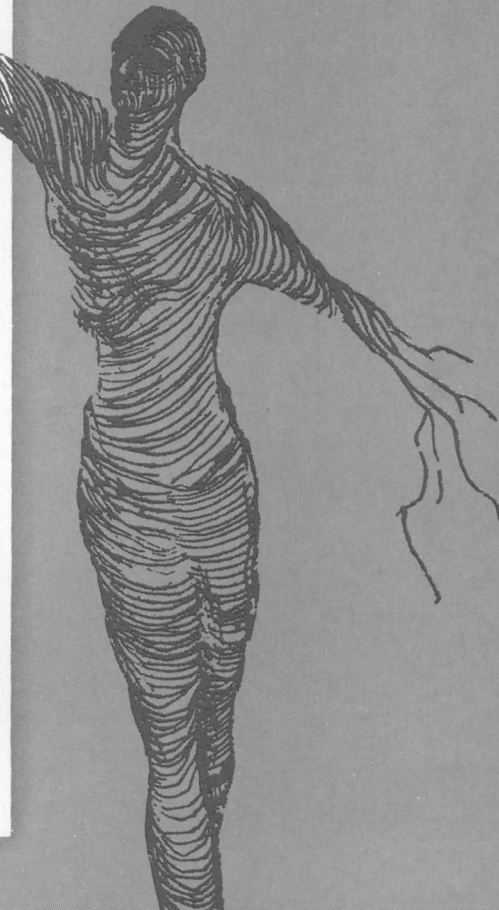
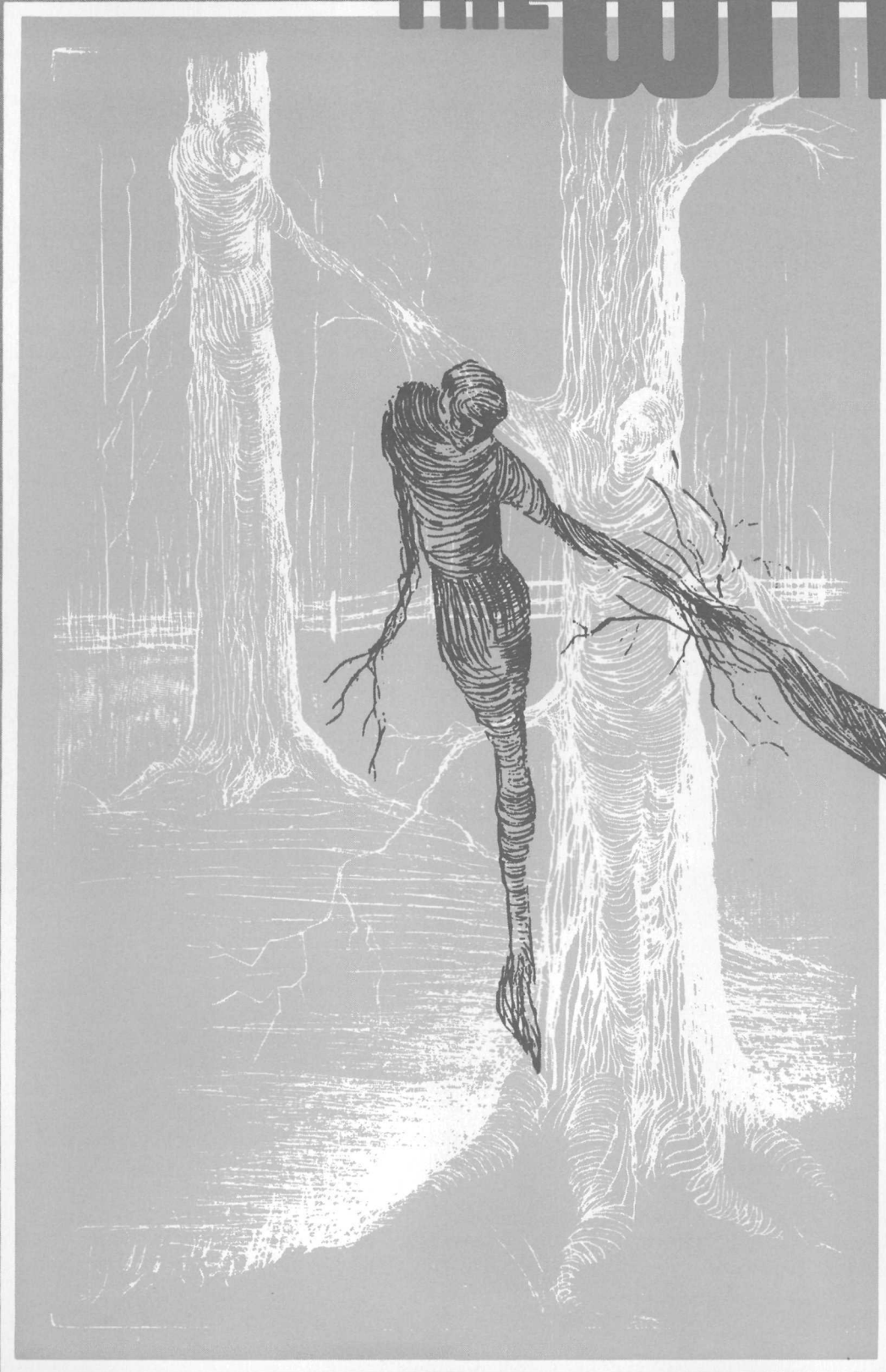


VOLUME • 73 NUMBER • 9 SEPTEMBER 1990

THE WITNESS

**Creating
a new
heaven
and
a new
earth**



Letters

On finding devils

Carter Heyward's May article relating her experience during the Nicaraguan elections is yet another in an apparently endless stream of unreflective narrow-mindedness one encounters in THE WITNESS. I am doubly disappointed with Heyward's authorship because it discredits her theological brilliance. It seems that she went in search of evil contras and, with or without substance or fact, found them.

Reading her narrative I was reaching quite a different conclusion. The account tells me that the Sandinista powers-that-be were attempting to prevent a strong UNO victory in territory not fully under their influence. At the conclusion of the article I realized that both the author and I had found the devils we anticipated. I wondered if there hadn't been at least

one other explanation: Someone made a mistake. Given the remoteness of the village, the general level of tension stressing everyone involved, and the singularity of the event, a mistake would be likely.

Heyward defined evil as anything associated with the U.S. government, be it foreign policy or the contras. Good, then, is anything opposed to that associated with the U.S. government — a type of reductionism common among extremists. By her own admission, Heyward has difficulty holding even a casual conversation in Spanish. Language ability is a requisite for an informed assessment of the situation. That Heyward did not return to El Toro, or seek news from the village after the election, concludes a troubled report with simply inadequate journalism.

Finally, I am puzzled by people who must associate every wrong with our nation-state. When I lived in Bogota I asked people not to disassociate me from the actions of my nation-state; I am responsible, as a participant, for its actions.

It puzzles me that for being so judgmental, Heyward avails herself of the wealth, power and privilege associated with the United States. She and fellow citizens flee the village in the only available vehicle. I am saddened because I looked to her for a more sterling example of faith and courage. Perhaps Heyward and I should be satisfied with her courageous theological insight and set aside hopes for political or journalistic brilliance as well.

Myles Graff
Minneapolis, Minn.

Episcopal bishops invoke 'collegiality'

Kim Byham's piece was helpful on the ordination of Robert Williams. But there is much more to be said of the Episcopal hierarchy's notion of collegiality — a new low in gentlemen's agreements. Williams may or may not have said some foolish things, but these are genuinely insignificant when compared with the hierarchy's willingness to allow unchallenged the gay-lesbian bashing which is nearly the last frontier for the so-called traditionalists. I look for their unwarranted attacks to grow as the "communist menace" recedes.

The hierarchy should be holding up the gay community for all to see: documented change in sexual habits never seen before; utterly heroic service to those dying of AIDS; exposure of a health system which serves no one, gay or straight, as it should — one could go on. Instead, our hierarchy wrings its hands because of some inconvenient remarks by a man attracted to the priesthood, for God's sake, as a means to

serve — only to find, as have many, that he has to leave that priesthood if he truly is to serve.

I see the truth about the ordaining of homosexual persons to be the following (on the whole, the hierarchy knows what follows to be true, which makes its failure to teach even more reprehensible):

1. The Bible is not the sole authority with respect to the formulation of church doctrine and ethics. Resort to "the Bible condemns homosexuality" is not enough with respect to this or any other question before the church. How often does the church need to be reminded that from the time of Hagar to the closing of the Canon, the Bible affirms slavery? Furthermore, the Bible universally condemns usury, that is, the lending of money at interest, but we have established a world economic order based on the lending of money at interest, claiming at the present moment that such an order is responsible for the collapse of communist tyranny and is the basis upon

which a world democratic order can be established. Clearly, most church people in the West do not accept that the Bible answers all moral questions.

2. The Episcopal Church does not have a settled position against the ordination of homosexual persons. The 1979 General Convention resolution was a recommendation against such ordinations, not a canon. The debate clearly established that ordination is a local event, occurring under the direction and authority of the bishop acting with the commission on the ministry and the standing committee of a diocese. Even this recommendation brought forth an absolutely unprecedented act on the part of more than 20 bishops who participated in the debate. That act was a signed declaration repudiating Convention's action and declaring the intent of the signatories to abide by the ancient practice of the church; namely, the local determination of candidates suitable for the ministry.

Heyward responds

Myles Graff suggests that in El Toro we found "the devils we anticipated." Nothing could be further from the truth. We didn't have to go to El Toro, or even to Nicaragua, to see that the U.S.-sponsored contra war was evil. But the El Toro experience showed us no "devils" — no evil people (contras, Sandinistas, others) — just much chaos and confusion and, to be sure, our participation in, and fear of, this chaos. It was a humbling and instructive visit.

We reported the experience through Witness for Peace. As best we could tell, the electoral irregularity became a moot point in the context of the UNO victory. We have been in touch with people in El Toro, though we still do not know (and we suspect they do not know) what caused the voting system to break down

on Feb. 25.

My speculation on what, exactly, transpired in El Toro happens to be very much what Graff suggests from reading the account (i.e., that "someone made a mistake"), but it seemed important to present a first-person, eye-witness account without speculation.

My *interpretation* of the U. S. role in El Toro (as throughout Nicaragua for the last century) as *evil* was, and is, sharp and uncompromising. It is an interpretation shared by many throughout the world. It is, for many of us, framed in the context of a liberation theological commitment that makes no claim to perfection. If Myles Graff admires my theology but not my politics, he does not understand my theology.

Carter Heyward
Cambridge, Mass.

'Round the world at 50

Parker Rossman's article "Liberation philosophy for retirement" in the May issue is a wonderful proposal for all clergy. I can testify to its value.

I decided that when I came to my 50th birthday I would resign whatever employment I had at that time, take a year off to review what I had done, and chart my course for the coming years.

In 1966-67 I did exactly that. I resigned as pastor of the Disciples congregation in Great Falls, Mont. and started out on a 'round the world trip with my wife and 16-year-old daughter. We had no reservations. We traveled by whatever local transportation was available and lived as the people of the area lived. I never worked so hard in my life as I did dealing with strange money, customs

Continued on page 27

to oppress Spong, gay community

3. In fact, many openly gay and lesbian clergy have been ordained since 1979. The practice of the church, which occurs in many different dioceses over years, is more predictive of church doctrine than is a single resolution, which does not have the force of law, adopted at a single General Convention.

4. The move to censure John Spong arises because he "violated collegiality." This is clearly a novel concept, entirely without precedent in our precedent-loving church. There is a defensible collegiality, and it would be the settled, publicly debated Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, along with its Book of Common Prayer. Since these were not violated by Bishop Spong, one has to assume that there was some kind of secret agreement which defines "collegiality" in a new way. That agreement apparently was not to ordain openly gay or lesbian people, at least not to notify the press if such ordinations were undertaken. If there is such a secret agree-

ment, the House of Bishops has been taken over by those ancient enemies of God's Truth, the heretics, who continually talked of secrets handed by God in some mysterious way to secret servants. Our newly defined "collegiality" smacks of the ancient secrets and is unworthy of a church which claims to be the People of God, openly proclaiming the Good News of a more abundant life for all.

