

The Witness

Volume 75 • Number 12 • December 1992

**Prince of peace:
when the Church
engages rage**



Rage in the 1990s

I HAVE JUST FINISHED READING my [11/92] copy of *The Witness* from cover to cover, and I think *Rage in the 1990s* is one of the best issues in many months... even years! Thank you for putting it all together so well, so successfully and so powerfully! This is a great service to all Episcopalians and I want to spread the word.

Mary Nash Flagg
Portland, ME

YOUR NOVEMBER ARTICLE on "The Witness and the U.S. Government" was an interesting 'dig' into history and one of which we have to be aware. I remember the picture article in the April 4, 1949 issue of *Life* very well and my father always thought that, with that gallery of folk, he was in the company of some rather outstanding prophets, witnesses and creators of much that was best in the American culture of that post-war, new cold-war time.

You listed some Episcopalians in that group, but I regret that you failed to mention Dr. Guy Emery Shippler, long-time editor of *The Churchman*. That magazine, with an additional title of

Human Quest, continues as a monthly out of Florida under the capable editorial guidance of Edna Ruth Johnson.

"Ship," together with Dad, laughed at the whole thing although, later, when Francis Walters of Pennsylvania was chair of the House Un-American Activities Committee, the pressure got intense. What an era. What an abuse of power. And what a need to be vigilant against such happening again.

William B. Spofford
Salem, OR

I AM GRATEFUL for the responses of Ms. House and Mr. Cantor to my essay in the November *Witness*. My problem in responding to them is that they were not responding to my essay as published, as is indicated by the fact that the quotes in Ms. House's essay were

not in my published essay, but rather to an earlier version of my original essay which was twice as long. Furthermore, I am not the author of the published essay. It was constructed out of my original essay by the editors, who also changed the title in a misleading way. I was not allowed to edit the published version, as promised, but through some frantic phone calls I was able to correct some of the more serious errors. I also note that the editors went out of their way to announce at the beginning of the article that it was *unsolicited* and that there would be *responses* to it, as if to defend the reputation of *The Witness* as a movement house organ. Oh, well, so it goes.

Ms. House's response confirms and is a good example of what I said about the weaknesses of movement politics, of which she gives an idealized picture. She also distorts some of my main points. For example, I said that thousands of people around the world are literally dying to participate in electoral politics. She distorts this into my saying that they are dying to participate in the "American dream," the "media-propagated image of the 'good life.'" (That may be true as well.) She does not respond at all to my main point, namely, that movement and electoral politics need each other and should combine their strengths in order to overcome their weaknesses. My question to Ms. House is this: Is the movement going to "implement serious social change" and "realize their visions of a more just society" entirely apart from electoral politics, as she implies? If so, how?

I appreciate Mr. Cantor's saying that I am "on to something" and that the "American progressive movement really does need to figure out its relationship to the electoral realm." Exactly. He goes on to state that "working for profound social change in the electoral realm always seems to produce unsatisfactory outcomes." I believe that this has not "always" been the case, that the New Deal was an example, and that the solution is increased participation. Mr. Cantor says that the American political party system is "uniquely bad." This is an extremely important issue about which a great deal has been written recently. I would argue that it is probably better than the alternatives, such as the multi-party systems of many European de-

mocracies which have splintered political responsibility and crippled united action. Again I believe that the solution lies in greater participation, especially through expanding voter registration among minorities and the poor. See Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Why Americans Don't Vote*, (Pantheon, 1988), which also includes the best recent discussion of the complex relation of movement and electoral politics. I honor Mr. Cantor for his work in organizing the New Party. He has made a strong argument for going the third party way. I believe, however, that the history of progressive third parties indicates that they tend to divide the progressive vote and help to elect conservatives. But Mr. Cantor is aware of this problem and properly commends the fusion approach when appropriate. So I believe that the same energy, time, talents and resources would be better spent trying to move the Democratic party to the left. But it is an important issue for progressives and I wish Mr. Cantor well and will support his effort.

Owen C. Thomas
Cambridge, MA

[Ed. Note: We published the edited version of Owen Thomas's article, after he had an opportunity to review it, because we believed his views on movement and electoral politics were provocative and timely. We solicited responses to his piece because some of us shared Gloria House's conclusion that it took an "alienated imagination" to think that people risk going to jail because it is "more exciting" and "makes much better party conversation" than working in the electoral system.]

A War of Angels

I HAVE JUST FINISHED READING the October issue of *The Witness*. You did a marvelous job on your article, "A War of Angels." When I was born my mother was delighted that I had blue eyes and light skin, because I could pass as a white man. My grandmother, however, told me that my Indianess was not a matter of skin color but the content of my heart. The more I work with indigenous groups around the world the more I see that there is a commonality among all of us. When I see the eyes of white folks glaze

Letters

over and tears run down their cheeks at a pow-wow, I know we are truly one people.

The cover of October's *Witness* made me cry. It conveys a message of the despair my people feel. Being in Detroit last week also made me cry. Is this the best that the human race is capable of?

When people of the dominant culture tell me what they want out of life I have to chuckle, because they invariably describe Native American culture as it once was. We savages produced a culture where there were no locks on doors, no orphanages, no need for oaths or contracts, no old folks homes, no hunger, and no homeless. We lived the Gospel of Jesus Christ centuries before He was born. I thank Gitchie Manitou that people are beginning to understand our culture and our religion.

I'm sure you are aware of the "Eight Fires" prophecies of my people [Ojibwe]. We feel that we are in the eighth and last fire when the light-skinned people will turn to our people. I believe it is happening. I find it marvelous that Jesus said He did not come to bring peace, but to light a fire on the earth. I believe with all my heart that Jesus is the one who has lit the eighth fire.

Tom Trimmer
(Owosh-Keday-So-Quay) Blackbird
Alma, MI

I AM VERY IMPRESSED with the entire [10/92] magazine. The cover was beautiful, and spoke directly to the way I see what is going on in the cities. "The War of Angels" is the best piece that I have read on the American Indian spiritual situation; the misunderstanding and the exploitation surrounding the issue is confusing, degrading and sometimes misconstrued to be complimentary. I thought your story treated the subject fairly, honestly and with dignity, for which I am thankful.

I do not think that many of the rites and traditional practices of the American Indian can be translated into a normative practice for the Greater Christian World.

I was grateful for what you said about the Eucharist. I do believe that most Indians have a greater understanding of the sacrificial yet joyful nature of this sacrament. It may be because of the sanctity with which they regard corn, their "staff of life." It is easier for

them to understand God's presence in the elements that are offered.

Quentin Kolb
Salt Lake City, UT

A Nation of Esaus

I DON'T OFTEN WRITE LETTERS to editors, but Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's editorial in the October issue of *The Witness* struck a deep responsive chord in my soul, and I write to thank you for the editorial.

Your statement about, "I've often wished I was a 'person of color,'" was especially striking. I am a second-generation American but found that I have been frustrated with being a bland, white American. However, I found a strong sense of identity with my maternal Scottish grandmother who spoke broad Scots and taught me the Psalms, Rabbie Burn's poetry and her beloved Methodist hymns. Of all things she married a Dutch immigrant who came to this country in steerage at a very young age. Quite a combination. My paternal grandparents who were of German and Scottish stock were deceased prior to my birth.

Perhaps the fact that your personal melting pot and my melting pot both took place in Southwestern Pennsylvania and in Ohio made the chord resonate a bit louder for me. The bodies of my maternal grandparents are buried in Hickory, Pa. and my father's family were most lately from East Liverpool, Ohio. My Dutch and German grandfathers were potters as were their fathers before them.

I have sought my birthright mainly through identification with Scottish culture: wearing the kilt, playing the pipes, learning to play the Celtic harp and teaching myself to cook Scottish foods including Kidegree and Scones and also a deep appreciation of German culture. Most of this has been self taught as my immigrant family system sought to assimilate and to melt into the terribly bland American "dream." I never heard a word of Dutch or German spoken in my boyhood home or my Grandparents' homes.

Thank you for *The Witness* and for your editorial. I deeply appreciate what you and the journal are doing.

Pax et Bonum!

Kenneth C. Emmerling
Roanoke, VA

I AM WRITING TO TELL YOU that your editorial, "Exchanging birthrights: a nation of Esaus," was very good and hit home for me. To be lost in the generic melting pot gives a sense of detachment or non-association with any special group.

I have been reading *The Witness* since 1984 when you all so kindly gave me a subscription while at a Federal Prison Camp. I have been released for five years and am now a first year student at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry. I have looked forward to meeting you and your people [at the Forum]. It is great that we in the body of Christ can come together and share the 80 or 90 per cent of the Church we totally agree upon and then discuss in Love that ten or so percent that we do not agree to.

William R. Bailey
Ambridge, PA

Design Demands

COMPLIMENTS TO ALL, especially [designer] Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann and the Art Section editors. Art is wonderful. Your graphic design is just terrific. However (picky, picky), I have always wondered why there is such a heavy line around every pull quote — no lines are needed but if desired a simple hairline above or below would suffice.

Virginia Bennett
Troy, MI

[Ed. Note: Done!]



Correction

MITSUYE YAMADA, the poet highlighted in the October issue, does not "teach English at Cypress College." Reader Leonora Holder de Avila notifies us that she retired from that position a few years ago.

Minority Farming

I WAS VERY PLEASED about your article [progress report on minority farming, Marianne Arbogast, 9/92] in *The Witness*. Thank you for addressing and pointing out the serious problems of Black, Native, Hispanic farmers securing their rights of ownership. Instead of planting a crop we're planting our bodies and souls into the soil.

Four years ago I purchased a 37-acre farm in Lapeer, Mich. It was my lifelong dream! I always wanted to live on a farm! It took me five years to find this farm. Many of my friends and family members would say, Ron you've lost your mind, buying a farm, why, that's crazy!!! It's dark out there!!!

Before I bought this farm, I received many strange looks and questions: What do you need a farm for? Why do you need this amount of land? What will you raise on this farm? It's hard work you know? These were questions asked of me when I would approach a farmer (white) for being interested in buying. It was heart breaking!

After much sacrifice and pain, I finally found an old farm and a farmer who was willing to sell me his farm on a land contract. Others had refused. Even a mortgage was refused to me when my credit was of outstanding status.

I'm the first of my generation to have even considered owning a farm. My parents worked

on a plantation as well as my Grandmother and Great Grandparents. All worked very hard for as little as 50 cents a day picking cotton.

My mother was born on a plantation to a wealthy land owner. Her father was the owner of the plantation. He never accepted her or the other two sisters born by him. (I won't say fathered by him, because he doesn't deserve the title! He left them nothing, only a light skin, long hair and a difficult life from kids in school, calling her half breed!)

I read your article and it gave me hope and strength! Your staff is truly a witness to the truth. Thank you for being a true messenger of Jesus!

Ron L. Parker
Lapeer, MI

Witness History

SOMEWHERE RECENTLY I READ that *The Witness* was 75 years old. This milestone calls for personal congratulations.

In 1917 my father, Rev. Charles Jacob Shutt, then Rector of St. John's, Mankato, Minn.; Bishop Sage of Kansas (seminary classmate); and Bishop Johnson of Colorado determined to establish a Church-wide publication representing no partisanship. Published in Hobare, Ind. by a Mr. Applegate, it was type-set in Chicago. The original idea-format was a four-page newspaper. My father had

been a newspaper man, and learned to set type by hand. In 1918, the triumvirate found it more practical to move the headquarters to Chicago, eventually abandoning Hobart and Applegate. My father sometimes, so I have been told, worked in setting type. At any rate, he was Managing Editor and the survival of the news sheet (now a magazine) was solely due to my father, since the two Bishops were contributing editors.

In 1919, my father died. He was succeeded by Bill Spofford and presently the whole contents changed to become a "voice" for labor. Spofford was later listed with others on a Government "black-list" of suspected Communist-sympathizers.

In 1940 I was ordained to the Priesthood. Somewhere around 1946 I was brought to New York by Spofford and spent one year gathering news, and becoming familiar with the growing Socialistic trend of Spofford's editorship.

When we moved to Chicago in 1917 I was 9 years old. What I remember was told to me by my mother, who died in 1940. In 1992, I am 84 years old and in good health.

Permit me to congratulate you and your co-workers on this milestone of 75 years, and to look forward to more years of service to our beloved Church.

Philip Leslie Shutt
Paris, IL

Abortion

I MUST DISSENT from the pro-choice position affirmed by my sisters and brothers on the ECPC board in this issue, but not from the process which brought the board to its position.

My own conviction is that the time is not ripe for a definitive answer. We need to talk - and more importantly - listen to each other as we seek to discern God's will on the wrenching question of abortion. I think as a Church we need to stay with the question.

While the decision is one with which I disagree, it is an honorable one and the board's process in arriving at its decision is one which honors God. It is a rare and wonderful experience to be part of a group which is committed to understanding one another's concerns and commitments.

Andrew McThenia
Chair, ECPC board

ECPC Statement on Abortion

The following statement was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company at its meeting, October 25, 1992:

In response to a number of questions from readers, the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, owner of *The Witness* magazine, affirms its strong support for the pro-choice position regarding abortion, and its continuing opposition to any legislation restricting women's access to all family-planning services, including contraception and abortion.

The Board's historic commitment to these principles, and the reservations about

abortion held by *Witness* Publisher and Editor, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, were fully discussed at the time of her appointment. The Board does not feel that absolute agreement about this or other issues is necessary, and affirms the principle of editorial freedom.

The Board encourages and supports discussion to clarify the principles and guidelines women use in making a decision about abortion, particularly in terms of the contributions which Christian faith and ethics can make to this process, and welcomes the stimulus for such discussion provided by the editorial views expressed by Editor Wylie-Kellermann.

THE WITNESS

Since 1917

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Cover art: NATIVITY 1950, illustration by Fritz Eichenberg, © 1950.

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

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadow put to flight

It is not news that Jesus was born into a world torn by domination, revolution and poverty. Cherubic and royal art notwithstanding, Jesus belongs to this world and these times, to the hardship of need and prison and confusion, to the reality of war and fear.

Jesus stands before us without a father's name, in a Rome-dominated state, where the Temple legitimated Roman authority and obligated those without resources to pay for the cleansing of their sins.

With little inherited right to official authority, Jesus grasped the covenant of God in Scripture and practiced dominion over disease, purity codes, the Sabbath and even death itself.

God in Christ speaks to us by arriving through the least expected avenue and by having recourse to the resurrection. We are offered the delight of knowing that God is at work where we are not looking.

Christ also admonishes us to throw away the formulas that seem to promise justice, the laws that tally injury and desert; he asks that we love one another and exercise authority with humility.

This issue is dedicated to those who have found ways to speak to, and even love, those whom they might more astutely kill. These are people — in Israel/

Palestine, Germany, El Salvador, South Africa, the U.S. — who do not dodge rage, who do not pretend reconciliation.

At a minimum, the people in these pages honor their enemies with a willingness to put their strength and lives in opposition to what they consider evil. There is more courage in

this than in the systems of denial that permit one to live in conjunction with evil without acknowledging it. (Mohandas Gandhi writes that it is better to resist evil violently than not at all; there is no virtue in refusing to engage the world and its horrors.)

At best, people of faith are standing in Jesus' third way, rejecting violence and passivity. Walter Wink examines the Sermon on the Mount, finding in it very practical suggestions about how people can fight oppression without joining the zealots. Walking the second mile, for instance, is a tactic that will result in Roman soldiers being disciplined by their superiors, because — by law — they are only allowed to require peasants to carry their packs for *one* mile. Similarly, under the purity code one can strike an inferior with the back of one's left (defiled) hand; a back slap with the right hand connotes equal social standing. Hence, turning the other cheek, invites a slap that, ironically, implies dignity and standing.

In pursuing that kind of shrewd and self-respecting struggle for justice, discernment is key. And since we draw our lines in different places, there is a wisdom in Gandhi's comment that he would die for the truth as he sees it, but would

not kill. Images of a Chinese student standing in the way of an armored tank or of protesters in the U.S. raising the elements of the eucharist before installations of nuclear technology stand as icons to that commitment. People, with nothing but their humanity, witness in the face of institutionalized violence.

On a smaller scale, *Better Homes and Gardens* reported in June that a committed Ku Klux Klan activist participated in a television interview with her estranged gay son and the mother of an interracial child. The

Klan mother made the claims she normally did about the evil of mixing races and the way AIDS serves as God's scourge on the homosexual community.

Flying home, the Klan member said she was haunted by the pain in the other mother's face during the interview. When the show's producer called to let her know the taping had gone well, she responded that she was going to have to quit the Klan and agreed to do it on television. Subsequently her husband and younger children left the Klan as well.

Hiding behind the rage of the Klan, the Afrikaners, the Israelis and the Palestinians, and, closer to home, the Left, the powers and principalities can lurk. If we allow our fear to turn us aside from those who are raging, we miss an opportunity to understand their concerns and to discern whether those concerns represent a longing for justice — however twisted the application — or whether in their evil intent they might educate us about the powers.

We can be sure that by looking straight into rage, learning to listen and to discern, we will be — in the words of Wendell Berry — “practicing resurrection.” Our perceptions, our desire to be faithful, *can* stand firm in the maelstrom. **TW**



editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Artist Helen Siegl, whose *O Antiphons* appear throughout this issue, has a clip art book published by Pueblo Press.

Rain

by William Melnyk

Rain
from dark clouds
falls without conviction, without effect
upon the smoldering black hulk
of ruined dreams and realized fears.
Smoke rises as embers die
and with them, hope.

Pain
in the sweet black looking-on face
of a young girl who cannot understand
is barely masked by the wonder
of a child's eyes and heart.

Gray men in a gray men's world
did it.

Did it in a suburban courtroom; did it.
And terror reigns in black folks' homes
again; in the fearful eyes of this
young girl on her way to school:
Hair braided, clothes pressed,
ashes from Billie's Soul Food Place
on her polished black shoes.

