

# THE WITNESS

**Cryo in the wilderness:  
On freezing pre-embryos**

• Charles Meyer

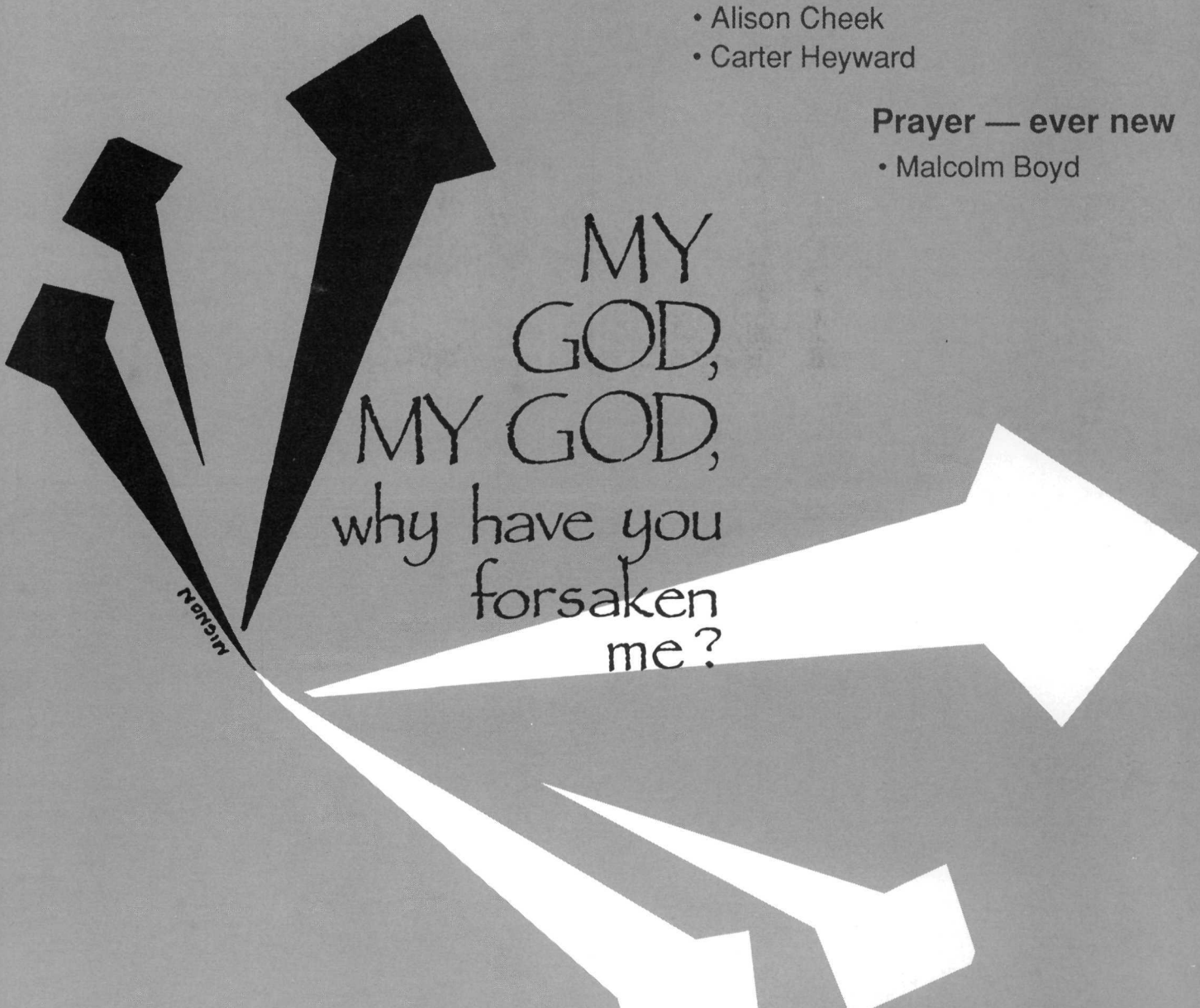
**Seminaries and liberation**

• Alison Cheek

• Carter Heyward

**Prayer — ever new**

• Malcolm Boyd



MY  
GOD,  
MY GOD,  
why have you  
forsaken  
me?

MICHAEL

# Letters

## Middle class scapegoats

It is kind of John Snow to identify the cause of all our problems, the white, straight, money-oriented, college educated, affluent middle class (December WITNESS). He exhibits all the prejudice that he would deplore if directed at another group. We have to have our scapegoats, don't we?

I would remind John Snow the white middle class feels, bleeds, and has its tragedies due to AIDS, drugs, delinquencies, etc.

No wonder the church speaks to a smaller and smaller audience when spokespersons of the Gospel drive people to the margins because of who they are.

**Abner K. Pratt II**  
Eastham, Mass.

## Snow responds

I am sorry to see my article in THE WITNESS interpreted by Abner Pratt as an attack on the middle class. What I was attempting to say is that American culture as it affects everyone from the underclass to the very rich is based on Social Darwinist assumptions.

As a middle class person successfully on the way up believes he or she is a winner, so the underclass kid about to drop out of high school believes deeply that he or she is a loser. Both believe, or rather assume, that the survival of the fittest adequately describes the human enterprise. The middle class is not an evil conspiracy to dominate American society, it is captive to the same crazy idea that life is a struggle among individuals, the "war of all against all," where only the most fit must survive if there is to be human progress.

Not only is this kind of reductionist evolutionary socio-biology scientifically silly, it is in direct contradiction to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

**The Rev. John Snow**  
Cambridge, Mass.

## Read with eagerness

I am part of the Whitefish Peace Alliance and we send you our Peaceweaver newsletter, from which you quote on occasion in *Short Takes*, so I feel like sending you a personal note.

Many thanks for all you stand for. I would never have known about the Appalachian coal mine strike except for your coverage. You got to it early, and that has added help for me when I have seen it in other media contexts.

The two periodicals I always read with great eagerness are THE WITNESS and *Sojourners*. You represent a very important part of the Episcopal Church, and a voice that is sorely needed today.

**The Rev. Richard A. Kirchoffer**  
Whitefish, Mont.

## Read with reservations

I generally disagree with you 90% of the time, but you are always stimulating, and your December AIDS issue was really excellent.

**The Rev. Robert M. Darrow**  
West Bend, Wisc.

## Trident correction

I'm particularly pleased with the November issue commemorating the 50th birthday of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. I like all the articles, especially Nathaniel Pierce's piece and Mary Miller's history.

I would only make one small correction in Jim Lewis' interview which I also think came out well. It is understandable that he would quote me as saying that "just one Trident submarine has as much destructive power as 25 World War II submarines," because it's almost impossible to imagine the terrible extent of the destructive power of these weapons. Actually what I said is that just one Trident carries as much destructive force as 25 World War II's!! (According to *Newsweek* magazine.) Or put another way, just one Trident is also equal to

1,200 Hiroshimas.

The Navy likes the Trident and the D-5 missiles they carry because they are accurate and fast — the missiles can travel 6,000 miles and come within 600 feet of their target. The Navy claims that the D-5 can destroy Soviet land-based missiles while they are still in their hardened siloes.

And aside from their awesome destructive capabilities is the fact that each Trident submarine fully equipped with its load of 24 D-5 missiles (each carrying up to 12 nuclear warheads) costs \$1.3 billion. Just imagine how many affordable housing units could be built with that money, or community health centers, or how many urban schools upgraded. This is just a way of saying that what we need in this country is nothing less than a profound reordering and reshaping of our economic priorities.

**Anne Rowthorn**  
Hartford, Conn.

## Shares resistance story

Pat Washburn's "Inviting the IRS to dinner" in November prompts me to share a story of another EPF member's tax resistance. A dear friend of mine, long either a student or otherwise unemployed, is now entitled to a respectable taxable income. His solution was to live within that modest amount that can remain untaxed and donate the remainder to his parish for the express purpose of making it fully accessible to persons with disabilities. God only knows what good works will come from this method of tax resistance.

**Jane Jackson**  
Oakland, Cal.

## Issue gave hope

Having been "grounded" by a bad cold, I caught up on some of my reading, including the November WITNESS. I was so excited about some of the articles that I called numerous people to share with

them my excitement.

The article about the death penalty really got to me. When Joseph Ingle mentioned about the throwaway diapers, "stripped of his dignity . . ." I wept.

I have been a member of EPF since about 1960, so I was much interested in the issue. I had also been a member of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) and always felt that the two groups should join, but ESCRU just died. Why can't we make connections?

THE WITNESS pulled me back into the Episcopalian fold. I was so discouraged that I had given up going to church. Of course, I knew that wasn't the answer but the November issue did me more good, gave me more hope, than any sermon could have given me.

**Mary Austin  
Newtown, Pa.**

## John Walker memories

I was deeply touched by the WITNESS article on Bishop John Walker, as it brought back many memories of that wonderful evening at St. Margaret's, so full of love and of the man who inspired them all.

Many people said after the service that they needed a personal way to say goodbye. The Cathedral service helped us lay our bishop to rest. But we needed something more intimate to express our love for our friend and pastor. For nearly three hours, story after story was told by young and old, rich and poor, friend and stranger. You did an excellent job in your article of sharing the flavor of that evening and of paying tribute to a great man. Thank you for all you give to us throughout the year.

**The Rev. Dr. Vienna Cobb Anderson  
Washington, D.C.**

## 300 years late?

I am unable to set aside the remarks submitted in Glen Rice's Letter to the Edi-

tor, "300 years late" (December). Certainly his hostility toward the church is readily apparent, but I wonder if his hostility masks a deeper alienation, suffered by many gay and lesbian people who have left the church and, consequently, the faith which it represents. One can hardly blame Rice for his hostility. At the same time it seems ironic that while he would not allow the church to determine his right to his sexuality, he has seemingly allowed the church — by completely embracing his exile — to determine his spirituality, and the corresponding understanding of how God interacts with the world.

Gay men and lesbians have not been the only group to suffer at the hands of the church: Women, blacks, Jews, children, among many others, have equally experienced shame and rejection. Each have been forced to clarify God's continued faithfulness to their people regardless of the prevailing attitudes of the institution, a scandalous particularity especially to white, heterosexual men. Each have reclaimed their rich heritage, their rich traditions. Likewise, gay men and lesbians are beginning to reclaim their heritage, even if it is only to remember the countless brothers and sisters who were burned as "faggots" at the stake. And gay and lesbian Christians are giving witness to a God who seeks justice for those among God's people who have had no voice in their society, and too frequently in their own church.

Perhaps Rice may never return to the church. Nevertheless, God continues to remain faithful to him. Thankfully, your efforts and the work of others will be the voice crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight God's paths." (Pardon the pun.) You have brought a new vision, a new hope to those who have been kept in bondage or exile.

