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WITNESS MAGAZINE

CHALLENGING A GREEDY WORLD

'The People of the Land'

in the Americas

VOLUME 84
NUMBER 1/2
JAN/FEB 2001

WITNESS MAGAZINE

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Kickapoo spokesperson, Cho-ku-qua, being interviewed by television crew

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VOLUME 84
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JAN/FEB 2001

Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Manuscripts will not be returned.

The Witness

Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
Alice Devine

Epsicopal Church Publishing Co.
Board of Directors

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Owanah Anderson, Richard Bower, Louie Crew, Jane Dixon, Ian Douglas, Mark MacDonald, Chester Talton, Mitsuye Yamada

Contributing Editors
Martin Brokenleg, Kelly Brown Douglas, Carmen Guerrero, Mary E. Hunt, Jay McDaniel, Bill Wylie-Kellermann

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
118 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

Moratorium Now

I oppose the death penalty. And I am one of the majority of Americans who in a recent nationwide poll are calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in this country. More than 1000 groups, including 27 local governments [Atlanta, GA, Baltimore, MD; Detroit, MI; Philadelphia, PA; San Francisco, CA; to name a few], have joined a movement called Moratorium Now and have ratified resolutions calling for a nationwide moratorium. So imagine my disappointment as a Christian when I checked nationally in the Summer/Fall 2000 issue of *Moratorium News* and found only a relative handful of churches involved in this effort. In the three states with the largest death row populations, only eight churches are listed as having passed moratorium resolutions as a part of the Moratorium Now movement.

As Christians we have to do better. We are the leaven called upon by God to mix with the world and transform our society into a better place. As the Body of Christ it is in our hands and it is our obligation to make a difference in this world of ours. Yes, every religious denomination has condemned the death penalty and supports the immediate moratorium on the use of capital punishment in this country. But why hasn't that filtered down to the individual congregations? Why hasn't that filtered down to your church?

I call on every reader of this letter to do two things. First, ask your local congregation to pass a resolution calling for an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty, and send a copy of this resolution to Moratorium Now. For more information or for sample resolution forms call the Moratorium Now Project at [301] 699-0042, or visit the website at <www.quixote.org/ej>. Second, ask the members of your church to sign the Moratorium 2000 petition sponsored by Religious Organizing Against The Death Penalty. For more information, or for petition forms call [202] 588- 5489 or visit the website at <www.moratorium2000.org>.

Together we can make a difference. Please join us.

Patricia A. Guthrie
Peoria, IL

A *Witness* nudge

It's publications such as yours that keep me committed to Christianity. Your emphasis on tolerance, understanding and concern, combined with a call to action, occasionally nudges me out of my complacency and/or cynicism, and makes me aware that if good things are to replace the poverty, injustice and hatred so often encountered in my own small world, I have to be willing to do my part.

Patricia Heck
Sewanee, TN

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Facing up to colonialism and its consequences

by Steven Charleston

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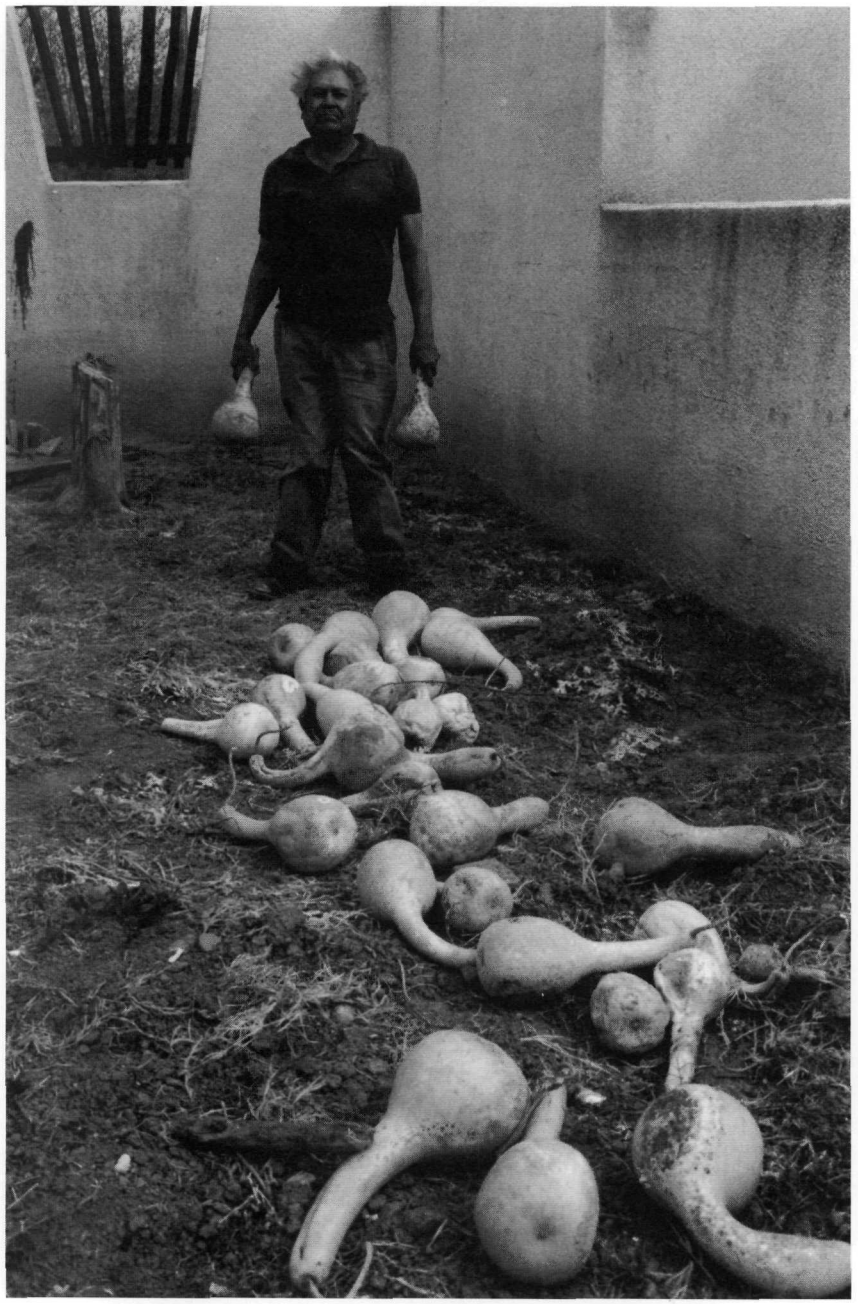

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SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, I was invited by Michael Peers, Primate of Canada, to participate in a dialogue between the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada and representatives from the Anglican Council of Indigenous People, the representative body of indigenous members of the church. The subject of this conversation was the impact of recent court decisions brought by the victims of both physical and sexual abuse in church-operated boarding schools. These judgments, which held the church liable for the abuse, raised the real possibility of financial disaster for several Anglican dioceses and, perhaps, for the church as a whole. The stakes were high and both the bishops and the indigenous people felt the tension. While the church had accepted responsibility and offered a public apology to the indigenous community, and while the First Nations members of the church had expressed their hope for a spiritual renewal in the aftermath of the tragedy, it was clear that true reconciliation would be a long and intricate process. In the end, however, the outcome of this particular meeting was enormously positive. Both "sides" in the exchange exhibited a genuine Christian desire for understanding and healing. They committed themselves to continue the process in partnership, whatever the financial future might hold. They reaffirmed that the gospel mission of the church would go on, in fact must go on, if the sad legacy of their shared past was to be redeemed.

I left the gathering with great respect for the church in Canada, for its indigenous leaders and its bishops. But most of all, I left with a fervent prayer that the church in this hemisphere would finally take its own colonial history seriously.

What does the Canadian experience teach us?

First, it graphically demonstrates that colonialism is not an historic artifact. The past is not gone and forgotten, even though some of us may pretend otherwise. Colonialism is historically radioactive. It has a long half-life that continues to poison the relationship between human beings even generations after the fact. The colonization of the Americas by European imperialism, aided and abetted by the Christian church, continues to haunt this hemisphere. Indigenous people, who are the survivors of one of the most systematic

efforts at "ethnic cleansing" in the history of the world, remain in the shadow of what I believe must be named the American Apartheid.

In North America, this apartheid accounts for what happened, what is still happening, in Canada. It explains why indigenous communities in the U.S. continue fighting in the courts to protect themselves, to protect their treaty rights, to protect the remnants of their ancient homeland. The struggles of the Gwich'in people, for example, who are faithful members of the Episcopal Church, illustrate this point. If there had been no legacy of colonial racism in Alaska, if Gwich'in culture had been respected from the outset as integral to the social and economic future of all the people in Alaska, and if the indigenous vision of the Earth as a sacred creation of God had been honored by the Christians who colonized Alaska, then the legal battles over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would never have occurred. The fact that indigenous people in both Canada and the U.S. go to court year after year is testimony to the legacy of the American Apartheid. It is evidence of the toxic effects of colonialism, racism and the inability of any society to honestly confront its own past.

South of the Rio Grande, in nations throughout Central and South America, what I describe as apartheid against indigenous people is far more obvious and deadly. In Guatemala alone, thousands of indigenous people have been killed in massacres conducted by state-supported terrorists. In the Chiapas region of Mexico, indigenous communities remain under the armed occupation of the Mexican military, existing in a constant state of siege. In both cases, the "crimes" of the indigenous people were to name the American Apartheid for what it is, to expose the truth that colonialism and racism in the Americas is ongoing and virulent, and to demand their basic rights as human beings.

Poverty, illiteracy, disease, hunger, oppression: The truth is just beyond the border. And yet, the life and death struggles of the indigenous people of the Southern Hemisphere remain invisible to the majority of North American Christians. Only as if in a mirage do we catch a glimpse of the suffering which occurs daily in what we, with such casual arrogance, have defined as "our own backyard." If the North American media pays scant attention to Central and South America, it pays almost none at all to the original inhabitants of these nations. At best they are only colorful "extras" for nature specials on the rain forests or the condor, not real people with a legitimate civilization still in peril to colonial greed. North America's media does not register them on the radar screen of global concerns. For all practical purposes, for all political purposes, they simply do not exist.

This leads to the second lesson the church must take to heart: Our blindness to the American Apartheid has consequences. In Canada, those consequences may be measured in both the human terms of broken relationships and in the

TRYING TO LIVE UP TO OUR NAME

More often than I care to say, I have wished *The Witness* had a different name. Usually for no better reason than to spare me the momentary discomfort of having people who have never heard of us think that we are affiliated with a well-known conservative religious denomination (with "Witnesses" figuring prominently in its name) whose theological perspective I find highly suspect. At such moments I wish for a name either less or more obscure — *Progressive Anglican*, say, or *2tru* (you decide which might be which).

But I am glad to share in our vocation of bearing witness to the world-as-it-is, whether plagued by evil and suffering or blessed by compassion and beauty. Enlarging perspectives is a crucial precondition for the deepening of spiritual and political understanding. And such deepening, in turn, is a critical precondition for thoughtful and faithful decisions about how to choose on behalf of life.

In this regard, we here at *The Witness* are especially grateful for the enlarging of perspective working on this issue on native peoples in the Americas has given us. Guided in our choice of stories by Steven Charleston and Owanah Anderson, both of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, we've truly benefited from getting a native perspective on the powers and principalities at work in our own hemisphere — and in our own country and church. Less happily, but equally beneficially, we have found ourselves bumping with alarming frequency into our staff's mostly unexamined Western mindset (which included the embarassing assumption that the people we'd want to interview would surely speak English, or that our "straightforward" questions must not have been understood if the answers we got didn't seem straightforward to us) — and the obvious limits this imposes on our work.

So, as we begin our 84th year of publication, we've decided to make some changes. One small, simple way to deepen our solidarity with the peoples whose lives form the content of this issue is to begin making room in our budget for offering as many articles as possible from this and future issues in Spanish, the language of so many of this hemisphere's indigenous citizens. We've also decided to begin giving the people we interview (as, in this issue, Felipe and Elena Ixcot) the chance to say everything they'd like in answer to a question, even when space doesn't allow in the magazine. We'll use our website (www.thewitness.org) to make these downloadable articles available worldwide, and we'll provide hard copies for duplication wherever electronic link-ups are lacking.

We're also committing ourselves to working hard to rapidly expand our website's "A Global Witness" section to provide a place where testimony of things seen and unseen can be offered from a wider array of witnesses than we've been able to provide space for until now.

I may not always like our name, I admit, but we here at *The Witness* are committed to living up to it. We appreciate your support as we attempt to do so.

— Julie A. Wortman, editor and publisher

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monetary terms of a church in bankruptcy. In Alaska they may be measured by the loss of a natural beauty, the Arctic tundra, that can never be restored. In the South, they can be measured by tombstones.

When I describe our colonial history as radioactive, I mean to imply that it is lethal. It infects us. It permeates both ends of this hemisphere. It creates a pathology, which we pass from one generation to the next. A key aspect of this pathology is the inherent inability of the descendents of European colonizers to "see" those they have colonized. In the North, indigenous communities are still categorized in the most blatant stereotypes. They are dismissed as the historical leftovers of the Wild West myth created by colonialism as a macho justification for slaughter, brought into contemporary ridicule as the "casino Indians" who don't deserve the money they make for playing the game taught to them by European greed, or trivialized as the shaman gurus for white suburban fantasies of spirituality. In the South, indigenous people are only a backdrop to the "real" stories, which concern North America: the war on drugs, NAFTA, the flight of economic refugees crossing our borders.

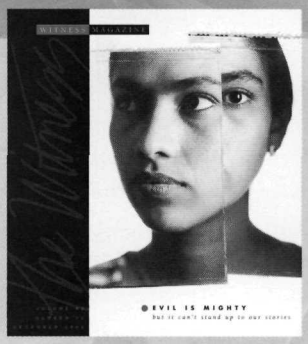
In the end, the vast majority of Christians living in the privileged centers of power in this hemisphere have virtually no idea of the suffering of their faceless neighbors living under the American Apartheid. They are not conscious that their self-imposed glaucoma perpetuates the colonial tragedy of the past. Therefore, they are usually shocked when they discover the implications of this kind of racism. Whether the consequences come to them in financial, ecological or moral disasters, the blind managers of the American Apartheid are caught off guard by the sudden realization that the illness they have carried in the genetic structure of their own history has suddenly activated. The cycles of pain begin again. The pattern of struggle, oppression and denial runs its course through the courts or in the hidden places of the Americas where indigenous people pay with their freedom, their hopes or their lives because European Americans fear the truth. And eventually, when the stark light of that truth fades under the long shadows of America's guilt, the eyes of the privileged public turn away, the indigenous people slowly dissolve before them, and the silence of shame descends to smother the cries of justice.

In this issue of *The Witness*, we are confronted with two lessons: colonialism and consequences. Through the stories of indigenous people of the Americas, *The Witness* seeks to remind us that the truth of our own colonial past is all around us if only we have eyes to see. You can catch a glimpse of it in the struggles of the Canadian church to redress the abuses of the boarding schools. You can observe it as the subtext of the fight of indigenous Christians to preserve the Arctic National Wildlife refuge. You can be startled to see it so clearly in the faces of the people of Chiapas or Guatemala. With these many images of truth, *The Witness* calls all of us to open our eyes, recognize the cost of our complicity in not being able to "see" one another, and then to respond by breaking the cycles of pain which fuel the American Apartheid. Ultimately, this issue offers the church a chance to learn a third lesson, one that is filled with the hope of faith and with the power of liberation.

When I flew home from Canada after the historic encounter between the survivors of colonialism and the inheritors of its moral burden, I returned with a stronger sense of hope than I had ever known before. I had seen with my own eyes that men and women of faith can face their past, confront its consequences and still work together toward a future of justice and reconciliation. I knew that if this were true, then the days of the American Apartheid were numbered. I knew that none of us are condemned to be the repetitive victims of the blind cycles of racist colonialism. We can, and I believe we will, break free of the shame and fear. We will finally bring justice to the indigenous people of the Americas. The lesson learned last is often the most important. We have much to do. It will be a difficult job. In the South, it will be a dangerous job. But it is a task we have put off far too long. The gospels tell us that Jesus Christ came to heal the blind and to set the captives free. Between the descendents of the conquerors and the survivors of the Western Hemisphere, we cannot do one without the other. Now is the time to do both. ●

Steven Charleston, of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and the former Bishop of Alaska.

'All that we are, all that we have, comes from God and will one day return to God.'



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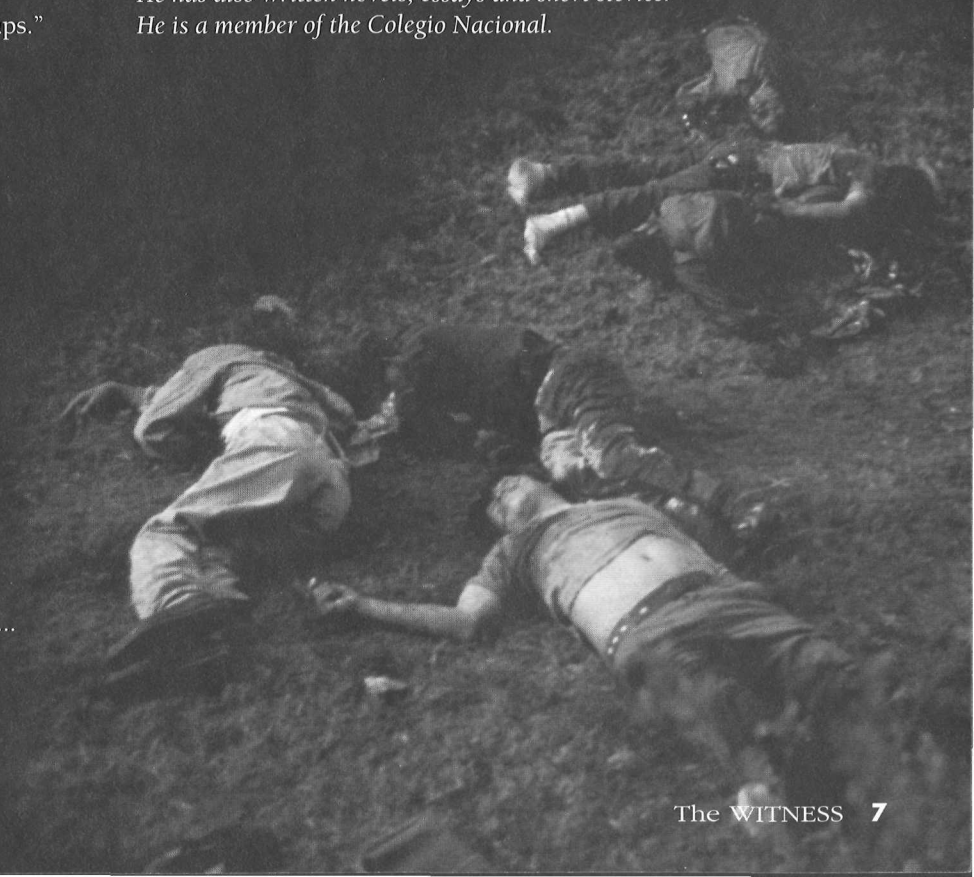
Prose of Chenalhó

by José Emilio Pacheco

In 1982, at the beginning
of everything we now see unfolding in Chiapas,
Algeria and Rwanda,
the wealth of Forbes' 400
amounted to only $92 billion.
By 1996 they had amassed $477 billion.
Another year of globalization increased their fortunes.
In 1998 the richest people in the world
taken together possess $624 billion.
If someone mentions to them
the village of Acteal in Chenalhó, Chiapas,
45 defenseless dead, finished off
with machetes and expanding hollowpoint bullets
the gentlemen of Forbes would say:
"We are fed up with catastrophic news.
Enough talk about victims.
There is no point in mentioning disasters.
We detest the complaints and lamentations.
We don't want to hear about the 7,000 displaced
(Indians)
in Poloh and in X'oyer
who protect themselves against the murderous groups."
Acteal is nothing
compared with what may come
if immediate action is not taken.
One need only read Andre Gluckman
("The Third Death of God"
in last Wednesday's Spanish daily "El Pais")
about what happened in Bainen,
eight kilometers from Algiers,
on Christmas eve,
two days after the Chiapas massacre:
Hava, 3 years old,
Yahia, 8
and Selma, 11,
were disemboweled.
Their murderers hung their entrails
like garlands on the tree branches.
On top of the decapitated body of their father,
a doll's head.
The mother, the grandmother, the aunt, the uncles ...
the whole family was cut to pieces.
And a nine year old boy
nailed by the arms, crucified.
There are no words, says Gluckman — and it makes one
shudder
to think again of Acteal —
for such indescribable cruelty,
to speak the unspeakable,
to narrate the unimaginable.
If one were to talk about these things, for instance,
with Phil Knight (number 17 in Forbes' list),
owner of Nike and Air Jordan,
companies that enslave little girls in Asian sweat shops,
he will say: "This isn't an issue that should
even be on the political agenda today."
How far?
How long?

— January 11, 1998 (translation by Monique J. Lemaitre and Duane Ediger), 1998 Rights Reserved, Communicacion e Informacion S.A.de C.V.

José Emilio Pacheco is one of Mexico's prominent poets. He has also written novels, essays and short stories. He is a member of the Colegio Nacional.



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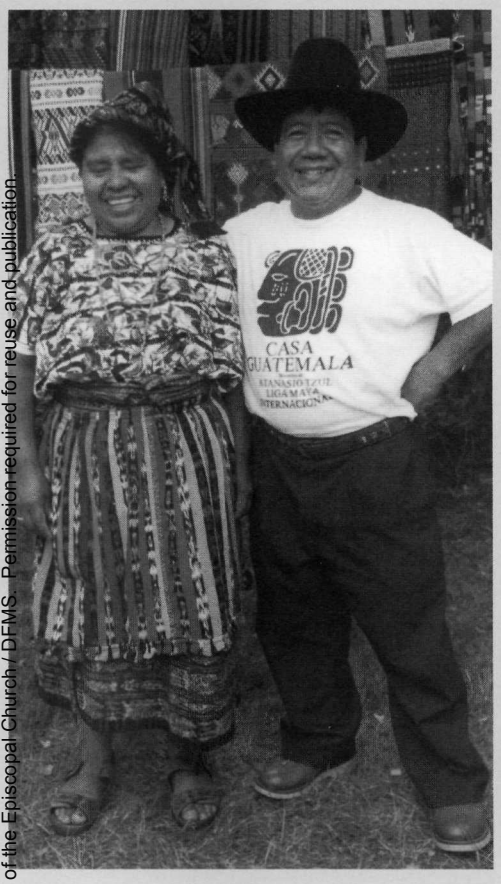
'WE STRUGGLE BECAUSE THE



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Felipe Ixcot, a founder of the International Mayan League, escaped the death squads of Guatemala with his wife, Elena, and their children in 1982. They have been living in sanctuary with the Benedictine Brothers of Weston Priory in Vermont since 1984. They have dedicated their lives to promoting the rights and culture of the Mayan people, both in Guatemala and in the U.S.

An interview with Felipe and Elena Ixcot

by Joyce Penfield

Joyce Penfield: Why did you leave Guatemala?

Felipe Ixcot: It is 18 years since we had to leave Guatemala. When I was 18 years old, I became involved in the church because my father was a catechist. I finished a course as Social Promoter in the Diocese of Quetzaltenango along with 35 other Mayan youth of different languages. It was there that I gained my social conscience as a community organizer with only one intention: to get rid of this misery in which we live. Elena and I got married in 1969 and we organized a youth group in the community and a literacy campaign. When the repression arrived in the 1980s, all of our work was destroyed by the army and death squads who killed or kidnapped various of our co-workers and friends. Then they came after us. For three months I was an internal refugee in Guatemala. Elena during this time received death threats and therefore we had to flee the country with family. We entered Mexico near Tapachula in Chiapas and there our daughter, Maya Ixchel, was born. (Ixchel means "moon" in Mayan. According to our legend the moon taught Mayan women how to weave.) In Mexico, immigration officials were always in the coffee plantations looking for the undocumented so we could never live in peace. Fortunately, we were able to get assistance from Catholic and Presbyterian Mexican friends who helped us go to Mexico City. Eventually we fled to a Presbyterian church in Tucson and then we were taken to a reservation near Phoenix, where Pima and Papago native peoples lived. Later Sister Darlene Nigorski came and told us about a church that could give us sanctuary and security. That is how we entered sanctuary with the Benedictine Brothers in Weston Priory, Vermont.

J.P.: Have you been back to Guatemala since then?

F.I.: Yes. We have visited three times since we got our permanent residency in the U.S. in January 1999. What we found was a disaster, because the people are still traumatized by the war. In order for healing to occur, we need to know who massacred our people. But impunity still exists in Guatemala. The people have no confidence in the authorities. Thus there has been no healing. As for security, kidnappings continue, death threats of human rights leaders continue. The Mayan people in the villages have been forgotten. There is no help for their communities: no schools, no roads, no drinkable water, no health clinics.

The Peace Accords have not worked for anyone. Many say that they exist only to silence the armed struggle and not to deal with the roots of the problems. The people continue to be hungry. More than 50 percent have no work. And 75 percent of the land is still in the hands of 3 percent of land owners. The devaluation of the dollar has also had a big effect. In my town of 14,000 people, more than 6,000 young people have left to work in the U.S. because after finishing their studies there is no work. And there is no land, either, to continue working.

J.P.: What changes did you find in Guatemala when you visited there in 1999?

F.I.: When we arrived at the airport in Quetzaltenango, we saw lots of air pollution. This is new for me. On the edge of the

LAND IS OUR MOTHER'

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city, there was so much garbage right near houses. This didn't exist before. And plastic products have been introduced. International corporations have lured the people to use plastic. When our mothers went to the market, they would take their baskets and plates. If they bought salt, it was wrapped in the leaf of a plant. And later it was washed and used for tamales. The leaves were fed to the horses. Nothing contaminated the earth.

Another thing: thread, which is so important to the Mayan woman because weaving is part of her life and her dreams. Cotton is totally Mayan. Thousands of years ago our ancestors painted thread with different colors for weaving. But now, there is a German company in Quetzaltenango that sells acrylic thread cheaply. International corporations have attacked our culture.

J.P.: I remember some years ago you helped form the International Mayan League. What is its purpose?

F.I.: The International Mayan League (LMI) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was born in Costa Rica. Its function is to further scientific, philosophical and artistic knowledge of all Mayans in Guatemala and also unite Mayans who live outside of Guatemala so that they can know their roots. Another goal is to help the international community become familiar with the political situation the Mayans in Guatemala suffer and to leave a special place for women. LMI also disseminates information about human rights violations. The organization has a political-cultural identity. We don't only speak about the richness of Mayan culture but also its suffering — the racism, oppression, persecution and death to which the Mayan people of Guatemala have been submitted for 500 long years and, in particular, the last 36 years of war.

We have begun to organize our Mayan people in Guatemala to learn about the roots of their existence. What did the Mayans do to develop their civilization before Christopher Columbus arrived? LMI is a great political and peaceful tool for bringing change to

Guatemala. We must begin with our roots. Also we have organized a Mayan Congress here in the U.S. in nine states in which we have training. We want the Mayans living in the U.S. to also know their true history.

J.P.: Why is identity so important for Mayans?

F.I.: When the people finally know this, they are going to open their eyes and understand why they are suffering now. They are going to realize who are the legitimate owners of the land. Why are the grandchildren of Mayan doctors now dying of what only costs five cents to cure? And why do we who lived here before Europeans arrived on this continent now live under such oppression? It is important that the Mayan people know who their ancestors were and what they achieved in science.

According to history, Mayans developed their civilization with three crops: corn, beans and pumpkins. Mayan legend has it that our creator made us out of corn: love of the sky and love of the land. So if we are corn, we are part of nature. That's why Mayan people are so zealous about caring for nature. If we attack plants, we are attacking ourselves because we are part of nature and we are corn. That is our past. It's not what the anthropologists write in books. They say that we were ignorant and that the Europeans brought us civilization. What is "civilization"? Is it the theft of land? Is it the raping of women? Is it the massacre of people? That is what Europe brought.

And as for the land: We don't struggle so hard for land for economic reasons. We struggle because the land is our mother. That is why we struggle over it. It's because we have this relation with the earth. Many human rights organizations in Guatemala do not understand this. They don't pay attention to the roots of the problems nor educate the people in the villages directly about the value of their Mayan culture — a civilization in existence for 10,000 years. Christianity scarcely has been in existence 2,000 years!

J.P.: What are the major issues that confront the Mayan woman today?

Elena Ixcot: Endless problems. A major problem that Mayan women confront today is discrimination because they have never been given an important role to play in political and religious areas. The other problem is that the original woman of this continent has no access to political participation. She is illiterate. And because of the war in Guatemala, she confronts more serious aspects of life. She is left widowed and has to work for the survival of herself and her children all alone. She has never had an opportunity to participate in the political and social aspects of the society. But now there is more active participation as Mayan women have begun to struggle for their rights. They demand from their government: Why kidnappings? Why disappearances of their loved ones? Why forced recruitment that takes away their sons? Mayan women continue to struggle for survival but also to claim their rights.

J.P.: I know both of you have worked in the church a great deal. What are your thoughts about the relationship between the church and the Mayan religion?

F.I.: The church still continues categorizing, but Mayan religion can't be called a religion. It is more a "cosmovision." Its form of understanding life and the existence of God is very special. We Mayans believe more in that which gives us life, that which exists. For example, the rain exists. The sun exists. And when we have a Mayan ceremony, it isn't purely spiritual. It is also educational because reverence is given to the earth and it is explained to the people why reverence is given. Neither is Mayan religion polytheistic because we believe in respecting these elements which are part of our existence. We don't say that they are God, but we honor and respect them. One way to complete the encounter of the two cultures would be for the church to assume its responsibility in finding a road of unity and stop calling Mayans pagans.

We know many things that are found in the Bible that the church doesn't realize. For example, Jesus used many plants to explain the reign of God, mustard seeds and fig trees, because these are part of nature and part of human beings. Then there is the Holy Spirit who comes in the form of fire. Fire in Mayan culture is the center of life. There is a huge contrast between the Mayan and Christian cosmovision. For example, when the Christians came and told our ancestors they were going to eternal fire if they didn't respect God, our ancestors said: But fire is our friend! How were the Europeans interpreting the existence of fire compared to the Mayans? The church doesn't even make a space to study: What is Mayan culture? It only criticizes it. The encounter of the two cultures — Mayan religion and Christianity — has never been achieved or completed.

E.I.: Our hope and our vision is that we can share more about the Mayan cosmovision with the church because we are from this continent and they brought a religion that was born outside of this continent. But so far, with so many people on this continent in North and South America, we have never heard of anything joined with the church. It hasn't happened.

J.P.: What do we non-Mayans need to understand better?

F.I.: To understand that from a Mayan point of view all of humanity is part of this way of life, and protection of all our environment. In the Mayan cosmovision, everyone is brother of the world and shares in the protection of the environment. Another thing is that Mayan culture is the spinal column that sustains Guatemala. And we ask our North American friends to write your government and ask them to place conditions on aid for the government of Guatemala until the Peace Accords are completed.

E.I.: What we require now is mutual respect. That is what brings unity to humanity. Justice, peace, and freedom can be attained by everyone uniting in mutual respect. ●

Joyce Penfield attends the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. She was active in the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s and has led several North American peace delegations to Guatemala. A longer version of this interview is available at <www.thewitness.org>.

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INVISIBLE PEOPLE

With whom do Anglicans stand?

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THE MODERN ERA OF MISSIONS, which gave birth to our communion, began with the first outreach to indigenous people in North America. Since then, the mission to the indigenous nations throughout the world has been a key component in the establishment of many dioceses and provinces. The invisibility of indigenous people and their concerns at the Lambeth Conference [of 1998] is stunning in light of the long history of the church's mission to them. In light of the present-day situation of indigenous people, this invisibility is more than stunning, it is frightening. Often found living within the borders of the "first world" countries of the North, they experience poverty and hunger at a level that parallels conditions in the two-thirds world. Though they retain their tribal identity and relationship to the land, indigenous people are also frequently found living in urban environments. Statements regarding the wealth of the "first world" ignore the poverty of the many. Strategies for mission in urban environments do not consider their presence. In the battle between North and South, indigenous peoples rarely rate an afterthought.

Indigenous people in the world today

Today, indigenous peoples, The People of the Land, stand, both spiritually and physically, in the way of a spirituality of greed in a global culture of consumption. Spiritually, their family- and clan-based traditionalism is in the first line against scientific materialism. Physically, they inhabit the dangerous border between a greedy world and the resources necessary for over-consumption.

Only rarely do nations bother to go through the charade of debt to steal from the indigenous people. They say, "It is our land. They are our resources (cf. Rev 18)." Those who get in the way are in extreme cases simply murdered in overt genocide. Many more are destroyed, with only slightly less speed, in the aftermath of cultural and spiritual destruction — displacement and theft, disease and hunger, suicide and despair.

Although all people feel the "fragmentation" of modern life, indigenous peoples do not see it as a problem of "pluralism and diversity." It is the larger dominant culture's unforgiving call to "fit in" to the larger scheme of things. The eagerness of many to appropriate native symbols does not hide the basic modern hostility toward indigenous peoples. Deeply held prejudice is often betrayed in seemingly innocent contexts. For example, two preliminary section reports here at Lambeth have said that the fragmentation of modern life leads to a "New Tribalism." To indigenous people, "Tribalism" is the opposite — a clan-based communal identity is associated with survival, hospitality, and solidarity with all of creation and her creator.

The mechanisms and institutions that are developed to cope with the fragmentation of modern life are often destructive for indigenous peoples. For example, many types of counseling are based on an understanding of "self" that is derived from the present cultural reality of mass consumer-oriented culture. When applied to indigenous people, these therapies are more than ineffective — they can only increase a sense of fragmentation and alienation.

Where do we go?

One-fourth of the world's remaining usable land is now in the hands of indigenous people. It will, no doubt, be the "battlefield" of many conflicts among the nations in the years to come. What is the hope of indigenous peoples in this precarious situation? Witnessing how easy it has been "not to notice" the tribal nations in this conference one is tempted to fear. If neither side of the geo-political and cultural conflicts that dominated our attention here at Lambeth could "see" indigenous people, will they be seen in the battles for land, air, and water that will surely be a feature of much of the next century? Yet, despite all of what could be said in the negative, today indigenous peoples throughout the world are in a Spirit-led cultural renaissance. Many are accepting the new life of the Gospel with great momentum. Where this has happened, it has only strengthened the Spirit-based traditionalism of their societies. Certainly, it has also intensified the struggle they have with a globe-eating culture of consumption.

The songs and prayers are getting stronger, the voice of Jesus is clear, and the power that sustains life never more evident. The question for this conference is not, "Will indigenous peoples stand?" After over 500 years of deadly hostility aimed toward them, they still do — with pride and strength. Similarly, the question is not, "Does Jesus stand with them?" The question for this conference is whether the Anglican Communion stands with the indigenous peoples. ●

— from "A Statement to Lambeth from the Anglican Indigenous Peoples Network," by Mark MacDonald. MacDonald is the Episcopal Bishop of Alaska and a member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's board of directors (publisher of The Witness*).*

THE GWICH'IN

'The most Anglican group of people in the world'

by Murray Carpenter

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Ken Whitten

The 130,000 caribou of the Porcupine herd migrate hundreds of miles to the ANWR coastal plain annually to give birth to their young. The Gwich'in, 7,000 people living in 15 villages along interior Alaska and Canada, have always been dependent on the Porcupine herd.

AND ANWR

fight for the right to protect a way of life.

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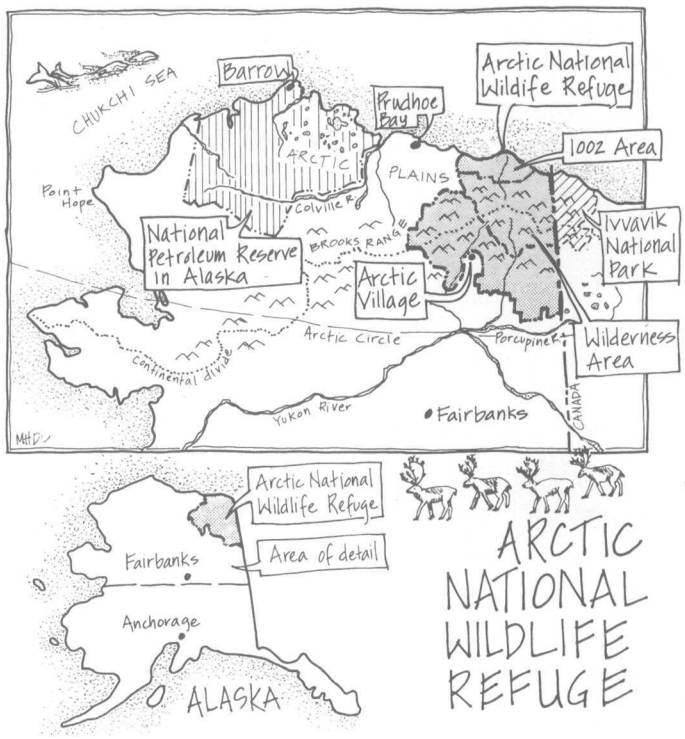
THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (ANWR) means different things to different people. Environmentalists see the 19-million-acre tract in extreme northeastern Alaska as a last remnant of wilderness, home to wolves, wolverines, polar bears and snowy owls. Oil developers see it as the last best hope for a large oil field in the U.S. And the Gwich'in people see the area as a critical birthing area for caribou — and for a way of life.

The 130,000 caribou of the Porcupine herd migrate hundreds of miles to the ANWR coastal plain annually to give birth to their young. The Gwich'in, 7,000 people living in 15 villages along interior Alaska and Canada, have always been dependent on the Porcupine herd (named after the Porcupine River). Caribou are not just another animal to the Gwich'in, they are part of them.



Caribou, culture and 'spiritual solidarity'

"We've always lived like this," says Faith Gemmill, who is from the Gwich'in settlement of Arctic Village, located just south of the refuge, and along the caribou migration route. "We even have a creation story that we came from the caribou." According to Gemmill, the Gwich'in and the animals struck a deal. "The Gwich'in would retain a piece of the caribou heart, and the caribou would retain a piece of the Gwich'in heart," said Gemmill. "So whatever happens to the caribou happens to us, and whatever happens to us, happens to them."

The Gwich'in, and a number of environmentalists, are concerned that oil development along the coast would devastate the Porcupine herd and the Gwich'in way of life. "We're dependent on caribou," said Gemmill. "If [drilling] were allowed, slowly we would lose aspects of our culture. We just want to pass along what we have to our future generations. I want to pass it on to my daughter, and she's only two now."

Caribou comprises as much as 80 percent of the Gwich'in diet, Gemmill says. The hides are used for clothing, the bones for tools. Caribou have inspired traditional songs and dances. In sum, Gemmill said, "It's everything. Spiritually, culturally and socially, too. Like when we're out on the mountain hunting; it's very important for us to have that time up there with the caribou." During the hunt, young boys are taught the role of being the provider, hunting, and giving thanks. Young women are taught to prepare the meat, and other traditional roles. "We live in modern communities, we have TVs, we have telephones," says Gemmill, "but we need that time of year with the caribou."

Sarah James, a Neetsaii ("from the south side of the Brooks Range") Gwich'in from Arctic Village, agrees about the importance of the hunt in teaching the youth "survival, patience, sharing." The hunt also provides specific sustenance to the Gwich'in. "We need fresh meat for our bodies, we survive year to year by hunting or fishing. If that's missing from our bodies, we feel different," said James. "Going out [hunting] like that, that's the way I grew up."

A surprising fact to many outsiders is that most Gwich'in are Episcopalian. "We're Episcopals in Alaska, for about 100 years," Gemmill

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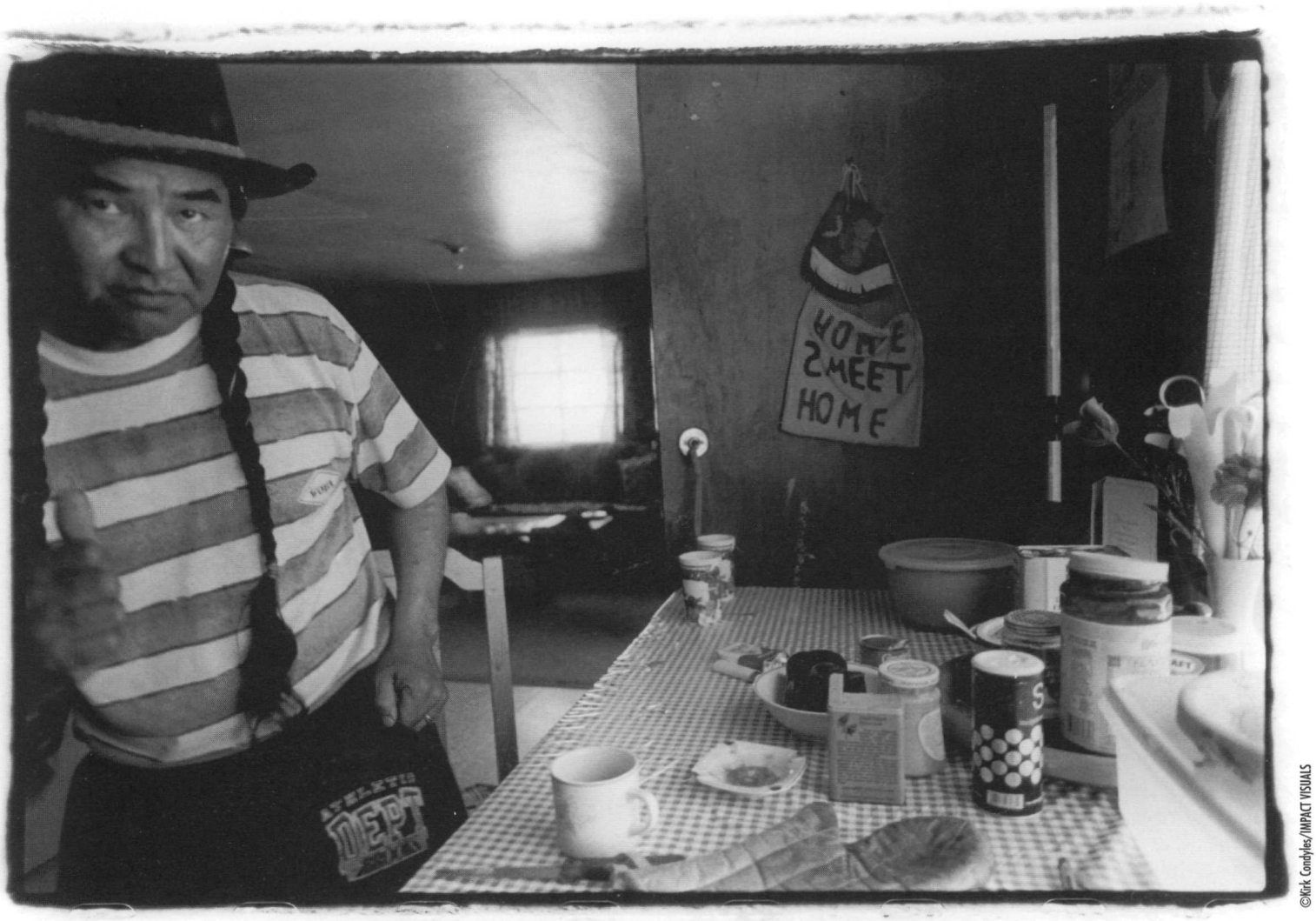

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Gwich'in Randell Tetlachi in his family cabin.

says. "My great-grandfather was one of the first Episcopal ministers; he helped translate the Bible to our language. We say the Lord's Prayer in our language, sing traditional hymns in our language." Gemmill sees no real distinction between traditional Gwich'in spirituality and Christianity. "It's the same," she says. "We have our traditional songs, our traditional dances."

Mark MacDonald, Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, agrees, "Gwich'in Christianity has become a way to affirm and embrace the old ways and the new ways, without losing cultural cohesiveness and solidarity. The Gwich'in are brilliant theologians. Gwich'in traditional culture is much closer to Christianity and Jesus than the dominating culture — Christian or not."

MacDonald adds, "The church has found ANWR a compelling issue since General Convention in 1991. This is because it involves both an environmental concern, in the protection of ANWR, and a human rights concern, in the protection of the Gwich'in way of life. The Gwich'in people, arguably the most Anglican group of people in the world, are directly dependent upon the Porcupine Caribou herd for survival. A threat to the herd is a threat to Gwich'in cultural and physical survival."

The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church last spring renewed its support for permanent protection of ANWR in a resolution "in spiritual solidarity with the Gwich'in people."

'Among the most pristine ecosystems on earth'

The untrammeled land that is now part of the refuge has nurtured the Gwich'in for centuries. "It's an ecosystem that's been intact, and a way of life that's been intact for thousands of years," says Gemmill. She adds that the region she hopes to protect is a finite strip of land. "It's the last 5 percent of America's arctic coast that's not open to oil development. We're not asking much. We should not be asked to sacrifice our culture, our way of life. It's not fair or right."

The entire refuge is over 19 million acres, the same size as Maine. It was dedicated by President Dwight David Eisenhower in 1960 at the behest of scientists and conservationists who felt it had some of the most extraordinary natural values in the arctic. The Brooks Range swings down close to the coast here, making the coastal plain much narrower than it is farther west near Prudhoe Bay, and com-

pressing a great many diverse habitats into a compact area within the refuge.

The great herds of migratory caribou have earned ANWR comparisons to Africa's wildlife-rich Serengeti Plain. In addition to the caribou, the refuge is home to wolves, musk oxen, wolverines, snowy owls and great flocks of snow geese. For a place so far north, the refuge features a great diversity of species: over 160 birds, 36 land mammals, nine marine mammals, and 36 fish. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the refuge, "The Arctic Refuge is among the most complete, pristine, and undisturbed ecosystems on earth."

At risk: the ANWR coast

Eight million acres of the refuge are protected as wilderness; it's the largest wilderness area in the refuge system. But only 30 of the 125 miles of coastline fall into the wilderness area. The coastal area is most critical for the caribou, polar bears and many other species. It's also the area oil developers hope to tap. In 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act doubled the size of ANWR, set aside 8 million acres of the refuge as wilderness, and, controversially, designated 1.5 million acres on the coastal plain as an area to be studied for oil development. This so-called 1002 area, named for the section of ANILCA that created it, comprises the vast majority of the ANWR coast.

Adam Kolton of the Alaska Wilderness League says there have been constant efforts to open ANWR to oil development ever since the Trans-Alaskan pipeline started delivering oil from Prudhoe Bay in 1977. A federal study released in 1987 recommended full-scale oil development. But the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill scuttled the momentum. "Images of dead sea otters, killer whales and shorebirds on the TV every night," he says, "really changed all of that."

Other legislative efforts to open ANWR to drilling came after concerns about dependence on foreign oil flared in the wake of the Gulf War and then a few years later, when concerns about the national debt were high.

The Alaska Wilderness League is pushing efforts to protect the area as wilderness, a measure supported by over 200 members of the House and Senate, and a large segment of the public. In the final months of the Clinton administration, a number of ANWR advocates urged President Clinton to declare the area a National Monument.

"There's huge support from the American people for protecting this area," says Kolton.

In Alaska, the general sentiment is exactly the opposite. "It's become just about illegitimate [for Alaskan politicians] to oppose development in ANWR," says Bob Childers, an advisor to the Gwich'in Steering Committee. "Basically, oil taxes pay 80 percent of the budget." Alaska Senator Frank Murkowski has been the "most vociferous advocate" in Washington, D.C., repeatedly introducing legislation to open the refuge to drilling. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates 3.2 billion gallons of economically recoverable oil lie beneath ANWR, about the amount the U.S. burns in five months.

The recent momentum for drilling in the refuge has been partly prompted by high oil prices, but some believe the oil would provide

Indigenous peoples battling corporate culture

While the Gwich'in struggle with big oil in Alaska, other native peoples are having similar struggles with modern industrial society.

In northeast Colombia, the U'wa Indians have threatened to commit mass suicide by jumping off a cliff if Occidental Petroleum proceeds with plans to explore and develop oil deposits beneath their ancestral homeland. The U'wa claim Occidental's developments, supported by the Colombian government, are just the most recent in a constant erosion of their land rights over hundreds of years.

The U'wa conflict has at least three strong U.S. connections: Occidental Petroleum is based in California; the U.S. is the largest importer of Colombian oil; and the $1.3 billion the U.S. is spending on "Plan Colombia" will strengthen the Colombian military which has worked on Occidental's behalf, brutally at times, to clear roads of protesters and otherwise smooth the way for oil exploration. The U'wa called on foreign governments to reject funding for Plan Colombia because the Colombian government "seeks through this plan to increase violations against the Colombian people and, in particular, against indigenous groups."

In Maine, the Penobscot Indian Nation is fighting the state over the authority to regulate wastewater discharged in the Penobscot River watershed (see *TW* 6/99). Because the Penobscots claim the state's largest river and its islands as their reservation, they argue that they should be allowed to regulate discharges to the river. The state opposes the Penobscot's position, and has been joined by over 30 municipalities and businesses, including pulp and paper mills, concerned that the Penobscots might set unreasonably high standards. The Penobscots argue that they've been living on and with the land and river since the Ice Age, and ought to have the authority to prevent further industrial pollution like the dioxin that has made Penobscot fish, once a dietary staple, unsafe to eat.

The flip side of native sovereignty and the environment is visible in Utah, where the Skull Valley Goshutes hope to site a high-level radioactive waste dump on their reservation. In this case, the tribal leadership and a majority of the tribal members want the dump as a means of "economic development," while Utah's governor, environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, and over 50 Indian tribes oppose it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on environmental struggles of indigenous peoples, see the Indigenous Environmental Network website at <http://www.alphacdc.com/ien/>.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT the Gwich'in, contact Faith Gemmill of the Gwich'in Steering Committee at <gwichin2@alaska.net>.

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Check out 'A Global Witness' :

Through this section of our website we are offering analysis and commentary from around the U.S. church and the global Anglican Communion. Our aim is to encourage a reclaiming of the Anglican vocation to doing "public theology" — and to expand awareness of the issues and struggles occupying the hearts and minds of Anglicans and other persons of faith worldwide.

Postings include: Irene Monroe's regular 'Queer take' column and commentaries from Peter Selby, Katie Sherrod and others.

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little price relief. "We think the evidence is pretty overwhelming that drilling in the refuge would have absolutely no impact on energy prices," says Kolton. "It's really Economics 101: The price of oil is determined by global supply and demand. The simple fact is that, with less than 3 percent of the world's global reserves, we can't drill ourselves to economic independence. We need to decrease our dependence on oil rather than plundering the area."

At stake: a people's spiritual and cultural authority

The Gwich'in have opposed oil development on the refuge since a 1988 meeting, when Gwich'in elders — four from the U.S. and four from Canada, representing 15 villages from Mackenzie Peninsula to Arctic Village — said "no" with "one voice and no compromise."

"It was unanimous, we can't allow it," Gemmill says. "The elders told us to go out and educate the public. It wasn't the environmental community that asked us to take a stand, we did it on our own, with the elders. One of our main cultural values is respect for the land and the animals. One of our spiritual beliefs is that any birthplace, any spawning area, is sacred."

But environmental protection is just part of the equation. "For us it's a human rights issue, not just an environmental issue," Gemmill says. "Every human should have the right just to live." James agrees, "We have the right to say, 'No, we don't want oil development.' It's just human rights versus oil."

ANWR may seem remote, but choices being made by distant industrial economies are now affecting the Gwich'in, most notably in the case of global warming brought on by fossil fuel combustion. Gemmill says the Gwich'in see "many alarming changes" related to global warming, including plants growing differently and migration routes and times changing. Warming is a symptom of a bigger problem. "People are depleting the earth's resources too fast. The earth won't be able to sustain life," she said. Gemmill said many native people, not just the Gwich'in, are saying "Stop ... and give the earth time to heal."

MacDonald believes this is more than an isolated skirmish over preserving the environment or protecting human rights; there is a bigger issue at stake. "Many of the arguments that the church has found compelling in supporting the Gwich'in and other indigenous groups are based in similar views of the spiritual and cultural authority of a 'people' — a nation. These arguments are at the center of our basic moral and spiritual teaching," says MacDonald. "This is the first major skirmish in what may prove to be one of the decisive moral battles of this century. One-fourth of the world's usable land is in the hands of indigenous people. These 'Peoples of the Land' are on the front line of human survival. They are the thin line between the insatiable greed and total destruction of our moral, spiritual, and physical environments."

For now, the Gwich'in are continuing their efforts to get the word out about ANWR. "The elders directed us to go out into the world and tell people why we opposed oil development," James says of the grassroots campaign. "We don't have much money to work with; we've got multi-million-dollar corporations against us. But people do have power. And we've proven that. This is the right thing to do, and that's why."

Even as they struggle to protect ANWR, the Gwich'in work to preserve their traditional culture. James doesn't have any interest in seeing the Gwich'in way of life, now a mixture of cash and subsistence economies, subsumed by modern western culture. "I don't see much value in western culture, but I'm not opposed to higher learning," says James. And she notes that while many places have seen a lot of environmental damage from modern industrial society, ANWR is an ecosystem that still functions well.

"I don't see many places where the natural ecosystems still work," says James. "We're talking about caribou that are still wild and healthy. It's a small place they've gone for thousands of years, It's a safe place for them. It's a special place, a healthy place tucked away in that corner of the world, and it needs to be protected." ●

Murray Carpenter is a freelance writer based in Belfast, Me.

LAWSUITS AND . . .

Lawsuits may leave Canadian Anglicans with only 'a book, a bottle of wine and some bread'

by Marianne Arbogast

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THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA is facing what may be its most difficult time "in living memory," Anglican Primate Michael Peers said in a September sermon at St. James Cathedral in Toronto. Memory, in fact, is at the heart of the church's current struggles. In living memory of thousands of indigenous Canadians now embroiled in lawsuits against the government and mainstream churches of Canada, native children were taken from their families to be schooled in European culture, religion and lifestyle. Some 130 Indian residential schools were administered by the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist (now United) churches to carry out the government policy of assimilation of native peoples. The Anglican Church ran 26 residential schools between 1820 and 1969. In addition to the incalculable loss of family and community, language and values, large numbers of children were subjected to physical and sexual abuse. The schools' legacy includes broken families, alcoholism and suicide.

Three hundred fifty-nine lawsuits, involving 1,600 survivors of this abuse, are now facing the national Anglican Church or its dioceses. The Canadian government is named in more than1,500 lawsuits involving 7,000 survivors. In many cases, claimants brought lawsuits against the government, which then brought third-party claims against the churches.

According to a Residential Schools website set up by the Anglican Church, the total assets of the General Synod (the church's national body) amount to less than $10 million. The damages claimed in the lawsuits naming the General Synod exceed $2 billion, and legal costs continue to escalate. The church may be facing bankruptcy. Although church leaders have assured dioceses that their contributions are not disappearing down legal sinkholes, the drain on the church's assets has already impacted its ministries. In August 2000 eight national church staff positions were cut, and grants to assisted dioceses in the north of Canada (one-third of the church's budget) were reduced by 5 percent. The national church's newspaper, *The Anglican Journal*, suffered a significant cutback, and a national resource center supporting parish ministries was closed.

"There have been shortfalls in donations from dioceses for other reasons," said Jim Boyles, the church's general secretary. "In normal times we might well have been able to handle that through normal budgetary processes. But since we are using our reserves for legal expenses, interest income has fallen, and there is uncertainty because of the continuing drain from the church's assets."

In October, the synod of the Diocese of Cariboo in British Columbia — financially depleted by legal fees stemming from lawsuits filed after the conviction, for sexual abuse, of a former dormitory supervisor at St. George's School in Lytton, B.C. — voted to authorize its bishop, James Cruickshank, and its executive council to formally wind up the affairs of the diocese in the next 12 months. Only one of 15 cases involving the diocese has been decided. Now under appeal, it is also the only case of all those involving the Anglican Church to have proceeded to judgment.

The Diocese of Cariboo — comprised of 17 small parishes that have struggled to become self-supporting and have gradually increased their self-reliance — is engaged in a dispute with the government over ownership of parish buildings, with the government claiming they are diocesan assets, and the diocese asserting that it holds them in trust for the parishes. Delegates to the Cariboo synod laughed when the diocesan chancellor reported that federal lawyers had asked for a list of "jewels and paintings" owned by the churches, many of which are small and poorly equipped. Echoing the national church's stated priority of "healing and reconciliation," Cruickshank urged his diocese to focus on indigenous ministry.

"We need more healing circles and we need to participate in the healing gatherings. And we must always ask what are the needs of the survivors of abuse at St. George's, and we must ask them how we can best respond. We must also ask what role this diocese can play in confronting the racist backlash which we know is present."

The church is facing "pruning," Cruickshank said, which will enable it to "grow back more compassionately than we ever could have imagined possible, because we will know what it's like to be powerless."

While affirming the church's willingness to accept moral and financial responsibility, Anglican leaders have called on the government to find an alternative to the expensive, drawn-out, adversarial court process.

"We'd like to see a comprehensive plan to resolve these claims in the most humane and expeditious way possible," Boyles said. "Our church supports the concept of Alternative Dispute Resolution and has been working with the government on 12 pilot projects, but it is very, very slow. We believe the government needs to look at alternative ways of handling claims. The church and federal government must find a way through these cases so they're not fighting each other, but rather focusing on the victims of abuse in the schools."

Boyles says such a process should be based on principles outlined in a report by the Law Commission of Canada, which include "compensation, apology, memorialization, and commitment to ensure such abuse doesn't happen in the future."

In his September sermon at St. James, Peers acknowledged that he does not know if the national church will survive in its present form. "I do not know if those dioceses that are in financial difficulty will survive either," he said. "I do not know if church buildings in those dioceses will have to be sold. ... But there are things I do know. I know that the way of the cross is the way to life. I know that it makes possible — in fact, even inevitable — the setting free of the kingdom of God."

As Bishop Duncan Wallace, quoted in *The Anglican Journal*, put it, "All we need is a book, a bottle of wine and some bread and we're in business." ●

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S OF A CULTURE

An interview with Donna Bomberry

by Marianne Arbogast

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[Ed. note: Donna Bomberry is Indigenous Ministries Coordinator for the Anglican Church of Canada.]

Marianne Arbogast: Why is the issue of residential schools so significant for native people in Canada today?

Donna Bomberry: It's very complex and steeped in the history of our relationships in Canada. The Anglican Church, with the other church denominations who administered the residential schools for the government, operated residential schools until 1969. So it's still a live experience for my generation, the next generation older than myself and our children and grandchildren coming after us.

There are many issues that native people have with that experience, but the major focus here in Canada is the litigation that has come about because of physical and sexual abuse that happened to former students. But there are other issues that come out of it as people recall their experience. It is often termed cultural genocide, where people lose their language and identity as part of a people and within a family and a community. And other losses have been identified. Being raised in an institution, you don't learn relationship skills, parenting and how to be family. So the legacy affects three to four generations who are living today.

M.A.: What kind of outcome do you think indigenous Canadians are hoping for from the lawsuits?

D.B.: I guess they're seeking redress. But they haven't seen or heard anything. Our Council [the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples] has noted the actions of some lawyers in Canada who were seeking First Nations people to sign up to litigation. People didn't know what they were signing up for. They heard promises of dollars or whatever promises the lawyers were making, and people would sign on to the lawsuits, not fully understanding what it was about. So we identified that these lawyers were preying upon people who have a poverty, a spiritual poverty and an economic poverty, as a result of many experiences — residential school being a major part of that — in their life. And that, really, the only winners in all this are going to be the lawyers.

M.A.: So those who suffered abuse or the consequences of abuse will not in fact benefit from the lawsuits?

D.B.: I don't know. Out of the legal court situation, there's no provision of long-term work for an individual to seek healing — and perhaps some of them aren't seeking that. So perhaps it's a short-term solution. It's what's available to all in Canadian society. Human rights and due process is court litigation. And lawyers are convincing enough, I guess, that that is the route you go, if there's no other action in town.

M.A.: Would it have been better for the government to have taken a different approach?

D.B.: What is now being looked at is Alternative Dispute Resolution. The church and government together are exploring the ADR process as an alternative way that is hopefully going to be more humane than the court system and is able to help provide mechanisms for healing. But that is moving very slowly.

There's some discussion happening now about another alternative to litigation and ADR, and that is tribunal, which is a little more than the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. A tribunal would allow all parties to speak, all those who've been affected. That includes the former students, their families, former staff, and even government, to explain the policy. Many people don't know what the policy was all about and why the residential schools were established. You know, that's the biggest question that many of the former students have: Why did that happen? Why did I go through all that? What was all that about? And we're still trying to understand as a church what we were doing involved in that.

M.A.: How would you evaluate the response of the church to this challenge so far?

D.B.: I look at our history. Our national church got out of residential schools in 1969. And our church commissioned a report to General Synod called the Hendry report, *Beyond Traplines*. The Hendry report identified self-determination and treaty and land rights and industrial and environmental development, and so our church set out to find ways of being advocates and seeking justice in those areas.

And then in the early 1990s the legacy of residential schools really began to emerge, when a political leader in the First Nations community spoke out about his experience. The Anglican Church also began to pay attention to that. The church needed to hear those stories and bring to light the experience of those who attended Anglican schools. That began in 1991 and our Healing Fund was established in 1991. The apology of the primate of the national church came in 1993, and

'English and English only'

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN ALASKA has been in the hands of native Alaskans essentially since the Russians sold the Great Land, as they call it, to the U.S. [in 1867]. It was the only institution in native hands because of the assimilationist policies of the U.S. government. [Then] the U.S. government, in a remarkable violation of the separation of church and state, assigned various Indian reservations to specific Protestant Christian bodies and paid the salaries of missionaries to carry out the civilizing task. Two of the key players in the social and educational assimilationist policy were Presbyterian ministers, S. Hall Young and Sheldon Jackson. Young wrote in his autobiography about the need to counter Orthodoxy's habit of using indigenous languages and customs.

"One strong stand," Young wrote, "— so far as I know I was the first to take it — was the determination to do no translating into any of the native dialects. I realized that the task of making an English-speaking race of these natives was much easier than the task of making a civilized and Christian language out of the native languages. We should let the old tongues with their superstitions and sins die, the sooner the better, and replace these languages with that of Christian civilization, and compel the natives in our schools to speak English and English only."

And in 1912, the U.S. government closed the Orthodox Church school, St. Paul's in the Aleutian Islands, for the crime of teaching Aleut. Let me give it to you straighter. In the words of one of the commissioners of education: "We have no higher calling in the world than to be missionaries to these people who have not yet achieved the Anglo-Saxon frame of mind."

Or, straighter yet, in a citation that I think is really raw in its exposure of the connections of commerce, racism, Protestant Christianity and assimilationist policies. This is from the official school philosophy promulgated in 1900 (Jackson headed the U.S. government's education policy in Alaska): "If the native population of Alaska can be brought under the influence of Christianity and be given a rudimentary English-language education, it follows that the white population [these are immigrants from the lower 48 states] could employ them in mining, transportation and the production of food."

Now this phrase, "brought under the influence of Christianity," is especially telling in that many of the native population were Orthodox Christians. But just this is another trait of the controlling narrative: That is to say, it consistently filters out, or declares as illegitimate or heretical, dissenting Christianities. ●

Larry Rasmussen (quoted with permission from his 1999 Kellog Lectures at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.).

a covenant regarding self-determination within the church came about in 1994. So indigenous Anglicans, working with the rest of the church, began to tell the story. But the story wasn't known generally. Canadians in general have been in denial about the history, so it's been a steep learning curve and a quick one in the past few years.

That experience is in the history of my family, as close to me as an uncle, but I never knew the stories. I knew of dysfunction and substance abuse. We internalize our anger and abuse ourselves and so we see that in our families, but we don't know why. I think that's part of the denial. We believed things about ourselves that were being taught in residential schools. Assimilation was a policy to do away with Indian people, and we internalized those views of us, and self-hatred and low self-esteem went to work at us. Those are the areas we try to respond to now through our work of healing and reconciliation.

One positive thing is a proposed increase in the Aboriginal Healing Fund that is administered here at the national church. The Aboriginal Healing Fund was established in 1991, and it has established an annual budget of $100,000. That will be doubled come 2001.

The Canadian government needs to address the litigation situation so that we, the church, might be able to participate in the healing in the long run, rather than being put out of business in the short run. We want to continue to be around to work in bringing about justice, whether it's advocacy for land rights or treaty rights with the government, or education with the rest of Canadian society.

M.A.: Do you think that part of the reason the lawsuits have mushroomed the way they have at this time might have to do with anger or frustration over other issues, like treaty rights, that are harder to get a handle on or find a way to take to court?

D.B.: I think it is more basic than that. Because First Nations communities haven't been able to have those issues resolved, they have the highest unemployment, and so it gets down to an individual's basic situation and needs that, politically, the First Nations community is trying to find a resolution to. And they can't move in those areas until our treaties are upheld and government recognizes land rights and treaty rights, so that First Nations communities can be further self-determining and be involved in their communities' development. It comes down to the treaty, the land basis of a First Nations community, and how that affects an individual. Residential schools also identifies for an individual that they lost a culture and its values and its relationship to land. It's the land that gives a people their identity, who they are, what their economy is, what their society is. Residential schools displaced people in that relationship,

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so they could not return, and if they did return there was nothing there to sustain them. Many former students are out in the cities, and have discovered that they don't have the skills to sustain themselves.When I first started doing this work I ran into many people who would say, I've been in and out of recovery programs for substance abuse and these conventional programs aren't working for me because I haven't felt validated. I think that's part of the frustration and the stereotyping that we face as Indian people. No one knows what our history is. Those individuals who are seeking healing and recovery don't have their experience validated because no one knows what they're talking about.We see racism and anger surfacing around fishing rights, logging, mining. When indigenous peoples are seeking their fair share of a particular industry, we run into conflict with other people who have a stake in that industry.

It's a vicious circle and out of that anger and frustration, it comes out this way. The tip of the iceberg is being focused on the residential schools. But the cultural genocide and loss of language and psychological abuse, all that is part of the other lawsuits that are there, and courts have not determined yet how to deal with that.

M.A.: Those issues are actually named in the lawsuits, but don't fit into a legal category?

D.B.: Right, or one that is what they call "compensable."

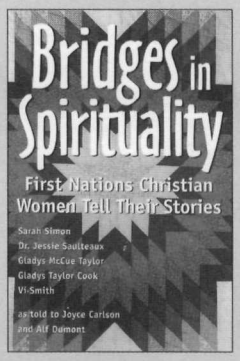
M.A.: Do you think there's a way in which the lawsuits might be helpful in bringing those issues to light and raising questions about attitudes and practices that persist in the dominant culture?

D.B.: One thing that the lawsuits have done is gotten everyone's attention. I guess this is a wakeup call for Canadians.

M.A.: What has this process been like for indigenous Canadians who are Anglicans?

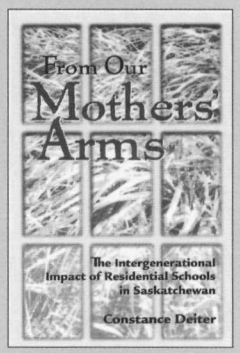
D.B.: My own sense of this is through our national Council when we gather. Many of them are former students of residential schools. It's very complex to try and tell you what it's like for them, because they're very much part of the church, faithful people, but their families are hurting. They experience the legacy within their own families and their own communities, and they need to walk with those hurting people. We as a church need to respond and we need tools, we need skills, we need resources to help respond locally. ●

Marianne Arbogast is associate editor of The Witness.



Bridges in Spirituality
First Nations Christian Women Tell Their Stories, Joyce Carlson and Alf Dumont, editors (Anglican Book Center/United Church Publishing House, 1997).

From Our Mothers' Arms
The Intergenerational Impact of Residential Schools in Saskatchewan by Constance Deiter (United Church Publishing, 1999).



In 1986, on behalf of the United Church of Canada, its Moderator made a formal apology to native people for the role of the church in the missional destruction of their cultures. In 1993, Canada's Anglican Archbishop offered a similar apology, naming, in particular, the church's role in the administration of residential schools.

These two books are intended as part of the work which repentance demands. They are efforts to listen to the voices and stories of native people and to grant those voices a wider hearing.

The first, *Bridges in Spirituality*, comprises the oral histories of five church women, some with liturgical authority (one the first to offer communion in the Ojibwe language), others clergy spouses, all active church leaders in their own right. The "bridge" concerns their gift and capacity to combine the Gospel and given ecclesiastical structures with the traditional ways, creatively giving form to the one with the other.

There is included, for example, the invocation of the elders of the four directions in connection with a native baptismal. These women tend to have as graceful a facility with Scripture as with the old traditions and the two move in and out of one another in their hearts and words.

The second volume is more narrowly focused on the residential schools of Saskatchewan. It, too, works from oral histories, in this case of the author's own family members.

The consequential effects of the residential system which it documents are devastating. Perhaps emblematic is a schoolwall mural which is described, whereupon white priests pause on a staircase leading to heaven while native people in traditional dress are represented going off to hell.

The consequences were indeed hellish for native children. Citing the work of Alice Miller, the internationally noted child psychologist, Deiter is able, with a substantial theoretical foundation, to read the evidence of this poisonous pedagogy, this assault on family, this loss of parenting as issuing in the whole range of obsessive-compulsive disorders: alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, overeating — just to name a few.

Teasing stories out from behind denial, it also narrates humor and, above all, resistance. The latter includes, on the one hand, the direct burning down of certain residential schools or, on the other, the development of Indian sign language as a subversive method of student communication, "silenced" and behind the back (or under the very noses) of teachers.

An appendix outlines the United Church's formation and administration of a Healing Fund. Given the scale and consequences of this well-intentioned horror, at $1 million it seems underfunded.

— Bill Wylie-Kellermann is *The Witness*' book review editor.

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LAND REFORM IN EL

'The land without Indians is worthless'

by Richard A. Bower

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LA TIERRA SIN INDIOS NO VALE NADA. The land without Indians is worthless. This was the attitude of the Spanish colonials from the earliest days, shaping the long tradition of struggle and suffering of the native populations, and later of the *mestizo campesino*, the rural peasant of El Salvador. Immediately on taking possession of Central America, the Spanish crown, supported by the sword (military) and the cross (the church), began a process of land acquisition and oppression, leaving wounds that still affect the majority of Salvadorans.

To encourage colonization, the Spanish king gave large blocks of land to Spanish settlers. The settlers had dreams of immediate wealth and little stomach for the hard work of developing the land for production. For this reason the colonials said they wouldn't accept the land without also receiving enough natives to work the land. This process of giving land along with indentured indigenous people to work the land was called *La encomienda*.

La Encomienda — land and indentured workers

La Encomienda guaranteed that the best and richest of the land would remain in the hands of the few, and that a whole culture of poor, landless peasants would emerge over the centuries. And in El Salvador the impact of *La encomienda* still lasts.

Here, in the most densely populated country in Central America, the bulk of the population lives a rural, agricultural life. Eighty percent of the cultivatable land is in the hands of 2 percent of the people, the oligarchy, the coffee growers, the so-called 14 Families (in reality, more like 100). Even in the 21st century, El Salvador functions like a medieval fiefdom: an old landed oligarchy, supported by a strong military, chaplained by a conservative, hierarchical Roman Catholic Church, still living on the coffee *haciendas* and ruling the large *latifundios*. For over 500 years little has changed.

The coastal, Pacific plains of El Salvador are fertile and rich. Most of the large-production crops are grown there: cotton (which used to be king), sugar cane, fruits of all kind, maguay, from whose fibers ropes are made, and *añil* from which comes a valuable purple dye.

In the early 1930s a peasant insurrection, led by a child of the oligarchy, Farabundo Martí, nearly overthrew the military government supported by the oligarchy. In revenge, General and President Maximiliano Martínez slaughtered over 30,000 native Salvadorans and peasants in less than three months. At the heart of the rebellion was the issue of the just distribution of land. In this repression, Martínez had the support of the oligarchy, the church — and the U.S.

From that time onward, even today, the poor, if they have land, live and work their small *milpas* (parcels of land) in the highlands, the steep, rocky and lifeless soils of Chalatenango, Las Cabañas and Morazán. Meanwhile, the landed families produce products for export, not for feeding the people: coffee, cotton, cane (e.g., rum), and sometimes fruit and vegetables for local and foreign consumption. The *campesinos* do the best that can be done, raising corn and beans on the dry hillsides, often losing even what little land they have traditionally worked (without holding legal title) when the larger landowners for whom they previously worked in serf-like conditions expropriate it (with government support).

Base communities and organizing

The 1960s and 1970s were times of growing threat. Union organizers, Catholic workers and Christian base communities organized rural communities and agricultural cooperatives to, at first, improve the living conditions of the *campesinos* and then to redress the government for failures to protect these workers' limited rights.

When the oligarchy awoke to this activity, they began a campaign of severe oppression toward the *campesinos* and organized workers. Governments fell if they showed the least interest in responding to the needs of the poor. In 1977 President (General) Arturo Armando Molina issued a land reform proclamation, which (under pressure) never left the page it was printed on. By January 10, 1981, after three years of back-and-forth fighting between the government and several opposition groups, the first FMLN (a coalition of six or seven of these groups) armed offensive changed civil unrest to civil war. In 1984, under the leadership of moderate President Nepolian Duarte, a very progressive land reform legislation was passed. Hopes were soon dashed, brutally in many places, when signals were sent to the landowners that neither the military nor the courts would enforce the agrarian reforms. In the tensions that followed, the war escalated.

As in the beginning, so now. The landed oligarchy demanded low-paid, passive and submissive workers for the land. *La tierra sin indios no vale nada* was still a reality of the early 1980s.

The Peace Accords — land to combatants

After the Peace Accords of 1992, two remarkable things happened.

SALVADOR

Dona Teresita in her rural kitchen in El Salvador.

The first was that the accords required land distribution to all of the decommissioned fighters, both members of the Salvadoran military and of the FMLN, the revolutionaries. This was done in 1993, with parcels taken from the holdings of the oligarchy sufficient for subsistence farming.

The other thing that happened was that the old landed families, for the time at least, had little concern for the land that remained in their control. They had discovered the international money markets, neoliberal economics, the privatization of government services, and were financially doing quite well through the banks they owned and the foreign investments they made. The rich landowners produced no cotton for export in the years 1995–1999. In addition, because of the free-tariff trading between Guatemala and El Salvador, merchants found it was cheaper to import Guatemalan fruits and vegetables (and often meat) than it was to pay the new, inexperienced, El Salvadoran farmers to produce them. Good land lay barren and there was no government to provide technical and financial support to help the new farmers change the situation.

During the years of 1996–1999, many of the newly landed ex-combatants began selling their land, feeling that the money would be worth more than the continued struggle to stay afloat as small farmers. Little by little the land (purchased cheaply) returned to the original owners, legally and publicly. These people are now, once again, beginning to produce crops for export.

In the mountains, where the land is less productive, the *campesino* have been able to retain the land. With the help of U.S. aid, some of this newly acquired land is being surveyed and registered to protect the small farmers. But still, the land is very difficult to cultivate: It is like trying to farm in rocky northern New England, without the promise of rain.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, strong organizations and popular education strengthened the hand of small rural communities. Cooperative endeavors abounded. There is little of that now — most were destroyed during the final years of the war. Through heroic efforts some new agricultural cooperatives have been formed among the poor, despite quiet opposition by the government and conservative church leaders. But they are minimal, with little economic support. The war has also changed the culture, especially among the *campesinos*. This group is far more individualistic and disheartened that it was in the early war years. Community organizations and Christian base communities, the energy and life of the poor in the 1960s and 1970s, have mostly disappeared. Some are trying to reemerge, but with much difficulty.

Except for the developing service and financial economic sectors, El Salvador remains basically an agricultural country, the vast percentage of people depending heavily on the land and its produce. Recent governmental proposals for agricultural reform are focused primarily on the large producers of export crops. Little has changed over the generations. The few see their ownership of the land as their right and privilege, while the many eke out their living on the gleanings left over. As always, land reform — justice in the use and production of the earth's resources — is an urgent issue of stewardship and of equity.

Anglican Church response

The Anglican Church of El Salvador's response, as it has been since the 1980s, has been to provide a voice for those without voice, a community that has struggled to provide assistance, training and community organization for the rural *campesino*. In the 1980s, the Salvadoran Anglican Church, with the help of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief (now called Episcopal Development and Relief), operated an agriculture training school, *El Maizal*, in the region of *La Libertad*, until it was closed down because of the intensity of the war. The church was also instrumental in founding CREDHO, an organization, now autonomous, for the training and organizing of rural cooperatives.

During the war years humanitarian money flowed from the U.S. and Europe to support efforts like these. Sadly, little of that support continues. The focus is on the globalized economy, not on micro interests such as rural cooperative farming.

In El Salvador, a country with more than 5 million inhabitants living together on a small parcel of land the size of West Virginia, people continue to live poorly on the land or, fleeing to the cities, even poorer in urban *barrios populares*. The Maya, the ancient native people of the area now comprising Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, believed and practiced that the land and its fruits belonged to all the people. Now the land, for centuries distributed as royal patronage among the rich, remains the property of the few, the land and forests ravished by greed, a sore that erupts in civil war century after century. ●

Richard Bower is a member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's board of directors (ECPC publishes The Witness*).*

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CHIAPAS' LONG STRU

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Chiapas, Mexico: Members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

'You can't talk about the Gospel without addressing people's miserable poverty'

by Camille Colatosti

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"I want there to be democracy, no more inequality — I am looking for a life worth living, liberation, just like God says." — *JOSÉ PEREZ (EZLN militiaman, captured at Oxchuc, Jan. 4, 1994)*

ON JANUARY 1, 1994, 3,000 members of the mostly indigenous Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) captured the city of San Cristobal, Mexico, the capital of Chiapas, one of the country's poorest states. On the border with Guatemala, 50 to 90 percent of the people here speak a Mayan language, making it "Mexico's Indian heartland," according to Harvard's John Womack, Jr., author of *Rebellion in Chiapas* (The New Press, 1999).

While 14,000 Mexican troops forced a Zapatista retreat from Cristobal on January 2 and by January 12 a ceasefire had been declared, many say that peace has never been reached and that the Zapatista rebellion has shaped the region.

According to Womack, the cause of the rebellion is "an age-old problem," with the wealthy using all the power available to it "to squeeze every bit of labor and every bit of money it can out of the poor people who are the great majority there and who also happen to be of Mayan descent."

A long history of poverty

Chiapas covers almost 29,000 square miles and has a population of over 3.2 million. Of all of Mexico's states, it is the most agricultural, with coffee and cattle as its major crops. A poor state, the average per capita annual income is $2,000–$3,000, compared to $5,000 nationally and $30,000 in some northern states. Fifty-four percent of the people in Chiapas are malnourished.

The infrastructure of Chiapas is also severely lacking. While 55 percent of Mexico's electricity is generated from Chiapas, only about 20 percent of homes in Chiapas have electricity.

Chiapas also has the worst education in the country — 72 out of 100 children do not finish the first grade. More than half of the schools offer only a third-grade education. Half of the schools have only one teacher for all the courses offered. In 1989, there were 16,058 classrooms in Mexico, and only 96 were in indigenous zones.

The poverty of Chiapas has roots that go back to the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The conquest led to the mass enslavement of Indians, even though slavery was technically illegal.

By the 19th century, great *haciendas* of sugar and sisal — a cactus-like plant whose fibers are used to make rope, rugs and other goods — employed thousands of pauperized workers, most of whom remained bound to wealthy planters by unpayable debts.

Rebellion in Chiapas also has a long history. In 1545, the first Catholic bishop of Chiapas, Bartolome de las Casas, protested the exploitation of the native population. In 1712, indigenous people tried to overthrow the *hacienda* system. From 1810–21, Mexicans fought to win their independence from Spain. Then, 100 years later, Mexicans fought again, waging the Mexican Revolution, which overthrew a dictatorship and promised liberal reforms that would eliminate poverty and provide education, health care and land for all, but, according to Womack, these promises went largely unrealized. Inequality and poverty remained, especially among indigenous peoples.

Nevertheless, an article of the Mexican Constitution (adopted in 1917, after the revolution) did change the shape of Chiapas. Article 27 recognized villages as corporate bodies entitled to tenure in agricultural lands and guaranteed grants of federal or expropriated private lands — *ejidos* — to villages that needed them. This article inspired many to move into the jungles of Chiapas to form villages.

Groups of landless neighbors would find grantable land, occupy it, secure the perimeter, and declare a community. They would fight to protect the land and petition for official recognition. Once recognized, they would petition for an *ejido*.

By 1960, the jungle was transformed with new remote villages which largely functioned with political autonomy. They ruled themselves through town meetings and village assemblies. However, they failed to achieve economic independence. Without a real plan, most newly formed villages grew coffee or raised cattle, and so remained subject to the large export markets.

Continued poverty and inequality contributed to widespread popular unrest.

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Pro-EZLN graffitti on the poverty-stricken streets of San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico

January 1, 1994: NAFTA and Zapatistas

Tensions and repression increased in 1994 in response to two crises, crises from which Chiapas — and perhaps Mexico as a whole — has not recovered.

The U.S., Mexican and Canadian governments initiated the first crisis. It came in the form of economic policy — the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This agreement, which took effect January 1, 1994, removed all agricultural tariffs. This effectively lowered the price of Mexican crops and lowered both payments to Mexico's poorest producers and wages to the country's poorest workers. The value of corn, for instance, fell dramatically. Even worse for Mexican farmers, U.S. corn can be sold in Mexico at 60 percent of the cost of the Mexican crop. NAFTA also paved the way for abuse of the environment. Logging corporations, such as Boise Cascade, now have unregulated access to exploit the forests.

But most controversial of all was Mexico's repeal of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, the article making communal lands — *ejidos* — available to villagers and protecting communal land holdings from privatization.

The second crisis of 1994 was, say many, precipitated by NAFTA. That was the rebellion on January 1 by the Zapatistas. When 3,000 armed members of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) descended on Chiapas' capital of San Cristobal, they declared war on the Mexican army. Their aims, clearly stated in their declaration, were to overthrow the Mexican government. A key reason for this action, they explained, was to implement land reform. The leaders were largely indigenous and fought for a better life in Chiapas. For this reason, their cause was seen with general sympathy throughout the country.

The fact that the Zapatistas were extreme underdogs may also have led many to view them with sympathy. The invasion came as a surprise to the Mexican government, but within 24 hours, 14,000 Mexican troops forced a Zapatista retreat. By January 12, a ceasefire was declared and peace talks began.

The peace negotiations centered on what has come to be called "the Indian question," not the attempted government overthrow. While the EZLN may have wanted to take over Mexico, they soon realized that this goal was unrealistic.

In 1996, about one-and-one-half-years after negotiations began, an agreement was reached — the San Andres Accords — which committed the government to giving Indian communities more autonomy. But the Mexican congress never ratified the agreement.

Military occupation — and faith-based resistance

Instead, the government has waged low-intensity warfare in Chiapas. The bulk of the army — a total of almost 80,000 troops — has gradually moved into the state, three times the level of occupation at the beginning of the conflict. Chiapas contains a combined total of 300 barracks, camps and checkpoints.

"In Chiapas, there are 20 to 25 military vehicles that pass through different roads where I live and control all the means of transportation," says Manuel Hernandez Aguilar, an indigenous Mayan from a grassroots faith community called *El Pueblo Creyente* (People of Faith). "When we go out, they ask us for ID and treat us as if we are foreigners in our land — but we are the ones who are the original people of this land."

Aguilar presents an example of the kind of leader and the kind of movement that had been building in modern Chiapas since the 1960s. *El Pueblo Creyente* is an organization of Catholic lay people who gather to share common experiences, and to oppose repression of local indigenous Mayan communities.

"My principal work," explains Aguilar, "is to wake our people up to what's happening. We want people to reflect on what the Gospel means to them. This is not just a spiritual evangelism, though. We also deal with human needs — and how Jesus worked hard to meet the needs of the poor and change their situation.

"We carry out our work so that people

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aren't left behind and forgotten. We want our church to be alive, not dead. Our church announces the good that happens and denounces the bad.

"Our work has much to do with poverty, because there is a lot of poverty. You can't talk about the Gospel without addressing people's miserable poverty."

Aguilar also works with a group of organizations that are independent from the church, ARIC (the Rural Association of Collective Interests). As he explains, "These are independent and democratic, and put into action the reflections that we do in our faith groups. ARIC is looking for an end to this poverty. But this work is not looked upon well by government authorities."

Aguilar continues, "Because we carry out this work, our diocese is persecuted. Our Bishop Samuel Ruiz was threatened with death and there was an attempt on the lives of many leaders for the work we do with the living Gospel."

Since 1995, government authorities backed by the ruling PRI party have closed 35 churches and chapels in Chiapas. In 1998, Mexico deported Thomas Hansen of Pastors for Peace and Miguel Chanteau, a French Catholic priest. Chanteau, who worked in Chiapas for 30 years and was a close associate of Ruiz, had criticized the Mexican government for its violence toward indigenous people.

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Paramilitary violence: the Acteal massacre

In addition to the army, Chiapas is plagued with numerous paramilitary troops, organized by both the cattle barons and the army. The paramilitary has been reportedly responsible for numerous human rights abuses, from searching homes without warrants, to stealing livestock and food, to erecting arbitrary roadblocks, to rapes and murders.

A year ago, Asna Jahanjir, a United Nations official assigned to monitor the status of human rights in Chiapas, reported that "extra-judicial executions are widespread and ongoing. Entire communities are forced to flee to makeshift refugee camps."

One of the worst incidents to take place since the 1994 rebellion is the Acteal massacre, in which 45 civilians were killed on December 12, 1997.

Kerry Appel, director of the Human Bean Company, a fair-trade coffee company based in Denver, was in Acteal at the time of the massacre and witnessed the killings. He has been traveling to Mexico for 30 years, buying coffee directly from producers in Chiapas and then selling it in the U.S. Because he eliminates the middleman, or "coyote," he pays producers about $1.50 a pound for their coffee instead of the usual 40 cents. Acteal is a Tzotzil Indian village where the coffee for the Human Bean Company is grown.

"Women and children fled down the steep mountain path toward the valley, as armed men shot them from behind," Appel recounts. "Some who reached the underbrush by the river below were discovered by the assassins when the babies' cries gave them away. ... The assassins cut open the stomach of a young pregnant woman, tore her unborn baby out and cut it up. A baby less than one year old survived because her mother covered her with her own body and received all the bullets. One baby was shot in the head at close range.

"The massacre went on for almost five hours ... while dozens of armed civil guards stood on the road above and did nothing.

"In the end, 45 of Human Bean's coffee producers had been massacred and as many as 5,000 were refugees in the Tzotzil community of Pohlo."

Later, Appel learned that there was no coffee available for him to buy. "The same Mexican-government-backed paramilitary groups that had committed the massacre ... then stole the coffee of the dead and the refugees to sell it," he says.

The coffee processing plant in Acteal — where Human Bean coffee is processed — was then occupied by the Mexican army, an action that would have been unthinkable when the Mexican constitutions' autonomy-promoting Article 27 had been in effect. Dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the government had become aggressively intolerant of the independent villages of Chiapas, villages that had been independent, in some cases, since their founding.

Election defeats for the PRI

The decision of the PRI to crack down on those who seek autonomy may have ultimately led to its defeat in the latest round of national elections.

In last July's presidential elections, opposition candidate Vicente Fox defeated the PRI favorite—the first time in 71 years that the PRI lost its hold on the presidency. Likewise, the PRI lost the governorship of Chiapas to opposition candidate Pablo Salazar, an independent representing an alliance of parties including Fox's National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution, which supports the Zapatistas. Salazar helped negotiate the 1996 peace accords.

Fox says he is willing to respect the San Andres Accords. During his campaign, he also said that he could resolve the Chiapas conflict in "15 minutes." He promised to withdraw the army to its pre-1994 positions.

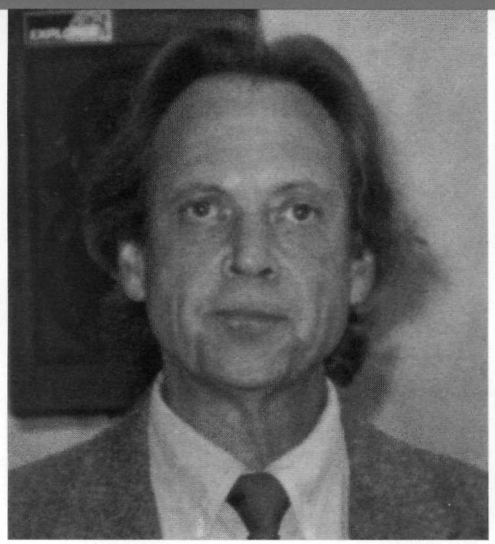
But very quickly Fox seemed to be having second thoughts. In October 2000, he suggested that "an army pullout might not happen prior to an accord," and would happen only when "law and order" have been established.

As Womack puts it, "I don't think elections solve very much, but they do something. The fact that the PRI lost the election in Chiapas doesn't mean that all the bad guys are gone and only good guys will run things, but the wealthy have lost some of the official leverage that they used to have. They haven't lost property by any means — but things have changed."

Still, he continues, "the people in Mexico need to continue what they have been doing for many years: figuring out what really are the obstacles to their own popular organizations and trying to organize around those obstacles, to undermine them. They need to put together formal organizations in the economy as producers, consumers, credit cooperatives — develop their own material base and use that base to develop formal political organizations that can provide them protection. This can happen only from local places and spread from each local place. It can't be dictated from above. It has to come from popular organizing — and that is the work of a lifetime." ●

Camille Colatosti is The Witness' *staff writer.*

AN ADOPTED LAKOT



To fight a 21st-century Indian killer

by Owanah Anderson

PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II, diabetes was virtually unknown among the Native American population. After 1940 diabetes became "epidemic" among many tribes.

Today, diabetes is a vicious 21st-century Indian killer. National statistics show that Indians are hit four times harder than the general population.

Among Pima Indians in southern Arizona, 50 percent of persons over 35 years of age have diabetes. In some tribes in Oklahoma more than 40 percent of persons 60–64 years old have the disease. In all, about 60,000 of the 2.2 million American Indians/Alaska Natives who receive health care from Indian Health Care facilities throughout the nation are known to have diabetes.

Every American history student knows that American Indians had no immunity to simple childhood diseases, such as measles, that came with European explorers and wiped out entire villages and nations of native peoples. But why, in the last half century, has diabetes taken such a deadly toll among today's native peoples?

Mark Butterbrodt, a tall lanky Harvard-educated physician teaching pediatrics at the University of Minnesota, asked himself that question and decided to try out some theories.

Of Norwegian descent, Butterbrodt grew up in the northeast corner of South Dakota, next door to the Sisseton-Wahpeton reservation, in an era when the chasm that separated the native and non-native populations of border towns was even more pronounced than it is today. (As recently as 1999, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held public hearings on race relations in Rapid City, S.D. and emphatically reported racism there to be rampant.)

"It was through the wisdom and character of one man, Vine Deloria Sr., that I traversed that chasm as an adolescent," says Butterbrodt. Deloria, an Episcopal priest, was a member of the proud Sioux family of priests and poets, authors and advocates that has spanned three generations of distinction in a land often teeming with malevolence.

"Beyond my genuine respect for the inner character and spirituality of Indian people, my lifelong connection with them has been bolstered by the Episcopal Church, the Lakota/Dakota (Sioux) language and the wonderful old Lakota Hymnal," he says.

"My family had been Episcopalian for three generations before I was born," Butterbrodt adds. His great-grandfather, a Norwegian immigrant, had left the Lutheran Church to become Episcopalian "because the latter was much less strait-laced about the temperance movement." Butterbrodt's father, a pharmacist, was a linguist who spoke excellent Dakota and young Mark mastered the language early in life.

Historically, the Episcopal Church played a major role in the lives of the Sisseton-Wahpeton band. Driven out of Minnesota in 1863, the impoverished band would likely have starved to death had it not been for Bishop Henry Whipple, who relentlessly badgered the U.S. Congress for financial assistance (which the bishop, himself, administered). Large numbers of the band converted or at least supplemented their traditional religious ethos with Episcopalian Christianity.

Butterbrodt recalls long summer evenings spent on the lawn of St. John's Church at the rural hamlet of Brown's Valley listening intently to the legendary "Father Vine," a renowned storyteller. Attending the annual Niobrara Convocations, a gathering of Episcopalian Indians from across South Dakota, remains an endearing memory.

After graduating from a small South Dakota high school, Butterbrodt did his undergraduate work at Harvard. "I was Harvard's 'token hick,'" he says. He returned to his native state for medical studies and finished his medical degree at the University of Minnesota.

He was recruited to come back home to do his "pay-back" stint, to pay off expenses of medical school. His assignment with the Indian Health Service (IHS) was on the Yankton Sioux reservation, in the southern part of the state. "I did not start out with some sort of mission-driven, noble notion about being the good white doctor serving impoverished native peoples," he muses. "In fact, I was

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A'S VOCATION

strongly drawn to academic medicine and figured when my 'pay-back' stint was taken care of, I'd return to the University of Minnesota."

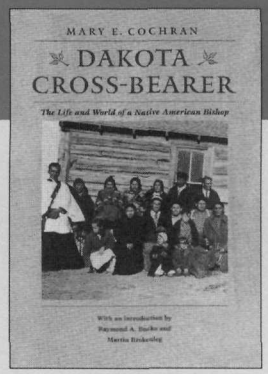
Such was not the case. He would not return to Minneapolis until after seven years and several assignments on various Sioux reservations and facilities. It was in Rapid City in 1984 that his tie with Sioux people was further strengthened. He was working at Sioux Sanitarium in Rapid City and became close friends with several Pine Ridge people. Among those Lakota friends were John and Flossie Bear Robe, who lost a son about Mark's age in an automobile accident. The Bear Robes informed him they were taking him to replace their son. "It was no formal adoption," he said, "but I have since felt very much a part of their family."

Butterbrodt became a part of the congregation at St. Matthew's, the predominantly Indian church in Rapid City. Here he became quite proficient in singing from the Lakota Hymnal — after serious coaching from Christine Prairie Chicken and Marie Rogers and other elders. It was the Lakota Hymnal, in fact, that became a powerful icon to him at a moment in his life when he was testing professional options. He had to make a decision whether to accept an offer to enter private practice, accept a fellowship for doctoral work at University of Minnesota or remain with IHS. While visiting a friend in Los Angeles, he visited a museum and stumbled on to an Indian exhibit. His attention quickly focused on a worn old Lakota Hymnal with a beaded cover. The Hymnal was open to hymn 167 — "Guide Us, Oh Thou Great Jehovah." Legend says this was the favorite hymn of Philip J. Deloria, the priest-father of Vine Deloria, Sr. and grandfather of the renowned author, Vine Deloria, Jr. The hymn, according to legend, had figured largely in the proud young chieftain's conversion to Christianity.

Butterbrodt chose to remain focused on Indians. As he did so, the reality of the toll of diabetes on his patients began to occupy his mind.

He returned to Minneapolis with a Bush Foundation fellowship for coursework at the University of Minnesota. A professor spoke of the theory surrounding the "thrifty gene." This not-proven theory suggests that hunter-gatherer peoples were able to effectively store fat. The fat was then used during periods of famine. "People who make a rapid transition from nomadic or physically demanding lives to a more sedentary, inactive lifestyle with a steady food supply, appear to be more susceptible to obesity and diabetes," says Butterbrodt.

"Before the second World War, Indians were certainly more involved in physical labor," says Butterbrodt. "Rural women had few household conveniences. Simply to put a meal together required physical labor — from gardening to gathering. Men were often day laborers, ranchers or farmers. All the children had chores requiring far more physical activity than watching TV."



Dakota Cross-Bearer: *The Life and World of a Native American Bishop* by Mary E. Cochrane, with an Introduction by Raymond A. Bucko and Martin Brokenleg (University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

IN *DAKOTA CROSS-BEARER*, Mary Cochrane (wife of an Episcopal priest who worked on the Standing Rock Reservation before being named bishop of Alaska) chronicles the life of Harold S. Jones, a Dakota who became the first Native American bishop in the Christian church.

As Brokenleg and Bucko write by way of introduction, "*Dakota Cross-Bearer* provides an apology for Christianity alongside a healthy critique of church policies and practices. At the same time, it steadfastly maintains a respect for traditional religious practices and beliefs."

Based on extensive interviews with Jones, then carefully researched and written, the biography Cochrane has produced in many ways reads like a memoir, a geography of stories in the style of a Dakota storyteller.

Since his tenure as bishop was brief (he suffered a stroke in the autumn of 1972, just months after his consecration), the thread of the story concerns his upbringing by grandparents on the Santee Reservation in Nebraska, his seminary training at Seabury-Western, and assignments in various communities across the plains: Wounded Knee, Oglala, Cheyenne River Reservation, and Navaholand Area Mission. Running throughout, like a recurring spiritual landmark, is the Niobrara Convocation, a large yearly gathering of Episcopalians drawn from all the Dakota and Lakota communities, which he first attended with his grandparents. And the narrative is often punctuated with refrains from Dakota hymns, which clearly echo in his heart and summon memory and moment.

"Cross-bearer," of the title, carries a double weight of meaning. It is, of course, a liturgical reference to the one who leads the procession into and out of worship. But the mark of discipleship and burden of the cross are implied above all. Cochrane has made the point that the Way which Jones has walked has not been without cost. ●

Bill Wylie-Kellermann *is* The Witness' *book review editor.*

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Such observations led Butterbrodt to believe diabetes could be preventable among native people with a consistent and conscientious effort to revert to a pre-war lifestyle of food consumption and physical activity. "If we could get involved early with children, could we prevent diabetes altogether?" he pondered.

He wrote a proposal and the American Academy of Pediatrics gave him a $5,000 start-up grant. He departed a comfortable urban life in Minneapolis and set out for the Pine Ridge Reservation, located 90 miles from the nearest Office Depot or Target store. The reservation, home of the Oglala Sioux (or Lakota) Indians, is centered in Shannon County, the poorest county of the U.S. and, except for Haiti, has the shortest life expectancy of the western hemisphere.

Pine Ridge Reservation is noted for contentiousness, clique conflict and bitter memories. It was on this desolate reservation that the appalling massacre of Wounded Knee, in which 369 Sioux Indians were mercilessly slaughtered, occurred in 1890. And it was here, in 1973, that fierce inter-tribal conflict surfaced with the 71-day occupation of Wounded Knee.

"I came to Pine Ridge in 1995, fully expecting to get the program launched and return to Minneapolis in about three months," says the sandy-haired Butterbrodt. He is now entering his sixth year at work on the reservation.

The lynchpin of the project to illustrate how diabetes could be prevented was to screen children for risk of diabetes and to go into homes with training on nutrition and exercise.

From the onset, Butterbrodt sought to encourage and enable community ownership of the diabetes project. To achieve acceptance, he drew from all aspects of his background — his knowledge of the language and respect for the character of Sioux people and his involvement in the Episcopal Church that once had 38 churches, chapels and mission stations on Pine Ridge.

Within a month he had a community board for the clinic. Acceptance for both the project and for him personally was promptly forthcoming. Staff soon included Darleen Bear Killer as coordinator and Mike He Crow as Community Health Representative. Pine Ridge people have been trained to do screening; Lakota-speaking people are trained to make home visits.

Also an aspect of the diabetes prevention program was a vigilant blending of traditional healing practices with western medicine. Spokespersons for the program soon included persons such as the Oglala elder, Rick Two Dogs, whose grandfather knew Crazy Horse. Two Dogs was trained by elders and is connected by spiritual practices to the use of herbs and ceremonies to achieve traditional healing.

Butterbrodt's staff included a certified diabetes educator and nutritionist who urged communities to provide nutritious school lunches and physical education in school curricula. Families were taught how to use "commodity foods" effectively.

Before long, kindergarteners were walking a mile a day and grandmothers were pumping iron at the school gym (after program staff was able to get schools to stay open after school hours for community use of facilities).

Every schoolchild on the Pine Ridge Reservation — 4,000 in all — has been screened. The project has identified 500 at highest risk. More than 800 home visits have been made to teach nutrition practices.

"A primary result of the project has been to educate families that diabetes is preventable, not inevitable," Butterbrodt says. "A secondary result is that we have demonstrated that positive lifestyles can change and improve longevity even in settings where there are so many obstacles to a healthy lifestyle."

The diabetes prevention project now funded by IHS employs 30 tribal members. Butterbrodt has "kicked back" and, while serving as unpaid medical adviser for the project, is working full-time with IHS and raising his adopted 14-year-old son, an Ojibwa from Red Lake Reservation of Minnesota. ●

Owanah Anderson, who lives in Wichita Falls, Tex., is of the Choctaw nation of Oklahoma. She is a member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company board of directors (ECPC owns The Witness*).*

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'Peace tents' in the Mideast

Grassroots peace initiatives are springing up in Israel, according to an American lawyer and writer living near Tel Aviv.

"'Peace tents' have been cropping up on highways where Jews and Arabs drop in to try to resume normal dialogue," writes Helen Schary Motro in *The Christian Science Monitor* (10/31/00). "The first was in the northern Galilee, where some of the worst Arab-Jewish violence had taken place, including involvement of the Arab village Arrare, where two Israeli Arabs had been killed. Yet even the peace tents have not been spared random vigilante violence.

"One 'peace tabernacle' set up by the Arab villages of Tira and Taibe, in cooperation with the Jewish towns of Tzur Yigal and Kohav Yair was torched; but the next morning, activists began to rebuild it atop the ashes. Eighty-five Jews and Arabs put a joint announcement in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper calling for an end to violence. There are vigils, peace walks and, last weekend, a binational demonstration in the mixed-population city of Haifa."

Globalization and women's voices

A recent issue of *Media and Gender Monitor* reported on a group of women writers gathered in India for workshops on gender and censorship. Asked how globalization has affected women's freedom of speech, Ritu Menon of India said that "in India, we are now flooded with MTV, American melodrama and sitcoms, inane talk shows, programming that is 'global' and often has very little to do with what's happening locally, and the highlighting of the woman-as-object in addition to woman-as-consumer — both masquerading as the liberated woman. India is obsessed with beauty pageants, with Miss World, Miss Universe, Miss Smooth Elbow, Miss Long Legs — you name it — via magazines like *Elle, Cosmopolitan, Femina* and *Bride*. Conservatism cloaked as commerce, commerce pretending to be free choice, while genuine freedom of choice recedes far-

ther and farther. At least earlier we knew to whom to direct our protest. Now, it's a distant corporate entity and, even though we may know the name, we have no access to it. The only real choice left is to switch off. Tune out. And continue to protest."

Sanja Sarnavka of Croatia spoke about women's need "to find mechanisms of preserving our identity and authenticity" in the face of media onslaught. Quoting the statistic that "almost 80 percent of the total news flow emanates from West-based major transnational agencies," Sarnavka noted "a considerable threat of homogenization, and the loss of self-perception, as well as a loss of independent perceptions of the world."

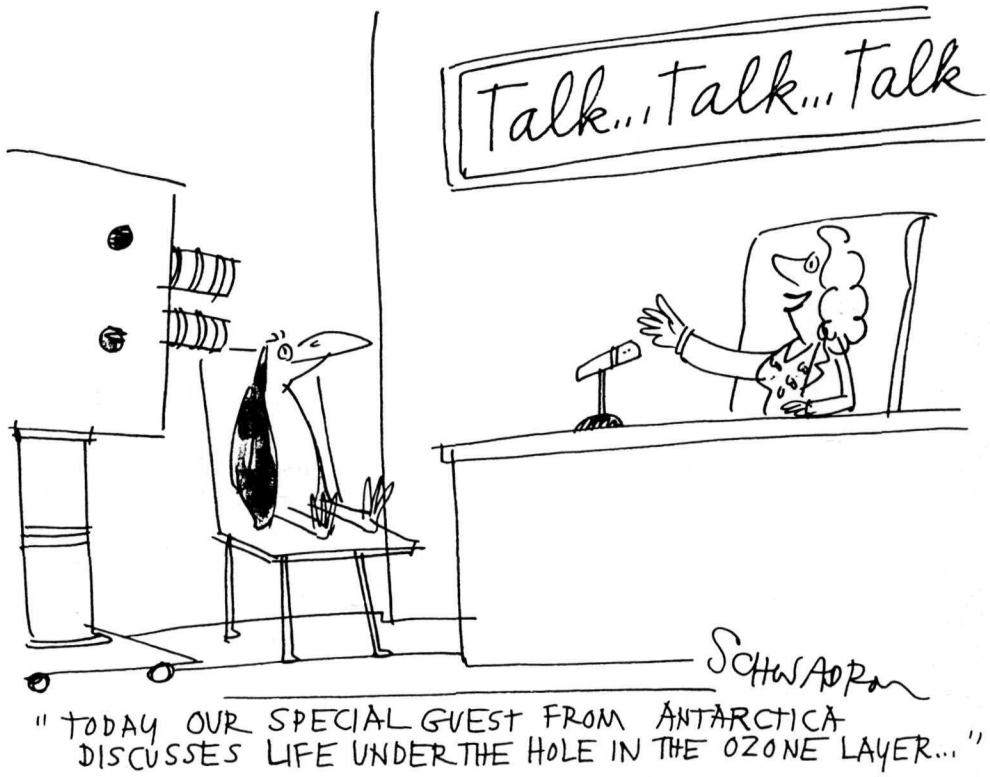
Patricia Flores of Bolivia reported that "globalization has commercialized media and this has resulted in more sexism and sensationalism. In Bolivia we are recipients of endless talk shows from Peru, Argentina and the U.S.A.

"These involve mostly women, ranging from young girls, teenagers, mothers. Issues that are raised on these talk shows, like domestic violence, become almost topics of entertainment as they are exploited to the limits of scandal and sensationalism. In the present climate, women's voices are heard only when what they say can be distorted and sensationalized, when what they have to say helps to increase ratings."

'Don't kill your first patient'

Ads featuring Bill Maher of "Politically Incorrect" are being placed in student newspapers at medical schools that continue to use dogs and other animals in labs. Telling students, "Don't kill your first patient," the ads explain that more than half of all North American medical schools have dropped animal labs from their curricula in favor of better, less expensive teaching alternatives.

According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, which is spearheading a campaign to end the use of live animals in medical training, just 46 of the 126 U.S. medical schools continue this practice. PCRM is most strongly targeting UCLA, Boston University, St. Louis University, the University of Colorado and the University of California, San Diego. PCRM asks that letters be sent to these schools asking them to replace live animal labs with modern, more humane alternatives. They are also looking for volunteers who live near the schools to distribute literature. For more information, call 202-686-2210, ext. 329.



Belgian sustainability

Belgium recently announced a comprehensive sustainable development plan based on goals set at the 1992 U.N. Earth Summit in Rio de Janiero (*Grist Magazine*, 10/25/00). The plan includes a goal of increasing the number of organic farms in the country by 60 percent a year for the next four years, with the aim of having at least 4 percent of the country's agricultural land farmed organically. By the year 2010, it also aspires to cut energy consumption in the country to 10 percent below 1990 levels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7.5 percent, and provide 2 percent of the country's power through renewable energy, while gradually phasing out nuclear power.

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A classroom at Old Sun (Blackfoot) School, an Anglican residential school in Gleichen, Alberta, Canada.

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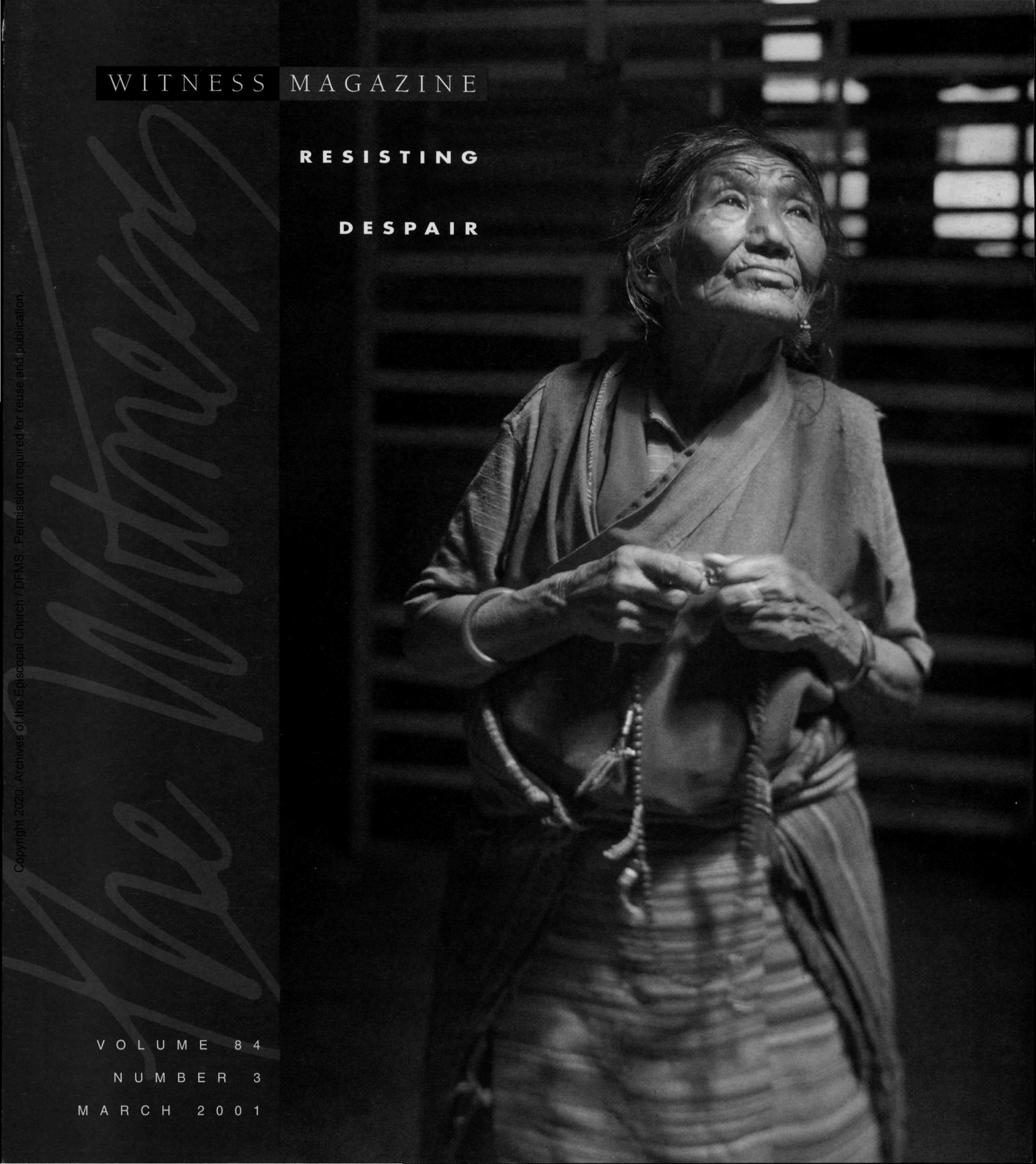

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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
Alice Devine

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
118 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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Rewarding conscience with nightmare

I have been a subsciber to *The Witness* for several years now and I must say that I don't think I've ever encountered a magazine that more accurately reflected my progressive/inclusive views on Christianity, spirituality, and social activism, and I thank you all for bringing that to me on a monthly basis.

I would like to comment on the recent U.S. presidential election because it ties in with the theme of the November 2000 issue ('Resisting Politics as Usual'). During the course of the campaign, Green party candidate Ralph Nader frequently sounded off on the assertion that there was no real difference between Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush. I couldn't disagree more. Although I concede that the Democrats and Republicans are, in fact, on the same page regarding a number of issues such as the death penalty, military spending, and world trade, I would say that there are vast differences on many other critical issues, such as environmental protection, support of organized labor and public schools, tax policy, and civil rights, issues that the Vice President clearly held views on that better reflected the public interest.

I read somewhere that Nader remarked that a victory by George W. Bush would be a "cold shower" for the Democrats. I am annoyed, however, that that "cold shower" will probably unleash a concerted effort on the part of the Republican majority to deconstruct the gains made in the area of environmental protection, including the Clinton administration's initiative to preserve the remaining 60 million acres of unspoiled wilderness in our National Forests. I am also saddened by the prospect of having a Supreme Court that, with two or three additional Bush appointees, will be much more likely to favor the interests of the wealthy over the powerless. It also upsets me that the fruits of fiscal discipline could be outrageously squandered on a Bush tax cut proposal for people who don't need a tax cut, rather than being spent on debt reduction, education initiatives, and on a first step toward universal health care.

I have no problem at all with the Green Party. I am a member of The Sierra Club who has supported environmental action groups, both nationally and locally. I have two boys, ages three and one, and I can tell you that having a President who thinks that NOTHING should be done about global warming is downright frightening. The problem, it seems to me, is that we are operating under such a poorly designed electoral system that rewards people who vote their conscience with their worst nightmare. I think that the instant runoff voting method that is currently being used in a few countries, and is under consideration by several states for future use is a good first step, along with a long overdue examination of the relevancy of the electoral college.

Ralph Nader should have understood what the consequences of his role as "spoiler" were going to be. For those of us who care deeply about social justice issues and the environment, it's going to be a cold winter.

Paul Winters
Framingham, MA

Thanks for the photos!

Ed. note: In the final moments of production of our January/February 2001 issue we neglected to include a credit for the historic photos that accompanied our piece on "Lawsuits and the loss of a culture," which dealt with the Anglican Church of Canada and the lawsuits it faces over its treatment of native children in church-run residential schools. Those photos, from the Anglican Church of Canada Archives, were provided to us by Steve Brickenden of the *Anglican Journal*. We appreciate his help.

Blessed by wagging tails

by Julie A. Wortman

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I've promised myself that when I finish writing this editorial note (if the sun is still up) I will take our dogs for a walk at the beach. Deadlines prevented me from this daily ritual this morning, so I'm hoping to make up for lost time. My sense of balance needs restoring. My hope for the world needs encouraging. My place in the universe needs clarifying.

Big talk, I know. We are only speaking here about a simple outing along the water's restless edge with three black Labrador-ish mongrels. An outing that is, after all, pretty predictable. Buster will likely ceaselessly patrol for errant ducks, terns and loons. Hoping to seduce Buster into a game, Martin will prance along in proud and sassy possession of a driftwood stick. The aged Bedford, rocking back and forth on arthritic legs like a drunken sailor, will doubtless absorb himself in mysteries only a canine nose can detect, stolidly oblivious (and, frankly, deaf) to any special requests I might make of him.

Day in and day out we make this pilgrimage. The tides shift. Rain replaces sunshine, replaces fog, replaces snow. One day the beach is rocky, the next full of seaweed, the next spotlessly devoid of debris. Sand dollars abound and then are scarce. Islands hover above the horizon and then are shrouded from view by thick fog.

Each and every day the dogs greet the prospect of their morning walk with unlimited enthusiasm, while I'm frequently ambivalent — as this morning, feeling the tug of work. And where their mood is always joyous, mine often isn't. I brood over fields rumored to have been sold for more trophy summer homes. Over profit-driven, seemingly unstoppable forces hell-bent on sacrificing caribou and a people's way of life for a few months of oiled energy. Over the bleak future of local teenagers running amuck for the lack of a sober parent's genuine companionship and care. Over my own abundant shortcomings, both personal and political.

Despair begins to circle my head like a hungry gull.

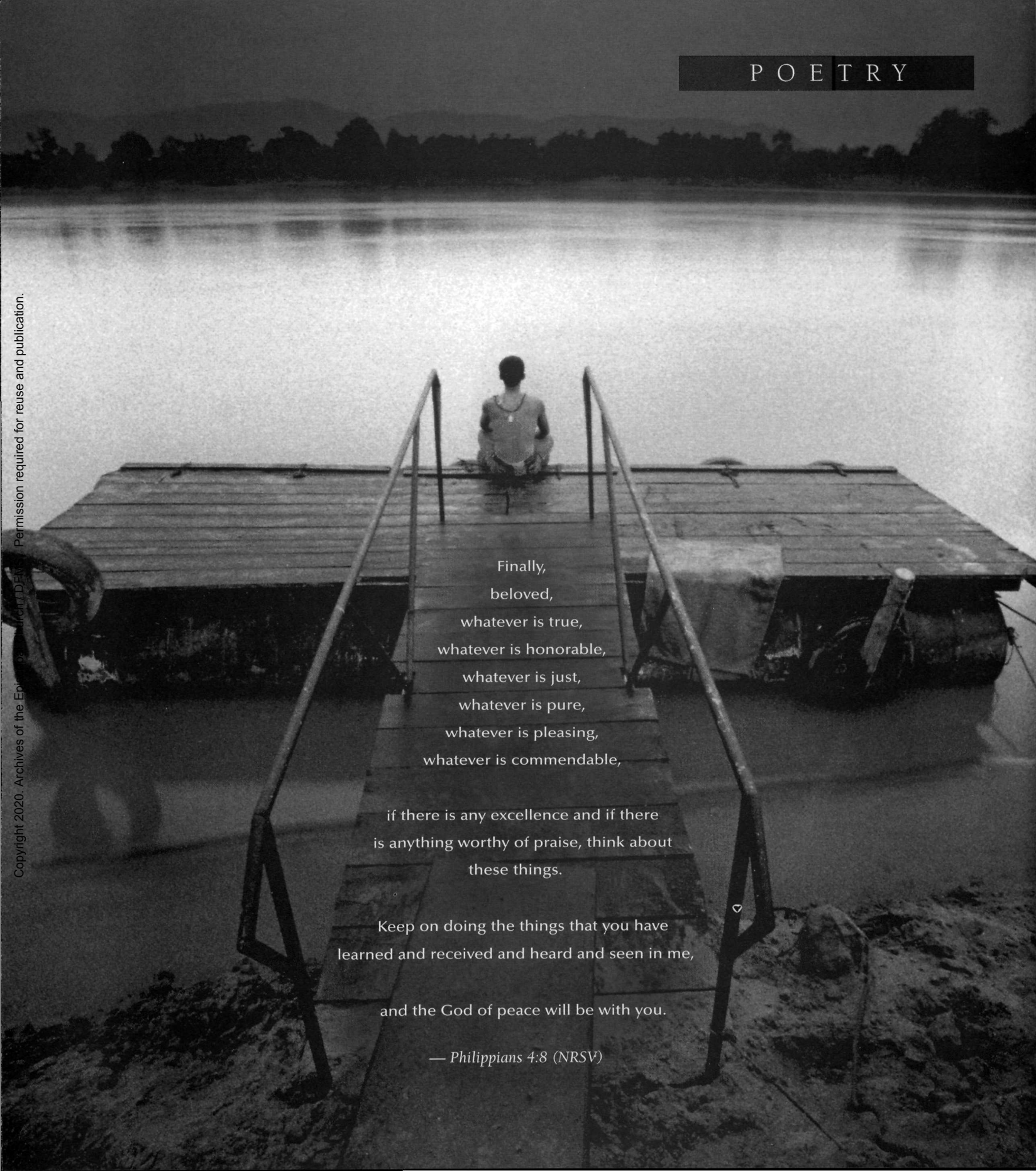
The blessing is that, over and over, I find rescue from such dispiriting meditations in the form of wagging tails that insist on a stick flung into the waves, *now*! That remark on the goodness, yet once more, of *this* day! That insist that life is *life*!

The wagging returns me to my senses. I find I have been sleepwalking. My vision slowly recalibrates to take in the nuance of maroon twigs against russet grasses, the play of light on the waves, deer tracks in the snow. Step by step, I recover myself. Regain my footing in this very particular place, at this singular moment of the globe's turning. Open my pores to the exuberance of creatures who are completely devoted to this unique moment, whatever the next may bring. Inhale salt air. Exhale despair. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.

Eventually we arrive back at the car out of breath, thinking of breakfast. Where the trip coming was full of excitement, the return journey is mellow with satisfaction. A painful mental landscape lies discarded on the sand for the tide to wash away. Greed, exploitation, cruelty and personal failings have not been miraculously banished from the world. But I'm again awake to creation's beauty, to the small excellences — to life. ●

Anne Cox

Julie A. Wortman, is editor and publisher of *The Witness.*



Finally,
beloved,
whatever is true,
whatever is honorable,
whatever is just,
whatever is pure,
whatever is pleasing,
whatever is commendable,

if there is any excellence and if there
is anything worthy of praise, think about
these things.

Keep on doing the things that you have
learned and received and heard and seen in me,

and the God of peace will be with you.

— Philippians 4:8 (NRSV)

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An interview with Joanna Macy

by Marianne Arbogast

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JOANNA MACY is an activist and a scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory and deep ecology who has developed and conducted workshops around the globe to help people do "despair and empowerment work" or, as it is now called, "the work that reconnects." In the face of the crises facing our world, "we are tempted to shut down, narrowing our sights to our own and our family's short-term survival," Macy writes in *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World* (New Society Publishers, 1998). Yet, she insists that "a silent revolution" is occurring in our midst, radically altering our perceptions and actions and bringing about a "Great Turning" from an industrial-growth society to a life-sustaining society. Macy is the author of eight books, including *Widening Circles: a Memoir*, a spiritual autobiography published last year by New Society Publishers.

Marianne Arbogast: The issue of *The Witness* that we just finished working on [Jan./Feb. 2001] focuses on indigenous peoples in the Western hemisphere, and much of what's in it is very bleak. There's an account of the massacre in Acteal in Chiapas, and a story about the threat to the Gwich'in people and the caribou herd in the Arctic because of proposed oil drilling, and exploitation of people and the land in Central America. When I was talking yesterday with Julie Wortman, we both acknowledged the heaviness we were feeling working on this. When we're confronted with such tremendous evil, how can we keep from being overwhelmed, or overwhelming others, with the sheer immensity of it?

Joanna Macy: That question has motivated much of my life's work. And I have been helped immeasurably by seeing that the pain that we feel for the world is the other face of love. We would not feel the sorrow or the outrage if we were not profoundly connected with our world. So we can understand those feelings as evidence of our mutual belonging.

It is important not to reduce those feelings to a private craziness or a personal pathology. They are natural and wholesome responses, and they are very widespread. My book with Molly Brown, *Coming Back to Life*, has a whole chapter on honoring our pain for the world. I share exercises we do that help people explore and express what they're feeling, and reframe it in the context of our connectedness. Our capacity to "suffer-with" is the literal meaning of compassion. When we don't resist or pathologize these feelings, they help us see more clearly and become more aware of the larger context.

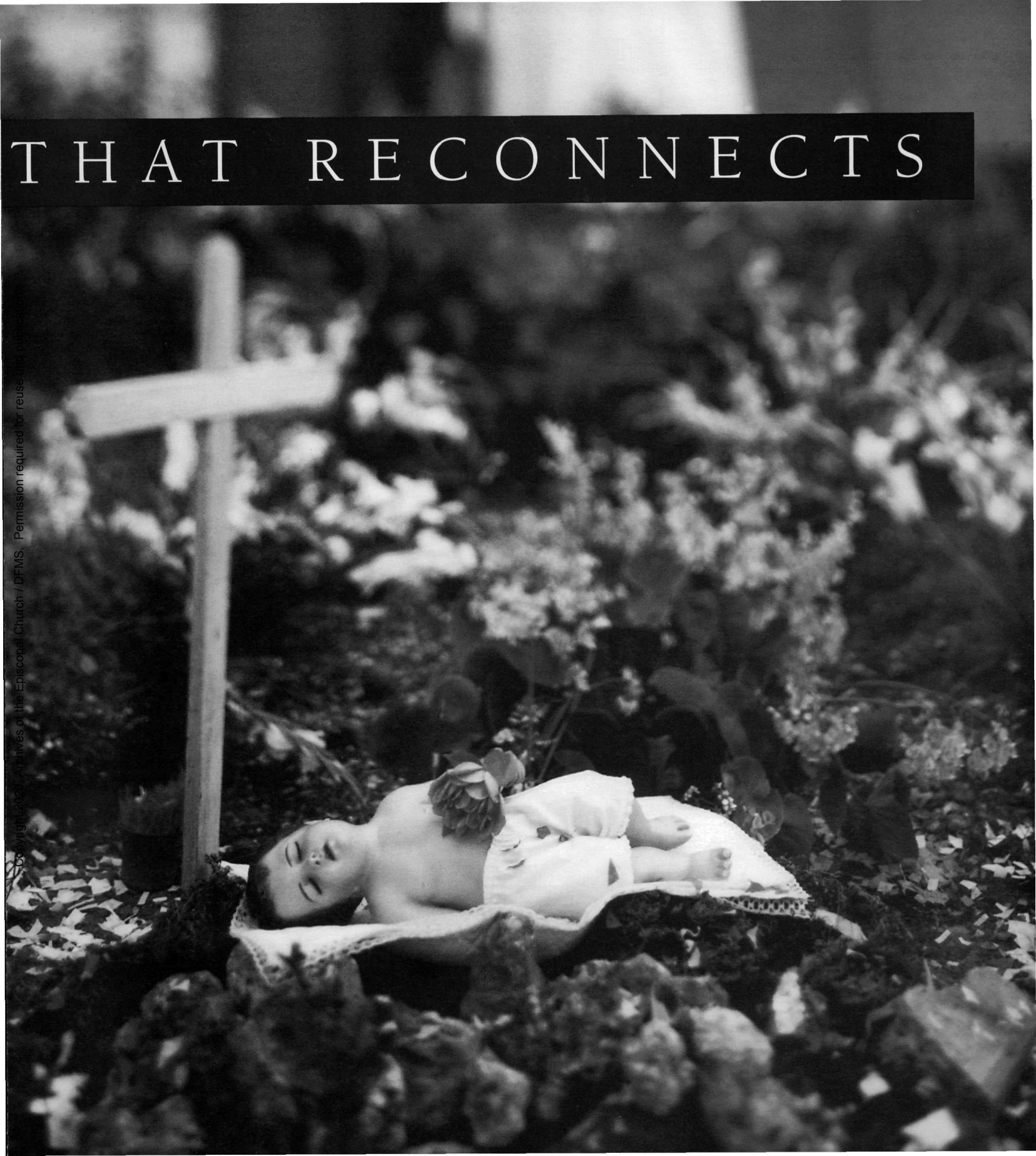
In that larger, longer-term context an epochal shift is occurring — from the Industrial Growth Society, which is self-destructive, to a Life-Sustaining Civilization. This "Great Turning" takes a while, because the present economic system is so entrenched. But the shift must happen and it is happening. Look at what's going on at the grassroots: not only direct action and resistance, but also the creation of new structures and new forms — and along with all that there's a shift in consciousness, a spiritual revolution. Our sense of self-interest is rapidly expanding to include the planet; we are awakening to our embeddedness in the living body of Earth. So there's much to take hope in on the larger, long-term scale, and we can feel privileged to be alive now to take part in it.

Still, on a daily basis, we are seeing the tremendous costs in terms of oppression and destruction and wars and preparations for war. So we need to find ways to respect and not be stopped by the despair, which has a lot to teach us and which is inevitable, because we're intrinsic parts of a world where a lot is being lost.

M.A.: It's interesting to me that you see that as a widespread

Friday of Sorrows © Terry Vine

THAT RECONNECTS



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experience, because I've been struck recently by how many people I know — and not people who are ecological activists — who have experienced some kind of intense grief, coming from some non-conceptual level, for the natural world. I have a friend who found herself weeping for months over her sense that trees were dying — she kept saying she thought people would think she was crazy. Another friend talked about feeling smothered when she saw housing or commercial developments paving over the earth. Do you think those experiences are common?

J.M.: Absolutely. The life that is in us, the life that is breathing through us and beating in our hearts, is very ancient. It didn't begin with our conception, or even with our species, which has come on the scene pretty recently. Wild nature and life's passion for itself is bred into us, in our bones, so when we see how life is being smothered and poisoned, grief is a natural response. And we can turn it into a greater sense of our connectedness and the power that comes from our connectedness.

M.A.: I think we can sometimes feel that the problems facing the earth and human beings are so complex, and that we don't have the right kind of education — or even the right kind of mind — to comprehend them, or to be able to do anything useful.

J.M.: It's very good, then, to look at the countless examples right now of citizens stepping beyond their own personal life to work together, to walk in fresh paths, and to create cohousing, or new ways of holding the land, or new ways of growing food, or new kinds of schools and new forms of currency. These manifestations can look marginal if you only consult the corporate-controlled media, where they're hardly reflected in the headlines and on the evening news. But when you train your eyes to look for it, you see on every hand people quietly taking action on behalf of other humans, other species, the soil, the forests, in a way that, when I was a young woman, wasn't even dreamt of. Oh, there were always the peace and justice activists, but this upwelling of identification with the larger web of life is actually quite recent and happening very fast. And when you direct your attention to pertinent sources of information both in print, like *Yes!* magazine, or on the web, like *Rachel's Weekly*, you can see the tremendous vitality, and feel proud to be alive at a time when our species is showing so much learning and ingenuity. That's important for me because I get angry and cynical when I look at the corporate-controlled media.

The spiritual practices of our traditions are enormously helpful to us in dealing with despair. From my root tradition in Christianity, there is the whole tradition of Passion Week and Good Friday, and in the Jewish tradition, the High Holy Days around atonement, the Kaddish and Yom Kippur. Being able to grieve together is profoundly bonding and sane-making. When we borrow from these traditions in our workshops, people find a container to speak the sadness and the dread they feel. Then a tremendous upwelling of energy, even hilarity, occurs because the life-force rushes in so fast when we stop denying our pain for the world.

M.A.: Last year, you had an article in *Timeline* in which you said that "not being certain of the success of our work can liberate us from having to be braced all the time against bad news, and feeling we have to work up a sense of hope." Could you say more about that?

J.M.: The Great Turning, from an Industrial Growth Society to a Life-Sustaining Society, is happening, we know that; but what we don't know is whether we'll pull it off in time to save life on earth. And that very uncertainty can bring out the best in us, the true courage and creativity. We mustn't get caught in the polarity of optimism and pessimism. Those are passing feelings. Don't limit yourself with a label. Even if you brim with hope that we'll pull through, there are still huge losses to grieve, whole cultures and species disappearing.

So let's make friends with the sadness, see it as the dark sister, that part of you that knows we're losing much that can never be recalled. That keeps us honest. It also helps us be less attached to the visible results of our own efforts. Then we can give ourselves more freely, just glad to have a chance to participate in the Great Turning.

It's important to acknowledge that the problems we're dealing with have roots in the past, before our birth, and also that most of those for whom we work are not born yet. We need to see our lives and actions within larger expanses of time. That is why I offer "Deep Time" workshops where we experience our bonds with the ancestors and our allegiance to the future generations. That brings a sense of calm determination, and helps us rise above our habitual, carping self-judgments for not doing enough or not doing it better. Then we can rejoice in the sheer opportunity to act.

M.A.: Part of the impetus for this issue of *The Witness* was Scott Russell Sanders, an activist who wrote of an experience with his teenage son, who got very angry with him one day and said, you're not giving me any hope. How can we be honest with our children about how the world is and at the same time offer them real grounds for hope?

J.M.: This is a time of tremendous opportunity when people are doing beautiful things, and you can see real heroes; each young person can be one of them. It's very helpful to give examples. When I talk about the Great Turning, I point to the many ways youth are involved.

In my most recent 12-day training, many participants got involved in the support of a forest action nearby, where a steep slope of redwoods was being illegally clearcut. Young people with Earth First! were tree-sitting on platforms a hundred feet in the air, and they were managing to save 80 trees by interlinking them with their high rope bridges. My trainees went into service to these young people — and a fresh clarity came into all our work together. Seems we learn best when we're acting on behalf of Earth.

Young people are active in so many ways — working in after-school programs in the inner city, and creating organic gardens in schoolyards and vacant lots. Examples abound, when you look.

M.A.: So hope can come in finding a way to respond or being part of that kind of action?

J.M.: That's absolutely right. I don't know how else to maintain high spirits. When you get involved in a team action, even with all

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the hard work and risk, it's fun. There's so much at stake, and the people around you are so great, that you feel glad to be alive.

M.A.: Probably many of us have had those kinds of experiences — but we've also had negative experiences connected with activism. I wanted to ask you what you would see as healthy activism, because sometimes activists can seem to be hitting each other over the head, or hitting others over the head, because people aren't doing enough, or they're not getting involved with a certain issue or in a certain way.

