

The Witness

Volume 75 • Number 11 • November 1992



RAGE

in the
1990s

Tools of Harvest

I RECEIVED THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE of *The Witness* today and was most pleased — and reminded of what I have been missing, as I have not subscribed (from sheer poverty) since I entered seminary. It is refreshing to renew acquaintance with a publication that speaks so loudly and clearly for faith, truth and justice.

I especially appreciated your “Tools of Harvest: imported labor in Nebraska” and wonder (I am editor of *The Nebraska Episcopalian*, our diocesan publication) what your reprint policy might be.

J. Anne McConney
Omaha, NE

P.S. Just a comment on the letter by Ruth Clausen and Letetia Brown in your letters section: I did not see the article in question — but I can say from experience that if their diocese is as consistent and fair as they say, then they are to be congratulated. There are a few places (even one is too many) where the word “hoops” is an exact and accurate description.

[Ed. Note: We invite people to reprint *Witness* articles for nonprofit use and simply request that publications list the name, address and subscription cost of *The Witness* and send us a copy.]

Marcia Spofford

THE RECENT ISSUES celebrating 75 years and remembering the founder and his son remind me of another history-making Spofford, Marcia, the daughter of William Spofford Sr. She was my mentor, role-model, heroine and inspiration as the leader of the small group of “radical” students at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, in the early 1940s. Our primary campus agitation in those years (joined by the few campus Socialists and pacifists) was the integration of Antioch, which finally succeeded in 1944 with the admission of Edith Scott and her younger sister Cory (as she was known to everyone at

Antioch in 1945).

On my return to Antioch for the academic year 1946-7 after two-and-one-half years in the Merchant Marines, I and my roommate Walt Rybeck became very close friends with Edith and Cory. Cory later married Martin Luther King.

Sadly, Marcia, who had married (Tony Russell) and had two children while still a student (again, she was a pioneer) died of polio in 1944 or 1945.

Long before I became an Episcopalian in 1978, I subscribed to *The Witness*, partly in memory of Marcia and her father.

If anyone reading this knew Marcia, I would be eager to hear from them. I think she deserves more than a footnote in history.

Robert T. Jordan
2901 Russell Road
Alexandria, VA 22305-1717

Abortion

I SO ENJOYED all the letters in your September issue that I want to write and say I heartily agree with all those who [criticized] your change of position on abortion rights. I particularly enjoyed the letter from Jane Johnson from Denver since I’m older than she.

Most pro-choice advocates do not believe that abortion is the greatest; in other words, most people are not pro-abortion but pro-choice. It is not something the government should have anything to say about — purely a matter between a woman and her circumstances, conscience, and her doctor.

Mary Lou Brackett
St. Paul, MN

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE of *The Witness* contains predictable reactions to your raising with Carter Heyward the ambiguities of the abortion controversy. You are to be congratulated for doing that even if you are politically incorrect for so doing. While I am “pro-choice” I believe the whole question is much larger than the parameters in which it [is] usually cast. Unfortunately much of the “pro-life” side opposes measures that might lessen the number of unwanted pregnancies. On the other hand, the “pro-choice” does not always face the implications of its position.

The selection of Ambridge as the venue for *The Witness*’ 75th anniversary meeting

reflects an uncommon generosity in these contentious days.

Abner K. Pratt, 2nd
Eastham, MA

75th anniversary forum

WE MAY FIND “that we share neither a Lord nor a faith, only a baptism that is laden with irony.” Unsettling as it is, your observation may be true. But if that be true then we will have excluded ourselves from the one true Church, Christ’s body on this earth.

Division does indeed exist within our Episcopal Church, but in the honesty and frankness of your article it becomes clear that there is also hope. For though we may disagree, we must Love.

Clay Lein
Ambridge, PA

AS A LONG TIME READER and admirer of *The Witness*, I am very much interested in the coming meeting of *The Witness* with Trinity School. Although these two seem poles apart in their approach to the Christian mission, I believe what takes place at Trinity will evidence some beneficial results. At any rate, the efforts put forth are highly commendable.

Recently, a friend of mine who comes from the conservative tradition, asked me to characterize *The Witness* for him. He is presently leaning toward a moderate-liberal position. Inasmuch as he is into poetry, I attempted to provide him with a poetic response, which I have enclosed. Of course, this is not great poetry and likely does not do justice to such an eminent periodical; but it does reflect my strong feeling and interpretive devotion to this witness for Christ.

The Witness

A channel of eternal relevance,
With prophetic passion and spirited thought.
Inspirational herald for social advance,
Reverberating compassion for the poor and distraught.

Witness for truth on fiery wings,
Comes startling revelations and traumatic themes.

While re-assuring with prophetic insight
All humbly yielding to Godly light.

Letters

Witness for justice in the eyes of time,
The uplifting of workmen toiling in the mine.
Entreating for feminine celebration at the
sacramental meal;
Elevating status of minorities through
contagious zeal.

Witness for peace through divine accord,
Not to perish vainly by the sword.
Loving, hoping with patient persuasion,
The essence of harmony and reconciliation.

Witness for freedom through courageous
stance,
Facing liberation foes with ominous glance;
That dignity and equality be the story
Of our nation's pride and aspiring glory.

The flame of Bill Spofford, blazing depth and
expanse,
The progress of humane strivings to enhance.
Buoyed by a consecrated, liberating crew,
Countless are indebted to a wise and saintly
few.

During the fifties, I had a cherished friend-
ship with Bill Spofford. This was during my
community services/social relations days with
the Diocese of Newark. I am now retired.

John R. Green
Maumee, OH

THANK YOU for taking *The Witness* into a
forum on evangelism.

So far the "Decade of Evangelism" is
turning into a disappointment for the Episco-
pal Church. Not accustomed to evangelism,
we try to reach out to others with nametags
and newcomers classes, larger lawn signs and
warmer welcomes. As a result, we are begin-
ning to lose our reputation as "God's frozen
chosen," but we are not much nearer our goal
of resurgence and renewal.

What is missing? I believe it is conversion
to Jesus Christ as Saviour. We don't know
how to convert people! We don't know how
to be ourselves converted. The result is a kind
of spiritual emptiness at the very heart of
things.

Each one of us longs to experience the
peace, joy, freedom and power of new life in
Jesus Christ. We continue to "spook" our-
selves with fears of Fundamentalism or Ca-

tholicism or becoming too "churchy." What
we are really afraid of is what Bonhoeffer
called "the cost of discipleship." We keep at
arm's length the One who calls to us because
we dread the words "Take up your cross and
follow me."

It need not go on like that.

Frederick A. Fenton
St. Augustine by-the-Sea
Santa Monica, CA

Seeking solidarity

FOR CALIFORNIA GAYS AND LESBI-
ANS still smarting from our governor's veto
of AB101 (which would have prohibited job
discrimination on the basis of sexual orienta-
tion), the insult, rage and despair felt by
African-Americans at the Rodney King ver-
dict is a jolt of familiar emotion. We can
understand the outcry against a system which
people had trusted would deliver at least a
measure of justice. So we must join their
outcry. And they must join ours. There can be
no justice for any unless there is justice for all.

Blacks and gays have both been betrayed
by the system. California's gay and lesbian
community had taken the word of a politician
and thus probably should not have been sur-
prised to find we'd been fed a lie, but in the
case of the beating of Rodney King, the black
community had trusted in the promises of The
American Way of Justice. Both communities
— indeed, all communities of the disenfran-
chised and marginalized — must raise our
voices. Together.

Where does the gay and lesbian commu-
nity stand when racial tension pits black against
white against Korean against Latino? And
when economic injustice pits have-not against
have — and, most tragically — have-not
against have-not? We cannot stand by and say
"it's not my battle." Human dignity is every-
one's battle, but it is more particularly ours.
The system, after all, at least gives lip service
to the notion that prejudice based on sexual
orientation is wrong.

Yet, all too often, the racial minorities see
the gay community as composed entirely of
upper-middle-class white males — who are
thereby members of the ruling class. And
lesbians and gays often feel they have enough
strikes against them without complicating the

picture with racial and ethnic pluralities. It's
tough enough fighting for civil rights when
you're black and straight; it's tough enough
fighting for civil rights when you're gay and
white. The tragedy is that although both sides
should have plenty of empathy for another
disenfranchised minority, neither "side" feels
they can risk inclusivity.

Larkette Lein
Integrity, Southland Chapter
Fullerton, CA

Witness praise

HERE'S MY 3-YEAR RENEWAL. I really
appreciate what you're doing.

Peter Selby
University of Durham Dept. of Theology
Durham, England

Stringfellow letters sought

I AM JUST BEGINNING WORK on a biog-
raphy of William Stringfellow who, as you
know, wrote regularly for *The Witness* in the
70s and 80s. I have no doubt that among the
Witness readership are to be found friends,
correspondents, and co-workers of his. If any
of them hold letters or related materials from
him, I'd be delighted if they would send me
copies c/o: 1994 Clarkdale, Detroit, MI 48209.
Many thanks to them in advance, and to you.

Bill Wylie-Kellermann



Correction

While Linda Crockett is in El Salva-
dor as this issue is prepared, she does *not*
live there despite indications to that ef-
fect in the September issue of *The Wit-
ness*. In the Letters section, her address
was listed as 22nd of April, El Salvador.
In fact, her community is Project Via
Crucis and she lives in Adamstown, Pa.

THE WITNESS

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The Witness (ISSNO 197-8896) is published ten times annually with combined issues in June/July and August/September. *The Witness* is indexed in *Religious and Theological Abstracts* and the American Theological Library Association's *Religion Index One Periodicals*. University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich., 48106, reproduces this publication in microform: microfiche and 16mm or 35mm film. Printed in U.S.A. Copyright 1992. SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$20 per year, \$2.50 per copy. Foreign subscriptions add \$5. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please advise of changes at least 6 weeks in advance. Include your mailing label from the magazine and send to Marietta Jaeger. MANUSCRIPTS: *The Witness* welcomes unsolicited manuscripts and artwork, but will return them only if a SASE is enclosed. **N.B.** In the case of poetry, manuscripts will be filed and writers will receive a response only if and when a poem has been accepted for publication. Poets may submit their work to other publications concurrently.

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Cover: *Long, hot summer* by Eleanor Mill, a syndicated artist working in Hartford, Conn. It is the policy of *The Witness* to use inclusive language whenever possible.

Facing rage: the Church's disability

There is a spirit on the loose, a rage that like a cloud rolls over the nation — maybe it manifests itself in a war against Iraq, a brutal attack on a child, a resurgence of racism and neo-nazism, or maybe its icon is someone holding an

automatic weapon in a shopping mall and gunning down people he has never met. Everywhere, and quite likely in our own lives, there are short fuses, passions that rocket to the surface after provocations that do not warrant it. If not around issues of substance, at least around aggressive freeway driving or standing in long lines.



A family of Klan supporters at a rally in Raleigh, NC.

credit: Jerome Friar, Impact Visuals

automatic weapon in a shopping mall and gunning down people he has never met.

Newspaper articles profile the mass killer today as a white male who has sustained a loss in employment or through divorce. The psychiatrists suggest that as a white male he has not developed the skills needed to cope with adversity.

But this rage is by no means limited to

It seems only logical that the anxiety and rage that are sweeping the nation are taking hold within our community as well. We sense, even intuitively, the fear that is out there. We read of atrocities from which we cannot hope to protect ourselves — and we need affirmation and security, but in a flip that is probably demonic, we project our worst hidden fears onto one another and a rage can begin to simmer.

I wonder if that dynamic is not operative in the Church as well. Is that a driving

factor in the withdrawal of ESA parishes? Does it partly account for the turmoil throughout the Church?

It seems to me that we need to pray. And then, people of faith need to figure out how to approach that roiling rage, how to affirm it and ride it. I picture a free spirit leaping onto the back of a wild horse and riding it until that horse can feel guides and tolerate currying.

It's not a vocation that will come easily. Church people normally veer away from conflict, preferring to hold up the joy of community and love. When it doesn't skirt anger, the Church practically begs people to keep their emotions inside, asking them to forgive before the Church has even fully understood the transgression.

But to ride, and eventually redirect rage, we need to honor it. It does not have to be a vice and it does hold a kind of terrifying beauty.

I have a friend, an incest survivor, who says she only prays when she is shaking her fist at God or when she is cleaning her bathtub. Another has resumed a relationship with God only recently. The silence between them broke when she allowed herself to yell at God.

However uneasy it makes us, the Church has a vocation in this day: to honor rage and to learn how to talk to Rambo. The Pentagon knows how to activate Rambo. Madison Avenue knows how to sell to Rambo and how to drive him to a frenzy — does the Church have nothing to say to him? As people of peace, perhaps a handful of us should, as a discipline, offer to read the *Soldier of*

editor's note

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

Fortune magazines and offer our intercessions and our hearts for the people to whom they speak.

It is not inconceivable that Rambo could become an ally. He has every right to be angry. The media has had little to say about the decline of the middle class or the exponential consolidation of wealth in this country. Perhaps Rambo, in economic pain, could learn to focus his rage without doing damage to the available, and advertised, targets: people of other races, creeds and lifestyles. I'm not sure that Rambo does not know how to think, but he's not receiving much encouragement to do so.