**Paul Bendan  
Pittsburgh, Pa.**

## Kudos from Peru

Loving greetings for the New Year, and many thanks for keeping THE WITNESS coming our way. The contents are always stimulating and we share the ideas with our Christian Feminist group, *Talitha Cumi*. It is good to feel connected in some way with all the efforts to humanize our planet.

So many momentous events going on in our world — does it mean there may be a breakthrough for transformation in the coming century?

**Sister Rose Timothy  
Sister Rose Dominic  
Lima, Peru**

## Returns to Nicaragua

My husband and I have returned to Nicaragua to work for a few years, *si Dios quiere*. We're interim staff of the Quaker Center, then we'll work in the *campo*, I doing health education and Charles, carpentry. I recently saw the Rev. Miguel D'Escoto and remembered his fast for peace in 1983 when so many came to fast with him from all over the world, including THE WITNESS. What a special moment in history that was.

Poor Nicaragua is suffering terribly. There is hunger among adults as well as children. With rising costs, it is a daily struggle for the poor to survive. Since Congress voted funding for the opposition in the elections, the *contras* in the countryside have increased their killing, kidnaping, mining of roads, destroying cooperatives, robbing, even threatening those who will not promise to vote for the opposition UNO. The people are weary. However, belief in the fundamental goodness, rightness and ultimate victory of the revolution is strong. Christians speak of this time as being their "40 years in the desert" after their escape from slavery.

The Sandinistas are doing everything

*Continued on page 14*

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THE WITNESS (ISSN0197-8896) is published monthly except July/August by The Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Editorial Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002. Telephone (215) 643-7067. THE WITNESS is indexed in *Religious and Theological Abstracts* and the American Theological Library Association's *Religion Index One Periodicals*. University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, reproduces this publication in microform: microfiche and 16 mm or 35 mm film. Printed in U.S.A. Copyright 1990. SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$20 per year, \$2.50 per copy. Foreign subscriptions add \$5 per year.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please advise of changes at least 6 weeks in advance. Include your label from the magazine and send to: Subscription Dept., THE WITNESS, P.O. Box 359, Ambler PA 19002.

# THE WITNESS



## Table of Contents

6 Cryo in the wilderness: The ethics of embryo freezing  
Charles Meyer

10 Daughter of privilege scorns elitism  
Norris Merchant

12 *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* probes prayer anew  
Malcolm Boyd

15 The legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Manning Marable

16 Martha, Mary: Cautionary tale held suspect by women  
Alison Cheek

16 'Seminary-in-wilderness' new concept for '90s  
Carter Heyward

19 Bishops' report lacks depth  
John M. Gessell

**Credits** Cover graphic, Margaret Longdon, design, TSI Visuals; Bingham photo p. 11, © George Lang; graphic p. 13, Margaret Longdon; graphic p. 15, David Adams; graphic p. 21, Len Munnik in *Ground Zero*.



## Our demons, ourselves

Continual reports from Central America of cold-blooded murders, never-ending suffering of civilian populations, and, most recently the U.S. invasion of Panama present abundant, grotesque material for reflection as Lent begins.

One of the six Jesuits murdered in El Salvador often said, according to the *National Catholic Reporter*, that the United States was the most violent country in the world. George Bush seems determined to prove it with the 14th U.S. invasion of Panama — yet another example of “gunboat democracy.”

A *New York Times* headline last October asked, “What Should Washington Do About Noriega?” The story, among other things, suggested the possibility of “an old fashioned military operation.” But Robert A. Pastor, a former Carter Administration official, is quoted as reacting to this: “Removing Noriega by force is a ridiculous idea. If we failed, we’d be humiliated; and if we succeeded, even our closest friends in Latin America would condemn us. We could be faced with a hostile new regime or find ourselves compelled to support a regime through military occupation.”

Then came the Dec. 20 invasion of Panama.

Now reactions are setting in — witness Colombia’s firm protest of the U.S. Navy in its waters for openers. But what about the lack of voices condemning the invasion of Panama coming from our own country? Our own Congress?

To their great credit, church leaders reacted with outrage. But they were fighting macho headlines such as “OURS”, which took up half a tabloid

page over Noriega’s prison photograph. And church leaders who filed protests must have felt like voices crying in the wilderness, as public opinion proved supportive of the invasion. WITNESS readers who found the act unconscionable will be consoled by the following statements, gathered by the Episcopal News Service:

**Episcopal Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning:** “I am profoundly saddened that the administration has found it necessary to intervene militarily and unilaterally once again in the affairs of a Western Hemisphere nation — even in the face of extreme provocation . . . I mourn the deaths both of the U.S. soldiers and of Panamanian citizens.” He expressed concern whether “such a violent act will issue in a just solution.”

**James Hamilton, general secretary of the National Council of Churches,** sent a letter to President Bush admonishing: “The rationale you have offered the nation for having ordered this invasion is insufficient, in our opinion . . . The NCC has long defended certain basic norms of international behavior. These include respect for the international rule of law; respect for treaties freely entered into; recourse to appropriate intergovernmental organizations for resolution of international disputes, and the unacceptabil-

ity of unilateral acts of military force, whether covert or overt, against another party. The NCC has consistently challenged governments, including our own, when they have violated these fundamental principles.”

**The Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett,** general secretary of the United Methodist Church’s Board of Church and Society: “U.S. intervention in Panama cannot be understood as a valid act of a civilized nation. Unilateral intervention, no matter its validity, can never be supported.”

**Episcopal Bishop James Ottley of Panama:** “We regret that the changes so longed for by our people did not find a response in the negotiations which were carried out previously, and that they had to be accomplished through an armed intervention, which has left suffering and grief in the wake.”

**The Council of Latin American Churches** called the invasion “a new terrorist action” and accused the U.S. government of being the “main obstacle for the establishment of peace” in the region.

“How long will the Christian churches in the United States continue to tolerate, and in some cases, even justify, these actions that not only violate the most basic human rights, but also the right that the weakest and smallest countries have to make their own decisions and to write their own history?” the statement asked.

All of which provide sober reflections for Lent, as we ponder that “some demons are cast out only by prayer and fasting” — and international opinion mounts that *we* are those demons.

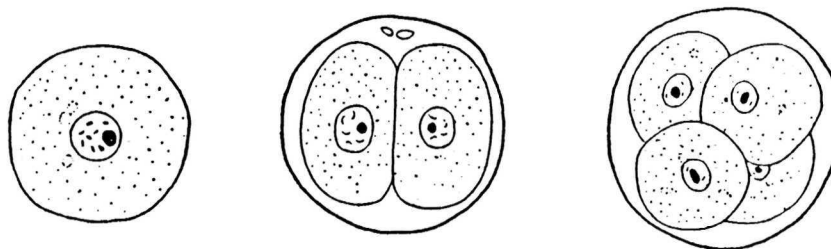
### 7 of 8 churchworkers released

Seven of the eight Episcopal churchworkers who were jailed in El Salvador have been released. Still detained is Julio Castro Ramirez, agronomist for CREDHO, allegedly being held because his brother is a member of the FMLN. Church lawyers continue to work for his release.

# Cryo in the wilderness:

# The ethics of embryo freezing

by Charles Meyer



**J**okes abound about frozen embryos. The judge in the Tennessee divorce case reportedly awarded equal embryo custody to husband and wife: six months in his freezer and six months in hers. A new movie is said to be titled: “Honey, I Thawed The Kids!” Couples with embryos in storage call them “kid-cicles.”

But behind the levity is a sense of uneasiness about the ethical implications of cryopreservation — the freezing of human embryos — for our society. This uneasiness is shared by couples requesting the procedure, practitioners performing it, and commentators observing it, and rightly so, for the balance of benefit to burden is as yet unclear. The scales are still teetering while the procedure is rapidly becoming standard medical practice in In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) programs around the world — yet another example of medical technology rapidly outpacing our systems of ethical decision-making.

Cryopreservation of embryos is not new. It has been successfully done with mammalian embryos since 1971. But it has only been since 1983 that the technology for cryopreservation has been

applied successfully to human embryos as a possible adjunct for treatment of infertility in IVF programs. The first human birth from a frozen embryo occurred in 1985, and there are now nearly 100 children resulting from such embryos. There were nine U.S. IVF clinics using cryopreservation in 1985, 15 in 1986 and 39 in 1987. A 1989 study showed that 63% of (responding) clinics used the process and nearly 33% of the remaining programs were instituting it by 1990. With the current number of 2.4 million infertile U.S. couples on the increase due to postponement of pregnancy to later age, environmental factors and sexually transmitted diseases, the demand for the procedure in the current 169 U.S. IVF clinics will continue to grow.

The method of cryopreservation is technically simple. Following the usual regime of IVF treatment, immature eggs are surgically removed by laparoscopy under general anesthesia or, more currently, ultrasound-guided vaginal needle aspiration. These eggs are then mixed with the sperm and incubated until they reach the 4-to-8 cell stage. After further preparation, the embryos are pipetted into small glass ampoules (called “straws”) which are heat-sealed and cooled to minus 30 degrees Centigrade

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**The Rev. Charles Meyer** is Assistant Vice President of Patient Services at St. David's Community Hospital in Austin, Tex..

before being transferred into liquid nitrogen. When the woman is ready to receive, embryos are thawed one to two days following ovulation and are inserted non-surgically (without anesthesia) into her uterus.

The ethical issues surrounding this process center around cryopreservation itself, the nature of the embryo, the options for disposition of excess embryos, informed consent, and the just distribution of healthcare resources.

### Benefits and burdens

There are basically three benefits of freezing human embryos. First, the number of embryos kept available for transfer is increased. In many IVF programs all fresh embryos must be placed into the woman from whom the eggs came. Although a pregnancy is most likely to be produced with the placement of three to four embryos, if eight to ten eggs are fertilized and result in six to eight embryos, all must be transferred back, thus decreasing the likelihood of implantation. If a woman must repeat the IVF process several times, multiple embryos are lost with each attempt, whereas cryopreservation ultimately decreases the number of "wasted" embryos by slowly using one or two at a time. As a result, the process should increase the pregnancy rate for infertile couples by about 8%.

Second, the risk of multiple pregnancies — twins, triplets, or more — is decreased by transferring only a few embryos and freezing the rest for a future cycle. Multiple pregnancies often result in more complications of pregnancy, fewer live births, and smaller birth-weight babies.

Third, and perhaps most important, cryopreservation obviates the need for the woman to go through the painful process of daily injections of hormones for ovarian stimulation, frequent blood tests, and surgery. Stored frozen embryos can be used for subsequent cycles at much less cost to the couple — both

physically and financially. The charge for IVF procedures is between \$7,000 and \$10,000 per attempt. Repeat attempts with cryopreserved embryos average about \$1,000 each.

Critics of the process complain that 50 to 60% of the frozen embryos do not survive thawing. Is this a sacrifice worth the potential benefit, if the chance for implantation and development to term of the frozen embryo is, even in the best programs, under 15%?