J.M.: That kind of activism is outdated and counterproductive. Watch out for self-righteousness. Watch out for the trap of thinking you know, or need to know, the only right answer. Be truthful to your vision, but don't feel you need to develop a strategic plan for the human race. It doesn't work that way. We only know what works as we act; each step reveals what the next step should be. So we've got to watch out for dogmatism, and thinking that the struggle is between good guys and bad guys. We're all in this together. We're going to pull through this dark passage together or not at all. So don't fall prey to self-importance, and imagining that it all depends on you personally. The responsibility we must own is a collective one, and we shoulder it together to correct and heal the harm that is done in our name.

Once you get involved, you see that everybody can participate but nobody can take the full credit. And that means that nobody can take the full blame, either.

M.A.: Today it seems that corporations are identified as the "bad guys" — and often rightfully so. Yet all of us know good people who work for these companies, and may even be doing very good things in their particular jobs. How do you deal with these kinds of ambiguities?

J.M.: We must remember that the real "enemy" is the institutionalized forms of greed, hatred, and ignorance — not the flesh-and-blood people who are in bondage to those structures. As they awaken to their interconnectedness with all life, these very people become our allies, helping to change the system from the inside.

M.A.: There is also sometimes a tendency to try to establish a sort of hierarchy of activism — thinking a certain cause is *the* cause and everybody should be working on it.

J.M.: You're right, that does happen, but it's not useful. It's wrongheaded to imagine that my cause is more important than your cause. The teachings of interconnectedness help us to see that whatever issue we're working on — whether it's saving the whales or feeding the homeless in a soup kitchen — has the same root cause: the human mistake of seeking to exploit and dominate. So I don't think the particular issue or campaign is as important as getting involved; then you begin to see how interwoven all these issues are. Just pick one thing. It doesn't matter if you think it's the most important or not. Pick whatever you feel drawn to. Join in with others — and roll up your sleeves. ●

Coming Back to Life, *Joanna Macy's book with Molly Young Brown, and her memoir,* Widening Circles, *can be ordered from New Society Publishers (800-567-6772 and www.newsociety.com). For information on her workshops and trainings contact dmosel@igc.org. or fax 510-649-9605. Her web site (www.joannamacy.net) will soon be online.*

Open Sentences

Purpose

This exercise provides a swift and easy way for people to voice their inner responses to the condition of our world. Its structure helps people both to listen with total receptivity and to express thoughts and feelings that are usually censored for fear of comment or adverse reaction. The sequence of the sentences generally moves from thoughts and views to feelings.

Description

People sit in pairs, face-to-face and close enough to attend to each other fully. They refrain from speaking until the exercise begins. When the guide speaks each unfinished sentence, Partner A repeats it, completes it in his own words, addressing Partner B, and keeps on talking spontaneously for the time allotted. The partners then switch roles. Depending on the material, they switch after each open sentence or, more usually, at the end of the series. The listening partner — this is to be emphasized — keeps silent, saying absolutely nothing and hearkening as attentively and supportively as possible.

If the partners switch roles once, after a series of sentences, invite A to convey without speaking his appreciation to B for B's supportive listening, and invite B to express — again nonverbally — her respect for A's concerns and his courage in sharing them.

For the completion of each open sentence allow a minute or two — or longer, if the momentum is strong. Give a brief warning each time before it is time to move on, saying, "Take a minute to finish up," or "Thank you." A clap or small bell can then bring people to silence, where they rest a few seconds before the next open sentence.

Here is a sample series of open sentences that we have used a great deal. Feel free to make up your own to address the particular interests of the group, remembering to keep them as unbiased and nonleading as possible.

1. I think the condition of our society is becoming ...
2. I think the condition of our environment is becoming ...
3. What concerns me most about the world today is ...
4. When I think of the world we will leave our children, it looks like ...
5. Feelings about all this, that I carry around with me, are ...
6. Ways I avoid these feelings are ...
7. Ways I use feelings are ...

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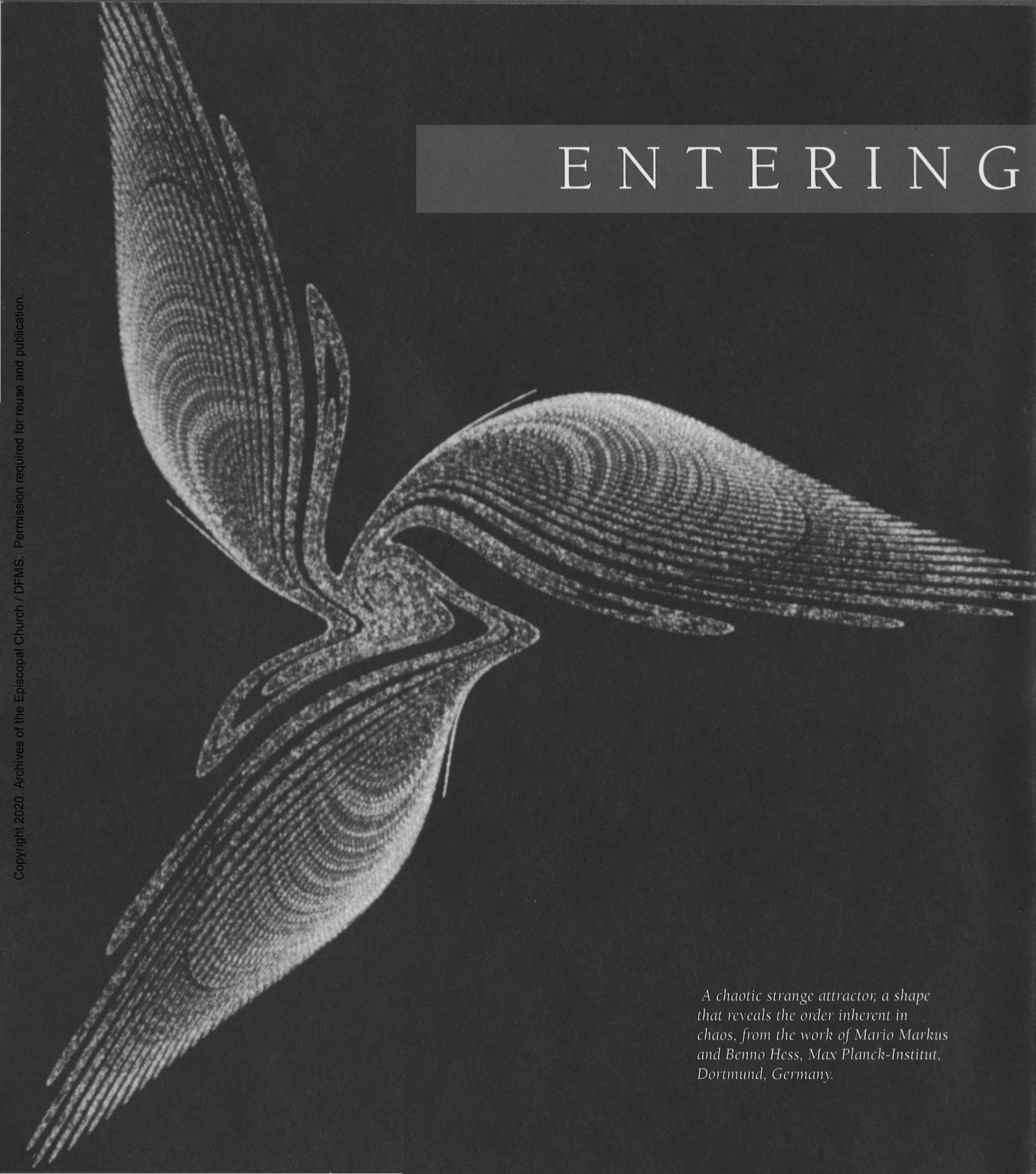

A chaotic strange attractor, a shape that reveals the order inherent in chaos, from the work of Mario Markus and Benno Hess, Max Planck-Institut, Dortmund, Germany.

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LIFE'S RHYTHMS

Drumming a way into sacred time

by Ana Hernandez

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God set the sun to rise and set every day, and put the earth into orbit. The moon makes it around the earth every 28 days or so, the locusts come back every seven years, Advent comes before Christmas, Lent before Easter, Sunday before Monday, and work comes before play — a really bad idea. We eat, sleep, and brush our teeth, our hearts seem to pump without any prompting, and many other events and phenomena seem to repeat themselves in the same order and at the same intervals through time. We start out riding tricycles, graduate to bicycles, and, if we're lucky enough to reach enlightenment, we get to view it all as one big interconnected unicycle. Through it all, we are rhythm.

The first thing we recognize on this earth is the vibration of our mother's blood through her veins and arteries, and later on, the sound of our mother's heartbeat and breathing while we are in the womb. The ear being the first sense organ to develop, somewhere between the fifth and sixth month of gestation, we begin to actually hear these internal rhythms. By 28 to 30 weeks, we can also respond to both the internal and external rhythms (by kicking or changing our heart rate). After we are born, there aren't many opportunities for such a nice rhythmic massage.

Rhythm is the most powerful organizational tool we've got. Since the ancients, rhythm has been used to mark communal events. The earliest drummers were women, using frame drums for liturgy. Look what rhythm did for King David, and the Benedictines; we're still hooked on the psalms. Armies still use drums to boost morale and energize tired troops (maybe if more people drummed, we wouldn't need wars), shamans use rattles like white noise, to scatter thought, and there's nothing better than Motown or the Poulenc "Gloria" to clean by; believe me, a clean house is a successful revolution. Rhythm has been used to celebrate, to warn of a storm coming, to ensure a good harvest and to accompany farm work. Dancers clap, stomp on the floor, make mouth noises, wear ankle bells or use their bodies as percussion instruments.

So what is it about rhythm that energizes us? What is the hypnotic effect that can happen with any kind of music, from the beginning of "She Loves You," by the Beatles, to a Bach fugue, to the latest sounds coming from the DJ's booth above the dance floor? The scientists say that it is the nature of rhythm to turn on the switches in the limbic system (or what used to be called the "visceral" or "reptilian brain"). The adrenaline starts to surge (bringing up our emotions and feelings), the information is then processed by the neocortex, and we are moved in myriad ways. Or something like that. I can never pay attention long enough to figure it all out; I get distracted somewhere around "She Loves You, yeah, yeah, yeah, YEAHHH..." In her book, *When the Drummers Were Women*, Layne Redmond says: "Scientific studies have shown that our moods, emotions, thoughts and bodily processes are rhythms of chemical energy. The Puerto Ricans call this fundamental rhythm that marks how we walk, talk, and interact *tumbao*. It is an expression of the totality of our personality." The verb *tumbar* means to knock down, to knock over, and is used figuratively in the sense of mixing somebody up, taking the senses away from you, or messing with your whole sense of being.

Rhythm can also calm and soothe us. It's no accident that one of the basic forms of meditation consists of counting the breath. If you're trying to get the kids to sleep, lullabies work like a charm by helping to slow the breath, relaxing them, and sending them to never-never land. Think of the tune "Silent Night," and breathe with it. We are all made of the same stuff. We all breathe the same air, the same air that people have been breathing since the dawn of time. I like to think that all of my favorite people have breathed the same air throughout history. Make a date for you and your breath, and put it in your book. Take a moment, find a quiet place to breathe, and think of all of the people whose air you are sharing.

Rhythm is more like dancing than knowing. We don't have to control or even be aware of what's going on for it to have a profound effect on us. It's our body that hears where to go next. When my uncle was in the hospital a few years ago for an angioplasty, the

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web sites: www.drums.org

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nurses were worried that his oxygen levels weren't improving a few days after the surgery. They were watching his monitors, and as they watched, his oxygen level rose to normal. A nurse asked, "What are you doing?" He said, "I was just lying here singing John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt in my head." She said, "Well, keep singing it, because your levels are great." The body hears where to go next.

I first began drumming around 1990. I had a Djembe from Ghana, in West Africa, and had been told that it was used to invoke the divine spirit and its healing power. Then, while on vacation, I was in a beautiful park in Ithaca, N.Y., with some friends, picnicking on the lake. A man walked by and said "Drums for Sale." I couldn't believe what he had in his arms: four rectangular boxes with slits of various lengths and widths cut into the top that looked like tongues. I called him over and asked him to show me these "drums" he had made, which he called "slit drums." The sound took my breath away. I needed a slit drum. He volunteered that he had "more in the van," so I went for a peek, and found one that I really liked. I proceeded to drive my friends crazy all the livelong day, banging away on that drum.

I started to do some research on slit drums. According to Adrienne Kaeppler (in Mickey Hart's *Planet Drum*), "Slit drums ... are believed to represent ancestral voices which encourage the living to dance into a state of communal ecstasy in order to banish personal preoccupations and bring those dancing into communion with collective forces passed on from the dead to the living and those still to come."

Whoa! One world at a time, please! But I do need to banish personal preoccupations, who doesn't? Wondering about those collective forces, I looked up "spirit": *geist*, *ruach*, *geest*, *spirare*, *esprit*. Why had I never noticed that they all either mean ghost or breath as well as spirit? What else was I missing?

I decided to check out the effects of the drum on myself first. I started with the heartbeat rhythm, because it is the thing we all share. I found I could drum myself right into a trance if I kept the beat at about twice my heart rate. Years later I learned from Don Campbell (author of *The Mozart Effect* and expert on music and healing) that if you drum a simple eighth-note rhythm at 120–140 beats per minute for more than three minutes, it balances the brainwaves, and you start going into a trance. (Kids and people with blood pressure problems, do not try this at home! Talk to your doctor first. There are very real physical consequences when you mess around with your natural rhythms.)

The heartbeat is still the first rhythm I teach in drumming workshops. Along with our breathing, it is the most fundamental aspect of our lives, and just one of many basic things we do not pay attention to. It's also simple to learn, and anyone can do it. Close your eyes, place your hand on your heart or wrist, and feel your heartbeat. If you have trouble, don't worry, you're not dead yet. Imagine the rhythm of your heart. Now, begin to vocalize the rhythm with your voice. When you feel comfortable sounding out your heartbeat, try playing it on your drum, using your hands or a mallet. Try it for five minutes, and see if you don't feel both relaxed and energized.

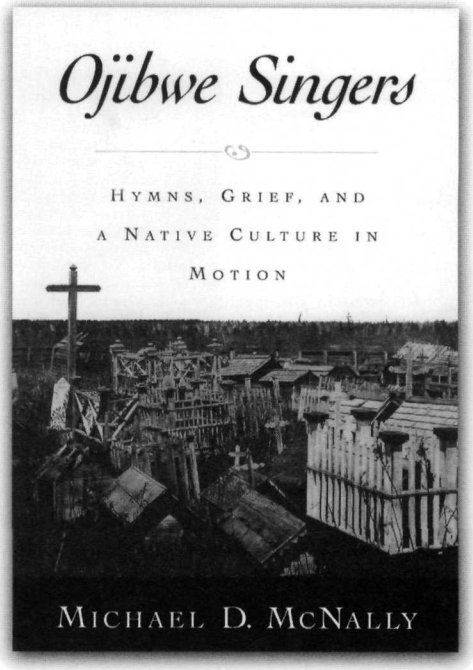
The point of using the heartbeat is so that you can begin to get acquainted with your internal rhythms, and also to help you feel more relaxed. Try it with a partner, facing each other. It is a good exercise to enhance listening skills, concentration and intimacy. With your eyes open this time, each begin to play your own heartbeat rhythm. You will soon find that you are in synch. This synchronization is called entrainment, the force that brings two or more bodies vibrating with similar rhythmic cycles into alignment. Go into a music store, and strike an A tuning fork, and all the A strings on all the guitars along the walls will begin to vibrate in sympathy. Place two pendulum clocks in a room and come back a day later, and they'll be in synch too. Sit in a drum circle and lay out for a second, and your drum will still vibrate. That many things happen without my "help" was a huge lesson.

Drumming has been a positive revolution in my life. Like most of us, I grew up in that either/or, right/wrong worldview. Let's just say I did not flourish there. I see more possibilities on the margins, and luckily, in a drum circle, everyone's on the margin. The people who come to a drum circle are the ones who are supposed to be there, to energize the spirit and explore unity through music. No words are needed. If you are six or 90, broken or whole, happy or depressed, tuned in or out of touch, blind, deaf, lame, too smart for your own good or not too bright, a democrat, republican, anarchist or atheist, you have a place in the circle. You are a part of the community. Rhythm is a universal language, and you are the rhythm. I like the image of a circle, because it speaks to the mystic in me. In a circle, everyone is equidistant from the center. There is always room for anyone to come and go. All the members are equal in the circle, each with a voice that can be heard by everyone else. Everyone takes turns leading the transitions to new rhythms. The kind of music that is made in a circle is based upon that circle's relationship with itself rather than any externally imposed expectations.

Since I've been practicing drumming without a license, I have witnessed drumming cure headaches and relieve the pain for a woman with a brain tumor. I've seen the faces of many lighten and radiate the joy that was secretly lurking. I've seen bodies that were stiff become fluid, and people who are shy come out to play. I've seen angry people find a place to work it out. People have told me of their lowered blood pressure and of their reduced stress and anxiety. I've also seen how giving people a rhythm that they're not ready for looks exactly like test anxiety. There's a lot of shallow breathing and tense faces; heads go down, people get timid, stop listening, and withdraw from interaction.

I used to be affected by the rhythms of everything and everyone around me. It was distracting and depressing. I felt out of "synch." We often say that when we're getting sick. Trying to play to another's rhythm isn't healthy if the cost is ignoring your own. Drumming has enabled me to hear my own rhythms amid the noise and haste, helps me to find and maintain my balance, and helps to keep my blood pressure down. The increased awareness of my breathing has helped me to throw away both cigarettes and asthma medicine. Drumming has also enhanced my ability to listen, increased my level of patience, helped to work through grief and frustration, and given me a much more relaxed and positive outlook on life, because of its unique ability to ground me and bring me into the magic place of sacred time. ●

Ana Hernandez is a musician who also works at the Episcopal Book and Resource Center at the Episcopal Church Center in New York.



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by Michael D. McNally
(Oxford University Press, 2000).

In 1997 *The Witness* gave its William Stringfellow award to the Ojibwe elders of Minnesota, who, struggling for a response to the soaring number of teen suicides in their own communities, reinstituted hymn sings — services of testimony and song — praying to restore the spiritual strength of the teens and their circle.

Michael McNally, an assistant professor of history at Eastern Michigan University, has written a sophisticated and scholarly monograph that sets precisely that effort in the context of its cultural history. This is a work against the grain of that strand of scholarship which regards such hybrid cultural forms (Ojibwe hymns) as simply eroding traditional values and capitulating to Christian culture.

Tracing the history in periods, McNally is able to show how, by remaking the music as their own, hymn-singing functioned as a way of carving out a semi-autonomous space within the constrictions of reservation life. While he does not make the analogy explicit, the process is not dissimilar from the way gospel hymns and spirituals of slave religion in the American south likewise created a free space in the hush-harbors.

In the present time, he recounts the history of how the elders revived the hymn-singing tradition, and, in particular, how it functioned to reawaken collective memory at the wakes of teens who had suffered violent deaths. While, as McNally himself acknowledges, this hymn-singing tradition is by no means unambiguous or without contradiction (somehow engendering both accommodation and resistance), it marks truly another rich "bridging" of spirituality. ●

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is The Witness' *book review editor.*

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REHABILITATION?

Fighting to free 'the poster boy for punishment'

by Roger Lowenstein

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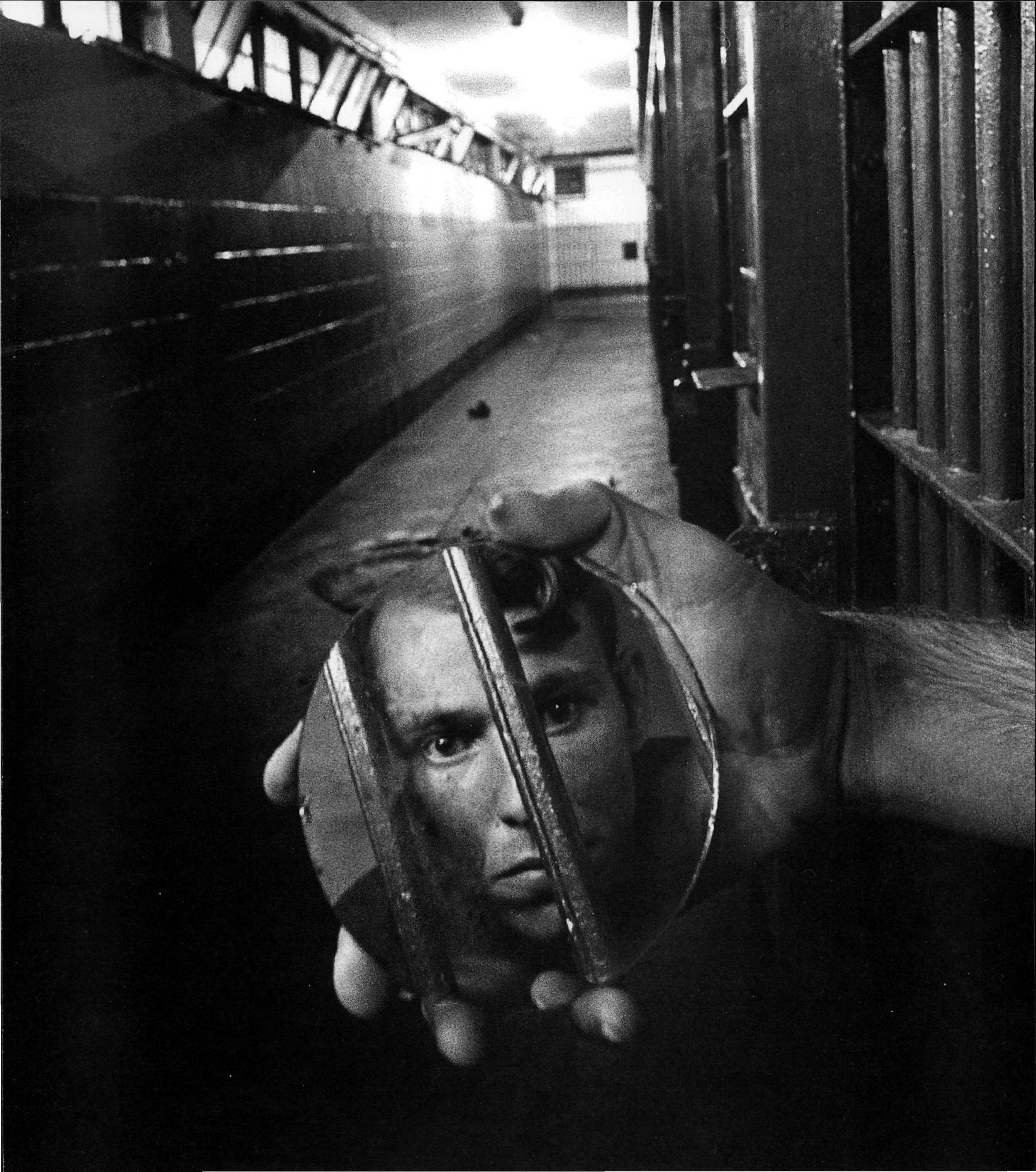
IT IS LATE AUGUST OF 1963 and John F. Kennedy is in the White House. I'm a 19-year-old college student working as an intern on Capitol Hill in the office of a liberal Jersey City congressman, and helping to organize Capitol Hill employees to join the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and shut down the Hill. I've been to Europe twice, but I've never met a convicted criminal. I venerate the working class but don't know any "workers." I'm naïve and idealistic and think the only real political organizing that needs to be done is to push Kennedy to the left. Why won't he fully embrace the Civil Rights movement?

Back in my home state of New Jersey some lowlife thugs are celebrating an armed robbery in Brooklyn by drinking and carousing with various girlfriends in a roadside dive in Lodi. One of the thugs, Frankie Falco, is wanted for murder. Another, Tommy Trantino, sits at the bar drinking himself into oblivion. He's had two dexedrine tablets and 20 double shots of whiskey. A police sergeant and an unarmed probationary policeman respond to a noise complaint at 2:30 in the morning. They enter the bar. The sergeant finds a gun wrapped in a towel on the bar. Trantino jumps him and disarms him, giving his service revolver to Falco. The cops are told to strip. They begin to comply. Trantino hits the sergeant with his gun, then both cops are shot to death. The next day the cops catch up to Frankie Falco in a New York City hotel room and execute him. Trantino turns himself in, is tried and sentenced to death in New Jersey's electric chair. Our lives will soon cross.

By the time I get my law degree and finish my clerkship on the New Jersey Supreme Court Tommy has been in the Death House for five years. Perhaps the best description of Tommy then is provided by Frank Bisignano, another cop-killer awaiting execution:

> *When he came in, he was very disjointed. He used to fly off on tangents. He was very withdrawn and introverted. It was like he was on drugs and they had kept him drugged during his trial. You're faced with two choices in a place like that. You do something for yourself or become a vegetable. For months, he wouldn't talk to anyone and he had a very bad temper.*
>
> *They had a ventilation shaft running up by the cells and you could open it to get some air. We used it like an intercom system. We'd sit and talk for hours about the deepest feelings we had ... I saw Tommy become a totally different individual. He went from being a temperamental, moody person to a pacifist. He became very involved in topical events and very involved in the peace movement. He just couldn't hurt anybody anymore.*
>
> *I was 22, and the first book I read was* Peyton Place. *I was reading things like that until Tommy started teaching me how to spell, how to punctuate, and to develop a vocabulary.*
>
> *I'll tell you what kind of guy he was. I was broke for 10 years. But Tommy had a little money coming in and every time he would get a money order he would send me up a little bag with cigarettes, paint supplies, and things like that. He bought me my first typewriter. I never had to ask. And he did that type of thing for everyone on Death Row. ...When the guys were glum they all looked to him. It was like the whole institution was on his back, and he stood up to it.*

By 1969 I am a fledgling public defender in Newark. When I had first entered a maximum security prison in Concord, Mass., as a first-year law student I couldn't make eye contact with the prisoners. They were an alien species. No more. I like my clients, and like getting them acquitted even better. I consider myself a "radical" and am one of many young protégés of Len Weinglass and Bill Kunstler. I share offices with Len and other members of the Newark "law commune." Len represents Tommy in failed attempts at post-conviction relief. In 1972 the death penalty is held unconstitutional nationwide. Tommy's sentence is commuted to life. He will be eligible for parole in 1977. By then Tommy is at the minimum security Wharton Tract facility training young inmates how to avoid recidivism. On one work release trip into the community he saves the life of a young girl who had fallen into the water and was drowning. Tommy doesn't swim but jumped in after her anyway. In 1978 Little Brown publishes his critically acclaimed book of autobiographical short stories and drawings entitled, *Lock the Lock*. Prison psychologists declare that Tommy has successfully rehabilitated himself and has channeled all his previously negative energy into positive accomplishments



in an effort to make amends.

It is 1982. Parole has finally been granted, then rescinded and new conditions imposed following public outcry, candlelight vigils and a media circus that includes the repetition of mythology about the crime created by the police (they danced over the corpses, urinating on them, performing unspeakable sex acts, etc.). I make my first court appearance for Tommy at the Bergen County Courthouse and have to cross a picket line of uniformed cops chanting, "Kill him, kill him!" The ostensible reason for the hearing is to determine the amount of "restitution" that Tommy must pay as a condition of any future parole, but the real purpose of the hearing is to allow the victims' families to ventilate regarding the horrible impact of the crime. Tommy is being guarded by corrections officers, who have placed snipers on the courthouse roof. I sit next to the most hated inmate in New Jersey, becoming by osmosis the most hated lawyer in New Jersey. In a society that has given up on the concept of rehabilitation my client is the poster boy for punishment.

Thus began, off and on, my now more than 18-year struggle with the New Jersey parole and corrections system on Tommy's behalf. In a system designed to have no more than two parole hearings before release, Tommy has had 11. He is the longest-serving New Jersey inmate. He will be 63 in February, having donated his entire adult life to the prison system. Frank Bisignano and the others in the Death House with Tommy have been paroled 15 years ago. Every time Tommy comes up for parole his record of accomplishments has grown, requiring consistently more fantastic rationales to justify denial. By now, with no bad conduct for the last 37 years to justify any negative conclusions, the Parole Board must resort to new psychological "evaluations" in order to make the case that the "real" Tommy Trantino is lurking beneath the benign affect, just waiting for release so he can recidivate. As in the Soviet Union, the so-called "healing" professions have been inducted into the criminal justice system in order to bury political prisoners. Tommy's case has been before the Supreme Court of New Jersey four times, most recently in September 2000. We wait for an opinion.

In 1990 I moved to Los Angeles to become a television writer. I got rid of my law practice. Other lawyers took my other cases, but no one would take Tommy's case. A hundred lawyers told me, this guy's never getting out. Give it up. But they warned us in law school to beware the lawyer with only one case. I am now that lawyer, and I keep on plugging. It is clear to me and any fair-minded observer that Tommy is being held illegally by New Jersey authorities. In 1995 I filed a state habeas corpus petition. Since April of that year, without any break (or compensation), I have been litigating Tommy's case non-stop in a court system now 3000 miles from home. I have been before the Appellate Division three times and the Supreme Court twice. Last year the Appellate Division finally granted relief and ordered immediate parole. In an exhaustive 62-page opinion the Court held that the Parole Board had no factual basis for denying parole. But after the usual public outcry the Attorney General obtained a stay from the Supreme Court. That Court granted review, and Tommy remains in prison.

By the time this article is published there will be an opinion. Either Tommy will be free or he will have to serve an additional 20 years before his next eligibility, his second death penalty. Tommy is the eternal optimist. He believes in the law, and finds my arguments irrefutable. What an irony. A double cop-killer stands up for the rule of law, while those whose job it is to enforce the law – the Attorney General, the members of the Parole Board, the Governor – do everything in their power to distort and subvert the law. When I as the attorney get furious at the injustice, the interminable delays that have robbed Tommy of his adult life, his marriage, his ability to see his mother before she died, it is Tommy who reassures me and calmly predicts ultimate victory.

To me there is no question why I have to fight this case to the end, whenever that may be. There are important issues at stake. The criminal justice system cannot buckle under political pressure as the U.S. Supreme Court recently did in Bush v. Gore. More importantly, the issue of rehabilitation is one that defines who we are as a society. Every major religion promotes the concept of redemption. The sinner must be given the opportunity to repent and to do penance through prayer and good works, and we in turn must forgive. Each side of that equation is critical, and each side is imbedded in our criminal justice system. Parole can and should be earned. No matter how heinous the crime, Tommy Trantino today is not the drugged-up thug who committed it. He has changed, and society must accept that if we are to advance as a civilization. We cannot abdicate our criminal justice system to vengeance and the victims' rights movement, or we will all be the lesser for it.

The above paragraph explains intellectually why I fight for Tommy, but ideas are only part of the story. I will fight to the end for Tommy because I am committed to him as a person. Our paths crossed and I agreed to help him. He is being screwed and I happen to know how to fight it. I'm not Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld, looking for innocent clients who can be cleared by DNA tests. Give me a guilty client any day. But then the onus is on me to judge my client – not based so much on guilt or innocence as on whether this person deserves to be in the jam he/she is in, and whether he/she deserves the massive psychic energy needed to reverse his/her fortunes. In Tommy's case the answer is clear. In the course of our journey we have become friends. Maybe it's because we both had strong Jewish mothers with a biting sense of humor, or we're news junkies, or in an odd way we are progressive men who came of age in the 1960s, but we talk on the phone every week as two people on the same trip. The young inmates call Tommy "Pops" and make him feel old and irrelevant in the same way as ageism is pushing me out of the television writing business. Sometimes I'm Don Quixote and he's Sancho Panza; other times it's the reverse. I know how much better I am as a person because of our relationship. I, and our community, will be so much better off with Tommy walking free among us. ●

***Roger Lowenstein** lives in Los Angeles. On January 18, 2001, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that Thomas Trantino must be transferred to a halfway house within 30 days, then after a 12-month successful adjustment, paroled to the street. The "facts" offered by the parole board to justify denial of parole were described as "makeweight." New Jersey's longest serving inmate (37 years) is finally free.*

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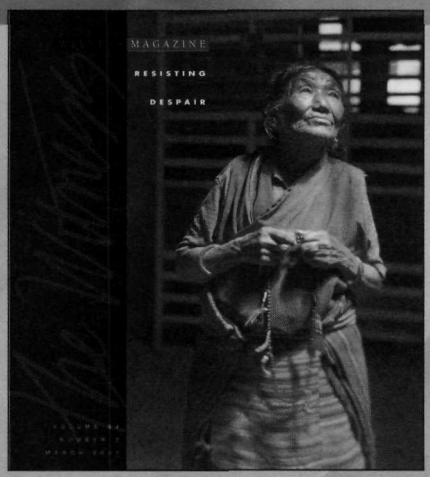
'All that we are, all that we have, comes from God and will one day return to God.'



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SUSTAINED BY LOVE

A call for spiritual practice that restores community

by bell hooks

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OUR NATIONAL SPIRITUAL HUNGER springs from a keen awareness of the emotional lack in our lives. It is a response to lovelessness. Going to church or temple has not satisfied this hunger, surfacing from deep within our souls. Organized religion has failed to satisfy spiritual hunger because it has accommodated secular demands, interpreting spiritual life in ways that uphold the values of a production-centered commodity culture. This is as true of the traditional Christian church as it is of New Age spirituality. It is no accident that so many famous New Age spiritual teachers link their teachings to a metaphysics of daily life that extols the virtues of wealth, privilege and power. For example, consider New Age logic, which suggests that the poor have chosen to be poor, have chosen their suffering. Such thinking removes from all of us who are privileged the burden of accountability. Rather than calling us to embrace love and greater community, it actually requires an investment in the logic of alienation and estrangement.

The basic interdependency of life is ignored so that separateness and individual gain can be deified. Religious fundamentalism is often represented as authentic spiritual practice and given a level of mass media exposure that countercultural religious thought and practice never receive. Usually, fundamentalists, be they Christian, Muslim, or any faith, shape and interpret religious thought to make it conform to and legitimize a conservative status quo. Fundamentalist thinkers use religion to justify supporting imperialism, militarism, sexism, racism, homophobia. They deny the unifying message of love that is at the heart of every major religious tradition.

No wonder then that so many people who claim to believe in religious teachings do not allow their habits of being to reflect these beliefs. For example, the Christian church remains one of the most racially segregated institutions in our society. In Martin Luther King, Jr.'s letter to American Christians, in which he assumes the persona of the biblical apostle Paul, he admonishes believers for supporting segregation: "Americans, I must urge you to be rid of every aspect of segregation. Segregation is a blatant denial of the unity which we have in Christ. It substitutes an 'I-it' relationship for the 'I-thou' relationship, and relegates persons to the status of things. It scars the soul and degrades the personality. ... It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible." This is only one example of the way in which organized religious worship corrupts and violates religious principles about how we should live in the world and how we should act toward one another. Imagine how different our lives would be if all the individuals who claim to be Christians, or who claim to be religious, were setting an example for everyone by being loving.

Countercultural spiritual awakening

Blatant misuses of spirituality and religious faith could lead us to despair about spiritual life if we were not simultaneously witnessing a genuine concern for spiritual awakening expressed counterculturally. Whether it is the American Buddhists working in solidarity to free Tibet or the many Christian-based organizations that provide support in the way of food and shelter for the needy globally, these embodiments of loving practice renew our hope and restore the soul. All around the world liberation theology offers the exploited and oppressed a vision of spiritual freedom that is linked to struggles to end domination.

A little more than 10 years after Fromm first published *The Art of Loving*, Martin Luther King, Jr's collection of sermons *Strength to Love* was published. The major focus of these talks was the celebration of love as a spiritual force that unites and binds all life. Like Fromm's earlier work, these essays championed spiritual life, critiquing capitalism, materialism, and the violence used to enforce exploitation and dehumanization. In a 1967 lecture opposing war King declared: "When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Moslem-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: 'Let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.'" Throughout his life King was a prophet of love. In the late seventies, when it was no longer cool to talk about spirituality, I found myself

Timothy Whelan

turning again and again to his work and to the work of Thomas Merton. As religious seekers and thinkers, both men focused attention on the practice of love as a means of spiritual fulfillment.

Extolling the transformative power of love in his essay "Love and Need," Merton writes: "Love is, in fact an intensification of life, a completeness, a fullness, a wholeness of life. ... Life curves upward to a peak of intensity, a high point of value and meaning, at which all its latent creative possibility go into action and the person transcends himself or herself in encounter, response and communion with another. It is for this that we came into the world — this communion and self-transcendence. We do not become fully human until we give ourselves to each other in love." The teachings about love offered by Fromm, King and Merton differ from much of today's writing. There is always an emphasis in their work on love as an active force that should lead us into greater communion with the world. In their work, loving practice is not aimed at simply giving an individual greater life satisfaction; it is extolled as the primary way we end domination and oppression. This important politicization of love is often absent from today's writing.

Choosing a commodified spiritual rhetoric ...

Much as I enjoy popular New Age commentary on love, I am often struck by the dangerous narcissism fostered by spiritual rhetoric that pays so much attention to individual self-improvement and so little to the practice of love within the context of community. Packaged as a commodity, spirituality becomes no different from an exercise program. While it may leave the consumer feeling better about his or her life, its power to enhance our communion with ourselves and others in a sustained way is inhibited. Commenting on the value of an engaged life in *The Active Life: Wisdom for Work, Creativity, and Caring*, Parker Palmer writes: "To be fully alive is to act. ... I understand action to be any way that we can co-create reality with other beings and the Spirit. ... Action, like a sacrament, is the visible form of an invisible spirit, an outward manifestation of an inward power. But as we act, we not only express what is in us and help give shape to the world; we also receive what is outside us, and reshape our inner selves." A commitment to a spiritual life requires us to do more than read a good book or go on a restful retreat. It requires conscious practice, a willingness to unite the way we think with the way we act.

... or a conscious spiritual practice?

Spiritual life is first and foremost about commitment to a way of thinking and behaving that honors principles of inter-being and interconnectedness. When I speak of the spiritual, I refer to the recognition within everyone that there is a place of mystery in our lives where forces that are beyond human desire or will alter circumstances and/or guide and direct us. I call these forces "divine spirit." When we choose to lead a spirit-filled life, we recognize and celebrate the presence of transcendent spirits. Some people call this presence soul, God, the Beloved, higher consciousness, or higher power. Still others say that this force is what it is because it cannot be named. To them it is simply the spirit moving in us and through us.

A commitment to spiritual life necessarily means we embrace the eternal principle that love is all, everything, our true destiny. Despite overwhelming pressure to conform to the culture of lovelessness, we still seek to know love. That seeking is itself a manifestation of divine spirit. Life-threatening nihilism abounds in contemporary culture, crossing the boundaries of race, class, gender, and nationality. At some point it affects all our lives. Everyone I know is at times brought low by feelings of depression and despair about the state of the world. Whether it is the ongoing worldwide presence of violence expressed by the persistence of man-made war, hunger and starvation, the day-to-day reality of violence, the presence of life-threatening diseases that cause the unexpected deaths of friends, comrades and loved ones, there is much that brings everyone to the brink of despair. Knowing love or the hope of knowing love is the anchor that keeps us from falling into that sea of despair. In *A Path with Heart*, Jack Kornfield shares: "The longing for love and the movement of love is underneath all of our activities."

Spirituality and spiritual life give us the strength to love. It is rare for individuals to choose a life in the spirit, one that honors the sacred dimensions of everyday life, when they have had no contact with traditional religious thought or practice. Spiritual teachers are important guides who provide a catalyst for our spiritual awakening. Another source of spiritual growth is communion and fellowship with like-minded souls. Spiritual seekers let their light shine so that others may see not only to give service by example but also to constantly remind themselves that spirituality is most gloriously embodied in our actions — our habits of being. Insightfully Jack Kornfield explains: "All other spiritual teachings are in vain if we cannot love. Even the most exalted states and the most exceptional spiritual accomplishments are unimportant if we cannot be happy in the most basic and ordinary ways, if, with our hearts, we cannot touch one another and the life we have been given. What matters is how we live."

Lessons learned in church

For many of us, church was the place where we first heard a counternarrative of love, one that differed from the confused messages about love learned in dysfunctional families. The mystical dimensions of Christian faith (the belief that we are all one, that love is all) presented to me as a child in the church were the space of redemption. At church I learned not only to understand that God is love, I learned also that children were special in the heart and mind of divine spirit. Dreaming of becoming a writer, valuing the life of the mind above all things, it was especially awesome to learn by heart passages from First Corinthians, "the love chapter." From childhood on I have often reflected on the passage that proclaims: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." Throughout my graduate school years, as I worked hard to finish my doctorate,

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striving to maintain a commitment to spiritual life in a world that did not value the spiritual, I returned to these lessons about the primacy of love. The wisdom they convey kept me from hardening my heart. Remaining open to love was crucial to my academic survival. When the environment you live in and know most intimately does not place value on loving, a spiritual life provides a place of solace and renewal.

Significantly, the gaining of knowledge about spirituality is not the same as a commitment to a spiritual life. Jack Kornfield testifies: "In undertaking a spiritual life, what matters is simple: We must make certain our path is connected with our heart. In beginning a genuine spiritual journey, we have to stay much closer to home, to focus directly on what is right here in front of us, to make sure that our path is connected with our deepest love." When we begin to experience the sacred in our everyday lives we bring to mundane tasks a quality of concentration and engagement that lifts the spirit. We recognize divine spirit everywhere. This is especially true when we face difficulties. So many people turn to spiritual thinking only when they experience difficulties, hoping that the sorrow or pain will just miraculously disappear. Usually, they find that the place of suffering — the place where we are broken in spirit, when accepted and embraced, is also a place of peace and possibility. Our sufferings do not magically end; instead we are able to wisely alchemically recycle them. They become the abundant waste that we use to make new growth possible. That is why biblical scripture admonishes us to "count it all joy" — when we meet various trials. Learning to embrace our suffering is one of the gifts offered by spiritual life and practice.

Finding divine forces in the natural world ... or at temple

Spiritual practice does not need to be connected to organized religion in order to be meaningful. Some individuals find their sacred connection to life communing with the natural world and engaging in practices that honor life-sustaining ecosystems. We can meditate, pray, go to temple, church, mosque, or create a quiet sanctuary where we live to commune with holy spirits. To some folks, daily service to others is affirmative spiritual practice, one that expresses their love for others. When we make a commitment to staying in touch with divine forces that inform our inner and outer world, we are choosing to lead a life in the spirit.

I study spiritual teachings as a guide for reflection and action. Countercultural spiritual awakening is visible in books and magazines and in small circles where individuals come to celebrate and commune with the divine. Fellowship with other seekers after truth offers essential inspiration. Since the earliest roots of my spiritual practice were in the Christian tradition, I still find the traditional church to be a place for worship and fellowship, and I also participate in a Buddhist practice. I meditate and pray. Everyone has to choose the spiritual practice that best enhances their life. This is why progressive seekers after truth urge us all to be tolerant — to remember that though our paths are many, we are made one community in love.

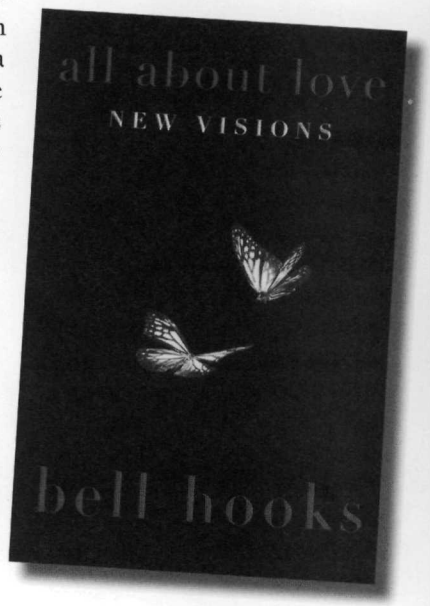
Breaking taboos

The spiritual awakening that is slowly taking place counterculturally will become more of a daily norm as we all willingly break mainstream cultural taboos that silence or erase our passion for spiritual practice. For a long time many of my friends and work peers had no idea I was devoted to a spiritual practice. Among progressive thinkers and scholars it was much more hip, cool and acceptable to express atheistic sentiments than to declare passionate devotion to divine spirit. I also did not want folks to think that if I talked about my spiritual beliefs I was trying to convert them, to impose those beliefs on them in any way.

I began to speak more openly about the place of spirituality in my life when witnessing the despair of my students, their sense of hopelessness, their fears that life is without meaning, their profound loneliness and lovelessness. When young, bright, beautiful students would come to my office and confess their despondency, I felt it was irresponsible to just listen and commiserate with their woes without daring to share how I had confronted similar issues in my life. Often they would urge me to tell them how I sustained my joy in living. To tell the truth, I had to be willing to talk openly about spiritual life. And I had to find a way to talk about my choices that did not imply that they would be the correct or right choices for someone else.

My belief that God is love — that love is everything, our true destiny — sustains me. I affirm these beliefs through daily meditation and prayer, through contemplation and service, through worship and loving kindness. In the introduction to *Lovingkindness*, Sharon Salzberg teaches that the Buddha described spiritual practice as "the liberation of the heart which is love." She urges us to remember that spiritual practice helps us overcome the feeling of isolation, which "uncovers the radiant, joyful heart within each of us and manifests this radiance to the world." Everyone needs to be in touch with the needs of their spirit. This connectedness calls us to spiritual awakening — to love. In the biblical book of John, a passage reminds us that "anyone who does not know love is still in death."

All awakening to love is spiritual awakening. ●



Cultural critic and feminist theorist bell hooks is Distinguished Professor of English at City College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. This article is excerpted from her recent book, All About Love: New Visions *(pp. 72–83), copyright © 2000 by* ***Gloria Watkins****. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., William Morrow.*

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TIBETANS'

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The woman who whispered her prayers

My name is Ama Adhe and I am 65 years old. I spent 28 years of my life in eight different Chinese prisons as a political prisoner. My *chuba*, which is the traditional dress of both Tibetan men and women, became my protection at night in the cold and dampness of my small prison cell. I used my sleeve as a pillow, one side of my *chuba* as a mattress and the other side as a blanket, since in many of the prisons there was no other bedding or blankets. Often, when I worked in the prison vegetable gardens that fed the Chinese guards, my *chuba* became a secret hiding place where I would store and conceal food to bring to the other prisoners who were starving. I was caught and severely punished for this on many occasions.

The inscription you see on the flag in this photograph is the Dolma prayer. I attribute my survival to the ceaseless repetition of this prayer. When I was first in prison, I tore a strip of

WHISPERED PRAYERS

Practicing compassion in the midst of suffering

by Stephen R. Harrison

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A SAGE ONCE SAID that the world is made up not of atoms but of stories. As a psychiatrist, I am allowed the privilege of bearing witness to these stories and helping their authors make some sense of them. People usually do not come to my door because of success so much as pain and suffering, and I witness daily the effects of unforeseen traumas and tragedies.

Although I am understandably somewhat desensitized from working with people who have been through traumatic experiences, I was not at all prepared for what I was to find in working with the Tibetans. I found 18-year-old nuns who had been raped, beaten and shocked with 7,000 volts from electric cattle prods. I found monks and nuns who had been suspended by their limbs and beaten for hours at a time. I found people who had been incarcerated and tortured over years and decades of time for no substantial reason. I found mothers and fathers bringing their children over 19,000-foot peaks in the middle of winter, only to leave them behind to be educated and probably never to see them again as the parents returned to their farms in Tibet. I found loss and tragedy everywhere. The stories were unending.

So were the steady stream of refugees. Winter and summer. Day and night. Mountains and plains. Their journeys were marked by starvation, subzero temperatures, severe snowfall, death from starvation, limb amputation from frostbite, retinal eye burns from snow blindness. By arrest and return to prison by the Chinese police. By repeated robbery in Nepal by the border patrol. By arrest in India for being an illegal refugee. Again and again, the list goes on: rape, assault, imprisonment, forced abortion and sterilization, beatings and beatings and more beatings.

Yet I found, in spite of the upheaval, many remarkable Tibetans who had graciously gone on with their lives. And with them, they brought their radiant lightheartedness, generosity, kindness and compassion. It was a sight that I would have normally not believed to be possible — how such severe trauma could be left so far behind and anger and hatred so minimal, how kindness can be a goal to be practiced intensely in daily life. "When you ask me if I feel angry at the Chinese government for what they have done to Tibet and the Tibetan people, I say, 'No, I do not feel angry because nothing good can come out of anger,'" said one 75-year-old woman (her husband

cloth from my *chuba* and tied 108 knots in it to use as a rosary. It is a tradition for Tibetans to count the number of repetitions of our prayers because it helps us to maintain our attention and concentration. The Chinese guards noticed this knotted cloth and beat me. Then I began to say my prayers out loud in my small cell. The guards waited secretly outside, and whenever they heard the sounds of my prayers, they would again beat me. And so I learned to whisper my prayers. When they saw my lips moving, the guards placed duct tape over my mouth. I learned to say my prayers with my fingers and in my mind. When they saw my fingers moving, they beat me and placed duct tape over my fingers to prevent me from counting. And so it was that I learned to pray silently in my mind without making any gestures so the guards could see nothing at all. ▲

Printed by permission of Talisman Press, publishers of Whispered Prayers: Portraits and Prose of Tibetans in Exile *by Stephen R. Harrison with a Foreword by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Additional Essays by Anthony Storr and Vicki Goldberg.*

TIBETANS' WHISPE

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The Crossing

It was winter as the remaining three of us crossed the Himalayas to escape into India: my eight-year-old sister, a monk in his 60s, who became our guide, and me, a boy of six. The rest of our group were captured earlier in the expedition and taken away by the Chinese police.

At some point there were no trees on the steep mountainside we were going down. The stones were very slippery and we had nothing to hold on to. Because of the difficult descent, the monk told us to wait and he would go ahead to find the way. We waited and waited but he did not return. We began shouting for him. No one answered. My sister and I finally proceeded ahead, when all of a sudden we saw the monk's body in the canyon below, his fingers still clutching a handful of grass. He was dead. We cried for a long time and then we covered his body as best we could.

My sister advised me to climb back up the mountain to look for help while she stayed with the body. During the climb, I lost direction and could not find the road. When darkness fell, I called out for my sister. Again and again I shouted out my sister's name, hoping the winds would carry my voice to her. Nothing. I was so scared that I cried and trembled with fear. I found a cave inhabited by big birds, like chickens with long tails. I slept there for the next four nights without food or

RED PRAYERS

and nine children now all dead). "When I weave, I pray. And when I don't weave, I also pray. I pray for world peace and I pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I try to do 10,000 prayers for world peace each day. I count these prayers on my prayer beads."

The title of my book, *Whispered Prayers*, originated from the many conversations I had with Tibetans who were imprisoned and severely punished by Chinese guards for uttering their prayers. But to stop these prayers proved impossible. Tens of thousands of prayers uttered daily tethered their minds not to hatred and revenge, but to compassion and understanding.

My personal passage to India and my Tibetan project began in February of 1996. By nature I am not a political person and I knew almost nothing about Tibet, or China for that matter. I did not know, for example, that the Chinese government had initiated a series of invasions of Tibet in 1950 that, within the next decade, would result in the occupation of the whole of Tibet and the eventual death of over 1.2 million Tibetans — about one-sixth of the total population — due to political persecution, imprisonment, torture and famine. I was not aware of the destruction of 70 percent of the rich forest reserves, the massive dumping of nuclear wastes and the dynamiting of all but a handful of the 6,000 monasteries that before 1950 had dotted the Tibetan landscape. Nor did I know that over 130,000 Tibetan refugees had fled their motherland since those days. Rather, these numbers were all too enormous and abstract to be meaningful to me, and I did not realize their significance in terms of the staggering weight of human suffering.

I traveled to India as a photographer. My journey began at the Tibetan Homes School, which is a large school of 1,500 refugee children, in Mussoorie. When the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Tibetans fled Tibet after the Chinese invasion, they traveled to Mussoorie, which is one of the old British hill stations that lie at an altitude of 6,000 feet. Three weeks later I departed for Dharamsala, where the Tibetan Government in Exile is located. I remained there for seven weeks. In November of 1996 I returned to both locations for an additional seven weeks and then on to other settlements. In 1997 I made a third trip to India for four weeks.

Most of the subjects in this presentation were interviewed with the assistance of a translator. Because of the sensitivity of the information presented as well as the attitude of the Chinese government, the identity of subjects has been protected as much as possible. As one 16-year-old boy who fled Tibet at the age of 12 said, "I tell this story for my country, but I request that you change all names and all dates. My parents have been very kind to me and I wouldn't want them to suffer." ●

Stephen R. Harrison *lives in Santa Barbara, Calif. To contact Talisman Press, LLC: PMB 270, 1324 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; <www.talismanpress.com>; 1-800-914-9299.*

water. Each day I continued to yell for my sister. No one answered. On the fourth day, I heard hammering and left the cave to follow the sounds. They led to a power station and to a carpenter nearby, and then to the police, where I was held for two months before being sent back to my home in Tibet. My father returned to look for my sister, but no trace of her was found and she was given up for dead. A great sadness penetrated our home.

Time passed. I was 12 years old when I again tried to escape to India, this time with my younger sister and 10 other Tibetans. The long and terrible journey took 40 days. At last we arrived very early in the morning at the reception center in Kathmandu and fell asleep in the gardens. Two women came to awaken us and told us not to worry. I was sent to the Tibetan Homes School, and to my surprise my older sister was there, alive and well. Some monks had apparently heard her crying as they crossed the Himalayas for India and had brought her along.

Four years later my sister graduated. Unable to live away from our family, she returned to Tibet. Once again I do not know her whereabouts. I remain at the Tibetan Homes School determined to continue my education so I can help my country in its liberation. ▲

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WHISPERED PRAYERS

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The woman who sought her son's education

I am 38 years old and I have just arrived with my three-year-old son from Tibet. I decided to leave my home because it was time for my child to go to school. The education is inadequate in Tibet because it is taught by the Chinese. They brainwash children and teach what is not true. It is important that my child learn about his Tibetan heritage.

It took me five years to save enough money to leave and pay for our long journey to India. We traveled alone by bus to Mt. Kailash, which took seven days. I then paid a guide and we were able to join a group of 18 other people. There was only one other woman who had a child in this group. The remainder of the group consisted of monks and nuns.

From Mt. Kailash it took our group two months of walking to reach Nepal. It was winter, but we were fortunate because we had only two days of deep snow. I carried my child on my back with our bedding and food. I had no other clothes or shoes other than those that I am now wearing. It was very cold and I was always worried that my child might die. I prayed constantly that we would reach India and receive the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It was this determination and the love for my child that kept me going. I will be very sad to say good-bye to my little boy, but I feel I have no choice. Dharamsala is already overcrowded with refugees like myself who cannot find work. I will have to move on to somewhere else, leaving my child behind. ▲

DEADLY BETRAYAL

... and a return to childhood faith

by Nelson Johnson

THE FOG HUNG HEAVY over Greensboro, N.C., early on the morning of November 3, 1979. As one of the organizers of an anti-Klan march to be followed by a labor conference, I was a little worried about the weather. Around 7AM I stopped by the home of Jim and Signe Waller, a Jewish couple, where we had breakfast together. Jim had left the medical faculty at Duke University to become an organizer in a textile mill. Little did I know that this was the last time that we would ever have a meal together. In less than four hours Jim would be shot in the back.

By 10AM the fog had melted away and the

Police and protesters argue during a Malcolm X-birthday march to protest human rights violations against African Americans in 1992.

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sunshine had burst through, transforming the day into a bright crisp fall morning. I was excited about the plans for the day. Impressive work had been done in the textile mills along a 75-mile stretch of the I-85 corridor and in communities in those mill towns. Greensboro was the center of our textile mill and community work. I felt that a lot of people would be joining the march and attending the labor conference. As a student leader at North Carolina A&T State University and a community organizer, I had organized a number of marches and rallies over the past 15 years. As usual, I was a little anxious before the big march and conference, but anticipating mill folk and folk from the black community getting together — a meeting long overdue, I felt like a wonderful day was taking shape.

This initial assessment would prove tragically wrong. By the morning of the next day, I wore clothes splattered with day-old dried blood — blood from five of my dear friends killed the day before by Klan and Nazi gunmen in the streets of Greensboro. I had spent a painful night locked up charged with inciting to riot after a paid police agent led a caravan of nine Klan and Nazi members into a legally planned march, where they killed five people, wounded 10 others and terrorized Morningside Homes, an African-American public housing community.

I had discussed the march with the police, painstakingly obtained a parade permit, and was assured of police presence and protection. I had had a difficult relationship with the Greensboro police since my student days 10 years earlier. The discussion with police immediately came to my mind as I peered through unbelieving eyes on that Saturday morning at the wounded and dying bodies of friends. As the blood of my loved ones was soaking into the ground, I stood over Jim's body and shouted with all the assurance that the Spirit could give me, "This could not have happened without direct police involvement and we declare war on you!"

Of course, I did not know of the police agent's organizing role or any of the other information that eventually came out in court after six long years that resulted in two leading police officers and six Klan and Nazi party members being found liable for wrongful death. At the time, I just knew the police were deeply involved in this tragic event, and I spoke the truth as it was flowing through me. I was immediately charged with inciting to riot, wrestled to the ground and taken to jail. I remained in jail that night because the magistrate refused to set a bond as I was declared to be too great a danger to the peace and order of the city to be set free that day.

By the morning of the next day, I wore clothes splattered with day-old dried blood — blood from five of my dear friends killed the day before by Klan and Nazi gunmen in the streets of Greensboro.

Released by mid-morning on November 4, I was met by a small crowd of reporters and friends and informed of the names of those killed. They included not only Dr. Jim Waller and Sandy Smith, the beautiful black former Student Government President at Greensboro's all women's Bennett College, but also Michael Nathan, a Jewish doctor who was leading the first aid team for the planned four-mile march, Ce'sar Cauce, a wonderful brother of Hispanic origin, who organized among non-academic workers at Duke University, and William (Bill) Sampson, a Virginian by birth and the only Anglo-white. Bill had left divinity school at Harvard University a few years earlier to become a textile mill organizer in Greensboro.

Once out of jail I also gratefully learned that my eight- and nine-year-old daughters had been picked up by my youngest brother and taken to his home in Winston-Salem for safety. My wife, Joyce, and I drove to a friend's house, as it was too dangerous to move back into our home. The next six days, leading up to the funeral of those killed, were the most intense, the most packed with counterintelligence maneuvering and growing tension, ever in my life and, I suspect, ever in the life of this community of 200,000 citizens — North Carolina's third largest city. These six days would portend the next six years, which involved an intense journey of survival for me and other members and friends of the Communist Workers Party (CWP). This journey involved a strange blending of vicious anti-communism and deep-seated racism, threading through three trials (averaging over five months each) related to the Klan/Nazi killings, the bringing of seven criminal charges against me, slander and vilification of those killed and those of us who survived on a scale that I had never seen before. Yet, all of this did not stop a powerfully inspired fight back and for me a rediscovery of my faith on a deeper level.

My faith was nurtured in the late 1940s and early 1950s on a farm near Littleton, in eastern North Carolina. We black folk formed a fairly tight rural community, but we were completely separated from whites except for the requirements of work. Religion was central to our village. My grandfather, for whom I was named and who died in 1932, was the founder and first pastor of Lee's Chapel Baptist Church. My father, now 92 years old, was a deacon in the church and my mother, who died at 87 in 1992, played the piano for the church choir. I grew up surrounded by religion and faith. It was so real and so profound for many people in our little village. As a child and teenager, I liked the singing and the preaching (preaching has a very lively form in the southern black rural tradition). However, the deeper substance and interiority of the faith never fully gripped me, although I am convinced that it gripped many other people in the community. I wanted to feel and believe as deeply as they seemed to feel and believe, I just didn't. But even with my shallow awareness, I was a believer, I went along

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with what I understood the faith to be.

I suppose that part of the basis for my faith is because religion and church were the stabilizing force in the community. In fact, church was the only significant institution in the community other than the school. It served the role of being a community center, recreation center, old folks home, counseling service, arts and drama club, civic center and faith center, all wrapped into one. It was really the unifying epicenter of our village.

As for Jesus, I really didn't think much about who he was in my early years. I certainly didn't have a frame of reference on how or whether the human and divine dimensions came together in Jesus. Such theological reckoning was not even a thought. He was just the Savior, who did miracles, helped people and assured us that everything would be all right. In the midst of this racially oppressed and segregated community, Jesus helped us put up with "white folk" in the hope of going to heaven in another life. My faith did not grow out of well-considered reflection on the meaning of anything in particular. Rather, it was the acceptance — and I did accept it — of the general feeling, mood and beliefs in my small rural community. We believed that there was a God and that God would reward the good people and punish the bad people; Bible stories were told in such a way as to reinforce that. If you asked God, God would have mercy on you, even if you were mean, because he was a forgiving God. Such was my early faith training.

I matured slowly. People my age always seemed more grown-up than I was. Through my four years in the U.S. Air Force and later my growing involvement in the black liberation movement, particularly my study of Marxism, I gently laid aside many of my previous faith beliefs. There was so much about religion that didn't make sense to me in my late 20s and 30s. I gradually moved away from organized religion and dedicated my life to working among the poor. I was committed to doing what I could to help folk, including working with religious people and the church when I thought that would help. Although I did not make a public spectacle of it, I no longer considered myself to be a confessing believer in the former sense.

During the six-year period after November 3, 1979, of being denounced, labeled, branded, stigmatized and ostracized, I was alternately drawn to reflecting more on faith and things of the Spirit and then pushed farther away from religion because I thought the church should have been doing more. In 1983 I believe I was serving a 20-day sentence for contempt of court. I had refused to stand when the judge entered the court because the court, in my opinion, was so corrupt. I had seen two all-white juries acquit all the Klan and Nazi gunmen of all criminal charges in spite of the fact that they were filmed by four television stations, calmly shooting people. I had lost all respect for the court.

While serving the 20 days, I went on a 20-day hunger strike to express further contempt for the court. An Episcopalian minister attached to the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, Henry Atkins, visited me in my jail cell one day and inquired as to my well-being. I didn't know him. He seemed like a very kind man. I sensed in him something very authentic. I asked him what he really believed. "Do you really believe there is a God and, if so, how do you explain the sort of thing that happened here in Greensboro and especially the role of church folks?" Honestly, I cannot remember exactly what Atkins said, but I remember what he didn't say, and I remember how I felt. He didn't give me the expected heavy-handed speech about how God was going to deliver me or punish someone else or the bit about my need to have more faith. As best I can recall, he shared a little about his life and about what God meant to him personally. It didn't sound all that strong at the time, but I felt it was genuine. It was enough for me to begin to wrestle anew with my own faith.

When I got out of jail, Atkins invited me to St. Mary's House, a little church adjacent to the college campus. About 25 Christian ministers were there, mostly white. They were courteous but obviously did not understand the depth of the systemic evil and the need for change.

From 1979 through 1984, I felt like I went through hell. I reached the end of my rope. I spent many nights agonizing over what I needed to do in the future. Driven by circumstances and inspired by discussion with Atkins and others, I started to read the Scriptures a little. I went to a number of churches in the black community, trying to draw meaning from what was being preached. A black pastor who was particularly helpful to me was Otis L. Hairston of Shiloh Baptist Church. He was a quiet, unassuming man who preached a gentle gospel that not only invited individual transformation, but also challenged institutional powers and systemic evil. My family and I became members of Shiloh, and it was under Hairston's leadership that I was both protected and initially nurtured in the gospel ministry.

There was a warmth and reception of me in the black church that I had not received anyplace else. What I heard, however, often didn't seem to address the problems of the structured and the systemic evil. What these services did do was to reinvigorate my interest in Jesus. I started to focus on Jesus. As I did, I gradually discovered a person that I hadn't known existed. I was beginning to see how thoroughly Jesus opposed all the sources of evil rooted deeply in culture and manifested through systems. I also sensed a compelling compassion in him for everyone, especially for the poor. I could begin to see how deeply some people loved him and how much others hated him.

Out of the anguish and hardship born from the Klan and Nazi killings on November 3, 1979, I reluctantly returned to the faith of my childhood. Still seeing through a glass darkly, I began to discover in Jesus the kind of deep reliance on God that sustained Him in challenging the powers and principalities and enduring the cross. As I rediscover Jesus on deeper and deeper levels, a new world — the necessity for authentic community lived on the basis of very different assumptions — is opening up to me. It's a challenging but beautiful journey. ●

Nelson Johnson is pastor of Faith Community Church and Executive Director of the Beloved Community Center in Greensboro, N.C.

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Vatican official calls for more just relationship with animals

John Thavis of Catholic News Service reports that a Dec. 7 article in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano,* titled "For a More Just Relationship With Animals" questions humanity's unqualified license to kill or inflict suffering on animals. Written by Marie Hendrickx, a longtime official of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the article says that the cramped and cruel methods used in the modern food industry, for example, may cross the line of morally acceptable treatment of animals.

Hendrickx said that in view of the growing popularity of animal rights movements, the church needs to ask itself to what extent Christ's dictum, "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you," can be applied to the animal world.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says it is legitimate for humans to use animals for food and clothing, and to domesticate them for work or leisure.

But Hendrickx pointed out that a small but significant change in wording was made between the catechism's first edition and its official Latin edition on use of animals for medical experimentation. Such experiments are now called morally acceptable only if they contribute to caring for or saving human lives.

Moreover, the catechism says that in general it is "contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly."

Hendrickx said the question today is whether "the right to use animals to feed oneself implies raising chicken in cages that are each smaller than a notebook. Or raising calves in boxes where they cannot move or see the light of day? Or pinning down sows with iron rings into a nursing position so that piglets can suck the milk without ever stopping, and thus grow faster?"

Likewise, she questioned whether the right to dress oneself with animal skins meant it was morally acceptable to let fur-bearing creatures die slowly in traps from hunger, cold or bleeding.

Hendrickx also questioned treatment of animals in traditional spectacles that have survived into the modern age, like bull-fighting or "throwing cats or goats off a bell-tower." She was referring to the tradition in a Spanish town of tossing a goat from a 50-foot bell tower into a piece of tarpaulin, to mark the beginning of the festival of St. Vincent, the town's patron saint. The town gave up the practice last year after years of protest from animal rights groups.

Community and religious leaders blocked the entrance to the Detroit News *garage on March 6, 1996, eight months into the strike against the* Detroit Free Press, The Detroit News *and Detroit Newspapers, Inc., by unions representing editorial and production workers. Among those pictured here are the retired Episcopal Bishop of Michigan, Coleman McGehee (second from right) and* The Witness' *Bill Wylie-Kellermann (far left). An intense and often volatile labor dispute, the strike effectively ended this past December when members of two teamsters locals endorsed a "last and final offer." An economic and editorial boycott of the newspapers by the community reportedly cost their parent companies, Gannett and Knight Ridder, nearly $500 million in lost profits and strike-related costs and a third of their local circulation. During the strike hundreds of community leaders would not speak to the dailies in protest of the newspapers' management practices.*

Global trade and HIV/AIDS first priorities for new alliance

A unique, broadly ecumenical body launched in Geneva last December has pledged itself to tackle issues of global trade and HIV/AIDS. For each issue, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance will develop an educational approach as well as a specific strategy.

Participants in the founding meeting of the Alliance vowed to "speak out with one voice against injustice, to confront structures of power, practices and attitudes which deprive human beings of dignity and to offer alternative visions based on the Gospel."

Participants noted in their final *communiqué* that the Alliance "will be a flexible and open instrument enabling participating organizations from the broad ecumenical family to work strategically on priorities identified as common to our witness and work."

The founding meeting included 40 people from all continents representing the World Council of Churches (WCC), regional ecumenical organizations and fellowships, church agencies, specialized networks in the South, Christian world communions, international ecumenical and Roman Catholic organizations. The meeting was convened by the WCC.

In his opening address to the founding meeting, WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser said the time has come to take a courageous new step together to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation. "The Alliance intends to continue and strengthen a commitment [whose] roots go back to the very beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. The Gospel must not remain a message of

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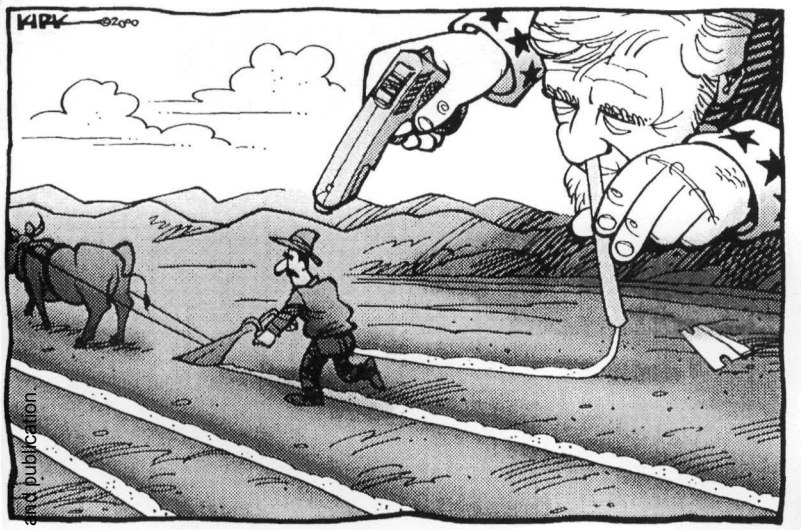

COLOMBIA POLICY

private salvation but [must] be translated into acts of justice and peace, affirming human dignity and offering reconciliation and fullness of life for all."

Speaking to representatives from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, North America and the Pacific, Raiser said the past 10 years have seen not only the dismantling of the communist system and the end of the Cold War, but also the rapid expansion of globalization — with dramatic effects on the lives of people all over the world, particularly in the South. "The gulf between rich and poor is widening both within and between countries and we witness the spread of a culture of violence. The number of refugees has increased dramatically and prospects for containing or reversing ecological degradation are vanishing."

From a list of 170 suggested issues, the meeting selected global economic justice, with a focus on global trade, and ethics of life, with a focus on HIV/AIDS, for attention over the next four years.

The meeting's final *communiqué* noted that global trade is dominated by a few economic powers: transnational corporations, governments and multilateral institutions. This makes it extremely difficult for many countries to access world markets equitably. "Advocacy work is particularly needed at the level of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union," participants said.

The *communiqué* identified the HIV/AIDS pandemic as one of the gravest challenges to health and also "to prospects of social and economic development and global security." HIV/AIDS' impact is a symptom of "systematic economic problems such as under-investment in health and unequal access to effective treatment." It is thus a particularly appropriate issue for churches, the *communiqué* said; while governments and private companies need to be involved, "churches need to speak out on causes, prevention, treatment and consequences."

"The Christ we follow tells us that when we minister to the sick, the hungry, the stranger and the prisoner, we are ministering to Christ himself. His identification with the marginalized, his rage at the moneylenders and his willingness to challenge established social boundaries in view of the Kingdom of God lead us to a life of confronting unjust structures of power in solidarity with the excluded. With this conviction and with trust in the grace of God, we launch this Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance," states the final *communiqué*.

The full text of the Alliance document, "A Covenant for Action," as well as of this *communiqué* are available by request, from <e-alliance@wcc-coe.org>. The *communiqué* is also on the WCC website at <www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/00/communique.html>. ●

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CLASSIFIEDS

Congress on Urban Ministry

Learn, share, worship and celebrate with Sr. Helen Prejean, Tony Campolo, Altagracia Perez, Bill Wylie-Kellermann, Robert Franklin and many others at the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Ministry's (SCUPE) 25th-anniversary conference on urban and justice ministry, March 27–31, 2001 in Chicago. Contact SCUPE at 312-726-1200, <congress@scupe.com>, <www.scupe.com>, or 200 N. Michigan Ave. #502, Chicago, IL 60601.

L'Arche Harbor House

L'Arche Harbor House, a Christian community in Jacksonville, Fla., invites you to assist in creating community with persons who are developmentally disabled. Requirements: dedicated people who want to live the Gospel in community life, who desire to live with, learn from and relate with adults with disabilities. Responsibilities: help create a home based on the Beatitudes, develop relationships with members, assist with personal care and community living. Benefits: Americorps site, stipend, room, board, health insurance, and formation in the spirituality and philosophy of L'Arche. To apply, contact Dottie Klein, 700 Arlington Road, Jacksonville, FL 32211, 904-744-4435; <larchfl@aol.com>.

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An Episcopal religious community-in-formation for men and women; single, committed and married; living, working and ministering in the world; striving for justice and peace among all people. Write: Order of Jonathan Daniels, The Cathedral Church of Saint Luke, 143 State Street, Portland, ME 04101; <OrdJonDanl@aol.com>.

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THE POLITICS AND SPIRITUALITY OF WEATHER

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The Episcopal Church's 2000 General Convention was the first major convention in U.S. history to power itself with renewable electrical energy. A month later, the Democratic National Convention followed suit. Two Episcopal Church activists with a mission are the reason.

28 **We're grateful for your support!**
A listing of those of who have provided generous financial support to *The Witness* over the past year.

on the cover

Carcasses and Approaching Storm

by Bruce Barnbaum

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APRIL 2001

Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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The Witness

Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

A Global Witness
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Website Design
Jim Dugan

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
118 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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LETTERS

Iraq war

Please don't let the war against Iraq be invisible in your magazine's pages! The Episcopal Church is one of many that are speaking out against the sanctions that are killing thousands of Iraqi children every month. Please make sure that your magazine speaks out against this evil!

Marjorie Schier
Levittown, PA

Tell me a story

In Ina Hughes' piece on "Doing theology through personal narrative" [*TW* 12/00] she refers to "Heinrich Schumann." The name is "Heinrich Schliemann," and the "actual remains of Troy" is still in doubt. But her point, "Tell me a story and I will remember," is excellent — like "teach me to fish."

Peter Friend
Wolfeboro, NH

Living up to a name

Stay with the name of *The Witness*. It has a long and honorable history and is on target.

We in this diocese have a standing commission on Prophetic Witness to Technology and the Culture. There is an ongoing effort to leave out the part about witness, but it is still there! After all, if we only "observe" the culture and say nothing to the culture, what good have we done?

Bishop Jim Pike's best book, I believe, was *Doing the Truth*, his book on ethics. He reminds us that Jesus says not to just SEEK the truth. He says if you love me, DO the truth.

Ward McCabe
San Jose, CA

'The People of the Land' in the Americas

A friend just gave me a copy of the current [Jan/Feb 2001] issue of *The Witness*, your fine publication. Rarely, if ever, have I seen such sensitivity to the concerns of indigenous and powerless peoples of the earth, especially in a church publication. Keep up the good work.

Michael L. Yoder
Department of Sociology,
Northwestern College
Orange City, IA

Challenging a Greedy World

I like your magazine a lot — just received "Challenging a Greedy World" — an impressive documentation of the terrible injustices in today's world.

Marlies Parent
North Stonington, CT

Remembering Sam Day

Sam Day, Jr., longtime journalist and peace activist, died Jan. 26, 2000, in Madison, Wis., following a stroke. Day was coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu (the Israeli activist imprisoned for exposing Israel's clandestine nuclear weapons program). He contributed stories to *The Witness* on Vanunu and other topics, including his experience of blindness following a stroke he suffered in1991, while in prison for distributing literature against the Gulf War.

Day's career included serving as managing editor of *The Progressive* and editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. In the former capacity, he won a 1979 court battle against a government restraining order that forbade *The Progressive* to publish an article that described how a hydrogen bomb works. He also founded Nukewatch, a campaign to identify nuclear weapons transportation routes.

In 1982, Day traveled to South Africa to report on that country's secret nuclear weapons program. Over the past two decades, he has been arrested numerous times and has served state and federal prison terms for nonviolent civil disobedience at U.S. military and nuclear weapons installations. — *The Witness'* staff ●

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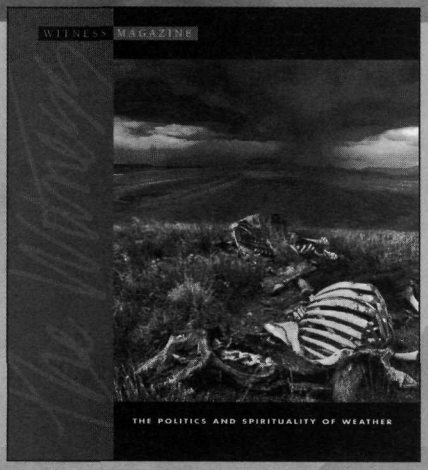
'All that we are, all that we have, comes from God and will one day return to God.'



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Check out
'A Global Witness'

Through this section of our website we are offering analysis and commentary from around the U.S. church and the global Anglican Communion. Our aim is to encourage a reclaiming of the Anglican vocation to doing "public theology" — and to expand awareness of the issues and struggles occupying the hearts and minds of progressive Anglicans and other persons of faith worldwide.

www.thewitness.org

Praying for rain

by Julie A. Wortman

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The idea of exploring the politics and spirituality of weather came to me a couple of summers ago through a chance encounter with our local neighborhood shamans (he is a former Jew, she's a former Christian). We had met on a forest path and, inevitably, we all remarked on the fineness of the morning. Too bad about the lack of rain, though. Both our parched gardens were suffering. That's when my shaman friends confided that they'd been drumming for rain in an attempt to reclaim the ancient practice of weather-working.

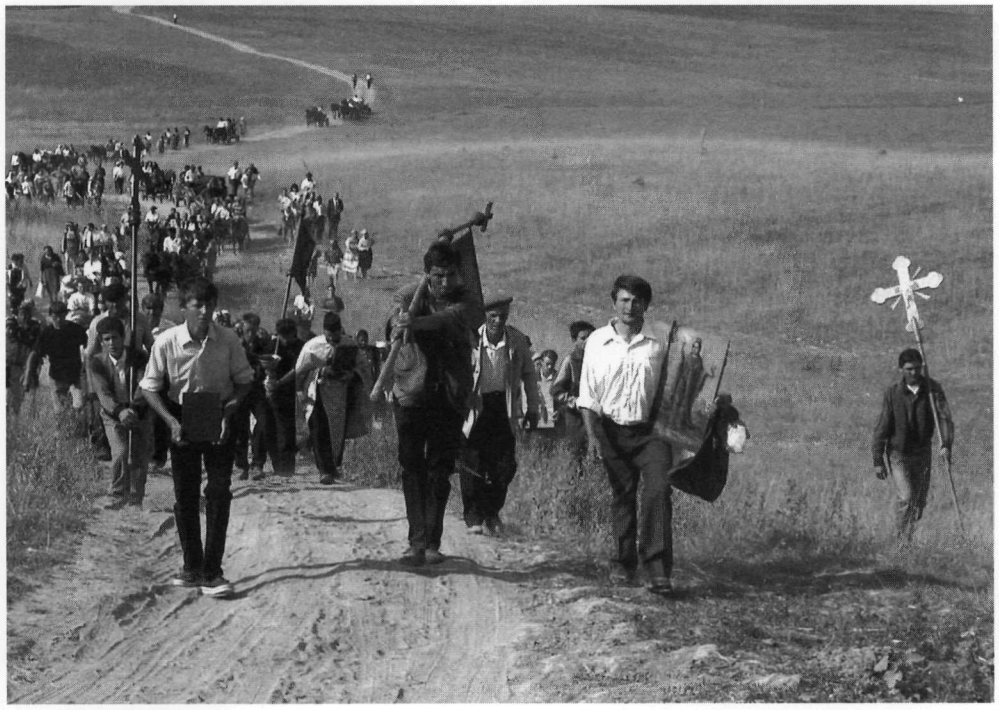
I nodded politely, concealing my surprise — and knee-jerk inclination to immediately dismiss such New Age woo-woo. But I was hooked. The whole way back to the house I could think only of the topic's potential.

We might laugh off the claim that there are weather spirits and that they might be influenced to our benefit. But we Western people can't deny our own obsessive desire for climate control. I think of a lecture I heard years ago about retrofitting historic buildings with modern heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems. Arguing for the installation of systems that would require a minimum of damage to historic windows, ceilings and walls, the lecturer urged a radical return to the "thermal delight" of allowing the kitchen hearth to provide a home's chief source of winter warmth (cold bedrooms are better for sleeping, he said) and screened windows opening onto a shaded veranda its chief means of summer cooling. Unworkable, most in the audience said with regretful sighs of nostalgia for those halcyon days of simpler living. Who could live that way today?

We in the West give selflessly of our time and money to come to the aid of the victims of natural disaster in developing countries — as if there were no correlation between our culture's insatiable addiction to non-renewable fuels and sprawling starter-castle developments and the escalating scale of the devastation which each new hurricane, drought or earthquake brings. We take pride in our humanitarianism, piling up sandbags against the threat of unruly forces we deem politically neutral, confident of the benevolent approval of a God who wills humanity's temperate comfort.

Both our politics and spirituality have remained indoors too long. We mark the seasons of the church year thinking to keep our heads dry and our feet out of the mud. But we do so at our peril. The Creator we seek to glorify needs a breath of fresh air and a regrounding in the creation.

My shaman friends, I know, would approve. The next time the garden begins to wither because of too many cloudless days, I'll think of them. I won't use a drum, but the prayers I offer will be a reclaiming of an ancient tradition just the same. ●



Radu Anecuiuesei/Reuters/Archive Photos

Residents of the town of Lasi in northeast Romania march through a dry field June 14, 2000 in hopes that their prayers for rain will be answered. The country was experiencing a drought, the worst in 50 years.

Julie A. Wortman is editor and publisher of *The Witness*.

A 'natural' disaster?

by Daniel R. Faber

PRESIDENT BUSH had barely had time to learn his way around the White House before he was being called upon to address a number of domestic and international emergencies, ranging from the energy crisis in California to the catastrophic earthquakes in El Salvador and India.

The Salvadoran earthquake is just one in a long line of natural disasters to have impacted Central America in recent years, among them Hurricane Mitch, which killed more than 11,000 people, destroying the homes of three million more and inflicting over $8.5 billion in damage.

Although these tragedies are commonly referred to as "natural disasters," a more careful examination of the political ecology of developing countries reveals that earthquakes, hurricanes, flash floods, landslides and forest fires are becoming more deadly not because they are more intense, but because government policy has made people increasingly vulnerable to their fury. This is particularly true in El Salvador.

In the middle-class community of Las Colinas in Santa Tecla, for instance, a landslide set off by the earthquake buried 500 houses and killed 315 people, with hundreds more currently missing and feared dead beneath the rubble. For years, residents of Santa Tecla, environmentalists and the municipal government had tried to stop a luxury housing development on the steep slopes above the community, as well as further development at the base of the hill. Their concerns were that the roads and deforestation would destabilize the hillside and create a slide in heavy rains or an earthquake. Appeals to the Salvadoran Congress and Supreme Court to stop the development were denied.

In recent years, the U.S. government has worked in concert with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to promote a "structural adjustment" and liberalization of the Salvadoran economy. In addition to cutbacks in social services in favor of servicing the external debt, the impact of these policies has been to reduce wages and increase natural resource extraction in order to boost export earnings. As a result, poverty and ecological degradation have intensified. More than 95 percent of the country has been deforested; 40 percent of the land designated as ecologically fragile has been developed. Because of such improper land uses, more than 77 percent of the country suffers serious soil erosion, and is prone to landslides and flash flooding.

More than 50 percent of the Salvadoran population now live in poverty, unable to meet basic needs of food, housing and health care. Lacking access to good agricultural lands, many are forced to live in sub-standard housing located in ecologically precarious or dangerous areas. Such homes, located atop the "soft" soil structures of steep hillsides and flood plains, are particularly vulnerable to the disintegrative effects of earthquakes and heavy rains. Yet, because a mere 2 percent of the population owns 60 percent of the land, these "disaster prone" areas are often the only lands available to the poor. As a result, the poorest segments of society are most severely impacted. In 1982, the deforestation of Monte Bello by poor family farmers outside San Salvador resulted in a massive landslide that killed more than 1,000 of their fellow villagers residing at the bottom of the mountain.

The Bush administration can play a pivotal role in assisting El Salvador during this crisis by working with Congress and the U.S. Agency for International Development to secure substantial emergency and long-term funds for the relief effort. More immediately, the administration should leverage its influence to inhibit the abuse of such assistance by corrupt government officials — a long-standing practice by U.S.-backed Central American politicians — which could have a destabilizing effect on the fragile peace in the country. After tropical storm Mitch devastated El Salvador in November of 1998, many of the communities most affected by the disaster did not receive aid from the ruling National Republican Alliance (ARENA) government, which instead utilized funds for party-building purposes. Today, there is fear in El Salvador that relief money will once again be used to reward ARENA supporters and punish opponents, particularly since the National Association of Private Enterprise (ANEP) is coordinating current relief efforts. Robert Murray Meza, a possible ARENA presidential candidate in 2004, is in charge of the ANEP program.

The Bush administration can help ensure that all relief aid is properly utilized by urging the Salvadoran government to create a specific Relief Fund, which would be administered in a transparant way by a commission that represents all sectors of Salvadoran civil society: labor unions, churches, non-governmental organizations, women's associations, community and business groups.

In the meantime, U.S. citizens can support the relief effort by donating resources to reputable non-governmental organizations such as U.S.- El Salvador Sister Cities, which has teamed up with 10 other non-governmental organizations to coordinate relief efforts in the wake of this national disaster.

El Salvador urgently needs our help. But in addition to the immediate requirements for humanitarian assistance, the Bush administration cannot ignore the larger structural crisis in El Salvador. ●

***Daniel R. Faber** is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Northeastern University, and author of* Environment Under Fire, *a book on Central America's ecological crisis.*

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The Cosmic Order

Glorify the Lord, you angels and all powers of the Lord,
O heavens and all waters above the heavens.
Sun and moon and stars of the sky, glorify the Lord,
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, every shower of rain and fall of dew,
all winds and fire and heat.
Winter and summer, glorify the Lord,
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O chill and cold,
drops of dew and flakes of snow.
Frost and cold, ice and sleet, glorify the Lord,
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O nights and days,
O shining light and enfolding dark.
Storm clouds and thunderbolts, glorify the Lord,
sing praise and give honor for ever.

— *from A Song of Creation*, Supplemental Liturgical Texts (Prayer Book Studies 30), *The Standing Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church.*

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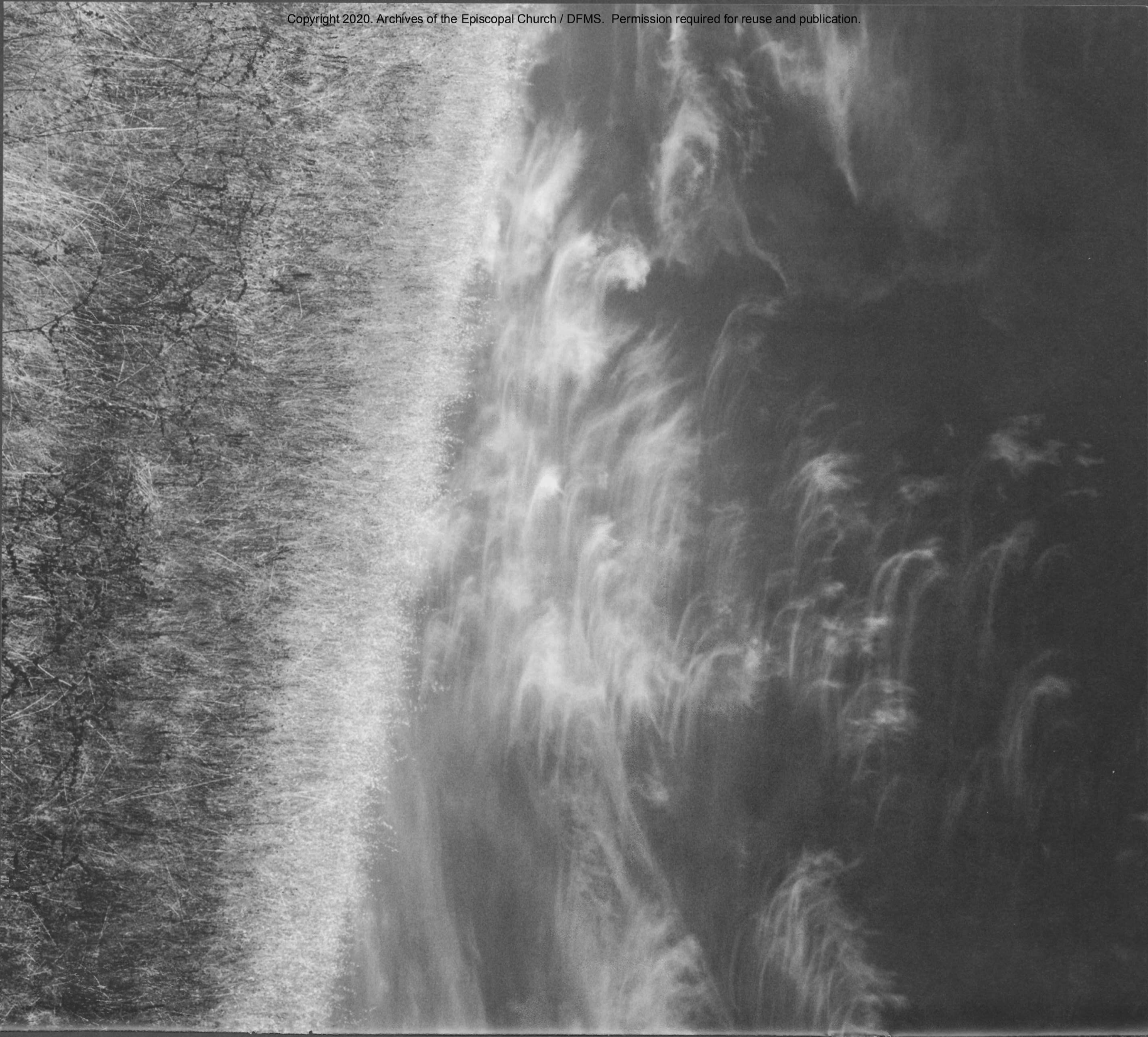

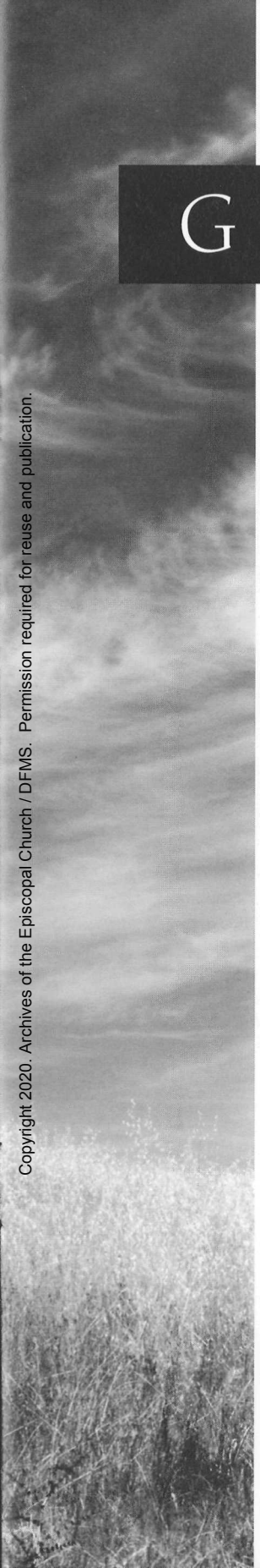

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GLOBAL WARMING

... and the politics of denial

by Camille Colatosti

"THIS MEETING will be remembered as the moment when governments abandoned the promise of global cooperation to protect planet earth," read a press statement issued by the international environmental organization Greenpeace at the close of the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held at The Hague last November. The conference brought together representatives of more than 160 nations to hammer out details of the Kyoto Protocol.

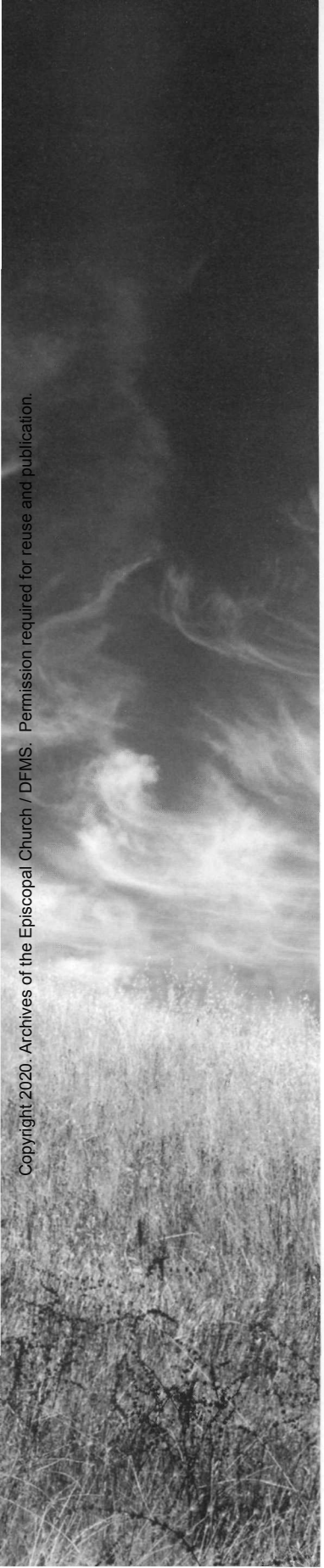
Crafted in 1997, the protocol sets modest goals to reduce carbon emissions, and thereby slow down the rate of global warming. The agreement calls for the U.S. to cut its emissions by 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012; 40 other industrial nations would need to cut their emissions by an average 5.5 percent below 1990 levels. Representing 5 percent of the world's population, the U.S. bears responsibility for emitting 25–30 percent of the world's greenhouse gases.

Many shared Greenpeace's disappointment. The Hague conference was a failure. No new agreement was reached. No enforcement mechanisms were put in place.

Bill McKibben, a fellow at the Center for the Study of Values in Public Life at the Harvard Divinity School, attended The Hague conference, and sent daily reports of its unraveling to gristmagazine, an online journal whose tagline reads "a beacon in the smog." As he explains, an agreement to the Kyoto Protocol would indicate that the world was going to take climate change "seriously enough that we will agree to surrender absolute autonomy over our economy — not to a client agency like the World Trade Organization that simply offers an easy way to spread our power, but to a truly international regime that sets specific limits on what we can and cannot do."

"The science," says Ross Gelbspan, author of *The Heat Is On: the Climate Crisis, the Cover-Up, the Prescription* (Perseus 1998), "is unambiguous: Stabilization of the earth's climate requires emissions reductions of about 70 percent. With our oil and coal burning, and the resulting carbon emissions into the atmosphere, we have heated the deep oceans. We have altered the timing of the seasons. We have burdened our atmosphere with carbon concentrations that have not been seen in the last 40,000 years and loosed a wave of violent and chaotic weather."

A report issued by the U.N.-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change this past January predicts that global temperatures are rising at a faster rate than before believed. Five years ago, the panel's scientists (there are hundreds of them) predicted an increase of 1.8 to 6.3 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the 20th century. The panel now predicts that temperatures will increase anywhere from 2.7 to 10.8 degrees by 2100. As Gelbspan



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explains,"If the upper end of this prediction actually comes to pass, our planet will be transformed into something nearly unrecognizable — it will be even warmer than when the dinosaurs still roamed the earth."

Humanity's challenge

The U.N. Climate Change panel's report stresses that global warming results from human behavior. The implicit challenge is clear: Just as we have the ability to heat the planet, we also have the ability to reform our production practices and to restore the globe.

For Gelbspan, "The opportunity embedded in the climate crisis is unprecedented."

McKibben likewise acknowledges the challenge ahead, but he questions humanity's willingness to meet it. In his landmark book *The End of Nature* (Random House 1989), one of the first books on global warming written for a general audience, McKibben lamented that "nature as a system of biology independent of man's influence no longer exists. We have irrationally intruded on the very system that sustains us without having known how it works." And the failure of The Hague conference, says McKibben, represents a "failure of all the not very ambitious attempts to do anything about this."

McKibben is also clear about who is most at fault: The conference "foundered on American unwillingness to do anything in a meaningful way," he says.

European countries came to the conference prepared with real plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, many European countries have committed to make huge cuts regardless of the fate of the Kyoto Protocol. Holland, for instance, plans to cut emissions by 80 percent in the next 40 years. Germany plans to reduce greenhouse gases by 50 percent and England has committed to 60 percent reductions by 2050.

The U.S., on the other hand, has made no commitment to reduce greenhouse gases at all.

According to McKibben, "The U.S. spent the last 10 years looking for loopholes or major escape hatches and there really aren't any." The latest example is a U.S. proposal at The Hague that would allow it to count the country's vast woodlands against our Kyoto emissions-reduction commitments. "For politicians," says McKibben, "nothing could be more wonderful — they could be seen to be doing something about the world's climate problem without having to really do anything at all."

Mark Hertsgaard, author of *Earth Odyssey: Around the World in Search of Our Environmental Future* (Broadway Books 1998), agrees. "This was a loophole that you could drive *Exxon Valdez* through," he says. Not only is it difficult, if not impossible, to measure the amount of carbon dioxide that a forest absorbs, it is also true, says Hertsgaard, that if forests serve this function, "they are acting as carbon sinks already and this is not getting us any closer to where we need to be. We've got to cut these gases by 50–70 percent and the U.S. has refused to cut them by even the 5–7 percent that Kyoto requires. The U.S. isn't ready to admit that we've got to reduce energy use."

Why won't the U.S. face facts?

The reluctance of the U.S. to act, especially when the predictions for the future are so grave, may seem puzzling. Experts offer a range of explanations, from what McKibben terms "Americans' addiction to cheap fossil fuel," to the steady and consistent efforts of the fossil fuel lobby to minimize the dangers of global warming, to the lack of a viable environmental or Green Party on the national scene.

McKibben argues that Americans think of it as "a constitutional right to have $1-a-gallon gas and we're angry when we don't. But keeping prices artificially low, at $1 a gallon, sends no signal on how we should conserve and doesn't force the development of new technologies. Europeans pay the real price of gas — $4–$5 a gallon. Perhaps that's why they are more willing to seek alternatives."

McKibben explains that, while it is impossible to put a price on destabilizing the earth's climate system, it is possible to calculate the costs of protecting lines to the Persian Gulf, human healthcare, oil depletion allowance and subsidies. "At $4–$5 a gallon," he says, "people would not buy Ford Explorers.

"We've been lazy. Ten years ago, the problem was brand new and we didn't know much about it. Now, there is no scientific doubt about global warming. But in that same decade, the U.S. economy boomed and Americans went on a binge, buying ever-larger cars and houses. The idolatry of economic growth has made it impossible to deal with environmental problems. In a rational world, the fact that scientists were talking about changes that would transform the planet should focus everyone's attention on the issue and it hasn't."

Acknowledging the huge amount of money and influence that has been used to divert the U.S. pub-

lic's attention away from global warming, McKibben adds, "There are always powerful interests who don't want progress — who didn't want civil rights laws and women's equality. None of that removes the onus from us."

But the misinformation campaign has been strong and well-funded. Ross Gelbspan has examined in detail the role of the fossil fuel, auto and heavy-industry lobby to minimize the problems that we face. "The Global Climate Coalition — a lobbying group that represents fossil fuel, automotive and heavy industry interests — has spent more than $63 million to combat any progress toward addressing the climate crisis, including a $13 million ad campaign in 1997 to support a Senate resolution against ratification of the Kyoto Protocol," Gelbspan says.

Another organization actively working to influence public opinion in its favor is the Western Fuels Association, a $400 million coal cooperative. As Gelbspan explains, "Western Fuels has been quite candid about its attack on mainstream science. In one annual report, it declared: '[T]here has been a close to universal impulse in the [fossil fuel] trade association community in Washington to concede the scientific premise of global warming ... while arguing over policy prescriptions that would be the least disruptive to our economy. We have disagreed, and do disagree, with this strategy. As a result, Western Fuels has waged an unceasing war against mainstream science for the last eight years.'"

In addition, adds Gelbspan, "the George C. Marshall Institute, an extreme, politically conservative institute, maintains that the climate crisis is basically a liberal plot to subvert the U.S. economy.

"By keeping the discussion focused on whether or not there is a problem, the fossil fuel lobby has effectively prevented discussion in the U.S. about what to do about it."

Importantly, too, while U.S. policymakers feel the powerful economic and political pressure of the fossil fuel lobby not to pass legislation limiting emission, they feel no

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Climate change

A review of the basics

by Murray Carpenter

TO UNDERSTAND CLIMATE CHANGE, it's helpful to consider the earth at a distance. There's the globe spinning through the ether, a sphere mostly covered with water, several solid land masses here and there, and all of it wrapped with a thick gaseous cushion.

For now, let's focus on the gases in the atmosphere, which are all that buffers the earth from the inhospitable habitat in outer space. The gases act like the glass in a greenhouse, allowing solar radiation through and trapping some of the heat. These so-called "greenhouse gases" include ozone, methane, water vapor and carbon dioxide. Naturally evolved over eons, the greenhouse gases allowed the global temperature to climb to a comfortable 60 degree Fahrenheit average, permitting life as we know it to evolve and flourish.

Two greenhouse gases, water vapor and carbon dioxide, deserve special attention. Carbon is an essential element that, in combination with water and favorable climatic conditions, is the basis of all life. Without carbon and water our forebears would never have crawled from the primordial ooze, life as we know it would never have evolved, algae to alligator, ape to us.

It's this very life that is problematic, from a climate change perspective. The organic matter the earth brims with is, by definition, carbon-based. The remnants of giant ferns, flying dinosaurs and other such prehistoric flora and fauna now form the great underground stores of carbon known as fossil fuels: oil, coal and natural gas. Huge quantities of carbon are on the earth's surface in the soil, and in the trees, leaves and leaf litter of our vast forests.

Releasing carbon at an unprecedented rate

We are now burning this carbon at an unprecedented rate. The carbon releases are pretty basic, according to Jonathan Foley, Director of the Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment at the University of Wisconsin. "We're just digging up a lot of really ancient carbon in the earth and burning it."

In burning the carbon, we release carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. And that additional carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the biggest contributor to this human-caused climate change that we are beginning to learn more about. Absent other variables, the more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the warmer the earth will become.

Since the advent of the industrial revolution, when we really got serious about clearing forested land and burning fossil fuels, atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have increased over 30 percent to 370 parts per million. Continued emissions at current levels could lead to a level of 500 parts per million by the end of this century, nearly double the pre-industrial concentration of 280 ppm. Too, methane concentrations have nearly doubled, and nitrous oxide concentrations have increased by about 15 percent. All greenhouse gases are not equal: Methane traps over 21 times more heat than carbon dioxide, and nitrous oxide absorbs 270 times more heat than carbon dioxide, but by sheer volume carbon dioxide gets blamed for most of the warming.

What this means for the global climate is hotly debated. But few argue this: All else being equal, adding carbon to the atmosphere will warm things up here. Conservative estimates by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggest we'll see warming

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of about 3.5 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century, and a one-and-one-half foot rise in sea level (due to melting ice and water expanding as it warms).

Rising temperatures, rising seas

Global temperatures have risen about 1 degree Fahrenheit over the last century, and recent data appears to reaffirm scientists' projections about the current and projected warming: 14,000 square miles of sea ice are melting annually in the Arctic; two cubic miles of ice were lost annually from Greenland ice sheets from 1993–1998; researchers estimate the glaciers in Montana's Glacier National Park will melt within the next 50 years; and butterflies are migrating farther north and birds are nesting earlier. Continued warming is expected to stress species at the southern ends of their ranges, such as brook trout in the Southern Appalachians, and Atlantic salmon in Maine. This is just a short sampling of a long list of global scenarios that even cautious scientists admit appear to be related to human-caused climate change.

Climate models suggest warming will do more than add a few degrees to today's average temperatures. Some places will be warmer, some cooler, some drier, others wetter. Heat waves and droughts will be more common, and precipitation could come in more intense bursts, leading to more flooding.

While the science is far from perfect, and another decade of research would still not lead to absolute certainty about the changing climate, Foley says recent weather seems to reaffirm what scientists have predicted. He noted that July of 1999 was the warmest month ever recorded in the instrumental record, and the warming has been accompanied by continued unusual episodes of weather.

Seasonal, annual and 'serious' variabilities

Making the whole thing harder to understand, confounding scientists and lay people alike, is the natural climatic variability underlying the human-caused warming. There is seasonal variability and annual variability — one winter may be cold, the next mild. Then there are the longer periods of cool weather, like the so-called Little Ice Age a century ago. And then there is serious variability, like the ice ages.

All of civilization as we know it has evolved in this relatively short time since the last ice age, 10,000 years ago. In that period there were roughly 5,000 years of gradual warming, then an equal amount of gradual cooling, and now we have this uptick, this warming. While many scientists agree that we will have another ice age starting within the next few thousand years, what happens between now and then is up for grabs. We could see gradual warming, abrupt warming, or even catastrophic cooling. The last theory, yet another example of the many ways climate change is dependent on a mind-boggling array of interconnected systems, was developed by a scientist who believes a circular ocean current that brings the Gulf Stream north, warming Europe in the process, could shut down suddenly due to decreased water density brought on by melting ice caps.

If that's not uncertainty enough, there are more localized effects of human-caused climate change. University of Georgia researchers found that the expansive, well-paved Atlanta metropolitan area is often 5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than the surrounding areas, an "urban heat island effect." The researchers found that the area is losing 56 acres of trees every day to development, and that the heat is contributing to an already bad air pollution problem (ground level ozone, a key component of smog, forms in the presence of sun and heat).

Some urban areas are becoming cloudier due to the cloud-seeding effect of air pollution, and staying warmer at night due to the increased cloud cover. The bottom line is that we can and are changing the weather, and any large, global-scale climate change will have to be considered against the background noise of this smaller-scale, human-caused climate change.

Pluses and catastrophic minuses

Global warming may not be universally bad. Some northern areas could become more moderate and enjoy longer growing seasons, somewhat offsetting lost agricultural productivity in the south. And many plants grow more vigorously with elevated carbon dioxide levels.

But a few degrees of warming would be catastrophic for the billions living in the tropical and subtropical regions of the globe. These areas will likely lose agricultural productivity due to heat and aridity. The changing climate will likely increase the range and incidence of diseases such as cholera, malaria, dengue fever, West Nile Virus, and encephalitis. The diseases would not only spread through the warming, but also through heavy rains (many associated with the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon, which is projected to remain more frequent than it was in cooler years).

Other disastrous events could be in store for the billions of people living in floodplains and coastal zones. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that a 3.5 degree Fahrenheit warming would increase the number of people vulnerable to storm surges from 46 million to 92 million. Low-lying countries will be particularly hard hit: Bangladesh could lose 17.5 percent of its land mass.

While global warming has become a common topic, we continue to burn more and more fossil fuels. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. citizens generate approximately 6.6 tons of greenhouse gases per person annually, more than any other country in the world. And emissions per person increased over 3 percent between 1990 and 1997. The simple act of driving is a big contributor. The Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) estimates that Americans drive over 2 trillion miles annually, consuming 115 billion gallons of fuel. The average American's personal vehicle uses 570 gallons of gasoline annually, according to RMI, and emits 11,400 pounds of carbon dioxide. ●

Murray Carpenter is a freelance writer living in Belfast, Me.

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corresponding pressure in favor of such legislation, as they might if they lived in Europe.

In the January/February 2001 issue of *Dollars and Sense*, David Levy, a *Dollars and Sense* associate who teaches management at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, suggests that "the change in Europe can be understood mostly as a response to political and social pressures."

In particular, the Green Party in France and Germany helped pull those countries to the left, leading them to reject U.S. efforts at The Hague conference to broker a deal. It is probably not a coincidence that, in both France and Germany, the environmental minister is a member of the Greens. In several other European nations, the Greens serve in coalition governments, pushing those policymakers to give the environment real consideration.

Paul Hawken, economist and co-author of *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Little, Brown and Company 1999), believes that the reason the Green Party in the U.S. did as well as it did in the last presidential election is because "people are fed up with both sides of the aisle. Gore and Clinton had a huge relationship with corporations."

A new industrial revolution?

Despite the failure of The Hague conference, there are signs that some representatives of heavy industry are at least moving away from efforts to deny the science of climate change.

In 1999 and 2000, British Petroleum, Shell, Ford, Daimler-Chrysler, Texaco, The Southern Company and General Motors all left the Global Climate Coalition, the main lobbying group opposed to action on global warming.

Auto companies are also developing alternative technologies. Toyota launched the Prius, a car with a hybrid electric-gas engine, in Japan in 1998 and in the U.S. in 2000. Honda launched its own hybrid, Insight, in December 1999.

Mazda, Ford and Daimler-Chrysler are working jointly to produce fuel-cell-powered cars by 2003. British Petroleum's new ads portray BP as standing for "Beyond Petroleum." As Gelbspan explains, "BP now anticipates doing $1 billion a year in solar commerce within the decade, and Shell is investing $500 million in renewable technologies."

On their own, these efforts may not be enough. But they may indicate the beginnings of a shift in worldview, one in which labor is no longer seen as the limiting factor in production. As economist Hawken explains in *Natural Capitalism*, in today's world natural resources and the ecological systems they sustain are what is in short supply. Coming to terms with this fact, he believes, can lead to a new industrial revolution in which an emphasis on sustainability can lead the business community to "do well by doing good."

Currently, explains Hawken, "natural resources — including air, sea and fish — are treated as free and without value unless they are drilled, mined, exploited." This view, he believes, will inevitably change. "We're living in a time when natural capital is falling rapidly and it is now emerging as a limiting factor to prosperity. The next industrial revolution is about how we make human beings better off than they are now — 80 percent of the world needs to be better off while preserving nature."

For Hawken, living systems need to take center stage. He urges industrial processes that make natural resources more productive. "If you make something more productive," he explains, "you need less of it." ●

Camille Colatosti is The Witness' *staff writer.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.heatisonline.org
www.globalgreendeal.org
www.naturalcapital.org
www.ozoneaction.org
www.ipcc.ch

True for California, true for the world

The lack of environmental and economic vision is apparent in policymakers' reaction to the recent energy shortage in California. Michael Walsh of the Chicago Climate Exchange, an institution working to build a market-based approach to solving climate change, expresses an idea shared by all the experts. "Don't blame environmental regulations for this. Environmental regulations are not a factor here."

Here's the problem, says Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* (Random House 1989). "There is a shortage. People are using more electrons than there are in the system. The solution isn't to put more electrons in the system. The solution is to conserve."

Paul Hawken, co-author of *Natural Capitalism* (Little, Brown and Company 1999), agrees. "The only way out of the California energy mess is in our book. We need conservation, and not conservation like, 'Turn off the heater.' We need heaters that use less energy. We need to change our appliances, our heating systems, so that we use dramatically less energy, less money and so that there is a return on our investment.

"This is the only way out," Hawken says again. "This is not just true for California, but true for the whole world." ●

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GLOBAL GREENING?

The time for a 'Global Green Deal' has come

by Mark Hertsgaard

EVERYONE KNOWS the planet is in bad shape, but most people are resigned to passivity. Changing course, they reason, would require economic sacrifice and provoke stiff resistance from corporations and consumers alike, so why bother? It's easier to ignore the gathering storm clouds and hope the problem magically takes care of itself.

Such fatalism is not only dangerous but mistaken. I spent much of the 1990s traveling the world to write a book about our environmental predicament. I returned home sobered by the extent and especially the speed of the damage we are causing, but also convinced that there is nothing inevitable about our self-destructive behavior. Not only could we dramatically reduce our burden on the air, water and other natural systems that sustain our civilization, we could make money doing so. In fact, if we're smart, we could make restoring the environment the biggest economic enterprise of our time, a huge source of jobs, profits and poverty alleviation.

What we need is a Global Green Deal: a program to environmentally renovate our civilization from top to bottom, in rich and poor countries alike. Making use of both market incentives and government leadership, a 21st-century Global Green Deal would do for environmental technologies what government and industry have recently done so well for computer and internet technologies: help launch their commercial take-off.

Getting from here to there will take work, and before any journey, it's best to know where you're starting. So here are three key facts about the reality facing us.

First, we have no time to lose. Although we've made progress in certain areas — air pollution is down in the U.S., children's environmental awareness is rising the world over — most of the big environmental problems like climate change, water scarcity and species extinction are getting worse, and faster than ever. Thus we need to change our ways profoundly and — much harder — very soon.

Second, poverty is central to the problem. Four billion of the planet's six billion people endure deprivation inconceivable to the wealthiest one billion whose lifestyles are advertised as the global ideal. To paraphrase Jefferson, nothing is more surely written in the book of fate than that the bottom two-thirds of humanity will improve their lot. As they press for such everyday luxuries as adequate heat and food, not to mention cars and CD-players, humanity's environmental footprint will grow. Our challenge is to accommodate this mass ascent from poverty without wrecking the natural systems that make life on earth possible.

Third, some good news: We have in hand most of the technologies needed to chart a new course. In particular, we know how to use oil, wood, water and other resources much more efficiently than we do now. Increased efficiency — doing more with less — will enable us to use fewer resources and produce less pollution per capita, buying us the time to bring solar power, hydrogen fuel cells, drip irrigation and other futuristic technologies on line.

Efficiency may not sound like much of a rallying cry for the environmental revolution, but it packs a financial punch. As Joseph J. Romm reports in his book, *Cool Companies*, Xerox, Compaq, 3M and Hewlett-Packard are among the many companies cutting their greenhouse gas emissions in half — and enjoying 50 percent and higher returns on investment — through improved efficiency: better lighting and insulation, smarter motors and building design. There's no reason the rest of us — small businesses, home owners, city governments, hospitals — can't reap the same benefits. As Destination Conservation's work with thousands of schools across Canada shows, any school district that is not now environmentally retrofitting its facilities is turning its back on a major, guaranteed source of income.

Super-refrigerators use 86 percent less electricity than standard brands while costing the same and performing better, explain Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins in their book, *Natural Capitalism*. In Amsterdam, the headquarters of ING Bank, Holland's third largest bank, uses one-fifth as much energy per square foot as a bank across the street, even

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Timothy Whelan

though the two buildings cost the same to construct. But the ING headquarters boasts efficient windows and insulation, as well as a passive design that enables solar energy to provide much of the building's needs, even in cloudy northern Europe.

Examples like these lead even such mainstream voices as AT&T and Japan's Planning Ministry to predict that global environmental restoration could become a source of virtually limitless profit. The idea is to retrofit everything from our farms to our factories, our garages to our garbage dumps, our shops, houses, offices and everything inside them. The economic activity generated would be enormous. Better yet, it would be labor-intensive; investments in energy efficiency yield two to 10 times more jobs as investments in fossil fuel and nuclear power. In a world where one billion people lack gainful employment, creating jobs is essential to fighting the poverty that retards environmental progress.

But this transition will not happen by itself — too many entrenched interests stand in the way. Automakers, for example, often talk green but make only token efforts to develop green cars, for the simple reason that their gas-guzzling SUV's are hugely profitable. But every year, the U.S. government buys 50,000 new cars for official use from Detroit. Under the Global Green Deal, Washington would tell Detroit that from now on the cars have to be hybrid-electric or hydrogen-fuel-cell cars. Detroit would doubtless scream and holler, but if Washington stood firm, Detroit would comply. And soon carmakers would be climbing the learning curve and offering the competitively priced green cars consumers say they want.

We know this model of government pump-priming works; it's why so many of us have personal computers on our desks today. America's computer companies began learning to produce today's affordable systems during the 1960s, while benefitting from long-term subsidies and guaranteed markets under contract to the Pentagon and NASA. Thirty years later, the U.S. is still reaping the benefits: The cyber-revolution is fueling one of the most extraordinary economic expansions in history.

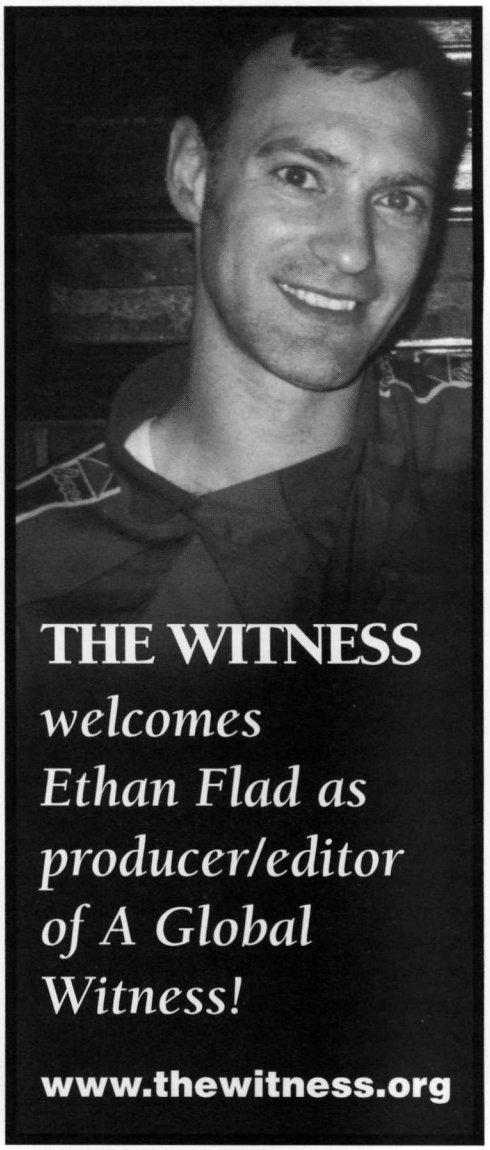
The Global Green Deal must not be solely an American project, however: Rich and poor nations alike must participate. China and India, with their gigantic populations and ambitious development plans, could by themselves doom everyone else to severe global warming and ozone depletion. Already, China is the world's largest consumer of coal and second largest producer of greenhouse gases. But China would use 50 percent less coal if it simply installed the energy efficiency technologies now available on the world market. Under the Global Green Deal, governments in Europe, America and Japan would help China buy these technologies, not only because this would reduce global warming but because it would create lots of jobs and profits for workers and companies back home.

Governments would not have to spend more money, only shift existing subsidies away from environmentally dead-end technologies like coal and nuclear power. If even half of the $500 billion–$900 billion in environmentally destructive subsidies now being doled out by the world's governments were redirected, the Global Green Deal would be off to a roaring start. Governments also need to establish "rules of the road" so market prices reflect the real social costs of clear-cut forests and other environmental abominations. Again, such a shift could be revenue-neutral. Higher taxes on, say, coal burning would be offset by cuts in payroll and profits taxes, thus encouraging jobs and investment while discouraging pollution. A portion of the revenues might also be set aside to assure a just transition for workers and companies now engaged in inherently anti-environmental activities like coal mining.

The Global Green Deal is no silver bullet. It can, however, buy us time to make the more deep-seated changes — in our often excessive appetites, in our curious belief that humans are the center of the universe, in our sheer numbers — that will be necessary to repair our relationship with our environment. After all, even the greenest cars will still clog cities and destroy open space. But perhaps they can satisfy our collective auto addiction while we get first-rate mass transportation systems up and running.

None of this will happen without an aroused citizenry. But a Global Green Deal is in the common interest, and it's a slogan easily grasped by the media and the public. Moreover, it should appeal across political, class and national boundaries, for it would stimulate jobs and business throughout the world in the name of a universal value: leaving our children a livable planet. The history of environmentalism is largely the story of ordinary people pushing for change while governments, corporations and other established interests reluctantly follow behind. It's time to repeat that history on behalf of a Global Green Deal. ●

***Mark Hertsgaard** is the author of four books, including* Earth Odyssey: Around the World In Search of Our Environmental Future, *and a commentator on NPR's "Living On Earth."*



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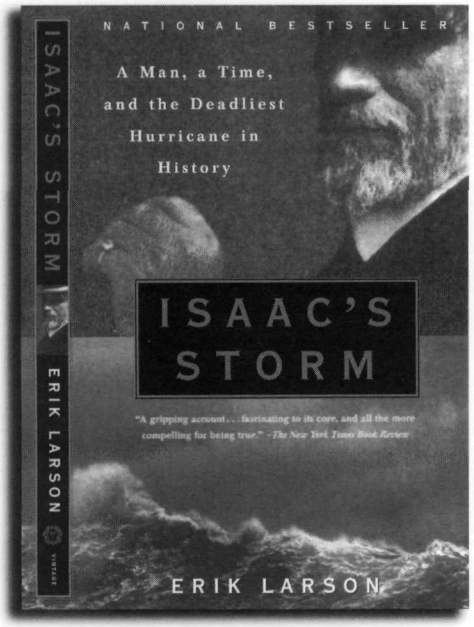
MEDIA REVIEW

Isaac's Storm

by Michael Betzold



Isaac's Storm
by Erik Larson
(Vintage 2000)

MANY IN OUR CULTURE of convenience curse the weather. In an age when almost everything gets packaged into consumable infotainment, the skies remain untamed and unbowed. Meteorologists have increasingly sophisticated tools and do better at forecasting, but expectations have outstripped their ability. Public demands for accuracy are unrealistic. Since only their errors are noticed, weather forecasters are trusted about as much as politicians.

Despite science's best efforts, our weather remains wonderfully — or frighteningly — unstable and, ultimately, unknowable. Above all, it is adamantly inconvenient. That makes it Public Enemy Number One in a time where almost all human needs allegedly can be satisfied with a mere mouse click.

A century ago, much less was understood about weather but far more expertise was claimed. Through the perfect lens of hindsight, we can see clearly the folly epitomized in the person of Isaac Cline. Cline was the National Weather Service meteorologist stationed in Galveston, Texas, who failed utterly to predict or take seriously the great hurricane of September 8, 1900. The most devastating natural disaster in U.S. history, the storm blew down the nation's third largest port city and killed at least 10,000 people.

Afterwards, even though he had lost his wife in the hurricane, Cline insisted he had saved countless lives by issuing timely warnings. But Erik Larson's *Isaac's Storm* unmasks him as a liar, a coward and a charlatan. Reconstructing events from original sources and spinning them into a spellbinding narrative of human tragedy, Larson's book is superb journalism. And it is much more. Setting Cline and his hubris in the context of an emboldened and vainglorious America at the dawn of its imperial century, Larson compiles a stunning indictment of arrogant officialdom. In the 1890s, so cocksure was Cline of his own forecasting prowess that he lectured on the impossibility of a hurricane striking Galveston, and, bowing to his inflated expertise, the city refused to build a protective seawall.

In the century to come, the world would suffer repeatedly from inept management masquerading as omniscient authority. Cline's foolish, sweeping claims to certainty are not relics of a less enlightened time. Experts have told and still tell us that nuclear power is safe, medical research will conquer all diseases, the Vietnam War was winnable, stock market trading brings prosperity, global markets promote stability, bioengineered food is beneficial, gene manipulation will trump heredity, earthquakes can be predicted, and nature will ultimately be subdued.

Blind faith in such pronouncements is no longer universal, and a healthy skepticism blooms in some quarters. Yet Tampa-St. Petersburg and other cities are nearly as vulnerable to a monster hurricane as Galveston was in 1900. In California, millions living along fault lines dare the earth to open up and swallow them. We keep bulldozing farms for condominiums, cutting down forests and polluting cities, hoping nature will not seek revenge.

We should know better. Isaac Cline at least had the excuse of naïvete. What is ours? ●

Writer ***Michael Betzold*** *lives in Detroit.*

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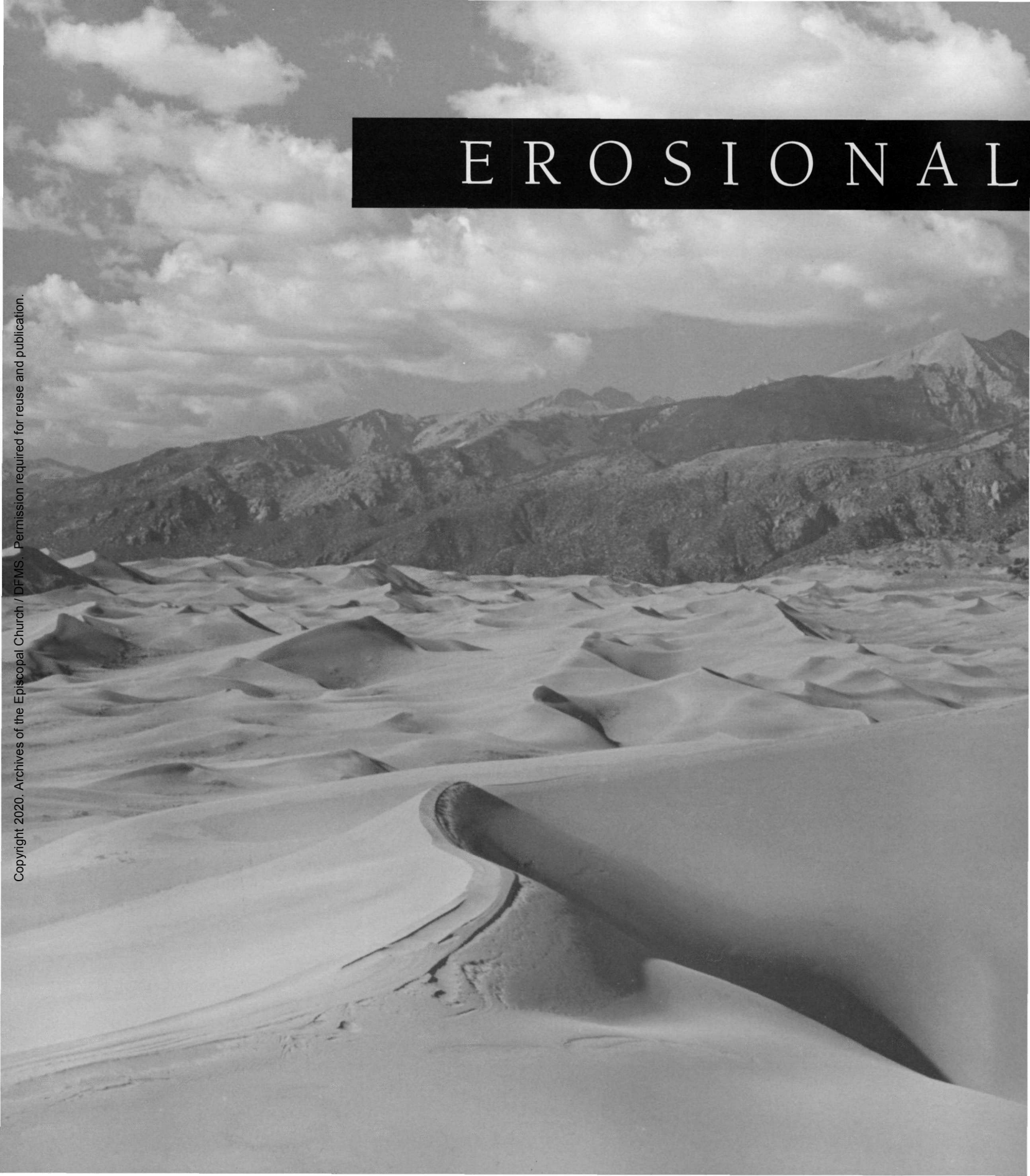

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An interview with Terry Tempest Williams

by Julie A. Wortman

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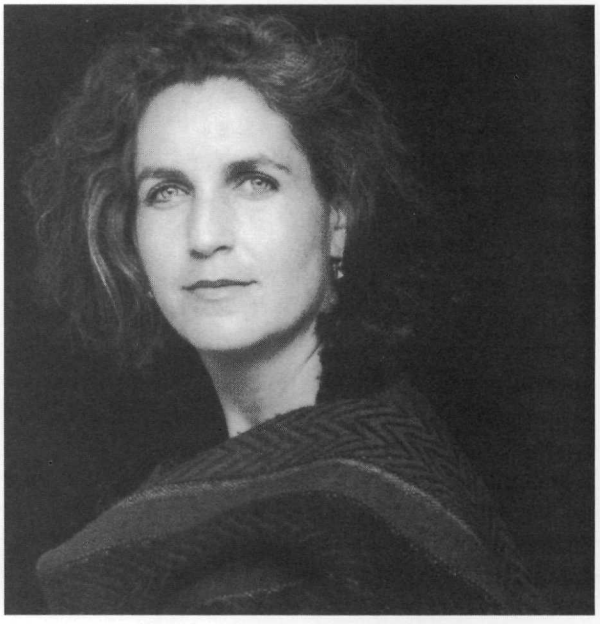
NATURALIST-WRITER Terry Tempest Williams' advocacy for a politics of place rooted in an "erotics of place" challenges the usual categories of environmental, political and religious thinking. Her books include *Refuge, An Unspoken Hunger, Desert Quartet* and, most recently, *Leap*, a spiritual, psychological and earth-affirming exploration of the layered meanings of Hieronymus Bosch's 15th-century Flemish triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. She lives in Utah's Castle Valley.

Julie A. Wortman: When we arranged for this interview, you told me that you didn't think you had much to say about weather. Yet in your writing you frequently talk about such things as the solstice and your need for below-ground time during winter in order to be able to continue your above-ground public life the rest of the year. In your essay, "Undressing the Bear," you write of "female rain falling gently, softly, as a fine mist over the desert." And your book *Refuge*, which was my introduction to your way of viewing life, is a powerful intertwining of your reflections about the slow flooding of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge by the Great Salt Lake because of climatic changes and the ebbing of your mother's life owing to the breast cancer she and so many women in your family have contracted through exposure to the effects of nuclear testing carried on the desert winds. So to me it seems you have a great deal to say about weather.

Terry Tempest Williams: Isn't that interesting? Maybe weather is like skin — we're so close to it we don't even think about talking about it. And you may be right. I may, in fact, be obsessed with weather. And maybe it's just being born with the name Tempest, I don't know. But when you bring this topic up, I suddenly realize that I live with weather, that weather informs my days.

In the household I grew up in, 5:15P.M. was sacred time around our dinner table, because that's when the weather report was broadcast. My father's business depended on the weather because he worked outside in a family pipeline construction business. Certainly, living here in Castle Valley, part of Utah's Red Rock Desert, every minute is infused and informed with and by weather — clouds, wind, sun, heat, cold. Weather keeps us paying attention — you can't get complacent here in the American West when there's so much sky. You watch the storms move in. You watch the rainbows. You watch the *virga* — the rain that is falling but never reaches the ground. I find that living out here, in the desert in particular, my eyes are always focused upward. And I am reminded over and over again



that there are forces out here that are much stronger and bigger than I am.

JW: You've written, in fact, that that sort of awareness leads to a life that includes a spiritual dimension. Here's a quote from *Leap*: "Spiritual beliefs are not alien from Earth but rise out of its very soil. Perhaps our first gestures of humility and gratitude were extended to Earth through prayer — the recognition that we exist by the grace of something beyond ourselves. Call it God; call it Wind; call it a thousand different names." Many people, I think particularly of many Christians I know, wouldn't think that their spiritual beliefs rise out of Earth. In fact, I think what we've seen is that Christians and

other organized faiths in recent times have steadfastly resisted that earth connection.

TTW: And yet, I think we've always had that connection. It's the ground beneath our feet. It's what feeds us. It's what sustains us. It is not abstract. It is red soil between our fingers. We forget that. So often in our religious traditions our view is not Earth-centered but heaven-bound. It takes us out of our responsibility here on Earth. It takes us out of our bodies. And, therefore, it fosters the illusion that we are not of earth, of body, of this place, here and now.

JW: It is kind of like taking religion indoors into a climate-controlled sanctuary. In doing that, there's a terrible negative result for a politics of place.

TTW: That's right, because we can abdicate our responsibilities. That was one of the aspects of Hieronymus Bosch's triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, that seized me. It seems that, as Christians, it is very easy for us to contemplate heaven and to contemplate hell. It's not so easy for us to be engaged on the Earth. I was so struck by the painting's side panels of heaven and hell, and then the center panel, of Earth, where you see this wild engagement — even love-making — with the Earth. With the birds on the same physical scale as the human beings, there is this wonderful confluence of consciousness in that center panel that we forget. We lose track of the central delights of a spiritual life — hand on rock, body in water, the sweet conversations that exist when we're completely present in place, home, Earth. Again, not that separation of heaven and hell, past and future. The present is the gift.

JW: I've read that the etymology of "ecology" is "ecos," which means home.

