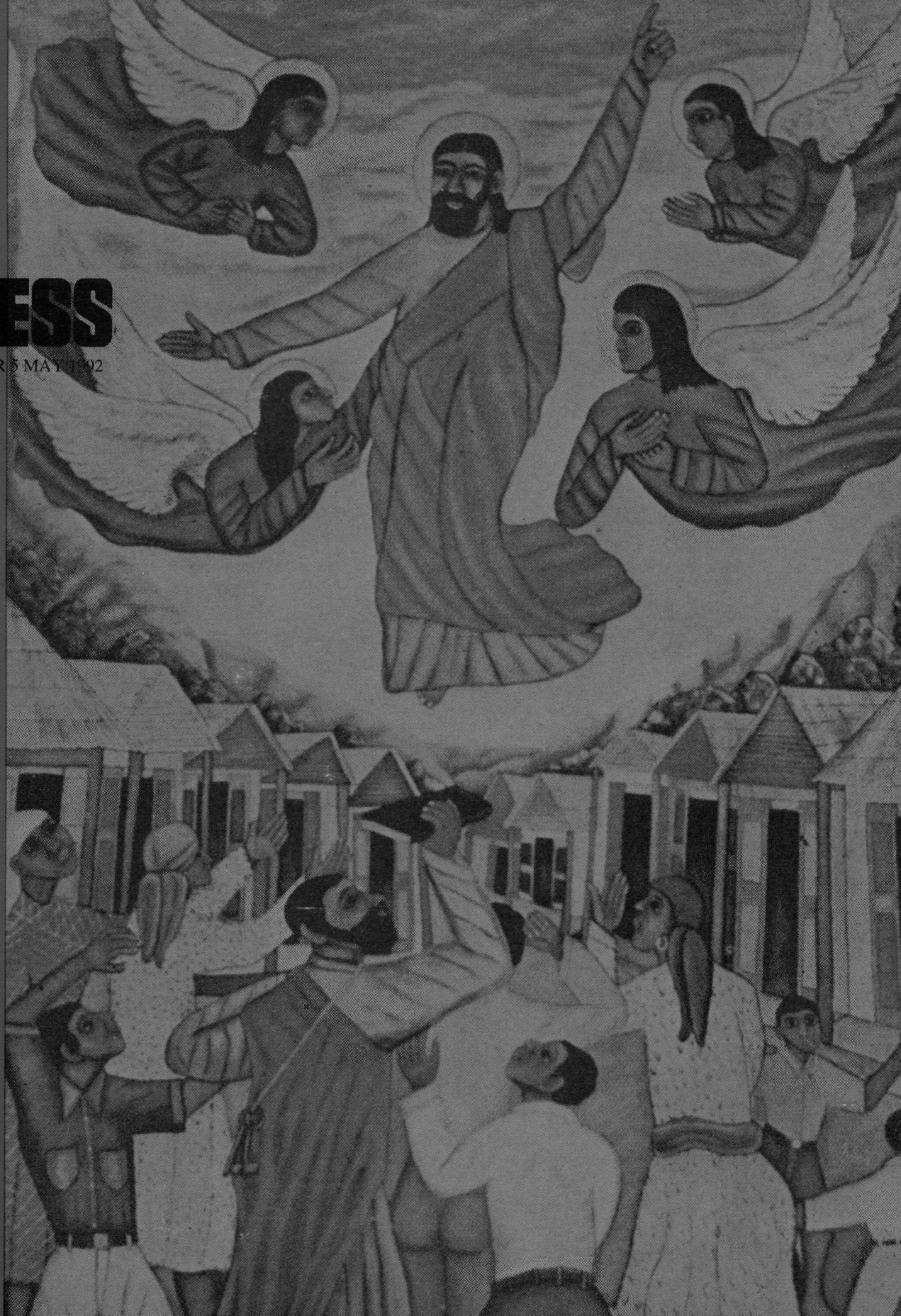


THE WITNESS

VOLUME 75 NUMBER 5 MAY 1992

Ordination: *In pursuit of a multi- cultural priesthood*



Questions of faith and money

YOUR REPRINT of articles from the 1931 issue of *The Witness* was great [February, 1992]. The two criticisms of capitalism made so much sense to those engulfed in the Great Depression. It is tragic that today Christians do not look to a democratic socialist system that stresses service rather than profits as the primary motivating factor.

Just yesterday I saw the classic picture of "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler" in a suburban church parlor.

In my sociology of religion class I have Cherie Bandrowski speak. She tells how she was a well-off and contented suburbanite until she read Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Then she felt that she must express her Christian faith by joining a church interested in the poor and working among them in a depressed city area. And she did it.

I trust *The Witness* will touch many lives with what it really means to be a Christian.

John M. McCartney
Nonviolent Action for National
Defense Institute
Detroit, MI

YOUR FEBRUARY ISSUE reminded me that something has been bothering me for most of my life.

I remember when my parents received a "missionary box" when I was a young child. Daddy counted as a "missionary" because he served small Methodist and United churches in rural Vermont. While he and Mama had no objection to receiving the boxes of clothing from her college friends who had children a little older than we were, they were distressed to be the recipients of a "missionary box" which as I recall was a blanket or two. I remember how they labored over the thank-you letter which had to express gratitude and a request not to do it again ... They didn't mind getting the Christmas box from the church, however, since a dozen or more boxes were filled at our house and distributed by Daddy to members demonstrably poorer than we. Our box came from somewhere else. I never knew

where, but doubtless my parents knew.

When my husband and I served a small inner-city church in Chicago in the early '60s, we were supposedly "on the cutting edge" following the suburban new church development of the '50s. Later my husband moved on to serving the elderly and infirm. Throughout these experiences there was a sense that God loves the poor, the sick, the elderly, the disenfranchised, the minority more than He loves other people.

I have often wondered what happens when a poor person manages to get his/her life back together, gets a good job and becomes middle class (whatever that means). Does that person then lose God's love and attention because he/she (with God's help) has prospered?

We are back in the inner city and we love it as always. Our church is poor. We are not subsidized by our denomination, so the members have to raise the money by having fundraising events throughout the year. This supplements the non-pledged envelope gifts which are usually about \$1 per week, appropriate in relation to the income of the givers. Fundraisers are for the whole community and thus bring in money from non-members. Suddenly we find ourselves feeling defensive: why isn't our church mounting programs for the poor? the homeless? the elderly?

Because more and more of our members are entering the ranks of the unemployed. More and more are coming closer and closer to being homeless. Our food pantry is busy and we also participate in other neighborhood community pantries. We have cooperative programs with other neighborhood churches. This is all we can do. Our people are stretched meeting their own employment needs, the needs of their families and the needs of the church for fuel, repairs, paint and keeping outdated furnaces working.

Again I find that there is an attitude that God loves only the poor. We are not poor enough to be among those God loves and not rich enough to work off our guilt with patronizing gifts to "those less fortunate."

In the intervening years while my husband was serving the elderly in various capacities in church-sponsored institutions I have had the opportunity to belong to a number of different churches, some of which can be classified as "big rich churches." I have found

members of these churches as broken and wounded as any in the inner city. They are in even more desperate need of the Gospel of Christ than their poorer brothers and sisters. Not, as one might think, so they will share their plenty with those in want: most of them do so in their own way, but so they can find relief in Christ for the burdens they bear, healing for their inner wounds and above all a healing of attitude, so they can hear and share with their brothers and sisters the Message. So they can recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives and in the lives of the poor and accept this as Gift. To get beyond the grammar and lifestyles to the commonality as Children of God together.

Soup kitchen, shelters, yes, and art of all kinds (look at what the WPA arts programs achieved!) and education and social action are all important. But remember, we are us, it's not them-us, as it was with the blanket for the rural missionaries or the government surplus for the poor pastor. We receive with gratitude the clothing from our friends because we know it comes from love, caring and a sense of being with us, being us. We receive with joy the Christmas box from our own church, because it is for us from those who care and who are also us.

Priscilla W. Armstrong
Baltimore, MD

I FOUND YOUR "Money and Faith" issue as good as any issue of any magazine I've read. Indeed, depressingly so. My greatest fear may be that we humans will fail to make adequate changes to our structure to correct our flaw. I was especially impressed by Walter Wink's article on the Domination System until its end where I felt Mr. Wink fizzled out rather than

The Witness welcomes letters to the editor. We are most able to accommodate letters of 200 words or less. Please send comments to The Witness, 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226-1868. It is our policy to edit letters for length when necessary, but not for style.

take the next logical step.

To me, what we need to do go back a couple of issues to your "Confession" issue and admit that the Domination System simply does not — cannot — work. And, then to go on and make the political changes necessary.

Mr. Wink's argument that "only God can bring about a new system . . ." is hogwash. Human history is especially a story of changing political structures to take into account groups that have been excluded.

John Kavanaugh
Detroit, MI

[Ed. Note: Walter Wink is not at odds with you. You need to read the subsequent chapters of his book: *Engaging the Powers*, Fortress Press, 1992.]

Not renewing

I WOULD LIKE TO LET YOU KNOW that I will not be renewing at this stage for a few different reasons. Since my initial receipt of the magazine my involvement in the church has become much less — I'm sure you have heard how bad the Anglican church in Australia is regarding the ordination of women issue. I am now marginally involved with the Uniting Church (Presbyterian/Methodist/Unitarian) here but really I have left the Anglican church.

A luta continua. Best wishes for 1992 and for the magazine in the future.

Christina Green
Victoria, Australia

Abortion

The irony of it all: That the yearly estimate of two million abortions in Italy dropped to 224,000 after abortion and contraceptives were legalized! That Romania in the 1980s, where contraceptives and abortions were both outlawed, had an abortion rate 17 times that of the Netherlands, where abortion was legal and publicly funded!

Not a bit ironical is the fact that the Netherlands has the developed world's lowest abortion rate because it has very comprehensive community and school health programs and easily accessible contraceptive services.

We thank Pasadena (Calif.) Planned Parenthood for giving us this information. Could

it be that IF we really wish and WILL to minimize abortions, we had better take note of what has happened in Italy and the Netherlands? All in favor, pass the hat for our beleaguered clinics, and pass the word to every editor, church leader and politician!

Andrew B. Smither
Duarte, CA

Old Witnesses

[Ed. Note: People who sent financial contributions to *The Witness* in 1991 received copies of the magazine as old as the 1930s.]

MANY THANKS for sending the copies of back issues of *The Witness*. They bring back many wonderful memories of people, issues and friendships.

You seem to be off to a fine start in this new stage in the life of the magazine.

While I of course respect your right to raise any theological or pastoral questions you wish around the issue of abortion, I hope that there will be no retreat from *The Witness'* stand for free choice in the legal and political areas. This would represent a tragic equivocation on one of the most crucial issues facing our society.

George W. Barrett
Santa Barbara, CA

THANK YOU for the two copies of *The Witness* from 1932 which you sent. The Holy Spirit must have led you to send a copy with Bishop Johnson on the cover. He confirmed me! I wish I had a tape of the sermon — probably the shortest and most pointed ever given, but entirely lost from memory.

And it was because we knew he was involved with *The Witness* that we subscribed, sometime in the late 1940s, and thereby became acquainted with Bill Spofford, Sr., through his writing. As you said in the transmittal, it is great to get a flavor of the time by reading these old issues.

Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy
Ann Arbor, MI

Witness praise

I ENJOY *THE WITNESS* so much. It hits me where I live theologically speaking. My new position is that of Priest-In-Charge of the

English-speaking congregations in Guatemala City. Ministry among the Quiche Indians as well as marginal groups in the cities is incredible.

Joseph F. Rider
Vero Beach, FL

I'VE BEEN A SUBSCRIBER to *The Witness* for several years. I'm a member of St. John's Cathedral here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I subscribe to many magazines and after I've read them I pass them on to other persons at the Cathedral. I live in a one-bedroom apartment — so don't have much room for magazines I've already read.

