, Paul Washington and Gardiner Shattuck are also offered.

20 A vision betrayed: economic justice languishes by Camille Colatosti
Learning from the GCSP, Episcopal Church activists designed an economic justice program in 1988 that was enthusiastically received but nearly destroyed within 10 years. Emmett Jarrett offers his analysis of its abandonment on p. 24.

26 The ant and the spider: an interview with Chung Hyun Kyung by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann
Discouraged by the brave efforts to create change that have ebbed so rapidly, The Witness *turned to Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung for analysis and suggestions. Unapologetically, she presents a different model.*

32 *The Witness'* hall of fame: the 1997 awards
Every three years the Episcopal Church Publishing Company presents awards to stand-out disciples of justice.

Cover: Photo montage by Charles F. Penniman, Jr. Angel is atop the Advocate with the Philadelphia skyline in the background.

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

Back cover: Photo by Harvey Finkle. Philadelphia's homeless took refuge in St. Edward's Catholic Church in 1995.

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The changing face of justice work

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Wars and elections are both too big and too small in the long run. The daily work goes on, it adds up. It goes into the ground, into crops, into children's bellies and their bright eyes. Good things don't get lost!"

— Barbara Kingsolver,
Animal Dreams *(Harper Collins)*

The Episcopal Church has launched and then abandoned two very good initiatives for social change in the last quarter of this century. Both were accompanied by powerful and biblical rhetoric. Both called on the church to move beyond its own myopic internal concerns to affect change for those who are in the most economic pain in this society. Both were greeted enthusiastically by the bishops and deputies meeting in General Convention.

The Witness rehearses this history in our July issue because we believe there are clues here to the vocation of people of faith in the turning of this century. For readers who belong to other mainline denominations, we expect that there are sufficient parallels to sustain interest. For those outside the mainstream churches, this issue may help illuminate the potential and the hazards involved when churches attempt to right wrongs in which they themselves are implicated.

The General Convention Special Program (GCSP), a program that attempted to put church resources at the disposal of community organizations that would empower indigenous leadership, was initiated in the wake of the 1967 riots. American cities were in flames. Waves of protest, led by young people, were smashing against the way business had always been done.

The GCSP was as radical as the times. Without apology, it put money — no strings attached — into the hands of people working long days in their communities to create another way and some of these people were extremely militant. And some of these people were not popular with the bishops in the dioceses where they worked.

The challenge to this General Convention is to avoid those things which are false — including manic diversions and empty, emotionally tangled resolutions — so that we can hold to what is simple, to that which softens our hearts, to those commitments which give people who experience America as a nightmare some reason to breathe easier.

In this program was an inkling of the reparations movement that was to follow — the church had hoarded wealth created by people whose work was inadequately compensated; it owed these same people whatever leverage it could provide to give them access to economic and political power.

During the years that followed, church members managed to encumber this national program with red tape, until in was finally dissolved in 1973.

Fifteen years later, General Convention embraced an economic justice initiative that was far less militant in appearance. Like the GCSP, it proposed putting church resources at the disposal of those in the community working to provide economic options and power to people who had been marginalized, but, unlike GCSP, it provided opportunities for parish and diocesan level involvement. Its goal was less militant. The economic justice program sought to build an alternative economy within the existing one — not to bring the system down.

Yet, despite its gentle tone, this program too was abandoned within six years. Factors leading to the dismantling of the economic justice initiative are many, not the least of which was the fact that national church treasurer embezzled millions of dollars, but at *The Witness* we suspect that Emmett Jarrett is right: unless the church comes to share an identity with those it tries to help, it will always organize its programs in way that — no matter what the rhetoric — actually maintains the walls between us and those who have less than we do.

So now, the church stands on the brink of a new millennium. We understand that we are called, as we have ever been, to care for the widows and orphans, to offer acceptable sacrifices by welcoming strangers and visiting those in prison. Yet the national climate is contrary — justifications for welfare cuts, immigration quotas, mandatory jail time and death penalty sentences abound. We are an

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is co-editor/ publisher of *The Witness*.

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impatient and angry people whose lives are saturated with a popular culture that sports wealth, health and privilege.

So in 1997, we are faced with a political landscape from which the charismatic leaders of the 1960s have been swept away in violence. And we have invested some portion, but not enough, of ourselves in a cooperative economic model that may actually frighten us because we do not know how much our Lord would permit us to keep. As Byron Rushing observes (p. 20), it is easier for church people to talk about sex than money — and there is every indication that at this year's General Convention sex will be a major topic.

What do we do now? Where is the movement of the Holy Spirit? What word do the angels of God have for us in this day?

Today digging deep so that we know who we are and what we cherish, creating a home and church life so grounded that we can listen to those who do not share our ideas, is a tremendous work, one that may require as much courage as the blink of an eye did for some in 1944.

The answer that *The Witness* staff proposes will, on its face, seem anticlimactic.

God is calling us to become aware and to build community. We are to work to discern the times and to provide a sacred space where people can speak what they believe to be true while relying on one another to listen with hearts that are not closed.

Chung Hyun Kyung, author and Asian feminist theologian, says the assault the principalities wage on us now is more difficult to resist than it was in the 1960s (p. 26). We face seductive images and veiled lies. We must work harder to overcome the propaganda, to even speak against the values we are immersed in worldwide as happy youth consume Coke and cigarettes. It is our challenge to try to strip away the false images and to affirm what is real. Sometimes it is enough to teach a child, to nurture a garden, to go to a block club meeting.

This truth, unglamorous as it may seem, does not excuse us from acts of courage and sacrifice. It simply means that discerning which acts require courage is relative to the age in which we live.

In *Fugitive Pieces* (Knopf), a book about a child who survives the Nazi massacre of his family, Anne Michaels writes, "[Good] is as accurate a measure as any of a society: what is the smallest act of kindness that is considered heroic? In those days, to be moral required no more than the slightest flicker of movement — a micrometer — of eyes looking away or blinking, while a running man crossed a field. And those who gave water or bread! They entered a realm higher than the angels' simply by remaining in the human mire."

Today digging deep so that we know who we are and what we cherish, creating a home and church life so grounded that we can listen to those who do not share our ideas, is a tremendous work, one that may require as much courage as the blink of an eye did for some in 1944.

Doing these simple things — freeing our minds from the prevailing consumption and fear, refusing to hate those who cannot be self-sufficient or who are foreign — is an offering to God. Only with people of heart — people who have some sense of who they are, who know and cherish the rivers and the neighborhoods in their midst, who pray — can God do great things.

The challenge to this General Convention is to avoid those things which are false — including manic diversions and empty, emotionally tangled resolutions — so that we can hold to what is simple, to what is grounded, to that which softens our hearts, to those commitments which give people who experience America as a nightmare some reason to breathe easier.

If we can surrender the delusion of affluence and remember to give God thanks for even a handful of things that give us joy, we will be much better positioned for the next wave of the spirit that Chung and others promise will rise up to overwhelm rigidity as a new era begins. This new era, called by Steve Charleston a "second reformation" and foretold by Asian mystics in the 18th century, promises a day when diverse voices are honored, the earth is cared for and a gentle feminine spirit prevails. It is a dream that seems beyond our reach, but when we are quiet enough to dream dreams and to see visions, we will know where to position ourselves so that God's love can be manifest now and always. TW

Abolitionist of the Year

The Witness' circulation coordinator and office manager, Marietta Jaeger was named Abolitionist of the Year by the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty at the coalition's 17th annual conference in Houston this past June. Jaeger, a member of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, has been a tireless campaigner against the death penalty for many years, spending most weekends and many evenings speaking on the topic or vigiling against executions. *The Witness'* is proud of her committed activism.

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And Where in the World Are You? / *Psalm 73*

I see the wicked glide by
sleek in their velvet hearses
rich beyond measure, egos
puffed like an adder's.

No sons of misfortune these:
no cares
shadow the perfumed brows;
a whirligig of furies
their axletree cuts;
the innocent die.

I sweat like a beast
for the fate of my people.
Is God
ignorant, blank eyed
deaf, far distant
bought off, grown old?

They rape the fair world
they butcher, huckster
by the pound, living flesh;
their guns, their gimlets
claim us for trophy.

Why then endure
why thirst for justice?
Your kingdom come
a mirage, never comes.

I sweat like a beast
my nightmare is life long
And where in the world
are you?

What Marvels the Lord Works For Them / *Psalm 126*

When the Spirit struck us free
we could scarcely believe it
for very joy. Were we free
were we wrapt
in a dream of freedom?
Our mouths filled with laughter
our tongues with pure joy.

The oppressors were awestruck; What marvels
the Lord works for them!
Like a torrent in flood
our people streamed out.
Locks, bars, gulags, ghettoes, cages, cuffs
a nightmare scattered.

We trod the long furrow
slaves, sowing in tears.
A lightning bolt loosed us.
We tread the long furrow
half drunk with joy
staggering, the golden
sheaves in our arms.

from Daniel Berrigan's *Uncommon Prayer: A Book of Pslams,* Seabury Press, 1978.



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When only the church remains: struggles in Philadelphia

by John E. Midwood

In July, the Episcopal Church will hold its 72nd General Convention in Philadelphia. John E. Midwood, archdeacon of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, introduces readers to justice issues and sources of hope in the city he has lived in for 17 years. Philadelphia's story and what it represents to the nation and the church is a story told in urban centers throughout this country.

Summer in Philadelphia is wonderful. Hot and humid weather slows the pace of life. The street becomes living space. Front steps and sidewalks become block-long living rooms. Children rollerblade, ride bicycles, splash in water from fire hydrants or play street ball. Each evening adults set up lawn chairs outdoors to escape the accumulated heat of day inside the house.

Philadelphia offers, as most American cities do, two tales: one told in the halls of glittering convention centers, the other whispered in neighborhoods marked by ruin.

The convention center

Philadelphia's convention center is one of several large investments of public and private dollars in center city. A downtown mall and transportation center, several new hotels and office buildings, historic buildings and major streets have been constructed, preserved or redesigned. A $100 million family entertainment project has just been proposed for the waterfront. Merchants pay extra taxes to keep the streets swept, to provide friendly guides on corners and for additional police.

Center city Philadelphia is a mixture of neighborhoods, commercial districts, restaurant rows, Independence National Historical Park and the waterfront. But there is more to our story in Philadelphia.

In the neighborhoods

North Philadelphia is old industrial Philadelphia. Some large brick factories still remain, usually vacant. Large lots where factories once stood are strewn with trash and weeds. Old row houses are not being preserved, but left to decay. Islands of new houses built by community development corporations provide some relief. Inner city neighborhoods are not without hope, but the political will to make meaningful change is missing.

The church is the only institution left in many inner city neighborhoods — the banks, the post office branches, even the local retailers are gone. The congregations are safe places in dangerous neighborhoods for children after school. They are the sites for debates and decisions about local and city-wide issues.

City ministry begins with witness. We have a long tradition of witness in Philadelphia. Absalom Jones walked out of a church on Fourth Street in 1784 when he and his African-American brothers and sisters were not permitted to worship on the same floor with white people. Robert DeWitt began his episcopacy in the 1960s walking the sidewalks around Girard College protesting its whites-only admission policy. Many of us walked the streets protesting the Vietnam War.

Witness continues today as people in Philadelphia follow Jeremiah's counsel to seek the welfare of the city. In this, we have become more aware that investment as well as inspiration is required. Center city Philadelphia demonstrates the difference significant investments make.

General Convention decisions over the last 15 years helped me discover this insight. Jubilee Ministry was established by General Convention in 1982. Jubilee's vision from Luke is that the poor are a source of blessing and that *now* is the acceptable time of the Lord. I have visited Jubilee Centers around the country and experienced first-hand the witness they provide.

Six years after establishing Jubilee Ministry, General Convention committed the Episcopal Church to a ministry of economic justice. Economic justice added financial resources to the people focus of Jubilee Ministry. Sadly, the Episcopal Church is pulling back from these ministries just when they are beginning to bear fruit.

We are beginning to experience the benefits of investing in inner city congregations, people and neighborhoods in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Local congregations play a primary role in mission strategy. The church is the only institu-

John E. Midwood is archdeacon for urban ministry and mission strategy of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Photographer **Harvey Finkle** lives in Philadelphia.

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tion left in many inner city neighborhoods — the banks, the post office branches, even the local retailers are gone. The buildings are local works of art filled with neighborhood memories. The congregations are gathering spots where people are fed and allowed a forum to explore ideas. The congregations are safe places in dangerous neighborhoods for children after school. They are the sites for debates and decisions about local and city-wide issues. Diocesan missions are communities of hope and faith in neighborhoods suffering from neglect and lack of investment.

Interfaith action

Episcopal inner city congregations have joined with other congregations to form church-based community organizations. These organizations provide discipline and develop leadership so people can influence and control their lives and neighborhoods. Philadelphia Interfaith Action, affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, has organized residents to demand community policing, the sealing of drug houses and improvement of city schools. Uniting people from a variety of city neighborhoods is no small task in a political climate which thrives on division and distrust. PIA's annual assembly is a semi-religious event. Joining with inner city residents to hold political leaders accountable is an uplifting experience.

Church investments

Inner city residents need more than a voice to take control of their lives and their neighborhoods. They need capital. Private financial institutions look over and beyond inner city neighborhoods to loan money and make investments. Research conducted while studying how best to implement a ministry of economic justice documented this. Our work led to a partnership with the Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund. Episcopal parishes, organizations and indi-



Harvey Finkle

Homeless folks take refuge in St. Edward's Catholic Church in Philadelphia, 1995.

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viduals have invested over $3.5 million in the Episcopal Community Investment Program since its inception. The work is a national model for community investment funds. Houses have been built, businesses established and community organizations strengthened by capital borrowed from the Fund. Results of this ministry are found throughout the metropolitan area.

Building housing

Nehemiah Housing is a partnership which created a new neighborhood in the inner city. Philadelphia Interfaith Action, the Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund, the city and the religious community worked together creatively. PIA began the project with a commitment to build 1,000 new homes in Philadelphia. The redevelopment fund provided the financial expertise and safeguards for the construction loan and processed individual mortgage applications. Church organizations, including the Diocese of Pennsylvania, provided the construction capital. The city provided the land and necessary infrastructure improvements. West Philadelphia now sports 160 new homes as a result of this joint effort. Since then, secular politics have prevented the city from releasing additional tracts of land. The commitment to built 1,000 new homes remains to be fulfilled.

Racial violence

This spring, racial violence in the Grays Ferry neighborhood in South Philadelphia — a woman, her son and nephew were beaten outside a church social hall by at least seven white men, later a young white drug store clerk was killed by black youth — resulted in Louis Farrakhan accepting a community group's invitation to participate in a march through the neighborhood. Fear that the march might lead to violence was real. The mayor, Edward Rendell, was equally concerned about a political embarrassment just before a scheduled national Volunteer Summit. With considerable effort, the mayor arranged for a Unity Day Rally with Farrakhan and Protestant Judicatory leaders at a church outside the Grays Ferry neighborhood.

While public demonstrations of unity can be a good thing, the political anxieties that prompted this one raise questions about whether civic leaders are fully committed to struggling against the racism and injustice that plague inner city neighborhoods.

Racism thrives on fear and is skillfully used by some leaders in the city. The faith of people in inner city churches is stronger than fear and racism. The church must harness this faith in a true movement for unity, acknowledging fear and building on faith. We must seize this opportunity. Inner city people need the support of the entire church for this ministry.

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Welfare changes

The Volunteer Summit which took place in Philadelphia is the government's answer to welfare changes. (I refuse to call it reform.) In Philadelphia, 400,000 people will lose some or all of their food stamps, children will lose Supplementary Security Income, and federal block grants to the state will be cut by 15 percent. Volunteer efforts and work requirements will not fill this gap.

A report issued by the Twenty-first Century League states that "a massive political and social experiment is at hand. What does it mean to the Philadelphia region? No one knows." President Clinton came to town and embraced volunteerism as the response to a social experiment with unknown results. Whatever the results, they will be felt first and hardest in the inner city.

The Diocese of Philadelphia will present anecdotal information about the effects of welfare withdrawal in the form of an inner city mission tour during General Convention. Busses will leave the Convention Center on four afternoons and drive through center city and inner city Philadelphia. Guides will provide firsthand stories. The tour will show the contrast between well organized neighborhoods with access to capital and neglected neighborhoods.

The goal of ministry in Philadelphia must be reconciliation, ending the disparity and injustices that create a center city and an inner city. We must seek the welfare of Philadelphia. Investment must complement our long tradition of social witness. Partnerships make us more effective.

I hope and pray our church, gathered in General Convention in Philadelphia, will strengthen partnerships, affirm and invest in the ministries of Jubilee and economic justice and rededicate us to protecting and preserving the respect and dignity of every human being. TW

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The Church of the Advocate
A witness to change

The Church of the Advocate, a gorgeous church complete with flying buttresses, gargoyles and brass angels, is nestled between neighborhood homes and devastated brick apartment buildings open to scavengers and the elements.

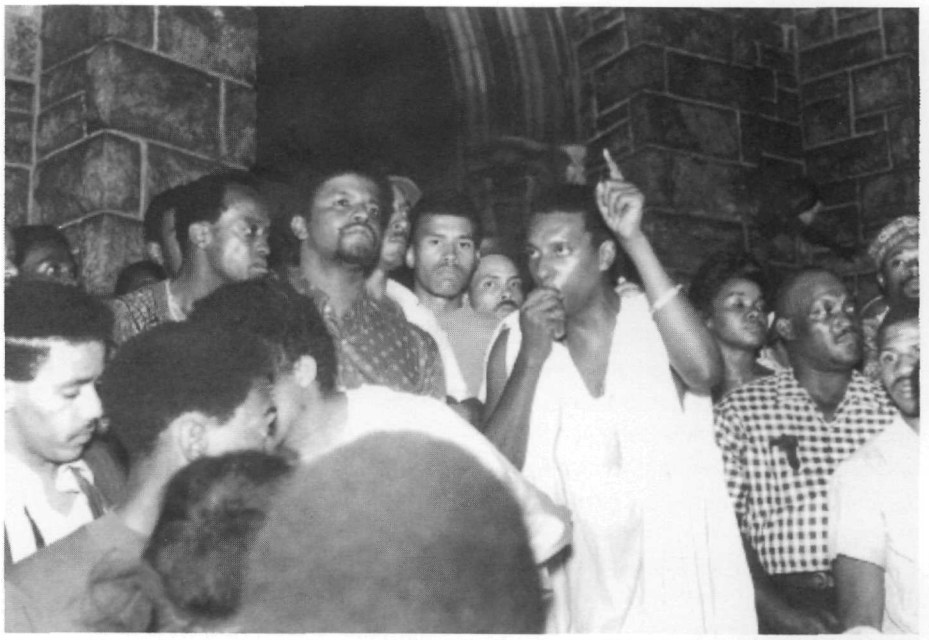
It is now, as it has been for decades, a witness to the light.

Despite the deterioration of the building itself, Isaac Miller and Ann Robb Smith, the church's priests, continue to offer sacraments and a whole range of social services to people in the neighborhood. They've strung netting across the inside of the sanctuary to catch falling masonry rather than close their doors to those who count on the quiet and resources that a faith community provides.

Built by a wealthy industrialist who wished to imitate European grandeur, the Advocate has stood with the marginalized and often against the established powers. In the 1960s and 1970s, under Paul Washington's leadership, the church welcomed activists, including the Black Panthers. Later, the church opened its doors to the women and bishops who were prepared to proceed with the sacrament of ordination despite the institutional church's recalcitrance.

The Advocate's legacy of tenacity and deep commitment rooted in faith is a treasured blessing to all who work for justice and peace against great odds.

The Witness is pleased to be holding its General Convention awards dinner at this historic bulding on July 18, 1997 at 6:30p.m. Part of the proceeds from the sale of tickets will go to benefit the Advocate's restoration fund. Call 313-841-1967 for information on reservations.



Jack T. Franklin/Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Philadelphia.

Stokely Carmichael addresses 2000 Black Panther supporters on the steps of The Church of the Advocate, 1966.



Witness archives

The first women ordained at the Church of The Advocate, 1974.

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Channeling money to those whose cities burn

by David L. Holmes

At the end of the long, hot, riot-torn summer of 1967, bishops and deputies gathered in Seattle for the triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Meeting concurrently and separately was the Triennial Meeting of the Women of the Church.

During the preceding three years, Vietnam was a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, but racial unrest stormed the nation. Muslim leader Malcolm X was assassinated in Manhattan; the Los Angeles ghetto, Watts, exploded into six days of destruction.

Presiding Bishop John Hines, in his opening sermon, spelled out a program designed to meet "the crisis in American Life." Hines told the convention that he had tried to determine "what God may be saying to the churches in this crisis in American cities." He had walked through the ghettos and had experienced "unrehearsed" confrontations with their residents, he said. He spoke of "dispossessed people" rioting because they were convinced that the white man's justice simply meant "no justice for the black man." He declared that many inhabitants of these ghettos had given up on the Christian churches as "possible allies" because they had seen little evidence that church members cared.

Above all, Hines told the bishops and deputies, he now realized one grim fact: that America's inner-city poor were convinced that they could improve their lives only by acquiring "sufficient power ... to shape their own destiny." If America refused to grant them this power for self-determination, Hines said, then it was clear to him that they would seize it. And to achieve self-determination, he observed, they would go even to their deaths.

Thus the question confronting Episcopalians in this "moment of passing grace, that may never again recur," Hines declared, was simply "how can [Episcopal] resources . . . be enlisted intelligently and humbly in the service of the people of the cities?" How can the Episcopal Church "enter into partnership with the indigenous community groups in impoverished slum areas which . . . are seeking to alleviate the conditions which are destroying" their lives?

So committed were both supporters and opponents of the GCSP that the Houston police feared that the Episcopal Church could not control its own General Convention.

Increasing self-determination

To answer these crucial questions, Hines put forward a plan that came to be identified as the General Convention Special Program (GCSP). The church should, he said, reorder its budgetary priorities and spend $9 million in the following three years to bring "the people of the ghettos into areas of decision-making" and to increase their self-determination. This money should be given to community organizations that residents themselves control. In addition, the Episcopal Church should appeal to the other religious groups of America to join in a "full-scale mobilization of...resources" dedicated to healing the nation's wounds.

As Convention deliberated, a lay deputy delivered a prophetic minority report. Dissenting from the majority report of the Joint Committee on Program and Budget "with great regret," this deputy declared that he had no objection to the Episcopal Church giving grants to organizations of the poor through diocesan and ecumenical channels — for the church retained some control over such grants. But he warned that the GCSP's plan to give church offerings with no strings attached to minority groups who sought economic or political power was a "wrongful use" of church funds that would "alienate thousands" of Episcopalians and undercut many equally important missionary, educational, and ecumenical programs.

Another deputy introduced a proviso that took into account many middle-class white people's fears of militant groups, such as the Black Muslims and the Black Panthers. He proposed that the GCSP could award no funds "for the benefit of, or in connection with, the activities of any individual or group which advocates the use of violence as part of its program." Since a black member of the Ex-

The 1967 General Convention Special Program

David L. Holmes is professor of religion at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. This article is adapted from "Presiding Bishop John E. Hines and the GCSP," *Anglican and Episcopal History,* LXI (December, 1992). Photographer **Harvey Finkle** lives in Philadelphia.

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ecutive Council was later to declare that "you are not going to find any black or brown group today which hasn't engaged in violence because blacks and browns have been dealt with violently," the scene was set for conflict.

Support for GCSP

Yet despite the anxieties of some, both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops of the 1967 General Convention adopted an open letter affirming Hines's program. "We want to see people who live in ghettos set [and] pursue and achieve their own goals." The open letter declared:

We want Episcopal Church money invested to make this process work. ... We underline our agreement with you that Episcopal enabling money for community-organization should be "under the control of those who are largely both black and poor." ... We know that the "have-nots" must share in the power of the "haves." ... And if that means ... that some groups combine blackness and power instead of blackness and weakness, we have no objection.

The convention backed these strong words with a series of resolutions that would form the nuts and bolts of the GCSP. In addition, the Triennial Meeting of the Women of the Church donated $2 million of their United Thank Offering (gifts for worthwhile projects that are not part of the church's official budget) to the GCSP by a vote of 447 to 20. The women's organization also made the GCSP their first priority for future Thank Offerings.

Shortly after the 1967 General Convention, the staff of the GCSP began to form. To head it, Hines selected a black social worker from the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, Leon Modeste, then 41. Modeste was something rare among blacks — a lifelong Episcopalian. The holder of a bachelor's degree from Long Island University and a master's degree in social work from Columbia University, he was widely experienced in community work. At the time Hines selected him, he was working as the evaluator of community service programs in the department of Christian Social Relations at the Episcopal Church Center in Manhattan. Thus he possessed a wide web of contacts in precisely the area in which the GCSP planned to focus. Hines gave Modeste a free hand in selecting his staff.



Archives of the Episcopal Church

Muhammed Kenyatta, a Baptist pastor and activist, took over the microphone at the 1969 Special Convention. Episcopal priest James Woodruff (on right) accompanied Kenyatta.

A 'street-wise' staff

Modeste needed staff members who met at least three criteria: They had to understand the life and the environment of the poor; they had to have track records of working for the empowerment of the poor; and they had to be able to operate with a sense of credibility among elements of society who had written off organized Christianity. Since Modeste found few such people in the Episcopal Church, where even black Episcopalians tended to be middle- or upper-class, he hired former staffers from two organizations that some in the white community viewed as militant — the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE). Few of the 18 staff members he hired were active in any church, and only two were Episcopalian.

With a "crash" cash program of $221,000, Modeste's staff began work in the fall of 1967. The streetwise staff concluded that church groups were out of touch with the people who were hurting most in American society. The "GCSP mission had to do with self-determination and empowerment," Modeste explained recently. "We supported and encouraged minorities, the poor, and those alienated from the mainstream of society. We were not to recruit more memberships for the church or more clergy." Though some grants of the GCSP did go to organizations of black clergy and to

continued on page 15

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Was the GCSP a racist initiative?

The GCSP's initial critics were predominantly bishops from the south and others who were terrified of Black Power as evidenced in the late 1960s and early 1970s and who were desperate to suppress this GCSP program that was *designed* to help unleash it.

Yet, in his recent book, *Yet with a Steady Beat* (Trinity Press International), Harold Lewis decries the program as a white liberal initiative that was chauvinistic towards African American clergy:

"[W]hile black Episcopalians endorsed, in principle, the General Convention's actions in 1967 which established the General Convention Special Program (GCSP) designed to redress the problems of blacks and other minorities in the inner cities, they nonetheless took umbrage at the action because it empowered black groups in local communities, an action that, as Ed Rodman observed, 'completely ignored the role of the black Episcopal Church as a focus for this new program by giving money directly to secular groups, many of whom were openly hostile to religious institutions.' "

"Such an affront did not go unnoticed. The decision of the special General Convention held in South Bend, Indiana, in 1969 to make $200,000 available through GCSP to the Black Economic Development Conference and not to the Episcopal group, the Committee of Black Churchmen, was repudiated by black Episcopalians and further served to embolden them, and to make them even more firm in their resolve to mobilize in and act through a caucus rather than to attempt to effect change through 'the system.' After General Convention made its intention clear, the Reverend Junius Carter declared 'I'm sick...and I'm sick of you. You don't trust me, you don't trust black priests.' *The Journal of the General Convention* reported that reaction somewhat more diplomatically: 'The Rev. Mr. Carter of Pittsburgh and the Rev. Mr. Casson of Delaware, on behalf of black clergymen, expressed their disappointment at the action just taken.'

"It is crucial that we grasp the significance of the official actions on the part of the Episcopal Church in this regard. Through those actions, the Church displayed an unabashed lack of confidence in its own black membership. Because the most vocal activists in the black community were in the secular arena, the Church acceded to *their* demands. Believing them to be a more authentic and representative voice for blacks, the Church did not recognize in black Episcopalians the possibility that they whose parishes, in most instances, were in the heart of the urban centers wracked with violence and unrest could be instrumental in addressing the problem.

"The Church's action in this regard was consistent with its historical attitude. This was but a variation on an old theme of marginalization. It would appear that the Episcopal Church had so condescended to blacks in its midst that to the mind of the Church they were neither fish nor fowl — that is, neither an integral part of the Episcopal Church, nor an authentic component of the black community. Blacks, as always, had been relegated to an ecclesiastical and societal limbo."

Paul Washington who led the walkout from the 1969 General Convention by African Americans and supporters, asks why Lewis' book neglects to note that many black Episcopal clergy were directly involved in the political showdowns that led to support for the GCSP and for reparations.

In his book, *Other Sheep I Have* (Temple University Press), Washington notes that at his parish, the Church of the Advocate, the Black Panthers and other neighborhood activists were welcome. But this was not the norm for the black clergy who were reluctant to channel money into the hands of militant groups with no strings attached.

Leon Modeste agrees with Washington. As the Episcopal layperson hired by John Hines to run the program, he says the program was deliberately cut loose from internal church politics — diocesan bishops didn't have prerogative over how funds were spent, neither did individual parishes.

Modeste added that Hines designed the program after talking with leaders in the black community, including various clergy, about how the resources of the Episcopal Church could be used to change the level of despair people felt.

"The whole idea was to break through and open up the resources. We cut through a lot of red tape to encourage empowerment and self-determination," Modeste remembers. "People were hurting. We worked to get as much money out as we could before that window of opportunity closed.

"Most of the black clergy were wrapped up in the institution. They weren't about to do anything. They were looking at it in terms of their careers. The people best able to do the work had to live in the affected neighborhoods 24 hours a day.

"Some people say I should have been more political, I should have stroked the bishops. But this was foreign to their whole culture. Stroking wouldn't have done it. If I'd proceeded like we were on eggshells, a lot less would have been accomplished." — *J.W-K.*

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church-sponsored community projects, many churches claimed that the GCSP's staff rejected or ignored their applications.

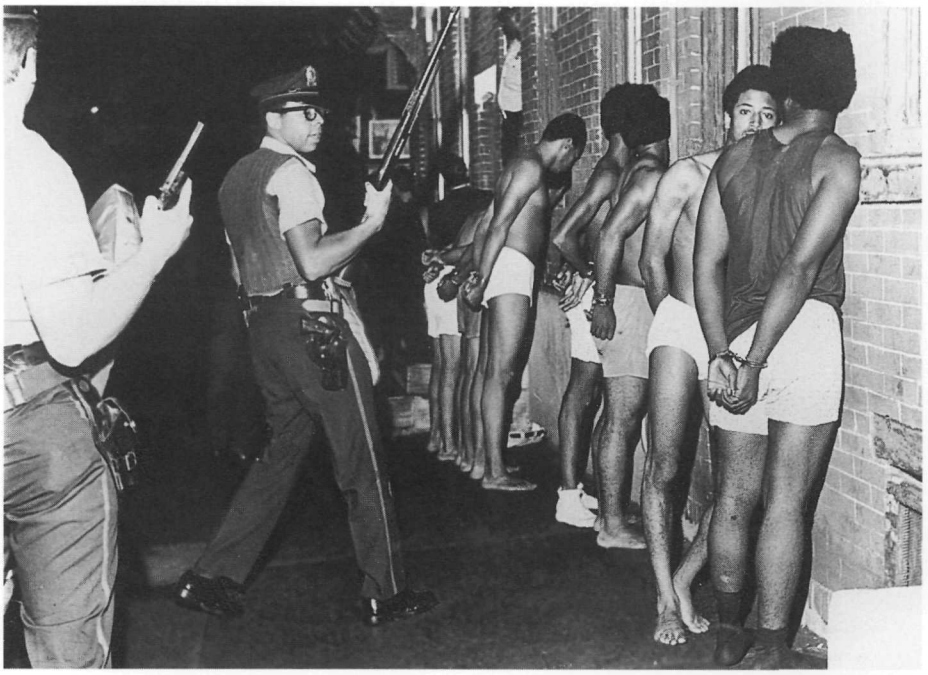
How GCSP worked

How did the GCSP work? Organizations applied for funding directly to the GCSP office in the Episcopal Church Center. The GCSP staff forwarded the applications it approved — the number approximated 10 percent — to the program's Screening and Review Committee. Established by the Executive Council and chaired by Bishop Hines, this committee had a membership of 14 which was designed to avoid having Episcopal officialdom dominate it. Seven members were active Episcopalians. The other seven — who were generally not Episcopalian — represented groups the GCSP was seeking to empower.

Opponents of the GCSP asserted that many of the minority members, like many members of the GCSP staff, were hostile to any organizational expression of the Christian faith. If a grant would assist a minority group's empowerment and self-determination and the group's methods did not include advocating violence, then the committee could approve it, funds permitting.

Finally, the proposal was brought for approval to the Executive Council, which was composed of 39 bishops, clergy and laypeople elected by the General Convention and the nine Provinces to carry out the policies of the Episcopal Church. During the Hines administration, the Executive Council was expanded to include youth and minority members. Between council meetings, Hines had the authority to certify emergency grants from GCSP funds.

The relationship between the Executive Council and the diocesan bishops became strained during this time. Whenever the council received an application from a group that operated in a bishop's diocese, it notified that bishop. And in theory a bishop's negative opinion carried weight. But if a bishop opposed a program that would operate in his diocese, he possessed no right to prevent it from receiving funds from the GCSP.



Urban Archives, Temple University, Philadelphia, Penn.

Members of the Black Panther Party, stripped and handcuffed following police raids on Panther headquarters, August, 1970.

This design, which must be seen in the context of the anti-establishment 1960s, emerged from a fear that conservative forces in a community might pressure bishops to veto worthy grants.

The "Black Manifesto" demanded $500 million in reparations for past injustices and advocated that blacks seize white churches and synagogues until reparations were paid.

Meeting in 1969

And so the story comes to the late summer of 1969, when the Episcopal Church held the second Special General Convention in its history and the first General Convention in which groups other than white males played significant roles. The stated purpose of the Special Convention was to complete business left over from the Seattle General Convention, but the policies of the GCSP dominated the proceedings. As a sign of the new social atmosphere of the 1960s, many dioceses had appointed three "extra delegates" who would represent youth, ethnic minorities, and (since women had not yet been authorized as deputies) women. These additional deputies received a voice and vote on committees and in joint, or plenary, sessions of both Houses, but not in official sessions of the House of Deputies.

The Black Manifesto

Much of the debate was caused by the

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Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC) — an organization founded to develop self-help and establish economic self-reliance in black communities. Earlier in the year the BEDC had adopted the "Black Manifesto" — a document that demanded $500 million in reparations for past injustices and advocated that blacks seize white churches and synagogues until reparations were paid. In May, 1969, a delegation of the BEDC had met with the Executive Council and demanded more than $60 million, plus 60 percent a year of the income from all the Episcopal Church's assets, as its share of the reparations.

Some white Episcopalians (such as lay theologian William Stringfellow) supported the demands. (The cost of these reparations per active Episcopalian would not have exceeded $30.) But the Black Manifesto outraged most white Episcopalians and contributed significantly to the problems the GCSP now began to encounter.

When the BEDC presented its demands, the Executive Council advised them to apply instead through the normal channels for GCSP funding. But since going hat in hand to the Man's church was not what the BEDC had in mind, the scene was set for confrontation.

The initial confrontation on the first evening of the Special Convention was vivid. A joint session of both houses was interrupted as Bishop Hines and a dashiki-clad Baptist minister who was also a Black Muslim tussled over possession of the microphone. Hines then ruled, despite a contrary vote by the deputies, that the unexpected guests should be permitted to speak. Later, when convention refused to deal immediately with the concerns that black folks were raising, some black and white sympathizers led by Paul Washington walked out of the convention. Heated debate, open hearings, walkouts, denunciations, and parliamentary maneuvering marked the five-day meeting. The debates displayed not only the frustration of blacks but also the increasing dissatisfaction of some Episcopalians with the GCSP and its staff.

In some parts of our Church there is a debate between the advocates of 'personal' religion and the champions of the 'Social Gospel.' It is a sterile debate. There is no way to separate the two and remain faithful to Jesus Christ. — *John Hines*

GCSP reaffirmed

In the end, the Special Convention ratified the Executive Council's response to the BEDC's demands. It expanded the GCSP, expanded the Executive Council to include youth and minority members, and rejected a resolution from the House of Bishops that would have given bishops more control over grants. In addition, it voted that the church raise $200,000 through a separate appeal and give it to the National Committee of Black Churchmen — a newly organized group that most bishops and deputies clearly understood would act as a conduit to the BEDC. Following an impassioned plea by a clerical deputy, the convention expanded the GCSP to include community development with Native Americans.

The GCSP, while amended, withstood scrutiny at South Bend.

But tensions persisted. On the eve of the 1970 General Convention, following three hours of emotional debate, the Executive Council approved a $25,000 grant to the Black Awareness Coordination Committee (BACC) of Denmark, South Carolina, by a margin of only three votes. Both the bishop of South Carolina and the bishop of Upper South Carolina appeared before the committee and argued against the application on the grounds that BACC's members had taken over Episcopal-related Voorhees College at gunpoint. For some opponents of the GCSP, the approval of the grant was the last straw.

The convention assembled in an atmosphere that the bishops' pastoral letter termed one "of contention and some distrust." Much had happened in the 13 months since South Bend.

From 1967 on, critics such as the Texas-based Foundation for Christian Theology — the most relentless adversary of the GCSP — had asserted that the Special Program was poorly administered and that it did not preach the Gospel. They also declared that the program had surrendered to secular ideologies, caved in to the demands of the BEDC, and violated its instructions by giving money to organizations that advocated violence. It was clear by 1970 that these critics had gained a national following. A conservative Episcopal newspaper columnist declared that the GCSP was "tearing the Episcopal Church apart." So committed were both supporters and opponents that the Houston police feared that the Episcopal Church could not control its own General Convention.

Economic decline

The failure of dioceses to meet their financial quotas for the General Church Program displayed the clearest evidence of growing opposition to the GCSP. In 1968, 12 of the 89 Episcopal dioceses had failed to meet their quotas. The shortfall, which was more than three times the average, caused the budget of the national church to drop seven percent below 1967 projections. In 1970 the number of dioceses who did not meet their quotas rose to 47. As Bishop Hines told

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the Executive Council, the gap between the assigned quota and the monies received was the largest in 30 years.

Although dioceses from all over the nation cut or withheld pledges, the opposition was centered in the South and Southwest. Atlanta sent $109,000 rather than the requested $174,000. Pledges to the Diocese of North Carolina decreased by $160,000 largely because of a GCSP grant of $45,000 to Durham's Malcolm X Liberation University, which had the purpose of training "Negro Americans to set up an independent nation in Africa." The bishop of New Mexico and Southwest Texas withheld his annual quota of $92,000 after the GCSP granted $40,000 over his impassioned opposition to the highly controversial Alianza Federal de Mercedes, an organization whose ultimate goal was to regain for Mexican-Americans the millions of acres of land granted to them by Spain and Mexico but appropriated by the U.S. when it took over the Southwest.

This shortfall in income forced Hines and the Executive Council to curtail sharply the national programs and administration of the church. Cuts included $340,000 in support of overseas missions and the reduction of the work force at the Episcopal Church Center by 40 persons. The national church also reduced its support for diocesan urban and rural ministries and for conference centers and camps. In an effort to calm the opposition, the presiding bishop and the Executive Council added white members to the staff of the GCSP. They also dispatched representatives to explain the program to diocesan leaders throughout the nation, and they publicized the favorable assessment given to the GCSP by outside evaluators hired by the Executive Council.

Hines came to the General Convention accompanied by round-the-clock bodyguards assigned by the City of Houston. In his opening sermon he called for an evaluation of his episcopate. But he reiterated his belief that the Episcopal Church should fund minority groups and help make it possible for them to "achieve political, economic, and social power." The many objections to the GCSP and to his leadership, he asserted, reflected a deeper problem for Episcopalians — "the meaning of mission in Christ's name . . . [and] the cost we are willing to pay in response to God's call." Although he called for unity, his sermon made it clear that Christians should place social justice before denominational unity.



Harvey Finkle

At the Houston convention, the first convention in which women were finally seated as deputies, the GCSP won some small victories — on budget, youth, and investments. The report of outside evaluators given to the convention showed that, from the fall of 1967 through the spring of 1970, the GCSP had funded more than 150 programs for blacks, whites, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans at a "low-cost, high-benefit" expense to the Episcopal Church of $113 per participant.

Undermining GCSP

Yet 1970 marked the beginning of the end for the GCSP. The General Convention toughened its definition of violence. It eliminated the special categories of membership for youth and ethnic minorities on the Executive Council. And it markedly increased the role of bishops in the grant process. Henceforth, the GCSP staff had to notify a bishop 30 days before the Screening Committee reviewed an application from any organization that operated primarily in his diocese. If the bishop objected in writing to the proposal within 30 days, the Executive Council could override his objections only by a majority vote.

The Houston convention sufficiently modified the GCSP that some ad hoc groups that had formed to oppose it now felt confident enough to disband. Some influential members of the Executive Council quietly began to work toward phasing out the GCSP. But in 1971 the income from the national church continued to decline — to $10.5 million from the $11.7 million anticipated. To make up for lost income, Hines and the Executive Council had to tap legacies and reserve funds as well as rent out almost half of the 10 floors of the Episcopal Church Center to non-profit groups. They were also obliged to reduce the work force of the Episcopal Church Center again, to scarcely 50 percent of its prior size.

By the time the General Convention

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met in Louisville in 1973, the GCSP was almost dead. Although the three previous General Conventions had involved themselves largely with questions of social justice, the concerns of the Louisville convention focused on internal church issues: Prayer Book revision, women's ordination and the continued participation of the Episcopal Church in the Consultation on Church Union.

With little debate, the Louisville convention adopted only three resolutions concerning the GCSP. One called for greater local participation in "empowerment programs." A second required the attachment of a Christian statement of purpose to all grants. The third approved a recommendation of the Executive Council that grouped all minority organizations of the Episcopal Church under one funding umbrella and changed the name of the GCSP to "the Commission on Community Action and Human Development." Minority empowerment now ranked only fifth on the list of budgetary priorities — a change that many supporters of the GCSP saw as an abandonment of the church's mission.

Thus the social ministry of the Episcopal Church as it was embodied in the General Convention Special Program ended at Louisville. After 1973 Episcopalians found other ways of responding to social needs. Two months after the final gavel fell in Louisville, the Executive Council terminated Leon Modeste's position as director of the new Commission on Community Action and Human Development. On December 1, 1973, the contracts of all GCSP staffers expired. In the new office of "Community Action and Human Development" at the Episcopal Church Center, the staff numbered only two persons.

John Hines resigns

The General Convention of 1973 was able to end the GCSP so easily because its chief apostle had resigned. John Hines had staked his career on the Episcopal Church taking its place, "humbly and boldly, alongside of, and in support of, the dispossessed and oppressed peoples of this country, for the healing of our national life," and the church had not done so. But Bishop Hines did not go quietly into the night. At Louisville he preached a farewell sermon that one church paper described as "incandescent."

This church of ours may be an even smaller church because of such a witness; less powerful, and less influential. But the essential question is not 'How shall the Episcopal Church grow?' — but 'How can the Episcopal Church be faithful?' That is the heritage worth sacrificing for — worth passing on to our children and grandchildren. — John Hines

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. It is the saving power of God for everyone who has faith — because there is revealed God's way of righting wrong." This was Bishop Hines's text — Romans 1:16. His sermon first looked inward. He spoke positively of church union and questioned the Episcopal Church's commitment to it. He urged the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy, declaring emphatically: "There are no theological reasons why women should not be ordained." He warned against churches acting like sects. And then, with these words, he turned to the GCSP:

"Six years ago this Church took a tentative but courageous step towards a radical understanding of mission — in the light of burning cities and the cries of the poor and powerless for justice. It was a bold and adventurous step. It did not put institutional solvency first — but rather human need first.

"There are people among us who are critical because [our Church] programs do not pointedly speak of Jesus to others. . . . My own feeling [is] that nothing would have been more remote from Jesus than separating the attempts to humanize the world done by non-Christians from those done by Christians. To one such querulous complainer, [Jesus] took time to tell a story about a man who fell among thieves — and the compassionate man in [his] story was of a false religion.

"In some parts of our Church there is a debate between the advocates of 'personal' religion and the champions of the 'Social Gospel.' It is a sterile debate. There is no way to separate the two and remain faithful to Jesus Christ. Yet the debate indicates that this Church may grow weary of the battle for social justice [because of] the pressure of the powerful and the high cost of witness.

"What I hope for has little to do with growth in communicant strength, though I would rejoice at a multitude of conversions possessing integrity. [It has] little to do with bigger budgets, nothing to do with maintaining a respected place with the carriage-trade clientele of our society. I hope for a witnessing community of questioned integrity.

"It may — in the future, this Church of ours — be an even smaller Church because of such a witness; less powerful, and less influential — as a secular society gauges power and influence. For the essential question is not, 'How shall the Episcopal Church grow?' — but, rather, 'How can the Episcopal Church be faithful?' For that is the heritage worth sacrificing for — worth passing on to our children and grandchildren. God forbid that they should come to a time and place unashamed of the Gospel — but ashamed of us!" TW

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Looking back at GCSP: another point of view

by Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr.

Despite John Hines' hopeful vision of the renewal of the Episcopal Church through the empowerment program he proposed in 1967, GCSP failed to address three critical issues that ultimately undermined its effectiveness.

1) Status of black Episcopalians: Although unnoticed by most white Americans, the "great migration" of black southerners to the urban North in the decades between the two world wars exacerbated class divisions within the African-American community. Migrants from the South were often viewed as uncouth by educated, middle-class African Americans whose families had lived securely in northern cities for many years. The African-American elite, to which most Episcopalians belonged, also resented the intensification of racism that the influx of newcomers encouraged. As W.E.B. Du Bois observed, "nothing more exasperates the better class of Negroes than the tendency to ignore utterly their existence" and to be lumped (in the eyes of white people) with the most downtrodden members of their race.

During the era of the civil rights movement, however, when many traditional assumptions about social stratification were challenged, activists began to ridicule members of the black middle class for holding such views. They called them "Uncle Toms," parodied as a self-serving elite out of touch with ordinary black people. Although African Americans had cultivated middle-class values partially as a defense against the racism of whites, this "bourgeois mentality" became their own undoing in the cultural climate of the late 1960s. Black Episcopalians were similarly lampooned by white liberals, who assumed their fellow churchgoers were not "black" enough to interact with the poor people whom GCSP was designed to assist. As a consequence of this changing consciousness about race, the staff of GCSP eyed African-American Episcopalians with suspicion and initially excluded them from the operation of the program.

2) Authority in the church: One scholar has called Hines' convention sermon "a primary document of the era," and indeed it was, for his words reflected the self-assurance common among mainline Protestants at the time. Membership figures in the Episcopal Church had reached an all-time high in 1965, and Hines and others seemed confident that their denomination would continue not only to grow but also to guide national life. Yet as the church assembled in Seattle to hear Hines speak, American attitudes about political and religious authority were involved in a process of radical change. The counter-cultural spirit of the late 1960s eventually infected even traditionalists in the church and led them to question the establishment Hines represented.

In addition, the Second Vatican Council had recently de-emphasized the hierarchical nature of organized Christianity and stressed instead that leadership ought to be shared collegially throughout the church. Recalling Vatican II, one Episcopal bishop accused the Executive Council of acting more like "a medieval curia" than a representative of democratic Anglican polity, and another bishop reminded staff members at 815 that Episcopalians at the local level also constituted "the people of God." Bishops and dioceses, GCSP opponents argued, constituted the true locus of authority in the Episcopal Church, and they should be free to practice and interpret the social aspects of their faith with minimal outside interference.

3) Social Gospel or underground church?: An essential paradox existed at the heart of Hines' conception of GCSP. Although he promoted a servant-like model for the church, he also suggested that his denomination needed to be strong enough to march into action "with colors flying high" and mobilize the nation in the fight against poverty and racism. Hines had begun his ministry in the days of the Social Gospel when such militant imagery was still prevalent in Protestant circles, but theological trends had evolved considerably since the 1930s. By the late 1960s when GCSP was introduced, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's emphasis on "religionless Christianity" and the subsequent popularity of the "underground church" had seriously undermined the premises of Social Gospel theology. Following the logic of contemporary theological thinking, some critics of GCSP reasoned that the program was actually the vestige of an outmoded theological style. In a "secular world come of age," mature and committed Christians no longer needed the bureaucracy of the institutional church to sponsor their engagement in political affairs. TW

Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr. is a priest and church historian. He is currently writing a book entitled, *Dwelling Together in Unity: Episcopalians and the Dilemmas of Race,* which studies the impact of the civil rights movement on the Episcopal Church.

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A vision betrayed: economic justice languishes

by Camille Colatosti

The challenge issued to the national Episcopal Church was direct: "The Diocese of Michigan, troubled by the anguish and hopelessness of so many disadvantaged and dispossessed ... calls upon the Episcopal Church to take leadership in support of cooperative self-help programs. [T]he Church's efforts, if joined with those of countless groups and individuals in the United States, will develop a new atmosphere in our country supportive of these economic alternatives."

Made nine years ago, this challenge led to the passage of the Economic Justice Resolution by the 1988 General Convention held in Detroit. The resolution, crafted by many of the same folks who hosted the Urban Bishops Coalition hearings on urban issues in the late 1970s, was designed to put church resources at the disposal of community folks in a way that could create "economic substructures." Passing unanimously, it was greeted with excitement by many who felt the church was, once again, putting outreach above its own narcissism.

Now, nearly 10 years later, activists in the church are assessing the program's effectiveness. John Hooper, the key staff person for the Diocese of Michigan's Economic Justice Commission and McGehee Economic Justice Funds, believes that economic justice is thriving in the local levels of the church.

"There are," Hooper explains, "many organizations that are doing the work — the dioceses, the parishes, a credit union in Los Angeles that was started after the riots, a development bank in Oakland that opened last year. Economic justice is alive at the grassroots."

Still, Hooper and other backers of the original resolution fear that the resolution did not change the mission and vision of the national church. Hooper notes that "while a number of people at the national church put a lot of work into this, I'm not sure that the national church and staff completely embraced it. Here and there there was foot dragging. They didn't want to solicit funds. They did not accept the program's importance."

Some other people closely involved with the work at the national level say the impediments were even worse: there were conflicting ideas about whether the staff served the Economic Justice Commission or vice versa. In addition, two senior staff members' attitudes and actions greatly inhibited the program.

"The Diocese of Michigan, troubled by the anguish and hopelessness of so many disadvantaged and dispossessed ... calls upon the Episcopal Church to take leadership in support of cooperative self-help programs."

High stakes

"The church's own identity is at stake in terms of work with the poor," according to Jim Perkinson, a lay leader of the Detroit Church of the Messiah and author of the theological document behind the resolution. "Part of the theological critique at the time was that the church had allowed itself to become captive to many social divisions — rich from poor, black from white, suburban from urban. The Episcopal Church is located largely on the wealthy white side of those divisions."

The strength of the economic justice initiative, many believe, is that it didn't ask the church to simply offer charity.

"This resolution is not about charity," Perkinson says. "The collective identity of the people of faith was all of a piece with championing the cause of the poor. God entered history among those who are suffering the most — and began a new faith initiative there — so that becoming a person of faith or a disciple meant developing a relationship with those most marginalized."

Despite fears that the resolution has not been understood or implemented thoroughly, all involved are hopeful that more can happen now. As Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing, a member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus and a backer of the 1988 initiative, reminds everyone, "Even though it has been almost 10 years since the initiative passed, in the scheme of things in the in Episcopal Church, that is not a very long time. People should not be discouraged. We're talking about something that is very long term. We're talking about money. And for most Episcopalians, this is more difficult to talk about than sex."

Background

At the 1988 Convention, the resolution passed unanimously.

Coleman McGehee, then bishop of the Diocese of Michigan, was one of the originators of the resolution. He recalls that the Urban Bishops Coalition (UBC)

Camille Colatosti is a freelance writer in Detroit. Photographer **Jim West** also lives in Detroit.

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had been addressing urban issues for more than a decade prior to 1988. In fact, McGehee turned to Hugh White and Joe Pelham, priests who had worked with the UBC hearings, eventually publishing *To Hear and to Heed*, testimonies in which people spoke about work, poverty and the lack of opportunity in America's post World War II cities despite the economic boom.

White and Pelham, working with a variety of other folks, released "Taking Action for Economic Justice" prior to Convention. The Diocese of Michigan worked hard for the program's passage. McGehee commissioned a bus tour of Detroit which took bishops and deputies beyond the glass-towered hotels into neighborhoods devastated by white flight and neglect. "We prepared for the convention," McGehee notes, adding that advocates spoke at dinners and luncheons during the convention. When it was presented to convention, "it was received very well by everyone," McGehee says. "People saw it as a program of self-help, not charity. People saw it as a partnership with the disadvantaged."

Passage of the measure may also have been aided by the fact that, unlike the General Convention Special Program of 1967 which simply allocated monies from the national offices, the economic justice program involved parishes and diocesan leaders.

The nuts and bolts

The Michigan task force developed a three-level implementation plan for parishes, dioceses and, finally, the national church. It called on parishes to conduct surveys of the economic needs in their neighborhoods and to identify the groups that were actively addressing those needs. Parishes were also to conduct educational programs that would develop an awareness of economic development possibilities. In addition, the action plan suggested that parishes sponsor cooperative ventures, such as cooperative housing, worker-owned companies or community development credit unions.

Dioceses were asked to appoint commissions on community investment and economic justice. As the implementation plan explained, "This group is appointed by the bishop and includes representatives of parishes, representatives of existing projects within the diocese, representatives of lower income and minority populations, people with expertise in cooperative and in community and economic development and members of the diocesan staff and commission with responsibilities for social action ministry." This commission was to maintain an up-to-date assessment of the economic situation of the disadvantaged in the diocese and to identify resources in the church. The diocese was also to implement training sessions and, if possible, establish an alternative investment fund and a grant fund.

At the national level, a working group on community investment and economic justice was to be formed. This would provide education for mission and ministry, and stewardship and development. It would work closely with the dioceses to facilitate training and guidance. It would also establish an Economic Justice Implementation Commission that would, then, carry out the resolution's work.



Jim West

Coleman McGehee, now retired bishop of Michigan (center), is confronted by security when he joins members of the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights in protesting First National Monetary Corporation's sale of South African gold. When the General Convention met in Detroit, McGehee championed an economic justice initiative which would, among other things, give low-income people recourse to credit unions. The plan passed unanimously.

In particular, the Economic Justice Implementation Commission would create and distribute a national Episcopal Fund for Community Investment and Economic Justice. This fund was to provide four million dollars per year for six years for the economic empowerment of the disadvantaged. The money was to come from investment funds of the church.

It was hoped that special fund contributions would augment the fund. The action plan also suggested that a tithing

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approach be used.

Implementation

After nine years, the effects of the resolution are clearly visible. On the local level, a number of parishes are involved in cooperative economic development ventures in their community. Some, like Detroit's Church of the Messiah, have sponsored cooperative housing and worker-owned businesses. The Church of the Messiah sponsored a painting and plastering business which became, for a time, a worker-owned cooperative.

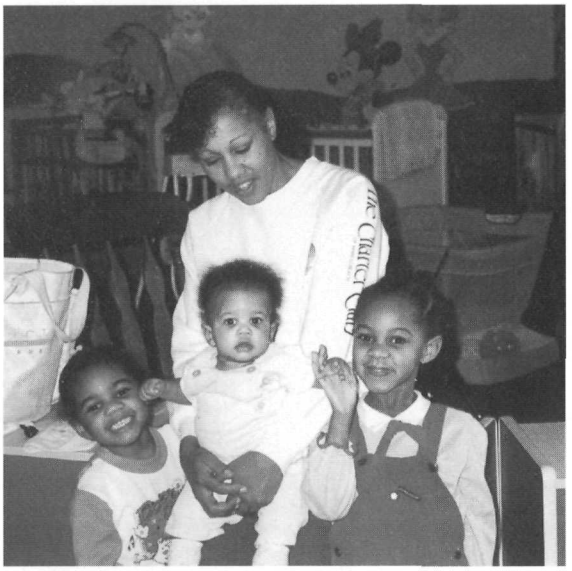
Responses at the parish level have, believes Perkinson, become "structured into many local churches as part of their own activity."

Hooper agrees. He notes, however, that the original plan may have been too narrow in its suggestion of local activity. "The original plan focused on specific models—housing cooperatives, worker cooperatives. Our thrust was to see those models as ideal situations to fulfill what we were looking for—community control, ownership and a fairness and sharing and collaboration.

"One of the things that we've experienced since then is the fact that the church as investor or supporter is not generally in the situation of choosing the model. The community groups develop the programs. The implementation, therefore, has been much broader than we thought, less bound by those models."

Arthur and Susan Lloyd, active members of the Diocese of Milwaukee Economic Justice Commission, also see successes at the diocesan level. As Arthur Lloyd explains, "The Diocese of Los Angeles Credit Union is probably a direct result of the resolution. There were a number of dioceses that did not have an economic justice commission before that now have one. Our own Diocese of Milwaukee has developed an investment fund, as have others. All are a result of that national program. There are people doing economic justice works that would not have been in place."

Rushing also sees successes. "Funds were set up in dioceses in Michigan, California, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina and elsewhere. These funds do two things. They lend money to people who need it, and the people who are involved in those funds begin to acquire an analysis about why it is so difficult for people to get money to be rich."



Children and a mother at the day care center located in PATH Transition Housing Center in Pontiac. The Michigan Housing Trust Fund loaned $125,000 of the $925,000 required to renovate an apartment building and build an adjoining service center.

In Oakland, the Diocese of California has joined 14 different religious bodies, as well as government agencies, private companies and private foundations in opening a community development bank, the Community Bank of the Bay. This bank, along with the five other community development banks in the country, focuses its services on communities historically ignored by traditional lenders. As the bank's development director Ed Voris explains, "The bank was created to provide credit to low and moderate income neighborhoods, primarily people of color who have been systematically denied credit. The bank has a mission to make business loans and loans for affordable housing." Opened in July 1996, 97 percent of the loans have fulfilled that mission.

Voris conducted a study of economic justice in major churches. From this study, he authored a book entitled *A Cry for Justice,* published by Paulist Press in 1989. The study surveyed a wide variety of religious organizations, from Catholic to Protestant to Jewish.

"One of the things that encouraged me about the Episcopal Church," Voris explains, "and the 1988 resolution, was that it actually committed money with its words. The problems in society can't be solved without money and the willingness of the Episcopal Church to commit money cannot be dismissed."

Despite this commitment, the national Episcopal Church did not invest in the Community Bank of the Bay. "I made an extreme effort to get them to participate," explains Voris. "They had set aside money for exactly this type of investment, but they decided to make loans with it instead."

Mixed results at the national level

Frustrations with the national church are echoed by others. Coleman McGehee observes that none of the people that he and others at the diocese recommended to serve on the national commission were appointed by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and President of the House of Deputies Pamela Chinnis.

It was also frustrating to some that the commission reportedly spent time early on trying to define economic justice rather than accepting the definition in the pro-

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posal and moving to implement it. Whole sessions were spent debating whether a cooperative model actually represented justice or simply represented affluent liberals imposing restraints on low-income people who some felt should have the right to unbridled profits in accordance with the American dream.

Susan Lloyd says that there were tensions from the start between the national church and the local activists. "We felt that the national church didn't seek input as much as we would have liked."

Rushing agrees. "At the 1988 convention," he says, "there was a strong sense that this was the direction that the Episcopal Church should go in—nationally, through the dioceses and parishes. We saw this as a shift in the direction of the general structure of the church. But we learned that you can't infuse vision. You can't legislate vision. The national church did the bare minimum of what they should do."

And although Brian Grieves, the Episcopal Church's national director of peace and justice, says there was "a staff person dedicated to economic justice for a few years," critics point out that both Gloria Brown and Lloyd Casson were asked to wear a variety of hats and not permitted a single focus on the economic justice initiative.

In addition, three years into the effort, senior staffer Diane Porter removed Irving Mayson, then suffragan bishop of Michigan, from the position of chair, despite his best efforts to hold the program to its course. Without explanation, Porter named co-chairs who were very motivated but who some say were the people most committed to small business enterprises rather than to the cooperative model.

Problems also arose when treasurer Ellen Cooke initially blocked use of national church investment monies for socially responsible investment by citing lawyers' concerns that this would not be financially prudent. In time, this was remedied.

"Wouldn't it be interesting," Rushing asks, "if every parish could invest its savings in alternative funds? This would not hurt the church and would help society a great deal. That's the kind of activity that I would expect to be supported by a national staff that had gotten the vision. We're not talking about significant fundraising. We're talking about what we do with the resources we have to help people who are attempting to gain economic control over their lives."



Employees of a grass-cutting business initiated by CORE City Neighborhood in Detroit. The McGehee Fund loaned them money to cover a City of Detroit bond requirement.

Of course, all national church work came to a relative standstill when one-third of the staff was fired due to a budget shortfall in 1994. And it was only a year later that treasurer Ellen Cooke was arrested for embezzling $2.2 million from the Episcopal Church.

Next steps

In 1995, the national church dismissed the Economic Justice Implementation Commission. "The national church felt that it had done its work, but many others felt that the program was just starting," Hooper explains. "This was something that needed a 20-year commitment. We felt that we needed a network to keep the program alive."

Originally, the 1988 resolution called for the formation of a national Economic Justice Implementation Commission whose task was to form a national network of activists. But this network did not materialize until activists themselves made it happen. In November 1996, activists established an independent Episcopal Network for Economic Justice. The three purposes of the network, Hooper explains, are "communication, resources, and advocacy."

The network, which will also strengthen educational efforts, is moving ahead according to Susan Lloyd. "Several committees are working on gathering resources. We are writing a document about alternative investments and are trying to rechannel church money and coordinate advocacy work. We are networking through a newsletter and will meet at the 1997 National Convention."

Arthur Lloyd also expresses hope. "We have been working very cooperatively with the national staff to work on a new loan fund at the national level."

An economic justice program fully integrated into the national church mission would be ideal, according to some who helped launch the program. But, in its absence, it is promising that a volunteer coalition is in place.

"The network should have come together sooner," says Hooper, "but it is a hopeful sign." TW

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Modelling a mixed message:
why economic justice was abandoned

by Emmett Jarrett

In Detroit in 1988 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted unanimously to adopt the "Michigan Plan" to commit the Church for six years to "a ministry of community reinvestment and economic justice." Prepared by folk from the Diocese of Michigan and elsewhere, and introduced by Bishop H. Coleman McGehee, the plan was grounded in a vision of economic justice as a biblical mandate for the Church's mission. James Perkinson of the Church of the Messiah in Detroit wrote a theological reflection paper that provided the basis for economic justice ministry. Convention committed the Church to "standing in the breach" and working with others to assure access to land, housing, jobs and credit to poor people in the U.S. Inherent in the rationale of the plan was the understanding that those who suffer under the present economic system and those who benefit from it are one people.

The plan was specific. A national ministry was to be established based on an alternative economic model to the present U.S. system: a model of cooperative economics. We would create, alongside the dominant economic system, a new model: land trusts to own land on behalf of the community and not for private gain; limited-equity cooperative housing, rather than housing to be sold at a profit by individual owners; worker-owned businesses where all shared in the profits as well as the risks; and community credit institutions that would invest in the communities where their depositors lived. Convention voted $250,000 to create a national Economic Justice Implementation Committee and get the program started. It was envisioned that EJIC would raise and spend $4 million a year on cooperative community reinvestment around the country.

But before long the cooperative model was abandoned in favor of various forms of "community capitalism," and competing interests vitiated the project as a whole. There was resistance to committing Church trust and investment funds to community institutions due to "fiduciary responsibility" to invest Church funds in "safe" instruments such as stocks and bonds. After six years the project apparently died. A few fragments were absorbed by the newly formed Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation interim body (JPIC). Activists like Art and Sue Lloyd, John Hooper and the redoubtable Michigan crew supported a number of wonderful local projects and continue to work effectively at the grassroots level. But the Episcopal Church's national "ministry of community reinvestment and economic justice" is no more.

The church didn't believe in the model it proposed. We were not ready to live cooperatively, and so we neither modeled that nor became effective evangelists for a genuine theology of community.

After Convention in Detroit in 1988, a group of Episcopal Urban Caucus members in the Diocese of Washington took up the challenge of the "Michigan Plan." I was then rector of the Church of the Ascension, Silver Spring, Md. — a multicultural urban sprawl "inside the Beltway" parish with roots deep in our local community. A number of us took seriously the task of establishing local and diocesan expressions of the ministry of economic justice. The Diocese of Washington's Convention in 1989 created a task force on economic justice along the lines suggested in the Michigan Plan. Members of the task force included inner city and suburban clergy and parishioners, community activists, diocesan officials and ordinary citizens of the nation's capital. We conducted urban hearings, interviewed political and business as well as church leaders, and even sniffed around the diocesan investment portfolio. We made contact with Gordon Cosby of the Church of the Savior, Jim Wallis and others in the Sojourners Community and had a local base in Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington.

Our task force produced a 100-page report which analyzed the land and housing situation in the metropolitan Washington area, examined the community credit availability and recommended specific "social justice screens" for diocesan and parochial investments. A Commission on Community Reinvestment and Economic Justice was created — again by unanimous vote — and given the task of carrying out these recommendations. In a burst of enthusiasm, a number of delegates to the 1991 Diocesan Convention gave money on the spot to begin the work. And with that the frustration began. We didn't expect to be funded, but

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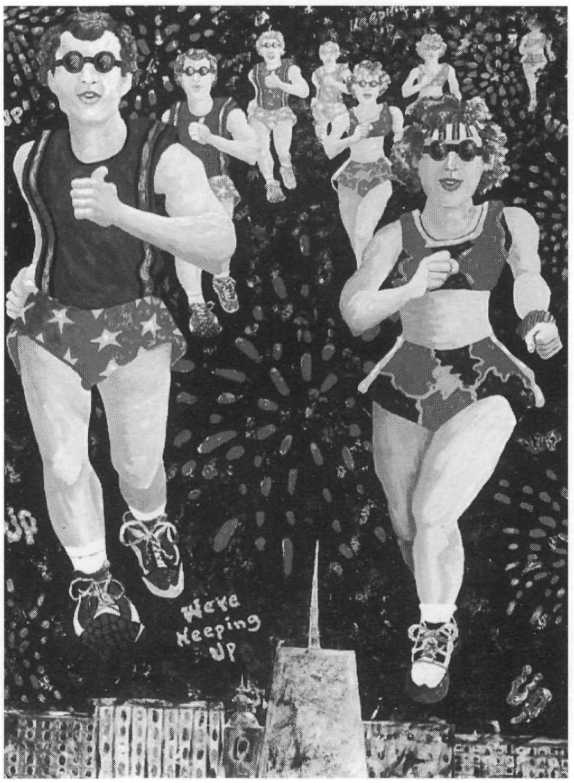
we hoped to be able to raise money for our work, following the model of the Peace Commission of the Diocese of Washington, which had done outstanding work by raising its own funds. We were never permitted to ask. In 1993, I proposed that the Diocesan Convention revoke its commitment to economic justice and dissolve the commission. It voted unanimously to do that.

One conclusion from this "tale of two cities" is to beware of Episcopal conventions with unanimous votes! If people really understand a commitment, they probably won't be unanimous when they vote about it. There will be some argument, some things to negotiate and agree on before the project begins. This realism was absent in both Detroit and Washington.

Money was also absent. At least Detroit voted to fund the Economic Justice Implementation Committee, but it costs a lot more than $250,000 to organize a national ministry of economic justice. We paid for the arguments in that instance. In Washington, people argued on their own dime. It was more practical.

But the profoundest conclusion is that we — the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington — went about it the wrong way entirely. If we really intended to model a different kind of economic system, we would begin with ourselves, and change the way we live as a Church, rather than make grants to help other people change the ways they live. We put ourselves in the position of recommending sharing to those who didn't have a share, of counseling evangelical poverty to the destitute. Finally, the Church didn't believe in the model it proposed. We were not ready to live cooperatively, and so we neither modeled that way of living nor became effective evangelists for a genuine theology of community in the world.

At a meeting of the Episcopal Urban Caucus in Philadelphia recently, a Latino layman from New York proposed as an agenda item that the Church sell its national headquarters at 815 Second Avenue, do most of its administration via Internet and move the Presiding Bishop's residence to an apartment on the Lower East Side of New York City. This suggestion was neither a joke nor a hostile gesture in Bishop Browning's face. I believe that Bishop Browning's commitment to social and economic justice is genuine and that his prayer life is sufficiently deep to sustain such a lifestyle change. But think what an example it would be! Instead of our Church being a "bit player" in the world of Wall Street and Washington, D.C., we would become overnight a radical counter-cultural force in American society. We would be, for once, and from the top down, believable — because we would be acting on what we said in the Michigan Plan that we believe — cooperative living, community.



Lucinda Luvaas

If you think about it, we have been backing away from hands-on community involvement for a long time. Not only does the Presiding Bishop live atop a New York office building, most bishops live in comfortable suburban homes and commute to their cathedrals for work. Many priests live in their own homes instead of rectories, and not in their parishes. We lecture about community, but we ourselves swoop in to give expert advice to people who are not our neighbors.

Until we develop a theology of community like the one proposed by James Perkinson and adopted by the Church in 1988, and subsequently abandoned, we will continue either to ignore or condescend to the poor. He wrote:

"At the heart, then, of the biblical vision of the People of God is the idea of a historical community living the eschatological reversal. 'Church' is that human geography in which the rich own and live out their need for the poor and the poor discover and live out their gifts for the rich in the name of Jesus Christ. The fact that bifurcation rather than amalgamation characterizes the social make-up not only of society, but of the Church itself, highlights the need for conversion and pilgrimage on the part of the People of God. It is just this pilgrimage of faith and discipleship that the modern day cooperative movement can facilitate."

When the Church is true to itself it knows how to neighbor. When we are genuinely members of the communities in which we live, we can contribute to economic justice for all. We won't do it by giving away trinkets, but by sharing ourselves. TW

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The ant and the spider:

an interview with Chung Hyun Kyung

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Chung Hyun Kyung is a professor of ecumenics at Union Seminary in New York. Winner of The Witness' *Stringfellow award in 1994, Chung took the theological world by storm when she addressed the World Council of Churches at Canberra in 1991. She has been in these pages more than once, challenging America to recognize its worship of Mammon and lifting up the theological insights of indigenous and marginalized worship communities [TW 7/94, 11/96].*

Chung has been invited to speak in every continent since her Canberra address, during which she invoked a litany of women, including the Korean "comfort" women raped by Japanese soldiers. She says that travel has broadened her understanding of oppression, causing her to want to be a bridge builder between cultures.

When Chung was offered the opportunity to teach at Union Theological Seminary in New York, she accepted. Ironically, she notes that she took a paycut to come. She also notes that her Korean students were all people of economic privilege, while that is not true at Union. Chung's contract with Union places her in New York for three years and in Asia, Africa or Latin America every fourth year to work with women and to teach. She is home in Korea for the summer.



Chung Hyun Kyung

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: You must be meeting lots of people in the United States who are wishing for change.

Chung Hung Kyung: Yes, I have discovered so many grassroots people's organizations that try to find a different kind of lifestyle and community. They try to form political organizations and maybe they are disillusioned with the institutional church, but they have very deep spiritual yearnings to find what it means to be human.

J.W-K.: Let me ask you a question about what we can do. A lot of people in this country who are committed to working for justice lived through the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam War movements. They have good politics. But there's confusion about what we should do now. People remember the 1960s, they remember Martin Luther King and hundreds of thousands of people in the streets. The U.S. government was very systematic about eliminating a lot of the leadership that we had then. Those people are dead. Yet a lot of people are still waiting for a new leader or a new movement that looks like what they saw in the 1960s.

I'm not sure we're going to get the same opportunity we had then. It may look different. Yet some good people in the U.S. feel paralyzed asking, "What do I do? My heart's in the right place, but what do I do?" From your international perspective, do you have a word for us about that?