Sane:
a word that in the wealthy store of a
white theologian's vocabulary no longer
exists.
Stand with her, with that warm black face
before cold black ashes,
and give me your white Christian triumphalism
if you dare.

Then, if you dare,
look for God in the ruins;
in the rain . . .

—William Melnyk is a *Witness* reader and priest in the Diocese of Michigan.

A Child of the Snows

by G.K. Chesterton

And at night we win to the ancient inn
where the child in the frost is furled,
We follow the feet where all souls meet
at the inn at the end of the world.

The gods lie dead where the leaves lie red,
for the flame of the sun is flown.
The gods lie cold where the leaves lie gold,
and a Child comes forth alone.

— from *A Child of the Snows*

Poetry

Evangelizing the Klan: responding to rage on the right

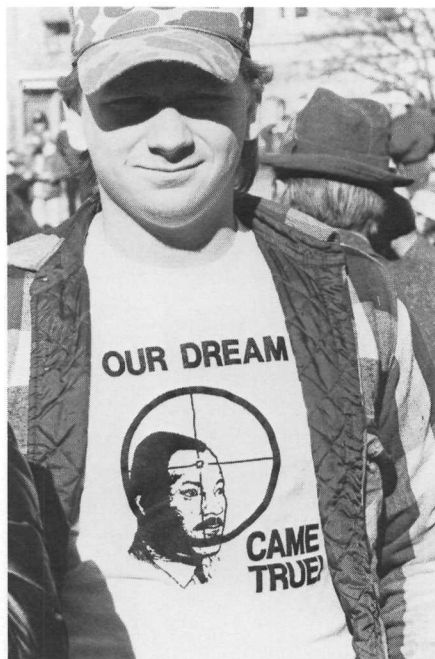
by Jan Nunley

Assaults against U.S. Jews surged during the first two weeks of October—the High Holy Days, according to the Anti-Defamation League’s most recent statistics. Anti-Arab violence increased as well in the days leading up to and following the Persian Gulf War. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s Anti-Violence Project reported a 41 percent rise in harassment, assault, vandalism and murder of homosexuals in 1991 and projects further increases in 1992, as the effects of election-year rhetoric become apparent: a lesbian and a gay man died in the fire-bombing of their Oregon home during a bitter campaign to enact a law defining homosexuality as “abnormal, unnatural and perverse.” Fire-bombings and other acts of violence against abortion providers rose 23 percent in 1991.

The weapons used to defend against such violence and hatred are those of confrontation: the enactment of laws such as the Hate Crime Statistics Act, community organizing into safety patrols and self-defense courses, lobbying for stiffer penalties for offenders, direct-action methods such as rallies, demonstrations and civil disobedience.

And still the violence continues, seemingly stronger than ever, finding fuel in the climate of fear. Rarely do people of good will venture across the cultural divide to find out what their opposite numbers are really thinking.

Jan Nunley is a newscaster for National Public Radio’s environmental program, “Living on Earth,” and a frequent contributor to Episcopal Church publications.



KKK member protesting in Phlaski, Tenn.

credit: Catherine Smith, Impact Visuals

Will Campbell is one who has. A white Southerner, self-described as a racist and sexist by “this accident of birth, this incurable skin disease called whiteness,” the seventy-ish Campbell has a knack for the unpopular and prophetic act. Calling himself a “Baptist preacher of the South,” Campbell has marched with Martin Luther King; he’s also visited the North Carolina Klan’s Grand Dragon and Daniel Berrigan in the same federal prison. And it was Campbell’s clear-eyed refusal to stereotype or exclude anyone from the reach of the Gospel—even Klansmen—that got him in trouble with progressive friends.

“I think we all get in trouble when we start saying ‘The Klan’, as if that is their only identity,” Campbell told me by phone

from his farm in Mt. Juliet, Tenn. “We do it with an awful lot of people that we want to somehow isolate. I have a daughter who is a lesbian, and when she is identified in the press, it is always, ‘she is an active lesbian.’ Well, she’s also an eminently decent, spiritually knowing, loving, pretty, intelligent, caring woman, but that becomes her identity. I know people who have been members of some kind of Klan organization, who are also Methodists, or Baptists, but we identify them as the Klan, and thus alienate them right off.”

But don’t they identify themselves that way? Why do they join the Klan? Campbell answered my questions with a story. He described his relationship with a Klan family in North Carolina in the 1960s, a family he describes as having “many fine qualities. I didn’t relate to them as ‘those Klan people,’” he explains, “so that I could ask him [the family’s patriarch] as I did on one occasion, ‘What does your organization, the Klan, stand for?’ And he said, ‘It stands for peace and harmony and freedom.’ Which kind of took me aback mildly, but I did this little Socratic game that educated people are wont to do — ‘What do you mean by peace and harmony and freedom?’” Campbell says the non-plussed Klansman replied, “I mean the same thing you mean.”

“But you define those words, you don’t let blacks and Jews define them,” said Campbell. “What means are you willing to employ to accomplish those ends?” The Klansman replied, “Whatever it takes” — including murder, intimidation, psychological and guerrilla warfare. “And then he said, ‘Now, you tell me what we stand for in Viet Nam?’ Well, we stood for peace and harmony and freedom, and we did not ask the Vietnamese, North or South, to define those terms, and of course the means we were willing to employ are identical.

“What he had led me to see was that we are a nation of Klansmen. And we go on equating the Klan and ‘redneck’ with racism, when that is really not the case. I think this man was more bigoted than most anyone I’ve ever known, but he was not more racist than anyone I’ve ever known, and you have to make a distinction between those two.” Campbell became emphatic. “When we start talking about the Klan, what I hear is one more escape for us good, middle-class white folks. It is not a few pitiful, generally poor, generally uneducated people marching around a ridiculous burning cross in a Carolina cowpasture who are the governors and the warriors and the managers.”

Will Campbell is skeptical of institutional solutions to the problem of hate. “Mr. Jesus didn’t ask us to do very much, really,” he says. “He talked about things like a cup of cold water, but when you get to the institutional level, like a national Church, this is an insult to our intelligence. So we have committees and task forces to design and build a global sprinkler system so that everyone will have a drink of water. Meanwhile, the cat near at hand dies of thirst.

“My problem is my vocation, and my responsibility is here in this holler, relating to the people that I see every day down at the tavern or in my cornfield or wherever. Not building that global sprinkler system.”

In Boston’s South End, Butch Naters-Gamarra, rector of St. Stephen’s Epis-

“When we talk about the Klan, I hear one more escape for us good, middle-class white folks. It is not a few generally poor, uneducated people marching around a ridiculous burning cross in a Carolina cowpasture who are the governors and the warriors and the managers.”

—Will Campbell



The harrowing of hell, c. 1320

Wall painting in former Church of the Chora, Constantinople

copal Church, is quite willing to let Campbell and others do their thing with white bigots. Naters-Gamarra, born in Panama of Chinese, African and Latino ancestry, says, as a matter of good stewardship of his own time, he’d rather leave

the friendly persuasion to someone else. “Right now I’m dealing with life and death, with kids shooting one another and with violence against women and in the home and on the streets,” says Naters-Gamarra, frustration evident in his voice. “That’s the immediate stuff I need to deal with, and that’s where my energy and time has to go. I think it’s white folks’ responsibility to talk to their white peers about

something like this. Not mine. I wish ‘em luck. And I can support and pray for them, and if a dialogue were initiated I would respond, but my experience with bigoted people is that there’s no room for dialogue.”

But he does see bigots as human beings, and even as “victims, just like people of oppression are victims.”

But victims of what? How can people who belong to what’s clearly the dominant racial group, most if not all of whom are male, be oppressed? Naters-Gamarra reaches back into St. Paul’s vocabulary, identifying a force that echoes Will Campbell’s suspicion of institutions: “The real enemy is the principalities and powers, and that evil is very real. It feeds the kind of hatred and bigotry in people who’ve been victimized to believe that is the right attitude and the right posture to take.” Naters-Gamarra sees the Church as captive to those powers, to the culture of racism, sexism, and homophobia. “We say we are a diverse, inclusive Church,

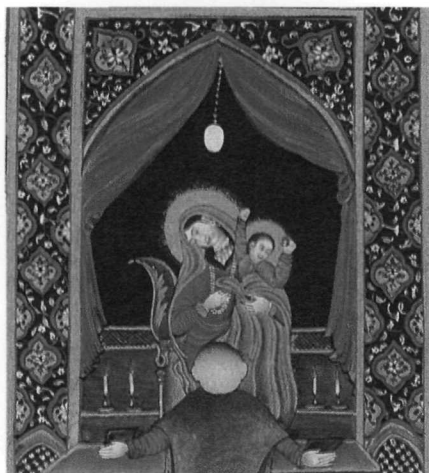
but when you go down all the different levels of the institutional life of the Church, you see that we're not inclusive after all. We're no better off than the Klan, except we're more hypocritical about it. The Church says we're all brothers and sisters in the Lord, no male or female, black or white, East or West — but we're going to oppress you anyway. The Church has the ability to shake itself free and transform the culture. But we don't have the guts to do that. We know that perfect love casts out fear. But because we are not practicing and being instruments of perfect love, we're just part of the fear."

Moving from fear to action is what motivates Herb Walters, of Rural Southern Voice for Peace (RSVP), an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Walters is lead trainer for Grassroots Listening and Organizing, a unique project that sends volunteers to do listening interviews in troubled neighborhoods, encouraging respondents to express their feelings about racial or other issues, and shattering stereotypes in a non-confrontational style. Walters achieved startling success with the Louisiana Racial Issues Listening Project, taking 26 interviewers trained in non-violent communication techniques to the heart of David Duke country with a list of 25 carefully-crafted questions. Of those interviewed, at least 45 percent became more positive about race relations by the end of the session. Sixty percent expressed more positive feelings about programs to aid minorities.

"What we do first," says Walters, "is build trust in some of the questions and in the way we question. Then we present information that debunks some of the

myths, and we ask them to reflect about the information we've just given them. But we give it in such a way that we're not saying, 'Look, you jerk, don't you understand this, don't you know you're wrong? Here's the facts.'

"When we're able to depolarize the situation, sometimes they'll start by saying negative things. But as we work with them and ask them the right questions, they get down into a place where their values are more positive.



"We often find that the activists going out and doing the interviewing are really nervous, because they expect to find the enemy," explains Walters. "And they don't always find the enemy — they find

"I think it's white folks' responsibility to talk to their white peers about bigotry.

Not mine. I wish 'em luck.

And I can pray for them.

—Butch Naters-Gamarra

complex human beings, and they find the enemy is really in some of the ideas out there. We're working in a way to promote the humanity of the people who've been caught up in racist beliefs. Rather than assuming that the person is a racist, even if they start off by saying things that would indicate that, we assume that they're a part of the solution."

Listening projects are applicable to a variety of issues. RSVP cites projects in Harlan County, Ky., and Western North Carolina, educating people about solid, chemical, and nuclear waste; in St. Mary's, Ga., building bridges between local townspeople and anti-nuclear weapons activists; in Asheville, N.C., defusing concerns about a home for men with AIDS; and in Kannapolis, N.C., educating residents about the Federal budget. The concept has gone international as well: a Listening Project helped de-escalate tensions about independence in Palau, Micronesia. And Walters just completed a trip to the former Yugoslav republics, hoping to set up a project there.

Doing a listening project requires commitment. "Begin by identifying some of the positive solutions and the people who want to make positive change," advises Walters. "Help those forces organize themselves and pull together to work for that change. There should always be some follow-up organizing work at the grassroots level."

Walters' way of activism may be a harbinger of things to come, an activism that yields healing — and results — instead of bitterness, fear and gridlock. Perhaps the strongest indication that the politics of confrontation and division is wearing thin is the practical success of Bill Clinton's refusal to polarize the electorate in the Presidential campaign. "This is America," he intoned in his standard stump speech. "There is no 'them.' There's only us."

Perhaps, as a society, we're growing tired of taking sides in a bitter "cultural war" between races and classes, sexes and sexual orientations, and are willing to listen to and be led by those able to hold the contradictions and ambiguities of American life in one hand and hope for the future in the other. Perhaps, in the end, we really are in this together — all of us.

TW

A listening project

We knocked on the door of a small home in a primarily white working class neighborhood in Denham Springs, La., home of David Duke. A young man, Jeff, told us to come on in, lit up a cigarette and from behind weary eyes said he'd been at a party until late last night. He was suspicious of us, but generally talkative.

When asked, "What are your hopes and fears about race relations today?" he answered: "I think it's hopeless. I'm not a racist or anything — but Abe Lincoln should have sent them (African Americans) back to Africa. There's such a gap between us whites and blacks. We don't understand each other."

"Why is there such a gap?" we asked.

"They're not developed like we are," he answered. "When you drive through there [pointing toward a nearby black community], it's like going into Africa."

"What has helped create such bad conditions in the black community?" I asked.

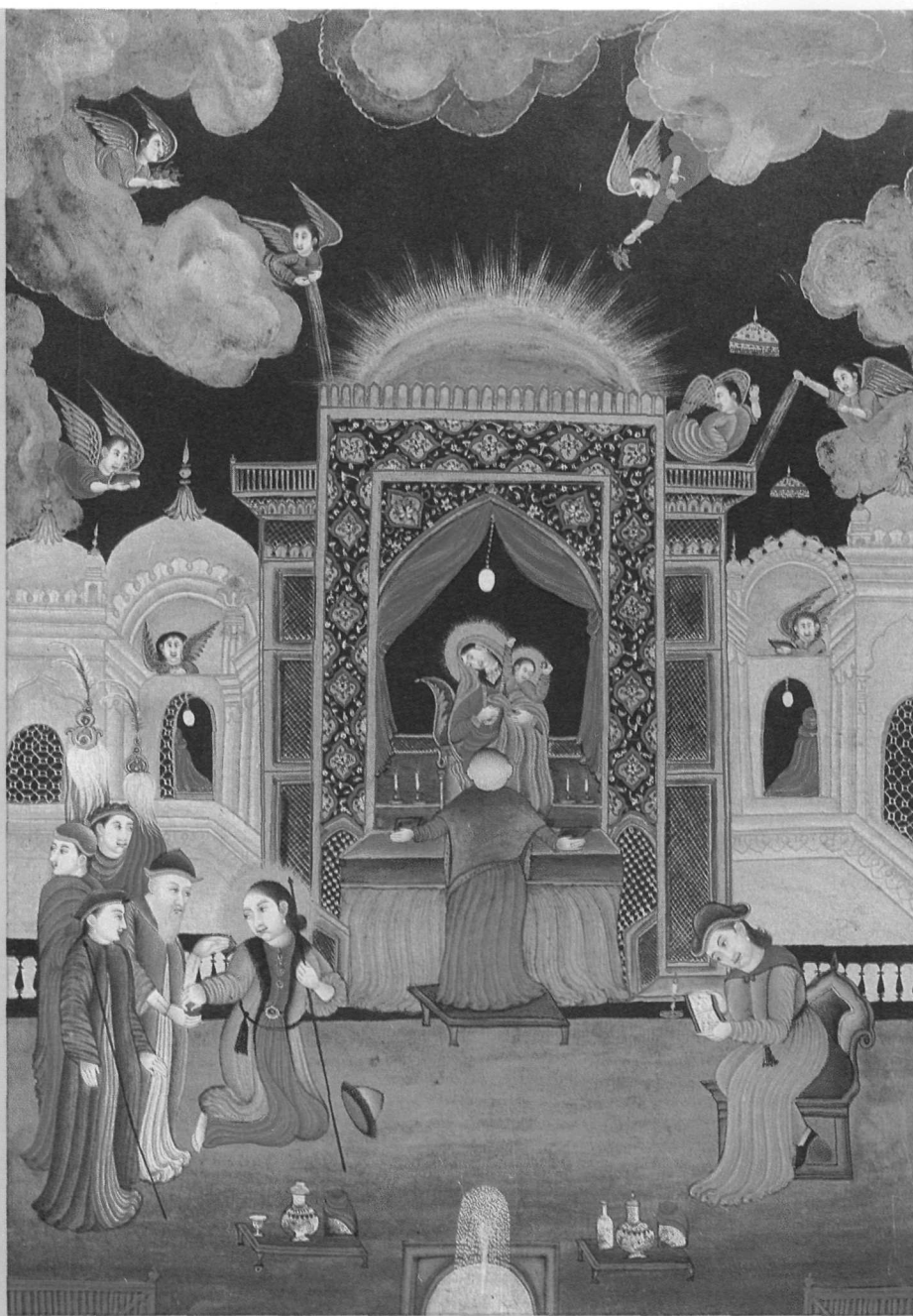
"Their environment affects them a lot," Jeff answered. "They don't want to work. They need to try to get off welfare. I worked for what I have and they could work hard and make it too."

"Do you know anyone trying to get off of welfare?"

Jeff talked about a black woman he knew. "She really wants to work. Sometimes she uses our phone and I know she'd like to work but it's hard having kids and trying to find a decent job."

Asked if he saw a tendency to blame the poor for the country's problems, he said he did. Jeff told us that racial tensions exist in Baton Rouge because blacks resent that whites have more. He reflected more on this idea when our questions

Adapted from an article by Herb Walters of the Rural Southern Voice for Peace, 1898 Hannah Branch Road, Burnsville, N.C. 28714.



A 17th century Asian depiction of the eucharist and nativity.

made clear the economic differences between blacks and whites. For example, black unemployment is three times that of white unemployment. We asked Jeff why such differences exist. His response surprised us: "It's partially racial. You

shouldn't hire a black man just because he's black. But if he's qualified hire him." He then told us that a black man doing the same work he does receives \$3-\$4 less per hour. "That's not fair. Blacks are almost still in slavery a little." **TW**

Sexually assaulted by the shepherd

by Holly Bridges Elliott

“Stupid, stupid, stupid,” a clergyperson on her diocese’s Standing Committee, responded after her painful disclosure. “You should never have become friends with a bishop.”