The church has always insisted that the Gospel and its teachings were the public gift of God to humanity without any hint of secret teachings or rites. Since there is no public, open agreement of the church against the ordination of lesbian and gay persons, I have to ask when and where the secret agreements not to ordain, or not to ordain with publicity were made. One might further ask whether the laity of the church are comfortable with the notion that the bishops have a secret collegiality by which important questions are decided without one house of the General Convention.

5. Once again the church hierarchy debates the place and position of lesbian and gay persons without our presence and/or meaningful input. What is happening with this issue is not the Church Catholic attempting to wrestle down ancient bigotry. It is rather that closeted bishops and straight bishops, utilizing the same intellectual rationalizations which led to the death of Jesus on the Cross, are attempting to avoid responsibility for the church's immoral witch hunt against lesbian and gay persons.

The service which those of us who are lesbian and gay have given to the church merits honor and dignity, not the shabby little game of politics which the Williams ordination unleashed. It is this small-minded shabbiness which is killing the church, not the service of a sexual minority, which continues to serve and to love in ways not even imagined by Episcopal High Priests.

Richard Kerr
San Francisco, Cal.

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

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

THE WITNESS



The WITNESS staff would like to thank the Rev. Anne Cox for her help in coordinating this issue. Cox, assistant rector at St. Paul's Church, Englewood, N.J., is also a consultant on environmental issues.

Table of Contents

6 The challenge of ecojustice
Robert C. Morris

8 Environmental racism and the struggle for justice
Louis Head and Miguel Guerrero

11 The face of God
James Wright

12 Fighting the poison of despair
Susan E. Pierce

14 Ecofeminist vision must spur action
Mary Zeiss Stange

16 The return of the heron
Rosalinda Ramirez-Yrizarry

20 Make environment ministry a priority
John DeMott

24 New woman bishop prefers 'ragged boundaries of the church'
Julie A. Wortman

Credits Cover graphic, Sister Helen David Brancato IHM, design, TSI Visuals; graphic p. 7, Flint Voice/CPF; photo p. 8, SouthWest Organizing Project; graphic p. 15, ISIS; graphic p. 18, Lynne Hoekman; graphic p. 23, Center for New Creation; photo p. 25, South Light Studios.

Editorial

Wealth is indeed a treacherous thing. Haughty and unable to rest are those greedy as Sheol, who are like death, insatiable, who assemble all the nations for their own end, collect all the peoples to their own advantage.

— *Habakkuk 2:5*

As THE WITNESS goes to press, the tense situation in the Persian Gulf, with the United States and Iraq poised on the brink of war over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, is a good example of the treachery of wealth.

The United States has sent troops to Saudi Arabia to protect its "vital national interests," as the Bush Administration puts it. What's tiresomely familiar here is the premise that the United States has a "right" to unlimited access to Persian Gulf oil, just as we had a "right" to protect business interests in Vietnam and Panama.

U.S. support of the deposed wealthy Kuwaiti monarchy was also based on sheer self-interest. The concerns of the have-nots of the Arab world — the suffering of the Palestinians, the endless war in Lebanon — are barely worth attention.

And, once again, the people we support are disliked not only by their neighbors but also their own people. The Kuwaitis earned the enmity of other Arab states, particularly the impoverished non-oil producers, by selling cheaply to the West and not sharing the wealth even with their own less-fortunate. Also, Kuwait's

The price of greed

ruling family routinely suppressed democratic opposition, and held all important government posts. This does not justify the government's overthrow by Iraq, but pre-invasion Kuwait was not the shining example of democracy lionized by the Bush Administration.

The Administration should also beware of its own rhetoric when it condemns the Iraqis as "outlaws and renegades." After all, only a few months ago, U.S. troops were sent to take over a sovereign country, depose the leader and install a "friendly" government. Similarly, there has never been a negative response from the United States concerning Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and its 23-year occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.

Ever since the Iran hostage debacle, the U.S. military has been itching for action in the Persian Gulf. Over the past 10 years, according to a briefing paper from the American Friends Service Committee, the United States has been implementing a major military build-up in the Gulf, including a \$1 billion military facilities construction program in a dozen nations across North Africa, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia.

Ironically, this build-up was intended to counteract the Soviet threat. With the Cold War over, the U.S. military behemoth in the Gulf is all dressed up with nobody to fight. Iraq's timing was perfect. But if the United States takes on Iraq, it is not

going to be a cakewalk like Grenada.

The Iraqi Army is the region's largest — a million strong — well-armed and well-seasoned after a 10-year war with Iran. And Iraq has chemical weapons. Our young men (and possibly women) may find themselves staggering through desert heat, suffocating in chemical warfare suits as Iraqi mustard gas shells rain down — all for the sake of a continued supply of cheap Hi-Test.

Americans didn't learn anything from the oil shocks of the 1970s. The money and time being put into renewable energy research and development is a fraction of what it was 10 years ago. And we're destroying the ozone layer and fouling the seas with the oil we do have. Now we're ready to fight for the right to continue to drown in our own waste.

Instead, this crisis should be a time to look at our consumption habits, heed the warnings, and make significant changes in lifestyle.

Unfortunately, the U. S. government has grown deaf to appeals for reason both at home and abroad. It paid no attention to pleas for an Arab solution to an Arab problem. Lacking a strong deterrent such as the Soviet presence once afforded, Bush is unrestrained in his response.

Greed, like death, is insatiable, and knows no limits. If the American people don't put limits on the Administration's possessiveness and unbridled military power, the price will indeed be death.

TW

The challenge of ecojustice

by Robert C. Morris

I drive to work through a landscape rapidly being “developed.” It is the beginning of the real estate gold rush of the ’90s. Bulldozers are carving lots in the spacious fields and felling the remaining woodlands to make the newest suburbs of Newark. For the first time, I see and feel this as an assault.

These subdivisions will house only upper middle-income types, where before a mix of great wealth, middle-income merchants and farmers, and low-income workers prevailed. Where once vast estates shaded off into woodland and swamp, dotted with small towns and village crossroads, \$750,000 houses now loom on rigidly-sliced three acre lots. The swamp is already being clogged with the runoff from their lawn fertilizer. The number of local endangered species grows.

Meanwhile, in Newark, one whole ward has no supermarket, older housing is being torched, and the number of homeless grows in both the city and the bulldozed countryside.

People in the parish say that this is great “development.” My mind tilts. Who and what is being “developed?” According to whose vision is this land being recreated?

In Isaiah’s biblical vision of the new Jerusalem, development is seen in a different way. The vision claims to be rooted in the very heart of God. The world is seen working as the Creator knows it can work. And humans are in-

vited into the heart of the vision so that we can experience a heart-changing *metanoia*, a turning around in the way we build the earth.

Isaiah sees a human development that honors connections the bulldozers sever, and enhances the dynamic balance of every part of the whole earth community. In this new Jerusalem the well-being of all the parts is interwoven: infants and elders, rich and poor, humans and other creatures, soul and body, earth, air, water, and God are all inseparable. Babies are healthy, elders robust, and people productive at labor that really serves human need and enriches human skill. The housing stock is durable, and the soil of the vineyards charged with fertile life. All this can happen, in part, because the nations “study war no more,” their energy redirected toward tending the earth, building the community, enjoying the creatures, and communing with God.

This vision does not stop at either the economic or psychological bottom line. The city is as conducive to prayer as to productivity. Communion with the “holy in the midst of life” is open to all. The social justice folk and prayer and praise people have found a common God. They are joined by the pioneers who even now seek to be ambassadors to the animal world, bringing us tales of order, communication and animal society to replace the chaos human fears imagine is out there in the wild.

All together, the Isaiah visions speak of an animal-human connection opened up by human alliance with the unifying wisdom of life, which flows like God’s breath through the earth. Wolf and lamb and lion are in greater accord. Attuned to

her Presence, “a little child” can play over the serpent’s den, and lead the wild beasts, unharmed (*Is. 65:25, 11:6-9*).

This community flourishes because it works in harmony with earth’s real shape and with humanity’s real needs. Meanwhile our present civilization is still bulldozing the planet into submission. Led by a pack of resource-gobbling First World countries, our civilization is now compromising basic resources and life-support systems. As suppliers, the Third World nations are both enchanted by and dragged into the consumer frenzy, which is actually increasing the sufferings of the poorest nations, and burying the First World in drugs, unhappiness, and social chaos.

As realization of the crisis grows, human beings fall into our usual Tower of Babel divisions, seeing everything as a conflict to be settled by battle: conservation vs. jobs, ecosystems vs. employment, economic justice vs. the integrity of animals, First World ecospirituality vs. Third World economic growth.

Isaiah sees that if it doesn’t all work together, eventually it won’t work at all. The new Jerusalem goal looks further than any politically correct cause of the moment, or the next quarter’s profit. It also looks further than the theo-ideologies that have bolstered our short-sighted human chauvinism since the Renaissance. The new Jerusalem is the only possible goal for the long-term viability of our species on the planet. It is God’s long-term pragmatism against our short-term excitability.

Many people are beginning to see the world a bit more the way Isaiah’s God sees it. An architect and developer I know asks, “Why take 40 acres of a farm

The Rev. Robert Corin Morris is founding director of Interweave, an interreligious adult education project in Summit, N.J. for wellness, personal responsibility, social action training and spiritual development.

and cookie-cut it all up into the same dreary 3.5 acres with five basic housing designs? Why not keep a third of the land in farming, let a third of the land go back to the wild, and cluster the housing on the last third?" He's done it, too, in two projects. Each cluster of human habitation is designed for many income levels and ages, with condominiums, rental apartments, semi-detached homes, and detached houses arranged around a common green. The nesting sites of the great blue heron are on the verge of the development, and the bird's rights written into the housing contracts.

These little outposts of the new Jerusalem grow faithfully from three major roots in the biblical vision of the human story: the mandate to exercise "dominion"; the reality of humanity as "Earthling"; and the importance of the whole earth and "all that dwell therein" — what environmentalists now are calling "the earth community."

Scripture says we bipeds are given dominion. This means responsibility, not the right of exploitation. Taken together, *Genesis I and II* spell out a human task that comes to fruition in Isaiah's City of God on earth.

Realistic dominion must be rooted in the fact that all humans are "earthlings," "adam" drawn from "adamah," the ground, just like all the plants and animals (*Gen. II*). This describes exactly what we are made of, and our humble position among the life-systems of the planet: our bones alive with the same calcium as the limestone; our bodies common with stuff in the compost heap; our blood filled with the flow of the local water table. Brain research is showing that we share our oldest brains with reptiles, our middle brains with the rest of the mammals, and part of our higher brains with the rest of the primate family. Like almost every native creation tale the world over, the ancient Hebrew story makes much of our kinship with everything else.



The way we are called to exercise this humble, earthy power is in community. It is not the solitary privilege of one person at the top of a hierarchy, much less the male's job. We are given the task of "naming" the creatures, and each other.

We need to do it well, for naming means relating in a way that evokes the potentials of the creature named. "Fellow primate" is a label more liberating to a chimpanzee than "just a dumb beast" which leads easily to "laboratory animal." "Protecting our resources" is a very different activity from "mutually beneficial relationships with life-support systems" and "the environment" is much easier to exploit than the biblical "earth with all its creatures, great and small."

The emerging world crisis demands that we expand our sense of community to include everything it takes to run a world. As Paul saw clearly, "The whole creation waits with eager expectation for the revelation of God's true human offspring" (*Romans 8:19*).