C.H.K.: I don't think we will have this hero leader cult anymore. We live in a different day. This is outdated. If we need heroes or heroines, then every one of us must become heroes and heroines.

Last time we met in Detroit, I talked about the ant and spider. Like the ant, every one of us, in our local places, can make a small hole in our locality. But also we are spiders. With the Internet and all this information organization, we make connections like spiders. We do works in our communities and keep our light alive, keep our hope alive. It will accumulate.

J.W-K.: Yet, you don't want us just to act locally?

In our time, satanic power comes with a very beautiful face. "Globalization will make you happy. I will give all these sexy, attractive things to you." It is harder to resist than military power.

C.H.K.: Globalization is hard. We have a sharp division between the rich and the poor and great suffering in people's lives. The suffering will become greater. Then when we get to the point we can't endure it anymore, we will have a momentum.

But now what we are doing is keeping our hope alive, keeping our light alive through our small activities — we have to keep teaching children. We keep giving

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Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Artist **Meinrad Craighead's** work is published in *Woman Wisdom: A Feminist Lectionary and Psalter* (Crossroad, 1991).

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information to people. We have political work in our local communities — to make education more inclusive, to create a more inclusive system or an environmental movement.

As we do little things and as we are building up internationally, it will gain momentum. At this moment, the movement is not very active, but people are pondering, people suffer and keep asking questions and keep participating in small political activities. We will get the momentum pretty soon.

J.W-K.: And when you picture the momentum growing, do you have a vision of what might happen?

C.H.K.: What might happen in the future? Many Third World theologians say that God is money in our time and religion is savage capitalism. People are worried about money and job security. This kind of economy creates great suffering, so it can be possible that they will make another war. People will say, "No more!" and then you will have an immense mobilization to change the system on a more immense level. I don't know exactly what form it will take, but I can see that we have to prepare people.

As a professor, I want to produce students who really see things as they are and I want them to develop the spiritual power — enough heart to feel compassionate, so they will know what to do.

I ask my students, we are producing more and more, are we happy? Are we healthy? Are we whole? Are we building a community where our lives will become more meaningful? Do we live more like human beings? What is the meaning of love? And what kinds of alternatives can you have in terms of value, of relating and choosing work?

More than ever, in our time, people really need a spiritual practice one way or another. In the 1960s, everything was so clear — there are the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movements. You could see it. But now this post-modern tactic of invading people's hearts is not like the modernistic way. Before they violated people with a real physical power, right? But the post-modern way of violating or domesticating people is by seduction, allure. They sell very beautiful death, very beautiful oppression.

It is a very sexy, seductive oppression. With globalization, the advertisements and articles say, "Hey, work for our company. Join this global system. You'll be happy. You'll be sexy." And they show beautiful beaches and beautiful women with gorgeous dresses, drinking great wine. All of this is emphasized in the movies, TV and music. They say, "If you join us you can have a membership in this great club of globalization. You will enjoy these beautiful beaches, dresses, champagne and luxury."

But that is not true. Because of globalization, only a few enjoy that kind of thing. And you know that structural adjustment programs and globalization of the economy cause many women in Africa and Asia to lose economic power.

Women's traditional economic method is the exchange of goods. It's very much a survival oriented economy, a sustenance oriented economy. In a cash economy and an export economy, women lose their economy into men's hands. So women don't get all that's promised in the sexy advertisements; they just cannot eat anymore. I have heard these women say, "Before we were poor people, but we are not even people anymore. We are just things to be tossed around."



Jim West

In our time, satanic power comes with a very beautiful face. "Globalization will make you happy. I will give all these sexy, attractive things to you." It is harder to resist than military power. They come in with MTV and all kinds of entertainment, saying, "Join our membership."

J.W-K.: Say a little more about how a spiritual practice can help us both recognize Satan behind the beautiful face and resist it.

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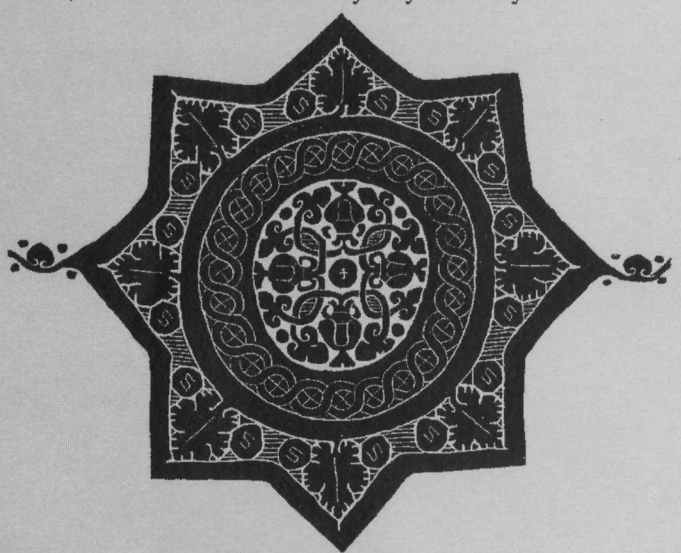
Moving to New York City:
Chung returns to the imperial center

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: Tell me why you chose to come back to Union Seminary, and tell me how you find the U.S.

Chung Hyun Kyung: After Canberra, I traveled to every continent and every possible diversity of people's communities. It changed my view greatly. I started from the very particular historical experience of being a Korean woman. Out of that, I developed a Korean women's feminist theology. I honor that process and I still think particularity, especially for minority groups, is very important. But what I experienced while traveling was such a deep, universal, human experience of pain and struggle.

Before, as a product of the Korean movement, I didn't consider white Europeans and American people as real human beings. The way they objectified us, I also objectified them. Whenever I thought about Americans, I thought, "These people have so many resources and they still exploit." And as a Korean, I thought of the bombs America threw at us. During the Korean War, the U.S. used more than all the bombs used during World War I and II. Can you imagine? It means our land is totally destroyed.

When I was in the Korean Student Movement, many students contemplated bombing American embassies. We perceived America as a totally savage country — a country with no culture. Even though I studied in America, I couldn't see people's deep humanity. I always was on guard. Americans, I thought, were born to exploit. And American-European culture is a culture of violence. Look at the way they eat. They eat with weapons! I said, "This is a very violent culture and I shouldn't make real human contact with them."



During the last seven years, I have begun to see that people's struggles are interconnected and I also discovered many European and American people who are human beings. If I say it like this, you may laugh, but it was a genuine experience — "Aha! They are also human beings like us."

Then I asked, what's wrong? Why are things working this way? I began to see in a more systematic, historical way the system which divides us. I discovered that hungry women crying in Africa, Asia and Latin America are directly connected with all the suburban wives in America and Europe who live on anti-depressant medicine. These two oppressions are seemingly very different, but now I can see the connection. One is oppression because the women don't have anything; the other because they have too much — it's stagnated and spoiled.

There's a very elaborate system of deception. You know, the suicide rate is high in Europe and Japan. Why, in these most affluent countries, are there so many drug problems? Why do so many people look so depressed? When you go to indigenous communities in South America, Africa and the Philippines, people are very poor, they are miserable, but they are a rush of life.

J.W-K: Say a little bit about the deception — you suggested that the only way European and American people can hang on to so many possessions is by a deception.

C.H.K.: It's a false security. It's like this idea that America is the number one country — you are the biggest, the richest country in the world. You lure people with the American dream, but now after globalization there are more

It dawned on me that we need bridge-builders, cultural translators to be international justice workers who can make connections between oppressions. It's almost like a mandala vision.

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and more poor people in America. There are many Third World people in America's inner cities. You know the infant mortality in Harlem is higher than Bangladesh? Can you imagine? Not only that, but every two hours one American child under 14 is gunned down.

So your TV advertisements promise so many things, but I think people are waking up. This affluence is not going to happen to them. Even the American middle class doesn't feel secure anymore. You are told that the more wealth you have, the happier you will become, but in order to make more wealth, you don't have any time to really live life — to spend time with your family, lovers and children and to take care of a garden.

Why you are so depressed? Because you made the money, but you are exhausted physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally. You have no sense of community because you have to compete so much. If you don't get killed on the subways of the inner cities, or robbed, you will die inside because you don't have energy to build up community.

It dawned on me then that we need bridge-builders, cultural translators to be international justice workers who can make connections between oppressions. It's almost like a mandala vision — you suddenly see the whole picture.

I had this inner urge to do some international work where I can make a connection among Asian, African, Latin American women's struggles and many women's struggles in the First World, too, especially women with a lot of struggles around issues of race, class or orientation. I prayed about it. Then Union offered me a job in ecumenics.

Another reason for my move is that Korea is not the Third World anymore. Because of our division, we are politically considered Third World, but economically we joined the developing countries. My country is now exploiting labor in Honduras, El Salvador, Indonesia and Nepal. We also have more than 35,000 foreign manual workers in Korea, because the Koreans do not want to do dirty jobs. So we have many Indonesian, Sri Lankan, Indian, Nepalese and Filipino people working for Korean companies in Korea.

So my social location as a Korean woman doing Third World theology in Korea doesn't fit well anymore. Ironically, I meet more Third World people in New York City than in Seoul.

In this situation, I had to make a choice. What do I want to do with my life? When I die, what kind of legacy do I want to leave?

The legacy I want to leave, if possible — and I will work very hard — is an intellectual legacy of Asian's women's theology in relation to women's struggle in Asia, Africa and Latin America and to many minority groups in the First World. I have this urgency in me, I don't think we have much time left.

You are told that the more wealth you have, the happier you will become, but in order to make more wealth, you don't have any time to really live life — to spend time with your family, lovers and children and to take care of a garden.

C.H.K.: The most difficult temptation is this temptation of beautiful seduction. When armies came to invade, it made you angry so you fought back. But all this beautiful allure is hard to resist — it's virtual reality. It's not tangible. It's not real, but it's also very real.

It's like addiction. Sometimes I say every one of us in the world now needs a 12-step program. We need to say, "I am powerless over money and all this seduction, all this promise of globalization." We really have to ask a power greater than us to guide us.

One of the important spiritual disciplines in Buddhism is voluntary poverty. The monks beg and only eat what is given. Being a beggar is their spiritual practice.

We do all kinds of movements and social analysis to see the madness of capitalism. But the madness of capitalism is also very beautiful, very seductive for many people because it comes with the beautiful face of comfort, luxury and pleasure. How can you say no to this?

I think only spiritual discipline will save us. We need a deep spirituality to say "no." Many Third World people talk about the Coca Colanization of the world. But now I talk to many Asian and African people in a different way, asking "Why do we drink Coca Cola? Why don't we just stop drinking it so they cannot sell it in Asia anymore?"

Liberation is not just structural. It is very deep psychological, emotional and inner world liberation too.

If we don't have that spiritual power, we just cannot resist.

Thich Nhat Hanh talked about U.S. globalization. He said, "All over the world, people are losing jobs, because globalization is a centralization and automation process. They don't need many workers anymore." Maybe some people think Thich Nhat Hanh's too idealistic, but I think he makes a lot of sense. He

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said, "Why don't we only take part-time jobs — everybody work three days a week?" All of us would make less money, so all of us would have a job. Then the other four days we could spend in the community, with the children, reading and writing poetry, spending time in the forest.

I think this spiritual awakening is coming. The 18th and 19th century prophets talked about the next millennium. They said that the energy of the world would shift from a dominant masculine energy to feminine energy. They prophesied a great spiritual awakening.

I think young people will reject a ratrace work life. They will make different choices for their lives.

J.W-K.: Are there spiritual allies that can work with us? Sometimes I think of the earth as a spiritual ally or the ancestors. Are they part of the struggle?

C.H.K.: Oh, yes. The spiritual visionaries of Korea talked about today's world. They said people will move very fast and eat unnecessary food and that it would cause all kinds of disease. They prophesied these things!



Miriam **by Meinrad Craighead**

A Korean spiritual visionary in the 18th century said we will change into feminine energy and great Mother will save us. He also said in this time, people will become real grown-ups. They will become wiser so they can make different kinds of choices in life. He said people born and living at the turn of the millennium are very lucky people because we will witness this change of energy.

Through celebration we discover who we are again, what it means to be human. We discern what we have lost and we know what we will protect to make ourselves human again.

Maybe I'm a perpetual optimist, but I don't feel hopeless. Great suffering always produces great people and great awakening. So I think suffering is a good preparation.

J.W-K.: Is there a place in the struggle for joy and for rest?

C.H.K.: Oh, yes, because of our urgency. When I look at a tree now, I don't take it for granted anymore. I don't know how long I can see this tree. The tree can die or I can die with cancer.

I think AIDS and cancer are very cultural diseases, symbols of our culture. Our culture is an acquired immune-deficient culture. The immunologists say an immune system involves white cells that recognize alien cells that start to develop. So immune deficiency means you lose the ability to distinguish between true self and false self.

That's the syndrome of our time. So, so many people are dying of cancer — the alien cells are growing and growing. Your false cell is cancer.

J.W-K.: And there's a way that rest and joy are related to knowing who we are?

C.H.K.: I think joy and laughter are great immune system boosters. Through celebration we discover who we are again, what it means to be human. We discern what we have lost and we know what we will protect to make ourselves human again. Joy is like our litmus paper to see whether we are still fully alive.

Joy is there even in the midst of suffering. Joy includes suffering; joy includes hardship. Joy includes deep sadness, the loneliness of life. It's almost as though only people who understand the deepest sorrow we feel for this world, can feel genuine joy.

J.W-K.: Your voice is very important to us. We had a letter from an older woman in her 80s who wrote, "I have been waiting all my life for Hyun Kyung's voice!"

C.H.K.: Oh, that is wonderful. Sometimes I feel very discouraged, but I have this sense that only when I encourage myself, then God will be energized by me and will energize me.

All women, children and men have to draw on their inner resources to bring out that energy. Only then will God energize our energy. So, I have to encourage myself and you have to encourage yourself. TW

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It only *seems* racist

A training tape made 10 years ago by Jack McMahon, the Republican candidate for Philadelphia district attorney, advised prosecutors to reject low-income black jurors and jurors who are well-educated *(The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 4/1/97).

"The case law says the object of getting a jury ... is to get a competent, fair and impartial jury," McMahon said. "Well, that's ridiculous. ... The only way you're going to do your best is to get jurors that are unfair, and more likely to convict than anybody else in that room.

"The blacks from the low-income areas are less likely to convict. ... There's a resentment for law enforcement. There's a resentment for authority. And as a result, you don't want those people on your jury. And it may appear as if you're being racist, but again, you're just being realistic."

McMahon also warned against "smart people" who "will analyze the hell out of your case," as well as social workers and teachers — though allowing that "if you get a white teacher teaching in a black school that's sick of these guys maybe, that may be one you accept."

Land mine ban delayed

President Clinton "has unmistakably signaled that the U.S. does not want to see rapid progress toward a ban" on land mines, according to Stephen Goose, chair of the Steering Committee of the U.S. Campaign to Ban Land Mines (*Maryknoll,* 6/97). Criticizing Clinton's decision to address the issue through the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva (which includes many nations opposed to restrictions) rather than the Canadian-initiated "Ottawa Process" (which calls for a total ban by the end of this year), Goose charges that "the president has chosen a 'go slow' approach in order to satisfy U.S. military leaders still reluctant to abandon the weapon."

So what's wrong?

When the 1997 graduating class at Fordham University chose to hold its Senior Ball at the Intrepid War Museum — an aircraft carrier docked in Manhattan which has been converted into a weapons exhibit gallery — few objections were raised, according to Jesuit peace activist John Dear.

"Most Jesuits, faculty and students, see no problem with a party at the pro-war museum," Dear wrote in the *National Catholic Reporter* (5/2/97). "As one Jesuit theologian at Fordham put it, 'We're all Niebuhrians here. Coercion and war are necessary and justifiable. Jesus' ethic can't be applied socially. He never meant it to be. So what's wrong with a party on the Intrepid?'"

Animal experimentation

Clergy, along with farmers and hunters, are among those most likely to support animal experimentation, according to surveys by sociologist Harold Takooshian (*Scientific American*, 2/97).

Other surveys revealed that opposition to vivisection is highest among women, young people and people with higher levels of education.

Although one U.S. study showed a slight correlation between scientific knowledge and support for animal experimentation, studies in Belgium, France and Italy connected scientific literacy with rejection of experiments on animals.

Overall, opposition to animal research is on the rise. Last November, the Netherlands passed a law which recognizes the "intrinsic value" of animals as sentient beings, and several nations (including Germany, the U.K. and Australia) now require a cost-benefit analysis to be performed on all animal experiments.

"Even in disciplines that have traditionally used animals, the trend is unmistakable," Madhusree Mukerjee writes. "A survey by Scott Plous of Wesleyan University finds that psychologists with Ph.D.s earned in the 1990s are half as likely to express strong support for animal research as those with Ph.D.s from before 1970."

Indian gambling

The United Methodist Church is struggling with tensions between its historic opposition to gambling and its support for Native American sovereignty. A Consultation on Native Americans and Gambling, sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, was held in December. Approximately 50 participants, mostly Native American, developed a set of recommendations, which include asking the Church to:

- Develop statements on gambling from Native American leaders, including spiritual and traditional leaders.
- Produce educational resources on the status of Native Americans and sovereignty, and others lifting up "the downside of gambling."
- Initiate viable economic development projects as alternatives to gambling enterprises.
- Provide more economic literacy training focusing on tribal businesses in Indian reservations.

— Lee Ranck,
***Christian Social Action*, 2/97**

Peace training for youth

A week-long nonviolence training program for youth ages 12-18 will be held Aug. 10-16 at the Equity Trust Conference Center in Voluntown, Conn. Activities will include discussion of political issues, organizing skills and strategy sessions as well as dancing, swimming, games and field trips. Cost for the week is $400 per person (sliding scale and scholarships available). For more information contact YouthPeace/WRL, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (ph) 212-228-0450, (f) 212-228-6193; e-mail: wrl@igc.apc.org.



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The Witness' hall of fame

Every three years *The Witness* and the Episcopal Church Publishing Company present awards to people working for justice. The awards are named for four heroes in the Episcopal Church: Will Scarlett, bishop and activist in the League for Industrial Democracy; William Spofford, long-time *Witness* editor and outspoken labor advocate; Vida Scudder, church woman and socialist; Bill Stringfellow, author of definitive books on the powers and principalities, lawyer and church critic.

Past awardees:

1994, Indianapolis

The Philadelphia 11 and the Washington 4 (Scarlett).
Hanan Ashrawi (Spofford)
Chung Hyun Kyung (Stringfellow)
Louie Crew (Scudder)



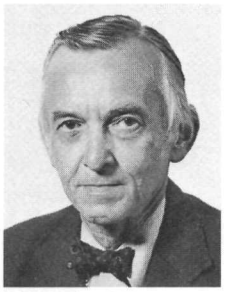
Will Scarlett



Bill Spofford



Vida Scudder



Bill Stringfellow

1991, Phoenix — *The Witness* boycotted

1988, Detroit

Bob DeWitt (Scarlett)
Jean Dementi (Spofford)
Pauli Murray (Scudder)
Steven Guerra and Margaret Ellen Traxler (Stringfellow)

1982, New Orleans

John Hines (Scarlett)
Ben Chavis (Spofford)
Marion Kelleran (Scuddder)
Bill Stringfellow (Special award of merit)

1979,

Daniel Corrigan (Scarlett)
Paul Washington (Spofford)
Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin (Scudder)
Joe Fletcher (Special award of merit)

The Witness' awards dinner

Feelings may run high at *The Witness* dinner. The July 18 dinner offers a chance for long-time activists in the church to meet new deputies who share a passion for justice. It also provides support for the Church of the Advocate, a parish that models a long-term commitment to its neighborhood and to prompting the church to move (p. 11).

The dinner will be catered by Project H.O.M.E.'s Back Home Cafe. Project H.O.M.E. (Housing, Opportunities, Medical Care, Education) is a program widely recognized as a leader in homeless services and advocacy in Philadelphia. Through a "continuum of care" approach consisting of a range of housing and supportive services, Project H.O.M.E. has enabled hundreds of chronically homeless persons to break the cycle of homelessness.

Project H.O.M.E. currently operates 10 residences throughout Philadelphia. Many of the residences are permanent housing for formerly homeless persons able to live independently. Others are specialized mental health residences or intensive recovery residences. Project H.O.M.E. also does extensive street outreach to homeless persons still living on the streets.

"Homelessness is not a matter of 'There but for the grace of God go I,'" says cofounder and executive director Sister Mary Scullion. "It's a matter of 'There go I.' We have to understand that women and men who are homeless have the same humanity that all of us experience. To allow homelessness to happen is to threaten all of our humanity."

In recent years, Project H.O.M.E. has expanded its work to include community development efforts in low-income neighborhoods. Unlike many nonprofit service providers, staff and residents of Project H.O.M.E. are actively involved in political advocacy. In 1994, Project H.O.M.E. and its supporters won a four-year legal and political battle to open a 48-unit permanent housing facility at 1515 Fairmount Avenue — a battle that included rallies, petitions, marches, and even civil disobedience. The campaign to "Free 1515" became a major fair-housing rights case that resulted in national attention.

Now housed in 1515 Fairmount Avenue is the Back Home Cafe, a restaurant and catering service that provides job training and employment to many Project H.O.M.E. residents. The Cafe, in its second year, serves as a wonderful community center.

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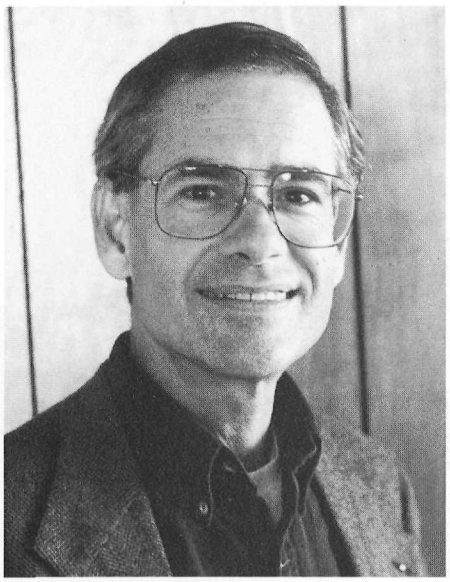
Choosing a new 'personality' for the church

by Julie A. Wortman

Ever since last April, when the 29-member national church committee charged with developing a slate of candidates for Presiding Bishop announced its four nominees, Episcopalians who care about their denomination's identity and mission have been trying to figure out which man would be the best successor to Edmond L. Browning — Frank Griswold, 59, of Chicago; Robert Rowley Jr., 55, of Northwestern Pennsylvania; Richard Shimpfky, 56, of El Camino Real (Calif.); or Don Wimberly, 59, of Lexington (Ky.). Acknowledging that *The Witness* tends to find greater hope in the resistance work of non-hierarchial, self-organizing, faith-based communities than in institutional, usually clericalist, church politics, we are surprised to find that we care what sort of person the new primate will be. This is because this new leader's manner, enthusiasms, theological views and commitments will signal what the Episcopal Church stands for — and, for good or ill, that has an influence on church and society that we can't discount.

Bishops do the choosing

The people who will have the biggest say about who the new presiding bishop will be, of course, are the church's bishops, the men and women who do the actual balloting. But the lay and clergy deputies from the church's dioceses will have to confirm the election to make it stick — when John Allin was elected presiding bishop in 1973, the deputies confirmed the choice, but not readily. [Deputies and bishops to the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia this July will be considering a resolution that would put into motion a canonical change to allow the deputies to vote for future presiding bishops, not just to confirm the bishops' choice.]



***The Witness* endorses Richard Shimpfky of El Camino Real for presiding bishop.**

What matters most to the bishops, some say, is how the new presiding bishop's leadership will affect their "collegiality" or sense of unity, mutual trust and interdependence. In this respect, the personal relationships that the candidates have developed with their colleagues over the years will matter a great deal, a factor difficult, if not impossible, for outsiders to assess.

Also certain to play into the bishops' assessment is that prior to their vote, the General Convention may have passed legislation changing the presiding bishop's role and powers. If proposed changes to the disciplinary canons are passed, the presiding bishop could, for the first time, have authority to temporarily inhibit a fellow bishop for misconduct and impose discipline. However, if a proposal from the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church goes through, the presiding bishop would have much less power to influence how national church programs are implemented. Instead, the structure commission contemplates a stronger emphasis on the primate's role as chief pastor and "prophet."

"[The commission] proposes a creative and effective role for a Presiding Bishop in calling the church to ministry and mission through the General Convention and prophetic appeals directly to the people of this church," thereby shifting emphasis "from managing to leading," the commission's report to this summer's General Convention states. This shift, the commission believes, "should mitigate somewhat the isolation of this office by putting the Presiding Bishop in more frequent personal, rather than managerial, contact with sister and brother bishops and the laity and other clergy of the church."

Set in the context of a whole package of proposals aimed at downplaying the church's "national" identity, the structure commission's reframing of the primate's office would seem to be intended to weaken the presiding bishop's ability to get the church to "walk" his "talk." Maybe this is the commission's backhanded way of making sure a new presiding bishop talks less.

Homosexuality a key issue

Still, whether the structure commission's proposals are accepted or not, nothing can prevent this election from being highly politicized, despite a strong and largely successful effort on the part of the nominating committee to persuade the candidates to refrain from discussing their views on matters to be

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Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

Vital Signs

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1997 awards

Leon Modeste and the GCSP

Like Bill Spofford, Leon Modeste saw the urgent need for change and didn't mire himself in the politics of the institutional church. *The Witness* applauds Modeste for getting the monies designated for the General Convention Special Program in 1967 into the hands of those who needed it. (see p. 12.)

After six years directing the General Convention Special Program, Leon Modeste served as president and CEO of the Urban League of Onondaga County in Syracuse, N.Y. He is now special assistant to the superintendent of the Little Rock School District.



Leon Modeste

The Bill Spofford award

The Ojibwe Singers: reclaiming hope

Known for his works on the principalities and powers, William Stringfellow used to say that his understanding stemmed from Anglican hymns — since he was tone deaf and wouldn't sing, he says he paid close attention to the words instead! The Ojibwe elders in Minnesota have noticed the power in hymns as well!

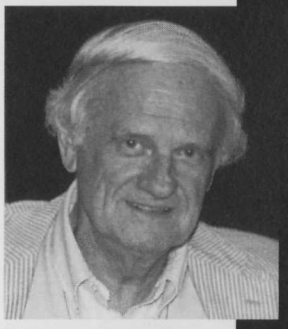
Confronted with a soaring number of teen suicides eight years ago, the elders took action. They did not appeal to the U.S. government for a new program. They did not become frenetically busy. They reinstituted their hymn sings, knowing that the three hours of song and spontaneous testimony would restore the spiritual strength of the adults and any teenagers who might attend. Today, people from three reservations attend, even driving two or three hours for hymn sings. They've just released their first cassette tape!

The Witness is grateful to the Ojibwe Singers for modelling another way and for reminding us that it is our own hearts and prayers that ultimately face down death.

The Bill Stringfellow award

Coleman McGehee: economic justice

In the spirit of labor activist and bishop William Scarlett, Coleman McGehee championed any number of causes while serving as bishop of the Diocese of Michigan. On this occasion, *The Witness* honors him for his outspoken advocacy for an economic justice initiative in 1988 that promised to build an alternative economy within the shadow of unbridled the capitalism that so effectively assigns affluence and ruin. (See page 20.) McGehee has received recognition from organizations concerned with African American and women's rights, civil liberties and labor issues.



Coleman McGehee

The William Scarlett award

Verna Dozier: reclaiming scripture

Verna Dozier has a cordial and gracious way of introducing strong and militant ideas. *The Witness* gives thanks for her ministry in opening up the ways that we all read the Bible, for affirming our understanding and our humor and most recently for teaching us about ambiguity (see p. 46).

Dozier says she is retiring from public speaking, a vocation she has pursued since retiring from teaching. We give thanks for her witness and her warmth.



Verna Dozier

The Vida Scudder award

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decided by this summer's General Convention. The foremost issue for most bishops and deputies will be the new presiding bishop's stand on homosexual relationships, a key barometer, these days, of a person's general world view on matters social and theological. Conservatives and many moderates will be calling the church's next primate to follow the lead of General Convention special guest George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in categorically affirming the traditional heterosexist position. At this writing, these forces are reportedly working to draft a candidate they can trust to do just that (some rumor this will be Herbert Thompson, bishop of Southern Ohio). Echoing the strategy that won approval for the heresy trial of Walter Righter, the conservative Irenaeus Fellowship of Bishops has announced that it will subsidize the travel costs of retired bishops who could help swing the vote in this anti-gay direction.

No one 'unacceptable'?

With this in mind, it is surprising that the Consultation, a coalition of General Convention strategists representing a fluid array of about a dozen church-based peace and justice advocacy groups — including the gay/lesbian advocacy group Integrity — hasn't labeled any of the four nominees categorically unacceptable, even though two, Wimberly and Rowley, are on record with the traditional gays-must-be-celibate view. Rowley, however, whose statements to the nominating committee shine with candor, has received high marks from members of the Episcopal Women's Caucus for his leadership in developing and presenting a resolution to the 1995 Portland, Ore., meeting of the church's bishops stating that the ordination canons regarding women are mandatory in all dioceses.

"Bishop Rowley chaired the committee with integrity and listened carefully to both sides,"EWC member Gay Jennings, who served with Rowley on the committee, posted to an electronic meeting on the topic of "PB Testimonials" last spring. "[Rowley] is fair. He is grounded in prayer and Scripture. He did a phenomenal job under very difficult circumstances. I have enormous respect for him. I would be very glad to see him elected Presiding Bishop."

Rowley's statements to the nominating committee also hold out the possibility that he has had a change of heart or holds a nuanced position on the sexuality issue. "My appointments to leadership positions in the diocese have included individuals who hold a variety of points of view in regard to human sexuality," he said. "I have also appointed individuals without regard to their sexual orientation."

Shimpfky has enthusiastically embraced the task of paying attention to the needs, concerns and politics of one of the most demographically diverse regions of the country, giving him an invaluable — and essential — intercultural perspective.

Leadership needed for Lambeth, not restructure

Wimberly, on the other hand, takes the tired stance that "we have allowed the topic of human sexuality to dominate our Church agendas for far too long," a position that suggests he fails to understand the way in which heterosexuals have scapegoated gay and lesbian Christians in order to avoid other issues. Resolving this question affirmatively is essential for the well-being of gay and lesbian church members, but also for heterosexuals whose bondage to heterosexism has left them without a tenable sexual ethic. With the Lambeth meeting of bishops only a year away — and Anglican bishops lining up with an agenda of condemning and perhaps disassociating from the American church for its liberality toward gay and lesbian people — this is hardly the kind of leadership for which advocates for the full acceptance of gay and lesbian church members would hope.

Wimberly, too, seems disappointingly enthusiastic about making church restructuring a priority. "The structure and/or restructuring of all aspects of our Church's National Office and its operations requires decisive action," he told the nominating committee in response to a question about "the most important priorities for Presiding Bishop."

"I do not believe that our National Church structure is perceived as being streamlined, efficient, effective, responsible and pastorally sensitive to the realities of modernity as evidenced throughout the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Responding to these perceptions is essential."

It is undoubtedly true that the church could operate better, as he says, but most progressives believe any restructuring should be led, not by perceptions of inefficiency, but by a clear sense of mission [see TW 5/97], which Wimberly didn't spend much time defining or describing for the committee.

Prayer book revision a justice issue

Based on their records, the two candidates most likely to remain uncompromising about their support for the full inclusion of gay and lesbian church members in the life of the institution — even in the face of a hostile reception from their colleagues at Lambeth — are Shimpfky and Griswold. Griswold's longer experience as a bishop — and the fact Chicago is a much larger diocese — might incline some to favor his candidacy. But Griswold's pronouncement, in his capacity as chair of the Standing Liturgical Commission, that "this is not the time for prayer book revision," comes as a huge let down to everyone who finds the church's common prayer uncommonly white, male, straight and privileged. At the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation "summit" last winter a working group declared prayer book

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After 20 years, will GC give a blessing?

by Michael Hopkins

Having secured the right (if not the will in all places) to ordain gay and lesbian persons through the passage of the Open Access Canon in 1994 and the decision of the Righter Court, advocates for the full inclusion of gay and lesbian Episcopalians will be focusing on a more basic issue at this summer's General Convention, the recognition and support of relationships.

Seven dioceses (California, Missouri, New York, Newark, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Rochester) have submitted resolutions calling for the development of a Rite of Blessing of Same Sex Unions to be included in the Book of Occasional Services (BOS). The resolutions recognize that an increasing number of congregations across the country are using some form of a blessing rite and insist that the time is right for the church to provide a form for celebration to those who, since a 1976 General Convention resolution, have been called "children of God who have a full and equal claim ... upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church."

For the first time, a booth at General Convention will focus solely on the relationships of gay and lesbian people. Sponsored by All Saints' Church, Pasadena, Calif., the booth is a sign of the growing grassroots support for the affirmation of lesbian and gay relationships.

Convention will also be asked to support relationships of lesbian and gay clergy in a resolution that would allow the Church Pension Fund to extend health benefits to domestic partners for those dioceses that request it. This follows on a vote by the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, meeting in Hawaii at the end of April, to extend benefits to domestic partners of National Church employees. Another resolution calls on the Pension Fund to also study extending survivors' benefits to domestic partners.

Conservatives in the church will be seeking to roll back the decision of the Righter Court by once again proposing a change in the canons requiring celibacy of all non-heterosexual unmarried clergy. This resolution has failed at the past three General Conventions and it is expected to do so again.

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Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, however, will preach at the main convention eucharist. Carey has made several statements opposed to the recognition of lesbian and gay relationships in recent months, including one in a sermon at Virginia Theological Seminary in February. The sermon followed only by days a decision by the seminary board to no longer officially require celibacy of non-married persons.

Those working for passage of gay-positive legislation at this General Convention will also be joining with supporters of women's ordination in their efforts to gain passage of canonical language that will make clear that bishops and dioceses may not deny otherwise qualified women ordination or licensing just because they are female.

In recent months there have been attempts by several groups to link this issue with the ordination of gay and lesbian persons, raising the specter of "forced" ordinations. In an article in the *Washington Times* following an ordination of a gay man in the Diocese of Washington in April it was stated that, given efforts in Philadelphia to pass "a proposed statute that will penalize clergy who do not accept female priests," "now there is talk among some liberal bishops of one day seeking to put a traditionalist bishop on trial for the 'heresy' of not ordaining homosexuals."

Integrity's General Convention eucharist on the evening of Wednesday, July 16, at the Church of St. Luke & the Epiphany, will be gay and lesbian Episcopalians' opportunity to give thanks for Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's supportive leadership and to pray that the next presiding bishop follows his example. Browning will be the celebrant at the service and Elizabeth Kaeton, director of the Diocese of Newark's Oasis ministry, will preach.

Michael Hopkins is vicar of St. George's Episcopal Church in Glen Dale, Md., and director of communications for Integrity.

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revision a justice issue, a view the Consultation has affirmed.

Griswold's negativity about prayer book revision seems especially disingenuous in light of his own otherwise strong — and welcome — statement to the nominating committee opposing the church's clericalism. "Observing the discrepancy between adult baptism and an ordination," he told the committee, "*and keeping in mind that liturgy identifies the church to itself* [emphasis added], whatever we say about the ministry of the baptized is flatly denied by the ceremonial, and often the sermon, at an ordination."

Intercultural perspective

In contrast, what makes Shimpfky a strong choice for presiding bishop is his very mindfulness of with whom, in all its diversity, the Episcopal Church is called to be in solidarity, whether in worship or in matters of justice. Holding to Karl Barth's practice of regularly meditating on Scripture in light of the daily news, he has enthusiastically embraced the task of paying attention to the needs, concerns and politics of one of the most demographically diverse regions of the country, giving him an invaluable — and essential — intercultural perspective.

"San Jose, our See, the third largest city in California, like New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong and London, if to a lesser scale, is a place of cultural confluence, not unlike ancient Jerusalem," he told the nominating committee. "Mine is a diocese in a missionary place and time, seeking to influence the confluences of many cultures. [I've learned] the necessity to trust those whose experience differs from mine. ... I've learned, also, that what we are, the whole country will soon be."

A 'public' church

Shimpfky's characterization of the Episcopal Church as a "public church," an institution "responsible for the pastoral care of the whole population and not just some of the population," also promises a useful, concrete commitment to social justice. Ironically, this may be less damning to his candidacy among his more moderate peers than the fact that, despite Shimpfky's recognition that the American church "is a democratic federation of dioceses," he categorically rejects as unbiblical the withholding of money from the national church as a means of protest or to "enable the grass roots."

Shimpfky categorically rejects as unbiblical the withholding of money from the national church as a means of protest or to "enable the grass roots."

We here at *The Witness* agree. Nothing in the restructure debate convinces us that a national denomination like the Episcopal Church should downplay its national identity in preference to regional and local activism — we need both. While our inclination is to focus on digging deep locally in the manner of "the ant," to use Korean feminist theologian Chung Hyun Kyung's metaphor, we also recognize the essential role that national and international "spider" networks play [see page 26].

Essential to the church's future as an institution that can have some positive role in reshaping human community according to gospel values is a leader who can urge that transformative mission as a priority. Given the long and careful process involved in developing this slate of candidates, it is possible that each nominee for presiding bishop has some capacity to offer that kind of leadership — but only in the case of Richard Shimpfky are we sure. With Shimpfky as primate, we feel confident, the Episcopal Church of the next nine years will be known to stand for justice. It's an institutional personality in which we'd gladly share.

Drawing a line in the sand?

A "Statement on Human Sexuality" that expresses deep concern that "the setting aside of biblical teaching in such actions as the ordination of practicing homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions calls into question of the Holy Scripture," raising questions of "mutual accountability and interdependence within our Anglican communion," was unanimously adopted by some 80 delegates to the Second Anglican Enocunter in the South held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 1997. Following the Encounter, the standing committee of the Anglican Province of South East Asia, passed a resolution adopting the Encounter's statement and stating that the Province supports and will be in communion "with that part of the Anglican communion which accepts and endorses the principles aforesaid and not otherwise."

Conservatives, including the fledgling American Anglican Council (AAC), "a network of individuals, parishes, specialized ministries and a council of Episcopal bishops, who affrim Biblical authority and Anglican orthodoxy within the Episcopal Church," are using the Kuala Lumpur statement as a rallying cry against passage of legislation that would "regularize" the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals and the blessing of their committed partnerships.

"The seeds have been sown for other provinces to consider how long they can stay in communion with a church as it moves away from the truths of the Word of God," Roger Boltz, AAC's administrative director, said of the statement at a May AAC gathering. — *J.W.*

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The varied legacy of six PBs

by Charles H. Long

The office of presiding bishop has changed rapidly in the 20th century, as the Episcopal Church changed. For more than 100 years the term meant literally the person who presided at meetings of the House of Bishops and not much more. The dioceses formed after the American Revoltuion were fiercely independent and were not about to have an "archbishop" who might interfere in their internal affairs or imitate the lordly ways of English archbishops. Dioceses, preoccupied with their own survival and church-building in their own areas (much as today) took a long time to develop national programs and a sense of national identity, requiring a new kind of national leadership.

The presiding bishop was normally the senior bishop in order of consecration, continuing to administer his own diocese and continuing in office until he died. William White of Pennsylvania was presiding bishop for over 40 years (1795-1836) but after White the seniority of incumbents meant a fairly rapid turnover. In 1923 A.C. Garrett of Dallas became presiding bishop at the age of 91 and served only nine months before his death. He had not even been able to attend meetings of the bishops for 13 years.

That experience, plus the need for someone to take charge of growing national and overseas programs, finally convinced General Convention to change the system and to redefine the office. Thereafter, the presiding bishop was to be elected for a specific term and to be not only the spiritual and pastoral leader of the college of bishops, but also the Bishop of the Church and chief executive of all its national and international programs. It soon became clear that these expanded duties required his full time and that he could not also be in charge of a diocese. Each presiding bishop in the modern era has been in his own way a strong leader, with distinctive personal gifts and priorities, and each has left his mark on what is still an evolving office.

Henry St. George Tucker (1938-1946) had been a missionary bishop in Japan and later Bishop of Virginia. He was the first presiding bishop to resign his diocese and did so reluctantly, part way through his term. "My heart is in Virginia, my office in New York and now they tell me my seat is in Washington" (at the National Cathedral). The patriarch of a distinguished Virginia family, he was simple and modest both in personal style and churchmanship, gentle but tough, and practical. He guided the church through difficult war years and began the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. But world mission was his passion and he did much to prepare the church for post-war expansion.

Henry Knox Sherrill, who succeeded him, could have been the head of anything. A man of vision, focus and eloquence, he won support from leading laymen of the eastern establishment, built a large and talented national staff, and raised more money than any presiding bishop before or since. One wag called him the last of the religious tycoons. The same could have been said of most heads of denominations in that expansive era. His priorities were both mission and unity. He was a leader of the new councils of churches at the national and world level, helped turn the Lambeth Conference into something more than an English tea party, multiplied overseas and campus ministries, started the Church Foundation to fund innovative projects, Seabury House as a national conference center, and Seabury Press as the publishing arm of a bold experiment in Christian education. His was a top-down administration and a hard act to follow.

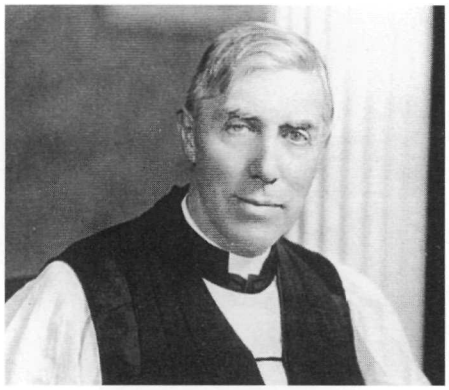
The dioceses formed after the American Revolution were fiercely independent and were not about to have an "archbishop" who might interfere in their affairs.

Arthur Lichtenberger (1958-1964) had learned to do that when he succeeded the progressive and evangelical Will Scarlett as Bishop of Missouri. He had also been a missionary in China, a professor at General Seminary and a much loved priest in three dioceses. His term was cut short by serious illness, much to everyone's regret, for he brought to the office clear-headed wisdom, true humility and a remarkable pastoral touch. He also brought a fresh emphasis on social justice. As a strong advocate of civil rights he demonstrated that the pastoral and missionary leadership of the presiding bishop led also to a prophetic role.

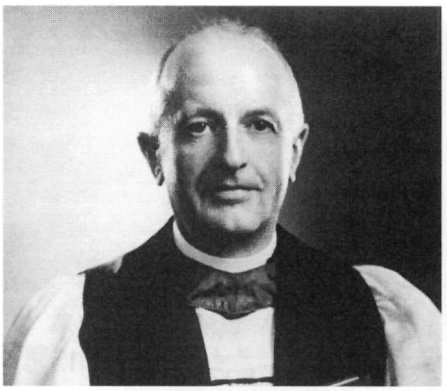
John Elbridge Hines (1965-1974) may be remembered as the Texan who risked all on the chance that the church could be persuaded to open itself to radical change in response to the urban and racial crisis that engulfed America soon after he took office. Did he lose the bet? He may have underestimated the amount of denial that persisted in Southern parishes and suburban parishes everywhere and the resulting backlash against the General Convention Special Program to empower the powerless. But the Episcopal Church would never be the same, no longer comfortable with its post-war emphasis on foreign missions and better Sunday Schools and no longer controlled by an elite white male minority. John Hines brought other minorities in to the councils of the church — blacks, women, youth in more than token numbers, and

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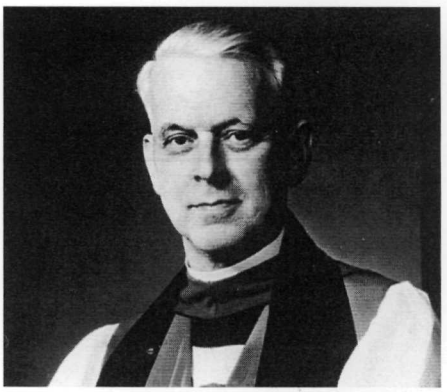
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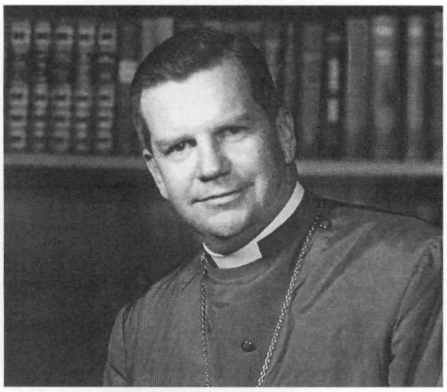
Henry St. George Tucker
1938-1946



Henry Knox Sherrill
1947-1958



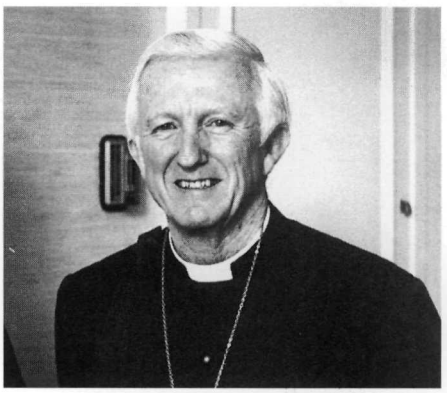
Arthur Lichtenberger
1958-1964



John Elbridge Hines
1965-1974



John Maury Allin
1974-1985



Edmond Lee Browning
1986-1997

social issues came to the center of the national agenda. The cost was high, the first of a series of budget and staff reductions that were to continue for 20 years and a decline in membership and public influence attributible to many causes, but the church did begin to change, radically, and in ways even Hines could not have anticipated.

John Maury Allin (1974-1985), the charming and gracious bishop of Mississippi, was elected after strong opposition in the House of Deputies and, it was said, as the candidate of conservatives who wanted to reverse the policies of John Hines. He gave himself to the task of healing the wounds of a troubled church and changed the image of the presiding bishop from one who challenged and governed from the top to one who tried to respond to initiatives from below — or at least from the church's legislative process. It could not have been easy for him when General Covention approved both a new prayer book and the ordination of women. Change continued and controversy too, not the least of which being his decision to allow the F.B.I. to peruse staff files in the Hispanic division.

The election of Edmond Lee Browning (1986-1997) gave liberals new hope. His compassion and courage were already legendary among people who had served under him. He had been bishop in Okinawa, Europe and Hawaii and on the senior staff of Executive Council. He combined the missionary dedication of Tucker and Lichtenberger, the ecumenical and Anglican interests of Sherrill and Allin, and John Hines' vision of the presiding bishop as prophet to the church. Browning rejected parochial understandings of church mission, yet the very credibility of his global understanding of God's work in the world was undermined from the beginning by the controversy surrounding his appointment of senior staff, including treasurer Ellen Cooke, whose embezzlement of church money helped destroy many people's faith in the national church offices. Nonetheless, more than any of his precedessors, Browning involved himself and his office in public issues and appeals to the conscience of public officials on matters as diverse and beyond the "program" of the Episcopal Church as the Gulf War, apartheid in South Africa and the conflict in Israel. He would travel anywhere and worked tirelessly for justice and peace.

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In pursuit of clergy who can serve the whole church

by Julie A. Wortman

The reasons fewer and fewer persons of color are now seeking ordination in the Episcopal Church — despite an increased demand for non-Anglo clergy leadership — was the focus of a recent consultation held in Los Angeles sponsored by the Episcopal Church's Racial/Ethnic Ministries Committee and national offices of Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American ministry. Altagracia Perez, rector of Los Angeles' St. Philip the Evangelist Episcopal Church, offered her own frustrating ordination story as an example of what many non-Anglo aspirants for ordination are up against.

It seems that during her first visit with her diocese's Commission on Ministry, the group that screens applicants for ordination, Perez, a woman of color of Puerto Rican descent, indicated that she felt herself called to ordained leadership in the Hispanic community. While many commissions on ministry have difficulty imagining a non-Anglo person serving anything but a congregation of their own ethnicity, this particular commission refused to support Perez' desired focus as "too narrow."

"I couldn't say that I wanted to do Hispanic ministry," Perez told consultation participants, "because the commission said I was to be ordained for the whole church, not just for one group."

So Perez busied herself demonstrating her versatility. Armed with an undergraduate degree from New York University and two divinity degrees from New York's prestigious Union Theological Seminary, she found herself a placement in an African-American congregation. Then she served the diocese by working with its youth program. After this, she coordinated youth ministries for the church's second province.

When the time came for Perez' final approval for ordination, however, diocesan officials told her that despite her broad experience and mainstream theological training she would still not be getting the green light.

"This time they said they wouldn't ordain me because they had placed a moratorium on ordaining Hispanic clergy," Perez said. "They said they didn't have enough positions in Hispanic congregations for them to fill."

Ordaining and training for an Anglocentric church

Faced with Perez' fury — and the undeniable evidence of their own double talk — those controlling the ordination process in her diocese eventually reversed their decision in her case. Perez' story, however, illustrates a fundamental truth that Episcopalians of European or British ("Anglo") descent find difficult to accept: Dioceses have seldom ordained people to serve the "whole" church. Instead, they have primarily trained and ordained people to serve their own ethnic group.

To be sure, the vast majority of people ordained in the Episcopal church have been middle-class Anglo-Americans. And the vast majority of the congregations they have been trained to serve contain people of similar ethnicity and class. But if this makes it unsurprising that church leaders have created processes for recruiting, training and ordaining Episcopal clergy with only middle-class Anglo-Americans in mind, it doesn't change the fact that these processes are ill-suited to the recruiting, training and ordaining of Episcopal clergy of non-Anglo background who have ethnic communities of their own they'd like to serve.

What the Los Angeles ordination consultation made clear is that non-Anglo church leaders are not any longer going to stand for the dominant culture's Anglocentric biases in matters of theological training and ordination. In a church hungry for more members and with few prospects of finding significant numbers of them except from among the influx of non-Anglo immigrant groups into this country, they no longer have to.

'The church needs us'

"The church needs us more than we need it," observed Petero Sabune, a Ugandan priest in the Diocese of Newark. "Once you make that paradigm shift, you can move."

And, indeed, in the two days the L.A. consultation's 75 participants had together, some areas of consensus began to emerge about the kind of movement that is needed.

A major concern raised by those representing non-Anglo groups highlighted the fact that an ordination process which relies on candidates putting themselves forward for ordination and then acquiring credentials to substantiate their worthiness for leadership requires many non-Anglo people to fly in the face of their ethnic community's deepest

Urging change

The Racial Ethnic Ministries Committee is bringing a resolution (A033) to this summer's General Convention that asks the church to "examine the overall structure of ministry development." Among other things, the committee intends that reforms in current policies and practices would "reflect proportionally the diversity of the mission field," provide "alternative training tracks that emphasize educational equivalence and cultural and contextual relevance," and insure that "racial/ethnic communities be enabled in their search for economical quality theological leadership."

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

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values.

"In communities of color, the issue is credibility, not credentials," said Steve Charleston, the former Bishop of Alaska who served as chaplain for the consultation and spoke on behalf of Native American ministries.

"When does leadership become affectation? When it is not grounded in the spiritual. I waited for the elders to tell me I was ready to be a priest."

"Hawaiians have a community orientation," echoed Charlie Hopkins, a native Hawaiian priest. "You don't put yourself forward for something [like ordination]. Personal achievement is much less important than community affiliation."

When non-Anglos speak in such terms, however, Anglo church authorities accuse them of trying to avoid the academic challenge of traditional seminary preparation in (Anglo) church history, Old and New Testament (Anglo) scholarship and (Anglo) theology.

But Charleston countered this critique powerfully: "The early church said the quality of 'being' in leadership is more important than 'doing.' You cannot study your way into the spirit. And you cannot pray your way into scholarship. The priesthood is primarily a spiritual vocation. We need people of honor and morality."

Emphasizing 'Gospel-based discipleship'

As John Robertson and Mark MacDonald, two representatives from the Minnesota Committee on Indian Work (MacDonald was elected Bishop of Alaska the weekend following the consultation), vouched, Anglo church authorities have considerable difficulty recognizing the strength of a Native American clergy candidate's credibility with his/her community as a key element of his/her credentials for ordination. Accordingly, the Committee has developed a program of "Gospel-based discipleship" that has shifted the focus in Native church communities away from trying to raise ordained leadership — emphasizing instead the drawing together of community members into "baptismal covenant groups" with primary leadership from "disciple-catechists" who are selected through a community discernment process. These leaders may not receive diocesan blessing for ordination, but the committee has made clear that neither will the community accept any clergy who have not been in some way similarly "locally affirmed."

Many of the participants in the consultation felt that such approaches to congregational develop — and to discerning who is best qualified to lead — could benefit all the ethnic communities in the church, including the Anglo community. By focusing more strongly on the recruitment, ordination and deployment of people of color, Charleston said, the church could move toward a badly needed reform of theological education.

An ordination process which relies on candidates putting themselves forward for ordination and then acquiring credentials to substantiate their worthiness for leadership requires many non-Anglo people to fly in the face of their ethnic community's deepest values.

What Anglos without multicultural vision fail to see, he said, is that the world is changing and their cultural dominance is destined to be less and less tolerated.

"We [people of color] are central to the discussion about the future of theological education," he emphasize. "Monocultural folks need us. We are trying to rescue, not water down, European standards."

Many consultation participants also agreed that chief among the factors that discourage people of color from pursuing ordination in a church that needs them more than ever is the fact that their prospects of earning a living wage are considerably poorer than for Anglo candidates because fewer non-Anglo congregations can easily pay for full-time clergy.

Not called to be martyrs

"Many current African-American clergy appear 'beat upon' [in their financially struggling congregations], so why would someone want to follow into the job?" asked Barbara Brown, who for many years worked with New York's suffragan bishop, Walter Dennis, on the recruitment of black clergy in that diocese.

"Compensation and benefits in so many of our black congregations are marginal or substandard. Persons are called to be priests not martyrs."

If dioceses cannot find the will or means to realign their budgets to improve support for ordained leaders in poor or struggling communities of color, some consultation participants pointed out, it would broaden the range of employment opportunities for non-Anglo clergy if they were welcome to serve in Anglo congregations. But whereas there are Anglo priests who happily choose to work in impoverished or struggling cures — and can be accepted as leaders in non-Anglo contexts — seldom do affluent Anglo parishes hire non-Anglo clergy.

"We feel like the gentile church in Paul's time, with the dominant Episcopal Church as the church in Jerusalem, the Jewish church," said Al Rodriguez of the Diocese of Texas. "So the Episcopal Church is English, but the gentiles were there to stay, and so are Hispanic Episcopalians. If we can have Anglos ministering to Hispanics, why can't we have Hispanics ministering to Anglos?"

The consultation's participants agreed that this, at base, is a key question that the Anglo-dominated Episcopal Church has a hard time facing up to. But if it could, and the obstacles to that kind of cross-cultural ministry were finally removed, maybe ordaining clergy for the "whole" church would stop being, at last, a matter of well-practiced double-talk.

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Standing firm on a shared Jerusalem

by Dick Doughty

***Jerusalem: Peace and Justice?*, 1996, 13 min. VHS, Episcopal Peace and Justice Network.**

In support of the General Convention resolution that staked out the Episcopal Church's position in favor of joint Israeli-Palestinian sovereignty in Jerusalem, members of the Episcopal Peace and Justice Network (EPJN) in 1995 embarked on a "fact-finding" trip to the Holy City.

Using images from their guided tours, their more than 40 meetings with representatives on all sides and members' own on-camera reflections, EPJN has created an informative, unequivocating introduction to the alarming issues facing the city sacred to three faiths.

Since the Israeli Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Ghaniam/Har Homa, begun this spring, made Jerusalem the epicenter of Middle East diplomacy, the video could not be more timely. It should be widely viewed, vigorously discussed, and decisively acted upon.

Footage takes the viewer along as EPJN tours the Jewish-only settlements that since 1967 have slowly choked off Arab East Jerusalem from the West Bank. The voice-over narration smoothly guides viewers through a summary of Israeli-Palestinian politics, and in doing so, it does not pull punches in assigning responsibility for the Jerusalem crisis. "Jerusalem is a mother who loves all her children equally," says Jess Gaither, convenor of EPJN, but "unfortunately, as we were able to see, especially in the settlements around Jerusalem, the Israelis are not living up to that equality of love." This is born out in a striking clip from an interview with a U.S.-born Jewish settler who refers ominously to "a possible war." Equally sobering is a Knesset member, Uri Orr, who states flatly that Jerusalem is "only our capital" and that joint sovereignty would be "unacceptable." And he is a member of the Labor party!

On the Palestinian side, the video touches on how Palestinians are still detained without charges, how they must build homes without the permits they cannot obtain and how the four-year-old Israeli closure of Jerusalem to Palestinians (not to Jews) stifles business and keeps Episcopal Palestinians from attending Holy Week services. There is no blinking at what is presented as a discriminatory, neo-apartheid process that is gradually "cleansing" Jerusalem of Palestinians. Throughout, the positions of the Episcopal Church on Israeli settlements ("illegal under international law") and the regional future ("favors the creation of two states") are inspiring. Notable also is a portion of Patti Browning's statement to a 1996 convention in Jerusalem that "no unilateral action [in Jerusalem] can be acceptable to the international community." Likewise, the film cites the church's call for an "immediate cessation" of Israeli confiscations of Palestinian land (though the shocking extent of these confiscations is left unmentioned). Its 13-minute length makes this is an excellent opener to an adult education class. With this in mind, EPJN offers the video with a compact study guide. But brevity is inevitably a liability, too. A mentor with background in the issues would be essential to a meaningful discussion.

"We join with all in praying for the peace of Jerusalem," says Gaither in closing. I sense he is calling for a prayer not only of words: This video inspires a prayer of action, and here is my sole criticism. I wish EPJN had taken an extra minute or two to point to Washington's culpability as the enabler of Israel's settlement policy as firmly as it points to Israel's culpability. An Episcopal prayer of action, in relationship with the Diocese of Jerusalem, logically would increase Church pressure on Washington.

Dick Doughty is co-author of *Gaza: Legacy of Occupation. A Photographer's Journey* (Kumarian Press, 1995) [see TW 5/96].

Resolutions uphold justice concerns

This triennium's social policy resolutions cover a broad spectrum of issues. Resolutions related to international peace include a call for the abolition of nuclear weapons (D022); for solidarity with persecuted Christian churches, including those of the Sudan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and China (D016); for self-determination for Tibet (B013, C001); for refugee status for women fleeing the practice of female genital mutilation (C017); and for the closing of the U.S. military's School of the Americas, implicated in the training of Latin American "death squads" (D009).

Health and human needs resolutions include a controversial call to study assisted suicide from the Diocese of Newark (C015). That resolution may be countered by an upcoming one being pushed by the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), a conservative "think tank" that has been critical of what it perceives as liberal church policies, opposing euthanasia.

Executive Council's Committee on the Status of Women wants the Episcopal Church's dioceses to keep track of the effects of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, and the Washington office to lobby Congress about spending priorities (A050). The committee also wants renewed emphasis on combatting sexism in church structures (A051).

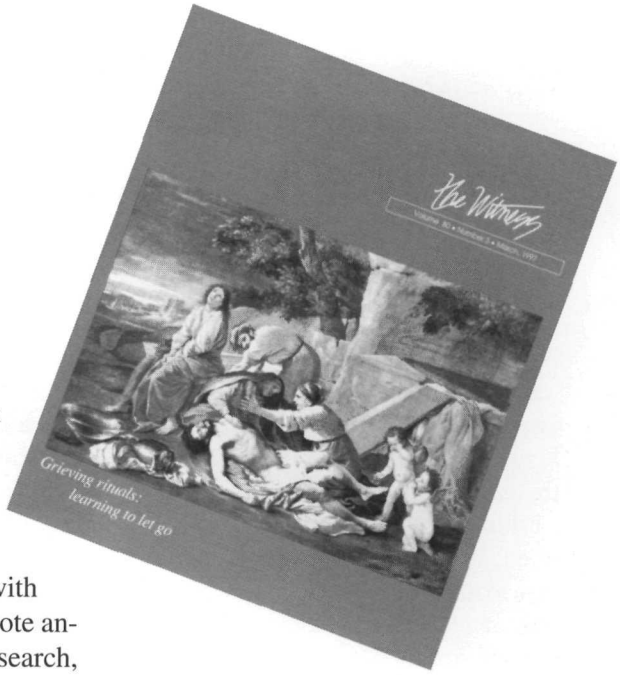
Recognizing that 2007 is the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the New World, the Episcopal Council of Indian Ministries wants the decade from 1997-2007 declared a "Decade of Remembrance, Recognition and Reconciliation" in parishes and dioceses.

General Convention's host city, Philadelphia, comes in for criticism in a resolution supporting a rehearing for African-American radio journalist and author Mumia Abu-Jamal, now on Pennsylvania's Death Row for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer (D018).

— from an Episcopal News Service report by Jan Nunley

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The Witness receives multiple honors for journalistic excellence



The March 1996 issue of *The Witness* received an Award of Excellence for Cover Design/Magazine, one of 12 awards given the magazine by Episcopal Communicators acknowledging excellence in religious communications.

The Witness picked up 12 Polly Bond Awards, including the Award of Excellence for general excellence in an agency magazine, at the annual conference of Episcopal Communicators, held on May 16 in Durango, Colorado. The Polly Bond awards were established in the mid-1970s by Episcopal Communicators to recognize excellence and achievement in the ministry of church communications.

"Consistently excellent; not only clear but interesting," wrote one judge in the evaluation of the magazine. "Graphics are relevant, interesting, and of high quality. Excellent variety and interest [in content]. Editor is creative in choice of material and of writers. Good variety of gender and ethnic expression.

"*The Witness* lives up to its mandate beautifully," the judge continued. "It stretches our boundaries, theologically and socially, with care, insight and courage. It is provocative yet responsible. The content of each issue, the writing, the art work, layout and design are all of a piece, reinforcing each other as elements to produce a coherent, stimulating publication."

"I was extremely impressed with the in-depth coverage here," wrote another judge. "The writing, the research, and the distillation of the information is not only professional, but done with greater care and intelligence than most major publications."

Other Awards of Excellence, the Polly Bond competition's top honor, received by *The Witness* included:

Editorial: "An Imperative Not to Despair," November 1996, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor.

In-Depth Article of a Current Issue: "Anatomy of a Strike," September 1996, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor-writer.

Critical Review: "The End of the Age," October 1996, Bill Wylie-Kellermann, writer.

Reader Response: "Tell Us Lies," April 1996, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor.

Cover Design/Magazine: "What's In the Church's Intere$t?", March 1996, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor, Julie A. Wortman, managing editor.

Photography/Single Photo with Article: "Arab Child Running Home from School," May 1996, Daymon Hartley, photographer.

Photography/Entire Issue: "In Need of a Labor Movement," September 1996, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor, Daymon Hartley and Jim West, photographers.

Headlines: "Are You Blood?: Hope in Race Relations," July/August 1996, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor.

Awards of Merit included:

Interview: "Life is Ever Surpassing Itself," December 1996, Julie A. Wortman, writer.

Humor: "God Don't Want You to Smoke," November 1996, Kendal Franceschi, writer.

Specialized Print Division/Agency/Miscellaneous: "The Heart Still Beats" (subscription card insert), Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, designer-editor.

Back issues available

Back issues of *The Witness* are available for $3 each. To order, please send a check or money order to *The Witness*, 7000 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI, 48210-2872; or e-mail us with your request at editor@thewitness.org, or call (313) 841-1967.

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Our readers tell us . . .

Eugenics: repeating history?

by John Dinan

In a vintage science fiction movie the aliens are trying to entice earthlings to join them in a voyage to their planet where they will live a luxurious, non-taxing life of leisure. At the end of the film one of the smarter earthlings translates their plan which is titled: To Serve Man. Instead of a noble plan to improve man's lot, To Serve Man turns out to be a cookbook! All of which brings us to the subjects of cloning and eugenics.

In his 1995 reissue of *In The Name Of Eugenics,* author Daniel J. L. Kevles tells an amazing story of a pseudoscience which, in its early days, nearly destroyed the world. The opening sentence of Chapter I describes the founder of eugenics, Francis Galton, as being "innocent of the future." Eugenics, founded in England, spread to the United States where its society (The American Eugenics Society) proudly noted that more than 350 colleges and universities offered eugenics courses in the 1920s.

So-called negative eugenicists (those who felt undesirable traits and individuals could be controlled through such methods as sterilization) sought to "improve" the general welfare by wiping out such traits as they identified as harmful to the public good. As Kelves notes: "Suggestions to accomplish that end ran the gamut from the cruel (putting degenerates painlessly to death or permitting mothers to smother children possessing inherited deformities) to the mocking (the abolition of alcoholism by letting the intemperate drink themselves to death, or the punishment of a murderer by hanging his grandfather)."

The popularity of eugenic control of the feebleminded resulted in legislation permitting sterilization at state-run institutions and immigration laws restricting immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and eventually permitting only the immigration of "pure Caucasians." "Immigration," said the American Eugenics Society, "should be first of all considered a long-time investment in family stocks."

Joseph S. DeJarnette, a powerful voice in Virginia's eugenics movement, felt the state was sterilizing too few people and in 1934 moved to have the state broaden its sterilization laws: "The Germans are beating us at our own game," he said.

Hitler's eugenics laws, instituted in 1933, were compulsory for all (institutionalized or not), applying to those who suffered from "hereditary disabilities, feeblemindedness, schizophrenia, epilepsy, blindness, drug or alcohol addiction and physical deformities." The movement to forcibly "control" such perceived conditions was considered a "public health movement." The "movement" resulted in the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 which in turn led to the holocaust.

Along the way, the eugenics movement in America had broad, public support and eugenics "think tanks," such as the Cold Spring Harbor Biological Laboratory in New York, were enthusiastically supported by grants from the likes of the Harrimans where eugenics "research" was conducted on a grand scale. All of this was done "to serve man." The end result of the eugenics movement were Hitler's racial cleansing policies. It took eight million deaths in Hitler's camps to bring down the eugenics movement.

While current cloning research may be on firm scientific foundations (not to mention free of half-baked racial cleansing concepts) the lesson of the past is clear. Those who tinker with the human condition should be viewed with a critical eye.

In The Name Of Eugenics is referred to by Stephen Jay Gould as "the finest book on the history of eugenics" and basic to an understanding of the tangled history of this discredited pseudo-science in a day when its progeny, genetics, presents new and unique medical and moral questions. It is estimated that between 20 and 30 percent of all pediatric hospital admissions are for chromosomal or genetic illnesses and 12 percent of all adult hospital admissions have a significant genetic component. It is clear that cloning and genetic researchers and the public at large need to review the history of the eugenics movement and its unintended consequences before tinkering with genetic questions. The caution that "Those who do not understand history are bound to repeat it" could have chilling results in our time. TW

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John Dinan lives in Topsfield, Mass.

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Assassinations and denial

by Jim Douglass

In a talk last year on "Martin Luther King and the Future of America," Vincent Harding anticipated the emergence of a monstrous question that our national psyche has repressed since the 1960s:

"We must go with King far enough finally to be able to face the fact—the hard, necessary fact—that there is a very strong likelihood that the agencies of our own federal government were deeply involved in his assassination. Now what do you do with that? What do *we* do with that?"

The more we learn about "that," the worse it gets. After a year researching the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and John and Robert Kennedy, I see the four of them as expressions of a single politics of assassination.

Now what do we do with that?

We can begin by studying two remarkable books which confront head-on the reality we have repressed: on the King assassination, William F. Pepper's *Orders to Kill* (Carroll & Garf, 1995); on the JFK murder, E. Martin Schotz's *History Will Not Absolve Us* (Kurtz, Ulmer, and DeLucia, 1996; distributor Plough Publishing House).

I am neither neutral nor objective in writing about these books. They turned my life in new directions. Pepper's work can be characterized as the physics of one assassination plot. Schotz's is the metaphysics of another. Each is unique and brilliant in challenging us to think beyond our perceived limits. Above all, they are works of extraordinary moral courage.

I discovered *Orders to Kill* in a bookstore in December 1995, four months after its publication. As I turned its pages, I was amazed and puzzled by its labyrinthine story. Pepper's 18 years of investigating King's murder showed that U.S. intelligence agencies had coordinated organized crime, the Memphis Police Department, and a U.S. Army sniper team to assassinate Dr. King. Why had this book of revelation into our greatest prophet's death not been headlined and debated? As I confirmed from its author and publisher, there had been almost total media silence in response to *Orders to Kill.*

In the summer of 1997 that is no longer the case, thanks to Dexter and Coretta Scott King's outspoken support for James Earl Ray and his lawyer, William F. Pepper. The Kings were convinced by *Orders to Kill* of what they only suspected before, that Ray was a patsy in the government conspiracy. As a result of the King family's appeal for a trial for Ray, *Orders to Kill* is now no longer ignored. It is under attack. That is because at the end of its twisting, turning journey down into the repressed reality in our unconscious we are given an invitation. It is that each of us stand with Martin on that Memphis balcony and realize the evil of the moment when the U.S. government killed him.

I first read *History Will Not Absolve Us* in Dallas on November 22, 1996, the thirty-third anniversary. Then I walked the motorcade route as a pilgrimage. I was a pilgrim to Dealey Plaza not for JFK alone but for the millions who have since died with him, as a result of policies carried out in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia by his executioners. That is the greatness of *History Will Not Absolve Us.* It provokes in us the historical understanding necessary to see the mass crucifixion of America and the world in the shooting of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Martin Schotz is a Boston psychiatrist whose psychotherapy is the truth. His book is "The Emperor's New Clothes" as applied to Dallas. When one looks closely, the generals and intelligence agents stand naked in the center of Dealey Plaza. As Fidel Castro recognized in a speech the day after the assassination (which Schotz includes as an appendix), "CIA" was written all over Lee Harvey Oswald.

Castro and Nikita Khrushchev also saw the CIA's motivation: Kennedy's beginning rapprochement with the USSR and Cuba, and the startling disarmament vision of his American University speech (another enlightening appendix). These were Cold War heresies, treason in a president.

Martin Schotz is not interested in conspiracy details. It is enough to identify the CIA as the switchboard for the execution. From there Schotz's relentless analysis takes us beyond conspiracy into the deeper waters of Orwellian control and public denial.

William Pepper and Martin Schotz have guided us to the ocean floor of our national psyche.

What kind of people are we who can live for decades in denial of government forces that killed a prophet and a president? TW

review

Jim Douglass, long-time anti-nuclear activist then living in the Ground Zero community in Seattle, is now working on a book about the assassinations. His most recent book is *The Nonviolent Coming of God* (Orbis).He lives in Birmingham, Ala.

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Stumbling in the dark

by Marianne Arbogast

For many years, Verna Dozier has lived and breathed and taught the Bible as a call to justice and community. But if all good teachers are disinclined to dispense easy answers or offer ready-made paths, Dozier is even more so.

Our best efforts toward the reign of God are "stumbling in the dark," Dozier says, and the worst thing we can do is to be too sure of ourselves.

"The minute that we absolutize the direction we have found, we have fallen into a temptation — that we know what God wants and that we are doing it," she says. "It is important to keep open to the possibility that we may be wrong."

By way of example, she recounts her own ideas on forgiveness.

"When I was growing up, I could not conceive that a black man could forgive a white man — it seemed to me a weakness. Now, I know it is not a weakness, and I can't conceive of any instance in which we should not forgive. But it could be a way of not having to confront a problem, if by forgiving you let injustice roll on. So even forgiveness is ambiguous. I think I need to understand that where I stand is not necessarily the totality of where God stands."

Dozier, author of *The Dream of God* and three other books on scripture and ministry, hopes to complete a book on ambiguity.

"We have to be able to stand in one place and not absolutize the place we stand," she says. "It's the temptation I find most seductive — we just have to be right. We get our power from being right, and not from God, who knows we're *not* right but loves us just the same."

The minute that we absolutize the direction we have found, we have fallen into a temptation — that we know what God wants and that we are doing it.