Miriam (not her real name), a lifelong Episcopalian, a clergy spouse and mother of five, had just sobbed out the story of her bishop’s sexual misconduct — of the progression of unwelcome, inappropriate advances he made, advances that finally culminated in a frenzied embrace behind the locked door of his office.

“I don’t think I’d ever said the word ‘penis’ out loud to a man before and here I was, having to say these things to this priest. I couldn’t stop crying,” Miriam said.

This was the second time Miriam had told this story to a Church official. When, nine months after the incident, she confronted the perpetrating bishop, he called in the national Church’s Office of Pastoral Development.

“He claimed that he was being persecuted and victimized,” Miriam recalled. “He brought in the big Church to see about this ‘alleged’ story.”

Remarkably, the investigating cleric chose to interview the bishop and Miriam’s husband first.

“Both suggested that he meet with

me,” Miriam said wryly.

The cleric revealed further insensitivity when he suggested that Miriam meet with him, alone, in his hotel room. In the end, he concluded, “We have your truth, and we have his truth. And they conflict,”

” Miriam remembered.

“I said to myself, ‘This is not the Church I thought it was. I hate the Church and all male clergy!’ The farthest thing from my mind was that when I told the truth my Church wouldn’t believe me.

“We have your truth, and we have his truth. And they conflict,” he said. “I said to myself, ‘This is not the Church I thought it was. I hate the Church and all male clergy!’”

They were in denial. Their only desire was to protect the bishop from embarrassment.”

Miriam’s relationship with the bishop began innocuously enough in the mid-1980s. She and her husband, a diocesan priest, established a cordial acquaintance with him and his wife. Their families shared Thanksgiving dinner. The two couples often attended the same social functions. The bishop, knowing Miriam’s artistic talent, commissioned her to do some work for a diocesan project. And, finally, she and her husband sought the bishop’s counseling for what Miriam described as “typical clergy-couple concerns.”

Although Miriam and her husband considered the bishop a friend, he was also their employer and counselor. In this last role, especially, the inequity of the relationship seemed pronounced.

“When a woman bares her soul, the imbalance of power becomes even more out of kilter,” said Miriam. “Because the counselor has this information, she becomes very vulnerable.”

Over time, Miriam noticed that the bishop was becoming increasingly flirtatious and physical with her. He began to comment on her personal appearance, the way she wore her hair or her clothes.

One Sunday, together in an empty church, the bishop impulsively kissed her, thrusting his tongue into her mouth. Miriam was stunned and they both immediately pretended it hadn’t happened.

About a month later, the bishop rescheduled a morning meeting to discuss some of her artwork to late afternoon. When she arrived, staff members were gone. The bishop seemed preoccupied and tense. After a perfunctory meeting, as she started to leave, the bishop locked the door and began to apologize for the kiss four weeks earlier. He began confiding in her, talking about problems in his childhood, his current self-doubts and loneliness.

“All of a sudden the roles were getting mixed up,” said Miriam. “I was stunned that he was asking for my advice. He had never done that before. I tried to reassure him about his effective-

ness as a bishop, to encourage him.”

Then came the seemingly innocent request: “I need a hug.”

Miriam complied, only to find herself in a tight grip, being furiously kissed and

“The truth was finally told, and I heard what I needed to hear. I believe he now knows how his conduct looks to me ... I can pray for him again.”

Holly Bridges Elliott is a free-lance writer in Minnesota.



From the Belles Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry.

The Cloisters

ment about her own experience. The bishop was ultimately asked to resign.

According to *The Episcopalian* he was suffering “spiritual, physical, and emotional stress.” An open letter from the Standing Committee to diocesan parishes said “there were patterns of behavior which were inconsistent with his role as pastor, priest, and bishop.” The city’s secular newspaper, however, reported that the resignation could be blamed on “a sexual liaison with a woman.”

Despite the vindication Miriam felt when the bishop was removed from office, the initial rebuff her disclosure had received and the Church’s unwillingness to be open even about the causes of the resignation, propelled Miriam into the victim’s typical cycle of self-recrimination, physical illnesses and impulses to self-destruct or lash out in anger. She sought counseling.

Then one day, in 1991, she read an article about clergy sexual abuse in *Episcopal Life*, the new incarnation of *The Episcopalian*. It mentioned Margo Maris, on the diocesan staff in Minnesota, who was advocating a healing process for victims that included an eventual reconciliation with the offender.

“I saw myself in that article,” said Miriam, “and I called Margo one night at ten o’clock.”

The “Minnesota process,” as Maris’ method is called, takes its cue from the classic intervention model used by rape crisis centers. “It focuses not on the offender, but on the victim and encourages an eventual meeting of the victim and the offender,” explained Maris, who first developed the process in 1984.

“Margo asked me, ‘What do you need?’ At the time, what I wanted was to tell my story to the Presiding Bishop [of the Episcopal Church].”

The requested meeting took place about a year later, with Maris in attendance.

fondled. She tried to push him away.

“He was out of control,” said Miriam. “Things stopped one step short of rape.”

Afterwards, Miriam attempted to make sense of what had happened.

“I was angry and hurt,” she said. “I wanted to talk to him,” but he began avoiding her. “I felt betrayed by someone who was my friend and who was supposed to be in a pastoral relationship with me. When a bishop does this, it’s almost an incestuous thing.”

Miriam told no one until the bishop fired her husband nine months later. Suspecting that the bishop’s conduct with her was a factor, she told her husband.

She and her husband sought legal counsel, but were advised against any action

since it might appear, their lawyer said, that Miriam’s story was retributive and thus not credible.

Throughout this time, Miriam kept going to church, even continuing to receive communion from the hand of the offending bishop, “partly because of stubbornness and partly because I still loved God, even though I was mad at my Church.”

About a year later, after Miriam and her family had moved to a different state, another woman lodged a sexual misconduct complaint against the same bishop. During this time personnel in the diocese and national Church had changed. The charge was taken seriously and Miriam was asked to contribute a written state-

"The Presiding Bishop said, 'I believe you,'" recalled Miriam. "That's about the best thing a victim can hear."

But for Miriam the healing process would not be complete until she also met face-to-face with the offending bishop. It took a long time, but Miriam, her husband and Maris eventually arranged the trip. The bishop participated with his therapist at his side.

The Minnesota process uses a formula, a sort of liturgical structure, in organizing such meetings of reconciliation. A moderator opens the session, generally with comments about the pain and difficulty of such a meeting. Each party then gets a chance to tell his or her story. The moderator then concludes the session with prayer. Maris requests that the offending clergyperson's bishop (or judicial head) be present so that "they are able to see firsthand the power differential between clergy and parishioners."

Since 1984, Maris has helped about

350 people, of both sexes, from a variety of denominations, deal with clergy sexual abuse. About 10 percent, she says, have participated in a reconciliation meeting. In all but one of these meetings, the perpetrator admitted responsibility for the offense, although offenders often begin meetings denying the victim's story.

"But the truth is so powerful, the offender can't deny it in the end," Maris said.

In Miriam's case, the meeting "was very difficult and very emotional," she said, "because I still had a fear of him and was still having bad dreams about him."

Miriam and the bishop signed an agreement not to disclose the exact details of the meeting (not a standard practice in the Minnesota process), but Miriam offered an overview.

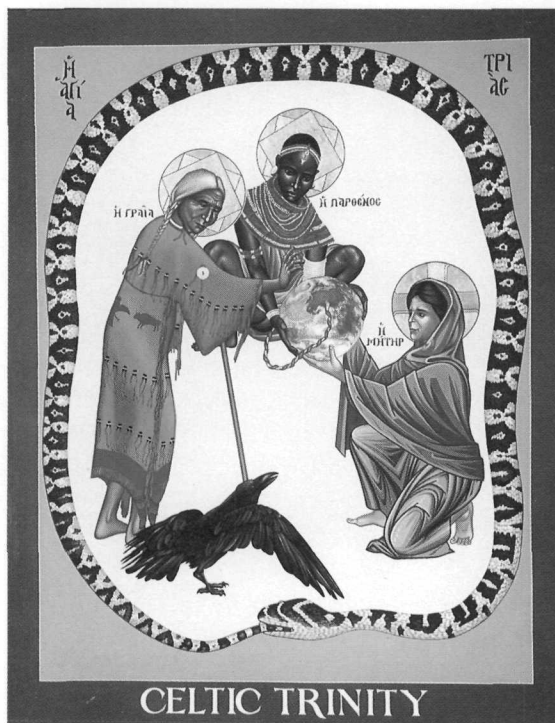
"The truth was finally told, and I heard what I needed to hear. I believe he now knows how it [his conduct] looks to me and would look to someone like me.

The last time I had seen him, he had accused me of being an evil woman. He had said, 'If this ever happens to me again, I'll know you're behind it.' At the end of our reconciliation meeting, by contrast, he said, 'God bless you.'"

Miriam said the meeting helped her understand that God was interested not only in her recovery but in the bishop's and his family's. "I can pray for him again."

The Minnesota intervention model "empowers victims and gives them a voice to tell the truth," said Maris. "They know that one or two people in the Church understand. These victims are churchgoers. Their spiritual life is a given. This process not only gives them back their power and self-esteem, but it helps them re-image God, to realize that God is not this clergyperson."

The relief at finally being believed and putting closure on a chronic ache, Miriam says, "is worth the wait." **TW**



Celtic Trinity by Robert Lentz

credit: Bridge Building Images

Hannah's prayer

*Yahweh kills and brings to life;
brings down to Sheol and raises up;
Yahweh makes poor and makes rich;
God brings low and also exalts.*

*Yahweh raises up the poor from the dust,
God lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's,
and on them God has set the world.*

*Yahweh guards the feet of the faithful ones
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.
Yahweh's adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in the heaven.*

—Excerpted from Hannah's song in I Samuel 2:1-10.

Marie Fortune, the author of *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship* (Harper, 1989), is the director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle, Wash., and an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

Julie A. Wortman: When did you first become involved in the issue of clergy sexual exploitation?

Marie Fortune: The first time this came to our attention was in the early 1980s. We'd been working on sexual and domestic violence issues since 1977, but it had never occurred to us that clergy were involved in this, which I look back on with a real sense of naiveté. We knew about therapists and doctors, but it frankly came as a surprise when we began to realize that, of course, clergy are doing it.

[Soon thereafter] a therapist in town wanted to know if I had heard about a pastoral counselor in my denomination who was facing three civil suits from clients for professional misconduct involving sexual abuse. I didn't know this individual particularly well, so I filed that information away in my memory — until I received a flyer a few weeks later indicating that this individual would be leading the clergy retreat during the next year.

I went to my conference minister and shared the information with him with the expectation that the pastor would not be allowed to do the retreat. The upshot of it was that I was called before our Church and Ministry Committee, which is our

Julie A. Wortman is an assistant editor of *The Witness*. Artist **Betty LaDuke**, author of *Art and Social Change in Latin America* (City Lights, San Francisco, 1985) and *Africa Through the Eyes of Women Artists* (Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ, 1991), donated her work to this issue of *The Witness*. Her work can be ordered c/o Multi-Cultural Images, 610 Long Way, Ashland, Ore. 97520. Artist **Doris Klein**, CSA, works in Milwaukee, Wis.



Freedom

credit: Betty LaDuke

Responding to clergy sexual abuse: an interview with Marie Fortune

by Julie A. Wortman

supervisory body for the clergy, to explain why I had disclosed that information — public at the time — to my confer-

ence minister. My colleague, who settled the three suits for significant sums of money, was never called to account for

his professional misconduct by the Church and Ministry Committee.

That was my first experience of the shooting-the-messenger phenomenon. What I began to see was that our judicatories had no idea what the problem was, how to approach it, what the necessary administrative intervention was. We [at the Center] began to provide training, which we have been doing ever since.

J.W. What does it mean to “sexualize” a pastoral relationship?

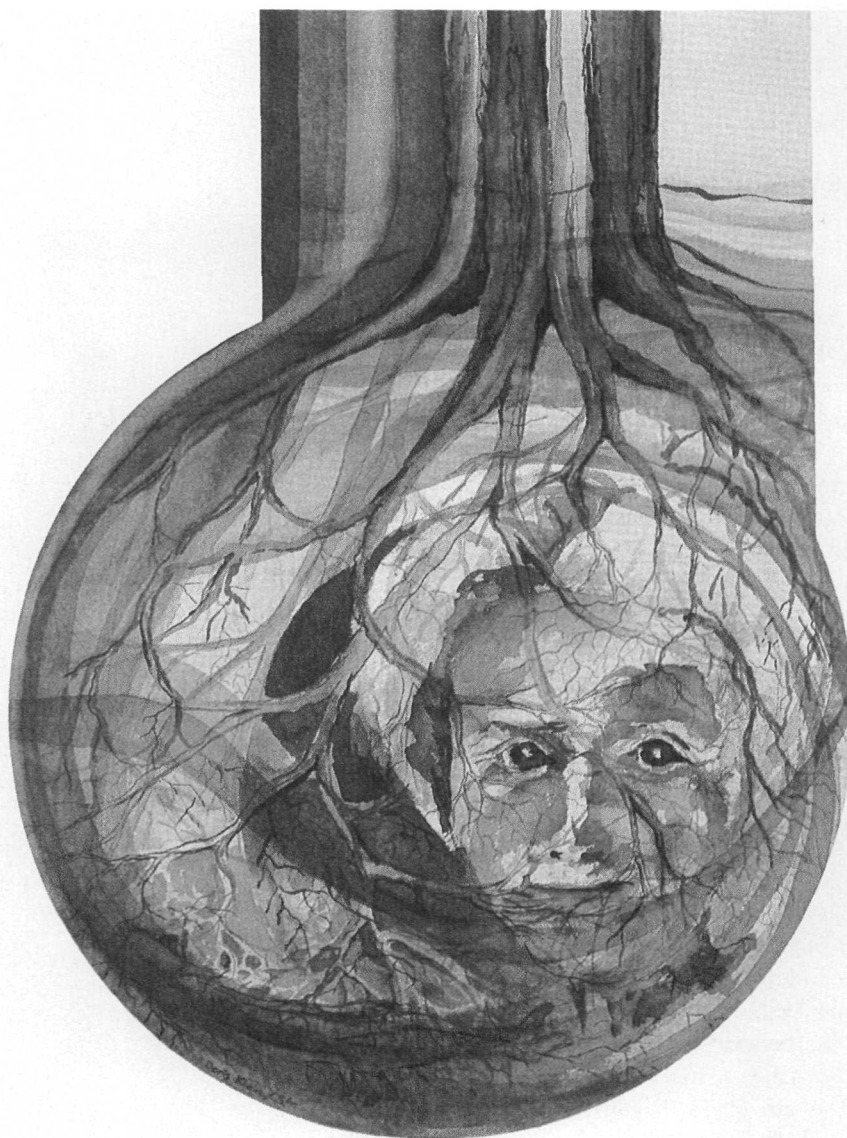
M.F. We talk about sexualizing a relationship to remind ourselves that the problem is not simply genital sexual activity between a pastor and a congregant or client. It can be physically or verbally bringing a sexual agenda into the relationship (which is clearly the pastor’s agenda), without regard for the needs of the client or congregant.

People often ask if [an offense involved] intercourse, that being for them the defining element. If it didn’t, they minimize what went on. But a lot of people don’t appreciate that the nature of the contact is hard to judge from the outside.

J.W. Is it really possible that clergy might not understand that their behavior is inappropriate when they do this?

M.F. It’s true that some don’t know, which is disturbing in and of itself, but there are also those who know and don’t care. We must realize that we are dealing with a culture in which male sexual access to women and children has been a privilege of gender for centuries. It is so normative that it’s possible for people to say that they don’t know what’s wrong. The same thing can be said of a lot of sexual harassment in the workplace. People’s awareness needs to be raised so that they understand that these behaviors are inappropriate in a professional setting, period.

J.W. That suggests that seminaries haven’t historically addressed the issue



Rooted in Wisdom — Sophia

or made that clear?

M.F. Absolutely. There has been very little effort to train clergy as part of a core curriculum in theological education. That’s one place where we can do some clear prevention with people for whom the lack of information is at the center of what’s going on. They’re what we call “wanderers” and they find themselves wandering into situations that are potentially harmful. With some education those

people can learn to do better. For other pastoral offenders, we have to have intervention available in order to move quickly to stop the pattern.

J.W. Do perpetrators conform to any identifiable profile? Is it possible to screen people out who might be likely perpetrators during the ordination process?

M.F. Most of the bishops and judicatory leaders are asking for a psychological test that will do this. The people I know who

credit: Doris Klein, CSA

treat perpetrators don't have such a tool. Research needs to be done to determine whether there are psychological profiles that would be predictive.

There are some common characteristics that we see, but I don't think they're predictive. For example, it is not unusual for the pastoral perpetrator to be a very charismatic, competent, effective pastor. The problem with having said that is that it does not mean that all our best and brightest are perpetrators — I want to be clear about that. But it is a useful piece of information when, at the point of intervention, committees or bishops are tempted to minimize [the offense] because they know this person is such a good pastor.

The one predictor we might have is people's conduct in seminary and in their field placement and internships. If there is any evidence that there is already confusion about appropriate boundaries and behavior in those professional settings, then we should take that very seriously. Some supervisors in those settings have not been prepared to do supervision around these issues.

My goal is to try to head the problem off as early as possible.

J.W. You have called on Church leaders to take a strong stand to stop sexual harassment. What would be happening if they were?

M.F. There's progress and retrenchment in every denomination. Some folks are doing an

excellent job, putting themselves on the line in their denominational structures and I want to acknowledge them. But that's not the consistent approach in any of our denominations and hence my con-

cern. The only statement that I've seen that comes close to what I was advocating was made by the moderator of the United Church of Canada.

J.W. Some Church administrators believe widespread publicity is not desirable. What do you think?

M.F. The larger question is whether the Church is going to be open about this problem. Our consistent experience is that when the Church acknowledges what has happened to the whole Church as well as to the community, the potential for healing is increased enormously. And that's the first priority, the healing of the victims — and, hopefully, the congregation, which in many ways is a secondary victim when this occurs.

