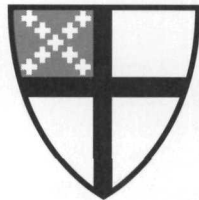


# THE WITNESS

THE  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
WELCOMES YOU



*but does it welcome...*

people of color

gays & lesbians

ordained women

poor people

native americans

## General Convention 1991:

**Racism, sexism & Phoenix**  
Pam Darling

**Traditionalist who's who**  
Susan Erdey

**The liberal agenda**  
Mary Lou Suhor

**Heyward, Mollenkott  
view sexual ethics**  
Susan E. Pierce

# Letters

## Need more peacemakers

Thank you for the excellent article in April about Agnes Bauerlein and her experiences in the International Peace Camp in Iraq during the Gulf War. Many of us were disturbed by the lack of coverage or slanted viewpoint given us by most of the media when relating anything to do with the peace movement during this war. I was glad THE WITNESS did not follow this line.

Bauerlein is a woman of courage and deep faith who lives what she believes no matter what the risk. We all need to hear the perspective of such people in order to gain a wider understanding of the complex issues involved in situations such as the Middle East. Too often we are kept uninformed by a media that allows itself to be censored by the government.

Though not all of us can take the actions of people who have found the strength to put themselves in harm's way for peace, we can all grow in a deeper commitment to work in whatever way opens for us to be peacemakers wherever we find ourselves. Perhaps it also helps give us the courage to say, "Yes," to opportunities which challenge us to take a stand.

**Rebecca H. Cratin**  
Ft. Washington, Pa.

## Words lack authenticity

In the February WITNESS you reprinted the message ("War is not the answer") from the 18 church leaders, including Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, who took part in a peace pilgrimage to the Middle East in December.

In the same issue is a Letter to the Editor from Peter Ogilby about his father's (Lyman C. Ogilby) belief that "justice must come before peace."

I must point out that of the 18 church leaders, only three were women. I suggest that the churches look inward and seek "justice" in their own ranks before they

go touring around the world speaking of peace abroad. Their words lack authority and authenticity to me.

**Joan Brewer Warner**  
West Lebanon, N.H.

## Articles great help

Your articles about the Persian Gulf have been a great help during this terrible time.

**Linda Burton**  
Raleigh, N.C.

## Universal legal order?

With every issue of THE WITNESS I write letters to you in my mind. I've found "the wilderness" less overwhelming because you were informing, guiding, witnessing.

The cover graphic for March was superb. The words, "A war we hate fought by people we love" tells it all. And the revealing herstory of Agnes Bauerlein added so much to the slowly emerging truth, a truth that pierces those fragile yellow ribbons and mocks the few who still wave the flag.

I've been in touch recently with a vintage friend with whom I worked in the federalist movement in the '40s and early '50s, spreading the idea of a world government. In some ways we are farther than ever from openness to the concept. In other ways, of course, we are closer (regional federation seems in the air); to say nothing of the pressure from environmental needs and the danger from present-day weapons! To me, it is insane that we have anarchy on the international level, and there is still nothing to prevent one nation from going to war against another. Outside of U.S. military might, of course, which scares me most of all. Who is going to control us? The United Nations, so used and abused by recent administrations, has developed as an organization but was denied from the beginning the structure of government.

We know that peace is not just the absence of war. But a legislated peace between countries, based on a democratic system of representation, would be a beginning. How can humankind develop spiritually when it is constantly being called to the killing fields?

I've sneaked in the idea of a "universal legal order" whenever there seemed to be an opening; this dreamer-commie-World War II-vet is about to join a newly formed chapter here of Veterans for Peace. We've got to start where we are.

**Virginia S. Meloney**  
Syracuse, N.Y.

## Ministry not a kingdom

I would like to take a moment to respond to the Rev. Clayton T. Holland of Bonham, Tex., in the April Letters to the Editor. Perhaps if he were to try THE WITNESS as a steady diet, instead of the other publications that he mentioned, he would discover what a call to ministry is all about.

After a typical day of responding to the needs of a family living with AIDS in Bonham from my office in Dallas, visiting my partner's mother in the nursing home, also in Bonham, I returned to my home after an 18-hour day and saw his letter. Sadly, Holland's attitude is typical of the many clergy in this part of the world who prefer to live in their own exclusive little kingdoms instead of realizing the global, inclusive nature of ministry. Give me THE WITNESS any day.

**The Rev. Robert E. Hensley**  
Director of Client Services  
Aids Interfaith Network, North Texas

## On M. L. King holiday

Amidst the furor over the Episcopal Church's continued commitment to General Convention 1991 in Arizona despite that state's refusal to "honor"

Martin Luther King with a paid holiday in his name, the dubiousity of this honor for King and others before him puzzles me. A paid holiday for whom? Locally, it is for government employees at all levels, schoolchildren and their teachers, church staff, and some professionals and business people. For those in retail sales, however, work goes on at an accelerated pace, to accommodate those with the day off. At the same time, one observes rather sparse attendance at church services which *do* honor King. Perhaps everyone has shopped till they dropped at the imperative sales "commemorating" the occasion.

The Presiding Bishop's recent proposals for Episcopalians at General Convention, including "radical" stewardship in their use of money and spare time in Phoenix, with fasting and abstinence from alcohol, is commendable. In the past there has been a notable lack of restraint in these areas among convention-goers.

Mary Polom  
Wilbraham, Mass.

## Pro-lifer writes

Tears streamed down my face as I sat reading for the first time an issue of THE WITNESS and I knew I had to write.

Magazines like yours deceive women into thinking that abortion is a good and courageous decision. *Courageous* is the woman who despite the odds will plan a life for the baby, if not with herself, with an adoptive couple.

Reproductive freedom is knowing that when one starts to engage in sexual activity, there is the possibility of pregnancy, and with that comes the responsibility of taking care of whatever children there may be. My daughter will know that abstinence is the one and only birth control that is appropriate before marriage. It's the safest choice and most important, the Godly choice.

It's so hard for me to believe that churches are debating the question of abortion. Abortion is murder. At the day of judgment you will have to face those murdered babies and say why you thought it was the right thing to do.

J. Kennel  
Christiana, Pa.

## Political prisoners plea

I have been a silently enthusiastic consumer of THE WITNESS for about 13 years. I agree with (almost) everything you print. But it's the chutzpah, not just the professionalism that makes the magazine so special. I read just about everything I can get my hands on, from the daily *Times* to *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, *The Guardian*, *El Diario*, *Claridad*, and *Off Our Backs*. Not one of them has ever had the guts to print so many no-holds-barred negative Letters to the Editor. If I were in charge of giving out First Amendment medals, you would get one, in gold.

Your letters column is my favorite feature. A propos of which, permit me to add to the Rev. Henry Bird's April list of Human Rights violations that deserve our tough questioning, the shameful list of over 100 political prisoners held in soul-numbing conditions at U.S. jails and prisons. Two (Alan Berkman and Silvia Baraldini) are battling U.S. Bureau of Prisons Bureaucracy as well as life-threatening cancers. Berkman has long been eligible for parole; Baraldini's native Italy has asked for her repatriation.

About a dozen more, including Alejandrina Torres, subjected to the sensory deprivation chambers of the behavior modification unit at Lexington, Ky., are serving longer-than-life sentences for their participation in the movement to decolonize Puerto Rico. At least an equal number are victims of an FBI program (COINTELPRO) to discredit, disrupt and neutralize the

Black Panther Party to "prevent the rise of a new Black Messiah" after the assassination of Martin Luther King. Still other political prisoners are incarcerated for their efforts to make U.S. citizens look at atrocities committed in our name in South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Iraq, or to stop the deadly game of planetary ecocide played by the "peacetime" warmakers.

As a brief guest in the halls of injustice to which the United States consigns those whose tolerance for compromise and rationalization is found wanting, I beg your readers to add political prisoners to their list of human rights violations we must commit ourselves to eradicating.

Finally, allow me to thank you and your wonderful community of readers for your meticulous and compassionate attention to my case. The commitment we all share has stoked my fires when fuel was scarce.

Linda Backiel  
Bucks County Prison  
Doylestown, Pa.

*(Linda Backiel is scheduled for release June 19, having served her full sentence for refusing to testify against a client before a federal grand jury.—Ed.)*

## Renews for three years

THE WITNESS staff of Mary Lou Suhor, Susan Pierce, Lynne Hoekman and Susan Small has done a superlative job day by day these many years. You have been a real team. I have my reliable spies. Well done!

Without reservation, I can testify that Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is truly in the traditions of Spofford, DeWitt and Suhor. Without hesitation, I renew my subscription for three years. I do this finding it more and more difficult to read what I want and need to read for my survival.

Hugh C. White, Jr.  
Windsor, Ontario

## THE WITNESS

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# THE WITNESS



## Table of Contents

- 6 Sexism, racism and Phoenix: A painful struggle around change**  
 Pamela M. Darling
- 10 The Consultation gears up for Phoenix**  
 Mary Lou Suhor
- 14 Who's who among the traditionalists**  
 Susan Erdey
- 18 Homosexuality as vocation**  
 Sam Portaro
- 20 Church needs new sexual ethic**  
 An interview with Carter Heyward and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott
- 24 Edward R. Welles: A man of fierce faith**  
 Susan E. Pierce

**Credits** Cover graphic and design, Beth Seka/TSI; graphic p. 7, Robert Hodgell; graphic p. 9, Robert McGovern; Conley photo p. 10, James Thrall; Byham photo p. 11, Amy Reichman Studios; Pollard photo p.12, Austin Hansen; graphic p. 15, David Bragin; graphic p. 18, Bill Plympton; Heyward photo p. 21, Bradford F. Herzog; photo p. 24, Mary Lou Suhor



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## ECPC Board moves WITNESS to Detroit

A decision by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's Board of Directors to relocate THE WITNESS to Detroit will result in the departure of present staff in Ambler, Pa.

The decision followed the announcement that the Board had voted unanimously to affirm the appointment of Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann as editor/publisher of THE WITNESS. She will replace current editor Mary Lou Suhor, who retires July 31. Wylie-Kellermann is former editor of *The Record*, publication of the Diocese of Michigan.

Affected by the move are Susan E. Pierce, managing editor; Lynne Hoekman, promotion manager; Susan Small, editorial assistant, and artist Beth Seka.

The staff was invited to move to Detroit, but because of family or personal reasons, none were able to accept the offer.

Following Wylie-Kellermann's selection, the Rev. William Rankin appointed a committee of the board to explore the future of the magazine. In addition to himself, it consisted of Robert Eckersley, treasurer; William MacKaye and Christopher Bugby. They met February 1 with the new editor, who, according to Rankin, "leaned toward moving the magazine to Detroit." The Board, he said, was also "tilted in that direction if and when implications are carefully detailed to show the move is essential."

On February 6, with one abstention,

the Board voted to relocate the magazine. On February 7, the staff was informed that THE WITNESS would be moved to Detroit after July 31; severance terms were also spelled out. The Board's decision was made without consultation with the staff concerning the logistics of the magazine's production during the transition.

The Ambler staff had hoped that the Pennsylvania office might be usefully kept in operation. In fact, Wylie-Kellermann had intended to visit Ambler to discuss the move before she was called to the Board's February 1 meeting. But during a three day visit Feb. 18-20, Wylie-Kellermann affirmed plans to move the magazine in four months, beginning April 1.

On March 6, the Ambler staff presented a statement to the Board, saying that they protested not the move itself, but the process employed to effect the move, and the timeline in which the transition was expected to be made. They said it had the earmarks of a plant closing, which was hardly representative of the values traditionally championed by THE WITNESS.

The statement also noted that the Board had not supplied the staff with hard information or a feasibility study, spelling out timelines, budget, personnel. (Research shows that other denominations have spent as much as one to two years planning and implementing relocations.) Publishing options such as locat-

ing editorial functions in one city and administration in another and/or an 11-month phase-out plan were proposed by the staff as alternatives.

But Rankin affirmed the Board's decision to relocate as irrevocable. The July/August WITNESS will be the last published from Ambler; the September issue will be published in Detroit.