My subscription would have come due in May — but here is a check for \$40 for two years.

Best wishes for your work. I am 83 years old — quite active yet.

Ruth Lackey
Albuquerque, NM



Corrections

The April book review began with an excerpt from Jim Douglas' book *The Nonviolent Coming of God*. We neglected to italicize the following paragraph:

The point here is similar to one that was made by William Stringfellow, when he was pressed by a friend to declare whether he really believed in the Resurrection. Stringfellow paused and said, "Phil Berrigan going to jail."

Also, contrary to appearances on page 18 of the March issue, we *do* know how to spell Edmond Browning's name!

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Since 1917

Editor/publisher Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann
Assistant Editors Marianne Arbogast
Julie A. Wortman
Promotion Manager Marietta Jaeger
Layout Artist Maria Catalfio
Book Review Editor Bill Wylie-Kellermann
Poetry Editor Gloria House
Art Section Editors Virginia Maksymowicz
Blaise Tobia

Contributing Editors

Barbara C. Harris H. Coleman McGehee
Carter Heyward J. Antonio Ramos
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Cover: *The Ascension*, by Castera Bazile of Haiti. Reprinted from May 4, 1961 *Witness*. It is the policy of *The Witness* to use inclusive language whenever possible.

The captivity of sacraments

by Wesley Frensdorff

The sacraments are the lifeblood of the Church, but the present system gives their control to **potential** leaders rather than to established leaders. It is [also] largely true that the availability of money controls the availability of eucharistic and sacramental leadership for most local congregations.

The captivity of sacraments

In my mind, there are two basic systemic problems, which are interrelated. One of these deals with our ministry delivery system, and the other with our system of leadership and governance.

Our ministry delivery system, the delivery of service in the name of Christ, is basically the English village model, but in overload. That model is centered and heavily dependent on the "cleric," who at one time was the most educated person in the village and thus also the primary teacher. This model tends to create vicarious religion, centered on the priest as the holy person, in whom is focused the religious power and knowledge. It also tends to create dependence, rather than interdependence. If the priest is "father," church members are children,

who never reach sufficient adulthood in Christ to exercise much of their ministries. If the priest is pastor, members are always sheep intended to follow, not lead.



"Come, follow me."

credit: Lavrans Nielsen

Furthermore, this ministry delivery system is highly professionalized; at the center stands a professional with professional training. The model is highly hierarchical, and economically dependent in that it cannot function in its presently accepted traditional form without money. Furthermore, as a result of setting priesthood in a professionalized and economically dependent ministerial system, we have created a "sacramental captivity." Sacraments are primarily available where

a professional, stipendiary priest is available. This clerically-centered model of congregational life and mission increasingly limits both ministry delivery and the sacramental life of the Church.

Importing leadership

But this system is also tied up with our governance system. It has separated, or at least created a distance between, the Church's primary leadership and the community of faith. As far as the local congregation is concerned, the primary leadership, by design, is **imported**.... The exercise of leadership takes second place to that of the imported leadership of the priest. Both systemic problems — leadership and ministry delivery — create much discomfort because they are basically inconsistent with our faith convictions. As Christians we are committed to a basic view of life that has interdependence at its heart.

In order to understand these systemic problems more clearly, it might be helpful to look at a bit of history.

From itinerancy to cures

Bernard Cooke, in 1983, pointed to three major shifts or movements that occurred in the first two centuries of the present era. These shifts so far have not been reversed, but in some cases heightened as the centuries progressed.

First, he pointed to the shift from itinerant ministry and leadership to resident ministry and leadership. Jesus was itinerant, and he demanded the same from his followers. In the early Church, leadership ministries were also itinerant but many soon settled down. While there has always been some itinerant ministry, for example through missionaries, most primary leadership in the Church has been

Wesley Frensdorff was consecrated in 1972, serving as bishop of the Diocese of Nevada, and later as interim of Native American Mission and assistant in Arizona. He died in 1988. This article is adapted from a 1985 essay entitled **Ministry and Orders: A Tangled Skein**. Artist **Lavrans Nielsen**, who died in 1976, was a Trappist monk at Gethsemani in Kentucky.

“settled” since those early centuries.

From gifts to sanction

The second shift to which Bernard Cooke points is one from charismatic to official leadership. The early leadership patterns were based on gifts given to individuals, because of which they were then called to carry on certain functions. Paul has a number of these lists. But soon the needs of the institutional leadership tended to shape these functions into offices. This shift, Cooke points out, was heightened by the second-century gnostic crisis. In the face of these challenges, both the ministry of prophesy and the ministry of teaching had their autonomy diminished, almost eliminated.

Setting the Church apart

The third shift, from “secular to sacred,” is “the key element in the process towards attributing sacrality to official Church leadership; the shift towards contributing to such leaders sacred power by virtue of which their ministerial activity is salvifically effective.” Here are sown the seeds of what later developed into a view of actual superiority of the clergy by virtue of ordination.

In contrast, Cooke points out, primitive Christianity “really saw its own existence with that of Jesus as ‘secular.’ They believed that a radically new form of sacrality had entered the picture with the advent of Jesus, and above all with his death and resurrection. This new sacrality had nothing to do with some special realm of sacred religious activity. It dealt with the sanctifying presence of God’s spirit in Jesus and thereafter in the Church. It was this Holy Spirit that made Jesus the new and definite “holy of holies” and the Christian community the temple in which God dwelt....The entire community was believed to be empowered by Christ’s spirit and empowered to share in the ongoing mission of the risen one.”

By the end of the first century, all of

this was beginning to change. There was a shift to the sanctuary with images of priesthood praising God on behalf of the people. In the second century “the sacred character of the **Episcopos** and the sacred nature of his role are explicitly and consistently mentioned.” This appears to reverse earliest Christianity’s reluctance to apply sacred terms to any individual in the Church. “From the third century onward we can speak of holy orders in the life of the Church.”

If we are going to free the life and mission of the Church from clerical and sacramental captivities, we must understand our history, disentangle the issues, and reform the systems.

Priests as first-class Christians

Edward Schillebeeckx points out that the trends Cooke identifies reached new heights in the Middle Ages and that we are still stuck with them. Schillebeeckx goes on to point out that at that time the shift from leadership rooted in community to leadership with “private” power came to new fulfillment.

Our theology and tradition still claim the first picture while our practice and ecclesial culture point in many ways to the second. While the Reformation sought to make basic changes in some of these areas, it was largely unsuccessful. Aidan Kavanagh puts the matter as follows:

The upshot of all this is that the Western Churches in the first half of this present and perhaps most egalitarian of centuries found themselves with a highly undiversified ministerial structure focused on a...group of people who were

*now regarded by many as ‘first-class Christians,’ a church of the chosen **within** a far larger church of the unchosen who constituted a baptized proletariat of Christians of the second, third, or even fourth kind. The effects of this are presently all around us.*

The other Christian ministries, where they survived, have been presbyteralized, and the rest of the Church has been deministerialized. Charisms have not been restricted by this situation, for the Spirit persists in blowing, disconcertingly, where it will. But there can be no doubt that this constricted ministerial situation has made it all the more difficult to discern diaconic (i.e., service) charisms when they occur, and made it all but impossible to recognize them publicly and employ them effectively to the Churches’ good.

The most significant thing to recognize is that in this process the ordained offices have been uprooted from the community. They are privatized and clericalized. Equally important, sacramental power now leads to leadership. In the earliest Church tradition, a leader was identified, called, and then given sacramental responsibility. Now, because of these shifts, in our practice, someone offers himself or herself to the Church and, if affirmed, is trained. Then, through ordination, sacramental authority is given; only after this comes the call to specific leadership. The primary criteria are leadership **potential** and intellectual ability, rather than **already established** leadership in the community of faith.

If we are going to free the life and mission of the Church from clerical and sacramental captivities, we must understand our history, disentangle the issues, and “reform” the systems, in order that every community of laity, in Schillebeeckx’s words, “may have a full ecclesial life.” Only then is the Church truly empowered for mission. **TW**

Psalm 62: I Put My Trust in Thee

by Benjamin Chavis, Jr.

O God my God, my soul longs for thee;
my heart beats to thy will.
I put my trust in thee, O God;
I yearn to celebrate thy love.

O God, thou art my confidence;
thou art my only ray of hope.
Before the dangers of society
thou art my security.

O God, I do accept thy call;
I shall preach thy word.
In constant struggle for thy kingdom
I put my trust in thee.

***Benjamin Chavis, Jr.** wrote these psalms while jailed from 1975 to 1979. Chavis, a United Church of Christ minister, had been organizing blacks to fight for civil rights in North Carolina when he and nine others were arrested and charged with arson. The convictions were overturned in 1981. During his time in prison, Chavis led a Bible-study group for fellow prisoners, an experience he wrote about in a February, 1982 **Witness** article entitled *Freeing Prisoners with the Bible*.*

Psalm 38: Give Me the Courage

Give me the courage, O God;
provide my spirit with thy strength.
Come unto me, O God,
and enter my heart with thy love.

Grant me the moral fiber to speak out, O God,
that I may take a vocal stand for justice.
Let me be thy instrument, O God,
that I may do thy will.

In the face of intimidation, O God,
help me to be brave.
Where there is injustice, O God,
in thy name give me the courage to challenge it.

Make me whole, O God;
let my personhood be active and upright.
Give me the courage, O God,
that I may involve my total existence
in thy liberation of humanity from sin.

Psalm

from **Psalms from Prison**, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1983.

Australian women ordained

by Sue Pierce

Less than a month after plans to ordain 11 women to the priesthood were blocked by a last-minute civil court injunction in the Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn, Archbishop Peter Carnley ordained 10 women deacons to the priesthood in Perth's St. George's Cathedral in the state of Western Australia, making them the first women priests in this province of the Anglican communion.

One of the Perth ordinands, Kay Goldsworthy, said the emotional March 7 service in St. George's Cathedral before a weeping and cheering overflow congregation felt "good, in the sense that the seven days of creation in Genesis were 'good.'"

Goldsworthy was made a deacon in 1986, and is now chaplain at an Anglican girls' school, Perth College.

"I'm still a bit stunned," she said. "We'd been hopeful so many times, it's like a tradition. I didn't think I'd be a deacon this long.

"As a woman who believes she is called to be a priest and has been stopped only by the fact that ... 'you've got ovaries,' I'm still very critical of the Church, but there was still a sense of something very powerful in the service, a sense of people unleashing stuff held at bay because for so long the Church wouldn't say 'women are good, women are equal.'"

Goldsworthy said she was encouraged by the grassroots support for the ordinations, noting, "People who weren't Anglican told me how wonderful they

thought it was and Anglicans who felt for years they couldn't go to Church have come back now. When I go to parishes people are realizing, 'Well, we could have a woman rector here'."

Pam Albany, Perth spokesperson for Australia's Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW), confirmed that support.

"We showed that working within the structure wasn't working. We used the media, we demonstrated, and put it on the table as a justice issue," she said.

The service felt "good, in the sense that the seven days of creation in Genesis were 'good.'"

— Kay Goldsworthy

Because of the toll exacted by the struggle, for many women the sense of victory and celebration over the Perth ordinations was mixed with heartache, anger and weariness.

The blocking of the Canberra ordinations, scheduled for February 2, had been the most recent defeat. The question of women's ordination, which had been voted down time and time again in the General Synod, had been taken to the Church's highest ecclesial court, the Appellate Tribunal, for a decision on whether the matter should be handled by the dioceses or only the General Synod. In December 1991, the Tribunal handed down an opinion stating it could not find an answer. Encouraged by this decision, and the fact that the Church's constitution does not prohibit the ordination of women,

Canberra's Bishop Owen Dowling made plans for the Canberra ordinations.

