

*After Hiroshima:
can nonviolence prevail?*

Ellen Cooke

WHEN I SAW "A TRACT FOR ELLEN," a poem obviously about the Ellen Cooke scandal detailed in the preceding article (June 1995), I groaned. Please, Lord, not a smarmy forgive-her-she-knew-not-what-she-did bit of doggerel! But then I saw who wrote it, Deborah Bly, and I started to read, figuring it might not be so bad.

After I finished laughing, I immediately called my friends to read it to them over the phone. Thank you, Deborah, for giving me a good belly laugh about a subject that up until now had only generated outrage, embarrassment, disgust. You have successfully put the whole mess into perspective for me, and I hope, for many others. Yes, people can be deceitful, mean spirited, power-mad, selfish and worse. But they can also be downright silly. Praise God!

Nina Pratt
New York, NY

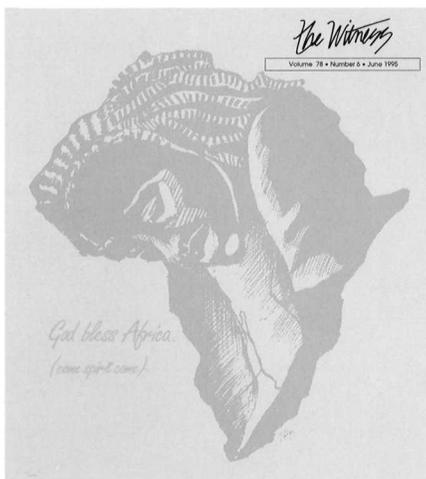
PLEASE BEGIN OUR SUBSCRIPTION with the May issue. I am interested in the continuing series on clergy sexual exploitation.

Marcia Dunigan
Langley, WA

Body wisdom

I HAVE JUST READ *Body Wisdom*. Once again you outdid yourselves. I really like the candor of Jeanie Wylie-Kellemann and Marianne Arbogast admitting a preference to live in the head and the "aha" of discovering body work. I think you are right that there is some compensatory grace stirring.

That is why I liked the piece on Michael Meade. It is the first thing on the men's movement that I have wanted to follow up on. I have written for more information. Julie Wortman confirmed my suspicion that the professionals in the church are not yet willing to look at professionalism as a principality. Bill Wylie -



Kellermann's review of Spong was most charitable. It was also honest.

Andrew McThenia
Lexington, VA

Economies of sin

BISHOP BROWNING'S COMMENTS started out good. "Apathy" is one way of viewing the Church's "problem." However, I am inclined to view "outrage" as something that folk do rather than be "Just." "Outrage" may even feel good; may be cathartic. Justice is not so easy as "outrage."

Kim Byham is one person that I like. He has worked hard for we who are Homosexual. However, I have difficulty with Mr. Byham's article: Whenever any of we Gays agree to the concept of sin, a whole lot of folks assume that we are in some (usually unstated) way agreeing that Homosexuality is a sin. I am quite certain that Mr. Byham does not believe that; and, I noticed that his article tried to counter that concept. But, no matter how hard Mr. Byham and other folk try, the "We're all sinners" approach always ends up giving the impression that some folk are "more sinners" than others. And, "ten times out of ten" the sinfulness in question is allowed to be determined by the prejudices of the culture.

If I might, I would disagree with Mr. Epting: Fragmentation into denominations has been the salvation (if there is ever to be such) for the various denominations. What got the church in trouble in the first place was its combination of power and unity. As long as the church was persecuted things weren't

too bad. But, once the church got into a position of power it became able to become apathetic. More to the point, it became able to slide towards conformity to the extent that the church itself became the oppressor. Indeed, the fragmentation into denominations was the church's method of trying to fight its tendency to be the oppressor.

Certainly, the result of the split into denominations has resulted in a multitude of oppressors. But, at least they have differed by degrees.

I do not believe there are any "sins" other than Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism! I contend that when people of "minority races," women and Homosexuals inadequately defend their own natures (participate in the prejudices against their race, their womanhood, or their sexual orientation) that they also commit those sins against themselves. Rape, Spouse Abuse, and Child Abuse may merely be the expectable results of a culture that is distorted.

One strain of the Old Testament tried — albeit with difficulty — to contradict the prejudices built into its culture. That would be the tradition of the Prophets that ignored the Homosexual implication in the Sodom Story and emphasized "Lack of Neighborliness" instead. It would be the Mosaic concept that found a parallel in Christ; "Love God and Neighbor!"

I struggled with the question of suicide. And, bluntly, the conclusion that I came to was that I did not feel that Homosexuality "deserved death." It was my own struggle with that question that led me to rethink the entire Homosexual question. That decision that "Homosexuality did not deserve death" was but my first step in reconciling myself with my nature.

John Kavanaugh
Detroit, MI

Political prisoners

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXCELLENT issue on political prisoners and especially on Mumia Abu-Jamal. Your company on this road towards justice is welcome. And your assistance at this critical moment means a great deal.

Noelle Hanrahan
Equal Justice

Letters

MY NAME IS SCOTT CHALFIN. I am incarcerated at the Somerset Co. Jail in Somerville New Jersey. I'm in what's called a maximum security pod. In this pod we're not allowed to attend church in the Jail Chapel, receive papers or anything like that. We are allowed mail.

I and another Christian brother started a Bible study back in December '94. We call it "the Praise Bible Study." We do our best discipling to other men about Jesus. Recently and rarely, we came across a copy of your magazine (Political prisoners, 1/95). It was a GOD send. All the pages were there. Even an envelope inside. How appropriate.

We really enjoyed the article about "Religious Freedom" by Iron Thunderhorse. Oh how we can identify with him. We're kind of in the same boat! We love Jesus, but we're persecuted for our faith. We would like to know if you can help us by sending your magazine to us to share. We have no money but would use it with faith of Christ. We'd also like to know if you can send us Iron Thunderhorse's address so we can correspond with him and maybe he can send us a copy of his book. All these things we ask with the faith and hope of Jesus Christ so we can help further his Word. We testify to the glorious works of GOD and his Son and Spirit! In the name of Jesus, may GOD continue to Bless your ministry.

Scott Chalfin #26643
c/o Somerset County Jail
Somerville, NJ 08876

Witness praise

I REALLY APPRECIATE *THE WITNESS*. Everybody else in the world has turned into a member of the right. Yours is a fresh breeze.

Keep up the good work.

Ralph Parvin
Lakeland, FL

THE BRAZILIAN THEOLOGIAN Rubem Alves wrote, "Hope is hearing the melody of the future. Faith is to dance it." *The Witness* has heard that melody, and I always find it to be a faithful dance-partner!

Paul D. Burridge-Butler
Sheffield, England

YOUR APPROACHABLE, human-to-human tone is needed — And appreciated. You make us think. Thank you.

Jan Torgerson
Pettibone, ND

SPEAKING AS A DYED-IN-THE WOOL cradle Anglican, I find that *The Witness* makes for refreshing reading in what sometimes seems nowadays to be a wasteland of theological absurdity. For both me and my wife, your excellent magazine represents the acceptable face of the Episcopal Church.

Thank you!

F. Hugh Magee
Cashmere, WA

Promise Keepers alert

I INTENDED TO BE PART of the demonstration against the no-women-allowed Promise Keepers Conference at the Silver Dome. I arrived a half hour early, but left about 20 minutes later after becoming frightened by the enormity of the message presented just by the numbers of cars parked every possible place and several men just walking with their Bibles with determination on their faces.

I am a cradle Episcopalian, organist/choir director at St. Gabriel's, Eastpointe and a convention junkie. But as Chair of Michigan ERAmerica and an active member of Macomb County NOW I view the turn out last weekend as a backlash of the progress women have made in the U.S.

Any group that is exclusive bothers me. The angry white male is using huge amounts of money to undermine progress made in mainstream religions for women priests and the understanding of committed, monogamous relationships and problems for Lesbians and Gay Men in our homophobic society. Jesus Christ is my role model. He was very inclusive. That hatred and bigotry seem to be escalating shows that respecting those who differ from you needs to be taught. We can agree to disagree and still coexist and be friends. This should be our goal.

Barb Palmer
Utica, MI

[Ed. note: Fritz Eichland attended the Promise Keepers Conference to which Barb Palmer refers. See his report on p. 28.]

Classifieds

Biblical scholars available

The Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars (AABS) is a recently formed organization whose membership includes teachers of Bible at seminaries, colleges, and universities in the United States and Canada. Its main purpose is to involve the biblical studies profession more deeply in the common life of the church.

Preaching is an area of church life in which the AABS has often been urged to play an active role. In order to get some idea of what would be most helpful, suggestions from the grass roots are invited. If those who preach sermons and those who hear them could ask anything of the church's biblical scholars, anything that might make the communication of God's word more effective, what would it be?

Send suggestions to AABS Steering Committee, P.O. Box 2247, Austin, TX 78768-2247.

CLOUT gathering

CLOUT (Christian Lesbians Out Together) will hold its Third National Gathering Aug. 10-13, 1995 at SUNY Brockport (16 mi. west of Rochester, NY). For information call: 415-487-5427 or write: CLOUT, P.O. Box 460808, San Francisco, CA 94146.

AIDS/HIV Conference

Episcopalians, Lutherans and United Methodists are co-sponsoring a conference on AIDS/HIV Sept. 28 - Oct. 1, 1995 in St. Louis, Mo. For information contact Hope and Healing Conference, Suite 508, 2025 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006; 202-628-6628.

Classifieds

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

THE WITNESS

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Vital Signs continues its series on clergy sexual misconduct with an interview with Massachusetts bishop, M. Thomas Shaw and a reader response to our story on "The Power Debate" on page 32.

Cover: *Dragon* by Maruyama Okyo, 1781; Courtesy of the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Folded screens, gold on color. In Asia, the dragon is a sign of good favor, the cyclic nature of life and messages from the ancestors and gods.

Back cover: *Peace Dragon of Hiroshima* by Julia Barkley, acrylic on aluminum, 1976. This painting is in the permanent collection at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. It is also published in *Stars in Your Bones* (North Star Press of St. Cloud, Inc., 1990), a book of art, text and poetry composed by Julia Barkley, Alla Bozarth and Terri Hawthorne.

The alchemy of community: turning rage into hope

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

When Three Mile Island leaked radiation 20 miles upwind from the home where my sister Mary was raising her babies, my anti-nuclearism began. I felt powerless, scared and enraged.

My roommate and her boyfriend took me to a demonstration at Three Mile Island on the fifth anniversary of the crisis. Chanting and singing with thousands of other people helped alleviate the despair I felt.

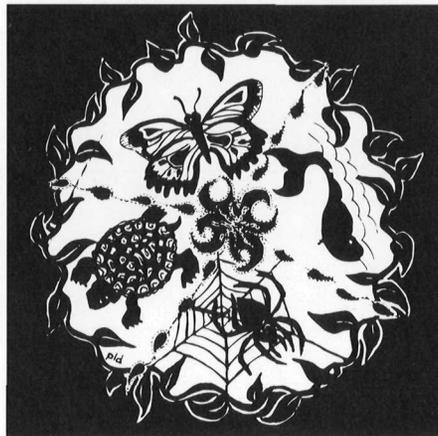
Standing in solidarity with others also helped when I attended a public service commission hearing and a utility spokesperson I had never met harassed me, saying, "You get more radiation sleeping with your boyfriend."

My first trial, for vigiling on August 6 at Bendix Corp., which at that time made the triggers for nuclear bombs, familiarized me with the comparable arrogance and contempt typical of many in the judicial system. When a grandmother explained to the judge why she had spilled ashes at the site, he responded "in my view, you've made an ash of yourself." It was downhill from there.

I feel fortunate that my experiences of leaning into authority, holding my own dignity, speaking or remaining silent were learned in a disciplined (if anarchic) community that regularly drew on its own strength and that of Dan Berrigan, Liz McAlister, Bill Stringfellow, Maurice MacCrackin, Ernest and Marion Bromley.

We spent a decade learning to stand in

solidarity with one another as some engaged in property defacement at military sites and others didn't; as some hired



Ahisma (nonviolence)

Patricia Lay Dorsey

lawyers and others represented themselves in court; as some decided to cross the line and others chose not to.

We learned the power of confessing the wrong reasons we might be attracted to an action (escapism, a need for admiration). When an action seemed right, we learned to follow the wave that our prayerful protest set in motion. We found a center from which to speak. We learned to cling to it in court and in jail.

I feel fortunate that my experiences of leaning into authority were learned in a disciplined (if anarchic) community.

Members of the Detroit Peace Community will vigil again on August 6 and 9.

We will stand outside the Federal Building holding reminders of the atomic bombing as well of symbols of hope.

This year, I find myself reluctant to hold up photographs of Hiroshima's and Nagasaki's survivors. There is altogether too much horror already in the landscape. Detroit has been decimated in so many ways and the federal employees have technicolor images of death and destruction seared into their minds.

For years, the DPC — like so many others — has handed out leaflets suggesting that the U.S. decision to drop the bomb gave the moral victory to the Nazis and began a process that would lead to the climate of rage, despair and violence that is rampant in our country today.

The truth of this claim is now painful. Hope is so far gone that for both rural and urban Michigan residents, the gun is the only ally.

So instead of harping on the sin and the horror (although they must be named), we will raise up the antidote: the promise of hope in community, the promise in simplicity and freedom. We will bring our children and paper cranes. We will pray for the reconstruction of community in Detroit and around the world.

(In a break with tradition, we will write to the feds ahead of time, so that they don't experience alarm at our arrival. Since April, no parking has been allowed near the building and guards are posted around the circumference. Our vigil will include signs that read, "No more bombings, not here, not anywhere." We can commemorate the dead in Hiroshima and the dead in Oklahoma.)

continued on page 36

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Patricia Lay Dorsey is an artist in Grosse Pointe, Mich.

THE WITNESS

JULY/AUGUST 1995

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The normalcy of nonviolence

by Holly Bridges Elliott

Nonviolence leads a curious double life. On the one hand, those who study it, catalog it, teach it and write about it tend to be seen (and sometimes to see themselves) as custodians of some exotic, fragile creature. On the other hand, the masses practice it with regularity. They just don't name it. They also never see it mirrored on the national news. So it's small surprise that so few Americans recognize it.

One of my neighbors is quite articulate about salvation through violence. "I can't understand why they don't let police have assault weapons," she calls out to me over the fence. I know she has been watching the network news.

"I don't see what's wrong with letting store owners livewire their doors and windows," she grumbles another day. "The criminal element is taking over. People are brutes. They don't understand that you mean business unless you get tough. Like Iran or Iraq, we should chop their hands off if they steal. What's the world coming to?"

Her symptoms, alarm and despair, are understandable when we consider the nature of the selective slices of so-called real life that bombard her senses. Her solutions seem fairly reasonable, given that the imaginative nonviolent solutions people use every day, in both private and public life, go unheralded in the media.

As the symptoms become graver, network-news damaged people begin to resemble Calvinists run amok: Humans, they cry, are a depraved lot. They'll al-

ways take their malignant mile if you give them a benign inch.

A similar assessment of human nature was once proposed to Gandhi. But Gandhi objected, saying "history" is the record of the *interruption* in the working of harmony and love.

"Two brothers quarrel," Gandhi said, "one of them repents and reawakens the love that was lying dormant in him. The two again begin to live in peace; nobody takes note of this." But if the two brothers "take up arms or go to the law — their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbors and would probably go down in history."

The force of love and harmony is like an even rhythmic line on a heart monitor. The occasional seismic blips are the sign of abnormality.

Once we turn off the TV and look at the lives around us, we can see that every day families, friends, co-workers and neighbors get in serious arguments and don't kill each other. They find a way to patch it up. Like the sheep farmer who, instead

of suing or attacking his neighbors whose dogs were killing his stock, made a present of a lamb to their children.

Every day motorists infuriate each other and don't shoot it out, or they do something clever to let off steam. A woman I know trots out her arsenal of Yiddish curses — "May your teeth go mad and eat your head!"

Every day police officers intervene in potentially violent situations without us-

ing lethal force. Gary Margolis of South Burlington, Vt., is a police officer imposing in stature as well as wit. Once he approached two angry men who had gotten out of their cars ready to fight. "Hey," cried Margolis. "There's gonna be a fight! Somebody call 911!" Then he looked at himself with surprise. "Wait, I *am* 911!" The men were diverted just long enough to defuse the tension so they could explain the situation.

Every day a mother somewhere checks the impulse to clobber her child and chooses a nonviolent way out. "I feel like I'm talking to an extraterrestrial!" she tells the kid, then retreats to the bathroom for a few minutes to cool off.

In 1989 alone, 13 nations comprising over 32 percent of humanity, experienced nonviolent revolutions that succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations in every case except China.

