The Witness

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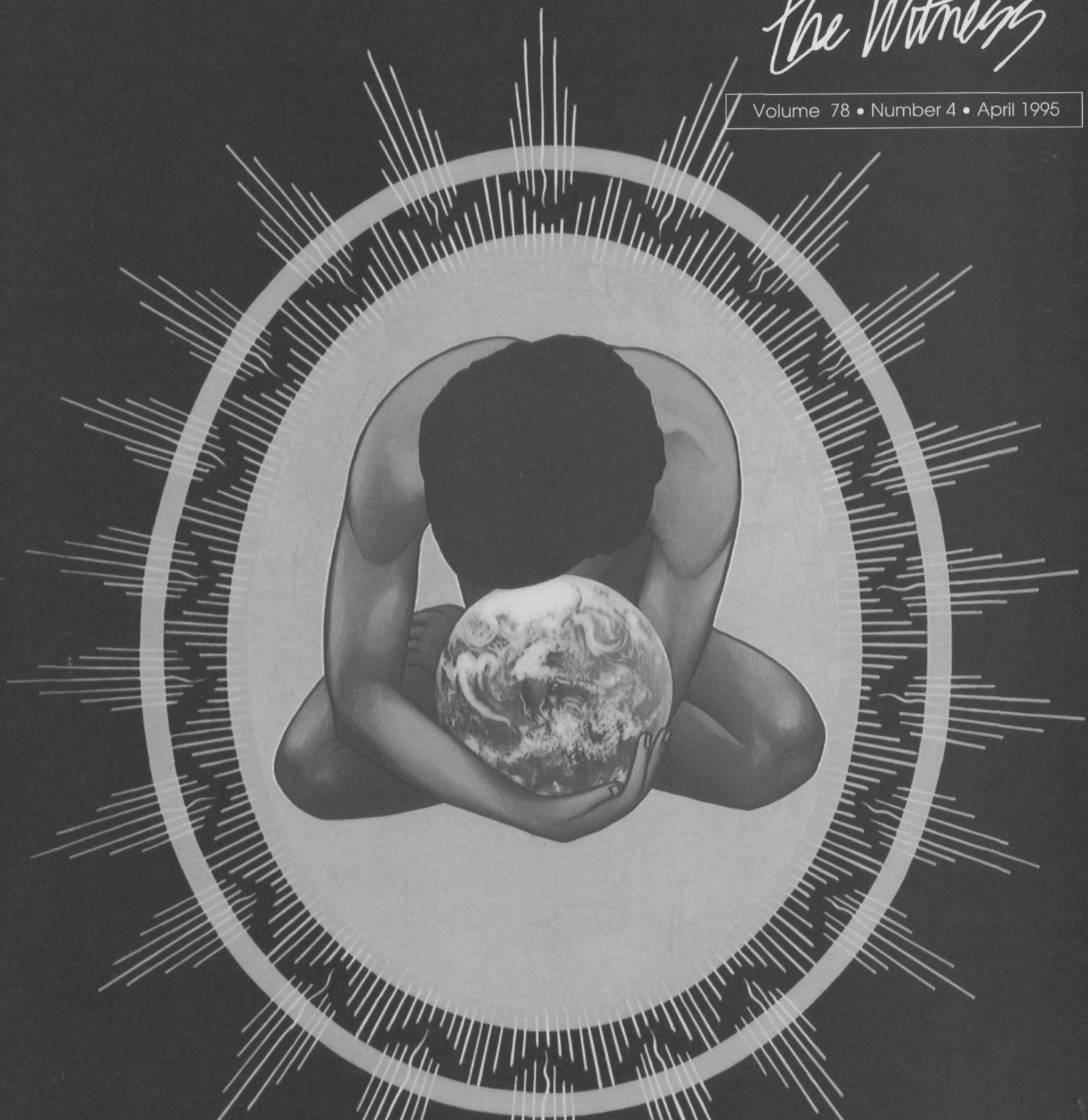


Resurrecting land

Political prisoners

THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY ISSUE of *The Witness* was outstanding.

We have been involved in the "Free Leonard Peltier" campaign.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation had a series with Nils Christy, professor of criminology at the University of Oslo. He has written a book titled *Crime Control as Industry*. He sees the USA moving toward a society of gulags and he is concerned that European countries will imitate it because of the persistent myth that anything American is good.

Dotty Dale
Bellingham, WA

THE WITNESS is filled with all we believe in and you supply names for networking as well! We had no idea of the injustices built into the American punishment system.

I liked "On being happy" by Melanie Morrison.

Don and Doris Cuddihee
Greer, South Carolina

THANK YOU FOR THE ISSUE on political prisoners. I have read it and will pass it on to other members in this community.

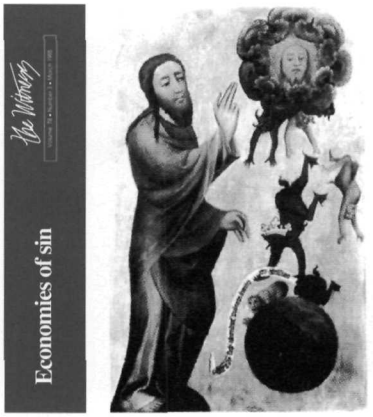
Klaus Meier
Hutterian Brethren Service Committee
Norfolk, CT

I DO LOVE YOUR WONDERFUL WORK. *The Witness* is worthy of its name and brings joy and food for reflection to so many of us here in Nicaragua. I even love your renewal letter!

Kitty Madden
Matagalpa, Nicaragua

Courtesy of Fortkamp

[We sent copies of the Political prisoners issue to those on the mailing list of Fortkamp Press.]



January/February *Witness*

TODAY my husband and I received a copy of *The Witness*. Once I started reading, I couldn't put the publication down. Not only was I emotionally moved, but I proceeded to highlight actions to be taken, materials to obtain for further information, etc. AND, since we are involved in several peace groups and forum meetings, I intend to bring *The Witness* with me to share and maybe encourage responses from others.

Enclosed is my subscription. I also intend to subscribe to *The Nuclear Resister* mentioned in your January/February issue.

Edith Herbert
Valley Stream, N.Y.

WE REALIZE HOW MUCH WE MISS *Witness* and want it. So put us back on the list.

Steve Senesi
Kalamazoo, MI

Classifieds

Urban interns

Episcopal Urban Intern Program: Work in social service ministry, live in Christian community in Los Angeles, share in spiritual formation. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1995-1996 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. (310) 674-7744.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication. For instance, items received January 15 will run in March. When ads mark anniversaries of deaths, ordinations, or acts of conscience, photos — even at half column-width — can be included.

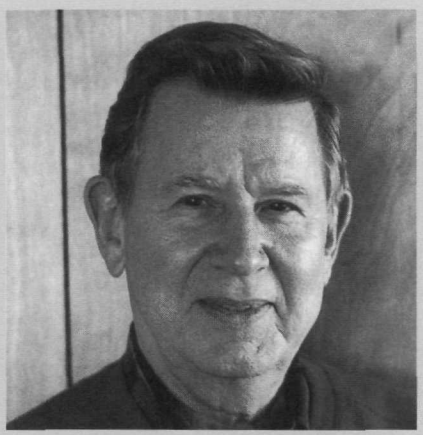
Fêting Bob Eckersley

Those familiar with the reincarnation of *The Witness* in 1974 know that it was accomplished almost single-handedly by Robert Eckersley. He was treasurer of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company for 20 years.

The board of ECPC will honor Eckersley's contributions on June 2 at General Theological Seminary with an open house gathering between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Come enjoy the music of the Miserable Offenders (let's see what Bob thinks of them!) and let Eckersley know how much we value his accounting, his loyalty and his humor!

Feel free to send greetings and memories for a booklet to be presented to him to *The Witness* office. We're also accepting donations for an investigative issue of the magazine on a topic of his choice.



Dismantling affirmative action: history drawn full circle

by Reginald G. Blaxton

Senator Robert Dole's public call for a study of the fairness of affirmative action policies reminds me of another episode in American electoral history when a conservative majority effectively overturned what had been considered, for barely a generation, progressive public policy.

The year was 1876, and the conservatives were Democrats. In the wake of the bloodiest conflict that the nation had known, the Republican Party, acting with certain moral resolve, had abolished slavery, provided Constitutional guarantees of civil and political rights for African Americans, and had developed and imposed upon a recalcitrant South a full program of political reconstruction.

There were other social policies, of course, which the Republicans had championed: the protective tariff; a national banking system; a sound paper currency in national bank notes secured by government bonds; and federal subsidies for improvements in infrastructure and mass transportation, among others.

But undoubtedly for most white southerners and northerners, the policies touching the abolition of "the peculiar institution," and in consequence, the empowerment of black Americans, were the most galling, requiring on their part unaccustomed pain and sacrifice in an era of rapid social change.

Women, at that time, were not allowed to vote, and thus it is fair to say that the Compromise of 1877 signalled the recrudescence of white male power, after a brief liberal ascendancy.

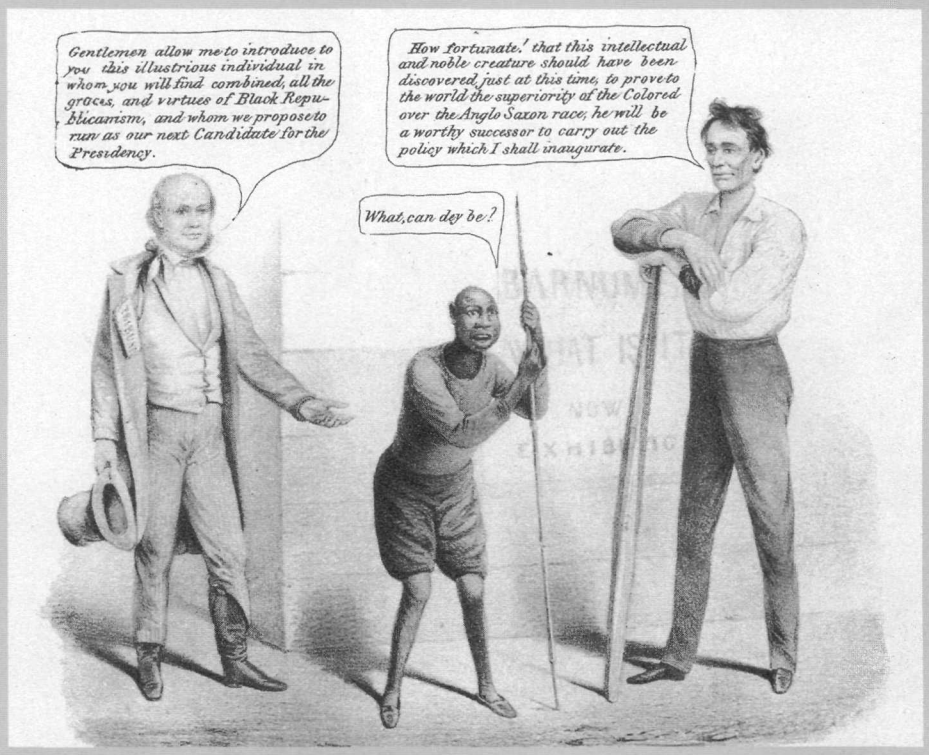
"Liberal" Republicans, following the lead of their conservative colleagues, abandoned African Americans to the tender mercies of the wicked, in order to secure the election of Rutherford B. Hayes in his disputed presidential contest with Samuel J. Tilden, a conservative Democrat.

By 1883, the Supreme Court had invalidated the Civil Rights Act of 1875. In 1894, Congress repealed the Force Acts. And in 1896, the Supreme Court, in an attempt to be "fair" to the Negro, so recently enslaved, approved as legally adequate the political cover of social segregation, so long as black people were provided with "equal" accommodations. Contrary to what Senator Dole seems to believe, this is not ancient history; it is recent history — conflictual and bloody at that.

The ethical issues surrounding affirmative action policies will not be fully engaged by reference solely to the social, political and economic discomfort of white males, regardless of whether, as Senator Dole says, "62 percent ... voted Republican in 1994."

As recently as a generation ago, such a political posture would have been readily identified as a form and expression of white supremacy. At some point in the

continued on page 16



***An Heir to the Throne, or the Next Republican Candidate*, c.1864** Currier and Ives

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

THE WITNESS
Since 1917

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Cover: Compassion Mandela by Robert Lentz. Lentz' icons are available through Bridge Building, P. O. Box 1048, Burlington, VT 05402.
Back cover: Lake Superior by Jim West

Restoring the land

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

The Lord said, "What have you done? Hark! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground.

Now you are accursed, and banished from the ground which has opened its mouth wide to receive your brother's blood, which you have shed. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield you its wealth. You shall be a vagrant and wanderer on earth."

— Genesis 4:10-13

Seemingly in response to cries from the earth itself, hundreds of people are gathering to pray in places where blood has been shed.

They gather to pray for and to release the souls of the dead. They gather to pray for the earth.

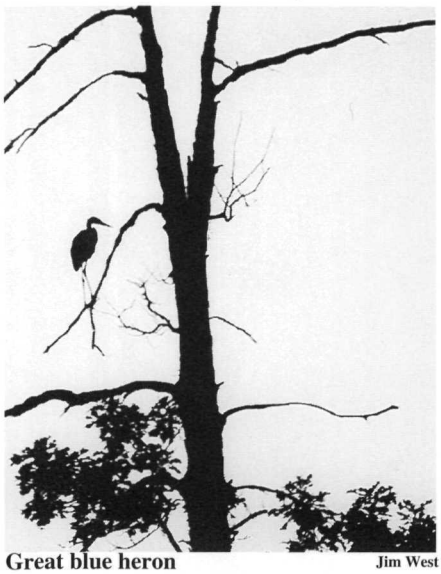
This issue is dedicated to people who are resurrecting the spirit of the land by acknowledging betrayals that have taken place. In most cases, these are places where indigenous people have been killed. In some, it's the location where women have been murdered or where someone took his or her own life.

