The Witness

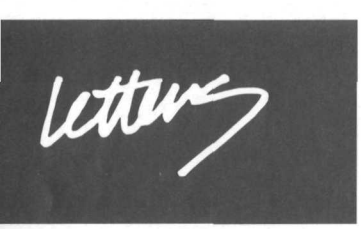
Body wisdom

Volume 78 • Number 5 • May 1995

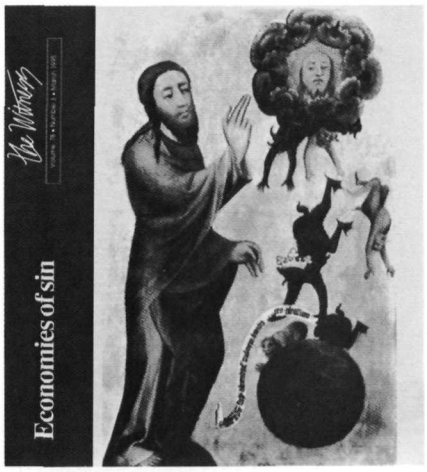
I HAVE BEEN A SUBSCRIBER to *The Witness* for several years and have always found it inspiring and challenging and especially helpful to me as a Christian educator. Your latest issue, however, which deals with "economies of sin" is really exceptional. Every article informs, uplifts and encourages. I keep a file of *Witnesses* but this one I have hole-punched to keep with my working notes for ready reference. Thanks again for a superb publication. I am hopeful that one day I will be financially able to be more than a subscriber. Also, thank you for including the information for obtaining the EUC's publication "To Heal the Sin-Sick Soul." I am sending for it today.

Anna K. Comer
Pittsburgh, PA

YOUR MARCH ISSUE IS A STUNNER. However, I looked in vain for comment on damnation and the flames of hell as the result of sin. There is a young man in our church who is deeply worried about my husband's sermons because he does not preach about hell, and the dangers of being condemned by God to spend eternity there. He worries about people who are not told about this danger, because if my husband never tells them, they could be consigned to the fires of hell for all eternity, simply because they are uninformed and it is my husband's job to tell them. This young man sees the task of any Christian minister as frightening people into good behavior and into a "belief on the Lord Jesus Christ" in order to avoid hell. I have two nephews who are also of this persuasion. One is a clergyman, the other is an engineer, and the two of them harassed their dying father who was unable to speak until he nodded that he accepted their particular brand of theology. I find it hard to deal with this level of "fundalit-ism."



It's easy to ignore these concerns which are deeply and sincerely felt, and wonder why our young man doesn't attend a



different denomination, one which agrees with his approach; he is, however, our organist, and a life-long member of a church of which his parents and grandparents were life-long members. This kind of relationship is common in the struggling inner city churches of main-line denominations.

It would also be interesting to examine why it is that "judgment" usually means "condemnation" and "justice" is used to mean "vengeance."

Priscilla W. Armstrong
Baltimore, MD

THANK YOU FOR THE PROVOCATIVE issue, Economies of Sin. The wide-ranging nature of the presentations stimulated my mind in a variety of directions. Two of the essays gave particular pause.

I am always disturbed by allegations that the writer or speaker "knows the Will of God." When Bishop Iker and I have differing interpretations, is mine based on my own will while his is based on the Will of God? Would that I could be so certain of my understanding about the nature of sin.

Easier to grasp is Bishop Browning's saying the church's greatest sin is apathy. What he discusses fits what Dorothy Sayers treated when she wrote of the deadly sin *acedia* or *sloth*. In her words "the world calls it tolerance." The images that came to Bishop Browning when he contemplated "the greatest sin the church has to face" are real for me. But I would extend the list. Is there an image in his mind of women priests in the Diocese of Fort Worth who are forbidden to function? Does he see a pair of devoted companions fasting in Seattle because the blessing of their relationship was not allowed? Does anybody care?

John S. McAnally
Port Townsend, WA

IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, we have had moments when we felt that the church-community was disappearing. However, we have been witnesses of how God as Leader of History, and Lord of the Church, guides it, directs it, protects it, and renovates it by sending men and women who know God on a first-hand basis. Men and women who have known how to respond to the Divine Call. Men and women who know that the Gospel is the Good News for the poor and who are conscious that in God's Kingdom exists a privileged class, that is, the neglected, the sick, the orphans, the widows and the smallest in the Kingdom.

When a church pays attention to and defends the interests of the powerful (rich), it's maintaining a political game, allowing a change not only in priorities but also working against the call. There is the sin.

The church's ministry should be an evangelistic, a prophetic and a missionary one, just as Jesus' ministry, and our goal should be to imitate him. The church's ministry should be to empower and transform the quality of life for the people. Only when this is done, it's then that we can say that we are starting to do ministry with the purpose of salvation-liberation that Jesus offered when he cured the sick.

Clemencia Maquete
San Juan Bautista Mission
Bronx, NY

THE REV. KEN BIEBER, who has now left our Church for the "Charismatic Episcopal Church" said in his recent interview [3/95] with you:

Bishop [John Shelby] Spong [of Newark] . . . has simply said, "I don't believe anything that the creed says."

I have heard Bishop Spong speak, and I have read several of his books, and I simply do not believe that he would make this statement. So I would like to know, exactly, where this direct quote comes from.

If Fr. Bieber can do so, I will apologize to

him for doubting his veracity.

But if he can not do so, he owes Bishop Spong, and the readers of *The Witness*, a retraction and also an apology.

Alex Seabrook

[A response from Ken Bieber follows:]

BISHOP SPONG HAS NOT SAID those exact words. But in his many writings, Bishop Spong has rejected virtually every statement in the Nicene Creed, which, according to the Book of Common Prayer Outline of the Faith or Catechism (BCP 845-862), is the creed of the universal Church, and is used at the Eucharist. I do apologize for being a bit unclear in my wording.

Perhaps after looking at the following examples from just two of the bishop's recent books: *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, identified as "B," and *Born of a Woman*, identified as "W," Fr. Seabrook will see what I was attempting to say.

1. **The Creed:** *We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.*
   Catechism: "... there is one God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth ... The universe is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains, and directs it."
   The Bishop: "We have come to the dawning realization that God might not be separate from us but rather deep within us. The sense of God as the sum of all that is, plus something more, grows in acceptability." (B-page 33) and "God is now perceived as the presence of life that animates the universe, that reaches self consciousness in Homo sapiens . . ." (B-page 241).
2. **Creed**: *For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.*
   Catechism: "The Messiah is one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, ... The Messiah, or Christ is Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of God."
   Bishop: "To see human life as fallen from a pristine and good creation necessitating a divine rescue by the God-man is not to understand the most elementary aspect of our evolutionary history" (B-page 234).
3. **Creed**: *By the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.*
   Catechism: "... by God's own act, his divine Son received our human nature from the Virgin Mary, his mother."
   Bishop: "Am I suggesting that these stories of the virgin birth are not literally true? The answer is a simple and direct, "Yes" (B-page 215); and "Virgins who give birth without a male agent exist for us only in legends and fairy tales" (W-page 84). And "Is there any possibility that the narratives of our Lord's birth are historical? Of course not. Even to raise that question is to betray an ignorance about birth narratives" (W-page 59).
4. **Creed**: *On the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures.*
   Catechism: "By his resurrection, Jesus overcame death and opened for us the way of eternal life. Jesus took our human nature into heaven where he now reigns with the Father and intercedes for us."
   Bishop: "Easter broke, I believe, not so much with a supernatural external miracle, but with the dawning internal realization that this life of Jesus reflected a new image of God ..." (W-page 39). And "A dead man became the means through which the living God was seen"(W-page 39).
5. **Catechism**: The Trinity is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
   Bishop: "I am not interested in preserving the doctrine of the Trinity" (B-page 232).

These, and many other examples, make it appear to me that Bishop Spong is not interested in preserving anything of the faith. Bishop Spong calls Jesus Lord, but his Lord is not the Lord of the Christian faith, but someone he has made up based on human reasoning grounded in the outmoded scientific evolutionary world view.

John Spong has a right to his opinion, but Bishop Spong does not have the right to publicly teach doctrine contrary to that of the church. Far from owing the bishop an apology, I believe he should apologize to the Church, repent of his sins of idolatry and false teaching, and then resign.

Kenneth R. Bieber,Vicar
Church of the Risen Lord
Bridgeport, MI

[Ed. note: Bill Wylie-Kellermann reviews Spong's book, *Resurrection: Myth or Reality?* on page 28 of this issue.]

Classifieds

Episcopal advertising project

A series of four 30-second television ads inviting persons to return to church is available in English and Spanish from The Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation. Dioceses or parishes can obtain the ads for broadcast on local TV stations at a reduced fee of $350 for one commercial, or $1200 for the entire campaign. Call (404) 233-5419 or (800) 229-3788.

IFOR position open

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation seeks to appoint a new coordinator for its Nonviolence Education and Training Project for Dec. 1995. This is a three-year position. IFOR is a multi-faith movement dedicated to active nonviolence as a way of life and a means of political and social change. The IFOR international secretariat is presently located in the Netherlands and operates in English. Further information is available from the IFOR office, Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, the Netherlands. Email: ifor@gn.apc.org; tel: +31-72 123 014; fax: +31-72 151 102. Send applications to IFOR President Marie-Pierre Bovy, Communaute de L'Arche, Bonnecombe, 12120 Comps Lagranville, France (fax: +33 6574 1309) before June 30, 1995.

Music tape

Martin Bell, author & priest, presents original songs performed by a diversity of gifted musicians. Includes settings for Lord's Prayer & other service music. *Just to Be Is a Blessing* is music that heals the soul, with lyrics that enliven faith. Cassette $10, CD $15. Order from MBA, 4683 Vintage Lane, Birmingham, AL 35244. 205/733-0455.

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.

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Vital Signs *examines issues of power and mutuality in this portion of our series on clergy sexual exploitation.*

Cover: The dancer: rhythms of the heart and soul by Mary Beckman. "When I saw this woman dance, I saw an incredible statement of personal power. She was celebrating a very aware mind, body and spirit connection. She also seemed to be expressing a deep connection to the earth and its mysteries. She was truly exploring and giving form to the dance within — something we can all do." Original artwork © Mary Beckman. Original artwork is in full color, greeting card published by: Caravan International, P.O. Box 17936, Boulder, Colorado 80308-0936; Phone: 1-800-442-0036. © 1994, 1995 Hope Springs Eternal Inc. *Back cover: Sanctified Joy* by Bernard Stanley Hoyes. For a catalogue of other work presented by the Syracuse Cultural Workers send $1 to SCW, Box 6367, Syracuse, N.Y., 13217; 315-474-1132. Camp meeting song cited in *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora* (Beacon, 1994).

The ways of the flesh

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

I feel like a neophyte editing this particular issue. Body wisdom is not my strong suit. I've lived most of my life believing that that my mind and soul are primary; my body simply a vessel to transport them.

Patterns adopted in college persist. I readily exchange the things my body needs, like taking walks, preparing whole grains and relaxing, for over-achievement. I love persisting through obstacles to produce articles, magazines, conferences. I fuel the work with arrogance. My mind and soul think nothing of driving my body past mealtimes and then filling the gap with caffeine, sugar or alcohol.

Across the nation, people — and in particular women — are turning to "body work." For some this a form of psychotherapy focussed on the feelings and memories stored in their bodies. For others it is more varied: yoga, T'ai Chi, meditation, sweat ceremonies, dance therapy, prayer walking.

This work is distinguished from a preoccupation with physical fitness by participants' belief that through a body-centered discipline they will learn bodily of what is important. They will learn wisdom. They will know God.

I've joined a strong circle of women who meet from time to time to pray outdoors and to dance with the earth. I have been cultivating visions in which I begin to see bodies as earth-temples.

Outdoors, fasting and in prayer I caught a glimpse of a woman named "earth-bound woman." She is someone who is content to live one life in her one body. She would not consider trying to live multiple lives simultaneously.

Mary Beckman

I was surprised to learn later that the women at the Re-Imagining God Conference held last year spoke often of "earth-bound woman," referring to her as incarnational. They wove her easily into theological addresses that re-imagined God.

Rita Nakashima Brock (p. 6) asked, "What re-imagining of God would allow us to look in a mirror and say that we see, in our embodied whole selves, someone we love? How can we come to understand our daily, earth-bound, ordinary acts of care ... as images of sacred power, of God-with-us and in us in our very flesh?"

Listening, I felt relief; my work is part of the work of these women. Dancing alone, I had tapped their language. Perhaps they tap mine. It's a corporate work.

