

# Holy matrimony



## Witness praise

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK — you're a breath of fresh air in a sometimes stifling world.

**Sandra Clark**  
Houston, TX

KEEP UP YOUR INSPIRING MOVEMENTS with the Holy Spirit! Although my faith denomination is light-years behind yours, what joy to see the spirit dance in Her beauty, unshackled.

**Marilyn Huyghebaert**  
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WE'RE VERY GRATEFUL to be part of this great enterprise.

**Jerry and Carol Berrigan**  
Syracuse, NY

I GET MUCH INSPIRATION — as well as information — from *The Witness*. You do a great job!

**Edwin Prong**  
Grand Rapids, MI

THANKS FOR YOUR THOUGHT-PROVOKING and action-oriented magazine.

**Debbie Wollard-Kidd**  
St. Clair Shores, MI

I AM A MEMBER OF THE United Methodist Church but enjoy very much reading *The Witness* — you speak to many of the issues and concerns which I have.

**Katherine Heidel**  
Buhl, ID

I HAVE BEEN GOING OUT OF MY MIND because I misplaced your first renewal notice and do not wish to miss an issue — I collect them! They get better every month.

**Alice Lewitin**  
Amherst, MA

## Church Insurance Co.

AS PLAINTIFFS' ATTORNEYS involved in litigation with various dioceses and the Church Insurance Company (CIC) arising from sexual abuse of children by Episcopal priests, we can offer a unique perspective to some of the observations and comments in *The Witness* September 1995 article entitled "CIC: What should be its bottom line?" and "The role and obligation of insurance companies." We concur with the view held by many Episcopalians that the CIC is not, and should not transact business as, "just another insurance company."

The conflicts of interest and conflicting fiduciary duties of CIC are more profound than either article indicates. Certainly CIC owes a fiduciary duty to its "owners" to refrain from unreasonably depleting the resources of the company. However, it seems that CIC has lost sight of who its "owners" are. The individual dioceses and other church entities that pay premiums to CIC for liability coverage are composed of the body of the Church: the parishioners. When CIC refuses to pay a claim, or litigates against a member of the Episcopal Church, CIC is fighting against the very person who paid the premium for coverage. Further, when CIC denies insurance coverage, or defends under a reservation of rights, it forces the individual dioceses, bishops and/or priests to retain legal counsel at their own expense to protect their own interests and it exposes the assets of the diocese, or other entity, to forfeiture, in the event the plaintiff recovers a verdict and CIC refuses to pay.

CIC's hypocrisy is evident whenever it attempts to take advantage of its unique posture as an "agency" of the Episcopal Church. It is quick to cloak itself and the insureds (and instructs its lawyers to do so) in the principle of separation of church and state embodied in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution on a number of legal issues, including discovery and punitive damages, but asserts that on other issues it is no different than any other defendant and is entitled to employ all technical legal defenses. It is undisputed that the CIC and its respective insureds are entitled to assert all available defenses, including civil statutes of limita-

tions and scope of employment defenses. (Interestingly, the defense of contributory negligence has been asserted by representatives of CIC claiming that a *minor child* who was sexually molested contributed to his own injuries by "not removing himself from harm's way.") However, one wonders whether such defenses *should* be employed by entities that seek immunity from a number of civil laws because they are uniquely religious entities. The selective use of the civil law does not reflect the "Christ-like" image that the Episcopal Church strives to project.

CIC should recognize what every major liability coverage carrier in this country has already recognized: that arbitration and/or mediation saves money, time and emotions for all involved. To refuse these highly effective dispute resolution techniques on the grounds that it might open the floodgates to frivolous claims is itself a frivolous argument. Frivolous claims can be detected and weeded out by good arbitrators and mediators, but at a lot less expense of money, time and emotions. Bishop Harold Hopkins, Reverend Margo Maris and Reverend Chilton Knudsen, mentioned in the first article, should be commended for their efforts in attempting to educate CIC about these issues. Unfortunately, the same trite arguments and extreme, rare anecdotal information promulgated in favor of tort reform in this country, have been used to thwart attempts to deal with sexual abuse by clergy in a reasonable, compassionate and Christian manner.

One aspect of these cases not mentioned in the articles is confidentiality agreements, also known as "gag provisions." A demand for confidentiality in any settlement document is counterproductive to the Church. Gaggling the victim only perpetuates the conspiracy of silence that permits the abhorrent behavior to continue. The Church should be attempting to place scarlet letters on the foreheads of the perpetrators, rather than muzzling the victims. Moreover, true healing for the victims is hindered by forced silence.

Much too often, the dioceses are quick to forgive the offender and quick to condemn the victim. It should be stated here, and in every training seminar sanctioned by CIC: *All claimants are not liars.*

Since, at the 1994 General Convention,

the Church courageously created the "window" beginning in January 1996 for the presentation of charges against alleged perpetrators under canon law, no matter how old, in order to deal with these extremely difficult factual, moral, and legal issues, it should likewise do the following to help the victims:

(1) Impose a similar "moratorium" on asserting the statute of limitations for any civil claim presented, no matter how old, beginning in January 1996 until January 1997;

(2) Put in place an optional mechanism to arbitrate and/or mediate all claims presented during that time period;

(3) Create a fund to pay the meritorious claims either in a lump sum or over time; and

(4) Create a fund to pay for therapy while the claim is investigated and/or the case is pending.

In our experience, most victims of clergy sexual abuse simply seek some expression of compassion and an offer of help from the Church. Invariably, the unreasonable fear of litigation on behalf of the local dioceses and CIC creates an adversarial atmosphere from the beginning. If a church activity bus went off a cliff with children on board and a priest at the wheel, the Church would certainly do

what it could to provide assistance to the families. It would not instruct its lawyers to draft creative arguments to blame the children or their parents for the wreck. Sexual abuse cases should be no different. Further, *cost of therapy can be offered without any admission of liability*. CIC's blanket refusal to pay for therapy if the diocese has already made payments is ludicrous and not based on rational or humane grounds. A diocese should not be penalized for a compassionate gesture made while CIC circles its wagons and loads its guns.

Plaintiffs' attorneys do not enjoy the subject matter of these cases. They are difficult, legally and emotionally. As a result, many attorneys refuse to take them. These clients are not typical. They are deeply tormented by the psychological injuries inflicted upon them by a trusted figure in their life. The Church itself could put plaintiffs' attorneys out of business by conscientiously dealing with this issue, as one commentator has pointed out, in a manner similar to the way in which the United States Navy dealt with the Tailhook scandal: by acknowledging that this is a serious problem that requires serious attention and resources, by deciding that the only effective

solution involves a fundamental change in procedures, and then by implementing those painful but necessary steps to effect real, meaningful and long term change. Unless CIC takes heed, survivors of clergy sexual abuse will continue to seek help and bring about change by the only means CIC makes available to them.

**Denis L. Ventriglia**  
**Wilmington, N.C.**  
**J. David Flowers**  
**Greenville, S.C.**

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"A merry revolutionary Christmas" from Grant Gallup, Casa Ave Maria, Nicaragua

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Cover: *L'offrande de Coeur* at Cluny

Back cover: A California wedding, Rick Reinhard/Impact Visuals

# Tending a sacred flame

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Witnessing a friend's wedding in 1983, I was awed by the clarity with which she and her partner committed their lives to one another. It was a wedding stripped of the cultural excesses and fairy tale pretensions, but grounded in evangelical simplicity and the Book of Common Prayer.

I knew in a heartbeat, or maybe through the fog of the next morning, that I would rather live celibate in hope of this kind of union than live with the occasional comfort and constant uncertainty of a lesser relationship.

Bill Kellermann and I met for a 7 a.m. service on All Saints Day that fall at the Episcopal church in the Catholic Worker neighborhood where we both lived. It was thick with shadows. We sat in the choir and joined the priest in the ancient words of liturgy.

By the end of that month, Bill and I were living a forced monastic routine in the Oakland County Jail for an antinuclear Advent protest. We had three weeks to begin a correspondence on sex, commitment and the Holy Spirit.

Bill suggested that marriage in this culture is an act of resistance.

"Vocations of celibacy or marriage, as far as I can tell," he wrote, "are both ways of disciplining and channeling energies that tend toward chaos, selfishness, even reckless indifference. In this culture, they are stirred up by the commercial powers for commercial ends (also, for the political powers, toward distraction and dissipation). I like marriage as discernment, as service, as community, as vocation," he added.

We committed our lives to one another

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

and designed a liturgy that allowed us to state our vows to one another before a cloud of witnesses. But the focus of the service was communion. No longer the center of attention, we moved back into the congregation. Everything was simple and low budget. The music was superb.

Marriage did not seem anti-feminist to me, so long as one avoided certain texts and vows. So I was surprised when during our honeymoon, I dreamed of a woman accused of being dangerous and crazy by a militia. The soldiers killed her. Looking for a trace of what had been on her mind, I found a cassette recorder playing two naive voices reciting wedding vows.

Something archetypal was shifting in me and not all of the new alignments were easy.

Three months after our church ceremony, we approached the district judge who would try us for conspiracy, a charge related to the one for which we'd been jailed during Advent the year prior. Not wanting a friend and minister to act as an agent of the state, we asked the judge to do so since we had no objection to merging our property and rights.

Most of that fall was bathed in warm light as we discerned the rhythm of our life together. The years since have been good ones.

So, is a committed relationship a piece of cake? Or dumb luck? Hardly.

I remember hearing my father preach that divorce should be easy, but marriage should require serious preparation and should never be imposed on people who

did not have recourse to the Holy Spirit.

The romantic projections of courtship wore thin in time. The births of our children reintroduced the sacred as well as heightening the levels of our exhaustion and our perception of one another's limitations.

Bill and I juggle constantly — who is taking the kids where, can we afford car repairs this month, who is calling to make doctor appointments or to find a sitter, whose work needs take priority? Sometimes we laugh when it occurs to us that romantic suitors would never ask these questions. They would, instead, see in us the poet, the dancer, the one who loves hiking and cooking outdoors.

Eleven years into this we have work to do — creative, imaginative work to keep this relationship alive, to free one another from endless rounds of duty, to see the flickers of who we are in God's eyes.

If we do this work well — neither naively nor chauvinistically — we will feed a sacramental flame that can keep our hearts alive

and can serve the community.

This issue on marriage is the first of several eventual issues that will scrutinize sexual ethics, holding heterosexual rela-

tionships to a standard as stringent as that applied to gay and lesbian relationships.

Can we discern an ethic? Does our rhetoric reflect our experience? Can we, in community with people of all orientations, feed the sacramental fire that reveals who we are called to be? **TW**

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exhaustion and perception of  
one another's limitations.*

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*editor's note*

# On not making it ‘official’

by Julie A. Wortman

We decided that this relationship was “it” more than 10 years ago. We had met in church. Talk and topics came easily and we quickly became friends. Slowly, our feelings for each other changed and our relationship became sexual.

By this time we were living in different cities. Our phone bills skyrocketed and our mailboxes were seldom empty. Visits were much anticipated, farewells accompanied by tears.

Eventually, realizing we were so much more fully ourselves together than independently, we took the “plunge,” announcing ourselves to friends and families.

Since then, we’ve worked hard to build a life that celebrates God. We’ve tried to tell each other the truth. We’ve learned both the limits and benefits of accommodation and compromise. We’ve even learned to accept each other’s families as part of the bargain.

Most importantly, however, we’ve resisted the temptation to infidelity. Neither of us wants to risk breaking the trust which allows us to be as fully vulnerable — and committed — to each other as we hope to be to God.

But we’ve never longed for marriage, either civil or sacramental. Both church and society would have to change dramatically first.

In the best circumstances, people embrace marriage as a “let’s make this official” kind of a thing — the deep commitment to each other has already been made. But it is the making-things-official aspect that troubles my partner and me.

With civil proceedings a couple re-

ceives many benefits — public recognition that the partners are a “true” couple and that their children, should they have any, are “legitimate”; special tax status; spousal insurance coverage; the knowledge that even without having drawn up wills or durable powers of attorney the partners will inherit each other’s property and have unquestioned access to one another if a medical problem arises.