Verna Dozier

Raised by a Baptist mother and an agnostic father, Dozier inherited a deep faith and a questioning mind.

"My mother was very devout, and my father was very skeptical of the whole enterprise," she recalls. "He had good reasons to be, because he was a poor man and worked very hard, and the ministers were living off the fat of the land — they were educated and privileged and they had cars and the congregations worshipped them. I think that's the best background a person can have — it saves you from being over-pietistic."

Dozier still has the picture book of Bible stories which her mother read, along with Shakespeare, to her and her sister when they were children.

"My mother was our educational foundation," she says. "There's a wonderful poem by Alice Walker that talks about mothers who never went to school but 'they knew what we had to learn without knowing a word of it themselves.' It's a marvelous tribute to black mothers of that time, and my mother was of that generation."

Dozier found the biblical story compelling but the church less so. Joining her father in renouncing organized religion, she nonetheless made a weekly trek with him to the chapel at Howard University, where Howard Thurman was dean.

"We would trot along up the hill to Howard and listen to the great thinkers and leaders that Howard Thurman brought to that chapel. I was spellbound. It was the first time I had heard anyone question the divinity of Jesus, and the chapel did not fall down. Howard Thurman brought great people there, and my father and I

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

just drank it in."

Dozier eventually found her home in the Episcopal Church, which she recalls as "the most lively and on the cutting edge of social issues." She also appreciated the lectionary cycle, through which "people are exposed to more of the Bible than in any other denomination."

For 32 years, Dozier taught English in Washington, D.C. junior high and high schools — a vocation well-suited to her love of literature and concern with questions of meaning.

"It was a calling," she says with the conviction of one who has long resisted the relegation of "ministry" to the clergy. "I never felt for one minute that I was not doing the work of God."

Her teaching ministry expanded upon her retirement. Dozier continued to teach the Bible, and found herself in great demand as a speaker and preacher. "The encounter with the biblical story and with people has always been a high, holy moment for me," she says.

Secure in her own sense of vocation, Dozier encourages others to discern their path by looking within.

"There's so much wrong with the world and you can't take it all on," she says. "What is it in me that responds to whatever is out there? That's my calling. But we also need to affirm the way that is not ours.

"Some of us have a larger vision and we can take on the powers and principalities directly. Others of us work in smaller areas. What's so important is that each one of us knows in the very depths of her being that she's significant and what she is doing counts.

"I have a friend who is a nurse practitioner, and she is just remarkable in how she affirms the sick and aged and decrepit. I don't think anybody will ever know her outside of her church community and her hospice patients. She's not going to change the world, but she's making it a better place."

Dozier believes that "we are living in a very dark time.

"Money has become our god," she says. "In this country, we keep the revolution from being born, because everybody has the feeling that one day I will be there, and I don't want this structure destroyed before I can do that. It affects the church as well — we don't call for revolution.

Some of us have a larger vision and we can take on the powers and principalities directly. Others of us work in smaller areas. What's so important is that each one of us knows in the very depths of her being that she's significant and that what she is doing counts.

"But the greatest sin for me is despair. I don't know what God is doing in this, but I believe that God is working."

She points to small, persistent efforts as signs of hope.

"The Society of Friends is a consistent witness for another possibility. I'm moved by what they stand for quietly," she says. "There's Clarence Jordan's community in Georgia — they just go along, planting their crops. And there are lots of these things all over the country — it's amazing how many there are."

Dozier found the recent conference on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) energizing.

"It had such a good spirit about it — many of the people there are involved in things I'm not involved in," she says. "They included environmental concerns, and that's a new direction."

Dozier recently decided to decline speaking engagements that require travel, due to age and health problems. She regards her May commencement sermon at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest (an institution founded by John Hines, whom she considers "one of the great men of the Episcopal Church") as her final public engagement.

"I was nervous, because after I had already written my sermon, I was told that the seminary had become much more conservative. This was not a true report. The students were terrific — I was happy because I didn't want to end my career on a sour note!"

Although, at 79, Dozier says she has "lived long enough" and is ready to die, a friend tells her she is "sending God mixed messages." Laughing, she agrees, explaining that her sister, who lives in the same retirement community, depends on her for emotional support.

"We have breakfast together and cocktails together — and she does not feel the way I do, she does *not* want to die. So I don't want to die before my sister."

Then, there is that book on ambiguity. TW

"I love The Witness *because it teaches me, challenges me and, best of all, it helps me to know that I have some degree of sanity in a crazy world."*

— Jane Holmes Dixon, Suffragan Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Washington

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The Witness

Unmasking the death penalty

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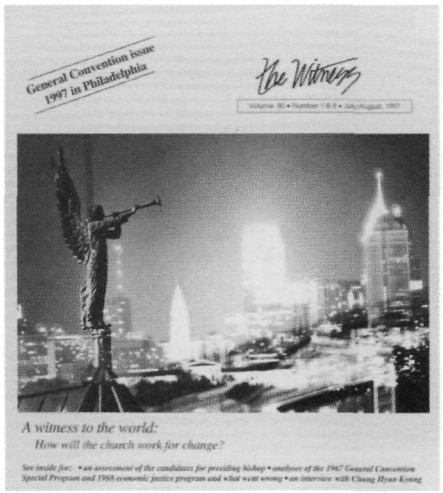


Economic justice

I WRITE TO CORRECT EGREGIOUS misconceptions portrayed by Camille Colatosti in her July/August article "A Vision Betrayed." I would like to believe that *The Witness* was simply uninformed about the economic justice program at the Episcopal Church Center. But since I was interviewed for the article and provided considerable information, I find its shortcomings inexplicable. Emmett Jarrett's article in the same issue says that "The Episcopal Church's national 'ministry of community reinvestment and economic justice' is no more." That is simply false, which I made clear when I was interviewed.

Executive Council in 1989 set aside $7,000,000 from its investment portfolio for alternative investments. Half of that money was for loans to be made in implementation of the Economic Justice Resolution passed at Detroit in 1988. The other $3.5 million was to invest in similar projects through the Council's Trust Fund Committee. The latter was set up separately because, prior to the 1988 General Convention, the Executive Council had a working committee for alternative investments already in place, so with or without the Michigan resolution, the Council would have established an alternative investments program. Both loan programs are made at below market rates.

In my interview I provided specific examples of loans that have been made. They include loans to the dioceses of Los Angeles ($100,000) and Michigan ($300,000). So when Ms. Colatosti writes about the many good things that have happened at the local level, including in these two dioceses, it is notable that the national Church has financially supported many of these efforts through its alternative investment program. I would also note that the national Church funded the work of Gloria Brown for a full year with the diocese of Los Angeles as she organized their now successful diocesan credit union.



Further, I informed Ms. Colatosti that Executive Council also invests $3,000,000 in minority bank deposits. This later investment goes back many years. When you add to that the Executive Council's longstanding work in corporate activism through its Social Responsibility in Investment committee, the national Church provides a very fine model of economic justice for the dioceses to emulate.

Ms. Colatosti's article laments the national Church's failure to invest in the Community Bank of the Bay project. In fact, an offer to invest several hundred thousand dollars was made, but the bank was not really seeking an investment. They wanted a grant. Regrettably, social justice grants were eliminated by the 1994 General Convention. The bank's director, Ed Voris, may think an investment and a grant are synonymous terms, but that is not the general interpretation.

The article also cites the embezzlement by Ellen Cooke as somehow related to the alleged failure of the economic justice program. In fact, as heinous as the embezzlement was, none of the money available for alternative investments was affected.

I believe the Convention in 1988 made a strategic mistake when it called for raising $24,000,000 over six years. Instead, it should have called on all congregations, institutions and dioceses to set aside five percent (or three percent or seven percent) of their investment portfolios for alternative investments. This would potentially amount to hundreds of millions of dollars, far exceeding the $24,000,000 goal. It would have provided a concrete source for carrying out the objectives of the Michigan resolution. (The Convention should have remembered from Venture in Mission that people won't raise money for the "national" Church, *but they will raise it at home and give* it away, or lend it, if they control where it goes.) I do not make this observation in hindsight. I said so to the Michigan proponents before the Detroit Convention.

I am sadly aware of some of the frustrations experienced by members of the EJIC committee mentioned with specificity in the article. But, even though Bishop McGehee regrets that none of his recommendations were appointed, his suffragan bishop and a prominent lay leader in his diocese were, one as chair and the other as secretary. Michigan was hardly ignored.

Finally, it was the EJIC committee itself that recommended it be reorganized as a new Economic Justice network. I think that is the right way to go to spread this ministry. And in this, its first year, it will receive a majority of its funding from Executive Council, and is in the next triennial budget. Peace and Justice Ministries is already providing consulting staff to the network and, as Arthur Lloyd says, "we have been working very cooperatively."

I hope the new network will help the whole church to be as proactive as the model of economic justice already set in place by Executive Council, which embraces the spirit and visions of the Michigan resolution.

Brian J. Grieves
The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.
New York, NY

Beyond inclusion

THANK YOU FOR THE JUNE, '97 *Witness* with reports from the "Beyond Inclusion" Conference at All Saints', Pasadena in April. For those who attended, it is a record of a great experience. For those of us unable to attend, it serves to give us an overview and excellent insights and quotes.

Mary Eunice Oliver
San Diego, CA

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MY ONLY COMPLAINT ABOUT *The Witness* is that when it comes it really messes up my day — I have to read it right away! The June issue is great — a subject dear to my heart. You do a marvelous job.

Sally Head
Ann Arbor, MI

ALWAYS FINE ISSUES, but in particular, the June, 1997 issue is outstanding. In working in a graduate program with prison inmates, no issue is more conflicting and frustrating for the faculty than that of homosexuality. In the prison context, the issue is distorted by the reality of rape as well as traditional standards in Muslim and Christian communities.

But the reason for this note is to request you to send a copy of the issue to a recent graduate who needs very much to have the support of these articles.

George W. Webber
Professor of Urban Ministry
New York Theological Seminary
New York, NY

Leadership

THE MAY ISSUE OF *THE WITNESS* IS outstanding!! Parker Palmer and Margaret Wheatley are gifts to us all; thank you for publishing their material.

John P. Boucher
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Columbus, GA

WOW! WHAT A WONDERFUL ISSUE! (May 1997) I just finished reading it — some of the articles twice. Not only is it a great report as to "*where* we are" as Church but it provides a great measuring stick for now (how far we have come) and in the future. I have felt for a long time that we (I am an Episcopalian) need to start defining and structuring our ministries by what needs to be done rather than by an outdated structure of more or less enclosed, exclusive parishes. Lay people are already trying to do this. Clergy, too, but they are hampered by canonical, traditional role definition and, often, local "letters of mutual agreement/employment" contracts which reflect the above. Thank you, *Witness* and all the authors of the articles.

Judy Yeakel
Langley, WA

Witness praise

GREAT SPIRIT — GREAT MAGAZINE — Thanks.

Margaret V. Howard
Middletown, NY

PLEASE RENEW MY LONG-LAPSED subscription. I miss you.

Jo-Ann R. Murphy
Transfiguration Church
Towaco, NJ

Awards dinner

I AM QUITE EXCITED to know that you are honoring Leon Modeste for directing the General Convention Special Program. Those were exciting times and I was his secretary. This honor is long overdue.

Sonia P. Omulepu
World Council of Churches
New York, NY

BRAVO ON AWARD RECIPIENTS this year at G.C.!! I was Leon's deputy for those six years of GCSP — wouldn't miss this moment of long delayed recognition for him!

Barry Menuez
Poughkeepsie, NY

Classifieds

Position open

A small family parish in the Adirondacks, an older congregation with some young families, is seeking a part-time rector to help us meet our pastoral and spiritual needs. Our congregation has grown in the last 2-1/2 years due to strong lay participation and enthusiastic supply priests. A profile will be sent upon receipt of your resume. Contact: Search Committee, Church of the Good Shepherd, P.O. Box 146, Elizabethtown, NY 12932.

Urban ministry program

The *Seminary Consortium on Urban Pastoral Education* in Chicago offers a six-month M.Div. internship program beginning Jan. 1, 1998 which integrates ministry experience with a full semester of course work. Classes include: "Urban Principalities and the Spirit of the City," "Christology and Culture," "Church-based Community Development," "Dimensions and Dynamics of Urban Ministry," and "For Such a Time as This: an Agenda of Hope for the City." Contact: Bill Wylie-Kellermann at SCUPE, 200 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601 (312-726-1200).

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Stringfellow book

Conversations at a 1996 conference on William Stringfellow, co-sponsored by *The Witness*, have been gathered together by Andrew W. McThenia, Jr. and Bill Wylie-Kellermann in a new book, *The Legacy of William Stringfellow*. Contributors include Eugene Rivers, Jim Wallis, Elizabeth McAlister, Nane Alejandrez and Michael Lerner, among others. The volume collects the remarks of the principal speakers as well as dialogue among participants. Send $5 to *The Witness*, 7000 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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The Witness

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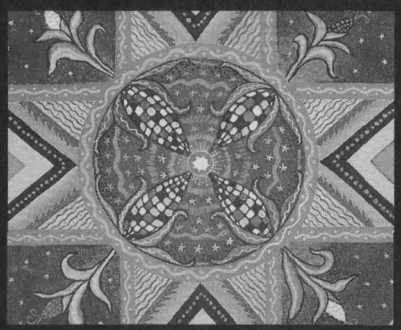
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Cover: Residents of Congregacion Anahuac carry the coffin of Irineo Tristan Montoya in his home town, Friday June 20, 1997, in Veracruz, Mexico. Montoya, 30, was given a lethal injection in Huntsville, Tex. for the 1985 robbery and stabbing death of motorist John Kilheffer near Brownsville.

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

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Killing for community?

by Marianne Arbogast

A photo of a funeral procession for a Mexican man executed in Texas (see cover) ran in a June 22 edition of the *Dallas Star-Telegram.* The accompanying story reported that hundreds of mourners had "mobbed the bridge over the Rio Grande" to meet the body of Irineo Montoya, "to salute him and curse the country that killed him." The rage of the crowd was such that American tourists were warned not to cross the border.

This hero's welcome afforded a convicted murderer no doubt mystified many Texans. The case was not overtly political. Why, below the border, was it seen in so different a light? Although questions were raised about legal procedure (Did Montoya understand the English confession he signed? Was he adequately represented?) a sociologist interviewed for the story saw them in the context of far broader dynamics. For Mexicans, said Rodolfo Stavenhagen of the Colegio de Mexico, the killing of Montoya symbolized "racism, marginalization, the exclusion of Mexicans in a system that is controlled by others."

As Timothy McVeigh (along with many more anonymous exiles) takes up residence on death row, as state after state resumes the legal killing of its citizens, the image of Montoya's funeral might serve as an icon of truths best grasped at the margins.

In *Violence Unveiled,* Gil Bailie's book exploring René Girard's theories on the roots of human culture and the culture-shattering implications of the cross of Christ, Bailie analyzes the death penalty as an instance of "sacred violence" (p. 15). State-sanctioned executions, while purporting to serve justice and protect society from threatening individuals, in reality arise from deeper, murkier levels of social necessity, Bailie believes. The condemned person serves as a lightning rod for the tensions within a society, uniting it against a common scapegoat.

From the vantage point of the excluded, this is what Montoya's mourners could see that his executioners could not. Intuitively, they knew that his death was not just about the murder of a Texan motorist. They knew it was linked to the repression of immigrants in the U.S. and the vast discrepancies in U.S. and Mexican standards of living.

As Steve Charleston puts it, the death penalty is "a cork floating on a sea of troubles" (p.12). In a nation torn by racism, economic inequality and political instability, the scapegoats are predictable. "Immigrants, political dissidents, racial minorities: These are the usual suspects to be blamed when a culture begins to fear itself."

In this light, it is perhaps less surprising than it seems that a band of small, rural Christian communities, heirs to a German peace church tradition, are taking to the streets in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Philadelphia radio-journalist and former Black Panther on death row in Pennsylvania [see *TW*, 1-2/95]. The Bruderhof communities, who approach the Amish in their degree of separation from the surrounding culture, may be well situated to discern the dark forces that closed in on Abu-Jamal and the MOVE community he publicly defended. Bruderhof member Sam Hine questions whether MOVE's real offense was establishing — as the Bruderhof have done — "a base from which to question the present world order."

None of this is to deny that there are individuals who have wreaked inestimable harm and continue to pose a grave threat to others, far less to suggest that they be excused or ignored. It *is* to suggest the death-penalty bandwagon can only carry us further down the path which has led to the current level of violence in our midst — crushing not only those whose chaotic violence threatens our peace, but those who, like Abu-Jamal, raise questions about the present world "order" which could help light the path to true justice.

It is possible, as Ruth Morris shows us, to respond to acts of violence in ways that honor both the needs of victims and the humanity of offenders (p. 18). Such alternatives arise most often in places where community is most intact. They clearly require time, hard work and the committed participation of many people.

We can continue to accelerate the rate at which we expel from our midst the McVeighs, the Montoyas and others who reveal to us, in varying ways, the underside of our society. But as long as we are blind to the lessons they bring us, we will not have the "closure" people want desperately enough to kill for. Alternatively, we can reaffirm our faith in a radically different community from that which forms around common enemies and common scapegoats — a community that might bear some resemblence to that gathered around the Crucified One. TW

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.*

editor's note

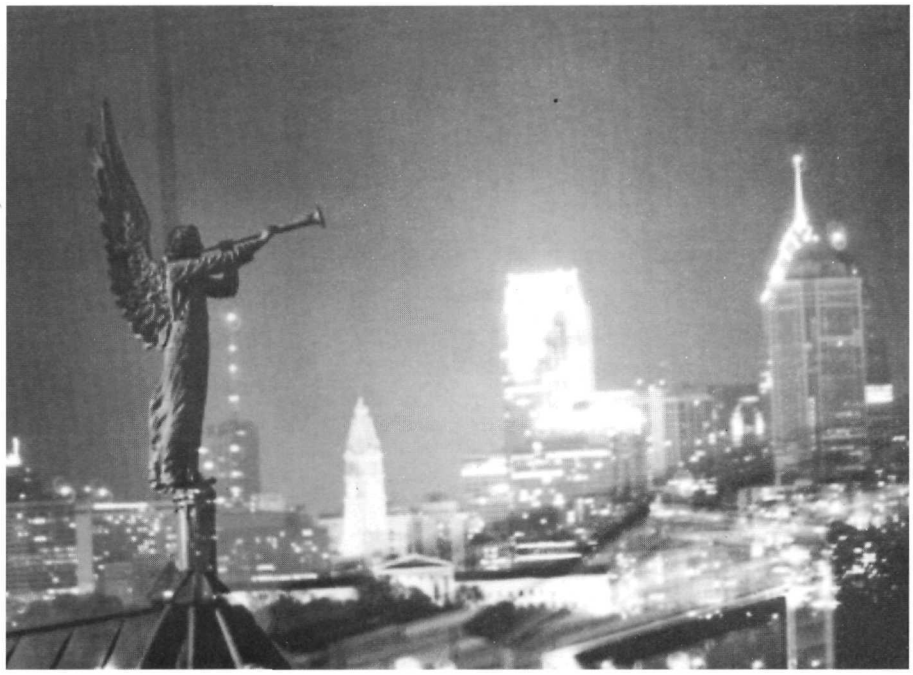
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An antidote for disappointment

by Julie A. Wortman

During this past summer's 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in Philadelphia, a friend staffing the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) booth came over to *The Witness* booth with a dumbfounded expression on his face. It seems that in the course of browsing through EPF's literature a recent visitor to the booth had been startled to find some anti-death penalty material. Waving one of the offending flyers in our friend's face, the visitor had reduced him to a state of bewildered shock when she had exclaimed, "But without the death penalty Christians wouldn't have a religion!"

Amusing as such who-would-believe-it? moments can be in the retelling, they are also sobering because they represent only the tip of the iceberg of what so frequently disappoints us about the witness of our fellow Christians. And at a concentrated gathering of church folks like the Episcopal Church's triennial General Convention, the dose of disappointment can be debilitating. In fact, I think what might be called "disappointment overdose" was as much the reason I left Philadelphia drained and dragging after nearly two weeks as that those weeks occurred during the dead of a sweltering summer and were filled with 16-hour days spent in the artificial atmosphere of airless, often windowless convention center and hotel meeting rooms both tracking the progress of church decisionmaking through a convoluted legislative process and attending a steady stream of special receptions, banquets and worship services sponsored by the church's many mission-oriented networks and advocacy organizations.



The Philadelphia skyline, taken from the roof of the Church of the Advocate, site of *The Witness'* General Convention dinner honoring Leon Modeste, Verna Dozier, Coleman McGehee and the Ojibwe singers. Charles F. Penniman, Jr.

I'm aware that many veteran Episcopal Church observors of a progressive bent were not disappointed at all by this General Convention — and, in truth, as much of our post-Convention coverage indicates (see pp. 21-28), the Convention made many encouraging decisions. For example, progressives in the House of Bishops managed to hang together strongly enough to avert, however narrowly, the election of a conservative presiding bishop. Likewise, the Convention outlawed discrimination against women in the ordination process, flagged as a desireable priority for mission outreach the combatting of the negative effects of "welfare reform," moved forward with plans for a "Jubilee 2000" commitment to forgiveness of third-world debt, environmental stewardship and human liberation, provided additional support for anti-racism efforts and moved forward on deconstructing the church's heterosexist biases. The Convention also approved the formation of an autonomous Central American province made up of the Episcopal Church dioceses in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama, in addition to the already autonomous Diocese of Costa Rica — an action for which these dioceses have long worked and about which their representatives in Philadelphia were clearly enthusiastic.

So from what does my disappointment stem? It is not just that one Convention visitor could justify state-sponosred executions by appealing to an atonement-skewed theology that finds Jesus'

continued on page 28

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

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The Prisoners

by Richard Schaaf

for Victor Jara

The guards
take their orders
from Pinochet, Marcos, Thieu ...

'If the prisoners don't talk,
pour pails down their throats'

It's torture.
The prisoners
they swell up like toads
but
They don't talk.

Victor, do you hear them
in the National Stadium
thousands, still
singing, clapping
their rough hands resounding over the Andes ...
From Santiago, in the spring,
a friend
witnesses this,
writes:

'In the prison, anyway, my friend ... witnessed
an execution (more than one, but this as you'll
see was something special). What happened was,
one of the soldiers in the firing squad refused to
shoot the man. And what happened then, was,
he was put up against the wall alongside the
prisoner, and together they were shot. You begin
to wonder, what kind of human being is this?

That he would choose to die, and die obscurely,
rather than kill a man. It's strange that there
should ever have been gods, they seem so chintzy
in the light of something like this.'

we read this, Victor,
while you sing 'Las Casitas Del Barrio Alto'
on the stereo,
So high spirited and true
even the children go around
singing it by heart



—from Poetry Like Bread: Poets of the Political Imagination,
edited by Martin Espada (Curbstone Press, 1994).

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"Cousins of the Amish" join urban radicals in death penalty protest

by Sam Hine

On May 13, 1985 a police helicopter dropped a firebomb on an intentional community in Philadelphia, Pa. Police had surrounded the house on Osage Ave. belonging to the MOVE organization, showered it with machine gun fire and attempted to drown the residents out with deluge hoses. Unsuccessful at that, they set the building on fire, conspired with the city fire commissioner to let it burn, and shot at MOVE members who tried to escape the inferno. Eleven people, five of them children, died in the blaze.

MOVE's crime: agitating neighbors with a political message about the oppressive injustice they lived under as black people in an American city. Unfortunately, the fire department let the fire get out of control, and another 60 homes in the neighborhood burned down.

Twelve years later, the emergence of another community movement out of the woodwork of traditional Anabaptism into the heart of the struggle for social justice has people intrigued and baffled. Members of the Bruderhof, a pacifist Christian community movement of approximately 2,500 people, were once best known in Pennsylvania as cousins of the Amish. Today they are better known — on the streets, in the halls of government and in the prisons — as vocal opponents of capital punishment. And, by no coincidence, they have found themselves shoulder to shoulder with the survivors of the government's war on MOVE.

Sam Hine lives at Spring Valley Bruderhof and is a journalism student at Northeastern University in Boston.

What could have brought these "white-bread fundamentalists" into an alliance with the anti-authoritarian, even revolutionary, urban MOVE community? As a Bruderhof member, I'll try to explain.

The Bruderhof movement started in Germany in 1920, came to the U.S. in 1954, and has grown to eight communities: three in New York, two in Pennsylvania, one in Connecticut and two in England. Sharing money, houses, land and work, we try to show our love to Jesus by loving and serving others. We believe Christ brought us together in community to be a city on a hill, a light in the darkness.

Actually, our political activism is nothing new. The Bruderhof resisted Nazism in Germany to the point of expulsion. Our communities housed refugees during World War II and helped displaced persons after the war. Members of the Bruderhof marched in Selma during the civil rights movement. We protested the American massacre of civilians during the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars, and we continue to demand an end to the economic sanctions that have killed more than a million Iraqi in the last seven years. A contingent of Bruderhof school children accompanied a "friendshipment" to Cuba, breaking the U.S. blockade to bring humanitarian aid to the island.

We've felt a particular urgency lately to protest the death penalty, partly because it's close to home — people are being killed by our government, in our name — but mostly because so many people who consider themselves Christian wholeheartedly endorse it.

We've felt a particular urgency lately to protest the death penalty, partly because it's close to home — people are being killed by our government, in our name — but mostly because so many people who consider themselves Christian wholeheartedly endorse it.

Busloads from various Bruderhof communities have attended rallies and marches calling for the abolition of the death penalty. In 1996, we sponsored the National Commission on Capital Punishment (NCCP) human rights hearing held in Philadelphia's city hall, where advocates and opponents of capital punishment gave testimony on its effects. This summer, our children decided to organize a "Children's Crusade," a three-day march from our Pennsylvania communities to death row, 30 miles away.

The story of MOVE and the Bruderhof contains an even more improbable twist, because the man who brought them together was none other than Mumia Abu-Jamal, once a convicted "cop-killer" forgotten on death row, now undeniably the world's most famous political prisoner [see *TW*, 1-2/95].

Abu-Jamal was convicted of the 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. He had won acclaim and was growing in stature as a radio journalist, until he condemned the police's treatment of the MOVE organization on his radio program, and chose to sacrifice his job rather than his principles. While driving a cab to support his fam-

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ily, he saw his brother in an altercation with a police officer and rushed to intervene. When other police arrived at the scene, both Faulkner and Abu-Jamal had been shot.

After winning a conviction, the prosecution presented Abu-Jamal's involvement in the Black Panther Party as a reason why he deserved to die. Since then, witnesses have claimed police coerced them into implicating Abu-Jamal in the crime, but despite growing evidence of his innocence, the state has failed to grant him a retrial. Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the case and appeals hearings, has sentenced more people to death than any other judge in the U.S.

The Bruderhof's decision to take up the cause of Mumia Abu-Jamal was controversial, but it was also inevitable. Abu-Jamal is caged less than an hour from the nearest Bruderhof community, in a prison our brothers and sisters visit regularly.

Bruderhof members first read about Abu-Jamal in a May 1995 article in *The Progressive*. That month we met some of his supporters at a march against the death penalty at the infamous Sing Sing prison in Ossining, N.Y., where the Rosenbergs were executed. Many of us read Abu-Jamal's book *Live From Death Row* (Addison-Wesley, 1995), and our eyes were opened to the cruel realities of that other America most of us never see.

Less than a month after Abu-Jamal's book hit the shelves, Governor Tom Ridge signed his death warrant. Convinced that whether he was guilty or innocent, Abu-Jamal had never received a fair trial, the Bruderhof put its united force into publicizing the injustice. At the time, we didn't know that during the following months Abu-Jamal would become the focal point of a millions-strong international movement to free political prisoners, to abolish the death penalty and to reveal the powers working behind it.

In January 1997, the Bruderhof's publishing house, Plough, brought out Abu-Jamal's second book from prison, *Death Blossoms: Reflections from a Prisoner of Conscience*. In *Death Blossoms*, Abu-Jamal tells how, after much searching, he found a spiritual family in MOVE founder John Africa's revolutionaries and their religion of Life. Because convicted MOVE members are barred from visiting prisons, Abu-Jamal asked Steve Wiser, a Bruderhof pastor, to be his spiritual adviser. Though Abu-Jamal remains an incisive critic of institutional Christianity, both he and the Bruderhof have benefitted enormously from this relationship.

Within our communities, we discussed associating with a decidedly "unchristian" group like MOVE, and decided to send a delegation to Philadelphia to meet them personally. Why, we wanted to know, do they say "Long Live John Africa," when, by all accounts, he perished in the 1985 fire?



Members of the Christian Bruderhof community protest the planned execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Harvey Finkle/Impact Visuals

We've got to know our MOVE brothers and sisters well since that first meeting. The spirit of John Africa lives on, for sure. It lives on in nine men and women in prison, serving 30 to 100 years each for the murder of a police officer killed in an assault on MOVE headquarters in 1978, who nevertheless radiate courage and hope. It lives on in Abu-

Do political, economic and religious power-mongers feel threatened by community? By people looking out for each other on their own, people with a base from which to question the present world order?

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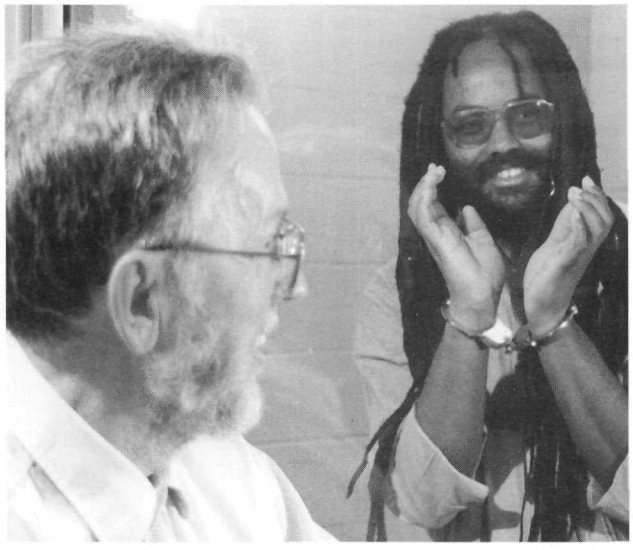
Jamal, who defies the jaws of the state's death machine with his pen, embracing life in all its depth and fullness and illuminating a struggle that goes beyond him, beyond even the abolition of the death penalty, to the roots of the spirit of death that has captured our nation.

Despite the questions of faith and practice, despite the allegations that they were a cult or espoused "false teachings," MOVE's story resonated with ours. Nazi storm troopers surrounded our German community in 1937 and forced everyone to evacuate in 24 hours, because our school wouldn't accept Nazi teachers and our young men wouldn't serve in Hitler's army. Unlike the Bruderhof, however, MOVE claimed a right to self-defense. Besieged, they refused to give up their home — and suffered the bitter consequences.

The MOVE bombing wasn't an isolated incident. In 1993, we watched the Branch Davidian's Waco community burn to the ground under federal siege. Most of us, while we felt the threat of such unrestrained police power, were too busy disassociating ourselves from this cultish aberration to raise an objection. When the media hype subsided, however, we realized that the Branch Davidians weren't destroyed simply because they believed David Koresh was the messiah, or because their arsenal posed a threat to national security.

Why, then? Do political, economic and religious power mongers feel threatened by community? By people looking out for each other on their own, people with a base from which to question the present world order? As we watched federal agents stake out the Freemen in Montana, then Texas separatists, unspoken questions rose in our minds: Who will be next? And who will object? Are we going to wait till they come for us?

In rejecting violence and private property, we take inspiration from the first Christian church in Jerusalem and from the radical Anabaptist fringe of the Reformation. The first Christians, who like us lived in community, were hounded by authorities, hung on crosses and fed to lions for refusing to stop "preaching that name." Like these earliest Christians, thousands of Anabaptists sold their land and pooled their possessions — and met execution at the hands of political and ecclesial authorities.



Bruderhof elder Christoph Arnold with Mumia Abu-Jamal
Paul Button

MOVE's story resonated with ours. Nazi storm troopers surrounded our German community in 1937 and forced everyone to evacuate in 24 hours, because our school wouldn't accept Nazi teachers and our young men wouldn't serve in Hitler's army. Unlike the Bruderhof, however, MOVE claimed a right to self-defense. Besieged, they refused to give up their home — and suffered the bitter consequences.

Their witness impelled Bruderhof founder Eberhard Arnold and his small German community, in 1930, to join the Hutterian descendants of these radicals, now living in farming communities in western Canada and the U.S. Ironically, as the Bruderhof's commitment to oppose evil becomes more visible in the 1990s, our Hutterian brethren and other Anabaptist groups have castigated us for taking our gospel to the social and political spheres — for calling society, government and (God forbid) churches to repentance and the promise of the coming kingdom.

The Bruderhof's intensified activism has brought on outside opposition as well, both insidious and blatant. Long-time readers of our quarterly magazine, *The Plough,* canceled their subscriptions or wrote letters expressing concern, alarm or anger. During the NCCP hearings in Philadelphia, the Fraternal Order of Police joined with an anti-Bruderhof hate group in an effort to publicly discredit us.

Where do we find hope to carry on? Often, we turn to Isaiah's prophesies, with their promise of God's future kingdom of justice. We sincerely believe that this kingdom is just waiting to happen, that the triumph of good is inevitable.

And, quite simply, protesting adds meaning to our struggle. We relish the flavor it brings to our lives. The freedom to speak our minds, to flex our demo-

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cratic muscles. The satisfaction of being heard, of joining hands with others who want the same thing. We rejoice in small victories. Time and again, we've seen our efforts stay the executioner's hand, if only temporarily.

We don't know what tomorrow will bring, or where it will take us. We've got our hands full meeting the challenges that arise. In the past year we've sent people to Australia, Bolivia, Cuba, Germany, Haiti, Israel, Hong Kong, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Russia and South Africa to meet interested groups who share at least a piece of our vision.

This year, the example of the early Christians has challenged us once again. After reading that they not only took care of their own, but eradicated poverty in the cities where they lived, we resolved to do the same. Starting with our own neighborhoods, we're trying to bring the good news, not with gushy words, but with our hands and tools and time. It may be a drop in the bucket, but it's a beginning.

The Bruderhof is still finding its place in a struggle much bigger than itself. Our belief in the sacredness of life compels us to oppose war, euthanasia and abortion as well as the death penalty, so we often find ourselves homeless on the political spectrum and short on allies.

Building community remains our most potent resistance, and our primary goal. We seek to rediscover unity in a fragmented society. To practice faithfulness and sexual purity in a culture of immorality. To create a haven for children in a world inhospitable to the childlike spirit. To affirm life in the midst of death.

There have always been political dissidents, and always will be. But the world also needs a people willing to turn their backs on everything that is evil in themselves and in society, a people who believe that Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount were meant to guide our lives today. TW

The deafening deep

An underwater sonar defense system being developed by the U.S. Navy could have a deafening effect on whales and other marine animals.

The Surveillance Towed Array Sonar Sytem, Low Frequency Active (LFA), designed to detect a special breed of silent submarines with an intense, low-frequency tone, will rev up to an estimated 235 decibels — possibly enough to damage a whale's hearing — according to Bob Holmes in New Scientist (March 1, 1997). And loss of hearing is only part of the problem. In order to avoid annoying sounds, some marine mammals may alter their migration patterns and abandon feeding grounds. Loud noises may also drown out courtship calls, disrupting breeding patterns.

While alarm about the LFA is new, noise pollution in our waterways is not. Evelyn Adams, reporting in Orion (Summer, 1996), notes that since World War II, "the noise level of the oceans has increased 15 to 30 decibels due to mechanized human activity, which has reduced the suitable area available to marine animals by 25 percent or more."

— Rebecca Scheib, *Utne Reader* (July-August, 1997)

New H-bomb

The smoke of "nuclear disarmament" has just been cleared by a blast from the Air Force. The Pentagon has deployed a new nuclear bomb called the "B61 (Mod-11)." The announcement of the earth-penetrating bomb has caused a minor shock wave in diplomatic and arms control circles, since it flies in the face of official pronouncements, legal obligations and public opinion.

A senior military officer said last March, "With the B-2 [Stealth nuclear bomber], the deeply buried target-killer will come on board." He was referring to the new, 340-kiloton "B61-11" H-bomb, which is designed to burrow 50 feet into the ground before detonating. The B61s are said to replace about 50 nine-megaton B53s which are still in use today.

The B61 "is a smaller yield replacement for an older, dirtier, bigger, less safe bomb," says Ashton B. Carter, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense, who spoke to the *New York Times*. The *Times* also said the new B61 would cause "relatively little surface damage." However, an accompanying graph showed it would spread "lethal radiation" for at least ten square miles. This "smaller" bomb, in the absurd jargon of nuclear war, has 27 times the force of the Hiroshima blast — the comparatively tiny atomic bomb (with an explosive power of 12.5 kilotons) that killed 140,000 people.

The military brass counter charges that the B61 is new, and say it's just a "refit" which will perform the same cold war mission as the B53. If the Pentagon is to believed, the job of the B61 is to threaten or attack Russia. However, critics point to official statements that imply that the real purpose of the B61 is to threaten the poor non-nuclear countries. The same stories that disclosed the new B61, also mentioned that "rogue" nations (always Libya, Iraq and famine-plagued North Korea) are believed to have burrowed into the earth to protect military sites.

— John M. LaForge, Nukewatch

Remembering Dorothy Day

November 8, 1997 marks the centenary of the birth of Dorothy Day, founder with Peter Marin of the Catholic Worker movement. In anticipation of the centenary celebration, Harper Collins has re-issued Day's 1952 autobiography, *The Long Loneliness* and Warner Brothers will release the home video edition of "Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story." For ordering information on the video, which will be available in early October, call 1-800-218-1903.



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The powers behind the death penalty

by Steven Charleston

As we come to the close of the twentieth century, American society is once again caught in a cycle of fear. The depth of this fear can be measured by many complex social, economic and political yardsticks, but if we search for a simple indicator, I believe we can find it in the debate over the death penalty.

Communities that are relatively calm, stable and secure do not as a rule employ increasingly repressive and violent means of insuring their survival. The reverse, I believe, is just as true: societies that are insecure, fractured, and volatile consistently turn to ever more brutal ways of keeping themselves alive.

The death penalty is a cork floating on a sea of troubles. It shows to what extent we will go as a community to preserve the status quo of our social order. Beneath the surface, upholding capital punishment, are the constantly shifting, liquid currents of economic dislocation, political disintegration, racial inequality and, finally, of criminal justice breakdown. These patterns are as predictable as they are visible. They chart a clear direction. They show us that our society is drifting toward chaos.

Capital punishment, therefore, is the wrong debate about the right problem. The issue is justice, but justice on a level far deeper than legal execution. The irony is: The more we claim the death penalty as a legal means of deterrence to crime, the more we subvert the true debate over justice as a deterrence to community collapse. While the average citizen feels a growing uneasiness about how things are going on the local level, the authorities attempt to reassure the populace by calling for more firepower, for policing agencies and tougher penalties for an ever expanding list of criminals. That list itself begins to single out certain target communities that are identified as the source of social breakdown. Immigrants, political dissidents, racial minorities: These are the usual suspects to be blamed when a culture begins to fear itself. In response, citizens are asked to believe that if only there were more police, more jails, and more executions, then the tide would turn. Shifting public attention from the deeper justice issues to the shallower formula of scapegoats and promises of restoring law and order accomplishes two primary goals for the defenders of the status quo: It distracts the focus of the public debate from the root causes of community dissolution and it justifies the expenditure of more and more resources to preserve the power of those in charge.

Societies that are insecure, fractured, and volatile consistently turn to ever more brutal ways of keeping themselves alive.

There is a subtle escalation principle at work in this process. As the currents of fear rise, they lift up an apparent logic not only for the death penalty, but for a much broader range of legal restrictions that increasingly limits an otherwise democratic society. A kind of social *quid pro quo* results: Citizens are told that if they will sacrifice a few more of their traditional rights and privileges, then the return will be safety and peace. Fearful, people make the trade. Gradually, one small sacrifice of privacy after another, the community retreats into a supposed safe haven. Suburban forts are constructed to protect the affluent. Whole sections of urban areas are designated as combat zones.

But does the trade-off really work? Are we any more stable and secure in America today after hundreds of executions? Does the loss of our freedom as a people truly buy us peace and a brighter future? Or are we simply sinking because we are being fooled into believing that a cork can support our weight in the midst of a storm?

As a society, I believe we are repeating the same patterns of fear and repression that have marked all declining communities throughout human history. There is nothing unique about our situation, except for drugs and technology. The drugs make our predicament far more accelerated and dangerous. The technology makes the means of repression far more pervasive and controlling. But the basic symptoms of a community internally conflicted to the point of collapse are there for anyone to observe.

Legalized executions are the graph of our decline. The more we resort to them, the more we admit that we are dying.

As a free society we are dying. As a cohesive community we are dying. As a people with confidence in our own future we are dying. With every lethal injection, we are announcing that we have lost control of our own destiny. And the more we ignore the root causes of our demise and become hypnotized by the hope for a miracle cure (the snake oil of firepower backed up by capital punishment) the more we only hasten and spread our social disease. Beneath the surface, the real justice concerns are racism, educational and economic inequality and

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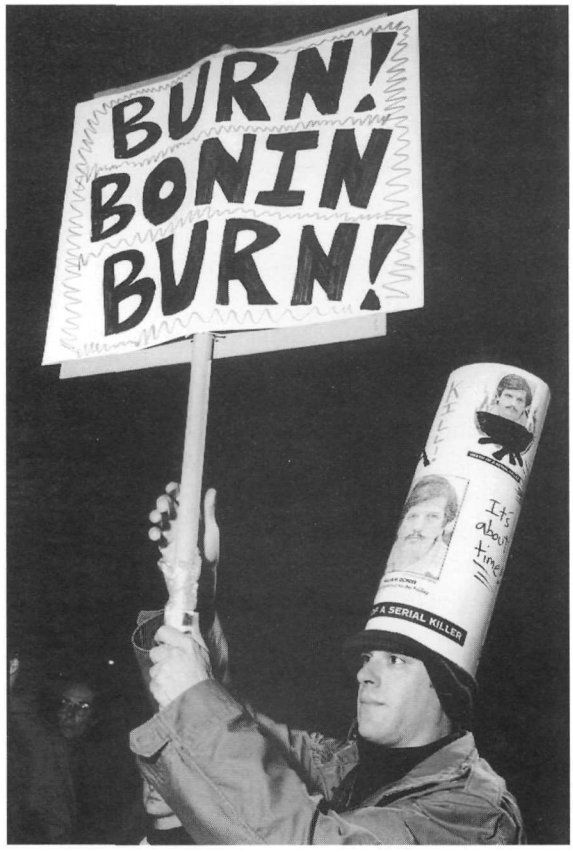
political institutions that no longer represent the people. Deal with those core issues and you deal with the problem. Ignore them and you fuel the problem. And no amount of firepower will change that basic equation.

I submit that if we want to get tough on crime, we should get tough on poverty. If we want to crack down on drugs, we should crack down on our own immorality. If we want to take back the streets, we should give back the hope.

For well over 200 years, the U.S. has thought of itself as the radical democratic alternative for humanity. Our claim has been that we are a just and free society without parallel in history. We have offered ourselves as a model for others to follow in aspiring to the ideals of true community. Now is a critical opportunity for us to live out those claims and become the alternative we say we are. A good first step would be to admit that mass executions (no matter how deserved by the criminals) are not a sign of strength but of weakness. The next step, which is far more difficult, would be to confront the currents of fear that are inexorably carrying us away from justice and toward repression. The final step would be to reshape our society to such a degree that every community within its boundaries has an equal investment in preventing crime and supporting justice.

If we are to take these steps as a free society, then by definition, we must take them together. Racism is the priority. As long as people of color continue to be marginalized and scapegoated, as long as the resulting gap between the rich and poor continues to increase, as along as drugs are used for the purposes of social control in our cities, then we will remain adrift. Racism populates death row. It aids and abets criminal behavior among all classes and cultures in America.

The desperation of the poor and the greed of the rich meet in the dark alleys of the soul where money matters more than humanity. We should not be surprised that a society which allows the wealthy to routinely subvert justice also creates a condition for the underclass to do the same.



Death penalty advocates celebrate just prior to California's execution of sex offender William George Bonin in 1996. Alain McLaughlin/Impact Visuals

Racism, as the persistent nightmare of the American dream, paints crime with the colors of the dreamer's own imagination. For much of middle America, crime is black. Or brown. Therefore, it is easy for our middle class to distance itself from whole segments of the population. The lie of racism convinces these increasingly fearful Americans that the very men and women they should be working with are the cause of the fear itself. Consequently, rather than working for cooperation, mutual respect and shared planning, Americans are convinced they must rely on policing and punishment, on limiting human rights and resorting to capital punishment in order to contain the imaginary enemy from within. The true ghettos in America are not in our cities, but in our minds. They are ghettos of fear. Of racism. And unless we wake up, end our social addiction to blame and racial hatred, I believe the prospects for us all will remain not only bleak, but life-threatening.

To put it bluntly: Resorting to the death penalty is an act of fear. We use it because we are desperate. We can pass the most draconian laws imaginable, outfit whole armies of police, incarcerate a third of our poor, and execute thousands and we will be even less secure than we are today. We will not just be killing criminals. We will be killing ourselves.

And yet, we can, if we have the will, faith, and resolve to do so, change our direction, turn against the tide, and become what we have always said we were: a free, equal, and just society for all persons. It is still possible. But to make such a sea change in our destiny will require nothing less than a social revolution. Or to be more exact: a spiritual revolution.

As a Christian, I offer no apologies for the bleakness of my analysis of our current debate over capital punishment. The situation beneath the surface of the death penalty is grim. But racism and fear are not the only currents that shape and guide our national existence. There are other waters, living waters, to which we can turn for both our sustenance and our salvation. I believe there is still time. I am not describing the kind of national religi-

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osity that equates Christ with law and order, but rather with a genuine faithfulness that allows all persons of all religious traditions to unite in a common front for the sake of community. Religious faith, lived out in tolerance and compassion, can unite our people in a shared commitment to end racism, poverty, and abuse. Together, we have that moral authority. The question of capital punishment can become for us a catalyst.

We can turn public awareness away from scapegoats and gas chambers toward an honest appraisal of the hard work that must be accomplished if America is to become a truly free and inclusive community. The task will be difficult. The tide of fear is powerful. The undercurrents of racism are endemic throughout our national life. But we must not be fearful ourselves. We must not imagine racism to be more than the cowardly excuse that it is. Fear always falls before the light of truth, of hope and of love. Justice, real justice for every person in this nation, is our strength. Respect, cooperation, trust, and unity are the forces we can bring to bear against the loss of confidence that haunts our society.

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I believe the day will come when we recognize death row for what it is: an icon for our crimes against ourselves. Consequently, I believe in a spiritual revolution. Even in the face of a fear so strong as the one which numbs our nation, I am convinced of the ultimate victory of justice over repression. I know in my heart that God will not allow us to slip beneath the waves of racism that batter our hope and divide our people, but instead will rescue us with a word that calms every storm.

I stand confident in the light of Christ Jesus who saved a convicted criminal from death, and by so doing saved her accusers as well. It is to that almost unimaginable vision of community that I commit my life. Along with so many others who dare to believe in the fulfillment of this promise, I let go of vengeance for the sake of justice and fear for the sake of community. I place myself between the convict and the executioner because I know, but for the grace of God, I could be either one. TW

Who's on death row?

- Eighty-two percent of the murder victims in the cases resulting in executions since 1976 have been white, even though whites are victims in less than 50 percent of the murders committed in the U.S.
- In Maryland, 87 percent of those on death row are African Americans.
- In Kentucky, 100 percent of those on death row are there for the murder of a white victim, despite the fact that there have been 1,000 African Americans murdered in that state since 1976.
- In New Jersey, a recent death penalty study by the state's Supreme Court found "strong and consistent biases" against black defendants, taking into account cases with similar socio-economic backgrounds and similar aggravating and mitigating circumstances.
- Under the federal death penalty, which resumed in 1988 and was expanded in 1994, 78 percent of those slated for capital prosecution have been members of minorities.
- Of the 330 executions which took place between 1976 and mid-1996, 274 (or 83 percent) have occurred in the South. Texas alone has accounted for about a third of all executions in the country. Houston, whose population makes up about 16 percent of Texas' total population, is responsible for about a third of Texas' death row. Similarly, over half of Pennsylvania's death row comes from one city, Philadelphia, which contains only 14 percent of the state's population.
- Between 1976 and mid-1996, nine juvenile offenders were executed. Sixty-nine percent of juvenile offenders on death row are either African American or Hispanic. Only seven other countries in the world are known to have executed a juvenile offender in the last 10 years, and none has executed as many as the U.S.
- Twenty-seven defendants with mental retardation (defined as a mental age generally less than 12 years old) were executed in the U.S. between 1976 and mid-1996.
- More than 3,000 people remain on death row awaiting execution.
- Between 1973 and mid-1996, 59 death row inmates were released after evidence of their innocence emerged.

—from a report by Richard C. Dieter, Death Penalty Information Center, Washington, D.C.

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Executing the scapegoat

by Gil Bailie

At daybreak on November 13, 1849, Charles Dickens was taking an early morning walk in London when he came upon a raucous and jubilant crowd. Pausing to investigate, he found that the crowd had gathered for a public hanging. A woman, one Mrs. Manning, was shortly to be hanged. The jeering crowd was in the process of making the woman the butt of its gibes and jokes. Later that day, Dickens wrote an open letter to the *Times of London*, saying he had seen an "inconceivably awful" sight, "the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd" that gathered to watch a public hanging. Dickens went on to say that as the sun rose it lit "thousands and thousands of upturned faces, so inexpressibly odious in their brutal mirth or callousness that a man had cause to feel ashamed of the shape he wore."

As for more recent forms of what so shocked Dickens, Janny Scott, the same *Los Angeles Times* reporter who wrote the story analyzing the phenomenon of mob violence in the Rodney King beating, wrote a subsequent article that could be a postcript to Dickens's letter of 1849. In it, she said:

"The scene outside Florida State Prison at the 1989 execution of serial killer Theodore Bundy was one of the wildest. Parents brought children, men brought wives. Hundreds of reporters camped out in a pasture. It was like a tailgate party, someone said. Or Mardi Gras."

Scott then asks precisely the right question. "Why are people fascinated?" she wonders. Answers to this question abound, but none seem to finally account for the fascination. Scott gets close to the underlying dynamic when she concludes a litany of possible explanations with a perceptive observation. The execution, she says, "is a brutal act," but it is one carried out "in the name of civilization." It would be difficult to think of a more succinct summation of the underlying anthropological dynamic at work: *a brutal act done in the name of civilization*, an expulsion or execution that results in social harmony. Clearly, after the shaky justifications based on deterrence or retribution have fallen away, this is the stubborn fact that remains: a brutal act is done in the name of civilization. If we humans become too morally troubled by the brutality to revel in the glories of the civilization made possible by it, we will simply have to reinvent culture. This is what Nietzsche saw through a glass darkly. This is what Paul sensed when he declared the old order to be a dying one (1 Cor. 7:31). This the central anthropological issue of our age.

When a culture's sacrificial rituals "work," they transfer the existing rivalrous antagonisms onto one figure against whom all can unite, an act that miraculously dissolves existing tensions and replaces them with a social bond.

Janny Scott's brief article comes especially close to the essential point when she quotes Louis West, a UCLA professor of psychiatry. "Society uses its occasional legal victim of the gas, the rope or the electric chair as a lightning rod to focus divine wrath upon a single offender," says West, "while at the same time magically insinuating the survivors into the good graces of the gods by the blood sacrifice." Curiously, and tellingly, the ancient language of blood sacrifice goes more directly to the heart of the issue than does the more conventional language of modern social science.

Etymology is often a good place to begin. The original meaning of certain words, like the originating events of a culture, tends to recede as the word adjusts to a conventional and respectable place in a culture's vernacular. This is especially true of those words that have the most potential for shedding light on culture-founding events. "Fascination" is just such a word. The root of "fascination" is the Latin verb *fascinare*, which means to bind or hold spell-bound. It is related to the Latin *fascis*, which means a bundle bound together. The symbol of authority in ancient Rome was a *fasces*, a bundle of rods bound together around an ax with the ax blade projecting from it. From these roots, the modern term "fascist" is derived. What are we to make of this? It suggests that when the journalist Janny Scott and the UCLA psychiatrist she interviewed puzzle over why humans find public executions fascinating, they are touching on an anthropological issue of the first order. The complex etymological background of the word "fascination" suggests an underlying link between fascination, the *esprit de corps* of a violent mob, and the structures of cultural authority that institutionalize the *esprit de corps*

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and extend its social benefits over time. Were we to fully understand the complex phenomenon of fascination, we would know more than we generally care to know about the origin and nature of conventional culture.

When a culture or subculture turns the system for protecting law-abiding citizens into a social ritual for generating its camaraderie, it sets up a social pattern structurally similar to the crucifixion. Eventually, in such situations, the objective wickedness of the culprit will not be enough to offset the moral misgivings aroused by that similarity. For obvious reasons, this is especially so in the case of "public executions." This is no doubt why of the very few Western societies that still impose the death penalty, in none of them are the executions carried out "in public." The experience of being morally shaken by a public execution is the beginning of an anthropological and spiritual revolution for which the term "Christianity" was coined decades after the public execution of Jesus. Jesus' moral rectitude surely contributed to the shock felt by his followers. And yet the recognition of the victim's moral rectitude alone could not have set in motion the anthropological revolution from which the world is now reeling. This revolution was set in motion by the revelation of Christ's structural innocence, by which I mean that his "innocence" was deducible from the fact that all accused him and no one rebutted the accusation. He was *perfectly* innocent, not just because he was ethically beyond reproach, but because he stood *perfectly* alone before a *perfectly* unanimous mob. What Christ has in common with all those against whom a unanimous mob has risen up will eventually outweigh the moral differences, however vast, that separate them. Societies under biblical influence will little longer be able to nullify the empathy for scapegoats aroused by the Cross by reserving their righteous and socially galvanizing contempt for certified moral failures.

What Christ has in common with all those against whom a unanimous mob has risen up will eventually outweigh the moral differences, however vast, that separate them.

At roughly the same time Dickens's indignant letter was being published in the *Times*, Coventry Patmore was writing a poem entitled "A London Fete." Like the last scene and epilogue of William Golding's novel, Patmore's poem represents a marvelously insightful reflection on the demise of the sacrificial system in the western world. It deals with a public hanging in London, around which a great crowd gathers. It anticipates the disintegration of Western culture's most explicitly sacrificial institution, but it does so in marvelously subtle and insightful ways. With a keen eye for the true purpose of the execution, Patmore's poem explores the ritual's diminishing capacity for restoring social order and harmony. At first, however, there are indications that such a harmonious outcome might still be possible.

...They brought the man out to be hanged.
Then came from all the people there
A single cry, that shook the air;
Mothers held up their babies to see,
Who spread their hands, and crowed for glee;
Here a girl from her vesture tore
A rag to wave with, and joined the roar...

That *single cry* is precisely what such rituals are all about. It is the verbal equivalent of the stones rained on the victim by a maddened mob. This single cry, achieved without anyone consciously acting to produce it, seems almost miraculous and is essential to the mob's *conviction*, its sense of having found the real *convict*. In terms of its primitive origins, it is probably not coincidental that this cry occurs at the moment when the victim would most likely be screaming protestations. Drowning out the victim's protests — effectively silencing the victim's voice — would be another function of the unanimous cry.

Removing criminals from society and deterring would-be felons from emulating them is a necessary task for any society that wishes to remain civil. As Patmore's poem underscores, however, these legitimate concerns can sometimes serve as a rational justification for an essentially irrational sacrificial ritual. This is especially so, of course, in the case of public execution or "capital punishment." Patmore makes it clear that the issue of guilt is extraneous to the social ritual he is examining in his poem.

...There's a man, with yelling tired,
Stopped, and the culprit's crime
inquired...

By the time of the ritual expulsion or elimination, the victim's culpability — or at any rate the rightness of the punishment — must be so completely clear that "it goes without saying." In myth, of course, what "goes without saying" is the righteousness of the mob. When the condemned one's culpability "goes without saying," it suggests that what is happening is a social or religious ritual more than a criminal proceeding.

It is hardly an idle question to ask: What happens when a culture continues to attempt the periodic restoration of its social harmonies by relying on myths and rituals of sacred violence that have lost their religious authority and moral immunity? The Patmore poem is ready with an answer, and it is as clear an answer to that question as we have a right to expect. In the poem, the hush at the climactic moment is shattered by a roar, a roar "less

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loud" but nevertheless one that is *more confused and affrighting than before.* The last lines of the poem proceed then to present a sweeping and haunting image of a sacrificial scapegoating ritual that has failed to achieve its social purpose. Its violence begins very slowly to rebound on the society that sponsored it.

The dangling corpse hung straight and still.
The show complete, the pleasure past,
The solid masses loosened fast:
The thief slunk off, with ample spoil,
To ply elsewhere his daily toil;
A baby strung its doll to a stick;
Two children caught and hanged a cat;
Two friends walked on, in lively chat;
And two, who had disputed places,
Went forth to fight, with murderous faces.

What makes Patmore's poem so helpful is that he shows us what happens when a society continues to resort to such rituals after they have begun to malfunction, and *that* is the real issue before us. In ancient Greece, the victim of sacrificial, scapegoat violence was called the *pharmakos.* The Greek word *pharmakon,* from which we get "pharmacy" and its cognates, means both "medicine" and "poison." Sacrificial rituals that cure the social realm of its tensions under certain circumstances, can poison it under other circumstances. More to the point, if a sacrificial event fails to function as a cure, it will inevitably function as a poison, which is what is happening in our day.

When a culture's sacrificial rituals "work," they transfer the existing rivalrous antagonisms onto one figure against whom all can unite, an act that miraculously dissolves existing tensions and replaces them with a social bond. Conversely, when a culture's sacrificial routines fail to generate this combination of camaraderie and moral rectitude, the existing rivalries fester and the social fabric begins to fray. TW



Anti-death penalty protesters create a cemetery bearing the names of the 502 people executed in California between 1893 and 1967. Alain McLaughlin/Impact Visuals

Organizing against the death penalty

The following organizations provide resources and support for people working to oppose the death penalty:

1. National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, 918 F Street NW - #601, Wash., D.C. 20004; 202-347-2411, fax 202-347-2510.

The NCADP works to bring an end to the death penalty through organizing, education and legislation. Contact them to become an individual member or to learn what affiliate groups are working at the state level or locally where you are.

2. Murder Victim Families for Reconciliation, P.O. Box 54, Atlantic, VA 23303-0054; 804-824-0948. MVFR is an organization of family members of victims; it supports alternatives to the death penalty and healing and reconciliation for families. MVFR also offers speakers to interested groups.

3. Death Row Support Project, P.O. Box 600, Liberty Mills, IN 46946; 219-982-7480. The Project facilitates supportive correspondence between persons on death row and persons on the outside.

4. American Friends Service Committee, Criminal Justice Program, 1501 Cherry St., Phila., PA 19102; 215-241-7130; pclark@afsc.org.

The AFSC Criminal Justice Program is sponsoring the Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty project. A national gathering is planned Nov. 14-16 in Wash., D.C. Project organizers will also provide resources, networking help and education activities for study groups nationwide. For more information on the national conference or forming a study group, contact Pat Clark at the above address.

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Alternatives to the death penalty

by Ruth Morris

I cannot answer the question "What is the practical alternative to capital punishment?" because I share with most of the world's peoples the conviction that capital punishment doesn't do a thing for anyone except add to the sum of misery in the world. It is reserved for the powerless, has little to do with the seriousness of offenses or danger, and in the nature of our elitist system never will. It has never been shown to have a deterrent effect, even if the concept of deterrence were not so morally abhorrent.

I used to call the present dominant eurocentric North American justice system retributive justice, but I have since hit on a better name: misery justice. It is *misery justice* because it never looks at making anyone better, just tries to ensure that offenders and their families are as miserable as the most miserable victim of crime. In the process, it generally revictimizes victims and adds to social misery in many ways. Misery justice is also popular in considering poverty: Don't do anything to make the lot of the working poor more endurable, just make sure the best-supported disabled person or child or aged person on welfare is more miserable than the worst paid, most exploited person in the workforce.

Jesus preached a transformative gospel. He looked inequities in the face, and called them for what they were. The best models of justice that follow that original Christian tradition derive mostly from indigenous people. Native Studies professor Sakej Henderson noted that the two icons of eurocentric thought, Jesus and Socrates, were both executed by the finest justice systems of their day.

"There is no word for justice in our native languages," says law professor Trish Monture-Okanee. "The nearest word is harmony."

There are four systems currently in practice in many parts of the world that are far more effective for all concerned than misery justice.

Native healing circles

Judge Bria Hucaluk of northern Saskatchewan approached native communities and invited their participation; by now virtually every community in her area has one. They are voluntary for victim and offender, but as with all healing justice approaches, so much more satisfying that most choose them. Native healing circles are the only legal proceedings I know of that start out with a prayer.

After introductions, the offender is invited to speak, and then everyone in the circle, without pressure. The goal is consensus. After 3-4 hours, healing begins to happen. Huculak observes: "It's a very emotional and painful experience. It's one thing to appear before a white judge who flies in and out. That's not the same as facing the victim, your own family and your own community. That's why it's more effective." The participation of respected elders adds a special quality to native healing circles. The solid support of the community for victims is the best guarantee of healing and safety for them.

Victim-offender reconciliation

For over 25 years, victim-offender reconciliation has been spreading all over North America and Europe, from a modest Mennonite beginning in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. Based on the idea that we need to focus on *giving the crime back to the primary parties, the victim and the offender*, VORP tries to meet the core needs of victims for answers, recognition of their wrongs, safety, restitution and meaning. By bringing victim and offender together with trained mediators, they enable a three-step process to happen:

1) Facts are cleared up, providing victims desperately sought answers to reassert their sense of control over their lifespace.

2) Feelings are released, just where they belong, to those who caused the wrong, in a safe, trustworthy setting.

3) Resolutions are identified. The victims say what they want to happen, and the victim, offender, and mediator work on finding a realistic outcome that satisfies all. How different from our courts, which have a separate agenda of their own, bearing little relation to the needs of either primary party!

A major European conference about six years ago reported on VORP programs all over Europe and North America. The general findings were:

1) Victims were 90 percent satisfied with VORP, less than 40 percent with traditional court processes. Offenders said VORP was harder, but fairer.

2) Restitution agreements were more than twice as likely to be kept from VORP sessions as from court orders. Not surprising, since the VORP session enabled the restitution to be realistic, and engaged the offender in understanding the harm, and helping to develop the solution.

Two North American models deal mainly with the hardest cases: family survivors of a homicide and survivors of

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violent rapists. Genesee County, New York, has had an amazing VORP program for over 30 years. Genesee County brings victims and offenders together within hours of the crime. Victim assistance is intense, right down to cleanup at the crime scene. Victims are supported, included and recognized in every way. Prosecutors and victims are part of a team that works for a sentencing package that makes sense to all.

In British Columbia, Mennonite Dave Gustafson works with long-term sentenced violent offenders and their victims. Typically he asks victims, "Are there any questions, the answers to which are essential to your healing, which you would like to ask the person who did this to you, if you could feel completely safe?" Resoundingly, years later, virtually every victim says yes. Gustafson begins a process of shuttle diplomacy, videotaping the victims asking their questions, when they feel thoroughly ready. After a similar process he videotapes the offenders answering them.

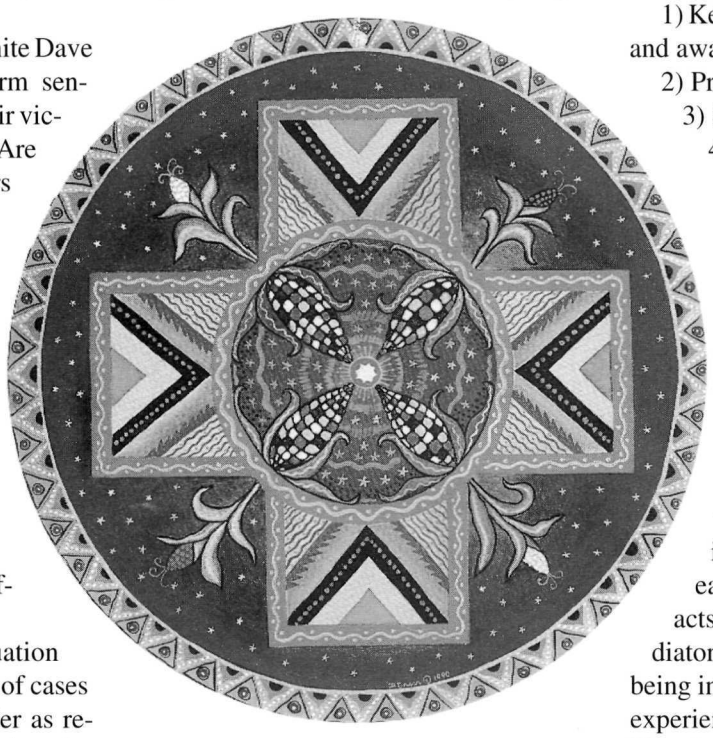
The overall program evaluation shows that even in the minority of cases when victims found the offender as repulsive as they had originally thought, they found healing through the program, because it equalized the playing field and demystified the power the offender had over their lives.

Japanese restitution model

John Haley, a criminologist who has spent six years in Japan studying the Japanese correctional system, gives astounding statistics on its success:

Between 1949 and 1988, while crime rates were rising all over the world, the number of penal code offenses fell by 30 percent in Japan. In that same period, Japanese homicides fell by 40 percent, robberies fell 60 percent and rapes 80 percent.

Homogeneity alone cannot account for this — Sweden is a homogeneous society with many advantages over Japan, yet their rate rose with that of the rest of the world. It is the Japanese response system that appears to cause this unique result. The Japanese system stresses offenders taking responsibility, correcting the harm, expressing contrition and paying restitution. Immediate family supports offenders through these steps, including treatment for the offender, if required. Conviction rates are 99 percent, over 80 percent of those arrested confess, and fewer than five percent of those convicted go to prison. The formal authorities respect the informal community controls, and support them.



Corn Mandala Diana Bryer

Haley concludes: "Japan has discovered how to merge communitarian values with the modern legal system." It is no accident that the Japanese language, like other indigenous ones, lacks a word for justice, but defines moral conduct in religious terms such as harmony or healing.

Family group conferences

Family Group Conferences are an innovation in New Zealand, with Maori roots, and therefore bear resemblance to Native Healing Circles. By 1989 New Zealand found that neither the treatment model nor the punitive model of response to juvenile offenders was working. The landmark 1989 legislation had six goals:

1) Keeping young people out of courts and away from labels;
2) Promoting accountability;
3) Strengthening family life;
4) Including victims in the process;
5) Making decisions by consensus;
6) Respecting cultural differences.

Since that legislation, 80-90 percent of young offenders are dealt with in the new way. Within three weeks of an offense, a Family Group Conference is convened that includes victims, offenders, and the family and affected community of each. A Youth Justice Coordinator acts as facilitator, convener and mediator. Victims are re-empowered by being included and invited to share their experience, their pain and their anger. Usually a silence follows while all eyes turn to the young offender. This is the miracle: that FGCs *condemn the sin but not the sinner.* Almost all young offenders express shame, and usually offer some kind of apology.

In a full FGC, the families of both victim and offender participate, showing the young offender how widely his or her action has damaged their own community as well as that of the victim. When all this anguish is being exposed, one party generally comes to the defence of the young offender: the victim! Words like: "Well, what Joe did was very wrong, but he doesn't seem to be such a bad kid. We

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just need to help him straighten out."

Thus, the FGC often performs a miracle: a healing process that may never be completed by our revictimizing courts is accelerated, so that the victim is enabled to choose voluntarily to forgive. From having been the most powerless person, the victim becomes the most powerful person, the only one that can free the community from this burden.

As the process continues, the whole group becomes involved in solutions. Many victims, who begin the process wanting answers, restitution and a chance to vent anger, get very excited about trying to help young offenders. Marie Sullivan, who is in charge of this process in Auckland, says, "Constantly in my work ... I am affirmed in my belief in the innate goodness of people by the common sense, the compassion and the cooperation of victims."

Australia has its own version of Family Group Conferencing, led by an amazing veteran policeman, Terry O'Connell. The Australian System makes the police the primary mediators and facilitators. I have seen O'Connell inspire a roomful of police with the hope that their original vision of helping the community can at last find practical expression.

New Zealand had a wonderful chance to see this process in operation in 1994, when two Tongan 5-year-olds were mowed down by a speeding car which didn't even stop. A picture of their grieving parents, who always picked them up but missed being there by a five-minute-early class dismissal, fueled anger and outrage throughout New Zealand.

Then the Monday news reported that the young driver had fled to his sister's house and turned himself in from there. Elders in their Samoan community had taken charge of the matter. The report continued: "The families of two South Auckland boys killed by a car welcomed the accused driver yesterday with open arms and forgiveness. .. He was ceremonially reunited with both communities at a special church service last night. ..The young man sat at the feast table, flanked by the mothers of the dead boys."

Activist priest and author Jim Consedine observed that "both Tongan and Samoan communities have a tradition of restorative justice. The well-being of the community and its restoration to peace and harmony are the primary values sought in the justice process. So restoring the young man to his family and the bonds between the two communities were the primary objects. The offer of a sincere apology and its acceptance through forgiveness and mercy flow from such a tradition. Secondly, the deeply held Christian beliefs of both communities meant they recognized each other as belonging to the one family of God, that even national boundaries and culpable action should not place at risk."

This amazing story is not at all as unique as our popular media would have us believe. At conferences on these topics I meet victim after victim who has found healing in reaching out for peace through meetings with their offenders.

A New England mother I met two years ago bought a gun to kill the man who shot her son to death when he emerged from prison. Eight years of vengeance-seeking left her so destroyed she turned to reconciliation for her own peace, fought the whole system to meet with her son's murderer, and is now tutoring him in lifeskills.

A murderer in a Canadian prison attributes his changed life to his victim's mother. "Every time I was beginning to give up or screw up, she would say to me, 'You HAVE to make something of your life, or my son's death will have been for nothing!'"

Canada's aboriginal people call the Justice Ministers, "keepers of all the bad experiences."

"There is no word for justice in our native languages," law professor Trish Monture-Okanee said at a 1995 justice conference in Saskatchewan. "The nearest word is harmony."

Another indigenous speaker, Professor Sakej Youngblood Henderson, developed the theme further: "For five centuries, eurocentric theory has used violence and terrorism as the foundation of social order, and called it justice. We must heal ourselves from 500 years of oppression. We must return to our old healing systems." TW

Corporate crime

You are 30 times as likely to die from corporate violence as from private homicide. Corporate killing comes in four packages:

1) Making, promoting and selling products known to cause injury, disease and death in consumers, such as the Dalkon Shield, Ford Pinto, Chevrolet Corvair and Nestle baby formula.

2) Workplace accidents, a high proportion of which are preventable.

3) Workplace health conditions, such as asbestos, mining air, and a wide variety of carcinogens, many of them affecting surrounding communities.

4) Environmental damage such as mercury pollution, which causes permanent damage and death to whole communities, not to mention risk of our entire future in this world.

