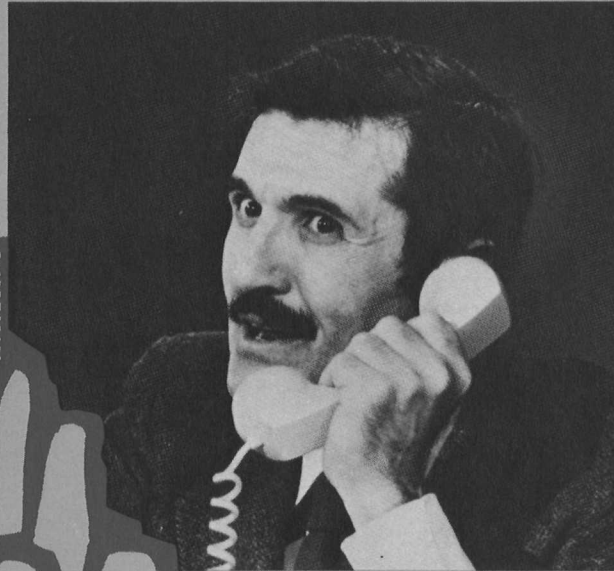


THE WITNESS



Sis Levin

Author, *Beirut Diary*



Jerry Levin

Hostage, 1984-85

Hostages
yesterday & today
Interview with Sis Levin



MIGNON

All you
peoples,
clap your
hands;

shout to God
with cries of gladness.

Letters

Genteel oppression

Kim Byham's article in the April WITNESS presented Robert Williams as a devious egotist and publicity hound.

Byham might have examined whether the Episcopal Church is the Body of Christ or a whited sepulchre. He might have challenged the church to act against established injustices. Instead, Byham is intent on proving to his church superiors that Robert Williams is truly wayward and queer, while the rest of us gay and lesbian folks have been properly toilet-trained.

What matters most is why church leaders are now so eager to draw the line at the ordination of Williams and all other sexually active gay and lesbian people. Plainly, because Williams is significantly more aggressive, public, and controversial than other gay and lesbian priests. Certainly bishops now regret their toleration of the more quiet queers, because this allows the louder ones to sneak in and abuse the privilege.

Bishop Spong has assured the House of Bishops that he still upholds an ideal of monogamy against "promiscuous and predatory sexual behavior." Besides dualistic moralism, this reveals the fierce sexual projection of many straight people upon gays and lesbians, just as Williams has noted. (And those who think AIDS is the final argument for monogamy lack sexual imagination and a working knowledge of condoms.) A good many Christians — gay and lesbian, straight, and bisexual — maintain non-monogamous relationships which may be marked by deceit and abuse, or by decency and consent. I would not trust the House of Bishops to judge.

Since the church will not marry gay people, and since Christians can only have sex within marriage, it follows that gay Christians cannot have sex at all; and only gay and lesbian celibates may become priests. Church leaders rarely

spell this out so severely, yet this and nothing else is the logic of the official church consensus on sexual ethics. When all the incense of Christian charity disperses, what remains is this rank doctrine of sexual and spiritual apartheid. I agree that "continuing dialogue" is needed here, but only if outrage, defiance, and satire are included.

Byham refers to Williams' "outrageous statements" without trying to refute them with his own sexual ethics. Entrapped by mechanical arguments and categories, Williams has so far failed to explode the current forms of debate. Charged with going too far, he has not yet gone far enough. Even if Williams is the devil incarnate, it's possible he has some good ideas. He disturbs ladies and gentlemen of all sexual persuasion, which Integrity might do more often to earn its name.

The Anglican/Episcopal sect is often guilty of making a religion of gentility. Williams, it seems, is charged with the sin of being rude. But he, at least, remembers what so many Episcopalians forget: namely, that Christ overturned tables in the temple.

Scott Tucker
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sad tale

What a strange and sad tale of Robert Williams! After reading Kim Byham's article, I'm not certain who said what to whom, but I do know that we are all diminished by it. None of this builds community, does it?

Josephine Merrill Kirkpatrick
Pasadena, Cal.

Silencing real scandal

Thank you for Kim Byham's thorough account of "The Rise and Fall of Robert Williams." I disagree, however, that Williams regarded himself as "the leading prophet of the lesbian/gay movement

in the Episcopal Church." Although his aggressive, insensitive style and crudely graphic comments at the Detroit symposium were disturbing, Williams never presumed to speak for all sexual minorities; rather, he spoke directly from his experience rooted in accumulated pain, the pain of being treated as a child, incompetent, a non-person in a faith community that verbally acclaims the equality and dignity of all.

There is no scandal in Williams' suggestion that there is nothing authoritative about monogamy, or sexual exclusiveness; nothing ultimately written about what should be possible or tolerable. There is no scandal in two women or two men declaring their love for each other in the presence of God. The self-righteous, self-sufficient talk of religious leaders is the real scandal, the real blasphemy; their words veil and disfigure the face of God who loves freely and gratuitously. Their moderate, weak-spirited responses encourage the gay bashings that cripple our lives.

To be ostracized by one's former friends and colleagues is a terrifying experience. Williams now joins the ranks of lesbian and gay clergy who know what it means to be booted about the geographical and ecclesiastical landscape just for being who we are. His first and greatest challenge is to continue believing in himself, to trust himself and his own thinking and not allow others to convince him that his thoughts, ideas, plans, visions are unimportant, immature, immoral and sinful.

Of course he is not always right, but that is no prerequisite for sanctity. Being true to oneself is.

The Rev. Zalmon O. Sherwood
Jackson, Mich.

For the record

I would like to make two observations about "The rise and fall of Robert Williams." The Dignity/Integrity Richmond

anniversary dinner at which Williams was invited to speak is not the largest gay/lesbian event in the Richmond community. The annual lesbian and gay pride festival attracts several thousand people. The D/I dinner has grown to 350 people. More importantly, the invitation to Williams was withdrawn after he made negative comments about Mother Teresa and Bishop John Spong.

William A. Harrison, Jr.
Richmond, Va.

Political card game

As a member of Integrity, Inc., I have long appreciated the many priests, bishops, deacons and leading lay members of our church who have been outspoken supporters of gay and lesbian civil rights and ecclesiastical privileges. We have, for nearly two decades now, played as partners in a political card game, attempting hand-by-hand and trick-by-trick, to establish those rights.

Bishop Jack Spong has long been a high stakes player in this game, and certainly there are many who have marvelled at the risks he has taken on our behalf. The ordination of Robert Williams by the Diocese of Newark stands in contrast to a "sense of General Convention" resolution passed in Denver in 1979 urging against such ordinations. That ordination — while prophetic and efficacious it may have been at that time — really is not what is upsetting the card table.

My diocesan bishop has promulgated the opinion of several of his colleagues that the real problem now before us is one of law and order. This holds that the Episcopal Church makes its mind known via resolutions of General Convention, and that when it does speak it ought to be heard and obeyed. When it is blatantly challenged we risk sowing the seeds of anarchy, and thereby potentially reap a harvest of discord.

On the surface this sounds like a sane

and sober rationale for condemning the action of the Diocese of Newark and its bishop. But this sort of reasoning reveals an attempt to appease the people opposed to the idea of gay and lesbian clergy by playing on their fears and supporting their prejudices. Several other gamesters, including the board of The Oasis and Integrity president Kim Byham have upped the ante with their own opinions. Again, it is not the issue whether or not Bishop Spong was within his canonical rights to ordain the man; clearly he was. The real issue is the way in which he went about it.

As Byham has pointed out, the public fanfare and media attention Spong called into focus on this particular action was self-serving and provocative. He unduly politicized what otherwise would have been a run-of-the-mill affair. Spong played a political trump card called antagonism. The problem is that his partner, Integrity, Inc., would most probably have taken the trick with an ace in the hole in Phoenix '91. We can now only hope and pray that as this hand plays itself out, his gambit does not cost us too many points.

Todd E. Mashlan
Toledo, Ohio

Baffled by article

Kim Byham's article left me somewhat baffled. It pointed neither to a clear condemnation of Williams' actions before the media, nor to support of them. Maybe that is what the author intended.

My own opinion is that in his public statements, which caused so much uproar in the Christian community, Williams confuses reality with ideal. Yes, the reality is that humans murder each other every day of the week, but murder is, of course, not ideal nor is it in any way an acceptable given of life. And yes, people are not faithful every day of the week, but that does not preclude monogamy as an ideal life style.

One of the saddest things about the whole Williams affair is that by making his unorthodox beliefs and ideas a public media focus, Williams precluded the possibility of his initiating some real and serious dialogue between straights and gays, where the apparent need or predilection among gays for multiple sex partners could have been a topic of investigation. It is not unfortunate that the Diocese of Newark — in consenting to and supporting Williams' ordination — failed to know about his views, but that it failed to detect his self-indulgent and immature behavior patterns.

Annette Jecker
Vernon, N.J.

Bad example

Bishop John Spong has created a bad atmosphere in the church by his poor handling of the Williams case.

In our Anglican tradition, clergy and lay people are seldom, if ever, asked to limit what they say or believe. If someone says, I do not believe in monogamy, but practices it, we should leave him alone. If he says, I believe in monogamy, and does not practice it, we should hold him accountable for lying, deceiving and breaking the marriage vow. I believe our tradition holds people accountable for actions, not ideas.

Where does Jesus say we are supposed to be monogamous in marriage? Where does the Book of Common Prayer, the Canons, etc., make monogamy absolute dogma, never to be broken? The fact that we allow the divorced to remarry, even after they have committed adultery, indicates we deal with each person's actions individually, not dogmatically.

I believe monogamy is the best standard for marriage and relationships. I am also satisfied that it does not work for all people all the time. To be Anglican means we hold varying, often contradictory, ideas in tension. Williams' state-

Continued on page 27

THE WITNESS

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Editorial

How to lose adherents and respect

The following commentary on the Roman Catholic Bishops' latest draft of their pastoral letter on women is by guest editorialist Mary E. Hunt, co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) in Silver Spring, Md.

Little was expected when the U.S. Catholic bishops recently released the second draft of their proposed pastoral letter on women, and half of that is what the bishops produced. Rhetoric favoring the new Roman centralism replaces the voices of women in the document, and many conclusions seem to have been reached before the questions were even asked.

The bottom line? This will not fly in 1990. The laity, especially women, demand and deserve far more.

The shoddy, timid quality of the 99-page draft clarifies several matters. First, the bishops are not the proper Catholics to write about Catholic women. Women are. But if the bishops insist, they are in fairness obliged to take women's experiences seriously, whether they agree with them or not. Women spoke critically in response to the first draft, but the bishops as teachers failed to be apt students. In the absence of basic survey research to justify their assertions that most Catholics agree with them, and in the face of reliable information to the contrary, we are left to conclude that the bishops simply followed the party line without internalizing the strong, clear statements made at parish feedback sessions and in written commentaries. Citing *Mulieris Dignitatem*, the Pope's outmoded ideas on "The Dignity of Women," is an unacceptable substitute and shows the firm hand of Rome in this draft.

Second, the draft reveals the duplicity of the institutional church. It is disingenuous to proscribe birth control and then lament abortions. I have had too much respect for the bishops to believe *that they believe* the institutional church's position on birth control. In 1990, with virtual unanimity among Catholics on the use of contraceptives, it would be honest of them to admit that they too have read "the signs of the times" but that Rome forbids changing the teaching. Then they would only lose adherents. This way they lose both adherents and respect. The bishops' recent multi-million dollar public relations contract to sell the institution's abortion position to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, a scandalous expenditure, leaves me wondering if I have had too much respect for them.

