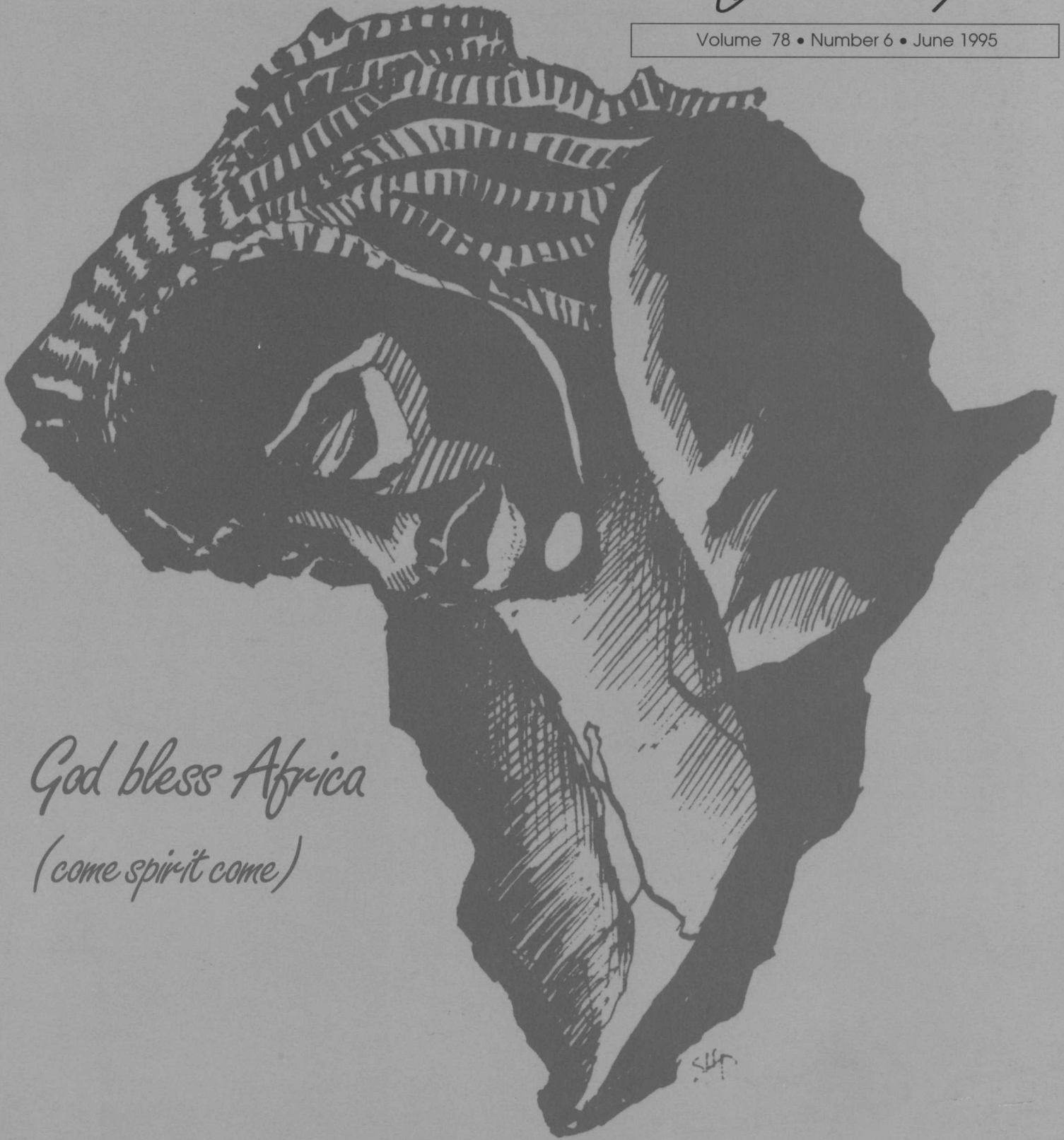


# *The Witness*

Volume 78 • Number 6 • June 1995



*God bless Africa  
(come spirit come)*

## Sin

I ENCLOSE \$3 FOR ANOTHER COPY of the March issue. My husband was in the midst of reading it when it disappeared, probably on one of his many travels to somewhere when it was carried along to be read while waiting. It was substantive and we need it!

**Priscilla Armstrong**  
Baltimore, MD

## Witness praise

I AM ENCLOSING a cheque as my contribution to your *wonderful* paper—it is most truly and aptly named, for in a world of increasing violence and cruelty by the *rich* nations and powerful men on those who are poor and powerless, your lovely paper shines out as a true witness to the love of God. I welcome its coming every month and save up my copies to read when I am feeling oppressed. I am proud to belong to the same community as you.

**Nadir Dinshaw**  
St. Brelade's Bay, Scotland

*THE WITNESS* IS A COMPELLING source of Hope in a world gone mad with hopelessness.

**Margaret Lowery**  
Sandy, OR

ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK for a one-year subscription. We have been reading issues fairly regularly for several years as they have been passed to us by a friend whose eyes no longer allow her to read. We are not Episcopalians but find ourselves frequently asking Episcopalian friends "Do you read *The Witness*?" Unfortunately, the answer is too frequently, "No."

**Pat Shufeldt**  
Greenville SC

## Clergy sexual exploitation

While in seminary, I was sexually victimized by a married fellow student who misbehaved

when his life felt out of control. As Nancy Hopkins said [in the April issue of *The Witness*] it wasn't about sex, it was about power.

Because the man would not leave me alone, I went to the Dean. We had an informal hearing. The only person who dealt with the evidence and drew conclusions was the Dean. If he hadn't been a decent, good and unbiased person, the process would not have worked. And I was lucky, the Dean agreed the man's actions were inappropriate.

The Dean's job is to safeguard the institution. He seemed to assume its safety would also protect me. The Dean promised that if this seminarian did anything else he would be dismissed immediately. We did not define what "anything else" included.

After this, the man was more restrained, but he did not leave me alone. The man was talked to each time, but he was never forced to leave the school.

The process was confidential, but people knew something was going on. Rumors spread, causing harm to me and others. Moreover, because I was obviously hurt, many thought I should leave. So seminary officials called me in. I was told that I should smile and hide my hurt. I should ignore the man as if he were a two-year-old. I should not depend on our seminary community for help. I could cry or be angry or sad at home, or in my therapist's office. Finally, for my growth and empowerment, my protection was up to me.

Six months later the offender completed his studies and left with honors and *restrictions*. I worked to rejoin the seminary community.

Two years later everyone is kind, but despite good reports from a psychotherapist and others, I've been blocked in the ordination process. Those who have the decision-making power tell me that they are not sure I can handle stress, that maybe I should quit the process for a couple of years and then start over. But in writing, these same people tell me that they have insufficient information about me to make a decision.

Apparently, they can't believe I have recovered. And why? Because I wasn't a good enough victim. I didn't hide my pain well enough. I wanted help protecting myself from a man who was first searching for women to

victimize and later wanted revenge. I didn't do it right. If I had hidden my hurt and ignored the man, there would not have been problems. No one acknowledges that maybe he should have been forced to leave seminary.

**Name withheld**

## Visiting Cuba

I JOINED THE PASTORS FOR PEACE caravan to Cuba last November. I had also visited Cuba in 1982 and found that the hungry were fed, the homeless housed, the sick receiving the finest of care. I found these same things true today.

They have replaced selfish values with the common good of all. Loving your neighbor means practicing solidarity. William Temple, former archbishop of Canterbury, explained this by writing, "No one acquires the right to possess or to hold down their neighbour." The American blockade has tried to do this.

We experienced a test of our faith with delays from breakdowns and actions of U.S. customs at the U.S. border at Buffalo, N.Y., where we applied civil disobedience to help the Americans cross into Canada. We had inconvenience by sleeping two nights on a church floor in Toronto. We loaded 260 tons of aid on a ship at Montreal for Cuba. There was medicine, medical equipment, school supplies, solar ovens, bicycles and parts, computers, faxes and 40 tons of powdered milk from the United Church in Toronto.

This was the fourth caravan organized by Pastors for Peace to Cuba.

We spent a week in Havana. I attended church at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. We attended a five-day conference on Cuban solidarity. One hundred and nine countries were represented by over 3,000 delegates. We had people from all ages and walks of life expressing their support.

**Jim Pence**  
Vancouver, Canada



## Correction

Janet Morley's poems in the May issue are published in *All Desires Known* (Morehouse).

Letters

# When the center doesn't hold

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Since the Oklahoma bombing, I've joined millions of others poring over each day's reports of those who died and those who did not.

But the accompanying commentary worries me.

People keep asking, how could this have happened?

I want to respond, "How could the government possibly be expected to know the contents of every vehicle on a downtown street and do you seriously want to live in a society where it does?"

The clamor for the anti-terrorism bill is terrifying. As a member of the anti-nuclear movement and a sometime tax resister, there is no question files on my community will be pulled open (see page 27). I remember the harassment we experienced in the early 1980s (bank accounts garnished, threatening phone calls, lies from federal authorities concerning our commitments and a death threat to a friend in Central American solidarity work).

The harassment only eased when the government's campaign against CISPES (Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador) was exposed. The public complaints and curtailment of the government surveillance apparatus made a tangible difference in the quality of life for many of us.

Now, rather than listen to and address the issues being raised, however heinously, by the militarized right in this country, the government is organizing a military response and asking for the death penalty for the bombers.

On the very same news broadcasts, right-wing white guys are telling reporters that the Oklahoma bombing marked the anniversary of the destruc-

tion of the Waco community two years ago and the execution of a white supremacist in Arkansas this year.

It doesn't take much imagination to foresee what the results of executing Tim McVeigh *et al* will be. Nor is it hard to imagine what people who hate the government and who have placed their trust in mega-weapons will do in response to government harassment.

God help us.

The only thing offering hope in the face of the militarized right is conversation. It's not a conversation I look forward to. I get the creeps when I'm driving behind someone with a bumper sticker that says "A man with a gun is a citizen; a man without is a subject."

But we can do it.

Last summer a group of us, including local United Methodist Bishop Donald Ott conducted an exorcism at a gun and knife trade show. We carried a cross past tables of weapons (and books with detailed formulas for home-made bombs), then gathered outside.

Raging white men came spilling through the doors, crying out insults and threats, but were immediately shushed by their friends who said, "Be quiet. They're praying."

For ten minutes they stood in respectful silence while we finished the rites of exorcism. Then they leaped before us insisting that they carry guns to protect our right to pray. They itemized their complaints against public schools, controlling government agencies, etc.

They were anxious about conspiracies — just as those smug newspaper commentators suggest.

But, while I consider the right wing's analysis flawed and its conclusions wrong,

it is not inappropriate to see conspiracies. You'd be crazy to insist there are not powerful mechanisms of social control aimed at us — we may not have microchips implanted in our butts (as McVeigh believes), but through advertising, through credit ratings, through subtle and blatant coercion we are corralled.

James Nichols (a Michigan farmer currently held for questioning) practices making bombs, turned in his driver's license and social security card and is experimenting with organic farming.

I think of a friend, Tom Jones, whose farm is 100 miles away from Nichols'. A Methodist minister and nonviolent activist, he is driven to distraction when he can't get bank loans for organic farming; he's denied government grants for alfalfa crops (which replenish the soil) because, despite great crops, he won't use chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Will we call it paranoid thinking, if Nichols complains that he is being forced to poison his land and his family?

Behind the militarism of the right is the reality of economic decline. When the middle class was made to pay for the retooling of American industry in the early 1980s, the editors of *Business Week* wrote: "It will be a hard pill for many Americans to swallow — the idea of doing with less so that big business can have more. Nothing that this nation, or any other nation has done in modern economic history compares in difficulty with the selling job that must be done to make people accept this new reality."

The nation is in trouble and the center is not holding. The church better have a word for Tim McVeigh — and I shudder if it is simply an expression of outrage, a cry for the death penalty or disparagement of conspiracy theories.

## THE WITNESS

Since 1917

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Vital Signs examines Ellen Cooke's embezzlement of national church funds and the frustration of women waiting for progress to be made in the Committee for Dialogue on Canon III.8.1. The series on clergy sexual misconduct will resume next month.

Cover: *Africa* by Helen David Brancato of Philadelphia. Brancato associates this quote from the South Africa Kairos Document with the image: "Often enough their bodies are broken but nothing can now break their spirit."

Back cover: *Africa: Women on the Move* by Betty LaDuke, who lives in Oregon. LaDuke is the author of *AFRICA: Women's Art, Women's Lives* (Africa World Press, 1995) and *Africa Through the Eyes of Women Artists* (Africa World Press, 1991).

# Challenged by African faith

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

**T**his issue is about sources of life in Africa.

It is not about poverty, starvation, AIDS or tribal war.

This issue is dedicated to those who pour their vitality into rituals, into the deep community implicit in all their faith traditions, into art and into resistance.

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company board, which owns *The Witness*, asked me and Bill Wylie-Kellermann to go to Africa when I refused a raise.

I looked forward to meeting artists and people in religious movements — particularly indigenous ones. Watching people weave the fire of pain and hope into radiant light I believed would help us step beyond the paralysis and despair generated by overwhelmingly tragic news reports and even by most religious appeals for charitable contributions.

We were fortunate to be allowed to attend the second Afro Anglican conference, held in January, which was hosted this time by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Capetown. The gathering, which examined Anglican commitments throughout the diaspora, drew people of African descent from the continent, the Caribbean, England and the U.S. Our particular interest, of course, was in meeting representatives of the African church.

In the course of that conference and a visit to Johannesburg we met many folks in the African Anglican church and beyond. Soon we became familiar with the assertive intellects and quick humor exercised by our sisters and brothers in the

Anglican Church in Africa. We were teased, challenged and welcomed.

We were on the alert for answers to two questions: what makes the church in Africa so vibrant when services in American mainline denominations are generally dull and poorly attended? And, does



St. George and the dragon, 17th century  
Ethiopian miniature

the active spirituality in Africa necessarily go hand in hand with conservative moral values?

## God on the move

We met in small groups for Bible study in Capetown. One member of my group was Grace Ndyabahika, chaplain at Makheri University in Uganda. Her attention to the conversation was intense as contrasted to the Americans who dominated the group. Also unlike the Americans, she bared her soul in telling about God's hand in her decision to marry and a dream that led her to the right mate. She told us that her father raised her not to lie, saying, "Christians are different."

Her faith is at her fingertips, on her tongue, in her eyes — it is her currency.

When I mentioned a time when I had wept during a service on Madison Avenue and been told to "keep a stiff upper lip," Ndyabahika was appalled.

"Pastoral ministry is the heart for us," Ndyabahika said. "It's when someone is in distress that God is convicting them or calling them!" She added that pastoral visiting is frequent and that fellowship groups meet weekly to get "passions out for the community and for the self."

I was struck when reading (Harvey Cox's, *Fire From Heaven*, Addison-Wesley, 1994) book on Pentecostalism) that the indigenous African churches (usually referred to as African independent churches and called African-initiated churches by one author in this issue) concluded that the European missionaries must have deliberately kept the power of the Holy Spirit a secret because missionary services were so contained.

Articles in this issue will illustrate ways that the African churches make room for people to cry, to shout, to publicly confess their sins. I find myself drawn and repelled simultaneously — I want to acknowledge my passions and then work them through a refining fire, but I have been raised in such an individualistic culture that I am wary of allowing anyone authority over my moral health. Likewise, I want to dance and stomp my prayers, but I've never placed myself in renewal congregations where worship might be more spontaneous.

Yet, for all my reservations, I do believe that the African church has the antidote to our tepid worship. And their emphasis on community and confession

*editor's note*

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

might well be the antidote to the despair and rage expressed by some folks in the shrinking middle class.

The Anglican church in South Africa is looking to exorcise the rage and hatred engendered by apartheid by drawing on the rituals of the African independent churches. They are devoting 1995 to studying the rituals.

### Obedience

Ndyabahika talked freely, as many other Africans did, about surrendering to the will of God.

W.P. Khotso Makhulu, archbishop of Central Africa, expressed a sense of humor and freedom in obedience, even when it involves pain. Of his own country, Botswana, he said, "We're going the way of all flesh. We've depended on irreplaceable diamonds — some people have overstretched themselves and burned their fingers *but that's not all bad*." He later spoke positively about Africans bringing

their conflicts, pain and dreams to the community — for its welfare — rather than looking to psychiatrists to make things whole.

Likewise, Joseph Dadson, bishop of Tamale in West Africa, explained, "If you live what God asks of you, you live what you say and your life fulfills God's word — that is greater mission. Evangelism involves not just proclaiming the word of God, but being obedient to the will of God."

Dadson's understanding of obedience might sound simplistic to Western ears, but there is undoubtedly a deep challenge in his description of the courageous witness of priests (who earn \$5 a month). He is too articulate about Western economic exploitation and prejudice not to have a clear message for us.

### Biblical seeds of revolution

Lamin Sanneh, raised in Gambia, says that no matter how chauvinistic the be-

havior of European missionaries sometimes was, the Gospel they carried, and translated into indigenous languages, brought the seeds required for Africans to overthrow the European colonialists. (*Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process*, Orbis, 1993).

Sanneh rejects the currently popular view that Western missionaries were uniformly predatory and African tribal societies were innocent. He suggests that that view not only underestimates the mixed legacy of the Western missionaries, but also lends itself to another form of Western chauvinism by portraying the "innocent" Africans as victims.

Sanneh argues that by translating the Bible into indigenous dialects, missionaries actually preserved cultures by providing written languages and even contributed to the emergence of nationalism.

"As Africans faced the unforeseen situation of forcible foreign rule, they found that the accompanying foreign Christianity possessed the unsuspected antidote to the loss represented by colonialism, and since Christianity could ostensibly be adopted as evidence of capitulating to foreigners, it was an effective disguise for the cultural resistance it made possible. ...