Meanwhile, Wylie-Kellermann has set up an office at 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226.

*Editor's note: When I heard that Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann had been named editor/publisher of THE WITNESS, I sang the Nunc Dimittus. She is a gifted, prize-winning editor and longtime activist around social justice issues. But I deeply regret that the ECPC Board has not found a way to incorporate the Ambler staff into the process concerning the move to Detroit. To our peril are decisions made which do not ask the question, "Is this fair, and is every person valued in the outcome?" The staff now face unemployment in an uncertain economy, and a job market that holds little promise.*

*Still, we wish the Detroit operation success. The church and society at large need a feisty journal like THE WITNESS, with its long tradition of struggle around social justice issues. On the eve of the magazine's 75th anniversary, we wish it well.*

*— Mary Lou Suhor*

# Sexism, racism and Phoenix: A painful

**C**an a church historically led by white men come to grips with the racism and sexism of its structures?

That question will be a key issue as race and sex dominate the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Phoenix this summer. In response to Arizona's vote last fall to eliminate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a paid state holiday, the church's Executive Council authorized a fundraising campaign for minority scholarships, and Convention planners adapted the schedule to witness against the pervasive racism of U.S. social structures.

In counterpoint to this official emphasis, hearings and corridors will buzz with controversy over sex. Debate will likely focus on the conflict between the report on sexuality of the church's Standing Commission on Human Affairs, and a proposed canon, offered by the Rt. Rev. William Frey, dean of Trinity School for Ministry and former Bishop of Colorado. Frey's canon explicitly requires clergy "to abstain from sexual relations outside of Holy Matrimony," a not-very-veiled attempt to reverse the trend, reflected in the Commission's report, toward acceptance of lesbians, gay men and their relationships.

## Historical connections

It is no accident that these two volatile issues will be competing for the Convention's attention this year. In fact, history shows a continuous interplay between the church's paternalistic treatment of people of color and its actions regarding the place of women, marriage, and sexual

behavior. For example, in the early 1870s, reports from the Freedmen's Commission, which served newly-freed slaves, and the new Woman's Auxiliary were both placed at the very back of the church's monthly magazine, *The Spirit of Missions*.

In 1916, Convention reinforced the age-old presumption that only white men could exercise authority over the whole church by authorizing a "racial episcopate" — non-voting suffragan bishops to minister to black clergy and congregations — and overwhelmingly rejected attempts to open church councils to women.

In the 1930s and early '40s, as Europe was overtaken by the deadly Nazi creed of racial purity and controlled reproduction, no black bishops were consecrated in the U.S. church, and women were deliberately and repeatedly excluded from the Commission on Holy Matrimony.

As the tide slowly turned, the association continued. An informal coalition of Woman's Auxiliary and black church leaders mustered liberal support to move the 1955 Convention from segregated Houston to Honolulu. In 1967, the church responded to the civil rights crisis by authorizing the General Convention Special Program, which gave grant money to advocacy groups in poor and minority communities, and finally passed a measure making women eligible to serve as lay deputies.

In 1989, it was Barbara C. Harris, an African-American, who became the church's first woman bishop. The Episcopal Church's leadership is laboriously being stretched to reflect the gender and racial composition of its membership.

Like virtually every other institution in Western culture, the Episcopal Church has been controlled by white men. This control is now shared symbolically with white women and with men and women

of color, but white men continue to dominate both its legislative and spiritual leadership.

These white men are ostensibly heterosexual. Efforts to exclude homosexual persons from church leadership have increased dramatically as exclusion on the basis of race and gender ceased to be officially permitted (though it continues to be practiced). This is not mere coincidence — profound prejudices connect racism, sexism and heterosexism.

## Fig leaves of fear

Fear of difference is a deeply-rooted human characteristic, one of the many of our sinful condition. In the Genesis story, when the first human pair sinned, they became able to recognize their nakedness — i.e., their difference from one another — and immediately tried to cover it up. In their guilty state, the experience of difference prompted feelings of shame and vulnerability, so that they hid their bodies from one another, and themselves from God.

Fallen humanity's continuing attempts to control this primordial fear of our differences contribute to all the oppressive political and social structures through which the weak are dominated by the strong, the poor by the rich, the generous by the unscrupulous — and keep us hiding from God.

Throughout history we have elaborated complex hierarchies of difference, in which particular combinations of human characteristics determine how individuals are treated. In our culture, a straight Asian woman is treated differently from a gay white man or a blind white woman; a poor white man is treated differently from a rich Hispanic man or a middle class black lesbian, and so forth. Society's distribution of wealth and power is shaped by these distinctions: One group is defined as

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**Pamela W. Darling, Th.D.**, is consultant to the Episcopal Church's Committee on the Status of Women. She recently completed an extensive historical study of the changing roles of women, and resistance to those changes, in the Episcopal Church.

# struggle around change

by Pamela W. Darling

the norm, superior to others and entitled by right — backed up by force — to the widest privileges.

The destructiveness of this process of differentiation has been hidden under various fig leaves. In earlier eras, inequities were justified by positing a God-given hierarchy (gods — kings — lords — land-owners — serfs — women — children — slaves) that kept everyone in a “proper” place under the “protection” of the local patriarch/war-lord.

In our time and democratic culture, these privileges are fostered by a myth of equality-under-the-law that pretends there are no differences. From this denial arises an inability to see the “other,” those different from the reigning norm, or to realize that the world view of the “normal” group is only a partial picture of reality.

## Patriarchal norms

In Western civilization, the norm has been established by heterosexual white males. Social conventions and moral principles are predicated on their experience and serve their interests. *Patriarchy* is a convenient term for referring to this system. To the extent that the interests of heterosexual white males actually coincide with those of everyone else, patriarchal social and religious traditions benefit all people; but whenever interests diverge it has been the “others” who suffered while those who matched the norm reinforced their position.

The world view of those in power functions rather like a red filter on a camera lens, which alters the appearance of everything and renders red objects invisible. The racist filter affects the way we perceive the relationships between whites and people of color, and renders invisible the legal and cultural mechanism of domination and the suffering caused by

discriminatory behavior. The patriarchal filter affects the way we experience the power dynamics between men and women, and renders invisible the social and psychological factors that perpetuate the subordination of women.

Today, race and gender criteria are officially eliminated from the Episcopal Church. The white male monopoly has been cracked open, slowly diversifying the nature and allegiances of those exercising spiritual leadership and institutional power, undermining the power of patriarchy. The old filters have been damaged. Our perceptions are changing — strange things we never saw before appear, and familiar things look different. It is disorienting, often frightening.

## ‘Traditionalist’ defenses

As this process of change continues, self-styled “traditionalists” — such as the Prayer Book Society, the Episcopal Synod of America, Episcopalians United, and in more moderate sectors, the Irenaeus Fellowship of bishops — struggle to protect what remains of the old order. At present these efforts include actions to reverse civil rights gains, opposition to affirmative action programs and inclusive language, and an almost frenzied cam-

paign to eliminate homosexuals from the church’s ordained leadership — at least those gay men and lesbians not vowed to celibacy.

With inflammatory rhetoric or cool reason, the church is responding to the erosion of the patriarchal filter, grappling with what Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning has called “that great divide of consciousness that is the hallmark of our time.” This divide affects whether we believe that the historical pattern of male dominance is, or is not, part of God’s will.

From these conflicts flow the current controversies. Since the early 1960s, the “traditionalist” agenda in the Episcopal Church has consistently linked “liberal” politics with what is usually described as a breakdown of respect for the authority of Scripture and religious tradition. “Liberal” is usually a euphemism for advocacy of civil rights and racial justice, the ordination of women, and a non-punitive approach to divorce, abortion, and homosexuality. In making these connections, traditionalists echo the agenda of the Religious Right elsewhere in the nation.

## ‘Biblical family’ at risk

The “traditionalist” argument, even in moderate and conciliatory form, seeks to



prop up the crumbling foundations of patriarchy. We can see this in a statement Bishop Frey circulated to the Irenaeus Fellowship of bishops inviting support for a canon requiring clergy to abstain from sex outside marriage. The canon is said to address the breakdown of heterosexual marriage, described as the foundation of society because of its child-rearing function. Says Frey:

*This foundation stone can be undermined, from the inside by infidelity, by abuse, or by neglect; or from the outside by the sanctioning of false alternatives, such as same-sex unions. And when that happens, a society is in danger of collapse. Anything that undermines the stability of the biblical family eats away at the roots of the community.*

The biblical family has indeed been the foundation of patriarchal structure, the subordination of women in the home establishing the model for relationships throughout society and the church. This model has long observed a double standard regarding marital infidelity, officially forbidding it to everyone, but generally punishing only the women. Think, for example, about the woman “taken in adultery” who was brought before Jesus: Where was the man who must have been with her? Men’s “indiscretions” are tolerated in a society that regards male sexual prowess as evidence of masculinity and self-worth. In practice, the church has tended to agree.

Patriarchy — especially in its middle-class American form — has depended on women to raise the children and maintain the structure of the family both emotionally and sexually. So long as women were bound within the strict limits of traditional marriage and the biblical family, men’s promiscuity was not a threat to society. But access to contraceptives and the so-called sexual revolution of the post-World War II period had the effect of extending to middle-class women the kind of sexual freedom which men have

enjoyed for centuries.

### New models needed

In this context, new models for the responsible exercise of that freedom are needed for both men and women. I carry no brief for infidelity or promiscuity, which undermines family however one defines it. But I do find it interesting that the sustained outcries against divorce and promiscuity coincide with the movement of women away from total economic and emotional dependence on men.

Rather than trying to lock everyone back up in a biblical family box (which was usually polygamous and not a particularly safe place for a lot of biblical women and their battered descendants), we need to reconceptualize intimate relationships in truly mutual terms instead of the dominant/subordinate model of traditional heterosexual marriage. We also need to expand our understanding of family beyond the parent(s)-raising-young-children model — in which most of us spend less than half our lives — if we are to create stable communities for us all.

In addition to the internal threat to marriage posed by infidelity, Frey’s argument identifies an external threat of “false alternatives, such as same-sex unions.” It is difficult to see how recognizing committed relationships between homosexual persons would have a negative effect on heterosexual marriages. Heterosexual marriage as an institution might actually be strengthened if same-sex unions were accepted as normal for gay men and lesbians. Lesbian and gay youth would be less likely to seek societal approval by repressing their nature and entering heterosexual marriages, which typically result in immense suffering for both parties, and often end in divorce.

The persistent fear that heterosexual young people might be lured into homosexuality is an odd notion — do we really believe no one would be straight if being gay were okay? In addition, same-sex unions have a potential for developing

models of mutuality in relationship which could be useful for heterosexual couples trying to escape the dominant-male/subordinate-female model of traditional marriage.

The patriarchal model of marriage is crumbling, not heterosexuality itself. The traditional family is increasingly revealed as a dangerous place, physically and psychologically. Often unsafe for women and children, it is also unhealthy for men who find themselves drawn into the oppressive roles of domineering husband or tyrannical father that lie just beneath the surface of our nostalgic images of “family” and *paterfamilias*.

### Challenge of Phoenix

None of us, male or female, is well served by the patriarchal form of marriage, just as no one of any color is well-served by the institutionalized racism of our social and religious structures. The challenge before us in Phoenix will be to sift through all the proposals and arguments about race and sex in search of that which promotes the growth and wholeness of all members of the human family, Christ’s body on earth. We must also recognize that all these issues are connected; dealing with them in isolation reinforces the very structures that need to be reformed.

Presiding Bishop Browning has chosen “listening” and “inclusivity” as hallmarks of his administration. A straight white man, he summons the church to hear the voices of the “other,” to discover what true dialogue might be when all members of the community are involved, and to work together to create structures of grace for our common life. This will be tremendously difficult and painful work. We know not where it will lead, nor what the new order might look like to eyes no longer blinded by racism and sexism. But the Gospel invites us — indeed it requires us — to let go of oppressive customs no matter how comfortably familiar, and surely we can trust the God of history to lead us into the future. TW



# Short Takes

## Sound familiar?

Presbyterians, the staid heirs to four centuries of austere Calvinist morality, are all a-boil over whether to scrap traditional bans on homosexuality and sexual relations outside marriage.