How come we have nothing to say to this man?

Time Magazine is predicting that by the year 2036 European-Americans will be a minority in the U.S. The changes ahead were a raw focus at the most recent Episcopal Urban Caucus meeting.

Michael Curry, rector of St. James, Baltimore, preached the future at that gathering (and again at the September House of Bishops meeting) saying that the Church needs to learn a new song. The U.S., he said, "will either weave a beautiful tapestry or create a social tragedy." Left to its own devices the nation will move toward becoming a South African apartheid or the chaos of Lebanon. The only institution, he said, which can demonstrate for the nation what a multicultural community might be like is the Church. Can we, he challenged, sing a new song?

Given the apoplexy of the age, rehearsing a new song will first require an ability to encounter rage. Somewhere embedded in our fury is our power. A number of feminists have discerned this as they explore ways to dance with anger.

Beverly Wildung Harrison writes in *The Power of Anger in the Work of Love*:

Can anyone doubt that the avoidance of anger in popular Christian piety, reinforced by a long tradition of fear of deep feeling in our body-denying Christian tradition, is a chief reason why the Church is such a conservative, stodgy institution? ... Anger denied subverts commu-

nity. Anger expressed directly is a mode of taking the other seriously, of caring. The important point is that where the feeling is evaded,

where anger is hidden or goes unattended, masking itself, there the power of love, the power to act, to deepen relation, atrophies and dies.

In letting rage speak, no matter how guttural and chaotic the speech, we reveal a power that has been brooding. Watching it erupt into the light is not always comprehensible as cleansing. But that self-same rage can offer energy and courage. It is ours and its movement, flickering out from the shadows, can become a delight. Once we have a relationship with our own deepest, least-confined renunciations and refusals and outcries — however unjustified they may be — the rage of others need not be so alarming. And we can testify to the truth that rage shooting forth in a climate of reason and faith can yield an incarnational strength and joy. If true for us, this must be true for Rambo as well.

In the interests of learning to listen to rage without trying to silence it, we've dedicated this issue to a variety of voices. The December issue will examine some of the things the Church *could* do if it did not imagine that rage is incompatible with the Golden Rule and if it were not paralyzed by fear.

Bulletin Board on this issue:

* Marietta Jaeger, circulation coordinator and promotion manager for *The Witness*, finds *Ancient Rage* (p. 16) offensive. In her objection to the piece, she writes: "Poor, poor Elizabeth, whom Scripture says was likewise filled with the Holy Spirit when Mary, pregnant, entered her presence; who proclaimed a faith-filled hymn of praise to God for fulfilling His promise to God's people; who helped to form John as The Baptist both in and out of the womb; whom Mary Lee Wiles now denies participation in the Resurrection Life of God's People!"

* Charlotte Hinger, author of the piece on the Ku Klux Klan (p. 8) adds a personal note: "During the Persian Gulf War I could see the emergence once again of America's fiery troublesome shadow — the deeply fearful, racist and cultural prejudices embodied by the Ku Klux Klan. In the space of a heartbeat — even in my tiny community of Hoxie — the citizens of Iraq were no longer people. They deserved the fate which was being visited upon them. I left our table at the Elks Lodge during Super Bowl Sunday in tears because I could not bear another, 'Did you hear the one about the Iraqi who. . .'

"The Klan is poised to ride again. Klansmen know full well the paralyzing fear that lies below the surface of America's civilized veneer and they know all the right words to appeal to our paranoia."

* Artist Kathy Constantinides (p. 28) has compiled a bibliography about sexual exploitation by clergy. Copies can be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to *The Witness*.

* *The Witness* has a new fax number! It is: 313-962-1250.

Somebody Was Breaking Windows

by Luis J. Rodriguez

Somebody was breaking the windows
out of a 1970s Ford.
Somebody's anger, for who knows what,
shattered the fragile mirror of sleep,
the morning silence
and chatter of birds.
A sledge hammer in both hands then crashed
onto the side of the car,
down on the hood,
through the front grill and headlights.
This Humboldt Park street screamed
in the rage of a single young man.
Nobody got out of their homes.
Nobody did anything.
The dude kept yelling
and tearing into the car.
Nobody claimed it.
I looked out the window as he swung again.
Next to me was my woman.
We had just awakened after a night of lovemaking.
Her six-year-old daughter was asleep
on a rug in the living room.
My woman placed her arms around me
and we both watched through the louvre blinds.
Pieces of the car tumbled
onto steamed asphalt.
Man hands to create it.
Man hands to destroy it.

Aunt Florence

by Josie Kearns

Visiting a relative who has not yet been diagnosed,
it is Florence who gulps down three barbiturates
without water, enters the white room
and says brightly,
"My God, honey, I hope you don't have
a brain tumor!"

She and my step-father once took turns
trying to pull the telephone out of the wall.
I think they wanted to deny each other
the satisfaction of calling the police.
She was fire, her auburn hair curled
like autumn leaves, chain-smoking,
smoke swirling above her head in fists.
While he was a tidal wave, grown mad
with volumes of whiskey, an alien,
his face blue with explosion.

Something about being so mad
and taking it out on your car.
Anybody's car.
I mean, cars get killed everyday.
I understood this pain.
And every time he swung down on the metal,
I felt the blue heat swim up his veins.
I sensed the seething eye staring from his chest,
the gleam of sweat on his neck,
the anger of a thousand sneers —
the storm of bright lights
into the abyss of an eyeball.
Lonely? Out of work? Out of time?
I knew this pain. I wanted to be there —
to yell out with him,
to squeeze out the violence
that gnawed at his throat.
I wanted to be the sledge hammer,
to be the crush of steel on glass,
to be this angry young man;
a woman at my side.

— from *Poems Across The Pavement*, Tia Chucha Press, Chicago
Luis Rodriguez is a Chicago poet.



Both survived the hollering, slung arms
around shoulders and cried in the end
over their children.
The son visits only on weeks Dad
has seen the psychiatrist.
His daughter does not attend family functions.
They miss out.

On her fifth marriage, as the license was written,
her fiancé expressed amazement at the number
of former husbands whose names she wrote out by hand.
She paused, glared at the newcomer, said,
"Listen, dammit, I was in demand!"

— from *Contemporary Michigan Poetry*, Wayne State U. Press, 1988
Josie Kearns is a poet in Flint, Mich.

He's white. He's patriotic. He's a professed Christian. He's concerned about the erosion of family values. He's opposed to race mixing in any form. He's a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

He thrills to the sight of the fiery cross which stands for the living Christ and the blazing spirit of Western Civilization. He believes that wearing a hood is not a disguise for immorality and lawlessness, but "a symbol of humility, of anonymity in doing good works."

During the initiation ceremony, he presented his body as a living sacrifice to God and was instructed by the Kludd — the Klan chaplain — to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is good and acceptable in the perfect will of God."

He joined because he feels America has lost her way and the Klan's new smooth rhetoric makes sense to him.

"In their public forums and rallies, Klan spokesmen speak out against drugs and welfare and give-away programs and affirmative action — things that bother a lot of people, not just right-wing racists," says Danny Welch, director of Klanwatch.

Welch should know. He is in charge of monitoring 346 separate white supremacist groups in this country — 28 of these are different factions of the Ku Klux Klan.

"However, Klansmen drop out by the dozen," Welch says, "because the Klan movement is based on racial hatred. It's the one and only agenda. Always has been and always will be."

There have been some very famous Klan dropouts. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black was a former Klansman. There is some disagreement among his-

Charlotte Hinger, a novelist in Hoxie, Kan., has completed a novel about the Klan's historic activities in the Midwest, called *Every Third Child*.



The KKK in East Windsor.

credit: Ricky Flores, Impact Visuals.

The Ku Klux Klan: America's fiery shadow by Charlotte Hinger

torians as to whether or not Harry Truman actually participated in the ceremony, but there is certainly agreement that there was a swift and angry disassociation from the Klan once he understood what they were about. Some historians believe Warren Harding was initiated in the Green Room of the White House.

The Klan's bloody and violent history belies the purity of their vows. Tales of mass murders, torture, floggings and the unspeakable terror of visits by merciless hooded night riders are known to most Americans.

Few know that Klan membership was at its height in 1925 when the organization became violently anti-Catholic and five million Americans became Klansmen. At that time, the flood of European immigrants — largely Catholic — streaming onto our soil since the turn of the century, taking jobs away from Real Americans, was cause for alarm. It was a situation which cried out for solid action by Genuine Patriots. And so the Klan was given new life. Like a recurring nightmare, the dreaded Knights of the Ku Klux Klan have thundered through America's

history since post-Civil War days.

"Growth in white supremacist groups is based on economics," says Welch. "We're seeing this now. And as the country has become more diversified, the hatred has become more diversified. It's no longer a black-versus-white issue as it once was. Now Asians, Hispanics and Jews are included."

There was a surge of violence against Japanese-Americans when prominent business leaders and political candidates recently focused America's attention on the amount of goods imported from Japan and Asian countries.

Attacks against Jewish-Americans and Arab-Americans accelerated dramatically during the Persian Gulf War. However these hate crimes, based on racial bias, tended to be spontaneous flare-ups of scattered individuals or groups rather than planned retribution by organized, white supremacists.

Right now, the traditional Klan is not the white supremacist group of choice for young people.

"They feel silly wearing pointed hats and bedsheets," says Welch. "They're heckled and laughed at when they walk down the street. Young men want to wear camouflage. Something more para-military. They think it looks cool to shave their heads and wear tattoos. The Skinhead movement has added a lot of fuel to the White Supremacy movement."

Sensing that the old ways aren't working, the Klan has developed new techniques. The hierarchy has learned a lot about managing the media as was demonstrated by the presidential candidacy of David Duke. And now they own and use computers.

Tom Robb, the Grand Wizard, was recently quoted in *Time* as saying, "They (media) always have these picture of people in the Klan, flies buzzing around the head, teeth missing, wiping manure off their feet. Louisiana has one David Duke. We plan to give America 1,000 of them."

John Salter, author of *Jackson, Mississippi, An American Chronicle of Struggle and Schism*, states emphatically that the Klan is not going to be defeated by counter-hatred and contempt.

"'Kill the Klan' sloganeering can only reinforce a dangerous and sometimes mutual paranoia," says Salter. "Efforts to secure legislation to ban ideas would only undermine the Constitution. Democracies operate on the premise that the free

"As long as we have white poverty and insecurity we're going to have racism — whether it's the good old American kind or the Neo-Nazi kind." —John Salter

minds of people will reject error and accept truth."

Salter believes that Klan growth is occurring because of economic frustration, interpersonal alienation and community breakdown.

"As long as we have white poverty

and insecurity we're going to have racism — whether it's the good old American kind or the Neo-Nazi kind," says Salter.

Salter is a professor of American Indian Studies at the University of North Dakota and has been an activist all his adult life. A liberal Roman Catholic, he committed to fighting vigorously and non-violently for social justice.

He is still haunted by the gaunt, worn faces of Klansmen marching in a rally in Raleigh, N.C. — their defiant fervor not too successfully transcending their basic tiredness and their fear.

"The average Klansman is an inherently decent human being: a person who is hungry spiritually and economically, starved educationally, relatively powerless and in many cases someone who has done virtually no traveling from his home area," says Salter.

It worries Salter that America has now gone almost 20 years without a broad-based social movement to keep people on some sort of an even, effective keel.

"There is now a tremendous anger building at the grassroots in this country — and however quietly for the most part at this point, it's building up steadily, faster and faster. It's an anger that can go either way: further down into the dark canyons of hate and division and violence and deprivation and tyranny charted by the David Dukes — or out into the sunlight of freedom, dignity and spiritual well-being. It reminds me a great deal of the later 1950s."

Salter was on the death list of Klansmen years ago and nearly died in an assassination attempt on a street in Jackson, Miss. His home has been shot up and he has been beaten.

Amazingly, Salter relates to Klansmen with compassion. "We must recognize our bond of brotherhood and sisterhood even with our mortal adversaries." He believes that the only answer to the people of the Klan is to make their fundamental human needs for spiritual, libertarian and material well-being a reality. **TW**

"There is a tremendous anger building at the grassroots in this country — and however quietly, it's building up steadily, faster and faster."

—John Salter

Generations of black rage

by Manning Marable

It was a cold, clear, early winter day in 1946. World War II had ended only months before, and millions of young people in the military were going home. James P. Marable, my father, had been a master sergeant in the army. Arriving in the Anniston, Ala. bus station, he had to transfer to another local bus to make the final, 40-mile trek to his family's home outside Wedowee, Ala.

My father was wearing his army uniform, which proudly displayed his medals. Quietly he purchased his ticket, and stood patiently in line to enter the small bus. When my father finally reached the bus driver, the white man was staring intensely at him. With an ugly frown, the driver stepped back. "Nigger," he spat at my father, "you look like you're going to give somebody some trouble. You had better wait here for the next bus."