TTW: Yes. Again, we are most mindful of those relationships that we live with every single day. I love the fact that I live in an erosional landscape. You watch the wind and you realize as you see the sand swirling about you that arches are still being created, that this isn't something that belongs to the geologic past. Metaphorically, that is also very powerful. To me, a spiritual life is also part of an erosional life. We are eroding the façade. Wind — spirit — sculpts us, sculpts our character, our consciousness, in ways we can't even know. I am shaped differently from others because of the spiritual processes that have formed me. There is physical erosion that goes on in the desert and spiritual erosion that goes on in our search for the truth, however we define that for ourselves.

JW: I was thinking about what you say in your essay about Stone Creek Woman, this apparition of redrock and maidenhair ferns that you've seen in a waterfall on Stone Creek in the Grand Canyon: "I've made a commitment to visit Stone Creek Woman as often as I can. I believe she monitors the floods and droughts of the Colorado plateau, and I believe she can remind us that water in the West is never to be taken for granted." You then go on to say: "Water in the American West is blood. Rivers, streams, creeks become arteries, veins, capillaries. Dam, dyke, or drain any of them and somewhere silence prevails. No water, no fish; no water, no plants; no water, no life. Nothing breathes. The land/body becomes a corpse. Stone Creek Woman crumbles and blows away."

TTW: Water in the desert is like prayer in our lives, that contact with some force that is both beyond us and a part of us. I go down to the banks of the Colorado River weekly — and in the summer daily — and, as I watch that powerful body of water, watch the muscularity held in the currents, I'm always mindful of what it is carrying downriver. We, too, can be carried away.

It could be said that we have taken our love inside. We go into our houses, we shut the door, and we have very isolated, lonely lives. When we take our love outside, we not only take it outside with the Earth, with nature, with birds, with animals — the ravens, vultures and coyotes where I live — but we take it into community. It is in community that we find another component of our spiritual life. And that has everything to do with service. How do we serve? What are we in the service of? And, again, that's not about heaven, it is about right here, right now.

In the community where we live, which is very small, the needs are great. And they can only be met through service and love and compassion and sacrifice. To me, these are powerful components of a religious life, of a spiritual life. I find the older I get, I'm less in need of an organization as much as a community. I don't need the organization of a religion. I do need the community where we can share a spiritual life. And I think there's a subtle difference.

JW: Some would say that people like us — people whose spirituality arises out of the earth — have become pagan. Do you think that's true?

TTW: I think so often our views of one another, of ourselves, shrink by the smallness of our vocabulary. What's a Christian? What's a pagan? Recently I was in Costa Rica, where I had the privilege of meeting a tribal medicine man. As we were walking in the rainforest he was sweeping the narrow trail of snakes with his feathered staff. He turned and he said, "I am a Christian, cosmologist, scientist, Earthist." And then he laughed. He said, "Does that cover it all?" And I thought, that's what I am, too! You know, whether it's Christian, whether it's pagan, whether it's an ecologist, whether it's a writer, a lover of language, a lover of landscapes, can't we just say that our spirituality resides in our love? If that makes us pagan, perhaps. If that makes us Christian, perhaps. But I love the notion that it's not this or that, but this, that, and all of it. And, in a way, this is how I see spirituality emerging on the planet. The constraints that we see within our religious traditions are not so satisfying. The world has become so large. I almost feel like the doors are blowing off our churches to let life come in and move freely.

What we're seeing is that we're taking the best of what we're being offered. There's so much within my own tradition as a Mormon that I deeply cherish. The notion of commu-

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nity, the notion of service, the notion of land, prayer — things that aren't exclusive to Mormonism, but that are certainly at the core of it. I can't separate my own sense of family from my sense of community from my Mormon roots. But, alongside, I think there's much to be gleaned from Buddhism, much to be gleaned from Catholicism, from that which the Quakers practice, from much that I have been exposed to and learned from my friends who are Indian people. And then there is so much to be gleaned from what we learn from the Earth itself — from simply walking the land, from the deer, the river, the wind. And so, together, through our traditions, through that which we are exposed, we come to some semblance of a spiritual life, bits and pieces. In my own tradition, I hear my mother saying, "Call it a crazy quilt."

JW: Women, in particular, seem to speak of that sort of crazy-quilt religion. But within the churches, of course, such an approach has mostly been rejected as unorthodox.

TTW: With the message that you need the structure that orthodoxy supplies — that without that structure, if we pick and choose the spiritual beliefs that are comfortable to us, then we're somehow missing discipline, missing sacrifice.

But I think life is a discipline we don't need to seek. Each of us is aware every single day of the discipline upon us, about the sacrifice, the suffering. I don't feel that I have to have that imposed on me through an orthodoxy. I'm very mindful of that just being human.

What I do struggle with is that when we practice our own spiritual life — however we define that — we miss the collective rituals. We miss the delight and strength and comfort that comes with our relations with others, and that comes with building a community. Here in Castle Valley, as the millennium approached, there was a particular cave where meditations were being practiced. People in the community would come and sit for an hour, and then another person would come and sit for an hour. I took great solace in that — that as a community, surrounded by these buttes and mesas in the desert, we were mindful of the passage of time in the sense of deep time.

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The greening of Apocalypse

by Catherine Keller

You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? — *Luke 12:56*

WHAT DO YOU THINK of when you hear the phrase, "the end of the world?" A premillennialist horror fantasy of final tribulation, complete with planes crashing as born-again pilots join the rapture of the true Christians? The final heat death of the universe? The smoke and fire of nuclear war, and endless winter afterward?

... [T]he rhetoric of "the end of the world" stimulates for most white middle-class North Americans, male or female, anxious ecological associations. Apocalypse is getting colored green. "Increasingly, apocalyptic fears about widespread droughts and melting ice-caps have displaced the nuclear threat as the dominant feared meteorological disaster," notes Andrew Ross in his aptly titled *Strange Weather* (1991). Consider what it means that — among the religious and the irreligious alike — phrases like "the destruction of the earth" or "save the planet" have within a few years become commonplace. But if apocalypticisms have become casual, so has the casual become apocalyptic. You exchange pleasantries with a stranger and find a casual allusion to the weather — for instance, when it is unseasonably warm, or cold, or when the weather weirdly bounces — rudely insinuating the end of the world. The foreboding feeling of irretrievable and unforeseeable damage reverberates in the brief silences, as we nod and shake our heads, break eye contact, change the topic.

Talk about weather has lost its innocence. Such a loss poses a social crisis for human discourse. How but through the weather do we move beyond the formalities? What other topic everywhere and always connects us, whoever we are, whether we are strangers thrown together for a few moments or partners rising from the same bed? The great inclusive "it" of "it's looking like rain," "it's gorgeous," has always bound us, with accompanying sighs, groans and grimaces. It embeds our relations to each other in nature — that materiality which is shared, no matter what, across every arbitrary human division. In the commonplace medium of the weather we encounter the ever mobile face of the creation here and now. ...

What weather talk means differs quite precisely according to our cultural as well as geographic location. Thus elite Western cultures tend to scorn weather-talk as banal. This superiority to small talk about the weather symptomatizes a kind of relationship to the planetary condition. Thus it is important to ask who benefits from a relationship of distance from the rest of creation. Who profits from the so-called transcendence of nature? However piously couched in the language of higher, eternal and invisible preoccupations, such transcendence correlates nicely with western technological practices. Freedom from nature implies, for instance, freedom from the vicissitudes of weather. It therefore facilitates practices of control of the environment and the exploitation of the earth's energies to sustain artificial environments with homogenized, centralized, steady, comfortable weather. Who can better afford to experience "nature" as banal, exterior, outside of immediate importance than those urban elites who seem to have severed the immediate bonds

of dependency upon weather conditions? But have they not therefore also forfeited the subtle shifting consciousness of our connections to all the earth creatures who share the dependency? This means most of us in the Northern Hemisphere. Nonetheless, even in the banality of our clipped connections, we talk about the weather. We are somehow still at home together in it.

The weather is at once a metaphor for the ecological crisis in which the planet finds itself, and its most inescapable symptom. The weather, like "nature," has readily been woman-identified — alternately enchanting and frightening, nurturing and withholding, rhythmic and capricious, moody and unstable, subject to the modern and "manly" sciences of meteorology, climate control, and other modes of social management. Talk about the weather therefore becomes ecofeminist discourse. Theologically, because it is about the end of the world as we know it, it falls under the heading of eschatology — talk about end things. ... Apocalypse is a type of eschatology. The ecological trauma apocalyptically encoded in the weather may clue us in to our eschatological mission, as theological practitioner — our mission not to a life after life but to life itself.

"Apocalypse" means literally "to unveil." In exposing and disclosing, it leaves no hiding place. The text in Revelation 6:12ff mocks the very effort to hide, when, at the opening of the sixth seal, "the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich ... call to the mountains, 'Fall on us and hide us.'" That seems to be our situation, when even weather patterns threaten the future life of human civilization. In North America, we normally think of cozily hiding in our homes from bad weather. But the ecological vision reveals, in a less mythological sense than apocalypse, that there is no home to hide from the weather in. The home of the human species is the planet. The ravaged air and water and earth are the elements in which we move and live and have our being. We can't keep the weather out. There is no "out."

Ecology — etymologically it means "talk about home" — has become talk about the planetary home of homes, the ultimate "habitat for humanity." It has developed as a discourse only because there is no longer any notion of home, like weather, which can be taken for granted. The weather itself poses the need to talk about the rapid deterioration of the home-spaces, deterioration to the point that without radical and rapid renovation, our terrestrial habitat will soon be uninhabitable to most of us except the rich, the armed, and the insect. Talk about home merges with talk about the end of the world — the ultimate case of homelessness.

Apocalyptic eschatology, which entertains the vision of the imminent collapse of the world (the sum of nature and civilization), appears at moments irresistible. This is both mythically appropriate and historically dangerous. And precisely therefore must those who practice spiritualities of justice within Christian contexts consider the theological force field of the weather and other ecological traumas. This means doing our apocalyptic "home-work." ●

Catherine Keller teaches feminist theory and constructive theology in the Graduate and Theological Schools of Drew University. Excerpts from "Talk About the Weather: The Greening of Eschatology" by Catherine Keller, from Ecofeminism and the Sacred, *edited by Carol J. Adams, copyright 1993 by The Continuum Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of the Publisher.*

Then, last Sunday was the monthly Fast and Testimony Meeting at my church. What that means is you fast for 24 hours, mindful of what feeds the body, mindful of hunger, even a spiritual hunger, and in that gesture you find a sense of humility. Then you come together as a community and you break the fast with the sacrament, with the body and blood of Christ. And then the time is ours to contemplate and to share what we've been thinking, feeling, something that's happened during the week that moved us. So it's really a time of stories, much like a Quaker meeting. And I just loved it! I realized that this is something within my religious tradition that I cherish. I love listening to the members' stories. And especially after forgoing food, I realized the stories feed us in the same ways that food feeds us. And that that can only be found in the embrace of community. And the ritual of sacrament means something to me. Again, I find both solace in the tradition and also outside the tradition.

JW: One of the stories that's interesting to me, since you bring up your Mormon heritage, is the story of the Mormon people coming in search of land, and then finding the land — "This is the place!" — in the Salt Lake valley. Has that heritage of a people seeking a sacred land influenced Utah's public policy in the direction of conservation?

TTW: It's a complicated question. I started thinking about the conservation ethic in Utah, specifically inherent in the Mormon religion, when we were confronted with a crisis in our state. And that was the crisis of wilderness. You'll remember in 1994 when the Republicans took over the House and Senate with the Gingrich revolution, how everything shifted. Our political delegation in Utah couldn't have been more thrilled, with Orrin Hatch and Representative Jim Hansen at the helm. It was decided that for once and for all they would end the wilderness debate in Utah and because they had a majority they thought that this would move through quickly. To Governor Mike Leavitt's credit, he said we needed to have a public process. And so for six months there were hearings held in every county all over the state of Utah that had wilderness under consideration in Bureau of Land Management land. Over 70 percent of Utahns wanted more wilderness, not less. In June, Hatch and Bennett, the Senators from our state, as well as Hanson in the House, came up with what was called "The Utah

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Public Lands Management Act of 1995." This said that 1.7 million acres out of 22 million acres of BLM land would be designated as wilderness. Those of us within the conservation community were appalled. The citizens' proposal had been for 5.7 million acres. So a nasty fight ensued in the halls of Congress. Bottom line, people spoke out, not only in Utah, but all over the country, and the bill died. And, because of the political climate judged by a very astute Bill Clinton, the Grand Staircase Esconde National Monument was created with almost 2 million acres of wilderness in Utah.

Our Senators would have had us believe that if you were Mormon, you were Republican, you were anti-wilderness; if you were non-Mormon you were a Democrat, you were pro-wilderness. Those of us within the Mormon culture said: That cannot be true! So we set out to find stories that would show otherwise. We created a book called *New Genesis — A Mormon Reader on Land and Community* that contains about 40 stories from members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints who spoke about how nature informed their spirituality as a Mormon or, conversely, about how Mormonism has enhanced their view of nature. It was very, very moving to see the different discussions, everything from the natural history of the quilt, to a treatise on air pollution, to a conversion story of the former mayor of Salt Lake City, a world-class rock climber, who, hand on stone, felt the spirit of God and joined the Mormon church. In each of these essays they tied the theme to a Mormon scripture, or to something in the doctrine, so that we were trying to pull our history of a land ethic through time to where we are now at the beginning of this new millennium. We also took a deep look at our history to say: What was the ethic of Brigham Young when he came across the plains during the Mormon exodus, came into the Salt Lake Valley, and said, "This is the place!"? We found that there was a very strong conservation ethic. That over the pulpit, at Temple Square, in the Tabernacle, there were talks given by general authorities that warned the saints of overgrazing, warned about using too much water and upheld the value of water conservation. Somewhere along the line we have forgotten that. It's been an interesting exercise of retrieval.

As Harold Bloom has said, Mormonism is an "American religion." We have become very successful. What was once community-based has now become more corporate-based. So I think what we're seeing is not something unique to Mormonism, but something that we're seeing in the evolution of American culture.

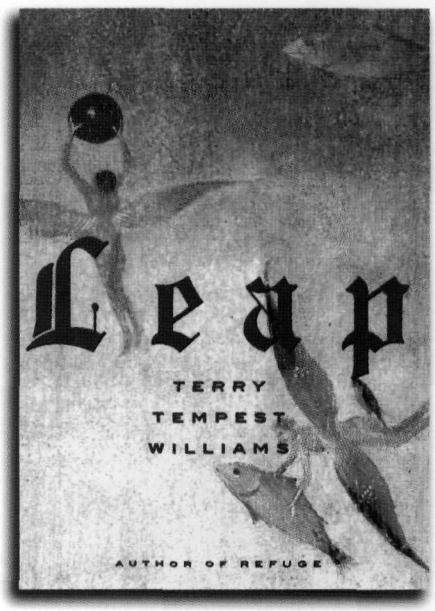
JW: Ched Myers wrote a piece in these pages several years ago about "The Bible and earth spirituality" in which he concluded that, "It is not the Bible that hates nature, but rather the culture of modernity."

TTW: Exactly. This relates to that process of retrieval and restoration of which I was speaking. I think we're seeing a greening of our churches because our life depends on it. I think it's that simple. If we are concerned about spiritual health, it must be in correspondence with ecological health. Look at people like Paul Gorman or the Bishop of the Greek Orthodox Church in Constantinople, who was first to come forward in saying that doing harm to the environment is a sin. And so our consciousness is expanding. We're retrieving our animal mind that knew this in our early stages of development. This is very positive, but it is met with suspicion because it is not human-centered, but life-centered. That's very threatening to a vertical notion of power, a power that isn't based on Earth, but on heaven. So, in a way, we're grounding our spirituality, we're embodying it. And we all know that the body is something that we're terrified of in religion.

JW: Yes. And because natural forces are so strongly seen as feminine, some people are saying that the crisis we're in, in terms of the planet, is the stuff of ecofeminism.

TTW: Again, we get into semantics. Certainly, when we look at the history of religions, we see a removal of the Feminine. But what I hope we come to is not a worship of the masculine or the feminine, but the wholeness of both. All we seem able to say is masculine or feminine, this or that. Again, I think of the two side panels of Bosch's triptych, heaven or hell. But how do we live in the center panel, how do we live on Earth? How do we live in that place of wholeness, that place of integration? That's what I'm interested in. And that's why I always return to the land, because I think we see that there. We see what it means to live in relationship, in harmony, even in predator-prey relationships, that there is a natural order to things. I think that in many of our religions, that natural order was broken. We feel the yearning to restore what was broken within ourselves. But how do we begin to not only make love, but make love to the world, when all that is thwarted with this heaviness of guilt and ought and should that institutionalized religion imposes? That's why I think it's healthy to have the doors of the churches blown open, to take our religions outside and not be frightened of the erosion that will be brought by spiritual winds. ●

Julie A. Wortman is editor and publisher of *The Witness*.



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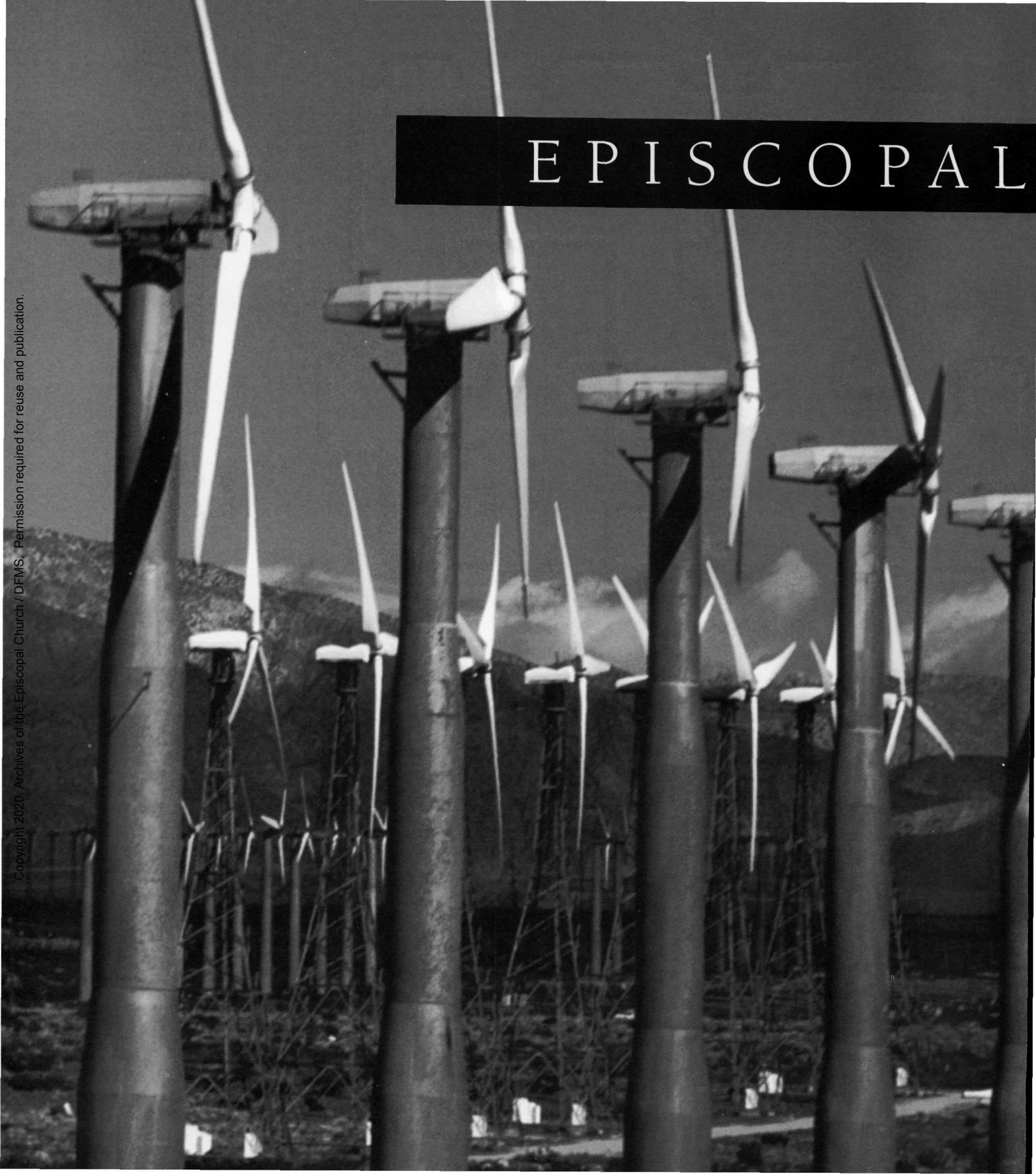

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POWER AND LIGHT

Two environmental activists help the church come clean

by Marianne Arbogast

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IN DENVER LAST SUMMER, the Episcopal Church held "the first major convention in the history of the U.S. to power itself with renewable electrical energy," according to Steve McAusland, who, with his colleague Sally Bingham, was behind this achievement. A month later in Los Angeles, the national Democratic Convention followed suit — also in response to McAusland and Bingham's initiative.

"They followed the church," McAusland says. "Now, isn't that an example of what can happen? The church can lead, and in the absence of what I would call sustained leadership in Washington, maybe it's time for the church to continue to exert its potential for leadership on the climate change issue."

Through Episcopal Power and Light, a ministry they co-founded, McAusland and Bingham are providing that leadership in a very practical way, urging churches to purchase their electrical power from companies that generate it from renewable sources. In the Diocese of California, where Bingham is Canon for Environmental Ministry at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, 50 percent of Episcopal churches are now buying green energy, and a growing number of churches elsewhere, both Episcopal and other denominations, are joining them. McAusland and Bingham, who met through the Episcopal Environmental Network, both have long histories of ecological activism.

Taking on Hydro-Quebec

For McAusland, it began with a canoe trip he took after graduating from college, on which he met a community of Cree Indians in Quebec who were fighting to save their river. "It was the early seventies, at the very beginning of the James Bay project, the largest hydro-electric project in North America," he says. "I ended up spending several years living with them while their river was being taken away from them. I saw the business plan of Hydro-Quebec, and saw that they were going to be beginning Phase II of the hydro-project in the early 1990s. So after I closed the chapter of my life living with the Cree, I became a video producer, knowing that it was really for the purpose of helping the Cree to defend their rivers. And when Phase II came around, I was ready, and we won. I had helped out in a significant way and we shut down a $15 billion project."

Bingham was an activist who returned to college and then seminary in her 40s to explore the connections between her faith and her commitment to the health of the planet. As a trustee for the Environmental Defense Fund, she had wondered about the seeming absence of the church's voice among those speaking out on behalf of creation.

"People would say, 'Well, it's the Christian church that's at blame — you are the ones that have dominion over everything and you think you can exploit the earth,'" Bingham recalls. "That didn't sound right to me. It didn't sound like the God I know or the faith I believe in."

Yet as a seminary student, she found her ecological convictions suspect.

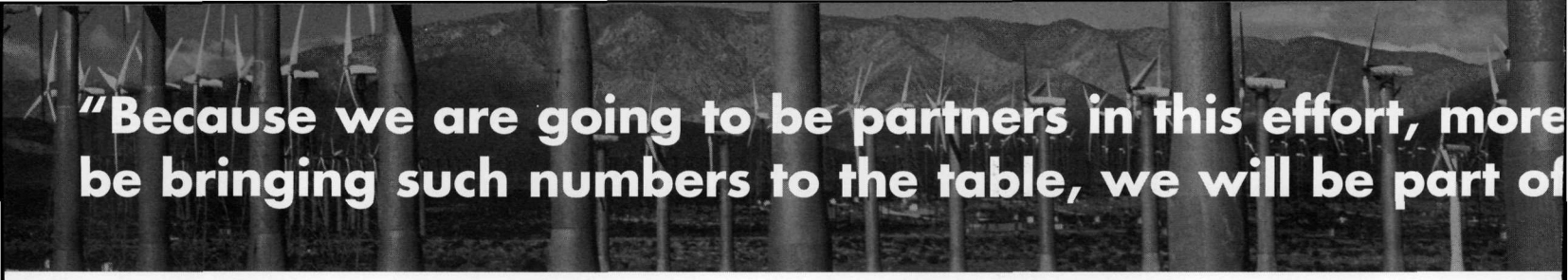
"I had a vocations committee, and partway through seminary we decided that, in fact, this was a call to Holy Orders," she said. "And so I proceeded along that track, and mostly I was told to stay quiet about the environment. If it were prison ministry or AIDS or one of the more obvious ministries that have to do with people, it would have been easier, but I was accused of being an environmentalist looking for a platform. You won't find people going through the ordination process with an environmental focus."

Bingham persevered, and after her ordination in 1997 became environmental minister for the Diocese of California.

Deregulation: a window of opportunity

By the time they met, both she and McAusland had independently concluded that climate change was the most serious issue facing the planet, and both were ready for a project involving concrete action. Opportunity presented itself in the form of energy deregulation, which was happening simultaneously in California, where Bingham lives, and in McCausland's home state of Massachusetts. They began laying the groundwork in California.

"When the business actually deregulated in March of 1998, we had already talked to the six California bishops, we had talked at two or three deanery meetings, and we had given people a heads-up on the choice they were going to have," Bingham says. "You



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don't have a choice of who's going to take the wires to your house or who's going to distribute the already-generated electricity, but you do have a choice of where that electricity comes from. So the environmental community has taken advantage of this, and has asked that people who care about the air and global warming find a company that produces their electricity from wind, sun, biomass, geothermal and, in some cases, small hydro-electric plants."

In addition to talking to church leaders, Bingham and McAusland approached energy companies with a proposal for partnership with the church. They ended up contracting with Green Mountain Energy, agreeing to encourage their churches and parishioners to buy from them in exchange for a small rebate to parishes for each member that signed up.

A growing campaign

The campaign has now spread beyond Episcopal churches in California, and given birth to California Interfaith Power and Light. Similar efforts are underway in other states where deregulation has occurred and clean energy marketers have moved in, or where green energy is available through traditional suppliers. The General Convention choice of green power was possible because of a green energy program begun by the Public Service Company of Colorado, which has invested in wind farms in Colorado and Wyoming. Similarly, consumers in Iowa are being offered the choice of wind-generated electricity.

While deregulation in and of itself is not necessarily desirable, environmentalists see in it a teachable moment.

"Deregulation is not an environmental cause," McCausland explains. "Deregulation as a phenomenon has been brought about by the biggest energy-consuming companies in the country who want to pay less for their energy. If cheap electricity is the motivating factor then we are going to see more coal being burned than before — and that has been the case."

"There's a particular window of time here," says Erika Morgan, who serves as technical advisor to Maine Interfaith Power and Light, an organization working toward a partnership between faith communities and a green energy provider (not yet identified) in Maine. "Choosing electricity is new to most people, so it enables us to take a message about environmental protection to a new audience at a time when they're listening. It's the key that opens the door; we need to walk through that door with a solid message about consumerism and conservation and energy efficiency."

Looking beyond price

Since green energy is generally slightly more expensive, part of the message is that price is not the only thing that matters.

"We learned early on that we cannot describe this to folks as a financial discussion," Morgan says. "It's more of a mission discussion — it's the right thing to do."

In New Jersey, where an interfaith group called Partners for Environmental Quality has contracted with Green Mountain, the Episcopal Diocese of Newark made the switch to green energy for its diocesan buildings last fall.

"It's something like $400 annually more than they were paying, but they felt that this was an appropriate outreach commitment to make, to take some leadership in the state," says Skip Vilas, an Episcopal priest and longtime advocate for environmental concerns. Vilas notes that the bishop of Newark has sent a letter to all Episcopal congregations, asking them to consider joining the effort. In New Jersey, as in California, congregations receive a small rebate for each member that signs up through them.

Bingham and McAusland are quick to point out that the cost can often be offset by simple conservation efforts.

Bingham, who purchases 100 percent wind energy — Green Mountain's most costly product — for home use, says that her heightened awareness has brought her overall cost down.

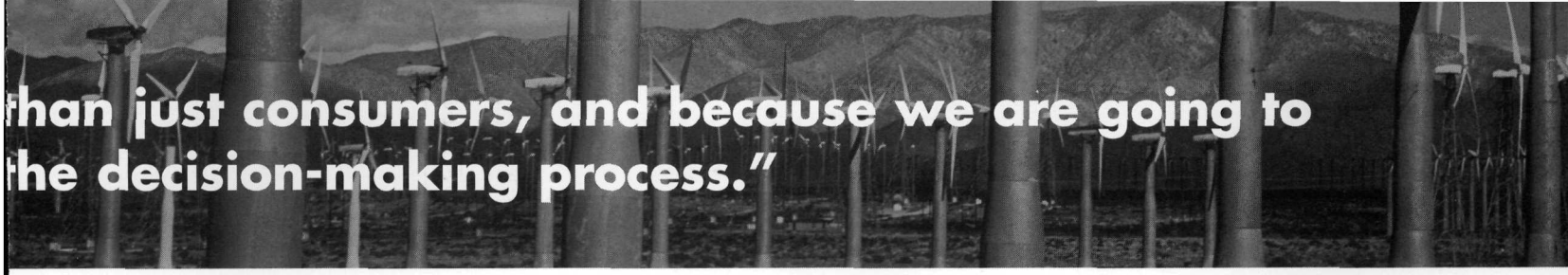
"It's about 19 percent more than what you would ordinarily pay," she says. "However, I have become so conscious of the electricity that I use that I save about 25 percent of electricity now just by doing simple things like putting in compact fluorescent light bulbs and not leaving the lights on when I leave the house. I pay less for electricity now than I ever have before. Steve used to come out here with a compact fluorescent light bulb in his pocket, and he'd change them in my house, and I watched my bill go down, down, down."

"A lot of us take energy and electricity for granted," McAusland says. "But when we learn what it is that's happening on the other end of the electrical line — what is being burned somewhere to provide us with electricity — then we begin thinking a little more carefully about how we use the stuff."

In California, where the current energy crisis has caused Green Mountain to stop taking on new customers, conservation has become the focal point of Bingham's work.

"Conservation is the short- and long-term solution to this problem," she says. "It doesn't scare me to think electricity prices may go even higher, because it will force people to conserve. I think this crisis is a wake-up call. Wasteful and short-term planning has really hurt our culture." She is also helping to mobilize the religious community to lobby for the creation of clean energy sources.

"We are hoping to influence the California Public Utilities Commission, so that for every kilowatt-hour of fossil-fuel-burning electricity that they generate — every new power plant they build that is dirty — a kilowatt-hour of clean energy is created, and a kilowatt-hour of conservation. We're going



to try to have a very strong religious constituency go to Sacramento and talk to legislators about this."

Freezing in the dark?

Conservation does not require extreme sacrifice, McAusland explains.

"Back in the Jimmy Carter years, energy efficiency and conservation were pilloried as freezing in the dark," he says. "We don't have to do that. Our energy technologies have matured enough that we can now maintain or improve our levels of comfort and save energy and save money at the same time. But you walk into your basic hardware store, and you don't find a lot of energy-efficient lighting systems, so we do have a ways to go. We need to be creating the demand for energy-efficient products and services.

"Energy efficiency is something we can be doing everywhere, regardless of whether or not there is a green energy to be purchased. You cut back on your energy bill by 30 percent, you save 30 percent of your greenhouse gas emissions. If you were to invest half of that savings in renewably generated electricity, you can begin to cut your emissions more, so perhaps we could begin to approach the 70 percent reduction level that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is calling for. That's exactly what's happening in the Diocese of California."

A church mandate

McAusland is a visionary regarding the potential impact of the church.

"Because we are going to be partners in this effort, more than just consumers, and because we are going to be bringing such numbers to the table, we will be part of the decision-making process," he believes. "When we're talking about distributed generation — getting away from the big, centralized, fossil-fuel-burning electricity-generating plant to putting solar panels on our roofs — not only is it labor-intensive in manufacturing them but also in installing them. And bringing our homes and places of worship up to snuff, we're going to be creating lots of job opportunities — and we will have a say in who gets the jobs. That's as exciting as anything else because when you look at the utility industry, for the most part you'll find white males. That will go when we get our numbers up there. So it's not just about traditional environmental values, but also about environmental and economic justice."

Bingham concurs. "People out in the South Pacific islands are going to lose everything they have as the ice caps melt and the seas begin to rise. We here in the U.S. create most of the problems. It isn't the populated areas of Ethiopia, it's the affluent nations with all the waste." Moreover, she notes, "electrical power plants are almost always located in poor neighborhoods. And the people that live near those power plants have the highest rates of asthma, lung disease and all kinds of respiratory problems. If the church isn't going to stand up and say, this is unjust, who is?"

Increasingly, the church seems willing to take up the commission. The National Council of Churches, through its Eco-Justice Working Group, is supporting interfaith global climate change campaigns in 16 states, which have held training events, facilitated political lobbying, and educated individuals and congregations about energy conservation and efficiency. An October conference in Maine drew 75 participants to consider the faith communities' response to global warming. The Maine campaign has also circulated a religious leaders' statement and developed a personal pledge for individuals and households committed to reducing their own emissions.

Building a global network

Last November, Bingham and McAusland were invited to Kathmandu, Nepal, for a gathering sponsored by the British-based Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC). Episcopal Power and Light was one of 26 faith organizations represented at the meeting, which included Japanese Shintos who have promised to purchase sustainably produced wood for rebuilding shrines, Huichol Indians who led a campaign which doubled the size of a protected area of the Chihuahuan Desert in Mexico, Maronites who are protecting a threatened forest in Lebanon, and Indian Sikhs who are working to reduce fossil fuel consumption by using solar power and more efficient cooking equipment in their Delhi community kitchens.

"The Kathmandu trip was probably the highlight and the biggest thrill that both of us have had because we were mixing with folks who were doing the same kind of work all over the world," Bingham said. "This has set up a whole new network for us. We went to Australia on the way home and were introduced to the head of the Department for the Environment for Australia, who was so excited at the possibility of being able to work with the church."

McAusland is pleased that ARC has identified global warming as its central focus at this time. "All the other environmental insults that take place in our backyards and around the country are important, but when you mess with the climate you're messing with the big picture, and all of the relatively minor insults become greatly magnified when you throw the climate out of whack. We're talking about lots of long-term negative impacts that are going to greatly impact the quality of life not only for our children, but for folk around the world, beginning with the poor." McCausland does this work because he has children, he says, and because "someone's got to do it. Because I don't see our leadership in Washington doing it, I volunteer the Episcopal Church." ●

Detroiter ***Marianne Arbogast*** *is associate editor of* The Witness.

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"THE GOVERNMENT IS CUTTING TAXES. SO WE'RE ASKING ALL TAXPAYERS TO DO THEIR BIT BY PLEDGING TO EARN MORE."

New leaders demand U.S. leave Vieques

Controversy over the U.S. Navy's bombing range on Vieques in Puerto Rico "may become the new president's first foreign policy crisis," Juan Gonzalez writes in *In These Times* (1-22-01).

"The Vieques dispute, which briefly attracted major media attention in late 1999, promptly disappeared from most radar screens in this country after President Clinton reached a compromise agreement on Jan. 31 with Puerto Rican Gov. Pedro Rossello," Gonzalez says. "But the controversy never went away for the 3.8 million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico who inhabit this nation's last major colonial possession. ...

"From the moment it was announced, the agreement faced widespread criticism, both in Puerto Rico among those who wanted an immediate Navy withdrawal, and in this country from the Navy's staunchest supporters in Congress who opposed giving up the range. On the island, several huge demonstrations were organized by a coalition of church groups, and hundreds of people were arrested throughout the year for civil disobedience on the range in attempts to disrupt maneuvers. But it wasn't until Election Day that the full impact of the Clinton-Rossello agreement became clear.

"While throughout the U.S. most people were fixed on the presidential race and the Florida recount, few noticed that down in Puerto Rico, opponents of the Vieques agreement had swept to an amazing victory. Rossello's pro-statehood New Progressive Party, which had backed the agreement, lost virtually everything — its majority in both houses of the Puerto Rican legislature, the governor's mansion and the post of resident commissioner, the island's nonvoting delegate to the House of Representatives.

"Popular Democratic Party leader Sila Calderon was narrowly elected Puerto Rico's first woman governor, and the polls showed that her strong opposition to the Vieques agreement was what provided her margin of victory. Within days after the election, Calderon met with Carlos Pesquera, head of the New Progressive Party, and Ruben Berrios, head of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, and the three leaders sent a joint letter to Clinton calling for an immediate withdrawal of the Navy from Vieques. Calderon promised that her first official act as governor would be to organize a referendum separate from the Navy's that would include the immediate withdrawal of the Navy as an option. In effect, she declared the Clinton-Rossello agreement dead."

Whose bullets?

Diana Roe of the Christian Peacemaking Team in Hebron writes in the *Social Questions Bulletin* (Methodist Federation for Social Action) about picking up a spent bullet on the street:

"'Hey you! Stop!' an Israeli soldier shouted. 'Give that back!' I turned around and reached into my pocket and handed him a bullet. Then I realized that I had given him one I had collected Saturday morning walking back from the Hart iSheikh neighborhood after meeting a family whose house had been attacked by multiple missile and gunshot fire.

"I reached into another pocket and handed him the right bullet. 'Here, this is the one from this street. Can I have that one back? I got it yesterday in the Hart iSheikh neighborhood.'

"'No, you must give them all back to us,' he answered. I did not argue with him. After all, he was right. No matter where I found these shells, they were fired by the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces]. ...

"Yet these days on every coffee table, bowls that used to hold cookies, flowers or apples now hold some of the fruit of the latest horror that comes from an occupying army. 'Have a cup of coffee and see what our children found in their bedrooms.'

"So I gave the bullets back to the IDF soldier. Yet he is only partly right. I could have said, 'Excuse me, sir, but I think those are mine. You see, I come from the U.S. It is my country that has paid for your army. It is my country that vetoed UN resolutions and thus

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enabled your country to carry on this brutal occupation. It was my congressman who joined over 400 other congressmen in supporting your country's assault on the people in these neighborhoods."

Relevant economics

French graduate students of economics are demanding an education that relates to "real-world problems such as unemployment and global economic inequality," according to *Dollars and Sense* (1-2/01).

"The movement began in a most unlikely place — the elite Ecole Normale Superieure in Paris, an institution with a long history of training top-level French intellectuals and politicians," Jennifer Berkshire writes. "The graduate students began circulating a petition demanding 'a pluralism of approaches' to the teaching of economics. Within weeks, hundreds of students from other economics departments across the country had signed on.

"The students' criticism caught many economists off guard — one went so far as to dismiss the protests as part of a 'Trotskyite plot' — and the French media quickly reduced the battle to one between 'anti-math' forces and their 'pro-math' opponents. But the students and their supporters insist that the struggle is about politics.

"Gilles Rivaud, a Ph.D. student at the University of Nanterre and a leader of the economics student protest movement, argues that economics courses should enable students 'to actively participate in debates about the world. They don't, and this is what we consider their primary fault.'"

Doing what God says?

A federal appellate court overturned the death sentence of a convicted murderer because the prosecutor had told jurors that imposing a death sentence would be "doing what God says" (*Church & State*, 12/01). According to the report, "the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals voided the death sentence imposed on Alfred Sandoval, who was found guilty of murdering four people in Los Angeles in 1984." When the jury was deadlocked on imposing capital punishment, the prosecutor told them that "God will destroy the body to save the soul. Make him get himself right." The appeals court ruled that the prosecutor's argument was "improper and highly prejudicial" and said that jury members should not be told to put "an asserted higher law" before secular law.

Citizens Budget Campaign

Citizens Budget Campaign, a group of citizens' organizations in Western Pennsylvania, is asking churches, neighborhood associations and other groups to endorse a set of proposals for "tax and budget priorities that respond to increasing economic inequality." They are calling for:

1. A Fair Economy: a living wage, tax reform and income security (protection and not privatization of Social Security);

2. Quality Living: health care measures including HMO reform and coverage for those who lack adequate protection; affordable housing and a safe environment;

3. A Democratic Society: racial equality and an end to practices such as racial profiling, unfair sentencing structures and housing discrimination; voting reform, including abolition of the Electoral College; and campaign finance reform;

4. A Peaceful Foreign Policy: opposing missile defense and other "Star Wars" initiatives, and commitment to international cooperation through the U.N. and other organizations that support democratic principles.

New staffer for EPF

Jacqueline Goler Lynn will be taking over from Mary Miller as executive secretary of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship July 1, when Miller retires from the post. Lynn is currently chair of the Peace and Social Justice Commission of St. James' Cathedral in Chicago and has worked extensively on the issue of gun violence.

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L'Arche Harbor House, a Christian community in Jacksonville, Fla., invites you to assist in creating community with persons who are developmentally disabled. Requirements: dedicated people who want to live the Gospel in community life, who desire to live with, learn from and relate with adults with disabilities. Responsibilities: help create a home based on the Beatitudes, develop relationships with members, assist with personal care and community living. Benefits: Americorps site, stipend, room, board, health insurance, and formation in the spirituality and philosophy of L'Arche. To apply, contact Dottie Klein, 700 Arlington Road, Jacksonville, FL 32211, 904-744-4435; <larchfl@aol.com>.

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

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The Witness

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WITNESS MAGAZINE

'IS IT OKAY TO CHANGE

WHAT IS A TREE,

WHAT IS A SALMON,

WHAT IS FOOD?'

VOLUME 84

NUMBER 5

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WITNESS MAGAZINE

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Bluegrass, Jackson Road, WA

Photo by Don Kirby

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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

A Global Witness
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
118 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

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Challenging a greedy world

I was troubled by the articles in the January/February issue of *The Witness* that addressed the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), especially the impact of development on the Gwich'in people. My troubled mind and heart stem from the statements of Steven Charleston, former Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, and Mark MacDonald, our present Bishop, who did not even mention another group of Christian indigenous people with a direct stake in ANWR development. I am referring to the Inupiat (Eskimo) people of the Arctic Slope. The Inupiat own 92,000 acres of subsurface mineral rights in the ANWR coastal plain.

My hope in writing this letter is to offer a complementary, rather than an adversarial, viewpoint to that raised by Bishops Charleston and MacDonald. Eight months ago I moved from Anchorage to Barrow at the invitation of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), owned by nearly 8,000 Inupiat shareholders, to accept the position of Corporate Staff Attorney. Barrow is a different world. Like the Gwich'in, the Inupiat derive up to 80 percent of their food from subsistence hunting and fishing, so they are highly motivated to protect the land. ASRC has pioneered innovative means to develop oil and gas resources in the fragile tundra ecology of the Arctic. Yet many Inupiat now feel "invisible" because their pro-ANWR development stance causes them to be "lumped in" with the oil companies and branded as "greedy Natives" by those who do not take the time to understand the complex legal realities of Inupiat life.

ASRC is one of 13 Regional Corporations formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. The Regional Corporations were granted the mineral rights and the Village Corporations the surface rights to certain land selections within each Region. Because mineral resources are not evenly distributed throughout Alaska, ANCSA dictated that each Regional Corporation redistribute 70 percent of its annual revenue from resource development to the other Regions for the benefit of their Native shareholders.

Under ANCSA, the Gwich'in elected to take absolute title to their former reservation land and dissolved their Village Corporation. Thus, the Gwich'in have no obligation to share the wealth from their resource development with other Regions; and the Gwich'in are not entitled to share in the resource development of other Regions. The Gwich'in leased most of their land for oil and gas exploration; but no developable resources were found. Self-determination is a choice, and every choice has its consequences.

In the early 1970s ASRC raised concerns about the potential environmental impacts of oil development at Prudhoe Bay on the Caribou — the same concerns that the Gwich'in raise now. However, after over 30 years, ASRC's concerns about negative environmental impacts on the Caribou at Prudhoe Bay have not materialized. The Central Arctic herd has thrived and increased many times over.

If we are to cure the "radioactive legacy of imperialism" as Steven Charleston so eloquently advocates, then we must have the courage to support Native self-determination and take the time to understand the many viewpoints that exist within the Native community. And like our Bishops I report strong reason for hope. Heroic efforts are being made by the Gwich'in and the Inupiat to open and maintain constructive dialogue on the issues that divide them on ANWR development.

As people of faith in the dominant culture we can support the Inupiat and Gwich'in dialogue in prayer and by lobbying our elected officials to ensure that all Native voices will be heard on resource development issues.

Erin Rose, Esq.
Corporate Staff Attorney
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
Barrow, AL

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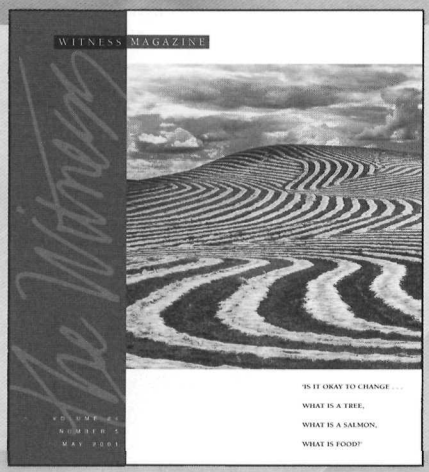
'All that we are, all that we have, comes from God and will one day return to God.'



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Entering into the GM debate

by Julie A. Wortman

THIS ISSUE on biotechnology and genetically modified (GM) food is full of questions, many of them prompted by last January's conference on "Genetic Engineering and Food for the World" co-sponsored by the Episcopal Church's Faith Ethics, Science and Technology Committee and the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. I attended that conference pretty confident that I'd leave with my biases intact — namely, that such innovations as genetically engineered or modified crops are the demonic creatures of the multinational agri-corporations who have developed them soley to increase profits without concern for their potentially negative impact on the health of the planet and the starving millions of the developing world.

As usual, I found that the truth is more nuanced — and confusing (to this non-scientific mind, at least) — than that. While mammoth multinational corporations were, indeed, behind the GM "green revolution," and while they have, indeed, focused their research on developments that would immediately benefit their own bottom lines, genetic engineering of crop plants might not be inherently a bad thing for ecosystems and for hungry people.

The operative word here is "might." And the big question is, as food scientist Marion Nestle pointed out in a conference workshop, who gets to decide if the risks to human and environmental health are acceptable? Even more fundamentally, who rightfully "owns" the very stuff of creation?

Somehow, up until now the public-as-stakeholder has been absent when answers to these questions have been given (by scientists working for Monsanto and other food corporations) — and accepted virtually without question by government regulators. Most notably, the churches and other keepers of cultural and social values — and seekers after justice — have been pretty much dismissed as having nothing of relevance to add to the lopsided conversation about what shape the globe's agricultural future should take. But a shift may be on the horizon. As a recent "Agriculture White Paper" issued by the Kansas Catholic bishops points out, "The great problems posed by the agricultural sector cannot be addressed as technical problems only. Nor can they be addressed as political problems only. They are, at their root, ethical problems."

So far, the ethical challenges to the rapid spread of GM foods have been raised most persuasively by the organic farming community. Food safety, of course, has been at the heart of organic agriculture's appeal — and, certainly, health concerns are a powerful reason to support the natural processes of organic agriculture. For me, though, the even greater draw of organics is the fact that when I support organic agriculture I am also supporting an environmentally positive ethic of regional and local food security and an economically just system of wage-cost relationships that values the intensive labor involved. Most organic operations, too, are small farms owned by people who have a personal stake in the quality of their communities' lives. And, where poultry, pigs and cattle are involved, the treatment of these "crops" is vastly more humane than in factory-farming contexts where both animals and land suffer unspeakable degradation, pain and suffering.

A measure of the success of the organic

Tallgrass Prairie by Steve Mulligan

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community in making the benefits of its crops better known — and perhaps a measure of the failure of agri-corporations to respect consumers' right to know what they are eating — is that a British supermarket company, Iceland, has announced that, in addition to banning GM foods, it will invest more than $13 million to make organic produce available to customers at prices comparable to those of foods grown with pesticides. According to *Grist* magazine, Iceland has made deals to buy nearly 40 percent of the world's organic produce and it plans to invest $1.5 million in the British National Trust's farming program to increase the amount of organic farmland in Britain.

From a North American and Western perspective, the choices are there. And my intuition suggests that for people in developing countries, traditional agricultural practices are a fit with the ethic of sustainability and social/cultural/environmental health implied by organics. But what do I know? As Marianne Arbogast's sidebar interview with the U.N.'s Peter Matlon suggests, biotechnology may offer developing countries a fast-track to self-sufficient food production. Who can be against that?

But one thing seems certain. It is high time that people who live out of a faith in the goodness of creation — and a commitment to justice in every sphere of life — join in figuring out the answers. As Susan Youmans, of the Episcopal Church's Faith Ethics, Science and Technology Committee pointed out at last January's genetic engineering conference, we've all got a responsibility to try. ●

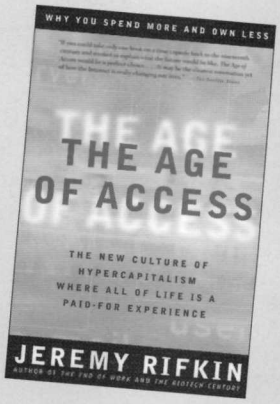
For more information on the Episcopal Church's Committee on Faith Ethics, Science and Technology check out <http://ecusa.anglican.org/science/>. Established in 1997, the committee is open to all Episcopalians interested in the interactions of Christian faith with science, technology and medicine. The Steering Committee is appointed by the Episcopal Church's Executive Council.

A note on the great photos: We've obtained much of the fine art photography in this and other recent Witness *issues with the help of Brooks Jensen at LensWork Publishing, which is devoted to "Fine Art Photography at Real People Prices." We're grateful. Check them out at <www.lenswork.com>; 1-800-659-2130.*

MEDIA REVIEW

Biotechnology & the emerging political economy

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann



Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access*
(NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000)

TWENTY YEARS AGO, Jeremy Rifkin was part of an action that disrupted a meeting on genetic engineering at the National Academy of Science. He and friends chanted, "We Will Not be Cloned!" Five years later he co-authored *Who Should Play God?* which title implies a certain theological take on genetic engineering. More recently, his *Biotech Century* (1998) has outlined a dire manifesto of the perils inherent and largely unexamined in the current biotechnological revolution.

Now, in *The Age of Access*, where he touches on biotechnology it is set in the larger context of "hypercapitalism" and the mechanisms of the new political economy. In a sense, corporate genetics are emblematic of that emerging economy. Rifkin identifies a rapid sea change in which the objects of market exchange are increasingly "weightless." By this he means not only the digital information in which they are encoded, but the very ideas, images, relationships, cultural material — indeed, experiences themselves. Property, in the sense of real estate or even owned commodities, comes to be secondary in this global scheme. It is the "access" to real estate or commodities or information or cultural images and experiences which is bought and sold, or better "leased" and "timeshared" in the market. "Intellectual property" becomes the coin of the realm.

"Imagine a world where virtually every activity outside the confines of family relations is a paid-for experience, a world in which traditional reciprocal obligation and expectations — mediated by feelings of faith, empathy, and solidarity — are replaced by contractual relations in the form of paid-for memberships, subscriptions, admission charges, retainers and fees."

So, how does genetic engineering figure into such an economic framework? Precisely and emblematically so. For example: When a farmer buys a certain seed stock, say, he or she is not buying the seeds so much as leasing the patented genetic code by which they are formulated. If the access fee is not paid in the next planting season, but the same seed stock is used, the farmer is in violation of the corporation's patent rights — is, in effect, stealing their intellectual property. Says Rifkin, "The elimination of the widespread ownership of the seeds of life and their concentration in the hands of a few companies mark a turning point in the history of agriculture. Like other fields, agricultural commerce is moving from a seller-buyer to a supplier-user relationship."

The same underlying relationship applies to virtually all of the uses of genetic coding. Where the DNA string is patented, be it a "natural" discovery or a "modified" creation, use of and access to that organism of biological process for medical or any other commercial purposes is precisely controlled. The Geron Corporation has a patent pending for human stem cells, those primordial cells from which individual human beings develop.

Playing God, indeed. In the theological economy, what is the greater idolotry (or blasphemy for that matter): To modify, manipulate, and design creatures genetically? Or to claim ownership of that image and pattern? ●

***Bill Wylie-Kellermann** is* The Witness' *book review editor and a* Witness *contributing editor.*

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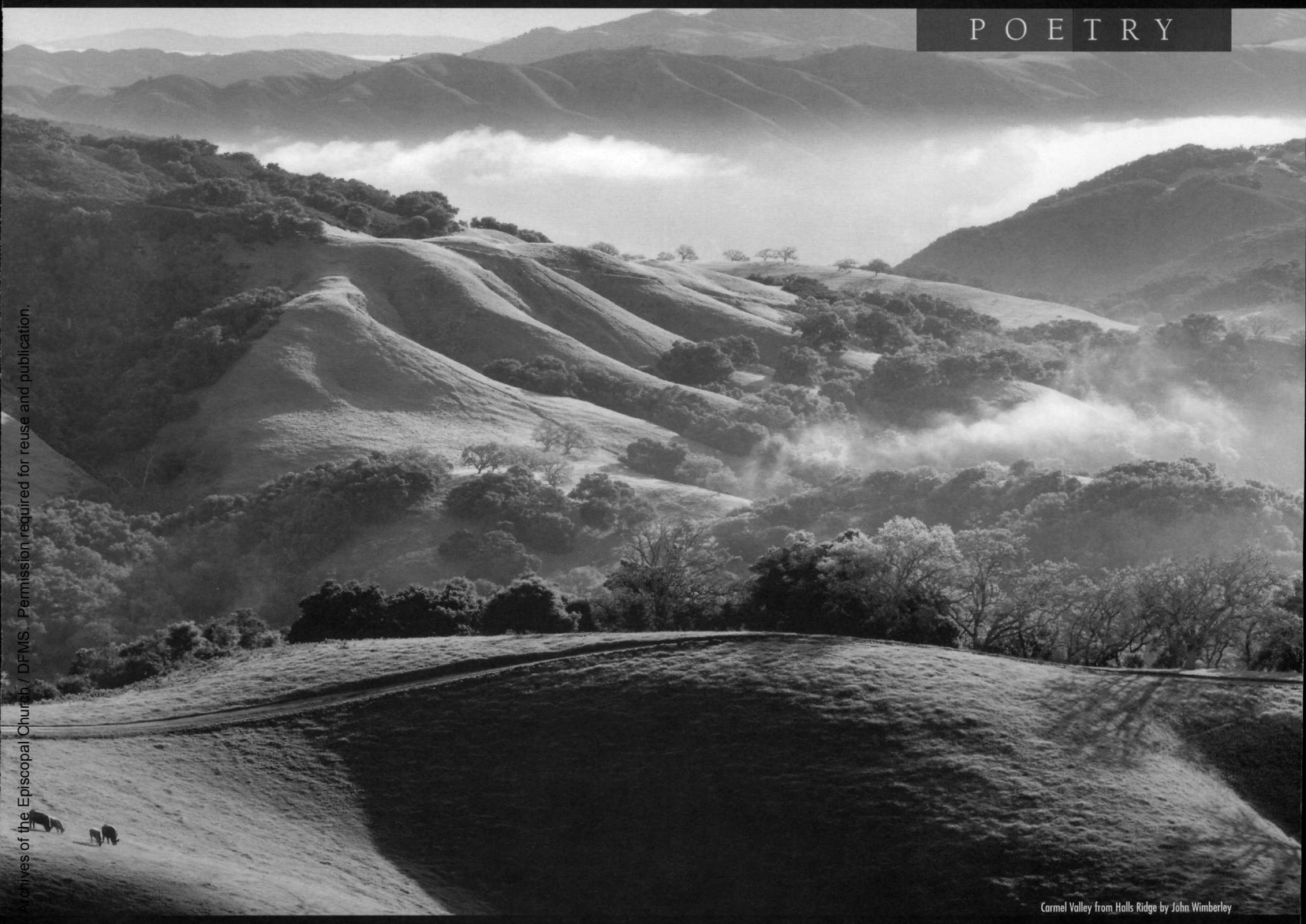

Carmel Valley from Halls Ridge by John Wimberley

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In the day that the Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up — for the Yahweh God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground — then the Yahweh God formed the earth creature from the dust of the ground, and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life; and the earth creature became a living being.

And the Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there the Yahweh God put the earth creature whom the Yahweh God had formed.

Out of the ground the Yahweh God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

— *Genesis 2:4-9 (NRSV)*

THE GM DEBATE

'Is it okay to change what is a tree, what is a salmon, what is food?'

by Marianne Arbogast

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AS I WAS OPENING a new jar of apricot preserves the other morning, I noticed a flag on the label that reads: "NOW GMO FREE." The small print assures me that "every ingredient in this jar is certified to be free of genetically modified organisms." The issues surrounding genetically engineered (GE) foods have only recently begun to penetrate my awareness, and I hadn't bought the product for that reason. But clearly, the company considers it a selling point.

Labeling, in fact, is one of the battlefields where the controversy over GE foods is being fought out. Groups like the Safe Foods Campaign — which is calling for a moratorium on genetically engineered foods — are demanding mandatory labeling of all foods that contain genetically engineered ingredients. "The rapid advance of this technology has been accompanied by almost no federal safety testing or regulation," a Safe Foods Campaign flyer reads. "A January 1999 *Time* magazine poll found that 81 percent of U.S. consumers believe GE foods should be labeled, yet the FDA's most recent changes in its GE policy still do not require labeling or comprehensive premarket health and environmental testing."

The speed of the GE foods revolution — fueled by corporations that, while they claim to want to feed the world, might reasonably be suspected of wanting to feed their profit margins — should concern everyone, writes Jean English, editor of *The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener,* published by the Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener Association (MOFGA). "When MOFGA proposed its first labeling legislation in 1993, not a single GE product was on our supermarket shelves," she writes. "Now, an estimated 60 percent of our processed foods contain GE ingredients, either corn or soy derivatives. Advocates of GE technology often argue that hundreds of thousands of Americans are consuming GE food every day, with no ill effects, so why worry?"

Here's why, she explains. First, if there were ill effects, either short- or long-term, how could we know their source, if GE foods are neither tested nor labeled? And second, the quantities we consume are destined to sharply rise. "The products now on the market are only the tip of the iceberg, or more accurately, perhaps, a molecule of the iceberg, of the brave new world of GE products that scientists in the laboratory are developing," English writes. "Each new product presents new and unique, and largely untested, issues of environmental impact, nutrition and food safety."

The FDA — and the food industry — counter that foods containing GE ingredients do not differ in any substantial way from those without them. Moreover, industry spokespersons say, labeling would cause consumers unnecessary alarm and impose significant burdens on producers — an argument that seems difficult to defend, since many manufacturers who export their products do manage to comply with more stringent European labeling rules.

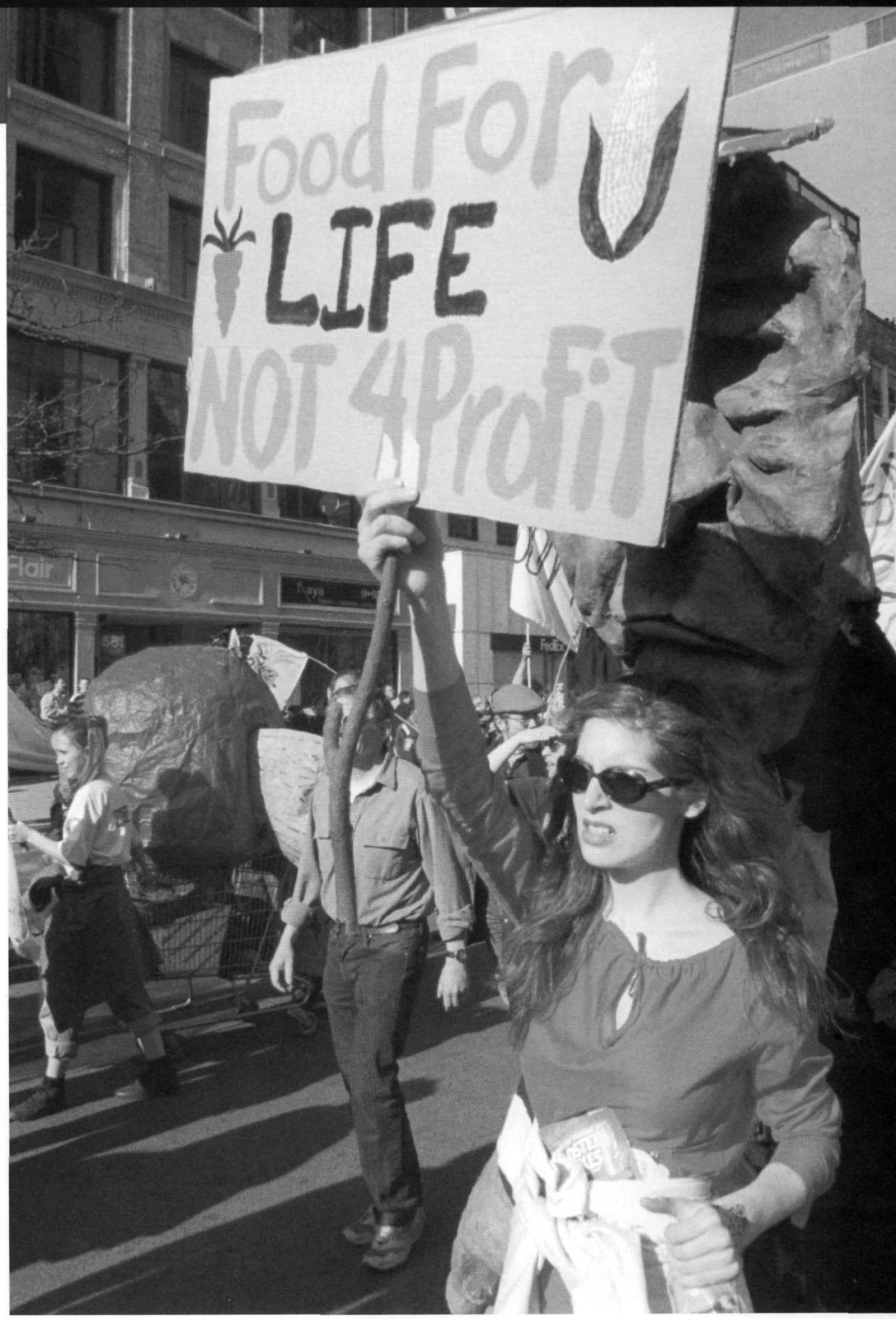
Those who demand labeling do believe that GE foods are substantially, and dangerously, different — in the risks they pose to human health and the health of ecosystems, in the economic and social impact they will have on people in developing countries, and in the fundamental questions they raise about the integrity of creation. As Seattle activist Craig Winters, quoted in *Science & Spirit* magazine, explains, "If genetically engineered foods were labeled, consumers would pay more attention and start asking important questions: What are our values? Is it okay to change what is a tree, what is a salmon, what is food?"

Human health risks

The first reason it may not be okay to make such changes has to do with risks to human health. Here, much of the concern is that we simply don't know whether GE foods are safe or not, or how genetic engineering might change the nutritional composition of foods; and the minimal testing that has been done on GE products has often been sponsored by the very corporations with an economic interest in promoting them.

The Safe Foods Campaign cites studies that have linked consumption of GE foods by rats to organ and immune system damage and stomach lesions. MOFGA's Jean English writes of Arpad Pusztai, a researcher for an institute in Scotland that had received money from Monsanto, who lost his job after going public with results of a study that documented malformed kidneys, spleen and brain tissue, as well as weakened immune systems and thickened stomach linings, in rats fed GE potatoes. Although his research techniques were criticized by the institute, they were exon-

In March 2000, over 3000 protesters marched to Boston's Hynes Convention Center, the site of a biotechnology conference called "Bio2000," to voice their concerns about genetically modified foods, corporate patents of genes and crops, and corporate control over food and health.



erated by an outside panel of scientists who said his conclusions were justified and recommended a moratorium on the sale of GE foods in Great Britain.

Another health concern has to do with the use of genes for antibiotic resistance in the genetic engineering process. These are not "target genes" for desired traits but "marker genes," which make it easy to test whether the desired gene has been successfully transferred. Critics claim that this could lead to increased antibiotic resistance in disease-causing bacteria — already a health concern of significant proportions.

GE foods also have the potential to trigger new food allergies. An oft-cited case is the insertion of a Brazil nut gene into soy by Pioneer Seed Company. Although initial animal testing seemed to indicate that the product was safe, further research concluded that the modified soy might trigger serious reactions in humans allergic to nuts. Moreover, when foods are modified to include genes from species not normally included in the human diet, unpredictable allergic reactions could occur.

Finally, critics of genetic engineering fear that it could change the nutritional composition of foods in unpredictable and potentially negative ways.

Supporters of genetic engineering view these risks as minimal, claiming that genetic engineering is more likely to increase nutritional value. And allergy sufferers might benefit if scientists are able to disable the genes that produce allergens.

Michael Jacobson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest — a consumer watchdog group that has spoken out

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against everything from french fries to sulfites — wrote a recent column in *The Wall Street Journal* defending GE foods. "While biotechnology is not a panacea for every nutritional and agricultural problem, it is a powerful tool to increase food production, protect the environment, improve the healthfulness of foods and produce valuable pharmaceuticals. It should not be rejected cavalierly." While Jacobson is in favor of expanding safety testing and regulation, he is optimistic about the technology's potential. And his position illustrates one of the most confusing aspects of the controversy — namely, that GE advocates and adversaries often base their arguments on the same set of values.

Risks to ecosystems

This is particularly true in the assessment of the potential impact of GE crops on ecosystems. Advocates say biotechnology will lead to decreased use of pesticides, while opponents say it is likely to increase pesticide use. Advocates say it will allow the use of fewer toxic herbicides; opponents argue the reverse.

"Ecology is very complicated, and it's difficult to predict ecological outcomes," says Allison Snow, a biologist at Ohio State University who is studying the problem of gene flow from GE crops to related wild plants. "It's hard to say right now that there's any benefit at all [to GE crops] or a huge risk at all. Ecologists are probably a little more cautious, obviously, than people who are promoting the technology. Probably most ecologists who have thought about this and studied it would say, yes, there are some benefits, but there are some pretty serious risks that we need to watch out for."

Snow names three. One is the rapid evolution of pesticide resistance in insects that feed on crops engineered to contain a pesticide such as Bt — the *Bacillus thuringiensis* bacterium. Organic gardeners — who dust Bt onto crops as a primary pest control tool — are particularly alarmed that its widespread engineering into crops will produce strains of Bt-resistant insects — thus rendering Bt ineffective in any form.

A second risk is the possible effect of such crops on "non-target" insects. The monarch butterfly became a symbol of this danger after Cornell University researchers reported that pollen from Bt corn — engineered to produce its own pesticide — was toxic to that species. Other studies have reported that it can have toxic effects on ladybugs and lacewings, insects that benefit farmers by eating aphids.

A third risk is gene flow from GE crops to non-GE crops or to the crops' wild relatives. Not only would this make the presence of GE ingredients in foods impossible to prevent or control, it might also create "superweeds" from the crossing of herbicide-resistant GE crops with weedy relatives, increasing the need for chemical herbicides and threatening biodiversity. While gene flow from transgenic crops to weeds has not yet been documented, Snow says that it is happening.

"I would not say it's very common right now, mainly because corn and soybean and potatoes [the main GE crops in the U.S.] don't have wild relatives," she says. "It's only other crops like rice and squash and canola where this is starting to happen. I was just talking with someone who said that Tasmania wanted to be GM-free, but they had some field trials with canola that was genetically modified, and now it's all along the roadside and there's just no way they can get rid of it."

The possibility of stress-tolerant crops, which would need less water or fewer nutrients, opens up another area of debate. On the plus side would be less need for irrigation and fertilizers. On the downside would be the possibility of further agricultural sprawl into areas where farming had not previously been possible — desirable, perhaps, in very poor areas of the world, but ultimately damaging in others, leading to further loss of biodiversity. And, as with herbicide- and insect-resistant crops, gene flow could be a problem. No one wants stress-resistant weeds.

It's too early to assess which of the potential risks or benefits are occurring, Snow believes, though she agrees that the technology has moved ahead too fast.

"I think things should proceed a little more slowly, and government regulations need to be examined and re-examined all the time to make sure that they're keeping pace with what the industry is trying to sell."

Economic and social concerns

A colorful brochure titled "Global Harvest: Biotechnology & Imported Food" pictures lush green and golden fields, and women in developing world marketplaces brimming with grain and produce. The credit on the back names the source and their slogan: "Monsanto — Food, Health, Hope." Inside, the corporation recites statistics on growing population, life expectancy and global demand for meat, along with decreasing land availability and food resources. But Monsanto has the solution: Bioengineered crops will "enable farmers to produce more food at lower cost in sustainable ways and provide consumers with a more abundant, higher quality food supply."

Skeptics abound. For many, Monsanto's name is linked not with "food, health and hope" but with the infamous "terminator technology" which produces sterile seeds, forcing farmers to purchase new seed from the company year after year. Although, after massive public protest, Monsanto promised in 1999 not to commercialize these "gene protection systems," research and patent application has continued on such technology by other global corporations.

Ironically, "terminator technology" might offer an ecological advantage, in preventing gene flow to wild relatives or non-GE crops. But it illustrates a fundamental problem with

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the use of genetic engineering in the developing world — the issue of control. Who will benefit if people in developing nations become dependent on global corporations for their food supply?

The patenting of genetic engineering processes and their products by multinational companies is an area of concern both for those who warn of the dangers of biotechnology for developing countries, and those who are optimistic about its potential.

"Patents and intellectual property rights are supposed to be granted for novel inventions," Indian doctor Vandana Shiva said in a recent lecture. "But patents are being claimed for rice varieties such as the basmati for which my valley — where I was born — is famous, or pesticides derived from the Neem which our mothers and grandmothers have been using. The knowledge of the poor is being converted into the property of global corporations, creating a situation where the poor will have to pay for the seeds and medicines they have evolved and have used to meet their own needs for nutrition and health care."

Shiva regards biotechnology as another stage in the process of the globalization of food, which — in the name of increased production — is destroying the biodiversity essential to the health of the earth and of the poor, who rely on a wide array of native plants to meet nutritional needs. In an article titled "A Blind Approach to Blindness Prevention," she challenges the apparent benefits of "golden rice," bioengineered with genes from daffodils to create a yellow rice high in beta-carotene, used by the body to produce Vitamin A. Although widely hailed as a "miracle cure" for blindness caused by lack of Vitamin A in the diet of children in poor countries, its production is part of a process that has destroyed traditional, natural sources of the vitamin, Shiva writes. "Sources of Vitamin A in the form of green leafy vegetables are being destroyed by the Green Revolution and genetic engineering which promote the use of herbicides in agriculture."

Moreover, rice production is water-intensive, unlike the production of native greens and fruits which produce Vitamin A. And excessive Vitamin A can be harmful.

INTERVIEW

Peter Matlon is Chief of the Global Program for Food Security and Agriculture at the United Nations Development Program

Marianne Arbogast: At the recent conference on genetic engineering and the world food supply in New York, you said that the "second generation" of biotechnology has the potential to impact developing countries in positive ways. How is this second generation different?

Peter Matlon: The first generation was basically driven by demands in industrial countries, so they were focusing on crops and on traits which were most appropriate for large-scale production by capital-intensive units in the temperate zones. But more recently a great deal of work has focused on crops that are more relevant for the tropics, and for the commodities which are produced and consumed by poor people, as opposed to wealthy people in the North, and on traits that are more relevant for resource-poor farmers. So you've got a lot of work now that has been done on sweet potatoes, on plantain, on rice, on maizes that are grown by African farmers.What they're now focusing on increasingly are those traits that would be useful for those farmers who simply cannot afford input — for example, virus resistance in beans and potatoes, insect resistance that is going into maize, nutritional work that has gone into the rices and probably some of the other cereals. Some people have said, look around, biotechnology has been around for more than 10 years and it hasn't helped any poor farmers; therefore, biotechnology can never help poor farmers. It's true that they've not yet helped poor farmers, but that is only because they were applying the technologies to different crops, different traits and different environments. And it has enormous potential to help resource-poor farmers in low-income tropical countries now.

M.A.: What about the problem of control by global corporations who own the patents and are seeking to profit from genetically engineered crops?

P.M.: Intellectual property rights are a big problem right now. Well over 95 percent of all biotechnological research in agriculture is being done by large multinationals. And they control property rights not only to most of the technologies, the gene sequences that have been identified or fabricated, but they also have expanded traditional intellectual property rights protection to the processes of the research itself. The means of integrating a gene into the sequences, means of characterizing genes and so forth — that's all been patented. So if people even want to do research, they have to have these tools, and to use the tools, they have to get licenses. And so automatically the companies begin to have control over what kind of research is done and where the products go. I've read a couple of articles that have suggested that the patent agents which were assessing patents were simply overwhelmed with the new science and did not understand it, and were granting patents on things which were very questionable.

It's almost as if somebody patented the hammer, and they didn't sell the hammer, they licensed it, so every house that was built with a hammer and a nail was still owned in part by the person who came up with that hammer. It's really gotten out of control. You're not just maximizing profit; you're creating exploitive rent.

There was a case where the U.N. had invested some 6 million dollars in supporting research that was being done in Mexico at the World Center for Maize Research. It was working with African maize germ plasm, attempting to incorporate the Bt gene (actually sets of genes) so that African farmers would have less loss of maize production due to stem bores. Most of the Bt genes which were available and the processes to incorporate these genes into the germ plasm were owned by a company, and so the project got licenses for research purposes from this company. About five years into the project, when some good progress was

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being made, this company was acquired by another company. And that second company looked at all of its research licenses and decided to call some of them back in. I was reviewing this project in Mexico and while I was there we received a fax from this company saying that they're withdrawing the license, they do not want this material to go further into production stage, and we were to either send back all of the materials in which we had used their processes or incorporated their genes, or destroy it and provide proof of having destroyed it. We contacted probably the top intellectual property rights lawyer at Stanford's law school, and made it known to them that we weren't going to accept this sitting down, and we never heard anything more from them.

But we still faced the same problem in the sense that the center has a license to do the research, but it doesn't have a license to commercialize it, to have the products of that research go back to Africa to help the people they were being designed to help. This was two-and- a-half years ago, and subsequent to that, more discussions have taken place and they are working on a partnership that will enable that. But that was a case where very, very short-sighted profit motive was driving this company to completely undo five years of work.

M.A.: How do you think patent law should be changed?

P.M.: One of the things that I would take issue with is that patent law extends protection now to some 18 years. That might have made sense when there were steam engines, when it took time to get a product up and get it out. Well, the pace of technological change is so rapid now, to have an 18-year patent on a piece of biotechnology — on a process — doesn't make any sense, and instead of encouraging invention, which is the whole justification of patent law, I think today it's more likely frustrating invention, and certainly the application of the products of invention to the poor, who don't represent a very attractive market.

One of the ways that this could be overcome is through private-public partnerships, and we're seeing a lot of experimentation with that now. One way would be through what's called market segmentation; that is, where a multinational would give up the rights, give away free, pieces of its technology, in markets which are unlikely ever to compete with their major markets. For example, there's no way that Pioneer or Monsanto are ever going to be competing on yams in Africa, so you give that away. You give away biotechnology for maize among resource-poor farmers with a possible restriction that that maize can never be exported to countries that are the major markets for global trade. You make it available for subsistence crops free because there would be absolutely no competition, no reduction of profits, for the private firms. All of these devices are now being experimented with. I'm more optimistic that we'll come up with ways of borrowing technology at very low cost and applying it to crops that are useful for the very poor, than that we're going to see a revisiting of patent law.

M.A.: Is it U.S. patent law that is the relevant law, or is there some international law?

P.M.: Every country has its own patent law. Many of them mimic the U.S. patent law. But what firms can do is they take out a patent in the U.S., and they take it out in Egypt, and they take it out in Zimbabwe and so forth.

M.A.: Why would the government of a country like Zimbabwe grant a patent to a multinational corporation — just because they want them to be there?

P.M.: That's a good question. Part of it is simply that this is fairly new, and people really don't understand the implications.

M.A.: What do you think about other concerns that are raised about genetically engineered crops in developing countries — for instance, their ecological impact?

Since those who suffer from Vitamin A deficiency suffer from general malnutrition, the best approach would be to increase the food security of the poor, Shiva says.

Others, such as Peter Matlon of the U.N. Development Program [see interview, p. 11], also critique the patent system, yet believe that biotechnological innovations — liberated from the grip of global economic interests — can increase poor farmers' food security.

A December 2000 report of the E.U.– U.S. Biotechnology Consultative Forum stressed the need to look at the impact of biotechnology within the context of globalization.

"There is one global economic space, but there is no mechanism to ensure global equity," the report states. "Inequalities of capacity — lack of trained scientists, for example, or lawyers familiar with the intricacies of the international intellectual property system — perpetuate inequalities of societal wealth and well-being."

Though "we should not burden biotechnology with the full weight of these broader problems," the report argues, "we should not make decisions about biotechnology out of context. How biotechnology helps or harms the world, contributes to equity or reduces it, should be part of decision-making."

'The Great Yellow Hype'

Biotech corporations themselves appear to have heard this message, and are capitalizing on it with ad campaigns focused on the needs of the developing world.

In an article titled "The Great Yellow Hype," *New York Times* writer Michael Pollan suggests that the "unspoken challenge" in ads extolling the benefits of golden rice "is that if we don't get over our queasiness about eating genetically modified food, kids in the third world will go blind" (*NYT*, 3/4/01). Yet, he writes, "it remains to be seen whether golden rice will ever offer as much to malnourished children as it does to beleaguered biotech companies. Its real achievement may be to win an argument rather than solve a public-health problem." Even the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, which financed the initial research on golden rice, has said that "the public-rela-

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tions uses of golden rice have gone too far," Pollan reports.

Still, others cite the potential medical uses of genetic engineering as an area of tremendous promise. Scientists have already developed potatoes and tomatoes that contain a vaccine against hepatitis B, and are working on inserting an anti-diarrhea gene into bananas, according to a story in *Science & Spirit* magazine (1-2/01). Such vaccines would be significantly less expensive and easier to store and distribute, advocates say. They would eliminate the risk of disease transmission through contaminated needles, and would offer a medical advantage by promoting the formation of antibodies in the intestinal tract.

Other ethical issues

Genetic engineering of food raises a host of other ethical issues. Animal welfare advocates point to ailments developed by animals who were bred with genes from other species (not to mention the huge numbers of animals subjected to biotechnological experimental research), and vegetarians do not want flounder genes in their tomatoes.

There are many, like Craig Winters, who question whether biotechnology represents an irreverent and ignorant tinkering with the sacred and complex processes of life. Many others object to the power of profit-driven corporations to make decisions that could have major, unforeseen impacts on the health of the earth and its people. And many are intuitively repelled by the idea of anyone holding patents on forms of life.

"This technology's not going to go away," Allison Snow says. "You can't un-invent all these things that people have discovered about genetic engineering. So the question is how fast should it proceed and how should it be used wisely for the public good?"

While others would debate whether it should proceed at all, and argue that "wise use" of biotechnology is a contradiction in terms, it is undeniable that the challenges posed by genetic engineering are here to stay. ●

Detroiter ***Marianne Arbogast*** *is associate editor of* The Witness.

P.M.: I would have four recommendations. First, there is a need for increased research on the environmental impacts of biotechnology. What are the risks? How does one manage these risks? I say that not because any large-scale damage has been done — not even small-scale damage has been done. There's very little evidence that any damage has been done to date. But it is true that we don't fully understand these complex ecosystems, and what the long-term ramifications might be. So, despite the fact that six national academies of science — the U.S., U.K., Brazil, India, China and Mexico — have basically said they've looked at the environmental risks and didn't find any convincing evidence of damage, they did call for more research to better understand this.

The second recommendation is to build the capacities in developing countries themselves in biotechnology applications and in developing biosafety systems. If we can build the capacity in developing countries in applying these tools, then they don't have to depend upon the multinationals, they can develop products themselves that really fit their consumers and their producers. They also need to have biosafety regimes put in. Very few developing countries have biosafety regimes in place, and those that do don't have the capacity to implement them very effectively.

The third recommendation would be to increase investment in public research generally, particularly among the international agricultural research centers whose mandate is to produce global public goods. They do not seek any profit, they do research on crops for the poor. If we could increase their funding, then they would be able to do much more of the upstream research and develop new processes and identify new genes and actually do some of the genetic modification themselves, and make these products available free to developing countries.

And the fourth recommendation would be to increase the access by public research institutions to the biotechnology products and processes that are coming from the private sector — through public-private partnerships, market segmentation, revisiting patent law — and to come up with a new paradigm of enabling public research, particularly in developing countries, to get access to private-sector products and processes.

The problem is that funding generally has declined for agricultural research over the last 10 to 15 years, and that trend has got to turn around. If it doesn't we're just going to continue our dependence on the private sector in the North and, frankly, a lot of potential benefits will never be realized.

M.A.: Why has the research funding declined?

P.M.: Well, there's been a decrease in public funding of all development over the last 10 years in the U.S. and in Europe. Part of it's donor fatigue; part of it's just the belief that the private sector can provide the solution; part of it is frustration with the political and financial mismanagement in developing countries themselves. So despite the fact that we've got an incredible surplus, despite the fact that we've gotten the benefits from the Cold War being over, those funds are not being used for development purposes. And then, within development funding itself, there's been a declining share going into agriculture. In large part that's because, perhaps, the research done in the past has been too successful; we don't have a global food security problem, we've got more than enough food. The problem is it's being produced in the wrong countries, and probably the wrong crops. So there's more than enough food in the world to feed everybody, but that doesn't help a very poor farmer in Uganda or in Zimbabwe or in Nigeria who can't keep his family well-fed because he's not producing sufficiently. He doesn't have the income to buy surplus wheat from Argentina or Australia or the U.S. or Canada. So what we're arguing is, sure, you don't have a global food security problem, but you do have a lot of people who are food-insecure because they're in poverty. And if they happen to be farmers, then give them the means of increasing their income, and the best way of doing that is to increase their productivity, reduce their losses. And that, I think, is one of the promises of biotechnology. ●

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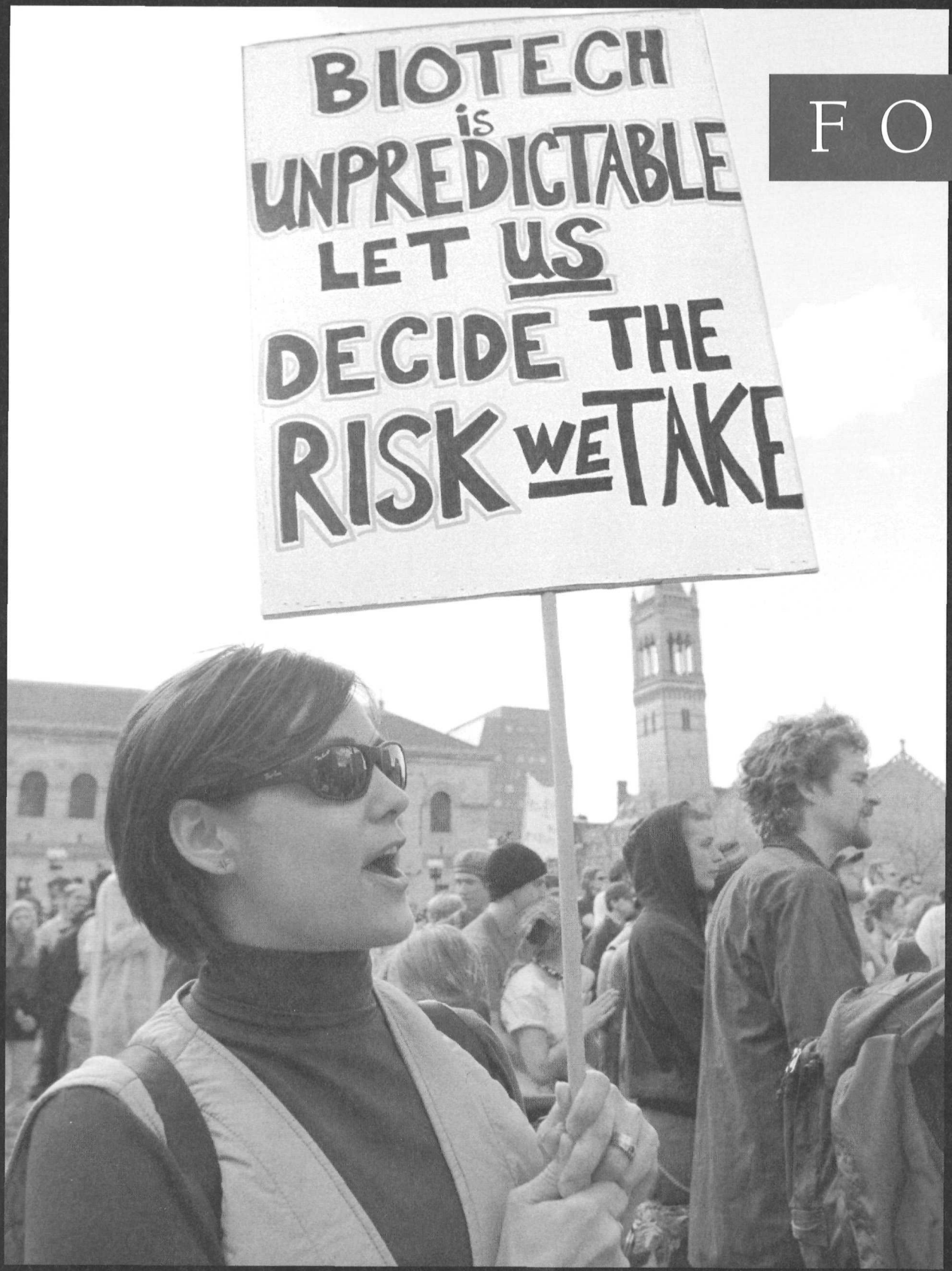

FOOD

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BIOTECHNOLOGY

Whose values, whose decisions?

by Marion Nestle

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MY TRAINING is in molecular biology and perhaps for that reason I spend much of my time explaining food biotechnology to the public, and public perceptions of food biotechnology to scientists. On a superficial level, public perceptions are easy to explain. Surveys of consumer attitudes about food biotechnology date back to the mid-1980s; I have copies of the results of more than 20 such surveys, at least five from 2000. Some academics have constructed careers by asking people what they think about the topic, but I do not find the survey results very interesting. For one thing, the surveys all produce similar results. They report that, in theory, people believe that biotechnology can do good things for them and the world, but:

They don't understand the science,
They are afraid of science and biotechnology,
They don't trust the industry, and
They don't trust government regulators.

I do not view these results as surprising or inconsistent. The surveys are superficial because they do not address the underlying problem — that of Two Cultures. In his famous lecture on Two Cultures, C.P. Snow was referring to scientists versus humanists. He described "the gulf of mutual incomprehension" that separates people who think like scientists from people who don't, but with respect to food biotechnology, the gulf of mutual incomprehension seems especially wide.

When scientists talk about food biotechnology, they mention technical problems, safety and far-off visions of what the technology can do for the world's food supply. So do food biotechnology companies. This rhetoric is usually expressed as: "Biotechnology — and only biotechnology — can help the world produce the food necessary to meet the population needs of the 21st century."

Reality measured against rhetoric

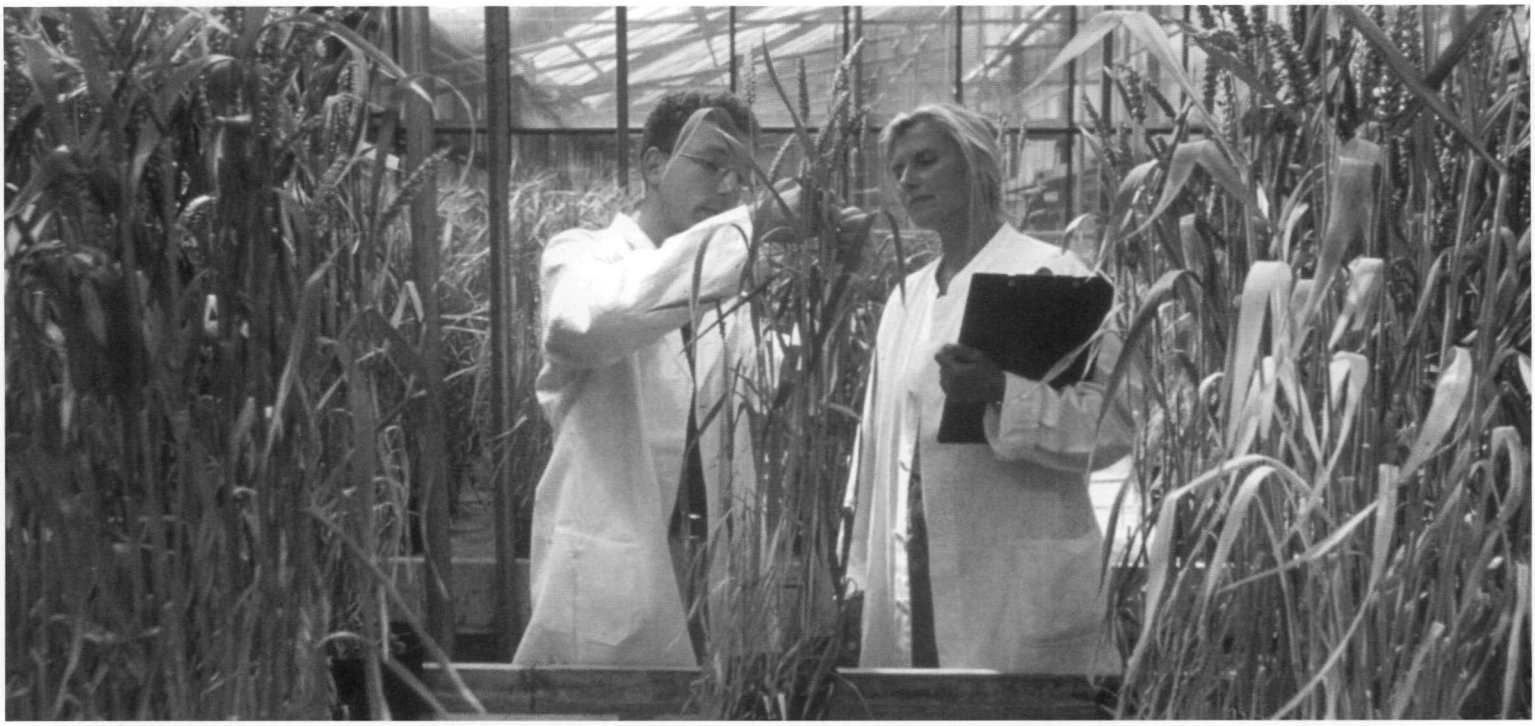
The rhetoric raises two sets of issues other than safety, although both sets bear on it.

The first set of issues has to do with the reality as opposed to the rhetoric: what the industry actually produces and who actually benefits. Food biotechnology in the U.S. began with Bovine Somatotropin, Bt Corn, and Roundup Ready soybeans, all of which have agronomic traits that provide demonstrable benefits for growers. Next, the industry produced foods with processing traits. The tomato with the reversed gene for ripening is the best example of such foods. Such traits produce demonstrable benefits for processors.

Only now is the industry beginning to develop foods with quality attributes such as improved nutrient content that might produce some benefit for consumers. The "poster child" for quality attributes is the Golden Rice enriched with beta-carotene that has received so much favorable publicity. It's been created, but is not yet on the market. I will have more to say about this rice shortly. At the moment, the public does not have much to gain from the genetically engineered foods that are available — not in price, not in nutritional benefit, and not in convenience — nor are people generally aware of evidence for benefits to the environment or to people in developing countries. The "utility" issue fully explains why people did not protest recombinant insulin and other drugs or cheese enzymes — most were demonstrably superior in quality and price to the products previously available.

Science: only one value system among many

The second kind of issue has to do with what I consider to be belief systems or ethical systems. Most non-scientists of my acquaintance view science as only one of a



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People may not understand science very well, but everyone knows when they are being disrespected.

number of value or ethical systems, any one of which might have equal if not greater validity, worth and importance. I can identify at least seven (somewhat overlapping) categories of such systems related to food biotechnology — not necessarily in order of importance.

1. Animal rights — This is a belief system that views as wrong such actions as injecting recombinant bovine somatotropin into cows in order to force them to make more milk.

2. Religion — This belief system is the one that led Prince Charles to say that he thought bioengineered foods took "mankind into realms that belong to God, and to God alone."

3. Morality — This category explains why people are concerned about the insertion of animal genes into plants, flounder genes into strawberries, and genes for human antithrombin into goats. The people I talk to cannot always justify why such actions do not feel right to them, but they clearly do not.

4. Natural laws — This category is analogous to religious values but it is secular; food biotechnology in some way violates the laws of nature. Questions about biodiversity, monoculture, and the monarch butterfly derive from this value system.

5. Social values — This belief system encompasses concerns about the effects of corporate agriculture on rural America, not only the effects of pollution on the environment, but also the emptying out of small towns as farm labor becomes more mechanized — the role of agriculture in American society.

6. Economic values — This value system views the effects of corporate agriculture from an economic standpoint and encompasses concerns about the the accelerating loss of small farms and small businesses throughout rural America.

Last, but certainly not least, is:

7. Globalization — This category reflects concerns about control of the food supply by faceless and unaccountable multinational corporations and is the one that led to protests against the World Trade Association in Seattle and against biotechnology companies in Boston.

All of these categories reflect the overriding feeling that food biotechnology corporations control decisions that are not necessarily in the public interest. Note that none refers directly to human or environmental safety. When people do talk about safety issues, I think that they really mean them as proxies for one or another of the seven

value systems I have just mentioned; people talk about safety because they have to. Scientists, federal regulators and — most of all — the biotechnology companies have dismissed value and ethical considerations out of hand and simply will not permit them to be discussed. Safety is the only issue that scientists, government officials and industry will permit for debate.

Safety issues — and rage

I saw this exclusion of other considerations during the time Joan Gussow and I served on the FDA Food Advisory Committee. In discussing whether or not the FDA should approve use of cow growth hormone, our committee was prohibited from considering anything other than human safety issues. Effects of the hormone on cows or on small dairy farms were irrelevant to the FDA's mandate and were excluded from the debate.

In my view, the narrowing of the discussion to safety issues has had two distinct effects. The first is to induce rage. I see people become furious when scientists tell them that science is truth, the products are safe, and nothing else matters. And scientists — particularly those working for biotech companies — make such assertions all the time. I have heard the head of one leading food biotechnology company say, "All we have to do to gain public support for food biotechnology is to educate the public that our products are safe." Such statements are shocking even to the heads of competing biotechnology companies. As I heard one of them say, "If I had your job, I'd resign."

People may not understand science very well, but everyone knows when they are being disrespected. Public response to assurances of safety is one of profound disbelief. And why shouldn't it be? People feel as though they are being experimented on, and they don't trust the experimenters — or their defenders — to be acting in the public interest.

The second effect of restricting the argument to food safety has been to focus attention on safety issues. People say: "Okay. You don't want to hear my concerns about animal rights, God's will and globalization? You only want to talk about safety? Fine. We'll talk safety. Let's talk about unintended consequences (witness tryptophan supplements), toxins, allergies, superweeds, Bt resistance, antibiotic resistance and — oh yes — monarch butterflies." Not one of these issues might make a scientist nervous — all are probable, but remote — but they contain just enough of a grain of truth to fuel debate and to discredit the credibility of any scientist or regulator who dismisses such concerns out of hand.

The passion that underlies the debates about safety, in my view, derives from the lack of opportunity to discuss the value and ethical implications of food biotechnology in a situation in which 50 percent of American soybeans and 35 percent of American corn grown last year was genetically modified. The public wants to talk about what those enormous percentages mean for them as individuals and a society. If all of this reminds scientists of arguments over nuclear power and irradiation, it should; the issues are quite similar and have to do mainly with who gets to make the decisions.

A basis for dialogue?

So, what is to be done? I think it's too late for easy solutions, but I do have some suggestions for steps that might help establish a basis for dialogue.

The industry needs to bring the rhetoric in line with reality and start producing useful products. I am not convinced that the beta-carotene rice is the best example — there are too many concerns about its cost, cultural acceptability, and bioavailability, let alone those related to the unbalanced use of beta-carotene itself. To explain: Beta-carotene is a precursor of vitamin A, not the vitamin itself; it must be split into two equal parts to be active. This requires an enzyme which, in turn, requires adequate protein in the diet. It also must be absorbed; both the vitamin and its precursor are fat-soluble, meaning that they require fat from the diet to be absorbed. Absorption also requires an intact, functioning digestive tract which also requires a diet adequate in calories and essential nutrients. Thus, it is not enough just to supply beta-carotene because its use requires a generally adequate diet, a clean water supply (so the digestive tract does not become infected), and money to buy the rice — all in short supply in countries where vitamin A is most deficient.

The industry must label its products. I've been on record since 1992 as saying that I think the companies were making a big mistake — what others have called collosal stupidity — when they opposed labeling. They are now paying the price in public suspicion, as are the regulatory agencies that went along with them. That is why the FDA is now playing "catch-up" and attempting to implement a voluntary labeling system. I say "catch-up" because we already have GM labeling: The supermarkets already sell products labeled "no-GMO" and "GM-free" and more are coming out all the time. Disclosure is a necessary first step in reassuring people that the industry isn't trying to hide something. Furthermore, the industry's argument that we should only label products, not processes, simply doesn't hold. The FDA permits process labeling — for example, irradiated, previously frozen, made from concentrate, and organic. All set a precedent for process disclosure.

My last is for scientists: I think scientists need to learn how to talk about science to the public. If scientists can't explain the technology in ways that anyone can grasp, they cannot expect people to believe a word they say.

It is critically important that scientists understand that not everyone values hypothesis-driven investigations and that many other values influence public views of biotechnology. Until people feel as though they have some control over what they eat, they are unlikely to respect the industry. The industry needs to respect such views as a basis for bridging the gulf between the Two Cultures and opening up avenues for more constructive debate. ●

Marion Nestle is professor and chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University. She presented this piece in a workshop at the January 2001 conference on Genetic Engineering and Food for the World sponsored by the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Episcopal Church's Faith Ethics, Science and Technology Committee.

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CONTRIBUTING TO

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THE WEB OF LIFE?

An ethics of food biotechnology

by Jeff Golliher

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HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH respond to information passed on by the Union of Concerned Scientists that in supermarkets today, corn tortilla chips may contain genetic material from fireflies, that potato chips may contain material from chicken, apple juice from silk moths, or veggie burgers from petunias? Without claiming specialized scientific expertise, is there a basis on which the church should be concerned? The answer is yes.

A hunger — and ecological — crisis

With the introduction of biogenetically modified crops into the global food system, a great deal is at stake for every living being, especially for the 800 million malnourished people who go hungry every day. Projected rates of future population growth will make this tragic figure even more severe. Increased food production and more efficient, cost-effective agricultural practices might be partial solutions to the worldwide hunger crisis. This is especially so in marginal areas where the land has been degraded and monetary and technological resources available for irrigation are scarce. In a technological extension of the Green Revolution of the 1970s, corporate promoters of genetically modified foods have made feeding the world their goal. This claim ignores the fact that today enough food is produced already to meet everyone's needs, at least minimally. So, it's not basically a question of quantity. Solutions to the food crisis are rooted as much in distributing existing food supplies equitably as they are in producing more crops.

The fact that equitable distribution is largely ignored while the genetic modification of plant crops is actively pursued points to less altruistic factors at work in agribusiness — the control of global markets in order to maximize profits. Public relations campaigns that proclaim the corporate mission of feeding the world, designed to ease the public's mind about the safety of genetically modified foods, divert attention from the deeper ecological issues involved and delay real solutions to the problem. For example, developing nations desperately need agricultural systems that are locally self-sufficient, rather than dependent on global agribusiness. Even if adequate land, water, energy and technological resources exist to support the development of large-scale agriculture, the consumers themselves would not have enough money to buy the food it promises. To make matters worse, people often do not have access to the land they need to support sustainable livelihoods, while the land itself is under the severe pressure of environmental degradation. As churches and governments grapple with difficult ethical decisions about the use of genetically modified foods in the years ahead, we must consider the primary ecological picture on which agriculture depends. The impoverishment of people is directly related to the impoverishment of the earth. In actuality, the food crisis is part of the ecological crisis, and the way the debate about genetic engineering takes place turns our attention from this most fundamental reality of our time.

The depth of the ecological crisis goes beyond our customary ways of thinking, and this has contributed to the making of the crisis itself. While ecology, a science of living systems, is relatively new, it provides a broad, holistic perspective on the earth as a web of life. The science of ecology and the ecological crisis challenge what we know and how we know it — about the relationship between facts and values, science and religion; about morality, justice and conscience, as well as non-violence and prayer, as ways of knowing and being. Issues of food and new biogenetic technologies cannot be adequately understood through the lens of a divided worldview — one that sees ecology and people as somehow different, separable areas of life.

The precautionary principle, food security and food safety

The debate about the testing, regulation and labeling of genetically modified foods is shaped primarily by the precautionary principle. The meaning of this principle is best understood in light of the Hippocratic oath which says, "First, do no harm."

School by Dan Burkholder

This is a good ethical standard related, I believe, to the principle of non-violence that has deep roots in spiritual traditions. The legal defense of basic human rights and consumer protection often depends on the precautionary principle and, for that reason, it should be affirmed and strengthened.

However, given the state of the global ecological crisis, the precautionary principle alone is not enough. We must also ask what contribution genetically modified foods and the industry that produces them are making to the web of life. Given the state of the planet, if we're not making things better, then we are probably making things worse.

Together with the precautionary principle, "food security" and "food safety" are two major concerns behind ongoing debates about the labeling of genetically modified foods. "Food security" refers to the goal of providing nutritious food for everyone, especially people who are hungry.

From a scientific standpoint, a food is considered safe if it does not violate the genetic integrity of organisms and ecosystems with regard to the flow of genetic information. A naturally occurring plant would resist genetic material from other biological species, for example, but not from plants of its own species. Biologically safe foods would not threaten food security in the ecological sense — the integrity of the food supply or of ecosystems that support it would not be compromised. So the crucial question is this: Could the modified genetic material of a plant "escape" into the larger ecosystems, and if so, would it be harmful? These are questions for which the scientific and agribusiness communities do not have assuring answers.

The claim that genetically modified foods are biologically safe is potentially misleading: Those foods are already the result of the compromised integrity of genetic material. Certainly, the assumption that they are safe is based on a contradiction, at least in our conventional use of language. The most obvious case here, which was discussed by Michael Pollan in *The New York Times*, is the New Leaf potato which includes the Bt gene as a pesticide. Is it a potato or a pesticide or both?

Owning life?

The genetic material of nature has been the common heritage of human civilization for 10,000 or more years, and the different ways that cultures have understood, classified, and used the web of life for survival is the most fundamental kind of sacred knowledge. The moral significance of patenting and "owning" forms of life are monumental issues here. Equally important is the issue of simply being able to know the names of plants and animals, their characteristics and properties, and how they interact in ecosystems. Human engineering along these lines is not something that amounts to a technological discovery alone; it reaches into the sacred itself. The precise moment in human history when we would most want people to reawaken their appreciation of the natural diversity which is the web of life is definitely not the time to introduce more hubris in our attempt to remake it.

The genetic modification of food, as well as new biotechnologies generally, has carried the marketplace at a pace far beyond the reach of effective governance, which in minimal, practical terms means regulation and labeling. But this is not really the major issue. Genetically modified food represents a development within our culture that still degrades and even destroys the web of life of which we are all a part. It will make little difference that regulatory principles and food labels issue the proper warning if the institutions driving the system are taking us in the wrong direction.

Think of it in terms of the increasing dependence of farmers on seeds owned and patented by global corporations. This amounts to the consolidation of power on the basis of genetic information within the seed itself. Increased pressure on indigenous, traditional and rural people toward industrial, monocultural production, and dependence on the corporations that govern it, means the loss of the cultural knowledge we need the most: the knowledge of biodiversity conservation by the people who practice it and know first-hand how local ecosystems work. The kind of knowledge most highly valued by the industrial system is knowledge of large-scale production. This has the unintended impact of destroying biodiversity and subsuming small-scale farmers and traditional communities into the market system. Marginalized peoples often do want this new knowledge; it might and sometimes does really help in the short-term, but they, like everyone else, are still caught within the same overall dynamic of choosing a course of action that leads in a destructive direction in the long-term.

It is, no doubt, very difficult for lawmakers to conceive of effective governance and regulation when the cultural and economic processes involved relate primarily to the maximization of profits and the control of a planetary marketplace.

Sacred knowledge

Some of the most basic questions about the relationship between people and the environment, stewardship and caring for the earth are at stake here — questions that the church has recently rediscovered in the last 20 years or so. The fact that here we are talking about a new technology as it relates to the food system makes the ecological significance of these questions all the more pertinent, because it is through food that we survive, and even more so, it is how God cares for us through the web of life.

All this leads us in the direction of radically reconsidering what sacred knowledge actually is. In the broad sweep of history, at least until the modern era, human knowledge has been holistically integrated to the extent that its overall purpose has been to maintain the web of ecological relationships that make human life possible and meaningful.

It is interesting and very revealing about the state of our ethical sensitivity, collectively, that only in the last 10 years, some scientists have engaged in a very serious debate about whether traditional indigenous peoples actually have ecological

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knowledge. Much of the debate has been tragically distorted by stereotypic examples of indigenous peoples who may not respect the environment. Nevertheless, the debate as a whole has been equally distorted by racist images equivalent to the 19th-century, pseudo-evolutionary view that so-called "primitive" peoples do not have true religion. Terms such as paganism, animism, and so on were coined by the leading intellectuals of the time to categorize so-called "primitive peoples" as something less than spiritual. It was all part of the political and economic machinery of racism. Not much has changed, except today this political and economic machinery is being carried out in terms of science, food and ecological knowledge. Who really knows about ecosystems and how they work? Do we? By their fruits, you shall know them. But more to the point: Who really has the knowledge to feed people sustainably?

Traditional peoples do; organic farmers do. And the fact is that large, global corporations have the resources to do things on a very large scale. A coming together of the two, based on economically just partnerships, would be a really good idea. It would mean setting aside implicitly racist colonial attitudes and recognizing that the ecological crisis is real for everyone. For the church, this means deepening our faith in God by affirming and acting on loyalty not to economic institutions as our first impulse, but to the web of life. ●

Jeff Golliher is Canon for Environmental Justice and Community Development at New York's Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and Program Consultant for the Environment with the Anglican Observer to the United Nations. This piece is adapted from a paper Golliher presented at the January 2001 conference on Genetic Engineering and Food for the World sponsored by the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Episcopal Church's Committee on Faith Ethics, Science and Technology.

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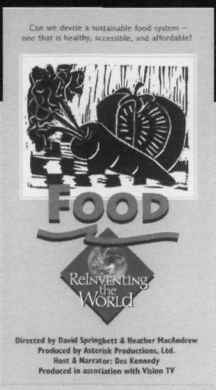
REVIEW



by Jay McDaniel

FOOD

(A video directed by David Springbett and Heather MacAndrew; produced by Asterisk Productions in association with Vision TV; Grades 7-12, College.)

AS JESUS BROKE BREAD with disciples before his death, we can assume that the bread was made by someone he or his disciples knew, and that its grains were grown and harvested by someone in the immediate area of Jerusalem. We might even fantasize that he and his disciples gave thanks, not only to God, but also to the grower, the breadmaker, and the earth itself, which was the source of the grain. Their simple act of communion would then have been an occasion for them to feel close, not only to God, but also to other people and to the soil from which all life emerges. Through their thankfulness, God would truly have been present in the bread.

In our time it would be very difficult to have this kind of supper. After all, most of us do not know the growers and breadmakers. As we hold a piece of store-bought bread in our hands, we do not know the origins of the grains, what they were fertilized and sprayed with, how long they were stored, and how they were transported to the grocery store where we bought them. We do not know what the transporters were paid or how much oil-based fuel was used in the transportation.

Equally problematic, many of us are not troubled by this. If we are inordinately busy, we find it more convenient to buy food from the grocery store, or from fast-food restaurants, than to grow and prepare it. We tell ourselves that we are too busy "getting things done."

Asterisk Productions has produced a 50-minute video that can help change our minds. The film is called *Food*, and it is part of Asterisk's "Reinventing the World" series. It features fascinating and hopeful examples of local communities in Brazil and Canada that have reclaimed the joys of locally grown and locally produced food, along with equally interesting interviews with food activists such as Frances Moore Lappe, author of *Diet for a Small Planet* and Rod MacRae, author of *Food for a Change*. In the course of these examples and interviews, the film asks:

How did we come to believe that how food looks is more important than how it tastes and whether it is nutritious?

How did the food become a commodity in consumer society, rather than a right?

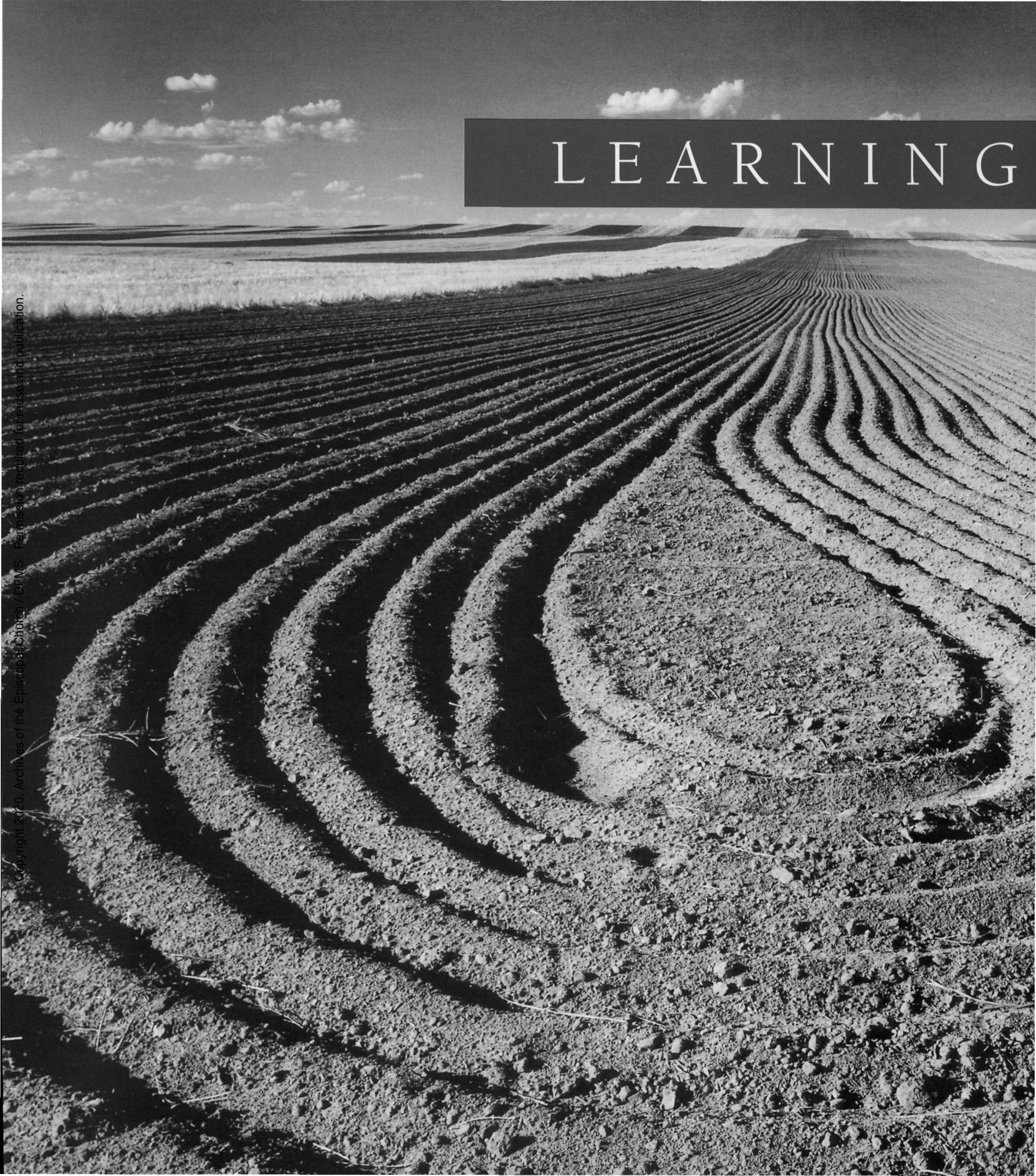
Why are there so many hungry people in the world, when there is enough food to go around?

How can the current food system be changed, globally and locally, so that healthy and affordable food is available to everyone?

In the latter regard, *Food* proposes that the needed changes depend on public policy alternatives at a governmental level, but also on consumer-driven changes that support local farmers. The latter include our support of (1) community-supported agriculture, in which citizens in communities buy from local farmers, sharing the risks and enjoying the product; (2) farmers' markets; and (3) business enterprises, such as one in Canada, where independent suppliers of food bring local products to the home.

For those who find food a sacrament and want to recover their connections with one another and the earth, this film can be a helpful educational resource. It can be used in adult classes in religious education, in the college classroom, and in study groups oriented toward a more just and sustainable world. In a world now driven by corporate power, *Food* might help us rediscover the wisdom of breaking bread together and including the poor and powerless in our communion. ●

Witness *contributing editor* ***Jay McDaniel*** *is author of* Living from the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism *(Chalice Press, St. Louis, 2000).* Food *can be obtained by contacting Bullfrog Films (Box 149, Oley, PA 19547; 610-779-8226; <www.bullfrogfilms.com>).*



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Providing food, shelter and energy without degrading the planet

by Scott Russell Sanders

IN SALINA, KANSAS, first thing in the morning on the last day of October, not much is stirring except pickup trucks and rain. Pumpkins balanced on porch railings gleam in the streetlights. Scarecrows and skeletons loom in yards out front of low frame houses. Tonight the children of Salina will troop from door to door in costumes, begging candy. But this morning, only a few of their grandparents cruise the wet streets in search of breakfast.

In the diner where I come to rest, the average age of the customers is around 70 and the talk is mainly about family, politics and prices. Beef sells for less than the cost of raising it. There's a glut of soybeans and wheat. More local farmers have fallen sick from handling those blasted chemicals. More have gone bankrupt.

When a waitress in a leopard suit arrives to take an order from the booth next to mine, a portly man greets her by complaining that Halloween has turned out wet. "It's a true upset to me," the man says. "Last year I had 200 children ring my bell." The waitress calls him honey and sympathizes.

An older woman bustles in from the street, tugs a scarf from her helmet of white curls and declares to everyone in the diner, "Who says it can't rain in Kansas?"

At the counter, a woman wearing a sweatshirt emblazoned with three bears swivels around on her stool. "Oh, it rains every once in a while," she replies, "and when it does, look out!"

Here in the heart of Kansas, where tallgrass prairie gives way to midgrass, about 29 inches of water fall every year, enough to keep the pastures thick and lure farmers into planting row-crops. Like farmers elsewhere, they spray pesticides and herbicides, spread artificial fertilizer, and irrigate in dry weather. They plow and plant and harvest using heavy machinery that runs on petroleum. They do everything the land-grant colleges and agribusinesses tell them to do and still many of them go broke. And every year, from every plowed acre in Kansas, an average of two to eight tons of topsoil wash away. The streams near Salina carry rich dirt and troubling chemicals into the Missouri River, then to the Mississippi and eventually to the Gulf of Mexico.

Industrial agriculture puts food on our tables and on the tables of much of the rest of the world. But the land and farmers pay a terrible price and so do all the species that depend on the land, including us.

I've come to Salina to speak with a man who's seeking a radical remedy for all of that — literally radical, one that goes back to the roots, of plants and of agriculture. Over the past six or eight years I've bumped into Wes Jackson several times at gatherings of folks who worry about the earth's future, but this is my first visit to his home ground. Wes has been here since 1976, when he and his then-wife, Dana, founded the Land Institute, a place devoted to finding out how we can provide food, shelter and energy without degrading the planet. He won a MacArthur fellowship in 1992 for his efforts, and he has begun to win support in the scientific community for a revolutionary approach to farming that he calls perennial polyculture — crops intermingled in a field that is never plowed, because the plants grow back on their own every year. The goal of this grand experiment is to create a form of agriculture that, like a prairie, runs entirely on sunlight and rain.

To reach the Land Institute, I drive past grain silos lined up in rows like the columns of a great cathedral; they are lit this early morning by security lights, their tops barely distinguishable from the murky sky. I drive past warehouses, truck stops, motels, fast-food emporiums, lots full of RVs and modular homes; past a clump of sunflowers blooming in a fence-corner at the turn-off for Wal-Mart; past filling stations where gas sells for 85 cents a gallon. The windshield wipers can't

Wheatfield, Yoder, WY, by Don Kirby

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The Land Institute

Wes Jackson displays experimental prairie crops at the Land Institute outside Salina, Kansas.

We hammer the soil, Jackson says, and then put it on life support.

keep up with the rain.

When pavement gives way to gravel, I pass a feedlot where a hundred or so cattle stand in mud and lap grain from troughs. Since entering Kansas, I've seen billboards urging everyone to eat more beef, but the sight of these animals wallowing in a churned-up rectangle of mud does not stimulate my appetite. The feedlot is enclosed by electrified wire strung on crooked fence posts made from Osage orange trees. In a hedgerow nearby, living Osage oranges have begun to drop their yellow fruits, which are the size of grapefruits but with a bumpy surface like that of the human brain. After the road crosses the Smoky Hill River, it leaves the flat bottomland, where bright green shoots of alfalfa and winter wheat sprout from dirt the color of chocolate, then climbs up onto a rolling prairie, where the Land Institute occupies 370 acres.

Wes Jackson meets me in the yellow brick house that serves for an office. It's easy to believe he played football at Kansas Wesleyan, because he's a burly man, with a broad, outdoor face leathered by sun and a full head of steel-gray hair. Although he'll soon be able to collect Social Security, he looks a decade younger. He wears a flannel shirt the shade of mulberries, blue jeans, and black leather boots that have quite a few miles on them. For a man who thinks we've been farming the wrong way for about 10,000 years, he laughs often and delights in much. He also talks readily and well, with a prairie drawl acquired while growing up on a farm in the Kansas River Valley, over near Topeka.

"I'm glad you found your way all right," he says. "Can't hide a thing out here on the

prairie, but you'd be surprised at the people who get lost."

When I admit to having asked directions at a station that advertised gas for 85 cents a gallon, he tells me, "The price of gasoline is a symptom of our capacity for denial. We pay for gas based on how much of it is above ground, not how much is left below. We ignore its real scarcity."

Wes and I sit at the kitchen table while coffee perks, a copy machine on one side of us, a wood stove on the other. The walls are lined with shelves bearing jars full of seeds. Every now and again I ask a question, but mainly I listen. Wes talks in a voice as big as he is, all the while fixing me with a steady gaze through wire-rimmed spectacles, to make sure I'm following.

He points out that our whole economy rides on cheap oil, which he calls "fossil sunlight," and nowhere is this dependence more evident that in agriculture. Natural gas is the raw material for anhydrous ammonia, which farmers spread on fields to compensate for the loss of natural fertility. We hammer the soil, he says, then put it on life support. We replace draft horses and hand labor with diesel-powered machines. We replace the small-scale farming of mixed crops with vast plantations of single crops, usually hybrids, which are so poorly adapted that we have to protect them from weeds and pests with heavy doses of petroleum-based poisons.

While cheap oil has accelerated our journey down the wrong path, we set out on that path long before we discovered the convenience of fossil sunlight, according to Wes. Our ancestors made the key mistake at the very beginnings of agriculture, when they started digging up the fields and baring the soil. The great river civilizations along the Tigris, Euphrates, Ganges, and Nile could get away with that for a while, since floods kept bringing in fresh dirt. But as populations expanded and tillage crept out of the river bottoms into the hills, the soil began to wash away.

"The Neolithic farmers began mining ecological capital," he explains. "That was the true Fall, worse than anything poor Eve might have done."

Wes knows his Bible, and he draws from history and philosophy and literature as easily as from plant genetics, the field in which he earned his Ph.D. at North Carolina State. At one point he quotes a famous phrase from the prophet Isaiah, then questions whether we're actually better off beating swords into plowshares. Wes is wary of swords, but also wary of plows. Where our ancestors went wrong, he believes, was in choosing to cultivate annual crops, which have to be planted each year in newly turned soil. The choice is understandable, since annual plants take hold more quickly and bear more abundantly than perennials do, and our ancestors had no way of measuring the long-term consequences of all that digging and tilling.

But what's the alternative? How else can we feed ourselves? Wes takes me outside to look at the radically different model for agriculture that he's been studying for more than 20 years — the native prairie. Because the rain hasn't let up, we drive a short distance along the road in his battered Toyota pickup, then pass through a gate and go jouncing onto an 80-acre stretch of prairie that's never been plowed. The rusty, swaying stalks of big bluestem wave higher than the windshield. The shorter stalks of little bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass brush against the fenders. We stop on the highest ridge and roll down the windows so rain blows on our faces and we gaze across a rippling, sensuous landscape, all rounded flanks and shadowy crevices.

"This would be a fine spot for the Second Coming," Wes murmurs. After a pause he adds, "Not that we need saving here in Kansas."

The grasses are like a luxurious covering of fur, tinted copper and silver and gold. In spring or summer this place would be fiercely green and spangled with flowers, vibrant with butterflies and songbirds. Now, in the fall, Wes reports, it's thick with pheasant, quail and wild turkey. He and his colleagues don't harvest seeds here, but they do burn the prairie once every two or three years, and they keep it grazed with Texas longhorns, whose bellows we can hear now and again over the purr of engine and rain. Eventually the cattle will give way to bison, a species better adapted to these grasslands. From the pickup, we can see a few bison browsing on a neighbor's land, their shaggy coats dark with rain.

In every season the prairie is lovely beyond words. It supports a wealth of wildlife, resists diseases and pests, holds water, recycles fibers, fixes nitrogen, builds soil. And it achieves all of that while using only sunlight, air, snow, and rain. If we hope to achieve as much in our agriculture, Wes argues, then we'd better study how the prairie works. Not just the Kansas prairie, but every one we know about elsewhere, works by combining four basic types of perennial plants — warm-season grasses, cool-season grasses, legumes and sunflowers — all growing back year after year from the roots. The soil is never laid bare. The prairie survives droughts and floods and insects and pathogens because the long winnowing process of evolution has adapted the plant communities to local conditions.

"The earth is an ecological mosaic," Wes explains. "We're only beginning to recognize the powers inherent in local adaptation."

If you wish to draw on that natural wisdom in agriculture, he tells me as we drive toward the greenhouse, then here in Kansas you need to mimic the structure of the prairie. It's all the more crucial a model, he figures, because at least 70 percent of the calories that humans eat come directly or indirectly from grains and all our grains started as wild grasses.

For nearly a quarter-century, Wes and his colleagues have been working to develop what he calls perennial polyculture — as opposed to the annual monoculture of traditional farming — by experimenting with mixtures of wild plants. Recently they've focused on Illinois bundleflower, a nitrogen-fixing legume whose seed is about 38 percent protein; Leymus, a mammoth wild rye; eastern gama grass, a bunchgrass that's related to corn but is three times as rich in protein; and Maximilian sandflower, a plen-

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tiful source of oil.

In the sweet-smelling greenhouse, we find seeds from these and other plants drying in paper bags clipped to lines with clothespins. The bags are marked so as to identify the plots outside where the seeds were gathered; each plot represents a distinct ecological community. Over the years, researchers at the Land Institute have experimented with hundreds of combinations, seeking to answer four fundamental questions, which Wes recited for me in a near-shout as rain hammers down on the greenhouse roof: Can perennial grains, which invest so much in roots, also produce high yields of seed? Can perennial species yield more when planted in combination with other species, as on the prairie, than when planted alone? Can a perennial polyculture meet its own needs for nitrogen? Can it adequately manage weeds and insects and disease?

So far, Wes believes, they can answer a tentative yes to all those questions. For example, his daughter Laura, now a professor of biology at the University of Northern Iowa, has identified a mutant strain of eastern gama grass whose seed production is four times greater than normal — without any corresponding loss of root mass or vigor.

More and more scientists are now testing this approach. After returning home from Salina, I'll contact Stephen Jones at Washington State University, a plant geneticist who is developing perennial forms of wheat suited to the dry soils of his region. I'll correspond with a colleague of Jones's at Washington State, John Reganold, a professor of soil science who predicts that with these design-by-nature methods, "soil quality will significantly improve — better structure, more organic matter, increased biological activity and thicker topsoil." I'll learn about efforts in the Philippines to develop perennial forms of rice. I'll speak with the director of the plant-biotechnology program at the University of Georgia, Andrew Paterson, who is also experimenting with perennial grains. I'll contact Stuart Pimm at the University of Tennessee, a conservation biologist who has reported in the journal *Nature* on Land Institute experiments that show that mixtures of wild plants not only rival monocultures in productivity but also inhibit weeds and resist pathogens while building fertility.

I'll contact all those people, and more, after returning home from Salina. But right now I'm listening to the fervent voice of Wes Jackson, who's lamenting that the U.S. loses 2 billion tons of topsoil a year to erosion. The cost of that — in pollution of waterways, silting of reservoirs, and lost productivity — is $40 billion, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Wes estimates that only 50 million of the 400 million tillable acres in the U.S. are flatland, and even those are susceptible to erosion. The remaining 350 million acres — seven-eighths of the total — range from mildly to highly erodible, and thus are prime territory for perennial polyculture.

He flings these statistics at me as we drive into Salina for lunch at a Mexican restaurant. Maybe what set him hungering for Mexican food were the strings of bright red jalapeño peppers hanging in the greenhouse among the brown paper sacks full of seeds. Whatever the inspiration, Wes launches into his plateful of burritos with the zeal of a man who has done a hard morning's work. As we eat, a nearby television broadcasts a game between Kansas State and the University of Kansas. Checking the score, Wes explains, "My nephew plays for KU at guard, my old position." When he learns that KU is losing he turns his back to the TV and resumes telling me about what he calls natural-systems agriculture.

"The old paradigm," he says, "is the industrial model, which figures we can beat nature, make it dance to our tune, use up whatever we need and dump our wastes wherever's convenient. The new paradigm, the one we're following at the Land, believes less in human cleverness and more in natural wisdom. The prairie knows what it's doing — it's been trying things out for a long while — and so we've made ourselves students of the prairie."

Transforming perennial polyculture from a research program into a feasible alternative for the working farmer will require many more years of painstaking effort, Wes admits. Researchers must breed high-yielding varieties of perennial grains and discover combinations of species that rival the productivity of the wild prairie. Engineers must design machinery for harvesting mixed grains that may ripen at different times. Farmers must be persuaded to try the new seeds and new practices and consumers must be persuaded to eat unfamiliar foods.

In keeping with his mission, before we leave the Mexican restaurant Wes urges me to try the whole wheat tortilla chips. "They're a lot tastier than the cornmeal, don't you think?"

I try them and I agree.

It's still raining when we climb back into the pickup and as we drive into the countryside Wes keeps shaking his head at the black slurry pouring off the fields. "That's gold running away," he says. "Farmers are always worrying about money and right there's pure wealth just washing away. It takes up to a thousand years to make an inch of topsoil."He goes on to speak about the need for training farmers, a subject close to his heart. "The children in rural schools are one day going to be in charge of the 400 million acres of tillable land in this country. So they'll have the greatest ecological impact of any group." To help inform those schools — and help resettle the small towns in which many of those children will grow up — the Land Institute has created a Rural Community Studies Center in Matfield Green, a tiny settlement in the Flint Hills about a hundred miles southeast of Salina. "We want to bring the message of ecology to bear on the curriculum of rural schools," he says. "I want those young people to go to Kansas State, Ohio State, all the ag schools, and ask questions that push beyond the existing paradigm."

How well would annual monoculture perform if it weren't subsidized by inputs of petroleum and groundwater, and if it weren't allowed to write off the ecological costs of pesticides and herbicides and erosion? To answer that question, the Land Institute has

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devoted 150 acres to the Sunshine Farm, a 10-year project for growing livestock and conventional crops without fossil fuels, chemicals, or irrigation.

The Sunshine Farm is where we go next, and the arrival of our truck wakes three dappled-gray Percheron draft horses from their rainy drowse in a paddock beside the barn. For the heaviest work there's also a tractor, but it shelters inside the barn and it runs on bio-diesel fuel made from soybeans and sunflower seeds. The farmhouse is heated with wood and all the buildings are lit from batteries charged by photovoltaic cells.

Six years into the study, data from the Sunshine Farm are providing a truer measure of how much conventional farming costs. Marty Bender, who manages the farm, explains, "We look at the energy content of all the crops and livestock that we produce, and we look at the inputs — fuels, feeds, stock, seeds, tools, labor. If you divide our outputs by our inputs, the ratio is comparable to what you see on Amish farms. And that tells me we're on the right track."

"When all the numbers are in," Wes predicts, "I'm sure the prairie's way will beat the pants off the industrial way."

Back in the yellow-brick office, Wes unrolls onto a table what he calls the Big Chart, which lays out a 25-year research plan. The boxes on the chart frame problems to be solved, and the arrows all point toward the vision of a sustainable agriculture that will overturn the mistaken practices of the past 10 millennia. It's a bold scheme. Already, scientists like Stephen Jones, Andrew Paterson, John Reganold and Laura Jackson have begun to work on pieces of the puzzle. With half a dozen full-time investigators and their assistants, plus eight student interns and five or six graduate students each year, the Land Institute operates now with an annual budget of $850,000, supported by foundations and private donors and the tireless labor of many friends.

This endeavor, now almost a quarter-century old, nearly died in infancy. As a young man with a family, Wes gave up a tenured position at California State in order to homestead in Kansas, then put every cent he had into starting the Land Institute. "Six months later," he recalls, "our only building burnt down, with all our books and tools. A great darkness came over me. It seemed like the world was telling me to quit. But if you're raised on a farm you're used to making things work. If you don't get it right the first time, you have another go at it. So we rebuilt."

To carry on the necessary future research, Wes calculates they'll need between $5 million and $7 million a year — not much money when you consider that estimated yearly loss of $40 billion from soil erosion in the U.S. This higher level of funding can only come with backing from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and even from agribusiness firms. "So far," he admits, "we've hit a brick wall at USDA. When you talk with them about learning from the prairie, following nature as measure and pattern, their eyes glaze over."

He realizes how difficult it will be to pry money from institutions whose philosophy of farming he so squarely opposes, but he relishes the challenge. "In America," he tells me as I prepare to leave, "we've got mostly two kinds of scientists — the ones who get us in trouble, and the ones who tell us what the troubles are — but very few who are looking for solutions. Here at the Land Institute, we're looking for solutions."

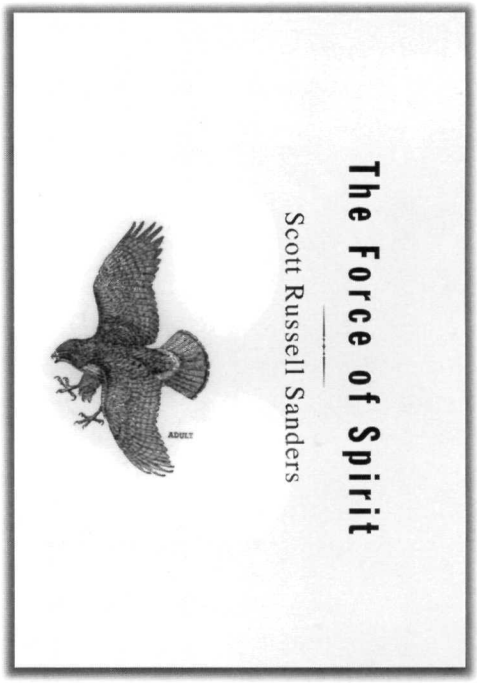
Before I go, I can't help asking him to explain how a Kansas farm boy grew up to become a visionary who's trying to revolutionize farming. He can't say for sure. His family's been in Kansas since 1854 (the year that *Walden* was published). His great-grandfather fought alongside John Brown at the Battle of Blackjack Creek, against proslavery hooligans from Missouri. His grandchildren are the sixth generation to live in the state. So he feels committed to this region for the long haul and he wants it to be a beautiful and fertile place well after he's gone.