Although the risk of multiple pregnancies is reduced by cryopreservation, the risk of cryodamage and birth defects is unknown because there have not been

*"The items being frozen are variously called tissue, embryos, preembryos, concepti, zygotes, life, fetus, human life, conceptual products, blastocytes, or "the children." Each has its concomitant emotional, legal and theological overtones."*

enough live births to make such a determination. It is certain that some damage to the outer layer of cells occurs, but, as with cattle, the result of that cell loss may be minimal. At the four-to-eight cell stage, each individual cell can still develop into a complete and separate embryo. That the existence or extent of damage is as yet unknown is enough for some to suggest that the wholesale practice of such an experimental procedure should not be done so widely without strict research protocols.

But the rapid demand for, and growth of, cryopreservation in IVF programs across the country seems to have made the practice appear to be standard medical procedure. In fact, the American Fertility Society (AFS), which in 1986 cau-

tioned about the process, determined in June of 1988 that cryopreservation of pre-implantation embryos was "an established therapeutic procedure."

The benefits of convenience and minimization of the woman's physical discomfort have no counter-argument. But one must ask whether this manipulation of the reproductive process is worth its potential effect on the family structure and the morass of legal complications resulting from its use, especially regarding issues of ownership, property rights, liability, and inheritance.

Until now, for ease of discussion, the objects here have been referred to as "embryos." But there is considerable popular debate about the nature of the items being frozen. They are variously called tissue, embryos, preembryos, concepti, zygotes, life, fetus, human life, conceptual products, blastocytes, or — in the case of Circuit Judge W. Dale Young of Tennessee — "the children." Each has its concomitant emotional, legal and theological overtones.

The most accurate designation is "preembryo": a fertilized clump of four to eight cells which are as yet undifferentiated. Each one could potentially grow into a separate embryo; they could combine to form twins or triplets; or they could not develop at all and be expelled from the woman's body, as a large percentage are naturally each month. It is not until two weeks' development that the preembryo cells differentiate into germ layers and an embryo is formed that may or may not develop into a fetus. It is only at this post-two week embryo stage that placental cells form for the attachment and nourishing of the developing fetus.

As with other things, what it is called suggests what can be done with it; designation determines disposition. While many people want to submit, along with Judge Young and Pope John Paul II, that "life begins at conception," others believe that designation to be fallacious.

Life does not *begin*; it *continues*. The preembryo did not spring forth *ex nihilo*. The sperm and egg that joined to form the preembryo were alive. What, in fact, is being questioned here is the relative value of life at its various stages.

As a society, we value a full-term baby more than a 19-week fetus. In Texas (and some other states) a 20-week stillborn requires a death certificate, while a 19-week one does not. Further, we value a 19-week fetus more than an embryo, an embryo more than a preembryo, and a preembryo more than sperm and egg. Few would suggest, for instance, that the demise of an undifferentiated group of cells is equal to the death of a full-term baby. But it is reasonable that the loss of these cells, whether naturally dispelled from the woman's body or through thawing, has more meaning than the loss of sperm and egg tissue. For this reason, as the American Fertility Society suggests, preembryos should be treated with more respect than sperm and egg tissue, but with less than a further stage of development.

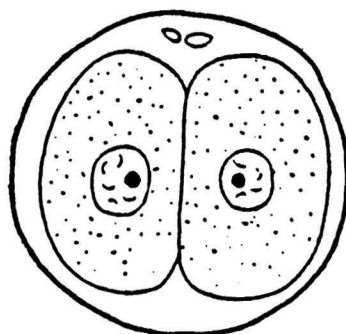
This reasoning is crucial to understanding the ethical acceptability of cryopreservation. It is precisely because of the preembryo's lesser existence, as compared to the embryo, that it may be frozen, even knowing that half of them will not survive thawing. It is not that the preembryo is insignificant and may be cavalierly dealt with, but that its significance and value are less than that of an embryo, and the burden of its loss is less than the benefits accrued to the woman.

### Disposition of preembryos

Probably the most vexing issue arising from cryopreservation is the disposition of excess, unused or unwanted preembryos. When a pregnancy and live birth has been achieved, when one of the couple dies or the two divorce, or when a change of mind occurs, excess cryopreserved preembryos are the result. It is estimated that there are currently over 30,000 frozen preembryos in storage

around the world. The options for their disposition are: thaw to transfer into the woman from whom they came, storage, donation to another woman, couple, or program, and thaw to discard.

- **Thaw to transfer.** Especially in the case of a partner's death or a divorce, the remaining partner may wish to have the unused preembryos transferred back into herself — or the man's new partner, infertile or not. In instances of birth or disagreement between parties, the woman may wish to dispose of the excess preembryos by thawing and transferring them into her uterus, either with



no thought to the ovulatory cycle, or leaving their implantation to chance.

Questions arise regarding whether the couple or surviving spouse has the right to designate to whom the excess preembryos will be transferred. Could they be given to the deceased woman's sister, mother, or daughter? If disease or accident has rendered the woman whose preembryos are frozen incapable of bearing children, can she choose the recipient? If a woman divorces and determines she is lesbian, can she and/or her new female partner opt to receive the excess preembryos?

Most programs require that the participants sign a detailed informed consent before entering, designating their choices in these matters ahead of time. Courts will undoubtedly deal with the situations where people sign and then

change their minds.

The American Fertility Society and nearly every other organization is against intergenerational transfer whereby a woman could give birth to a granddaughter, a niece/nephew, or even a sibling.

Screening of preembryos presents other ethical dilemmas. If a couple determine through genetic screening that their preembryo has cystic fibrosis or sickle cell disease or oncogenes ought they be able to discard on the basis of the possibility of unwanted future medical difficulties? On what other bases ought such discard be permitted? Sex? Eye color? Skin color? Furthermore, once the preembryo has been transferred into the uterus, implanted and become an embryo, can the couple request "embryo reduction" — the injection of a lethal substance by needle into unwanted implanted embryos — if twinning or tripling occurs?

- **Storage.** Although no one knows how long preembryos may be kept frozen, presumably they may be stored indefinitely. It is assumed that the longer the storage time the less likely the preembryo is to survive thawing or to implant upon transfer. Many programs set arbitrary limits on length of storage. A frequently used standard from the AFS is "for the reproductive life of the woman or until the original objective of storage has been achieved."

Of the over 30,000 preembryos stored worldwide, the United States has about as many as all other countries combined. It is certain that not all of these preembryos will be used by the couples from whom they came. One of the concerns arising from this massive number, all of which, presumably, will have a data sheet in their computer file, is the problem of preembryo banking. The United States already permits the sale of blood, semen and plasma (a practice forbidden by federal law on other continents such as Australia and Europe). It may eventu-



ally be possible to go to a bank and choose the desired characteristics of a preembryo for transfer, regardless of one's sexual orientation, age, economic or marital status, or level of infertility. Many people argue that this is no different from current adoption practice, and would result in even closer emotional bonding since the woman would presumably carry the preembryo to term and actually give birth to the child. To avoid the banking dilemma, some programs set a two to five-year limit on storage once a birth has been achieved, in order to bring closure to the process.

Programs vary on how to charge for storage. Some charge a flat fee at the beginning, others a monthly or yearly fee. But what happens if the couple no longer wants the preembryos, or leaves the area without notice, or becomes unable to pay the storage charge? Should the preembryos then become the property of the program and be donated, used for research, or thawed to discard? Likewise, what is the liability in the event of a power failure, mishandling or other human error? Is the death of the preembryos due to these causes legally to be considered murder or negligent homicide? Though most states do not yet have case law on these issues, it seems clear that no prosecutions would result from power failures, but a program might find itself in difficulty if it took custody of the preembryos as a result of the couple's failure to pay or show interest or availability, unless a clear and complete informed consent document was clearly in evidence.

In any case, preembryo storage and banking will be fraught with difficulties until some clear consensus arises regarding the nature of the preembryo and the options for its disposition beyond the freezer.

- **Donation.** For some couples, donation of their excess, unwanted preembryos — termed "little orphan embryo" by some — is a way to preserve that

couple's interest in giving their genetic legacies the best possibility of achieving birth, while at the same time fulfilling the wishes of another infertile couple. The issue this option raises is one of ownership. Whose property are they? Can a program require a couple to relinquish ownership of their preembryos ahead of time in an informed consent statement? What if circumstances, or feelings change?

Part of the problem lies in the differing ways of viewing the entire process. Physicians and clinics tend to view IVF in general and cryopreservation in particular entirely as a medical intervention for treatment of infertility, the goal of which is to produce a pregnancy and, hopefully, a live birth. Frozen preembryos are the means to that end. Couples, who are often desperate by now, tend to see the process as the final step in a long series of medical/personal failures which holds out the last hope that they will have their own genetic replicants: i.e. "children." Once the IVF process is accomplished and some preembryos are transferred and some frozen, there is often little delineation between the two sets of preembryos — all of which have now taken on the symbolic meaning of "the children," with concomitant emotional bonding. If the transfer fails and the preembryos do not implant in the uterus, or a pregnancy miscarries, the couple feels as though a significant death has occurred. Having other preembryos in the freezer may assuage some of those feelings, knowing that other attempts are possible, or may be the cause of further grieving when donated.

The parallel with mothers or parents who give up full-term babies for adoption is applicable here. While there is obviously a difference from the physician's perspective between an eight-celled preembryo and a newborn, there is often little difference for the parents of those preembryos, who may begin to see the frozen objects as their property.

In Great Britain, to enter an IVF program, a couple must have been in treatment for infertility for at least 12 months and receive psychological counseling regarding possible emotional ramifications of the process. No such guidelines exist in the United States. Because these emotional bonding issues have not been taken seriously by either clinicians or attorneys, no one has really studied the legal ramifications regarding the relinquishment of property rights before entering a program, designating a particular recipient (intergenerational, relative or otherwise) or the right to choose to discard thawed preembryos.

Current preembryo donation practices are unregulated. Consensus is unclear about what, if any, records — other than medical/genetic ones — should be kept regarding the donating couples' personal, professional and educational backgrounds, and if and how such data should be made available to adopting couples, or the children themselves. As with adoption, does the donating couple relinquish all rights forever to the knowledge of their genetic material's whereabouts? Is there a difference between giving up a full-term infant for adoption which the woman has carried in her womb and nurtured for nine months and donating eight-celled preembryos from a freezer to someone else?

Until consensus develops, it would probably be well to consider preembryo donation parallel to adoption, and call the process adoption rather than donation. Adoption emphasizes the action of the receiving woman or couple and focuses on the rights of the child, while donation emphasizes the action of the givers and seeks to defend their property/ownership rights. While the rights of all parties need protection, those of the potential child seem most vulnerable and worthy of primary focus.

- **Thaw to discard.** When the goal of

*Continued on page 22*

Sallie Bingham:

# Daughter of privilege scorns elitism

by Norris Merchant

“**Y**ou can’t get away from some of the amazing things the Gospels say. I always used to be astonished to hear this minister who seemed to be part of the white elite talking about ‘suffer little children,’ all the brotherhood scenes, and that rich man who could no more get into heaven than a camel could get through the eye of a needle. These were extraordinary things to be saying to a rich, prosperous, upper-class congregation. And nobody seemed to be taking them seriously.”