"Ultimately mother tongue sentiments fused with the revolutionary message of the Bible concerning the *impartiality* of God towards all peoples and races and then inveighed against residual obstacles created by continued colonial rule and the doctrine of white racial supremacy," Sanneh concluded.

Sanneh's thesis is similar to one repeated by Desmond Tutu in the form of a joke: "When the missionaries arrived, they had the Bible and we had the land. They bent their heads and said, 'Let us pray.' When we looked up, they had the land and we had the book." Tutu laughs. And then he whispers, "But what we had was of inestimable value."

TW

## Hope in South Africa

In many ways the social concerns on the bulletin board of a Methodist church in Johannesburg could have been posted in Detroit. They dealt with AIDS education, a homeless union, a city council in disarray, anti-handgun efforts, suburbanites who commute in to work but leave an economic void in their wake. ... Welcome home.

I watched for signs of and read about a deeper underlying problem: the inherited pain resulting from decades of torture and abuse. Only once did we see the state police power in action. The airports and the streets appear demilitarized, but as we passed a rural township caged behind barbed wire outside Capetown, an enormous military vehicle, a Kaspir, rushed past

us. It reminded me of the militarized vehicles I saw Jewish soldiers using in Gaza — all the windows were gridded with protective steel. It held an ominous power.

Most of the heart-sickening awareness of the vicious cruelty of the apartheid regime came to me through accounts that I was reading while there. I grew ill and for a brief moment longed for the comparative tranquility of the U.S. until I forced myself to recall America's long history — since its inception — of systematic oppression of several segments of the U.S. population.

Only then did my hopes turn, as have the hearts of so many revolutionaries in South Africa, to the Gospel.

— J. W-K.

# Odo Masquerade

## — Igbo tribal song

May the congregation here listen,  
Listen, for it is Odo hearing the market din  
The Odo who lives near Nkwo market  
Speaking his mind — his eternal mind:  
I say to you  
No other Odo gnaws into my trunk  
And into my branches  
Except Hornbill  
Who thundered and ate his visitor;  
I am the Odo who feeds on the market din —  
I, Ogene-the-bell, who summons to conferences  
I, the beaked singer, who rips open the maize cob  
I, mysterious tripod used for cooking  
So the pot can stand erect;  
Two of my three legs give way  
And the pot falls off, rolling  
Seeking the eternal cook.

I ask the creator-scatterer of locusts  
Please to retreat a pace  
For almighty Odo is girded with cloth  
And is going in peace —  
If soldier ants advance, person advances  
If they retreat, person retreats  
He who has a basket should bring it to the wilderness  
For the numberless locusts  
Are a hovering host in the wilderness.

I, the *Ozo* who killed an elephant  
I, the *Ozo* who wore palm leaves and rejected the hoe  
I, the *Ozo* who took his title on *Eke* day  
And performed in the village square on *Olie* day;  
I, the beaked Singer  
I, thorny weed never used as a carrying pad  
I, the branch of the *Iyi* tree that becomes a medicine —  
The killer of other trees.

Hornbill  
I am the woodpecker  
That destroys trees;  
The tree we consecrated  
Has ever been my walking stick —  
Ha Ha Ha Ha —



I am the Odo that flew straight  
And touched everywhere in Igboland  
The Odo living in the courtyard of the king of contentment  
The Odo whose gate is the *Ngwu* tree;  
I am like the child who accomplished a hard journey quickly  
And was said to have raced under supernatural influence  
I am the craftsman of the spirit world.

I am a gong:  
The gong is inspired  
And begins to talk  
I am the gong with a melodious voice;

The crowd is thick here  
The white ants are fluttering in clusters;  
My *uturu*-bird voice  
Is singing in the Odo fashion;  
I have come, I have come, I have come  
Son of the Almighty Odo;  
The scribe cannot pick up  
All that flows from my voice  
What I am singing  
I, the warbler.

— from *Leaf and Bone: African praise-poems*,  
edited by Judith Gleason (Viking Penguin, 1994)  
© Judith Gleason. All rights reserved. The book  
can be ordered by calling 1-800-253-6476

# What's the African church got that we haven't got?

by Daniel Moss

**A**t a wake in the Newark Cathedral where Ugandan born Petero A.N. Sabune is dean, he departs from the prayerbook's "Almighty God to whom all hearts are open ..." and detours into extemporaneous prayer. "But when I do that," he says laughing, "I'm still holding the prayerbook right in front of me. I just don't tell the congregation the page number. You see, God doesn't live in a prayerbook." He is grateful to be a product of the African church.

Conversations with eight Africans currently living or studying in the U.S. generated insights into the vitality of the church in Africa. The African church is not a church one goes to on Sunday; it is a church that is lived and breathed every day.

When Africa threw out the colonial powers, they didn't discard the white man's Christianity. There is an implicit irony that Africa absorbed imposed Christian concepts, molded them to fit their traditions and has now become the leading continent of Christian growth.

The reverse mission offered to us today doesn't arrive wrapped in slave trade and exploitation but rather washes up on our shores in inspirational stories of renewed spirit and commitment.

What can we in the U.S. glean from our African sisters and brothers?

## Prayer

Through the speaker phone, Sabune sang me some bars of a song of praise that "we

can use as a greeting or sing at a bus stop. There is such a sense of gratefulness." Many of the Ugandans, Kenyans and Zimbabweans described the spontaneity that characterizes their style of worship.

"At home," explains Maaraidzo Mutambara, a Zimbabwean woman studying at Harvard Divinity School, "people just pray from their hearts and the pastor can ask any member from the congregation, 'Mr. X, can you lead a prayer for us?'"

Benjamin Musoke-Lubega, a Ugan-



*[In Nigeria] people walk miles to go to church, they look forward to it. Here you find African students who don't find a church that fits their needs, that is warm. Everything is just cosmetic, words, even at coffee.*

— Ngoci Obi

dan serving as rector of Holy Spirit parish in Cincinnati, Ohio, laments the extreme formality and ritual of prayer in U.S. churches. "Without the service bulletin in the U.S., we don't know how to survive," he laughs. "In the African church, the (1662) prayerbook is used, but also there is time for prayers from the people. I know there are good prayers in the prayerbook, but I love for people to say out loud what is on their minds, what they are bringing before God." In the U.S., he adds, people fear being judged and so hold back on vocalizing their prayers.

African prayer is constant. It is common to pray before going to sleep, when getting up, and in some cases, before having sex. "I'm not sure how many people do that here," muses Musoke-Lubega.

Eucharists play a less important role than everyday prayer and Bible study; there are only two or three a month. People pray during lunch breaks, on a street corner or in a parish. They tend to go to their workplaces with their Bibles.

Musoke-Lubega observes, "In the U.S., religion is a private affair. In Africa, people share their faith and aren't ashamed of it. They talk about what God has done for them. Those who survive a car accident look at it as a miracle of God that their lives were saved. Here the first thing you do is look for who you can sue."

Prayers are said over seeds to help them germinate, for good weather and an abundant harvest. After the harvest, there is a day of thanksgiving during which people bring the fruits of their labors — bananas, goats, chickens, etc. — and offer them to the church. Although there is also offering of money, these farm products are later auctioned or sold and often comprise the parishioner's pledge.

## Community

In Africa, a sense of community is not something unique to church settings, but rather is a pillar of African society repli-

**Daniel Moss** recently returned from mission work in El Salvador. He now lives in Dorchester, Mass.

cated in church.

In the cities, where people have left the intimate extended families of their villages, Mutambara suggests, "Church elders feel like your parents at home."

Musoke-Lubega observes that in Africa "they take the body of Christ seriously, so when you lose a relative, they say it's one of us and if one of us is affected, the whole body is affected."

In Newark, Sabune has tried to encourage parishioners to open up weddings and funerals so they are not private affairs. In Africa, whole villages attend these rites of passage.

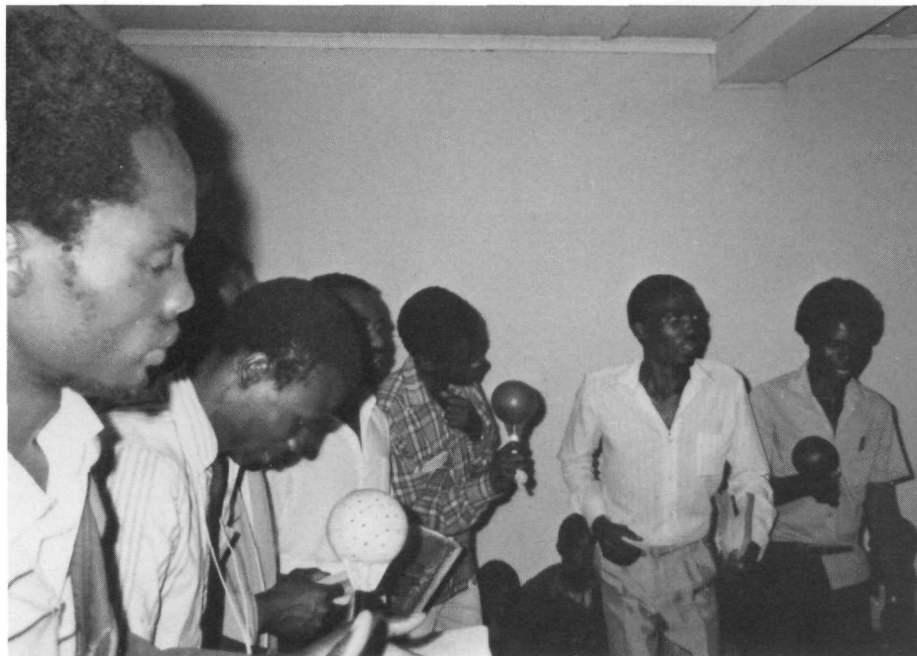
The Bible holds tremendous importance as a religious and cultural anchor and provides a framework in which to understand community. By 12 years old, Sabune says, most young children have learned the Bible. "You identify the characters in your village with the characters in the Bible. When you see an old man, you say, 'Oh, there's Abraham.' When you see a person who does good, you say, 'Well, that must be the Samaritan.'"

Ngoci Obi, a woman studying for ordination at the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Boston, marvels at the warmth of her Nigerian church. "People walk miles to go to church, they look forward to it. At EDS, you find African students who after awhile don't go to church. They don't find a church that fits their needs, that is warm. Everything is just cosmetic, words, even at coffee."

Mary Tusubira, the first of two women (the other was her twin sister) ordained in the Ugandan Anglican church in 1976, stresses the importance of sharing. She acknowledges the material poverty in Africa, adding, "but the little that we have, we share with those who are in need. Here at school, I hate weekends because we cook for ourselves and eat alone. You know, when you eat alone, the food doesn't taste."

Tusubira said that since being in the

U.S., she misses the sense of community generated by pastoral visiting, "because for us, we have no appointments as here. You just go among your people, praying for them, comforting them and trying to be with them. But here, well, maybe on Sundays. I'm really missing that."



Anglicans teach, pray and preach all night at a vigil in Zimbabwe.

Titus Presler

### Lay activism

Community in the African church is nurtured and expressed in "revivals." Christopher Byaruhanga, a Ugandan doctoral student at General Seminary, describes the revival movement begun in the 1930s as "a lay movement against the coldness seen in the missionaries."

Revival meetings are held monthly on a Friday evening and can continue right through Sunday. There is testimony, prayer and song. People spend the nights at the revival site, sharing food, fires and experience. Notwithstanding the revival's emotion, great emphasis is placed on spreading the message of God on a daily basis, not waiting until the next revival gathering.

The cultural importance of community and the spiritual sense of that community creating a single, unified body of Christ combine to embrace a walking sensation of "being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses." Sabune elaborates: "The cloud surrounds you no matter where you

are. You're never alone at anytime anywhere, so you can call upon God in many circumstances."

You can also call upon your neighbors. Byaruhanga surmises that because one's salvation is incomplete until "the entire community is saved, that's what motivates our vigor for evangelism."

It is perceived as a great and important step to bring the word of God to another person. That work is not considered to be the exclusive domain of the priest. House visits amongst the laity are a common feature of the African church. Byaruhanga concludes, "We believe that once you are a Christian, you show you are a Christian," by spreading the word of God. "Otherwise, it is just a title."

## Evangelizing

Lay evangelization in communities is one of the key reasons for the explosive growth of the African church. In African parishes, there is often one priest serving five to nine subparishes that are geo-

graphically separated and have their own church buildings. Religious activity in these chapels is coordinated by a well-trained man or woman known as a "layreader." The parish priest appears occasionally, taking as long as two months

to travel around to each community. On those sporadic visits, sacraments are administered. The bulk of the pastoral work is carried out by the volunteer layreaders.

Lay missionary activities are fed, in part, by an African emphasis on giving back to one's community.

"Maturity is counted in terms of what one can contribute to your community," Mutambara observes. "It's almost like the philosophy of 'I am because we are.' I've yet to experience that in the congregations here."

"People flock to the church," says Emmanuel Sserwadda, a Ugandan serving as rector of the Church of the Messiah in Islip, N.Y. "They love the church. They understand God. All these challenges in their lives have been like a test, they have been tested and tested and tested. It has affirmed their faith."

Of Nigeria, Obi says, "The majority who go to church are common people struggling for life. If you ask them what something means in terms of their suffering — those who have no job or are dying of a disease — that's the church they're looking for. They don't want terminologies of theology." At Bible study, a portion is read, and a member of the congregation expands on it in the way they understand it. They share what the Bible means in terms of their lives, leaving aside theological jargon. The prayers and discussions speak to their everyday trials and provide a framework in which to examine and understand the world.

### The role of women

Tusuubira and her twin sister were on the verge of entering an order of Roman Catholic nuns when their bishop proposed they consider becoming the first women Anglican priests. They attended Bishop Taca Theological College and Tusuubira described her predictably rough initiation.

"In Uganda many people who become priests are already teachers and nearing

## Church hierarchy and politics

Among the eight Africans I interviewed there was a varied spectrum of responses with regard to the church's relationship to government and its ability to speak out in opposition when necessary.

All of those interviewed have enormous admiration for Bishop Tutu and the South African church's ability to show that "apartheid is not compatible with Christianity." Benjamin Musoke-Lubega, a Ugandan serving in Cincinnati, elaborates, "You cannot say that your feet are inferior to your hands. Every part of the body is important. With that kind of witness, Archbishop Tutu helped bring down apartheid."

In Uganda, an archbishop paid with his life for his outspoken opposition to Idi Amin. The Ugandans I spoke with express great pride in that prophetic voice.

But historically, the African church hierarchy had cozy relationships with the colonial governments; they were born of the same seed. The church leadership was often composed of Western European bishops who did not sympathize with liberation struggles. As the church became increasingly indigenous, a more critical voice was heard.

However, in many cases, the church has not spoken out and has been part of the oppressive regime. This places the church in compromised positions from which "the church could not speak out for the people," says Emmanuel Sserwada, a Ugandan serving in Islip, N.Y.

Tribal allegiances also present a significant challenge to the African church. Sserwadda explains that, "If the government leaders come from a certain tribe and if a church leader is also from that tribe, they get blinded and cannot see what the government is doing wrong and are not brave enough to speak on behalf of the people and condemn the wrongdoing."

In addition, Sserwadda says, in many cases new dioceses — now there are 26 in Uganda — are "demarcated according to a tribal basis, which is very unfortunate. Tribes come and say to the archbishop, 'Well, we want our own man.' Clergy can't cross the tribal boundaries. But Christ crosses all boundaries."

The position of the African bishops at Lambeth was that "the Church should be able to say, 'Thus says the Lord' without being actively engaged in party politics." They encouraged Anglicans to witness to Christian responsibility and ethics, to be informed about social issues, to insure that seminaries teach social issues, to speak ecumenically when possible and to "use public criticisms of governments as a last resort."

Anglican leaders in Kenya have recently come under attack for their support of Roman Catholic bishops' criticisms of the government. The government charged the churches with causing chaos by speaking out against abuse of power and the erosion of judicial and legislative authority in Kenya. — *D.M.*

retirement, so at our seminary there were only old men, and one day in the dining hall a man stood up and said, 'Excuse me, Mr. Priest, I have something to tell you. You are going to kill the church by allowing these girls in.'

"Our priest just laughed and said, 'I'm surprised, have you ever read Jeremiah? He was chosen when he was young. Let them be here.' " Tusuubira wants to get a copy of Bishop Harris' ordination video to take back to Uganda to promote the ordination of women bishops in Uganda. I heard a distinctly dignified and proud tenor in the voices of Ugandan men and women who remarked that while the women were performing a wonderful ministry in some countries in Africa, they had not yet been ordained in the home of the mother church, England.

They raised the inspiring example of their female vice-president. Byaruhanga said that one of the positive values adopted from the traditional African religions is that of women in leadership as priests and throughout society. Sserwada felt that the tremendous growth of the church is due in large part to women's leadership.

Obi has not had it as easy. Women cannot be ordained in Nigeria in the Anglican Church, which she says "is unbelievable. It's the largest communion — 10 million people. That's why I'm here.

"It [sexism] is part of the culture and the church could do something to break it but is hindering it. My bishops don't want me to be ordained. I wouldn't dare go to Nigeria right now. The military is in everything so if the church says to the military, we don't want her, I would be in trouble." Obi works as a nurse's aide to put herself through school.

"Ordination of women is not a top priority in the life of the African Church compared with many other concerns which it is facing," declared the African bishops on the first page of their 1988 pre-Lambeth report. They asserted this

even though on the same page they said that there is "an acute shortage of clergy" because the church is growing so fast. African churches now ordaining women include Uganda, Kenya, West Africa, Burundi and South Africa. Women are



*Here, priests seem not to want to share. For the whole year, I was never invited to preach at a church I attended. In the Ugandan church, children are encouraged to preach.*

— Mary Tusuubira

allowed to serve as priests in Rwanda and The Sudan.

