The Witness

Volume 75 • Number 10 • October 1992

Culture as resistance

The Hunt
by Dierdre Luzwick

Mountain women

LINDA MEADE ("Listening to the ancestors," 9/92) died suddenly of an aneurism a month after submitting her story to the *Mountain Women's Journal*. At the time of her death she was organizing *against* toxic dumping and *for* a statewide health care plan in West Virginia. She had found a way to "stay home ... to help bring justice to these hills," for at least a little while longer. Sadly, her life ended shortly before the birth of the Appalachian Women's alliance, the group which finally brought together her friends and colleagues — her Appalachian sisters — in the fight to hold on to home.

The Appalachian Women's Alliance represents women's organizations and concern from nine Appalachian states — West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Georgia. Our purpose is to bring together our power as Appalachian women to explore and create a unified way for women to work and act in a regional context. We are committed to affirming and supporting Appalachian women; providing opportunities for mountain women to come together and to make our voices heard; and to facilitating a regional network of women around women's issues.

We are grounded in our commitment to mutual accountability and responsibility and are working to create and promote new understandings of leadership and authority which are inclusive and non-hierarchical and which actively challenge the patriarchy in which we live. Together we are developing and articulating a new vision which is empowering to women. We practice shared leadership and consensus-style decision making in all aspects of our life together and our processes are open, participatory and "circular." Within the Alliance every woman has equal ownership, an equal voice, equal responsibility to use her voice (as well as to monitor it) and an equal space in which to be heard.

We are currently publishing the Mountain Women's Journal, developing a database around women's issues, working as part of a regional coalition on national health care, putting out a regional newsletter, planning and responding to regional actions and events and creating a women's emergency fund. And we are just beginning.

We hope that the Episcopal Church will continue to be supportive of our efforts and will hold true to its promise of supporting the struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere.

For more information about the Appalachian Women's Alliance or to order copies of the Mountain Women's Journal ($6 each) contact me at the Appalachian Women's Alliance, Rt. 1, Box 492, Riner, Va., 24149.

Meredith Dean
Appalachian Peoples' Service Organization
Blacksburg VA

Abortion

I READ YOUR INTERVIEW with Ms. Heyward with both interest and dismay. I believe it is an individual's decision whether (she) "is better served by being able to strip herself of the (potential) life that has been conceived in her or by a different approach." Likewise, "When a loving relationship accidentally results in a pregnancy," it is not your right to decide for that couple what is or isn't "an enormous price to pay." It is, conversely, your right to decide if that loving relationship is yours.

I am quite comfortable with a belief that a woman who HAS conceived a child will reach ANY decision in consultation with her trusted people, give ANY decision prayerful consideration if she has a relationship with God, and then act as she has determined most wise. It is not my business, or *The Witness'*, or the Institutional Church's, or any government's business to interfere in her decision. My degree of comfort with someone else's decision is entirely irrelevant. It is a private matter. This is NOT China.

Having said that, I will also say that one of the great mysteries of the abortion war is that Family Planning as an honorable manner of reducing the need for abortions has not had a great ground swell of financial and political support by all fragments of our society. The U.S. is measurably behind other western nations in both availability of new techniques tested elsewhere and research to improve the success rates and safety of various means of contraception.

Education, developmentally appropriate rather than after the fact, about what is happening in and with one's own body and what can result from a variety of actions is a minimum curriculum standard that is very often lacking. The shared misconceptions of casual peer discussions can spread as fast as disease.

I am hoping that *The Witness* will look further into the broader ramifications of reproductive issues of all kinds, rather than obsessing about the middle of the road position on abortion.

Carol Daniels
Captiva FL

I APPRECIATED Carter Heyward and Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's "risky conversation" on abortion.

Like Wylie-Kellermann, I've been concerned for a while that so many otherwise thoughtful people have "shut down" the possibility of any real consideration of abortion. I wish that those of us who are pro-choice could go beyond the "clump of tissue which belongs to me" school of thought to a broader appraisal of the social meaning of abortion.

It is helpful to remember that abortion is a means of birth control for the individual, but for society it is (and always has been) a form of population control. Throughout history, women have aborted fetuses. Of course, until recently, it has been difficult and dangerous to abort, and infanticide has been much more widely practiced. We recoil at the thought of infanticide, and refuse to understand how it could have occurred except within the context of subsistence crises.

I imagine the personal responses of women now aborting are much the same as in ages past; that our choices are "for the best," or that we really have no choice. This is the subjective side of population control. The individual perception of unwanted pregnancy and the choice for abortion are only one piece of a much larger social "choice" for stringently limiting reproduction.

It is surprising that we talk about the abortion issue without acknowledging how ex-

traordinarily anti-natalist our society is. Together with a handful of other Western countries, we have dropped below Zero Population Growth. We are no longer producing enough people even to replace ourselves. Extreme population control, together with the breakdown of traditional marriage, has meant that "something has to give." For millions of women, that "something" has been one or more babies that would have been wanted under better conditions.

Since our way of life is based on plundering the resources of the Earth, rather than caring for it, it is unlikely that even modest population growth will be tolerated any time soon. And, the Dan Quayles and Clarence Thomases of our society aside, women will not give up reproductive freedom. So, abortion is here to stay for the foreseeable future. Given the dreadful performance of our free enterprise family system for children, it might be considered a blessing.

I want "choice." I also want all of human life to become regarded as more sacred. The latter must be the basis for unity among us. It is also the correct emphasis of the Church.

Marilyn Daniels
Belleville MI

I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST the June/July issue of *The Witness* and thought it a very good issue. I was very taken with the dialogue that took place on the issue of abortion. We need to have more conversations like that. Too often in important issues like that, people think that the other side is evil and has nothing to be said for them.

I also am rejoicing that you are going to Trinity in the fall. I think that is the kind of thing we need to have take place again and again in the Church.

Carlson Gerdau
Director Deployment, Ministry, and Communications
The Diocese of Chicago

75th anniversary forum

FIRST, LET ME CONGRATULATE YOU on the wonderful job you are doing with *The Witness*. It may well be said of you, as it was said of Paul and Silas, that "these people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also" (Acts 17:6). I think you're doing a fine job.

Second, there will be many (most of whom I count as friends) who will not agree with this assessment of your stewardship. Perhaps the hardest thing these days is the lack of common ground among Christians, finding ourselves with "strange bedfellows" on various issues. That makes it all the more important that progressive journals like *The Witness* take the kind of stands you are taking. I want to support you in that, and I am planning to come to the 75th anniversary forum on what to me is very strange turf indeed to that end.

Emmett Jarrett
Episcopal Urban Caucus president
Silver Spring MD

WHILE I'VE BEEN PLEASED with the new *Witness*, nothing I've seen heretofore has heartened me so much as your conversation with Carter Heyward and the announcement of your impending anniversary celebration at Trinity School for Ministry. I feel moved to compliment you on your courage; then I find myself reminded that, as Jesus taught, the opposite of fear is not courage, but love. In any case, brava and hallelujah!

James G. Carson
Chicago IL

Witness art

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE EXCITEMENT in our center when the June/July issue arrived. Thank you for giving the urban poor a chance to make their voice visible. It says a lot for you and *The Witness.* Thanks from all of us at the Northwest Center for affirming our belief in Ida Mae [Sydnor].

Sister Helen David
Philadelphia PA

Challenging avoidance

MY EYE, [reading Judges 18] was drawn down the page to read the story of the nameless concubine, gang raped by a bunch "of the worst scoundrels in town," as my N.E.B. so nicely puts it. Why do we not read, ponder in our hearts, the deed of the father who says to these same scoundrels, "This man is my guest; do not commit this outrage. Here is my daughter, a virgin. Let me bring her out to you. Rape her, and do to her what you please." (Judges 19: 23-24).

Why do we stop short at this story? This is typical of the avoidance of the church in matters of sexual violence. We avert our eyes. We do not want to speak of *this* pain — let's go to Job instead. I think it is time for this story to be included in our lectionary, in our meditations. I want to ask our ministers to preach about rape and incest – for "our hands are on the threshold of the door" (Judges 19).

Just last Sunday I read about Philippino maids in Kuwait who are routinely raped in the country we so gallantly defended during the war in the Persian Gulf. One story was almost identical to the woman in the Judges' tale, except she was thrown out of a window, instead of out of doors. Where is the outcry from our government, our Church, our Episcopalian President?

Roberta Nobleman
Dumont NJ

Seeking contact

TRADITIONAL GREETINGS through the *Cannupa Wakan* (sacred pipe). I just finished reading several issues of *The Witness. Wanishi* (thank you). It is refreshing to see that theology is active in areas that need attention. Special thanks are in order for covering Native American issues and the indigenous perspective.

I have been active in civil rights, Native American rights, and prisoners' rights for about 25 years. I am incarcerated.

If anyone is interested in correspondence with a 42-year-old Algonquin who enjoys art, crafts, writing, culture, computers, mother earth and all our relations, I would enjoy it. My address is: Iron Thunderhorse, SPN #353666, Harris County Jail, 8-C-3, 1301 Franklin St., Houston, Texas 77002.

May our Grandfather *Kitche Manitou* and the *Ohaas Niempang* (Thunderbeings) guide and keep you on your path of service. *Mitakuye Oyasin,*

Iron Thunderhorse
Houston TX

[**Ed. Note**: Iron Thunderhorse is coauthor of *Return of the Thunderbeings*, Bear & Co., 1990.]

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Since 1917

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It is the policy of ***The Witness*** to use inclusive language whenever possible.

Exchanging birthrights: a nation of Esaus

"I am not willing to feel guilty about my grandparents," insisted a friend who has spent much of his adulthood trying to establish whether he is the poor white trash he's been told he was. "They were good people," he added. People eking out a living on Michigan farm land — on Indian land.

The Columbus anniversary conversation which followed was good. One of the things that hit me hardest was the realization that "white" is not an ethnic identity.

I was raised with an appreciation of African American culture. With that appreciation came a load of white guilt. I am very interested in Native American culture. I've often wished I was a "person of color," a person with a tradition of music and art and story-telling.

Being generically white seemed a liability and kind of unimaginative. But I understood and concurred with the conclusion that white people needed to repent for much of the abuse in this nation.

What is only slowly dawning on me is that white people have been hugely victimized as well and in much the same way that Native and African Americans have. White privilege has obscured this victimization, but we were bought: the price was our heritage.

In 1918, Ford Motor Company sponsored an Americanization program that culminated in a graduation ceremony in which participants descended from a boat into a 15-foot-wide melting pot. The director, Clinton C. DeWitt explained that *Six teachers, three on either side, stir the pot with 10-foot ladles, representing nine months of teaching in the school. Into the pot 52 nationalities with their foreign clothes and baggage go, and out of the pot, after a vigorous stirring by the teachers, comes one nationality.*

An emblem of America, 1798, mezzotint. The New York Public Library. Artist unknown.

How many white Americans know their ancestry? How many can sing a song, say a prayer, bake the bread of their country/countries of origin?

As important, how many know the positions their foreparents took in the struggles of their native land? Did they fight for or against the monarchy? Did they support or reject ecclesial authority? What was their world view and their sense of their place in it?

There is power in knowing these things. They offer a construct through which to consider the United States today. And most of us forfeited it.

It was forfeited in exchange for employment at Ford Motor Company, or for admission to the elite schools of the nation, or for the appearance of upward mobility.

Like Esau, we sold our inheritance for a mess of pottage.

And to this day we have an obsession with filling the bowl which exceeds our understanding. We do not fill our bowls in proportion to our physical needs. We fill our bowl with a desperation and a craving which is commensurate with the price we paid for it.

Without cultural roots, we asked few questions when other people were stripped of their heritage. Our bowls were filled and refilled with the wealth that was taken violently from others, those who were not privy to white privilege.

I think we did not even know our voices, although I'm sure most of us knew that as generic white people we were involved in something evil.

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. **Artist Irene Duffy** lives in Pullman, Washington.

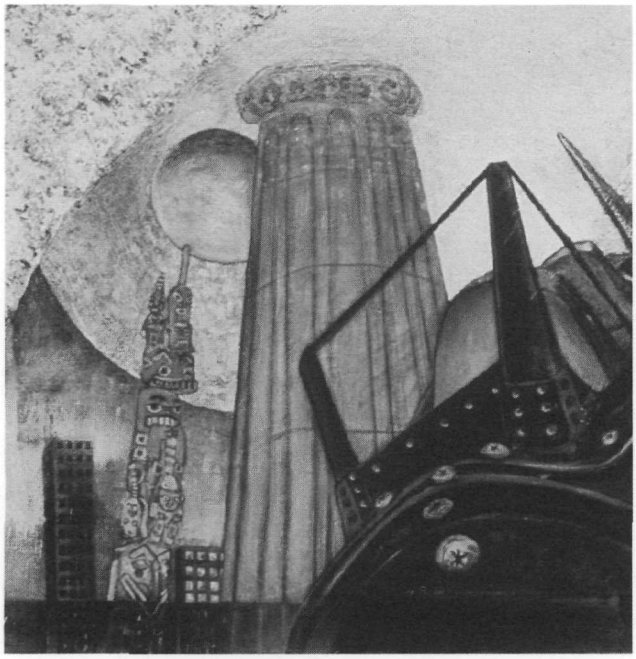
thing evil. But as a people with no name and no history, only privilege, many of us only chose between silent complicity or white guilt.