However, the opposition acted quickly. Three men from the Diocese of Sydney went to the Appeals Court in the State of New South Wales and won an injunction blocking the ordinations until their legality could be determined. Sydney is the largest and wealthiest diocese in the country and routinely uses its majority in Synod to vote down women's ordination.

According to Alison Cheek, an Australian who was priested with the first women to be ordained in the U.S. Church in Philadelphia in 1974, winning the injunction was possible because the Church of Australia's constitution is tied to that of the state, civil courts having legal jurisdiction over matters of Church law.

Cheek, who is now director of feminist liberation theology studies at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., had journeyed to Australia for the Canberra ordinations. But because of the injunction her hopes of finally seeing her Australian sisters ordained were destroyed—the long-anticipated day of celebration became one of shock, sadness and anger.

"It was so hard when I went to Canberra, because the 11 women really thought they would be ordained," Cheek said. But despite strong sentiment among many Australian Anglicans, including conservatives, that Church matters should not be decided in civil court, Dowling honored the injunction, passing over the women to lay hands on the male ordinands present.

Cheek and Caroline Pearce, another Australian ordained a priest in the U.S., were unable to stand by and watch the women being ignored. "When the Bishop passed over the women, Caroline and I went and laid hands on them," said Cheek.

While having no illusions about the Church, many Australian women feel that the Perth ordinations are a sign that transformations are taking place.

Sue Pierce, a free-lance writer based in Philadelphia, was an editor of *The Witness* from 1988 until 1991. She is production editor for *American Writing: A Magazine*.

"The great thing about Perth is that it happened," said Patricia Brennan, a physician and former national convener of Australia's MOW. "It broke a terrible deadlock."

Brennan said she found the Canberra non-ordinations painful but instructive. "The Christian Gospel sits happiest in disappointment — Anglicans are so arrogant when they win. Canberra was a strange sort of celebration. People were horrified, it was looking like domestic violence. There was an atmosphere of defiance and joy, tension and rage — it set the stage for [Archbishop] Carnley," said Brennan.

Another reason Perth may have succeeded where Canberra failed is geography. Perth, separated from eastern Australia by hundreds of miles of desert, faces the Indian Ocean to the west and actually is closer to Jakarta, Indonesia than to Sydney. Western Australians feel little allegiance to the regions in the east.

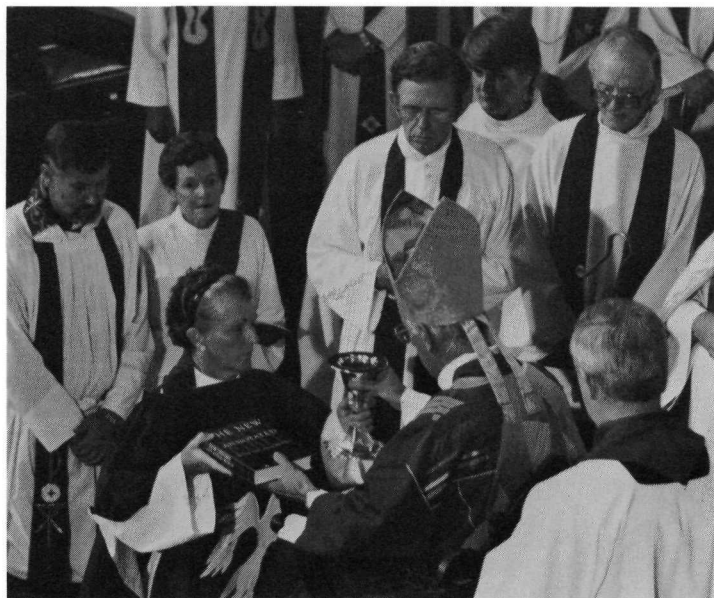
When the opponents to the Canberra ordinations filed suit to block the ones in Perth, they asked the judge in Western Australia to "maintain the status quo" by upholding the New South Wales injunction. The judge replied, "It is not part of my job to adopt the safe course; my duty is to dispense justice."

Waiting for the judge's decision was a nerve-wracking time for all, according to Albany, because of the power of civil law.

"If there had been an injunction and the Archbishop had gone ahead, he could have been held in contempt of court. If the ordinations had gone ahead and been declared illegal, opponents could have declared themselves the *true* Anglican

Church, and taken all the property. As someone said, 'How many women priests is St. George's Cathedral worth?'"

The evening before the scheduled ordination, the court's decision affirming the ordination was handed down. According to Goldsworthy, there was a "fabulous sense of celebration" at the



The Perth ordination

credit: *Anglican Messenger*, Diocese of Perth

service. At Perth College where she is chaplain, she saw the effect of the ordinations on the next generation through her young women students. When the students heard of the favorable court decision, they ran to the chapel and began ringing the bell.

"It had been deeply frustrating to work with 700 girls and to tell them God says you are great and good, except that within this structure, as a woman, you can't be totally a part of it," she said. "They have lots of wonderful anger — it's nice when girls of 15 and 16 can't believe that anyone could stand in their way."

The Australian ordinations are also of great importance to women in England, although Caroline Davis, a spokesperson for MOW in London who was in Perth for

the ordinations, doesn't feel that they will directly affect the situation in the Church of England, where changing the canons in favor of women's ordination requires approval from both the General Synod and the British Parliament.

But Davis hopes that the pro-women stance of Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, plus the Australian ordinations, may persuade the Church of England's November General Synod to approve women's ordination.

If the English Church rejects women's ordination to the priesthood in November, the issue cannot be reconsidered for another five years.

As for whether Australia's upcoming General Synod in July will uphold the Perth ordinations, MOW's Brennan, for one, is optimistic. She noted that the Church is becoming increasingly congregational and fragmented. Many of the anti-women conservatives, she thinks, will be

willing to trade off letting bishops in each diocese have the episcopal authority to choose to ordain women or not in order to avoid further splitting the Church.

"The goal posts have been moved and people are going to have to get used to it," Goldsworthy says.

"For myself, I need to keep exploring what priesthood as a woman means for me. I can't forget those women in Canberra. We all pay a price. But we go through this so that the ones that come after us won't have to."

[Ed. Note: In addition to Goldsworthy, those ordained in Perth were Elizabeth Couche, Constance Halbert, Jennifer Hall, Teresa Milne, Catherine Pinner, Judith Peterkin, Joyce Polson and Robin Tandy.]



HOOP ONE:

Admission to postulancy

1. Would-be priest or aspirant discusses matter with rector of "home" congregation, who advises him/her whether to let the diocesan bishop know he/she wants to be ordained.
2. If bishop believes aspirant might have vocation to ordained ministry, invites aspirant to apply for acceptance as postulant — in some dioceses, applicant is required to participate in process of "vocational discernment" first.
3. Diocesan commission on ministry assists bishop in interviewing applicant and evaluating application materials, including results of physical and psychological examinations.
4. If accepted as postulant, aspirant begins approved program of preparation (theological, practical, emotional and spiritual formation).
5. Postulant communicates progress to bishop four times a year, during Ember Days.



HOOP TWO:

Acceptance as candidate for holy orders.

1. After six months as postulant and nine months of theological study, postulant can apply to become candidate.
2. Commission on ministry, diocesan standing committee, academic supervisors and postulant's home rector/vestry must indicate to bishop whether postulant seems qualified.

To become a priest



HOOP THREE:

Ordination to transitional diaconate

1. Candidate for holy orders not eligible for ordination to diaconate until at least 21 years of age; must have been candidate no fewer than six months.
2. Candidate must pass examination covering Holy Scriptures; Church history; Christian theology and Church teaching; Christian ethics and moral theology; studies in contemporary society, including racial and other minority groups; liturgics; theory and practice of ministry. [At minimum, most dioceses require standardized General Ordination Examination prepared by General Board of Examining Chaplains.]
3. Candidate's qualifications for ordination again evaluated and diocesan standing committee provides bishop with testimonial.



HOOP FOUR:

Ordination to the priesthood

1. Transitional deacon must be at least 24 years of age and have been deacon for no fewer than six months.
2. Deacon must have served in an acceptable cure.
3. Standing committee again provides bishop with testimonial as to deacon's qualifications.

The diocesan bishop can eliminate a person from consideration at any point in ordination process (although not without giving reasons).



I hate to sound age-ist and sexist, but it seems like all we're seeing lately is white, middle-aged, divorced women, often in A.A.," a diocesan commission-on-ministry member observed in confidence.

She admitted that she and the others who evaluate persons seeking ordination in her diocese are disinclined to approve such applicants for postulancy — especially with a deployment-minded bishop breathing down their necks.

"It is really hard — it is so painful [deciding who should be approved]," she continued. "It's wonderful when someone great comes through."

But just what are the criteria for someone "great"? This is an intelligent and sensitive white woman priest talking, someone approved for ordination when diocesan commissions on ministry were regularly dismissing others of her gender from consideration without a second thought. This is a woman who tells of a fellow priest, gay, who suffered an ironic injustice when he was rejected twice for postulancy — the first time because he was outed during the application process, and the second time, in another diocese, when his guarded references to his personal life were taken as evidence that he was "too closed down emotionally."

He's "a wonderful priest" now, she says. But what of those white, middle-aged, divorced women her commission on ministry is tired of seeing and feels disinclined to approve for postulancy?

Stories abound about bids for ordination to the Episcopal priesthood that "went wrong," a virtually unavoidable by-product when something as delicate as "vocational discernment" and God's "call" are involved. Both the individual and the Church must participate and either one

can be mistaken about whether the person should be ordained.

But there are also those conspicuous—and all too frequent — instances where the institutional bias in favor of young, married, "normal" white males stops someone else from being ordained. This is so much a problem that last year's General Convention directed the Church's own Council for the Development of Ministry to help eliminate "stereotypical biases" in both the ordination screening process and deployment throughout the Church — biases involving gender, class, ethnicity, culture and disabilities.

up in the unwillingness of the [members of the] standing committee to be direct in asking the questions on their minds," she recalled of her own ordination process.

"People make assumptions: 'This person is blind, therefore she can't do what we want someone to be able to do.'"

Ramnerain wasn't rejected for ordination, partly because she anticipated the biases and met them head-on, something she urges others from marginalized groups to do if they want to work toward breaking down the stereotypes that handicap them throughout the Church.

"You know, [marginalized] people are



credit: Tana Moore

Barriers to ordination

by Julie A. Wortman

"I don't think we should let everyone pass [through to postulancy]," says Barbara Ramnerain, a deacon in the Diocese of Minnesota who also sits on the diocese's commission on ministry. "We should just apply the same rules to everyone."

Being blind, Ramnerain has long experienced biased stereotyping not only in society, but also in the Church. "It showed

tired of it— they're tired of the assumptions people have."

But applying the same rules to everyone is more difficult than it looks, as most everyone involved in screening applicants for ordination agrees. Strongly influenced by the attitudes and concerns of their bishops, each diocesan commission on ministry responds to people who

Julie A. Wortman is an assistant editor of *The Witness*. Artist **Tana Moore** works for the Lawrence Institute of Technology in Mich.

present themselves with a call to ordained ministry differently.

Some commissions gear their screening to deployment, looking for the specific gifts needed for cures in their diocese or limiting the numbers accepted. The late Bishop of Tennessee, George Reynolds, for example, reportedly made a practice of accepting only one postulant a year because that was the rate at which he thought he could support their seminary education and find them jobs. Other commissions discount deployment, believing that whether a person can actually find a cure is less important than affirming a valid call.

Evidence of emotional problems or incompatible ideological stands can also be key considerations — propsective applicants in conservative dioceses frequently migrate to liberal dioceses and, according to ESA spokesperson Brien Koehler, negative responses to theological conservatism have sent some aspirants to Fort Worth.