When a Philadelphia nun decides to convert her convent's old barn into a solar-powered house, she's practicing First World repentance and turning toward a better use of energy for the sake of the whole world community. When she takes the technology she's learned to her community's remote sister village in Mexico and helps their chicken business survive competition from the nearby invasion of the agribusiness lords, she preserves the richness of the earth's diversity.

What will the future of the Mexican village be? The fate of the affluent First

World as it realizes the party has got to stop? The future of the remaining great apes and elephants and dolphins, and the humbler flora and fauna? "Behold," says the God of Genesis, "they are delivered into your hands!" That God expects us to work toward the new Jerusalem, which will only come when the "heavens" have different ruling powers in them than the ones our bulldozers now serve.

As Christians join with others of good will to work for peace, justice, and the integrity of creation, we need to bring the heart of the Scriptural vision with us as our contribution to the emerging world culture. It is actually much more concerned about the fate of the earth and much more serious about the pivotal role of human beings in that fate than most of the other sacred visions on the planet. Needless to say, it is much more concerned about the earth than Christianity has ever realized.

A simplistic return to pre-industrial or even pre-agricultural spiritualities is hardly likely to suffice for a pluralistic, international world. A romantic nature worship will not give us the tough and hard-headed "wise-as-serpents" know-how we need to figure our way through this. Any theology of "original blessing" without a sufficient account of how the dark side of human nature twists our creativity into destructiveness won't help us stop treating earth and each other like dirt. A humanism which has no wild and reckless faith in a Creator irrevocably committed to the success of this planetary venture does not have either the mythic magic or the songs for the dark nights of defeat and frustration which we need to face the coming days.

Isaiah saw Good News for planet Earth. Jesus called humanity toward the kingdom of the new Jerusalem. So should we. We'd better, because the tough news is that the world has been delivered into our hands. It will take all our wit and wisdom, and whatever help is available, to get through this one. **TW**

Environmental racism and the struggle for justice

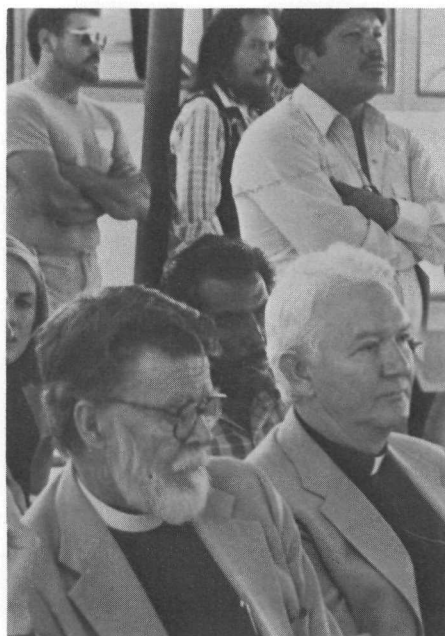
by Louis Head and Miguel Guerrero

The systematic exposure of people of color to hazardous wastes is probably the most insidious form of racism today. It manifests itself in the high number of polluting industries and hazardous waste dumps in communities of color, and people of color's routine exposure to extreme health and safety hazards in the workplace. The underlying assumption in these practices is that certain people are expendable.

U.S. government policies over the last 10 years have worsened conditions for poor people of color, as reflected in economic and drug-related violence in urban areas, unaffordable housing, skyrocketing infant mortality rates, and a host of other symptoms.

Commenting on these trends, African-American scholar Manning Marable wrote in 1983, "Without gas chambers or pogroms, the dark ghetto's economic and social institutions might be destroyed, and many of its residents would simply cease to exist." A short seven years later, this is beginning to happen. The irony in Marable's observation is that an element of the "gas chamber" does exist, figuratively, in the form of toxic poisoning.

In 1983, a U.S. General Accounting Office report showed that three of four landfills studied in the Southeast were located in poor African-American communities, including Chem Waste Management's facility in Emelle, Ala., the



The Rev. Paul Saunders, left, and the Rev. Gene Hutchins, right, represent the Episcopal Church at the Inter-Denominational Hearings on Toxics in Minority Communities in Albuquerque, N.M.

nation's largest hazardous waste dump. In 1987, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice released its landmark study *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States*, which found race to be the most significant of the variables associated with the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities, and that three out of five African-Americans and Latinos live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites. Research by the Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland, Calif., shows that most of the 200 metric tons of uranium tailings — radioactive residue

from mining — in the United States are located on Native American land.

Two threads of history explain the disproportionate impact of toxic wastes on communities of color. One is the United State's long legacy of oppression of people of color, from indentured servitude, slavery and colonialization to newer forms of institutional racism. Another is the incorporation of people of color into heavy industry and agribusiness. Historically, people of color have obtained the worst industrial and agricultural jobs, and have for a variety of social, economic and cultural reasons lived in areas where polluting industry is most likely to be located.

Industry seeks communities which are politically disadvantaged, economically depressed, and therefore subject to economic blackmail. Depressed communities are sold the notion that hazardous waste landfills and other deadly industries offer hope of employment and economic development. Instead, the result is long-term devastation of lives and resources, in return for a few jobs. When industry is challenged on its polluting practices, the community is threatened with plant shut-downs and job cutbacks to pay for pollution control and clean-up.

Government regulators such as the Environmental Protection Agency were formed primarily because government and industry realized that use of hazardous chemicals needed to be regulated. Regulatory development has focused on allowing industry to pollute to certain limits, rather than preventing pollution. In response to growing sentiment in this

Louis Head and Miguel Guerrero are staff members of the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), in Albuquerque, N.M.

country for government and corporate accountability, industry and government have undermined and controlled environmental legislation and limited the enforcement capacities of the EPA and other government agencies. Also, industry has fled U.S. regulation and imposed the burden of environmental degradation on Asia, Africa and Latin America.

According to Alex Varela and Arthur Ray, staff attorneys with the EPA, the agency "has never acknowledged that many environmental problems adversely affect minority groups to a much greater extent than the population at large. Even more frightening, it appears that many of the EPA's actions in carrying out its avowed mission have adversely affected poor and minority communities." They point out that endangered species such as the blunt-nose leopard lizard are provided more pesticide protection under federal law than farmworkers, 95% of whom are Latino and African-American.

In September 1989, the Albuquerque, N.M.-based SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), a multi-racial, multi-issue community organization founded 10 years ago, and the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches conducted Inter-Denominational Hearings on Toxics in Minority Communities. The hearings, held in Albuquerque, reflected the ongoing partnership developing between community-based justice organizations like SWOP and regional and national religious institutions in order to address environmental and other social and racial justice issues. The hearings were funded in large part by agencies of member denominations of the Eco-Justice Working Group, including the Episcopal Church.

At the hearings, an ecumenical panel of church leaders, including representatives from the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande, heard several hours of testimony outlining the role government and industry play in toxic waste dumping, and the impact of toxic pollution on

people of color in the Southwest. To cite some examples:

- Former Los Alamos National Laboratories employee Jerry Fuentes told of how he was fired after confronting supervisors and safety officers on the careless handling of plutonium and uranium. "Buildings and lab tables are 'hot,' and buckets of radioactive residues are thrown out on the ground. Workers suffer loss of hair, brain tumors, and high cancer rates," he said, adding that Chicano workers were forced to work in unsafe areas, but feared speaking out "because they need their wages."

Environmental issues cannot be separated from the broader context of social, racial, political and economic justice.

- Betty Griego of Mountain View, a community south of Albuquerque, fought back tears as she told how her six-month old son turned blue and nearly died in her arms after drinking formula made with tap water from wells contaminated with nitrates. However, she and other low-income residents are unable to afford a hook-up to city water. And evidence suggests, she said, that much of the pollution was coming from nearby Kirtland Air Force Base.

- Representatives from El Centro del Obrero and La Mujer Obrera in El Paso testified about chemical spills and working conditions in *maquila* industry operations on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. These industries are often "runaway shops," and tend to employ

teenage women workers. The increase in severe workplace hazards resulting from the development of *maquila* industries have been accompanied by marked increases in toxic waste in surrounding communities. Said Guillermo Glenn, "We feel that the location of this toxic zone is not a coincidence. In fact, we believe that because this area is a low-income Hispanic community, city and state officials have allowed it to become a haven for unregulated hazardous waste material companies and this also affects what is transported and brought back across the border. It is a kind of no-man's zone, a low-regulation zone, where the authorities really do not understand what is being taken across and what is being brought back."

- Virginia Candelaria testified how she and hundreds of other women workers are suffering and dying from several forms of cancer due to years of exposure to solvents in an Albuquerque General Telephone and Electronics (GTE) plant. During the resolution of a lawsuit brought by 465 plaintiffs against GTE, the poisonous section of the plant where Mrs. Candelaria had worked was moved to Juarez, Mexico. Workers there are being paid *maquila* wages to do the same work.

- Bernardo Ponce and Carlos Casas told of working at the Fenix Junkyard in Juarez, where a defunct radiation machine used for cancer treatment was discarded as scrap metal by a U.S. disposal company. When the machine was dismantled, cobalt pellets spilled out and got scattered throughout the neighborhood, contaminating the workers and at least 500 residents — three children died, and many people still suffer from radiation sickness. The contaminated metal was made into restaurant tables and reinforcing bars which were eventually sold back in the United States.

- Residents of the Rio Puerco area of the Navajo Nation near Church Rock, N.M., told how they have been exposed

to high levels of radiation from water contaminated by uranium tailings, byproducts of nuclear weapons and fuel production. A Navajo medicine man fell into a pond containing tailings and sulfuric acid and was badly burned. In 1979 the dam at a United Nuclear Corporations tailings pond broke, resulting in a 94-million gallon spill which contaminated the water and bed of the Puerco River, and has affected community residents, livestock and the local school's water supply.

- People from Espanola, N.M., testified that Chicano public school employees in their district were forced to clean up asbestos in local school buildings without adequate protection. The district showed no concern regarding the impact of this dangerous material on school children or the workers removing it. An elderly maintenance man who was exposed to it was told by his supervisor not to worry because he was not going to live 20 more years anyway.

The hearings showed that environmental racism is very real and that environmental issues cannot be separated from the broader context of social, racial, political, and economic justice. Unfortunately, this has not been the perspective of environmentalists over the years.

The environmental movement enjoys high visibility today in the United States and globally. Millions of dollars now fund the major environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, and Friends of the Earth, which are affiliated as the "Group of Ten." Much of this money comes from membership, which has skyrocketed over the past decade, with some groups now claiming millions.

But a significant amount of the funding for several "Group of Ten" organizations comes from major corporate powers, including GTE, Exxon, Dow Chemical and many others. The CEO of Waste Management, Inc. sits on the board of

directors of the National Wildlife Federation. Indeed, many corporations are now labeling themselves environmentalists. They provided the money and the hype which made the Earth Day activities this year such massive media events. However, this new-found and loudly expressed corporate environmentalism coincides with deindustrialization at home and runaway shops abroad. It raises the question of whether the poor are going to continue to pay for past and present environmental negligence in the United States and around the world.

As environmental groups enter the mainstream of U.S. society, they claim that there is increasing interest among people of color about the environmental movement. It is generally expressed that people of color are finally "coming around" to the importance of what the environmental movement has been advocating for a long time.

However, people of color have been historically involved in struggles for environmental justice, and have taken on environmental issues as community, labor, or civil rights causes. Farmworkers, mostly Latino, have for many years spearheaded the fight against pesticides. Occupational safety and health issues have been addressed by labor unions, or in the case of the border industries, by immigrant rights groups. The problem of lead-based paint poisoning has been taken on by housing organizations.

The reality is that the environmental movement has not shown much willingness to put its resources towards supporting the struggle to end the poisoning of communities of color. The mainstream environmental groups have only a few token people of color involved in their operations and policy-making bodies. Finally, like the EPA, some of these groups have taken steps which have been detrimental to people of color's interests.