Some say that listening to their bodies, recovering stories and senses, brings them closer to the earth. They feel their bones to be like the earth's rocks, their skin like topsoil, their blood like rivers. They begin to recognize the earth's seasons and changes in relation to their own. And to love and trust the creator.

One can guess that less technological societies did not have to schedule evenings to work this wisdom. But neither did they have to go to Vic Tanny's to lift weights and stretch their legs.

The jingle dancers and shawl dancers, the warrior dancers at American Indian pow wows know the wisdom we've lost.

Michael Meade, a representative of the men's movement, talks in this issue about the ways less technological societies dealt with disease and violence. Interviewed by *Sun Magazine*'s Sy Safransky, Meade covers a wide-range of body topics (p. 16) — everything from gang violence to AIDS and the need to age well.

Meade calls together men who attend workshops with others from different racial, economic and gender-oriented backgrounds.

The work is not only for women.

We need to learn who we are and where we've come from and to understand organically that our lives are woven together with each other's, with the earth's and with the creator. TW

editor's note

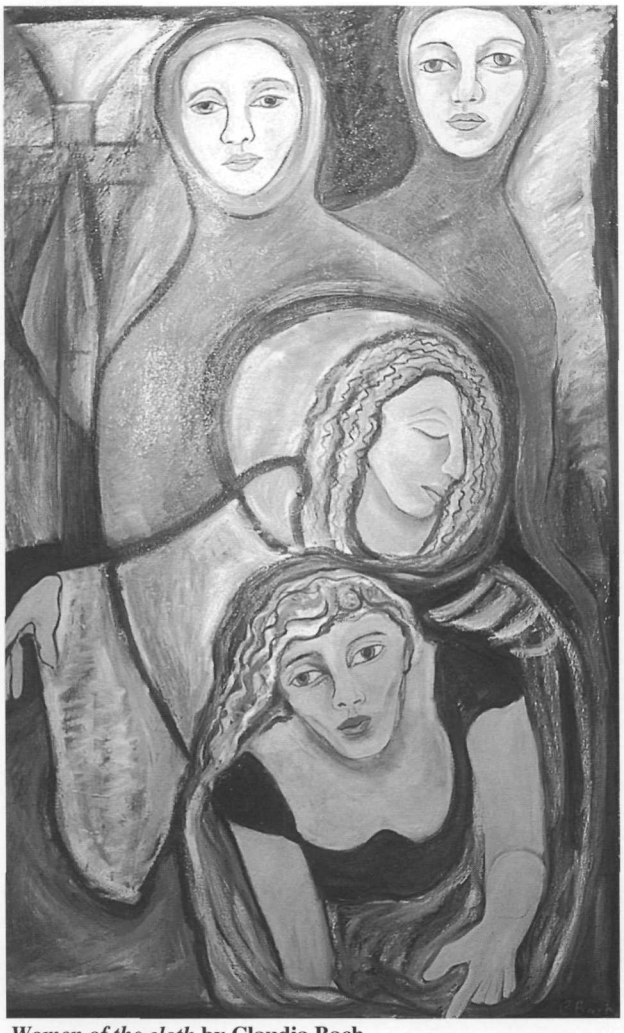
Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

Reclaiming our flesh

by Rita Nakashima Brock

Barbara de Souza worked for almost eight years among poor communities in Sao Paolo, Brazil, and developed a two-year course in health education for women. The area she served had only one public health clinic for more than 80,000 people. De Souza provided basic health care information and instructions for doing community health work. Women gathered each week to learn anatomy from the head down, learning about the illnesses of various systems and their causes and about the politics of health care in Brazil.

To help them learn, she had her classes create a life-sized doll and put the correct anatomical features on her, and she had them draw posters to illustrate biological processes. A peak moment during the course was reached after about a year of instruction when they studied the reproductive system. The women lost their inhibitions with each other and developed a group spirit.



***Women of the cloth* by Claudia Bach**

One woman's story stands out from the others, and I tell it with De Souza's permission.

Dona Julietta was from an abusive marriage. She could not handle money, was unable to do anything outside of her home without her husband's permission, and believed she was stupid, slow, and unable to learn. In order to come to the meetings, she told her husband she was attending a prayer meeting at church. And she had to bring her seven-year-old daughter along. As the weeks proceeded, it became evident that she was slowly able to learn. Although she could barely read, she was good at spatial relationships and made well-organized posters. She was also a lively member of the group, supporting and cheering others on as they struggled to learn new material.

At the time the peak of the course arrived, Julietta's husband said to her that he was tired of her going to prayer meeting every Wednesday. He beat her and forbade her to go by locking her in the bedroom. When she did not come and there was no word, the group discussed what to do. Because her husband was rude and abusive, they decided not to go to her house.

The next Wednesday when Julietta's husband saw her whispering to her daughter, he suspected something, so he repeated that she could not go. Her daughter, to be helpful, said, "But Papa, they don't really pray at the meeting; they look at a big naked doll and talk about it." Furious, he beat Julietta and locked her in her room again.

But Julietta had had a taste of feeling loved and important, so she climbed out through the window and arrived in her beaten state. She told the group that as a child she had been passed from one member of her family to another, because her mother had died in childbirth. No one

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Rita Nakashima Brock is associate professor of humanities at Harding University in St. Paul, Minn. She is the author of *Journeys of the Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (Crossroad, 1988) and of *Guide to the Perplexing: A Survival Manual for Women in Religious Studies* (edited with Judith Plaskow, Scholars Press, 1992). Brock told this story at the Re-Imagining Conference in Minneapolis last year. Her complete address is published in the May/June, 1994 issue of *Church & Society Magazine*, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, Ky., 40202-1396; subscriptions $12/year, $30/two years. Artist **Claudia Bach** lives in Sarasota, Florida.

The bodies of grownups

Janet Morley

The bodies of grownups
come with stretchmarks and scars
faces that have been lived in
relaxed breasts and bellies
backs that give trouble
and well-worn feet
flesh that is particular
and obviously mortal
They also come
with bruises on their heart
wounds they can't forget
and each of them
a company of lovers in their soul
who will not return
and cannot be erased
And yet I think there is a flood of beauty
beyond the smoothness of youth
and my heart aches for that grace of longing
that flows through bodies
no longer straining to be innocent
but yearning for redemption

To find myself exposed

Janet Morley

To find myself exposed
where even the dark is not safe
to suffer my timid flesh
to be appalled with longing
to give up all my words
and unprotect my soul
to be searched with love
and scorched with the breath of you
I cannot so much as finger this fear
for fear of unforgetting

Janet Morley is the adult education advisor at Christian Aid in England.

"Keep the attention on the body": a spiritual discipline

by Marianne Arbogast

"Keep the attention on the body." At one time I would have thought this to be strange spiritual counsel, but by last October, when it was offered by a Jesuit Zen master to participants in a weekend retreat, I could accept it as familiar and trusted advice.

A co-retreatant — a friend who loves to dance, does massage therapy, and speaks ecstatically of the physical processes of pregnancy and labor — says she is attracted to Zen practice because it involves the body. For her it follows a natural inclination; for me it provides something that was lacking.

My own inclination is to live in my head. For years I was content with a spirituality that moved from reflection to action. If I considered my body at all, it was as an instrument for living out my ideals.

But 10 years ago, at a time when I was finding little inspiration in ideals, a retreat director gave me a copy of Anthony de Mello's book on prayer, *Sadhana*. In order to pray, de Mello maintained, we need to "return to our senses": seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting God in the physical world around us.

At first, exercises in awareness of breath or body sensation seemed pointless to me, and I was often restless. But as the retreat week progressed, I felt that a new and unsuspected dimension of my consciousness was awakening. The rushing of rain and wind outside, the shining green and black of tree branches, the hardness of the wood floor under my footstep, took on new intensity. At the same time I was inwardly quieter — not always while I practiced breath or body awareness, but afterwards, in the in-between spaces of the retreat days. Attentiveness to my body was leading me to deeper centeredness of my whole being.

Since then, I have continued to explore Eastern forms of meditation practice, finding in them some necessary spiritual balance. I know that a significant dimension of that balance has to do with body awareness.

As I began to be aware of breath and posture, I noticed changes. Slouching felt less comfortable; I wanted to sit with my back straight. My breathing became deeper, and a sporadic pain I'd felt in my chest for a long time disappeared.

At my first weekend Zen retreat, I was surprised to realize that I was literally unable to relax the muscles in my stomach for more than a few seconds. They would tighten again on their own, accustomed to a lifetime of training to "hold your stomach in." After the retreat, I was acutely aware of this, and gradually noticed an easing of the tension.

I began to be more in touch with my emotional responses, recognizing fear or anger in my stiffening shoulders or jaw.

I also became more attuned to physical needs; I learned that when I stay mindful, I can easily distinguish when I am hungry, for instance, and when I am eating out of boredom or anxiety.

Ruben Habito, a Zen teacher and writer who describes the Zen life as "coming home," names "recovery of the body" as one aspect of that homecoming (*Healing Breath: Zen Spirituality for a Wounded Earth,* Orbis, 1993).

Zen practice, he says, frees us from a false mind/body dichotomy, and teaches us to be at home in our bodies as our true selves. At the same time, it enables us to overcome an illusory separateness from the rest of creation.

"As I focus on my breathing in and breathing out, here and now, I literally put myself in connection with everything else that is connected with this very breath: all the living beings of the human and animal domain with which I share the air I breathe; all the plants who receive what I exhale and give me oxygen in return, and so forth. ... As I do so, I see my actual connection not only with the oak tree in the garden but also with the trees in the Amazon forests being depleted at a rapid pace. ... The pain of every sentient being in the universe is felt as my very own pain, *in this very body,* and naturally draws me to respond, in whatever way I can, toward its healing."

I am convinced that mindfulness affects my daily life in very practical ways. On days when I am more mindful, I seem to

As the retreat progressed, I felt that an unsuspected dimension of my consciousness was awakening. The rushing of rain and wind outside, the shining green and black of tree branches, the hardness of the wood floor under my footstep, took on new intensity.

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.* Artist **Claudia Nietsch-Ochs** lives in Merching, Germany.

intervene more calmly and effectively in conflicts at the soup kitchen where I work. I feel different, and I believe my physical presence is perceived differently. It may be simply that, when I'm quieter within, I am better attuned to what's going on around me. Sometimes it feels as if the right words come out of my mouth — more from my body than my mind — without my having thought of them.

One Christian writer, J.K. Kadowaki, speaks of the Zen process as moving "from the body to the mind," in contrast to the Western method of mind to body.

"I have learned many things from Zen," he writes (*Zen and the Bible,* Arkana: London 1989), "but one of the most wonderful is to have become aware of the importance of the body in religious life. ... The Western way is to first reflect rationally, make a judgment, will to do something, and finally use the body to carry out the act. ... The way of Zen is in striking contrast to this. ... Learning through the body is a fundamental of Zen."

But if our cultural heritage has cut us off from bodily sources of wisdom, some compensating grace seems to be stirring in our collective psyche.

It seems that almost everyone I know is doing some form of body work, or spiritual practice which involves the body.

Julie Wortman does T'ai Chi. Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is part of a group of women who walk rope courses strung between trees and have danced all night outdoors in prayer. Marietta Jaeger participated in a sweat lodge ceremony with Crow women in Montana.

I know five massage therapists. Women on my block are currently meeting for a weekly yoga class. Three friends join me twice a week for meditation. Others have entered into various forms of body therapies — from rolfing (a deep tissue massage technique) to bioenergetics (a form of body-based psychotherapy). Still another participates in monthly "peace dances."

Conference centers across the country advertize meditation and body work retreats, which quickly fill to overflowing.

Living in wisdom with creation **Claudia Nietsh-Ochs**

Leona Sullivan, a friend who has prayed and offered spiritual direction for many years, sees this as "a response to the information age and high-tech.

"In an earlier age, there was a rhythm to nature that people followed," she says. "Now our society is so crazy in its pace. We're bombarded by such a glut of impact, through TV, computers, travel. We really need high-touch — inner connectedness with our deepest self, the core of who we are before God."

Massage and polarity therapist Pauline Feltner agrees that our society promotes alienation from our bodies.

"Our culture is very cerebral," she says. "A lot of people don't even know how they feel; they'll get a massage, and say, 'I didn't even know that hurt,' or 'I didn't know there was tension there.'

"Many of us, since we're all so good in our heads, can do talk therapy for years and not get at things that are important.

"Also, in our culture, we see pain as something to get rid of, rather than something to explore, and dialogue with, and see what it's telling us."