This candid astonishment at striking contradictions helped direct Sallie Bingham, the daughter of a wealthy, liberal and devoutly Episcopalian publisher in Louisville, Ky., toward militant feminism and a more free-swinging and venturesome political stance than that of her family. In fact, her relations appear to have at least temporarily disowned her. One reason may be her frank discussions in her family memoir, *Passion and Prejudice*, of dark rumors surrounding the death of her step-grandmother, supposedly the richest woman in America, and her conjectures concerning her father’s possible U.S. intelligence connections during his work as a Marshall Plan coordinator.

Though forgiveness or reconciliation may be alien to her family’s present stance, a desire to retain the elegant, Elizabethan language of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer has proved more to their taste. Bingham’s mother Mary has assiduously supported the traditionalist

Prayer Book Society, with much the same nostalgia that Bingham’s ancestors had for the doomed, antebellum South. A Confederate flag was prominently displayed among the memorabilia in her father’s office.

Those rich Christians who would listen respectfully to Gospel passages that seemed to condemn them, said Bingham, would nevertheless engage in philanthropy that “basically furthers the cause of the status quo. It has nothing to do with change.”

Like many offspring of the ultra-rich, Bingham found her closest childhood relationship with a beloved and loving nurse. Nonetheless, from the intensity of commitments she discusses with such deep feeling, one senses that however distant her parents were, their professed liberal values took root in her — even while her aging parents were becoming conservatized by unwelcome events in society and the church. The raucous youth rebellions of the 1960s were not to the taste of the elder Bingham, admirers of the sedately “aristocratic” liberalism of Adlai Stevenson. They tended to see the Episcopal Church’s statements as becoming more embarrassingly “political” and the liturgical changes as demeaning. Of her mother’s attitude toward Prayer Book reform and allied matters, Bingham said, “She’s been a great force for conformity in the Episcopal Church. I’ve been sorry to see that because a lot of that has been directed against women in the clergy.”

What Bingham valued from her upbringing in the church is “the philosophy, not the practices.” She professed a

deep gratitude for having been introduced to certain Christian values, even though she saw them blatantly violated in the suburban “mansion-church” attended by her family and other well-to-do white folk. “I did develop a great love of the ritual, and still love the symbols of the Christian church,” she said.

But when she ventures to church these days, Bingham admitted, “the language is a problem for me. I’m very put off by having to constantly refer to ‘God the Father’ and so on.”

Because of her determination to witness to feminist values she sees consistently threatened in a male-dominated world, Bingham finds unusual means of speaking out. At her father Barry’s funeral last year, when noted politicians, the wealthy and the humble packed Louisville’s Calvary Church to pay tribute to a man they highly regarded, she insisted on altering the masculine language used in the service.

“They were singing all those incredibly paternalistic hymns: ‘Faith of My Fathers,’ ‘Rock of Ages,’ and I kept changing the pronouns.” She made her instant liturgical revisions with such confident loudness that she was overheard in the sanctuary, causing rector Benjamin Sanders to smile about it afterwards.

“I sang pretty forcefully,” she explained. “It was not really done in a spirit of rebellion, it’s just the only way I can sing those hymns any more.”

There exists, said Bingham, a contradiction between the radical vision of the Gospels and the fact that “the church seems to attract the conformist members

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**Norris Merchant** is a free-lance writer based in Louisville, Ky.



Sallie Bingham

of society. It's so rare to find a rebel or an outcast who's working from *within* the church."

When asked how she as feminist would evaluate the work of a woman like Mother Teresa, who is known to hold traditional attitudes, Bingham said, "I think that works on two levels. She is certainly relieving suffering, and I have the greatest admiration for her commitment. But in terms of being an example for other women, I don't think it's helpful because of this aura of *saintliness*. Most of us don't think we can be saints — it's a model that's never really worked too well for the vast majority of the population. We're well aware of our frailty, and our need to have life made a little easier. When we see someone like Mother Teresa, who appears to have no needs, it's rather alienating."

So far as the problem of ending poverty goes, Bingham commented, Mother Teresa "is not changing structure, or even criticizing structure, as far as I know."

Mother Teresa's stated opposition to all abortion or even birth control "just adds to the troops of the hopeless she's

trying to minister to," said Bingham. Many women serving the male power structure of the church, she noted, embrace "the spirit of humility, which in effect means that you can never really criticize anything."

Bingham was not reluctant to discuss a sense of spiritual awareness she finds extremely meaningful and sustaining in her own life. "I have always felt a Higher Power. At this point in my life, at age 52, I feel this power most strongly in aspects of nature, and in young people, where I do think you see the spirit of God working."

That sense of something divine in certain vital manifestations of life transcends for her, at present, the value of the church as an institution. "I don't belong to a church at this time," she said, "and I don't attend regularly, because I find the service so alienating."

Louisville has become the scene of much feminist activity since Bingham centered the Kentucky Foundation for Women and her literary quarterly *The American Voice* there. The city's Christ Church Cathedral has also become the home of the Episcopal Church's first woman dean. "I've been going to the Cathedral now and then, where we have a wonderful woman, Dean Geralyn Wolf," she said, "But the service hasn't changed."

Anti-feminist activity also abounds in the city. Responding to the picketing by anti-choice groups at a Louisville public clinic, Bingham said it was "horrificing. They're led by some blind hatred and are really persecuting people already in distress. I just can't imagine people who call themselves Christians behaving that way."

Bingham confesses to being disturbed by the overwhelming patriarchal emphasis still found in Western religion. "From what little I know about what happened in the pre-Christian era, the Goddess religions all over the world were slowly but thoroughly exterminated. I think the

anti-nature, anti-woman connection is very strong. It's something feminist environmentalists are beginning to talk about. There's something about 'nature' that the male power structure abhors."

There came a time when Bingham required vast inner strength to fight a power structure. In 1984 women family members were asked to resign from the board of her father's newspaper, the *Courier-Journal*. She refused and was then forced off. She eventually decided to sell her stock in the family empire, which later led to her father's surprise announcement that the entire family holdings would be sold. During that crisis, Bingham averred that one of her principal supports came from Al-Anon, a secular self-help group mainly intended for family members of persons with drinking problems. She found the frank, open, and non-judgmental exchange of confidences provided in Al-Anon meetings a source of strength.

The controversy attending the sale resulted in much blame being placed unfairly. Bingham was resented as the catalyst that brought about the fall of one of the great, liberal family-owned newspapers and the loss of many jobs. A caller on one interview program asked her, "How does it feel to be hated by 2,200 people?" For a while such issues deflected public attention from projects such as her new foundation which, using part of her proceeds from the sale, has already given well over a million dollars to support the work of women artists.

Controversies also tended to overshadow Bingham's previous work — two well-praised books of short stories, a novel, and eight plays, in addition to her remarkably venturesome stint at the *Courier-Journal* as book review editor, where she wrote a column championing regional and little-known literary publications and writers.

Characteristically, among the books

*Continued on page 23*

Are You Running With Me, Jesus ?

# At 25, book probes prayer anew

by Malcolm Boyd

**T**wenty-five years ago, *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?*, a book of 89 short prayers and meditations I wrote was published. Langston Hughes insisted on calling them, simply, poems. When the book deeply touched the lives of people and was critically acclaimed, it was the most unexpected event of my life up to that time.

The book emerged in silence, with virtually no reviews. Twelve months after publication, *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* was selling 5,000 copies a week. The title became familiar in the press, on TV and radio; its name began to appear on banners in peace demonstrations.

The spirit of the times had a lot to do with the book's growing reception. There was excitement and a positive thrust in religion that could not be separated from a comparable secular mood, with its Peace Corps imagery of hope, the civil rights struggle, a strong public consciousness of a potential to effect significant changes in society, and a near-universal yearning for peace.

I wrote most of the book during the summer and fall of 1964 in inner-city Detroit. The meditation that begins "Look up at that old window where the old guy is sitting," was based, for example, on a street scene just five blocks from my lodgings near Wayne State University, where I was a chaplain. "The

old house is nearly all torn down, Jesus" was a view directly across the street. "The kids are smiling, Jesus, on the tenement stoop" — six blocks away. "In this ugly red building, old people are waiting for death" — three blocks away.

The impulse to write the book sprang from my increasing inability to pray. I had always assumed prayer was necessarily verbal. I forced myself to use the archaic language of liturgical prayer, battling my growing disillusionment and boredom. Wasn't God supposed to be *up there*? When this neat system collapsed for me, I virtually stopped praying, except for the Lord's Prayer.

In the spring of 1964 a group of Roman Catholic laity and clergy invited me to visit Israel and Rome. At one point we visited Cyprus where the men lived dormitory-style in a hostel. One afternoon everybody was taking a nap despite the sounds of distant gunfire being exchanged by Greek and Turkish Cypriots. I lay on my cot, trying to pray. Then I picked up a pen and notebook. "It's morning, Jesus," I wrote, "and here's that light and sound all over again."

I didn't know it at the time, but that was the basis of the first entry in *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* I was grappling with prayer and meditation in a new way. After the tour I again started writing my sacred thoughts.

I sent the resulting book to a friend. The publisher for whom he worked accepted it, and the original contract titled the book, *Prayers for a Post-Christian Era*. The editor explained we would have to move very carefully if we called it *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* Finally that title won approval, but only

because the publisher thought the book was doomed to peak at 4,000 sales. What difference could a title make?

The avalanche of letters from readers was the first indication something exciting was happening. Their communications filled pages and dealt with complex matters. One terse message remains my favorite: "My sister and I are too old to run with Jesus as we used to do," a woman wrote. "Now we're only able to walk with him. Jesus has taken us over some rough terrain but he stayed with us. Old and weary though we are, we can say there is no other way. His hand is large and secure, isn't it?"

I seldom used structured words in my own prayers or meditation anymore, except for those uttered in a conversation where God's presence, or need, was particularly strongly felt. Prayerful reflections used to stand as something separate from other parts of my life. But I came to learn that real prayer or meditation is not so much talking to God as just sharing God's presence, generally in the most ordinary of situations.

I also learned how to feel free to be completely myself with God. Now, in a given situation, knowing that God is with me — perhaps revealed in another person, or persons — I speak out of that deep trust and love which can spring only from a healthy, tried and authentic freedom. When my idea of prayer changed, I realized it would no longer be offered to God *up there*, but to God *here*; it was to be natural and real, not phony or contrived. It was not about other things — as a rationalized fantasy or escape — but these things, however unattractive, jarring or even socially out-

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cast they might sometimes appear to be.