Third, any naive notion that Catholics might have had about women as "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption," the first version of this letter, is laid to rest. Ordained priesthood is ruled out, hence access to decision-making, sacramental ministry, and community leadership (i.e., partnership) is denied. It is easy to say that no sane woman would want to join such a club, but that diverts attention from the deep misogyny that underlies the theory that women do not resemble Jesus in the Eucharist.

Moreover, whatever happened to the partners is a mystery. Four of the six women consultants, hand-picked by the

bishops, resigned prior to the publication of this draft. While we may never know precisely why they resigned, it is safe to say that Roman strictures, followed scrupulously by the U.S. bishops, led even these women to distance themselves.

What now? Whether the bishops approve the text at their November meeting, or shelve it as they will be urged to do by progressive feminists, they have shown their true colors on women's issues. Those colors are out of style. Equality, a word used throughout the document, simply does not exist for them. It cannot exist in a patriarchal religious system where male hegemony is sacrosanct.

The pastoral reveals the very sorry limitations of the institutional church, particularly the unwillingness of ecclesiastical officials to share responsibility, much less power, with women. Fortunately, the Roman Catholic community has feminist theological and political resources, including scholars such as Rosemary Radford Ruether and Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, to turn to. The task is to move the bishops out of the way, which may not prove as difficult as we once thought. They seem to be cooperating with drafts like this that take them another giant step backward.

(An earlier version of this commentary appeared in Conscience: A News-journal of Prochoice Catholic Opinion.)

Hostages yesterday and today —

The U.S. hostages taken in Lebanon could have been freed years ago, had political energies been channeled into peaceful, diplomatic efforts.

So claims Sis Levin, whose husband, Jerry was kidnapped in Beirut in 1984 and managed to escape a year later. But instead of negotiating, Reagan administration officials opted for the secret arms-for-hostages deal — the Iran-Contra scandal — which makes Watergate look like a Sunday school picnic,” Sis believes.

Since then, the State Department has had to “repair a broken bridge with Syria” to facilitate the release of Robert Polhill and Frank Reed, Levin said. Sis and Jerry attended the May luncheon in Arlington, Va. for friends and relatives of hostages who gathered to celebrate Reed’s homecoming. They heard him urge the United States to “negotiate” for the remaining hostages, a word still spurned by the Administration.

Sis Levin rejects the government’s reaction as “game-playing.”

“We have always negotiated for hostages — for our journalist Nicholas Daniloff, for the 33 people held in the TWA hijacking incident — whoever,” she says.

Levin offers her own experience in helping to get her husband out as evidence that an honorable alternative could have worked early on. As Sis tells it, she and a team of private citizens pursued quiet meetings with key figures such as Syrian’s foreign minister Farouk Al Sharaa; Shiite leader Nabih Berri, Jesse Jackson, and many others at lower levels to set up conditions for Jerry’s eventual escape.

Sis wrote a book about the process, entitled *Beirut Diary*. It reads like a spy thriller, and is on the way to becoming a movie, with talk of Sally Field portray-

ing Sis.

Beirut Diary illustrates how women can bring their unique gifts as peace-makers to influence politics. Jerry Levin was abducted at gunpoint on the way to his job as Mideast Bureau Chief for Cable Network News (CNN). Sis had joined him in Beirut in January, 1984. Eight months before, 241 U.S. marines had died in a suicide bomb attack, and shortly before that, Christian Phalange forces had massacred hundreds of Palestinians at Shatilla and Sabra refugee camps while Israeli troops looked on.

After Jerry was kidnapped, Sis’ plight might have been summarized: Episcopalian married to Jewish journalist caught up in Mideast Muslim crisis. She was living in a country where “Arabterrorists” and “Christianmurderers” were frequently used as one word by opposing factions.

Initially, fear paralyzed her, she admits, but she realized that if Jerry was ever to regain freedom, she would have

to play a vital role. This was not easy for a woman with roots in Alabama, raised in the tradition of being submissive and not causing waves. “At my father’s bidding, I had even memorized parts of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*,” she laughed.

Levin soon found that she was facing the opposition of her government, the inertia of CNN, and the hostility of many friends at high levels. In spite of these odds, she worked for Jerry’s release with a team, including her brother, attorney Francis Hare, Jr.; noted peace advocate and scholar Landrum Bolling, and retired Lebanese businessman George Malouf.

Bolling was especially helpful in convincing the Syrians to get involved. “He told them, ‘You’re always saying to the world that you don’t hate Jews. Here’s your chance to prove it by helping to release Jerry Levin,’” Sis recalled.

That argument helped convince the Syrians that they might establish a better



Sis Levin consults with former first lady Rosalynn Carter at '85 Peace in Mideast meeting, Washington, D.C.

an interview with Sis Levin by Mary Lou Suhor

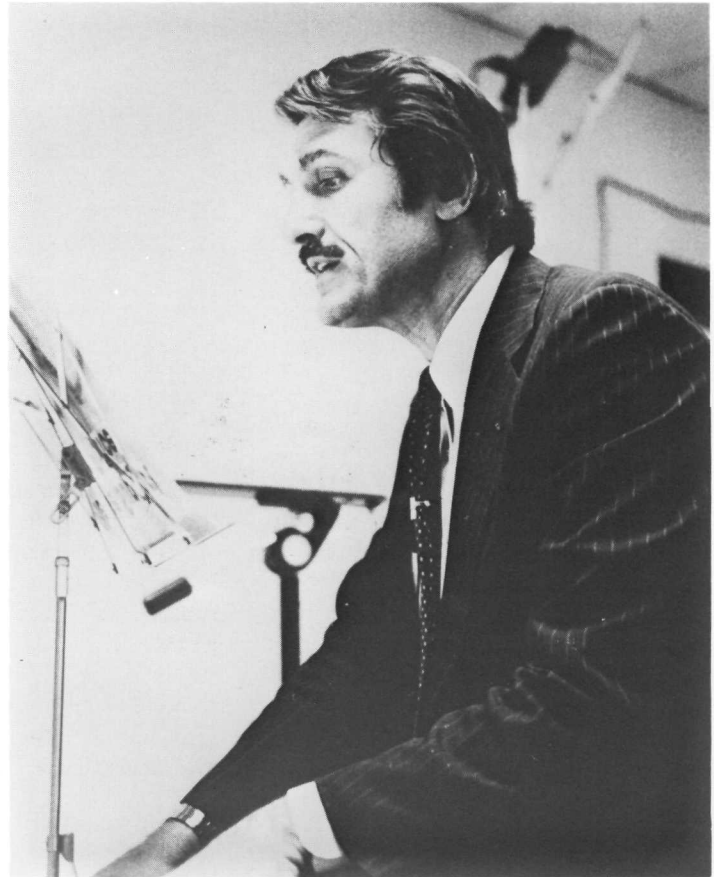
When Sis Levin's husband, Jerry, was kidnapped in Beirut, her plight might have been summarized: Episcopalian married to Jewish journalist caught up in Middle East Muslim crisis.

climate for U.S.-Arab relations. Levin's book describes how they intervened to have Jerry's captors improve his meager diet so he could gain strength. Then one of his guards carelessly left him unchained one evening. That very night, Levin escaped by tying his blankets together and lowering himself from a balcony. A Syrian patrol picked him up and within 24 hours he was delivered to the United States.

Sis feels that Syria was sending up a trial balloon when it played a role in getting her husband released, and "Ronald Reagan shot it down. Our team could have brought them all out," she is convinced. (At this point, CIA Chief William Buckley, Presbyterian missionary Ben Weir, and Lawrence Jenco, a Catholic priest, had been kidnapped as well. Jenco inherited Levin's room and knotted blankets.)

"That's what ought to make people mad," Sis exclaims. "To discuss the hostage situation you have to talk about it in context of the Middle East. My book begins chronologically with the U.S. battleship *New Jersey* firing from the Mediterranean just outside my apartment window into the hills of Lebanon. When those offshore naval guns were ordered to fire, innocent people were killed. Actually, you can go farther back than that for U.S. involvement, but my career friends in the State Department were sick over that decision to intervene mili-

Former hostage Jerry Levin, in a speech after his escape in 1985, called for reconciliation among nations.



tarily.

"When they retaliated for the *New Jersey* shelling by hitting the U.S. embassy in Kuwait, some Shiites got caught, and they thought we would exchange prisoners. They figured — we're at war — you're shooting at us and we're shooting back. Isn't this war? In war you exchange prisoners, right? Normally we would have. But now we know that Ollie North had a neat idea, so the answer was no, and it didn't play that way," she said.

The Iran-Contra scandal changed the rules, the actors and the currency of the game, Sis said. "They pulled the hostages largely out of Syrian capabilities and gave them to Iran and changed the

currency to arms instead of diplomatic negotiation."

Ronald Reagan promised the American people when he became President, "never again" would we have a hostage situation, but if it should happen, he would deal with it firmly and immediately. "He was wrong on both counts," Levin said. "But to be fair, no one in politics wanted to touch it. I think the Democrats could have presented it that their man, Carter, was not far off in his approach to the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979-80. But the only political person to address it was Jesse Jackson, who spoke with firmness, balance and fairness." Jackson negotiated the release of Lt.

Frank Goodwin, the U.S. naval pilot shot down over Syria, and also made an intervention in Jerry's behalf.

When videos of hostages Levin, Weir and Buckley were released, Sis "went barrelling to the State Department" to see Jerry's tape. In it, he said, *My life and the freedom of the other hostages depends on the life and freedom of the prisoners in Kuwait.*

"But we were constantly told by the government to keep quiet about the demands, that we would get the hostages killed. Well, that didn't add up, certainly not to a journalist's wife," Sis complained.

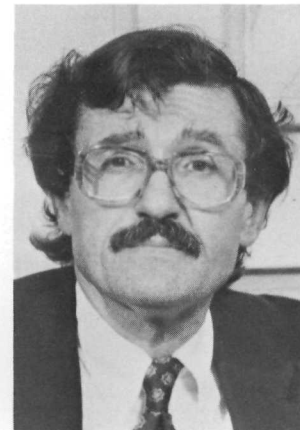
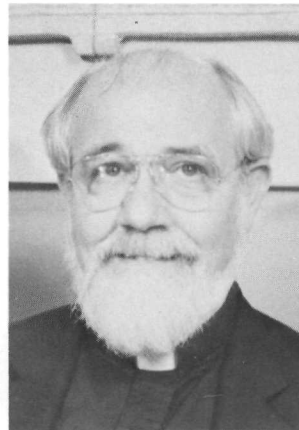
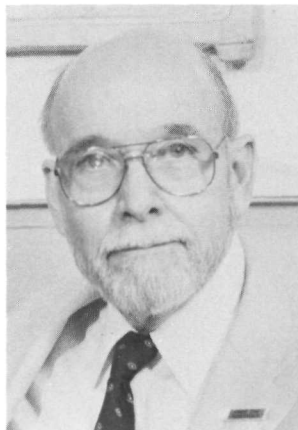
Sis said that she came to see that the hostages were only the tip of the iceberg. "There seemed to be a desperate cry coming out of Lebanon, and we were deaf to it. There was a context to the hostages' captivity that was full of history and insensitivity, bad choices and pain. The kind that comes when a nation abandons dialogue and embraces military force," she wrote in her diary.