I am not in favor of a revenge approach to these truly dangerous and unrepentant killers. But I *am* in favor of quitting the pretense that the pitiful and sometimes reprehensible human beings who fill the death rows of the U.S. are the greatest threat to the whole future of our civilization. — *R.M.*

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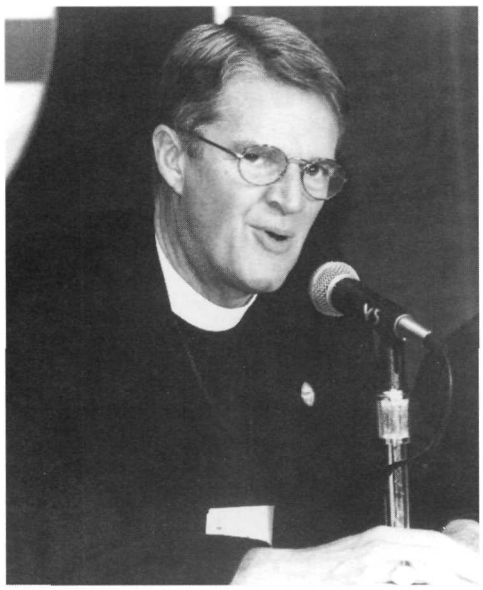
The church's new presiding bishop: Frank Griswold

by Jacqueline Schmitt

Guiding the church along the journey from conversation to conversion describes Frank Tracy Griswold's understanding of the essential ministry of bishop. "We are designed to discover truth together through conversation," he said soon after his election.

Griswold was elected in 1985 as co-adjutor of a diocese ready to move forward on the ordination and deployment of women and toward more openness regarding homosexuality. He has described some of this process as "excruciating," but as a relative newcomer to the diocese, I found it refreshing, progressive and catholic in the sense of being open to a wide diversity of people and concerns. "The jewel in the biretta belt," some used to call Chicago, with its past reputation for high Anglo-Catholicism and an all-male priesthood. Perhaps wrenching for some raised under that old synthesis, but for all his willingness to listen to objections to women and openly gay clergy, Griswold has held his ground. During all these conversations, women and openly lesbian and gay clergy and laypersons are present, active and in positions of leadership in the diocese.

"Conversation and conversion come from the same root word meaning to turn or to be turned," Griswold said in his sermon at General Convention. Such conversation can be a welcome relief to some but others find his ambiguity frustrating. A clergy day on homosexuality held a few years ago may illustrate that. Four clergymen spoke, two "for" and two "against" ordination of openly gay clergy. Not all diocesan clergy attended, and perhaps no one's deeply held conviction was changed, for the tone of the day was friendly and conversant. But for Griswold, these "converting conversations" happen among equals. Those expanding the expectations of the church are as much on the inside of the church as are those who argue the traditions they hold should never change.



Frank Tracy Griswold at final General Convention press conference ENS/Jim Solheim

To hold so articulate a vision of the church catholic raises our expectations of Frank Griswold as a bishop who can apply that vision in society. He has been less active in the public sphere than other religious leaders in Chicago, although his spiritual journey draws him into the heart of Christ, with its deep compassion for the heart of the world. We who believe the church should confront the powers and principalities should urge Griswold to keep listening to the cries of those excluded by racism and social and economic forces and not only those excluded by the actions of the church.

Stewardship is a concern many have raised about the Diocese of Chicago, whose giving to the national church plummeted two years ago. Responding to anger and dissatisfaction with diocesan structures, Griswold led the parishes in a five-year experiment with purely voluntary giving. What it has taught him is how much effort goes into telling the people of the church about the work of the church, and how involved the bishop must be in that task of persuasive "selling."

The task of persuading the whole of the Episcopal Church to support its work is before Frank Griswold now. The actions of General Convention lead me to think he is inheriting a church far less divided than the one Bishop Browning greeted 12 years ago. His vision of embracing catholicity may fit this church as we come to real consensus — an apparantly liberal consensus — on ordination and liturgy. The challenge before us all is to take that progessive, catholic vision into the world that desperately needs to hear the liberating word of the Gospel and feel the embracing touch of Christ.

We who believe the church should confront the powers and principalities should urge Griswold to keep listening to the cries of those excluded by racism and social and economic forces and not only those excluded by the actions of the church.

Jacqueline Schmitt is the Episcopal chaplain at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and editor of *Plumbline*, a publication that addresses issues of ministry in higher education.

Vital Signs

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A vote (finally) taking a clear stand on women's ordination

by Katie Sherrod

Three years ago, at the General Convention in Indianapolis, the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) demanded that the Episcopal Church take a clear stand on whether the canon on ordination was mandatory or permissive.

The church waffled — setting up three more years of dialogue on "implementing" Canon III.8.1. But in Philadelphia, the ESA finally got what it asked for. It just didn't get what it wanted.

By decisive votes in both houses, General Convention made it clear Canon III.8.1 is mandatory, and that all dioceses must find ways to ordain women to the priesthood and for female priests to exercise their ministry. The four non-complying dioceses have three "more" years to figure out a way to do this.

The four non-complying bishops reacted in ways reflective of their leadership styles. William Wantland of Eau Claire said — yet once again — that he would retire. John David Scholfield said he would do what is necessary. Keith Ackerman of Quincy got teary. Jack Iker started uttering threats and promising defiance.

The vote was the culmination of years of work by members of the Episcopal Women's Caucus and by countless lay people in the Dioceses of Eau Claire, Quincy, San Joaquin and Fort Worth who support, want, feel in need of the ministry of female priests. More importantly, it was a recognition that the ministries of ordained women are worth valuing, and that all dioceses should have the chance to experience the grace they offer.

It became clear early on that most people had had enough of stalling on this issue. The Convention's legislative committee on ministry heard the testimony of more than 50 people. Each witness was given three minutes to state her or his position. Iker, however, was given more than a half hour to explain the so-called Dallas-Fort Worth plan he and James Stanton, bishop of the neighboring Diocese of Dallas, have devised.

Under this "plan," a female priest licensed in the Diocese of Dallas would be allowed to function in Fort Worth. A parish who insisted on "going against [Iker's] wishes" and calling a female priest also would be placed under Stanton's authority. That parish's money would remain in Fort Worth, however. The female priest would be barred from Fort Worth's diocesan convention.

"Conscience is mine to pay the price for, but I do not believe that someone else should impose their conscience on others and make them pay the price."
— Lucinda Laird of Newark

Iker said this plan had been accepted by the rectors of Fort Worth parishes who support the ordination of women. His account of that pre-General Convention meeting is at odds, however, with that of several priests who were there. They say they were given to understand that it was this, or nothing. Given that choice, they accepted it.

But, they said, Iker made it clear that any rector who hired a female priest, and any parish who called a female priest would be in deep trouble with their bishop. Said one priest who was present at the meeting: "It was here's a plan, but don't you dare take advantage of it."

And indeed, Iker said in Philadelphia that if a parish insisted on having a female priest, "I would consider it a breakdown of the pastoral relationship."

A subcommittee of the committee on ministry, at the urging of members Keith Ackerman, the ESA bishop of Quincy, and Judy Mayo, a lay deputy from Fort Worth, made an attempt to offer immunity from presentments for clergy opposed to women's ordination who serve in dioceses attempting to implement the church laws. Catherine Roskam, Bishop of Suffragan of New York, however, reminded the committee why concerns about presentments were in the air — because of the presentment brought by these very same bishops against Walter Righter, the retired bishop of Iowa. The proposed amendment was soundly defeated.

Then the resolutions moved on to the House of Deputies, where, in a vote by orders, lay deputies approved the resolution enforcing the ordination canons (A052) with 69 yes votes, 30 no votes, and 13 deputations divided. Clergy deputations voted with 70 yes votes, 32 no votes and 11 divided. Divided votes are cast as no votes. A simple majority of 57 affirmative votes was needed for passage.

A second resolution protecting the rights of those hold differing viewpoints on women's ordination (A053) was approved with 71 lay deputations voting yes, 24 no and 16 divided. Clergy deputations voted 71 yes, 28 no, and 12 divided.

The word "mandatory" was a stumbling block for some deputies. The American Anglican Council had recruited several ordained women to sign an "Open Letter" in which they opposed A052 and A052, and attempted to shame those women pushing for passage by accusing them of the "sin of impatience."

Edward Little of the Diocese of San Joaquin (California), a clergy member of the ministry committee, also urged "patience": "I believe in conversion. In 1976 I opposed the ordination of women.

Katie Sherrod, who lives in the Diocese of Fort Worth, is vice president of the Episcopal Women's Caucus.

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'The Faith of our Fathers is being taken from us'

The Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) held its ninth annual legislative meeting at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Rosemont, Penn., immediately following the Episcopal Church's General Convention last July. In reviewing the actions of the convention ESA president Donald P. Moriarty, II, lamented that "the spiritual environment within the Episcopal Church continues to be poisoned by false teaching, and continues to degrade." Among the convention's offending actions he cited passage of legislation (1) requiring that women be given access to ordination, (2) providing medical insurance for "domestic partners" that include partners of the same sex, (3) directing the standing commission on Liturgy and Music to study liturgies for the blessing of same-sex commitments and (4) approving full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America despite a provision that would allow for this church to accept the ordained leadership of Lutheran clergy not in the apostolic succession.

"The election of Bishop Frank Griswold as Presiding Bishop is basis for major concern for the future," Moriarty also claimed. Griswold "deliberately rejected biblical authority," the ESA president noted, when at the 1994 General Convention in Indianapolis he signed a statement of *"Koinonia"* affirming that gay and lesbian Christians' committed relationships can be on a par with the marriages of heterosexual Christians. In addition, "[Griswold] has knowingly ordained practicing homosexuals and has helped design and has commended forms of worship whose content clearly deviates from historic liturgies and the statements of the creeds." Although "[Griswold] is a highly personable and likable individual," Moriarty said, "his theological center is certainly not the historic center of the Christian faith."

With this General Convention, the ESA leader complained, "the body of doctrine of this Church is now in the process of being changed and no longer will it mean the same thing to be a member of the Episcopal Church." Regretfully, he said, "The Faith of our Fathers is being taken away from us," a fact which the group has documented in "a rather expensive, but very worthwhile video project" which documents the Philadelpia General Convention. "No longer will individuals be able to deny their statements and actions," Moriarty said. "We have their faces and their words on video tape for all the world to see."

Searching for how "to make possible our continued health and safety as a spiritual community within this poisoned and oppressive spiritual environment," the ESA has concluded that it has no option but to establish itself as a new orthodox province of the Anglican Communion in North America, although the open letter issued at the close of the Rosemont assembly said "we are not leaving anything or going anywhere." Calling on "all orthodox Episcopalians and orthodox associations and ministries to join us in this task of renewal, revival and rebuilding," the group has outlined a plan by which the dioceses led by the four ESA bishops who refuse to ordain women priests — Eau Claire, Fort Worth, Quincy and San Joaquin — will form the core of the new province. Parishes outside these dioceses who want to part of the new province are invited to ask the ESA bishops or bishops who are part of the Dallas-based conservative coalition called the American Anglican Council for "episcopal oversight." Individuals who can't find a nearby "orthodox parish home," are encouraged to build their own with the help of the North American Missionary society run by Jon Shuler.

— Julie A. Wortman

In time I came to believe that God is calling women and men to the priesthood and episcopate. My heart was changed because the Holy Spirit had time and space to transform me."

But in the committee hearings, Little had made it clear that his "conversion" happened because he had had an opportunity to experience the ministry of female priests. People in the four non-complying dioceses are not allowed that opportunity. One cannot "receive" what one is not allowed to experience.

Anne Robbins of Southern Ohio, a clergy member of the Committee on Dialogue on the Implementation of Canon III.8.1 and a member of the ministry committee, responded, "It is time to give our pain to God for good. ... I believe that God is asking us to help push away the stone from the tomb in which women's ministries have been buried. God is asking us to move on, to state definitively that the ministries of women who are priests are welcomed and needed throughout the church."

The so-called "conscience clause" was brought up more than once as the resolutions were debated, with Lucinda Laird, a clergy deputy from Newark, pointing out that, "Conscience is mine to pay the price for, but I do not believe that someone else should impose their conscience on others and make them pay the price."

Then came the vigil in the House of Bishops.

After the four non-complying bishops were allowed to address the house, Dorsey Henderson of Upper South Carolina offered an amendment that would have prevented the provisions of resolution A052 from going into effect until new bishops are elected in the four dioceses.

Vermont's Mary Adelia McLeod pointed out that in the case of Iker and Ackerman, both in their 40s, Henderson's amendment could mean an "unconscionable" wait of 20 years or more for women to exercise their priestly ministry in those dioceses.

Sanford Hampton, assisting bishop in the Diocese of Olympia (Washington),

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opposed Henderson's amendment, saying, "The diocese is not to be identified with the individual who happens to the hold the office of bishop."

The amendment was defeated in a roll-call vote, 138 to 51.

Then John MacNaughton, retired bishop of the Diocese of West Texas, offered an amendment that would have barred presentments being brought against any clergy whose dioceses have alternative ordination processes for women. That amendment was defeated in a voice vote.

Then came the roll call vote on A052. It passed overwhelmingly, as did A053.

Given their eagerness to take Righter to court, it is no wonder the four bishops opposed to ordaining women were not comforted by assurances that no presentments would be attempted against bishops seeking to comply with the new provisions. Their unwillingness to trust the good faith of their brother and sister bishops was revealing.

In a press conference following the vote, Iker said he would engage in "active resistance." He has since announced that his "plan" is as far as he is willing to go.

However, given that Fort Worth is named by the ESA as one of the four pillar dioceses of their proposed illegal province, it appears that he and the other three bishops are willing to go much farther.

Telling the story

"Stand in the Temple" is a new video available from the Episcopal Women's Caucus that tells the story of the battle for women's ordination in the Episcopal Church in the words of the women who participated in the struggle. Filmed at the Caucus' 25th Anniversary celebration in Alexandria, Va., and produced by Katie Sherrod, this moving account is a must-see for anyone interested in this compelling chapter of women's church history. Copies are available for $29.95 plus $3 for postage from Carlin Rankin, 25420 44th Street, Washington, D.C. 20007-1105. Make checks payable to "EWC."

Title IV disciplinary canons amended

by Gay Jennings

When I was appointed to the General Convention legislative committee on canons in 1991, I wondered for what sin(s) I was doing penance. Canons? Church laws? Rules and regulations? What a waste of my time. How boring! I could not have been more wrong.

I have come to a new appreciation for the place of canons in the life of a community of faith. Every community has rules to govern their common life. Canons are not the Gospel, but they can and do reflect Gospel values — truth, accountability and justice, mercy and restoration, and equity. The formulation, interpretation, and implementation of canons is justice work.

Title IV has been described as a work in progress. Significant progress was made in Philadelphia. The 1994 General Convention approved the first major overhaul of the disciplinary canons in decades. The discipline of deacons and priests was the primary focus in 1994 with the sections pertaining to bishops the primary focus this time around.

After 27 hours of hearings and committee meetings, much of which pertained to the discipline of bishops, someone quipped, "Why are we spending so much time discussing something that has never happened?"

The proposed revisions to Title IV sailed through the House of Deputies with only minor amendments. To the credit of the House of Bishops, they, too, overwhelmingly adopted the revisions along with a few amendments that strengthened the 56-page document.

There were minimal attempts to prevent a single complainant or alleged victim from being able to file a charge against a bishop, and to shorten the time allotted for the "window" which permits charges for offenses that were previously barred by the statute of limitations. The bishops, who promised in their ordination vows "to defend those who have no helper," did not assent to these changes.

Major changes to the disciplinary canons as applied to bishops include a provision giving the Presiding Bishop the ability to issue a Temporary Inhibition which includes consent of the Standing Committee if the bishop exercises jurisdiction; the creation of a Review Committee composed of all orders to function like a Standing Committee in the investigation of alleged misconduct; expansion of those able to bring a charge against a bishop; a different process for an alleged doctrinal offense with a charge brought to the House of Bishops, and a statemnt of disassociation voted upon before a presentment may be considered; and a first reading of a constitutional change to include clergy and laity on trial courts for bishops.

Other general changes include defining aTemporary Inhibition as as an extraordinary remedy to be used sparingly and limited to situations where immediate or irreparable harm might be done to individuals or the good order of the Church; provision for "Consultants" to assist those accused of an Offense in fully understanding the content and mechanicsTitle IV at the beginning of a disciplinary process; replacement of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure used by ecclesiastical courts with Rules of Procedure designed specifically for proceedings under Title IV; and a provision for conciliation of disciplinary matters (voluntary mediation) not involving immorality or serious personal misconduct.

— Gay Jennings is a deputy from the Diocese of Ohio.

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Same-sex blessings still on agenda

by Jane Garrett

At the best attended hearing at General Convention, approximately 50 persons testified, alternating very moving pro and con sentiments, on the subject of same-sex blessing rites. The next morning the remaining witnesses continued the testimony. When brought before the full House of Deputies, the resolution passed by several diocesan conventions calling for the preparation of a rite for inclusion in The Book of Occasional Services, failed on a vote by orders — but only by one diocese in each order. The closeness of the vote seemed to surprise proponents and opponents alike.

On the penultimate day of Convention, the Diocese of Missouri's version of the blessing resolution (preparation of a rite for study only) came before the bishops. Joe Doss of New Jersey, introduced a strengthened substitute resolution with a built-in timetable for continued theological study by the Standing Liturgical Commission (now combined with Music) followed by a report to be available, with recommended future steps, by November 1999, for consideration by the 73rd General Convention. The bishops passed it and the next morning, without a vote by orders, so did the Deputies. When asked at the conclusion of the bishops' debate if this action would mean a moratorium on blessings at least until the Denver Convention in 2000, Doss replied, "No."

In related actions, survivor benefits from the Pension Fund for same-sex spouses failed to pass.Many Deputies said they were unwilling to vote for this until the church settles the same-sex blessing issue.

— Jane Garrett is a clergy deputy from the Diocese of Vermont.

Browning: naming hate

Let us focus for a moment on our struggles around sexuality. And what could be closer to us than something that is central to each of us, at the very root of our being. We actually do agree on most issues around sexuality. We agree on the sanctity of marriage. We agree that explitative relationships and abusive relationships are evil. We have a message for our culture about this. We should be delivering it with unity and strength. Instead, we have been diverted by fear, and, let me name it, by hate.

And I have wondered if this diversion does not come from the evil from which we pray daily for God's deliverance. Our witness, which should and could be vigorous and storn, has been divided, and at times ludicrous, to our society, because we do not agree on what a "wholesome" relationship means. Some of the most extreme among us have used the disagreement without our body to foment difficulty and advance themselves and their causes. This is not of God. Surely, this is not of God.

I'm a traditionalist. That's right. I'm a traditionalist because I treasure and believe in the ethos of Anglicanism. As anglicans, we discern God's will through Scripture, tradition and reason. However, some have chosen to embrace biblical literalism instead of our Anglican tradition. History tells us that biblical literalism was used to support both the practice of slavery and the denigration of women. We have moved past slavery and we are moving past the oppression of women. It is time to move past using literalistic readings of the Bible to create prejudices against our gay and lesbian brothers and issters. Biblical literalism may be someone's tradition, but it's not our tradition and it's time we came home to our Anglican roots.

— excerpt from Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning's address to the 72nd General Convention, July 18, 1997

Praying diversity

The Episcopal Church must continually encompass ever greater diversity of language and images if God's diverse people are to worship authentically and joyfully. Where there are problems with liturgical change in congregations today, the reason is generally not in having too many liturgical forms, or too broad a spectrum of ways to speak about God; it is in the failure to nurture spiritual maturity which seeks the living God in the present moment, and not always in the static comfort of familiar words. Triennial General Conventions can't do much to form mature Christians, but last summer's Convention at least took some steps toward expanding and enriching our common worship.

The newly-constituted Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) was directed "to prepare a plan for liturgical revision and enrichment of the common worship of this church" reflecting the church's multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multigenerational composition.Revised and expanded Supplemental Liturgical Materials for the Eucharist and Daily Office were also authorized for use during the next three years, and the SCLM given authority to develop new pastoral liturgies. Two inclusive-language translations of the psalms were approved for study and use and a hymnal supplement of music by and about women was approved — but no funding is recommended in the budget. Awaking to the fact that Episcopal congregations worship in more than 20 languages *other* than English, Convention asked the SCLM to recommend translations of the Bible in these languages for addition to the list of approved translations.

Convention also commeded for study and discussion the recommendations of the Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Renewing the Anglican Eucharist, and by calling for a task force to develop theological guidelines for future hymnody.

— Elizabeth Morris Downie. Downie is a clergy deputy from Eastern Michigan.

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Bridging the left/right gap through world mission?

by Ian T. Douglas

Structural reform was supposed to be a hot issue at the 72nd General Convention. The Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church (SCS) had been given a mandate to review the structures of the episcopal Church as "if we were starting a new institution." for three years the SCS worked tirelessly to evaluate, review and propose new possibilities for the institutional organization of the Episcopal Church. To the SCS' credit, their work was done in consultation with other interim bodies and the executive agencies of the church. A "Comment Draft Report" released by the SCS in July of 1996 and responses to the draft were incorporated into the commission's final report.

For those who were looking for radical changes in the structures of the Episcopal Church, the SCS proposal to the General Convention was disappointing. At the macro level, the institutional organization of the Episcopal Church was left intact. Most recommendations of the SCS had to do with streamlining and consolidating the number and portfolios of the standing commissions and legislative committees of the General Convention and clarifying the responsibilities and powers of the Executive Council, the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop.

Under the watchful eye of a senior church politician, Byron Rushing of Massachusetts, chair of the House of Deputies legislative committee on structure, the majority of recommendations of the SCS were endorsed by the General Convention. Previous standing commissions concerned with evangelism, human affairs and metropolitan areas were replaced by a single Standing Commission on Domestic Mission and Evangelism. Likewise, the Councils for the Development of Ministry and the Board of Theological Education were combined under the new Standing Commission on Ministry and the standing commissions on Church Music and Liturgy became the new Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. The number and portfolios of legislative committees, however, were left relatively intact.

At the executive level, the office of the President of the House of Deputies was made a Vice President of the Executive Council although a proposed salary for the post was turned away by the bishops. The role of Presiding Bishop was clarified as chief pastor and primate and a chief operation officer position was canonically mandated to help the Presiding Bishop manage the affairs of the Executive Council and staff. The convention also adopted a new unified budget combining the General Convention and "program" budgets of the national church.

The gulf between the perceived liberal leadership of the national church and the rising conservatives in the AAC may not be possible to bridge. The divisions between these two camps were especially evident in the debate over a proposed Partnership for World Mission.

But while these minor structural adjustments to the *status quo* were slowly crawling through the legislative process, few noticed that a new parallel structure in the Episcopal Church was beginning to raise its head. For over a year, conservative Episcopalians and like-minded agencies and organizations have been organizing themselves into one united voice. The American Anglican Council (AAC) was formed in August of 1996 to be a "network of individuals, parishes and specialized ministries who affirm biblical authority and Anglican orthodoxy in the Episcopal Church." Headquartered in Dallas, Tex., its leadership includes two bishops, James M. Stanton and Alex A. Dickson, along with a Virginia priest, John A.M. Guernsey, and Diane L. Knippers, President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a Washington-based conservative political action committee.

Standing in the exhibit hall at the General Convention, a casual observer would not find a strong presence of the AAC. A keen eye would only find the AAC shield (a co-opted version of the Anglican Communion's compassrose) hanging in the Episcopalians United booth. But first impressions are misleading. Less than two blocks from the Convention Center stood the well-organized and well-funded General Convention headquarters for the AAC. Each day, AAC leadership would lead a luncheon briefing for bishops and deputies on legislation coming before the two houses. Deputies and bishops who found travel to the off-site AAC headquarters difficult were transported by a courtesy van.

Press releases originating in these daily AAC briefings announced that, "Days of passive acceptance [of liberal directions in the Episcopal Church] are over," and "Orthodox Episcopalians vow to reshape the future of the Episcopal Church." Said the IRD's Knippers: "We yearn for our church to devote its energies — not to defending homosexual activity — but to sustaining family life, building strong,

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worshiping congregations and expanding our evangelistic mission at home and abroad. Our goal is nothing less than to reshape the future of the Episcopal Church."

In a follow-up meeting immediately after the convention, the AAC and its supporters indicated that they are already beginning to prepare for a strengthened presence at the General Convention of 2000 in Denver.

The gulf between the perceived liberal leadership of the national church and the rising conservatives in the AAC may not be possible to bridge. The divisions between these two camps in the Episcopal Church were especially evident in the debate over a proposed Partnership for World Mission brought to Philadelphia by the Standing Commission on World Mission, on which I served. The proposed partnership sought to bring together over 40 diverse groups, agencies, national church bodies, parishes and dioceses involved in mission outside the U.S. under the auspices of the Standing Commission on World Mission. The fact that the breadth of those involved in the Partnership idea spanned the spectrum from the national church to the AAC caused both sides to consider the idea suspect. Old guard liberals were leery of the mission theology and methods of some of the more conservative mission groups involved in the partnership and sought to ensure that the national church would have ultimate authority over the group's activities. On the other hand, reactionary conservatives wondered why independent missionary organizations were willing to be in partnership with the General Convention and the established governance structures of the national church.

Neither side could see that despite profound differences across the political spectrum, the world mission community in the Episcopal Church has more to gain than to lose from working together.

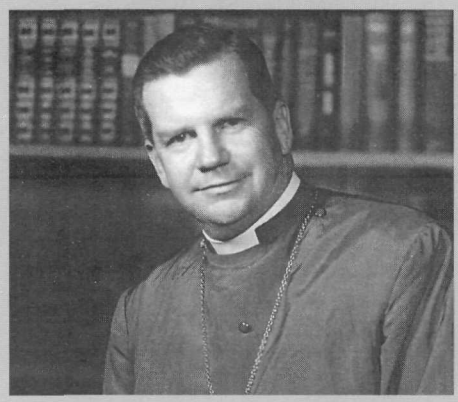
By the end of the General Convention, the wholeness and healthy witness of the world mission community had prevailed. The Partnership for Global Mission had been endorsed by both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops, although serious, potentially debilitating, concessions had to be made — the partnership will be primarily accountable to the Episcopal Church through the Executive Council and not through the Standing Commission on World Mission, but with no funding from the program budget of the national church.

What remains unclear is whether the world mission community — or any other such mission-driven alliance in the church — will be able to continue to be a bridge between warring liberals and traditionalists as it works to realize its goals. The bifurcation between a perceived liberal establishment and a rising network of traditionalist Episcopalians is having a profound impact on the operation of the church. It seems that the rhetoric over the past triennium about "two Episcopal Churches" is no longer just talk.

John Elbridge Hines, 1910-1997

On July 21, about midway through the 72nd General Convention meeting in Philadelphia, the bishops, deputies and convention visitors celebrated the life of former Episcopal Church presiding bishop John Elbridge Hines during a Monday morning convention eucharist. Hines, who had been ill for some time, had died July 19 in Austin, Tex.

Elected bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Texas at age 34, Hines is credited with the founding of a nationally known seminary, and an unusually large number of other church institutions. He also was a strong crusader for civil rights and economic justice. As presiding bishop Hines chose to confront head-on the powers and principalities exposed by the inner-city rebellions of the summer of 1967 with his General Convention Special Program for community empowerment.



John Elbridge Hines

Hines hoped this social justice initiative "would save the church's soul [and] show that the church had at least a partial understanding of what the cross meant," but many congregations protested the radical nature of the program by withholding funds from the national church. Critics of Hines' outspoken social justice leadership — he also played a pioneering role in the South Africa divestment movement during apartheid — believe his tenure as presiding bishop began the denomination on a path of crippling internal conflict and membership loss that it has continued to travel to the present day. However, many Episcopalians, including current presiding bishop Edmond L. Browning consider him a compelling role model.

"John Hines was a model of what it is to reflect the ocurage and compassion of Christ," Browning said during the Philadelphia convention.

"I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to tell John Hines that he was my hero."

—based on a report from Episcopal News Service

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continued from page 7

suffering greater in significance than his word of release to the captives and his call to reject the domination systems of this world. Or that a woman priest could stand up in an open hearing to defend her view (and the view of more than 80 other women priests like her) that the church would be committing the "sin of impatience" if it prevented the four bishops and dioceses that currently reject women's ordination from continuing to discriminate against women. Noting that racism still flourishes in this country despite the civil rights movement of the 1960s, she offered the opinion that legislating non-discrimination just doesn't work. As one African-American lay woman pointed out in disgusted rebuttal, "The civil rights laws may not have changed racist hearts, but at least they prevented people like me from continuing to be lynched."

But mind-boggling as some of the debate was, my deeper disappointment was with the prevailing atmosphere of the General Convention itself. First, everywhere I turned I encountered a pervasive focus on rank reinforced by clerical collars and exaggerated attention to (mostly clerical) titles. I am suspicious of glowing affirmations of "the ministry of the baptized" in such a context, and long for the day when the primary definition of "ministry" is what church members are doing to confront the powers and principalities of this world in their workplaces and community institutions and not some form of church-based pastoral care, religious education or sacramental leadership.

Likewise, the mindnumbing civility of speech couched in the language of Robert's Rules of Order and the attendant formality of the legislative process seemed to me to create, especially in the House of Deputies, a chilling atmosphere of diffident self-restraint that was in stark contrast to the life-and-death character of many of the issues the Convention considered with such unrelenting efficiency. Here, too, I'm skeptical that function follow form — it just doesn't seem likely to me that decisions made in such a polite, orderly and reticent way will be communicated to home dioceses and congregations with even a fraction of the passion necessary to inspire heartfelt commitment to these causes.

Finally, I was dismayed to find, even among people of a progressive/radical political bent, a strong mistrust of authority exercised in non-hierarchical ways. So oriented to the top-down, clericalist tradition of the institution were the deputies, in fact, that they rejected out of hand a proposal that, in addition to the bishops, they also be allowed to participate directly in the election of the church's presiding bishop. Bishops, we apparently believe, know best, despite the abundant evidence of experience and the superior wisdom we find in circles of mutual leadership and truth-telling.

In the end I cannot put aside, I confess, the nagging conviction that something is missing from the church's corporate life. And I'm well aware that this missing piece has little to do with how General Convention operates — the way we choose to make decisions is merely a reflection, I know, of what is beneath the surface.

But my fear is that in digging past appearances we will not find abundant treasure. As theologian and Scripture expert Verna Dozier reminds us in her compelling book, *The Dream of God* (Cowley, 1991), the institutional church in all of its forms has rejected God's call to participate "in God's dream of a good creation," with Jesus as the model.

Paradoxically, she says, the church carries the dream nonetheless. And, as one friend reminds me, "the church is a great place for meeting great people," people who crave to live the dream.

Organizational theorist Margarent Wheatley (see *TW* 5/97) tells us that these days people everywhere are hungry for heartfelt and sustained conversation about the things that matter to them most. It is this sort of discourse, she says, that will bring about the social change for which the biblical witness suggests God is longing. With this in mind, I was heartened to hear Frank Griswold speak of the church's need for deep, converting conversation in the context of his first sermon as presiding bishop-elect.

"Conversation — considering the views of others with an undefended heart — can be terrifying," Griswold said, "because conversation at this level exposes us to the possibility of encountering the mystery and imagination of God" in "the lived truth of another, a lived truth which frequently confutes and stretches and transforms our paltry and partial grasp."

Somehow, I am convinced, however painful, the church must make room for such embodied truth-telling. Without it, we will never get beyond a theology that says Jesus' best gift to us was his death.

New Jamestown 'Covenant'

The 1997 General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to declare 1997-2007 a "Decade of Remembrance, Recognition and Reconciliation" for and with native peoples. The decade will be launched this November 1 — All Saints' Day — in Jamestown, Va., when representatives from many American Indian tribes and nations will meet with Episcopal Church leaders to sign a new Jamestown Covenant framed to create a new vision of mutual ministry and a new community of Gospel proclamation while taking honest stock of the past.

The year 2007 marks the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement on American shores. In 1607 King James I stipulated that the Jamestown colonists were to share the Gospel with indigenous peoples of the western world, an act which launched an era of missionary outreach that eventually resulted in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The General Convention also called on the church to support initiatives like the Crazy Horse Defense Project, which opposes commercial exploitation of Native Americans and their symbols.

— based on ***Ikhana*** *and ENS reports*

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Texas death row

by Herb Gunn

Texas Death Row, photographs by Ken Light, essay by Suzanne Donovan (University Press of Mississippi, 1997).

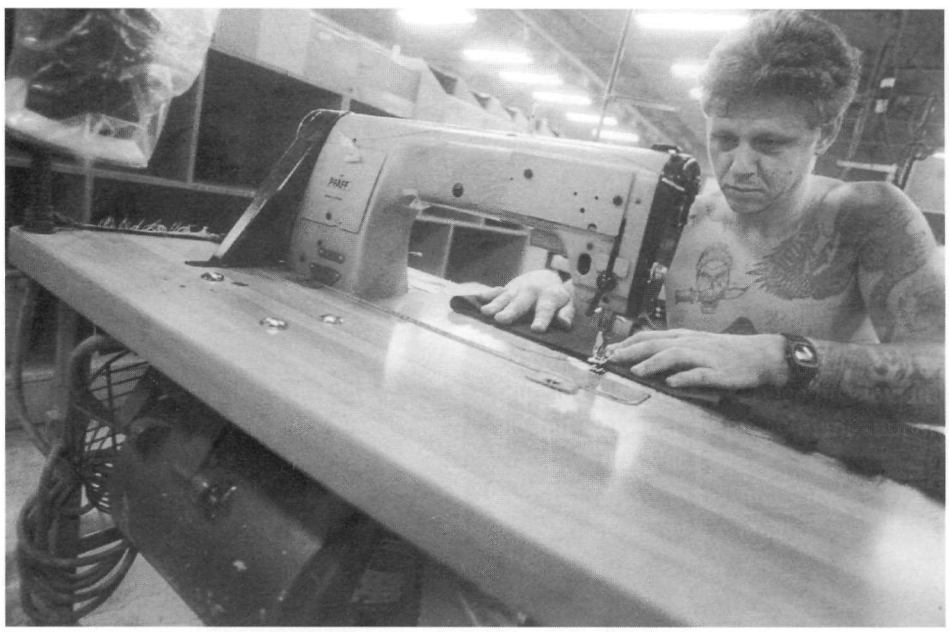
Ken Light's photography, and the prose by himself and Suzanne Donovan in *Texas Death Row* is a frank and unsentimental view of the concealed world of men awaiting execution.

Above all, the work is honest. It avoids slipping into a sideshow of cozy captives and death chair conversions that would cheapen the debate on capital punishment.

The authors dislodge the reader's stereotypes about life behind the walls of Ellis prison in Huntsville, Tex., which they visited on several occasions during 1994. In a few instances, they risk burlesque portraits of unhewn men with ribald wall hangings and tattoo-stained skin. Accompanying the sometimes frightful images are unabashed official accounts of the murder and mayhem discharged by those sentenced to die.

Some readers won't pick up the book twice. But those who do will discover images less about death than about life. It is a life of raw humanity — ambiguous, challenging and troubling — hidden from a nation where passions about the death penalty too often scorn ambiguity, where advocates on both sides might prefer the comforts of their own caricatures over the haunting images caught in black and white.

This is precisely the formidable contribution that *Texas Death Row* makes to the debate over capital punishment. Life on death row is reduced, squeezed into a mere sample of personal possessions and living quarters not much larger than a single bed. It is a world where a modicum of free movement is sometimes swapped for four hours of work in the prison garment factory — making clothes that may outlast the maker.



Sewing guards' uniform pants
Garment factory

Photo © Ken Light

More subtly, however, the book explores a confusion of the soul where the usual measurements of time and faith are disturbingly reordered.

Most of us live in a world in which death is defined by life and how it was lived. When death comes, it is celebrated because of the life and verve that preceded it and the hope of redemption that follows. But the decree of capital punishment reverses the theology; it creates life defined by death. Time is no longer measured from its source and origin forward but it is counted in days from its end backward. Capital punishment moves men and women toward death as the final outcome — no redemption and no hope.

"Hope is something I really can't afford in here," says one of the inmates interviewed. "Hope will kill you."

In one image, the worn face of Bobby West is sandwiched in the horizontal aperture of his maximum security cell. His gaze is haunting. He holds upright, as if captive as well, a snapshot of his boyish figure in a cub scout uniform.

Therein lies the gift of the book's uncensored view. It holds both sides accountable to look into the eyes and the lives of men on death row. TW

review

Herb Gunn is a photographer and editor of *The Record*, the newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan.

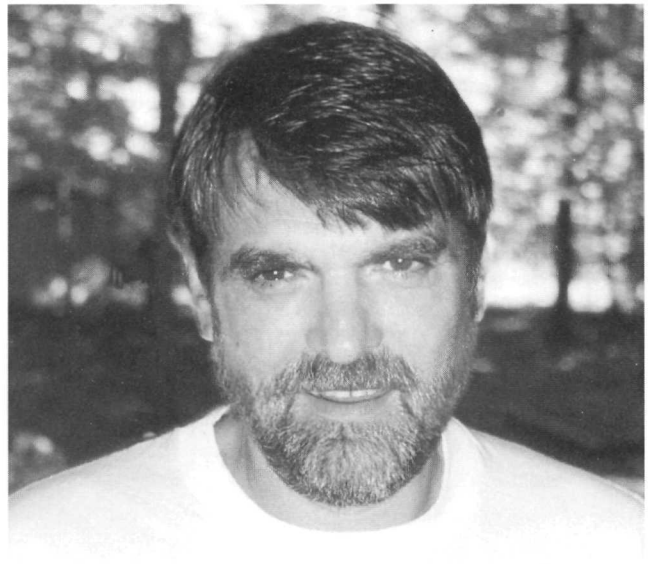
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Moving toward abolition

by Marianne Arbogast

I began to picture my grandmother in tears. I began thinking about what she believed in, and there was no doubt in my mind that her tears were tears of compassion for this girl on death row and for her family.



Bill Pelke

This past spring, Bill Pelke bought a bus and retired from his 30-year job as a crane operator at Bethlehem Steel, with plans to tour the country. The 1965 former Eastern Trailways cruiser is not most people's idea of a recreational vehicle — but then, recreation is not what Pelke has in mind.

The day Pelke retired — May 14 — was the twelfth anniversary of an event which changed the course of his life. On that day in 1985, his 78-year-old grandmother was murdered in her Gary, Ind. home by four ninth-grade girls who wanted money to go to a video arcade. In the aftermath of the tragedy, Pelke underwent a conversion which led him to extend forgiveness to those who killed his grandmother and devote his life to fighting the death penalty. His bus, christened "Abolition Movin'," will carry his campaign wherever the spirit moves.

The brutality of Ruth Pelke's death defies comprehension. Chosen because of her hospitality to neighborhood children, she willingly opened her door to the teens who inquired about taking Bible lessons. Once inside, one of the girls hit her over the head with a vase. Another, 15-year-old Paula Cooper, took a butcher knife from her purse and stabbed her 33 times, while the others searched for cash. They found $10 and a set of car keys. While Pelke lay dying, they drove her car to their high school and took several classmates for joyrides.

The girls were arrested and, over the next few months, three were convicted and sentenced to long prison terms. The fourth, Cooper, was regarded as the ringleader. As her trial approached, public sentiment strongly favored the death penalty. Pelke recalls that friends sought to console him with the words, "I hope the bitch burns." He did not disagree.

"I felt that if they didn't give the death penalty, they would be saying that my grandmother was not an important enough person to merit it," Pelke says. Leaving the courtroom after Cooper was sentenced to death, he told a reporter that "the judge did what he had to do."

For months, Pelke fought to suppress the painful image of his grandmother that haunted him. "Whenever I thought about my grandmother, I pictured how she died — butchered on the dining room floor where our family had gathered for so many years on joyous occasions."

More immediate personal struggles enabled Pelke to "put the murder and the trials on a back burner," he says. The breakup of a long-term relationship with the woman he was later to marry pushed him into a serious depression.

One afternoon in November, as Pelke sat high above the ground in the cab of his crane during a lull in his workday, he found himself in tears.

"I asked God why, why, why?" Pelke says. Painful memories assaulted him — the loss of a childhood sweetheart, combat and injury in Vietnam, a troubled marriage, divorce and separation from his three children, and the nightmarish death of his grandmother.

But as he prayed, a new image rose in his mind.

"I began to picture my grandmother in tears," Pelke says. "I began thinking about what she believed in, and there was no doubt in my mind that her tears were tears of compassion for this girl on death row and for her family.

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

"My mind flashed back to the day Paula was sentenced to death. Her grandfather began to wail, 'They're going to kill my baby,' and had to be escorted from the courtroom. As Paula was led away, tears were rolling off her cheeks onto her dress, causing dark blotches.

"I thought about my grandmother's faith and what the Bible taught about forgiveness. I knew Nana would not have wanted Paula put to death, and I felt like she wanted someone in our family to have the same compassion. I begged God to give me love and compassion for Paula Cooper and her family."

Pelke knew that his prayer had been answered when he started to think about what he could do for Cooper.

"I wanted to try to help her in any way I could, and I realized it would be terribly wrong for the state of Indiana to put her in the electric chair and send volts of electricity through her body."

From that moment, Pelke began to remember his grandmother alive and loving, "the way she lived and what she stood for and who she was," he says. "It was such a relief."

Immediately, he began writing Cooper, and at Christmas time, went to visit her grandfather.

The reaction of Pelke's family and friends was mixed. While many were impelled to rethink their own positions, others were confused and even hostile.

"One of the most hurtful things people say is, 'You must not have loved your grandmother very much,'" Pelke says. "I was told that by somebody very close to me."

At a friend's urging, Pelke wrote an article for a local paper. Soon afterwards, he was interviewed by an Italian journalist, and then asked to travel to Italy to appear on a television program.

"The Italians, who do not have a death penalty, could not understand why the state would want to execute someone who was only 15 years old," Pelke says.

His trip to Italy drew widespread media coverage and fueled a campaign for Cooper's removal from death row. Forty thousand Italians, mostly school children, signed a petition on her behalf, and the pope appealed for clemency.

"Eventually, in 1989, because of international embarrassment, the law was changed," Pelke says. "Before that, a 10-year-old could have gotten the electric chair in Indiana."

Although the age for legal execution was raised to 16, the court initially stipulated that Cooper would still be held under the old law. Later, her sentence was commuted to 60 years in prison.

A co-founder of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, Pelke says that forgiving Cooper "did more for me than it did for Paula."

"I don't go out and debate the death penalty," he says. "What we do is share our stories of the violence that took place in our lives, and share the healing.

"I watched the families of the Oklahoma bombing victims express so much pain and anger, and I know that what we're talking about can help them."

Pelke is troubled by the way the legal system manipulates grieving families.

"They are told by the courts that the death penalty is justice, that it is their only hope for closure and healing. But the day after the execution, they still have the hurt and pain and anger.

"They are not told about alternatives, such as life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, with the perpetrator doing work and putting money into a victims' fund, for counseling or support of families who have lost a breadwinner."

Letters and meetings between victims and perpetrators are also discouraged.

"Many people in prison would like to have contact with victims' families, but attorneys are generally opposed," Pelke says. "Defense attorneys are afraid their clients might say something that could be used against them."

Although Pelke and Cooper exchanged hundreds of letters, it was not until 1994 that he was finally allowed to visit her. He has continued to visit regularly.

His life has changed in many ways, Pelke says.

"I learned that forgiveness should be a way of life. There were people I had been working with whom I had held a grudge against for 10 years. I realized if I was going to forgive Paula and hold a grudge against others, I would be a hypocrite."

He also found himself re-examining other views. Although he was awarded a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam, he felt sickened by the jubilant support for the Gulf War.

"There had to be other ways," Pelke says. "I have seen enough death, and I don't want to see any more."

"Abolition Movin'" is both practical and symbolic, concretizing Pelke's commitment to be there for the long haul.

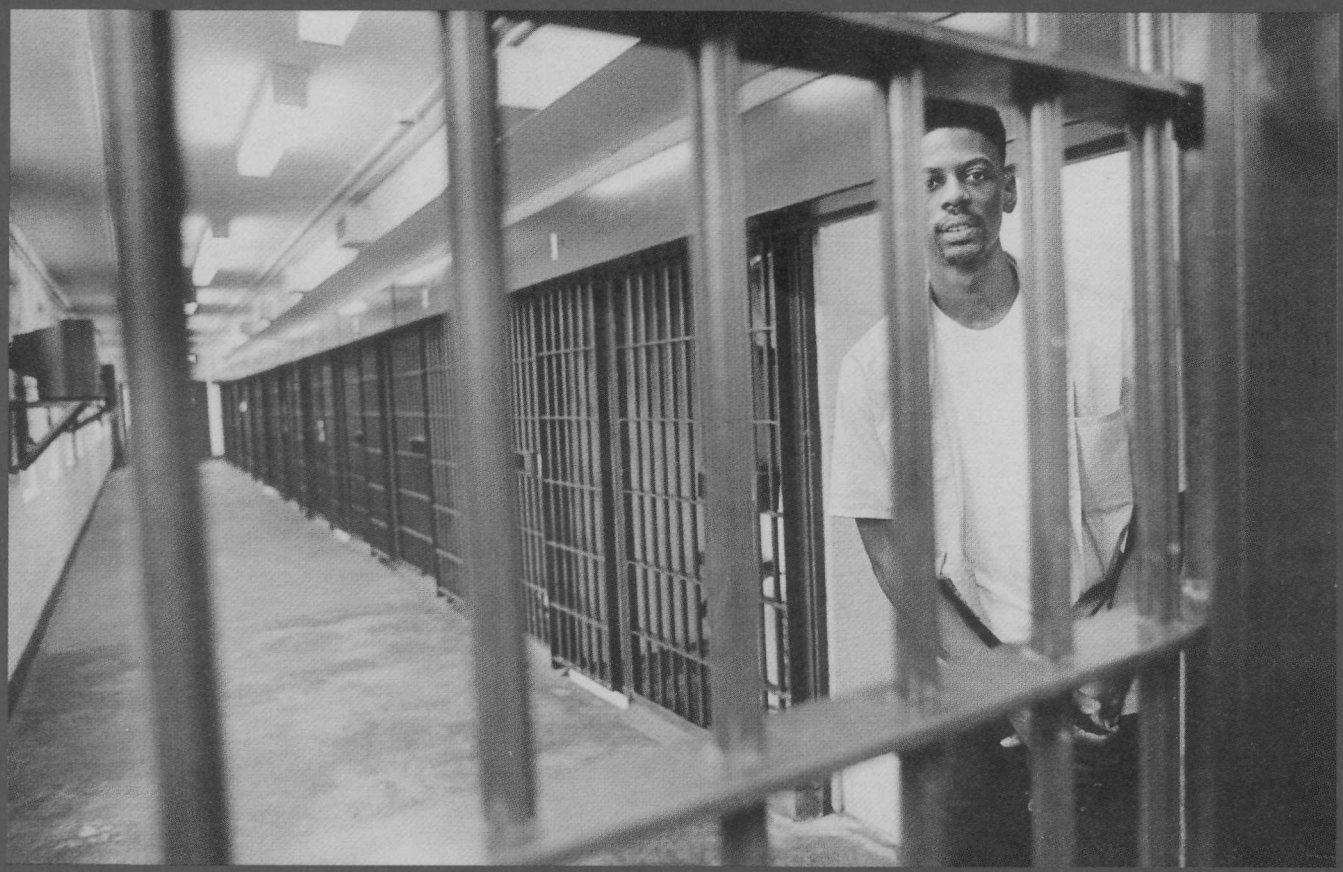
In June, he drove it to Washington, D.C., where he and others were on trial for unfurling an anti-death-penalty banner on the steps of the Supreme Court building on the anniversary of the first execution following reinstatement of the death penalty in the U.S.

"It was amazing to see the excitement the bus generated," he says, recounting a breakdown in a McDonald's parking lot that occasioned a string of conversations with restaurant patrons. During the trial and an overlapping fast and vigil, Pelke drove vigilers to Baltimore to protest an execution there.

"This is not something that will be over in a couple of years," he says.

"But I have seen many people whose hearts were touched, who changed their minds. People realize the death penalty is not doing what the politicians say. I plan to travel around until it is abolished." TW

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Edie Mitchell, on death row in Louisiana in 1994

Andrew Lichtenstein/Impact Visuals

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The Witness

Volume 80 • Number 10 • October, 1997

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Allies in Judaism

Unmasking the death penalty

THERE ARE SOME VERY REAL AND destructive problems with our nation's juvenile justice systems. Not only has the system itself failed miserably, but it has failed children in the process.

Once upon a time, we were a people of compassion. We sought understanding of complex social problems, like "What causes children to turn to crime and violence?" and "What causes delinquency?" When it came to light that the obstacles of children were produced by a society of adults that failed them, we opted to dismiss our persistence to find answers.

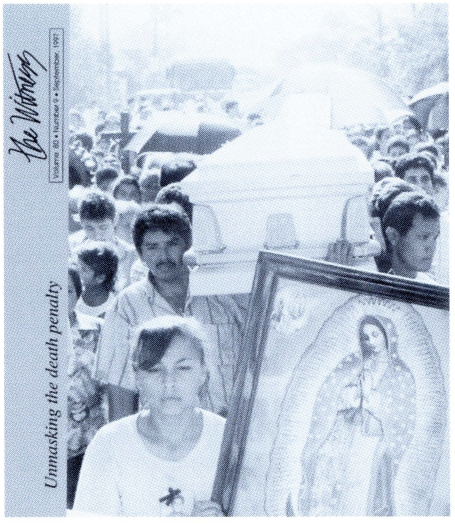
Once upon a time, the criminal justice system — especially in the critical area of juvenile delinquency — was concerned with issues of education, prevention, therapy, and rehabilitation. Once upon a time, someone gave a damn.

Welcome to today. Today, troubled youth are punished, tried as adults, permanently yanked from society, shipped to adult prisons as raw bait and, in some cases, sent to death row. And all this because of a subsiding nation which has lost its humanity and, accordingly, become a manufacturer of criminals from birth.

Children, if you are abused, just be sure the abuse doesn't affect you. You could be considered rebellious. When you are thrown out of your home, you shall not return to school. This may cause harm. When daddy beats mommy, act like you don't see it.

Every town has its right-wing nuts. What's really sad is the overwhelming public support for transforming the once progressive department of juvenile justice into a heartless penal system.

G. Jeremy Ireland, 17
Burlington, NC
Ireland101@aol.com



July/August

THANKS FOR THE WONDERFUL review of *History Will Not Absolve Us* and *Orders to Kill* by Jim Douglass, which you recently sent me. Your willingness to review the book is a blow against the darkness which Jim has termed "the unspeakable" and which I called our society's "black star." I very much like the brief format of your magazine as well as its excellent content.

E. Martin Schotz, MD
Brookline, MA

IMPRESSIVE! I haven't yet finished my complimentary July-August issue, and I know I would like to subscribe. Your magazine is like *The Atlantic Monthly* for liberal Episcopalians.

Sara Brockway
Ashland, MA

I REMEMBER CLEARLY A SERMON given by our former rector of 17 years, now Bishop Orris Walker of Long Island: "When the framers of our Constitution finished their work they went across the street and wrote the Constitution of our Church." After reading your July/August issue about the failure of General Convention initiatives to help racial minorities in the area of economics: Might I suggest it's time that we "went back across the street" and gave folk their share of the power rather than "well meant" crumbs.

John Kavanaugh
Detroit, MI

Defying presumptions

YOUR JUNE ISSUE WAS EXCELLENT — one of your best. A special nod to William Countryman for his lucid comments upon biblical literalism. Indeed, the Bible is not a rule book. It is, rather, of the nature of a sacrament, because it conveys the hidden Wonder that it proclaims. To read its pages is to encounter personally as Lord and Savior that ultimate Word of God whom Christians know as the Christ — who equally embraces all, irregardless of race, creed, gender or sexual orientation. If we would dispense with the legalisms, accept our sexuality wholeheartedly and use it responsibly, we would be a long way towards resolving the dilemma that the church is creating for herself today. What you are doing is important!

O. Sydney Barr
Grahamsville, NY

WHAT A *FABULOUS* ISSUE on "Defying presumptions" — am ordering 5 copies, to give to members of our ministry and Counsel at Quaker Meeting.

Barbara Potter
West Buxton, ME

YOUR "CELEBRATING THE CALL to integrity, June, 1997" and statement "...us gay folks" — Wow!! I'm 73 and I am amazed at the gay and lesbian people. After a stroke nine years ago, I tolerate all kinds of people. As for church renewal vs. Alex Seabrook, I quite agree with him. Let Alex include St. Mark's of Storrs, Conn., into his list [*TW* 5/97].

Charles Riemitis
Manchester, CT

Spirituality of leadership

WHEN WE OPEN ADELYNROOD each May, the library is sure to have the winter issues of *Witness* out and available. Good material always for our justice-directed discussions. The issue about leadership — especially Parker Palmer — is still being referred to [*TW* 5/97]. We try to stand for justice and yet be reconcilers in this church of ours. Thanks for your help.

Betty Sawyer
Society of Companions of the Holy Cross

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Getting the life you want

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ARTICLE ON Wally and Juanita Nelson, which appeared in *The Witness* [12/96]. Posted on my wall, I have one of my most treasured gifts: a photo of Ernest and Marion Bromley and Wally and Juanita Nelson in a fraternal embrace with Rev. Maurice McCrackin. (As you I am sure know, according to Rev. Fr. Daniel Berrigan, SJ, "Our Generation Runs on the Shoulders of Maurice McCrackin.") In some ways, Rev. McCrackin *IS* a gift from Marion Bromley and Juanita Nelson. Every time he has a chance, McCrackin explains that Juanita and Marion caused him to embrace in action the revolutionary world of non-violent resistance.

Thank you very much for presenting to us towering human beings in the simplicity of their lives.

Pio Celestino
Harlingen, TX

A Role Model?

IF A PERSON, BELONGING TO AN organization, aspires to its highest office, it is usual for that candidate to take an oath of allegiance and to swear to obey and uphold the rules and regulations and the resolutions and by-laws. If, after so doing and being installed into that top position, the appointee then publicly vows to violate those oaths and states that he or she will ignore those that bothers their conscience, it would seem to me to require one of two things; either the organization should remove that person from its membership or that person should resign the moment such a violation is voiced.

Here we have the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, well aware that the laws (canons) he disagrees with have been in effect long before his quest to be made bishop, proceeds to be ordained and consecrated a bishop by kneeling before many of his peers and a big congregation in a church and swears before God and on the Holy Bible to "conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

This implies obeying the canons and resolutions of the triennial National Conventions one of which has just occurred. For a bishop to violate the very solemn oaths he made at his consecration because he doesn't like some of them sends a terrible message to our young people as well as us older ones.

What a role model! He should have the intestinal fortitude to either obey or to leave.

Peter Tringham
Fort Worth, TX

Witness praise

IF COMPLACENCY IS A DISEASE, and *The Witness* is the best immunization shot fighting it, does that mean I can deduct this donation as a medical expense?

Becky Robbins Penniman
Columbus, OH

THE ONLY TROUBLE WITH *The Witness* is if it comes when I am busy with other things, 99 percent of the time I drop everything else (figuratively) and read the whole magazine ... it's that good.

Ann McElroy
Cupertino, CA

THANK GOD FOR A *SANE* publication in the Episcopal Church!

Jason W. Samuel
Lake St. Louis, MO

Classifieds

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1998-99 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Catholic Worker history

Voices from the Catholic Worker, an oral history of the movement compiled and edited by Rosalie Riegle Troester. Available from your local bookstore at $22.95 or for $20 postpaid from Rosalie Riegle, The Mustard Seed Catholic Worker, 721 E. Holland Ave., Saginaw, MI 48601-2619. Call 517-755-4741 or e-mail riegle@tardis.svsu.edu for details.

Benefit

The Witness enjoyed a wonderful Convention dinner at the Church of the Advocate in July. We'd like to invite all our readers to send donations to the church's building fund, since they have literally had to stretch nets over the sanctuary to prevent falling masonry from injuring worshipers. In the meantime, they continue to offer programs and meals to neighborhood youth, to respond to emergency needs and to host a soup kitchen. This church, which welcomed Black Panther Party strategists and women seeking ordination in 1974, is a continuing presence for justice. Donations can be sent to The Church of the Advocate, 1801 Diamond St., Philadelphia, PA 19121.

Stringfellow booklet

Conversations at a 1996 conference on William Stringfellow, co-sponsored by *The Witness*, have been gathered together by Andrew W. McThenia, Jr. and Bill Wylie-Kellermann in a new book, *The Legacy of William Stringfellow.* Contributors include Eugene Rivers, Jim Wallis, Elizabeth McAlister, Nane Alejandrez and Michael Lerner, among others. The volume collects the remarks of the principal speakers as well as dialogue among participants. Send $5 to *The Witness*, 7000 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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Magazine Production	Maria Catalfio
Book Review Editor	Bill Wylie-Kellermann
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Promotion Consultant	Karen D. Bota

8 Redeeming the world: Evely Laser Shlensky by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann
As chair of the social action committee for the Reformed movement, Shlensky tackles many justice issues.

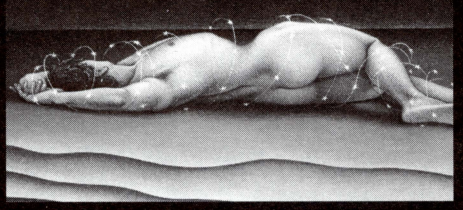
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Cover: Rainbow Shabbat (center panel) from the Holocaust Project ©Judy Chicago, 1992, stained glass, fabricated by Bob Gomez, painted by Dorothy Maddy, photographed by Donald Woodman

Back cover: The 12 tribes of Israel by Carol Greger.

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness*' roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

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'Those who love living'

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

It's tricky doing issues which cross cultural lines, perhaps especially when the culture is one that you believe you already know and share. I find myself suppressing the urge to say, "Some of my best friends are Jewish." More recently I've noticed that some of my best friends are in the process of becoming Jewish. And then, of course, many friends raised Christian have a Jewish grandparent and even more families (my own?) have Jewish bloodlines that have been unacknowledged for so long that no one now remembers that the story is suppressed.

Some Christians will be quick to say, "So what? None of that matters. We are all Jewish in origin. We have a shared heritage." But I wince to hear it.

It seems to me that who is a Jew is sufficiently challenged within Judaism as Israel's Orthodox denounce all others. The last thing I would want if I were Jewish is a large, dominant and unwieldy religion calling my sacred places home. It can't be anymore comfortable than if the Mormons, pointing out that they honor Jesus, claimed a deep understanding of Christianity. The community that believes it has received a further revelation and moves on is not the same in substance as the community that remains. No matter how intimate the history, we need to adopt the manners we use when we visit, when we are aware that we are in proximity because of the other's hospitality.

My family was invited to a Seder this year. The meal was beautiful. Our friend spoke the Hebrew prayers with reverence. The children were wide eyed. In the course of the meal, we began to talk of the Egyptian soldiers drowned in the Red Sea and our hostess said that there is a tradition of dipping a finger in the wine 10 times, once for each plague, as an indication that each plague, the destruction it caused, "diminishes our joy."

We began, Christians and Jews, to talk about forgiveness and redemption. But it wasn't long before a Christian launched into a sermon about Jesus and suddenly an ancient freedom feast complete with deeply rooted ethics was dismissed as though only what followed in the person of Jesus had merit.

I cringed, looking into the faces of our Jewish friends. I marvelled at their forbearance. It seemed necessary to tread lightly because the sermon-giver was an African American storefront pastor who had married into one of the Jewish families present. But I watched for openings that would allow us to return to Jewish texts and wisdom.

As Christians I suspect we are presumptuous most of the time. We want so much to be seen as the chosen people that we leap into the covenant pushing the Jews aside. Tom Jones notes that in reading the Book of Revelation most commentators reinterpret the salvation promised the Jews as salvation intended for the Church (p. 6). One of those self-serving abridgements, it says: Jew, read converted Jew, read church. The Christian Right, I recently learned, asserts that they are "the real Jews".

Meanwhile a Baptist Convention announced its intent to convert all Jews by the year 2000. And Susannah Heschel writes that Christian feminists, sometimes unthinkingly, contribute to anti-semitism when they paint Biblical Judaism as an unrelentingly patriarchal system against which Jesus stood alone (p. 18).

This issue is timed to coincide with the anniversary of *Krystall Nacht*, the November night, 59 years ago, when Nazis destroyed synagogues and Jewish businesses, killing dozens and relegating thousands to the earliest concentration camps. Recalling that night should help us as Christians remember to back up, to listen, to tread softly, to act like guests — we aren't even your average guests, we're guests who have done repeated harm.

At the same time, we need to find a balance. The interfaith dialogues that have consisted of Christian clergymen punishing themselves for the legacy but refusing to speak up when they actually disagree with their Jewish counterparts about something, perhaps as vital as Palestinian rights in Israel, is legendary and a little pathetic.

The times are now urgent. Within Judaism there are groups of people who share our concern that the ecosystem is sustaining what may be mortal wounds and global capitalism has most workers by the thumbs. As Marge Piercy writes, all religious traditions have their Right-wing hellions (p. 7). But those of us "ordinary people who love living" can support one another in baking bread, in

continued on page 6

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

This issue is part of a series on allies — others who are engaging in the work. We are grateful that we are not alone in it and find it useful to learn how other communities approach it, since this may broaden our own view or add light to what often seems unrelentingly bleak.

editor's note

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Apocalyptic reconciliation

by Tom Jones

For almost 2,000 years, the church's ingrained anti-semitism has blinded Christian believers to what the "Revelation to John" says about Jews. In commentaries, scholars have projected onto Revelation their anti-semitic notions that the Christians have replaced the Jews and the Jews have dropped from the sight of God. It will help in our understanding of what is said about Jews in Revelation if we accept the premise that when Revelation refers to the Jews it is in fact referring to the Jews, and not to Christians!

The last book of the New Testament has a very startling message for our divided world. Despite the interpretation offered in most commentaries, John, speaking for the "One who is God" in Revelation, is trying to bring Jews and Christians together. The historical context is that Revelation was written after the fall of Jerusalem at a time when schism between Jews and Christians was either beginning or imminent. Before this schism, Christians and Jews were seen by the Romans as one cult and the Jews could offer protection to the Christians from the Roman law of emperor worship.

John writes of two "synagogues of Satan" in Smyrna and Philadelphia in the letters to the churches. But critics are misleading when they don't point out that John is not speaking about all synagogues or all Jews when he talks about the synagogues of Satan. John calls the empire itself Satan, and when these synagogues give up Christians to the Roman authorities, they are then working with the empire that is Satan, and therefore are called the synagogues of Satan. In the remainder of Revelation, John has only positive things to say about Jews as people of faith.

John reminds Christian believers that they are in this spiritual journey with Jews, not separate from them. The entire context of his heavenly vision is drawn from the Hebrew Bible. John is telling us that the Jews have and will receive the salvation of God through practicing their Jewish faith, and the Christians and Jews will then share the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The following scripture cites have been ignored or re-interpreted by scholars to mean the church, yet they speak of the salvation of the Jews.

Rev. 6:9-11: The description of the martyrs crying out from beneath the altar make it likely that both Jewish and Christian witnesses are included.

Rev. 7:3-8: Our commentaries say in one way or another, "This means the church." Why does this mean the church? The 144,000 receiving the seal of the Lord come from the twelve tribes of Israel which are called by name. If anything this number suggests that an infinite or complete number of Jews are to be sealed.

Rev. 11:3-13: The commentaries go to great length in attempting to identify these two witnesses as particular Christian personages. Yet nothing could be simpler that to recognize in these two the figures of Elijah and Moses who repeatedly appear in the gospel transfiguration scenes as precisely such witnesses. Their being called up here is emblematic of all the Jews who were called up after the destruction of the Holy City.

Rev. 14:14-20: There are two separate harvestings of the earth in this passage. The Son of Man will harvest the grain (which may be read as Christians); the angel will harvest the grapes (to be understood as Jews). They are then thrown together into the violence of the empire.

Rev. 21:12-13: These angels stand at the 12 gates calling for all to enter. God has given the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem to the Jews, again posting those tribal names above each entry, for they have always shown the way. They have been a light to the nations. They have been God's chosen people to proclaim salvation to all who would hear. Now the angels are calling us, Jews and Christians and, indeed, all the people of the earth who have a right to the tree of life, to enter the city by way of the Jewish tribes, who are the gates.

Revelation presents a vision that promises redemption to Jews and Christians alike. It is a travesty that it has been read otherwise for so long. TW

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"blinding quiet," in scholarship.

It may surprise Jewish readers that *Witness* subscribers also feel assaulted by the commercial and imperial manipulation of Christianity. We also try to sustain a vision that has nothing to do with blessing nuclear submarines or with Santa Claus. In teaching our children, we are hampered by the fact that the powers use our sacred symbols in their work.

There are differences between us, too. Many of the voices in this issue — which range from Reform and Reconstructionist to Humanist — are reluctant to talk about God at length. They are more relaxed explaining what God would have us do. They speak of blessings, not as things to beg for but, as things already received. The focus seems to be on the work that needs doing complimented by the enjoyment of creation that is required by the Torah. TW

Tom Jones is a United Methodist pastor who is a full-time organic farmer. Jones is working on a book about Revelation.

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The Fundamental Truth

by Marge Piercy

The Christian right, Islamic Jihad,
the Jewish right bank settlers bringing
the Messiah down, the Japanese sects
who worship by bombing subways,
they all hate each other
but more they hate the mundane,
ordinary people who love living
more than dying in radiant glory,
who shuffle and sigh and bake bread.

They need a planet of their own,
perhaps even a barren moon
with artificial atmosphere,
where they will surely be nearer
to their gods and their fiercest
enemies, where they can kill
to their heart's peace
kill to the last standing man
and leave the rest of us be.

Not mystics to whom the holy
comes in the core of struggle
in a shimmer of blinding quiet,
not scholars haggling out the inner
meaning of gnarly ancient sentences.
No, the holy comes to these zealots
as a license to kill, for self doubt
and humility have dried like mud
under their marching feet.

They have far more in common
with each other, these braggarts
of hatred, the iron hearted
in whose ear a voice spoke
once and left them deaf.
Their faith is founded on death
of others, and everyone is other
to them, whose Torah is splattered
in letters of blood.

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Poetry

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Redeeming the world:

an interview with Evely Laser Shlensky

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Evely Laser Shlensky is widely known as a writer and speaker on the interface between social justice and Judaism. She is chair of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, a member of both the National Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the National Interfaith Committe for Worker Justice.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: You've been actively working for justice. How does your spirituality relate to your political concerns?

Evely Laser Shlensky: Spirituality is not a word I'm particularly drawn to. I know that it's very much in vogue now.

But there is a traditional Jewish notion of how we're supposed to be in the world which is much more meaningful to me — that is the concept of holiness. There's a deeper word for it, *kedusha*. Probably the best way to understand what is meant by holiness is to refer to Leviticus 19, which is called the holiness code. It starts out, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." It goes on to detail many specific behaviors. While some are ritual behaviors like keeping the Sabbath and not making idols, others are — in fact most are — in the realm of an ethical mandate, instructing how you're supposed to treat the poor and the stranger.

J.W-K.: With all the urgent justice issues before us, it is easy to despair. How do you maintain your sense of hope?

E.L.S.: Judaism is basically a hopeful religion. What Judaism has offered uniquely to the world is a messianic vision of a world redeemed. A hope that there will be a time — that we can work for a time, that we *must* work for a time — when justice and peace will prevail.

When I become despairing — as I do — I can somehow drum up this vision that says there's a better time coming and



Evely Laser Shlensky

I am implicated in the process of bringing it into being.

But how I actually preserve my hope is through a list that I keep by my desk. It has the overthrow of apartheid and the beginning of a reversal of the nuclear arms race on it. It has the actual triumph of the sanctuary movement in terms of breaking some new legal and judicial ground. The women's movement and gay and lesbian movement — all these things which could have only been a dream a couple of decades ago — are blossoming in ways I would not have felt possible. That hope list is a very real, tactile way for me to preserve hope. Aside from the redemptive vision of my religion, I have to look at what has actually been accomplished. Right now I have a lot of involvement with labor issues and it's helpful for me to look at Jewish history and to look at how people in the early part of the century organized and turned things for working people.

Torah study to me is even more engaging than prayer. It offers ways of thinking about how we are to rework the world.

J.W-K.: Are there rituals that help nourish your sense of hope? Arthur Waskow writes about the importance of the Sabbath in terms of teaching us how to take time out and how not to imagine that we're God [*TW* 1/96]. Are there particular ceremonies or festivals that help sustain your hope?

E.L.S.: The Sabbath would be very high — the Sabbath is a day when we taste the world as it might be if it were redeemed, when we stop feeling that we have to manipulate the world, when we attempt to live in a devout time of harmony.

I just read some rabbinic commentary that described the Sabbath as our preparation for revolution. It reminds me of Abraham Heschel's statement about prayer as a subversive activity when it's done right.

J.W-K.: Say a little bit about what an observation of the Sabbath looks like.

E.L.S.: Sabbath is our weekly ritual to, in some ways, emulate God. If God rested after a very creative thrust, rested on the seventh day, then we too can take time out of the frenzy and rejoice in the created world.

When I moved to California, my initial inclination as I walked through my orchard was: Want an orange? Pick one. But I learned

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Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Artist **Judith Hankin** lives in Eugene, Ore.

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that one thing that is prohibited on the Sabbath is to pick fruit or in any way disturb the earth. When I practiced that, it put me into a very different relationship with a fruit tree. To see it on the Sabbath, is to see it as part of the glory of creation, a gift, and not necessarily something that is just there to serve me.

J.W-K.: I know there are a range of ways to observe the Sabbath. Is lighting candles part of what you do?

E.L.S.: On Friday nights we light candles. I make challah — that's the ceremonial bread — and we say blessings over that, blessings over the wine. It's usually a time for a family dinner. It's not so often for me a time to go to temple, although that's something I'm not necessarily proud of. Then there's Saturday, which I usually observe with Torah study, which to me is an even more engaging religious activity than prayer. One reason I'm interested in the text is because it offers ways of thinking about how we are supposed to rework the world. The rest of the day is often given to walking and just doing things that are not ordinary things. I do some things that traditional Jews wouldn't do, like drive, but I try not to do the things that are ordinary like grocery shopping and regular work.

There's a ceremony that honors the ending of Sabbath which we call *Havdalah* (which means separation). I used to have trouble with it because it's usually explained that this is the time to demarcate the separation of the holy from the profane. But a meaningful understanding of separating from the Sabbath for me became an understanding of moving between reflecting on a redeemed world and doing the work of redemption.

J.W-K.: This issue of *The Witness* was partly inspired by a conversation with Fordham law school professor Russell Pearce. He had participated in a Stringfellow conference in which the focus was on Christian theology and radical politics. The conference examined ways to be faithful to our tradition by working for justice [see Classified ad, p.3]. Pearce said that there are many analogues in the Jewish community.



Receiving the Torah **by Judith Hankin**

E.L.S.: During the Civil Rights Movement, going on Freedom Rides or the Poor People's March was considered a dignified religious act. Abraham Joshua Heschel apparently received some criticism for participating in the march on Selma from his congregants. He responded that he felt as though he was praying with his feet.

There has been an obvious rightward swing in the U.S. although Jewish voters consistently vote far more liberally than their economic status would indicate that they ought to. Jews vote about 75 percent Democratic, which considering their socio-economic status is not so typical.

J.W-K.: Pearce noted that Jewish activists are less likely to condemn the U.S. government as evil, partly because it guarantees civil rights. Do you think that's true?

E.L.S.: Some of the most prominent social critics have been Jews. I don't know that they feel any more beholden to this country than anybody else. It seems to me that if we follow the prophetic model, it is our job to be social critics — to hold government to task, to say that even kings are not above the law and that there is a higher moral law that we all must accede to.

J.W-K.: This issue is dedicated to the work that progressive Christians and progressive Jews can do together. Do you find people you know reluctant to work politically with Christians?

E.L.S.: No, most social action these days is done in an interfaith context. It's hard for me to think of any area in which we've been involved in which we don't ally ourselves with progressive Christians. We try to be considerate of one another's religious sensibilities. Working together almost invariably enhances my understanding of Judaism.

For instance, when I went down to Mesa Grande, Honduras to participate in the repatriation of Salvadoran refugees, it was enlightening to understand their return to El Salvador as an exodus experience. It gave me a different take on what it was to have an experience of expulsion and an experience of return against great odds.