"We are asking the church to rethink a lot of things," said the Rev. John J. Carey, chair of a denominational committee that is recommending the change to the Presbyterian Church, USA.

The committee challenges the traditional Presbyterian view of marriage as the only legitimate setting for sex, speaks favorably of teenage masturbation and petting, and advocates ordination of homosexuals to the ministry.

The proposed changes, to be considered by the denomination's General Assembly at its annual meeting in Baltimore in June, are outlined in a 197-page report prepared by Carey's committee.

**Michael D. Schaffer**  
*Philadelphia Inquirer* 5/13/91

## Quote of note

Some 98% of the adults in this country are hard-working honest Americans. It's the other lousy 2% that get all the publicity. But then — we elected them.

**Lily Tomlin**

## Managed news controls minds

Information has always been a strategic source of power. From time immemorial the Teacher, the Priest, the Censor, and the Spy have helped despots control subject populations. Under the old-fashioned fascist dictatorships, the Party Propagandist replaced the Priest, and the control of minds through managed information became as important as terrorism, torture, and concentration camps.

With the maturing of a modern capitalism, the managing of information has become a fine art and advancing science. Only through managed information can volition itself be captured and, as Rousseau recognized, can minds be so perfectly subjugated as to keep "the appearance of freedom."

**Bertram Gross**  
*Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America*



## Mini Meditation

*What if one of you has a hundred sheep but loses one of them? Would you not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost one until you found it? (Luke 15:4)*

Jesus is very clear. The shepherd should leave the 99 sheep to fend for themselves and go out in search of the lost one. The story must have soothed Jesus' conscience. As a limited human being he was forced to ignore many individuals in the huge crowds that followed him, healing only here and there when the timing was right or the effect of the miracle would be broad. Jesus consistently left 99 sheep behind in favor of the lost soul. Good news?

Many of us are undoubtedly lost sheep — persons who need, and get, every ounce of help God can dish out in our lifetime. Are you one of them? If so, your problems are solved.

Consider, however, the possibility that you are not. Even if you are hurting or grieving or handicapped, maybe you are not one who God will single out. Maybe God is preoccupied with truly lost sheep, confident that you can cope with your life on your own. Such a possibility seems to reflect most people's experience more accurately than some theory that God helps everybody equally.

Clearly, the psyche of Jesus was profoundly affected by this painful discrepancy. Perhaps telling this parable was a way of clearing his conscience.

**Craig Biddle**  
*Bread*

## Around the home

Men, why aren't you carrying your fair share? According to Arlie Hochschild in *The Second Shift*, the male half of a two career marriage does very little shopping, cleaning and routine child care.

Over a 10-year period, Hochschild surveyed San Francisco couples. Wives working outside the home do 75% of the housework. Only 18% of the husbands share housework equally; 61% of them do virtually no housework.

A *New York Times* survey of 1,500 women and men corroborates these findings. Working women thus have 15 fewer hours of leisure each week. What occupies their husbands during these hours? Sleep, sports on TV, and hobbies.

**Initiatives** 10/89

## Plundering our heritage

This, finally, is the punch line of our 200 years on the great Plains: We trap out the beaver, subtract the Mandan, infect the Blackfeet and the Hidatsa and the Assiniboin; call the land a desert and hurry across it to get to California and Oregon; suck up the buffalo, bones and all; kill off nations of elk, wolves, cranes, prairie chickens and prairie dogs; dig up the gold and rebury it in vaults some place else; ruin the Sioux and Cheyenne and Arapaho and Crow and Koowa and Comanche; kill Crazy Horse, kill Sitting Bull; harvest wave after wave of immigrants' dreams and send the wised-up dreamers on their way; plow the topsoil until it blows to the ocean; ship out the wheat, ship out the cattle; dismiss the small farmers, empty the little towns; drill the oil and natural gas and pipe it away; dry up the rivers and springs, deep-drill for irrigation water as the aquifer retreats.

And in return we condense unimaginable amounts of treasure into weapons buried beneath the land that so much treasure came from — weapons for which our best hope might be that we will someday take them apart and throw them away (or which our next-best hope is that they remain humming away under the prairie, unused forever).

**Ian Frazier**  
*Peaceweaver* 6/89

# THE CONSULTATION gearing up for Phoenix '91

Members of THE CONSULTATION, an umbrella group of Episcopal organizations dealing with justice and peace issues, will be lobbying for a progressive agenda during the 1991 General Convention July 11-20 in Phoenix. According to the Rev. Joseph A. Pelham, convener, at a recent meeting the group adopted two resolutions:

1) That the Consultation go on record expressing its earnest hope that the Presiding Bishop urge every gathering by official and unofficial groups during General Convention make the issue of racism the focus of all special activities.

2) That the Episcopal Church spend the next three triennia addressing institutional racism inside our church and in society in order to become a church of and for all races, and a church without racism, committed to ending racism in the world; and that greater inclusiveness become the Episcopal Church's primary strategy for evangelism.

While member groups will be supporting each others' efforts in general, they will also focus on concerns affecting their constituencies in particular. Following is a roundup by WITNESS editor Mary Lou Suhor of issues around which some of the larger groups will direct their energies.

## UBE takes long view of struggle for racial justice in church, state

The Union of Black Episcopalians hopes that resolutions about racial injustice introduced at this Convention will invite people to be part of an ongoing *process*, that they may become effective agents of social change, Judith Conley, president, said. "We have had some 50 Convention resolutions before on racism, with no significant results," she noted, "so we don't see this as *the* Convention to end racism."

UBE will monitor Convention to assess how effective "the overall witness" in Phoenix is going to be in terms of getting the Episcopal Church and society at large to be intentional about addressing racism.

Participating under protest because Arizona rescinded the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, UBE still objects to Phoenix as the Convention site, "but we have been given no alternative, so UBE will be present to assist the Executive Council and the Presiding Bishop to effect change," Conley said. "This could happen if those with power are willing to relinquish it to make things happen, and if deputies introduce

resolutions calling for more than just 'task forces,' " she emphasized.

UBE is not convinced that setting up a Martin Luther King, Jr. scholarship fund for minorities is a substantive response from the church, "and we won't know, until we have seen how it will be administered and implemented. It could merely be a way of satisfying many who will say that racism has been addressed because we have this scholarship fund," Conley said.

The proposed racism audit will be credible only "if the instrument is worthwhile and the data collected in such a way that it engages people to work beyond the audit," Conley said. "How the questions are asked is important; data should address all aspects of racism, and should be geared toward affecting employment and true inclusion, for example."

Re lifestyle, UBE is urging its members at Convention to fast on a daily basis in some way, such as giving up a meal, or wine, or cigarettes, or a bottle of soda and turning the money in to the King Fund. With regard to participation in extracurricular events surrounding Convention, two schools of thought prevailed.

"One was that we should not participate in any activities where meals were involved, and another was that we should



Judith Conley

go to some select events and address the issue of racism. My hope is that people would not eat at these gatherings as a symbol of our displeasure that Arizona was chosen to host the Convention," Conley said.

Because the state refused to endorse the King holiday, the UBE booth will be stark and draped in black, with no other decor or extravagance, she said.

## Critical time for Integrity

At its 1976 General Convention, the Episcopal Church passed a resolution calling homosexuals "children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance and pastoral concern and care of the church," and stating that "homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the law, with all other citizens."



Kim Byham

"Five conventions later, we would like our church to fulfill its promises," Kim Byham, Integrity representative to The Consultation, said.

"We hope the 'love, acceptance and pastoral concern' will be manifested by removing ordination barriers based solely on sexual orientation; guaranteeing non-discrimination in the life, worship and governance of the church; lesbian/gay representation at the National Church Center and on commissions and committees; developing rites for blessing committed relationships, and developing models and resources for clerical and lay education on issues of human sexuality.

"It is a scandal that for the last 15 years the Commission on Human Affairs and its predecessors have studied lesbian/gay issues without ever having a lesbian or gay member," Byham pointed out. "Somehow, all other mainline denominations managed to find qualified lesbian and gay members for their comparable committees." Integrity also hopes that in 1991 the Episcopal Church will indeed "call upon our society to see that equal protection is provided in actuality" by encouraging state and local governments to make child custodial decisions solely on the qualifications of the parents; by encouraging the federal government to disseminate the Department of Health and Human Services report on youth suicide (suppressed because one of its chapters took a non-judgmental position on homosexuality); by calling on all states to repeal discriminatory sex laws, particularly consensual sodomy laws, used to deny lesbians and gays basic protections; by calling on the federal government to cease discriminating

against lesbians and gays in military service; and by calling for an amendment to the federal civil rights act to include "sexual orientation" among the protected classes.

Bishop William Frey's canon proposing that "all clergy of this church . . . shall be under the obligation to abstain from sexual relations outside of Holy Matrimony" ignores the fact that Holy Matrimony is not an option for lesbians and gay men, Byham said. "Integrity will need the help of everyone in the church who recognizes that wolves often hide in sheep's clothing, and that denying equal justice for lesbians and gay men will merely be the first step in the right wing's agenda to wrest control in the same way the conservatives gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention."

## EPF ponders U.S., global issues

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship will lobby equally hard for justice on both the domestic and global fronts. Capital punishment and the criminal justice system will be the focus in the former, and the Middle East and Central America in the latter, according to Mary Miller, executive director.

Executions across the country have escalated since the death penalty was reinstated, Miller said, and the resolution highlighting the church's opposition to capital punishment appears at General Convention at a time when the White House is inaugurating initiatives to expand the death penalty for various federal crimes.



Mary Miller

The resolution, submitted by the Rev. Joe Morris Doss, includes as backup Presiding Bishop Browning's 1990 statement against capital punishment plus a paper from the Society of Christian Ethics entitled, "Biblical Teaching on Capital Punishment." The paper is part of an *amicus* brief filed in a California case and demonstrates that the Bible *cannot* properly be used to support capital punishment, Miller said. Bishop Browning has also signed on to the brief.

"With regard to international issues, it's hard to say what's top priority," Miller puzzled. "A whole array of resolutions is coming from the Standing Committee on Peace and EPF on Israel/Palestine and the Middle East generally. Clearly the Middle East is as hot and desperate an area as it ever was," she said.

The government is playing on military victory and patriotism instead of dealing with human issues, she said, citing Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf's appearance before Congress and the victory parades scheduled across the country, the largest set



June 10 in New York. "Episcopalians are heavily involved here — from the President to James Baker to the mayor of New York to local levels," Miller said. "The feeling seems to be if only a few hundred U.S. soldiers died, it's OK; but it's not OK." EPF has also initiated a resolution proposing Selective Conscientious Objection as a legitimate exercise of individual conscience and asks that the Episcopal Church allow its members to file as SCOs, and support such legal status.

With regard to Central America, "there is as much unfinished business as finished business in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama," Miller said. "Our Panama resolution explicitly asks for U.S. accountability for the devastating invasion, and seeks reparations to assist in rebuilding.

"We will be supporting many resolutions initiated by the Standing Commission on Peace and Justice, such as ongoing support for sanctions in South Africa and the lifting up of South Africa as a program priority," Miller added.

EPF has also asked its deputies to file resolutions on the lifting of trade and travel embargoes against Cuba and the restoration of diplomatic relations, along with the ending of U.S. propaganda broadcasts; on support for war tax resistance; and on opposing low intensity conflict.

"An awful lot of paper will flow at General Convention," she summed up.

## EUC to tackle three areas

Three major concerns of the Episcopal Urban Caucus will be reproductive rights, economic justice and racism, according to EUC convenor Diane Pollard.

Concerning the issue of reproductive rights, EUC is backing a resolution which calls on the church to "express its unequivocal opposition to any legislative, executive, or judicial action on the part of local, state, or national governments which would abridge the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy and which would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision." This resolution was submitted to the previous General Convention, but was replaced by compromise legislation. EUC, a member of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, has raised up the issue of choice as one of its priorities.