My father was instantly confused and angry. "As a soldier, you always felt sort of proud," Dad recalls. This bus driver's remarks "hit me like a ton of bricks. Here I am, going home, and I'd been away from the South for four years. I wasn't being aggressive."

Dad turned around and saw that he was standing in front of three whites, who had purchased tickets after him. James Marable had forgotten, or perhaps had repressed, a central rule in the public etiquette of Jim Crow segregation. Black

people had to be constantly vigilant not to offend whites in any way. My father was supposed to have stepped out of line immediately, permitting the white patrons to move ahead of him. My father felt a burning sense of anger. "You get there some other way nigger," the driver



James Marable in 1943 at an army base outside Detroit.

Marable, with sons James (left) and Manning (right), 1954.



repeated with a laugh. The bus door shut in my father's face. The small vehicle pulled away into the distance.

There was no other bus going to Wedowee that afternoon. My father wandered from the station into the street, feeling "really disgusted." Although he eventually obtained a ride home by hitchhiking on the highway, he never forgot the hatred in the driver's words. This incident was only one casual event, which

was repeated hundreds of times again, in different guises. After arriving home, my father drove his girlfriend to the ice cream store for a sundae. The white clerk, a freckled-faced, red-haired teenager, retorted: "Niggers git their ice cream at the rear window, boy!" Filled with anger, my father drove away.

Driving to the north to attend college in the early autumn of 1946, he slept in his car rather than face insults by white hotel managers. Instead of requesting the use of toilet facilities at filling stations, Dad simply hopped out beside a clump of trees or foliage to relieve himself. Even these defensive measures provided James Marable with only a modest degree of self-respect. "When you go against the grain of racism," my father reflects today, "you pay for it, one way or another."

Despite the oppressive character of segregation, my father never lost faith in the ultimate victory of the civil rights movement. Jim Crow was morally indefensible and politically bankrupt. Such a system could never last forever. And with the emergence of the modern desegregation movement of the 1950s and 1960s, legal racism was outlawed. In the nearly three decades since the march on Washington, D.C., obvious advances for African Americans have been achieved. But even today, the shadow of inequality looms heavily over the current generation of African Americans. Nationwide, 23 percent of all black men aged 18 to 29 are either in prison, on probation, parole, or are awaiting trial. Black unemployment rates remain more than twice that for whites. African Americans now have the highest cancer rates in the U.S., and are twice as likely to die before their first birthday than whites. The average black man living in Harlem has a lower life expectancy than a resident of Bangladesh. More than one-third of all blacks live

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below the federal government's poverty line, and more than one-half of all black children are born in single-parent households, with average incomes below \$10,000 annually.

Yet racism cannot be capsulated into a narrow set of depressing socioeconomic statistics. "Racism" isn't simply the "silent discrimination" experienced by my generation of African Americans, who are often denied access to credit and capital by unfair banking practices, or who encounter the "glass ceiling" inside businesses which limit their job advancement.

At its essential core, "racism" is a contempt for "subordinate" human beings, and the elitist belief that we can treat others without simple courtesy and dignity. It is most painful to people of color in its smallest manifestations: the white merchant who drops change on the sales counter, rather than touch the hand of a black person; the white teacher who deliberately avoids the upraised hand of a Latino student in class, giving white pupils an unspoken advantage; the white woman who wraps the strap of her purse several times tightly around her arm, just

before passing a black man; the white taxi drivers who speed rapidly past blacks in business suits, picking up whites on the next block.

The grandchildren of James Marable have never encountered Jim Crow segregation. They have never experienced signs reading "white" and "colored." They have never been refused service at lunch counters, access to hotel accommodations, or admission to quality schools. For my children — 15-year-old Malaika, and the 13-year-old twins, Sojourner and Joshua — Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fannie Lou Hamer are distant figures from the pages of history books. Malcolm X is a charismatic figure mentioned in rap videos. "We Shall Overcome" is a quaint song of the past, rather than a militant anthem for racial equality.

Yet, like my father before them, they

also feel anguish and heartache. They complain that their textbooks don't have enough information about the contributions of African Americans to our society. When Joshua goes to the shopping mall, he has been followed and harassed by security guards. White children have moved items away from the reach of my son, because they believe the stereotype that "all blacks steal." Sojourner has had white teachers who were hostile and unsympathetic toward her academic development. As Malaika explains: "White people often misjudge you just by the way you look, without getting to know you. This makes me feel angry inside."

A new generation of African Americans who never personally marched for civil rights, and who never witnessed the crimes of segregation, feel the same rage expressed by my 70-year-old father. They clearly comprehend the racial hypocrisy of the court system. One recent example from Southern California: In San Fernando, a postman shot and killed a pesky German shepherd dog on his mail route. The postman was sentenced to six months jail. Yet white police officers in L.A., who are videotaped virtually beating a black man, walk free on the streets. "Where's the justice?" young African Americans are asking.

The rage which boiled over into violence in Los Angeles is experienced by almost every person of color in America. Unless whites come to feel as outraged as we have always been about prejudice, more conflict and tragedy across racial lines is inevitable.

At its core, "racism" is a contempt for "subordinate" human beings, and the elitist belief that we can treat others without simple courtesy and dignity. It is most painful in its smallest manifestations.

Prelude

by Mongane Serote
from *Tsetlo*

When i take a pen,
my soul bursts to deface the paper
pus spills —
spreads
deforming a line into a figure that violates my love,
when i take a pen,
my crimson heart oozes into the ink,
dilutes it
spreads the gem of my life
makes the word i utter a gasp to the world...

— from *Somehow We Survive*, Thunder's Mouth Press, N.Y., 1982
Mongane Serote works for the African National Congress' Arts and Culture Department.

The following is excerpted from testimony offered to the Episcopal Church's national Committee on the Status of Women.

Five or six years ago I recovered the memory that, as a child, I had been sexually abused by my grandfather. The recovery of those memories involves countless waves of pain and horror, and many levels of encounter with shock and disbelief.

I lacked the strength to deal with members of my family all at once, and so I had separate correspondences or conversations with each of my parents and my four younger siblings.

My two sisters both said, "Oh no, not me!" Subsequently, when one of them separated from the Christian cult she had belonged to for many years and entered therapy, she called up to talk about Grandpa. "Why did you say *not me* when I asked you before?" I wondered. "Oh," she replied, "when you said *incest* it never occurred to me that that was what he had done to me. I thought what he did to me was my fault."

The brother next to me in age wrote me a letter and said, "Pray for the soul of your grandfather. He needs your forgiveness."

My mother said, "Well, of course he did it to me, too. That's why I've always had trouble with God the Father."

These three responses, I would maintain, exemplify spiritual violence against women, and particularly how such vio-

Anne Fowler is rector of St. John's, Jamaica Plain, Mass. Artist **Dierdre Luzwick** lives in Cambridge, Wis.



credit: Dierdre Luzwick

Church violence against women

by Anne Fowler

lence is perpetrated by the Church.

As in my sister's case, women have been denied constructs by which to understand our experience, denied language to name our experience, and taught to trivialize our experience. We have been isolated from one another through our conviction of our sinfulness and shame-

fulness — by reason of our very bodiliness.

We have been victimized and brutalized by distorted understandings of Christian principles, such as my brother's. Except for weddings and funerals my brother probably hasn't been inside a church since his confirmation in 1960. Yet he felt free to co-opt the notion of Christian forgiveness and use it as a shield between himself and my anger and pain.

And like my mother — a lifelong Episcopalian of ever-deepening faith and commitment, altar guild, flower arranging, first woman warden in her parish, member of the diocesan Commission on Ministry, the Standing Committee — we have endured lifetimes of liturgy and God-talk which raise for us primal imagery of abuse, violation, and betrayal.

These are just some of the forms spiritual violence may take.

Perhaps some of you have been reading, as I have, with fascination and horror, a journalistic essay in *The New Yorker* about a girl, pseudonymously called Genie, who emerged into the public world at age 12, without language. She had been kept shut in a room alone for those 12 years, strapped to a potty chair or in her crib — shut in there by her parents. She was a modern wild child.

The violence done to this child resonates for me as an image of the violence that has been done to women, spiritually, by the Church.

It has been common to speak of the Church — the parish church, in particular — as a family, with all the connotations of intimacy and permanence. Advocates for abused women and children, our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers, single

people, have cautioned against the designation of the Church as family because of the exclusivity — the implication that the “traditional family,” whatever that is — is the only and the correct way of being, and because, for many of us, the label “family” does not evoke the warm and welcoming sentiments that we want our church community to represent.

And yet, I think that we do well to remind ourselves that for many women, as for the wild child Geniie, church has been exactly like family.

Like Geniie, we have been held captive in our community of origin, strapped down, chained in, unable to leave, and at the same time isolated, alone, excluded. We have stayed because of the human need for community, the human dependency upon parents, especially a Parent who is life-giving and nurturing; stayed because of the faith memory of one who was radically committed to the helpless, the powerless, the innocent, the outcast, and the broken, the blind and the deformed. We have stayed out of hope, and we have stayed out of hopelessness.

Because we have stayed, we have been victimized, as Geniie was victimized. We have been betrayed by our closest intimates. But now, I think, we are beginning to emerge into the light. We walk with a stoop, spiritually speaking, as Geniie walked with an odd shuffle, as did the Biblical Woman Bent Over. And we speak with a strange and different language, perhaps. We are wild children. But we are coming into the light.

I want to touch briefly on Scripture. I notice our reluctance to speak from the pulpit about controversial issues which

affect women — issues such as domestic abuse, child abuse and incest; abortion; homosexuality; gender equality in the workplace; the historic Christian oppression of women. If we don’t preach and teach about these things — by failing to tell the truth — we deny people permission to come and reveal their lives and sorrows to us.

*We have been held captive
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and we have stayed out
of hopelessness.*

male-dominated family — the least safe place for women and children to live and a model which does particular violence to other kinds of family constellations;

- nostalgia for “tradition,” a tradition which cannot discriminate between what is God-given, universal and Gospel-centered, and what is “man-made,” time- and culture-bound, unjust and cruel.

And I notice liturgy. Is it necessary to name the hypocrisy which in one breath claims “the Word” as God’s self-revelation, and in the next dismisses as trivial any objections to a male god and exclusively male divine and human imagery?

As “liberal,” “mainline,” Protestant Episcopalians, we may find it easy to recognize and to debunk the more blatant kinds of misuse and abuse of Scripture in the ongoing oppression of women and children. Nonetheless, we continue to be intimidated by proof-texters.

Folks who scrutinize Scripture to find validation for their prejudice and hatred of homosexuals invariably quote the story of Sodom and Gomorrah as evidence of

I notice our persistent imaging and valuing of the Church as a repository for nostalgia:

- nostalgia for some fantasized and specious former state of “innocence,” of “chastity,” of “moral standards;”

- nostalgia for the “nuclear family,” the

the sinfulness of homosexual acts. What goes unmentioned, generally, is that Lot’s two daughters are offered up as sacrificial sexual victims in place of the male guest — and that ultimately it is a female prostitute who is raped, killed, and dismembered. Violence against women is a given here, so much a part of the cultural landscape that the biblical authors don’t even comment upon it.

We refuse to remember and to read back into our Scriptures the messianic bias — for the poor, the oppressed, the disenfranchised. We refuse to read that bias back into our Scripture, including women and women’s experience. Women, after all, are the underclass in any society. What does the Messiah have to say to us?

We need the image not of a God who is punitive and perpetuates violence — a God who reflects the human experience of male dominance and abuse of women and children. We need an image of a God who neither demands nor exalts suffering. And in that light, we need a revolution in our understanding of the Cross.

We must begin to see the work of Jesus not as a headlong rush to sacrifice, the kind of sacrifice which continues to be urged upon women. We must see the crucifixion of Jesus as the consequence of his refusal to give up the fight for radical mutuality, inclusivity, radical justice and radical love. The symbol of the cross is not, as so many Christians would have it be, a witness to the sanctification of suffering. The cross is a witness to the power, the relentlessness, the horror of violence.

And our calling as Christians, as women of the spirit, as members of the beloved community, is not to condone crucifixions. Our job is to put a stop to them, once for all. Our job is to go beyond crucifixion, to triumph over violence. Our job is the Resurrection.

THE WITNESS

Rage: a violent and uncontrolled anger, a fit of violent wrath.
From the Latin *rabies*. — Webster's Dictionary

From the booming-bassed, Uzi-burst brutal street raps of Public Enemy and Ice-T to the screaming megadecibel heavy-metal guitar ranting of Guns n' Roses, rage is a driving force in pop music today.

Rage has always been an element of pop music, but it was generally an inchoate rage against authority or teen anguish or rotten boyfriends/girlfriends. This new rage is focused, political, and often violently nasty and aggressive.

The "voice of the street" is how rap artists and fans describe the music. And the news from the street is not good. As Clarence Lusane writes in the September issue of *"Z" Magazine: Living in a post-industrial, increasingly racist, anti-immigrant, less tolerant, more sexist, Jesse-dishing, King-beating, Quayle-spelling, Clarence Thomas-serving America, too many young blacks find too little hope in current society.*

The rappers in many ways are voices crying in the wilderness, prophets warning an unheeding people of troubles to come. The West Coast rappers, born of the hoods of East L.A. and Compton, were talking about police violence years before the Rodney King beating exploded into the national consciousness.