It can't be done in secret. That's been the problem for years. The secrecy around clergy sexual abuse is the reason it has continued and the reason people have been so badly harmed by it. Whenever a congregation has informed its membership about the nature of the unethical conduct and the steps that the responsible authority has taken we have seen some

real potential for healing and a new sense of the nature of ministry. It is very painful and there is resistance, but not wanting to know something is no prescription for dealing with it. When people have tried to keep information from the congregations, it has resulted in greater harm, loss

of credibility and, ultimately, in the potential for legal liability if people have to go that route in order to get some response.

J.W. Would the Church be doing any-

I have yet to encounter anyone who wanted to sue their Church. What they want is for their Church to acknowledge the harm that's been done, for the person who harmed them to acknowledge responsibility and to have an apology.

Excerpt from a May, 1992, pastoral letter to the people of the United Church of Canada from Moderator Walter Farquharson:

I write offering apology to those wronged by the Church, those who have found harassment where there should have been haven, abuse and violation where they rightly expected healing and honoring. I also acknowledge that some have experienced accusations and alienation because they named the reality, or stood with those abused, or challenged particular abusers. Too often the Christian community has sought to deny the sin and has chosen instead to victimize those sinned against and those who have offered support and sought after justice for the violated or abused.

I write asking congregations to find ways of knowing the scandal is real, that it is a matter of abuse of office and power not "just of" sexual indiscretion, that our failure to minister effectively often results in victims being further victimized.

I write urging all to take the matter with great seriousness and to engage in the struggle to eradicate this evil from our churches and communities.

I write, too, urging all to be faithful in prayer that those abused find justice and healing, that abusers find new life in repentance and radical transformation, that communities work towards being able to deal with honesty and grace with abusers and abused. Our Church must continue to change our ways of dealing with sexual abuse so that our procedures more adequately reflect changed understanding of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and reflect more truly the Gospel call to stand with the exploited and voiceless.

thing about this if there weren't legal recourse? Are victims eager to find a legal remedy?

M.F. The response of the Church in the last five years, has been driven by law suits and the threat of law suits — the potential financial burden this represents is frightening to these institutions, as well it should be. And some insurance companies are starting to say they are not going to continue to insure for this — that's very real institutional pressure and is part of what has stimulated the process. There are some folks within denominations who are committed for the right reasons, but we're talking about institutions and that's the way institutions work and change.

From the survivor's perspective — and I've had contact now with over 800 cases — I have yet to encounter anyone who wanted to sue their Church. What they want is for their Church to acknowledge the harm that's been done, for the person who harmed them to acknowledge responsibility and to have an apology. For most people, that's all they want, literally. If they have any therapy expenses, or medical expenses or loss of salary as a result of having to deal with this, they sometimes will want that to be compensated, which is appropriate. It's only when they don't get that and are seen as the enemy of the Church, that they finally say, "There's no place for me to turn but to the civil system." It's a painful testimony to the Church's insensitivity and its inability to respond pastorally to folks who come forward and disclose what has been done to them.

J.W. What's the biggest obstacle keeping the Church from responding appropriately and pastorally?

M.F. The biggest thing is ignorance. People don't have the conceptual understanding or skills to respond, so they get scared — and then they start to do all the wrong things. But it's not just about ignorance — we've been educating about this

for a long time and there are places that are still pretty resistant, so we know that's not the only answer.

The other answer is denial. Minimization and denial are our only protection against things that are too painful to face. But until we are able to press ourselves beyond the pain, it's very difficult to act in ways that are constructive.

A colleague of mine in the United Church of Christ often uses the phrase, "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you flinch before it sets you free." That is absolutely true in this situation. It makes all of us flinch, but we've got to be willing to face the implications. It requires courage — courage on the part of the leadership to confront a powerful Church figure, to institute a protocol that some people are not going to like, to consistently apply whatever the procedure is without any favoritism. It takes energy and it takes courage and we don't have enough of that right now.

J.W. In the Episcopal Church there is a tradition, in some places, of referring to male clergy by the term "father" and there's also a penchant on the part of Church leaders to refer to the Church as a family. Do you have any views on whether such practices set up an unhealthy dynamic conducive to clergy sexual abuse?

M.F. Yes. We started likening the Church to a family to increase people's connection to each

other in a congregation. For some people, it was to be an alternative family, to replace the family they'd never had or the abusive family they did have.

What we forgot was that families can

be very destructive as a structure. One of the critiques we need is, what does it say about people's expectations of intimacy? If I'm a parish pastor, I see my responsibility as helping to create a community of people who, out of that community experience find their family experiences. I see a difference between family and community. People need both, but I think they need to find each in different places.

The mission of the Church is at issue here. I was doing a workshop one time and a man asked, "Isn't it the job of the Church to increase intimacy among people?" He caught me off guard. I stopped and thought about it for a minute and then said, "No, that's not the job of the Church. The essence of the job of the Church is mission." I think we've gotten off track and that's been part of the problem.

We don't exist to be more and more intimate with this small group of people closed in on itself. When we are doing that, the potential for abuse to occur in that very closed, tight system is very, very high. But if our job is to be the place

We don't exist to be more and more intimate with a group of people closed in on itself.

When we do that, the potential for abuse is very high.

Our job is to come to be encouraged so we can go out to the world and do the mission of the Gospel.

where we come to be nurtured and encouraged so that we can go out to the world and do the mission of the Gospel, then there's a different structural dynamic that lessens the potential for anyone with any power in that system to misuse it.

J.W. What about cases of abuse that have occurred in

the distant past? Why do some people wait so long to come forward? Should there be a statute of limitations on prosecuting those cases?

M.F. It is not unlike sexual abuse of

children in other settings. It is not unusual for children to totally repress that kind of experience until adulthood, when they have more resources to deal with the implications of the memory.

The other reality is that 20 or 30 years ago nobody was talking about any of this, nobody was supporting children who would come forward. That's changing. I think we're going to see children disclosing earlier, then we can stop pastors who are molesting children earlier, so they won't have a chance to have the 50, 60, or 100 victims these people sometimes have. But we've got that backlog of past cases and we're going to have adults coming forward for another ten or 15 years.

I don't think statutes of limitations are appropriate in Church policies around this experience. If our goal is to stop injustice and bring healing, then every decision we make about policy needs to rest on that commitment. If you look at the impact a statute of limitations has on survivors, we have to understand it's not helpful to be told, "You didn't come forward [soon enough], so we don't have to do anything about this." There's no question that the cases that are disclosed by adult survivors are difficult because the offender may be deceased or retired, but he is still accountable for the harm he did.

J.W. Should known perpetrators ever be allowed to serve in parochial positions?

M.F. We have to deal with that on a case-by-case basis. If, after disclosures, we have intervened and deprived these people of their pastoral offices, then we've done our best to ensure that, at least under the auspices of the Church, they cannot use that role any longer. If we don't do that, and they reoffend, we have failed — not only in terms of our pastoral responsibility, but we're also extraordinarily liable.

In terms of any therapeutic response, the person involved has to acknowledge responsibility and be willing to do what-

ever it takes to change so that they don't do it again. If somebody is still minimizing and denying that it's really their problem, then they are not appropriate.

I would say, categorically, if someone has offended against children and teenagers, they should never be in that position again. We know that it is virtually impossible to cure people who offend against kids and teenagers.



The question, always, is what is the impact on survivors and what is the potential this pastoral offender will cause harm again?

J.W. What are you celebrating right now in terms of positive developments in the fight against clergy sexual abuse?

M.F. The Presbyterians repealed their statute of limitation provision and that is important for all the reasons we have been discussing. There have been some important policy statements at the national level in the United Church of Christ, in the Episcopal Church, in the United Methodist Church.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has just completed a major study on sexual harassment. They have a proposed a four-year comprehensive strategy that has been approved by the bishops and now goes to their national council body. People are hopeful it will be approved, but they have no sense whether

anyone will allocate money for it.

In Chicago's Roman Catholic Archdiocese, where they've had horrendous problems in the past, the cardinal finally acknowledged it and said that they had to do better. He put together a commission that developed an excellent policy for dealing with sexual abuse of children by priests — it looks great on paper, although it says nothing about adult victims.

I was also encouraged by a non-denominational congregation that had been sued by a member because of sexual abuse by the pastor. They fought the suit, lost, and the complainant was awarded a financial award. A second complainant came forward and was going to bring a second suit. The lawyers went to the church council and said, "We've got to fight this," and the council agreed. They went to the congregation, which was the decision-making body. The congregants responded that it seemed pretty clear that the pastor sexually abused these people and that their responsibility was to pay the cost of therapy and so forth; Why were their lawyers fighting this? I'm encouraged that some folks see the Church's responsibility and are not driven by some lawyers who evidently see their job as protecting the Church from victims instead of protecting victims from the Church.

TAW

Marie Fortune, with her staff at the Center, has developed a video on clergy sexual exploitation called Not in My Church (for Jews, there's a version called Not in My Congregation) that comes with a study guide and "awareness" brochures for congregants. A complete training curriculum, Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship, is also available. To obtain copies of the video or the curriculum contact the Center at 1914 N. 34th St., Suite 105, Seattle, Wash., 98103; 206-634-1903.

Beyond the confines of prison and death

by Marianne Arbogast

The memory of Franklin Abramson prompts Ahmad Abdur-Rahman to prayer, fasting and discipline in his struggles for justice. Rahman, who has served 21 years in prison on a felony murder conviction stemming from Abramson's death, views Abrahamson as an ancestor, someone whose life and death is integral to his own.

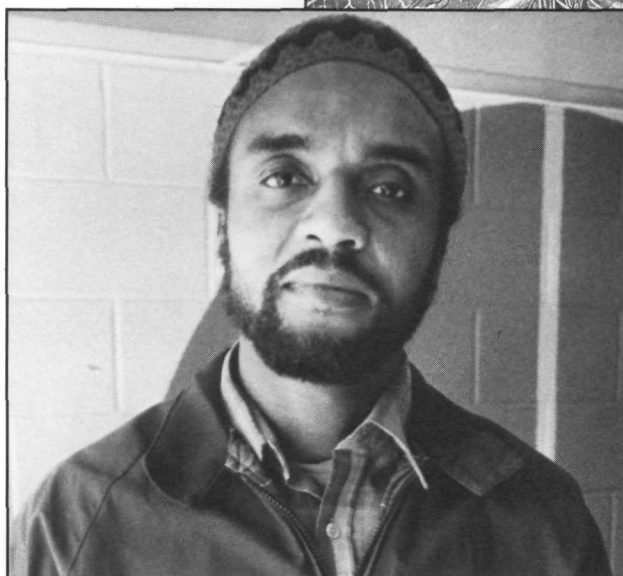
Abramson died in 1971 at the age of 23, an accidental casualty of the black liberation struggle being waged in U.S. cities.

Rahman, then 19, was new to Detroit. He had been recruited away from Chicago gang life by Black Panther Party leaders, who challenged teen gang members to redirect their rage away from each other and toward the racist class structure causing their oppression.

"In the 1960s the City of Chicago police department had the highest kill rating in the country, and most of the victims were black," Rahman says. "I had received my fair share of beatings from the Chicago police, and I had to ask myself: Why do I have so much courage fighting my own brothers, but had never done anything — leafletting or anything — to fight that? I thought, if I'm going to die for something, let me die for something important."

By day, the Panthers ran free meals programs and health clinics; by night, Rahman says, they conducted more covert operations in pursuit of their goals.

On April 11, 1971, Rahman and three



Ahmad Abdur-Rahman, a member of the Black Panthers in 1971, participated in a raid on a drug house that resulted in Frank Abramson's death.

courtesy The Detroit Free Press

others were given guns, taken to a house on Virginia Park in Detroit and instructed to carry out a "drug raid."

"Our term at the time was 'expropriation from the capitalists,'" Rahman explains. "We were striking a blow against one of the worst plagues in the community, and we would take the funds from these raids and use them to support our organization." Any drugs found were confiscated and destroyed.

The house turned out to be a student co-op, not a heroin den. Abramson was there to spend the night and collect friends

to help with planting at the farm he was caretaking that year. While Rahman was searching an upper floor, he heard a gunshot from a floor below, where a fellow raider was guarding Abramson. He rushed down to find Abramson dead.

Rahman and his companions fled to the waiting car and were driven away.

Within hours, Rahman says, the police had the names of the four — known only to the man who had set up the raid and provided transportation. They were arrested and charged with felony murder. The driver was never charged.



Praying

credit: Alex Grey, Brooklyn, N.Y.

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

Rahman's companions, including the man who shot Abramson, pleaded guilty and received more lenient prison sentences. Rahman, who fought the charge, was found guilty and given the maximum sentence, life-without-parole.

Facing life in prison at the age of 19 "brought on a whole new kind of rage," Rahman says.

He learned of the pattern of FBI infiltration of radical groups throughout the country, and came to see the drug raid as a trap.

"Under the felony murder doctrine, whoever drives the getaway car is equally guilty," he says. "Why did they

never charge this person? I have never tried to diminish my responsibility, but I believe the files of the FBI should be opened, and there should be some shared responsibility."

Separated from his infant son, confronted with racist, sometimes brutal guards and dehumanizing prison conditions, Rahman sunk into a deep bitterness which alienated even his friends and family. His condition worsened until a fellow inmate gave him a book on Christian yoga, recommending it as a stress-reducing technique.

"I didn't believe in anything spiritual but I was game to try anything," Rahman says. He took up daily breathing exercises and yoga practices, and began to experience a profound change.

"Through spiritual practice and meditation, I came to the realization of a spiritual dimension in myself and the universe," he says. "I began to try to adjust my thoughts and actions to live in harmony with this spiritual reality."

An avid reader, Rahman embarked on an exploration of the mystical traditions of the great world religions.

Around the same time, he won honorable mention in a writing contest and began a correspondence with Episcopalian author Madeleine L'Engle, who had served as a judge. Along with advice on

writing, L'Engle sent Rahman books on theology and spirituality.

Rahman was startled when L'Engle wrote him of a dream she had had in which someone called him "Ishaq," a name he had been given by a Muslim mentor during an earlier spiritual search, but

had rejected and never revealed to anyone.

"I was going through a spiritual transformation, and this confirmed I was on the right path," Rahman says. "I felt I was meant to correspond with this woman, that there was something she had to say to me about life that was important.

"We eventually became very good friends," Rahman says. "She showed me that being spiritual was not an opiate, but could deepen your creativity."

L'Engle also caused him to revise his negative opinion of Christianity, enabling him to see that it was "not in the actions of people like Jerry Falwell and

Jimmy Swaggart, but in the hearts of believers who follow the teaching of Jesus, 'As you have done to the least of these you've done unto me.'"

He also met Gloria House, another Episcopalian (now poetry editor of *The Witness*), who was teaching courses in a bachelors' degree program at Jackson Prison.

Rahman credits House with "pointing the way of balance," and allaying his fears that "becoming spiritually active [might] stop you being politically, socially active, making a difference."

"I became closer to prisoners studying martial arts, Zen, yoga, and different kinds of Christian mysticism," Rahman says. "We developed a circle, and exchanged books, ideas and practices — for example, we did a three-day silent fast in our cells."

Eventually Rahman was drawn back to Islam, largely because of the example of Muslim prisoners.

"When we who were black nationalists went to individuals to organize a strike, it was always the members of the Nation of Islam we could count on," he says.

Though they renounced Elijah Muhammad's characterization of whites as a race of devils in the late 1970s, they retained a zeal to fight racism.

Rahman says that while he was at Jackson, white guards beat a black prisoner so severely that he was paralyzed for life. After

the beating, the prisoner was left unattended for three days, then put on a bus to a prison in the Upper Peninsula, where

The Black Panthers "were striking a blow against one of the worst plagues in the community; we would take the funds from these [drug] raids and use them to support our organization."
—Ahmad Abdur-Rahman

The house turned out to be a student coop, not a heroin den. While Rahman was searching an upper floor, he heard a gunshot. He rushed down to find Frank Abramson dead. Rahman and his companions fled.

prison authorities refused to accept him and returned him to Jackson.

The guards remained in their jobs until prisoners' protests forced the authorities to respond. "Muslims were the backbone of the actions that eventually got the guards disciplined," Rahman says.

He began meeting with the Muslim prisoners, and fasted for the month of Ramadan even before he formally converted.

"I saw in Islam as they practiced it the kind of discipline I needed," he says. "In prison, trying to maintain an equilibrium of mental wholesomeness is hard to sustain."

Muslims learn techniques to deal with anger, Rahman says.

When anger rises, they are to make a series of prostrations before Allah, reciting verses from the Koran before each one. As in all prayer, they are to turn towards Mecca, "a symbol of turning towards the center within yourself which cannot get angry, which is peace itself, which is God," Rahman says.

If the anger persists they are enjoined to fast.

"Not getting angry is very important in Islam," Rahman says. But he clarifies that "when Mohammed prophesied, 'Do not get angry,' he meant, 'Do not make decisions based upon anger,' not 'Do not feel negatively against oppression.' If we see something wrong, we must try to change it."

Rahman's conversion to Islam "gave him a way to process the hurt and injustice done to him," House says. "When I first met him he was still very stern and harsh, very critical of just about everyone. I watched him develop into someone

who was more and more accepting of others. He has a clarity of vision and ability to counsel others."

Rahman's gifts have been affirmed by the Muslim communities at several different prisons, which have elected him to be their *imam*, or spiritual leader. (In typical prison fashion, "every time he has been elected he has been moved out of the

prison," House says. "They don't want him to exercise that kind of leadership.")

Throughout his journey, Rahman has been accompanied by Franklin Abramson.

"In African tradition, there is a belief that as long

as anybody thinks of an ancestor, they are not dead, they can come and help you. [Abramson's] image has never really got out of my head, and I know I share responsibility for what happened. I see him in that sense of an ancestor, and I see it as my duty to make something happen in my life that will give him honor."

Shortly after Rahman earned his degree, House gathered a committee of people to work for his release from prison. James Ricci, a *Detroit Free Press* columnist, visited Rahman and began to write about him.