In return for these benefits, the community gets clarity about which relationships are “official” and which are not — with all the legal, economic and social-welfare implications official status implies in this country. Considering how reluctant civil authorities are to interfere in cases of domestic violence and the second-class status of unmarried mothers and their children, those implications are to us more than a little suspect.

With the celebration and blessing of a marriage in the church, the benefits are less material but perhaps even more seductive, because through this ceremony the couple is identified with the godly side of things. “The bond and covenant of marriage,” the bride and groom are told in the usual prayerbook service, “was established by God in creation.” As married people you also gain new status in the faith community since “Holy Scripture commends [marriage] to be honored among all people.”

In return, since the church links children to marriage, the institution receives endorsement of its assumptions about “family values.” The gifts the couple traditionally receives are intended to encourage them to observe the faith community’s feasts — and its norms. The “head” of the household wields the carving knife but seldom irons the linen tablecloth on which the bone-

china turkey platter rests.

It is little surprise to us that the priest acts for the state as well as the church at most weddings. In both religious and civil marriage the assumptions about gender dominance and roles, affectional norms and inheritance are the same. The marriage vows a couple makes may have something to do with celebrating that two people are committing themselves to working out their salvation and livelihood together, but those authorizing those vows seem to us mostly concerned with maintaining patriarchy.

A lesbian couple, of course, is, by definition, an affront to patriarchy. For that reason few people and no institutions are clamoring for us to make our committed relationship “official,” although most everyone in our parish would be only too happy to ring wedding bells for the happily unmarried, committed, heterosexual couple that attends the early service.

For the powers that be, treating our relationship as equivalent to a heterosexual one would be unthinkable precisely because the institution of marriage means *so much more* than living in a committed, monogamous, lifelong relationship dedicated to celebrating God. It is easy for my partner and me — we seldom feel safe even holding hands outside our home — to understand that. And it’s a relief. We have no wish to pay even lip service, as many of our heterosexual friends feel forced to do, to the values and assumptions which dishonor us and so many others, gay and straight.

If there is anything we long for that marriage offers, it is the occasion a wedding presents for gathering friends, family and community together to celebrate God’s presence in a couple’s joy. That’s why we plan to throw a party someday for ourselves — a celebration of life-giving commitment for which we believe Jesus would want there to be plenty of good wine, marriage or no marriage. **TW**

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

## Sonnets

by William Shakespeare

CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,  
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

CXXXVIII.

When my love swears that she is made of truth,  
I do believe her, though I know she lies;  
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,  
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.  
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,  
Although she knows my days are past the best,  
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue;  
On both sides thus is simple truth suprest,  
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?  
And wherefore say not I that I am old?  
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,  
And age in love loves not to have years told:  
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,  
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.



# Practicing what we preach:

## an interview with Steve Charleston

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

*[Steve Charleston critiques some of the church's expectations of clergy and the way our society devalues matrimonial commitment as he prepares to step down early next year as Bishop of Alaska so that he can find time to care for his wife and his son. The reasons for Charleston's resignation after five years in Alaska are published in Vital Signs 10/95.]*

**JW-K:** What are you looking forward to and where are you anchoring your hope right now?

**SC:** I have absolutely no idea where I will be after I leave Alaska or what I will do. I have *no* place to go, no job. I suppose that speaks to the seriousness with which I made this decision. I didn't do this because I wanted to change jobs. I saw this as a personal decision in which I tried to live out what I believe.

I *do* have anchors. One is my ongoing relationship with my wife and my son and our commitment to keep working together and caring for each other.

Another anchor is my absolute faith and commitment to God. I am not at all scared of stepping out into space because I believe so strongly that the Holy Spirit is there to help me. Stepping out into the unknown — which I've done before — is not something that frightens me because I *know* God will not let me fall. Nor will God allow my family to be hurt or the Diocese of Alaska to be hurt. I'm confident of that.

**Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann** is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Artist **Michelle Gibbs** lives in Oaxaca, Mexico.

**JW-K:** How have your son and wife responded to your decision?



Steve Charleston

James Solheim/ENS

**SC:** My wife understands the decision I've made and supports me in it. My son is extremely happy that I've made this public commitment to him. Both my wife and my son have shown a tremendous amount of courage and faith through all of this.

**JW-K:** I have images playing in my mind of my own childhood. It was not extreme, but my father, who was an Episcopal bishop, was certainly absent a lot of the time for church activities and often exhausted when he got home. A friend of mine had parents who were missionaries in Africa. She and her sister were left in a Canadian boarding school.

She describes agonizing over who these people were that her parents loved so much that they were willing to leave her behind and who this *God* was who insisted that her parents were needed somewhere else.

**SC:** If we could somehow touch the life histories of a great number of Christians, we would hear stories of children who had suffered through family lives where they did *not* feel they were the priority. That's particularly true for the children of ordained leaders.

What have we *learned* from all of these stories? Where does it appear in the institutional or structural decisions we've made? How have we responded to the realities of people's lives that have been deeply hurt by our church?

I hope my decision is one example that will call this to our attention. I don't think my story is all that unique. In many ways Suzanne, Nick and I are speaking to a reality shared by many others. I hope that by making the choices we've made, we're giving some hope to people.

**JW-K:** Have you heard from many people?

**SC:** People here in Alaska feel genuinely sad and we share that sadness. On the other hand, people have been incredibly

understanding about the dilemma that my family has faced and are very supportive. I received a message from a woman here in our diocese whose son had committed suicide. She said, "I only have four words to say to

you: 'Take care of Nick!'"

I've also gotten letters and phone calls from people outside the diocese. All have been very helpful and supportive.

*Our society wants to see people who are addicted to the climb for success.*

*And that's why it's so important to question what we're living out as an alternative as Christians.*

# Examining the episcopacy

**Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann:** If you cast an eye across the House of Bishops, do you sense that bishops have much time for family?

**Steve Charleston:** The episcopacy really needs reform. Many leaders of the church have sacrificed family for the sake of *others*. I believe the majority of the House would say the greatest frustration in their ministry is that they don't feel able to live out a spiritual style of leadership. They find themselves constantly enmeshed in the managerial sides of leadership.

We need men and women that we can look to as spiritual guides and partners in the Episcopal Church.

**J.W.-K.:** Does your Choctaw heritage inform your views?

**S.C.:** Sure, the image of spiritual leaders who focus *all* of their lives as a witness comes from the native tradition. Seeing those people in a horizontal relationship — giving up their claim to worldly authority in order to live out *spiritual* values — is very much in keeping with the tradition of the native medicine person.

**J.W.-K.:** Would the community have had much tolerance for a native medicine person who was not careful with his or her family?

**S.C.:** The dichotomy or the pull between career and family would not have existed in traditional native society. That dilemma, that pain that we've created for ourselves as a community, is not something that is normative culturally for others. It's something that we have created. We have defined and institutionalized it, so it's up to us to take responsibility to *change* it.

**J.W.-K.:** What are the temptations in the current structuring and understand-

ing of being a bishop?

**S.C.:** There is a temptation to become a workaholic. The whole system is designed to seduce a man or a woman into a feeling of being constantly involved with all the decisions. We believe, in the Western system, that people must be constantly occupied with business (under the rubric of the Protestant work ethic) if they are to be found acceptable or successful.

Times for reflection, quiet prayer, day-dreaming, conversations, story-telling, listening, walking, looking at the earth — all of those things are not prized. So the temptation is to minimize the spiritual and to maximize the managerial.

**J.W.-K.:** And what's the seduction in it?

**S.C.:** Most all the bishops I have met deeply care about the church. They feel that if they could just work harder, work longer, somehow they could fulfill their best intention and dream for the church.

That's a wonderful comment on our bishops — it speaks to the quality of men and women that we have. We need to help our bishops by giving them permission to entertain new ideas, to stand down from the artificial image of the perfect manager who *always* knows what's happening and is on *top* of it.

**J.W.-K.:** Won't there be bishops who would miss making all the decisions?

**S.C.:** Some bishops would miss the self-satisfaction that you get when you feel that you are in a position of ultimate authority. It's an addiction that is encouraged by our larger culture. Our society *wants* to see people who are addicted to the climb for success. And that's why it's so important to question what we're living out as an *alternative* as Christians.

**J.W.-K.:** Is a misunderstanding of the theology of sacrifice at the root of this? The model that you're holding up — for

spiritual leaders to be in balance — is very different from that of Abraham sacrificing Isaac.

**S.C.:** There are two elements of sacrifice. The first is an image of ordained service that implies a sacrifice of self and of close intimate relationships for the sake of the greater need or the bigger cause. And that sounds noble. In its practice, it has often resulted in burned-out leaders, leaders seduced by power, and broken families.

On the other hand, the sacrifice I'm trying to talk about is sacrifice for the sake of love which places self in a balanced relationship with others.

**J.W.-K.:** What about the emphasis that Christ puts on moving out and leaving family behind?

**S.C.:** The Gospel image of single men leaving their world, going off in small bands of religious pioneers to spread the Good News is a wonderful one.

But if you look at what the messengers are saying, we are to love ourselves — to understand who we are in relation to everyone else — and to love others. That is the greatest commandment and on this commandment *all* the rest of it depends.

Christian ministers come in all shapes, sizes, and conditions — single, married, divorced, whatever. But the message is that we are to be people who live in very strong love relationships with each other. It is much easier to win recognition, to get an award or to get your picture in the paper, than it is to stand your ground in love, as completely as humanly possible, with the other men and women around you. Love is the hardest thing to live out. Jesus understood that, which is why he put it at the very center of everything he said and why he claimed it for the ultimate identity of God.

I'm getting a lot of letters from people who grew up in clergy families. They speak so honestly to the great disparity between what we practice and what we preach in loving relationships. Here is someone who should be the object of the greatest sense of affection, devotion and love from a parent, shunted to the sidelines so that the parent can go out and preach love and affection for others.

**JW-K:** Would you say a little about your understanding of your marriage vows?

**SC:** My understanding is that it is *one* of the most intimate ways that we can live out the Gospel.

Suzanne and I share a very strong sense of *faith* that the vows that are exchanged between people under the Spirit are holy and sacred. She and I both take our vows to cherish, to love, to support one another very seriously. Those vows are the heart of what we're standing on together now.

Even if the solemnity of the marriage contract were ended, my sense of being connected to Suzanne, my responsibility with her and my love for her would continue. That's what I mean about deeper bonds of the Spirit than society holds up as a convention. It's important to live out love no matter what and to *stand* on it, to make a stand on it.

The truth in modern life is that vows can be lived out in different ways. It is very difficult in this society to make commitments to one another and keep them. Commitments are disposable in America today.

It may seem somewhat hopeful for a family to say, "No, we're really going to try to keep our commitments, even if we are separated by distance, even if we're assaulted by illness, even if we have to struggle through financial problems. No matter *what* we encounter we will still try to move forward in loving one another and in keeping our commitment."

I made a promise, a commitment to

Suzanne, and I'm not going to back off from it. I made a commitment to Alaska and I believe I'm fulfilling that by doing this, because I made a commitment that I would give all of my heart and all of my energy to the church in Alaska. If I believe I've reached a point where I'm not able to do that 100 percent, then my job as a good leader is to say so. If I *didn't* do that, then I *wouldn't* be showing my commitment to this diocese.

Spiritual leadership is always filled with irony. Sometimes the most powerful thing a truly spiritual person can do to exercise leadership is to let go of power and the job in order to show humility, obedience to a vow, care for others. Sometimes the best thing we can do is to step aside and the worst thing we can do is to believe that we could never step aside.

**JW-K:** Would you say a little more about marriage generically?

**SC:** The whole concept of marriage in our society is obviously undergoing radical transformations and by that I'm not speaking of issues like same-sex unions. What I'm speaking of is the dramatic redefinition of marriage in heterosexual society.

The big question for us in the Christian church is, what are we saying about this change and in what constructive ways are we helping to shape that change?

We're undergoing the breakdown of the exoskeleton that we had so carefully crafted over the years as an industrial society to hold a man and woman in the contract of marriage — the images of what is masculine and feminine, of the

working roles between the two partners, of the lines of authority.

We had an image of marriage as being Ward and June Cleaver, or Ozzie and Harriet, Father Knows Best. That has been collapsing all around us with the divorce rate, the rise of single parents, women in the work place.