In early 1990 letters signed by SWOP and hundreds of other social and racial justice activists and organizations were

submitted to the "Group of Ten." These letters raised concerns about a host of issues and called for dialogue to take place between people of color and members of the group. Initial discussions are now taking place, with potential for a new understanding between the environmental movement and organizations working for social and racial justice. Key questions in this process involve better defining how environmental issues fit into a social, racial and economic justice framework, and what the role of environmental groups will be in the emerging social and racial justice movement in the United States.

This new movement is exemplified by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, which was recently formed out of a SWOP initiative, and includes over 75 individual activists of color and representatives of community and labor organizations from Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona and California. This network reflects the fact that there is as much or more local organizing taking place today as in the 1960s and early '70s. After surviving a decade of Reganism, activists are looking for ways to mutually strengthen their efforts.

These days the work is quieter (i.e. unreported) and is much less likely to be empowered (i.e. extinguished) by government funding. Issues being addressed include employment, workers rights, affordable housing, education, municipal services, immigrant's rights, and many others. As part of this broad agenda, organizers from around the country point to the environment as being "the issue" of the '90s. Perhaps it will be a unifying issue. TW

Resource

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The face of God

by James Wright

I was there. I am you.

I was there many ages ago when a man named Moses said to God: "God, show me all your glory." God said, "Yes, all my goodness I will show you, and my name I will tell you. But you cannot see my face; it is not time, for no person can yet see my face and live."

Yes, I was there, and I saw the fear and tenderness, the anticipation and sadness, and a vision of what was to be.

I was there. I am you.

I was there on the mountaintop with the man named Jesus. We were not alone. There were Peter, James and John. There was also the man named Moses, with his friend Elijah. I wondered: "Is it time?"

The glory of God began to radiate from Jesus' face, and Moses, with Elijah, joined in the light. But Peter and his friends were still afraid, and knew not what to say.

I was there. I am you.

I was there in the valley with the man named Jesus. And it's funny, you know, but I could always see him for who he was. Perhaps that is because I have known him for so long.

The Rev. James D. Wright is assistant rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Gainesville, Fla.

I would often look at his face and rest. Within his countenance I would always see the reflection of a beautiful blue-green pearl laid out on the jet-black curtain of the sky. It was a holy sight, this face of God. I call it Earth.

When I rest with my friend Jesus, and adore the face of God, I see that which you now call heaven. It is perfect, it is one, and it is a kaleidoscope of color, a tapestry of texture and hue.

But I was there, and so were you.

Yes, I was there when Jesus was in the valley, with all the people of the world. And I remember, through the pain, what the people saw when they looked into his blue-green face.

I remember the people who were wedded to power and fear, and how they would reach out and order the colors, and assign values to the textures and hues. I remember how they broke up the pearl into little pieces — this part for you and this part for me. I remember the tools with which they scratched his face; lines to separate one part from another. Man separate from woman, young separate from old, country different from country, and one picture-face of God better than another.

I also remember Jesus' friends. Sometimes I could catch a look of recognition in their eyes, a glimpse of understanding. But even they could not know the face for long, nor could they see its depth. When it was finally kissed by greed, scratched and spat upon by pride,

they thought it had been destroyed, and they left it to die alone.

But mostly I remember the small-tall ones. I remember the beautiful women who had been made to feel low, but saw in Jesus' face the beauty of their true stature. I remember the blessed poor, who had been made to feel irrelevant, but saw in Jesus' face a reflection of their true worth. I remember the many who were sick and cast aside, and had been made to feel dirty, but saw in Jesus' face the source of life and light. And I remember the children who had been thrust aside by an illusion of the more important, but saw in Jesus' face a world in which there are no divisions and no rankings, a kaleidoscope of color and a tapestry of texture and hue.

I remember the small-tall ones very well. Yes, I remember them very well.

I was there. I am you.

I was there when Jesus died. The people were not ready for the face of God, so rather than blind the people, Jesus allowed his own light to be put out. But since light is all there is, it could not be put out forever, and it still shines even to this day, a beautiful blue-green pearl laid out on the jet-black curtain of the sky. I can see it in your face, you small-tall one.

I am here, and so are you. Honor the face, the Earth-Heaven, the blue-green pearl of great price, the kaleidoscope of color and tapestry of texture and hue. It is time.

JW

Fighting the poison of despair

by Susan E. Pierce

Poor and minority communities have for years borne the burden of this country's waste. For example, an 80-mile strip along the Mississippi between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, La., is dotted with small, impoverished, rural towns mostly populated by African-Americans. This strip is called "Cancer Alley" because 136 petrochemical plants and other industries have so polluted the region that the cancer rate there is 20 times the national average.

In addition to the health hazards, entire communities have been displaced. Reville town, a small town near Baton Rouge founded by ex-slaves after the Civil War, was heavily contaminated by vinyl chloride emissions from a nearby Georgia Gulf plant. In response to lawsuits, the company bought all the homes and relocated the residents in an out-of-court settlement.

In Appalachia, where local residents have traditionally been at the mercy of the coal companies, often losing their land to strip mining and their health and lives to black lung disease, the new growth industry is toxic waste dumping. As coal mines shut down and unemployment rises — in some regions of West Virginia and Kentucky it is as high as 50% — the toxic waste dumping industry exploits the need for jobs.

Sandy Elledge of the Appalachian Peoples' Service Organization (APSO), which builds coalitions between the Episcopal Church and advocacy groups, told of going to a hearing concerning a proposed hazardous waste dump in economically-depressed McDowell County, West Virginia. Much to her surprise, one of the proposal's biggest supporters was a local man whose family would probably be endangered by the dump.

"I was so stunned," said Elledge, "that I asked him, 'How can you risk the health and safety of your family?' His answer was, 'Ma'am, I have a right to choose how my family will die.'"

However, despite the seemingly overwhelming task of combatting a sense of powerlessness and reversing the tide of toxic waste sweeping over poor and minority communities, grassroots organizing by advocacy groups is bringing hope and change to these areas.

In Louisiana, a coalition of unions, black tenants rights organizations, and environmentalists have come to together to force government and industry to clean up polluted areas. Pat Bryant, executive director of the New Orleans-based Gulf Coast Tenants Leadership Development Project, explained how his group combined its program of advocacy for adequate housing and economic development with environmental issues.

"We discovered that the same communities most affected by the government's economic policies were also the most affected by industrial poisons," said Bryant.

Bryant pointed out that the struggle to combat toxic pollution had to be waged on the political front as well because of the state government's close ties to the petrochemical industry.

"Politicians here are like pelicans after an oil spill — they're so soaked in petrochemical money that they can't lift their wings to fly. They are mortgaging our future for petrochemical campaign financing," he said.

In 1988, in order to raise public awareness and protest the widespread contamination of the region, said Bryant, his group participated in the Great Louisiana Toxic March, an 11-day, 100-mile

long march through Cancer Alley. According to newspaper polls, the march significantly raised local awareness about the dangers of hazardous waste. A second march was held in the spring of this year, and, Bryant said, was a major factor in passage of legislation to cut toxic emissions by 50%.

The marches were organized by a multiracial coalition of civil rights, religious, labor and tenants organizations working with mainstream environmental groups. As an African-American, Bryant was aware that white-dominated environmental groups were not used to sharing leadership with minorities. However, he said, these groups would have to learn how to work with people of color because, he said, "Unless this movement is based in the Third World communities, it's not going anywhere. It's the people in the communities, the local leadership, who will sustain the struggle."

Grassroots organizing is also proving effective in combatting toxic waste dumping in Appalachia. In the Cumberland Mountain region of Tennessee, a group called Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) was originally founded around issues of land use and taxes. According to staff member Lisa McLeod, a five-county survey done in the early 1970s found less than 10 corporations owned the majority of land and mineral rights but paid only a fraction of the property taxes.

The group also worked on coal issues — strip mining and its effects on the people living nearby.

Toxic waste has become an issue for SOCM in the last two years. McLeod said, "We had a fight in 1989 because the state was trying to take away county control over the placement of hazardous

Ecofeminist vision must spur action

by Mary Zeiss Stange

In response to the classic Freudian quandary, “What do women want?”, contemporary ecofeminism offers an answer startling in its bold simplicity: to change everything about the way we imagine, experience and act in our world, and to do it now, before it is too late. As Canadian ecofeminist Judith Plant characterizes it, ecofeminism is “a truly international movement that has the power to radically transform our human perceptions of our species and its place in the natural world.” Ecofeminism looks toward “human cultural possibilities as yet uncharted but which hold the promise of a world built not on fear but on love; which thrives not on self-interest but on the joyful experience of differences; which values not money and materialism above all else, but the real security of mutual interdependence.”

In its radical anti-sexist, anti-classist, anti-racist agenda, ecofeminism is in many ways a logical outgrowth of the women’s movement of the 1960s and ’70s. Indeed, some have challenged the very use of the “eco-” prefix, as implying that environmental awareness is a recent addition to feminist thinking, whereas in truth feminism has always been actively concerned about the relation between the oppression of women on the one hand, and environmental degradation and depredation on the other. The direct parallel between the rape of the earth and the rape of women in patriarchal culture is a familiar motif in 20th-century feminist discourse.

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The close affiliation between “woman” and “nature” has long been regarded as the foundation upon which patriarchal oppression rests, and the theoretical underpinnings of this system of exploitation have been painstakingly worked out by environmental historian Carolyn Merchant. In her authoritative *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*, Merchant demonstrates how attitudes toward women (or more broadly, the “feminine”) and nature (the realm of the non-human) have historically been mutually reinforcing. From the 17th century forward, “Mother Earth” has been subjected to technological domination and control on a scale unthinkable prior to the age of science. If today we are poised on the brink of global environmental catastrophe, Merchant suggests, it is in large part because science has been aided and abetted by being able to draw upon an older tradition which believed that nature, like woman, is an untrustworthy creature ever in need of taming, bridling, and breaking under the whip of male (“rational”) dominion.

Of course, there has been ample theological justification for this view. In its development, Christian patriarchal orthodoxy itself drew upon older Judaic and other pre-Christian views of female inferiority. Biology was destiny, woman’s reproductive capacity tying her much more closely to the natural/physical world than the fundamentally more spiritual male. Eve’s punishment in *Genesis* 3, that she suffer in childbearing and be submissive to her husband, was conventionally interpreted to mean that male dominion over the female was not merely “natural,” but divinely ordained.

In focusing on the necessity of female suffering in a fallen world, Christian theology laid the groundwork for what contemporary feminism recognizes as a theology of violence against women — and, perhaps by extension, against the earth. Given the background of a theological tradition that does not merely acknowledge, but in some profound sense requires and even celebrates female suffering, it is hardly surprising that women in a patriarchal system readily identify with the suffering of animals and of the earth itself. Such identification has led at least one radical feminist, Andrée Collard, to declare, “No woman will be free until all animals are free and nature is released from man’s ruthless exploitation.” That the majority of animal rights activists are women further suggests that identification with non-human suffering plays an important role in female psychology. And this identification is simultaneously encouraged by ecofeminism.

Carolyn Merchant, however, warns of the hazards inherent in feminist “celebrations” of the connection between women and nature:

If women overtly identify with nature and both are devalued in modern Western culture, don’t such efforts work against women’s prospects for their own liberation? Is not the conflation of women and nature a form of essentialism?

In other words, does ecofeminism — along with the often allied animal rights and “deep ecology” movements — unwittingly buy into precisely that cultural construct which it ought to be busy overturning? That the leadership of both the animal rights and deep ecology movements is predominantly white and male

suggests there is cause for concern. So, too, does the fact that most of the prominent spokeswoman for ecofeminism are white, Western, and middle-class in experience and education.

The majority of ecofeminists acknowledge the problem of springing free from the system of patriarchy. In its sheer massiveness, the structure of institutional oppression of women and the earth throws up practical obstacles at every theoretical turn. It is one thing to talk of a new vision of a new earth, but quite another to go about realizing that vision in an ever more complex world.