Two rappers who graphically describe their experience as African-Americans in the urban war zone are Ice-T and Sister Souljah. They have been at the center of a storm of criticism — Ice-T for his song "Cop Killer," and Sister Souljah for her outspoken support for those who rioted in East Los Angeles earlier this year.

Ice-T's album, *Body Count*, originally included *Cop Killer* until his record company, Warner Brothers, bowed to the threat of a boycott by law and order groups and conservatives, pulled the album to remove the "Cop Killer" track. Lt. Col. Oliver "Iran/Contra" North suggested that Ice-T be tried for sedition.

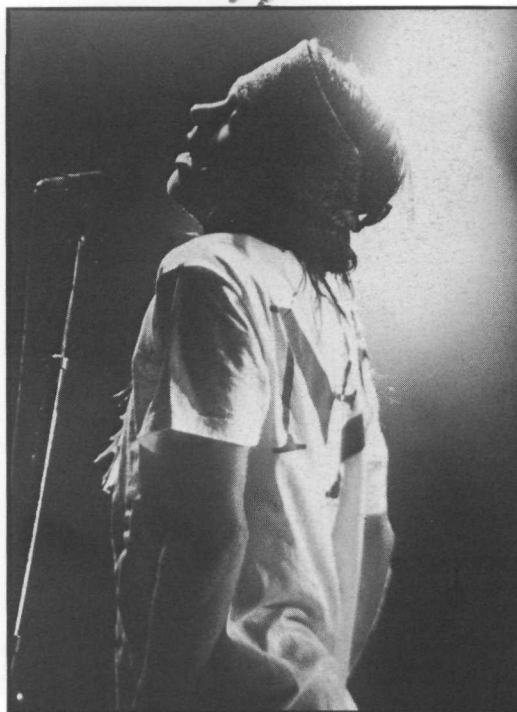
"I don't think like a white, middle-class yuppie," Ice-T told *USA Today* when it was observed that his new album is as angry as his last. "My true opinions are controversial."

When Sister Souljah openly expressed sympathy for the Los

Susan E. Pierce, former managing editor of *The Witness*, is now production editor for *American Writing: A Magazine*. She's also a popular music aficionada.



Above: Ice-T credit: Jesse Frohman
Left: W. Axle Rose, Guns n' Roses credit: Robert John



RAGE in music by Susan Pierce

Angeles rioters, her remarks created a storm of controversy, focussing attention on her album *360 Degrees of Power* and its incendiary raps like *The Final Solution: The Hate That Hate Produced*, which says:

*Souljah was not born to make people comfortable
I am African first, I am Black first
I want what's good for me and my people first
And if my survival means your total destruction, then so be it
You built this wicked system
They say two wrongs don't make a right
but it damn sure makes it even.*

Oliver North left her alone, but she got taken to task by presidential candidate Bill Clinton for saying "hateful" things

about white people.

The rap/hip-hop group *Arrested Development* sings in their song, *Give A Man A Fish*:

*Got to get political
Political I gotta get
Grown but I can't hold my own,
so this government needs to be overthrown
Brothers wit' their A.K.s and their 9mms
Need to learn how to correctly shoot them
Save those rounds for the revolution*

White boy music

Young whites are pissed off, too. Metal groups have tapped a deep streak of disaffection and rage in their audience. These young white men who have made groups like *Guns n' Roses* million-selling artists are part of what Susan Faludi, author of *Backlash*, calls the "downscale" generation. Coming of age amongst the economic disaster wrought by years of Reaganomics and Bushinomics, unable to find work and support their families or even themselves, frustrated and confused, they look for someone to blame.

Because it's too complex to blame corporate greed, the "downscale" generation has turned its rage against women, minorities, and gays and lesbians.

When Axle Rose, the lead singer of today's hottest heavy metal group *Guns n' Roses*, sings the following lyrics from his song, "One in A Million," the group's fans respond with an almost religious fervor, jamming stadiums and buying millions of albums:

*Immigrants and faggots
They make no sense to me
They come to our country
And think they'll do as they please
like start some mini-Iran
or spread some fucking disease...*

The message is unpleasant and frightening, but young white guys across America are turning up the volume.

Women

Women rage too, but not in the same way the boys do. Angry women are found in rap, rock, reggae and folk.

The closest to the metal male rage are the female metal/thrash groups like L7, Hole, Babes in Toyland, and Bikini Kill, who play loud, dissonant, angry music with trenchant, politically pointed lyrics that can be tough to discern above the feedback.

In a gentler way, women folk musicians like Holly Near and the group *Sweet Honey in the Rock* have long been singing songs that deal forthrightly with sexism, homophobia, incest, child abuse, domestic violence and any other justice issue.

Reggae artists like Sister Carol and Rita Marley, as well as the incomparably sharp-edged Canadian Lillian Allen, give the women's voice to island music.

Singer Buffy Sainte-Marie, a Cree Native, has expressed the rage of Native people in her songs. From her 60s-era song *Where Have the Buffalo Gone?* — a biting indictment of the destruction of Native culture — to her latest album *Coincidence and Likely Stories*, she has expressed a searing anger against the injustice perpetrated against Native people in the Americas. (She also writes beautiful love songs.) Her music is a perfect antidote to the wretched excess of celebration surrounding the 500th anniversary of Columbus "discovery" of the Americas.

Gay and lesbian

Gay and lesbian artists rage, but usually more wittily (and hopefully) than metal or rap. The lesbian singer, Phranc, sings a song to her punker/skinhead friends telling them "to take off their swastikas" because she's one of them but is also "a Jewish lesbian." Alix Dobkin is an icon of the women's music scene.

The gay male group *the Flirtations*, with member Michael Callen a noted AIDS activist/Person With AIDS, sings tough songs gloved in the velvet of melting doo-wop harmonies. The British group, *The Tom Robinson Band*, sings *Glad to Be Gay*, an anthem for the post-Stonewall generation.

Progressive rap and Metal

Women rappers, *Queen Latisah*, *MC Lyte* and *Salt N' Pepa*, offer music that counsels young women to have pride and to combat sexism.

KRS-One, a male group, is classified as *educainment* because its repertoire educates listeners, advising them to avoid drugs and violence.

Queensryche, a heavy metal band, rages against the destruction of the environment, racism, sexism, the current political structure and organized religion.

Music these days is the voice of an angry, politicized, and increasingly polarized population. In rap, metal, thrash and all the other forms, the message is almost millennialist in its apocalyptic visions of racial strife, environmental destruction, and nihilistic despair. It is often racist, misogynist, and brutal, and possibly irresponsible. But it is real feelings, real rage, real despair. As much as Tipper Gore and others would like to protect their kids from it, censorship doesn't erase the fact that the music tells the reality that countless young people live. Like it or not, we ignore the prophecy at our peril.

Let not your heart be faint, and be not fearful at the report heard in the land. . . and violence is in the land, and ruler against ruler. — Jeremiah

TV

The following are excerpts from a novel-in-process, Ancient Rage. It opens here with a late night conversation between Elizabeth and her cousin Mary nine years after the Crucifixion and then moves backward in time to John's and Jesus' deaths.

Leaning forward, Elizabeth searched her cousin's face for understanding.

"I can't drink blood — not even my cousin's blood. Tell me it's blood, and I gag; tell me it's wine and it makes no sense. Maybe if I'd seen him after Golgotha — maybe if an angel had ever spoken to me..."

Elizabeth took a deep breath and continued.

"Do you know there's no name for what I am? I'm a widow, yes, but there's no word for a parent bereft of all children. It's too terrible to name." She shifted her slight weight. Her voice took a sharper edge. "Maybe if Jesus had saved John, if he had restored him to life, or if he had simply gone to visit John in prison, maybe then I could drink his blood and rejoice."

"Would you rather not have had a child?" Mary asked.

"No, I wanted a child."

"So John was a gift. . ."

"He was used! Zachariah and I were used. God didn't care about any of us, only about setting the stage for his own son. The casual way He disposed of John, that's what I can't forgive." She made a dismissive gesture with her hands.

Mary leaned closer and began stroking Elizabeth's bent back, kneading her hunched shoulders, offering wordless comfort.

Mary Lee Wile lives in Yarmouth, Maine. She is a teacher and freelance writer. She has spent 11 years researching her novel on Elizabeth. Four years ago her family lost a child to cancer. Artist **Kathe Kollwitz**, 1867 – 1945, lived most of her life in Germany.

"What a long, far way we've come since you first came to stay with me all those years ago," Elizabeth mused. "We had such hope, then."

"I still do," Mary answered quietly.

"Mary, whatever our sons felt, you and I were forced to suffer. And we're not alone. Mothers put God on trial daily as they see their children suffer, and daily God is found guilty."

"Elizabeth," Mary countered, "you would make God the scapegoat for your anger rather than accepting Jesus as the scapegoat for your sins."

At the first Passover meal after John's death, Elizabeth, unnoticed, had left her sister-in-law's Passover celebration and walked home barefoot, smearing the lintel and doorposts of her home with blood from her wounded feet. Elizabeth's silence stretched through summer. The servants kept careful vigil the night of the new moon of Tammuz, but Elizabeth showed no sign of recognizing it as the time of John's birth.

The hills slowly turned brown. Elul came, the month of mourning, but Elizabeth never wept. The Day of Atonement came and went in silence. When the night sky was lit with the flames of the Harvest Festival menorah, she turned her back; on those mornings the servants would find her sitting on the roof with her head bent down, eyes covered.

When the Festival was over and the rains began, she took no notice of the damp. She still went each morning to the roof before dawn. The servants would lead her down, her wet clothes weeping the tears she never shed.

One afternoon in the gray, damp month of Tevet, Anna, the old widow, came to call. Few visitors came any more; Anna herself had not been since shortly after Passover when Elizabeth lay on her bed,

"Would you rather not have had a child?" Mary asked.
"He was used! Zachariah and I were used. God didn't care about any of us."

Mary and Elizabeth by Kathe Kollwitz

Ancient Rage: Elizabeth, the m by Mary Lee Wile

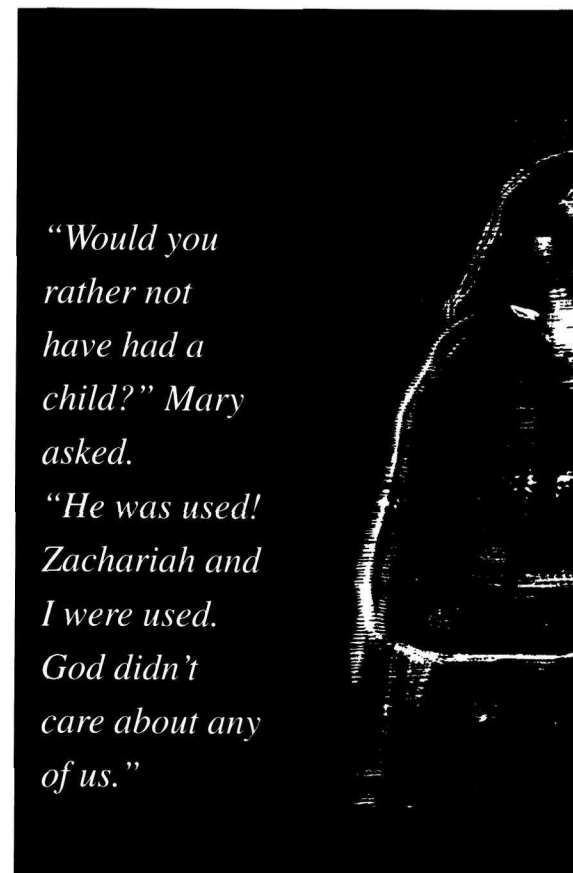
knees drawn up, feet still bandaged, hands clenched together at her breast. Appalled by such naked agony, Anna had not returned.

Now her own agony drove her back to her old friend.

"She's no better," Rahab said, meeting her at the door.

"I'll just sit with her awhile," Anna said.

Anna stared at Elizabeth, small, straight, her high cheekbones gaunt, her lined face dry and fine as parchment, her almond eyes fixed nowhere.





Chur

ther of John

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"Elizabeth?" Anna spoke softly. She waited for response, but the only sound was the slow dripping of rain. "You're right, you know. The rage of grief has no words." She sat down on the cushion beside Elizabeth, her hair short under the mantle, the sackcloth of mourning scratching her old legs, and quietly she spoke of why she'd come: her only granddaughter had died in childbirth, along with the newborn child, another girl. "These are only facts," she said. I can't make them unhappen, but I don't know what to do with how I feel." Anna fell

silent, hearing the rain, hearing the sound of their breathing. "I just want to come sit with you sometimes, if that's all right."

Elizabeth neither moved nor spoke.