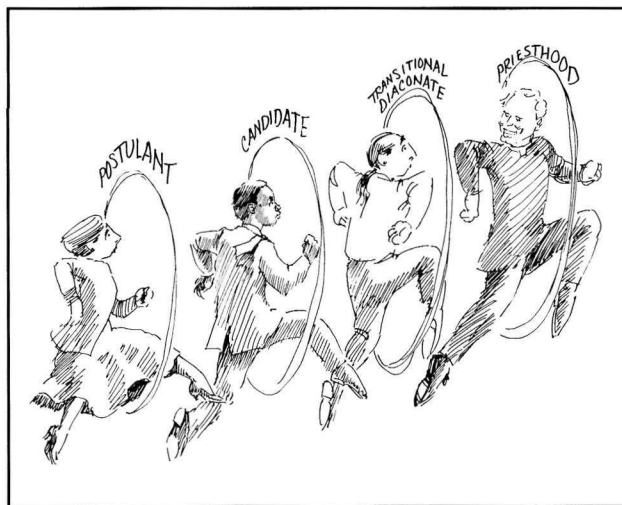
There are dioceses, like Newark, that do not even consider applicants who feel called to the vocational diaconate, and others, like Eau Claire, who will not consider women applicants unless the vocational diaconate is what they're after.

But despite the problems an applicant might face because of diocesan idiosyncracies and common stereotypical biases, the intense personal scrutiny the process can entail has for many applicants proven an unexpected and sometimes uncomfortable invasion of privacy.

Sarah Bailey, a 49-year-old from the Diocese of Southern Ohio, was told to wait before pursuing postulancy when it came out that an incident of sexual abuse from her childhood was beginning to trouble her.

"They advised that I get counseling,

even though I didn't want to postpone postulancy," Bailey said, recalling that painful period. She no longer regrets that advice or the postponement — she continued her theological studies at a nearby



credit: Tana Moore

United Methodist seminary in preparation for a final year at an Episcopal seminary — but for other applicants, the decision to divulge certain aspects of their personal history has had a negative effect.

Minnesota's Ramnerain tells of a congregational committee that decided an applicant was too emotionally scarred to continue with the process, evidence from psychiatrists to the contrary.

"She had chosen to tell them she had been a victim of incest," Ramnerain recalls. "They didn't need to know that."

Unsettled issues may need to be resolved, Ramnerain agrees, but Minnesota's commission, under the leadership of sexual exploitation expert Sue Moss, has tried to help applicants understand that there are boundaries, even in the screening process — some commission members even serve as applicant advocates to help aspirants determine where those boundaries are.

"You don't have to spill your guts," Ramnerain says.

Still, it is hard to know what is too much guts-spilling and what is too little. From the vantage of his position as provost of Austin's Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, Bill Bennett notes that while it may be possible to know everyone pretty well in a small seminary community, that does not necessarily mean that faculty and administrators would be able to pick up on problems that could blossom into disastrous misconduct once a postulant is ordained.

"There are subtle pressures not to drop out or not to reconsider the ordination goal," Bennett says. "The pressure to get through the process keeps folks from admitting to problems."

For too many, it is too often a question of all or nothing.

"When a person experiences a sense of vocation to Church leadership, ordination usually seems to be the only suitable mode of actualizing the call ... those whose vocation to ordination is not ratified by the commission's discernment feel themselves devalued and rejected," the Board for Theological Education told the General Convention last year.

That observation has been leading people like Lucinda Laird, a priest serving on Newark's ministry commission, to ask an important question.

"When we talk about this as a 'discernment' process, do we really mean that?" Laird wonders as Newark's commission wrestles with a major revamping of its approach to screening.

"If we do, there has to be more education about vocations, both lay and ordained," Laird adds.

That would be a blow against clericalism, for sure. But would it help the Church see that some white, middle-aged divorced women — and those in other marginalized groups — might really have a vocation to be ordained?

TW

Native Women's History

Those who control the land, control history and control reality. Since it was primarily women who were the keepers of knowledge, the people who carried the stories, who carried 10,000 years of history, they were targeted by the colonizers in a unique way. Women and women's authority had to be challenged in order to bring Native peoples "under control." Thus young boys were kidnapped and sent to England where they were socialized in another way.

Native cultures offer a radical concept related to women. In the gathering of women, all were involved to the extent possible and decisions were made by consensus. Decisions were made in the light of seven generations ahead. The question was always asked: What will this do to the generations to come? As women, we have a special connection to the spiritual, especially to the Creator. It is why we are able to see ahead.

Native women are trying hard to combat sexism by reclaiming our authentic traditions. It shows the effectiveness of colonization when traditions have been altered to make invisible women's significance in tribal life. We are in the process of reclaiming "dangerous memories." What we have come to understand is that sexism is not traditional; domestic violence is not traditional.

**Justine Smith of WARN
(Women of All Red Nations)
NARW Probe, March 1992**

Religious Addiction

Symptoms of religious addiction include: the inability to think, doubt, or question information or authority; placing your beliefs, finances, relationship and destiny in the hands of a clergy person; and thinking that it is a sign of faith to not think, doubt or question...to obediently become a slave to the opinions, wishes and interpretations of those representing the church.

Another symptom is black and white, simplistic thinking. Seeing life in terms of

right or wrong, good or bad, saved or sinner — never seeing the gray areas. Real life is seldom black-and-white, and the inability to cope with gray areas leaves a person feeling out of control, leaving them forever at the mercy of those who will give the black-and-white answers. These people limit and stunt their lives by rejecting anyone or anything that does not fit into their narrow frame of reference, and they become abusive of others who do not share their views. Difference, variety and change all fall into the ambiguous gray areas.

**Michael Blankenship in an
article on Leo Booth, author of
When God Becomes a Drug,
from *Second Stone*, 3-4/92**

Black Activist Faces Execution

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been on Pennsylvania's Death Row since 1982 and has now exhausted all procedural appeals, "symbolizes both the racist nature of the death penalty and the State's attempt to silence Black political activists by any means," Paul Magno writes.

Abu-Jamal was arrested in 1981 after intervening to stop a policeman from beating his brother, who had been stopped for a traffic violation. The policeman was shot and killed. Although witnesses described the gunman as a short, heavyset man with an Afro, and Abu-Jamal was 6'1", 170 lbs. and wore dreadlocks, he was charged with capital murder.

"It soon became apparent that the prosecution of Jamal was being pursued for political reasons," Magno writes. "Abu-Jamal had become a member of the Black Panther Party at age 16." Later "he emerged as a widely known and respected journalist committed to reporting on racism and oppression in the U.S. *The Philadelphia Tribune* called him the 'Voice of the Voiceless' in 1980, and in the same year he was elected president of the Association of Black Journalists of Philadelphia....He also reported on the state's repression against MOVE, a Black nationalist organization destroyed by the

Philadelphia police....The prosecution...argued for his death solely on the basis of his political history and beliefs, maintaining on that basis that he was 'a potential cop killer all along.'"

Equal Justice U.S.A. in Hyattsville, MD, has a Legal Defense Fund for him, in the hope that he can mount an appeal based upon discrediting the factual basis for the conviction. Contributions can be sent to P.O. Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782. Abu-Jamal can be written at AM-835, Drawer R, Huntingdon SCI, Huntingdon, PA 16652. Also, appeals can be sent to Governor Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Rm. 225, Harrisburg, Pa., 17120.
***The Catholic Worker*, 3-4/92**



— Prepared by Marianne Arbogast

Stop Nuclear Testing

Nevada Desert Experience, a movement which organizes ongoing prayer and civil disobedience at the Nevada nuclear weapons test site, has released a *Call to the Churches* which asks Churches to call for fasting and prayer, to support those who participate in nonviolent civil resistance, and to urge their congregations to challenge Congress to adopt a test ban. Legislation calling for a one-year moratorium on U.S. testing has been introduced in both the House (HR 3636) and the Senate (S2064).

For more information contact: Nevada Desert Experience, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, Nev., 89127.

Volunteer Openings

Invest Yourself, a catalog listing more than 40,000 volunteer positions in non-profit, non-governmental organizations, is available from The Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, P.O. Box 117, New York, N.Y.

Q: What was your own experience of ordination?

A: "There was something about that ordination to the diaconate that I will never forget," Barbara Harris said recently. "God was placing my feet on a path over which, from then on, I did not have full control. It wasn't like being on a career path.

"At the moment of ordination, I felt quite humble but I felt the rightness of it. God was moving me to a place in which I could do some things that needed to be done out of that serving office of deacon. Your first ordination is so awe-inspiring. Although I don't mean to sound casual about ordination to the priesthood or consecration to the episcopate."

I'm learning a self-discipline that I have not had to exercise heretofore. [As bishop] You begin to choose your words very carefully.

Q: When and how did you decide to pursue ordination?

A: "It was some time after the Philadelphia ordination and I was not convinced fully that this was what I was called to do. I wrestled with it for a long time, all that time trying to test this with Paul Washington. I think initially Paul was not convinced either. We went back and forth on this for a year or more.

"Finally one evening we had a marathon conversation. It began at 7:15 in the evening and at ten minutes past 3 we stood up to pray together in my den. In this conversation I think we explored every possible area of strengths and weaknesses, vocation, call rightness...

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Interviewee **Barbara Harris** is suffragan bishop of Massachusetts and former executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

When we finished praying Paul said to me, 'When shall we go to the bishop?'

"I did the first alternative program of study in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. I was advised not to go to seminary. It wasn't that I wasn't ready for seminary, but that seminary wasn't ready for me. And the Diocese of Pennsylvania was anxious to test an alternative program of study."

Harris continued her work with Sun Oil, where she was in charge of public relations. She took classes when she could

and participated in independent studies. At the end she took her exams at the Episcopal Divinity School, enjoying, for the first time, access to libraries and faculty.

Q: What's the appropriate role of a priest?

A: "I see the priest as an instrument to be used by God as an expression of God's love — as teacher, as proclaimer and by proclamation, not only by word, but living out the proclamation. A vessel from which God's unconditional love is poured out."

Q: How can the role be abused or confused?

A: "I think it's misunderstood when people feel that we have the right to determine whom God can use as instrument and therefore try to set boundaries and be the gatekeepers of who shall serve in this role and who shall not."

Q: Is it ever appropriate to refuse candidates for ordination?

A: "I think we all have to test our vocations. I don't think people ought to go into ministry as an escape from painful



Barbara Harris

Learning self-discipline interview with B

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

situations, which a lot of people do — as in other helping professions many come from backgrounds of abuse and dysfunctional family situations. I think people have to be very careful about that.

"But I don't think we can try to proscribe or limit the operation of the Holy Spirit by determining whom God can call.

"I think there are ways to help people discern whether they are called. In that discernment there needs to be an openness so that we don't see ministry as if all priests come out of the same cookie cutter mold. I think we have to recognize that



credit: Wendy Maeda, *The Boston Globe*

Discipline: an Barbara Harris

Paul's references to diversity of gifts is not to be taken lightly.

"In recent years the ordination process in many places has been designed to screen people out. In some instances this has been dictated more by economics — by what has often been referred to as a clergy glut and a concern as to whether or not there is a job for that person at the end of the process.

"That's a wrong attitude as far as I'm concerned. I don't think you can have too many people doing ministry. Not all have to be ordained, but where there is a valid call, there does not have to be the promise

of a position.

"I spoke to a group at seminary many years ago. The class was primarily women. I said that a lot of women were going to have to carve out their own ministry. I think this is now true of men as well. They need to find ways of supporting themselves as they do creative ministries that need to be exercised; these probably would not be parish ministries.

"There are so many people to minister to who will never come within the orbit of the parish. Even where parishes are involved in out-reach there are people who would never be touched."

Q: Is there a political aspect to serving as a priest?