Ricci's columns reached Heleen Eichen, Abramson's sister, who lives in Florida.

At first, she was infuriated. "When Frankie was killed, it was splashed all over the newspapers, and now all the pain

and anger was coming back again."

Her brother's death had "devastated my whole world," Eichen says. She, like Rahman, was 19 at the time. She had no contact with her father, and her mother had died several years before. Abramson was her only sibling, an older brother who faithfully kept in touch and sustained her sense of family.

"It was a senseless, stupid, meaningless death," Eichen says. "That was part of my anger — somebody shooting him for no reason at all. He was a genuinely good person."

Eichen stayed away from the trial, not wanting to hear the details, caring only that "someone pay" for her brother's death.

"I knew that four black men were involved, and I wanted to hate every single black person I ever saw," she says, though an inner voice told her "that's not what Frankie would want."

When she saw Ricci's articles, Eichen phoned him to voice her outrage. Other family members wrote angry letters to the editor.

Soon afterward, Eichen received a letter from Rahman.

"I was really moved," she says. "He said there wasn't a day that goes by that

he doesn't think of Frankie, and he said Frankie's memory has been a spur to his self-improvement. When I learned that, it made me think Frankie's death — even though it was tragic and meaningless — wouldn't have been in vain."

She began to see Rahman in a new light.

"When I saw his words I felt I got to know him," she says. "I came to recog-

After converting to Islam, Rahman says, "I became closer to prisoners studying martial arts, Zen, yoga and Christian mysticism. We exchanged books, ideas and practices."

Abramson's "image is in my head. I share responsibility for what happened. I see him as an ancestor. It is my duty to make something happen in my life that will give him honor."

nize and respect him as a person. Throughout my angry phase I looked at him as a non-entity. I didn't want to know him. You can ascribe all these [negative] traits to someone you don't know.

"I thought about what Frankie would do, and I knew Frankie would forgive him."

She talked with two of Abramson's friends who had been with him the night he was killed, and they agreed.

Eichen describes her observance of her Jewish faith as "more cultural than spiritual." Nonetheless, she finds significance in the fact that she was moved to make a second call to Ricci two years ago at the time of Rosh Hashanah.

"Traditional Judaism says an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but the Jewish New Year is a time when we're supposed to forgive enemies and atone for sins."

Eichen told Ricci she would support Rahman's release from prison.

In June of this year, she travelled to a parole board hearing in Michigan to speak on his behalf.

"There were about 75 people at the hearing," Eichen says. Many testified to the positive impact Rahman has had on their lives. "It made me feel vindicated," she says. "It's still hard for some of my family members to understand my position."

The parole board, deluged with an overwhelming show of support for Rahman, voted unanimously to recommend his release. He is now awaiting Governor John Engler's decision.

"I'm doing it for Frankie," Eichen says of her advocacy for Rahman. "He could do more for Frankie if he was released. He would have a lot more to offer as a free man."

TV



Prison Repression

Human rights activists are opposing the construction of a new prison in Florence, Colo., which will virtually eliminate human contact for prisoners. It will have a higher security rating than the "level 6" federal prison in Marion, Ill., currently the highest in the country.

Marion is the only U.S. prison to be condemned by Amnesty International for violating the U.N. Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. It has been in a state of permanent "lockdown" since 1983. Prisoners rarely leave their cells, are forbidden to socialize with one another and have no access to educational or recreational activities or group worship. Guards discipline prisoners by tying them spread eagle and naked to their concrete bed slabs.

The prison in Florence is designed with no windows. Electronic surveillance will replace most personal contact with guards, and there will be no communication between prisoners.

Although the Bureau of Prisons claims that control units are necessary to contain violent prisoners, their residents include a disproportionate number of minority prisoners and political dissidents. Although Marion is among the smaller U.S. prisons, it houses more political prisoners than any other.

Rafael Cancel Miranda, a Puerto Rican independence fighter who spent 25 years in prison, described his experience at Marion: "I spent 18 months in the Control Unit. Within that space of time many people killed themselves. Many also went crazy. They used to give prolixin, thorazine and valium. Once you get hooked into that, forget it; you're not your own man or woman any more."

Adding injury to outrage, the water supply both at Marion and at the new site in Florence may be unsafe. Critics say the Marion water fails to meet federal and state standards and the prison in Florence is being constructed near land contaminated with radioactive materials.

The federal prison in Florence is only one instance of a nation-wide trend toward

"super-maximum security" prisons or prison units. Thirty-six state prisons now operate similar control units which keep prisoners isolated and prohibit community.

In a forward to *Can't Jail the Spirit*, a collection of U.S. political prisoners' biographies, Jose Lopez argues that this trend is a tool of political and economic repression. "Those who cannot be controlled, those who will not submit to living in the areas designated for Third World peoples, those who refuse to work for low wages, and those who rebel and try to organize their people — will end up in prison where they can be controlled."

—Information from the **Committee to End the Marion Lockdown**, P.O. Box 578172, Chicago, IL 60657-8172.

Not Enough Jobs

"Disdain for the able-bodied poor is deeply rooted in ... what historian Michael B. Katz calls the 'enduring myth' of American history: that there are jobs available for all who want to work.

"Yet the simple truth is that there are not enough jobs to go around. Between 1970 and 1984, New York City alone lost 492,000 jobs with lower educational requirements, but gained only 239,000 jobs with higher educational requirements. While the net loss of 253,000 is alarming,

Short takes

—Prepared by Marianne Arbogast

the consequences for workers with limited education and skills has been devastating.

"National studies have found that, *excluding* discouraged workers and *including* all available jobs (regardless of skill or educational requirements), there are as many as ten unemployed people for each unfilled job opening."

Christopher Meade, "The Myth of Welfare," *Z*, 9/92

(The following is excerpted from a letter written by Dorothee Sölle and her friend Luise Schottroff, professor of New Testament in Kassel, Germany, and sent to one Protestant and three Roman Catholic congregations in Cologne celebrating their ecumenical work on October 2, 1992. The theme of the worship was Den Himmel Erden, "Heaven on Earth" or "Grounding Heaven.")

We write to you in alarm and horror. Our country has changed; an evil spirit, a demon, walks among us. This spirit is hostile toward foreigners and hates everything that looks different from us. This demon sows hatred and causes conflagrations, roaring "Out!" but meaning "Away into the gas!" since there is no "out." Its name is racism and it is connected with the darkest time in the life of our people, when the huge majority broke from God and ran after idols — pure blood, one's own soil, the great nation and military force. For a long time, Christians in the ecumenical movement believed that this idol was overcome and could not return. Now we stand bewildered and ashamed. A young person in Hamburg carried a sign with the plaintive words, "I am ashamed."

Racism does not fall from the sky; it is made by some and exploited by others. One instrument for that exploitation is the discussion over the asylum paragraphs in the Constitution. The public is given the impression that the economic problems of German unity will be solved if only more severe action is taken against persons seeking sanctuary, these parasites. Unemployed youths live out the

terms of their lives by attacking the scapegoats offered them — refugees.

Dear sisters and brothers, if we honestly examine ourselves, the difference is very small between those who burned the Jewish cemeteries in Sachsenhausen and those intent on changing the Constitution. The methods of the hoodlums below and the politicians above are quite different. Arson and Constitutional change have nothing in common in form, but the goal of getting rid of our past and living without remembrance is similar. Every foreigner and every stranger must be anxious in the presence of those below and those above. We all know today that the number of refugees will increase because economic injustice grows and is unbearable for those dying in it. The injustice cries to heaven. We cannot have heaven on earth without hearing this cry.

I'd like to remind you of the sanctity of life which God gives us. Ways out of the dangerous situation arise where sanctity increases. Those ways already exist in the initiatives of church communities who seek to bring German and foreign people into contact and create spaces for foreigners and the unemployed. Groups canvass for understanding and open the eyes of others to the distress of refugees, providing room for justice and attempting dialogue with the seduced Germans who await the solution to all difficulties from a right-wing shock.

In ancient times there was a conception of sanctity which is lost to us: there were holy places and profane places. In the temple, people could approach the deity. An infringement of the holy place was a violation of the deity. Temple sanctuaries and church sanctuaries are based on this idea of sanctity generally assumed in ancient societies. Persecuted people could flee to God's altar and could not be taken away by state authority. They stood on holy ground under God's protection. The word "asylum" means refuge or



Skin heads. A. Hitler is alive and well.

Dorothee Sölle is a feminist liberation theologian, living in Hamburg. She is also a new contributing editor of *The Witness*.

Marc Batko translated this from the German. Artist **Eleanor Mill** lives in Hartford, Conn.

Responding to G
by Dorothee Sölle and Luise Sc



credit: Eleanor Mill

erman skin heads

ttroff

sanctuary; behind that is the word "sylvan," take from, take away, rob, steal, plunder and injure. "Asylao" means being uninjured, unviolated and in the religious sense, which is always also political, being protected by God. There are remnants of this idea among us in the secularized society. Many cannot acquiesce when police enter churches to forcibly deport refugees.

Today a conception of holiness, shelter and refuge which has Biblical roots is growing among Christians. Christians who grant asylum to refugees, who open and thereby change their space, become more everyday and at the same time more holy.

Previously these spaces were guaranteed to be orderly, clean, mostly empty and suited for festivity. Now refugees eat and sleep there, fleeing the German bureaucracy and fearing persecution. The spaces of the community become more everyday and more holy. Sanctity grows where people are protected. Work with refugees is hard but it also produces happiness, the happiness of standing together with other people, the happiness of feeling sanctity and God's nearness.

Paul said: "Present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God." He alluded to the widespread cultic practice at that time of offering animals to the gods. His theme was that the experience of God's sanctity changed the bodies of people and their life together.

The place of the original experience of sanctity was the common meal. The disciples of Jesus met in house communi-

ties. They ate together, interpreted the Bible and deliberated what to do. Here was also the place for refugees, who as a rule were economic refugees. Christian communities formed little supply communities — underground groups within

*We write to you in alarm
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the community where the employed joined with the unemployed and shared their labor and their money. They made one another rich. They shared their songs, their enthusiasm for Biblical stories and their ability to build just relations. They even attempted to abolish the subordination of women and slaves under the patriarchal father of the

house. The common table of the house community was the place of the sanctification of bodies, the place of strengthening for the work of justice, the place of remembrance of injustice, of Jesus' death.

Jesus called refugees "blessed" (Matt. 25,35) and Paul again and again addressed the people in the communities as "saints." This is good. Sacred places arise today where people work against man-made injustice.

They are arising among us. God's friendliness enables their labor to grow in Klettenberg, Sulz and elsewhere. May God's love warm you and shine over all of us.

TW



Rhea Miller, a recent Episcopal Divinity School graduate, spent Pentecost 1992 in an Israeli jail. She offers the following reflections.

Tall, articulate, worldly-wise with wild hair, she told us in St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem that if we wanted to join the *women in black* demonstration, we had to remain silent. Each week, this Israeli Jewish mother, together with about 100 other women, stands at a busy intersection in West Jerusalem, asking for an end to the occupation of the Palestinians by the Israeli government. "So, if the passersby spit on you, what do you do? Take out your tissue, wipe it off, and put it in your pocket. Are you hurt? No! This is our work."

A blind Palestinian social worker engaged me in conversation in the "house of peace" where we were both lodging. She counseled the victims of the *intifada*. She said, "Oh yes, I try and help them get around again with their new physical limitations, but that's not the hard part—not the loss of a leg or an eye. This week, a young man came in with both legs gone. After the Israeli soldiers had shot him, they rolled his legs in the dirt and delayed medical care. Gangrene set in and both legs were cut off. Then the soldiers beat him in his hospital bed. I have to help this young man deal with his psyche." When I told her of two other recent Palestinian beatings, she started laughing. I asked her why she was laughing. She answered, suddenly serious, "What else am I to do? Should I cry? Should I hate? Sometimes it is better to laugh so one can keep on going. It is all so insane."

A community leader from a little town called Beit Sahour, next door to Bethlehem, spoke of his attempt to bridge the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian gap. "I was approached to participate in an effort to bring Israeli Jews and Palestinians to-



Women in Black, Jewish women protesting the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Rhea Miller is at the center of the back row.

credit: Françoise Gall

Witnessing in Israel/ Palestine by Rhea Y. Miller

gether in a more intimate way. I was reluctant, but I wanted my son to grow up loving Jews too. I did it for my son. I invited certain Jewish Israelis into my home—for tea, for meals. Finally my five-year-old son asked me, 'Dad, what is the difference between a good Jew and a bad Jew?' How was I to answer? He is so young. I can't let him be beaten by passing Israeli soldiers. I want him to be careful. So I told him simplistically, 'Good Jews don't wear uniforms and bad Jews do.' So one day, while playing out in the streets, an Israeli Jewish settler came by in his jeep and pointed his machine gun at my boy and told him he was going to kill him. My boy ran, and the settler chased him and beat him. When he finally arrived home, he barricaded himself in his room, and told me I had lied to

him. He said, 'When I grow up I am going to throw stones and kill Israelis.' I still bring Jews into my home to dialogue, but it is a struggle with my son."

During a rough arrest of 113 international demonstrators against the occupation, an Israeli Jewish man was being deliberately dragged to the bus through the gravel, along with other demonstrators from around the globe. Another Israeli soldier motioned to the first to stop. Then he bent down himself and picked up the young Jewish man in his arms and carried him to the bus without further bodily harm.

A Palestinian woman, an author and the first Palestinian member of the international social justice writers' organization "PEN," told us, "One hundred years of struggling for peace, even 1,000 years

struggling for peace, is better than one day of war."

A Jewish Israeli graduate of Harvard Divinity School, told us that we must do more than find a political solution to this dilemma. "We must reach a spiritual depth. We must first acknowledge the damage done to the Palestinians, and the damage done to the Jews. Secondly, we must next confess each of our parts in the violence.... Yes, we Jews are pathological about Palestinians. We do become involved in a victimhood mentality due to WW II. But you Christians have also created years of anti-Jewish sentiment, and if the tides were turned and Palestinians were more powerful, would they not be doing the same to us? It is a difficult journey we have to take together."

Many of the international demonstrators visited Yad Va Shem, the Holocaust memorial in West Jerusalem. I shivered to see once again the damage we human beings are capable of doing to one another. And then I shuddered as I recognized one human rights violation after another by Nazis to the Jews that were being repeated by Jews against Palestinians. I knew that the museum property itself included one corner of a buried Palestinian village where over 300 Palestinians were massacred by Israeli soldiers in an effort to encourage all Palestinians to flee the country. This was only one tiny piece of property that was the source of so much rage.

The Palestinian Israeli Elias Chacour, priest and author of *Blood Brothers*, famous for asking Holy Land pilgrims, "Are you here to see the dead stones, or the living?," asked those of us sitting in his home, "Do you believe God ever sanctions violence?" When answered in the negative, he replied, "Neither do I."

In speech after speech, I heard with my own ears Israeli Jews, including Israeli reserve soldiers, testify that it was the *intifada* that had awakened in them

the scandal of the occupation. They owed the *intifada* the awakening of their own conscience. In the words of Ari Shavit, reserve soldier and Israeli journalist:

"For this is what the Palestinians have brought upon us by means of the intifada: they have provided, in the most unambiguous way, no possibility of an enlightened occupation. They have forced us to choose territories or decency. Occupation or fairness. And yes, that is indeed the question of the hour. An acute and urgent question, demanding an answer at once. It is not at this hour a matter of territories in exchange for peace. It is a matter of territories in exchange for our humanity." ["On Gaza Beach," *The New York Review*, July 18, 1991, p. 6.]

On a hot summer Sunday morning in the Valley of Armageddon, Megiddo, a group of 180 world citizens followed a young Scottish man playing "Amazing Grace" on his bagpipes en route toward the West Bank to hear firsthand the voices of the Palestinians living under their own apartheid system. I was one of those world citizens, and we were met by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), both police and army, at the Green Line, the boundary of Palestinian holdings prior to the war in 1967. The bagpiper was met by a contingent of cavalry, and he and a few cohorts kept the horses focused while the rest of us tried to proceed through the police line. One hundred and thirteen of us were arrested, some so roughly that I personally feared great pain. Our nonviolence mellowed the arresting process, however. We were bussed through Galilee twice on that Pentecost Sunday, finally landing in jail near Haifa.

Jail is discomfort, dishes so greasy that any food would be rendered unappetizing, and the norm is being threatened and yelled at for nothing and everything. Yet jail is the great school. An Israeli reserve soldier, arrested with us, translated the Hebrew and reminded us of our

rights under Israeli law. He carried the scar of a Palestinian rock on his head. Sister Ann Montgomery told of her time with the Gulf Peace Team in Iraq. The retired Amsterdam women taught us what it means to be resourceful in jail, including the writing of new songs that brought tears of laughter. The British woman taught us how to dry laundry in a cinderblock cell with 16 beds and a hole in the floor in the shower for our toilet. The Israeli Jewish woman jailed with us never failed to ask in Hebrew for that elusive role of toilet paper that was begrudged by the authorities. I learned the comfort of Love across international lines at a time when fatigue was all I thought I was capable of. When we walked out of jail 48 hours later, we knew our Jewish Israeli and Palestinian friends could be called back into jail at any point, or harassed in their homes.

When I finally managed to hail one of the few cabs at the Garden of Gethsemane on a high Muslim Holy Day to leave for home, the driver asked if I was part of "that peace group." I gulped, not knowing if the driver was Palestinian or Jewish, and responded, "Yes." He said, "Good, I want to help you." I realized that though I had seen some dead stones in the Holy Land, whether in the walls of the Old Jerusalem or on the hillside of Shepherd's Field, I had met the living Christ in the lives of a variety of brave Jewish Israeli and Palestinian men and women. Elias Chacour was right to encourage those of us pilgrimaging in the Holy Lands to look beyond the ancient shrines to the living. These people, living in one of the most volatile places on the face of the earth, dared all the odds to wage peace in the midst of rage. **TV**



by William R. MacKaye

As soon as Virginia Mollenkott began to speak, I was troubled all over again by those long-time *Witness* supporters who declined to participate in the magazine's 75th anniversary forum because it was taking place on what was perceived as alien if not enemy turf.