When Elizabeth was alone again she hugged the silence to her, holding it like the child she no longer had. Sitting there in the soft lamplight, she fell asleep. She dreamed of Anna, weeping, standing beside a bed full of blood. On it lay Anna's granddaughter and the baby; the baby had drowned in blood. Then the dream shifted and Elizabeth was the one ready to give birth. Exhausted, she gripped the sides of the bed and pushed, feeling the child pass out of her body. The faces around her froze in horror. She looked, and all she had birthed was a head.

Elizabeth woke screaming, drenched in sweat.

The servants came running. For nearly a year she had made no sound at all, and now this hideous, mad wailing echoed through the house.

She was sitting where they had left her, silent again, her face shiny with sweat. She stripped and bathed herself, washing away the sweat. She didn't want to think.

She dressed again, then suddenly took up the basin, smashed it across the room, tore her clothes, and began to hurl Zachariah's garments into a heap in the middle of the room.

How dare he die and leave her to face this alone? How dare he die in peace? Either he was dead and would never know the horror of John's grotesque death, or he was, as John had promised, alive with God—and with John.

Breathing heavily, she sat on the bed.

Elizabeth could not still her mind. She thought about John's talk of life after

death, and she envisioned him standing before God, without his head, unable to speak. Then she imagined John's head alone in heaven, pure intellect, no heart, no feelings, no body to embrace when she finally got there, too. Crazily she imagined herself and Zachariah carrying John's head on a golden platter, bringing it before God, asking for healing. "Ask Jesus," He replied, and Elizabeth picked up John's head and hurled it like a curse at God.

[Elizabeth travelled to the crucifixion with Andrew, who had been John's disciple before becoming Christ's.]

As Elizabeth rode the familiar route to Jerusalem, the smudgy rim of the eastern sky began to bleed into darkness. Even the Temple was washed in crimson as they approached the city. The air still hung thick with the scent of roasted meat and pomegranate wood. Sleepy camels turned liquid eyes on them as they passed the encampments of pilgrims that dotted the landscape.

At one encampment, a woman's voice sang quietly to a fretful child; the words were unfamiliar, in an alien tongue, but the tune was pure, clear, heartbreakingly sweet. Elizabeth turned to listen and felt tears on her cheeks. She strained to hold onto the haunting melody as they moved

away, closer to the city.

Jerusalem, when they reached it, still slept, debauched from too much Passover wine and meat. In the quiet hush of early morning, the donkey's hooves

rang sharply against the paving stones.

Not knowing where to find Jesus or Mary yet, Andrew took Elizabeth to the

"Do you know there's no name for what I am? I'm a widow, yes, but there's no word for a parent bereft of all children. It's too terrible to name."

one place they were sure to be later: Golgotha, the place of execution. Elizabeth had never been there. It was unclean, a mouldering place of unsanctified death. Rolling a ball of lint under each thumbnail, her hands reflected nervous terror.

Golgotha stood bleak and empty. Andrew stopped. Should they proceed from here and enter the place itself, they would be defiled. The sun, now fully up, reflected off bones and skulls scattered beneath the upright beams of crosses. Elizabeth remembered the bleached colors of the desert, but this place was more hideous even than John's wilderness, more bleak, more terrible.

"When will they be here?" she asked.

"I don't know," Andrew answered.

"Do you want me to go find out?"

"Yes, please."

"Will you come, too?"

"No," Elizabeth said, looking around her. "I'll wait. You can find me here."

She slid off the donkey, then sat down and leaned against the trunk of an old tree.

"Go," she said. "I'll be safe here. No one will come until the time of crucifixion." She was right; not even robbers frequented Golgotha. Like the Holy of Holies, one entered here in fear and trembling, and even then only once, to die or watch a death. Reluctantly, Andrew left.

Elizabeth looked steadily at the bone-littered hill. Here she would witness another senseless death. She began a monologue directed at God: "Are you doing this to satisfy me? To show you have no favorites—you'll kill anybody? I never meant Mary's son to suffer just because mine did. I wanted you to save them both. I wanted them both alive."

She began rolling lint under her left thumbnail again. Maybe the others were all wrong. Maybe the angel who spoke to them was Lucifer, the most beautiful of all, the fallen angel of light luring Mary and Joseph and Zachariah to believe a lie.

Or maybe God had placed another bet with Satan, as he did over Job, to watch people react to—to what? Hopes destroyed?

None of it made sense. Rage knotted her chest.

Waves of heat shimmered off Golgotha's bones by the time Elizabeth heard voices. She stood and looked down the road. She couldn't tell if Andrew was there; a whole crowd moved in the distance. At the head of the crowd two Roman soldiers glinted as sun touched their armor. She heard raised voices, garbled words. As the crowd drew closer, she made out three men carrying cross beams. She forced herself to look at them. None was familiar.

Was Andrew wrong? Where was Andrew anyway? None of these men was Jesus.

She scanned the crowd, looking again for Andrew, and saw Mary, weeping. More Roman soldiers marched near her.

Elizabeth continued to stand in the protective shade of the tree, watching the procession parade up the littered hillside. The soldiers directed the three condemned men to crosses close together on the western slope of the hill. They set down their heavy burdens and the soldiers efficiently set to work assembling each cross. Elizabeth could still make out Mary. She studied her cousin, who was now down on her knees in the defiled dust, other women bent over her. When a pounding sound rang out over the crowd, silence fell. Elizabeth watched Mary raise her head and stare at the center cross. Elizabeth followed her gaze.

Jesus was on the cross, his neck arched

backward in agony as the soldiers beat nails into each hand. Where was the man who carried the cross beam? Why wasn't he up there?

Elizabeth, caught in a nightmare where nothing made sense, felt the pounding reverberate throughout her body. Mary jerked with each pounding as though whipped. Blood poured out of the nail wounds in Jesus' hands, staining the earth.

Mary lowered her face, her fingers clutching dry dust. Elizabeth involuntarily cringed at the thought of that vile dirt under her fingernails. Mary was oblivious, completely given over to grief.

The air grew darker. Elizabeth thought of the incense thrown on hot coals in the Holy of Holies to keep the High Priest from seeing God face to face. Was God now deliberately hiding the death of his son, using the dust of Golgotha as foul incense to obscure this hideous vision, to keep Himself from witnessing his own son's death?

Elizabeth made herself look at Jesus. In her blurred vision, seen through dust and tears, Jesus had two heads, both sunk on his chest. "A two-headed goat," Elizabeth thought, her mind still on the Day of Atonement. "Tie a red ribbon on Jesus' head, the scapegoat for man's sins. That other head is John's, the sacrifice already given to appease God. But I guess it

didn't work." As she watched, red did show on the left head, but it was no ribbon. Blood dribbled down the face from the wounded

*"Mary, whatever our sons felt,
you and I were forced to suffer.
And we're not alone. Mothers put
God on trial daily as they see
their children suffer, and daily
God is found guilty."*

forehead. She blinked to clear her eyes, and the two heads resolved into one. The pain-contorted face was more than she could bear, so she turned her attention to

the crowd. Mostly women were there. Where was Andrew? Where were the other disciples? One man stood, never moving his eyes from Jesus. Elizabeth thought she recognized him from the River, but didn't know his name.

She felt a stab of pride. John's followers hadn't deserted him when he was arrested. Jesus may have had a bigger following, but John's was more loyal.

Then she lowered her head in shame. What did it matter, now? Another young man was dying. That's all that mattered.

Elizabeth decided to leave her shaded circle; she had come to rage against this one more death and she would have to enter into the horror of it if she wanted to be more than a voyeur. Darkness thickened. Dust choked her. She felt Golgotha's filth creep into her hair, her clothes. She kept walking until she reached the throng of women below the center cross. She heard Jesus speak; he raised his bleeding head and stared at heaven. It was to God he spoke. "Why have you forsaken me?"

Elizabeth collapsed to her knees. Darkness seemed to cover the earth. This was God's son—and God had forsaken him, too. What kind of God is it that inflicts such pain on those he seems to choose—who abandons them to suffering and death? she asked the darkness.

A cry rang out; Elizabeth saw Jesus arch his body, then slowly slump to lifelessness. One of the soldiers drew his sword and pierced Jesus through the side; more blood poured out. The women began to wail the ancient chants of mourning. Elizabeth raised her voice among them, an old woman once again outliving youth. The soldiers took the body down. Elizabeth watched as Mary sat on the ground and enfolded the body, the blood of her son staining her clothes, a hideous mockery of the blood of childbirth, this childdeath.

Mary stroked his hair, caressed his face. Even as Elizabeth watched, Jesus'

skin took on the waxy palor of death. She remembered holding John as a child, how his body would conform to hers as he fell asleep in her arms, and she wondered if Mary remembered holding Jesus as a child as she embraced the dead body of this grown man.

Mary looked up and saw Elizabeth. "Help me," she begged. "Please, Elizabeth, help me."

Elizabeth moved beside Mary on the defiled ground of Golgotha. "What can I do?" she responded, helpless.

"It's nearly the Sabbath. Help me prepare him for burial. There's so little time. Don't leave me."

Elizabeth had forgotten what day it was; she had forgotten everything but this one more death.

She stayed, going with strangers to a strange tomb to help Mary wash the body, sponge away dirt and blood.

The stone sat heavily beside the open door of the tomb; the body was ready; but no one moved. Elizabeth looked at Mary. Mary stood staring down at the shrouded shape of her son, her bent shoulders giving her the look of a broken-winged bird, injured beyond repair, flight lost forever.



credit: Kathe Kollwitz

Her right hand was clenched at her throat; her left hand reached out to trace, light as a feather's touch, the outline of Jesus' face. Her own face was unrecognizable, swollen with weeping, sagging, every feature pulled downward into utter hopelessness, as though a demonic housewife had put both hands into a bowl of risen bread dough and dragged her fingers through it, collapsing the dough in ragged, ravaged lines.

The grieving maternal tenderness that had suffused her as she held her son back on Golgotha was gone. What Mary saw now was the end, the black mouth of the tomb ready to swallow her son forever.

That was the last time Elizabeth saw Jesus.

Twenty-four church leaders, including Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, cried “blasphemy” last August after U.S. President George Bush ridiculed Democrats because “God” does not appear in their political platform.

“As our Pledge of Allegiance affirms, we are ‘one nation, under God.’ Not ‘over’ God or in any other way owning God,” the leaders said in a letter to the White House following Bush’s Republican Convention address. “Any partisan use of God’s name tends to breed intolerance and to divide.”

Browning, at least, should know. Episcopalians these days seem irreparably split over the proper religious agenda for the Church in the 1990s, a dispute that couldn’t be more strongly rooted in God talk or accusations about the lack of it.

“Followers of Christ have a higher regard for the upper-case Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Ghost — than for the lower-case trinity — Freud, Adler and Jung,” a self-proclaimed upper-case Coloradan recently charged in a letter to the Milwaukee-based magazine, *The Living Church*. “Lower-case trinitarians [i.e., liberals] may believe that that is where their salvation lies if they wish, but how can they really be anything other than lower-case trinitarians?”

However restrained, the discourse of such conservatives seems increasingly passionate and insistent. Some are even calling their protests a form of “spiritual warfare.”

Such rhetoric seems strikingly reminiscent of arch-conservative Patrick Buchanan’s claim that there is “a religious war going on in our country.” Outraged, the hapless presidential candidate also characterizes the conflict as “a cul-

tural war” to be won only by taking back “our cities ... our culture ... our country” from such people as the residents of South Central Los Angeles or those working for passage of equal-rights amendments. The latter, Buchanan recently told Iowans in one of his most quotable speeches, are part of “a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.”

Spiritual warfare?

by Julie A. Wortman



Many anglophile church “conservatives” or “traditionalists” might shy away from Buchanan’s colorful language, but when you read between the lines it is difficult not to conclude that a sizeable number hold similar views about what needs to happen in the Episcopal Church — and based on similar assumptions about what needs to be won back from whom.

Take, for example, the new pro-conservative book, *New Millenium, New Church*, by Milwaukee Bishop Roger J. White and Richard Kew.

“The painful truth is that two competing factions have faced off ever since the General Convention Special Program in Seattle in 1967,” the two write. “This was an attempt to respond to the bitter violence that had erupted in black ghettos throughout America, and the Special Program earmarked funds to address the problems in society those disturbances highlighted. Controversial grants were made, and a Special Convention was called in

1969 at the campus of Notre Dame University to debate widening the Church’s range of participation.”

The authors then pointedly note: “This was also the first General Convention at which women, ethnic minorities and young people were present in significant numbers.”

Since then, White and Kew lament, the Church has been focused on liberal “causes” — civil rights, the peace movement, women’s ordination to the priesthood, and the pro-choice movement among them. But, they also assure us, the time has now come for “the coalescing of more conservative forces” that will “not only alter the direction the Episcopal Church takes, but will likely rescind or modify certain facets of church life that prevailed during the liberal heyday.”

What kind of changes might distressed conservatives like to see? These days, a casual sampling of angry views appearing in a variety of Church magazines and newspapers indicates that a pre-1969 *status quo* may be exactly what many people have in mind:

“Our clergy has run amuck again, stumbling about in a darkness of their own making. It’s different today, though. A dangerous new twist has been added: popularity. In their quest for popularity, the national church has robbed us of our ancient liturgy, substituting the language of the street. In contravention of New Testament teaching, gaggles of giggling girls have been introduced into the sanctuary in the form and function of priests.”