Sometimes I wonder if it's Cain's curse that haunts this nation — built on the blood of American Indians, African slaves and cheap immigrant labor.

Does the unacknowledged pain and blood in the soil cause Americans to be transient and alienated from the sacredness of place?

Does the earth refuse to yield its joy and do we punish it with sprawling developments, pollutants and asphalt because we cannot bear to hear the cries of those who have died uneasy?

As we worked on this issue, we learned of many additional instances of people who claim to have heard the moaning of the dead and who have been moved to honor the dead in ceremony.



Great blue heron Jim West

Desmond Tutu has dedicated 1995 to studying rituals that might be used to help cleanse South Africa. He will be looking at the independent churches' ceremonies which are vigorous and physical, drawing on Christian and earth-based roots.

The Muslims have already built a shrine at Robbens Island where many died and where others, including Nelson Mandela, were obligated to pound rocks on a diet of porridge for decades.

In the U.S., we've learned of Indians who rode horseback to Wounded Knee in sub-zero December days to honor their dead on the 100th anniversary of the 1890 massacre (*Woman of Power*, Issue 23).

We've also read about Indians who did a pipe ceremony for the Nez Perce Indians who were killed just north of Little Big Horn where Chief Joseph was forced to surrender in 1877 (*The New Yorker*, 8/8/94). In that case an Assiniboine Indian offered the prayers for the Nez Perce and also for his own people who had been complicit in murdering some of the Nez Perce as they had tried to flee.

Last summer, a conference of Native-, African- and Asian-American journalists, meeting in Georgia, travelled to the beginning of the Cherokees' trail of tears for a ceremony.

People who have heard the cries of the dead say they feel the quieting of the land after prayers are offered. They say they feel a peace and a deep connection to the earth afterwards. Some say they've heard the earth singing.

It's striking how many people are now trying to listen to earth.

Even the township planning consultant of the last undeveloped community between Detroit and Ann Arbor, Mich., describes his community's resistance to real estate expansion by saying, "We're letting the land speak."

In the north, the land is creeping with new life, the perma frost is turning to mud, buds are bursting, animals are mating.

Earth-based cultures would be celebrating new life and the turning of the seasons.

The land in turn might yield its wealth.

May we have the stamina to atone for the spilling of our brothers' and sisters' blood.

May we learn to listen to the earth.

May we be instrumental in the resurrection of its life and of our place in it.

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Photographer **Jim West** is an editor of *Labor Notes*.

A tree of life

by Anne Cox

When I returned a parishioner's phone call on a Thursday night, she told me that Friday was the 10th anniversary of her son Bill's suicide. She wanted to celebrate communion by the tree where he had shot himself, and wanted to know if I would do this with her. Her friend Jean, who had been with her immediately after the suicide, would also be there.

Bill's suicide happened before I became rector of Nativity. I had heard Carol talk about Bill, and say that of her three sons, he was extremely sensitive, too sensitive; he felt the world's ache.

I was scared. This felt big and important. I was honored that Carol wanted to include me in this very private moment.

The next day, we drove to the park where Bill had shot himself. It was less than a mile from Carol's house. The afternoon was cold, with wisps of snow and blowing wind. We were very bundled.

When we reached the tree, Jean and I stood back and let Carol prepare the space. She put a photo of Bill against the oak tree, as well as some stones, some leaves, some toys. Jean had given Carol a little dancing, free spirit woman of paper maché on a long fishing line which she wrapped around a piece of bark; she danced in the wind the whole time. We put a candle in a mason jar in a niche at the base of the tree.

I asked Carol what she hoped would come out of this. She responded that for 10 years she had been very angry and bitter. She had often felt abandoned and she hated this tree. "I need to let go of that part of me," Carol said. "I know that my life was changed by Billy's suicide and even that there is some life in that for me."

I talked about reclaiming this place,

Anne Cox

reclaiming the goodness of Bill's and Carol's lives. Then we celebrated communion. It was very simple (and windy). We communed each other and then scattered the remaining bread for the animals. We poured the wine at the base of the tree. We were communing with the entire world — not only we are held in God's hands, but also the tree, the lake, the creatures.

Carol played "Tis a gift to be simple" on her recorder and Jean and I sang.

In the thanksgiving, we all articulated our hopes for Carol moving beyond Bill's death. Carol gave thanks that the ritual redeemed the tree as a holy place for her.

Then it was much too cold and we had to go in. We left the rosemary that Jean had brought for remembrance at the base of the tree.

Carol told me that she cried all day Saturday but that it felt incredibly cathartic and that she now feels like there is life. She said she has decided to commemorate Bill's birthday now instead of the date of his suicide, so on March 5 she baked communion bread for the Sunday service. She pressed the bread with a seal from the Orthodox Church. The seal has lots of different symbols — the lamb of God, a square with Greek letters for "Jesus Christ conquers," triangles that represent angels, prophets, apostles and saints. Both in the meaning of the seal and in the traditional understanding of the eucharist, breaking the bread joins the congregation with the communion of saints.

Going to that place was important. When I was taking environmental psychology courses, I read a study that showed — across cultural and income lines — that big trees are important to people. For me, the eucharist by the oak tree was very powerful. We had a circle that included the tree. There were four of us.

And Carol has moved from commemorating death to celebrating life. TW

When we reached the tree, Jean and I stood back and let Carol prepare the space. She put a photo of Bill against the oak tree, as well as some stones, some leaves, some toys.

Anne Cox is rector of Nativity Episcopal Church, Bloomfield Township, Mich. She also designs and manufactures rubber stamps.

In Beauty

— Navaho chant

House made of dawn
House made of evening light
House made of the dark cloud
House made of male rain
House made of dark mist
House made of female rain
House made of pollen
House made of grasshoppers

Dark cloud is at the door
The trail out of it is dark cloud
The zigzag lightning stands high upon it
An offering I make
Restore my feet for me
Restore my legs for me
Restore my body for me
Restore my mind for me
Restore my voice for me
This very day take out your spell for me

Happily I recover
Happily my interior becomes cool
Happily I go forth
My interior feeling cool, may I walk
No longer sore, may I walk
Impervious to pain, may I walk
With lively feelings may I walk
As it used to be long ago, may I walk

Happily may I walk
Happily, with abundant dark clouds, may I walk
Happily, with abundant showers, may I walk
Happily, with abundant plants, may I walk
Happily, on a trail of pollen, may I walk
Happily may I walk
Being as it used to be long ago, may I walk

May it be beautiful before me
May it be beautiful behind me
May it be beautiful below me
May it be beautiful above me
May it be beautiful all around me
In beauty it is finished
In beauty it is finished

Poetry

When the land weeps

by Ariel Miller

Arriving late at night at the retreat center, the visitor had been escorted by her hosts to a cabin near the Susquehanna River. They asked her anxiously if she needed company. A lover of the land, she reassured them she felt at ease being alone.

But an entire people awaited her in the night.

"All night long I had dreams about children who were not really children," recalls Diana Boycheck, a life-long Christian who was soon to embark on the journey of learning her Cherokee heritage as a healer.

"All night I kept waking up feeling that I had to give something to the land," Boycheck recalls. She knew of the Native American tradition of blessing and thanking the land by offering sage, tobacco or some other natural substance.

"I kept getting up to gift the land until I had given almost everything I had."

The next morning one of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who staff the Spiritual Center in Windsor, N.Y., returned to the cabin to show Boycheck the grounds which had earlier been used as a Jewish summer camp for children from Long Island, but had been purchased in 1979 by several nuns who had raised money to provide a retreat center that could be accessible to working-class people.

"I told Sister Paula my dream, and said, 'You have to tell me what happened here,'" Boycheck says.

"She told me that an Indian village camped here by the river. It was a friendly village, living in peace with the nearby American soldiers, but the soldiers got a message from General Washington that the Indians were to be removed from the river. They were slaughtered — only a few escaped."

Diana Boycheck

The religious community living at the site 200 years later could not rest easy.

"She, too, felt as if the land was crying," says Boycheck of her host, a sculptor. "She said to me, 'If only we could pray.'"

In fact, Sister Paula says for years she had cried whenever she mowed the land closest to the river.

Sister Elizabeth joined Boycheck and Sister Paula by the Susquehanna. Hills rose up, including the Oquaga Mountain, which was sacred to the tribe that had journeyed up and down the Susquehanna.

They prayed together. Boycheck created a circle with corn meal and tobacco, then began to drum and chant. The two other women sang.

Sister Paula explains that they sat facing the mountain.

"During the drumming I could feel a vibration underneath the earth," Sister Paula says. "It felt like an earthquake. Diana explained that the land was being protected."

"All of a sudden," Boycheck says, "I had a vision of faces rising to the sky. They rose and rose in a cloud, and the last was a beautiful little girl, the most beautiful face. As I was gazing at her face the women cried *'Look! Look!'*

"I did not want to take my eyes from this vision," Boycheck continues, "but finally I looked up, and there, circling and circling us, was a huge hawk, the hugest I have ever seen."

The sculptor — though she was not an Indian — had a vision, too: that she must carve Boycheck a peace pipe.

It would be years before Boycheck would learn the significance of the pipe. But she did recognize the hawk as a portent of joy.

"To see a hawk or an eagle during a ceremony is a great gift," she says. "It is a great blessing because they are closest to God."

After this prayer the land was relieved of its burden, so that when Boycheck returned later that summer to pray "I was so filled with joy I almost could not get up," she says simply. "It was and remains the most beautiful experience of my life; every molecule of my being was filled with God."

Born in Syracuse, New York in

An entire people awaited her in the night. "All night long I had dreams about children who were not really children. All night I kept waking up feeling that I had to give something to the land."

Ariel Miller is a freelance writer in Cincinnati, OH.

a large, close-knit family, Diana Boycheck was raised by Methodist parents and Baptist grandparents.

First cousins, her grandparents were both grandchildren of a full-blooded Cherokee woman, Tempe Newport. Although they cherished their roots in Tennessee, they moved away from them physically and spiritually.

Drawn to spiritual things, the little girl would wake up on Sunday mornings and walk by herself to the nearby Methodist church, where she ardently learned about God.

She even made a trek to the Roman Catholic Church to ask if she could become a nun, which she was told was an impossibility for a Protestant child.

She later converted to Catholicism, but always had the sense of another essence — a spiritual invitation not readily understood in the practice and piety of a Protestant girlhood or of a Catholic adult.

Later, as a mother of three, Boycheck went through a divorce. She had to give up her home; she faced poverty. But events propelled her swiftly into a sense of profound blessing. At a conference that had nothing to do with Indian spirituality, she saw a stranger and her heart leaped.

"I walked over to her and said, 'You look like my family,'" Boycheck recalls. "All of us got tears in our eyes." The stranger was Cherokee medicine woman Wolf Warrior Woman.

From her, Boycheck learned the meaning of the pipe.

"The peace pipe is a portable altar. When you join the bowl to the stem, it's a direct link to God," Boycheck explains.

And although she could not know it at the time of her host's mystical vision on the site of the massacre, to the Cherokee the pipe ceremony was essential to the release of the souls of the dead.

The significance of the hawk was revealed as well. Part of the task of the shaman in training is to discover her emblem or costume. After searching widely Boycheck discovered a red tail hawk kachina — and knew that her quest had succeeded.

"The costume is the answer to the question, 'Who am I? What is my purpose?'" she explains.

"The red-tail hawk kachina helps people who are half in life and half in spirit to go on.

When I saw this kachina I had a vision, and knew that this was my purpose in learning the healing."

In a sweat lodge ceremony she was named Soaring Hawk Woman.

Boycheck now lives in Norwich, New York, where as a home health aide she quietly continues a ministry that weaves together her Native American and Christian vocations for compassion.

She takes particular joy in working with hospice patients — people, she says, who are hovering on the threshold of the light. TW

Knowing the spirit

The white people never cared for land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots we make little holes. When we built houses, we make little holes. When we burn grass for grasshoppers, we don't ruin things. We shake down acorns and pinenuts. We don't chop down the trees. We only use dead wood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't hurt me." But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. They blast out trees and stir it up to its depths. They saw up the trees. That hurts them. The Indians never hurt anything, but the white people destroy all. They blast rocks and scatter them on the ground. The rock says, "Don't. You are hurting me." But the white people pay no attention. When the Indians use rocks, they take little round ones for their cooking. ... How can the spirit of the earth like the white man? ... Everywhere the white man has touched it, it is sore.

— Wintu woman elder

Singing for the *wiliwili* tree: an interview with Ched Myers

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Witness *contributing editor Ched Myers joined a delegation to the sacred Hawai'ian island, Kaho'alawe, shortly after the U.S. Navy discontinued using it for bombing practice and returned it to the state of Hawai'i.*

*Myers travelled with members of the PKO — Protect Kaho'olawe Ohana (*ohana *means community or family) — which began a movement to liberate the island in 1976. In 1979, the PKO (through a lawsuit against the U.S. Navy) won the right to access the island for religious ceremonies.*

Finally, in 1994, the U.S. military signed the island over to the State of Hawai'i. A conveyance commission will oversee the island during the transition and ensure that the U.S. Navy will remove the unexploded shells and bombs from the island.