### Coveting U.S. structure

I heard a great deal of admiration during these interviews for the governance of the U.S. church, perhaps the one area in which there was consensus that the U.S. Episcopal Church excelled. The U.S. church was perceived to be run more democratically. For example, Sserwadda laments that clergy deployment in Africa is "the same system as it was in colonial times when a white bishop from Britain

was living like a lord and there would be no questions — whatever he said was it." Though the bishop is now African, "at the end of the year, he drafts a memo and says, 'I'm posting such and such a person here, moving them from north to south.'" Sserwadda is impressed by the vestry's close involvement in church business in U.S. parishes. He contrasts the superior lay leadership in ministry and liturgy in Africa to the minimal involvement of lay people in church administrative affairs.

Some of these Africans also see accountability as lacking in the African church. Sserwadda offered examples of times when money sent to a diocese did not reach the people it was intended to help.

### Preaching

Many of those interviewed comment on how uncomfortable it felt in the U.S. for the rector to be the only one preaching. Ugandan priest Tusuubira admits to feeling offended that she was not asked to preach in her visits to other parishes. "Here, priests seem not to want to share," Tusuubira says in a horrified voice. "For the whole year, I was never invited to preach at a church I attended. I deserted it." At home in Uganda, she invites lay people to preach because "they have something for people. So I say to them, 'Can you share with us?'" In the Ugandan church, children are encouraged to preach and, in fact, lead entire services.

The participation of young people is another critical ingredient in the growth of the African church. In the U.S., Tusuubira has observed that youth are in the choir or serve the rector, but are not given any independent responsibility. Many of the churches she has visited were populated by predominately older parishioners, causing Tusuubira to wonder about the future of the U.S. church. "You are really lacking Christianity among the youth," she comments. In Uganda, young people are encouraged to

# Sexuality and sin

Progressives in ECUSA largely presume that the African Church is homophobic, sexist and moralistic. It's easy to imagine that the word preached by Africans is the bad theology of some Western missionaries coming back at us.

Yet, as is true any time a message crosses cultures, the truth is more complex. When Daniel Moss asked the Africans he interviewed about their home churches' position on homosexuality, he says they responded, "We don't have homosexuality." Many went on to talk about divorce instead.

"When you look cross-culturally at an issue like sexuality, it brings you back to reconsider the unspoken assumptions in your own culture," observes Ian Douglas, director of Anglicanism, Globalism and Ecumenism studies at the Episcopal Divinity School. For instance, he says, "Some Africans accuse us of being serial monogamists." He notes that the priorities of the African church can prompt us to wonder why we spend so much time examining gay and lesbian behavior instead of challenging the actions of heterosexuals.

"Traditionally you don't only marry the individual but also the family," explains Ugandan Christopher Byaruhanga. "We see marriage as a rite of passage and from the African point of view, you can't repeat a rite of passage. One who has divorced can't have an administrative post in the church. They can come to church but most will back off from holy communion. Divorce is not allowed because we believe there is nothing impossible that Jesus Christ cannot solve."

On the issue of polygamy, the conversation has shifted.

In 1888 Western missionaries raised concerns about polygamy at Lambeth and received direction to welcome polygamists into the church if they chose one wife and dismissed the rest.

One hundred years later, the African bishops raised the concern again, noting the injustice done to women in the interim. This time, Lambeth agreed that polygamists should be received into the church *with* their wives, but must not marry any additional wives.

According to observers, leaders in the African Church are most likely to spend time on issues of homosexuality when they are in an international forum and it is raised by Westerners.

In 1988, the African bishops at Lambeth were accused of minimizing the efforts of both gay and lesbian Christians and women interested in ordination when they interrupted Lambeth's agenda to insist that issues of more primary concern to them be addressed. (These included healing, youth, ecumenism, economic development, racism, polygamy and AIDS.) Yet, we need to acknowledge that the African bishops' rejection of the Western cultural chauvinism implicit when we presume that our agenda is the only agenda does not *necessarily* mean that the African bishops have no sympathy for or understanding of the pain involved in our concerns.

How homosexuality is understood in Africa may vary.

"In traditional tribal settings, especially Islamic ones, gender roles are highly differentiated," Douglas says. "There is an identification among people of the same sex. You go through rituals to-

gether, live together, work together, play together. When Africans say there is no homosexuality in their country, in their mind, that is probably correct. But that is not to say they haven't been close spiritually, emotionally and physically with same-gender people. One's God-given sexual orientation is there, but how it is exercised is culturally defined."

The primates of the Anglican communion, 11 of them African archbishops, issued a pastoral letter in mid-March which said the following concerning sexuality and Christian commitment:

"Around the world serious questions relating to human sexuality are being faced by the Church. The traditional response to these questions is to affirm the moral precepts which have come down to us through the tradition of the Church. Nevertheless, we are conscious that within the Church itself there are those whose pattern of sexual expression is at variance with the received Christian moral tradition, but whose lives in other respects demonstrate the marks of genuine Christian character. The issues are deep and complex. They do not always admit of easy, instant answers. A careful process of reflecting on contemporary forms of behavior in the light of the scriptures and the Christian moral tradition is required. We have to recognize that there are different understandings at present among Christians of equal commitment and faith. We invite every part of the Church to face the questions about sexuality with honesty and integrity, avoiding unnecessary confrontation and polarization, in a spirit of faithful seeking to understand more clearly the will of God for our lives as Christians."

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

preach at an early age.

"If you have a gift, it's something that you can share," Mutambara states, "I don't know if it's a form of individualism," that only the rector tends to preach in the U.S., "but I enjoy the diversity of preachers in Africa." (One person interviewed wonders if rectors are reluctant to invite others to preach because they don't want to pay for a guest preacher.)

Preaching in the African church is not an exposition from a prepared text. Comments are not limited to the biblical readings of the day. Byaruhanga finds the difference of style and content difficult to adapt to.

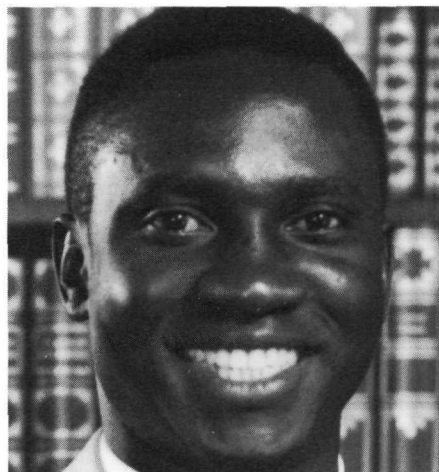
"Here, you read the lesson and then look at the problems of your congregation and sometimes realize they don't match," Byaruhanga says. "But if I don't preach from the text, I'll be out of context. In my country, you look at what most affects you. If you look at your congregation and see polygamists or many divorced people, you want to preach on those things from a Christian perspective."

Lay preaching is also considered to be extremely effective in offering a prophetic voice because the laity is not beholden to other parishioners in the same financial sense that a priest is. A priest may be timid for fear of losing support.

Confessing sins, everyone interviewed stresses, is critically important for the welfare of both the individual and the community. But many express a sense of walking on eggshells in talking about sin in the U.S. church.

### Sin

"People here (in the U.S.) do atonement, but it's not widely accepted," Musoke-Lubega says. "Most people here want a pleasing Christianity, but we forget that Christ suffered on the cross. Christianity has happiness and freedom, but it doesn't mean all the time that it will prevent suffering and pain and agony and death. Some people don't want to be challenged



*People here (in the U.S.) do atonement, but it's not widely accepted. Most people here want a pleasing Christianity, but we forget that Christ suffered on the cross. Some people don't want to be challenged.*

— Benjamin Musoke-Lubega

and when they are, they respond, 'And are you not a sinner?'"

Tusuubira expresses surprise that the sin of Bishop Johnson's suicide was never discussed. "Here (in Massachusetts), they nursed it and prayed for him and they never talked about it as a sin."

Nevertheless, those interviewed quickly dispelled images of fire and brimstone and harsh punishments for sinners.

The African church encourages parishioners to publicly confess their sins. Someone may stand up and "testify that I had an affair, or I embezzled funds or I stole somebody's chicken — may God forgive me," Sabune describes. He says the sinner is offered help and forgiveness, not ostracism. Love shown to that person encourages them to "conquer the power

of the devil." The environment during these public confessions is highly charged and emotional. People cry when they think of their past sins. Even men break down crying in services; that is acceptable.

In addition, an individual's confession provokes a reflective questioning on the congregation's part. Did we as a community somehow sin to cause this individual to sin? What could we have done to prevent it? Personal and collective sin overlap.

Byaruhanga observes that sin in U.S. culture is considered a personal issue and people prefer that the church not interfere with their daily life. "Whereas in my country, what affects the individual affects society. Therefore, we encourage public repentance." At weekly meetings, the Bible is read and people repent their sins in front of the congregation. It is called "walking in light." Forgiveness is asked from both God and one's peers.

Private confession does not exist. Byaruhanga contends that "the priest and the laity are equal before God, so as a priest you don't have special powers. Actually, it's the congregation of believers that have more power." The priest also confesses publicly and asks for forgiveness. "In my country, priests who are saved are very much loved."

### African traditions

When Bishop Taca first came to work in Uganda, he posited that in order to survive and grow, the church must have native-led leadership. But, while the Anglican church leadership became increasingly African, people were obligated to do away with all things African. African customs were considered heathen.

"People were deprived of their culture, and this is one of the unfortunate sides of the church in Africa," laments Sserwadda. "They were not given a chance to express themselves and try to compose various tunes and ways to praise God."

It is only recently that African rhythms are returning to church music and children are no longer baptized with Western names like William and Mary.

In 1988, in their report to Lambeth, the African bishops urged that the church "make full use of its cultural heritage in order to enrich its life." Specifically, they

advocated translating the Bible, alternative liturgies, locally produced vestments and eucharistic elements and local African architects for new churches.

Now, according to Musoke-Lubega, "the clergy come in dancing, the bishop's mitre could be made of animal hide and instead of a traditional chasuble, he could

be wearing a lion or leopard's skin."

The lion is associated with the king and divine authority, so when a priest wears a lion's skin, "he is seen as a representative of God — this appeals to people because it's what their ancestors did and their parents have known. They feel at home." **TW**

## Differing views on Rwanda

Pain and death in Rwanda are the devil's work in retaliation for the success of the church, Archbishop Augustin Nshamihigo told the Afro-Anglican conference.

"You have heard that bishops were killed, priests were killed, Christians suffer, but the church lives," Nshamihigo said. "Satan is jealous because there were so many Christians in the country."

Looking young and surprisingly sleek, Nshamihigo gave a rudimentary talk about Rwanda and then chastised the assembly for not sending aid.

"Other denominations sent aid, I am embarrassed by the Anglican Church. The World Council of Churches (WCC) aid lacked impact because it wasn't church to church," Nshamihigo complained. "I want a practical church with action."

A furor followed during which individual priests, primarily American, objected that they *had* sent money.

A Ugandan priest spoke up from the back, but the moderator cut him off. Again, the priest tried to speak. Finally, over the objections of the moderator, Emmanuel Sserwadda, now serving a parish in Long Island, asked "Why must so many bishops leave when the people overthrow the government?"

The moderator closed off discus-

sion. I followed Sserwadda into the hall. There he and Benjamin Musoke-Lubega, a Ugandan serving a church in Cincinnati, Ohio, explained that international Anglican monies are being sent into Rwanda via the WCC and the Anglican Church of Canada (which has had a longterm relationship with Rwanda) because the archbishop, who was close to the Hutu government, fled to Zaire and later to Nairobi, Kenya.

"Bishops should stay in the mainstream and be faithful, confront bad governments and be on the side of the people," complained Sserwadda. "There's no reason they should be running away when governments change."

Musoke-Lubega explained that when the British left, the Tutsis, whom the Belgians had organized as an elite 10 percent of the population over the more numerous Hutus, continued to issue identicards that cited ethnic identity. And so did the Hutu government, which forced the Tutsis into exile in Uganda in 1959.

"The archbishop should have said, 'We sinned,'" Musoke-Lubega said.

The president of Uganda tried to warn the Rwandan government that Tutsi exiles from Rwanda had gained military skills fighting in the Ugandan civil war and were turning their eyes toward their homeland. "He urged them to open discussions," Sserwadda said. "But the

Rwandan government refused."

I sought out Archbishop Nshamihigo later and asked him about the criticisms. He was surprisingly willing to answer questions, even those that challenged his integrity.

Nshamihigo said he had worked with Roman Catholic and Protestant bishops to encourage the government to develop a multi-party system to create reconciliation. During the recent coup which placed the Tutsis who had been exiled in Uganda in power, Nshamihigo said that three bishops were executed. "They said those bishops were biased. I was in Canada, the U.S. and England when that happened."

From Zaire, Nshamihigo says he organized the church so that Rwandan clergy could either function in Rwanda or amongst the refugees in Zaire.

Asked if he wants the previous government, now exiled in Zaire, returned to power, Nshamihigo answered, "We don't know. We don't know what would happen. Earlier refugees [the Tutsis] occupy everything."

"It is easy to judge us," Nshamihigo added. "But, because both sides want power, to be in the middle is impossible."

In the meantime, it is the judgment of those channeling international aid into Rwanda to do so through the WCC, bypassing the exiled archbishop. This is a decision that Sserwadda and Musoke-Lubega applaud.

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

# Weaving anger, wisdom and wit:

## an interview with W. P. Khotso Makhulu

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

I met W. P. Khotso Makhulu, Archbishop in the Province of Central Africa, by accident when Bill and I asked to share his table in the cafeteria during the recent Afro Anglican Conference in Capetown. His conversation was initially weary and alienating. He complained that he had become an archbishop too young. I was afraid we had stumbled on one of those church patriarchs who have lost their faith but can't surrender the crown.

Then as the conversation progressed in a cat-and-mouse-like manner, he began to share some of his excitement about political change in southern Africa and I realized that his initial reticence may have had less to do with his own feelings than with his desire to test *ours*.

In the course of the conversation that followed, we talked about despair and Makhulu responded, "I am an eternal optimist. I have seen so many countries in the abyss and it's as if they are lifted up and pushed through the tunnel.

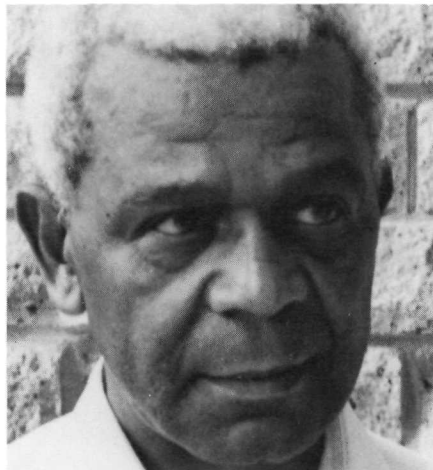
"In Mozambique, we never thought the Portuguese would go. On the day of the inauguration there was a different feel in the land." Makhulu added that he liked the church folks working with RENAMO, wrestling with Marxism, because he felt communism was never given a chance in the Soviet Union.

Many of South Africa's revolutionaries are known to Makhulu because his home is in Botswana, which offered safe haven for them.

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

As an apparent afterthought, Makhulu said "So many African leaders were, or will be, refugees. Nixon and Reagan should have been refugees."



W. P. Khotso Makhulu, archbishop in Central Africa.

Bill Wylie-Kellermann

I pursued an interview with him after hearing him preach to the conference and to a Capetown congregation there to welcome us. I was struck by his authority, his humor and his anger. His facility with language — both ours and several others, including French and Xhosa — was breath-taking. (He had even taken the opportunity to challenge and scold the Archbishop of Rwanda in French, knowing that many participants would not follow the exchange.)

My notes from his sermon indicate that he honored members of the congregation for having provided a place where

"the demon apartheid was discussed, deplored and rejected."

He chastened those participating in the conference by reminding us that, "The currency of heaven is not about a sloppy sentimentality. We are to love our enemies. We are to want the best for our enemies, even if we must wring it out of them, so we may all live in salaam/shalom."

Makhulu then smiled.

"Lest I be accused of only espousing social programs, I want to articulate my belief in a God who is engaged in the lives of his creation. God inspires us so that we may dare to go and do great things. God draws us to communality, kinship, in an age of individualism.

"So what are you willing to do for the Anglican community?"

"We would be blind if we closed our eyes to the effects of fundamentalism, regardless of its source. We think of Islam, but we have fundamentalists in our fellowship, people who preach the inerrancy of Scripture. It's easy to dismiss them. But nonetheless we must correct this with orthodox teaching."

Makhulu called participants to further activism.

"Those of you schooled in the ways of the world could help us read the signs of the times. If we don't act," he added, looking out at the many Americans who had each spent several thousand dollars

to be present, "we are condemned to intermittent junketing.

"Afro Anglicans," he added, "God loves you as you are with your variety of complex-

ions and cultures.

"As men and women of color, we can teach love of others. We have experienced diversity — that is why it is incongruous for any of us to emerge fascist."

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*So many African leaders were, or will be, refugees. Nixon and Reagan should have been refugees.* — W. P.K. Makhulu

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**Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann:** In your sermon to the conference, you spoke out against Christian fundamentalism in Africa. Will you talk about their influence here?

**W. P. Khotso Makhulu:** The fundamentalist right, call it what you may, is a system of teaching buttressed by the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. It's decidedly anti-Left and anti-Communist, and therefore advocates the cause of capitalism and so-called American values.

We are already flooded on some of our television programs. They are buying advertising time to put forward this brand of their religion.

**J.W-K.:** Are they from the U.S.?

**K.M.:** Yes. We have no money to go to radio stations or to do a kind of apologia. The point is to teach our people the basic orthodoxy.