A: "If a priest is going to be true to the proclamation of the Gospel, the politics of the culture cannot be avoided. We cannot divorce ourselves from the world around us. The Church must be in the world and to be in the world requires that we address the same kinds of issues that Jesus addressed. These have to do with justice, with peace, with oppression, with equity, with inclusiveness, all of which are related to the politics of the culture.

"If you are prophetic, you are being pastoral in the best sense of that word."

Q: How do you find the role of bishop?

A: "Little in one's previous ministry truly prepares you for being a bishop. I don't think you can study to be a bishop. There is the opportunity to use your pastoral gifts, teaching gifts, preaching gifts, to stand as a unifying presence. I don't mean a unifying presence in trying to placate all sides of opinion. I think to exercise that role faithfully means to be a maker of consensus."

*I guess if I've discovered
a new gift, it is to be in
dialogue with people with
whom I drastically
disagree.*

Q: How does it feel to attempt to be a symbol of unity?

A: "Oh it's scary," Harris said, laughing. "I doubt if anybody who is honest would say they don't have some apprehension and anxiety about that. I'm a little wary of those who feel that they have cornered the market on revealed truth and righteousness."

Q: Is that a feeling to which bishops are particularly susceptible?

A: "I think some are. Fortunately more are not.

"It's an awesome responsibility. People tend to look to bishops for answers. I think we have to be honest enough to say that we don't have all the answers, but

there are ways that we can explore things together and try to arrive at answers.

"But where issues are clear, issues of justice for example, then I think it is incumbent upon a bishop to exercise authority in lifting those up and using the office as a teaching role.

"There are other demands of the office that do not allow for all of the kinds of involvement that you could engage in in another role. When I was at ECPC (the Episcopal Church Publishing Company) I had more freedom of movement in terms of time and schedule to be on the front line. I had a forum in *The Witness* to say some things. Now I don't have that particular forum."

Q: I don't know you well but my sense from reading the column you wrote for *The Witness* [1984 – 1988] is that part of what you were striving to do was to clear away distractions and confusions so that readers could not possibly miss the justice issues that you were raising.

You were honing the point so that it could not be ignored. It seems to me that trying to move people to consensus must draw on very different skills.

A: "I think that's a fair assessment. It's different and at times I guess it's somewhat constricting, particularly if you're a suffragan bishop. There is an authority inherent in the role of diocesan bishop that is not present to the same degree.

"But I'm not so much constricted by being a suffragan bishop as I am constricted by serving a different constituency [ECPC vs. the Diocese of Mass.] People have to be met where they are."

Q: You have made this change and yet it doesn't sound as though anyone said,

"You must not be political..."

A: "That's never been said. It's something you discover as you move into the role. I'm learning a self-discipline that I have not had to exercise heretofore. You cannot always respond to situations as you would like to. You can't always say what you would like to say. I have some corking good responses, but they are in my journal.

"You choose your words carefully because you want to be understood and many are quick to misunderstand."

Q: Any surprises or gifts in the role of bishop?

A: "I guess perhaps I did not anticipate the openness of older people — people

who have seen a lot of life and know who they are. I think people tend to think of older people as set in their ways, but in many instances I find them much more flexible than people in my own age group who are still searching for their identities and wrestling with so many insecurities. The latter group are frequently those who want to shut people out.

"I guess if I've discovered a new gift, it is to be in dialogue with people with whom I drastically disagree. Some years ago that was not really possible for me because I was convicted of the rightness of the cause I was pursuing. It's a gift that has developed over time," Harris said laughing. "I count it as a gift because it wasn't something I set out to do." **TW**

Alternative routes

Although most of those ordained to the priesthood get their theological education in a three-year Masters of Divinity program at an accredited seminary and are ordained under the "regular" ordination canons, not everyone becomes a priest that way.

Education

A little more than ten percent of those ordained study in a diocesan school or program, read for orders on their own or pursue some other program of study. Such alternative educational programs, in fact, are becoming more and more popular as the Church realizes that seminaries do not always supply the training a priest needs to be effective.

The Instituto

The Instituto Pastoral Hispano is one of the most praised alternative programs.

The Instituto originated in the Diocese of Connecticut in 1977, as a program to train lay leaders within a fast-growing Hispanic population, but is now an independent program based at General Theological Seminary in New York. The four-year program offers a holistic ap-

proach to theological education for Spanish-speaking men and women. The students meet one evening a week and Saturdays to explore ways that their experiences are related to theology.

A heavy emphasis is put on their work in the community and in churches. The structure is deliberately designed to accommodate students' work schedules, since it is understood that most of these students are not financially able to suspend their work lives for a three-year seminary hiatus.

Maria Aris-Paul, director of the *Instituto*, runs the program using a Paulo Freire method, where course work is conducted on a discussion model so that everyone can learn from each other. Particular attention is paid to vocational discernment, Aris-Paul says, because students can easily seize on ordination as a substitute for developing a strong, integrated sense of self-esteem.

Graduates of the *Instituto* are now exploring new "shared-ministry" models in New York — the priests at about half the Hispanic parishes are working together in yoked ministries. At their urging, the Hispanic Commission of the Diocese of New York has been reconstituted by Bishop Richard Grein. The Hispanic pastors proposed that the commission be composed of

lay delegates from every Hispanic parish and a few elected clergy representatives.

Local ordination

The Church first legislated a way to ordain "local" priests and deacons to minister in particular communities and congregations in 1970. Canon 9 has been used more and more in recent years, particularly where congregations are in isolated areas or where the members are distinct with respect to ethnic composition, language, or culture and where no *regular* priest is available, such as on Indian reservations, in rural areas and in places with dense concentrations of immigrant people.

The focus is on raising up persons from within the worshipping community to minister there, among friends and neighbors — something many Church observers feel should happen more routinely anyway. Provisions are made for alternative forms of education and evaluation, with a strong emphasis on continuing supervision and education. Persons ordained under the canon are not mercenaries, free to apply for positions throughout the Church. Their ministry is confined to the community and congregation to which they have been ordained.

Pushing for a real peace dividend

Joining more than 20 religious orders and denominations in filing a resolution at the annual shareholders' meeting of General Electric (GE), the Episcopal Church has asked for that company's "orderly withdrawal from the nuclear weapons business."

Although this is the first time the Church has protested GE's defense contracts — it has 40,500 shares of GE stock in its portfolio — a similar resolution has been filed with Westinghouse for three successive years.

In a letter to General Electric chairman John F. Welch, Jr., the Church's treasurer, Ellen F. Cooke, wrote that the Church "has long been concerned with the moral and ethical implications of its investments and with the social responsibility of the corporation in which it holds investments."

If the government were spending less money on arms there might be more for U.S. cities which, by anyone's standard, are in big financial trouble due to federal spending cuts that affect provision of decent housing, health care, education, job training and other critical public services. Recognizing this, the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship are endorsing this month's Save Our Cities! Save Our Children! march on Washington.

Among other things, Save Our Cities! march participants are calling for "elimination of the walls between domestic and military spending" and "a program for planned economic conversion that creates jobs in the cities, retrain former military personnel and defense workers and guarantees economic justice, full employment and job security for all Americans."

Our fellow Anglicans in Britain, it should be noted, are equally concerned about their government's continuing focus on arms upgrades. Sixteen Church of England bishops and two bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church are among 100 British Church leaders who have protested Britain's decision to replace its Polaris missiles with Trident missiles.

Said Bishop Stanley Booth-Clibborn of Manchester: "Britain [is] proposing an escalation at a time when we should be trying to ensure a reduction in the number of such weapons."

Florence Tim Oi Li, 84

The first woman in the Anglican communion to be ordained a priest, Florence Tim Oi Li, died in Toronto on February 26 at the age of 84.

Born in Hong Kong, Li studied theology in Canton and was ordained a deacon in the Portuguese colony of Macau during the Japanese occupation of China during World War II. Her work with refugees fleeing Hong Kong captured the attention of Bishop R.O. Hall in 1944, who decided to ordain her a priest. Hall was censured for performing the ordination and Li was told not to function as a priest, but she did not resign her orders.

Archbishops of Canterbury Temple and Fisher refused to recognize her orders and so did the Lambeth Conference of 1948. But 40 years later, in a special service at Westminster Abbey, she was hailed by Archbishop Robert Runcie for her "selfless ministry."

During the Cultural Revolution in China Li worked on a chicken farm. She participated in the renewal of the Church in China when the revolution collapsed, ministering to a congregation of about 1,000 in Guangzhou. She joined members of her family in Canada when she retired.

"History will judge that her ministry, her humility and courage, played a major part in the acceptance of the ordination of women to the priesthood as part of the Anglican tradition," Runcie said in a message read at her funeral. (See photo on page 18.)

Inciting riot?

It isn't really news that Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and his executive staff at the National Church's headquarters in New York are scratching their heads these days over how to reallocate

program budgets in light of this year's shortfall in diocesan apportionment income. It's a tough job -- new initiatives established by last year's General Convention must be weighed against ongoing programs and commitments to local groups and organizations. The final decisions will be made by the Executive Council at its June meeting in Albuquerque, N.M.

In a March 20 work-in-progress memorandum to all her staff, Diane Porter, the executive of Advocacy, Witness and Justice Ministries unit, included these remarks about the role of Executive Council-chartered committees and commissions in the reallocation decision-making:

"The committees/commissions are important to the ministry of this office but they are not in the decision stream on this process. The budget will be the budget of the Presiding Bishop that has been informed by the work of the Senior Executives and Unit Executives. Any committee/commission chair person that would like to have a discussion about the reallocated money should be forwarded to me. The Presiding Bishop, Barry [Menuet] and I will meet or talk with any chairperson that has concerns. Let me warn you that using the committees/commissions as a pressure group or inciting the group to riot over the recast budget, will be considered grounds for termination."

Advocacy, Witness and Justice Ministries includes the various ethnic-focused ministries, the Coalition for Human Needs, Jubilee Ministries, AIDS ministries, rural and small town ministries, anti-racism and environmental programs and Episcopal Church efforts to influence public policy.

— Prepared by Julie A. Wortman

The logo for "Vital Signs" features a stylized graphic of a cross with a heart inside, followed by the words "Vital Signs" in a cursive script.

Toward a multi-cultural priesthood

by Julie A. Wortman

Three years ago, Rafaela Moquete, a native of the Dominican Republic who was born a Roman Catholic but confirmed in the Dominican Episcopal Church, approached the Diocese of New York with her desire to be ordained a priest in the U.S. Episcopal Church.

She had studied theology at New York City's *Instituto Pastoral Hispano*, been a lay preacher, worked with Hispanic prisoners, received clinical pastoral education at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital and was now into her third year of working at St. Mary's, N.Y.

"My life experience with the community [at St. Mary's] has been revealing and alarming for me," she wrote. "I have seen the pain of my people and have identified myself with that pain. I have felt more and more the necessity to do ministry for and with Hispanic people because I have seen my people in exile with the need for guidance from priests who understand their culture, language, idiosyncracies. Priests who can celebrate the eucharist, do baptisms, marriages, pronounce absolution — who understand the [ordained] ministry as a real and serious commitment to God and to them."

In December, 1991, Moquete became the first Dominican woman to be ordained to the priesthood by the U.S. Church. She is now priest-in-charge of the Hispanic congregation at St. Mary's

and the associate priest at San Martin de Porres Episcopal Mission.

Her ordination, unlike so many ordinations of those with strong ethnic identification, *is* recognized throughout the



Florence Tim Oi Li, the first ordained woman in the Anglican Communion, with Barbara Harris, the first woman bishop.

credit: Mark Ellidge/The London Times, 1988.