We are moving as a society toward a new definition of what the relationship between men and women *is*. What does marriage mean to us now? If you have two people who are completely equal, if they are both to be open to work on fulfilling their own lives, if they are to have a true partnership, both spiritually as well as economically and socially, what does that *look* like? What kind of commitment and covenant do we *make* with each other? How do we *talk* about that now? And how does the church then bless, sanctify and nurture those new relationships?

The problem is, as the church, we haven't quite caught up with the change.

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*Good spiritual leaders must be balanced between the most personal and intimate expressions of love and their ability to stand up publicly for larger issues of love.*

*Both must be there.*

*One-dimensional leaders ultimately do not serve the other; they only serve self.*

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We're still running several steps behind, as in so many other things. Shouldn't we be focusing on this and catching up to it? Because the rest of society is obviously undergoing stress and change.

**JW-K:** A big part of what the secular society is doing is switching over to serial monogamy — a succession of

relationships. What do you think the church should say or do?

**SC:** The church should offer to people the option of making commitments that are forever. That's not something that we want to *say* right now, because the change

seems to be propelling us toward conditional commitment. Conditional commitment is more popular — commitments of short duration, negotiable commitments, qualified commitments. In a sense, we're watching the evolution of a relationship of men and women along much more self-centered and legal lines.

It sounds very odd to the world's ear when a Christian comes along and says, what about *unconditional* commitment? What about *absolute* fidelity? What about a love that does not have pre-negotiated limits to it?

As a Christian, I can understand the reaction which led us to break the old stereotypes. We need a new way to talk and relate to one another, but I'm *not* convinced that we have to do that by abandoning our ability to make a commitment to another human being and to keep it.

What is *wrong* with saying I'm capable of making a commitment to someone else and of believing with all of my heart that I can keep that commitment for the rest of my life? If we do not have things that are so precious to us that we are willing to make that level of commitment, then our lives are impoverished.

I think it's wonderful to believe of myself that I'm able to make a promise, to enter into a covenant, to take a vow, and to stay with it come thick or thin. That says something about who we are as people of God that we need to hear again.

I'm going to do it. I don't know about the rest of the world. I figure the rest of the world is going to think I'm nuts because I've stopped being a diocesan bishop. They're going to think I've given away all of the political leverage that I had so carefully amassed and that I should have found a good military academy for this

troubled kid of mine.

**JW-K:** And gone on to be the next Presiding Bishop!

**SC:** Sure! And turned my wife into Pat Nixon. There you go. I know a lot of folks will think that I was nuts because I have caused a lot of confusion and pain by



*Hope held high*

Michelle Gibbs

standing up and saying, "No, I can't keep doing both of these things at the same time right now in my life. I *wish* I could, but I can't do justice to both my family and the diocese simultaneously."

I want to witness to living in a state of true love and covenant with two of the most important people in my life. It's a radical, revolutionary thing to do in an age that sees people as disposable. You know what I'm saying?

**JW-K:** When Bill and I got married, he described marriage as resistance to a consumer culture.

**SC:** I'll tell you something else — for my liberal brothers and sisters out there — it is imperative for those of us who care about a reform of the church and a reform of the society, that we of *all* people, make commitments and stand on them.

Otherwise all of our rhetoric about solidarity rings hollow. If you can't stand in solidarity with one other person, no matter what comes, no matter what you've got to give up or what struggles you face, then it's going to be very difficult to have a lot of confidence that you're going to stand in solidarity with the world's poor, or stand in solidarity with the whales. You can't stand in solidarity with your own child, how are you going to be the great revolutionary leader and get the working masses together?

The *beauty* of the Gospel is that Jesus had the wisdom to see that we are only as strong as that smallest part of our lives. Our greatest dreams grow from that smallest seed. Insofar as you are able to do it to the least of these, you are doing it for *all* of us. Inasmuch as I am able to stand by my convictions, to practice what I preach, to have the courage to give up anything that the world would offer to seduce me away from the absolute commitment to love and the vow to solidarity, my ability is a clear message that if we can stand firm *then* we have the right to claim moral authority and leadership and to begin to break open a new reformation for our church and for our society. Otherwise, we're just paying lip service to it.

I don't feel beaten down by this at all. I believe that when the dust settles, I'm going to emerge with a closer commitment to God and my family, and I think my voice is going to be much stronger. I'm grateful to God for that. **TW**

# Is marriage God-ordained?

by Walter Wink

**I**s marriage God-ordained? Well, of course, if by that you mean that marriage is an order of creation. But like all other institutions, marriage and the family are good creations of God, fallen in their actual practice, and in need of redemption. In that full sense, marriage can be said to be *normal*, but it is certainly not *normative*. Neither Jesus nor Paul were married, so we can scarcely say, as many have argued, that marriage is God's intent for everyone. Single persons, homosexuals, priests, and nuns are not outside the will of God if they do not marry. Neither marriage nor singleness is normative. God can bless our lives and the world through our being married or unmarried, equally.

Thus, when Marion Soards (*Scripture and Homosexuality*, Westminster/John Knox, 1995, 23) writes that "God's purpose for humanity ... was for man and woman, male and female, to find fulfillment in the complementary sexual union that God intended for creation," he commits a logical fallacy. Certainly God purposes thus, but God also purposes other arrangements as well, as the singleness of Jesus demonstrates.

Actually, marriage and family life have been oversold by Protestants. Our anti-papist past still colors our disrespect for celibacy. And despite our focus on family-centered churches and our nostalgia for "family values" (which generally turn out to be simply a longing for the restoration of patriarchal dominance, as in the Promise Keepers movement), Jesus has

very little good to say about families. He sees in them the basic cell of the domination system, and deems it necessary to call his followers out of their biological families and into a new family not based on blood lines, but made up rather of those who do the will of God: "Here are my mother and brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:34-35). In the new family of Jesus there are only children, no patriarchs: "Call no man your father on earth, *for you have one Father*—the one in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law" (Luke 12:51-53). In violation of a religious duty known to every culture, Jesus tells a man to leave his dying father's side, ignore the filial obligation to see to his burial, and to follow him peremptorily (Luke 9:59-60).

The first person to attempt to squelch any act of courage, defiance, or revolt is often a family member. So deeply is the family enmeshed in the values of the Domination System that

people's own flesh and blood may even betray them rather than see society's values jeopardized: "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death" (Mark 13:12 par.).

Paul's surprisingly anti-family attitude in 1 Cor. 7 becomes more intelligible in the light of Jesus' teaching. Paul is not simply anticipating an immediate end to history; he is trying to disentangle believers from the most profoundly soul-shaping institution in human society. Some women may have found welcome relief in being freed from having to marry, bear an unlimited number of children, and live a life restricted to the household. Paul may have been closer to the mind of Jesus here than he has been credited with being.

In respect to the holiness code, the law, relations with the Gentiles, the Temple sacrifice and other issues, the church developed the implications of Jesus' teachings further. In the case of the family and the role of women, however, and all other matters dealing with male supremacy, the church generally softened, compromised, and finally abandoned his position altogether.

Human beings will of course continue to be born to biological families. The family is not intrinsically evil. To repeat: like every Power the family is created by

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*The Bible has no sex ethic.  
It only has a love ethic,  
which must be continually  
brought to bear on whatever  
sexual mores are dominant  
in a given time.*

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God, and thus holy and just and good; it is fallen; and it is capable of redemption. The family is therefore to be protected: radical discipleship must not be allowed to issue in callous disregard

for parents (Mark 7:9-13), or spouses (Mark 10:1-12), or children (Mark 10:13-16 par.; 9:37 par.) But families are also to be critiqued and challenged, a function

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Currier & Ives

performed by the new family established by Jesus. Redeemed, marriages and families can become cells of the new family of Jesus, though still under the condition of fallenness.

What then of gay marriages? It is dishonest to deny that the Bible condemns homosexual acts. The issue is, however, hermeneutical: What do we make of that judgment? For the Bible also countenances slavery, violence, and the subjugation of women. And at point after point, the Bible *condemns* sexual behaviors that Christians today *permit*: sex during menstruation, masturbation, birth control, a limited amount of nudity, explicit lan-

guage about sexual organs, marriage outside one's ethnic group, and celibacy. And it treats semen and menstrual blood as unclean, while we would only consider them messy. And at point after point, the Bible *allows* sexual behaviors that most people today would *condemn*: prostitution, polygamy, sex with a deceased husband's brothers to produce a male heir, sex with slaves and captives, concubinage, the treatment of women as male property, and very early marriage. The only points on which most of us and the Bible agree are rejection of incest, rape, adultery, and intercourse with animals. Moses permitted divorce; Jesus

forbade it. Yet we not only permit it, but ordain those who have been divorced.

The Bible clearly has no recognizable sex ethic, but only a shifting set of sexual mores which changed even within the thousand-year composition of the canon. We ourselves have watched sexual mores change in our very lifetimes: from the ideal of virginity in marriage to "shacking up" for two or three years before marriage; from anti-miscegenation laws in the South to intermarriage. The Bible has no sex ethic. It only has a love ethic, which must be continually brought to bear on whatever sexual mores are dominant in a given time.

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# Internalizing the rules

by William C. Frey

Talking about family and marriage, like marriage itself, is not to be entered into “unadvisedly or lightly.” Marriage, after all, is one of the major metaphors used throughout the Bible to describe the loving relationship between God and God’s people. And, at least one of the meanings of the Cana story is to announce that, through the messianic ministry of Jesus, this marriage covenant is being renewed.

I therefore applaud Walter Wink’s hint that the family, under the tutelage of Jesus, might yet become, not simply a means for the transformation of society, but even a model of what such a renewed society could look like. Sort of a “preview of coming attractions,” a beacon of hope in a dark world.

Wink’s conclusions about the radical demands that Christian discipleship makes on the family are, for the most part, helpful. I don’t believe they go far enough, however, and I would suggest that for the renewed family to fulfill its function, relatively healthy married couples might be encouraged to seek ways of including the singles — unmarried, divorced, widowed, etc. — in some sort of extended family. Widows and orphans appear to be among God’s special concerns.

Strictly as an aside, I believe that Promise Keepers is probably doing more than any other movement to reduce domestic abuse in this country.

The assertion that “The Bible has no sexual ethic” surprised me. At a recent meeting of the House of Bishops, Wink

admitted that the Bible is univocal in its condemnation of homosexual behavior, but proceeded to argue for its acceptance on other grounds. I thought he was saying that there *is* a biblical sexual ethic, but that he disagrees with the part of that ethic which deals with homosexuality. That’s different from saying that the Bible has no such ethic.

Jewish readers would be surprised. Dennis Praeger, for example, comes to a totally different conclusion. “When Judaism demanded that all sexual behavior be channeled into marriage, it changed the world. ... Judaism has a sexual ideal — marital sex. *All* other forms of sexual behavior, though not equally wrong, deviate from that ideal” (“Judaism: Sexual Revolution,” *Crisis Magazine*, 9/1993).

Most Christian scholars would be surprised, too. Perhaps reading the Bible without a guide, like the Ethiopian eunuch, might lead to that conclusion. But Christians have, from the very beginning, used Jesus as the hermeneutical lens through which to interpret the Scriptures. Though Wink does that elsewhere, he appears to neglect it here. Viewed through that lens, which distinguishes what was “in the beginning” from that which was added “for the hardness of our hearts,” an ethic which, at least, commends faithful marriage and condemns adultery and fornication begins to emerge.

I get nervous when words like “love,” “mutuality,” and “authenticity” are invoked as biblical themes without clear definition, particularly in our culture which has so disastrously sentimentalized them. Too often, love is interpreted as indulgence, mutuality is reduced to whatever consenting adults consent to do, and authenticity begs the question,

“By whose standards?”

To “love others as Christ loved us” means that the behavior of Jesus is the norm for defining love. That behavior reveals both a severity and a tenderness which, in Christ, are not contradictory. It is love which invites us, and love which warns that the gate is narrow. It is love which says, “Neither do I condemn thee,” and love which says, “Go and sin no more.” It is love which lays down its life for the beloved.

Mutuality is a bit more problematic. The closest biblical word is “*koinonia*,” the sharing of life. *Koinonia* knows nothing of “consenting adults,” and in fact assumes that there are relationships where our consent is immaterial. Some, such as those with God, family, neighbors, and fellow believers, are simply given. *Koinonia* says that we are not autonomous units, but members of one another and, as such, owe each other a “fierce loyalty.”