The term "nonviolence" has been equated with passivity and cowardice. Transforming "nonviolence" into something positive and popular may only happen when "violence" finally gets a bad reputation in this culture.

Once we turn off the TV, we can see that every day families, friends, co-workers and neighbors get in serious arguments and don't kill each other.

Once the disease of network-news damage has run its course, one may be able to see things clearly. Like a person whose fever has broken, we may

rise out of delirium to see that violence is not the rule. It is the exception in human relation — the *interruption*.

In the meantime, focussing attention on the successful uses of nonviolence, telling stories that illustrate its creative but downright ordinary nature, is good medicine that the peacemaking community has to offer to the network-news damaged. And if they don't call it "non-violence" so much the better. **TW**

Holly Bridges Elliott, a writer and editor living in Los Angeles, has researched a book on nonviolent tactics used in personal and public life.

We Shall Bring Forth New Life

by Sadako Kurihara

It was night in the basement of a broken building.
Victims of the atomic bomb
Crowded into the candleless darkness,
Filling the room to overflowing —
The smell of fresh blood, the stench of death,
The stuffiness of human sweat the writhing moans —
When, out of the darkness, came a wondrous voice.
“Oh! The baby’s coming!” it said.
in the basement turned to living hell
A young woman had gone into labor!
The others forgot their own pain in their concern:
What could they do for her, having not even a match
To bring light to the darkness?
Then came another voice: “I am a midwife.
I can help her with the baby.”
It was a woman who had been moaning in pain only
moments before.
And so, a new life was born
In the darkness of that living hell.
And so, the midwife died before the dawn,
Still soaked in the blood of her own wounds.
We shall give forth new life!
We shall bring forth new life!
Even to our death.

— from *Songs from Hiroshima*

Sadako Kurihara was 32 when she experienced the Hiroshima bomb. She wrote this poem, she said, at the end of “the horrific month of August, at a time when corpses lay everywhere in Hiroshima. The people who were not suffering from the direct effects of the bombardment were slowly dying from the effects of the radiation. At a time like this, new life had been born; I was fascinated, and had to write it down.”



Dirge Without Music

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground.

So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind:
Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned
With lilies and with laurel they go; but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers, into the earth with you.
Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust.
A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew,
A formula, a phrase remains, — but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the
love, —

They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and
curled

Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. but I do not
approve.

More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses in the
world.

Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave.
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

Revisiting VJ Day — with a U.S. bias

by Samuel Wylie

Ed. Note: *My father, Samuel J. Wylie, was a Navy chaplain on the St. George stationed off Okinawa. His letters home help illustrate the climate into which the atomic bomb was dropped. My mother and two older sisters, then babies, were waiting for him.*

My father believed Christians should take no delight in killing, but that soldiers must fight hard and un sentimentally. He even told his parents that people gathering signatures to protest bombing cities were “badly mistaken,” adding, “It seems ridiculous to be so sentimental about the Japanese cities that you are willing to spare them at the expense of thousands of our 18 and 20 year old soldiers and Marines.” He died in 1972, but I often wonder how he would have responded to recent assertions that Japan had been actively trying to surrender for six months before atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It would seem that some of the nightmare he describes here could have been prevented by a change in U.S. foreign policy.

I did not alter my father’s references to “Japs” because the derogatory reference is the one many Americans used.

— J.W-K.

12 August 1945

On the day I reported aboard the St. George, the Captain said, “Chaplain you may have thought Saipan was a forward area, but you haven’t seen anything yet. Within a week, we will be going to a Really Forward Area.” And we did! All the way North. There was a great deal of tension in the air. The St. George is

well armed, but after all she is an auxiliary ship, and sitting at a point 300 miles South of Japan, 300 miles North of Formosa, and a little less than that East of China seemed like a daring venture.

I remember one Head of Department’s meeting when the Captain addressed us and said we would have to be prepared to cope with:

1. the Japanese air attacks
2. swimmers — chaps who swim out from the shore
3. suicide boats — boats that do the same thing, but with a bigger charge of explosives
4. possible fire from shore batteries

By the night before we arrived, we were all pretty sober people in serious conversation.

We arrived at Kerama Retto at General Quarters (every man at his battle station). The Army was on the beach and mortar fire was going on all around. We waited anxiously to see if the Japs had any shore batteries that they could use on us. Evidently they didn’t. We were spec-

A single Jap kamikaze had come swooping in. Nobody flinched, nobody tried to run away; every man who had a job to do went on doing it like the men our boys are — watching sudden death shooting straight toward them.

tators of the Army’s War only.

We were within rifle shot of the beach, and we could see the Japanese, but for some strange reason they did not try to harry us with rifle fire. The contrast in our relative positions that first day (Army and Navy) was brought out at dinner time. While we sat in the wardroom and ate shrimp cocktail, steak, pie and ice cream, the mortar firing on the beach was very audible. I felt guilty. But that night, the relationship changed, and for the remainder of the operation, the soldiers were very willing to eat K-rations on the beach rather than share our luxuries afloat.

All hands on deck

Sunset came and went. I had a Mark class in session in the library. It was the last one for four months. In the middle of it, the gongs went. It was the first time I had heard them. (We used the bugle for practice drills.)

The gongs on the St. George always mean the real thing. My Mark class began to tumble out of the library and join the teaming crowd out in the passage way. With amazing order, which makes a Navy, 700 men got up and down narrow ladders in a very few minutes.

I went to sick bay. Sick bay has no G.Q. telephone so we did not know what was going on overhead. We were at G.Q. far into the night. Then “secure” sounded; it came to be the most wonderful sound we ever heard. After a couple of hours sleep, “bong, bong, bong — 21 times. Then the bugle call, then “General Quarters, General Quarters, all hands man your battle stations!” This lasted almost till dawn. Our days went on like that. Two or three times a night; once or twice during the day. Sometimes, I took up my battle station on the gun deck. Up there people were alert. They had to be. And, of course, on the gun deck you could see what was going on.

Suicide attacks

We saw a great deal. Several times Japanese planes were traced in from way out. Forty miles, 30, 25, 20, 10, 8, and then we could see the shooting. Many of them were shot down in sight of us. It seemed just like the newsreels and yet, less exciting somehow. The false glamour was missing. People didn't think of the pilot as a person, they were aware only of the plane. Then, we started to feel the weight of the suicide attacks. I can't say much about that [because of the censors]. We saw our own ships hit, first quite a ways out where we could see only fire in the night, and smoke by day. Then closer.

About the second week we were there, in mid-April, I went on a flight to Japan. I have never been so scared in my life. I went, not at all out of any great bravery. I am not afraid to fight aboard ship, but air combat doesn't appeal to me one little bit. I went along because the feeling of ship vs. squadron is sometimes strong, and I thought a ship's chaplain who made a combat mission would be able to quickly convince the squadron that he was a squadron chaplain too. I guess it worked.

Several times the plane went to General Quarters. Planes made that signal by blinking the lights (our seaplanes are huge affairs with a large crew, berthing compartments, flight deck, galley and gun stations so some such system is needed). I stayed up on the flight deck right behind the navigator. We went to G.Q. because radar had picked up Japanese planes trailing us. They followed us on two or three separate occasions but never came in to fight.

Back on the ship, we discovered the ironic fact that they had had their first night's sleep in a long time. And the last, too.

Life continued at the same pace. But people kept cheerful and good-natured. Discipline was only very slightly relaxed. The work got done. General Quarters occurred remarkably seldom during the



Samuel Wylie, a U.S. Navy chaplain in 1945, with a Japanese child.

day on Sunday. With from three to five services on as many ships, that is something to be grateful for. The days that it did occur played havoc with the schedule. But we made it, and between us chaplains on the larger ships, every man in quite a radius who wanted to get to Church on Sunday had the opportunity.

More ships were hit. Some very close. I can't talk about that. One or two I boarded, and long as I live I shall never forget the horror of sudden death. I felt very inadequate and new to that kind of ministry. I helped, I guess, and I kept calm of course, but I felt that I hadn't much to give. But I was learning what I needed to know. And I was proud of the Navy.

Burying sailors

I buried many boys. I watched the cemetery on the Island grow by leaps and bounds. Sometimes the work got ahead of the men who made the arrangements. That was always bad, but it couldn't be helped. Now it is a beautiful cemetery. Respect and reverence were always shown — even when things were very primitive.

Then came Sunday, May 6. The Church Working Party was called as usual, and I was down in the mess hall setting up Church for our usual first Sunday of the month Communion Service. The gongs sounded, the bugle blew, all the fanfare of G.Q. let loose. We went topside; there were Jap planes within three miles, but apparently heading out.

The Captain gave a guess that we would secure from G.Q. in five minutes. I went below to the mess hall in order to get started the minute they sounded "secure." You can't waste time when you have three or four services.

Hit by a kamikaze

Suddenly, without any warning to those of us below deck, the ship vibrated with a sharp concussion. About 10 seconds later, the ship's bell broke out into wild ringing and the P.A. System blared: "Fire on the seaplane deck; Fire on the seaplane deck!" I tore up to see — then down to sick bay to help with the casualties.

Long later I found out that over the hills surrounding us a single Jap *kamikaze* had come swooping in, and though we and all the ships in the anchorage opened up on him nothing could stop him. The pilot may well have been dead when he hit us. Anyway, in he came, while gun crews directly in his path stood straight at their guns.

Nobody flinched, nobody tried to run away; every man who had a job to do

went on doing it like the men our boys are — watching sudden death shooting straight toward them. Miraculously the damage was slight. The only reason we were not a mass of flaming wreckage like many another ship I saw was the providential way he hit us. I am not allowed to discuss battle damage except to say that we are most fortunate that he hit us in exactly the way he did; any other way could have meant grim things. After all, we carry aviation gasoline, bombs, torpedoes.

Soon after I got to sick bay, casualties started to come in. Two were critically injured. And one man brought in dead had to be removed to make room for the living. I did what I could. And because they were my own boys and I knew them, I was able to do a good deal, I think.

Ace flyer lost

By that time, it became known that we had three dead. One was our ace flier. The irony of it struck us all deeply. He had gone looking for trouble in the sky. He had wild adventures every flight, because he went where he knew he could find them.

We would not have been surprised to have had him die in his plane. But instead, he was killed getting out of bed. (Fliers have no G.Q. stations.) His stateroom was in what most people would call the safest part of the ship. But that is how he died. He had a wife, and a baby whom he had never seen. He was the most popular flier on the ship, a good friend of mine. He had received Communion from me the preceding month.

The other two boys who died were enlisted men from our plane-tending division. One was a Catholic; the other a Methodist lad. When we opened the locker of the Protestant boy to pack his things, we found a picture of his home Church pasted on the inside of the locker.

By this time, it was about 1300. I had a service on another ship at 1400 and felt

that there was all the more reason to go on and conduct the Lord's supper for these other lads who might easily be the next to take a kamikaze. When I got back, we took our dead lads to the beach and read the committal service. They were buried with full military honors.

Then back to the ship and the regular communion service — just eight hours delayed. I wanted to have church. I above all did not want even the symbol of the changelessness of God's grace and favor to be prevented by the action of men.

I gathered my choir together and asked them if we could have the full service — Sung Call to Worship, choral responses, etc. I was afraid that maybe they had had too much. One of my big, rugged almost tough characters grinned back; "I don't see why in hell we can't Chaplain." And we had it. I have never conducted a service where the responsibility on the minister to bring comfort and assurance was greater; or where the congregation was more receptive. We had reached the consecration when the warning came that an air raid was imminent. The Captain left.

I paused in the service to say that we had finished the parts that preceded the reception of the sacrament and that the altar would remain set up and ready for them to drop back in small groups as they could during or after the raid to receive the sacrament. Then I started to administer the Lord's Supper.

About half way through, the gongs sounded. Scared boys, but disciplined boys, tore reverently (if they can do that) out of church and up to their battle stations. I stayed beside the elements. Those whose battle stations were in the mess

hall came in — saw the Table and reverently stood in silence and respect. Then, individuals, or men in twos and threes started coming back, dropping down on their knees at the Communion rail, receiving the Lord's Supper.

G.Q. secured, and more came. Then Church was over.

I went back to sick bay. Our critically injured people were coming out of their shock a little and were aware of what was going on. The most seriously hurt one was pretty low. The other had his eyes burned shut, and of course, he couldn't move. The gongs sounded again. I knew the temporarily blinded boy would appreciate not being alone. The thought of abandoning ship in his condition must have been a nightmare to him. Of course, there would be corpsmen to look after him, if that happened, but I figured he would feel better if there were someone around all the way through. G.Q. lasted all night, or almost.

Psychoneurotic casualties

I went back to sick bay. Our critically injured people were coming out of their shock . . . The gongs sounded again. I knew the temporarily blinded boy would appreciate not being alone.

Days went on. Other ships were hit; one badly and very close. It kept renewing the suspense and fear in our boys. One officer and one enlisted man became psychoneurotic casualties. We envied the fleet. They make their assault

then steam away. Just being underway does wonders for morale. But we stayed and stayed and did all our fighting at anchor.

We shot down a plane. That gives the ship distinction. We now have two small Japanese flags painted on the side of our bridge; one edged in black. We stopped it the hard way.

To our great joy, we got orders to leave

Okinawa on July 12 and proceed here for repairs.

It is now Sunday afternoon. We are still waiting, straining our ears for word that the War is over. Everyone is tense, but hopeful. Surely they will say “yes” to our statement about the Emperor, and we can cease firing.

Church was almost a hilarious occasion this morning. We had an unusually good attendance, and I spoke on our responsibilities as Christians — civilian Christians — pointing out that within a year they would be going back to about 135 parishes throughout the country in a couple of dozen denominations. *If* they and their fellows went back with some high purposes and covenants, it would be a nation widely influenced.

I can't write more. I can't think of anything or talk of anything but peace and the chance of seeing you in a very few months. I can hardly sleep at night.

15 August 1945

Dear Mother and Dad,

This is the happy day for which we have all waited. It came sooner than we expected, though the suspense of these days has been hard.

It is difficult to put into words how much the day has meant — all the hopes and dreams that now seem more likely to be realized, all the fears that we can put away from us forever.

Whistles and sirens on ships shrieked out all over the harbor, shouts went up from the decks—everybody has been hilarious, and deeply grateful. Tears came to my eyes as I looked out on our harbor, and saw one conspicuous white ship among the gray ones— taking no part in all the demonstrations. It was a hospital ship. I felt sorry for the lads aboard, but happy that soon the Navy would be releasing her back to the passenger line that used to own her, and she would be plying the seas on pleasure cruises instead of the grim job she was doing. **TW**

‘Wars which none can win’

by Dorothy Day

Another point of view was offered by Dorothy Day, a journalist and founder of the Catholic Worker movement which offers hospitality to the homeless and protests war. She gave this address to the Liberal-Socialist Alliance in New York City on December 8, 1941.

There is now all this patriotic indignation about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Japanese expansionism in Asia. Yet not a word about American and European colonialism in this same area. We, the British, the French, and others set up spheres of influence in Asia, control national states — against the expressed will of these states — and represent imperialism in the Orient.

We dictate to Japan as to where she can expand economically and politically and we declare what policy she must observe. From our nationalistic and imperialistic point of view we have every right to concentrate American military forces in the Philippines, confronting Japan at her front door. Were Japan to face us from Cuba what would be our reaction? If the United States insists upon a colonialist policy in Asia then this nation must be prepared for a militaristic backlash ...

Hitler is a madman; however, our American State Department is quite aware that — under treaty — Germany must declare war on any power which moves against the Empire of Japan. Need I remind you that the Fascists are allies of the Russian Communists? What action will Moscow take in support of Germany? Are we actually prepared to confront a German-Russian

alliance? But let us suppose that the Soviet Union does nothing at the moment at least. Is it not probable that Hitler will observe her own dicta and move to the East where expansionism can readily be accomplished? How then can the United States justify a military alliance with Stalin whose blood baths have rivaled Hitler's purges? So we are faced with a dilemma: either we go to war against a German-Italian-Russian-Japanese alliance — a suicidal undertaking — or we become Russia's defender — an ideological crime.

But I waste rhetoric on international politics — the breeding grounds of war over the centuries. The balance of power and other empty slogans inspired by a false and flamboyant nationalism have bred conflict throughout civilized history.

And it has become too late in human history to tolerate wars which none can win. Nor dare we quibble about just wars. Evil enough when the finest of our youth perished in conflict and even the causes of these conflicts were soon lost to memory. Even more horrible today when cities can go up in flames and brilliant scientific minds are searching out ultimate weapons. War must cease. There are no victories. The world can bear the burden no longer. Yes we must make a stand.