Last month her husband Jerry wrote, "Westerners are not the only prisoners in the Middle East, and Muslim feelings have to be considered." Both Sis and Jerry believe that hostages in the Middle East should be freed across the board, and this applies to those held by Israel as well as those in Kuwait and Iran.

In her own efforts for Jerry's release, Sis found herself facing formidable odds. She was told that she was un-American to go against the government's wishes, that national security was at stake and that to negotiate with the captors was anti-Semitic.

She was appalled that CNN did not support her, and that the media in general was not digging for the story.

"I know how shocked Jerry was about the media's complicity with the silence called for by the government. He said he didn't expect people to agree, that there would be lots of debate and argument. What he didn't expect was the silence. I



Protestant, Catholic, Jew: From left, former hostages Ben Weir, Presbyterian missionary; the Rev. Lawrence Jenco, of Catholic Relief Services, and CNN journalist Jerry Levin.

don't want to speak for him on that; he says he felt his colleagues truly thought they would get him killed. But he's more generous than I."

Shortly after Jerry's arrival in the United States, the President told him on live network television to be quiet about his experience, Sis recounted, "and every journalist who ever lived ought to have gone up in smoke over that one. That's gagging at the highest level. Jerry talked about reconciliation after he got out, and if reconciliation is so unpatriotic and un-American that a hostage released after a year in captivity can't talk about it something is wrong. But people just loved Reagan; it was 'happy time'."

Upon his return, Jerry formed a committee to help Terry Anderson, who was captured about a month after Jerry's escape, "and none of the big name journalists would sign on to the committee." Sis said. "Some are coming around now but it's late in the day."

Sis also bristles over the way CNN treated her "with raw chauvinism" and tried to stonewall her. She did not hear from CNN while Jerry was missing, "except for one phone call about insurance." Perhaps they feared, she said, that they would be accused of negligence by assigning a Jew to Beirut, "but Jerry would never have allowed that, and I would

never have done that," she insisted.

"Instead, CNN spread the word that I was hysterical. Then the State Department told me that they had not been in touch with me in Beirut because they heard I was hysterical. Later the Ambassador apologized for how I was treated. But it was a scary time — there was no formula to handle these things. And shouldn't they have come running twice as fast if they thought an American in Beirut was in so much trouble she was hysterical? That's a trick of chauvinism, to try to make the woman appear emotional and unbalanced. Jerry looks on the bright side of this. He said if they had treated me in any other way he would still be in chains because it would not have driven me to try to get him out. And from a feminist viewpoint I find that quite interesting."

She described being called un-American as a way to silence debate. "I'm distressed, especially, that so many of my old friends in the South are taught to think without questioning. You have to try to turn some light on to that dark place."

As an example, she related her experience in a church in Montgomery, Ala., where she was speaking about her husband's kidnapping "just as carefully as I could" and a man jumped up and said,

"Young lady, are you criticizing the U.S. government?"

"I said, 'Yes, sir, I am. And if a hundred years ago someone hadn't criticized the U.S. government we'd still have slavery.'

"You know what? Those people in that church still thought we should! I keep assuming we can talk sense in a liberal vein, but sometimes we can't. The reason why needs to be explored smack in the middle of an adult forum in an Episcopal Church, where we look at the Gospel and apply it."

Levin says she thanks God for Presiding Bishop Ed Browning, and particularly for his wife, Patti, and her formidable work around Middle East issues.

She credits Bishop Bill Stough, currently head of the Presiding Bishops Fund for World Relief, with teaching her how to be a peacemaker when he was Bishop of Alabama. "When I got caught in the middle of a war I found all he was saying was true. It still sings in my heart."

Sis and Jerry were married by Stough in 1978 in Birmingham — "with my mother in the background, bless her, screaming 'be not yoked with unbelievers,'" Sis recalls. It was the second marriage for both, and Jerry at the time claimed to be an atheist. During his captivity as a hostage he experienced an "inward journey toward Christianity, and now, although still suspicious of organized religion, believes in God and does

not blame Jesus for the offenses of Christians," she said.

Today she and Jerry, both Woodrow Wilson Visiting Scholars at Princeton, travel extensively to churches and college campuses to promote peace in the Middle East, and have returned to the area several times on good will missions. Both participate actively on the Washington Diocese Peace Commission for the Middle East. Sis is impressed with the Rev. Frank Wade's ministry at St. Alban's, "which is not afraid to deal with Middle East issues, but how many other parishes will do it?" Her St. Alban's T-shirt worn over blue jeans testified to her loyalty as she was interviewed at her home on 33rd Place Northwest, practically in the shadow of the National Cathedral.

At one point, Sis received unexpected support from noted Evangelist Jerry Falwell, who invited her to preach in his church. He told her he believed that her persistence got her husband out, and that "the hostages could be home tomorrow." The United States is a superpower, he said, in control of this situation, and he believed there were several options.

On this they agreed, she said. "There have always been several options. But the United States, for some unrevealed reason, decided to intervene militarily on one side of a conflict in the Middle East, and hostage-taking was the direct result of that," she added.

Falwell was unprepared for her message from the pulpit, however. "He expected me to be ready to throw all the Palestinians into the sea and deliver the straight conservative hard line. I preached instead on forgiveness. He told me afterwards, 'I don't understand. Don't you want to be raptured? To be with Jesus?'"

"Then I asked, 'Mr. Falwell, if [Armageddon] were tomorrow, by your theological understanding, what happens to

The U.S. hostage crisis: 1984-90

1984

Feb. 10: Frank Regier, American University of Beirut professor, kidnapped; rescued April 15 by Shiite Muslim Amal militia raid on house in West Beirut.

March 7: Jeremy Levin, CNN journalist, kidnapped; escaped Feb. 14, 1985 from a house in Bekaa valley, Lebanon.

March 16: William Buckley, CIA chief in Beirut, kidnapped; reported killed Oct. 4, 1985.

May 8: Benjamin Weir, Presbyterian missionary, kidnapped; released Sept. 9, 1985.

Dec. 3: Peter Kilburn, American U. of Beirut librarian, kidnapped; murdered April 17, 1986 in retaliation for U.S. bombing of Libya, along with two British hostages and a British-American journalist.

1985

Jan. 8: Lawrence M. Jenco, head of Catholic Relief Services, Lebanon, kidnapped; released July 26, 1986.

March 16: Terry Anderson, AP Middle East Bureau Chief, kidnapped; **still in captivity.**

May 28: David Jacobsen, American U. of Beirut Hospital administrator, kidnapped; released Nov. 2, 1986.

June 9: Thomas Sutherland, American U. of Beirut acting dean of agriculture, kidnapped; **still in captivity.**

1986

Sept. 9: Frank Reed, director of the Lebanon International School, kidnapped; released April 30, 1990.

Sept. 12: Joseph Cicippio, acting comptroller of the American U. of Beirut, kidnapped; **still in captivity.**

Oct. 21: Edward Austin Tracy, author of children's books, kidnapped; **still in captivity.**

1987

Jan. 20: Terry Waite, aide to Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, kidnapped; **still in captivity.**

Jan. 24: Robert Polhill, Alann Steen and Jesse Turner, Beirut University College educators, kidnapped; Polhill released April 22, 1990; **others still in captivity.**

June 17: Charles Glass, ABC-TV newsmen, kidnapped; escaped two months later.

1988

Feb. 17: Lt. Col. William Higgins taken prisoner in Southern Lebanon; killed July 31, 1989 in retaliation for the kidnapping of Sheik Abdul Obeid by the Israelis.

Continued on page 13

Wage war on drugs with new weapons

by Harold J. Dwyer

A mood of frustration and fear is becoming more prevalent in U.S. society with each passing week. This mood, a response to the plague of drugs which seems to be destroying our people, has engendered a reaction that is likely to be even more destructive than the drugs we all fear.

From the floor of Philadelphia's City Council to the office of the mayor of Baltimore, as well as in scientific journals and church periodicals, we are baraged by the prophets of failure who would have us believe the only solution to our drug crisis is to sound a retreat. Some proposals call for a brief tactical regrouping, a legalization of "less harmful" drugs and controlled distribution of others. More libertarian schemes suggest the legalization of any and all substances. What these ideas have in common is the suggestion that since there has been no clear example of the effectiveness of current criminal justice approaches to the drug problem, it is time to throw in the towel.

A typical argument of this type is found in an article by Ethan A. Nadleman, which appeared in the September 1989 issue of *Science* magazine:

Drug legalization increasingly merits serious consideration as both an analytical model and a policy option for addressing the drug prob-

lem. Criminal justice approaches to the drug problem have proven limited in their capacity to curtail drug abuse. They also have proven increasingly costly and counterproductive. Drug legalization policies that are wisely implemented can minimize the risks of legalization, dramatically reduce the costs of current policies and directly address the problems of drug abuse.

The article presents a simple idea, one with which few people would have difficulty. The criminal justice approach has not been effective in the elimination of drug abuse in our society. This fact should not surprise us since drug abuse is, in fact, a health care problem, not just a criminal problem. The crimes connected with the use of illegal drugs are only a portion of the destructive effects of the drug problem. In fact, studies indicate that some of the most "expensive" drugs, in terms of cost of abuse-related accidents, health complications, and lost time on the job, are the already legal drugs — alcohol and nicotine.

If we admit the cost of these legal substances, and if we acknowledge that we cannot in any way predict the effect of increased consumption that might result from the legalization of other drugs, dare we add more substances to the list of chemicals to which people might become legally addicted? The history of the abuse of prescription drugs obtained through legitimate sources and the added incidence of the "street" availability of prescription drugs easily leads to suspicion that "controlled legalization" would very quickly get out of control.

Another aspect of the argument for legalization is that if we eliminated the criminal element from the drug trade, we would eliminate the most severe drug-related problems in our society. I would suggest that some of the most serious problems caused by drugs are not only apparent in the life of the abuser or the crimes the addict commits, but also in the lives of those directly affected by the addict. If the truism that each alcoholic/addict directly affects at least four or five other people is accurate, then any spread in the availability and use of currently illegal substances could bring about consequences our society cannot afford to ignore.

The use of drugs by those who are unable to participate in the "American dream," who use alcohol or drugs to medicate away their anger and frustration, will not be decreased by this legalization. If anything, the removal of criminal sanctions and the increased availability would probably result in a sharp increase in addiction to a wide variety of drugs. The personal tragedies already seen in treatment centers, doctors' offices, clergy studies and city morgues would multiply. The potential loss of a generation of inner-city youth would become a harsh reality.

There is no single solution to our drug crisis. Our society, however, like the addicts we fear and pity, still seeks a quick fix. Solutions will be found in ongoing efforts on several fronts. The cost of criminal enforcement is high; the cost of increased treatment resources and prevention is high as well. I suspect however that the cost of the "modest pro-

The Rev. Harold J. Dwyer, Jr. is rector of the Episcopal Church of the Trinity, Coatsville, Pa., a member of the Addictions & Recovery Committee of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and chair of the Coatsville Drug Task Force.

posal” of legalization would be many times higher. And I think we should stop measuring the cost in dollars alone.

Since the end of the Second World War we have justified the expenditure of countless billions to defend our nation from outside enemies. Whether or not this policy made sense in the past, it is clear we no longer need to continue this expense. If we wish to prevent the destruction of our nation from the forces which have already exhibited the ability to “bury” us, we might well consider directing these defense dollars to the war on drugs, a war that must be fought on every front — criminal justice, health care, community organization and education.