"Power is the ability to define reality," says David McMichaels, a CIA consultant who left his job after being told to produce nonexistent evidence that Sandinistas were supplying weapons to Salvadoran guerrillas.

McMichaels adds that religious communities and alternative publications are an enormous threat to the Pentagon. Cultural identity, I would contend, is another forum in which one can learn to imagine and to speak in ways that go beyond the scope permitted in the mass media, by Madison Avenue and by government propaganda.

The only thing that allows one to stand outside and critique actions of the nation is a community world view that includes a history. That history can be scriptural, or rooted in an alternative lifestyle or publication. But on some level it must be rooted in our own histories.

I felt a corporate responsibility for the decimation of the Indians and the enslavement of Africans, but I did not feel personally implicated until I traced family history on my mother's side back to southwestern Pennsylvania and Ohio.



Momentum credit: Irene Duffy

My great-great-great grandfather, John Cowen, was one of the first white people to hold a patent for land in Hickory, Pa. The Scotch Irish communities that my ancestors lived in had "block houses" to which townspeople could run during Indian attacks. As poor farmers, their lives were threatened by the land claims of those they had displaced. My great-great-great-great- grandfather James Dinsmore was admired for being a Presbyterian elder and an Indian-killer. Where they felt the most fear in their lives, they developed corresponding rationales to allow them to feel righteous in their hold on the land.

When I asked the 82-year-old family historian what Indian tribes had lived in the county, he said he did not know. He could point out the burial mounds where a local college had started an archeological dig but he could not say to whom these bones of the dead belonged. (I've learned they belong to the Lenni Lenape, "Grandfathers" of the Algonquins.)

My ancestors are also buried in that earth. There is blood, enmity and a common desire for life buried in that earth. It gave me life. I need to atone for some specific things and I am in the course of learning what those may be. This is not generic white guilt.

Paying attention to my family's history and to the stories buried in Washington County, Pa. will root me in a place. While I learn things that I do not like, I also come to respect the immigrant coal miners, farmers and school teachers who are my people.

Standing with my ancestors involves me in a history to which I'd had only an intellectual connection. Knowing in detail even just that piece of my heritage can help to restore my birthright. It can give me a scale on which to evaluate what I would sell for pottage. TW

Cincinnati

by Mitsuye Yamada

Freedom at last
in this town aimless
I walked against the rush
hour traffic
My first day
in a real city
where

no one knew me.

No one except one
hissing voice that said
dirty jap
warm spittle on my right cheek.
I turned and faced
the shop window
and my spittled face
spilled onto a hill
of books.
Words on display.

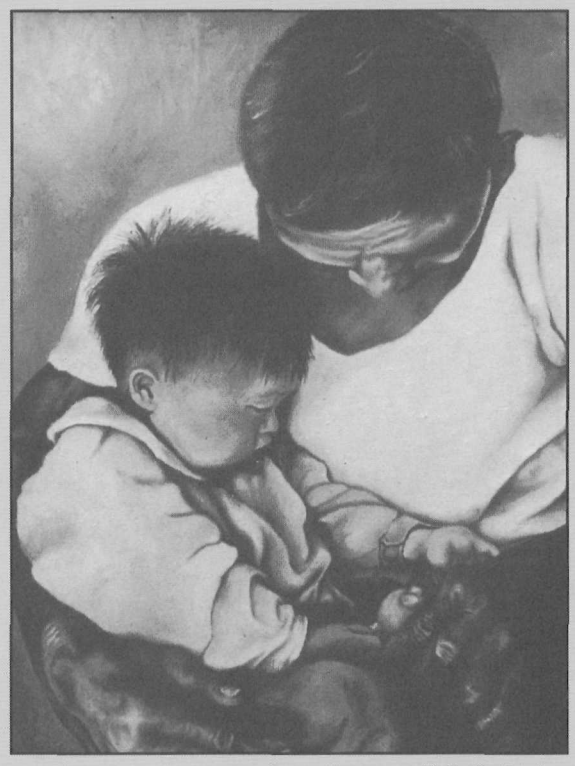
In government Square
people criss-crossed
the street
like the spokes of
a giant wheel.

I lifted my right hand
but it would not obey me.
My other hand fumbled for a hankie.

My tears would not
wash it. They stopped
and parted.
My hankie brushed
the forked
tears and spittle
together.
I edged toward the curb
loosened my fisthold
and the bleached laced
mother-ironed hankie blossomed in
the gutter atop teeth marked
gum wads and heeled candy wrappers.

Everyone knew me.

Camp Notes and other poems, Shameless Hussy Press, Berkeley California, 1986.



credit: Jerrilyn Prestiano

Mitsuye Yamada was born in Kyushu, Japan and raised in Seattle, Washington until the outbreak of World War II when her family was removed to a concentration camp in Idaho. She teaches English at Cypress College in Southern California and is the founder of the Multicultural Women Writers of Orange County. She is active in Amnesty International.

American Son

by Mitsuye Yamada

When I was ten
I rolled my hair in rags
for Shirley Temple ringlets
polished my teeth white
for a pepsodent smile
clattered about in slick
tap shoes
so my father
sent me away
to his mother in Japan
who took me in
because I was hers,

a piece of an only son sent
home like dirty laundry to be
washed and pressed
then returned to America less
tomboy American more
ladylike Japanese

a daily reminder of him
who only yesterday
crossed that river
on a swinging narrow bridge
to school

a thin-boned body like his
that worked years ago
in the teeming rice fields
until dark.

Desert Run, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Latham NY, 1988.

Poetry

Chief Ronnie, Eleanor and Holly Branham, now know they are Monacan Indians of West Virginia.

credit: Ariel Miller

Learning one's name

by Ariel Miller

Though she was in her ninth decade in the 1950s, Indian midwife Kate Johns still went from cabin to cabin on the wooded slopes of Bear Mountain to deliver the babies of her tribe. Far more was at stake than each new life: she was striving to keep alive an ancient legacy on the verge of destruction. Any newborn she could reach in time would be safely recorded as Indian on the birth certificate.

But any Indian born in a Virginia hospital would be registered as Black, as state and county officials worked relentlessly to bring all non-Whites in the Commonwealth under the iron restrictions of segregation.

Despite the cost, Indian families on Bear Mountain refused to surrender their identity. "My great-grandmother said, 'you're Indian and don't you ever forget it!" recalls Phyllis Hicks of her forbear Kate Johns. But beyond that knowledge, almost nothing was left for the elders of this Indian enclave in the Virginia Piedmont to hand down to their children. The ancient language and culture were lost. "Our ancestors pushed aside whatever they had done that was Indian," Hicks explains sadly. "All that was left were things that were part of the White man's world, so that nothing would be said against us."

Then, in the 1980s, at the prompting of Episcopal missionary John Haraughty, Lynchburg pediatrician Peter Houck uncovered evidence that the Indians of Bear Mountain were descended from Monacan tribes who had lived in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge for over 10,000 years. With Houck's findings supported by a growing body of scholarly research, the Bear Mountain Monacans were formally recognized in 1989 by the Governor of Virginia as one of only eight indigenous Virginian Indian tribes, reversing 60 years of official efforts to deny their existence.

The story of how they found their heritage again is testimony to their endurance and the commitment of the missionaries and other friends who cared deeply that justice be done.

Houck's research revealed that the ordeal of the Amherst County Indians began soon after patriarch William Johns bought a tract of 400 acres on the secluded mountainside north of the James River in 1833, and settled there with his extended family. Despite their English names, geneologies indicate that all were Indian or of Indian-White descent.

Most vestiges of the Monacan culture of their ancestors had disappeared from the region long before. Historians estimate that up to 90 percent of the Pied-

Ariel Miller is assistant editor of *Interchange*, the newspapers of the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

mont-dwelling Indians had died of epidemics of European diseases to which they had no immunity, and most of the rest had migrated south or north. By the late 19th century the last of their descendents were widely believed to have died in Canada.

Nevertheless, the people on Bear Mountain had such strong Indian characteristics that some Whites came to believe that the families in the settlement were Cherokee refugees who had come to Virginia to escape the death march of the Trail of Tears. With no oral or written tradition to tell them otherwise, the Bear Mountain Indians accepted this story. Some of the scattered descendents of the clan believe that to this day.

But a tale grew up in Amherst County that the Bear Mountain settlement were the descendents of Indians and a group of freed slaves, or "free Issue," who had been settled in a hollow near Bear Mountain just before the Civil War. From then on they began calling the settlement families "Issue," a term of contempt as stinging as "half-breed" or "nigger."

By the 20th century, most of the settlement families were impoverished as well as outcasts. A succession of farm depressions drove Indian farmers into debt. The county seized land for non-payment of taxes. More was lost through White chicanery. Monacan Chief Ronnie Branham reports an amazing conversation in an Amherst bar a few years back where locals, taking him for White, boasted of how Whites had tricked "those issues" out of land.

In 1989, the Governor of Virginia officially recognized the Bear Mountain Monacans as one of the indigenous Indian tribes, reversing 60 years of official efforts to deny their existence.

In 1908, concerned about the plight of the settlement, a group of Amherst County patricians raised money to help seminarian Arthur Gray, Jr. found St. Paul's Mission at the foot of Bear Mountain. For 50 years a succession of indomitable missionary deaconesses would see to it that Indian children, barred from White schools, received an elementary education at the outpost school at the Mission. The mission became and remains the heart of the tribal community.

"We knew we were Indian, but we couldn't be Indian, we couldn't be White, and the White man wanted us to be Black."
— Eleanor Branham

But off the mountain the climate of bigotry grew steadily worse. Under the rubric of Virginia's 1924 Racial Purity Act, state Vital Statistics Registrar W.A. Plecker circulated a hit list of the tribe's surnames to county officials and insisted that all families with those names be classified as Negro "because there are no descendents of Virginia Indians claiming or reputed to be Indians who are unmixed with Negro blood."

They would be subjected to Virginia's own version of apartheid. *Mongrel Virginians,* the title of a psuedo-sociology published about the Bear Mountain Indians in 1926, epitomizes the pariah status inflicted on them.

The missionaries at St. Paul stood up staunchly for the tribe. Deaconess Florence Cowan waged a seven-year desegregation battle and finally in 1963 won Indian children access to white schools and a high school education.

Her successor, Church Army Captain John Haraughty, helped the tribe overcome impending economic disaster. When he arrived at St. Paul's 1968, most of the families were landless and were reduced to working and living as tenant farmers in mountain orchards. With land prices rising, the orchards were being sold off, and the Indians faced the loss of both jobs and shelter.

Working with tribal representatives like Phyllis Hicks, Haraughty succeeded in getting federal grants for job training and the construction of a housing subdivision for the tribe. Together they dramatically improved the economic status of the tribe. But a profound bereavement persisted. "We were lost - that's the only word for it," explains Eleanor Branham, wife of the chief. "We knew we were Indian, but we couldn't be Indian, we couldn't be White, and the White man wanted us to be Black."

With a hunch that the tribe might be the descendents of the lost Monacans, Haraughty approached amateur historian Peter Houck, pediatrician to many Bear Mountain children, and asked him to delve into the roots of the Bear Mountain settlement.

Published in 1984, the revelations in Houck's book *Indian Island* electrified the tribe and led to a complete revolution in the treatment accorded them by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

He traced the settlement's geneology back to Indians living in the Piedmont in the late 18th century, then linked it for the first time to historical evidence of an uninterrupted Monacan presence in the Piedmont until that time.

New archaeological evidence shows that Monacans have been in the Piedmont

for 10,000 years, and at one time had a complex civilization including farming and trade that extended from the Atlantic Coast possibly as far as the Great Lakes.

Suddenly, these erstwhile "mongrel Virginians" were founding mothers and fathers. Within four years of the publication of Houck's book, the tribe had won state recognition.

Since then the Monacans of Bear Mountain have been working hard to uncover more traces of their lost heritage. Scholars have sought them out; they have participated in digs; they have won research grants to prepare a monograph and a traveling display on the history of the tribe. Now they are regularly invited to give presentations at Virginia's major cultural festivals, at churches, schools, and boy scout troops.

A new epiphany occurred with the arrival on Bear Mountain of George Branham at the end of 1990. An Indian raised in Maryland, he had had no contact with Bear Mountain and believed his heritage was Cherokee and Sioux. His own quest for his roots took him to the Pine Ridge Reservation, where he overcame alcoholism under the tutelage of a Lakota medicine man who told him that to stay well he must continue to grow in his tradition and serve his people.

Then Monacan Jimmy Knuckles, one of Branham's Maryland cousins, urged him to read Houck's book. Branham did, and finally found himself at Bear Mountain standing in front of the graves of generations of his Branham forbears. "He told us," Eleanor Branham says softly, "that he was talked to by the spirits."

It was the most uncanny convergence. Following Houck's book, scholars had begun to republish old ethnological evidence that the Monacans were a branch of the eastern Sioux, sharing an ancient common ancestry with the Sioux of the Great Plains.

The cemetery at St. Paul's Episcopal Mission, like the ancient burial mounds in the area, holds clues about the Monacan's identity. credit: Ariel Miller

George Branham now spends his winters on Bear Mountain and has begun to teach Sioux spirituality and culture in weekly classes at the parish hall. Members of the tribe have responded with deep satisfaction. They are learning to make traditional leather and beadwork, and plan to embellish the parish hall with symbols of their culture.

This year they hope to start learning to speak Sioux.