**J.W-K.:** For instance?

**K.M.:** It is wrong to say the poor are poor because they've sinned. It's a simplistic distortion. Or to say that crooks are comfortable because God has blessed them. It is what we do with bounty in the service of others that matters.

I am appalled that your Congress is thinking of cutting out social programs. This runs contrary to my understanding of the Gospel: "In as much as you did it for the least of these ..."

**J.W-K.:** How do you respond to claims for the inerrancy of the Bible?

**K.M.:** It's a fact that the Bible has its particular contexts — some history, some prophetic utterance, some literature. There have been mistakes in copying and in translations. It's unrealistic to be so dogged and dogmatic. It almost makes it sound like one continuous thing when the Bible is covering periods of history.

**J.W-K.:** How do you respond when they



This carving, *Family Tree*, shows generations at work — it represents the African proverb, "I am, because we are."

say you are not saved because you do not share their beliefs?

**K.M.:** Salvation is not for them to challenge. Salvation is a gift from God. They have not been set up to judge. Anyone who is saved must also learn humility that it is a free gift from God.

**J.W-K.:** What do you do when they do condemn you?

**K.M.:** I simply treat them with the contempt they deserve.

**J.W-K.:** How do you feel about evangelization in the African context, particularly regarding Muslims?

**K.M.:** Evangelization does take place. It is one of witnessing to the God whom we believe in and worship when we seek to obey and follow. If others take cogni-

zance and wish to engage in dialogue, I have no problem with that. In other words, I am prepared to entertain an inquirer.

I am prepared to go to an unbeliever — conditions being right — to make Jesus attractive to that person. But Muslims who are deeply committed — and I'm not talking about the fundamentalist (we have them on both sides) — I would want to respect.

**J.W-K.:** Some participants at the Afro Anglican conference were saying African constitutions should be strengthened to prevent abuses of power by Muslim populations. How do you feel?

**K.M.:** The constitution should be strong regardless of whatever religion is dominant. There should be safeguards. It becomes quite important to establish that if you're going to have people who want us to become Islamic republics.

**J.W-K.:** The Rwandan archbishop suggested today that the troubles in Rwanda were caused by the devil's jealousy that the church was thriving.

**K.M.:** So what? We know that we are living in a world full of committed people

and full of weak people. What is important is not simply to respond with such a bland statement but to say, "What can we do for good?"

What does that statement mean?

Does it mean we stand by and say, "The devil is at work"? No, it is a question of making choices — not resignation.

**J.W-K.:** Two Ugandan priests challenged the Archbishop of Rwanda, who has fled his country, saying that too often bishops depart with the exiled governments.

*We are not self-conscious about witnessing and are willing to talk about our convictions. Religion is communal.*

**K.M.:** I have seen bishops go for a variety of reasons — dominant tribes have pushed people out, the Archbishop of Uganda, Janani Luwum was murdered for criticizing Idi Amin, bishops fled Liberia. But the question raises the question of political alliances. They can be awkward.

The church has a history of supporting independence. It would be a strange African who wanted to remain under the yoke of imperial masters, but it's a question of degree.

In a number of countries we went through a period of absolute silence — paralysis, instead of making what is right and wrong known to the powers that be.

At the same time, one sees conversions. People become aware and have such a change of heart to the point of martyrdom. I think of the courage of the Ugandan bishops and church leaders in Namibia and South Africa.

**J.W-K.:** In your sermon you suggested that those attending the conference might be helpful in the struggle by using their worldly knowledge to read the signs of the times. Yet I'm more inclined to look to base communities of people without privilege for direction ...

## Watch for the ATR

Major addresses and sermons of the Second International Conference on Afro-Anglicanism, held at the University of Capetown in Jan., 1995, will be published in the *Anglican Theological Review* in Nov., 1995. This issue will include talks by W. P. Khotso Makhulu, Desmond Tutu, Harold Lewis, Nan Peete, John S. Pobee, Sehon Sylvester Goodrich, Orland Lindsay, Joseph Dadson, and Cyril Okorochoa. Single issues can be ordered from ATR, 600 Haven St., Evanston, IL 60201. Annual subscriptions cost \$23 (\$26 outside the U.S.).

**K.M.:** People in base communities know exactly what hurts and what's wrong. They may not know how to address the powers that be or they may know and not be able to address them. Sometimes sincerity alone is not enough. When you are dealing with a devious government, it is necessary to have people who are in the know. Some of the bullies are in power because the U.S. will do nothing about removing them.

Afro Anglicans — those who are students of international relations, those who understand the drift of foreign policy — can do a little interpretation here and there. And when you move to the structures of negotiation, it seems to me it is important to go well-prepared, well-briefed.

**J.W-K.:** The American church seems so sluggish compared to the church in Africa.

**K.M.:** I can't comment on the American church. I have seen parts of it that are exciting, doing some good work.

I think on this continent — I don't want to sit in a lofty place — people are willing to submit. People arrive in the Gospel because of the enthusiasms of those who promote it, because of bitter lessons in the school of life when you have tried everything.

We are not self-conscious about witnessing and are willing to talk about our convictions. Religion is communal. It may come to you as an individual but it takes place within the context of community.

**J.W-K.:** In the U.S., I often feel that I can only bring part of myself into the sanctuary. I leave a part of myself outside the door. Is that true in Africa?

**K.M.:** Some of the sophisticated stuff does not enable the person to emerge from the camouflage. But then something catches you and touches you in the raw — there is no way of avoiding it. You must let go.

## Back issues

The following back issues of *The Witness* are available for study groups or personal use. Study guides are available upon request when ordering multiple copies of a single issue.

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**TW**

# ‘Living through a miracle’: change in South Africa

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

*In the past we prayed for the oppressive government to fall, and now we pray for the democratic government to be elected. Guide us to choose what is best for your people. Give us the courage to resist intimidation; tolerance towards those with other opinions; willingness to accept the expression of a democratic choice; and the grace to recognize that political opponents are not our enemies, but sisters and brothers through whose shared views your will may be done.*

— intercession from the South African Council of Churches prayer service, for election day 1994

**E**n route to Johannesburg on a KLM flight from Amsterdam, Jeanie and I are astonished to find ourselves in a plane filled entirely with white folks. It is the first of many contradictions. We are in a flying first-world social location. In the seat behind us I overhear an exchange: “I’m anxious to see how things are now.” The reply of quick comfort, “Don’t worry, nothing has changed.”

Set beside that the refrain we heard repeated in conversation with those who had struggled so long: “It’s as if we have lived through a miracle.”

Which then is it? Nothing changed? Or miraculous transformation? As in such

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**Bill Wylie-Kellermann**, a United Methodist pastor, travelled to South Africa in January. He is the editor of *Keeper of the Word: Selected Writings of William Stringfellow*, Eerdmans, 1994.

things generally this is partly a matter of seeing and partly a matter of where you stand.



**Brigalia Bam**

Bill Wylie-Kellermann

Housing patterns are already changing. We stayed with friends in a working-class suburb of Johannesburg where they would not have been free to live a year ago. There is a pervasive anxiety among white folks, even among those who opposed apartheid. A white choreographer of a dance company feels her professional days are numbered and begins to think again about going back to teaching. The white director of an anti-apartheid art gallery has begun to think about finding a new place in community-based art.

White male university professors look anxiously at black graduate students and know instinctively that the old boys academic network is not the future.

And concretely, South Africa is no longer a police state. The architecture remains, of course, a barbed-wire testimony. And the economic structures of apartheid remain firmly intact. But the armored *kaspirs* are parked. The townships and squatter camps are no longer occupied militarily. Brigalia Hlophe Bam, the newly appointed General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), told us that she has recently been able to pass a policeman on the street without seething in anger — and to greet him as a person.

## A human emblem of change

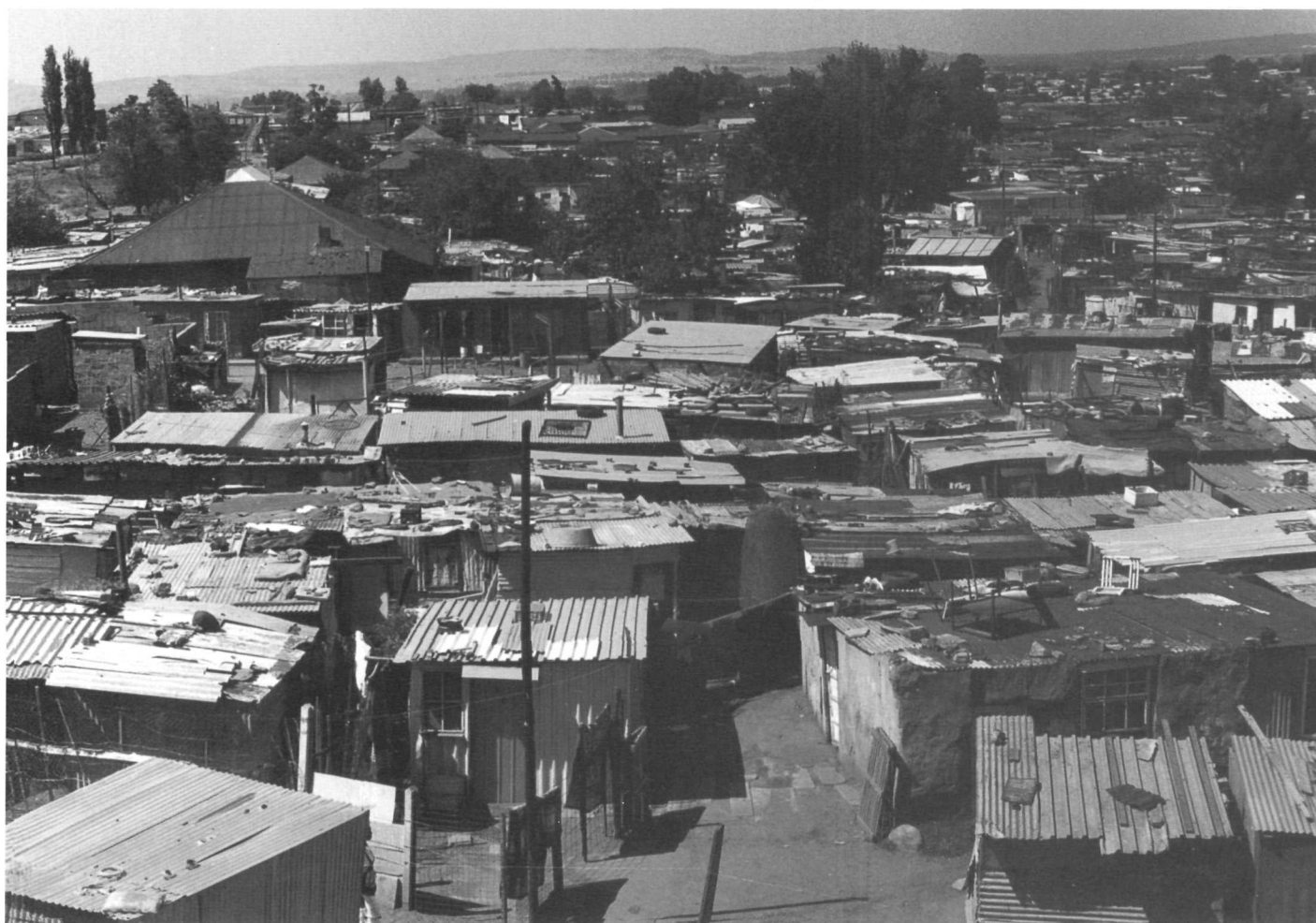
Bam is emblematic of the new role the church is struggling to discern for itself in South Africa. For 21 years she had been virtually exiled in Switzerland working for the World Council of Churches where she helped found its Programme to Combat Racism. She’d left behind a brother who, like Nelson Mandela, was digging every day in the prison quarry of Robben Island. However, in 1988, as the church struggle heated up, she felt called to return home, fully expecting to die. “Let me go back home to suffer with the people, I thought. I returned not full of hope but convinced that things would never change.”

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*What ought to be the posture of church in relation to a fragile, emerging government whose announced program it largely supports? Where is its prophetic and critical function to be focused now?*

— Brigalia Bam

Bam’s expectation of meeting death was hardly idle. In August of that year, Khotso House (downtown Johannesburg home of the Council, where she came to work and where we met to talk) was bombed. A device detonated in the



Soweto, the township outside Johannesburg, demonstrates the extraordinary demands now placed on the new coalition government in South Africa for housing, schools and social services.

Bill Wylie-Kellermann

basement blew off the roof six floors up.

The year following, several attempts were made on the life of Bam's predecessor as Secretary General, Frank Chikane. His clothes and/or luggage were apparently sprayed during airport transit with a deadly nerve toxin employed in chemical warfare.

Both events may be taken as measure of the import of the church in the political struggle during the State of Emergency years when the most basic organizations were declared illegal and banned. In such a period the church became the only remaining alternative for gathering and

speaking. It was virtually thrust into the frontlines of direct action and of human rights work on behalf of political prisoners.

In the period following the release of Mandela, Bam served with Chikane as the Council sought to support the opening of the political conversation and help ensure the democratic process. The prayer above is an intercession for that moment.

### Post-electoral poverty

Now, a year into the new ANC coalition government, the churches find themselves in yet another historical moment, a new context for reflection on theology and

praxis.

One odd, but major, change has been the international community's presumption that with the election victory, there is not a continuing need for financial support. The human rights work which included financial support for families of political prisoners (paying legal fees, schooling for children, even covering funerals) and salaries for 24 very decentral-ized staff positions, was at one point 70 per cent of their budget. After the elections that was cut drastically. They are now in the novel position of needing a development officer and attending grants-

manship workshops.

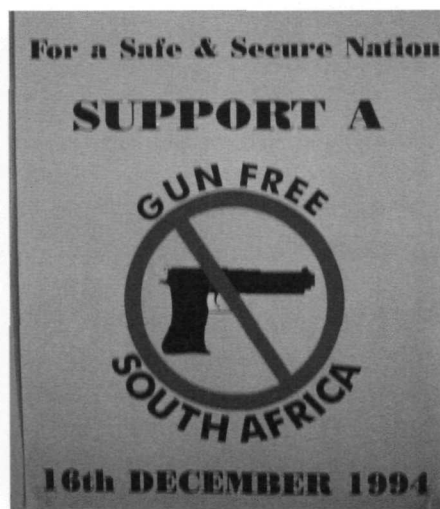
Incidentally, we observed the same phenomenon on other fronts. For example, the ANC's cultural program, organizing a network of community-based art centers, had been funded largely by grants from the Scandinavian countries. Following the elections, however, those funds have been cut off on the assumption that the government will now be supporting them directly. And yet the Government of National Unity is a fragile coalition beset with overwhelming expectations (like the need for massive housing development) and still negotiating budget priorities. Hence, such monies are not yet forthcoming. Or another example, a community center in Soweto, also previously funded internationally, is now operating largely on money from first world delegations who stay periodically at their facility, biding its time in hopes of future government program funds.

The unanimous election of Bam in October of last year is itself a sign of the changing times, the new moment. Culturally, South Africa remains a very sexist society. "We fight for the white women all the time, but they have never fought for themselves, being content with white privilege," she says. That is further compounded by the traditional tribal sexism of many African cultures. The ANC is the only party to appoint a woman to cabinet level position. Bam's visible public role is by no means easy, leaning into patriarchy and the customary old boy network. She has in the past contemplated gathering a circle of women to begin a new women's church.

### Independent churches

Certain very strong women are, in fact, founders of some of South Africa's independent churches. These often large congregations, which fuse Christian faith with traditional tribal ritual, are springing up all over the continent. These groups focus on healing, using water for purifi-

cation, slaughtering goats to ask the ancestors for strength, speaking in tongues, dancing. Their roots in traditional religion blend easily with Christian rituals.



Bill Wylie-Kellermann

For example, the communion of saints may be readily merged with the honoring of ancestors. Baptism introduces a child not only into the community, but into the larger circle of ancestral saints. Cultural sympathies incline them much more to the tribal-based stories of the Hebrew Bible. These churches employ the body in worship, with much dancing and singing, in liturgies high on spontaneity. The Holy Spirit, which some regard as a secret kept from them by the European missionaries, is theologically prominent.

Bam understands the importance the independents may play in the future of the South African church. They are beginning to relate to the council, though that is rendered difficult by SACC's formal membership criteria: the requirement to be a national body, have a formal constitution and a statement of faith. They are, nonetheless,

able to join local councils.

### A new prophetic role

However, the new context for the church is set above all by SACC's relationship to the new political realities. Brigalia Bam framed some of those questions for us: "What ought to be the posture of church in relation to a fragile, emerging government whose announced program it largely supports? Where is its prophetic and critical function to be focused now? What is the church's ministry in the rebuilding of a nation?" In the earlier period many regarded "reconciliation" as a cheap grace synonym for evasion and denial of apartheid's reality. "What now is the work of reconciliation? So many blacks were bruised, but whites too. Their humanity was wounded, scarred, destroyed. I hope it does not take as long as the Holocaust. We must forgive, but not forget."

These suggest a range of issues to be addressed. One place SACC is exercising a prophetic function is with respect to Armscorp, the government corporation which manufactures weapons for lucrative export on the global market. The council is pressing for an immediate moratorium on all arms deals and a complete dismantling of the corporation. A government needing massive capital, even one by nature sympathetic, is slow to respond. (The African bishops noted in

1988 that 40 percent of Africa's debt burden pays for weapons.)

*Previously, their counseling focused on the trauma of apartheid violence, while now they find themselves attending to domestic abuse.*

### Challenging hand guns

They are also participating in the Gun Free South Africa Campaign, initiated by Methodist bishop Peter Storey, which involves disarmament by gun turn-ins. There are some 3.5 million registered guns in South Africa, and millions more illegal.