Even as I speak to you I may be guilty of what some men call treason. But we must reject war: yes, we must now make a stand. War is murder, rape, ruin, death; war can end our civilization. I tell you that — within a decade — we will have weapons capable of ending this world as we have known it.

Did the U.S. prolong the war?

by William Lanouette

Ed. Note: *The American claim is that the atomic bombs were dropped in order to save hundreds of thousands of lives by forcing Japan to surrender before a planned Allied invasion. But peace advocates have argued for some time that the U.S. deliberately made it difficult for Japan to surrender. William Lanouette, author of *Genius in the Shadows: A Biography of Leo Szilard, the Man Behind the Bomb*, examines these arguments.*

At 8:15 on the morning of August 6, 1945, the world got a glimpse of its own mortality. At that moment, the city of Hiroshima was obliterated by a fireball that sent waves of searing heat, then a deafening concussion, across the landscape. Three days later, a second bomb hit Nagasaki. In another five days, Japan surrendered, ending World War II.

After the bomb was dropped, President Harry S. Truman said flatly that its purpose was to save lives. But was ending the Pacific War promptly the only reason for leveling two cities, instantly killing 70,000 at Hiroshima and 40,000 at Nagasaki and, within the next five years, an estimated 230,000 more people from the aftereffects of the two bombs? The official view first came under serious challenge in 1965, with the publication of “Atomic Diplomacy” by historian Gar

Alperovitz. Drawing on secretary of war Henry Stimson’s unpublished diaries, Alperovitz argued that postwar relations with the Soviet Union were an important consideration in the decision to drop the bomb. During the three decades since, other evidence that raises questions about Truman’s explanation has surfaced in the Manhattan Project records at the National Archives, the papers of physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, and the official and personal documents of America’s wartime presidents, diplomats, military leaders and scientists.

Taking this information into account, it still seems fair to conclude that the predominant reason for dropping the bomb was the belief that it would end the war quickly and spare American soldiers. But other factors clearly influenced the decision. These include:

* Postwar diplomacy. Truman’s new secretary of state, James F. Byrnes, and a number of military leaders saw the awesome weapon as a way to make the Soviets “more manageable” — first, by ending the Pacific war before they could join it in mid-August, as Stalin promised; second, by countering political gains the Soviets had already made in Europe.

* Bureaucratic momentum. Fearing that Germany was working on an atomic bomb, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had begun America’s A-bomb research in 1939 and agreed to make it a high-priority

project days before Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Building the bomb required enormous sums of money and the efforts of many of the nation’s leading scientists — an undertaking that became known as the Manhattan Project. In the end, the commitment to build the bomb produced a powerful impulse to use it.

* Political justification. Some American military and civilian leaders pushed the White House to use the bomb before Japan could surrender in order to justify the billions that had been spent — without Congressional knowledge or approval — on the Manhattan Project. As an aide to Undersecretary of War Robert Patterson said, “If this thing works, they won’t investigate anything, and if it doesn’t work ... they won’t investigate anything else.” Its leaders had to justify the \$2 billion (\$26 billion in today’s dollars) expense to Congress and the public, which had no idea of the scope of the A-bomb work, for the more than 160,000 workers at 37 top-secret factories around the country. Some scientists preferred bombing Japan twice to test both the uranium and plutonium weapons. The four urban targets considered for bombing had been spared conventional bombing so U.S. military observers could see the A-bombs’

full effect on large cities.

* Psychological factors. After four costly years of war, Americans in high office were eager to crush the enemy and bring the boys home. Public feeling was running so high against the Japanese and their

wartime behavior — the slaughter of civilians at Nanking, the surprise attack on

Truman’s new secretary of state, took office on July 3. A novice at diplomacy but a skilled politician, he worried that public opinion would turn against the president unless Japan was brought to its knees.

An expanded version of William Lanouette’s analysis is available in the January/February, 1995 issue of *Civilization*, the magazine of the Library of Congress. Erika Weihs’ art is available as a postcard from the War Resisters’ League, 5 for \$2, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012; 212-228-0450.

Pearl Harbor, the Bataan death march, the barbaric treatment of Allied POWs (one study after the war found that 27 percent died in custody, compared with four percent of those held in Germany and Italy)—that many American leaders were in no mood to take additional casualties. They were appalled at the thought of more American boys, who found glory in life, being killed by Japanese kamikaze pilots who found glory in death. In the eyes of war-weary Americans, the enemy had been demonized as “Japs,” creatures who needed to be blasted and burned out of island caves.

Because all the principal figures have since died, it is chiefly with archival evidence that the various arguments are now being made.

As questions were raised after the war about whether it was really necessary to use the atomic bomb, administration officials cited higher and higher casualty figures to justify their decision. “When Truman wrote his memoirs in 1955, he said 500,000 American lives were saved as a result of the bombing,” says Dartmouth College historian Martin J. Sherwin, whose 1975 book on the origins of the Cold War, *A World Destroyed*, examined in detail how U.S. leaders decided to use nuclear weapons. Winston Churchill, who later called the bomb “a miracle of deliverance,” wrote that more than a million lives were saved. These upward revisions, according to Sherwin, suggest that the two wartime leaders felt a serious need to justify the bomb’s use.

The debate over whether the U.S. was justified in dropping the bomb starts with two words: “unconditional surrender.” With their defeat on Okinawa in June 1945, the Japanese clearly were going to lose the war. Should the U.S. have modified the terms of surrender, approved by

the Allies at their Casablanca conference in 1943, and allowed one condition: a guarantee that the emperor and the imperial throne would survive? And if the U.S. had offered this guarantee, would the powerful war faction in Japan have allowed the nation to lay down its arms?

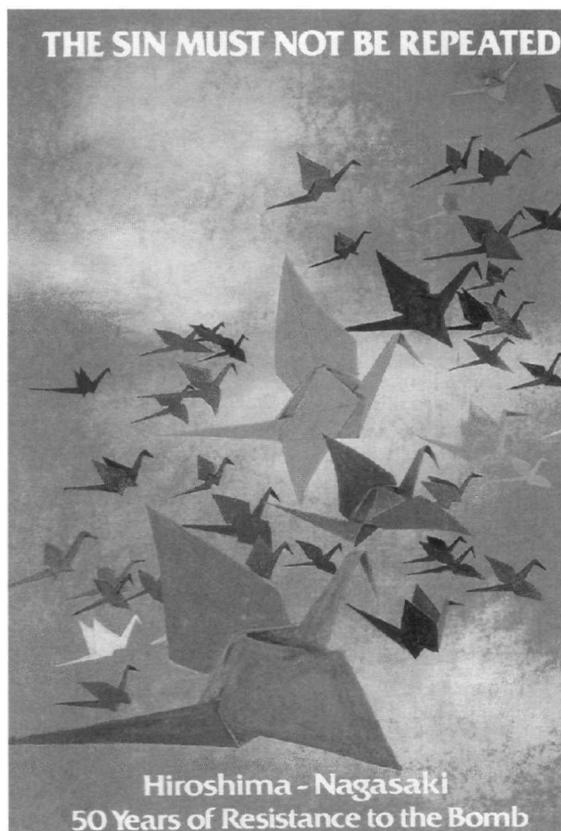
former U.S. ambassador to Japan, who was then acting secretary of state. But other influential advisers held to the original terms, among them FDR’s personal adviser, Harry Hopkins, and two assistant secretaries of state, Archibald MacLeish and Dean Acheson.

An ad hoc committee of Stimson, Grew and Navy Secretary James Forrestal was charged with drafting surrender terms. On July 2, the group recommended to Truman that the U.S. promise Japan it could retain a “constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty” as long as the regime remained peaceful. But a Gallup Poll that month showed one-third of Americans favored executing Japan’s emperor Hirohito as a war criminal and another 20 percent wanted him jailed or exiled. Only 7 percent wanted him to stay on the throne, even as a figurehead of a new government.

Byrnes, Truman’s new secretary of state, took office on July 3. A novice at diplomacy but a skilled politician, he worried that public opinion would turn against the president unless Japan was brought to its knees, and he was convinced that negotiating a surrender with a hated and all but vanquished foe would make the president appear weak.

When Truman went to the Big Three conference in Potsdam in mid-July, he took along the draft of the surrender terms prepared by Stimson, Grew and Forrestal. Truman also took along Byrnes. During the meeting, the Americans received word that the first test of the A-bomb on July 16 in New Mexico had been a stunning success. Byrnes persuaded the president to delete from the draft declaration the section that would have guaranteed the continuation of the imperial system.

The July 26 Potsdam Declaration promised the Japanese they would not be



Peace cranes by Erika Weihs

courtesy of War Resisters' League

Historical research since the war shows that in the spring and summer of 1945, there were profound disputes in Washington about unconditional surrender. Churchill had suggested mitigation of the unconditional surrender terms when he met with Stalin and Roosevelt at Yalta in February 1945. The U.S. Army chief of staff, Gen. George C. Marshall, and the White House chief of staff, Adm. William D. Leahy, both favored retaining the emperor. So did assistant secretary of war John J. McCloy and Joseph C. Grew, the

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“enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation.” At the same time, it demanded the “unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces,” warning that the alternative would be “prompt and utter destruction.”

In Tokyo, pressures for a settlement had been rising all spring in various government circles. The Japanese had been fighting a losing defensive war for more than two years, and they seemed ready to break in April when allied forces invaded Okinawa and the government of retired Gen. Koiso Kuniaki resigned.

Japan’s leaders had considered Okinawa a decisive battle that would show the Allies that continued fighting would be dreadfully costly. And it was. During the three-month island campaign, 7,000 American soldiers and Marines died, along with 5,000 sailors. It was the highest death toll for any single battle in the central Pacific campaign, surpassing the total of 6,800 in the yard-by-yard battle for Iwo Jima that had ended in late March. But the number of Japanese killed on Okinawa was far higher, with estimates approaching 100,000.

Hirohito and such older advisers as retired Adm. Yonai Mitsumasa and Gen. Koiso hoped to end a way they knew was lost. *Hirohito called in the chief cabinet members and urged them to seek peace by any diplomatic means.

Throughout the summer, Adm. Suzuki’s government continued to approach the Soviet Union, which was still officially neutral in the Pacific war, about brokering a favorable peace with the Allies.

The Soviets, however, dragged their feet. Months earlier at Yalta, before Japan’s crushing defeats in the central Pacific, the Americans and the British had thought it was crucial to get the Soviets into the Asian conflict. They promised the Soviets the use of Dairen and Port Arthur on the Manchurian coast,

recovery of the southern half of Sakhalin Island and control of the Kurile Islands. In return, the Soviets pledged to enter the hostilities by mid-August. Now, with Japan enfeebled, it was clearly in the Soviets’ interest to prolong the war until they could get into it — and collect the concessions they had won at Yalta.

The Americans had cracked the Japanese diplomatic code as early as 1939, and through radio intercepts they knew about Tokyo’s urgent approaches to Moscow. “Unconditional surrender is the only obstacle to peace,” the foreign minister, Togo Shinegori, instructed his representative in Moscow on July 13.

When Stimson told Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in mid-July 1945 that the bomb would be used, Ike was disheartened by the news. “Japan was at that very moment seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of face,” Eisenhower recalled in 1963. “It wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing.”

Truman was in a weak position to reverse course on the bomb. While he is viewed today as a strong and successful president, in 1945 he was considered a lightweight. FDR’s death badly shook the nation’s confidence. Perhaps Roosevelt alone had the political stature not to use the weapon he had helped create.

As rational people, we like to think that momentous decisions are based on reason and conviction or, in the words used in 1944 at Hyde Park when FDR and Churchill weighed using the bomb on Japan, “mature consideration.” Hiroshima reminds us that fear and doubt are every bit as important as reason and conviction. Whatever the verdict on the bombing of Japan, one thing is certain: it was not done after “mature consideration.” At a time when humanity has developed weapons powerful enough to destroy the planet, that failure may be the most instructive legacy of the Pacific war. **TW**

Confronting the World Bank

Calling for an end to the World Bank and IMF's oppression of the poor, members of the Atlantic Life Community and students from St. John's-St. Ben's University in Minnesota held a nonviolent protest at the World Bank's International Finance office in Washington D.C. on Holy Thursday afternoon.

The action began when Phil Berrigan and I poured blood on the World Bank logo located outside the main entrance. Dominican sisters Carol Gilbert and Ardeth Platte, Berrigan and I then proceeded inside to the main lobby with a picture of a starving child, a bagful of earth, and several vegetables which were placed on the floor.

Gilbert and Platte poured blood around these elements to symbolize the death and destruction caused by World Bank policies, including the destruction of the rain forests and the relocation of tens of thousands of people due to "development" projects.

Meanwhile the rest of our community entered the lobby and, together, conducted a liturgy of repentance. A litany was offered, we sang, and read from the scripture. Bread was blessed and shared. World Bank employees were invited to share in the bread. Some did. We invited observers to join with us in proclaiming this year as a time of jubilee, a time to cancel all debts and to establish justice for the poor.

Police ordered the community to leave. Gilbert, Platte, Berrigan, Mike Walli and I remained in the lobby witnessing on behalf of the victims and the endangered earth. We were arrested and charged with "destruction of property," a felony, and "unlawful entry." We were jailed overnight. The felony was changed to a misdemeanor and we were released on personal recognizance. We were also given "stay away" orders from 13 World Bank and IMF owned properties in D.C. A trial date was set for August.

—Art Laffin
Atlantic Life

The year of Jubilee

A packet designed to help church people understand the theology of Jubilee is available for \$6 from the United Church Board for World Ministries Global Education and Advocacy, 700 Prospect Ave., 6th floor, Cleveland, OH 44115. The packet includes sermon ideas, group exercises, ritual celebrations and media tips that support the release of slaves and forgiveness of debts with an emphasis on current international and domestic policy.



Mumia Abu-Jamal

L. Whitehorn

Death warrant

The governor of Pennsylvania, Thomas Ridge, has signed a death warrant for Mumia Abu-Jamal. This is the third warrant he has signed, bringing to an end a 50-year moratorium on the death penalty in Pennsylvania. Abu-Jamal (to whom the 1/95 cover of *The Witness* is dedicated) is described by Michael Yasutake as the most important spokesperson against the death penalty.

Abu-Jamal was a prominent African-American radio journalist in Philadelphia and a Black Panther leader. Although he pleads innocence, Abu-Jamal was sentenced for the murder of a police officer in 1981. To protest his execution, scheduled for Aug. 17, write to Ridge at Main Capitol Bldg., Rm 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Tax deductible contributions can be sent to the Bill of Rights Foundation,

marked "Jamal," Committee to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, NY, NY 10023-5001. You can arrange to bring a political prisoners art show (created to support Abu-Jamal) to your city by calling Mary Taylor at (201) 435-3244.

Beyond the Creed

The interview underway, Uta [Ranke-Heinemann, a German author published by Harper] turned her criticism to the Roman Catholic creed. "What does it say about ze life of Jesus? Only zat he was 'born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified and buried.' In between is not interesting for Christians, because he said something — love you enemies — zey do not want to hear. Zey care only about zat fairy tale for children five year old — the Virgin Mary and redemption by blood. Zey can't live without blood. Zey vont to be redeemed by blood, the death penalty and military retaliation. Jesus may as well have sat at home all 33 years doing nothing but crossword puzzles. Doesn't matter."

—John D. Spalding
"My travels with Uta"
Christian Century, 4/19/95

On the bright side

Students at the University of Michigan Law School raised \$1,000 to purchase the right to spew five tons of acid-rain producing sulfur dioxide into the air. The pollution rights shares are auctioned by the federal government through the Chicago Board of Trade. By purchasing the rights, the students (who belong to the UM environmental law society) made them unavailable to corporations.

Detroit Free Press, 3/29/95

shoot taxes

Hiroshima school girl speaks

interview by Anne Chisholm

[Forty years after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, English writer Anne Chisholm interviewed a small group of survivors who had been schoolgirls at the time.]

Shigeo is a small woman with quick movements, smiling and full of energy. The top half of her face is sunny and open, with unusually pretty dark eyes; she has long thick black hair, falling casually over her forehead and round her neck and shoulders. The lower half of her face, from a line running below her cheekbones across the middle of her upper lip, is different; the shape is lumpy and the texture looks hard and smooth. Her mouth, drawn in with dull pinkish-brown lipstick, is oddly shaped; the lips are not really lips. Her neck is badly scarred too, and her small hands are misshapen. They are clawlike,

bent back at the wrists and base of the fingers. The skin on her hands is brownish, shiny in patches, and curiously plump. The nails are well kept, but some are deformed. Nevertheless her hands are extremely mobile and efficient and she uses them without awkwardness or self-consciousness. Her voice and expressions are full of spirit and gaiety. Sometimes her face, despite its scars looks strikingly pretty; then suddenly it is as if something slips and she becomes ugly, but not for long.