Activist Ynestra King, often cited as a founder of the ecofeminist movement, argues that seen in the proper light, the woman/nature connection is a strength, not a weakness, when it comes to implementing the vision of a world transformed. King bases her critique on Murray Bookchin's "social ecology," the view that directly links social oppression to natural despoliation. At the root of this link, she asserts, is misogyny. Woman is on nature's side as "the other," from the point of view of male culture. What needs to be overcome is precisely the male fiction of "otherness," that is, the alienating split between male culture and female nature.

In theological terms, the image that must be overthrown is that of the male God "above" nature, which sets the pattern for the identification of the male spirit with super-nature, and the relegation of the female body to the natural "order" of things. Social ecology rejects any and all alienation of the human from the natural. As King holds, this provides the foundation for a powerful transformative vision.

Ecofeminist writings are replete with vision: Of a world where everything that is, is holy. Where values of inclusivity and interconnectedness outweigh the forces of division and conquest. Where the lion and the lamb live, if not exactly in peace, at least free from human inter-

ference.

But, unless vision spurs action, it is vulnerable to the kind of criticism columnist Molly Ivins recently leveled at New Age thinking (which, not insignificantly, is espoused by a number of ecofeminists). In a column in the August, 1990 *Progressive*, while recognizing that "They do spend a lot of time Visualizing Peace," Ivins asked whether any of these people "ever feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or shelter the homeless?" A deep ecologist might dismiss such a question as "anthropocen-



tric," and an animal rights advocate would call it "speciesist." However, by virtue of ecofeminism's claim that its transformative vision cuts through all barriers of class, race, and culture, just how it confronts this question is a test of its validity as a vision for the future.

Two of the more influential religious theorists in contemporary feminism — one a witch, the other a Christian theologian — have addressed this issue. Starhawk, speaking from the vantage point of the earth-centered "Old Religion" of Wicca, picks up on the theme

of "liberty and justice for all." She writes:

And when we say "for all," we include the animals and plants and the environment itself as part of our community. And this value is not an abstraction, but becomes manifest in the opportunities we create that feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, provide health care and education to all as right, and place the sacred value of each being above the right to exploit the earth and profit off others' labor. To do this, we need to construct a new economics, with sustainability as its base.

Inverting Gandhi's oft-cited remark about a nation's humanity being reflected in the way it treats its animals, Starhawk seems to be saying that a society's attitude toward the environment is best reflected in the way it treats its people. Yet while many ecofeminists talk in terms of transformation of consciousness and self-renewal, few — especially North American ecofeminists — seem overly willing to confront the tough economic challenges Starhawk raises. Often, it seems as if the hungry and the homeless, being in effect a part of the patriarchal system, fall outside the purview of ecofeminist activism. The socially disenfranchised are convenient objects for meditation, yes, but difficult to work with in practice.

Speaking from the perspective of Christian feminist theology, Rosemary Radford Ruether also confronts the social implications of ecofeminism. She says what is necessary is to "convert our minds to the earth," and explains:

(This) cannot happen without converting our minds to each other, since the distorted and ecologically dysfunctional relationships appear necessary, yet they actually support the profits of the few against the many. There can be no ecological

Continued on page 19

The return of the heron

by Rosalinda Ramirez-Yrizarry

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or the elderly who do not live out their years; he or she who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; those who fail to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant

This is the world that I was born into.

I saw the dew sparkle like diamonds on the green earth. An orchestra of song filled the air — crickets, coquis, birds, horses, cows, dogs, children — all playing by the river's edge. Branches stretched out to provide shade and the brilliance of colored flowers.

The water, tumbling carelessly over the rocks did not complain or cry, but gurgled and sang until it was at last freed into the expanse of the ocean. The whales, keepers of sacred history, gathered off the coast to celebrate their own birthing — and the children of the sea surfaced to greet the children of the land. Patient and calm, the dolphins would come close and exchange signs of affection, accompanying us.

Eventually turning towards the shore, we'd bid farewell until next time. In the field, the old dog and the heron walked side-by-side. An unlikely pair, they were inseparable until the time of the migration would come. Heron would return at the same season every year to check in on its old friend. Who knows what stories they told each other as they walked slowly through the field? The elders, watching the magic sight, lived season-to-season because of the gifts of the forest — the plants, the herbs, the flowers. A hundred heron migrations would not be too much to see in a lifetime.

Rosalinda Ramirez-Yrizarry, a Puerto Rican, is Co-Director of the Southeast Center for Justice, Atlanta, Ga. Her home is in the Uroyan Mountain country. Of Taino-Arawak and Spanish lineage, she is also known as Catitonauh.

This is what I want to tell you.

The heron did not come back this season. Oil weighed down its wings, they say. The old dog waited until he fell asleep in the field. Dog never woke up, his spirit soaring with the heron's in some secret place of rendezvous. The elders don't make it through so many seasons. The forests no longer offer healing. The heron has not returned and the forests are being taken. The shores are eroding with the bodies of dolphins. Victims of the stranger's net, their desperate cries fill our sleep. But the stranger's ears hear only the rustle of Paper Dollars. Dollars don't breathe. Dolphins do. How can the absence of life have more value than life itself? The number of whales on the coast grow fewer with each passing season. Fear grips the shore as the time of birthing draws close. The birthing comes naturally. Paper Man brought the fear.

The water does not sing as loudly. Foreign items weigh it down, destroy the life within it. Signs tell us that it cannot quench our thirst any longer. The colors are fading. Acid they say. It's in the rain. The trees are dying. The songs of the Mountain forests grow weak. Poisons passed in the air by Paper Man kills the bird's song, chokes the coquis' cry, paralyzes the cricket's excitement, sours the cow's milk, destroys the horse's pasture, leaves the dogs sterile. And the children — pushed from the womb to the light too soon — never have a chance to open their eyes to catch the sparkle of the dew.

Paper Man takes all of us, you and me,

as he takes the earth. He measures us against his Paper and buys and sells our labor. Families and entire villages live and die now so that Paper Man can accumulate his Paper wealth. We build houses for them to live in while we go homeless. We gather the crops for them to eat while we starve or are poisoned like the coquis.

Extinction is upon us. Life is being traded for a piece of Paper. The Paper People and the Mountain People are distinct. We cannot live together. Extinction will take us all. The Paper People will wander away beyond the stars forever. But the Earth never dies. It is simply transformed . . . over and over again in its own time. The Mountains will rise again, and the Mountain People with them, because the Mountains and the People are one. The very stones will thrill with our memories. Our feet will once again be conscious of the Earth's sympathetic touch. There will only be a change of worlds, a new creation. The heron will return.

I face into the wind and pray for the world to change.

I cry for ancestors of Mountain heritage — whose loving made us possible — to touch the Paper People, for Paper has blinded them to the magic. The Paper Children come to Earth not knowing how to breathe and how love can change the world. They have no memory of the songs that must be sung. They feel no connection. Their fathers have abandoned them to Paper. If they do not learn to listen and hear the songs, to see and recognize the magic, they like their fathers will not know transformation. Disconnected, they will not return with the heron.

To be faithful to the heron, one must love deeply.

The words ecology and justice leave a

bitter taste in my mouth. They parch my throat, as if lining it with salt and I'm forced to grit my teeth so that I do not explode. Paper People terminology. Save whose ecology? Justice for whom? History testifies that it is never for all. The Paper Dollar underwrites the definitions of ecology and justice. The systems that support the Paper People and their Dollar cannot support ecology and justice. The priorities are natural enemies. Ecology is an all or nothing proposition. The true ecologists speak of Mother and Brother and Sister and Grandfather, and a love relationship defines the justice that forms the underlying spirit.

At times I wonder how long I can sustain my love for these United States of America with its suicidal lifestyle and the uncontrolled brutal determination with which it pursues Paper and power.

When I was an adolescent, this country seemed full of possibilities. I'd lift my fist in protest and all my anger towards oppression would surge forth tempered by the consolation that I was helping this country move towards change. I lifted my fist so many times for this country, until I found myself alone, with my fist high in the air, in the middle of a great emptiness.

Then, one day this country sent me the disturbing news that friends had been killed, each one in a different place, at a different time, connected only by their common love of people, the land and life. The reasons were unclear. Paper. It was for Paper. That is what I understood. They said to protect such Paper was the same as defending democracy. To save the Paper People those who did not value it enough had to die. To assure the "life" of the Paper they had to contaminate the land. Non-violent resistance was a dangerous practice and the Paper Society had to be protected from it. I couldn't make the connections.

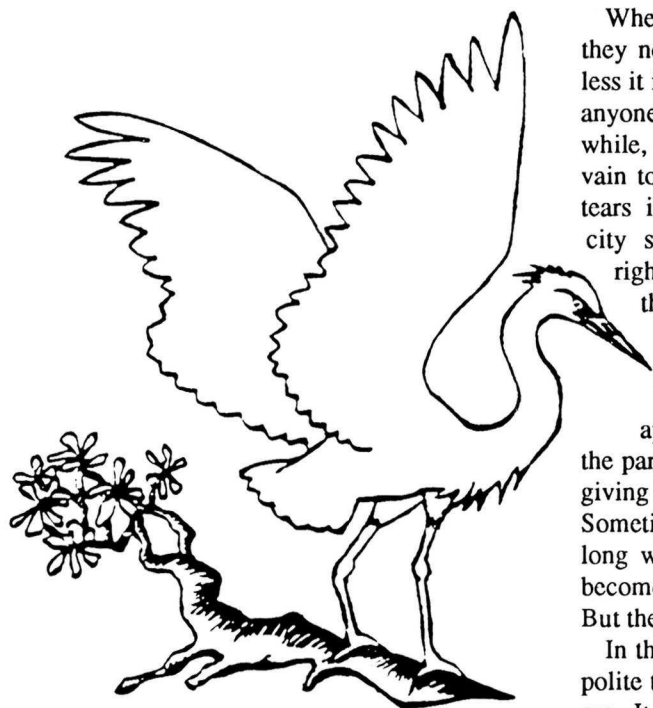
It was then that I realized this country would not listen to my pleas, to what they considered my naive ideas and radi-

vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat.

For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them.

Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

*So says the Lord.
Is. 65: 17-25*



cal ways. It simply would not listen.

I felt rage against this country because of what it had unjustifiably taken from so many. I was angry because of all that it pretended to be and was not . . . its unkept promises and blind suicidal path, its destruction of so many lives for the profit of a few. I came to reject it so strongly that I ended by not respecting it, by wishing it evil, and blaming it for everything bad that had happened or would happen. I even went so far as to decide that this country did not deserve my efforts. I stopped being able to enjoy this country like one becomes unable to enjoy the company of a friend who has forgotten how to smile.

This was when I realized that Paper rules the world, the over-congested streets really lead nowhere, and the Paper People are the rulers of the lie, of the "no," of the "tomorrow," of the "maybe." And I decided a country that is not even sure of where it stands today or tomorrow on issues of life is profoundly, spiritually barren.

When one talks to the Paper People they never seem to know anything, unless it involves profit. They never accuse anyone unless it is for their gain. Meanwhile, widows, isolated and poor, try in vain to bring back their dead with their tears in the middle of blood-drenched city streets, and those people whose rights are violated are unable to prove their innocence. Men and women with children are left homeless, crying in the streets for mercy. Trees, animals and mountains disappear, causing the sun to scorch the parched earth and preventing it from giving forth its fruit in due season. Sometimes I can't help thinking, how long will it be before my family and I become numbered among the victims? But the fact is, we are.

In this country one learns that it is impolite to name things the way they really are. It is more "correct" to speak half truths, hypocritically, so as not to disturb or offend anyone or make an inappropriate implication. When you ask disturbing questions, you might be told more directly that certain things cannot be because they do not fulfil the (Paper) requirement; or, because it is simply not the way it is done — (Paper) People don't think that way; or, because there are not enough resources available (available is the key word — Paper People's resources must be preserved at all costs).