"It seems like, no matter what else I tried, I just kept thinking about the source — soil, water, photosynthesis, the things that sustain us." Is he hopeful that a durable form of agriculture will be found in time to feed the earth's swelling population?

"We don't know how this is all going to turn out," he admits. "But the risky thing is to do nothing, to keep on going the way we've been going. No matter how dark the times, it's still worthwhile to do good work."

The next morning, as I drive east through even heavier rain toward my home in Indiana, the radio carries reports of brimming rivers and flooded roads across Kansas. The plowed fields I pass are gouged by rivulets and the roadside ditches run black with dirt. But where grass covers the land, there's no sign of runoff, for the prairie keeps doing what it's learned how to do over thousands of years — holding water, building soil, waiting for spring. ●

From The Force of Spirit, *by* ***Scott Russell Sanders****. Copyright © 2000 by Scott Russell Sanders. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston.* *Essayist Scott Russell Sanders teaches at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind. His books include* Hunting for Hope, The Paradise of Bombs *and* Secrets of the Universe. *For more information on the Land Institute check <www.landinstitute.org>.*



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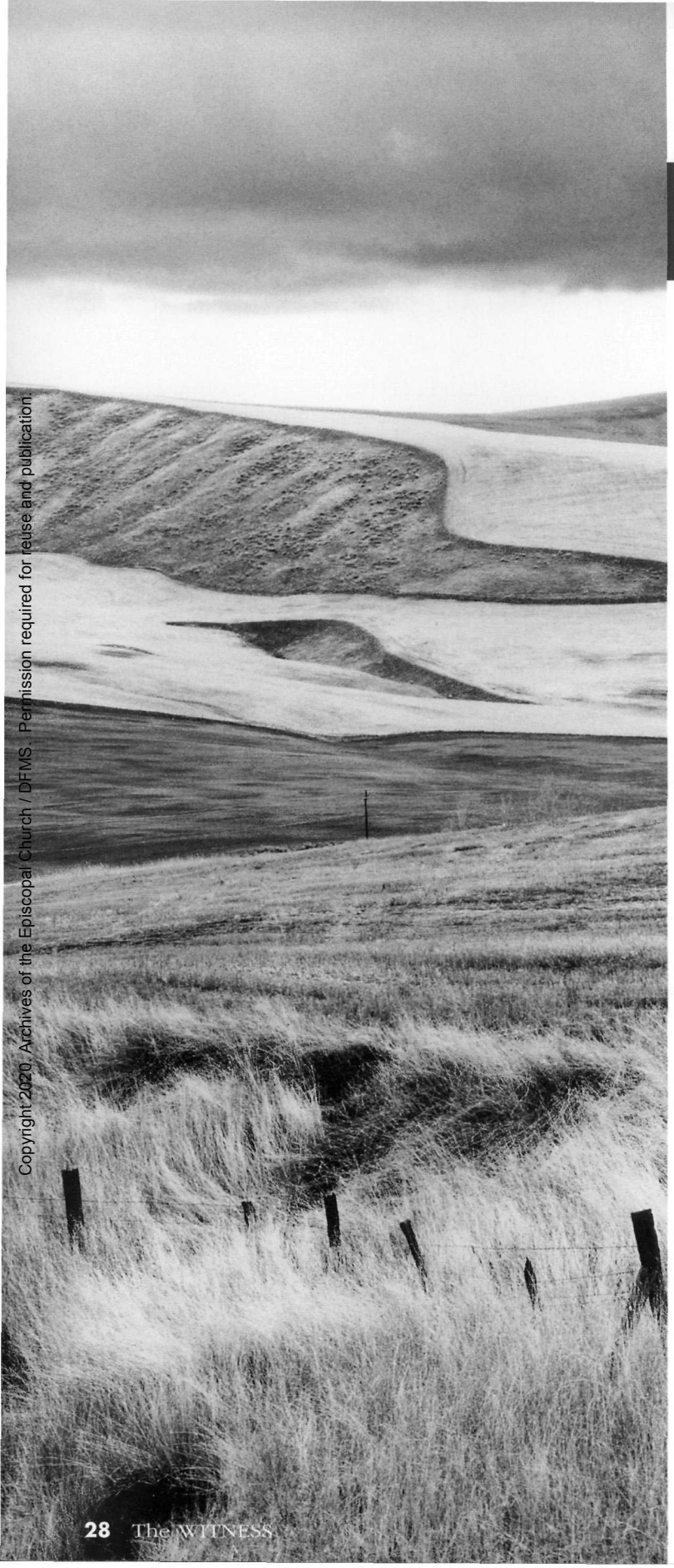

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EXERCISING

— even in disputed areas

by Susan Youmans

WHERE DOES THE AUTHORITY come from to take a position on genetically engineered foods? This is a disputed, complex topic involving technical questions about science, regulation, law, trade and development. Yet some of today's practices challenge values we hold as people of faith — love of justice, reverence for creation, esteem for humility. Our religious vocation invites us to take this issue very seriously. But how to augment our vocation with the nerve and ability to develop a position? We can learn from other communities that have authorized themselves to learn and operate amidst dispute and technical complexity.

You may know the story of the leukemia cluster in Woburn, Mass., from *A Civil Action*. Anne Anderson, one dying child's mother, fiercely believed that something caused the leukemia. Bruce Young, her Episcopal priest, urged her to substantiate this or move on in her grieving. She learned where each sick child lived and put pins in a map for each home; all cases were in the same neighborhood. When the child's oncologist saw the map, he called the Center for Disease Control.

What occurred next has been described as similar to early public health research — "barefoot epidemiology." Anderson and Young ran an ad asking people with childhood leukemia in their family to attend a meeting at the church. Gradually, in addition to learning a lot about the causes of childhood leukemia, the families learned about the possible connections of the disease with the hazardous practices at a local tannery, now a plant where solvents were used to clean machinery and then poured out onto the ground.

When I first heard this story, in 1985, the struggle was considered to have been somewhat successful. I'd been involved with issues of production and use of scientific and technical information for 25 years, and I attributed the success to the fact that the citizens had used technical information. Then, in seminary in the early 1990s, I was led back to the story from a different direction. I had done field work at MIT in which I interviewed professors about what responsibility accrues from the power associated with having knowledge. One professor alerted me to a seminar in which the topic was citizens acquiring power through gaining their own

Wheatfield, Dufur, OR by Don Kirby

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knowledge. I went, and heard the Woburn story again. It led to my reading much more about that struggle, spending many hours with Bruce Young, and meeting scientists and others involved.

Learning the science had not been the critical part of the citizen's success. They did read, and they presented extensively on the topic. But it was an alliance of knowledges that made the difference. At a crucial point they talked at a Harvard seminar, attended by chance by a professor who had a methodology — a statistical model — he was eager to try out. He teamed up with the Woburn families. The data collected was sufficient to claim an association between the water and leukemia, though his work was attacked by colleagues (who were later described by sociologists as industry-inspired).

But the momentum had been created. Anderson and Young testified at hearings where Superfund legislation was being reauthorized. Proceedings began which resulted in the Environmental Protection Agency requiring a clean-up. It was a victory in terms of remediation of the land, increased knowledge in the science of remediation, and identification of an additional cause of childhood leukemia (benzene).

A recurring pattern

What does the Woburn story have to do with our concerns about genetically engineered food? It shows a pattern that recurs in most struggles about the effects of technology:

1. Non-experts in a field learn both technical information and political processes.

2. They usually receive no credit for their perception or the homework they've done to understand the problem.

3. They learn that processes they expected to protect them, do not.

4. They find that, alone — that is, without credentialed allies — they cannot usually win these David-and-Goliath battles with entities of great economic clout.

5. With each other's support, they stand firm through severe emotional and physical hardship.

6. Public officials and scientists contradict the facts of their experience.

7. Those involved and their community split over the costs to the community's economic interests.

8.This battle about power and various kinds of suffering is fought out in terms of science and struggles to renew and strengthen public processes.

Environmental sociologist Phil Brown has described the experience of Woburn's activists as learning science, protecting their community, growing in self-esteem and making democracy work better. The success required the teaming of experience-based and expert knowledge, and a cauldron of trials for both sides. I have seen this pattern recur in many other environmental health struggles.

Failed struggle

I would like to tell a second story about people who fought and failed to stop installation of a cellular phone antenna in a historic church steeple very close to their homes and school. It took place in Lexington, Mass., in a neighborhood around a church where Emerson and Thoreau preached. In this controversy, the opponents of the antenna were what anyone would call intelligent lay people — middle-class, highly educated people. Some were parents at a private school located 100 feet from the church.

The proponents of the antenna, in whose steeple the antenna was to be installed in exchange for a "rental" fee, came from similar backgrounds as the opponents.

The corporation involved here was Nextel, a member of an industry that obtained national legislation severely limiting communities' powers to set limits on antenna installation.

The dispute here did not concern children already dying, but suspected consequences of long-term exposure to extremely low levels of radio-frequency-level electromagnetic radiation (the sort of exposure you would get if your bedroom window was 40 feet from a cellular phone antenna). As the risk is now gauged for radiation at this frequency, standards for setting safety limits are based on thermal effects, so anything less than the heating of tissue is below the level of the standard's focus. But research suggests that health effects occur at far lower levels of exposure — enough that many European countries are drastically reducing the level of exposure acceptable. And towns all over the U.S. are attempting to place moratoria on siting of antennas near residences, schools and hospitals, until more is known.

But interpretation of the research is the point. To establish risk, there must be a consensus on the biological mechanism of harm. Yet in this case, because the biological mechanism through which some effects occur cannot yet be precisely described, consensus at this point is impossible to accomplish. The church council took this as a basis for claiming that it was unlikely that the antenna would pose a risk.

In my 20s in graduate school I was married to a law student who told me about the legal concept of "the reasonable man" (or woman) as a standard for responsible behavior. The reasonable person is an "everyman" whose behavior is assumed to be reliable enough that the law protects him or her from being wronged. In the Lexington story the hypothetical reason-

able person is crucial. To that person, a question is not eliminated because a hurdle 25 years down the road can't be leaped today.

We as individuals must exercise the "reasonable human's" measure of responsibility about technically disputed areas. For instance, we must notice where the strong and the vulnerable are represented. We must notice, if scientific arguments seem to lead nowhere useful in an important conversation, what function they are performing in the dialog and for whom. We must think as a person would think when buying a car — suspending the social nicety of assuming that rhetoric is always being used for mutual benefit.

In Lexington, neighbors brought alternative scientific interpretations of research, as well as significant work in public health on the precautionary principle, to the attention of the church's parish council. From this, the church leaders might have been led to conclude too little was known to prove the installation safe. But years-long academic debates on risk were too many domains away from the work that scientists on the parish council had done. They considered applying precaution — or the precautionary principle — a bogus issue.

Lessons for the GE food struggle

These stories teach many lessons about how to proceed in the area of genetic engineering and foods.

First, build relationships with people in other fields of knowledge. In the field of genetic engineering and food, there are so many facets to discerning what questions churches should ask. For instance, it is relevant to understand the nature of current testing, regulatory structures, and how the effects of genetically modified organisms might impact ecosystems.

Second, don't avoid the complexity of the issue. When considering the genetically engineered foods issue, all of us come with many kinds of expertise, and we also encounter other areas where we are not experts. Use what you already know about how highly disputed technical issues unfold (e.g. in global warming, asthma as an urban health issue, incineration, nuclear waste, tobacco). Look for what is different in the genetically engineered foods controversy and then seriously pursue what stands out according to your knowledge and experience. (For me, for example, it is corporate claims for ownership of genetic information based on the concept of intellectual property. From my past work I know the meaning of intellectual property has been put into question in the decades since 1960, when information technology provided new ways to unhook content from form in publishing.)

Recognize the demands of being on new ethical territory. The church committee in Lexington, initially approached by Nextel for a "rental," never dreamed that this involved choices that perhaps exposed their neighbors to a possible, if disputed, health risk.

Churches have little experience with the dialog issues distinct to technical and scientific controversies — and no norms for what is appropriate in this dialog. In Lexington, a slide in a key discussion quoted a technical article, saying that the research reviewed showed that the cancer risk from long-term, low-level radiation was negligible. No one explained, nor did the audience understand, that in the technical parlance of the article, no general conclusion about safety was being made. Yet the laypeople were being invited to draw this conclusion.

Third, expect that really getting out there with your knowledge can be hard. A church in a nearby town invited two Lexington women to describe what they had learned about themselves from their struggle. When they arrived, they were peppered with questions, not given time to document what they knew and not taken seriously. They went home without covering their topic and feeling like failures. The following Sunday, members of the host church expressed chagrin that they had derailed the meeting's agenda by insisting too much on facts. As an evironmental scientist observed, "Opinions play a role when you are trying to get to some kinds of truths."

We are on both sides of the Lexington story and the GE foods debate. We need to apply carefully the chance we have to enrich our perspectives with new ideas and new allies. We must not kill dialog and relationship by failing to value our own and other peoples' opinion- and experience-based knowledge. ●

Susan Youmans is a member of the Episcopal Church's Committee on Faith Ethics, Science and Technology.

SHORT TAKES

Medicare or casinos?

Theodore Roszak, in a *Hope* magazine interview (Winter '01), disputes the notion that growing numbers of seniors will make Social Security unaffordable.

"Americans should realize that not only did we come to entitlements after every other industrial society in the world, but we still spend far less on entitlements — meaning, in our case, Social Security and Medicare — than other industrial societies, which are doing a very good job of competing with us in world markets. We are a rich society; we can afford vastly more than other countries when it comes to providing a dignified retirement for older citizens. ...

"A very telling set of facts is this: Medicare costs us 200 billion dollars a year. The people of the U.S. spend 630 billion dollars a year on gambling alone. Look beyond that at the way we spend money on professional athletics, entertainment, cosmetics, cigarettes, liquor. ...

"The idea that we cannot possibly afford an older society is not only economically untrue, but it's ethically absurd. It's as if we're saying that now that we have gained the gift of time, which is the grand product of two centuries of industrial development, we can't afford it. Longevity is not a cost; it's a benefit of solving other problems. Every time we find a way to improve nutrition, every time we find a way to bring babies into the world healthier, every time we stop teenagers from smoking, every time we pro-

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vide more safety in the workplace or automobile, every time we conquer another disease, the result is longevity. It is a benefit we're willing to pay for, as you can see by the way we use our money on medical science, public health and research."

Exporting the U.S. prison model

Repressive prison trends that activists are confronting in the U.S. are spreading to other countries, Angela Davis says in an interview with *The Progressive* (Feb. '01).

"When I visited Australia a year and a half ago, I found that the largest women's prison there, which is outside of Melbourne, is owned and operated by Corrections Corporation of America, which is headquartered in Nashville, Tenn. It is not only the tendency to incarcerate ever greater numbers of people that one can see in European countries and Australia, but also the supermaximum prisons have been exported. There are supermaximum prisons in the Netherlands, South Africa, and even Sweden. The security housing unit, which is a particularly repressive formation originating in the U.S., has invaded their prisons as well."

Cuba, in contrast, offers a better model, Davis says.

"In Cuba, at least in the women's prisons I visited, the women — unlike women in the U.S. or in other countries — did not feel disconnected from the larger society. The effort to pay close attention to the U.N. standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners was very obvious. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the system itself was the fact that prisoners were allowed to continue to work in their fields if their offense was not related to their particular profession. I talked to a woman who was a veterinarian, for example, and she continued to be a veterinarian in the prison. I talked to a woman who was a doctor, and she continued to be a physician in the particular prison where she was incarcerated. That in itself was interesting because it inverts the hierarchies of prisoners and guards. As the doctor, she was in charge of civilian nurses, for example, and was treated not as a prisoner, not as an inferior person, but rather as a doctor.

"Furthermore, people who work, and virtually everyone works who is in prison, receive the same wages and salaries as they would receive if they were working in the same job on the outside. It was a striking difference with respect to the U.S., where prisoners can receive as little as 10 cents an hour."

Monitoring of multinationals

A coalition of environment, labor and human rights groups is calling for new legislation that would require U.S.-based corporations to disclose information about their operations in other countries, *The Michigan Citizen* reports (3/3/01).

"U.S. law requires companies to disclose some basic information about their domestic activities, including what kind of pollution they emit or how many employees have been injured on the job.

"The coalition is currently circulating a proposal that urges members of Congress to draft new legislation that would extend these existing requirements to companies' overseas operations.

"'Communities and workers throughout the world have the right to important information about corporate practices that will have significant impacts on their lives,' said a statement by the coalition of more than 150 organizations including Amnesty International, the AFL-CIO and Friends of the Earth."

According to this proposal, U.S. corporations would be required to "reveal the environmental impact of products and operation, reveal details of all security arrangements with government or private firms, indicate whether or not they had a human rights policy, indicate whether they faced any charges of human rights violations, reveal the numbers of workers hurt, killed or handling hazardous material at each plant, and reveal the location of all plants around the world."

First Muslim holiday stamp

The first U.S. postal stamp honoring Muslim holidays will be available in October, 2001, *Church & State* reports. The stamp commemorates Eid-al-Fitr, a Muslim feast that marks the end of fasting for the month of Ramadan, and Eid-al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice. The campaign for the stamps was led by the American Muslim Council, which arranged for 3,000 Muslim children to send letters to the postmaster. The stamp features the Arabic phrase "Eid mubarak," which means "blessed festival," in gold against a blue background. ●

CLASSIFIEDS

Clergy Renewal Program

Listening to God: Spiritual Formation for Clergy Renewal: A two-year program designed to explore the process and practice of Christian prayer and discernment for the purpose of personal renewal and congregational leadership. Extension Program: June, 2001; Twin Cities Program: October, 2001. Christos Center: 651-653-8207. Web: <www.christoscenter.org>. Email: <christoscenter@worldnet.att.net>.

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21–30. Apply now for the 2001–2002 year. Contact EUIP, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. Phone: 310-674-7700. Email: <euip@pacbell.net>.

Order of Jonathan Daniels

An Episcopal religious community-in-formation for men and women; single, committed and married; living, working and ministering in the world; striving for justice and peace among all. Write: Order of Jonathan Daniels, The Cathedral Church of Saint Luke, 143 State Street, Portland, ME 04101; <OrdJonDanl@aol.com>.

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Genmanipulated plants, Hamburg University – Frommann/laif / IMAPCT VISUALS

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GETTING A LIFE!

Younger adults and the callings of conscience

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Photo by Rachel Tobie, Colby College

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JUNE 2001

Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

A Global Witness
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Website Design
Jim Dugan

Controller
Roger Dage

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Wes Todd

Office Manager
Alice Devine

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
118 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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LETTERS

Effective politics

I agree almost entirely with Paul Winters' letter to the editor about the 2000 election and its nightmare results ("Rewarding conscience with nightmare," *TW* 3/2001). The "almost" refers to his key statement about "such a poorly designed electoral system that rewards people who vote their conscience with their worst nightmare." But it is not the electoral system which is at fault (although it could be improved) but rather the "conscience." Voting your conscience apparently means voting for the candidate whose views on the issues most closely reflect your own. This, I believe, is a seriously misinformed conscience, since it omits a critical factor, namely, whether or not the candidate has a real chance of being elected. It is the lack of this factor which always produces the nightmare. It may be good Puritan moralism in the sense that it gives one a sense of moral purity, but it is not effective politics, which is always incremental, never ideal.

Finally, Ralph Nader is not stupid. He knew what the consequences of his campaign would be (97,000 votes in Florida). And he has recently admitted that there were five major differences between Bush and Gore. If he keeps at it rather than running in the Democratic primaries where he belongs — and if the moralists follow him again — then he will give us the real nightmare of eight years of Bush.

Owen C. Thomas
Berkeley, CA

Gifts of the spirit

I must write to tell you how much we appreciate your magazine, which was given to us by Sara Owen from Atlanta, one of your faithful readers. You certainly take the lead in the gifts of the spirit — how to appreciate them and use them. You're also on the cutting edge of many concerns, even guiding us into a new and better future.

Marilyn and Lamar Clements
Clearwater, FL

A word of caution

The article, "Rehabilitation? Fighting to free 'the poster boy for punishment'" by Robert Lowenstein in your March issue was fascinating, persuasive and even inspiring. However, I have to raise a question about one point. Mr. Lowenstein baldly asserts that Falco, Trantino's partner in the murder of the policemen in Lodi, New Jersey, was "executed" by New York policemen. It may well be that he was; the circumstances certainly suggested it.

But I am writing to caution your readers against accepting Mr. Lowenstein's assertion that Frankie Falco was "executed" on Mr. Lowenstein's word alone.

About ten years before the murder in Lodi,while I was on the staff of what was then St. Augustine's Chapel on Henry Street in Manhattan, I knew Frankie Falco. Our work at St. Augustine's was mostly with African-American and Hispanic-American young people, but a group of white boys known as the Mae Rose gang used to hang out on a corner opposite our church and we came to know them. Frankie Falco was a Mae Rose, like his older brother Eddie.

Eddie Falco was scary enough, but Frankie was the most terrifyingly violent human being I have ever encountered. Common talk in the neighborhood was that Frankie Falco put somebody in the hospital about every six weeks.

Nothing I ever knew about Frankie Falco permits me to believe that he would, if suddenly wakened by policemen with drawn weapons, have submitted peacefully to arrest, unarmed or not.

Perhaps subsequent investigations unknown to me have shown that Frankie Falco's death was indeed a case of premeditated police murder. However, I do not pretend to prove Mr. Lowenstein wrong — merely to remind your readers that things are not always as clear-cut as they may seem, even when the apparent villains are police.

Merrill Orne Young
Surry, VA ●

Embracing the strangers within?

by Julie A. Wortman

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This issue is the product of a workshop The Witness *offered at the National Gathering of College and University Students over New Year's weekend in Estes Park, Colo. (NatGat 2000, for short, an event sponsored biennially by the Episcopal Church's national Office of Ministries with Young Persons). The workshop group included eight NatGat 2000 participants — Josh Thomas, Erika von Haaren, Jamie Tester, Ruth Monette, Philip Schaffner, David D'Andrea and Rachel Orville. Two experienced college chaplains, Jacqueline Schmitt and Samson Gitau, and Phyllis Amenda, a second-career graduate student and NatGat workshop leader, also participated. In addition to contributing their ideas, a number of those attending the workshop also wrote articles for the issue. We are deeply grateful for everyone's help.*

I recently heard a priest speak of a life-changing sabbatical experience in an Alaskan village church. A stranger to the community, he was not only warmly welcomed, but also invited into the life of the place in ways that tapped into his deepest, truest self as never before.

"They welcomed me with no thought of how I should fit in or how I might best serve some plan or program," the priest reflected. "Instead, they embraced me with the unstated expectation that my inclusion in the congregation's life would most certainly change not only me, but them."

Here was an instance, in other words, of radical hospitality. The stranger at the door welcomed as precious, transforming gift.

I found myself thinking of this Alaskan anecdote frequently as we put the finishing touches on this issue about younger adults and their desire to live lives of faith and meaning. Although the vast majority of the young people I encountered at NatGat 2000 had been brought up in the Episcopal Church or some other mainline denomination, most seemed to see themselves as church outsiders — not as strangers at the sanctuary door, exactly, but certainly as newcomers. Perhaps as strangers within: people raised in the church, but now too old to be programmed as "youth," too young to have worked their way up the church-leadership pecking order and too culturally enigmatic to make meaningful conversation easy.

Not surprising, then, that much of this issue revolves around younger adults' search for sacrament and solidarity in an atmosphere where they feel fully welcomed and valued.

In the institutional church, such places are in short supply. We bemoan the graying of the church with head-scratching confusion about how to change the trend. We believe ourselves welcoming, but resist the requirements of radical hospitality.

I saw it in myself during NatGat and then in working on this issue with our NatGat editorial planning group. I wanted fewer theological clichés. I hoped for more radical activism. I was disappointed by recurring generalities and I yearned for more nuance.

In other words, I was looking for a level of maturity and experience I imagined necessary to meet *The Witness'* standards. These younger folks were not who I expected — or, perhaps, hoped for.

Luckily, I hung in, uncomfortable as that proved to be. I was at first tempted to write off their desire for congruence between professed belief and lived reality as a *déja vu* task of the young. But, as I listened to them speak of their struggle to weigh lifestyle and career choices against a Gospel of liberating love, radical justice and simple living — and in light of the difficult-to-ignore influence of parental and societal expectations — I had to admit that by no stretch of the imagination could I say that I've "arrived." In fact, I frequently felt humbled by these younger adults' honesty and commitment. And envious of their deep understanding that, although there's a politics to everything, life is primarily about imagination. I also could see that in some ways they understand today's world much better than people my age do. I found myself wanting to hear more, not less, of what they had to say.

How often we ignore that respectful mutual relationships require self-effacing presence. The gathering's organizers recognized this and asked that participants — especially the most likely offenders, the elders — agree to not arrive late or leave early. I confess that I arrived in Estes Park wishing I could do just that. If I had, I'd have preserved the self-deception that I had the busier and more important schedule, but lost any genuine idea of what NatGat 2000 and its participants were about — and risked losing my own credibility.

And so, this issue of *The Witness* has turned out differently than I thought. My NatGat encounter has opened up possibilities and offered challenges — gifts for which I am truly grateful.

My hope is that truly embracing her "strangers within" will do as much for the church. ●

Julie A. Wortman is editor/publisher of The Witness.

Love of God

by Joyce Nalunga

Joshua M. Thomas (Mostar, Bosnia-Hercegovina — see page 12)

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(Chorus)
Love of God, love of God
You are all we ever wanted
Love of God, love of God
Fill our hearts on this yo' day.

(Chorus)
Kwagala, Kwagala,
Gwe wekka gwe twetaaga waano
Kwagala, Kwagala,
Tujjuzze emyoyo gyaffe.

Jesus, Sweet Jesus,
There's none on earth like You.
How we really love you.
Fill us with yo' anointing,
Oh the king of our hearts
Fill our lives on this yo' day.

(Chorus repeats)

Yesu, oh Yesu
Tewali nomee akenwkanna
Tukwegayiridde
Tukwateeko nikisa kyo
Tukwegayiridde
Otujjuzze nomioyo gwe.

(Chorus repeats)

This song appeared on New Voices, New Songs: Give Him a Call, *produced by the Ministries with Young People Cluster, Episcopal Church USA, 2001 (see page 16 for review).* ***Joyce Nalunga*** *lives in Kampala, Uganda.*

Juneteenth

by Katie Sherrod

JUNE 19 IS CELEBRATED in Texas as Juneteenth. It marks the anniversary of the day in 1865 when Union General Gordon Granger read the Emancipation Proclamation at the Port of Galveston.

It is a date marked in Texas by parades, festivals in parks, church services, family reunions, speeches, songfests and all manner of other celebrations. While most of these celebrations occur among predominately African-American communities, increasingly members of the Anglo community are starting to participate also.

For Juneteenth marks the day of the arrival of the first word of freedom for the 250,000 slaves in Texas, even though Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation two-and-a-half years earlier, on January 1, 1863.

The glad tidings of freedom filtered gradually through our giant state as, one by one, individual plantation owners, business owners, farmers and other slave owners read the proclamation to the women, men and children they had owned until that day.

The *Handbook of Texas* reports, "the first broader celebrations of Juneteenth were used as political rallies and to teach freed African Americans about their voting rights. Within a short time, however, Juneteenth was marked by festivities throughout the state, some of which were organized by official Juneteenth committees.

"Some of the early emancipation festivities were relegated by city authorities to a town's outskirts; in time, however, black groups collected funds to purchase tracts of land for their celebrations, including Juneteenth. A common name for these sites was Emancipation Park." The first Juneteenth celebration in Austin was in 1867 and was under the direction of the Freedman's Bureau.

In the early 1900s blacks and whites often joined together for Juneteenth celebrations. But as the freed blacks began to prosper — in some Texas cities, within a generation after slavery, they had their own physicians, lawyers, business owners, bankers — many in the white community began to feel economically threatened. In the 1920s, the first of the infamous Jim Crow laws began to appear in Texas, and in the rest of the South.

By the late 1940s, early 1950s, Juneteenth was the only day on which African Americans in Texas could play in public city parks, swim in public pools, enter city-owned zoos, read in libraries and otherwise enjoy the civic fruits of the taxes they paid.

I was about seven or eight when I began to understand what was happening. I remember even as a child feeling ashamed. My parents tried to explain Jim Crow laws to us, and made clear their disagreement with such laws. We lived in West Texas, where the largest group targeted for racism was Mexicans and Mexican Americans, but the very few African Americans were treated no better. My father, a physician, caused an uproar in our small community in the early 1950s when he built a clinic with only one waiting room. When a wealthy rancher announced that he wasn't sitting in the same room with those [racist name for Hispanics and blacks], my father calmly said that he was welcome to wait in his pickup truck. Since my father was the only physician in three very large counties, the rancher decided to wait in the waiting room. It was my first lesson in witnessing. It was also my first lesson in the power of pragmatism. That rancher wasn't willing to suffer from his very painful sore throat just for the sake of a racist stance.

Ironically, in the early 1960s, the Civil

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Rights Movement had the effect of diminishing the popularity of Juneteenth celebrations, in part because of the push for integration. But in the 1970s, as African Americans began to explore their cultural heritage, the holiday was reborn as a symbol of pride in accomplishment in the face of unbelievable oppression.

One of my proudest days as reporter was in 1979, watching as my state legislature, which is not marked by progressive ideas, to say the least, passed a law declaring Juneteenth a state holiday.

The holiday has migrated as Black Texans have moved to other states, Louisiana and Oklahoma especially.

For Texans, and I hope for others, Juneteenth increasingly has provided people of all races an opportunity to recall the milestone in human rights the day represents for African Americans — and thus for all of us.

I remember interviewing David Newton, the African-American sculptor creating the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial in Dallas. He was showing me the figure grouping that would represent freed African Americans. It represents the moment this man and woman hear the news of their freedom.

A shirtless muscular black man in rough homespun trousers with a rope belt and bare feet stands looking down at the woman beside him. One of his arms rests protectively across her shoulders. His back is crisscrossed with old scars from the master's whip.

She is kneeling; her torso slightly turned so that her arms are around the man's waist and her head is leaning against his hip. She is wearing a simple cotton blouse and skirt. Her feet also are bare. The blouse has slipped slightly off one shoulder where her arm is raised to embrace the man, just enough to reveal scars on her back also.

It is the moment after the initial burst of joy, David said. Both faces are somber, as they struggle to absorb the incredible news they have just heard. It is the moment they remember all those who died as slaves, all those who never reached the promised land of liberty. It is the moment when they wonder what will happen to them now. For even as they face the rising sun, one can still see the marks of the whip imprinted permanently on their backs. David said, "The scars are there to symbolize that scars don't just go away with the signing of a piece of paper. They are handed down from generation to generation. That's why I want this monument to be a healing place. We have a scarred land."

And so the two figures in the group comfort one another, turning as they always have to their own and to prayer, for the strength to move into freedom with grace, courage, and love.

And I turn to David and say, "The marks of the whip are also on the ones who did the whipping."

I believe that until the white population of the United States recognizes and acknowledges that reality, we will never bridge the divide between blacks and whites. Whether we like it or not, we whites are scarred by the hand that wielded that whip. Even though none of us, or perhaps even none of our ancestors, ever owned slaves, we all are the beneficiaries of a racist society in which we sit at the top. Being white gives us a daily advantage that we might deny, but that our black brothers and sisters see clearly. We all are caught in the bondage of racism.

And so as we sing together "Lift Every Voice" I pray we can one day stand in freedom together, acknowledging our blended histories and our common salvation. ●

Katie Sherrod is a longtime reporter and public television producer who lives in Fort Worth, Tex. She is editor of Ruach, *the publication of the Episcopal Women's Caucus.*

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A GLOBAL WITNESS • A GLOBAL WITNESS • A GLOBAL WITNESS

AGW

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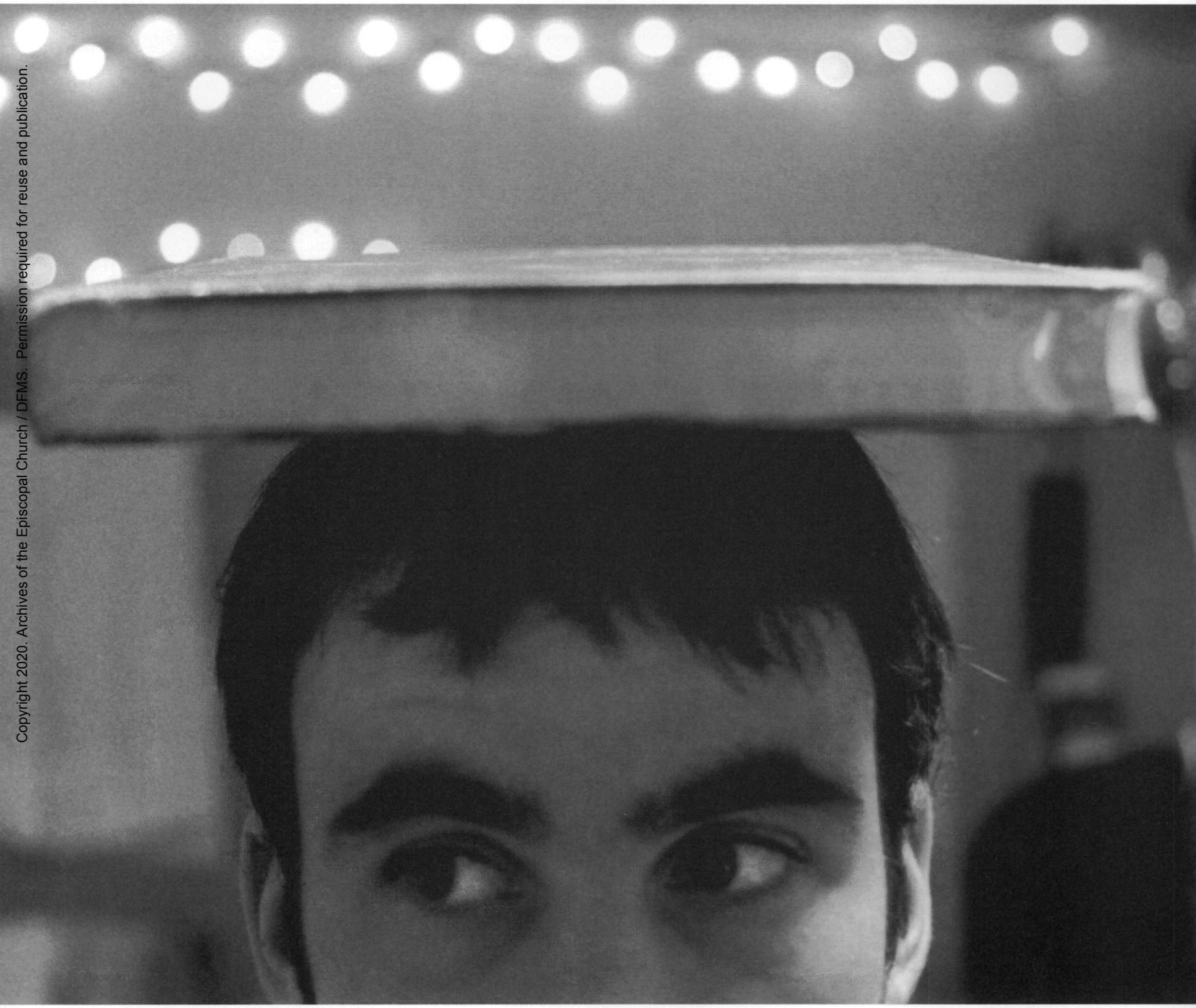
LOOKING FOR A VIABLE



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FAITHFUL 'LIFE DREAM'

— and craving a little respect

by Camille Colatosti

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"STUDENTS ARE BUSIER NOW than they used to be," says Ruth Monette, a 24-year old lay minister at the University of Southern California (see sidebar). Having graduated from Hobart and William Smith Colleges just two years ago, she knows first-hand how busy college students are. "I was overextended as a student," she says, "just taking a normal course load, working 10 hours a week, and taking a leadership role in different campus organizations." At the University of Southern California, Monette mentors a student leadership team for campus ministries.

"There is only about one hour a week when I can get all four students in my leadership team together. They are just too busy."

As Monette explains, "All of my students work. One is in ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps), so he gets up when some of the other students are just going to bed. Being employed has made a big difference in how busy students are. But there are also lots of options in terms of how to get involved on campus. A lot of students volunteer in different ways. Of course, classes take a lot of time and it's easy to forget that part."

Jamie Tester, a 20-year-old sophomore at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minn., exemplifies busyness. In addition to taking 16 to 18 credit hours (four to five classes) each term, she works as a resident advisor in her dorm, "maintaining order among 32 women — it's a 24-hour job!"

Tester is also a student senator and chair of the senate's academic affairs committee.

"All student grievances go through me and my committee," she explains. She tutors students in English, reading papers and helping with writing. And she babysits off campus for a family with two children for about eight hours a week.

"Sometimes I just sit in my room at my desk and feel overwhelmed," Tester admits. "Last week, I was checking my e-mail — I had a book in front of me so that I could read while my e-mail downloaded — and I was eating lunch."

Tester's goal is to become a lawyer so that she can advocate for the welfare of children.

Despite the fullness of her life — or perhaps because of it — Tester attends church every Wednesday evening and at least two Sunday mornings a month.

"This is my only down time that I allow myself," she explains. "It's a time for quiet, with no books, a time to think about something besides class stuff. It helps when I'm there. It forces me to slow down. It puts my mind at ease. If I'm worried that everything won't get done, I leave there feeling like 'of course it will.' I feel better, less panicky, when I leave. That's why I love going on Wednesday nights — in the middle of the week. This helps me deal with everything. I let God take everything I have and not worry about it."

Monette says she found similar comfort in a church connection when she was a student at Hobart and William Smith. "The college's chaplain was an Episcopal priest so it was easy for me, as an Episcopalian, to relate to her. I think that this was an outlet for social friendship for me. I went to school without knowing anyone on campus. The chaplain helped provide a safe community to be a part of and to fit in. She also pushed me to grow into an adult faith."

What is my work? Who will be my partners?

For Tester and Monette, as for many young people, the spiritual nurturing that is part of their college and post-college lives is essential. As Sharon Daloz Parks explains in her book, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*, young adults face two central questions: What is my work? Who will be my partners? By "work," Parks explains, "we do not mean simply a job or a career but rather a sense of one's calling — born from some reflection on life's purpose. Whether or not one is college-bound, the task of young adulthood is to find and be found by a viable 'life dream' — and to go to work on it."

The church could play a crucial role in helping young peo-

Piper Loyd, Colby College

Making a home for 'Doubters Anonymous'

"Hi, my name is Ruth Monette and I'm the Lay Minister for Episcopal Campus Ministry at the University of Southern California." So begin the 20 or so e-mails I send out over the summer to incoming freshmen who have identified themselves as Episcopalians. I go on to tell them about Canterbury (the common name of Episcopal campus ministries across the nation), about religious life at USC, and hope that some of them will actually respond. In college, even the most active youth sometimes fail to find room, in an ever-increasingly busy schedule, to maintain their connections to church. Many of them will feel they are maintaining their personal relationships with God, without the clutter of the institutional church and all its problems. Others will find that the faith that made so much sense in their childhood and teenage years no longer makes sense — sometimes it happens slowly and other times all in a rush. Classes and friends from a diversity of religious backgrounds (and no religious background at all) can shake a student's certainty about their own faith.

I know all this not only because the students tell me so, but also because I lived it. I was raised as an Episcopalian and began to make my home in the church as a youth. As a teenager in the Diocese of Indianapolis, I traveled to Mexico and Ecuador with mission trips, participated in the national Episcopal Youth Event, and worked on leadership teams for annual diocesan youth conferences and Happenings. I chose a college where I could continue my involvement with the Episcopal Church — Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, N.Y.

I credit my college chaplain with the fact that I'm still here, still a part of the Episcopal Church. I had the moments when none of what I grew up believing made any sense, when I could not say the creeds with honesty. I spent the fall of my junior year in Bath, England, and only went inside churches for tours. When I could not believe, when I had more doubt than faith, I still found comfort in the rituals of liturgy. Because my chaplain had already introduced me to The Center for Progressive Christianity (in Cambridge, Mass.), I knew she took my doubt seriously. I also knew it was all right for me to participate in chapel services, even with all my questions still unanswered.

After my graduation in June of 1999, I came to the University of Southern California as the Assistant Chaplain (as part of the Episcopal Urban Internship program, see page 28). In August of 2000, I was promoted to Lay Minister. I work with an ordained priest who is completing a Ph.D. program while working half-time with the chaplaincy and half-time with two local parishes.

Phyllis Amenda

With a student leadership team of four to five students, we run a very active campus ministry. Religious life at USC is overseen by a Dean of Religious Life who formally recognizes student religious groups and religious directors. The Episcopal Campus Ministry is one of nearly 50 student religious groups — including Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Taoist, Pagan and many Christian groups. Within the context of all that diversity, making a home for "seekers" is a special part of what Canterbury USC does. In one-on-one conversations, we affirm students' questions and challenge them to think through them. In groups — such as the Lenten series "Doubters Anonymous" — we nurture students' need to apply their academic critical thinking skills to their spiritual lives.

— Ruth Monette

ple, many of whom are on college campuses, grow up into a competent adulthood, says Jackie Schmitt, the Episcopal chaplain at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

"The pressures of this culture and this time and what is going on with young people," Schmitt says, "underscore why it is so important for the church to be involved with people 18 to 25. With the fractured lives people lead, with economic pressures and pressures from the Internet, this is even more important now than ever."

Helping young people figure out who they will be also determines what the church will be. For without younger voices, the church loses. Says Schmitt, "Those who are 18 to 25 are on the cusp of cultural change. They lead the way. Merchandisers know this. Without young adults, we are stuck in the past, rather than being in today."

'I am not my parents'

David Gortner, a doctoral candidate in psychology and human development at the University of Chicago, and an adult minister at St. Marks in Evanston, directs a research project in clergy leadership at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. "Young adults," he says, "have a tendency to distantiate — to put up a hand and say that I am not that, to identify as distinct from something else. For instance, a young person might say, 'I am not my parents,' or 'I am not the community where I grew up.' But young adults are also searching for a place where they do belong. They are trying to figure out 'Who am I?' and 'What am I called to do?' and 'What is my life purpose?' Unfortunately, religion — mainline religion — has often failed to provide an avenue for young adults to explore."

For over five years, Gortner has studied models of young adult ministry. He researched 12 communities that offer young adult ministry and he conducted interviews with 60 to 70 others. The research was interdenominational — Episcopal as well as other protestant denominations, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim. Gortner explains, "Young adults in most mainline denominations simply aren't coming to church and the

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reasons they cite are these: 'I don't feel welcome' and 'it doesn't seem relevant.' This reflects on the institutional church.

"The communities I looked at are in the denomination but they are on the fringes of those denominations, not at the center. For instance, in Walnut Creek, California, there was a failure on the part of the university chaplaincy to reach out to young adults. Young adults, then, took things into their own hands and formed a community called Mosaic. The diocese supports this but Mosaic is on the fringes of the work that the diocese does.

"Mosaic was given backing and space by the church even though many of the young adults who attend are not members of the church or even of the denomination. They gather on Tuesday evenings. The worship is non-prayerbook. Discussion is frank and honest about life issues and how those meet their faith.

"For many, this was their only faith community, their only church. Others belonged to different churches."

Gortner has identified models or patterns for successful young adult ministry. He notes that "they differ depending on what is being emphasized, but each is viable and each is viable within the Episcopal Church.

"One approach involves teaching and life application of belief and values. Another approach emphasizes relationships. Yet another approach uses more modern media. Some approaches are ultra-traditional. Others are not. There are a wide variety of ministries to which young adults are drawn.

"The majority," says Gortner, "entered through relationships with other people. For the most part, in almost every case, young adults came to worship through interactions with others."

Most important, continues Gortner, "is that people are welcomed with open arms and not expected to sign on the dotted line to join the church. These communities are offering something relevant, experiential and welcoming that leads people to find them, leads people to come back, to convert, and to discover a new depth of faith."

Adult, not 'young adult'

Younger adults seek a great deal of independence and freedom in their faith experiences. They also make it clear that they do not want to be treated as youth and that they do not want a youth group. That is, they do not want activities that are run by staff people. Nor do they want activities at all. They do not want to be entertained or to be programmed. Instead, they want to find each other.

Rachel Roberson, a 27-year old college graduate who now lives in San Francisco, spent two years with the Peace Corps in Cameroon. Active in Northwestern's Canterbury House when she was a journalism student there, she was ready to join a parish when she returned to the states.

"I chose to focus on ministry on the parish level and to do what everyone else does." She works as a lay preacher, helps to lead a youth group and volunteers to teach English as a Second Language at a school run by San Francisco's Church of the Incarnation.

"As an adult, I didn't feel like I needed 'young adult activities.' I wondered, when does this 'young adult' label end? When you marry, have kids, are 40? As a young person, I do sometimes feel that I have a credibility problem — not only in church but everywhere. Still, I want to be seen as an adult. For me, the decision to remain at church is a personal one that is related to the community I am in right now. My faith, my relationship with God, remains very personal. These aren't things I talk a lot about even at church. These are almost separate from my church community. But I love my community."

Ultimately, the shape of a worship community needs to be determined by the community itself. If younger adults are to be part of the community, they must help shape it. This is something that Mary Hileman has learned during her 11-and-a-half years as a campus minister at the Canterbury Center at Oklahoma University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Her work involves, as she puts it, "developing communities where students can plug in. This means providing communities for people who are at a similar spot in their lives. We need to always ask, what would you like to do? How can I as a chaplain help you reach out to the community and facilitate your spiritual growth?"

For instance, after asking students what they needed, the Canterbury Center at Oklahoma began offering a course on Christian meditation. The center also provides opportunities for fellowship and community building, from a weekly soup-and-noonday-prayer gathering — for faculty, staff and students — to graduate-student and undergraduate fellowship and potluck dinners.

"Our work," Hileman explains, "is a collaboration between student interests and my commitment to spiritual formation, to helping young adults learn what it means to live an involved life.

"I don't do a lot of programming anymore but I facilitate students taking a leadership role. This is crucial. Programming for students doesn't work. Empowering students to be Christ's presence in the world is the purpose for chaplaincy these days."

NatGat

The belief that young adults need to lead their own spiritual development underlies the National Student Gathering (NatGat) sponsored every two years by the Episcopal Church's national office of ministries with young people.

"The gathering, which is organized by young people, is a place for questing, for looking and listening to God," explains Thom Chu, director of the national young adult ministries office. "We design an opportunity for people to know each other in a deep way. People make new soul friends from faraway — and that really last."

Chu recalls the first NatGat gathering he attended in 1985. "I was a first-year student at Columbia, and I got a really deep understanding of what baptism means. To be in that space with so many other young people who wanted to know God changed my life. I've worked for the Episcopal Church almost since then."

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Looking for life beyond this 'best of all possible worlds'

Work hard, play hard. At Dartmouth, that's the ticket to success, exactly what I was looking for when I came here four years ago. Though initially hoping for an Ivy League utopia of learning, I soon was caught up in the myth that success equaled "the good life." Investment bankers, management consultants, corporate lawyers — these were the successful alumni, earning plenty of money to be comfortable, with the right house and clothes and car, exotic vacations and plenty leftover to donate back to their alma mater!

It seemed great, and I went on working hard in the classroom, earning A's and academic citations, stressing out to prove myself good enough, smart enough. Others were working hard to play hard, dying to perform in the social sphere where beer pong and random hookups and the humiliation of Greek pledge rituals masked a deep yearning for community, connection and true friends.

Still confused about everything, I spent sophomore fall at the university in St. Petersburg, Russia. On my daily walk downtown after classes, I passed by old women with cardboard signs around their necks, beggars on the streets crying out, "Pomogite!" Help. I thought of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain: "Give to those who beg from you." Simple enough, I was making excuses. When I realized that my lunch at the Russian edition of Pizza Hut could have fed a family for a week, I began to confront the elitism, entitlement, and exclusivity which Dartmouth had bred in me. Isolated in the hills of New Hampshire, everything from movie tickets to late-night pizza, health care to mocha lattes were instantly available with the swipe of an ID card, and I'd begun to see that as normal and to lose sight of life beyond this "best of all possible worlds."

The face of the homeless beggars had become too much to bear, and so one day I detoured from my usual route to avoid them, crossing the street through an underground tunnel and "passing by on the other side." I instantly saw myself as the Levite and priest in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Things changed forever.

From then on I resolved to take some risks, to listen and look for God more closely in what Mother Teresa called "distressing disguises." In Petersburg, it was an old woman who, upon my small gift of money and a bit of time, held my hand and cried, praying for me. On the streets of Boston, during an immersion program on street ministry, it was Matthew, a man homeless after losing his job for standing up to injustice in the workplace. "I asked myself," he said, "'What would Rosa Parks do? What would Dietrich Bonhoeffer do? What would Martin Luther King, Jr. do? What would Jesus do?'"

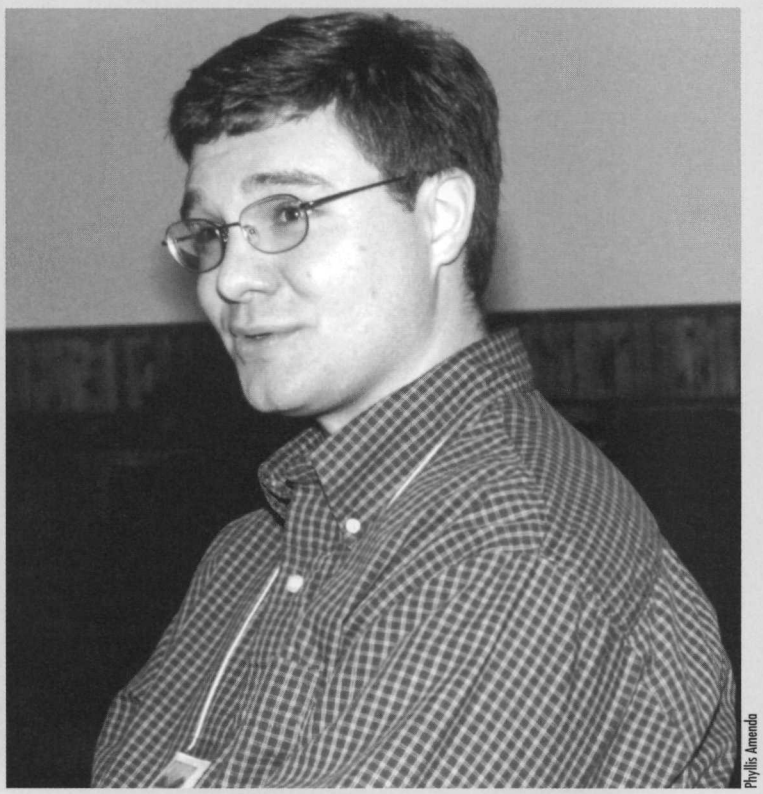
This past December, during a research trip in Mostar, Bosnia-Hercegovina, the children of this multi-ethnic city recovering from civil war and genocide painted a series of murals on what was the front line. Some were impressionistic nature scenes, the Simpsons or Beavis and Butthead. But in the center, right below the window opening of a high school out of which women were publicly raped during the war was an image of the Crucifixion. The text in English reads: "Jesus, come back, please!" [See photo, page 5.]

I find that plea for life back on the Dartmouth campus, too, where I work now as lay chaplain to The Edge, our Episcopal campus ministry. A wonderful job far from the "success" I expected four years ago. Here I meet Jesus in students struggling to "get a life" of their own in a place where conformity is often the cost of acceptance. Our work at The Edge to create an alternative, open community, with true common prayer and common table, is marked and shaped by these kinds of experiences of God outside the traditional boundaries of church.

Each week students from The Edge tutor kids at a low-income housing project. One afternoon, when I was playing outside with a bunch of the boys and getting frustrated by the chaos of yelling profanities, the re-enactment of WWF wrestling, and bikes crashing into each other, one of the fourth-graders came up to me and said, clear as day: "Come, follow me."

Leaving behind the pressures of academic and social performance, I've come to find life by finding God in unexpected places. I can follow that fourth-grader into the wonder and horror of his world. I can follow Matthew into the streets of his Boston. Nourished by the prayers of that beggar in St. Petersburg, in the midst of injustice and hopelessness I can cry out with the anonymous painter in Bosnia. Come, Lord Jesus.

— Joshua M. Thomas



Phyllis Amendo

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Chu sees NatGat as a place that "gives young adults a chance to develop their own sense of what it means to be in community. They learn to express that in an indigenous way that is true to who they are. Of course, it's a temporary experience, set in a particular time and when it's over, it's over. Yet it builds new relationships and important memories."

Amber York, a 22-year old college junior taking time off from college as she transfers from the University of Maryland to a school in Michigan, where she lives with her family, was one of the 10 or 12 young adults on the NatGat planning committee. The theme, based on a passage from Isaiah, was "Behold! I'm about to do a new thing."

Wanting to address the spiritual needs of 18 to 25 year olds, York says the NatGat planning committee made sure the gathering, which took place in Estes Park, Colo., would provide an opportunity for participants to get away from home and to become clearer about who they are and how to make their own place in the world. The gathering, says York, was "anything you wanted it to be. There were resources for spiritual guidance and resources about doing campus ministry or information about jobs you could get working with the church after college. There were so many resources and you could grab whatever you wanted. Or you could chill out and look at the mountains and realize how wonderful creation is.

"It was a wonderful experience — literally mountaintop, you know?" ●

Camille Colatosti is The Witness' *staff writer. She teaches English at Detroit's Hampton University and lives in Hamtramck, Mich.*

'These four years I have experienced community like I never have before'

This spring I am graduating from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), having majored for a few years in International Agriculture and finishing with Justice, Peace, and Conflict Studies (JPCS). I came to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley looking forward to living with Mennonites who were pacifists, lived simply, and strove for justice — all according to Jesus' example. I came looking for a home that I had not found as a transient military kid, nor as an Episcopalian. I came looking for people like me — passionate about treating everyone fairly, no matter what their economic or social status, nationality, gender, or any other characteristics, and passionate about living a real relationship with God. I expected Mennonite anti-nationalism and a desire for social justice to coincide with broad liberal ideas. I found most of what I came looking for, but my learning curve has been steep to correct my rosy view of reality.

Nonviolence, simplicity and justice only matter in relationships. These four years I have experienced community like I never have before. The word has become cliché, but I have begun to learn the deep complexity of the reality within "community." It has been excruciatingly painful, exhausting, comforting, joyous and energizing. And the times I have learned the most about what it means to live in community — within relationships that really matter — have been when my growing community has failed my expectations. Not all Mennonites take their pacifism seriously or have conscientiously thought it through. And the same with living simply. Discovering this was disappointing, but not earthshaking. However, living in the reality of a community of people who do not view justice the same has radically changed my idealistic view of "living in community."

While very focused on justice for the poor, hungry and imprisoned (see Matt. 25:35-36), the general EMU community has been on the conservative end of justice issues that are close to me. Using inclusive language and images of God, ordaining women as full ministers in God's church and seeking justice for people of diverse sexual identities have been crucial parts of my spiritual formation. Studying, learning, playing and worshiping with people who believe that God is masculine because that is what the Bible says, or women should not be ordained to ministry, or that LGBT people should not be full members of churches has been very difficult. Sitting with people who know and love me, but who do not believe that I should be a full member in their church because I love women, has challenged my concept of how a healthy community functions. However, I cannot simply write these people off as uncaring because I experience their love for me in a very real way. I know that their questions are part of their own deep search for God's Way.

As in every community, there are those who advocate for me as well as those who question me. I have found a community of people who are like-minded, but they do not comprise the entire community as I had naively thought they would when I entered college. Living and interacting honestly amongst ALL these different people who have become so dear to me has become my working definition of true community. It is both harder and more life-giving than anything I imagined.

After graduation, I am leaving this place and this time in my life to join the community of the Lutheran Volunteer Corps. I'm looking forward to getting away from the definitions this beloved EMU community has placed on me, and to start fresh where no one knows me. But I'm still moving on to build a new community that is sure to be complete with its own definitions and boxes. I find that even with the mess and pain, my life's meaning is in walking with people as they question and live, and knowing that people are walking with me. — *Rachel Orville*

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'FANS LIKE THAT WE'RE

New Wet Kojak

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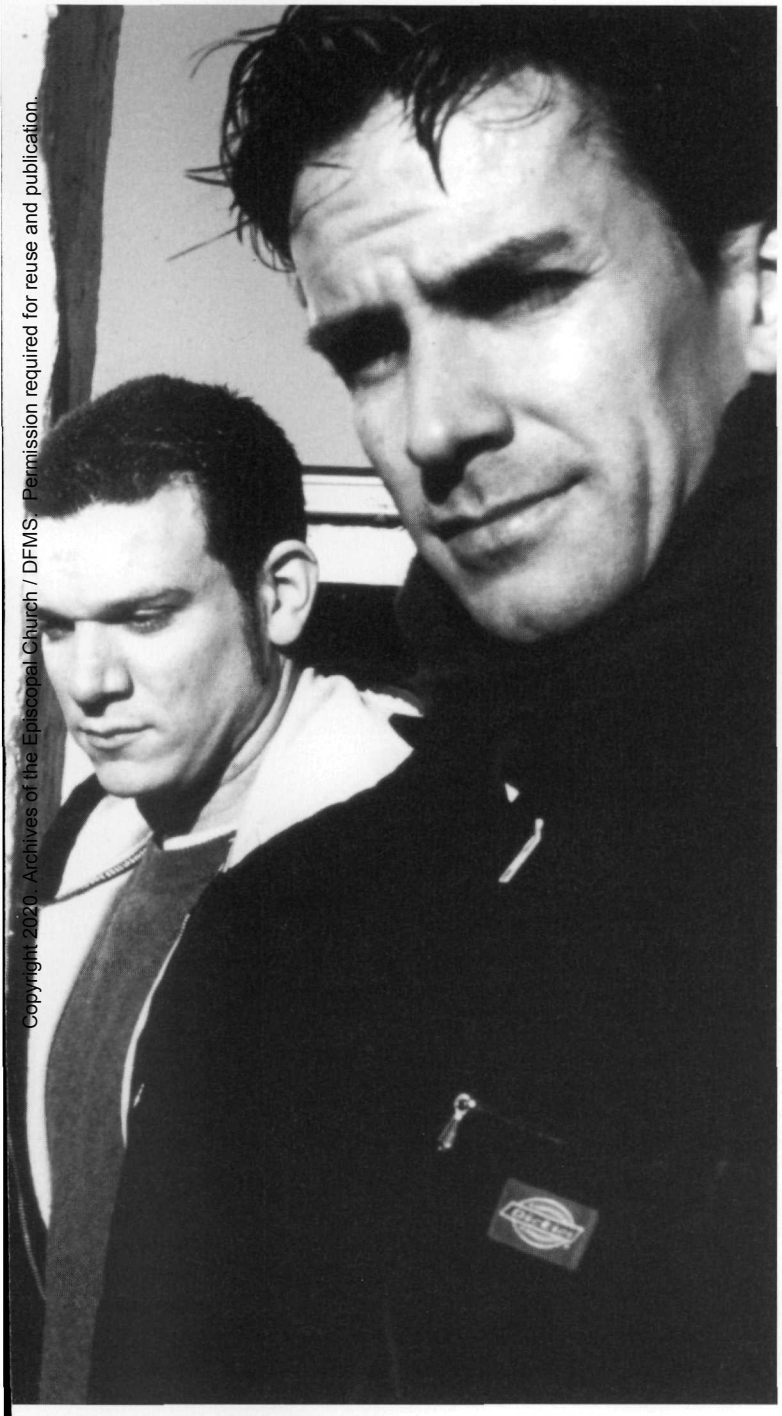
NOT A PARTY BAND'



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An interview with Johnny Temple

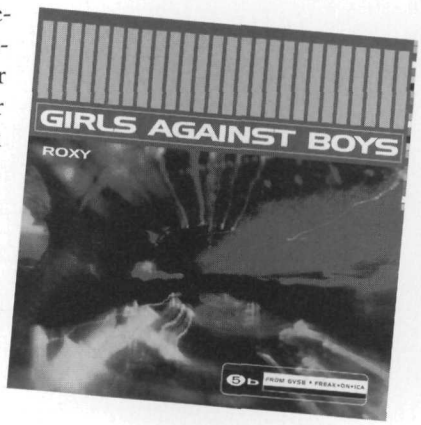
by Camille Colatosti

JOHNNY TEMPLE is a 34-year-old musician living in Brooklyn. He plays the bass in two rock bands, New Wet Kojak (Temple is at right in facing photo) and Girls Against Boys. Collectively, the bands have seven albums to their credit. Temple also runs Akashic Books, a Brooklyn-based independent publishing company that, he explains, is "dedicated to publishing urban literary fiction and political non-fiction by authors who are either ignored by the mainstream, or who have no interest in working within the ever-consolidating ranks of the major corporate publishers."

We asked Temple to talk with us about the important role that music plays for young adults as they work to figure out their values, their politics and their spirituality.

Camille Colatosti: Could you describe your bands?

Johnny Temple: New Wet Kojak is a strictly creative project. The music is avant-garde. It is rock, but the saxophone is a strong instrument in the mix. The rock is a little jazzy and moody.



Girls Against Boys is both a creative and a social or political project. The music is discordant as far as loud rock music goes. Our musical roots are in the punk rock tradition, but we are not a punk rock band. Still, the passion and aggressiveness of punk informs the band. Girls Against Boys is rhythm-based; we don't focus so much on melodies the way a lot of bands do. We like a wide variety of music, including funk

In search of peace

by Ruth Monette

NEW VOICES, NEW SONGS: Give Him a Call
Produced by the Ministries with Young People Cluster, Episcopal Church USA, 2001

NEW VOICES, NEW SONGS: Give Him A Call was a project undertaken by the Ministries with Young People Cluster at the national office of the Episcopal Church in the U.S. The Cluster brought together young adults — ranging in age from 16 to 26 — to write, record, and perform their own music for 72 hours. The CD that this weekend of intense musical expression produced is an eclectic mix of styles ranging from the spoken word to gospel to R&B to country to pop-like tunes reminiscent of such popular artists as Jewel. While some of the songs could be described as "praise" songs (a style of music that some young adults find more meaningful than traditional hymns), many others sound more like music that might be found on the more successful Christian rock stations.

The songs are described as "reflecting the feelings, experiences, and passion of the composers in their quest for God." And, indeed, the lyrics of these 13 songs do tell a remarkable story of the faith of their authors. For example, Mary Bragg's "See the Rain Fall" chronicles the presence of God in the pain that follows a friend's death:

It's the dawning of a brand new day
It'll be the day you took your last breath.
The future slowly fades away.
Seventeen and you face your own death
Why did this have to happen this way?

I see the rain fall.
I hear your voice call.
I feel your breath on me.
Holy Spirit.

In "What's So Amazing About Grace," Seth Pearson pointedly explores the challenge of maintaining faith when God seems out of reach:

I have goals I never realized
And my innocence compromised.
I have fears that haunt me from my past
My relationships — they never last
All my dreams never came true
And you know what? I blame You!
So tell me, what's so amazing about grace?

His ending is perhaps too simple — the singer turns from God only to be immediately reminded of God's presence in his life — however what is not always so simple in life can become so in song.

Songs such as "Love of God," "Give Him a Call," and "I Want to Walk with You" are best described as praise music — appropriate for worship in a contemporary setting. The lyrics are simple and express the joy Christians find in their relationships with God:

Love of God, Love of God
You are all we ever wanted
Love of God, Love of God
Fill our hearts on this yo' day.

Overall, this collection of music presents a wide spectrum of the music that young adults find meaningful. Listening closely, it also provides insight into this generation's spiritual quests. First, the CD as a whole clearly communicates the strength of the composers' faith. In each of these songs, a deep trust is being placed in God. A trust that God is present in their lives, knows them personally, and will provide comfort in times of pain, stress and doubt.

Consistently, these songs equate a relationship with God to a sense of peace. This overwhelming need for peace speaks directly to the peace that is so hard to find within the hectic lives of young adults. Like all of the population, young adults have embraced the drive to overcrowd their schedules, leaving very little time for quiet, peace and even themselves. Additionally, this music points to the challenges of being a young adult — the sense of having no voice, the sense of having more questions than answers, the sense of an unknown future, the desire for guidance on the journey.

New Voices, New Songs: Give Him a Call *is available from Episcopal Parish Services (800-903-5544) in sets of five CDs for $15.00. Additionally, the CD liner promises that lyrics, songsheets, MP3 files and additional information is available at <http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/myp/musiclab.htm>.*

music and hip-hop and rhythm-and-blues.

We have a guitarist, a bass player, a drummer, a keyboard player and a vocalist. We write the music collaboratively. The singer writes the lyrics.

C.C.: Why Girls Against Boys?

J.T.: When the band started in the early 1990s — our first album was in 1991 — there was a boys' club mentality in rock music. There are so many more women in rock now than there were 10 years ago, and this is good. But back then we wanted to make a statement about the boys' club. We wanted to say that, even though the band is all men, we aren't part of the boys' club. We are Girls Against Boys.

C.C.: How does your music challenge the boys' club of rock 'n' roll?

J.T.: We put out our first three records on Touch & Goan independent label in Chicago. There is a wonderful community of musicians in the independent music world. Now we've signed a contract with Geffen Records. This is not an independent company. It is a major recording corporation. This has helped us get some things that we couldn't get before, like more money so that we can all afford health insurance. But now we have to struggle to stay part of the independent music community. Geffen, and other major corporations, aren't really part of a music community. They are just trying to make money. Working with them means that we are associated with a business that focuses on the bottom line, and not with an independent label that is interested just in producing good music.

The music industry is corrupt, market-driven and it is getting worse. It is disillusioning to work with a company that should be about promoting creativity but isn't. This is not what major record companies are about.

C.C.: This issue of *The Witness* looks at young people as they make a transition into adulthood. What role do you think music plays for young people?

J.T.: I want first to talk about myself. I've always been inspired by music, but it was really important to me when I was a teenager. When I was a teen, and also when I was in college, music was important in helping me understand issues of social justice. Both my parents were liberals and activists, and I felt fortunate to grow up in Washington, D.C. The bands there saw a connection between music and social justice. The bands would speak out. They would play at rallies or organize rallies.

In D.C., there is a strong underground music scene. This influenced me as a musician. It taught me that if you have a platform, you need to use it responsibly for the greater good.

In college, I was involved in political activism, but I felt that there was a social component missing. You see this throughout the left in America. Since the 1960s, politics and culture seem to have gone on divergent paths. Lots of political movements have become unexciting to young people, who have so much creativity and energy. But this needs to be channeled.

Music can be a wonderful tool to channel young peoples' energy in a constructive direction. This is what Girls Against Boys tries to do in our music.

The left has been very ignorant about what is important to young people. We saw this in the last presidential election where Gore and Lieberman blew the young peoples' vote by this overt moralizing. While moral issues are important, morality has to be expressed in an inclusive manner. Clinton won the 18–25-year-old voting block by 18 points, but Gore won this group by only two points because he didn't extend himself to young people.

Young people need to be engaged in political issues. If they were, then we might not have such an apathetic country. Music can help accomplish this.

C.C.: How does music help create a connection between young people and politics?

J.T.: Music can foster community where values are taught and reinforced and acted upon, so that certain issues, such as domestic violence against women or the AIDS epidemic, can be couched in a way that makes them seem relevant and vital to young people.

C.C.: We hear a lot of reporting on the way that popular music fosters negative values and violence, but we don't hear much about music promoting positive values or a sense of social conscience.

J.T.: If you have a sick society that promotes violence, you will have sick expressions. I don't so much blame the Eminems out there for promoting violence. I blame the politicians and the economy that has created a society that is morally bankrupt, where only the bottom line matters.

Don't misunderstand. I do think that music can inspire violence and abuse, so I don't hold up Eminem as a sort of hero, but I don't think that the solution is to encroach on his freedom of speech. We need instead a society where notions of respect and justice are made real, rather than a society where these are presented just as shallow concepts.

The main critics of the violence in popular music are these politicians who are just grandstanding. They have no higher moral message.

C.C.: How does music help foster a connection between young people and what is positive? Do you see a spiritual component in music?

J.T.: When I was a young adult, music was my own personal religion. I think that a lot of young people feel this way. Music fueled me and made me feel more fulfilled. It drove me to get involved in causes.

There is also a strong spiritual component in music — perhaps because music allows

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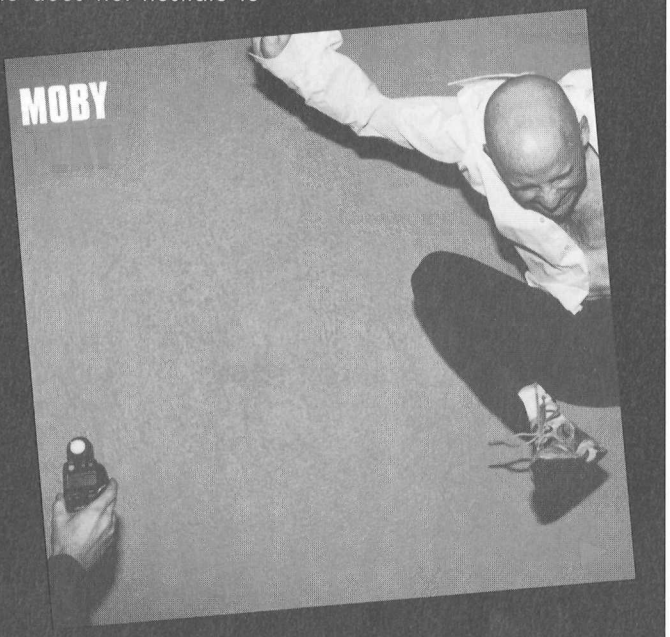
A new and spiritual form of music

by Erika von Haaren

Moby. He's a man that seems to be an enigma, but is actually quite clear. A musician that has broken the bonds of traditional genres, expectations and musicality, he has created a new and spiritual form of music that has appealed to the masses. He declares himself a devout Christian and many have said that he could be considered a bit radical in his love for Christ. His music is hard to describe. He has used everything from techno to punk to Negro spirituals to create his unique sound. He refuses to fit into a Top-40 box — which may, ironically, account for his popularity. He is seeking a more global understanding of sound and relationships and so he has experimented with everything and anything that may touch people's hearts and touches his own heart as well. There is an almost ethereal quality to his musical masterpieces, but then there is also the low bass beat that makes your feet come alive when you hear it. It is a liberating experience in music.

He came onto the scene about 10 years ago, but didn't see much recognition until around 1994–1995. Moby was unique because he was the very first person to put a face on dance music. Most dance remixes are done in a studio by technicians who are not necessarily performers. Moby got out there, mixed his music and played the club scene. Lately, though, he has been considered a contradiction in terms. He seems to be a firm believer in the "both/and" syndrome and, in truth, all parties are getting their share. For instance, on his latest album, Moby sold all of the tracks to commercial creators. His justification was that he wanted the music to get out there in any way it could. At the same time, he declared his distaste for commercialism by donating money from one of the tracks that had been used in a car commerical to an organization that was working to reduce cars in America.

Whatever his politics, his music is a new and thrilling expression of joy and love in Christ. And the fact that he does not hesitate to make himself and his faith heard is also a very emancipating idea. He includes passionately written essays in his liner notes for his albums that express his opinions on everything from drug use to weaponry. In a time when we are struggling to find great new role models, it is thrilling to have this man who has beaten the odds with his faith by his side.



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people to let go of this world, the reality in which we live. Music can be like a dream. It can free you from the drudgery of everyday life. It can provide catharsis. It can provide hope and inspiration. Music can elevate someone's consciousness.

C.C.: How do you see yourself inspiring others?

J.T.: I do this through my music and also through my publishing company, Akashic Books.

All of the members of Girls Against Boys have active lives outside of the band. This is important because rock 'n' roll is not inherently this wonderful thing. Fans come to us to say that it is so cool that we do other things besides play music, that we are active in other aspects of life, that we are all doing things that we think are constructive. We aren't hedonist and music is often portrayed this way. The media shows musicians to be these partiers. Fans like that we're not a party band. Our music is feeling-based and intellectual. We use rock 'n' roll as a vehicle of engagement, to engage fans beyond the music itself.

I play bass but I also publish books. So I read a lot and edit and put out great works. Literature is a wonderful tool to raise consciousness.

Akashic Books publishes mostly novels — we've put out 11 so far, but we are also branching into nonfiction. We just published *Falun Gong's Challenge to China: Spiritual Practice or 'Evil Cult'?* by Danny Schechter. Falun Gong is a meditation-based spiritual movement that the Chinese government branded as counter-revolutionary and has vowed to crush. Danny Schechter is a human rights journalist and working with him, and people like him, is the direction I want to take the book company.

Falun Gong has very few advocates in America because the mainstream media has embraced the U.S. government's view of them. Schechter's book has been widely reviewed, so its message is getting out. My

dream is to publish books and play music that has an impact on public policy.

Fiction has been the mainstay of Akashic Books so far. I love novels. As editor-in-chief, founder and publisher, I find it exciting to work on novels and to work on non-fiction. One of my goals is to challenge readers, and to take on stereotypes or misconceptions.

For instance, take the idea of political correctness. Some people feel that this has evolved into a kind of censorship. I have always felt funny about this since political correctness comes from notions of social justice. I publish African-American authors, Latin authors, women and gay authors — those who open up language and dialogue so that you can talk about wanting to end racism without having to fit your language into how someone else wants you to express yourself.

Most of our books — novels — are provocative on a number of levels. Being provocative does not have to be heavy-handed. You have a whole book — 300 pages or so — to provide a lot of nuanced discussion and dialogue on a topic.

C.C.: Why is this nuanced look at politics important?

J.T.: Sometimes, for young people especially, the nuances of politics can get lost in political dogma. I saw this in college campus activism when I was younger. People can get so vehement in what they believe that they shut others out, or cut themselves off, from others.

We need to allow for differences of opinion, for real discussion and dialogue. This is the only way that we can figure things out. This is especially true for young people. Music helps them look at an issue or topic in a nuanced way. This is for the greater good and it's the way to get something done — and to try to make the world a better place. ●

Camille Colatosti is The Witness' *staff writer. She lives in Hamtramck, Mich.*

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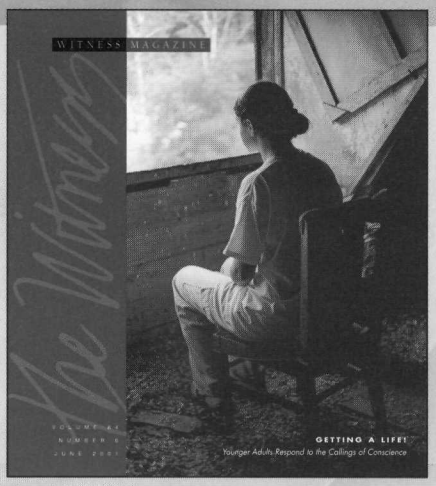

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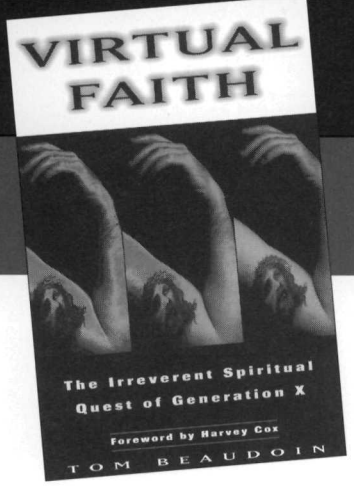

Virtual faith and the NetGeneration

by Joshua M. Thomas

"GOLDEN-HAIRED, blue-eyed Jesus seeks loving young woman (22–29), preferably of recent Norse-Germanic heritage, who wishes to live in the spirit of the eternal. This is a legitimate ad. I am highly spiritual, though not religious, and have often been called Jesus because of my appearance and powerful spirituality that I attempt to share with others."

Where else could you find this personal ad but at www.jesus.com? This web site, which contains both a contest to win a shower with Jesus and a series of sermons that offer searching cultural commentary on GenX, is a perfect example of what Tom Beaudoin calls "The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X," the subtitle of his book *Virtual Faith*.

The Vatican's naming of St. Isidore of Seville, a 7th-century author of one of the world's first databases, as patron saint of computers and the internet is a canonical recognition of the growing importance of the online world. E-mail, e-commerce, web pages, instant message services, streaming audio and video, newsgroups and chat rooms increasingly shape our culture, especially that of young people. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 73 percent of those between ages 12 and 17, and 75 percent of those between ages 18 and 29, and 29 percent of those under 12 have been online (www.pewinternet.org). So at ease in the cyberspace of our post-modern culture, it should be no surprise that youth and young adults look online to form spiritual connections.

Virtual Faith

Full of examples from music videos, fashion and cyberspace, and drawing on research in coffeehouses, jazz clubs and chat rooms, Tom Beaudoin's *Virtual Faith* (1998) is what he calls "the first sustained attempt to develop a theology about, by and for Generation X by attending to popular culture." A Roman Catholic young adult himself, Beaudoin uses theological methods to identify and comment on the often "irreverent" spiritual expressions of GenX — things like pierced navels, Goth clothing and Pearl Jam's "Jeremy." GenXers grew up with Madonna, Kurt Cobain, divorce, AIDS, rap, E.T., and Tammy Faye Baker, and so Beaudoin's chapter subtitles like "Sinister Ministers" and "Subversive Sacramentals" capture the paradox of a simultaneous yearning for authentic faith and deep suspicion of its traditional manifestations.

The "virtual faith" of GenXers present in pop culture is both real and artificial, in the same way as cyberspace both does and does not "exist." Their "religiosity," the word Beaudoin uses, is highly ambivalent, at once valuing the cyber world of virtual selves, where screen names of any gender, age, sexuality or ethnicity can experiment boldly in online communities. At the same time, they see the cardinal sin of institutions as hypocrisy, a lack of correspondence between what one is and what one pretends to be.

But GenX is a culture of "both/and," where posturing and authenticity meet. "If virtual faith is to have any significant value," Beaudoin writes, "it must help clarify the real, and it must make our authentic lived practice more truly religious." In fact, he sees irreverence as a spiritual gift, responding to an institutional Church gone awry, and inviting a return to a living tradition of a more radical Jesus.

In the anonymous freedom of cyberspace, people can both criticize the institutions, create parallel communities and gain access to religious knowledge which will, at its best, reshape religion in the "real" world. Thus, when explored and appreciated, the chief characteristics of young adult "irreverent" religiosity — suspicion of institutions, desire for an experience of living faith, religious dimensions of suffering, and ambiguity in faith — become gifts to the institutions that are being criticized.

Voices of the NetGeneration

For as much as the church is beginning to talk about GenX spirituality, we need to realize that high schools and college campuses are now populated by a different group of people. Variously known as GenY, Bridgers, or Millennials, it is the designation "The NetGeneration" that captures the crucial importance of technology, computers and especially the internet in forming how they approach and think about the world. Though some studies are beginning to systematize our understanding of this generation (www.millennials.com, www.growingupdigital.com, www.millennialsrising.com), for most of its members postmodernism and the internet (whose use is beginning to cut across economic, racial and ethnic divides) are taken for granted.

They have grown up to expect that, with a

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click of the mouse, they can access information and people from every imaginable religious group, spiritual practice, political theology, traditional and alternative. Beaudoin writes in *Virtual Faith* that "Cyberspace threatens the stability of religious institutions because it is a radically pluralistic space." Institutional power is thus leveled and each presence on the web assumes a "relative equality."

Rather than theorize about the spiritual connections youth and young adults are making, I sent a survey (by e-mail of course!) to high-school and college students I know asking for their insights. Since this is a generation for which truth is captured in stories, within a particular context and experience, I offer a sampling of the responses I received. They represent the varied and sometimes conflicting attitudes this NetGeneration has to the notion of spiritual connections with the technology that helped form them:

- "The internet provides spiritual resources to individuals who might not have access to the same information or support from their home congregations. I refer specifically to LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] people who, although they may face stigma from their home congregations, can assuage spiritual doubt and find strength from on-line reconciling ministries based in their same faith tradition, or one similar. More generally, it can serve as a sounding board to experiment with and discuss ideas one might not feel comfortable examining with their own pastors or youth leaders. Such an experience can create a second 'virtual church' where one communes in an entirely different way within an electronic faith community."
- "Being a non-practicing Methodist attending a Jesuit university, one would think I am force-fed religion on a daily basis. On the contrary, I commonly find myself in deep discussion regarding aspects and beliefs of different religions. Like many of my fellow students, we are being taught about a religion with which we don't necessarily agree. When we come together we discuss what we are looking for in religion. This is where the internet comes to play. Rather than receiving misguided information from a slightly prejudiced source (i.e. priests) about a different religion, we can 'easily' research the topic for ourselves quickly and anonymously. I believe this takes away a lot of the fear or shame a person may experience when deciding to change religions."
- "I've been a part of a couple of discussion listserves that have addressed all sorts of things like the role of young people in the church, the nature of God, Post-modern theory."
- "Cyberspace? Religion? Interesting. I don't put much stock personally in what I see on TV or the internet for that matter. There is a whole slew of false information and any number of ways you could think of to send people off on life-size tangents if they actually listened. I continually find that the internet, or something so cold and unfeeling can offer me no comfort spiritually."
- "I've never connected cyberspace/internet and religion before. Now that I am thinking about it, the idea doesn't sound great. It makes me think of weird sects."
- "The internet has been my vehicle for learning about my church, religion in general, and the Church in general. Websites like those for our church and www.anglicansonline.org have given me a way to answer questions that I had quickly and easily when they came up, without having to go find someone to ask and risk feeling stupid for asking a question to which I 'should' have known the answer."

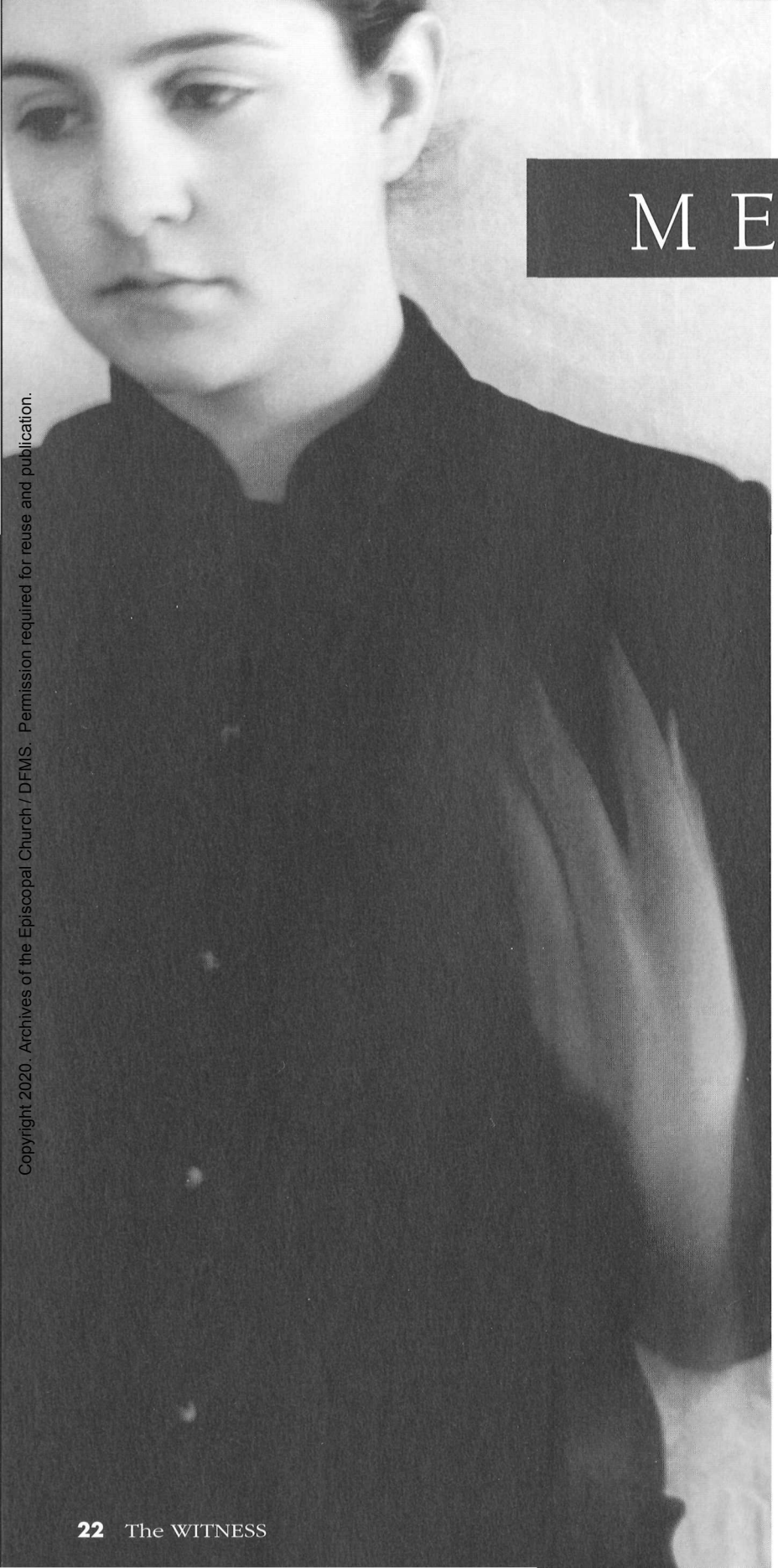
Online resources

In an age when having a web page is becoming an essential marker of existence both for individuals and organizations, nearly everything imaginable is available online. You'll find cyberchurch communities by and for GenXers, like The Ooze (www.theooze.com). Other more traditional churches are using the internet to reach out to younger generations. St. Hillary's Anglican Church in Kew, Australia, goes by the name SHACK (www.shack.org.au) and has age-specific programs like Solace, Eleven50, Wipeout, Revolution and Community @ 5. An outreach of Bethesda Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis, Spirit Garage (www.spiritgarage.org), known as "The Church with a Really Big Door" has become an important model for young adult ministry in the U.S. Nearly every campus ministry has its own web site and uses e-mail as a central means of building community and sharing information.

Spiritual Connections

Any discussion of spirituality online opens the door (or the portal, to use net language) to something infinitely diverse and complicated. From the impact of multiple screen names and virtual personalities on identity formation, to the popularization of alternative spiritualities, to the irreverent expressions of pop culture, to the democratization of the knowledge and, thus, the power of institutional faith traditions, the internet and cyberspace are radically changing how we think about religion. One college freshman said it this way on his instant messenger profile: "God is a DJ." ●

***Joshua M. Thomas** is a Class of 2000 graduate of Dartmouth College who is lay chaplain at The Edge, Dartmouth's parish-based Episcopal campus ministry.*



MENTORING

— peers who care about your soul

by Jacqueline Schmitt

THE FIRST TIME Marla came to church, the door was locked. It was the first Sunday in Advent, and our congregation had gone to a local church for Lessons and Carols. I got a scribbled note from the seminary dean, who happened to be in his office near the chapel when she tried to get in.

"Here's a student for you," he wrote. "Marla Johnson," and he gave me her dorm and e-mail addresses.

Despite that inauspicious beginning, Marla persevered. We contacted her, invited her to church, assured her we would be there this time, and included her in our Canterbury student community.

One day I had lunch with Marla. It turned out she had been thinking for some time that God was calling her to ordained ministry.

"I remember being very young the first time it occurred to me that I should be a priest," she said. "I was in church listening to the sermon, and I thought, 'God gave me all the right gifts to do what that man does.' I realized that God had blessed me with an incredible intuition, good speaking skills, intelligence, creativity and compassion. I felt then that God gave me those gifts so that I could use them to serve as a leader in the church."

Marla had grown up in the Episcopal Church and her family were active members of the parish to which she still belonged and attended when at home. In spite of that predisposition to find the Episcopal Church a friendly place (an experience by no means shared by all young adults), she did not come looking for us until the last service of the fall quarter during her freshman year. She kept her Episcopal identity to herself on a campus of students either blatantly secular or conservatively faithful.

"It has been very difficult for me to embrace a Christian identity in the presence of members of my own generation," Marla told me. "The majority of those whom I associate with consider organized religion to be the Antichrist. So many people have been hurt by the judgment dictated by the rigid rules of the church. It has taken time for me to

Rachel Tobie, Colby College

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understand that the more verbal I am about my beliefs, the easier it is for people to see that not all Christians fall into the same category, and that there can be a place for free-thinking people in the church."

Community member, then minister

Marla became an active member of the Northwestern Canterbury community. She attended services regularly, went on retreats, worked with our seminarian on outreach projects, began hanging out at Canterbury House. The students wanted to make Canterbury House more open to the community, to be a place where students could feel comfortable to drop in and stay to talk with friends, study or hang out. As we talked about who would live at Canterbury House the next year, which would be Marla's senior year, it became clear to the community that these two student residents should take some leadership roles. At other campus ministries, these students are often called "peer ministers."

Marla and another student, Teresa, were interested in living at Canterbury House, but they were definitely not interested in being called "peer ministers."

"Just what would you want us to do?" they asked. My reply was that they should do the things I could not do: Plan the social events that students would want to come to, organize the outreach projects that students would be interested in, contact and invite new students to join our community.

"Oh, we can do that," they said. "We just don't want to be peer ministers."

In the beginning of the year, Marla and Teresa were tentative about their evangelistic duties. They had no interest in thinking of themselves as evangelists, but they wrote the welcoming letter that we sent to the new students who identified themselves as Episcopalian and we planned how we would advertise our community as the school year began. The day after the new students moved into their dorms, Marla visited everyone whose name we had received, invited them to church the next day, left them some candy and a magnet that told who we were and where we were. The next day, most of them showed up — and stayed throughout the year.

Marla and Teresa quickly moved from being shy about organizing our community activities to being very imaginative and bold. They sent out weekly e-mail messages, they planned parties, they cajoled students into going on service projects, they joined the planning team for our provincial retreat.

"My friends thought I was crazy," Marla later reflected. "Even the people at Canterbury were thrown off a little. Although I had always participated, I had kept to myself most of my first three years and suddenly I was everywhere, doing everything. I don't think anyone understood how much I was loving it."

Asking for discernment

But it was soon no surprise to the community when both Marla and Teresa said, "We need a discernment group."

"Discernment" has become a buzz word for those in the "ordination process," and yes, Marla and Teresa were both exploring calls to ministry. But vocational questions are larger than trying to decide what one wants to do to make a living. The eight students in the group were looking at all aspects of what God might be calling them to do, looking at patterns of how their communities had recognized these callings over the years.

"In junior high," Marla said, "I took a career quiz which dictated that I should be a photographer, a dental hygienist, or a priest. My friends thought that the idea of my being a priest was hysterical, and they teased me for a long time. My teacher looked at the list, and said, 'You'd be a good priest.' However, it was the words of my peers and not my teacher that mattered the most to me. I dismissed the idea, saying that I could never do something like that."

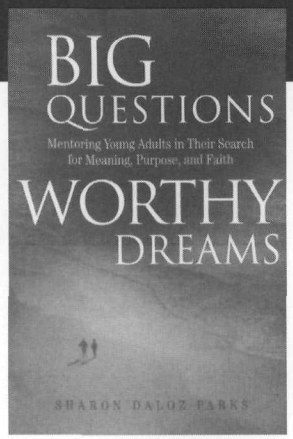
What the Canterbury community gave to Marla that year was the chance to try out what it might mean to answer God's call to be a minister and to try it out among a community of peers who wouldn't laugh at her. Far from it — the community thrived with Marla as one of the leaders. She is lively and fun, and she grew comfortable with her role as organizer and evangelist.

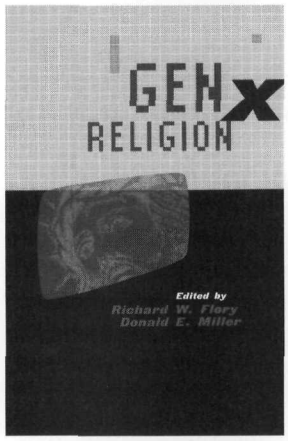
"I know that this is the right thing for me. Even when I am unhappy or stressed, I find myself passing people on campus whose lives I have touched or been touched by through Canterbury, and I know that this is what my life should be about."

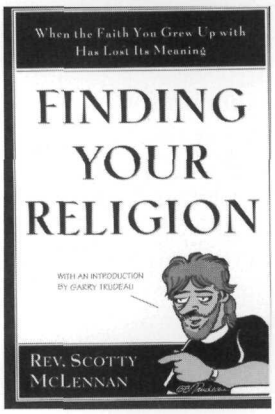
A 'true' mentoring community

Marla's vocational search was more meaningful for her because it took place in the context of a community that mentored her. To have her junior-high-school teacher affirm what she saw in Marla's vocation was not enough, nor was it enough for me, as the chaplain, to say, "Marla, be our peer minister." The role elders play in the mentoring community is important, but the process is enriched by peers who see in you your exciting potential and affirm who you are and hope with you about who you may become.

During the young adult years, when we move from adolescence into adulthood, mentors play important roles in our lives. They serve as guideposts into the grown-up world, they answer our questions, they help us imagine who we might become. Most importantly, they take us seriously. They affirm who we are and encourage us along the way we need to go. A mentor, above all,







Finding religion in the young-adult years

WE IN CAMPUS MINISTRY credit the work of Sharon Daloz Parks and her colleagues in giving us a theoretical underpinning to our work with younger adults. In *Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (Beacon Press, 1996), Parks and her colleagues looked at 100 people, not "superstars," but people who had lived lifetimes of conscious work on behalf of a larger world. They wanted to find out what these folk had in common, what experiences led to their commitments and beliefs, who supported and challenged them. They discovered that what happens during the young adult years is, indeed, critical to their development into "good" adults. A mentoring environment and opportunities to engage constructively outside their home communities are two marks in that development.

Recently, Parks has reworked an earlier book, *The Critical Years* (in which she identified "young adulthood" apart from adolescence and older adulthood as an era of life with its own challenges and advantages) into *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith* (Jossey-Bass, 2000). In the process of this reworking, Parks discovered several critical social changes which have impacted development in the young-adult years. Economic changes, lengthening life span and increasing religious and demographic pluralism are among the background patterns against which we understand "faith in its broadest, most inclusive form as the activity of making meaning that all human beings share."

"This book," Parks writes, "describes primary features of the development of meaning and faith in the young adult years, during which ways of thinking, forms of authority and patterns of belonging may be recast."

Parks underscores the importance of gaining this understanding when we work with young adults. "If we are to mentor the next generations well," she says, "it has become a matter of considerable urgency that we more adequately understand the formation of the young adult imagination and its implications for forming meaning, purpose and faith."

A new book by sociologists Richard W. Flory and Donald E. Miller, *Gen X Religion* (Routledge, 2000), examines a variety of religious expressions among younger adults. The communities described in the book demonstrate the range of religious pluralism in America, from Christian tattoo parlors to the International Church of Christ movement to a Gen X shabbat. In this study of non-traditional religious communities, the authors raise questions about what Gen Xers have in common with baby boomers and what lasting impact their tendency toward fluidity and distrust of hierarchies may have on the American religious landscape.

Finally, *Finding Your Religion: When the Faith You Grew Up With Has Lost Its Meaning* (HarperCollins, 1999) is a book campus ministers are reading with their students. The author, Scotty McLennan, now Dean of Religious Life at Stanford, walks the reader through, says one colleague who bought 20 copies to give to students, "the process of entering into the stream of a religious tradition." McLennan was Garry Trudeau's college roommate, and was the inspiration for Doonesbury's "fighting young priest," Rev. Scott Sloan (the cartoon character graces the book's cover).

McLennan tells the stories of young adults looking for meaning and wondering if they will ever find a place for themselves, and affirms that it is part of the religious quest to struggle, to be confused or alienated, and to be surprised at finding meaning in unexpected ways.

— Jacqueline Schmitt

is someone who cares about our souls.

The term "mentor" has connotations in the business world, where young employees are assigned mentors to guide them through the corporate structure. Such mentors are especially helpful, we hope, to women or members of minority groups new to the corporate culture. Yet one cannot always say that these mentors care about the souls of the trainees under their care. The business is, of course, interested in what the new employee will produce and how it will affect the bottom line, but a true mentor plays an important role in our growing up, and is someone who is interested in who we may become. A mentor in one profession may well recognize that the young person under his or her care may leave and do something else.

Mentoring communities are places where this process extends beyond a relationship with one older (and, one hopes, wiser) person, but includes a community of peers. Students know that classes that operate like this are the most exciting, filled with learning both for teacher and students. Indeed, surveys of students here at Northwestern often reveal their yearning for both significant connections with faculty who can both teach them and get to know them and for time for significant conversations with their peers. They know that being part of a community of learners helps them really learn, helps them integrate what they learn into their lives.

Campus ministries are, at their best, mentoring communities. They are located at places where younger adults wrestle with questions of vocation, identity, intimacy, loyalty to institutions and where they test the trustworthiness of authority. The

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more intentional these ministries are at keeping the concerns of students at their core, the more successful they are in supporting the faith development of the younger adults in these congregations.

Church mentoring beyond the campus?

The church beyond the campus, however, demonstrates less commitment to younger adults. Last February, Charles N. Fulton, of the Episcopal Church Building Fund, wrote, "The average age of a person in the U.S. is estimated to be 34.6 years old. The average age of an Episcopalian is estimated to be 57 years old." A new Alban Institute study found under 4 percent of Episcopal clergy are under age 35, compared with just over 19 percent in 1974.

Young adults want to connect. They want to make a difference in the world and in their lives. They live in a society with fewer and fewer of the markers which traditionally have guided the way toward a responsible, healthy and committed adulthood.

The way some professions recruit young adults is instructive. I knew a student who decided by her senior year that, after two years in the Peace Corps, she wanted to go to graduate school in geology. Each summer of her undergraduate years, she participated in significant internships at university-related research facilities. She was invited to professional conferences where undergraduates presented papers on their research and graduate schools sought them out to apply to their programs. She was accepted at a graduate school, which was happy to defer her admission until after her stint in the Peace Corps, because it recognized the importance of the experience. As a 22-year-old she was valued for her abilities and her potential.

There are parallels in other graduate and professional fields, as well as in the trades and the workforce. There are few opportunities in the Episcopal Church for young adults to be encouraged to try out lay or ordained ministry, to be recognized for the contributions they make now or for the potential they have for leadership in the future. As an institution, we cut our adolescents and younger adults off after confirmation, where they drift in the sea of culture until we hope they come back with their children as a pledging unit for a suburban parish.

Alarming as they are, church membership statistics should not be the only impetus to care about younger adults. We should care about them because they are valuable people. We should take seriously the vows we took for them at baptism and care enough to provide mentors, mentoring communities and mentoring experiences that support their growing into the adults they hope and dream they will be. ●

***Jacqueline Schmitt** is Episcopal Chaplain at Northwestern University and editor of* Plumbline, *the now on-line journal of the Episcopal Society for Ministry in Higher Education, <www.esmhe.org/Plumbline/>.*

What can a church do for us without being pushy or apathetic?

PEOPLE MY AGE (24) are an interesting bunch. We are a potpourri of college students, working people, married, single, atheists and faithful all tossed into one big group commonly referred to as Young Adults. We are the folks who keep landlords in business. We are the ones who have made "Ramen Noodles" a household staple. We are the ones who will probably buy that beat-up old VW for $350 because we need to be able to get around. We are struggling for independence — we need to begin careers and learn what our parents meant by the phrase, "making ends meet" — but oftentimes don't know where to start. We are also struggling to define our own beliefs, morals, and priorities as our own, without the influence of parents, teachers or siblings.

Each of us is an individual and, while our challenges are much the same, we each have our own story when it comes to where we are coming from and where we hope to go.

Most churches don't really have a solid idea of what to do with us. There are few, if any, programs that are solely designed to help 18–30 year-olds learn about their faith in the context of all the massive changes and upheavals in our lives. That is no one's fault, of course, but simply a truth. We are hard to figure out. Many of us are already over-committed and the very thought of having to commit to one more thing is terrifying. At the same time, we are seeking community and that one consistent aspect of our lives in the midst of the maelstrom.

So what can a church do for us without being pushy or apathetic?

The ministry we are developing in the Diocese of Minnesota is one that allows a commitment, but also allows for flexibility. Based on a strategic vision which we developed in September 2000, we decided that the most important aspects of our mission would be: (1) putting down roots within the church, (2) discovering our identities in Christ with community and (3) living joyfully in our day. To that end, we have created four core teams to focus on the different aspects of making this program happen, including a team in charge of finding creative ways to fund events and our general operating costs as a whole.

Currently there are about 60 people who have taken an active interest in what we are creating. We have an average of six people per team who meet monthly to form new ideas and brainstorm possibilites that would allow us to grow spiritually — because spiritual growth is at the center of what we are doing. We are seeking to learn more about the love of God and how we can live into that love.

It's an exciting time. At age 24, I find myself thrilled that even though I am headed for a time of great change, I will have this community upon which I can lean when I need to. And when someone else goes through a similar situation, I will be able to provide a shoulder for them as well. It is that which holds us together during a time when we often feel as though we are coming unglued. We ask for your prayers as we continue to strive to make this a reality in Minnesota.

— Erika von Haaren

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SERVING AND

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DISCERNING

— on $100 a month

by Alison Witty, Jon Erdman and Jeff Huston

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IN THE SUMMER OF 2000 the first class of interns arrived at Resurrection House, a ministry that the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection created to provide recent college graduates with the opportunity to spend a year living in community and working on personal discernment issues. With the help of the Diocese of Nebraska, the Hitchcock Foundation, and lots of dedicated parishioners, the people of Church of the Resurrection had turned their old church rectory into a home for three or four interns. The hope was to bring talented young people to serve in an urban setting where help was needed, and to enable those same people to get a first-hand look at Christian ministry from different perspectives. We tried to find folks who sensed at least the possibility of a calling to serve in ordered ministry, hoping that some might decide to become priests in the church.

There are three parts to the intern's work-week. Twenty hours a week of service in a local church — doing church-based ministry in an Episcopal setting. Then 10 hours a week working in some kind of gritty, urban outreach ministry. And finally, 10 hours a week of community building, including personal spiritual direction, worship, personal prayer and community meetings.

Spiritual direction is a key part of the program. It is a wonderful help that our spiritual director is a veteran of community living herself and so knows the kinds of issues that the interns are facing. The whole program is set against a backdrop of very simple living. The interns get less than a $100 a month on which to live, plus a modest food allowance for the whole house. We knew that simple living was a hallmark of most successful Christian communities and so we asked the interns to sign a covenant before they came to Omaha: no monetary gifts, no loans, no jobs on the side. They were challenged to live for nine months as simply and lightly as possible, even to the extent of depending upon the church members to help provide some meals and transportation.

My impression is that the simple living aspect of the program has been one of the great challenges — and great blessings — for the interns. They are consistently declining financial help from well-meaning family members, friends and even church members. And they have made very intentional decisions to keep their lives uncluttered. They have no TV; they use the local library for computer access; at Christmas, most of the gifts they gave they crafted themselves. The simple living has focused their prayer-life and their community life in a powerful way. And I know it has enabled them to experience how doing ministry has many rewards, even if they are not necessarily financial in nature.

— *Scott Barker, Vicar, Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Omaha, Neb.*

Alison Witty: Simple living is more than our poverty

Simple living is not always easy. There are some days I would like nothing more than to come home, put on my pajamas, and watch television all night long, but we don't have a TV. ...

There are some days that I would like nothing better than a treat from Dairy Queen, but I don't have the money. ...

Some days I wonder if I'll have enough money to buy the essentials, but I always do.

I have learned that there is a lot more to simple living than our poverty. Living simply means putting our priorities straight. It means feeling the reward of loving Christ in all persons.

As we were developing guidelines for our community at the beginning of our year here, we agreed to celebrate the Eucharist together once a week with our director. We have all found a certain pleasure in gathering around our own dining room table to celebrate Christ's last meal. Since we are celebrating in our own home, we use whatever bread we have in the cupboard. Our source of the Body of Christ always has a bit more flavor than the wafer normally used on Sundays. We have used wheat, sun-dried tomato, even cinnamon raisin on occasion. What this has really come to symbolize for me is the diversity of the Body of Christ. Mother Teresa has been quoted as feeling lucky to serve Christ in his "distressing disguise" as the poorest of the poor. Our communion bread reminds me that Jesus is in all of us — in fact, could be any of the people I serve.

Volunteering in a homeless shelter sure affords me the oppor-

Not looking for the 'normal thing'

by Ruth Monette

ENVISION THE MOTHER OF ALL REALITY TELEVISION, MTV's *The Real World*. Take away the cameras, the glitz, and the large paychecks. Shift the work assigned the housemates from media-based productions to social-service-related positions with local non-profits. Assume that those responsible for choosing participants actually look for people who will get along together and avoid those likely to cause significant problems. Do all this and you have the Episcopal Urban Intern Program (EUIP). The EUIP is a year-long internship program located in Los Angeles where young adults live in Christian community and work full-time with populations such as the homeless, abused children, at-risk youth, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

When I graduated from college in June of 1999, I had only three goals. The Episcopal Urban Intern Program allowed me to accomplish all three. In August of that year, I took a road trip, driving from upstate New York (where I had attended Hobart and William Smith Colleges) to California. I moved to a place I had never been before — Los Angeles. And I was guaranteed a year without snow. While accomplishing these three things was high on my "what to do after college list," what really attracted me to the Episcopal Urban Intern Program was the chance to spend a year figuring out my life.

In one way or another, each of my fellow interns joined the EUIP for the same reason. Three were there with plans to attend graduate or professional schools in the near future (seminary, law school and medical school). The fourth was fairly sure that her passion was at-risk youth, but wanted to test that. And then there was me — a little less focused, but interested in exploring all the options.

Our year in the Episcopal Urban Intern Program had three foci: our worksites, our community life and our spiritual lives. Each of us was placed in a full-time social service-related position with a non-profit agency in the Los Angeles area. We worked with the homeless, people living with HIV/AIDS, abused children, at-risk youth and a campus ministry on an urban campus (my placement). The jobs were stressful — emotionally and spiritually and sometimes physically. They were also deeply rewarding.

At the end of our workdays, we returned to the former rectory at Holy Faith Episcopal Church in Inglewood for "community time." We ate dinner together at least once a week. We met in a group with the program's coordinator. As I would explain to college friends who choose more traditional paths, one of the hardest things about moving to a new city is making friends ... but my new friends came built into my move.

That is not to say that it was easy. The struggle of living in community — honoring each person's uniqueness while establishing appropriate limits — was one of the most difficult aspects of the program. We had to look beyond each other's annoying traits, get past who didn't do their dishes or who hogged all the computer time. In truth, community life was particularly rough for us. We were not able to resolve all of our differences and we struggled until the last day to feel a sense of success about our community. However, each of us made lasting friendships during our year together and I think each of us learned a great deal about having healthy relationships with the people we live with.

Intertwined with our community life was our spiritual life — individually and collectively. The program asked us to become active members of our sponsoring parish — Holy Faith, a multicultural urban parish like no other any of us had attended. We sang in the choir, taught Sunday School and worshipped with the parish. Additionally, as a community we met regularly for "spiritual time," alternating between Bible studies and prayer. We each met individually with the program's coordinator to discuss our worksites, the community life and our spiritual journeys.

I got more than I expected out of the EUIP — life-long friendships, a job I love, and a sense of direction for the next few years, at least. As a former intern from the first year of the program puts it, "If you don't know quite what you want to do with your life, but you know it ain't the normal thing ... this is the program for you."

— *For more information on the Episcopal Urban Internship Program contact <www.euip.org>.*

tunity to see many distressing disguises. To me, living simply means being ready and willing to serve Christ in anyone, anywhere, as God calls us to do, not letting our own desires get in the way. For what we do for the least of these, we do for Christ Himself. It's that simple.

Jon Erdman: What is mine alone?

"All we are and all we have are not ours, but God's, and we are simply stewards of what we have been entrusted." In my experience, this statement is at the heart of living simply. It also is one of the hardest to take to heart. So many of the things I have, I feel I have worked hard to get. I have put in many hours of work, care and thought, and I have looked on some of "my" belongings as rewards for the work I have done. But they are not mine. I alone could never have gotten any of them — or anything, for that matter. God has given me everything.

So how has that affected my life? For a start, my life has been less cluttered.

One of the first acts of letting go of my things was packing to come to the Resurrection House program. I was only able to take two carry-on bags and two tubs in baggage. So, to start out, I did not bring much. It was hard to choose what to bring. As I look back on it, it did help me set my priorities. Much of what frivolous things I had come to acquire during my life did not accompany me. Only what I needed, then a few Bibles, a chess board, a few pictures, a few CDs, a few books, and a few other items. What is important really changed when it all had to fit in two bags and two boxes. It was freeing to see how little I actually needed.

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Packing was a great way of setting my priorites, but just cutting down on the amount I have is not, for me, the most important part of living simply. Fewer belongings is a way to an understanding, but it is not the only way to that understanding. That understanding, is the attitude that I have in my heart about what is "mine." What is mine alone? Nothing. Everything is God's. That understanding is, for me, the heart of living simply.

The change in heart is what is important to me. How I share what I have, instead of regarding it as "mine." That change in heart led me to the question, "Why did God give this to me, and how does God want me to use it?" Much of the way I used to act has changed because of asking myself that question. I have been more willing to give my time, my energy and my things to help other people. The largest blessing that I have been given by living simply has been becoming closer to God. After coming to the realization that all has been given to me in love and I should also give in love, I have grown closer to the Almighty God who is love, who said "Love one another, as I have loved you. That my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

Jeff Huston: What you add, not deny

When I first found out that I had been accepted into the Resurrection House program my head started spinning in search of an explanation of simple living. I wondered if I could bring a personal CD player. I must have thought that bringing a discman might compromise my agreement to enter a simple community. In all honesty, I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

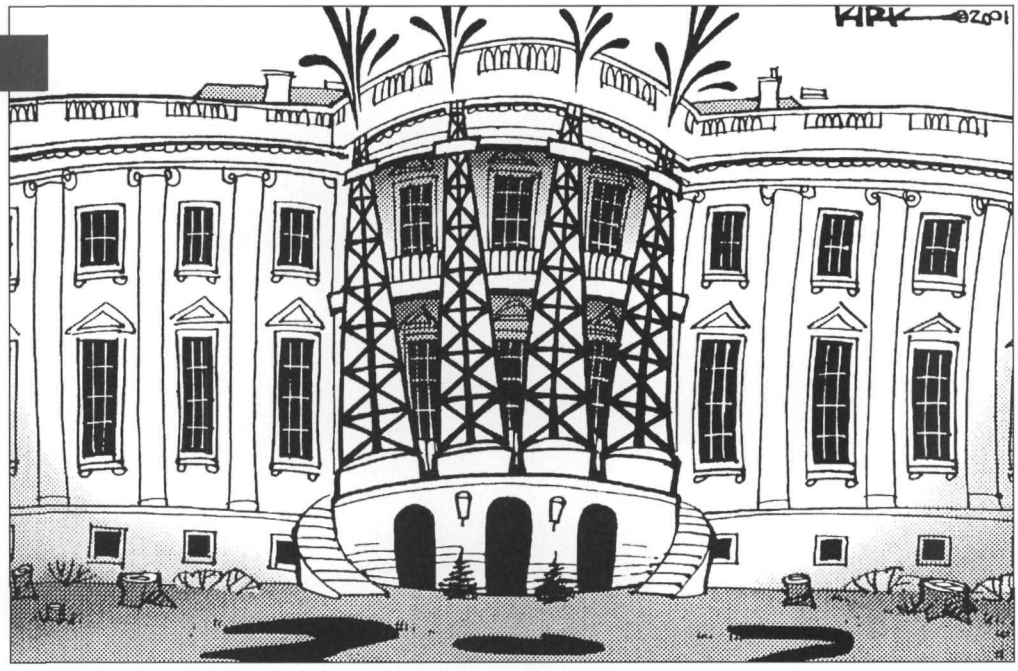
Upon arrival in Omaha, I remember thinking to myself as my roommates and I entered our unfurnished house, "This simple living thing is ridiculous!" However, when we returned from our opening retreat, our house was completely furnished — beds, two love seats, a coffee table and a full dining room set, not to mention the various knicknacks for the kitchen and a set of pots and pans. The gifts continued pouring in and we soon found ourselves with more than we ever thought we could possibly need. Our initial abundance of household items spawned our favorite phrase, "It depends on your definition of simple!"

Fast-forward six months and I'm sitting here in Wahoo, Neb., in the middle of our six-day silent retreat. Here, in a very real way, I've come to the realization that living simply isn't entirely about my possessions or lack thereof. Granted, it feels great railing against the absurdity of our market-driven economy; simplicity, I've found, is not about what you deny but what you add. Of course we don't need that third TV or the new SUV; what we need more than anything is God. And not just the Sunday morning fix we're prone to accepting as our "end of the bargain." What we need is a real relationship with God, one steeped in prayer and openness to God's presence in our life.

This week has afforded me the opportunity to be in constant communion with God in nature, Scripture, meditation, reflection and prayer. How often on any given day do we take time "to be" with God? My roommates and I are blessed in that we share two worship times each day (even though morning prayer comes at 6:30 A.M. twice a week.). It is our communion with God that we share as a community, as well our individual time with God that allows us to claim a Christ-centered, simple community. It is our focus on God's presence in our lives that backs up our bold claim of simplicity in this complex world.

So there you have it, my musings and reflections on simple living. Do I see a future as the next new-age guru on how to change lives? For your sake as well as my own, no. But I will leave you with my working definition (to date) of simple living: Simple because my focus is on God's presence in my heart and with us at Resurrection House. Simple because I'm trying to keep up with God and not the Joneses. ●

For more information on Resurrection House contact <fatherscott@uswest.net>.



School shootings and white delusion

White Americans "live in an utter state of self-delusion," Nashville-based writer Tim Wise wrote in a commentary on recent school shootings that appeared on the internet. "We think danger is black, brown and poor, and if we can just move far enough away from 'those people' in the cities we'll be safe. If we can just find an 'all-American town, life will be better, because 'things like this just don't happen here.' ... In case you hadn't noticed, 'here' is about the only place these kinds of things do happen. Oh sure, there is plenty of violence in urban communities and schools. But mass murder; wholesale slaughter; take-a-gun-and-see-how-many-you-can-kill kinda craziness seems made for those safe places: the white suburbs or rural communities.

"And yet once again, we hear the FBI insist there is no 'profile' of a school shooter. Come again? White boy after white boy after white boy, with very few exceptions to that rule (and none in the mass shooting category), decides to use their classmates for target practice, and yet there is no profile? Imagine if all these killers had been black: Would we still hesitate to put a racial face on the perpetrators? Doubtful.

"Indeed, if any black child in America — especially in the mostly white suburbs of Littleton, or Santee — were to openly discuss their plans to murder fellow students, as happened both at Columbine and now Santana High, you can bet your ass that somebody would have turned them in, and the cops would have beat a path to their doorstep. But when whites discuss their murderous intentions, our stereotypes of what danger looks like cause us to ignore it — they're just 'talking' and won't really do anything. How many kids have to die before we rethink that nonsense? How many dazed and confused parents, mayors and sheriffs do we have to listen to, describing how 'normal' and safe their community is, and how they just can't understand what went wrong?

"I'll tell you what went wrong and it's not TV, rap music, video games or lack of prayer in school. What went wrong is that white Americans decided to ignore dysfunction and violence when it only affected other communities, and thereby blinded themselves to the inevitable creeping of chaos which never remains isolated too long. What affects the urban 'ghetto' today will be coming to a Wal-Mart near you tomorrow, and unless you address the emptiness, pain, isolation and lack of hope felt by children of color and the poor, then don't be shocked when the support systems aren't there for your kids either."

Treaty conflict gives way to partnership

Conflict between Ojibwe Indians and white sportfishing groups in northern Wisconsin has given way to an environmental protection partnership that has chased several mining companies from the state, according to a recent story in *ColorLines* (Spring '01).

"Under the treaties of 1837 and 1842, the Ojibwe had reserved rights to use natural resources — such as fish, game, wild rice and medicinal plants — in the 'ceded territories' they sold to the U.S.," write activists Zoltan Grossman and Debra McNutt. "The tribe's historic practice of spearfishing was outlawed in 1908, driving the tradition underground, until a 1983 court decision recognized that Wisconsin Ojibwe had retained treaty rights in the ceded territories.

"In response, a backlash gained steam among white sportsmen who feared that spearfishing would deplete the lakes of fish. Although the Ojibwe never speared more than 3 percent of northern Wisconsin fish, they were repeatedly scapegoated by the media and sportfishers for the region's environmental and economic problems.

"Indian spearfishers were confronted by mobs of white anti-treaty protesters who held signs reading 'Save a Walleye — Spear an Indian.' They shouted racist epithets such as 'timber n———,' 'welfare warriors,' and 'spearchuckers,' and threw rocks, bottles and full beer cans at Natives. Ojibwe saw their elders assaulted and nearly run over, their drum groups harassed with whistles and mock chants. White sportfishers blockaded, swamped and attacked Ojibwe boats with metal ball bearings, pipe bombs and sniper fire. ...

"In response, the Midwest Treaty Network (MTN), founded in 1989 as an alliance of Native and non-Native groups supporting tribal sovereignty, initiated the Witness for Nonviolence, modeled after similar monitoring programs in Central America. During the treaty conflicts, about 2,000 trained witnesses stood with Ojibwe fishing families as a supportive presence, documenting anti-Indian violence and harrasment and trying to deter or lessen

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the violence and promote reconciliation.

"Witnesses noticed that many followers of the anti-treaty groups were confused by anti-Indian propaganda, and genuinely concerned about the environmental effects of spearing. Even at the height of the spearing clashes, the late Red Cliff Ojibwe activist Walter Bresette had predicted that white northerners would realize that environmental and economic problems are 'more of a threat to their lifestyle than Indians who go out and spear fish. ... We have more in common with the anti-Indian people than we do with the state of Wisconsin.' How to turn this potential into a reality was the question.

"The opportunity came with the 1990s invasion of mining companies into the area. The environmental threat they posed provided a crucial common enemy around which to build an alliance. A number of multinational mining companies, such as Exxon and Kennecott, had long eyed the metallic sulfide deposits in northern Wisconsin. They saw the administration of pro-mining Republican Governor Tommy Thompson as the ideal opportunity to propose new mines, particularly since Native and non-Native communities were split over treaty rights. Ironically, it was native sovereign rights guaranteed by treaties that became a key factor in building a multiracial alliance against the mining companies in Ojibwe-ceded territory. The treaties gave the tribes legal standing in federal court to challenge environmental degradation. This political clout forced whites who were seriously interested in environmental protection to sit down at the table with the Native nations as potential allies."

Grossman and McNutt report that "international mining industry journals now express worry about the contagious spread of Wisconsin anti-mining strategies, and identify Wisconsin as one of four global battlegrounds for the industry's future."

"The earth is capable of forgiveness"

We need to begin a "truth and reconciliation" process with the natural world, says writer-philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore in an interview with *The Sun* (3/01). "After a war is over, the healing process almost always begins with amnesties and pardons, the formal trappings of forgiveness. Right now, experiments in truth and reconciliation are going on all over the world, such as in South Africa, where those who admit their crimes under apartheid are allowed to go unpunished.

"This relates to the natural world because, here in the U.S., we are involved in a centuries-long war against the land. There are natural consequences to ecological warfare: devasting floods and hurricanes, increased cancer rates, crop failures. We might think of these disasters as a kind of cosmic justice — tit for tat, no mercy. But the earth is also capable of forgiveness, because it has the ability to heal itself. When the earth covers burned-over land, first with wildflowers, then alder thickets, then pine forests; when a marsh filters water; when plants create oxygen; when a river washes silt from the gravel beds where salmon spawn — these great natural cycles of renewal are a kind of forgiveness, again and again transforming death into life. They are a kind of grace.

"The breaching of hydroelectric dams, for example, offers the chance for grace and the possibility of redemption. I want to be there when the sluice gates are opened and the Columbia River rises, fed by the reservoir behind the John Day Dam. True, in so many place, we have done irreparable, unforgivable harm. Extinct species will not be born again. And when corporations cut an ancient forest and poison the bulldozed ground, we will not see that forest again for 14 generations. But a river can heal itself, and so has the power, essentially, to forgive."

Hugh White

The former associate director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company from 1973 to 1981, Hugh Carleton White, Jr., 80, died April 14 in Pontiac, Mich. A lifelong Detroiter, White helped found the Detroit Industrial Mission, which he directed from 1955 to 1967. DIM grew to include an ecumenical staff of clergy and lay persons who participated in mediation and dialogue between unions and management regarding working conditions, wages and racial and gender discrimination. Between 1966 and 1968 White assisted in the founding of 11 Industrial Missions in North America.

From 1981 to 1989 White served as consultant to Michigan's Episcopal bishop, H. Coleman McGehee, with a special emphasis on economic justice and corporate responsibility. ●

Clergy Renewal Program

Listening to God: Spiritual Formation for Clergy Renewal. A two-year program designed to explore the process and practice of Christian prayer and discernment for the purpose of personal renewal and congregational leadership. Extension Program: June, Twin Cities Program: October, 2001. Christos Center: 651-653-8207. Web: <www.christoscenter.org>. E-mail: <christoscenter@worldnet.att.net>.

Episcopal Urban Intern Program

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21–30. Apply now for the 2001–2002 year. Contact EUIP, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. Phone: 310-674-7700. E-mail: <euip@pacbell.net>.

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To apply, send résumé and letter of introduction to Richard Witt, RMM, P.O. Box 4757, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602.

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Photo by Dan Burkholder

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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

a global WITNESS
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
232 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

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LETTERS

Novel coverage

It never ceases to amaze me how, month after month, you come up with novel coverage of urgent and relevant topics. This one on the technobiology of food is so well done (it happens to be a concern of much interest to me), and the photographs are outstanding and touching.

Margaret Collins
Portland, OR

Resisting despair

Your last issue was so valuable! All of them are but I have been struggling with how not to be immobilized by despair, particularly as Bush unleashes his assault on all that I value.

Margaret Bresee
Marshfield, VT

Poster child for punishment

Thank you, Mr. Lowenstein, for this story. Tommy's spirit is intact [*TW* 3/01]. He has a friend and is beloved. He has been blessed. "Poster Boy for Punishment" is alliterative and compelling, but the real story is that he has been redeemed in large part by your love and commitment. Whether he is prisoner or freed man, he is redeemed.

It is a timely piece for me. At 46, the cumulative effect of crime is getting to me in the most existential way. I grew up in the city which boasted of its status as murder capital of America. By the time I was 30 I had known five human beings whose lives were taken by murderers, three randomly, one drug-related, and one domestic. By the time I was 40 my life had been fractured by the violent break-in and subsequent shooting by police of a 16-year-old boy. I had already experienced the terror of an attacker's break-in as a young woman in law school. As a lawyer, my office received bomb threats from an employee's angry husband. I neither sought nor invited any of these experiences. Victimhood is not a club anyone wishes to join EVER. Our society hates weakness. We like tough people, criminals who stand up to "cops" and the criminal justice system and vice versa — thus the celebration of the criminal world in movies and television. We like stories of victims who publicly outpour forgiveness and get on with it, whatever it is. Per your story, the true victim is the perpetrator drugged and savage, the perpetrator tried and convicted. The rest of us have to keep our lower brainstems in check and our mouths shut. We get to read about the redemption of killers and the uncivilized "vengeance" of the victims' rights movement and their "heinous" reinterpretation of the crimes committed. I do not see any compassion for the survivors in your work, those whose blood gets superinjected with adrenalin without warning at the emergence of the memory. (But I understand. When I see these angry people on television, even I have to look away.)

I am saddened but, on the other side, you make me care about Tommy. Whether I could care about the one who killed Helen or the one who killed Tracy, I don't think so. I saw their parents and grandparents at the funerals. Their sisters and brothers and friends. Can anyone pay that price in one lifetime? The ones who killed Eddie are unknown to me. The ones who killed Paul and Blair are themselves dead, a much neater solution — moving on is so much simpler. Parole hearings cut deep into old wounds.

Who should be the Poster Boy for Punishment? I don't know much about the victims' rights movement, but shouldn't they have any? We work to rehabilitate the killer, this is good, but where are the funds for treatment of the wounded? Tommy could buy typewriters for his cellmate. His victims could buy nothing for nobody, but really, is there any amount of money that could stop that terror, that torture that began the night he picked up his gun?

Dear Tommy, go in peace. Return no one evil for evil. If the system has made you a whole and heroic man, amen.

Dona E. Bolding
(via the Internet) ●

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Most every issue of *The Witness* is about "reimagining faith and action," but this month we've decided to face the topic head-on. In both church and society, the times seem to be calling Christians of a liberal/radical stripe to speak out and act up on behalf of all that they hold holy — without apology and without fear that our openmindedness may seem intellectually lightweight, that our theological questioning will be accused of masking disloyalty to our Christian identity, that our belief that someone on "the right" could possibly have a valid perspective will be mistaken for spinelessness.

Progressives, more than most, understand that reimagining faith and action is a continual process, called for by the unavoidable fact that each new day is, well, a new day. Yesterday's absurdities have a way of becoming today's realities.

Our vocation is a vital one for both church and world. In our hope to be truthful to ourselves and one another about the signs of the holy we detect, we find ourselves constantly, if sometimes timidly, stepping outside the theological, political and institutional boxes that confine and oppress.

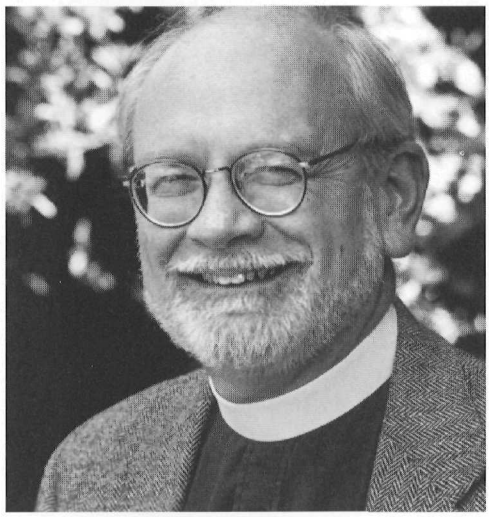
In the process, we make complacency impossible. In the process, we are changing the world. ●

— Julie A. Wortman, editor/publisher

Thanks to Brooks Jensen and LensWork *for help in obtaining much of the fine art photography in this issue(www.lenswork.com).*

Rediscovering a passionate,

by L. William Countryman



PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY in our time has emerged through two related but distinct processes. One is a process of paring away: Christians, over the last couple of centuries, have realized that many elements of our Western culture are not essential to — or even compatible with — Christian life and belief, and we have sought to shed them. We have looked hard at the false claims of government absolutism, of slavery, of racism, misogyny and homophobia and have rejected them.

The other process has been one of refocusing. Here the question isn't, "What is extraneous to our faith?" but, "Where is its center?" Our answers take different forms, but, eventually, they come back to the way Jesus united, in both his life and teaching, the two commandments to love God and to love neighbor.

The two processes may produce related results, but they are not identical. One prunes the excess at the peripheries; the other is looking for the root or fountainhead of our faith. Many of us who claim the name of progressive Christians are probably more comfortable with the pruning shears than with the dowsing rod, clearer about what we don't believe than about what we do.

Therein, I suspect, lies much of the sense of uncertainty that has hovered over progressive Christianity for the past generation. We have seen how establishments, whether medieval aristocracy or contemporary plutocracy, whether patriarchy or a dominant race or class, have repeatedly invoked Christianity to justify their sins. We are clear that we need to reject this entanglement of Christian faith with the *status quo*. But simply to reject is not enough. Rejection does not inspire hope or love or delight or even intellectual coherence.

The real reason why progressive Christianity exists is not to prune away archaisms and false accretions. It exists — the Spirit calls it into being — to be an authentic gospel voice, to proclaim the good news of Jesus' life and teaching. Why do we resist the marginalizing effects of racism or sexism or heterosexism? Because they are no longer necessary in our enlightened age? No. Our "enlightened" age has been the bloodiest in history. We reject them because Jesus has given us a vision of a humanity united to God and to one another in the profound respect and sense of kinship we call by the name of love!

This insight and conviction is what guides us even as we enter more deeply into interfaith dialogue and cooperation. We become engaged with people of other faiths not because we suppose that Christian faith is unimportant, but precisely because our Christian faith requires us to act out the good news of Jesus by loving and respecting all our neighbors. To do so does not relativize our faith or make it generic and colorless. To the contrary, by expressing our faith, it adds new energy to it.

Sometimes progressive Christians shy away from clear and strong statements of faith for fear of falling back into the old, smug exclusivism that so long allowed the

converted Christian faith

pious of the Western world to look down on everyone else. Perhaps we are afraid of having a passionate, converted Christian faith because we worry that it will turn out just as strident and exclusivist as earlier versions of our tradition.

Well, it may. There is no human way to guarantee against it. But for progressive Christians, the future lies with our willingness to own up to the depth of our own convictions, to proclaim the good news without fear, to live as people deeply touched by the Spirit's power for change — even as we insist on shedding the oppressive distortions that our religious predecessors have sometimes fallen into. Progressive Christianity isn't about indifference or bland tolerance. It's about the rediscovery of the fountainhead, the center. In Jesus' teaching and practice of love, humanity is called to a love affair with God and a new kind of community with one another.

Whenever Christians rediscover this center, they produce not mere revisions or readjustments of Christianity, but reformations. What the great saints of the past did out of the depth of their experience and convictions, we are called to do today. Not that our reformation will look exactly like those of Benedict or Francis or the Beguines — or of Martin Luther or Martin Luther King, Jr. Every reformation has to address the time and place of its own occurrence.

Our challenge and our calling is to discover the Spirit's gifts of reformation in our own time. If progressive Christianity is to fulfill its vocation from God, we will do it by opening up about our faith and joining together to live it out. The faith God has awakened in us is a gift for the world. It makes possible a life of love and hope, of trust and justice; and we will be happy to invite (never to command!) all humanity to join in as the Spirit calls them and makes it possible. ●

L. William Countryman *is Professor of Old Testament at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif.*

Timothy Whelan

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With dreadful Riſt: from the mid-Deep, appears,
Surge after Surge, the riſing, wat'ry, War.
Whitening, the angry Billows rowl immenſe,
And roar their Terrors, thro' the ſhuddering Soul
Of feeble Man, amidſt their Fury caught,
And, daſh'd upon his Fate: Then, o'er the Cliff
Where dwells the *Sea-Mew*, unconfin'd, the
And, hurrying, ſwallow up the ſteril Shore.

THE Mountain growls; and all its ſturdy *Sons*
Stoop to the Bottom of the Rocks they ſhade.
Lone, on its Midnight-Side, and all aghaſt,
The dark, way-faring, *Stranger*, ſits the
And climbs againſt the Blaſt.
Low, waves the rooted Foreſt, vex'd, and ſhr
What of its leafy Honours yet remains.
Thus, ſtruggling thro' the diſſipated Grove,
The whirling Tempeſt raves along the Plain;
And, on the Cottage thacht, or lordly Dome,
Keen-faſtening, ſhakes 'em to the ſolid Baſe.
Sleep, frighted, flies; the hollow Chimney howls,
The Windows rattle, and the Hinges creak.

THEN, too, they ſay, thro' all the burthen'd Air,
Long Groans are heard, ſhrill Sounds, and diſtant Sighs,
That, murmur'd by the *Demon* of the Night,
Warn the devoted *Wretch* of Woe, and D
Wild Uproar lords it wide: the Cloud

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With Stars, [illegible]ift-gliding, ſweep along the Sky.
All Natur[illegible] — But hark! the *Almighty* ſpeaks:
Inſtant, the hidden Storm begins to pant,
And die [illegible] to a noiſeleſs Calm.

[illegible] 'tis Midnight's Reign; the weary Clouds,
[illegible] meeting, mingle into ſolid Gloom:
[illegible] World lies loſt in Sleep,
[illegible] the low-brow'd *Night*,
[illegible] *Contemplation*, her ſedate Compeer;
[illegible] ſhake off th' intruſive Cares of Day,
[illegible] lay the meaner Scenes all aſide.