EUC will also push for General Convention to restore full funding to Jubilee Ministry, a network linking parishes, di-



Diane Pollard

ceses and the national church in a partnership for training, advocacy, and service to the poor and oppressed.

The other economic justice component EUC supports is continued funding for the Community Investment and Economic Justice Plan implemented by the previous Convention, which gives grants to grassroots economic organizations such as community-based re-investment programs and community credit unions.

"We are supporting the efforts being made by this Convention to look at racism in the church," said Pollard. Among the proposed efforts are a racism audit and daily Bible sharing sessions in small groups focusing on the issue of racism. The EUC supports the national church's call for groups to cut back on expenditures for lunches, dinners and displays and to donate the excess money to the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial scholarship for minority students. But, Pollard added, "We will also lobby for the church to take a long-range look at racism, to continue beyond this Convention."

## APSO for farmers, eco-watch

All issues affecting environment policies, the small farmer, and small churches will dominate the attention of the Appalachian People's Service Organization, Sandra Elledge, editor of *APSOlution*, said.

"Appalachia has become everybody's dumping ground, for toxic and medical waste, and just plain garbage," Elledge noted.

The small farmer's situation, and especially that of minority farmers, is critical to the point of their disappearance, Elledge pointed out. In 1982 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights predicted that unless the United States changed its agricultural policies, the minority farmer would be extinct by the year 2000. Statistics show that black farmers disappear three times as fast as white farm operators. In Virginia, only 10 of the state's black farmers are under age 25, and only 87 under 35.

Black farm-held acreage declined 87% between 1950 and 1987. "Most recent figures from the Family Farm Bureau show that in 1988, nearly 2,000 small farmers per week left farming," she reported. "The Congressional Budget office said in 1985 that if current U.S. policies vis a vis trade and banking persist, more than 500,000 families may have to leave farming. New farm bill provisions are much the same as the old, except that funding is \$2 billion less. Conse-



Sandra Elledge



quently, 1 million people may leave the rural United States soon because of decline in income and the plight of the farmer.

"Many places have experienced a double whammy because many small factories — where part time farmers worked to supplement their income — are closing as well," Elledge said.

Resolutions dealing with small church ministry and resources for small churches are also high on APSO's advocacy list.

"Over 80% of congregations are small churches and need advocacy; for example, we need a church field office for rural and small church ministries similar to that of the Native Americans in Oklahoma, she said. "The soaring cost of providing health care benefits, too, have closed a number of churches, and need to be addressed," she concluded.

## Women's issues occupy Caucus

Lobbying by the Episcopal Women's Caucus will take place around some 14 resolutions embracing three general categories: economic issues, inclusivity, and sexuality, according to Marge Christie, president.

**Economic issues.** EWC's major concern is the increasing pauperization of women. Studies show that by the year 2000, the poor *will be* women and children, Christie said. The plight of older women occupies Caucus efforts as well, since statistics indicate that they are locked into jobs considered "less valuable" and their pay is going down to the old 52 cents on a dollar. A number of resolutions will address these issues.



Marge Christie

The Caucus also supports the National Council of Churches' pay equity policy, and will petition the Church Center and Episcopal dioceses to incorporate into their guidelines a policy of equal pay for equal work. Another will support pensions equal to those of clergy for lay employees in the church who work more than 1,000 hours annually.

**Inclusivity:** The Caucus will support the supplementary liturgical texts recommended by the Standing Liturgical Commission, which use inclusive language, as well as the SLC recommendation to add to the church calendar Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, two pioneers for the rights of women, who were nurtured by their life in the church. To its coffee mugs and T shirts which read, "A Woman's Place is in the House of Bishops," the Caucus will

add this year similar items which proclaim, "God is Not a Boy's Name," Christie said.

**Sexuality.** The Caucus will be "part of a whole bandwagon" of resolutions submitted around sexual exploitation and harassment of women, including sexual abuse by clergy. "Women who consult clergy for counseling are in a vulnerable position, and we are trying to help the church understand the problem so things can begin to be done in dioceses and seminaries to define what is not ever proper conduct for clergy in a power-over situation," Christie said. Between 10 to 16% of clergy across all denominations are guilty of sexual abuse, she noted, and court cases are escalating across the country.

"With regard to abortion, we are expressing unequivocal opposition to any legislation requiring parental notification

*Continued on page 27*

## WITNESS staff to boycott convention

THE WITNESS staff will honor the national boycott against Arizona — by groups protesting that state's failure to vote for a paid holiday honoring slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. — by not attending General Convention in Phoenix. Neither will THE WITNESS have a booth in the Convention exhibit hall, Mary Lou Suhor, editor, said.

In addition, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company Awards Dinner, customarily held during General Convention, will be postponed to a future date, possibly during the magazine's 75th anniversary next year.

THE WITNESS supports The Consultation's position that those who are called to lobby or to participate in an official way in the House of Deputies or House of Bishops should attend, albeit under protest, so Convention will not be abandoned to the conservatives. But since the magazine does not play such a role, THE WITNESS has contracted with a "stringer" who will be at Convention to file an analytical commentary for the July-August issue.

In explaining the staff's rationale to boycott, Suhor said that one of the more powerful ways to wield clout in racist or affirmative action issues today is through the economic boycott. "Analogously, we believe that South Africa is changing today because of pressure on two fronts: from within, by a courageous people determined to overthrow the yoke of oppression; and from without, through pressure exerted by international economic sanctions, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu has urged us to support." (Tutu was originally scheduled to speak at General Convention, but later canceled out "by mutual agreement" with Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning.)

"The Episcopal Church will drop millions of dollars into Arizona by holding its General Convention there. We don't think that state should benefit economically from our presence," Suhor said.

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A pre-Convention rundown on the Right:

# Who's who among traditionalists

by Susan Erdey

**W**hile the progressive wing of the Episcopal Church argued over whether or not it was racist to hold its 1991 General Convention in Phoenix, the conservative organizations were marshalling their considerable forces in preparation for an all-out battle in the Arizona summer heat.

As liberal organizations such as the gay and lesbian group Integrity wonder where they will get the money to attend General Convention, conservative groups appear to be well-funded. Episcopalians United (EU) hopes to spend \$185,000 (they claim a \$900,000 annual budget) on Convention activities. The National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL), the Episcopal Church's anti-abortion group, plans on spending at least \$15,000.

"Who *are* these people?" moan the progressive groups as yet another slick, direct mail piece arrives from EU. Where did they get their start? Who participates in them? And just what is their agenda for General Convention?

Make no mistake; these are very powerful groups. Although they profess to be outside of the progressive "power center" of "815," the national offices of the Episcopal Church located at 815 Second Avenue in New York City, groups such as the National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL), Episcopalians United (EU), the Episcopal Committee on Reli-

gion and Freedom (ECRF), and the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) have more clout from a variety of sources than a casual observer might expect.

Here then, is a brief compilation of several conservative organizations in the Episcopal Church, their missions, and a few of the key players in each group, as gathered through a survey of literature and statements in the public realm. Note the formidable amount of cross-pollination among the various groups.

**Episcopal Committee on Religion and Freedom.** ECRF is a committee of the Institute of Religion and Democracy (IRD), a right-wing think tank whose self-described mission is to "work to bring balance to [churches'] political witness and prevent them from replacing their spiritual mission with a political agenda." ECRF is planning to field a team of observers and activists at General Convention. IRD board members include Richard John Neuhaus, a theologian who recently converted to Roman Catholicism from the Lutheran Church, and is a contributing editor to William F. Buckley's *National Review*; the Rev. John Rodgers, former dean of the conservative, evangelical Episcopal seminary Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pa.; Dr. Allan Parrent, professor of Christian ethics at Virginia Theological Seminary; the Rev. Rebecca Spanos, treasurer of NOEL; and Michael Novak, another contributing editor to *National Review*.

**Episcopal Renewal Ministries.** This

charismatic renewal organization's board members include Ted Nelson of EU and NOEL, and John Rodgers of EU, NOEL and IRD.

**Episcopal Synod of America (ESA).** Its founding synod in Fort Worth in 1989 generated headlines as the group threatened to leave the Episcopal Church, then threatened to stay. ESA rejects "endeavors to adopt inclusive language [and] actions of those in the Episcopal Church who accept fornication, adultery, and homosexual unions as 'alternative Christian life-styles'"; "affirms the sanctity of life, opposing abortion on demand and euthanasia"; affirms "the Scriptural and historic standards of faith and morals for admission to the ordained ministry" and opposes "the breach of 2,000 years of unbroken practices of male priesthood and episcopacy." Member dioceses are San Joaquin, Fort Worth, Quincy, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac and Albany, along with ESA parishes in other dioceses. The Rt. Rev. Clarence Pope, bishop of Fort Worth, is president. Both the current and former presidents of the Prayer Book Society, the Rev. Robert Shackles and the Rev. Jerome Politzer, are ESA members. The ESA has received land in Aiken, S.C. on which to establish a traditionalist seminary. This land appears to be the same site for which the Prayer Book Society had once planned its own seminary, as reported in the PBS newsletter, *Mandate*, in the summer of 1988. Editor of the ESA magazine, *Foundations*, is William Murchison, a syndicated columnist whose home base is

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the conservative *Dallas Morning News*.

**Episcopalians United.** Also known as Episcopalians United for Revelation, Renewal and Reformation, it is perhaps the best-funded of the Episcopal Church's conservative organizations. EU's stated goal is "renewal" at every level of the church, and members believe that the "modern drift toward the secularization of the faith and practice, doctrine and discipline of the Episcopal Church is destructive of the institution." EU's secretary is Temperance Parker, evangelism officer and deputy for programs in the Diocese of South Carolina. Board members include the Rt. Rev. Alden Hathaway of Pittsburgh, who is also a trustee of the Trinity School of Ministry; the Rt. Rev. Fitzsimons Allison, retired bishop of South Carolina; the Rt. Rev. John David Schofield of San Joaquin; the Rev. Terry Fullam, former rector of St. Paul's, Darien, Conn. and president of Episcopal Renewal Ministries; and the Rev. John Guest of St. Stephen's, Sewickley, Pa.

**National Organization of Episcopalians for Life.** NOEL's current president, the Rev. Dr. Robert Munday, professor of systematic theology at Trinity School for Ministry, is canonically resident in the Diocese of Quincy (Illinois), an ESA diocese. The Rev. Neil Lebharr former president,, is also a member of Episcopal Renewal Ministries. The Rev. Ted Nelson, recently retired rector of the charismatic Church of the Resurrection in Dallas, is active in NOEL and also chair of the board of EU. The Rt. Rev. William Stevens, bishop of Fond du Lac (also an ESA diocese), also serves on NOEL's board.