We had been talking of other things; when I asked her to tell me what had happened to her on the morning of 6 August 1945 she readily agreed. But her voice became lower, more serious, and her expression anxious and intent.

"I was thirteen years old; I was ordered into the center of the city to clean

up the streets. We were working about 1.6 kilometers from the hypocenter. I heard the airplane; I looked up at the sky — the plane had a pretty white tail, it was a sunny day, the sky was blue. This had happened many times before, so I didn't feel scared. Then I saw something drop — white I think — and pow! — a big explosion knocked me down.

"Then I was unconscious — I don't know for how long. Then I was conscious but I couldn't see anything, it was all black and red. Then I called my friend, Toshiko; then the fog goes away but I can't find her. I never see her again. Then I see people moving away and I just follow them. It is not light like it was before, it is more like evening. I look around; houses are all flat! I could see straight, clear, all a long distance. I follow the people to the river. I couldn't hear anything, my ears are blocked up — or maybe my consciousness is blocked out. I am thinking a bomb has dropped!

"I heard a baby screaming — that woke me up and I could hear things, but

For more on nonviolence ...

A number of organizations, committed to nonviolence, offer newsletters, projects or advice upon request. These include:

- American Friends Service Committee, 1001 Office Park Road, #107, West Des Moines, IA 50265
- Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, 499 Patterson St., Memphis, TN 38111
- The Catholic Worker, 36 East First Street, New York, NY 10003
- Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680
- *Desert Voices, The Newsletter of the Nevada Desert Experience*, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127
- Episcopal Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 28156, Washington, DC 20038
- Fellowship of Reconciliation (U.S.), 521 North Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960

- Jonah House, 1933 Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217
- *The Nuclear Resister*, P.O. Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733
- *Nukewatch Pathfinder*, P.O. Box 2658, Madison, WI 53701
- Parenting for Peace and Justice, 4144 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108
- Pax Christi, 348 East Tenth St., Erie, PA 16503-1110
- War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012
- Witness for Peace, 2201 P Street NW, Rm 109, Washington, DC 20037

And here are several favorite books:

- *Conquest of Violence*, by Joan Bondurant (U. of Calif. Press, 1971).
- *Who Will Roll Away the Stone? Discipleship Queries for First World Christians*, by Ched Myers (Orbis, 1994).

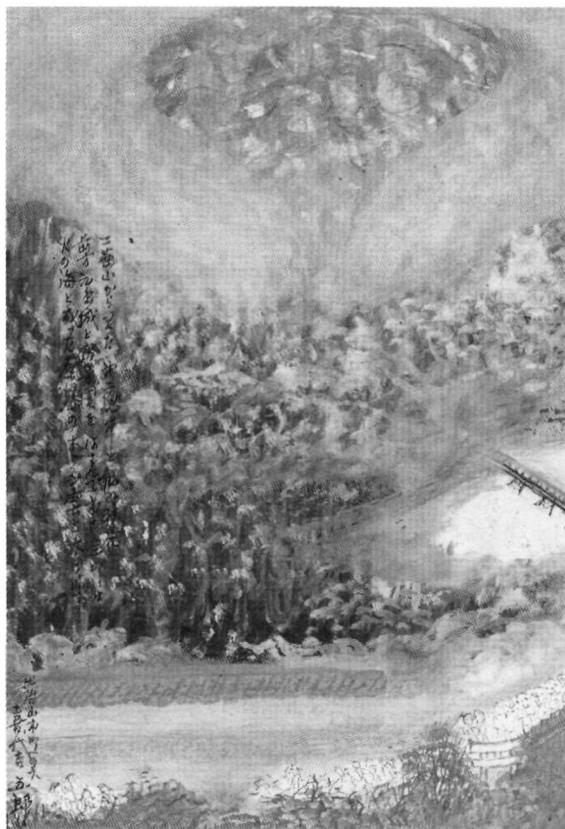
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nothing sounded loudly. Then I heard a man say, 'Let's go to the hills' — and I thought maybe I should go back to the school. People started to push; I was afraid I would fall into the water, and I wanted to leave with the others. There was an old woman on the ground and people were stepping on her. I couldn't help her up! [Shigeko held out her hands: tears came to her eyes.] I didn't know my hands were burned, nor my face. Very very difficult ... all these years my regret ... why couldn't I help her? It still hurts me.

"Someone gave me oil for my hands and face. It hurt; my face had a swollen feeling, and I couldn't move my neck. My eyes were swollen and felt closed up. I got to my school yard and sat down, put my head back against a wall and — unconscious again. When I wake up — I don't know how long — it was so dark! I kept saying, 'Please give me some water; my name is Shigeko, I live at so and so, tell my parents ...' I thought if I say it once more someone will come and pick me up.

"I don't know where I was; I was lying on the floor. I had been sitting outside but someone had carried me inside into the auditorium. All I remember is that I had walked into the school yard. Then four days later, my mother came. She had been in the house, which fell down and covered her with rubble, but she managed to get out. My father saw the plane too — he was working outside, and he said to a friend, 'Run!' He ran into a concrete ice box in the old fish market building, and so he was

protected. When he came out all the others were burned. My father tried to organize help for people; my mother was



Drawing of atomic explosion from Mt. Futaba which overlooks Hiroshima by Goro Kiyoyoshi

looking for me every day. For four days, she searched for me, she even looked at dead bodies. My father told her on the fourth day, 'Don't go out again, you'll get sick.' But she sneaked out anyway.

"That evening a man came and said he'd heard a voice at the school, a girl's voice so faint he could hardly hear, saying my name. My mother went out again with him, calling my name. I was unconscious; and I was

dreaming of water. I saw a beautiful fountain, and the ocean all blue, blue, blue ... I went into the beautiful blue ... it was cool ... I felt no suffering, no thirst, I felt light like a feather, not frightened any more. It was a joyful, happy feeling. No one was there, but a glow; just so happy ... Then I heard my mother calling, 'Shigeko!' and I answered, 'I am here!' The next thing I knew, my mother was talking to a doctor and I came back to myself. There was a sharp pain in my chest, and I had to have an injection for the heart. 'This girl has a strong heart,' someone said.

"They put me on a wooden door with a blanket and took me home. I remember neighbors say, 'Oh Shigeko came home! How nice!'

"After that I was unconscious many times and they thought I was dying. My mother had to listen to my heart. Still breathing! Still alive! This went on for perhaps two or three months. No, I don't remember pain very much. Physical pain you forget, like having a baby. Treatment? Just a little soy bean oil to clean up my face. My whole face was burned. I had no eyebrows. My

mother had to pull my eyes open. When they tried to remove the burnt clothes, my skin came off as well. Four days later my father peeled the burned skin off my face. It was all black; underneath was like a cream puff, full of pus. He cut all my hair off because of the infection. But before, I had a little girl's haircut, with a fringe. [She held back her hair from her forehead, which is smooth and youthful still, and took my hand and placed it on the fine, soft skin.] You see?" **TW**

— from *Faces of Hiroshima: A Report* by Anne Chisholm, (Jonathan Cape, 1985). Goro Kiyoyoshi's drawing is available in *Unforgettable Fire* (Pantheon, 1977).

"I was thirteen years old. I heard the airplane; I looked up at the sky — the plane had a pretty white tail, it was a sunny day, the sky was blue. Then I saw something drop."

— *Shigeko*

Militant nonviolence

by Barbara Deming

Ed. Note: This article is excerpted from a longer article published in Liberation magazine in February, 1968. It stands over time as an excellent critique and defense of nonviolence. While Deming wrote this using “generic” male language, we have modified it.

“Do you want to remain pure? Is that it?” a black man asked me during an argument about non-violence.

It is not possible to act at all and to remain pure; and that is not what I want, when I commit myself to the nonviolent discipline. There are people who are struggling to change conditions that they find intolerable, trying to find new lives; in the words of Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, they want to “set afoot a new man.” That is what I want, too; and I have no wish to be assigned separate quarters from those who are struggling in a way different from mine. I stand with all who say of present conditions that they do not allow us to be fully human and so they must be changed — all who not only say this but are ready to act.

At a recent conference about the directions the American Left should take, a socialist challenged me: “Can you call degrading the violence used by the oppressed to throw off oppression?” When one is confronted with conditions which are damaging, even murderous — it is degrading for all to allow such conditions to persist. And if the individuals who can find the courage to bring about change see no way in which it can be done with-

An unabbreviated version of this essay is now available in *Nonviolence in America* (Orbis, 1995) by Staughton and Alice Lind.

out employing violence, I do not feel that I can judge them. The judgments I make are not judgments upon people but upon the means open to us — upon the promise these means of action hold or withhold.

The very people who speak of the



Barbara Deming

Diana J. Davies

necessity of violence are the first, often, to acknowledge the toll it exacts among those who use it. Fanon has a chapter entitled “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” and in it he writes, “We are forever pursued by our actions.” After describing, among other painful disorders, those suffered by an Algerian terrorist — who made friends among the French after the war and then wondered with anguish whether any of the men he had killed had been men like these — he comments, “It was what might be called an attack of vertigo.” Then he asks: “But can we escape becoming dizzy? And who can affirm that vertigo does not

haunt the whole of existence?”

“Vertigo” — here is a word, I think, much more relevant to the subject of revolutionary action than the word “purity.” No, it is not that I want to remain pure; it is that I want to escape becoming dizzy. And here is exactly the argument of my essay: we can escape it. It is my stubborn faith that if, as revolutionaries, we will wage battle without violence, we can remain very much more in control — of our own selves, of the responses to us which our adversaries make, of the battle as it proceeds, and of the future we hope will issue from it.

The future

The future — by whom will it be built? By all those whom the struggle has touched and marked. The future will be built even, in part, by those who have fought on the losing side. If it is a colonial struggle, of course, a good many of the adversaries can be expected to leave at the end of a successful revolution; but if it is a civil struggle, those who have been defeated, too, will at least help to make the new society what it is. How will the struggle have touched them? How will it have touched the victors?

Carl Oglesby, in *Containment and Change*, quotes a Brazilian guerrilla: “We are in dead earnest. At stake is the humanity of man.” Then he asks, “How can ordinary men be at once warm enough to

It is my stubborn faith that if, as revolutionaries, we will wage battle without violence, we can remain very much more in control.

want what revolutionaries say they want [humanity], cold enough to do without remorse what they are capable of doing [cutting throats], and poised enough in the turbulence of their lives to keep the aspiration and the act both integrated and distinct? How is it that one of these passions does not invade and devour the other?” Yes — the ques-

tion is one of equilibrium. How does one manage to keep it?

Nonviolence a failure?

At this point suddenly I can hear in my head many voices interrupting me. They all say: "Who among us likes violence? But nonviolence has been tried." It has not been tried. We have hardly begun to try it. The people who dismiss it as irrelevant do not understand what it could be.

What most people are saying just now is that nonviolence gives us no control at all over events. "After years of this," says Stokely Carmichael, "we are at almost the same point." [Nonviolent actions] have served to integrate a token few into American society. And the great majority of black people are actually worse off than before.

I won't try to pretend that progress has been made that has not been made. Though I would add that there is one sense in which things hardly can be said to be at the same point still. If one speaks of psychological forces that will make a difference — the determination of black people not to accept their situation any longer, the determination of some white people not to accept it either, and a consciousness on the part of other white people that changes are bound to come now, doubts about their ability to prevent them — in these terms all has been in constant motion.

Literally, yes, one can speak of gains that seem to mock those who have nearly exhausted themselves in the struggle for them. But I think one has to ask certain questions. Have gains been slight because nonviolent tactics were the wrong tactics to employ — or did many of those leading the battle underestimate the difficulties of the terrain before them? Did they lack a sufficiently radical vision? Can those who have now turned from reliance upon nonviolence say surely that resort to violence over those same years would have brought greater gains?

There are those who are implying this. One observer who implies it strongly is Andrew Kopkind, writing in *The New York Review of Books* in August about the uprisings in the ghettos. He writes, "Martin Luther King and the 'leaders' who appealed for nonviolence, CORE, the black politicians, the old S.N.C.C. are all beside the point. Where the point is is in the streets. ... The insurrections of July

out. But it is one thing to be able to state the price the antagonist paid, another to be able to count your own real gains.

Carl Oglesby, in *Containment and Change*, criticizes "the politics of the appeal to higher power ... the same thing as prayer ... a main assumption of which is that [the higher power] is not bad, only misinformed."



At Greenham Common, England, 3,000 women blockaded the U.S. Air Force Base to protest the nuclear cruise missiles.

have done what everyone in America for 30 years has thought impossible; mass action has convulsed the society and brought smooth government to a halt." He itemizes with awe: they caused tanks to rumble through the heart of the nation's biggest cities, brought out soldiers by the thousands, destroyed billions of dollars worth of property. This violence (or as Dave Dellinger better names it, this counterviolence of the victimized) certainly called out the troops. The question that hasn't been answered yet is: Did this gain the rebels an advantage? It gained them many casualties. The powers-that-be paid their price, too, as Kopkind points

Dealing with raw power

He goes on to describe how the "whimsical" hopes that are entertained about the powerful evaporate: "Sometimes mass-based secular prayer has resulted in change. But more often it has only shown the victim-petitioner that the problem is graver and change harder to get than [he] had imagined. ... It turns out that the powerful know perfectly well who their victims are ... and that they have no intention of changing anything. This recognition is momentous, no doubt the spiritual low point of the emergent revolutionary's education. He finds that the enemy is not

a few men but a whole system whose agents saturate the society. ... He is diverted by a most realistic despair. But this despair contains within itself the omen of that final reconstitution of the spirit which will prepare [him] ... for the shift to insurgency, rebellion, revolution. ... At the heart of his despair lies the new certainty that there will be no change which he does not produce by himself."

With this description I do not argue at all. It is a very accurate description of the education those protesting in this country have been receiving. May more and more read the lesson. I argue with the contention that nonviolent action can only be prayerful action — must by its nature remain naive. Too often in the past it has confined itself to petition, but there is no need for it to do so — especially now that so many have learned "change [is] harder to get than they had imagined."

The trouble is that advocates of non-violence themselves often write in terms that tend again and again to stress only the appeal that can be made to conscience. Bradford, in his paper on Black Power, notes: "Carmichael's vision isn't limited to Negroes. Machiavelli had it: 'A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good. Therefore it is necessary ... to learn how not to be good.'" Then Bradford pleads that to put one's faith in coercive power is tragic, and his argument is "Throughout history, those who have most deeply touched the hearts of hardened men have been the ones who chose not to defend themselves with violence."

But the choice is very much wider (as Bradford of course knows); and the distinctions that seem to have been set up here are unreal. To resort to power one need not be violent, and to speak to conscience one need not be meek. The most effective action both resorts to power and engages conscience. Nonviolent action

does not have to beg others to "be nice." It can in effect force them to consult their consciences — or to pretend to have them. Nor does it have to petition those in power to do something about a situation. It can face the authorities with a new fact and say: Accept this new situation which we have created.

Motivated by love

If people doubt that there is power in nonviolence, I am afraid that it is due in part to the fact that those of us who believe in it have yet to find for ourselves an adequate vocabulary. The leaflets we pass out tend to speak too easily about love and truth — and suggest that we hope to move people solely by being loving and truthful. The words do describe our method in a kind of shorthand. But who can read the shorthand? It is easy enough to recommend "love." How many, even among those who like to use the word, can literally feel love for a harsh opponent?

What is possible is to act toward another human being on the assumption that all people's lives are of value, that there is something about any one to be loved, whether one can feel love for him or not.

It happens that, if one does act on this assumption, it gives one much greater poise in the situation. It is easy enough to

but we had better spell out how, in battle, we rely upon the truth. It is not simply that we pay

our antagonist the human courtesy of not lying to him. We insist upon telling him truths he doesn't want to hear — telling what seems to us the truth about the injustice he commits. Words are not enough here.

Gandhi's term for nonviolent action was "satyagraha" — which can be translated as "clinging to the truth." What is

needed is this — to cling to the truth as one sees it. And one has to cling with one's entire weight. One doesn't simply say, "I have a right to sit here," but acts out that truth — and sits here. One doesn't just say, "If we are customers in this store, it's wrong that we're never hired here," but refuses to be a customer any longer. One doesn't just say, "I don't believe in this war," but refuses to put on a uniform. One doesn't just say, "The use of napalm is atrocious," but refuses to pay for it by refusing to pay one's taxes. And so on and so on. One brings what economic weight one has to bear, what political, social, psychological, what physical weight. There is a good deal more involved here than a moral appeal. It should be acknowledged both by those who argue against nonviolence and those who argue for it that we, too, rely upon force.