Sullivan has recently undergone bioenergetic therapy, a process of counseling and physical exercises ordered toward opening up the breathing and freeing energy flow.

"We have defensive body responses, connected to experiences in early childhood," she explains. "We tighten the body up, and cut off our breathing in certain places. When somebody is 'uptight,' their whole body is moving upward — their shoulders move up. The person who is grounded is well-connected with the earth, and doesn't lose their balance as easily."

This grounding has everything to do with the spiritual life, Sullivan believes.

"God can't be present to us in the past or the future, only in the present. I have to be grounded in my body to be grounded in the current reality."

Opening up our breathing "helps us be in touch with our deeper spirit and with God," she says. "It's a freeing process, so I can more creatively attend to other people and the world around me."

My Zen retreat companion, Susan Horvat, says that she first felt connected to God through her body.

"I came to prayer through movement first, through the body," she says. "During the years when I was doing a lot of liturgical dance, I really felt authentic. When I was moving, and focusing it as a prayer form, there was no doubt, no question. Meditation is, for me, the still point. The stillness is the backdrop of the dancing."

Awareness of breath and posture is "starting with something real rather than something insubstantial," says Beth O'Hara-Fisher, another member of our meditation group. "For me, it's connected to seeking God at the center of your being, rather than outside yourself."

Feltner believes that "when one is coming from one's own center, what one puts into the world is more helpful."

Doing body work with others has deepened her spirituality and increased her "sense of awe," she says. She quotes Christina Baldwin: "When we are disconnected, mystery reaches for us again through the body, and by moving into the physical, by dropping into the body, we make ourselves available. The body is a trustworthy source of bringing the Sacred into everyday life." TW

Therapeutic body work

Stephanie Thompson, a therapist who practices a form of body work known as Integral Psychotherapy, offers this description of the process:

Usually people begin with individual therapy. At the point when the therapist and the client decide they are ready, they start body work, either individually or in a group.

We begin by having someone lie on a mat and do deep breathing, all the way through to their stomach. Basically, the therapist just facilitates their breathing.

What happens depends on the person. If people are just allowed to be, to breathe, they usually move into some kind of feeling.

Some people have a lot of resistance, a lot of armoring in the body that creates blocks to feeling. As the person and the therapist get to know where the blocks are, the therapist can facilitate, maybe by stroking the neck or pressing on the abdomen.

Usually talking is discouraged, because it pulls you back into the head. The therapist may say, 'You're safe. It's OK to be scared. It's OK to be angry.'

In a group, each person is paired off with a partner. One is on the mat while the other is facilitating. The therapist moves around, working with each pair.

Afterwards, clients participate in a process group, where they talk about what came up: where the blocks are, where there is pain, whether the person dissociates — splits off — or stays in the body.

Children who experience abuse have to disconnect from their feelings. During body work, when the person moves into feelings, they disconnect. Some say they feel like they are floating above their body. Some numb out — they won't be able to feel their feet or hands.

I know a person who had been choked a lot, who would actually get red marks on her neck in her body work.

Memory and experience are stored at the cellular level, and through breathing and touch, we are able to access them. There are different areas of the body where energy gets blocked, where there's not a good flow.

In my experience, this kind of work really helps people to get to core issues. Integrating the mind and body is a much more wholistic way of healing.

I have a real interest in my own process. When I'm taking good care of myself and feeling integrated, I have so much more love and energy to give to people, the earth, and things of value to me.

—*M.A.*

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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The signature of the resurrection

by S. R. Skees

Students come together evenings, haggard from work and commuting but smiling the warmth of knowing much about one another. They sit in a circle in the cavernous gymnasium of an inner-city Methodist Church, playing with their bare toes as they talk.

They know the leaps and waves of each other's spontaneous moving bodies well, since many of the games they play entail follow-the-leader and mirroring skills. Here they learn to trust, lead, follow, create dance movements, and let out joyous passion.

"We want to get people to *be* in their bodies," laughs Cynthia Winton-Henry, the students' instructor, who left a Disciples of Christ pastorship in a slow-moving church in California's Silicon Valley to co-found an improvisational Christian dance company called *Wing It!* Dance, she adds, is "the signature of the resurrection of the body."

"We carry our theologies in our bodies," explains Phil Porter, Winton-Henry's colleague. "In the same way that we don't just talk about a relationship with Jesus — we take communion — we don't just embrace a belief in the body; we get up and dance."

Based in the Bay Area, the two have danced with homeless people, battered women and with Bishop Desmond Tutu in front of 10,000 people. They also tour the U.S., teaching in sanctuaries, businesses, hospitals and schools.

Wing It! students tap their creativity, enhance their ability to cooperate, and come into connection with the other dancers, says Porter.

Creative dance class at *Wing It!* S.R. Skees

"When you get people together to dance community happens," says Winton-Henry. "The 'corporate body,' which has long been a Judeo-Christian concept, needs to have its blood running through it. That body needs to be together, doing. We *do* through echoing early practices of dancing, singing, storytelling."

Winton-Henry and Porter have developed a philosophy and a dance technique called "Interplay" which combines physical, spiritual, and psychological data and action. Dancers become attuned to the sensations, knowledge, and wisdom of their bodies and express that in spontaneous choreography that often becomes three-dimensional prayer.

WingIt! participants leap about in black spandex, limbs outstretched, facial expressions exaggerated, fingers spread or toes pointed.

"So much of dance is communicated on a body-to-body level," Porter says, "or from the dancer's body to the viewer's body. When a dancer jumps, a member of the audience feels it in their body. That direct, body-to-body connection itself *is* the sacred."

The dance of Interplay seeks to heal the dualistic thinking in current society between body and spirit.

"The body is a big way of knowing," Winton-Henry proposes, "and the mind is a small subset within that, which does linear thinking.

"The body fullness that we see in children that we adore — that's the fullness we achieve in dance, in play. It's not about wildness," Winton-Henry says. "Rather, we can combine the freedom and self-acceptance of children with adult information and wisdom."

Sex pervades *WingIt!* dance. For a bodyspirit, spiritual ecstasy and orgasm emerge from the same place.

Dance technique employs the whole body, says Winton-Henry: "hips, thighs, ears, wrists, pelvis, buttocks, chest. But some church leaders have constructed intellectual religious worldviews that come close to condemning the body as sinful."

Their dancing, including the sexuality that comes through, they say emphatically, "is not pagan but Christian, because the dancing body *is* the incarnation.

"Mystics talk about all of this" — Winton-Henry's hand slices the air and the California twilight beyond — "being a cosmic dance. And that's what it is. It's about people tripping and falling and being terribly amused and relentlessly hopeful." TW

S. R. Skees earned a master's degree in world religions at Harvard Divinity School and now writes on international religion and women's spirituality.

'This is my body': our bodies on the line

by Ched Myers

We live in a world in which history is being held hostage to ever bigger guns and ever more fabulous myths of redemptive violence. Perhaps only empowered political bodies can rehabilitate the hope for justice and freedom in our time, and heal our body politic. If so, the churches must follow Jesus in recovering the nonviolent power of body-politics.

On the eve of Jesus' showdown with the Domination system, he said to his betrayal-bound companions: "Take: this is my body" (Mark 14:22). This is not intended as a memorialization, however. Rather it is a direct statement that his body-politics will be ultimately revealed in the way of the Cross.

As his body hangs on that cross Jesus is revealed as the Human One, even as the Temple veil is torn (Mk 15:33-38). And at the end of the story Jesus' body is not there to solemnize (16:6). Instead we are informed that the practice of Jesus' political body continues, forging the Way we have been invited to follow (16:7).

The subversive character of Jesus' body-politics was not lost on those within his own cultural context. It has been missed completely, however, by the church today. By privatizing and interiorizing faith, the church mirrors the alienation of the political body from the body politic that so characterizes modernity. But what if Jesus was right that our bodies are indeed our most potent political tools? Perhaps "This is my body," which lies at the heart of the church's liturgy, should also lie at the center of our politics.

Practitioners of nonviolent direct action in the 20th century have rediscovered the truth of body-politics. Gandhi experimented with this approach in the conviction that the best weapon of the poor was their bodies because that was the one thing they could control and mobilize. Martin Luther King believed that only by violating real social boundaries with real bodies could the U.S. come to terms with the duplicity of its racist body politic. And Plowshares activists have pioneered resistance to imperial militarism by calling Christians to trespass into the most sacrosanct nuclear security areas.

Common to each tradition is the conviction that *where* we place our political bodies in the body politic makes all the difference. Philip Berrigan, as is his way, expresses the thesis of body-politics somewhat more bluntly: "Hope," he is fond of saying, "is where your ass is."

Perhaps "This is my body," which lies at the heart of the church's liturgy, should also lie at the center of our politics.

Civil disobedience attempts to unmask socio-political contradictions by representing them in public ritual, thus rendering the war of myths visible in real time and space. Such actions cannot be dismissed by the authorities as merely deranged opinion or antisocial behavior, because actual bodies must be dragged away, arrested, and jailed. At each point in the process the possibility of genuine political debate is opened up. To illustrate the alternative power of body- politics, I will make brief mention of three examples drawn from the last several decades of nonviolent struggle in the U.S.

When Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955, she was not the first to do so. But her solitary gesture triggered a bus boycott that launched a civil rights movement that changed the character of the whole society. By not standing, Rosa made a stand against a racist body politic in her own political body.

King and other leaders subsequently became increasingly adept at the strategic use of political bodies — from lunch counter sit-ins to marches. The Civil Rights movement represented both "defensive" and "offensive" body-politics. African Americans protected the integrity of their political bodies against the daily assault of Jim Crow while also *attacking* that color line. In so doing they forged, for the first time, a politics of mass civil disobedience in the U.S.

When Bryan Wilson, a Vietnam veteran, was run over by a train loaded with armaments bound for El Salvador at the Concord Naval Weapons Station on September 1, 1987, losing both legs, he offered the penultimate expression of body-politics. His sacrifice triggered a campaign of nonviolent resistance on those same tracks, still stained with Bryan's blood, for years afterwards.

Nonviolent direct action has characterized the militant wing of the peace

Ched Myers works for the American Friends Service Committee in Los Angeles, CA. The themes in this article are explored in more detail in his recent book, *Who Will Roll Away the Stone? Discipleship Queries for First World Christians* (Maryknoll:Orbis, 1994).

movement in the U.S. Given the abstract and secretive character of U.S. foreign policy, activists have tried to respond with actions which unmask its true character. The politics of trespass was reappropriated from the Civil Rights movement in order to reveal the hidden geography — local and global — of militarism: weapons factories, distribution depots, missile silos, research and development sites, forward deployments, secret communications installations, even training centers.

The physical presence of resisters at these sites means to provoke what Jim Douglass calls a "moral and political crisis." The tactics vary. Sometimes the aim is token impediment, disrupting business as usual for a few hours, as in the re-enacted "die-ins" in front of Pentagon entrances or actions to obstruct the nuclear "White Train" on its route around the country.

On other occasions, the focus is on bodily violating the "sacred spaces" of the national security state, as in the case of Plowshares actions or prayer pilgrimages to nuclear weapons sites. Bill Wylie-Kellermann, in his book *Seasons of Faith and Conscience*, has shown how such nonviolent resistance to the "gods of metal" reinterprets traditional liturgical practices by moving the geography of worship to spaces in contention.

Finally, when Jack Elder was arrested on April 13, 1984, for transporting three Salvadorans from Casa Romero, a hospitality house in San Benito, Texas, he was representing a third tradition of body-politics. Through the 1980s, Central America solidarity work developed several notable aspects of creative nonviolence. The Sanctuary movement sought to protect Central American refugees from immigration and political authorities, as well as from mercenary *coyotes* along the refugee trail. This was done first by working for safe passage through an "underground railway," and then through offering hospitality in churches and families. The political bodies of refugees made the distant realities of U.S.-sponsored war on the poor *concrete* to middle-class congregations in the Palace Courtyard.

Coleman McGehee, eighth Episcopal bishop of Michigan, celebrates the eucharist outside a nuclear weapons plant.

Subsequently, some refugees returning to their homes asked First World supporters for *acompanamiento.* This spawned the flip side of the nonviolent partnership, as North Americans relocated their political bodies to war zones, hoping to provide a deterrent to further violence aimed at the refugees.

The best example is Witness for Peace, which trains nonviolent observers to place their political bodies in war zones between combatants, in an effort to deter fighting and human rights violations.