Not long after George Branham discovered his roots on Bear Mountain, B. Lloyd retired as director of the Appalachian Peoples Service Organization and became supply priest to the Mission. Lloyd, who has made a Sioux vision quest, sees the coming years as a profound journey of spiritual rediscovery for the Bear Mountain congregation. "George's coming is providential," Lloyd says. "He is here to help the Monacans regain a sense of being Sioux."

And so the Indians of Bear Mountain have regained their rightful place in Virginia's history.

It is a crossroads where joy mingles with bereavement. Over the years, scores of Monacan families were driven away from Virginia by racism. Tribal leaders are sure that many will never come back. They suffered too much, they want to forget. Some refuse to tell their children that they have Indian blood.

But state recognition has had an incredible liberating impact. Small wonder: as John Haraughty puts it, "the state that said they were nobody has admitted they are somebody."

People of the diaspora are beginning to return: to see the mountain again, to lay flowers on ancestral graves, to learn about their roots.

"A lot of people who went away and married away have come forward and want to be a part of the tribe," adds Kate Johns' granddaughter Annie Branham, a witness to the tribe's worst times. Now she looks joyfully to the future.

> *"You can shout. You're not ashamed. You're a whole new person!"*
>
> *— Annie Branham*

"Kate told us very little," says this quiet elder, smiling. "But she'd say, 'someday it will come back to you.' And now this discovery! You're a whole new person. You can go out and shout and you're not ashamed!" TW

Native issues in 1992

Religious Freedom

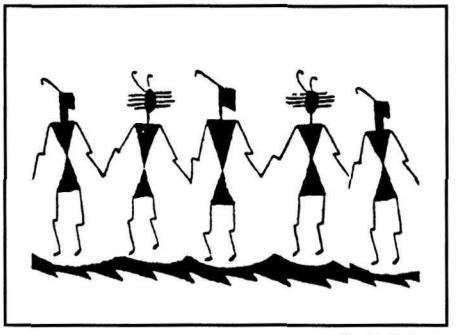
In 1978, Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA). However, recent Supreme Court decisions have shown it to be inadequate. In the 1988 Lyng case, the Court gave the Forest Service permission to destroy an ancient sacred site on public land. In 1990, states were given the right to prohibit the sacramental use of peyote in Native American church services. A coalition of Native American organizations is calling for amendments to guarantee religious freedom.

Action: 1. Write your senators and representatives, asking them to hold hearings on issues of Native American religious freedom. Ask them to support the legislative efforts of Senator Daniel Inouye on these matters. 2. Write Rep. George Miller, Chairman of the House Interior Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. 3. Write the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. Express support for their leadership on American Indian issues and their investigation of religious freedom problems. Ask them to introduce a separate bill to protect Native American religious freedom.

In Arizona, Apaches are struggling to stop construction of a telescope on Dzil nchaa zi (Mt. Graham), a mountain sacred to the Apache people. The observatory is sponsored by the University of Arizona, the Vatican, Italy's Arcetri Observatory, and the German Max Planck Institute.

This data was provided by **HONOR** (Honor Our Neighbors' Origins and Rights) and assembled by **Marianne Arbogast.**
Artist **K. Kelleigh** is of Cherokee descent and lives in the Midwest.

Action: Write the following officials to express opposition to the Mt. Graham construction project: 1. Cardinal Castillo Lara, 00120 Vatican City-State, Europe. 2. Bishop Manual Moreno, 192 S. Stone Ave., Tucson, AZ 85702. 3. Franco Pacini,



credit: K. Kelleigh

Arcetri Observatory, Largo Enrico Fermi 5, 50125 Florence, Italy. 4. Dr. Heinz Riesenhuber, Fed'l Minister for Research and Technology, Heinnemannstr. 2, 5300 Bohn 2, Federal Republic of Germany. 5. Pope John Paul II, c/o Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, Apostolic Nuncia Ture, 339 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. 6. Dr. Manual Pacheco, President, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85734.

Environmental Protection

Further development of the James Bay hydro-electric project in Quebec threatens the health and traditional lifestyle of 1200 Cree and 6000 Inuit Eskimos living in the region, contaminating the water and poisoning the fish which has been their dietary staple. The state of New York recently terminated its contracts with Hydro-Quebec, but New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island still receive energy from the company.

Action: Support Massachusetts State Assembly Bill H 1978 (Robert Marzilli-D) which will prohibit the state from loaning money to Hydro-Quebec through Massachusetts' pension and retirement fund. Write legislators in states holding contracts with Hydro-Quebec, urging them to follow New York's lead.

Mascots, Logos and Symbols

A number of Indian organizations are encouraging a boycott of Heilmann's malt liquor called Chief Crazy Horse. Reps. Frank Wolf and Patricia Schroeder have introduced legislation which would prohibit the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco from approving such labeling.

A Missouri state legislator, Vernon Thompson, has introduced a bill to prohibit state financial support of the stadium where the Kansas City Chiefs play if the team "discriminated against Native Americans or mock sacred Native American symbols." Rep. Jack Jackson of Arizona has introduced a bill that would make it illegal "to use any Indian name or place in a derogatory manner."

Land

HONOR (Honor Our Neighbors' Origins and Rights) is developing several initiatives to help restore and consolidate tribal land bases. They offer a model resolution for congregations or other church bodies challenging the Church to return excess lands on or near reservations to the appropriate tribe. In March, the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan became the first to adopt the resolution.

HONOR also plans to develop a "Return the Homelands" foundation to raise money for tribes to purchase priority lands. It hopes to match up people who wish to purchase an "Acre of HONOR" with a tribe which needs a specific parcel. It may also offer leadership training for activists with expertise on land issues.

Action: Become a member of HONOR. Ask your congregation or diocese to support the HONOR land resolution (available from HONOR, Sharon Metz, director, 2647 N. Stowell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211).

Sweet Honey in the Rock credit: Sharon Farmer

Witnessing a miracle: interview with Bernice Reagon

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Bernice Johnson Reagon, founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock, consented to be interviewed about Sweet Honey' upcoming release, In This Land. Reagon is a curator at the Smithsonian Institute and a civil-rights activist.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: I've heard you talk about the importance of culture as a way of teaching African American children their identity when there is no land on which to raise them. What does it mean to have a cultural identity?

Bernice Reagon: It's really the whole complex, almost a medium, that supports and sustains life. It is language. It is song. It is belief. It is expression. It's your art. It's your land identity.

The African American culture is a warrior culture, mostly because it has evolved having to fight for the lives it is created by. (Even as the culture hosts you, you have to transmit the culture.)

Yet — some people think miraculously — a lot is affirming and celebratory. If you think about the historical legacy of this people in this land, you find people who really understand that if you get up in the morning and you know your name, you have witnessed something of a miracle and there is reason to delight.

As African American people see it: you can be broken and *live*. When you wake up and you touch yourself and you still have your legs and your hands, and when you open your eyes and can see, and you know your name and can call your family, Black people often say, "Thank you."

There is a lesson in African American culture about naming where you are, so it does not name you. You can be in a particular situation, but that situation is not your name.

I grew up in a culture where I saw and experienced this again and again. Most of the time it was in church in my early days and later it was in the movement. The reason you came together in the group was to change your condition — and when you left you were supposed to be a bit more ready to go on in your next step. In every concert we try to invite the possibility of that. We like to invite people to move the stuff of their lives back and forth over this musical offering and try to be more ready for the next time.

J.W-K.: I'd like you to talk about anger.

B.R.: I find a lot of people who ask about rap — they're not asking about rap. They're asking about their fear of African American young people who say so clearly what they think and are not willing to control their anger or be patient.

What's more terrifying to them is that so many young white people also love this music. People begin to ask whether it's a threat to the survival of the [dominant] culture. I think it's about fear of anger, not really being able to deal with opposition, or to function in a culture where many people are not like you.

We are not socialized to deal with this. I feel this is the work that this generation needs to bring to the culture — to provide exercises people can go through in order not to be anxiety-ridden by all of our people; our cultures; all people having

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

access to power; the changes in the relationships between men and women; [the existence of] more than one language; and the need to have the ability to go on with your life and work with people who you don't agree with all the time. People also need to learn when it is time to separate yourself because you do not have enough in common to walk together. We do not have the equipment at this point to do this with ease.

A lot of what *Sweet Honey* tries to do is say "We have to talk about some things that are hard, but we are not attacking your life. You are not going to die because of this conversation."

You need a center and an internal source of direction. (I think the same is true for institutions.) If you have that, you are more able to deal with the possibility that you may have to deal with people who are upset and angry.

J.W-K: Could you talk some about the song you sing in your new release, *In This Land,* the one that's called *Now that the Buffalo's Gone.*

B.R.: I first heard it sung by Buffie Sainte Marie. It has been especially important in 1992 to have a song in our repertoire that talks about the indigenous people and culture of this land. This song calls to those of us who have family members who are Native American — your people need you. You need to hear from your people.

We did not have a national gorging on the glories of Columbus' discovery — and that was not accidental. There are many, many people who said, "We must put within the culture our experience; When people think about this date, we must admit there was immense human destruction, immense environmental destruction." People said this quincentenniary is an opportunity to get this a little more balanced in the American psyche. It's almost like you messed up the birthday party, but I think the most important thing that could be done is to add some of the damage to the picture. There are so many of us who walk in that damage that to do less would be to deny that we walk.

We need to add some of the damage to the Columbus picture. There are so many of us who walk in that damage, that to do less would be to deny that we walk.

J.W-K.: What about your rap song *A Priority?*

B.R.: What happens in *A Priority* is taking over territory. Women need more space than they have to walk in — no one is going to give us this space — we need to just start walking in it. You just have to change the way the culture deals with us — not by talking — but by actually placing ourselves in a new territory. In the civil rights movement, Black people changed the territory by walking.

We watch people during concerts and it's wonderful. More and more men are getting up; it used to be only women. People get up and they are strutting in the new land created by the song. You can watch men — brothers, fathers, lovers — trying to determine if they can walk in this new land. Young African American men and women — they leap to it immediately. *A Priority* is not even a song — it's a claim advancing territory — masquerading as a song.

If you think about the historical legacy of African Americans, you find people who really understand that if you get up in the morning and you know your name, you have witnessed something of a miracle.

J.W-K.: In *Guide Me Thou Great Jehova,* there's a prayer. Yet, I remember on the *Good News* album you almost apologized for singing *"Ain't That Good News."* You reminded people that religion was not just a pie in the sky offer, but the church was a power in the Black community. How is your own experience of religion playing through your music and your life?

B.R.: My most radical days in the movement were hosted by the Black church. I have come to my position as a radical through an organized religious culture.

I feel that everything we do is part of a sacred experience. Life is sacred. Any time you gather to lift life, you are working in very special territory. Sometimes in concerts I actually thank the audience for allowing us to revisit hallowed ground that might not be within their culture.

I know that we are always — in terms of organized religion — in a mixed audience. I invite people to take what aspect of the truth they can. Our audience comes out of a broad-based community, where [people] challenge themselves to be more tolerant of things that are not them.

Sometimes people may not be able to agree with a particular song, but they experience the bigness there is when you don't smash that which is not you.

We are not entertainers. Entertainers create a reality that takes you out of your space, which is a necessary release. *Sweet Honey In The Rock* takes you into yourself where you are working through all parts of yourself and lifting all of that and saying, "I'm glad I'm here." TW

"We're going to have to control your tongue," the dentist says, pulling out all the metal from my mouth. Silver bits plop and tinkle into the basin. My mouth is a motherlode.

The dentist is cleaning out my roots. I get a whiff of the stench when I gasp. "I can't cap that tooth yet, you're still draining," he says.

"We're going to have to do something about your tongue." I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. "I've never seen anything as strong or as stubborn," he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

"Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?" —Ray Gwyn Smith

***Woman holding fruit,* Diego Rivera's Detroit Industry Mural, 1932-1933.** Courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

To tame a wild tongue

by Gloria Anzaldúa

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess — that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for "talking back" to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. "If you want to be American, speak 'American.' If you don't like it, go back to Mexico where you belong."

"I want you to speak English. *Pa' hallar buen trabajo tienes que saber hablar el inglés bien. Qué vale toda tu educación si todavía hablas inglés con un* 'accent,'" my mother would say, mortified that I spoke English like a Mexican. At Pan American University, I, and all Chicano students were required to take two speech classes. Their purpose: to get rid of our accents.

Attacks on one's form of expression with the intent to censor are a violation of the First Amendment. *El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua.* Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out.

Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, *evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invencion o adopción* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un modo de vivir.* Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language.

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves — a language with terms that are neither *espanol ni inglés*, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages.

Chicano Spanish sprang out of the Chicanos' need to identify ourselves as a distinct people. We needed a language with which we could communicate with ourselves, a secret language. For some of us, language is a homeland closer than the Southwest — for many Chicanos today live in the Midwest and the East. And because we are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages. Some of the languages we speak are:

1. Standard English
2. Working class and slang English
3. Standard Spanish
4. Standard Mexican Spanish
5. North Mexican Spanish dialect
6. Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California have regional variations)
7. Tex-Mex

Article adapted from "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," *Borderlands*, Aunt Lute Foundation, San Francisco, CA, 1987.

8. *Pachuco* (called *caló*)

My "home" tongues are the languages I speak with my sister and brothers, with my friends. They are the last five listed, with 6 and 7 being closest to my heart.