— **George T. Webb, Fayetteville, N.C. (in *Episcopal Life*)**

“My question ... is why was the church, at least on a local basis, involved in offering sanctuary to illegal aliens in the Southwest some years ago in violation of U.S. law?

“This mindless indirect support of il-

Julie Wortman is an assistant editor of *The Witness*. Art provided by **George Knowlton**.

legal immigration is, or was, an activity fostering the primary cause of the [Los Angeles] riots. The continuing position of the federal government in allowing an overpowering flow of illegals into the Southwest is unconscionable.

"In effect, the U.S. is no longer a melting pot but a dumping ground for people who adulterate our society, cheapen our goals and who unfortunately, do not have the background to understand nor appreciate a system of free enterprise and democracy."

— **John L. Burwell, Jackson, Miss. (in *Episcopal Life*)**

"The Church has failed in her duty to serve her people. The position that we must offer compassion to the women who are in crisis with a problem pregnancy is absolutely correct. However to advise them to have an abortion, even as a last resort, is to offer counsel with Satan's agenda in mind, not God's plan....

"God has not changed. Biblical law is unchanged, timeless. Its laws, commandments and promises of punishment for the abandonment of these laws and commandments remains the same now as when they were written....

"We must stop falling prey to those feminists who demand 'reproductive rights over their own bodies' and expose this for what it really is. They are not looking for reproductive freedom, but for the freedom to practice senseless sex."

— **Nancy L. Choches, Wickford, R.I. (in *Rhode Island Episcopal News*)**

"To the extent that we have leaders who conceive of the church's missionary task as one of social action, advocacy, lobbying, 'prophetic witness,' or working for 'peace and justice,' we are preaching 'another gospel.' Social justice is better than social injustice, but it is ultimately irrelevant to the mission of the church, which is to form Christian people who do not allow any human society, of whatever sort, to give them their identity.

Our calling is not to transform culture, but to transcend it."

— **Daniel H. Martins, Baton Rouge, La. (in *The Living Church*)**

"The 'spirituality' promoted in these articles [on women's spirituality] is heretical in the classic sense of the word.

"By incorporating Native American, Hindu and ancient matriarchal religions into their worship, the feminist theologians described in the articles seek to defy Christ's self-proclamation as 'the way and the truth and the life' and presume that one can come unto God the Father by a route other than Christ."

— **Doug Truitt, North East, Md. (in *Episcopal Life*)**

"The tendency of the social engineers is to call for 'social justice' rather than a transcendent justice. What is established as a result are genuine feelings of compassion and mercy but implemented in such ways as are perceived to be for the recipients' own good even before their rights are considered. The prohibition of prayer in the public schools is one example [of infringing on the 'the freedom to worship [which] produces for every worshipper a privileged sanctuary of conscience into which no earthly power can invade'].

"Benefits are often forced upon people which the engineers consider as kindnesses but which the recipients too often see as condescension and respond with anger and/or contempt. So often this has been the result of unrestricted aid to underprivileged nations who then return these acts with hatred for the U.S.

"Social engineers also use the term 'social justice' to describe a system of redistribution which they favor but, according to historian Dr. Herbert Schlossberg, is really 'institutionalized theft.' In his book *Idols For Destruction* he condemns the idea that property rights can be separated from human rights. The

idea that property rights are inferior 'is fraudulent. There are no societies that are cavalier toward property rights but which safeguard human rights. The state that lays its hand upon your purse will lay its hand upon your person. Both are acts that despise transcendent law.'"

— **Donald A. Seeks, Fresno, Ca. (in *The San Joaquin Star*)**

"A policy of 'inclusion' does not necessitate the demolition of more than a thousand years of Anglican tradition. It does not require that we alienate our brethren throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion.

"To welcome minorities from other cultures does not necessitate the dismantling of our culture. When this occurs, the leadership of the church is, in effect, excluding the mainstay of its membership ... those lifelong Episcopalians who treasure the canons and liturgy which define the Episcopal Church."

— **Linda K. Ellis, Atlantic Highlands, N.J. (in *Episcopal Life*)**

"Throughout Christian history there have been multiple opinions about *variables* (e.g., incense, vestments, candles, etc.). But the Church has always been called upon to *agree* about the basics. The reason we are experiencing so much pain and contention in the Episcopal Church (ECUSA) today is the fact that *we no longer agree about the essentials*. There are now two religions in ECUSA: one which continues to accept Scripture as the authentic record of God's self-revelation and a new sectarian religion which claims to have discovered new forms and new ways as God's revelation. At stake are basic, vital issues: the *givenness* of the Sacred Ministry [for men only], a Biblical view of sexual morality, the truth of God's Nature revealed as Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

— **Charles Lynch, Clarkston, Mich. (in *The Christian Challenge*)**

rw

Delusions in the Church

It is not so much the spiritual bankruptcy and faithlessness or the injustice and oppression within the Church which enrage me. It is the denial that these exist, the pretense that there is health in us, which inflames me. I witness this denial vividly reflected in the contemporary Church around the issue of homosexuality.

We welcome biblical fundamentalists citing Sodom and Gomorrah but we allegorize Jesus' bidding to sell all that we have, give to the poor and follow him. We pretend that ordaining homosexuals is a new thing. We pledge ourselves to study and education when people's lives are at stake. We worry about losing conservative money and members and ignore evangelism of the gay and lesbian communities. We enter heated arguments while the very people we are discussing sit in our midst and are unsafe to say so. Our pretense supports, even requires, lying or a definition of private life far beyond the privacy needed or desired by our "straight" membership. The mutual care within our congregations is limited and harmed, the collegiality of clergy restricted, pastoral care is stunted. Saddest of all, this denial in the Church feeds a terrible, unrecognized malignancy: closeted gay men and lesbian women are subject to blackmail and spiritual violence within the Church with no recourse: What, for example is the closeted gay priest to do when his married bishop propositions him and what is the leader of a national organization within the Church to do when told to quit or be "outed"?

Why do I remain connected to this Church? Where else can I tell and hear "the old, old stories of Jesus in his glory?" Where else can my breath be taken away

by Sir Hubert Parry's, "I was glad" or by Evelyn Underhill's depth of spirit and exquisite prose? Who else will go with me in heart and soul to Bethlehem every Christmas or to an empty tomb every Easter? Who else will feed me holy bread

Rage at 'A powerful man'

by Anne

The way we name something tells about the reality it possesses (look at the names men use for women: bitch, hussy, mistress and dame).

I am told that God is

Father

Son

Spirit.

A powerful man

molested my childhood self, imposing evil, and I don't want to call God 'father.'

Please, let me name in God creativity, nurture and redemption.

"Anne" is a pseudonym for an Episcopalian living in the midwest.

Witnessing rage: readers send observations

and wine, or anoint me when I am sick? Where else will people sing "For all the saints" when they remember with me all those who have gone before? Who else will pray with me, worship with me, challenge me and, when I die, remember to say, "Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Patricia.

Patricia E. Henking, *the vicar of Faith Episcopal Church in Merrimack, N.H., notes that "the Latin rabere is the root of both our words, rage and rabies. Thus rage is implicitly associated with madness made by being bitten."*

Not teaching nonviolence

It enrages me that the Bush administration is more effective in teaching religious people to hate a made-up enemy than the national churches are in teaching their people to love the enemy.

Instead of being a leader in peace, our government, whose coins proclaim, "In God We Trust," teaches violence by word and action. Local churches are afraid to criticize the government lest they be thought unpatriotic.

I maintain my connection with the Church so I can worship God, listen to my friends in Christ, seek forgiveness and speak out for peace and non-violence.

Fran Collier *lives in Key Largo, Fla.*

Surviving homicides

Outraged? You bet! And deeply saddened by the lack of awareness and support for survivors of homicide victims.

We are invisible people. You cannot readily see our pain and suffering when we have recovered just barely enough to be about the business of survival — returning to work, shopping for groceries, testing ourselves and fellow church-goers by appearing in our familiar pews.

When there is an effort in the Church to work in the area of criminal justice, it is most often directed to those in prison or on their way out. I support this, [but] very little effort is devoted to those of us who have been abused, raped, robbed or left to survive the murder of a family member, neighbor or dear friend — and we are an ancient population. It's as if other people feel that if they think deeply about our tragedies, they will also become victims.

Fortunately, Parents of Murdered Children and Other Survivors of Homicide Victims (PMOC) provides this support. I

do not see even the awareness in the Church that there is a rapidly growing group of survivors who are thirsting for help from our Church and communities.

I stay in the Church because I feel that I have been called, in addition to my ministry to other survivors, to a ministry of teaching my Church and community of all that is involved in surviving murder and of enlisting their help in meeting the needs of survivors. I am encouraged to stay in the Church because I feel God's presence at work in the Church in these uncertain times. I also am comforted by remembering that Mary, the mother of Jesus, and God himself are parents of a murdered child.

Betty Parks, of Fletcher, N.C., is vice-president of the national board of Parents of Murdered Children and Other Survivors of Homicide Victims. Her 24-year-old daughter, Betsy, was murdered in Raleigh, N.C., in 1975. POMC can be contacted at 100 E. 8th St., Cincinnati, Ohio, 45202; 513-721-LOVE.

Local control

What can Episcopalians do when the elite take away traditional parish self-determination, close churches, excommunicate outspoken individuals and abolish convocations, saying the number of people and the amount of contributed dollars are too small to warrant continuing congregational life?

I am enraged that folks who can't afford expensive priests can't have self-determining parishes and that, in effect, the Canons of the Diocese of Newark provide for a "poll tax" because persons who are not regular contributors of record in their parishes may not vote. It is outrageous that in some dioceses of the Episcopal Church people are disqualified from voting (or full participation in God's Church) if (a) they do not have the financial wherewithal to be "regular givers of

record," or (b) they prefer to have their giving confidential and unrecorded.

I maintain my connection with the Church out of loyalty to God's call and in gratitude for the love of the folks with whom I am privileged to minister.

Katrina Martha Swanson is rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Union city, N.J.

AIDS-rejections

Just recently, my life partner of more than ten years, Ron Washburn, and I were invited and then summarily disinvited to a family reunion because we are both HIV-positive. After planning to attend the reunion for a number months, I was

told by an aunt that "we wouldn't want to put the children or anyone else at risk by having you and

Ron present." This goes against all medical facts, which clearly indicate that the virus is not transmitted through casual contact.

HIV/AIDS discrimination still exists, even among members of the Episcopal Church. In addition to dealing with the physical consequences of HIV infection, Ron and I suddenly had to deal with the emotional consequences of isolation and rejection. My sister was devastated by our family's irrational behavior. She also needs their support in dealing with Ron's and my illness.

This was all the more difficult to accept because of my longtime activism on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Church. It made me realize that no family is immune from fear based on ignorance.

Tom Tull is a member of the Episcopal Church's Joint Commission on HIV/AIDS and one of the authors of the first AIDS-related resolution to be passed by the Episcopal Church (1985) or any other major Christian denomination. **TW**

Rebuilding L.A.

The Diocese of Los Angeles' Task Force on Economic Development has designated \$300,000 (provided by the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, the Episcopal Church's disaster-relief and charitable-giving arm) for creation of a community-development credit union to serve the South Central Los Angeles area. The national Church's alternative-investments committee has complimented that move by investing \$100,000 in each of two minority-owned L.A. banks and another \$100,000 in a project to provide loans for building low-income housing.

Equally strategic has been Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's "loan" of his economic-justice staff officer, Gloria Brown, to help manage the year-long process of setting up the new credit union. Brown will also work with the diocese's task force in planning other community-development projects.

The focus, Brown says, is alternative investment tactics "that foster equity for people that have been locked out of the system."



— Prepared by Julie A. Wortman

Multi-ethnic experiment

This fall, an equal number of black, white and Hispanic Episcopalians from 10 Delaware congregations will spend eight Sundays worshipping together in an effort to see what it would take to create anti-racist, multi-cultural church communities. According to Max Bell, a diocesan spokesman for the project, Delaware currently has no multi-ethnic parishes. Project designers hope that with the insights they gain participants in the experimental "congregation" will be able to advise their home congregations on how to recognize and fight institutional racism.

After Watergate, Irangate, the Savings and Loan scandals and the monstrous crimes of the Gulf war, all human travesties directed by elected U.S. government officials, it is difficult to understand how anyone would indict *movement* politics for “gross irresponsibility.”

Broadly defined, the “movement” consists of an amazingly small number of individuals, most of whom know each other, or know of each other because the networks in which they function are interconnected, stretching across the U.S., into Europe and the Third World.

During the last 30 years, “movement” activists have been civil rights workers in the South, urban militants and community organizers in the North, union organizers, people of color in nationalist, community-based organizations for self-determination, workers in solidarity with Third World liberation movements, the essentially white, middle-class feminists; the environmentalists, cultural workers (e.g., poets, musicians), left organizations such as the Communist Party — USA and, of course, shifting alliances or coalitions of the above.