They should have been here to hear this. Mollenkott, forthright in her proclamation that homosexual love is a God-given gift for homosexual people, wasn't fazed for a moment by the procession of students who wanted to challenge her views by Bible chapter and verse.

Reared among the deeply conservative Plymouth Brethren (the same Church that spawned Garrison Keillor), Mollenkott is steeped in Scripture at least as profoundly as were her prospective challengers, students at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. She just doesn't find the same message there.

Take Romans 1:26-27, a passage often construed as a Pauline ban on all same-sex relationships.

That's not what it's about at all, Mollenkott told her audience -- it couldn't be, because Paul didn't know about homosexual orientation. His condemnation went rather to the disordered lives of pagan Greek freemen who understood sexual expression only in terms of exercising sexual power over powerless women, slaves, and boys.

Mollenkott is equally forthright in the seriousness with which she takes the Bible as teacher. Challenged by Stephen Noll, Trinity's academic dean and author of

William R. MacKaye is editor of *In Trust, the Magazine for Leaders in Theological Education*, and a member of the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

one of the four papers on the Authority of Scripture prepared for the House of Bishops, to disclose whether she would feel any differently about the permissibility of homosexual behavior if it could be shown unequivocally that Paul *did* know about homosexual orientation and *did* intend to condemn homosexual behavior in all its forms, she didn't resort to the obvious escape route of saying she didn't accept the premise.

"I would," she replied.

Then, after some reflection, she conceded that in the end she would probably

"Curing" homosexuality is perceived as an important ministry by many on the Trinity campus, and the frequency with which comments about homosexuality arose during the day's programs seemed to signal a preoccupation with the subject approaching the obsessive.

Chester Talton, another forum participant, who is suffragan bishop of Los Angeles, pointed out that the amount of time Church members spend talking about sexuality inevitably leads to neglect of many other concerns that ought to attract the attention of those committed to walk-

ing in the footsteps of Jesus — eradicating racism in the Church and in society, for example. Talton, who is African American, recalled going to the True Light Baptist Church as a child with his grandmother, "singing songs of suffering" and experiencing that "somehow God was tied up with all of that."

His grandmother, said Talton, never could abide Paul. "She just couldn't understand how he could encourage Philemon to return to his master," he said.

Nan Arrington Peete, a member of the board of *The Witness*, who is canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Atlanta and also African American, chided Trinity students for their preoccupation with questions of sexuality and for failing to address examples of systemic evil in their questions. If they were as concerned as they said they were about the authority of Scripture, she noted sharply, they should be applying those concerns to issues of justice.

Mollenkott and Talton spoke to forum participants — 80 people who identified themselves with the *Witness* community as well as the 92 Trinity constituents (a small additional number declined to ally themselves with either institution) -- at an afternoon gathering at which they were



take the guidance of her heart and her experience over the guidance Noll asked her to suppose was to be found in Paul, but with evident sadness she said this would amount to "breaking faith."

Mollenkott's comments, and the passion with which she spoke of her love for God and her experience of God's love for her, some of it mediated through the experience of lesbian relationships, formed an emotional high point of the extraordinary 75th Anniversary Forum on Evangelism that *The Witness* conducted October 24 on the Trinity campus. Her comments were also plainly unsettling to many of 92 Trinity faculty members, students, and supporters who attended the forum.

described as “speaking from the *Witness* constituency but not for it.”

Joining with them to speak “from the Trinity School for Ministry constituency but not for it” were William Frey, dean and president of Trinity, who is former bishop of Colorado, and Hays, a priest who is assistant professor of pastoral theology, dean of student life, and the only woman on the faculty of Trinity. Mary Hays was breathtakingly honest when she said her most recent “experience of God’s presence during a time of crisis” was in the midst of her anger and pain at the way some on Trinity’s campus had received her as the first female faculty member. Frey spoke of the freedom the resurrection gave him from chemical-dependency after he and his family were deported by Guatemala military.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, editor and publisher of *The Witness*, moderated the panel and set the discussion in motion before opening it to questions from the audience.

Earlier in the day the forum participants prayed Morning Prayer together in the seminary chapel, broke into small groups for study of Romans 12:1-2, and engaged in their choice of two of five workshops: “The Authority of Scripture,” led by Verna Dozier, author of *The Dream of God*; “The Traditional Way: Native Faith and the Imperial Religion,” led by Quentin Kolb, a Native American priest who is urban missionary of the Diocese of Utah; “Sexuality, Feminism and Faith,” led by Mary Meader, a Massachusetts therapist who is a deputy to General Convention and a member of the Joint Commission on Pastoral Teaching on Sexuality; “The Powers and Principalities Viewed Through the Work of William Stringfellow,” led by Andrew McThenia, a professor of law at Washington and Lee University and chair of the board of *The Witness*; and “The Multicultural Challenge: Can the Church Meet the Chal-

lenge to Integrate?” led by Butch Naters-Gamarra, who is the Panamanian-born rector of St. Stephen’s Church in Boston.

So what was gained by participating in the forum held under the circumstances it was? We fingers and toes and vertebrae and tendons and intestines of Christ’s body were challenged once again to discern where we are to build up the social structures that we have received and where we are to destroy them and start anew. In my experience, unfamiliar and possibly uncongenial surroundings stimulate that kind of reflection. Part of our call — liberals and conservatives, radicals and reactionaries alike — is not to make ourselves at home too quickly in a world in which we don’t belong.

As the day ended in offering of Evening Prayer, with a rousing African song-dance substituted for the familiar Magnificat, I looked about me at those with whom I’d spent the day. I can’t say whether I shared a common *experience* of faith with those who differed from me, especially in the great sense of interior freedom that the gospel has given me.

To me at 58, many of the Trinity students seemed astonishingly young (es-

pecially since nationally these days only one Episcopal seminarian out of five is under 30) and every bit as rigid as I was at their age. Some seemed to think complex questions had shorthand answers. (One student asked panel participants to state their definition of sin and their doctrine of the atonement in two sentences.) An African student, evidently reacting negatively to the tolerant views of sexual variances expressed during the day, asserted that African Muslims lead holier lives than Christians. No one commented, but I found that tough to swallow, given that the Muslim masters of the Sudan are currently using mass murder to wipe out the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches to which many recently living southern Sudanese adhered.

Be these observations of diversity as they may, many hands reached heavenwards when the congregation — and it was a congregation! — belted out Hymn 490, “I want to walk as a child of the light, I want to follow Jesus,” as day slid into dusk. Whether the upraised hands signaled charismatic transport or sheer exuberance, I cannot doubt that *this* was a yearning shared by all. **TW**

I find that it’s too soon to offer my perspective on *The Witness*’ forum. I was impressed by the commitment of the Trinity students and the seriousness with which they try to live the Gospel. I also saw Trinity’s location in a small working-class steel town as indicative of a rejection of the pomp and pretension that *can* be integral to the Episcopal Church. The staff could not have been more welcoming.

People spoke with striking honesty about their lifestyles and beliefs. The day was appreciated by many, including Trinity students, but one wrote afterwards: “It was sinful for us to allow ourselves to be led in worship by

those who worship another god, to discuss sin with people who are proud of sin and defiantly unrepentant.” I’ve heard some were asking that the chapel be reconsecrated after our visit.

The feelings run deep. There was a scandal simply in being together. And a relief in confronting one another directly rather than through journals or inter-Church gossip.

Finally, I rely on Virginia Mollenkott’s wisdom when she said we simply present ourselves in a spirit of love and, beyond that, rely on God’s grace and agency in putting the day to right use.

—J.W-K.

(A video is to be released in 1993.)

Militarism at school

A new local action project developed by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) called "Choose Life" is now available for use with young people wrestling with career and other important life decisions in an increasingly military-positive social environment. Project resources include a survey tool for measuring the presence and influence of the military on high school campuses as well as activities that cover topics from "Vocational Discernment through the Eyes of Faith" to "Draft Registration and Conscientious Objection."

"Since it is increasingly difficult for youth to obtain financial assistance for education or to find meaningful employment, regardless of socioeconomic background, a military career may appear to be the best or only option available," say project designers Janet Chisholm and Judith Beck.

For "Choose Life" resource packets write EPF at PO Box 28156, Washington, D.C. 20038 or call 202-783-3380 (FAX 202-393-3695). Episcopalians should note that diocesan youth officers have been sent copies — the packet is designed to be duplicated.

Episcopal Church in Pasadena, Calif., for organizing and developing an AIDS service center, the first of its kind in that community. Sadly, even minimal AIDS activism continues to be an exception in the Episcopal Church — only 20 or so Episcopal dioceses are currently on record with AIDS policies and educational activities recommended by the 1992 General Convention.



Photo credit: Argus Photo, Cape Town

Dioceses in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa wasted little time ordaining women to the priesthood once the province approved women priests last August. Here Archbishop Desmond Tutu is praying over Wilma Jacobsen and Margaret Vertue after ordaining them priests in Cape Town on September 29. Bishop David Russell of Grahamstown ordained Nancy Charton (the first woman deacon ordained by the province in 1985), Bridge Dickson and Su Groves on Sept. 5. "Our Church will be enriched by the ministry of women priests," Tutu remarked about the history-making ordinations. "It will be more compassionate, more caring, after being impoverished for so long."

Charles, who will retire in June 1993 after eight years in the position.

Eight to go

Deacon Mary Kay Bond of Salina, Kans., will likely soon become the Diocese of Western Kansas' first woman priest now that the diocese's Standing Committee contains a majority of women's ordination advocates. Last year, Episcopal Synod of America folks held enough seats to block Bond's ordination by abstaining from approval "for reasons of conscience." Angry reaction to that vote engendered a campaign to change the committee's composition at the diocese's annual convention last October. "The issues were made clear to delegates by their priests . . . and by a large portion of the Bishop's Annual Address," Bond reports. Bond's ordination will reduce to eight the number of Episcopal Church dioceses that have not ordained women to the priesthood.

Affirmative action

The Church Deployment Office (CDO) has finally acted on its longstanding policy of equal opportunity and affirmative action by now automatically including women, blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans when it receives requests for candidate profiles — whether or not the parish or diocese making the request indicates a willingness to hire such persons (in practice, that willingness has been missing).

It could be, according to James G. Wilson, the CDO's executive director, that a woman or a person of color might be best qualified for a job, even though a parish or diocese may have excluded such candidates from its profiles request.

"I've seen parishes surprise themselves once they discover that the person who best meets their criteria is, for example, a woman," Wilson said. "They've surprised themselves by going ahead and hiring that woman."

Honoring AIDS activism

At its annual meeting last October, members of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC) took time out to honor Deborah Harmon Hines of Massachusetts for her work as an early pioneer in educating and organizing on behalf of persons living with HIV/AIDS, particularly among people of color. The group also praised the congregation of All Saints

We're proud

The Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., has named William W. Rankin, a contributing editor of *The Witness* and a former chair of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, its new dean and president. Rankin is rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Belvedere, Calif. He succeeds Otis



— Prepared by Julie A. Wortman

Little seems to have changed since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark Supreme Court decision that declared segregated education unconstitutional because it is “inherently unequal.”

“In no school that I saw anywhere in the United States, were nonwhite children in large numbers truly intermingled with white children,” says Jonathan Kozol, author of *Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools*. Many of the influential white people that Kozol interviewed considered segregation “a ‘past injustice’ that had been sufficiently addressed,” despite research clearly showing vast inequities in school funding, with white suburban schools receiving as much as two and a half times the funding of black and hispanic urban ones.

Clarissa Sligh uses elements from the history of the school desegregation struggle and from current events to fashion *Witness to Dissent: Memory, Yearning, and Struggle*, a sculptural installation that has been exhibited in Washington, D.C. and New York City.

Sligh is an artist with a social conscience, an African-American woman, and an adult who played an integral part in the civil rights movement as a child. In 1956, as tenth-grader Clarissa Thompson, she was named the lead plaintiff in what became the first successful school desegregation case in the state of Virginia. Her grades, psychological profile and standardized test scores were used as the basis for the arguments presented in

state and federal courts as part of the suit. In *Witness to Dissent*, Sligh takes this experience, simultaneously personal and profoundly public, and attempts to show its connections to the racial issues of today.

Sligh first solicited stories from more

shed in the struggle for equality) contain the texts of civil rights legislation dating back to the Emancipation Proclamation (the legalistic language of which stands in stark contrast to the very direct and personal writing in the “witness” statements). Overseeing the installation and its classroom-like reading and writing activities, is a large blue-tinted photograph of two little girls, one Negro, one Caucasian, with the caption “They want integration.” (The image was taken from a 1956 newspaper photo of Sligh and her classmate Ann Marx.)

While Sligh wants viewers to understand the legal and political history of the civil rights movement, she is interested in something more than a textbook chronology — she wants to focus on how segregation affected, and continues to affect, individual lives. Her use of autobiographical elements presents events from the vantage point of a confused teenager who has unwittingly found herself in a “public position of representativity.” She includes a videotape in which she seeks the perspectives of fam-

ily members, other artists and political activists. And, finally, through the “witness” statements themselves, she encouraged people to confront their own private feelings and observations about racial relations in the United States over the past 40 years, and to begin healing “the xenophobia which divides America to this day.”

TW



Witness to Dissent: Memory, Yearning and Struggle, a sculptural installation designed by Clarissa Sligh.

than 100 artists and friends from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds, who all grew up during the civil rights movement. They were encouraged to jot their memories down quickly and without editing; their statements are now part of the installation, providing a backdrop of honest and conflicting emotions. In a gallery room awash in patriotic colors, blue stars and red stripes surround a white table and chair which are provided for visitors who might wish to contribute their own written “witness” about life in a segregated society.

A series of red books mounted on a red wall (perhaps as a reminder of the blood

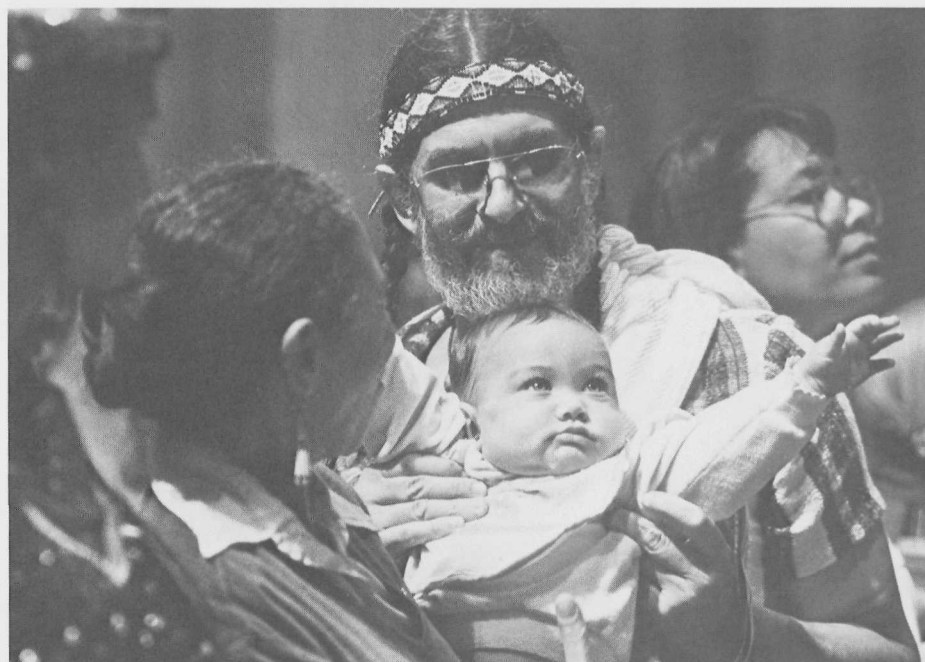
Blaise Tobia and **Virginia Maksymowicz**, Philadelphia artists, edit the Art & Society section of *The Witness*.

[The following is adapted from the sermon preached by Steven Charleston, bishop of Alaska, at the Cultural Survival Celebration at Washington National Cathedral on October 12.]

What brought you here today? Why are you here? Some of you have come out of anger. Some of you have come out of guilt. Some of you have come out of hope, and some out of need. Some have come to show solidarity, support. Some out of simple curiosity. I believe that whatever our personal answers may be to that simple but profound question, one thing can be said of us all: There is not a single person who is here by accident. We are gathered here for a reason, and it is the purpose of God that has brought us to this holy ground.

I will tell you what I believe that purpose is. It is to make of us a community, a people of God. From all four sacred directions we come to this place to be the living people of God, to be a new community, to start afresh and anew another 500 years together in the Americas. But the 500 years that will come forth from this place today will be a community dedicated not to greed, not to violence, but to peace, to reconciliation, a community of hope, a community of trust, a community of justice, a community of love. We are here, brothers and sisters all, by the will of God to be such a community. We are blessed by God on this sacred day to embody that new beginning.

And how do we do it? It begins with something as simple as remembering. To many of you this may not seem a powerful way for God to act in the lives of God's people. But I can tell you from my own tradition that the power to remember and to pass on the story of the people, generation unto generation, is the seed and the heart of what it means to be a tribe, to be the People of God. We tell our



Cultural Survival Celebration at the National Cathedral.

credit: Ruth Frenson

Reclaiming America: an October 12 Celebration

by Steven Charleston

children the tradition of the people. We tell our story in song and in chant, in prophesy and in memory. We carry that on because it becomes for us the center of the tribe. There is a power that is released when we tell our story to one another. When we remember together, our shared history makes us a people.

What happened to us 500 years ago is our common story. It is not only the story of what happened to America's indigenous people. It is a story that has touched the lives of every culture and every race in this hemisphere. This has happened to you. We do not gather to remember something dead. My ancestors are witnesses to the truth of what happened here 500 years ago. They are a living testimony. Look

around you. See the native people gathered in this cathedral. There is a living testimony. And the truth never dies.