Chicanas who grew up speaking Chicano Spanish have internalized the belief that we speak poor Spanish. It is illegitimate, a bastard language. And because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other.

***"Vistas," corridos, y comida*: My Native Tongue**

In the 1960s, I read my first Chicano novel. It was *City of Night* by John Rechy, a gay Texan, son of a Scottish father and a Mexican mother. For days I walked around in stunned amazement that a Chicano could write and could get published. When I read *I Am Joaquin* I was surprised to see a bilingual book by a Chicano in print. When I saw poetry written in Tex-Mex for the first time, a feeling of pure joy flashed through me. I felt like we really existed as a people. In 1971, when I started teaching High School English to Chicano students, I tried to supplement the required texts with works by Chicanos, only to be reprimanded and forbidden to do so by the principal. He claimed that I was supposed to teach "American" and English literature. At the risk of being fired, I swore my students to secrecy and slipped in Chicano short stories, poems, a play. In graduate school, while working toward a Ph.D., I had to "argue" with one advisor after the other, semester after semester, before I was allowed to make Chicano literature an area of focus.

Si le preguntas a mi mamá, "¿Que eres?"

Chicanos and other people of color suffer economically for not acculturating. This voluntary (yet forced) alienation makes for psychological conflict, a kind of dual identity — we don't identify with the Anglo-American cultural values and we don't totally identify with the Mexican cultural values. We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness. I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one. *A voces no soy nada ni nadia. Pero hasta cuando no lo soy, lo soy.*

When not copping out, when we know we are more than nothing, we call ourselves Mexican, referring to race and ancestry; *mestizo* when affirming both our Indian and Spanish (but we hardly ever own our Black ancestry); Chicano when referring to a politically aware people born and/or raised in the U.S.; *Raza* when referring to Chicanos; *tejanos* when we are Chicanos from Texas.

Chicanos did not know we were a people until 1965 when Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers united and *I Am Joaquin* was published and *la Raza Unida* party was formed in Texas. With that recognition, we became a distinct people. Something momentous happened to the Chicano soul — we became aware of our reality and acquired a name and a language (Chicano Spanish) that reflected that reality. Now that we had a name, some of the fragmented pieces began to fall together — who we were, what we were, how we had evolved. We began to get glimpses of what we might eventually become.

Los Chicanos, *how patient we seem, how very patient. There is the quiet of the Indian about us. We know how to survive. When other races have given up their tongue, we've kept ours. We know what it is to live under the hammer blow of the dominant* norteamericano *culture. But more than we count the blows, we count the days the weeks the years the centuries the eons until the white laws and commerce and customs will rot in the deserts they've created.*

Yet the struggle of identities continues, the struggle of borders is our reality still. One day the inner struggle will cease and a true integration will take place. In the meantime, *tenemos que hacer la lucha. ¿Quién está protegiendo los ranchos de mi gente? ¿Quién está tratando de cerrar la fisura entre la india y el blanco en nuestra sangre? El Chicano, si, el Chicano que anda como un ladrón en su propia casa.*

Los Chicanos, how patient we seem, how very patient. There is the quiet of the Indian about us. We know how to survive. When other races have given up their tongue, we've kept ours. We know what it is to live under the hammer blow of the dominant *norteamericano* culture. But more than we count the blows, we count the days the weeks the years the centuries the eons until the white laws and commerce and customs will rot in the deserts they've created, lie bleached. *Humildes* yet proud, *quietos* yet wild, *nosotros los mexicanos-Chicanos* will walk by the crumbling ashes as we go about our business. Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we, the *mestizas* and *mestizos*, will remain. TW

The spirituality of this land, harbored perhaps in the bones of the dead, is making a new claim on its people. Sensitive, educated European Americans are signing up for vision quests and asking Wakan Tanka to speak to them through the pipe. They are praying to the four directions and learning to call the earth their mother.

Fundamentalists are alarmed that paganism is on the rise.

Bureaucrats in mainstream denominations are probably aware that they have lost not only members of the congregation but disposable income as well.

I understand the regrets (although not the radical fear) of Christians who, like me, find themselves apparently unable to effectively articulate the integrity and power of biblical beliefs. Partly this is because advancing a faith that rejects hedonism and holds to the way of the cross is difficult. But it is also because standing between us are enormous visages of the Church's complicity in Columbus' venture; the Inquisitions; the witch-burnings; the homophobia; and that pervasive and impenetrable posture of righteousness that fills Sunday's pews.

It's small surprise that European Americans are turning toward Native American (and Celtic and Eastern) beliefs with a vengeance.

And I understand some of the longings that lead European Americans toward Native American spirituality, having gone on a vision quest this summer. The encouraging thing is that it indicates that there is a real hunger for:

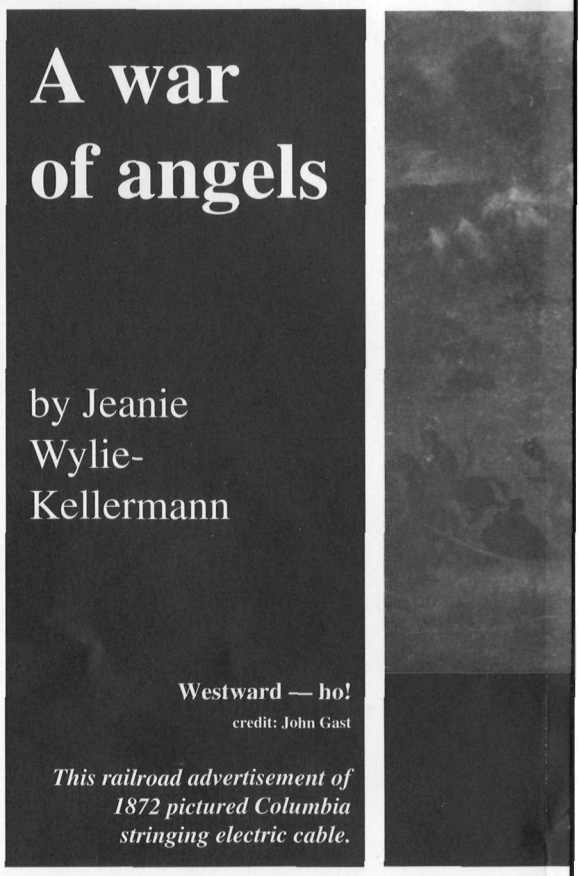
- a relationship to the earth;
- an expectation of miracles through rites, covenants, the elements;
- a spirituality that does not align with patriarchy, consumerism and moral hypocrisy;
- a faith community that has a long history of leadership by people of color and by women in particular;
- a place where we can express our most primitive selves — naked in the fire-flame shadows, painting cave walls and our bodies, praying the earliest child's prayer to Mama and Dada. To howl, dance, drum, weep;
- the transcendent.

When the missionaries brought Christ to this land, they understood that their faith must make alliances. It could meld with the people of the pipe and in some missions it did. Or it could combine with the spirit of Columbia, preaching advancement and change and the virtue of conquest.

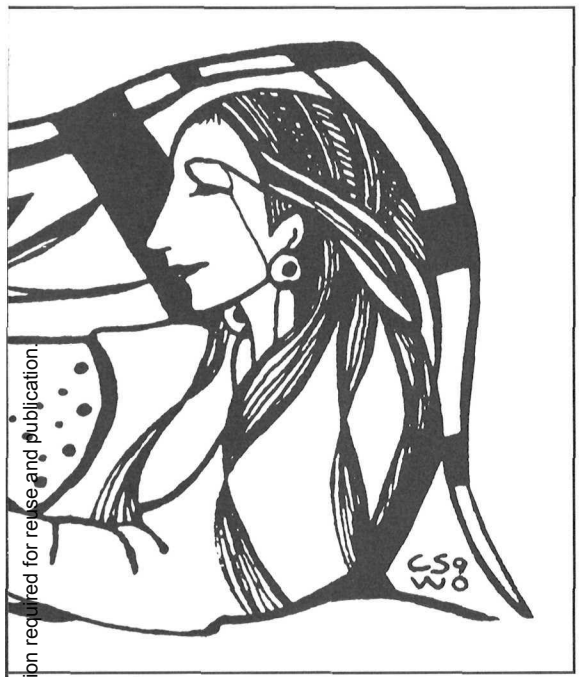
The elements of Christian spirituality which might feed this hunger are the ones that have been methodically weeded out since the scientific revolution. The mystery, visions, fasts, experience of the saints and mystics, earth cycles of the Jewish feasts, direct revelation, and power of sacraments have all been put aside or explained away. And our holy men and women have exchanged the numinous for membership in professional associations.

One would almost wonder what remains beyond a moral training for chil-

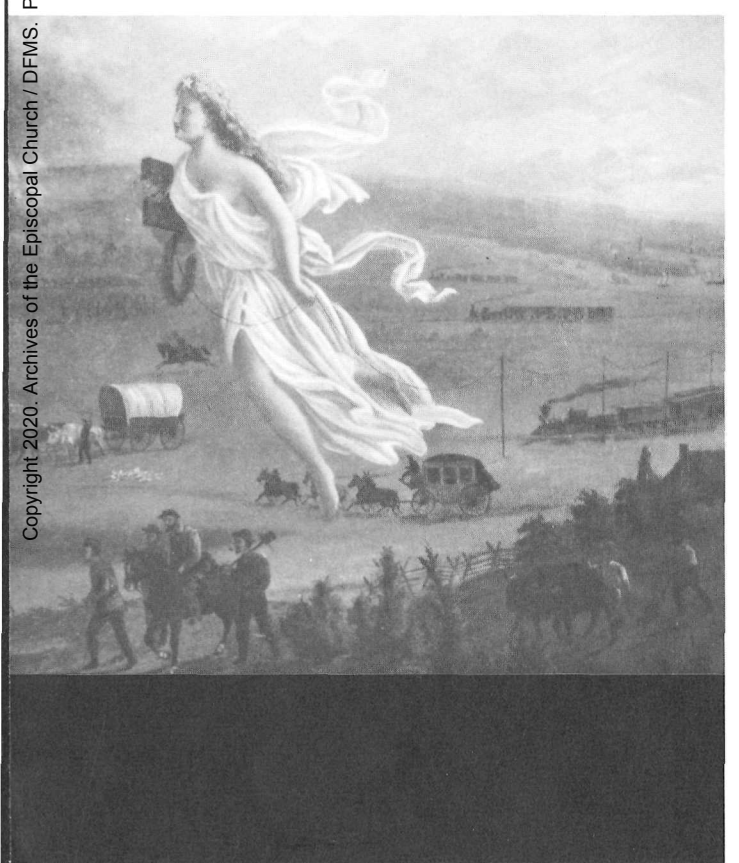
White Buffalo Woman, bringer of the pipe



Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness.* Artist **Christine Sioui Wawanoloath** was published in *Every Woman's Almanac: 500 Years of Survival* by The Syracuse Cultural Workers.



credit: Christine Sioui Wawanoloath



dren. Once our faith is compressed to those things science can support and our sexuality, grief, passion, wild hopes and imaginations are checked at the door, what's left? What gets said during coffee hour?

In a vision quest, fancy clothes are not required. In fact, before long people are sweaty and have earth under their fingernails. Depending on the trust level, people talk about the important things in their lives: the transitions, the marriages, the broken relationships, the affairs, the changes in their children, the bankruptcy of their own vision, their need to discover and live through their own power. At best, people learn an intimacy that is premised in a sort of solitariness. They are reminded that they are responsible for their own circle. They are expected to pray and engage with the Great Spirit directly.

Native American priests who have integrated the Traditional Way with Christian faith sometimes suggest that Indians have a greater understanding of Christ's presence in the eucharist and in the reality of angels and saints. They have a more fundamental understanding of the relationships between all things in God's creation. They are quicker to anticipate that God is looking for an unedited view of our hearts.

At the same time, an increasing number of Native Americans are wary about the droves of European Americans who are rising, like another white wave, to consume their spiritual culture.

In 1984, Indian elders asked the American Indian Movement to debunk "plastic medicine men" who were selling their people's spirituality to European Americans who, as in every other sphere of their lives, were looking for quick fixes. Among those condemned by AIM are Sun Bear, Wallace Black Elk, Cyfus McDonald, Brook Medicine Eagle, Osheana Fast Wolf, Dyhani Ywahoo, Rolling Thunder and "Beautiful Painted Arrow."

Other Native Americans, like Robert Allen Warrior — a contributing editor to *Christianity & Crisis,* protest that European Americans are scarfing up Native traditions but learning nothing of *current* political struggles.

And George Tinker, a Lutheran pastor and Osage, who welcomes European Americans into his congregation, now forbids them entry into the sacred sweat ceremonies. Tinker suggests that Native Americans need to help European Americans find life and sustenance in their own traditions.

The cynicism and the wisdom in this Native American effort to hold European Americans at arm's length probably has to do with each individual's responsibility to care for one's own circle.

We can't buy someone else's experience of God. No matter how many feathers and turquoise earrings one buys at pow wows from the Anglos who imported them from Mexico and Taiwan, one can't turn one's skin dark and one's heritage into someone else's.

And, from the Great Spirit's perspective, we can guess that one does not need to.

On the other hand, while respecting the hand that is outreached to keep Anglos at a distance, it is also true that the Hopi and the Ojibwe, among others, have prophecies that a time will come when the whites will learn to walk the red path. During that time the future of the earth will hang in the balance. Either whites will learn to harvest with the seventh

generation in mind, or the rapid progression toward death through contamination of the earth, water and air will continue.