These activists do not constitute a homogeneous group, contrary to what Thomas says, coming as they do from a wide range of class, educational, cultural and racial backgrounds; and their cooperation at any level, on any issue, exacts a great deal of tolerance, patience and faith.

Unlike elected politicians, movement workers take no oaths to uphold the public good. They are not paid ample salaries to act on behalf of a constituency. They are not shielded from mundane realities

by posh accommodations, chauffeured limousines and government planes. Yet the discipline with which individuals in movement organizations hold themselves responsible for implementing serious social change would astonish most people.



Woe unto...

Gloria House responds
to Owen C. Thomas


Movement activists fight because they want to realize their visions of a more just society. They do not see government *per se* as evil, as Thomas states. However, most of them are convinced that *capitalist* governments are destructive of human life and they believe we can conceive and develop new ways to organize and distribute our resources.

Conceiving new structures of human organization and striving to realize them is an unusual kind of work, but it is work, nevertheless. The work of a movement

activist is not fun, as Thomas suggests.

Romanticizing the experience of being arrested or going to jail as “fun” requires an alienated imagination. Having themselves never gasped at the filth of a county jail cell, critics of the movement might consider being locked in one a great adventure. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The work of a movement activist is in many ways a sacrifice hardly understood by even the closest friends and family. It may include daring acts of courage, but more often it involves the same steady, tedious chores that Thomas associates with the work of electoral politics — stuffing envelopes, making phone calls, doing political education, attending endless meetings which compete with commitment to home and family.

Anyone willing to take an honest look at contemporary electoral politics will recognize the bankruptcy of the system. Yet too many Americans believe we live in the “best of all possible worlds.” According to Thomas, “thousands of people around the world are literally dying to participate” in an American style of democracy. It is true that many people fall prey to media-propagated images of “the good life” available in this country. Such was the recent case, for example, of Cubans anxious to leave their socialist nation for the American dream. Once in the U.S., they ran headlong into the class and race discrimination which characterizes American society and, sadly, many of them are now in U.S. jails and prisons. So much for the good life. It is more important for us to recognize that thousands of people around the world are literally dying, not to come to the U.S., but because of U.S. aggression — both open and covert — against them and because of policies stemming from the deadly “new world order.” Movement activists play a vital role in helping us to face this fact and do something about it. 

Gloria House is a professor at Wayne State University, poetry editor of *The Witness*, and long-time civil rights activist and one-time member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Owen Thomas draws an unnecessarily bright line between movement politics and electoral politics in his attempt to be provocative. But it's not unhelpful, because he is onto something.

The American progressive movement really does need to figure out its relationship to the electoral realm. Neither working only in electoral politics, nor working only on "movement" issues is sufficient.

Easy agreement on that strategic point only carries you so far. We then have to ask ourselves why working for profound social change in the electoral realm always seems to produce unsatisfactory outcomes. People either end up sold out or burnt-out.

The reason, I think, lies in the unique (and uniquely bad) American political party system. Unlike other industrial nations (and many not so developed), the U.S. has weaker, less ideologically distinct, less effective political parties. We also have an endless number of fragmented single-issue organizations. These organizations do lots of vitally important work, but I've yet to meet an organizer who didn't wish that there was some other way to connect with people working on other issues.

Well, there is. A newly forming, grassroots-based political party, called the New Party, wants to take the country in a more humane and progressive direction. The New Party opened its doors in January, and currently has organizing projects underway in one-third of the states in the union. It's nothing glamorous — meetings, electoral planning sessions, cultural events — and we don't expect to show up on the national political radar this year, but we do think that

Danny Cantor is a long-time labor activist and national organizer of the New Party Campaign, 720 Monroe Street, Hoboken New Jersey 07030; 201-795-2013.

people are ready for some sort of bold initiative in American politics. People active in the project include a range of community organizers, unionists, issue advocates and professionals. We've got people from different issue areas, men



credit: Eleanor Mill

nonvoters?

Danny Cantor responds to Owen C. Thomas

and women, people of color and whites, straights and gays and lesbians. We've got a few people with national name recognition, and lots of individuals known to particular communities.

The Perot phenomenon, whatever one's views of the Bonaparte-from-Texas, made it clear that the two major parties are in serious disrepair. The reality of an alienated and disempowered population will not disappear. The reason is that neither party really believes in educating and mobilizing the population to partici-

pate. And the reason for that, as everyone knows, is that the people who don't participate tend to be poorer, darker and younger than those who control the political scene.

The New Party's strategy for change is simple: Start local. Build for the long term. Combine electoral work with non-electoral work. Don't waste people's votes (or time). Don't be spoilers. [The New Party proposes running candidates in local elections where they might win. In races where there is a reasonable major party candidate, the New Party would attempt to list that candidate on the ballot a second time with the New Party slate. This tactic, called *fusion* or *cross-endorsing*, helped create the strength of the American Labor Party in the 1940s.]

We have reason to be optimistic. Although you'd never know it from current public policy, most Americans actually hold relatively progressive views. They think the country should be run for the common welfare and general benefit. They don't believe kids should get a lousy education, that poverty is good for economic performance, that taxes should be regressive, that living standards should decline, or that we should organize our economy in ways that wreck the earth. But most Americans have lost confidence in their own ability to address such problems and that workable solutions can be found. We need a different sort of political organization and a new philosophy of governance, more rooted in the people, to make democracy work. Neither is likely to happen without a new party.

So, we invite readers of *The Witness* to help build the New Party. Become a founding member. Hold a house party. Read some material and pass it on. Send money. Get involved in helping us develop a program, identify potential local candidates, or whatever. If we maintain a little patience and sense of humor, we might pull it off.

TAY

“You can be sure that the gentlemen in Washington have their own file on you — certainly if you have done anything in the past 30 years that could be remotely called Christian Social Action,” William B. Spofford wrote in the Feb. 24, 1955 *The Witness*.

In his many years as editor of the magazine, Spofford not only practiced but preached such action with fervor, laying down none-too-subtle challenges to the status quo.

“Of course the Kingdom of God will not have been established once we end capitalism,” he wrote in 1934. “Nevertheless since under this system an increasing number of men [sic] are brought to the verge of starvation, it seems to me that the job immediately before us is to put an end to it in order that we may apply ourselves to more important matters.”

Spofford’s efforts did not go unnoticed.

In the April 4, 1949 issue of *LIFE Magazine*, his photo appears along with 49 others under the caption, “Dupes and Fellow Travelers Dress Up Communist Fronts.” Albert Einstein, Leonard Bernstein, Thomas Mann, Norman Mailer, Charles Chaplin, and Langston Hughes are among the “dupes” featured in the spread. More notably from a *Witness* standpoint, the gallery includes Vida Scudder, a scholar, social activist, and member of the Companions of the Holy Cross, who along with Spofford helped found the Church League for Industrial Democracy. Two other Episcopal clergy are also pictured — Bishop Edward L. Parsons and William Howard Melish.

Shortly afterwards, Spofford was summoned to testify before a New York subcommittee of the House UnAmerican Ac-

tivities Committee.

“They picked *The Witness* apart, and declared it to be a communist rag,” said Davis Hobbes, a Tunkhannock attorney and close friend of Spofford. “*The Witness* was a powerful voice and they wanted to kill it — and they wanted to kill Bill, too.”

Vandals hurled stones through the windows of the print shop, and the Spoffords lost most of their friends in

Tunkhannock.

“It probably affected my mother more, in terms of community shunning and snide comments,” says Spofford’s son, Bishop William Spofford. “My father never made a great big thing out of what he did. He was trying to build a more sensible, peaceful order. He would have been outraged at the notion that this was something out of the norm.”

With Spofford’s death in 1972, the

The Witness and the U.S. Government

by Marianne Arbogast

Life Magazine, April 4, 1949. Bill Spofford is on the far left of this page, second from bottom. Spofford's print shop was vandalized after this photo was published. Courtesy Life Magazine



Marianne Arbogast is an assistant editor of *The Witness*.

Episcopal Church Publishing Co. lost its most notorious voice, but not its penchant for irritating the powers-that-be. A 1976 ECPC study/action guide was labeled a "one-sided venture into political indoctrination" by Ronald Reagan; conservative columnist Jeffrey Hart called it "nothing less than a Marxist handbook for the overthrow of the U.S. political and economic system."

In 1977, *The Witness*' coverage of

events related to the Puerto Rican independence struggle and Grand Jury abuse earned it a visit from the FBI. At the time, two staff members of the national Church's Hispanic Affairs Desk — Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin — were in jail for their refusal to testify in a Grand Jury investigation. *The Witness* had been outspoken in criticizing then Presiding Bishop John Allin for permitting a late-night FBI search of Cueto's files at the

national Church offices, and in supporting the women's stance of non-cooperation. Mary Lou Suhor, then-managing editor and later editor of *The Witness*, visited the women in jail, the FBI showed up at the Ambler, Pa. office.

"They said they knew I had visited Maria and Raisa in jail and produced a folder and asked if I would identify some photographs," Suhor recalled.

Celebrating
— 75 —
years

The investigation was not pursued.

As *The Witness* deepened its involvement with Puerto Rican issues, the ECPC Board developed precautionary procedures. DeWitt was made official custodian of all records, and for a time files were stored in the safe of the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia where Barbara Harris was deacon.

After spending 10 months in jail, Cueto was imprisoned a second time when a second Grand Jury was convened. She and four others, including Puerto Rican activist and ECPC Board member Steve Guerra, were sentenced to three years for refusing to testify. Bishop Coleman McGehee, another board member, testified as a character witness for Guerra. None of the five were ever indicted.

"The ECPC and the FBI were coming at this from two diametrically opposed positions," Suhor says. "The ECPC ended up honoring Maria and Raisa. At General Convention we had Bishop John Hines presenting awards to Maria and Raisa for the same thing they were being jailed for. They were doing all this from a biblically-rooted posture. You cannot separate politics from spirituality."

TW

organizations labeled by the U.S. Attorney General or other government agencies as subversive.

In the beginning such people were prominent liberals who were lured into sponsoring or joining organizations that seemed American enough at the time. When the Moscow-directed line emerged, numerous liberals quit. But others like those below stuck it out. Some of them were receptive to shrewd Communist persuasiveness. Some in high position stubbornly ignored their critics in the honest belief that there would eventually be a meeting of minds. Still others cynically pursued a personal ambition, thinking that the Communists could

help them along in their careers. Not a few became so notorious that they were accused of being actual members of the party. Some of those pictured here publicly and sincerely repudiate Communism, but this does not alter the fact that they are of great use to the Communist cause.

Indeed membership would damage their special usefulness. Innocently or not, they accomplish quite as much for the Kremlin in their glamorous way as a card holder does in his drab toil. The Communist-front organizations have been exposed often enough, however, so that by now the perennial joiner whose friends try to excuse him because he is "just a dupe," is clearly a superdupe.



ARTHUR MILLER
Playwright



CORLISS LAMONT
Writer, philanthropist



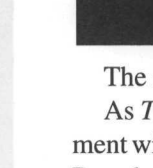
ARTHUR UPHAM POPE
Authority on Persian art



SUSAN B. ANTHONY II
Grandniece of suffragist



NORMAN MAILER
Novelist



JAMES WATERMAN WISE
Author son of Rabbi Wise



B. BALDWIN
Movie actor and producer



CHARLES CHAPLIN
Movie actor and producer



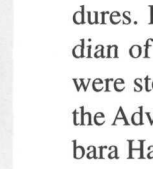
PHILIP MORRISON
Atomic physicist



OLIN DOWNES
Music critic



O. JOHN ROGGE
Lawyer



LYMAN R. BRADLEY
Professor of German



THOMAS MANN
Novelist



VIDA D. SCUDDER
English professor emerita



DEAN DIXON
Orchestra conductor



KENNETH LESLIE
Editor of "The Protestant"



FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN
Political science professor



MARK VAN DOREN
Poet



HARLOW SHAPLEY
Astronomer



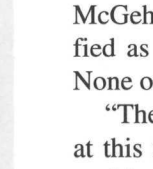
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Poet



WALTER RAUTENSTRAUCH
Engineering prof. emeritus



F. O. MATTHIESSEN
History professor



DONALD OGDEN STEWART
Writer



LOUIS UNTERMAYER
Poet



GEORGE SELDES
Editor



LILLIAN HELLMAN
Playwright



WILLIAM HOWARD MELISH
Episcopal clergyman



GENE WELTFISH
Anthropologist

There may be those who would prefer to believe that my statements here are untrue, and that I am a disturbed and irrational person. There may be those who ask, 'Why did she wait so long?' without understanding the abuse of power and the oppressive fear and silence which victims endure because policies, education and support are lacking. One might ask instead, 'What enabled him to get away with it for so long?'"

Artist Kathy Constantinides' words get right to the crux of this issue. Like many similar victims of clergy sex abuse, she has recently come forward with her story of betrayal, pain, and confusion.