And how do we understand this truth of which I speak? There was a temple, a high holy place, the habitation of God Almighty. It stood on sacred ground, and its doors were open to all peoples of all nations. And once the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, came to Jerusalem, and approached that sacred place, what did he behold before him? There were many tables where business as usual was going on, where what had been sacred had now become profane. And what wonder and amazement did the people gathered around him exhibit when he strode forward and with a mighty hand turned them

over and spoke to the congregation, and said, "Not here. This is holy ground, and so it shall remain. For all people."

When Christopher Columbus planted his flag of conquest 500 years ago he stepped out onto sacred ground. In his blindness and his ignorance he thought he was conquering real estate. But he had stepped out onto the promised land for our people. This is the sacred place where we were called to be God's people and to give thanks and praise to the Creator. It was holy ground, and that flag of conquest planted deep within it drove home colonialism which is the beginning of our story. The tables were set up. Columbus in his ignorance and blindness opened our holy land for business. The tables were set and they are still doing thriving business today.

I choose only three names for the legacy of Christopher Columbus. The first is racism, the second is oppression, and the third is exploitation.

When Christopher Columbus came here, his first act was to seize innocent native people, men and women, bind them in chains, and take them back to Spain with him as slaves. And he did this because he thought they were less than human, because they were inferior. Colonialism brought us racism, and it is as alive today as it was 500 years ago. That racism has touched the lives of every person in this cathedral. It is not an experience unique to native people. Those of you who are proud to be of African descent need no message from me of the truth of what I am saying. Those of you who are from an Asian background, were you not used as cheap labor? Those of you who are of Hispanic origin, were you not those who toiled and still toil in the fields of colonial America? Racism continues to do a healthy traffic in the Native homeland, and every single day it defiles that which is holy and sacred.

And what of oppression that grows

from racism like insidious chains that ensnarl us all? Look to the south where whole nations have a majority of citizens who are indigenous, native people. Are they free? Look to the north, so smug, while in our own cities the economic, social, and political oppression of people of all colors continues unabated to this day. You know raw power is the currency of colonialism, and it is traded across the Americas every day.

And exploitation. I don't need to tell you how deeply my ancestors loved and revered this sacred place, to such a degree, with such passion, with such immeasurable love, that they called it their Mother. And how has the earth been treated over the last 500 years? Our forests are cleared of their timber for profit. Our rivers are polluted with sewage for profit. The very air we breathe is foul for profit. We have taken this Mother and abused her more vilely and more insidiously than at any other time in the history of the tribe of human beings. We have carved her up and sold her on the tables of colonialism that do a brisk business in the buying and selling of the earth itself. Is there anyone here that will not pay the price for that abuse? If this be the truth, what are you going to do about it?

I cannot answer for you. I can only answer for myself. And I say to you, I will stand with my ancestors. I will stand with my ancestors who for generations fought with every ounce of their strength against the dying of the light. Fought against racism, oppression, and the destruction of our Mother, the earth. I stand with them, and I stand with my people who continue that struggle every day of their lives because

they remember. I stand with my people and I stand with my God. Hear me: Christ is coming. The Christ who does not forget God's people is coming, is coming! Behold, Christ comes in a sacred way from all four sacred directions. And this Christ can see with the same clarity those tables of colonial, capitalist commerce that have defiled the sacred land of God and abused the people of God, and with a mighty hand this Christ shall reach out and those tables shall be turned.

My brothers, my sisters, is this too political a sermon? It's a day of liberation. Receive it. From this moment on, you will never be the same.

Here is the word of God for those of us commissioned on this day to a new community: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loved us."

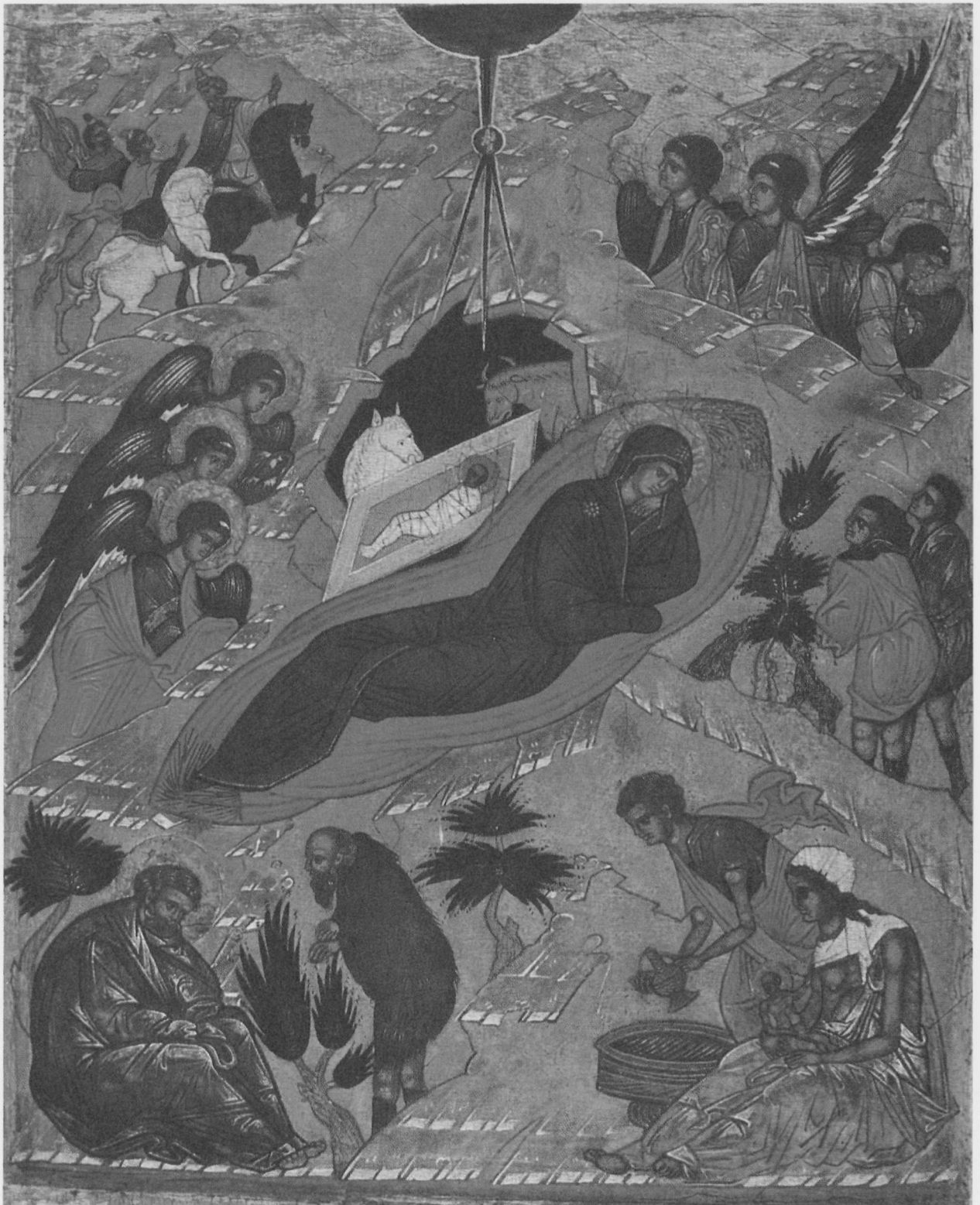
Columbus was only a conqueror. Colonialism is only a conqueror. We are more than conquerors, we are more than just survivors, we are those victorious, those brought to life again, those who know the truth, those who hear the truth,

those who speak the truth, and hear the words of St. Paul: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation

will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Brothers and sisters, we are more than conquerors. I stand to proclaim a new beginning. I stand to proclaim a new community. I stand with my ancestors. I stand with my people. I stand with God who stands with me. Amen. **TW**

*From all four sacred
directions we come to
this place to be the living
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community, to start afresh
another 500 years together
in the Americas.*



**Geburt
Christi**

credit: 15th c. icon
from Novgorod,
Russia.
Collection of
George Hann.

A Child under threat: El Salvador's accords

by Linda C. Crockett

In the midst of the tension in El Salvador, there is a wonderful hope. Salvadoran Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez describes the Peace Accords as a newly born Child, in need of nurture to grow to strength and wholeness. This Child of Peace was born in New York at midnight on December 31, 1991, when agreement — mediated by the United Nations — was reached by the Government and FMLN. The umbilical cord was cut in Mexico on January 16, 1992, when the Accords were formally signed. And the Child was baptized on the Popular Altar in the Civic Plaza in San Salvador on February 1, when thousands gathered to celebrate the first day of the ceasefire.

"There are Herods who want to kill the Child," Gomez said. "We are in a critical stage where all could be lost. It is important we be vigilant over the life of the Child. It must be the responsibility of Solidarity, which helped give birth to the Child, to help us assure that the Child grows to full strength."

The Accords address a cease fire; purging of military officers responsible for the scorched earth policies and human rights violations; land redistribution; incorporation of the FMLN into civilian life; reduction of the military, including dissolution of the Treasury Police, National Guard and the five elite rapid response battalions; and creation of a new Civilian Police Force.

A nine-month calendar, ending Octo-

Linda Crockett, of Adamstown, Pa. is a founding member of Project Via Crucis and participated in the sixth annual delegation to El Salvador.

ber 31, detailed measures to be taken by each side through the delicate process of demilitarization and construction of a new political, social and economic landscape. The United Nations has proposed an extension until December 15, which both the U.S.-supported ARENA government and the FMLN have accepted. The FMLN is complying with full disarmament.

ARENA, meanwhile, is behind schedule. Its attempt in March to avoid dismantling the security forces was bolstered by an April Legislative Assembly vote that restructured the National Guard and Treasury Police by transferring them into other parts of the military. Only after an outcry from the United Nations and the public were the security forces finally disbanded. Governmental compliance is estimated at only about 50 percent.

Short-term and immediate danger is evident in the re-emergence of paramilitary death squads. Human rights violations are increasing. On October 11, a top FMLN military commander, Pablo Parado Andino, was ambushed and critically wounded by unknown men in military uniforms carrying M-16s at a roadblock. A member of the coffee workers' union was abducted October 13. His tortured body was found two days later. Paid ads by right-wing groups are appearing frequently in the newspapers, denouncing the Accords as treason, demanding that the FMLN disarm completely and threatening a new bloodbath.

The Ad Hoc Commission, set up under the Accords to review the human rights records of military officers, submitted their report to President Christiani on September 22, naming over 100 offi-

ers to be removed from the military. Under the Accords, the president has six weeks to carry out the recommendations. So far, no names have been made public and no officers have been removed. However, under the United Nations extension, the government is obligated to purge the military by 1993.

With painfully clear understanding that more of them may die in the struggle, the Salvadoran poor, along with the historic Churches, popular organizations, unions, and the FMLN, call the peace process "irreversible." The Accords provide a foundation upon which a new model, characterized by full participation of the poor, can be constructed. The potential this represents is precisely the reason that this Peace Child, born of the blood of more than 75,000 martyrs, is viewed by the powers as dangerous.

What if other "third world" nations begin to take seriously this emerging model of a society that does not fit into any of the traditional East or West structures of political and economic power? What if the poor nations begin to adopt a model that supports their own internal development, and refuse to bleed their people dry to benefit "first world" economics and interests? What if the poor of the United States become conscientized as have the Salvadorans during the years of repression and war, awakening to the root causes of their poverty and organizing themselves to demand justice from our government?

"The Child has been born of Solidarity, Hope and Resistance," Bishop Gomez says. "The Child, fully grown, will become Peace with Justice." A threat to the Herods indeed. **TW**





Africa: Healer
credit: Betty
LaDuke

Rage, healing in South Africa

by David Chidester

September 7, 1992, against the guns of Bisho, people fell, as the sudden, unexpected beehive of automatic rifle-fire left 29 dead and over 200 wounded. Yet another massacre, not ancient history, like Sharpeville 1960 or Soweto 1976, but today, like Sebokeng, Dobsonville, Boipatong, and over 50 other mass killings since 1990, Bisho stood out amidst the carnage of the daily death toll. It made reconciliation more difficult; it made calls for revenge and retribution easier to heed. In response, political leaders turned up the heat of the already boiling rhetoric. Religious leaders buried the dead.

"How much longer," Archbishop Desmond Tutu asked, "must we have to keep drying the people's tears?" People are in pain. If their grief turns to tears, it could just as easily turn to rage.

In South Africa, pain has assumed many, multiplying forms. It has resulted not only from the loss of loved ones, but also from the violations of humanity that have occurred in and through the routine humiliations and degradations, the recurring insults and occasional tortures, and the whole systematic, institutionalized apparatus of separation, exclusion, and dehumanization that came to be known as apartheid. South Africa has been a world of pain. However, if pain has been constant, the effects of pain have alternated between despair and rage. Despair

is obviously disempowering. Rage appears powerful, an explosive rush of violent energy seeking an outlet. Nevertheless, both despair and rage flow from the same river of pain.

Pain is a force that, among other things, poses the central challenge of being human. If pain turns into despair, the self is dehumanized. If pain turns into rage, the other is dehumanized, transformed into an object, a depersonalized target for righteous revenge or retribution. Being human, in these terms, is a dynamic, powerful equilibrium that is poised between a disempowered despair and an overempowered rage. Between those extremes, a space of mutual recognition can be negotiated in which humans can be human. After all, in African terms, a human is a human by virtue of recognizing others as human beings.

The Churches in South Africa have responded to rage in a variety of ways. The most predictable, perhaps, and least effective, have been issuing resolutions that call for peace. As might be expected, such resolutions have been largely useless in addressing the reality of grief, rage and violence in South Africa. Like the September, 1991 National Peace Accord, signed by all political leaders, but ignored by all the combatants on the ground, church resolutions have floated like bits of paper in the whirlwind.

Christians in South Africa have also addressed rage more meaningfully through rituals of healing. Many local

churches, especially, but not only, those known as African independent or indigenous churches, have drawn upon specifically African religious resources to address despair and rage. In traditional African religion, the cause of pain, whether it results from violence against or violations of human beings, can be identified as witchcraft. A much misunderstood symbolic idiom, witchcraft beliefs and practices locate the cause of human suffering in the antisocial, and therefore antihuman, acts of evil agents. In response, a person identified as an evil agent can confess and be reincorporated into the human community. As long as witches remain at large, however, people must be protected. If affected, people must be healed. If despair and rage are symptoms of the insidious effects of witchcraft, healing must address these symptoms. Following traditional practice, some Christians resort to sacred medicines, or muti, for protection from evil. By contrast, members of African independent churches reject the use of muti,

relying instead on moral purity and spiritual healing.

African independent churches, South Africa's largest religious constituency, now accounting for the religious affiliation of

In African religion, the cause of pain, violations of human beings, can be identified as witchcraft. As long as witches remain at large, people must be protected.

roughly 40 percent of the population and divided into over 5,000 denominations, have found ways to incorporate traditional African religious resources, such as rites of purification, reverence for ancestors and detection of witches into a Christian framework. For the most part, these churches have been apolitical. They have been local, township-based havens, or rural sanctuaries, of spiritual security in a harsh world.

David Chidester is associate professor of religious studies at the University of Cape Town and director of the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa. He is author of *Religions of South Africa* (Routledge, 1992) and *Shots in the Streets: Violence and Religion in South Africa* (Beacon, 1991).

In April 1992, however, the largest African independent church, the Zion Christian Church based in Moriah, north of Pretoria, provided a platform from which Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi addressed an Easter gathering of two million Zionists. Although the congregation listened attentively to three political leaders, they responded most enthusiastically to the Zionist prophet, Bishop Lekganyane, who presented the promise, not of political resolution, but of spiritual healing. In Zionist practice, healing is often enacted in dramatic performances in which despair and rage are exorcised through the laying on of hands, or washed away through baptism, or purged through ritual vomiting, or stamped under foot in vigorous, communal dancing. The cause of suffering might persist, as the witches remain at large — even occupying positions of political power, but the symptoms of despair and rage can be eased through ritual healing.

In counterpoint to rituals of spiritual healing, some Christians adopt a “prophetic” stance, identifying, and identifying with, the suffering that has caused the liberation movements to resort to violence. Working with the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the Azanian Peoples Organization,

In Zionist practice, healing is often enacted in dramatic performances in which despair and rage are exorcised through the laying on of hands, washed away through baptism, purged through ritual vomiting, or stamped under foot in vigorous, communal dancing. The cause of suffering may persist, as the witches remain at large — even occupying positions of political power, but the symptoms of despair and rage can be eased through ritual healing.

Church people have struggled for an essentially religious, even apocalyptic, spiritual redemption. Banned and forced underground after 1960, liberation movements resorted to armed struggle, in part, as Nelson Mandela explained in the early 1960s, to channel popular anger, which might otherwise explode in terrorism. In prospect of revolutionary victory, liberation movements also promised a spiritual recovery of the humanity that had been denied under apartheid. If rage could be transformed into disciplined resistance, then resistance could result in human redemption.

In the second half of the 1980s, many of the most visible and vocal South African religious leaders aligned themselves with the promise of redemption through

resistance. The *Kairos Document*, for example, declared that any genuine Christian Church had “to confront and to disobey the state in order to serve God.” In the 1990s, however, with the revolutionary parousia indefinitely delayed, and a contested era of negotiations entered, despair still could be countered, and rage channeled, through acts of protest. As part of its mass action campaign, the ANC led 50,000 marchers into Bisho, a ritualized act of protest against the oppressive military rule that had been established there with the support of the South African government. Hopeful protest, however, was brutally slaughtered at Bisho.

During the ANC’s organized mass action in the early 1950s, known as the Defiance Campaign, labor leader Moses Kotane declared that government authorities “are Christians but they eat people.” Forty years later, at Bisho and elsewhere, the state continues to eat people with cold, calculating rationality. The river of pain continues to flow through South Africa.