We must rethink other national priorities as well. We must be willing to see the connection between the cutbacks in social services over the last 10 years, the decline in availability of affordable housing, a minimum wage that has not kept up with inflation, the subtle and not-so-subtle effects of racism and other forms of discrimination, and the rise in alcohol and drug addiction and crimes connected with this rise. We must admit that the bankers who look the other way while large cash transactions take place, the luxury auto dealers, realtors and jewelers who willingly sell their most expensive wares to youth who pay with a large pile of \$100 bills, are as much a part of the drug trade as the kids selling a few pieces of crack.

As a nation we must see that the drug problem is not confined to a few notorious street corners in urban areas. We must admit that the problem will not go away even if we deputize half of our citizens and empower them to arrest the other half. We can turn every unused military base into a prison camp; we can give up our constitutionally-guaranteed rights that guard our privacy and protect us from unreasonable surveillance, search and seizure; we can accept the most draconian tactic our fear and loath-

ing of drugs and addicts will allow, or we can look at the whole range of societal problems that create the environment where the drug trade and drug addiction flourish.

None of this, however, should lead us to the conclusion that since the law enforcement model has not worked, legalization is the only answer.

The resources currently being dedicated to fighting the war on drugs are inadequate. Budgetary fictions that allow for the dedication of a few new dollars

“The weapons we need to win this war are education for prevention and education for decent employment.”

and the renaming of other funds already marked for anti-drug efforts will not do. The use of confiscated money solely for criminal justice agencies is imprudent. The largest portion of this money should be returned to the very communities from which it came. It is money that would have otherwise been spent on food, housing, health care and education if people had not been living under the power of the demon addiction.

The war on drugs will not be won by making drugs more available. The war will not be won by passing stronger laws. The weapons that we need to win this war are education for prevention and education for decent employment. We need to increase resources for the treatment of drug addiction and treatment of poverty and hopelessness. We must insure that the rights of all our citizens to

adequate employment, housing, education and healthcare are finally met.

We can enter the 21st century with a commitment to serve the needs of all this nation’s people. Or we can continue our useless efforts to fight against drugs, or dream up new and equally futile schemes and finally see our society destroyed not by external enemies but by our own lack of compassion for each other.

The choices concerning the fight against drugs made by federal, state, and local governments are important for our present and future. They will determine the kind of society we will pass on to our children. The church must continue in its long-standing role as an advocate for those our society would render powerless and voiceless. We must not succumb to fear. We must not retreat to the safety of believing that the drug problem is unrelated to the larger unresolved issues of racism, classism, and nationalism. We must instead continue to point out these connections to our members and to those who formulate government policy.

The powers and principalities that enslave God’s children have not gone away or changed — they have merely adopted new tactics. The community of faith must meet these new tactics with the ageless message of life, truth and liberation which took flesh in Jesus of Nazareth.

Twelve Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous teach that the secret to recovery is surrender. I believe this will also prove true for our society. The surrender we should seek, however, is not surrender to addictive drugs or the despair which seems to motivate many of the pro-legalization arguments. Instead, we should surrender to the will of a loving God. People in Twelve Step programs know their lives are under the care of a power greater than themselves. It is only this power that can bring healing to individuals and society. **TW**

A woman's choice

by Jim Lewis

Not long ago, the phone rang at home and when I answered it, I was reunited with a woman I had not seen or heard from for 23 years.

She had seen in *Episcopal Life* a picture of me being arrested during the Pittston strike and searched me out.

Judy came in to my life during my first four years of ordained ministry in Annapolis, Md. She was working on a degree at the University of Maryland, and she was pregnant. There was no man on the scene and she wanted an abortion. It was suggested that she talk with me.

In those days, back before the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, the options were poor. Women in search of an abortion were forced to leave the country to have the procedure done, if they had the money, or search out someone in this country who would perform the act illegally — an alternative often detrimental to the woman.

As we talked, I came to realize that even though Judy said she wanted an abortion, and I was willing to help her get it, something wasn't quite right. Pressing her on the matter, I discovered she wanted more information before going ahead.

I directed her to a gynecologist in the parish so that she could get medical advice. The doctor was trustworthy in my opinion. He was an excellent doctor and, like me, had no axe to grind in this situation. We both wanted to see her come to her own decision in the matter.

The Rev. James Lewis is Director of Social Ministries for the Diocese of North Carolina and a contributing editor to THE WITNESS.

After talking to the doctor, she asked to speak to an Episcopal adoption service in Baltimore. I remember driving her there.

After all this counsel and discussion, including considering the possibility of keeping the child as a single parent, she chose adoption.

I arranged for her to live with a clergy family just outside of Baltimore. Once every two weeks, up through the birth of her baby girl, I met her at a restaurant in Pikesville, Md. where we talked about how she was doing.

Following the adoption, Judy went about her life and the child was raised by a family unknown to her. I saw Judy again only briefly before taking a parish in West Virginia.

Now, more than two decades later, she said over the phone, "You probably don't remember me." But I did remember. Through the years, Judy has come to represent for me the underlying question of abortion: Are women going to have a choice?

As I sat at my kitchen table holding the phone, Judy reviewed her history in the years since we had last seen each other. It was fascinating.

She is married with children of her own, and runs a business in a Pennsylvania town. She is a member of a small Episcopal church, and has talked with her bishop about the possibility of becoming a deacon.

A few years ago, she had tried to make contact with her daughter through the adoption agency. They told her the records had been destroyed. The woman she spoke with had been understanding and was troubled that the information no

longer existed. The loss of the records represented an era of secrecy when birth mothers and adopted children were not meant to reconnect.

Strangely and fortuitously, Judy's daughter, engaged in her own search, later called and talked with the same woman, who then hooked them up with one another.

It was the start of an excellent relationship between the two. Her daughter's adoptive parents are wonderful and they all come together on special occasions.

She had called to reconnect and to tell me how important it had been for me to be there 23 years ago. She said she had to understand that the decision about abortion had to be her own — and not that of her mother, her friends, the church or the state.

Judy said her daughter told her later that she had become pregnant as a teenager and had chosen to have an abortion.

Before we closed the conversation, Judy told me that she was active in the pro-choice movement. "Women," she said, "just have to be able to choose what's right for them. What's right for me may not be right for someone else, even my daughter. Ultimately, what's right is the right for a woman to choose what is right."

I promised to come and visit when I was in the area. I then told her how important she had been to me early in my ordained years. She had been key in helping me understand the struggle women are up against in a society that treats them like children, unable to decide whether to give birth or not.

It was helpful to revisit those days, but I don't want to re-live them. TW

Hostages . . . Continued from page 9

my Jewish family and my beloved Muslim friends?" And he smiled and said, "They go to hell."

"He's completely consistent and I give him his eschatology but I don't give him his smile. Jesus wept. And if I believed that people were going to hell I'd be crying, too. That's the part I don't understand."

Tackling social issues on an ecumenical level is especially important to Sis, and in the early days of her struggle to free Jerry, such efforts were painful. Benjamin Weir was Presbyterian and her husband was Jewish and Jenco was a Catholic priest, but Episcopalians were reluctant to get into the hostage issue. She was unable to convince the National Cathedral to host an ecumenical service for the hostages. Later, then-Bishop John Walker went on sabbatical and wrestled with the question, and when he returned, "he took us all up on Capitol Hill to lobby for the hostages," she marveled. "But by then I had already gotten Jerry out."

Levin believes that the kidnappers picked up more hostages than they needed for a one-on-one exchange, so they could experiment with Jerry and Jenco and Weir and Jacobsen. "I have the feeling that they hold on to an exact number, a chip for chip. We knew they were saying 17 or something but thought they would really settle for exchanging two or three for their actual relatives."

At the very end would probably be Terry Anderson, who has become the most valuable in terms of negotiating, Levin said, "and he is the most interesting because I firmly believe that he will come out shaking his fist at the government for not acting earlier. And the government has to be totally aware of that."

If there is a recurring word in Levin's vocabulary when connecting the hostage situation to other global peace and justice issues, it is "forgiveness."

"I don't see how we can look at U.S. involvement in Central America, South Africa and the Middle East, which I insist are intertwined, and not see that we are a people who have to be forgiven. If we don't come to church to try to understand what we mean by this, how we can discuss the future of this country?"

"You have to start with yourself. You look in the mirror real hard and when you get a handle on that you go from there. In Israel/Palestine right now the strongest voices are coming from the Intifada, and among them are the Christian Palestinians, who have been there for 2,000 years. Their houses have been demolished, their families killed and yet they say the only answer to any of this is forgiveness and peacemaking."

Sis emphasizes that neither is forgiveness alien to the Jews. "It is very much part of their theology, but they are afraid to trust again. And I understand that. Anti-semitism is alive and well and we know it. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if you don't love both sides, you aren't much help."

"But when Jews tell me they have to behave this way toward the Palestinians because of the Holocaust, I take all my courage into my hands and ask if they really believe that those who died watching and weeping want them to do this to the Palestinians in memory of them."

"If we are truly friends of Israel, we would be honest with them. After all, we say friends don't let friends drive drunk. Analogously, Americans should not let America go down the tubes, or Israel either."

Levin, mother of six, jokes that her experiences in her dysfunctional family have given her valuable tips in how to handle international relationships and conflict resolution in the Middle East. She relates an anecdote about her identical twins, Isabel and Florence.

"When they were about three, they were quarreling in the living room and I heard a crash. I went in to find my favor-

ite lamp in a million pieces, with them looking up at me white as ghosts. Well, Isabel said Florence did it, and Florence swore Isabel did it, and what's a mother to do? Then Florence piped up, 'God did it?'

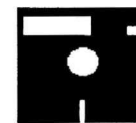
"I believe that's a good example of a civil war involving God, because God is always brought in when people grasp at justification. Holy War has got to be a contradiction in terms. We always seem to bring God's name in to justify what we want and are willing to fight for, so we baptize it."

That is illegal baptism, Sis Levin concludes, "and besides, God doesn't get a chance to vote."

Resource

Beirut Diary by Sis Levin, \$14.95, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 60515 (800-843-7225).

TW



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Choosing integrity over Integrity

by Robert Williams

Kim Byham, national president of Integrity — the organization for gay and lesbian Episcopalians — wrote a story in the April WITNESS entitled, “The rise and fall of Robert Williams,” describing how and why the openly gay Episcopal priest ordained in December of last year was asked to resign from his ministry only six weeks later. Here Robert Williams presents his critique of Byham’s account.

I have given Integrity 10 years of my life, from founding a local chapter to working as a lobbyist at General Convention. For several years, when I lived in the extremely homophobic Diocese of Dallas, Integrity was my primary religious community. A handful of friends and I founded the Dallas chapter during Advent 1980, and it was my principal source of spiritual sustenance and the center of my social life. When I went to seminary, I felt it was Integrity, and not a parish, which had called me out and sent me.

It was not without some sadness, then, that I recently mailed my letter of resignation to Integrity. The vituperative article in the April issue of THE WITNESS by Integrity President Kim Byham was not the catalyst for my resignation; I had vowed to do so since January. It had become increasingly clear that Integrity, now established within the power structures of the Episcopal Church, and therefore more conventional and conservative, no longer represented my values,

goals and vision.