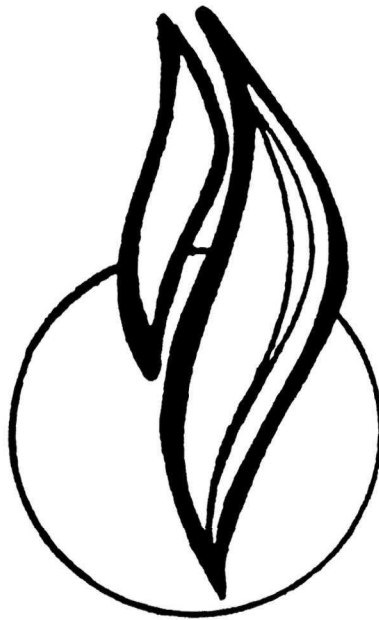
Prayer is so much more than most people give it credit for. It can be voting, making love, being angry, being quiet, marching in a peace demonstration, watering a garden, attending an office meeting, listening, lying on a sick bed, dancing, getting married, starting a new job. Prayer can be filled with color and fun, vitality and pain, hopelessness and starting over again.

An exciting aspect of prayer, for me, is that the old patriarchy is dead. God is not, I discovered, a hierarchical, autocratic, macho "Lord" of a clublike "holy of holies," nor is God an impersonal machine computing sins in a celestial corporate office above the clouds. It came to me that God is loving, even vulnerable, in a terribly unsentimental and profound way, demonstrating the depth, complexity and holy simplicity of an extraordinary relationship with people.

I came to realize many prayers and meditations are uttered or felt without prescribed forms of piety. If you listen, you can hear sacred thoughts and reflections in the novels, songs, plays and films of a wide range of contemporary artists. Authentic prayer bridges the heretical gulf between the sacred and secular, the holy and profane.

We also encounter anti-prayers when confronted by worshipers who deny in their actions outside a church building what they "pray" about inside. There is a hypocritical gulf between mouthing prayers about racial justice, and then resolutely manipulating a white power structure to keep non-whites in housing ghettos, unemployment, and interminable second- or third-class citizenship.

Prayer, I have learned, is more my response to God than a matter of my own initiative. I believe Jesus Christ prays *in* me as well as *for* me. But my response — like the Psalmists' — is sporadic, moody, now despairing, now joyful, corrupted by my self-interest and frequent desire to manipulate God's love. The



widespread, often hidden, community that is open to the Spirit of God — ranging from Christians to Buddhists, Jews to adherents of New Age consciousness — incarnates prayer in its essential life. My own prayer is part of this. But many times when I am caught up in egoism or self-pity, I forget.

I am as conscious of experiencing God everywhere in life as a medieval person residing in the shadow of Chartres Cathedral, or an ancient tribal person living close to nature might be. My sacred thoughts, prayers and meditations reflect this.

In 1965 *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* became a phenomenon as well as a book. As a result, it was necessary for me to confront and assimilate celebrity, and learn how to survive it. Now, nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the appearance of the book. I am also that much older, having celebrated last year not only my 66th birthday but also my 34th anniversary as an Episcopal priest. Doing so, I found myself looking back on the significant spiritual turning points of my life.

In 1968 I withdrew into a reflective,

carefully structured life at Yale University's Calhoun College while I privately experienced a crisis of faith. A Humpty Dumpty part of me had fallen and broken into pieces. What did I actually believe? Could I rediscover it or find it anew? I sought peace, intellectual honesty, and spiritual renewal.

In 1970 I entered into an even deeper spiritual search. For the most part I cut myself off from people, stayed close to nature in the Michigan countryside, and was nurtured by the steady, slow turning of the seasons, with their witness to God's creation and stability. In 1976 I came out of one of my life's closets when I revealed that I am a gay man.

I experienced a rebirth that reverberated through my entire life with its sheer spiritual intensity. The reaffirmed love of God for me as a person created in God's image became overpowering. The love of Jesus Christ, who shared every aspect of human life in the Incarnation and is my Redeemer, set me afire with new hope and joy. The companionship of the Holy Spirit is, I found, nurturing, intimate, a limitless source of strength, and a guide to personal well-being and social responsibility.

Imagine my dismay, then, in confronting a Mt. Everest of turning points that apparently still lay ahead. Although loaded down with accoutrements of what the world chooses to call achievement, I had to face a crucial question: What is the purpose of the rest of my life? Despite everything I had to be grateful for, I was aware I had come perilously close to not growing anymore. I felt my life was becoming encased in cement. I had to get in touch anew with my conscience and intuition, feelings and senses. *The Book of Common Prayer* says quite eloquently, "Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal." The moment had come once again come for me to get deeply involved in the quest for Christ's

strength and renewal.

I find to my delight that I am not alone on my spiritual journey. Companions are legion. It is different from the mood of 1965, and *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* There is now anxiety and hope about the emergence of a new century. An earlier innocence has been replaced by a hard awareness of realities — it is understood that youthful, fresh idealism is not enough. Yet old answers and familiar approaches do not suffice.

In our highly materialistic, consumer-oriented, success-motivated society, there is a spiritual wilderness. Conventional churchianity — too timid to address controversial social issues, publicly asexual, reciting traditional norms by

rote and devoid of passionately committed spiritual leaders — is unable to meet the challenge. Growing numbers of people are asking how to gain the world without losing one's soul.

While Jesus is the same, our world is not. The deep changes are reflected in the pages of the new 25th anniversary edition of the book. For one thing, environmental issues have moved to the forefront of our consciousness and experience. Survival itself is at stake, along with our common health. Tragically, we have let racial justice lag below the level of minimal decency and the requirements of an honest conscience. Women's and gay/lesbian rights have taken immense strides, yet even though a war has been won, battles remain to be waged. And ever-new wars hang in the balance. Politics remains a dismaying paradox between the forces of public service and the most flagrant, abusive assertions of self-interest.

Therefore, new prayers in the 25th anniversary edition reflect my focus on these matters. Scattered intermittently through the book, they concern a wide range of subjects including AIDS, the planet Earth, gridlock traffic in the city, the human voyage into outer space, a ceremony of loving union, and Latino immigrants. There are a few new chapters: Meditations at a Zen Buddhist Retreat Center in the Country; Meditations at Home, at Work, on Identity, On Curious Occasions; Life and Death in a Retirement Home; Non-Verbal Prayers and Jesus Prayers.

Language has changed too; it is constantly in flux. Twenty-five years ago blacks were called Negroes by the media; gay men and lesbians were called homosexuals. But the most dramatic changes are found in the area of inclusive language. A quarter of a century ago, "he" was used to describe persons of both genders; God was referred to as "He" or "Him." Paternalism was firmly entrenched. The new edition represents a

## Letters . . . Continued from page 3

possible to assure fair elections. The challenge to the rest of us is to do whatever we can to assure that the findings of the international observers, which indicate that the electoral process is proceeding fairly and freely and faces its greatest threat from contra activity, are circulated and accepted in the United States

**Dorothy Granada**  
**Managua, Nicaragua**

(*WITNESS* Assistant Editor Susan Pierce went to Nicaragua as part of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Witness for Peace delegation to monitor the election. Her analysis will appear in a future issue.)

## Communists?

Can you send me a copy of a recent issue of *THE WITNESS*, please? I heard an Episcopal bishop in a radio interview explaining differences in the church. He said, "Some people say it (*THE WITNESS*) is communist." He was from Ft. Worth. I *longed* to read your ideas.

**Virginia Killough**  
**La Porte, Ind.**

sincere belief in the significance of inclusive language and an honest effort to utilize it.

Prayer is many things: intimate and public, personal and social. It concerns one's own life and the life of the world. The book celebrates the loving life of God in the world.

In its pages are meditations and reflections, fragments of experience and memory that express a yearning for wholeness, and many different forms of what we call prayer. If you are willing to share the intimacy of a spiritual journey with me and let me be your guide in occasional labyrinths and over some hills, I offer you my hand.

(*Are You Running With Me, Jesus?: A Spiritual Companion for the 1990's* by Malcolm Boyd will appear soon in paperback at \$8.95 from Beacon Press, Boston.)

### Barbara Harris: Bishop

Order a copy of the historic April issue of *THE WITNESS* commemorating the Feb. 11 consecration of the first woman bishop in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion.

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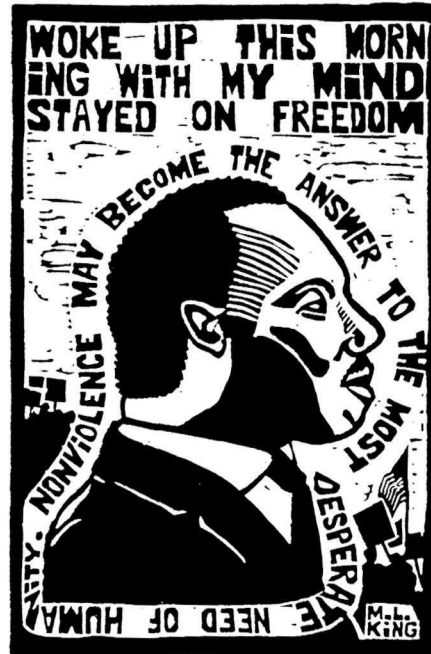
# The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

by Manning Marable

Martin Luther King, Jr., has been dead for nearly a generation. The political environment which defined his activities — the oppressive conditions of legal segregation and political disenfranchisement — no longer exists. It is easy, therefore, for those who opposed King's democratic social vision while he was alive, such as President Bush, to now provide platitudes about racial equality and justice. Faced with the destruction of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the absence of enforcement for affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation, and the policy of ignoring the mounting tragedies of black unemployment, homelessness and growing poverty, most white American politicians hide behind the soothing image of King as an advocate of racial peace. They fear the disturbing implications of the economic and social demands for restructuring American society that King made in the final years of his life, and pretend that this radical phase of his career never existed.

Black politicians have a different responsibility to be truthful in African-American history. To be sure, King symbolized the struggle to desegregate the racist South and dismantle the structures of civil inequality. His famous "I Have a Dream" speech, given on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on a hot August afternoon in 1963, spoke for the democratic sacrifices and struggles of millions of African-Americans, from the abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth to the early civil rights crusaders like Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, and Ida B. Wells.

**Dr. Manning Marable**, Professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado, is a member of THE WITNESS editorial board. His column, *Along the Color Line*, appears in 170 newspapers in the United States and abroad.



Black elected officials and all blacks who gained some degree of success in the cultural, social and political hierarchy of white America owe part of their accomplishments to King and thousands of other nameless freedom fighters who demanded a redefinition of democracy beyond the color line.

But civil rights was not the only issue to divide America in the 1960s. Under the Johnson administration, the United States had sent over half a million troops to southeast Asia. Black Americans represented one out of every seven soldiers in Vietnam. They suffered disproportionately high casualties because they were unfairly ordered into combat units. While the NAACP and the Urban League, fearing political retaliation, cautioned against the civil rights movement becoming involved in the Vietnam War debate, King made the decision to align his political beliefs with his ethical

hatred of war. Against bitter attacks, King urged black Americans to reject American imperialism abroad, and the sterile logic of crusading anti-Communism. He inspired millions to oppose the U.S. war effort.