Learning to use force

If greater gains have not been won by nonviolent action it is because most of those trying it have, quite as Oglesby charges, expected too much from "the powerful"; and so, I would add, they have stopped short of really exercising their peculiar powers — those powers one discovers when one refuses any longer simply to do another's will. They have stopped far too short not only of widespread nonviolent disruption but of that

I argue with the contention that nonviolent action must by its nature remain naive.

form of noncooperation which is assertive, constructive — that confronts those who are "running everything"

with independent activity, particularly independent economic activity.

To refuse one's cooperation is to exert force. One can, in fact, exert so very much force in this way that many people will be quick to call noncooperators violent. How, then, does one distinguish nonviolent from violent action? It is not that it abstains from force, to rely simply

upon moral pressure. It resorts even to what can only be called physical force — when, for example, we sit down and refuse to move, and we force others to cope somehow with all these bodies.

The distinction is simply that those committed to a nonviolent discipline refuse to injure the antagonist. Of course if nonviolent action is as bold as it must be in any real battle for change, some of those resisting the change are bound to feel that injury has been done them. For they feel it as injury to be shaken out of the accustomed pattern of their lives.

But I can imagine the impatience of some of my readers with these various scruples. What, they might say, has this to do with fighting battles — battles which are in dead earnest? How can we hope to put any real pressure upon an adversary for whom we show such concern?

This is the heart of my argument: We can put more pressure on antagonists for whom we show human concern. It is precisely solicitude for their person in combination with a stubborn interference with their actions that can give us a very special degree of control. We put upon them two pressures — the pressure of our defiance of them and the pressure of our respect for their lives — and it happens that in combination these two pressures are uniquely effective.

One effect gained is to “raise the level of consciousness” for those engaged in the struggle — those on both sides. Because the human rights of the adversaries are respected, though their actions, their official policies are not, the focus of attention becomes those actions, those policies, and their true nature. The issue cannot be avoided. The antagonists cannot take the interference with their actions personally, because their person is not threatened, and they are forced to begin to acknowledge the reality of the grievance against them.

The more the real issues are drama-

tized, and the struggle raised above the personal, the more control those in nonviolent rebellion begin to gain over their adversary. For they are able at one and the

In nonviolent struggle, the violence used against one may mount for a while (indeed, if one is bold in one’s rebellion, it is bound to do so), but the escalation is



Paul McAdams

Protesters block the White Train, carrying nuclear weapons, in Portland, Ore. in 1982.

same time to disrupt everything for them, making it impossible for them to operate within the system as usual, and to temper their response to this, making it impossible for them simply to strike back without thought and with all their strength. They have two hands on them — the one calming them, making them ask questions, as the other makes them move.

In any violent struggle one can expect the violence to escalate. It does so automatically, neither side being really able to regulate the process at will.

no longer automatic; with the refusal of one side to retaliate, the mainspring of the automaton has been snapped and one can count on reaching a point where de-escalation begins. One can count, that is, in

the long run, on receiving far fewer casualties.

Nothing is more certain than this and yet, curiously, nothing is less obvious. A very common view is that nonviolent struggle is suicidal.

Nonviolence suicidal?

The contention that nonviolent

In nonviolent struggle one doesn't try to frighten the other. One tries to undo them. When — under your constant pressure — it becomes to their own interest to adapt themselves to change, they are able to do so. Fear for themselves does not prevent them.

struggle is suicidal hardly stands up under examination. Which rebels suffered more casualties — those who, under Gandhi, managed to throw the British out of India or the so-called Mau Mau who struggled by violence to throw the British out of Kenya? The British were certainly not “nice guys” in their response to the Gandhians. They, and the Indian troops who obeyed their orders, beat thousands of unarmed people, shot and killed hundreds. In the Amritsar Massacre, for example, they fired into an unarmed crowd that was trapped in a spot where no one could escape and killed 379 people, wounding many more. There was a limit, nevertheless, to the violence they could justify to themselves — or felt they could justify to the world.

In Kenya, where the British could cite as provocation the violence used against them, they hardly felt constrained to set any limits at all on their actions, and they adopted tactics very similar to those the Americans are using today against the Vietnamese. In the struggle for independence, many thousands of Africans fighting in the forest and many thousands of their supporters and sympathizers in the reserves were killed. Many were also tortured.

One can, as I say, be certain if one adopts the discipline of nonviolence that in the long run one will receive fewer casualties. And yet very few people are able to see that this is so. Several things, I think, blind people to the plain truth.

Accepting casualties

First, something seems wrong to most people engaged in struggle when they see more people hurt on their own side than on the other side. They are used to reading this as an indication of defeat, and a complete mental readjustment is required of them. Within the new terms of struggle, victory has nothing to do with their being able to give more punishment than they

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Choosing to support armed resistance

by Marianne Arbogast

On January 30, 1972, Mary Nelis watched as British paratroopers opened fire on civil rights demonstrators in the streets of Derry, Northern Ireland. Fourteen unarmed protesters were killed on what came to be known as “Bloody Sunday.” The commander of the paratroopers’ unit was later decorated by the Queen.

“It was a great shock for us — we lost our innocence,” explained Nelis in Detroit, now a grandmother and a Derry city councilwoman on the road for the cause of Irish solidarity.

Nelis had been active since the late 1960s in the struggle that had taken its cue from the U.S. civil rights movement — singing its songs, borrowing its tactics, and adopting its philosophy of nonviolence. Nelis and other activists fought for voting rights (tied to property ownership until 1969), fair housing and an end to job discrimination against the nationalist, mainly Catholic community.

“The Protestant state excluded Catholic nationalists,” she says. “We were segregated in housing, education and work. They despised everything about us — our names, our culture, our music, our flag. We had absolutely no power and no dignity.”

Though the nonviolent movement was effective in bringing about some reforms, “it was against a whole background of denying civil liberties,” Nelis says. “Ten thousand people from the nationalist community were detained without trial.”

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor at *The Witness*.

The Bloody Sunday killings, which took place at a demonstration she describes as “very peaceful,” ignited armed resistance. “The IRA went on the offensive. Thousands of young people joined, including my own children.”

She agonized over her response.



Mary Nelis

“I believed that you have to consider all ways to resolve conflict without killing,” she says. “A lot of us clung to the notion that there had to be another way.”

In 1976, two of her sons were arrested. One would spend 11 years in prison; the other was released after one.

“Most of the women formed themselves into campaign groups, to resist the British government criminalizing both our children and the struggle,” she recalls. “I had to ask myself very intense, fundamental questions. Should I support my children, and therefore the IRA? Would I ever be prepared to kill?”

“After a lot of soul-searching, I came to the conclusion that the only people making peace in Ireland was the IRA. I

saw no door open that would change the situation. All sorts of peaceful people had tried."

For Nelis, this meant accepting a new burden of obligation.

"Once you make the decision that you're going to support armed insurrection, it puts a great responsibility on you, because you have to accept responsibility for all the deaths of men, women, children, policemen, young IRA volunteers."

Nelis entered more deeply into the political struggle with Sinn Fein, Northern Ireland's nationalist political party.

Abuse of prisoners, which drew condemnation from international human rights organizations, became the focus of the campaign. Prisoners who demanded prisoner-of-war status, refusing to wear prison uniforms, were thrown into cells with only blankets.

"For five years they never got out of their cells," Nelis says. "They lay in their own excrement and dirt, never washed, never saw the sunlight. Many died."

Nelis drew widespread attention when she and other women stood in front of an Irish cathedral, wearing only blankets, to dramatize the prisoners' plight.

Nelis calls 1980-81 — the year of the hunger strikes in which 10 prisoners fasted to the death — "a catalyst year. The prisoners' struggle showed how neutralized the nonviolent struggle had become," she says. "The people who called themselves pacifists were the people who opposed them. There was an opportunity lost at that time.

"I remember going to conferences and being attacked for supporting the IRA's right to engage in armed struggle. I'd ask, 'How are you nonviolently addressing the situation?' It becomes a cop-out."

Nelis also suffered church censure, which transformed her faith.

"The churches are quite powerful in the north of Ireland, and exercise tremendous influence," she said.

"People like me were told in 1980 that we couldn't belong to the Catholic church and support the IRA. Some people were refused absolution. Our bishops refused to allow the bodies of dead IRA volunteers into church for Christian burial, while they allowed the bodies of soldiers and policemen, and let them bring the Union Jack into church. It caused division among people who had given their lives to the Catholic tradition."

At the same time, the resistance was supported by individual priests, many of them missionaries who had returned from Latin America committed to liberation theology.

"We dried our tears and decided they had left us," Nelis says of the hierarchy. "When two of our young people were killed in 1987, we went to the door of the church. The priest said we couldn't come in, and we said, 'Father, get out of the way. This is our church.'"

Nelis finds support in a base-community-style group that meets for Bible study.

"Christ's life was all about struggle with the poor and oppressed," she says. "I think Christ understands our dilemma, supporting violence, trying to find ways of nonviolence and still uphold the teachings of Christ."

Nelis believes that armed resistance, and particularly the IRA bombing of the British stock exchange that caused £2.2 billion of damage, forced the British to confront the conflict.

She is hopeful that they will withdraw from Northern Ireland, even though she says they "have been very

reluctant to support this peace" (the ceasefire declared by the IRA last year).

"The only guns out at the moment are British guns," she says. "They're still arresting people and raiding people's homes. They are actively obstructing, asking for pre-conditions to talks, saying the Irish should hand in all their arms."

Still, she says, "I believe they are going to disengage. Recently British ministers sat down to talk with members of Sinn Fein for the first time in 70 years."

Also, she says, "some of the Protestant churches have been making very progressive statements," and a conference just before Christmas brought Catholics and Protestants together.

Nelis is emphatic in declaring that the conflict "is not a religious war. England has always been in Ireland for strategic reasons, and colonizers have always divided to keep control. In Ireland they were able to divide people on the basis of religion. But the conflict has always been England's absolutely immoral presence in Ireland."

She acknowledges that "there are hard times ahead. We're in dire straits economically. We are a third-world country masquerading as first-world.

"Our economy has been tied to the war. People have been employed in prisons, police forces, and security operations.

"But it costs Britain £7 million per year to remain in the war. That could be used to create the manufacturing jobs that have been lost in the last 30 years.

"I believe the first step is to secure the peace, to ensure a peaceful transition of power," Nelis says. "I believe we do have the creativity, imagination and goodwill to solve the problems."

take (quite the reverse). Vengeance is not the point; change is. But the trouble is that in most people's minds the thought of victory and the thought of punishing the enemy coincide. If they are suffering casualties and the enemy is not, they fail to recognize that they are suffering fewer casualties than they would be if they turned to violence.

Actually, something seems wrong to many people, I think, when — in non violent struggle — they receive any casualties at all. They feel that they are not hurting anybody, then they shouldn't get hurt themselves. It is an intriguing psychological fact that when the ghetto uprisings provoked the government into bringing out troops and tanks — and killing many black people — observers like Kopkind decided that the action had been remarkably effective, citing as proof precisely the violence of the government's response.

But when James Meredith was shot in 1966 during a 200-mile voter registration walk to Jackson, Miss., any number of observers editorialized: "See, nonviolence doesn't work." Those who have this reaction overlook the fact that nonviolent battle is still battle, and in battle people do get hurt. If personal safety had been Meredith's main concern, he could have stayed at home. Battle of any kind provokes a violent response — because those who have power are not going to give it up voluntarily.

To recognize that people have greater, not less control in the situation when they have committed themselves to nonviolence requires a drastic readjustment of vision. And this means taking both a long-range view of the field and a very much cooler, more objective one.

Nonviolence can inhibit the ability of the antagonist to hit back. (If the genius of guerilla warfare is to make it impossible for the other side really to exploit its superior brute force, nonviolence can be

said to carry this even further.) And there is another sense in which it gives one greater leverage — enabling one both to put pressure upon antagonists and to modulate their response to that pressure.

In violent battle the effort is to demoralize the enemy, to so frighten them that they will surrender. The risk is that desperation and resentment will make them go on resisting when it is no longer even in their own interest. They have been driven beyond reason.

In nonviolent struggle the effort is of quite a different nature. One doesn't try to frighten the other. One tries to undo them, only in the sense that one tries to shake them out of former attitudes and force them to appraise the situation now in a way that takes into consideration your needs as well as theirs. One is able to do this precisely because one reassures them about their personal safety all the time that one keeps disrupting the order of things that they have known to date. When — under your constant pressure — it becomes to their own interest to adapt themselves to change, they are able to do so. Fear for themselves does not prevent them. In this sense a liberation movement that is nonviolent sets the oppressor free as well as the oppressed.

Nonviolence teaches us not to be naïve about the fact that some people will see it as in their interest to try to destroy us; but to recognize that they never can see it in their interest finally to accommodate themselves to the changes we are forcing unless we give them the liberty to do so. And they will only believe that we offer this liberty, only be able to imagine new lives for themselves, if we have refused to threaten them with any personal injury.

Building a truth force

Again I can imagine certain readers interrupting — to remark that I am overlooking one fundamental point. It is all very well to talk of the advantages of nonviolence but how many are going to answer the call to such battle? A certain form of struggle can hardly be called practical if one cannot recruit very many people to try it; and to get most people to fight, one has to offer certain things which nonviolent struggle does not offer.

I have heard people state, for example, that people from the ghettos would never turn to nonviolence because it does not allow them to speak out the full measure of their hatred for white people.

It is not only black people in our society who are suffering now from the sense that their lives are out of their control, and who are going to be satisfied only to take actions that give them some sense of

beginning to assert such control. At this point in our history, nonviolent action had better be taken boldly or one need hardly bother to take it at all, for one will be taking it alone.

The trouble is that in most people's minds the thought of victory and the thought of punishing the enemy coincide.

Those who believe in nonviolence face a sharp challenge. They must decide whether or not we really are engaged in a struggle that is "in dead earnest." If we are, we must act boldly; we can expect to be hurt. Those who commit themselves to violent struggle take this for granted — which gives them a certain advantage.

May those who say that they believe in nonviolence learn to challenge more boldly those institutions of violence that constrict and cripple our humanity. And may those who have questioned nonviolence come to see that one's rights to life and happiness can only be claimed as inalienable if one grants, in action, that they belong to all people. **TW**

The earth's women

by Rosemary Haughton

The earth's women are coming to realize that their own age-old dispossession is likely to extend to all creation, if the earth becomes uninhabitable.

When women get together with other women or with men, to plan and carry out actions against the deployment of weapons which may destroy all life, they are engaging in a duty of public mourning such as that to which Jeremiah called the women of his time.

If one needs to be convinced of just how dangerous this political grieving is felt to be it is only necessary to read accounts, or see newscasts, of the behavior of British police and American military towards the women who maintained the women-only peace camp at Greenham Common, outside the heavily armed perimeter of the base where nuclear weapons were stored. None of these women had ever been armed, they had done nothing more dangerous than sing, weave colored wool through the barbed wire, and periodically shake the fence until it fell, as a kind of symbol of the vulnerability and folly of patriarchal structures. But mostly they were simply there, camping and cooking and talking and trying to keep dry, or warm (or cool). Yet they were beaten, sometimes severely, insulted, their tents and equipment taken away and destroyed, even the plastic shelters they took to instead of tents periodically removed. They were imprisoned in

Rosemary Haughton, who raised 10 children as well as several official and unofficial foster children, is a founding member of Wellspring. She is the author of *Song in a Strange Land: The Wellspring Story and the Homelessness of Women* (Templegate: Springfield, IL, 1989).

high security prisons as if they were dangerous criminals.

In a collection of essays called *Reclaim the Earth*, Anita Anard tells a story of women in a remote village in Northern

India, over, as the trees were felled, the fragile topsoil was washed away, resulting in major floods which washed away bridges and roads and farms and people. The men were compelled to leave home to work for the incomers in order to survive.

So in 1974 the women organized. They and their children went out and wrapped their arms around the trees, crying out, "The forest is our mother's home, we will



She defied him to shoot her first before touching the trees.

Phyllis Wong Kun

India called Resi, who did something very peculiar — they hugged trees. What they were doing was saving the future of their families and their land. Hugging the trees, women and children prevented 70 lumberjacks from felling the oak trees as the contractor had sent them to do.

The local people had lived off the forest, which supplied their basic needs and provided a surplus to sell. The new ways offered jobs, but tied them into an economy that depended on export. More-

defend it with all our might."

This movement forced the State government to investigate the concern of the women. Its committee reported that 12,000 kilometers of sensitive watershed area was endangered by the felling, and the felling was stopped.