Somewhere in the European American's experience of Native American spirituality is the hope of balance.

Christians, transplanted to this country and mobile in their career paths, can begin to learn the importance of place. We can learn the plants and animals native to the place where we are. We can begin to see the ways we are all connected. We can, perhaps for the first time, trust our own place in the circle. And we can feel, in our own hands, the stewardship that binds our lives to those of our great-great-great-great-great grandchildren. Perhaps there is more time than we are inclined to think, enough time to notice and even revere the place in which we live.

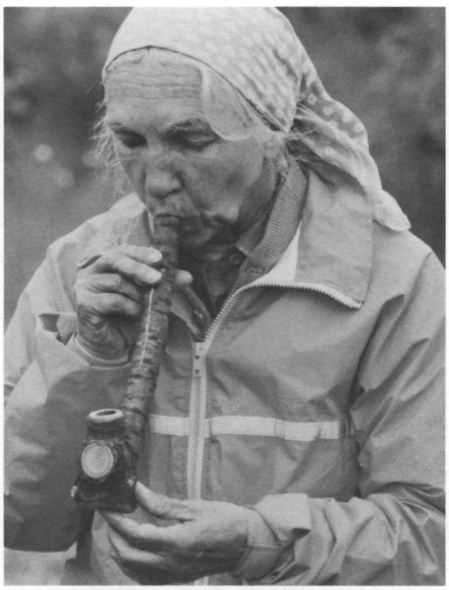
There is another reason why European Americans, while respecting that hand that holds us at a distance, need to learn the Traditional Way. It is, in a sense, the heritage of European Americans as well. And this is only because of the importance of place.

This land holds the bones of its dead. It holds the sacred places, the rocks and falls and medicine wheels where prayers have been offered. Embedded in its earth is an understanding of God and a covenant offered by God in the smoke of the pipe and the visions of the elders.

When White Buffalo Woman brings the pipe to her people, her spirit stands upright in the life of this land. (Her act is compared to the eucharist in the Episcopal Church's educational curriculum *In the Circle of the Spirit.)*

The railroad advertising artist who drew the image of Columbia sweeping over this country intuitively understood the power of earth and spirituality. He attempted to substitute conquest and "enlightenment" for the White Buffalo Woman.

The "angel of the nation" is an Old Testament concept that applies. Walter Wink and other Christian theologians suggest that in a biblical understanding of the spiritual and physical reality of a nation, "an interiority" exists, a power that — like a gyroscope — can hold a people in sway. It is argued that one would do well to learn to know the angel of a nation (a congregation, a denomination, a corporate structure) before attempting serious change.



Monny Cobb, a member of Grace Episcopal Church in Holland, Michigan joined a vision quest led by an Episcopal priest. credit: Herb Gunn, *The Record*

The United States has an angel. For a long time, 500 years, it has been understood to be Columbia — the spirit of scientific advancement and domination. But powerful beneath that image is the White Buffalo Woman attesting to a God of power that teaches the relationships between all things, that offers prophesies, that redeems and restores, that calls us to live with our sexuality, our dreams, our anger and grief — for the well-being of the children.

When the missionaries brought Christ to this land, they seemed to understand that their faith must make alliances as it had in so many cultures before. It could meld with the people of the pipe and in some missions it did. Or it could combine with the spirit of Columbia, preaching advancement and change and the virtue of conquest.

For five hundred years, the spirit of Columbia has prevailed, but she is losing influence. It is unlikely that either Columbia or the White Buffalo Woman could be totally suppressed. The angels of nations have a way of rising again — as is clear in the Soviet block among Poles, Serbs and Croats.

But the children of Columbus are making a choice. However narrowly or naively, they are rejecting his spiritual legacy. The living Church is given a choice as well: it can define itself within the vision of the Europe of the 1490s and the imperial America which has evolved, or it can step beyond a conquesting worldview and embrace its own biblical tradition in harmony with that of the original peoples of this earth.

For 500 years, the spirit of Columbia has prevailed, but she is losing influence.The children of Columbus are making a choice. They are rejecting his spiritual legacy.

As Yahweh sits in heavenly council perhaps there is room for reconciliation between the White Buffalo Woman and Columbia. Perhaps the Christian Church in the U.S. can help facilitate that by reclaiming its relationship to the earth and to the transcendent. As above, so below. TW

Greenham Common Memorial

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the start of the march by people from Wales which led to the women's peace camp at Greenham Common. A proposal has been launched to set up a sculpture commemorating all the women who supported Greenham.

It is to be a simple, natural figure of a woman with a baby, on a plinth where women can sit, with a plaque with dates of the main events at Greenham.

The protest marches began when women decided to oppose the siting of U.S. cruise missiles in Britain. Women began to occupy the land at the entrance of the missile site. The movement grew to encompass solidarity with the miners in the region and to fund-raising for famine victims in Ethiopia.

The last cruise missile left Greenham Common March 5, 1991.

Money for the sculpture is to be raised by worldwide public subscription. Write: Women for Life on Earth. Ynyslas, Borth, Dyfed SY24, 4JU, United Kingdom.

Echoes: Justice, Peace & Creation News, WCC, Nr 1 1992

Easter Vigilers Imprisoned

Four Christian peace activists were recently sentenced by a federal magistrate to six months' incarceration with manual labor plus $5,400 "restitution" for breaking into nuclear storage bunkers at Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Mich. A fifth, Jackie Hudson, is awaiting sentencing. Hudson, Peter Dougherty, Helen LaValley, Ardeth Platte and Liz Walters spray-painted "Christ Lives! Disarm!" on the walls of the empty bunkers during an Easter Vigil service they held on the base. The five were protesting the transfer of cruise missiles from Wurtsmith, now in the process of closing, to other military bases, arguing that the weapons should instead be dismantled. The four women are members of Roman Catholic religious orders. Dougherty is a Roman Catholic priest.

Vatican Supports Discrimination

Laws prohibiting discrimination against homosexual persons, "even where they seem more directed toward support of basic civil rights than condonement of homosexual activity or a homosexual lifestyle, may in fact have a negative impact on the family and society," according to a recent statement from the Vatican. "'Sexual orientation' does not constitute a quality comparable to race, ethnic background, etc. in respect to non-discrimination," the statement declares. "Unlike these, homosexual orientation is an objective disorder." While asserting that "all persons have the right to work, to housing, etc.," the statement contends that the state "may restrict the exercise of rights, for example, in the case of contagious or mentally ill persons, in order to protect the common good."

Dust and Ashes

Even though Job's experience is inscribed in our sacred texts, we have lost sight of his fundamental wisdom. He at least had the humility to repent as he beheld the grandeur of nature. Moreover, he learned to resituate himself as a subordinate creature in a world that he recognized to be beyond his comprehension or control.

Timothy Weiskel, project director, Harvard Seminar on Environmental Values, and research fellow in the Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Divinity Bulletin, 1992, Vol. 21 No. 3

Disposable Workers

A growing number of Americans are becoming "contingent or disposable workers," writes Barbara Garson, author of *The Electronic Sweatshop* and *All the Livelong Day*. "Between burger flipper and manager is an expanding world of contingent workers with diminished ties to companies, to fellow workers, to customers and to the world in general. Adjunct lecturers trek from university to university getting paid $900 to $3500 a course. Computer programmers migrate like farm workers between Route 128 and Silicon Valley.

"I met a single mother whose company had been taken over and her entire department declared 'temps.' She's still paid $12.50 an hour on the word processor, but with no health insurance she has to decide whether it's worth a $70 doctor's bill (plus the lost pay) to find out if her child's lingering sore throat is strep."

The Nation, 6/92

— Prepared by Marianne Arbogast

Planning for Survival

A coalition of more than 40 grassroots anti-poverty organizations met for a National Survival Summit August 20-23 in Detroit. The meeting "brought together some of the strongest and most formidable street fighters in North America to plan a strategy in response to the war agaist the poor going on in this country," said Diane Bernard, chairperson of Michigan Up and Out of Poverty Now. Participants included representatives of the Native American movement, labor and welfare rights organizations, and the National Union of the Homeless. "I think it was significant that 350 poor people from around the country got the money together to have this conference," Bernard said. "It has become clear to a lot of poor people that they need to support this movement. We can't get Skillman grants, and nobody is going to do it for us."

Genesis as resistance

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished the work which God had done, and God rested on the seventh day...So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it... (from Genesis 2:1-3)

The creation story may be so familiar we have trouble hearing it. The first chapter of Genesis, in our own experience, does call to mind cultural conflicts over evolution, sexual politics, ecological domination and stewardship. Yet we are less likely to comprehend that this narrative was conceived in conflict. It is a story first uttered as an act of cultural resistance.

The roots of Genesis 1 are to be found in the Babylonian exile of the sixth century BCE. The two kingdoms had been crushed, the temple destroyed. The social world of Israel was literally unmade. The best and the brightest, namely the literary elite, had been dragged off to Babylon and often as not offered good government jobs. It was a time of confusion and cultural seduction. Who now to worship? Marduk and his kin, the Babylonian pantheon? They were literally overpowering. Hadn't they defeated Yahweh? That certainly was the Babylonian view made explicit in their own imperial celebrations.

I have in mind the New Year's festival which remembered the creation of the world as the founding anniversary of the empire. There the *Ennuma elish,* the Babylonian story of creation, was dramatically reenacted.

Word made flesh credit: Meinrad Craighead

At the crux of their story is a great battle. Younger gods who have stirred the wrath of Tiamat, mother goddess of sea and chaos, turn in terror to Marduk, the up and coming young male god. His deal is that he will fight the great dragon in exchange for undisputed sovereignty in the assembly of the gods. Engaging her in fierce cosmic combat and emerging victorious, Marduk divides Tiamat's monstrous fishlike body and spreads it out upon the heavens, thereby imposing order upon the world and paving the way for his enthronement among the gods as the very god of Order. Here is the creation of the world. Then from the dripping blood of her consort, also felled, he fashions human beings to be slaves for the gods.

Several things ought to be mentioned in connection with this ancient mythology.

• As foundation myth, this is the story which legitimates and virtually creates the social world of Babylon. It sanctions the Babylonian state as the real world of order. (Indeed, in such a scheme the cosmos itself may be conceived as a State.) The king as divine representative embodies the sovereignty of imperial order, a role authorized and ritualized in public festival.

• Moreover, by this story, human beings are assigned a place in the created social order: they are servants and slaves. The story not only grants meaning to the empire, it clarifies the significance of each person's life in relation to the world, social and political.

• Evil, in Babylonian theology, precedes creation. That was Paul Ricoeur's brilliant point in *The Symbolism of Evil.* Chaos and evil predate the world. They have a kind of metaphysical primacy. As he put it: *the origin of evil is coextensive with the origin of things; it is the* ***"chaos" with which the creative act of the god struggles.*** *The counterpart of this view is that* ***salvation is identical with creation itself;*** *the act that founds the world is at the same time the liberating act.*

• It issues in the preeminent theology of war. This is classic military imperial mythology. Might makes order makes right. And it is practically the primeval Orwellian equation: destruction is creation. This mythic ideology identifies every enemy with the original Enemy, chaos. And every victory creates anew the world of Pax Babylonia.

Walter Wink has shown how the "myth of redemptive violence" permeates American culture. It is the predominating myth of the last five hundred years. In *Engaging the Powers* (Fortress, 1992) he undertakes, among other things, a devas-

Bill Wylie Kellermann teaches at the Whitaker School of Theology in Detroit. Portions of this article are adapted from his book, *Seasons of Faith and Conscience* (Orbis, 1991). He is book review editor for *The Witness.*

tating analysis of cartoon plotlines to show how our children are being fed "Babylonian mythology" with their breakfast cereal. In this cartoon catechism Marduk and Tiamat fight it out in an infinite variety of costumes, but with the same mythic plot, the same redundant meaning.

It is in light of our own imperial mythology that the liturgical resistance of the Israelites in Babylon may be most edifying. To reiterate their situation: the exiles were inundated in the empire's myth; their children were being taught it; and they suffered the massive spectacle of the annual New Year's festival. In that context the Genesis 1 account, with its stunning rhythm and its drama of voices and refrains, may be read as a subversive alternative, nearly a parody of the Marduk tale. As it stands we have it in Temple form orchestrated for full choirs, but I prefer to imagine it as a mimeographed leaflet passed hand to hand for recitation in home use around the kitchen table. This literally is a case of singing the Lord's song in a strange land.

Whereupon several points again may be noticed:

• This telling of the story creates Israel's social world. The world which has been destroyed by Babylonian might is recreated around the family table. An identity and community are sustained without the benefit of either Temple or State, indeed despite them.

In Babylon, this is a strange song indeed. One perhaps the captives need to sing in this hour and house.

• The recitation establishes a spiritual and social rhythm in the life of the exiled community. The sabbath as a seventh day of rest originated among the exiles. Previously unknown, it was inspired and invented there. (In the more ancient versions of the Ten Commandments, "sabbath" means merely holy day.) Insofar as this was a public act of rest, it declared a different worldview, an alternative allegiance. Resting with Yahweh. I don't mean to suggest that the sabbath was a periodic strike day, but one has to wonder how such a coordinated workstoppage would impact Babylonian society. The Israelites were marching to a different cultural drummer. In our own society, organized on the seven-day week, picture a sect which decided to order its life on a five day cycle, stopping work every fifth day. It makes me recall a nonviolent tactic of the Intifada, in which the Palestinians set their watches forward an hour. At one point Israeli soldiers were stopping people and smashing their watches if they showed the "wrong" time.