One of the popular myths about lesbians and gay men is that we function as a unit, that there is clear and unified lesbian and gay opinion on any given issue. The use of a phrase like “the lesbian/gay community” can be misunderstood to imply a certain uniformity; but in fact, what is most obvious at a gathering of the lesbian and gay community, such as a Pride March, is our broad diversity — from the strident activism of ACT UP to organizations for gay Republicans; from an array of conventional religious caucuses to groups of gay pagans and atheists; from motorcycle and leather clubs to organizations of lesbian and gay professionals. The rainbow flag has been chosen as a symbol of the lesbian/gay community because it symbolizes diversity — not only racial, but ideological. The fact that I am gay does not guarantee that I share opinions, values, or vision with another gay man or a lesbian. I feel no more kinship with Kim Byham than I do with, say, George Bush (who is male, a Texas native, and an Episcopalian).

Still, I was shocked to find he was running a negative publicity campaign to undermine the positive media attention we were receiving for the founding of

The Rev. Robert Williams, former director of The Oasis, a ministry to lesbians and gay men in the Diocese of Newark, lives in Hoboken, N.J., and is currently working on a book about his spiritual and sexual quest.

The Oasis last June. I couldn't understand why Integrity, supposedly representing gay and lesbian concerns within the Episcopal Church, should respond to the news about The Oasis with anything but joy.

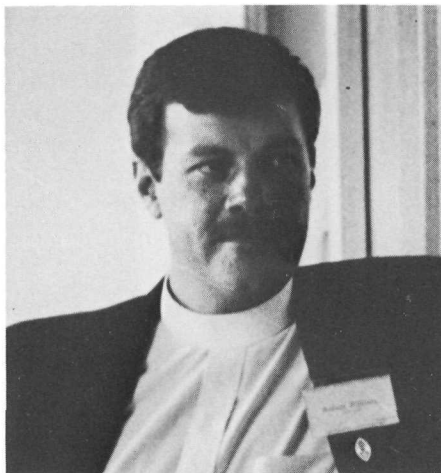
It is not terribly surprising that Kim's article in THE WITNESS is riddled with inaccuracies, since neither he nor the editors ever contacted me (or anyone close to me) to verify any of the information. But one bit of misreporting that particularly angers me, because it is offensive to the parishioners at All Saints, Hoboken, who gave so much time and energy arranging the ordination, is his reference to the "small congregation." There were at least 300 people present at the ordination; there were around 50 people seated on the platform behind the altar alone; and these numbers do not include the news media, who were not seated. In fact, the media reported the attendance figures more accurately at between 250 to 300; Kim decided to revise them in order to make his point.

The article also incorrectly describes The Oasis as a "pastoral" ministry. In fact, the pastoral dimension was only one quarter of the vision for The Oasis as outlined by the mission statement — the other parts were evangelical, educational, and prophetic. I had repeatedly told The Oasis board my talents, interest, and passion were for constructive theological work, and while I could administer the pastoral ministry, I was not the person to do one-to-one pastoral work, because those skills are not my strong suit.

One of the other inaccuracies that intrigues me is the reporting of the presence of "only two openly-lesbian priests." Actually, I'm aware of only one — Carter Heyward. There were a number of lesbian priests present who are *not* open about their sexuality. Perhaps one reason the media tended to ignore Integrity's press release claiming there had been 60 ordinations of openly lesbian or

gay priests prior to mine is that the release did not produce 60 names. The Diocese of Newark was acting on the best information it had available when they told the media I was the first ordinand since Ellen Barrett to go into the ordination ceremony publicly as a non-celibate, "practicing" homosexual. There are a number of priests who have come out as gay or lesbian since their ordinations, but so far as I know, no one who has been 100% out of the closet publicly prior to the ordination ceremony besides Ellen Barrett and me. If so, why did the media not pick up on the others — since we now know they *do* consider such ordinations newsworthy?

I suspect that most of the priests on Kim's list went through the ordination process with some degree of what Episcopalians usually prefer to call "discretion" (since "dishonesty" is such a harsh word). The most common way for either a lesbian or a gay man to be ordained in the Episcopal Church is to let a few major players (usually the sponsoring parish rector, the bishop and the bishop's closest advisors) in on the secret, and they in turn make sure the issue does not come up for general discussion during the pre-ordination screening process — God forbid the uninformed laity should have to deal with such information!



The Rev. Robert Williams

In fact, there is not a diocese in the country in which there would not be one or two people from such organizations as Episcopalians United or the Prayer Book Society present to make a formal protest, if they knew a non-celibate lesbian or gay man were being ordained. It seems to me, as long as we are committed to the present ordination liturgy which provides a forum for protest, it is our responsibility to give enough notice so that those who wish to protest can be heard.

But isn't this all beside the point? Isn't ordination of a proudly gay person a cause for celebration (particularly by the members of Integrity), regardless of whether it is the first, second or 150th ordination? It is true that the media has a perverse fascination with "firsts." When Les Smith, the Diocese of Newark press officer, wrote a press release playing up the unique character of my ordination, he was simply doing his job well. He did choose his wording carefully, consulting with me, so as not to make any false claims. At any rate, the diocesan press releases did what press releases are intended to do: *They got publicity.* What baffles me is why Kim Byham and the members of the Integrity board had any reaction other than elation.

On the other hand, there are some facts in Kim's article that are accurate, and significant, because they haven't been reported elsewhere. One is:

Williams has been making outrageous statements of this sort for many years; indeed outrageous comments were his stock in trade. He often used them to get people's attention when giving a presentation.

It would be virtually impossible for anyone to have a sustained conversation with Williams without hearing comments of the general nature he uttered in Detroit.

I couldn't have said it better myself. This is exactly the point I had been trying to make. What I did in Detroit —

speaking out in a provocative and challenging way on issues of sexual ethics — is exactly what I have been doing for the past 10 years, what I very intentionally planned to do, what I feel I am called by the Holy Spirit to do, what I was ordained to do, and what I know I was hired to do, since I not only designed The Oasis but also wrote my own job description. So why is what I've done for the past 10 years *suddenly* too controversial for the Diocese of Newark? The only answer that makes sense to me is it was a "cover-your-ass" maneuver on the part of Bishop Spong, in response to the increased heat he was getting, including that from other "liberal" bishops.

As far as I know, Kim's article is also accurate in reporting the intense anger I feel towards Jack Spong. I don't remember my precise words on the night this house of cards came tumbling down, but something along the lines of, "I want to hurt Jack Spong," certainly captures the gist of what I was feeling. What appalls me is that I made such comments during private negotiations with The Oasis; and for them to have been shared with Kim Byham strikes me as a breach of privacy. At any rate, regardless of the pain and rage I was feeling on Jan. 27, what remains true today is that I would cooperate with anyone, including Episcopalians United or the Episcopal Synod of America, to see that Jack Spong is removed from the office of bishop.

My best assessment of this whole affair is that I was stupid — not so much in what I said in Detroit (although I have acknowledged the Mother Teresa comment was a mistake, albeit a minor one) as in my foolish trust in Spong, the Diocese of Newark, and the Episcopal Church. I was duped. Ten years ago, having just escaped from fundamentalism, I discovered the Episcopal Church. I was seduced into believing this church was willing to truly accept me for who I am. Who am I? A member of a very

specific subset of a unique subculture: A late 20th-century urban gay male; an angry gay activist; a sexual radical. I spent eight wonderful years of my life living in an almost-totally gay environment in Oak Lawn, the gay ghetto of Dallas. In my 20s, I spent at least twice as much time in gay bars as I did in Episcopal churches. Even today, though married, my basic social patterns haven't changed that much. My partner Jim Skelly and I still love going to gay bars, and, if anything, I've become *more*, not less, radical. Ten years ago, a handful of Episcopal priests erroneously convinced me the

"Self-affirming lesbians and gay men . . . do not belong in the Episcopal Church or any mainstream Christian denomination."

Episcopal Church was open enough to accommodate me just as I am. They were misinformed.

I was further seduced by Jack Spong. In spite of repeated warnings (including some from Kim Byham), I *trusted* Jack Spong. I truly believed he was the one bishop left in the Episcopal Church who was doing what a bishop is supposed to do — be a prophetic leader. It was a streak of my residual internalized homophobia, I think, that made me so desperately *want* to trust him. I really wanted there to be one bishop I could believe in, one I could respect, one I could obey.

I was clearly wrong about the Episcopal Church. It may be true that *some* lesbians and gay men are welcome in the Episcopal Church — those who play by

the established rules, who aren't too radical or outspoken or impatient in their demands for total justice, who think it is appropriate that their sexual ethics should be dictated to them by heterosexual authority figures, and who behave in a proper, genteel, Episcopalian manner. In short, the lesbian/gay equivalents of "Uncle Toms." But I don't think the Episcopal Church has room for people like me — and we are legion. In fact, among my seminary community at the Episcopal Divinity School, I was thought of as somewhat conservative. There were dozens of other students more "radical" than I; and when I am compared to the lesbian/gay community at large, there are hundreds of people more radical than I. Does the Episcopal Church welcome them?

On a recent Thursday night, my spouse called and suggested I meet him at a popular gay bar in Greenwich Village. It wasn't until I stepped out of the train station that I remembered the New York chapter of Integrity had just ended its meeting a block away. Since I've encountered such vehement negativity from Integrity members recently, for a moment I was concerned we might run into some of them. But then I realized I've *never* run into an Integrity member in a gay bar — they live a totally different lifestyle than Jim and I do.

For those who want to understand this point, I would propose an experiment: Visit three gay bars in any major metropolitan area — and for the sake of variety, make one a drag bar and one a leather bar. Survey the patrons there, asking them where they went to church last Sunday. I am confident you will find most of them did not go anywhere. If you really want an education, ask them why they don't go to church. (This, by the way, would be what is called "evangelism" — *if* you had a welcoming church to invite them to.)

Now I ask: Which Christian churches would welcome these people — my

people? I don't believe there are any, except the Metropolitan Community Church and a handful of independent parishes. Until January, I foolishly believed the Episcopal Church did welcome my people, but I was dead wrong. The sad thing is, the Episcopal Church probably is the most welcoming of the mainstream Christian churches. And the Diocese of Newark is probably the most welcoming diocese in the Episcopal Church. The inevitable conclusion for me is that self-affirming lesbians and gay men — or at least the gay ghetto types like me — do *not* belong in the Episcopal Church or any mainstream Christian denomination. For six months, as executive director of The Oasis, I tried to convince my people they should give the Episcopal Church a try. I owe them an apology.

Last I heard, Integrity's two main agenda items were to make it possible for qualified lesbians and gay men to be ordained, and to provide liturgical recognition of same-sex couples. It seems to me that Integrity is investing an incredible amount of time, energy and money struggling for goals that are immediately obtainable. If we believe the authority of ordination is conveyed by the Holy Spirit acting through the People of God, rather than by a patriarchal authority figure, why doesn't Integrity simply claim its authority to raise up and set apart its own indigenous priests? In the dioceses where the Episcopal Church is the most oppressive (i.e., Dallas), why don't Integrity chapters ordain lesbian and gay priests to serve their own community? And why don't these priests (or any of

the hundreds of already-ordained lesbian and gay priests) just go ahead and publicly bless same-sex couples, without waiting for the approval of any bishop or convention? The answer, of course, is that Integrity is working for these things to be done with the official sanction of the institution. What that translates to is: Integrity doesn't just want to ordain lesbian and gay priests and bless same-sex couples, they want to do so *with the approval of straight people*. I submit this is a masochistic, self-destructive quest.