At the age of 18, Constantinides says she was sexually abused by a priest in her Greek Orthodox parish in Detroit. Her self-esteem was crushed by this breach of trust between the teenager and the priest whom she "worshipped as a hero."

Enraged, Constantinides ended her Church connections, and by extension her church-centered ethnic community. As is often the case, she has met with a wall of institutional silence on the part of the Greek Orthodox hierarchy. Consequently, Constantinides felt compelled to research the topic of clerical sexual abuse through professional journals and conferences. In addition, she contacted nearly 700 members of her former church congregation in the hope, she says, that they

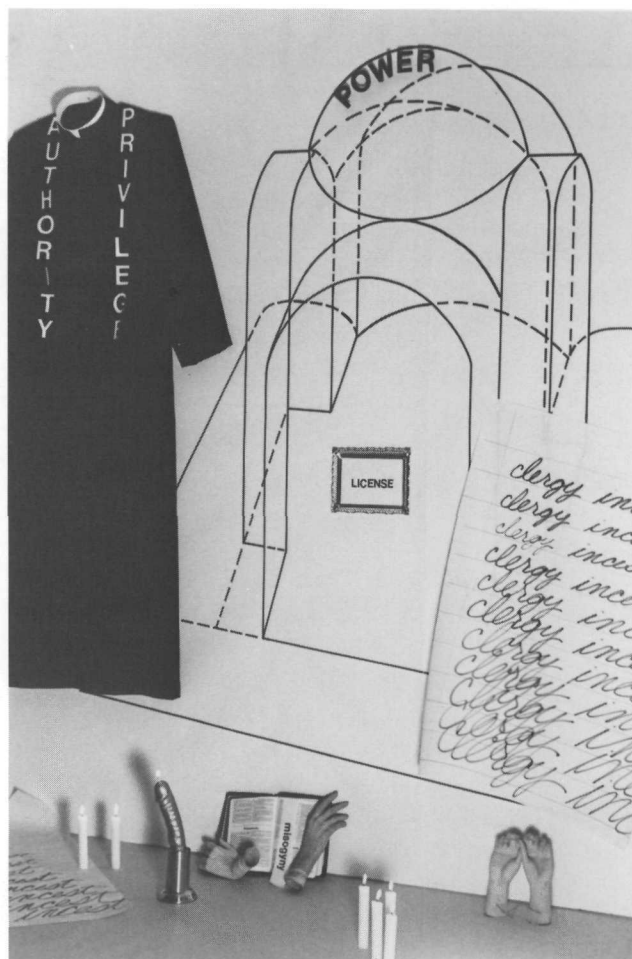
Is silence a sacrament?

by
Blaise
Tobia
and
Virginia
Maksymowicz

"will have the courage to confront this problem directly, to reach out to other women who may have been victimized."

Her incorporation of her sexual-abuse experiences into her art began two years ago, with a series of photographs and texts called *WITNESS: Is Silence A Sacrament?* Her current installation, *LESSON: photo/graphic/facts* is still in progress. It combines candles, a black cassock and a schematic diagram of a church with words such as *authority*, *privilege* and *power*.

Constantinides has spent more than a decade making art about women, the relationships they have with men, their position in society, their connections to their personal and collective pasts. Her



LESSON: photo/graphic/facts by Kathy Constantinides

hybrid artform is an example of a recent practice that has come to be known as sculptural installation; she creates displays by arranging objects, photographs, drawings and other elements within a space and adding handwritten or printed texts. Unlike traditional sculpture that is meant primarily to be looked at, Constantinides' installations invite active participation; the viewer might be asked to walk into or around the artwork, rearrange things, pull on strings, read something, write something or make something. As a result of this interaction, Constantinides hopes that the importance and shared human experience of her subject matter will be emphasized and, ultimately, remembered.

TW

art and society

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

America's hate groups

by David Crumm

Blood in the Face: The Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Nazi Skinheads and the Rise of a New White Culture by James Ridgeway, Thunder's Mouth Press, 208 pages, \$18.95 paperback.

A friendly woman in a light blue sweater relaxes on a comfortable couch in an old farmhouse and gazes at you with a gentle invitation in her eyes.

Her voice is so softly reassuring, she almost sighs as she says: "There's a feeling you get when you're totally among your own kind." She adds: "When you love something, you don't want to see it destroyed. If somebody comes in and tries to destroy our family, you're not going to let that happen."

The woman sounds almost loving until she reaches her conclusion: "And our race is our family. How can we sit back and let that be destroyed and not do something about it?"

This nameless woman is one of the dozens of white supremacists in *Blood in the Face*, the title both of a film and a book produced last year by *Village Voice* political correspondent James Ridgeway. Together they form a gut-wrenching family album of America's leading hate mongers.

Their vision for America's future is terrifying. One of the most popular underground novels in the movement is *The Turner Diaries*, a fantasy about all-out racial warfare written by William Pierce. The novelist dreams of white revolutionaries capturing southern California and then using every lamp post and street sign for lynchings. Pierce writes that most of

the victims will be white people who have promoted racial equality.

Among Turner's descriptions of the slaughter: "Hanging from a single overpass...is a group of about 30, each with an identical placard around its neck . . . 'I betrayed my race.'"

What's most unsettling about the white supremacists Ridgeway shows us is that so many of them, at first, look friendly and familiar.

The film includes a family portrait on a sunny day in the country: a child, a young man and an old man enjoy a picnic lunch. The young man says, "We have to get our government back. So that's what it's all about." He sounds a bit like Jimmy Stewart defending Americans' rights in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Then the young man adds, "All these so-called subversive groups are nothing but patriotic Americans trying to do just that."

Ridgeway doesn't psychoanalyze his subjects, but it's obvious there is a rage deep within these people. For some, it's a frustration born of poverty. For some, it's a kind of fear that their nostalgic dreams of America are spinning out of control. Still others have been trained to feel this kind of anger by their parents or friends.

As if trying to hammer America into their own image, supremacists often seize hallowed symbols and tilt them at bizarre new angles to serve their cause: the American flag is joined with the swastika. An open Bible is etched at the top of a registration form for a group called Posse Comitatus. In the United Methodist Church, the flaming cross is a symbol of evangelism; in the Ku Klux Klan, it is a holy call to a racial war.

One of the eeriest sequences in Ridgeway's film shows George Lincoln

Rockwell, the tall and handsome founder of the American Nazi Party, talking with reporters in the 1950s. The reporters challenge Rockwell's outrageous claim that Jews and homosexuals deserve to be murdered.

One man asks, "Why do you think you can accomplish your mission by following in the footsteps of Adolph Hitler — a man who is so universally despised by all freedom-loving people?"

Rockwell smoothly replies, "As far as being despised goes, the most despised man the world has ever known is also the most successful — Jesus Christ. He was crucified and all his followers were hated worse than I am. And He's doing very well now I would say."

Then the film leaps ahead 40 years to the present for a chilling interview with a teenaged boy who claims that Rockwell's spiritual example still inspires him. Americans were wrong to condemn Rockwell, the youth says. "He wasn't really a hate monger. He was really a love monger. He loved the white people."

Ridgeway intends the book and movie to be a kind of mental jump-start for Americans who let their social conscience stall in the late 1980s. On nearly every page, in nearly every scene, he seems to be shouting: Wake up! Wake up! Militant racists are alive and well in the 1990s!

book review

Alive. Well. And seductive.

The movie ends with the steely gaze of a white supremacist preacher, gazing out at viewers with a final appeal: "Did we make a point with you? Can you walk out of this room and not believe most of what we're telling you? Have we made a new convert?"

David Crumm is the *Detroit Free Press* religion writer.

I grew up in the deep South in the '40s, and they were violent times," Emmett Jarrett, president of the Episcopal Urban Caucus and Maryland rector, recalls. "I remember being whipped by my father when I was three years old for lying, when in fact I was telling the truth. My father abandoned us when I was five.

"There was no ongoing abuse in my childhood except for extreme poverty — but the violence was there, it permeated the culture. And I think it made me very fearful as a child.

Later, Jarrett's maternal grandfather came to live with his family. While in elementary school his grandfather pulled him down out of a fig tree in the back yard and broke his arm.

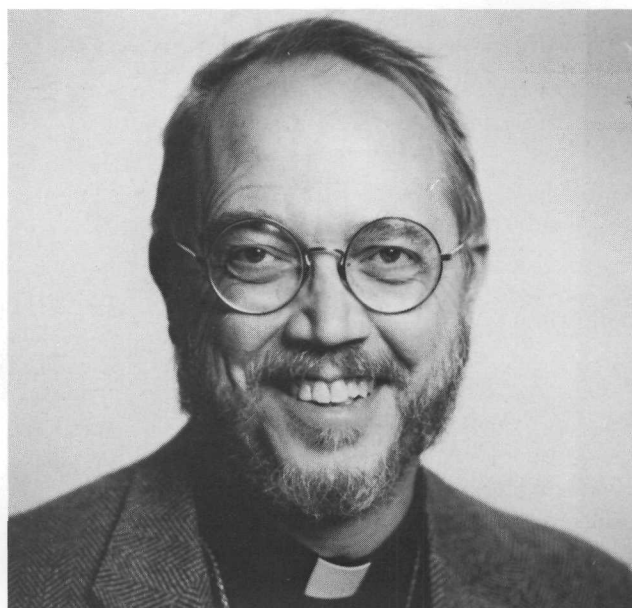
"Then when I was ten, he bloodied my face during an argument. I picked up a baseball bat and said, 'Take another step and I'll kill you.' And I meant it; I think I really would have bashed his head in."

In 1988 Jarrett took a vow of nonviolence with the support of the Presiding Bishop and his friends and family. The vow, written by John Dear, S.J., commits him to "recognizing the violence in [his] own heart" and to practicing the nonviolence of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jarrett took the vow because, as an adult, he struggled with his own impulse to violence.

"My first marriage was violent in many ways. We beat each other up — I think because it seemed like the way to get what we wanted."

"Violence" for Jarrett is more than physical brutality — "though that is certainly where we have to start. We live in it. You see violence toward women, and old people, and children—it's part of our

"When I was ten, my grandfather bloodied my face during an argument. I picked up a baseball bat and said, 'Take another step and I'll kill you.'"



Emmett Jarrett

Raised in rage

by Craig Smith

life. Then there's the next step: you can do terrible injury to people just through your words. And thoughts do the same thing, but on a different level: they do violence to the self, to the condition of one's soul." The rule of nonviolence, therefore, must extend to the deepest parts of the self—to thoughts and words as well as actions.

Jarrett's nonviolence stands in sharp contrast to his past.

But it's not easy.

"I still experience tremendous rage when my son won't do what he's supposed to do. Whatever interrupts or gets in the way of my will produces a violent response, but now we have all kinds of social constraints that help me not beat up my kid. I'm looking for something beyond them. I want to stop getting mad when Nathaniel won't go to bed on time. I want to be a way to something different."

One of those ways is, as Jarrett puts it, "engaging in the difficult task of truth-telling. The greatest violence I'm subject to now is the violence of lying to myself, the violence of not being committed to that which is beyond me, that which is going beyond. And I'll say it: I'm somebody who will use others, who'll consume others, except that there is a commitment to move beyond that." Telling (and being open to hear) the truth, whether in personal relationships, within his congregation, in the church hierarchy or in the larger social arena, is, for Jarrett, one of the demands of the life of nonviolence.

An implication of his vow is the commitment to live in honest and diverse community—not just a "lifestyle enclave," says Jarrett, "but one which includes people we don't like. That's where the real work gets done." Such a commitment called Jarrett to confront racism and classism within his own parish, the Church

Craig R. Smith interviewed Virgil Foote for the January, 1992 issue of *The Witness*. He is a member of St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington, D.C.

of the Ascension in Silver Spring, Maryland. "It was an enormously complex conflict which resulted in some 30 active members leaving the parish. But now there are about 40 percent non-white members, and we have a vestry that is 50 percent non-white."

Jarrett also attended the consecration of the suffragan bishop for the Armed Forces at the Washington National Cathedral, and stood in silent protest with members of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. "In the heart of the Church, in the center of national power, I was a distinctly marginal figure, and my heart beat wildly with fear. I think I was afraid of what it would mean to be a truly marginal person."

But political resistance, for Jarrett, must always remain nonviolent, even when the rage profoundly just. "Violence is never a legitimate means of resisting oppression—for the simple reason that it won't establish justice. I don't think we can establish justice until we circumvent the pattern of violence at the heart. The Reign of God says that there is a better way to fight, the third way of radical nonviolence."

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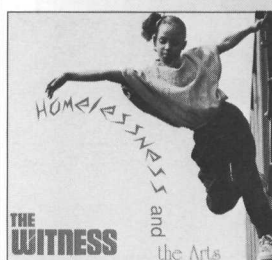
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*Witnesses,
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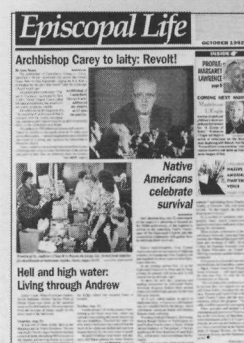
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