Sometimes I want to explode saying this country is so confused that perhaps it should not be anyone's country! But, it is someone's country — mine, yours and all of ours who choose to be here — and we have to deal with it as it is because that is the price of having a country.

Besides, the passage from hate to irrational love is but one step. This contradiction is as great as the immense and passionate love I express through my work and struggles which I entrust to this country's existing, though fragile, possibilities.

The best part is that, in spite of itself, this country does return the gesture. Every time the dog, wild with excitement, calls me to come and see another squirrel, as if to say, "Look. They are still with us!" Or the cats draw my attention as they roll and purr with pleasure upon a plot of grass as if exclaiming, "Ohhh, it's still here. It's sooo good." Or I see the eyes of a young child filled with wonder and mystery as a butterfly alights on her finger, as if inviting the child to "something more." Or the glowing face of an old woman filled with tears of joy at the touch of a newborn infant who, delighted in the warmth and closeness of another human being, raises his tiny hand to caress her face in a gesture of uncomplicated affection. Yes, the bird that stays with us through the winter, the tree stump that grows back again, the people who place their bodies in the way of the bulldozers to save a forest, a home. There is still life here!

These are the things to which we must be careful not to become blind as we find ourselves becoming more and more outraged. In our outrage, we must not become disconnected like the Paper People in their greed for Paper Power.

This is a time that requires the best we have to offer. We will be our own results. We must remember to remain connected to the heron.

TW

THE WITNESS makes a switch

After almost a year's research, THE WITNESS has switched to recycled paper for printing stock and office supplies. Production costs have risen because the price of recycled paper is still higher than that of regular stock, but we feel it is well worth the extra expense.

Buying recycled paper, recycling metal, paper and glass we use in the office, and other conservation methods are all part of THE WITNESS' commitment to environmental stewardship.

Stange . . . Continued from page 15

ethics simply as a new relation of "man" and "nature." Any ecological ethics must always take into account the structures of social domination and exploitation that mediate domination of nature and prevent concern for the welfare of the whole community in favor of the immediate advantage of the dominant class, race, and sex.

Ruether calls for an "ethic of ecojustice," placing upon humanity the heavy responsibility of curtailing the process of social/cultural evolution for the sake of saving the planet. We must do this, she says, because by virtue of our cultural consciousness, "we alone can 'sin.' . . . We are the rogue elephant of nature."

What steps are ecofeminists taking to tame this elephant? Ynestra King stresses the importance of taking direct action, to effect personal change as well as to accomplish long-term goals. She writes:

Direct actions include learning holistic health and alternative ecological technologies, living in communities that explore old and new forms of spirituality which celebrate all life as diverse expressions of nature, considering the ecological consequences of our lifestyles and personal habits, and participating in creative public forms of resistance, including nonviolent civil disobedience.

How, more precisely, such "direct actions" will transform human society beyond isolated pockets of mostly white middle-class Americans is, alas, an open question.

This points toward one of the major problems with current ecofeminist theory. For the most part, it remains little more than theory. Retreat into alternative communities and ritual guerrilla theater is certainly of benefit to some individuals, mostly on a personal level.

However, in a world of increasingly limited resources, ecofeminists (along with their colleagues in animal rights and deep ecology activism) frequently seem to be overvaluing environmental concerns at the expense of the realities of human suffering. Perhaps it is somehow easier to work toward saving dolphins or seal pups, than to identify with crack babies, teenage mothers or street gangs. It was reported last year that anti-fur demonstrators in New York complained to the police about panhandlers getting in their way. A proposition recently passed in a California referendum calls for the diversion of funds from several social service programs, in order to "protect" the mountain lion, which is not an endangered species. Something is seriously out of focus here.

Ecofeminist writers in this country have a tendency to sentimentalize the nature they identify with — perhaps because many of them are urban-based. One who does not live on the land, or depend upon it for one's sustenance, can risk being sentimental about it. Not surprisingly, there is also a good deal of romanticism about Native American belief and practice in ecofeminist theory. This has occurred to the extent that at least one North American Native, Gitksan Tribal Council member Marie Wilson, has politely, but pointedly, asked environmentalists and ecofeminists to pay more attention to their own tradition, and leave hers alone.

Internationally, the ecofeminist movement is alive and well in Third World nations. Yet things like the Chipko or "tree-hugging" movement in India, like Native American spirituality, tend to be misappropriated by American ecofeminism, yielding romanticized images of something like nature-worship, rather than stories of grassroots struggles for survival. The women in India hug those trees to prevent developers felling them, not because they love the trees, but because they need them for firewood for

cooking. All the while, the women themselves are living in a system of severe patriarchal oppression.

The promise of ecofeminism, the promise of a world in which all may thrive in dignity and harmony falls short in so far as it does not recognize the primary importance of human need and suffering. Building upon the best insights of 20th century feminism, ecofeminism may be equipped with the ideal tools for transforming society. Meditation, working on compassion, recognizing what some have called the rights of nature, are important preliminary steps to take. Sadly, though, they too often seem to be the ends, rather than the means. We must do better than this. Our lives literally depend on it. TW

We need your help

Our annual fundraising appeal for continued publication of THE WITNESS is still far short of its goal as the end of our fiscal year — Oct. 31 — approaches. As of this writing, we have only heard from some 250 donors.

Perhaps our once a year, low-key but sincere appeal letter was tossed along with the junk mail after you returned from vacation. We hope not, but if that was the case — HELP!

We can't afford to send out another mailing on our 1989-90 budget, so we earnestly solicit your support through this notice in the magazine. If you still have that envelope somewhere on your desk, do speed it off to us. If it got tossed, feel free to enclose a tax-deductible gift with your next renewal notice, or other correspondence coming our way.

We will be publishing a list of our friends who respond to this appeal later in the year.

Many thanks!

Make environment ministry a priority

by John DeMott

Earth — Suddenly pictures were taken from miles away (from a spaceship), and we saw it at last for what it truly is. It is about the size of a dime. It is blue with swirls of silver. It shines. The blackness it floats in is so immense it seems almost miraculously not to have swallowed it up long since. Seeing it like that for the first time, you think of Jesus seeing Jerusalem for the last time. The ass he's riding comes clipclobbering around a bend in the road, and without warning there it is. His eyes fill with tears, as Luke describes it. "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace," he says. "For the days shall come . . ." (Luke 19:41, 43). The holy city. The holy earth. We must take such care of it. It must take such care of us. This side of Paradise, we are each of us so nearly all the other has. There is darkness beyond the dreams of avarice all around us. Among us there is just about enough light to get by.

**— Frederick Buechner
Whistling in the Dark**

We stood at the summit of Har Megiddo. The rediscovered ruins of the ancient city sat astride the military and commercial route connecting the centers of antiquity's "fertile crescent."

Below, stretching northeast towards the mountains of southern Lebanon and Syria, lay the great plain known as Armageddon.

On that plain, we heard a guide telling his Christian tour party, would be fought the final, decisive battle between the forces of good and evil.

I shuddered.

The chilly wind bit sharply, whipping our raincoats about us. It had begun to rain. We felt the storm approaching.

But the approaching storm was not what made me shudder. Rather, it was my knowledge that many American pilgrims to Palestine/Israel's "Holy Land" do believe as gospel truth that the end of our age will come in a blazing conflict between modern armies at a place like Armageddon in the Middle East.

"Well," I said to a companion. "That's a nice definition of our problem, isn't it?"

He nodded in agreement. He understood fully for he, too, was an activist in the environmental protection movement.

What's our problem? It's one of fostering an ethic capable of inspiring international commitment and devotion to the cause of protecting our plundered planet Earth from continuing injury and damage that may well spell the end of human life.

John DeMott, Ph.D., Professor of Journalism at Memphis State University, is a member of the News and Information Committee of the National Council of Churches.

That challenge is immediate and urgent. Perhaps already we have ignored it too long. It's quite possible, science tells us, that there's been set into motion a compounding process of ecological destruction impossible to arrest, let alone reverse.

Whatever our chances of survival in what is certain to be a difficult future, today's challenge requires the dedication of people everywhere, regardless of faith or creed.

Given such a need, we are naturally inclined to look for leadership from society's religious leaders and the institutions they serve or represent.

It's disheartening, therefore, to realize that much of humanity's failure to come to grips with today's overriding crisis is rooted in this country's Judeo-Christian faith.

Despite mainline religion's tradition-based acceptance of stewardship over the earth and its natural resources — frequently described as the "greening of religion" — two strong forces in modern religion continue to constitute major obstacles to society's efforts to create the environmental protection ethic so desperately needed today. Those forces are generally related to apocalyptic and Armageddon doctrines and, unfortunately, both appear to be growing in U.S. society.

Before probing the relationship of those forces to the environmental protection movement, let's examine a bit of recent history.

During the 1960s and '70s, a number of prominent historians and environmentalists criticized religious leaders and theologians for ignoring the growing environmental crisis. Some even went so

far as to say that the ancient Hebraic scripture's call to be "fruitful and multiply" was the cause of the crisis.

Consequently, the environmental protection movement generally was unable to attach itself to the grassroots church network as had the civil rights and peace movements — except in the case of Appalachians opposed to strip mining and a few Native American causes.

An inevitable convergence of theology and ecology, however, had been predicted by early conservationists such as John Muir, French bacteriologist and ecologist Rene Dubos and Jesuit philosopher and paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin.

As a result of those insights and other explorations such as George Hendry's trail-blazing book, "The Theology of Nature," more and more religious leaders around the world began to call for a greater awareness of our relationship to — and responsibility for — the state of our natural world.

In 1986, the World Wide Fund for Nature, as part of its 25th anniversary observance, convened an interfaith ceremony at Assisi, Italy, the birthplace of St. Francis. It was attended by representatives of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Moslem and Jewish faiths; and it marked the first time in history that official representatives of five of humanity's major ethical systems stated categorically that their beliefs led them to conservation.

"Let us declare," said Hindu leader Karan Singh, "our determination to halt the present slide toward destruction. To rediscover the ancient tradition of reverence for all life and, even at this late hour, to reverse the suicidal course upon which we have embarked. Let us recall the ancient dictum: 'The Earth is our mother and we are her children.'"

And in Moscow, in the *glasnost*-tempered Russian winter of 1989, religious leaders from throughout the world — many Americans among them — broke bread and pondered the following in-

sight: "We did not inherit the earth from our ancestors. Rather, we have borrowed the earth from our children, grandchildren, and their descendants."

Time and again, contemporary moral philosophers — Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, Jewish — point out that a sense of the sacred, combined with science and reason, presents the solution to our problems.

In today's Western civilization, that prospect inevitably demands a rigorous re-evaluation of Judeo-Christianity as an established source of strength for the protection of the environment.

Re-examining Judeo-Christian scrip-

The religious establishment can play a leading role in the determination of our ecological fate.

ture from the standpoint of an environmental protection ethic, one can encounter some disturbing things. For instance, Psalms 115:16 says, "The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth He has given to the sons of man."

Environmentalists have argued that the Judeo-Christian tradition is intrinsically anthropocentric, meaning that the human species looks upon itself as the center of reality. Under that interpretation, Mother Nature bats last. In Eastern religions such as Zen Buddhism, however, enlightenment and well-being are attained only when one lives harmoniously with nature.

That view was popularized by historian Lynn White, Jr., in a 1967 essay, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," in which he called Christianity

the most anthropocentric religion in the world and claimed that the medieval church was directly responsible for today's polluted skies and waters.

"We shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis," he wrote, "until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason except to serve man (sic)."

The Judeo-Christian legend of the Messiah — and the Islamic legend of the *mahdi* — are forces that have made it difficult at times to foster the development of an environmental protection ethic.