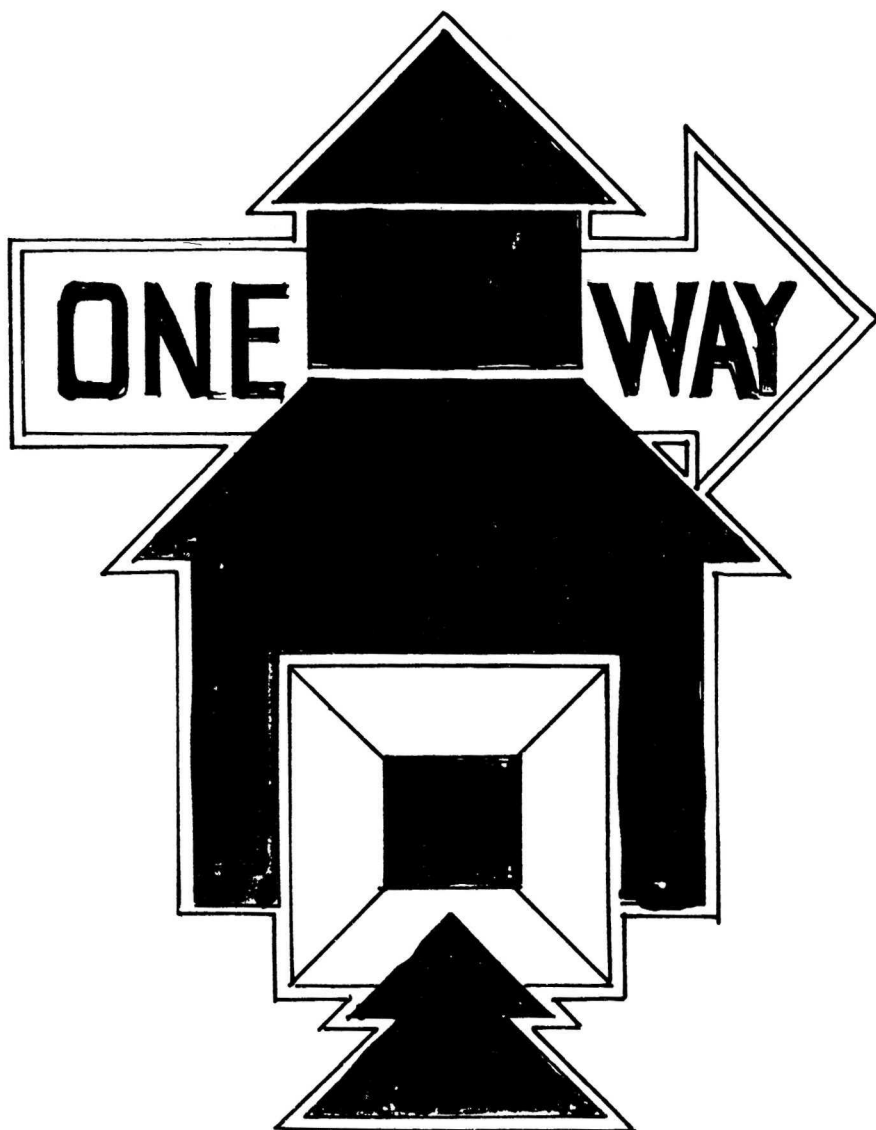
**Prayer Book Society.** Dedicated to the preservation of the 1928 Prayer Book, the PBS' main objective is "to maintain and be true to the traditional faith and worship of the Episcopal Church." Its directors include Norman Bishop, a nationally known Republican political consultant

who worked with pollster George Gallup who is also an Episcopalian, on a number of recent polls for the Society.

The PBS got into considerable hot water last summer when it filed presentment charges against the Rt. Rev. John Spong of the Diocese of Newark for his ordination of Robert Williams, a decidedly non-celibate gay man, to the priesthood. Signatures from three bishops are required for a valid presentment, but one of the three bishops whose signatures were af-

fixed to the document, Bishop Terence Kelshaw of the Diocese of Rio Grande, had never consented to sign.

According to its new president, the Rev. Robert Shackles, the PBS plans to "make 'morality' the key thrust of our strategy and efforts in Phoenix this July. The perpetual efforts of people such as Bishop John Spong to undercut basic moral standards through efforts to accommodate what he apparently sees as 'the modern morality,' must be confronted



and defeated. We intend to rededicate ourselves to doing just that. The church absolutely must stand for something (in questions of morality)," says Fr. Shackles, "it's a pure question of values."

**St. Stephen's Church, Sewickley, Pa.** A power parish for the conservatives, this church was instrumental in founding the Trinity School for Ministry. St. Stephen's rector, the Rev. John Guest, also heads up the John Guest Evangelistic Team.

**Truro Church, Fairfax, Va.** This is the home base of several Episcopal conservative organizations. The parish, one of the largest in the denomination at approximately 1,500 members, is a NOEL stronghold. Truro Church donated property for NOEL House, a home for single mothers. Neil Lebharr, a former president of NOEL, has also been an assistant at Truro. The Rt. Rev. John Howe, bishop of Central Florida and chair of NOEL's board, is a former rector of Truro. Truro is also home to Episcopal Renewal Ministries, headed by the Rev. Charles Irish. The parish's membership includes a member of the IRD staff, Lawrence Adams, an international affairs, defense and education expert who is a former analyst for the minority staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee. He is also president of ECRF. The newly appointed rector, the Rev. Martyn Minns, was an associate at St. Paul's, Darien, under Terry Fullam.

### Commentary

At first glance, the main topic on the conservative agenda is sex — specifically, whether or not the Episcopal Church should ordain non-celibate lesbians and gay men. (The conservatives seem not to recognize that the church has

been doing so for centuries, the more recent action of the Bishop of Newark notwithstanding.)

EU has sent a lengthy tract, "Should Practicing Homosexual Persons be Ordained in the Episcopal Church Today?" to all members of the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. The author of the report, the Rev. Kendall Harmon, a graduate of Trinity School for Ministry and a priest in the Diocese of South Carolina, also wrote a response to the national church's 1988 curriculum, "Sexuality: A Divine Gift," calling it a "deeply disturbing document." In the current tract he out-

*"The unifying element in this tremendous expenditure of time, money and effort . . . is power, control and the fear of losing them — the fear of death, in a sense."*

lines the history of the church's attitudes on homosexuality, and claims to refute the findings of two progressive scholars, John Boswell of Yale and William Countryman of Church Divinity School of the Pacific. Considerable space is given to "healing ministries" which purport to cure gay men and lesbians of this "illness"; and the author urges that the possibility of healing should be taken seriously by the Episcopal Church.

Further developments on the sexuality front include a proposed canon governing sexual behavior of clergy, sponsored by the Rt. Rev. William Frey, former bishop of Colorado and newly-appointed dean and president of Trinity School for Ministry.

However, some in the progressive camp of the Episcopal Church believe that the sexuality issue isn't really where the conservative collective heart is. Louie Crew, founder of Integrity, believes that the sex issue is "all scapegoat-

ing." Their real concern is the quest for power, he said.

But power is what the ESA professes *not* to have. The Rev. Jeffrey Steenson, in a report to the April meeting of ESA's Legislative Assembly in Chicago, stated that the "liberal protestants and their co-religionists hold all the significant positions of power." Yet in the same report he opined that "courageous apostolic ministry is not bound by the legalisms of moribund institutions."

Can a moribund institution be powerful? Clearly the ESA is intent upon amassing the power to be independent

should the discussions at General Convention not go as it would like. Bishop Pope, in his opening address to the ESA Legislative Assembly, warned that "we are fast approaching the time when we must stop being concerned and calculating

about bold action . . . We have been artificially trapped within geographical boundaries which for many have become spiritual gas chambers [sic] as the historic faith and practice has gradually been sucked out."

Despite the ESA's earlier threats to stay in the Episcopal Church, steps are being taken to facilitate a breakaway. The Rev. Richard Cantrell, a member of ESA's Task Force on New Parishes, recommended in a report that the Synod "carry out our responsibility and then figure out a way to pay for it." He stated that "we cannot in good conscience wait any longer to begin even if it means breaking canons and acting without permission of local ordinaries." The task force report outlined plans to establish congregations in "large population centers which have no traditionalist parishes," to recruit priests and "consecrate missionary bishops without waiting for canonical authority," to recruit men for the priesthood,



committing themselves to "fill the junior class at Nashotah House next year and each year afterwards." (Nashotah House, which formerly trained men only for the priesthood, just recently proposed policy changes to accept women, a decision prompted by low enrollment, which threatened its future.)

Fundraising will be targeted towards those Episcopalians who "plan to be the founding nucleuses [sic] of the new parishes." It is instructive to note that the task force report states: "As quickly as possible, the ESA will develop an alternative to the Church Pension Fund." Many critics have speculated that the lack of a viable, independent pension fund has been the sole reason the highly-clericalized ESA has stuck around in the Episcopal Church for as long as it has.

Members of groups such as ESA have been very vocal in attacking the membership of gays and lesbians in the wider church. However, indications are that the traditionalist movement is getting nervous about the presence of closeted homosexuals within its own ranks. An unsigned letter from a self-described "celibate homosexual," published in the April issue of *The Christian Challenge* (a magazine which bills itself as "the only worldwide voice of traditional Anglicanism"), states:

There is one big noise in the traditionalist movement about whom I know a lot from a former lover of his. Maybe this clergyman has repented and reformed, but 25 years or so ago he was returning to bed between masses on Sunday to have sex with this man. It seems very odd to me to hear him verbally "gay bash" today as if he had always been Fr. Pure. He's not alone in this.

A sleeper issue at Convention may well be the developing crisis in the environment. Several conservative publications have sounded the alarm about "environmental fanaticism," linking it to New Age spirituality, crystals, peace activism, paganism and radical feminism. A more

subtle link may be at work here, however, as the progressive agenda espoused by environmentalists threatens the exploitative mode of business in this and other industrialized countries. In its latest issue, IRD's magazine, *Religion and Democracy*, announced that a coming issue will focus on the recent World Council of Churches' statement on the environment, as well as the connections between theology and the environmental movement.

### Analysis

The unifying element in this tremendous expenditure of time, money, and effort isn't the ordination of women, or of lesbians and gay men, or the blessing of same-sex relationships. It's not orthodoxy or tradition. What is at issue is power, control and the fear of losing them — the fear of death, in a sense. That's why many women and a not-inconsiderable number of gay men oppose the progressive agenda: Those who have gained power by playing the Old Boys' game are frightened by the prospect of a change in the rules. There's a lot of talk — especially in politically oriented traditionalist publications — about liberty. It doesn't seem to be the same kind of liberty that most hold dear. Rather, it is the liberty of the ruling class to do what it wants with others. As Maggie Ross, an Anglican solitary, says in her book, *Pillars of Flame: Priesthood and Spiritual Maturity*:

The churches are afraid of a kenotic God; the consequences of worshipping such a divinity are too dangerous; the possibility of a social order transformed by mercy and reverence for the despised and the holiness of fools is too much to bear.

Perhaps it's time for the church to re-examine the last clause of its baptismal Covenant: the promise to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." And, as the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* put it, to "renounce . . . the vain pomp and glory of the world." TW

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# Homosexuality as vocation

by Sam Portaro

**T**he ordination of Robert Williams by Bishop John Spong of Newark, and the subsequent controversy surrounding the exercise — and excesses — of their respective ministries, have generated much discussion. While it remains to be seen whether this controversy enhances or detracts from ordination issues under consideration by the Episcopal Church, the more important dialogue touched by these events is the one on same-sex unions.

Robert Williams offers “Re-Visioning Christianity for Radical Gay Men and Lesbians” in a recent issue of *Christopher Street*, a widely-circulated gay/lesbian periodical. That an article of four pages is inadequate to the task is not nearly so important or amazing as the feat itself — arousing a serious conversation about Christian faith and discipline among people possessed of a justifiable antipathy toward the Christian religion. Interest in committed fidelity among gay men and lesbian women sufficient to gain Williams a foothold in such a publication may indicate the readiness of some to engage in dialogue with traditions experienced in covenants.

The result is an opportunity to participate in the making of theological tradition not in theory, nor in legal canon, but in

the difficult work of struggle in the midst of hard realities. If anything good is to come of this exercise, however, it may be necessary for all concerned to set aside their pride and illusions of power.