AND now, ye lying *Vanities* of Life!
You ever-tempting, ever-cheating Train!
Where are you now? and what is your Amount?
Vexation, Diſappointment, and Remorſe.
Sad, ſickening, Thought! and yet, deluded Man,
A Scene of wild, diſjointed, Viſions paſt,
And broken Slumbers, riſes, ſtill reſolv'd,
With new-fluſh'd Hopes, to run your giddy Round.

FATHER of Light, and Life! Thou *Good Supreme!*
O! teach me what is Good! teach me thy ſelf!
Save me from Folly, Vanity and Vice,
From every low Purſuit! and feed my Soul,
With Knowledge, conſcious Peace, and Vertue pure,
Sacred, ſubſtantial, never-fading Bliſs!

D Lo!

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From *The Secret Books* by Sean Kernan

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COMING INTO POWER

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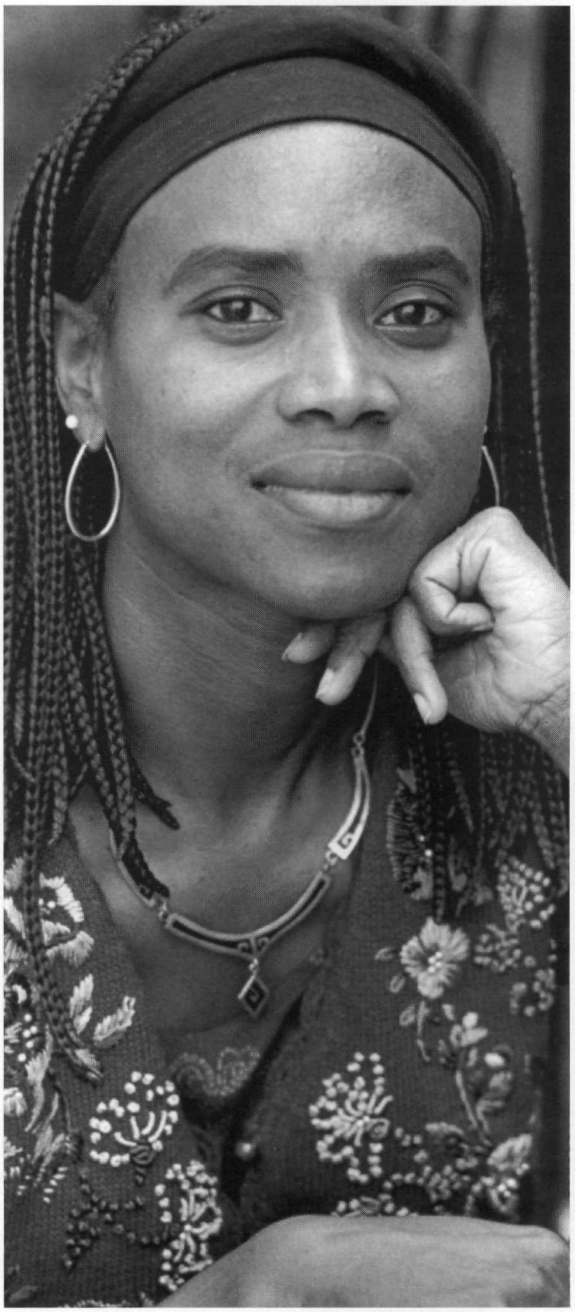
Taking theology to the streets

by Irene Monroe



Ron Prager

In the 1960s and 1970s, we African Americans got our news concerning black people from three main sources: the black church, the black newspapers and the streets. Believed to be much more reliable than television's ABC evening news and white newspapers like the *New York Post* and the *New York Times*, the streets were usually where we heard or saw the news first. In my home of segregated Brooklyn, N.Y., in fact, the streets functioned as a multi-layered site where African Americans transacted their business, interacted socially and were mobilized for action. So, coming from a black urban tradition, I grew up on the streets and was educated by them.

In African-American urban communities the streets have always been the site for radical change and the stage for subversive public discourse. Weekly, in the protest era of the 1960s, African Americans from all the five boroughs in New York City would travel to Harlem to hear street ministers, street intellectuals, street politicians and African-American *griots* (oral historians) give their public addresses at the well-known street site of UCLA, the University on the Corner at Lennox Avenue. With no walls to lean on, no chairs to sit in and, oftentimes, with no podium for the speakers to speak from, UCLA served as our public institution of higher education. The street, UCLA, provided a rich public discourse of black intellectual thought.

In African-American religious life, the streets have also been the stage for Christian social protest and public theology. The black civil rights movement picked up its momentum and received worldwide attention when African-American preachers moved their members from their church pews to the picket lines. The world not only got to see an African-American Christian social ethic in practice, but it also got to hear a black public theology espoused by Martin Luther King, Jr. On the first day of the Montgomery Bus Boycott on December 5, 1955, King espoused his views on the requisite conditions for black activism: "Freedom is never given to anybody! For the oppressor has you in domination because he plans to keep you there! And he never voluntarily gives it up. We've got to keep on keepin' on in order to gain freedom. It is not done voluntarily. It is done through the pressure that comes about from people who are oppressed. Privileged classes never give up their privilege without strong resistance."

To the general public, the streets are commonly thought of as the site for rioting. Demonized for much of the violence that does take place there, marginal-

ized people's street riots are organic revolutionary forms of social justice where they come into their own power. New York City's Greenwich Village LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgendered) community learned that on the night of June 27, 1969. Little would the patrons of the Stonewall Inn, a predominately African-American and Latino LGBT working-class bar, know that those two nights of rioting — June 27–29 — would spark the advent of our queer liberation movement. On the last day of the street riots, crowds gathered outside the Stonewall Inn to assess the damage and to read the graffiti sprawled on its bricks — "Legalize Gay Bars" and "Support Gay Power." Such were the earliest expressions of Queer public theology.

Theologies of the dispossessed

Public theologies emerge from street people. Public theologies are also liberating theologies, because they emerge from those people at the bottom and at the fringes of life. Theologian Robert McAfee Brown in *Liberation Theology* (1993) points out that "the starting point for liberation theology is not at all the topics theologians write about, but [it is] the here-and-nowness of what is happening on street corners or at soup kitchens." These theologies are about the dispossessed, the disinherited, the disrespected and the damned. They are expressions of the life of God's people. And, while not all street people are people of faith and many live secular lives, theology is not restricted or privatized to only those in seminaries, churches or who acknowledge a living God. Theology is about the whole of life and the whole of life encompasses both its sacred and public spheres. As Massachusetts' Episcopal bishop, M. Thomas Shaw, has pointed out, "our public life is very much a part of our [religious] journey." (See "Walking the God-talk in politics today: resurrecting a public theology," *TW* 9/00.) Street people may have been forced to the public margins of society — the streets — but their social location and lived experiences as individuals and as communities bump up against existing structures and systems of domination and call into question the dominant culture's presumptions about the wholeness of life and the theological underpinnings upon which they rest.

A prophetic call

Clearly, public theologies often emerge from a place of inhospitality and parochialism. Having neither a home in the church nor a place in the academy, these theologies emerge from the activism of indigenous people of and on the streets. Public theologies have a prophetic call in that they call attention to the present-day social injustices and institutional ills that bring about a particular people's forced eviction from the Kingdom of God. These public theologies are nagging reminders to the privileged that their churches and seminaries not only choke the spiritual lives of the oppressed, but also limit their theological view in seeing and knowing the various faces of God. These public theologies are, indeed, the authentic expressions of the life of God's people. And, while these public theologies reflect the unending struggle to give voice and visibility to those relegated to the margins of society, these theologies also reflect the joy and celebration in the daily lives of its people of and on the streets.

When churches work, they ground the spiritual wanderer. They embrace the ecclesiastically shy. They bring in the unchurched and they uphold the Christian mission to welcome in all of God's children.

However, when churches lose their prophetic call, they open themselves not only to the charge of inhospitality, but also to the charge of parochialism. Theology in these churches, unfortunately, becomes ecclesiastical articulations of the *status quo*, where the Bible functions as their legitimating talking-book. Religious intolerance masks spiritual abuse and patriarchal clericalism masks structural oppressions, so that these holy places of worship actually become sites of ritualized violence.

Seminaries lose their prophetic call when they address only the academy, or only the institutional interests of their denominational churches. These seminaries may occasionally glance at the world, but they never fully engage themselves in it. Their efforts to teach cultural and ethnic diversity — a diversity which is seldom reflected in their faculties or student bodies — mask, at best, their anemic attempt to be politically correct and, at worse, their academic arrogance to exclude from their folds the very people theological education ought to be about. Theologies emerging out of these seminaries, unfortunately, become inauthentic expressions of the life of God's people.

While it is easy to see how the economic disadvantage based on structural racial bias leads peoples of color to the streets, it is less obvious how many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are forced to become street people. Abandoned by family and friends because of our sexual orientation, many of us have only the streets. And many religious lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are spiritually homeless in that we have been evicted from our faith communities. Oftentimes we find ourselves on the streets of gay enclaves searching for the spiritual community we lost since being excommunicated by our faith communities. And, while many of us have found spiritual refuge in queer alternative churches like Metropolitan Community Church, Dignity, and Unity Fellowship, many of us nonetheless miss our home churches.

Because the streets are the harsh reality of both homelessness and joblessness, many of us LGBT people who are in seminaries or in schools of theological study reside in the closet until after tenure or ordination. However, even once out of the closet, many of us do not necessarily preach, teach, write or advocate from the social location of being queer because the streets can still be a place where we end up if we do so.

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Coming out as a public theologian

Because I am an open lesbian, I have not found a home church in my faith tradition of the black church from which to do AIDS ministry. Nor have I located an academic base where I can do queer theology because it is not yet, in the eyes of many academicians, a legitimate theology. So I have found a home and my ministry/life's work on the streets, with Boston's LGBT communities. The foundation for my life's work is in what Jesus said in Matthew 25:45: "In truth I tell you, in so far as you failed to do it for the least of these, however insignificant, you failed to do it for me." Therefore, in wanting to be a practitioner of applied Christianity and to do a "theology-in-praxis," I realized my work would be primarily a public theology.

As I came out as a lesbian to myself and to my church, my theological voice shifted. Where as a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York I was just focused on black church women, as a doctoral student at Harvard Divinity School my attention was drawn to the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. At Harvard, too, I combined journalism with my area of study, enabling me to develop a strong focus on religion in the news. As a result, in this era of the Christian Right, one of my outreach ministries is my two religion columns — "The Religion Thang," for *In Newsweekly*, a LGBT newspaper that circulates widely throughout the New England states, and a monthly column online, "Queer Take," for *The Witness* (see www.thewitness.org).

Because homophobia is both a hatred of LGBT people and a stance that is usually taken "in the name of religion," my reporting has been about exposing how Christianity has shaped the theological and moral view of us LGBT people. Also, because Christianity impacts both our secular and religious lives, my columns try to inform my audience of the role religion plays in all forms of discrimination — in racism, sexism, anti-semitism and homophobia. My advocacy approach is to inform and to inspire my LGBT readers in a way that will bring them to the full understanding of the enormity religion plays in our lives, whether we are practicing atheists or recovering Christians, and how both religious intolerance and fundamentalism not only shatter the goal of American democracy, but also foster a climate of spiritual abuse that restrains the authentic expressions of the life of God's people.

By reporting religion in the news, I aim to bring theological discourse outside the restricted confines of the classroom and the church and into the streets. In the process, I am making this theological discourse accountable to a population of people. Liberation theology can only have integrity if it is done in tandem with a struggling community.

Writing: public theology activism

Writing has always been associated with the work of academicians, theologians and journalists, not activists. But writing to right a wrong, and writing for social justice is also the work of a public theology.

Much that is written about LGBT people is by heterosexuals. And whether it is in newspapers, magazines, movies or on television, that writing cannot escape misinformation or stereotypes. Much of who we are is seen and written through a complicated prism of homophobia that projects and condones lies, fears and violence perpetrated upon us for the holy sake of moral virtue and family values.

For my African ancestors, writing became a subversive tool, particularly in a Western culture that did not value the veracity of their lives told in an oral tradition. Writing allowed my ancestors to tell and to compile the stories of their lives as a sacred text. Hence, writing also makes visible, at least in print, those lives that are too often, with intent, omitted — especially the lives of street people. Therefore, writing is a political necessity.

For LGBT people, writing from their social location is not only a radically queer act, but also a subversive tool to de-center the centrality of the traditional theological canon in this society that values and lauds the writings by and about heterosexuals as normative. By our writings we create a counter voice — a text and knowledge that becomes a tool that not only gives us a voice, but also gives us power.

LGBT writers, journalists, theologians and activists *should* write because our lives depend on it. We should write because not to write would cause us to participate in our own death. We should write because those behind us, our progeny, will need it. We should write because our opuses become a canon for survival, and our holy bible. And we should write because we know our lives are sacred texts. Writing in this sense becomes both an act of liberation and of social activism which is the work of a public theology.

Bringing the street into the fold

In order for our churches and seminaries to step into the new millennium with a prophetic call, they must include in their folds those of us who are out on the streets. Their theologies must become "theologies-in-praxis," applied Christianity that reaches the academy, the church and the public. The church and the academy must have an on-going relationship with each other and with the public that looks at reality from an involved, committed stance in light of a faith that does justice. Only then will the charges of inhospitality and parochialism be dropped from many of our churches and seminaries, and only then can both accurately reflect the authentic expressions of the lives of all of God's people. ●

Irene Monroe is a Ford Foundation Fellow and doctoral candidate at Harvard Divinity School where she is the head teaching fellow for The Rev. Peter Gomes. Her 'Queer Take' columns are a regular feature at <www.thewitness.org>.

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'FAITH IS A WORK

Pamela Ellis Hawkes

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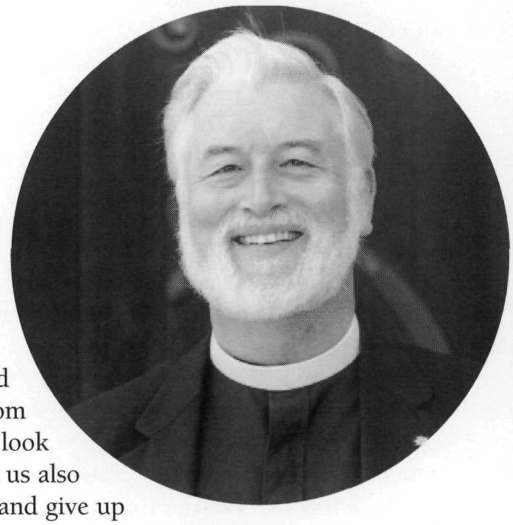
OF IMAGINATION'

An interview with Alan Jones

by Julie A. Wortman



ALAN JONES is Dean of Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco, a place of wide-ranging and creative spiritual and theological exploration. The Forum at Grace provides "civil conversation on critical issues," often tapping the views and gifts of high-profile scholars, authors, activists and performers like Mickey Hart (former drummer with The Grateful Dead), Huston Smith and Jane Goodall (www.GraceCathedral.org/webcast/forum/). Jones' many books include *Living the Truth, Exploring Spiritual Direction, The Soul's Journey, Passion for Pilgrimage, Journey into Christ* and *Soul-making: The Desert Way*.

Julie Wortman: You've been engaged in a project of "re-imagining Christianity." I'm wondering if that has anything to do with the future direction of "progressive" Christianity? I'm thinking here of the brand of Christianity that is rooted in liberation theology and a justice orientation.

Alan Jones: Well, when the revolution comes, I will be with the progressives. But I will be very reluctant in that, I think. My quarrel with some progressives or liberals is that there's an absence of astonishment or wonder in their approach to faith. I know that's a blanket statement, but, in general, progressivism is a rationalist, we-know-what-justice-is approach. But faith is a work of imagination before it is a set of beliefs.

I'll give you an example. People come in and say to me, "I really can't believe in the virgin birth," and I have to suppress a yawn, because that doesn't interest me, even as a conversation. I want to say, "Let me show you a picture." And I would get an icon of Mary and Jesus. And I'd say, "Now, just forget that that's Mary. Forget that's Jesus. Just look at a woman and a baby. Forget about Christianity, if you can. Just look at a woman with a baby — any woman, any baby, anywhere. A woman with a baby at the breast. Then ask yourself, 'In light of that image, how should I behave? How should I be in the world?'"

I think it is important to try and get to a way of looking at things from an imaginative point of view. Let us look at the primordial images again. Let us also acknowledge that history is messy and give up the utopian vision that somehow we're going to usher in a perfect church. Liberals and conservatives tend to want to be in the right, but in a messy history we often only have a choice between two evils.

For example, take the thorny issue of abortion. I find myself trying to be in conversation across the board. I am reluctantly for a liberal abortion law, but I would maintain that abortion is always wrong. Abortion isn't the way it's meant to be. But it's the better of the two options under certain circumstances. Still, when feminists say a woman has a total right over her own body, I think that isn't true. I don't think anybody does. There's no such thing as a private act. That is, totally private. Obviously, I'd say that in most circumstances like this the person may have 80 percent of the choice. But society has an interest in how we behave. All our choices have implications for other people. But I rarely see that as part of the conversation.

JW: It's the difficulty of embracing ambiguity?

AJ: And sitting with it, because it's human nature just to want to be totally in the right rather than saying, "This is where I stand now, and I'm going to choose this, and take the consequences, and repent as well."

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JW: You've said that Christians can't go forward in their spiritual journeys without the help of other religious traditions. What do you mean by that?

AJ: The split is not between the great traditions, but within them. Last night my wife and I had dinner with some leading Buddhists in California. We were talking about the emergence of, not American Buddhism, but American Buddhisms. They're going through all the upheavals that the churches are. But, at the same time, I could say that they're my church, because they're people I can trust, I feel safe with and we speak the same language. I feel I have more in common with a lot of my Buddhist and Jewish friends in San Francisco than I do with people who call themselves Christians.

I think the real question for us is: Do we really believe what we say we believe? For example, if we say that Jesus — and I'm going to say it as broadly as I can, to include as many people — shows us who God is, or what God is like, or what God does, then how would the Christian claims be pressed? In other words, if Jesus shows us that the divine is a self-emptying center, a self-giving love, how would Christians press their claims? Would they kill people? Would they lock people up? Would they consign people to hell? If in the beginning was the word, and that word is in every soul, what is the word from other religions to us?

It wouldn't hurt to try to tease out the political and social implications of what we say we believe about God. If we say that the Trinity is the celebration of radical unity and radical identity — that is, the unity of persons, but also with distinct identity — and that we're made after the image of this God, that is saying an awful lot. It says an awful lot about civil rights, about every human being having the right to a place at the table. It says that it isn't a kind of collectivism of Marxist communism, where you are sucked into the collective. And it isn't radical individualism, where we're all autonomous selves. But it *is* the struggle toward true communion, where every individual is celebrated in a community which is just and provides the maximum opportunities for human flourishing. You could argue for all sorts of things, such as not cutting out arts programs in schools, when you begin by saying, "We are on the side of human flourishing."

But people say, "Oh, I can't believe in the Trinity." They won't do the hard work. And that's one of my quarrels with some progressives, that they chuck out everything without actually having thought about what it could mean, in a dynamic way, if you responded to it as a work of the imagination. If you took the Trinity as a work of the imagination, rather than clobbering people with a dogma that they can't even begin to talk about, you would come up with a very different kind of conversation.

JW: I like the way in which you talk about Christianity: "Christianity isn't an argument; it's a story."

AJ: It's not an argument. And God is not an idea. Not even a good one. God is not a concept. In other words, my first thing is wanting to talk to people not about God, but about their passions and their enthusiasms, about their fears, their moral imagination and their emotional life. I don't mean emotionalism, but I mean their life of affect in the world. And then we can give the word "God" some content. But sometimes we jump into God language far too prematurely.

JW: I recently read an essay by Hal Crowther in which he says that Annie Dillard's book, *For the Time Being*, offers a new theology for thinking Christians. He says, "The Book of Job is a rock that breaks all but the toughest Christians. Dillard's modest proposals, there's no hectoring or proselytizing in either of these books, offer the rest of us the way to steer around it. Acquit God of all charges. Strip him of the terror and testosterone of the Old Testament and the improbable tenderness of the New. Relieve poor God of the thankless task of loving, judging, rewarding and punishing the incorrigible race of men. Remove God from the center of the human dilemma and build him up along its edges with holy things we can feel and sense for ourselves. 'God,' Dillard writes, 'is the awareness of the infinite in each of us.' 'Panentheism' is her word for it and she quotes a theologian who calls it 'the private view' of most Christian intellectuals today. It's the opposite of atheism because its successful practice requires constant spiritual vigilance: an eye peeled, an ear to the ground to detect the divine."

AJ: That's very good. God is not a project of the ego. Iris Murdoch, in one of her novels, says, "Everything we concoct about God is an illusion."

JW: Well, that makes me think about all the "orthodoxy" talk that has been occurring in Anglican Communion circles, especially on the part of certain conservative church leaders.

AJ: My test for somebody's orthodoxy is, "If you were in charge, would I be safe?" Or, "If you were in charge, would there be room for me?" For me, epistemology is not first about what can I know, in an intellectual sense; it's about who can I trust? What can I trust? And then, within a community of trust, we can argue and fight and scrap like mad about all sorts of issues because we are rescued from having to be in the right.

I would also say that we are struggling with a church that is largely unconscious. That is very painful for those of us who have crept a little bit — or stumbled — into consciousness. Bill Swing, our bishop here in the Diocese of California, preached a beautifully moving sermon this past Maundy Thursday for the clergy at what we call a Chrism Mass. He talked about his sympathy for Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, having to keep engaging other primates about gay and lesbian issues again and again, issues which some of us have left behind 20 or even 30 years ago. But there are people for whom this is raw material, where the Bible seems clear-cut. I no longer argue with them. I say, "You're talking about my friends. You're talking about people I know and work with every day. You're not talking about monsters. You're talking about my colleagues. And what you say simply isn't so."

But it must be so wearying for somebody like the presiding bishop — and God bless

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him for it — to have to go over the same ground again and again with people whose consciousness is somewhere else, in a place we find both puzzling and unacceptable.

We must realize that the church becomes the playground for different levels of consciousness. And a person on one level cannot talk to people at another level. Huston Smith puts it well in *Why Religion Matters*. He says there's some merit in the traditional view, there's a merit in the modernist view, there's merit in the post-modernist view — and there are also weaknesses in each point of view. He pleads for a new conversation between all the levels at their positive points.

JW: Do you think that that's possible? What would that look like?

AJ: I think that's probably very, very difficult. I see it sometimes at Grace Cathedral, in that we will have a lot of traditional things going on. We have a traditional Eucharist on Sundays, with incense and great music. And on Sunday afternoon, we'll have Mickey Hart from the Grateful Dead doing a performance for Earth Day. And so we try and say, "Look, we don't want to trash history and say everything in the past is junk. We believe we're historical beings on the one hand, and yet we also believe in the openness of the spirit, God calling us into the future."

So I'm in a totally different world than Jack Spong [the retired Bishop of Newark]. And I don't find his Christianity very compelling or exciting. But he's obviously right about gay issues. He's obviously right, largely, about the New Testament. So here I am, wanting to get Jack Spong to appreciate High Mass, wanting him to appreciate that the medieval Christians weren't all stupid and that Thomas Aquinas actually had quite an intellect. And I'm wanting those things at the same time as I acknowledge the good things that Jack Spong has done to rescue some people from fundamentalism.

JW: You're dean of a cathedral and probably no one would disagree that Grace Cathedral is one of the liveliest cathedrals in the country, and maybe in the world, in terms of the

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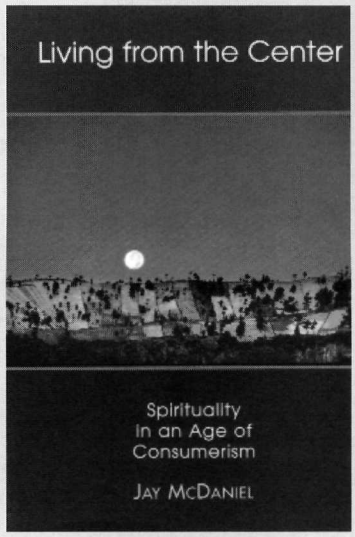
Spirituality in an age of consumerism



David Steindl-Rast, in one of his books on prayer, quotes from a poem by D.H. Lawrence: "All that matters is to be at one with the living God\ To be a creature in the house of the God of Life."

This poem came to mind as I read *Witness* contributing editor Jay McDaniel's new book, *Living from the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism* (Chalice Press, St. Louis, 2000) — partly, perhaps, because McDaniel's book itself draws frequently on poetry; partly because McDaniel's worldview situates human beings firmly in relationship with all the creatures in the earth-household (a theme he has explored thoroughly in other works on ecotheology); but also, I think, because McDaniel has written a book about "all that matters."

What matters, McDaniel proposes, is to "live from the center," available to the creative, healing energies of "God's Breathing" in us, around us and through us. To do this, he believes, it is not necessary to call God by any particular name or affirm any particular set of doctrines. A worldview is important only in its capacity "to point beyond itself to a world beyond words in which the Spirit is present," and to enable us to live in greater wisdom, compassion and freedom.

Much of this work is given to examining traditional spiritual themes — sacramental awareness, openness to grace, living-by-dying, faith — against the backdrop of the consumer culture which surrounds us. McDaniel's intended audience is widely inclusive and the book contains a special welcome to the skeptic.

McDaniel offers a clear and accessible introduction to the key ideas of process theology that undergird his approach. I suspect that others who, like myself, have little knowledge of this field would be surprised by how many of its tenets have emerged in our collective religious consciousness and ring both familiar and true: "The universe is an interconnected web of life." "All creatures in the universe have their own inner aliveness and each living being has its own intrinsic value." "All creatures are immanent within one another, even as they transcend one another." "God feels the feelings of all creatures, sharing in their sufferings and joys."

Process theology, according to McDaniel, views God as the Lure toward fullness of life for each creature at every moment. *Living from the Center* reads more like a lure than a sermon. It is not a raging denunciation of consumerism; even McDaniel's imaginative portrayal of "Jesus at the Mall" portrays a Christ who is broken-hearted rather than angry. But in its gentle invitation to consider, in Mary Oliver's words, what each of us will do with our "one wild and precious life," it is a book that can offer support and encouragement on the spiritual path, even to those who find themselves outside traditional religious frameworks.

— Marianne Arbogast, Associate Editor

sheer variety of things going on and the kinds of conversations happening at all different levels. I think about that, and then I think about this current drive in the church, or this current obsession in the church, around something called "20/20," a resolution that came out of the Episcopal Church's General Convention last year committing the church to double its baptized membership by the year 2020. It's been estimated that this would require the so-called "planting" of 2,500 new congregations during the next 20 years. So this would be a massive effort. I personally can't think of anything more unappealing. I find the church's congregational focus generally unappealing. When I think in terms of the kind of church life I *would* find appealing, it's something that's more like a cathedral, or the potential of a cathedral like Grace and other places where they allow themselves to be many different things.

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AJ: What worries me about this 20/20 project is that there isn't an understanding that there's got to be a revolution in the whole life of the church if it's to expand. The parochial model, as currently understood, is unworkable. It's unworkable financially as well as spiritually. I like a cathedral because it is a community of communities. It is a 10-ring circus. And it is meant to be, with room for the traditional and room for the innovative, and room for all sorts of experimentation. What I try to do is first build trust so that we can risk things. Then we can make mistakes, and say, "Well, we won't do that again; it didn't work." But it is important to be able to risk.

Another aspect of this is that the evidence is that denominational loyalty is weakening. Not just with us, but with everybody. I recently read that 80 percent of Australian Roman Catholics don't practice their religion. So, thinking of this 20/20 effort, how would you expand an institutional church where the denominational loyalty is weak? There's an old adage: Pursue integrity and identity will follow. That is, let us do what we think is right as humbly as we can. Then we'll find out who we are. Then we either grow or we don't. But who cares?

As I've traveled around the church, I've found that a lot of clergy are in a low-grade depression. And they interpret that as faithfulness, which is very, very sad. There is also an absence of passion. There's an absence of passion around the intellectual life, too. When I talk about the recovery of the life of the imagination, I'm also pleading for what we used to call the feeling intellect, not cold rationalism, but the feeling intellect, where ideas matter and we can argue. I'd love to be in a church where we could argue more rather than demonize each other.

In England, when I taught in theological college, we had a discipline of Morning Prayer and the Eucharist. It was a small faculty and our theological arguments were passionate and fiery and yet we knew we'd show up together the next morning for that expression of solidarity and silence. But we would be able to argue and enjoy each other in a way that I haven't experienced in this country for a long time.

JW: To which of the communities at Grace do you belong?

AJ: I don't look to the church for community, though I know that a lot of people do. My community was at dinner last night, with my Buddhist friends. It could be people who support the Museum of Modern Art. My community — my intellectual and spiritual community — transcends the church. What I look for in the church is the connection with my symbolic and imaginative life and the rituals and sacraments to maintain a rich symbolic connection to things. A lot of people, I think, look to the church for that as well.

JW: It sounds to me like you are saying that you're looking to the church to help you keep your focus?

AJ: That's right.

JW: To keep your sense of ...

AJ: ... my sense of what really matters. And to help me with a sense of the transcendent. A lot of churches are warm, fuzzy places of community with no sense of the mystery — back to my issue of astonishment. We have one fixed altar at Grace Cathedral and it's wonderful for me once a week to celebrate the Eucharist not facing the people. A lot of my liturgical friends would say, "Just as we suspected, Jones, you really are a reactionary." But it's very good, occasionally, for all of us to be facing one way, looking up at something above and beyond us, as well as inside us. The community gathered around the table is an important image, but another important image is the community actually transcending itself and becoming more than the sum of its parts. And then that should be an inspiration for action in the world. I think the old transcendence is not going to do, either, but whenever you come up with a program of liturgical practice you've got to be careful of what you're throwing out. ●

Julie A. Wortman is editor/publisher of The Witness.

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A declaration of conscience ... to end poverty for workers

by Dick Gillett

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AN INTERFAITH INITIATIVE directed to elected officials in the city of Los Angeles is calling for a fundamental reordering of the city's economic development priorities toward benefiting the working poor. Titled "To Fulfill the Dream: An End to Poverty for Workers," the Declaration of Conscience, as it is called, proposes six policy recommendations to be required of developers when they come to the city seeking financial subsidies.

Such exhortations by the religious community are, of course, not uncommon; but they are frequently treated as well-intended, but ineffective, religious pronouncements. But the context of the L.A. Declaration, and a concerted moral and political strategy to put the policy principles into effect, make the Declaration worth watching closely here.

Like most large urban centers in the U.S., Los Angeles is a city of stark contrasts in wealth and poverty. But, for various reasons, including L.A.'s fast-growing and vulnerable immigrant population, the rich-poor gap here is extreme. A comprehensive study last August by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy found that the number of working poor in L.A. County increased over the last decade by 34 percent (in roughly the same period, Los Angeles added about 2,100 new millionaires).

Nonetheless, several very hopeful developments have been occuring in L.A. over the last five years. First, a reinvigorated labor movement has been successfully organizing low-wage workers (overwhelmingly minorities and women). A strike last year by about 8,000 janitors tied up the city for three weeks. Receiving widespread religious and public support, the janitors won their strike overwhelmingly.

Secondly, organized labor, community groups and the religious community, having first worked together back in 1997 to pass a landmark living-wage ordinance, now frequently strategize together.

Third, the originator of the Declaration of Conscience, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), has become a prominent player in the push for dignity, respect and a living wage for low-wage workers. Formed back in 1996, CLUE, a group with strong Episcopal Church participation from the outset, cut its teeth in working for the 1997 ordinance. In early April of this year, CLUE turned out over 200 clergy and laity to march in support of hotel workers in Santa Monica.

Six recommendations

Each year the city gives hundreds of millions of dollars in public monies as incentives to corporations and developers to do business in Los Angeles. There are about 18 such large development projects pending over the next two to three years. When CLUE made the Declaration public in March, each of the city's mayoral candidates and those running for L.A. city council seats were asked to endorse it. Its six policy recommendations:

- Require full compliance by developers and their sub-contractors with all provisions of existing living-wage ordinances and commit to raising eventually the living-wage level to 200 percent of the current federal poverty level, or $33,000/year for a family of four (the present L.A. ordinance sets a wage of $8.97/hr.).
- In new projects, require local hiring, with a priority to hire low-wage workers.
- Strictly enforce the city's worker-retention ordinance, which mandates that workers be retained for 90 days when a city contract changes hands.
- Promote workers' rights to organize a union and bargain effectively.
- Require that developers provide a licensed child-care facility at affordable cost for their workers near the development site.
- Offer job-training programs to upgrade worker skills for workers employed by their project.

In response to this letter to the politicians, the two runoff candidates for mayor of Los Angeles, plus 21 candidates for city council seats in the June municipal election endorsed the Declaration. In the coming months and beyond, when the developers come before the new mayor and city council to promise jobs and prosperity for Los Angeles — and ask for huge subsidies and contracts — we will be able to remind our elected officials that they signed the Declaration and that large numbers of religious leaders in Los Angeles and members of their congregations will, if necessary, come to City Hall to help these officials keep their promise. Over 180 religious leaders, including all three of Los Angeles' diocesan bishops and about 30 Episcopal clergy plus other Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives, have thus far signed the document. ●

Dick Gillett is Minister for Social Justice in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and a member of CLUE's board of directors.

See our website for a report by Ethan Flad on April's Progressive Religious Partnership meeting in Washington, D.C.
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NATURAL RESOURCES

Tradition without orthodoxy

by J. Rebecca Lyman

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LAST YEAR I bought a satisfyingly heavy tome by Cheryl Mendelson entitled, *Home Comforts: The Art and Science of Keeping House*. Mendelson confessed herself to be of rural background, and the keeper of many lost traditions of housewifery. A child of rural grandmothers myself, but feeling rather deficient in the area of household management, I bought a copy and spent an enjoyable hour reading. Never had I loved housework so much as when I found it rationalized, and marshaled into an authoritative and accessible text!

Housekeeping, of course, has everything to do with theology, which, as we know is the art and science of creating routine, order, pleasure and safety out of the dangerous, chaotic and delightful existence we share with God and each other. As Mendelson points out, "The way you experience life in your home is determined by how you do your housekeeping." The way we experience our daily existence is equally determined by how we do our theology. Jesus may have used parables of sweeping and lamp-keeping to describe life in the reign of God, but until now most theologians have had either too little experience or interest in ordinary physical routines to repeat the metaphors.

Recovery of ordinary experience

Post-modernity, if you can still bear the phrase, has led to the rehabilitation of the material and concrete, our acceptance, if not expectation, of diversity — and our recovery, therefore, of neglected and silenced voices. To speak of ordinary experience is simply the only way to begin to understand who we may be, both in ourselves and in relation to others.

So theology, it seems to me, has been delivered back into flesh and history, back into what, in her poem, "Natural Resources," Adrienne Rich calls, "The enormity of the simplest things:\ — a universe of humble things,\ and without these, no memory\ no faithfulness, no purpose for the future\ no honor to the past."

Such humble history has always been problematic for theological schemes. I don't need to argue for the multiplicities of experience which history reveals: Quakers and Anglicans tell very different stories about the Restoration. I also don't need to wax nostalgic about the retrieval of the ordinary. Most of the sources and voices have been ignored or suppressed. They do not need intellectuals to call them into existence to give their lives meaning. It is rather their daily living which has supported everything else.

Who, then, preserves the continuity of faith?

"Natural Resources" I define as this basic reality of human existence, our lives as embodied, individual creatures of God. This resource transcendent orthodoxy could not and cannot embrace. "There are words I cannot choose again," writes Rich. "Such words have no shame in them, no diffidence\ before the raging stoic grandmothers: ... My heart is moved by all I cannot save\ So much has been destroyed\ I have to cast my lot with those\ who age after age, perversely,\ with no extraordinary power\ reconstitute the world."

"Orthodoxy" is a word we cannot choose again as the current intellectual and social landslide brings the raging stoic grandmothers face-to-face with the Fathers of the Church.

In my complacent liberal piety, "orthodoxy" seemed to me for a long time to be a harmless artifact, rather like a chasuble, which reminded us of the past in aesthetically pleasing, but largely irrelevant, ways. Yet, my condescension and others' rush to old norms are part of the same cognitive and emotional binary landscape of orthodoxy: To avoid extinction or dilution, we seek to define the one true faith — and how can our particular group still define itself as best of all? Often we Christians talk about ourselves and God as if we were the lead actors in a complex drama with badly behaved supporting actors, e.g., Jews, pagans, Hindus, Muslims and heretics. For the most part we have labeled others to identify what we are not: The Jews are the stubbornly "chosen people" — not us. The Muslims are violently exclusive — not us. Pagans are superstitious and syncretistic — not us. Heretics are systematic and overzealous — not us.

Tradition rendered transcendent

How did we get to this? As Daniel Boyarin suggests in his book, *A Radical Jew*, Paul's vision of universality which included all people — Jews, Greeks, women, slaves — was based on transcending physical particularities in a new community. However, what could such radically inclusive universality rest on, if not singularity? Baptismal unity thus stood in stark contrast to the divided world, yet this transcendent universality naturally defined difference itself as opposition, especially in the context of persecution and apocalyptic

Descending Angel by John Wimberley

beliefs. By the time of Augustine, all humanity could be divided into two cities: "In the wide world inhabited by so many different peoples with divergent religions and manners, infinitely divided in their language and clothing, there have, nevertheless, always been no more than two kinds of groups of human beings, which we can call two cities."

Contextually, Paul and Augustine are giving explanations for their religious practice: They are creating "tradition." But their voices usually come to us out of context, as disembodied texts of a transcendent truth and we forget that, in reality, historical life and religious identity were a mess: The grandmothers went to synagogues for centuries, read all sorts of texts and led lives not entirely determined by official speech. Christians read a Hebrew bible, wear Late Roman vestments, argue in Greek metaphysics and preserve European goddess festivals. This is okay, but just don't lie about it.

Ensuring identity and truth

As a Christian, I do believe that "We've a story to tell to the nations." But there are historical and theological consequences of how we tell our story about our devotion to Jesus as the decisive revelation of God. In the discourse of transcendent orthodoxy our proclaimed singularity has for the most part hampered interfaith dialogue, prompted us to lie about our origins, and made the reality of our own interior diversity hell.

Historically, "orthodoxy" emerged from the 2nd century to the 5th century as a powerful means of ensuring identity and truth in the midst of sectarian conflict and state persecution. Diversity is not denied in orthodoxy, but it is disciplined by hierarchy. "Orthodoxy" ordered the "traditions," i.e., the oral and written stories about Jesus, and tested the "authority" of individuals who claimed to be "apostolic." I am not sure the varied urban centers of Christian mission needed "orthodoxy" to survive. Orthodoxy flowered, I believe, because within Roman culture itself unity and diversity were threatening spiritual and political issues. The yearning for a unity on a human scale to match the transcendent God and the perfect peaceful order of the cosmos was shared by many. If tradition is the "passing on" of faith or story, orthodoxy is the codification of a certain telling of the story — what may be included, what must be left out.

Thus, ancient "orthodoxy" thrived, I believe, not merely because of imperial power — it would be nice to blame it all on politics — but because its transcendent, hierarchical ordering mirrored the hopes of the urban patriarchal churches to stabilize human experience and mediate the divine mystery. Because everyone believed in an underlying Platonic unity, the few, fragile words of the creeds — themselves the products of compromise — were enforced as the necessary signifier of the higher One. Orthodoxy, defined as eternal and unchanging, ensured differing classes, races, places and even theological opinions held together on earth as it was held together in heaven. Heresy was rebellion against God and the community, a willful destruction of saving truth.

The problem with this theological picture, of course, is history — I have yet to find one willful heretic; most "wrong" people were struggling with new questions of belief and practice. Yet, to preserve the unchanging transcendent truth, "orthodoxy" must lie about motivation or content and create the "dead wrong" to highlight its "living truth." As one scholar, now bishop, said to me, "It doesn't matter historically what the heretics actually taught — it is all a foil to create orthodoxy."

So our peace of Christ rests on constant policing of demonic error which may not have existed? The temptations of this sacred binary view coupled with institutional power can defeat even the best of our born-again saints: If Augustine of Hippo, the doctor of grace, can justify coercion to end controversy in the church, we are all in trouble.

Without the diverse, articulate voices of the urban Greek East, orthodoxy in the West soon became obedience to the sole apostolic church, Rome. We paraphrase Foucault that "orthodoxy became the prison of the church" as theologians and believers alike were warned of the ease of error: The uninsulated wires of heaven can burn without ecclesiastical electricians.

True *consensus fidelium*

Wait, you say, what about all that stuff out on the fringes, those monks in tubs, the mystics, or Gregory the Great using pagan sites for worship? Yes, contrary to the experts or the ideology, many voices, many ages, many people existed in active, faithful lives whose theology was probably as flawed as Arius or as perfectionist as Pelagius, but in the great inchoate center of "Christian mystery" as ordinary experience, this did not destroy anything.

This persistent faith in the face of everything is the true *consensus fidelium*. The Reformation finally broke open the ideology of a single Christendom and the Enlightenment completed the theological diaspora of Christianity. Individual reason, the printing press and the democratization of power challenged the old central view. Yet mutual persecution for doctrinal error was merciless. At the end of the religious wars of the 16th century, Christians knew themselves to be neither alone in the world nor one.

Exile to America and elsewhere offered opportunities to found New Jerusalems, but secular tolerance kept breaking in. Do you remember that diversity and the political rights of dissenters in England drove Newman into Catholicism? Infallibility emerged as a reaction to democracy and modern science. Orthodoxy as romanticism bloomed in the 19th century. Breaking up is hard to do.

Orthodoxy, therefore, as a social and spiritual discourse fulfilled a unifying, but ultimately deadening role: The complexity of categories and transcendent authority promoted either passivity or rebellion. The violent enforcement of orthodoxy in Christian history is the necessary consequence of seeing an institution as the agent and protector of transcendent truth. Let us be clear. This righteous violence is not merely unfortunate, it is a blasphemy, the replacing of God by the church.

"Everyone knows Christians are non-violent, except Christians," commented Gandhi. The sins of ideological violence and genocide which are justly laid at the feet of modern secular states must also be traced back to our own religious passions. "Orthodoxy" was our failure in the desert: We didn't mean to choose physical security, personal power and a divine insurance plan over the way of the servant Jesus. We did, indeed, think we could drink the same cup and bear the same cross. I judge

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the ancestors no more harshly than they judged themselves. If, like Cranmer, Christians must recant our recantation, the struggle for integrity is worth the public humiliation.

Don't only blame the old white guys

"Orthodoxy" therefore is no mere chapter of our past, perpetrated by a lot of old white guys who have nothing to do with me or my Jesus, but in fact a living legacy of sacralized hegemonic speech, exclusive attitudes and minimal tolerance for those who disagree with us. We have paid in blood for our creeds, our liturgy, our vernacular Bible, our racial integration and the right of women to preach. We have burned each other, not "they" have burned "us." I am today heir of both persecutor and persecuted. Orthodoxy, therefore, cannot be the language for the stoic raging grandmothers. Even as "progressive," "dynamic," "radical" or "repentant" it cannot engender adequate humility, openness, renewal and surprise, for it must conceal its own historical humanity — out of anxiety, out of love, out of passion for the truth. This temptation to replace a living God by an enforceable code continues to violate the justice, the graciousness and the true mystery of the Holy.

Embracing our world as human beings means accepting our particular contingent being — imperfect and provisional as our theology must also be. It means respect and acceptance for eventual disagreement and the mess of negotiation which frees all voices to speak. "Tradition" is the art of human memory, renewal and continuity. Based in incarnate agents, "tradition" has fewer pretensions to divine transcendent power or singular authority. It is retrieved and renewed in the transmission of each human generation. The contextualized voices of Paul and Augustine reveal their Jewish and African heritage, their spiritual strengths and limitations. Add in Macrina, Hildegaard and Absalom Jones: Have we lost authority or started to find true catholicity? Do we see the spectrum within light, the reality of the particle which is sometimes the wave?

To be followers of Jesus, Christians in the end must refuse the temptations of hegemonic speech and action. Coercion does not fit the teaching rabbi who dined with everyone and accepted his death — nor the Word which emptied itself, not counting equality with God a thing to be grasped. The Syrophoenician woman won the argument, the rich young man just walked away and the most consistent condemnation in the gospels is for those confident in righteousness, constant in self-serving prayer and smug in authority, who lay burdens on others they do not bear themselves. We can be passionate lovers of Jesus, but we can no longer be passionate haters. We cannot tell our stories as if there are no other stories of God to be heard.

Jesus: Venn diagram of attributes

To embrace plurality — social, religious, scientific, experiential — as a gift of God presents a daunting challenge. Daniel Boyarin has noted that history has given Jews only the gift of "perpetual, creative, diasporic tension." As our Reformation wears on, might we, too, learn that only our multiple theologies and histories will reveal the breadth of life in the Spirit? True catholicity lies ahead, not behind. Jesus must be a Venn diagram of attributes, with lovers and followers attached on many sides. If the faithful love and self-offering of Jesus were the theological norms, which stories would you tell me? Before the eyes of the raging stoic grandmothers, such tales could no longer be romantic or abstract. I do not know if our stories could bring us together yet, but what if the diversity of the stories was the point? "Peace is relation with another ... the inassimilable other, the irreducible other, the other unique. ... Peace is the incessant watch over this alterity," wrote the philosopher Levinas in light of the Holocaust. What if our catholicity was our protection of each other's conscience, our care of diversity as reflecting the will of a creative and good God and our acceptance of dissension based on renewed humility before a redeeming mystery? Our only security rests in this continual re-membering of our lives in God through the prism of Jesus' life and death, our contingent humanity always loved, never abandoned, infinitely wrong and forgiven as children of the risen Christ. Beyond orthodoxy is faith.

Let me end in my grandmother's kitchen. It is a hot and humid Michigan afternoon. My grandmother, my mother and I sit around the kitchen table drinking lemonade. I am enjoying listening to my grandmother gossip. My mother, the minister's wife, never does and my teenage soul is weary of her spiritual foot on my neck. My grandmother tells of the Methodist Women's Society outing to visit a local African Methodist Episcopal Church. "But, you know, they didn't eat anything, because you know whose hands made the cookies ..."

"And whose hands," interrupted my mother in a voice I had never, ever, heard her use to her mother-in-law, "and whose hands do you think have always made the cookies in your town?" Silence. We were repressed Midwesterners; we just drank more lemonade. Perhaps my mother did not change my grandmother, but her interruption changed me. I went to integrated public schools, I didn't know anyone with a maid. Yet, my world cracked open at the passion in my mother's voice as she exposed this violation of divine and human hospitality, of what women offer to other women, what basic justice the children of God owe to each other.

"What were you doing?" she seemed to ask my grandmother. "Who did you think you were?"

What are we doing? Who do we think we are? This is how, around kitchen tables in otherwise forgettable afternoons, the Gospel is made flesh, how "age after age perversely\ with no extraordinary power we reconstitute the world." ●

J. Rebecca Lyman is Samuel M. Garret Professor of Church History at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif. This piece is an abridged version of a paper by the same title that she delivered at this year's Ephiphany West conference, Beyond Orthodoxy: Embracing Christian Pluralism Past and Present.

The 2001 meeting of Anglican primates was to be a showdown on the "limits of diversity" in the Anglican Communion, but something else happened. Check out Ian Douglas' analysis at:
www.thewitness.org

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No simple pluralism

by Peter Selby

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ONE OF THE GREAT GIFTS I received as a result of being asked to speak at *The Witness*' awards banquet at last year's General Convention was the chance to sit in on a meeting of the House of Bishops. The gift was not just an opportunity to hear interesting debates; it was also a time to observe different ways of doing things. To look at different provinces is to look at different cultures and to be made alert to the way in which, for all our high-powered theological arguments, culture and history make crucial differences to the way churches operate.

Obviously, U.S. Episcopalians' anti-monarchist origins affect the way authority is exercised in the U.S. church — specifically in terms of the expectations of bishops and those who hold other church offices. Here in England, even people who might profess to have their doubts about the monarchy are subtly influenced to find the monarchical traditions of episcopacy quite comfortable. We are inclined to think we have managed to give substance to the right of the church to choose its own bishops and that the historic rights of the British monarch in the matter are now just formalities. But, in reality, those historical formalities subtly condition the way we think about our bishops and those who choose them, and all kinds of unquestioned assumptions still obtain.

Similarly, I find it fascinating to see how the ideological assumptions behind the U.S. constitution profoundly affect the U.S. Episcopal Church's self-understanding. The commitment to allowing the People of God to govern their own life works itself out in institutional behavior that looks very little different from the political elections that produce the President, members of Congress and holders of a host of local offices. For both our different churches, then, the arrangements we have evolved look simply to be the way in which God's people have worked out — and should work out — ways of regulating their life.

The same would of course be true of Anglican provinces throughout the world. As the Anglican Communion becomes, rightly, an association of provinces working out their life in very changed circumstances, putting behind their origins in the colonial thinking of a British ascendancy, we can expect to see patterns of church life that are recognizably American, African, Latin American, Australian, Asian and all the rest.

But that, in turn, mustn't lead to a simple pluralism: The ideology of "autonomous provinces" can simply mean everyone going their own way without making use of the potential to understand yourself better by seeing what you do in the mirror of what others do. It might be right to resist more centralization of authority; but not in favor of accepting that none of us has the right to question what another province does. Only such a process of mutual questioning enables us to get at our unquestioned assumptions, enabling us thereby to reconstitute ourselves according the Spirit of Christ. There'll never be a church that bears no cultural marks; but all churches need to have the capacity and the humility to discern what it is about their life that is so historically conditioned that it gets in the way of the Gospel.

That seems to me to be particularly important for British and American Anglicans searching for an ecclesiology for our time. Our histories and present experience of military and financial power as nations means a constant temptation to think that the way we have come to do things represents, quite simply, the way for Christians to act and behave. I have huge sympathy with the difficulty many U.S. Episcopalians have had over the way many of the decisions of the 1999 Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops turned out [see *TW* 3/2000]. But underneath were real conflicts about the power of money and how to handle the globalization of issues that can no longer be left to each province to deal with just as it chooses.

The fact is that some of us are more powerful than others in an international assembly of that kind. Being more powerful doesn't mean you are bound to be wrong; but it does mean being pretty careful when you become quite certain that you are bound to be right! What looks like the radical demands of the Gospel to us becomes, as it crosses cultural barriers, simply another form of colonialism. God's project, a global and local community called after Christ and sharing Christ's mind, turns out to be mixed up with handling the movements of culture and power in our time. Nothing new in that; but as Tanzanian bishop Simon Chiwanga said in his opening sermon at Lambeth, the need is for "awareness, awareness, awareness."

And the awareness we most need is self-awareness. ●

***Peter Selby** is Bishop of Worcester, England.*

The Witness Wins Associated Church Press Awards

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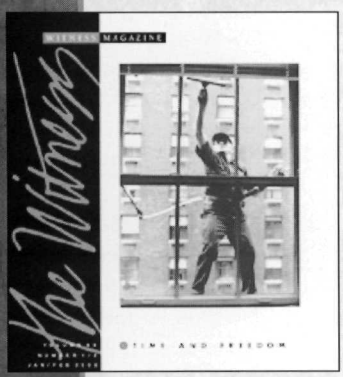
Best in Class for a Special-Interest Magazine

"Displays the best layout out of all entries submitted in this sub-category. The content is very thought-provoking, well-written, and well-edited. The issue on Time and Freedom was especially praiseworthy. The graphics selection displays a good mix of photographs and artwork."



Award of Excellence for Theme Issue

"Creatively developed special issue is built around the concept of time, its limitations and opportunities, and the presence and absence of freedom. This joint theme is shaped through a variety of articles, some of which are highly personal and painful, while others are practical, theoretical and brimming with passionate advocacy for persons who are 'doing' time. A model for how to construct a special issue."

Award of Excellence for First-Person Account

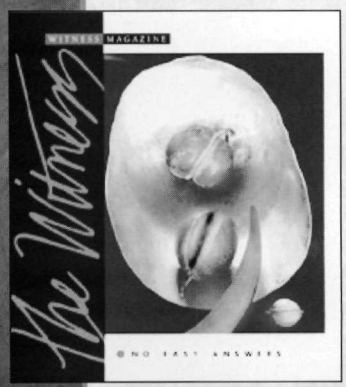
Former editor of *The Witness*, Robert DeWitt, won the Award of Excellence for First Person Account: "Time Travel: When three hands bridge an abyss," published in the January-February 2000 issue. "What new insight can someone offer about Alzheimer's disease? DeWitt offers a loving approach that doesn't focus on loss or grief but rather on the remarkable ability to accompany the loved one on the journey."

TIME TRAVEL

When three hands bridge an abyss

Award of Excellence for a Critical Review Section

The Award of Excellence for a Critical Review Section was bestowed on Bill Wylie-Kellermann for his review of Carter Heyward's *Saving Jesus from Those Who are Right*. The judges wrote: "This review is a model of critical engagement, a productive 'thinking out loud.' It can be read with profit not only by those who are broadly in sympathy with the author's viewpoint, but also by those who, like this reader, strongly disagree."



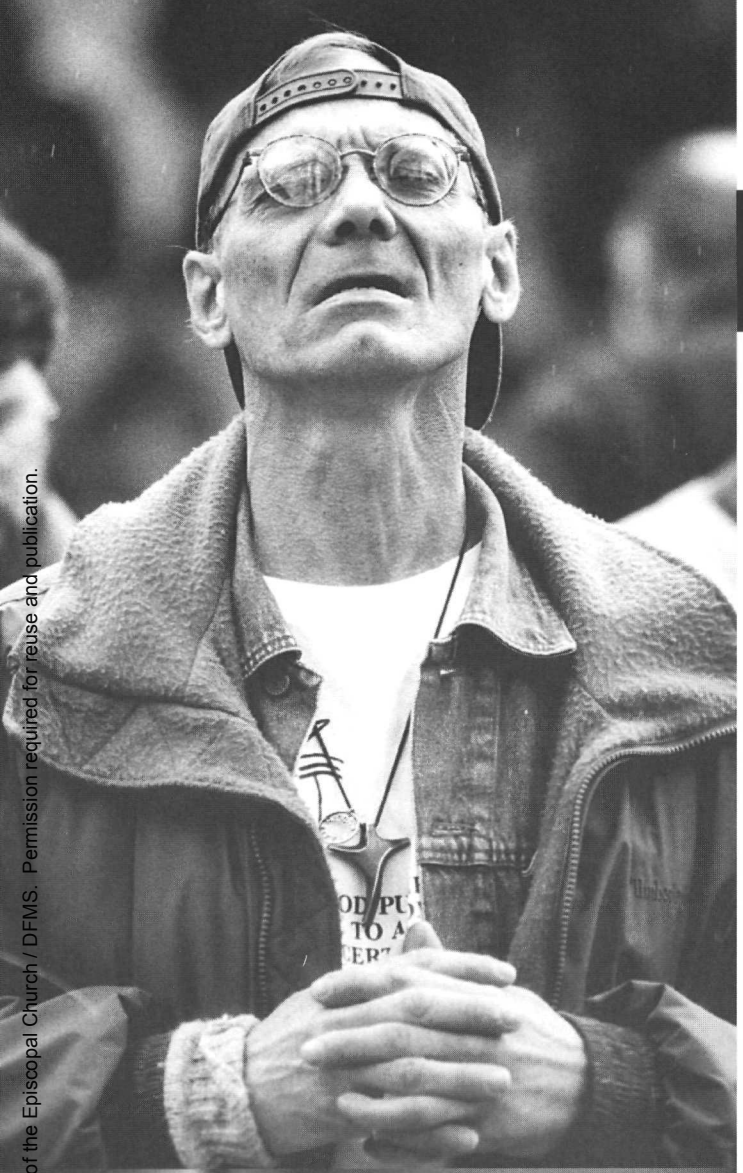
Award of Excellence for Magazine Cover

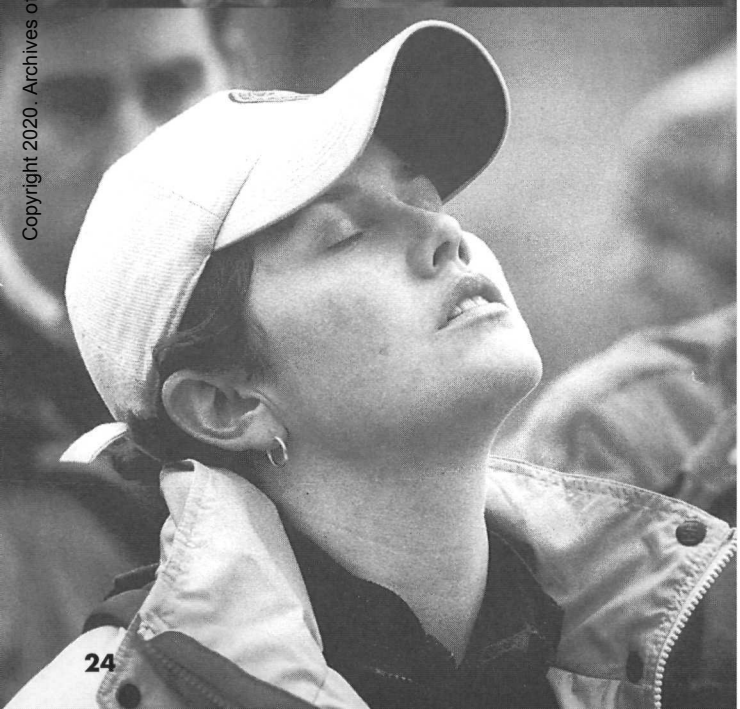
The final Award of Excellence was for Magazine Cover (1-, 2-, or 3-color) for the April 2000 cover. This was the "No easy answers: Gender and sexual ethics for a new age" issue. "This magazine has tremendous aesthetic and artistic appeal. The key for the design here is the balance and contrast of color, the creative two-part logo, and the photo used on the cover that beautifully matches the magazine's main subject. This cover is a great example of mixing a thought-provoking subject with an art piece that opens the readers' minds for many types of interpretation."

Honorable Mention for the Best Publication Redesign (Kat Stuart, designer)

Honorable Mention for Poetry ("Winter Fire" by Rose Berger, December 2000)

Thank you, *Witness* subscribers, for inspiring us to do the very best for you!





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COMMON

A church community with no strings attached

by Carolyn S. Ellis

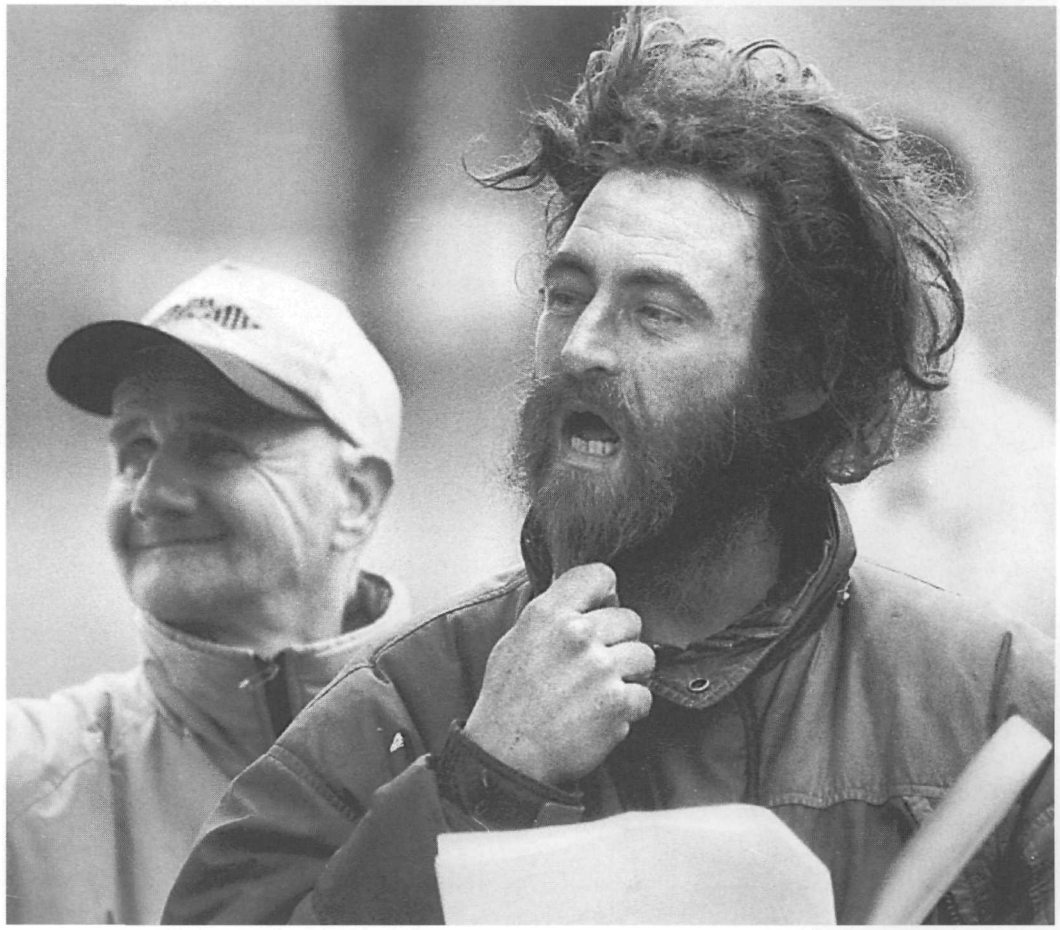
ON HISTORIC BOSTON COMMON, in the shadow of the State House and three bricks-and-mortar churches, Debbie Little, an Episcopal priest, offers Holy Communion on Sundays at 1 P.M. to anyone who comes by. On Easter 1996, a dozen homeless people hanging out in the area accepted Little's invitation to hear some Good News. Today as many as 200 people attend services, gathering in a circle by the triple-tiered Brewer Fountain. The location is convenient, just steps from the Park Street subway station and across Tremont Street from the Cathedral Church of St. Paul and the offices of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

These people — homeless, formerly homeless, and domiciled — have given themselves the name Common Cathedral. They meet every Sunday regardless of the weather in what Little calls "the church under a tree." Common Cathedral's facilities are a rough-hewn cross and a roll-away altar made by Gary, a member since Day 1. Gary, wearing denim overalls and a baseball cap, says, "This is the only church that has accepted me as I am." They welcome neighbors from Beacon Hill and Back Bay, passers-by, often tourists on Boston's well-known Freedom Trail, and guests from affiliated churches who provide lunch. The free-form service follows the Book of Common Prayer with plenty of airtime for those who show up. There are always some surprises. Little says she finds this weekly newness energizing, since she is comfortable "flying by the seat of my pants."

On a very cold Sunday in February, Little is hard to find among the 75 to 80 people gathered for worship. She is dressed in corduroy pants, hiking boots and parka, her clerical collar barely visible. Reaching out with bare, red hands, Little invites the congregation to speak. Gary, middle-aged with a youthful demeanor, tells the gathering, "Follow the cross and the cross will follow you." Several others speak about their resurrection from a life of addiction and despair, their love of the Lord and their willingness to assist others.

Everyone is chilled to the bone well before Communion. "The weather is a great equalizer," Little says. Being outdoors removes the hurdle many homeless persons face when it comes to going inside, especially into churches where they may have experienced rejection, abuse or discomfort. When a woman arrives without gloves, Little reaches into a stash she keeps handy to give her a pair.

CATHEDRAL



Little calls upon those present to read the Scripture lesson, pass communion and be the choir. She breaks bread from small, round loaves and chalicists pour grape juice into disposable communion cups. Communion is offered to several men and women sitting on park benches at the edge of the gathering. In future weeks, some may move into the circle and even take leadership roles.

Communication is one of the most important functions of Common Cathedral. Little announces the coming week's schedule of indoor activities at churches within blocks of the Common. The list includes meals, Bible study (including women-only and Spanish), healing services, recovery groups, Common Art (drop-in crafts with a hot meal) and Common Cinema (films on video with popcorn). Richard hands out a pocket-sized card listing meals and shelters in the area and coupons for the laundromat. Little urges everyone to get help for anyone at risk of freezing.

Many of the congregants wear a small cross designed for Common Cathedral around their necks. Little has conferred more than 900 of these distinctive symbols. "People recognize the cross or the brown shoelace under someone's collar," she says, "Often they then feel free to exchange information about shelters or just to reach out to someone new."

Common Cathedral provides emergency food and clothing, legal services and medical care in addition to instruction for baptism and confirmation, conversation and prayer. A wrap-around program, Ecclesia Ministries, includes a pastoral care team to visit hospitalized homeless persons. About 85 volunteers have been trained. Many are students from Greater Boston's nine divinity schools and seminaries who complete field study in street ministry. The City Reach program introduces middle- and high-school students to homeless individuals. Students stay overnight on the floor of the Cathedral, take to the streets with sandwiches and chapsticks, distribute clothing — and explain what they have learned to their home churches.

Bill is a City Reach teacher. He is also a good example of Common Cathedral's magic at work. Bill arrived on Boston Common after spending a year at a shelter in Quincy, knocked down by a bout of depression and what he terms "an excess of pride." When he came, he reports, "I was a mess, yelling at God. People reached out to me, but I couldn't take it in." However, he watched others participate, and then he jumped right in. Bill now sings with the choir at St. Paul's Cathedral and has his own apartment.

When City Reach students ask Bill how to recognize who is home-

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less, he tells them he can't always be sure. But, he recommends, "Look at the eyes. With a regular person, they will sparkle. With a homeless person, there is an emptiness, a 1,000-yard stare." Bill also advises his students on how to approach someone on the street — introduce yourself first, first name only, and use a person's name if they give it. "When we don't have things, we have our pride and our names," he explains.

An ecumenical network of 100 churches provides Common Cathedral with financial support, meals, fellowship, volunteers and prayers. Little preaches in these churches, bringing them wisdom gained from street ministry. She networks with police, medical and housing specialists and advocates with government for the homeless. She helped to establish a shelter for homeless women in Back Bay and participates with downtown churches in the Doorbell Ministry. Clergy share information about resources and have identified unmet needs for storage, laundry facilities and over-the-counter medications.

Churches and Christian organizations provide many services for the homeless within blocks of Boston Common. Boston Rescue Mission/Kingston House, founded in 1899 and located in the Financial District, has a 175-bed shelter and provides meals, clothing, training and service. St. Francis House provides shelter, meals, showers and lockers through the Long Island Shelter Annex on the fifth floor of its building on Boylston Street. Starlight Homeless Ministries has brought food and Christian counseling to the streets at night since 1990.

St. John's Episcopal Church on Bowdoin Street, Beacon Hill, has provided meals for decades. Lisbeth Hall, priest-in-charge and a sculptor, assists at Common Art, the fine arts and crafts program held on Wednesdays from 10 to 3 P.M. The Paulist Center on Park Street overlooking Boston Common provides a hot meal weekly, restrooms and groceries. The Park Street Church supports Starlight Ministries with meals and volunteers. St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral hosts several Common Cathedral programs, including Bible study and Common Cinema.

Street ministries in other cities around the country vary. They serve people on foot, in vans, and in trucks outfitted for hygiene or medical care. Facilities may be an undercroft rented for a dollar a year, a storefront, a tent, or a fully staffed shelter for pregnant and parenting teens. Some provide a never-empty pot of coffee, Sunday dinner because there is no other meal available, or a full complement of meals prepared by formerly homeless people now at work. Some actively bring a Christian message to those they assist, and others give freely with no expectation of return.

The San Francisco Night Ministry (http://www.nightministry.org/), for example, founded in 1964 by Lutheran and United Presbyterian clergy, is there for "the terminally ignored" when churches and social service agencies are closed. Night Minister Donald Fox, an Episcopal priest, says that in this ministry, like that of Jesus, "everyone is equally loved, equally valued and entitled to care." Armed with cell phone and pager, Fox has been on the street between 10 P.M. and 4 A.M. for 10 years. The Night Ministry maintains the longest running crisis hotline in San Francisco. Fox encounters people in bars and coffee shops, in hotels and homes, and on the sidewalk and responds to referrals from the hotline, the telephone operator and the police.

In Chicago, Tom Behrens, a United Church of Christ minister and mortgage banker, was in 1974 asked by 18 Chicago churches to undertake a nighttime ministry. For 10 years Behrens worked on the street. When a runaway boy was murdered downtown, Behrens began fundraising to expand youth outreach services. The Chicago Night Ministry (http://www.thenightministry.org/) today has 400 volunteers and 50 staff and is a United Way agency. Behrens is frequently consulted about growing a ministry into a multi-faceted organization. He hopes to establish an institute to help others develop effective street ministry and be a forum for people working with persons who are hard to reach.

Some street ministries focus solely on worship. Keep it simple, you could say. In downtown Seattle, Episcopal priest Susan O'Shea offers Holy Communion every day at noon at the Chapel of St. Martha and St. Mary of Bethany in Seattle's Pike Place Public Market, the oldest operating farmers' market in America. Like chapel founder Carol Ludden, O'Shea offers a ministry of sanctuary and companionship.

"Many people downtown live in marginal circumstances and they enjoy coming here," O'Shea says. The chapel began outdoors as "the church without walls," and today is open from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. O'Shea estimates they serve 200 cups of coffee a day and have 1,600 members, many Spanish-speaking.

People of means who have felt marginalized at some point in their lives — through a struggle with depression or addiction and childhood rejection — also seem to be drawn to these churches. They also are people who value connecting. Sarah, who regularly worships at both Common Cathedral and a suburban parish, says of Common Cathedral, "If Jesus were here, walking on earth, that's where he would be." She acknowledges that for some people there isn't much we can do but be with them in fellowship and prayer.

Traditional churches say they welcome everyone to worship, but the homeless get a different message from comments like, "You can't bring that in here," or, "How may I help you?" Common Cathedral and other such street ministries put the needs of the homeless first, whether that means not using the prayer book or letting people bring their belongings or their dog.

Still, Little hopes for the time when Common Cathedral isn't needed. The deeply spiritual homeless population craves regular worship at which they are welcome and a church community with no strings attached. Matthew, a man who has been coming to Common Cathedral for four years, agrees. His first reaction to Common Cathedral was, "This is beautiful. It's about time a minister from one of these churches came out to where the poor really are." His enthusiasm led him to become a spokesperson for the homeless and for a year he attended meetings with Little.

But now Matthew has mixed feelings. Real change hasn't occurred. Out of frustration, he's built a model church which he now carries with him. This cardboard edifice is precisely constructed and covered with protest slogans and scripture passages in Matthew's neat hand. The front doors are padlocked. The building is symbolic, but the lock is real.

"The church should be a refuge," Matthew says, "but I'm still locked out." ●

Carolyn S. Ellis is a writer who lives in the Boston metropolitan area.

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'a global WITNESS'

Through this section of our website we are offering analysis and commentary from around the U.S. church and the global Anglican Communion. Our aim is to encourage a reclaiming of the Anglican vocation of "public theology" — and to expand awareness of the issues and struggles occupying the hearts and minds of progressive Anglicans and other persons of faith worldwide.

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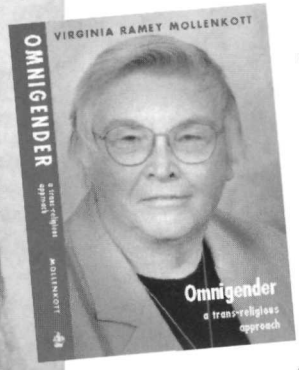
'GRACE — is a

by Mary E. Hunt



Omnigender: A Trans-religious Approach,
by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott (Pilgrim Press, 2001)

LEAVE IT TO *THE WITNESS*' OWN Virginia Ramey Mollenkott to push the theological envelope one more time in her marvelous new book, *Omnigender: A Trans-religious Approach*. Just as she did with *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* co-authored in 1978 with Letha Scanzoni, before Virginia admitted publicly that she was the neighbor in question, she has written what is known in the publishing business as "a big book." In my view, this book ends one period in the epoch struggle of Christianity with homosexuality and opens another.

Virginia received a Lifetime Achievement award from SAGE, Senior Action in a Gay Environment, a direct-service and advocacy group for seniors in New York City in 1999. It was my privilege to make the presentation on an evening when the Broadway crowd was out in full feather to honor composer Jerry Herman, artist Paul Cadmus and entertainer Storme DeLarverie. I wondered what they would think of a feminist religious writer getting the award as well.

I began my remarks by suggesting that Virginia's impact on Christianity is enough to make the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence look like altar girls. The audience roared. We were home, with our people, people who have paid a price to sing, "I am what I am," and mean it. I realized that oppressed people know the role religions can play to liberate or oppress. Here they were face-to-face with a Christian woman who has insisted that her community live up to its Word. I claimed that Dr. Mollenkott's contributions have resulted in some of the remarkable inroads that lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender people have made into Christian institutions. I noted that she points helpfully toward a lot of work that still needs to be done. This book only reinforces my words.

For the past 30 years, lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender people and our supporters have labored in the often unwelcoming vineyard of Christian churches as if people were female and male, gay and straight, here or in the country. What was once a gay-male movement for social and ecclesial justice, slowly and still to a limited degree, became a gay/lesbian movement with some sense that lesbian women's experiences were different from gay men's.

The relatively recent but welcome arrival of bisexual people on their own terms only reinforced the binaries, albeit by embracing them. However, the entrance of trans people in their many forms — intersexual or hermaphrodite persons, transsexuals, transves-

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transgender person who loves women and men'

tites or cross-dressers, drag kings and queens or performance artists, transgenderists or bigenderists and androgynes, to name only some of the newly emerging categories — effectively changes the panorama forever. No longer can we tell players with or without a scorecard. No longer can we assume anything about anyone, or so it seems, with gender categories as fluid as warm honey and sexual orientations multiplying like dot-coms in the Silicon Valley. The point is that all must be made welcome, just as they are, in communities that call themselves Christian.

Gender is a complicated concept. I predict that the Human Genome Project and its descendents will settle most of the biological questions about sexual orientation. But I doubt that science will ever find the gene that causes discrimination, that triggers hatred and that sets up excluding hierarchies. Thus, Virginia's focus on the religious components is well-placed because it is there, where values are grounded, that the promise of justice lives.

Virginia is never one to ignore the elephant in the living room. In this book she goes about the systematic deconstruction of gender givens, relying on the latest social and biological scientific information. She spares neither progressives nor conservatives, arguing — and I agree — that we all need to shift our static categories because they simply do not work anymore.

Life is not split conveniently down the middle. There is much greater diversity than any of us dreamed. There is no purpose served in denying the obvious, even though it is convenient to do so. I can imagine that some LGBT activists may secretly wish she had left well enough alone. God knows we have enough problems on our hands with the old anthropology. We have not been very successful in changing religious institutions on gay/lesbian and bi terms. What makes us think we will do any better with trans and queer? But knowledge grows and with it our analysis. What remains static for Christians in this whirlwind is a commitment to love and justice. The rest, as the rabbis say, is commentary.

Almost everything changes if Virginia's analysis is correct. Texts like "neither male nor female" can mean just that when gender is in flux. Arguments against women's ordination need wholesale revamping since we do not know for sure now what a woman is. Even our own hard-wrought sexual identities are up for grabs when we take seriously the data from the sciences and listen to the stories of people who have lived painful lives because they could not check a box, use a rest room or get married, because they did not fit the mold. Virginia's honest Christian response is that the only thing we can throw out is the mold. She does so with courage, compassion and skill.

Virginia has done her homework in the trans community. She knows the people, reads the literature, attends the events, loves with her generous heart and thinks with her scholarly head. She has found the people and the arguments persuasive, fascinating and compelling. We are the richer for it. How little we know about what makes any of us tick, much less what makes us love and feel sexually attracted. How dare we judge from our ignorance?

She models how to work as a Christian scholar and activist without apology and with attention to an increasingly pluralistic world. Virginia grew up as a fundamentalist's fundamentalist in the Plymouth Brethren Assemblies, a Christian group so parochial that she did not know Catholics were Christians. Nonetheless, she brings a welcome interreligious perspective to bear, making good on her subtitle. Not only is she looking at trans matters on the sexual front, but also in the religious realm. This attention to Hindu, Buddhist and other faith traditions signals that she has gone well beyond her evangelical roots, though she never leaves them entirely. They nurture her own generous spirit and ground her commitment to inclusivity.

Every summer she provides leadership for a weekend at Pennsylvania's Kirkridge conference center entitled "Gay, Lesbian and Christian." She has helped thousands of people over the decades make sense of that ecclesio-genic conundrum. I imagine that the group will slowly take on trans concerns and include more trans people because of her prophetic stance. It will not be a quick adding of the word "trans" to the title, but a thoughtful, perhaps painful grappling with how taking trans concerns seriously upsets all of our apple carts. The difference is Virginia will be there to pick up the fruit.

She continues to push the Evangelical Women's Caucus to greater inclusivity. Imagine their surprise when she came out as a lesbian. Now, through her tireless advocacy for trans folks she is inviting every group to push its parameters. The Caucus will feel it, too, as trans people move toward membership and any trans people who are in it come out. The movement for LGBT inclusion cannot simply add "t" and stir, but must confront the changes that taking new people seriously on their own terms demands. No cheap grace here.

The first time I met Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, she was preaching from the pulpit of a church in Washington, D.C. She began, "Grace — is a lesbian." My mouth dropped. Now, I suspect, she might begin something like this: "Grace — is a transgender person who loves women and men." The Holy Spirit may be surprised to hear her identity revealed and her message articulated with such brilliance.

We, luckily, have the book. ●

Witness *contributing editor* ***Mary Hunt*** *is co-founder of WATER, the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, in Silver Spring, Md.*

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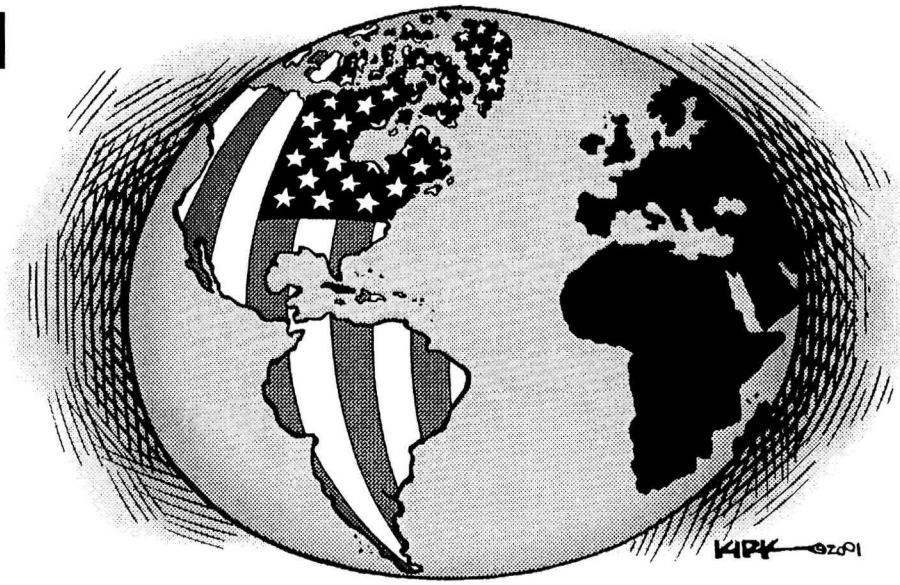
Project HIP-HOP

Each summer since 1993, groups of Boston-area high-school students have journeyed 5,000 miles to visit historic Civil Rights movement sites and meet with movement veterans. To date, 125 students have taken part in Project HIP-HOP (Highways Into the Past: History, Organizing and Power), which is based at the ACLU of Massachusetts' Bill of Rights Education Project. In 1996, a group of students who had made the journey south in previous years traveled to South Africa to learn about the struggle to overthrow apartheid. In a story in *Rethinking Schools* (Spring '01), project director Nancy Murray writes that by the end of each trip, students have felt "that the torch has been passed to them by movement veterans and with it the responsibility to make a better society."

"We were put in touch not just with the struggles of the past," wrote one student, "but with the urgent tasks of the present and future, and now see ourselves as critical pieces in the puzzle of how to achieve social justice."

Another student, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, wrote: "I no longer feel like an outcast in society. Through this summer, I have become more than just a 'kid.' I have broken out of the mold that society has put me in and have become a working part of society itself. Now I am part of 'we, the people,' the people the Constitution was created to serve and protect, and I refuse to let it be twisted up and used against me."

"On their return, the youth have made presentations to an estimated 25,000 of their peers in nearly 300 visits to schools, community centers and churches," Murray wrote. "They have helped create a Project HIP-HOP curriculum for high-school students, and now have their own newspaper, *Rising Times*. Started in 1998, the newspaper features articles about a variety of social and educational issues. It has a special focus called ACTION for Justice — "our campaign of telling the truth about racism and plain injustice in the criminal justice system, and of demanding decent education, not incarceration, for our generation."



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Chiapas setback

The peace process in Chiapas suffered a setback with the passage of an indigenous rights bill that is seen as too limited, according to a May report from SIPAZ.

"During the first five months of President Vicente Fox's term, important progress was made toward reinvigorating the stalled peace process in Chiapas," the report summary states. "However, the hopes raised were seriously challenged when the Mexican Congress approved a bill of constitutional reforms on indigenous rights and culture that was promptly and vehemently rejected by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). The law differs significantly from the bill drafted by the congressional Commission on Agreement and Pacification (COCOPA) and backed by the EZLN. The COCOPA bill sought to implement the San Andres Accords, signed in 1996 by the federal government and the EZLN. That was the bill President Fox submitted to Congress shortly after assuming office.

"The bill that was finally approved includes positive elements prohibiting discrimination of any kind and recognizing the autonomy of indigenous peoples in certain respects. However, as indigenous leaders, academic experts and others pointed out, it fails to grant a variety of legal rights to indigenous peoples without which, they argue, it would be difficult to make autonomy meaningful in practice.

"In the end, it seems to reflect the historic gap between the reality of the indigenous peoples and that of the political class in Mexico. The bill was passed by a large majority in Congress, and legislators from the PRI and PAN parties have defended it as an important, albeit limited, step forward. However, the long-awaited passage of this bill was greeted as much by criticism from those it is supposed to benefit and their supporters as it was by praise from other quarters. Moreover, as the limitations of the bill became known, the criticism from key indigenous groups took the form of cries of outrage and betrayal. Some pledged to oppose ratification of the reforms by the state legislatures. Even President Fox, responding to the mounting criticism, was moved to state, 'Clearly more thorough work is required on central aspects, such as autonomy and self-determination.'

"The sense of disappointment and betrayal was perhaps greater as a result of the hopes raised by the remarkable events of the preceding months. In late February, 24 EZLN leaders undertook a two-week caravan through 12 states that culminated with a rally of approximately 200,000 people in Mexico City's main square. The central objective of the march was to lobby Congress on behalf of the COCOPA bill. While the Zapatistas delegates encountered some hos-

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tility, they were generally received enthusiastically along their route. Moreover, the caravan propelled the Chiapas conflict back to the center of public attention. En route, they participated in the third National Indigenous Congress (CNI). The 5,000 representatives of 42 indigenous peoples accepted the COCOPA bill as their own and recognized the EZLN as fully representative of the CNI. Given the broad representation of the CNI, its action undermines efforts to cast the EZLN as an isolated group and the Chiapas conflict as a local matter.

"The Fox administration contributed to the positive climate by welcoming the Zapatista caravan, pledging to secure peace and prosperity in Chiapas, and partially addressing the three conditions set by the EZLN for the renewal of talks: closure of seven Mexican Army camps, release of EZLN prisoners, and approval of the COCOPA bill on indigenous rights and culture. A lengthy polemic over whether the EZLN would be allowed to address legislators from the floor of Congress led to an EZLN threat to return to Chiapas. At that point, President Fox intervened to take further steps to fulfill the EZLN's conditions and to lean on Congress, where opposition had already been weakened by the growing momentum created by the Zapatista caravan. Finally the Chamber of Deputies voted to open its doors to the Zapatistas.

"On March 28, in an historic event, EZLN and CNI leaders spoke in Congress. The EZLN leaders seemed to mark the opening of a new stage when they affirmed the Zapatistas option for political struggle and stated, 'Now is no longer the time for arms.' Once back in Chiapas, Subcommander Marcos summed up their hopeful assessment: 'Today dialogue is closer and confrontation is more distant.'

"Meanwhile, events in Chiapas underscored the urgent need for progress in the peace process. Social and political killings continued. In one unresolved case, eight indigenous peasants were ambushed and killed. There were multiple incidents of violent confrontation between groups with rival land claims. Ranchers and others marched in opposition to the Zapatistas and the COCOPA bill and demanded a role in peace talks. And the new governor, Pablo Salazar, continued to face a power struggle with the state legislature and judiciary while he was simultaneously besieged by sometimes competing demands from a wide variety of social groups.

"Hopes that progress in the peace process would alleviate tensions in Chiapas and establish the basis for dealing with their underlying causes were dashed by the negative reactions to the indigenous rights bill, which included a decision by the EZLN to suspend contact between its intermediary and the federal government.

"In this deteriorating environment, Chiapas governor Pablo Salazar called upon President Fox and the EZLN to maintain their commitment to peace and to rise above the interests and visions of those who place obstacles in the path of the measures needed to get the peace process back on track. Recommended Actions:

1. Write President Fox, COCOPA, the Subcommittee for Analysis of Indigenous Initiatives, and the EZLN, expressing: a) concern about this new obstacle to renewed peace talks whose prospects until recently had seemed to be improving; and b) the hope of the international community that the key participants will find the vision and the courage to meet this challenge that has put the entire peace process at risk.

2. Write to President Fox: Note that the bill approved by Congress dramatically limits the exercise of the right of self-determination of the indigenous peoples and its expression, indigenous autonomy, and that he himself stated, "Clearly more thorough work is required on central aspects, such as autonomy and self-determination." Appeal to him to find the appropriate manner to use his executive power to ensure that, as soon as possible, Congress reconsiders the issue of indigenous rights and culture and approves the remaining elements of the COCOPA bill that he presented to Congress in December.

3. Circulate information, such as the contents of this Report, on the situation in Chiapas.

(The full text of the SIPAZ report can be found at: <http://www.sipaz.org>.) ●

Lic. Vicente Fox, Presidente de la República
Residencial Oficial de los Pinos
Colonia M. Chapultepec,
Delegación M. Hidalgo
Fax: (+52)(5)515 1794
Internet site for comments:
http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/?P=17

Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación (COCOPA)
Reforma No.10,
Torre Caballitos, Piso 18
06030 México, D.F., México
Fax: (+52)(5)345 3288

Subcomisión de Análisis de las Iniciativas de Ley de Derechos y Cultura Indígenas
c/o C. Senador Manuel Bartlett Díaz
Reforma No. 10
Torre Caballitos, Piso 16
06030 México, D.F., México
Fax: (+52)(5)345 3296 ext. 5329
E-mail: mbartlett.spri@senado.gob.mx

Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional
c/o Centro de Información Zapatista
Avenida Ignacio Allende No. 22-A
Barrio San Antonio
29250 San Cristóbal de las Casas,
Chiapas, México
Fax: (+52)(9)678 1013

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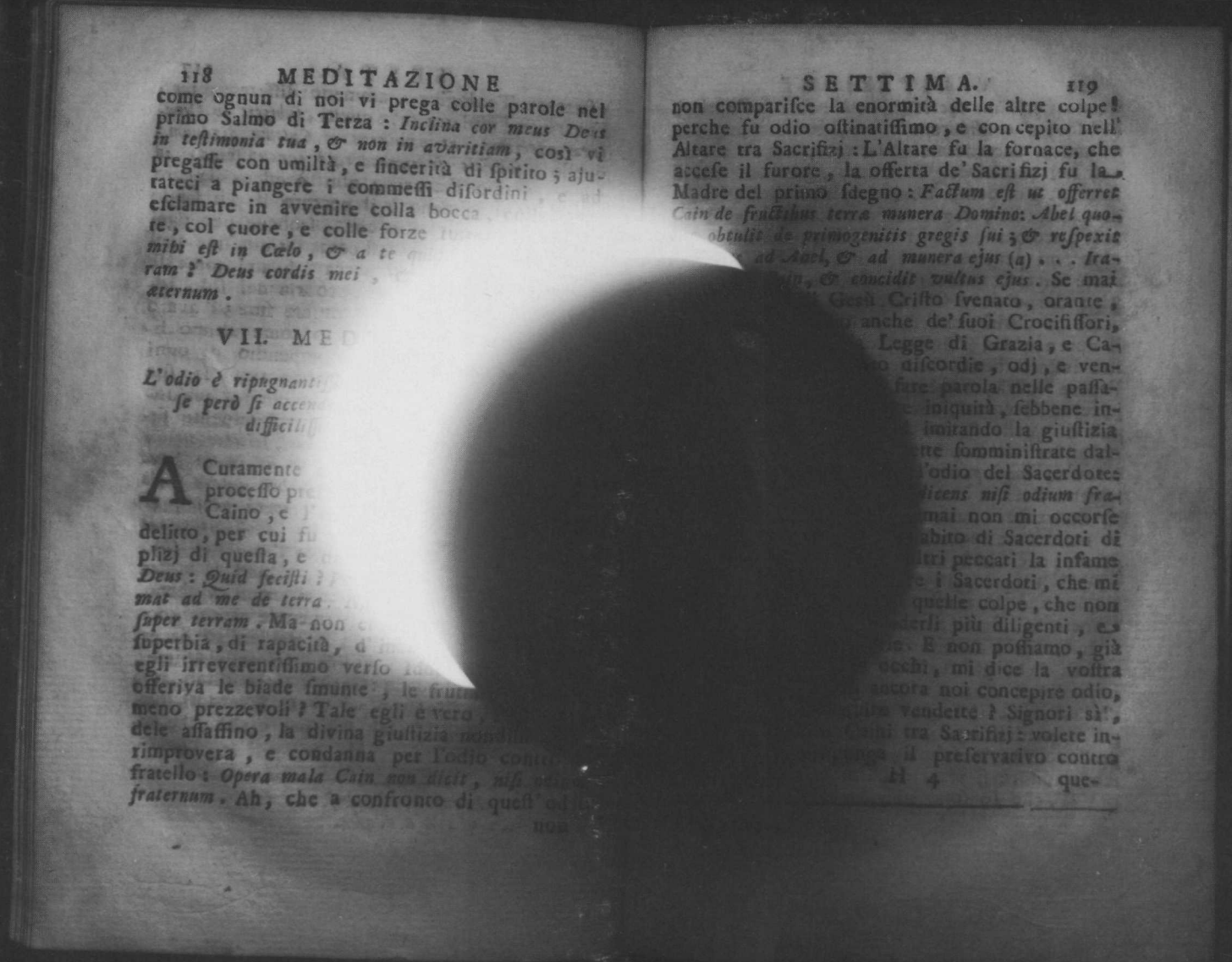

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come ognun di noi vi prega colle parole nel primo Salmo di Terza : *Inclina cor meus Deus in testimonia tua, & non in avaritiam*, così vi pregasse con umiltà, e sincerità di spirito ; ajutateci a piangere i commessi disordini , esclamare in avvenire colla bocca te, col cuore, e colle forze *mihi est in Cœlo, & a te ram ? Deus cordis mei , æternum .*

VII. ME

L'odio è ripugnant se però si acce difficil

ACuramente processo pr Caino, e delitto, per cui fu plizj di questa, e *Deus : Quid fecisti ? mat ad me de terra super terram .* Ma non superbia, di rapacità, d egli irreverentissimo verso offeriva le biade smunte , le frut meno prezzevoli ? Tale egli è vero dele assassino, la divina giustizia rimprovera, e condanna per l'odio contro fratello : *Opera mala Cain non dicit, nisi fraternum .* Ah, che a confronto di quest' od non

SETTIMA. 119

non comparisce la enormità delle altre colpe! perche fu odio ostinatissimo, e concepito nell' Altare tra Sacrifizj : L'Altare fu la fornace, che accese il furore, la offerta de' Sacrifizj fu la Madre del primo sdegno : *Factum est ut offerret Cain de fructibus terræ munera Domino: Abel quoobtulit de primogenitis gregis sui ; & respexit ad Abel, & ad munera ejus (a) . . . Iraconcidit vultus ejus .* Se mai Gesù Cristo svenato, orante, anche de' suoi Crocifissori, Legge di Grazia, e Cadiscordie, odj, e venfare parola nelle passainiquità, sebbene inimirando la giustizia te somministrate dall'odio del Sacerdote *licens nisi odium fra*mai non mi occorse abito di Sacerdoti di tri peccati la infame i Sacerdoti, che mi quelle colpe, che non erli più diligenti, e . E non possiamo, già occhi, mi dice la vostra ancora noi concepire odio, vendette ? Signori sì', Caini tra Sacrifizj : volete inil preservativo contro

H 4 que-

From *The Secret Books* by Sean Kernan

The Witness

The Witness Magazine
P.O. Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856

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WITNESS MAGAZINE

THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

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An elderly woman, a relative of killed Palestinian policeman Mohammed al-Masri, 20, covers her face with her hands as she cries in front of their home in the village of Beit Hanoun, near the border with Israel, before his funeral.

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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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The Witness

Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Media Reviews
Bill Wylie-Kellermann
Bruce Campbell

a global WITNESS
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Website Design
Jim Dugan

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
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Change of address: Third Class mail does not forward. Provide your new mailing address to *The Witness*.

Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
232 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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Younger adults and callings of conscience

What a wonderful issue of *The Witness* this month (June 2001)!!! I have already gotten several hundred copies to share with NatGat attendees as well as our young adult and higher education ministries networks. I was especially moved by Julie Wortman's editorial about being part of the event and being in a ministry relationship with young adults. It's such a healthy image of mentorship having some quality of "learning the ropes together," as Sharon Parks Daloz has put it so well.

I am personally grateful to *The Witness* for being open to the invitation to be in community with us, but more importantly, those of us across the church who work with young people now have a fresh and current perspective of young adults in ministry, in action and in discernment for the voice of God.

Thomas K. Chu
Program Director
Ministries with Young People Cluster
Episcopal Church Center
New York, NY

Annual appeal thanks

Here is my special gift to help you with ongoing expenses over and above what is covered by subscriptions. I surely wish you well. Your publication gives urgent, fresh and well-written commentary on the current social scene while articulating the religious dimension. Thank you for your ministry.

Arthur H. Underwood
Cockeysville, MD

Choices, not merely 'churchpersonship'

Cosmic coherence! Just as I was appreciating the genetic modification issue (*TW* 5/01) — loaning it to my 16-year-old daughter as she prepared for a debate on gene patenting, as a matter of fact! — and I was longing to express my thanksgiving for *The Witness'* ongoing witness, lo, like an answer to prayer, there arrived your solicitation letter!

I don't always agree with every assertion in *The Witness*. But issue after issue, it consistently provokes my thought. Moreover, it regularly swells my imagination and compassion until they burst the banks of their normal course and flood out into new areas of my consciousness, bearing rich nutrients to the soil of my commitments. I deeply appreciate *The Witness'* insistence upon understanding the life of faith in terms of ethical choices in the world, and not merely in terms of "churchpersonship."

The Witness continually invites me to be "missionary" in my preferred sense of that word: unwilling to let my faith puddle comfortably around me, but always pouring it outward in an effort to bring palpable healing, reconciliation and justice to situations in which fellow inhabitants of God's creation are broken, divided, oppressed. Add to that dedication a modicum of sheer beauty — photos, poetry, artwork and graphics, elegant prose — and *voilá*, the ingredients that inspire this gift of thanksgiving to you! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Holly Lyman Antolini
Cushing, ME

Gifts and edge

I must write to tell you how much we appreciate your magazine, which was given to us by Sara Owen from Atlanta, one of your faithful readers. You certainly take the lead in the gifts of the spirit; how to appreciate them and use them. You're also on the cutting edge of many concerns, even guiding us into a new and better future. God bless your good works.

Marilyn Clements and Lamar Clements
Clearwater, FL

Top priority

Many thanks for your excellent issue on climate (*TW* 4/01). Earth/Environment must be top priority!!

Barbara Potter
Falmouth, ME

When kids grow up with gunfire

by Ethan Flad

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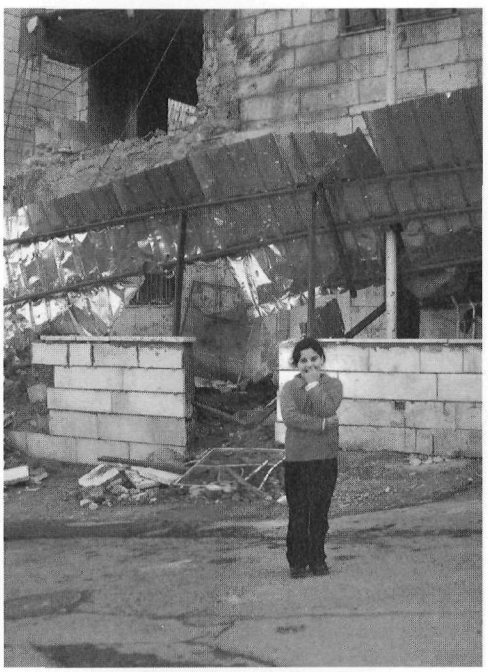
WHEN I WAS A KID, I considered Golda Meir one of my heroines. I remember writing a book report about the former Prime Minister of Israel, extolling the efforts of one of the first international women political leaders of the modern era.

Meir was to me a symbol of the oppressed Jewish people. I read about her work to help create a fledgling nation in the midst of what I understood was a hostile Arab region. My sense of justice was awakened by these stories.

Until just a few years ago, my analysis of the conflict between Israel and its neighbors was a fairly simplistic one: Jews were reclaiming their Promised Land, and Arabs were trying to stop them. It has taken me at least a decade of education about the region combined with two trips to Israel/Palestine and a greater understanding of our nation's role in the "peace process," to un-learn what I previously believed.

While I don't pretend to be an expert on Middle East politics, I do feel that I now have a more complex and nuanced view of that region than most North Americans. As a person who has been fortunate to travel to several regions of the world, I've felt it harder to describe the issues in Palestine/Israel than anywhere else I've gone. I've been especially frustrated by my increasing belief that the information we receive through our primary international media sources is incredibly biased.

As an example, earlier this year I met an Arab-American who told me how a couple of years ago he was placed on an e-mail list run by the Israeli embassy to the U.S. Every day, David received an e-mail from their DC headquarters with new information straight from Israel. After a while, he began to notice that U.S. newspaper articles on the following day would be taken straight from those e-mail bulletins. Twenty-four hours later, members of our nation's mainstream media simply re-publish the "news," based on the Israeli state's communications machine.



Palestinian girl in Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip

As social justice advocates, how can we help achieve a greater balance in objectively representing the words and images that come from that tense region of the world?

In January 1996, I attended a conference in Jerusalem on the future of the dwindling indigenous Christian presence there. The event was convened by a group named Sabeel, an ecumenical Palestinian liberation theology center, whose founder and director is an Anglican Palestinian priest, Naim Ateek. I had met Naim in 1991 in Brazil at an Anglican Peace and Justice Network meeting, and was captivated by his indigenous interpretation of justice. Naim's ability to contextualize a theology of nonviolence within a violent system drew me to travel to a region I had avoided to that point.

The trip, my first to the Middle East, was at once an exhilarating experience and a depressing one. A major highlight was the first Palestinian election, which was held the day before the conference — an extraordinary coincidence. I joined two other U.S. visitors — Patti Browning, wife of then-Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, and Jess Gaither, convener of the Episcopal Peace and Justice Network — as guests of Samir Kafity, then-President Bishop of the Middle East, when he voted for the first time in his life. That significant day offered a glimpse of hope for peace.

Conversely, I witnessed intense poverty in the Occupied Territories, I experienced the omnipresent Israeli security checkpoints, saw expanding Jewish settlements, and I encountered blatant racism directed toward an African American friend. Despite the brief euphoria of the Palestinian election, I left the region saddened by what I'd seen and doubtful that the peace process would move forward quickly. My visit also led me to begin to change my previous strong support of Zionism.

In February 2001, I returned to Jerusalem to attend Sabeel's fourth international conference: "Speaking Truth, Seeking Justice." This time an emotional high was not to be expected. The event was held one week after the election of right-wing hawk Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister. The mood was somber — almost five months had passed since the start of the "new" Intifada, the Palestinian uprising which commenced in the fall of 2000.

The conference had originally been scheduled to take place in Bethlehem, but security

Photos by Stephen R. Sizer

concerns caused the organizers to move it to Jerusalem instead. Our visit to Bethlehem ended up being a few hours, rather than a few days, due to almost-daily violence between Israeli military forces and Palestinian militants. Our busses filled with international conference participants were not permitted to pass a checkpoint into Bethlehem, just 10 minutes south of Jerusalem. Instead, we walked across the checkpoint and took new busses. We almost didn't go there at all, since one of our group, a young Palestinian woman, had "Jerusalem Only" papers. Two hundred fifty people refused to go into Bethlehem unless she could go too.

In Beit Jala, a Palestinian neighborhood in Bethlehem, we saw the result of the violence that took place after dark each day. We visited a home where 18-year-old Osamah Quraby had died in bed three nights earlier. Tank fire from Gilo, the Israeli settlement at the top of the hill, had knocked in the wall of his room onto his bed, suffocating and crushing him. It was depressingly familiar. During the opening worship service of the conference, a screen projector slowly showed the name and age of each person who had died since September — Israeli or Palestinian, Muslim, Jew or Christian. The majority of names were under the age of 30; a frightening percentage of the victims were under the age of 18. Ghassan Andoni, a Palestinian peacemaker working in Bethlehem, told us, "The kids can now tell the difference between different types of guns, just by the sounds."

Naim Ateek addresses protesting Bethlehem-bound Sabeel conferees at Israeli checkpoint.

With kids growing up knowing the sounds of gunfire as part of their daily existence, with restrictions on movement that some compare to the infamous Pass Laws of apartheid-era South Africa (except South Africans, like Muslim theologian Farid Esack, who said, "This is worse than what we experienced!"), with a belief that the news we get from the Middle East is prejudiced toward the U.S.' historical support of Israel, one could easily lose hope. However, there are causes for hope, as long as there are peacemakers. This issue of *The Witness* profiles some of those stories. The diverse voices in this issue — Palestinians, Israeli Jews, American Indians, U.S. Christians — give encouragement that together we will eventually create a just, lasting peace.

WHAT IS "A GLOBAL *WITNESS*"? In the short time since I've been working with *The Witness*, several folks have asked me what this "a global *Witness*" title means. As evidenced by this issue, one key aspect is our intention to increase the amount of material we receive from other parts of the world. While *The Witness* has always been attentive to international justice and peace issues, traditionally most of our content has been authored in the U.S. Over the coming couple years we hope to showcase more international writers in our print publication — but in the meanwhile, check us out online for articles from around the world. Our efforts with "a global *Witness*" will primarily be on the Internet, so visit www.thewitness.org/agw/ for original commentary and indigenous insights on a range of social justice concerns. *[N.B. At press time,* The Witness *had just been informed we need to change the title of the web site project, "a global* Witness.*" See our advertisement below for more information.]* ●

***Ethan Flad** is editor/producer of "a global* Witness *(see www.thewitness.org/agw/).*

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Notes from an execution

by Bruce Campbell

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THE GURNEY was wheeled into the small, concrete room. A sheet was used to cover everything, nearly up to the neck. A patch of skin was prepped for the needle, which was then methodically inserted, empty but ready to deliver the poison. Following procedure step by step, at a command the assistant turned the small lever that sent fluid through the tubing and into the veins.

Knowing it was hopeless by this point, I still found myself resisting, resisting, but my pounding heart started slowing down. I yawned once and closed my eyes. When I awoke, feeling half-asleep, I could hardly breathe for the packing in my nose, and my eyes felt scaly and dry. I asked the nurse for water.

Two months ago. My 3-year old son got a little quieter as we entered the hospital lobby, then went completely quiet as the doctor examined his nose, his eyes, felt his small pulse. Going into the operating room, he clung to my neck ferociously and it was hard for me to peel him off to lower him to the table. Inches from his face, I still couldn't convince him everything was safe and going to be all right, and with some force I held his arms splayed down as the anesthesiologist struggled to keep the mask to his face. Not knowing what was happening to him, he resisted with muscular terror.

This week. The shortest route from the commuter train to my office in New York takes me through Rockefeller Center, and on most mornings I stroll past the plaza outside the Today Show and the myriad of people, mostly tourists, who gather there for a glimpse of the show and a glimpse of themselves on the monitors scattered about. Barricades hold everyone peaceably at the periphery of a large square of street which serves as the outdoor set. The mood is usually excited but quiet, until Al or Katie or Matt comes outside, when it erupts into squeals and flashes and frantic waving.

This time, a different scene. I round the corner of the building at 48th Street, and there is the customary square of spectators, but today they are lifeless, subdued. Live from Terre Haute, Ind., a procession of press people are filing past a podium and delivering their descriptions of the execution of Timothy McVeigh, which has occurred just moments before.

I move closer to a monitor myself. Around me, people stand holding poster boards with photographs of their babies or bearing the words "HELLO, MOUNT VERNON!!" or they stand in a loose knot of a dozen or so sporting college mascot baseball caps, or their T-shirts holler out party phrases or website addresses, but the people are very still, some slumped across the steel barricades in torpor, some standing and frowning with their arms folded, some looking at their watches, some trying to hold conversations about something, anything, else.

There are no protesters among the crowd nor death-penalty advocates, not one amid all of the posters and homemade banners and hats, no chants, no catcalls. When people speak to one another, they draw close and whisper or cup their hands conspiratorially. The entire mood is that of a party at which both band and bartender have flipped out the lights early in the proceedings and unceremoniously departed, leaving the guests adorned and mid-delight, but with nothing left to do.

I can only find one person trying something else. I hear a voice behind me, not loud but conversational, say, "It's just wrong. The whole thing is wrong, it's just the wrong thing to do, there's nothing right about it." I turn to see two working men leaning halfheartedly across a barricade, staring off, and speaking to them is one of the Rockefeller Center guards, dressed in a brown security suit with tan piping and a mock-policeman's cap, metal name badge, and drum-major sleeve cuffs. He is standing officiously, tall, in corporate authority, casually but deliberately scanning the crowd as he speaks softly and surely, "I'm sorry, it's just wrong." Black, his unlistening audience of two is white.

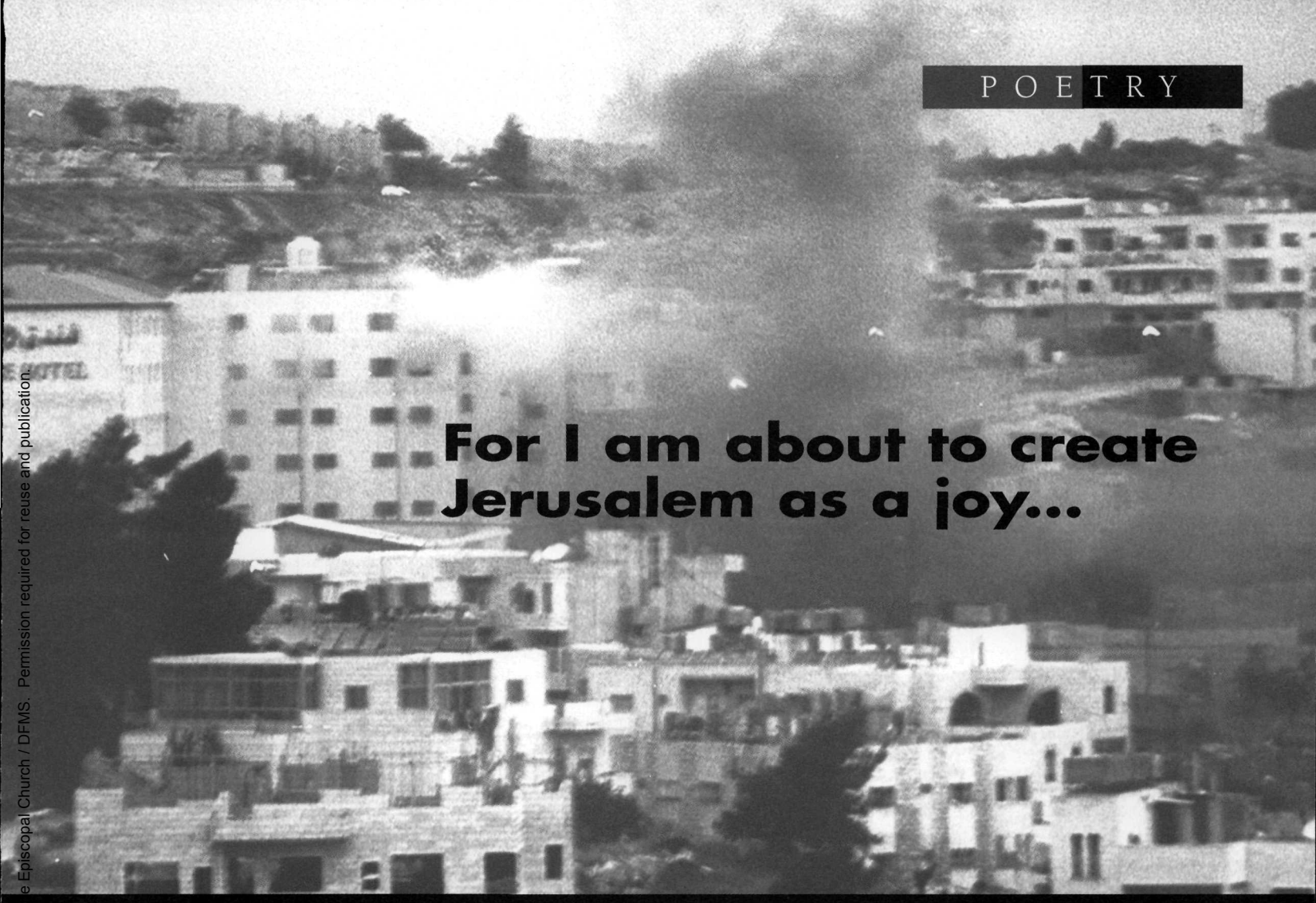
Standing together at an American epicenter of news and media activity, the people here are by now restless at the repetition of details from the press, the forced march through a numbing yet fatal government procedure. The show's almost over. We are dressed up and without a role to play any longer in what is happening.

But we are all resisting. We are resisting death, in all of its versions and preludes, every current that tries to drag us to shore, to shallows, no matter how we are reassured it is all for the good, that it is just. We are resisting in different ways, but we resist. We are helpless but to be taken in the flow of life. All discussions of what is moral must begin with the evidence of our resistance.

Resistance, itself, is our life. ●

Israeli shelling of Bethlehem on April 2, 2001 (Reuters/Ammar Awad/Hulton/Archive)

***Bruce Campbell**, a media critic/editor for* The Witness, *has been a producer and film reviewer for National Public Radio affiliates and conducts community workshops on media literacy. He lives in Tarrytown, N.Y.*



For I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy...

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For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;
the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating;
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
and its people as a delight.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress.
No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;
for one who dies at a hundred years will be
considered a youth, and one who falls short of a
hundred will be considered accursed.
They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
They shall not labor in vain,
or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord —
and their descendants as well.
Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent — its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.

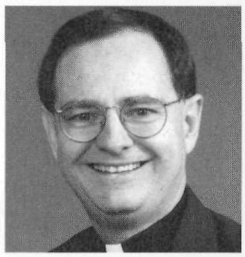
— Isaiah 65:17-25 (New Revised Standard Version)

A JOURNEY OF JUSTICE,

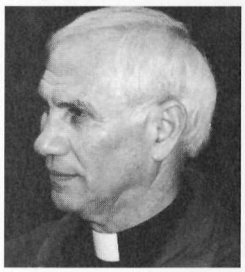
An interview with Naim Ateek

by Brian Grieves

ANGLICAN PRIEST NAIM ATEEK, a Palestinian with Israeli citizenship, is founder and director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. Brian Grieves is director of the Episcopal Church's national office of Peace and Justice Ministries. We asked Grieves to interview Ateek for *The Witness* because of his many years of involvement with peace and justice advocacy in the Middle East and because of the two priests' longtime friendship. The interview occurred in New York.



Brian Grieves: Naim, it's wonderful to chat with you this afternoon. Our friendship goes back to our time together at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in Berkeley, Calif. I was a senior there when you were doing graduate work in 1971–72. Maybe a good place to start is to ask you to reflect on your journey as a priest and as a Palestinian since that time?



Naim Ateek: In 1966, I started my ministry as deacon in a small town near Nazareth. In 1967 I was ordained priest two weeks before Israel occupied the Gaza strip, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Sinai. So I was hit by the impact of the 1967 war. The whole community was also shocked. It brought back memories of the 1948 war, with the continued dispossession and displacement of the Palestinians. Personally, I felt unable to cope with all the injustice. A few years later, I went back to CDSP. I needed to rethink my theology. God was blessing me through my parish ministry, but I also felt God was leading me to a ministry that would focus more and more on the justice issue. That was the beginning of a turning point in my journey of faith. Beginning to really see the deepening injustice of how Israel was gradually increasing control over the lives of the Palestinians and oppressing them eventually led me to continue in graduate work and then to write the book, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Orbis, 1989).

B.G.: So many Palestinians have left their homeland — the diaspora of Palestinians extends all over the world. But you never left. You went away to study, but you've returned and you've stayed. That must inform your journey and what you've seen over these years.

N.A.: I enjoyed the 10 years that I lived in the U.S. completing undergraduate and graduate work. I had many friends and had some work opportunities. But I always had that inner urge that I must serve my people. I was always caught between the comfort of being here in the States, away from the conflict over there, and the pull of knowing that I belonged back there. We all joke about it within the family because I helped my sister come here on a visit and then she ended up getting married to an American. Then she helped my brother and another sister, and so on. I have more family living in the U.S. now than I have back home. I was the only one who came and went back. It's unbelievable. But it was very clear to me that that's where I must be.

And now, reflecting on my ministry in Palestine and Israel, I am amazed at how God led me through a parish ministry of almost 30 years and then slowly guided me into a broader ministry of justice and peace.

B.G.: You mentioned *Justice and Only Justice*. It's a landmark book that is a reference for people who want to understand the situation there. Let's talk a little bit about the theology of the book and your evolving theology since then.

N.A.: Recently, we've been translating the book into Arabic,

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A JOURNEY OF FAITH

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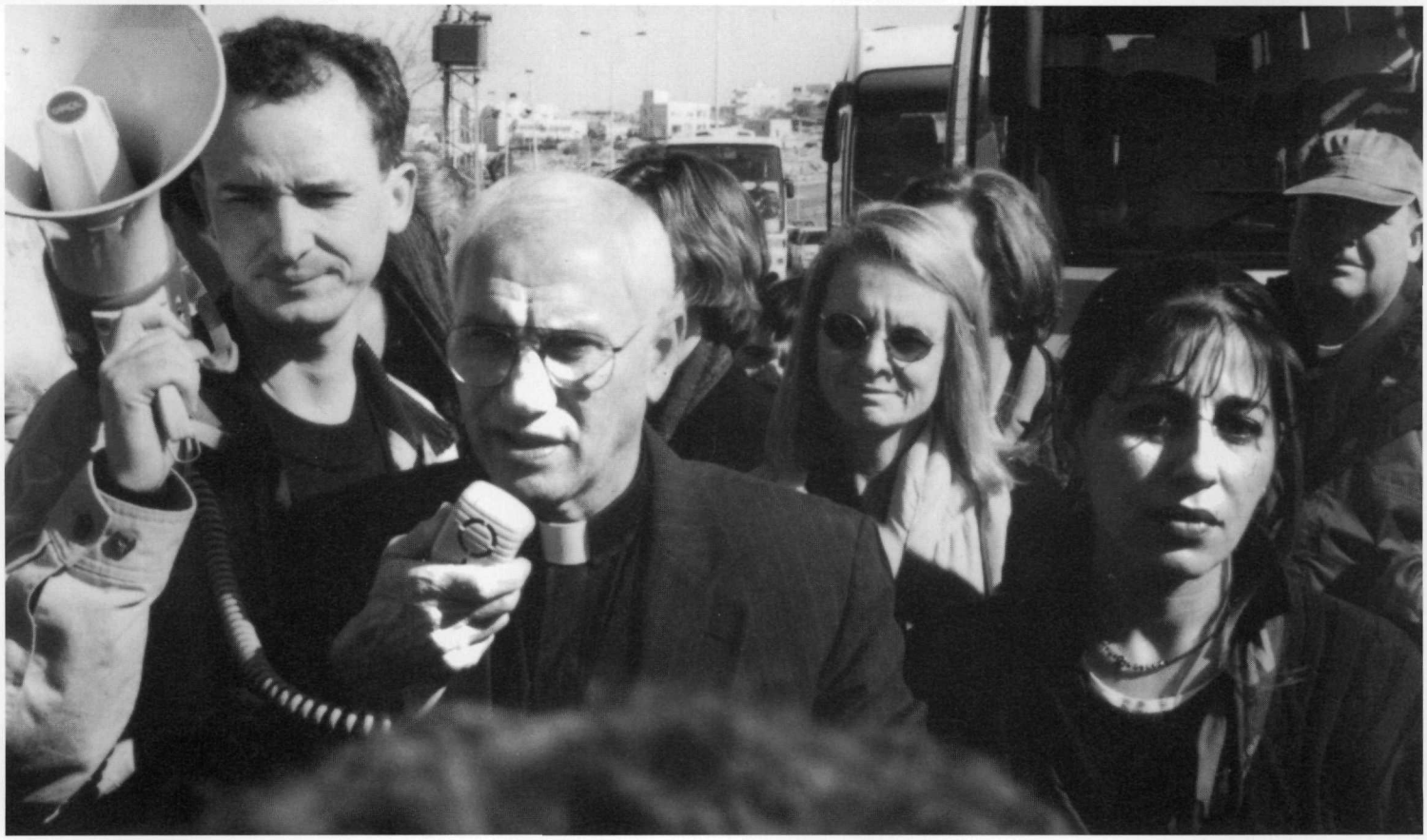

Photo by Ethan Flad

Naim Ateek speaks to Sabeel conference participants at an Israeli checkpoint last February.

so I've been very much again involved in the book in a close way. The book was first published in 1989, but I have felt how relevant it is still for what's happening today.

In writing the book, I felt I needed not only to articulate for myself, but also to share with others, the background to the conflict and the challenges that are facing us today. To begin with, the problem of identity is still a very crucial issue for many of our people, especially the Christian community. It's a small community now, 2 percent of the total population in both Israel and Palestine. Although the community in its roots goes back to the early Christian centuries, we have lost many people to emigration, and for many other reasons. There is a deep crisis of identity. We have to deal with the different aspects of our identity — what it means when we say we're Arab, Palestinian and Christian. Some of us are also Israeli citizens. We have been shaped by the different dimensions of our identity.

For me, all of these different aspects of my identity are also areas of responsibility. I have a responsibility to my Arab brothers and sisters, my Palestinian brothers and sisters, my Christian community and my Israeli connections. In one sense, all of these different areas provide me with an agenda of ministry, whether through the Christian ecumenical work of Sabeel, or through interfaith work, because both are part of my identity. Arab and Palestinian Muslims are part of my community.

In the book I was also asking how can I, as a Christian Palestinian Israeli citizen, do theology in my own context? I immediately ran into the whole difficulty of how one interprets the Bible. The Bible has been abused by people who have wanted to sup-

port exclusivist Zionist claims to the land. What was needed was a theology of liberation, a theology of the land, that can help my people maintain and strengthen their faith in God. To help them be empowered to work for justice and peace by following Jesus in his nonviolent path. To have the courage to stand up and say that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza must end, that there has to be a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel.

My concern about justice for the Palestinians comes from this basis of faith. I'm equally concerned about Israeli Jews who need to live in peace. But they cannot have security unless they give justice to the Palestinians.

B.G.: You speak of nonviolence. How do you address nonviolence in a region where the conflict is so violent?

N.A.: It is clear to me that we need an alternative to the violence, that we cannot allow the armed struggle to be the only way to resist the occupation. The violence is only increasing the number of people who are getting killed on both sides, but especially on the Palestinian side. Some of us have been talking and writing about nonviolence for many years. But there is now a new intention of trying to intensify a movement of nonviolence. This is the way Jesus lived and behaved, so we've been doing some reflection on the life of Jesus and nonviolence with our community. I'm thankful that there is enthusiasm about this.

Our concern is that Israel doesn't want the emergence of a nonviolent movement. It's easier for Israel to justify its violence when there is violent resistance on the Palestinian side. So Israel turns many demonstrations that begin nonviolently into violence by immediately throwing tear gas bombs or by somehow instigating or provoking incidents. But in spite of that violent reaction to the nonviolence of the people, I think we need to do everything we can so that a nonviolent movement will emerge. That's really the opportunity. There are Muslims and Jews who are participating in that kind of a movement. It is very exciting.

Jerusalem — Israeli flags and, in the distance, a mosque

B.G.: The violence against nonviolence certainly is not unusual in history — I think of the civil rights movement in this country, where they brought out the dogs and the tear gas and the hoses and so forth and people were killed. That movement was premised on the nonviolence and pacifism of Jesus. Are you finding a positive reception of that sort of nonviolence across the faith community — among Jews and Muslims as well as Christians?

N.A.: Yes. We've had several strategy meetings with different groups at Sabeel. When we are trying to think about examples, people are always mentioning the U.S. civil rights movement, South Africa and other places. So I am now trying to educate myself about what happened in the U.S. in the 1960s and about what happened in apartheid South Africa.

The feeling is that a paradigm shift must take place. What can be done so that this paradigm of violence can be broken? If we can somehow push or effect a shift, the movement can contribute to the ending of the Israeli domination of the Palestinians. The mentality has to change so that the word "domination" becomes passé. The new word must be "partnership."

I think a nonviolent movement can spearhead that kind of a paradigm shift. But I don't believe we can do it alone. That's why I'm looking also to our friends in the States. Especially as the civil rights movement and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa are still within living memory. The hate, the resentment and the love of revenge is becoming deeper.

B.G.: When you talk about the need to have the involvement of those of us in the U.S. as partners in this kind of a movement, that weighs very heavily on us, because we recognize the role of the U.S. government in perpetuating the violence that's there. So we have to find a way to break through the voice that always says: Israel first and last. And, as this would be a grassroots movement, what are your hopes that the Palestinian Authority would help to promote a culture of nonviolence — or do you think it's just going to have to be from the grassroots impacting not only the Israeli situation, but also your own authorities there?

N.A.: It might prove to be a great waste of time if one is going to concentrate on changing the approach of leaders, on both sides, Palestinian or Israeli. I would like to begin with the grassroots in both communities because I believe there are people in both Palestine and Israel who are ready for this movement. These are people who have been doing a little bit here and there. So they are already conscious. They have analyzed the problem and their objective is very clear, that the occupation must end. I would like us to begin to work together on that level. Hopefully, as we are doing this, some of the leaders will begin to see the value and the wisdom in that kind of approach and strategy. That's my hope. But in order for it to be successful, the

Photo by Mike DuBose, United Methodist News Service

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Palestinians cannot do it alone. They have to be joined by Jewish and international groups. In one sense, these groups provide protection against Israeli reaction. Because in our experience with the Israeli army and settlers, the life of a Palestinian is very cheap, whether it's a man, a woman or a child.

B.G.: Let me shift a little bit and ask you to talk about Sabeel — how it was founded, its mission and how you see it moving forward in the context of the discussion that we're having?

N.A.: Sabeel is really an answer to prayer and a response to a dream that started with me when I felt that the church must become much more involved in justice issues. I was still working in the parish, loving and enjoying it, but at the same time feeling the limitations of that ministry in terms of the real issues affecting our community. *Justice and Only Justice* was the vehicle by which I was reflecting on what needed to happen. After the book was published I gathered a few people in Jerusalem to discuss how we could turn its ideas into reality. This *ad hoc* committee helped me to expose this theology of liberation to other people. So, through the help of some friends, we were able to put together a conference in 1990, which we now refer to as "the first conference." We did not call this movement Sabeel in the beginning, but simply PLT, Palestinian Liberation Theology.

B.G.: This was all in a Christian context?

N.A.: Yes, that's the way it started. I invited people from different denominations, like Fr. Elias Chacour, Jonathan Kuttab, Jean Zaru, Cedar Duaybis, Samia Khoury and others. So we had the Catholic, the Protestant and the Orthodox perspectives. We invited 10 theologians from different parts of the world, including Rosemary Ruether, to the conference. The conference was coordinated by Kathy Bergen, who was working at the Mennonite Central Committee in Jerusalem at the time. About 50 to 60 people attended from Israel/Palestine and overseas. Out of that conference came our first publication, *Faith and the Intifada* (Orbis 1991). Then I asked the *ad hoc* committee if it would like to continue with me on a journey as we try to discern what God wants us to do. The members agreed. So we continued with some workshops in which we discussed the implications of a Palestinian theology of liberation.

In 1994, we adopted the name "Sabeel," an Arabic word that means "the way" — it reminds us of Christ being the way, the truth and the life. Sabeel also means "a spring of water." We felt this was a wonderful name, as it reflects our journey of justice and faith.

Our second international conference in 1996 focused on the issue of Jerusalem. As a result of the conference, we formed "Friends of Sabeel" so that internationals could be part of the ministry. In 1998 we had our third international conference which focused on the concept of Jubilee in light of 50 years of Palestinian dispossession. This past spring we held our fourth international conference with the theme "Speaking Truth, Seeking Justice."

We're now working on different levels and in a variety of areas. Sabeel's ministry is ecumenical. The Christian community is very small in the country, so in order to have a much better witness for Christ, we must be more united. We de-emphasize denominationalism and emphasize ecumenism. On a grassroots level, we work with clergy, women and young people. We have a branch of Sabeel in Nazareth that is carrying out our ministry in the Galilee. We're the only organization that's doing this type of ecumenical work.

Sabeel is a ministry of justice. From the position of faith, we are working for justice for the Palestinians and peace for all. Hopefully, this will lead eventually to reconciliation and healing.

More recently, we've moved into the third area of Sabeel's ministry, which is interfaith work. Unless there is also peace among religions, there cannot be peace among nations and peoples. So we have to work on the interreligious level.

B.G.: You've mentioned that the Christian population is 2 percent of the population of the country, both in the Occupied Territories and in Israel. The interfaith dimensions must be quite a challenge.

N.A.: The more interfaith work we do, the more we are breaking down some of the stereotypes that have hindered us. Some Muslims perceive the Christian community as standing on the side, while others know how much we are involved. As the percentage of Christians is so small, we are not so visible in the struggle. Not many Christians are getting killed, although many of their homes are being shelled. The Palestinian Christians and Muslims are one community. We must continue to work together for the achievement of justice. So interfaith work is a way, also, of entering into that kind of a relationship with some of the Muslim religious leaders, talking about some of the things that we can share.

B.G.: And the Jewish community?

N.A.: Our relationship with the Jewish community is basically with those secular Jews who are working for justice and peace. They like Sabeel's ministry. We still look for religious Jewish partners.

B.G.: Would you say that, even though it's only 2 percent of the population, that because of its ties to the West and the enormous support it receives from Western churches the Christian community functions as a bridge to the Arab world, the Islamic world?

N.A.: The Christian community has always served the wider community, especially through the many Christian institutions — schools, hospitals, clinics, orphanages, and so on. So the influence of the Christians has been much greater than their numbers. And it continues that way. The leadership of the Palestinian Authority knows our involvement very well. But in areas where there are no Christians, people don't know very much about us.

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The following is a brief listing of helpful Internet resources for more information on current events in Palestine/ Israel, especially highlighting organizations that are working to enable peace there:

Organizations based in the Middle East:

APPLIED RESEARCH INSTITUTE – Jerusalem, a source of demographic, political, environmental maps and statistics: www.arij.org

BAT SHALOM, a feminist peace organization of Israeli women: www.batshalom.org

COALITION OF WOMEN FOR A JUST PEACE: www.geocities.com/EndTheOccupation/

GUSH SHALOM, an Israeli peace organization with Jewish & Arab members: www.gush-shalom.org

ISRAEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: www.israel.org

THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: www.mecchurches.org

PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY: www.pna.org

THE PALESTINIAN SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS & THE ENVIRONMENT (LAW): www.lawsociety.org

SABEEL ECUMENICAL LIBERATION THEOLOGY CENTER: www.sabeel.org

THE PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN PEOPLE: www.rapprochement.org

YESH GVUL, an Israeli peace group that supports soldiers who refuse repressive or aggressive assignments: www.yesh-gvul.org

News Sources:

ELECTRONIC INTIFADA, "a resource for countering myth, distortion and spin from the Israeli media war machine": www.electronicintifada.net

KOLISRAEL.COM, a website that provides access to a broad collection of media from Israel/Palestine in both Hebrew and English: www.kolisrael.com

MIDDLE EAST REALITIES, an alternative media source: www.middleeast.org

THE OTHER ISRAEL, a bi-monthly magazine published by the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace: other_israel.tripod.com

U.S. Based Organizations:

CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE: www.cmep.org

EMBASSY OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED STATES: www.israelemb.org

FOUNDATION FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE: www.fmep.org

JEWISH UNITY FOR A JUST PEACE, an international gathering of grassroots Jewish activists committed to ending the Occupation: www.junity.org

NOT IN MY NAME, a network of American Jews critical of the policies of the State of Israel: www.nimn.org

B.G.: Can you say why, in spite of this influence, Christians are still leaving the country?

N.A.: There has been a general emigration of Palestinians which is felt all the more acutely by our small Christian community. It has been easier for Christians to emigrate, because of their connections with people in the West. The number one reason for leaving is the political instability. There are some people, too, who feel they would like to be in a community where there are more Christians. And although I love for people to stay, I will never force anyone, because I know how difficult it is. When I think about people's concern with economics, good employment, making a decent living away from the humiliation and dehumanization of the occupation, I don't blame them. I hope and pray that when peace is established and there is a Palestinian state, that many people would come back. I meet people in this country who say: When there is peace, we want to return. But I'm never sure about the new generation, when they get used to life in the States, whether all of them would want to go back. It's probably easier for the older generation, because they still have the memories and connections with the old country.

B.G.: To many people in the U.S., the peace process of the 1990s seemed hopeful. Arafat was able to return from exile, for one thing. And yet, the year 2000 saw this whole thing just sort of get dashed on the rocks. You expressed a lot of concerns about the peace process while it was going on: What happened to that process? Was it flawed to begin with? Was it doomed to begin with? Is there any hope that it can be revived?

N.A.: Obviously, it's easier to talk about the past than the future. Palestinians were divided about the peace process. Some people said: The process is flawed to such an extent that it's wrong; the Palestinian leadership should have never accepted the Oslo peace process. A second segment, and I was one of those, said: It is flawed, but let's give it a try; let's see whether we can direct it. It might get us to a peace that is honorable and that is just. I was tired of saying no, no, no. I said, "Let's say 'yes.' And let's see whether Arafat and the Palestinian leadership are able to steer the process in the right direction."

I think it is clear today that the first group could see from the very beginning that the peace process was not going to take us to where we would like to go. Looking back now, one can say: The peace process has failed and is dead. The situation is now worse. Whereas Barak said he is willing to give back 95 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Sharon will not return more than 42 percent. Some Jewish analysts have said that it was right for the Palestinians to reject the 95 percent offer. Some political analysts are saying it was never 95 percent that was offered, but between

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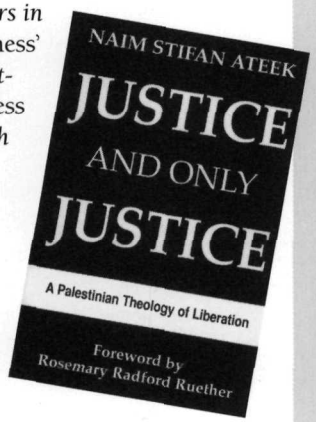
80 and 85 percent. Still, whatever the percentage retained by Israel, it would have given Israel a matrix of control that would keep its domination of the Palestinians.

Now, I don't think Sharon is interested in peace. He's going to bide his time. I think he'd rather live with a low-intensity war with the Palestinians. In fact, that's advantageous for him. He's a general. He wants to manage the conflict militarily rather than solve it. That's what's really happening here.