Church; she is not leashed to a specific geography by a "local" or Canon 9 ordination. But today's Anglo church leaders, not to mention the predominantly Anglo membership they serve, are unlikely to call Moquete beyond the confines of Hispanic ministry. If Moquete's experience is similar to the Asian- and African-American priests who have preceded her, her ministry will in all likelihood be relegated to an ethnic-specific congregation, whether she chooses this or not.

"It is easier for a black to be elected bishop than it is to get elected a rector of an all-white congregation or a deputy to General Convention," says Nan Arrington Peete, Atlanta's canon to the ordinary

and diocesan deployment officer.

"Search committees will even write that they want a 'caucasian male, married' or a 'young, caucasian male, married,'" Peete said. "If I suggest a black candidate for a job with a white congregation, I'm told: 'They wouldn't want to come here.' But that is not what they are really saying. There is a mindset that black folk can't lead white folk."

"The Church runs a two-tiered track system," points out Episcopal priest Reginald Blaxton, a Washington, D.C., marketing consultant who is also the assistant at St. George's Episcopal Church.

"Until the day of graduation, black [and other non-Anglo] candidates are treated the same as whites. But after ordination that changes. The opportunities for employment available to my white classmates [at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass.] were unavailable to me."

Blaxton believes that part of the reason he was finally ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of Chicago was to fill a position in a black, inner-city parish.

"There is very little racial integration of parish ministry in the Episcopal Church," said Blaxton. Recruitment of blacks would be ethical, he argues, only if "matched by a serious effort to desegregate congregations."

Perhaps because deployment of non-Anglo priests is so difficult, there is a diminishing number of non-Anglo priests seeking ordination. According to the Church's Board for Theological Education, only 41 of the 597 students enrolled in the Church's 11 Episcopal seminaries in 1990 were black; 12 were of Asian heritage, eight were Hispanic and seven were Native American.

Henry Atkins, co-chair of the Executive Council's Commission on Racism

Julie A. Wortman is an assistant editor of *The Witness*.

and president of the *Instituto Hispano Pastoral's* board, favors recruitment of ethnically-identified candidates, but is concerned that diocesan commissions on ministry are ill-prepared to evaluate non-Anglo applicants.

"I'm shocked by how commissions on ministry don't know how to make decisions about Hispanics who come before them," Atkins said. "If the person doesn't speak English very well, everything breaks down."

The Board for Theological Education asked General Convention to urge dioceses "to provide their commissions on ministry with continuing training in awareness of the important cultural differences among ethnic communities in the Church from which prospective postulants may come, with the objective of removing stereotypical biases from the screening process," a resolution which the legislative body passed. Similar training and consulting resources are to be provided "concerning ways to avoid perpetuating sexist stereotyping."

The board's recruitment and selection committee also told last year's General Convention that the emphasis on screening people who present themselves for ordination should be dropped in favor of a focus on leadership recruitment.

Yet the Diocese of Atlanta is having a hard time raising funds for a Canterbury Center to house an Episcopal campus ministry at the University of Atlanta and other established campus ministries are struggling to make ends meet.

"[Atlanta's] campus has the highest concentration of black college students in the country and is the home of the Interdenominational Theological Center, the largest black theological consortium in the world," Peete emphasizes.

"If we're serious about recruiting blacks, we've got to put money into it. This [campus ministry] is a viable way to recruit younger black men and women.

But we can't get support, even though this would be for the whole Church."

The Church Deployment Board points out that its bishops are partly to blame for the limited range of church employment opportunities non-Anglos see.

"We recommend that all bishops be actively and effectively involved in the search process," a 1990 deployment board study said. "This includes the responsibility to nominate clergy for positions in addition to those names received from other sources."

"I have felt the necessity to do ministry for and with Hispanic people because I have seen my people in exile." — Rafaela Maquete

Washington's Blaxton, who chose non-parochial work because of the narrow range of positions available to black priests, says: "Bishops could use their influence if they wanted to, but there must be a change in attitude."

Not only could bishops be more involved in recruitment and deployment, they could also push seminaries to broaden their curricula so that new clergy get more exposure to theology examined through multi- or cross-cultural lenses.

"Our primary consumers are bishops," says Bill Bennett, provost of Austin's Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, which has a nascent Hispanic ministries program that seminary administrators hope will spark a stronger cross-cultural emphasis throughout the school's curriculum. Bishops' desire for a strong "core" curriculum in the preparatory coursework required by Church canon, however, limits opportunities for broadening the curriculum, Bennett and other seminary administrators say.

Of course, bishops and diocesan advisors can require that their prospective clergy get the training they want them to

have, if not in seminary, in home-grown programs before and after graduation.

In Central Florida, Bishop John Howe has directed the diocese's commission on ministry to explore ways of strengthening candidates' expertise in evangelism and "church planting."

Similarly, bishops *could* require a multi- or cross-cultural literacy for their candidates.

Evaluating a candidate's readiness for ordained ministry is a diocesan matter, despite the great emphasis given to candidates' performance on the standardized General Ordination Examinations (GOEs). In Connecticut and San Joaquin, candidates are not required to take GOEs. They take diocesan-formulated exams. In some dioceses, GOEs are only used as a diagnostic exam, a guide for areas where a student needs more work.

In the end, if Church leaders are committed to affirming a multicultural clergy for a multicultural Church, they have the means of moving the Church in that direction through more aggressive approaches to recruitment, education and deployment. The only remaining question, Peete and others say, is how Church leaders understand Church unity, that ineffable something bishops vow to uphold.

"Is it that we've got an English heritage and can sing an Anglican chant? Or is what holds us together our belief in the Incarnation and the Resurrection?" Peete asks. "Affirming our multiculturalism means acknowledging the gifts that everyone brings from his or her tradition."

When Rafaela Moquete wrote her statement of "call" for New York's Diocesan Commission on Ministry, she wrote, "Having an Anglo priest has been important for me to understand about the Church from his perspective."

The inverse of Moquete's logic should be clear to a Church intent on ending racism by the year 2,000. **TW**



Mary Magdalene

credit Robert Lentz

To ordain: to invest with ministerial authority; to minister: to serve as an agent for another; to attend to the wants and needs of others.

When many of us think of ordained ministers, it is Episcopal priests, Baptist preachers or Jewish rabbis that come most easily to mind; if we stretch beyond the boundaries of Western religions, we might also imagine Buddhist monks, Islamic imams, or the shamans of tribal cultures. Within Christianity, it is the laying on of hands by a bishop or an elder that officially effects ordination. In its larger sense, however — that of being recognized as one who will act with authority on behalf of others — “ordination” to a ministry happens through the recognition and acceptance of the people being served. The Holy Spirit’s action of investment will not be limited solely to where the institutional Church would direct it.

Robert Lentz is a contemporary icon painter who understands ordination in this larger sense, and celebrates it through the ancient forms of his art. He depicts a wide range of those who have been faithful to their ministerial vocations: from Jesus himself to Mary Magdalene to St. Francis of Assisi to Martin Luther King, Jr. He has also created icons of the 20th-century union organizer Mother Jones and gay activist politician Harvey Milk.

In an article written for *Festivals* magazine, Lentz quotes Cardinal Juan Fresno of Chile as having said, “Whoever stands up for human rights stands up for the rights of God.” He goes on to defend that the people he portrays — in their identification with the least of their brothers and sisters, and regardless of their particular religious consciousness — have indeed achieved a measure of holiness worthy of the icon tradition. “Icons are images of God’s kingdom, and God’s

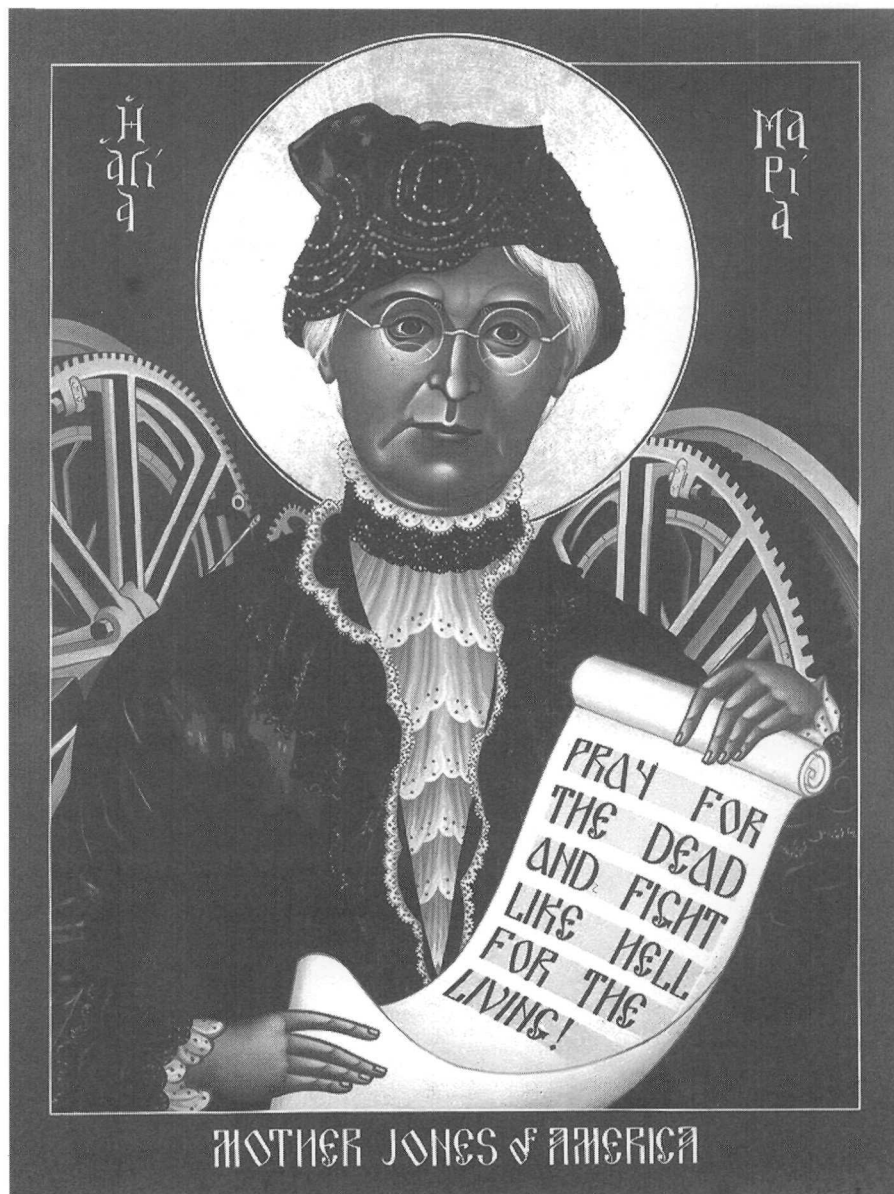
Ordained by community

by Blaise Tobia and Virginia Maksymowicz

kingdom is larger than the Church,” Lentz also wrote in *Festival*. “The icon is the best way I have found to tie the transcendent and the immanent together — and tied together they must be.”

Lentz has received complaints about some of his icons, especially from Roman Catholic clergy, but, as he points out, he grew up in the Byzantine tradition where icons are the creations of the laity, not the clerical hierarchy. In fact, Lentz states that Eastern bishops often take popular icon paintings into consideration during the canonization process, as evidence that the people already regard the depicted person as an example of faith. “Canonization is simply an official recognition of God’s work among the people,” Lentz observes.