Witness for Peace was conceived as a way to expose the covert U.S. war on the Sandinistas. On the home front, Witness also developed an emergency response network, which prepared teams to mobilize sit-ins at congressional offices at crucial moments in the struggle against U.S. policy. Witness for Peace is now experimenting with this model in such places as the Middle East, South Africa, and even inner-city areas in the U.S.

Christians from diverse traditions have been deeply involved with each of the three examples of militant nonviolence. Martin Luther King, the black Baptist minister; Jean Gump, the Catholic mother of 12 and a nuclear resister; or Jim Corbett, the Quaker rancher and Sanctuary activist in the Southwest, have all appealed to the nonviolent Way of Jesus's cross for illumination and justification of their body-politics.

In a world of violence, body-politics invite us to drop all weapons from our hands and "take up" our political bodies in nonviolent struggle. Moreover, body-politics promote democratic renewal by preferring direct engagement over passive reliance on abstract, ideological discourses and remote institutional mediations.

For justice and freedom and in our time, the churches must follow Jesus in recovering the nonviolent power of body-politics. TW

Body casts and ritual nudity

by Nkenge Z°!@

Renée Stout is currently a visiting artist at the University of Georgia in Athens, teaching an independent studies course in painting for undergraduates and a seminar for graduate students.

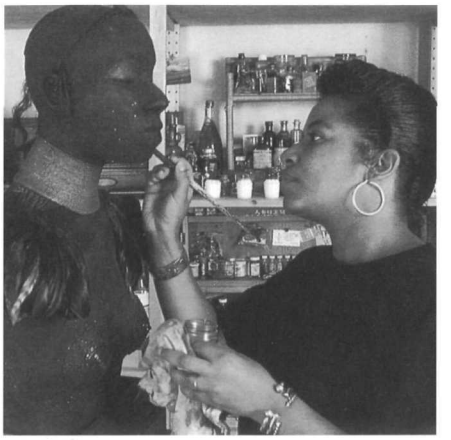
Her work, "Dear Robert, I'll see you at the crossroads: Blues & Conjuring," is in a travelling exhibition, now at the Yerbe Buena Art Center in San Francisco. Another of her works, "Fetishism," will be part of a show in England.

With each month's lunar phasing millions of Christians' lips lift to chalice, millions of Christians' tongues receive the bit of bread and wine symbolizing renewal, covenant, resurrection embodied in the flesh of Jesus the Christ. It is a sacred act.

And how many billions of beings perform sacred acts — inside and outside the practice of Christianity — daily, knowingly? Breathing. Practicing peace. Planting seeds. Grooming a loved one's hair. Witnessing the motion of light in water.

art and society

Sculptor Renée Stout injects herself into the realm of the sacred through her practice of art. In this place of creative foment she dances with time, the unconscious, space, and certainty, to shape objects that, if properly attended to, provide a portal whereby fourth-dimensional spirit might funnel to this third dimension, according guidance to those seeking.



Renée Stout Franko Khoury

Chronicler of artists in Afrika and the diaspora Nkiru Nzegwe describes Stout's activities as "transcending the realm of western art." Co-author of the book *Astonishment and Power*, Olasimi Michael Harris, says the sculptor has "confronted and successfully thwarted issues relative to the female body, nudity, and 'the gaze' that have risen to prominence during the past decade in art-historical and critical discourse." Her *Fetish #2* is "ritual nudity, not the available female nude of Western art."

Fetish #2 (1988) is a 64-inch-high object in which Stout has lived because to build it she used her own body, smoothing plaster about her form to make a cast. "I was empowering myself by starting from the point of using my own body and adorning it from things in the environment." Whereas a Central Afrikan fashioning a power figure might adorn it with herbs and leaves from his or her environment, Stout used from hers a broken key, bottle caps, and other items post industry.

Observing the figure, I realize my eyes are desperate to gobble every shape, tone, rhythmic interval of the work. But I don't immediately permit them. Why? Because to partake in the work, to *perceive* it requires that I *not* assume the position of the looker separated from the work by body, time, and my experience. Cowrie shells dressing the eyes of her figure signal me *look ahead to Afrika* if I am to comprehend the rich coloring, the neat round burlap pouches of medicine lacing the shoulders. The glass-faced box imbedded in its solar plexus says *this is also the home of the fire chakra where energy is transformed.* And so I am challenged. Will I enter the work or allow it to enter me? The question is not idle.

Always insightful Stout says, "I've ... dealt with personal things in my life on intuition so when I started doing this kind of work that I'm doing now, everything just sort of fell into place. ..." Comfortable with her own body, nevertheless, she muses, "... sometimes it's like trying to

Nkenge Z°!@ Ameen Howrabi

New Art & Society editor!

Nkenge Z°!@ is a longtime broadcaster in Detroit. An anchor-reporter at public radio station WDET-FM, she is intent on becoming an agricultural reporter.

Fetish #2 **by Renée Stout** Dallas Museum of Art

step out of it and sort of realize — what is the body all about, and how is it connected to the spirituality, and when you die *does* the spirit leave the body and go someplace else?"

A keen sense of the dominant political forces in preceding eras emerges from her conversation. She speaks of menstrual blood being used for making charms "before men took control of spiritual matters." Like other artists in the United States exploring the inner reaches of their work, Renée Stout identifies "this sort of magic" in the female flow. Like other questing men and women, she remembers lore of societies where the monthly has been used for various circumstances until the eras when menstruation began to be considered taboo, dirty. As much investigation as statement, she works her own menses into the figures she shapes.

Concluding a lecture before the National Conference of Artists' regional Meeting in Detroit where Stout's work was discussed, Nzegwu was quite adamant that "The intention of one's spirit and the intent for which an object is created is something that really needs to be ... thought about, which in a sense makes artists much more than members of society, but really the shapers, the definers, the builders of the new society."

When Stout travels to Afrika she doubtless will head straight to the central part of the continent which has "spoken" to her through power objects housed in the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. It is the work of Zairean and Congolese artists and medicine people which inspires her. The circumstances out of which she creates are quite different from those in which the Afrikan power objects were made. Yet the Philadelphian living in D.C. identifies a forward purpose for her energies that resonates with the historian's charge, "I think I'm creating what I'm creating for the same purposes, to overcome adversity." TW

Violence, sex and aging: an interview with Michael Meade

by Sy Safransky

When I was growing up in New York City, I shied away from tough Irish-Catholic kids like Michael Meade. They ran in gangs, and they got into trouble with the cops, and sometimes they beat up nice little Jewish boys like me.

Gang fights on Friday night, dances on Saturday night, church on Sunday, school on Monday: these were the touchstones of Meade's life until his 13th birthday, when his aunt gave him a copy of Edith Hamilton's Mythology. *He was stunned by the stories, which he read and reread.*

"The tales of gods and goddesses and humans caught in extreme and mysterious situations seemed more like life than anything else I had heard or read," he says. They opened "a vast dwelling place within, where the imagination and emotions denied by family, school, and church were accepted. In many ways, I've never stopped reading that book."

Legends and myths became his passion as a teenager, even as his political sensibility was being sharpened by an unpopular war. At the age of 20, Meade was drafted but refused to be sent to Vietnam. He ended up in military prison, where he staged a 64-day hunger strike and spent three months in solitary confinement before he was discharged.

For the past 30 years, Meade has continued to study myth, as well as religion, anthropology, music, drumming, and storytelling — while fathering four children, marrying twice, and working a variety of jobs.

Michael Meade

Today, Meade — whom poet Robert Bly calls "one of the great teachers of men in the United States" — is at the forefront of an effort to make the men's movement more politically relevant. In week-long conferences, Meade brings together up to 100 men of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to help them confront their differences as well as find what binds them together. To assure a wide mix of participants, conference fees are waived for those unable to pay. For information, write to Mosaic, P.O. Box 364, Vashon, WA 98070.

Sy Safransky: You've said that without elders a society begins to devour itself. What do you mean by that?

Michael Meade: The elder is a person who has a knowledge of survival, the wisdom of survival — darkened wisdom is how I like to think about it — not just someone who has gotten close to the big white light.

People can help other people only when they have learned about the depths in themselves. If someone hasn't dealt with violence in himself, hasn't been exposed to violence, he'd better not try to deal with gangbangers, because he won't be treated as an elder; he'll become a statistic. Likewise, people who have developed a deep capacity to mourn and to sympathize would be good hospice workers, helping people make that last transition toward death. So whether it's working with the dying or with violent young people or with drug or alcohol addicts, you go back and help people who are engulfed in the same fire you survived.

As a culture, we turn away from people just when they are in times of change. That's when most communities used to embrace people, so the individual and the culture both benefitted. A lot of young people today are in a rite of passage. They don't know it and our culture doesn't recognize it, but they are brushing up against death, they are pressing at the doors of greater life. We have to meet them there.

When the heat is too much, when the sorrow is too great, you can dance or sing. So all of a sudden, the whole group may start to sing.

S.S.: This used to happen more naturally in the extended family.

M.M.: Yes, it did. But I don't think we have the time to redevelop the intricacies of extended families or of village life. Right now, I'm interested in what I call sudden community, sudden family. I've been doing conferences that are ex-

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Sy Safransky is editor of *The Sun*, a provocative literary journal published in Chapel Hill, N.C. This interview is reprinted in a shortened form with permission. To subscribe, send $32 to *The Sun,* Subscriptions Service, P.O. Box 6706, Syracuse, N.Y. 13217.

periments in sudden community. They bring together men not only of different races — whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans — but also of different cultural and economic experiences, from the poor to the very rich. Homeless people and doctors have participated in the same conferences. That's what I mean by sudden community. When we bring these different groups together, we find the elements of our common humanity, of hope and even of conflict.

S.S.: What gives you the ability to deal with the conflict that arises?

M.M.: (Laughs) I'm not sure about the ability. During the first conference of this sort, we said at the beginning that the only rule was no physical violence. There was no evidence that we could abide by this rule for six days. The fact that we got through it taught me that it is possible.

Ritual conflict

I've also been making a study of ritual conflict for 20 years. I believe one reason we have so many pointless wars and so much mindless aggression is that we don't have ritual ways of expressing conflict. Most cultures once had such rituals that were intended to bring out people's envy, anger, jealousy, rage — everything that can become increasingly damaging if it's ignored or denied.

S.S.: What's an example of such a ritual?

M.M.: In Zambia, there's a ritual about a tooth. When someone in the village is sick or disturbed, they imagine it is caused by an ancestor's tooth that has gotten inside that person. That person's sickness affects everybody in the village because they are connected with one another. So they make a ritual to get this tooth, this sickness, out of the person.

But the tooth won't come out unless the truth comes out. And the sickness includes all of the hatreds and conflicts felt by everybody in the village. The sick person has to express what's really troubling him or her, and it's usually not very noble. It's jealousy or rage or another of those darker human passions. But the tooth won't come out of the sick person until all of the troubled feelings come out of everybody else in the village. The release happens only when everything comes out, in the midst of dancing and singing and drumming. The whole village gets cleansed by the release of the tooth through the release of these difficult truths.

Jim West

As a culture, we turn away from people just when they are in times of change. Young people today are in a rite of passage. They don't know it and our culture doesn't recognize it. We have to meet them there.

S.S.: What difficult truths come out when white men and black men get together at these conferences?

M.M.: African-American people need to express their deep sense of outrage and anguish about the injustice that has gone on in this culture for many, many years. If it doesn't get expressed in words, in truthful words, it gets expressed physically. Either it kills them because they carry it around — like an ancestral tooth that each generation inherits — or it comes out through actions that can be destructive to others.

But it gets tricky. People inherit these injustices and these outrages as a group, so even though the anger may be expressed by an individual, the individual is also speaking for the community. The listeners must respect this. It takes the power out of the situation if the white people listening say, "Wait a minute. I understand that black people have been enslaved and brutalized, and that all this crushes a family and a race of people, but I've never done it myself." The ritual is destroyed when ancient pain is challenged in this way.

In the tooth ritual, the people who are participating don't disagree with the person who is speaking. They say, "Speak your truth, get it out, get that tooth out, get that anguish out." The idea isn't whether what they're saying is literally accurate. The idea isn't simply laying blame, but moving the anguished tooth by speaking emotional truths. But in a culture of radical individualism, people tend not to be able to hear when groups of people say they are oppressed and hurt.

What we learned in the conferences is that everybody has to listen to everybody else, not as individuals trying to defend themselves, but as representatives of a

culturally meaningful group, as witnesses to the genuine anguish of the person speaking. We have to do a lot of breathing exercises to stay seated, to not flee the room or throw that first blow.