It is a story first uttered as an act of cultural resistance.

• It is fundamental to this story that creation is not by the sword, but by the Word. The biblical roots of non-violent transformation go back to day one, page one. True creation, say the exiles and their God, is not by violence, but by love and delight. By Word. This is also, notice, the prophetic tradition of social transformation in Israel. The prophets act as though the truth (or better the word of God) uttered in the streets has history-making power. They speak, trusting quite simply that a change is thereby set in motion.

• The gods are creatures. This is the sly sleeper of the story. (And one which bears on a New Testament understanding of the principalities: compare the creation hymn of Colossians 1:15-20). Here dualistic (Persian) gods of light and dark are discovered to be no gods at all. They are uttered and named by the Word. Sun gods and moon gods with their "rule," along with the astral deities — all are creatures. Even fertility is inherent in creation. The narrative functions to withdraw the mythic projection which in Israel is called idolatry. As God warns elsewhere: "Beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole host of heaven, you are drawn away to worship and serve them, which Yahweh your God has allotted to all the nations under the whole heaven" (Dt 4:19). This remains a perennial problem, against which the creation account inveighs.

• Creation is good. This seems perhaps a small point, but it is every bit as momentous for how one views the world as the Babylonian conviction that evil precedes creation. This story flatly counters that view. Sin is subsequent. Evil is derivative and secondary. It has no claim to metaphysical preeminence. (Practically on this point alone the Creation spirituality folks stake a worldview they contend is decisive for planetary survival.)

• Human beings are the image of God. Here is an idea so incredibly subversive it may be the most politically loaded claim of all. Who in Babylon, not to mention virtually the whole of the ancient world, was the image of god? The King, of course, who stands in for Marduk in the creation pageant, and whose authority is annually legitimated. Who, however, in the liturgy of Israel? Humanity. Women and men. Human beings in community. This is a subversion and affront to every imperial authority. It's practically anarchism. In this counter-story, human beings are not from the blood of a murdered god, created as slaves of the state. They are made for freedom and responsibility.

In Babylon, this is a strange song indeed. One, perhaps, the captives need to sing in this hour and house. TW

Southern Africa will ordain women

The Church of the Province of Southern Africa decided by a 79 percent majority this past August to approve the ordination of women as priests. The measure failed when it was proposed to the provincial synod in 1989.

Of the 34 provinces and member churches of the worldwide Anglican Communion, 15 have ordained women as deacons and 14 have ordained women to the priesthood. The Church of England will vote on the issue at its General Synod in November.

Think locally?

Putting a positive spin on the fact that parishes and dioceses are allocating less money for the National Church in favor of supporting their own local ministries, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning told the Executive Council last March, "We celebrate that the ministry of local congregations is growing ever stronger."

But critics of a new proposal to consolidate four of the Church's social-justice programs indicate that Browning and his staff may be less than positive about this decentralizing trend.

"We see [the proposal] as a move for real centralization of authority by national church staff," said Episcopal Urban Caucus president Emmett Jarrett.

The proposal calls for the creation of a 10-member committee which will replace the current 15-member Coalition for Human Needs (CHN) committee and the 8-member Jubilee Ministries committee, according to Marcy Walsh, chair of the ad hoc Executive Council committee that prepared the consolidation plan. With the help of grants administrators on Browning's staff, the new group would evaluate applications for CHN grants, provide administrative oversight for the Jubilee program and also guide what remains of the national church's Housing and Social/Specialized ministries programs. [The staff positions for these last ministries were eliminated when budget cuts reduced the number of national church staff positions from 291 to 239 last year.]

"It's purely an administrative efficiency move," Walsh said, noting that the smaller number of committee slots would reduce the cost of bringing people together for meetings.

Critics of the proposed consolidation don't deny that improved efficiency and lowered administrative costs are desirable goals, but they are concerned that the 10-member commmittee will not be able to represent the variety of constituencies which have been represented previously. This, they say, contradicts the empowerment focus of these ministries.

"We are committed to consensus, constituency grant-making by representatives from constituencies, not by [National Church] staff," the Appalachian Peoples' Service Organization (APSO) board told Executive Council members in an April 28 resolution. APSO also protested the heavy cuts already made to CHN and Jubilee. [CHN funding was reduced to 52 percent of the amount budgeted this year, while the $100,000 budgeted for Jubilee has been reduced to $65,000.]

"CHN has been one of the real ways the Church has participated in the Appalachian region," stresses APSO's Sandy Ellidge. APSO currently has one representative on the CHN committee.

Members of the Jubilee Ministries committee share these concerns.

The consolidation proposal is not "responsive to the nature of the Jubilee network," says the urban caucus' Jarrett, who also sits on the Jubilee Ministries committee. The new oversight and grant-making group being proposed would operate in a "top-down," staff-heavy, administrative manner, Jarrett fears. At its most effective, the Jubilee committee's oversight of the network has been interactive and participatory.

The Jubilee Committee has also found its own solutions to a leaner budget, Jarrett added. "The last committee meeting was held here, in our rectory," the Silver Spring, Md., priest said. "We had people sleeping on couches and we prepared meals together — it was entirely in keeping with the nature of this ministry."

A. Jones' bicentennial

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pa., and the Union of Black Episcopalians will join together this Nov. 6-8 in sponsoring a bicentennial celebration honoring Absalom Jones and the beginnings of Black membership in the Episcopal Church. The event will be held at St. Thomas', which was founded by Jones.

Jones, born a slave in Delaware in 1746, was the first African American to be ordained an Episcopal priest. He founded the independent "African Church" in 1792, while he was still a lay person. The congregation was renamed St. Thomas' African Episcopal Church when the Diocese of Pennsylvania accepted it for Episcopal Church membership in 1795. But there were strings attached — the parish was not allowed to participate in the diocese's annual convention, a restriction that persisted until 1864.

The Middle East

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning recently joined 15 other U.S. religious leaders calling on President Bush to end the embargo against Iraq. Humanitarian relief, they said, should be "unconditional."

"We express our deep concern that the United Nations Security Council is violating this principle in the case of Iraq, thereby making the health of many Iraqi children apparently contingent on the fulfillment of political requirements of some Security Council members."

Vital Signs

— Prepared by Julie A. Wortman

Internment of Japanese Americans
photo credit: Linda Eber

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

by Blaise Tobia and Virginia Maksymowicz

In their recent book, *Crossroads: Reflections on the Politics of Culture*, Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard examine the concept of the American "melting pot" in terms of the systematic efforts to obliterate minority cultural identities in this country. "Before the melting pot could do its work," they write, "the unmeltable had to be dealt with."

One of the ways that governing powers have tried to control ethnic minorities has been to erase their accomplishments and their struggles from the annals of a country's history.

California artist Judy Baca recognized these intentional omissions and decided to do something about them. In 1976, she began a project that was to last a decade: the production of what may be the longest mural in the world, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*. Rather than a wall of division between peoples, Baca conceptualized this half-mile long painting as a vehicle to bring together people from a range of cultural backgrounds. She hoped that it would tell the story of Los Angeles "from the eyes of the people who were not written about in the history books." To that end, she spearheaded a coalition of about 250 young people (ages 14 to 21), 40 historians, 40 artists, and an eclectic mix of community groups and funding sources (ranging from the Latin American Civic Association to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) who contributed to the research, design and production of the artwork. The mammoth project was directed under the auspices of the Social & Public Arts Resource Center, a nonprofit, multi-cultural arts center.

***The Great Wall of Los Angeles,* a 350-foot mural, conceived by Judy Baca.**

The site chosen for the mural was Tujunga Wash, a flood control channel of the Los Angeles River running through the San Fernando Valley. Baca viewed this concrete-lined waterway as a scar in the natural landscape and saw the mural as a means to transform its ugliness. Also since the surrounding, mostly-white, suburban neighborhood was formed as a result of flight from the problems of the inner city, it could be seen as a symbol of Los Angeles's long legacy of interracial violence — not only between white and black but among black, brown and yellow as well. Baca envisioned the process of creating the mural as an opportunity to address this, so she and the other project artists held workshops to bring the young people involved in the painting (some of whom were recruited through the juvenile justice system) face-to-face with their peers from other cultures. The mural crew produced about 350 feet of painted imagery every other summer and, as Baca notes, some of the participants literally grew up with the project. TW

art and society

Blaise Tobia and **Virginia Maksymowicz** edit the Art & Society section of *The Witness.*

Worshiping in tongues

by Julie A. Wortman

Stressing "the importance of our common work to eliminate the sin of racism," the Episcopal Church Racism Commission recently invited leaders in over 40 dioceses to participate in a national teleconference. Scheduled topics included forming a common definition of racism, recognizing its presence and organizing to fight it.

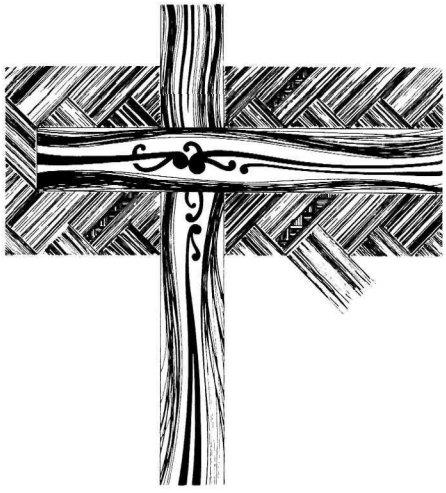
As useful as this kind of information-sharing might be, galvanizing Church-wide commitment to ending racial oppression will not be easy in an Anglo-centric Church, no matter how high-tech the methods. At this year's annual meeting of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, long-time anti-racism activist Byron Rushing pointed out that the hard part will be "envisioning a Church without racism" and then bringing that vision to life.

How can such a vision be built? Maybe prayer book revision is the answer.

Tinkering with the Church's official worship life would at least be a sure-fire way to get everyone's attention — anyone who was around when the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* was approved or when the so-called "inclusive-language" supplemental texts were considered can tell you that.

Perhaps that's because when liturgy holds its mirror up to the face of the Church, people like to see an image they recognize.

"Liturgy describes the People of God," R.G. McCullough writes in the introduction to *A New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, an icon of official Church commitment to multiculturalism almost from the very moment it was issued in Advent of 1989. McCullough was a member of the last of several provincial commissions to work on the book during a 25-year-period.



Design in the New Zealand Anglican prayer book.

"Liturgy expresses who we believe we are in the presence of God," McCullough adds. "Liturgy reveals the God whom we worship. *Liturgy* reflects our mission."

Propagating a "common" understanding of how Anglicans see themselves and their relationship to God has been a central concern of the Church since 1549, when Anglican reformer Thomas Cranmer produced his first *BCP* for the English Church.

> *"Liturgy expresses who we believe we are in the presence of God."*
>
> *—R.G. McCullough*

A Hawaiian translation of eucharistic rites from the U.S. Church's current prayer book, sponsored by the Commission on Hawaiian Ministry, is only one of the more recent examples of continuing efforts to insure that a person's native language need not be a barrier to his or her socialization into that common understanding.

But most English-speaking Episcopalians will likely go through their entire worshiping lives without ever once running into these new Hawaiian-language liturgies, let alone ones in Spanish or Lakota, languages that Episcopalians also speak. Perhaps the most "common" presumption in the Church today, whether in this country or in other former strongholds of English colonialism, is that the English language and culture are at the heart of what it means to be Anglican.

What is astonishing about New Zealand's prayer book is the way that assumption is challenged. What in other churches are written off as peripheral concerns about how the book's language fails to reflect the full diversity of church membership — problems usually "solved" by providing limited-circulation translations like the new Hawaiian one or devising texts for "alternative" use to placate those feeling devalued by gender-exclusive language — are here addressed directly and positively by the one official book meant to reveal the common understanding of who the people of God are and how they see God. For the New Zealand Church, the goal of prayer book revision was participation, not socialization.

"A Prayer Book for the Church of the Province of New Zealand, including as it does *Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa* [the Maori people], and the island nations of the South Pacific in the Diocese of Polynesia, must be a deliberate attempt to allow a multitude of voices to speak," McCullough says.

And speak they do.

"The Lord be with you. *Kia noho a Ihowa ki a koutou,*" are the words a pre-

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Julie A. Wortman is an assistant editor of *The Witness* and a member of the Diocese of Michigan's anti-racism committee.

siding minister might say in greeting a worshiping congregation. Maori, Fijian, and Tongan, in addition to English, are all languages of eucharist. "O give thanks to the Lord, who is gracious: *he mau tonu hoki tana mahi tohu*. God's love endures for ever," begins Psalm 136.

But it is the *Benedicite Aotearoa,* included in the liturgy of Thanksgiving for Creation and Redemption, that most directly reveals the New Zealand church's deepest vision of itself:

"O give thanks to our God who is good:

whose love endures for ever.

You sun and moon, you stars of the southern sky:

give to our God your thanks and praise.

All mountains and valleys, grassland and scree, glacier, avalanche, mist and snow:

give to our God your thanks and praise.

You kauri and pine, rata and kowhai, mosses and ferns:

give to our God your thanks and praise.

Dolphins and kahawai, sealion and crab, coral, anemone, pipi and shrimp:

give to our God your thanks and praise.