We shall likely need a changed notion of authority as pertains to marriage. We shall need to re-affirm the primacy of conscience in determining individual vocational and ethical discernment. Welcoming conscientious dissent as integral to the process of renewal and reformation will mean inviting the possibility that the process might extend to the renewing and reforming of established foundations. While it is true that the church has a lot of catching up and penance to do, the same may be said of the lesbian and gay community. Everyone has much of value to share if we can

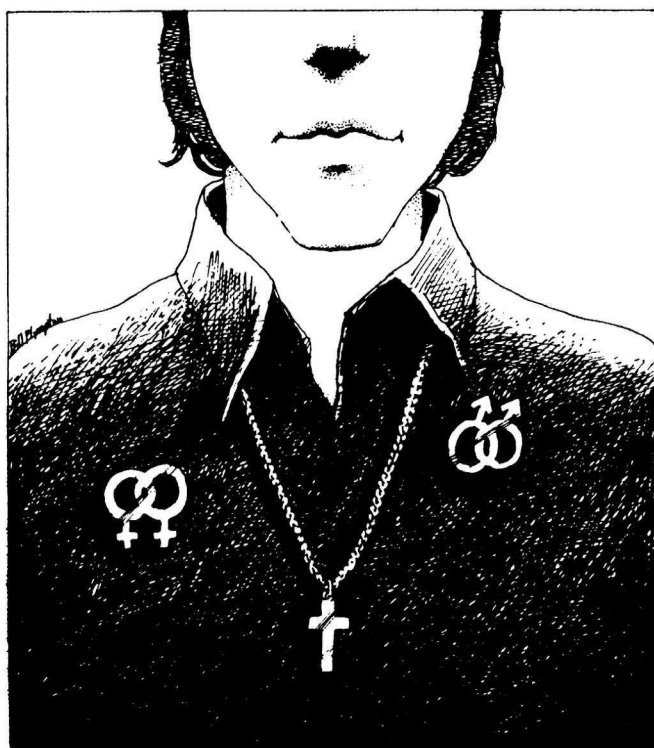
come to some place conducive to the exchange.

It may be helpful to ground sexuality — and committed intimacy, in particular — in vocation. If God calls every Christian into purposeful life, how are the Christian’s sexual relations to be integrated into that vocation? Furthermore, because that vocation is not only a personal matter, but also a social or communal one, how is the Christian to mediate sexual relations between those private and public dimensions?

Christians have largely confined these questions to ordination, and thus to the limited number of those called to Holy Orders. Shifting the focus to the universal vocation — the call to personal relationship, in union with one person or in celibacy — opens the theological task to a broader community. Instead of beginning with the hierarchical and institutional considerations concerning ordination, we begin with the lateral and cultural considerations of the more common vocation to relationship.

At a time when many of the Christian churches struggling with the issue of homosexuality are also examining anew the ministry of every baptized member, this strategic shift moves the sexuality debate off the margins of the churches’ deliberations and into the more central, and fundamental, arena of vocation. Such a discussion embraces what it means to be called of God in the whole of one’s person — including one’s sexual person — in the midst of a community of others.

Having followed the debate within the churches, I believe



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that our failure to arrive at legal or pastoral consensus points to the need for greater examination of sacramental theology and ecclesiology. Society's emerging interest in such matters as same-sex union are evidenced in the wider application of equal opportunity entitlements to include sexual orientation, extending in some cases certain spousal benefits to same-sex partners. Some universities have decided or are now deliberating proposals to open married-student housing to committed couples of the same gender. Such actions seem to indicate a growing public concern for dialogue on how to make and nurture loving relationships. To those within the church who have pioneered same-sex unions as a component of Christian life and vocation, these evidences signal that we may now engage those ready to join us in dialogue after years of painful separation.

In that dialogue we might reconsider some venerable traditional theological mores, chief among them being humility and awe in the presence of mystery. The mystery and power of sexuality are brutalized in attempts to reduce all behavior to a single norm. To see how love between two persons manifests itself and gives itself back to the community is to witness mystery. Respecting the dignity of every human being — a component of our baptismal covenant — includes respecting the exercise of each person's gifts in response to vocation. We Christians might appropriately ask of one another, and of those other than ourselves: How do you perceive God's call in your life, and what graces have you discerned in relation to that call?

These questions move us beyond preoccupation with genital intercourse to a consideration of the *promise*, the covenant, as the only essential to the vocation of marriage. My late grandfather, good immigrant Italian Catholic that he was, maintained throughout his life that the authority of the Pope stopped at his bed-

room door. Such a posture not only delineates the roles of the religious community and personal responsibility in matters of intimacy, but establishes the threshold of mystery.

The church has traditionally taught that in marriage, the individuals making their promises are the celebrants of the sacrament. The rest of the assembly — including the priest — are witnesses. Marriage is not the official sanction of sexual genital expression — a license to have intercourse. That it has become so in the minds of many is a sad travesty of

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*"Many homosexual Christians, like their heterosexual counterparts, desire to share their commitment with a larger community."*

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sacramental evolution.

People have married and given themselves in commitment to one another far longer than sacramental forms have existed. Sacramentalizing such giving is an expression of willingness to share it with the community; it is, if you will, a pooling of grace. Thus the church is beneficiary of the couple's gift of covenant love.

In undertaking such a covenant commitment within the community of the church, a couple is asking the community to share responsibility for the keeping and nurturing of that commitment. While it may be argued in the case of same-sex unions that the church ought not to accept such responsibility, the refusal of this invitation demands serious examination. Those who choose to live out their commitments may need us and the support of our community; but that is only half the story. The other half is that

we need them.

Many homosexual Christians, like their heterosexual counterparts, desire only to share their commitment with a larger community. Nor is the proper question one of why covenant love between persons of the same sex must express itself in genital intimacy. While Christian marital vows do specify monogamy, monogamy literally means only "one marriage," and thus poses a challenge to our altering the word to mean "*one marriage at a time*." In modern usage monogamy is redefined as commitment to a single partner.

But fidelity is not limited only to genital exclusivity; it extends to every aspect of the commitment. Nor do the vows specify genital activity as a prerequisite to consummation. The pledging of the vows alone suffices to consummate in the eyes of the church — all else is an expression of that covenant promise. That the private exercise of this commitment may or may not include genital intimacy is of no more concern to the community of the church in the case of homosexual couples than it is in the case of their heterosexual sisters and brothers. The principles that guide the community in one sphere must extend equally to the other sphere.

The community may judge promiscuity, exploitation, abuse, and violence as destructive and unethical violation of the covenant vows. Such violations may challenge the promise of the community to uphold these two persons in their vows. But the community is also invited to consider fidelity, respect, nurture and affection as constructive and ethical expressions of the covenant vows. Such virtues encourage the promise of the community to uphold these two persons in their vows and confirm the promises of the individual to so live within community as to enrich rather than impoverish it.

*Continued on page 25*

# Church needs new sexual ethic

*Sexuality issues will be major items of controversy at General Convention 1991. For example, clergy sexual abuse will be the target of numerous resolutions calling for the banning of any intimate relationships between clergy and lay people. Also, a resolution proposing a canonical amendment that expects clergy to "abstain from sexual relations outside of Holy Matrimony" will be introduced. Many see this resolution as an attack on non-celibate gay and lesbian clergy, whose relationships are not sanctioned by the church. The Rev. Carter Heyward, professor of theology at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and Dr. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, professor of English at William Paterson College in Wayne, N.J., are lesbian-feminist theologians who have written extensively on sexuality issues. They recently discussed their concerns about the Episcopal Church's punitive view of sexuality and their visions for a new church ethic in an interview with WITNESS managing editor Sue Pierce.*

**General Convention will consider a number of sexual ethics resolutions. You both told me you have serious questions about the consequences of these resolutions, and the way in which the church deals with sexuality in general. What's behind your concern?**

**CH:** Sexual ethics is very a complicated issue, and what I'm concerned about are the statements drawn up by victims' committees in the various dioceses to support resolutions forbidding any kind of clergy/lay, or clergy/parishoner sexual relationships.

**VRM:** So they believe the solution to ending abusive relationships is to have none at all?

**CH:** Yes, and I'm deeply troubled by that because I think it plays right into the homophobia, the erotophobia and the clericalism rampant in the churches. I don't believe for a minute that all clergy/parishoner relationships are sexually abusive, any more than I believe relationships where some power imbalance could conceivably exist, which we all have experienced, are ostensibly abusive.

**VRM:** Relationships are most abusive when not recognized as power inequities.

**Do you both think the church is rushing to deal with the problem without adequate information?**

**CH:** Yes. I think we've got to be able to make a distinction in the church between relationships in which a priest and a layperson are trying very hard to have an equal, just relationship, whatever the imbalance of professional power there may be, and those in which clergy are sexually seducing and manipulating every person who comes into their office. Women are not usually the perpetrators of that kind of abuse — it's not that women have any moral claim to purity, but it usually tends to be heterosexual men who do this to women and children.

**VRM:** This is another case of jumping from one extreme to the other. We've had this abuse, therefore we'll refuse to allow any intimate relationships at all, and not examine the underlying issues. It sounds grand and moral, and all the complexities involved get swept under the rug.

**What do you mean by complexities?**

**VRM:** What Carter was talking about — that there can be humanly decent, loving relationships even when there are apparent power inequities.

**CH:** Someone said after hearing about these resolutions, "What's going to happen to the bishop's daughter, who's always historically married the young curate?" In a sense, this church has been built on a combination of closeted homosexual clergy and young clergymen who married daughters of prominent parishioners. Not that we would necessarily want to say that it's a great thing, because there's so much of a power imbalance, quite frankly, in heterosexual relationships and in a heterosexist culture. Talk about power imbalance — if you want to get rid of it, get rid of traditional heterosexual relationships.

**VRM:** Or *be* the bishop's daughter — that equalizes things a bit.

**Do you know how many resolutions are being submitted, and has anyone drafted a response to them?**

**CH:** Fourteen or 15 of these sexual ethics resolutions have been submitted to General Convention — it's really alarming. In most cases church women's groups have gotten behind them. This clearly is the best effort people have been able to come up with to try to stop abuse.

A resolution some other women and I wrote that will hopefully get a hearing at





### **Dr. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott**

Convention is an attempt to put the brakes on really restrictive legislation, to ask the Presiding Bishop and the president of the House of Deputies to appoint a joint commission to study the complexities for the next three years and to come up with some ethical proposals out of that study. Presumably then, the power relationships can be looked at and the nuances can surface.

**Is it fair to say that traditionally there's been little or no teaching on sexual ethics issues in seminaries?**

**CH:** That's true, but it's very hard to teach sexual ethics in a church as homophobic and sexist as this church of ours. For example, I know of a lesbian priest who is involved in a relationship with a parishioner, and these two people would be very pleased to be open about it, but it's not safe because of her job. One of the criteria that some of these sexual ethics committees are working on for ethical, non-abusive relationships is "no secrecy." But you can't do that in a church that's going to kick you out if you reveal that you are gay.

It's a Catch-22 for lesbian and gay clergy, and that kind of thing can't be dealt with in an upfront way as long as the church resists saying that gays and lesbians can be ordained and gay and lesbian

relationships can be blessed and celebrated. It's frightening that the leaders, even some of the liberal, sensitive ones, don't seem to recognize that.

**VRM:** As a matter of fact, the church has cut itself off from one of its main resources. If all churches are having to work out the whole issue of human sexuality, they desperately need to get a pleasure-positive, passion-positive, body-positive attitude towards sexuality. And their chief resource would be the lesbians and gay men who have somehow come through this horrible, lion-filled forest and have managed to become healthy and engage in healthy relationships. If you have gotten there, you have really worked through a lot of ethics, without maps, and made your own way through trial and error. You can talk from the gut. This wonderful resource would be available except that they're going to crack you on the head and have a million ways to punish you once you've said who you are.

**What do you think of the canonical change put forward by Bishop William Frey proposing a sexual ethic for clergy that allows them to have sexual relations only within "Holy Matrimony"?**

**CH:** What proposals like that have done is taken things like clergy sexual abuse and collapsed it all under that heading, saying one of the reasons clergy ought not to sleep with people they're preaching to or counseling is because that's sex outside of marriage, and, as we all know, the Bible teaches only sex within marriage between a man and a woman with a life-long commitment is permissible.

**VRM:** I'd like to see where the Bible says that, because I've looked and I haven't found it. There's precious little in the Bible to back that up, but a lot's been said about it.

**CH:** My reading of the churches across

the board, including the Episcopal Church, is that around sex, gender and power issues are where the reactionary forces are able to coalesce their power. People are just scared to death of strong women, which is what "lesbian" represents, and the pushing of the boundaries of traditional sex roles. All kinds of mischief and evil are getting drawn in under the sex-gender-power fear that is being fed, so there's more racism, anti-semitism, more crass capitalism than ever, yet the issues that draw in the reactionary forces are those about gays and lesbians, and about feminists who want to do away with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost — people who are seen as representing the demise of the "family."