S.S.: Has it ever come to blows?

M.M.: It's come close many times. It's so hard to communicate just through words. It's hard to find words that carry the true anguish of what people feel.

We have found what people in many cultures have found. When the heat is too much, when the sorrow is too great, you can dance or sing. So all of a sudden, the whole group may start to sing. Everybody may be feeling different things, but we are all singing together. For a moment we're reestablishing a sense of community. Then we can take on a little more rage or a little more sorrow.

A relevant aspect of the tooth ritual is that the tooth is considered a spirit ancestor. It enters someone who is troubled or hurting, and it is painful while it's inside. But once it comes out, it becomes an ally, a source of spiritual support. Similarly, people become allies to each other if they can get through their points of conflict. Deep human connections are made between people who would otherwise pass on the street and not look at each other.

Ethnic gifts

By getting groups like this together you start to see the medicine that different ethnic groups carry. The cultural roots of people contain medicine just like the roots of certain plants. The willingness of people to remain in these conflicts stimulates medicine in their root memories, which can begin the healing process. For example, I think black people carry medicine that white people need — say, the capacity to carry an incredible weight of sorrow through the blues. The blues make it humanly possible to carry inhuman anguish. There are also medicines within the Latino memory that certain circumstances bring out. During one conference, five Latino Vietnam vets constructed an altar on the spot for all their friends who had died. They began to talk to the altar, to rage and weep at it. It just broke everything loose in the room. All of a sudden everybody had a place to direct sorrow, fear, anger.

You see, I don't think the concept of the melting pot was ever accurate. It was a bad image, an industrial image — the idea of melting everybody in this big pot, like in one of those old factories in Chicago. It didn't work. Individuals got melted down, but not groups. Not group memories, the old memories.

S.S.: Is there more of a political climate today for radical change? Do you think that Clinton and Gore being in office makes a difference?

M.M.: I think there is a definite difference. Clinton's propensity for consolidating groups, for gathering information, for consensus, is valuable. Whether it leads to immediate solutions or not, I think it makes the dialogue more open. And Gore's involvement in ecology is very encouraging.

But I don't see solutions coming from the top down anymore. I think now we're in a time of symbolic ascension, when things come from the ground up. Rituals, for example, traditionally are made from what's at hand. They are partly remembered and partly made up on the spot. I think that's what's going to happen politically. I think people are going to find solutions in their communities, by having their hands on things, by being involved.

One of the few ways to feel whole nowadays is to participate in these rituals of lament. To stand at the Vietnam Memorial or at the AIDS quilt can be a very healing experience. It feels very appropriate to just stand there and let the tears come down.

Reviewing Vietnam

I see peace coming from the ground up, too— from the Vietnam veterans who survived, who found a way to put themselves back together. They have this great capacity for survival, and they have ideas on how to deal with violence, on how to negotiate very dangerous circumstances.

S.S.: Isn't there a paradox in your seeing peace coming from Vietnam veterans, given the fact that you refused to be sent?

M.M.: I've had the good fortune to be in ritual conflict with those who barely survived Vietnam, men who were wounded physically, emotionally, spiritually. In conferences, these men were in the same room with men who went to jail as war resisters, men who had claimed to be insane, men who had claimed to be homosexual (some were, some weren't), men who got deferments because of privilege. There was anger. There was skirmishing. There was rage from a man who had lost part of his body and, more important, perhaps, part of his soul in Vietnam. There was anguish from a man who had been exiled in Canada. Slowly it came out that Vietnam was a life-changing experience for everybody, even if the nature of the change was different. The war was like an initiatory event that sent people in different directions. Yet by expressing their rage and their sorrow, everybody could for a moment be back together. You could feel the sense of genuine community of that generation.

The Vietnam Memorial is probably the most sacred spot in the country. The

descent of that black wall into the earth is the place where America comes together. It's the one truly powerful monument in the country that sustains a continuous ritual of sorrow.

Vietnam is still unfinished. Personally I trace the increase of violence in this country to our taking men who were on fire psychically, bathed in napalm, and dropping them into the cities, as if no transition were required. I think the drug habit came into the city then, along with the habit of ignoring the use of drugs — both of which were part of the Vietnam military experience. I think the familiarity of carrying automatic weapons was transferred directly into the city. The unhealed aspects of that war have given birth to this increase of random violence in the cities.

S.S.: How is that different from the legacy of other wars — the Korean War, for example?

M.M.: Wars don't die unless they are fully spoken about, and Korea is the war no one spoke about. Korea lived silently, like a ghost, in the closets of America. It hung in the closets, and the uniforms quietly dripped blood. Korea was a ghost in the 1950s, and Vietnam was that ghost let out into the streets.

S.S.: What about the Gulf War?

M.M.: The Gulf War was like a drive-by shooting. It was a fly-by. In the Gulf War, we saw more bombs dropped in a few days than ever before in the history of the world. And then we decorated everybody. We announced that even those who were hurt in some accident on the back lines, even those who were hit by an ambulance, would get a Purple Heart. Such an act gives permission for all kinds of violence. It's very easy to connect the fires in the Gulf with the fires burning in Los Angeles.

S.S.: When you were growing up in New York, you were involved with gangs. What's the difference between gang violence now and then?

The AIDS quilt — 15 acres of it — in the shadow of the Washington Monument. Jim Solheim, ENS

M.M.: Luis Rodriguez, a great writer who grew up in the gangs in the barrios of L.A., wrote that every group of men is a gang. The Baltimore Orioles are a gang. The Chicago Bulls are a gang. The police department is a gang. Rock bands and rap groups are gangs. Gangs are what men do. I don't think we can ever get rid of gangs. The real question is what's the intention of the gang.

When I was growing up in the 1950s, there were neighborhood gangs everywhere, and everyone in them was experimenting. Loyalty was one of the major experiments. You learned who was going to stand with you. Everybody could be cool when they were putting on their jackets, but it was when the trouble hit that you found out who would "take your back," as we used to say. You also found out who and what you would die for. That's what it came down to.

We were always flirting with breaking the law, which is part of the nature of youth. Youth finds its connection to community by going against community. The rites of passage in all cultures have included antisocial behavior. Youths could get into trouble, find out who they were as individuals in the midst of the turmoil, and then return to the community without being judged criminal forever. The culture kept in touch with them while they did this. Now we don't keep in touch. Culturally we turn our backs to them.

There are three differences between the gangs in the 1950s and the 1990s: the lack of hope and expectation that one will live a meaningful life; the lack of connection between people, through family, church, or community; and the availability of weapons.

My feeling is that young people can't be abandoned in those circumstances. They have to be given signals that they and their turmoil are welcome. That's the job of elders in the culture. There's a fire in all people, but especially in young men, that can burn toward dominance, brutality, an excess of competition, and destruction. But when it's engaged and welcomed and appreciated it becomes part of the heat in the hearth of the community. The same fire that can brutally kill can also lead a young man to courageously risk his own life to save other people. Rage and outrage are the same essential energy that makes art and beauty.

I believe that art is the antidote to

violence. Art can move the fires of passion from destruction to creation.

S.S.: We're losing many people to the AIDS epidemic, too.

M.M.: This is a time when everything has a long shadow of loss. Everybody is a member of a lost tribe somewhere in the modern world. All the tribes are lost. We've lost the sense of life. We've lost a sense of the stages of life. We are living, almost consciously, in an ongoing funeral, in a huge shedding of life.

I've watched the AIDS quilt going through the country. Each patch on the quilt represents a death, and that death is connected to all the other deaths. Stitched together, they make a piece of cloth that, when it's laid down, makes a funeral ground. Everybody comes there. People weep there. It's a blanket of loss, a moving funeral.

Learning lamentation

One of the things we are witnessing is the return of funerals within communities that have been hit hard by AIDS and by violence. You actually see improvisation of new styles of funerals — the return of ritual funerals through that shared experience of death. That's what I mean by rituals coming from the ground up. It starts with the idea of one person, or a few people, then it catches on. People begin to stitch their place into it. That's how ritual used to be made in most cultures. That's how it's being made again.

One of the few ways to feel whole nowadays is to participate in these rituals of lament. To stand at the Vietnam Memorial or at the AIDS quilt can be a very healing experience. It feels very appropriate to just stand there and let the tears come down. Sometimes someone else's tears provoke you, just someone standing near you; you don't even know who he is. That's another definition of what I call the water of life, when those tears come from that deep well of human sympathy, human sorrow. At that point we're human. We're connected.

S.S.: I'd like to talk about other ways we're connected to one another — in families, in marriage. You're married. You have grown children.

When you deny death, you automatically weaken the courage of the community. Then no one recognizes elders and adults don't act like adults.

M.M.: I've had two marriages, and my wife and I are adjusting to living on our own, now that all four children are on *their* own.

S.S.: What keeps your marriage alive?

M.M.: William Blake said that if people are going to remain in a marriage for a long time they both have to live in the world of art. Blake's idea, I think, is a fine one — that both partners have to be involved in making something. They have to be giving birth creatively or else they begin to expect the relationship to satisfy the human need for creativity and expression. And the relationship can do that only on occasion.

S.S.: Unfortunately, in so many relationships the passion seems to die, especially as people get older.

M.M.: We have a fantasy in this culture that everything good happens in youth. But in many cultures there are images of people deepening their sensuality and sexuality as they get older.

Sensuality and aging

I once saw a movie about people in a village in the highlands in Cuba. There was a great scene in which the drummers were playing and women and men were dancing and singing. Then this old man came out and sat down on a drum and played it with his heel and his hands in a very old style. He lent a sensuality to that drum that really got everyone going. After he played for a while, he stood up and went over to his wife. They both looked about seventy years old. And they began to dance, with none of the inhibitions that we typically see in our culture. Their entire bodies were moving — these old bodies that no longer had the shapes of youth but had subtle and confident moves. It was incredible. They danced with obvious sexuality and sensuality, and yet they had dignity like fine old instruments.

S.S.: The psychologist James Hillman says that where we are in life is as important as where we came from, but that our biographical sense of psychology overemphasizes childhood.

M.M.: Not everything can be run through the child loop. Not everything happens to people because their mother was this kind of mother or their father was absent. Some things happen because of some deep purpose or some spiritual awareness breaking out. Some of it has more to do with an awakening of the elder — someone who is going to carry authority and resources not just for the individual but for the community. And some of it has to do with learning about death rather than childhood.

A culture that denies death, like ours, weakens community. Community binds us together because of the awareness of death. When you deny death, you automatically weaken the courage of the community. Then no one recognizes elders. You just have old people. And when the elders aren't recognized, adults aren't adults. They don't act like adults because they don't feel they can become elders. Eventually people deny life-changing experiences, and everybody keeps going back to their childhood as if whatever is there could explain their lives. They don't value the life experiences that have happened since then. TW

Freedom riders

Gays and lesbians from all across America will ride to the aid of a lesbian family and their besieged property outside Ovett, Mississippi on Memorial Day weekend, May 26-30.

Since November, 1993, lesbian partners Wanda and Brenda Henson, along with numerous volunteers, have defended their 120-acre "Camp Sister Spirit" folk school from an ongoing religious-right-inspired campaign of violence, harassment, intimidation and death threats. There have been over 60 incidents to date, including telephone death threats, mail bomb threats, explosives found at their gate, a dead dog tied to their mailbox.

The climate of aggression briefly attracted the attention of Attorney General Janet Reno who sent Justice Department representatives to Ovett to investigate the situation last year. The Justice Department concluded that the Federal government could not help because gays and lesbians are not covered under the current civil rights laws.

With no help from the government in sight, veteran gay and lesbian activists have decided to take the defense of Camp Sister Spirit in their own hands so that the camp can complete their dream of building a feminist lesbian folk school (an educational and cultural retreat center that makes available an opportunity for learning non-oppressive lifeways) and having food and clothing available to address the poverty in the area.

Robin Tyler, a prominent lesbian activist who originally called for and emceed the first March on Washington for lesbian and gay rights, says, "Following the tradition of the 1960s, the community of faith must rise once again. And we need to let gay bashers and homophobes know that when they attack isolated gays and lesbians, they aren't just taking on one or two people, they are taking on the entire gay and lesbian movement."

***Second Stone* 2/95**
New Orleans, LA

U.N. allows choice

The United Nations decided to allow Catholics for a Free Choice and three of its Latin American counterparts to participate in the upcoming United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, overriding strong Vatican objections.