The State, in an unprecedented move, has written its own clause stating that it is holding Kaho'olawe in trust for "the future nation of Hawai'i."

Kaho'olawe is the smallest of the Hawai'ian islands. It was privately owned after U.S. annexation, during which time it was used for cattle and goat herding. The land was so over-grazed by the 1930s that it was turned over to the Navy as a bombing target.

Myers, author of Who Will Roll Away the Stone? Discipleship Queries for First World Christians *(Orbis), worked in the 1980s with the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement. As Program Director for the Pacific Southwest office of the American Friends Service Committee, his connections with the Hawai'ian sovereignty movement and PKO have continued.*

In June, 1994, Myers travelled with Robbie Brinton, his partner, to Kaho'olawe for the first time. One-third of the delgation were native Hawai'ian, the rest were locals of various ethnicities. The youngest was 6, the oldest was 78.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: I know that this trip was a critical one for you. You've described it as "a center point of my spiritual life" and as "a parable that stands right at the center of what it means to be human and connected or disconnected from the land." Would you tell us about it?

Ched Myers: When I reached Kaho-'olawe, I kissed the ground.

Through my work with indigenous people throughout the Pacific, which has focused on their struggles for self-determination and particularly their struggles around issues of land and land rights, I'd developed a fairly keen sense of the pain that U.S. militarism has caused Pacific islanders — in Micronesia, Tahiti, Melanesia, Hawai'i. So going on an access to Kaho'olawe was always something I had wanted to do.

Through my work with indigenous people throughout the Pacific, which has focused on their struggles for self-determination and particularly their struggles around issues of land and land rights, I'd developed a fairly keen sense of the pain that U.S. militarism has caused Pacific islanders — in Micronesia, Tahiti, Melanesia, Hawai'i.

I had a mystical dream about it two years earlier. In the dream, as soon as I set foot on Kaho'olawe, there was music arising from the land. It was just coming up from the land and through my feet and into my mind. The whole universe was singing. It's very much in my soul.

J.W-K.: How did you get to the island?

C.M.: A fishing boat, which was donated by one of the PKO supporters, shuttled 70 people in about five trips across the four-mile channel between Maui and Kaho'olawe. We went over at about four in the morning while the seas were calm. The sun was just rising over one of the two great volcanic peaks on the island of Mauias as we got to the island.

The fishing boat anchors 300 yards off shore and you pile into a little zodiac — one of those little rubber boats. It takes you in and drops you off about a hundred yards off shore. Then you wade in. Everybody is dropped off in shoulder-high water with all their gear, which is double-wrapped in plastic bags and floated ashore. This is both a practical and a spiritual matter as far as the PKO is concerned. It's practical because there is no natural harbor on the island. But it's also spiritual — as one of the elders, or *kupuna*, puts it, "We come to this island just as our ancestors arrived, by wading ashore."

The PKO is very clear that people are coming to the island to be a part of it and to live in the Hawai'ian way. People are asked to leave their electronic gear behind. It's just basic camping gear that you float

Those who came to pray at Kaho'olawe, a Hawaiian island used as a U.S. Navy bombing target until last year, leave gifts of white coral wrapped in *ti* leaves.

Robbie Brinton

ashore — including all your water, because there's no fresh water on the island.

We were sitting on the beach at sunrise, exhausted from dragging all this gear and swimming ashore, but really elated.

J.W-K.: How was your time on the island spent?

C.M.: You're there for four days and three nights. The first day is setting up camp and adapting to the climate of the island, which is relatively hot and dry, and extremely barren — both because of the bombing, but also because of the ecological damage that has been wrought over the years. So there's not much growing on the island. There's lots of red volcanic dust though.

The PKO, while they're a very strong political organization, are very non-proselytizing on this trip. They want to bring people to be in touch with the *'aina* — that's the Hawai'ian word for land. They believe that by touching the *'aina* you will be converted to the cause, so there is almost no attempt to persuade you of the politics of the PKO or Hawai'ian sovereignty.

It would be a perfect opportunity for it, because you're a captive audience, but they end up saying almost nothing. And of course, they don't have to. You feel tremendous elation to be on an island that is basically uncivilized — no hotels or roads or anything like that.

On the other hand, you can see the land bleeding to death, with acres and acres of hard packed dirt, because of the erosion from the bombing. The coral reefs are dying because of the runoff from the erosion. You can literally see the wounds in the land everywhere you look, so it's a yin-yang kind of experience.

It's a very religious place. Everybody's spirituality is respected. People don't try to push Hawai'ian spirituality on the visitors, but they try to let people know what the *heiaus* (temples) signify and what the Hawai'ian traditions are. Yet most of the prayers by the leadership are Christian, because, of course, most of the Hawai'ians are Christianized.

The second day was the heavy work day. Robbie went to work with *pili* grass, which is a kind of a thin straw-like grass, from which they make the thatched roofs for the traditional *hale* or house. Other people were replanting. Others were repairing water systems. (Water *did* occur naturally on the island. There were a couple of springs in the old days, but the bombing has cracked the water table and so it has gone down and the springs stopped flowing.) So catchment and checkdams are the means of storing water after the rains.

I worked on repairing one of the water tanks up on the hill where the water catchment systems store the water. The roof of the water tank had blown off during a storm and we had to rebuild it. It was all day in the hot sun, but people were working collectively, doing hard work and it just felt very, very good. People used what skills they could offer.

But there were a couple of skilled people coordinating the work and quite a lot gets done with so many people.

The third day, you take an all-day hike from the beach site where the camp is across the island about three miles, straight uphill, to the sacred mountain where the traditional navigational school was. It's a tough hike.

The trail has been specially cleared by the Navy in cooperation with the PKO — you cannot walk outside the designated zone, because there's so much ordnance unexploded. As you walk the trail you see the devastation. It is very, very sobering.

They invite you to remove your shoes for the last 200 yards up the mountain. You're walking over very sharp rock. You don't have to do this, but this is tradition and of course it's also biblical tradition to remove one's shoes when standing on holy ground.

We offered our *ho'okupu* (gifts) in thanksgiving. Knowing a little bit about the traditions, I had brought a few things that were really special to the place that I love (southern California) as offerings — some sage, some acorns and some shells.

The wind was blowing and you could see the whole island, you could see the currents going between Maui and Kaho'olawe and Molokai, and almost the entire Hawai'ian chain.

After that, we met members of the conveyance commission who were visiting the island to do some technical work.

At the saddle below the main peak is one *wiliwili* tree. We were told that *wiliwili* trees — a gnarly-knobby kind of tree — used to cover the whole island with a magnificent forest.

But the entire island has been denuded and there is this one last *wiliwili* tree kind of slunk over in the ground but still growing.

A *kupuna* — her name was Pualani Kanahele — asked us and the conveyance commission — which included some military personnel— to gather in a circle around the *wiliwili* tree.

She began this chant in Hawai'ian. Hawai'ian is like so many Pacific island languages; it rises and falls like the ocean in its intonation and mesmerizes you. As she was singing, one of my friends was translating.

She was thanking the tree for surviving the onslaught of the white man and of the military and of the holocaust that the Hawai'ian land and culture has seen. She thanked the tree for all it has seen.

It's a very old tree. It goes all the way back to traditional times, so she was asking the tree to remember everything that it had seen and never to forget. Then she asked the tree to give its seed as the seed of renewal so that the seeds of this one *wiliwili* tree would replant and reforest the whole island. She thanked the tree for its seed and its strength.

An elder chanted to the last wiliwili *tree — she thanked it for surviving the onslaught of the white man and of the military. She asked the tree to give its seeds so they could replant and reforest the whole island.*

She clearly named the tree as the central symbol of everything that the PKO is trying to do. In reflecting on this later, it was clear to me that Kaho'olawe is a place of revisioning, rediscovering language and culture. It's clearly a place of resistance and *now* a place of reclamation as people access it and access their identity as they do so. And finally, hopefully, it's a place of reinhabitation — where not only Hawai'ian sovereignty, but the social and economic and land-based reality of that, can be realized.

She's chanting all this and I realized that tears are flowing down my cheeks. I believe that trees represent the life and spirit of the land and when they're uprooted, we are uprooting something very spiritual.

I feel that way about the oak trees in California. I've seen so much destruction, so my passion for my own land was merging with hers and I just felt myself transported by both the pain and the promise.

It wasn't that I wanted to become Hawai'ian, it was that I saw what I have lost and what could be found, if we dare to reconnect with the land, if we dare to understand who we are, to also go through that process of resistance and reclamation and reinhabitation.

That night, our last night, there was a big party. There's no electric stuff there so it's up to the people to make the music just like it used to be. There was a ukelele and a guitar. Everybody sang old Hawai'ian songs. People got up and did hulas spontaneously. The old people were showing the little kids how to dance the hula.

It was all really fun and carefree but you could see that some serious cultural reconstruction was going on right before your eyes. We sat up late laughing and yet there was also a time when everybody had a chance to speak. It took hours and hours to go around the circle. The PKO is very committed to everybody getting a chance to talk about how this time has

struck them — whether it's the elder who's rediscovering his Hawai'ianness after having had to give it up for decades, or the young, awkward 13-year-old who doesn't know why she's there and is really shy, but says, "It's great to be here and to be with everyone." People had a chance to get up and cry and talk about how much this means to them. It's what the Hawai'ians call sharing *mana'o*. It kind of means spilling your guts!

The next morning we left at sunrise. Robbie and I were the first of the group to get there and the last of the group to leave. We were leaving and you could see the sun rising on Kaho'olawe and I realized what a transforming experience it had been. We were tired. It's pretty basic living. You wash in the ocean. You get dirty and you live in it. But it was a wonderful experience.

J.W-K.: There's an island off your own coast with similar history. Can you say a word or two about it?

C.M.: I just came into the office today and saw a notice from the Department of Defense that says its environmental impact report on the bombing of San Clemente Island finds "no significant impact."

San Clemente is one of the southernmost Channel Islands off the coast of southern California, sacred to the Tongva people, as the first people of southern California were known. They commuted regularly to these islands and lived and fished on them.

San Clemente has also been used by the Navy for decades for bombing.

I've often wondered what is the difference between my place and Hawai'i? Why does it seem so impossible to build a movement here that could start small and yet become so significant that it could actually wrest the island back from the military?

I realize that the key is not political strategizing. The key is knowing who you are — reclaiming who you are and, of course, that's something that's so much more difficult for European-Americans and the dominant culture. Southern Californians scarcely know about San Clemente Island. You can only see it in the distance on a very clear day.

He never arrived. Two days later, Kimo Mitchell, a friend, tried to find George and was also lost at sea.

These were the early martyrs that really galvanized the movement. There is an altar to George and Kimo that stands a quarter of a mile from the main camp along a little coastal trail. We went out there. On the headstone, in Hawai'ian, is a quote from the gospel of John, which says "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." People lay wreaths and shell *leis* and flowers and coral — coral is a particularly sacred *ho'okupu.* Lots of white coral is strewn around this memorial.

Pualani Kanahele (at the front) chanting to the only remaining *wili wili* tree on Kaho'olawe.
Robbie Brinton

J.W-K.: Is there access to it?

C.M.: There's no access.

I have to say one thing more about Kaho'olawe, because it reminds us of the price of resistance.

The non-violent occupations of Kaho'olawe began, as I said, in 1976. In 1977, George Helm, who was the best-known and best-loved Hawai'ian folk-singer, set out from Maui to Kaho'olawe one evening, paddling a surfboard across the channel to occupy the island to try to stop a scheduled bombing.

You just sit and it all comes to you. If we could come to the land in the name of the Lord, maybe healing could come, even at that cost. TW

Resettling El Salvador

by Daniel Moss

My friend Eduardo speaks longingly of the four acres he owned and worked in the neighboring province of San Vicente before the Salvadoran war.

Beans grow in those moist and cool fields and, at 65, he yearns to dirty his fingers in his own soil and die there. But 15 years ago, his extended family used his property as collateral on a fertilizer loan for their corn crop. After his brother was killed by the army, Daniel didn't dare venture to the bank in town that was kitty corner to the soldiers' barracks.

If he manages to pay the accumulated interest, he will need to weigh the viability of a move. Transportation costs $80 he doesn't have and the small plot of land he farmed before wouldn't support his family, which has grown dramatically; he now has over 20 grandchildren.

He may choose to stay in Nuevo Gualcho — a former cotton plantation that is now home to 800 repatriated Salvadorans who fled bombings and military operations in the early 1980s, then spent 10 years in a Honduran refugee camp before returning to El Salvador. Residents are now attempting to build a sustainable community and are inching closer to defining just how to pay for that dream.

However feebly, the Chapultepec Peace Accords make this community of former FMLN (the guerrilla resistance) supporters possible. The Land Transfer Program is not land reform; the program is intended to allow 47,500 families to buy land at market value. These include 15,000 ex-government soldiers, 7,500 ex-FMLN combatants and 25,000 civilians working land they occupied and tilled during the war.

The Land Bank — a post-accords institution capitalized almost entirely by

Daniel Moss recently returned from El Salvador after two-and-a-half years of volunteer community development work in Nuevo Gualcho. He and his wife, Tyler Haaren, were sponsored by the Massachusetts Episcopal Diocese's Commission on Wider Mission.