My final concern lies with Wink’s apparent theory of human development. He acknowledges fallenness, yet when he invokes a “love ethic” as opposed to a sexual ethic, the Fall vanishes.

A love ethic, divorced from rules and norms, seems to imply that we can somehow leapfrog the normal processes of maturation in which we have to crawl before we can walk. Most developmental studies affirm that “mature” stages presuppose the earlier ones. The individual practices a behavioral code which is first learned by rote, then reinforced by the peer group, and later owned as an ideology. Then and only then can improvisation happen. Freedom to improvise, in any discipline, comes only after the rules have been memorized, practiced and internalized. Surely this was what Augustine had in mind when he said, “Love God and do as you please.”

TW

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## Wink's response to Frey

My comments on marriage need to be understood in the wider context of Jesus' proclamation of God's domination-free order.

It may be true, as William Frey notes, that Promise Keepers are doing more than anyone to reduce domestic abuse in this country; but they do so by reasserting patriarchal domination.

It may be that Judaism idealizes marital sex; but it saw no contradiction between that ideal and polygamy, concubinage, prostitution, and the reduction of many women to male property.

I do take Jesus as the hermeneutical lens through which to interpret Scripture, and he clearly affirmed marriage as di-

vinely ordained; yet he himself never married.

I agree that rules and norms are necessary; that is what sexual mores are. But rules and norms also tend to be impressed into the service of the Domination System, and to serve as a form of crowd control rather than to enhance the fullness of human potential. So we must critique the sexual mores of any given time and clime by the love ethic exemplified by Jesus.

Defining such a love ethic is not complicated. It is non-exploitative (hence no sexual exploitation of children, no using of another to their loss), it is non-dominative (hence no patriarchal treatment of

women as chattel), it is responsible, mutual, caring, and loving. Augustine already dealt with this in his explication of "Love God and do as you please."

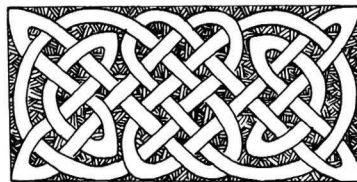
But my main question is why do we consider it ethically acceptable to ignore or even violate the vast majority of biblical sex mores, yet single out others as in violation of biblical teaching? When we have more light than they on human sexuality, why shouldn't we be free to take a different position? The problem is that we *have* "internalized the rules," and some of them are *bad* rules, like the biblical acceptance of slavery and the suppression of women. It's time we changed. **TW**

## Roman and Judaic traditions

Marriage in ancient Israel, in many ways, had more of the character of a commercial transaction than a religious event. According to Mishnaic law, "A wife may be acquired in three ways ... by money, by deed or by intercourse." Notice that a wife is acquired in the same way as any other property: "by money, by deed, or by usucaption (long possession)." The understanding of the woman as an object acquired is reinforced by the fact that in the marriage ceremony it is the man who speaks, not the woman.

Yet it is not the woman as a person who is treated like a piece of property, but the woman in her sexual function. In other respects, the personhood of the woman is strictly protected; even in her sexual function, it is her rights which are defined, not the husband's. She has a right, for example, to intercourse on a regular basis, depending on the man's occupation.. If he is a sailor, she has a right to his attentions only once in six months; if a camel diver, once a month; if a laborer every other day, but daily if he is unemployed...

In ancient Rome, marriage was clearly a religious event. Roman religion was centered on the household gods and each husband and wife served as priests of the household shrine. Through marriage a woman was inducted into her husband's religion: he carried her over the threshold



in a simulated capture and then shared with her a piece of a special cake, so establishing communion with her and with the household gods ...

From ancient times, Roman citizens, including women, had had a remarkable freedom in terms of marriage. In the fifth century before the time of Christ, the Law of the Twelve Tables provided free marriage as an option available to women. A girl could choose at the age of 12, which was the acknowledged age of marriageability, to declare herself a free

woman and, although she then usually chose a guardian to administer her estate, she was free to betroth herself and to marry whomever she might choose; on one had the relationship to her of pater familias. True, custom required fidelity of her while allowing her husband easy access to concubines, prostitutes, and female slaves, but nonetheless her status was unique in the world of that day. She was regarded as her husband's equal in social status and was equally entitled to dissolve the marriage if she chose.

By the time of the empire and the birth of the Christian church, this freedom had replaced the ancient religious ceremonies with a free marriage that was a transaction with no stated form at all. No exchange of gifts was needed and no contract required unless great wealth and estates were involved. It sufficed that both parties to the marriage be citizens, that they have the desire and will to be married to each other, and that their mutual consent be verified.

— *Excerpted from Re-Inventing Marriage by Christopher L. Webber. See review on page 37.*

# The church and marriage: looking for a new ethic

by Jean Ponder Soto

**D**uring my lifetime, my own Roman Catholic tradition has undergone a major shift in its official thinking on marriage. The Second Vatican Council, in its document on *The Church in the Modern World*, proclaimed that there are two purposes in marriage: (1) the procreation and education of children, and (2) the mutual love and support

of the spouses. The document broke with centuries-old teaching by refusing to prioritize these two purposes. Previously, the Roman church taught that the begetting of children is the primary end of marriage.

## The staying power of patriarchy

This understanding of marriage reflected the Roman society from which it sprang. In the Greco-Roman world, marriage and the begetting of children were considered a duty one owed to the Roman state. The survival of society depended upon the

fertility of families. In the best of times, the population barely managed to replace itself. Further, the patriarchal family structure was the basic unit of that society. Men married (1) to establish a family, (2) to produce heirs and carry on the family name and fortune, and (3) to provide citizens to maintain the Roman state. In those early centuries, the church saw marriage as an almost entirely civil matter, which indeed it was.

After the barbarians invaded and the Roman empire slowly crumbled, the church took on the functions of the civil marriage courts. In time, the institution of marriage accumulated more church laws than anything else. Church law on marriage dealt with the rights and duties of the parties and with the conditions of validity of the marriage; church law

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## Sex in other sacred traditions

• **Hinduism**— Along with spiritual salvation, moral duty, and material wealth, sexual pleasure is considered one of the four basic goals of life. Hinduism produced several sex manuals that are regarded as sacred texts. The most famous, the *Kama Sutra*, was composed between the 1st and 4th centuries C.E. In it, men and women are urged "to have pride, not shame, in their sexual activities, since the joy of sex reflects the joy of divine union." Joy in sexual union is found by harmonizing the passions of the couple. This skill is effective only in the context of true love, which is necessary for sexual fulfillment.

• **Buddhism**— Followers seek to still all desire — including sexual desire — as a condition for enlightenment. The Zen Buddhists of Japan distinguish between desire and pleasure; the absence of desire actually increases the pleasure of sexual intimacy. Without desire, violent feelings and aggression are absent, and intercourse becomes "a true celebration of spiritual harmony."

Tsogyel, a Tibetan woman and a religious teacher, taught that without lustful desire coitus is a divine gift that brings pure joy and is to be received with gratitude. In such sexual activity each partner sees her/himself as the medium through which the gift of pleasure is bestowed on the other. Focused completely on the partner's pleasure, the pair create a divine nectar from the mingling of the man's white seed and the woman's red seed. It is absorbed into their bodies and brings a wonderful peace that is a "pleasure beyond pleasure." A person who is thus able to transform desire "experiences sexual activity as a fragment of nirvana."

• **Taoism** — The way of Tao is to achieve harmony by balancing the male principle, *yang*, with the female principle, *yin*. The goal of sexual activity is not only pleasure and children, but the maintenance of physical and spiritual health through the union of *yin* and *yang* elements.

• **Judaism** — In the mystical literature of the Kabbalah, one's inner union between the male and female principles is a prerequisite

for sexual union. The couples' sexual union brings perfect joy and perfect unity of body and soul: "When male and female are in union, God abides."

• **Islam** — a 16th century Muslim Nefzawe wrote *The Perfumed Garden*. The manual writes of "What a man despises and desires": "above all, a man loves a woman whose sexual joy is also religious joy ... God gave us sexual love as a reflection of his love for all mankind. So when a woman gives her love to a man, she is responding to God's love for her." In the chapter "What a woman despises and admires": "Thus above all, a woman loves and respects a man who regards sensual love as part of his religion, through which he learns to praise and glorify God."

— Material drawn from Robert Bates, *Sacred Sex. Erotic Writings from the Religions of the World* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993). Bates notes that in classical Greece and Rome intercourse between husband and wife was "usually a hurried, loveless business, whose sole purpose was procreation." Thus, he finds little in western classical literature "where religious and sexual feelings unite."

treated marriage as a contract and modeled itself on civil contract law. Marriage was not considered a sacrament in the Roman church until the 12th century. There was little concern with the intersubjective relational aspects of marriage.

The Christian church inherited a body/spirit dualism and a Stoic philosophy that devalued the body, seeking the strictest possible control of it and of sexual activity. Augustine of Hippo set the tone for centuries when he taught that sexual intercourse was always sinful — even in marriage — because of the element of pleasure in it. He believed that sexual intercourse should take place within marriage only to conceive children; it was otherwise permissible (again, within marriage) only when necessary to quiet the fires of concupiscence or to prevent a greater sin. When the Roman church reacted to the Protestant Reformation at the Council of Trent, it proclaimed again that celibacy was a state more perfect in virtue and closer to God than the married state. Trent declared that anyone saying otherwise should be declared *anathema* (*Canons on the Sacrament of Marriage*, Canon 10, Nov. 11, 1563).

Before the declarations of Vatican II, the “good” marriage was one that had been validly contracted by a baptized couple who agreed to have children (or to be open to that possibility) and who would remain united to each other until death.

### New perspectives

The early part of this century brought forth a number of new thinkers who

emphasized the subjective aspects of marriage and the relationship between the spouses. One writer, Herbert Doms, a German priest, was especially influential. He believed and wrote that sexual activity in a marriage served chiefly to foster and express the mutual love between the spouses. This thinking was, at

spoken of in a positive light — as a reflection of divine love and as caught up in divine love — but in the Roman church it is still inseparably linked to the procreation of children. The Roman church has maintained an official prohibition against “artificial” means of birth control and permits only the use of periodic abstinence as a means of regulating births. The Anglican Lambeth Conference had already moved past this stance and allowed birth control in some situations by 1930.

The reality, however, is that Roman Catholic women in the western world use artificial birth control. For the first time in human history, reliable and inexpensive means to prevent conception are widely available and used. What is not yet worked out is a solid, thoughtful, and comprehensive Christian vision of conjugal sexuality.

What is a vision of marital sex unlinked from the intent to bear children? The next important step is to hear from married couples themselves on the role of conjugal sexuality in their lives. Nothing can substitute for their lived experience. Couples can tell us of the concrete patterns of development within their marriage and their sexual expression. This information needs to be used to enrich a renewed theology of marriage.

Sexual intimacy “unlinked” from procreation forces a rethinking. If we agree — and

not all would — that it is good, within a marriage, to unlink the intent to procreate children from the intent to engage in sexual intimacy for its own sake, then the question can arise about the role of divine



From “*L’art de bien vivre et de bien mourir*,” Paris, 1492

Visminis Co

first, condemned by the Roman church — but was later incorporated, with qualifications, into the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on marriage.

Today the sexual love of spouses is

mystery in such a sexual union: “What is God doing when a couple makes love?” The short answer is that God is making love too. One can say that God permits lovemaking, or gives lovemaking as a gift, or that sexual love is a reflection of God’s love. But it is another matter, a further step, to say that God is present and active in sexual intimacy.

A spirituality of conjugal intimacy could call upon the Christian conviction that in Christ we become new creations, and that the Spirit is given so that we are co-actors with Christ; we live, suffer, rejoice, pray, and love joined to the Risen Christ. The life of married love — and its sexual expression — is not only a mirror of God’s love, it is the very activity of the Trinity that lives in the marital relationship. The Vatican II document describes marital love as “caught up into divine love.” Conjugal love is one of the best instances we Christians have of what the Incarnation means.

### Sexual intimacy as aesthetic

Like fine art, lovemaking can be undertaken for its own sake. Its value is intrinsic. The spouses, as artists, “make” love. With God, they become co-creators of their corner of the universe.