Sharon thinks he can suppress the Palestinian Intifada. Some hope that his blunders would force the Americans and the rest of the world to see him in his true light and try to stop him. Our hope is that a miracle will happen and the paradigm shift will take place. Otherwise, the situation will deteriorate over the next three or four years with more people killed, settlement expansion and the entrenchment of the matrix of control. That's really the frightening part. We are looking for the time when the Israeli occupation of Palestine will end. Without this kind of justice there cannot be peace. ●

This interview appears in Spanish on The Witness' *website, <www.thewitness.org>. The Witness began publishing each issue's lead article in Spanish with the Jan/Feb 2001 issue. These issues are archived on the website. Go to the end of the lead article to find the link to the Spanish translation.*



SEE OUR WEBSITE
for a report about last May's Fifth Christian Conference in Baghdad by Irene Voysey, <www.thewitness.org/agw/>.

Of land and belonging

By Harley Eagle

We need only to look at our own history between the Indigenous of North America and the more recent "settlers" of this land to see that the same situation is being played out in Palestine. Terms such as "Manifest Destiny" are replaced by "Zionism." The struggle over Jerusalem is the same as our struggle over our Sacred Black Hills of Mount Rushmore fame, to name but one of many sacred sites lost to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. During the fourth international Sabeel conference this past February, as I listened to the tragic stories being told of the horrors that the Palestinians face on a daily basis, it was clear to me that the similarities were profound. I could not help but wonder at the outrage of North Americans regarding the treatment of Palestinians, when many refuse to acknowledge the similar treatment of Native North American people that continues today. The process of land confiscation and genocide is very much alive and well on this continent.

We oppressed people find solidarity with each other and find the struggles we face as nations are not that different. I believe that this was the thinking of the Sabeel organizers in requesting the presence of an indigenous person from North America at the conference. Not only did we recognize our common struggles, but my mere presence made non-indigenous people, especially from North America, realize the connection. This identification helped people to realize that the situation in Palestine is following a pattern practiced and almost perfected, if you will, with the indigenous populations in their own countries.

Within our indigenous traditional cultural teachings we are taught the interconnectedness of all. We understand that the dominant culture's way is to separate, individualize and become detached from things. It is my perspective that when we realize that we actually do have a part in what happens to all of Creation it becomes more urgent for us as human beings to accept our responsibility to move to action in addressing justice issues.

A common theme that came out from the Sabeel conference was the hope in bringing both Palestinians and Israelis to the understanding that "the land does not belong to us but we belong to the land." This is essential to our world view as indigenous peoples. If this is hard to grasp for non-indigenous people of North America, I would suggest that you look to your own land holdings. I would suggest taking a journey into your own history to discover what this concept would mean to you considering your own property. If you expect the folks of the Middle East to accept this notion, you must first accept it in your own hearts and look into the issue of the inhumane treatment of the indigenous nations of this part of the world.

Harley Eagle, a Dakota/Saulteaux from White Cap Dakota Reserve in Canada, visited Palestine twice over the last three years. He was part of a Palestinian/Native North American exchange in 1998. This past spring he participated in the 2001 Sabeel conference. Eagle is Co-Program Coordinator of the Mennonite Central Committee Oglala Lakota Nation service unit with his wife, Sue, and daughter Danielle, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

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A LIFELONG

Photos page 14, 15 by Mike DuBose/United Methodist News Service

Patti Browning visits partially destroyed Palestinian farm in the Gaza Strip last December.

...to a people and the soul of a country

by Patti Browning, with Sandra J. Bright

PATTI BROWNING AND I MET IN 1978 when my husband John was called to be the Dean of the Cathedral in Honolulu. Her husband, former Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, at that time was serving as Bishop of Hawaii. Through the years our lives took different roads, but we remained friends. In February 2001 Patti and I attended the Sabeel Conference in Jerusalem. It was my first visit to Israel/Palestine and was for me an almost Damascus-like conversion to the Palestinians' cause for peace. My experience was grounded in Patti's experience: What I saw, what I heard, what I learned and what I felt was through the love, faith and hope that Patti embodies for the people of Palestine. The following story is the combination of excerpts from my conversations with Patti and excerpts from her journals. The words are hers.

— Sandra J. Bright

I WAS 29 YEARS OLD when I first saw Jerusalem. It was in 1962. Ed and I were serving as missionaries in Okinawa and were en route to Canterbury, England, where he was enrolled in a summer program at St. Augustine's College. We had decided to break up the trip since we had four children under the age of 6 at that time. The first leg of the trip was to Bangkok. From Bangkok we flew to Beirut and from there into Jerusalem's tiny airport.

It was early June and the air was clear and cool, quite a contrast to the climate in Okinawa, and upon our arrival we instantly felt invigorated. We were staying at the YMCA, which was a small building that could sleep about 25 people, and arranged to have a guide show us around Jerusalem. He arrived and as we visited the holy places, I was drawn to his kind face and remarkable knowledge of the Bible. He began to talk about his life as a Palestinian Christian and refugee in his own country. He told how the Zionists had demanded that his family leave their home in one hour and take only what they could carry. I was stunned by his story and by my ignorance.

As the day continued, Palestinian adults and children gathered around us, no doubt attracted by my four very red-haired children, and began to tell similar stories of being dragged from their homes and scattered throughout their homeland. Later that evening at the YMCA, we listened intently to a Lutheran missionary couple talk about the occupation of Palestine after the proclamation of the new State of Israel in 1948. They pointed out the barbwire that rimmed No-Man's land only a few feet from our lodging and told of a nun that had been shot in the area a week earlier. I found myself identifying with the Palestinian story, perhaps because of my experiences in Okinawa. Even as an American missionary, I had felt the confinement, and often harassment, of living

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COMMITMENT

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under U.S. military rule.

Before we left Jerusalem, I gathered all the material I could find about Palestine's story and carried it with me for years to share with others. These first questions and feelings of connection would grow into a lifelong passion and commitment to these people and to the soul of the State of Israel.

Israel/Palestine — and Intifada — 25 years later

It was 25 years before I returned to Israel/Palestine. They had been busy, exciting and productive years: Ed served as Bishop in Okinawa, Europe and Hawaii before his election as Presiding Bishop in 1985. During that same time we nurtured our one daughter and four sons to their independence. I never forgot my earlier experience and would frequently share the story of my oppressed sisters and brothers in Palestine, but often to unsympathetic ears.

I am not a one-issue person, but I am a staunch advocate for human rights and the Palestinians' suffering seemed so endless. At some point I took to heart a quote made by The Christophers, a Roman Catholic community, that said, "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." Their belief that a single person's actions can make a difference helped me to continue.

In 1987, Ed and I flew into the international airport at Tel Aviv for his first pastoral visit to the Diocese of Jerusalem as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, USA. We were greeted by Jerusalem's bishop, Samir Kafity, and John Peterson, who was then serving as the Dean of St. George's College. They had planned a full agenda, and I was eager to see Jerusalem once again and talk with the Palestinian community. The stories of the past 25 years were sobering: the crushing 1967 war, living in sewers, death of children, resignation to rootlessness. When our trip was over, I left once again with questions, deep concerns and a feeling that the Palestinians' identity was disappearing and no one cared.

It was just a few months later that the Intifada of December 1987 began. I begged Ed to include me in a small group of Anglicans being sent on a fact-finding trip to Israel/Palestine to show our solidarity with our sister church suffering through the conflict.

Since then I have returned to Israel/Palestine 15 times and I carry in my heart a litany of images, people and their stories. I especially recall many visits to the Ahli Arab Anglican Hospital in Gaza with my friend Suhaila Shawqi Tarazi, director of the hospital. There were stories of young men and teenagers being pulled off operating tables by Israeli soldiers; young girls injured by plastic bullets targeted at their lower abdomens; a small injured child raising her tiny fingers in the "V" shape for peace; entering the courtyard of the hospital to a scene of frantic activity of bed after bed with young people bandaged and bleeding, and carload after carload of injured continuing to arrive. I saw the fear on their faces and could feel their fear in my heart. On my last visit this past February, amidst this recent Intifada, the situation was even worse; the Israelis had barricaded Gaza into three sections and many of the injured were not even allowed access to the hospital for care.

I remembered Najat Kafity saying to me, "We can no longer take life for granted. It grieves me to see Israeli children growing up to hate and fear Palestinian children and Palestinian children growing up to hate and fear Israeli children." And this reminded me of South African Allan Boesak's chilling statement that it pained him to see that a child's only role model for leadership in his country was violence.

What can I do to help?

One day in April 1991, I drove with Ed in the early morning to Nablus, a city in the West Bank. We had celebrated Easter in Jerusalem. The hills were green and bright, red poppies

Former Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning (left) and Riah Abu El-Assal, Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, visit with Yasser Arafat in Gaza City last December.

were in bloom everywhere. That afternoon, listening to a group of Palestinian children singing during worship, I was awakened to the incredible bond of family and community, theirs and mine, both of us drawing strength from common ancestors dating back thousands of years before Abraham, and from our Semitic bond with their Jewish cousins.

I also remember attending church in Ramallah, a small town north of Jerusalem. That day I had entered the sanctuary seeking solitude and found a seat in the back of the church. Sitting there it somehow felt familiar. It called up once again my missionary years in Okinawa, where I sat in a church of a different country, a different culture, a different language, but where we held the same prayer in our hearts for justice and peace. I felt comforted. I felt a part of the context. I belonged there.

In March 1992, Riah Abu El-Assal, then an Anglican canon in Nazareth, spoke to a group I was with. "We have never had our land as our land," he said. "The British took us over and then left us to the mercy of the Jordanians, the Syrians, and the Israelis. The Anglican Church could be very powerful, but they need the truth. Get the information out to your country at the grassroots level. I don't want pro-Palestinian or pro-Israel. That is bad. We need a bridge between us. When will the U.S. help us who are helpless?"

We left without answers.

Before returning to Jerusalem, we drove to the Galilee Sea, and I eased down to a pool at the edge of the water. I left with a filled bottle for my next grandchild's baptism. I also pledged to myself and prayed that our church could be a bridge of reconciliation of the children of Abraham.

Truth + Justice = Peace

Through the years I have felt lonely periods of hopelessness. I remember in 1992 visiting the Jabala Refugee Camp, one of the worst in the whole country. The odors of the open sewers were overwhelming even in the cold weather. At one time there had been a huge pool of sewage where people were punished by making them stand in the pool up to their necks for hours. During that trip to Israel/Palestine, Ed and I met with Yasser Arafat. He told us about the deplorable conditions in Gaza: starvation as devastating as Somalia; the deliberate silence of the media and Israel's blatant defiance of the United Nation's resolutions, especially the 4th Geneva Convention.

After the meeting, Ed and I went to have dinner. I tried not to get teary-eyed about the conditions of the Palestinians during the meal, but it was difficult to control my emotions. So we walked back to our hotel and that helped, temporarily, to get my mind off their concerns. But the Palestinian plight, with all their abuse, misery and discouragement, kept going through my mind and heart. Those of us who care and fight for them must remain strong, but what gives me hope is the hope I see on the faces of these people.

I wanted and needed to help the Palestinians and, as the wife of the Presiding Bishop, I knew I had an opportunity to share their story in a way I wasn't able to before. I was terrified of standing in front of people, let alone speaking. But one day during an airplane flight, I opened randomly to an article in one of those airliner magazines about the fear of speaking in public. It said that if you don't speak of your experiences you may deprive someone of the information they need to know. Then I remembered Palestinian human rights lawyer Jonathan Kuttab's "Equation for Peace: Truth + Justice = Peace." I understood the equation and believed it to be true. I began to understand how I could help. I could begin by sharing the truth as I witnessed it. It was time to bite the bullet!

When the Intifada began in September 2000, Ed, now in retirement, called Riah Abu El-Assal, now serving as Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, to ask what we could do to help. Ed also called Brian Grieves, the Officer for Peace and Justice at the Episcopal Church Center. We were asked to join an ecumenical group to visit Israel/Palestine and assess the situation. We arrived in early December and found the conditions very discouraging. The construction of Jewish settlements was literally eating up the countryside. The airstrip of the tiny Jerusalem airport, that had welcomed Ed, me and our children on our first visit to Jerusalem in 1962, had been confiscated for use as a highway between settlements, while all Palestinian movement in Gaza and the West Bank was controlled by barricades and curfews. Palestinians were finding themselves separated from their jobs, their hospitals and their families. This kind of "apartheid" was strangling the family unit and when we destroy the family we destroy the soul of a society. It is this kind of terrible oppression that breeds terrorism!

We returned from our trip bone-tired. But a few weeks later I turned to Ed and said, "I have to go back! I want to attend the Sabeel Conference in February. I want to talk and be with our dear friend Naim Ateek (Founder and President of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem), and support our friends there in any way I can." So Ed, when it was time, drove me to the airport.

When I arrived in Jerusalem the breeze was so invigorating that I was ready to step into its life with both feet. I felt like I was home again. I really could live there. I think I can truthfully say I feel at-one there, rooted in years of getting to know and love the people: laughing with them, weeping with them; learning and sharing their story, and valuing its truth at the core of my soul. I don't believe I will ever rest until there is peace in the City of Peace, Jerusalem, our Jerusalem: the Christian Jerusalem, the Jewish Jerusalem, the Muslim Jerusalem. ●

Patti Browning's "Jubilee Reflections on Mordechai Vanunu and Samuel Day" can be found at <www.thewitness.org/agw/>.

Sandra Bright at Women in Black protest in Jerusalem in February 2001

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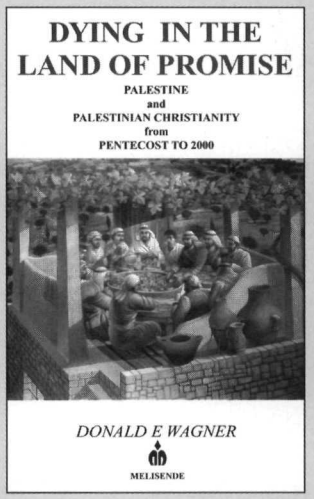
A much-needed ethical handbook

by Tom Getman



Dying in the Land of Promise:
Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000,
by Donald Wagner
(Melisende, London, 2001)

IT IS A TIME in the partially holy land when individual brutish criminal acts and mob violence seem to be determining the future. Into this present reality, Donald E. Wagner has provided a much-needed and long overdue service to the Body of Christ, and the wider faith community, with *Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*. This extraordinarily comprehensive compendium of critical historical data — as well as of long-scattered, stifled, obscured or even censored materials — is particularly auspicious. It is a moment when concerned people are beginning to understand the crimes that have been perpetrated against the Palestinian community for half a century. This has been inflicted by a government of a people who should have a deep understanding and hatred for domination through occupation and apartheid.

Wagner's contribution is a much-needed ethical handbook. It is a readable combination of professional knowledge, personal experience, teaching skill and love for all the people of the Middle East. Theologians, development and advocacy activists, as well as laypeople struggling to understand the fairly straightforward issues of occupation obscured by media silence and effective propaganda, will use this tool with appreciation. The busy reader who will return to the book again and again will find particularly helpful the technique of the summary of highlights and critical data at the end of each chapter.

As I write this review, despite protestations of a "ceasefire," excessive use of force, tank shelling and brutal siege blockades continue the violence of military domination in Palestinian towns and villages — mostly out of sight of reporters. The terrible Tel Aviv suicide bombing has taken the lives of 20 young Russian immigrants to Israel. Citizens in both Israel and Palestine are sick at heart about how violence and vengeance leads to more and more mindless heavy-handed reaction.

Wagner's *Dying in the Land of Promise* is invaluable in providing a framework with which to understand how hopelessness leads to desperate measures. The combination of injustice unacknowledged and ethnically based colonialism, along with a mix of bad theology, is tragic — and seems to be leading to mob rule. The chapter on the "Foundations of Injustice" especially drives the reader to serious reflection and intercession. Wagner's compelling style increases the desire to avoid the mistakes of the past by driving back the nightmare of the present. The book helps us to face the possible legacy of a horrific future without responsible participation. May grace and mercy abound to reverse the precursor decisions rooted in less than adequate biblical interpretation by the likes of turn-of-the-20th-century Lord Arthur Balfour, Lord William Shaftsbury and indeed Winston Churchill. These dispensational Christians supported the lie of a "land with no people for a people with no land," in spite of the appeals of anti-Zionist Jews such as Asher Ginzberg who wisely counseled, "Those who settle in Palestine must above all seek to win the friendship of the Palestinians, by approaching them courteously and with respect." How different things could have been. How different they might be if people in power began to act as good neighbors instead of cruel conquerors.

Dying in the Land of Promise raises the possibilities of brighter futures by outlining several hopeful scenarios, including the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theological Center's "Document on Principles of a Just Peace."

But a main theme that leaps from these pages is the essential need for people who embrace Scripture to focus on the far-reaching nature of decisions by single influential persons in times of crisis and change. If just principles are not adhered to, great heartache, pain and further injustice will follow. Whatever is hidden in the dark will inevitably come into the light, as Israeli "new historians" such as Benny Morris are proving.

Dying in the Land of Promise sets the record straight with factual historical and compelling anecdotal evidence from Wagner's wide experience in the Holy Land. Surely detractors will find enough minor contradictory details to attack the author and seek to discredit the book. Unfortunately the volume was so important it was rushed to print before a number of distracting typos were corrected and critical edits finished. But it should be stated that there is minimal inconsistency and emotional histrionics, which those of us who live in the region sometimes are tempted to use, to undermine the credence of this landmark publication. It will be a controversial book because it dares to be truthful. May I advise that you rush out and buy it before it is banned, discredited or removed from libraries. It will be a guidebook you will return to again and again. ●

Tom Getman is director of WorldVision's Middle East office in Jerusalem.

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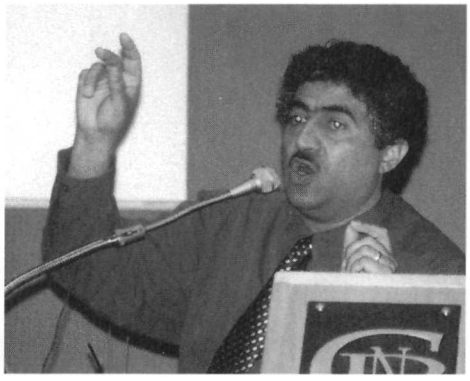
LAND FOR PEACE?

An analysis of what went wrong

by Jonathan Kuttab

The first Intifada in 1987 brought the first rays of hope for peace. This largely nonviolent popular movement called for an end to occupation and successfully challenged the stereotypes of Palestinians as terrorists.



Jonathan Kuttab

THE COLLAPSE of the "peace process," and the subsequent cycle of bloodshed and violence that is currently raking Israel /Palestine, has left many of us confused, bewildered and without a clue.

Yet this collapse of the peace process should provide an opportunity to reconsider the whole process and to ask some serious questions as to whether it was not based on flawed premises that were bound to lead to such an outcome. It is also important to ask whether the fevered attempts to revive that process by the likes of the U.S. State Department, the CIA, and indeed Ariel Sharon, are worthy of the support of people of goodwill who are concerned about peace, justice and reconciliation.

The greatest success of the Israeli occupation and the Zionist movement in recent years has been in redefining the reality of the conflict and in creating a new narrative that has obtained worldwide currency and is rarely challenged. Yet it is precisely this narrative which has led to the current confusion and paralysis of the peace and justice community regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The process was thorough, pervasive, diabolical and ingenious, and successfully seduced, co-opted and neutralized the Palestinian leadership and most of the peace and justice community. It corrupted the vision of peace and justice and institutionalized a complex system for perpetuating and legitimizing continued oppression and occupation, with the acquiescence of the victims and their leadership.

To understand how this occurred, it is helpful to take a quick look back at where things stood right after the June 1967 War. Israel had recently won a stunning victory over its Arab neighbors and gained control of all historic Palestine, including Jerusalem, the rest of the West Bank, Gaza and other Arab territories from Egypt (the Sinai) and Syria (the Golan Heights).

Since that time, moderates on all sides developed the belief that a wonderful opportunity existed for ending the Arab-Israeli struggle through the formula of Land for Peace. Israel would return territory captured in that war in return for Arab acceptance and recognition of the State of Israel, which had been erected in Palestine at the expense of the local indigenous population. United Nations' Resolution #242 enshrined this principle and further called for a just solution to the problem of refugees.

Arabs who had questions about the legitimacy of the state of Israel and the injustices done to the Palestinians in 1948 were urged to make a historic compromise and abandon their claim to 78 percent of historic Palestine in return for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza; while Israelis were told they should give up the territories they conquered in that war in return for peace, legitimacy and genuine security. To be sure, there were plenty on both sides who resisted such a historic compromise, and some who actively worked to prevent it from becoming a reality, yet people of goodwill in both camps and throughout the world felt that only such a pragmatic compromise (the two-state solution) could address the equities on both sides and provide a meaningful outcome.

One obstacle to such a peace were people on each side who insisted on delegitimizing the Other and refused to recognize their identity or aspirations. There were Arabs who rejected Israel as an illegitimate racist state built by force of conquest on their land; and Israelis who denied Palestinians were a peo-

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Israeli border police struggle with Palestinian demonstrators during a demonstration against Israeli blockades of Palestinian towns and villages at the Al-Ram checkpoint near Ramallah.

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ple, and who demonized their leadership, the PLO, and treated them as either nonexistent, or part of an amorphous Arab mass (who had 22 states anyway), or as being evil terrorists.

A second and more physical obstacle was the confiscation of Arab land in the Occupied Territories, and building therein exclusive Jewish settlements. Not only were these settlements illegal under international law (and as such constituted an unjust infringement on Arab property and rights); more importantly, they clearly undermined the possible pragmatic two-state solution, by dotting the very areas slated to become a Palestinian state with a hostile and intrusive permanent presence of continuously expanding Jewish settlements.

The first Intifada in 1987 brought the first rays of hope for peace. This largely nonviolent popular movement called for an end to occupation and successfully challenged the stereotypes of Palestinians as terrorists. It obtained widespread sympathy worldwide, and even inside Israel. It led to the famous handshake on the White House lawn, when it appeared that the first obstacle listed above had been eliminated and mutual recognition had finally taken place. No longer was each side denying the existence or legitimacy of the other.

Yet behind the facade of reconciliation was a very devious plan to utilize the very language, slogans and ideas of peaceful moderates to confirm, legitimize and consolidate the occupation and domination over the Palestinians. To understand how this successfully occurred, it is important to understand the mechanisms of the "peace agreement" and the "peace process" to see how it became the enemy of a genuine just peace and how it could never lead to the lasting peace and security that people of goodwill on all sides desire.

FIRST, the "peace" agreements effectively neutralized international law, the United Nations and the international community, by positing the peace agreements themselves and the procedures laid down in them as a substitute.

In fact, the agreements became the *only* permitted method for adjudicating the disputes between the parties.

SECOND, the agreements failed to provide a meaningful method for resolving disputes, but stated that both parties (the very powerful and the very weak) would resolve all disputes between themselves. If they failed to agree, they *may* refer their differences (but only if both agree to do so) to the U.S. —

Israel's benefactor.

THIRD, the agreements left all matters of the slightest interest to the Israelis exclusively in their own hands (including all matters pertaining to Israeli settlers, security, underwater resources, movement in and out of the area, etc.); while matters of interest only to the Palestinians were left in the hands of numerous joint committees, where decisions had to be unanimous.

In all these committees, Israel had a veto, and could paralyze the daily life of Palestinians simply by refusing to meet in the joint committees.

FOURTH, the Occupied Territories were divided into three types of non-contiguous zones, labeled A, B and C. Zone A territories were under Palestinian control, and composed primarily the dense populated city centers. There, Palestinians were supposed to be in full control — subject of course to the terms of the various agreements. Zone B territories were primarily the perimeters of villages, where Palestinians had civilian authority, but Israel had overriding "security control." Zone C lands constituted the Jewish settlements, connecting roads and everything else. These were left under the exclusive control of the Israeli military government. Because the areas under Palestinian control were non-contiguous, Israel could at any time thoroughly paralyze ordinary life in the Occupied Territories by cutting off the different areas from each other, turning the West Bank and Gaza into over 60 isolated cantons.

FIFTH, the agreements left the most serious issues: Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and borders, to be negotiated "at a later stage." This, in effect, meant that until that time arrived, Israel continued to exercise full and unfettered control in those areas. When Palestinians made complaints or demands regarding those issues, they were told they were violating the agreements, and that as long as there were no restrictions in the agreements about them, Israel was perfectly free to do as it wished and was not restricted by international law or anything else. Yet each and every one of these difficult issues continued on a daily basis to create problems and to rouse passions. The refugees stayed in their miserable exile, the settlements continued to flourish and expand at the expense of the local people and their land, Jerusalem continued to be under full Israeli control, illegally; and Israeli occupation continued with an air of legality, legitimacy, and even acquiescence by all who supported "the peace process," including the victims themselves.

SIXTH, the agreements had no mechanism for enforcement or even monitoring of compliance. When Palestinians violated the agreements (for example, by not doing enough to prevent attacks by individuals within or coming from the areas under their control), Israel had a wide variety of sanctions to apply against them. When Israel violated the agreements or failed to fulfill its explicit requirements (for example, by failing to open free passage between Gaza and the West Bank, or failing to implement commitments for further redeployment — transferring areas by reclassifying them from Zone C to Zone A), Palestinians had no recourse whatsoever, and were prevented by the agreements from bringing the dispute to any other forum without Israel's approval.

SEVENTH, the Palestinian leadership was placed in a very uncomfortable position. It was constantly being pressured to act as the occupation's agent vis-à-vis its own people. As long as it did so, it enjoyed special privileges, freedom of movement for its senior personnel, money (taxes of Palestinian workers collected by the Israeli authorities and periodically transferred to it) to run its departments, and basic immunity from serious criticism for its inefficient and corrupt handling of the affairs of its own people. If, on the other hand, it insisted on representing their interests genuinely vis-à-vis the occupation, it came into direct conflict with Israel, was punished and sanctioned and ultimately told it could be "no longer viewed as a partner" and could face delegitimization again.

The sad thing is that many in the peace and justice community, who fought the demonization of the PLO and called for direct negotiations between the parties, were now in a poor position to challenge the whole "peace process" or to effectively critique the Palestinian National Authority for its own shortcomings. We bought the lie that the Oslo process was the only game in town, and succumbed to the propaganda that the only alternative to it is Hamas suicide bombings and a return to armed conflict.

Yet the present crisis in the peace process and the tensions it has caused can also present us with an opportunity to reassert principled positions regarding the whole conflict and to organize again around a program of action and positions that do not necessarily reflect the balance of power between the parties, but the balance of equities and a commitment to human beings on both sides of the conflict. We do not need magic formulae for "solving the problem" but to perceive directions leading toward a just and lasting peace. These positions should be a reflection of our ethics, beliefs and faith commitments, not just political bias. As a committed Christian who believes in peace, justice and reconciliation, I believe the following elements should be included in such a position:

- Giving greater weight to international law than to realpolitik. We must restore respect for things we hold to be universally true and applicable to friend and foe alike. They must include respect for human beings, collectively and individually, rather than respect for power and influence.

- A reassertion of our commitment to human rights and freedoms of individuals, and rejection of torture, the killing of innocent civilians, collective punishments and other forms of inhumane actions, regardless of whether they are perpetrated by Israel or the Palestinian National Authority.

- A rejection of violence and any policy aimed at finding a solution through military means, since this would only lead to loss of precious lives and an increase of bitterness and hatred, and will never achieve either jus-

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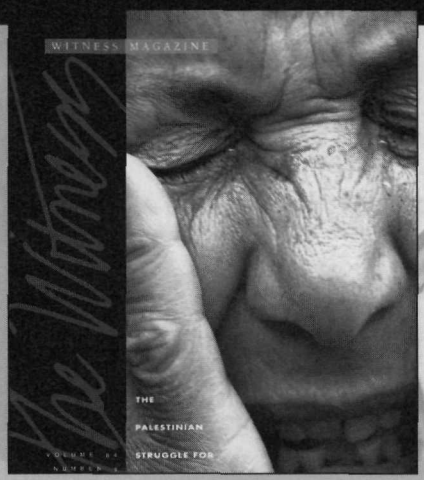
tice or security. More weapons, and greater reliance on them, are only counterproductive.

■ A uniform principled resistance to Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories as illegal and immoral elements that are not only unjust but also destructive for the possibility of a peaceful compromise. We must seek a united front of bringing international pressure to bear in the direction of a solution based on justice. This can include elements of boycotts, economic sanctions, nonviolent protests, and moral isolation of persons or institutions that support oppression and occupation. Israel is extremely sensitive to outside pressure, and often fancies itself as part of Europe and the Western world. It cannot tolerate for long being ostracized on moral grounds. Unlike the South African apartheid regime, it does not have the minerals and physical resources to withstand for long such ostracism. Yet in South Africa, it was precisely those sanctions, based on moral principles and international law, that brought the end to the apartheid regime; therefore those who are concerned with peace and justice should not belittle the moral power at their command if they seek a principled opposition to occupation, apartheid and repression as represented by the settlements.

■ Finally, we must not let the agenda of our struggle for peace and justice be set by others who do not share our values. We must create our own narrative and be ever skeptical of the "solutions" cooked up by those primarily responsible for the problem. We must find the courage to resist the accepted wisdom regarding the peace process and insist on genuine peace that conforms to our ethics and values, even if it means rejecting the "peace" process. ●

Jonathan Kuttab is a Palestinian human rights lawyer who is on the board of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. See: <www.fmep.org/images/maps/map0007_1.jpg> for a map showing the West Bank after the Second Israeli Redeployment (FRD), according to the Sharm al-Sheikh Memorandum.

'All that we are, all that we have, comes from God and will one day return to God.'



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FINDING HOPE IN POLITICAL

Samia Khoury and Terry Greenblatt on peace and justice

A conversation facilitated by Gina Benevento

Samia Khoury (left), a Palestinian Christian, and Terry Greenblat

Photo by Gina Benevento

SAMIA KHOURY is president of Rawdat El-Zuhur, a coeducational elementary school for the lower-income community in East Jerusalem, and treasurer of the board of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. Terry Greenblatt is director of Bat Shalom, a national Israeli women's peace organization that is the Israeli partner in the Jerusalem Link, and co-founder and former director of Kol Ha-Isha, West Jerusalem's feminist center. Their conversation, held last May at the offices of the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem, was moderated by Gina Benevento, a filmmaker currently producing a documentary on Hayder Abd al-Shafi, chief Palestinian negotiator at the 1991 Madrid and 1992–93 Washington peace talks.

Gina Benevento: The conversation today is between a Jewish Israeli woman, Terry Greenblatt, and a Palestinian Christian woman, Samia Khoury, at a time of extreme political crisis here in Israel/Palestine.

Samia, a recent e-mail you sent out commenting on the crisis here opened with a quote from Mark 14:34: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." What is the reality that you live today as a Palestinian?

Samia Khoury: Discouraged. For the first time since the occupation, I really feel scared. I am normally a very optimistic person, even since the 1967 war. And in all of my volunteer work, I have never given up hope on anything. I work with children, and I feel that it is very, very important to keep open and to look at the bright side of life, in spite of everything that's going on. Sometimes even my friends are surprised. I walk in a room and say, "Good morning." And they say, "How can you be so bright this morning with all that's happening?" It's surviving. But these days I cannot help but be scared, be worried. Every day my grandchildren go to school, I pray for the day to end without any injuries or any drastic happenings. So it is this heavy burden on my chest.

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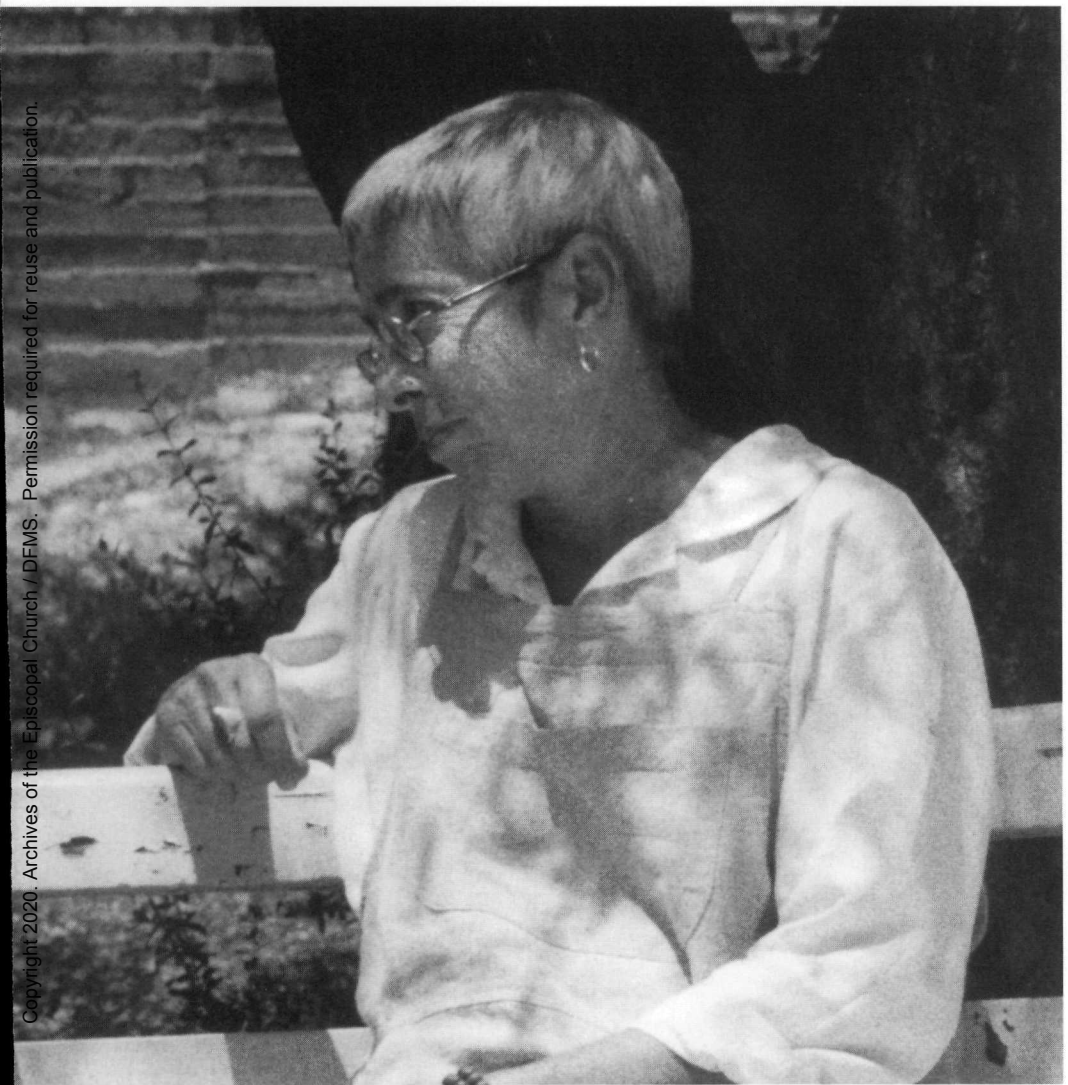
DIALOGUE BETWEEN WOMEN



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n Israeli Jew, during their conversation in Jerusalem last spring

It just shuts you off, your imagination, your freedom, your thinking, everything. You cannot think to yourself, I want to go see my brother, see my sister, or see my relatives at a funeral. You realize, Oh, this needs a lot of planning! You have to call so many people to check whether the roads are safe or whether you can get there. So it's very dismal.

I personally have a share in all this suffering. One of my cousins was assassinated. My brother was deported. My son went to jail. At the beginning of the occupation in 1967, the Israeli Army took part of the Birzeit College buildings that my family had founded and owned before it was developed into a university. We gradually were able to get over these things and forgive for the sake of peace. We made more and more concessions. But now it is as if they're telling us, "We just want to get rid of you and that's it."

The complacency of the world community is also unacceptable in this time. After the Nazi regime, when people used to say they didn't know, still we blamed them. Now it's happening again. Of course, the Jewish community always said, "Never again." But it should be never again for everybody. Everybody!

This desperation is what's worrying me. The desperation of people. When people become desperate it is catastrophic. You don't know what they will do. And this is why I say the world community is stretching their luck. And Israel is stretching its luck with these young, desperate people who have nothing to lose.

Still, I cannot lose hope. I keep having hope in the humanity of people.

Gina Benevento: Is there a difference between your generation of Palestinians and the younger generation of Palestinians?

Samia Khoury: I always feel privileged that I belong to a generation that experienced living in Palestine before 1948 as Palestinians, whether we were Christians, Jews or Muslims. When we were young people and children, we had Jewish neighbors, and they were very friendly. We were all the time taking back and forth plates of goodies. And these people even came and visited my parents after 1967. We were all moved by that gesture, but I was not at home to see them. My children and grandchildren don't know the Jews except as an Israeli occupying force. And it is very difficult to explain to them the difference.

Gina Benevento: Terry, what is your reality now as an Israeli?

Terry Greenblatt: It's probably better for me to address that on a few different levels: Terry the Jew, Terry the director of Bat Shalom, Terry the activist, someone who believes that it is my responsibility, it is my duty, during these times, to protest in whatever way I can what is being done in my name. As a Jewish Israeli living here for about 32 years now, I have to say that it has never been more difficult to simultaneously stay open-hearted and clear-sighted to what is going on and at the same time not become self-hating. I believe that if there are enough people like me who are willing to look at the truth with an open heart and mind, that we will eventually have some sort of an impact on the policies and the ideologies that seem to be driving our leadership and the majority of our population. But we have not found the way of challenging ourselves to accept that there is another story or another narrative. Nor have we been forced by the international community to maintain reasonable, responsible international standards vis-à-vis our behavior. So without generating internal pressure and unchallenged by external pressure, we can look at what's happening in Israel today and say, "No surprise."

We founded a country that was supposed to provide its citizens with all kinds of security. And those very seeds that were planted to begin this enterprise, were mostly planted by people who had come from outside of this region. So there was no real ethnic connection. There's a religious connection, there's a historical connection, there's a connection as a result of our historic persecution, but we're not of the earth. That became very clear, certainly, as the Palestinian dialogue became more articulate and more effective at pointing out the connection between people and land, the community and its land.

And the other thing is that we came very damaged. There's a whole psychology of Holocaust survivors and what that means. We never went through a process where we said, "Wait a second, we experienced a hell on earth. That had to affect us. That had to twist our ability to see, to hear, to do, to love."

Gina Benevento: Why would Israel ever make the changes you say are needed?

Terry Greenblatt: As you know, one of the political positions that Israel has taken for quite a while now is that without being forced to, we won't. Therefore we are turning to the international community and saying: You need to come, number one, to protect the Palestinians and, number two, to protect us against ourselves. So, no, I don't see the signs of Israel coming to some enlightened position and saying, "Wow!" But there are these small groups of people and organizations who remain committed to holding a clear vision of the possibility of a just peace and are using the almost insignificant power that they have for those purposes. So, even in these days, there's a voice coming out of Israel that will never allow anybody to look back and say: There was a consensus in the country that what was happening was okay. No. There were those who stood up and said, "Not in my name, not representing me," and who did whatever they could to try to stop it.

Gina Benevento: Should you two even be here talking to each other? Samia, isn't there the whole question of not engaging with "normalization"?

Samia Khoury: Well, I don't think talking to Terry is normalization. I am a woman and she is a woman and we're both concerned about peace and justice. I think that's not creating an artificially "normal" situation. This is our duty, our responsibility as women to care for the human life.

Terry Greenblatt: Nobody likes to sit with the enemy. The only reason you do that is because if you don't, you'll die. There's no other choice. So I certainly appreciate the importance of dialogue, but the word is problematic. "Dialogue" has been co-opted to be a label on efforts that in the past have not challenged in the ways that they needed to challenge.

But political dialogue between women is where I find hope. This is because women bring ourselves to the table. We don't separate out the pieces that are inappropriate. We have fewer rules, we have fewer constrictions.

Gina Benevento: For the West and for Israelis, the Oslo peace process was great. There was peace, things were improving.

Samia Khoury: There was euphoria about the peace process on the Palestinian side, too. Of course, many of us realized that Oslo did not have the components for the just peace we sought. But people were so tired of the occupation, they felt maybe the peace process was a good sign. It was a start. I remember the first Christmas after Oslo, the euphoria. People went to pray in Bethlehem. There were no soldiers, Israeli soldiers, there was nothing. So the euphoria, I think, was in both places. But the disappointment for the Palestinians was much more than for the Israelis, because the Israelis were simply giving back what was not theirs in the first place.

Gina Benevento: From the signing of the Oslo accords up through October 2000 I moved between the two societies and it was clear to me that there was going to be an eruption, that Palestinians couldn't continue to live this way. It was also clear that Israelis were blissfully unaware of this, or they didn't want to be aware. So when the peace process fell apart, it didn't surprise me or other people, but it surprised Israelis. Terry, what is your recollection and experience of that?

Terry Greenblatt: During the peace process, you couldn't have listened to Palestinian women and remained inside of that bubble of: Oh great, the Palestinians are walking toward peace and soon we're going to have a peace and it's going to be over. But, you're absolutely right, that was the pervasive sense in the country. It was, of course, supported by and encouraged by the American and Western press. Meanwhile, the Palestinians were adding up another year of occupation, another year of occupation, another year of occupation and nothing was changing on the ground.

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So, post-October Israeli Jews were surprised that all of a sudden we don't have a peace partner and the dream is gone. And the other surprise was what happened vis-à-vis Palestinians who are citizens of Israel, that moment in which Israelis felt an attack from inside. What that gave birth to was Sharon as our prime minister, with no effective political opposition inside of our government.

I read the other day that a survey of Palestinian citizens of Israel showed that only 32 percent considered themselves Israeli. So that means that 68 percent of Palestinian Israeli citizens living inside the country who are due equal rights and equal access don't feel identified at all with their nationality. And for the first time they were unequivocal, they were articulate, they said we will no longer accept second-class citizenship and we will no longer be forced to show our loyalty to this country by cutting off our connection and our solidarity with our people, with our brothers and sisters, which has been the "catch-22" that they have been in all these years.

Samia Khoury: How much can these women's peace groups make a dent on Israel? I read this item about the Israeli soldier who refused to serve and how supportive his mother was. Will the Israeli women be able to get their young men out of the Occupied Territories? This seems to be our only hope. Our hope and your hope.

Terry Greenblatt: Right now, I see three things that are happening — and happening dynamically. One is the women's protest movement. There is almost not a day that goes by that there isn't somebody somewhere out in the streets protesting something. Which is a new peace process — in other words, an energized anti-occupation peace process that acknowledges that when one country is occupying another, they cannot simultaneously sit down as equal partners in negotiations.

Number two is the effort of Bat Shalom and other groups to create as many opportunities as there can be for providing women — and men — with the opportunity to talk and learn.

And the third thing that is happening is that for the first time there is a willingness to consider as part of legitimate public discourse the issue of conscientious objection, which has been, as you know, a taboo in our society. While there is a women's group that has initiated support for conscientious objectors and is talking about the connection between militarism and feminism, militarism and peace, my sense is that this movement is being energized by young people.

Samia Khoury: Well, that's good.

Terry Greenblatt: Yes, but somehow we women forget that we still have no power and as wide as the circle has become, somebody has still created the circle. Otherwise, they would not let us be doing what we're doing. We need to be able to envision beyond the structures and the institutions and men's either/or. As women, the first thing we should think is: If he's saying there's only one option, there must be 20; now I have to think of those 20, and then make my decision. But I will not accept the proposition that I either love you or you're my enemy, you're either Israeli or Palestinian.

Women in Black:

An International Movement of Women for Peace

by Gila Svirsky

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF WOMEN IN BLACK began in Israel in January 1988, one month after the first Palestinian Intifada broke out, with a small group of Israeli women who carried out a simple form of protest: Once a week at the same hour and in the same location – a major traffic intersection – they donned black clothing and raised a black sign in the shape of a hand with white lettering that read "Stop the Occupation."

The idea spread quickly and spontaneously to other places in Israel. It was a simple form of protest that women could do easily. We didn't have to get to the big city, we could bring our children, there was no chanting or marching, and the medium was the message. Within months, vigils sprang up throughout Israel.

Several months after the first Women in Black vigil in Israel, "solidarity vigils" began in other countries: Initial reports came from the U.S. and Canada, and these later spread to Europe and Australia. Some vigils were primarily Jewish, while in other cities, the groups were mixed Jewish and Palestinian.

Around 1990, Women in Black vigils took off with a life of their own. They formed in many countries, and many of these had nothing to do with the Israeli occupation. In Italy, Women in Black protest a range of issues, from the Israeli occupation to the violence of the Mafia and other

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organized crime. In Germany, Women in Black have protested neo-Nazism, racism against migrant workers and nuclear arms. Women in Black in Belgrade and Zagreb set a profound example of interethnic cooperation that was an inspiration to their countrywomen and men. And, in India, Women in Black hold vigils that call for an end to the ill treatment of women by religious fundamentalists.

Women in Black has become a movement of women of conscience of all denominations and nationalities who hold vigils to protest violence in their part of the world: war, interethnic conflict, militarism, the arms industry, racism, neo-Nazism, violence against women, violence in the neighborhoods, etc. Each vigil is autonomous, setting its own policy and guidelines, though in all the vigils the women dress in black, symbolizing the tragedy of the victims of violence. What unites us all is our commitment to justice and a world free of violence.

The movement of Women in Black in Israel won the Aachen Peace Prize (1991); the peace award of the city of San Giovanni d'Asso in Italy (1994); and the Jewish Peace Fellowship's "Peacemaker Award" (2001). In 2001, the international movement of Women in Black was honored with the Millennium Peace Prize for Women, awarded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

On June 8, 2001, 150 groups of Women in Black from around the world (listed in the web site below) held vigils to protest Israel's ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territories.

This international protest was initiated and organized by the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, an umbrella organization of 10 Israeli women's peace organizations.

Gila Svirsky is a peace and human rights activist in Israel. She is co-founder of the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, which has engaged in a number of acts of resistance to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. Svirsky was born in the U.S. and has lived in Israel for the past 35 years. For more information on the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace see <http://www.geocities.com/EndTheOccupation/>.

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Samia Khoury: You're very right about this option thing. I mean, when people tell me: You have no other option, if you don't get on the train now, you'll miss the train; you'll miss the bus. Well, I'd rather miss a bus that's going to crash than get on that bus. Talking about the Palestinians inside Israel, have there been Palestinian women, from inside Israel, active with you in a large number?

Terry Greenblatt: Yes, they have been active. We have two centers, one in Jerusalem and one up North. The Northern region is more heavily populated with Palestinian citizens of Israel than Jewish citizens of Israel. However, if you're asking me if their agenda, if their political agenda, has informed Bat Shalom's policies and declarations, the answer is no. If Bat Shalom is an organization that represents Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis, then it almost needs to have two agendas, two political understandings. That is something that we have been pushing for in the last year and a half, or trying to raise in whichever way possible. Because Bat Shalom's position, up until now, has basically been a Bat Shalom Jewish Israeli position.

As one of the Palestinian women on the board of Bat Shalom said to me two or three months ago, "Because I like you and respect you, I've got to tell you something." I said, "What?" She said, "I love that you brought more Palestinian women onto the board of directors. And I love that you keep pushing us to bring our agenda. But you have not heard our agenda yet, because we understand that the crisis, the critical situation, is with the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Once that is finished," she said, "I will blow you all out of the water. You need to know that there are mornings I wake up and before I open my eyes, the first thought in my head, I only wish God will only allow it, is that I will open my eyes and not see a Jew today."

Samia Khoury: My heavens!

Terry Greenblatt: This is somebody living as a citizen in this country, in Bat Shalom, continuing to work with Jews. You cannot say she is somebody who is a separatist. And to wish me good morning, to participate, she needs for me to know that that's what's going on with her. I need to be able to hear that. I can't invisibilize that. I can't say: "I love you when you come and speak with me to a group, but I don't want to hear that you can't see a Jew because of what the Jews have done."

That's the way we're trying to work. That's what it means to prevail.

Samia Khoury: This is the hurt of injustice. But I think the Israelis and the Palestinians are destined to live side-by-side. Even destined to live together. I always say it's like a Catholic marriage. I think there is so much animosity, though, that maybe there needs to be a break, a complete Palestinian state, and a complete Israeli state. And then, maybe, once there is peace, this eventually will go back to one democratic secular state because for both Israel and Palestine that would be much healthier and more viable.

Gina Benevento: I thought maybe we'd touch a little bit on what

kind of religious and philosophical basis you're working from. For me, as an international Christian, it is what Martin Luther King, Jr., said when he went to Birmingham: "I'm here because injustice is here." Unless the Israelis deport me, I will stay here until I can help make some change. I know that Sabeel also has a credo that: I will stand for justice, I can do no other. So, I was curious about the commitment that you have to justice, you as a secular Jew, Terry, and you, Samia, as a practicing Palestinian Christian?

Samia Khoury: As a mother, if you treat one child differently to the other, you know what that's going to do. That's going to bring trouble. That's going to have them at each other's throats. Even not in your internal family. On Sunday, if one aunt comes in and treats your son differently to your daughter, your daughter is going to say: Oh, that's a nasty aunt; why did she give him two pieces of chocolate when she gave me one? This happens every day in life. So, whether you're religious or not, this is the structure of life. If you want peace, you have to have justice. Justice is the code of life, I feel. It is basic in everything. It gives you peace of mind, it gives you peace of your home, peace of your office, and so it extends to peace of your society. People live equally. Justice prevails and everybody is happy. If only the world community can abide by the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would want them to do unto you."

Gina Benevento: How do you, as a Palestinian, keep that belief and commitment to justice when every day, everything that you do, you're met with injustice?

Samia Khoury: I don't know. You just have to work at it and prove that if you don't have justice you're not going to have the security, you're not going to have the peace. And this is proven every day. You cannot really back up and say: Okay, I'll give up on justice. You cannot give up on justice, because it would be catastrophic. Of course, you can never talk about 100-percent justice, especially in terms of political issues. If I wanted 100-percent justice, I would say, "I want to go back to my house in Upper Baka'a in West Jerusalem, I want my house where I was living." This is 100-percent justice.

This is why I think the Israelis are scared of the word justice, because they feel that justice means annihilation of the state of Israel. But in my dictionary, justice does not mean annihilation. It has been very clear that what we are asking is for relevant justice. We have accepted to establish our state on 22 percent only of historic Palestine. We are saying that very clearly. When you want to make peace, everybody has to make compromises and we have already made ours.

Terry Greenblatt: I continue to work against injustice because it is intimately connected to my own freedom. As long as I understand the world in that way, if justice is the social contract, the ideological contract between human beings or countries, then that's the denomination that I deal in. As an Israeli Jew there's an element of undoing or redoing or feeling that sense of responsibility to do better, do different, to try and make an individual and a communal contribution to this land that is so very special and so unique, that does justice to this divine piece of land so that whatever history will remember, or whatever contribution the Jewish people will be able to make here, that it is one of honor and deserving of the other people who live here, deserving of the other religions that are here.

Gina Benevento: Terry, what do you expect of the progressive Jewish community? And Samia, for you, what do you ask of the Christian community in the U.S.?

Terry Greenblatt: For the progressive Jewish community to be a friend and an ally to me and what I'm trying to do here, I need them to understand that they are no longer supporting Israel, or at least the kind of Israel that I believe that they would like to see, by not doing whatever they can to pressure their own governments, their own communities, to hold us accountable in the same way that they themselves hold their own countries accountable. This separate, special standard that they have awarded us, if in the past it was believed that this was the way to show your love, solidarity, support for Israel, no longer is acceptable.

Samia Khoury: Well, I would say the same thing about the Christian leaders. If Christians had been more vocal in 1948 even, it would have made a difference. Now we are hearing more voices. We see church commissions coming and they're more interested. But interest is different from action. There has to be more action. If this is their duty as Christian leaders, as church people, are they willing to stand up in the pulpit and say: We have done these people wrong, we have to address this injustice and help force Israel, force the American government to stop sending aid to Israel to oppress people? Justice will liberate us and it will also liberate Israel from being an oppressor, because in the process of being an oppressor, you are being dehumanized.

Terry Greenblatt: I just want to add one thing. Many of the groups who have been coming since October have been Christian church-related, interfaith, and so on. Something I hear again and again is how difficult it is to try in America to present an alternative view because people are immediately labeled anti-Semites. So I think the Jewish community needs to serve as allies with the Christian community so that when they are attacked in that way, they are not left out there hanging.

Gina Benevento: Is there any reason for hope for the future?

Samia Khoury: That's just like asking us: Why don't you die tomorrow? Of course there's hope. As long as there is life there is hope. I continue to have hope as long as there are Terrys, and Samias, and Ginas in this world — and as long as there are children who come and say, "Good morning Grandma," there is reason for hope. ●

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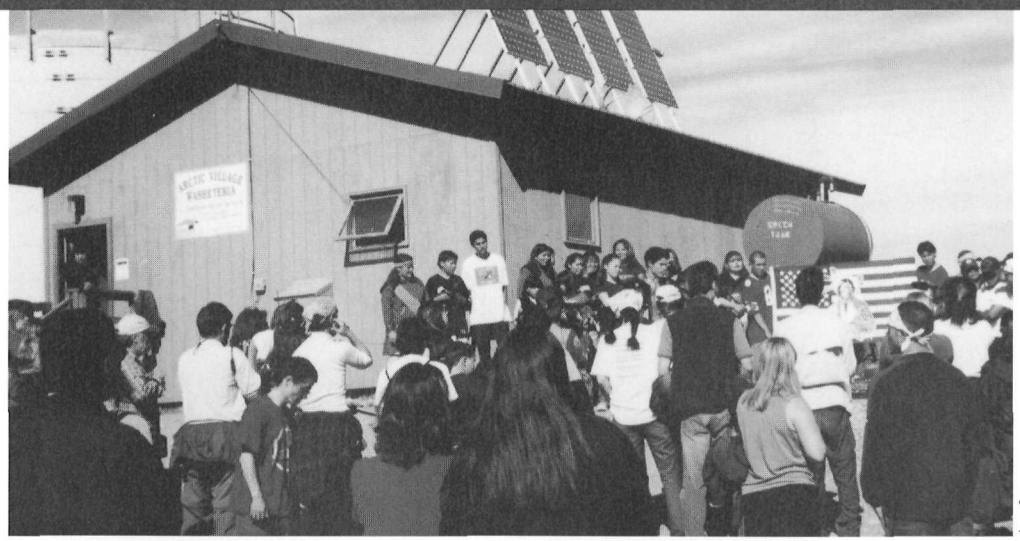
Human rights versus oil

By Julie A. Wortman



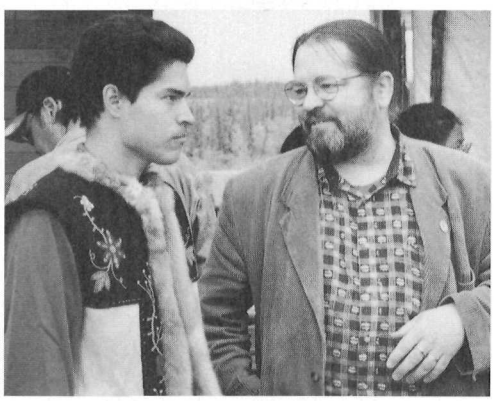
Anne Cox

Evon Peter presides at dedication of new solar panels for the Arctic Village washeteria.

This past June 21–25, as small bush planes ferried pristine-wilderness-seeking eco-tourists in and out of the dirt landing strip on the edge of this South Slope Alaskan settlement, about 250 Gwich'in, along with an assortment of fellow indigenous-rights and environmental activists, were gathered in Arctic Village's (Vashraii K'oo) community hall to celebrate Gwich'in identity and achievement with dance and testimony.

Orchestrated by the Fairbanks-based Gwich'in Steering Committee, "Gwich'in Gathering 2001" was also aimed at spotlighting for outsiders the basis for Gwich'in opposition to opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil drilling — because, as Episcopal Bishop Mark MacDonald pointed out to the largely Episcopalian audience, "the lobby for drilling has been communicating untruthful things about this issue."

"Drilling in the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, no matter how carefully, will substantially disrupt the birthing grounds of the Porcupine River Caribou herd," Steve Ginnis, a Gwich'in Koyukon Athabascan born and raised in Fort Yukon, Alaska, told the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs last May. Ginnis is President of the Tanana Chiefs Conference, a consortium of 42 Interior Alaska Native tribes.



Julie Wortman

Evon Peter and Mark MacDonald.

"Gwich'in people on both sides of the [U.S./Canada] border share these animals as a material resource and as a vital cultural component," Ginnis pointed out to the Committee. "Along with our cousins in the Yukon Territory, we consider the birthing grounds a sacred place. It is unacceptable to consider placing industrial development in this area."

Gwich'in Steering Committee member Sarah James reiterated this stance during one of the talk sessions this past June. "This is human rights versus oil," she stated flatly. "That's all it is."

But few non-Natives want to accept this simple formulation of the conflict.

Only a couple of days before Gathering 2001, President George W. Bush's Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, had flown into Arctic Village for a four-hour consultation with Vashraii K'oo Neets'aii tribal leaders. Norton, among whose official responsibilities is the protection of Native rights, was apparently unmoved by village elders' concern that opening the Arctic Refuge to drilling would rob the tribe's children of their heritage and traditional way of life. Norton, who reportedly stressed the heating needs of the far larger number of children in the Lower 48, scolded villagers that they should "broaden your world view," a remark frequently repeated with head shakes during the gathering as participants reported on the tribe's participation in global solidarity campaigns and educational programs (a satellite dish at the village school makes internet access and telecommunications possible). The tribe's First Chief, Evon Peter, 25, college-educated and widely traveled, personifies this village's orientation to the future.

Ironically, those favoring drilling in the Refuge also seek to discredit the Gwich'in position by arguing just the opposite — that the Gwich'in world view is already so broad that Gwich'in objections to drilling in the Refuge based on the threat to their traditional subsistence lifestyle are disingenuous. James and others from the tribal villages in this region admit that progressive environmental degradation over the past generation has made it more and more difficult to find sufficient game to keep villagers alive. And modern village life runs on electricity for lights (a generator at the landing field produces it at 51 cents per kilowatt), gasoline for the four-wheelers most everyone uses for

Julie Wortman

Eco-tourists use the landing field at Arctic Village as a staging area for expeditions into ANWR.

transportation (brought in by barge or airplane at a cost of $4 a gallon) and heating oil for withstanding the Arctic's long, frigid winters ($3 per gallon). Still, caribou and moose meat were prominent staples at Gathering 2001 meals and speaker after speaker stressed that outsiders are incapable of judging the boundaries of "traditional" and "non-traditional."

"Hunting and fishing rights are not just about food in your mouth, it's a way of life," said Deborah Vo of the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, an Athabascan with marketing and business management degrees to her credit. "These things define our language, our songs, the roles we learn. Education is important, but where you are from is also important."

In downplaying such arguments, pro-drilling advocates say the Gwich'in are pawns of the uncompromisingly anti-development, presumably Anglo, conservation community which, they say, highlights the human rights angle only to further its own pro-wilderness agenda. Alaska's television and print media outlets are stuffed with oil company ads that counter conservationists' claim that oil drilling is bad for the environment — and downplaying the fact that in 1996 alone, for example, there were 427 substantial spills of either oil or other hazardous substances at Prudhoe Bay — by showing apparently healthy, contented caribou dotting the Prudhoe Bay oil fields .

"Some people use this as a pretext for suggesting that caribou are not harmed by industrial development," Steve Ginnis testified at last May's Senate hearing. "What you may not know is that caribou use the oil fields as a safe harbor from predators — wolves and bears. These high-food-chain animals are less likely to exist within the Prudhoe Bay industrial zone."

The Tanana Chiefs Conference is worried that drilling in the Arctic Refuge will affect many other animals than the caribou — polar bear, musk oxen, arctic fox and wolverine. The Chiefs also point out that little attention has been paid to the impact of the oil companies' dependence on ice roads and ice pads on the fragile hydrology of the region.

Environmental concerns, in fact, are a high priority for the Gwich'in and for other Native peoples, as Tom Goldtooth, Coordinator for the Minnesota-based Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) stressed during Gathering 2001. IEN has just approved a Native Energy Campaign to educate tribal leaders on renewable energy. During Gathering 2001 Evon Peter, in fact, presided over the dedication of a new solar-powered energy system (for the eight months of sunlight) for its "washeteria," which provides washing machines and showers for the 130 or so people who live in Arctic Village year round.

Andrea Carmen, of the International Treaty Council, emphasized that for Native peoples, the distinction between environmental and human rights is artificial — a product of the so-called "developed" world's compartmentalized mindset.

"We cannot just speak of the rights of humans," Carmen told Gathering 2001. "It is much better to speak of 'natural world responsibility.' Indian people are responsible for the idea of sustainable development. We're fighting for the entire world here."

Another complexity of the Arctic Refuge conflict which non-Native people emphasize is the distinction between tribal governments and the "corporations" set up under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971, a piece of federal legislation pushed by Alaskan legislators to make it easier for government to resolve Native claims to the state's mineral and surface rights.

"The U.S. government pulled off an amazing feat of assimilation by creating a corporate structure that undermines tribal governments," said Heather Kendell Miller, an attorney with the Native American Rights Fund. The Gwich'in, which already had a recognized "reservation" of land (which only partially covered the area of their traditional homeland), opted to have the "Village Corporation" created under the 1971 legislation give the land officially recognized as theirs back to traditional tribal control. This meant the tribe opted out of the corporation structure imposed by ANCSA, so that if ANWR's coastal plain is opened to drilling, they will not be a beneficiary as part of that structure. This has seemed to pit the Gwich'in, whose primary concern is the welfare of the birthing grounds of the Porcupine River Caribou, to which they have hunting rights, against peoples such as the Inupiat, who are part of the ANCSA corporation structure. The Inupiat, who do not object to opening the Refuge to drilling, are traditionally whale hunters who reportedly object to oil drilling in the Arctic Ocean, a stance which Gwich'in attending Gathering 2001 said they support.

Despite the apparent intricacies of the conflict, what remained clear as Gathering 2001 drew to a close is that the forces which favor opening the last remaining 5 percent of the Arctic coastal plain to industrial development are not intending to back down from this fight. Also clear is that Sarah James' succinct characterization of the dispute, "human rights versus oil," inescapably remains the very simple core issue. ●

***Julie A. Wortman** is editor/publisher of The Witness.*

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Rx: save the old-growth forests

Pet owners have lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels than non-pet-owners and recover more quickly from surgery, according to a recent article by physician Howard Frumkin in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. Frumkin also cites studies which indicate that gardening promotes mental health and reduces violence in prisons and other institutions; viewing natural landscapes reduces fear, anger and the incidence of headaches; and that wilderness experiences are therapeutic for psychiatric patients, emotionally disturbed children and adolescents, bereaved people, rape and incest survivors, patients with cancer and end-stage renal disease, post-traumatic distress syndrome and addiction disorders.

Frumkin, a doctor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at Emory University, writes that this evidence supports John Muir's declaration that "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."

In a commentary on Frumkin's article, Harvard zoologist Edward Wilson writes that "the engagement of the new forms of preventive medicine envisioned in Frumkin's essay will be welcomed by environmentalists for much the same reason that the intervention of physicians in peacemaking and the care of refugees has been rewarded by two Nobel Peace Prizes, thus far. One of the principal goals of environmental thinkers today is the formulation of a sound conservation ethic grounded in the deep psychological and spiritual needs of human beings. Dr. Frumkin has shown, among his other enlightenments in this essay, why it is wiser, for example, to save the last of the rich old-growth forests in the permanent service of preventive medicine than to cut them down for the short-term purchase of more pharmaceuticals."

Fundamentalism and globalization

Religious fundamentalism can be a reaction to globalization, Indian author Arundhati Roy said in an interview with *The Progressive* (4/01). "Indian intellectuals today feel radical when they condemn fundamentalism, but not many people are talking about the links between privatization, globalization and fundamentalism. Globalization suits the Indian elite to a 'T.' Fundamentalism doesn't. It's also a class problem. When people stop some film from being shot or burn a book, it's not just that they are saying, this is against Indian culture. They are also saying, you Westernized, elite, English-speaking people are having too much of a good time."

Navigating like a man

Erin Swenson, an ordained Presbyterian minister who chose to undergo male-to-female sex-change procedures, writes in *The Other Side* (5-6/01) about experiencing patriarchy in a new way.

"In spite of ourselves, many — perhaps all — of us continue to hold the status of men above the status of women," Swenson writes. "Nothing has illuminated this for me more than my own transition from the social

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role of male to female. During the first few months after I began living full-time as a female, I had a problem bumping into people. At first I thought it was simply a kind of emotional dizziness that had come from finally allowing myself full expression of my true identity. But I began to notice that my collisions were almost exclusively with men.

"It took much self-analysis before I realized that men and women navigate public spaces differently. Men tend to walk directly toward their destination, and women tend toward the more circuitous routes. I realized suddenly one day, after another such collision (again with a man), that men take precedence over women in public space. The same man who might hold open a door for me in one situation would walk right into me on the sidewalk. I realized that men have the right of way! Having navigated most of my life as a man, I simply was navigating like a man in public while men were expecting me to navigate like a woman. Hence we collided!"

Death penalty COs

The newsletter of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund reports that a member of the Illinois legislature has introduced a bill that would extend conscientious objector status to death-penalty opponents.

"The legislation would call on the state to redirect income taxes paid by people who hold religious, ethical or moral objections to the death penalty by putting the money into the common school fund. Arguments against the measure make points that are familiar to those of us who lobby for the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill: It would be too costly to carry out; the Illinois Department of Revenue cannot assume the unusual duty of certifying a person as a capital punishment objector; it can be very difficult to determine the sincerity of someone's belief; it would set a precedent that could open the door for other groups to set their own priorities for how they would like their income taxes spent.

"Rep. Mary Lou Cowlishaw, the bill's sponsor, says, 'The proposal does not call for the objectors to pay less in taxes but gives them the comfort that taxes they do pay will be spent on something else.'"

"Erasing the life of a fellow human being is an issue of greater moral magnitude than other issues and so stands separate from others," the Peace Tax Fund newsletter adds.

'Torture trade'

An Amnesty International report on the "torture trade" provides "numerous examples of U.S. products being used by torturers overseas, as well as in the U.S.," *Multinational Monitor* (4/01) reports. "Amnesty has compiled a list of more than 80 U.S. manufacturers and suppliers of electro-shock weapons and restraints.

"Amnesty International is urging the U.S. and other governments to ban the use, manufacture, promotion and trade of police and security equipment whose use is inherently cruel, inhumane or degrading. The group includes leg irons, electro-shock stun belts and inherently painful devices such as serrated thumbcuffs in this category. Amnesty is also calling for a suspension of trade in equipment that has shown a substantial risk of abuse or unwarranted injury, including legcuffs, thumbcuffs, restraint chairs and pepper gas weapons."

'Jazz funeral'

Soulforce, an interfaith network of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals and their families, protested anti-gay Southern Baptist teaching at the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, La., in June. The protest culminated in a jazz funeral procession carrying a coffin filled with letters from and about those who have been hurt by Southern Baptist teaching. Supporters tried to take the coffin into the Superdome, but were stopped by police and ordered to leave. Thirty-four people were arrested and charged with trespassing.

Volunteer opportunities

The Commission on Voluntary Service and Action's new 2001 catalog of volunteer opportunities, *Invest Yourself* is now available. It lists over 200 non-government agencies that seek volunteers. CVSA, P.O. Box 117, New York, NY 10009; 718-638-8487. ●

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Palestinian farmer Abu Houli lives near Dir El Balah in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip. His home, orchard and well house were bulldozed by the Israeli Army. (Photo by Mike DuBose, United Methodist News Service)

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WITNESS MAGAZINE

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People pick up donated food just before Christmas at the Straight Gate Church in Detroit

©Jim West

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OCTOBER 2001

Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Book Review Editor
Bill Wylie-Kellermann

a global WITNESS
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Website Design
Jim Dugan

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
Alice Devine

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Martin Brokenleg, Kelly Brown Douglas, Carmen Guerrero, Mary E. Hunt, Jay McDaniel, Bill Wylie-Kellermann

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
232 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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LETTERS

Reimagining faith and action

Another great issue!! (*TW* 7-8/01) The 10 copies disappear quickly from my Peace and Justice table at All Saints, Pasadena. We have several groups studying David Korten's "Post Corporate" world. Many thanks!!

Robert Miller
Duarte, CA

Colombia report

In the 1800s native people were being moved to what was later called Oklahoma. There were many who had lived on the same lands for many generations, actually thousands of years. They didn't want to leave. The troops killed them. That was when the Platte River ran red with blood.

In March 2001, I joined 10 others from the Fellowship of Reconciliation/Global Exchange on a delegation to Colombia. I am a member of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In Bogota and Medellin we met with human rights groups, families of the detained and the disappeared and then we went into the mountains of northern Colombia where the indigenous people live. They live very simply in peace and co-op communities. Their land is rich in mineral wealth and they are under continuous attacks by right-wing paramilitary forces who are private armies of the transnationals to drive the people out. Just a few days before we were at this one community, the paramilitary had come down the river with army helicopter support. The community ran into the jungle and many of their homes were burned.

There is a movement to legalize the paramilitary. I am reminded of the historical reports of when the Platte ran red. I am originally from Missouri near there.

We met with the army general in the district who supported the actions of the paramilitary. He told us that he had been trained at the School of the Americas and the Petroleum Institute.

We were told by labor unions that the FLAA would be devastating to labor in Colombia. It would further cheaper labor and devastate human rights.

Jim Pence
Vancouver, BC

Hugh White

I just recently learned of the death of Hugh White, an associate editor of *The Witness* in the 1970s and 1980s. The enclosed check is a donation to the magazine in his memory.

I knew and frequently worked with Hugh while he was in Detroit and I was with the church's Joint Urban Program in the 1960s. The industrial-missions network was very much a part of that national effort and Hugh was of course a major influence and inspiration for me and many others. We became good personal friends until dropping out of touch a dozen years ago. I know how important *The Witness* was to him. This small gift is to help keep that voice strong

Thanks for your work, too.

Anthony Morley
Minneapolis, MN

Let's push for change

We cannot simply read Mark Hertsgaard's provocative, encouraging article, "Global Greening? The time for a 'Global Green Deal' has come," and shake our heads in wistful resignation to the status quo (*TW* 4/01). I'm sending copies of it to my two Senators and urge every subscriber to do the same.

It's the first time I've read anything about our environment that speaks positively and specifically to BIG GOVERNMENT, BIG BUSINESS and other nations that "we have in hand most of the technologies needed to chart a new course." He cites companies that have cut their greenhouse gas emissions in half, while enjoying 50 percent and higher returns on investment through improved efficiency.

Let's push for change. "We have no time to lose."

Mary K. Rouillard
Fort Edward, NY ●

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Shifting from charity to change

by Charlie Bernstein

Reclaiming jubilee

Last June the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (ECPC is publisher of The Witness and our website's related "a global Witness" project) met with staff of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations in Washington, D.C. The young, energetic policy analysts there offered much helpful information on a variety of bills then moving through Congress, among them President George W. Bush's Faith-Based Initiatives/Charitable Choice proposals.

The advocacy work these hardworking staffers in this busy Capitol Hill office are doing was authorized by a visionary piece of Episcopal Church legislation passed at the church's 1982 General Convention — Resolution A-80A, declaring a "priority ministry commitment" to be called "The Jubilee Ministry."

A-80A reminded the church that "the Year of Jubilee decreed by God (Leviticus 25) demands a time of new beginnings, when the relationships of power and servitude come to an end and all members of society are restored to equality and freedom." The resolution also affirmed that "a ministry of joint discipleship in Christ with poor and oppressed people ... to meet basic human needs and to build a just society is at the heart of the mission of the Church."

None of the political rhetoric surrounding "charitable choice" has embraced this fundamental conviction. What we've heard instead is do-gooder talk disembodied from solid social and economic analysis — and subtly oriented toward an elitist agenda. If the religious community wishes to be more involved in meeting the social-welfare needs of our citizens, faithfulness demands an aggressive commitment to bringing radical social change, not to standing in for government. ●

Julie A. Wortman *is Editor/Publisher of* The Witness.

ANYONE WISHING to become involved in making charity and philanthropy more responsive to the movements that aim to make charity obsolete should read David Wagner's *What's Love Got to Do with It? A Critical Look at American Charity* (The New Press, 2000), which offers a concise historical account of how charity in the U.S. evolved as a partner in perpetuating poverty. Wagner asks: "What if [Cesar] Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Paine, Eugene V. Debs, Margaret Sanger or Mother Jones had been content to serve at soup kitchens or join a religious mission somewhere? What if they had become therapists or professional administrators?"

At its very roots, Wagner argues, American charity benefits the haves at the have-nots' expense, complementing our broader social practice of rewarding good fortune with better, while punishing the poor for a supposed deficit of moral fiber. In this ethic, the job of charity is not to shift wealth or power from haves to have-nots, but to meet enough of poor people's needs to keep them alive, but not kicking — at the same time allowing affluent donors and charity leaders to feel socially engaged and virtuous.

"[T]he fight for pensions, unemployment benefits, or the minimum wage," Wagner says, "has often united working-class, poor and even middle-income groups, but social-service approaches often individualize problems or divide classes and communities, removing collective struggle from the table."

Charity, in short, has little to do with love.

In a review of Wagner's book, John Buell adds that the social-change movement "will have to make demystification of charity part of its political practice" (see *The Maine Progressive*, www.maineprogressive.org, 3/30/01). Such a demystification will require, in part, getting a handle on how to shift American giving from charity to change.

For roughly a quarter century, a social-change funding movement has been growing in the U.S., transforming how many of us give and think about giving. Though this movement still only accounts for a small part of American generosity — less than 3 percent of all private giving to nonprofits, according to the National Network of Grantmakers (www.nng.org) — that's a marked increase. The movement is real. And it's a growth industry.

The Funding Exchange (www.fex.org) is a national association of the new breed of progressive foundations attracting donations from people who want positive social change. One thing that sets foundations like these apart is that, in addition to large gifts, smaller donations are often solicited and welcomed. Twenty-five-dollar donations are numerous. The message is, in effect: "You don't have to be rich to be a philanthropist — you just have to find a cause to believe in and support it. " The result is that at least some foundations are funding exactly the kind of root-cause programs traditional philanthropy tends to neglect. The donor/grantee relationship is no longer benefactor/supplicant, but a partnership.

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The most dramatic example of this smaller-gifts-and-more-of-them trend is the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/) that raises its money through an annual second collection taken the Sunday after Thanksgiving in every Catholic church in the country. (Think about it!) Though CCHD does not support groups that counter Catholic doctrine — for instance, in such areas as birth control — it has nonetheless been of sweeping benefit to poor people's movements in every state. Since its founding in 1969, CCHD has raised and distributed over $250 million among nearly 4,000 low-income organizing projects.

It's true that, unlike CCHD, most social-justice funders would have a hard time surviving on small contributions. All have wealthy donors. But that's relative. None was started with corporate mega-mega-endowments. They're driven by much smaller donations. Their methods of giving also counter the norm. New England's Haymarket People's Fund (www.haymarket.org), for instance, relies on volunteer activists, not board or staff, to distribute its donors' money. Its founding donors intentionally distanced themselves from grant-award decisions, believing that local activists know what's best for their own communities.

So "Change, not charity" is emerging as a real 21st-century philanthropic theme. Unlike traditional philanthropic giving, the object is not to relieve government — we, the people — of the "burden" of social welfare, but to hold policy-makers accountable to the people. This democratizing approach turns out to be attractive to many donors.

There are also efforts to expand the progressive giving movement itself. Changemakers (www.changemakersfund.org) was launched last year to assist "the leaders and institutions that build community-based philanthropy." It makes grants to leading funding innovators around the country. Likewise, the National Center for Responsive Philanthropy (www.ncrp.org) has since 1976 conducted research, provided technical assistance, advocated progressive giving policies and guided foundations, corporations, workplace giving programs and individuals into ways of funding social change more effectively. Similarly, Neighborhood Funders Group (www.nfg.org) both educates larger foundations about the value and methods of grassroots organizing and advocates for social-change funding.

Another rapidly growing aspect of social-change funding is progressive workplace giving. The National Alliance for Choice in Giving (www.choiceingiving.org) is made up of a growing number of so-called federated campaigns in the United Way model. Like a United Way, these groups enable people to give at work through an annual campaign. Unlike most United Way giving, the money goes to groups that emphasize social change.

Still another kind of grassroots fundraising is canvassing. Statewide door-to-door and phone canvasses across the country may number in the hundreds. This represents wildfire growth since their advent in the mid-1970s. These canvasses encourage ordinary people to give in their own self-interest — for clean air and water, affordable health care and utilities, electoral reform, and much more. What's more, they recruit many of those contributors as active players — real people dealing with real policy issues. USAction (www.usaction.org) is a national federation of statewide citizen action groups. The clout of these groups, which are reaching millions each year, defies calculation.

While social service providers, who survive mainly on grants (from government, foundations, and corporations) and fees for service, often complain that changing the system is difficult because they're funder-driven, grassroots social-change leaders, supported mainly by individuals, consider themselves funder-powered, drawing their strength from the communities or movements they benefit. The Midwest Academy (www.mindspring.com/~midwestacademy/) provides a good discussion of the whys and hows of such grassroots organizing.

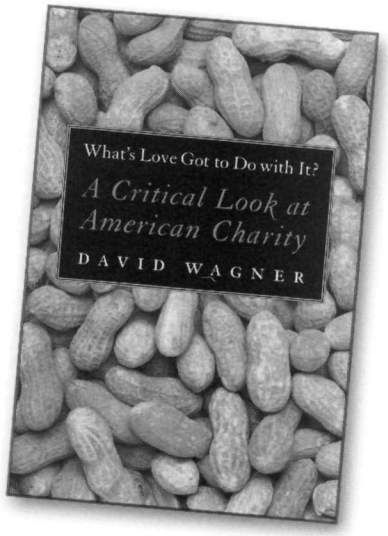
Networks of individual progressive philanthropists are also coming together. A number of funding groups now host "wealth conferences," at which donors discuss and explore how to effect social change through their giving. These events particularly attract people who believe that the best legacy they can leave their heirs is not an enriched university endowment, a plaque on a museum wing, or a bequest to yet another generation, but the seeds of a just society and a sustainable future.

Another networking example comes from the other side of the generation tracks: Cambridge-based Resource Generation (www.resourcegeneration.org), the locus of a nationwide network of young progressives with trust funds (they call themselves "cool rich kids") committed to undoing the inequities inherent in American culture. They're not driven by old-fashioned altruism or by guilt. They believe that the growing concentration of wealth is jeopardizing our future, and that redistribution of wealth (starting with their own, given strategically) can save it. Today they're giving to movements that will redistribute wealth — and recruiting friends and family as well.

The bottom line: Social-change giving is happening, and it's zig-zagging across class boundaries as traditional philanthropy never has. Many nonprofits are also beginning to talk the language of change to prospective donors in all income brackets.

Still, not to paint a too-rosy picture, social change giving remains just a sliver of the American-giving pie. Wagner would, I'm sure, remind us that current practices continue to marginalize the poor quite efficiently. That means that if charitable giving is to evolve into a vehicle for social progress, the message of democratized social-change giving needs the widest possible airing. ●

***Charlie Bernstein** works at Maine Initiatives (www.maineinitiatives.org), a social-change fund. An earlier version of this article appeared in* The Maine Progressive.



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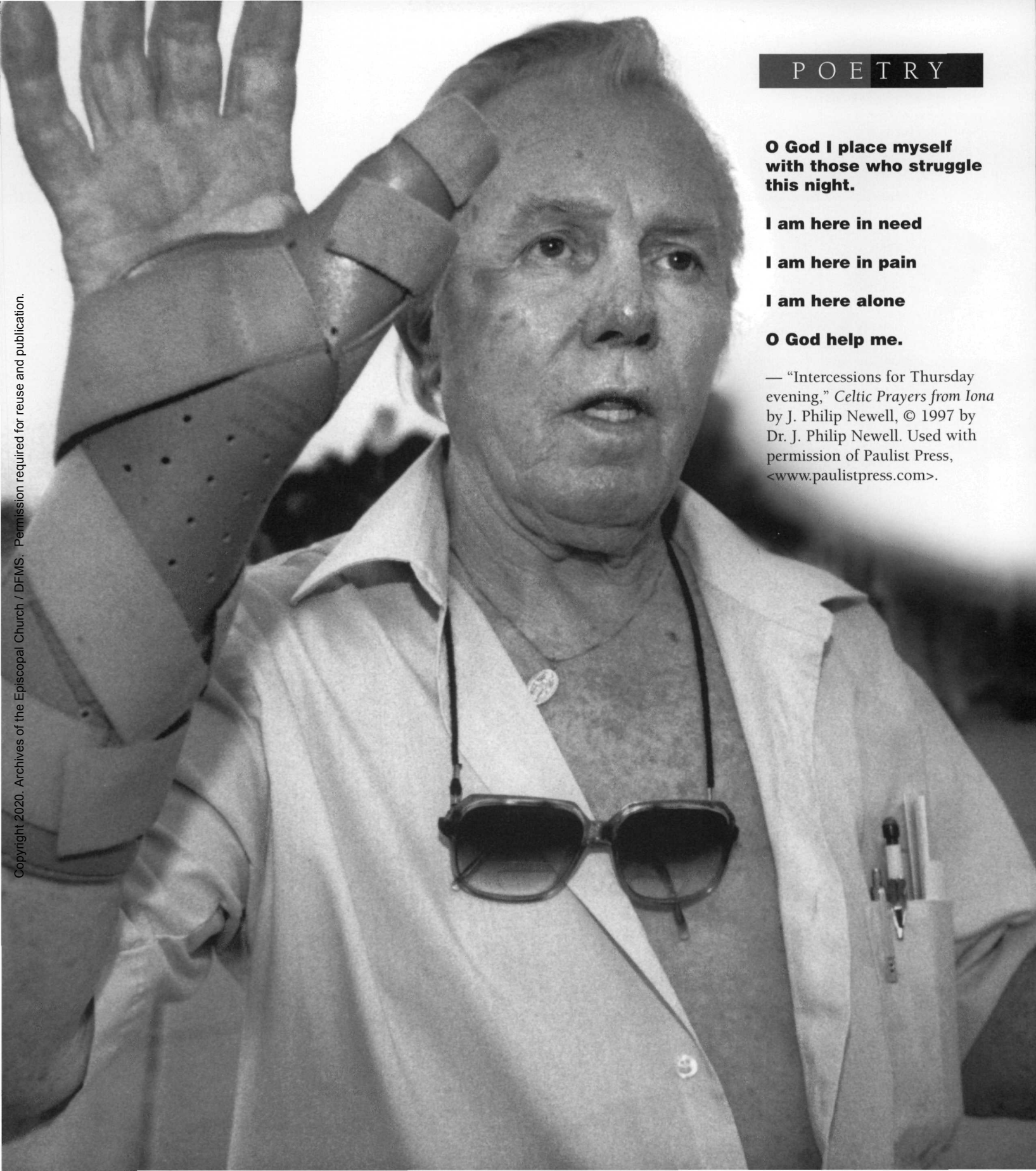

POETRY

O God I place myself with those who struggle this night.

I am here in need

I am here in pain

I am here alone

O God help me.

— "Intercessions for Thursday evening," *Celtic Prayers from Iona* by J. Philip Newell, © 1997 by Dr. J. Philip Newell. Used with permission of Paulist Press, <www.paulistpress.com>.

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DON'T BE CHARITABLE

Arrange it so that they have power

An interview with Michael Zweig by Jane Slaughter

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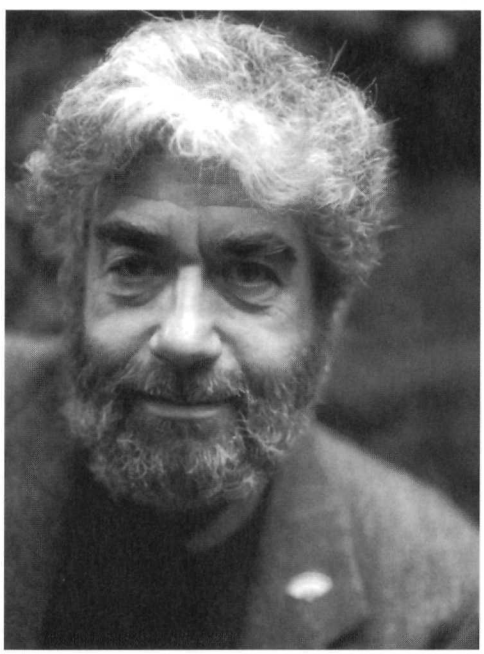


Michael Zweig

IN *THE WORKING CLASS MAJORITY: America's Best Kept Secret* (Cornell University Press, 2000), Michael Zweig pulls the covers off "America's best kept secret." He's not interested simply in an exposé. Zweig believes that an understanding of class is essential to understanding power in society—and to winning more power for one class by restricting another. That, he says, is " a project of democracy," since the working class, as he defines it, makes up 62 percent of the population. Zweig, who teaches economics at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, and volunteers with the Southold Fire Department in Long Island, is also the author of *Religion and Economic Justice*. In that book, he argues that a concern for the poor is most effective when understood not as charity but as "an alliance with the working class."

T.W.: It's the conventional wisdom in America that we've overcome classes, that everyone is middle class. In my seventh-grader's U.S. History class, they learned that on the frontier there were no classes. Why did you decide to try to convince people that there is a working class and that most Americans are in it?

M.Z.: Over the last 30 years a lot of good attention has been paid to race and gender, but very little to class. And in fact the media puts forth some very misleading ideas about class. For example, every 20 minutes on the news it's the Dow Jones this and the NASDAQ that. You would get the impression that everybody in the country is involved in the stock market, that we're all a little bit capitalist. The fact is that less than half the people have anything at all to do with the stock market, even just belonging to a pension fund that's invested. If you want to have an influence over income and wealth and tax policy and affirmative action and all kinds of very practical day-to-day matters, it's important to know about class.

T.W.: You often hear even union leaders referring to "middle-class workers." Why has the working class disappeared from public view?

M.Z.: When people talk about "middle-class workers," what they mean is workers who have a house and a decent life, who aren't living in abject poverty. They think of anybody who has a decent life as a middle-class person, decent in terms of their consumption. But if we look at class just in terms of income or lifestyle, we miss what class is really about, which is power.

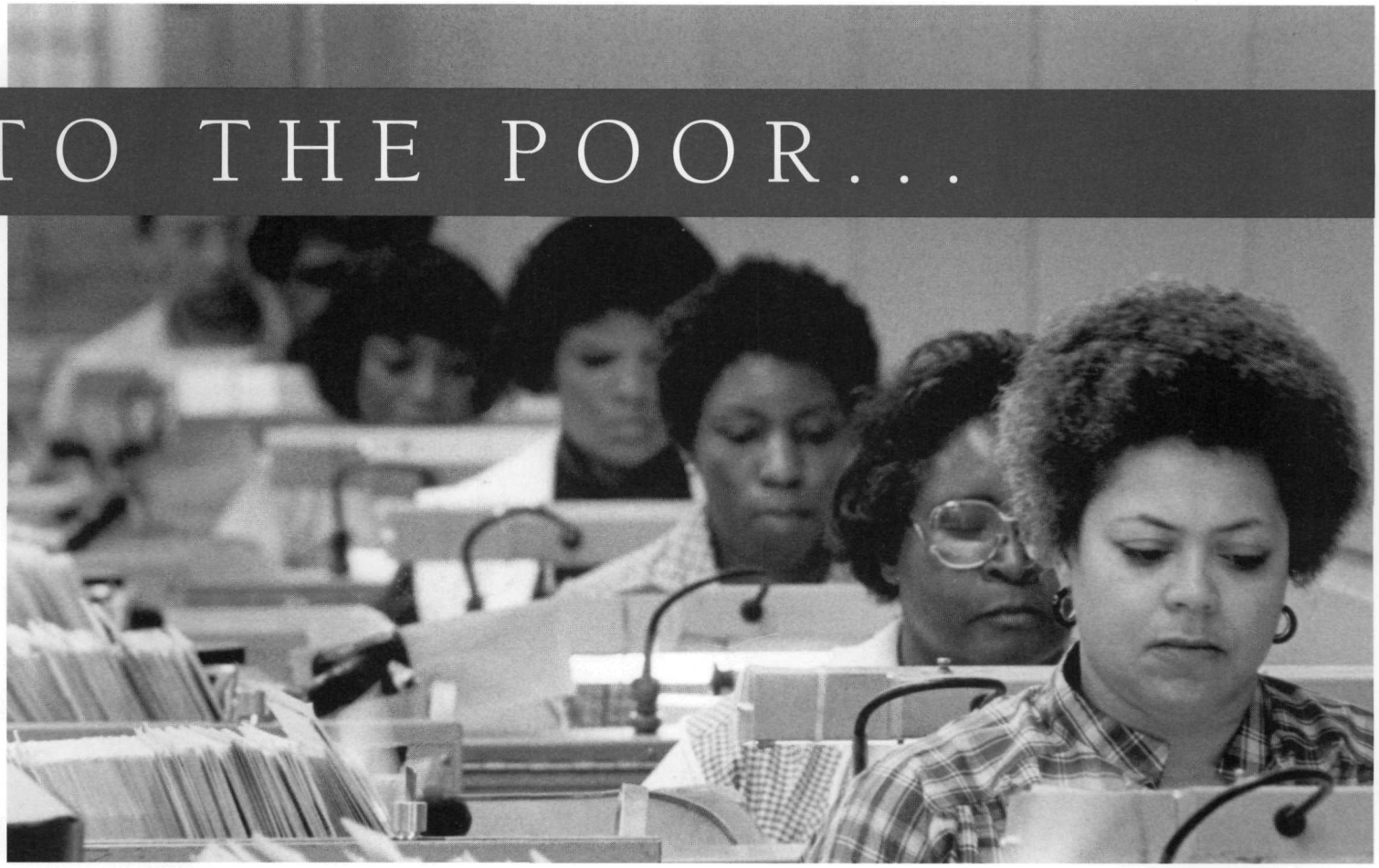
Of course, different classes have different incomes and lifestyles, but it's power that gives you the different incomes and lifestyles. From having different amounts of power you get different amounts of wealth, different status, different access to the media and having your ideas and your needs represented.

Many workers — not all — now live the way middle-class people, managers and small-business owners, lived 50 years ago. That's because unions and social movements won higher wages, Social Security, unemployment compensation, a Fair Labor Standards Act. All these things have improved the lives of workers, but they're still workers. They're still a working class that does not have much power.

T.W.: How do you differentiate classes on the basis of power?

M.Z.: I look at occupation. If someone doesn't have much control over their work, that's a working-class person. A cashier in a supermarket is a working-class job. A stockbroker is also a salesperson, but the stockbroker has enough authority and power at work to shape what they do and have some independence. So that person is middle class.

TO THE POOR...



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The working class is not just blue-collar industrial workers; the working class is also the people who are writing basic computer code, bank tellers, elevator repair people. If you count the numbers of people who are in each occupation, which the U.S. Department of Labor does, I find that about 62 percent of the labor force are working-class people.

The middle class is the professional people, small business owners, managers, supervisors, and that's about 36 percent of the labor force. They have middle amounts of authority and control. And then the capitalists are about 2 percent.

The capitalists are the people who have the power to make decisions about production, not just in industry but in finance, real estate, all aspects of the economy. The people who have the ultimate power to run those industries are the capitalist class. It includes owners of small businesses, but on a national level, there are only about 200,000 people who run businesses that have a national scope.

Understanding class as power helps us look very directly at who has power and how they exercise it in the economy, in culture, in politics. There's a lot of discussion about campaign finance reform, about corporate control of the media and the images that we see, the kinds of things that are represented to us as news or as entertainment: These are all class questions. Because the capitalist class has certain interests and certain ideas about how life should be organized. Ultimately, they use their power not only to run the economy but to maintain their power to keep on doing that.

If you understand class as power, you can understand better who are your friends, who are your enemies, what kind of coalitions can you build, how can you influence events. If you only understand class as income, a lot of that disappears.

For example, the usual way people think about class is that most people are middle-class, it's a middle-class society with some rich people at the top — David Rockefeller and Bill Gates and Madonna. Then there's the poor at the bottom, the "underclass." Then if we notice that everyone we know is experiencing degraded working conditions, and that more people in our families are working to make the same income, and that we don't have time for our children, we're working longer hours, with less medical coverage — if people want to do something about this, where is the target? Who's the enemy, who's responsible? The way politics has played out in this country over the last 20 years is that the problem is poor people. The middle class is suffering because poor people are taking away our tax money and they're living on welfare and they're coming into this country and they're taking away our jobs —

An "Ethnic Anglican" considers classism

by Ian T. Douglas

ONCE, EARLY IN OUR MARRIAGE, when my wife and I were vacationing with her parents, my mother-in-law asked me over breakfast: "Ian, why are you an Episcopalian?" Somewhat taken aback by the question, I wondered what was she after? "What do you mean?" I asked. She responded. "You do not seem like other Episcopalians." My interest was piqued. I had a creeping suspicion that my mother-in-law was not making an observation about my religious beliefs but rather about my cultural identity and class background. I asked a second time: "What do you mean?" "Well," she said, "you're not like the Episcopalians I knew in Philadelphia." My suspicions were beginning to be confirmed. Because I am basically a troublemaker, and because I love my mother-in-law dearly and we enjoy a wonderful relationship, I felt free to push her a little further. "What do you mean?" I questioned a third time. She replied in a matter-of-fact manner: "It seems that, unlike the Episcopalians I knew along the Mainline, you are not of the silver-service, tea-sipping upper class." Taking this as a compliment, I found myself answering her inquiry, quite unreflectively, "I'm in the Episcopal Church because I'm an ethnic Anglican."

What does it mean to be an "ethnic Anglican" and what does such an appellation have to do with class and class analysis?

I grew up in a working-class family in Fitchburg, Mass. In my home town, religious affiliation was intimately connected to the immigrant community with which one primarily identified. Finnish folk went to Messiah Lutheran, Greeks to Holy Trinity Orthodox, *Quebecois* to St. Francis', Arcadians to St. Joseph's, Italians to St. Leo's, the Irish to St. Bernard's (these latter four being Roman Catholic churches), and immigrants from England to Christ Episcopal Church.

Just before the Great Depression, my father's parents immigrated to the U.S. from England and found employment in the paper factories of Fitchburg. At about the same time my mother's parents traveled south from Quebec to work in the city's woolen mills. My parents' question was: Do they raise their two boys as *Quebecois* Roman Catholics or English Anglicans? They chose the latter and so our family attended Christ Episcopal Church in Fitchburg.

Growing up in Christ Church, it was clear to me at an early age that two classes existed in the parish. There were the mill owners, an old family with deep roots in New England who built, paid for, and ran the church. Then there was the rest of us, the mill workers who filled the pews. In our eyes, the mill owners were the real Episcopalians and we were the immigrant ethnic Anglicans in their church. It was clear that we were second class, economically and religiously.

The ethnic Anglicans at Christ Church, Fitchburg, were well aware of the classism within the parish and in the wider Episcopal Church. As is so often the case, however, those who were privileged by the class structures, the mill owners, had no idea that classism was rife in the parish. That's how privilege works. Those who enjoy the power do not realize they are carrying an "invisible backpack of privilege." This was as true for the mill owners at Christ Church as it is for others in our communities who continue to be privileged because they are white, or male, or straight.

The Episcopal Church has begun to address the evils of racism, sexism, and heterosexism by unmasking the structures of oppression that privilege some at the

continued in bar on opposite page

T.W.: And they're still poor!

M.Z.: But boy, are they making a mess out of our lives. What you get from that view is a lot of sentiment against immigration, against people on welfare, a lot of racism. The poor become the target. That gets you welfare "reform," it gets you criminalization of drug use, the prison-industrial complex—all that follows from "the poor are the enemy."

What's the alternative? Are "the rich" the enemy? Poor people aren't poor because there are rich people. Poor people are poor because they are workers who aren't getting paid decent wages. Or they're poor because they don't have jobs. They're poor because capitalists have decided not to keep their industries in the cities and have moved them away somewhere so that people are left without work and without an infrastructure and tax base. The capitalists are responsible for those decisions because they're capitalists, not because they're rich.

So if all you have in your mind as a picture of society is a very broad middle class with a few rich and a few poor, you have no appropriate political target. You get a very confused politics that most working people

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walk away from. Which is exactly what we see. People don't vote, they don't have any confidence in the political process.

Understanding our way through this thicket of politics, culture, and economics, it's very helpful to understand that most people are working-class people: They work for a living, supervised by, and ultimately controlled by, a capitalist class that has different interests and wants to keep these working people powerless. In fact, the capitalists employ whole arrays of managerial personnel to keep them powerless, as well as intellectuals and professionals. But those middle-class people also have a sense of professional responsibility and want their independence, and they can come to resent the restrictions that are placed on them by the capitalists. So the middle class is not only in the middle in terms of income, the middle class is in the middle of labor and capital, caught between them.

Part of maintaining your power is to hide it, and to get people to think that there isn't any power involved at all, it's just the way things are. It's a struggle even to get a discussion of classes out, because it is such a highly charged and dangerous notion. What did we see when Al Gore went to the Democratic Party Convention and talked about "working families"? George Bush and all these pundits went nuts. "This is class warfare, we can't allow this." Peggy Noonan, the columnist and former Reagan speechwriter, was on television beside herself: "I thought we gave up this language years ago ..."

Gore stopped talking about working families and went back to talking about middle-class tax cuts. Any discussion of class is very consciously repressed.

T.W.: Don't a lot of ordinary people seem to have a stake in thinking of themselves as having made it into the middle class?

M.Z.: It all depends on how you ask the question. If you ask most people, "What class are you—upper-class, middle-class, or lower-class?" most people, 85 or 90 percent, will say "middle-class." Because they know they're not upper-class, and they don't want to be lower-class, so what else are they going to say? But if you change the question and say, "What class are you—upper-class, middle-class, working-class, or lower-class?" 55-60 percent of American people say "working-class." Despite all the consumerism and upward mobility and "this is America, anybody can be anything."

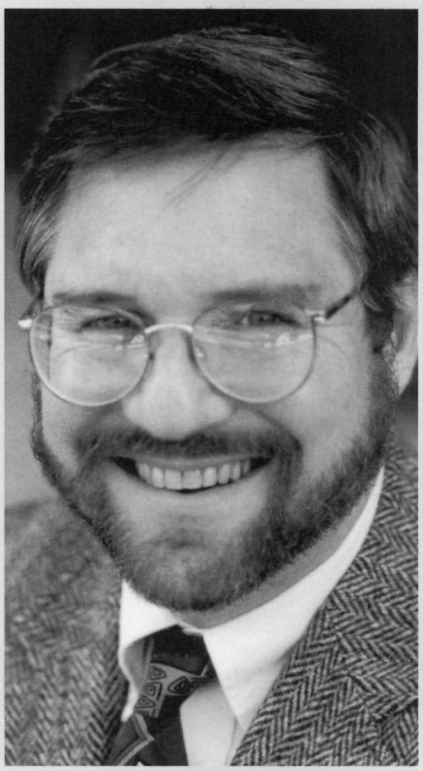
Even if people are just asked, "Are you middle-class or working-class?" still a majority, 55 or 60 percent, will say "working-class." So people do think of themselves that way. They may not spontaneously say it, because it's not part of the culture or the language or the media, it's not what you see on television, it's not the way anything is discussed on the news. It's America's best-kept secret.

People will identify themselves as workers, but they also don't want to have that carry with it a connotation of doom, of being trapped, of yet one more obstacle. People don't like to think that their future has been taken away from them. If the point of saying to somebody "you're a worker," is to put them into a category that says you have no hope, you're stuck here in the factory, you're stuck here at this cash register, people will resent that. But if "you're a worker" means that you have a respected role in society, people don't want to run away from that.

T.W.: Does the fact that people can work hard and move into better occupations than their parents make the whole idea of class less important?

M.Z.: The fact that people can advance does mean that we don't have a caste system where we're born into who we will be forever. People do move across classes (although the biggest indicator of where a person is going to end up in the class structure is where their parents started out). That's a wonderful and important feature of American capitalist life. But that can't be true for society as a whole. Everybody can't leave the working class. There has got to be a working class, and it has to be a majority of the population because that's how the economy is organized and how wealth is created.

T.W.: Some people say you shouldn't raise the issue of class because it's divisive. The idea of class struggle doesn't bring people together.



Ian T. Douglas

expense of others. We have a long way to go, however, in addressing the sin of classism in our midst. We must first recognize and admit that classism is alive and well in our church. We must listen to the experiences of the many "ethnic Anglicans" and other working-class folk among our clergy and in our parishes who have born the brunt of classism in the Episcopal Church. And we must link efforts to overcome classism with the church's other anti-oppression work. As we continue to struggle together to overcome the sins of racism, sexism, heterosexism and classism in the church and in the world, we will live into the promise of God's freedom for all made real in Jesus Christ. ●

***Ian T. Douglas** is Associate Professor of World Mission and Global Christianity at the Episcopal Divnity School in Cambridge, Mass., and a member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's board (ECPC publishes* The Witness)

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M.Z.: If you look over the last 30 years, there's no question that there's been very intense class struggle and class warfare in this country. The only thing is that only one class seems to know it. And they don't want to talk about it.

The capitalist class is waging unrelenting, very deliberate, very well-thought-through warfare on American working people and workers all over the world. It's a warfare that involves attacks on unions, on individual workers who want to organize unions, on poor workers, on low-wage workers, women workers, on African American and immigrant labor—these are the people who have been targeted to have their living standards reduced, and that's been a very conscious program to "make America competitive." The idea that America has to be competitive is sold to us as a question of national pride, but what it actually is is a program for the capitalists who run the economy to make money by degrading the lives of working people.

Calling that out and recognizing it isn't creating class struggle. The class struggle already exists. What it does do is make it a public question. It calls these capitalists to account for what they're doing, politically, morally, ethically, aesthetically, and in every other way. It's a way to back them off and say, no, we're not going to allow you to treat people this way. That then becomes a fight, because the capitalists don't want to be limited in what they can do. They don't want to be told that it's wrong to lay 40,000 workers off and lay a whole city waste. This has to be called out for what it is. The capitalists have too much power that they want to exercise privately and quietly without supervision and without contest. And without people knowing that that's what's going on.

T.W.: Does being rich automatically put you in the capitalist class, with those values?

M.Z.: No, a lot of professional people and managerial people make very good money. They may own stocks and may identify themselves in some way with the good life and with the powers in society, the power of capital. But that doesn't make them capitalists. And it also doesn't make them necessarily in their thinking and their values aligned with the capitalists. Very often people who are quite well-to-do can have values and ethics that promote a social and cooperative sense of mutual aid as opposed to this barren raw individualism that capitalists promote.

T.W.: Is it possible then to be born in one class but cast your allegiance elsewhere? I'm thinking of Eugene Debs, who said, "While there is a working class, I am of it."

M.Z.: Oh, sure. If you look at the religious community, for example, there are many religious people who are reasonably well-off, they're not capitalists or workers, who cast their lot with the workers. They may not think of it quite that way, because in the religious communities the way this is often talked about is the "preferential option for the poor." Well, we need to understand, who are these poor?

The poor are not some lump of people at the bottom of society who are just there as the underclass, permanently poor and permanently outside the mainstream of American life. The poor are working people. The poor are people who are unemployed but who are going to go back to work. The poor are women whose marriage ends and they are trying to get a job and get their lives together. After a while they get their lives together and then they're not poor anymore. And then something else happens and then they're poor again. Or someone has a job, but then their mother gets sick and they have to stay home and take care of her because they don't have adequate medical care, and they become poor.

If you understand that poverty is something that happens to the working class, it's a different type of preferential option. Instead of an option for some marginal poor, this remote "other" that we have to be nice to, it's an option for the majority of the population, the working class, who are subject to the conditions that create poverty. If you have that option for the working class, that then leads you to an understanding of the need to limit the power of the capitalist class. That has political consequences and ethical and moral consequences.

T.W.: If the poor are in reality part of the working class, cycling in and out of poverty and near-poverty, what does that imply for the traditional Christian concern for the poor?

M.Z.: The idea of doing something charitable for the poor, who will always be with us, is a beautiful thing. But it's misplaced as a practical program, because the way for the poor to have a better life is for them to have more power. "Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime." That means don't be charitable toward the poor; arrange it so that they have power.

If you approach working people who are poor with a sense of charity, it's humiliating to many people. People will take it because they're hungry, and they'll even appreciate it in a certain way, but it can be done in a way that's deeply hurtful and in the long run counterproductive. Or it can be done in a way that says, "Let's work together to stand up and exercise the humanity we have in a way that makes us fully powerful in our interests and with our own needs, but as a community."

The capitalists claim that their wealth is

the result of their individual success and prowess in the market. But their wealth isn't just their own doing; it's also the doing of the people who work for them to create the goods and services they sell. Wealth is actually a social creation.

T.W.: So we should see a fair share for working people, including poor people, not just as charity but as...

M.Z.: As a legitimate claim to the contributions that working people make to the wealth of the country.

T.W.: If someone would follow your prescription for philanthropy, they would not just give money to a food bank, they would help to organize people in some way.

M.Z.: In the last 25 years the social safety net has been dramatically shredded at the same time that the living standards of American working people have been greatly reduced. All the social structures of mutual support are being undermined, unions are being undermined, government programs are being undermined, people are having to work much longer hours and have more stressful lives. That means they have less time to volunteer. Their ability to be active in their churches, in the Boy Scouts, in the Volunteer Fire Department, in all the social structures that allow us to help one another, all that is seriously challenged by what is happening in the economy. So we're being thrown back just on our own resources.

The political forces behind this, which exist in both the Democratic and the Republican parties, are saying to the religious community, "You should do more charity, have another soup kitchen." The churches are being urged to take up the slack of what unions used to be able to win for their members; they didn't have to go to food banks because they had a wage that could support their families.

So the religious community is now being asked to use all their energy on immediate aid for the people on their doorstep, instead of seeing, wait a second, we need to focus on the social structures that are bringing these people to our doorstep. That is what an understanding of class allows people to do, to see those connections.

We're being told that our ethical and moral responsibility—if it's not just to ourselves—is an individual act of charity towards others, volunteering in the soup kitchen. And people are often driven by a sense of moral urgency to do good for the poor. But if we look at the national discussion of morality and ethics in the last 25 years, the way that values enter into the national debate is "family values." All issues of economic justice have been drained away and disappeared from any public review of social policy. All questions of economics are simply technical questions for the market and what we have instead as questions of morality are, "Who are you sleeping with?" Questions of morality become, "Do you smoke marijuana? Are you gay or are you straight? Do you or don't you have an abortion?"

These are all important questions to struggle with, morality at the personal level. But they aren't the sum and substance of ethics and morality. That way of approaching things not only misses the economic targets, it misses the moral targets. It misses the ethical reality that we are mutually interdependent and we are mutually determining and we have a responsibility to each other that isn't just charity. It's the way society needs to be organized, from the top to the bottom.

And that understanding challenges capitalism. It doesn't necessarily destroy it, but it certainly puts a limit on it. It says the market is not the be-all and end-all, as a mechanical process of production and exchange for maximum profits, of the human content of our lives. We're not going to allow our lives to be reduced to that. That's a moral question, and that's not who do you sleep with. If we understand that morality extends to economic justice, we can recast what is the practical and moral and religious task of our institutions.

T.W.: Should we turn a cold shoulder to the starving person on the church steps and say sorry, we're organizing strike support instead?

M.Z.: No, but every strike support should definitely have a soup kitchen. Every union should be working with every church and every synagogue and every mosque to develop social structures for working people, whether they're on strike or in an organizing campaign or whether they're unemployed or whether they've just been divorced and can't make it for six months.

We feed you, but we do it in the context of a social movement that's feeding you, so that it isn't just the church as an isolated institution taking on the burdens of the poor, it becomes the church working with other institutions to mobilize power, to confront the powerful. That's a very threatening and difficult thing to do.

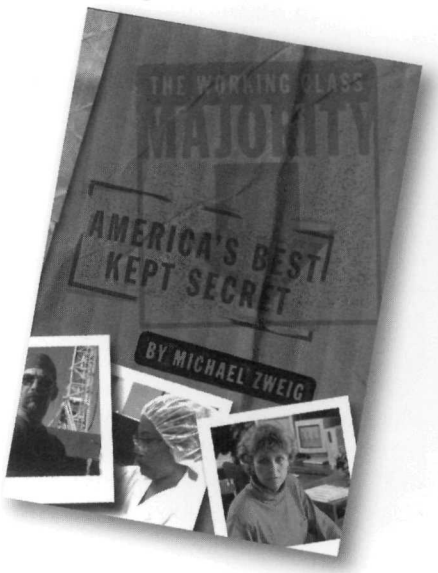
T.W.: It's more than "speaking truth to power."

M.Z.: Oh, it's *doing* to power.

T.W.: So you're saying that if people want to exercise a preferential option for the poor, the best way to do that is to organize power for the working class, which is the majority.

M.Z.: That's why it's also a project of democracy. One way class has been obscured in the last 30 years is that workers have been characterized as "special interests." Just like the oil industry or the banking industry. But they're 62 percent of the population. ●

Jane Slaughter is a freelance writer who lives in Detroit. For The Working Class Majority *visit <www.workingclass.sunysb.edu>.*



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CHARITABLE CHOICE

Unleashing an 'enormous force for good'?

by Camille Colatosti and Julie A. Wortman

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LAST SUMMER, when the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "Community Solutions Act," (HR7), President George W. Bush issued a statement that called the move "a victory for progress and compassion" that would "increase the help available to poor Americans" and "end discrimination against churches, synagogues and charities that provide social services."

No one, the president added, "can love a neighbor as well as a loving neighbor and we must unleash good people of faith and works in every community in our country. By doing so, we can extend the hope and the promise and the opportunity that is at the heart of the American dream to the heart of every child in America."

The president then urged the Senate "to act quickly to unleash this enormous force for good."

Expanding charitable choice

Passage of the Community Solutions Act was a key step in the Bush Administration's efforts to expand charitable choice (the provision of government-funded social services by religious organizations), an intention first signaled last January 29, when Bush announced the opening of a new administrative office — the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The office opened on February 20, and is directed by John DiIulio, a former Princeton University professor.

DiIulio told *Sojourners Magazine* that his office's mission included increasing charitable giving, promoting public/private partnerships and "making sure that religious and secular organizations in the community that traditionally haven't been part of the federal funding loop get to be a part of it, if they so choose."

The concept of "charitable choice" originated with John Ashcroft, then a senator from Missouri, during the drafting of the 1996 welfare reform act. Previously, government funds could not be given to predominantly religious organizations like churches and synagogues (what are now being called faith-based organizations, or FBOs) because of the U.S. Constitution's requirement that church and state be separated. In order to accept public funds, religious organizations needed to create secular non-profit 501(c)3 tax-exempt organizations, like Catholic Charities or Lutheran Social Services, that could meet government standards of non-discrimination, safety and licensing.

Ashcroft's "charitable choice" amendment altered existing law to permit government funding of welfare reform programs provided by FBOs which, under Title VII of the U.S. Code, are allowed to discriminate in their employment practices on the basis of religion — discrimination that covers not only employees performing religious functions, but also extends to employees engaged in secular functions. According to a background paper prepared by the Episcopal Church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations, courts have interpreted the Title VII exemption for church discrimination to also apply to aspects of an employee's conduct that the religious organization deems inconsistent with its tenets and teachings.

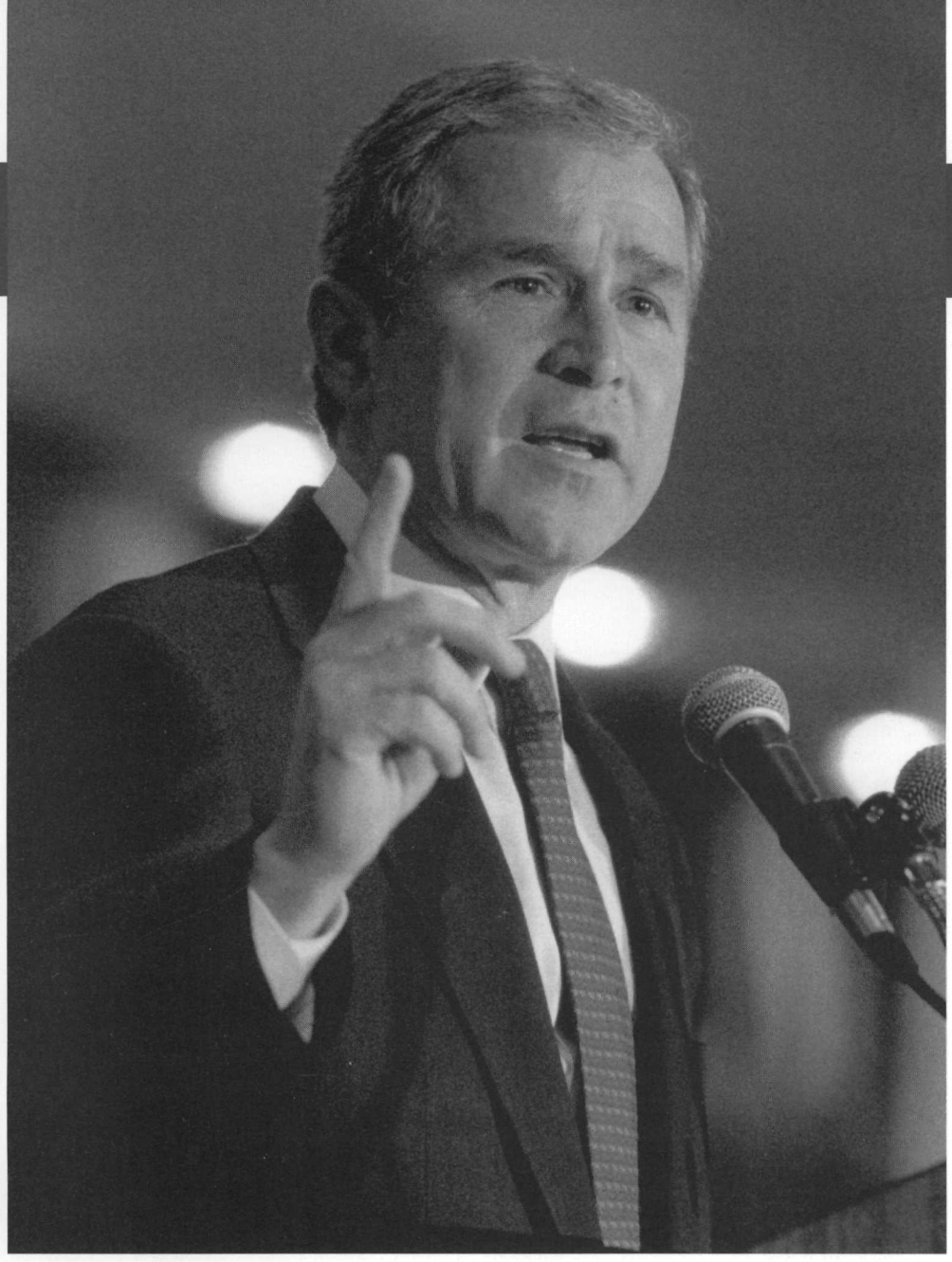
Although welfare reform's charitable choice, which is administered by the states, provides that FBOs cannot use government funds for religious missions or to screen the religious backgrounds of potential clients, it provides that they can deliver publicly funded programs that contain religious messages. However, under the 1996 welfare reform bill (and in several bills since then), states must provide beneficiaries with a secular program alternative should they choose not to seek services from the FBO.

Because the Clinton Administration never issued regulations for the charitable choice provision of welfare reform law, it was not widely implemented nor did it face constitutional scrutiny by the courts.

Taxpayer-funded discrimination

While the Bush Administration says FBOs have been unfairly eliminated from eligibility for federal funding, critics of charitable choice say the provision is an unconstitutional effort to eliminate the separation of church and state, pure and simple. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a "religious liberty watchdog group," says the legislative bills that would authorize FBOs to receive federal funds "subject people in need to religious coercion; they subsidize religious discrimination and undercut the integrity of America's houses of worship."

Mark Stern, a lawyer at the American Jewish Congress, says charitable choice has been the cause of at least four lawsuits — including state funding for a Bible class in Texas and a Christian 12-step course for addicted fathers in Wisconsin. A lawsuit in California challenges the state government's policy of setting



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aside money for faith-based groups only.

"Bush's faith-based initiatives take an unconstitutional idea and compound it," Stern says. "The government cannot be in the business of engaging in religion. Where religion is pervasive in a program, the government can't subsidize it."

Eyal Press, a reporter and a fellow with the Open Society Institute, a foundation based in New York City, agrees. "Charitable choice removes safeguards" that required religious groups to form separate secular organizations, Eyal says. This "allows groups to evangelize while providing publicly financed services," he explains. "It also permits groups to discriminate in hiring on religious grounds, despite financial support from the government."

Of particular concern to John Johnson of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations is that "the legislation could, in fact, trump state and local laws respecting anti-discrimination measures enacted at those levels." Indeed, says Johnson, "moderate Republican members of Congress delayed a final vote on the House bill to force its sponsors to 'commit' to ensure that the states' rights issue is addressed when the legislation is conferenced with the Senate version."

Last summer, an article by *Washington Post* staff writer Dana Milbank (July 10, 2001) spotlighted this concern. The article stated that, according to an internal Salvation Army document, "the White House has made a 'firm commitment' to the Salvation Army to issue a regulation protecting such charities from state and city efforts to prevent discrimination against gays in hiring and domestic-partner benefits," in exchange for promoting Bush's faith-based social-service initiative (an increasing number of states and municipalities have laws prohibiting such discrimination).

The article quoted George Hood, a senior official with The Army, as saying that hiring gay employees "really begins to chew away at the theological fabric of who we are."

Although administration officials said the Salvation Army's claim of a "firm commitment" overstated the case, Milbank noted that The Army document "suggests President Bush is willing to achieve through regulation ends too controversial to survive the legislative process. It also underscores the close allegiance between the administration and conservative groups."

Likewise, funding houses of worship for the charitable services they provide, but insisting that these same religious organizations not use funds to proselytize, is "a distinction without a difference," says Americans United's Lynn.

Transforming lives

Proponents of Bush's Faith-Based Initiative

Rev. Eddie Edwards, founder of Detroit's Joy of Jesus, meets social-service needs in a private school.

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dismiss these concerns. In a July 2000 campaign speech, Bush said, "I'm told by the legal experts that my initiative will pass Constitutional muster. We will send money to fund services. But the money does not go to fund the religious programs within the institution."

Bush has made this initiative the center point of his social policy, stating that religious organizations are more effective in providing the services that poor Americans need. In his foreword to Marvin Olasky's book *Compassionate Conservative* (2000), Bush wrote, "Government can do certain things very well, but it cannot put hope in our hearts or a sense of purpose in our lives. That requires churches and synagogues and mosques and charities."

Religious organizations, proponents also argue, are less bureaucratic than the government and can provide services for less cost.

Don Ebberly, from the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, told *Insight Magazine* on March 26, 2001: "We are going to be spending a lot of taxpayer dollars on social programs in America. Take your pick: either through traditional distant bureaucratic systems or small-scale loving and caring services. Traditional programs do not have the capacity to transform lives and don't even pretend to promise that result. Faith-based programs do and thereby engage in serious prevention that will have the result of reducing the need for costly government spending."

Likewise, CNN's Tucker Carlson has reported that "study after study shows these faith-based initiatives work better, much better in most cases, than government ones."

But are these claims true? Reporter Eyal Press says, for example, that there is no "strong evidence to indicate that faith-based organizations are more effective than their secular counterparts. This doesn't mean that they are not more effective, but there is no evidence."

Press points to Nancy Ammerman, a sociologist of religion at Hartford Seminary, who states, "We don't have the research to tell us whether faith-based organizations are better or not."

Mark Chaves, a sociologist at the University of Arizona, adds, "It can't be said strongly enough how little we know about whether religion makes a difference in the effectiveness of delivering services. Several studies have shown that, all other things being equal, individuals who attend church are less likely to be arrested or to abuse drugs — and more likely to find jobs and escape poverty — than those who do not. But none of these studies tells us anything about whether religious organizations are more effective than their secular counterparts in delivering social services."

Do religious organizations even have the capacity to undertake the social service work of Bush's initiative? In a 1999 study of faith-based charitable work, Chaves surveyed 1,200 religious organizations. "More than half of the congregations participated in social service projects of some sort, with African-American and liberal churches playing a particularly strong social-outreach role. The vast majority of these activities, however, were 'short-term, small-scale' efforts, such as sending volunteers to help staff soup kitchens. Congregations devoted an average of 2–4 percent of their budget to social service — figures that underscore the potential limits of a social policy that centers around private religious groups while ignoring the need for public investment in areas like health care and education."

In a July 17 report in *The American Prospect*, Maia Szalavitz, co-author of *Recovery Options: The Complete Guide*, questioned the Bush Administration's confidence in "faith-based treatment" for addiction and juvenile delinquency and its desire to recognize religious training as an alternative form of qualification for treatment providers.

"Over the past 10 years," Szalavitz writes, "more than two dozen teenagers have died in so-called 'tough love' rehabilitation facilities that use violent confrontation and exposure to primitive living conditions as means to a cure."

Competition among religions

But Terri Schroeder, a First Amendment legislative analyst for the national office of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), sees the question about the effectiveness of the faith-based social services as irrelevant. "The real question is: What does the relationship between government and religious organizations need to look like if there are going to be partnerships? Religious diversity has thrived because of tolerance. If we forget

this, we could be opening the door to chaos. This may lead to competition among religions and to government evaluation of religion, the government saying that one religion is better than another."

Indeed, Bush has already said that the Nation of Islam will not qualify for funds because he believes it is a religion that preaches hate. But, according to The Interfaith Alliance, a national organization "dedicated to promoting the positive and healing role of religion in public life," it is not clear "what the criteria would be for determining which religious programs qualify for funding and which don't. Government officials will be put in the position of labeling some value systems better than others and relegating the rest to second-class status."

Meg Riley, director of the Unitarian-Universalist's Washington, D.C., Office of Faith in Action and the co-chair of Equal Partners in Faith ("a multi-faith, multi-racial network of religious leaders and people of faith committed to equality and diversity" founded in 1997), agrees. "Religious freedom is best served when faith communities are left to their own dictates, without governmental strings, on how best to serve their local communities."

Black churches divided

Bill Fletcher, the national co-chair of the Black Radical Congress, believes there is also "a Machiavellian component" to Bush's initiative. The president, he says, is "trying to play upon splits in the African-American movement. This is especially important to Bush given his poor performance among black voters."

Founded in 1998, the Black Radical Congress, explains Fletcher, works "to forge African-American activists and scholars and various organizations into a national movement in order to rebuild a left presence in black America."

"After the election," Fletcher says, "Bush called a meeting of African-American ministers. It was not a diverse group and was aimed at further driving a wedge among divisions. Bush offered a carrot to a sector of the black community."

Eugene Rivers, pastor of the Azusa Christian Community, a Pentecostal church in Dorchester, Mass., was one of those who attended the meeting in question. A self-described "new leftist," Rivers converted a former crack house in one of Boston's poorest communities into the headquarters of his Ten-Point Coalition, a group of churches that came together in 1992 to combat the gang violence that was claiming the lives of a growing number of the city's black and Latino youths. Working with police and other neighborhood organizations, the Coalition boasts of the impressive 80 percent decline in Boston's homicide rate.

Rivers hosted a March 19, 2001, press conference to proclaim his support for the Bush initiative, although representatives of the Congress of National Black Churches, who also met with the president, issued a statement to say that they are not in favor of the Bush plan. Rivers has accused critics of the Bush plan of being racist, or anti-religious. He told the *Boston Globe*: "The white fundamentalists thought the faith-based office would finance their sectarian programs, which primarily serve upper-middle-class suburbanites, and they are infuriated because John DiIulio wants resources to go to people who are poor, black and brown."

Of the left and liberals, Rivers said, "Those who oppose charitable choice are 'upper-income liberals' who care more about whether a social-service provider has a cross on its door than whether the institution is doing an effective job serving the poor."

For Rivers, "The black community would be foolish to dismiss the opportunity to work with government simply because of ideological discomfort with the Bush administration."

Charitable choice a distraction

Anti-charitable-choice groups like The Interfaith Alliance (TIA) believe the debate over charitable choice "distracts from a deeper examination of our nation's budget priorities that has led to insufficient funding currently available to address America's poverty crisis."

As Richard Wagner observes in *What's Love Got to Do with It?* (The New Press, 2000), "The United States has the sharpest rates of income inequality in the Western world, the sparsest public social welfare system in the industrialized world, among the highest poverty rates in the Western world, and a host of festering social problems that produce more violence and prisons than elsewhere."

"In 2000," reports TIA, "Catholic Charities USA noted a 23 percent increase in the amount of food and shelter they delivered, and they remained unable to meet all of their requests. America's Second Harvest, the nation's largest network of food banks, reports that in 1997, 21 million people turned to the agencies they serve, a 17 percent increase over 1996 requests — 40 percent of those clients were from working families. Whether or not religious organizations have the capacity to effectively deliver social services, they clearly have been overextended in meeting the needs of the poor, including the increasing working poor. Increasing the number of competitors for stagnant funds while ignoring the fact that welfare roll reduction has not resulted in poverty reduction will not address this issue."

To many people, calling the government to accountability about social policy, in fact, is the faith community's special, prophetic role — a role which could be seriously co-opted by charitable choice.

"Would there have ever been a Montgomery bus boycott if their hands had been in 'Pharaoh's kitty'?" Timothy McDonald, pastor of Atlanta's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, asked during the Progressive Religious Partnership conference in Washington, D.C., last April. "If Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Atlanta, under Dr. King, had received a $100,000 grant for poverty work, or if Ralph Abernathy's church in Mississippi had gotten a $50,000 government gift for computer training, do you think they would have stood up and criticized that same government?"

As Paul Moore, the retired Bishop of New York, pointed out in a *Living Church* editorial last summer, "It is the responsibility of the state, not the church, in an affluent society, to provide for the basic human needs of its citizens: food, shelter, health, education and housing. These are issues of justice, not charity, and it is the duty of the state to provide them." ●

***Camille Colatosti** is a professor of English at Davenport University in Detroit and is* The Witness' *staff writer. Julie A. Wortman is editor/publisher of* The Witness.

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'COMING OUT' AS WEALTHY

For the common good

by Marianne Arbogast

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THE WEBSITE for the White Dog Cafe [www.whitedog.com] features photographs of elegant dining rooms in a row of brownstone houses in the University City section of Philadelphia. It also features a Social Action page with information on topics like global fair trade, criminal justice reform and genetically modified foods. You can arrange for a private party, sign up for a community gardens tour or volunteer for a Habitat project. As you browse menu selections (Roasted Wild Mushrooms and Organic Savoy Baby Spinach Salad sounds good) you can also mark your calendar to attend one of the White Dog's "Table Talks" ("The Quagmire in Colombia," maybe, or "White People Confronting Racism").

White Dog owner Judy Wicks is a member of Responsible Wealth, an organization that promotes fair taxes, a living wage, corporate accountability and broadened asset ownership. But while its goal is increased equity, its membership criteria is exclusive: Only those whose income and/or wealth are in the top 5 percent in the U.S. (over $145,000 household income and/or over $650,000 net assets) are eligible to join.

The four-year-old project of the economic justice group United For a Fair Economy now has over 500 members who, their website [www.responsiblewealth.org] explains, "have joined together to speak out publicly to change a growing set of rules tilted in favor of us, large asset owners, at the expense of others in society.

"We believe an economy and democracy that tolerates a widening gap between rich and poor and which concentrates economic and political power in the hands of a few is not sustainable," their statement continues. "The growing disparities of wages and wealth seen in America and throughout the global village are not healthy for society or for business."

Judy Wicks: Investing in people

Wicks likes to say that she "lures customers into social activism with good food." Although her 18-year-old restaurant is a thriving business employing 100 people and grossing close to $5 million annually, Wicks says that "making a profit is not part of our mission.

"Our mission is to serve fully in four areas: our customers, our employees, our community and nature. Money is a tool by which we serve, whether it's buying top-notch ingredients for our customers, paying our employees a living wage, buying from organic farmers or buying electricity from windpower. The two things that we focus on are economic justice and environmental sustainability."

Wicks, who grew her business from its inception as a coffee-and-muffin take-out shop in her house, has often served as a spokesperson for Responsible Wealth campaigns.

"I feel that those of us who have businesses have a special responsibility to see that that business is directed toward the needs of the common good," she says. "An organization like Responsible Wealth helps guide that. It was through Responsible Wealth that I heard about the living wage campaign. I'd never thought about it — I thought as long as you paid people minimum wage, that's fine."

In the restaurant business, which traditionally employs large numbers of minimum-wage workers, a concept like the living wage is revolutionary.

"The restaurant business is not known for investment in people, it's known for a revolving door of just using people and going on to the next batch," Wicks says.

At the White Dog, all except the most temporary workers make at least $8 an hour, the living wage in Philadelphia. Those who stay more than two years also receive health insurance, a dental plan and 401(k) benefits.

Though not a church goer, Wicks says her life is "based on spiritual beliefs. What I do is based on the knowledge that all living beings are interconnected, not only physically through our environment, but also spiritually. And so when I make a decision in my business, I think about how this will affect my customers, my employees, my community and the natural world."

Wicks, who plans to one day pass on her business to her 22-year-old daughter, supported Responsible Wealth's campaign to stop the repeal of the estate tax, part of this

year's tax-cut legislation. The $1.3-million small business exemption would likely cover most of her business, she says.

"My estate is probably worth a little over $2 million right now, so if I were to die today, my kids would have to pay taxes on anything over $1.3 million. But even at the 33 percent rate they would be able to afford it because the tax would be paid over 14 years. Knowing how hard it is to start from scratch, I certainly would not advocate a tax that would put a family out of business. If there are, in fact, cases where this happens, I think the exemption simply should be raised."

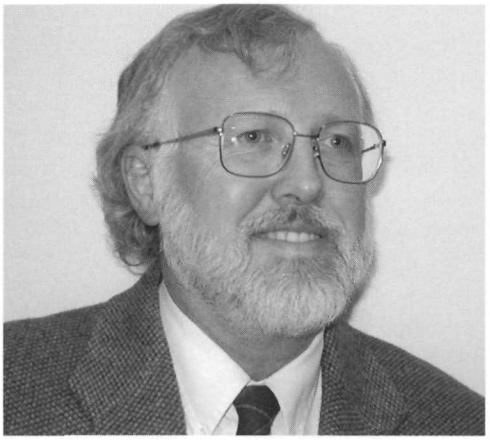
Her daughter agrees, Wicks says. "She feels fortunate that she's inheriting a business. There are many children who inherit nothing. The tax should be imposed on those who inherit more, for government expenses that provide things like job training and small business loans and better education for those who don't have an inheritance to rely on."

Misinformation was rampant in the campaign to repeal the estate tax, Wicks says.

"The conservatives positioned small business and small farmers as being the ones hurt by this tax, and that's not true.The tax is very progressive in that it taxes the very wealthiest people, the top 2 percent."

Wicks was stunned when she received hate mail after speaking out against repeal of the estate tax on a nationally broadcast right-wing talk show.

"I got hate mail, voice mail and e-mail from people who called me everything from a communist to a lesbian," she says. "It was really mean-spirited and it shocked me, what anger people have for something that I consider to be a generous position. It scared me for a number of reasons — one is that the anger seemed directed toward the federal government. I certainly don't condone everything the government does, by any means, but the government is the most effective way we have to protect the interests of the common good versus the interests of big business. The problem now is that big business is controlling government. We've got to get out of that situation through campaign finance reform, if it's not too late."



Barry Hermanson: What do we owe back?

Barry Hermanson, another Responsible Wealth member, is also a business owner. Like Wicks, Hermanson started out with an alternative vision. After earning degrees in business and theology, he took a VISTA assignment as a small business counselor for a nonprofit serving San Francisco's Asian community, then worked a stint in temporary clerical jobs. He soon realized that temp agencies were charging exorbitant fees, and set out to see if he could do it differently. The result was Hermanson's Employment Services, an agency for temporary office workers that has been able to pay workers up to $4-an-hour more than the going rate, by keeping overhead costs low and relying on word-of-mouth advertising.