Prayers for the earth

At 4 a.m., the community cattle truck honked and loaded Gualcho folks in their best ironed clothes. They carried bouquets of red and white paper roses for the commemoration of the Calabozo massacre. Concha passed up a basket of tortillas stuffed with beans wrapped in a steaming towel and hoisted herself onto the truck bed, doing her best not to get dirty. It was a three-hour journey to the deep river gorge where more than 300 people were killed in a 1982 army operation.

When the road deteriorated, we walked. There was an occasional stray cow, but most of the barbed wire along the roadside was rusted and broken, pastures were overgrown and saplings grew out of crumbled adobe walls of bombed houses.

Eduardo — like over half the Gualcho population — had lived in this area before the war. He pointed, "There's where we chopped down a tree to block the road. Incredible," he grinned. "In 1977, we cleared the rocks from this road so the priest could visit. By 1980, we were tearing it up again to barricade against the army." By 1980, their parish priest, Napoleon Macias, had been assassinated.

About 500 people from neighboring communities tromped through pastures and jungle, balancing on logs across bogs and streams, forever heading down to the Calabozo River bed. A woman stopped to erect a home-made cross to mark where her parents and two brothers had been killed. She cleared brush and dug a hole with a machete and positioned rocks to set it firmly.

At the actual riverbank massacre site , an artist had planted a 25-foot- high cross of soldered piping and etched panels depicting the peaceful peasant life, then the helicopters mortaring the village and piled corpses, and finally the new El Salvador — healthy corn stocks growing out of a mound of skulls. Local conservative priests refused to officiate at the commemoration; they still perceived it as a subversive act. And so Eduardo, the coordinator of Gualcho's pastoral team, led the songs and celebration. Survivors of the massacre gave testimony, prayed for the dead, for the land and for the future.

Just below, in a pool at a bend in the river, Saul stripped to his underwear and lathered himself with soap. It was in this river, 13 years earlier, that Saul stumbled blind and hid for six days, smelling — not seeing — the rotting corpses of his relatives. Now with his sight restored through corneal replacement surgery, Saul looked upstream to a sandy flat, wondering if watermelons would grow well there. He jumped into the Calabozo to rinse off. — *D.M.*

U.S. AID and European Economic Community funds — offers 30-year mortgages at six percent interest.

FMLN ex-combatants were entitled to a range of re-insertion (into civilian life) vocational trainings ranging from cattle ranching to sewing to computers. Upon graduation, loans were made available.

A bakers' cooperative

Concha and other women enlisted in a training for bakers — there was a flurry of egg cracking and flour sifting as they attempted to supplement the mostly corn tortilla diet with bread products. The women were enthusiastic, week by week venturing into new cakes and cookies, looking longingly but thinking twice before joining hands and signing the dotted line on an 18 percent loan to buy an oven and build a cooperative bakery. The obstacles are formidable — the local market is limited, the rain-rutted dirt road is almost impassable.

Cattle farming

Juan invested his credit in two cows, but one fell into a ravine looking for scarce grasses and the other's hoof became infected and it later died. At least in the first case, he was able to sell the meat before it spoiled.

Juan had attended an agronomy training which, among other things, included a small stipend, agricultural tools, a bed, a table, machetes, and chairs whose cheap cardboard backs and seats have already rotted. Juan's wife, Estela, shrugged embarrassedly and offered me a chair covered with a board. After 12 years of war and sacrifice, the decrepit chair is an in-your-face reminder of what was not won during the war.

New wealth

Sabastian, on the other hand, has access to three credit packages through his wife and two children, all registered ex-combatants. He's got three sets of chairs. He bought 10 head of cattle and so far is riding high in the saddle that his son (working illegally in the U.S.) bought for him. He had an abundant corn and sesame crop this year, working his 10-year-old twins to the bone.

A Gualcho baby stands on his family's table, received because they are ex-combatants.

But one unlucky turn — a long drought or sick cow or child, and he'll be with Juan, staring at empty pockets and chewing on tortillas and salt.

With an unusual bumper crop, a small farmer might accumulate $500 of disposable income in a year. Will they be able to make the approximately $300 plus/year payments on the land, housing and production loans? Or will the land be repossessed by the banks and ultimately return to the wealthiest landowners?

Eduardo says he may stay in Gualcho. He has come to love the people with whom he struggled for a more just society and suffered the nightmare of war.

Eduardo

Recently Eduardo went back to look at the destroyed house over which he had sweated and sacrificed and which he could only inhabit for two years before it was bombed. He chopped back the weeds that grew out of the crumbling adobe walls, stacked the salvageable clay roof tiles and planted cashew trees to replace the ones burned in army operations. During the visit, he discovered that another family plans to return — his wealthy neighbors — the same family that had denied him an easement to their spring and later joined ORDEN (D'Abuisson's death squad organization that assassinated Eduardo's father and both in-laws).

Who would have thought that contrary landowners would return to areas in the heart of the FMLN's rearguard? Whoever would have thought that bank debts would be remembered or that communities would pay market prices for land they had "conquered" during the war? The Peace Accords are full of compromises and those once maligned as lawless communists are now, in the spirit of reconciliation, playing by the rules.

Eduardo says he may stay in Gualcho. Although it's a stumbling, neophyte cooperative with an impressive list of failed projects, on a good day Eduardo still believes that once the administrative problems and inexperience are overcome, Gualcho still offers economic and social opportunities that could benefit the entire community. He has come to love the people with whom he struggled for a more just society and suffered the nightmare of war.

Hope persists; Salvadorans are world-famous for their perseverance and refusal to passively accept the yoke of oppression. Notwithstanding the Land Transfer Program's many bureaucratic snarls, the government's refusal to expropriate contested lands and the clock ticking down on the U.N. supervised April 30 deadline, there have been advances.

While angry soldiers of the ex-government occupy the National Assembly and hold deputies hostage to demand that they not be robbed of the indemnization, land and credit that they were promised, some people have and will be benefitted.

Perhaps Concha, Sebastian, Raul and Eduardo will be able to use their Christian inspiration and revolutionary ideals to sow productive seeds and plow a viable path through El Salvador's economic minefield. It remains to be seen if the agonizingly slow pace of the endeavor will be enough to prevent another outpouring of blood on the land. TW

Dismantling affirmative action: history drawn full circle

continued from page 3

mid-1960s, as the analysis of personal racial prejudice was extended to cover the workings of public and private institutions, white supremacists were commonly referred to in racial polemic as white racists, and later, simply as racists.

What was lost in the subtle change of nomenclature was the ready understanding that, historically, white Americans have tended to believe that their political interests, *as a race*, were in fact superior to everyone else's.

The point is that white racism — the belief that white Americans' interests, concerns and preferences ought to come first in the life of the nation — is so deeply imbedded in everyday attitudes and actions, over several centuries, that some kind of opposing, preferential policy will be necessary to offset and redress the social imbalances caused by such patterns of belief and practice.

I am certain that conservative Republicans will rush forward with a counter claim that we ought to be a color-blind society, in support of which they will approvingly quote the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. with selective precision.

I would respond that when Senator Dole reads the results of the Fall elections without looking to determine the skin color of those who voted for his party's candidates, our society will not be far from the realization of Dr. King's beloved community.

Republican conservatives will also invoke the scary specter of "reverse discrimination," which is real and disturbing to anyone sensitive to moral dilemmas, particularly as it affects individuals.

But as the ethicist Daniel Maguire argued in the early 1980s, "ethical problems are not just unfortunate; they are often brutal." Maguire's book, *A Case for Affirmative Action*, reissued (and renamed) in 1992, would reward the close attention of anyone interested in the topic.

Finally, I had hoped, as a Christian and as a priest, that the "religious" right might help frame the terms of this public discussion by reference to the prophetic tradition — *the values* — of biblical religion, shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims. In view of the shabby record of white Christians in matters of racial justice, notwithstanding recent outreach efforts of the Christian Coalition to theologically conservative African Americans, I should not have been surprised that this has not happened.

I am afraid that past and present history teaches that when the period of moral urgency passes, the national conscience can be fobbed off with the authorization of a national holiday or the issuance of a postage stamp.

The moral default of white Christians, over centuries, demonstrates the cultural captivity of religious authorities to the racial, class, and economic interests of their members.

But then, there is always the possibility that some ordinary American(s), inspired by a vision of transcendent truth — a Lincoln or a King — may clarify the moral challenges. Such figures in public life have too often been made to suffer vilification, exile, and the forfeiture of their lives before legislators catch the vision.

I am afraid that past and present history teaches that when the period of moral urgency passes, the national conscience can be very easily fobbed off with the authorization of a national holiday or the issuance of a postage stamp.

Another possible answer to the moral dilemma of affirmative action may lie in Harvard University Professor Cornel West's provocative suggestion that preferential policies in the future be based on considerations of social class rather than on race. Maybe his voice will be heard above the din of white male frustration.

In any case, I trust that Senator Dole will do his best (or his worst), depending on your racial and ethical vantage point. And in the meantime, as the Majority Leader ponders the moral requirements of equity and justice for all Americans, with special reference to affirmative action policies, may "justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). TW

Crazy Horse ban gains ground

The campaign to ban the sale of malt liquor under the name of Chief Crazy Horse has succeeded in two states, and one grocery store chain. Laws prohibiting it have been enacted in Minnesota and Washington, and A & P Vice President David S. Edwards stated in a letter to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility that the beverage "is no longer an authorized item for sale in our stores."

G. Heileman Brewing Company, which has produced the malt liquor since 1992, has denied responsility for the label, which has offended native Americans who revere Crazy Horse as a spiritual leader who fought to protect his people from alcoholism.

HONOR requests that readers contact their local stores, asking them to refrain from stocking Crazy Horse Malt Liquor. An information packet is available for $1.00 from HONOR, 2647 N. Stowell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211.

Answering racist muttering

"I think that the nastier mood has been coming along for quite a while," said K. Anthony Appiah, a professor of African-American studies and philosophy at Harvard University, in a recent interview with *Emerge* magazine.

"There are a lot of white people in this country who are not confident about their futures. There are problems ahead in the American economy. There are long-term problems already, some of which Murray and Hernstein [authors of *The Bell Curve]* talk about. And so they are particularly likely to worry about anything that looks as though it might be getting in the way of getting the job. Any form of affirmative action for women or minorities looks like that.

"And so there's a lot of resentment, even among people who are employed, because they're not sure how long they will be employed or how easy it will be for them to get a job again, or whether the job they get will have an income that is like the one they had before. And so I think there has been a lot of muttering going on for a while. In that sense, Murray's claim that they are simply talking about something that people are muttering about is perfectly right. And I think at this point it's as well, since they brought it up, to go through and see which things they're right about and which things they are wrong about."

Nonviolence programs

Nonviolent Alternatives offers three- and four-week programs on wholistic living, nonviolence, and unlearning racism in Lakota communities in the U.S., and in India. For information contact Nonviolent Alternatives, 825 4th St., Brookings, S.D., 57006; (605) 692-8465.

Censoring anti-pornography feminists

Anti-pornography feminists, accused of supporting censorship, have themselves been effectively censored by media bias and slander, Ann Simonton writes in *Z Magazine*. She lists five myths which she believes have silenced debate: 1) Anti-pornography feminists are aligned with right-wing conservatives; 2) they are a movement of two people — Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin; 3) they advocate censorship; 4) they are anti-sex; and 5) they support anti-feminist and anti-gay legislation.

"A primary frustration for anti-pornography feminists is the difficulty of trying to get people to acknowledge the harm done to women, children and men through the pornography industry," Simonton says.

"The majority of women who appear in pornography are also prostitutes and have been sexually abused as children. They are poor and 90 percent would leave the business if they could. Pornography is also controlled by organized crime where force and violence are standard business practice. ... 'Anti-censorship' groups never give the microphone to the women with little access to free speech who, for example, live on the streets being prostituted."

Simonton charges that financial motivations underlie much 'anti-censorship' advocacy. She notes that Lavada Blanton, the treasurer for Feminists for Free Expression, works for *Penthouse,* and that *Playboy* and *Penthouse* both donate money to the ACLU.

Nuclear Study Guide

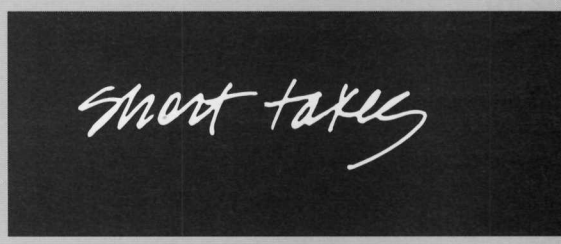
The Nuclear Story: Seeds of Life, Seeds of Death provides prayers, facts and study questions for Christians seeking to face and redeem the past in this year which marks the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Available from Pax Christi, the 84-page book costs $5. Pax Christi USA, 348 10th St., Erie, PA, 16503; (814) 453-4955.

Coming up

Upcoming *Witness* themes include: Out of Africa, Nonviolence – tactic or lifestyle? and the Suburbs.

Readers are welcome to submit ideas, art or short articles for consideration. We don't publish sermons or academic prose.

We always welcome short news articles about local events that concern workers, the environment, etc.



We respond to submissions when we think it's likely we can use them. We don't send rejections. We are open to simultaneous submissions.

We value wit and brevity. We particularly appreciate submissions with a twist.