Rabbits and cattle, moths and dogs, kiwi and sparrow and tui and hawk:

give to our God your thanks and praise.

You Maori and Pakeha [non-Maori], women and men, all who inhabit the long white cloud [New Zealand]:

give to our God your thanks and praise.

In its geographic and creaturely specificity, this modern song of thanksgiving embraces and affirms the unique, ecologically delicate and culturally diverse fabric of modern life the faithful encounter in this South Pacific island nation. What's provided is a vision of a varied creation through New Zealand eyes. By naming it, people in this part of the Anglican Communion may have a chance of praying it into life.

What's a satellite hook-up compared to that? TW

THE WITNESS FORUM
AT TRINITY SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY
October 24, 1992

9:00 a.m. **Morning prayer**
Verna Dozier, preacher

10 a.m. **Participatory Workshops**

- The authority of Scripture
- Sexuality, feminism and faith
- The Traditional Way: Native faith and the imperial religion
- The powers and principalities: viewed through the work of William Stringfellow
- The multi-cultural challenge: Can the Church integrate?

Lunch

1:15 p.m. **Workshops** repeated
3:15 p.m. **Bible study**
4:15 p.m. **Panel discussion**
6:30 p.m. **Concluding worship**

Panelists

Virginia Mollenkott teaches at William Patterson in N.J. She is the author of *Sensuous Spirituality: Out from Fundamentalism* (Crossroad Press, N.Y., 1992). Her views have been published in *The Witness.*

Chester Talton is Suffragan Bishop of Los Angeles and a former board member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, owner of *The Witness.*

Mary Hays, former associate rector of Truro Church in Fairfax, Va., is a priest and professor of pastoral theology at Trinity in Ambridge, Pa. Forward Movement recently published Hays' essay on Scripture study.

William Frey is dean of Trinity and the former Bishop of Colorado. He authored the controversial 1991 General Convention resolution that asked the Church to state that clergy sexual activity should occur only within heterosexual marriage.

Preacher

Verna Dozier, author of *The Dream of God* (Cowley Press), taught high school English until she was 57. For the last18 years, she has been a widely-enjoyed theologian and preacher.

Workshop Leaders

The authority of Scripture. **Verna Dozier.**

The traditional way. **Quentin Kolb**, urban missioner in the Diocese of Utah and Ute Indian, integrates native spirituality with his role as Episcopal priest.

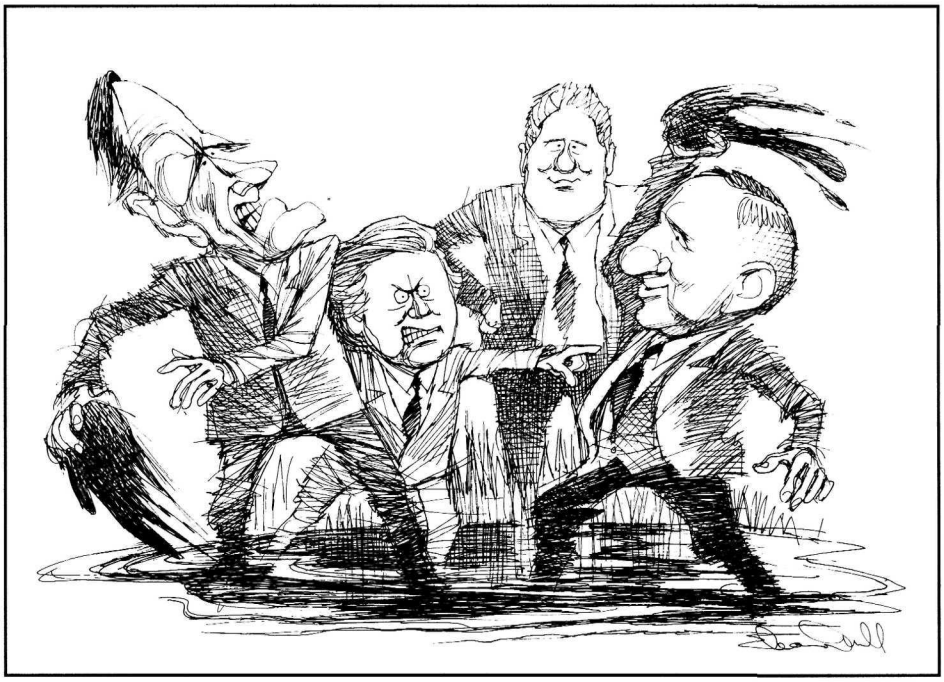
The multi-cultural challenge. **Butch Naters-Gamarra** was born and educated in Panama He is a priest of an inner-city congregation in Boston's South End which is bi-lingual, multicultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic.

Sexuality, feminism and faith. **Mary Meader** is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree in feminist theology at the EDS. She is an advocate and counselor for survivors of incest.

Powers and principalities. **Andrew McThenia,** chair of the ECPC Board and professor of law at Washington and Lee, is editing a book of essays about William Stringfellow. McThenia engaged in civil disobedience on behalf of the Pittston coal miners in 1989.

Childcare will be provided.

[This unsolicited article champions the electoral process. In November, we will publish some responses to this piece.]



Boys at play: Bush, Quayle, Clinton, Perot. credit: Eleanor Mill

Woe unto nonvoters

by Owen C. Thomas

At a conference on the Gulf war entitled "Bringing Home the War," there was much singing of old movement songs and recounting of stories from great movement events of the past, but although the conference was held in the midst of a critical presidential (and Congressional) campaign, I did not hear a word about electoral politics.

I have been involved in movement politics. In the 1960s and 1970s, I marched, went to rallies, gave money, and preached about civil rights, the Kerner Report, and the Vietnam war. But I was raised in a hotbed of electoral politics by agnostic socialists in Greenwich Village in the 1920s. My father was an American historian and teacher, and my mother worked in journalism, city government, and international affairs.

In the past 40 years I have regularly urged my students to get registered and vote, supplied them with voting records, worked in local campaigns, and served on the Cambridge Democratic City Committee, as well as the state board of Americans for Democratic Action. One of my students was murdered in Alabama in 1965 while working in voter registration.

This last point indicates that the politics of the civil rights movement were a complex mixture of movement and electoral politics. And what I am going to argue is that these two kinds of politics need each other and become distorted without each other.

The strengths of movement politics are obvious to all who have been involved. Movement politics came into its own in this century with the labor and civil right movements, because at the beginning of these movements there was no alternative, no other recourse but the methods of the movement, namely, strikes, sit-ins, the testing of discriminating laws, plus the powerful morale building ingredients of rallies. It is important to note, however, that the goal of both movements was electoral politics culminating in the labor legislation of the 1930s, the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, and the election of public officials sympathetic to the goals of the movements.

The anti-Vietnam war movement was rather different and marked the beginning of the separation of movement and electoral politics which we see today. Watergate, and later Iran-Contra strengthened this disillusionment and thus also movement politics. I believe that this alienation from electoral politics on the part of many who would normally vote for liberal candidates played some part in the elections of Reagan and Bush.

This leads me to the weakness of movement politics. The Gulf war conference reminded me that at its worst movement politics is marked by self-righteousness and irrelevance. The disdaining of anyone interested in electoral politics was depressing.

The keynoter at the conference told a moving story of his recent visit to Iraq. When someone asked him what we could do about it, he responded that we should go to Iraq ourselves. He did not mention the thousands of dollars it would cost, or what such a trip might achieve, nor did he mention the possibility of electing a different president.

Owen C. Thomas is professor of theology at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. Artist **Eleanor Mill** works in Hartford, Conn.

This led me to reflect that movement politics had developed a Manichaean attitude toward government and the state. The keynoter commended the movie "JFK" as the key to American politics. Another speaker stated, "We must say No to the state!" This is the "Christ against culture" attitude described by H. Richard Niebuhr and exemplified in I John in which the world is a region of darkness lying under the power of the evil one, in Tertullian who said "There is nothing more entirely foreign to us than affairs of state," in monasticism, sectarianism, and in Tolstoy who said that the state is the chief offender against life.

Niebuhr states that while this view is a necessary element of balance in Christianity, the extreme temptation of this view is to convert this ethical dualism into an ontological dualism. The state is seen as the absolute evil and must be resisted absolutely, either by total withdrawal, renunciation, and non-participation, or by violent attack.

The problem is that the complete renunciation of government and electoral politics is as impossible as the complete rejection of culture. Non-participation in politics has an effect on politics, and the opposite of the one intended. So this negative side of movement politics is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If government is a grand conspiracy and participation is pointless, then the more the non-participation, the worse it gets. QED.

If government is a grand conspiracy and participation is pointless, then the more the non-participation, the worse it gets. QED.

Finally, if the goal of current movement politics is to have an impact on the political process, I believe that it has become increasingly ineffective, especially since the anti-Vietnam movement. I honor and support those who lie down in front of nuclear trains or who for justice and peace are beaten, arrested, fined or imprisoned. They have more courage than I. But, sadly, I believe their impact on the issues is minimal. The impact is entirely dependent on media attention and responsiveness of public officials to that attention. If the time, energy, talents, money and other resources expended on movement political events were devoted to electoral politics, I believe the impact would be significant. (It is interesting to note that while in recent years the New Right has taken up movement politics, it has combined it fairly effectively with electoral politics.)

At its worst, movement politics is marked by self-righteousness and irrelevance. The disdaining of anyone interested in electoral politics is depressing.

Now what of electoral politics? It is the essence of the American experiment. Thousands of people around the world are literally dying to participate in it. Most of the recent critiques have focussed on the influence of rich and powerful lobbies, the cost of campaigns, the power of incumbency, and secrecy in government. My conviction is that there is electoral and legislative and legal recourse for all of these weaknesses and corruptions, and the fundamental problem is lack of participation in the process, aided and abetted by movement politics. So we have the strange situation of the failures of electoral politics causing disillusionment and alienation of the electorate which deepens the failures. I believe that as a nation, but not as individuals, we get exactly the kind of government we deserve.

An important factor is that movement politics is usually exciting and gratifying, whereas electoral politics is often boring and tedious. It is a lot more exciting to get arrested in front of T.V. cameras than it is to stuff envelopes and ring doorbells. It makes much better party conversation!

The strength of movement politics is that it is essentially communal—this is possible because it tends to be middle- and upper-middle class, white, and educated, whereas electoral politics, because it cuts across class, race and educational differences has much more difficulty achieving this communal character.

Movement politics will have to be widened to include presently excluded constituencies which it claims to serve. A recent PBS program, *Rage for Democracy,* chaired by Anthony Lewis, reported that political participation decreases with decrease in education and income, and suggested that a fundamental reason that the U.S. lags far behind the other industrialized democracies in regard to poverty, health care, education, infant mortality, and so forth, is that we are the only one without class-based political parties. The poor and lower middle class are divided by race and ethnicity and by racist politics, but a party based on these constituencies could win every residential election. The original constituencies of the New Deal approached this and paved the way for the most important social legislation of the century. So a new theory and practice of community is needed which is based not on homogeneity but on the acceptance of, and learning from, difference. This is something which a renewed movement politics could contribute. TW

Former editor Bob DeWitt asks readers to remember that presidents make judicial appointments.

The second reformation: interview with Steve Charleston

by Jan Nunley

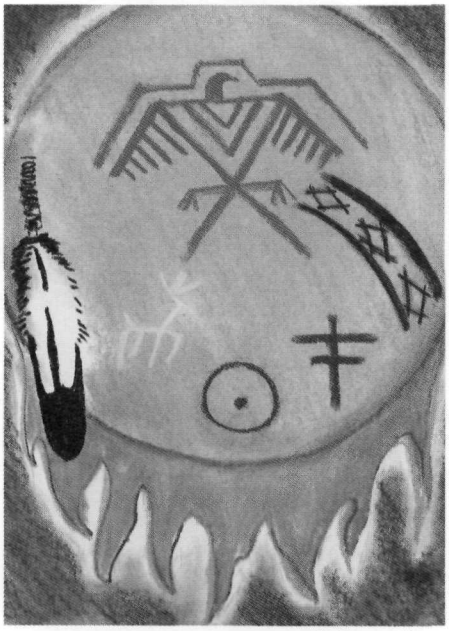
Steven Charleston, Bishop of Alaska and member of the Choctaw nation anticipates a second reformation for the Church. [Also, see page 30.]

Jan Nunley: You've said that the central issue confronting relations between Euro-Americans and Native Americans is cultural reconciliation. What are the differences between the cultures?

Steve Charleston: It's very simplistic to put it in this way, but one of the differences between the two ways of life is the Western culture often asks, "Can we have more?" And the Native culture asks, "Do we have enough to share?" It seems to me that the reconciliation is not really a matter of choice any more. It's a matter of necessity, because the philosophy "Can we have more?" is rapidly being answered for us. If you continue to abuse the planet, to destroy the ecosystem on which we all depend for our survival, to alienate segments of society from one another, to exist in a state of militarization and materialism — the answer is, "No, you cannot have more." By necessity, I believe, the West needs to look toward the alternative offered by Native people.

J.N.: At the Convention in Phoenix, I was struck by the backlash against Native liturgies and environmental theology.