When one believes that the return of one's Savior is imminent — perhaps even next Tuesday at 5 p.m. — it is difficult to commit oneself to long-term restoration of the environment. Long before global temperature elevation floods our seacoasts, the Messiah undoubtedly will have appeared and taken his children to their reward. Or long before the rainforests have burned or cut away, our eternity will have been decided on the battlefields of Armageddon.

Unfortunately, for people committed to salvation of the human race and the earth, much of today's conventional interpretations of Hebrew and Christian scripture is based on writings created centuries before we became aware that we had acquired the power to destroy the entire human race.

With its primitive analysis of ancient history and anticipation of future events, apocalypse doctrine clings to its literal interpretation of Holy Writ. The Armageddon network survives, encouraged by U.S. involvement in the Zionist adventure in Palestine. And religious crazies persist in predicting the date of Judgment Day.

A pathetic picture? No, it is more alarming than pathetic, because religious groups of apocalyptic and Armageddon believers are enjoying steady growth.

Moreover, many Christians and Jews not associated with apocalyptic end up aligning with them through a blind trust

in God's goodness to humanity, which was created in God's image and therefore favored over other creatures.

"If God wants it to happen," such good folks say, "then it will happen. If it isn't God's will, then it won't happen."

Smiling beatifically, such folks go about their accustomed activities without feeling any urgent need to commit themselves to protection of the environment — except perhaps for purging it of obscenity, alcohol advertising or other affronts to their piety.

While these people are not beyond conversion to the religious environmental protection movement, they are presently a dead weight upon the "greening of religion" in this country.

And they have kin in the many Americans who possess a blind faith in the capabilities of modern science to meet the challenge of environmental degradation by achieving some miraculous cures for acid rain and similar ills. Before the earth is destroyed, they believe, science will have met the challenge. That kind of Pollyanna mentality is as dangerous as the fatalism and predestinationism of apocalyptics.

Despite the fact that the recent 20th observance of Earth Day was supported by virtually all U.S. main-line denominations, it received little notice in many churches. Whenever I attend some of the largest churches around the country, I find myself greatly distressed at their fixation on one's "personal relationship" with Jesus Christ, rather than social action and justice. Given the dominance of such churches in some of the fastest growing Christian denominations, the environmental protection movement obviously will have great difficulty making progress in the immediate future. Similar obstacles exist in ultra-conservative segments of other religious groups.

Judeo-Christianity's faith in God is commendable, I concede; but we need to augment it with an appreciation of human responsibility.

That has been occurring. Many U.S. Christians have been active in the environmental protection movement for years. But while teaching in Egypt, I discovered an old Arab proverb that has much to say about the effort to develop a stronger environmental protection ethic in modern religion.

"Trust Allah," it advised. "But you must tie your camel."

While many American faithful trust the Lord absolutely, I fear their camels are running amok, wreaking havoc through the country as a result of insensitivity to environmental damage and ignorance of its serious consequences.

What progress could be achieved, I often ask myself, if all the hours spent in today's church activity, much of it devoted to the reinforcement of religious bigotry, could be devoted to fostering a desperately-needed environmental protection ethic?

We need not renounce institutionalized religion in order to obtain salvation for Spaceship Earth. On the contrary, the essential character of the Christian faith has always cherished a close relationship to nature. Witness the following words of one of Christianity's most beloved hymns:

*When through the woods and forest
glades I wander
And see the birds sing sweetly in the
trees
When I look down from lofty mountain
grandeur
And hear the brook, and feel the
gentle breeze
Then sings my soul, my Savior, God
to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou
art*

Though religion generally has been slow in responding to the environmental crisis — and certain forces in contemporary religion constitute major obstacles to be overcome — the religious establishment can play a leading role in the determination of our ecological fate.

The religious press, broadcasting and other segments of religious journalism have a special part to play. We cannot depend upon the commercial mass media, enterprises devoted to the revenue-enhancing reinforcement of conventional wisdom. Reflecting today's popular concern over pollution, the commercial media have been giving a lot of attention to the environment and attempts to protect it effectively. However, we need to remember that the commercial media are notoriously fickle, and will jump ship immediately whenever their audience appears to be losing interest. Above all else, they are advertising-driven adjuncts of society's marketing system. Ratings, readership or audience share dictates the nature or character of their public service. The public interest is incidental to profit-seeking for commercial mass media. Until the environmental ethic becomes an established part of society's conventional wisdom, we can expect no solid commitment from the mass media.

In the meantime, the mainline religious media must assume leadership in this field. And, in the exercise of that leadership, those media must be able to command the confidence of their supporting institutions.

Care-for-the-earth ministry and mission must be the basis for worldwide religious liturgy, catechism, education and social service. For as British poet Laurence Housman observed many years ago:

*How shall we love thee,
Holy hidden being
If we love not the world
which thou hast made.*

TW

MOVING?

Keep THE WITNESS coming by sending a corrected mailing label from a recent issue to: THE WITNESS, P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002. Please send it at least six weeks before you move.

Short Takes

Panama holocaust

Eight months after the U.S. invasion of Panama, the Panamanian death toll is still unknown. The figures continue to swell as mass graves are discovered. Human rights groups now put the number of civilians killed at 2,000 to 4,000 . . . 14 common graves have now been identified.

The first such site . . . was exhumed on April 28 and May 5, yielding a terrible harvest of dismembered bodies, broken bones and crushed skulls. All were buried by the U.S. Army during the December invasion, according to eyewitnesses.

These exhumations uncovered 123 bodies, though the actual number thrown into the trench is not known. The grisly toll includes several children buried in one plastic bag, two bodies with hands tied behind their backs that showed signs of bullet wounds and a small bag containing the arms, legs and torso of a woman.

Valerie van Isler
The Guardian 8/15/90

Bush chops tree budget

Number of trees George Bush has pledged to plant in the United States in the next five years: 5,000,000,000.

Amount he has proposed to cut from existing Forest Service tree-planting programs next year: \$32,000,000.

Harper's Index 6/90

Lesbian/gay ministry seeks director

The Parsonage, a San Francisco-based ministry to gay and lesbian people supported by the Episcopal Diocese of California and the national church's Jubilee Ministry program, seeks to fill the new position of executive director. Qualifications include: experience in lesbian and gay ministry and advocacy; strong administrative and volunteer management skills; ability to articulate Christian theology and witness regarding lesbian and gay experience and faith. Laypersons and clergy are encouraged to apply. For information and an application, write Deborah Frangquist, Chair, Search Committee, The Parsonage, 555-A Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114. The application deadline is Oct. 1.



Hopi wisdom

The world has to get together because we are living on this earth. We are children of Mother Earth and we were sent to use our language, our ceremonies, whatever we develop to help keep this life and land in balance. We have no business going around disturbing other peoples' land and life. We can help them with every invention we have, but not use that to try and control them.

Thomas Banyacya, Hopi elder
Ground Zero, Winter 1990

Grand jury resister wins victory

Attorney and political activist Linda Backiel, who in July faced a jail sentence for refusing to violate lawyer/client privilege by testifying before a grand jury (see July/Aug. WITNESS), recently won a unprecedented victory. Her grand jury hearing has been delayed until early October, when an appeal to dismiss contempt of grand jury charges against her goes before the U.S. Supreme Court.

A different sort of Archbishop

The Rt. Rev. George Carey, 54, who next year will become the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury and spiritual leader of the world's Anglicans and Episcopalians, is likely to be a very different sort of head of the English church.

Like many of his predecessors, he is primarily a scholar and writer. But unlike the overwhelming majority of past archbishops, Carey is not a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, and he is not the son

of a clergyman, a professional man, a nobleman or a member of the gentry.

His father was a hospital porter. Carey grew up in public housing in London's tough East End, began his working life by dropping out of school at 15 and taking a job as an office boy, and finally entered college at age 21 at the University of London. Carey wrote recently that he did not experience "living Christianity" until he was 17, when his 13-year-old brother took him to the local Anglican church. There he found "the worship appallingly boring but the fellowship and the preaching riveting."

In his present post as bishop of Bath and Wells, Carey is known as the "green bishop" because of his concern for environmental questions. He is a supporter of the ordination of women, which is still not permitted in the Church of England although the Church of Ireland recently ordained its first two women priests.

William R. MacKaye
Bread 8/5/90

EPF on the move

The national office of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF), formerly housed at Christ Church, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., has moved to the Church of the Epiphany in downtown Washington. The new address is P.O. Box 28156, Washington, DC 20038; the new phone number is (202) 783-3380.

Blueprint for Mid-East showdown

Anticipating increasing chaos in the poor countries, the Pentagon is shifting from an East-West to a North-South posture. The North-South war game is not one of defending the boundaries of ordered societies, but of rapid strikes for purposes of rescue, retaliation or intimidation, in pursuit of specific Western "interests" — the sort of war described in the 1982 U.S. Army manual as "AirLand Battle 2000." That document incorporated a concept of integrated conventional, nuclear and chemical warheads for use on the electronic battlefield deep in enemy territory.

Diana Johnstone
Middle East Report 5-6/89

New woman bishop prefers 'ragged boundaries of the church'

by Julie A. Wortman

It seemed suspiciously coincidental that the women of Dunedin, New Zealand should choose June 29, the day Penelope Jamieson was consecrated bishop of Dunedin, to march to the city's center to "Reclaim the Night," and protest violence against women. Admittedly, revolution was in the air that afternoon as the Anglican Communion's first woman bishop, Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts Barbara Harris, joined in what New Zealand Anglicans call an episcopal "scrum" to make Jamieson the Communion's first woman diocesan bishop. But the revolution has to do with New Zealand's women taking back the church and much more.

It is easy to equate physical violence against women with the church's traditional and canonical sanctions against women's full participation in church life. The 20 local Roman Catholic women who stood outside waving placards that read "Yippee! We're for Penny!" and "Congratulations Penny!" left no doubt that as women they find their church a painful place to be. While their own bishop, Leonard Boyle, has attended Anglican episcopal consecrations in the past, he made a last-minute decision not to attend this one.

The Rev. Catherine Milford, representing England's Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW), admitted to occasional despair over the resistance to women's ordination among Anglicans at

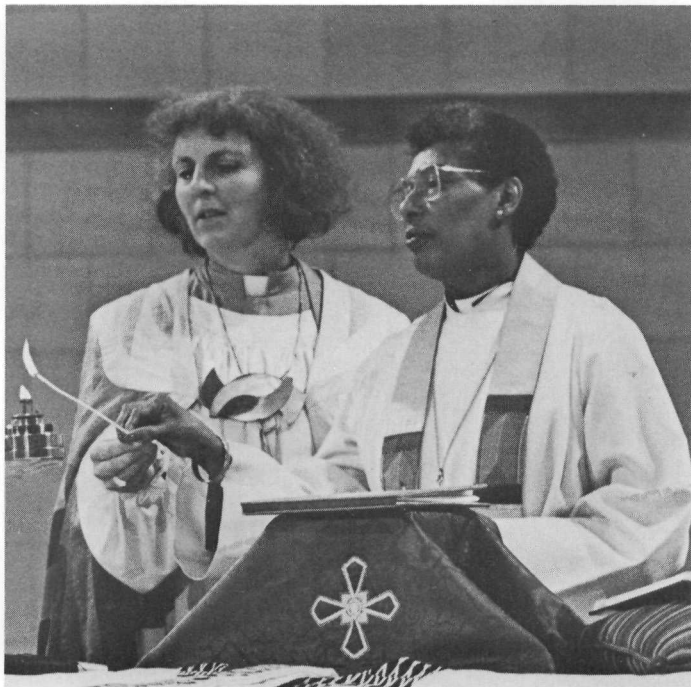
home. "At this time, when women deacons in England dare to 'lay down their lives' for a parish, they are thrown back from the powerful electric fence which guards the sacred places," she said. "Something prevents our Church of England from a corporate recognition of the Spirit at work in the ministry of women and from being able to respond with joy," she added.