Hermanson, a Presbyterian, is reticent in talking about his faith, but he acknowledges that "it underlies everything I do. I believe that the fundamental message of Jesus was to work for people who are disadvantaged, and to be concerned about others before yourself. In some ways that's impractical, but when I tried to be concerned with the wages my employees were making, they, in turn, brought so much business back to me. Someone could say that was pretty slick marketing, but I believe if you treat other people well, they will treat you well."

Hermanson, who recently served as co-chair of San Francisco's Living Wage Coalition, stresses the need for large-scale change in the economic rules of the game.

"I was trying to change the temp agency industry by providing an alternative way, but there's no way the industry is going to be changed as long as there is nobody telling the larger services they need to change," he says. "A perfect example is health care. Most temp employees do not get health care, and I'm not able to build that into what I'm charging my clients because the cost is prohibitive. Health care is not going to happen unless we have a law that says you must do it.

"The Living Wage Coalition helped get legislation passed that raised wages for 20,000 workers, and we're working on a health care plan. Working with a large coalition of people to develop the political will for this legislation has brought a different focus to my life. I have been increasingly involved in community work, particularly with an eye toward economic development and employment."

In addition to contributing both time and money to the living wage campaign, Hermanson helped build and staff a computer training center in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. "It is very important for individuals to use their money to help create social change, as well as donate to nonprofits who are actively providing some of the needed services," he believes.

Hermanson is disturbed by what he sees as "a phenomenal change taking hold in this country," expressed in the sentiment that "what I have is mine, I've worked hard, and by God, you shouldn't get any."

He was dismayed at a Democratic club meeting ("These days I almost hate to use the word 'Democrat,'" he says) where he was challenged on his opposition to repeal of the estate tax. "I said, as a Democrat, I believe in a progressive system of taxation. People who are wealthy should pay a higher percentage. I think people forget that as we live together in community, there needs to be a contribution to that community. It goes to the heart of what we believe is the basis of a democratic society. What do we owe back to each other in order to make it a better place for all of us?"

Charles Demere: Spiritual power in a dollar bill

Charles Demere was born into a family with enough money for two vacation homes, in addition to their year-round home in Georgia.

"Friends of mine who lived on the same

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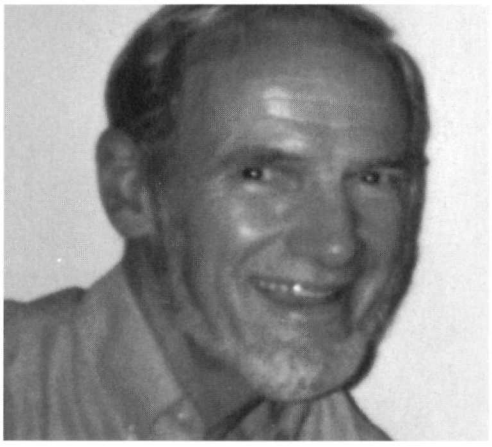


block during the winter didn't have any summer place, and there was something about it that didn't seem quite right," Demere says. "There was a mixture of guilt and enjoyment of the money I had."

Demere, an Episcopal priest, says that early on he identified with the rich young man in the Gospel story who was told to sell everything and give the money to the poor.

"I was bothered by this admonition throughout much of my young adult life," he says. "I was not ready to deny who I was, to pretend to be poor when God had given me wealth."

Eventually, Demere decided that what he needed to do was to work creatively with the money he had. "A Christian says, I belong to God," he says. "And if I belong to God, my house does, too, and my car does." So Demere regularly loans out his car, and recently loaned out a Washington apartment (which he keeps for frequent visits there from his home in Maryland) to a refugee couple from Sierra Leone, who stayed there three months.

Demere, who was in at the founding of Responsible Wealth, initiated its highly successful "Tax Break Pledge" campaign, through which people pledge their savings from the 1997 reduction in the capital gains tax to economic justice efforts. At an early organizing meeting, he recalls, conversation turned to the recent capital gains tax reduction, from 28 to 20 percent.

"I said, that's part of the benefit for rich folk that shouldn't be there," Demere says. "So I pledged to give my capital gains savings to Responsible Wealth. Inside of half an hour, people picked up on the idea, and over a million dollars was committed either directly to the poor or to advocacy for fairer taxation."

Demere, who worked with HUD's Model Cities Program after 12 years of serving parishes, found himself with two government salaries — severance pay and unemployment — when his job ended.

"I contacted Ministry of Money and said I wanted to do something creative with one of the salaries. I ended up hiring someone for Jubilee Jobs, connected with Church of the Savior in Washington, to work with Latinos for entry-level jobs.

"I have fun being creative in different ways," he says. While marching to the World Bank for the Jubilee 2000 campaign, Demere was moved to question himself on debt relief. "I had made loans to various causes, mainly to start up small businesses, and they were having trouble paying me. I said, if you make regular payments, when you get to the halfway point I'll cancel the rest of the debt."

Since his retirement from HUD, Demere has travelled to Nicaragua, worked on an assortment of peace issues and engaged in civil disobedience at the Capitol rotunda for campaign finance reform. He regularly gives away half of his income, and argues that a "preferential option for the poor" implies that "we ought to leave at least 51 percent to the poor in our will."

Money "is meant to be a kind of sacrament," he says. "Bennett Simms at the Institute for Servant Leadership in North Carolina spelled this out. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. There's a lot of spiritual power in a dollar bill."

Jenny Ladd: 'Coming out' as wealthy

Like Demere, Jenny Ladd struggled with issues raised by her family's wealth. An heir to Standard Oil money, she often kept her financial status a secret.

"I felt like I had to sort of lie about things because I would be embarrassed or I didn't want to be stereotyped or objectified — I didn't want to be the walking wallet," Ladd says.

Her family, though not religious, valued fairness and equity, and she felt "a kind of cognitive dissonance in having those values and also being in a position of having more money than other people."

Growing up in Cambridge, Mass., Ladd recalls students marching down Commonwealth Ave. against the Vietnam war. She was 15 when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, and wrote the American Friends Service Committee to ask what she could do. At Antioch College, she took part in student strikes supporting workers and, when she was 22, set up an activist-directed fund to support social causes.

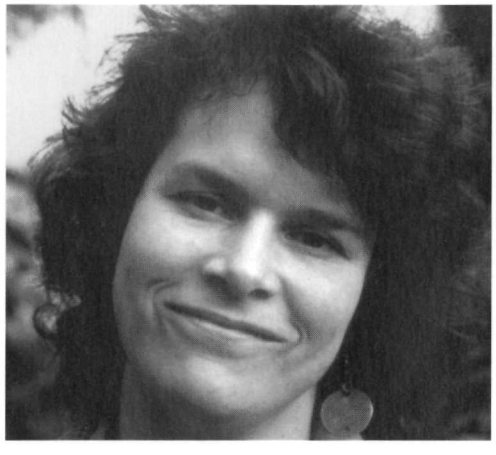
"I was in a historical period where social justice and equity issues were in the forefront, so I was immersed in that and, from a young age, felt like I needed to do something about it," she says. "I had lots of relationships with people who didn't have money, so it was a constant reminder of what some people can do and other people can't do."

Ladd initially pursued a career in education, teaching from elementary through college level and eventually earning a doctorate, but later came to believe that she had more to offer in the field of social change philanthropy.

"I felt like I couldn't do both worlds well," she says. "I couldn't keep up with the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. I needed to make a choice, and at that point the concentration of wealth was beginning to scare me, and I felt that with my particular make-up and history I could be of more service there."

As director of Class Action in Northampton, Mass., Ladd serves as a philanthropic advisor to people with wealth and also works with groups on money and class issues.

"We're going to do a workshop for cross-



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class couples, and we just did something called 'The Money Game,' which is a simulation game where you play with real money, and you learn a lot about your own feelings about giving and receiving and taking and asking. I've run classes on how to create a strategic giving plan. I also have a support group called 'Excess Baggage' for people who have more than enough."

Ladd is part of a cross-class dialogue group, now in its fifth year, which was set up "to explore as openly and deeply as we possibly could what significance money and class had in our lives, and how it functioned in daily interactions with others.

"We've talked about why don't the wealthy people give all their money away, what it would be like to be in each other's shoes, and the betrayal that each of us has felt from people from the other class at times. We've shared as openly as we could how much each one of us has or doesn't have, so we've brought our checkbook, we've looked at what our car is worth and our house is worth and our savings account and inheritance. We did one session where we shared what our expenditures were, which is even harder, because it's a real mirror of your values.

"We also have met in what we call caucus groups, where the wealthy people could meet with each other and the working-class and poor people could meet with each other, so that things could be explored in a way that wasn't hurtful to people, but also where people could challenge one another in a useful way."

Ladd says that she has found it liberating to be open about her wealth.

"Speaking out as a person of wealth has been a reclamation of myself, in a way, and I hope of service to the larger whole," she says. Her spiritual perspective, which flows from a daily meditation practice and draws on several faith traditions, gives her "a deep sense of the interconnectedness of all of us" and concern for "the health of the body that we're all part of."

She would like people to understand that their well-being is inextricably tied to the well-being of others. "Right now, if you think of money circulating through some areas of the population and not circulating through others, it's as though we had a leg with gangrene or something."

Though Ladd's inheritance (which she intends to give away) will be significantly increased with repeal of the estate tax, she supported Responsible Wealth's position. While echoing the skepticism of other Responsible Wealth members about government use of tax money, particularly on military spending, she stresses that there will always be government needs. "If the wealthy don't pay, then who does pay? Chances are it will come in different forms of taxation that hit mostly low- and middle-income people."

She likes the idea proposed in Chuck Collins' and Felice Yeskel's *Economic Apartheid in America* of a trust fund, like Social Security, for each child born, which they could draw on when they turned 18 for college or a house or setting up a business.

Under the current system, "only certain kids get born with an asset base," she points out. "It isn't that they go work hard and earn all the money — it's that they have an asset base that grows. That could be shared around a lot more liberally.

"We're in a culture that is so individually oriented and out of balance in that way," she believes. "I'm not suggesting we become a culture that's only looking at the common good in the sense of the state, but I think there really are roles for the government to provide. Also, in our culture, we think of things as that which makes us more secure. In my own life, having a deep spiritual alignment is my source of security — as well as really strong relationships, so if there was money or no money, people would help me and I would help them." ●

***Marianne Arbogast**, who lives and works in Detroit, is Associate Editor of* The Witness.

Responsible Wealth campaigns

The repeal of the estate tax, signed into law this past spring, was a disappointment to members of Responsible Wealth, which had lobbied hard to retain the tax.

"We will continue to work to see that we do have an estate tax intact," says Mike Lapham, a founder and co-director of the organization. "What Congress did doesn't really repeal the estate tax for another 10 years, so in a sense there's 10 years to fix the mistake that they made."

Though Responsible Wealth supported the gradual increase in exemption levels that was part of the legislation, they believe that complete repeal — which does not take effect until 2010 — "is irresponsible and not really good for our country," Lapham says.

The tax-cut legislation also spurred a new campaign inviting people to "give back" their income tax rebates by donating the money to organizations working for economic justice. "Something like 25 percent are not going to get any tax cut at all," Lapham says.

Responsible Wealth also plans to continue to address issues related to the growing gap between CEO and worker pay by helping members file shareholder resolutions in targeted corporations. This past year they filed 11 such resolutions, asking that CEO pay be linked to issues such as sharing rewards and sacrifices within the organization, employee and customer satisfaction, or social responsibility concerns — especially predatory lending practices.

"We will continue to focus on the predatory lending issue because we think it's an egregious abuse," says Responsible Wealth co-director Scott Klinger. "It clearly makes the rich richer at the expense of the poor, and some companies that practice it have very generous CEO pay policies."

Klinger says that Responsible Wealth also plans to target Walt Disney, which has wide pay disparity but mediocre stock returns. They will ask Disney to limit stock options available to top CEOs to promote broader-based employee ownership.

Although shareholder resolutions are non-binding, Reponsible Wealth has won some victories when companies negotiated for them to withdraw their resolutions, Klinger says. Mattel, for instance, agreed to review an extravagant severance package for a departing chief executive, and Jefferson Pilot, a North Carolina insurance company, said it would work to "raise the floor" for its lowest paid workers.

"Five years ago, CEO pay resolutions were unknown, and now they are quite common," Klinger says. "We think that's due, in part, to our raising of the issues."

For more information, contact Responsible Wealth at 617-423-2148, or visit their website, <www.responsiblewealth.org>.

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DOING GOOD

— by writing checks

by Gail B. Kuenstler

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Photo courtesy of Oxfam America

HOW TO MAKE SENSE of the contents of your mailbox? This has been my question over the last months as I sort through appeals from Freedom from Hunger versus Food for the Hungry, Oxfam America versus Big Brothers Big Sisters, cancer research versus landmines. I want to help, but who is really doing good? Where are your dollars really needed? Which groups are doing what they say they are doing?

I started to send for annual reports to get information about several groups and immediately discovered one Catholic medical missionary group who was spending a little on overseas projects and a lot to finance the nuns' residence. This showed me that I needed to look closely at annual reports.

I learned that Freedom from Hunger, mentioned above, is a group which gives small ($75) business loans and weekly education and support to third-world women, transforming their lives and the lives of their children. Food for the Hungry is an evangelical group that builds churches, feeds people and preaches the Gospel. Although I am a church goer, I don't choose to support organizations that use food as part of a campaign to attract converts.

Charity-rating groups

Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance and the American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP), two groups who rate charities, list the evangelical group, Food for the Hungry, on their websites but only one of them, the Better Business Bureau (www.give.org), says that the goals of the evangelical group are "spiritual." The BBB describes each group in some detail and they include this information in the description. Their site is the first one to check to see if your group is included. If it is included, they will tell you on the site if the group meets their standards. AIP (www.charitywatch.org) will only give you their top groups in a category. You have to get the newsletter from AIP to get the ratings but they rate more groups than the BBB has listed.

The American Institute for Philanthropy (AIP) gives Food for the Hungry a letter grade (C+) in their newsletter because they spend only 62 to 67 percent on the charitable purpose, and spend betwen $24 and $31 to raise each $100. But AIP doesn't mention the spiritual goals. On their website AIP states that Food for the Hungry provided the requested documents but it is not one of their top-rated international relief and development groups. It's important to check out a group on both sites, but you still may have to request the annual report and the IRS Form 990 for charities if the group is not listed because no one has requested information.

Both AIP and the BBB's Wise Giving Alliance have newsletters, which report salaries (CARE's president is making more than $540,000 a year). They also report the percentage actually spent on the purpose of the charity, what the charity spends to raise $100, the amount of assets (some groups' ratings are drastically lowered because their assets are too large), and the range of the top three salaries. AIP gives each charity a grade, as in the example above. Freedom

from Hunger, a secular group, gets an A- because 77 percent of the money is spent on the charitable purpose and only $14 is spent to raise $100 (the difference goes to administration). The top salary at Freedom from Hunger is $99,000. The BBB simply says whether or not the group meets their standard, which is that a "reasonable amount" be spent on fundraising and administrative costs.

The charity sound-alikes (Freedom from Hunger, Food for the Hungry) are a problem for givers; you really have to check them out, and then make a note, so you remember who is who.

Religious and social-welfare groups

If you want to give to a religious group, for example Episcopal Relief and Development, it may not be listed because it is not a charity, for tax purposes, but a religious group. However, the Mennonite Central Committee and Catholic Relief Services, two organizations with very high ratings, are listed with AIP because they are willing to provide the information requested and they are ecumenical in their approach to helping. Many religious groups use their resources to build churches. Some limit their economic aid to members of the church. I prefer to separate my development-giving from my religious-giving. Third-world indigenous peoples have their own religions.

Social-welfare groups may or may not be listed because they are non-tax-deductible, not-for-profit lobbying groups (RESULTS is one example). They don't have charity status, therefore they don't provide salary information to the government. They may choose not to provide it to the charity rating services, either, even if they are listed by the rating service. Salary and other information might be available by writing to the group.

The hard part for me was to figure out my priorities. Focusing on a few groups and giving larger amounts can make you a major donor. This will entitle you to annual reports, newsletters, videos, and even appointments with the staff to discuss the program. Through prayer, you can let your heart be guided on the subject of whom to support.

Books like *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* by Ronald Sider or *Robin Hood Was Right* by Chuck Collins and Pam Rogers will help you develop your own giving program by educating you about some of the consequences of your choices. *Living High and Letting Die* by Hugh Unger is a moral philosopher's take on the necessity of saving the third-world hungry with all of the resources we have after the expenses of a "modest" lifestyle.

I started by looking up on the Internet a few groups in the international development category, after I received mailings from them. Although Americans gave more than $143 billion in 2000 to nonprofits, about half of that money went to religious organizations, and almost all the rest went to U.S. causes. Only 1.2 percent went to international affairs, including third-world development. These development organizations, which emphasize self-help and self-direction, have flowered with the coming of age of the boomers, although they are still quite small compared with more established charities. They have developed a post-Peace Corps kind of giving which is effective and cost-effective.

Every day 35,000 children die of hunger-related causes, as Oxfam tells us in their "Poverty Report." Because of my own history — I was a volunteer in Mexico with the American Friends Service Committee as a college student and did a volunteer stint just last year in a Mexican orphanage — my interest is in helping children in the third world and especially in Latin and Central America.

The four outstanding organizations I describe below do primarily development, not relief, work. Relief work means helping people after hurricanes or wars. Some of the relief groups are classified by AIP under "development" and some are placed in the "hunger" category. Development, of course, helps children and their families. I no longer give to child sponsorship organizations because they spend too much on communicating with the sponsors and there is no way to know how effective their work is. In other words the charity-rating groups can only tell you if the program is well-run; they can't tell you if the money you send is used effectively. This is true with development groups, too. There is no way for me to know if Oxfam's village projects are successful; the charity-rating only speaks to issues like accountability, percentage spent on fundraising, salaries and administrative costs. But the communications I was getting from the child-sponsorship groups (at one point I was supporting four children), made me question the quality of the village-level projects. With child-sponsorship organizations, some of the money may be used for school fees, but none of it goes to the family directly. The remainder goes to a project like "education about nutrition," for example. Most child-sponsorship groups encourage you to visit your children abroad, and this would be a good way to see these projects in action. This, of course, would also be possible with the projects of the groups I recommend. The annual reports of these groups describe the projects in some detail, and their focus is the family and community rather than the child.

Another worry I had in researching organizations was whether it makes any sense to help communities in countries with inept and corrupt governments. Successful democracy is based on some degree of economic security and education. The projects I describe work on both economics and education/ empowerment to promote democracy at the grassroots level. Certainly villagers cannot escape the impact of having a lousy government, but judging from the materials provided by these organizations, these programs work both in the short and long term. Families start to eat better and pay their school fees, so their children can be educated. The water supply gets cleaned up, the birth rate falls and children get medical attention. Parents get loans and job training.

Here is the list of the groups to whom I currently give. All of them get top or near top ratings from the American Institute of Philanthropy:

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#1: Freedom From Hunger

They provide small loans (about $75) and training in running a business to women. They have a video on the Internet at their site (www.freefromhunger.org) that describes their work in Madagascar. The Grameen Bank, which has provided small loans to the poor around the world for the last 20 years, was the pioneer in microcredit. Freedom From Hunger has good ratings and works in 14 countries. Unlike Oxfam, they accept U.S. government A.I.D. money to finance their programs (25 percent of revenues).

Freedom from Hunger
1644 DaVinci Court
Davis California 95617
www.freefromhunger.org
800 708 2555

#2 : American Friends Service Committee

The snapshots of the AFSC's work are fascinating: providing school supplies to children in Haiti, creating health clinics, refurbishing fishing fleets and establishing community stores where people can buy supplies at uninflated prices, peace education, direct food aid to North Korea, health training programs in Sao Paulo, training for women factory workers on the Mexican-U.S. border, nonviolent conflict resolution in the U.S,, setting up a National School of Prosthetics and Orthotics in Cambodia, a peace center in the Andes, and on and on. It would seem that the AFSC does anything that they think might work — peace projects, development, relief and health — all with a pacifist accent.

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19182
www.afsc.org
888 588 2372

#3: Oxfam America

Many organizations that do international development use the simple mechanism of the small loan to encourage small business. For example, working with the village health committee, Oxfam America gives $20,000 to establish a bank in one Cambodian village. Ninety-seven percent of the loans are repaid and the interest is used to pay for medicine for AIDS and TB. In the Amazon, Oxfam helps Indian communities to organize to resist encroachment by loggers and farmers and sponsor credit and training programs.

In El Salvador, they support many grassroots women's groups whose members have recently gotten women elected to the legislature. In Mali, West Africa, one group supported by Oxfam teaches reading and is an advocate for women's rights including protection against domestic violence. Oxfam's annual report is staggering; the amount of work as well as the number of projects which impact whole regions is inspiring. Africare is another top-rated group that works in Africa and does similar kinds of programs.

Oxfam America
26 West Street
Boston, MA 02111
www.oxfamamerica.org
800 77 OXFAM

#4: The Heifer Project International

The Heifer Project gives livestock — ducks, water buffalo, llamas, rabbits — to poor villagers all over the world. One animal can change their lives; suddenly there is milk to drink and milk to sell to pay school fees and to buy clothes. This is especially important in areas where all the cattle have been eaten because of famine. You can give a heifer for $500 or honeybees for $30. Because ducks and honeybees stimulate a child's imagination, these animals make especially good gifts to be given by relatives in the name of U.S. children. Heifer materials for school children can be helpful in organizing a church or school fundraising event. The charming and well-designed gift cards that your contribution buys are perfect for the child who has everything. The Heifer Project is the most "user-friendly" project for groups new to third-world giving.

Heifer Project International
P.O. Box 8106
Little Rock, AR 72203-8106
www.heifer.org
800 422 0755

Top-rated groups according to AIP

The top rated groups in the AIP International Relief and Development category are Africare, American Friends Service Committee, Catholic Relief Services, Direct Relief International, Doctors Without Borders USA, Mennonite Central Committee, Mercy Corps International, Oxfam America, Technoserve and World Neighbors. Heifer is not listed because they spend a larger amount on fund-raising, but still a "reasonable amount," according to the Better Business Bureau. For example, Oxfam has $10 million in program expenses, 101 employees and only spends 16 percent of contributions on fundraising. This may be possible because they are better known and considerably larger. Freedom from Hunger is not listed above because it appears in the hunger category.

Supporting third-world peace

There are other ways for Americans to improve the lives of third-world peoples besides writing checks. In many places, war is destroying the lives of families and driving many of them from their homes and into refugee camps. Monitoring U.S. foreign policy and influencing congressional decision-making can help to make sure our tax dollars are not increasing the level of violence.

Peace-making organizations such as the Fellowship for Reconciliation , Witness for Peace and Peace Brigades International send delegations to the third world, provide training in countries where violence is a problem and accompany human-rights workers in these countries. These groups need support and can help you contribute to pacifist communities in third-world countries and to refugee communities like those in Colombia or Chiapas.

When the newspaper brings you articles about violence and starvation, you can use your pen to create a better world. It is a gift to be able to afford to give $75 to a woman in Africa so she can set up a stall in the market and feed her kids! What privilege to be able to support someone who is brave enough to protect human rights workers! Your money can be used effectively to help third-world peoples. ●

Gail Kuenstler *is a member of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Woodstock, N.Y. She has a doctorate in Cultural Anthropology.*

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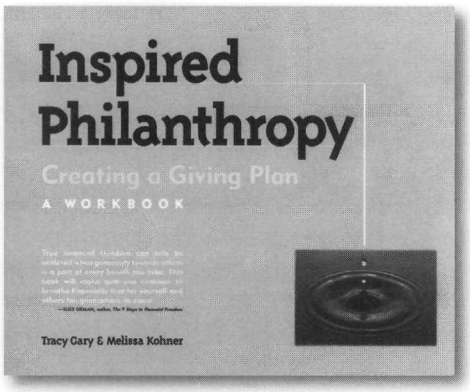
A workbook for personal giving

By Joseph Wakelee-Lynch



Inspired Philanthropy: Creating a Giving Plan
by Tracy Gary and Melissa Kohner, edited by Nancy Adess, Chardon Press, Oakland, Calif. 1998.

IN NOVEMBER 1999, Kim Klein, co-founder of a progressive publishing house in Oakland, Calif., and publisher of *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, told an audience: "All social justice requires an understanding of money — how it works, who has it, how it is taxed, how it is given away. Therefore, fundraising is central to program work, not ancillary, not supportive of, central to. Get rid of the barriers between program and fundraising."

Klein knows the money business. She also knows the how-to-find-out-who-has-the-money-business, as well as the how-to-find-out-how-those-who-want-to-give-away-their-money business, and, maybe most important, the how-to-ask-them-for-their-money business. Best of all, Klein, as co-founder of Chardon Press, is helping to publish a cornucopia of fundraising and organization books designed to help people who work in progressive and religious politics to learn it all, too.

Many of Chardon's offerings are guides to help people make their way through the intricate, intimidating mazes of fundraising. Indeed, Chardon's most popular book, now in its fourth edition, is *Fundraising for Social Change*, by Klein herself.

Inspired Philanthropy: Creating a Giving Plan, by Tracy Gary and Melissa Kohner, approaches the funding problem from the other direction: It is a workbook designed for people who have money and want to give it away in order to further social change. That's different than traditional philanthropy. "Progressive philanthropy," write Gary and Kohner, "supports what is called social change, that is, actions that seek to right the imbalances of an unjust society or an unequal distribution of resources."

Inspired Philanthropy will help you to understand how and to whom you've been giving time and money in the past, even if it is only a small annual amount. It contains exercises and worksheets designed to help you examine and identify your most important values and issues. By using them, you can focus your giving and strengthen your ability to help causes that you care the most deeply about. Other exercises offer assistance in tracking the recipients that you've given to in the past and identifying their organizational characteristics and goals. These provide a tangible way of making intentional and focused something that until now you may have been doing haphazardly. And there's a useful section on volunteering — giving one's time — that includes a statement of a volunteer's rights and responsibilities that every social service agency should know about.

But the book is also of great use for people who do, indeed, have significant amounts of money to contribute. It's full of tips that can assist you to clarify and maximize your relationship as a donor to an organization that you support. It even includes creative suggestions for challenging others to give with you. And although it is mostly oriented toward individuals, *Inspired Philanthropy* could be adapted easily for a congregation's use. There are many whose members, perhaps because of age or family responsibilities, cannot often take to the streets with the activists. But those parish stalwarts are often ready to pool their contributions and distribute them to needy organizations. I was part of such a church in southern California that has been giving away more then $20,000 a year for the past three years.

The book's authors bring their own interesting histories to this work. Tracy Gary, when she was in her 20s, inherited a trust from her parents. At first she gave the money away haphazardly, but she quickly felt the need to be more disciplined. After 25 years, she has given away three-fourths of her inheritance. "My sense of real abundance has come through that giving," she says. Anyone who has met tithers who truly give from the heart will know how Gary can feel so rich by giving money away.

As for Kohner, her first experience in giving was carefully placing a dollar in the collection plate in church. She muses that churches are good at raising money because the plate keeps coming round. I doubt she's sat on any stewardship committees: Church people don't give generously because they can't escape the offering. Usually, they believe that following Jesus means not spending a lifetime accumulating but, instead, giving in a radical way: giving love, forgiveness, peace and hope.

Inspired Philanthropy can help take you down that road of giving, and it's one that gets more satisfying with every step. ●

***Joseph Wakelee-Lynch** is a writer/editor in Berkeley, Calif.*

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SPECIAL REPORT

The global anatomy of a local church conflict

by PamelaW. Darling

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Last summer we posted an article by Ian T. Douglas in "a global Witness" which described a "showdown" that never materialized at the March 2001 meeting of the Anglican Communion's Primates (see "'Through prayer and action': the seeds of a new Anglicanism?" at www.thewitness.org/agw/) .

"For many, especially for conservatives in the U.S. and their colleagues around the world," Douglas wrote, "the 2001 Primates Meeting was to be the final showdown where the American Episcopal Church would be chastised, once and for all, for its 'revisionist' positions on women's ordination and human sexuality."

Against this backdrop — and in light of the efforts of a new traditionalist group, the Anglican Mission in America, to colonize the Episcopal Church with traditionalist parishes under the jurisdiction of its own specially consecrated bishops — the conflict between a parish in Accokeek, Md., and Jane Dixon, the Bishop of Washington, Pro Tempore, has taken on disproportionate, emblematic significance.

This issue went to bed on September 1. Check our website for updates on developments occurring after that date.

What might have avoided notice as a purely local diocesan matter has instead attracted attention around the Anglican world. Among leaders of the Episcopal Church, USA, and so-called "traditionalist" groups who want freedom to preach "orthodox" doctrine and traditional morality — and to be exempt from the church's canons — "Accokeek" has become a test case.

The facts of this case, well-documented on the Internet [see URLs below], are as follows: On December 13, 2000, Barbara Sturman, senior warden of Christ Episcopal Church in Accokeek, Md., notified the Bishop of Washington, Ronald Haines, that the church planned to call Samuel L. Edwards, of Fort Worth, Tex., as rector. Because Haines was about to retire, he asked Washington's Suffragan Bishop, Jane Dixon, to take over (upon Haines' retirement, Dixon became the Bishop of Washington, Pro Tempore). Canon law allows the bishop 30 days in which to "communicate" with a parish before a call is issued. Even after a call, the bishop is to ascertain whether the candidate is "duly qualified."

A few days after receiving the message from Sturman, Dixon, through her staff, "communicated" that approval was contingent on a satisfactory interview. An appointment was set for January 10, 2001, within the 30-day limit. On January 3, Edwards e-mailed Dixon's office that he could not keep the appointment and the interview was rescheduled for February 26.

Meanwhile, certain members of the congregation shared with Dixon their distress over Edward's views about the "hell-bound" Episcopal "Unchurch." Edwards had for the last eight years been Executive Director of the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA), which had morphed into Forward in Faith, North America (FIF/NA). In various articles on the FIF/NA website, Edwards expressed the opinions of many traditionalists charging a decline of theological and moral leadership in the Episcopal Church. His writings also reflected the increasing frustration of many dissidents: "Those who are determined to keep working with the system of ECUSA [the Episcopal Church, USA] must do so in the full and certain knowledge that, if they are to bring the hell-bound machinery of that institution to a halt, the substance which gums up its work will be composed of their selves, their souls and bodies."

"I was alarmed by Father Edwards' explicit encouragement of people to 'gum up the works' and leave the Episcopal Church," Dixon says. "I wanted to see where he was on those things. I needed him to guarantee that he would obey

Jane Dixon

his ordination vows, obey the canons of the church. He equivocated."

At the interview, Dixon says Edwards stood by his earlier statements, would not promise what he might do in the future, would not promise to obey the bishop and her successors, would not promise that Christ Church would remain in the Episcopal Church.

After the interview, Dixon notified the senior warden and Edwards that she could not approve him as rector. But Edwards had already signed a contract with the parish and moved his family into the rectory. The canons permit a member of the clergy to function without a license in a diocese other than her/his own for up to 60 days, so Edwards could legally officiate at Christ Church until May 25.

Meanwhile, lawyers and canonists on both sides were hard at work. The terms of Canon III.17 were hotly disputed — had Dixon violated the 30-day limit; was she within her rights to deny that Edwards was "duly qualified"?

On March 16, Frank Griswold, the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop, issued a statement: "I cannot imagine a bishop, as chief pastor of a diocese, approving the election of a priest to serve a congregation when that priest has a marked and publicly stated antipathy — far beyond comment and critique — toward the church in which he was ordained. Therefore, as Presiding Bishop, I am in complete support of Bishop Dixon's decision."

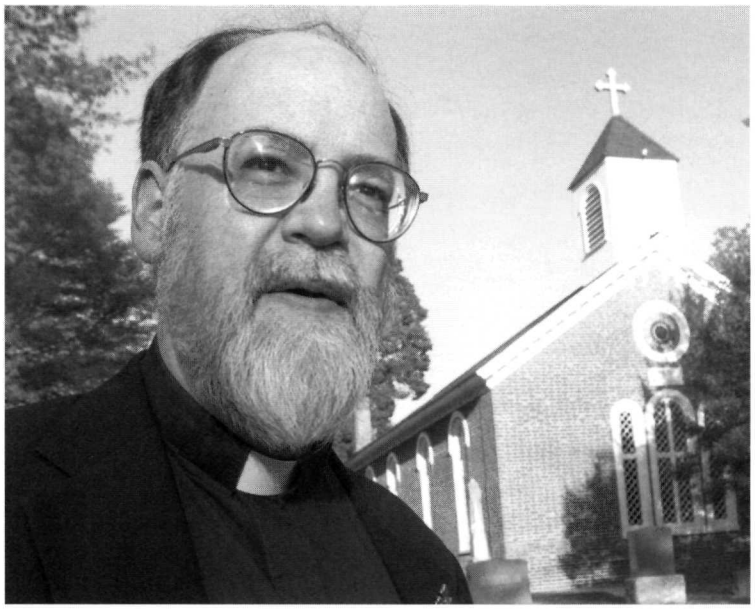
More than 60 bishops signed a letter of support for Dixon, while letters chastising her came from a handful of other bishops. On May 15, the Presiding Bishop met with traditionalist bishops, the president of FIF/NA, and Charles Nalls, the attorney representing Edwards and the Accokeek parish, for a "candid expression of views" about the place of traditionalists in the church.

As the 60 days came to an end, Dixon notified Sturman and Edwards that she was coming to Christ Church to celebrate the Eucharist and appoint an interim priest to serve them while they looked for a rector.

On Sunday, May 27, the senior warden stood in the church door and told Dixon she could not come in unless she would sit quietly in the pew while Edwards celebrated. Dixon, who had come with some supporters — including the now retired Bishop Haines — announced that she would celebrate the Eucharist on the adjacent church basketball court. Half of those in the church followed Dixon, while the rest remained for the service conducted by Edwards. Members remaining inside were augmented by supporters from several area parishes.

The scene verged on the chaotic as Edwards' supporters attempted to disrupt the bishop's service and police called by the parish to remove "trespassers" milled around uncertainly. Above the heckling, Dixon announced that Haines, now retired as diocesan bishop, would serve as interim rector for Christ Church. Another retired bishop, Edward MacBurney, read a statement from Jack Iker, the bishop of Edwards' home Diocese of Fort Worth. Iker condemned Dixon's actions and made the unprecedented — and unlawful — declaration that he was taking Christ Church under his pastoral care and protection and giving permission to Edwards to serve as rector.

During the next several weeks, as dozens of Christ Church parishioners worshipped with Haines at a nearby hall and Edwards officiated in the church, the lawyers got busier. Nalls filed a charge of trespassing against Dixon and a complaint (later withdrawn) in criminal court against Dixon's husband, for allegedly pushing the junior warden in the midst of the confusion on the basketball court.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO/Leslie E. Kossoff

Samuel Edwards, outside Christ Church, Accokeek, Md.

On June 25, 2001, Dixon filed suit in federal court to compel Edwards to remove himself from Christ Church and to require the vestry to welcome their bishop. That same day, the Presiding Bishop wrote to all bishops: "I have been unsuccessful in my extensive efforts to assist those involved … [to] find a way forward that would satisfy their several concerns."

Two weeks later, Dixon sent a complaint about Edwards' officiating without a license to his Fort Worth bishop, Iker. Two sets of ecclesiastical charges against Dixon were filed with the Presiding Bishop, who forwarded them to the Review Committee of the House of Bishops, as the canons provide. As this issue went to press, the matter was in the hands of the secular court, and the disciplinary processes of the Diocese of Fort Worth and the House of Bishops.

ANALYSIS

For those opposing women's ordination, Jane Holmes Dixon — the second woman to be ordained a bishop in the U.S. church — had for many years been a source of particular aggravation because of a series of visitations she made to churches in that diocese that did not accept the ordination of women. By all accounts these were difficult events and contributed to her reputation among some as a feisty, aggressive leader. Many wondered why she appeared to be forcing herself on congregations that did not want her.

There was a precedent. When John Walker was first elected Suffragan Bishop of Washington in 1971, there were churches that would not welcome a black bishop. Diocesan Bishop William Creighton authorized visitations by Walker to every congregation in the diocese to heighten awareness of the evils of racism and its power to divide the Christian community. (Walker eventually became Washington's diocesan bishop.)

Dixon was the next suffragan bishop after Walker. Many remembered how his courage in going where he was not wanted helped the diocese

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Diocese of Washington

Ronald Haines presides at a service for Christ Church parishioners in a nearby hall.

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move forward in race relations. They saw Dixon's visitations as another round in the battle for acceptance of all people into the life and ordained ministry of the Episcopal Church.

There was one big difference. Despite the systemic racism in church and society, which continues to this day, most racial discrimination was illegal by 1971. No one could claim any moral imperative for excluding Walker from the church. On the other hand, in 1993 discrimination against women in the church was still protected by a screen of "conscience," rationalized by "theological convictions" about the proper role of women. Persons attempting to exclude Dixon claimed a theological imperative to protect an all-male ordained ministry. They also claimed a canonical exemption, citing the infamous "conscience statement" adopted by the House of Bishops in 1977, following the 1976 vote to ordain women.

Never ratified by the General Convention (in fact, repudiated in several forms), this statement has nonetheless been used repeatedly to legitimize continued discrimination. Even among staunch supporters of ordaining women, many still counsel endless patience, forbearance and tolerance for "conscientious" theological views opposing women, even if they would never dream of making similar remarks in defense of discrimination against black clergy.

A 'church within the church'

Days before the bishops adopted that 1977 "conscience clause," more than 1,700 people dead set against the ordination of women and/or the new prayer book gathered in St Louis to consider their alternatives. By meeting's end, some had left the Episcopal Church to form the Anglican Church in North America. They elected bishops, who were subsequently consecrated by a retired American Episcopal bishop, a bishop from the Philippines who was later disciplined for participating, and a bishop from Korea, "in absentia," who later denied having given his consent. It was the first sizable breakaway since the Reformed Episcopal Church departed in 1873.

Many of those who did not join the schismatics in St. Louis were members of the Evangelical and Catholic Mission (ECM), formed a few months earlier. They were intent on creating "a supportive ecclesiastical entity within the Episcopal Church," where they could maintain a separate succession whose orders would not be tainted by the presence of women or those who ordained women. Offspring of the anglo-catholic American Church Union (ACU), the ECM was first headed by ACU president Stanley Atkins, Bishop of Eau Claire; then by Atkins' Eau Claire successor William Wantland; and later by Robert Terwilliger of Dallas.

Terwilliger ordained Sam Edwards to the priesthood in 1980. The ordination of women was already part of the discipline of the Episcopal Church when Edwards was ordained, but Dallas was among several dioceses still rejecting it as a "novelty." Edwards was soon writing for the ECM newsletter, *The Evangelical Catholic*, and served as its features editor from 1986-1989. By this time, the Diocese of Fort Worth had separated from the Diocese of Dallas, the ordination of women being one issue that led to the division.

In 1988, pressure on traditionalists escalated with the election of Barbara C. Harris as Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts. It was "the final crisis," a "direct assault upon the unity of the Church," and other traditionalist groups joined ECM in protest. A letter from ECM bishops, drafted by Edwards, summoned sympathizers to a "Synod" in Fort Worth hosted by its bishop, Clarence Pope. Some 1,500 people created the Episcopal Synod of America, electing ECM president Pope as ESA president, and elaborating on the ECM notion of an ecclesiastical entity in the church.

Calling themselves "the Church within the Episcopal Church," they assigned ESA bishops to various areas of the country, elaborated on ways of being "in (or out of) communion," and sought a non-geographical "Tenth Province," a traditionalist overlay on existing Episcopal Church dioceses. Women, sexuality, the interpretation of Scripture, the language used about God — in all these areas these traditionalists saw a capitulation to the godless spirit of modernity, a plunge into heresy and immorality led by false teachers such as prolific author John Shelby Spong, the then Bishop of Newark, various feminists and the "homosexual lobby." In their view, there were now two churches in the Episcopal Church, one orthodox and the other apostate, "hell-bent," having abandoned the traditional faith.

Cultivating global allies

In 1993, Edwards became Executive Director of the ESA, and later facilitated its transformation into Forward in Faith, North America (FIF/NA), affiliated with the original FIF group in England. In the process, Edwards helped create an international traditionalist movement. Some bishops in provinces formerly part of the colonial empire were easily persuaded that the American church had plunged into heresy and rampant licentiousness and readily joined the struggle.

At the 1998 Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops, traditionalists hosted a well-equipped lounge and other amenities for sympathetic bishops. Afterwards, electronic communication made it possible to maintain relationships and develop plans quickly, across continents and

oceans. Traditionalists in the U.S. were buoyed by the support and encouraged to dream that together they could rescue the Anglican Communion from its slide into false teaching.

In January 2000, with no notice or authorization from anybody, primates of the provinces of Rwanda and South East Asia consecrated two American priests in Singapore, and sent them home again as Anglican bishop-missionaries. They were part of a new group of evangelical American clergy and sympathetic overseas bishops to be called the Anglican Mission to America (AMiA). The new bishops, emphatically not recognized as Anglicans by the Archbishop of Canterbury, gathered up dissident clergy and congregations from dioceses around the country, and from earlier splinter groups. In January 2001, the AMiA and FIF/NA signed a joint statement pledging "mutual commitment to work together for the establishment of an orthodox jurisdiction in North America."

Challenging the structures

The March 2001 Primates Meeting – the "showdown" that didn't happen – left traditionalists frustrated once again. Meeting with Presiding Bishop Griswold in May, they pressed him to honor the primates' "commitment" to enable traditionalist bishops to assume oversight of parishes at odds with their own bishop. But Griswold had no authority to do such a thing. When Jack Iker took it upon himself to provide alternative oversight to Christ Church, Accokeek, he was pursuing that goal, however uncanonically. Disregarding lawful structures and processes, Iker was moving on a parallel track with the AMiA. On June 24, 2001, AMiA bishops and supporters gathered in Denver, Colo., to ordain four more American priests to the episcopate.

Only two days after the Denver consecrations, Dixon filed suit to remove Edwards from Accokeek. Publicity naturally linked the two together. The AMiA, having given up on the Episcopal Church, was creating its own substitute institution. Dixon, perhaps regarding Edwards as an AMiA advance man set on reclaiming the Diocese of Washington from "revisionists" like herself, took forceful action to protect the unity of the existing institution.

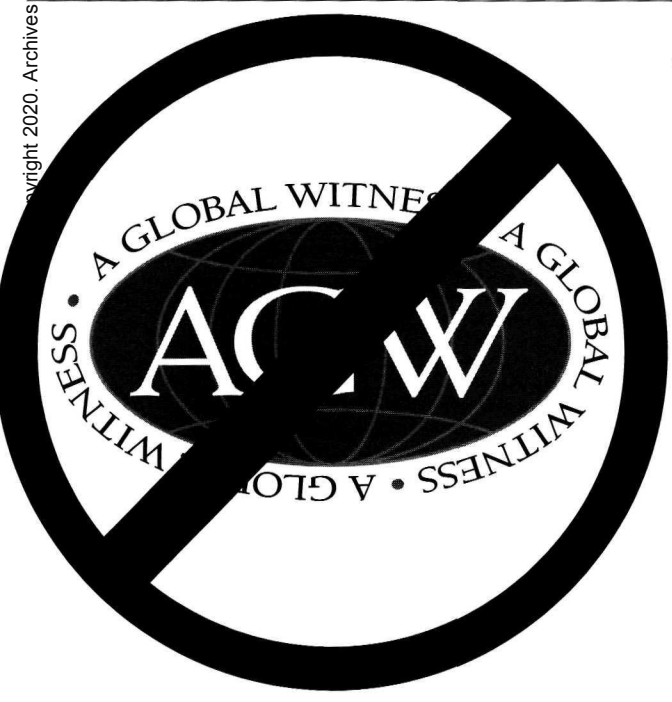
Even though Dixon has had to do her job in an institutional structure that is still profoundly sexist – marked by many patronizing "brother" bishops and traditionalist reports full of feminine put-downs and vitriol so disproportionate it can only be explained by misogyny — the Accokeek conflict is not primarily about sexism or the ordination of women. It is, instead, about the inevitable clash between those who believe God calls the church to theological uniformity — Edwards asserts that unity comes only "from sharing the mind of God" — and those who seek to protect the institution because its stability creates holy space for a diverse community of faith. As Dixon observes, "We can have this marvelous diversity and toleration because we have an institution in which to live. That's what our polity has always been about: We can be the Anglican Communion because we respect the rules."

Even after the last chapter of the Accokeek story is written, the tension it represents will continue to challenge the structures of the church. These challenges will accelerate because of the speed and reach of electronic communication. Anyone can now become part of an international Anglican conversation. Anyone can publish briefs and counter-briefs, prayers and exhortations, stories and screeds about events in the life of the church.

Initially, such anarchic communication gives an advantage to "outsiders" who have had little prior access to channels controlled by those with institutional power. Once that stabilizes, controlling the flow of information may prove more important to those who value theological conformity than to those who value diversity within a common structure. Accokeek is a test case for both hypotheses.

To be continued. ●

Philadelphia-based Pamela W. Darling is a church historian and author of *New Wine: the Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church*. Many documents chronicling this story appear on the website of the Diocese of Washington (www.us.net/edow/news/accokeek.htm) and of Forward in Faith/North America (www.fifamerica.faithweb.com/Reading/news.htm).



YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

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Martha's Vineyard?

In a "tongue-in-cheek letter to the White House" (*SojoNet*, 6/4/01), Ken Sehested of the Baptist Peace Fellowship suggested "a novel solution" to the conflict over U.S. naval training on Vieques (now slated to continue until 2003).

"Puerto Ricans have carried the load of our military training needs for more than 60 years," he points out. "Why not approach the citizens of other U.S.-owned islands and request their help in shouldering this burden?

"For instance, there is the Acadia National Park off the coast of Maine. ... Off the coast of Massachusetts is Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Islands. Block Island is off the coast of Rhode Island. Long Island, N.Y., is large enough to allow shared use by the Navy and private citizens. There are hundreds of miles of beachfront (especially useful for practicing marine amphibious landings) on North Carolina's Outer Banks. Georgia offers St. Simons Island and Jekyll Island. In the Florida Keys are literally dozens of islands. Then there's Padre Island off the Texas coast and the Channel Islands and Catalina Island off California. ...

"I am quite confident that after all these negotiations are completed, the U.S. Navy would have several hundred years of assured access to proper training environments. And after all have taken a turn, the people of Vieques could again be approached to begin a second round of shared responsibility for national defense."

Price of prisons

A new searchable database on prisons was launched by motherjones.com this summer. "Debt to Society: The Real Price of Prisons" reports that:

— spending on prisons nationwide has grown six times faster than spending on higher education in the last 20 years;

— many states have seen an actual drop in spending on higher education while prison spending has soared everywhere;

— the most extreme disparities between white and nonwhite incarceration rates are not in the south, but in northeastern Democratic strongholds like Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Journalists targeted

Covering the July 6 killing of a Colombian radio news director, *The New York Times* reported that the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists considers Colombia to be the most dangerous country for journalists in Latin America.

Despite his family's fears for his safety, "Jose Dubiel Vasquez continued disseminating news about local corruption and the conflict between rebels and paramilitary groups," The *Times* reported (7/11/01). "On Friday, Mr. Vasquez paid the price, colleagues and relatives said. As he drove home with a fellow reporter after the morning broadcast, a gunman stepped up to Mr. Vasquez's car and shot three bullets into his head. He died immediately, becoming the second news director from Caracol Radio to be gunned down since December.

"Mr. Vasquez was the sixth Colombian journalist slain this year. One was shot to death two days later, the fourth in 12 days, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists in New York. In all of last year, seven journalists were killed, at least three as reprisals for their work, the committee said. ..."Press freedoms are being attacked as Colombia suffers a wave of political violence. Armed groups — mostly right-wing death squads, rights groups say — focus on labor advocates, professors, student leaders and human rights workers.

"'The parties in the conflict care a great deal about how they are portrayed in the media,' said Marylene Smeets, who oversees the committee's research in Latin America. 'So the parties in the conflict are willing to force journalists to spread their word. They are also punishing those journalists who don't give out the message they would like to give out.'"

Opposing a marriage amendment

The Interfaith Working Group (IWG), a Philadelphia-based progressive interfaith organization representing 22 religious organizations and congregations and 77 clergy from 16 religious traditions in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, issued a statement in July in response to an announcement that a coalition of conservative religious organizations will be proposing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman.

"The U.S. Constitution is not a dictionary, a religious document, or a tool for oppression," their statement says. "The proposed amendment would give the civil institution of marriage a religious definition that is not

shared by all religions. This is oppressive to religious and governmental bodies that may wish to define marriage differently, and to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans who will be denied equal protection under the law."

School bus pollution

The Union of Concerned Scientists is asking citizens to lobby for a federal grant program to put cleaner, safer school buses on the road (*Earthwise*, Summer 2001).

"Most of the 442,000 school buses on the road today are aging diesel vehicles built to outmoded health and safety standards," they say. "Throughout the school year, they emit clouds of cancer- and smog-causing pollution that harm our kids and the environment.

"Diesel emissions include soot and smog-forming nitrogen oxides. Soot, which evades the body's defenses to lodge deep in the lungs, has been linked to chronic bronchitis, pneumonia and heart disease. Smog impairs the respiratory system, exacerbating asthma and other diseases. And more than 40 of the compounds found in diesel exhaust are classified as toxic air contaminants.

"Diesel emissions pose an especially high risk to children because their respiratory systems are still developing, they spend more time outdoors than adults, and they breathe more air per pound of body weight. ... Natural gas school buses, which are already on the road in many communities, offer significant reductions in dangerous emissions. In addition, they provide an interim step toward fuel-cell buses, since the two technologies require similar fueling facilities. Fuel-cell buses, when they become available, will provide virtually pollution-free transportation.

"UCS is working to establish a federal grant program to replace the dirtiest diesel buses with clean, safe school buses. Let your members of Congress know that you want them to fund this important program. Write your senators at U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and your representatives at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515."

Subvertising

"I think America today is essentially no different from McDonald's or Marlboro or General Motors," said Kalle Lasn, a former advertising executive who cofounded the Media Foundation and now edits its magazine, *Adbusters*, in an interview with *The Sun* (July 2001). "It's a product image that's sold to us and to consumers worldwide. The American brand is associated with catchwords like 'democracy,' 'opportunity' and 'freedom,' but, like cigarettes that are sold as symbols of vitality and youthful rebellion. America in reality is very different from its brand image. The real America has been subverted by corporate agendas. Its elected officials bow down before corporations as a condition of their survival in office. America isn't really a democracy anymore: It's a corporate state."

The Media Foundation engages in "culture jamming" through "subvertisements" — ads intended to subvert consumer culture, interviewer Derrik Jensen explains. "Nearly everyone is familiar with Joe Camel, the cartoon camel used by RJ Reynolds for 10 years to sell cigarettes — especially to children, critics said," Jensen writes. "In response, Lasn's Media Foundation gave us Joe Chemo, a bald camel lying in a hospital bed with IVs in both arms. Another cigarette-ad parody showed a Marlboro Man look-alike smoking a limp cigarette over the caption 'Smoking Causes Impotence.' Still other counterads have taken on alcohol (a battered child seen through a vodka bottle, with the caption 'Wipe That Smirkoff'), food monopolies, the fashion industry, and consumer culture in general."

Arms transfers code

"Led by Oscar Arias, former president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace prize winner, an international group of arms control, human rights and development organizations recently began an effort to solicit support for a revision of an arms transfers code of conduct first introduced in 1997," the newsletter of the Council for a Livable World reports (*Arms Trade News*, May 2001). "The proposed "Framework Convention on International Arms Transfers" outlines a broad set of principles based on international humanitarian law that would require states to adopt mechanisms banning arms transfers that could be used to violate international standards of human rights and non-aggression.

"The Convention outlines responsibilities states have, deemed by international law, to make a case for limitations on weapons transfers that 'could have an adverse impact on sustainable development or regional peace and security, would facilitate the commission of violent crimes, or could be easily diverted to such ends.'"

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Education for Urban Leadership

The Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education is offering: the "Churches, Urban Policy, & Community Development" seminar October 19–21, 2001; the Chicago Congregational Studies Institute, April 5–9, 2002; our two–year M.A. in Community Development; and the spring-term Graduate Theological Urban Studies term. Contact SCUPE: 200 N. Michigan, Ste. 502, Chicago, IL 60601, 312-726-1200, <www.scupe.com>.

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Volunteers sort donated clothing for shipment to disaster victims overseas. Operated by the church of the Brethren for Church World Service. Photo by Jim West

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on the cover
New York City
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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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The Witness

Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Media Reviews
Bill Wylie-Kellermann
Bruce Campbell

a global WITNESS
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Website Design
Jim Dugan

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
Alice Devine

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Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
232 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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LETTERS

Under-reported issue

When it comes to war and other issues of conscience, faith-based publications often do much better than mainstream media do. But I think your magazine and others ought to do a much better job reporting the suffering that's caused by sanctions against Iraq.

Here are three facts that I believe all Americans should know but most of us don't know: (1) The war against Iraq is waged mainly by economic sanctions that were imposed August 6, 1990. (2) Thousands of Iraqi children die every month as a direct result of deprivation caused by these sanctions. (3) Our leaders already knew in 1991 that our sanctions were killing children.

Why don't we all know these facts? Seems to me the war against Iraq is the most under-reported issue of our time, and that magazines like yours should constantly report it even though mainstream media don't.

It's not that our media totally ignore the war against Iraq. Enclosed is a *Time* article that tells it like it is. Look at the date: June 1991. The sanctions weren't even one year old then and now it's more than 11 years. The suffering is even worse now and our print and electronic media occasionally report it.

But if sanctions were killing our own children, wouldn't we expect daily reports in every U.S. newspaper? And wouldn't we expect every faith-based publication to protest, protest, protest until a great wave of moral outrage got the sanctions lifted?

Marjorie Schier
Levittown, PA

[Ed. note: Please visit www.thewitness.org/agw for recent postings from/on Iraq.]

Some executions are justified

Many opponents of the death penalty (Bruce Campbell's September 2001 essay) argue that capital punishment is barbaric, sadistic, cruel and unusual punishment and "state-sanctioned murder." However, if the execution of a vicious serial or mass murderer is state-sanctioned murder, then state imprisonment of rapists, child molesters, drug dealers, burglars and murderers is state-sanctioned kidnapping and state taxation on consumer goods is state-sanctioned theft.

Religious opponents of the death penalty use the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" to buttress their position. But the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is more accurately understood as "Thou shalt not murder." Indeed, a few passages after that commandment is given to man, there is a verse affirming that a murderer forfeits his own right to live.

Some killing is morally justified such as killing in self-defense or in a just war. If the state has the moral right to authorize its citizens to wage a just war against Adolph Hitler, then it likewise has the moral right to authorize the executions of sadistic murderers like Richard Speck, Ted Bundy, John Gacy, Jeffrey Dahmer and Timothy McVeigh.

Haven Bradford Gow
Eudora, AK

The best!

I never want to lose *The Witness*, which I consider the best religious publication out.

John M. McCartney
Detroit, MI

Sunday School reading

As a gift to several of our Sunday School teachers, we wish to give each of them a one-year subscription to *The Witness*. Thank you! We will learn from you and enjoy our reading.

K. Jeanne Person
Grace Church
Brooklyn, NY

Grist for the mill

Thank you. Your thoughtful articles/illustrations/themes/editorials are great grist for the mill of awakening — what hard work for us hobbits.

Elaine P. Morse
Birmingham, MI ●

Pondering national ideals in a post-September 11th world

by Julie A. Wortman

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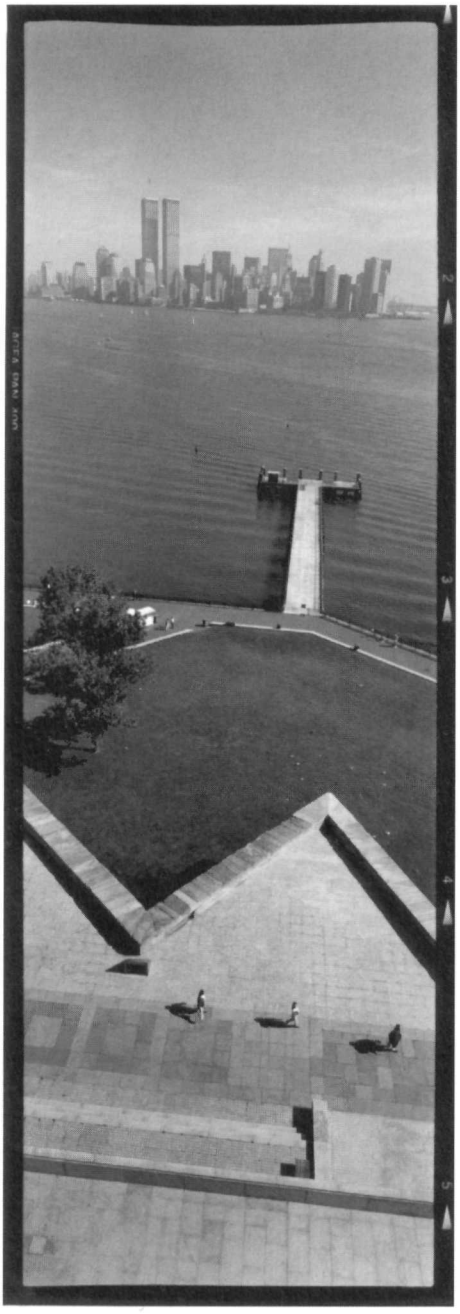

Liberty Island ©Horst Hamann

THE OCTOBER ISSUE was at the printer's and the November copy was flowing in when I got word of the hijackings and attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. As soon as it was possible to think, our staff began reshaping our editorial work in light of a post-September 11th world. We are still feeling our way.

Eerily, November's topic — how people of faith are fighting for the soul of our global cities — was very much germane to the question on everyone's mind: How could this tragedy have happened? As many pointed out, the World Trade Center and Pentagon were "national symbols." True enough, but what seemed crucial was that they were national symbols that to some had become so powerfully emblematic of the demonic that their bloody destruction could seem justified.

Longtime urban theologian and activist Laurie Green, the Bishop of Bradwell (in the Church of England's Chelmsford Diocese), writes in *The Impact of the Global: An Urban Theology* (2001) that "the crucifixion of Christ is to be found constantly in our urbanized world, for the commodification of people and things and the ruthless exploitation of technology and resources which [have become] the dominant values of globalized urban capitalism, threaten to enslave both rich and poor alike."

To many, the World Trade Center was synonymous with the values of which Green writes. The process by which those values corrupt, Green says, runs as follows: "The poor countries are awash with advertisements for and symbols of the benefits of the wealth of the rich developed world and so naturally look to that rich world for aid. The World Bank offers to assist them but only if they will emulate the values and priorities of the rich world. A loan will be offered only if the poor nation reduces its internal food subsidies, reduces spending on health and education and ploughs its meager resources into engagement in the world market, seeking to earn foreign currency rather than maintaining its own internal local market. But the international market is so designed that a poor country may never be able to succeed within it. The terms of trade and the advantages which the already-wealthy countries have, lead to the poor new players being pushed ever lower down the league of trade; they eventually find that the initial promise of increasing wealth for all proves illusory. The poor country becomes ever more dependent and the vast majority of its population is driven to deeper anguish and worse conditions than even pertained in their previous wretched state. All this is far removed from the holy promise offered by Christ that when God's Reign comes there shall be a banquet prepared for all the nations. The evidence of the streets of Jakarta, Harare or Lima is that the promise offered by globalization is hollow, driving the rich to hardness of heart and the poor to destitution."

On September 11 the World Trade Center was a place of business inhabited by thousands of people trying to make a living. In the Pentagon thousands of people were working hard to protect that enterprise from coming to harm. Very likely no one in either place thought of themselves as caught up in activities or policies or processes by any stretch of the imagination brutal or demonic. But we here in the U.S. have become identified with an enterprise of globalization, urbanization and militarism which symbolizes death rather than life-giving possibility. We owe it to our beloved sisters and brothers who died in the September 11 attacks — and to all those who have endeavored to aid them and their families — to try to figure out how better to live the ideals we would hope would mark us as a people in the years to come. ●

***Julie A. Wortman** is* The Witness' *editor/publisher*

Manifesto: A Mad Farmer's Liberation Front

by Wendell Berry

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.
And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a
card and shut away in a little drawer.
When they want you to buy something
They will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.
So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.
Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.
Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.
Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophesy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to carrion — put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.
Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?
Go with your love to the fields.
Lie easy in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is nighest your thoughts.
As soon as the generals and the politicos
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.

Family in Park by Daniel Hall, age 9/Shooting Back (1991)

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Awaking to horror — and a new way to see ourselves?

by Edmond L. Browning

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THE ROLLER COASTER of emotions I have ridden since the September 11 bombing of the World Trade Center is, I am sure, a close cousin of the one everyone else is on. Like everyone else, I find myself waking up at night for no reason, unable to concentrate sometimes. I have wept. I awaken in the morning to the sound of birds singing and the feel of fresh air, to the smell of pine, to the sight of majestic Mt. Hood, and I feel the blessing of being here in our beautiful state of Oregon. And then I remember what has happened and it hollows out my stomach, as it has every morning, and I reach out and touch Patti lightly, so I won't wake her. She is still there. Thank God.

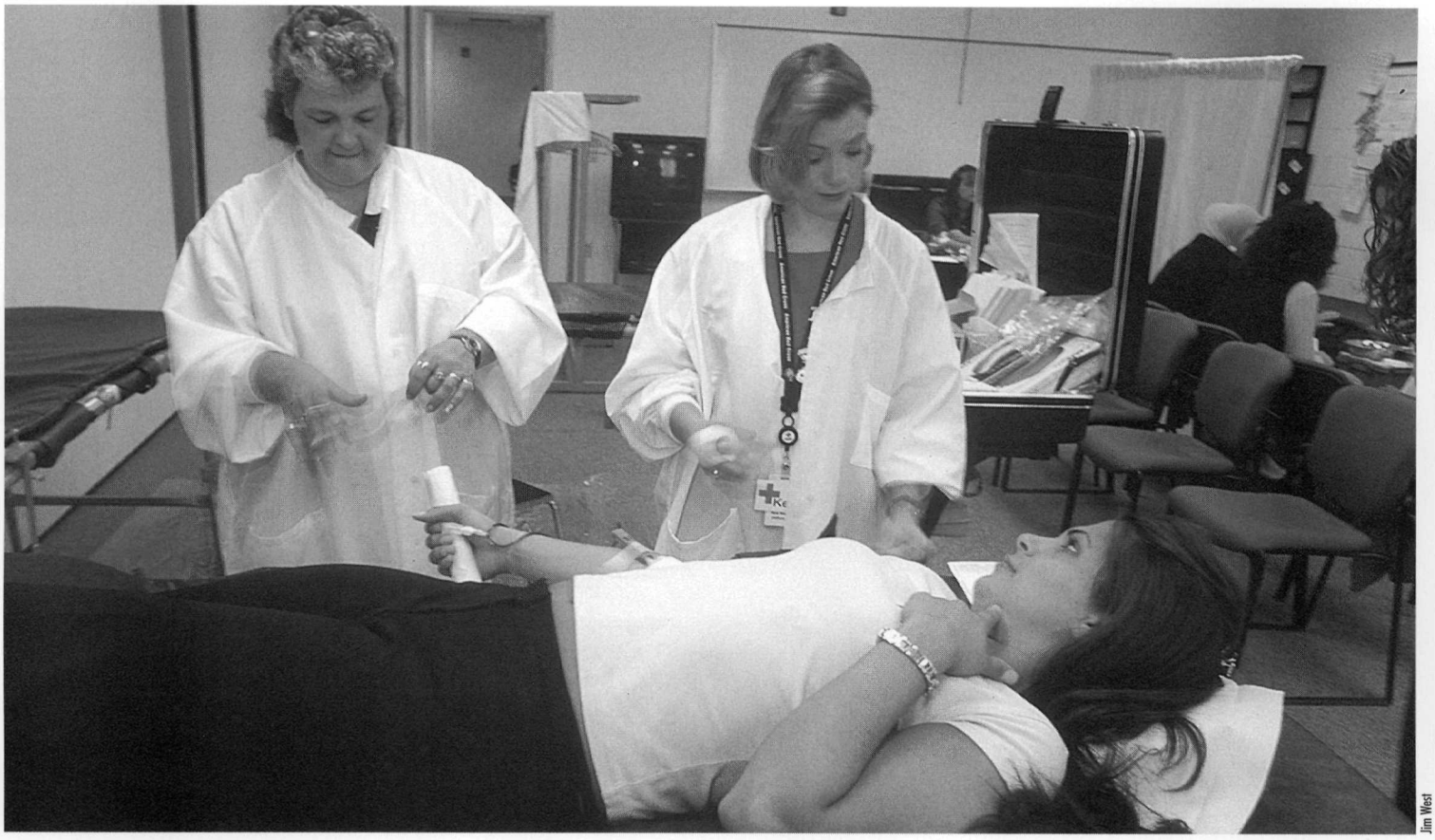
All this beauty. In the years since retirement, I have never regretted moving out here. Who could? It's wonderful. But, since the bombing, I have longed to be in New York, with New Yorkers. I miss my colleagues always, but never more than now. I miss the city's life in so many ways — nothing momentous, just the way it feels walking on the sidewalks, the energy, the mosaic of people, the enormity of it. I think of it all the time these days and its memory is precious. I had forgotten, I guess, how much I love the place. Who would have thought that the destruction of tall buildings would break our hearts? But it does.

Episcopal News Service photo by Morton Broffman

Then Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and his wife Patti joined thousands at a special service at Washington National Cathedral and a candlelight march to the White House prior to Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

When I am not feeling these things, with the heightened awareness of how sweet ordinary life is that we all seem to have these days, I am thinking ahead. Thinking ahead, and looking into the past as well. I remember the beginning of the Second World War very well. The sinking feeling, the hollowed-out stomach — we all felt those things, too, just like now. I remember the internment of the Japanese. I remember how sensible it seemed to people at the time, how prudent. I was young: I thought it was unfair, but I know that my elders thought I was idealistic and naive.

Our family spent many years in the Far East. Two of our children were born in Okinawa. We travelled throughout the world a great deal. Parents and children, we learned a lot. One of the things we learned, though, was that, in many places, America and Americans are perceived very differently from the way we perceive ourselves. This could be a painful thing, and it made a deep impression. I remember a time when we had returned to the U.S. and one of our sons didn't want to go to school. "Why not?" we asked. He was crying. "The other kids'll be mean to us because we're Japanese." I should mention that this boy had the blondest hair and the bluest eyes you were likely to find in a human being. But he knew enough about the strength of prejudice, and had heard enough fearful things about life in



Jim West

Detroit's Arab community mounted a blood drive to aid victims of the September 11 attacks.

an America of which he had no memory, that his Asian cultural heritage seemed to him a huge divide between him and his future schoolmates. He felt it must somehow *show*, that they would somehow know him, not as one of them, but as an Other.

I reminded Peter, our fourth son, of this moment just the other day, when he called me from his parish in Los Angeles. This parish has a day school attached to it and he has been spending a fair amount of time ministering to the children there. One child from a Muslim Indian family came up to him in tears. "Are they going to put me in a camp?" he asked in a terrified whisper. It is these memories, mixed with these current events, that continue to bring tears to my eyes. It is how little we have learned over the decades, how little we learn from our mistakes, how pervasive bigotry is and how easily fear brings it out. As Presiding Bishop, I spent a great deal of time in Palestine and became close to the situation there. So did Patti, and we have remained close to it since I left office. Our hearts break every time an act of violence is reported, every time the U.S. misses a chance to show an even-handed regard for the legitimate concerns of both parties with a claim to the land we call Holy. As preparations mount for war, I mourn the missed opportunities for peace. We have let too many of them slip by.

But there are still things we could do in the Middle East to bring healing. Humanitarian aid always costs less than cruise missiles. We could drop the failed boycott of Iraq and "bomb" Afghanistan — with food, medical supplies. We could assist Pakistan at its borders, supplying money for the care of refugees that Pakistan's economy cannot supply. We could return to the bargaining table with the Israelis and the Palestinians with a more realistic vision of what is possible there, and stop being party to the death and destruction caused by the current Israeli version of Manifest Destiny.

Before September 11, I feared that our country was moving into the same isolationism that I remember before the Second World War. Is it really the case that the only thing we can work with Muslim nations on is the declaration of war on another Muslim nation? What about taking some notice of their reality before thousands die in another terrible event?

Make no mistake: The people who ploughed fully-fueled airplanes into two buildings full of innocent people committed a moral atrocity. They will answer for it before the judgment of God, and so will those who encouraged and supported them. But it may be that this horror will provide for us a new way to see ourselves, as citizens of the world rather than as a class apart. ●

***Edmond L. Browning** served as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, headquartered in New York, from 1986 through 1997. He now lives in Hood River, Ore.*

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MONEY MAKES THE WORLD

An interview with Barbara Garson

by Jane Slaughter

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FROM THE NUMBER OF TIMES per day that newscasters treat us to the breaking news on the NASDAQ and the Dow Jones, you'd think that everyone had a consuming interest in following his or her investments minute by minute. The truth is that less than half of American citizens have anything to do with Wall Street, even as little as belonging to a pension fund that's invested in stocks.

But the doings of Alan Greenspan and the financiers do affect all of us, nonetheless. Author Barbara Garson, who became famous back in the 1960s as the author of the anti-war play *MacBird!*, decided to "get beyond the global babble" and find out how the rapid and massive flows of money around the world act upon ordinary people. The results are contained in *Money Makes the World Go Round: One Investor Tracks Her Cash Through the Global Economy, from Brooklyn to Bangkok and Back* (The Penguin Group, 2001).

Garson is the perfect person to attempt such a project: She's radical, she's funny, and she takes each person she meets, from Wall Street traders to Singapore nannies, at face value. "Everyone I met was surprising," she says, "but no one exotic." Garson wrote two important books about work, *All the Livelong Day* in 1975 and *The Electronic Sweatshop* in 1988.

Garson takes us through her own face-to-face learning process about currency crises, Eurodollars, Third World debt, and the International Monetary Fund. Her method is to deposit her publisher's book advance in (a) a local bank and (b) a mutual fund, and then follow her money as it wings its way around the world. It helps build an oil refinery in Thailand, it finances a catalytic cracker in Singapore, and it's part of "Chainsaw Al" Dunlap's rampage that wrecked the Sunbeam Corporation in the U.S.

Although she's made herself an expert on money, Garson has resisted its fascinations in her own life. She works when she needs to and lives simply.

TW: Describe the project you set for yourself.

BG: When I was young, "one world" was a phrase that meant brotherhood, peace, Esperanto and the U.N., Eleanor Roosevelt. It was a vision that we would work to make the world better, and you were creating oneness by moving in the direction of equality, raising everybody up.

Suddenly, I look around 25 years later, and instead of "one world" the phrase is "global village." And what does that mean? Global village apparently means electronic banking and CNN, and as far as making the world good, that's just anathema; that's what you shouldn't do. Global village means information highways carrying unstoppable capital flows, and if you try to interfere with that, it'll be disastrous. You must just let the money do what it wants to do.

In other words, the worst people operating from their worst motives will somehow bring about good. Anyway, "good" is a word you don't want to use because that will slow things down. One Eleanor Roosevelt could stop all this progress.

So I decided to take a look at this global village and the mechanisms of how money was actually going to unify this planet. I decided to follow two typical investments: money in the bank and money in a mutual fund. I got a book advance and I put the first half in a very lovely bank, the nicest I could find, because I had these prejudices and I wanted to counter them.

TW: I've always thought of you as a person who's chosen to not be concerned with money, to have a reasonably relaxed lifestyle. Certainly you were not an investor.

BG: My mother says the same thing. She keeps asking me, "You? What do you know about money?" I had this $65,000 book advance, and I thought that was pretty good. But as the book went on and on, and it took five years ultimately, each year my mother, being a bookkeeper, would say to me, "So let's see, what are you earning now, $19,000 a year? Getting into the fifth year, so what is this now — $13,000 a year?"

TW: What happened to the money you invested in the nice little small-town bank?

BG: I thought they needed it, they wanted it, they'd give me some sort of service — and the first thing I knew, this bank had nothing to do with my money. That's because whoever holds my money has to receive some return on it. They could find something profitable to invest in, such as a factory. But when you enter what's called a "mature economy," like the little town of Millbrook, N.Y. — the buildings were already built. It's not that all the buildings that were needed were built and everybody's home was good. But everybody who could afford a mortgage

GO ROUND

already had their mortgage.

So that money becomes a hot potato. There was nothing for that bank to do with my money except pass it along to their correspondent bank, which happens to be Chase.

Now Chase had the same problem. The need to bring in a return means that that money has to go somewhere, and it's that "has to" that created the whole global economy. In other words, there used to be laws and restrictions on how money could be moved abroad, laws in this country and laws from other countries keeping it out. Then there came a time when investment in this country wasn't so profitable. All the factories after World War II had been rebuilt and workers weren't being paid enough to purchase everything that could be made. But the money had to go somewhere where it would bring in a return, and it was that money that created the so-called global economy.

TW: One of the people I liked best in the book was the fisherman who stops when he has enough. Why is there no such thing as "enough"?

BG: Let's say you make a successful investment. What does it give you? More money. You have to do something with that money. Money can't stop, it can't just sit in the bank, if you're a bank, because that's actually costing you money.

One of the things my money became invested in was a seafood importer in Brooklyn. He had a $3-million line of credit from Chase, an amount that began to seem cozy and wee to me as I pursued my studies. He was importing black tiger shrimps.

I went to Malaysia to see my shrimp farms and I talked to the people who were sending these shrimps into the U.S. and I saw what they were doing with the profits, which was creating jellyfish factories — and this was the most progressive and useful part of anything that happened with my money.

But let me tell you about shrimp farms. I thought of a shrimp farm as something like underwater farming, this kind of Jacques Cousteau-like scene, with people bubbling along and taking the shrimps and putting them in baskets. But in fact shrimp farms are huge pits stretching along the coast. Sea water comes in and the wastes from the shrimp are put back out into the water. The illegal immigrant Indonesians who worked on my shrimp farms were rowing through the pits putting down the food so it would be evenly distributed, so that the shrimp wouldn't have to swim and they'd be a uniform size, the kind you get in packages, 25 to 30 per pound. In order to do this they were tearing the mangroves out of the tropical coastlines.

Because of the enormous density of it and the chemicals they used, they were polluting themselves, so in three years they'd have to move up the coast a little further. And in fact whole coastlines were used up, and they'd move on to other countries.

Now, the pollution also caused the local fish to move farther out into the ocean, so that coastal fisherman who had been rowing out to catch fish now couldn't find any fish near the coast. They either had to go out of business, or tie themselves to the global economy, in the sense that they now had to get a motor for their boat.

Once you had a motor, you had to pay off the debt from buying it. Or if you went to work in a factory instead of fishing, either way, you had to keep doing it.

American International Building/Financial District ©Horst Hamann

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The case against sprawl

"Sprawl" is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as "poorly planned, low-density, auto-oriented development that spreads out from the center of communities." It creates that doughnut effect in some cities where acrylic and asphalt suburban shopping malls form a ring around the dead center, where the old downtown sits decaying. Between 1960 and 1975, the state of Pennsylvania lost a total of 3,600,000 acres of farmland. That's like losing a geographic area the size of Pittsburgh every six months.

When Iowa State University Professor Ken Stone examined the sales changes in Iowa small towns from 1983 to 1993, he discovered "a huge shift of sales to larger towns and cities, with substantial amounts captured by mass-merchandise stores." Stone estimates that the total number of businesses lost in small towns and rural areas was 7,326 in the decade studied. Iowans spent $425 million more at discount stores, but $153 million less at variety stores, $129 million less at grocery stores, $94 million less at hardware stores, $47 million less at men's and boys' apparel stores, and so on. In the 11 store types studied, businesses lost more than $603 million in sales. In this ten-year period, Iowa lost:

555 Grocery stores
298 Hardware stores
293 Building Supply Stores
161 Variety Stores
158 Women's Apparel stores
153 Shoe Stores
116 Drug Stores
111 Men's and Boys' Apparel stores

That may have seemed like a joke in 1994, but Wal-Mart now has more sales than the Gross Domestic Product of Israel, Greece, Ireland and Egypt.

A Price Waterhouse report says that by the year 2005 just 10 companies, including Wal-Mart, will control 50 percent of food-store sales.

[Excerpt from Slam-Dunking Wal-Mart *by Al Norman (1999). Available online on the Sprawlbusters web site at:* **www.sprawl-busters.com/caseagainstsprawl.html/.**

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And the most subversive thing I heard in all my travels was when a fisherman said to me that what he had liked before, before the shrimp farms, was that you stopped when you had enough. You came in for the day when you had enough. It wasn't an easy life, but he stopped when he had enough. It was the most subversive thing I heard, because if many people stopped when they had enough ...

My money could not stop — it would back up, so to speak. The people who hold it have to bring in returns for other people.

But a shrimp farm, however awful it sounds, is economically productive compared to just buying and selling the shares in something, which is a pyramid scheme which has to end in a crash.

TW: The media presents investors as risk-takers, entrepreneurs sometimes, hard workers. These are the dynamic movers and shakers of our economy. But isn't investing literally making money off of someone else's work? When you own stock, aren't you taking the profit somebody else, a worker, has created?

BG: The word investment is a very broad word. It could mean I'm not doing the physical work but I take a risk in letting my money be used to build something new, and I don't know whether that project will be profitable or not. So it could involve risk and it could involve, if not work, then a commitment of something of yours that you won't have back if it doesn't work.

But what I discovered about the phase of capital that I was watching was that investors were not putting their money, for the most part, into something new. They weren't building anything. They were buying shares of things that already existed. The pyramid scheme was that if they could get someone else to buy shares, then the value would go up. And they weren't taking risks, because they were using the government to make sure any risks they took were covered.

You have to understand that when you buy a share, you're not paying money to a company. You're not giving it money with which it can employ people. No, you're buying a share from some other shareholder. They sold this share to you because they thought they had a more profitable use for the money. What are they going to do with the money? If they were poor people, they might buy something with it. But for the most part, they're not. They're going to buy more shares with it. They're going to bid up the price of those other shares, and you're bidding up the price of the share you bought.

You may seem to have more and more money — the value's going up every single day — but you've really only got the same underlying little factory that you hope will make enough money in the future to pay the shareholders.

As the price of the shares goes up and up and up, suddenly, somebody realizes, hey, the last guy we can draw into this has already come in. Somebody is the last guy in, and he can't find anybody to buy his shares. And then there's a crash.

That's why Wall Street wants to privatize Social Security — oh, a bunch of rubes to buy our shares so we're not the last people in.

You're damned if you do and damned if you don't in this system. I just described to you how harmful my shrimp farms were, but the money that went into them at least was producing shrimp farms. It's equally catastrophic when the money goes into producing nothing.

TW: Or maybe into actually destroying things. In your book you talked about that super-successful investor Michael Price and his philosophy of "unlocking the value."

BG: Michael Price would get up in these shareholder meetings and say, "I own 5 percent of the shares of Chase" or "I own 22 percent of the shares of Sunbeam. We're going to unlock the value." Michael Price wasn't faddish. He

studied what assets a company had. Say they owned a factory and the factory had so much money in the safe for reinvestment. So once he owns the shares of the company he can force the executives to open the safe and give the money to him. That is "unlocking the value."

Now, it may not be money in the safe, because there rarely is. More likely, Michael Price says, "The total worth of your factories if sold separately is such and such. I'm going to make you sell the factories. I don't care if the company no longer exists. The cash will be turned over to me and my investors will reap a profit."

TW: It goes without saying that he doesn't care what happens to the people who work in the factories.

BG: Oh, forget that. FORGET that! If they do worry, their concern may be for shareholders down the line, whether they can get out in time, but the workers — that's just not part of the consideration.

TW: But Michael Price was already ridiculously rich.

BG: Oh, it's a game. At that level, you score and you win. Other people brought in 18 percent and you brought in 20 percent. I don't object to it except that their game has so much to do with us.

TW: You wrote about your money's participation in the "Asian crash."

BG: It was building a brand new refinery in Thailand for $1.9 billion, in the same part of the world as my shrimp farms. It was no coincidence, because it was a time when money was pouring into Southeast Asia.

When I arrived in Thailand there were 9,500 people camped around my refinery working to build it. I talked to some of them, to the CEO, and I got friendly with a street vendor in front of the refinery, a fabulously interesting woman who I call "Squirrel." She and another woman were saving to set up a permanent stand in a market, which would certainly be a move up for them. They had moved there from the country, and they weren't sad. One of them expressed it very forcefully. For a while she worked in what you and I would call a sweatshop. And she said that sitting in front of a sewing machine, no matter how long, didn't bother her when she thought back to standing in the paddy fields with leeches on her legs.

In that phase everybody seemed to be moving up, and it was very exciting that these two were saving together to buy a market stand. They were like mother and daughter. I could get very sidetracked into the family stories — but it's not a sidetrack, because these are the sorts of opportunities that my money was producing.

TW: It helped create the sweatshop that Squirrel's family could send her to, which created her desire to never go back to the rice paddy again, and instead to be an urban person and part of the global economy.

BG: So these women vendors are now selling food in front of my refinery to these 9,500 workers. At that point, global capital looked like what all the people who are touting it say it is. Everybody was moving up. I could see at my refinery that the people from the country became welders and welders became foremen and foremen became contractors and contractors became bankers and these two street vendors were going to become entrepreneurs of their little stand. I called it a little stand, but it was a restaurant to them.

Then suddenly, through something that you will understand if you read my book, called a currency attack, the Thai bhat was worth half as much as before, in relation to dollars. Now, if you remember, we talked at the beginning about the fact that the beginning of the global economy came with banks in the U.S. demanding the right to invest abroad. Before the 1970s most countries had something called capital control laws. We did too. One very common law was that a country like Thailand would say to its own banks, you can't borrow more than a certain percent of the money in a foreign currency. The U.S. government was very influential in making other governments end these rules about capital controls, so now all those rules were broken down.

After the currency attack, suddenly their currency is worth half as much, and they have to pay back their loans in dollars. So the people in Thailand who borrowed from my bank in the U.S. really can't pay it back. Just Chase alone had about $50 billion in danger in Thailand at that point. So although these are private loans to private banks or private companies in Thailand, the U.S. government goes with the banks, and they say to the Thai government, "You are going to assume or assure that debt. You can try to get the banks to pay it back, but whatever can't be paid back, you, the Thai government, are going to guarantee."

Now we're getting back to my street vendors. Thailand is a country that both exports rice and feeds itself very well with rice. It was rice rich. Now, the U.S. banks are saying to the Thai government, "We're not going to lose any money on our loans. You have to come up with dollars to pay us back. " How are they going to get the dollars? They get the dollars by exporting something from the country and selling it in dollars.

So one of the things the Thai government does is to manipulate it so that the price of rice doubles. And then more of the rice they produce is exported and they get dollars.

So if my street vendor wants to keep in business — let's say she finds a factory that's still operating and goes and stands in front of it and sells a rice-based dish — she's selling to people who hardly have any money now and she has to absorb more of the cost. She is just plain poorer.

The IMF [International Monetary Fund] was really worried for a while. They were thinking about putting in some traffic lights, some capital controls. But when the crash ended and none of the banks had lost any money, not a penny, they stopped thinking about those traffic lights. The bankers and the U.S. government and the IMF congratulate themselves and they say, "We got through that. We averted a crisis."

They averted a crisis, but of the people that I got back to in Thailand, nobody is working in the same job or living in the same place. The street vendor, Squirrel, had disappeared. One of the oil refinery welders now didn't have as much money and he couldn't take care of his family and the money he earned was now very much useless. But he was studying English because so many of the projects in the area that survived were being

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bought with American money.

Some people were going home to the country, but there was less country, because my oil refineries and my shrimp farms had taken up a lot of the land.

TW: Do you think we need more controls on trade?

BG: I would probably be for free trade if there really was free trade. Don't forget that what I studied was money. The free movement of money is very different from the free movement of goods. For one thing, it's harder to speculate in goods and services. You don't have this rapid in and out; you actually take possession of the goods.

We don't even know what free trade would look like, because these free-trade arrangements that we make have nothing to do with free trade. NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] is an 1,100-page document. If it was free trade it would just say, "Okay, no more tariffs." But the process with NAFTA was that each industry, the capitalists from all three countries, got together on making the terms that it wanted to protect that industry. They said, "What are the rules that would be most beneficial for us? Let those rules exist in all three countries."

For instance, how is it free trade to say that in every country that comes into NAFTA they have to have the U.S. 20-year patent law on pharmaceuticals? So that drugs that have already been being made in Canada and Mexico can't come across the border and they have to stop making them there. That's free trade? Where's the free? Where's the trade?

I think that I might be for free trade in the sense of the movement without tariffs of actual goods. Not of money, because money is just about speculation. I think I might be for free trade, because I'm not in favor of one group of workers in the world against another. But I know I can't be in favor of what's currently being called free trade, and I would never be in favor of the unregulated movement of money, now that I've studied it, because it leads to these enormous swings. That money has to be controlled. That money has to have stop signs.

The stop signs I'm talking about are actually the ones that the capitalists themselves should be wanting, the traditional ones. I can't believe it — I call myself a socialist, and right now I seem to be the only one who remembers just plain John M. Keynes — the way the capitalists used to know how to control the economy and make it more smooth and even. They don't seem to remember that.

It's simply traditional Keynesian capitalism that when the economy is expanding you give money to rich people. They'll build new factories, they'll open new restaurants. But in the midst of a recession, when there isn't enough money in people's hands and factories aren't being run to capacity and restaurants are closing because they don't have enough customers, then you give money to ordinary people in the form of salaries, so they will spend it. Because ordinary people spend money. When you give big globs of money to people who already have money, they invest it. And the last thing you want, during a recession, is for them to look for another place to put their money, at a time when the existing factories aren't producing enough and the existing restaurants are closed.

So this is traditional. This is not me — I'm a socialist. I don't want these decisions to be made by them at all. But am I the only person in the middle of a recession saying wait, wait, you capitalists—why don't you do your traditional thing?

TW: Many people say that one of the main things that makes this era different is the speed with which transactions and information exchange can take place.

BG: Let me speak to you about the speed of transportation. As far as speed of financial transactions, the previous global episode at the turn of the 19th century was far more revolutionary. Because they brought in the telegraph. What long distance communication was there before that? Smoke signals. It was a tremendous change.

The computer has not speeded communications up so much. Really what a computer has is the ability to process many, many transactions at once, to get the running total on many, many transactions. So it's increased volume, but not so much speed.

We talk about the time when there was a railroad boom — that was the key to expanding the economy at that time. A lot of people made money when the railroads were being built, and a lot of people lost money, just as people made and lost money on the computer boom. But once the railroads were built, the expanding economy was based on there being something to carry on the railroads. Trade was really increased. People could grow more in some parts of the country than they needed and expect it to reach to other parts of the country, and they would produce more because they could sell more. And then other people would produce things for them. And so the trade that the railroads facilitated actually increased the wealth of the world. You don't trade the same stuff, you start making more stuff. You grow the wheat for yourself and you grow the wheat for the other people because you can now ship it to them by train. So yes, it was a railroad era, but the continued expansion depended on there being real stuff to carry on the railroads.

And now we have something called the computer era. And yes, at the beginning of the era, people who bet on the right system or monopolized the right system, like MS-DOS, made fortunes. But if all you can carry on this new mode of transportation is economic commands—well, I don't know whether it's enough to facilitate a great future.

I was really shocked to travel around the world and realize that the actual product of the computer era was not economic control. The only thing actually being bought was entertainment and education — "content." And that had a limited period in which it could be a stop-gap to what has essentially been, since the 1970s, a decline in growth and production. So I didn't have to be so brilliant to know we were going to be moving into this decline that we're in now.

The cycles of expansion and crash are going to repeat themselves until all the other continents are used up for the expansion bubble, and then it's going to come home. ●

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*Detroiter **Jane Slaughter** is a freelance writer who specializes in labor issues.*

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We aren't the world

by Bruce Campbell

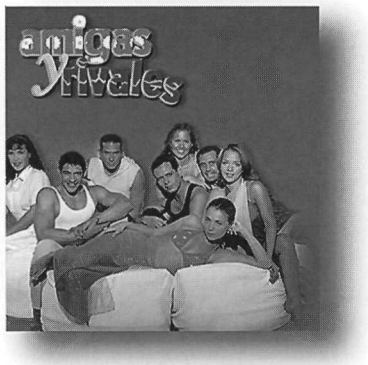
YOU REMEMBER where you were when you heard we bombed Baghdad, when the Challenger exploded, when the stock market crashed or when O.J. was found innocent. But do you remember the moment you first heard cable TV would carry over 150 channels into your home?

You should, because that moment arguably had longer impact on you than any of the other events. Your very next thought might well have been to wonder how many times any of us were going to be able to watch Dragnet.

You needn't have worried. After quickly doing the math on 150 channels of either new productions or rerun residuals, the media powers knew that the only things they could afford to bring us would be 1) things that actually paid them to air, like specialty channels or infomercials or worship services, or 2) low- or no-cost TV channels from all over the place.

At first, all over meant Atlanta, Chicago and New York. But in a few short years, all over has globalized. Now, courtesy of cable TV, Americans can watch the BBC, newscasts from most major European cities, Australian documentaries, Brazilian soap operas, South African soccer and Russian orchestras. Not that you would, as the current ad goes, but you could. This summer, Congress mothballed a pet project of Al Gore's to launch a satellite containing a single camera that would feed continuous video images of earth to everyone and not do a darn thing else — arguably the ultimate global TV.

From the very birth of modern media, the great myth has been that it was possible for humankind to achieve, apparently for the first time in history, global connectedness. Gone would be the barriers of culture, distance and civilization, and even though language would be a hurdle, this, too, would be overridden by the image of a single human family with ultimately more in common than distinct. Each duly noted milestone in media history represented a marker of this myth: the first radio broadcast, the first satellite, the first intercontinental television transmission, globally televised sporting events, worldwide telecast of the moon landing, the World Wide Web. All of these say, "We are together, aren't we?"



The characters on Univision's Amigas y Rivales *are popular wherever the "telenovela" is broadcast.*

But we aren't, and why aren't we? Why, when we have unprecedented access to global media, television in this case, are we still beset by parochialism and unable to see the big picture, even if we did have GoreSat?

The reason that TV has been unable to deliver on its promise of an electronic global city is simply that the act of making and delivering television enforces symmetry. When you finally have the chance to watch, without comprehension, newscasts from around the world, you are struck by their remarkable sameness. Those ebullient Latins may be highly emotionally expressive in their soap operas, but so are we. Sports are sports, dance is dance, music is music, and political posturing is all but hard-wired. One hundred and fifty channels, and one thing on.

It's a huge let-down to think that, after all this work and expense to connect us, we're pouring mountainous sums of money into enterprises that strive to make us look like each other: relatively well-off, telegenic, heavily made-up, brassy, hip and breezy. The reality check comes when you realize that you are yourself perhaps not like that, that you don't know many people who are and that very, very many facets of life don't get on TV even once. If we have global TV, it is a depiction of a world which includes everyone, but which very few of us actually inhabit.

Almost the same words are used in describing the effect of global broadcasts of Princess Diana's funeral or the World Cup finals: These are said to be moments that unite us. How fascinating that the whole concept of unity can shift from one of some sort of intentional consensus or singular ideal, to representing the effect of all of us sitting at the same moment staring passively into a TV set. By this logic, Northern Ireland has undoubtedly been "united" several times over but we're damned if we know why it insists on blowing itself up.

The actual global city sure isn't the Global Village. It's a much more varied, nuanced, dynamic and unstable place. The extent of our differences greatly outreaches the different languages our game shows now come in. We are not only less equipped in our global understanding for having seen the TV version, we are actually ill-equipped, the more so because we believe that we do understand. ●

Witness *media review editor* ***Bruce Campbell*** *commutes to work in midtown New York from Westchester County.*

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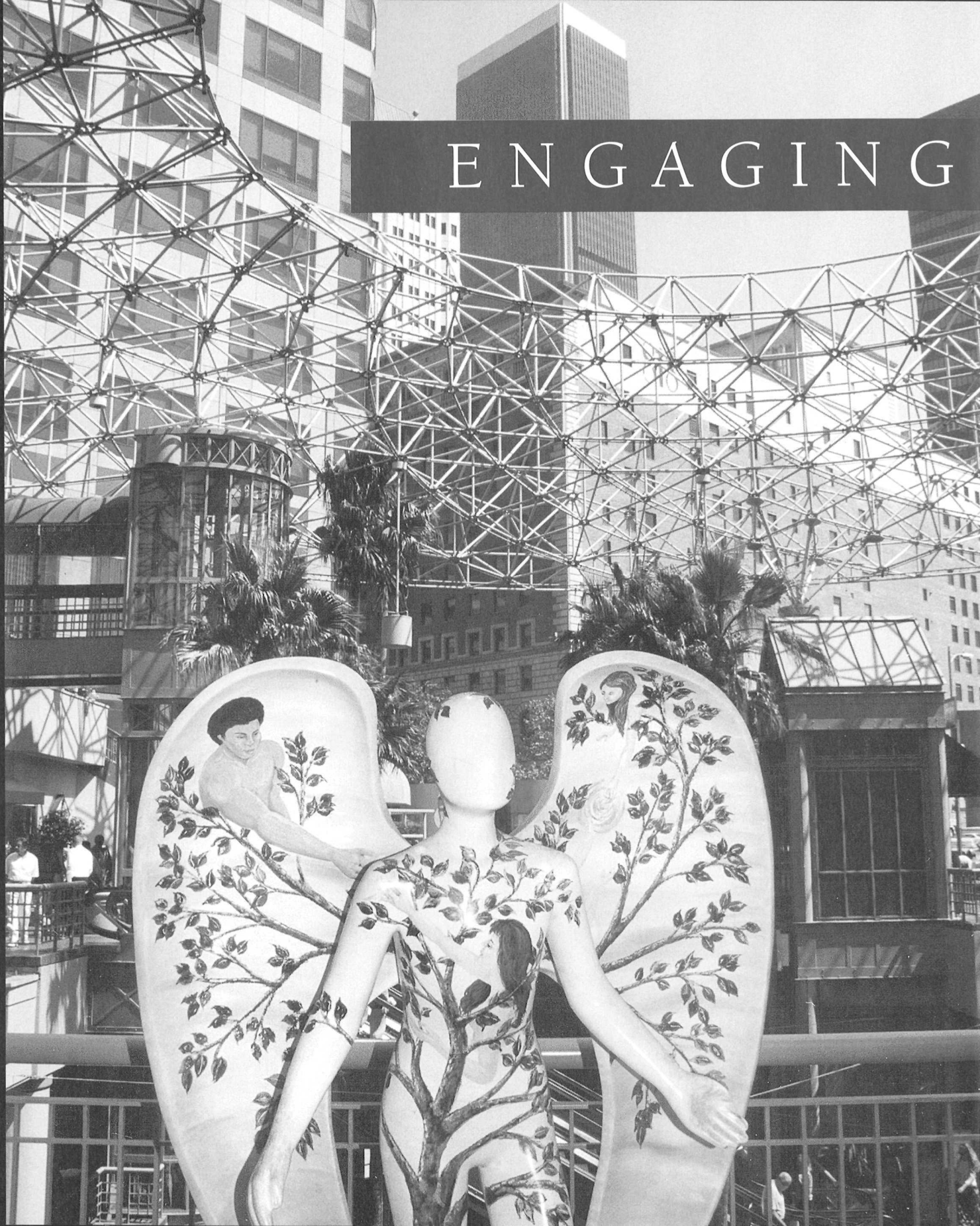

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One local struggle at a time

by Anna Olson

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I GOT TO KNOW the airport awfully well during my first months of parish ministry in Inglewood, Calif. — bordered to the north and east by South Central Los Angeles and to the west by the mammoth Los Angeles Airport — and not because my job involved a lot of flying. I came to work at Holy Faith Church as a former union organizer, and upon arrival in L.A., began to poke around for ways to connect my former vocation with my current one. My first find was the "Respect at LAX" campaign: a multi-union effort to organize service and security workers at Los Angeles International Airport. When I joined the community committee in support of organizing airport workers the focus was on baggage handlers and security screeners employed by the Argenbright company. At the invitation of organizers and workers on the campaign, I began showing up for demonstrations, learning the ins and outs of the many terminals — which contractors had agreed to pay the living wage, which workers had a clean place to eat lunch, where the echo was best for making noise in protest, how long the airport police would allow a march to block traffic.

At a small gathering of clergy at my parish, I sat listening to one of the Argenbright workers talk about why he supported the organizing campaign. He was an African-American man in his early twenties who lived at home with his parents not far from my church. He earned slightly above the minimum wage. Health benefits, while offered through the job, were out of reach on his low salary. Sick days were only excused with a doctor's note. While he recited these details at our request, the passion for organizing didn't flare in his voice until he began to describe the atmosphere in which he worked. Over and over, he repeated, "There's just no respect." No respect. No respect for the workers who represent the protection against weapons and terrorists that the traveling public depends on. No respect for this young man from the neighborhood working hard to make a future for himself and to do a good job at an important task. Most of the time his job was routine, but every now and then came a moment when risking his own safety to question a suspicious person could make the difference between tragedy and safety for hundreds of people. He was willing to take the risks, but discouraged by the humiliation, unfair discipline, arbitrary changes in work rules, questionable safety equipment and lack of training that characterized his job.

I locked my eyes on hers as I prayed, and I thanked God for the courage of these workers, holding the line for the promise of good jobs in our community.

His story was in many ways a familiar one. As an organizer, I had spent countless house visits listening to the stories of non-union workers struggling to make a living in dangerous, low-wage jobs. The details differed, but the fundamental desire for fairness and respect was the same at the airport in Los Angeles as in the factories of Texas and Louisiana. What was different about this encounter was my perspective as a pastor to the youth of my parish. I saw sitting in front of me a good kid, just a few years older than the kids in my youth group. Here was one of the ones who had made it — finished high school, avoided the perils of the street, maintained a good relationship with his parents. He was intelligent, thoughtful, articulate: the embodiment of my hopes and the hopes of parents in my parish for our teenagers. But all this had won him a job with low pay, no healthcare and no respect. When asked about the future, his sigh was discouraged. He was a good kid who had done things right, and it had not produced much hope for the future.

My participation in the Argenbright campaign gave me a much deeper sense of the challenges facing youth and parents in my parish and the surrounding community. So many of the employees at Argenbright were young, even still in their teens. It was a powerful lesson for me on how tough it is to raise kids here, on why so many kids don't see the value in avoiding the many pitfalls, in stick-

Los Angeles©Stephanie Allespuch

Will faith communities keep faith?

by Peter Selby

It is very well known that the relationship between church and state is very different in England from what it is in the U.S. (and it is different again in Scotland). But some very similar issues are being thrown up on both sides of the Atlantic by contemporary debates on the role of faith communities in welfare provision, and a bit of our experience may be illuminating to Witness readers charting their way through these very difficult policy questions.

In the mid-1980s, when the Thatcher government was in full cry the Church of England published a report of which we remain justly proud, called Faith in the City. Government ministers sought to rubbish the report (first calling it Marxist and then saying it would have been better if it had been Marxist!) that represented a call to church and state to attend to the needs of marginalized urban communities. Later a similar, rather smaller-scale, report, Faith in the Countryside, made a similar call in relation to the rural economy, and the life of rural communities and churches.

Without any question Faith in the City reasserted the call of the poor at a time when government was withdrawing huge amounts of previous grant aid and local services from urban communities. Its words, and the actions it precipitated in the church, came as a real encouragement to those who had struggled for many years to get their voices heard, and who were particularly suffering under the economics of the right. A whole culture of inventiveness ensued and some very imaginative urban programs resulted. To some degree the same is happening in the aftermath of Faith in the Countryside.

One of the fruits of Faith in the City was the creation of the Church Urban Fund. Church people subscribed heavily to that and as a result pump-priming grants, and some sustaining ones too, were made to a whole new generation of community projects, evangelistic initiatives and efforts toward justice. In the process a culture of self-help developed and many individuals and communities discovered resources within themselves and possibilities of making a real difference that they had not reckoned with before.

But there are important paradoxes that are very relevant to the current debate. First, this brought comfort not just to the urban communities but also to the advocates of New Right policies. "We told you so," they said,

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ing with lousy schools and graduating.

Along with their parents, I set out the hope and expectation that they will attend college. But I recognize that for many of them, the road to college will not be as easy as my own was. Whether because of economic constraints, family crises, poor academic preparation, lack of immigration documents, many of the youth I work with will have to enter the full-time workforce immediately after high school. And the jobs that are available to them will look very much like employment at Argenbright. Argenbright is not by any means the worst; in fact, it is probably fairly typical of what's out there for high-school graduates.

Unlike what the media might portray, most of the kids here make it more or less through without getting into much trouble. I have come to wonder if the real story is not so much gangs and violence and dropouts and incarceration — although these are also powerful realities in the lives of our young people — but the fact that for kids who do what they are supposed to, there is a job with no respect waiting at the end. A job that doesn't come close to allowing a young man or woman to move out of their parents' home, much less raise a family, get more education or buy a home.

As the Argenbright campaign wound down toward a resolution, I found myself back near the airport, at the intersection of Century and Sepulveda Boulevards. Traffic backed up as far as the eye could see in all directions, stopped by rows of police in full riot gear. In the very center of the intersection was a small group seated in a circle, facing inward. On each of their backs was a simple sign with a number of years printed on it: four, seven, 22, 18 — the number of years that each of these Latino immigrant workers had worked at the Wyndham Hotel as housekeepers, cooks, porters, drivers, dishwashers. The owners of the Wyndham had announced a few weeks before that the hotel was to be sold. The new owner intended to close the hotel for renovations, dismiss the entire workforce and re-open non-union with new workers. Union workers at the Wyndham, distraught at the loss of their jobs and at the loss of one of the few union hotels in the airport area, had turned out in substantial numbers for the demonstration. A gutsy few had staked out the center of the street and were waiting tensely to be arrested. My job was to stand at the head of the circle and pray, then get out of the way as the riot police closed in. (I had been arrested a few months earlier in another hotel labor conflict, and the terms of my release did not allow me to join in this time.)

I began to close my eyes as I prepared to pray aloud, but caught sight of an older woman sitting across the circle, one of those who had worked for years at the Wyndham. Her face was stoic, but her eyes showed fear. I locked my eyes on hers as I prayed, and I thanked God for the courage of these workers, holding the line for the promise of good jobs in our community. I prayed in the words of the prophet Amos for justice to roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream, feeling the words as I had rarely felt them before.

I never had the chance to speak to the woman whose eyes I held during the prayer. The police moved in, and I moved to the sidelines as the protesters were arrested one by one. She went bravely, her head

held high. The next day, other arrestees told the story of a long night in jail, far longer than I had spent on my one arrest in L.A. They said that some of the women had been afraid to tell their husbands they were going to be arrested, and watched with trepidation as the hour grew later and later, their unexplained absences lengthening. They said that some of them remembered seeing protesters arrested in their home countries and never coming back. I will probably never know the exact source of the fear in that one woman's eyes, but it was clear to me that both the stakes and the risk of this action were far greater for her than they have ever been for me in my life as an activist.

The workers from the Wyndham represented a different generation from most of the Argenbright workers. They were older, people with families, mostly immigrants, many with limited English. Many of them had been in their jobs for years, not because the jobs were great, not because the wages were particularly high, but because union jobs are hard to come by in the airport area and the security of a job with benefits and negotiated work rules was not to be given up lightly. In my own parish, the only Latino retirees with a measure of economic security are former union hotel housekeepers. Hotel housekeeping is hard physical work, even in the union hotels. But a union contract limits the number of rooms to be cleaned each shift, guarantees seniority rights, and provides for health and retirement benefits. Compared to their peers, who made a living in domestic work or non-union hotels and factories, the union retirees have at least earned some stability in exchange for their years of hard work.

It wasn't always true that there were few decent jobs in Inglewood and the other communities surrounding the airport. Inglewood was built on good union jobs in the aerospace industry, but during the 1970s and 1980s, those jobs gradually drained away. Now low-wage service jobs, domestic work, childcare and non-union electronics factories are the primary options for the Latino immigrants who make up the bulk of the area's current population. And although working life is tough in Inglewood, the options are far better than in the sweatshops of downtown Los Angeles, where countless immigrant workers toil for less than the minimum wage.

My three years in parish ministry in Inglewood have provided an up-close look at the human consequences of the de-unionization I had witnessed from my perspective as an organizer. Working for the Southwest Region of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, I watched as factory after factory, union and non-union, closed their doors and moved their operations to other countries where unions were weak and labor was cheap (Southwest in the union's East-Coast-driven parlance meant Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana). In rural communities that often meant that jobs became scarce, and workers who had made decent money close to home were forced to commute long distances for far less money. In greater Los Angeles during the recent economic "boom," local jobs are still relatively plentiful. But the jobs that exist provide little of the security required to support dreams of home ownership and higher education for the next generation.

The overwhelming pastoral reality in my parish work stems from the pressures on families who must work multiple, stressful, lousy jobs to survive. In my experience, persistent economic stress is the single factor that most accurately predicts domestic violence, alcoholism, kids with troubles in school, kids who flirt with gang life and the myriad other problems that afflict this community. Parents are sleep-deprived and often have few hours left in the day to spend with their spouses and children. High housing costs and low wages combine to pack families of five, six, and seven people into one- and two-bedroom apartments. Families are amazing in their ability to survive and even thrive under tough conditions, but the human cost of the much-trumpeted "new economy" is high. The Wyndham workers, huddled in the street in protest, understood this reality and were willing to take substantial risks to resist it. They have not prevailed so far, but their struggle touches the very heart of the community they live in.

Some months after the Wyndham demonstration, my rector, who had stood beside me in support as I prayed in the street, received a call "regarding his associate." The caller was a consultant to a convalescent home down the street from the church, and she professed deep concern over a recent "incident." She was sure that the rector would want to know what had taken place and take appropriate action. The incident in question involved my presence the day before a union election at the home, in which I stood with workers and organizers during a shift change and distributed a letter affirming Holy Faith's commitment to the workers' right to vote for or against a union without threats or intimidation from management. The worker standing with me was a Certified Nurse Assistant, motivated to unionize by her load of several dozen psychiatric patients as the lone CNA on the night shift in her unit. She shook her head, saying that she did not know what would happen should one of the patients experience a severe psychotic episode. She knew that one person was not enough to handle that eventuality, not with so many other seriously ill patients needing attention as well. As we chatted with one another and with workers leaving and arriving for work, the home's management team stood silently on the porch, watching each person to see if they stopped to speak with anyone connected to the union. The consultant who called my rector, and later spoke with me at his recommendation, expressed "shock" that I would suggest that there had been intimidation, and further said that she had thought a "person of God" would "take the high road" and remain neutral in a conflict such as this one.

The election at St. Erne's Convalescent Home was part of the Campaign for Quality Nursing Home Care, a multi-faceted campaign seeking to address both working conditions and patient care in Los Angeles County nursing homes. I became interested in nursing homes when I noticed a number of uniformed nursing home workers standing in line each week at our parish food program, waiting to receive bags of groceries. As I became involved in the campaign, I learned that the average wages for nurse assistants in area homes hovered under seven dollars an hour and that nursing home workers suffer on-the-job injuries at rates equaled only by high-risk industries like mining. Grossly

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"removing government grants and subsidies has liberated local communities from the heavy hand of the state." The fact that removing those grants had also precipitated huge quantities of misery only slightly alleviated by the new charitable money was something they conveniently overlooked.

Secondly, hard-worked community volunteers now have to spend a higher and higher proportion of their time finding ingenious ways of raising funds and negotiating their way through the private charity maze. And thirdly, we have in the process moved further and further away from the belief that it was the responsibility of the community as a whole to make basic welfare provision toward a world where tax cuts benefit the wealthy while the poor are reduced more and more to dependence on charity.

What has this history to say to faith communities today? Understandably those within them who are seeking to alleviate poverty are glad to have the prospect of some matching funding from public sources. Such funding produces not only a reduction in the effort needed to finance worthwhile projects, but also a sense of the affirmation of the role of faith communities in society at large. Looking from afar at the U.S. context there seems to be (ironically) a movement towards the "establishment" not of course of a particular religion, but of religious faith generally as the bond that holds society together and the means whereby much needed provision for poor people is achieved.

An individual congregation or faith group faced with the offer of assistance to do valuable work among the poor will feel that it is an offer it can hardly refuse. The need is there, and they have the means to meet it with public assistance, gaining credibility for themselves and their faith in the process. But within the same process lie the seeds of the destruction of the witness of faith communities — and particularly the Christian communities — to a God who is judge of our society and its provision for its most vulnerable. It is hard to remain prophetic while you make yourselves more and more dependent on those against whom you have a call to prophesy.

There are no easy solutions to these dilemmas. But faith communities need to be very circumspect — wise as serpents and innocent as doves — if they are not to find that they have gained a whole world of charitable opportunity and meanwhile lost their own soul. That faith communities have huge potential for doing good is not in question. The question to those who would do good in that way is, will your community of faith keep faith? ●

Peter Selby is Bishop of Worcester, England.

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inadequate staff-to-patient ratios like the one described by the CNA at St. Erne's lead in many cases to serious inadequacies in patient care.

Around the time I got involved with the Nursing Home Campaign, I found myself speaking with a new parishioner, who confided her dream of finishing a certification program as a nurse assistant. She explained that she had worked for several years caring for disabled elderly people in their homes, and shyly suggested that this work had made her think that she might have a gift for caring for others. She was struggling to pay for the certification program and worried that her English might not be equal to taking the exam, but with encouragement from her husband she was persevering. Given the economic pressures and limited opportunities that many of my parishioners face, I don't have conversations about vocational discernment often enough. It was exciting to hear someone who was able to match her gifts with her career aspirations so clearly. At the same time, I felt some trepidation, given what I was learning about working conditions for so many certified nurse assistants.

I did not voice my concerns in our conversations about vocation, and I shared in the celebration when she finally found the money to pay off her tuition and passed the certification exam. Within a month or so, she had found employment in a local nursing home. She was disappointed by the low starting pay, but nonetheless optimistic about this opportunity to put her hard-earned certification to work. Within six months, she caught a patient as he fell, preventing him from injuring himself but straining her own back. When her injury proved difficult to heal, she began to suspect that her supervisors were setting her up to be fired. She is now unemployed, pursuing a workers' compensation claim, and unsure what her employment future will be with her inability to lift patients. She remains positive, but it is impossible to miss the deep disappointment in her eyes.

This parishioner, along with many of the nursing home employees I have met, represent a particularly heartwrenching failure of the classic American Dream. They are immigrants and U.S.-born workers with limited educational backgrounds, who have struggled to go back to school while raising children, working and often learning English. They are motivated not only by a desire to earn a living, but by a sincere desire to care for those most often forgotten and neglected by our society. They have willingly taken on jobs that include contact with the most intimate realities of sick and dying human bodies. For some lonely people, they represent the only loving face or word of comfort in each long day. And at the end of their shifts, they are standing in line for food in front of my church.

When I initially sought out opportunities for involvement in the Los Angeles labor movement, I did not anticipate how deeply my labor activism and parish ministry would come to inform one another. I jumped into the struggle because I missed the excitement of picket lines and demonstrations, the satisfaction of standing up in the face of clear injustice. I missed having an easy answer to the classic labor question: "Which side are you on?" Especially in my first months in the parish, I found day-to-day life in the church to be filled with mundane details and lacking in clear connections to larger questions of justice. I figured I was lucky to arrive in L.A. at a time when the labor movement was vital and committed to organizing, and the call for

clergy and religious leaders to participate added legitimacy to my desire to be on the front lines from time to time.

More than anything else I have done in these three years, labor activism has taught me about the larger context in which my ministry exists. The small corner of the Los Angeles area where I work, and to a much greater extent the L.A. area as a whole, mirrors the global reality of increasingly diverse collections of people caught up in increasingly rigid economic realities that allow little possibility of socioeconomic stability or mobility to the majority of the world's people. My bishop has commented on several occasions that he believes the region served by the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles is the most diverse the planet has ever seen. People come from all over the world to make their homes here, driven in most cases at least in part by economic pressures in their homelands. The result is a region characterized by small pockets of tremendous wealth and vast stretches of poverty and economic struggle.

The progressive movement in L.A. is strongly driven by workers' issues, and I'm by far not the only priest nor the first who has turned to involvement in local labor struggles as one avenue for confronting the injustices of the global economy. The basic need for good jobs and fair working conditions is fundamental in the communities we serve. There is a substantial group of clergy and religious leaders in Los Angeles who agree that prosperity is built far too readily on the backs of workers. Seeing the struggles of working *Angelenos* to survive and thrive in economic boom times, we fear for the coming economic downturn. While it is easy to romanticize the excitement of ministry in such a multicultural region, we cannot truly celebrate our diversity until the second half of the Lucan promise is fulfilled in our communities: "Then people will come from east and west, and will eat in the kingdom of God."

While it has become clear to me that the realities I encounter in my parish demand a commitment to stand with organizing workers, I find it a far greater challenge to know how to integrate the insights of labor struggles into the life of my congregation. It is much easier to represent the church in the struggle than to make the struggle central to the life of the church. While I manage to weave references to economic injustice and the call to organize into many of my Sunday sermons, prayers and Bible studies, my parish remains far from the activist community of my dreams. I fear that too often my own activism and that of other clergy errs on the side of using the (limited) power that we have as representatives of religious authority to advocate on behalf of workers, rather than taking on the greater and I believe more important challenge of being agents of empowerment, of creating a sense of urgency in our parishes, and of communicating that questions of who finds a place at the table are central to the life of the Gospel.

Despite my occasional misgivings and frustrations with parish life, I'm "sticking with the parish" in my quest to be a part of the larger struggle for justice. I believe that discovering ways to become activist communities on the local level is essential to the larger project of hastening the Kingdom of God. In *The Impact of the Global: An Urban Theology*, Laurie Green, Bishop of Bradwell in the Church of England, writes about the value of what he describes as sacramental actions — actions on the local level that serve to illuminate and challenge global realities. Only as we who have come from around the world to dwell in this particular manifestation of the global city find local ways to bring about fulfillment of the Gospel promises of human dignity and thriving do we truly take our place as one small part of the body of Christ. ●

Anna Olson is the pastoral associate at Holy Faith Episcopal Church in Inglewood, Calif.

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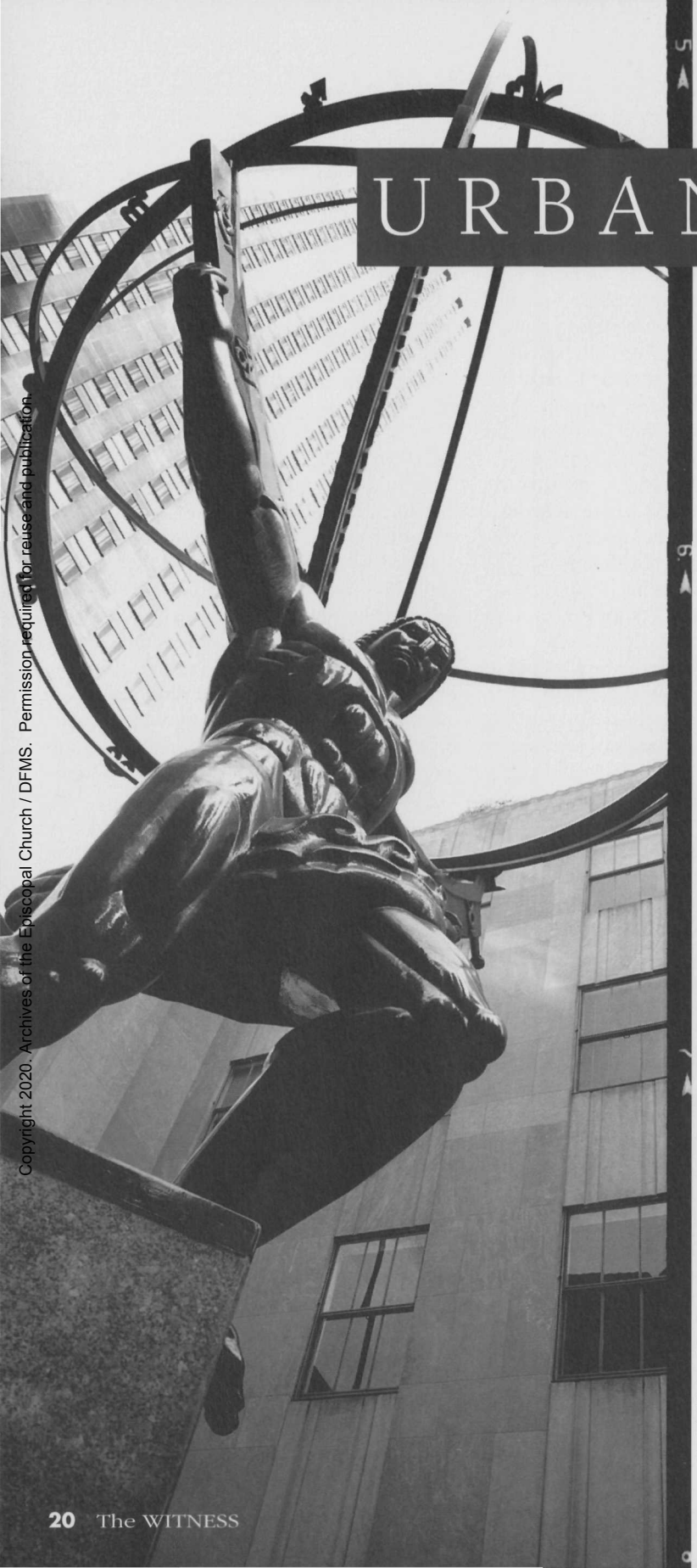

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URBAN MINISTRY

A conversation with Andrew Davey

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

NEW YORK is no longer merely an American city. It has become, in the emerging world order, one of the first-tier global cities, a hub in the worldwide network of financial flows. When the very technology of the global economy, airline jets in this case, were turned into weapons against it in September, it was surely to be accounted as much an attack on global headquarters as it was an attack on the U.S. Indeed, not surprisingly, the missing and dead include citizens from England, Germany, Japan, and Canada but also from Mexico, India, Australia, China and some 30 other nations. Barely a few weeks prior, Andrew Davey of the Church of England and *Witness* contributing editor Bill Wylie-Kellermann had spoken by phone between Detroit and another global city, London. Their conversation meandered through the chapter headings of Davey's new book, *Urban Christianity and Global Order* (SPCK, 2001; American edition to be published by Hendrickson in 2002). It touched, analytically and theologically, upon the ways in which globalization is altering the face of the city and thereby of urban ministry. Ironically, it came to rest on a prescient point: the vulnerability of the global city to terrorism and collapse. The attack on the World Trade Center may indeed have changed everything, including how we hear and read this conversation. It is our hope, in turn, that this conversation might alter to some degree how we read the attack on the World Trade Center, how we sift through the rubble for its meaning and consider the future.

BWK: Someone recently said to me that churches throw up web sites and think they've become global participants. Here in the U.S., globalization has been an agenda of theological education for a decade or more, with seminaries requiring some kind of exposure. But basically the focus has remained little more than multicultural internationalism. The kind of analysis that you're talking about really isn't being taught. So, what is globalization from where you're sitting?

IN A GLOBAL AGE

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AD: You're right that globalization means so many different things to different people. One of the things I've tried to do is to tie it down quite tightly to the way in which certain forces are reordering our world. The particular aspect of this is the compression of space and time. Things happen almost instantaneously throughout the world and that takes us both into the world of the media and into the world of financial movement. There are, indeed, aspects of globalization which are to do with the movement of people, but I think it's important to see it firstly in terms of a changing ordering in the world.

BWK: I know that you'd include, as part of this neo-liberalism and deregulation, the technological movement of capital with the barrier-free movement of resources and consumer goods as well.

AD: That is also part of the way in which our world is being reordered in favor of certain groups and people. But we do not yet know where this project is going to end. The world is still globalizing. We haven't suddenly had the advent of globalization and we can't speak yet of "before and after globalization." The world's resources are beginning to form new clusters around certain points in the world, primarily cities, and we are seeing resources shifting away from certain other regions, be it Africa or parts of Latin America.

BWK: You're raising here the connections between globalization and the city. How is the technological infrastructure as well as the neo-liberal political agenda affecting the urban landscape around the world?

AD: Well, I think early commentators on globalization interpreted globalization as the end of the city. We had a lot of talk about telly-cottaging or the ability to work from home in the paperless office. But what we are witnessing is the fact that business, financial business, cannot operate without the proximity that's possible within a city and without the type of infrastructure that "informational capitalism," to use writer Manuel Castells' term, demands. Informational capitalism requires a certain level in the quality of communication. Yes, you can access things like the web from remote desert villages, but if we are to talk about the quality of infrastructure that is needed, we will be dependent on cities for a long time to come. And it's not just an issue of the concentration of resources, but the concentration of what is called "connectivity." In the global south, in Africa and Latin America, we're witnessing capital cities that have a certain concentration of those resources. But you'd set up your internet company which serves Zimbabwe in the northern hemisphere because the speed of your resources there will be so much quicker. It is in this sense that observers like Castells talk about the "disinformation" of Africa, the way in which whole parts of the globe become excluded very quickly because of the quality of the resources they have.

BWK: Aren't we talking about several tiers of global cities here?

AD: Yes. Saskia Sassen would be very specific that there are only three, possibly four, cities in the world now which warrant the title "global city." Those would be London, New York and Tokyo. It is those cities which really have concentrated the command aspect of the global economy. And then you would see different hierarchies emerging below. Most of the American cities and most of our cities outside of London would be in that second hierarchy.

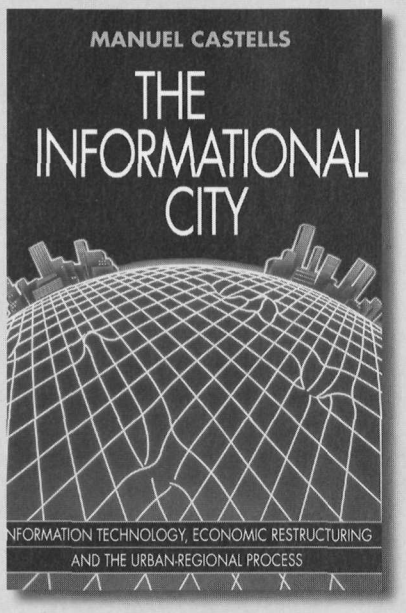
BWK: Sassen writes from Chicago, which does have a strong global connection. At present it's experiencing a huge housing boom and gentrification, much of which is based precisely on this phenomenon. On the other hand, I live in Detroit, which is essentially the loser. What Detroit's grasping at for an economic base is casinos and ball parks.

AD: That's very similar to what we've seen happening in Britain. Birmingham is probably a second-tier city. It still has a reasonable industrial base, but the types of industry have shifted over the years from heavy engineering to more hi-tech industries. Outside of the key cities, as with Detroit, you see an increasing assumption that they will be dependent on tourist and lesser industries. So you see cities putting in their bid as the "music capital" of Britain or the "space-and-technology capital." And all this is primarily based on multi-million-pound tourist attractions which they hope will regenerate the cities primarily through visitors, but also by possibly attracting allied industries such as music recording or high-technology communication. Globalization is very definitely about some part of the country over-heating because there is such a concentration of activity and other parts declining.

Economic activity then restructures cities socially. One of the key concepts from Saskia Sassen is the issue of "valorization," the way in which in the global economy certain activities, certain people, and certain places become over-valorized. We see this in London in the way in which financial districts have astronomical rents and land values and these are then passed on through the rents in the sectors that support them. At the same time other activities are under-valorized, often in the public services. It's very difficult at the moment in inner London to maintain our health and education services because

Acting on behalf of place

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann



Manuel Castells
The Informational City:
Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

MANUEL CASTELLS, the Spanish sociologist who's taught urban planning at the University of California Berkeley for 20 years, is best known for his 1500-page magnum opus, a trilogy under the overarching title of The Information Age. Responsible scholars have compared the work to those of Max Weber and Karl Marx. It can be dense, sweeping, abstract, theoretical, and insightful. Certain of its themes were anticipated in this 1991 volume specifically outlining the impact of informational capitalism on the city. Like Saskia Sassen, Castells argues against those who've foreseen the city disappearing in the face of decentralized informationalism, that is, the dispersal of labor and withdrawal of capital into cyberspace. In his view, the network economy structures the informational megacity as a "space of flows." This term encompasses the material processes, the technological hardwiring, for the electronic flow of information and capital as well as the corporate headquarters for the flow of command and control decisions. It also includes the concentrated location of specialized service firms and, finally, the reorganization of living space for the managerial elite and specialized personnel.

In fact, this process does represent an assault on the city as "place," a reality layered with history and collective memory. "People live in places, power rules through flows." The social meanings of the city as place tend to evaporate as the flows dominate space. The loss of individual identity for the city is threatened. Castells is in effect calling for a certain kind of resistance, for cultural strategies and new social movements that act out of and on behalf of place. Labor, for example, which is learning to think globally, must become more aware of the power of the local. "Labor — and indeed, individual citizens — must develop an awareness of the precise role of their place-based activities in the functional space of flows" if an alternative is going to be reconstructed.

Even as the nation-state is diminished by globalization, Castells foresees the space of flows actually generating a kind of renaissance for city as local state. And cities have the opportunity to seize control over globalization's spatial logic, but that will involve not only consciously reclaiming identity in pursuit of change, but encouraging democratic participation and community organization. All somewhat rare. ●

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is a media review editor for The Witness.

those who work in them are paid so differently from the people involved in other activities in the city that they then can no longer afford property prices even in some of the less gentrified areas. The irony is that those office lots or service areas which are so over-valorized are very dependent on under-valorized labor groups.

BWK: Right. People get under-valorized. The poor and working poor.

AD: Not least the cleaners. Offices could not exist and are not sustainable without the assumption that a very underpaid, undervalued group will be willing to clean, to provide security, to work in the canteens, providing basic services on which those high-tech office blocks depend. And looking on your side of the Atlantic, the janitors' strike and the public transport strikes in Los Angeles are maybe an example of the way in which those dependencies can be forced upon the groups who dominate the city.

BWK: Shifting ground to the biblical, you do a really wonderful and fairly quick survey of ancient Hebrew communities as well as of Jesus and early church issues related to urban ministry.

AD: I guess that comes out as a slight dissatisfaction with the way the Bible has been used in urban debates of the past, the way in which it has always been assumed there was a grand narrative here: Either the people of faith are seen as those who were in control of the city or the city gets a very bad press with the "city of man" (I use the term very advisedly) based upon the blood of Cain and therefore a cursed environment from which we'd best withdraw or leave other people to run.

BWK: In that connection let me raise the city of Babel. The traditional reading is that the arrogance and pretension of the tower issued in the curse, almost as though the diversity of language and culture were itself a curse! Of course, a more post-modern reading could see the single language, the dominant culture, as central to the imperial project. You know, kind of like English-only,

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or Babylonian-only, and that what is a curse to the centralized project, in fact, is the multicultural diversity of the workers, cultural resistance of the brick makers, that brings down the centralized project. And God's at work in that.

AD: One of the things that we've failed to deal with in the past, too, has been the urban contact of Jesus or the urban context of the first Christians, a lot of which involves reading between the lines or filling in the gaps. We have a memory of Jesus which doesn't always acknowledge the urbanization that was happening in Galilee or the globalization project along which the first Christians were able to connect. I guess most of our generations were brought up with images of the Gospel coming in at the right time and being able to spread on the back of the Roman Empire. We do find the early Christian communities exploiting the infrastructure of that globalization project, but at the same time being very aware of the corruption of its ordering. Rome was a globalization project solely based on sustaining the city of Rome.

BWK: For me the language of the powers has been important in thinking about the city theologically. I'm just starting to use it as a lens for thinking more about the global principalities.

AD: I was struck in the second volume of Max Stackhouse's series, *God and Gobalization: Religions and the Powers of the Common Life* (2000), how he uses "the authorities" as language for the professions. There are indeed challenges that these face from globalization, but the integrity of the profession which he is trying to maintain is the integrity of the professional expert. I think that's where someone like Leonie Sandercock (*Towards Cosmopolis*, 1998) comes into this discussion very quickly. She takes on particularly the professionalism of planners and architects, those who are remodeling the cities in a very interventionist way. And one of the problems about intervention is that you do not come in to listen to the stories, the expectations or the hopes of the people who live there, but you come in with solutions already mapped out from above. I suspect that there is an element of this within the Stackhouse book as well — that education, the law, health, are very much about professional competencies, about professional integrity and not about how these professions might actually be challenged by the people they are there to serve. Sandercock is very much about rediscovering an insurgent practice for the planner and the architect which engages them with the communities which then become the protagonists of their own reshaping.

BWK: I like that. It strikes me that what you are saying about the professions is pretty much how Stackhouse would view the profession of theological ethics. I suspect he'd imagine that a circle of ethicists, basically from the top, could nudge and tweak and somehow help shape the globalization project, whispering a few words in the ears of the rulers and powers.

AD: I think this also connects with what we see in this whole movement termed public theology or global ethics. One of the things that we have to be reimagining at the moment is the church's ability to provide neutral space, or what Ed Soja, the California geographer, would call third space, an environment, a forum, a space in which insurgent alternatives for society can be reimagined. I think as far as the church goes, we might also provide some of the spaces in which such experiments take place. However, that involves opening space not only for the experts, but involving the people that actually are the communities in which we are presently working.

BWK: You are opening up the whole question of urban practice in relation to globalization. Do you know a book called *Grass Roots Post-Modernism*? The authors are Gustavo Estava and Madhu Suri Prakash. They're arguing against the commonplace, "Think globally, act locally." In a certain sense their concern goes right to the heart of the challenge you're putting to the church. They're raising the temptation of grandiosity in anti-globalization. They reject the notion that it's possible to build a global counter-force to globalized capital. They argue, in the tradition of Gandhi or Wendell Berry, say, that we need to be thinking locally, with the premise that this will generate not so much a common "no" to global capitalism, but a multiplicity and rich diversity of alternative "yeses."

AD: One of the things which I fear about efforts to do "global ethics" is the notion that religious leaders can make a difference at that level. I think we see all too well, whether it's in Palestine or Northern Ireland, that regardless of what the religious leaders do, the tribal politics of the street remain the strongest. And the creation of unethical communities is just as much a local reality as the creation of ethical communities. That also connects with the way in which we encourage people to think globally and act locally.

What we've witnessed with Jubilee 2000 is that only when it caught the local imagination, when it took people onto the street, did it really began to have an effect. It wasn't about religious leaders having quiet words with the director of the World Bank. It was actually about religious leaders taking it to the world as a matter of urgency because they had so much pressure coming in from their own constituencies.

Mobilizing that kind of movement is absolutely critical to the way in which we relate between the local and the global. Maybe we'll also witness something like this with the environment and climate change in the next few years, because we're going to need to do it somehow! We must use the church as the opportunity to operate both locally and globally because many of the networks already exist for us. We are proclaiming the simultaneous possibility of global and local connectivity. But a word of caution: We may also find ourselves sidetracked by some who would wish to see "global" in terms of centralization rather than the dispersal of the network.

BWK: I'm interested to know whether you would see parish (and I understand we have different histories here), as representing a useful sense of turf, you know? Parish is very much a turf-based approach to min-

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istry, and so an entrée to local struggle. It has the very feet-on-the-ground approach which ends up actually engaging the global forces from a community base. It's like David Korten arguing that a key response to globalization is to build what he calls "social capital," essentially a community of real relationships. Or like Jeremiah telling the "resident aliens" (in Greek, the *parachoi* from which parish, right?) to put down local roots even in exile, even in Babylon.