Bowing to Vatican pressure in mid-March, the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, which is reviewing applications for the conference, suspended authorization for Catholics for a Free Choice and its sister organizations in Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay and referred the matter to a committee. The Vatican's move to block participation was a public effort to censor debate within the Catholic church about the role and status of women. Catholics for a Free Choice, which has been accredited without protest to previous international U.N. conferences, educated the public on the widespread disagreement among Catholics with Vatican positions on women, sexuality and reproduction.

Catholics for a Free Choice
news release, 3/21/1995
Washington D.C.

Sentencing Sam Day

Life-long journalist and peace activist Samuel H. Day Jr., 68, was convicted of "unlawful re-entry" at an Air Force base in Omaha, Nebraska and was sentenced recently to six months in federal prison. It was the second time Day has been given a 180-day maximum sentence for federal misdemeanor trespass. Day is a former editor of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* and managing editor of *The Progressive* magazine.

U.S. Magistrate Kathleen Jaudzemis tried Day March 5th, but postponed her verdict until March 27th. Day, who represented himself, has been incarcerated in the Douglas County Jail in Omaha since his President's Day protest February 20th. Special Assistant Prosecutor Air Force Major Victor LaPuma, referring to himself repeatedly as "the government," had requested that Day also be sentenced to one year's probation and a $1,000 fine. Magistrate Jaudzemis did not impose the additional penalties.

Day entered Offutt Air Force Base attempting to hand out a leaflet describing how U.S. targeting plans for nuclear weapons are in violation of binding international treaties to which the U.S. is a party.

Day told the court: "The Douglas County Jail is not a comfortable place to be . . . especially for someone of my age and disability. I am 68 years old and blind. I can no longer see the faces around me. I can no longer read books or magazines, or newspapers or even the mail that comes to me from friends and family. I can no longer play the chess games and card games that help to while away the days and weeks and months in jail.

"But I did not come to Omaha to seek comfort. I came here to say with my body what I have been saying with words for almost half a century. I came here to alert this court to our government's preparations for waging nuclear war. I chose to come to Offutt Air Force Base because it is headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Nuclear command, which controls the targeting and launching of many thousands of nuclear warheads. And I chose to come here now because, contrary to public opinion and despite the end of the cold war, our government has not relinquished one iota of its capacity for waging nuclear war.

"Under international law it is a crime to point weapons of mass destruction at defenseless cities. Under international law, it is the duty of every citizen to do everything possible to prevent such crimes. Many international laws are also the law of the land, having been ratified as treaties by the Senate of the United States. I have done my best to uphold the law."

The power debate: Who do clergy (and the rest of us) think they are?

by Julie A. Wortman

Celibacy in singleness and fidelity in marriage. There are those who believe that if only the church would uphold this simple, traditional maxim there would be no need for special sexual (mis)conduct policies like those being widely promulgated in the church today.

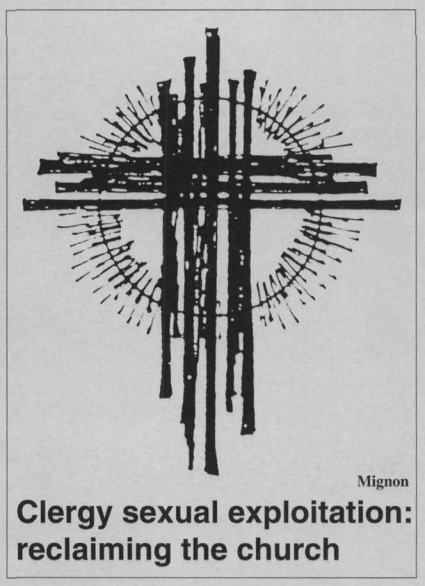
But these policies are now a requirement for liability coverage by the Church Insurance Company (CIC), which hopes they will help "increase the defensibility of potential claims" in the face of dramatic increases in the number of church workers being accused of sexual exploitation. In 1990 CIC handled 10 claims, up from six the year before; in 1992 the number of claims was 39, more than twice the number in 1991.

The publicity the increased number of claims has attracted has encouraged more and more victims to come forward, making it likely that more, not fewer, claims can be expected in the short term. The focus, many believe, must now be on preventing future misconduct by upholding clear professional boundaries in the church workplace. The formal detailing of limits on church-worker behavior in the new CIC-required sexual conduct policies, however, has intensified one of the most heated debates in the church today — that over the power relationship between the ordained and the people to whom they minister.

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

Questioning mutuality

At issue is the presumption behind most of these policies that, for unmarried clergy at least (virtually no one questions that married clergy should not have sexual relations outside of their marriages, regardless of workplace temptations), it may never be possible to date or enter into a sexual relationship with a member of the community they serve because



Mignon

Clergy sexual exploitation: reclaiming the church

such relationships can never be truly mutual.

Consider the policy recently adopted by the Diocese of Michigan, a policy which the drafters believe is relatively liberal. Citing two ways that authority may be granted to individuals within the church — by entrusting them with particular positions and tasks or by ordaining them — the policy states: "The authority accompanying a particular position or function ends when the position or function is given up. Ordination, on the other hand, is permanent, and carries with it an authority and a responsibility which remain regardless of the ordained person's position. This being the case, an ordained person's position in relation to those among whom he or she ministers can never be simply that of one person among peers."

Therefore, the policy concludes, clergy should not be romantically involved with people they have counseled or are counseling; to whom they are giving spiritual direction; from whom they have received confession or confidential information; people who are family members of persons to whom they have given or are giving counseling, spiritual direction or guidance; or patients, residents or students in an institution where they are serving as teacher, counselor, administrator, or chaplain. If an institutional relationship included counseling, the policy stipulates, "dating between an ordained person and a counselee is not permissible at any time after formal counseling has ended, even if one or both parties have departed from the institution in which the counseling relationship was established."

What makes the Michigan policy liberal, drafters say, is that it does permit a cleric to pursue a relationship with a parishioner if the cleric manages to find a potential date who doesn't fall into one of the above categories — but only if the cleric reports the fact to the bishop *and* bishop's designee *and* to a warden of the congregation (or to the priest in charge). The cleric must also find the parishioner another pastor and, if asked by those in authority, meet "with a professional counselor to evaluate the mutuality of the relationship" and be willing to follow the counselor's recommendations.

So much for the time-honored tradition of curates finding a suitable wife from among the daughters of the congregation, even though many clergy in the church have done just that.

"On a personal level, clergy face the same ethical issues other Christians do," the Michigan policy states. "As ordained people, however, clergy are accorded (and take for granted) a certain power in relationship with other Christians — teaching and interpretive authority, credibility in making moral judgments,

sacramental authority, authority to be present with people when they are most vulnerable. Whether or not it is acknowledged, whether or not it is intentionally exerted, clergy have this power by sacred trust and its influence colors all the relationships of clergy within the church."

In effect, this and other such policies assume that a "pastoral relationship" exists between clergy and lay even outside the usual one-on-one-contact definition, a relationship established as, week after week, the clergy preach and lead congregational worship.

Challenging clergy power

But how much power is "a certain power"?

Some people — largely male clergy, sexual misconduct experts say — scoff at the idea that clergy have any special power in their relationships with laity and argue that they should not be required to observe any special standards of behavior.

"Male clergy find it hard to understand that sexual exploitation relates to institutional power and will often say, 'I don't know what you're talking about — I don't have any power,'" says Penelope Jamieson, bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand, who, like every bishop in the church today, has the responsibility for adjudicating charges of sexual misconduct in her jurisdiction. "But there's an easy answer to that. I say, 'Yeah, are you likely to put your arm around me?' And they'll say, 'No.' When you have a female in a position of institutional power, males recognize that power and clearly see that it is inappropriate for them to place a 'fatherly' arm around me, their bishop. That makes them realize that they as priests do have institutional power and if they attempt to place a 'fatherly' arm or anything else on a woman for whom they stand in a leadership position they are doing it from a position of power which makes mutuality impossible."

As Jamieson indicates, women clergy — and this probably also applies to persons of color, lesbians and gay men — are also less likely to possess the power that straight white male clergy do in this culture. "The professional woman's power is undermined by the fact that she lacks power in general," say Karen Lebacq and Ronald Barton in their 1991 book, *Sex in the Parish*. "We would still urge caution for the woman pastor who develops a sexual interest in a male parishioner, but here our concern focuses on protecting her as well as him."

Systemic abuses

But according to Eleanor L. McLaughlin, a priest in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts who helped produce that diocese's sexual conduct policy, the new policies being required do little to address the abusive "power-over" of sexism.

"As creatures of our culture, we the church are focusing almost entirely in our policies and practice upon *individual* complaints and the punishment of *individual* perpetrators, without reference or commitment to changing the overarching system of white and male power relationships which have existed forever in our church and culture," McLaughlin told a clergy gathering in her diocese last March. "Our sexual abuse policy follows the Republican Party's strategy for dealing with urban crime: lock up the delinquents, put no effort or investment into changing the power relationships, economic and political, which destroy families and neighborhoods and reward aggressive and accumulative behaviors. To 'change the neighborhood' would require transforming the balance of power, whether we are speaking of banks, renters and the homeless or bishops, rectors and the 'merely' baptized."

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— Eleanor McLaughlin

Professional misconduct expert Gary Schoener of Minneapolis' Walk-In Counseling Center, says that such analyses are important, but cautions that the systemic problem behind sexual misconduct is one "of hierarchy, not just patriarchy." He says that of the cases they see at his center (excluding cluster child-abuse cases), about 70 percent are cases of male professionals (includes clergy) abusing female clients (includes parishioners), but at least 20 percent are cases of female professionals abusing female clients. An estimated 5 percent of cases involve male victims of female professionals — "The most closeted people we now deal with are the male victims of female offenders," Schoener says.

One notch below the angels?

In the church, hierarchicalism means, among other things, clericalism. "Both clergy and lay people tend to believe that in ordination the clergy person is set one notch below the angels and that the rules don't apply to them," says Virginia Brown-Nolan, author of *Toward Healing and Wholeness: Facing the Challenge of Sexual Misconduct*, a 1994 publication of the national Episcopal Church's Committee on Sexual Exploitation. "It is part of the way our church is structured."

You don't need to search far for evidence that supports Brown-Nolan's claim — in addition to ordaining clergy for life, Episcopal Church commissions on ministry encourage those pursuing ordination to demonstrate that they have a special spiritual "call" to holy orders

unlike the vocational calls of other baptized persons. In many quarters of the church, clergy make clear their station by wearing clerical collars with their street clothes; and a substantial number of clergy insist on being called (and many lay people insist on calling them) "Father" or "Mother" (never brother or sister).

"Lay people who would otherwise see the flags that a person is coming on to them romantically do not see those flags with clergy because they assume clergy would not do anything that would harm them, that they are holy people," says Brown-Nolan.

Restoring balance: the promise of mutual ministry

Critics of the church's clericalism worry that the policies may have a tendency to actively bolster the perception that clergy are superior to lay people and therefore dangerously powerful. "Church life should not be divided between potential perpetrators and potential victims," says Reginald Blaxton, a priest in the Diocese of Washington.

But under the banner of "mutual" or "total" ministry, a growing number of folks are nuancing the power discussion by noting that the clergy role should combine collaborative leadership in the church community with the responsibility to be its chaplain. Like Peter Rutter, author of the *Sex in the Forbidden Zone* (1989), proponents of this view recognize that the one-on-one pastoral/confessional contact between clergy and parishioners is a situation in which parishioners make themselves vulnerable to the clergy counselor in the pursuit of answers about how to proceed with their lives, spiritually and morally — a situation which therefore constitutes a "forbidden zone" for sexual contact. But they also acknowledge that there are many non-counseling situations in which clergy should be part of a team of workers, a situation that fosters a more realistic picture of the power dynamic in congregations, namely that lay people have power of their own — power which they can give away, use responsibly, or abuse.

"I think there are real skills of leadership that are asked of priests these days in terms of how they give a vision of God without claiming power in place of God in the community," says Dunedin's Jamieson. "The trouble is that the conventional analysis of power says that, 'If the laity have the power, then the clergy haven't and if the clergy have the power the laity don't.' And it's just not true. There's enough mission for everybody. There's more than enough to go around without getting into the one-on-one struggle that does happen."

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— Penelope Jamieson

The possibility of true mutual ministry is also strengthened, many contend, if clergy step back from trying to fill the shoes of trained psychotherapists, a role many have found attractive. "Most clergy don't have the training to do that sort of counseling," says Brown-Nolan, herself a priest with formal training in social work. "We barely talked about things like transference in my one class on pastoral care in seminary. The problem is that lay people don't want to believe that they need professional psychotherapy, so they go to their pastor."