As I've worked with the farm workers, I've recognized that Moses was a great labor organizer who took his people from

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being oppressed workers to a situation of freedom. It opens my eyes and I suspect that happens the other way, too.

J.W-K.: I've been skimming through some of Jacob Neusner's books, because he does a lot of dialogue with Christians. He's written a book called *Trading Places.* He writes, in part, about what it means when a religion is associated with a power structure. In the first three centuries after Christ, Judaism was what he calls the "licit" religion — legitimate, because it had standing with Rome. There were compromises and arrangements that had been made between Rome and the Temple and consequently people had standing if they were Jews. Then, with the conversion of Constantine, it flipped and suddenly the Christians had political authority and the Jews did not.

He writes that each religion, when it was *not* in power, was focused in home and community ceremonies as well as in a vision of how things could be, an alternative vision. The religion was essentially one of resistance.

I like the idea that it flipflops. It really depends on global politics whether a religion is a state vehicle or not. Neusner thought most Christians would be delighted to see Christianity becoming a reigning force. And, yet, for progressive Christians that's one of the most difficult things — having chaplains blessing nuclear submarines.

E.L.S.: Let's hear it for separation of church and state! That's what gives us moral authority — *no* religion is supposed to be aligned with the state, or beholden to the state.

J.W-K.: Which leads easily into questions about Israel. You've gone to the Middle East. What do you make of what's happening now in East Jerusalem with Jewish Israelis evicting Palestinian Israelis and requiring identity cards?

E.L.S.: I feel very dispirited by what's going on now in Israel. I care very much about the success of the peace process so that all peoples in the area can live in dignity and with some sense of control over their own destiny. One of the roles that Jews in the U.S. — as well as Christians and Muslims — have tried to play is to say that the U.S. has got to put heat on both sides so that they'll come up with some livable solution.

J.W-K.: How does that conversation play out with folks in the Reform movement?

E.L.S.: What I've expressed is close to what most people think. The Middle East situation is beseiged by both terrorism and intransigence. Internally, the Israeli situation is complicated further by the increasing power of the ultra Right-wing Orthodox religious parties. They have their own vision of how things ought to be and that vision doesn't tend to comport with what I would like as a liberal Jew, because they certainly don't recognize my Judaism as being authentic, nor what I would hope for in the political configuration of the Middle East.

J.W-K.: Do you think there has been more openness within congregations to look at abuses of power in Israel than there used to be? Marc Ellis cautioned years ago that interfaith dialogue between Christians and Jews had to deal with justice for Palestinians, but he said there wasn't much tolerance among Jews for criticizing Israel. In fact, he said there was more openness to questioning Israeli policies within Israel than there was in the U.S.

E.L.S.: When [Yitzhak] Shamir was in power and [Menachem] Begin, there was a sense in this country that you were betraying your people if you offered any critique, even though the very same critiques were offered by Israelis all the time. That has changed quite a lot, especially since the peace process.

J.W-K.: Where are the areas where Jews, in conversation with Christians, should call Christians to account? It could be really useful for Jews to say to Christians, "Why do you bless nuclear submarines? What about having flags in churches?" Can you imagine that conversation?

E.L.S.: I'm not sure.

J.W-K.: You could ask Christians to challenge the Baptists' intent to convert Jews.

E.L.S.: I wish they would. But I would rather lead by just doing what I think is right and hoping that other people might think about what might be right for them. We've thought about this in relation to our work with Jewish manufacturers who use sweatshops — maybe other religious groups might decide they have a role too.

J.W-K.: That would be a great invitation to issue, if you find out that some major manufacturer is a Methodist or a Lutheran or an Episcopalian.

E.L.S.: When Jews — when we do confront our own — we often hear this allegation that we're going to engender anti-semitism by airing dirty linen in public. Frankly, that possibility is something that makes us a little nervous.

I remember standing on the border between Honduras and El Salvador and somebody came up to me and said that as a Jew I should talk to [then Assistant Secretary of State] Eliot Abrams. I was thinking, "There are a lot of Christians in power, Ronald Reagan for one. Maybe you ought to talk to them!"

Somehow the scrutiny should work both ways.

J.W-K.: Absolutely! Some of those conversations would be painful — maybe *Witness* readers would be surprised to learn of people in our camp who are causing harm. But often it wouldn't be difficult — it could be a tremendous opportunity to join forces. I would be glad to protest simultaneously with you if there are Episcopalians using sweatshop labor in L.A.

E.L.S.: That would be very powerful. And very comforting. TW

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Wall of Indifference **from the Holocaust Project ©Judy Chicago, with photography by Donald Woodman** photo by Donald Woodman

Beyond indifference, forging solidarity

by F. James Levinson

Over the years, when I have picked up a copy of *The Witness* or *The Catholic Worker* or read about a religiously based civil disobedience relating to some cherished cause, I often have found myself lamenting the absence of a viable Jewish equivalent. Certainly there have been attempts. The Jewish Peace Fellowship founded in the 1930s has made a valiant effort to stay afloat despite marginal support. Local chapters of the New Jewish Agenda have tried to serve as a counterweight to mainline organizations. The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism occasionally has taken important positions on issues of peace and justice. And yet Jews, acting as Jews, are often absent from the interfaith barricades.

I remember with more than a little sadness my own participation in a Massachusetts "Witness for Peace" group heading for Nicaragua in the early 1980s, this at a time when such ventures were particularly dangerous. I was the only person in our group who had trouble finding a clergy person or organization representative to represent me at the commissioning service. After I was turned down by a half a dozen rabbis, I finally requested the participation of the one person who couldn't turn me down, my 14-year-old daughter.

Spiritually-based resistance

Then, and on other occasions, I would ask myself, why is this the case? Why have we Jews, of all people, not been eager and active participants in spiritually based resistance activity addressing evils in our society?

The question, on reflection, subdivides into two. The first concerns the frequent absence of a Jewish identification in the progressive actions we take. The second concerns our reticence to participate as Jews in actions together with Christians who might logically be kindred spirits. The first is more complex, the second relatively straightforward. Let's take the second first.

While Jews in America today are in most respects highly assimilated into the society at large — too much so, some of us might argue — we become, almost uniformly, wary and cautious when this assimilation brings us too close to a Christian church, or indeed to Christian practice of any kind. No reader of *The Witness* is unfamiliar with the Christian roots of anti-Semitism or Luther's diatribes against the Jews or the Spanish Inquisition or the horrors of the Holocaust. Yet even a focus on these shattering events may not fully explain the reticence we feel, the discomfort we experience when

James Levinson is on the faculty of Tufts University and leads a Jewish congregation in central Massachusetts.

we get too close to Christianity.

Christianity and exclusion

However assimilationist we might be, Christianity evokes exclusion. It barrages the Jew on the airwaves, on the streets, and in the supermarkets (particularly during the three months a year during which commercial America sells Christmas and Easter) leaving us with reactions which fall somewhere between indignation and weariness.

Indeed, since the founding of the Republic, our ancestors recognized a need to protect themselves against the dangers posed by those seeking to "Christianize" this nominally secular republic. The histories of our Congress and our state assemblies are filled with debates over proposed constitutional amendments not over whether school prayer should be permitted, but over whether our governments should be based on "the rulership of the Christian Lord." The activities of the Christian right in America merely extend this tradition.

Thus while we are always willing to have Christians join us in *our* seders and our Bar Mitzvahs, we continue to be wary of Christian forms. The cost, sadly, is that those Christians who today are cognizant and sensitive, and who do seek to be genuinely inclusive, often find their invitations for interfaith witness rebuffed, sometimes unkindly, by Jews still feeling a need to keep them at bay.

Rabbinic focus and secular activism

But what of the first question, that of identifiably Jewish witness? The question must take us back to our European roots in the latter decades of the 19th century . At the risk of oversimplifying a highly complex issue, most rabbinic Judaism at that time was actively absorbed in understanding, interpreting and adhering to Jewish law, and to adjudicating disputes according to this law. Its purposes were almost exclusively religious. Those who sought political or social expression did so outside of the religious frame.

Accordingly, although some late 19th century Zionists sought to function within a religious context, Jewish social reformers and political dissidents, influenced by the new Socialist-revolutionary ideologies sweeping through Central and Eastern Europe, almost uniformly, acted not as Jews but as individuals, and often rejected their religious Jewish roots as reactionary or irrelevant. While some, like Trotsky, chose to remain in Europe, many left and became, like Sidney Hillman, David Dubinsky and Samuel Gompers, active participants in the American labor movement.

This legacy of socially and politically active Jews continued through the 20th century and has included such diverse notables as Emma Goldman, Clara Lemlich, Howard Fast, Saul Alinsky, Bella Abzug, William Kunstler and Abbie Hoffman. In virtually every case, their activism was not identifiably Jewish. Often it rejected Jewish practice outright. When Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were about to be executed in the electric chair, they angrily opposed the presence of a rabbi.

The same has been the case in Israel where peace and justice activity is uniformly the domain of secular Jews. And a recently published book by Immanuel Suttner on South African Jews makes clear that the same was true of Jewish activists such as Joe Slovo, Helen Suzman and Johnny Clegg in that country.

For some potential Jewish activists, there may be a third factor to be added to our wariness of Christianity and this traditional separation of religious and so-

Luther's terror text

During the early years of the Protestant Reformation, Luther was sure he could accomplish what the Catholic Church had failed to do: bring large numbers of Jews to Christianity. In a 1523 pamphlet entitled, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*, he denounced the blood libel as slander, and blamed the Church for alienating the Jews. "If I had been a Jew and had seen such idiots and blockheads ruling and teaching the Christian religion," Luther wrote, "I would rather have been a pig than a Christian."

Less than 20 years later, Luther, incensed that the Jews had not followed his brand of Christianity, wrote, "I would threaten to cut their tongues out from their throats, if they refuse to acknowledge the truth that God is a trinity and not a plain unity." He also outlined the following eight actions to be taken against them:

Burn all synagogues; destroy all Jewish homes; confiscate all Jewish holy books; forbid rabbis to teach, on pain of death; forbid Jews to travel; confiscate Jewish property; force Jews to do physical labor. If necessary, expel all Jews.

Four hundred years later, Hitler proudly claimed Luther as an ally: "He saw the Jew as we are only beginning to see him today." At the Nuremberg trials, Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher defended himself with the claim that he had not said anything worse about the Jews than had Martin Luther.

— *J.L.*

(This general information is taken from Joseph Telushkin's book, *Jewish Literacy*. Luther's eight proposals against the Jews were published in *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies*, quoted in Jacob Marcus, ed., *The Jew in the Medieval World*. Julius Streicher's defense at Nuremberg is cited in A. Roy Eckardt, *Your People My People*.)

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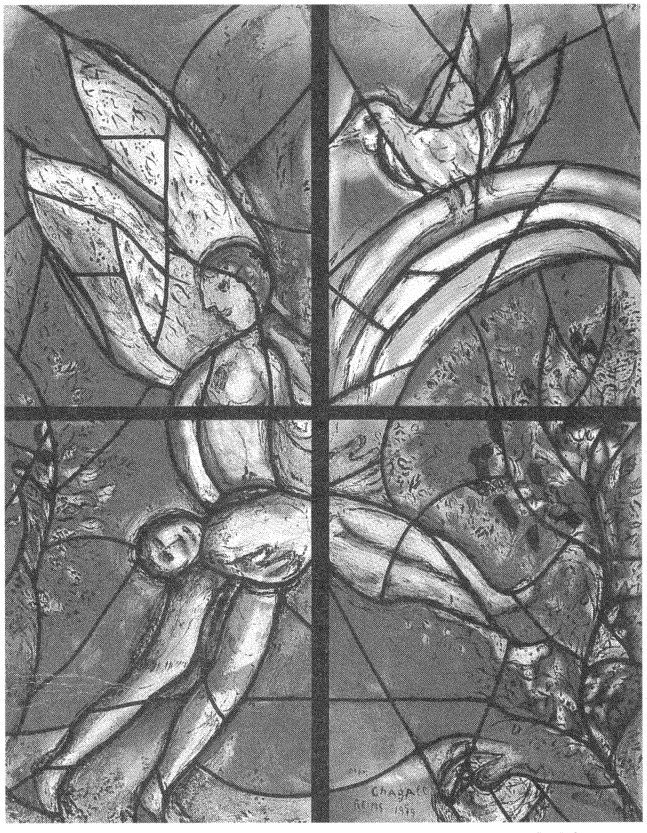
cially active Jews. This is the ambiguity of the "Israel" issue. Most of us are drawn to Israel for reasons which cut to the core of our religious and cultural heritage, yet we often despair of that country's abuse of power. Put simply, how does one both support Israel and witness for peace and justice?

Breakthroughs

And yet, we have seen in the latter part of this century that a highly visible, concrete challenge is sometimes capable of cutting through these obstacles of fear, tradition and doubt. We have seen it most visibly in the civil rights struggle and in opposition to the war in Vietnam. The breakthrough was manifested in Selma, Alabama and Albany, Georgia where rabbis joined black and white Christian clergy in seeking to integrate a public pool. In each case, Jews wore for identification the yarmulke or traditional head covering — even Reform Jews who never wore them in their synagogues!

We associate these breakthroughs with the figure of Abraham Joshua Heschel, although many, in fact, preceded him. Heschel was an outspoken rabbi during the Vietnam era and a colleague of the Berrigans. Many Americans remember Heschel standing together with Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy at Arlington National Cemetery and decrying the tragic loss of life in that senseless struggle. Although today he is also recognized for his many contributions to Jewish theology, I find it revealing that I heard about him first not in religious school, but from Christian anti-nuclear friends.

Heschel may have been a prophet in more ways than one. For during recent years we have seen increasing erosion in the traditional bifurcation of religious and socially active Jews. As younger Jews begin to reclaim the dormant spirituality of Jewish practice (the earlier absence of which led so many Jews to seek other spiritual forms) many of us are also finding it possible to reclaim the Jewish concepts of *rachmones* (compassion) and *tzedakah* (justice) in our social and political activism. Under the tutelage of such mentors as Naomi Goodman, Arthur Waskow, David Saperstein, Michael Lerner and Everett Gendler, increasing numbers of American Jews are feeling comfortable for the first time protesting social evils not simply as individuals, but as Jews.



In the beginning **by Marc Chagall. Chagall prepared this window for a German Christian church after World War II in an act of reconciliation.**

An Auschwitz pilgrimage

The 1994 Interfaith Convocation for Peace at Auschwitz, in which I was privileged to participate, was active testimony to the potential power of this re-joining of Jewish faith and Jewish justice, and may itself have been a force in helping to catalyze that very rejoining. As Christians, Hindus and Buddhists joined us in mourning the nightmare of Auschwitz, many of us, as Jews, were able to reaffirm, as a faith community, the great teachings of that trauma: that the only thing worse than the Holocaust was that the world allowed it to happen; that we must never again turn our backs on evil and suffering wherever it might appear.

From the ashes of Auschwitz we are able, Jews and non-Jews, to generate new resolve to address today's sources of suffering: Bosnia, Cambodia, Burma, Tibet, Rwanda, and the problems which continue to plague the poor and the dispossessed throughout the world. In that context — and, not unimportantly, in a place of Jewish pilgrimage — other remarkable rejoining was able to take place, including an understanding of the linkages between the tragedies at Auschwitz and Hiroshima, and the convening of a pilgrimage linking them.

It was also the occasion for me to meet Helga Mueller. Mueller had grown up near Munich believing her father was a German war hero. The fiction was reinforced by her family at every occasion. It continued after her father returned from the war, then suddenly died. But something didn't ring quite true to the now teenage Mueller who, in time, came upon information indicating that far from being a hero, her father had been a Nazi war criminal.

Mueller began to dig deeper into the war archives: the Nazis, believing they would be around for a 1,000 years, kept

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Affluenza

According to a PBS documentary, an epidemic known as "affluenza" is sweeping the country. Its symptoms include chronic stress, swollen expectations, social scars, fractured families, shopping fever, and a rash of bankruptcies.

The makers of *Affluenza*, John De Braaf and Vivia Boe, define the disease as "an unhappy condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more."

Although the film is cleverly written, reminiscent of *Atomic Cafe* and *Roger and Me*, De Graaf and Boe have a serious message: Overspending is a real ailment with serious side effects, including headaches, low back pain, heart palpitations, unexplained aches and pains, hyperacidity, depression, anxiety attacks, and sleeplessness. Of course, there's a cure for affluenza that's surprisingly easy to administer: Spend less. And, as *Affluenza* points out, a growing number of Americans are downscaling their lifestyles and generally getting by on less. Some 5 percent of all baby boomers have embraced some form of voluntary simplicity, according to futurist Gerald Celente, and he expects the number to grow to 15 percent by the year 2000.

— Jay Walljasper,
***Utne Reader*, 9-10/97**

'Inclusive language' fight

When North Carolina-based *World* magazine accused Zondervan publishers of planning a revision of the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible — the best-selling edition in the North American evangelical world — using "gender inclusive langauge" (except when referring to God), the article set off an explosion among evangelical leaders. Stung by the criticism, the International Bible Society, which licenses Zondervan to publish the NIV in North America, announced in May that it would "forego all plans to develop a revised edition of the NIV."

But there are complications. In 1995, Hodder & Stoughten, the NIV's publisher in Britain, issued a revision of the NIV that used inclusive language with a preface saying "it is often appropriate to mute the patriarchalism of the culture of the biblical writers through gender-inclusive language." And in the same year, Zondervan published a simplified-langauge Bible for children and adults learning to read English that also uses inclusive langauge, but contains no announcement to that effect and was not marketed as an inclusive edition.

According to a report by Darrell Todd Maurina, Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff now cites the inclusive language controversy first in a list of seven battles which must still be fought and won, placing it even before an indirect reference to President Clinton's position on "partial birth abortion".

— Ecumenical News International

continued from page 13

meticulous records. Mueller even learned that, quite possibly, what she had experienced as the death of her father had been a staged funeral and that he may have escaped to South America.

As she began to learn more about her father, she found herself more and more estranged from her family. Now, in addition, she began to have dreams of herself living in a house built on skulls, of the river near her home filled with floating corpses.

Mueller told her story before the assembled group of us at Auschwitz, concluding it by saying that her father had been the Nazi commandant responsible for the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in the town of Lida in Little Russia. As she mentioned the name of the town, I gasped aloud. Lida was where my family had lived for countless generations.

My knees became very shaky, and a knot formed in my stomach as I walked up to the front of the room after the session and proceeded to speak with her. As I made the connection, Mueller became visibly pale and then nearly hysterical, telling me she knew that one day she would have to meet someone whose family had been victims of her father. I was filled with dread as I wondered whether Mueller would ask me for the forgiveness that was not mine to give.

In my ears rang the words of the prophets that the children were not to suffer for the sins of the parents. But I heard also the infinitely harsher words of Eli Wiesel; "Do not forgive the murderers and their accomplices. God, merciful God, do not have mercy on these who had no mercy on Jewish children."

I experienced all of these emotions and more as Mueller and I talked, and then walked together, weeping, past the ruins of the crematoria. What became clear from our hours together is that we were both victims, the broken and tormented — Mueller just as clearly as any of us who had lost our families.

More broadly, that spirit of solidarity, expressed at a place where so many of our ancestors had lost their lives, went a long way in assuaging the fears and doubts that had been holding some of us captive. At the same time, that same spirit held out for all of us present the possibility of *Tikkun Olam*, the healing of the world — and the possibility that the cycles of violence might someday be broken. TW

Celebrating the holiness of the material world

by Ileana Grams

When considering what is most basic to Judaism, both Jews and non-Jews are perhaps unlikely to see it as above all a celebration of creation and of the holiness of the material world. Yet its most important holiday, the theme of most of its prayers, and much of its code of behavior are centered on the preciousness and beauty of the world that came into being "In the Beginning."

First, there is the Sabbath, the weekly holiday that celebrates the creation of the universe. To honor the Sabbath, Jews rest as God did, and contemplate the beauty of what has been created, just as the Creator did. Thus they refrain from work, which is defined as any intentional activity altering the material world. As the Sabbath candles are lit, the children blessed, and God praised for the wine and bread which begin the meal, we enter a holy period of contemplation and enjoyment of what God has made. The Sabbath brings home the point that such enjoyment is only possible when we give up our efforts to dominate. By making us stop, by making us rest, the Sabbath shows us the goodness of Creation, a goodness which is always there but whose enjoyment is obscured on the other days of the week by the need to earn our bread and to make our human environment. The Sabbath is the only festival instituted in the Ten Commandments. It is both the most important and the most frequent.



Tidings **by Michael Bergt**

For the observant Jew, the other six days of the week are holy as well. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest." The rabbis who codified the Talmud said this means that the obligation to work is as great as the obligation to rest. That is, all of one's life, and all one's activities, belong to the realm of Torah. One's duty is to live each moment in such a way that all of life is made holy. This is done not by escaping or transcending the material, but rather by being conscious of it. Consciousness makes us human, consciousness is the image of the Divine in us. A fully conscious life is both truly human and truly divine. Plato would agree, but Plato sees the body as a prison, limiting the full consciousness that the soul can attain only in bodiless purity, focussed on the immaterial Forms. Judaism sees human consciousness as operating fully only when it is focussed on the works of God: Creation. Where Plato sees pleasures as nails that fasten the soul to the body and keep it earthbound, Judaism says that in the afterlife we shall be called to account for every legitimate pleasure that we failed to enjoy. Creation is good, and therefore we are not only permitted but obligated to enjoy it.

I grew up with my mother's injunctions not to waste and not to destroy anything. Picking leaves off trees was frowned upon, as was abuse of any living thing. What we could not use ourselves was given to someone who could. Clothing was discarded only when quite worn, not because we no longer liked it or it was out of fashion. My mother viewed the creative reuse of something otherwise useless as a triumph, and she was a mistress of the art. She deplored a superabundance of toys, clothes, or anything else, because excess made it impossible to appreciate and enjoy each thing as it deserved. To do much with little was not just a tactic to make money go farther. Rather, it was living in accordance with the truth that the world is precious.

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Without knowing it, I was being exposed to three Jewish principles about the material world: *Bal Tashchit, Tikkun Olam,* and *Kavanah.*

Bal Tashchit (Thou shalt not destroy) is a general prohibition on destruction or wastefulness of any kind, derived from Deuteronomy 20:19-20, which forbids the destruction of trees in warfare. The rabbis expanded this to forbid any wanton destruction, any use of more where less would do, explicitly on the grounds that we are obligated to treat the creation with respect.

Tikkun Olam (repair or perfecting of the world) is the human responsibility to improve the world. God alone cannot make the world perfect, because he has given over so much power to humans. Therefore, if God is to realize the full goodness of Creation, it can only be with the active participation of humans. Thus, we are obligated to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison, and work to remedy injustice. But we are also obligated to tend the natural world so that its beauty and fruitfulness are preserved. Planting trees, in particular, is such a mitzvah (good deed/commandment) that a famous rabbinic saying is,"If you are about to plant a tree, and the Messiah comes, first plant the tree, and then go greet the Messiah."

It might be thought that humans have an obligation to perfect the world because it is their Fall that has blemished it. But Judaism rejects the idea of original sin. The good world which God has created is not tainted by Adam and Eve's disobedience. Neither are other humans. Rather, Judaism teaches that each human has both an inclination to good and an inclination to evil, as the tradition would put it, or free will, as moderns put it. Each individual must choose good and reject evil, and is accountable for the choice. A midrash (a rabbinic commentary on the Scriptures) notes that, in the creation account, it says several times that God saw that creation was good, but it does not say this about the creation of humans. Why not? The answer is that humans are not good or bad until they make themselves so. Thus, God could not say yet. Because humans have such freedom, God needs their cooperation in the perfecting of the world, and it is their task and their privilege to cooperate.

A short bracha *is recited by observant Jews every time they eat, drink wine, hear thunder, see lightning, smell a beautiful smell, see a rainbow, eat the first new fruit of a given kind for the year, or see a beautiful or remarkable natural object (as well as on numerous other occasions). Each* bracha *begins "Blessed are You, Lord our God..."*

The midrash seems to make God less than omnipotent by transferring to humans power to determine themselves. And indeed, this is a major theme in Judaism, with implications for the Creation. A midrash on Ecclesiastes pictures God leading Adam through the Garden of Eden and saying:"See my works, how fine and excellent they are. Now all that I have created, I created for your benefit. Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy my world. For if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you."

Humans have not only to refrain from destruction and to work actively to better the Creation, but to appreciate what is there. To do this, they need *kavanah*, or focussed attention. (The word *kavanah* means both intention and attention.) Moments of *kavanah* throughout the day are guaranteed by the institution of the most common Jewish prayer, the blessing or *bracha*. A short *bracha* is recited by observant Jews every time they eat, drink wine, hear thunder, see lightning, smell a beautiful smell, see a rainbow, eat the first new fruit of a given kind for the year, or see a beautiful or remarkable natural object (as well as on numerous other occasions). Each *bracha* begins "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe," and continues according to its special subject. (The blessing for beautiful sights, which I say frequently, living as I do in the Southern Appalachians, continues, "maker of the works of Creation.") Since different kinds of food get different *brachot* (plural), according to whether they grew in the ground, on a tree, are made of one of the five grains mentioned in the Bible, or had another origin, saying a bracha is an opportunity to stop and pay attention to the connection between the food in our hands and the natural world that it came from. It is noteworthy that the blessing does not consecrate the food or other object, but is rather a blessing or a praise of God for making the object. The object needs no consecration. It is holy already. It is we who need to notice its holiness and to thank God for it — and that is what we do in the *bracha.*

The main prayer for the morning service thanks God for "your miracles which are with us daily: evening, morn and noon." It is not just eating and seeing beautiful sights which are miraculous and worthy of praise. The *brachot* to be recited as one gets up in the morning begin with blessing God who has given the rooster understanding to distinguish between darkness and light, and include, among others, blessings for opening one's eyes, stretching, putting one's feet on the floor, dressing, and eliminating. This last,

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too, is a time to praise God who has designed the body with marvelous intricacy. Very observant Jews used to try to say 100 *brachot* a day. To come anywhere close to this goal requires a Zen-like living in the moment, a being here-and-now that differs from Zen in being expressed in words, but shares the same outlook: "How marvelous! I chop wood, I carry water."

Judaism rejects very strongly the anthropomorphization of God. So what to make of the strange story in Exodus in which Moses asks to see God? "No man can see my face and live, but hide yourself in the cleft of the rock, and I will pass by you," says God. So Moses does, and sees God's rear. For the rabbis, the meaning of this strange incident is that we cannot see God as he is in himself (God's face), but we can know him as he is revealed in his Creation, which is, as it were, the back side of God.

Christianity has emphasized the accessibility of God in the person of Jesus, and in the sacrament of communion which he instituted. In communion, the material elements of bread and wine are the carriers and manifestation of divinity. For Christians, this is because those elements are consecrated in the eucharist. But what if communion were a dramatic showing forth of the divinity which is always present in every element of the Creation?

Where Plato sees pleasures as nails that fasten the soul to the body and keep it earth-bound, Judaism says that in the afterlife we shall be called to account for every legitimate pleasure that we failed to enjoy.

What if the real purpose of communion were to start with the back side of God, as it were, the bread and wine, and, by heightening our consciousness, to show us that the front side of the bread and wine — and everything else — is God? Jesus was Jewish, after all. In that case, Christians not only could, but should, adopt the attitude that the material is holy. TW

Resources

Richard H. Schwartz, *Judaism and Global Survival,* New York, Atara Publishing Company, 1987. This is the best short survey of what Judaism has to say about our responsibilities to the Creation.

Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism,* Simi Valley, California, Tze Ulmad Press, 1975.

Herman Wouk, *This is My God.* Abba Hillel Silver, *Where Judaism Differed.* Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism.* These three first came out more than 30 years ago and have been through multiple republications.

Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993. This book takes St. Augustine's accusation that the Jews are carnal and shows that indeed, a major difference between Patristic Christianity and Talmudic Judaism was in attitudes toward the flesh.

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The role of Jewish feminists

by Susannah Heschel

"A woman may not read from the Torah because of the honor of the congregation" (*isha lo tikra batorah mipnei l'vod hatzibur*). That proclamation from the Talmud became one of the hotly contested dicta of Judaism during the 1970s, as the Jewish feminist movement took shape. At the outset, Jewish feminist objectives seemed clear: equality of women with men, primarily in religious ritual, but also in secular communal affairs.

In discussing the Talmud's stated reason for not granting women an *aliyah* (call to the Torah to recite a blessing during synagogue services), Jewish feminists at first debated the term "honor." Was it really a dishonor to men if a woman said the prayers and read from the Torah scroll in the synagogue? Surely not; how could men's honor be violated if a woman, too, recited the blessings? Only gradually did we realize that the word at stake in the Talmudic dictum was not "honor," but "congregation." Whose honor was being respected? Did the Jewish congregation consist only of men, as implied in this Talmudic statement? What about the honor of women? Even more fundamental, who makes the determinations concerning honor and dishonor? If Judaism's normative rabbinic texts were authored solely by men, what is their religious and moral authority for women? Those were the questions raised by the next stage of Jewish feminism.

Suppressed feminist history

Feminist analysis today is less a search for a single intention or meaning of a text, and far more an effort at unmasking hidden interests, a search for the politics of the text. We don't simply ask what the text seems to be saying, but whose interests are being served. We examine what the text reveals, but also explore what the text conceals.

One feminist historian, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, has suggested a feminist hermeneutics of suspicion, which views a prohibition as evidence that the action in question was at least occasionally practiced — otherwise, why would a ban be needed? For example, Fiorenza views the New Testament prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 that women should be silent in church as evidence that women did, in fact, speak up. Returning to the example above, that "a woman should not read from the Torah because of the honor of the congregation," we might deduce the prohibition as evidence that women, in fact, were reading from the Torah, at least in some congregations. Additional evidence corroborates that possibility. Another early rabbinic text includes women among those called to the Torah in the synagogue; the Tosefta (additional writings) to Megillah 3:11 states, "Everyone is included in the *minyan* of seven [to go to read the Torah on the Sabbath], even a woman, even a child."

Most of the negative depictions of Judaism in Christian feminist writings are inaccurate and biased, drawing from age-old stereotypes.

Feminist scholarship has uncovered forgotten aspects of Jewish women's history. For example, although women were excluded from composing the major textual traditions of Jewish mystical literature, they developed their own spiritual practices and prayers. And while the major non-Orthodox denominations of Judaism did not officially approve the ordination of women rabbis until recent years, a 17th century Jewish woman in Kurdistan was called a rabbi. A Hasidic woman, the Maid of Ludmir, briefly served as spiritual leader of her community — until her marriage, which allegedly spoiled her spiritual gifts; and a German-Jewish woman, Regina Jonas, was ordained privately as a Reform rabbi in 1935 — only to be murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz in 1944.

While the historical record emerges as far more supportive of feminist goals than initially expected, problems remain as women call for changes in Judaism. Feminists differ concerning the roles they seek for themselves; they debate whether feminist theory calls for equality between men and women or respect for their differences; they disagree over the nature of the Judaism they ultimately envision.

While the past 20 years have brought important opportunities for Orthodox women, they have also generated disappointments in the failure of rabbinic leadership. To be sure, sources have been mined to reveal far greater opportunities for women's religious activities than was previously recognized, and many changes have taken place. Schools to train women in classical rabbinic texts, or to study traditional biblical commentaries, have been established, and all-women prayer groups have formed for *Shabbat* services, for reading the Scroll of Esther on Purim, and for other occasions.

Yet even with a clear mandate, opportunities for women often come under attack. Orthodox women who gather sim-

A longer version of this article appears in *On Being a Jewish Feminist,* edited by **Susannah Heschel,** Schocken Books, N.Y., 1995. Artist **Amy Hill** lives in New York City.

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ply to pray together have been harshly criticized by Orthodox rabbis, although these women do not call themselves a *minyan* (prayer quorum), since they accept the *halakhic* mandate that a *minyan* is limited to 10 or more men. Although they violate no Jewish laws, these women's prayer groups are sometimes called disruptive to the community, and charges of sexual impropriety and violations of women's allegedly inherent modesty have been raised. In other cases, feminism is given a blanket condemnation as a secularizing movement, despite the fact that many Jewish feminists seek greater, not lesser, involvement in communal religious life.

Is emulating men the answer?

The question arises, Should women voluntarily assume the obligations of praying three times a day, putting on *tefillin*, wearing a prayer shawl and head covering? Or does that presume that the life of a religious Jew is the life of a religious Jewish *man*? If the goal is achieving what men have, the danger is giving added weight to the assumption of men's superiority. How should feminists proceed — by demanding access to traditionally male roles, or demanding higher status for traditionally female roles?

Feminist theorists increasingly go beyond assertions of equal opportunity for women and men, arguing that as women enter professions hitherto dominated by men, they not only become female doctors, lawyers, rabbis, and professors, but they also change the nature of the professions. Studies of women's professional behavior and management techniques, for example, indicate that differences do exist. A woman rabbi may turn out to be a distinct kind of rabbi.

As increasing numbers of women are ordained, Jewish religious life might be transformed.

Christian feminist errors

Most of the negative depictions of Judaism in Christian feminist writings are inaccurate and biased, drawing from age-old stereotypes rather than reliable scholarship. They hinder the efforts of Jewish feminists by magnifying Judaism's sexism into an antisemitic distortion. The sexism that exists in Judaism is parallel to the sexism that exists in virtually all other religions and cultures; sexism simply takes different forms in various eras and locations, and cannot be weighed and measured to determine which is more or less oppressive. The distortion begins with some feminists' argument that Judaism's sexism is worse than all others and is even responsible for inaugurating Western civilization's patriarchy. That claim cannot be proven historically and functions instead solely as an anti-Jewish ideological charge.



Amy Hill

Feminist anti-Judaism began as women sought an explanation for patriarchal structures as an evolving characteristic of human societies, rather than as an immutable law of biology. Some subscribed to the myth that prehistorical societies had been goddess-worshiping matriarchies, destroyed by the patriarchal society of ancient Israel, which introduced worship of an exclusive, mono-theistic father-God. Just as Christian theologians have blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus, some feminist theologians blame Jews for the death of the goddess and the introduction of patriarchy.

Another popular claim is that Jesus was a feminist, liberating women from Judaism's patriarchy and establishing an egalitarian Christianity. His liberation of women, however, was foiled by the patriarchal convictions of his earliest followers, who were Jews imbued with Judaism's sexism. Again, Jews and Judaism are blamed for the sexism of Western civilization.

This particular form of Christian feminist anti-Judaism seeks an explanation for Christianity's sexism by blaming it on the Jews. The statements and actions attributed to Jesus in the gospels are contrasted with a very negative picture of first-century Palestinian Jewish mores regarding women. In this case, too, the anti-Jewish stereotypes are in no way based on the actual historical evidence. These Christian feminists draw invariably from much later Talmudic sources, composed several centuries after the Gospels by rabbis living in Babylonia, in order to draw a contrast to the Gospel stories. The Talmudic sources, in fact, do present a predominantly patriarchal picture, with limited scope for women's influence and power. But the Talmud does not necessarily reflect the situation of Jesus's own lifetime, any more than the later misogyny of the church Fathers can be placed in the mouth of

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Jesus. The more appropriate evidence from first-century Palestine indicates that women served as synagogue leaders and maintained positions of social and financial importance, suggesting that Jesus' behavior was no different from that of other Jews in his day. Indeed, the very act of trying to draw a contrast between Jesus and Judaism is absurd, given the multiple Judaisms that flourished during his lifetime, and the fact that he himself was a Jew, and all that he preached was an expression of Judaism. The egalitarian impulses reflected in the Gospels are as much a source for Jewish women's history as they are a theological mandate for Christian women.

Finally, the most problematic example of feminist anti-Judaism is found in writings that depict Judaism as a misogynist, militaristic, violent religion, which is contrasted to the allegedly pacifistic, feminist teachings of Jesus. In the most egregious example of feminist anti-semitism, the German Protestant feminist theologian Christa Mulack has drawn an analogy between Nazism and Judaism, suggesting that just as the Nazis obeyed the commands of Hitler, the Jews obey the commandments of God. Both, she concludes, are moralities of obedience to orders, in contrast to Christian and feminist ethics of compassion and responsibility.

A sizable body of literature has developed in recent years to refute the anti-Judaism found in some Christian feminism, and the effect has been significant in heightening awareness of the problem. While the excesses of some feminists demand specific refutations, they should not diminish the valuable work of other feminists. On the contrary, the analyses of sexism in other religions often provide valuable perceptions that may be applied to Judaism. For example, the remarkable insights of Mary Daly into the nature of Christianity's sexism were instrumental in shaping Jewish feminism.

Inclusive language

The issue of religious language, particularly the language used to describe God, has aroused intense controversy. Suggestions that God be addressed as "she" as well as "he" are met with claims that female language would violate the gender-neutrality of Judaism's God. At a conference debate over gender-inclusive language a few years ago, one opponent of feminism insisted that changes in religious language were unnecessary, because "God is neither male nor female; He is above gender."

For Jewish women, feminism has come as a great promise and an enormous relief. Feminism signals the intense engagement of women in Jewish creativity.

In fact, gender-inclusive language is not foreign to traditional Judaism, although modern Jewish apologetics have tended to reject female imagery as signifying a departure from strict monotheism. Within medieval Jewish spiritual writings, for example, God's immanent presence is called *Shekhinah*, a female personification, and much of classical Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition, focuses on the reunification of male and female aspects of God that will occur at the time of messianic redemption. In that way, inclusive language may not be an innovation, but a recovery of an older tradition.

In recent years efforts have been made to retranslate or rewrite the prayerbook to make its language gender-inclusive. The Conservative prayerbook has eliminated references to the congregation as if it were composed exclusively of men. In the reconstructionist prayerbook references to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are augmented with the names of the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

New feminist rituals

Even the *mitzvot,* "prayers in the form of a deed," have been recast by feminists. In contrast to the efforts of many modern Jews to assimilate by casting off religious obligations, feminists have expanded the range of women's *mitzvot.* New feminist prayers and rituals abound for marking important moments in women's lives, including naming baby girls, celebrating childbirth, marking menarche and menopause, as well as elaborating women's participation at weddings, *bat-mitzvah* ceremonies, *Rosh Hodesh* observances and Passover Seders.

The strengthening of our position as feminists in recent years has also brought a diminution of the anger and frustration women justifiably have felt over our exclusion from so much of Jewish life. That rage had motivated some women simply to reject religion as hopelessly patriarchal. Yet it would be absurd to abandon Judaism solely for its patriarchy. While much in Jewish religious thought is biased and distorts our identity as women, we find there is a great deal that still speaks to us. Jewish spirituality, although developed in an exclusively male world, can be deeply inspiring for us.

For Jewish women, feminism has come as a great promise and an enormous relief. Feminism has infused women with a new sense of opportunity, and has brought the talents and insights of women to positions of leadership. Most important, feminism signals the intense engagement of women in Jewish creativity. Jewish feminism began as women felt left out of Jewish life; it is continuing as women determine they have something to contribute. In the future, we shall see how Judaism itself is transformed by their participation. TW

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Justice struggles and Judaism

by Lisa Gayle

My parents joined a synagogue when I was 11. I was at least two years behind in Hebrew when my teacher called on me to read what I now recognize as the basic beginning to Jewish prayer. I struggled over the first two words, my finger dragging along the page from right to left as I worked to read each consonant and the vowel below it. *Baruch atah,* "Blessed art Thou." The stumpy-looking third word looked easy, but when I tried to pronounce it, my jaws contorted and sound stuck in my throat. My teacher interrupted sternly, "Always, when you see this word, say *Adonai.*"

Adonai is translated as Lord. The Hebrew letters read something like Yahweh, but Jews do not speak the Name of God. There is a deep and continuing tradition of Divine presence and inspiration in Judaism, but God is purposely abstract. A good Jew performs *mitzvot* (good deeds). Faith is not our defining piece.

In Sunday school, I learned Jewish songs, dances, ethics, history and Hebrew, but never others' ideas of God. This was the 1950s and 1960s. Jews were coming to terms with the Holocaust when God didn't save us, and the State of Israel, so dependent upon the action of people. This was also post-war America that believed in Technology, Progress and Anti-Communism, which had a strong dose of anti-semitism.

Motivated by ethics

I know Christians who are motivated to work for social justice through a personal, faith-based relationship with Jesus, or through modeling themselves after Jesus. The Jews I know are most often motivated by a sense of what is right and wrong, a broadly drawn sense of community, and obligation — joked about as guilt.

Toba Spitzer, of Newton, Mass., became a rabbi to do social justice work, in part because she was disturbed by the lack of a spiritual core in the secular Left.

"The split between spirituality and social justice is a modern one," she says. "I don't think ancient Jews would even understand that split. The point of Judaism is to sanctify every single aspect of your life. You say a blessing before you eat and after you go to the bathroom. The laws for how you slaughter an animal are right up there with the laws of giving *tsedakah,* with the laws of having to take care of poor people. In Biblical and Rabbinical Judaism there is no way to separate the just treatment of people and the environment with religious practice."

Spitzer sees three fundamental principles running through Judaism, from Biblical times, through Rabbinical Judaism, to the present. First, from Genesis is the notion that every human being is created in the image of God. The rules indicate that in giving, the main concern is the dignity of the person who needs.

I am finding out that Judaism has a depth, beauty and mystical side that is now in process of once again becoming fused with the struggle for social justice.

Second, in Exodus, the Jewish people standing together at Sinai entered into a covenant with God that also implies obligations to the community. Ritual and ethical rules are listed side by side. You don't steal or kill. *Shabbat,* a weekly day of spiritual renewal, has social justice implications. We don't create for the sake of economic growth. *Shabbat* is a constant reminder that there is something bigger than you that says stop.

Third, in Leviticus is the idea that the land, the source of prosperity, belongs to God. People are to take care of the land. There are very particular rules about tithing, giving away a portion of the produce and letting the land rest.

A society based on these principles would be very different, Spitzer observes. Modern Orthodox Jews apply these principles within their community. They visit the sick, they comfort the grieving. These are obligations. Outside of what they consider their community, they may do little, but they do a good job of taking care of their own.

Pearl Marcus, a friend of my parents, tells this story about Jewish life on the lower east side of New York 70 years ago: At *Rosh Hashanah,* the Jewish New Year, she would accompany her grandfather on visits that had both ritual and social content. Her grandfather would go to the butcher, the tailor, all the people with whom he carried on the business of daily life. At each stop he would ask if he owed anything. Usually he didn't, but if he did, he'd pay. Then he would ask forgiveness for anything he might have done to offend the person. They would forgive each other, drink a shot of schnapps, and he, with little Pearl in tow, would go on to the next store.

The entire community engaged in this period of forgiveness and renewal, a prac-

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tice carried over from Eastern Europe. It helped the community that was often severely stressed by the limits placed on Jews from the outside and it helped individuals prepare for forgiveness and renewal in the eyes of God.

Fundamental Jewish values were passed on to me through my family. The language was neither religious, nor political, but the ideas that each person deserves to live with dignity, that we have obligations to contribute to the community, and that we work only for what we need underlined my parents' approach to the world. It's no accident that the Yiddish word *mensch*, close to the German word for man, connotes a kind, decent person.

Jewish political activism

Movements for social change in the 20th century U.S. and in Europe before the Holocaust were disproportionately Jewish, although these activists rarely made a point that they were Jews. Even so, the backlash against communists and socialists was often anti-semitic — think of the deaths of the Rosenbergs, the purges in Hollywood, the activities of HUAC. In my own family, my great aunt and uncle were fined with 300 others when the N.Y.C. government smashed anti-racist union organizing efforts in the early 1950s. Black-Jewish relations in New York would be very different if the vision of these Jewish and black teachers had succeeded. With their removal, narrow union politics prevailed.

I learned the same lesson again when their son, an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War and contributor to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Port Huron Statement, was beaten and left for dead by a Right-winger.

I visited my grandfather for the last time in 1970. I schlepped my guitar from Boston to Florida. He was dazed from a weak heart and lots of medications. The mask of Parkinson's Disease made his emotions impossible to read, but when I sang Phil Och's anti-war song "I Ain't A-Marchin' Any More," his face lit up and he applauded loudly.

My grandfather had been an IWW (International Workers of the World) organizer. He worked from the time he was a young boy. Finishing *Les Miserables* in the street car coming home from work, he wept. By the time he was 11, he had left school, but seized an education in the milieu of progressive workers and intellectuals who organized and argued in the coffee houses and factories around New York City. He refused to fight in World War I and hid from the draft in the woods of upstate New York. He was an atheist, but a Jewish atheist, and Phil Ochs helped me let my grandfather know that a Jewish tradition had been passed on.

Becoming a radical

The feminist movement brought out the radical in me and introduced me to Lesbian and gay liberation. From there it was a short bridge to embracing the liberation struggles of people of color. Nothing short of a total revamping of society could possibly make the world just. No rulers give up their power without a fight. I became a revolutionary.

From 1975 until its dissolution in 1988, I belonged to the Revolutionary Socialist League. What attracted me to the RSL was its vision of a just world that bordered on spiritual. We valued all oppressed, each group having a unique view of liberation that formed an essential piece of a truly free world. We took our vision absolutely seriously, for example, emphasizing gay liberation in the auto plants, steel mills and garment factories where many of us worked.

We believed that the liberation of workers and other groups oppressed under capitalism could happen only when those people were controlling the process. That led us to reject the tenets of Marxism one at a time: How could Stalin's Soviet Union be a worker state if the workers didn't control it? How could Lenin's and Troksky's Communist Party carry out the dictatorship of the proletariat if they were repressing the proletariat in order to hold on to state power? With so many righteous viewpoints, how could there be one Truth?

What did it mean to be Jewish?

For much of that time, I struggled with my Jewishness and spirituality. I have a difficult time with Israel. Holocause survivors needed a safe place to go. At the same time, the Nazis, the Russians, and the U.S. anti-communists had wiped out the progressive Jewish leadership. The Jews who took leadership in forming Israel were those willing to make an imperialist arrangement in the Middle East. The dynamic is similar to the evolution of the N.Y.C. teachers union. When capitalism smashes visionary movements, people opt for survival. Still I am saddened when other oppressed peoples react to Israel with anti-semitism. Ironically, some parts of the Palestinian movement have worked hard to distinguish between the Jewish people and ardent Zionism. I still am deeply saddened as I try to untangle anti-semitism from class- and race-based conflicts.

While in the RSL, I meditated daily. We held Passover Seders. Occasionally, on a Friday night, when I'd find myself alone with a roasted chicken and a bottle of wine, I'd take out my candlesticks and say the blessings.

Uniting the political and the religious

In 1983, I was diagnosed with a malignant tumor in my hip. The political me began to read, write and think about capitalism, its relationship to cancer and environmental destruction. At the same time, cancer is a personal event that shoved me up against death, insanity, birth and possibility. As I turned inward to focus on healing, I was often touched, sometimes shaken, by experiences that were dis-

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tinctly non-material. I wound up holding two sets of beliefs, a revolutionary, materialist philosophy that seemed just, but exhausting to sustain, and a spirituality that was becoming mystical.

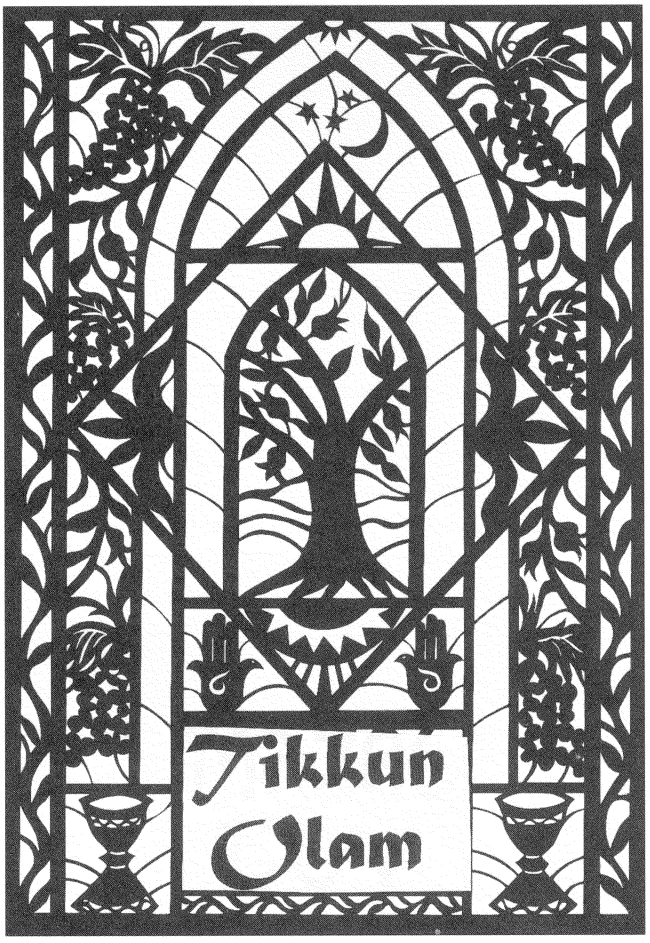
I felt uncomfortable talking about my beliefs with anyone. They were intensely personal. And then I became a parent. One of Jacob's early questions was "What's God?" Suddenly my visits to various synagogues during *Yom Kippur* and saying *Kaddish* for my father were far too little. I needed words. I needed structure. I needed a religious framework for my son.

Jacob was born in Guatemala. He is part Native American and, as a convert, 100 percent Jewish. Assisted by elders, we opened ourselves to Native American traditions. We do social justice work in support of Guatemalan Indians returning to their land after the genocide of the 1980s. But I have come to understand that Judaism is the only spiritual belief system I can authentically pass on. At the same time, I am finding that Judaism has a depth, beauty and mystical side that is once again becoming fused with the struggle for social justice.

Jewish Renewal

At the center of this fusion is the movement for Jewish Renewal. Arthur Waskow, a rabbi in Philadelphia who was once a secular social activist, says that Jewish Renewal draws on Jewish mystical teachings that understand the Divine as embodied as well as present in the teachings of the prophets and the rabbis. Jewish Renewal infuses ancient wisdom with the insights of contemporary ecology, feminism and participatory democracy. There is respect for, and often learning from, other spiritual paths, he adds.

A component of Jewish Renewal is that people seek to heal the earth and society. Kosher — a way of infusing food preparation with Divinity by humanely slaughtering animals and keeping people healthy — has been expanded to Eco-kosher, practices to heal the wounded earth. There are efforts toward mutual respect between Jewish people and other peoples and paths, in the world at large and in Israel.



***Tikkun Olam,* papercut by Judith Hankin**

At the most recent festival of *Tu B'Shvat,* the holiday marking the New Year of Trees, 250 Jews gathered to honor the Redwood forest and to resist Pacific Lumber Company's logging. Waskow describes the 250 participants as experienced rabbis, Hillel students and teens for whom this was the first burst of a light-filled Judaism that is at the same time spiritually passionate, Torah-informed and *Tikkun Olam*-committed. A Kabbalistic Seder was held as well as civil disobedience.

"All this was treated as Torah," says Waskow, "the aiming toward Divine wisdom that comes through our own process of making holy our own approaches to biology, ecology, law, and social change, as much as it comes from quoting words of Torah from previous generations." Jewish Renewal is influencing all aspects of Jewish life.

"The process is going on in Jewish music, liturgy, midrash, education, politics, in synagogues and *havarot*, in 'secular' or communal settings and even in ashrams and on Broadway," says Waskow.

"There are literally tens of thousands of people now living the kinds of Jewish life-practice that only a few dozen people were living just 25 years ago."

Waskow likens these tens of thousands to seedbeds. With Judaism's just traditions, still alive even in secular Jews, the soil for Jewish Renewal is fertile. TW

Resources

Jewish Renewal can be explored by reading Arthur Waskow's works, Zalman Schacter-Shalomi's *Paradigm Shift* and *From Aging to Sage-ing,* Michael Lerner's *Jewish Renewal,* Roger Kamenetz's *The Jew in the Lotus,* Judith Plaskow's *Standing Again at Sinai,* Marge Piercy's *He She and It,* and Judy Petsonk's *Taking Judaism Personally.*

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Converting to Judaism

by Kimberly Conwell

I did not start my journey to conversion on purpose. I was an active member of my church, attending services and Bible studies regularly, serving on many committees. I even took a job there. The church has a million-dollar service agency and I became the bookkeeper. But I was always restless, not with the local church itself which I still love, but with the church in its larger sense.

I felt compelled to seek out the roots of Christian liturgy and theology, while simultaneously exploring other religious traditions. My local librarian finally asked if I was pursuing a theology degree. The deeper I went, however, the less satisfied I was. I became a great debater, subjecting my friends and pastors to hours of questions digging at inconsistencies.

I was often angry with God. I felt God was driving me towards something I could not identify. God was relentless and I was tired of it.

Finally, I reached a point when I had to stop attending services. I spent two years in private study and reflection. Often I wished I could be secular and leave the work of religious ideas alone. A simple moral life (to the best of my abilities) seemed well enough, but I was driven.

Time and again, I found myself drawn to religious writings and teachings and I immersed myself in them. I spent a few months at the Zen Center. I attended neo-pagan goddess events. And I kept reading, particularly within Buddhism and Judaism, yet I knew that any one religion could demand more than a lifetime of study. No matter how attractive the idea was of taking bits and pieces of various religions and cobbling them together into some sort of practice, I knew I would never achieve any kind of depth that way. And I desperately wanted the deeps. I decided to concentrate on the Judeo-Christian tradition. (Like most Christians, I did not realize how distinct the two traditions are.)

I returned to church with a renewed devotion to God and spiritual life.

I found a kind of peace with the Christian service, but often felt that hymns or prayers referred to aspects of Christian theology in which I no longer believed. At the same time, I was immersing myself in Jewish writings and teaching myself Hebrew, reasoning that the only way for me to understand Jesus was to be able to understand his people and their Scriptures, and that the only way I could, in conscience, remain a Christian was to come to terms with who Jesus was. I had also read literary criticisms of the Hebrew scriptures which made me long to be able to read the original. Although studying Jewish texts never reconciled me to the Christian Jesus, I did fall in love with the texts themselves.

When a proselyte approaches a rabbi with the desire to convert, the rabbi is required to ask, "Why?!" and then to list the difficulties and persecutions Jews face.

I began to realize that I would not be able to complete my journey until I had visited a synagogue. My partner, a non-practicing Jew, agreed to go with me to a local Reform Temple. I was excited and afraid. When the ark was opened, I almost missed it. I had been trying desperately to keep my place in the prayerbook. Then I looked up as the Rabbi lifted the Torah. I felt like Isaiah in the temple. A feeling of awe and mystery washed over me. My Hebrew has gotten better since then, but the thrill of watching the Torah, wrapped in brocade and crowned, being carried by the rabbi through the congregation has never left. I was hooked.

Converting to Judaism is not something invited by designated greeters at coffee hour. In fact, when a proselyte approaches a rabbi with the desire to convert, the rabbi is required to ask, "Why?!" and then to list the difficulties and persecutions Jews face.

I decided to take it slow and live a Jewish lifestyle for a year before making any decisions. At least I told myself that I was keeping my options open, but in my heart I knew that I had found a home. Over the course of that year, I discovered a deeper dimension of myself than I knew existed. For the first time, I began to understand the meaning of concepts like discipline, ritual, good deeds. I found in Judaism a delightful playground between authority and autonomy. Finally, I went to the rabbi and asked to convert. As Talmud instructs, he explained the difficulties inherent in such a choice. Even knowing that he was required to say this, it threw me, but I couldn't go back. When I came up out of the *Mikvah* (ritual bath) and was officially a Jew, I was both laughing and crying, filled with joy. The days since have felt increasingly normal, but the

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Kimberly Conwell works for a Detroit inner-city church. She and her partner attend the Temple Shir Shalom, a Reform congregation in West Bloomfield, Mich. Artist **Michael Bergt** lives in Santa Fe, N.M.

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underlying joy is solid. I'm still quick to question, but the framework is right.

Among the things I consider, a few are worth mentioning:

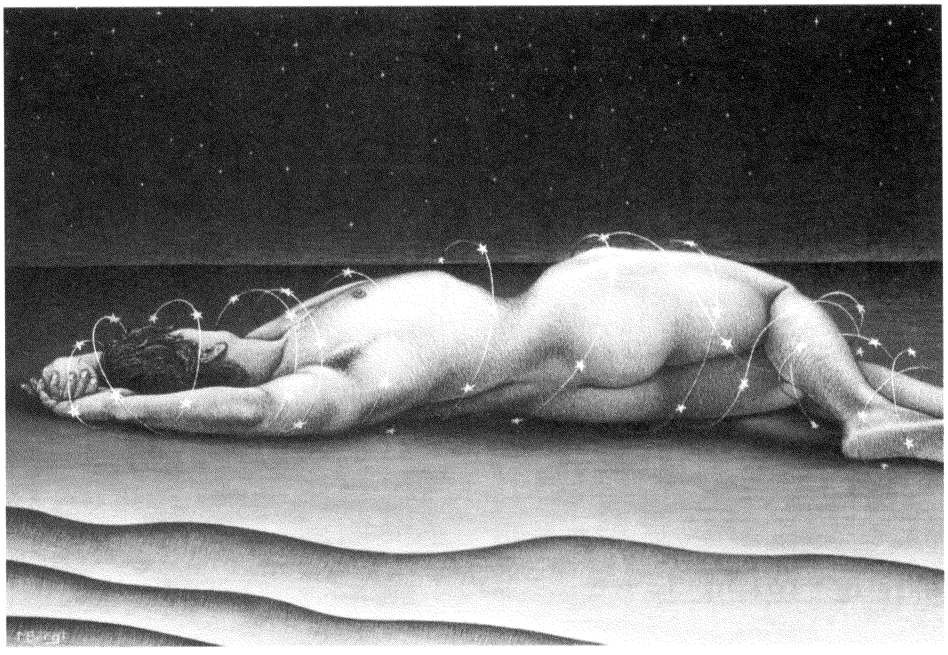
• The first is that within Jewish-Christian discourse, we often fail to understand each other. Christians especially tend to think that because we share certain Scriptures and talk about them using the same words, we have the same meanings attached to those words. Often there's a slight tilt on the interpretation.

• The basic understanding of human nature differs. In Christian theology, Jesus — the divine child of God — died for the sins of humanity. This implies that human beings are bad enough for this to have been necessary. Jews never had to deal with the death of divinity. Within Judaism, there is a balance. The *yetzer hara*, the inclination toward evil, and the *yetzer hatov*, the inclination toward good, are both found within individuals. The individual's task is to nourish the inclination for good and to focus the inclination to evil into productive pursuits. For the Jew, evil is less permanent and less irredeemable than it is for the Christian.

• Sex is viewed very differently — sex is a good thing! You are required to have sex. I say that the Talmud teaches that both partners are to enjoy it, but since the Talmud was written for men, it actually says that your wife must enjoy it. Having sex is considered a *mitzva*. Having sex on the Sabbath is a double *mitzva*.

• There are differences, too, in understandings of the personal and the communal. Both religions do both pieces, but in Christianity there's more emphasis on a personal relationship with God and personal salvation — the communal follows. In Judaism, the primary relationship is between the community and God — the individual fits into that relationship. It's a different slant.

This journey through conversion has given me a framework around which to grow. Often I imagine Judaism as the trellis and myself as the rosebush. I find new possibilities opening up daily. TW



Caught in a dream **by Michael Bergt**

Remembering Ben Linder 10 years later

On April 28, 1987 Benjamin Linder, a mechanical engineer working as a volunteer in northern Nicaragua, was assassinated by a squad of *Contras,* anti-revolutionaries sponsored by the Reagan administration. Two Nicaraguan workers, Sergio Fernandez and Pablo Rosales, were murdered in the same assault.

Linder, 27, had come to Nicaragua in August, 1983. An accomplished juggler and unicyclist, he loved to entertain children in the villages where his work for the Nicaraguan Energy Institute brought him. His murder came by a creek, where he was making preparatory measurements for a small hydroelectric plant. The *Contras* immobilized him with hand grenades and then shot him in the head.

"Some critics will go out of their way to characterize Ben as a starry-eyed idealist who saw Central America as a stage for acting out repressed desires for social change back home," Tom Kruse, one of Linder's close friends and fellow volunteers, recently observed. "But Ben was hardly ungrounded. He witnessed official arrogance and indolence, yet he also recognized that the 1979 revolution had created real spaces of empowerment and opportunity unparalleled in Central American history."

Linder was a member of the New Jewish Agenda, an organization of progressive Jews attempting to resist a "neoconservative" trend in the Jewish community. The latter's leading partisans included Elliot Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State in the Reagan administration — a prominent architect of the *Contra* war.

— David Finkel

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80 bishops pressure pension fund to intervene in labor dispute

by Julie A. Wortman

Los Angeles Bishop Frederick H. Borsch is spearheading a move by 80 Episcopal Church bishops, including presiding bishop-elect Frank T. Griswold, to call upon the Church Pension Fund (CPF) to use its influence with one of its asset managers on behalf of a Washington, D.C., janitors' union.

The bishops' July 18 request is the second CPF has received in recent months. The first came from the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ) last April. In late May, CPF rejected ENEJ's request, citing "negligible" influence in the matter. In addition, CPF senior vice president and general counsel John Geer told ENEJ president John Hooper that, owing to "the nature of the Fund" and the large size of its investment portfolio, the Fund has chosen "to limit its corporate activities to voting in favor of shareholder resolutions on social topics, with an occasional letter to management explaining the nature of our vote."

As this issue went to press CPF had not yet formally responded to the 80 bishops' plea that CPF take a more active role in this particular case.

At issue is the eight-year struggle of Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, Local 82 (SEIU) to organize janitors who clean commercial office buildings in an effort to win them basic job rights. Carr Real Estate Services (CRES) is a business that hires only non-union cleaning contractors and provides all the janitorial labor for its parent company, CarrAmerica, the largest private building owner in Washington, D.C. One of the contractors hired by CRES has been found guilty of several labor law violations. Likewise, CRES and CarrAmerica have attempted to discourage janitors from unionizing by denying the unions access to CarrAmerica buildings (in defiance of a court order) and by photographing those who attend after-work, off-site union meetings. The National Labor Relations Board has issued a complaint about some of these actions.

Bill Ragen, a SEIU organizer, says that SEIU believes the Church Pension Fund could help the union persuade CarrAmerica to use only contractors that "pay fair wages, comply with federal labor laws and wage and hour laws and treat their employees with dignity and respect." The reason, according to SEIU's Julie Gozan, is that some of CPF's considerable assets are invested with the advice of Security Capital Group, which owns 40 percent of CarrAmerica through a subsidiary, the Luxembourg-based Security Capital U.S. Realty. CPF is also reportedly a U.S. Realty shareholder.

The bishops are asking that CPF sit down with union leaders and hear their concerns with an eye to possibly influencing "the position of Security Capital Group with respect to CarrAmerica's apparently anti-union policy," a policy that facilitates "poverty wages with few, if any, benefits."

CPF operates, as its letterhead declares, "In the Service of the Episcopal Church," providing pension benefits for Episcopal Church clergy and lay employees. With over $3 billion in total assets, CPF follows DuPont and Eastman Kodak as one of the largest employee benefit funds in the country, a distinction, the bishops noted, that "carries with it a special social responsibility."

"One of the issues that we constantly need to work on in this country is support and care for our families whose income leaves them below the poverty line and without basic benefits, especially health benefits," said Los Angeles' Borsch in commenting on his decision to press this matter with CPF.

"I and many of the other bishops feel that the church and church agencies should do all that we can to support this basic fairness."

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*.



Lutherans jilt Episcopalians

By only six votes, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), meeting in a churchwide assembly on August 18, voted down a concordat providing full communion between the two denominations. A two-thirds majority was needed to pass the measure. The Episcopal Church's General Convention had approved the concordat a month earlier by an overwhelmingly positive vote.

Most observers believe that Lutherans opposing the concordat did so largely because of its requirement that ELCA bishops be incorporated into the historic episcopate. Lutheran bishops are currently elected to six-year terms, after which they return to being pastors. Under the concordat they would have been elected bishops for life, even if they only served a limited term in the position. Episcopal bishops would have had to help "install" each new Lutheran bishop to ensure their inclusion in the apostolic succession.

In other action, over 81 percent of the Lutheran assembly participants voted to approve full communion with three Reformed churches—the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

— based on an ENS report

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Continuing the 'dialogue' on human sexuality: an untouched universe of difference

by Jennifer Phillips

The church has hardly begun to talk about the theological dimensions of the complex arena of human sexuality. Debates about whether gay and lesbian Chrisians comprise new categories of potentially holy and Christian life divert us from the larger issue of how all persons as fully sexual and spiritual beings may live lives lifted toward God.

Eight years as a hospital chaplain and eight more as rector in two highly inclusive urban parishes have convinced me that human sexuality is far more complex and various than I once could have imagined. Like most Christian children, I was raised with stories from Genesis and Noah that suggested that the world of creatures was divided into two tidy categories of male and female that paired easily one with the other.

I picked up a *New York Times Magazine* one Sunday in 1969 and read of the plight of Olympic women athletes who had been denied the right to compete since testing had revealed that they had an extra Y chromosome (XXY combination) and therefore were not "genetic females." "But I'm a woman! I have always been a woman," was the pained cry of one. I began to do research and quickly came across the phenomenon of XYY men, who at that time were being studied for suspected tendencies toward violent behavior. My world of neat dualities began to crumble.

In the 1980s I worked in a major medical center where I heard the stories of dozens of human beings in time of medical crisis whose lives did not fit the categories. I remember a young man dying of cancer whom I visited during repeated hospitalizations over two years until his death. "I grew up in a male body knowing I was female," he told me. "My father whipped me for putting on lipstick when I was nine. For years I secretly believed I wasn't a real person — that I was some kind of awful mistake. I had to sneak into a medical library to finally read about myself, to find out who I am ... and find out I wasn't the only one. I chose not to have transgender surgery. I don't often cross dress any more — it just doesn't seem that important. I married my best friend who is a woman and she loves me as a woman in a man's body. Her love saved my life and gave me faith for the first time that maybe God had made me." I remember his voice after 20 years, transparent with trust.

Since then I have listened to people born with no, or both male and female, or ambiguous genitals. I have heard those who lost their genitals traumatically or iatrogenically, and those who went through the long difficult process of transsexual surgery.

I have sat with those whose sex was altered by hormone treatments, those who experienced themselves as trapped in a wrong-sexed body, and those who have shifted gender by dress and hormones with no desire to alter their overall physiology.

I have counseled those who have lived for a time as gay and then fallen in love with someone of the opposite sex and made good passionate marriages. I have listened to far too many gay and lesbian people who married out of desperation, fear or at the urging of clergy in order to try to change their erotic feelings into what they were not. I've met those who feel clear they have chosen from among real alternatives for their orientation and identity, others who felt no choice from earliest childhood. I have sent parishioners off to try celibate vocations in religious orders.

I have listened to many, many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight and gay transvestite people and their loved ones — often under those pressured circumstances of illness where vulnerabilities and souls are shared, confessions made, and pretenses dropped. And I tell you, the sex and gender of human beings is more marvelous, poignantly challenging, and various than most people imagine! Most of the people I met were trying valiantly to craft humane intimate relationships of integrity. Few had given up on the possibility of a whole life, on the possiblity of being loved by another human being.

Faced with lives that departed from societal norms, each of these people, too, suffered much and struggled mightily to sort out where they had come from, how they became who they were, and to what eternal dimension — what God — they belonged. In the 1980s virtually none of them had found significant help from clergy or religious organizations. I like to believe this is changing.

The conversations we are having in the church so far hardly even touch on this universe of difference which derives from the mysterious mind and intention of God. We can choose to believe God constructs creation sloppily with many mistakes, that these lives are somehow perversions of human being, or we can investigate the deeper mystery that God has far more in mind than we find comfortable or easy to organize in our minds — so much that reverence and wonder are our necessary response.

Our need for political identities and debates in order to manage our anxiety and confusion often blinds us to the world as it is, in its hungering for God and its most tender need for compassion, and simply to be seen and heard.

I believe God desires us to pay attention in order to know something more than we would otherwise know of the Holy One. The church must be a place where our categories cease, where no life-testimonies are denied, where love seeks the truth.

Jennifer Phillips is rector of Trinity Parish, St. Louis.

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Bishop to chair Colorado commission on same-sex relationships

The bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado, William J. Winterrowd, has been named chair of the state's newly formed Commission on the Rights and Responsibilities of Same Sex Relationships. Created by Colorado's Governor Roy Romer, the commission is to "examine issues of civil law relating to same-sex relationships," especially the rights and benefits, both legal and economic, that persons in long-term committed relationships ought to be accorded.

Romer announced the Winterrowd appointment following his veto of the anti-gay marriage bill passed by the Colorado legislature in June. He vetoed the bill, he said, because "it became clear to me that, regardless of how benign the wording, this bill is fundamentally negative and divisive," doing little to "protect marriage" and much to "target gay and lesbian people and to exclude and stigmatize this group in our society."

Romer said he hoped the commission will be provide a forum for "thoughtful and thorough debate which we have not yet had." Among issues which need review, he said, were "estate, property, inheritance, health care and other topics."

Winterrowd, who has been diocesan bishop in Colorado since 1991, said he had favored the governor's veto. "The commission is not to debate or in any way consider homosexual marriage," he stressed, "but I think there is a justice issue that we can look at. I hope we can defuse the issue for people — I hope we can get away from emotions and ideology and promote fairness."

Winterrowd said he thought the governor saw him as a "mainline centrist" who could bring "the values the church represents" — and not just the perspective of the Religious Right — to bear on the debate over how to respect the dignity and rights of gay and lesbian persons living in committed, faithful relationships.

"Some people think that being a centrist means you want to straddle a fence, but I think 'centrist' is a dynamic perspective when people are so deeply divided on an issue."

In terms of the church's stand on homosexuality, Winterrowd said he does not support ordination for homosexual persons, but at this past General Convention he did vote in favor of allowing the Church Pension Group to offer medical insurance for domestic partners.

The new commission is due to produce a set of recommendations within the next six to nine months. — *Julie A. Wortman*

Investigators issue report on *Penthouse* allegations

Investigators seeking the truth behind allegations of sexual misconduct by clergy in the Diocese of Long Island as reported in a December 1996 Penthouse magazine article called "The Boys from Brazil," have issued a 22-page report both confirming and disputing the story's claims.

The report stated that there was evidence that William Lloyd Andries, during his tenure as rector of St. Gabriel's church in Brooklyn, had had sexual relations with a number of male partners, including Jairo Pereira and some parishioners, one of whom might have been a minor. Andries also had "gathered around himself a number of men who were either homosexual or bisexual themselves or, at least tolerant of his lifestyle," the report said. However, the story's claims that Andries and his friends had engaged in sexual rituals and orgies in the church and while wearing church vestments seemed to be without foundation.

The report concluded by noting that the investigators could not find any evidence "that those who knew of Andries' sexual behavior, including those who had authority over him, reprimanded him or even brought the inappropriateness of it to his attention," a finding that distressed Long Island's bishop, Orris G. Walker, Jr.

"I have no personal knowledge of any sexual involvement by then Father Andries with any member of his congregation, and certainly not with any person who was a minor," Walker said. "I am distressed that this report suggests that Mr. Andries may have engaged in sex with a minor, a criminal act, based upon a mere allegation. I would have hoped that a charge of this nature would have been based upon substantial proof." — *based on an ENS report*

Canada now has two women bishops

In September Ann E. Tottenham was consecrated suffragan bishop of Toronto, making her Canada's second woman bishop. Toronto also elected Canada's first woman bishop, Victoria Matthews, in 1993. Matthews left Toronto following her election to the post of diocesan bishop of Edmonton earlier this year.

Tottenham, 56, was ordained to the priesthood in 1983. She had been headmistress of Toronto's Bishop Strachan School for 14 years before becoming a parish priest in 1995. She will be area bishop of the Credit Valley, located on the western side of the diocese.