Conjugal love, like the dance, is ecstatic. The original context and meaning of *ecstatic* is “to be transported beyond oneself into the presence of God.” Dance and lovemaking create a sacred space and arouse the ecstasy that pierces the boundary between the human and the divine.

Conjugal love is like an icon. Lover and beloved, by their touches and caresses, reveal and call forth the divine presence which each one possesses.

Christine Gudorf, in *Body, Sex & Pleasure: Reconstructing Christian Sexual Ethics*, makes a case for mutual pleasure as the purpose of marital sexual love. Her work is a corrective to the tendency to spiritualize marital sex excessively. It also aims at ending church “demonization”

of pleasure. Far from being something to despise or fear, Gudorf notes that experiences of pleasure are necessary for human growth and wholeness.

The notion of sexual union as an art

celebration of equality between the man and the woman” (Sandra Schneiders, *Women and the Word*, p. 35).

Respect and appreciation, gratitude and awe — and all of the attitudes we associ-



*The Wedding Dance*, 1566, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

courtesy of Detroit Institute of Arts

work yields an ethic — just as the notion of procreation as the chief purpose of sexual union did. The ability to reveal God’s love to one another, the gift of mutual self-donation, demands that the equal dignity of each spouse be recognized. The lovers in the *Song of Songs* are an example:

“The mutuality of their delight in one another, the totality of their self-giving, and the finality of the love itself, which seems in no way oriented toward the producing of children or the continuation of the tribe, are a

ate as fitting in the presence of the holy — will also characterize sexual expression.

If procreation of children is no longer the primary end of sexual intercourse in marriage, the prohibition of same-sex unions seems superfluous. Same-sex relationships possess the same capacity for love as do heterosexual marriages. In fact, aspects of the mutuality and equality

operative in gay and lesbian couples at their best could well be a model for heterosexual couples that still labor under a dominant/submissive model.

Gudorf points out that a purpose of mutual pleasure in

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*Conjugal love, like the dance, is ecstatic. The original context and meaning of ecstatic is “to be transported beyond oneself into the presence of God.”*

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sexual intimacy creates an ethic that calls for sexual union to be free from any kind of violence or coercion, and requires the knowledge and circumstances necessary to give one another pleasure. Judith Wallerstein's *The Good Marriage: How & Why Love Lasts* (May, 1995), the first in-depth study of successful long-term marriages, shows that sexual intimacy is central, but that other demands tend to crowd it out. The time and place, then, for conjugal love must become sacred time and space and be protected. It is time that has the character of the Sabbath.

A couple's intimate life together needs the seasoning of time in order to grow in beauty and depth and strength.

When sexual expression truly is lovemaking, it is a journey into vulnerability. It is an aesthetic and ascetic discipline to begin the journey again and again with the same person. This is because the ability to disguise one's nakedness is eroded by that repetition. Over time, the journey can lead from a desire to hide or protect oneself to the discovery of new dimensions in self and other.

A terrible tenderness can be found behind the layers that peel away. It is paradoxical, amazingly powerful, and almost too frightening; it reminds us of dying and rising.

Such a vision of married sexual love is one that lays full claims on the Incarnation. The making of an act of love is understood as a joint endeavor of the spouses and God. It is love—God's love and the spouses' love—that is revealed and expressed.

Through bodily pleasure, the Spirit touches and is touched. Such love can be transforming: for as the couple grow in their love for each other and in their recognition of the source of their love, they are changed. "God," the first letter of John tells us, "has loved us first." We respond in kind—loving spouse, and self, and God, with God's own love. **TW**

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# Perspectives on marriage

## Facing into the ceremony

I have heard more than one member of the clergy express a preference for officiating at funerals rather than weddings. Families tend to be emotionally volatile around weddings: crucial participants can show up very late to the rehearsal or ceremony, family members get into shouting matches, someone's drinking problem comes to the fore. The stress levels for families seem to run very high around weddings and the minister can be easily caught up in the fray.

Upon hearing such tales from my colleagues I remember thinking that I would never allow or excuse such behavior from a couple or their families. But now I am on the bridal hotseat, involved and invested in preparing for my own wedding and I am now faced with my own tempest of emotions.

The image of bees and hives has come to me more than once in the last months. I picture my family and the groom's family as separate bee hives; each hive has agreed to part with members and resources to set up a third colony. In and around the original family hives, there is much excited activity. But that is not all, if I look within I find that same buzzing energy inside of me as if I had swallowed my own small swarm.

I first noted my extra reserves of nervous energy when I started to shop for a wedding dress. By donning one of these costumes, I unleashed long buried fantasies from childhood. In a wedding dress I was a cross between a fairy princess and the lead in the school play; I was dazzled.

When I told a friend who had recently married, she confessed to hearing "The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies" play in her head whenever she tried on one of these dresses.

The bride is in costume and the ques-



A bridal fashion show

Jack Kurtz/Impact Visuals

tion is: What drama or dramas is she cast in? If marriage is a sacrament what hidden things does it reveal?

One possible answer is revealed in the moments when congregations are moved to tears. Tears commonly happen at two key moments: when an infant, often in baptismal gown, is received at the font; and when the bride approaches the altar. I wonder if the bride and the newly baptized are icons? I see in them dual images of the human soul before God, both are received and claimed.

I am intrigued by the wedding imagery in the final chapters of the Book of Revelation. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb

(19:9)." The final reunion of God and redeemed creation is pictured as a great cosmic wedding banquet where the thirsty drink from the water of life (22:17).

I saw a set of wedding photographs in which a number of the guests were regulars in the soup kitchen where the bride worked. These unposed, black and white pictures struck me as modern day snapshots of Luke's parable of the great banquet: the poor and the lame, the addicted and the mentally ill were guests of the bride and groom. These photos moved me to think of heaven.

When I stir up images from my soul regarding the meaning of my wedding I cannot help but acknowledge the mythic images that I find there: the bride in baptismal white as an image of the human soul before God; the wedding banquet which celebrates the union of God with all creation at the end of time. I do not actually think that I will feel like an icon when I walk up the aisle. I will likely be worrying about tripping on my dress or keeping my headpiece on. But I won't be surprised by my own tears or by anyone else's.

As for the buzzing bees, they have been lying low since I bought my wedding dress. My fellow sugar plum fairy had the same experience: Buying the dress was the biggest hurdle. I await the drama of my wedding with eager anticipation and for the minister's sake I hope my behavior and punctuality are exemplary. And maybe there will be a moment at the reception when I will know that I am playing my part in a cosmic drama and I will remember to bless God for this day and for this marriage supper.

— Erika Meyer is a priest in rural Michigan.

## The twinkling of an eye

*For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye...* Psalm 30:5

We got kind of a late start this morning, so we had to dash tensely around the house getting ready for work. With only five minutes to make my train — the station is nearby, but five minutes is a little too tight — Richard speeds along the street and jerks to a stop at the light. He is fuming about the mess one of the kids left in the bathroom, and he barks at me when I ask him why he's bothering with that right now.

"Because they don't have any consideration for others at all!" he roars.

"So why are you yelling at me?"

"Who else am I going to yell at?" he demands, still furious, until what he said has dawned on both of us and we begin to laugh: me first, of course, but then even he cannot stop the grin from stealing

across his face. He shakes his head, and we part with a laugh and a kiss.

Well, who else is he going to yell at?

People shouldn't take out their frustrations on the ones they love, of course, but once in awhile it doesn't hurt me to take a hit that by rights belongs to somebody else.

Especially if it can end up like it did this time: with both of us laughing and feeling glad to be loving someone who can handle our less-than-attractive moments.

This time it was Richard, but God and he both know about my occasional tirade in our kitchen that's really about something that happened far from there.

Richard is remarkably wise when I do this: he is quiet, content to wait it out without trying to argue me back into

lucidity. It passes. I remember my irrational behavior and am sorry. He says it's okay, and I know it genuinely is.

There is a thin line — but one which must be strictly observed — between the occasional decision to absorb someone's misdirected anger and a consistent acceptance of the whipping boy's role. One is an accommodation to a normally loving partnership; the other is sadomasochism.

In one case, wrath is brief: "the twinkling of an eye."

In the other, it is a dispiriting daily reality.

Love demands equality in power and in freedom of expression, even the expression of things about

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*Love demands equality in power and in freedom of expression, even the expression of things about which we feel silly or ashamed later on.*

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which we feel silly or ashamed later on.

— Barbara Crafton is on the staff of St. John's in the Village, New York City.

## Baptismal vows at home

Divorce is a sad thing. It can also be empowering. The church's attitude toward divorce always casts it in the light that people gave up. It doesn't recognize that there can come a time when people are dying.

The church was not there for me and it was not there for my wife Jennifer when we each experienced divorces prior to our marriage to each other — and we are both priests of the church.

I began to really feel bad about myself that I didn't know how to be a spouse. As a priest I felt I was supposed to be setting an example. You almost forget your humanity. Here you are failing.

I'm the one who decided to get myself into therapy and to pay for it myself. I thank God that I realized that I needed to get myself some help.

In my first marriage, we never got

premarital counselling. Because I was a seminarian, the priest assumed I knew what I needed to know — bad assumption!

In my second marriage, my wife contributed her own issues. I had all the rhetoric of being a feminist husband, but it was all rhetoric. I didn't help with the early childcare. My wife did all of it. I never helped in the kitchen. I never helped in the house.

Now I do childcare two days a week. I do a lot of the cooking. I'm more aware that this really is a partnership, not a relationship where one person is subjugated to the other. In a lot of cultures,

especially Latino culture, there is a perception that the woman is there to take care of the man.

Realizing a partnership is practicing your baptismal vows in your home. I

know now that part of my ministry is being present to my wife and my children.

There's more to marriage than love. Our marriage is very much one with Christ at the center. We talk about our spiritual lives, our work, our sexual life — she is

my best friend because I am not afraid to stand naked before her.

I'm thankful for this third opportunity.

— Butch Naters Gamarra is rector of St. Stephen's, Boston.

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*Realizing a partnership is practicing your baptismal vows in your home. I know now that part of my ministry is being present to my wife and my children.*

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## Souls in touch

Neither of us is the person we were when Patti and I stood before Bishop David Rose in Corpus Christi, Texas and made our vows. Since that time, we have been on a journey together, and I continue to give thanks every day for all that Patti has brought to my life. We have been enormously blessed in one another, and in our mutual willingness to trust one another, encourage one another, learn from one another, grow together, laugh together and — perhaps most important — to be bearers of God's grace to one another.

Faith is an essential element of our marriage. We know that each of us belongs first to God, and all we are together

comes from God.

Marriage is a vocation. It requires a particular kind of commitment that not everyone can, or should, make. It is sometimes difficult to remember this in the midst of our cultural images about love and marriage! The church has an important role here. In the marriage service, the celebrant says that the marriage covenant "signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people." Because marriage signifies the union between Christ and his church, it is a foundational element of our life as Christian community. We, the church, must take seriously our responsibility to help couples as they live into their marriage vows. We honor marriages

when we offer both friendship and practical support to families.

Many years ago Patti and I attended a Marriage Encounter weekend that we both found very helpful in naming some of the common-sense habits of good marriages. One of these is dialogue. How many people there are who lead single married lives. They are married but their souls have lost touch. Patti and I have been carrying on a dialogue — in person, by phone, and through notes over all these years. I think of marriage as an ongoing conversation, listened to by God, in which we define who we are, and where we are as we go about the business of loving one another into becoming our best selves.

—Edmond Browning is Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

## United by vision

Jimmy and I were so different that if we hadn't both been committed to the struggle to change this country, we might not have stayed married for 40 years.

I am a first-generation Chinese American, born in Providence, R.I. and raised in New York City. An African American, Jimmy grew up in Marion Junction, Ala. where white people were gentlemen by day and KKK by night. While I was in graduate school, Jimmy was bumming his way through the western part of the U.S. or working on the WPA until World War II opened opportunities at the Chrysler-Jefferson plant where he worked on the line for 28 years.