Sometimes it takes an outside observer to point out the obvious. In reporting this story, *OutWeek*, a lesbian/gay news magazine, described the polity of the Episcopal Church this way:

Compared with many Protestant denominations, the Episcopal Church has a fairly rigid, hierarchical power structure.

I was struck by the accuracy of that description, and it made me ask why I was ever in the Episcopal Church. Whether or not the local bishop is benevolent, do lesbians and gay men and other marginalized peoples belong in such an inherently hierarchical institution at all?

Kim's article is painfully, prophetically accurate in its closing sentence, that speaking the truth may "set [me] free from the Episcopal Church." It is interesting that he chose such language (more accurate language, I suspect, than he consciously intended), implying the Episcopal Church is an oppression from which one needs to be freed.

I have come to describe the mendacity that pervades the Episcopal Church as being like a disease, and the more closely associated anyone is with the Episcopal Church as institution, the more likely he or she is to become infected with it. Perhaps Kim is correct: To tell the truth is incompatible with being an Episcopalian. It certainly seems true that to be a self-affirming, openly and proudly gay man is incompatible with being an Episcopalian. **TW**

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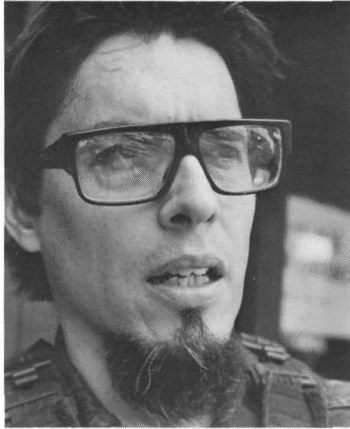
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Squatter—priest fights for homeless

by Robert Hirschfield



“Squatting is Mary and Joseph finding a place in the stable to allow for the possibility of life.”

The Rev. Frank Morales preached the above words at St. Clement’s Episcopal Church on Manhattan’s West Side, far from the squats of the East Village where for the last five years he’s been both an organizer and a squatter.

A tall man whose boyish face is bisected by the hard black line of his horn-rimmed glasses, Morales, 41, was speaking about the diversity of the 25 or so squats in the East Village: “In Umbrella House, for example, there are homeless men who used to live in tents in Tompkins Square Park and political intellectual types like Seth Tobaccman (a radical artist) who edits the newspaper *WW III*. In the squats you find blacks and whites, ecological urban pioneers and anarchists.”

A couple of years ago, the squat Morales was living in was set ablaze by arsonists. Developers were suspected — the East Village is locked in a fierce

gentrification battle. Though the building was deemed salvageable by the squatters, architects and community, the city ordered it demolished. The police sealed off the street and kept back squatter supporters as a demolition crew leveled the building.

“We’ve won more battles than we’ve lost,” Morales said. Tactically, he said, squatters have been able to mass supporters in and around squats threatened with eviction. In addition to blocking police, the supporters let them know that squatters have legal rights. Those who have lived 30 or more days in a building are entitled to a housing court hearing. In the case of impending demolition, said Morales, squatters must hold their ground, for a building cannot be demolished if residents are inside.

Morales’ two daughters, Alita, two and a half, and Dakota, six months, live with their mother in a squat on Sixth Street. Until he and his wife separated, they lived as a squatter family, of which there are not many in the East Village.

Robert Hirschfield is a freelance writer living in New York City.

Morales' roots are a few blocks from the squats. He grew up in the Jacob Riis projects along FDR Drive on the area's eastern rim. His father was a maintenance man at a senior citizen's home, his mother a cashier. They were Catholics. Passing the nice lawns of nearby Stuyvesant Town, a middle-class housing development, awakened in Morales the lonely pain of his poverty.

A Boys Club scholarship got him into affluent Cushing Academy in Ashburnham, Mass. From there he went on to Hobart College, an Episcopal Church-affiliated school, where he came in contact with the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. Its members, who pursued peace wholeheartedly, became for him a community which spurred his conversion to the Episcopal faith.

"I decided to become a priest because the priesthood seemed like a vehicle that would lead me to a deeper spiritual and social involvement. I didn't see how any change could take place unless we harnessed the God energy that we are." The priesthood seemed the best way to harness that energy. But at times he's found its authority cumbersome.

"When friends invite you to a demo and say, 'Don't forget your collar,' it gets to be overbearing. But when you go into a jail, and because of your collar a prisoner gets to visit with a loved one, that's something else."

Morales began his ministry in the South Bronx. In 1977 he joined Operation Move In, a grassroots movement supported by local Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches. Move In worked to relocate homeless people in abandoned buildings. Morales squatted there, too. The acres of burnt-out shells provided squatters with the advantage of anonymity, and there were other advantages, such as ethnic cohesion and the absence of gentrification.

"It could take a year or two," Morales said, "before authorities found out about a squat. When the housing people came

around to displace the squatters, the squatters would tell them, 'You don't own nothing here. Get off the block.'"

Morales was struck by the religious conservatism mixed in with the political radicalism of some Latinos. He recalled Steve, a member of the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican nationalist group, who had little time for authority figures.

"If we were walking down the street, and a cop was abusing a wino, he would always intervene," said Morales. "But he treated me in this special way, as though by being a priest I could perform magic."

Squatting, Morales is fond of saying, is self-determination in regards to housing.

"Since they are not renovating existing housing stock, squatting is the only option the homeless have," he said. "From an economic point of view it is cheaper and works out better for the government than the shelters. Squatters are able to raise money and buy materials. Broadway Lumber lets us have their damaged sheetrock for free."

The squatters' fierce individualism — every squat is autonomous — makes the formation of a united political organization difficult. "Many squatters," said Morales, "hate anything that has to do with an organization." But he noted that squatters will throw themselves in front of squats not their own to thwart evictions, and will show up at Tompkins Square Park to stand by homeless people being dislodged by the police.

In his sermon at St. Clement's, Morales said, "The liturgy of squatting is an action made in illegality, in clandestinity, yet crystal clear in the eye of God. Forming a group to go in, putting up a new door, cleaning the place up, the giddiness of appropriating some space for life and joy, space to see new personal and social horizons, putting an end to the suffering of having no home, working together. . ."

That is the New Jerusalem.

TW

Warehoused apartments

The withholding of empty, habitable apartments — a phenomenon known as "warehousing" — is contributing to an unprecedented shortage of affordable housing in New York City.

Landlords warehouse apartments either for speculative purposes (to reap windfall profits by selling when the market rises to its peak) or to prepare them for conversion to condos or co-ops. From 1981 to 1987, over 204,000 apartments underwent such conversion. On average, the newly converted units are twice as expensive as the units they replaced, and thus the low-income New Yorkers who previously occupied the majority of them are permanently priced-out. The conversion process has continued unabated and the 72,000 apartments presently being warehoused assures more of the same.

The existence of these [empty] apartments is enough to stop hearts already fluttering at the sight and plight of 90,000 homeless people who inhabit our streets and subways. Add to these an additional 150,000 households living doubled or tripled up with family or friends — the so-called invisible homeless.

While it is true that New York's housing stock is larger and better than in the recent past, those changes have come at the expense of housing affordable to the bottom half of the population. Apartments renting for below \$300 per month, precisely those apartments affordable to the 43% of New Yorkers with incomes below \$19,000, have plummeted from 85% of the rental stock in 1978 to less than 35% in 1987. At the same time, the number of apartments renting for over \$500 per month have increased by 708%, from 3% to 23% of the rental market. Apartments renting for over \$1,000 per month increased by 295%.

— Carmen Trotta

The Catholic Worker, 5/90

Short Takes

Dangerous drug war rhetoric

When Ralph Waldo Emerson observed that "language is the archives of history," he never could have imagined how the drug war has borne out his aphorism. . . President Bush lets his imagery run amok, as others often did during the Vietnam era, when he vows the Administration will fight the war "neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block, child by child." (How do you wage war "child by child"?) Drug Czar William Bennett's fondness for draconian punishments for dealers and users seems a flashback to Gen. Curtis LeMay, the man who wanted to bomb Vietnam into the Stone Age. . . The conclusion these policies lead to is inescapable. What the words of the drug war — like those of Vietnam — add up to is a formula for failure.

Ralph Brauer
The Nation, 5/21/90

Learning from pain

I have found that pain, rather than being something to avoid — which is what we're taught — is something from which you get an awful lot. It's one of the areas of your life in which you are forced to see yourself. Therefore, it's quite a wonderful thing. If you can bear the self-scrutiny that always comes with pain, it's very enriching.

Alice Walker
Common Boundary, 3-4/90

C of E Report: Accept gay priests

An official House of Bishops report that calls for the acceptance of homosexual priests and church endorsement of stable relationships between persons of the same sex is being considered by Church of England bishops. Archbishop Robert Runcie has requested that the report, a culmination of a two-year study, not be released publicly until the bishops decide whether or not they will act on it.

Episcopal News Service, 1/10/90



Excommunication

I lived on the streets on three separate occasions for a total of a year. Probably the most important experience of living on the streets is the sense of excommunication from the human community. It's total. It's not a partial state. The reason why (excommunication) exists theologically is to scare people to death.

Mitch Snyder
Pax Christi, USA, Spring 1989

Sobering statistics

Number of soup kitchens in New York City in 1980 — 30; in 1989 — 600. Ratio of the U.S. government's budget for housing to its budget for the military in 1980 — 1:5; in 1989 — 1:31.

Peaceweaver, 3/90

Christians revolutionary

What makes Christians revolutionary? A deeply held conviction that everyone is our neighbor to be welcomed, treated with justice and dignity, to be granted all the human rights we would ourselves enjoy. But being a revolutionary implies acting in accord with those beliefs — holding firm, refusing to back down or buckle under when prudence and common sense suggest retreat.

David A. Spieler
The Human Quest, 5-6/90

Anger at hostage situation

Frank Reed said that he had spent part of his [43-month] captivity in Lebanon with four other hostages — two Americans and two Britons — and that he was "very, very angry" that they had not been freed.

"For God's sake, it's nearly the sixth year for these men. I'm absolutely embarrassed I'm out before they are."

The Philadelphia Inquirer, 5/3/90

What do you suppose will satisfy the soul, except to walk free and own no superior?

Walt Whitman

The true price of militarism

The United Nations calculates that by the year 2000, if present trends continue, people in 64 nations will not be able to obtain even minimum nutrition. By the year 2020, there will be eight and a half billion people on the planet, seven billion of those in the Third World.

Eight or nine percent of the world's current military budget could be used to end all topsoil erosion and deforestation and launch a viable program for renewable energy. The amount channeled into global military spending in just two days could end desertification as a phenomenon on the planet; the amount allocated for 15 days could end the water crisis for two billion people. More people die now of hunger in two days than were killed by the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Daniel Maguire
Creation, 5-6/90

Say what?

Appearing with Ronald Reagan at a New York anti-abortion gathering, Peter Grace, chairman of H.R. Grace Co., declared: "Everybody who's for abortion was at one time themselves a feces. And that includes all of you out there. You were once a feces."

The Militant, 2/10/89

Bringing God out of the closet

by Anne E. Gilson

One day, when I was digging in my closet, shoving the pile of outgrown clothes to the side, looking for a matching pair of whatever, I found God. I can't tell you how surprised I was. So was God.

I said, "Well, God. What are you doing here?" (After all, it was *my* closet, you see.)