S.C.: The backlash against using Native tradition or imagery in worship and the concerns about whether environmental theology is syncretism — those kinds of reactions are produced by ignorance and fear. They are symptomatic among some Western people of a loss of confidence in their own cultural system that they have inherited for generations.



credit: Norman Singer

In the latter part of this century it's becoming obvious that the assumptions on which the United States was originally founded by its immigrant populations are rapidly going bankrupt. Lacking any alternative vision, people retreat into a kind of bunker mentality, trying to hold fast to the archaic notion that colonialism can continue to work into the next century.

J.N.: And that's the context in which you say, "Christianity needs us more than we need Christianity," that we need a second Reformation.

S.C.: The Second Reformation is coming. I'm absolutely convinced of it. We are a generation living before the beginning of the second great Reformation, and that reformation will transform the face of Christianity all across the globe. It will produce in the next century a Church that is much different than the one that we understand now. Many of the growing pains that we see should not cause us any real sense of loss or anxiety. If we take it seriously then we can help form and guide this reformation in a way that is helpful. On the other hand, if we ignore our responsibilities and leave it in the hands of those who operate out of fear and reaction, then we're just abrogating God's call and causing a lot of pain and confusion.

J.N.: What will this Church of the Second Reformation look like?

S.C.: After the Second Reformation, there will still be splinter groups. But there will be a whole community within the Church, stretching around the globe, that will be much more horizontal in its relationships. There will be more equal understanding of the role of men and women, of laity and clergy, of youth and elders. It will be a more tolerant and accepting community. Its ritual and worship life will be far more integrated with the sight, sounds and smells of its many different members. The rights of creation will become a major issue, because we will have finally matured to the point where we understand that human rights and the rights of all forms of life are intimately interrelated.

In lots of ways the Church will start to inch towards that ancient imagery of the Body, in which individual communities thrive in their cultural richness, but where the integration between us, and the communication and cooperation among us, is much stronger than anything we've ever known before.

Jan Nunley is a newscaster for National Public Radio's environmental program "Living on Earth." She's also a frequent contributor to Episcopal Church publications. Artist **Norman Singer** produced this graphic for use in the educational series *In The Circle of the Spirit,* which Steve Charleston helped organize.

Culture Wars

by Reginald Blaxton

Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America by James Davison Hunter. HarperCollins Publishers, New York, New York, 1991.

The language of warfare, once a staple of popular Christian piety, has taken a beating over the last quarter-century. Apologetically useful as a way of molding Christian identity and cementing attachment and loyalty to the church's purposes, martial images are no longer much in evidence today in preaching, liturgy, or hymnody.

The irony in this situation is that over the last 25 years or so, as older historical contests between parties, denominations, and faith communities have receded into the past, increased intramural conflict has become a defining feature of mainline Church life.

In the Episcopal Church, for example, the bruising battle over ordaining women to the priesthood and episcopate has given place to yet another front in the continuing collision of values and world views—the ordination of out-and-proud homosexuals. This is a controversy now also familiar to Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, and Presbyterians.

Typically, across demoninational boundaries, one side, in support of its position, will claim the authority of scripture, tradition, and a transcendent deity, while the other side appeals to the spirit of the modern age, revealing a "tendency to resymbolize historic faith according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life."

To those in the middle, probably a majority, perplexed and wearied by unceasing social turmoil, Church life, has become just another venue in which the sometimes bitter and often impassioned cultural conflicts of American society are slugged out. Current hostilities in Church and society, marked by the increasingly militant posture of combatants on both sides of recent controversies, may fairly be called a state of war. And James Davison Hunter uses the image of a "culture war" as his controlling metaphor and point of departure in examining the anatomy, historical background, and political implication of the battle of belief systems.

Hunter contends, "the nub of political disagreements today on the range of issues debated—whether abortion, child care, funding for the arts, affirmative action and quotas, gay rights, values in public education or multiculturalism—can be traced ultimately and finally to the matter of moral authority." This is an area in which religious institutions, traditionally, have had great say in providing public definitions and perspectives and in shaping public debate.

Unquestionably, however, there now appears to be a breakdown of middle class consensus relating to traditional concepts of moral authority. Moreover, it is the deep-seated commitment to different and *opposing* bases of moral authority and the world views that derive from them that creates the deep cleavages. This accounts for the raw edge in Church controversies, barely concealed in the Episcopal Church by a thin and brittle veneer of Anglican politesse.

Hunter's analysis of the battle of world views rings true to me, and has particular resonance within the context of Church life. As New Testament scholar Leon E. Wright observes of the church's dilemma:

By reason of the authority of its posture, the Church must honestly recognize the fact of its teachings ... as organically geared to first-century patterns and designs. And yet, it is pledged authentically to tutor those in its ambience for whom a technological self-understanding has hopelessly outdistanced more primitive models of reality and being. The crucial question, then, becomes this: Has the Church realistically acknowledged the presence of a widespread problem in these terms, once thought the utilization of merely authoritarian or dogmatic methods and means?

Or to set the church's dilemma in another idiom: *No one puts new wine into old wineskins; if one does, the wine will burst the skins and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins* (Mk. 2:22, Mt. 9:17, Lk, 5:37f).

Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America is a challenging interpretation of the deep divisions at the heart of contemporary life. The book is not a call to arms, which may distress embattled partisans, but a clearly written, rigorously argued, evenhanded examination of the polarizing impulses of American culture, including religious life. Hunter, who teaches sociology and religion at the University of Virginia, is at his best addressing the deeper commitments—the clash of world views—that ideological antagonists bring to the resolution of social issues.

book review

This book is highly recommended to any person who, before returning to the fray, wants to acquire some critical distance and perspective on the moral and cultural conflicts of our time. TW

Reginald Blaxton is an Episcopal priest and board member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Co.

Building bridges between cultures: Bishop Steven Charleston of Alaska

by Jan Nunley

Steve Charleston

"I know it's odd, but I'm feeling really good about where the Church is and about what we can do together."

Oklahoma was once Indian Territory, the final stop on the holocaust known as the Trail of Tears, at first for the great Southeastern nations — Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Seminole and Creek — driven from their homes by the 1830 edict of President Andrew Jackson, and later for some 62 other nations and bands of Native peoples. Promised to them "as long as Grass grows or water runs," Oklahoma, like their other homes before it, was overrun in a land grab by white settlers within living memory of the survivors of the Native diaspora. It still has the second largest Native population of any state in the union.

Oklahoma was the earliest home of Bishop Steven Charleston, sixth bishop of the Diocese of Alaska and a citizen of the Choctaw Nation. Born in Duncan, in the southwest part of the state, Charleston was raised in rural Oklahoma City. Both his great-grandfather Martin and his grandfather Simeon were Native clergy in the Presbyterian Church, and his first church experience, like that of many Choctaws, was Presbyterian.

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

But remaining a Christian was a struggle for Charleston, who wanted to know if he could be both Indian and Christian.

Charleston is comfortable at sweat lodge and pipe ceremonies. He is proud of his ancestry. Yet, he could not stay away from the Church.

"The Native tradition and the Gospel of Christ Jesus belong together," Charleston said. "They work together, they speak together, they have the same voice. That's why, the Native world view is something we can understand and embrace because it has a voice that we've heard before, the voice of Jesus, that speaks to us about issues of justice and mercy, of sharing, of giving away and of helping one another, of living as a tribe."

In his pursuit of God, Charleston sampled a variety of churches, finally entering a small Episcopal mission where he was relieved to meet a priest who did not pretend to have all the answers. Paul Kendall "was saying that he was willing to search with me."

Charleston entered seminary at the Episcopal Divinity School where he was painfully aware that he was one of only four Native people in mainline Christian seminaries anywhere in the United States. Following graduation from EDS, he served for two years as executive director of the Church's National Committee on Indian Work.

Charleston found vitality in his vocation, because, he says, "The one place where Western culture and the Native culture have come closest is in the spiritual. Western Christians and Native Christians can join and touch and build bridges. That's where we can forge a reconciliation that will last into the future. The religious dimension challenges the economic, political and social assumptions on which much of North America has been based for over 500 years."

Charleston served as director of cross-cultural studies and assistant professor of pastoral theology at Lutheran Northwest-

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Jan Nunley is a newscaster for National Public Radio's environmental program "Living on Earth," heard in over 200 cities in the U.S. and worldwide on the Armed Forces Radio Network. She's also a frequent contributor to Episcopal Church publications.

ern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, as well as priest-in-charge for Holy Trinity/ St. Anskar Parish in Minneapolis in the 1980s.

"One of the sad things that I see so often is Western people who, being spiritual orphans in their own culture, go hunting for some adoption in the Native community," Charleston says. "When I was a seminary professor, once in a while a European person would come to me and say I was very lucky because I came from a culture that had such an old covenant, because they didn't. My answer was, 'Of course you do.'

"One of the powerful remnants of what the old covenant of European Americans was once like when it encountered Christianity is still available to us through Celtic Christianity where Celtic Christians tried to blend their understanding of nature's harmony and balance with the Christian Gospel.

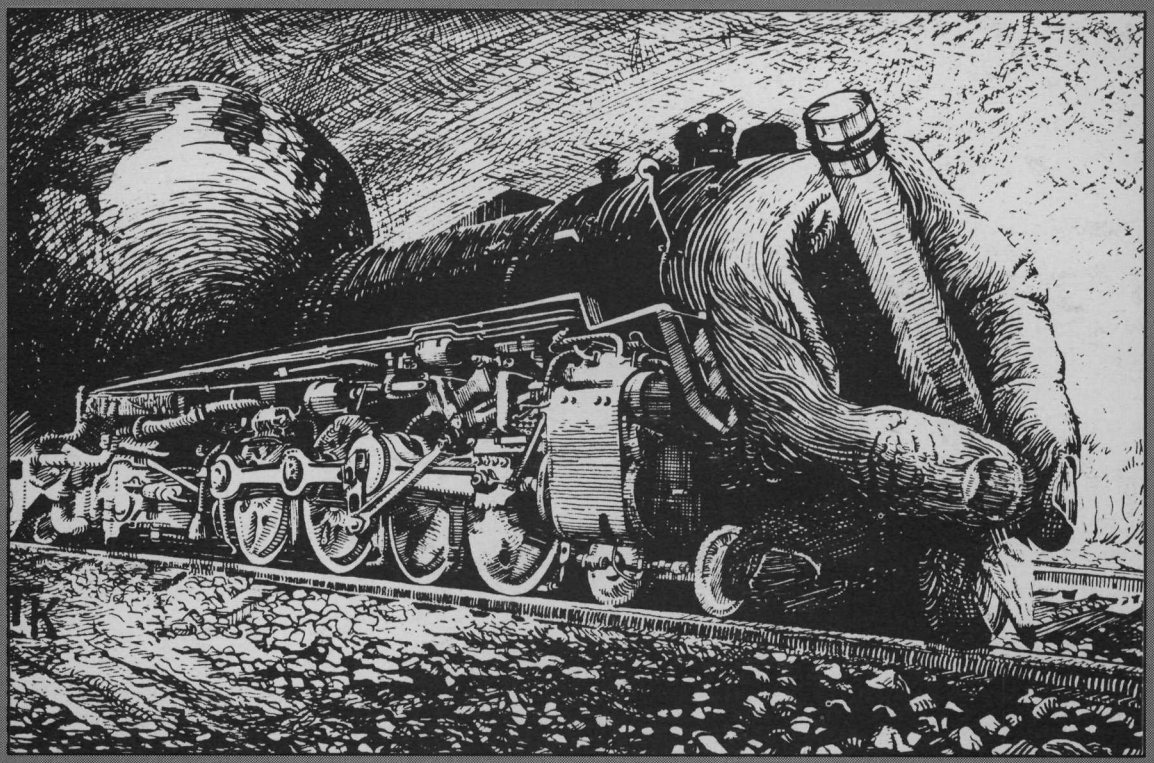
"The problem is not the original covenants. What we find often has distorted it is the Industrial Revolution, which had more impact on Christianity than the Protestant Reformation. Once colonialism got into high gear, the first people to be colonized were Europeans, not Indians or Africans — the first people to undergo the oppression of colonial powers were the European peoples themselves who were taken off the land and out of their original covenant relationships and into the factories. Then they were used as mercenaries to go out and extend the same colonial pattern on to other peoples.

> *... the Native world view is something we can understand and embrace because it has a voice that we've heard before, the voice of Jesus, that speaks to us about issues of justice and mercy, of sharing, of giving away and of helping one another, of living as a tribe.*
>
> *—Steve Charleston*

" I think the question for us, as we come towards this major opportunity for reform, is, Will we stand up and say, *We will change these cycles?* Will we say, *No to colonialism, to exploitation of human beings and the natural world?* Will we stand firmly for one another in a new sense of Christian community that is opposing oppression and exploitation? I think this is the time, the moment, we're called to do that, and how we answer that call will affect generations to come."

Charleston was consecrated the first Native bishop of Alaska in March, 1991, in ceremonies which celebrated his own Choctaw heritage and those of the Alaskan nations of his new diocese. In just under two years, Charleston has launched a new theological vision for the vast Diocese of Alaska — a vision of a bicultural bridge between Native and non-Native Alaskans as part of a "Mission Wheel," drawing on the Native imagery of the circle to balance the work of the diocese and that of the parishes. It is a vision, as Bishop Charleston puts it, "as broad as Alaska itself."

"I feel really hopeful. I know that's odd in the Episcopal Church today, but from our viewpoint in Alaska, we feel this is a really wonderful time in the life of the Church. There's lots of joy and growth ahead. I'm feeling really good these days about where the Church is and what we can do together." TW



credit: Tom Keough

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