During services the following Sunday, Jamieson's first chance to lead worship in her own cathedral, Milford asked Bishops Harris and Jamieson to join in lighting a flame that Milford and other MOW supporters would keep lit until women get the right to be ordained priests in England as well.

Although New Zealand approved women's ordination in 1977, few women were ordained early on. Jamieson, who began studying theology in 1978, was among those qualified for ordination, but forced to wait until a bishop was willing to ordain them. It was an experience which makes her unsympathetic to concerns that the orders of men she ordains might not be accepted in Anglican provinces where women's ordination has not yet been approved. "The issue seems to be new because it's affecting men," she said. "Women clergy already face that problem."

"I'm part of changing order," she said matter-of-factly, accepting this will mean continuing controversy. "But it's more what I am that concerns people than what I say or do," she added with a slight edge to her voice. Pausing to a moment, she then conceded with a wry

Julie A. Wortman is staff writer for *Episcopal Life*.



The Rt. Rev. Penelope Jamieson, Bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand, and the Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris of the United States, the only two women bishops in the Anglican Communion, light a flame which will remain lit until women win the right to be ordained priests in England.

smile, "There is an ontological quality about my position that does infuriate."

Few women had thought it likely that the conservative southernmost Diocese of Dunedin, which did not begin ordaining women to the priesthood until 1984, would be the first to elect a woman bishop.

Nevertheless, the Rev. Claire Brown, a priest on the cathedral staff, decided it was time to propose a woman "to remind the church that women are eligible." When the women of the province heard that Jamieson had been elected, they were stunned but elated.

At one point during the consecration ceremonies, 20 lay and clergy women took over the service in an unscheduled demonstration of support for Jamieson and a stronger role for women in the church. They gathered in the center of the cathedral and began singing a familiar Celtic blessing which ends, "May

God hold you in the hollow of her hand," gradually moving forward to enclose Jamieson in their circle. Jamieson joined them in singing the benediction. The congregation rose to its feet in a spontaneous outburst of applause as the women presented the new bishop with a carved wooden crozier one of them had designed.

And yet, as Pat Scott, a lay delegate to the electoral synod pointed out, Jamieson's gender is only a part of what made the outcome of her election "awesome."

"The miracle is not that a woman was elected, but that the

old values were overturned," Scott told women in the diocese afterward. "Lay ministry was valued alongside ordained ministry, commitment to a Pacific Island community was recognized to be as important as being on Standing Committee. Make no mistake, this is a revolution in thinking."

Jamieson's broad experience in the church will enable her to meet the challenges of this new role, according to Brown. "Penny has 30 years of experience in Christian ministry — a much wider experience than many who have spent their whole adult life in the ordained ministry," Brown said. "Only those who have no real belief in the value of lay ministry could deny that."

Barely a week following the electoral synod, New Zealand Anglicans began using a new prayer book, one that proudly affirms an English heritage transplanted to a late 20th-century, Pa-

cific island world. Twenty-five years in preparation, the new book has shaped an image of what the Church of New Zealand intends to be — a church which increasingly affirms its Maori and Polynesian heritage, validates God's motherhood along with God's fatherhood, values lay ministry as much as ordained, and prefers partnership to individualism.

At her installation Jamieson told her diocese, "It will be my most profound pleasure to be among you as one who both celebrates and shares the Christian life which is so dear to me — and may we, all of us, grow together in that life as a community of Christians of diverse shapes and hues."

In 1965, following her marriage to Ian Jamieson, a lecturer in medieval English at Wellington's Victoria University, English-born Jamieson taught Sunday School and served on the vestry, but she was especially attracted to the edges of parish ministry, helping operate a drop-in coffee bar, and working with Wellington's inner-city ministries. While studying theology, Jamieson worked as a lay parish assistant in one of Wellington's poorer neighborhoods.

She was ordained a priest in Wellington in 1983, and in 1985 assumed the position of vicar in an ailing parish where she proved herself an able administrator. By delegating responsibility and focusing on the parish's spiritual life, she nurtured the struggling congregation into a thriving and active faith community. When talking about what she will miss most as she assumes her episcopal duties, she said, "It's easier to be close to people in a parish."

As bishop, however, she expects to continue with the focus she has had as a priest. "I'm more interested in working in or on the ragged boundaries of the church than being at the center," she said.

She will also continue upholding efforts to honor the country's — and the church's — early commitments to New

Zealand's native Maori people. Before pursuing ordination she did doctoral study on a Council for Educational Research project involving Tokelauan children who were learning English. Ironically, the only New Zealand bishop who failed to attend her consecration was Wakahuihui Vercoe, bishop to the church's Maoris.

While Vercoe does not formally object to Jamieson's episcopacy, he says the Maori people are not ready to address women's roles, either in the church, where some Maori women already serve as priests, or in society. His people, he insisted, must have time and space to step back from 150 years of enforced assimilation and determine how Maori and white roles can be equalized, a position Jamieson and others support.

"A democracy doesn't really give mi-

nority groups a chance to be heard," Jamieson said, noting that Anglican Maoris are expressing "a need that has arisen out of our history" and are not asking to create a separate province.

Despite Vercoe's reticence, the Maoris in Dunedin seem enthusiastic about Jamieson. At her installation, a Maori priest, the Rev. Tom Kahuki, carefully pointed out before reading the Old Testament lesson, "I do not stand here as a representative of the Maori, but I'm here to honor our Mother-in-Christ."

Jamieson seems to find special grounding in Maori spirituality. As her consecration procession entered the rear of the cathedral, a 92-year-old Maori woman cloaked in ceremonial feathers slowly backed down the aisle before the diocese's new bishop, calling her into the sacred meeting place, where in

Maori tradition only truth can be spoken. She cried in Maori, "Bring your mother under the umbrella of the Almighty!"

In the chancel, a young Maori cried back in the same tongue, "This is your family!" Following Maori custom, Jamieson was accompanied down the aisle by about 30 friends, parishioners, and colleagues from her home in Wellington who were there to support her.

Once described as "too untidy" in appearance to be a bishop, she is living out her new role with awkward grace. If resigned to miter and crozier, she remains unwilling to allow English ceremony and tradition to isolate her on the throne. Throughout it has been an Annunciation experience, she reflected, "a situation not of choosing, but of being chosen — and then finding the heart and the spirit to say 'yes.' "

TW

Barbara Harris: Bishop

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Belonging

The small plot of
ground
on which you were
born
cannot be expected

to stay forever
the same.
Earth changes,
and home
becomes different
places.

You took flesh
from clay
but the clay
did not come
from just one
place.

To feel alive,
important, and safe,
know your own waters
and hills, but know
more.

You have stars
in your bones
and oceans
in blood.

You have opposing
terrain in each eye.
You belong to the land
and sky of your first cry,
you belong to infinity.

— Alla Reneé Bozarth

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Letters . . . Continued from page 3
and languages. But it was the most profound and rewarding learning experience a person could have. We traveled by costal steamer down the Yugoslavian coast, over the Alps near the Albanian border by local bus, by train through Greece, deck passage on an Egyptian ship to Egypt. Another deck passage to Beirut, a taxi to Jordan and then Baghdad. We rode the train to Basra and took a ship down the Arabian Gulf with a stop in Kuwait. A month in India and Nepal, then a ship to the Malay Peninsula and onward to Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Hawaii and home.

We had many opportunities to visit with local officials, missionaries and leaders from other religions as well as countless encounters with the citizens of these countries. Such experiences gave us a depth of understanding and appreciation of other societies that we could never experience from reading alone.

Prior to this trip we spent two years researching the areas we planned to visit. Then we borrowed money on our insurance and on our home and started out. The cost of travel wasn't excessive when we lived as the local people did. The kindness and helpfulness of those we met was most gratifying. Rossman's article brought back memories that have enriched our lives immeasurably.

D. Franklin Kohl
Arlee, Mont.

Sub WSCF for WCC

I enjoyed Parker Rossman's article about the Swedish couple taking a sabbatical to celebrate their 50th birthdays. However, the conference at which he first met them was held in Strasbourg, France and was not sponsored by the World Council of Churches, but by the World Student Christian Federation. The WSCF is entirely independent of the WCC and frequently critical of it; at the same time WSCF has been, since 1898, a training ground for future leaders of the churches and the ecumenical movement.

I was organizing secretary for the Strasbourg conference and it was, as

Rossman says, a major turning point in the modern ecumenical movement. There was open rebellion against the conference agenda and leadership by young people from Asia, Latin America and Africa, who were no longer willing to be dominated by Western modes of theological thinking and who insisted on the priority of regional concerns over global ones. This was an era in which liberation theology was just beginning to emerge in Latin America and colonialism was still being fought against in Africa and Asia. A great many of the current leaders in the church were formed in the crucible of the encounter. It was there that I first met the young leaders Philip Potter, Burgess Carr, Emilio Castro, Samir Kafity, and many others. Unfortunately, the WSCF almost literally fell apart after the conference. The next generation had become politicized and deeply involved in the struggles for justice in their own lands with little interest in a "world" organization. Things are just beginning to turn around again.

Charles H. Long
Forward Movement Publications
Cincinnati, Ohio

Different class game

I found Parker Rossman's article interesting and stimulating *for a certain class of people*. I wondered, however, how it would sound to people without the economic security which is assumed throughout the article. "Liberation philosophy for the well-to-do retired" might have been a more appropriate title.

Rossman writes, "By age 50, Margareta explained, most people's children are educated and grown, and careers have matured to success." Tell that to poor families. Describing where the retired couple went, Rossman lists places one can hardly afford on social security.

Correction

Our July-August editorial incorrectly stated that the Episcopal Church Pension Fund bought 150 shares of Royal Dutch Shell stock worth \$6 million after the 1988 General Convention vote supporting a boycott of oil companies trading in South Africa. The correct number was 150,000 shares. — Ed.

The latest data I saw said one out of three black women over 65 in the United States is living in poverty. Read Rossman's article as a black grandmother taking care of her uneducated black daughter's crack-addicted baby and you have a different class game.

This is just a plea that THE WITNESS not come off with the arrogant stance so common to us Episcopalians. We assume the rest of the world has the same amenities we have and can afford our exemplary, godly behaviors.

Margaret E. Ferry
Palm Harbor, Fla.

Even controversy helps

In recent issues, Kim Byham, national president of Integrity, has assailed actions of a newly ordained gay priest in the Diocese of Newark, Robert Williams, and Williams has responded with a blast at Byham. All praise to THE WITNESS for giving us the views of both men in their own words!

Both are right, in a sense.

Williams makes the point that his "talents, interest, and passion were for constructive theological work" rather than pastoral work among gays and lesbians. Hasn't the theological work already been largely done by persons such as John McNeill whose *The Church and the Homosexual* led to his ouster from the Jesuit order, Bishop John S. Spong's *Living in Sin* and others? Yet maybe someone is needed to systematize this in a way acceptable to the Anglican tradition.

In practical terms, what we lack — and what I understand to be the long-term goal of Integrity — is reception and understanding of this theology in our church, along with infiltration of our seminaries by learned priests who will teach the next generation of clergy the new theology.

And Kim Byham is right in suggesting that Williams' words and actions have not helped this process at all but probably have hindered it — although to the extent that the Holy Spirit is moving the church forward, even controversy helps.

Bill Day
Springfield, Ill.

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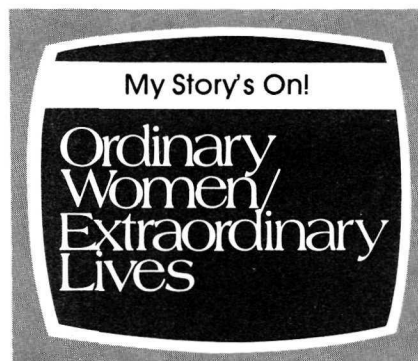
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