And God said, "I might ask you the same question."

I huffily replied, "Well, I'm reorganizing my pile of outgrown clothes and trying to find a matching pair of whatever. It seems to me, God, that it doesn't matter what I'm doing here. This closet is my space, after all. How long have you been in here, anyway?" I thought to myself, *some nerve* — closets are pretty personal and you don't go traipsing around in other people's closets.

God sort of twinkled and said, "Well, I've been here for ages — right beside the outfit you never wear because you think it's weird — just waiting for you to notice it *and me*."

God's losing it, I thought. God has lost God's way and *somebody* had better help God . . .

First things first. "I'm not wearing it. It's a horrible shade of lavender. *Lavender is the symbolic color of the gay and lesbian liberation movement*. What would people think? And only those . . . those extremists wear that sort of outfit. Besides it doesn't . . . fit." I must admit I sputtered a bit.

Enough is enough, I thought. I'm just

going to go about my business and pretend God isn't here. And I busily set to work digging in my closet, looking for that matching pair of whatever . . .

"Oh, terrific. This is *not* amusing, God. I must let you know that this is not convenient. And what are you doing with those socks? Wait, those used to be my best impressing-people socks, and you've made them *lavender*. First the outfit and then the socks."

God said, "I just thought you'd need these to wear with that outfit."

"Well, you thought wrong. I'm looking for that matching pair of whatever and *that's* what I'm going to wear."

God's losing it, I thought. God has lost God's way and *somebody* had better help God . . .

Maybe if I just keep doing what I'm doing, someone will come along and handle this.

"Listen, God. I'm trying real hard to find that matching pair of whatever and you . . . you . . . Oh, damn. Those are my standing-up-in-front-of-people shoes and you've turned them into . . . hiking boots . . . *lavender* hiking boots."

God said, "I just thought you'd need these to wear with that outfit and those socks."

"Well, you thought wrong. I'm looking for that matching pair of whatever and *that's* what I'm going to wear."

And then I actually said, "God, you're losing it. You have lost your way, God, and *somebody* had better help you."

And I looked. And God was holding my matching pair of whatever . . . My matching pair of *lavender* whatever.

"Is this what you've been looking for?" God asked.

"Well, yes. But I certainly don't remember them being lavender." And I looked at God suspiciously. "God, I thought you were losing it and now you've found it and . . . and . . ."

I looked again and — I don't know how to say this — God *was* there, I *know* God was, but in God's place was a mirror. I looked in the mirror and there I was wearing that lavender outfit — lavender socks, lavender hiking boots, and lavender matching pair of whatever. Then I remembered. This is what I had been digging for.

And for the first time in a long time I noticed the pile of outgrown clothes and the pile actually began to glimmer and pulse and sort of act like an ocean wave.

"I'm losing it," I thought. And then I remembered that I had found it. And I sort of grinned and said, "Oh!"

And — well, I tell you — that outgrown pile of clothes just nudged me right out the door of my closet. TW



Anne E. Gilson is a feminist theologian working on a Ph.D. in systemic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Break bread, break barriers

by Paddy Kennington

“Therefore all things are not good by the divine goodness, but by their own goodness.”

St. Thomas Aquinas

Last spring after working nine years in soup kitchens, a night shelter and food bank, I left to go to graduate school in the fall. During the summer, I wrote a one-sided, imaginary dialogue between myself and a street person.

I struggled over what I wanted to say about poverty and more to the point, about life with poor people. Most of my attempts resulted in moralism, frustration, shallow romanticism, or the pain of my own naive, stumbling efforts to make sense out of the non-sensible. I really believed that when the majority of people saw and understood the pain and suffering of people struggling for life on the streets, a great tidal wave of indignation and advocacy on behalf of street people would result. Slowly, I began to realize this would not be so.

It is nonsense that one group of people dominates another to the point that some must live in suffering and squalor so others can enjoy the lion's share of wealth, comfort and basic necessities. But every time I began to write about street people, I ran smack into my own prejudices. Worse, I realized with searing remorse and shame how stupid and blind I had been in doing and believing some of the same things that I see thoughtless and insensitive people doing and believing about the poor.

Paddy Kennington teaches literacy education to homeless people in Raleigh, N.C. and is a Third Order Franciscan in the Episcopal Church.

I wanted to say through my imagination what I have tried to live out daily in the shelter and soup kitchen:

Bread, Broken and Shared

I came here offering my bread. I thought that was a charitable, good thing to do. I could have stayed home or pretended you and your needs didn't exist or allowed my fear of you to turn to hate. But I didn't. I say that I'm here on your behalf and not for reward or honor. But you know better. It is true though, that I choose to be here. But you are here because you need food and shelter.

I realize now since I have met you and have come to know you day after day at the soup kitchen, that we have to live with each other here or fall back on violence as a way to communicate. I don't want to hate you or ignore you or make you invisible. You have shown me that I did expect you to be grateful and to like me in "payment" for my charity. I see now that this is violence to you and your freedom as a person. These are burdens I put upon your shoulders. Maybe you do need bread and soup, but I also need to offer my brokenness, my bread, to you.

Now that we are friends, I can't simply give you soup and a sandwich then smile and turn away. Somehow I must give you bread in such a way that you are not lessened

and I am not exalted in the exchange. Can't we sit here at this table and share a bowl of soup and cup of coffee together? I want to tell you something.

I have been changed by your presence, by our friendship, and by the unspoken words and unanswered questions between us. If I were honest with myself and you, I wouldn't presume to know what is best for you, what you need and want from life. I can't know what your life is like; I can only put myself in your path.

Help me to be broken and share bread as you have shared your brokenness with me. Please be patient with me when I am condescending and patronizing, insensitive and rude. Help me to accept what you have to offer and not to focus on your indignation and hostility. Our lives depend on getting beyond our differences and sharing our common Spirit. You are already halfway there.

Now I know that I must come to you not because you have needs and I think I can help you. I must walk up to you because you are. The world sees you as weak and helpless and me as strong and capable. I can pretend to shut you out of my world, or hate you, or pity you. But you can choose to do these things, too. I don't want to share my brokenness, my bread, with you because you are poor but because you are you. Maybe you can help me to share my bread with the rich for the same reason.

For if I am ever to offer my broken bread to those who live by the law of violence and to love them even when they strike out at you and me, then I must also offer my broken bread to victims of that same

violence. There is no home with violence, no life with violence. So, you see, I am homeless, too.

* * *

Lots of people, myself included, came to the soup kitchen to "do good works." I was Dr. Feel-Good and I saw the poor, hungry and tired people as objects of my *doing good*. My mental and spiritual horizon was pointed in the right direction but incomplete. I believed that when I washed a dirty wound or gave a shivering person a blanket in 10-degree weather, I was in some way fulfilling God's plan of creation. But in failing to keep in my awareness the goodness of people and nature because of their own being and worth, I had allowed myself to relate to other as *thing*.

Shortly after I began working at St. Luke's soup kitchen in Atlanta, I drove past a group of our guests who were lounging on a downtown street corner. I recognized Al, John, Raymond and others. I remember to this day the realization that they weren't bums, but people I knew personally. Before I came to St. Luke's, I wouldn't have given a second thought to the terms "bum" or "derelict." I would have admitted, if asked, that they were God's creation in the same way that anyone or anything is loved by God. The difference, after becoming involved in friendships with these men, was I became aware of their own dignity because they were who they were and I knew them. At that moment, the category "bum" ceased to exist for me. TW



Womanist theologian inspires

Mention the Episcopal Divinity School to 10 people in the Episcopal Church, and you'll likely get 10 different reactions. Some know the school for Joseph Fletcher and his ground-breaking work with situational ethics. Others know it as the "new" (since 1974) incarnation of the former Philadelphia Divinity School and the Episcopal Theological School. Some folks' eyes will light up as they praise the school's work on inclusive language. Others will roll their eyes and groan that EDS is so radically left-wing that it flirts with heresy.

It's also the place where some of the leading women of the Episcopal Church have come to do their work: Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Alison Cheek, and Fredrica Harris Thompsett. Bishop Barbara Harris has been a trustee of the school for nearly 10 years.

And now an ordained Presbyterian African-American woman on the faculty at EDS is a leading light on the theological horizon for her remarkable work in black womanist ethics. The Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon is an internationally acclaimed ethicist and theologian, and one of the most popular professors on campus.

Cannon isn't a typical seminary professor. Born in the Southern textile town of Kannapolis, N. C., she grew up in a working-poor black family who, like most of the other residents of Kannapolis, were directly connected with Cannon Mills. She shares a surname with the textile giant because her grandfather's family were slaves on the Cannon cotton plantation which later became Cannon



The Rev. Katie G. Cannon

Mills. She says she's "always been a pioneer and a groundbreaker." On April 16 she celebrated 16 years as a Presbyterian minister — the first African-American woman to be ordained in the denomination. "Being a front-runner is part of what makes me who I am."

It's from this experience that she began the work of black womanist ethics. Womanist ethics is a whole new genre which starts with black women's reality as a point of departure. The term "womanist" was coined by Alice Walker in her 1983 collection of essays, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. Walker herself sets forth a complex definition of womanist: the first component involves the word's derivation from *womanish* (as opposed to *girlish*) and its essential meaning "black feminist" or "feminist of color"; the second, as a woman who loves other women, is committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people; third, it celebrates what the womanist loves — in Walker's words, "music, dance, the moon, the Spirit, love, food, roundness, struggle, the Folk, herself"; and fourth, comparing womanist to feminist as purple is to lavender.

ender. Not all womanists agree about Walker's definition, but Cannon says, "I'm one of the people who say you can't be a womanist unless you embrace all four components." She sees herself and the womanist theologians as "the first generation" of black women to address ethical issues in this way.

Why don't womanists just call themselves black feminists?

Cannon believes it's because "so much of the feminist movement in the United States was white, middle-strata women, and what they were working for was to get what their fathers, their brothers, their sons, and other men in their social location had — not realizing that on the pyramid there were a whole lot of us who didn't have white privilege, who were not located at that same place.

"And so there are white feminists who do race/sex/class analysis. And there are black feminists who clearly say that they will not embrace the word womanist — they would rather hold to 'feminist' and make feminism live into what it should be about, inclusive of all women, and all peoples' well-being. Those of us who are theologically trained are basically moving out of a womanist place, because we don't want to fight white women to say, 'you've got to include us'. There are feminists who say they can't do their feminist work unless they're inclusive of all women. We say, well and good: increase your cloud of witnesses. Get more white women with that kind of political critique."

Cannon's classes are known for their intellectual — and emotional — rigor and the enormous amount of reading, writing and thinking she demands of her students. Despite the heavy requirements, her courses are always overbooked, because so many EDS students,

Susan Erdey is a free-lance writer and assistant for development at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

students to work for justice

by Susan Erdey

as well as numerous others from the nine Boston-area seminaries in a consortium with EDS, want to study with her. One of her classes had over 70 students this year.

She describes her courses as “aerobics ethics — my students sweat blood! Every course I teach is three courses in one,” she says. It’s remedial work; “they get the white male normative tradition, they get feminist critique, and African-American culture.”

Aerobic ethics is about urgency, she says. “We don’t have the luxury nor the leisure to sit around and say, ‘Well, I want to do my grief work, and let me think about this, and don’t rush me’ — people are *dying*. There are 50,000 people who will die as a result of racism in 1990 alone.” Cannon said that figure was based on “the manifestations of the way white supremacy impacts the black community.