There really are practical ways to begin to reclaim the earth, to come home. The return home of the dispossessed, most of whom are women, is also how the earth herself may have a future. **TW**

Looking for Jesus amongst the Promise Keepers

by Fritz Eichland

Ed. Note: *Promise Keepers are taking the nation by storm — with conferences in 14 cities sold out, they expect to evangelize nearly one million men this year. Since their interpretations of faith include “honoring” women and working at race relations, Promise Keepers (PK) may positively address issues of violence in our culture. At the same time their condemnation of homosexuality causes irreparable damage. This article is not an analysis of the movement. It is a vivid descriptive piece which may make it possible to reach your own conclusions.*

Supporting all the trappings of a 1990s rock show, Promise Keepers swept into Metro-Detroit’s Pontiac Silverdome one Spring-like April weekend. Seventy-six thousand men attended the event and, reluctantly, like a bear waking from a winter’s hibernation — I was there too.

I say reluctantly because I figured that I didn’t need — and didn’t want — to hear the message these guys were preaching.

I’m a card-carrying Christian, an Episcopalian — one of God’s frozen chosen. I attend church every Sunday. I’m active in my parish. My family tithes. I recite and believe in the Apostles’ Creed. That’s on the good days.

On the bad days I waver. I vacillate in my faith. I have an arms-distance relationship with God. I am uncomfortable

with Jesus talk. The son of an alcoholic, I find it hard to trust.

And trusting in God — someone you can’t see — is a very scary thing indeed.

When Jeanie first approached me to write a story about Promise Keepers I didn’t bother to return her phone call. I did do some online research and didn’t like what I found. One cybercritic called them a bunch of “politically right-wing fundamentalists.”

A week later Jeanie and I bumped into each other at a church meeting. “I want you to do this story,” she said. “You’re good at these kind of things.”

I was busy, I said. I had other projects I was working on.

She kept after me. “Just let me send you my file.”

When I read it, my worst fears were realized. They sounded like a bunch of right-wing, Bible thumping, women-in-their-places, gay bashers.

I read about PK getting masses — we’re talking tens of thousands — of guys together for a week-end of preaching, singing, sharing their fears, talking about their personal relationship with Jesus, and praising God.

Because of the way I work as a writer — getting down in the muck and the mire with my subjects — this could be a pretty scary story

to work on. But, on the other hand, I did need a bigger hard drive for my computer and the fee would certainly help. I called and said I would do the story.

Then a strange thing happened. A couple of weeks before I attended the Promise Keepers meeting, I came across Romans 6:3-11 during a parish Bible study.

Beyond sin and death

Reading the passage was like getting whacked upside the head by a two-by-four. I felt that for the first time I might have an understanding what this Christianity thing was all about. And that maybe, just maybe, I was ready to start moving down the road of my spiritual life.

So there I was on a sunny, spring Friday afternoon, when I would like to have been outside riding my bike, sitting in the press box waiting for the show to start.

The Silverdome is the largest domed stadium in the world. It’s three levels tall

and capped with a fabric dome. It seats 80,311 football fans. During religious events they tear out the artificial turf and put ten thousand seats more on the playing field. The event had sold out — without advertising, just word of mouth — in two weeks.

A record, the PK media people said.

Inside it would be a real show. The

sound system control board parked in the center of the main floor looked every bit as impressive as the ones I’d seen at the

By quarter of seven the place was packed with 76,000 guys. The band slipped into a lite-rock version of “Crown Him With Many Crowns.” Then “Rise Up, O Men Of God.” I’ve never experienced anything like what happened next: 76,000 men on their feet, everybody singing, cheering and yelling at the end.

Fritz Eichland is a teacher, freelance writer/photographer and bicycle enthusiast living in the Detroit area.



Seventy thousand men gathered to pray with the Promise Keepers in Pontiac, Michigan. F.E.

Twisted Sister and AC/DC concerts I'd attended. The side sections of the stage stretched to the top of the second deck. The main section overflowed with ferns, ficus trees, speakerbanks, and band equipment.

The draping around the stage was an abstract swirl of Plums and Teals. And that color scheme carried over to all the PK guys and gals at the press conference and running around the stadium. They looked as if they had just stepped out of a Gap ad: khaki pants, braided leather belts, teal shirts with plum trim, loafers.

By quarter of seven the place was packed — except for 1,000 women volunteers — with 76,000 guys.

Beach balls bounced around the lower deck. Paper airplanes floated down past the second level press box. Two or three Canadian flags poked up out of the crowd.

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti; and people signs: John, I'm in section 131. Like a tsunami, waves rippled around the lower deck. Every 10 minutes the same group of guys would launch a four-foot Styrofoam glider from the second deck.

The band — five singers, guitar, keyboard, percussion — moved on stage and slipped into a lite-rock version of "Crown Him With Many Crowns." A few guys in the crowd got up to sway to the music. Some hands were up, waving to the beat. Still lite-rocking, it segued into "Come Thou Almighty King." More guys on their feet. Then "Rise Up, O Men Of God." I've never experienced anything like what happened next: 76,000 men on their feet, everybody singing, cheering and yelling at the end.

"No matter how we got here, from near or far we all came together by the

prodding of God," yelled Glenn, the MC. "For the next 36 hours this place is the home of the lions of the tribe of Judah." (The Silverdome is the home of the Detroit Lions.)

Live theater

I'm a big fan of live theater. Besides the play itself I love watching all the other action — actors entering and exiting, the lighting, the scenery, how things are put together. And at the PK Conference I wasn't disappointed. This was live theater at its finest.

These people were organized! There was a three- or four-song warm-up set, Glenn told a joke or two and introduced the speaker who talked for 30 minutes. We would see a PK commercial on the big Diamond Vision screen. There would be a short break.

And then the band started up again.

The idea behind PK is to help us guys become better men. Better men by becoming Godly men. PK believes that

society and the country is in a mess because us guys are promise breakers, not promise keepers.

We've broken our relationship with God. We evade responsibility at home. We cheat on our wives. We abuse our kids. We're addicted to sex, drugs, and alcohol. We can't ask for directions. We are a mess.

And the conference is designed to start housebreaking us. There are eight sessions in the conference — each dealing with one of the PK's seven promises, plus an extra walk-up call.

Less than an hour into the conference evangelist Luis Palau asked me: What was my relationship with Jesus? And he wanted to know about my morals. They were pretty pointed questions too. Like, did Jesus reign and control my life? Was I struggling with homosexuality, masturbation, pornography, fantasizing? Did I give in to these temptations? Would I put my sexuality under the control of Jesus? What about my business morals? What about my family? Do they see the hand of God in my life?

This was hot and heavy stuff. Jesus wants to have a personal relationship with you, he said. And you with him, but you're afraid. You know if you surrender it will cost you. People will call you crazy.

But what will happen is you will have a thinking, exciting, personal relationship with Christ. You will know your sins are forgiven.

Here's what you need to do, he said. Confess. Renounce all evil in your life. Say, "I don't understand Christ, but come into my heart."

He invited those of us who wanted to commit or rededicate our lives to Christ to come forward.

In an instant — like they had been waiting for it — guys were out of their chairs, moving forward, streaming down the aisles onto the main floor. I sat stunned

in the press box. I had expected an altar call, but not now. I had figured it to come about five o'clock Saturday afternoon when everyone was sleep deprived.

The area in front of the stage looked like a huge mosh pit. Guys were crying. Hugging each other. PK volunteers passed out Bibles. The band played lite-rock



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hymns. Smooth-talking Glenn the MC moved on stage.

"We don't want anyone to leave without assurance of eternal life ... your sins are forgiven ... be filled with the holy spirit," he said .

"Put your family under the blessing of God," said Luis. It took almost 45 minutes to get everyone back into their seats.

Later on Glenn announced that 7,500 guys had asked for salvation that night.

This was standard stuff, I thought. I could get this on Cable. I

talked with a couple of local religion writers I knew. We agreed that so far we hadn't seen or heard much out of the ordinary.

What would it be like and what would we have if we accept Jesus Christ as our personal savior? asked E. V. Hill, the next speaker. His answer: peace with God, the peace of God, and God as a guide in life.

"The way things are now," he said, "you need a guide."

If you have the peace of God and God as a guide, you will rise up and lead your community to righteousness, he said. "And you will do it in the name of Jesus Christ."

He started to pace back and forth across the front of the stage.

"Men of God love," he shouted at us. "They love, help, and save. They have the power to turn America around."

Guys were on their feet now cheering and clapping.

"Go do it," Hill hollered at us.

"Go do it.

"Go do it."

The band started lite-rocking "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus" and we all sang along. After the song, Glenn told us to write down one key thought for each session in our PK workbooks, don't forget

our wrist bands, and he would see us at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

I sat in the press box thinking about what I had heard and seen.

An interesting spectacle, but lacking in emotion, I thought. I heard the speakers, but they

John grabbed my hand and we started to share and pray. John's prayer was about spending time with TV sports instead of his family. I was kind of embarrassed. I didn't know this guy. Episcopalians don't do things like this, even in the house church I attend.

weren't reaching me. I was envious of the 7,500 guys that allowed God to move in their lives. I had wanted that, but like the five virgins, had been asleep at the switch.

Wait a minute! It reached those 7,500 guys that came forward. They were involved. Those 7,500 had come with the thought of allowing God to move into their lives.

Then I realized: I was just watching. I was the one that was unemotional. I was the one that was withdrawn, sitting in the press box. I was the one that was cynical, questioning.

If anything was going to happen, be it story-wise or movement down my spiritual road, I was going to have to participate and allow whatever happened to happen.

7 a.m. With cleaning crews still moving through the third deck, the doors opened and like coffee slowly filling a cup, the guys covered the main floor, bubbled over the first level, filled in the second level in a flash, and by 9 a.m. lapped at the stadium's top row of seats on the third level.

The band started a lite-rock warm up. Glenn asked us to pray for a bus load of Illinois guys coming to PK who were involved in an accident. Six were in critical condition.

Joe Garlington told us that if we are to become men of worship, regular prayer is important. We needed to find a place, a time, and a partner, he said.

For most of Joe's talk I moved around the Silverdome, from the main floor to the last row in the third deck, shooting photos.

Want to pray?

But I got back to the press box just in time for Joe to tell us to break into small groups to share and pray together.

John, a writer sitting next to me, asked me if I wanted to pray.

Okay, I say to myself, you can sit and watch or join in and see what happens. I

said yes.

John grabbed my hand and we started to share and pray. John's prayer was about spending time with TV sports instead of his family. I was kind of embarrassed. I didn't know this guy. Episcopalians don't do things like this, even in the house church I attend.



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Get with the program, I yelled at myself. I shared the first concern that popped into my head: Too much time with my computer.

John prayed for me. Let the Lord come into my life, he said. I prayed that he could tear himself away from his TV. I kept looking at my watch. I had to leave and cover the gay and lesbian demonstration. And I felt uncomfortable as hell and wanted to get out of there.

Demonstrating outside

The people at the anti-PK demonstration — representatives from Macomb County NOW, the Triangle Foundation, and Affirmations were angry for a variety of reasons: PK represented a repressive version of the family. They promoted male dominance. They are anti-gay. They

Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper

1. A Man and His God: A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. A Man and His Mentors: A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

3. A Man and His Integrity: A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

4. A Man and His Family: A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages, families, love, protection, and biblical values.

5. A Man and His Church: A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of the church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources.

6. A Man and His Brothers: A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.

7. A Man and His World: A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (see Matt. 28:19-20).

proof-text the Bible.

A counter-demonstration of pro-PK forces formed. Sixteen anti's and four anti-anti's. The anti-PKs shouted a few slogans — "Men don't own women and children, Liberation not domination." The anti-anti's carried a Christian flag and a Bible and were on a first name basis with some of the anti's.

Both sides argued at each other about being polite and whether Scott Amadore, a gay guy from a Detroit suburb who was murdered by the straight fellow he embarrassed on the Jenny Jones Show, deserved it or not and whether he would burn in hell.

I left. Things could only get worst. And I didn't want to miss lunch.

I got back to the press lunch room and found a seat with a bunch of radio guys. Then a fellow I had noticed sitting in front of me in the press box came up to the table and asked if he could sit with us.

"I've been saving the seat for you," I said, sort of my own private joke.

David and I started talking. He was an Episcopalian from Virginia visiting the conference as a guest of the publisher of *New Man*, a magazine that covers the Godly men's revolution.

"I find a real sweetness here," he said. "Any movement that can get men to appreciate women to the point of serving them has to be given credit."

What do you think? he asked me.

I didn't find anything objectionable yet, I said. But I did feel uncomfortable around all the Jesus talk. It's just not my style.

A divine encounter?

David shifted around in his seat looking me in the eyes.

"I have to tell you this," he said.

Uh-oh, I thought.

"I saw you sitting at the table when I got in line," he said.

"I felt this wave sweep over me. God

was speaking to me and He said go sit with this fellow. If the seat next to you was still empty when I got through the line I would come over.

"It took me 10 minutes to get through the line and the seat next to you was still empty. When I came over and asked if I could sit there you said ..."

"I've been saving the seat for you," I finished for him. "I say that a lot, it's a private joke."

Then, with all the finesse of a blind-side punch, he said: "What's your relationship with Jesus?"

"Well," I said, hemming and hawing, thinking, trying to figure out what to say and do. "I'm not sure."

"Do you want to have a personal relationship with Jesus?" he asked.

"I'm afraid of that language," I said.

"That doesn't matter," he said. "Do you want to have a personal relationship with God? He's here now."

I thought a minute.

"I did have this weird experience recently with Romans."

One of the reasons I came to the conference, I told him, besides to do this story was to move down the spiritual road I felt was opening before me.

"Fritz," he said, "has anyone ever prayed for you? I mean really prayed?"

"I don't know," I said. "I'm not sure. I mean, yes, I guess."

"Do you want to have a personal relationship with Jesus?" he asked.

"I'm afraid of that language," I said.

"That doesn't matter," he said. "Do you want to have a personal relationship with God? He's here now."

I thought a minute. This is one of the things I had come for.

This is what the 7,500 guys that had witnessed last night had come for. Same place. Different way.

"Sure," I said. "I'm frightened. I don't know what to do."

"Fritz," he said, "just pretend Jesus is sitting across the table from you and say what comes into your mind."

Hey, I thought, stop being so stiff-necked. What could go wrong?

"Jesus," I said, focusing on the salt shaker, "I want to have a personal relationship with you."

Thunderbolts, rushing wind, burning bushes?

No.

David reached over and put his hand on my shoulder and, in the middle of the Silverdome press room, with people trooping by and lite-rock hymns in the background, prayed for me.

He prayed that my new relationship with Jesus would deepen. He prayed that I would fulfill God's wishes for my life.

Then we traded cards and went back to work.

'Out-servant her'

Did I see the conference any differently? I did feel like I was one of the gang now.

Does that mean I liked all that I heard? No.

Wellington Boone told us not to dominate our wives, leading out of fear, but to become a spiritual leader by out-servanting them.

"Surprise her," he said. Surprise her by writing love letters and giving her time for herself.

"Outservant her, men. Got that?" he shouted at us.

I also heard him call homosexuality an abomination and cringed because I

thought of Rick, my best friend and a guy I love like a brother, who is gay.

I heard Joe Stowell, the president of Moody Bible Institute, tell us to spend more time with our kids, that the most important thing we could give them is time.

"They don't care about your day or work or office," he said. "They care about you."

I heard Tony Evans, a black man, complain about gays getting together and organizing for political power.

"There is nothing wrong," he said, "with Christians getting together. It's time for *us* to come out."

But I also heard him speak forcefully on racism.

"We might have come over on different ships," he reminded us, "but we are all in the same boat now."

Overcoming racism

Race and color have kept us apart, he said.

"How can we be the people of God on Monday if we don't worship together on Sunday? The only color that matters is red — the color of the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

Then he commanded us to get our lives together and be brothers.

"No more niggers, honkies, wops ... brothers!" It brought all 76,000 guys to our feet shouting, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus."

I didn't shout Jesus, but I was on my feet cheering and clapping.

Boone and Randy Phillips, the white president of PK, stood face-to-face before 76,000 guys and apologized to each other for the past racial discrimination and bigotry each of their races had shown toward the other.

It was gutsy. A real model of reconciliation each of us could take home and use in our lives.

One woman's perspective

Holly Phillips, Randy's wife and the only

woman to speak, soberly warned us that many women have a difficult time with change.

"Some wives will be thrilled and overjoyed by the strange, changed man that just walked through the door," she said. "Some will be cautious and uneasy."

Change in your family could take a couple of years, she said. And for some it may never come because it is just too late.

She told us to find a small group of men to talk with at home, to find a partner and become accountable.

"I'm a fraud," Bill McCartney, the PK founder told us. I shouldn't be up here, he said, because of what I was.

His change from a driven, obsessed football coach came, he said, when one day he looked at his wife in church and instead of happiness saw pain on her face.

I knew I needed to change, he said.