The Witness Project: commemorating slain women

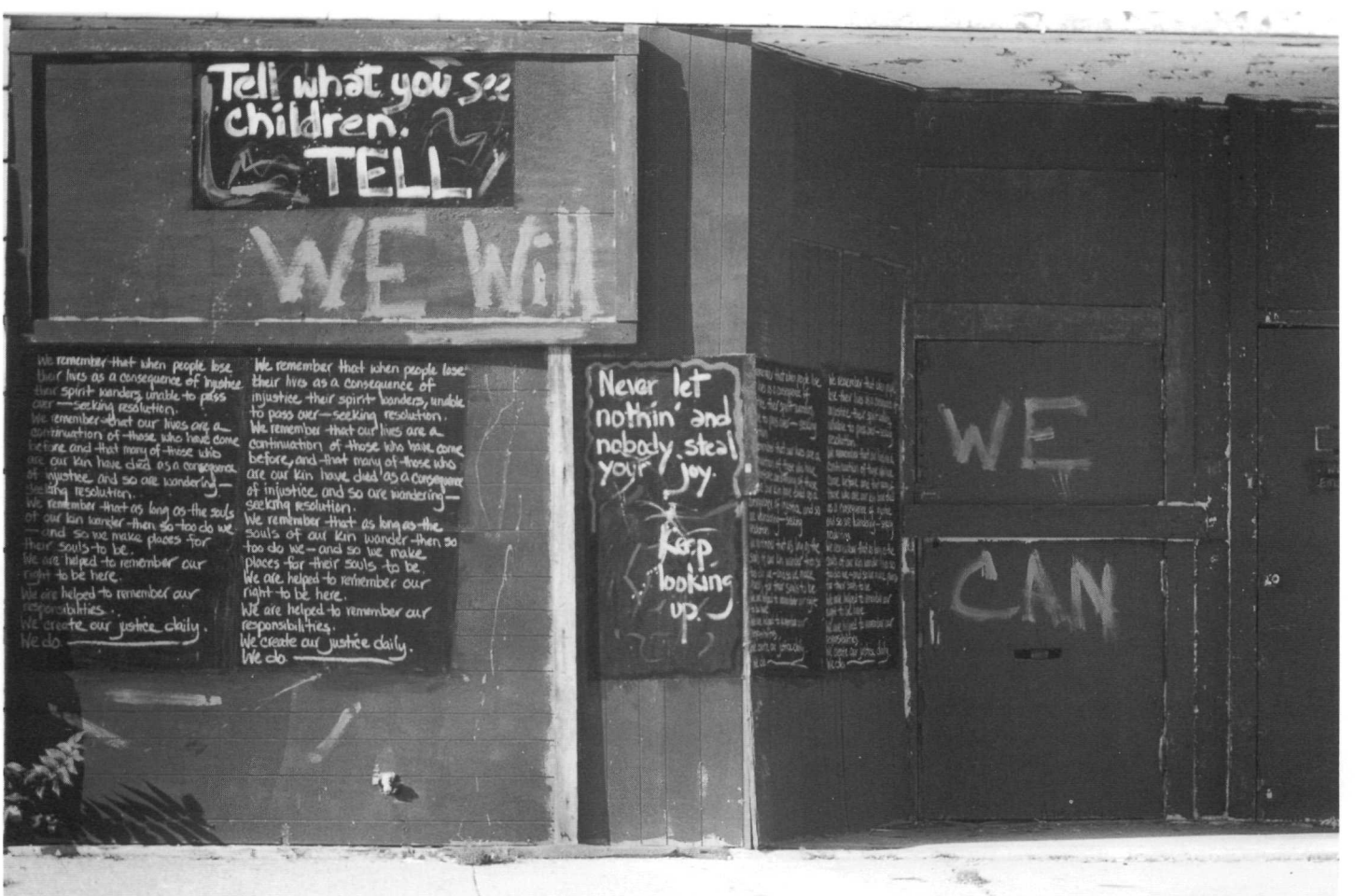
After the 1992 murders of 11 African American women who were found in abandoned buildings throughout the Woodward corridor of Highland Park and Detroit, artist Janet Young Webster began to create a new form of street art on the sides of abandoned buildings.

She composed a series of 11 messages, ranging from poetry and prayers to traditional African American sayings, then painted them onto over 200 large panels. The panels were adhered to the outside walls of buildings to create "word murals." The buildings became resting places, *descanso,* evidence that these 11 women had existed and were valued.

"We remember that when people lose their lives as a consequence of injustice, their spirit wanders, unable to pass over — seeking resolution," one of the murals read. ". . . We remember that as long as the souls of our kin wander, then so too do we — and so we make places for their souls to be. We are helped to remember our right to be here. We are helped to remember our responsibility."

The first mural was installed on September 24, 1992, on the building in which the body of JoAnn O'Rourke had been found.

Webster's original desire had been to install the panels onto the front of the Monterey Hotel across the street, where three women's bodies had been found in February of 1991. Taken over by the State of Michigan because of unpaid taxes, the huge hotel was left unsecured and was used for prostitution, drug activity, and



Graffiti-inspired art reclaims the site where the body of a Detroit prostitute was found. Gordon Judd

dumping of various kinds. The building exuded a negativity that was palpable to Webster's five-member team, who found that they did not want to get too close to the structure, so they chose the building across the street instead.

The first word murals were installed in the spirit of civil disobedience. There was the expectation that the police would interrupt the installations, as permission from the building's owner had not been obtained or sought. The group had planned that, if fined or arrested, they would use the opportunity to bring attention to the owners who had left their property open and in disrepair in the middle of residential neighborhoods.

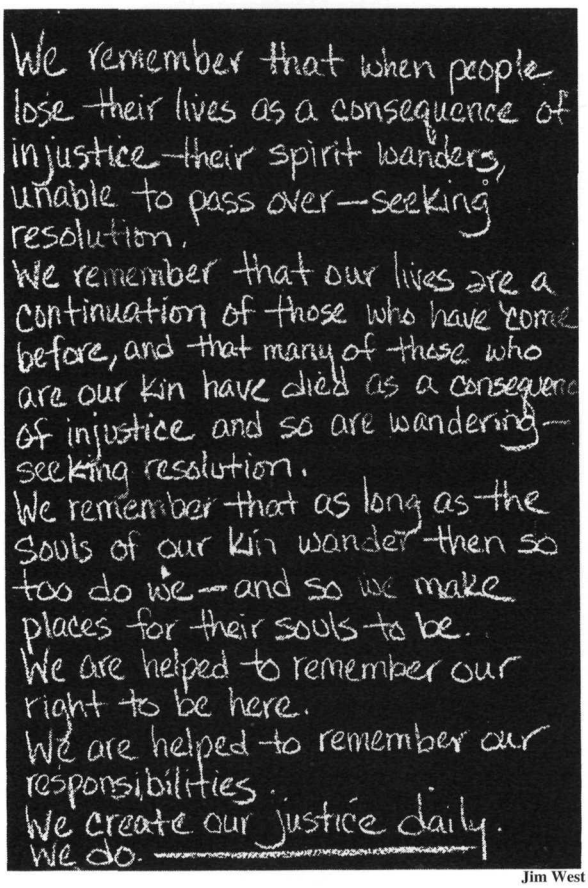
They quickly discovered that the police had no interest at all in what they were doing. One police car had paused as the installation began, but soon drove off and never appeared again.

The second mural was adhered to an abandoned building at the corner of Mack and Meldrum on Detroit's east side. The building, an old wooden grocery store built in the early 1900s, was chosen for its beauty, and because it was the site of drug dealing and prostitution. This mural was adhered with more confidence, but still with some expectation that the work could be interrupted. Again, the mural went up with no interference.

The significance of the project began unfolding in the weeks following the first installations. What occurred was completely unanticipated. The immediate areas surrounding the two buildings where the murals had been installed took on a completely different tone. The drug dealing moved across the street and one block down, and the prostitution moved with it. Life went on as usual in the general vicinity, but not within the square blocks in which the buildings were located.

In October, 1992, one month following the installations, a hole the size of a doorway in the side of the Mack and Meldrum building was bricked up by an unidentified hand. The building was finally secured and made inaccessible.

The Highland Park building was demolished in March, 1993, by the Edison Company to install a generator.



Jim West

Webster was subsequently invited to create a word mural for an abandoned cleaners at the corner of East Warren and Lenox on Detroit's east side. The building had been left open for several years and was used by a group of men who sat inside the building and drank the entire day long.

Webster covered the front of the building with 75 separate panels, all reading, "no endless supply of time." The inside wall space was covered with panels reading, "How long? Not Long?"

The art, completed in October of 1993, was demolished along with the building by the City of Detroit in January, 1994, after a neighbor reported that men were building fires inside.

Webster is currently working on a second phase of what she has named the "WITNESS Project." Her new series, entitled SOUL, is a multimedia art and educational project about childhood sexual abuse. As with her earlier work, its intent is to bring into the public domain stories and ideas that are kept shrouded, considered "personal" or "private business."

In the winter of 1993, following the installation of the first two murals, Webster began writing the story of all that she had witnessed while investigating the murders of the 11 women and creating the project. *Power of Conviction: A Story of Women* became a one-woman performance piece that was first presented in June, 1993, at the A.C.T. Gallery in Detroit.

"This is about silence and the loss of memory and the beauty and human tenderness that we're all dying for," Webster says in the piece.

"This story is about making places for the wandering dead so that we can be free to go on. So that we can be free to go on and create things beautiful enough to blast back this ugly."

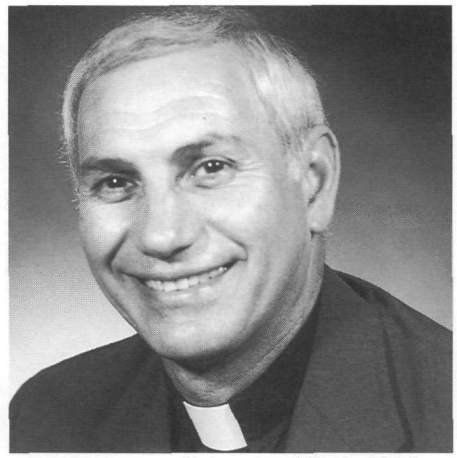
TW

Material for this article was supplied by the artist. Photographer ***Gordon Judd*** *is a Basilian priest in Detroit studying non-violence. Photographer* ***Jim West*** *is an editor of* Labor Notes.

Whose promised land? an interview with Naim Ateek

by Ronald R. Stockton

Naim Ateek is Canon of St. George's Cathedral and Pastor of its Palestinian congregation. He is the author of Justice and Only Justice, *a memoir and treatise on Palestinian liberation theology. This interview took place in May, 1994, just eight months after the Oslo Accords had produced an Israeli-PLO agreement to create Palestinian self-rule, two months after a Jewish settler had massacred dozens of worshipers as they prayed in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque, and one week after Israeli soldiers withdrew from Gaza and Jericho. Shootings occurred almost daily and Israeli soldiers still imposed curfews and patrolled Palestinian neighborhoods.*



Naim Ateek Photo courtesy of Maryknoll Missioners

Ronald R. Stockton: In America, Christians are over 90 percent of the population. Here, Palestinian Christians are a small group with no power. What does it mean to be Christian in the Palestinian context?

Naim Ateek: Our Christian community is very small in number. In other places, for example, South Africa, Christians are the largest group and they have many publications that describe their situation. Here we have few.

For most Christians the Bible is very accessible. With Palestinian Christians, the Bible is a problem in some of its parts. You have to liberate the Bible with the right hermeneutic before it can be a source of strength.

The Old Testament has two Exodus stories. The first has an exclusive theology in which the native people are negated and exterminated. It has been used by some Jews and Zionist Christians to justify their conquest of Palestine and the expulsion of the Palestinians. Jeremiah and other prophets speak of another exodus after the exile. The returning exiles will live side by side with others. Ezekiel 47 speaks of sharing the land with the inhabitants who are already there. In Leviticus, God says "The land is mine. You are all strangers." We must create an inclusive theology of God, not just a God of the Jews or a God of the Muslims. God is not for one people only.

I believe that the state of Israel should never have been created because it was established on an injustice. However, I have come to accept it.

R.S.: Jesus was a Jew. Does this create a problem for you?

N.A.: Our people cling to Christ as a Palestinian. We do not deny his Jewish roots, but because he lived in Palestine under occupation he was a Palestinian. It was under occupation that he told the people of his days to love their enemies. In light of the Resurrection, however, his Jewishness and his Palestinianism became insignificant. He is no more the Jewish Jesus but the lord of history and the redeemer of the world. The focus is not on his Jewishness but on his universality and on what God has done in Christ for the whole world.

R.S.: What do you teach about the Holocaust? It seems to be a very politically charged topic in America and Europe.

N.A.: After the Holocaust and because of Holocaust, some Christian scholars emphasized the Jewishness of Jesus. They wanted to help Christians see the affinity between Christians and Jews and lead them to reject antisemitism. I agree with this; but some of the scholars went too far theologically. The important point is that western Christians and Palestinian Christians had two different experiences with Jews.

In the west they saw Jews as an oppressed people; the Palestinians, however, experienced Jews as oppressors. The Holocaust is a terrible tragedy, but it should not be used as a weapon to silence any honest criticism against the unjust policies of the state of Israel towards the Palestinians. Furthermore, suffering can make people more compassionate but it can also make them more bitter. The suffering of Jews made many of them bitter so that there is almost a

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national complex that they must deal with.

Today there is a generation of Israelis who did not experience the Holocaust but who *can still imagine* it. Instead of making them more compassionate, they act very brutally against the Palestinians. By inflicting suffering on others, they imagine that they are preventing their own suffering. In the way they have treated the Palestinians, one can almost say that they see the Palestinians as Nazis.