If Christian Churches have addressed the despair and rage born of pain, it has not been through Church resolutions, but by providing practical resources of healing and hope in which people can find refuge. Only addressing the symptoms perhaps, rituals of spiritual healing and hopeful protest may nevertheless make pain bearable until the causes of grief and rage can begin to be more directly addressed through a negotiated political settlement.

TW

Notice!

The Witness publishes ten issues a year. The January and February issues are combined and will be mailed in the third week of January.



At the Phoenix General Convention in July 1991, bishops shouted at each other, violated the confidence of executive sessions, and generally embarrassed themselves. Shocked by their own behavior, they held a special meeting at Kanuga the next spring, meeting in small groups for bible sharing and reflection on their role as bishops, seeking to restore a sense of community, or at least civility, to their interactions.

Moving on gingerly, their next regular meeting, in September 1992 in Baltimore, combined the small group format — focused this time on the authority of Scripture — with some quasi-public sessions, most notably a brief address and Q-&-A period with the visiting Archbishop of Canterbury. They plan another retreat at Kanuga in the spring, to continue working on their common life.

Most post-meeting reactions to Kanuga and Baltimore have been cautiously worded, along the lines of: “We needed to get to know one another.” Less diplomatic sentiments have also been heard, ranging from “we need to stop navel-gazing and get on with the business of the Church” and “this is just one more way to avoid dealing with difficult issues” to “the legislative model should be abandoned; everything should be done through bible-based small groups” and “bishops should reclaim the magisterium, teaching the rest of the Church instead of expecting Convention to decide by majority vote.”

What is going on here? Should the rest of us, laity and clergy, at home and in the House of Deputies, be worried?

Disaster or Turning Point?

The eruption of ungentlemanly be-

Pamela W. Darling is an ECPC board member and Church historian from Philadelphia, Pa. Artist **Edward Bisone** works in Santa Ana, Calif.



Figure with halo, gagged.

credit: Edward Bisone

Critiquing collegiality

by Pamela W. Darling

havior in Phoenix blew the lid off tensions that had been building for many years. Personal antagonisms between a few individuals merely exposed a web of conflict and suspicion previously hidden under the veneer of old-boy's-club geniality.

There wouldn't be anything particularly significant about this — after all, the House of Bishops is just made up of sinners like the rest of the Church — were it not for the point in history at which the blow-up occurred. The 1991 Convention began in controversy over racism — both the seemingly intractable problem of racist structures in Church and society, and the location of the Convention in Arizona which had just voted against observing Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Most

of the shouting in Phoenix stemmed from outraged disagreements about the Church's treatment of gay and lesbian people, especially regarding ordination. And the fault line dividing people on the issue of sexuality lies very close to the line drawn by those opposed to the ordination of women and, not so long ago, by those resisting Church involvement in the civil rights struggle.

This is not a coincidence. In both Church and society, changes in policy and attitude toward women, gay men and lesbians, like those affecting people of color, attack the foundations of Western patriarchy, relaxing the restrictions which keep power and authority in the hands of white, male, ostensibly-straight people. To the extent that the episcopacy has

been a patriarchal institution, its system of authority presuming paternalistic control of the faithful by their "fathers in God" and its members accustomed to the privileges of belonging to an elite group, it too is under attack.

Protecting the Status Quo

In response to these challenges, the House of Bishops has repeatedly appealed to images of unity and collegiality in an attempt to prevent individual bishops from moving ahead of the group, and conversely promoted an agree-to-disagree attitude toward those who lag behind. Some historical precursors to the crisis in Phoenix shed light on this process:

1) In 1966, the House of Bishops censured civil rights activist Bishop James A. Pike for the disregard of "collegiality" implicit in his provocative writings and highly publicized recognition of Deaconess Phyllis Edwards as a full-fledged deacon in the Diocese of California — four years before the 1970 General Convention eliminated distinctions between female and male deacons.

2) After the House of Deputies rejected the ordination of women in 1973, a slim majority of those remaining in the House of Bishops at the end of Convention appealed to "collegiality and mutual loyalty" in the hope of dissuading individual bishops from ordaining women anyhow.

3) In 1974, the House of Bishops voted to "decry" the actions of three retired bishops who ordained eleven women to the priesthood in Philadelphia "in violation of the collegiality of the House of Bishops," and censured them the following year after efforts to bring them to trial were stymied. The ordination of four more women by another bishop in Washington in 1975 was also "decried."

4) A year after the 1976 General Convention did open the priesthood and episcopate to women, the House of Bishops seemed to set collegiality aside, unilaterally

declaring in its "conscience clause" that no one was really bound by the canon about women's ordination. In the hope of avoiding outright schism, they persuaded themselves that its clearly prescriptive non-discriminatory language was meant



to be "permissive" only (an interpretation rejected by subsequent Conventions, but still proclaimed by many bishops), and ushered in the prolonged period of contradictory teaching and practice in which we find ourselves still.

5) In 1989, as Bishop Barbara Harris attended her first meeting, the House of Bishops responded to the newly-formed Episcopal Synod of America's promise of disregard for canons regarding both women's ordination and diocesan boundaries with a fuzzy statement of brotherly love (appropriately enough, written in Philadelphia) and an even fuzzier assertion that resistance to ordaining women was "a recognized theological position" in the Anglican Communion.

6) In 1990, the House of Bishops "dis-associated" itself from Bishop John Spong after his highly publicized ordination of a gay man who lived with his male partner,

citing as the "authoritative position of the Church at this time" a recommendation from the 1979 General Convention that the ordination of a "practicing" homosexual was not "appropriate."

7) In 1991, amidst the name-calling in Phoenix, the House of Bishops narrowly backed away from censuring two other bishops for ordaining people who openly shared their lives with persons of the same sex, agreeing instead that such ordinations cause "pain and damage to the collegiality and credibility of this House" and calling for a process to develop consensus on the issue.

8) In 1992, the House of Bishops took no action against retired Bishop Donald Davies, who violated canon law by entering a diocese against its bishop's wishes to confirm members of a break-away congregation, which affiliated with the "Missionary Diocese" established by the Episcopal Synod of America to protest the ordination of women and of gay and lesbian people.

Understanding Inconsistency

These incidents from our last quarter century show a curious pattern. Sometimes the canons are rigidly enforced and sometimes they are interpreted away. Sometimes recommendations and tradition are treated as though they have the force of law and sometimes they are discretely ignored. Sometimes collegiality means uniformity of practice and a single "mind of the house" and sometimes it allows disagreement and contradictory practice.

This inconsistency becomes explicable when analyzed in terms of inclusion: canons and statements which exclude categories of people from the ordained ministry carry more weight than those which include, and bishops whose actions support continued exclusion are tolerated, while, until the Phoenix Convention, bishops who acted to include those previously excluded were punished.

Why should this be so? In any expanding group there is an unconscious backlash phenomenon that prompts those who match the previous norm to resist the incursion of "others" — whether new waves of immigrants, or new categories of people seeking access to the ordination process, or new bishops who don't fit the elite white male model.

The fact is, the House of Bishops, like the rest of the clergy and lay leadership, is beginning to reflect the real demographics of the Church. About half the currently active bishops were consecrated since Edmond Browning became Presiding Bishop in 1985. Most of the non-white bishops ever consecrated in the American Church sit in the House today. Barbara Harris broke the male monopoly in 1989, and Jane Dixon's consecration last month lowers the psychological barriers to the election of even more women as bishops. Though no active bishop has yet self-identified as gay, it is well-known that there have long been gay bishops, some sharing life with same-sex partners. Elsewhere in the national Church, Pamela P. Chinnis is President of the House of Deputies, and only 45 percent of the elected members of the Executive Council are white men. And in this diverse context, the differences among white men themselves are more visible.

Hope for the Future

The myth of the straight white male "fathers of the Church" has collapsed, and with it old understandings about authoritative teaching in the Church. There was no consensus in Phoenix — not about sexuality, and not about how to treat bishops who violate the old boundaries of collegiality. Some floun-

dering around is to be expected as we figure out how to deal with these new circumstances. A new model of episcopal leadership must be found to replace the old, which was too entwined with the perspectives and assumptions of the few to serve the many well.

There are voices which bemoan the breakdown of consensus, the loss of unity, the erosion of traditional understandings of authority. Many harbor a nostalgic desire to return to the good old days when "everyone" agreed on values, on mores, on standards of faith and practice, on how to be the Church in the world.

But there never really was such a time. The old consensus among those permitted to exercise authority in the Church did not take account of the perspectives, the wisdom, or the needs of many others. The Church seemed to speak with a single voice, because many others were silenced. As they begin to be heard, as the "others"

The myth of the straight white male "fathers of the Church" has collapsed, and with it old understandings about authoritative teaching in the Church.

No longer homogenous or monolithic, the House of Bishops could use its own interactions to teach the Church and the world something about co-existing with "the other" in love.

dering around is to be expected as we figure out how to deal with these new circumstances. A new model of episcopal leadership must be found to replace the old, which was too entwined with the perspectives and assumptions of the few to serve the many well.

If the temptation to turn back is resisted, a stronger, wiser leadership could develop. No longer homogenous or monolithic, the House of Bishops could

use its own interactions to teach the Church and the world something about co-existing with "the other" in love. It could find a new approach to "authoritative teaching" that draws its power from the pooled experience, insights and wisdom of the whole people of God.

It could find courage to grant the same tolerance to those calling for greater inclusion as to those unable to accept some of their sisters and brothers. It could emerge

from this introspective interlude with a deeper sense of "unity" and "collegiality," no longer confused with uniformity but grounded in our common love of the one God in whom we all live and move and have our being. Let it be so. **TW**

Fundraising policy

Fundraising for *The Witness* will be composed of one annual appeal from *Friends of The Witness* in the Spring. Readers will not receive emergency or irregular appeals throughout the year.

Board members of the Episcopal Church Publishing Co. have taken on this task in an effort to support the magazine and its staff.

Subscription revenue, at \$60,000, covers less than one-fifth of the total annual magazine budget, so additional revenues will always be necessary. *The Witness* is fortunate to have an endowment that supplies \$220,000 a year. The balance needed to cover the \$328,000 is another \$48,000.

The Friends of The Witness' fundraising letter went out later than usual this year. In the future, it will arrive in April or May. Our thanks to all of you who made donations for 1992! Your gifts make a critical difference.

Emma Mashinini knows the feel of outrage in her bones. There was a day when South African government repression drove the name of her baby from her mind. That's a hard thing to forgive.

Mashinini, now the officer for justice and reconciliation in the Anglican Province of South Africa, spent six months enduring solitary confinement and torture in 1981.

"They fetched me from my home in the early hours of the morning in Soweto," Mashinini explained during a recent telephone interview. "They pushed us all out of the house, even my husband. They went through all our letters and pictures. They put me in solitary confinement for six months.

"I was very angry to be kept in prison when I had not committed any crime. We had a lot of work to be done in the community and I should have been at home. There was a terrible day when I was sitting in a cell and I had forgotten my baby's name. I could see her face, but I could not place a name on her."

The thing that kept her sane, Mashinini says, was her faith. "I had someone to talk to all the time — I was talking to my Lord. I was in a weak position in prison but I became very strong when I demanded to have a visit from the Church and holy communion during Easter time.

"I wasn't prepared to give in — to commit suicide or change my lifestyle. I was not going to please them. I said I will stand up against them."



Emma Mashinini

Courtesy of Archbishop Desmond Tutu's office

Confronting apartheid

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

said I will stand up against them."

Ten years later, Mashinini's commitment is unflagging, but she says she is confused about the politics of South Africa for the first time in her memory.

As a child, forced by the South African government to relocate twice, she knew who her enemy was. That conviction was sustained during her trade union activism, imprisonment and Church work.

But suddenly, at the age of 63, she is confused.

"Today it is very distressing — you hear an eight-month-old child has been shot, a 90-year-old man has been killed. When a worker can go on a train and chop people....

"For the first time I am confused. I say, 'Lord, am I weakening? Why am I confused?' They want us to be confused. I fight against it. I do not want to be weakened by this system."

In Mashinini's view, part of the problem is that while ecumenical Church lead-

ers launched the 1991 peace accords, they officially stepped back once the government and big business leaders were on board. Unfortunately, she says, the accords predicated a new constitution on "an end to violence." Consequently, those resisting a new constitution had reason to promote factions and violence.

"We know there are people behind the many killings of our people, but why are we so weak to give in to instructions that you must kill? It is unlike South African children. Once you are an elder person, you are the mother and father of all South African children."

White Afrikaaners have often objected to Church support for political change, Mashinini said, although she notes that some young Afrikaaners are refusing military service because they understand it to be unjust.

"They know about these things. They cannot be ignorant. We speak about justice and equality. They always sit there

*Witnesses,
the quick and the dead*

"I wasn't prepared to give in — to commit suicide or change my lifestyle — that's exactly what [the government] wanted. I was not going to please them. I

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

— but what does it mean to them? Does it mean anything?"

Mashinini, raised an Anglican, has always been able to rely on the Church to speak out against forced relocation, even when it meant Church leaders would be deported. The Church provided meeting space for the union movement, just as it currently addresses issues of homelessness, land distribution, the death penalty, prison life, and the anti-conscription movement. Belatedly, she says, the Church has also affirmed the humanity of women by ordaining them.

She also draws hope from the indigenous Christian Churches which lay a claim on 40 percent of the South African population. [See page 37.]

"These Churches reach the most humble of the people. They do so much. They may not have the kind of liturgy we have, but they do the laying on of hands; they pray for the people. People who cannot afford to go to doctors, go to those Churches and they find comfort. I appreciate them. When we serve on committees we never want to be without them. They are a force to reckon with — they are large numbers. They understand the need for change. They are the ones who are in the front, standing up and picketing on issues of homelessness.

"When many people have been killed, it is those people who are being affected. They can't keep quiet. They are in the forefront of the change. When you hear there has been a successful 100-percent stay-away from work — those are the people. They make you proud of who you are. If we want to know our roots — it is those people. They can counsel you during your time of distress. They are psychologists in their simple way."

And perhaps it is a simple endurance and wisdom that has the best chance to weave the current bloodshed and confusion in South Africa into a fabric of change and hope. **TW**

Welcome to The Witness!

Each month we mail complimentary copies of *The Witness* to people we believe might be interested in subscribing. This December 1992 issue is distinct because it is 16 pages longer than usual and includes four-color art, affordable only

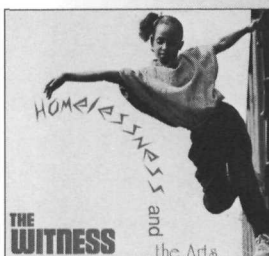
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Joe Pelham remembered

by Barbara Harris

The recent death of Joe Pelham, executive director of Boston's Episcopal City Mission in the Diocese of Massachusetts, silenced one of the Church's most articulate advocates for the nation's poor and dispossessed. For nearly 40 years, this gentle and compassionate intellectual and spiritual giant provided prophetic leadership in the Episcopal Church and beyond to those seeking to respond to the cries of poor people in cities across this country.

"Old heads" and "young turks" alike will recall Pelham's presence wherever the "action" was in the Church — from his parish and diocesan ministry in Michigan during the late 1950s, his early leadership of the old integrationist Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) during the 1960s and Coalition E at 1970s General Conventions, to his most recent role as convenor of The Consultation, an umbrella organization of progressive groups within the Episcopal Church. He perhaps best may be remembered as the principal author of *To Hear and To Heed: The Episcopal Church Listens and Acts in the City*, which grew out of a series of hearings held by the Urban Bishops' Coalition in the late '70s to allow the disadvantaged of the nation's cities to speak for themselves. That 1978 publication remains a primer for an understanding of the Church's role in identifying and addressing the systemic causes of poverty in our cities.

Often identified as "the conscience of the Episcopal Church," Pelham constantly, consistently and exasperatingly

poked, prodded and nudged the Church, reminding it of the moral responsibility to serve those most marginalized in our society. He held firmly to a conviction that this ministry could best be carried out



Joseph Pelham

by community-based organizations made up of and run by poor people. Acting on that conviction, Pelham made important contributions to the shaping of the national Church's Coalition for Human Needs grants program, its Jubilee Ministry thrust and other grass-roots constituency efforts. He also was one of the principal architects of the so-called Michigan Plan — the Church's yet-to-be-implemented grand foray into the world of community economic development adopted by the General Convention at Detroit in 1988.

For the past ten years Pelham's leadership of the Episcopal City Mission focused the organization's efforts in a joint mission and ministry with community and Church leaders and neighborhood activists to enable poor people to organize their own communities and to have a voice in issues affecting their lives. In

Boston and other Massachusetts urban centers, those efforts have been reflected particularly in the areas of affordable housing, economic development and organizing for the rights of tenants, senior citizens, women, children, the disabled, welfare recipients and newcomers to the country.

Among the mixed blessings bestowed on those of us who knew Pelham, this should-have-been bishop was never elected to that office, despite being a more than qualified sometime candidate. Here, it seems, his integrity worked against him. Twice, as it so often does, the Church rejected the messenger. Induction into that House, which many of us would have welcomed, might have offered less opportunity to express his text for living — "Public Faith and Public Policy." This was the title and thrust of his initial address to the annual meeting of ECM ten years ago; it was a call for people to involve themselves in the political process which forms public policy and to use their influence and power toward shaping one that would be both liberating and just.

Long-time friend and associate Ed Rodman, Canon Missioner for the Diocese of Massachusetts, said it best at Pelham's memorial service, held in Boston's Cathedral Church of St. Paul. Pelham was politic, but not a politician; strategic, but not a strategist; spiritual, but not a spiritualist. More, or most, importantly, he was trusted by all — a distinction few enjoy. May this gentle giant rest in peace. TW

Jane Dixon's consecration

No, we haven't neglected to note that Jane Dixon was consecrated suffragan of Washington. It's just that the date of Dixon's consecration and her decision to delay interviews until after the service, make it impossible for us to cover the event until our Jan./Feb. issue.

Barbara Harris is suffragan bishop of Massachusetts and former executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

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