But even without pretending to be psychotherapists, clergy face a muddy workplace situation, Brown-Nolan says. "Clergy function in a very social way in their congregations," she notes. "They and their parishioners attend the same parties and go on picnics together — the kinds of things that friends do together. Many parishioners consider their clergy to be their friends."

In addition, the church is the place where people explore their spirituality. As Lebacqz and Barton write, "If spirituality has to do with being whole persons, then sexuality is an integral part of spirituality."

That makes the church a sexually charged environment, whether people want it to be or not. A 1988 *Ministries Today* article by Richard Exley cites a *Christianity Today* poll of clergy in which 23 percent self-reported engaging in sexual behavior they deemed inappropriate, only 4 percent having been found out by church officials. About half said they had had adulterous sexual intercourse, while more than two-thirds said they had engaged in passionate kissing, fondling or mutual masturbation with parishioners or other partners they in retrospect considered ineligible.

The power-imbalance dynamic which encourages such abuses, Jamieson says, may be exacerbated by the "mercenary" priesthood with which most people are familiar — professionally trained priests who come to a congregation from outside, stay for five or 10 years, and then move on.

"I find very attractive the idea of priests coming out of the communities they are to serve," Jamieson says. "I think the total ministry concept is about being part of the community and seeing discrete functions and roles within the community, but not that raising, not that setting above, setting over. Within tight communities, boundaries are known and they are mutually reinforcible and that's why this question of not raising the priest above becomes important."

Fighting boundary fundamentalism

by Carter Heyward

I sometimes feel like a skunk at a garden party, suggesting that prevailing assumptions among, especially, white middle-class professionals about boundaries, dual relationships and other relational complexities can be too rigid, too unbending, to permit deeply human, mutually respectful connectedness between healers and those who seek help.

Like many of you, maybe all, I am a survivor of much spiritual and emotional violation which from time to time has culminated traumatically. One such realm of chronic diminishment in my life, as for so many women, lesbians, gay men and other "gender deviants," has been the Christian church, in which I am a priest and a theologian. About 10 years ago, some women students and I began to name the problem we experienced together — "church abuse," we called it. It was this arena of violence, more than any other, that in 1987 led me into a psychotherapy experience which became an occasion for further emotional and spiritual devastation — this time at the hands of a psychiatrist, a lesbian sister who did not touch me sexually at all but who, whatever her personal and professional reasons, used the concept of boundaries to distance and punish, to tease and confuse, to anger and bludgeon me emotionally and spiritually.

This experience provided the unspoken motive and primary insights of a theological text I wrote during the two months following the termination of the therapy in the fall of 1988. Writing the book, *Touching Our Strength*, or letting it write itself through me, more exactly,

Carter Heyward

literally kept me sane that fall. Within a year I had begun working on another book related to the therapy, this time actually attempting to tell the story from my perspective and to offer some interpretations.

For the next three years I worked on this book, *When Boundaries Betray Us*, and I did so for several reasons. First, so that other clients and patients might not feel so crazy or alone. Second, so that therapists might be challenged to think about how even the rules upon which they rely in order to do no harm can become vehicles of emotional devastation. And most importantly, from my perspective as a theologian, to chart a theological passage through what I call in the book the patriarchal logic of our life together, that is, our assent to, by participation in, political, social and professional structures of static, hierarchical power relations in which an authority, be he God the Father or the local priest or pastor or shrink, holds an unchanging power in place — always, as Alice Miller notes, for our own good.

So while *When Boundaries Betray Us* can be read simply as a book about therapy gone wrong, it is, in my intention, one of several theological and ethical pieces I have done and am doing on our sacred power in mutual relation — what it is, how we experience and understand it, how we fear and deny it, what happens when we share it, what happens when we don't. I uphold a vision in which we are some day in community, accountable to and with one another, including those who seek our help. But I believe we need to ask ourselves and one another how we can move toward such a vision of community and mutual accountability if in the meantime we are framing our professions, our laws and our ethics around the same static hierarchical

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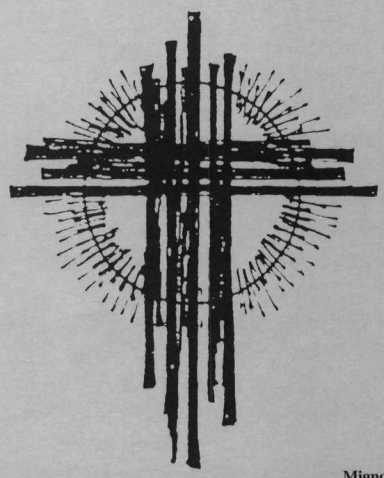
The articles in this month's Vital Signs are the second installment in The Witness' *six-part series on clergy sexual misconduct. The first installment, published in May, was an interview with Nancy Myer Hopkins on her work with congregations. Future articles will examine the tension which arises as the Episcopal Church attempts to respond to cases as both a legal entity and as a Christian community, healing for victims and offenders and issues that emerge when cases involve gay and lesbian persons and other minority groups.*



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Clergy sexual exploitation: reclaiming the church

understandings of relational power that historically have generated dynamics of sexual, emotional, economic and other forms of abuse. Do we really imagine that our uses of hierarchical power in the long run will be any less deadly than those of our professional forbears to the human spirit or even less violent to the bodies of women, children and marginalized men?

As a feminist liberation theologian and even more as a spirited sister seeking sisters and brothers, I must tell you that I am dismayed by the contemporary turn it seems to me that our professions have taken toward the protection of patriarchally structured power relations even among many feminist clergy and mental health professionals. What I see is a rigid boundary fundamentalism — not only is it historically sexist, it is also culturally racist, that is, reflecting a Eurocentric preoccupation with self possession rather than with community building as the way to be safe and ethical. Moreover, patriarchal power relations in which one party is assumed to possess an unchanging power over another for the good of the other, reflects an economically classist underpinning of capitalist social relations which function to separate, isolate and further fragment us into parts, thereby battering the spirit within us that yearns more for wholeness, integrity.

Rigid boundary fundamentalism, I believe, will not keep us safe from others or others safe from us. Most likely it will, in the short run, drive most sexually predatory behavior underground while it wreaks havoc spiritually, emotionally and relationally with most folks' deeply human yearnings for right connection — to embody integrity, that is, through the struggle for genuinely right relationships in our professional lives as well as elsewhere.

Rigid boundary fundamentalism will not keep us safe from others or others safe from us. Most likely it will, in the short run, drive most sexually predatory behavior underground while it wreaks havoc spiritually, emotionally and relationally with most folks' deeply human yearnings for right connection

Ethics to help us be genuinely moral should be ongoing discourses, never-ending, about right and wrong through which we are literally encouraging one another to struggle for right, mutually respectful relationships. Psychotherapy, pastoral counseling and other healing connections should be, I believe, paradigms of what Jewish existentialist social philosopher Martin Buber called the I-Thou relation in which all parties participate in shaping one another's well-being, that is, one another's struggles for life and justice, for joy and compassion. I believe that an I-Thou relationship is intrinsically non-abusive because it is so profoundly mutual, that is, mutually respectful and attentive to others' vulnerabilities and well-being.

In our society it is, of course, immensely hard to imagine shaping our professional ethics around the possibilities of an I-Thou, so badly broken are we, and fragmented and afraid. And not just the patients or the clients or the laity — we all are. But unless we are willing to do the community-building and to take the risk, both professionally and personally, of opening our own lives and professions, the dynamics of our work, our connectedness, our love, our hopes and our fears and our yearnings, we are likely to wake up someday and find ourselves in Gilead, that not-so-far-away nightmare envisioned prophetically by the brilliant Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood in her chilling book *The Handmaid's Tale,* in which nobody is allowed to touch anybody without the permission of the white male commanders.

Our fear of one another will devour us and our professions unless we refuse to let this happen. As a wise Christian ethicist, H. Richard Niebuhr, once said, "We watch what we fear and we imitate what we watch." Today we fear violation. And we *should* fear violation. We fear that which breaks the body and wounds the spirit, but there is a real danger lurking in this and that is that in our fear we are stripping away, legally, ethically and otherwise, our own and one another's capacities to be fully human sisters and brothers together in this world — to be, in Martin Buber's words, an I in relation to another's Thou.

Farewell, Henri Stines

Longtime anti-racism activist and celebrated preacher Henri Alexandre Stines died March 8, 1995 in Chicago at the age of 71. Born and educated in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, he served in parishes in Charleston, W.V., Detroit, Washington, D.C., Berkeley and Chicago until his retirement in 1986.

In the 1960s, Stines served for two years on the staff of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity based in Atlanta, working to persuade church people to become more involved in the civil rights struggle.

"Whether it was walking a picket line in front of a segregated church school, visiting Jonathan Daniels and his friends in a rural Alabama jail or meeting with bishops to advance the cause of equal treatment of clergy, Henri gave of himself and became one with Michael and his angels in striking down the forces of evil," said John Morris, a longtime friend and former colleague.

Stines is survived by his wife of 47 years, Gladys Robinson Stines, his two daughters, Denise Stines Francis and Suzette Stines, and five grandchildren.

Reclaiming our flesh

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cared for her because she was plump and shy. She felt ugly and useless.

She hated mirrors all her life because she looked ugly and stupid to herself. But she told the group, "Now when I look in a mirror, I see someone I love!"

The whole group cried and began to tell stories of their own years of oppression. They ended that meeting by praying together for strength to continue toward the time when they could love themselves as made in God's image, the image in the mirror.

What re-imagining of God would allow us to look in a mirror and say that we see, in our embodied, whole selves, someone we love?

What re-imagining of God would allow us to look in a mirror and say that we see, in our embodied, whole selves, someone we love? How can divine images affirm the complex, ambiguous, often difficult lives of women all over the world who swim in the riptides of oppressive, exploitative systems?

How can we come to understand our daily, earth-bound, ordinary acts of care; our emotionally charged, demanding relationships; our solitary, reflective moments; our work for our societies, for our churches, for each other, and for our life on the earth; and our very physical selves as images of sacred power, of God with us and in us in our very flesh?

Incarnation compels us to look within ordinary, earth-bound existence for clues to divine presence, within the humble lives of those, in Adrienne Rich's words, "who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world." Looking for incarnation as verb is to look for the activity, not the individual, in which love is manifest. For the Spirit of God in our midst moves fluidly, finding homes for her presence as hearts open, looking elsewhere when hearts close. The revelation of incarnate spirit comes from the margins of life, from the heart of life-giving power. TW

Archivist alert!

The Witness is seeking to find an institution which would like to house a nearly complete set of *Witness* magazines dating back to 1917. Our goal is to make these issues available to as many people as possible since they cover nearly a century of national and church history. Please write to us at *The Witness*, 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226-1822.

The Witness *can aid Christian educators*

The Witness offers issues on current topics for Christian education classes. Opinions in the magazine are strong, while adversaries are treated respectfully, which makes for great discussions. Study guides are provided upon request when ordering multiple copies of a single issue.

Planning a summer series?

Consider using the July/August issue which will examine violence and nonviolence in honor of those who died in the bombing of Hiroshima 50 years ago. The study guide will provide scriptural material to complement conversations.

Looking for something lighter? How about "Be ye perfect": From perfectionism to prophecy (3/93)? This issue examines the suggestion that the Bible calls us to perfection. Walter Wink contends that Jesus could never have said, "Be ye perfect." We also look at the lives and views of some wonderfully imperfect people.

Planning for the fall?

Celebrate St. Francis day with our Animal Rights (10/93) issue — an interview with Andrew Linzey offers a theologian's perspective on the role of animals in creation.

Mark Labor Day by reconsidering economic justice (5/94). Doug Theuner, bishop of New Hampshire, offers some suggestions about how to harness church funds for justice. Bill Wylie-Kellermann describes the role of the powers. Camille Colatosti reviews efforts to bring corporations under some community control.

The resurrection of the body

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

Resurrection: Myth or Reality?
John Shelby Spong
Harper SanFranciso, 1994

There is an old joke, dating from the era in which theology was thought to be a European male enterprise. An archeologist, uncovering what he is convinced are the bones of Jesus, grasps the care with which this world-shattering news must be announced. Setting aside first Barth, then Niebuhr, he settles upon Paul Tillich as the best spokesperson for the task. When the incontrovertible evidence is laid out before him, Tillich rocks back in his chair and says thoughtfully to himself, "Ah, so he actually lived!"