Why would a soldier beat a Palestinian child? Does he see the Nazi in this child? Is this the way to express "never again"? Unless Israeli Jews begin to confront this part of their history and recognize that we are all the children of today, that we have all suffered and that we can all be oppressors, there will be no change.

R.S.: Is forgiveness part of liberation theology?

N.A. Very much so. We have to struggle with it because of people's experiences. Every member of our congregation has stories to tell. My own kids went to rent a video during the *intifada* and soldiers made them stand against the wall and beat them. We have been more fortunate than many others since we live in a protected compound, but think of those who do not. In spite of all this, we must continue to practice forgiveness and pray for the grace not to give in to hate.

We teach our people that, in the final analysis, the dynamic is that of oppressor-oppressed. Today the Israeli Jew is the oppressor, tomorrow the Palestinian could be the oppressor. We need to watch out and must stand with the oppressed.

R.S.: What is the appropriate political solution for the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians?

N.A.: I have changed quite a bit in the 27 years since I was ordained. I read old sermons and cannot recognize myself. There were times when I was very confused.

I was much affected by 1948. I was 11 when the Jews occupied my home town of Beisan. I can still remember how the soldiers went in, occupied the town and kicked everyone out. We had no choice but to leave. They took our homes and gave them to Jewish immigrants and changed the name of the town to Beit She'an. My father was a committed layman, a goldsmith by trade. He talked of our expulsion all the time.

A view of Jerusalem from the garden of Gethsemane.

I believe that the state of Israel should never have been created because it was established on an injustice. However, I have come to accept it and am willing to bear that injustice for the sake of those Jews who have no other home — and for the sake of peace.

Like the majority of Palestinians, I now accept the existence of Israel within the pre-1967 borders although that means 77 percent of Palestine.

In other words, most Palestinians have resigned themselves to 23 percent of the land of Palestine. We like to focus on a just peace and not on the destruction of the state of Israel. We accept Israel in spite of its injustice.

We emphasize a two-state solution — the state of Israel along side the state of Palestine. Our message is a message of justice, peace, reconciliation. I hope we can maintain this prophetic role.

R.S.: What produced your acceptance of Israel?

N.A.: I was fluctuating. I had to deal with my own bitterness and resentment. By the grace of God I was able to do it. It was a journey of faith. **TW**

Since the accords

After signing the Oslo Accords, people in the West Bank and the Gaza strip were euphoric, in spite of skepticism about the applicability of the agreement.

People went out into the streets in jubiliation and distributed flowers and olive branches to the Israeli soldiers.

Now, a few months after the partial withdrawal of the occupying army, euphoria has given way to despair. Palestinians find themselves in prison, because Israel has imposed border closures. Unemployment is at 50 percent. Negotiations are going around in circles on both sides.

There is an urgent need for the unbiased interference of the U.S. and Russia and for all the donor countries to live up to their promises.

Palestinians understand the need for Israeli security and are working hard on it. Israelis must work on redeployment of their army in preparation for Palestinian elections, lifting the border closure and, most importantly, stopping the expansion of Jewish settlements in and around Jerusalem and on the West Bank.

– Naim Ateek

From witch trials to hope

by Rosemary Haughton

A 17th-century farmhouse stands within nine steep, forested acres in Gloucester, Mass. The house offers hospitality and has become a symbol of alternative economic development. It stands close to the sea which has been the "land" harvested by Gloucester fishing families for generations.

Seven friends purchased the house in 1981, desiring a low-profile, informal way to offer the hospitality of a shared home to people in crisis.

As it grew, we sensed that what we were about had to do with "coming home" — exiles returning, reclaiming the land that had never been legally theirs.

The history of the house had something to do with it. The homeless women who came to us were sisters to the women who had lived in it 300 and more years ago — but had never owned it.

When we bought the house we gradually discovered much of its history, partly from the formidable historical research necessary to establish title to the various parcels of land which went with it, and partly from a family descended from the original builders of the house.

Sylvester Eveleigh had built the house in 1649, it seems, or maybe it was his son John, and they prospered and were respected, and served as selectmen and did all the things good citizens should do.

Sylvester Eveleigh served as a juryman during the Salem witch trials. These were trials of women suspected of dealing with the powers of evil, because they knew more than most of their neighbors, or were more solitary, or owned things others coveted. There is no record of how Sylvester voted on that jury, or of how the women of his household felt in their secret thoughts about the trials and their fearful outcome.

There is no mention of the women in the recorded story of the house, apart from their names. Their fathers, brothers and husbands bought land, built houses, farms and saw mills. They administered justice, which was greatly concerned with land: the ownership of it, the disputes over it, the inheriting or disinheriting of it. Women were often part of the deal, as with Elizabeth Eveleigh who married a man called Rust, to whom the house passed in consequence.

The women were, then as now, landless and vulnerable, but they created life in the land. They grew food and healing herbs, they cleaned, made the clothes. They often dealt with all the financial details of the farms they could not own.

The women strewed the bride-bed and the floor of the room with sweet herbs to expel evil spirits and bring good luck and many offspring. Marriage was what women were for, to provide sons to inherit the land. And then as now there were the other women, the servant girls who slept in the attic and were well- or ill-treated according to the mood of the master or mistress, and who were regarded as sexually available even in Puritan New England, and could not complain because it was always their fault and they might lose their jobs, which meant food and shelter, or they might be suspected of witchcraft for ensnaring a man.

Wellspring is a house drenched in the stories of women living in space belonging to others, their lives directed to the purpose of others.

The house has a well in the front yard, and that was the reason naming it as we did. The well is almost certainly polluted as well as unused, like so many other wells in this land from which once everyone drew their water. So the well for which the house is named is also a symbol of desire to discover unpolluted sources of life, for women and by women.

There is a sense in which all women, with a few exceptions, are "homeless," even if they live in comfortable homes, because they belong to the sex that does not possess, that is, on the contrary, possessed.

The police once brought a young woman to Wellspring about midnight. It turned out that her boyfriend, who was drunk, had beaten her in her own apartment, for which she paid the rent, and had then fallen asleep on her couch. She called the police because she was afraid of what might happen when he woke, and their response was to remove her and leave *him* on the couch. It just did not occur to them to regard her as the owner of that space, with the right to inhabit it unmolested. It is *the women who leave.*

Even when there is no obvious violence, even when the relationship is regarded as "normal," the same underlying assumption holds: the house, the land, the nation, belong to the men.

After 14 years at Wellspring, the vision is clearer and more stark. As the public mood of unadmitted (but well-founded) fear for the future seeks its scapegoat, it is the women who are driven into the wilderness. In Massachusetts, for instance, homelessness has been *redefined* to exclude two-thirds of those currently homeless. (People are counted as homeless only if they have lost their homes through fire or natural disaster, or been evicted by court order.) Shelters for

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Rosemary Haughton, a founding member of Wellspring, is a widely published author in the field of theology and spirituality. She writes of her experiences at Wellspring House in *Song in a Strange Land: The Wellspring Story and the Homelessness of Women* (Templegate: Springfield, IL, 1989.

women and children are de-funded, many forced to close. And it is proposed that, at the federal level also, poor women under 20 who have babies must live at home or in an institution in order to receive benefits; the pathetic little bit of independence they might have had is too threatening. As in the witch hunts of the Middle Ages, public fear (of war, sickness, economic uncertainty) is to be exorcised by punishing the women, whose gains in civil rights, legal rights, job equity and, above all, in personal independence are too threatening.

In this atmosphere, Wellspring House, and now a sister corporation, a community land trust, clarify the vision and continue to call exiles home, to teach and demonstrate that a just society must be founded in the obligation of all citizens to share and care for the land. Hospitality means making the earth home for all.

This 17th-century house, once the home of a Salem witch trial juror, now shelters women and is the center for a variety of development projects .

At the heart of Wellspring is a small group of people — six at present — who live in or near the old house and form the "core community." We see our role as bearers of the tradition, charged with ensuring that the mission of hospitality informs all the decisions and the work, and is expressed in the very look and feel of the place — the welcoming kitchen where volunteers prepare dinner, the winter fires on the 17th-century hearth, the fresh flower-bulbs in winter, flowers from the garden in summer — that say to all, "You are welcome, you are important, you deserve beauty." Most of the core community are also part of the staff. Dozens of volunteers do child-care, food preparation, telephone answering, wood stove tending and much more.

A lodging house for single men and women and two apartment houses now provide homes for low-income people. The community land trust, holding the land as a sacred trust, makes possible ownership of homes on that land for people who never thought they could afford it. It includes five condominium units so far, and 16 units now rented but moving towards cooperative home ownership, plus eight more condo units (one for handicapped people) in construction.

To reclaim the land means to understand oneself in the land — social analysis, awareness of the history of women and the poor, growth in confidence. It also means, very practically, learning how to find, keep and pay for a home, learning the skills to move from the dependence and isolation of poverty to both self-support and the interdependence of friendship. To reclaim the land means to dare to cross barriers of class and education, as men and women, poor and middle-class, share the work of the two boards of Wellspring, as volunteers and homeless women become friends.

A little bit of literal reclaiming of land goes on in the nine acres around the old house. Most of the rocky, forested land is wonderful for walking, camping, and meditation, but no good for cultivation. But on the level land, from the first year, we planted a vegetable garden and fenced it to protect it from energetic and hungry ground hogs. We grew food for the house, and made compost. (The green compost bucket in the kitchen has to be explained to new volunteers and homeless guests.)

The flower beds in front of the old house make passing cars slow down. Fruit and other trees have been planted. Three years ago a big area was fenced to make community gardens. Now, families who have no yards come to dig, plant and harvest, and the children play in the sandbox or on the swings nearby. One day, perhaps, we'll have a cooperative farm.

Gloucester is a traditional fishing port, and the ocean is the "land" where a third of local families make their living — or did. Now, many of the big fishing grounds are closed by government order and fishing is severely restricted. Boats are idle and fishermen are on unemployment. Families who are unable to keep up payments face the loss of not only boats but homes. The public is taught to blame the local fisherman for over-fishing. Nobody mentions the huge factory boats that sweep the breeding grounds. Nobody mentions the global phenomenon of pollution-induced abnormalities that make many fish incapable of breeding.

A group called The Gloucester Fishermen's Wives works with Wellspring on public policy and on creating new small businesses. Reclaiming the sea make take years, but the spirit is alive. Wellspring has a business called "Fish to People" that brokers low-cost "underutilized" fish species (when the boats are allowed to catch them) to hospitals, shelters, nursing homes, and food pantries.

We have created a little space in which we can claim "this land is home to me," and move on in the hope that one day all the world can be home. TW

Facing presentments: looking for a little action

"Dialogue doesn't work in bringing us to a point of decision," Todd Wetzel, executive director of Episcopalians United, told *The Witness* when asked about the letter of presentment that has been issued by 10 bishops against retired Bishop Walter Righter. At issue is Righter's 1990 ordination of a non-celibate gay man.

"An ecclesiastical trial is the only way in which the church can honestly debate these issues," Wetzel added. "Either the church is going to ordain homosexuals or not. It's time to reassert discipline — not just on issues of sexuality but on a broader front."

Other presentments for the same offense are also expected to be issued against Stewart Wood (Mich.), Ronald Haines (Washington), John Spong (Newark) and Allan Bartlett (Pa.).This formal legal approach to settling theological disputes appears to fly in the face of the General Convention mandate "to continue the dialogue."

Edgar Kim Byham of Integrity, the advocacy group for gay and lesbian rights in the Episcopal Church, says that a heresy trial "would be an immoral waste of time and money."

"They clearly have no chance of success — but they want something more definitive than they got out of the Wood decision," Byham said, referring to the decision by a panel of five bishops appointed by the presiding bishop that there was no grounds for a call for presentment against Michigan's bishop, Stewart Wood. In that case six priests and 29 lay persons charged that Wood had violated a 1979 General Convention resolution in ordaining a non-celibate lesbian.

By charging Righter on the grounds that he violated the teaching of the church, i.e., committed heresy, the 10 bishops have asked for an ecclesiastical trial, circumventing the involvement of a board of inquiry appointed by the presiding bishop.

To hold a trial, one quarter of the bishops must give their consent. Supporters of the presentment predict that this will happen if they get the support of the bishops who signed the "affirmation" of the church's traditional teaching on sexual morality (i.e. married, heterosexual sex) during the 1994 General Convention.

"I think it will polarize the church and will signal that we can't talk any longer [if the trial takes place]," said Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies.

But for many, whether we *were* talking is an open question.

William Frey, former bishop of Colorado and dean of Trinity School for Ministry, recently declared a moratorium on discussing issues of sexuality because he believes both sides have made up their minds and neither side is listening. In the meantime, he says, the other work of the church is left undone.

While at the House of Bishops meeting in Kanuga, Frey said he spoke with those advocating a trial.

"The presentment is a desperate attempt to get one question on the agenda of the House of Bishops — it has little to do with human sexuality and everything to do with order. Does the Episcopal Church have any official teaching on the matter of human sexuality? If so, what is it, and are there any consequences for not adhering to it?"

For many, the questionof order invokes another problematic area: adherence to the canon that makes ordination equally applicable to men and women.

"It is ironic that bishops who have intentionally excluded women from ordination despite the canons would bring charges against Bishop Righter," observes Cynthia Black, president of the Episcopal Women's Caucus.

Four of the 10 bishops who signed the letter of presentment — William Wantland (Eau Claire), John David Schofield (San Joaquin), Jack Iker (Ft. Worth) and Keith Ackerman (Quincy) are opposed to women's ordination to the priesthood.