Forgive, Give and Live. Those were the three words that helped him change.

Forgive everybody of everything. Give and you will receive. And Live as Christ would live His life, he said.

A steady trickle of tired looking men moved from their seats, into the aisles, and out of the stadium as he spoke.

McCartney's talk was an odd rambling letdown from the others we had heard.

Randy came back on as the trickle of men leaving became a flood and talked about money, the only time during the conference it was mentioned. We prayed together and lite-rocked about leaving as Godly men.

Looking for changes

A couple of weeks after the conference I asked Patricia, my wife, if she saw any changes in me.

"You're less cynical and more open to seeing God move in your life and the lives of other people," she said.

I liked that. Beside the story, that's what I went for. **TW**

What the critics say:

"I'm concerned when they take first-century morality and try to apply it to the 20th century. They take one sentence from Leviticus and use it to condemn gays. In the last part of the 20th century we don't do that. Bill McCartney was involved with Colorado Amendment Two. During the time it was debated hate crimes went up 300 percent. When it passed there was another big increase."

— Jeff Montgomery,
Triangle Foundation, Detroit area Gay Rights group

"Men ought to be in football stadiums and be told how to behave in light of change in family structure and the roles of women.

"These people are preaching old wrongs about men being the head of the household. It's about control. It's a network. The religious right really wants to make a democracy into a theocracy. They want to make Christians out of everybody."

— Sharon Bogucki,
Macomb County National Organization for Women

"I think it is less of a men's movement and more of a new angle on the old Evangelical Crusade. It reminds me of the 1950s and 1960s Billy Graham big group crowd phenomena.

The Men's Movement is much more focused on the issues and concerns of men's lives: a particular faith or form is not that important. I see patriarchal leanings and homophobia in the Promise Keepers."

— David Brower,
Detroit Episcopal priest in the Men's Movement

Prayer and renewal in the midst of misconduct: an interview with M. Thomas Shaw

M. Thomas Shaw, S.S.J.E., the 15th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, succeeds the late David E. Johnson, who committed suicide in January, 1995. Shaw, 49, had been serving as bishop coadjutor of the diocese at the time. The Society of St. John the Evangelist, of which Shaw is a member, is a religious order of priests and lay brothers in the Episcopal Church involved with ministry to the urban poor, retreat work and spiritual direction.

Julie Wortman: The Diocese of Massachusetts and you were thrown into the public spotlight rather suddenly last January after Bishop Johnson's suicide and the subsequent revelation that he had been involved in adulterous sexual relationships. People are interested in the way you handled the disclosure of both. Some would say you told too much.

M. Thomas Shaw: With the suicide, I took my lead from David's wife, Jodie Johnson. Initially we were the only two people except for the police who had the information that David had committed suicide. I said to her, "Jodie how do you want to deal with this?" And she said, "We're going to be honest about it." Once she gave me that permission, Paul's words about "the truth will set you free" became the thing that guided us in making our decisions about disclosure.

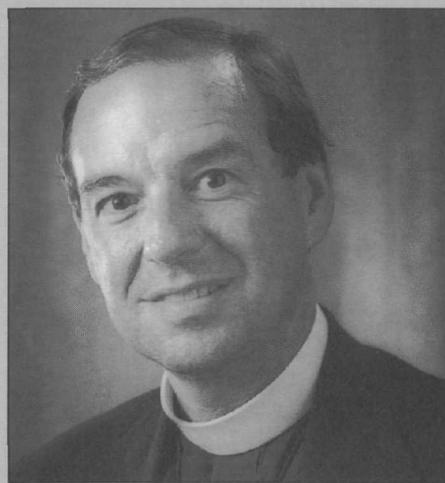
When I say "the truth will set you free," I think that people don't need and shouldn't have access to all the information that's there. But it is the honesty people need in

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

order to bring about health and encouragement of Christian community in the future.

J.W.: Did you also take your lead from Jodie Johnson about disclosure when it was revealed that David Johnson had engaged in extra-marital sexual relationships?

T.S.: It was certainly something that we talked about, but I knew enough from dealing with such situations that if we were going to be concerned about the



M. Thomas Shaw

David Zadig

If I really take the time to pray about each of these sexual misconduct cases before they come to me, I feel I can go into the whole thing with an openness — and a lack of defensiveness, because as a white male I obviously come into these situations with a lot of baggage.

health of the church we didn't really have any choice. It has become increasingly apparent to me that in forming Christian community secrecy is almost never helpful. The kind of secrecy that allows people to collude with the power of sin or evil is always destructive.

J.W.: That sounds simple, but I imagine it isn't. Where have you bumped up against the greatest difficulties with disclosure?

T.S.: It is difficult to know how much information one should release at a given time, especially when there is conflicting evidence or extenuating circumstances.

J.W.: So what do you do? I assume most cases have extenuating circumstances.

T.S.: Yes. I don't want to sound overly pious, but I think that it is prayer that has helped me in dealing with these cases. If I really take the time to pray about each of these cases as they come to me, the Holy Spirit gives me some clarity. And by that I don't mean that an answer suddenly comes on my mental screen, but when I walk into a situation and I have to respond to the pain and the people, in some way the Holy Spirit gives me some clarity in speaking. I also have found that I need a lot of guidance and counsel from other people — I try to avoid making decisions in isolation. Lay women, especially, have a lot of insight that's helpful to me.

J.W.: Does the praying help you avoid presuppositions?

T.S.: It gives me a kind of space. You know that wonderful phrase from the psalms where the psalmist says, "You brought me out into an open place and I feel as though you've rescued me"? I feel that if I can pray about a situation beforehand I can go into the whole thing with an openness — and a lack of defensiveness, because as a white male I obviously come into these situations with a lot of baggage. I think prayer helps me not carry quite as much baggage or at least gives me some compensating perspective.

J.W.: Is there a prevailing dynamic that you see as you deal with cases of clergy misconduct?

T.S.: I often see in the perpetrators

people who are ministering in isolation and who don't have colleagues or the kind of spiritual resources to deal with the hard issues around ministry and so they don't have any clarity. They have affection needs and recognition needs that more appropriately should be expressed in an intimate relationship with a spouse or a friend or in their own prayer time, but they don't seem to have access to that.

And some of what I see, too, is that offending clergy don't "get it" as far as the power issue and the issues around sexual ethics. It's obvious to me as a bishop and also as somebody who's been a spiritual director that whether or not we want the power or whether or not we believe that's what the church says theologically about those positions, we have that power. The abuse of that power is something that can be incredibly damaging to people.

J.W.: What is the power clergy have?

T.S.: I think we have power as far as access is concerned, an *entree* into peoples' lives. I think defenses are a good thing for people to have and that there is a reason why people have defenses, but there are times when people should feel they don't have to put up those defenses. One of the sacred places is the relationship between a priest and a person who comes to a priest for help.

J.W.: What don't offending clergy "get" about sexual ethics?

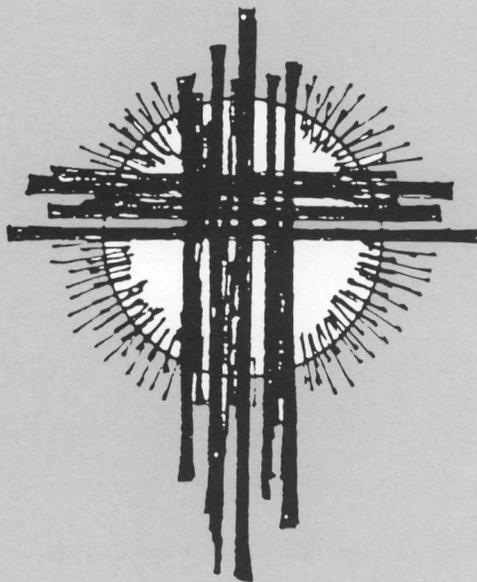
T.S.: A lot of us clergy were brought up in the church in the 1960s and early 1970s, when there was a muddled sexual ethic — I think there's a muddled sexual ethic now, only it's a different one. But in the 1960s and 1970s there wasn't much guidance; there wasn't much in the way of standards or ideals that were held up to people. I don't think the Christian church in the West has had much of a clear understanding of Christian sexuality since the 5th century — since Augustine. Augustine kind of cut off the debate.

From my own pastoral experience before becoming bishop, I think that how Christians live out their sexuality is something that's not understood. The institution of Christian marriage is in a lot of trouble and should be the focus, more

than whether or not we allow same-sex unions.

Many marriages, when it comes to the issue of sexuality, are really not in great shape. And I'm not sure the church has provided much help, nor have men and women in Christian marriages been willing to be honest about that. All this stuff about homosexuality is just a red herring to distract us from the much deeper issue of sexuality and contemporary culture and the lack of Christian guidance.

J.W.: Can you give an example of what you mean?



Clergy who have the long view recognize that while this is a terribly difficult thing we're going through right now, it is part of some very powerful renewal in the life of the church that has to do not just with sexuality but with gender issues and lay and ordained ministry.

T.S.: Take married relationships that are 15 or 20 years old. What role does sexuality play in those and how does sexuality contribute to the health of the relationship and the wholeness of the human being?

J.W.: Are you saying that people aren't talking about whether they are having sex and what their expectations are from the sexual relationship?

T.S.: Yes, and they're not talking about the role their sexuality plays in their wholeness as Christians and how they connect that to their prayer, to their life with God and to their ministry. I think that most of us who are Christians in the West compartmentalize our sexuality. And that's one of the things we discovered as we tried to unravel David Johnson's life — that he had this tremendous power of compartmentalizing, that he could see his sexuality in a very different way from the rest of his life. I don't think everybody is as extreme as he was, but the healthy integration of sexuality and spirituality is not there for most of us.

J.W.: I've heard it said that a lot of the clergy in the church are demoralized right now, partly because of the current focus on clergy sexual misconduct.

T.S.: I think a certain segment might be. I think that the power of evil will always try to draw us into the negative around these difficult issues, the depression and the loss of morale, but I think there's tremendous grace and resurrection in it. We have been having a lot of discussions in our diocese about background checks. Some clergy are very much against this, but others think this is the right thing to be doing. Clergy who have the long view of things recognize that while this is a terribly difficult thing we're going through right now, it is part of some very powerful kind of renewal in the life of the church that has to do not just with sexuality but with gender issues and lay and ordained ministry. If we're faithful to this I think it is something that's going to really help all of us — and help us be the body of Christ.

J.W.: Can you envision an institutional church in which ordained folks can be in mutual relationship with lay folks, not in

power-over relationships with them?

T.S.: We have lots of congregations like that all across the Episcopal Church. Unfortunately, they're not the ones that are reported on in the press. I go into congregations Sunday after Sunday where clergy and laity understand who they are, understand how they are to relate to one another and what is appropriate.

I've received letters from people who think we disclosed too much about the Bishop Johnson case or say the women in the Bishop Johnson case were really the ones to blame, but overwhelmingly I've had men and women, lay and ordained, say to me that they are grateful that we've been so honest with all of this and that it means so much to the life of the church. To me that is an incredibly healthy response. *The Boston Globe* even did an editorial on it. That's a sign that a lot of

people understand what a healthy relationship between clergy and lay people in a Christian community is supposed to be.

J.W.: What is your hope for the clergy under your authority who are guilty of sexual misconduct?

T.S.: I think it is like any other issue in the Christian pilgrimage. Out of every sin we commit, out of every difficult time we go through, because Jesus Christ has been victorious over death, God can bring something towards wholeness that is quite wonderful. I guess my hope for the clergy I deal with is that they're able to experience something of the power of the resurrection as they go through this painful experience.

For congregations, I hope they have some assurance that there will be some protection from this in the future. As a bishop, the health of the local Christian community is very important to me.

New York's new suffragan!

Catherine S. Roskam, 52, was voted suffragan bishop of New York in a three-ballot election on June 10, making her the fourth woman to be elected to the episcopate in the Episcopal Church, USA, and the sixth woman to be elected bishop in the worldwide Anglican communion.

"Many people in the diocese were interested in electing a woman bishop," Roskam said following the election, citing a widespread desire for further "diversity" in diocesan leadership. New York is currently served by three male bishops — of European, African and Caribbean descent. Three out of five of the candidates in the election were women.

The bishop-elect began her ordained ministry in New York but has been missionary in the Diocese of California since 1991.



Catherine Roskam

The election must now be ratified by a majority of the bishops and diocesan standing committees in the Episcopal Church. She expects some opposition.

"The fact that I am a woman will be a problem for some. But I am also an inclusive person — I expect to sign the 1994 *Koinonia* statement [put forward by Newark bishop John Spong calling sexual orientation "morally neutral" and ordination "open to all baptized persons"] — and that will be a problem for others." Roskam said she has been a member of Integrity, the Episcopal Church's gay rights organization, since 1984.

Roskam is scheduled to start work in New York on January 1, 1996. Her husband, Philip, is a licensed psychologist, and their daughter, Gemma, attends college on the west coast.

Power, influence and authority: a cautionary tale by Reginald G. Blaxton

Ed. note: The following was written in response to the second installment of The Witness' six-part series on clergy sexual exploitation. Reginald Blaxton takes issue with "The Power Debate" by Julie A. Wortman, 5/95. We recognize that much of Blaxton's analysis is also at odds with the preceding Tom Shaw interview.

Proponents of the view that Episcopal clergy serving congregations are powerful individuals would do well to step back from their advocacy for a moment and reflect on a single statistic. *During the space of a decade, approximately a million parishioners have left the Episcopal Church.*

There are probably a million reasons for this exodus. But the fact remains that any sort of clerical "power" that can be so readily resisted and repudiated by so many people should not be considered power at all.

In secular perspective, most congregational clergy in mainline denominations, outside of employer-employee relationships are *not* powerful people.

In a hierarchical church, the potential for clerical power increases the closer one moves to the Ordinary's office. But even an Episcopal bishop's power — his or her ability to achieve purpose — is subject and constrained, by design, by many other checks and balances, in law and custom.

It is true that the authority of presbyters as ordained ministers may enable them at times to significantly influence the decision-making and actions of genuinely powerful members of their congregations. But authority is not power, and it should not be confused with power.

I believe that the idea that parochial clergy involved in sexual misconduct

exercise “power” in relation to their adult victims has been appropriated, without critical reflection, from analyses of sexual abuse in other professional contexts, principally the practice of psychotherapy.

But pastoral care — what parish clergy practice professionally — is not psychotherapy. And the kind of counsel which clergy are trained, ordained and expected to provide, across the full range of theological learning, i.e., in *Divinity* — is not “psychological” in the commonly accepted sense of the word.

Professionally speaking, clergy are counselors in the same sense that lawyers are called and considered *counselors-at-law*.

I suspect that the secular psychotherapeutic/counseling model has been appropriated to shore up a professional identity weakened by the pressures of secularism and specialization, questions about the intellectual and moral credibility of Divinity as a field of professional expertise and profound skepticism about the sometimes unconscionable ways clerics have exercised power in the past, in church and state, when they had it.

Clerical sexual abuse does entail an abuse of *authority*—the right to command and the correlative right to be obeyed. It is particularly troubling that “experts” on sexual misconduct in the church setting, most of whom are women, do not seem to recognize the distinctions between power, influence and authority.

In the current controversy over clerical sexual misconduct, there is but one genuinely powerful player: the Church Pension Fund and its subsidiary, the Church Insurance Corporation (CIC).

Conceived during the late 19th century as a service agency to relieve clergy and their widows of the burden of poverty during their retirement years, the Church Pension Fund was granted in 1913, as a condition of its establishment, a monopoly over the business of the Episcopal Church.

Monopoly is the effective source of power. This private, commercial enterprise (in an action for which I can find no precedent in modern church history)

has now grown rich and arrogant enough to dictate internal church policy. *That* is an example of institutional power.

Sexual misconduct policy, in its formulation and enactment, depends on the authority of bishops, as religious community leaders, for its effect. If the process used in the Diocese of Washington is a reliable guide to the wider church’s practice, there will be no opportunity for critical review, public debate in convention, or a vote on the wisdom of these measures. (And so, I would have to say that the headline in *The Witness*—“The Power Debate”—is both misleading and inaccurate.)

If the CIC is truly powerful, and sexual misconduct policies rely on the extra-canonical authority of bishops for their force and effect, the “experts” are, at present, highly influential (though I suspect

Reader response

I believe that the idea that parochial clergy involved in sexual misconduct exercise “power” in relation to their adult victims has been appropriated, without critical reflection, from analyses of sexual abuse in other professional contexts.

that *they* view their influence as power).

Their expertise goes unchallenged by the holy common folk of God, clerical and lay. And their claims that they are merely acting “pastorally,” as advocates of “victims” and “survivors” have been accepted with a surprising degree of docility.