But King's political legacy transcended the issue of Vietnam. He began to recognize that the political program of integration was insufficient to achieve economic equality for people of color in the United States. He called for the nationalization of basic industries, in order to guarantee jobs for the inner cities. King favored a plan for a guaranteed income for all Americans, and expanded social programs. Massive reductions in the Pentagon budget would be required to finance this domestic reconstruction. American foreign policy abroad would have to pull back from its support for imperialism, economic exploitation and political domination.

King's political vision also makes sense for the 1990s. We must advocate certain socioeconomic prerequisites for full participation in a democracy, such as the right to a job, not to starve, and to have decent housing and free medical care. King would insist that the battle today against racism is being lost, and that all Americans lose when blacks' median incomes are barely 55% of whites'. Poverty is directly connected with urban crime. And the answer to urban chaos, King would tell us, is not more police and capital punishment. The termination of drugs, crime and social unrest will come about only with total reconstruction of the inner cities, which requires shifting millions of dollars from the military budget. The legacy of Martin Luther King demands a rededication to the struggle to create both political and economic democracy in America. **TM**

### About these reflections

Feminist theologians Alison Cheek and Carter Heyward chose the Feast of Sts. Martha and Mary — the date of their “irregular” ordinations in 1974 — to reflect on the relation of these two biblical women to their present lives in general and to the role of a seminary in modern times in particular.

Their meditations, delivered in back-to-back sermons at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., offer conundrums that might well be pondered by all men and women.

Cheek points out the irony in the Lucan story of Martha and Mary, cited by many as a “woman’s gospel” but regarded with suspicion by women today because of the way the story, told by a man, sets “activists” at odds with reflective or contemplative women.

Heyward examines the role of strong women in “wilderness” times, and urges seminaries not to succumb to “wilderness fatigue” as the path of least resistance today. — Ed.

# Martha, Mary: Cautionary

In 1974 on the regular feast day of Martha and Mary, 11 women deacons were ordained to the priesthood in a service in Philadelphia that was later termed “irregular.” It is true that the Episcopal Church was constipated in the matter of the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, and since the women were ordained without the formal consent of their diocesan bishops, perhaps it is accurate enough to call it “irregular.” But it is a piece of history worthy of *anamnesis*.

At that time the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) had already begun its

search for an ordained woman to join its faculty. Increasing numbers of women were seeking admission to the school, many of whom were also seeking ordination. After the Philadelphia event this school made a very serious and deliberate decision that it would not eliminate from the search any of the women who were ordained in Philadelphia. It also decided that, were one of the women so ordained to be hired, she would function regularly and normally as a priest.

This decision involved making a prophetic witness. It meant taking a public stand that the opinion of this institution differed from that of the House of Bishops, which had passed a resolution saying that the Philadelphia ordinations were not valid. It was a prophetic decision. People put their status in the

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**The Rev. Alison Cheek**, ordained as one of the “Philadelphia 11” in 1974, is Director of Feminist Liberation Theology Studies at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

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## ‘Seminary-in-wilderness’ new

The tradition of the real Martha and Mary — strong, active women whom the early church was trying to silence — was embodied in the 1974 Philadelphia ordinations when 11 “uppity” women were ordained priests.

The Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) has a tradition of outspoken women in an outspoken seminary. But there are questions about if and how, as a school, we intend to be faithful to this tradition, about where we stand.

I want to suggest that where we really

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**The Rev. Carter Heyward**, ordained as one of the “Philadelphia 11” in 1974, is Professor of Theology at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. A contributing editor to *THE WITNESS*, she has published numerous books and articles on feminist theology.

are is in the wilderness. We are in a tradition not only of the real Mary and Martha, but also of the people of Israel, who once in bondage to false gods, found themselves wandering in the wilderness between captivity and liberation. Hear their lament: “Why were we brought up out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? We even hate the food.” That’s where we are in this school, in the wilderness — betwixt and between — and that’s where we’ve been since at least 1975 and, in many ways, long before that. By the grace of God, and with a little help from God’s friends, that’s where we’ll continue to journey on this side of God’s realm where justice will roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. What is this

wilderness all about?

First, it’s not as easy or as comfortable as it was in Egypt. It was easier when there was no question that good Episcopalians used the *Book of Common Prayer* for daily and weekly worship. It was more comfortable when there was no question that spiritual and ecclesiastical authority was passed down by God through *His* church in the persons of bishops and priests to lay people. It was easier when there was no question that an Episcopal seminary ought to be first and foremost a training school for professional parish priests. It was more comfortable when we wanted to be a school that the church loved; a school that most bishops would welcome their folks attending; a school widely re-



# tale held suspect by women

by Alison Cheek

church, and maybe their jobs, on the line, and it is something that we should honor and be proud of today.

The women concerned did not lose the initiative even in the process of hiring, since the three persons who were “short-listed” for that job — Suzanne Hiatt, Carter Heyward and I — by mutual agreement decided that one should withdraw, and the others suggest to the school that they be hired to share the position. Now, in the ceremonial life of the hiring of faculty, this isn’t terribly conventional behavior. Nevertheless, it was not far from those communities in the early church which made decisions because “it felt good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” And it felt good to the Holy Spirit in the sisterhood and to us to make this suggestion, which was accepted fa-

vorably by EDS.

On the day of the ordinations in Philadelphia it seemed to us very propitious that the feast day of Martha and Mary fell in the calendar at that time. It seemed good that we could be ordained on a day that is one of the few honoring women, and where the Gospel is a woman’s story.

Actually, the Lucan account of Mary and Martha is *not* a woman’s story. I’ll guarantee it wasn’t lifted out of the secret journal of either Mary or Martha. It is a *man’s* story about Jesus and two women. And by and large, women have always been leery of it, hating the playing off of two women, one against the other. Most women strongly identify with either one character or the other. Yet they resent the put-down of Martha.

After all, she seemed to be doing all the work. And they are apt to be co-opted by the commendation of Mary. I have found that even in the most conservative of women’s groups there is nothing like this story to raise a hermeneutic of suspicion.

Some feminist interpreters have tried to save the story by saying Jesus is rescuing women from the stereotyped role of housewife and liberating them within the church, giving them a new role. But there are difficulties with this line of interpretation, because if we adopt it, we are bringing Christian women from their marginal position and raising them up at the historical expense of their Jewish sisters. We are presupposing that Jewish women had no chance to study the Torah, and that Christian women have been

## concept for '90s by Carter Heyward

garded as one of the finest, if not *the* finest, seminary in the church.

It was easier in Egypt; it always is. The people of Israel knew this, which was why they lamented, complained, got tired of wandering, got fed up with Moses *and* the food, got restless and yearned to turn back from time to time. Similarly, do we now hear rumblings of this desire to turn back, to get into a place where we can be sure of who we are and where we’re going? That’s what I believe I’m hearing, for example, in the plea that we remain primarily “Episcopal” in our ambience, allegiance, and numbers. Do those who are urging us to be more “Episcopal” mean for us to enthusiastically embrace the real justice-seeking elements of the Anglican heri-

tage, and nurture the seeds of liberation planted by Episcopalians who have struggled at the margins of the church and society? Or are we being asked to shape up and conform in more conventional, less controversial, ways to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church?

As the liberation tradition in Judaism teaches us, wandering in the wilderness is the way to learn that God is not located in a fixed place, an established temple, a church, or a single tradition. God is in the journey. God is in the movement. Our “spiritual consciousness” as a school has not been well-tuned to this realization, I think. Not because it’s our fault as a seminary, but because the mainline Christian church

— including, of course, the Anglican tradition and the Episcopal church — has not embraced the commitment to liberation which is essential to being a faithful wilderness people. Thus we find ourselves unprepared for wilderness journeying, disappointed to be the seminary so many bishops love to hate, unhappy not to be better understood as faithful people.

On the one hand, we genuinely want justice for women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, poor and outcast people. On the other hand, we want to be well-liked, accepted by those who don’t necessarily want those things. On the one hand, we want feminist women and feminist men to come, enjoy themselves here, and help make this a fine school —

Cheek . . .

raised out of all this, whereas scholarship shows that women did study the Torah, and inscriptions have brought to light the fact that women were sometimes rulers of synagogues. Another difficulty with this line of interpretation is that it treats the story almost as biographical data, and we know that the Gospels are not intended to be biographies.

Once we see when this story was written, and look at the words used, it is obvious that it comes out of a later date than the days of the historical Jesus. Jesus is called "the Lord," suggesting that an appeal is being made here to the word of the risen Lord rather than the historical Jesus. We know there was a problem about women's leadership in the early church. The author of *1 Timothy* simply makes a flat and straightforward prescription that women are to remain silent in the churches: "I do not permit a woman to have authority over a man."

Heyward . . .

but not too many, please. On the one hand, we want to live true to our commitments, we honestly do; but, on the other, we want to make sure the church understands us. We want to move, but not too fast. We want to grow, but not become too feminist. We want women, but not too many, and certainly not more lesbians. We want men, the straighter the better. We want black people, but make sure they're Anglican. We want to do what's right but, please understand, we need money.

Our confusion is, I believe, a sign of "wilderness fatigue." It says to me that we are a weary people. Whether we have been at EDS for many decades, came in 1975, or have just arrived, we have learned the lament: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?" "Wilderness fatigue" is contagious. It is rooted in collective

Luke is a little more subtle. He tells a story where the risen Lord reproves the woman who is active and takes initiatives, and commends the woman who is passive and silent. We also know that the word used to describe Martha as being encumbered with much serving is indeed a word that was used to mean table service. By this time in the church it was also commonly used as a technical word describing church leadership. And we note that, in an era of house churches, it is in Martha's house that this all takes place.

If this story is intended to silence women, why is that necessary? What is going on here? I think the real Martha and Mary provide a "dangerous memory." They were powerful women leaders — if they had not been, it is not very likely we would know their names. Their names are among the few women's names that have come down to us out of a period of androcentric historical consciousness. Women's leadership was

causing a threat to patriarchal social structures, and therefore problems for the church communities. And what better weapon with which to tackle the problem in the church than the word of the Lord? It is a very effective weapon to this day. Little did Luke know how effective it would be. And 20th century women, although critical of the story, are ecclesiastically socialized not to question what is presented as the words of Jesus. Perhaps we get more of a glimpse of the historical Martha and Mary in John's account of them, where we are given a few more details. But we know from history that they must have been powerful, committed women in the early church. I am glad to have been ordained on the feast day of the *real* Mary and Martha. I am glad to be in the lineage of women who were active, committed, faithful and powerful enough to have become a problem for later generations.

I regard this Gospel as a cautionary

faithlessness — that is, in the failure to accept, with radical seriousness, the presence and power of God in our corporate journeying and life together, and let it comfort, inspire and delight us.