The others who signed are John Howe (Cen. Fla.), James Stanton (Dallas), Stephen Jecko (Fla.), Terence Kelshaw (Rio Grande), Maurice Benitez (ret.,Texas) and James Coleman (W. Tenn.).

If it comes to trial the bishops who will cast the verdict are: Fred Borsch (L.A.), Donis Patterson (ret., Dallas), Cabell Tennis (Del.), Arthur Walmsley (ret., Connecticut), Roger White (Milwaukee), Edward Jones (Indianapolis), Robert Johnson (N.C.), Andrew Fairfield (N.D.) and Douglas Theuner (N.H.).

Some observers suspect a trial would be a two-edged sword. A victory for Righter could be an important affirmation of gay/lesbian rights, but negative reaction to such an affirmation could lead to the nomination and election of a new presiding bishop (scheduled for 1997) opposed to the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals.

The bishops opposed to women priests could also interpret a verdict that supports Righter's conscientious right (based on a theological position) to ordain a non-celibate gay man as support for their claim that the "conscience clause" gives them the right to ignore the ordination canons.

At bottom, the frustration that prompted 10 bishops to issue a presentment may be the same frustration that has caused many bishops to ordain qualified homosexual priests and many clergy to bless homosexual relationships.

Both groups — those who perform the rituals and those calling for ecclesiastical trials — want action, not talk.

— Witness *staff*

Vital Signs

Making the sanctuary safe: an interview with Nancy Myer Hopkins

by Julie A. Wortman

Nancy Hopkins is an Episcopal Church consultant on helping congregations deal with events that have left them feeling traumatized. In addition to working directly with congregations, she conducts training sessions to prepare others for this work and spends time writing on the topic for a variety of journals.

Nancy Hopkins

Julie A. Wortman: Working with congregations in the wake of clergy sexual misconduct has become a specialty of yours — how did you get started doing this work?

Nancy Myer Hopkins: I've been working in this area for more than six years, dating from our move to Minnesota, where my husband, Harold [Hoppy] Hopkins, had taken the job of Director of the Office of Pastoral Development for the House of Bishops — he had been bishop of North Dakota and I had been using my background in family systems and family therapy in my work as a counselor for Lutheran Social Services in Fargo.

Hoppy was going to be dealing with clergy sexual misconduct issues a lot and wanted some extra education. So we went to a four-day training, one of the first being offered. I learned a lot about victims and offenders, but they did not mention the congregation at all and that seemed like a huge gap to me — there was a whole other big group of people out there that was affected by this and it appeared that nobody was looking at that.

So the person who organized the conference and I invited about 10 people to do research with us. We represented a broad range — three were offenders who were well into the recovery process, some worked primarily with victims, others worked primarily with families of offenders and some were trying to manage these cases for their various denominations.

We went to congregations where there had been cases of clergy sexual misconduct and asked, "What did you need that you didn't get?" These were congregations where the misconduct was well in their past. And they were very clear. The first thing they told us was, "To be told the truth." Even when the case was 20 years old, there was still a lot of very intense feeling that they had never had a chance to process together. We learned from this that regardless of the time element, these feelings go underground and are still there if they are not surfaced and worked through.

We also surveyed 18 "after-pastors," pastors whose predecessors had been offenders. We found that about half of these people were having a terrible time, that the anger in the parish seemed to be out of control, being directed at the bishop or whoever would be in that position in their churches, at anybody who was identified as the victim and at the after pastor — as is often true in the case of an incested family, seldom was the anger directed at the person who really did betray them. The after-pastors reported lots of conflicts and fighting in their congregations, particularly what I call "symbolic fights" involving displaced anger. In general, the trust levels were shot.

J.W.: Working with congregations sounds complicated — you've got a group of people reacting to the situation individually, out of their own personal lives and backgrounds, and you've also got to contend with a group dynamic?

N.H.: It's *very* complicated. A lot of clergy who have been power abusers — basically that's what sexual exploitation is, of course, power abuse — have attracted to their congregations people who would be dependent on them.

J.W.: So then it's also a matter of going back to basics about roles and power?

N.H.: Absolutely. That's one of the underlying themes. What we're talking about here is power abuse. The sexual stuff is a way that it frequently plays out, but it is by no means the only way. There are plenty of ways that clergy can abuse their congregation. They can be emotionally abusive, verbally abusive or go after the money — and sometimes these are combined.

What we're finding when we intervene in these systems is that there will also be lay people who are abusing what we call their secular power, related either to money — that's a primary one — but also to status, class, gender, and race. Power abuse is not only going on with the cleric. I think very often a person can get away with something because others are also getting away with something.

J.W.: Are most of the congregations you see, then, pretty unhealthy?

N.H.: Not always. You also get healthy congregations where abuse occurs. The abuse is still traumatic, but in those settings the congregations can recover more readily. As I do this work and realize how complex it is, I've been looking increasingly at the variables that predict if a congregation will be totally traumatized by a case of clergy sexual abuse or

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Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.*

whether it will recover relatively easily.

Recovery is aided if the congregation is well connected to its diocesan structure, if it's been open as a total system, if the people are healthy, if there is a broad distribution of lay people who are using power — not one or two who are abusing their power, if the congregation has not had a past history of being traumatized, and if the clergy who have gone before have for the most part left under reasonable circumstances. All these things make a difference. There are probably 10 or 15 more factors, but these come most readily to mind.

J.W.: How long before a congregation sorts things out after a case of abuse?

N.H.: It takes a long time. Congregations often want a quick fix. It almost seems like the sicker they are the quicker they want the fix to be. It's an indication of how ill they might really be if, after the first meeting, people are suddenly saying, "Oh, we've dealt with this and now it's time to move on."

J.W.: Is this where the truth-telling comes in?

N.H.: Yes. I don't have a way to help a congregation unless they can talk about what has gone on. There's an important difference between secrecy and protecting privacy. In the context of clergy behavior, information that can and should remain private does not legitimately concern people in the congregation — over-disclosure of a cleric's private life can be a boundary violation. But when a cleric has abused the power inherent in his or her role to harm or injure others in the congregation, this becomes an offense against the entire community. Keeping the behavior secret sets up a wide variety of damaged relational possibilities.

The laity have given away too much of their power to the clergy — across the board, not just where abuse has occurred.

J.W.: For example?

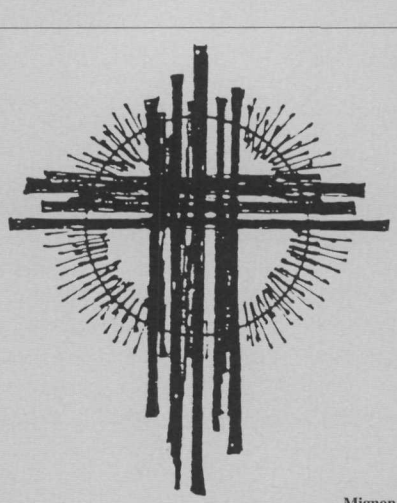
N.H.: When someone is covering something up, all their conversations and relationships, even if they seem unrelated, are colored by the necessity to be guarded. Those who know the secret tend to separate themselves from those who don't, because people who share a secret tend to be more comfortable with each other — and sometimes those who guard the secret send not-so-subtle signals that they have special knowledge and this compromises the power of all the other members of the congregation. Also, when the secret is finally revealed, those who were not in the loop feel profoundly betrayed.

J.W.: I suppose that the effectiveness of what you're doing has a lot to do with the support you get from diocesan authorities?

N.H.: That is a key factor. Luckily, more and more dioceses are getting on board with this. There are some very good people — perhaps in half the dioceses — who understand how important it is to do the congregational work and to also have policies set at the diocesan level. Still, some diocesan leaders ignore the policies that have been put in place, and that's a recipe for disaster.

J.W.: What is the key concept people need to grasp if they are to be effective in managing these cases in congregations?

N.H.: Why this constitutes abuse of power — especially sexual contact between a priest and an adult parishioner. If people don't have that understanding they won't go much further with discipline. They certainly understand if a child is a victim, but those tend to be the minority of cases in our church. We tend to have more



Mignon

Clergy sexual exploitation: reclaiming the church

This month *The Witness* launches a six-part series on clergy sexual misconduct. While church leaders have begun to publicly name the problem and offer adjudicatory solutions — the increased caseload in dioceses across the country indicate not only the need for, but the result of, doing so — there is still much confusion about causes, prevention and treatment. The conversation ranges from the power dynamics between lay and ordained and the fiduciary responsibilities of the institution to its members, to sexual and professional ethics, the purpose of congregational life and the mission of the church in general.

This month our interview with Nancy Hopkins touches upon why clergy sexual exploitation is so devastating to congregations and some of the ways the parish can be reclaimed as sacred space in its wake.

Future articles will examine presumptions about who has power and the potential to abuse it, the tension which arises as the Episcopal Church attempts to respond to cases as both a legal entity and as a Christian community, healing for victims and offenders and ethical issues that emerge when cases involve minority groups.

In all, we sense a continual grasping and groaning after resurrection in conflict with impulses to protect and defend the institution. It is our hope that the series will not only contribute to an expanded understanding of the issues involved, but also to a faithful response.

sexual exploitation cases with adult victims. And an awful lot of that is male-on-female — not all, but almost all.

Another key understanding is the need for disclosure. If they don't understand the need for disclosure, they won't do much work with congregations. They'll leave them hanging.

J.W.: Aren't we also dealing here with a balancing act between asking our clergy to be personally involved in the life of their congregations and asking them to maintain a professional distance?

N.H.: Fifteen or 20 years ago clergy were into being "authentic." They were told, "Be yourself, be a good buddy, be vulnerable — this is the way to be effective." There is still something to be said for that. But you have to stack that up against the unconscious power that is in the role. There is power that clergy can take in the role, but there is also unconscious power in the role as well — all the transference and projection that people do with the ordained.

The laity have given away too much of their power to the clergy — across the board, not just where abuse has occurred. The result is that people put these massive expectations on clergy for them to be or do what *they* should be being and doing for *themselves*.

J.W.: What about the factor of how men and women relate in this culture?

N.H.: That's another underlying theme. The power imbalance in the role is greatly enhanced by power imbalances that are basic in a patriarchal culture. You've got this kind of double whammy with male clergy and female parishioners — there's all the unconscious power, the embodiment of the divine in the clergy person, and then there's the gender stuff in there as well. Women clergy experience power in the role very differently, but that's been relatively unexplored territory.

J.W.: So the issue of consent is a problem?

N.H.: Yes, but this is a controversial issue. There's an after-pastors meeting on Ecunet — it's a wonderful discussion! One of the topics has been, can a lay adult ever give consent to a sexual relationship with a clergy person and, if so, what would that look like? It's been one of the liveliest meetings I've seen.

Most people writing about this topic say that single clergy should never date single congregants. Others say it's possible if certain conditions are met — for example, that the dating is not a secret, that there is no major life transition in either of their lives, that there is no explicit counseling situation, that the congregant gets another pastor and worships in another congregation, that lay and denominational officials are told.

J.W.: Have you had any experience with liturgical services in which people have been trying to bring healing to the congregation after a case of clergy sexual exploitation?

N.H.: I've known of a number of healing services. But I try to caution people about offering such liturgies prematurely. As church people we tend to try to paste over things before we should. "Forgive and forget" is a phrase people often use when they are likely to be in denial.

On the other hand, there's one congregation I'm working with right now where they are having monthly healing services. The priest is making it clear to people that these are part of the ongoing healing process.

J.W.: With so many cases coming to light, I've heard some people, especially clergy, say that the church is engaged in a witch hunt. What do you think?

N.H.: Historically, witches were females and were basically either burned or hanged for getting out of line. Applying the term to this always brings me up short.

There is the remote possibility that someone could jump on this bandwagon and make a false accusation — and one false accusation is too many. But I think the fear of false accusations is greatly exaggerated. Based on what I've seen, most of the people who come forward and make charges are credible. To dismiss the whole thing as a witch hunt is a form of backlash and makes me very angry.

We will see even more cases coming forward. It is the kind of thing where one case gets publicized and 10, 20, or 50 others who have been victims read about it, hear about it, and may decide, "I have to tell my story as well." But I see that as hopeful, not hurtful.

If somebody is living with the pain of sexual abuse and they are enabled, by seeing someone else's courage and seeing that the church handles the case sensitively, to feel that they, too, might be heard, I see that as a positive step — rather than the person just living with the pain of that abuse and living with the continuing power of the abuser over them.

J.W.: Will that have an influence on the congregations where it happened?

N.H.: Yes, if it is an egregious case of power abuse, the congregation would have to deal with it because some people in the congregation most likely will have had knowledge of the abuse and have kept it a secret the whole time. It will have impacted on the health of that congregation. Because they've had this secret festering in the system, they could end up with later cases of abuses of power or clergy burnouts, one or the other.

J.W.: What gives you hope as you continue to pursue your work with congregations?

N.H.: The hope is global. As an institution, we are beginning for the first time to face a variety of abuses — the institution has been laced with abuses, even though — and I want to stress this — a majority of clergy have not been abusers. But every time the institution faces this and says, "This will stop and we can recover from this," we are taking a step toward health, not only for ourselves but in the church and the culture.

In congregations we work with, we see people begin to heal in front of our eyes. That's where the hope lies. I know from going back and asking people one, two and three years later, "How is it going for you?" they're saying it was a major turn-around for them. And it has spread out into the community so we have a community of people working to recover from a wide variety of illnesses, abuses, addictions.