I like my vegetables crisp, Chinese-style; he liked them cooked to death. Traveling along the highway, I would have my head in a book, while he was pointing out the cows and counting the freight cars. I have a New England accent; he talked "Alabamese." I hate housework. He (fortunately) actually enjoyed

vacuuming and mopping the kitchen floor. My approach to political questions came more from books; his from experience.

We struggled over almost every issue, often so vigorously that people had



Grace and Jimmy Boggs in 1991.

to switch their eyes from one side to the other as if at a pingpong match. Through these struggles we both grew.

Jimmy's mother, like mine, had never been to school and could not read or write. But there was a difference. Our home was not in the Chinese community and my mother had no one to talk to about

her problems. So she saw them as personal, not social. Jimmy's mother had a social perspective on life.

From the moment that I began living in the black community, I was impressed by the social and political consciousness of grassroots blacks who had been raised in the segregated South. Those with education and those without had to live next door to one another. So over back fences folks discussed what was going on in the community, how black folks were being treated and how world and national events affected their lives. On front porches and in barber shops folks testified from their own experiences, wondering collectively why white folks were so inhuman, usually concluding that it was because they were more interested in material gain than in human relationships.

When I married Jimmy, I joined this community. It was an enormous privilege.

—Grace Boggs is a community activist in Detroit.

## Million Man March

On Monday, October 16, 1995, well over one million Afrikan-American men descended on the nation's capitol for a day of atonement, fasting, prayer and reconciliation. As a participant in many Washington marches, I can say this is the high point of my life.

*Sunday, 10/15/95 - 4:33 p.m.:* It has been amazing to watch our communities organize and respond to this historic event. As I sit on the bus with 46 other brothers, old, young, working, unemployed, handicapped, I realize that all classes of black men are present for this event.

I reflect on the massive show of support from the black women; the mothers, wives, sisters, girlfriends, all feeling the utmost pride and determination as they watched, worked and prepared their black men for this historic journey.

*10/15/95 - 5:44 p.m.:* As we sit at the State Fair, I am totally swept away with a group of sisters singing: "Oh! I know you can change ... , Oh! I know you can change ... , Oh! I know you can change ... , the Million Man March is gonna change some thangs!"

*10/15/95 - 9:40 p.m.:* The last several hours have been spent developing the brotherhood on our bus. The conversation has already begun to take place about what will happen when we return to our respective communities. The dialogue is spirited and emotional ... The younger brothers on the bus are transfixed.

*10/15/95 - 10:25 p.m.:* Upon arriving at the service plaza in Springfield, Ohio, I saw a magnificent sight. Hundreds of buses filled with thousands of black men.

*10/16/95 - 9:30 a.m.:* I am now at the Mall in Washington D.C. I am surrounded by an endless sea of black men. In every direction, proud, disciplined, loving and caring brothers by the hundreds of thousands.

*10/16/95 - 12:18 p.m.:* Just a few minutes ago, I spoke with my wife at home who shared with me that on the noon news at CNN, they estimated that the crowd was at two million and growing! As I walked around meeting brothers from Philly, South Carolina, Los Angeles, New

York, Connecticut, Memphis, all around the country, I am not surprised. Some have estimated that between 45,000 and 50,000 black men came from Detroit. I am encompassed with a new attitude, one that gives me supreme confidence in our ability to make things right in our communities.

For so long I, as a black man, have carried a special burden. That is, no matter what I accomplish as an individual black man, it is always overshadowed by the misdeeds of other brothers who have given up hope. I have watched the evening news with shame, as the insane acts of lost black men are paraded across prime time. I have experienced the fear of white people on the elevator, on downtown streets, and as I travel across the state. Today that personal burden has been lifted.

This event has provoked a powerful presence from our proud ancestors. The spirit of the 250,000 black people that stood on this same exact location 32 years ago are all here today. I envision the beaming stares of all of those that have sacrificed their lives for the advancement of Afrikan people in this country. The 150 million souls lost in the treacherous journey to these shores are all shouting in unison today: "Go black man, it's finally time that you've stood up!"

I have on several occasions today, been overwhelmed with emotion, tears just streaming down my face. As Bishop George Stallings from the Imani Temple led 1.5 million black men in prayer, I felt the pain of our children and women as I atoned for the sins of black men. While Maya Angelou read an original poem for the march, tears returned to my eyes. Again and again and again, as a young sister from Maryland read a poem, begging black men to protect her until she became a black woman, I cried. As a 14-year-old brother pleaded with black men to assure his future, I cried. And as I thought about the millions of black folks across the country, as they marveled in pride at our historic gathering here in D.C., I cried. All day I screamed, hollered, shouted and cried. Tears of joy, tears of atonement,

tears of pride, and tears of a future, unseen yesterday, but very clear today. I cried.

*Richard Trice is the training and technical assistance coordinator for the Hunger Action Coalition and father of five in Detroit, Mich.*

## Adopt a striking family

The six unions on strike against the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press* are asking individuals, union locals and churches to pledge a monthly contribution for the welfare of a striking family. Pledges of \$50 a month can help feed a family, \$200 could save a home, \$10 might prevent a utility cut off. Checks can be sent to DNA Striker Relief Fund, Metro Detroit, AFL-CIO, 2550 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48208.

## FBI wiretaps

The F.B.I. has proposed a national wiretapping system of unprecedented size and scope that would give law enforcement officials the capacity to monitor simultaneously as many as one out of every 100 phone lines in some high crime areas of the country.

The plan, which needs Congressional approval for the money to finance it, would still require a court warrant to conduct wiretaps. Still, the proposed expansion of the Government's eavesdropping abilities raises questions among telephone industry executives as to why the F.B.I. believes in may require such broad access to the nation's phone network.

— *New York Times*, 11/2/95

## Sydney defers lay presidency

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney, Australia, has deferred until 1996 a final vote on whether to allow lay persons and deacons to preside at the eucharist.

*Short takes*

# Clinging to the alien ‘other’

by Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr.

As I understand the biblical perspective, the significance of marriage goes deeper than society’s laws and transcends the success or failure of any particular marriage. It is infinitely more profound than just staying together legally. It is grounded in God’s inclusive call to all humanity and the Bible bids us allow its “logic” continually to undermine all the unconscious assumptions through which divisive chauvinisms seek to drown out God’s inclusive call.

I base this claim on two classical biblical statements about marriage. The first is Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” The second is Jesus’ response to a question about divorce in which he refers to this Old Testament passage.

Genesis 2:24 is from the contributor to the Old Testament narrative called the “Yahwist.” Based on cultural assumptions equating “human” perspective with “male” perspective, it holds that human fulfillment and wholeness come only by abandoning the familiar for the mysterious — abandoning the ambiance which formed one’s persona, which imparted one’s identity, for another ambiance defined and characterized by relationship with a mysteriously alien other. This parallels another Yahwist passage, the call of Abraham: “Leave your homeland and kindred and immediate family,” God says, “for the land that I will show you ... and in you shall all the families of the earth be

blessed.” By birth Abraham shares in the prestigious heritage of illustrious Babylon. But it is precisely in abandoning that defining heritage for a locale, lineage and family beckoning from a mysteriously alien future that Abraham becomes what he is meant to be, and new, salvific possibilities open up for the whole human community.

Before Abraham’s call the Yahwist recounts various human efforts to establish one group’s identity as “normative” and to impose that identity on others. Examples stretch from Cain (“Farmers are normative!”) and Abel (“Shepherds are normative!”) to the Tower of Babel (“Babylonian culture mediates God’s presence!”). Those examples expose as clearly today as they did millennia ago how we human creatures deal with the threats posed to our identity by those alien “others” out there whose presence challenges the validity of our claims to normativeness.

But the narrative of Abraham’s call begins to set out an alternative understanding of humanity, and of God. In that understanding, God is not the God of one variety of humanity, but of all hu-

manity — precisely in its innumerable, multifaceted, multicolored varieties. God is not a tribal God but the caller of a variety of tribes (twelve is a mystical, holistic number) into a league in which their unity guarantees the integrity of the specificity of each. This God calls varied genealogical groups into an Israel — Jews

and Greeks, slaves and senators, women and men — into an *ekklesia*. The central biblical story, in fact, is about how God is at work — humbly, patiently, noncoercively and non-imperialistically — on an alternative way to human fulfillment and wholeness.

That way is not some idealistic “humanity” in which the particularity which goes with being human is removed, nor is it the assertion of some one particularity as normative. It leads to a wholeness in which each particular, incomplete piece of humanity is necessary. To set out on God’s way is to leave homeland, kindred and immediate family for a mysteriously alien set of future relationships. That is the fundamental theological — and anthropological — statement of the story of Abraham’s call. And the allusive phraseology of Genesis 2:24 locates the meaning of marriage in that call.

Both the powerful drive of sex impelling human beings toward one another, and the primal abhorrence of incest with its insistence that the drive must lead to alien others, bespeak God’s inclusive purpose for variegated humanity. Human fulfillment and wholeness is to be found

only in a relationship with an alien other. The drive that leads individuals to marriage is rooted in God’s inclusive purpose for all humanity.

The nuanced meaning of Genesis 2:24 prepares the

way for Jesus’ own profoundly nuanced statement about marriage in Mark 10:2-12. The questioners ask about the legality of divorce, “to test him,” the implication seeming to be that Jesus will take some foolish, fanatical position undermining his credibility. Having had them quote what the law said on the subject, Jesus

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*We are called to allow the logic of marriage to undermine all the unconscious assumptions through which chauvinisms seek to drown out God’s inclusive call.*

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**Harvey Guthrie**, a former dean of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., has now retired to a rural acre outside Fillmore, Calif., which he says he married into and on which he and Doris Peyton will celebrate 50 years of marriage on December 29.

says, "Sinful human nature, and legalistic approaches to complicated things taken by the likes of you, make laws governing the termination of marriages necessary. But marriage is not, finally, about a legal contract. It is about something of a different order, something deeper."

In typical fashion, Jesus says this allusively, not by citing marriage or divorce law, but by reciting the Yahwist's allusive statement in Genesis 2:24 about how human incompleteness is to find fulfillment in the purpose of God. Again, when he gets back home and finds that the disciples don't get the nuance either, he employs inflated ironical hyperbole in branding as adulterous any marriage after divorce.

Put prosaically, Jesus is saying to both antagonists and disciples that the significance of marriage goes deeper than we think, that the significance of marriage is rooted in God's inclusive purpose for all humanity — in God's call to the separated varieties of humanity to find fulfillment and wholeness in relationship to one another.

Jesus seems subtly to underline the logic of that significance by going deeper than the statement of the Yahwist in Genesis. The "therefore" with which Genesis 2:24 begins refers to the creation of woman from a rib taken from the man, an understanding that sees woman as derivative of man and male humanity as normative humanity. But Jesus prefaces Genesis 2:24's "therefore" with a reference to Genesis 1:27, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female,'" which understands women and men together to constitute humanity and neither to be derivative or normative. Further, the earliest manuscripts of Mark omit "and be joined to his wife" after "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother."

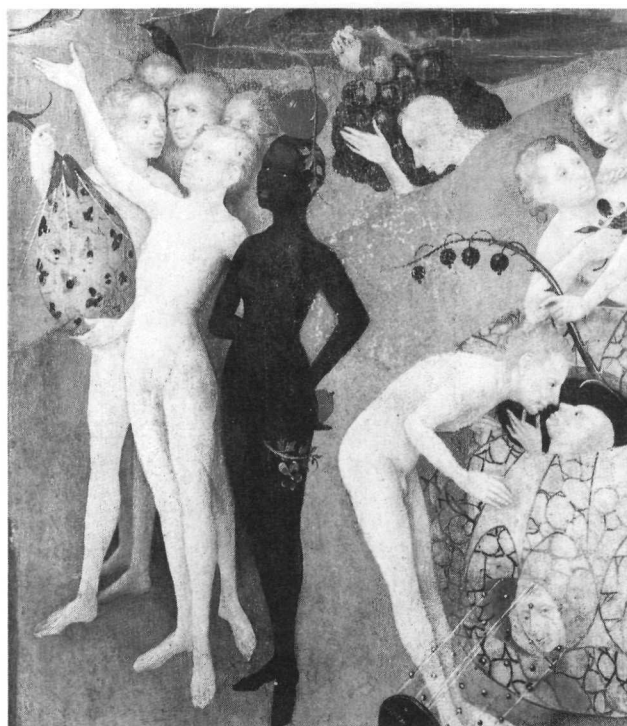
Given this, and given Jesus' reference to Genesis 1 in which "man" clearly includes both male and female human beings, it is entirely possible that Jesus is saying, "From the beginning God made [human beings] male and female. For this reason human beings shall leave father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh ..."