**VRM:** It's all been said very blatantly: America will never return to its number one position if women don't return to the kitchen.

**Do you think this is a backlash from people who believe their days are numbered because the world is changing, whites won't be the majority anymore, and the patriarchal paradigm is failing?**

**VRM:** That's what I call my last gasp theory. It was articulated most perfectly in



**The Rev. Carter Heyward**

the 17th century, when the concept of the divine right of kings was dying, and those in power tried to bolster it back up. On the other hand, I don't think we should take too much comfort in that. As long as things keep getting worse economically, the scapegoating will accelerate.

**CH:** What I fear is that the last gasp may be a very long one. I think that advanced capitalism, with all its heterosexism and everything else, will ultimately collapse. We cannot keep living on the basis of the greed and violence we're currently embedded in. One of my most pessimistic scenarios is that this does drag on for another several generations and things will get worse and worse. The last gasp of white sexist, racist patriarchy is going to be a horrendously brutal one for everybody who is not playing by their rules, or does not represent the norm. We will never get to see the full fruits of the seeds that we hope we're planting.

**VRM:** I think many people are experiencing spiritual awakening and not necessarily in church. This is not a pleasure-hating, but a humanistic, gentle, spiritual awakening and the violence is exacerbated in resistance to this. These are horrendous times, partly because the forces are moving so opposite to each other.

I have a lot of hope, but I don't know how soon things will change. All I know is it's my business to work like crazy for change.

**CH:** Certainly there is great hope coming from the margins, from the bottom, which is why I'm a liberation theologian. Hope is coming from the Southern Hemisphere, from the poor, from lesbians and gay men, and women of all colors. That's where my hope is, because along with some of those categories I too am marginalized. In other ways, because of my class and race, I'm very much a part of the oppressive forces and I'm trying my best to understand what it means to have that

kind of privilege and use it in just ways.

**One of you is a lifelong Episcopalian; the other, an adult convert. How have your very different religious backgrounds influenced your faith and sense of self?**

**VRM:** I came up through Protestant fundamentalism. I became an Episcopalian as an adult, and I was looking forward to a church that had Communion every Sunday, because that was central for the Plymouth Brethren, the church in which I was raised. But I became a feminist shortly after joining and was appalled by the hierarchial elements in the church. I don't think the Episcopal Church is the epitome of perfection, but there isn't an organization in the world that's perfect. At least in the Episcopal Church you can talk about things, and we have a Presiding Bishop who *says*, "There will be no outcasts." You can be a thinking person; you don't have to check your mind at the door.

But my fundamentalist upbringing was very valuable. One thing that you can say for fundamentalists and evangelicals, if they're convinced of something, they'll commit to it. My style is evangelical and I'm passionately committed to what I believe. I'm not sorry I grew up being drilled in the Bible; it's been very useful.

**CH:** I really hear what you said about your own strengths and integrity coming from your fundamentalist roots, Virginia. I wasn't raised fundamentalist, but I have come to understand that my zeal and personal passion comes from my Southern roots, having learned that from Southern women, white and black. My family was a churchgoing family all my life — I became an Episcopalian at age 2.

The Bible always was part of my family's daily devotions. It's typical of the Episcopal Church that I don't remember a whole lot about the Bible from church school or preaching. But I had an image of Jesus as this wonderful person, and God was this nice old white man in the

sky who looked down and loved everybody.

**VRM:** I had the image, and it wasn't positive, of this God who was always watching, and would get you if you put your hand in the cookie jar. I asked my mother why she whipped me, and she said, "God says, 'Spare the rod, spoil the child.'" The beatings were a sadistic ritual that was excused by "the Bible."

**CH:** I did not have any sense of a punitive, harsh God. I don't remember any connection between religion and punishment. Church was a soft place. I had a gentle, caring childhood in the midst of what I came to learn was an abusive society.

**Why was it important to both of you to come out as lesbians?**

**CH:** I came out in 1979, thinking I was coming out once and for all, when I intentionally published articles saying I was a lesbian. General Convention in Denver was getting ready to vote on gay and lesbian issues, and it was important to me to be standing there as openly lesbian and not as someone talking about some other people "out there." Also, by then I had come far enough in my academic and priestly work to realize that sexuality is right at the heart of what I believe the Spirit is about in our lives, and as a theologian I wanted to be able to say so, and say how I knew, instead of using a lot of abstract theory.

**VRM:** My lesbianism was always very much a part of me. I tried to kill myself in my teens because they told me I'd never be healed, that God had no use for people like me. I couldn't stand the thought of living a life that was useless and offensive to God. I tried to be heterosexual. I married myself off. But what I did ultimately realize was that God created me as I was, and that this is where life was meaningful.

**CH:** Your religious culture was really demanding you to choose. It was not that clearcut and simple a thing for me. A lot of how I view sexuality has to do with my increasing belief that human beings' sexual orientations are really very varied. Some of us know from birth, some have much more ambiguity.

What I want to say "no" to is that there is a bio-genetic factor determining sexuality — there may be, but no one knows. It also may be that the society in which I grew up so oppressed me as a female that by the time I was a young woman, it was apparent that the only way to be myself in the most intimate possible way was with women. And that's maybe what lesbianism means in my life, a social construction. Or it may not mean that. I don't care either way, but one thing I despise is the churches telling us they will allow us in because we can't help ourselves. I want to say, "We don't know whether we can help it or not. The fact of the matter is that we are attempting to live as best we can moral and worthwhile lives — that is what we should be rejoicing about — so come down off your soapboxes, sisters and brothers, and open the door."

**VRM:** When heterosexuals ask me about the origins of my homosexuality, I say, "You tell me about yours, I'll tell you about mine."

Coming out is a way to strike a blow against heterosexism, which is held in place by silence.

**CH:** If all the gays and lesbians in the church came out overnight, the silence-breaking would make this a different church.

**How much does clergy sexual abuse have to do with clericalism, the idea that clergy are somehow "better" than laypeople?**

**CH:** Part of the rhetoric around clergy sexual abuse is this business of being

clear about the boundaries between a lay person and an ordained person, which is clericalism. I do understand that I have power and that I can abuse it and people with it. However, I have always believed that a priest should be in the business of giving up power by empowering, by helping others to understand that we're all commissioned by the sacred spirit to pastor one another, to be priests together. Anything that increases the gap between clergy and lay people, such as saying that professional competence and personal intimacy are mutually exclusive, that you can't be pastoral to people that you're deeply involved with, concerns me. That has not been my experience as a teacher, nor as a priest. I don't think it's good theology at all.

**VRM:** Friendship can be a startlingly intimate relationship. I believe clear thinking *requires* emotional involvement.

**CH:** I agree. The danger with the clergy, and other professions, is that we're becoming too professional, backing off from any kind of intimacy. This is happening among women clergy, and distresses me because we're becoming a bunch of little female patriarchs, and that's much less than we could be doing as priests.

**VRM:** Those of my students that are my friends, what they give to me is invaluable.

**Do you think that the problem of abuse would exist if there wasn't this imbalance of power?**

**CH:** The liberal leadership is not probing more deeply into what clergy abuse is about, because to discover what it's about would be to discover we're living in a house of cards. If we're really going to have non-abusive relationships, we're going to have to rebuild the house and not in a hierarchical mode. Making more rigid

rules may eliminate sexual abuse, but there still will be spiritual or emotional abuse as long as some priest believes he or she is some special image of God.

**VRM:** The priesthood can be modeled differently. We need a little more wind of the Spirit, some spontaneity.

**CH:** I believe we can be a sacramentally profound community without the hierarchy.

**How would you answer the charge that by saying intimate relationships between clergy and laypeople are OK, you are in effect condoning sexual abuse?**

**VRM:** I can condone friendship because there is an egalitarian quality in a friendship, a non-abusive power relationship which could include a sexual element. I would never condone any kind of distorted, exploitative relationship.

**CH:** There is a chaos in what we're talking about. I think there is something very sacred in chaos that becomes order. It's a question of hanging loose to allow God's spirit to move among us and teach us. Of course, we have to be rigorous with one another in trying to do the right thing in a community of people. We're certainly not saying anything goes.

**VRM:** We're calling for quality relationships, a higher ethic, which is more difficult than just being punitive.

**CH:** People say to me, "If the church doesn't come up with some pretty strict rules, the secular laws will do it for us." My answer is that the church needs to lead the way in examining the deeper issues and creating a more humane society.

**VRM:** I'd like to see the church let Caesar do Caesar's work, and take a prophetic stand. TW



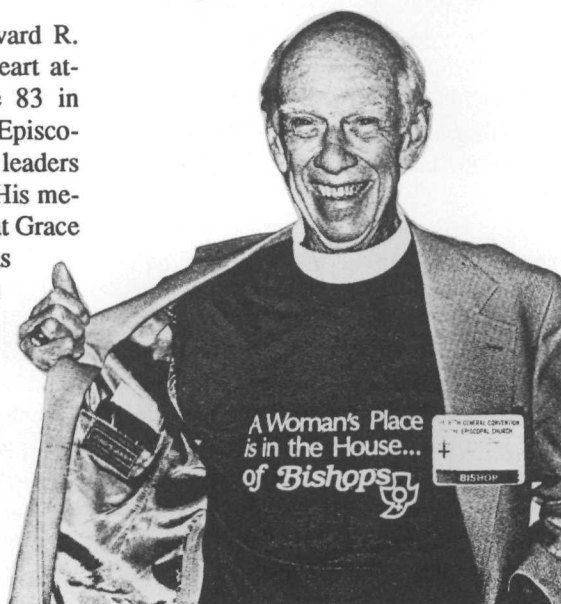
# Edward R. Welles: A man of fierce faith

by Susan E. Pierce

When the Rt. Rev. Edward R. Welles II died of a heart attack April 15 at age 83 in Kansas City, Mo., the Episcopal Church lost another of its great leaders in the struggle for social justice. His memorial service was held April 19 at Grace and Trinity Cathedral in Kansas City, on the very same date and in the very same place he had been made Bishop of West Missouri 41 years before.

Welles, former bishop of West Missouri, was a third-generation cleric. The grandfather he was named after was run out of Vicksburg, Miss. for speaking out against slavery. His father, the Rev. Samuel Welles, was nearly run out of an Oklahoma town for serving the chalice to a black man. Welles himself took unpopular stands for civil rights in Kansas City, Mo., in the 1950s and '60s, and found himself an outcast in his beloved church after he joined two other bishops in 1974 in Philadelphia to ordain 11 women as priests in defiance of an official church ban against such an act.

The day of Welles' funeral was also the same day, noted the Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, that George Carey was installed as the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury. Hiatt, one of the 11 ordained in 1974 and now professor of pastoral theology at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., said, "I could just see him, standing there smiling at the fact that the day of his entry into the larger life was the day the new Archbishop was consecrated. Gestures, anniversaries, things like that were so important to him — he was a great symbolist."



The Rt. Rev. Edward R. Welles II  
1907-1991

Bishop of West Missouri for 22 years, then assistant bishop in Maine, Welles was a staunch Anglo-Catholic. Though very conservative on many issues, he was admired by those on the other side of the ideological fence.

The Rt. Rev. Robert L. DeWitt, who during his tenure as Bishop of Pennsylvania was often involved in controversy because of his radical stands on issues, was another of the ordaining bishops in Philadelphia. He recalled that though Welles' views were very different from his own, "We had a mutual respect for each other. I didn't write him off as I tended to do with other conservatives in the House of Bishops, because he was as intensely loyal to the church as people are to their favorite sports team. He was a cheerleader at the House of Bishops, and actively enthusiastic for the church."

Welles saw the Philadelphia ordinations as a justice issue, and as Hiatt pointed out, "Once he believed in something, he went with it. He lived out his convictions in a fierce way."

Hiatt recalled that despite the radical nature of what he was doing, Welles remained typically faithful to his conservative principles throughout. "For example," she recalled, "from his years as a bishop, he would not ordain anyone who had been divorced. There were some divorced folks in the group so in the planning we made sure we didn't assign him any. And the 1928 Prayer Book was used at the service mainly at his insistence. Furthermore, the 1928 Prayer Book was was clearer about ordination being the bishop's prerogative."