You can have a ripple effect of good health going outward when you deal with this well.

Reluctant in San Diego

by Julie A. Wortman

When church folks start talking about "evangelism," I usually leave the room. For one thing, most of the people I've encountered who *enjoy* talking about and doing evangelism have seemed unnaturally smiley and friendly. For another, they've also seemed homogeneously white, straight, clean-cut and likely to be comfortable with wearing American flag lapel pins (if they weren't already wearing clerical collars).

But the fates, combined with the fact that *Witness* board member Linda Strohmier twisted my arm ("Church journalism is a powerful form of evangelism," she kept chanting in my dubious ear), dictated that I participate in an "Evangelism Ingathering" in San Diego this past February.

Strohmier is the national church's new evangelism coordinator and she's nothing like my stereotype of an evangelism enthusiast. Asked during her interview for the coordinator's job what group of people she would like to concentrate on evangelizing first, her deadpan response was, "Gay men and lesbians."

The Ingathering in San Diego was to be her first official encounter with some of the people who have been working in evanglism for many years. A sprinkling of newcomers like me was there to add a little spice.

In the past, my biggest objection to official church evangelism talk has been that it has always seemed like double talk. Evangelism in this context is basically about church growth — about packing the pews and filling the collection plates — but we are not supposed to say so. Instead, we're told that evangelism is *only* about sharing our personal Christian stories with people who might like Christ in their lives.

No one likes to say that their major interest in having more people in the pews is about money, but I find it difficult to believe that it isn't. This is one of the

Linda Strohmier

fundamental disconnects we encounter so often in the church — between the principality of the institution and the Jesus movement the institution is supposed to serve.

A secondary but related aspect of this is that, recognizing that bringing *any* new people into the church changes the church to some degree, if you are trying to buttress up an institution that you know and love in its present form, the safest thing to do is to go after people like the ones you already have, people who will not pose the threat of bringing too much change — disconnect number two.

But thanks in large measure to Strohmier's straightforward and sometimes quirky willingness to grapple with questions others might prefer to dismiss, evangelism double talk was kept to a minimum in San Diego and the issue of the disconnects was put directly on the table.

Perhaps this was also because a significant number of the participants represented constituencies who have the numbers for which the church-growth folks are looking, but who pose a very deep threat to the homogeneity of the institution — American Indians living on reservations, migrant workers, inner-city Asians, college students, gay men and lesbians.

Julie Easley, Episcopal chaplain at the University of Iowa — a ministry that has grown from three to more than 75 (with a mailing list of 300) in less than three years — said that for her the issue is one of personal integrity. "How can I in good conscience encourage young adults to join the church when the church is not interested in offering them a chance to exercise leadership until they are in their forties?" Easley asked.

From my point of view, this applies to women, people of color and lesbigay folks as well.

But as Mark MacDonald, a priest who serves Indian communities in Red Lake and Redby, Minn., talked about the high rate of youth suicide among the Ojibwe, my feelings began to shift. It used to be, MacDonald said, that Ojibwe Episcopalians gathered regularly for hymn sings — community gatherings in which personal testimonies were interspersed with song from early evening until late in the night. But church officials told them they must stop the sings because it wasn't what Anglicans do and so they stopped. But now, convinced that the singing strengthens their people in self-understanding, faith and self-esteem, especially their youth, the elders have decided to begin singing again. This time, the church (personified by MacDonald) will support them.

"For me, evangelism is a justice issue," said MacDonald, "The poor don't know about Jesus and they need him."

His story reminded me that offering that kind of lifeline to people who face despair because of racism, poverty, homophobia or sexual abuse is, afterall, something I'm deeply committed to doing. I might even be willing to call this a commitment to evangelism now that coming to grips with the disconnects in institutional efforts to offer Jesus to the world appears to be what the Strohmier era of evangelism — she prefers the term "Gospelism" — will be about.

At least I should be able to stay in the room for the conversation.

Stewardship without accounting?

by Dieter T. Hessel

One God, One Family, One Earth: Responding to the Gifts of God's Creation [an environmental curriculum for older youth and adult Episcopalians] by Eleanor Hill, Alfred Persons, and Jean Goodson; in consultation with the Education Action Group of the Environmental Stewardship Team. The Episcopal Church Center: NY, 1994.

An audiotape of four Paul Winter Consort pieces — one played in the Grand Canyon, and the others at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine — are included in this "interactive course exploring the spiritual dimensions of the Environmental Crisis."

Being a Winter Solstice Celebration enthusiast, I listened to the tape while browsing through the Leader's Guide. The music disposed me not only to think kindly of this parish education resource — which is well-written, and utilizes visual as well as musical arts — but to feel the deep sense of lamentation and celebration that Paul Winter evokes. While the curriculum encompasses both, celebration gets much better treatment than does lamentation.

The course caters to characteristic preferences of affluent Episcopalians for creation celebration and caring, plus cultivating less consumptive lifestyles, without venturing into much critical socio-economic analysis or exchanging any straight talk about how money is earned, invested and spent. As a venerable Presbyterian friend once observed, affluent congregations have an unholy compact wherein the clergy don't ask the laity how they got their money so long as they give some of it to the church.

Therefore, this curriculum offers some critical commentary on inappropriate consumption by affluent people in the northern hemisphere, but almost nothing about demanding community accountability from corporations (or participating in any corporate responsibility strategy). Nor does it illumine the church's role as advocate and model of sustainable livelihoods in a world dominated by profit-maximizing, labor-exploiting businesses colluding with weak governments to produce resource-wasting, unneeded stuff for "free" marketing to population groups that have the money.

"Environmental stewardship" is the prominent theme. Minor attention is also paid to the "environmental justice" movement for equity for the powerless who experience disproportionate toxicity on every continent. The curriculum does not quite get these together, probably reflecting a tug-of-war among the designers, who would have benefitted by paying closer attention to the ecumenical eco-justice thought and action which upholds the ethical norms of sustainability, sufficiency, participation and solidarity in community.

There is some irony in this curriculum's lack of attention to economics and ecumenics, since both words come from the same Greek root — *oikos* — as do ecology and stewardship *(oikonomos).* That was a missed opportunity. But *One God, One Family, One Earth* does do some good things well.

Insights of ecological and cosmological science are effectively presented. There is also some lite biblical interpretation, though not enough to reveal the Bible's rich resources for eco-justice ministry, nor possible interactions between Scripture and the world's other sacred source — the book of nature. Still, it starts in that direction.

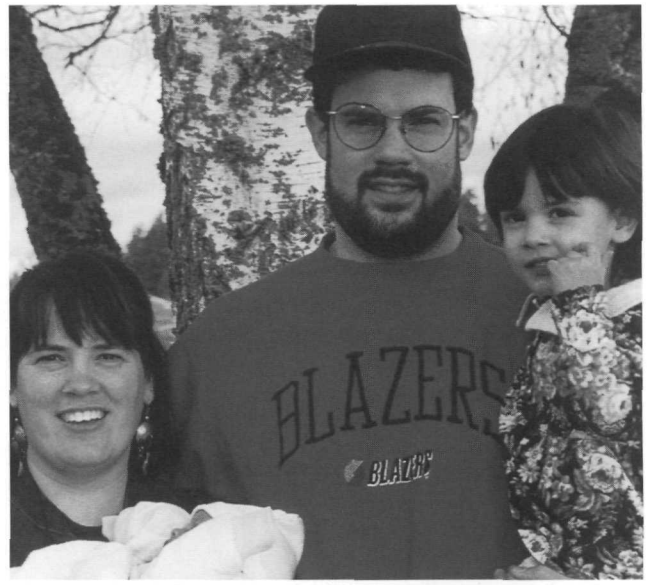
The curriculum takes participants through a cycle of creation-aware spirituality that encourages them: a) to appreciate our place in the universe and stay in communion with creation, and at the same time, b) to think globally, act locally, and commit individually, as they begin a parish environmental ministry.

The last session brings them back to celebration creation-awareness, *after* doing action planning — an aesthetic, perhaps even inspiring touch. The six-session process is a "green" version of the awareness-analysis-reflection-action cycle that has gained prominence in social education. And it has ecclesial resonance, effectively utilizing collects from the Book of Common Prayer.

The developers of this course went to a lot of trouble to make it user-friendly (almost to a fault, since that results in very short readings, that can have intellectually thin effects). In the Leader's Guide, teachers will find thorough lesson plans, with precise, flexible instructions for all six sessions. A Resource Appendix lists religious and environmental organizations, other books and curricular resources, and "videography and audi-visual tips." I recommend it for the limited start-up purpose for which it is intended. I also urge Episcopal Church educators to become more ecumenical in eco-justice education and action as they proceed. TW

Dieter T. Hessel is a social ethicist and former national staffer of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for social education and social policy development.

book review



Jim Bronec and Celeste Kersey with daughters Naomi and Faith

I look at the land and it seems as though the soil is just used to hold the plants upright and then we pound on chemicals to feed them.

Resurrecting toxic land

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

When Jim Bronec grew up, the city folks whined about tractors running into the night and raised concerns about herbicide and pesticide spraying.

They were, Bronec understood, people who considered Oregon's farmland a scenic backdrop to their middle-class lives. They didn't understand.

Just recently Bronec has returned to his homeland after a tour with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps which introduced him to the needs of urban America and to his massage therapist/midwife-in-training wife. Bronec, large and steady, stands like the earth itself next to the quick-fire wit and demands of Celeste Kersey.

They have crafted a home for their two daughters out of the house Bronec was raised in. When he would say, "This is where the linen goes." Kersey would lean back, "Who says so, Jim?" The patterns he grew up with won't be adopted wholesale as the model for their life together.

Nowhere is this more clear than in their approach to the land.

The concerns of the city folks no longer seem so unreasonable and sometimes Bronec feels disloyal to the family friends he has known all his life. (He will add that it makes no sense to buy a home in farmland if you can't tolerate night plowing and harvesting, since they are necessary. And he'll add that city neighbors can be inconsiderate, allowing their children to ride horses through farm fields.)

"But I feel differently than I did growing up. I feel a lot more responsibility for the health of the land. Growing up I used to think the responsibility was solely, 'How am I going to make money to feed my kids?'

"Now I feel responsible to the land and to everyone for how I use it.

"Just down the road we have some neighbors whose house juts into our field. When I was a child, we were aerial spraying over his house -- he came out really angry. He said his wife was pregnant.

"My immediate reaction was, 'That stuff's not going to hurt you.' Now the whole idea is appalling to me. Country folks resist other people telling them what to do. There's a lot of built up resistance to environmental stuff.

"But I've come to the conclusion that what we've been fighting is actually beneficial. Being a person entrusted with the land — if I'm going to use poisonous chemicals, I have a responsibility to everyone around me. There's no way around that.

"The decisions I make are far-reaching. If I use petroleum-based fertilizer, it's imported. Plus the local runoff is going into the streams. And then there's the product."

Being a person entrusted with the land — if I'm going to use poisonous chemicals, I have a responsibility to everyone around me.

Bronec says he doesn't want to farm grass seed as the senior Bronec Brothers, his dad and uncle, have done for decades. This crop is particularly dependent on herbicides.

He's even disappointed that his organic garden, from which he can see the Cascade Mountains, may be subject to

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

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

herbicide and fertilizer runoff from the farm equipment parked nearby.

A small business counselor has been brought in to help the older Bronec Brothers figure out if and how they want their 1,000 acres used by the younger Bronec Brothers, Jim and Dave.

"He's great! There are some things my father and his brother have not discussed in years. Like my father has finally told my uncle that he wants to quit farming."

The younger brothers will face problems with the counsellor as well. Dave wants to make a good living as easily as possible, which may mean continuing the family tradition.

Jim has appalled his father and uncle by asking if he can farm a few acres organically now. He's convinced that it can be profitable.

"They won't give me even a few acres. I think my uncle thinks I'm going to go broke and it's up to him to save me. And, of course, in their minds, the land is clear now. They've worked for years to get rid of the weeds.

"But I look at the land and it seems as though the soil is just used to hold the plants upright and then we pound on chemicals to feed them.

"I think about what we'll give future generations — we'll have taken something alive and have turned it into dead matter."

For now, Bronec helps his father and uncle. He's even getting his license so that he can spray herbicides and pesticides.

But he also attends meetings of people committed to sustainable agriculture where he's introduced to farmers who share his values. He's making new allies.

"The hippies" who shared a commune near his family's farm when he was a child are still neighbors. And while they seemed foreign and exotic when he was little, they now have a desire to see their 33 acres farmed organically. They'd be delighted if Bronec would give it a try.

Bronec thinks of planting berries on the hillsides and maybe rice in the swampy areas. Multiple crops require more work (and harvesting fruit requires relying on migrant laborers which he knows introduces more justice issues), but the crops suit the character of the land.

And there is nothing he wants more than to conform his labor to the needs of the earth.

"I want to trust God's will. To me nature symbolizes God's working. When we say we can fix things that are wrong with chemicals we're ignoring the way God made it.

"We've tried to use chemicals and technology to solve our problems when we should have been looking to nature. If we can trust that there is a means within natural laws or natural boundaries to get a harvest off the land and to feed ourselves, then we'll have healthy soil and food in the future.

"It's a justice issue. We learn how God wants us to treat each other with respect. Why shouldn't that carry over to how we treat the land?" TW

Back issues

The following back issues of *The Witness* are available. Study guides are provided upon request when ordering multiple copies of a single issue.

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