Jerusalem jottings

William Spofford, retired bishop of Eastern Oregon, has written a memoir called *Pilgrim In Transition: Jerusalem Jottings, Galilee Gleanings and Sinai Solitudes.* It is available for $10 a copy ($2 s/h) by writing him at 8029 S.E. 29th, Portland, OR 97202.

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Humanistic Judaism

by David Finkel

***Celebration. A Ceremonial and Philosophic Guide for Humanists and Humanistic Jews*, by Sherwin T. Wine. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988; 1-800-421-0351.**

Humanistic Judaism represents an organized movement for a way of being Jewish, of practicing *Judaism Beyond God* (the title of another of Sherwin Wine's books), in a modern society where secular liberal values have become well established — yet remain always under attack. Too few Jews and non-Jews alike recognize that this kind of Judaism exists.

"Humanistic Judaism," writes Wine in this collection of readings, songs and meditations, "is a philosophy of life which has been part of the Jewish experience for over 100 years. However, it grew out of attitudes and beliefs which were part of the 'underground' of Jewish life for over 2,000 years.

"It is very distinct from Orthodox Judaism in rejecting the authority of the rabbinic tradition. It is also very distinct from the three non-Orthodox 'liberal' alternatives — Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionism — in rejecting the need for theistic language. The age of science, capitalism, and the secular revolution have so transformed Jewish life that it has become impossible, without a dogmatic arbitrariness, to maintain conviction in traditional beliefs.

"Combining humanism, a people-centered philosophy of life, and Judaism, the culture of the Jewish nation, creates humanistic Judaism. *(T)he real experience of the Jewish people has humanistic significance. Jewish history, more than any other national history, testifies to the moral indifference of the universe and to the necessity of human beings to take control of their own fate"* (emphasis added).

"The moral indifference of the universe" is the key phrase here: The Cosmos doesn't care about us. Rather, human beings draw their moral convictions, their solidarity, their strength and salvation only from each other and from themselves. The rituals developed by Wine and other members of his congregation (the Birmingham Temple in suburban Detroit) and the humanistic-Jewish movement celebrate the instinct to come together for expressions of joy, grief and observances of seasons and life cycles — things that are at the actual core of human religious life for thousands of years—in ways with roots in Jewish culture and custom, yet without prayer.

The cosmos doesn't care about us. We draw salvation from each other and ourselves.

How is this possible? A representative example is recasting the most sacred prayer in Jewish tradition, "*Kol Nidre* (All Vows)," sung on the eve of Yom Kippur, which asks God to release us from any promises we make to Him—before we have actually made them. In this collection (p.416), the melody is preserved, with the words changed to:

"We affirm all promises and resolutions/ Which we have made for the sake of love."

Inasmuch as humanistic Judaism is a philosophical and cultural rather than political movement, its adherents will be found along many points of the "Left-Right" spectrum. It does, however, actively engage in struggles for the separation of religion and state—in the United States and in Israel, too.

Humanistic Judaism is philosophically pro-Zionist, but resists the temptation to view the State of Israel in a messianic light, whether religious or secular. Israel, that is to say, is seen as a human creation and a means toward an end (Jewish national freedom), not the teleological working out of a manifest or divinely decreed destiny. The growing power of Orthodoxy and fanatical nationalism in Israel is seen as profoundly contradictory to the mission of the Zionist pioneers. (The degree to which this is historically accurate is a separate and highly complex problem.)

Thus a humanist *Haggadah* written by Wine for the Birmingham Temple's Passover seder celebrates freedom for Jews wherever they are — not the traditional "This year we are slaves here, next year we will be free in the land of Israel," or "Next year in Jerusalem."

It remains an open question whether the rituals and songs of a humanistic Judaism (or, for example, of an approximate Christian counterpart, Unitarian Universalism) can match the astonishing emotional power tapped by traditional religion. On the other hand, comparatively speaking, organized humanism is still in the process of birth. Humanistic Judaism, in any case, as an expression within a highly pluralistic modern Jewish existence, deserves wider attention. TW

review

David Finkel is an editor of the Detroit-based magazine *Against the Current.*

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Christians need to make sure they are not trying to convert or pressure, and Jews need to learn to distinguish conversation about our views from conversion attempts.



Sally Frank

Defending Eve

by Marianne Arbogast

As a Jewish feminist, Sally Frank would like to exonerate Eve, and as a lawyer, she has some strategies for doing it.

"There is the youth defense," says Frank, a law professor at Drake University Law School. "If a three-year-old throws a rock, even if it kills an infant you don't charge them, because they don't know right from wrong. How could Adam and Eve know right from wrong before they ate the fruit?"

Frank, however, prefers an approach that would lead to vindication, not merely acquittal.

"With a justification defense, you can argue that the law was not a law for all time. Maybe God's command was like telling a two-year-old not to touch an oven.

"There is *midrash* that asks, 'Why did God rest on the sabbath?' One theory is that God didn't want to finish the work of creation, but left it to humanity. How can we be God's partners if we don't know good from evil? Therefore, God *wanted* Adam and Eve eventually to eat the fruit. Eve ate the fruit so she could become God's co-worker."

Everything hinges on storytelling, explains Frank, who published her work on Eve's case in the *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*.

"There are five possible defenses with five different summations," she says. "What a lawyer does is to figure out which story to tell."

Stories are important to Frank's spirituality as well as her profession. The stories of her faith tradition have always connected with her passion for social change.

"The demands of the prophets for justice and treating everyone well, the concern for the widow and orphan really hit home," she says.

"In college, I was active in South Africa divestment work. I once came home from a sit-in to the Passover seder. There is the reading of the 10 plagues, with the words, 'May the recitation of these plagues teach us that no nation that oppresses its people can endure.' You don't need any extra commentary to see the connection."

She recounts her rabbi's retelling of the Hanukkah story soon after the invasion of Panama. "He gave it something like this: 'The imperial power was trying to impose its will on the recalcitrant locals, who waged a guerilla war in order to behave in the way they felt was right for themselves.' Basically, the Hanukkah story is an anti-imperialist struggle for religious freedom."

Frank grew up in New Jersey, with parents who were deeply involved in their Jewish community. She attended her first demonstration, a protest against the persecution of Soviet Jews, with her mother. By seventh grade she was active in the United Farmworkers' grape and lettuce boycott, and the following year worked for McGovern's presidential campaign.

Frank drew national attention in 1979 when she brought a sex discrimination lawsuit against Princeton University's all-male eating clubs, arguing the case herself for the first six years.

"I began as an undergraduate and finished as a law professor," she says. "It took 13 years to establish that they were public accommodations. I argued before the New Jersey appellate division in 1983,

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

during my third year in law school."

As a law student at New York University, Frank's non-curricular field experience also included several arrests for nonviolent civil disobedience actions protesting nuclear weapons and nuclear power.

Frank clerked for a New York judge and taught at Antioch and New York Law Schools before joining the faculty at Drake in August of 1990.

Arriving in Iowa at the outset of the Gulf War, she found support in an interfaith group of spiritually based peace activists.

"We found we had a lot in common in how we saw our different faith traditions," she says. "In New York, my peace action came out of a more political perspective. I think, traditionally, most Jewish activists haven't worked through Jewish groups, but many are influenced by Jewish traditions and the obligations of those traditions."

In addition to working with the social action committee of the Reform Movement in Judaism, Frank has chaired the Iowa Program Committee of the American Friends Service Committee.

Interfaith work raises "sensitivity issues," she acknowledges.

"Are all meetings and programs organized for Saturday? It shocks me how many things are planned for Saturday morning, when no one would think to plan them for Sunday morning."

Sometimes Frank has pushed for a time change. At other times, she has applied the principle that "you can violate the sabbath to save a life" to activities like anti-death-penalty demonstrations.

It is particularly important to Frank to identify herself as Jewish when testifying against the death penalty, because Christians so often act as though the Hebrew scriptures militate for capital punishment, ignoring Judaic arguments for mercy.

Perceptions of proselytizing are another concern. "Christians need to make sure they are not trying to convert or pressure, and Jews need to learn to distinguish conversation about our views from conversion attempts."

Respecting the humanity in others, whether or not you agree with them, is a core value for Frank, and she struggles to understand others' intolerance of her views. She recently won a tenure dispute with Drake, which she attributes to "sex and politics."

Traditionally, most Jewish activists haven't worked through Jewish groups, but many are influenced by Jewish traditions and the obligations of those traditions.

"I don't know that they ever had a street activist on the faculty before," she reflects. "In a small community that may be shocking."

Frank literally wears her heart on her sleeve in the form of political buttons which are part of her daily attire. But she welcomes disagreement from her students, regarding it as "good class participation."

She also rejects the school's competitive teaching style, which she sees as antithetical to feminist principles.

Frank's spirituality is based on the Jewish concept of *Tikkun Olam*, "repair of the world."

"The theory is that God took up all space before creation, but had to kind of withdraw into God's self to make room for the universe," she explains. "There were rays of light from God, and when God pulled back, what was surrounding the rays broke, and that's how evil got into the world. Whenever we keep a commandment, one little piece gets glued back. Our job is to put all the pieces back together. We don't need to succeed in doing it all ourselves, but every act we do has ultimate meaning in the cosmos."

She applies that to keeping a kosher home, assisting a domestic violence victim, investigating police brutality.

"It's sometimes painful to open the paper or watch the news," she says. "There is an increase in homophobia, fear of the other, immigration and poverty. There is the high when Arafat and Rabin shake hands, then the low when Rabin is assassinated. But we have to act as if we do have hope.

"We have to define victory by very small steps," she says, citing a Jewish legend that the world is preserved by the righteousness of 36 people in each generation.

It's a "myth" that the 1960s are over, Frank believes.

"There are people who care working at the local level. There are health clinics, legal clinics, co-ops, but it's not seen as a national movement."

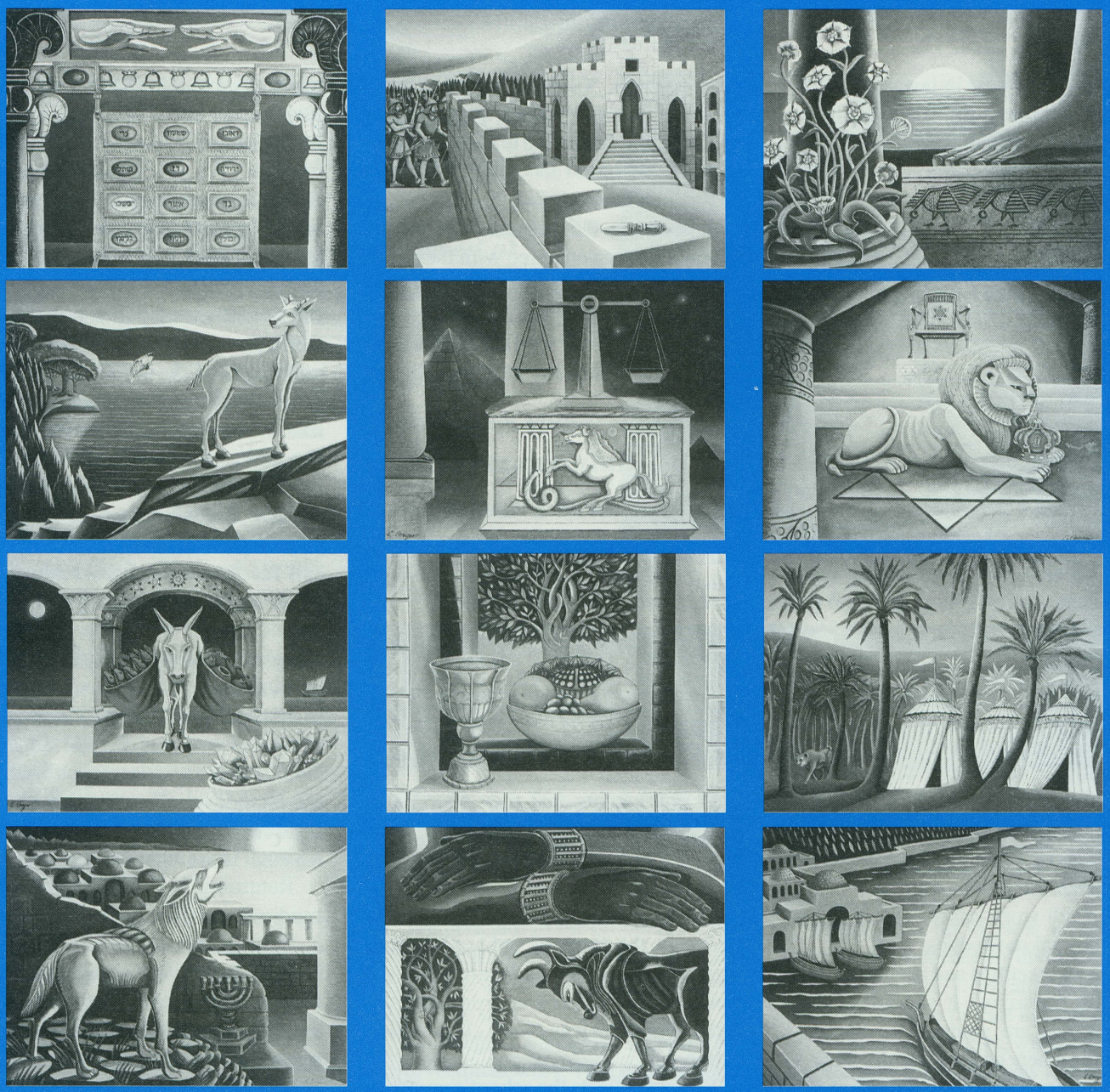
Returning to Eve, Frank quotes Talmudic discussion of humanity's origins.

"There's the question of why did God start humanity with a single person. One answer is that God didn't want anyone to say, 'My lineage is better than yours.' But another is that anyone who saves a single life, it is as though they have saved an entire world." TW

Witness for the Witness?

If you are willing to staff a table promoting *The Witness* at your church coffee hour or at a conference, we'd be grateful. We have materials to make it simple! Contact our promotion consultant, Karen Bota, at 313-841-1967 or Karen@thewitness.org for more information.

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The Witness

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Northern Ireland:
winds of peace

A witness to the world

THE ARTICLE ON THE LOS ANGELES consultation on ordination issues in the July-August issue for people of color was very fine. It gives a very balanced picture of what happened and a reasoned argument for the need for such a gathering. The voice of a community united with a faithful commitment is not simply louder but more persuasive than the sum of individual voices. As many pointed out, the real test of the meeting is what happens afterwards, among the organizers, participants and beyond. The end of Presiding Bishop Browning's legacy gives us responsibilities for continuing the causes that he supported and yet also opportunities for the opposition to reconfigure the structure and direction.

James Kodera
Wellesley, MA

THIS LETTER CONCERNS WHAT I VIEW as a substantial distortion of Bishop Frank Griswold's views on prayer book revision contained in your coverage of the candidates for Presiding Bishop in the July-August issue. Normally I wouldn't presume to speak in print for someone else; but in view of the facts that (1) the candidates agreed to refrain from public discussion of the issues themselves, and (2) at this writing, Bishop Griswold has just been elected Presiding Bishop, I hope you'll allow me a bit of space in your columns to address this matter.

You cite as "a huge letdown" Bishop Griswold's quoted statement that "this is not the time for prayer book revision" despite the fact that much of the church's constituency "finds (its) common prayer uncommonly white, male, straight and privileged." Based on my experience as a member of Bishop Griswold's diocese, I find it quite impossible to believe that he means the 1979 BCP is everything the church needs in a prayer book.



Rather, I believe that if queried, he would respond that we are in a time of rich grassroots liturgical ferment—in areas including gender-inclusive language and imagery, and the whole issue of marriage and the blessing of committed relationships, among others—and that it is simply too soon to attempt to codify the outcomes of this ferment in a revised prayer book. To interpret his statement as an expression of satisfaction with the status quo is neither logically necessary nor, in my view, correct; and it could do the church a considerable disservice by fomenting early and unfounded dissatisfaction with a Presiding Bishop-elect who may well make some of his greatest contributions to the church's common life precisely in the realm of liturgy.

James G. Carson
Evanston, IL

A role model?

IF A PERSON, BELONGING TO AN organization, aspires to its highest office, it is usual for that candidate to take an oath of allegiance and to swear to obey and uphold the rules and regulations and the resolutions and by-laws. If, after so doing and being installed into that top position, the appointee then publicly vows to violate those oaths and states that he or she will ignore those that bothers their conscience, it would seem to me to require one of two things; either the organization should remove that person from its membership or that person should resign the moment such a violation is voiced.

Here we have the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, well aware that the laws (canons) he disagrees with have been in effect long before his quest to be made bishop, proceed to be ordained and consecrated a bishop by kneeling before many of his peers and a big congregation in a church and swearing before God and on the Holy Bible to "conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

This implies obeying the canons and resolutions of the triennial National Conventions, one of which has just occurred. For a bishop to violate the very solemn oaths he made at his consecration because he doesn't like some of them sends a terrible message to our young people as well as us older ones.

What a role model! He should have the intestinal fortitude to either obey or to leave.

Peter Tringham
Fort Worth, TX

Fundraising appeal

HERE YOU GO AGAIN — making me wish I were rich. I've been thinking about The Lottery. Maybe if God knew I'd give at least half my winnings to *The Witness*...but no — somehow I don't think She works like that.

Anyway, here's what we can do this year and please don't talk about the "end times" for *The Witness*. It has to last at least as long as I do and I expect that to be another 20 or more years. You're such a blessing to us.

Sara Owen
Atlanta, GA

I RECEIVED THE APPEAL FOR FUNDS. I am currently on disability but *The Witness* has added so much to my life that I feel compelled to send what I can. I also would like to staff a table at St. Timothy's. A friend introduced me to this publication during some very dark moments of my life and it has certainly been an inspiration and comfort. I am a "born in the cradle" Episcopalian and honestly had never heard of the journal nor seen it in the homes of any of my Episcopal mentors.

I am most appreciative of the light which

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this journal has brought into my life. I am currently trying to start a new business to work my way out of disability and to be able to support myself. The disability was a wake-up call to stop and smell the roses; to re-think the value of life, to take my soul out and study my own purpose; to just let go and let God; to build my spirit; to release my fears; to know that God loves me no matter what the condition of my body, mind or spirit; to learn to be quiet and listen gently and lovingly; to recognize that every moment, every occasion is a chance to learn new lessons which enable us to be more Christ-like. If we look at those things which are often labeled as "bad" and study how those factors can enrich our lives as well as enrich the lives of everyone that we assist or meet, then we suddenly recognize what an absolutely amazing world God has created for us. My disability has become my ability.

Ms. Willie Lester, one of my mentors, used to say that when things were bad I should remember, "God is good, God is great." Her philosophy was that these were the beginning statements of a childhood prayer which were easy to recall even in the most trying of times. I found that recalling these two simple statements put new light on many trials and tribulations. The other comfort phrase she emphasized was one that certainly was simple but ever so true. Her belief was if you were feeling unworthy, insignificant, useless or unloved then you say three times, "Jesus loves me, this I know. Because the Bible tells me so." She also taught us that when we found ourselves at a loss for strength to turn our palms upward and sing "Onward Christian Soldiers! Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before." If you really needed to put up a battle it was permissible to turn one palm up and to close the other hand as if holding a very solid cross. Now you have the necessary love and support of Christ.

I have been ill for 11 years, been through some physical, emotional and mental battles that have taken their toll but the words of this loving Episcopal Sunday School teacher have carried me far and prevented much scarring. The two prayers she told to hold us near and dear were, "The Lord's Prayer" and "The Jesus Prayer." She stated that "The Lord's Prayer covered pretty much all of man's needs and would accommodate you when your brain shut down and you couldn't think of fancy prayers." Also if you are tired, this prayer will soften your mind and kinder your spirit. Remember the word *tired* covers a broad scope of maladies.

Ms. Willie stated that we should remain about the business of "The Jesus Prayer" daily, not only for our benefit but for others and the world about us. I believe this to be more true today than ever before.

Ms. Willie would have enjoyed *The Witness*. This donation is sent in memory of one of the finest Christians, ladies and Sunday School teachers a young girl ever knew. I owe her much for her introduction of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to a little girl who grew through many troubling years at her door and in her class and at her table and then grew into a woman who has had to relearn many of the lessons. However, it was easy to recall what had been taught in such a loving manner. I also would like to thank her for teaching me to make the best cup of tea and to appreciate the drink in like manner as one appreciates the knowledge she passed on to that child and many others.

Again thank you for such a wonderful journal.

Edwina C. Staten
Newbit, MS

THE ENCLOSED IS JUST A *SMALL* token to express my deep appreciation for the continuing excellence of *The Witness!*

I look forward each month to receiving the current issue. I'm *never* disappointed — always stimulated!

Jane Schutt
Florence, MS

Mailing snafu!

We were chagrined, last month, to discover that many readers did not receive their September issue owing to a mailing label error. Because of the popularity of that issue, we were caught short on replacement copies and had to ask the printer for more. If you haven't received that issue by now, please let us know by calling 313-841-1967.

Classifieds

Prisoners need stamps

Christian prisoner project seeks donations of postage stamps and Christmas cards (limit 10). Help inmates keep in touch with loved ones at Christmas. Christian Williams, FSP, Route D18367, Represa, CA 95671-5071.

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1998-99 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Activist training

Two workshops on nonviolence and leadership for social change will be offered in Philadelphia in January, 1998. Jan. 16-18: The Nonviolent Warrior: Confrontation and Long-Range Strategy. Jan. 23-25: Leadership Inside & Out: Building Skills, Renewing Your Spirit. Trainer: George Lakey. Contact Matt Guynn, Training for Change, 4719 Springfield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143; phone 215-729-7458; fax 215-729-1910; e-mail peacelearn@igc.org.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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The Witness

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Tracing the course of the mercurial peace process in Northern Ireland, Duncan Morrow examines the obstacles and incentives to "co-ownership" of the process by Northern Ireland's nationalist and unionist communities.

12 **The Orange parades: marching to quell anxiety** by Bob Mulvihill
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15 **Corrymeela: sowing seeds of trust** by Meg Egan
An American volunteer at Corrymeela, an ecumenical group fostering cross-community reconciliation, describes Corrymeela's "seed group" program for youth.

20 **'Reconciliation is not weakness': an interview with Robin Eames** by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann
The Anglican bishop of Armagh argues the need to recognize the legitimacy of both communities in Northern Ireland.



Cover: Peace Cairn in Donegal in North West Ireland. Visitors are invited to add rocks to the Cairn to symbolize the laying down of primitive weapons, turning them into building blocks for a better future. Photo by Michael McMullin.

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

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Creating a context for peace

by Marianne Arbogast

Most of my impressions of Northern Ireland have been based on the bleak stories behind news headlines — smoldering bomb ruins, the hunger strikes, street shootings and government repression. As we began work on this issue of *The Witness* last spring, the picture seemed true to form: The ray of hope from the first IRA ceasefire had been eclipsed by the exclusion of Sinn Fein from the peace talks, and the wearying violence had resumed.

We could never have anticipated the changes that were soon to take place: a new Labour government in England, a new ceasefire and the tentative movement toward dialogue between political parties that have long refused to acknowledge each others' right to speak. Throughout the summer, it was exciting to check the Irish news headlines on the Internet and see the fragile course toward peace talks hold. But as we talked with people in Northern Ireland, it also seemed apparent that the political breakthroughs rest on the steadfast efforts of countless groups and individuals who, for years, have been laying the groundwork for change.

My first phone call to Northern Ireland was answered by Jim Anderson, a Catholic who left the seminary in 1989 to help found a small ecumenical community called Solas (Gaelic for "light") in Belfast. Like nearly everyone in Northern Ireland, Anderson has painful stories to recount. When his grandmother died, his father met with organizers of an Orange march scheduled to pass by the Catholic church on the day of the funeral, to ensure that the service would be over before the march came through. But, by accident or intent, the march began early, and the hearse outside the church did not deter marchers from raising the volume of their drums, shouts and anti-Catholic songs (led by what are colloquially known as "f___ the pope bands") as they passed by.

Yet, while Anderson is frank about Catholic grievances, he is also firmly committed to fighting "the bitterness and bigotry that is passed on from generation to generation." After eight years of cross-community work with young people in Belfast, he admits to a measure of burnout, but is nonetheless making plans for a small retreat center in the west of Ireland.

"We hope to organize programs that encourage young people to look across the border to a place like Donegal [in the Republic of Ireland], which is a mix of Protestant and Catholic, and see that they can live side by side," he explains.

Anderson's perspective is shared by many. Corrymeela ("Hill of Harmony") is one of the oldest and best known of such initiatives [see p.15]. Now in its 33rd year, it has long served as a beacon for those committed to reconciliation between Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities. Likewise, the Cornerstone community [see p. 29] is a long-standing witness to Christian unity in a country where works of mercy between Catholics and Protestants are fraught with risk and political significance.

A recent report of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council lists 496 projects which received grant funding last year. They are as diverse as an ecumenical gay men's retreat; a cross-community effort to refurbish ambulances for a town in Romania; and a drama project entitled *Two Tribes and a Dragon* which depicts "a mythical people who divide into two tribes and a dragon which feeds off their conflict."

"In most countries the unifying myth emerged from a historical struggle for independence," Brian Lennon (a Northern Irish Jesuit) recently wrote in *Commonweal* magazine. "In our case the struggle for independence was against each other." Lennon reports that "what was fascinating during the last ceasefire was the extent to which nationalists and unionists wanted to meet each other, to find out about the other side's life and values, to celebrate what they have in common."

Such meetings, though less dramatic than the political talks, may be no less vital to Northern Ireland's future.

Mari Fitzduff, director of the Community Relations Council, writes that "the prime necessity is not finding a creative constitutional solution, but the development of a context in which a solution will be collectively considered. Experience has suggested that when enough structural issues of injustice have been addressed, enough positive relationships have been developed, and much of the violence has stopped, then it will be more possible to draw upon some of the many constitutional solutions that are available."

If such a time is drawing nearer, it may largely be due to the faithful, courageous, daily efforts of Northern Irish Catholic and Protestant Christians to create such a context. Now, when I think of Northern Ireland, I think of them. TW



Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.*

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Was the church at Diana's funeral?

by Douglas E. Theuner

I can never remember whether it is in *The Plague* or *The Fall* that Albert Camus' protagonist comes to the realization: "I was absent in the place where I occupied the most space." Still, that expression came to my mind while watching the funeral of Princess Diana of Britain in Westminster Abbey. I could not help but think that the same could be said of the church as it was represented on that occasion by our mother Church of England.

What struck me was not what happened, but what didn't happen. As far as I can tell, the Church of England's venerable Book of Common Prayer was not in evidence save for some opening sentences, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer at the end of the intercessions offered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his final benediction from the Burial Office: "May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ ...," and perhaps in the vague implication of the Holy Trinity in the commendation read by the Dean of Westminster Abbey, unionjackily resplendent in red cassock, white surplice and royal blue cope.

It has been said that the British royal family had in its initial reaction to Diana's death shown itself to be out of touch with the modern world. Surely that charge could not be made in the matter of the funeral. The recitation of poetry, the song by Elton John (who happens to be a favorite of mine) and the eulogy by a family member who admonished not to make Diana out to be a saint were very much in touch with the world. The TV cameras focused on the entrance into the Abbey of John and his same-sex partner, while there was no attention paid to the Primate of All England, dressed down in purple slip collar shirt and black rachet and chimere; a man known to Anglican insiders as one who does not approve of homosexual relationships. I wonder how Carey felt about having his worldview devalued in his house.

What the funeral did not show was what is uniquely Christian in death: anything that points beyond it to the miracle of resurrection or speaks to an antecedent life of faith. Surely it is a good thing to be in touch with the world. But that is quite a different matter from being subsumed by it. Was I seeing the church in touch with the world or just the world, albeit tinged with the symbols of an apparently bygone age of faith, in touch with itself? Surely the church needs to be closely in touch with the world if it is to offer a message of salvation. In Diana's funeral I saw the touch but not the message.

Surely the church needs to be closely in touch with the world if it is to offer a message of salvation. In Diana's funeral I saw the touch but not the message.

Diana's funeral gives evidence that the Church of England has effectively been disestablished or, worse, coopted. Of course, one needs only to visit the great churches of England, filled with their war memorials and cenotaphs of imperialism, to see that that is nothing new in the Anglican experience. It's just that today's principalities and powers are not empire and its expansion but celebrity and its feeding.

This is not just a matter for our mother church, however. Our own post-Constantinian church and its investment in Euro-American imperialism must pay heed not only to what the world is saying to it but, even more importantly, to what it is saying to the world. In a TV interview after the funeral, Lord Jeffrey Archer, peer, Member of Parliament and best-selling novelist, said that everything had changed in England in the past week — no doubt an overstatement but one with enough truth to be heeded carefully, not only in England, but the world over, and especially where the trappings of England's past glory are still invested with power, as in an aristocratically caparisoned episcopate so little understood or attractive to even our Lutheran sisters and brothers, as evidenced by their reservations in Philadelphia about taking on a still imperial-appearing episcopate. That was probably our first wake-up call of the summer. Now, the second.

By all means, let us draw near to the world, as our Lord did, but in drawing near let us consider what Word we have to speak and let us speak it, as he did, with clarity and compassion. The Word was not to be heard in Westminster Abbey, save as noted above and perhaps in the hymns and in the reading of I Cor. 13 without any context that indicated that the love extolled was any more than that which is within the unredeemed capacity of human beings. Westminster Abbey ranks high among the icons of Anglican tradition. As for a witness to the Faith, it seems to me that the church was absent in the place where it occupied the most space, Westminster Abbey and millions of TV sets the world around. If not a plague or a fall, that should at least be a wake-up call. TW

Douglas Theuner is Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire and president of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

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My Home Town This Earth

by Mitsuye Yamada

Imagine there is a future
where a tight ring of peace
like Saturn's collar
holds us all in
and there is no
space for war

Imagine there is a future
where my home town
this earth
is no longer
an experimental station
for nuclear wars

Imagine there is a future
where our psychic Geiger counters find
no clicking nightmares in the air

where no child sees its mother's image
in pieces of charcoal
buried in the ground
where she was burned
where no mother cries
over her child's coffin
killed at war
killed in the war
killed by hate
killed by hunger

I lay my aging woman body
on this ground
spread eagled
reaching to four points
of our common future
our shared pasts
and remember

we must make a future
for those for whom survival only
is not enough
we must make a future
for those so bereft in mind and spirit
they cannot imagine there is a future.

Imagine there is a future
for eyes
watching us here
watching us now
through the wrong end of a telescope.



Desert Run: Poems and Stories Lathan, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1988.

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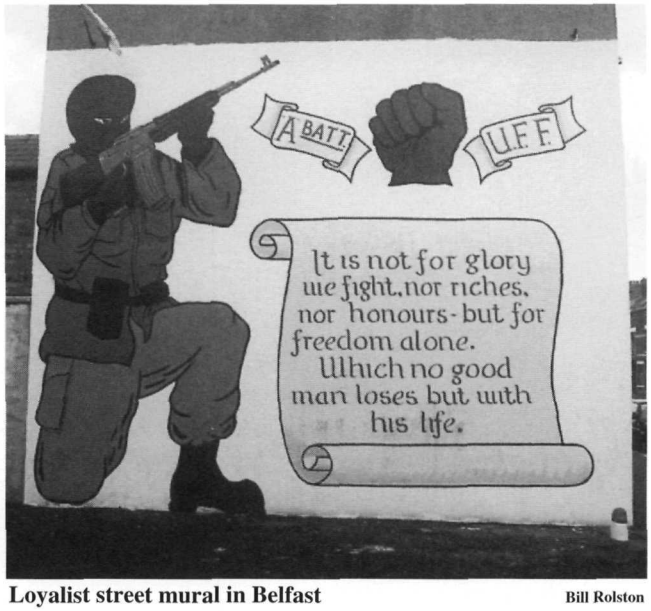
Northern Ireland's grail: peace without losers

by Duncan Morrow

For three years now, Northern Ireland has been on a "peace process." Beyond all doubt, the IRA ceasefire of 1994, followed six weeks later by a ceasefire from the pro-British or "loyalist" paramilitary groups, ushered in an identifiably new period in Irish political history. In the beginning, the sheer shock of the experience, the turning off of the political violence which had transfixed the political landscape for 30 years, took time to get used to. Palpable relief and enormous hope sat side by side with a kind of confused disbelief as people wondered if it was safe to crawl out from their protective shells at last. Now, in late 1997, and a few breakdowns and renewed ceasefires later, the early euphoria has long since given way to the realities of tough real-world political enmity. But as we come to the verge of groundbreaking political talks, it is clear that some "process" is still taking place, in spite of the doubts and the vagaries surrounding partners, methods and even goals.

A sense of movement

A glance at the Oxford English Dictionary confirms the many meanings which the word process carries in English: "a state of going or being carried on," "a method of operation in manufacturing," "a natural or involuntary operation, series of changes" or even "to go in procession." Common to them all is a sense of movement and change coupled with a conviction that something is being turned into something else. All of these meanings are like straws blowing increasingly powerfully in the Northern Irish winds. Two crucial questions remain, however: What is the ultimate destination of the procession and who is processing whom?



Loyalist street mural in Belfast Bill Rolston

Underlying the process is the undoubted desire of the overwhelming majority of people in the North of Ireland for an end to political killing. Although by 1994 the level of violence had already dropped dramatically from the levels of the 1970s, the distinguishing mark of communal conflict, a fear of potential armageddon, continued to paralyse political and social relationships.

Fear of being the loser

A generalised desire for peace is only the first step, however. As has become clear since 1994, peace, like Heinz, can come in at least 57 varieties. Victory at the end of a war brings peace, in the sense of ending conflict. But such a peace is built on a clear distinction between winners and losers. The possibility that the peace on offer might be indistinguishable from losing continues to haunt the Irish peace process. Fear of being the loser, justified or not, may yet drive some to continue the war. In a conflict between innocents, where everyone is apparently justified in their own violence because it is seen as merely reactive to the violence of others, the peace process at times has degenerated into a series of demands that other people should change. Peace means that "the others," whoever they may be, should stop their violence. Until then, "we" can do nothing. The risks of passively slipping back to reciprocal violence because "they" won't do what they need to for peace remains.

Doubt about ownership

A peace without losers remains the holy grail of Irish politics. For it to be possible, the process must change everyone and the procession must be everyone's. At the core of the Irish peace process there is a doubt about ownership. The root of this model of peacemaking in the dialogues within nationalism between John Hume for the nonviolent Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Gerry Adams for Sinn Fein was enough to set alarm bells ringing among unionists. Of course, unionists and their largely Protestant supporters wanted an end to political violence,

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Duncan Morrow is a lecturer in politics at the University of Ulster. The photographs by **Bill Rolston**, a professor of sociology at the University of Ulster, are from his book, *Drawing Support, Murals in the North of Ireland* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications).

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but not if violence was to be replaced with a new and more powerful worldwide political attack on their position. The language of a peace process, with its emphasis on movement being articulated so enthusiastically by Irish republicans and nationalists, contained for them its own looming threat. A peace process with nationalists cast in the role of processors left unionists convinced that they were to be processed.

A path for Sinn Fein

A serious upsurge in political tension in October 1993 led the British and Irish governments to accelerate their own search for a new initiative in Northern Ireland. The result was the Downing Street Declaration, in which the British and Irish governments effectively restated the principles of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, but with two significant additions: The Declaration was warmly welcomed by all of the democratic parties in Britain and Ireland outside Northern Ireland and was explicitly aimed at providing a path for Sinn Fein to join talks on the future of Northern Ireland once the IRA called a halt to political violence. With British-Irish political consensus, Northern Irish unionists and republicans faced the prospect of isolation from the source and object of their respective political strengths and affections.

The possibility that the peace on offer might be indistinguishable from losing continues to haunt the Irish peace process.

Unionist resistance

The peace process, with its roots in Hume-Adams and the Downing Street Declaration, lacked a clear unionist partner. "Processes," with their emphasis on movement and change, always make those who fear a loss of power nervous. But when the Clinton Administration made clear its strong and active support for the new initiative, both republicans and unionists were forced to face ever greater consequences of refusing to cooperate. As Gerry Adams toured the United States in triumph, unionists, with their insistence that Northern Ireland is a matter of domestic United Kingdom politics, saw the renewed interest less as a gift than a threat. But while the temptation for unionists to sulk in a corner was always going to be hard to resist, the risks of taking a back seat were all too clear. Unionists were shaken to their foundations by their experience of 1985, when the British Government under Mrs. Thatcher signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement without consulting them. Furthermore, the Agreement had proved impervious to the considerable unionist effort to destroy it. While the more fundamental unionists, especially around the veteran ultra-Protestant Ian Paisley, professed their undiminished opposition to any dealing with Sinn Fein or the Irish Government, the mainstream Ulster Unionist Party adopted a less strident approach, especially after the British government reiterated that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only take place following a referendum and the agreement of the major Northern Irish political parties. The decision of loyalist paramilitaries to join the peace process by declaring their own ceasefire confirmed that, in theory at least, a new window of opportunity existed.

The decommissioning roadblock

The search for co-ownership at the core of the process, however, was to prove a repeating theme. Irish nationalists have historically regarded the British government as their primary negotiating partner, able to pressurise unionism at will. Many therefore expected a swift reaction

Peace process players

PLACES

Northern Ireland: the six-county region partitioned from the rest of Ireland in 1921, as a Protestant-majority state belonging to the United Kingdom. Under direct British rule.

The Republic of Ireland, Eire, Ireland: the Catholic-majority state which gained independence from Britain in 1921, centered in Dublin.

POSITIONS

Nationalists: primarily Catholic supporters of the reunification of Ireland as one nation. The term "**republican**" generally refers to nationalists who are prepared to use force to achieve their goal.

Unionists: primarily Protestant supporters of retaining Northern Ireland's union with the United Kingdom. The term "**loyalist**" tends to connote those for whom Protestant (as opposed to British) identity is paramount, and who believe in a covenantal loyalty between Britain and Northern Irish Protestants.

PARTIES

Ulster Unionist Party: the main party of the unionist establishment. Led by **David Trimble**.

Social Democratic and Labour Party: moderate nationalist party led by **John Hume**.

Sinn Fein: republican party which supports the armed struggle of the IRA. Led by **Gerry Adams**.

Democratic Unionist Party: mainly working-class unionist party led by loyalist minister **Ian Paisley**.

PROBLEMS

Decommissioning: Hotly debated issue of IRA disarmament. The initial demand for decommissioning prior to Sinn Fein's inclusion in the peace talks brought an end to the first IRA

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to the calling of the ceasefire. In reality, however, the unwillingness of unionists to engage with Sinn Fein until the ceasefire had become "permanent" rather than "complete" created an enormous difficulty for the weak Conservative administration. In contrast to many nationalist assumptions, Britain could not simply "deliver" the unionists to any talks. John Major's government, conscious that it could soon be forced to rely on unionist votes in parliament and aware of a considerable number of unionist sympathisers in its own ranks, sought instead to secure voluntary unionist participation in the process. But in supporting unionist demands that the IRA should decommission it weapons before entering talks as a sign of the permanent good intentions behind the ceasefire, they enraged the IRA and alienated the majority of Irish nationalists. In the absence of any other gestures, especially over the early release of prisoners, many in the Catholic community began to suspect that the peace process was a British stitch-up.

The visible split between the British and Irish governments over decommissioning left the peace process without any firm inter-communal partnership. The alignment of the British government with the unionists confirmed nationalist fears that the British were not serious. Meanwhile, the refusal of constitutional nationalists, throughout Ireland, to demand disarmament by the IRA was held to be proof of general nationalist bad faith by unionists. Shortly before President Clinton's triumphal visit to Ireland in November 1995, an international commission into decommissioning under U.S. Senator George Mitchell was cobbled together. Mitchell's principles, more specifically the idea that decommissioning should take place in parallel with progress in the peace negotiations, was in many ways a master-stroke of diplomatic fudge. When [former British Prime Minister] John Major was seen to undermine the commission, intentionally or not, by a begrudging acceptance of its findings and the erection of a further hurdle to talks for Sinn Fein, the IRA signalled its alienation with a bomb at Canary Wharf in the heart of London's docklands.



Republican street mural, reproduction of a "Cormac" cartoon from *An Phoblacht/Republican News*. Bill Rolston

Marching rights dispute

For 18 months, the whole peace process appeared to be slowly disintegrating for want of a clear direction. Elections to a peace forum, in which Sinn Fein did exceptionally well, were marred by the continuing IRA campaign which disqualified Sinn Fein from taking their place at the negotiating table. The atmosphere between communities on the ground was also being poisoned as a result of the escalating dispute over marching rights. The irony that exclusive processions were threatening the pursuit of an inclusive process went largely unremarked.

Residents in overwhelmingly Catholic districts started to object openly to the annual parades of the exclusively Protestant Orange Order in their neighbourhoods. When the police sought to block such a march at Drumcree near Portadown in July 1996, the Orange Order and their supporters brought public life in many parts of Northern Ireland to a standstill. The police decision after four days of rioting and blockades to allow the march after all, and the use of brute force to secure the Orange route, resulted in widespread Catholic outrage. The fragile plant of less antagonistic community relations could be seen withering under the stress of the hostile street confrontations.

The two potential axes of a broadly-based peace seemed to be diminishing rapidly rather than strengthening. Inter-governmental relations remained impaled on decommissioning. Meanwhile, Northern Ireland's political communities, Protestant and Catholic by tradition, seemed less inclined than ever to seek a mutually inclusive political relationship. While there was little doubt that the vast majority in Northern Ireland had no appetite for a return to inter-communal killing, the absence of an agreed version of what peace might mean was becoming a serious flaw.

New hope, new tensions

The sin of extrapolation is to draw lessons from today's trends about inevitable paths tomorrow. The election of new governments in London and Dublin in May and June transformed an apparently moribund situation. Suddenly, calculations in the republican movement favoured re-engagement in the peace process. A more confident British govern-

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ment signalled its preparedness to fudge the decommissioning precondition, while [new British Prime Minister] Tony Blair simultaneously expressed his own expectation that Northern Ireland would remain within the United Kingdom at the end of the process.

On the surface, however, the tensions were rising. The improved climate between the two governments was almost derailed by a renewed crisis over the Orange parades issue [see story, p. 12]. While the public remained largely uninformed about developments in the consultations between the governments and Sinn Fein, the atmosphere between the communities was becoming dangerously violent. When an Orange Parade was forced through at Drumcree in July few were predicting the breakout of peace. Indeed, the potential for serious inter-community violence appeared to be greater than at any time since the 1970s. Only a historically unprecedented, and internally divisive, decision by the Orange Order to avoid the most serious flashpoints at a number of venues prevented a widely predicted disaster. Within a week, the situation was further transformed by the announcement of a renewed IRA ceasefire.

Edging toward talks

The Blair government in Britain signalled its intention to avoid the long delays which had so threatened the previous ceasefire. There was little jubilation in any area about the second ceasefire. But perhaps the very absence of unrealistic expectation created the climate for real movement for the first time. Irish republicanism had now chosen the political over the military path for the second time in three years.

Unionists, too, though unhappy about decommissioning, were faced with a serious possibility that they might be blamed for the failure of inclusive talks. Despite serious splits within the Protestant community, the largest unionist group edged slowly towards talking directly with all parties.

In political terms, then, the process is suddenly alive. The contradictory goals of unionism and nationalism remain, if taken at face value, irreconcilable. But the need to show a willingness to include others in front of an international audience has put enormous international and intergovernmental pressure on all exclusivist actors.

The irony that exclusive processions were threatening the pursuit of an inclusive process went largely unremarked.

While the potential for breakdown exists all too clearly, the costs for any party which is seen to destroy Northern Ireland's best hope for political peace in 75 years, whether republican or unionist, are very serious. As such, there is a sense in which the process, guaranteed by the governments, may now own the parties rather than the other way around.

The outcome and the destination remain uncertain, but a much-maligned effort produced by the British and Irish governments in 1995, known as the Framework Documents, appears to offer the best clues about the shape and scope of any thinkable settlement. For as long as the talking goes on, it seems at least possible to believe that an inclusive political settlement for the North of Ireland will rest on the reality of the setting as an interface between different peoples rather than any romantic myth of exclusive ownership by one group against another. **TW**

ceasefire. Sinn Fein has now been included with the understanding that decommissioning will take place in parallel with progress in the talks.

Marching rights: The right to hold sectarian marches along traditional routes. Until recently, insisted upon by members of the Orange Order and others, over the objections of communities (mainly Catholic) they passed through [see story, p. 12].

PAPERS AND POLITICS

Anglo-Irish Agreement: an international agreement signed by the British and Irish governments in 1985, asserting that any change in the status of Northern Ireland could come about only with the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland. It also acknowledged the Republic's legitimate interest in Northern Ireland, and committed both governments to promoting a devolved (locally run) government in Northern Ireland that could be supported by all parties.

Hume-Adams dialogue: discussions between John Hume of the SDLP and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein held during 1993, with the goal of finding areas of agreement and making joint progress toward their shared aim of British withdrawal.

Downing Street Declaration: a joint British-Irish document issued in 1993, reiterating the principles of the Anglo-Irish agreement, stating that any decision on the future of the union was to be ratified both north and south of the border, announcing a Forum for Reconciliation set up by the Irish government for dialogue between parties in Northern Ireland, and providing for North-South cooperation.

Framework Documents: a joint British-Irish document issued in 1995, outlining a framework for internal government in Northern Ireland and intergovernmental relations.

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The Orange parades: marching to quell anxiety

by Bob Mulvihill

On July 12, 1991, a Protestant friend of mine asked if I'd be interested in seeing the big man preach at an Independent Orange Lodge parade in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland. I knew, of course, that he was talking about Ian Paisley, and so I eagerly accepted the invitation. I'd seen Orange Lodges and Apprentice Boys of Derry practicing for the Twelfth before, but never had I been involved in the parade itself. So much was and is made of the Twelfth parades that I couldn't wait to get a direct look.

I wasn't disappointed. Big drums, the Reverend himself, Bible in hand, marching through the streets of seaside Ballycastle, orange sashes and families ready for a festive day. After the parade itself was over, the crowd spilled onto a football pitch for a picnic and speeches. Political rhetoric filled the air, but it was not until Paisley began to fulminate against the pagan Catholics who desecrated the body of Christ that I became self-conscious.

From the earliest times, the Twelfth parades have been a major source of discord. In 1782, a Catholic wrote the following for a newspaper column:

On Tuesday last the Gentlemen called Orange Boys, who have desolated the County Armagh during the last year, paraded publicly in large bodies, with orange cockades and colours flying, through the towns of Lurgan, Waringstown, Portadown, etc. Their colours, which were new and costly, bore on one side King William on horseback, and (will it be believed?) on the reverse King George the Third!!!! This banditti, who have hunted upwards of 700 families from their homes and their all — who have put the Catholics of the County out of the "King's Peace," parade in open day bearing the King's effigy, and sanctioned by the magistrates!!!

Ask any recent visitor and you'll find that not much seems to have changed. Arches across the streets proclaim "no surrender," curbsides get new coats of red, white and blue paint, the Union Jack is everywhere to be seen and bunches of Sweet William and Orange Lilies are attached to the drums used in the marches. Among the many questions one could ask about the parades, I'll pose two: What is it about these marches that is so confusing to us and yet so important to Ulster's Protestants?

Most Americans know far more about the Catholics of Northern Ireland and their cause than they do of Protestants. What little we think we know of the latter convinces us that they are attached to religion in an anachronistic manner and are generally intolerant. The infamous parades seem a parody of religious expression. We tire of such displays and wonder what all the fuss is about.

Arches across the streets proclaim "no surrender," curbsides get new coats of red, white and blue paint, the Union Jack is everywhere to be seen and bunches of Sweet William and Orange Lilies are attached to the drums used in the marches.

Protestants, themselves, have had a very difficult time telling their story, when they have bothered to try. A Protestant leader of the Ulster Defense Association, a man closely associated with paramilitary activities, asked me a few years back if I could help persuade the U.S. State Department to permit him to travel to the U.S. I told him what I presumed was obvious: that I was an academic doing research in Northern Ireland and that the State Department would have little interest in my thoughts about a man they regarded as a terrorist. He seemed genuinely disappointed. Only recently have Protestant leaders taken seriously the need to tell others of their predicament, as they see it.

Contrary to prevailing stereotypes, there is considerable division in the Protestant community regarding the marches. The Irish writer Dervla Murphy points out that there really are two different types of Twelfth marches.

"It can be taken either as a super-deluxe, hyper-Bank-Holiday-cum-Folk Festival or as a militant demonstration of Northern Irish Protestant power and the Orange Order's determination to retain that power at the expense of the democratic rights of one-third of the population."

The overwhelming number of parades are peaceful, family-oriented and generally inoffensive to Catholics. In 1996, only 65 out of over 3000 parades provoked some form of governmental or police intervention.

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While virtually all Protestant political leaders insist that the people have the right to march when and where they choose, many will argue against provocative parade routes, i.e. those passing through Catholic neighborhoods and those known to have been the source of previous disturbances. Moreover, many Protestant leaders, including those representing some of the most extreme Protestant groups, will argue convincingly that violence against Catholics must be prevented because it violates the Protestant conscience.

Why are the parades so important to Protestants? According to Northern Irish writer Rosanne Cecil, "parades are the very stuff of Protestant politics." At one level, they are celebrations, of Protestantism, Orangeism and Unionism. Indeed, because of the very close links between these three faiths and the establishment of the Northern Ireland state, the parades celebrate the state itself. The problem, of course, is that it is their state, a Protestant state for a Protestant people. Catholics are presumed to be disloyal to this state.

These parades, especially those on the Twelfth of July, commemorate not just the battle won in 1690, but the continuing battle against the enemy within, the Catholic republican effort aimed at the extinction of the Protestant people in Ireland and later in Northern Ireland. (In this sense, many Protestants are much like the white people of South Africa whom the American anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano described as "waiting," waiting for the inevitable end.) How is it, visitors will ask, that Protestants are able to sustain the myth of 1690 with such intensity, as though the historic event were actually part of the living memory of the community? According to Jennifer Todd, a political science professor in Dublin, the parades "provide a motivation and rationale for the continuing battle and they imaginatively resolve the existing contradictions faced by Northern Protestants by having them win the battle."

It is commonplace to refer to the Protestant people, faced as they believe they are with the threat of extinction, as living in a state of siege. They must be hypervigilant because their position in Ireland and in Northern Ireland was and is threatened by two major factors, Catholic encroachment and British abandonment. Indeed, it is these fears, both real and imagined, of encroachment and abandonment that testify to the failure of the Protestant people to dominate the country in any stable fashion.

Always in the Protestant mind was the anxiety that Catholics would try to undo the political settlement that assured the Protestant place in Ireland and in the United Kingdom. It was a worldview in which Protestant survival depended on Catholic suppression. Protestants were required to be hypervigilant with respect to the traitors in their midst. This constant sense of threat gave rise to the self-defense tradition of marching and banding in which small groups of Protestants organized for protection in the face of weak central government and later, by the end of the 16th century, to subdue or eliminate potential Catholic challenges. The legendary Orange Order, the sponsor of the parades, founded in the 1790s, continues to this day to organize Protestant determination to resist the inevitable Catholic threat.



Members of the Orange Order march through Belfast in 1996 as fires from sectarian riots smolder in the background. Andrew Holbrooke, ENS

"It can be taken either as a super-deluxe, hyper-Bank-Holiday-cum-Folk Festival or as a militant demonstration of Northern Irish Protestant power." — *Dervla Murphy*

This aptly de-

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Ireland's colonial history

The colonization of Ireland began in the twelfth century, when the Normans under Henry II of England captured Dublin. For several centuries, English influence seldom extended beyond the "Pale," a narrow strip of land surrounding Dublin. The colonizing of Ulster — the region of today's Northern Ireland — took off in 1607.

Colonizers, who included everyone from fugitive criminals to London financiers, were required to clear their estates completely of native Irish, but in practice needed them as laborers. While many of the early settlers merged with the native population, later colonists retained their religious and political distinctiveness. Colonists were required to take an oath of allegiance to Protestantism to get land. The dispossessed native Irish were Catholic.

In 1685, when James II attempted to recatholicize his kingdoms, the English aristocracy named a new king, William III. William defeated James in Ireland at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, and consolidated his victory the following year at Aughrim in 1691 on July 12 — still the biggest celebration in the Ulster Protestant calendar.

From 1691 onwards penal laws dispossessed Catholics and dissenting Protestants of their land and denied them religious freedom, voting rights and education. A series of revolts, some led by Protestants, challenged the colonial system.

In 1846 the potato crop — staple food of the rural Irish — failed. Although the peasants produced enough food, they were forced to sell it to pay rent. Throughout the Famine ships left Ireland for England laden with grain and cattle. More than a million people died and at least as many emigrated to the U.S.

In the late nineteenth century, the campaign for "home rule" gained momentum. After most adult men in the U.K. won voting rights in 1884, Irish nationalists regularly won 80 percent of Irish parliamentary seats at Westminster. In 1912, when a home rule bill seemed destined to pass, outraged Irish loyalists launched the Ulster Volunteer Force and pledged to seize control of Ulster. The British government promised special arrangements for Ulster after the First World War ended.

Convinced that constitutional methods were doomed to failure, a small group of republicans staged the Easter Rising in 1916, seizing key buildings in Dublin. The execution of its leaders rallied public opinion behind the rebels; the republican party, Sinn Fein, won the first post-war election by a landslide. Its members refused to go to Westminster, instead forming their own parliament, Dail Eireann. A guerilla war ensued between the IRA and the British forces.

Britain's response was to divide Ireland in two, forming six of Ulster's nine counties (those most heavily Protestant) into Northern Ireland. In 1921, Britain withdrew from the new Irish Free State (now Eire, or the Republic of Ireland).

Northern Ireland, as a province of the U.K., was ruled by its own parliament, Stormont. Catholics suffered systematic discrimination and the abuse of security measures enforced by an overwhelmingly Protestant police and judiciary.

In the 1960s, a Northern Ireland civil rights movement met with widespread support, but also with violence from extreme loyalists, leading to the re-emergence of the IRA. When rioting broke out in Derry and Belfast the British government sent in troops to restore order. The British started trying to end discrimination in housing and local elections, but Catholics' initial welcome soon dissipated when the army cracked down hard on civil-rights protest. When internment without trial was introduced in 1971, nearly all those imprisoned were Catholics. At a march in Derry in 1973, 13 civilians were shot by British paratroopers in the incident infamous as Bloody Sunday. Two months later direct rule from Westminster was imposed.

Britain's attempt to restore local rule in 1974 was brought down by a loyalist workers' strike. For the next decade Britain treated the problem as one of law and order rather than politics, a policy which backfired in 1981, when republican prisoners went on hunger strike to demand political status. As 10 men starved to death without the Thatcher government giving ground, the republican cause gained support. When Britain set up another elected assembly in 1982, nationalist members refused to take their seats.

In the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, the British government conceded a special role for the Irish Republic, while the Irish government agreed that the country could be reunified only with the consent of the majority in the North. The Agreement was reached without consulting unionists; their sense of betrayal increased, along with loyalist paramilitary violence. Northern Ireland seemed stalemated until talks between nationalist leaders John Hume and Gerry Adams, followed by the Downing Street Declaration of 1993, reawakened hope.

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scribes the situation of Protestants in relation to Catholics, not only in Ireland historically, but in Northern Ireland since partition, as well. Protestants could not provide for themselves that for which they most yearned, a high degree of security for a Protestant Ulster. The drive for security will also produce aggressive actions if the state either requires a very high degree of security or feels menaced by the very presence of the "other." Thus Protestants called on the combined services of Orange Lodges, the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army. And yet these anti-Catholic practices and politics only deepened the enduring threat posed by a dispossessed Catholic population. Despite the futility of this search for security, loyalists persisted because domination was seen as the only alternative to humiliation.

Ulster loyalism is dominance, Todd tells us, "and most would agree, but it is not as uncomplicated as that assertion sounds. Protestants enjoyed a powerful advantage in Northern Ireland, but as their acute fears remind us, they were never really in control of the region."

To be dominant in a system is not to dominate the system. Both the dominant and the dominated are equally caught in it. One has the advantage, the other does not.

We know that anxiety increases as the shape of a political system begins to change. The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 threatened the heart of the covenantal arrangement between Ulster's Protestants and the British government. Not only did the British allow for the possibility of a united Irish state, but they also permitted the Republic of Ireland to plan an active and formal role in the governance of Northern Ireland.

It was no accident, then, that the number of loyalist Protestant parades grew from 1,897 in 1985 to 2,581 in 1995. The parades are a "ritual restoration of the proper order," an order which Protestants saw slipping away from them.



Protestant march on the Shankill Road in 1993 to commemorate the anniversary of the death of a comrade in arms. Christina Cahill/Impact Visuals

The anxiety spilled over in the summer of 1996 when a dispute between the Orange Lodges and Catholic residents over a parade passing by the Drumcree parish church brought Northern Ireland close to anarchy. The police first prohibited and then permitted the march, alternately angering first loyalists and then nationalists. The dispute resulted in two deaths, substantial communal polarization and serious disruption of the peace process.

It is stunning, therefore, that compromises over parade routes, only a year after Drumcree, helped to create the conditions required for the peace talks to be resumed. Loyalist and Orange leadership reciprocated the IRA's cease-fire with an agreement to re-route several parades away from controversial sites.

"Where you could walk, you were dominant," was a characteristic summary of the Protestant insistence on parading at will.

Both sides had offered persuasive and significant compromises: the IRA had stopped the violence and loyalists had abandoned the effort to dominate. Whether there is any possibility of a vital relationship between the Protestant and Catholic peoples can now be examined at the negotiating table and in discussions within and between communities throughout Northern Ireland. TW

Indeed, it is these fears, both real and imagined, of encroachment and abandonment that testify to the failure of the Protestant people to dominate the country in any stable fashion.

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Corrymeela: sowing seeds of trust

by Meg Egan

Gerard Campbell didn't know the difference between "Protestant" and "Catholic" until he turned 10, he says. That year, the Portadown neighbors he'd grown to know as friends—the same ones he played ball with after school—turned on his and three other families with bricks, breaking windows and dumping paint on their homes. Neighbors spat as the Campbells moved from River Way to another street just off the Garvaghy Road: Portadown's tiny Catholic neighborhood, a site best known for sectarian marches and deadly, explosive violence. That's the day Campbell's mother explained what Catholic and Protestant mean in Northern Ireland. "We're not welcome here," she said simply.

Conversely, where Aileen O'Reilly grew up, in the Republic of Ireland, most folks didn't talk about religion—at least, not the young people. In Ballymun, a housing estate within Dublin's city limits but miles psychologically from Trinity College and the pastoral St. Stephen's Green, young people struggling to get by on their families' low incomes worried more about jobs than spiritual development.

"Religion was never an issue. No one ever asked you if you were a Catholic or a Protestant or a Christian," O'Reilly says. "People went to Mass on Sunday, but that was it." And Northern Ireland, she says, "was too far away to bother thinking about."

Campbell, 26, and O'Reilly, 21, grew up on the same island, a place whose name changes with the company one keeps. The physical miles between Portadown and Dublin measure in the hundreds, but only a radical approach to community-building could bridge the ideological distance keeping most of the citizens of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland apart. At the Corrymeela Center in Ballycastle, on the island's Antrim Coast, even simple exercises can have radical results: Pouring a cup of tea for a stranger can be the first step toward a change of heart as dramatic as convincing staunch unionists and Sinn Fein to sit at the same table at Stormont. A program developed at Corrymeela, the Seed Group, brings young people from both sides of the border together for six weekends over a period of six months; while "the troubles" may never actually enter the conversation, participants generally find their interaction puts an end to stereotypes they associate with people from the other side. They talk together, eat together, travel together and, in the end, most learn that as individuals, they aren't so different after all. Campbell, O'Reilly, and other former Seed Group participants gathered at Corrymeela in September for a reunion. Laughter abounded.

At the Corrymeela Center in Ballycastle, on the island's Antrim Coast, even simple exercises can have radical results: Pouring a cup of tea for a stranger can be the first step toward a change of heart as dramatic as convincing staunch unionists and Sinn Fein to sit at the same table at Stormont.

The Seed Group program

Founded in 1965, the Corrymeela Community draws its members from many different Christian traditions. Corrymeela is a dispersed community; its 180 members rally around a commitment to seek the healing of social, religious, and political divisions in Northern Ireland and throughout the world. Corrymeela's Ballycastle center welcomes guests from all backgrounds, whether Christian, non-Christian, or non-religious. About 6,500 people visit each year, attending a variety of programs that fall under five main headings: schools, youth, families, Christian education, and "open events." The community developed the Seed Group program in an effort to encourage cross-community relationships among young people who might then become resources for each other, for Corrymeela, and for the community at large. The Seed Group name comes from the parable of the mustard seed and the belief that the tiniest seed, sown well, can grow into something massive.

"I don't think I would be where I am today if it weren't for Seed Group," Campbell says plainly. Now a community activist living in the U.S., Campbell first visited Corrymeela with a Jesuit priest who was showing the Antrim coastline to a friend; Campbell went along for the ride. "I came through the front door, and people just make you feel so welcome," he says. When he was invited to join the Seed Group, Campbell's republican fam-

Meg Egan is a social worker and freelance journalist living and working as a volunteer at the Corrymeela Center in Ballycastle until September, 1998. For the safety of those who participate in their programs, Corrymeela requested that their faces not appear in photos.

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ily wasn't particularly enthusiastic about it, but Campbell came anyway. A quiet person, he says he usually wouldn't have opened his mouth in a group setting. But as the months passed and he grew more intimate with the others, Campbell found that looking forward to Seed Group "kept me going month to month."

Four adults coordinate the program, recruiting some 15 young people ages 18 to 25, male and female, from a mixture of religions and from both rural and urban areas in Northern Ireland and the Republic. Each weekend addresses a particular theme; the first usually focuses on participants' personal histories. Once they know about each other and have shared a few laughs, in later weekends they address family relations, relationships outside the home, politics and spirituality. Finally, the Seed Group travels the following summer to another country, where together they learn about another culture's ways.

An atmosphere of acceptance

At their initial meeting, the Seed Group's first task is to draw up a contract outlining how they plan to work together. This typically means agreeing that the information shared within the group stays within the group, and that participants strive to create an atmosphere in which no one feels pressure to divulge private or painful information, one in which each person's views are heard and differing opinions respected.

"People accept you the way you are," says Joan Wilson, 24, who plans to stay connected to Corrymeela now that her Seed Group experience has ended. Wilson comes from Enniskillen, in County Fermanagh; she calls Corrymeela "a haven" and the Seed Group, a chance to learn that "the other side isn't alien. They're just like us." Away from everyday realities, from the police and the television clips that focus so much on violence, the Seed Group offers participants a bit of a holiday, and that frees them up to meet one another as people, not labels. By the time participants find out each others' religious leanings, Wilson says, they already like one another. "We never discussed the troubles," she says. "What religious side you come from isn't apparent or isn't visible ... It's very clever." Rather than learning what categories the others fall into, participants learn what others think and have the freedom to ask why.

Mick Colton, 23, laughs when he imagines sharing the kinds of talks he had at Seed Group weekend "with the lads at the pub." There are two issues he's never heard chewed on at a pub in Ballymun, Colton says: religion and politics. "All we'd talk about [there] is football and women. It's hard to talk about spirituality," he says, laughing. Children in Dublin schools almost automatically grow into nationalists, he says. Being part of a Seed Group led him to examine the views he once held by default. "I just want, I suppose, peace now," he says. "I want it to be peaceful."

Risking commitment

Recruitment for the Seed Group hasn't always been easy. Corrymeela Community members and staff are well-connected with youth organizations and schools throughout both the Republic and Northern Ireland, but entering a group alone takes self-confidence and at least a little courage. Not every young person wants to take the risk.

"It was a little bit awkward," says Niall Browne, 24, from Enniskillen. He'd been doing data processing for the Corrymeela office in Belfast when he heard about Seed Group. The opportunity to meet other people his age was attractive, but when he discovered that others in the group already knew one another, Browne got nervous. "Then I



Corrymeela volunteers leading children on a walk to the beach.

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realized that even the ones who came up in groups felt as out of place as I did," he says. In addition to overcoming the inevitable nervousness, participants also must be willing to devote six weekends over a six-month span. When individual members don't commit, the entire Seed Group suffers.

"I didn't feel there was commitment from the group," says Jackie Duffy, 24, who comes from Belfast. Out of a group of 17, at least five or six participants were missing from each of her Seed Group weekends in 1991-92. Duffy reasons that not everyone was as "into" Corrymeela as she (Duffy visited Corrymeela as a school girl and "just kind of fell for the place"). In addition, her Seed Group experience did not include the trip abroad "which, to be honest, would have been an incentive to come up," she says.

The trip abroad is meant to be a chance for the group to further experience and bond around their similarities, as they experience the mysteries of another culture. But it may also be the carrot that convinces wary Seed Group participants to come to Corrymeela in the first place.

Peace and romance

The chance to make friends—and the possibility of romance—also draw young people to the Seed Group. "It's not that they don't believe in peace," says Helen Rooney, 31, a member of the Corrymeela Centre staff, but most of the young people are more enticed by the chance to meet peers than by "the peace the justice thing." Rooney's first visit to Ballycastle was as a participant in the Seed Group. Her mother, a librarian at a Catholic Boys' school in Belfast, arrived home one Thursday night and announced to Helen that she would be spending the weekend at a place called Corrymeela. "And I said, "What's Corrymeela?" Rooney remembers. If given more than a night to think about it, Rooney probably wouldn't have gone through with it, she says; another 24 hours and she likely would have balked at spending a weekend with strangers. But that weekend became the beginning of a long-standing relationship with the Corrymeela Community.

Rooney's bus from Belfast arrived at Corrymeela at 10 p.m. on a dark, windy October night. "We were taken to this very warm room with a lovely open fire," she recalls. When the ice-breaker exercises began, she says, "I thought, 'God they're mad.'" Because the success of a Seed Group depends on participants' trust for one another, the staff spends a lot of time leading team-building exercises and silly action songs. Learning to fall backwards into the arms of the other participants, singing raucously, and sharing clean-up duties after tea lead to a familiarity which encourages openness.

At the Seed Group reunion, past participants spoke warmly of the trust that grew—and that remains. Aileen O'Reilly met most of her "true friends—as in deep" during her Seed Group experience. "I talk to them in a true way, a spiritual way," she says. "There's people there I would sort of, like, put my life in their hands."

A slogan touted by Corrymeela Community members says that "Corrymeela begins when you leave." In learning to listen, in learning to value difference and respect others' views, Seed Group participants may grow to be more compassionate adults: citizens who strive for peaceful ends to conflicts, whether in their own homes or across borders.

The Seed Group "is a model for Northern Ireland, basically," says Niall Browne. "Mutual understanding. At the end of the day, that's what it's all about." TW

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The following back issues of* The Witness *contain articles which may relate directly to Northern Ireland or simply to the spirit of this month's topic.

- *Africa: Come, spirit, come (6/95)*
- *Allies in Judaism (10/97)*
- *Birthing in the face of the dragon (12/91)*
- *Dialogue (4/94)*
- *International youth in crisis (7-8/93)*
- *Grieving rituals (3/97)*
- *Resurrecting land (4/95)*

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- *Witness in the world (General Convention issue, 7-8/97)*
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Boardroom diversity

The United States Trust Company (investment managers specializing in services for investors with social concerns) reports that for seven years they have been voting against slates of directors of companies that do not include both women and minorities. The good news is that the number of women and members of racial minorities in corporate boardrooms continues to increase, albeit slowly. However, there is little evidence that increases in board diversity improve diversity in the rest of the organization. On the contrary, some earlier preliminary research found that where racial minorities are present on boards, minorities are less likely to be among senior managers.

The news on the issue of economic empowerment of women and minorities in the marketplace is mixed. Women today earn just 72 cents on the dollar, compared to the pay of men in similar positions. While this is modest progress from the 59 cents on a dollar women earned in 1970, it also points out how far we still have to go.

For African-American men the news is more discouraging. A recent University of Massachusetts study found that in 1996, African-American men earned 76.5% of the pay of white men in similar jobs, a decrease from 78% in 1990.

— *Values*, 7/97

For the healing of the nations

Church World Service (CWS) is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a "pilgrimage of prayer" in their Jubilee year.

For a half century CWS has embodied the mutual commitment of U.S. churches to life-giving ministries. In flood, drought, war and famine CWS provides emergency aid, often remaining after the crisis to accompany long-term development. Support of U.S. churches' resettlement of refugees at home complements ministry to refugees worldwide.

For the Healing of the Nations is a 30-day devotion booklet for this jubilee celebration and is available for $3 from CWS, Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515-0968.

Green taxes work

Green taxes work, say the Swedes. Environmental taxes in Sweden amount to only 6 percent of the country's tax revenue, yet theirs is one of the world's largest exercises in using taxes to protect the environment. Taxes on sulphur dioxide emissions resulted in a 30 percent reduction in acid rain between 1989 and 1995. The tax on fertilizers has led to an estimated 10 percent reduction in use. The program has caused power stations to switch over to burning self-renewing brushwood rather than fossil fuels, and cleaned up diesel emissions. Other taxes cover nitrogen fertilizers, pesticides, the scrapping of cars, water pollution, and gravel extraction. Sweden's Environmental Protection Agency has released an evaluation of the taxes, which were phased in starting in 1984. "Taxes work better than environmental regulations," said Rolf Annerberg, the agency's director-general.

— *Timeline*, 9-10/97

The Breakfast Club

In September, 50 Christian leaders in the Chicago area began engaging in an experiment in "racial reconciliation" called The Breakfast Club. Each has covenanted to meet for breakfast each month with another member of the group — a person of another race — over the course of a year for the purpose of discussing race on a one-to-one basis.

"Most programs are far too complicated," says Tom Lach, who will be the facilitator and coordinator of The Breakfast Club. "We must finally move to action after all the sermons, lectures, workshops and rallies by asking busy leaders to participate at the very beginning. We hope to tell the world that this issue of race is finally at the top of our priority list."

The project is sponsored by the Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise (CURE). CURE president, Russ Knight, hopes that after this pilot year, the Breakfast Club will spread throughout the nation.

Busted for 'anarchy'

When seven Rainforest Action Network protesters boarded a Mitsubishi ship, they expected arrest. But they didn't expect a felony conviction. They got one. Cowlitz County, Wash., threw the book at them. The prosecutor reached back to a 1919 union-busting statute outlawing "felony anarchy and sabotage."

The activists did not damage the Mitsubishi ship during their October 29, 1996 demonstration. They rappelled down the freighter's sides, where they hung a banner that read, "Protect our Forest. Stop raw log exports. Boycott Mitsubishi."

On June 9, a jury found six of them guilty of breaking the anti-sabotage law. On July 22, a Cowlitz County judge sentenced each of them to two years probation and 11 hours of community service. (The seventh protester was already serving a short sentence in Canada for chaining himself to old-growth timber and has not yet been tried.) Rainforest Action Network claims it is the first felony conviction for nonviolent environmental action in U.S. history.

Longview, where the protest took place, is a city of about 30,000 and is home to one of Washington's largest ports. Environmental protests go on all the time there. Deputy prosecutor Sue Baur told the *Longview Daily News* that the county used the anti-sabotage law to deter future protests. "They're not going to do it again here. That's our thinking," she said.

Use of the felony anarchy and sabotage statute worries the protesters. "In Washington, this law can be used arbitrarily now," says Charissa Niles, one of the defendants. "The law doesn't only apply to ships. If a protest affects a business, it can be a felony."