“It’s so systemic, it’s hard to pick out the specifics” that contribute to the figure, she said. She pointed out a few examples: “The high infant mortality rate, the lack of care for elderly black people, the fact that young males in Bangladesh have a greater chance of reaching adulthood than young black men in New York — these are all forces working against blacks,” she said.

And, she noted, a new ethical model is vital for all people. “I think part of what it means to do womanist ethics is to put the urgency of what we’re about before other people as well . . . not only because of black people dying, but because the life we save may be our own. The fact that we’re destroying non-renewable resources — what we’re doing to the earth itself, the rain forests — that’s the urgency.”

It’s about survival, she says. “In a situ-

ation where a person is dealing with racism, sexism, and classism, to manage to survive is moral action, moral agency. That’s one of the reasons I do aerobic ethics.”

Cannon’s rigorous pedagogy isn’t necessarily grade-oriented, however. Students don’t claw and scrape for an A, but rather seek transformation. “Each semester, the way I evaluate whether my ministry is effective or not is if one person out of a course can make a life change as a person committed to doing justice. So I’m under pressure — I’m after transformation to happen.”

Her students agree. Sister Jayne Simon, an African-American Doctorate of Ministry student from Mississippi and a member of an ecumenical religious community for over 32 years, says that Cannon is basically “scratching away 500 years of lies. This is just the tip of the iceberg. That’s what the task is about — demystifying, debunking, unmasking racism, the lies and the oppression. I resonate with her teaching. It’s made me realize that racial integration has overall been detrimental to us — it’s been a process of indoctrination and assimilation, rather than being true to our ontological and historical vocation as African-American people.”

Master of Arts student Joanna Kadi says Cannon is one of a very few models of working-class women in authority. For Kadi, a working-class Arab-Canadian woman, Cannon’s model has helped her make the connection between the personal and political. “She sees how racism and sexism impact people’s lives,” says Kadi. “I have incredible respect for her. She’s very caring and accessible — she doesn’t put herself above people even though she’s in a position of authority.”

Tony Coleman, an African-American studying for a Master of Divinity degree, says Cannon’s “call by God on earth, in this place, is to teach, to cause change, and she’s doing it. I don’t know of any person, especially the black people, in her class that have not been turned upside down and around. It’s kind of what it must be like for the eggshell as the chicken is being born — breaking out of that which imprisons us. And Katie is responsible for the breaking of that shell.”

“There’s a rumor that there are two Katie Cannons,” Cannon laughs. “There’s one that’s a Presbyterian minister, and there’s one that’s an Episcopal priest. But there’s only one — I am the one. As my mother used to say, ‘Ain’t but me one.’”

“I can’t think of a better place for me to do the work that I do. Because it’s got to be in an environment where people have been exposed to the most rigorous field education, where people have the physical material comfort to wrestle with the hard issues, so it’s not life-threatening. EDS has a tradition for being a prophetic institution. We’re the only seminary of the nine in Boston that has a black woman full-time on the faculty. That in itself is a testimony.

“My mother is still not pleased that I’m in New England. She said, ‘Katie, that’s not what we ordained you to do.’ And there’s a real concern about the brain drain in the black community. Why do our best minds go to work in a predominantly white situation? And it’s about legacy. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, we all want a long life, but longevity isn’t a promise, a full life is. Jim Cone is the one who said you’ve got to choose what you’re going to do. And so writing and publishing is what I’m going to do, and I can do that here.”

TW

WITNESS wins cheers from its peers

THE WITNESS magazine took eight awards — four first places and four honorable mentions — in two prestigious competitions, the Associated Church Press (ACP) and the Episcopal Communicators' Polly Bond awards at annual conventions of each group in Nashville April 18-21. The two agencies were among some 60 Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish press groups which cooperated to produce the Religious Communication Congress (RCC '90) at the Opryland Hotel, where 1,300 participants explored the theme, "Communication Power."

Notables on the program were Bill Moyers, who gave the keynote address and was honored with the RCC Communicator of the Decade Award, and comedian Steve Allen, who presided over the closing media event.

For the second year in a row, THE WITNESS was awarded first prize in the *general excellence* category by the Episcopal Communicators. Judges said: Writing has gravity and substance; graphics, photographs visually appealing; content qualitative and effective, addresses controversial issues; design, clean and creative.

Other firsts in that contest were for Beth Seka's July-August cover, War in the Coal Fields; best *series photography* in the coal strike story that issue (by photographers Mary Lee Simpson and Jim Thrall); and best *series on a single subject* — the April WITNESS on the election of Barbara C. Harris as first woman bishop in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. Polly Bond Awards of Merit also went to

THE WITNESS for best *news story*, "Requiem for a common man, an uncommon bishop" (on Bishop John Walker's funeral) by Mary Lou Suhor in November and best *magazine layout* of a two page spread, "Athens church joins 'overground railroad'" by Suhor in March.

Episcopal Communicators judges were particularly laudatory of the photographic sequence by Simpson and Thrall accompanying the coal strike story, commenting "good layout, nice cropping, good expressions — each photo is an award winner in its own merit — best of show."

From the Associated Church Press, THE WITNESS earned two honorable

mentions, one for magazine photography, entire issue — the April issue on Barbara Harris; and for Lynne R. Nelson's "The face of God: Stories from the front line" in a devotional/inspirational category, introduced for the first time this year.

About the former, ACP judges said: "This issue covers Bishop Barbara Harris. Beginning with her high school graduation picture, it uses warm photographs of her with the first woman Anglican priest from China, with friends and family and in the rituals of her consecration. The images are presented clearly, if sparsely. Good play is given most of the photographs . . . The print quality of the magazine is somewhat gray, but the images of Barbara Harris chosen present a good biography."

About the Nelson article, judges commented: "Excellent written stories of care given to patients with AIDS, each of them different, each calling for distinct adjustments and responses on the part of the caregivers. Very impressive work."

Although the magazine did not receive an ACP award for General Excellence, judges gave it an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10 in their critique.

The ACP this year received 658 entries, and the Episcopal Communicators nearly 500 in their respective competitions.

This year's awards bring the total of firsts captured by THE WITNESS over the past five years to 19 — seven from the ACP and 12 from the Episcopal Communicators, plus 12 honorable mentions — four from the former and eight from the latter.



THE WITNESS joins winners of Polly Bond General Excellence Awards at Episcopal Communicators meeting in Nashville. Lower left: Leonard Freeman, editor, *Cathedral Age*, Washington, D.C.; Kay Collier-Sloan, editor, *The Advocate*, Diocese of Lexington. Upper left: Frances Antonucci, editor, *Washington Diocese*; Susan Pierce, assistant editor, THE WITNESS; and Mary Lee Simpson, president of Episcopal Communicators.

Letters . . . Continued from page 3

ments questioning monogamy are well within the broad scope of Anglican freedom of thought.

Williams' remarks were in a conference setting, not a pulpit. He spoke his own ideas, not Spong's, mine, or the church's in these free sessions searching for new and current ideas and thinking.

The late Bishop Jim Pike used to say that the vocation of the Christian is to speak to the church as well as for it. Williams has that right, too. He suggests we, the church, need to re-think our position on fidelity.

Bishop Spong has done intellectual freedom in the church, the homosexual rights movement and Robert Williams a great disservice.

The Rev. Robert Warren Cromey
San Francisco, Cal.

(See Robert Williams' response to Kim Byham's article on page 14.)

More on Methodists

I appreciate THE WITNESS so much! The Cuba issue (March) will help Americans have a better perspective, hopefully.

But let's give the Methodists some credit. After all, their mission promoted more than Coca Cola. Could we have some further report?

Ernie Troutner
Lodi, Cal.

(On the positive side, Bishop Armando Rodriguez, who just retired after serving 22 years as Methodist Bishop of Cuba, was one of the few ordained clergy to remain after the revolution. He was a pastor at the time — the bishop lived in Jacksonville, Fla. But he remained to lead the church into autonomy. It was largely through the faithful witness of the laity, who took over the regular duties in the local churches after the pastors left, that the church remained alive. And Methodists were among the ecumenical denominations that kept the Protestant seminary open until new clergy were trained. — Ed.)

Praise for election report

Susan Pierce's article on the Nicaraguan elections (April WITNESS) was exceptional. I felt it really covered the whole "nine yards" of an incredible experience. In fact, it was probably the most thorough one I have read.

Patti Browning
New York, N.Y.

Account accurate

Thank you for sharing Susan Pierce's delightful eyewitness account on the Nicaraguan elections. I can attest to its accuracy since I was there.

The piece provides the reader with rural/urban perspectives, the dynamics of the voting place, the invasion of observers, the shyness of the victors, the euphoria of the defeated. The vignettes on Doña Carmelita and the militia man elicit our solidarity. And the article points out the shortsightedness of "our" experts and seems to evade the tears of many "pro-Sandinista international residents."

Yes, voting is a sacrament. That touches deep at my Hispanic soul. It is a sacred moment because it carries the identity value of baptism, the memory of the Liberator and the nuptials of the citizen with the beloved country.

I particularly would have enjoyed a profile of Doña Violeta — the white Dolorosa descending from the White House — surrounded by her Chamorro clan, always in the winner's circle, since Nicaragua is Nicaragua.

The Rev. Juanleandro Garza
Tucson, Ariz.

Job well done

Thanks for the article Susan Pierce wrote on the [Nicaraguan] election experience. It is well done — moving and accurate. She did a good job.

Gail Phares
Raleigh, N.C.

Re the above three letters: Patti Browning, wife of Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, was an observer in the Witness for Peace Opinion Leader delegation at the Nicaraguan elections. Gail

Phares, a co-founder of Witness for Peace, led the Episcopal delegation. Juanleandro Garza was a member of the Presbyterian delegation. — Ed.)

Insulted Appalachians

I am astonished to read the "joke" in your April Short Takes about the mountaineer who supposedly never saw a mirror, and his wife, the "old hag." What will your next joke be about, Polacks screwing in light bulbs?

It is especially appalling to read such a bigoted piece in THE WITNESS. You owe Appalachian people an apology, "by cracky."

The Rev. Denise Giardina
Durham, N.C.

(With profound apologies. — Ed.)

Magazine challenging

I am old and ill and my eyesight has deteriorated. I can no longer read all the fine magazines I used to enjoy, and I'd not ask people to read them to me. So I am letting my subscription expire.

I assure you that this has nothing to do with my occasional difference of viewpoint from that of your writers. For instance, women clergy have not been among my priorities. And in the culture in which I grew up, abortion was sort of an obscene word. One would no more mention abortion in polite company than one would speak of the irresponsible sex which occasions the abortions.

Nevertheless, yours is a great publication. I have always found it, like Christianity itself, challenging, thought-provoking, and inspiring.

Dick Lyon
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Correction

Mary Meader-Wostrel's name was inadvertently omitted from the list of Episcopal Nicaraguan election observers in the April issue. Sorry.

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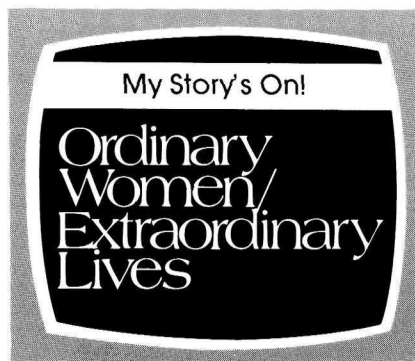
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