Ipelingeng Nomkibelo, director of a Soweto community center, explains the importance of the church's role. "We support it, but it must be the church. If we received the guns people would believe the center was stockpiling them against a future uprising. Only the church can do this." She also identifies an interesting shift to which the center is attending and to which the church must: previously many of their counseling efforts focused on the trauma of apartheid violence, while now they find themselves attending more and more to domestic abuse.

Bam points to the rising number of street children in the cities. Much as in the U. S., the assault on the black family has been systematic. Fathers, for example, were separated from their wives and children in the homelands, while they were housed year-round in the township hostels. After so long, the fabric of the family is torn and disintegrating. The children must be ministered to, but so must the family as a cultural institution.

### **Liturgies of exorcism, reconciliation, and healing**

"The first priority for the ecumenical movement at this stage in the life of our country is to work hard in the area of reconciliation and healing," Bam says. "Healing wounds will not be easy, but it is an essential task and it has to be faced with realism and courage and a great deal of creativity."

A concrete political focus for that work concerns the Truth Commission, which has begun the work of uncovering the violence of apartheid and identifying specific crimes. Bam is convinced this is a needed step in the process of reconciliation and the SACC supports the commission, though they oppose the hearings being televised. When we were there a public furor raged over whether former South African police could apply for a "blanket amnesty." No, said the ANC, tell us the specifics of your crime and



**Graffiti outside Soweto commemorates Gandhi, the Soweto massacre, Mpanza, Chris Hani and Gabriel Mugabe.**

Bill Wylie-Kellermann

apply for amnesty for those actions.

"Reconciliation," Bam says, "does not mean amnesia or denial. It includes facing the painful truth. For example, Father Michael Lapsley, the Anglican priest whose hands were blown off by a letter bomb, isn't looking for monetary compensation. He just wants to know the truth." Lapsley was an ANC chaplain exiled in Harare who is now a counselor in Cape Town at the Trauma Center for Victims of Violence and Torture.

The council is beginning to explore how the church might augment the Truth Commission's work liturgically. Its revelations could be placed in the form of a confession, for example, perhaps in services of repentance appropriate to the penitential seasons of Advent or Lent. Forgiveness and absolution could bear in the ministry of healing.

An Islamic community goes each Sunday to Robben Island, where Bam's brother and Mandela were held. They remember the host of Muslim prisoners

also once confined there. They pray and are building a shrine to remember and reclaim the space.

Bishop Tutu is heading a year-long study of how liturgical practice can serve the process of national healing. He has begun to ask if some form of "national exorcism" is required to name, rebuke, and cast out the spirit of racism and apartheid. Interestingly, he has been listening hard to the Independent churches. Is there something in the liturgies of purging which they undertake? Can the wider church appropriate the Pentecostal healing which they evince?

Desmond Tutu is one who sees the miracle. As he told the Conference on Afro-Anglicanism which we had gone to attend, "Despite the poverty, despite the fact that not a great deal has changed materially, there is something new in the air. We have a new, free South Africa."

The question in this moment is how to live into and live through the miracle now being wrought.

**TW**

# Communities on fire: African-initiated churches

by Titus Leonard Presler

Christianity in Africa is reaching down into the cultural roots of the continent's peoples and bringing forth new expressions of gospel faith and church community. As a result, it is growing exponentially, with almost 400 million people, about 48 percent of Africa's population, predicted to be Christian by the year 2000. Many of the mission-founded churches are flourishing, but much of the new Christian vitality arises from the over 7,000 African-initiated churches that have been founded in this century by indigenous prophets.

The newer churches exhibit great variety, but to communicate the dynamism of the movement I — like African Christians often do — tell a story, one story about one particular church among the Shona people in Zimbabwe. The story comes from research time I've spent with congregations in the Honde Valley on Zimbabwe's eastern border with Mozambique. This church is especially arresting because it's an instance of a woman-church — a church founded by a woman, led mainly by women, and offering a ministry of liberation mainly, again,

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**Titus Leonard Presler, Th.D.**, served three years in Zimbabwe as an appointed missionary of the Episcopal Church. He is preparing a book on the *pungwe* movement in Shona Christianity and coordinating a pilgrimage to the Bernard Mizeki Festival Centennial in June 1996. He teaches Anglicanism, Globalism and Ecumenism Studies at the Episcopal Divinity School. Presler and his wife Jane Butterfield are rectors of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

to women. It is called the Pentecostal Apostolic Church of God (PACG) or *Chechi yePentikosti*.

## Woman-church

We started climbing the mountain about an hour before dusk, moving up a path from the tropical valley toward the top of Dombomapungu, a mountain overlooking the devastation of Mozambique. I was with about 30 members of Pentecost, and they were heading out on a Wednesday night for worship — not in their simple, thatched shelter in the village of Hamudikuwanda, but out to the wilderness; and not just for a couple of hours, but for the whole night, from dusk to dawn.

Men and women in the group were tired from their day of tending maize fields and tea bushes, but they were cheerful as they anticipated the long night of being with one another and with God. Elderly people joined us as we climbed, as did school children from church families, even though they must be in class the next morning. And, of course, there were infants on their mothers' backs. Everyone was fasting for the all-night vigil, called a *pungwe*, so we carried just jackets and blankets for what we knew would be a chilly night. Such intense communal spirituality is common among African-initiated

churches (AICs), and among some mission-founded churches (MFCs) as well.

Darkness gathered until we were walking up the rough track by starlight, and each of us stumbled from time to time, but this was routine for Pentecost members. Tonight's vigil was one in a series of five wilderness nights that this congregation had been asked to undertake by the church's founding prophet, Mbuya Maunganidze, whose name means "Grandmother You-have-gathered-together."

Although the village's name means "You do not want to increase," the Hamudikuwanda congregation had grown from a handful of people to about two hundred in just one year, and now they wanted to construct a building of bricks and mortar. In order to help the congregation discern God's will and to test their resolve, Maunganidze directed them to hold all-night vigils on five different mountains over the course of five weeks. In common with other AIC founders, Maunganidze's prophetic gift of discerning God's will through the Holy Spirit strongly influences the congregations of her church, which she established in the 1960s when her ministry of prophecy was rejected by the Apostolic Faith Mission in which she grew up.

## Confessional gates

As we approached the meeting place at journey's end, we could hear the singing of 100 church members swaying in the darkness as, one by one, they made their confessions through about 15 prophets, most of

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*On this night, the preachers spoke vividly of closeness to God, resistance to evil spirits, family reconciliation, and the role of women. They often broke into songs that roused the group to their feet for a dance around the fire.*

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them women. In common with other AICs, the PACG requires members to pass through confessional "gates" formed

by prophets who hear confessions and are believed to discern unconfessed sins and alliances with evil spirits.

The gravity of the wilderness vigil prompted the Pentecostal Apostolics to have each member confess to *five* prophets in succession and, finally, to the congregation's chief prophet, Evelyn Mhlambo. Mai (Mother) Mhlambo projects a powerful and flamboyant presence as she presides over corporate worship, directs the spiritual lives of her members through healing and exorcism, and has veto power over the church council's management decisions.

A choir of women sang continuously a Shona confession song that focused the group's attention on the task at hand:

Come, let us confess to the Father,  
and let us be righteous.  
Confess, and go to Paradise.  
We have waited to go to the Father.  
Mothers, come,  
Confess and be righteous.  
Come, we are going to Jerusalem.  
Jesus is coming,  
He is coming with power.  
Let us confess and be saved.

Improvised stanzas highlighted various sins that could be confessed: murder, wizardry, gossip, adultery, theft, and the like. After I made my own confession before the first prophet, I wondered "What now? How can I come up with more?" Then the pattern drew me on, for I was constrained to go more deeply into the dynamics of my life than I might with a single individual, and the prophets' assurances of forgiveness had a correspondingly cleansing effect.

After the confessions, the congregation moved to an open, rocky area toward the east and gathered around a large fire that burned throughout the night. Nocturnal journeys to such desolate spots are common among Shona AIC Christians, who point to Jesus' wilderness fast as their model and recall how Moses and



**Mai Mhlambo, a female prophet, praying with a group of men during an all-night vigil on Dombomapungo Mountain.**

Titus Presler

Elijah met God in the wilderness. Experiencing God in the wilderness is what prompts AICs to call such meeting places their "Paradise." This night's work — which Mai Mhlambo described as "to talk with God, to be healed, and to be given various gifts" — included passionate singing, intense prayer, stirring sermons, and exorcisms that highlighted the liberation that such a church offers to African women.

### **Preaching and prayer by firelight**

Preachers around the fire included women and men, youths and the elderly, and sometimes even children. Such broad-based sharing of the word is common in African Christianity, although a few churches, both mission-founded and African-initiated, restrict the role of women. On this night, the preachers spoke vividly and compellingly on themes of closeness to God, resistance to evil spirits, family

reconciliation, and the role of women in church and society. They often broke into songs that roused the group to their feet for a dance around the fire.

Long litanies of corporate prayer recurred during the night, all kneeling (on rocks!) toward the east as Mai Mhlambo bid them pray for particular concerns, such as youth, the church's leadership, evangelism, the ill, and, of course, the building of a new church. At the leader's concluding "Alleluia!" everyone burst loudly into individual prayer, which Mai Mhlambo brought to a close with another "Alleluia!" that signaled the start of another bidding.

At other times, Mai Mhlambo walked about the group and touched individuals as a signal that they should move out toward the forest and pray alone. Many would be scattered to the far reaches of firelight, most of them on their knees and praying loudly with arms raised. Tongues and other ecstatic utterances could be heard. While young people continued to sing by the fire, Mai Mhlambo visited the scattered individuals and counseled and prayed with each one as needed. This practice individualizes the wilderness experience, making each participant responsible for his or her own encounter with God and providing pastoral care to each member.

Later in the night, Mai Mhlambo dispersed the congregation into groups of five to go and pray for spiritual strength. With such ritual flexibility, the wilderness night becomes a setting where people engage their spirituality in a variety of modes: individually, in small groups, and in the assembled congregation.

The vigil came to climax in a full-scale confrontation with woman-oppressing spirits between 3:30 and 4:30 a.m., precisely the pre-dawn time, called *mambakwedza*, when many people expect the spirits of Shona Spirit Religion to come forth with special intensity. Early

in the evening, Mai Mhlambo had declared that someone had brought "a four-footed animal," a reference to the spiritual presence of a hyena, a sign of wizardry. One person claimed to have seen a star shining on some people but not on others, and, in a clear allusion to wizardry, another said she had seen a small packet tied with a string. Preachers between midnight and 3 a.m. highlighted themes of spiritual conflict and expectation. One young man recounted a traumatic time with a diviner-healer, while another declared that Christians should reject all totems in favor of the single totem of Pentecost.

### Exorcisms

For the exorcisms, about 20 participants, mostly women, gathered expectantly in a line, while others stood to the side, singing strenuously. As she worked down the line, Mai Mhlambo shouted for the evil spirits to come out, telling them to stop tormenting their hosts and commanding them to go elsewhere. She physically wrestled with possessed individuals as she invoked God's power and asked Jesus and the Holy Spirit to free supplicants from disease and harassment. Their reactions included falling down in a trance, speaking in tongues, and running off into the bush shouting and with hands aloft.

For many of the women, the targeted spirit was a *chikwambo*, the spirit of a murdered man who returns to claim a woman from the family of the murderer so that she will bear him children. These children are then supposed to carry out the traditional rites of invoking and propitiating him as an ancestral spirit.

In patriarchal Shona society, a woman claimed by a *chikwambo* is shunned for marriage or, if already married, she is

quickly divorced, for the visiting spirit endows the woman with unusual strength, with which she severely beats any actual man claiming marriage with her. Such women live on the outskirts of society, have children by a succession of male friends, but are able to claim little status or inheritance of their own. The PACG takes *chikwambo* spirits seriously by accepting that they exist, but, unlike traditional religion, it does not acquiesce to their claims but, instead, casts them out. As a result, the church is flooded with women, who account for 75 percent of its membership and for much of its phenomenal growth. The church's ministry constitutes a major contribution to the grassroots feminism that took root during Zimbabwe's Liberation War, when women fought side by side with men and could never again be regarded as the ancillary property of men.

### God bless Pentecost

As dawn came, all stood and sang "God bless Africa," the African national anthem, with the important substitution of "Pentecost" for "Africa." After a trinitarian blessing, the now subdued group shared significant dreams that members had dreamed in recent days and retrieved jugs of water that

*The AICs suggest that taking spiritual evil seriously on the biblical model may not be anachronistic but actually liberating.*

Mai Mhlambo had blessed for healing. As the sun rose, people walked back down the mountain to the work that awaited them in their homes and fields.

The Pentecostal Apostolic Church of God is a fairly recent addition to the rich and varied landscape of African-initiated churches on the continent. The African Apostolic Church of Johane Marange began with the founder's 1932 vision of a bright light and a voice that designated him as a John the Baptist figure with a missionary vocation. Today the church numbers about a million mem-

bers in several southern African countries and is noted for elaborate hierarchy, Old Testament polygamy, strict teetotalism, and its members handling fire at night. St. Luca's Apostolic Ejuwel Jekenishen Church, also founded in 1932 in Zimbabwe, stresses God's revelation through dreams, and its music is punctuated by enormous drums. Ndaza Zionists spend much of their worship in holy dancing in brilliant robes that emphasize their dignity as citizens of God's reign in defiance of their low socio-economic status. The Church of Simon Kimbangu in Zaire numbers millions of members who revere the memory of their founder, who healed the sick and raised the dead during a brief ministry cut short when he was imprisoned by the Belgians in the early 1920s. In the Ivory Coast, the Harrist Church today builds on the mass movement catalyzed by William Wadé Harris, a Liberian who traveled with a simple message of reading the Bible, rejecting fetishes, and turning to Jesus. Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa — most African countries have a flourishing collection of such churches, each with distinctive features, but sharing some common emphases.

### Expressing God's power

The special openness to the Holy Spirit that many AICs share is nurtured by the emphasis that many African religions place on immediate, mystical experience of spirits, whether ancestral or earth-related. African Christians would affirm the Episcopal catechism's view of the Holy Spirit as "God at work in the world and in the Church even now," but, in line with the biblical witness, they emphasize the *power* of that work — God's power healing people from disease and liberating them from oppressive powers. Details of how that power is expressed in the AICs may seem alien, even bizarre, to western Christians, but the PACG illus-

trates how the gospel is being expressed and applied through the cultures and world views of African peoples.

Far from embodying an uncritical syncretism with traditional religion, however, the AICs often have the insight to *confront* the old matrix at crucial points precisely *because* they take the tradi-



Mai Mhlambo exorcising evil spirits during the all-night vigil.

Titus Presler

tional cosmology and its spirits seriously. Here they depart from some of the early missionaries, who tended to discount the spirit world in favor of a cool spirituality and a scientific approach to the causes of illness and misfortune.

The liberation of women from spiritual and social oppression through the PACG illustrates how the triune God is brought to bear on people's real problems, both personal and systemic. The church's founding and leadership by women, while unusual, signifies that social movements are substantially changing societal structures through gospel witness.

During Zimbabwe's Liberation War, fought against the Rhodesians from 1966 to 1980, some AIC prophets saw God's hand at work in liberating the people from colonialism, and they sometimes offered the guerrillas strategic advice,

their gifts of discernment.

African-initiated churches (a better term than "independent churches") have weaknesses as well as strengths. Some are so oriented toward the Old Testament that grace can be crowded out by law. Literal insistence on scriptural details sometimes limits vision of the liberative

breadth of God's dance with humanity. Emphasis on spiritual healing can cost lives as church members are discouraged from taking ordinary infections to clinics and hospitals.

The polygamy that some churches encourage perpetuates the oppression of women and children economically and, therefore, educationally, socially, and politically. In some communities, the founding prophet becomes so elevated in the view of some believers that he or she rivals the role of Christ in their devotion. Some churches are very exclusivist, considering themselves to be the only legitimate Christians on earth.

It is important to note, however, that such views and practices are not unique to Africa, for we find them in the west as well. It is equally important to realize that AICs are not the only locus of vitality in African Christianity; mission-founded

churches such as the Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists are also developing innovative ministries, often on an ecumenical basis.

### Full-blown ecclesial communities

What are we to make of the AICs — are they off-track or on-track, aberration or inspiration?

In my own intensive experience of a number of churches, I have been profoundly affected by the spirituality, by the communal life, and by many individuals in the AICs. I have come away from many gatherings informed, edified, and, more important, rejoicing in an au-

thentic experience of the presence of God. The AICs are not sects or cults, but full-blown ecclesial communities with the usual mixture of saints and sinners, and they have much to offer global Christianity.

The history of how African Christians early developed distinctive interpretations and communal patterns demonstrates that the mistakes of missionaries were not the last word. Instead, the incarnational dynamic of the gospel itself stimulates a creative appropriation of faith that helps grassroots Christians shape their own spirituality in dialogue with their traditional background. Receiving the Holy

Spirit as God's power poured out in the world, the AICs suggest that taking spiritual evil seriously on the biblical model may not be anachronistic but actually liberating. AICs offer a model of how each church community can be authentic in its cultural setting at the same time that it witnesses to the universal gospel. The evangelistic and social outreach of many AICs enacts the enduring theme of mission at the heart of the gospel. Finally, the vitality and unique character of many AICs witness to the movement of God in the world and to how the Word is yet becoming flesh in all the diversity of the human family. **TW**

## Artists as revolutionaries

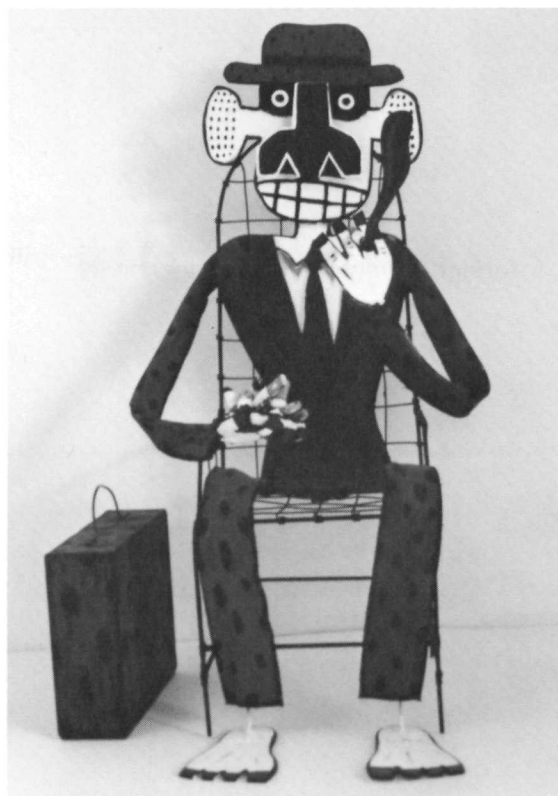
During apartheid, the South African government took two revolutionary groups most seriously: the armed forces and the cultural workers.