That is the point. We are called, along with Jesus, to allow the logic of marriage continually to undermine all the unconscious assumptions through which divisive chauvinisms seek to drown out God's

by distinguishing between sacramental significance and legal contracts; that it is a desecration of what marriage is about to use it in some "family values" ostracization of divorced persons, single parents, or gay and lesbian couples; that "to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death" is of a piece with "[to] strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being"; that racism and sexism and homophobia and economic oppression are as sinful, and in the same way, as adultery.

And I will say, too, that I am thankful for a wife, Doris Peyton, and a marriage that are as responsible for what I have said as any exegetical expertise. After almost 50 years you would think I should know Doris completely, know everything about her, and in lots of ways that is true. We often say the same thing about something spontaneously at the same time. But just when I think I've got her, she comes across as a mysteriously alien other, and my prejudices are confronted for what they are, my limited perspectives challenged, my chauvinist assumptions shown up. It is not always without pain, but it is undergirded with an acceptance of *me* (not my pretenses) and a respect for me that is wonderfully affirming. That has a great deal to do, I think, with what I see in Genesis and Mark. We both agree that we have been downright lucky and that it would not be appropriate to get too theological about it. But we do believe it is grounded in an inclusive purpose best glimpsed in nuances and allusions, usually obscured by profundities, and quite often well served by ironic humor.

TW



*Gloration of procreative energy by Hieronymus Bosch*

inclusive call.

Neither the nuances nor the allusivenesses I believe I rightly discern in the Genesis and Mark passages warrant my drawing pedantic, legalistic, prosaic conclusions. I will, though, say that I believe the Episcopal Church's honest canonical recognition of the fact of civil divorce in 1973 at my first General Convention honored what marriage is about

# Witness year-end report

## Fêting Eckersley

Members of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company board and friends of *The Witness* magazine gathered in New York City in June to pay tribute to Robert Eckersley, of Scranton, Penn., ECPC's treasurer for two decades!

"It is hard to imagine the Episcopal Church without *The Witness*," said Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning in a written statement, "and it is hard to imagine *The Witness* without Robert Eckersley."

Eckersley's work was applauded by Robert DeWitt, a former bishop of Pennsylvania, who became its editor in 1974.

"Since the mid-70s, Eckersley has been attending staff and directors' meeting, preparing budgets, counselling perplexed and/or erring editors, and generally keeping watch above his own," DeWitt said. "And all this he does with a serenity born of confidence and competence."

Current editor Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann noted that "Bob was invaluable for extending his advice with an invitation to disregard and to challenge his views — as long as his perspective was understood."

Those working for peace and justice in the Episcopal Church have, at times, shared a tumultuous history, Wylie-Kellermann added.

"But Bob was always intent on getting people to work together. He gives great thumbnail sketches of members of the board, staff and Consultation. He has opinions about our strengths, weaknesses and hearts. He becomes frustrated when people in our camp are at odds."

She ended by saying, "Bob is a man who is cautious about religion — not too comfortable with doctrine or miracles — who has spent much of his time with bishops and Christian radicals."



Robert Eckersley

"He's a man who denounces emotionalism, but quotes poetry and is known to cry. He often quotes:

*They drew a circle that shut me out  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win  
We drew a circle that took them in."*

## Reader survey

Many thanks to all who responded to our readers' survey. We're still digesting the many comments, but a quick review indicates that most of the respondents are European American with household incomes under \$70,000. More than half are women, most are Episcopalian. One-fifth are gay/lesbian. One-third are ordained. Most have graduate degrees. Most consider themselves liberal and vote Democrat, although numerous other labels were offered, including one "contrarian communitarian." Many readers described themselves as "compassionate" and "intelligent."

## Witness awards

*The Witness* won 12 awards and four honorable mentions in the Episcopal Communicators and Associated Church Press competitions this year.

The Episcopal Communicators' Polly Bond Award of Merit was given to *The Witness* for General Excellence. *The Witness* placed third in the ACP Best in Class competition.

The following 1994 *Witness* features were also honored:

- 1994 Advent Calender, by Julie A. Wortman. Polly Bond Award of Merit [specialized print].
- "Dance of the Soul" by Claudia Bach, 7/94. Polly Bond Award of Merit [original graphic].
- "Daughters of Prophecy" by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, 7/94. Polly Bond Award of Merit [editorial].
- "Engaging the Powers" by Bill Wylie-Kellermann, 3/94. Polly Bond Award of Merit [critical review].
- "Family: Icon and Principality" by Bill Wylie-Kellermann, 12/94. ACP honorable mention [theological reflection].
- "Family Values" issue, 12/94. Polly Bond Award of Merit [in-depth coverage of a current issue].
- "February Thaw" by Skip Renker, 5/94. ACP honorable mention [poetry].
- General Convention coverage, coordinated by Julie A. Wortman. ACP honorable mention [convention or meeting coverage].
- "Glamour," 11/94. Polly Bond Award of Merit [magazine cover design].
- "Passion and Dialogue: An Interview with Steve Charleston" by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, 3/94. Polly Bond Award of Merit [magazine interview].
- "Selling Cars" by Jim West, 11/94. Polly Bond Award of Excellence [photo].
- "Why I am (Still) a Baptist" by Ken Sehested, 10/94. ACP Award of Excellence [feature article].
- *Witness* profiles by Julie A. Wortman and Marianne Arbogast, 4,6,12/94. ACP honorable mention [department].
- "Women's Spirituality: In the Church and Beyond," 7/94. ACP Award of Excellence [readers' favorite].

# The church and the unmarried

by Kay Collier-Slone

General Convention, Phoenix. The "official" statement regarding sexuality offers a caveat which "recognizes that many of its members live in 'discontinuity' to the standard as stated" (i.e. life-long, heterosexual, monogamous marriage).

Conversation buzzes in the corridors among the single, separated, divorced and widowed in attendance. Marriage is *not* the only norm. As single adults, these people live in a new paradigm that is not "discontinuous"; it simply is the way of nearly half of the U.S. population — the way they live, work, make decisions — and, yes, choose whether or not to be sexually active.

- 48 percent of the adult population over the age of 25 is now single.

- This figure may reach 52 percent by the year 2000.

- In the 1980 census, the average age for first marriage was 21-23; in 1990, that figure was 27.5, including high-school drop-outs.

- The post-80 age group is the fastest growing in America. Many are single.

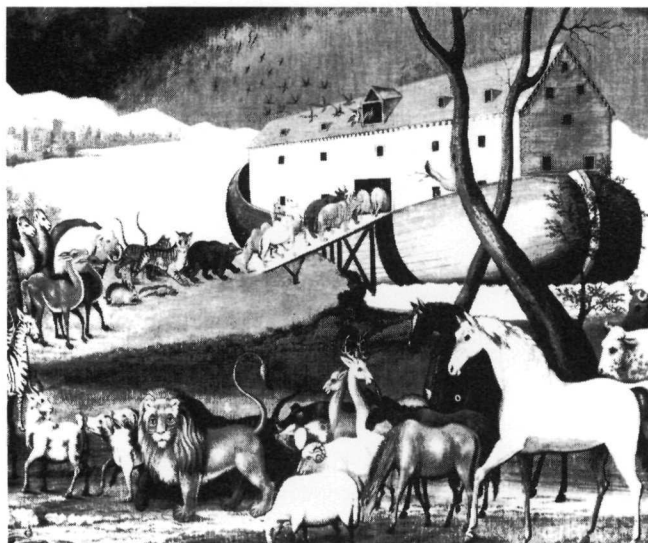
- 60 percent of today's children will live in a single-parent home before they are 18 years old.

- 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce; 60-70 percent of second mar-

riages end in divorce; and 70-82 percent of third marriages end in divorce.

Jesus was single. Yet, as a denomination, and as parishes and missions, the Episcopal Church has programmed and evangelized around married people.

Ministry with single adults is largely a ground-up effort in this church at present, driven by the need of growing numbers of spiritually hungry single adults to have their issues recognized and ministered to; to be fed by the one place which should be



Episcopal Ad Project

uniquely qualified to address the experience of loneliness, of separation, of the need for community. It is also driven by the clamor of a growing number of single adults that unless the Episcopal Church begins to be intentional about reaching out to the many single adults who are unchurched, efforts at evangelism will be minimal at best. The numbers do not lie. Ministry with single adults is not anti-marriage; it is pro the new reality of the major portion of the population of this and other countries.

What are the issues the church should address?

- The pain of loneliness, with its often-resultant non-marital mini-marriages, relationship addiction and anesthetizing through abuse of damaging substances and behaviors.

- Marginalized grief—of divorce, of break-ups and deaths in long-term non-marital relationships, of broken dreams and societal pressures.

- The promise of personal wholeness and individual relationship with Jesus Christ—the only relationship which will never fail, in a lifetime in which most persons will spend some period of time alone.

- Community-building, companionship, mentoring—concepts which are crucial to balanced, healthy lives in a society where the institution of marriage is no longer either given or certain.

- Evangelism outreach which can truly say "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You"—and mean it—to single adults, as well as to youth and couples.

- Young single adults who are the first generation to face nearly 20 post-puberty single years.

- Provision of funds, resources and training for parishes and missions of all sizes which will state loudly that single adults are recognized as normal "members" incorporate in the "blessed company of ALL faithful people"—not half-persons waiting in some ante-room to life.

As we enter the 21st century, it is unconscionable that any thinking church could be without some intentional ministry with single adults.

The numbers have it—and they are likely to go higher, not lower. **TW**

**Kay Collier-Slone** is director of Ministries with Single Adults at Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington, Ky.; and author of the book *Single in the Church: New Ways to Minister With 52% Of God's People* (Alban Institute). Artist Nell Hillsley works in St. Paul, Minn.

# Promise Keepers revisited

**T**hank you for your coverage of the Promise Keepers (7/95). The article by Fritz Eichland was exactly as you described it, "a vivid descriptive piece which may make it possible to reach your own conclusions." I was fascinated to read about the experience of a man who went to the Promise Keeper gathering dubious and found that there was something in the message that was appealing to him and his faith. To me that is one of the reasons the Promise Keepers are an effective movement right now: They speak to men who are struggling to find a place to be as Christian men. However, many elements of the Promise Keepers represent backlash at its finest: scapegoating feminists, women, gay and lesbian people as the cause of the breakdown of the family and economy. Moreover, the Promise Keepers represent a palatable and effective stream of far right extremism in the U.S. Hopefully, future coverage of the Promise Keepers will include this type of analysis. Again, congratulations on your work with such a fine publication as the *Witness*.

**Julie R. Enszer**  
**Director, Affirmations [Gay/**  
**Lesbian Center], Ferndale, MI**

A packet of information, sent with this letter, included several outrageous comments from Promise Keepers' organizers and supporters.

For instance, *Church & State* quotes Tony Evans in *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, "Don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I'm not suggesting that you ask for your role back. I'm urging you to take it back. Unfortunately there can be no compromise. ... Treat the lady gently and lovingly. But lead. ... [And] to you ladies who may be reading this: Give it back! for the sake of your family and the



Fritz Eichland

**Promise Keeper in Pontiac, Mich., 1995**

survival of our culture, let your man be a man if he's willing."

Yet, another article, published in *New Age Journal* (3/95), reveals the same ambivalence that Fritz Eichland describes. Like Eichland, Jeff Waggenheim was skeptical of Promise Keepers when he took the assignment and hostile to ideologies that suppress women and condemn gays and lesbians. But when Edwin Cole denounced infidelity and advocated celibacy, Waggenheim writes, "I listen harder, and for a while Cole sounds — dare I say it? — positively feminist as he talks about how respect for women is lost when a man is pursuing sex without love. Then, suddenly, per Cole's request, dozens of young men all around the stadium are standing to take a vow of chastity, and nearby men are moving closer to them to lay a hand of support on their bodies, all heads nodded in prayer."