— Erin Middlewood,
***The Progressive*, 9/97**

Short takes

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'Reconciliation is not weakness': an interview with Robin Eames

Robin Eames, the Archbishop of Armagh, has a reputation for being one of the most thoughtful and open Protestant leaders in Nothern Ireland. He has been active in ecumenical work between Protestant and Roman Catholic church leaders.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: I thought maybe the most constructive thing to do in this interview would be to present to you with a stereotype and let you break that down and introduce nuance to it.
The impression that I get on this side of the Atlantic is that England created a colonial situation in Northern Ireland much like they did in other countries where they've arbitrarily put a small percentage of people in a privileged position, and that the Protestants have been reluctant to let go of that privilege even though it would result in justice for Catholics. From a distance, it looks as though the Protestants are the ones who need to let go of some of the power and influence that they've had. Is that a fair description? Or is it way too simplistic?
Robin Eames: How long have you got? I'm afraid it's a very unfair picture and a totally erroneous one. I don't know quite where to begin. The position is simply this: There are two main communities in Northern Ireland — the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. If you're born into a Roman Catholic home, you will be brought up under the political influence of either nationalism or republicanism. If you're born into a Protestant home, you'll be brought up under some influence of unionism. Now because of this over-identification between religion and party politics, it is very, very easy for a person to be judged politically by their religious label and to be judged religiously by their political label. The two communities are roughly 60 percent Protestant, 40 percent Roman Catholic. It's getting closer because of the birthrate, but it's still a majority of Protestants who live in Northern Ireland and it would be almost 100 percent their wish to remain members of the United Kingdom. It's not a question of the British getting out of Northern Ireland, because the Protestants are Irish, but they're British.

The conflict has arisen over the constitutional future of Northern Ireland. Republicans wish to see the border brushed aside to form a united Ireland in which the Protestants feel they would be totally outnumbered and in which their ethos and culture and religion would be sublimated into a foreign state.

And the Provisional IRA, the Irish Republican Army — whose main aim has been to end the British presence in Northern Ireland — has, in fact, been attacking the Protestant community. From within the Protestant community, there has, of course, been paramilitary activity by what are called the loyalist paramilitary gangs.

We're on the verge of political talks which hopefully may produce a political solution which will allow an equality to exist, which will allow a justice position to increase in which there's fair treatment of both sides.

But the instability that would occur with an ignoring of the wishes of the majority would be unbelievable and *that* wish of the majority is justice for both communities, but living within Northern Ireland.
J.W-K.: Now my understanding is that things actually have been becoming more equitable — that the economic balance in favor of Protestants has been shifting and is becoming more equal. Is that true?
R.E.: Yes, we have the most strict anti-discrimination laws in western Europe. If you employ five or more people, you must account for a balance between the two religions in your employment. That is probably the strictest anti-discrimination law you will ever come across. And I don't think there's anything, knowing your country as I do, to equate with it.

Early on there was definitely discrimination against Roman Catholics in housing, jobs and promotion. I don't deny that and no one with a fair mind would attempt to deny it. But I have to say to you that if you saw Northern Ireland now you would see beautiful houses, excellent education opportunities and, above all, a promotion of Roman Catholics to very senior positions in virtually every walk of life.

So often in your country I meet people who have this mystical view of Northern Ireland which is based on the past rather than the present. That's why I smiled when you began your analysis,

There are times when you've got to represent the feelings of your people, but there are times when it is very important to show that reconciliation is not weakness and that accommodation is not surrender.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is co-editor/ publisher of *The Witness*.

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because I have heard that analysis more times than I've taken a cup of tea.

You'll get large pockets of people living in the United States — particularly on the eastern coast from Boston down to New York, who still believe that that is the situation in Northern Ireland. And it's totally false! There's lots still to be done to get true justice and equality, but the whole situation has evolved in a way which has left that past far behind us.

J.W-K.: It was confusing for people from a distance to imagine why Britain would refuse to negotiate with the IRA after the IRA unilaterally agreed to a ceasefire. It seemed like a very courageous thing for the IRA to say that they would have a unilateral ceasefire and we were amazed that they weren't allowed then to come to the table to talk.

R.E.: Well, first of all, people are not convinced that it isn't just a tactical exercise, a cynical exercise. People have still to be convinced that this is real peace, because the IRA refuses to surrender its arms. They have murdered and maimed hundreds and hundreds of Protestants, and to ask a population to believe in a matter of weeks or months that that's the end of it is asking a great deal. I've personally buried many, many people who have been murdered by the IRA.

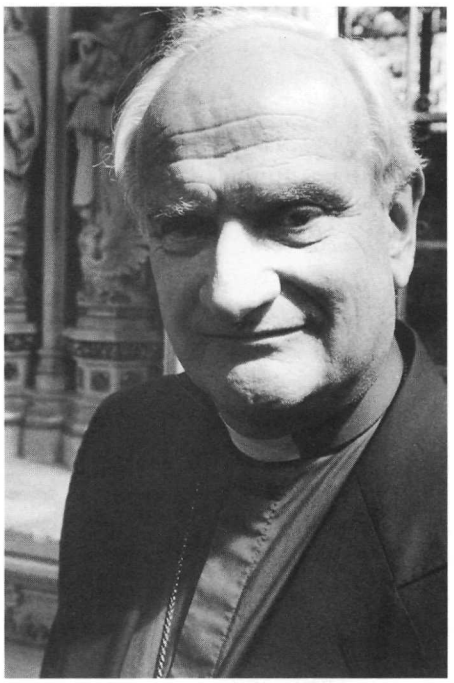
Part of the resentment of the Protestant community against Sinn Fein has been that for years and years Sinn Fein has lectured them in the media about what's needed for peace and at the same time the IRA, of which Sinn Fein is the political voice, has been murdering people. It's not easy to simply say in an instant, "It's all ended and we can believe them."

J.W-K.: It seems to me like a lot to ask the IRA to actually surrender their weapons, unless there's going to be a reciprocal collection of the weapons that are in the hands of the Protestants.

R.E.: Yes, well, I mean this is the whole point, if I may say so. It's a question of building up trust between the two sides. And in addition to that, it's the process rather than the fact. Process takes time. Nobody here believes that the arms will be given up by either side in an instant.

J.W-K.: I guess the thing that I would like to see is a consistent standard. Since there is violence on both sides, there has to be a way that entry into the conversation doesn't make it sound as though the IRA are the only people who use weapons irresponsibly.

R.E.: Well, the Mitchell Principles do



Archbishop Robin Eames Andrew Holbrooke, ENS

this. They don't equivocate between one side or the other. They talk about democracy in terms of total democracy without a need for arms. And the phrase that I use — and the phrase everyone else who is involved in the movement that I'm involved in would say to you — is that our ultimate aim is to take the gun right out of Irish politics.

J.W-K.: I've been doing a little bit of reading about the role of the church. I've heard very good things about your role in helping to negotiate, but in terms of people on the parish level, I've heard that pastors in all the churches feel like they're in a Catch-22. If they don't preach politics, then it looks as though they're irrelevant. If they preach reconciliation, it looks as though they're traitors to their own people. And if they preach the justice concerns of their own people, then it seems like they're fanning the flames of hatred.

R.E.: Well, I think you've got that very accurate, if I may say so. I think a lot of clergy feel they're prisoners of the situation. They know what they should be preaching, but very often they're afraid to step out of line with what they know are the views of their people. I use the phrase, "They're hostages." Now I know from my work as a diocesan that in fact this is true of many, many of my clergy.

J.W-K.: Is there a way for pastors to get out of the trap? What kind of advice do you give to people when they lament the situation that they're in?

R.E.: Well, there is only one path for clergy to tread and that is the path of the Gospel — irrespective of who it hurts or who it hinders, their duty is to preach the Gospel of Christ. Under God every one of us is equal. It's not a question of being a Protestant Christian or a Roman Catholic Christian, it's the question of being a Christian. If you're an ecumenist, as I am, you try to draw the two sides together. There are those would attack me for being weak, saying, "You're not standing up for your side." Now there are times when you've got to represent the feelings of your people and I do so with as much courage and clarity as I can, but on the other hand there are times when it is very important to show that reconciliation is not weakness and that accommodation is not surrender, but that in fact it's the reality and it takes a lot of courage to do it.

J.W-K.: Where do you find your hope politically?

R.E.: I find it in several bases. Number one, I find it in the resilience of the people

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of Northern Ireland who have come through so much and are still living normal lives. Secondly, I believe there's a new dawn coming insofar as politicians are becoming more able to take on board the views of the so-called opposition. And thirdly, I have always believed in the principle that, in time, common sense prevails.

As a Christian, of course, I believe in the ultimate eternity of the Christian faith and I think that with churches working more closely together and with a common attempt to be Christian rather than secular or divisive, that's bound to lead us eventually into the Promised Land.

J.W-K.: Is there more cooperation between the Protestant churches and the leadership in the Catholic churches?

R.E.: Much, much more than there ever was! For example, we were the first country, I think, in the west to have a regular interdenominational conference which tackled difficult issues. The Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic leaders meet regularly. We're totally committed to the good of all the people in this land and we're striving for that. And I like to say we're achieving it.

J.W-K.: Do you have a word to say about how the U.S. could play the most constructive role possible?

R.E.: First of all, I believe slowly but surely the fact is getting through in the United States that there are two communities here. Protestants have felt for generations that the only picture the U.S. had of Ireland was the nationalist republican one — that they were the downtrodden people and that they were under the domination of the Protestants. While there's some vestige of truth in that, as I said to you, you've got to recognize that there's a perfect legitimate right to be a unionist and to be a Protestant. People born and brought up here under the Protestant or unionist flag have as much right to live here as the Roman Catholic nationalist or republican.

The second thing is that the U.S. must always appear to be even-handed. For many, many generations it was felt over here that the U.S. was not even-handed. But I believe that under President Reagan and certainly under President Clinton there's a greater recognition of the two communities' right to live together here.

And the third thing to say is that it is mistaken to believe that if the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic disappeared overnight, that this would solve the problem. I think it would provoke far more problems than it would ever solve.

J.W-K.: It seems that there's a real dedication in both populations to different governments. I don't know how you resolve that.

R.E.: Well, it's been described by some commentators as the irreconcilable problem. As I say, that's part of the challenge and the difficulty for people like me. I'm primator, presiding bishop, of the Church of Ireland in Ireland, which means I have two jurisdictions —Northern Ireland and the Republic. I have to walk on both sides of the border and to deal with two governments and two totally different cultures. And that, believe me, is not easy.

A lot of clergy feel they're prisoners of the situation. They know what they should be preaching, but very often they're afraid to step out of line with what they know are the views of their people.

J.W-K.: I'm concluding from what you've said that you figure that the most hopeful opportunity is for Northern Ireland to stay within the United Kingdom, but for the laws and the regulations to become even more equitable than they currently are.

R.E.: You're very close to it in that. I believe the hope for the future is living with difference and diversity, but living in peace with it. Mutual rights. Mutual respect. Mutual tolerance. But as long as the majority wish Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom, I do not see an alternative to that.

J.W-K.: If it were 60-40 the other way, would you believe that going with the Republic of Ireland was the right way to go?

R.E.: I think if it was 60-40 the other way, it would be the same question I'm asking only in reverse. I believe that, obviously, in a democratic society, if the majority voted to move within the Republic of Ireland, this would happen. But not all Roman Catholics want a united Ireland! There's a sizable proportion of Roman Catholics who are quite happy to live in the United Kingdom, but they do want justice.

J.W-K.: I want to be sure that you knew that we understand that the U.S. has difficult and challenging problems that are every bit as full of violence and confusion and anger as those in Northern Ireland. I wonder if there are social problems that you see *us* facing that you have thoughts on about how we could proceed.

R.E.: I don't know that we are yet in a position to teach the rest of the world and I wouldn't want to do that because we have enough problems of our own. But I do see problems like the problem of ethnic minorities being very similar to the problems that people have here.

You just have to see the black-white issue in the U.S. and you've got — with a change of scene — the Roman Catholic-Protestant problem. It's a question of how people relate to each other and how you reach the maximum degree of community harmony. TW

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CPF agrees to meet with union

by Richard W. Gillett

The Church Pension Fund (CPF), responding to a letter last July signed by 80 bishops of the Episcopal Church including Presiding Bishop-elect Frank T. Griswold, has agreed to meet with two representatives of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to discuss a long-standing labor dispute involving janitors in Washington, D.C. The Fund's board of trustees authorized its Social and Fiduciary Responsibility Committee to meet this month with union representatives and to report back to its December meeting.

As previously reported in *The Witness* [10/97], the bishops' letter, initiated by Los Angeles bishop Frederick H. Borsch and four other bishops (Allen Bartlett of Pennsylvania, Barbara Harris and Thomas Shaw of Massachusetts and Stewart Wood of Michigan) asserts that CPF could be in a position to help bring about a settlement of the janitors' dispute. That dispute, a nine-year struggle by SEIU Local 82 on behalf of the janitors with CarrAmerica, Washington's largest private building owner, could be resolved, the union hopes, through CPF's intervention with Security Capital Group (SCG). SCG has a prestigious contract with CPF as a special investment advisor and is also a 40 percent owner of CarrAmerica through a subsidiary. CPF also has investments in a subsidiary of SCG. Carr has persisted in using only non-union cleaning contractors in the buildings it owns, the bishops stated in their letter to Frank S. Cerveny, executive vice-president and manager of CPF.

Recently Carr's property management arm settled an unfair labor practice complaint by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for denying union organizers entry to its buildings despite a previous court order granting union organizers access to meet with Carr's contract janitors — Carr thus defying both a court order and the NLRB. It is worth noting that the issuance of a complaint by the NLRB against an employer is a significant statement about a company's actions. Last year only 37 percent of charges filed nationally were found by the NLRB to have merit.

The focus of the labor dispute — well-known in the nation's capital — concerns 230 workers who work in 17 buildings, all non-union, managed or owned by Carr.

There is a substantial constituency, both church and labor, who are awaiting the outcome of this issue with great interest — and with determination to see justice done.

The cleaning contractors under Carr pay their janitor employees, many of whom are recent immigrants from Central America, wages of $5.75 to $6 an hour with few if any benefits. Says Ellen Johnson: "I've cleaned Oliver Carr buildings for the last nine years. I am making $6 an hour with no benefits." The federal poverty line for a family of four is $16,000, the full-time equivalent of $7.50 an hour.

Better off is Maria Abrego, who works for a union cleaning company in Washington. "Most of my co-workers and I are older women with a lot of seniority," she says. "With the union we know they can't fire us for any little reason."

The issue of the Washington janitors highlights for CPF its social responsibility as a church institution. In their letter to CPF the bishops expressed the hope that in this situation "where and how the Episcopal Church invests its funds must not be found at variance with our baptismal vows to strive for justice and peace among all people." Acknowledging CPF's recent investment successes (it now has over $3 billion in assets), the bishops assert that "this distinction carries with it a special social responsibility."

Over the years, as the rest of the Episcopal Church and other churches have engaged consistently in shareholder actions, CPF tended to remain aloof from such involvement. More recently it has begun to move somewhat toward a policy of selective investments and toward the voting of proxies on some stockholder resolutions. Now it is challenged to do more.

In this regard, it might take note that some of the large public pension funds, such as the California Public Employees Retirement System and the New York Common Fund, have adopted responsible contractor policies to ensure that the janitors cleaning their real estate investment properties are employed under fair and decent conditions. If with their concern for the pensions of their members they can begin to face up to their wider social responsibilities, much moreso should the pension fund of the church.

Hopefully CPF's trustees will take note that a very large number of bishops, plus both the retiring presiding bishop and the presiding bishop-elect, have expressed in this instance their strong support for the most vulnerable of the working poor. There is a substantial constituency, both church and labor, who are awaiting the outcome of this issue with great interest — and with determination to see justice done to the janitors who clean CarrAmerica's buildings.



Richard Gillett, a long-time advocate for economic justice and a former staffer for the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, has been recently appointed minister for social justice for the Diocese of Los Angeles.

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In the wake of struggle:

the Episcopal Church in El Salvador

by Ann Stanford

In August of 1996, my students, a colleague, and I ride in the back of a pickup truck up to the remote and beautiful village of Perquín. As we jolt our way past deep potholes and breathtaking views of the mountains, we discuss the colorful mural painted on the church that anchors the square. On it, I explain, they will see a striking image of Archbishop Oscar Romero. We pull into the square and see only a whitewashed church with slight traces of color visible under the paint.

I am back in El Salvador in March of 1997 on the anniversary of Romero's assassination (1980). Puzzled as to why there are no public proclamations or advertised memorial masses, I am told that the current archbishop thinks it best to ignore Romero's anniversary because it might interfere with the canonization process. (Most people say that the archbishop wants to bury the memory of Romero.) We are in the midst of the dusty, dry season, but that night the skies uncharacteristically pour rain, crack with violent lightning. Many people believe it is Romero's anguish. Or God's rage.

El Salvador, the focus of intense U.S. media scrutiny and recipient of billions of dollars in U.S. military aid during the 12-year civil war, has been all but forgotten in the relatively uninteresting post Peace Accords epoch. U.S. solidarity groups are seeing diminished membership and lack of interest. Although the crime rate is out of control, death squad activity persists and poverty and inflation are on the rise, increasingly democratic elections and the veneer of prosperity projected by glitzy new shopping centers in wealthy areas of San Salvador make El Salvador seem, as one embassy official there recently declared, "a U.S. foreign policy success story." Indeed, recent FMLN gains (the political party aligned with former guerrillas) in the National Assembly attest to major change, much of which some Salvadorans see as hopeful. But conflict in El Salvador is far from being a thing of the past.

In addition to the disheartening fact that the poor remain desperately poor, a struggle for the spiritual allegiances of the Salvadoran people is being waged.

In addition to the disheartening fact that the poor remain desperately poor, a struggle for the spiritual allegiances of the Salvadoran people is being waged. Not only have conservative evangelical groups gained powerful footholds, but the rift within the Catholic Church between conservative and progressive elements has widened. The current archbishop, Fernando Sáenz Lacalle, is a member of ultra-conservative Opus Dei and a paid officer in the Salvadoran military. (One Salvadoran priest notes that Lacalle is paid more than 30,000 colones per month by the military, an amount far in excess of the average annual salary.) Far from the legacy of Oscar Romero (who from his pulpit ordered the Salvadoran military to cease the repression and killing), Sáenz has actively worked to suppress the remnants of the Christian base communities (CBCs) that were a source of theological reflection and resistance throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Instead, Sáenz has called for individual responsibility and obedience to the tenets of church doctrine.

Many in El Salvador are saddened and angry at the shift. A story circulates that when the pope visited El Salvador this year and asked gathered Catholic bishops their opinion about Romero, one exclaimed, "He is responsible for the deaths of 75,000 Salvadorans!" (the number of those killed in the war). Only one bishop openly disagreed.

Dean Brackley, S.J., a theologian at the University of Central America (where seven Jesuits and two women were murdered by Salvadoran military in 1989) believes that, counter to what many say, CBCs are far from dead, but look quite different than they did 10 years ago. "People associate CBCs with the war," says Brackley, "and they want to heal, to move on. At the same time, people are coming together spontaneously to do ministry and there is a political and social edge to their work that is very exciting."

This is evident in the small community in Perquín located in the mountains of Morazan where my students and I participated in a Maundy Thursday Eucharist with a roomful of lay people and nuns. The mass was celebrated by Rogelio Poncelle, a Belgian priest who is not recognized by the Salvadoran Catholic Church, but who was chaplain to the FMLN throughout the war. Despite the conservative local priest (who had the church's mural whitewashed in an effort to move Perquín beyond its politicized past), this community struggles to maintain its social and pastoral projects — and to repaint their murals on other buildings as signs of hope.

"We are in a theological war now and

Ann Folwell Stanford is an associate professor in the School for New Learning at DePaul University, which has maintained a cooperative relationship with the National University of El Salvador since 1990. Stanford is writing a book, *Mechanisms of Disease: Women Writers of Color and the Politics of Medicine*.

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this one is much harder to fight," explains a Salvadoran nun at the local CBC, Casa CEBES. Numerous signs of resistance and hope such as Casa CEBES — along with resettlement communities, educational initiatives, cooperatives, community banks, and social projects— continue to exist against all odds.

Less known is the work of the Episcopal Church in El Salvador. Established in the 1950s and served by North American priests, the Salvadoran Episcopal Church has remained under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Church until this year, when General Convention voted to grant autonomy to the Dioceses of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Panama. They will be called the Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America (IARCA) after applying in December to the Anglican Consultative Council for recognition.

This is a welcome and long needed change, according to Martin Barahona, the diocese's first Salvadoran bishop. Since the 1940s, when the Episcopal Church came to Central America, the role of clergy has undergone an evolution (in varying degrees) from a church serving the needs of wealthy North Americans to a church aligned with the people. In El Salvador, however, the Episcopal Church, itself poor by U.S. standards, has a long record of commitment to and, as Barahona says, "standing with" the poor.

Known as a "church of the people" during the crises of the 1970s and 1980s, the Episcopal Church engaged in a strong program of social ministry, working with refugee resettlement projects and building new communities away from zones of conflict. During the war, San Juan Evangelista, the largest and oldest Episcopal Church parish in El Salvador, served as a sanctuary for hundreds of refugees. With the urban offensive of 1989, several clergy and laity were arrested and detained as political prisoners, including the present rector, Luis Serrano.

Currently the church is involved in health projects, land transfer advocacy (as a result of the peace accords, or, as many Salvadorans more precisely say, "the treaty to end armed conflict"), education, as well as daily pastoral care. Ten priests work in 15 congregations and several missions. Of the ten, only one is not Salvadoran. Barahona estimates around 5,000 Episcopalians in the country.

Barahona is passionate about the work of the Church in El Salvador, especially in building bridges among the sharply divided sectors of the country as well as increasing its focus on the empowerment of women. "Women have suffered a great deal in El Salvador and 80 percent of our church members are women," Barahona says. This commitment has led to the formation of an Instituto de la Mujer this past year.

Indeed, the Episcopal Church received a great deal of attention this fall when Hannah Atkins' photograph ran on the front page of El Diario del Hoy, one of the two principal Salvadoran newspapers. Denounced by the Catholic archbishop, Atkins' ordination was broadly supported by political groups, social organizations, universities, and especially women's groups.

Atkins, a North American, serves a parish that meets in the street. At Santissima Trinidad, eucharist is held on Sunday afternoons after the women parishioners have sold their wares in the morning market. One parishioner donated an exterior wall of her house for a mural painted by local young artists (who also happen to be gang members). Parishioners arrange benches and chairs facing the makeshift altar and mural while Atkins vests in the street. "We make church and it is beautiful. Dangerous, but beautiful."



Young men whitewash the image of Archbishop Oscar Romero on a church wall in Perquín in El Salvador. David Henricks

Street violence is common in El Salvador. Atkins says of the post-war transition, "There is a need for recovering the values of solidarity, love and service that led people into the popular struggle and base communities. Everyone knew what to die for, but many have forgotten what to live for."

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Atkins, along with Barahona, teaches in the Women's Institute, which is designed to train lay women in such areas as theology, women's psychology, liturgy, and stewardship. The 37 women who are currently enrolled have committed themselves to meeting one Saturday each month for three years.

"The institute is a sign of the Episcopal church's commitment to women's leadership — both recognizing and facilitating it at the community level," Atkins explains.

This is a crucial time in Salvadoran history, one in which the continued friendship and witness of friends outside the country is deeply felt. In the U.S., only the diocese of Central New York has a formal relationship with El Salvador. Established in 1992, the companion relationship has spawned a number of exchanges (60 people from Central New York have visited El Salvador and about 40 from El Salvador have visited New York), as well as financial support.

Richard Bower, dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Syracuse, recently spent six months on sabbatical in El Salvador, studying the issue of autonomy (see story in next month's issue of *The Witness*) and working with a small rural congregation. "What has been of high importance to us in Central New York and El Salvador is accompaniment: being together, with Central New York sticking with the El Salvador church in this difficult time."

But he acknowledges that accompaniment won't be easy.

"What worked in El Salvador during the war, in ministry and public stands, doesn't work during this more complicated time where the 'enemy' is much harder to define, where there is not much clarity, and where so much energy is needed simply to survive as a poor church."

RC bishops urge acceptance of gay children

U.S. Roman Catholic bishops last month extended to parents and families of gay and lesbian children an "outstretched hand" of support but reaffirmed church teaching saying homosexual activity is a sin.

The 20-page pastoral statement, "Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers," was developed over four years by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' committee on marriage and family and given approval by the conference's top policy-making board.

"All in all, it is essential to recall one basic truth," the statement said. "God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps to define the unique person we are. God does not love someone any less simply because he or she is homosexual."

Speaking directly to parents, the statement calls on them to "accept and love" their gay sons and daughters because "homosexual orientation (is) experienced as a given, not something freely chosen" and "by itself, a homosexual orientation cannot be considered sinful, for morality presumes the freedom to choose."

Parents of homosexual children need the help of the church," said Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. O'Brien, chair of the committee. "So often they can find themselves in a state of isolation and confusion, drifting to the margins of church and community life," he said.

The document broke no new ground theologically and is rooted in the most recent version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the church's main compilation of its teachings. It celebrates human dignity, recognizes strong friendships with those of the same sex as long they don't include "genital sexual involvement" and urges Catholics to "concentrate on the person, not on the homosexual orientation."

However, the statement is meant neither as an endorsement of the "homosexual lifestyle" nor is it intended to "serve a particular agenda," the bishops stressed.

The pastoral was welcomed by some Catholics in gay ministries.

"Several years ago, I would not have dreamed that there would be a document like this or one that was so connected to family," said Jim Schexnayder, who heads the church's Oakland, Calif.-based National Association of Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries, a network of nearly 30 dioceses and 250 individuals.

He said the document could help break down stereotypes about homosexuals, such as those portraying gays as part of a seamy sub-culture, stereotypes which have hampered outreach efforts to gays by the church.

Robert Mialovich, president of DIGNITY, the nation's largest gay and lesbian Catholic organization, welcomed the bishops' statement "as a significant opening of the arms to gays and lesbians in the church, especially to young people who are struggling. DIGNITY looks forward to grasping that 'outstretched hand' the bishops are offering and to making sure that gays and lesbians are made full and inclusive members of the Catholic Church."

The statement seeks to maintain a delicate balance on the high-wire issue of homosexuality in the wake of incidents and statements that have given the church a harsh, anti-gay image. In the 1980s, the Vatican disciplined Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, in part because of his allowing a gay group to meet at St. James Cathedral and it stripped Charles Curran of his right to be a Catholic theologian, also in part because of his views on church teaching and sexuality.

— B. Denise Hawkins, Religion News Service

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Struggling with the language of faith

by Constance Chandler-Ward

***The Inclusive Psalms*, Priests for Equality, Brentwood, Md., 1997.**

Years ago, during those early days of feminist awareness, I had a vehement argument with a friend about inclusive language in Scripture. She said she felt included in Scripture, even when she was called a "brother" in Christ, because she knew that the masculine terms were really meant to include her. I think she was a little amused by my passionate inability to think likewise and by my declaration that we all suffer when we accept noninclusive language as large enough to hold us.

A year or so later, I received a letter from her in which she described a psalm with feminine pronouns that had been sent to her by a friend. "I found myself sobbing," she said. "I had no idea how excluded I felt until I felt those tears falling off my face."

I am so thankful that somewhere there are Roman Catholic priests who felt their faith diminished by language which forgets to acknowledge the presence and story of half of humanity. Although Priests for Equality have had little official support for their inclusive language project and must struggle on a small budget, they have done good scholarly and literary work to bring us a highly usable New Testament and now also the psalms.

The questions that arise around translation have long fascinated me. I lived a good deal of my younger life in Europe, during the course of which I became bilingual in French. I noticed that when I was speaking one language, my gestures, expressions, humor and manner of thinking altered from those that occurred in the other. It was subtle enough, but I was quite clearly altered in the language shift. The reason, of course, was that the words were surrounded by the culture out of which they sprang and the connotations were peculiar to that culture and not translatable. I even noticed those differences between English from England and from the U.S.

I must begin, then, by believing that any translation is an approximation at best.

The introduction to *The Inclusive Psalms* names the same struggle: "How to express the sentiments of one culture in another language is always perplexing. It becomes even more trying when you are dealing with ancient languages. ... In our translation, we try to find a balance between the kind of poetic form familiar to the ears of the English-speaking public, and the earthy, gruff tone of the original language." Not only were they dealing with translation issues *per se*, but also with our familiarity with and assumptions about the earlier translations. Somehow many of us grew up thinking that God was really Elizabethan and English because of the King James version of the Bible.

I am so thankful that somewhere there are Roman Catholic priests who felt their faith diminished by language which forgets to acknowledge the presence and story of half of humanity.

The translators recognize, too, that some of the texts cannot truthfully be translated inclusively. A translator's job is not to delete, yet I refuse to be assumed within patriarchal universal statements. I do not believe that God established the male line of David or that God willed the winning of battles or the death of enemies. When the texts are patriarchal I do not blame the translator, but I do not want to pass them on to my children.

Bearing all that in mind, it is indeed refreshing to have this translation for our use in worship. In our weekly inclusive Eucharist at our retreat house we have introduced *The Inclusive New Testament* and *The Inclusive Psalms* with gratitude. Sometimes there are lines that seem grinding to my ear like: "Fling wide the gates, open the ancient doors, and the Glorious Liberator will come in! Who is this 'Glorious Liberator'? Adonai Sabaoth is our Glorious Liberator!"(Psalm 24)

But often the translation seems refreshingly real, like: "Why should I be afraid in times of danger, or when I'm surrounded by those who lie and deceive? They trust only in their money, and boast of nothing but their wealth. Yet even they cannot redeem another person — no one can pay God ransom for someone else, because the payment for a life is too great."

Sadly, I doubt that this or any other more inclusive biblical texts will readily be finding their way into mainline church worship services. Most clergy seem to think that such texts are too radical and upsetting for the majority of church members. It may well be too late, anyway, as so many people on a spiritual quest find their needs unmet in typical congregations. But I hope *The Inclusive Psalms* will somehow find its way into the hands of those who thirst and hunger for a deeper exploration into the heart of Christian tradition.

Constance Chandler-Ward is one of three priests who run Greenfire, a retreat house in Tenants Harbor, Maine. For more information about Priests for Equality, a project of the Quixote Center, write them at PO Box 5243, W. Hyattsville, Md., 20782-0243.

$$ for Advocate and H.O.M.E.!

The final tally on funds raised to benefit the restoration of Philadelphia's historic Church of the Advocate and the work of Project H.O.M.E.through *The Witness'* awards banquet last July is complete. A total of $3000 was raised for the church and an additional $1000 for H.O.M.E. (beyond the catering fees paid to the Back Home Cafe). We're grateful to all who made the event a success!

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Church-based reconciliation

by Gordon Judd

The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to Churches, eds. Gregory Baum and Harold Wells (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY, 1997).

This collection of essays is a wide-ranging, diverse potluck on the theme of reconciliation, including stories, reports, historical overviews, interviews, and reflections from a dozen different ethnic or national experiences. There is a feast of variety and plenty here, and far too much to digest in just one sitting. Like many such collections that bring together a variety of authors around a particular focus topic, *The Reconciliation of Peoples* offers something useful and satisfying for almost anyone interested.

Editors Gregory Baum and Harold Wells are Canadian-based theologians who have brought together writers "to record and reflect upon actual efforts and achievements by Christian churches, organizations, and individuals toward reconciliation in many different circumstances of ethnic, cultural, or religious conflict" (vii). The circumstances are indeed different. Some encompass historic or recent experiences involving staggering human rights violations such as Nazi war crimes, South African apartheid, or the disappearances, torture, and extra-judicial executions under Chile's military dictatorship of the 1970s. Others deal with subtler human rights abuses such as the United Church of Canada's response to the linguistic and cultural aspirations of Quebec and others with situations that are little known or reported, such as efforts at reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula or the Fiji Islands.

While conflicts may arise from a variety of sources, they almost always entail ignorance or misunderstanding of each other's story. But this is not a variation on the 1970s mantra, 'I'm Okay, You're Okay.'

At first glance, readers might balk at a collection that appears to balance torture and murder with the issue of bilingualism. The book does not, however, imply any such equation. Instead, it invites readers to recognize that both division and reconciliation lie along continuums. Whether groups have suffered from apartheid or linguistically exclusionary practices, they can feel deeply aggrieved, and any effort at bringing people together, at narrowing the breach of mutual suspicion and acrimony, is movement toward healing. All of these essays recount significant stories of reconciliation and suggest the wide-ranging possibilities presented churches to become agents of positive social change.

Gregory Baum thoughtfully provides "A Theological Afterword," synopsizing seven "common convictions implicit in these essays." Three of these are particularly important for readers who want to be teachers or practitioners of the process of reconciliation: [a] This process demands a conversion or change of mind and heart, [b] needs a common story, and [c] emerges from the willingness of some people to lead.

While Baum and most of the authors address head-on the critical role that justice must play in every effort of reconciliation, they also point out that all parties to the conflict need to move even further, whether by recognizing the Christian call to confess that one has sinned against others and making reparations, or by embracing the Christian call to forgive and love one's persecutors.

One of the most striking aspects of these essays is the role that story-telling had in reconciliation. Anyone acquainted with the theory or practice of conflict resolution will not be surprised, however, since they view conflict and communication as inseparably linked. While conflicts may arise from a variety of sources, they almost always entail ignorance or misunderstanding of each other's story. When opposing groups are able to tell these stories, and when they struggle to arrive at a common story, reconciliation is already at work. This is not a variation on the '70s mantra, "I'm Okay, You're Okay." The outcome is mutually remembered and embraced truth even when some storytellers must confess their roles as oppressors or murderers.

Baum states, "In all accounts reconciliation between groups of peoples is

Gordon Judd, a Basilian priest who lives and works in the Detroit area, has an MA in Conflict Resolution and a private practice in group process consultation.

review

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promoted by a few Christians with strong convictions surrounded by many who remain indifferent or are even hostile to the idea." I would add that this kind of leadership is strongly characterized by a willingness to take unilateral action in seeking reconciliation, not knowing how one's overture will be received or whether greater humiliation and hurt will ensue.

The Reconciliation of Peoples is perhaps most valuable in two ways. First of all it is inspirational reading, strongest in this respect when it is dealing with victims' stories of reaching beyond their wounds and anger to rebuild the broken human community. Secondly, it is potentially very useful for those teaching about or implementing church-based reconciliation processes. In this respect, the authors and editors powerfully reinforce the conviction that the Christian "faith tradition offers resources for reconciliation that need to be emphasized and made explicit."

Of particular interest for this issue of *The Witness* is a short but insightful piece on Northern Ireland by Jesuit priest Michael Hurley. For those whose grasp of the Northern Ireland situation is somewhat blurred, Hurley helpfully traces some of the background to the decades-long violence, noting that the Protestant and Catholic churches have historically been perceived by many as implicated in the bigotry and bloodshed. He believes, however, that this perception is off the mark. He points out that in recent years the churches have made a concerted effort to further the cause of reconciliation. Hurley argues that this "new interest in and appreciation of the churches' ministry of ecumenism and reconciliation is a complex phenomenon" arising, in part, out of their recognition that they are not self-sufficient and that they must work together to succeed. TW

N. Ireland's churches have allies in reconciliation work

The ground is fertile for joint church efforts to foster reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland partly because the churches have strong allies among a myriad of community groups committed to promoting peace through cross-community, nonsectarian means. Sometimes supported by aid from outside granting agencies such as the Ireland Funds (an international confederation of groups of Irish interest and concern which sponsors fundraising events in 40 cities around the world), these numerous grassroots projects are wide-ranging, practical and often highly imaginative approaches to dispelling ignorance and misunderstanding between traditional enemies — as the following sampling suggests:

- Belfast Harpers — a cross-community joint effort to revive traditional harp music through a festival and professional recordings;
- Bryson House — a voluntary organization in Belfast whose activities include support for families under stress, services for the elderly, environmental projects and employment and training projects;
- Committee on the Administration of Justice — a cross-community group in Belfast providing information on human rights and establishing standards of justice in Northern Ireland;
- Belfast Community Circus School — an artistic circus involving cross-community groups;
- Glencree Centre for Reconciliation — a Wicklow-based effort aimed at encouraging reconciliation, North and South, through structured programs in peaceful settings;
- Derry Centre for Creative Communications — a center which facilitates exchanges between people from different cultural backgrounds and draws in participants from around the world to learn how Derry has coped with division and conflict;
- Cultural Traditions Group — a Belfast-based organization providing seminars, conferences and publications that promote mutual understanding and debate on cultural diversity and traditions in Northern Ireland;
- Flax Trust — a Belfast business center that works toward reconciliation through economic and social development;
- Dungannon Bereavement Counseling — a bereavement and counseling service for the families of victims of sectarian killings;
- Harmony Community Trust —a program in Down to develop cross-community relationships among young people through leadership training and enterprise;
- Lower Shankill Women's Group — a project enabling women in a deprived area of conflict to recognize and develop their own skills;
- Holiday Projects West — a Derry-based project to provide holiday programs for children from troubled areas;
- Women's Information Drop-In Centre — a Belfast community-service organization founded by Joyce McCartan, who lost three sons to sectarian violence, and committed to reconciliation through job-training, job-creation and children's education;
- Shankill Community Information Services — *The Shankill People*, a community newspaper published by the Shankill Community Information Services, confronts sectarian thinking and action and encourages positive dialogue in North and West Belfast.

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Sam Burch

We need to weep over the situation, over having done such terrible things to each other.

Building on the cornerstone

by Kate DeSmet

In the neighborhood where Sam Burch and his playmates grew up they regularly heard a warning from their parents that was simple and severe: "Stay on our side of the road or you will get beaten by the Catholics." Burch, a Methodist, lived close enough to the Catholics in West Belfast to see them and fear them. Not close enough, however, to know them. But Burch, like some fellow Irish clergy and lay persons, eventually grew tired of the hate and bloodshed and poisoned spirit of the place. They built Belfast a new road, a symbolic middle road, where people of separated faiths could meet. Burch's "road" is known as the Cornerstone ministry.

"There is a wall that divides the notorious areas of Shankill, the heartland of loyalist Protestants, from the Falls, where the republican Catholics live," said Burch, an ordained minister. "The wall keeps the two communities separate. So we moved into two houses on what we call the peace line between the two neighborhoods. And we called [the ministry] Cornerstone because of that wall. It looked like a good name for symbolizing something strong in Jesus, that we can rely on Jesus and not a wall to keep us safe."

Burch, along with a Roman Catholic nun and a Presbyterian minister, helped create Cornerstone's interfaith "wee community" in 1982. Some 20 Christian lay persons and clergy began meeting to pray together for peace. Belfast was deep into the "troubles," a period of murders and bombings and street fighting between the two groups. Violence was a companion to the overwhelming poverty of the area. It is estimated that nearly 80 percent of the residents in the hardest-hit neighborhoods like the Falls and Shankill receive government assistance. The neighborhoods are regarded as among the most poverty-stricken in all of Europe, and many families haven't had a paying job in generations.

"That's what makes the fighting so violent — each of them are afraid of the little bit of bread they've got being taken out of their mouths," Burch said. "There is a big contest between the two groups over jobs, low-paid jobs, especially for the women. There are stitchery jobs, making up shirts and so forth, and cleaning the hospital. They don't want to leave their own area because they have such low self-esteem. The government put in training units to give young people better skills and that's been partially successful. But it has got a long way to go."

The Cornerstone group realized it had to do more than walk the streets to reach the people. They had to live where the two sides were most divided. And they had to do something to witness to the message of the Gospel in the midst of religious hate and mayhem. The community spent years in prayer for peace. But eventually they were drawn to action.

"We all had busy ministries at the time so it was hard to see the way forward," said Burch. "But it grew out of our prayer. We were coming through the hunger strikes at that time and we thought we were plunging into civil war. The strikes galvanized us into doing something."

The Cornerstone activists, including five who live full-time in the ministry's two houses, began setting up programs to draw together the very people fighting each other. They began after-school clubs for young people. Senior citizens were

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Kate DeSmet is a locked-out *Detroit News* religion reporter.

coaxed out of their homes to eat lunch together. Women's groups were organized to help train the many single mothers in new job skills. And parents with toddlers began meeting three times a week for first-hand evidence that both Catholics and Protestants want the same things for their children: a homeland without violence, without walls, without warnings about "our side of the road."

"What they discover about themselves is as important as what they discover about each other," said Burch, who at 65 is retired but still spends three days a week living at Cornerstone. "The gospel is about loving your neighbor and you can't stop doing that just because they are of a different denomination or color."

The move by Burch to become more fully involved with Catholics did not go over well with his "very loyalist" Methodist congregation. While a few supported the effort, many others thought he was going too far afield from what he'd been called to do as their pastoral leader. As Cornerstone's ministry evolved, hearts began to change.

With intensified violence on the streets, the Cornerstone group began to make a more public witness of what it believed was necessary for peace. Teams of two persons — a Catholic and a Protestant — began visiting the homes of the murder victims. They counseled the families, grieved with them, talked of the unifying message of Jesus, and then moved on to the next sorrowing family. Cornerstone leaders and supporters also led processions through the streets and held joint religious services of prayer for healing and peace. There was one service in particular that Burch says was a turning point for many who had not understood what Cornerstone's work was all about.

"There'd been these scenes of horrible murders and we decided to do an ecumenical prayer service," Burch said. "We asked two women to hold up a scroll listing the names of the dead. One woman had lost her husband, the other had lost her brother. There were 2,700 names on the scroll. We wanted them to place the scroll on the altar of the church.

"With everybody watching, these two women carried the scroll, lifting it up high and they placed it on the altar. Then they turned to each other, this one woman a Protestant, this other one a Catholic, and they embraced and began weeping and all the church began weeping. It was a very moving experience. It showed the hurt and suffering on both sides. We need to weep over the situation, over having done such terrible things to each other."

The tearful service deeply affected Burch. He still recalls it with emotion in his voice. And he remembers when he first began to see Catholics as something other than the enemy of his loyalist Protestant community. As an itinerant Methodist preacher he was often on the road in Ireland, making his way to assignments at churches in counties north and south. During a stay in the Catholic south Burch began having more conversations and interactions with Catholics that convinced him he needed a more open mind. His heart didn't reconcile with the Romans overnight. It took years to see through the warnings he'd received as a loyalist youth.

Teams of two persons — a Catholic and a Protestant — began visiting the homes of murder victims.

"I'd discovered that the Catholics were not so frightening as I'd thought," said Burch, who cites the Christian gospels as the great healing force in his life. "The thrust of the gospel is to find each other and find friendship in Jesus. It was a long journey, a slow journey for me. I've endured a lot of setbacks as well. But these experiences have tremendously enriched my faith."

One setback took place about four years ago when somebody set fire to the Methodist church where Cornerstone celebrates interfaith prayer services. The fire destroyed some of the pews, blackened the ceiling and damaged the electrical wiring. Fortunately, someone spotted the smoke early enough to save the structure from being lost. While police believe the fire was deliberately set, they have no suspects. Burch said it may have been caused by troubled youths but he does not believe it was a message of protest against the work of Cornerstone.

And the good news is that the Methodist church is fully restored after raising about a million dollars for the work. The church now includes a modern community center that will be inaugurated at celebration ceremonies that will include Catholic and Protestant worshippers.

In fact, Burch said, much of Cornerstone's work in the past year has focused on celebration instead of mourning. As Ireland moves cautiously towards a possible political settlement of its troubles, the West Belfast community is inching its way towards a still tenuous but budding reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics. Cornerstone recently held a festival for all the neighbors on either side of the "peace line," featuring floats and bands. There was even a summer barbecue for families held out in the open, in view of the wall that has so long stood as a barrier to peace.

With so many programs and plans that develop each week, Burch said he "can be quite weary at the end of the day." A routine of prayer twice a day at the Cornerstone homes, including shared meals and housework, helps refresh the group. And while the activists don't always "agree with what our churches teach," said Burch, "we do believe in the one Jesus. That is a powerful help to us all." TW

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The Witness

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Immigration:
The flight into America

Unmasking the death penalty

I WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED to open the September issue of *The Witness* and find an article by the Bruderhof and a picture of my sister at a "Free Mumia" rally. Growing up in the Bruderhof communities, I know that they have received lots of outside opposition and many negative responses to their anti-death penalty stance. I'm glad another Christian publication agrees that capital punishment is wrong.

Melissa Rhoads
Elka Park, NY

I FOUND the "Alternatives to the death penalty" article by Ruth Morris fascinating, but I have a very basic question to ask: By what method is it determined in these various cultures that the offender is guilty of the offense against the victim? And what if the offender maintains his/her innocence despite conviction, as is happening as I write this in what I believe is "justice gone wrong"?

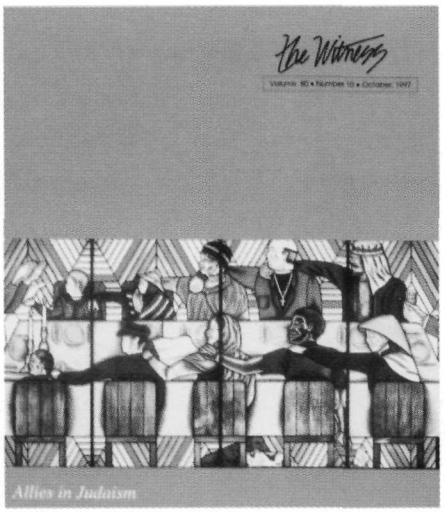
I was especially interested in Genesee County's program. Yet there is no indication that a person was arrested, charged, and his/her guilt determined, since the VORP activities begin "within hours of the crime." Are the police making the guilty determination without benefit of trial to which the alleged perpetrator is entitled under the Constitution?

VORP programs in all the cultures described sound positive and helpful to everyone involved; but there needs to be some explication of the methodology by which the alleged perpetrator is determined to be guilty of the crime against the victim.

Priscilla Armstrong
Baltimore, MD

Allies in Judaism

SOME PROBLEMS ARE MORE COMPLEX than they seem. Your October issue mentioned the Baptist goal of converting the



Jews. Two events at the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention provoked this controversy. One was a statement from the podium that by the year 2000 Baptists hoped to take the message of Christ to every American. The second was a resolution dissenting from that of a rival Baptist group. It said that all persons, Jews included, should be offered the message of Christ. The practical result was to designate a liaison to work with Jews for Jesus.

Few people bothered to read the resolution itself, including apparently those who wrote op ed pieces and put paid advertisements in the *New York Times*. The resolution noted that there had been "an organized effort on the part of some" to deny that Christians had an obligation or even a right to "proclaim the gospel" to Jews. Affirming that Christians are "indebted" to the Jewish people and that the Jews are "beloved" of God, the resolution nevertheless noted that Christians were told to take the message of salvation to "every kindred tongue and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). The SBC, having "neglected the Jewish people" in the past, would now "direct energies and resources toward the proclamation of the gospel to the Jewish people."

As a non-Baptist, I was not pleased to see this resolution, but as someone who teaches a class on Religion and Politics and who tries to understand the authentic perspective of each group about whom I teach, I was exceptionally concerned at the inflammatory way it was distorted. Editors denounced it as anti-Semitic and said it reflected the type of thinking that led to the Holocaust. One newspaper editorially asked ,"What is the difference between a Baptist and a Nazi? It's a matter of degree."

There is exceptional hostility to conservative Christians in our country, a hostility that borders on something shameful. *The Witness* is not one of the great offenders, nor did your issue seriously distort what the SBC said. As evangelicals, they WOULD like to take the message of Christ to every American and they WOULD hope that everyone would accept. They DO take at face value the statement of Jesus that "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6) and they DO believe that there is a "new" covenant that moved beyond the old.

The question remains for those of us not in the theologically conservative camp, how do we relate to those Christians who are? I do not have the answer, but I do know that it does not lie in calling them Nazis and anti-Semites and bigots.

I read your journal faithfully and consider it a wonderful provocation. Keep up the good work.

Ron Stockton
Dearborn, MI

Dorothy Granada

I THOUGHT YOU AND YOUR READERS should know that my associate and good friend Dorothy Granada has been awarded the 1997 International Pfeffer Peace Prize for her lifelong commitment to nonviolent social change. Each year since 1989, the Fellowship of Reconciliation has presented this award to an individual or organization working internationally to achieve social change through nonviolence.

Dorothy Granada, an American of Chicana and Filipina descent, has since 1989 worked in the small community of Mulukuku, Nicaragua, providing trainings in nonviolence, gender sensitivity, and human rights. She also opened a women's health clinic, which not only provides needed health services but empowers women to identify and organize against forces that have marginalized them.

Grant M. Gallup
Casa Ave Maria
Managua, Nicaragua

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Grieving

I THINK YOU WILL BE INTERESTED in knowing how valuable *The Witness* of a few months ago, covering bereavement, has been at Fairhaven.

Last January I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Residents' Association, specifically to become chair of the Religious Life Committee, with general involvement in the religious activities of the Fairhaven Community. Fairhaven is a function of the Diocese of Maryland, and we are about 46 percent Episcopalian, with many other denominations represented, and one or two residents who say "None." We have a very nice chapel with Eucharist every Sunday and some other services. There is an Ecumenical Service every Sunday in the auditorium, with communion every quarter. There are three or four joint services each year. The chaplain, The Rev. Sarah Lewis, and assistant chaplain, The Rev. Fielder Israel, alternate between the chapel Eucharist and the Ecumenical Service. Also there is a Presbyterian afternoon service once a month in the chapel. This service is handled by the minister and organist of a neighboring Presbyterian church.

A Roman Catholic priest from St. Joseph's parish comes periodically for Mass in the Health Center Chapel. A Rabbi from a Conservative Synagogue comes about once a month.

Four Bible Study groups meet weekly, and there are occasional speakers, videos and other presentations. There is much going on.

I have members of many denominations on my Religious Life Committee. When I asked a friend if she would serve as a representative of the Unitarian-Universalist group, she agreed, provided she could bring up the question of a widow/widower support group. As you can imagine, of the 420-plus residents here there are many in that category. My friend has been widowed twice, and has been in support groups, so she knows whereof she speaks. The committee told her to pursue the matter, and the chaplain, who is staff to the committee, agreed to talk to the Directors of Social Services and Resident Services.

The results are not encouraging. Sarah, the chaplain, found that before she came such a group had been proposed and "there seemed to be no interest." My Unitarian friend found that there are no books on death, dying, bereavement or grieving in the Fairhaven library (a very good library), and the library committee wanted none. Sarah is starting such a library in her office. We have ceased trying to understand this attitude.

Against that background I read *The Witness*, catching up on periodicals I had put aside. I then gave it to my friend, who was delighted to read it and has been circulating it. I think the last figure she gave me was 16 persons on her list, not only residents, but at least one staff person. It has been very helpful.

Whether as a result of this agitation or a new Director of Social Services we don't know, but there is a current announcement of a bereavement support group to meet shortly. Some of us are a little suspicious that it sounds like a social worker telling people, rather than individuals supporting each other, but we will have to wait and see.

Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy
Sykesville, MD

Defying presumptions

THANK YOU FOR THE WELL-TIMED, free sample of *The Witness* (June 1997) on *Defying presumptions: gay and lesbian Christians celebrate Jesus' call*, which arrived on my desk at Germantown Mennonite Church this week. I say "well-timed" since it is two weeks ago today that our congregation was dismembered from the Mennonite Church via the action of our district body, the Franconia Mennonite Conference, because of our welcoming of gay men and lesbians as members of our congregation. It is a true sign of hope to find many throughout the wider church who have given "witness" for many years — in your case 80 years!

Richard J. Lichty
Philadelphia, PA

Witness praise

JUST LOGGED ON YOUR WEB PAGE. I'm a loyal reader and it's nice to think I can enjoy your ideas between issues. You do good work!

Betsy Willis
Zionville, NC

Classifieds

Youth ministry director

An urban youth ministry seeks part-time director. The Mission of the Holy Spirit, an outreach program of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia that works with teens in the city of Norfolk, seeks a leader to work with program development, coordination and community involvement. The vision of the Mission is to empower inner city youth through various programs, spiritual development and Christian community. We seek a grounded Christian, an organizer, strong in youth ministry, committed to community involvement, and able to work with our volunteers. Open for lay or clergy, equal opportunity employer. Contact: The Rev. Susan S. Keller, Mission of the Holy Spirit, 600 Talbot Hall Road, Norfolk, VA 23505 (757-423-8287).

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1998-99 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

Classifieds

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The Witness

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Immigrants become citizens at a Mass swearing-in ceremony held by the INS at the Jacob Javits Center on July 25, 1996 in New York City. The young boy, watching his mother, is already a citizen. Photo by Andrew Lictenstein/Impact Visuals.

Cover: Flight into Egypt by Bartolome Esteban Murillo, © Detroit Institute of Arts

The Witness offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish.

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Seeking a vision, not a dream

by Julie A. Wortman

The deportations have begun — and the conundrums. People here in Maine are scratching their heads over a mother who is an "undocumented" refugee from Central America. She came here to live the "American dream," a hope superficially so like Isaiah's vision of "A new heavens and a new earth" (Is.65:17), in which the people enjoy the fruits of their own labor and common well-being prevails, that many have come to think it sacred. Under the new immigration law passed in 1996 [see p.8], this woman faces deportation. But her baby, born here, is a U.S. citizen and cannot be expelled. Should the child and mother be separated?

Meanwhile, a wealthy capitalist who owns most of a nearby coastal island has given up his U.S. citizenship and emigrated to a Caribbean nation. In addition to this home in Maine and his Caribbean home base, he owns residences in Colorado and Ireland. Like so many seeking to immigrate to this country, this man, too, seeks refuge — from U.S. taxes.

Tax money, of course, is what many anti-immigration, pro-capitalist Americans fear is in too short supply to provide for the neediest among us, not to mention for "foreigners" of limited means. The American dream and Isaiah's vision abruptly part ways when it comes to making money, not creation, the bottom line.

Still, U.S. commercial advertising and government propaganda downplay this truth so successfully that people are employing desperate strategies to reach these shores. The poorest and most unskilled soon find themselves exploited by owners of meat packing plants, garment industry sweatshops and non-union janitorial services who take advantage of their willingness to do just about anything for the lowest of wages in order to elude persecution or gain what they hope will be a foothold on the American ladder of upward mobility [see p.13].

Undocumented persons are especially vulnerable to workplace and housing abuses. The new law, with its requirement that people illegally living here who now wish to legalize their status must return to their homelands for a lengthy period first, has forced many more deeply underground — and more securely into the hands of the unscrupulous.

Between our burgeoning prison population — more and more of whom are providing cheap labor for American companies — and those hiding from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, we have created a new, expendable, underclass of virtual slaves.

This holiday season American religious and humanitarian groups have organized a boycott of gifts produced by overseas sweatshops [see p. 17], but the abuse of invisible legions of mistreated workers in our own midst is harder to fight. The good news is that the courage to risk exposing and facing up to this exploitation by "native-born" entrepreneurs is beginning to come from the workers themselves, making solidarity more possible.

But immigration is more than a justice issue. We cannot ignore that the demographics of this country are inexorably changing. As Richard Rodriguez points out [see p. 18], many of the emerging racial tensions we see in this country no longer have anything to do with "white" people. And while greed and racial/ethnic/class prejudice seem the most obvious reasons for this country's current xenophobic immigration laws, most of us have internalized so completely the competitive, scarcity model we learned as children in games of musical chairs that any new person is a threat [see p. 6].

There's another possibility. In the recent film, *La Promesse* [see p. 27], an adolescent boy believes himself responsible for the welfare of an immigrant mother and child. He is fascinated by this woman's steadfast belief in her own dignity and in her commitment to justice. Through her self possession and spiritual depth, he discovers his own.

If we'd be open to the gift, I wonder if it might not be so for us? Thinking of Matthew's account of the holy family's flight into Egypt, there is reason to hope that our churches might teach such a possibility. But the call to "respect the dignity of every human being" has nowhere been more steadfastly ignored — however eagerly celebrated — than in our churches [see p. 28]. This is true despite concrete efforts to provide sanctuary, legal aid, resettlement assistance and advocacy.

And that's the challenge.

If people of faith can come to grips with the disturbing resistance to the respectful widening of the circle in our own churches, I think we'd be on the path to replacing a false dream with a divine vision — one that offers a new heavens and a new earth for us all. TW

editor's note

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness.*

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Memories of tables and chairs

by Janet Shea

My mother, a woman who thrived in her place at the center of the family, is 90 years old. Once gregarious, she is now sorrowful, she is no longer in the middle of things. At one time in my life she was my friend, my best friend, we told each other. Later on she became my companion. Now I am hers. It used to be that she bought my clothes, even after I had grown out of childhood, even after I had children of my own. It used to be that she treated me to lunch, for the sheer pleasure of my company. She is confused now, she still looks for money in her empty purse, money so she may continue to surprise me with presents. Sometimes I slip her a bill or two as we pretend that she has not lost her place in the benevolent center. Over the years I have watched this escalating tug-of-war, her desperate hold on to something long since past. More reluctant to be a grandmother to my children than a mother to me. The mother of a mother. I have watched her resistance, her inability to find a new place, her waning energy wasted in the struggle, her unwillingness to step aside, to move over, to welcome the unknown. I so mourn for her lack of peace in the process of her own displacement.

Displacement? Replacement? Placement? Place? When I think of "place" the image that comes to my mind is one of tables and chairs. Dinner tables, supper tables, harvest tables, Thanksgiving tables. A home. My childhood home, in an Irish-American enclave south of Boston, where there was no table too small, where there was always room for the uninvited, for the weary traveller. Piano benches, seating three. Footstools piled with telephone books, high as a chair. An ironing board dragged out from its hutch, set up with a sheet, mis-matched plates, and a candle. This is the ideal in my memory. A remembrance of the Eucharistic table. A family moves over, welcomes the stranger, makes room at the table.

There was only one winner, and one could only win by beating out the others. An odd juxtaposition of plenty to scarcity, generosity to greed, position to displacement.

In the same house, of the same childhood, there were birthday parties, parties at which the game called "Musical Chairs" was part of the celebration. It was a game filled with much excitement, a bit of a rough-house game where seven or eight children ran around a circle of chairs to the accompaniment of a the piano-player pounding out a lively tune, then stopping at whim — the signal for each child to take his/her place. The catch to the game was that there was always one chair less than the number of children, and at each go-round one chair was removed, one place diminished in the tousle. Not only did a child lose his/her seat in the game, but the loss of that seat meant that the child was eliminated from the game. There was only one winner, and one could only win by beating out the others. The power of the game insidious, impotent without the participation of every child at the party. Puzzling, disturbing images. An odd juxtaposition of plenty to scarcity, generosity to greed, position to displacement.

The fear of displacement, a residual resistance in welcoming the stranger, is deeply imbedded in our cultural psyche. Do we not as a country call out to the poor, the hungry, to those people yearning to be free — and at the same time pull out the chairs beneath them? Do we not through the global media seduce the poor with our riches, then cry poor ourselves?

At the same time, fear of displacement, a residual resistance to the newcomer, mistrust of the stranger are deeply imbedded in our individual psyches. How familiar is the experience of being in a circle — a neighborhood organization, a book club, a prayer group, a writing workshop — and lo, a new participant is introduced to the group. Is there not often a niggling kind of resistance that barely comes to the surface of sophisticated and enlightened discourse? When I find myself in similar situations a quiet voice inside reminds me that I am being asked to make room, to move over, to give up my place. Not always do I welcome that newcomer without a silent fear, a secret jealousy that the new person will be valued more than I. Loved more than I. That in some way that stranger will dethrone me from my place of long-standing.

It is difficult for me to imagine what the proper Bostonians in the late 19th century feared of my Irish ancestors, immigrants seeking relief from the famine, as they "landed in droves," half starved/half dead. Looking for work, a new life in America, they were not welcomed. Greeted instead with the all-too-familiar sign on the doors of the shops and factories, "NO IRISH NEED APPLY." I still wonder what those privileged, well-educated Bostonians thought they would lose.

continued on page 26

Janet Shea is a writer who lives in Boston, Mass. and Martinsville, Maine.

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Exiles

by Juan Felipe Herrera

... and I heard an unending scream piercing nature.
— from the diary of Edvard Munch/1892

At the greyhound bus stations, at airports, at silent wharfs
the bodies exit the crafts. Women, men, children; cast out
from the new paradise.

They are not there in the homeland , in Argentina, not there
in Santiago, Chile; never there no more in Montevideo, Uruguay
and they are not here

in America

The are in exile; a slow scream across a yellow bridge
the jaws stretched, widening, the eyes multiplied into blood
orbits, torn, whirling, spilling between two slopes: the sea black,
swallowing all prayers, shadeless. Only tall faceless figures
of pain flutter across the bridge. They pace in charred suits,
the hands lift, point and ache and fly at sunset as cold dark
birds. They will hover over the dead ones: a family shattered
by military, buried by hunger, asleep now with the eyes burning
echoes calling Joaquin, Maria, Andrea, Joaquin, Joaquin, Andrea,

en exilio

From here we see them, we the ones from here, not there or across.
only here, without the bridge, without the arms as blue liquid
quenching the secret thirst of unmarked graves without
our flesh journeying refuge or pilgrimage; not passengers
on imaginary ships sailing between reef and sky, we that die
here awake on Harrison Street, on Excelsior Avenue clutching
the tenderness of chrome radios, whispering to the saints
in supermarkets, motionless in the chasms of playgrounds.
searching at 9 a.m. from our third floor cells, bowing mute,
shoving the curtains with trembling speckled brown hands. Alone,
we look out to the wires, the summer, to the newspapers wound
in knots as matches for tenements. We look out from
our miniature vestibules, peering out from our old clothes.
the father's well sewn plaid shirt pocket, an old woman's
oversized wool sweater peering out from the make-shift kitchen.
We peer out to the streets, to the parades, we the ones from here
not there or across, from here, only here. Where is our exile?
Who has taken it?

Exiles of Desire, Houston, Arte Publico Press, 1985

Poetry

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The flight into America

by Camille Colatosti

After seeing his entire family massacred, a young Rwandan man asked his priest for help. The cleric sent him to a church in Kenya, where another priest gave him the address of Freedom House in Detroit, a 14-year-old shelter for refugees and asylum seekers.

Another Rwandan, this time a woman, had a comparable experience. She escaped assassins by hiding under a pile of dead bodies for a week. The bodies were her husband, siblings and parents. The killers who murdered her family thought that she was dead as well.

When they finally left, she didn't give them a chance to finish her off. Instead, she, too, managed to find her way to Freedom House.

From Albania, a rock musician made a similar journey. His lyrics and music violated his country's laws. With a false visa in hand, he came to the U.S. His Detroit taxi driver told him about Freedom House.

"A lot of people who come to us have to flee in the middle of the night because if they stayed they would be killed," explains Freedom House Executive Director Lynn Partington. "We had about 500 people come to us so far this year. They came from 67 different countries, seeking asylum. Whenever there is a crisis abroad, we see people from those countries a few months later. We have a lot of people from Rwanda, Iraq, Syria, Central America, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, and Somalia."

Who is seeking entry?

In the diversity of those who approach its threshold, Freedom House is a microcosm of the U.S. According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), 911,000 legal immigrants entered the U.S. in 1996. 198,000 received refugee status. 595,000 were admitted under family reunification guidelines, and 118,000 for their job skills. The INS estimates that an estimated 250,000 additional people entered the country without proper documentation.

"This law takes away our hope we had, coming to this country. It takes away our hope of becoming someone in this life."

— Carmen Martinez

About 37 percent of 1996's legal immigrants came from Asia. This includes immigrants from Vietnam, China, Pakistan and India. Slightly less than one-third — 32 percent — came from the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico. Mexico is the single largest home nation for U.S. immigrants: 163,572 legal immigrants — and about 50,000 undocumented immigrants — came to the U.S. from Mexico last year. About 18 percent of legal U.S. immigrants came from Europe. The rest came from a variety of nations.

But a new 1996 law, called the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, is aimed at limiting immigration into the U.S. Focusing on immigrants who have gained entry illegally, it is also targeted on keeping refugees out of the U.S. altogether by allowing for what is called "expedited removal." This means that immigration inspectors at ports of entry are no longer required to hold case hearings before denying entry to immigrants who fail to show proper documentation. According to Lisa Brodyaga, an attorney for Refugio del Rio Grande, a refugee shelter founded 10 years ago in Harlingen, Tex., "If the person who is conducting the interview — the lowest level person in the Immigration Service — thinks you are not eligible, he can turn you back."

Jessica LaBumbard, the legal coordinator with Detroit's Freedom House, expresses dismay over this new development. "It's difficult for me to get access to people because they are being deported so quickly now. Some people have no opportunity to tell their stories. They have no opportunity to gain asylum."

Freedom House greets the immigrants who seek aid much differently than the U.S. government now does. Freedom House opens its doors to anyone who has a well-founded fear of persecution in his/her home country, based on religion, ethnicity or membership in a social or political group. Freedom House takes seriously the Geneva Convention's Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

In light of the 1996 immigration law, many refugees and immigrant advocates wonder if the U.S. still adheres to this principle. "Protecting political refugees," says Partington, "is what our country was founded on." Yet, new U.S. immigration laws and procedures are rocking that foundation, making it hard for refugees to find asylum in America. It is so difficult, in fact, that Detroit's Freedom House, located just a few blocks south of the Ambassador Bridge connecting Detroit to Windsor, Ontario, sees more and more of its refugees decide to seek asylum in

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Canada.

"There," says Partington, "refugees have a 50 percent chance of acceptance. Here, they have only an 18 percent chance."

Brodyaga agrees. "When I started in this work 20 years ago," she says, "if the application was not frivolous, an asylum-seeker could obtain a work permit virtually immediately. Now, there is little political asylum left."

Past anti-immigrant policies

Despite its reputation as a nation of immigrants, the U.S. has a history of enacting laws that exclude immigrants from its shores. The first exclusion act — the Chinese Exclusion act of May 6, 1881 — barred Chinese immigrants from naturalization. This act was not repealed until 1943. Before that, in 1921, Congress established a system of immigration laws that were based on quotas and national origins. The Nationality Act of 1952 attempted to regularize these quotas, yet it was still discriminatory. It was not until 1965 that Congress abolished the national origins quota system, instituting the standards for legal immigration that remain today.

There are three ways to legally immigrate to the U.S. The first is to reunite U.S. citizens and permanent residents with close family members — parents, children, spouses and siblings. The second is to have an employer sponsor an individual who brings a needed skill to the U.S. And the third way to immigrate legally is to be a political refugee.

This standard was amended on November 6, 1986, with the Immigration Reform and Control Act. This authorized amnesty for undocumented immigrants who had lived in the U.S. since January 1, 1982. Congress also, for the first time in U.S. history, created sanctions prohibiting employers from knowingly hiring, recruiting or referring for a fee, people not authorized to work in the U.S.

A new 'reform' and 'responsibility' act

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 has now changed the immigration standard again, restricting access to immigration by altering the way in which deportation proceedings are conducted. It also took away many forms of amnesty or relief from deportation, and it created new requirements for people who want to immigrate or become legal in the U.S.



Portraits of immigrants exhibited in Ellis Island, N.Y., 1997 Maria Dumlad/Impact Visuals

Many of these requirements, say immigrant advocates, are so cumbersome as to be impossible to follow. Rather than keep immigrants out, the new law may, advocates fear, simply leave more immigrants undocumented than ever before. Unable to wade through contradictory rules, or to wait years for applications to be processed, people will remain in the U.S. in an undocumented state.

The 1996 law, for instance, makes it economically infeasible for immigrants to bring family members to the U.S. The law now requires sponsoring citizens or permanent residents to prove that immigrating family members can be supported at 125 percent of the federal poverty level. As Brodyaga explains, "A family of six — four children and two parents — needs an annual income of $26,050. In Texas, your teachers, police, even immigration personnel don't earn that."

Carmen Martinez, a 44-year-old farm worker who migrated from Mexico in 1986, is a good example. The new law makes it nearly impossible for her to gain legal immigrant status for four of her eight children. The law requires her to make $30,000 a year and she makes $10,000. "No one could ever earn $30,000 picking strawberries, said Martinez.

"This law takes away our hope we had, coming to this country. It takes away our hope of becoming someone in this life."

The 1996 law also institutes new penalties against immigrants who live in the U.S. in an undocumented state for 180 days. Before they can receive a visa, they must be barred from the country for three years. Those living undocumented in the U.S. for one year or longer must be barred for 10 years. Before the enactment of the 1996 law, a provision known as 245(i) allowed people who were unlawfully in the U.S. but eligible for a visa — people who had married a citizen or a permanent

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resident, for example — to apply for an adjustment of status without leaving the country. They did, however, have to pay a $1,000 fine. These fines recognized reality. Many undocumented family members of permanent residents live in the U.S. while waiting for their applications to be processed. The fees also provide substantial income to the INS — more than $200 million in 1996.

Yet, this provision is, as of this writing, scheduled to be eliminated. If it is, people who are unlawfully in the U.S. will be required to leave the country and apply for an adjustment of status at the U.S. consulate in their home nation. Once their application is approved, they will have to remain outside the U.S. for three or ten years.

The new law eliminates another exemption for undocumented immigrants who have lived and worked in the U.S. for seven years. Before, they could apply for what was called a "suspension of deportation" by proving that leaving the U.S. would cause extreme hardship. Now the cutoff is 10 years and the procedure, renamed "cancellation of removal," requires a higher standard: An individual must prove "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship."

"If you put all of these requirements together," says Refugio's Brodyaga, "you can see that non-legal family members of poor people cannot become legal. They will never meet the 125 percent poverty guidelines. They will never get the waivers required. Most people will decide not to apply for a visa if they have to leave the country to apply and then stay away for three to ten years."

Rice University economist Donald Huddle claims that, annually, immigrants cost $51 billion more in social welfare and job displacement costs than they pay in taxes. Yet, an Urban Institute study shows that, each year, immigrants contribute $25 to $30 billion more in taxes than they receive in services.

Confusing immigration debate

Many politicians claim that the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 addresses real concerns of native-born Americans. They point to national anti-immigration groups like the Federation for American Immigration Reform who focus on potential problems with both legal and illegal immigration, such as the potential for dramatic, unsustainable population growth, ethnic tension and an "unassimilated" citizenry. However, most public discussion of immigration reveals contradictory information and confusion. For instance, the restrictionist Federation for American Immigration reform cites Rice University economist Donald Huddle, who claims that, annually, immigrants cost $51 billion more in social welfare and job displacement costs than they pay in taxes. Yet, an Urban Institute study shows that, each year, immigrants contribute $25 to $30 billion more in taxes than they receive in services.

Likewise, some immigrant advocates like Judy Marks, the communications coordinator for the National Immigration Forum, the country's leading pro-immigration organization whose 300 members include local, state and national pro-immigration organizations, believe that anti-immigrant feelings are grossly exag-

Immigration internationally

Government response to immigration in other countries parallels that of the U.S. Throughout Europe, New Zealand and Australia, governments are increasing restraints on immigrants. In New Zealand, for example, where 60 percent of recent immigrants arrive from Asia, the center-left New Zealand First party is proposing to limit immigration to one-fifth its current level.

In Denmark, Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen recently appointed an opponent of immigration as his new interior minister. The new minister, Thorkild Simonsen, calls for fewer immigrants to be admitted under family reunification rules and demands that the federal government give additional money and authority to city councils in communities with high immigrant populations.

France is also experiencing its share of controversy over immigration. There, undocumented African immigrants are protesting the reluctance of the French government to recognize their rights and grant them residency status.

In fact, Canada seems to be one of the few nations that is not reducing its immigration goals. Citizen and Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard said recently that Canada would aim to admit 200,000 to 225,000 immigrants and refugees in 1998 — 5,000 more than its 1997 goals. "Our immigration plan is based on the humanitarian values of welcoming and caring that characterize us," said Robillard.

"It also reflects our desire to make the most of the undeniable economic and cultural benefits that newcomers bring to this country." — *C.C.*

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gerated. She points to an October 13 poll in *USA Today*, showing that Americans are now more pro-immigration than they have been in the past. The poll found that those saying they were "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned" about immigration and its effects have declined since 1992. Then, 52.5 percent of those surveyed believed that there were too many immigrants coming to the U.S. In the recent poll, only 35.25 percent of those surveyed felt this way.