Bill and I visited the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg. Linda Givon gave us a tour and told us about the gallery's efforts during apartheid.

"In the 1980s, we wanted to be anti-apartheid. We decided to exhibit both black and white artists," Givon said.

"We experienced harassment. During shows we would have someone watch for the police. It was illegal for black and white people to gather together. If the police came, the black guests would put a towels over their arms and appear to be waiters."

The art filling the gallery space now includes a huge Trojan horse replete with Bible and machine gun, Masaego Johannes Segogela's carvings of angels battling devils and the sculptures of Norman Catherine, who presents white members of parlia-



courtesy of Linda Givon

*The Minister of Foreign Affairs* by Norman Catherine

ment with their suitcases beside them, ready to flee at a moment's notice.

Givon explained that under apartheid art could be challenged for reasons of blasphemy, pornography or treason. The ideas presented through art were considered real threats to the regime.

The Goodman Gallery was raided once, during a gay exhibit, but the last piece had been sold just before the police arrived.

Givon added that the future of the gallery is uncertain.

With the end of apartheid, she said, "the purpose of culture must change."

The new government's focus, she suggested, should be on strengthening community cultural centers. She didn't add, although she could have, that the future of white people who have run cultural enterprises like art galleries, dance theaters, etc. is also uncertain. Several white people in those fields with whom we spoke are anticipating shifts from working as directors, to becoming dance teachers and art instructors. —J.W-K.

## Post-Oklahoma harassment

Joe Roos, a founder of Sojourners community and publisher of its magazine, was denied entrance to Canada when he arrived in Ottawa on April 22 for an Associated Church Press/Canadian Church Press Convention.

At the airport, he was the only one on his plane taken aside and asked whether he had ever been convicted of criminal activity. When he answered that he had six convictions resulting from acts of prayerful, nonviolent civil disobedience in the U.S., he was told that he would not be allowed to enter the country.

Denied any appeals process, he was escorted through the airport by an immigration official and an armed Canadian Mounted Police officer, and put on a plane back to Washington, D.C.

"Since extreme right-wing people also protest government actions, even though it's for different reasons and involves totally different modes of protest, they're focussing on us," Roos said in a telephone interview. "But it was a good opportunity to testify about faith- and conscience-based actions to another government bureaucracy in the same way that we do in the U.S."

When Roos presented himself at the Canadian Embassy in D.C., he was asked, among other things, if he had ever bombed anything in the U.S. and if he planned to bomb anything in Canada.

Roos was told he would not be allowed access to Canada until he had been fingerprinted by the Washington D.C. police and then checked by the F.B.I. at his own expense. They also required certification from the police in every city he has lived in since the age of 18.

Lastly, he needed three letters of recommendation that would certify that "I was rehabilitated from my crimes."

It was only after members of the Canadian Church Press and two Members of Parliament sent letters of protest to parliament that he was told he could obtain, for \$130, a four-day pass into the country. (The Canadian Church Press paid this fee, and purchased Roos' second \$550 plane ticket.)

Roos was told that he could not enter Canada again until January, 1996, when five years will have passed since his most recent conviction, stemming from a Gulf War protest.

Roos arrived at the convention on April 24, and the next morning was elected president of the ACP.

## Building a new South Africa

It has been one year since the historic elections created a government on national unity in South Africa and elected Nelson Mandela as president. On May 24, 1994, President Mandela invited his country and its supporters to eradicate apartheid's economic and social legacy, stating: "My government's commitment to create a people-centered society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from fear. These are fundamental to the guarantee of human dignity. They will therefore constitute part of the centerpiece of what this government will seek to achieve."

In building a new society the government has opened the door to foreign investment and dozens of companies that divested in the 1980s are returning to South Africa.

Anticipating the end of sanctions in 1992, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) began a year-long process of consultation with a wide diversity of labor, political and business groups which culminated in the July 1993 announcement of the "Code of Conduct for Business Operating in South Africa." In the introduction to the Code, the SACC states its purpose: "In order to reverse apartheid's crippling legacy and to improve the economic well-being of all South Africans, investment by both South African and multinational companies needs to be reshaped in the image of an equitable, democratic and life-enhancing society. ... The code outlines ways in which business and other members of civil society, to lay the economic foundations for a stable and prosperous South Africa."

The ten-point code contains provisions on equal opportunity and affirmative programs, training and education, labor union rights, community relations, consumer protection, environmental practices and support for local black-owned business.

The code provides an avenue for the religious community in the U.S. to support the creation of a new society in South Africa. The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), which had its origins in 1971 when the Episcopal Church made business history by filing the first religious investor shareholder resolution calling on General Motors to withdraw from South Africa, is now calling on U.S. companies doing business in South Africa to endorse the code's principles and pledge to live by them. So far ten companies have publicly done so — Borden, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Coca Cola, Colgate-Palmolive, Crown Cork and Seal, Ingersoll-Rand, International Paper, Kimberly-Clark, Pfizer and Schering-Plough.

This spring ICCR members have filed shareholder resolutions with Baker Hughes, Dow Chemical, Dresser, Microsoft, Procter and Gamble, and Upjohn calling on them to commit to uphold the code. Numerous companies were also contacted by church investors to urge their support. ICCR, a coalition of 275 Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish institutional investors, will continue in 1995-96 to encourage companies to endorse the code as one concrete way to support the building of a new society in South Africa.

*For information on the Code of Business Conduct, contact David M. Schilling, ICCR, 475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 566, New York, N.Y. 10115; 212-870-2928; fax 212-870-2023.*

*short takes*

# Women soldier artists

by Betty LaDuke

*Eritrea, a nation of three million in north-eastern Africa, had been colonized by Italy in 1891. After Italy was defeated in World War II, the United Nations passed a U.S.-sponsored resolution federating Eritrea with Ethiopia. The U.S. received communications and military bases along the Red Sea, and Ethiopia received U.S. military and development aid.*

*The conditions of federation were soon violated by Ethiopia, and a clandestine Eritrean Liberation Movement formed. The armed struggle began shortly before the Ethiopian government officially annexed Eritrea in 1962.*

*When Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in 1974, the Ethiopian Military Junta forced the U.S. out and turned to the Soviet Union to train the Ethiopian army to crush the Eritrean revolution.*

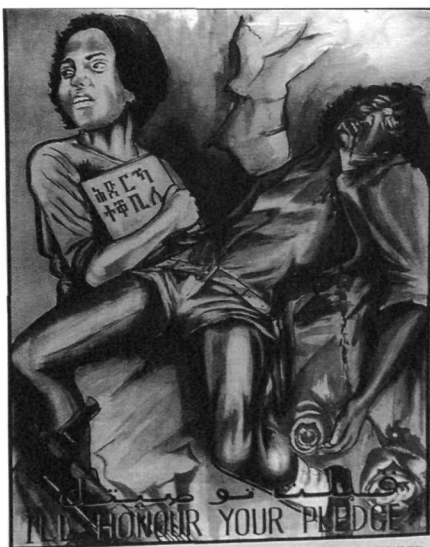
*The Eritreans, fighting only with captured Soviet tanks and weapons, successfully opposed intensive land and air offensives, achieving liberation on May 21, 1991, after 30 years of war.*

Terhas Iyassu and Elsa Jacobs are two of the thousands of women who fought with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) to free their nation from Ethiopian subjugation. Their military training included instruction in the use of a variety of weapons — not least of which were paintbrushes and oil colors.

During the war, a Department of Culture was formed within the EPLF to plan

activities in music, dance, drama, writing and the fine arts. Iyassu and Jacobs — along with the others who form the nucleus of the contemporary art movement in Eritrea — were trained as artist-fighters.

I visited Eritrea in 1994 to meet with



**Fighter by Terhas Iyassu**

them. Their images taught me much about Eritrea's land, people, and cultural diversity, as well as the impact of war upon the role of women. While some of their paintings document women's traditional baking of *injera* (the Eritrean staple, which is like a very large sourdough pancake), spinning cotton, making baskets, or caring for children, new, non-passive role models of women as combatants and martyrs were beginning to emerge.

I learned much about the human side of this liberation struggle, the forming of interpersonal relationships and the birth of children in the war zone.

The idea for an Art Section evolved spontaneously among the fighters, and then was promoted when the EPLF real-

ized that art can be "a weapon to help in the struggle for liberation."

## Terhas Iyassu

Terhas Iyassu tells of the visit of two artists to her unit in 1978.

"Haile Wolde-Micheal and Berhane Adonais distributed papers and pencils to all who were interested in art. They asked us to draw something, anything, and then selected the 13 best drawings."

Her drawing was among them.

After completing military training, Iyassu and the others were sent to the Fine Arts Center at the Arag base.

Iyassu describes their studio as "an underground cave." Art supplies were scarce and they learned to improvise, making colors from local plants and outdated medicine. For an oil painting surface, a flour sack was cut open and prepared with a base of sugar and flour.

Their art work was used to promote awareness of the EPLF in the countryside.

"Most of our paintings made very clear our suffering, our hope, our longing for liberation," Iyassu says. "Most of our work was done in the simplest way, so nomads or farming people could grasp the messages of the paintings."

Often their work was interrupted when they were sent to the front to fight.

Thirty to 40 percent of the combatants were women. During the early years of the war, men and women lived and fought together, but sexual relations were forbidden. As the war was prolonged, the policy changed. There were mass marriages, but husbands and wives were not allowed to be together in the same regiment. Each brigade had its own maternity camp, and children were taken care of by their mothers. Child care was rotated, as women's work was necessary for building houses, paving roads and repairing them, especially after the rains.

Iyassu married and became pregnant.

"At the time I was not happy about

**Betty LaDuke**, an artist who teaches at Southern Oregon State College, is celebrating the publication of her latest book, *AFRICA: Women's Art, Women's Lives* (Africa World Press, 1995). Copies of the book can be ordered by calling 609-844-9583.

raising a child, as we were living in caves experiencing bombardments, but the comrades who lived with me helped me." Iyassu gave birth to her first daughter, Martha, in 1981, and to the second, Janet, in 1986.

During most of the war, Iyassu taught art to orphaned children and prepared teaching aids and curriculum materials, while taking care of her own children. She developed the skills necessary for her current job at the Ministry of Education in Asmara, where she illustrates elementary and secondary textbooks.

Oil paintings, water colors and drawings fill the walls of her home studio. Next to her oil painting, *Soldier Cooking*, is a smaller watercolor, *Fighter*, which had been made into a poster and popularly displayed on store fronts throughout Asmara, the capital city. The symbolic image is expressionistic in style but carefully composed to convey the political message, *I'll Honor Your Pledge*, written in Tigrinya and English on the bottom.

Issayu drove with me from Asmara to Massawa, the port city whose capture by the EPLF marked their victory.

The narrow, rock-strewn road to Massawa is extraordinary. There are endless, sprawling turns and twists, dropping from the cool Asmara plateau of 4,000 feet to the level of the Red Sea. Ribbons of rock circle the mountains, forming terraces for planting grains, fruits and vegetables. Clusters of rock and mud-plastered huts with thatch roofs are nestled precariously on hillsides between some of the larger towns. There were also skeletal remnants of burnt tanks, trucks and long-nozzled artillery guns, indicating many battles and the occupation and isolation of the port of Massawa from the rest of Eritrea for most of the war.

### Elsa Jacob

Elsa Jacob, a close friend of Iyassu's who also trained as an artist-fighter, had just

completed the 10th grade when she made the decision to join the EPLF.

"I was very angry, as I was very, very interested in my academic studies," Jacob says. But she witnessed "much suffering ... women and children cruelly killed by Ethiopian soldiers, villages set on fire ... and I felt, 'Why do I try to learn under these conditions? I need to try to find a better solution.'"



*My son* by Elsa Jacob

When Jacob joined the EPLF, "they tried to convince me to continue my work with the Eritrean Youth Association, but I decided to be a full-time fighter," she says.

This was a difficult decision, as she was the oldest of four daughters, and her father had died the year before, in 1976. Ironically, he had fought in the war as an Ethiopian soldier, "always against my will," he told his family, but this was his means of supporting them, and not an unusual occurrence. Jacob says that "he did not die a happy man."

Jacob experienced her first battle in 1979. She was just 17, and was told not to go, but she insisted.

"The Ethiopian soldiers pushed us against the hills, and then we had to retreat into the mountains for 10 kilometers," she says. "We were surrounded by too many Ethiopian soldiers and tanks, and we had to fight our way out of that. The battle took three days. I was the only woman in our group.

"Death is the hardest thing to bear, when your colleagues and friends suddenly disappear," Jacob says. "You feel you can't smile ever again."

*The Woman Hero*, a dynamic water color painted by Jacob in 1984, shows a woman fighter, whose face is covered with thick drops of sweat, standing over the body of a slain Ethiopian soldier. Today, a poster created from this powerful image hangs in Jacob's home. I also saw a recent portrait of her father, painted from a photograph, and one of her son, Tesfaledet Mengstab. The father's features are lean and stern and his eyes stare straight ahead. In contrast, her son's round baby face and dark, bright eyes look upward. A sky-blue background and many flowers surround him.

"Our children are like flower seeds," she told me, "and we have to find a way for a bright future, a better way of living, education, and opportunities for development."

Jacob is now married to a former fighter, who works as an administrator in the local government, and they have a two-year-old son.

Jacob has been assigned by the government to teach at the Asmara Art School, which will soon open. The school will develop a core of elementary and secondary art teachers, and an art program—the first ever in their educational system.

Even though the Eritrean government is struggling economically and facing severe housing shortages, education and art education are priorities. Jacob's child will not have to go to war to become a painter.

# Revealing the hidden

by Nkenge Z°!@

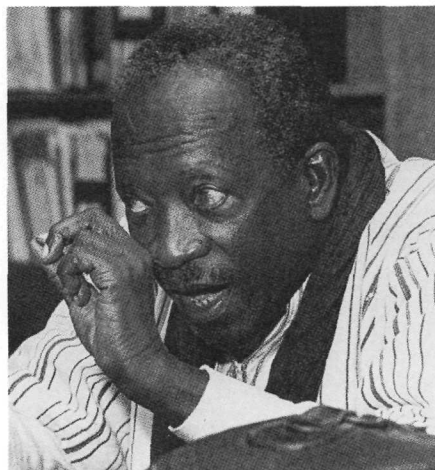
*Black film can have as profound an impact in the next century as black music has had in this century*

— Arthur Jafa, filmmaker

**B**orn in the southern region of Senegal amongst fishing people, Ousmane Sembène's sophisticated creative vision is fed by indigenous custom and aesthetic and by profound sensitivity to the fallout bequeathed Afrikans by colonialism and its younger cousin *neo*.

Whether novel or film, Sembène's works are multi-level, rich with referent and charged with cultural significances. His first work of fiction, *Le docker noir* (1956), is a fictional reconstruction of race relations between the French and exiles from France's colonies in Africa and the black diaspora. This work is credited with setting the political tone for a new breed of works by French-speaking Afrikan writers (see *Ousmane Sembène: Dialogues with Critics and Writers*, Amherst: U. Mass. Press, 1993).

Sembène's 1968 film *Mandabi* ("The Money Order"), was the first full-length feature by a black Afrikan. Based on his



Ousmane Sembène

short novel of the same name, the camera follows a vainglorious man who can't cash a money order sent from a relative living in France. In Wolof, with English subtitles, the portrait is rife with humour. Yet the audience witnesses the utter diminution of the protagonist's pretensions in the face of the machinations of the Senegalese *petite bourgeoisie*.

The 11 films written and directed by Sembène present a cornucopia of political, religious, social and cultural issues. Eschewing the deceptive rigors of exclusivist thinking, he says modes of thought prescribing "either capitalist or communist, either Christian or Muslim, either black or white, are inhibiting and oppressive." Sembène has also given voice to women, whom he sees as critical figures for resisting neo-colonialism.

In his last film, *Gelwaar: An African Legend for the 21st Century* (1992), the mystery of what happened to a Christian villager's body upon his death becomes the medium by which tensions over burial customs, indigenous wisdom, Islam, Catholicism, family relationships, city vs.

village, urban, rural, foreign ideas, nationhood, youth and elders build to create a heady and inevitable confrontation between the "caretakers" of the state and the villagers who have maintained, despite pernicious times, a knowledge of custom.

Filmmaker Njia Kai says Sembène's accomplishments are all the more laudable because in addition to the usual difficulties, Afrikan and American Afrikan filmmakers are working with a medium not designed to focus on black people. As an example she cites the colors used in processing film, which are keyed by most manufacturers to the skin tones of European women. Indeed, she says, storytelling conventions and the very hardware of filmmaking, from lenses to cameras, emerged from societies dismissive of the world views of peoples of color. By engaging in cinema, Sembène has helped lay open the opportunity for black, brown, yellow and red people to redefine film by reengineering the equipment used to make film.