So long as these “experts” are able/enabled to hide their own power interests in the enactment of sexual misconduct policy, and the political and financial

interests of other players, behind the benign, apolitical, unexamined rhetoric of “pastoral” concern and responsiveness, I believe that more people, demoralized by superficial thinking about power, and the malign effect of such thinking on the quality of Christian community and inter-personal relationships, voting with their feet, will have ample reason to leave the church.

The posture of victimization, finally, is neither powerful nor spiritually healthful. It represents a flight from, an immature refusal to accept, personal responsibility for being/becoming a sensitive and competent moral actor.

The experts’ focus on victimization is anti-pastoral in that it encourages passivity in the face of injustice; for where the nature and dynamics of power are misconceived, and the social context of ethical action and response is misconstrued, the support and nurture of the holy common folk of God — i.e., *empowerment*, in political parlance — cannot be effectively practiced.

Consider for example, a recent news article concerning former national church treasurer Ellen Cooke’s theft of 2.2 million dollars. In addition to her appointment as treasurer, Cooke, at the time of her firing for reasons unrelated to her stealing, was the senior administrator of the national church staff, second in authority to the primate, a position hitherto only held by a bishop.

According to Cooke’s statement an Episcopal priest now counseling her had stressed “the truth of my inappropriate and wrong response to the situation in which I found myself.” The priest, who is a woman, “has helped me to acknowledge the pain, abuse and powerlessness I have felt during the years as a laywoman on a senior staff level at the church headquarters” (*The New York Times*, May 8, 1995).

A cautionary tale? You bet.

Reginald Blaxton is an Episcopal priest who lives in Washington, D.C. He is a member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company board.

continued from page 5

This issue offers several perspectives on the atomic bombings in 1945 and on nonviolence.

It opens with letters recently rediscovered that my father wrote to his parents from Okinawa in the summer of 1945 (p. 8). These letters are humbling for me — reading his accounts, I realized that I had previously viewed the atomic bombing in a vacuum, without factoring in the destruction and carnage that were already in action.

As a Navy chaplain, my father was burying American boys on a Japanese beach (p. 8). He writes, “The quicker, harder, and more often we bomb Japan, the quicker the war will be over and that many more men’s lives will be saved. That is what I want.”

I suspect that my father, who died in 1974 — by then a passionate critic of Richard Nixon, might have modified his views had he had access to the articles now in circulation which suggest that the U.S. had strong incentives to prolong the war (p. 12).

Dorothy Day, an advocate of nonviolence, was shrewd enough to anticipate these kinds of U.S. interests at the time; she opposed the war (p. 11).

At a recent contributing editors’ meeting in Detroit, people at the table, each with long histories in justice struggles, had radically different views on nonviolence. For some it is a life-discipline, for others it’s an occasional tactic that usually needs to be backed by the threat of force.

Drawing on both perspectives, we have included the convictions of an Irish grandmother connected to *Sinn Fein* (p. 23) and those of a couple who cashed in their retirement pensions to provide a neutral setting where divorced people can exchange their kids in safety (p. 38). We also found that Holly Elliott is studying common usage of nonviolence (p. 6).

But we needed someone to speak to the division between those struggling for justice who rely on armed resistance (p. 22) and those staking their lives on nonviolence. We found Barbara Deming (p. 18). She acknowledges that people can use nonviolence as a cover for passivity. She is also clear that while nonviolence *does* mean that you cause an adversary no bodily harm, it *does not* mean that you

“I’m not sure I believe in nonviolence anymore,” a neighbor complained. He explained that he hurls rocks, or eggs, at the cars of men who bring street prostitutes into the alley where his children play.

abstain from using force. Some will question her belief. But I find it a relief. And it’s the antidote to a friend’s desperation on my block.

“I’m not sure I believe in nonviolence anymore,” a neighbor and friend in the community, complained recently on his front porch.

He explained that he hurls rocks, or eggs, at the cars of the men who bring street prostitutes into the alley where his children play. Day in and day out, suburban and local men park their sexual desires in the corners of our neighborhood.

“I don’t think I’m ever going to have the soul force to protect the neighborhood just by concentrating on goodness,” he said in disgust.

Then he went on to give a very thorough explanation of what serious nonviolence would look like in our neighborhood.

“We need teams of people to go door-

to-door to build the block club. Everyone needs the phone numbers of neighbors. Last week an elderly lady over by where they’re digging up the street heard a bang on her basement window and then a guy came to the door, shouting, ‘We’ve got a gas leak. I need to check your basement. I think it’s going to blow.’” She let him in. He robbed her. She needed to call a block captain — forget about the police.

“We need to police the area — we need to confront people together. It would take discipline and time.”

Of all of us, this friend is the most vigilant and active in the neighborhood. He’s also closest to despair because so few of us make the neighborhood meetings at the library. Without solidarity, we can arm our cars and homes with alarms. Or we can give up our homes and flee, as urban refugees, to another community. Bottom line, we can try to protect them with guns.

The dilemma is the same regionally and internationally.

Lip service to a nonviolent ethic will not suffice.

We can’t afford to be simplistic or self-righteous. Nonviolence presupposes a willingness to understand our adversaries’ motivations. This is why we need to have conversations with members of citizen militias. It’s why this issue includes an article that is not entirely unsympathetic to the Promise Keepers, a group which will pull together hundreds of thousands of men this year to teach conservative moral values (p. 26). It’s why we can’t float candles for the dead in Hiroshima but refuse to acknowledge the agony of U.S. soldiers in WWII.

We can’t demonize those with whom we disagree. We can’t be detached or naive about power. For nonviolence to work, we need to be smart, engaged and able to strategize. With luck, or discipline, we’ll stand in community and find ways to decrease the violence around us. 

Bonhoeffer's resistance

by Michael L. Westmoreland-White

The Cup of Wrath: A Novel Based on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Resistance to Hitler, by Mary Glazener, Smyth & Helwys Press, Macon, GA: 1992.

In most historical novels the main characters and most of the action are fictional, but the setting and (perhaps) some of the minor characters, and actions, are drawn from historical events. Mary Glazener has not written that kind of book. Rather, hers is a nonfiction historical novel, a genre new to me. All of her "characters" are actual historical persons, and only two of them have been disguised with fictional names. The plot, most of the action, and almost all the dialogue is historical as well. Glazener's work is a "novel," rather than a biography, however, because she describes emotions, gives an omniscient viewpoint, and creates probable conversations out of the actual words of her major characters. The result is an *interpretation* of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his family, friends, and their resistance to Hitler, that has all the power of a novel and none of the heavy-handed didacticism of more straightforward interpretations.

In this 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and the Holocaust, looking again at a small handful of Germans who opposed Hitler and Naziism is quite instructive. *The Cup of Wrath* sheds light on a time of great darkness. It allows us to view a very human Bonhoeffer, seeing him develop from a young theologian to the creative prophet of the *Letters and*

Michael Westmoreland-White, a new member of the International Bonhoeffer Society, recently completed a doctorate in Christian ethics. He lives in Louisville, KY.

Papers from Prison. Further, we confront painfully the failures of most Christians (even the Confessing Church), of that era, fearing that our own churches might be as susceptible to ideological captivity. It sheds light on Bonhoeffer's fellow conspirators, mostly secular, and we wonder how they found courage and clarity where so many did not.

Glazener does not answer all our questions, but brings the importance of the questions home to us in a decisive way. One place this is most obvious is the perpetual question of how Bonhoeffer speaks to the question of the morality of violence. Bonhoeffer scholars debate whether or not he was ever a complete pacifist, and Glazener makes no attempt to answer that question. Instead, she faithfully portrays all of Bonhoeffer's challenges to Christian participation in warfare. She also displays Bonhoeffer's decision to participate in the assassination attempts on Hitler when all other choices seemed absent.

As Glazener notes, Bonhoeffer knew that the conspiracy entailed guilt, but he took on that guilt, claiming Christ's forgiveness. In the end, Bonhoeffer is a challenge to both an easy pacifism (passivity) and a cheap acceptance of justified violence.

Bonhoeffer would probably not be happy that for some his actions justify Christians' use of violence. That focus obscures all of the resistance Bonhoeffer was doing from early in the Hitler regime, while there was still time to stop him without the desperate measures of the conspiracy.

Further, it is very clear that Bonhoeffer's theological and ethical thought was still evolving at the time of his execution. I am

not certain that he ever fully resolved the issues of violence and nonviolence. It is too easy to concentrate on Bonhoeffer's participation in the assassination conspiracy and to ignore the incredible captivity of the church to the principalities of fascism, racism, militarism, etc., and the absurdity of an ethic of unquestioning obedience to authorities. I have heard fellow pacifists ask what might have happened if Bonhoeffer had been able to make his trip to India and visit Gandhi; would the Confessing Church have been able to resist Hitler with Gandhian nonviolence? I doubt it. Most of the Confessing Church, including many of Bonhoeffer's students, were eager to be drafted into the war and thus prove their "patriotism." They were baffled by Bonhoeffer's objection. I find it hard to believe that he would have had much success teaching them Gandhian techniques of nonviolence. The failure of Christians to be nonviolent is only a symptom of a much larger captivity to the powers, and it is those larger questions that are most illuminated by Bonhoeffer's witness.

All who struggle to have faith in Jesus Christ and to faithfully respond in discipleship in these United States should read this book. Why? Because our struggle for faith and faithfulness takes place in a context of militaristic and racist nationalism, violence, homophobia, misogyny, and national selfishness; a context to which much of the church seems thoroughly captive. *The Cup of Wrath* allows us to learn from others who had similar struggles in a time even darker than our own. If we are willing to drink such a cup, we too may hope for resurrection. **TW**

book review

When their plan to reduce family violence was turned down by one agency after another in Collier County, Florida, Chuck Leigh and Tricia Bratton put their money where their convictions were and began the program themselves. Cashing in their pension funds and moving to a low-income neighborhood in Naples, the couple launched Safe Children — Strong Families in January 1994.

As shelter and foster care workers, Leigh and Bratton had often seen children caught in the crossfire of battles between estranged parents.

“I had done work at a women’s shelter,” says Leigh. “In a lot of cases, when we came across physical fighting in front of the children, it took place during visitation.”

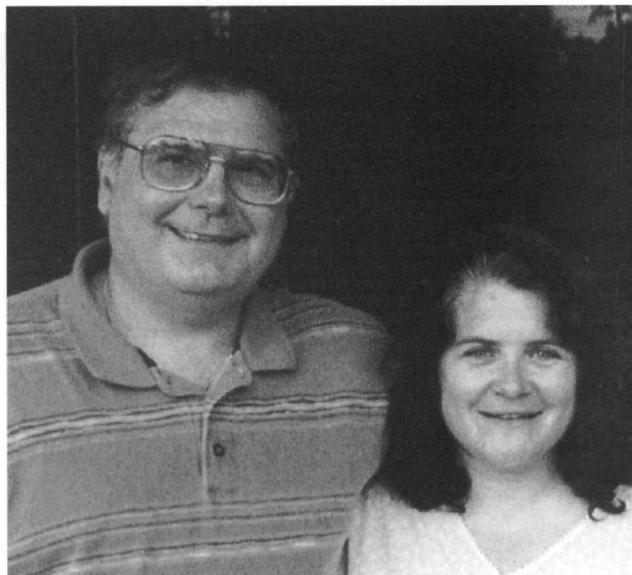
Leigh and Bratton have found a way to avert the violence by providing neutral territory where parents can drop off or pick up children for visits, and where supervised visits can take place between children and parents who are learning to work through their anger.

Leigh is full-time director of Safe Children. Bratton, a former county foster care supervisor, works for the public health department, earning enough income to enable her husband to work for \$9,000 a year. Along with other volunteer therapists, Bratton devotes weekend and evening hours to Safe Children.

A cornerstone of their work is the conviction that people can change.

“Physical abuse has more to do with attitudes than with psychosis. Men have the attitude that their job is to control their family. We can help make a change in what people see as acceptable.”

—Chuck Leigh



Chuck Leigh and Tricia Bratton

Shielding kids, changing attitudes

by Marianne Arbogast

Leigh, who runs a group for men who have been physically abusive, is critical of agencies that seem to be “always interested in assigning blame and punishment, but seldom interested in stopping violence in the long term. Just putting someone away for six months or a year is going to do more harm than good. I’ve never seen anyone come out of jail better than they go in — they come out madder and more bitter.”

Bratton concurs. “We provide a service that allows a man to visit his children, giving him some hope that his life can change, that he can still be a father while he’s working on his problems. I don’t want to minimize what they did, but we really believe in the concept of redemption, that people can change their behavior.”

Both Bratton and Leigh have experienced profound change in their own lives.

Leigh, now 46, moved from military service in Vietnam to an utter commit-

ment to nonviolence.

His convictions were shaped by his involvement in the sanctuary movement, working with illegal Central American refugees. “My dad was a Belizean citizen, and he gave me a perspective on how we were missing the boat on the gospel,” he says.

“I don’t believe violence is acceptable at any time for any reason. I don’t think we’ll ever get away from domestic violence or child abuse as long as systemic violence is acceptable in society. I find it difficult to explain why it’s okay for the state of Florida to kill people, but it’s not okay for men to slap their wives.”

Bratton, who is 38, recovered from substance abuse after joining Glide United Methodist Church in San Francisco in 1983.

“I found the acceptance there I had always looked for,” she says. “My ideas and my faith coalesced. There was a message of internal change along with

*Witnesses,
the quick and the dead*

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

social change.”

While at Glide, Bratton took a class from Gustavo Gutierrez, whose liberation theology helped her to process what she had learned during a six-month stay in an Indian village in Mexico.

“I got to understand the way it works in Latin America, and also why it’s so hard for it to take place here. We’re so individualistic, even in our faith. In Latin America, there are communities of people in poverty. It’s not a personal shame, it’s something they can unify around.”

Bratton’s fluency in Spanish, and her more recent study of Creole, have proved invaluable in her current work. Many clients are Mexicans, Guatemalans, and Haitians who work in the area’s tourist industries and farmlands.

Rootlessness contributes to violence in families, Leigh believes.

“Everyone here is from somewhere else,” he says. “People are away from families who could back them up. They don’t have a brother or mother or dad to work with them in times of stress. In a lot of ways we do what the extended family is not able to do.”

Leigh and Bratton work to keep children’s needs from being lost in the torrent of hurt and anger that can accompany divorce. “Most parents love their kids, or they wouldn’t be involved in visitation,” Leigh says. “When they come here, we get a chance to talk to both sides and the children, and over a period of time, most get through the anger.”

“We try to promote a healthy role model for non-violent communication,” Bratton adds. “We try to keep our focus and the parents’ focus on the children and their best interests.”

The courts have come to rely on Safe Children for objective evaluations.

“A lot of what we do is to verify what’s really going on,” Leigh explains. “In one case a woman was completely hysterical. Everybody thought she was crazy, and

the man always appeared very calm. But over a period of time we were able to see that he was setting her off, that he was the aggressor.

“Another woman accused her ex-husband of abuse, and was trying to have him charged with stalking, but after some time, we saw that she was actually self-mutilating.” Leigh adds that this was an extreme case, saying that it is more common for men to harass their former partners.

But “a lot of times physical abuse has more to do with attitudes than with psychosis,” he says. “Men have the attitude that their job is to control their family. We can help make a change in what people see as acceptable.”

By relying on volunteers, charitable donors, and payment for court-ordered evaluations, Leigh has been able to keep Safe Children open for a year and a half. So far, whenever they have hit rock bottom, money has come through. Last week, when just \$109 was left in the bank account, he was thrilled to open an envelope containing a \$4,000 grant from Trinity Episcopal Church in New York.

His own small salary, along with Bratton’s, has to stretch to cover child support for a 16-year-old daughter from Leigh’s first marriage, as well as living expenses for themselves and a seven-year old son.

“We moved into a house in the neighborhood,” Bratton says. “It needs work. To put up with water not working right, and not having air conditioning in Florida, is a struggle. But it helps put me in touch with the people we are working with.

“This is our ministry, rather than just our work,” she explains. “It’s not considered cost-effective,” Leigh adds. “But when you consider the trauma to children, it’s very effective.”

[Donations may be sent to Safe Children — Strong Families, 2740 Bayshore Drive #18, Naples, FL 33962.]



Jane Dixon

I love The Witness because it teaches me, it challenges me and best of all, it helps me to know that I have some degree of sanity in a crazy world.

*— Jane Holmes Dixon
Suffragan bishop of the
Episcopal Diocese of
Washington*

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When I visited Hiroshima in 1976, I was profoundly touched. Upon returning to the U.S., I painted my prayer for world peace — a mythologic dragon dropping lotus blossoms (an Asian symbol of everlasting life) on the bombed-out shell of the city of Hiroshima.

— Julia Barkley

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