Border patrol officer checks papers of a Mexican national underneath an Albuquerque, N.M. bridge. His papers were in order; however, the man in the background was taken into custody — he was an illegal alien. Jeffry D. Scott/Impact Visuals

While anti-immigrant voter sentiment may motivate some aspects of current U.S. immigration policy, U.S. business — especially in border states like California and Texas — applies a stronger, conflicting pressure, because many industries demand the availability of a large pool of vulnerable, undocumented, and docile workers. Pro-immigrant advocates charge that U.S. politicians have responded to these contradictions by enacting laws which appear harsh but which are too complex to be effective. As a result, the workers necessary to key portions of the U.S. service sector remain in this country.

As Philip Marin of the University of California at Davis explained at an April conference held by the Center for International and European Law on Immigration and Asylum, "The most recently arrived legal and illegal Mexican migrants can find jobs in high turnover farming, manufacturing and service areas in agriculture, domestic service and meatpacking." These jobs, which seem incredibly unattractive to most people born in the U.S., are accepted by many immigrants who see them as a way to enter a new country and start a new life.

Exploitation of undocumented workers

Refugio's Lisa Brodyaga points to the exploitation that undocumented workers face. "There is a lot of controversy, particularly in the area of agriculture. The work is just horrendously difficult. It is seasonal so you can't count on a job year round. The working conditions are dangerous to health. People have to deal with pesticides. Frequently, there is no place to go to the toilet. It is not the kind of work that people born in this country will do. It is mostly done by undocumented workers.

"The same is true with people's maids. It's very difficult to find women born in this country who will live in someone else's house, get one day off a week and have a major part of their salary be room and board. The going wage for a maid in Texas is $50 a week. What native-born woman would do it?"

Marin defines the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico as a demand-pull supply-push one. "In absolute terms, the U.S. is the world's major country of immigration and Mexico is the world's major country of emigration." Between 1991 and 1995, there were 1.5 million legal Mexican immigrants to the U. S. and an estimated 500,000 undocumented immigrants. While the U.S. supplies jobs that pull Mexican workers across the border, Mexico eliminates employment, pushing its citizens away.

At the beginning of the 1990s, farm labor occupied 25 percent of the Mexican labor force. Yet, the Mexican government has reduced and plans to further reduce this to 12-15 percent of the labor force by 2015. Marin elaborates, "Policies aimed at economic modernization such as the privatization of government-owned industries and the restructuring of rural Mexico have created mass unemployment. Mexico eliminated most input subsidies and price guarantees in agriculture, switched to direct payment to farmers, eased trade restrictions, signalling the eventual shrinking of the production of many commodities, notably corn, that today absorb a great deal of labor."

As people lose their jobs in Mexico, they see the employment possibilities just

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across the border. "There are a lot of positions," says Brodyaga. "The sweatshops along the border have been staffed by undocumented workers for many, many years. It's cheap. There is a market out there. Owners get rich this way."

Legislating vulnerability

Judy Marks of the National Immigration Forum agrees that the new law will not keep undocumented workers from U.S. borders. Instead, it will keep them vulnerable once they get here. "What the Congress didn't tackle," she says, "is targeting employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants and exploit them. It is no mystery where undocumented immigrants work. It is no mystery who the employers are. It is not farfetched that we could look at industries who use undocumented workers — garment, hotel and restaurant and agriculture. We could put in place a targeted approach of seeking out employers and heaping enormous fines. This would solve the problem. Instead, we have stripped legal rights of undocumented and documented immigrants."

In fact, the nine-member U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, headed by the late Barbara Jordan and put in place by President Clinton to evaluate U.S. immigration policy, recommended two measures that would have helped curb the exploitation of undocumented workers. These included a national registry of names and social security numbers of all persons authorized to work in the U.S. This registry would ensure that employers could not hire undocumented workers claiming that they received false information about employees' status. Congress rejected this and introduced a limited, optional pilot telephone verification program that enables employers who want to verify the status of newly hired workers to do so.

The Commission also recommended setting higher penalties for companies that repeatedly violate employer sanctions laws and adding federal labor inspectors to ensure that U.S. employers pay minimum wages. Yet, Congress deleted a provision adding 350 labor inspectors from a draft law.

To Brodyaga, Congress' decisions reveal a deliberate effort "to maintain a large group of undocumented people who have strong ties to the U.S. and who live in the shadows. They will never be eligible for food stamps. They can't complain to OSHA [the agency responsible for administering the Occupational Safety and Health Act] or the wage and hour board. You have to ask yourself whether the people in Congress can be so naive as to truly believe that a person who doesn't earn enough income, for example, who has four kids, is going to have his or her spouse and children stay out of the U.S. forever? Do they really believe that a person who has grown up here will leave the U.S. and wait 10 years to come back? Do they really believe that these new tremendously harsh laws will result in their stated goals — keeping people out who have been here illegally? Given all the controversy and debate, I don't think they can believe it. It is like Alice in Wonderland."

Brodyaga's strong words contain a warning: "This is totally foreseeable, totally logical. The U.S. is creating an almost slave labor force — people who are undocumented, who are living here, and who can never claim their rights." TW

BACK ISSUES WITH CONNECTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

The following back issues of* The Witness *contain articles which may relate directly to Immigration or simply to the spirit of this month's topic.

- *Jubilee economics (1/97)*
- *Caesar, widows and orphans (4/93)*
- *Economic justice (5/94)*
- *Hospitals: quality, access and spirit (6/96)*
- *Family reunions/family history (7/96)*
- *The communion of saints (11/93)*

Other available back issues:

- *Africa: Come, spirit, come (6/95)*
- *Allies in Judaism (10/97)*
- *Alternative ways of doing church (9/94)*
- *Birthing in the face of the dragon (12/91)*
- *Body wisdom (5/95)*
- *The Christian Right (10/96)*
- *Church structures and leadership (5/97)*
- *Death penalty (9/97)*
- *Defying presumptions: gay/lesbian Christians (6/97)*
- *Dialogue (4/94)*
- *Disabilities (6/94)*
- *Economies of sin (3/95)*
- *Fasting in Babylon (12/96)*
- *Glamour (11/94)*
- *Godly sex (5/93)*
- *Grieving rituals (3/97)*
- *Holy matrimony (12/95)*
- *In defense of creation (6/93)*
- *International youth in crisis (7-8/93)*
- *The Left (3/94)*
- *In need of a labor movement (9/96)*
- *Is it ever okay to lie? (4/96)*
- *The New Party (11/95)*
- *Northern Ireland: winds of peace (11/97)*
- *Ordination: multi-cultural priesthood (5/92)*
- *Raising kids with conscience (3/97)*
- *Resurrecting land (4/95)*
- *When the church engages rage(12/92)*
- *Witness in the world (Gen. Convention issue, 7-8/97)*
- *Women's spirituality (7/94)*

To order a back issue, send a check for $3.00 per issue ordered to* The Witness, *7000 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210-2872. To charge your back issue to Visa or Mastercard, call 313-841-1967, or fax 313-841-1956.

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Facing up to exploitation

by Jane Slaughter

At a rally last summer in Wenatchee, Wash., apple warehouse worker Roberto Guerrero told the story of how he came from Mexico to the U.S. He traveled, he told the crowd, with several other Mexicans stacked between sheets of plywood in the back of a truck. He and his undocumented associates joked to each other, said Guerrero, that if they died on the way, at least they were already in their coffins.

Now a citizen, Guerrero is trying to convince his employer, Stemilt, Inc., to recognize the union that a majority of his fellow workers say they need. They want a living wage and a way to protest unsafe conditions.

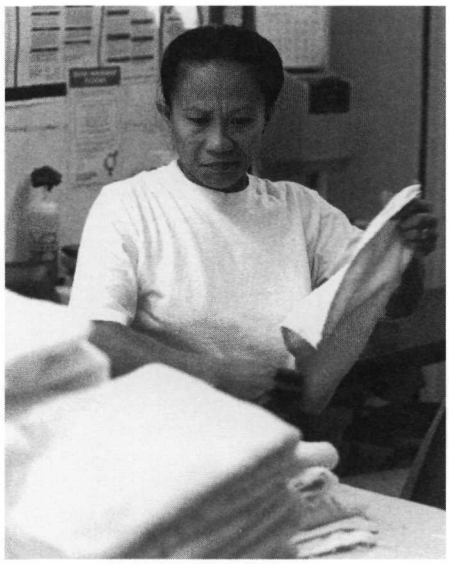
"I feel so sad how they treat my people," says Guerrero, speaking of his co-workers. They come, like him, from Mexico, or from El Salvador, Guatemala or Cambodia. They sort, store, and pack a billion dollars worth of apples each year. Roberto himself works in the "seg room," where it's always 30-35 degrees, segregating different sizes and qualities of apples and pears, stacking heavy boxes of fruit.

"It's like the Indians a long time ago," he says. "They [the employers] give little things, and my people give them the gold."

Targeting immigrant workers

The "gold" nowadays, of course, is cheap labor. Entire industries — garment, electronics, meatpacking, agribusiness— maintain their profit margins by specifically targeting immigrant workers as their employees. Immigrants take the low-paying, dangerous jobs that others don't want. They run great risks to come to the U.S. — such as traveling in "coffins" — because the abysmal pay they get here is still better than what they could find in their home countries. Once they are here, they put up with injuries, chemicals, and below-poverty-level wages because other jobs are closed to them. Better jobs are beyond reach because of lack of skills, language problems, and, in the case of undocumented workers, fear of discovery.

Certain American industries thrive on that fear.



Worker folds linen in laundry room at Days Inn, Flint, Mich., 1994. Jim West

"Food processing in America today would collapse were it not for immigrant labor," says Mark Grey of the University of Northern Iowa. Grey has studied the systematic recruitment by Midwestern beef, pork, and poultry packers of Laotian and Latino immigrants, both legal and undocumented.

Meatpacking is the most dangerous industry in the country. In recent years one after another well-paying, unionized meatpacking plant — employing white, native-born workers — has shut down. They have reopened in smaller towns, offering $6 an hour to a new type of workforce. In Storm Lake, Iowa, for example, Iowa Beef Processors proffered $150 bounties to Laotians who recruited relatives to come to work there. The majority of the workforce is now composed of immigrants. Turnover is 80 percent each year.

Similarly, electronics and garment factories deliberately set up in areas of high immigration: Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, New York City. Seventy-seven percent of the lowest-paid jobs in Silicon Valley's computer industry are held by immigrant workers, with employers now preferring Asian women, perceived as more "docile" than Latinas. Half the industrial workers in Los Angeles are Latinos; 87 percent of the apparel workers there are Latinos or Asians.

"Manufacturing in Los Angeles depends on immigrant workers," concludes union organizer Peter Olney. In some major cities, the janitorial workforce — those who clean the big downtown buildings by night — is now mostly Latino immigrants, and the migrant workforce that picks tomatoes, cucumbers, and citrus fruit is essentially all Latino immigrants and their children.

Circumventing sanctions

It's been 11 years since Congress enacted sanctions on employers who hire "illegal" immigrants, touted by conservatives at the time as a means to stop the influx of foreigners. All employers are now required to verify a new-hire's citizenship status, and employers caught with undocumented workers on the payroll may be fined. In practice, these "sanctions" have done nothing to discourage potential immigrants. They are easy to circumvent, as documents are easily counter-

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Jane Slaughter is a Detroit-based labor writer. Photographer **Jim West** also works in Detroit.

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feited. And they are seldom enforced. Employers calculate that the cheap labor is worth the risk of a fine. In New York City, for example, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) collected less than $5,000 in employer fines in 1996 — even though that year saw a big increase in INS raids on workplaces.

Far from deterring employers from hiring immigrants, the sanctions have actually, in effect, encouraged them to do so. When an employer sees signs of organizing among his immigrant employees, he can threaten to call the INS on himself. This ensures an intimidated workforce.

"With the help of the INS," wrote Sasha Khokha of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, "employers can police their workforce at will using the only armed force in the country specifically designed to regulate labor."

The INS plans to double the number of its agents over the next five years. But, as one undocumented worker from Mexico told *The Nation*, "Everyone knows they are never going to arrest all of us. Who would do this shitty work for them? We know that every now and then the *migra* will come in and take a few away to keep the politicians happy. That's how it works."

Poor pay, dangerous work

This "shitty work" may pay below the minimum wage, for women toiling at home sewing machines or in Chinatown sweatshops in New York or San Francisco. A well-publicized government raid two years ago on an El Monte, Calif., garment sweatshop turned up 70 Thai immigrants being held in slave-like conditions. They were forbidden to leave their combined working and living quar-

'The enemy in our midst':
an historical note on Detroit's Polish immigrants

Polish political loyalties at the turn of the century [in Detroit] were complex. When Woodrow Wilson called for volunteers for World War I, 40 percent of the first 100,000 to respond were Polish. However, in 1920, during Eugene Debs' candidacy for president, many Poles chose not to vote Democrat and voted Socialist. Such a great proportion of the Socialist voters in 1918 were foreign-born that Detroit auto manufacturer William Brush referred to them as the "alien threat" and the "enemy in our midst." He proposed "the total extermination of such monstrosities in human form." The American Protective League assigned 4,000 Detroit volunteers to keep watch on the Motor City's foreigners and radicals.

In 1920, during the Palmer Raids when the federal government ordered the simultaneous arrests of labor activists around the country, some of the socialist literature collected was illegible to the authorities because it was in Polish. And a decade later, when labor strikes began to sweep the country, Poles played key roles. Detroit's first, largest and longest sit-down strikes all took place in Poletown's steel, auto and cigar factories. It was an era when nearly 130 Detroit shops, plants and offices were occupied by workers, an era when 200 shoppers at Woolworth's, surprised by an unexpected sit-in, chose to stay inside with the strikers after management was locked out. Fighting for the right to unionize became a community occupation that won the support of some Roman Catholic clergy and the government of Hamtramck.

The old order in Detroit — the Protestants who controlled the factories, the newspapers, the court system and city hall — consistently viewed these people as a threat and went to work both to cut off immigration and to pressure immigrants into conforming to their standards. In an article titled "Who Shall Rule?" the Patriotic American editorialized that "we are now simply the waste-house of Europe and the receptacle of its refuse and scum" and that these "semi-barbarous" elements would overwhelm the U.S. and ruin "the perfectly free, modern country that it is, or used to be, 40 or 50 years ago."

This attitude on the part of the elite in the Motor City had two effects. It contributed to the politicization of immigrants who quickly perceived themselves as part of an unwelcome class and therefore more willing to challenge management and form unions. And second, it strengthened the Polish community's tendency to turn inward, resisting any semblance of assimilation, despite pressure to do so. For example, in graduation ceremonies at the Ford English School, an Americanization program run by the Ford Motor Company in 1918, all the participants descended from a boat, crossed a gang plank, and stepped into a 15-foot-wide "melting pot." The director, Clinton C. DeWitt, explained the pageant that followed: "Six teachers, three on either side, stir the pot with 10-foot ladles, representing nine months of teaching in the school. Into the pot 52 nationalities with their foreign clothes and baggage go, and out of the pot after a vigorous stirring by the teachers comes one nationality."

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann in
Poletown: Community Betrayed
(University of Illinois Press, 1989)

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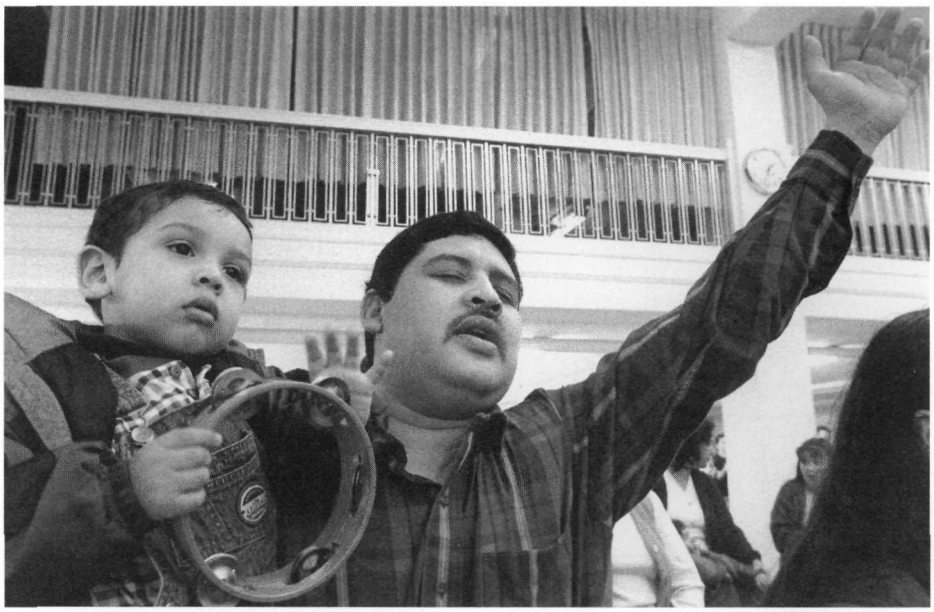
ters, surrounded by razor wire, till they had paid off the cost of their passage to America. One woman had been held for seven years. California State Labor Commissioner Victoria Bradshaw, who led the raid on the sweatshop, professed astonishment at the conditions.

When 209 undocumented meatpackers were arrested in Iowa in 1996, their average pay was found to be $6.02 an hour, or $12,521 for the few who manage to work an entire year. The nature of the work — wielding knives on animal carcasses — makes them highly susceptible to repetitive strain injuries, as well as wounds. If they are injured, they are unlikely to get compensation, both because of lack of knowledge of how to work the system, in the case of legal residents, and because of fear of discovery, in the case of illegal ones.

When the janitorial workforce was transformed in the 1980s from native-born to immigrant, wages fell. In Los Angeles, for example, pay dropped from nearly $10 an hour in 1977 to just over $6 in 1993 (in 1993 dollars). In Silicon Valley, electronics assemblers earn the lowest wages of any occupation other than food preparation. The solvents and solders they use, often with no gloves, can cause loss of smell and memory, scarring of the lungs or cancer, according to the Santa Clara Center for Occupational Safety and Health.

Toxins are part of the worklife of migrant strawberry pickers, too. In 1996 the California legislature delayed a planned prohibition of deadly methyl bromide, used to kill parasites. And in 1994 the Environmental Protection Agency reduced the amount of time employers must wait before sending workers into fields treated with the fungicide captan, a known carcinogenic. Workers are receiving up to 200 times acceptable doses, says a labor/environmental coalition.

Strawberry workers' average wage is $6.29 an hour, usually from piecework — a 20 percent drop from 20 years ago. Some, the most recent immigrants, sleep in the fields. Workers have sued one company for forcing them to do calisthenics before work and pack berries at the end of the day without pay.



Stemilt apple packing worker Roberto Guerrero and his son Moses, 2, at the Pentecostal church they attend. Jim West

Garment shops use the piecework system, too. Chinese immigrants at Lucky Sewing Co. in Oakland found that a dress for which they were paid $4 to $5 retailed for $175 under the Jessica McClintock label.

The irony of such low wages is that they prevent workers from obtaining legal status for their families. The law says that the person petitioning on behalf of family members must make 125 percent of the federal poverty level. For a family of four, the petitioner would have to earn $20,062 per year. The average full-time wage for an apple warehouse worker is $12,000; half that for a picker in the orchards.

An 'explosion' of union organizing

Given the isolation, the language barriers, and the legal problems, it's remarkable that some of the most exciting — and successful — union organizing in the country is happening among immigrant workers. Janitors, farm workers, drywallers, tortilla delivery drivers, food processors — the 1990s have seen a virtual explosion of militant struggles, including strikes and civil disobedience.

Best known are the 40,000 janitors who've joined the Service Employees union over the last 10 years. The union's Justice for Janitors (JfJ) campaign avoids the stacked-deck procedures of the National Labor Relations Board and uses marches and community support to pressure owners of big office buildings. In the Century City area of Los Angeles, for example, Central American janitors wearing red bandannas and union T-shirts invaded the swanky watering holes frequented by yuppie executives during happy hour. Their strike won them a contract. JfJ is now organizing in Sacramento, suburban Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and suburban Denver.

The union is using a second pressure tactic: asking large stockholders to use

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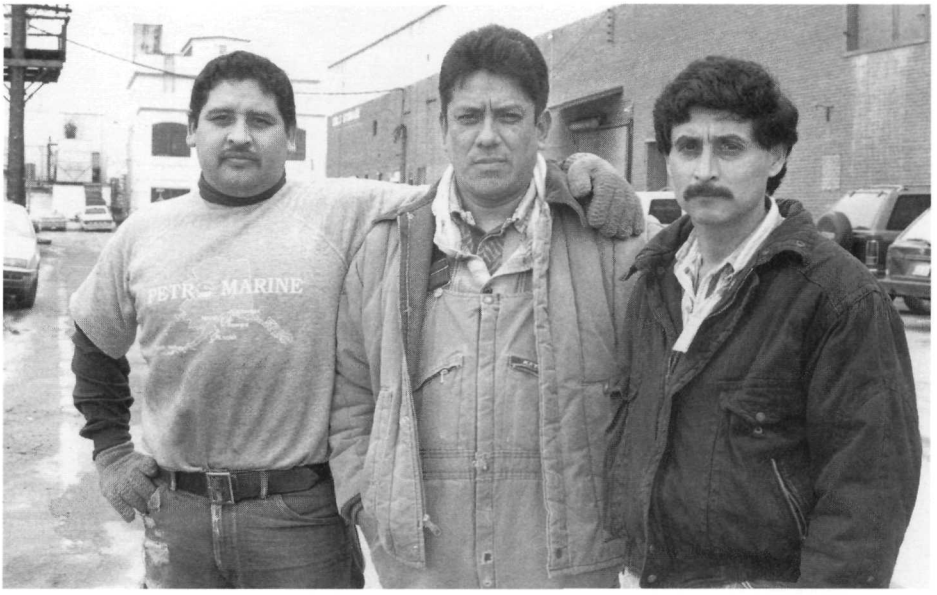
their influence with janitors' recalcitrant employers. The Episcopal Church Pension Fund is one such large stockholder [see *TW* 10/97 and 11/97]. After prodding by 80 bishops, Fund managers have agreed to meet with representatives of janitors seeking a union contract in Washington, D.C.

Midwestern migrant farm workers, through their union, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), have done away with the archaic sharecropping system on tomato farms. Through both their own organizing and a large dose of church support, they forced the large tomato-buying corporations — Campbell, Heinz — to sign three-way agreements with the union and small family farmers. Now FLOC is targeting cucumber workers in North Carolina. Last year, 150 tortilla drivers in Los Angeles won a 46-day strike and a 24 percent pay increase. Three years earlier, disgusted with arbitrary firings and no pay for overtime, they had begun meeting in secret. They went looking for a union, and found Teamsters Local 63.

"Unions aren't really targeting the immigrant community," says Joel Ochoa, who works for a Teamster-backed organizing center. "Immigrant workers are organizing themselves, and going to unions for assistance."

'Ecclesiastes says the union is good'

The apple warehouses of central Washington are yet another battleground. A majority of workers at two key companies have signed with the Teamsters, but owners have fired key leaders and refused to recognize the union. At the same time, the organizing has already had a positive effect, with the company giving a 35-cent wage increase, a week's vacation, and a Christmas party. The union has a monthly radio show in Spanish. They've enlisted religious leaders to lead rallies and speak from the pulpit. In August, workers marched on their employers to demand a contract, setting up a "bargaining table" and folding chairs outside company headquarters.



Roberto Guerrero with Manuel Granados and Miguel Pineda in front of the Stemilt apple packing plant where they work. Jim West

Roberto Guerrero was one of them. He and his wife Carmen have five kids. He makes $8.41 an hour now—but he's among the higher paid workers because he's been on the job for eight years. — they get a 10-cent raise each year.

An ardent Pentecostal Christian, Guerrero's pro-union rap is sprinkled with allusions to God's will. "Ecclesiastes says the union is good, you know," he contends.

"Chapter 4, verse 9 says two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. And verse 12, it says, 'If one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.'

"That is the union. If I go in front of the boss, he fires me, but if we go with 20 or 40 or 50 guys together, he don't fire us so easy." TW

Workplace struggles of immigrants are noted for relying on community support, and church support in particular. To find out what is happening in your city, contact the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights for the name of a local pro-immigrant coalition. 310 8th St., Suite 307, Oakland, CA 94607; 510-465-1984; <nnirr@nnirr.org>.

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Campaign to boycott 'sweatshop gifts'

A broad coalition of religious, human rights and labor groups is calling on American consumers to "shop with their consciences," not their pocketbooks, during the holidays.

The Holiday Season of Conscience, kicked off in Madison, Wis., and in more than 40 other towns and cities across the country last October, promotes awareness of child labor and sweatshop abuses under which many imported products are manufactured. It has a simple message: The small decisions consumers make every day tie into a much larger picture.

"The purpose is not to overwhelm people," said Angel Adams, a member of Madison's University Community Church, who helped organize the Madison events.

"You can't monitor every piece of clothing you buy, but you can start with things that are in the range of your control," she added.

Sweatshops vaulted into public visibility a year ago, thanks to the National Labor Committee, an independent human rights organization and the chief architect of the Holiday Season of Conscience Campaign. Committee director Charles Kernaghan drew publicity to the issue after writing a letter to Kathie Lee Gifford criticizing the working conditions in factories in Honduras, where he said young women worked long hours for little pay to assemble clothing for Gifford's Wal-Mart-sponsored clothing label.

The Holiday Season of Conscience campaign is endorsed by more than 120 organizations including the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, Catholic and Jewish groups, Unitarian churches, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and the People of Faith Network.

"People can say 'no' to child labor because children belong in school. People can say 'no' to the exploitation of teenaged girls forced to work long hours in sweatshop conditions under armed guards and threat of sexual abuse [and they] can say 'no' to workers being stripped of their rights and fined or blacklisted when they try to organize to defend their rights," United Methodist Bishop Fritz Mutti of Topeka, Kan., told a Topeka news conference announcing the Rural Religion and Labor Council's endorsement of the campaign.

Many of the companies under fire for labor abuses have corporate codes of conduct requiring safe workplaces, reasonable work hours, and sufficient pay. But according to Kernaghan, the codes are often "100 percent public relations."

Most of the codes, he said, have not been translated into foreign languages. Factory workers often don't know who they work for, much less that certain rights are provided for them under company policy.

Employers criticized by the National Labor Committee include Disney, the Gap, Wal-Mart, Nike and Reebok — corporations Kernaghan said should be concerned about protecting more than their copyrights.

"Think how stupid this is: Labels are protected under trade laws, but not the workers," Kernaghan said. "On a can of tuna we can look at it and tell if dolphins were hurt, but when we buy clothes we can't tell if they were made overseas by children. It's asinine."

On a visit to Haiti last year, Kernaghan said he found Disney workers who were earning 28 cents an hour and living in one-room huts with dirt floor and roofs that leaked every time it rained.

Wages aren't the only concern, however.

Meg Lewis, director of the Colombia Support Network in Madison, said the young women working in Colombian greenhouses must also worry about their health.

"The greenhouses use pesticides illegal in the U.S.," she said. "Workers get leukemia and cancer. Their children have high rates of birth defects, and the pesticides get into the drinking water."

The White House, in an effort to insure consumers are able to tell whether products are made under fair, decent labor conditions, last year set up the Apparel Industry Partnership. Jonathan D. Rosenblum, a legal counsel for the International Labor Rights Fund, said talks between human rights groups and corporations are in their final stages.

One proposal before the group is for independent monitoring of factories overseas by religious or human rights groups.

In October, Congress sent President Clinton a bill limiting imports of goods produced by "forced or indentured child labor." Lawmakers estimated the U.S. currently imports about $100 million worth of such products each year.

Kernaghan is confident the American public — "decent people with a sense of justice" — will stand behind the campaign.

"No one wants to buy something made in a sweatshop," he said. "To say it's close to slavery wouldn't be overstating it."

— Sonya Jongsma, Religion News Service

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The birth pains of a new America: an interview with Richard Rodriguez

by Scott London

When Richard Rodriguez entered first grade at Sacred Heart School in Sacramento, Calif., his English vocabulary consisted of barely 50 words. All his classmates were white. Rodriguez went on to earn degrees in English at Stanford and philosophy at Columbia. He then pursued a doctorate in English Renaissance literature at Berkeley and spent a year in London on a Fulbright scholarship.

Though Rodriguez had his sights set on a career in academia, he abruptly went his own way in 1976. Supporting himself by freelance writing and various temporary jobs, he spent the next five years coming to terms with how education had irrevocably altered his life. His first book, The Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez *(Bantam), appeared in 1982. It was a searching account of his journey from being a "socially disadvantaged child" to a fully assimilated American, from the Spanish-speaking world of his family to the wider, presumably freer, public life promised him by English. While the book generated widespread critical acclaim and won several literary awards, it also stirred up resentment among those offended by Rodriguez's strong stand against bilingual education and affirmative action. Some Mexican-Americans called him* pocho *— traitor — accusing him of betraying himself and his people. Others called him a "coconut" — brown on the outside, white on the inside. He calls himself "a comic victim of two cultures."*

Rodriguez explores the dilemmas of ethnicity and cultural identity more directly in his latest book, Days Of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father *(Viking). "The best metaphor of America remains the dreadful metaphor — the Melting Pot," he writes. The America that Rodriguez describes is a new cross-fertilizing culture, a culture of half-breeds, blurred boundaries, and bizarre extremes.*

Rodriguez is an editor for the Pacific News Service in San Francisco and a contributing editor of Harper's and the Sunday "Opinion" section of the Los Angeles Times. *His essays also appear on public television's NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.*

Maybe we're losing the American Dream because we are not like our Swedish grandmother who came across the plains, hacked down the trees, and took the Spanish words she encountered and made them hers. Now her great-great-grandchildren sit terrified wondering what to do with all these Mexicans.

Scott London: In *Days of Obligation,* you write about spending a week in the "twin cities" of Tijuana and San Diego. It occurs to me that if you take these two cities as one, the combination offers a glimpse of what America might look like in the 21st century.

Richard Rodriguez: Absolutely. Of course, San Diego chooses not to regard the two cities as one. Talk about alter ego: Tijuana was created by the lust of San Diego. Everything that was illegal in San Diego was permitted in Tijuana. When boxing was illegal in San Diego, there were boxing matches in Tijuana; when gambling was illegal, when drinking was illegal, when whores were illegal, there was always Tijuana. Mexicans would say, "We're not responsible for Tijuana; it's the Americans who created it." And there was some justification for that. But, in fact, the whore was a Mexican, the bartender a Mexican. Tijuana was this lovely meeting of Protestant hypocrisy with Catholic cynicism: The two cities went to bed and both denied it in the morning.

To this day, you will see American teenagers going to Mexico on Saturday nights to get drunk. Mexico gives them permission. The old Southern Catholic tradition gives permission to the Northern Protestant culture to misbehave. But what has happened in the last 25 years is that Tijuana has become a new Third World capital — much to the chagrin of Mexico City, which is more and more aware of how little it controls Tijuana politically and culturally. In addition to the whorehouses and discos, Tijuana now has Korean factories and Japanese industrialists and Central American refugees, and a new Mexican bourgeoisie that takes its lessons from cable television.

And then there is San Diego — this retirement village, with its prim petticoat, that doesn't want to get too near the water. San Diego worries about all the turds washing up on the lovely, pristine beaches of La Jolla. San Diego wishes Mexico would have fewer babies. And

Scott London works for KCBX Public Radio in Santa Barbara, Calif. **Jim West** is a Detroit photographer and artist **Edward Bisone** lives in Santa Ana, Calif.

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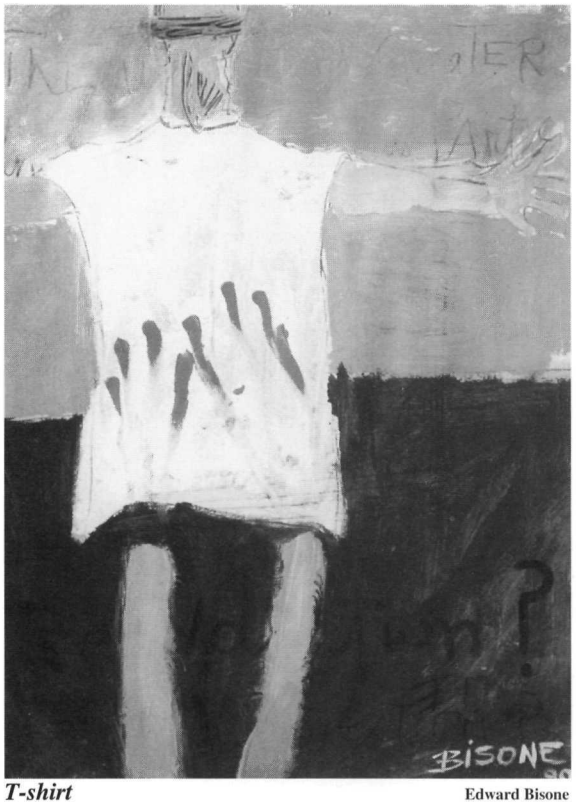
San Diego, like the rest of America, is growing middle-aged. The average age in the U.S. is now 33, whereas Mexico gets younger and younger, retreats deeper and deeper into adolescence. Mexico is 15. Mexico is wearing a Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt and wandering around Tijuana looking for a job, for a date, for something to put on her face to take care of the acne.

It is not simply that these two cities are perched side by side at the edge of the Pacific; it is that adolescence sits next to middle age, and they don't know how to relate to each other. In a way, these two cities exist in different centuries. San Diego is a post-industrial city talking about settling down, slowing down, building clean industry. Tijuana is a pre-industrial city talking about changing, moving forward, growing. Yet they form a single metropolitan area.

S.L.: We hear a lot of rhetoric these days about "restoring the American Dream." But the American Dream seems to be alive and well in Tijuana.

R.R.: Very much so. Maybe the American Dream is too rich for us now in the U.S. Maybe we're losing it because we are not like our Swedish grandmother who came across the plains, hacked down the trees, and took the Spanish words she encountered and made them hers. Now her great-great-grandchildren sit terrified wondering what to do with all these Mexicans. The American Dream is an impossible affirmation of possibility. And maybe native-born Americans don't have it anymore. Maybe it has run through their fingers.

Those people who say that America is finite are in some sense right. The environmental movement, for example, has a great wisdom to it: We need to protect, to preserve, to shelter as much as we need to develop. But I think this always has to be juxtaposed against the optimism of old, which is now represented in part by immigrants. I would like to see America achieve a kind of balance between optimism and tragedy, between possibility and skepticism.



T-shirt Edward Bisone

S.L.: Why do we always talk about race in this country strictly in terms of black and white?

R.R.: America has never had a very wide vocabulary for miscegenation. We say we like diversity, but we don't like the idea that our Hispanic neighbor is going to marry our daughter. America has nothing like the Spanish vocabulary for miscegenation. Mulatto, *mestizo*, Creole — these Spanish and French terms suggest, by their use, that miscegenation is a fact of life. America has only black and white. In 18th-century America, if you had any drop of African blood in you, you were black.

After the O.J. Simpson trial there was talk about how the country was splitting in two — one part black, one part white. It was ludicrous: typical gringo arrogance. It's as though whites and blacks can imagine America only in terms of each other. It's mostly white arrogance, in that it places whites always at the center of the racial equation. But lots of emerging racial tensions in California have nothing to do with whites. Filipinos and Samoans are fighting it out in San Francisco high schools. Merced is becoming majority Mexican and Cambodian. They may be fighting in gangs right now, but I bet they are also learning each other's language. Cultures, when they meet, influence one another, whether people like it or not. But Americans don't have any way of describing this secret that has been going on for over two hundred years. The intermarriage of the Indian and the African in America, for example, has been constant and thorough. Colin Powell tells us in his autobiography that he is Scotch, Irish, African, Indian, and British, but all we hear is that he is African.

S.L.: The latest census figures show that two-thirds of children who are the products of a union between a black and a white call themselves black.

R.R.: The census bureau is thinking about creating a new category because so many kids don't know how to describe themselves using the existing categories. I call these kids the "Keanu Reeves Generation," after the actor who has a Hawaiian father and a Welsh mother. Most American Hispanics don't belong to one race, either. I keep telling kids that, when filling out forms, they should put "yes" to everything — yes, I am Chinese; yes, I am African; yes, I am white; yes, I am a Pacific Islander; yes, yes, yes — just to befuddle the bureaucrats who think we live separately from one another.

S.L.: There is a lot of talk today about the "hyphenating" of America. We no longer

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speak of ourselves as just Americans — now we're Italian-Americans, African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, even Anglo-Americans.

R.R.: The fact that we're all hyphenating our names suggests that we are afraid of being assimilated. I was talking on the BBC recently, and this woman introduced me as being "in favor of assimilation." I said, "I'm not in favor of assimilation." I am no more in favor of assimilation than I am in favor of the Pacific Ocean. Assimilation is not something to oppose or favor — it just happens.

S.L.: *Time* magazine did a special issue on the global village a couple of years ago. The cover photo was a computer composite of different faces from around the world. It was a stunning picture — neither man nor woman, black nor white. This is the kind of assimilation that many worry about — the loss of things that make us separate and unique.

R.R.: Jose Vasconcelos, Mexico's great federalist and apologist, has coined a wonderful term, *la raza cosmica*, "the cosmic race," a new people having not one race but many in their blood.

But Mexicans who come to America today end up opposing assimilation. They say they are "holding on to their culture." To them, I say, "If you really wanted to hold on to your culture, you would be in favor of assimilation. You would be fearless about swallowing English and about becoming Americanized. You would be much more positive about the future, and much less afraid. That's what it means to be Mexican."

I'm constantly depressed by the Mexican gang members I meet in East L.A. who essentially live their lives inside five or six blocks. They are caught in some tiny ghetto of the mind that limits them to these five blocks because, they say, "I'm Mexican. I live here." And I say, "What do you mean you live here — five blocks? Your granny, your *abualita*, walked two thousand miles to get here. She violated borders, moved from one language to another, moved from a 16th-century village to a 21st-century city, and you live within five blocks? You don't know Mexico, man. You have trivialized Mexico. You are a fool about Mexico if you think that Mexico is five blocks. That is not Mexico; that is some crude Americanism you have absorbed."

S.L.: You have described Los Angeles as the symbolic capital of the U.S.

R.R.: I find L.A. very interesting, partly because I think something new is forming there, but not in a moment of good fellowship as you might think from all this "diversity" claptrap. It's not as if we'll all go down to the Civic Center in our ethnic costumes and dance around.

We're looking at blond kids in Beverley Hills who can speak Spanish because they have been raised by Guatemalan nannies. We're looking at Evangelicals coming up from Latin America to convert the U.S. at the same time that L.A. movie stars are taking up Indian pantheism.

After the L.A. riots in 1992, my sense was not that the city was dying, as the expert opinion had it, but that the city was being formed. What was dying was the idea that L.A. was a city of separate suburbs and freeway exits. What burned in that riot was the idea that the east side was far away from the west side. People went to bed that first night watching television, watching neighborhoods they had never seen before, streets they had never been on, and they were chagrined and horrified by what they saw. Sometime in the middle of the night they could hear the sirens and smell the smoke, and realized that the fire was coming toward them — that the street they lived on, the boulevard they used everyday, was in fact connected to a part of town where they had never been before, and that part of town was now a part of their lives.

That moment of fear, of terror, of sleeplessness, was not a death, but the birth of the idea that L.A. is a single city, a single metropolitan area.

What we have seen in the last three or four years is, if not optimistic, at least something very young and full of possibility. Women have been telling men forever that childbirth is painful, that life begins with a scream, not with little butterflies and little tweeting birds; life begins with a scream. In 1992, L.A. came to life with a scream.

S.L.: If L.A. represents the future, does that mean we're looking at more riots?

R.R.: We're looking at complexity. We're looking at blond kids in Beverley Hills who can speak Spanish because they have been raised by Guatemalan nannies. We're looking at Evangelicals coming up from Latin America to convert the U.S. at the same time that L.A. movie stars are taking up Indian pantheism. We're looking at such enormous complexity and variety that it makes a mockery of "celebrating diversity." In the L.A. of the future, no one will need to say, "Let's celebrate diversity." Diversity is going to be a fundamental part of our lives.

If you want to live in Tennessee, God bless you, I wish for you a long life and starry evenings. But that is not where I want to live my life. I want to live my life in Carthage, in Athens. I want to live my life in Rome. I want to live my life in the center of the world. I want to live my life in Los Angeles. TW

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Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People

In September 1995, the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee adopted a statement entitled: "A Moment to Choose: Risking to be with Uprooted People." The statement was the product of an 18-month process of seeking contributions from WCC member churches — now numbering 330 in more than 100 countries — ecumenical organizations and many others. The Central Committee also adopted a set of related resolutions, including one designating 1997 as an Ecumenical Year for Churches in Solidarity with the Uprooted.

Since then, the WCC Refugee and Migration Service has focused its attention on promoting the statement and related recommendations and assisting churches to engage with the issues. Production of a resource book called "A Moment to Choose: Risking to be with Uprooted People" was a major element of that effort. Pointing out that nearly one in every 50 people in the world today is a refugee or internally displaced or a migrant, the book aims to help policy makers and academics as well as all who wish to understand the causes and consequences of the forced displacement of people. It also challenges the churches to prophetic and practical responses that promote human dignity and sustainable communities, citing over 50 "Signs of Hope," concrete examples of groups involved in various work with uprooted people.

During the ecumenical year news of an additional "sign of hope" came from Madras, where the new government lifted a six-year Tamil Nadu State Ban on access to secondary education for Tamil Sri Lankan refugees. The Bishop of Madras promptly issued a circular to the Board of Higher Education and other heads of institutions in the Madras Diocese urging them to assist refugee students by granting them admission to their schools — and to also provide concessions with regards to fees. According to a WCC report, this response significantly raised the morale of the refugees.

Activities related to the ecumenical year were largely focused on raising awareness through ecumenical assemblies and worship. In Africa, for example, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) launched the year in Nairobi last June. AACC Vice President, Mary Auma Jalango, stressed the need by all concerned to address the root causes of uprootedness and create conditions conducive to peaceful resolution of conflicts during the launching ceremony. AACC Secretary General, Jose Chipenda, noted that "Africa is bleeding and the church cannot remain neutral."

Twelve thousand delegates also attended the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz, Austria, last summer, committing themselves to "champion the dignity and protect the rights of refugees, migrants and displaced persons, and to uphold the right of refugees to asylum and free place of residence." A forum on the spiritual dimension of uprootedness was planned following a conference held by the New South Wales Ecumenical Council on "Accompaniment." Related to this theme is a collection of poems and pictures of art by uprooted people being put together by the WCC as "a way of expressing their spirituality , their experiences, hopes, and talents." This resource is to be published by the WCC in March/April 1998.

As part of its participation in the ecumenical year, Amnesty International published a 140-page report entitled, "Refugees — Human Rights have no Borders." This document is available in various languages from Amnesty's 54 national sections (addresses available from the WCC Refugee and Migration service, see below).

Likewise, a very helpful 343-page annotated bibliography called *Women Refugees in International Perspectives*, 1980-1990, was published by the UNHCR Research Resource Division of Refugees with assistance from the UNHCR Centre for Documentation and Research. The book contains a foreword by Rita Reddy, UNHCR Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women, and offers comprehensive abstracts of books, articles, analyses and field reports about women refugees in countries of origin, asylum and resettlement.

For more information on these and other resources related to refugee issues contact the Refugee and Migration Service, Unit IV, World Council of Churches, P.O.Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Phone is (41-22) 791 63 23, fax is (41-22) 788 00 67, and e-mail is <rms@info.wcc-coe.org>.

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Changing status

by Jo Salas

Last spring I became an American citizen. The swearing-in ceremony I attended in New York City was the culmination not only of the year-and-a-half long application process but also of my 25 years as a permanent resident.

After the 1994 election, when the newly Republican-dominated congress began to target legal aliens along with other marginalized people, I decided it was time to change my status.

In spite of this sense of political urgency, I found as I went along that I was ready, somewhat to my surprise, to celebrate this decision as a gesture of commitment, like a couple who decides to get married after long years of living together.

I didn't know what to expect from the naturalization ceremony. In movies there always seems to be a group of immigrants with tears in their eyes, a kindly judge, friends and relatives in the background ready with hugs and cameras. Having had dealings with the Immigration and Naturalization Service I knew it wouldn't be quite like that. But I was looking forward to the acknowledgment of a turning point.

My husband and I arrived at Police Plaza in downtown Manhattan a little before 8 a.m., as directed, having left home in the Mid-Hudson Valley at dawn. There were already about 300 people lined up outside the door. A hundred and fifty more joined the line behind us. Most appeared to be from Southeast Asia, Central America, the Caribbean. We were among the very few white people that I could see and judging by the accents I was the only New Zealander. Everyone was neatly, even elegantly dressed.



Michael Adeyoju of Ann Arbor, Mich., at a swearing in ceremony where he became a U.S. citizen. A native of Nigeria, he had been in the U.S. for 13 years. Jim West

For a long time the line didn't move at all. Then we began to inch our way forward as a policewoman strode up and down admonishing us to take anything metallic out of our pockets so as not to hold up the security machine. It took more than an hour to get inside. We were lucky that it was neither raining nor freezing cold.

At the entrance to the auditorium a woman relieved me of my green card and another handed me a certificate of citizenship. My husband and the other escorts were sent upstairs and I sat down between two strangers in the vast wood-panelled hall. The decor of outsize flags and shields proclaimed that we were in the headquarters of the NYPD — that well-known breeding ground of exemplary citizenship.

I was left wanting an experience of welcome.

When everyone was seated a young man appeared on the stage. "There's no eating or drinking in this auditorium," he said without preamble. "No gum wrappers or garbage on the floor."

These were the first words addressed to us as a group. I looked around at my fellow immigrants. Every one of us had gone through a lengthy and demanding process to have arrived at this point. Who knows what some had undergone before that, in their departure from their homelands and their entrance to this country? I felt angry on their behalf as well as my own to be spoken to as if we were heedless second-graders, or worse, as if we were inferior and ignorant. A woman official, kinder and more respectful, instructed us on how to sign our citizenship certificates. "You can do it at your leisure, maybe sit down with a cup of tea," she said. The young man cut in. "You sign your full name. That means if you have two names, you sign two names. If you have five names, you sign five." His tone was unmistakably contemptuous.

We sat there for another half an hour. Then Mr. Gum Wrapper addressed us again. "Put away your newspapers and magazines," he said, although no one I could see was doing anything but waiting.

The ceremony was conducted by another woman, introduced as a supervising district adjudicating officer for the INS. She stressed our good fortune in becoming citizens of "the world's greatest nation" and exhorted us to behave ourselves and obey the laws. There was no hint that we might bring something of value to our adopted country, that the good fortune might be on both sides, that immigration was integral to the heart and the history of this society.

We stood up for the 140-word oath that inducted us as U.S. citizens. They had passed out printed copies of it but there were not nearly enough to go around. We echoed the words phrase by phrase. Most of the people were clearly not native English speakers. I wondered

Jo Salas lives in New Paltz, N.Y.

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if they all understood the meaning of words like "abjure" and "potentate." One of the women on stage led us in singing *The Star Spangled Banner*. She had a good voice and sang with gusto into the microphone while the roomful of people mumbled along. It's not an easy tune and the language is hard to follow. I had never paid close attention before to the words that come after "Oh say can you see." The warlike imagery was disturbing to me.

They invited us to congratulate the new citizens on each side of us. By then I was rather dispirited, but I didn't want to snub the people beside me, and actually I was glad when I looked into their faces and shook their hands.

Then it was over, as perfunctorily as it had begun. Mr. Gum Wrapper told us sternly to remain in our seats until our row was dismissed. The Middle Eastern man on my right was bewildered. "It is ended?" he asked me. Like him, I was left wanting something else, an experience of welcome, perhaps, or of being honored, an appropriate marking of this transition. Instead, I felt insulted and sad. I don't think it would have taken much to transform the effect of this ceremony, just an attitude of respect and an appreciation that we have come to join you, to add our gifts to yours.

In the lobby outside I saw no hugs, no proud photos being taken. We left as quickly as we could.

Postscript: My congressman, Maurice Hinchey, sent a copy of this article to Doris Meissner, Commissioner of the INS, accompanied by his own letter appealing for change—suggesting that all immigrants be able to attend naturalization ceremonies in their own communities rather than in huge impersonal centers. Whether as a direct result of this or not, I recently heard from a friend that he became a U.S. citizen in a small, local ceremony which was respectful, satisfying and even moving. TW

'Rainbow Liberalism' digging own grave

If the old left assigned the vanguard role to factory workers, says Michael Lind, the New Left assigns it to people of color. The strategy of rainbow liberalism rests on two assumptions, Lind says: "The first is that conservatism would not appeal to nonwhite Americans. The second is that the very policies that promote the rainbow strategy — affirmative action and high immigration — would not produce tensions among the multicultural rainbow's constituent bands. If these assumptions are wrong, then rainbow liberalism is digging its own grave. They are, and it is."

Lind notes that:

• black voters remain committed to the Democratic Party, but a majority of Asian-Americans voted for Bush in 1992, while Hispanics gave Democrats only about 60 percent of the vote that year;

• in a recent poll, non-Hispanic blacks favor deep cuts in immigration by a ratio of 11-to-1, while Hispanic Americans favor such cuts by 7-to-1;

• in taking over the Democratic Party, the civil rights coalition drove enough white Southerners and working-class Northern Catholics into the GOP to permit the Republicans to dominate first the presidency and now congress.

What is needed, concludes Lind, is an alternative American liberalism, or liberal populism, that rejects the rainbow strategy in order to concentrate on the interests of working Americans from all backgrounds.

"If immigration policy is considered as it should be — a form of labor policy — then the 'liberal' approach ought to be to minimize the immigration of low-wage workers who might compete with the American working poor," Lind says. "The left too often forgets that voluntary immigrants have come here — whether from Germany, Ireland, Mexico or China — because they want to become Americans. ... Liberals who generally favor personal choices have no business condemning as 'inauthentic' immigrants who choose to adopt America's mongrel culture as their own."

Lind also notes that "it is easy to stick with the old rainbow strategy and hope that in time nonwhite majorities will bring about the repeatedly deferred revolution, just as it is easy to continue to treat inherited racial categories and alliances as facts of nature, rather than as constructs serving time-bound strategies. Easy, but disastrous — for the rejection of strategy is itself a strategy for defeat."

***— Mother Jones,* 9-10/97**

Activist cookbook

The Activist Cookbook is a guide to creative political action. Recently published by the Boston-based group United for a Fair Economy, the book offers hundreds of ideas to help activists liven up.

In his foreword to the book, Jim Hightower writes, "A little spirited cleverness is what has often been the difference in our history between earnest, wrinkle-browed reform efforts that just sat there stewing in their own juices and those reform efforts that caught the imagination of a larger public and became movements that actually reformed something."

Author Andrew Boyd says he wanted "to create something like a toolbox, a hands-on manual, something you can just pull out and use."

The cookbook provides a survey of creative actions including media stunts, guerrilla and street theater, billboard correction, commotions and provocations, and saturation postering. It gives examples of how art and humor can make agitating for economic justice more fun, and more appealing. For more information, write 37 Temple Place, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02111, or call 617-423-2148.

***— The Progressive,* 9/97**

Short takes

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Expansion, not independence, the chief hope behind IARCA

by Richard A. Bower

There is a song from the Misa Salvadoreña that is popular among Central American Christians:

Cuando el pobre cree en el pobre,
ya podremos cantar libertad.

(When the poor believe in themselves, then we will be able to sing of liberation.)

The Anglican church in Central America is mostly a poor church working among the poor. Rooted in colonialism, it developed the historic habit of dependency. In recent years, however, the Central American Episcopal Church has struggled to move beyond this colonial and dependent way of being, establishing an indigenous church with local leadership, local theologies and local ways of celebrating.

Five national churches have joined to make a new Anglican Province, *La Iglesia Anglican de la Region Central de las Americas* (IARCA). Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama form the beginnings of this new Province. Honduras, for the time being, is relating to the new Province as an observer and neighbor, sharing in much of the life of IARCA until such time as she, too, chooses to become a full member.

In July, 1997, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church granted permission for these five dioceses to form a new Province, joining the 22 other provinces of the Anglican Communion world-wide.

Richard A. Bower is dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, in Syracuse, N.Y.

Vital Signs

"When the poor begin to believe in themselves... ." The process toward autonomy has been a journey of over 40 years, a process and struggle to believe that a Central American region with its own agenda and leadership can blossom as a unique, rich flower in the garden of Anglicanism. It is a church beginning to believe in itself.

The call is to evangelize, to share God's Good News of love, compassion, of dignity and empowerment, and of justice and liberation for people long put down — to share this message by word and action, in the way that only a truly indigenous church can share it.

But there remain weeds in the garden, risks and fears that continue to shape the way Central American churches relate to each other and to the North. Each country in Central America is unique, with its own history, culture and version of the Spanish language. Most have been through years of civil war and political unrest, often with struggles across borders. Always aware of U.S. imperial intentions and arrogance toward this "banana republic" region, our churches in the South look towards us at this time of transition with caution and ambivalence.

Some of our churches in IARCA are made up of people from the Islands, *antillanos* with long histories and deep commitments to the Anglican Church. Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras and, to a small extent, Guatemala, all have Caribbean coast lines. For generations people from Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and other islands came to settle, work and find a new life on the Central American coast. They were the workers, the builders of railways and canals, harvesters of coffee and cane.

Towns with lilting names like Bluefields, Aspenwall, Rainbow City and Corn Island litter the landscape of these Latin American countries, reflecting the influence over the years of Caribbean immigration.

El Salvador, alone, has no Caribbean coast, and therefore little Afro-Caribbean influence in the church. One of the tensions IARCA lives with is the tension between cultures: Caribbean, Afro-Antillian, Latin, meztizo and native cultures and languages. Quiché, Meskito, Guayamí, Kuna Yala, Pipíl and other indigenous folk populate our churches, bringing both the richness of their spiritualities and tragic memories of the past.

The economics of the churches that make up IARCA are uneven. Some dioceses come with established patrimonies, with resources to help them toward self-sufficiency. Others have hardly the last small bank deposit with which they try to pay their employees. Some live with relatively stable national economies; others bleed from high rates of inflation and the painful "neo-liberal" economics that enrich the rich and deepen the poverty of the poor, in the name of free enterprise, capitalism, and privatization of essential government services.

Interestingly, the items that for a while stalled the decision of General Convention to grant autonomy were economic: What do we do about a pension plan for the region? What do we do about on-going financial support for IARCA? How long will financial support be needed? How can the Episcopal Church promise anything beyond the next three years?

In 1947 the Anglican Churches of Central America were "handed over" by

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the Church of England to the care of the Episcopal Church. At that time almost the entire region became a missionary district of the Episcopal Church. In 1967 national churches were formed in each republic, with the anticipation that each church would choose its local bishop and other leaders from the people and culture.

In 1970 Costa Rica became an autonomous church (extra provincial), while the Ninth Province of the Episcopal Church was formed from the other Mezo, Central and South American Churches, along with the Spanish-speaking churches of the Caribbean region. The Ninth Province became the place to try out visions and models for the church of the future in that region. From 1984 to 1994 proposals for autonomy were submitted to the General Convention of our church.

The desire for autonomy has not been a desire primarily for independence. Rather the motivation has been for the expansion of the Church in Central America. The call is to evangelize, to share God's Good News of love, compassion, dignity and empowerment, and of justice and liberation for people long put down — to share this message by word and action, in the way that only a truly indigenous church can share it. Autonomy is a movement toward identifying local theologies, local spirituality, local ways of worshipping and governing: ways appropriate for the culture, history and context of Central American peoples. The growth of the church is not merely for the purpose of expansion, but rather for reaching the thousands of people in the region who have no accompaniment, care, support or pastoral presence. The abandoned ones. The forgotten.

In spite of the clear reasons for autonomy, the process in Central America has often been full of doubt and fear. "How will we (Central Americans) survive economically without strong connections to the U.S. Church? Can the Episcopal Church be trusted to keep a long-term covenant with us? What will happen to us in our own local, Roman Catholic cultures, where we are often oppressed by religious and political powers, when we no longer have the patronage of the Episcopal church to protect us? Will we be forgotten in the press of many needs throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion? How will we manage our own affairs across national boundaries, within a region of strong leaders vying for influence in a newly emerging church?



Stephanie Bower

For the moment IARCA will be a church truly self-governing, but not self-sufficient. It is hard to have one without the other, but this seems to be the best next step toward full autonomy.

Autonomy is perhaps not the best word to use to describe the theological and political vision of IARCA. It is not separation that is longed for, but a change in relationship and maturity: a change from being a daughter church, to being a sister.

Cuando el pobre cree en el pobre ...when the poor begin to believe in themselves," says the song. When what has been seen as weakness becomes a source of dignity, when dependency grows into self-sufficiency, when fear turns into empowerment, when failure turns into cherishing, when individualism and isolation emerge into community, when a tragic past becomes a hopeful future — then a people know that the Good News is being proclaimed and lived out among them.

One of the losses we in the Episcopal Church will experience in the emergence of IARCA is the loss of the regular, active participation and witness of Central American sisters and brothers in the life and mission of our church. The Churches of IARCA have helped us to keep our eyes and hearts open to the South, helped to keep our conscience and commitment to the liberation of the poor and marginal alive and finely tuned. It will be hard to sustain this attention without Central American leadership actively participating in the ongoing councils of our church. We have often been "evangelized" by the presence of our Central American friends.

Antonio Machado, poet and visionary, once said "*No hay camino. Se hace el camino al andar.*" "There is no road. The road is made by walking." Autonomy — or, better, a newly framed partnership between our Central American sisters and brothers and us — is a road we've never yet taken.

There is no map, only this beginning of a faithful journey.

Bishops link debt to sex

Emerging from a closed meeting in Dallas, Tex., a group of 50 Anglican bishops and archbishops from 16 nations issued a strong statement last September that claimed direct links between the issues of international debt and sexual morality, both likely topics at next summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops.

"It is not acceptable for a pro-gay agenda to be smuggled into the church's program or foisted upon our people," the bishops said.

The four-day "Anglican Life and Witness Conference" was jointly sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and the Ekklesia Society, a member of the American Anglican Council. — *ENS*

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Our readers tell us

Why I chant

by Bill Jordan

Like most people, I suppose, I tend to be uncomfortable with silence, probably because it has become such a rarity, a warning that something is missing or has gone wrong. Certainly silence does have its dark side, companion to loneliness, isolation, emptiness. The prisoner suffers the tormenting silence of lost companionship, lost opportunity, lost pleasure.

But, as the Psalms reassure us, "The Lord sets the prisoner free." Odd as it may seem, one way of achieving freedom is through silence itself. The silence of the prisoner and the silence of the contemplative are very different from each other. Whereas the punitive silence of the prison cell is involuntary, empty and despairing, the contemplative silence of the monastic cell is voluntary, full and hopeful.

How do we arrive at this blessed, fruitful state? I have found Gregorian chant to be a form of contemplative prayer that works for me. My enthusiasm for chant began when I was in high school and my parents gave me a recording of a Gregorian Christmas Mass. In 1993, I had the good fortune of finding a Gregorian chant *schola* in New York City. (*Schola* is the Latin word for "school." *Schola cantorum*, or "school of singers," refers to any group that sings only Gregorian chant.)

This *schola*, which practices chant as a form of contemplative prayer, has located itself in various Episcopal churches. Having now sung chant as a contemplative exercise for four years, I can say that what I had found in my Christmas Mass recording was a state of mind, the key to which is attentive listening.

Chant is an ensemble effort. Because we do not have a conductor in our *schola*, we can stay together only if we listen to each other very closely. With its minute variations of tempo and virtually endless combinations of pitch, value and tune, chant brings our attention to bear out of a divided state.

Most Tuesdays when I leave work I am not especially eager to spend the evening chanting. The marvelous thing is that this doesn't matter. If I commit myself to paying attention, the rest takes care of itself. The tension between making it happen and letting it happen is at the core of chant. Chant, specifically, and contemplative prayer, generally, bring us into the ream of opposites, the dilemma of immortal souls inhabiting mortal bodies, of a world at once fallen and redeemed. Contemplation is one way of mediating these dilemmas.

We have learned from our experience in the *schola* that chant will take care of itself only if we give it full attention and adequate time. If we are either impatient or lazy we produce no more than an evening of notably boring music. Just as chant sets its own pace, so the contemplative life itself results in heightened awareness of the pace of creation — the weather, the seasons, the cycle of day and night. These cycles give order to the daily monastic offices and to the liturgical calendar.

My first response to chant was one of late-20th-century impatience. Over time I have come to enjoy an activity that I can not rush by installing more bytes of memory or depressing the accelerator. We can rush when we speak, but not when we listen.

The practice of contemplative prayer embodied in Gregorian chant does not require flight into the desert or severe austerity. What we have tried to do in our *schola* is bring aspects of this practice forward through the millennia, into our hurried lay lives. With consistent practice, this is entirely possible. The world opens its arms when we allow for silence and listen. TW

Bill Jordan works in the National Ministries Unit of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. in New York, N.Y.

Tables and chairs, *continued from page 6*

Their big houses on Beacon Street? Their jobs? The very air they breathed?

And the music goes round and round. When the Italians settled in the North End, the Irish moved away, displaced, they said, by these infamous newcomers. The Jews, the Blacks, the Poles, Lithuanians, the Chinese, the whole city of Boston, from the North End to Blue-Hill Avenue, to the south shore suburbs and to the west, everybody running with the rigor of a group of children playing musical chairs, every one imagining the residence of a capricious maestro in the sky who at any moment would stop the music and slip away a chair.

And now, reminded of my mother's struggle before me, I too search for my place at the table. I am willing to give up my seat, but I don't know where I belong, to whom I am important, by whom I am needed. I wonder where my place is in the lives of my children. No longer do they confide in me, ask my advice. I can no longer heal their wounds. I am overcome at times with a deep sense of loss. I am left standing as the music continues to play, the music of their lives, and I feel sometimes that my chair has been removed. I am afraid. TW

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A promise kept

by Rosanna Kazanjian

***La Promesse* (1997), directed by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. Starring Jeremie Renier, Olivier Gourmet. In French with subtitles.**

It is hard to understand real oppression unless one has lived that particular reality. Somehow, in viewing *La Promesse*, I had no choice but to allow the waves of truth wash over my ignorance.

A 1997 film produced and directed by the Dardenne brothers, *La Promesse* shows the marks of the directors' 20 years of documentary film work. It is a starkly realistic, intensely moving film. It has a black-and-white quality in a technicolor format.

Set in Belgium, the story revolves around a 15-year-old boy, Igor, who learns to be a small-time hustler from his father, Roger. Together they toil in the town's only growth industry — the exploitation of illegal immigrants. Igor meets a majestic African woman who, with her baby, has left her village to join her husband. In this encounter Igor's uneasy attachment to his father's values and life-style begins to unravel. Roger draws his son into a cover-up of the accidental death of the woman's husband and a plan to sell the unsuspecting wife into prostitution. Igor, who has promised the dying man to look after the widow and child, begins his journey of liberation from his father's possessive, self-directed love toward a moral awakening.

A central image of the film is the mother and child. There is a scene of transport trailers, full of new cars, parked in a railroad yard. As Igor and his father arrive on the scene, people begin to emerge from the cars, illegal immigrants waiting for the pick-up. From the very top of the rig a tall, stately African woman steps down carrying her baby. No manger was more humble. This black Madonna and child step into a world poised to receive them with disrespect and dismissal.

This is a film about creating family, creating tribe and attempting to do this inside structures that tend to disassemble rather than connect.

Asseta Ouedrogo, who plays the role of the mother, brings to the film a strength which conveys unshakable values — values firmly rooted in the culture she has left. In unlikely settings, from dingy rooms to alleys, she recreates rituals that hold her family's soul journey in this strange land. The space around her becomes grounded because she is grounded. As a homeless woman she creates home space. Igor grasps this with his gut and chooses to respond to her over his own flesh and blood.

Each role in this film is played with compelling realism, but Ouedrogo's acting is entirely convincing. She has an interesting way of never quite facing the camera, a predilection which after a while conveys a sense of self-possession. She never quite gives herself to us, and finally, one can't help but honor her wisdom — as, ultimately, does Igor.

The relationship between the father and son reflects the complexity and confusion of love and need. Igor is at times an age-appropriate boy hanging out with his buddies, working on a hot-rod bike. At other times he is a wise, deeply compassionate young man struggling to be an independent thinker.

This is a film about creating family, creating tribe and attempting to do this inside structures that tend to disassemble rather than connect. It is about the longing of the human heart, no matter how ill prepared, and no matter how unsupported, to create home, family, spaces that hold.

In the first moments of the film, as the immigrants' wildly idealistic hope for a better life encounters squalor, manipulation and grinding hardship, I wondered if this was going to be one of those nihilistic films of unredeemed pain and suffering. One of my rules for a good film experience is that it convey some redemption, some reflection of possible goodness even in such circumstances. *La Promesse* is a promise kept. There is a strength that emerges through the aura of tension and fear that left me deeply moved and hopeful.

This film does not have a fairy story ending. It is a glimpse of the possibility and vitality of the human spirit in the midst of raw, cruel, struggling life. It weaves its way through the reality of the powerlessness and homelessness of displaced people, picking up threads of human connectedness and compassion. This is a strong film that lingers in the mind and heart. TW

review

Rosanna Kazanjian is an Episcopal priest who, with two colleagues, runs a retreat center for women in Tenants Harbor, Maine, called Greenfire.

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Paying attention to the 'petty stuff'

by Kate DeSmet

"It is only when you are in day-to-day contact through ministry and service with minority people that you begin to discover what they have to offer."



David Ota

Sometimes the most telling signs of who has power and who does not can be found in what David Ota calls "the petty stuff." Ota is a Japanese-American priest who serves as rector of a mostly Anglo-white Episcopal parish in northern California. Trying to balance out the mix between dominant and minority cultures is an enormous task with progress measured in the tiniest of leaps. For when you are on the "fringe," as Ota describes minorities in the church, even the smallest details give a measure of powerlessness that the majority do not see.

Take food, for instance.

"Now I know this will sound petty, but we were planning a stewardship dinner for the vestry and we started talking about what food to serve," said Ota, 43, rector of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church in Foster City, a suburb of San Francisco. Approximately 90 percent of the congregation is Caucasian.

"We started talking about having Chinese food. And this one guy said, 'Our people don't like that.' And I'm sitting right there. It's like, who is 'our people'? When somebody else suggested having spaghetti the guy said that's what our people would like to have. I had to smile and chuckle, but at the same time I'm thinking of how people use language in ways that divide us.

"Then at the celebration service for my induction as rector, the plan was to serve food but I noticed there was no rice on the menu — no rice!" Ota says. "My home congregation, which is Japanese-American, was planning on attending. And while Foster City is an area that is mostly Anglo, 25 percent of the population is Japanese. So we ordered rice."

Ota's ministry in a mostly Caucasian parish is new ground for him. He arrived at St. Ambrose with his wife Karen Swanson, an Episcopal priest, and their 6 1/2-year-old son in September 1997. Previously he was rector of Good Samaritan parish in Honolulu, Hawaii for 14 years, where 70 percent of the membership is Japanese. There were also large numbers of Chinese, Hawaiians, and Koreans.

Ota is a third-generation Japanese American whose father was interned in a U.S. prison camp during the Second World War. His mother was born in Nevada but spent her girlhood in Japan during the war. His mother's family are Buddhists, but when she came to the U.S. seeking work as a cleaning lady, she joined the Reformed Church — in part, to learn English. Ota's father started attending an Episcopal church as a young man because the local parish offered youth activities. His father's two brothers became Episcopal priests.

Ota was ordained into the Episcopal priesthood after studying at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif. He is a strong supporter of formal seminary training — but with a caveat: The third year should be devoted to immersion in a parish experience with minorities and immigrants.

"You need to learn the language and style of the people instead of imposing western theological concepts on them," Ota said. "You can't learn what minority cultures can teach by going to seminary. It is only when you are in day-to-day contact through ministry and service with them that you begin to discover what they have to offer. You begin to see that the

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Kate DeSmet is a locked-out *Detroit News* religion reporter.

way the world works for them is not necessarily the same as it does for the dominant culture."

One example: Ota says many Asians are offended by the routine use of Roberts' Rules of Order during church meetings. The rules govern when persons can speak, how they vote, and who can make final decisions.

"In western culture and in the way the church operates there is an assumption that we must use Roberts' Rules of Order," Ota said. "It is one way of conducting corporate meetings, and it is a very western model. It is not an Asian model, and it isn't a Native American model. In the Asian community we decide things more by consensus. Roberts' Rules are very confrontational. The dominant assumption that we all make decisions this way is off-putting."

When Ota served as head of the diocese's department of Congregational Development, he decided to change the way meetings were run when the department met with financially distressed congregations.

"There would be two tables facing each other — one would be the department leaders, the other would be the congregation leaders who needed money. So it was divisive and adversarial from the start," Ota said. "They would come to us and it would look as if they were begging for money. So I changed the process. We began meeting in a circle. And everybody got to hear what everybody else was saying. And everybody got to ask questions of anyone else. It was no longer where just the finance director could ask the questions or something like that. I added a spiritual component as well, with some scripture reading and prayer. I think what we did was take from the women's model of the circle, and the Asian model of consensus. And it worked."

Ota said the church must also change the way it selects leaders if it hopes to include diverse cultures. For instance, Asians often do not feel comfortable volunteering to take on leadership roles. They view that sort of behavior as "uppity," Ota said.

"In Hawaii we had an Asian minority group that met and discussed these things and we asked the question, 'Who would be good to serve on the diocesan council?' Once we came up with some names we'd personally encourage those people to serve. But if those same people had put themselves forward they'd be seen as uppity by other members of the community. If the church doesn't understand the culture it just misses out. The church has lost lots of able and competent people because we haven't sought them out."

In particular, Ota said the church has failed to develop a comprehensive strategy for evangelizing the large numbers of Indochinese immigrants in the U.S. — including Vietnamese, Laotians, Hmong and Cambodians. He has worked with Duke Ngyun, the first Vietnamese Episcopal priest ordained in this country. Ngyun had been working with Vietnamese young people in an immigrant resettlement program associated with St. Anselm's in Garden Grove, Calif. — the only Vietnamese Episcopal church in the U.S.

"He helped these kids find meaning and a connection that was wonderful," Ota said. "But once these kids went off to college they were completely lost because there are no other Vietnamese Episcopal churches anywhere else. So they joined other churches. I don't think the Episcopal Church has made a decision to evangelize the Indochinese immigrants. We help them to resettle out of a Christian commitment to serve. But we have to be intentional about bringing them into the larger, wider church."

Ota found a profound opportunity for evangelizing the Asian community in Hawaii whenever events dealt with the death of a loved one. Reverence for the dead, particularly family ancestors, is deeply tied to the Asian culture. One of the most widely celebrated Buddhist festivals is the *O Bon*, in which honor and respect are paid to the dead in street demonstrations, dancing and festive ceremonies. So when the church calendar marked All Souls, Ota made sure worshippers understood that the day commemorated all souls — not just Christian ones. "You lift up whomever you love," Ota said.

Ota sees the priest's role as that of "seminary dean" — helping educate and train members for service and ministry. In his new parish, Ota said a major challenge will be lifting the veil of invisibility that surrounds the small number of minority and immigrant families in the parish. He has already noticed how, during services, they often sit away from the main congregation, off to the side or in the back. So he will begin inviting them to take on more visible roles in the church's celebrations. He wants to pull them into the center, away from the fringe. It is the philosophy that guides his life.

"It is a gospel value to notice people on the fringe. We have to lift them up, and that helps the dominant people notice them and rethink their assumptions," Ota said. "It brings the fringe into the center and it changes the mix. You know most of the action in the church happens on the fringe, and the center is where people are most concerned about keeping the *status quo*, keeping things the way they are.

"But we've got to make change, not so much in people as in the process of how we do things. And when you change the process you give more people more power. The old idea that the only people with power are in the hierarchy is an old model and not a good way to have a relationship. If we can change the old models we will be better off." TW

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