AD: We come to this in the Church of England with a certain amount of ambivalence because we are still very strictly divided up into geographical parishes. When that's the only thing you're concerned with, the pejorative sense of "parochial" creeps in very quickly. But I do think knowing what is happening underneath your own nose on your own turf is the beginning of any sort of ethical discourse, of any ethical actions. And it is quintessentially how we learn to live together as community. We, in the Church of England, are always very cautious to distinguish between the parish and the church, because the parish, the place where everyone lives, is the pastoral concern of the church. It isn't who shows up on Sunday morning. It is in true celebration on behalf of the parish that the roots of Anglican liturgy begin.

BWK: I think you're quite right. The need in the U.S. is to push local congregations that are often disconnected from their context to think in terms of actually having a geography, a place that needs to be honored, developed, a space where community is built. But I'm not aware of people who are doing church-based organizing thinking of that work in relation to globalization. This organizing essentially develops new, alternative, democratic structures at the moment that state and national structures are being disempowered.

AD: There's a certain parochialism whether the campaign is to amend living wages or the immediate environment or the immediate power structures of the city. We need models that actually connect issues of living wage in North America or Europe with issues of living wage for those who supply us. We're beginning to see networks emerge concerning what might be termed "globalization from below." Something we need to look at is how the churches can underpin some of that with the connections which they already have. For example, within the Anglican Communion we've talked for years about partnership between dioceses, but have we ever looked at what economic activity connects those dioceses? I cite one very pioneering venture we have going on at the moment between a very poor part of Britain and community groups in Manila and the way in which through the personal encounter these issues are being raised on a larger scene.

BWK: What's the name of that campaign?

AD: That is the group that connects Christian Aid with Church Action on Poverty. These are two groups who have worked independently in the past, one concerned with the international development agenda, one concerned with the domestic poverty agenda, but who are recognizing now the two are so inextricably linked that they cannot work without each other.

BWK: Let me raise a question about the use of the global technological infrastructure. There are obviously all sorts of ways in which the social movements can be networked. But I do think that the technology is somehow determinative, that it does have a life of its own and that it does shape us. The technology itself draws us systematically into its system, so I'm quite wary. I want the church to be thinking critically about the technology instead of just jumping on the bandwagon. I don't see that critical thinking.

AD: Oh, I can see this operating on so many different levels as well. One takes us back to the scriptures. We could never advocate a complete withdrawal from globalization just as we could never advocate a complete withdrawal from the city, although we can be ambivalent and derogatory about some aspects of it. After all, the first Christians didn't say "We're not going to use roads because they're built by the Romans!" Sounds like a Monty Python line! I think that sort of technophobia rather frivolous. But it does take us into the debate about at what stage does connectivity become a human right, because if you exclude people from it, you are excluding them from a major aspect of social life in the world today.

BWK: I understand. The famous digital divide.

AD: This is also a civil society point: When local authorities begin to put key information on web sites, on certain types of access, you're beginning to exclude people immediately. And once again, the whole issue of connectivity in Africa and other parts of the world immediately comes up.

So I see the issue as who controls the technology. Obviously you have the ongoing debates on that concerning Microsoft in the U.S., but it also focuses in on the physical nature of that technology — where are some of the key components being sourced in the world? It's the issue of fair trade, of sweatshops and whatever. I mean, what happens when all this copper wire is being sourced from Namibia, but being processed in Europe and the Middle East? So there are a whole host of questions that go way beyond the infrastructure and the power control of information technology to some of the key aspects of capitalism.

BWK: Here's a big question: To what extent is the whole emerging system vulnerable and will it continue to be vulnerable, even to collapse, because it's so locally dependent and it's got its feet on the urban ground?

AD: I think vulnerability comes from a number of areas. I think of the whole power crisis in California as a supreme example of the way in which we assume that things are impregnable, but very quickly are proved to be highly dependent. I suspect that also this could lead us into some environmental issues, things we cannot control or have been unwilling to admit that we do have an impact on. In terms of London, one of the phenomena, probably ten years ago now, was when we had a lot of IRA activity in London and the two key financial sectors were targeted by IRA bombs. What looked

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like impregnable fortresses from the outside were quickly breached and the cities very literally shaken by it.

BWK: Does that foretell the tightening of exclusion which is exemplified by the gated and vertical communities?

AD: Yes, we're very quickly seeing the equivalent of gated cities in the centers of our cities. In London at the moment we have a number of 1950s, 1960s office lots in prime locations being converted into accommodations, to lofts and flats and condominiums. And these are very, very secure communities. Actually, "communities" is completely the wrong word, because it's a very individualistic way of living — fine views of the River Thames but no need to relate to the person living next door.

It's related to the way in which some of the most repressive places in Southeast Asia have chosen to throw in their lot with a high-tech future. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur have very definitely gone down a high-tech route where the cities have been completely remodeled around assumptions of technology and the skills base. The Kuala Lumpur high-tech experiment put everyone on to the connectivity of the city, but at the same time maintains tight controls on some of the opposition, some of the dissident groups within that society.

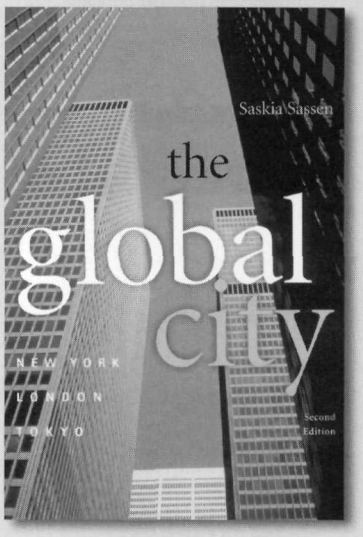
BWK: It doesn't bode well! Do you remain hopeful, particularly about the church?

AD: Yes, if Christians can muster the audacity to believe that they can evangelize the global processes through their own local and transnational witness! ●

Andrew Davey is Assistant Secretary (Community and Urban Affairs) for the board of Social Responsibility, Church of England. He is also reviews editor on the advisory group for an excellent new journal with the longish name, City: analysis of trends, culture,theory, policy, action *[+44(0) 125- 813002].* Witness *contributing editor* **Bill Wylie-Kellermann** *is Director of Graduate Theological Urban Studies for SCUPE (the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education).*

Globalization and its discontents

By Clinton E. Stockwell



The Global City:
New York, London, Tokyo,
by Saskia Sassen (Princeton University Press, 1991)

THE NEW CENTURY seems to be challenged by at least four realities: the increasing development of cities, especially mega-cities; the international migration of peoples that is resulting in a more culturally diverse world; the internationalization and globalization of finance capital into a world economic system dominated by transnational corporations; and growing resource scarcity and environmental stress. Key to the new order of things is globalization. Professor Saskia Sassen, of the University of Chicago, wrote the definitive book on the nature of globalization, The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton University Press, 1991), a decade ago. A revised edition is widely anticipated. Many thought that globalization would lead to radical decentralization, and would therefore work against urbanization. Sassen showed this to be absolutely not the case. The new globalization process has not only contributed to growth of cities, but has required such. While manufacturing and production has been dispersed to third world nations, the control of information and the administration of finance has found its ways to key cities. This constitutes the reality of the global city.

Cities are places where "producer services" can be found. Sassen connects globalization to the information society and to the rise of the service economy. Such services include advertising, accounting, business law, insurance, banking, real estate. She argues that global cities are interconnected units in a world economic system and "producer services" provide the infrastructure necessary.

Sassen also makes a distinction between first-tier and second-tier global cities. The former specialize in producer services necessary for the smooth operation of the transnational corporations disproportionately headquartered there. In more peripheral cities or regions dependent on the global city, there is a greater concentration of consumer services. Consequently, the new economy tends to devalue industrial and manufacturing workers who are pushed to the periphery of the system. And a radical distinction in wages emerges in the service sector. On the one hand, wages for professionals and specialists are higher, even luxurious; whereas the wages of routinized service workers, like clerical workers, are severely depressed. So not only has the new economic system contributed to economic concentration in global cities, but it has also produced increased inequality between the professionals who manage the system and those who serve it. ●

***Clinton Stockwell** is executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Center, an urban internship program for nine private liberal colleges, and an adjunct faculty member of the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, where he teaches courses on urban policy and on the church and globalization. A longer version of this review, one that surveys the views of others writing on globalization, is posted at <www.thewitness.org> with the November issue.*

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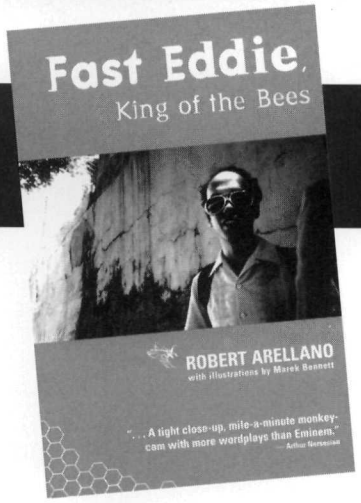

DIG CITY

by Robert Arellano

CUBAN-AMERICAN novelist Robert Arellano's Fast Eddie, King of the Bees (2001), *is part of the Akashic Urban Surreal series of books which explores the shifting social boundaries in our urban future. Fast Eddie is about an abandoned child on the streets of near-future Boston in the aftermath of the Great Devaluation, where squatters have turned the tunnel system into an underground hive known as Dig City.*

"STEP RIGHT UP!" Shep called on the Common. "It's Baby Eddie, preschool pretzel-boy!" I puttered around on the heels of my hands, grinning goofily at anyone whose attention strayed, sneaks flopping like crimson elephant ears. Shep, a sightless hustler from Southie, was my makeshift Fagin, my only pal. He trained the youngest by pretending grift was a game, supplying his own billfold. If Shep detected promise then off you went, an independent contractor in his ranks of sticky-fingered freelancers.

The Beast was one big Chinatown that had sprawled into South Station, the financial district, and what had formerly been known as the North End. Sooty, sparking skyscrapers loomed above our barrel-bottom dominion in ominous, opulent decadence, but you can bet a road rat never stopped to notice their gothic majesty. It was not in our wiring to admire, much less look up. So little sunlight filtered down to the street that reds and yellows got subtracted from the spectrum. If a helicopter ran out of juice, missing all the pads on the way down, and let a rich man descend upon the Beast, the city might seem to him like some awesome Atlantis, the indigo hues that come along with plumbing the deepest troughs like sinking into an altogether-other medium.

"Take a minute out for mini-magic!" Shep barked. We drew droves of dupes to our spot among the mandrakes by the stump of the old hanging tree, our only props a pair of miniature steel manacles, a shrunken straitjacket, and a mysterious box beneath a sheet. "It's the babe in bondage!"

Shep provided for his orphan cadets in a cozy, condemned candy factory near Kendall Square. After an old sign on the roof that had lost a letter or two, rats called his flophouse the Nec — rhymes with "mess." Gone were the days when homelessness had been more or less an exception and the most destitute had had access to shelters, group homes, orphanages and adoption programs. Health care had become something for the ultra-rich. For rats, medical attention meant fly-by-night storefronts operated by drunken quacks with expired licenses who were nevertheless enough in demand to require all-day waits. Prevention meant not letting oneself get run over or shot. Shep was pretty fair compared to the dozen or so alternatives available to boys in the Beast. (Although occasionally a pack master might arrange a back-alley mixer with a matron and her mice, there were no coed crews. Guardians for both genders agreed packs produced more income without the drama of that most distracting difference.) By enlisting with Shep, we knew we could depend on him to supply the basic necessities: a leaky roof, our daily grub, and a bed of old Globes.

When the buzz told Shep he had assembled a good-sized gallery, he slapped them with the bondage routine. "Baby Eddie defies the confounding kiddy camisole!" Over my head went that cuffless canvas shirt, size: small/chico. I was fettered, crossed sleeves tied behind my back. Shep invited the volunteer to tighten the straps. Pointing blindly in my vicinity, Shep cried, "Eddie's been a bad boy — let's put him in the crib!" Off came the sheet at Shep's feet. What lay beneath was less like a cradle than a diver's cage, the kind that keeps out sharks. A rat had found the old lobster trap washed up beneath the dilapidated docks of Inner Harbor. I climbed in.

Shep kept everyone idling until it was time for me to scramble for the jingling metal confetti, detaining them with his trademark slogan, which lulled even the sharpest cynics with its matter-of-fact ingenuousness: "What have you got to lose?" The point was: plenty. While Shep and I supplied distraction, the other rats marked the pigeons in the pack. With the pedestrians-turned-patrons pressing close in a circle, I amazed and astounded while my orphan siblings conspired to lighten the burden of select pockets. When the show ended and the crowd dispersed, our agents would tail their marks out from the axis along their trajectories across the hub. Since the beginning, I had understood the practices surrounding my pediatric profession to be a little unorthodox, but I managed to convince myself that, however bastardized by my orphan brothers to promote the conditions of easy crime, my prestidigitation preserved its integrity. Besides, growing into it as I had from an impressionable age, the career appeared to me not just as the only possible job, but as a sort of calling.

Shep padlocked the top and draped the sheet back over the crate. Buckles clinking, bars rattling, the struggle began. "No way the wound-up wonder child can get out of this one!" A couple of rat assistants hauled the whole contraption over to the edge of the Frog Pond and heaved me in. The Frog Pond's only a few feet deep, but as Shep would say, forebodingly, "It only takes a teaspoon." Portentous bubbles rumbled up from turgid turquoise depths. ●

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Disappointed in Durban

by Ethan Flad

Indigenous peoples protest on September 3 against their exclusion from the WCAR deliberations

Photos by Ethan Flad

"Reparations, reparations, reparations!"

— Desmond Tutu

ON THE MORNING OF September 7, 2001, with only 36 hours remaining in a two-week conference that had been over a year in development, Mary Robinson announced, "I have said before, and now believe more than ever, that Durban is the beginning of a long, serious road. This is not the end, but a beginning." I sat among a crowd of several hundred non-governmental organizational representatives (NGOs) who listened in disbelief, as the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights — the convener of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR) — seemed to suggest that she had never expected this massive event to emerge with significant agreements. With millions of dollars and countless working hours of activists around the globe having been invested in the process, this normally inoffensive quote was received as a slap in the face.

Some believe that progress was made in Durban. Robinson referred to the conference's attempts to reinforce international commitments: supporting migrants, opposing caste-based discrimination, recognizing ethnic and cultural groups like the Dalits in India (once known as "Untouchables") and the Roma (informally called Gypsies), guaranteeing religious freedom, and supporting judicial systems. But there was a sense of betrayal. Many people had come to the WCAR expecting landmark decisions on a wide range of issues, and felt that little was ultimately accomplished.

The level of dismay was obvious. With less than two days remaining, underrepresented groups mounted a series of protests: Dalits commenced a hunger strike; indigenous activists demanded that all references to indigenous peoples be removed from the documents, as they felt that the language being used would actually set back their work; and advocates for reparations held a candlelight vigil. [At a religious press conference on the top priorities for the WCAR's final days, Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared, "Reparations, reparations, reparations!"] On the final day, governments agreed that slavery and the slave trade were "appalling tragedies in the history of humanity" — and we were forced to wonder, why did it take a year of work to say this?

Three key problems were evident. The first was disorganization. Any churchperson who has ever attended a national denominational conference (like the Episcopal Church's General Convention) knows what a massive, chaotic event those political events can be. Multiply the logistics a hun-

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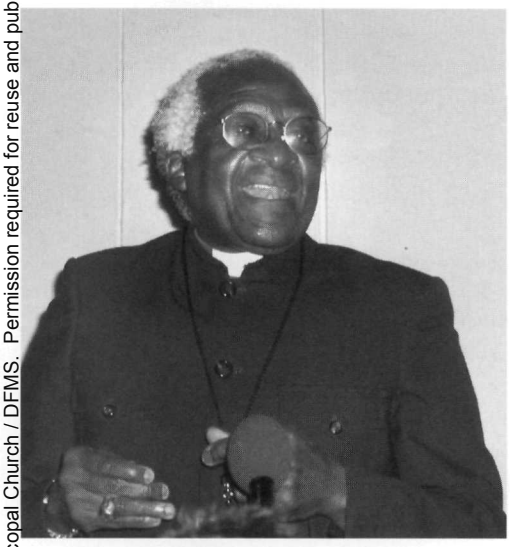
dred-fold, throw in several other languages, and you have the WCAR. I lost a full day (over eight hours) standing in line to get the accreditation pass to enter the government event — and then learned I would need an



Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Durban

extra "special" pass to actually enter the main building! At the NGO Forum that preceded the governmental conference, workshops were never where the paperwork indicated, signs were absent, knowledgeable volunteers were nowhere to be found. The morning NGO briefings were dominated by people complaining about logistics, rather than discussing programmatic themes. Isaac Miller, rector of the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, Penn., offered an opinion being expressed by many: Behind the scenes, some people were intentionally supplying mis-information. Clearly, creating anger and confusion worked to the advantage of those who did not support the aims of this conference.

The second obstacle was the Middle East topic dominating the public debate. The withdrawal of the Israeli and U.S. governments from Durban was the focus of international media coverage, but surprised few NGOs. (One young U.S. activist stated, "This is not new; this does not surprise me at all. The U.S. has NEVER been here!") Even for people who support the Palestinian cause for justice, the focus on it to the exclusion of many others was depressing.

The third and perhaps most important concern was the overall theme of the conference. Since it was not simply a conference on racism, but rather one on "Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance," the agenda was all over the place. People who hoped to concentrate on matters of colonialism, white supremacy, and institutional racism saw their concerns deemphasized in this process. Tissa Balasuriya, a Roman Catholic cleric from Sri Lanka, advised, "We are discussing small issues here, not the overall racist and colonialist context. Indeed, the UN itself is based on a racist world structure, and reflects it."

However, there were those who seemed unconcerned that the document language would not be perfect. Basil Fernando, a Sri Lankan staff member of the Asian Human Rights Center in Hong Kong, said, "If the whole focus of this process is to get treaties signed, this will not matter. Countries in our region DO sign these documents, but then do nothing." Madonna Thunder Hawk, an American Indian, agreed that the conference needed to be assessed differently: "Let us not forget this is all about networking — meeting with people in similar situations. That is the real way things can change."

In that sense, the WCAR was an unqualified success. Thousands of activists and government reps from around the world engaged one another in critical dialogue, and built lasting relationships with one another. This appears to be the greatest mistake of the U.S. government's departure from Durban. By not simply saying, "We disagree with you, and are going to debate these points," but rather, "We have no wish to discuss this with you," the U.S. effectively removed itself from building relationships and trust with other international participants — even (or perhaps especially) those with whom it significantly differs. The Durban experience — and the devastating terrorist attacks on the U.S. three days later — must be viewed within a continuum of isolationist U.S. policy decisions (the Kyoto climate change treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the land mines treaty, etc.) it has made in 2001.

What will be the way forward? For people of faith, there are a number of specific tasks that lay ahead. The World Council of Churches has begun an anti-racism survey of all its member denominations. Local and national church groups are commissioning their own studies of specific issues — many U.S. groups have been energized on reparations to support Congressman John Conyers' bill HR40, for instance. Some are even reviewing church land holdings within this context. Mostly, the community of faith must contextualize these contentious issues by offering spiritual education, community dialogue, and theological discourse, leading to action. As Fernando says, "One firm conviction I have is that it is the private citizens that can really make a change. If they speak out their minds and if they intervene to assert what they think is right and wrong, there is hope for a transition to peaceful times." With a lack of major victories from Durban, and the current spirit of mistrust and uncertainty, we must hope that Fernando's optimistic perspective will prove to be correct. ●

***Ethan Flad**, who lives in Oakland, Calif., is editor/producer of "a global Witness" (new name pending) at <www.thewitness.org/agw>*

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Vulnerable to Apocalypse

The smoke and ash still rise from the rubble as these words are written. The anguish of lives lost hovers over city and nation. My present fear is that shortly ashes and rubble will be made elsewhere in the name of the dead. My present hope is that the Word of God may be discerned standing in the shadows of these very events.

The attack on the towers has been called evil. It is. The temptation is to imagine thereby that the U.S. is the very embodiment of good. It is not. Conspicuously fused with the current language of war is a "theology" — a rigid dualism of good and evil. It is a dualism equally suited to terrorists and war-makers.

Our broken hearts are indeed the proper place to begin theological reflection. Wounded hearts, the tears of suffering and death, however, can lead divergent ways. I think of the holocaust, a truly innocent suffering on a vastly different scale, but theologically edifying. So many of those who passed through that horror witnessed to a renewed vision of humanity, a moral passion on behalf of all those who anywhere suffer violence and injustice. But that same history, the same anguish of suffering, can also be invoked to sanction exclusion, demolition, assassination, air strikes and Palestinian apartheid. The meaning of suffering and death is partly a moral choice, theologically put.

In the search for the meaning of these events, the temptation is to be justified by suffering. "Justification" is employed here firstly in St. Paul's sense, of constructing a self-righteous idolatry. This is a pastoral issue to which congregations who gather round those in grief ought to be alert. And it is a political issue for a nation that would justify the next round of military build-up, continuing construction of the largest war machine on the planet. In fact, our congregations must recognize that the political maneuver provokes a pastoral crisis of major proportion. When nations intervene, manipulating grief, they offer idolatrous, nationalistic, vengeful substitutions for the grace of God and true community. They preempt the forgiving love of the Gospel.

As the South Africans have taught us so well, reconciliation and forgiveness require truth. But if recent days are any measure, the truth would stun many Americans. For most, the innocence of victims is one with the innocence of the nation. And yet it must be said that the U.S. has been pioneer and master of targeting civilians. Be it instruments of mass destruction or antipersonnel weaponry or the slow terrors of low-intensity warfare. From Hiroshima to Vietnam to the contra war in Nicaragua to the infrastructure bombing of Iraq, and more, civilians have been not merely "collateral damage" but target. The question is: Can we look on the rubble of Manhattan and see Baghdad or Beirut or Ramallah? Do the eyes of our heart open or close?

There is likewise the truth of Osama bin Laden — and others like him — trained and supported and used by the CIA in the Afghan war against the Soviets. When we reap the whirlwind, do we see what we have sown?

And this barely begins to touch on the truth of the global economy, for which the Trade Towers were both a literal and symbolic headquarters. How to even evoke this gathering system, which excludes and crushes the poor, strip-mines culture and assaults the earth.

The image of the falling towers, played over and over, has been quite literally apocalyptic. It even prompts certain fundamentalists, with their concomitant dualisms and judgments, to claim the will of God, and see endtime signs. Apocalyptic, of course, is not about timelines, but truth. Apocalypse means "revelation," means "unveiling," means pulling aside the curtain of delusions that cover history's meaning. We do, indeed, need to look deep in reading this sign of the times.

I've been led to think on the apocalyptic dream of Daniel 2. There the towering imperial image of gold and bronze and iron is overwhelmingly strong and glorious above, but it's got to stand somewhere and what it stands upon is actually its vulnerability. Clay feet. If it doesn't stand on a foundation of justice it's vulnerable even to collapse. In the dream it crashes down like this heaving emblem in history. Such an image raises the question: What are we actually standing on? What is the real source of our continuing vulnerability? Is it inadequate security machinery and inadequate military power, or is it inadequate justice?

If a Word of hope is in the rubble it may be the choice clearly put: Will we sow yet again the whirlwind or lay with our lives a new foundation?

— Bill Wylie-Kellermann (An earlier version of this piece appeared in Sojourners, *www.sojo.net.)*

War is not a game

Now is the time in the game of war when we dehumanize our enemies. They are utterly incomprehensible, their acts unimaginable, their motivations senseless. They are "madmen" and their states are "rogue." Now is not the time for more understanding — just better intelligence. These are the rules of the war game.

Feeling people will no doubt object to this characterization: War is not a game. It is real lives ripped in half; it is lost sons, daughters, mothers and fathers, each with a dignified story. This act of terror was reality of the harshest kind, an act that makes all other acts seem suddenly frivolous, game-like.

It's true: War is most emphatically not a game. And perhaps it will never again be treated as one. Perhaps Sept. 11, 2001, will mark the end of the shameful era of the video game war. Watching the coverage on Tuesday was a stark contrast to the last time I sat glued to a television set watching a real-time war on CNN. The Space Invader battlefield of the Gulf War had almost nothing in common with what we have seen this week. Back then, instead of real buildings exploding over and over again, we saw only sterile bomb's-eye views of concrete targets — there and then gone. Who was in these abstract polygons? We never found out.

Since the Gulf War, American foreign policy has been based on a single brutal fiction: that the U.S. military can intervene in conflicts around the world — in Iraq, Kosovo, Israel — without suffering any U.S. casualties. This is a country that has come to believe in the ultimate oxymoron: a safe war.

This conviction has, until Tuesday, allowed Americans to remain blithely unaffected by — even uninterested in — international conflicts

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in which they are key protagonists. Americans don't get daily coverage on CNN of the ongoing bombings in Iraq, nor are they treated to human-interest stories on the devastating effects of economic sanctions on that country's children. After the 1998 bombing of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan (mistaken for a chemical weapons facility), there weren't too many follow-up reports about what the loss of vaccine manufacturing did to disease prevention in the region.

And when NATO bombed civilian targets in Kosovo — including markets, hospitals, refugee convoys, passenger trains and a TV station — NBC didn't do "streeter" interviews with survivors about how shocked they were by the indiscriminate destruction.

The U.S. has become expert in the art of sanitizing and dehumanizing acts of war committed elsewhere. Domestically, war is no longer a national obsession, it's a business that is now largely outsourced to experts. This is one of the country's many paradoxes: Though the engine of globalization around the world, the nation has never been more inward looking, less worldly. ...

Like an amnesiac, the U.S. has woken up in the middle of a war, only to find out the war has been going on for years.

Did the U.S. deserve to be attacked? Of course not. That suggestion is ugly and dangerous. But here's a different question that must be asked: Did U.S. foreign policy create the conditions in which such twisted logic could flourish, a war not so much on U.S. imperialism but on perceived U.S. imperviousness?

— *Naomi Klein, http://www.inthesetimes.com*

No technical solution

We must hold, as if to life itself, to a fundamental truth that has been known to all thoughtful people since the destruction of Hiroshima: There is no technical solution to the vulnerability of modern populations to weapons of mass destruction. ... It is to politics that we must return for the solutions that hold promise. That means returning to the treaties that the U.S. has recently been discarding like so much old newspaper — the one dealing, for example with an International Criminal Court (useful for tracking down terrorists and bringing them to justice), with global warming and, above all, with nuclear arms and the other weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical. The U.S. and seven other countries now rely for their national security on the retaliatory execution of destruction a millionfold greater than the Tuesday attacks. The exit from this folly, by which we endanger ourselves as much as others, must be found.

— *Jonathan Schell,* The Nation, *10/1/01*

For more commentary on the September 11 attacks, see <www.thewitness.org/agw>.

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DMin in spirituality, sustainability

New Doctor of Ministry program sponsored by United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, and the Center for Spirituality and Sustainability in Arkansas encourages ministerial leadership that is infused with respect for life and environment. The program, which begins in January 2002, offers areas of specialization in sustainability, interreligious dialog, human-animal bonds, process theology and holistic ministries. Program mentors are eco-theologian and *Witness* contributing editor Jay McDaniel, Xavier University theology professor and author Paul Knitter, and Jane Ann Clarke, a United Methodist minister with a Doctor of Ministry in ecological theology. For more information, contact Amanda Moore, 501-336-0889, aem@conwaycorp.net.

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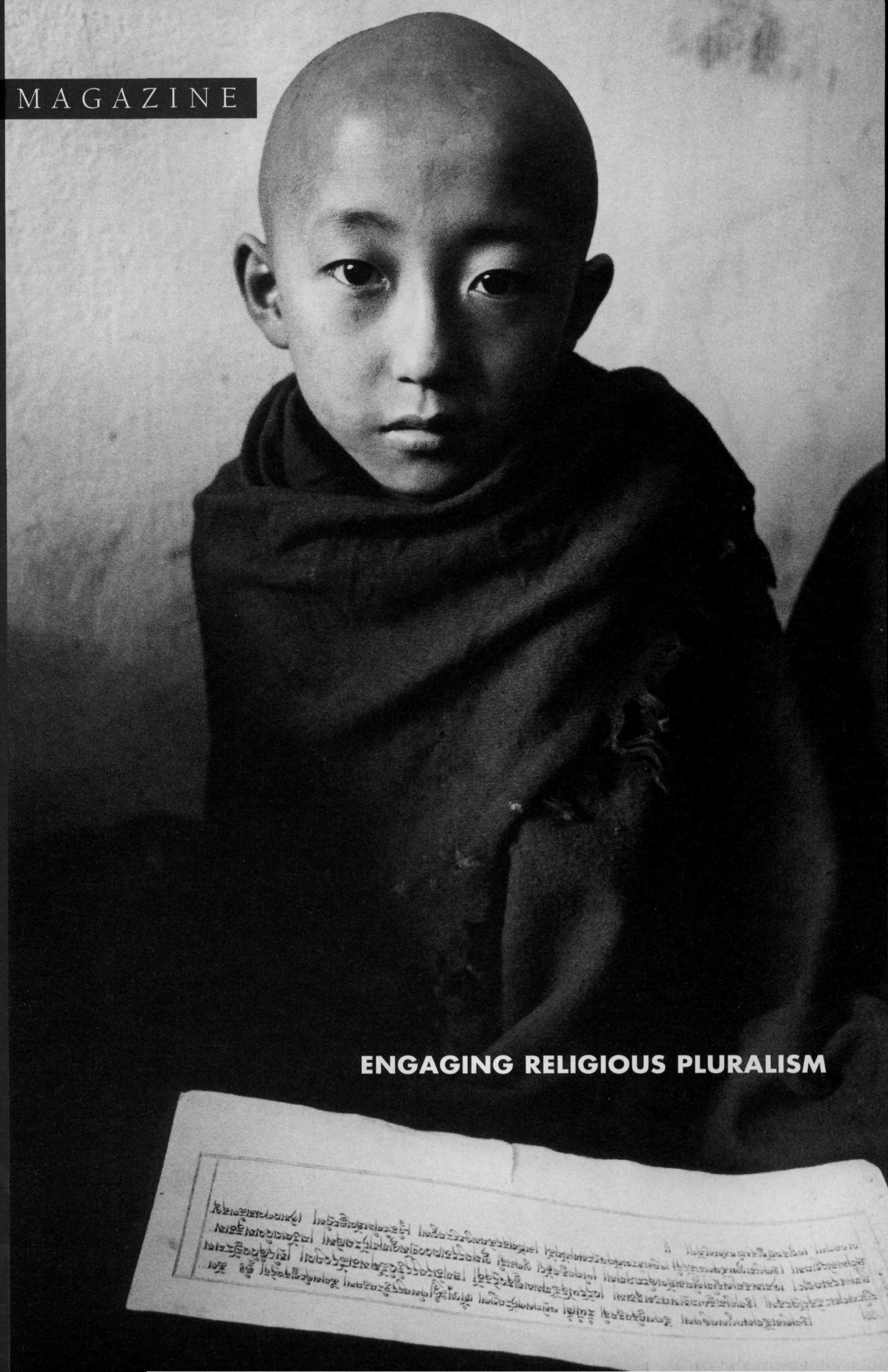

ENGAGING RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

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WITNESS MAGAZINE

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© Sean Kernan

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VOLUME 84
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Since 1917, ***The Witness*** has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Manuscripts will not be returned.

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The Witness

Editor/Publisher
Julie A. Wortman

Senior Editor
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Associate Editor
Marianne Arbogast

Staff Writer
Camille Colatosti

Media Reviews
Bill Wylie-Kellermann
Bruce Campbell

a global WITNESS
Ethan Flad

Magazine Production
KAT Design, Camden, ME

Website Design
Jim Dugan

Controller
Roger Dage

Development/Marketing
Wes Todd

Office Manager
Alice Devine

Episcopal Church Publishing Co.
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Change of address: Third Class mail does not forward. Provide your new mailing address to *The Witness*.

Offices: To reach Julie Wortman:
HC 35 Box 647, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860
Tel: (207)372-6396.
To reach Wes Todd:
232 Main Street, Thomaston, ME 04861
Tel: (207)354-7041
Subscription questions — Alice Devine:
PO Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856
Tel: (207) 763-2990

Website: www.thewitness.org

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OPEN LETTER

An Advent call to the church

As we enter this season of Advent the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, *The Witness*' contributing editors and the staff of *The Witness* magazine and website call the Episcopal Church and all people of faith to prayer for the victims of the September 11 hijackings and attacks and for all victims of the "war against global terrorism." We also call for sustained personal and corporate reflection about the morality of the bombing of Afghanistan and national policies associated with the war that are affecting the welfare of global citizens, asylum seekers, economic refugees and the earth. We hope that this reflection may lead us to committed personal and public witness on behalf of justice and peace.

To aid in such reflection, and in a spirit of *Witness* tradition, we offer these words of Martin Luther King, Jr.:

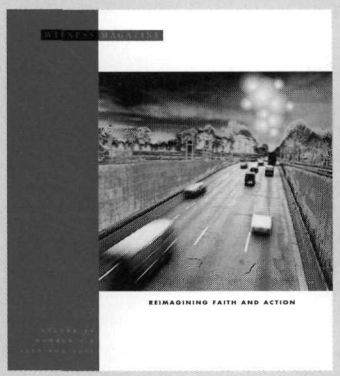
"The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. So it goes. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: Only love can do that."

We also offer our individual prayers and reflections on the war in the "a global Witness" section of our website, at <www.thewitness.org>.

Recent discussions among board members, staff and contributing editors have led *The Witness*' editorial staff to begin making plans for an issue on "Faith and patriotism" for March 2002.

Utne Reader nominates The Witness

THE WITNESS has been nominated for an *Utne Reader* 2001 Alternative Press Award in the category of spiritual coverage.



"*The Witness* is a great example of creative, beyond-the-mainstream thinking, and we are proud to honor it with an Utne Reader Alternative Press Award nomination," said Jay Walljasper, *Utne Reader* Editorial Director.

The vision of *The Witness* is global and our concerns are for all who struggle for liberation. Especially people of faith committed to supporting those seeking a voice and building justice-seeking coalitions across denominations.

Utne Reader, the nation's leading digest of the alternative media, has a paid circulation of 225,000. Since 1989 the Alternative Press Awards have showcased the best from the alternative press. *Utne Reader*'s editors select nominee publications through their extensive reading process and careful examination, rather than a competition requiring entry forms and fees. In this way, *Utne Reader* honors the efforts of small, sometimes unnoticed publications that provide innovative, thought-provoking perspectives often ignored by mass media.

Earlier this year *The Witness* was recognized with five first place Awards of Excellence and two Honorable Mentions by the Associated Church Press at their annual meeting in Minneapolis.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Embracing Christianity's chance to become more fully itself

by Julie A. Wortman

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THESE DAYS I DOUBT there are many *Witness* readers in the U.S. whose daily excursions into the world aren't lit by a galaxy of stars and stripes and punctuated by insistent entreaties that God bless America. For the most part, this display signals a heartfelt sense of solidarity with those who grieve the loss of friends, family members and colleagues in the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon — and with those who are endeavoring to shore up our homeland's security and put an end to global terrorism.

But I find myself feeling wary. Because while God Bless America may be intended as an every-citizen's prayer, if we're honest with ourselves we suspect that it is at heart an exclusivist declaration that the Judeo-Christian God favors an Anglocentric, capitalistic U.S. above all other nations and if you've got problems with any part of that, the U.S. has problems with you.

This between-the-lines message, however unconsciously delivered and received, bespeaks stubborn, perhaps fearful, resistance to the fact that this is no longer an Anglo-Saxon, "Christian country." In fact, as Diana Eck writes in *A New Religious America* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), "The United States has become the most religiously diverse nation on earth."[I commend Eck's book as a must-read in these times.]

What the churches do with this information is crucial. A reactionary case in point is the "20/20" proposal (its proponents call it a "movement") to finance a concerted effort to double average Sunday attendance in Episcopal churches by the year 2020. While the 20/20 report issued in October 2001 forthrightly admits that "Christianity is no longer dominant in our culture" and that "the formerly mainline churches may have a much more modest place in the scheme of things than has historically been the case," its authors also emphasize that "we will be living in a society where a multiplicity of faith groups and religions are in aggressive competition with us, and that we are called to answer the challenge with both grace and enthusiasm" — by, as the report makes clear, reframing mainline [white, privileged] Episcopal Christianity to attract new converts of other races, ethnicities and cultures, and by promoting "a fresh, new understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ."

I would be glad for the church's deeper understanding of the racial and cultural diversity it has long resisted. And for its deeper appreciation of the radical nature of discipleship. But the 20/20 "movement's" take on both topics appears both superficial and "retro." A smug us-versus-them mentality cast in "Father-Knows-Best" terms, deftly packaged for a diverse array of consumers and gesturing vaguely in the direction of a never-spelled-out goal of "sacrificial Christian service." The clearest proposal in the 20/20 report, in fact, is a recommendation that the Episcopal Church "establish a Research and Analysis Unit under the direction of a skilled statistician and researcher," who can make sure we're collecting appropriate data so that we can know as accurately as possible just how many worshipers there are in Episcopal churches from year to year. We'd be "building a church of disciples who make disciples," we're told, with the numbers to prove it.

Is this the dream we have of the church's future?

Competing for market share of our country's pluralistic population is more my idea of a nightmare.

As I write these words bombs are being dropped with ferocious and relentless urgency on Afghanistan. This country's welcome to refugees and asylum seekers is being dramatically curtailed. Legislation continues to enforce a trickle-down economy. And Congress is frantically passing "patriotic" security measures that abridge many of the freedoms our government says it is attempting to defend.

At the same time, news reports say, U.S. citizens are grasping for a way to make meaning of the events which have brought them to sudden consciousness that life is real and earnest — and immensely, diversely, sometimes shamefully, complicated — even in America the Beautiful. Many are showing up in our churches clutching life's crucial questions to their breasts. I cringe with embarassment to think of how confidently many in our pulpits will, with 20/20 enthusiasm, offer definitive answers in myopic hope of keeping the pews full.

The moment is alive with possibility. But saving the Episcopal Church, or even Christianity, from marginalization is not the goal. The strangers we are suddenly recognizing as fellow citizens of this nation and globe will, if we embrace them in an open-hearted spirit of radical hospitality, certainly change us all. This is very good news. Because in the process, I believe, Christianity has the chance to become more fully itself. A chance to become radically new. Radically deep. Radically of the creator.

Most importantly, I say with all deference to the statisticians, a stance of radical hospitality, not aggressive competition, will give Christianity a chance to become radically immeasurable. ●

Julie A. Wortman is The Witness' *editor/publisher.*

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PROMOTING 'FRANCHISES' TO END RELIGIO

Sean Kernan

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an interview with

by Julie A. Wortman

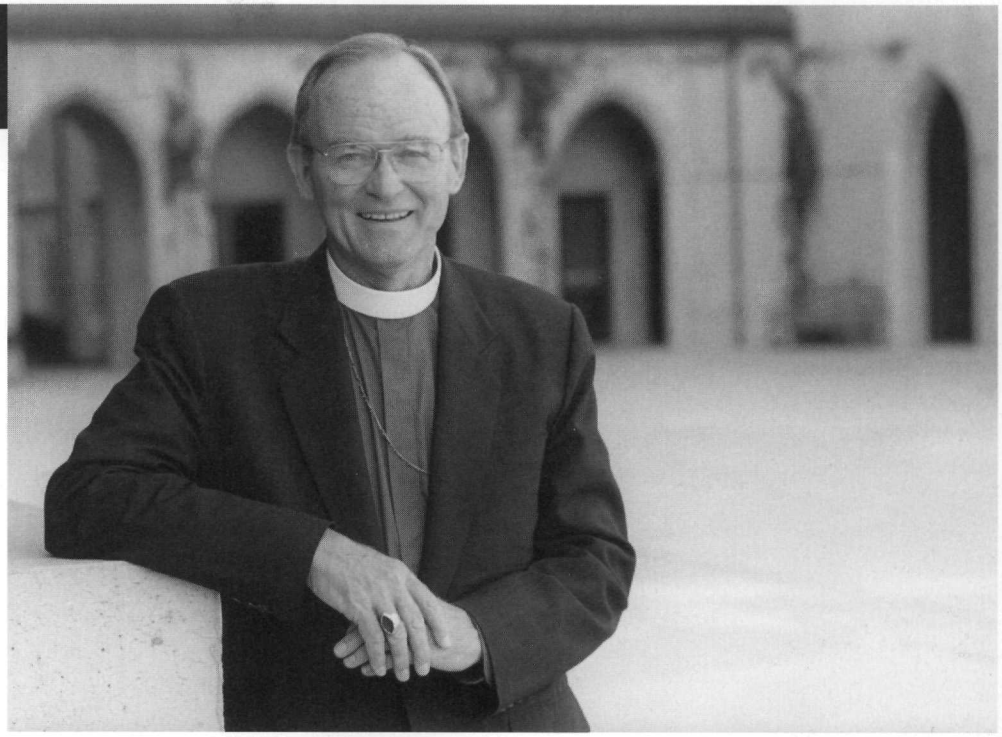
WILLIAM SWING, the Episcopal Bishop of California since 1980, first got the idea of creating the United Religions Initiative (URI) in 1993, when he was asked to organize an interfaith worship service at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral as part of the upcoming 50th-anniversary celebration of the signing of the United Nations charter. His idea was to create a sort of United Nations of Religions — if nations could find a way to work peaceably together to solve global problems, why not religions? But in the end, with the help of David Cooperrider, who teaches at Case Western Reserve's Weatherhead School of Management and runs an organization called Social Innovations in Global Management (SIGMA), and Dee Hock, the founder of Visa and an organizational design innovator, URI took the form of a non-hierarchical, self-organizing grassroots network of "cooperation circles," each having at least seven members from at least three different religious expressions. A Global Council manages the operations of the URI, including developing financial resources and processing applications for membership.

The group's formal launch was the signing of its charter on June 26, 2000. Since then, over 150 cooperation circles have been formed in 60 countries on five continents, involving, Swing says, "hundreds of thousands of people." Interest in URI's work, he adds, has profoundly accelerated since September 11.

This phone interview occurred a couple of days before the U.S. began bombing targets in Afghanistan in retaliation for the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

JS VIOLENCE

William Swing



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The Witness: The goal of URI, as I understand it, is to end religiously motivated violence.

William Swing: Yes. The first part of that is to promote daily, enduring interfaith cooperation. The second is to end religiously motivated violence. Third is to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the earth and all living beings.

TW: How does URI do that?

WS: We trust that the real problems are going to be addressed and changed not at the top of religion, but at the grassroots of religion. So we allow people to form their own cooperation circles around any issue or activity that they want. When they do so, they have all the authority that is in the URI. In Malawi, for example, we have lots of cooperation circles focused on AIDS. One of our number, Bill Rankin, who was in development for us, has now started GAIA, the Global AIDS International Association. He's using the URI cooperation circle network throughout Malawi to do AIDS education, prevention, treatment, etc. We went from having one cooperation circle there to having multiple circles forming a whole universe of cooperation around one issue.

We believe you're not going to get rid of violence by passing a resolution. What's happened in Kosovo is the result of 600 years of hatred across religious and cultural/ethnic lines. You only get rid of it by 600 more years of dealing with the hearts of the people on the ground. There aren't any quick fixes when it comes to religion — it's too ancient and too subterranean and the tap root goes down too far. It's really got to be whittled away and addressed every day in a constructive way at a grassroots level.

TW: So it sounds like URI's basic aim is to put people into relationship? They've got a common goal, a project and they are in relationship around that, dealing daily with their differences along the way.

WS: Absolutely. And they have to abide by the 21 principles of the URI.

TW: Those principles are pretty comprehensive. If people can say that they accept these principles, it seems you're ensuring a certain level of shared values from the outset. Without underestimating the power of the differences between people even if they share these values, how can the URI have an impact on deeper divisions? I think about one of the principles that has to do with equity between women and men.

WS: The first thing to say is that if we were trying, at the top of religion, to get one religion to deal with another, there would be too many contradictory and opposing viewpoints about which no one in a leadership position would feel able to cut any slack. But when you're dealing at the grassroots level, there are a lot of people who say, I don't really go along with everything that my religion teaches and therefore that makes it possible for me to meet you and deal with you across the boundary lines. That's why we have more potential for dealing with those deeper differences. There are groups that have a very low esteem toward women, but then there are a lot of people in that group that have a high esteem toward women and they will join the URI. Of course, if the folks at the top ever put the pressure on them to get out of URI, then that would be where the rubber hits the road.

TW: You are not just talking about people with denominational affiliations, right?

WS: We're talking about people in religions, people who are part of indigenous traditions and people who are led in a path of spirituality like spirituality and healing, or spirituality and the environment, etc. So it's a much broader range of people.

TW: Are there limits to cooperation that you've encountered? Is it possible to work cooperatively, say, with fundamentalists?

WS: Looking at it from another angle, a little anecdote. Somebody who is not a fundamentalist, but of a very evangelical nature, came into an interfaith group in San

The United Religions Initiative Charter

Preamble

We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions throughout the world, hereby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

We respect the uniqueness of each tradition and differences of practice or belief.

We value voices that respect others and believe that sharing values and wisdom can lead us to act for the good of all.

We believe that our religious, spiritual lives, rather than dividing us, guide us to build community and respect for one another.

Therefore, as interdependent people rooted in our traditions, we now unite for the benefit of our Earth community.

We unite to build cultures of peace and justice.

We unite to heal and protect the Earth.

We unite to build safe places for conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation.

We unite to support freedom of religion and spiritual expression and the rights of all individuals and peoples as set forth in international law.

We unite in responsible cooperative action to bring the wisdom and values of our religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions to bear on the economic, environmental, political and social challenges facing our Earth community.

We unite to provide a global opportunity for participation by all people, especially by those whose voices are not often heard.

We unite to celebrate the joy of blessings and the light of wisdom in both movement and stillness.

We unite to use our combined resources only for nonviolent, compassionate action, to awaken to our deepest truths and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

Purpose

The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living things.

Principles

1. We are a bridge-building organization, not a religion.
2. We respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition.
3. We respect the differences among religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions.
4. We encourage our members to deepen their roots in their own tradition.
5. We listen and speak with respect to deepen mutual understanding and trust.
6. We give and receive hospitality.
7. We seek and welcome the gift of diversity and model practices that do not discriminate.
8. We practice equitable participation of women and men in all aspects of the URI.
9. We practice healing and reconciliation to resolve conflict without resorting to violence.
10. We act from sound ecological practices to protect and preserve the Earth for both present and future generations.
11. We seek and offer cooperation with other interfaith efforts.

Francisco right after September 11 and said, "Look, you guys have been part of the enemy to me and I have got to start blessing the people I have cursed." And I thought, boy, that speaks volumes.

TW: How are you seeing URI's work in light of the events of September 11?

WS: Forgetting URI for a second, it just was very clear that something most natural happened, which was that every community that had an event of a spiritual or religious nature had an interfaith event. It wasn't like the President sent out a decree, or the World Council of Churches said we would suggest that you do this. Everybody looked around and said that in order to be the full human family here, with our religious differences, we all need to come together. And people flocked toward each other who heretofore would have had nothing to do with each other. And so I think interfaith has just created itself!

For instance, with the ecumenical movement there were two things that happened. Number one, enough time had gone by since the Reformation that people could see that the animosities between Catholics and Protestants were kind of senseless. Number two, people kept praying Christ's prayer for unity and said we just really must do something about ecumenism. So that's where ecumenism came from. But interfaith comes out of a deep sense of the total good of society. It's not a matter of Christ's prayer, or Mohammed's prayer, or anybody's prayer. It's a matter of, when you look around, common sense tells you that we're not going to make it as a nation unless we learn how to deal with each other religiously.

TW: And so you're thinking that what happened on September 11 pushed people into getting past old divisions and understanding the need for being together, for being cooperative?

WS: Although a lot of flags have been sold, when an enemy goes after civilians it's no longer just a national issue, it's a humanity issue. We're not talking about combatants, we're just talking about human beings. Once you have a stronger, broader, deeper understanding of humanity, then interfaith follows immediately thereafter.

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TW: Do you have any cooperation circles that bridge national borders?

WS: Yes, in Ethiopia, for instance, with Eritrea and Ethiopia. And in India/Pakistan, along the Jamu/Kashmir border. There are people there on both sides of the border who come together in the summertime at one of our conferences to deal with each other because they can't do it normally at home. And in the Middle East we have five cooperation circles in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Nazareth and two other cities. They've formed a multiple cooperation circle because they're all dealing with the Middle East issue with Muslims, Jews and Christians together. We're seeing some rapid growth of URI there, heroic growth. It is good to know there are some people who are holding the peace across the borders of religion.

TW: As I understand it, some of what's been going on with URI is that people who are already involved in interfaith activity are signing on to URI to be part of a larger network. How many new cooperation circles have developed — ones that weren't already functioning?

WS: We're being flooded by applications to start new circles. These are considered by our international board. We've been bringing on about 20 new cooperation circles every couple of months and now we're looking at three times that number.

TW: Has there been especially big growth since September 11?

WS: Not only has there been big growth, but just an awful lot of imaginative things. For instance, all of these people in Salt Lake City, from Native American tribes to Muslims and others have decided that they would like to go back to the Olympic truce that was part of the original Olympics. These people are saying that they'd like to push the Olympic truce for the Olympics and to also push it for religions.

TW: I noticed that there were some cooperation circles in Pakistan. In light of U.S. efforts to forge some kind of cooperative relationship with Pakistan to facilitate its efforts to fight terrorists based in Afghanistan, are you getting any word from folks in that region about cooperative efforts to respond to this situation?

WS: We don't have any work in Afghanistan, because it would just be impossible with that government to make that happen. But in Pakistan, that's the largest Muslim country in the world for us. Their response to URI has been the greatest. We have cooperation circles in Karachi, lots in Lahore, lots around Islamabad. I was just there this spring, in Lahore and Islamabad. I've watched the email coming in from those folks and they are finding it very hard to keep an interfaith coalition together. The

12. We welcome as members all individuals, organizations and associations who subscribe to the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.

13. We have the authority to make decisions at the most local level that includes all the relevant and affected parties.

14. We have the right to organize in any manner, at any scale, in any area and around any issue or activity which is relevant to and consistent with the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.

15. Our deliberations and decisions shall be made at every level by bodies and methods that fairly represent the diversity of affected interests and are not dominated by any.

16. We (each part of the URI) shall relinquish only such autonomy and resources as are essential to the pursuit of the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.

17. We have the responsibility to develop financial and other resources to meet the needs of our part, and to share financial and other resources to help meet the needs of other parts.

18. We maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, prudent use of resources, and fair and accurate disclosure of information.

19. We are committed to organizational learning and adaptation.

20. We honor the richness and diversity of all languages and the right and responsibility of participants to translate and interpret the Charter, Bylaws and related documents in accordance with the Preamble, Purpose and Principles, and the spirit of the United Religions Initiative.

21. Members of the URI shall not be coerced to participate in any ritual or be proselytized. ●

URI may be contacted at PO Box 29242, San Francisco, CA 94129-0242; 415-561-2300; <www.uri.org>.

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mounting vehemence against anything that isn't the local religion is powerful. A lot of our people are ducking for cover right now. They're very afraid.

TW: So that suggests that there is a fair amount of will for cooperation in Pakistan, but that in the current political climate that is being suppressed?

WS: I went to Sri Lanka, three different places in India and a couple of places in Pakistan. What I found was that every place we went we were surrounded by weapons — the local government was under attack by insurgents no matter where we were. The government would turn to the URI and say, "We need you. We need stability among religions to have stability in this country." So they rolled out the red carpet for us any place we went. That was usually because they were under such siege that they were looking for any group that could do reconciliation, conflict resolution, or who had an ongoing, daily, enduring concept of how you do interfaith work at a grassroots level.

TW: When I've talked to people about the URI, some folks ask whether it is really true that conflict between religions is fundamentally religious conflict or are we talking about a situation in which people are suffering economically or don't have human rights and religious difference is an emblem of that?

WS: There is in religion itself, usually, a deep sense of terrorism that we manufacture. I don't think we're ever going to get toward a solution until we go back to the religions to say, "How many times have we been encouraged to take the jawbone of an ass and slay all the Philistines for the sake of God? Or encouraged to believe that we need to kill every man, woman and child in the village or else we'll be haunted in our dreams like King Saul?" There's enough violence and terrorism in our own tradition that we've never come to terms with.

Secondly, there's a sense of superiority in religions that we're going to have to take care of some day. You know, Nazi Germany would say, "We're the superior race." Well, religions get by with saying almost that, that we're really God's people and the others aren't, that we're going to heaven and the others aren't, that we're of great worth and the others aren't unless they become like us. So some day religions are going to have to become accountable for their own contribution to terrorism. Until we even get a little sense of that, we're all just going to sit on opposite sides of the street and throw stones at each other.

TW: So, taking Northern Ireland as an example, you think that even if we could figure out how to structurally redress the inequity there between Protestants and Catholics in terms of economics and other sorts of social advantage we would still leave unanswered something that's a more fundamental divide?

WS: I would say exactly that. I think religions want to let themselves off the hook by saying, "We are without sin. It's those awful politicians and money people that come in and use us for their ends and we get co-opted." But the truth is that we're more at the heart of this than that and I don't think we ought to be let off the hook. And also, when we get co-opted, we have a lot to gain from that. It means we get to corner the market. And religions are out there in the world trying to corner the market for themselves. As long as we are trying to corner the market for ourselves, that makes it possible to turn your face away and not look while things are being done to other people.

TW: You talk about "cornering the market" — a business term. You've spoken about turning to business for fresh ideas about how to organize an enterprise like the URI. Given that the church has often modeled itself on business practices, what's different about the kind of business thinking that has gone into the organizing of the URI?

WS: If you take Colonel Sanders, he wants to set up exact replicas with the original recipe all the way across the world. And what we say is, there is no original recipe. You've got to figure out whatever the spirit is leading you to chose as your issue. And then you can go at it the way you want as long as you stick with the principles. So if you look at our franchises, none of them look like each other.

TW: Apparently there's a new wave in business thinking in a globalized environment that is similar to what you are talking about. The ability to take an idea and let it be in a place in a very local way as opposed to one-size-fits-all and golden arches. Is that what you've tapped into?

WS: Absolutely. I think the 19th- and 20th-century models of interfaith and ecumenism just borrowed from the culture, which is to say we thought we needed a president and a vice-president and so many committees and everybody should wear the T-shirt of the company and do things the way the boss or central committee says, from the top down. And what we're saying is, there is no central committee to tell you what to do. The greatest amount of authority is invested in the smallest unit. You create it and do it the way you think best.

TW: Does this have any implications for the Anglican Communion?

WS: I think the Anglican Communion models that a little bit and pretty well. Because we don't have a pope and we don't have a confession. And we just let 38 different groups roll their own out there.

TW: It's actually pretty interesting, because I think that was the conversation that was happening around the edges at the Lambeth Conference of Bishops in 1998. Peoples' negative reaction to the Virginia Report, in fact, was testimony to the fact that that embraced an old model for how to be a global enterprise versus really allowing every province to self-organize. But I guess you turned to business because you weren't

We found out that religion knows a lot about competition but very little

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finding in the church any model that was going to be useful in this global venture?
WS: We found out that religion knows a lot about competition but very little about cooperation.

TW: What kind of reception have you been getting to the URI from your fellow bishops?
WS: At this fall's meeting of the bishops people kept coming up to me saying, what you've been talking about has come home to roost and we've got to pay attention now to

about cooperation.

other faiths. They wouldn't have said that if it hadn't been for the events of September 11.

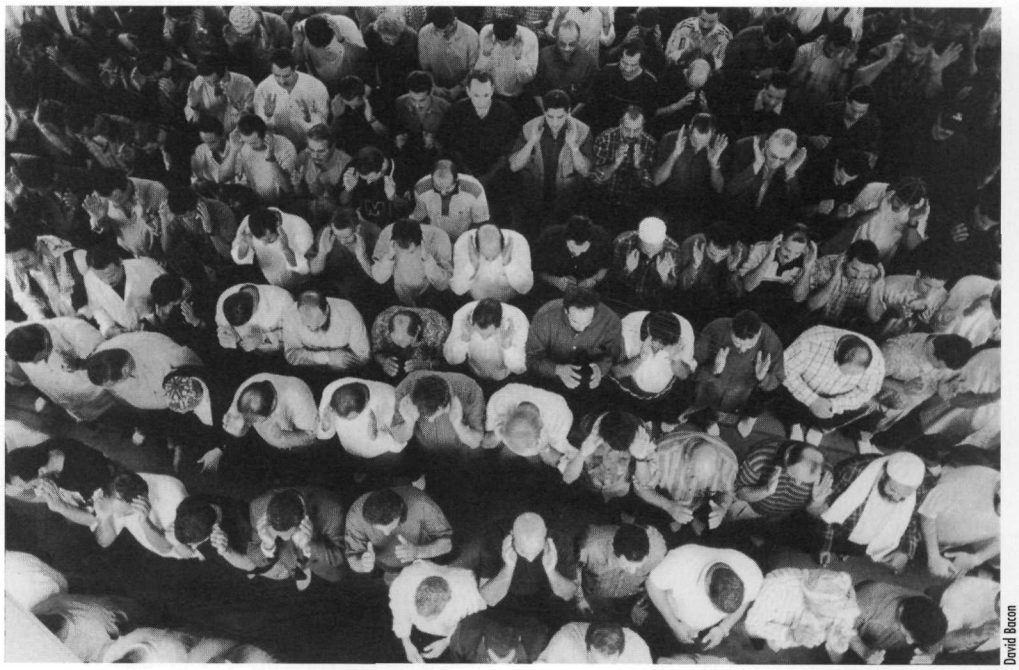
TW: I've noticed that when I've mentioned the URI I've encountered people who roll their eyes and wonder what sort of "whoo-whoo" venture is that? What do you think is incomprehensible about the URI?
WS: Once you're in the Episcopal Church or in the Roman Catholic Church, you think inside the boundaries of that church. To do interfaith work at an international level as well as at a local level means you have to keep two thoughts in your brain at the same time. One thought would be, "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior," and the other thought would be, "God has probably been generous to other people in other symbols and other ways." So you've got to both claim the salvation that you see and honor the mystery of God's being generous to other people in ways that you can't comprehend. You've got to hold two things at the same time and give them both high attention and high marks. As long as people don't think in that way, we at URI seem to be in la-la land. But once you see a fanatic religious group murdering the people around you, you realize that you have to elevate the understanding not only of your own faith, but of all faiths.

TW: How has your involvement with URI changed you?
WS: Well, number one, and probably the most important, would be that I now have deeper friends with whom I can speak intimately about faith, who are Jews and Muslims and Sikhs and Hindus, etc. In the old days I might have known a little about their philosophy, I might have seen one or shaken hands with one, but I never had real deep friends among them. Those friendships have changed me considerably.

TW: Are you part of a cooperation circle?
WS: I guess I am. All of us on the global council of URI are part of a cooperation circle. We decided that this administrative level of work had to be organized the same way as any local circle.

TW: What do you think is the biggest change to religion in America that is going to come as a result of September 11?
WS: It's really a coming-out party for the Islamic people in our midst. Up until September 11, Muslims in America had stayed within their ghettos. After September 11, people have come to the fore to say, "Please come out and tell us who you are, teach us what you believe and help us figure out where we should go from here to build America together." After the attacks there were hundreds of instances of violence or discrimination against Muslims in this country. But I bet there have been thousands of invitations to Muslims to speak and teach and come out and be heard that heretofore had never been issued.

I think the defining point of religion in this country was when Thomas Jefferson, looking in the rearview mirror at all the religiously motivated violence of Europe, said, "We've got to create a country that does it right this time around." He came up with two little principles. One was that no church shall be established above the rest. The other was that all the religions will have their freedom of expression. That was figured out by a politician for the churches for the sake of America. The religions in America have never figured that out yet. We're still holding out to corner the market. Some day the religions will catch up to Jefferson. That's what the interfaith movement is about. ●



David Bacon

Prayers are offered at the funeral of Abdo Ali Ahmed, a Yemeni grocer murdered in Fresno, Calif., following the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C.

Julie A. Wortman, who lives in mid-coast Maine, is editor/publisher of The Witness.

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"THE MULTI-COLORED WISDOM OF GOD": A PEN

by Christopher Duraisingh

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TODAY MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, the world cries out for credible signposts that human community is still possible across all that divides us. The anguish across this great nation since the tragic events of September 11, the fears expressed in so many ways as the country became vulnerable to terrorism as no one could ever imagine before, the crowded churches, the peace marches on university campuses, the daily bombings of Afghanistan — all these are expressions of this longing for some form of a "domination-and-fragmentation-free" human community in the midst of our racial, ethnic, cultural and religious differences.

In this context, "waging reconciliation" is an urgent call and a central aspect of the mission of the church, as the title of the statement from the September meeting of the Episcopal Church's bishops in Burlington, Vt., rightly reminds us. Does not the Book of Common Prayer state, in no uncertain terms, that "the mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ?" Yet it is the stark and painful reality of our times that both in the church and in the world at large diversity itself has become a central problem threatening the very life and unity of the church and the fabric of human community. This is especially true in the West, where unity, harmony and totality tend to be prized at the expense of multiplicity, contingency and particularity.

Still, whether we like it or not, cultural, religious and ethnic pluralism is one of the hallmarks of societies everywhere. Temples, mosques and Gurudwaras of the Sikhs mark the landscapes of several cities in this country. At the same time, we also witness how ambivalent religious traditions can be, for the instrumental use of religion for ethnic, linguistic or nationalist interests is also on the increase. Intolerant forms of fundamentalism in almost all religions, including Christianity, have risen with a destructive force, often fueling inter-ethnic and intra-state violence. What Dean John Arnold of Durham Cathedral — when he was the President of the European Council of Churches — said to describe the context for the mission of the Church in Europe is relevant for almost all parts of the world. "Instead of Europeanization of Ulsters," he said with some anguish, "I see all around me Ulsterization of Europe." How true!

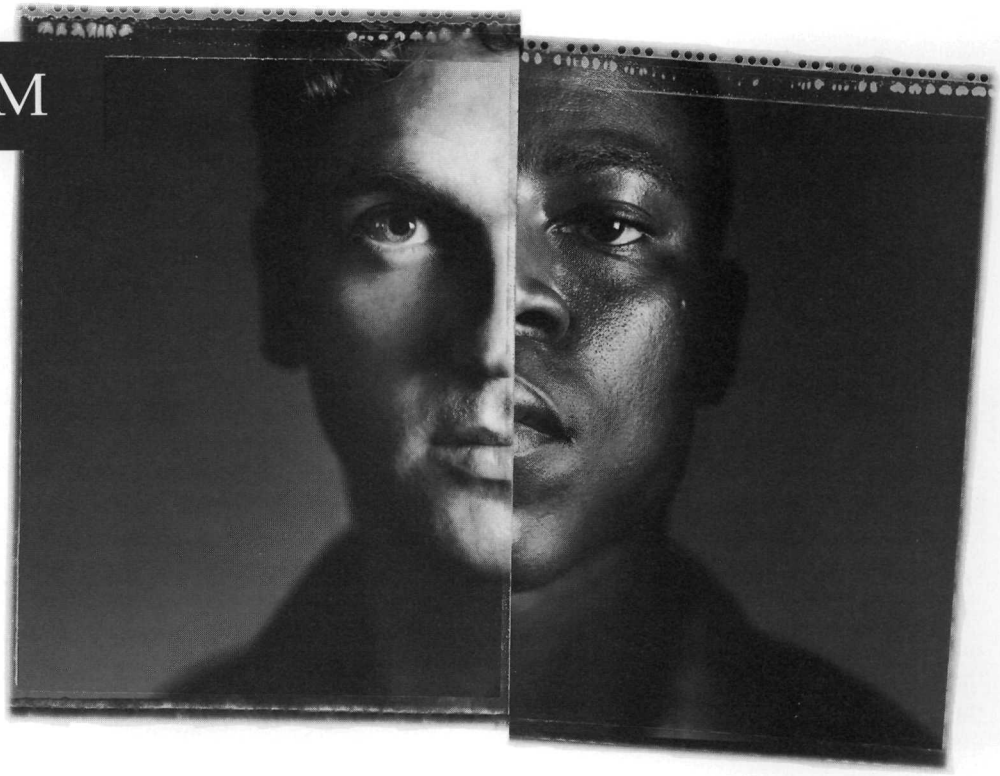
As Benjamin Barber writes in *Jihad vs. McWorld* (Random House, 1995), the centripetal force of globalization and the centrifugal tendency of ethnic, religious and cultural forces operate in tandem and feed upon each other. "Ironically, a world that is coming together pop culturally and commercially is a world whose discrete subnational ethnic and religious and racial parts are also far more in evidence, in no small part as a reaction to McWorld. ... The more 'Europe' hoves into view, the more reluctant and self-aware its national constituents become. What Günter Grass said of Germany — 'unified, the Germans were more disunited than ever' — applies in spades to Europe and the world beyond: integrated, it is more disintegral than ever."

Uncertainty drives many to turn to religion in search of identity and stability. As a result, Marc Gopin suggests in *Between Eden and Armageddon*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), we see two "very different possible futures." On the one hand, "religion's visionary capacity and its inclusion of altruistic values has already given birth to extraordinary leaders, such as Gandhi, King, the Dalai Lama and Bishop Tutu ... inspired to work for a truly inclusive vision that is multicultural and multireligious." On the other hand, this turn to religion has also led to a disintegration of society, painfully apparent in the mass-murders, tortures and "religious financial support" of brutal regimes and the events of September 11. The events of that day cannot be dismissed simply as the act of some mad men nor can we understand it as though it has nothing to do with any religious commitment, even if perverted. Rather, it is an extreme way of putting religious fervor to instrumental use in seeking to destroy a way of life and a value system that one has come to demonize in the light of what one understands as his/her religion or truth. It is a dastardly way of dealing with difference that threatens one's beliefs and values. In many ways, both the demonic act of destruction and a number of immediate responses to the tragedy are indications of an inability to handle difference and negotiate plurality. It is an inability to hold in creative tension the centrifugal and centripetal drives of human communities; it is a failure to hold together the human need for both integration and uniqueness. In both instances healthy pluralism is the casualty.

Biblical images of God's 'universal design'

The words of Lamin Sanneh, the Yale missiologist, are strikingly relevant in this juncture. He says, "For all of us pluralism can be a rock of stumbling, but for God it is the cornerstone of the universal design." How may we be faithful to God's design through cultivating a pasture of permanent openness to the other, and to the plurality of cultures and traditions, however strange and unsettling they might be? The gospel imperative is always an imperative for a permanent openness to the other, the stranger and the alien. Hospitality to strangers and mutuality of recognition of "the other" is intrinsic to the Christian story of God's love in Christ. Asian theologian Kosuke Koyama argues

TECOST PARADIGM



convincingly that the Gospel is essentially stranger-centered. An inclusive love for the "other" is at the heart of the biblical faith, he argues, and is the defining characteristic of the early church's understanding of the person and work of Christ.

Any theology, to be authentic, must be constantly challenged, disturbed and stirred up by the presence of strangers. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the idea of *ger*, the stranger, the resident alien, is central to the life of the people of Israel. The way the people of Israel dealt with the diverse strangers among them became the litmus test for their obedience to their God, for they were constantly reminded that they themselves were strangers. And was it not Plato who suggested that the measure of a civilization is the manner in which it treats the strangers and those who are different?

There are some powerful images in the Biblical tradition that give us some clues as to how we may deal with diversity and negotiate in a plural world. First, there is the image of Babel, the classic paradigm for the centripetal force of a form of globalization and integration that tends to destroy difference. It is the symbol of human quest for the monological. The search is for a single language, for the singular and unitary truth in terms of which the rest could be interpreted and assimilated. The very language of those who want to build the tower is oppositional in intent, against God, against other humans and creation. It values the unitary and homogenous. It orders reality hierarchically. It cannot tolerate being at the margins. It celebrates the self-sameness. It is the symbol of domination, and possessive power over everything else.

Then there is the tendency manifested during the post-exilic time of Ezra, for example, in which the passion for the unique identity and exclusive particularity

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of Israel as a covenant community leads to what we may call today an ethnic cleansing. Clear boundaries are erected; lines are drawn; outsiders are clearly identified. In preserving itself as a sacred community and a holy people, it lost its compassion for those who were different, racially, culturally and religiously. Thus the biblical records remind us of the dangers of both the centripetal and centrifugal forces — the quest for assimilation and the quest for exclusive identity — when they operate in isolation.

The Pentecost paradigm

The Bible, however, has yet another powerful paradigm of negotiating diversity. It is that of the Pentecost. It is the day when, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, the quest for integration and uniqueness are drawn together and diversity is affirmed, but in communion and harmony. The narrative in Acts 2 takes care to hold the terms "each" and "all" in creative tension. Each hears in his or her native tongue and thus monologic traditions are overturned; vernacularization takes place. All cultures and languages are affirmed and yet none becomes the norm. Pentecost both destigmatizes and relativizes cultures — and thereby brings about a communion of diversity. All are included and yet each is decentralized. The Spirit brings about not a homogenized, safe and secure uniformity but a differentiated and costly unity of all people, Jews, Arabs and people from many nations.

Pentecost both destigmatizes and relativizes cultures –

Perhaps the most powerful image of the Pentecost story is the richness of diversity. As the passage opens, the first thing that strikes us is the fact of a milling crowd, of masses of people, a sea of humanity in the narrow streets of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. They come in different colors, speaking different languages — Arabs and Libyans, Romans and Iranians, a microcosm of the then known world. The Gospel is heard in the interwoveness of the plurality of peoples, in cultures in collision.

This story suggests that it is in the midst of the promise and pain that immigration entails in our postcolonial times that we discern the Spirit. The interwoveness, the intermingling of the plurality of peoples is not something of which to be afraid. For the Spirit breaks forth in the midst of this diversity and is made known as the transforming power of God. However, it is not simply a celebration of diversity, for those who respond to the Spirit then are drawn into a communion in and through their differences. They have *koinonia*, a common sharing of their diversity for their mutual enrichment. It is as they mutually share their differences that they come to know and witness to what the author of Ephesians later on calls "the multi-colored wisdom of God."

I believe that here there are three significant lessons for our times as we seek to deal with diversity in a plural world. Pentecost points to a de-centering of centers and identities that exclude, a courageous crossing of borders and a promotion of a multi-voiced, polyphonic community.

De-centering identities

First, an authentic way of dealing with pluralism calls for a de-centering of individual and collective identities constructed as totally autonomous and self-sufficient. Look for a moment at the story of the Pentecost. The story is set against the disciples' question about whether the kingdom of Israel will be restored and their identity affirmed. But Jesus responds that when the Spirit does come upon them, they will disperse, their collective existence will be de-centered and they will go to the ends of the earth. Their identities from now on are to be defined in terms of their plural locations and the diverse peoples among whom they would go to witness. A centripetal longing is met with the promise of centrifugal dispersal. There is no central place, no single language, and no single authoritative seat of power, not even Jerusalem. Later on, the disciples come to learn that baptism itself is a sign of an alternative identity of a new and inclusive humanity which replaces exclusivist ways of defining oneself.

I am increasingly convinced that one of the major obstacles for a healthy way of dealing with difference is the pervasive habit of thought, a mindset, which is shaped by the Enlightenment. It is that of the notion of the human self or one's particular group as a bounded and autonomous entity. Is it not a major element of the Western cultural logic that the self is autonomous, self-contained, integral, self-sufficient, often monologically defined? When consciously or unconsciously we share this habit of thought, anything outside of one's self appears to be potentially threatening and therefore must be overcome or made serviceable to one's well-being. This autonomy obsession often leads us to dominating relationships, particularly with those who are different. Indeed, much of Western thinking about polity and relationships is shaped by the treacherous Lockean notion that the pursuit of individual comfort, security and growth is paramount and it will indirectly enrich the life of everyone else. I submit, however, that as long as individuals and groups are seen primarily as internally independent, separate, unified and fixed — having only "external" relations — "oneness" will be victorious over multiplicity, identity over difference, and sameness over diversity. Therefore, it is this mind-set that needs to be de-centered if we are serious about healthy ways of dealing with plurality.

American pragmatists like G.H. Mead have attempted to overthrow such a habit of thought by insisting that the human self is co-owned, shared and jointly shaped. Humans are dialogically brought into being. They are relational, social selves. Indeed, many non-Western cultures are collective cultures in which nurturing relationships and loyalty to others are supreme social values. Selves in these cultures are not ego-centric, self-contained or non-porous. They are socio-centric. As an African proverb puts it, we participate, therefore I am. Contrast this to the Cartesian dictum: *Cogito ergo sum*, or a possible modern equivalent, I possess, therefore I am!

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It appears that those who have been able to negotiate diversity in a healthy way seem to have a sense of their selves as "an act of grace"'and "a gift of the other." They celebrate the "other" as that which contributes to their becoming. Therefore, a prerequisite for learning to live with diversity in a wholesome manner would be a conversion from the Enlightenment notion of private, monological self and a rediscovery of oneself as co-constituted, relationally and dialogically, with others.

The leading Japanese Buddhist thinker Masao Abe argues in *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (University of Hawaii Press, 1995) that individual self-centeredness often leads to national self-centeredness and religious self-centeredness. He demonstrates that the logic behind all these forms of centrisms is the same, for at the core lies the search for something unitary and fundamental that could provide a stable center on which to hang all our understanding and in the light of which boundaries and exclusion can be erected. It is a search for a single meta-narrative. It reduces reality, selves in particular, into autonomous simply located substances, as in Newtonian essentialist metaphysics. But a decentered understanding of self and reality sees each entity or self through its social location and its multilayered relationships to others. Everything has meaning only as it is located both in its particularity — whether social, cultural, gender, racial, or economic power relationship — and within "a densely woven web of relationality." Therefore, no single self, nation, religion, nor race can be privileged over others, whatever may be their economic or political power.

Monologic definitions of centered selves arise out of a binary thinking that leads to a hierarchical ordering of reality. It privileges the first or the dominant term in any of the binary oppositions, including the self over the other, white people over the people of color, male over female, North over South. As Edward Sampson puts it, "In monologism lies the heartland of domination." Or as feminist theorist Jane Flax states, the ego-centric logic demands that "only to the extent that one ... group can dominate the whole can reality appear to be governed by one set of rules, be constituted by one privileged set of social relations or be told by one story." Therefore it is urgent that boundaries that set apart one community from another must be transgressed.

Courageous border crossings

The Acts of the Apostles portrays Peter bounded by borders of race and religion. Indeed, his attitude to a Gentile Cornelius was shaped by his sense of pollution by those who were different from him and his community. Yet as the power of Pentecost operates, he is given the strength to cross borders and discover that God has no favorites among God's people.

How can we learn to cross borders that we have hitherto kept as impermeable? First by realizing that no cultural or religious borders are impermeable. As Richard Bernstein argues convincingly, "There is no horizon which is ontologically closed. ... There are always the linguistic and imaginative resources within any horizon that can enable us to extend our horizon." Despite the argument of post-modern radical relativism and its notion of incommensurability of plural identities and cultures, behind our cultural, linguistic and even national borders there is a significant connectedness of our diverse identities and histories in these postmodern times. Many identities are hybrid and in constant flux. The factor behind many a nationalist conflict and ethnic cleansing in our times is the inability of a people to move beyond their own background or cultural boundaries. Hence, rupturing the spatial and temporal boundaries of our histories and crossing borders are an urgent imperative for our communities of faith in a conflictual and plural world.

Such a border crossing is similar to what John Donne refers to as "the passing over and coming back." In describing inter-religious relationships, Donne says, "Passing over is a shifting of standpoint, a going over to the standpoint of another ... way of life, another religion. It is followed by an equal and opposite process. We might call it a 'coming back,' coming back with new insight to one's own culture, way of life, one's own religion." Here there is no fusion of borders so that our individual or group identities are lost. Nor is it a border diffusion or dissolution. But it is a crossing over and a returning so that the coordinates of one's identities may now be redrawn in a much richer way due to the gift from the other.

Such a border crossing is costly, for first it demands of us a rejection of the oppositional thinking and binary habits of thought we are so used to. It is risky, for it calls us to be willing to be liminal, to being at the threshold. All threshold-existence is threatening; but it is only when we step across it, we may discover the creatively new. In *The Ritual Process, Ithaca* (Cornell University Press, 1989), Victor Turner throws some significant light upon the power of such a crossing over. He states, "*Communitas* breaks through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure ... it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency."

The Prophet Isaiah envisions such a border crossing in Chapter 19:23–24. The vision speaks of an impossible possibility. Three former enemies now cross borders and walk back and forth to each other over a highway built by God. But for Israel it was costly. It had to give up its privileged position and learn to be on a par with Egypt and Assyria. It had to give up its special name as "my (God's) people." But the Prophet speaks of it as though it is God's dream and purpose for humanity. The mission of the church today, I submit, is building such a highway over which people of diverse cultures, religions and races can cross borders for both integration as well as enrichment of their particular identities.

and thereby brings about a communion of diversity.

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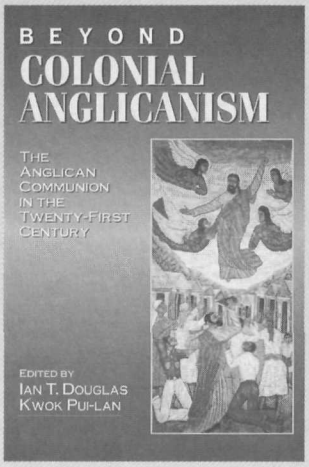
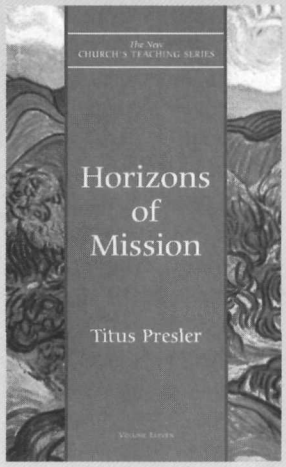
A brave new world for 21st-century Christians?

by John Kater





Beyond Colonial Anglicanism
edited by Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-Lan
(Church Publishing, Inc, 2001)

Horizons of Mission
(The New Church's Teaching Series, Vol. XI),
by Titus Presler
(Cowley Publications, 2001)

AT FIRST GLANCE, these two books stand apart by their differences. *Horizons of Mission*, written by a single author, a parish rector in Massachusetts, clearly addresses a North American audience. *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism* is edited by two scholars — one a white male American priest, the other a Chinese female lay theologian. Its 15 authors, and the concerns they address, are global in perspective. Yet these books deserve to be reviewed — and perhaps read — together, since both offer significant resources for those who wonder about what it means to be committed Anglican Christians in the 21st century.

Beyond Colonial Anglicanism, which originated in a consultation on "Anglicanism in a Post-Colonial World" held at the Episcopal Divinity School in 1998, also bears the clear effects of the tendentious discussions of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, held a few months later. Essays in the first of the book's three sections examine the nature of contemporary Anglicanism in the light of its ever-increasing diversity as well as the obvious effects of its long alliance with colonialism and imperialism. Part two surveys some selected "Challenges of the Present World," including reconciliation after violence, the environmental crisis, debt relief, issues of human sexuality and urbanization. The third section, "Visions for the Future Church," contains six chapters rethinking some of the implications of an Anglicanism which is truly global and post-colonial.

As with any such undertaking, the quality of the essays varies widely, though there is not a single one from which I did not profit. Some are reminders of things we have already known for a long time, but need constantly to have called to our attention. In this category I would include the chapter on "Debt Relief" by John Hammock of Tufts University and Anuradha Harinarayan of Save-the-Children USA. Others, like the essay on "Global Urbanization" by Laurie Green, Bishop of Bradwell, England, while based on realities of which many of us are already aware, approach them from fresh perspectives.

The most exciting contributions of *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism* are those essays that open genuinely new paths toward the future of Anglicanism by bringing the tradition as it was received into creative dialogue with aspects of culture and religion to create a "new thing." In my opinion, the three essays that are the most noteworthy successes in this regard, and to which I will return again and again, are Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndugane's "Scripture: What Is At Issue in Anglicanism Today?", Jenny Plane Te Paa's "Leadership Formation for a New World: An Emergent Indigenous Anglican Theological College," and Bishop Simon Chiwanga's "Beyond the Monarch/Chief: Reconsidering Episcopacy in Africa."

Most, perhaps all, of the authors of this book are what some call "bridge people," able to move with varying degrees of freedom between the culture in which they were raised and others with which they are also familiar. Perhaps the future of post-colonial Anglicanism will depend heavily on the contributions of such "bridge people." In this respect, *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism* offers significant resources for moving beyond the disappointment, anger and, yes, racism revealed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference. Certainly as an Episcopalian born, raised and living and working in the U.S., I found its agenda and perspective a congenial one. But as someone who also lived for a number of years outside the U.S., I am aware of other voices, other realities that make up post-colonial Anglicanism that are not heard in this country.

Ian Douglas acknowledges that some of those voices are painful for American Episcopalians to hear, and indeed, many would not be willing to enter into conversation with those represented in this book. But I would like to hear Kenyan Esther Mombo's nuanced feminism and Ugandan Francis Mutatiina's work on African concepts of family in dialogue with the perspectives of First-World authors. I would like to hear African, Asian and Latin American critiques of the individualism that distorts our North American approach to Christian faith. And I would be most encouraged to hear Christians from the older churches rethinking their approach to matters of faith *because of* what they have learned from Anglicans in other parts of the world. That, I think, would be the surest sign that we are truly moving into a post-colonial Anglicanism, a vision that remains today more a promise and a challenge than a reality.

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Titus Presler's book, *Horizons of Mission*, is just such an enterprise. It reflects the author's many years of living and working as a Christian in settings on the other side of the world from his current parish in Cambridge, Mass. It represents a vigorous attempt to define the nature of Christian mission and to suggest some guidelines for how it is done, with awareness of the diversity of Christian experience and in an atmosphere of mutual respect, both for other churches and other religious traditions. The book is haunted by the memories of mission badly conceived and badly done, both in the past and in the present, but Presler does not allow the worst to overshadow or negate the possibility of better.

Like some of the authors in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, Presler considers that the church's mission is not an end in itself, but rather is meant to serve God's mission of bringing into being a new creation. Such a perspective shifts the thrust of his book from a narrow focus on "making people Christian" to the much wider, more ecumenical and global perspective of "respond[ing] to God's call to move beyond who we are and engage someone who is different from ourselves."

Presler argues that the heart of mission is *witness* to what we have known of God; for Christians, that means witnessing to what we have known of God in Christ. Respect, witness and invitation, not judgment or coercion, lie at the heart of mission as Presler understands it. In this regard, he cites the 1998 Lambeth Conference affirmation that "Christians want to make Christ known and give others the opportunity of following him."

Not everyone will be satisfied with Presler's approach to mission. But for those of us who wrestle with the meaning of mission in a multi-cultural world, who ask questions and seek a way forward, his honesty and experience and the wisdom he draws from it offer enormous resources. ●

John L. Kater is Professor of Ministry Development and Director of the Center for Anglican Learning and Life at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif.

Multi-voiced communities

If we look back at the story of the early church after the Pentecost, it appears that the Spirit did not leave the believers only with border-crossings. Certainly such crossings brought out newer dimensions of integration or wholeness and redrawn definitions of identities. But the Spirit demanded more. The Spirit led the disciples to the formation of a community where differences could be articulated and contestation was possible. The stories of those who were silenced up until now can now be heard and theologies recast. New understandings of what it was to be a believer could emerge.

This story of Pentecost suggests that for any authentic way of dealing with difference and negotiating plurality, it is important to ensure the intentional creation of a community, a space, in which the "other" who has been silenced for so long can now be heard on his/her own terms. It is a space where monologue gives way to dialogues and "trilogues." It is a space that safeguards differences and yet builds up common sharing. Such a dialogical and multi-vocal relationship is possible not for the selves that are self-sufficient, discrete and bounded individuals, but for selves that are permeable, open to the other and in the process of being co-constituted with the contributions from others. This implies that we have many different voices in and through which we speak, think and hear others — and in and through which we relate to the world. Here, Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the polyphonic nature of discourse is significant. Each voice, as Bakhtin insists, exists only in dialogue with other voices. As he puts it, "Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another." Our many voices of *heteroglossia* offer us a richness of thinking, knowing and experiencing ourselves and all that is around us. It is through the multivoicedness we are constituted as social selves. The absence of multivoicedness leads a community to dominant modes of discourse and definitions of truth in static and universal terms.

I use the term "multi-voiced" and not the more familiar term "multi-cultural." This is primarily to indicate that the space and the community we are envisioning here do not simply include the presence of more or fewer representatives of diverse groups. But rather it actively fosters a setting where a plurality of voices are heard, their diversities and contestations are expressed and their participation matters in making decisions. Voicing implies exercising power. Therefore in a multi-voiced community, power-sharing is critical. But such a community is possible only when we are willing to give up our dominant roles and inherited structures of power and privilege. Much will be demanded of those who commit themselves for such dialogical and multi-voiced spaces in the midst of a predominantly monological world. The liberating dialogue among diverse communities would demand a willingness to abandon the false security of their own identities and a readiness to cross over the boundaries of their own cultural experiences and traditions. It would call for a willingness to move beyond our limited and finite horizons, theological and ideological comfort zones. When the fifth world conference on Faith and Order in 1993 in Santiago de Compostela called for this kind of multi-voiced dialogue it said, "As we strip ourselves of false securities, finding in God our true and only identity, daring to be open and vulnerable to each other, we will begin to live as pilgrims on a journey, discovering the God of surprises who leads us into roads which we have not travelled, and we will find in each other true companions on the way."

Today the call comes afresh to Christians everywhere, to cross boundaries across cultures and traditions that divide us in the pattern and power of the One who crossed every human boundary and broke every middle wall of division in order that the one new humanity where there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female may be brought about. Such a border-crossing in the power of the Spirit of the Risen Christ for the glory of the Triune God is our vocation, and our reward. ●

***Christopher Duraisingh** is Professor of Applied Theology at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. The address upon which this piece is based will be included in* Waging Reconciliation: God's Mission in a Time of Globalization and Crisis, *edited by Ian Douglas, Church Publishing, early 2002.*

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET ALONG WITH FUN

an interview with Martin E. Marty

by Camille Colatosti

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FROM 1987 UNTIL 1995 religion scholar Martin E. Marty and his colleague, R. Scott Appelby, directed the Fundamentalism Project, a scholarly survey of fundamentalist movements in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. With U.S. news reports full of talk about "Muslim fundamentalists" and "extremists" following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and U.S. retaliatory military strikes against the Taliban and the Al-Qa'eda network, Marty's perspective on the nature of religious fundamentalism has been in great demand. Marty, who has written over 40 books, is a University of Chicago professor emeritus, a Lutheran minister and a senior editor of *The Christian Century*. He has served as the editor of *Context* since 1969.

The Witness: What led you to become involved in the Fundamentalism Project?

Martin E. Marty: I did not initiate the Fundamentalism Project. I didn't ask for it, but was offered it by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, Mass. This is one of the oldest scholarly foundations in the U.S. It began under John Adams, the second president of the U.S. The Academy received the largest grant in its history — $3 million — to use for any international project of its choice. The Academy chose fundamentalism around the world.

This was 1987. The project was completed in 1995. At the start, it was a decade after the Iranian Revolution, something that U.S. leaders didn't understand. This was a revolution motivated by fundamentalism. The U.S. Department of Defense said, essentially, that they had monitored everything in Iran but religion, and so they were completely unprepared for the revolution. They thought, wrongly, that religion had no power in the modern world. When the project began in 1987, fundamentalism had also become an important component in American politics with the religious right or the Moral Majority.

My colleague Scott Appelby and I designed a project that was scholarly, not ideological. Our purpose was to provide information for people of state, religious people and lay people. We wanted to increase understanding.

In 1995, when I finished the project, I addressed the annual meeting of the Academy. I told them, "We were frightened when you asked us to do this." We were frightened that the Academy was investing all of this money and we were investing all of this energy in a phenomenon that would be momentary and then just disappear. Some thought that the Academy could have done a huge project on U.S.–Soviet relations, but it's good that that choice was not made since that would now be irrelevant. The Academy could have selected a project on the apartheid system of South Africa, but it's good that the Academy did not choose that since that is also irrelevant today. No one could have foreseen that what the Academy chose would have been so relevant. I would like to say that it's too bad we're still relevant — but we seem to be becoming more and more relevant each day.

TW: Did you accomplish what you set out to accomplish by studying fundamentalism?

MM: We began studying fundamentalism in 13 religions and by the end we studied 23. We figured out what fundamentalism is

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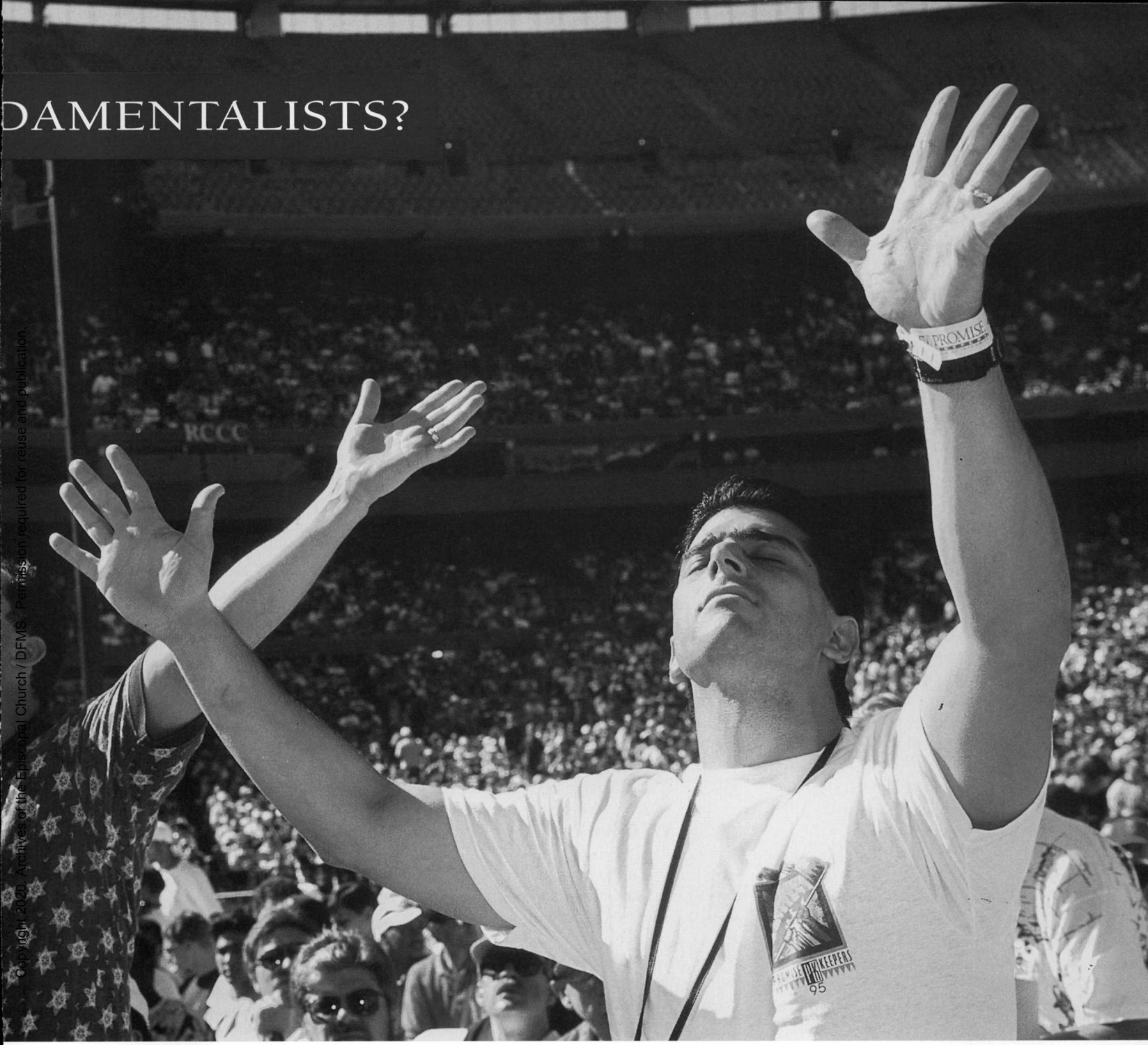
DAMENTALISTS?



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about, where it comes from, its limits, its threats and promises. We gave people a marker by which to measure fundamentalism.

Many ask, "Why look for common features of fundamentalism?" American fundamentalists say, "Don't link us with Ayatollah Khomeini and Osama bin Laden."

I tell them, it may be unfortunate, but there are links. I should say that no fundamentalist took part in the research project. Most fundamentalists resist the idea of comparison. Each fundamentalist group thinks it is absolutely unique.

The word "fundamentalism" came from the West. It was a term that originated in the 1920s in U.S. Protestantism. But even though the term originated to describe a particular political situation, we do believe that you can understand phenomena — any phenomena — only when you compare them to others. There are many kinds of fundamentalisms, but when we compare them, we begin to understand them.

TW: What are the common features of fundamentalism?

MM: Here is Marty's canonical version of the six features of fundamentalism:

First, all fundamentalism took rise on soil that was originally conservative or traditional or orthodox. I've never found one that began in a liberal or open culture or in a liberal religion. Never once have I found a liberal religion that turned fundamentalist. Now, an individual might turn from liberal to fundamentalist. A suburbanite in Detroit might go off to college and be recruited by Campus Crusade, but I never saw an entire culture turn from liberal to fundamentalist.

Second, though fundamentalism takes rise on soil that was originally conservative or traditional or orthodox, fundamentalism is not traditional, nor is it conservative, nor is it orthodox. Fundamentalism might cultivate the appearance of conservativism — of, say, old-time religion — but it is not conservative. In the U.S., fundamentalists may drive Jaguars or win the Miss America pageant.

People who are conservative or orthodox tend to be kind of passive. The Amish, for instance, are the most traditional Protestants in the U.S., but they want to be left alone. They don't evangelize.

Third, fundamentalist people discern something that is a threat to their way of life. In Iran in the 1970s, for instance, people from Europe came to Iran. They brought goodies and modernism and Iranians didn't want it. Young Iranian women chose to wear traditional clothes not because their mothers did, but because their mothers didn't. Their mothers had accepted some elements of modernity that young people saw as a threat to their way of life.

The fourth element of fundamentalism is that it is a *reactive* movement. It reacts against modernity, however that modernity is described. It might be described as diversity, hedonism, or whatever. Fundamentalists are evangelicals who got mad.

Fundamentalists believe that they are acting for God. They would betray God if they were not stirred up to act. They believe that they have to know the infidel and do battle against him.

The fifth feature is that fundamentalists are not tolerant but they are modern. They adopt the latest in technology. Fundamentalist movements often outpace modern liberal movements in the use of computers, loudspeakers and artillery. They may preach against technology but they adopt it. Much has been made in the media of the fact that Osama bin Laden is wearing a very high-tech computer watch. He is very much at home with modernity.

Finally, fundamentalists also see themselves as reaching toward the fundamentals of their faith, but they are selecting those features that best help them react and fight for the Lord against modernity or whatever the enemy is. Fundamentalists take these "fundamental" elements literally. Each fundamentalist group thinks it is going back to a perfect moment and a perfect text. They seek perfection and they believe that perfection once existed. They think of themselves as focusing on fundamentals, but really they are being very selective and finding what in their faith best suits their aims.

Fundamentalists will pick strange things that must be taken literally. Ninety-nine out of 100 scholars of Islam would say that those texts that Osama bin Laden is quoting are very marginal. It would be as if Jews and Christians would say that the most important book of the Bible is Judges and the most important verses are those where Yahweh says to kill.

TW: Does fundamentalism always lead to extremism and violence?

MM: We chose to use the word "fundamentalism" rather than "extremism" or "fanaticism" because "fundamentalism" is not as judgment-charged. In the midst of the fundamentalists, though, there may be extremists. For example, in the midst of all pro-life people in the U.S., there are some who say that abortion clinics are guilty of infanticide. Therefore, they reason, they might blow up a clinic or shoot a doctor because that is the right thing to do, the only way to save those babies from being murdered. Most pro-life people would say, "We would never do that. That is not where our belief leads," but for some, this is exactly where it leads.

TW: Where in the world does fundamentalism pose the biggest threat?

MM: It poses the biggest threat in two places and the least in the third.

First, fundamentalists pose the biggest threat within the Islamic world itself, largely because there was never a separation of church and state, or a separation of religion and government. The threat in the Islamic world is when fundamentalists believe that their government is not pure enough. For instance, in Egypt, fundamentalists killed Anwar al-Sadat and would like to kill President Hosni Mubarak. The guns of Islamic fundamentalists are not just trained on the West, but also trained on non-fundamentalists in their own state.

In Turkey, for example, a modern state, now fundamentalists are rising and they would like nothing better than to bring down the non-Islamic, secular government. Fundamentalists may be most dangerous when they are purifying their own territory.

Secondly, fundamentalists pose a large threat to outside territories or governments that they see as a threat to their own world. Fundamentalists, for instance, want not only to purge Islam of enemies within, but they also want to eliminate the infidel who is the alternative. In many cases, this is the West, beginning in Israel and continuing across the industrialized world.

In other parts of the globe, outside of the Islamic world, religious ethno-nationalism — not what I would call fundamentalism, but a tribalism inflated by religious claims — fuels conflict. Take Chechnya. This is not a highly Islamic nation, but in its nationalist fight for independence from Russia, Chechen forces started putting green ribbons on tanks. Green is the color of Islam, but the ribbons were a nationalist symbol, not a religious symbol.

In many parts of the world, there are extremist movements that are religiously informed but aren't necessarily fundamentalist. This is true throughout most of Africa.

Fundamentalists are least dangerous in a pluralist society. In the U.S., we can have hundreds of thousands of fundamentalists, probably millions, but they have no military power. Bob Jones University doesn't have artillery. They might speak in strong language, but they don't turn militarily militant.

In a pluralist society, things take care of each other. If you want to win in America, you need a coalition — you need to include some

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secular people, some Catholics, some Jews. A pluralist society forces fundamentalists to pull in or tone down their fundamentalism.

Fundamentalists in the U.S. may be a threat to what I cherish, but if six out of seven Americans aren't fundamentalists and the fundamentalists win in some way, it's our own hard luck because they have a zeal for organizing and we do not.

TW: Can you shed light on the particular version of fundamentalism represented by Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and the Al-Qa'eda network that bin Laden is said to lead?

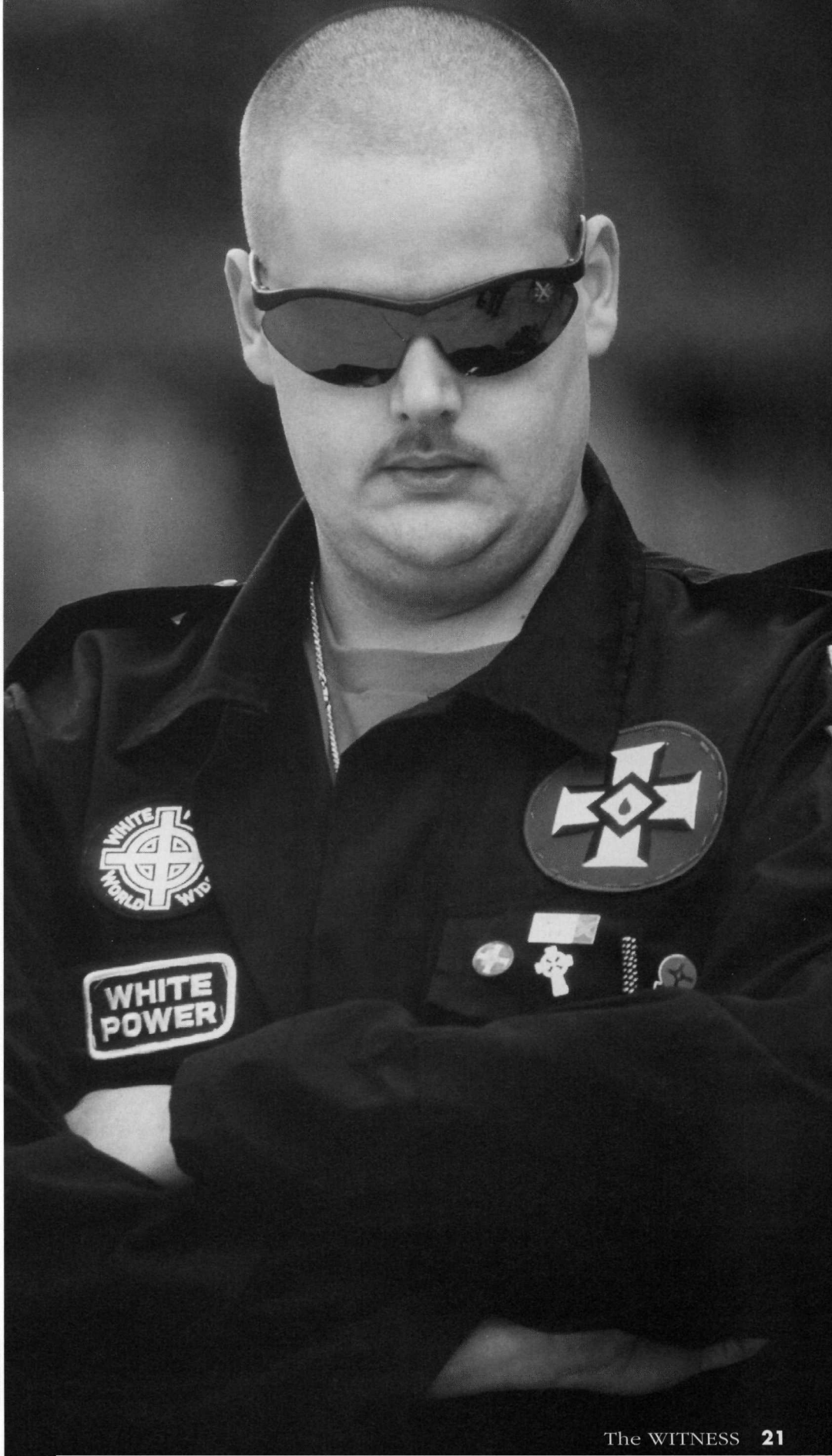
MM: I am not an expert on Osama bin Laden, but I like to describe him using a vivid metaphor: He hijacked Islam. The hijackers of the planes that hit the World Trade Center got on the planes and rode those planes in their intended direction for a while. Then they shifted the direction, turned those planes for their own purposes and used those planes to bump into something and cause great and terrifying destruction. The same could be said of bin Laden and his relationship to Islam. He follows Islam for a while, and then he turns it, shifts it for his own destructive ends.

His is a very strange reading of the Koran. He is not orthodox. He picks and chooses the passages he wants for his own aims.

We could also compare him to the Ku Klux Klan. This organization is a fundamentalist extremist version of American Protestantism. They wear crosses on their robes; there is a Bible at every meeting. Yet, they killed African-Americans; they hated Jews and Catholics. The vast majority of Protestants, of course, would say that the Ku Klux Klan doesn't represent me. Likewise, the vast majority of Muslims say that bin Laden does not represent them.

TW: What responses to fundamentalism, or signs of resistance, are most promising?

MM: Head-on, formal resistance against them from within a religion is rather ineffective. If you are in a room with strong Protestant fundamentalists, you could argue from now until the year 2010 and you won't counter them or win them over. I'm not a fatalist. There are a lot of ex-fundamentalists out there, but, in general, a counterforce



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An American fundamentalist

According to Martin E. Marty, co-director of the Fundamentalism Project, Rev. Jerry Falwell, 40 years ago, criticized Martin Luther King, Jr., and said that it was sinful for the church to be in politics. Now, he says that it is sinful not to be. He, like all fundamentalists, believes that he has to do battle for the Lord.

In his now infamous and much retracted commentary on the September 13, 2001, 700 Club, Falwell indeed positioned himself again as one doing battle for the Lord.

Of September 11, 2001, he stated, "I really believe the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way — all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say, 'you helped this happen.'"

Apologizing for his comments a few days later, Falwell insisted that he blamed "no one other than the terrorists" for the attacks on the U.S., but he also stressed his "deep concerns...over America's sharp spiritual decline during the past generation. Over 40 million unborn babies have been aborted since Roe v. Wade. We have expelled God from the public square and the public schools. We have normalized an immoral lifestyle God has condemned. American families are falling apart. Because of our national moral and spiritual decline during the past 35 years, I expressed my personal belief that we have displeased the Lord and incurred His displeasure ... I blame no one but the hijackers and the terrorists for the horrific happenings of September 11. But I do believe God's protection of us as individuals and as a nation is dependent upon our obedience to His laws."

— by Camille Colatosti

won't convince them. People for the American Way [a grassroots, activist group that presents public-policy information to counter the religious right] was organized against fundamentalism, but People for the American Way is not trying to convert fundamentalists. The organization is trying to present an alternative in order to prevent people from joining fundamentalist movements and from being convinced by them.

If there were alternatives in the Islamic world, fewer people would join fundamentalist movements. By alternatives, I don't just mean alternative ideas. I mean that we should reduce poverty. We should look at American foreign policy and see how this contributes to poverty. Alternatives that removed people from poverty and gave people more options would keep the fundamentalists from being alluring and would minimize the damage that they can do.

TW: Can you elaborate on the ways that American foreign policy contributes to the power of fundamentalism?

MM: If there weren't poverty, there would still be a fundamentalist reaction to the West, but it would be much more marginal than it is now. Globalization selectively increases poverty and the U.S. fuels globalization. Without poverty, there would still be fundamentalism; there would still be people who don't like the separation of church and state, who don't like free speech. If we tried to close the gap between the haves and the have-nots, the fundamentalists wouldn't stop, but the people they recruit would be less likely to join.

Many fundamentalist movements are led by well-off, well-educated people like Osama bin Laden, but the troops are people without jobs, people who have no hope and so are vulnerable.

American foreign policy's tilt toward Israel has exacerbated these things. Americans are so heavily committed to Israel that the U.S. has been unmindful of what Israel does to Islam. The fundamentalists can see enough fault in our foreign policy that they convince people that the U.S. is out to get to them.

[Editor's note: According to Ian S. Lustick, in his 1994 edition of *For the Land and the Lord*, the *Gush Emunim* (the bloc of the faithful), which increased power and influence after the 1967 war, believes, as is common to fundamentalist organizations, that it has: "a cosmic imperative to radically transform society through direct political action. ... Of decisive importance to Jewish fundamentalists is their belief that contemporary political developments are part of an unfolding cosmic drama that will determine, depending on the willingness of Jews to act decisively on its behalf, whether God's redemption of his people Israel, and of the whole world, will or will not soon reach its completion. ... The Jewish fundamentalism movement, and the settlers in the territories who have been its spearhead, have emerged as the greatest obstacle to meaningful negotiations toward a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement."]

TW: How should people respond to the violence created by fundamentalists who choose terrorism?

MM: I don't know anyone who knows a way by which the threat of terrorism can end. As cheap as technology is today, terrorism is always a possibility. What this means for me as an American — or all of us — is that we are now aware of it and we have joined the human race. Throughout history and across the globe, people have lived with terrorism. In feudal society, the lord of the manor could come and rape one's wife at any time. In India, a tidal wave can come and wipe out your whole community. People who live under tyrannies know that they might hear that knock on the door in the middle of the night.

Most people of the world, throughout history, have endured this and lived and made love and raised children. We can't win everything. We can't acquire the means and manner of the fundamentalist who looks at others only through gun-sites.

In Christian language, we need to have realistic hope. We need to be realistic about the risks we face, but we need to make sure that we are not overwhelmed. ●

Camille Colatosti, who lives in Hamtramck, Mich., is Witness *staff writer.*

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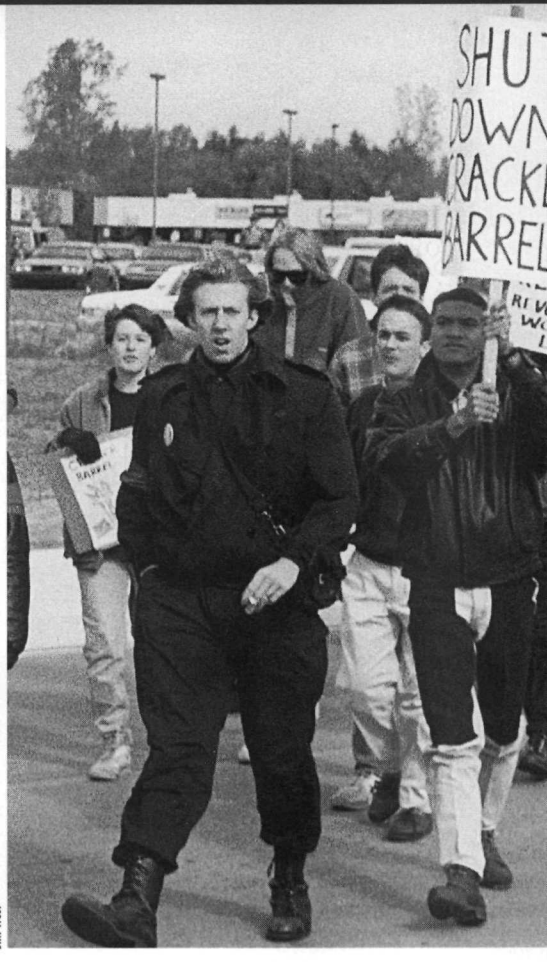
EXERCISING TOLERANCE

A protection from our deepest fears ?

by Elizabeth Kaeton



Jim West

LESS THAN TWO WEEKS after the attack on the World Trade Center, I found the wherewithal to take the PATH Train from Newark Penn Station into The City. I was in a great rush — the machine at the turnstile didn't like the dollar bill I kept trying to feed it — and I made it through the doors of the train as the warning bell shrieked in judgment of my inept fumbling.

As the train lurched forward, I noticed something odd — even for a train bound to New York City. Many people were standing up and holding onto the pole in the middle of the floor, or the railings at their side and over head, and yet, right in front of me, there was an entire row of empty seats. The occupant of the very last seat was a Muslim woman in full religious garb — full-length dress with long sleeves, a head scarf and face veil.

I felt my stomach tighten. All at once I was distressed, ashamed and compelled to sit next to her. I was also vaguely aware that I was wearing my clergy collar and that the wooden cross around my neck identified me as a Christian and an Associate of the Order of St. Helena. If the whole truth be told, I was feeling a certain obligation to be a visible witness of Anglican tolerance and Christian inclusion. Little did I know that I was about to discover the limits of both.

Keenly aware that all eyes were upon me, I made my way past the straphangers and took the seat next to her. Her eyes brightened above her veil as she responded with a warm hello to my greeting. With some hesitance I asked, "Umm, how's it going?" She moved her head back and forth as if to say, "So-so." That was enough of an invitation for me to continue the conversation. "I guess this must be a difficult time for you. I mean, it must take a certain amount of courage to be in public in your religious clothes — in this present, umm ... climate of, ah ... hostility."

"Oh no!" she said, brightly. "I am very pleased to be able to wear my head scarf and veil. It is really a privilege to wear them in public." I smiled warmly at her, silently admiring the fact that she at least had the strength of her religious convictions, something which might shame any Christians on that train — those who supposedly follow a God of incarnate love — who might have overheard her.

My smile seemed to give her enough of an invitation to continue. "Actually, my head scarf and veil are a reminder of my place in this world, the special place which Allah created for women." She looked at my arms that, under her glare, suddenly seemed naked, exposed and vulgar. "That's part of the problem with you American women," she continued, her tone mildly chastising, "you don't understand your role in creation and the will that Allah has for you."

I found myself suddenly flooded with stomach-knotting memories of once having been cornered by a Campus Crusader for Christ on a Greyhound Bus from Portland, Me., to Boston, and enduring two hours of listening to how "God has a plan for you."

To my horror, she continued brightly and with conviction, "And I believe that this is why there are so many Muslims in

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this country, because Allah wants to save this nation and bring it back from the brink of moral destruction and decay. Allah wants to return women to their proper place and not have them fill their heads with wrong ideas. Allah wants to restore the right relationship between men and women, that we may follow His command to be fruitful and multiply. Yes! God wants to bless America, and God's name is Allah. May the Great Name of Allah be praised."

I'm not often at a loss for words, but in that moment and in all the long moments it took to get to East 33rd Street, any words I might have spoken seemed to be caught in a tight, painful tangle in my throat. In that one train ride, this Muslim woman had taken me to the boundaries of my own tolerance and I discovered there a landscape as barren and desolate as any to be found in the images of the countryside of Afghanistan which come into our living rooms on the nightly news.

I've thought a great deal about "tolerance" and "inclusion" since that experience. In the wake of the outbreak of terrorism and, in the midst of the Episcopal Church's bishops' September 26 call to "wage reconciliation," I turned to the Prayer Book to find the word tolerance in a collect or a prayer. I began with the baptismal covenant. Astonished, I couldn't find it anywhere — not in the collects, or the covenant or in any of the prayers for the newly baptized. Indeed, the verbs in the service of Holy Baptism are pretty strong: Renounce. Accept. Trust. Promise. Believe. Witness. Persevere. Proclaim.

I thought certain I'd find the word in one of the Prayers and Thanksgivings. I checked out, "For All Sorts and Conditions of Men," confident that, were I to write a prayer for this petition, tolerance would figure high on my word list. Nothing. Neither was the word used in prayers for "the human family," or "our enemies," or even, "in times of conflict."

The Old English Dictionary lists the first definition of tolerance as "the action or practice of enduring or sustaining pain or

hardship," adding that, as a term in "forestry," it means, "the capacity of a tree to endure the shade."

I've never found the word in Holy Scripture — Hebrew or Christian. Not once does it pass the lips of Jesus. As I recall, Jesus commanded, "Love one another," not "Tolerate one another."

Tolerance, as a concept of "broad-minded acceptance," is a noble one, I suppose. Except that nobility can be a very slippery slope, jeopardizing even the well-intended into a free-fall from the high cliffs of arrogance. A person's tolerance often leads to that person's willingness to be "inclusive." I once heard a gay Hispanic man's angry but insightful reaction to the word "inclusion" applied to his "out" participation in the church: "Am I not baptized? Then, why do you think YOU are 'including' ME? Whose house do you think this is anyway?"

That has been the unspoken question at the heart of the conversations sponsored by the New Commandment Task Force (NCTF), a grassroots movement of liberal, conservative and moderate Episcopalians who have been seeking to "wage reconciliation" in the midst of this church's own internal, often terrorist, battles over the nature of God's will. I'm a member of the NCTF's eight-member Core Team, the only liberal woman and the only lesbian in what was at first an evenly divided group of four conservatives and four liberals.

There were conservatives and then there were the black-belt, industrial-strength conservatives who drew lines in the sand and proclaimed, "Here I stand. Period. End of discussion." There were liberals and then there were liberals who wanted "peace, peace when there is no peace" and were willing to pay any price for a false peace — even if that meant sacrificing my own "full inclusion" in the house. Why couldn't I be patient, one liberal male demanded of me? Why couldn't I put my personal (read: selfish) needs on the back burner for the "greater good" of the rest of the church? Why couldn't I be satisfied with what I already have — a polite, if limited, measure of inclusion and tolerance?

But I don't want mere tolerance and neither do those who oppose my full inclusion in the church, whether for liberal or conservative reasons. We all believe there are limits to tolerance, even if we don't agree about what those might be.

In both church and society, we have gradually become aware that the world-view possessed by one set of people is not

"Inclusion" sounds like reconciliation, but in fact creates a fantasy that masks the sense of ownership and entitlement of those who offer it.

necessarily the same world-view that is held by others. Differences that arise from distinctions in culture, ethnicity, race, religious perspective, geographical culture, etc., emerge and begin to come in conflict with the dominant power structure. Oppressive systems utilize difference as justification for oppression. The use of the words "tolerance" and "inclusion" increase in direct proportion to the proliferation of bias and prejudice, and are intended to address, perhaps even correct, the power imbalance. More often than not, however, these same words fall on the ears of the oppressed as camouflaged reinforcement of the dominant power structure.

What we fail to recognize, I believe, is that talk of tolerance is, at heart, a way to distance ourselves from our deepest fears.

To me, the scariest words Jesus ever spoke are those reported as a central part of his final prayers before Gethsemane. They are the deepest prayers of his heart — so much so that he repeats it: " ... so that they may be one, as we are one." (John 17:11b, and 22-23) The reconciliation of our differences, the unity of our lives with each other and God, is Jesus' most fervent prayer. Indeed, it is central to our understanding of our ministry as Christians. And, it scares us to death!

The dilemma of the human enterprise is that without separate and distinct identities we feel vulnerable and defenseless. "Inclusion" sounds like reconciliation, but in fact creates a fantasy that masks the sense of ownership and entitlement of those who offer it. "Tolerance" sounds like a step in the direction of unity, but fiercely protects the illusion that we are all different. My encounter with the Muslim woman on that PATH train last September was a painful lesson in this regard. I was willing to include and tolerate her with the expectation that she would be grateful. But her sense of identity was as strong and intractable as my own.

Who is my neighbor? Who is my enemy? To whose house do I belong? To whose world? Is God's name Allah or Jehovah? And who has the inheritance of Abraham's blessing, Ishmael, firstborn son of the surrogate mother and slave girl Hagar, or Isaac, firstborn son of the "legitimate" marriage with Sarah?

I suspect these questions will be our constant companions in the months and years ahead in a way that has a great deal more immediacy and importance than internal church warfare or threats of schism. It may be good to take some of the better parts of tolerance — patience, forbearance, and charity — along with us. There is no doubt that, before it is all over, this war on terrorism will have taught us a great deal more about what "waging reconciliation" might really mean, becoming, in the process, the answer to Jesus' prayer. ●

***Elizabeth Kaeton** is Canon Missioner to The Oasis in the Diocese of Newark, a ministry with and to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people. She is also the newly appointed Co-chair of the New Commandment Task Force II.*

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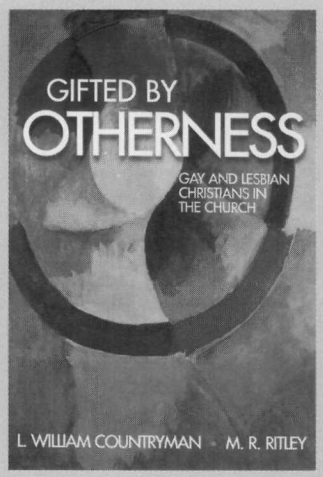
Otherness for such a time as this

by Virginia Mollenkott

Gifted by Otherness: Gay and Lesbian Christians in the Church
by L. William Countryman and M.R. Ritley
(Morehouse Publishing, 2001)



IF EVER THERE WAS A TIME when Americans have needed to learn more about the "otherness of the other," that time is now. As we have heard Osama bin Laden spew hatred in the name of Allah, we must remember that one of the most widely read poets in our country today, Rumi, was also a worshiper of Allah. And that Rumi and bin Laden differ more from one another than, say, bin Laden and Jerry Falwell. Gone are the days when we could afford to regard world religions such as Judaism, Islam, or Buddhism as monolithic, any more than we can judge an entire race or ethnicity by the actions of a few. And no longer can respectable multiculturalists act as if religion had not formed the backbone of most cultures. In an already complex world, September 11 has turned everything more complex.

During recent years within many Christian churches, the most divisive form of "otherness" has been gay and lesbian otherness, with bisexuality too terrifying to discuss and other forms of transgenderism threatening, perhaps, but still shrouded in a prevailing ignorance. Now two Episcopal priests, L. William Countryman and M.R. Ritley, have lifted up gayness and lesbianism in the Christian church, labeling it a gift not only to the church and the culture, but also to the individuals who discover such "otherness" within themselves and are forced to come to terms with it. Writing chapters alternately from Countryman's "out" gay male perspective and Ritley's lesbian perspective, they share the good news that everybody without exception is who we are by the grace of God. Therefore lesbian and gay Christians "must affirm that being gay is not an accident, an illness or a sin. It is a calling, as fully a vocation as any other."

Because these two authors are speaking for a category of otherness to which I happen to belong, I am pleased that they do so in an intelligent and literate fashion. As a specialist in 17th-century English poetry, I was moved by Countryman's connecting Henry Vaughan, George Herbert and Thomas Traherne to contemporary Christian struggles about sexuality. For instance, Countryman points out that in his poem "Love," Traherne depicts God's love for his soul in both heterosexual and homosexual imagery. And although Countryman does not say so, by that imagery Traherne implies that God's love-nature is bisexual: God wants him as both "His boy" and "His bride." Like John Donne, Traherne has noticed and utilized the transgendered imagery of the New Testament in a way that most contemporary Christians have overlooked.

M.R. Ritley is no less literate, but her expertise is Islamic mysticism. Her Sufi parable of "crossing the sands" is especially valuable for lesbian and gay Christians wandering in the wilderness of churchly rejection and debate, robbed of our history and cheated of our spiritual core. The parable concludes, "There are two things you must do. Stay alive. And keep moving. If you can do just these two things, you will come to another oasis."

Ironically, the book's major shortcoming is its failure to emphasize bisexual otherness and gender otherness. Ritley, who identifies as "bigendered," but denies being either bisexual or transgendered, does imply the inaccurateness of the binary gender paradigm by saying that gay culture has always known that "men can be tender, nurturing and sensitive without being weak, and women can be strong, dynamic and decisive without being violent." Rightly, she suspects "that what people fear the most is the challenge we [homosexuals] pose to the traditional gender roles, not our sexuality as such, because rethinking the gender roles might just require people to change and risk acknowledging the parts of themselves they have long rejected." Admitting that she has been as ignorant and prejudiced about bisexual and transgendered people as heterosexuals have been about her, Ritley speculates that we have "not even begun to see the full variety [of God's creation] even now." That being the case, I wish Ritley and Countryman had included testimony about the gifts of those whose otherness we *have* begun to see: bisexual, transsexual, intersexual, and otherwise transgendered Christians. But perhaps those are challenges for future books.

What I want to emphasize here is that Countryman and Ritley have done to perfection what they set out to do. They have depicted lesbian and gay otherness as "windows through which God's working in the world is glimpsed," as role models of the courage to be what God intended us to be, of vulnerability as freedom and spiritual strength, of the wholeness of being both sexual and spiritual, and of the willingness to go on loving no matter what the cost. And for those gifts (as we Anglicans so often say), thanks be to God. ●

Virginia Mollenkott's twelfth book is Omnigender: A Trans-Religious Approach *(Pilgrim Press, 2001).*

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War will imperil us all

We know what it is like to be attacked, to grieve and to feel anger. Every day we attend to the physical and emotional pains of the women in our communities who continue to suffer from the violence of war. We listen to the stories and work together with women to find ways to productively channel negative emotions. Women in Kosovo, still suffering from the symptoms of severe trauma, know what military responses do to innocent people and how long-lasting the consequences are.

Therefore we understand the urge for revenge is strong. And we know that it must not be given in to. We know that a violent response can only bring more violence. It does not bring justice. Instead it kills more innocent victims and gives birth to new holy avengers. It begins a new cycle and perpetuates more hate, more insecurity, more fear and ultimately more death amongst civilians. ...

We do not wish to have you see your young men go to war and lose their lives, like thousands of our sons, fathers and husbands did. ... We do not wish to have war on a country or countries full of innocent adults and children, who already suffer at the hands of their leaders and who themselves have committed no crimes. We know that bombs are not smart, we know they kill women, children and old people and we know only too well that it is mainly the women who bear the task of rebuilding societies torn apart by war. This is our work at present and it is very hard work. ...

American politicians and decision-makers, grieve for your dead, and find ways to protect the living! But we ask you not to put us and your citizens at more risk. What you are threatening to unleash is making us afraid for the world. Do not endanger the people of Asia, the Middle East and northern Africa. War will surely imperil us all and future generations also. Please remember your past and learn from ours, and work to leave a legacy of justice and peaceful construction, not of revenge, destruction and war.

— *Medica mondiale Kosovo, Women's Center, www.peacewomen.org*

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Patriotism and criticism

[A] byproduct of the patriotic fervor sweeping the nation has been a kind of muting of criticism against the U.S. leadership and a seemingly remarkable conversion experience undergone by many who just a few months ago were crying for an end to big government.

— Oxfam, the British humanitarian organization, for example, was circulating a petition before the attacks calling on the U.S. to "put health before wealth" by supporting relaxation of international patent policies that Oxfam says make vital medicines too expensive for developing countries. Immediately after the Sept. 11 events, the language singling out the U.S. had been dropped. The group also canceled a news conference at which it had planned to denounce the U.S. for its patent stance.

— The Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization, removed the "W Watch" column from its Web site because it could be perceived as critical of President Bush. Another group, Friends of the Earth, let the one-year anniversary of its discovery of unauthorized genetically modified corn in the food supply pass without even a news release. "No one's interested in gene-altered corn right now," Mark Helm, a spokesperson for the organization, told reporters.

— Two columnists for daily newspapers in Oregon and Texas were fired after writing opinion pieces critical of President Bush's leadership immediately after the attacks.

Many ask: While trying to avoid being perceived as unpatriotic, isn't this self-censorship and restraint on criticism dangerous in a democratic society?

"There will be those who will try to tell us that criticizing national policies in time of crisis is unpatriotic," Tom Cordaro, Pax Christ's national council chairperson, told *NCR*. "We have to keep in mind that statement William Fulbright, Democratic senator from Arkansas, made in the days of the civil rights marches and anti-Vietnam war demonstrations: 'Criticism is more than just a right; it is an act of patriotism — a higher form, I believe, than the familiar ritual of national adulation.'"

— *Rich Heffern,* National Catholic Reporter, *10/12/01*

McCarthyist déjà vu

For the second time in my life — at least — a group that I belong to is being investigated by the FBI. The first was the Weavers. The Weavers were a recording industry phenomenon. In 1950 we recorded a couple of songs from our American/World folk music repertoire, Leadbelly's "Goodnight Irene" and (ironically) the Israeli "Tzena, Tzena, Tzena" and sold millions of records for the almost-defunct record label. Folk music entered the mainstream, and the Weavers were stars.

By 1952 it was over. The record company dropped us, eager television producers stopped knocking on our door. The Weavers were on a private yet well-publicized roster of suspected entertainment industry reds. The FBI came a-calling.

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This week, I just found out that Women in Black, another group of peace activists I belong to, is the subject of an FBI investigation. Women in Black is a loosely knit international network of women who vigil against violence, often silently, each group autonomous, each group focused on the particular problems of personal and state violence in its part of the world. Because my group is composed mostly of Jewish women, we focus on the Middle East, protesting the cycle of violence and revenge in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

The FBI is threatening my group with a Grand Jury investigation. Of what? That we publicly call the Israeli military's occupation of the mandated Palestine lands illegal? So does the World Court and the United Nations. That destroying hundreds of thousands of the Palestinians' olive and fruit trees, blocking roads and demolishing homes promotes hatred and terrorism in the Middle East? Even President Bush and Colin Powell have gotten around to saying so.

So what is to investigate? That some of us are in contact with activist Palestinian peace groups? This is bad? The Jewish Women in Black of Jerusalem have stood vigil every Friday for 13 years in protest against the Occupation; Muslim women from Palestinian peace groups stand with them at every opportunity. We praise and honor them, these Jewish and Arab women who endure hatred and frequent abuse from extremists on both sides for what they do.

We are not alone in our admiration. Jerusalem Women in Black is a nominee for the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize, along with the Bosnia Women in Black, now 10 years old. If the FBI cannot or will not distinguish between groups who collude in hatred and terrorism, and peace activists who struggle in the full light of day against all forms of terrorism, we are in serious trouble. I have seen such trouble before. It was called McCarthyism. In the hysterical atmosphere of the early Cold War, anyone who had signed a peace petition, who had joined an organization opposing violence or racism or had tried to raise money for the refugee children of the Spanish Civil War, in other words who had advocated what was not popular at the time, was fair game. ... Today, in the wake of the worst hate crime of the millennium, a dragnet is out for "terrorists" and we are told that certain civil liberties may have to be curtailed for our own security. Which ones? I'm curious to know. The First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech or of the press? The right of people peaceably to assemble? Suddenly déjà vu — haven't I been here before?

— *Ronnie Gilbert*

Who will benefit?

The decision to allow the detention of suspects for an indefinite period, alongside the move toward lifting restrictions imposed on the FBI and CIA, exemplifies how the emphasis on military solutions is already paving the way for an assault on civil liberties. But civil liberties are not the only rights at stake; economic and social rights are also in danger of being undermined as powerful corporations manipulate the situation to advance their avaricious objectives.

Who will benefit from the $40 billion anti-terrorism and recovery package — to be taken from the "sacrosanct" Social Security surplus — which lawmakers approved, without blinking, three days following the attack? This sum is, of course, in addition to the same $325 billion that the bloated military apparatus already gobbles up each year. Not unlike the Israeli government — which recently passed its 2002 budget — slashing all social spending while dramatically increasing the money allocated to infrastructure and military — the U.S. Congress is now expected to circumscribe spending on health care, education and other social services, so as to confer billions on the military or, more precisely, on corporations like Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. In a week in which the Dow Jones posted a 14.3 percent loss, its largest since the Depression, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon gained 10 percent and 37 percent, respectively.

— *Neve Gordon,* In These Times, *10/29/01*

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mia Chiesa, quando volesti essere insignito del Sacerdotale Carattere: *In domo Dei ambulavimus cum consensu*: Tu alzi contro me temeraria la fronte, sotto le bandiere di Lucifero ti arrolli, e lui servi, servo rendendoti del peccato! Oh che odio! che sdegno! che furore accende nel Cuore mio questa tua perfidissima ribellione. Ci manifestò l'Altissimo questa giustissima indignazione nello escludere [illegible] Terra promessa [illegible] Duce del popolo [illegible], per la dif[illegible]ostrata nel[illegible]a, da c[illegible]rgare l'[illegible]e pu-[illegible]vicosa [illegible]icate [illegible]entav[illegible]vi- [illegible]unt v[illegible]ter- [illegible]ravi [illegible]que- [illegible]virà da[illegible]a del [illegible]anzi gl[illegible]per- [illegible] a con[illegible]fom- [illegible]e Orebo[illegible]ezza [illegible]a per c[illegible]oso il [illegible]ossederla [illegible]is tuis, [illegible]ibis ad ill[illegible]si il di- [illegible]e contro il [illegible] vi biso- gnava. Nel Levitico [illegible] Sacrifizio di propiziazione, che si prescrive per li peccati di tutta la moltitudine, si stabilisce ancora per il peccato del solo Sacerdote, per dinotarci la divina Sapienza di quale peso sia alla sua veridiera bilancia il peccato del Sacerdote: *Pro peccato solius Sacerdotis idem Sacrificium, quod pro*

(a) *Num.*14. (b) *Deut.ult.* (c) *cap.*4.

pro totius popoli peccato præscribitur, quia quo major auctoritas, eo majus est eorum qui peccant supplicium, come notò S. Pietro Damiano.

II. Lo Eminentissimo Ugone bensì osservò una importantissima differenza: *Invenitur autem differentia inter peccatum Sacerdotis, & Sinagogæ*; e qual'è mai questa differenza? Del popolo dicesi: *Si omnis turba filiorum Israel ignoraverit, & per[illegible]ritiam fecerit quod contra mandatum Do[illegible]* Sacerdote però dicesi: *Si Sa-ce[illegible]q peccaverit, [illegible]er ig[illegible]n enim lic[illegible]* E questa da[illegible] ser[illegible] quanto di [illegible]rdote, tem[illegible]a ad [illegible] con[illegible]à del [illegible] sta[illegible]ture, ch[illegible] legg[illegible]nella Me[illegible] d[illegible]ra le gent[illegible] dono[illegible], potendo[illegible] dal reg[illegible]dine dell'Uni[illegible] vaticina[illegible]sta: *Effunde iram [illegible]o gentes, qu[illegible]overunt: Prophetatio est ista, non optatio*, [illegible]l P. S. Agostino; *& hoc verbo effunde satis indicavit, quod voluit multam iram intelligi*. Oimè, che sarà d'un Sacerdote, il quale non solamente il conosce, come qualunque Cristiano, ma ch'è stato arricchito di tanti raggiantissimi lumi (a)? *Cum etiam ignorantes Dominum nulla exceptio tueatur a pœna, quia Deum*

(a) *lib.de pæn. cap.*5.

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