Besides King, Jones and Milk, Lentz has painted likenesses of Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Stephen Biko, Thomas Merton and Pope John XXIII, who many consider to be modern-day saints. He has also set about revamping the images of traditional saints, a number of whom worked without the benefit of official ordination, such as Mary Magdalene. Eastern Christian tradition holds that, after the Ascension of Jesus, Mary (who was not a prostitute but a woman of considerable wealth) travelled around the Mediterranean preaching the good news, not necessarily with any mandate other than her own faith. Lentz paints her pointing to an egg, an Eastern symbol of the Resurrection. (Notably, this icon was commissioned for Grace Cathedral in San Francisco to commemorate the election of Barbara Harris as the first woman bishop in the Anglican Church.) Lentz has also given traditional subjects unconventional (but scripturally faithful) twists that reinforce God’s identity with the full spectrum of humanity. He has portrayed Christ as an Apache Indian and as a Masai warrior. He has shown Mary the Mother of Jesus as a Navajo cradling a laughing



Mother Jones

credit Robert Lentz

child, as a Salvadoran woman mourning her Son’s death at the hands of a death squad, and as a pregnant Jewish girl pinned with a gold star and standing before the barbed wire of a Nazi concentration camp.

More information about Robert Lentz, and a catalog of his icons, may be obtained from Bridge Building Images, P.O. Box 1048, Burlington, Vermont 05402. **TW**

art and society

A God of truth or prejudice?

by Richard Kerr

I am an openly gay priest of the Church. I share my experience because not to do so is to make common cause with forces which threaten to completely undo the Church's mission.

It was in junior high school that my interest in the Church blossomed. I found in the Church loving people and a place where loving relationships seemed to be the norm. It was a wonderfully different atmosphere from football, whose only goal, to my mind, was to teach us how to endure or inflict pain upon other boys for the amusement of onlookers.

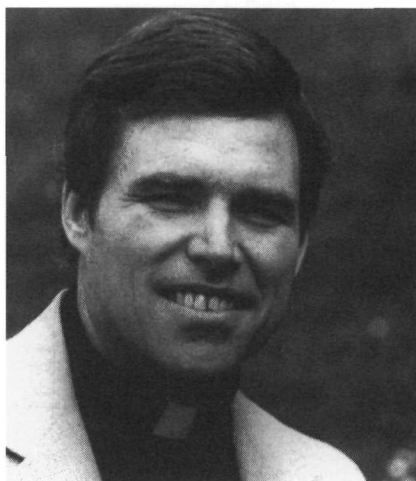
At the same time I was finding out that what I wanted to do in secret with other boys was not only "nasty" but also dangerous, because such boys were beat up by other boys. When the Church referred to this issue in the most oblique terms, its advice was "don't do it," because God hates it.

Despite my discomfort in dating girls, I found one girl whose company was more pleasant than any others and we talked about marriage.

In college I read everything I could find about homosexuality. The agreed teaching seemed to be that homosexuality was a way station on the journey from childhood to adulthood. Adults who failed the transformation to heterosexuality were cursed by God and became child molesters. The picture was so horrific that it convinced me beyond reasonable doubt that I was not homosexual.

Richard Kerr is director of Project Open Hand, an organization that delivers more than 2,000 hot meals a day to people living with AIDS who are homebound. He lives in San Francisco.

When I had a single homosexual contact as a college junior, I was so traumatized by my enjoyment of the experience that I was married within six weeks. At



Richard Kerr

age 20, I had embarked on the Church's prescribed path toward holy sexuality. My feelings remained entirely unchanged.

As I came into the formal ordination process, I was terrified that the homosexual kernel of my being would be discovered during my psychological examination. But I did not lie when asked any question about myself, and I was duly certified for ordination.

I served parishes in Montana and suburban Colorado in the early part of my ministry, continuously pressed by my feelings toward men, but never acting on them. Finally, while serving as rector of a parish in Denver, and as Secretary of

the Executive Council of the diocese, I could no longer internalize the contradictions. I divorced my wife, even then not able to say that the divorce happened because I was gay, although my wife knew. Soon, however, I knew that I was gay. That occurred while I served on a task force on human sexuality for the Diocese of Colorado. Since no openly gay people were appointed to the task force, it was only my closeted, deeply confused and terrified sexuality which I brought to the deliberations.

There was never any intent that meaningful discussion about the issue occur, in Colorado, at least. General Convention after General Convention has mandated the Church to study sexuality, but the penalty for honesty among clergy — loss of employment — entirely prevents the Church from developing anything approximating the truth about human sexuality.

Of much more meaning were the discussions which occurred between myself and a gay priest and his lover, both of whom had been treated abysmally by the Church because they were known to be gay. After meeting these men, the closet seemed a coward's paradise. I knew without doubt that if I were to "come out" that

I would become unemployable in the Church. Employment, however, built on dishonesty was more than I could stomach.

My parish was in a very poor section

of the City of Denver, and its members were primarily African-Americans. I was just completing almost ten years as rector. During that time the church buildings literally fell down around us. I had led an effort which raised half a million dollars, supervised an enormous construction project, developed a dynamic parish life

The battle over acceptance of lesbian and gay people really is a battle about the nature of God.

and helped lead the project to desegregate the Denver Public School System. I am certain that exhaustion contributed to my decision to resign *before* coming out. I was assisted in this decision by a young black associate who insisted that the black community had crucial objectives which did not include homosexuality, and in my isolation and confusion I accepted his judgment.

I also believe that I already had been infected with the AIDS virus, and that the weakness it caused contributed to my inability to see the truth: that homosexuality knows no racial, ethnic or national boundaries, but is a simple fact-from-the-womb of all human societies.

I resigned in mid-1979, a few months before the Denver General Convention.

During Convention, Presiding Bishop John Allin agreed to dedicate the renewed parish buildings. I was invited to concelebrate the mass with him and to say a few words. I listed the many groups which had need of the shelter the Community Wing could provide and the support the Church pledged itself to give. I concluded my remarks saying, "and the gay community, of which I am a part, needs your loving support and help."

To my astonishment everyone broke into applause, and I felt each of the 600 people present tried to touch me during the kiss of peace, offering support.

Yet within a week, Bishop William Frey called me to his office and complained that I had not revealed to him that I was gay, and said I would not serve the Church in Colorado.

Although I am still a priest in good standing and on cordial terms with Bishop William Swing, as an openly gay priest, I have been unable to secure a Church job.

What my life has taught me, however, is that regret is worthless. Instead, it is now time to face the Church with the consequences of its failure to understand human sexuality, and, particularly, to

honor homosexual persons.

Because I paid attention to the Church's teachings, I believe that I deeply injured a woman whom I married in good faith. I believe that the Church's failure to listen to its gay people, and to encourage them to openly and honestly share their experience, has deprived the Church of a vast body of extremely talented priests. Those who are in the closet still serving the Church lead lives of quiet desperation. Their best gifts are perverted by the en-

ergy they have to exert hiding.

Living the lie, the Church deprives itself of creative energies which it can ill afford to lose.

The battle over acceptance of lesbian and gay people really is a battle about the nature of God. Do we worship the Living God who has created us gay and straight, black and white, male and female, or do we worship the God who is nothing more than a symbol created out of prejudice?

Bishops' Court Convicts Jim Ferry

On Friday, March 20, the Bishop's Court in Toronto convicted James Ferry on two of the five charges brought against him by Bishop Terence Finlay: "wrongdoing by refusing to refrain from continuing a homosexual relationship contrary to the Bishop's instructions" and "contumacy and disrespectful conduct." Ferry was acquitted of canonical disobedience, dishonorable and disorderly conduct, and conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy.

Following the Court's sentencing recommendations, Finlay suspended Ferry's license, prohibiting him from exercising his priestly ministry, but retained him on the clergy list of the diocese. He said he would consider the Court's further recommendation that he release Ferry to serve in a different diocese if another bishop requested him.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there was an American bishop" who would make that offer, Finlay said at a press conference following the trial.

Observers have interpreted the Court's recommendation that Ferry be allowed to serve elsewhere as a rejection of Bishop Finlay's argument that he was legally bound by the 1979 House of Bishops' Guidelines requiring gay clergy to be celibate.

"The Court was saying, 'It's up to the individual bishop, Terry, and you could have done otherwise,'" said Integrity/Toronto member Chris Ambidge, who reported on the trial in the *April Witness*.

Michael Peers, primate of the Canadian Church, released a statement expressing "pastoral concern...for both Bishop Finlay and Fr. Jim Ferry." While asserting that "Bishop Finlay has acted fully within his authority...with sensitivity and care," he also praised Ferry's "courage" in enduring a "difficult public ordeal...to raise up the predicament of all gays and lesbians within the Church."

Ferry, who will be paid by the diocese through July, has said he will take time to consider his options before making decisions about his future or about further legal recourse.

"The bishop's action is very painful to me and to many others," he said at a post-trial press conference. But "in spite of it all, I am a person of hope...The Church hierarchy may have abandoned me, but I will not abandon the Church. I will remain, on the margins, as a voice crying out for justice, love, and full inclusion in the life of the Church family."

CASUALTY CAMPS OF THE GREAT WAR

By William B. Spofford Jr.
Dean, St. Michael's Cathedral, Boise, Idaho

THE CHURCH NEEDS A CENTER WHERE CLERGY CAN GET HELP FROM PSYCHIATRISTS AND OTHER SPECIALISTS TRAINED IN THE ART OF HEALING.

THE LEAD EDITORIAL in *The Witness* for Theological Education Sunday this year was headlined: "Training Camps for the Great War." It was a shocking and immobilizing thing to see those words, and we thought an inside scoop was in the offing. Only as one read further was the relevance made clear.

The church is, and always will be, at war with the fallen world. As C.S. Lewis has written, each Christian is like a member of the underground in France in World War II or, more appropriately, like a soldier in the O.S.S. who is parachuted into hostile country with the aim of changing that country into a new pattern of community . . .

In all wars, there are casualties. . .

Training Places

The Editorial was concerned with telling us about the relevance of our seminaries — the training camps for the great war of the church . . .

More often, the battle is one of toughness and attrition, involving persons who won't listen and couldn't care less; involving an institution which conforms to the world and sees buildings as a sign of grace and numbers as a sign of triumph. The Adversary, who has been called by an epistler "a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," is a slippery and clever foe, wearing now the mask of boredom and now the mask of pride, and then the mask of status. He lurks within one as well as around oneself. Each of us is a casualty.

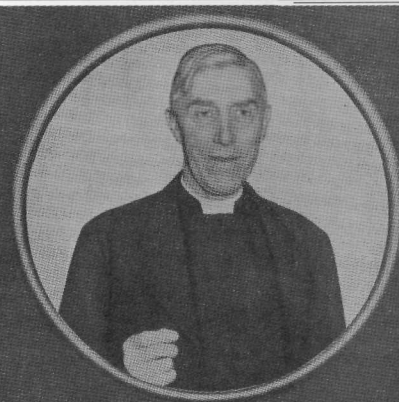
Thank God, most of us seem to have reasonably minor wounds which can be handled by supportive pastoral care on the part of our bishop, or by a good vacation, or an enriching sabbatical, or an occasional conference. But, for some, more is necessary. The wounds are deep. They are manifested in illness. . .

Therapy Center

Is there some possibility that the church, through its formal agencies — General Convention, the House of Bishops, National Council, seminaries and all diocesan and district organizations — could take this seriously? It would seem, on the surface, that it would be feasible to develop such a center for our casualties — a center which is little known or advertized where the wounded could receive help that they need from psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, doctors, social workers and clergy . . .

Whatever the cost to establish such a treatment program on the part of the church, it is undoubtedly cheaper — and a whole lot more Christian — than to loose onto unsuspecting congregations those who have been defeated, even temporarily, by the great war. It is undoubtedly more economic than to have casualties dishonorably discharged, when the dishonor is not exclusively their own but rather that of the body of Christ for which they have given their years, their actions, their faith and their talents.

Celebrating
— 75 —
years



EVERY CHURCH FAMILY
SHOULD READ REGULARLY
A CHURCH PERIODICAL
— THE PRESIDING BISHOP

January 18, 1940 *Witness* cover.