In *Resurrection: Myth or Reality?* John Spong sifts the scriptures as if on an archeological dig and claims to have found the bones of Jesus in a common unmarked grave. Only then does he seem to be free to proclaim the Easter moment (his term of preference over the resurrection of Jesus) as a timeless reality which is "eternal, subjective, mythological, nonhistorical, and nonphysical."

In critical sifting, his first layer of discovery was Jewish midrash, the ancient method of interpretation which reworked scripture texts, creatively comprehending and expanding "a story or an event by relating it to another event in sacred history." Spong is correct to identify the gospels as written partly in the tradition of midrash. And he is further on the mark to suggest that a variety of antisemitism has blinded Christians to that connection in understanding the construction of these gospels.

Ironically though, instead of taking this as an insight in how to get at the meaning of the resurrection for the assorted communities who produced the texts, midrash is for Spong a synonym for fabrication. Identifying midrash becomes an essentially dismissive technique, as in "only midrash." Spong is correct that "Did it really happen?" is not the question writers of midrash would be addressing. "That is a Western question tied to a Western mindset ..." Strangely though, it's the question Spong treats as an obsessive preoccupation. And by dismissing every gospel narrative from the burial on as fabricated, he concludes it did not.

The first half of the bishop's argument, sparsely footnoted, follows the outline of Reginald Fuller's *Formation of the Resurrection Narratives,* now 25 years old. It begins with the church's earliest written affirmations found in Paul — including the noteworthy claim that his own experience be numbered among the resurrection appearances (1 Cor 15:8). None of this is particularly new. (Spong's book is a miracle of marketing and promotion if it is regarded so). The main differences are that he marshals the material smugly against the naivete of "the literalists." In that regard his guiding hermeneutical question becomes: should this be taken literally?

The other difference is a methodological confusion in critical history probably stemming from his polemic. Working from the texts, he confuses what we can't say happened, with what we can say didn't happen. That applies to the Jerusalem events as well as conclusions about what Paul knew or heard. For example, if one were to apply this method to his own book, one would conclude that the bishop knows nothing about the more recent movements of biblical criticism, in particular literary analysis and sociological exegesis — and in the best cases their fusion. I do not conclude this about him, but do regret his silence. Both would comport with his point of departure in midrash, and both would serve to illuminate the real question of what the resurrection meant to the gospel writers and their communities. Spong, however, is stuck in older questions and methods.

One irony of his approach is that the women, first among them Mary Magdalene, are written out of the narrative. He predicates, largely on the basis of Paul (who had a vested authority interest in framing his list of appearances between Peter and himself), that Simon was the first witness of the Easter moment. If that were so, it seems strange that no narrative of that appearance was ever constructed in the gospels. And against all cultural logic, indeed against the weight of church patriarchy already re-emerging, the women are attested in *every* gospel as first witnesses.

So, that resurrection body ...

In my view, there's something wondrously scandalous about the resurrection body. Not just the Hebraic unity-of-the-person over against the Greek bifurcation of body from immortal soul. Not just the scandal to Western rationalism and scientism. But the political scandal.

For example, one need make no objec-

book review

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is *The Witness'* book review editor. He reviewed Spong's book at the request of Bob Eckersly who will not agree with the review, but who we believe will be pleased to see it.

tive history claims about the guard of soldiers placed at the tomb by the ruling authorities (Matt 27:62f) to understand what it means politically. Certain powers (in Matthew's moment as well as well as Jesus') want his body out of sight and off the scene. They want it dead and buried. And they want it to stay buried. But it won't. The solution of military repression fails. I think of that as good news.

Jesus hadn't just been drawn to Jerusalem "like a magnet" because it was the most fitting place for a prophet to die. The gospels portray him coming to town, at least on the last big trip, to confront the imperial center and its acolytes, the occupied system of the temple-state. He comes to put a choice, to offer a genuine alternative: embodied in the movement he called the kingdom of God. It was conspicuously subversive of established social arrangements. And it was enacted by bare-handed body politics: who you eat with, where you sit, what boundaries you cross, which sacred spaces you invade, and what urban center you refuse to be driven out of. The powers understood the affront and claimed his body in the arrest — processing, torturing, and doing away with it in a public ritual of execution. Put him in the ground they say.

Is Spong in some odd sense aiding and abetting them in that project? The politics of the resurrection seem to escape him. Imagine: a disposed body re-membered and present. Imagine: freedom from bondage to the power of death, freedom from the fear of death, freedom to die. The resurrection may be seen as the very emblem of that subversive imagination which is itself always incarnational, always embodied — in both the community and its text. It is the very opposite of "timeless truth," instead being always experienced in the concrete and historically specific: con-textualized. The subversive imagination envisions a world, a social order, which the powers say literally can never be. By the grace of God, it imagines and lives the impossible. Like the body of Jesus itself, the authorities want it off the scene, under control, or otherwise domesticated.

There is a struggle for the Bible. John Spong has intuited that, but I fear he's joined a rear-guard skirmish between literalists, as he calls them, and liberal rationalists, as I take him to be.

That is to say, there is a struggle for the text going on, a battle for the Bible, if you will. John Spong has intuited that, but I fear he's joined the wrong battle, a rear-guard skirmish between literalists, as he calls them, and liberal rationalists, as I take him to be. (I say this fully aware that he regards himself, under the mantle of John Robinson, giving the Honest to God movement "a mighty shove into the 21st century." He says this.)

Meanwhile the real struggle is over whether the Bible will be domesticated, whether its texts will be dismembered or simply dismissed to suit ruling forms of knowledge and power. And it seems to be the most politically radical narratives — concerning the way of the cross and the experience of resurrection — which always need the most taming. Literalists and liberals simply tame by different means.

The resurrection is spoken of biblically in such a diverse variety of ways, as though its power ought to be both evoked and guarded. Women returning like the mothers of the disappeared to a forbidden site, an empty tomb, an official seal broken, a messenger in martyr's robes, the shaking of earth's foundations, tears and turning, broken bread, a breath upon friends still locking the door for fear, a finger tracing the wounds, a seaside barbecue, promises uttered, the summons to discipleship and the risk of the cross put yet again. I'm sad to say these ways for Spong are an opaque and hopeless muddle of contradictions: simply evidence of their legendary fabrication.

Strangely, Spong proposes his own alternative, an elaborate historical fabrication. The second half of his book constructs an hypothesis about the first Easter moment. Following five clues, "authentic memories" that have "the ring of truth," Spong posits Peter's post-crucifixion return to Galilee. It is "admittedly speculative" but he suggests the route Simon took, whose house he stayed at, how long it took for him to get home, whom he sat with as "they processed their experiences and wondered what it all meant."

Spong articulates the inner struggle of Peter's mind, and has figured out what he was eating when it finally dawned on him that Jesus was actually alive. Finally, based on a close reading of Zechariah and Psalm 118 (lectionary texts for the feast of Tabernacles) he suggests the date of Peter's triumphal entry back into Jerusalem six months later. (Spong suggests that Luke's guess of the earlier feast of Pentecost is well-intentioned, but slightly inept). As history, it is, I suppose, a form of imagination, but one offered not in communion with the gospel midrashim, but in spite of them.

As for me, sometimes I feel like Thomas who the story says missed the first go round and with tough-minded resolve wouldn't settle for second-hand experiences. I understand his yearning to touch the body with his own hands. And like this Twin, I know how to recognize the Risen One: in the wounds of the Crucified One. To touch those wounds is to know incredible pain, and incredible love, and incredible joy. TW

In pursuit of a dancing God

by Marianne Arbogast

June Keener-Wink used to try to hide her hands, feeling they were "big and ugly."

Now she talks about them to the thousands of people who take part in the movement and body work workshops she leads across the U.S. and internationally.

"I tell my own journey with the physical body, and how the culture and the church bound me," Keener-Wink says.

"Most people hate their bodies," she states bluntly. "They think of their bodies as something they have, an 'it.' 'It' hurts. 'It' doesn't look good. Look around — you see anorexia and bulimia, the cult of bodybuilding, the emphasis on health. All are signs of the splitness of our society."

Through her workshops — often teamled with her scripture-scholar husband, Walter Wink — Keener-Wink hopes to foster integration.

"We find the workshops which have both right- and left-brain experiences much more powerful," she says. "We work with all parts of ourselves, relaxing, moving our bodies, working with clay, using Cray-pas, or role-playing in connection with the study of biblical texts."

If the Bible study topic is love of enemy, for instance, Keener-Wink invites people to work with their self-image.

"We often see our bodies as enemies," she says. "We need to get in touch with those parts which have betrayed us, or which we've betrayed."

She invites participants to pray with their bodies.

"How would you pray if there were no other way except through movement? Asking that question and then doing the prayer that way is powerful."

Those who are more "right-brained" often feel a liberation in being given a way to express themselves, she says, while the "left-brained" can feel challenged. She laughs as she acknowledges that the movement work is more threatening to most people than her husband's sometimes controversial ideas.

"I want to create a safe space," she says. "Participants can move in or out of what is offered according to their comfort level or their physical abilities or disabilities, and there is no judgement whatsoever cast upon what they choose to do."

I had a strong desire to express myself in movement or dance, but my fear was tremendous. My childhood idea of sin was connected with my body.

June Keener-Wink

She tells of a man from Texas who arrived for a workshop attired in cowboy boots and hat.

"The first thing we did was ask them to take off their shoes," she says. "It was quite hard for him; he wanted to be a good sport, but there was a lot of resistance.

"But when we went to Bible study after movement, he looked like a different man. He told us that it was hard to be a big shot with your shoes off."

Why didn't I grow up with a dancing God? I decided that I was going to find that God and help others to do likewise.

Keener-Wink believes body work is crucial in helping people deal with issues of sexuality.

"One reason people are so afraid of the body is because of sexuality," she says. "It's important to recognize that God loves our sexual selves, and to approve and work with that energy."

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.*

In her early workshops, she learned to recognize symptoms of sexual abuse at a time "when it was not out of the closet yet. I would see people, mostly women, breaking down, running out in tears. The body had a memory and the body was bringing all that up. It was often the first step toward getting some help."

Keener-Wink, who has been doing this work since 1982, describes it as a "calling that came from within.

"I don't remember anyone who combined spirituality, body imaging and the Bible," she says. "There was no one out there for a model."

At a time when she was feeling like "an uptight almost middle-aged woman cooped up year after year," she had intuitively turned to the body to find freedom.

"I had a strong desire to express myself in movement or dance, but my fear was tremendous," she says. "My childhood idea of sin was connected with my body. I did not have positive feelings about myself. I plunged into a movement class in spite of all those negative inner voices screaming at me."

At the same time, she began classes in pottery.

"I was centering my body, I was centering the clay; I was opening the clay, I was opening my body; I was learning to shape the clay, I was learning to shape my body. There was no end to this dance, this integration that was happening."

She wept when, on a visit to India, she learned that Hindus worship a dancing god.

"I was profoundly moved. Why, why didn't I grow up with a dancing God? I decided that I was going to find that God and help others do likewise."

At the start of each workshop, she lights an oil lamp which she fashioned out of clay in a way that allows the flame to dance, "symbolizing that we have a moving, dancing, active God."

She does not believe this God should be alien to Christians.

"As soon as I start talking about the body I use the word, *'nephesh,'* a Hebrew word which means all of me — mind, body, spirit, intuition, feelings."

Because there is no Greek or English equivalent, biblical translators often used the word 'soul,' she says, leaving the body out. "I try to help individuals move from 'I *have* a body' to 'I *am nephesh*.' To be incarnated, to be the temple of the Holy Spirit."

Keener-Wink, who has led workshops with her husband in numerous countries, says the most difficult was "in East Germany right after the wall came down."

When Walter Wink spoke, "they said we couldn't tell them anything about principalities and powers after what they'd been through. And that was true! But with the body work, they had no understanding at all. They were very rigid — they would laugh and run out of the room."

In other places, she felt there was less need for the body work component of the workshops.

In Latin America, she found that base communities already include the body with mime and role-play of Scripture.

And in South Africa in 1986, she felt there was a more urgent need for the nonviolence training her husband offered, so she cut back her sessions to give him more time.

But she sees their work as one. Activists burn out, she says, when they are "not in touch with their whole self.

"In our workshops we do a lot of groaning, getting those moans out, so we can lift them up to God, and not think we have to be the messiahs of the world.

"We strive for spontaneity in our bodies. Spontaneity is the ability to respond to what God calls us to do. It's being able to bend, to stretch and twist with God. I believe Jesus had soft knees. He could move in any direction God wanted." TW

Fire take the church!
Heart commence to turn over!
Great Lord! The whole thing been jump!
— Camp meeting song