Ousmane Sembène dreams of a final work, a three-hour epic, a magnificent depiction of Samori Toure, a revered Muslim who led resistance to western colonialism. Doubtless it would reflect Sembène's unique cinematic eye and ear for detail.

Asked during an interview by Sada Niang in Toronto, "As an artist, what is your relationship with history?" Sembène replied, "The artist is here to reveal a certain number of historical facts that others would like to keep hidden. Since the dawn of time ... Wolof society [in Senegal] has always had people whose role it was to give voice, bring back to memory and project toward something."

While his works, when shown, resonate in the small villages of Senegal, they are also heavy with significance for those of us trying to envision and practice new ways of being in the West. **TW**

*art and society*

Nkenge Z°!@ is editor of the *Art & Society* section. Ousmane Sembène's films are distributed in the U.S. by New Yorker Films, 16 West 61st Street, New York, N.Y., 10023, 212-247-6110. They are available for rent or purchase in both 16mm and 32mm formats.

# Embezzling power: the Ellen Cooke affair

by Jan Nunley

After months of speculation and rumor, everyone was braced for the astronomical amount of the theft — in the neighborhood of \$2.2 million — but what prompted howls of outrage, from *The Washington Post* to parishes across the country, was former Episcopal Church treasurer Ellen Cooke's claim that her theft of funds from the denomination were somehow linked to "the pain, abuse and powerlessness I have felt during the years I worked as a lay woman on a senior level at the church headquarters."

"If that's powerlessness, give me more of it!" exclaimed Jim Solheim, director of Episcopal News Service. "On a day-to-day basis, she was the most powerful individual in the Episcopal Church. She controlled the flow of money. She was not only treasurer, she was also the administrator of this building [the Episcopal Church Center at 815 Second Avenue in New York]. Not a single thing happened in this building without her knowledge and consent."

In a statement released two days before Episcopal Church presiding bishop Edmond L. Browning's own detailed message to the denomination about the results of a three-month audit of church financial records (see sidebar), Cooke said she began seeing a psychiatrist who attributed her actions to "many factors external to me and related to the workplace." She stated, "I am one of a small percentage of the population who by reason of personality are simply unable to stop in the face of enormous pressures and stress. [The psychiatrist] believes that my subsequent actions, blocked from



Ellen Cooke

*[The psychiatrist] believes that my subsequent actions, blocked from memory during this time, were a cry for help which I fully expected to be discovered and questioned, and which escalated as I tried to escape from a situation which had become intolerable. — Ellen Cooke*

memory during this time, were a cry for help which I fully expected to be discovered and questioned, and which escalated as I tried to escape from a situation which had become intolerable." Cooke added that an Episcopal priest — a woman — had offered her pastoral

support and "consistently held up to me the truth of my inappropriate and wrong response to the situation in which I found myself," while helping her "acknowledge" her feelings of "powerlessness."

Former Episcopal Church Center (often called "815") staffer Bruce Campbell, who in 1994 opted for voluntary severance prior to a round of staff cuts initiated by Cooke, believes most of the pressure Cooke experienced at the Church Center was of her own creation. "As a staff person at 815 while Ellen was treasurer, I observed her, not seeking ways to relieve herself of the burdens and responsibilities of power, but steadily amassing to herself more and more of them, to a level unprecedented in the existence of the office," Campbell wrote in a discussion of her statement on Quest, the church's international on-line service. "She did this at the expense of the abilities of qualified staff at her employ (who would gladly and competently have shouldered the responsibility) and over the objections, some six years running, of dozens of staff who saw what was happening."

## Controlling information

While Cooke's ongoing dishonesty came as a complete surprise to the wider church — a *New York Times* report indicated that Cooke may have even lied about graduating from Georgetown University with a degree in economics in 1969 — her tight control over information was widely acknowledged. Marge Christie of the Diocese of Newark, now serving on the church's Joint Standing Committee for Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F), which watchdogs the church's national budget between the triennial meetings of its General Convention, recalled difficulties getting the most basic budget information from Cooke's office when Christie chaired the Executive Council's

**Jan Nunley** is a transitional deacon in the Diocese of Rhode Island and a frequent contributor to *The Witness*.

*Vital Signs*

Committee on the Status of Women. "It was impossible to get the kind of information that I needed in order to know where we were with our finances during the triennium. Were we over budget? Under budget? We could never find out where we were. And I know that was true of other interim bodies."

Michigan attorney Tim Wittlinger, a member of the national church's Executive

Council serving on its Administration and Finance Committee, complained repeatedly to Cooke about the lack of "timely and detailed information" about the budget. "She generally said, 'Well, I'll give you whatever you want, but my experience is that most of the council members won't read it,'" Wittlinger recalled. "There were several times when I literally had to go to the floor of the

council and state that we're entitled to the information." Sometimes, Wittlinger said, the needed information would eventually arrive—but only moments before a crucial vote.

Others say Cooke did provide information, but only to certain people. "It depended on who you were," said Vincent Currie, Jr., chair of PB&F and administrator for the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.

## Where the money came from — and where it went

A three-month audit conducted by Coopers and Lybrand showed some \$2.2 million dollars was taken from the Episcopal Church's national church budget by its former treasurer, Ellen Cooke, from February, 1990 to her departure this January. No other national church staff members were implicated in the thefts. A federal government investigation of the embezzlement is now underway.

A summary of the auditors' report released by the Episcopal Church's presiding bishop, Edmond L. Browning, on May 1 revealed that Cooke channeled approximately \$1.5 million in unrestricted trust fund income and other unrestricted cash receipts to personal accounts in a Washington, D.C. bank and a New York brokerage firm. Some \$225,000 went to third parties, including tuition payments for Cooke's two sons. Ninety thousand dollars went to the Vestry and Rector's Discretionary Fund at St. Luke's Church, Montclair, New Jersey — where Cooke's husband, Nicholas Cooke, served as rector until January of this year. He then became rector of St. John's Church in McLean, Virginia. In July, 1991, the Cookes purchased a farm in Virginia for \$500,000; in March 1994 they purchased a home located near Nicholas Cooke's church in Montclair for \$465,500.

It is still unclear how much Nicholas Cooke knew about his wife's

misappropriations. On May 7 he told the congregation at St. John's that he would resign at the end of the month. Accounts are now being audited at St. Luke's.

According to the auditors, Cooke's misuse of the national church's corporate credit accounts came to \$325,000. In addition, Cooke apparently wrote "unauthorized" checks totaling some \$28,000. Church officials said purchases included clothing, jewelry (in one case a \$16,000 Tiffany necklace), non-business travel and gifts for her staff at the Episcopal Church Center — such items as cut-glass bowls and glass apples.

What initially tipped national church officials off about Cooke's ongoing thefts was an improper request she submitted for \$86,000 in back vacation pay at the time of her resignation in January, a resignation for which the presiding bishop had called because "her working style did not serve our common mission." Ironically, Cooke herself instituted the present "use it or lose it" policy, under which unused vacation leave is not included as pay in severance packages.

Most people aware of the Cooke's monied lifestyle assumed inherited wealth, more than high salaries, had a part to play. As treasurer, Cooke was paid an annual salary of \$125,000 — the highest in the Church, next to the Presiding Bishop. Press reports say that as rector of St. Luke's in Montclair her husband's compensation package was approximately \$70,000.

The auditors' report indicated that Cooke did not appear to have diverted funds from accounts earmarked for specific purposes, such as the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, the United Thank Offering and the Martin Luther King Legacy Fund. George Hunt, retired bishop of Rhode Island and a 12-year member of the national church's Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance, up until this year chaired the committee's work on that portion of the church's budget which supports "program" — church-sponsored efforts to address, among other things, youth ministries, women, congregational development, intercultural ministries and social justice issues. "I don't think any money was taken from the program portion of the budget — which constitutes about 75 percent of national church budget revenues," Hunt said. "However, I may be like the person who fell from a 10-story building and was heard to say, as he passed the fifth floor, 'So far, so good.'"

In a statement issued April 29, Cooke indicated "significant differences" with the auditors' report. Efforts to reach Cooke and her attorney for further comment were unsuccessful. Cooke is represented by Washington, D.C. attorney Plato Cacheris, a white-collar crime specialist who unsuccessfully defended ex-United Way chairman William Aramony on embezzlement charges.

— Jan Nunley and *Witness* staff

"In the job I had I could call up the treasurer and say 'What's the deal?' and she would respond." George Hunt, long a member of PB&F and now interim bishop of Hawaii, said that, with him at least, Cooke was more forthcoming with detailed information than her predecessor, Matt Costigan, had been. But, he acknowledged, "She may have used her knowledge of where the money was against others who didn't have that knowledge to keep control of the whole staff — and that's a pretty powerful control mechanism."

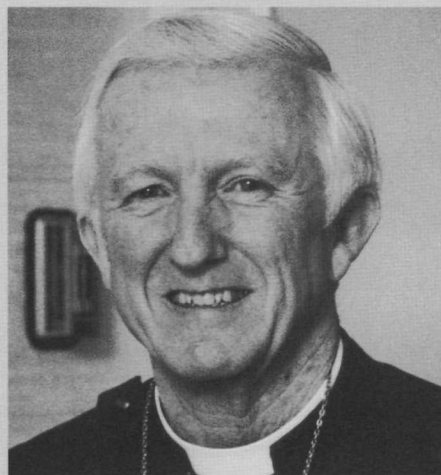
### Selective sabotage

Cooke apparently directed that power against, among other things, social ministry programs with which she disagreed. In 1990, Wittlinger asserted, Cooke tried to block the \$3.5 million Economic Justice Loan Fund mandated by a 1988 General Convention resolution. Wittlinger served on the committee charged with implementing the fund. "She introduced a proposal to put a moratorium on all future activity of the fund and didn't tell anybody on the Program Committee [of Executive Council]," said Wittlinger. "It literally hit everyone by surprise." He and others tried to work out a compromise with Cooke, but "she wouldn't budge." The proposal was defeated in a floor fight the next day.

"She had some philosophical differences with some of the movements in the church," acknowledged Vince Currie. "It's sad in a way that she chose to pick and choose the things that she would really scrutinize, and there was nobody scrutinizing her. I think she probably thought that some of the social ministries' money was being spent on special interest groups. And then for her to just blatantly steal enough money to fund one of those programs ..."

But what is consistently described as "cold-blooded" was Cooke's cutting of fully one-third of Church Center staff positions, while spending church money on personal luxuries — daily limousine service to the Church Center, Tiffany jewelry, a formal English garden and tennis courts for her 250-year-old New Jersey

home. "There was a wince of deep pain when we saw what she'd done and how she'd done it during a period when we were losing colleagues and programs right and left," said Jim Solheim. Bruce Campbell wrote: "During staff cutbacks in two separate rounds, some staff were retired before they had intended, including two of the most devoted, productive, and field-popular staff I worked with. ... They and the church lost years of effective and servantlike national ministry because [the



Edmond L. Browning

James Solheim

*There's [Presiding Bishop] Browning, going out and doing his very best to provide some leadership, and she's coming along behind and undercutting everything.*

— Jim Solheim

money] could not be available to salary them. The money may come back, but the loss in productivity, morale, and the usefulness of the national church to parishes and dioceses has been squandered, gone and unrecoverable."

### Gender bias?

In the face of such a legacy, for Cooke to attribute her actions to gender bias in the church was high insult to many. *The*

*Washington Post* devoted a scathing editorial to the Cooke case, calling Cooke "more autocrat than pushover" and accusing her of "downright moral squalor." The Episcopal Women's Caucus released a statement which stated, "Citing discrimination for unethical behavior, Cooke denigrates the commitment and capabilities of all laity and all women. ... For her to discover only now that she has endured abuse because of her sex is tragic, for she is an intelligent woman whose competency and integrity were never questioned — only her style of relating and functioning with others."

Around the church the response from laywomen was the same. Diane Walker, communications officer for the Diocese of Olympia (in Washington), remarked, "I don't know which is more appalling, the extreme selfishness of [Cooke's] response, or the incredible damage it does to the lay women of the church while at the same time appearing to raise consciousness about the way they are sometimes treated." Barbara Caum of Trinity Church in Athens, Penn., expressed concern about "how her reasoning reflects on women in the church, especially laywomen. ... 'The good old boys' network got me down, so I took the money to feel better.' What's the next?"

### Voices unheeded

But — whatever her motivations — how was Cooke able to conceal for five years the theft of millions of dollars? Former PB&F committee member George Hunt recalled "dis-ease" with the concentration of financial power in Cooke's hands as far back as 1990. "The treasurer should not be a voting member of the group that crafts all the workings of the church budget," Hunt said, explaining that Cooke was the elected treasurer of the General Convention, a salaried employee of the church — namely its chief administrative and financial officer — *and* a voting member of PB&F. "But that's the way the canons were written, and she was just doing what she was supposed to be doing. And then some."

Former Episcopal Church treasurer Matt Costigan observed, "All the staff that

were highly trained, two CPAs plus the staff that was trained to do investigative work, they're all gone. And as long as you don't have experienced people on board who would challenge something irregular, no one's going to question it."

Many say Cooke manipulated the presiding bishop, playing on his desire to bring women into key roles in the church. "When he appointed [Cooke]," said Marge Christie, "he was enormously proud of bringing a woman into such a major leadership role. So he found it very hard to accept the fact that the woman he brought in wasn't a team player. But he never dreamed that not only was she not a team player, but she was ripping him off."

The apparent refusal of senior church officials, including the presiding bishop, to give credence to repeated staff complaints about Cooke's abrasive management style was a continuing source of frustration to church center workers. "Staff who complained that Ellen's management style was ineffectual were told in meeting after meeting to stick to their knitting, and were then held accountable to solve problems they had no power to solve," wrote Bruce Campbell to Quest. "Without exception, every executive at the church center took occasion to stifle staff complaints. Some staff who threatened to tell [Executive] Council members were threatened with their very jobs."

"Meanwhile, staff sat through sermons and exhortations about how the church stands firmly for justice on the side of those unempowered and disenfranchised," Campbell continued. "Bishops and a steady parade of consultants berated staff to do 'more with less.' ... I saw support staff get up and walk out of these meetings, some in tears, utterly embittered, rendered cynical by the deafness of those in control. ... Toward the end, staff were sent out into the field in a 'listening process' and subjected to sometimes blistering attacks on the competence and responsiveness of specific program offices and staff members — who were often our colleagues who we knew to be suffering

under incompetent management. We would come back from these encounters and speak of them to each other in the hallways through clenched teeth, helpless to do anything about the malaise and cut off from any internal system of correction."

Cooke's high-handed style wasn't confined to the church center. It is Jim Solheim's opinion that, "if anyone really

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*Staff who complained that Ellen's management style was ineffectual were told in meeting after meeting to stick to their knitting, and were then held accountable to solve problems they had no power to solve. Without exception, every executive at the church center took occasion to stifle staff complaints.*

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— Bruce Campbell

took the time, they could trace directly back to Ellen the suspicion and frustration that the dioceses of the church have with 815." "There's [Presiding Bishop] Browning, going out and doing his very best to provide some leadership, and she's coming along behind and undercutting everything." Ultimately, Solheim believes, some of the blame can also be laid at the door of "the Anglican style: civility at all costs."

"I think her survival instincts were very finely honed. She understood the kind of organizational setting that we have here," Solheim added. "She knew that people, if given a chance, would choose not to fight. She really played on the weaknesses of the church as organization."

#### Legal steps?

It's not clear yet how national church leaders are going to proceed. At most \$1

million of the \$2.2 million stolen is covered by insurance. Cooke's two homes, now owned by the Church, are up for sale. Lawyers for both sides continue to negotiate restitution terms.

Many are calling for the national church to file criminal charges against Cooke, but Browning has not committed to a course of action. She may face federal and state charges — a federal government investigation has now been launched — for such things as mail fraud (bank deposits were mailed from New York to Washington) and tax evasion.

Meanwhile, Cooke's successor, former assistant treasurer Donald Burchell, is working along with other church officials to reconstruct a shattered department. New checks and balances are being put into place that, officials admit, wouldn't stop a determined and clever embezzler. "There's no question that if somebody really wants to steal money, they'll find some way to do it," said Tim Wittlinger. But Wittlinger believes spreading financial responsibility over several individuals could slow down a would-be thief — and increase the chances a slow budgetary hemorrhage, such as Cooke created, could be averted.

#### Condemnation; loss of momentum

The presiding bishop is being praised for moving swiftly, once Cooke's theft was apparent, to investigate and to release a full accounting of the findings. But he's also been the target of criticism, mainly from conservatives already at odds with his policies, who say Browning should resign before his term ends in 1997. In *United Voice*, the newsletter of the conservative group Episcopalians United, Detroit priest Richard Kim drew comparisons with Watergate. "Perhaps it is time for the presiding bishop, during whose watch all of this is happening, to step down," said Kim, who served under Bishop Browning in Hawaii. "Traditionalists, who are often at loggerheads with the hierarchy, stand to benefit ... by the embarrassment of the church's liberal power structure," William Murchison, of the traditionalist Episcopal Synod of America, quoted an "observer"

as saying in the organization's newsletter *Foundations*.

"I just grieve for [Browning]," said Furman Stough retired (and now assistant) bishop of Alabama, a former senior executive at the church center and a longtime friend of the presiding bishop's. "Thank God he's got only two more years, for his own sake and for [his wife] Patti and the children too. Fortunately, he really is trying to take care of himself healthwise. But I don't know what he's going to do about this stress."

Many are worried that an "unholy trinity" of recent Church troubles — the suicide of Massachusetts bishop David Johnson in January, presentments brought against retired Iowa bishop Walter Righter for ordaining an openly gay man to the priesthood, and the Cooke situation — have crippled Browning's administration. "There are very clear signs that the presiding bishop is listening more carefully than he has at any other time in his tenure. But there isn't much time for the team to regain momentum," observed Jim Solheim. But Marge Christie sees the next two years as sufficient time to regroup. "A lot can happen," she said.