[Excerpted from the June 13, 1963 *Witness*. William Spofford, Jr., son of long-time *Witness* editor Bill Spofford, is now the retired bishop of Eastern Oregon, living in Salem, OR.]

The quest to serve God

by Andrew Foster

A Dresser of Sycamore Trees: The Finding of a Ministry by Garret Keizer. Viking Press, New York, New York, 1991.

One of the popular trends in the Church these days is the notion of the Gospel as “story,” which leads both to the abstractions of narrative theology and to an often sentimental preaching style. While listening to edifying personal anecdotes told from the pulpit as gospel illustrations, I often feel that some preachers must be following a seminary-taught maxim: “All theology is autobiographical.” (Sadly, most do not heed the corrective corollary: “Not all autobiography is theological!”) In such a context, the highly personal book *A Dresser of Sycamore Trees: The Finding of a Ministry* by lay minister and high school English teacher, Garret Keizer, blazes as a shining paradox.

The book recounts the story of how the author became the lay vicar of a small Episcopal parish in an old railroad junction town in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. The title’s reference to Amos, the prophet who declared himself merely a shepherd, not a formally trained minister of Yahweh, echoes Keizer’s point of view as an observer from the edges of our increasingly urban society. The mystery of this spiritual autobiography, to my mind, is how skillfully the author disappears into the narrative. Somehow, the more personal and poignant the incident, the more Keizer illuminates the other people and circumstances in his story. I

think it is because he loves his neighbors so much that Keizer is able to subordinate himself while remaining the central character of the book. Here is autobiography without egocentricity.

As one might hope from the pen of a teacher, the writing itself is technically superb. In a series of chapters about religious mentors; the joys of preaching and parish visiting; caring for the church’s steeple clock; encounters with a commune of biblical literalists; a touch of diocesan politics; the feasts and fasts of the Christian year; and memories of a deep friendship; Keizer displays his virtuosity in guiding the flow of a good story. The details are vivid and sensual, often with a delightful contemporary spark. While he writes with genuine piety, there is no shred of conventional religiosity.

Here is a tantalizing morsel from the first page which gives the flavor of Keizer’s eccentric, yet engaging style. The author is returning home at night from a pastoral call, meditating, as we all do these days, in his automotive oratory: *The ionosphere has come down in the night, like St. Peter’s visionary sheetful of clean and unclean animals, and my car radio is a feast of stations. A little more volume, a little more speed — I give thanks for my family, my church, the Supremes. Next week, without fail, I will stop at the farm which it is too late to visit now, but passing by I pray for the family who live there. I pray for their cows and the land. And I tell myself by way of exultation what I now tell my reader by way of warning: it won’t get much better than this.*

The author is wrong. It keeps getting better! The secret of this storyteller goes

deeper than a self-effacing humility or wry self-deprecation. Keizer has somehow tapped into the gift of welcoming his readers into his own mind and then turning our eyes outward onto a community that radiates and reflects our own awkwardness, our own touching kindness, our own deep hunger to love and to be loved. No matter how comical the situation, the joke is never at the expense of his subjects. No matter how tempting it would be to resort to cheap stereotypes, the reader is made to look a while longer, to notice a bit more detail, that puts even the most unsavory characters in a new, redeeming light.

book review

At its heart, *A Dresser of Sycamore Trees* is a book about one Christian vocation. By sharing his own “finding of a ministry,” Garret Keizer models the disarming candor and inclusive compassion which is a requisite of everyone’s quest to serve God. Even though much of this book circles around the churchly concerns of a lay vicar, its chief value is in the way that Keizer’s ministry is woven among the more secular threads of daily life in Island Pond, Vermont. Just as each of us lives both outside and inside the Church, so this book portrays only a part of a total vocation, even as it builds bridges between the mundane and the holy. Should you want to learn more about this winsome high school teacher, another side of his life work is also artfully recounted in his award-winning first book, *No Place But Here*. Do yourself a favor. Discover the writings of Garret Keizer. I think this may be what the Gospel as “story” is all about.

TW

Andrew Foster is the Chaplain of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio.

"Johnson wouldn't be a slave no more!" I cried. "He died a free man. They's slaves today in Justice county, both white and black. Hit's time to break them chains...."

Doc placed a stack of union cards on the communion plate beside the broken crackers. When the plate reached the back of the church, the cards were gone. The pianist played a rattling version of "Precious Lord Take My Hand." They sang and their shadows danced across the ceiling....

"The Holy Ghost got a holt of us now," [the preacher] said.

"Why now?" I asked. "Why not ten years ago, or ten years from now?"

"Hit's the fullness of time," he said.

I loved that phrase, "the fullness of time." I shivered to whisper it to myself, for I sensed I was living in it, right then. Nothing afterward would be so important, not like what was happening there on Blackberry Creek. We are put on earth for the fullness of time, we spend our days reaching it, and then we pass on.

Storming Heaven,
Denise Giardina, 1987

The mountains of Appalachia raised Denise Giardina and they are home to her once again.

Giardina writes books.

She was also, for a brief time, an Episcopal deacon. Some who know and love her insist that her vocation was thwarted by Church leaders who were appalled by her challenges to companies operating in West Virginia while she served as deacon at Grace, Northfork.

Giardina says it was a mismatch from the start.

"I think ordination was one of the most frightening things that's ever hap-

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*.



Denise Giardina

credit: Kristin Layng Szakos

The fullness of time

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

pened to me. People must feel like that when they're getting married and they realize it's the wrong person."

Giardina grew up in a coal camp. Her father was a coal company bookkeeper. He hung the sign that said whether there was work each day. "People were only working one or two days a week. They had jobs but they were starving to death.

"We shared a lot of things — the dust, the coal trains, the isolation, but my family was better off."

Giardina's mother drove her two children to a company-owned church that was administered by the United Methodists three miles away. The pastor was a coal miner who eventually got Black Lung disease.

Giardina became an Episcopalian af-

ter meeting Jim Lewis [then a rector in Charleston, W.Va., now director of Christian Social Ministries in North Carolina and a contributing editor of *The Witness*]. Three years later, in 1976 Giardina enrolled at Virginia Theological Seminary where she appreciated the seminary classes but experienced "the whole old boy Virginia thing" as a shock.

To protect her sanity, Giardina decided to live with the Sojourners Community in Washington, D.C. People there shared her politics and her faith.

But Giardina's activities made waves on campus. She thought the Episcopal Church should do more than send care packages when a Pittston Coal Company dam broke loose on Buffalo Creek and more than 100 people died.

When Giardina helped conduct research that showed that Norfolk and Western Railroad owned 30 percent of the land near Northfork, W. Va., but paid only 16 cents an acre in property taxes, she made that information public in the VTS student newspaper and suggested divesting. The fact that the president of the railroad, John Fishwick, was on the board of VTS didn't deter her.

"The dean went through the ceiling. He raked me over the coals. He made veiled threats, asking 'Would you be happier somewhere else?' He talked about what a fine person Fishwick was and how I had hurt the seminary."

As a deacon, Giardina served Grace, Northfork, W. Va. "It was a small church. People there liked me." But Giardina's work was undermined by Jim Churchill, a retired, white collar Union Carbide employee from N.J. Churchill helped direct the community center where Giardina worked half-time and he attended her parish. He took his complaints to Bishop Robert Atkinson, saying Giardina was harassing corporate leaders.

"It became real clear that I couldn't work with Churchill and the bishop said that if I left the center, I had to leave Grace."

Three years after her ordination, Giardina laid down her orders.

Her reasons were mixed. Giardina will say that she may have allowed herself to be caught in the wake of women hurrying toward ordination, since hers was the first class of women to enter seminary knowing they *could* be ordained.

"Ordination is one of the most frightening things that has ever happened to me."

She'll also say she has serious reservations about the priesthood.

"I don't like the idea of setting apart some elite—and it usually turns out to be male, especially as you move up the feeding chain, so to speak. It's also so unfair to the ordained. There are so many double standards it perpetuates. People expect the priest to have the answer, to always say the right thing.

"I was getting comfortable with the service aspect [of being a deacon]. But if I was going to be getting grief all the time,

I felt like it would hurt my writing. My writing explores religious things — I didn't want to feel like I had to represent the Church in my writing. I've seen too many ministers get in trouble. It was a hard decision."

Giardina recently moved from North Carolina to Whitesburg, Kentucky where she has just finished a new novel on the coal fields, *Unquiet Earth* [Norton, 1992].

Giardina is still technically an Episcopalian, but says she is "really sort of a Quaker Catholic."

While she has reservations about the priesthood, sacraments are important to her, Giardina says.

"I have this sense of God being so large. (Denominations are efforts to put God in a cage, to try to tame God.) I have this sense of God as untamed and undefined. I like the Native American sense of the sacredness of the earth and animals. I'm interested in Hindu beliefs. At the same time, I like the centrality of the mass and the Incarnation, the idea of God becoming flesh.

"I believe in the sacraments — especially the eucharist. I guess as a fiction writer I am really comfortable with taking something that appears not to exist and making it concrete."

Welcome to The Witness!

Each month we mail complimentary copies of *The Witness* to people we believe might be interested in subscribing. We've sent this issue to you because we understand that you have an interest in ordination and its process.

For 75 years *The Witness* has published articles addressing theological concerns as well as critiquing social issues from a faith perspective.

The magazine is owned by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company but is an independent journal with an ecumenical readership.

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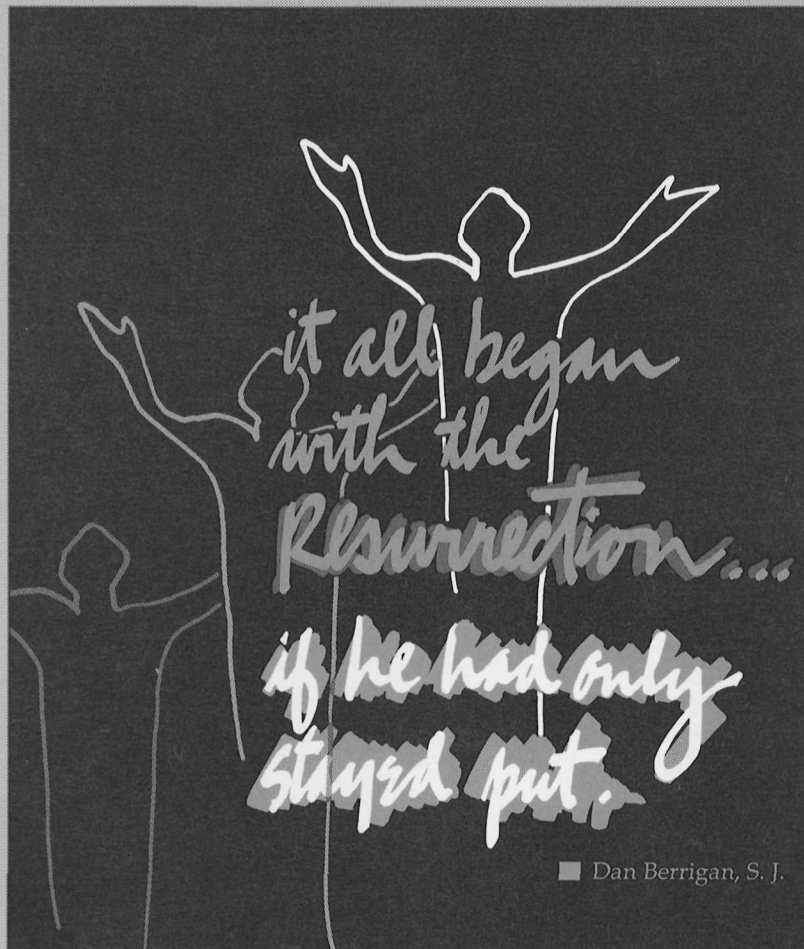
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