However, she said, he was conservative but not intolerant. "He was willing to let the others do it their way. They were all strange bedfellows, but for justice issues, they could overcome their differences."

Justice was indeed at the heart of a statement Welles and the other bishops released announcing their intentions to perform the ordinations. Acknowledging the potential for disruption and injury to many in the church, they made clear it was in the end a matter of following a higher mandate:

*"We are painfully conscious of the diversity of thinking in our church on this issue and have been deeply sobered by it. . . . However, there is a ruling factor that does require the action on our part . . . This action is intended as an act of obedience to the Spirit . . . an act of solidarity with those in whatever institution, in whatever part of the world, whatever stratum of society, who in their*



*search for freedom, for liberation, for dignity are moved by that same Spirit to struggle against sin, to proclaim that victory, to attempt to walk in the newness of life."*

He also had a very personal investment in the event, because his daughter, the Rev. Katrina Swanson, now rector of St. John's Church in Union City, N. J., was one of the ordinands. However, because of his deep love of the church, the resulting storm of recrimination and censure from other bishops and churchpeople was most difficult for her father, she said.

"It was a sweet and sour situation," Swanson noted. "I don't think he had any regrets over being part of it, but it really hurt to have so many of his friends in the church ditch him.

"The wonderful thing was the new contacts he was able to make when he followed God's call to new frontiers," she said.

DeWitt agreed that the struggle between the potential of hurting his fellow bishops and church and his passion for justice added to the bittersweetness of the moment for Welles. "These irregular ordinations put him in a spot more poignant than most people realized. His conflict over doing it wasn't doctrinal or theological, it was 'But how could I do this to these nice people who are my friends?'"

Swanson said her father never really talked much about how difficult the days after the ordinations were, but in a 1984 issue of the WITNESS commemorating the 10th anniversary of the event, Welles expressed his joy at the progress made and his sorrow for past pain and for important steps not yet taken:

*"To my infinite joy, an increasingly large proportion of people in the church accept women priests, and in the House of Bishops, fewer and fewer of my brothers treat me as a leper. For example, 10 years ago, the Bishop of Maine put me under inhibition within weeks of the Philadelphia ordination, so that I was not even*

*able to baptize a grandchild in the Episcopal Church. I had to do it in a Roman Catholic church. Now he has rescinded the inhibition and I have been serving as assistant bishop in Maine until the coadjutor arrives.*

*As for what remains to be accomplished, I'm really disappointed that there are no women bishops."*

He campaigned tirelessly to get a woman elected to the episcopate. At the 1985 General Convention, Welles wore over his bishop's clericals a T-shirt created by the Episcopal Womens' Caucus bearing the slogan, "A Woman's Place is in the House of Bishops."

When the "Episcopal Visitors" resolution, which allowed parishes and dioceses who could not "in conscience" accept a woman bishop to request an outside male bishop to come in, was debated during the 1988 General Convention in Detroit, Welles was one of 28 bishops protesting the resolution. He lamented on the floor of the House of Bishops that "we have no sister bishops to speak for themselves."

Because he so ardently believed in the right of women to become bishops, and was such a strong proponent of equal rights for all, DeWitt said that Welles was "ecstatic" when Barbara Harris, an African-American woman, was elected suffragan bishop of Massachusetts in 1989, becoming the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion. Despite increasingly fragile health, Welles made the journey from Kansas City to Massachusetts to celebrate her consecration.

Hiatt recalled his "energetic, ebullient personality that would just fill a room. He really enjoyed being at the center, being a bishop. He saw himself as an Anglo-Catholic, dedicated to preserving the faith. He was a great champion of racial equality, of ecumenism. He had an approach to the episcopacy you don't see anymore — he saw himself not as a CEO, as so many bishops do these days, but as a moral leader. He cared more about principles than public opinion." TW

## Vocation . . . Continued from page 19

There is no "right" to ordination or, for that matter, to marriage. The church does not confer "rights," but rather confirms grace. It may be inappropriate of the Christian homosexual to demand of the church the "right" to be married. However, it may be meet, right and even the bounden duty of every Christian who discerns God's call to vocation — including the call to intimate commitment — to offer that gift to God in the community of the baptized.

Christian homosexual women and men do not need the church's permission to solemnize a sacrament of which the partners themselves are the celebrants. Neither can any partners expect the unequivocal or uncritical acceptance of their relationship within the church; membership in the community of the faithful invites continuous confession and repentance and the critical ministration of the whole. Those moved to offer their relationship, even to the pain that inevitably comes of living in community, are making a gift to the church. As such, they contribute to the church's own vocation, challenging the church to discern God's call in their offering. The church's response to the proffered gift reflects not the quality of the giver or the gift, but the grace, or lack thereof, of the church itself — for the church also stands in need of repentance and within God's critical considerations.

Christian homosexuals might then be encouraged to take their place in the church and to offer with perseverance the gift of their love, and their covenant relationships. The church might be encouraged to receive with gratitude that gift, remembering that we are commanded to be thankful for all things, even those gifts we do not understand or do not receive to our perceived comfort or benefit. The resulting dialogue can be our shared offering, humbly surrendered to the judgement of God. TW

# WITNESS wins three ACP awards

**T**HE WITNESS magazine scored two firsts and an honorable mention in the prestigious Associated Church Press contest which drew some 800 entries in 1991, the ACP's 75th anniversary year. Awards were presented April 29 at a festive dinner in the Clarion Hotel, St. Louis, during ACP's annual convention.

THE WITNESS won for best editorial, "The price of greed," by Susan E. Pierce, in the September 1990 issue and for best feature, "Crossing the line in Iraq for peace" by the Rev. James Lewis in December. Honorable mention was awarded to Verna J. Dozier's "Saying 'Yes' in a 'No' world," in the May issue.

Of Pierce's editorial, judges wrote, "Tightly reasoned, tightly written. Instead of fighting 'for the right to continue to drown in our own waste,' the editorial reasons, 'this crisis should be a time to look at our consumption habits, heed the warnings, and make significant changes in lifestyle.'" Pierce also served on the ACP Futures Committee panel which tried to second-guess trends in religious publishing for the next decade. This workshop also examined case studies of magazines that had folded over the past years, noting that no publications, prize-winners notwithstanding, "are safe from a budget axe, wielded rather ruthlessly sometimes in the denominations."

Lewis' feature "presented timely information in a personal, readable manner," judges said. "The compelling issues, along with witty and rich language, made this article exceptional. Often, stories that relate incidences while traveling become boring, long explanations of who went where when. The structure of this article is much different. The author sets the scene and then breaks up the piece with

anecdotes from a variety of countries. He never loses sight of the theme and his message. A well crafted, interesting and important piece."

Dozier's article was cited as "a truly inclusive invitation to affirm in-spite-of/ because-of God's possibilities." First place in this category went to *The Christian Century* for Belden C. Lane's "Grace and the Grotesque."

Judges awarded THE WITNESS a 7 on a scale of 1 to 10. General comments included: "Courageous, tough issues. Solid reading. Strong editorials. You expect a lot from your readers, but if your letters to the editor column response is a judge of that, you're doing fine. Good job." . . . "Writing clear, consistent; perhaps could be more concise." . . . Hard hitting coverage in some stories; willing to take a stand."

This year's awards bring the total of firsts captured by THE WITNESS to 13 over the past 14 years, plus six honorable mentions.

The Associated Church Press numbers 204 publications in Canada and the United States in its membership, reporting a combined circulation of 11.5 million. Newly elected officers for the coming term are Tom McGrath, editorial director, Claretian publications, president; Ron Arena, *The American Baptist* magazine, first vice president; Wendy McFadden, *Messenger* magazine, second vice-president; Chris Woehr, News Network International, treasurer. Named to the Board of Directors was James Solheim, Episcopal News Service; Jean Caffey Lyles, *The Lutheran*; Leon Howell, *Christianity and Crisis*; and Ruth Nicastro, *Episcopal News*. Nicastro's periodical was also cited for general excellence this year by the ACP. TW

**CONSULTATION . . .** *Cont. from p. 13*  
and consent if the pregnant woman is underage," she said.

"It is also the view of the Caucus that if women had access to means of decent, reliable birth control, abortions would be far less an option. The Caucus is therefore calling for the use of medicaid funds for NORPLANT, a medical birth

control procedure, that those in need may have access to it."

The Caucus will present a briefing for women deputies and delegates about the issues it is supporting, legislative strategy, and candidates it will back on July 14 at a brunch at the Hyatt-Regency from noon to 2 p.m.

## Minority groups to present progressive agenda

Consultation members representing minorities will be active around a whole panoply of issues at General Convention.

Native Americans will be witnessing to how racism uniquely affects them in the United States, according to Kesley Edmo, Consultation representative. Especially offensive is the forthcoming quinquennial celebrations around the "discovery" of America by Columbus, after which the Indian nations were either wiped out or dispossessed. Carol Hampton, field officer for the Episcopal Church Office for Indian Ministries put it, "genocide is not something to celebrate," but rather a year for repentance and healing. "What we'd like to honor is 500 years of survival," Hampton said.

For Native Americans, racism also translates into how treaty rights are violated and how religious freedom is curtailed, said Owanah Anderson, Native American officer at the Episcopal Church Center. Also, Native Americans are concerned about their visibility, meaning participation in the life and decision-making of the Episcopal Church. Budget crunches will be shrinking funding for the new Episcopal Council of

Native Ministries (ECIM) which gives financial support to dioceses with major Indian missions and ministries, she said.

The Rev. Floyd "Butch" Naters-Gamarra, convener of the Coalition of Hispanic Episcopalians (CHE), says Hispanics are joining the growing protest about massive festivities planned throughout the hemisphere to "celebrate" the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World. CHE is involved in educational efforts and alternative celebrations which will lift up the culture and heritage of the peoples oppressed during that era, "one of the most destructive periods in history," Naters-Gamarra said.

CHE is also protesting wherever English is being adopted as the official language on state documents as discriminatory against Spanish-speaking and other minorities. Finally, CHE is backing a resolution concerning violence in the cities against people of color, and will vote in solidarity with resolutions submitted by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and the Peace and Justice Commission.

Asiameica Ministries Advocates will focus on Convention legislation highlighting the growing problem of prostitution and abuse of Philippine women, closely related to the presence of U.S. military bases, according to the Rev. James Kodera. In addition, a resolution has been submitted protesting compulsory fingerprinting of Koreans in Japan. An Asiameica Ministries Advocates member, the Rev. Benjamin Pao, is running for Executive Council. **TW**

### MOVING?

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## Daughters of Jerusalem

*(Luke 23:28-30)*

Weep,  
for our sisters and brothers,  
slain in El Salvador,  
shot down in Montreal,  
ourselves.

Light candles,  
pound crosses into the ground,  
wound the earth  
with our pain.

She opens,  
takes it into herself  
as she will at our own dying.

Clasp hands,  
sing, invoke  
rivers of peace in the desert,  
circles of peace for the world,  
answers on the wind.

In the cold our breath  
hangs incense-heavy.

If then we should turn,  
see the pain in each other's eyes,  
clear as the moon  
sliding from behind the clouds,  
and fall on the earth,  
rub dead leaves in our hair,  
howl?

They would not return.

. . . If we had not borne,  
or given suck . . .

O daughters of Jerusalem  
weep  
that the time not come  
when we ask the mountains  
to fall on us,  
the hills to cover us  
so we see no more.

Antonia Matthew

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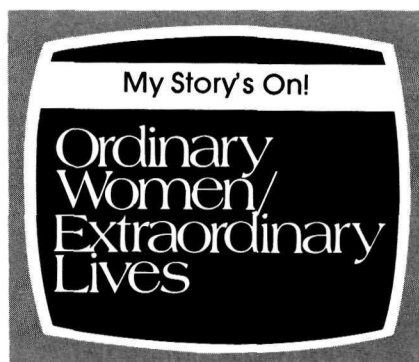
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Mary Lou Suhor

Editor

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