"The three events have been successive 'kicks in the shin' for the presiding bishop," said Hunt. "Yet it is the church which has suffered the deeper wounds, for all these events will adversely affect the church's thinking as we go about electing the next presiding bishop."

Some observers think the church will opt for a stronger administrator as the next presiding bishop, one less likely to be "pastoral" or lead the way on social issues, as Browning has attempted. But institutional and pastoral roles needn't be in conflict, said Hunt.

"My basic premise is: Good pastors (at every level, from the parish to the presiding bishop) are also good administrators — or at very least, have the sense to have good ones running the affairs of the church," he said.

"Administration is *not* just making sure the records are well kept, but knowing that keeping good records can help you serve the people committed to your care."

[Ed. note: We publish this poem in recognition of the rage that many in the church — perhaps especially national church staff members and their friends and families — felt upon learning of Ellen Cooke's embezzlement. We consider this poem one of the more creative release valves now in circulation.]

## A tract for Ellen

— from *The Fundamental Things (Still) Apply Society*, May 9, 1995 A.D.

by Deborah Griffin Bly

A former exec name of Cooke  
was the friend of a guy with a crook.  
Once known as "Ellen,"  
now accused as a "felon,"  
she prob'ly regrets what she took.

Some put the loss at 2 million.  
Some say it's more like a zillion.  
Gross betrayal of trust,  
our school ties are mussed,  
and our faces have gone quite vermillion.

Now please understand — no one loved her.  
In fact, ere the theft, Ed had shoved her.  
Her management style  
was off by a mile,  
she cared only for those up above her.

815 had some folks full of mission,  
but the budget said some must go fishin'.  
Those who were left,  
tho' tired and bereft,  
awaited new loss through attrition.

Now, the guy with the crook is a good guy —  
The problem began cuz he's real shy.  
A good-hearted man,  
he does all he can,  
but the circle is small he's informed by.

How'd it happen? Did nobody notice?  
Or was everyone reading Duns Scotus?  
Off in mid-air,  
lost in musings and prayer?  
Or whisk'ring the truth, but "Don't quote us"?

Imagine the Cookes, off in Jersey —  
home of the *belle dame sans merci* —  
contractors galore  
in, out the door,  
with cash from her money-stuffed purse.

"Can I ask you a question, oh honey,  
where are we getting this money?  
I should wonder, at least  
cuz I'm still a priest  
and the parish might think it looks funny."

"Oh my dear mate, if there need be,  
I just get more cash from the P-B.  
Don't you like the new kitchen?  
Isn't it bitchin'?  
I can't help how the Church proves it  
needs me!"

So to all who would lead: There's a tension  
between what you do and don't mention.  
Be just, and empathic  
watch for signs psychopathic;  
above all, avoid condescension.

*Freelance writer Deborah Griffin Bly is a member of the musical group, The Miserable Offenders, based in New York, N.Y.*

# Women in waiting?

by Carol Cole Flanagan

In 1976 the General Convention adopted a canon, (now Canon III.8.1.) stating unequivocally that the provisions of the ordination canons "shall be equally applicable to men and women." Since that time, all but four of the one hundred continental dioceses have moved to implement the canon, while the remaining four have become ghettos of discrimination and interpersonal violence against women.

In 1994, the Episcopal Women's Caucus (EWC) communicated to the presiding bishop its intention to begin exploring ecclesiastical and civil remedies. The presiding bishop requested one last attempt at dialogue, and asked for one year. This was a difficult request for the EWC. As our more radical sisters know, ours are the voices of moderation and reform. We have watched our sisters leave the church over the past 20 years. We have understood their impatience and despair, yet we have chosen to remain. We have continued to engage the church in the belief that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. And yet, we also know that "justice delayed is justice denied." We know, too, in some cases first-hand, that we have congregations and clergy in war zones, and we cannot turn our backs on them. We, the larger church, have helped to create those ghettos, and their people are our people. The EWC agreed to one year. The Ministry Committee agreed to one year. The General Convention agreed to one year. One year in which to fully implement the canon adopted more than 20 years ago. After that, all bets are off.

The committee charged with implementing the canon, (known as the Committee for Dialogue on Canon III.8.1.) met in Pittsburgh from April 17-19, 1995, under the leadership of Robert Rowley, bishop of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Although the House of Deputies reflected

a 9:1 ratio in support of the measure to fully implement the canon, the committee ratio is 6:4.

First, to provide "opportunities for full access to the ordination process in this church," the committee is considering a model from the Diocese of Eau Claire in which a female candidate is transferred to an "assisting diocese." The candidate bears all costs and penalties. This is the underground railroad approach, in which women and their families are simply uprooted and deported, if possible. This model would also be applied to candidates who oppose the ordination of women. Only the most pharisaic among us would claim that this constitutes "full access."

Second, to remove barriers to licensing and the acceptance of letters dimissory, the committee is considering a proposal for concurrent jurisdiction. In this proposal, the provincial bishop serving as president or vice president of the province would serve as the "alternative ecclesiastical authority" and perform such functions on behalf of the diocesan bishop. In addition to altering our polity by the establishment of an archepiscopate, this is segregation! This is the creation of a parallel structure. When has "separate but equal" ever been equal? This development would require a change in canon law, and the committee envisions that the processes would be monitored. By whom and with what safeguards and recourse?

This second model also provides that, where a congregation is "unable to avail

itself of the sacramental services of its bishop" because she is female, application may be made to the provincial bishop for the appointment of an alternative bishop (in consultation with the diocesan bishop).

The committee itself appeared to be nearly as uncomfortable with the two current proposals as is the EWC.

It appears that we, as a church, are engaged in these bizarre conversations for at least two reasons. First, some who oppose the ordination of women use conscience as a sword, not a shield. No person is *compelled* to serve as a bishop. No person is *compelled* to serve on a standing committee. If conscience prohibits one from applying the canons equally, one must *in conscience* decline to serve. The fact that we have persons exercising such offices who are unable or unwilling to "conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church" is itself unconscionable.

Secondly, to suggest, as some do, that they really have implemented the canon because the canon is "permissive" is hogwash. With "permissive" canons and "mandatory" resolutions, we may soon be lost in Wonderland. An argument put before the committee acknowledged that the language of the canon is imperative, but claimed that legislative history made it "permissive." The EWC is decidedly unpersuaded. Our legislative history accommodated slavery and segregation, gave us suffragan bishops for "colored work," barred women from service on vestries, and banned the baptized from communion. Legislative history simply does not justify discrimination against women or the violation of canon law. After 124 years of dialogue on the role of women in the church, and 18 years of accommodation, enough is enough. It is time to implement the canon. As written. Now.

(An Open Hearing has been scheduled by the committee for the afternoon of July 6 in Washington, DC. For additional information, please contact Robert Rowley, Bishop of Northwestern Pennsylvania, 145 West 6th Street, Erie, PA 16501; 814-456-4203.)

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*We have watched our sisters  
leave the church over the  
past 20 years. We have  
understood their impatience  
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we also know that "justice  
delayed is justice denied."*

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Carol Cole Flanagan is a longtime Episcopal Women's Caucus activist.

# Continuing her mother's journey

by Judith Ann Diers

**Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy** by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Orbis, 1995.

In *Daughters of Anowa*, Mercy Amba Oduyoye identifies herself as a daughter of "the mystical woman, prophet, and priest whose life of daring, suffering and determination is reflected in the continent of Africa." Readers are swept into the life of a matrilineal Ghanaian culture, recently invaded by the western Methodist tradition. In this one African daughter, we enter the search and struggle to find an empowering definition of "woman" in the midst of seemingly contradictory and oppressive structures.

Oduyoye, widely regarded as the leading African woman theologian, demonstrates how the folktalk and oral tradition of Akan (Ghana) and Yoruba (Nigeria) cultures are in dialogue with western churches, within the community and within individuals. In this book, her attention is turned specifically to the way in which patriarchy emerges and is reinforced within each context.

Divided into three sections, she begins with a critique of culture as expressed in its oral tradition of storytelling, folktales and proverbs. She demonstrates the power

this tradition wields in governing moral judgments of peoples' daily lives. In moving from language to a section on praxis she examines women in the context of culture, religion and marriage, showing the effect of uncritical examination of "folktalk" on women's lives, as they try to live up to the image portrayed in the oral tradition.

Oduyoye is critical of using solutions and methodologies that originate in the hands of the oppressor. This is most clearly reflected in her critique of western feminism.

In her final section, entitled "Dreams," she calls African women to use their creative powers to string their own beads to represent what is possible.

"Our dreams become a new cloth with an African pattern that fits into the global women's *asaasaa*" (a Ghanaian patchwork cloth, similar to American quilts). She makes a strong case for women throughout the world to identify our own pieces, and to bring together the solutions, the remedies and the cures which

have been created and breathed into being by women in every particular situation in which they find themselves.

As Oduyoye knows, many other

communities are working on their own particular patch, while also imaging the overall pattern of the quilt. These were some of the connections I was hoping she would make. In her position as a leading female member of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), I anticipated more than a

passing acknowledgment of the effect that Asian, Latin American and African American women have had on her development and understanding of patriarchy.

Oduyoye is no stranger to this intercontinental theological dialogue. When the 1991 EATWOT meeting in New Delhi included no women presenters, she was one of the leaders of the uprising of women who demanded recognition and hearings as full-fledged theologians. In describing that event, she coined the phrase "irruption with an irruption" (see her essay in *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*, 1983). Since that time, she has continued to be one of the major interpreters of women's issues within that organization.

Oduyoye, more than any other African woman has the unique history, network and experience to draw upon those interactions, for she has devoted her life to this international realm. But her book screamed out for these references. What has been useful about the Latin American critique of class? Of the Asian focus on non-Christian religions and culture? Certainly the critique of patriarchy done by womanists such as Delores Williams have also contributed to her development.

*Daughters of Anowa* provides a wealth of information and ideas. Oduyoye has touched upon hundreds of issues in culture, religions and family that affect the lives of women in Africa and throughout the world. Through this work, she has opened the door through which many African women will walk. She has lifted the veil of silence, broken taboos and blasted open a way for women to be freed to discover what it means to be fully human.

TAV

**Judith Ann Diers**, a Union Theological Seminary graduate, spent three years in Namibia. She wrote on African women theologians and interviewed Oduyoye at the 1992 EATWOT conference in Nairobi.

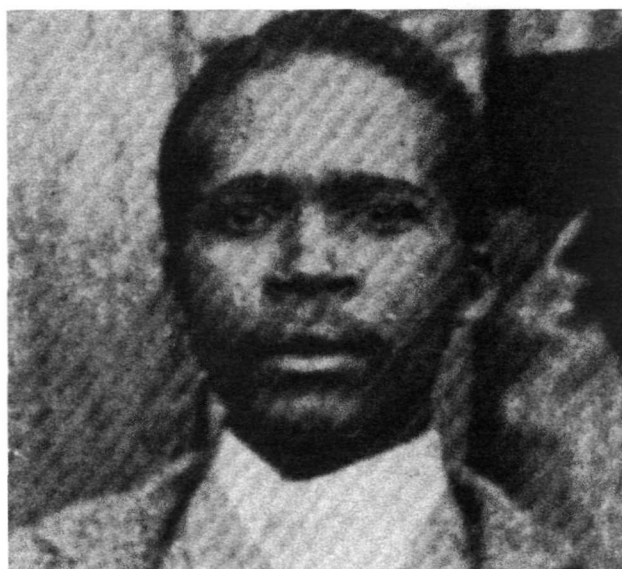
book review

The sound of flapping wings and a flash of light have indelibly etched the witness of 19th-century Anglican catechist Bernard Mizeki into the hearts of Zimbabwe Anglicans. This month as many as 8,000 or more will make the pilgrimage to the site of the hut and church he built near Marondera, on Zimbabwe's central *highveldt*, to participate in a four-day festival in Mizeki's honor — an annual event which has become the occasion for vigiling, testifying, preaching, praying, singing, healing and casting out demons.

"The Bernard Mizeki Festival is a unique event in the Anglican Communion," says Titus Presler, a U.S. priest now living in Massachusetts who served as rector of St. David's Mission and Bonda Church District in Zimbabwe's Manicaland for three years during the mid 1980s. "Nowhere else do so many Anglicans gather so regularly with such intensity. The festival recalls the ancient custom of pilgrimage to the Holy Land — a physical journey to a place where God is thought to have touched the human story in an extraordinary way."

The brush with the extraordinary which Mizeki pilgrims celebrate took place 99 years ago, on a June night, when two men dragged Mizeki out of his hut and attacked him with their spears. Wounded, Mizeki crawled into the protection of the night's darkness. Later that night, Mizeki's wife, Mutwa, and another

*Bernard Mizeki  
respected the  
Shona spirit  
religion he  
encountered  
among  
Mangwende's  
people.*



Bernard Mizeki

Courtesy of the Society of St. John the Evangelist

## A brush with the extraordinary

by Julie A. Wortman

woman heard a sound "like many wings of great birds" and saw a bright light in the direction where Mizeki had gone. When they went looking for the stricken man, he was nowhere to be found.

Probing Mizeki's life for prescient signs of this extraordinary ending, Zimbabwe Anglicans have found an icon of African Christianity, a phenomenon which may owe its beginnings to non-African missionaries, but which has been shaped by native peoples steeped bone-deep in the spiritual heritage of Africa.

*Like his listeners, he had been  
afraid of all these spirits, and  
had honored them and made  
sacrifices to them, but now he  
had given his soul and life to  
the one Holy and Loving Spirit,  
whom we call God.*

Mizeki was born in about 1861 on the coast of Mozambique, migrating in search of employment to Capetown, South Af-

rica, as a teenager. There he encountered missionary Frederick Puller, a member of the England-based Anglican order of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. Puller baptized Mizeki in March 1886 and then trained him as a catechist. Puller also gave Mizeki charge over the St.

Columba's Home for Africans, a boarding hostel on the outskirts of Capetown.

Eventually, Mizeki moved to what is now Zimbabwe, establishing a small mission to the people of Chief Mangwende. Here

he met and married his wife, Mutwa.

A contemporary account of Mizeki preaching portrays him as an ardent Chris-

*Witnesses,  
the quick and the dead*

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*. For information about the 1996 Mizeki pilgrimage, write Titus Presler at 15 Clinton St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139-2303.

tian, but not a zealot. "Without any hesitation, he started to talk about the Father and Maker of all spirits, who could at will send them all out or call them all back to Him," the account reads. "Without His permission, [Mizeki] said, they were powerless to harm us. He said that at one time, like his listeners, he had been afraid of all these spirits, and had honored them and made sacrifices to them, but now he had given his soul and life to the one Holy and Loving Spirit, whom we call God. Because of this he had lost all anxiety, and no one could ever again disturb his peace and happiness."

Mizeki respected the Shona spirit religion of Mangwende's people, valuing its montheistic faith and its observance of a weekly day of rest for the land.

But as Mizeki made converts — the first was John Kapuya — he also made enemies. According to his biographer, Jean Farrant, on account of his Christianity some Africans saw Mizeki as an ally of the unwelcome western colonizers who were entering the area and against whom the local people were staging revolts. In

addition, Chief Mangwende's sons, as well as the local diviner-healer, were jealous of Mizeki's influence with the people. For this latter reason, in particular, Anglican Africans see the fateful attack on Mizeki's life in 1896 as a martyrdom.

Next year will mark the centennial of Mizeki's enigmatic disappearance into the night. This time, among the thousands of pilgrims expected there will be Anglicans from beyond Zimbabwe's borders. U.S. delegations are planned from Presler's church in Cambridge, Mass., the Society of St. John the Evangelist and from the diocese of Massachusetts.

"Such a pilgrimage is incarnational: real people make a real journey; they meet other real people who become real friends in a way that transcends reading and theologizing," Presler says.

"Pilgrims to Mizeki next year will mark, learn and inwardly digest the spirituality of people among whom Christian churches are growing faster and with greater vitality than anywhere else in the world." **TW**

## Bread for the World

While Congress considers sweeping cuts to the U.S. foreign aid program, Bread for the World is launching a nationwide campaign to safeguard development assistance to Africa, where 20 million are at risk of starvation. Thousands of Christians will join the campaign to retain federal funding for targeted self-help development programs in Africa.

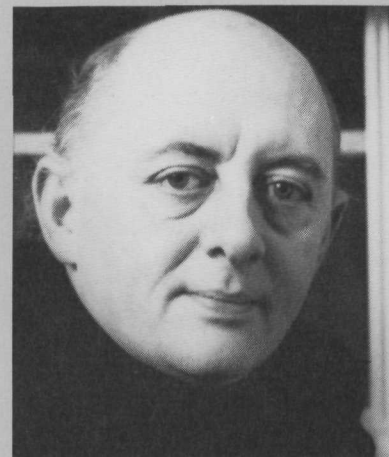
"These are initiatives that are cost effective and will work," David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, says. "U.S. development aid to Africa amounts to less than one-tenth of one percent of all federal spending."

Half the people of Africa live in absolute poverty. Thirty percent of

African children are malnourished. Across the continent, however, Africans are seizing opportunities and taking great initiatives through education, sustainable agriculture and democratization.

In an "offering of letters," more than 3,000 churches will write nearly 200,000 letters to members of Congress and place them in the offering plate. The letters will urge them to continue aid to Africa.

To become involved in the "Africa: Crisis to Opportunity Offering of Letters" campaign, write Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or call 1-800-82-BREAD. Include \$8 for an offering-of-letters kit or \$25 to become a member of Bread for the World.



Kenneth Leech

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— Kenneth Leech,  
Author, priest and  
social activist

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*“It may seem in some cases as if women’s strong voices  
are being heard merely as whispers, but in many other  
cases, those same voices cause the earth to tremble.”*

*— Musimbi Kanyoro*

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