In leaving Egypt and venturing forth out of bondage; in hiring "irregular" women priests; in becoming an "irregular" seminary, we embodied a vision of faith rooted in the tradition of Jonathan Daniels, our student murdered in 1965 in Mississippi as he worked for civil rights.

By hiring the most formidable organizer among women priests, the one we've long called "bishop to the women," this seminary embodied a vision of a prophetic God. This school, in tenuring an "out" lesbian professor, embodied a vision of a sacred Spirit who will touch, comfort and surprise us. EDS embodied great faith when it hired a black woman ethicist to help redefine the very terms on which moral decisions

are made.

And this school, by hiring a feminist Anglican liberation historian as well as two feminist liberation biblical scholars, was trying to help us sharpen our biblical and historical vision of what it means to involve ourselves with those who have given their time, energies, scholarship, talent and sometimes, like Jonathan Daniels, their lives on behalf of marginalized and oppressed peoples throughout the world.

I have a few questions: Do we want women priests on the EDS faculty and women students to settle in and become female patriarchs? Do we want our male faculty and students to be untouched radically by the presence of strong, outspoken women? What sorts of alums did we and do we want to produce here?

Do we really want EDS to be a school in which we do business as usual? Or do we want to journey in the wilderness,

text. If this is the Gospel of Christ, how are we to proclaim it? Can we proclaim it? Is it good news for women? I think not, if we take it at face value. I think it is a cautionary tale.

Are we again in the same place in this school as when Luke's Gospel was written? Our public relations, the application of funds, policies of prudence in church politics — are we using these things to silence women or to mute women's contributions? Are we toning down a dangerous memory of this school's prophetic history in the Episcopal Church?

I would call upon this school to reaffirm its commitment to the liberation of women and all oppressed peoples, structurally, prophetically, in radical trust in the Spirit of God, remembering the past, steadfastly setting our face toward Jerusalem, in the sure and certain knowledge in the power of the resurrection. **TW** (*I am indebted to theologian Elisabeth Schuessler-Fiorenza for insights into the interpretation of Luke 10:38-42 — A. C.*)

confident that our vision of a realm of a just and compassionate God will bring us home? Do we really want to figure out how to be a decent and orderly seminary of the Episcopal Church, or do we intend to be a wilderness school? Will this be a seminary-in-exile, a place where God will always be known, loved, and celebrated in the margins, in the struggle for a just and compassionate church and world?

If we truly were to embrace as our vocation being a seminary-in-exile and make this journey our home, our problems with money and public relations would fall quickly into perspective. We might find ourselves poorer in some ways, but would find ourselves journeying with a startling sense of confidence, clarity, joy and energy — a people on fire with a passion for justice. And I believe we would be at last a people at home, at peace with ourselves. **TW**

# Bishops' report lacks depth

by John M. Gessell

The Board of Directors of the Cumberland Center last fall released its critique of the Urban Bishops' Coalition report, "Economic Justice and the Christian Conscience," suggesting that its analysis does not probe deeply enough and does not speak to the structural causes of economic justice.

The Cumberland Center for Justice and Peace, Sewanee, Tenn., has over 60 members and is dedicated to promoting efforts, programs and activities to bring about a measure of peace with justice in its own region as well as in the nation and the world.

The Cumberland Center's response emphasizes that economic well-being for some has been gained at the expense of misery and poverty for many. The Center suggests that the bishops' call for a change in values is too timid, and what is required are changes in the economic and political structures of free societies if this paradox is to be addressed.

The Center's board issued the response because, while they hoped that the Urban Bishops' report would start a widespread debate within the church on the causes and consequences of economic injustice in America, this had not yet happened.

To stimulate discussion, the Center has issued 350 copies through sales (at \$3.75 each) and other distribution, and is planning a second printing. The board received some thoughtful letters but de-

bate and discussion in the church is minimal so far as we can tell. Perhaps there is no mechanism within the church to foster such a dialogue.

The Center's response begins by calling attention to the *kairos* of opportunity provided by the present danger of widespread impoverishment occasioned by cruel politics and structural injustices. It notes further that the Urban Bishops' report is helpful as a guide to conscience, but that its premise lacks sufficient credibility to move us further to action. Some reasons are alleged to show why this is probably true:

1. The report does not go far enough in criticizing the relation of current economic structures to the systemic causes of poverty in America, for if the problems which it only hints at lie within the capitalist system itself these are not addressed.

2. It is not sufficiently rigorous in its theological analysis, for even people of goodwill cannot change the paradox of poverty in the midst of wealth merely by a shift in values.

3. The report does not appear to be well-informed on the developments of theological and social ethics in the past generations relating to economic justice.

4. It does not give sufficient attention to the problems of pervasive racism and militarism in our society.

5. The fundamental issue of transforming a war-based economy in the United States to an economy that will better meet the demands of justice is not well addressed.

6. The report understates the scope of the necessary individual and societal changes required to bring about a greater

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**The Rev. John M. Gessell** is Executive Director of the Cumberland Center for Peace and Justice and Emeritus Professor of Christian Ethics at University of the South's School of Theology, Sewanee, Tenn.

measure of economic justice whereby equitable sharing of material well-being with those who are impoverished will be required by those who are more fortunate.

One might speculate on the failure of the Urban Bishops' Coalition or the Cumberland Center to provoke widespread discussion of economic injustice in America. Is it because the current events in Eastern Europe demonstrate the coming triumph of capitalism and the ultimate defeat of socialism? Such self-congratulation and self-glorification is a vulgar denial of reality. Poverty in

America grows with each succeeding year. And 1988 was a record-breaking year for the rich. The gap between rich and poor Americans has now reached its widest point since 1946. Last year the poorest one-fifth of U.S. citizens received 4.6% of the total national family income. At the same time the richest one-fifth received 44% of total national family income. The number of officially poor Americans was 31.9 million, 13.1% of the total population. Given this data, Eastern Europeans groping for new political and economic solutions should be forewarned about the consequences of opting for American-style capitalism.

No one in Eastern Europe is rushing to embrace American "free-market" economics — which has become a euphemism for multi-national monopolistic protection of deregulated greed. The call everywhere is for democratic socialism.

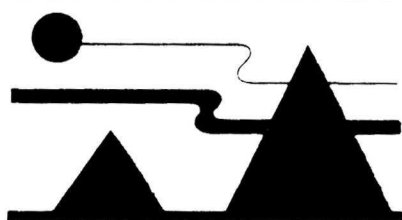
One bishop's reaction to the Cumberland Center's response may come closer to the truth. He noted his agreement with its final paragraph: "Thus the report of the Urban Bishops' Coalition is to be commended for addressing critical issues of justice and conscience related to the functioning of the U.S. economy. It nevertheless accepts, and is perhaps captive of, the dominant values of our culture — political, economic, and religious — as these are construed in the late 20th century. The board members of the Cumberland Center believe the report should adopt a more radical stance from within, questioning those very assumptions, rather than simply hoping for their reform." And he goes on to say, "We are captive in many ways that we need to look at, i.e., we are still captives of the 'Prince/Bishop' thing — we need to restructure the way in which the episcopate functions."

It may well be that the Episcopal leadership of the church is to a large extent captivated by its medieval theology of *episcopé* which includes the relatively uncritical alliance with the political and

economic principalities. There are those who are critical and can distinguish the dominant secular values which engulf us, but the general ethos tends to be acceptance without critical judgment — as if the Episcopal Church were an *established* church with duties to legitimize the culture.

In October 1981 the House of Bishops issued an astonishingly perceptive pastoral letter from its meeting in San Diego. Titled "Apocalypse and Hope," the letter charts the dismal and self-destructive spiral of violence throughout human history. "With violence so deeply rooted in human behavior it becomes an agony of growth to shift to another means of security. It remains easier to rely on instruments of mutually-assured destruction than to negotiate in patient non-violence for the means of mutually assured survival. We are therefore prompted as religious leaders to impose upon ourselves the obligation for making this moral shift. We pray to the Holy Spirit to change our hearts, moving us from violence to non-violence."

This was a landmark pastoral calling for a shift from the tradition of moral theology on the uses of violence that had been regnant in the church for over 1500 years. But this commendable access of acumen and imagination has not been followed up. Little indication has appeared that the church's leadership is moving from its uncritical option for the rich to a preferential option for the poor, or that it is willing to call into question the church's complicity with the warfare state, or to work against the death penalty, or to end the continuing oppression of women and homosexual persons. The "radical shift" of the pastoral letter is not merely a personal preference, it is a social contract. Radical shift from violence to non-violence in the terms of moral theology is a shift from a concern for the rich to the poor. For it is the poor who pay the unbearable price of the violence that is an integral part of injustice.



## Pro-choice issue available

■ Procreative freedom — the June 1989 issue of *THE WITNESS* gives a comprehensive theological and social analysis of reproductive freedom. Features penetrating interviews with Faye Wattleton, president of Planned Parenthood, and Beverly Wildung Harrison, feminist theologian. Also, an African-American male viewpoint by Faith Evans, past president of Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, and articles addressing pastoral and legislative implications.

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# Short Takes

## Pre-embryo phase not pregnancy

I would suggest that a woman is not pregnant until the pre-embryo implants in the uterus, at about two weeks. The IUD in some fashion disrupts the early process so that implantation doesn't take place. The assumption is that, unable to find a place in the inner lining of the uterus, the pre-embryo fragments and dies. This also applies to RU 486, the new pill developed in France. Like the IUD, RU 486's effect is contragestive. It is not against the ovum itself. It interferes with the interaction between the uterus and the pre-embryo.

**Embryologist Clifford Grobstein**  
*in Psychology Today 11/89*

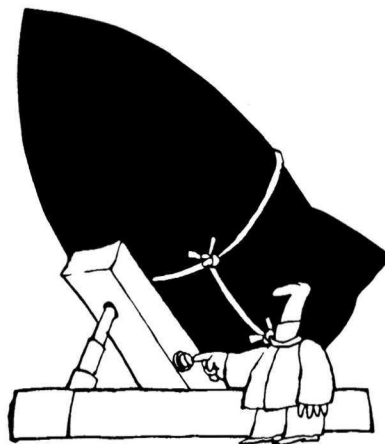
*(Grobstein serves on the ethics committees of both the American Fertility Society and the Catholic Health Association.)*

## How 'bout dem CEOs?

A recent survey of pay for the chief executives of 354 major companies found that in 1988 they earned 93 times the income of a typical factory worker, 72 times more than a schoolteacher, and 44 times more than an engineer. In 1960, when American business called the shots for the whole world, executives took home a mere 41 times more than factory workers, 38 times more than schoolteachers and 18 times more than engineers.

What we are going through is part of a worldwide radical shift in the division of labor. It is carried out by irresponsible corporations at the expense of workers in both the First and Third Worlds. We have to have an alternative to this reality of a global economy in furious, and often socially destructive, transition. We need democratic and social intervention into the investment process itself. It is the corporations, not Mexican, Taiwanese, or South Korean workers who are the enemy. That's why international labor solidarity is so important.

**The late Michael Harrington**  
*Solidarity 7-8/89*



## Swiss Army challenged

The Swiss people voted in November on the abolishment of their army, and 35% voted to get rid of the army by the year 2000. The referendum was initiated by a group called, "Switzerland Without an Army," which had gathered 100,000 signatures to force a vote.

Two years ago, organizers of the referendum were publicly ridiculed by government and media. One year ago, high ranking military officers said that if the referendum were to reach 20% of the votes, there would be a serious crisis. With a voter turnout of 69%, highest since 1971, 35% of those voting want the army gone.

Until recent history the Swiss army has been the number one patriotic institution. It has been labeled the most modern and effective army in Europe. Heightened public discussion around questions of war, peace and nonviolence has provided the grounding for wide reassessment of the need for an army.

**Synapses news release**  
*12/18/89*

## Quote of note

George Bush was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple.

**Jim Hightower**  
*Texas Agricultural Commissioner*

## Youths bend ethics rules

According to a recent survey of 795 business persons and 1,093 high school seniors by the Pinnacle Group, students were much more inclined than business people to be more inclined to do something illegal to make money:

— Asked if they would be willing to face six months probation on an illegal deal in which they made \$10 million, 59% of the students said "definitely yes" or "maybe;" and 24% of the business persons responded similarly.

— 36% of the students, contrasted to 14% of business persons would copy to pass a certification test.

— Half of the students said they would exaggerate on an insurance damage report, versus one of four business people.

— Two-thirds of the students said they would consider lying to achieve a business objective, while 29% of the business persons claimed they would do so.

**Gregory Pierce**  
*The New World 8/25/89*

## No ethics, no dilemma

As part of an effort to weed out people only interested in parlaying a Harvard business degree into a high-paying job, the admission process has been changing. It now includes 13 questions and nine essays and takes hours to complete. To make the cut, students must answer a few questions about ethics.

In the application, they are asked to explain how they managed an ethical dilemma they experienced. But according to Laura Gordon Fisher, the school's admission director, many students say they never have encountered an ethical dilemma. "Some applicants want to know if they can fabricate one," she said.

Reminds me of the old question, if a dog could talk, what would it say? If these kids could make up an ethical dilemma, what do you suppose it would be?

**Molly Ivins**  
*Houston Post*

the process — live birth — has been reached, or when there is a dispute between parties, a death, or a change of mind due to physical, emotional or financial circumstances, couples may choose to have their unused preembryos removed from the freezer, thawed and discarded. At least one program removes the preembryos and keeps them in an incubator as they are slowly warmed and disintegrate, in a manner which parallels withdrawal of interventions in intensive care nurseries. Other programs view the four-to-eight-celled objects primarily as human tissue and, while treated with respect, they are nonetheless thawed and discarded as any other human tissue from the lab.

The euphemisms used by IVF to avoid the reality of the preembryo's death indicate their uncertainty with the process. Australian programs originally said preembryos were "removed from storage." Recent U.S. terminology has centered around "thawing without transferring," "thawing to discard," or simply "thawing." None of the designations acknowledge that this choice intentionally allows the preembryos to die.

While many would contend that this option is active euthanasia or, more vehemently, abortion, it seems clear that removal of preembryos from the device which maintains them in a sort of suspended animation has a closer parallel to the removal of life-support systems from hospitalized patients. But even this comparison assumes too much in equating eight-celled embryos with persons. The fact also is that these undifferentiated eight-celled embryos die when thawed.

The interesting dilemma is that preembryos are seen by these same clinicians to be of lesser significance than an embryo and therefore ethically able to be frozen and thawed with a 50% sacrifice rate. But on the other hand, they are of such significance that terminology be-

comes euphemistic or evasive when the matter of choosing to thaw to discard arises. Some programs will not even offer that option and require that excess preembryos be stored indefinitely or transferred for donation to an infertile woman. Louisiana is the only state where this is currently law.

### **Preembryo symbol of life**

The issue here is the preembryo as a symbol of life and medical practitioners' refusal to accept not only the end of that life, but also the logical consequences of their technological interventions. Preembryos do symbolize human life. Human life ends in death, regardless of the kind and amount of medical treatment applied to prolong the process. If practitioners want to devise procedures to create and preserve potential lives, then they must be willing to accept the responsibility for withdrawing those procedures, and allowing, at the discretion of the parents, those preembryos to die. Not to do so denies the wholeness of life which includes death, and devalues the preembryo, making it a mere means to an end, and another commodity in an already overly commercial society. Thawing to discard, then, is an appropriate option for any program offering IVF and cryopreservation.

In order ethically to practice cryopreservation, there must be a well-written informed consent document. In addition to costs, issues raised in the form should include conditions of transfer, storage, donation, and thawing to discard. Disposition in case of death, divorce or disagreement must also be decided and agreed to prior to cryopreservation in order to avoid the kind of legal problem that developed in Tennessee, where no informed consent form was offered.

But can a couple be informed enough about the psychological, emotional and symbolic attachments they will experience to decide to abrogate any future rights for knowledge of or contact with their preembryos? Or is this consent par-

allel to one signed by a mother relinquishing her rights regarding a full-term baby? Will they be prepared for the criticism that they have "aborted" by allowing the excess preembryos to be thawed to discard? And what will happen if the mother dies and the bereaved father wishes to have the preembryos transferred into a sister-in-law, or mother, or new significant other to preserve the genetic legacy of his former spouse?

Even the best informed consent document will not totally protect all the parties from litigation, especially in this country. Legal issues not addressed in most documents involve inheritance and property rights. If both parents die, do the preembryos stand to inherit the estate if transferred to another woman, and what is her involvement in their inheritance?

Informed consent is, however, the key to the ethical structuring of any cryopreservation program. Couples or singles must explicitly know ahead of time the limits of the technology, the situations that may arise, and the best and worst-case scenarios this technology may produce.

### **Ethical objections**

Some people believe with the poet Homer that "The human race should rightly be confined/Within the bounds which Nature hath defined." They object to cryopreservation for the same reason they object to the use of any artificially assisted reproduction techniques, on the grounds that it is artificial and unnatural. But much of medical practice is "artificial" in terms of the physical or mechanical interventions used. Modern medical technology, from lasers to magnetic resonance images, has expanded what were previously thought to be nature's "bounds."

In fact, biotechnology may eventually obviate the need for cryopreservation altogether, once an effective way is devised to freeze ova. Because ova are made up of only one cell, they are much

more fragile and difficult to freeze and thaw without total loss. But once the method is perfected, frozen sperm and eggs may be thawed and mixed together when the woman is ready to receive them, thereby circumventing the entire issue of preembryo creation, storage and disposition. Already there have been at least five human births from the use of frozen ova.

Other ethical problems with cryopreservation stem from its association with IVF. As with IVF, many ask whether, in a country with 37 million people without healthcare insurance, it is a just allocation of scarce resources to spend money on a technology that benefits a relatively miniscule number, with an alarmingly small success rate? As the United States faces future rationing of healthcare resources, will such novel and expensive procedures be a priority in a nation with a higher infant mortality rate than Spain

and Costa Rica? In a world teeming with babies in need of food and nurture, should we produce more infants when we have not met our moral obligation to care for those already born?

In addition to the ethical issues raised earlier which are peculiar to cryopreservation, even aside from IVF, will we allow only "perfect" babies to be chosen? What political, social, physical or economic criteria will we use to define "perfect?"

Finally, where is the church in all of these issues? There is a desperate need for open discussion at the parish and community level about the ethics of sexuality, procreation, abortion, termination of life-sustaining treatment, and the socially just allocation of healthcare resources. The fact that there are no "right" answers, official church answers, Christian answers, or Biblical referents to cryopreservation deters many

churches from entering into such controversial dialogues. But this fact points up the need for discussion from the Christian perspective to provide the insight and guidance from which will evolve many possible courses of ethical action.

Current common belief is that we live in a "post-Christian age." If we do not take seriously our obligation to address these ethical issues, then the competing cultural theologies of science, law, political and economic advantage and social convenience will become the dominant forces in directing our common life together.

If we, as Christians, are to have any cultural viability and social influence in the future and if we are to assist our people in the understanding of our particular tradition of belief, then the church must begin to examine the untangling of that web, strand by sticky ethical strand. TW

## Daughter . . . Continued from page 11

Bingham chiefly turned to for support during the family crisis were Anne Braden's *The Wall Between* and Lillian Smith's *Killers of the Dream*. Both books were written by Southern women activists whose militant championship of minority causes met with a dismaying lack of support on the part of Southern "moderates."

In 1947 Braden and her husband Carl had roused the wrath of Louisville racists by selling a home in a white neighborhood to a black couple. When the house was firebombed, the Bradens were blamed. Tried before a biased court using the testimony of paid informers, Carl was imprisoned under a state anti-sedition law later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. He was a proofreader at the *Courier-Journal* and at the onset of the controversy, he was suspended by Barry Bingham. The paper showed little support throughout the struggle.

Impressed by Anne Braden's courage, Bingham sought to probe this admirable activist's life by writing a play, also called *The Wall Between*. And recently, Bingham said, "the Foundation gave a grant to a woman who's writing a biography of Anne Braden, and I'm very pleased with that."

She also has strong empathy with Lillian Smith, derived from the fact that she and Smith grew up in a closed environment, stifled by patriarchal domination and racial prejudice, which had to be fought to win self-determination. She, like Smith, remembers an encompassing ambience of "sin," a deeply-implanted guilt requiring a high moral responsibility that was contradicted by the rampant racism and injustice she saw around her.

During her girlhood "we lived in a rigidly segregated society," Bingham said. "All the white people were living off the labor of their black servants, and yet black people weren't considered, so far as I could see, to have souls. There

would never have been a thought of a black person in the churches. Even before the mansion-church was built, when we used to congregate in a little black church in Harrod's Creek, there was still no notion that the two congregations had anything in common."

Noting that the phrase "brotherhood of man" was frequently invoked in church, Bingham asked, "Where were women in that brotherhood, a brotherhood that wasn't even working for men?"

"Under that benevolence, the kindness of the patriarchy," Bingham said, "there was really murderous intent. How could all these people be treated as human beings with souls when they were being exploited?"

It is this whole question of exploitation and exclusion which troubles Bingham the most, and has led her to actions which have resulted in alienation from her family. TW

(*Passion and Prejudice* is published by Knopf. Hardback, \$22.95.)

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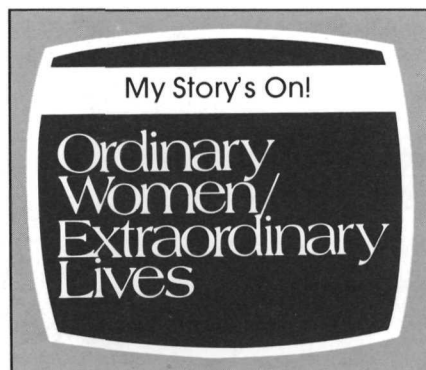
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