Waggenheim, like Eichland, is moved by the discussion groups within the press room itself. He's "stunned" that reporters who a moment earlier had been watching a Colorado-Nebraska game turn to each other and talk honestly about their marriages. He, too, notes the camaraderie "among the whites, blacks, and Hispanics who are filling the place" and finally,

with reservations similar to Eichland's, takes the hand of the man next to him in the press box and joins in the hymns with "chills running up and down my body."

At the end, Waggenheim concludes it is an open question whether Promise Keepers "will be able to blend moral values and personal change to truly bring integrity into the lives of American men" or will "descend into the demagoguery and extremist politics that have come to characterize the religious right."

*M.E.N. Magazine* [10/95] notes that the Promise Keepers have borrowed rhetoric from the men's movement: "The idea that men have not been good, safe partners. Men have been adversely affected by pornography and sexual fantasies. Men spend too much time at work and not enough time with their families."

But *M.E.N.* attacks PK's anti-feminism, homophobia and Christian chauvinism. It also critiques the core of PK's reasoning: "The economic system, which they enthusiastically endorse, is working against them. Loss of family-wage jobs, declining real income, job insecurity, and long-term unemployment, all of which are characteristic of our advanced capitalist economy, are the very things that force parents, children and grandparents to work long hours, to suffer depression, and to be alienated from each other."

At *The Witness*, we have serious reservations about Promise Keepers. We are skeptical of any stadium-sized gatherings. Some of the rhetoric of Promise Keepers' leaders is narrow-minded and dangerous. Yet, we consider it significant that men with good politics can attend these events and be startled at the level of honesty in the exchanges between men about promises they have made to their families. Millions of men are being drawn into these conversations. The Left needs find a way to talk honestly about sexual ethics and commitments.

— *Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann*

# Leveling the play field

By Kate DeSmet

The playfield on which women and men wrestle and sweat in sexual give-and-take may appear to be the place where male and female connect in passions freely offered. But Linda Hirschman, a Chicago law professor and feminist, says the playfield is more like a minefield for women who dangerously couple with partners far more powerful than themselves.

"I think women would be better off having less sex," says Hirschman of the Chicago Kent School of Law at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Hirschman, currently serving as scholar-in-residence at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Va., is co-writing a book about modern sexual behavior called, "After Vice-Politics, Feminism, and Legal Regulation of Sexuality."

The book, to be published in late 1996 by Oxford University Press, will challenge what Hirschman calls America's "libertine paradigm of heterosexual sexual relations" that champions free expression of sexual behavior by consenting individuals. Like some feminist scholars, she believes women pay a higher personal cost for the consequences of sexual behavior and, as a result, suffer more in a freer sexually practicing society.

But Hirschman's answer to the situation may unsettle some feminists. She advocates staunch enforcement of laws prohibiting fornication among unmarried adults, and believes current statutory rape laws should be used to jail teenagers who engage in sex.

"Frankly, I'd raise the age of (sexual) consent to 18, maybe even 21, so that a girl is out of high school before she's

harvested for sex," Hirschman said.

The Chicago professor said she does not desire a return to old notions of purified females practicing chaste behavior as a sign of submissive obedience to God and men. Instead, she believes laws can help women enhance their "sexual bargaining power" by preserving their sexual access from men until they are in committed, responsible relationships.

"What's happening now is a kind of free-for-all between players who are unequal," Hirschman said. "Men are, on the whole, larger, stronger and not vulnerable to childbirth and nursing. They are not tagged with the natural consequences of sexuality. And, on the whole, they are richer and more politically powerful. So when they bargain for sexual access in society they wield a lot of advantages."

When men get sexual access from women without committing to a responsible and loving relationship in return, the result is loss upon loss for women. Men offer women money in return for sex, or they offer an escape from "the rigors of the market economy," Hirschman said. Many women convince themselves that these are adequate returns for their sexual favors.

"Women and girls can delude themselves that they are making free choices when it comes to sexual activity with men, but often it is not a morally meaningful act of consent because the alternatives for women in society are so lousy," Hirschman said.

"So even if they believe they're acting freely it is still morally indefensible because the female remains an object, and

that is inconsistent with any moral theory of what it means to be a person."

Hirschman turns to the law to help fight the sexual power imbalance. Besides statutory rape laws, she cites others on the books that already address domestic battering, child support, and sanctions against men who use fraud for sexual access to women. Hirschman also wants strict enforcement of laws prohibiting fornication between consenting heterosexual adults but admits "the machinery it would take to enforce (such laws) would make even a 'femi-nazi' like me shudder."

Ultimately, women should understand that their ability to give men sexual access is a powerful commodity, said Hirschman, who developed the idea of sexual "bargaining" from her experience as an attorney for labor unions. Women with a collective sense of their sexual power can gain more leverage in attempts to control their bodies, relationships, children, finances, and future.

Hirschman, who is married and the mother of a college-age daughter, said her philosophy of sexuality is rooted in a

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*"I'd raise the age of consent, so that a girl is out of high school before she's harvested for sex."*

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— L. Hirschman

Judeo/Christian understanding of the moral role for humans living in community, as well as ancient Greek teachings about human

equality that were expressed anew in the Age of Enlightenment. But she admits that in a modern society that celebrates free sexual expression, she carries a "relatively repressed vision."

"I happen to be one of those people who doesn't think our society should be rated by how many orgasms can be achieved in a 24-hour period. So I am radically unwilling to accept the libertine paradigm of sexuality," Hirschman said. "It just doesn't work for women." **TV**

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**Kate DeSmet** is a *Detroit News* reporter on strike.

# When the church insists on heterosexual appearances

By Elvira Latta Charles

[Ed. note: In 1994, *The Witness* published Otis Charles' letter to the House of Bishops revealing that he is a gay man. We affirm his courage. This year, Elvira Latta Charles, formerly married to Otis Charles, offered her story, saying that if church and society didn't damn gay and lesbian life-styles, leading people to try to live duplicitous lives, she might have been spared a situation that caused her pain. Charles added that because homosexuality is a politicized issue, it is hard for people in her position to find their voices, but she hopes that telling her story may "forearm others until that time when education as well as the voicing of our experiences will help enlighten society so that this sad tragedy can be averted for both the gay and the heterosexual person."]

**W**e have read so much about the release of coming out of the closet for the gay person. It is euphoric — to be able to be who you are to your family, friends and neighbors is to feel tall, perhaps for the very first time in your life.

But, if the person revealing their identity is married, what is the experience of the "other" in the marriage?

I am speaking now of my own experience discovering after 25 years of marriage (including the birth of five children) that the man I loved and lived intimately with was gay. One can say, today, after

**Elvira Latta Charles** lives in Washington, Conn.

front-page articles in leading newspapers and magazines, that this is not unusual! But that was not the venue of my world 20 years ago when my husband, then the bishop of Utah, broke this astounding news to me.

The closet my husband began to move



**Elvira Latta Charles on her wedding day in 1951.**

Diana Latta Baudé

out from in 1976 suddenly enclosed me and even silenced me before my parents, my children and my friends. We did not openly share this secret that we both now knew. This transferred secret began to gnaw at my in-

*The closet my husband began to move out from in 1976 suddenly enclosed me and silenced me before my parents, children and friends.*

sides, as it had his perhaps, and it obsessed my every thought. I realized the enormity and power of this secret. Living within a deception can feel like an encounter with evil — it can call into question one's faith in God. I felt almost paralyzed in its grip and yet some life-force within me forced me to look outward for help.

In the process of therapy and recollection, I realized the ways that this secret, even when unknown to me, had been controlling me and my marriage. Communication and intimacy became its victims. We didn't share truths about our past and spontaneous intimacy was kept vigilantly in check.

For the gay spouse, workaholism can become a pattern as it is the only positive and socially approved outlet. The relationship becomes disempowering for both partners as the secret holds sway. And the gay spouse can begin to let out his or her frustration with sudden anger leaving the unknowing spouse to wonder, and in my case in need of psychological help.

I don't even like to look back on those years between 1976 and 1981, for I see a woman in almost a catatonic state. I had to rediscover who I was, for my image of myself, my spouse and my marriage had shattered. I knew, that like a broken mirror, the various pieces could never be reformed as they had been before and that made me feel desolate and so sad. So, I had to begin the process of refiguring myself.

Thank God for my strong belief in a caring God, a practice of prayer, a great psychiatrist and supportive children who gradually learned of their father's sexual orientation. And I mean gradually, for it took many years before I was

able to acknowledge the secret as reality.

I tried every workshop on the planet to make myself able to reconcile this truth with my faith and my values. I did volunteer work for the church, for social service agencies and women's centers. I took assertiveness training courses, others in building a self image; I studied t'ai chi and practiced it daily and shared its beauty with others. I did my work as the Bishop's wife, built a columbarium at the Cathedral, led retreats for women, coordinated an art gallery, remained active on boards of social service agencies, all the time carrying within me his secret. I hated the duplicity and I hated myself for the shame and embarrassment I felt.

And I was angry — oh, the anger and the rage I felt. To hear your husband preach to others what he cannot live himself and to be constantly measuring your reality against the belief system which you espouse and hold dear, adds to the pain.

Today, younger people will say, "Well, you could have left the marriage and saved yourself a lot of grief." That is absolutely true. I can only say that I did not. I suppose I lived in the hope that we could work "things" out, but I could not continue to live within a marriage that included both sexualities and so we divorced in 1994 after 43 years together. To be perfectly honest, I still grieve for what I would have loved as companionship and enduring love for the days ahead.

But the years just prior to my husband's decision to tell the church of his orientation laid a good foundation for the decisions that have followed.

While Otis Charles was dean of the Episcopal Divinity School, I studied feminist theology and received my M.A. in 1993. My years at EDS nurtured a theology of interdependence as opposed to co-dependency. Therapy and reading in feminist literature modelled for me the alrightness of looking out for myself and

acknowledging myself as a God-given gift. I had always viewed my marriage as a blending of "two halves to make a whole" and felt so betrayed as well as poorly prepared to face the future alone. I had to learn to be more honest in my communication with others and to gain my own voice.

Like so many women of my generation I like hearing myself more certain and more direct with others. And I appreciate the affirmation of knowing that my particular life experience, my ability to learn and absorb new information and create new patterns in my life, is a great cause for celebration.

I am now enrolled in a training program for Spiritual Directors, sponsored by the Diocese of South Carolina, and am beginning to work with women as a listener to their faith journeys. Perhaps other women whose paths are similar to mine will want to journey with me also. I think there are many men and women who share a similar story to mine. Our stories need to be told because they are about our very soul's health.

Women have learned as they try to unravel the particular trials in their own

lives that nothing happens independently of its social context. While my journey is unique to me and I alone am responsible for how I played it out, much has changed in terms of the issue of homosexuality.

But in spite of all the talk, much remains the same in the area of the institutional church and the family. I am saddened to realize that young boys and girls may still experience the fear that leads to inappropriate decisions for one's life. I am saddened that they probably make those decisions without the nurturing of caring family members and wise clergy.

Perhaps I will ultimately learn the purpose of my particular journey. In so many ways it has been so dreadful and yet I am so grateful for the gifts that I have uncovered. I am very conscious of those who have lovingly held me in prayer, including Edmond and Patti Browning, Jungian therapist Demaris Wehr and my spiritual director Jeannette Normandice.

I pray that the love that has been extended to me in the particular will be offered into the arena of the universal where we can share solidarity with all who have experienced grief and somehow been restored to life.

**TW**

## Witness study guides

Join together with parishioners, classmates, adversaries, housemates, significant others, or a combination thereof, and explore a topic as addressed by a single issue of *The Witness*.

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### Study Guide issues:

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The New Party

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# The ethics of monogamy

by Louie Crew

As a gay Christian soon to begin the 23rd year of marriage with another man, much of what I recognize as God's presence in my marriage does not square with the values of our culture.

Every state, for example, treats as grounds for a divorce the fact that a couple has not lived in the same residence for the past year. Thirty-eight allow less than a year to qualify. Ten states require only three months' separation to qualify (Source: Gary N. Skoloff, Skoloff & Wolfe, Livingston, NJ).

Yet I count it as one of the most important achievements in our marriage that for justice's sake we were able to sustain, with God's help, the stress of living 12 time zones apart for over a year at a time on three separate occasions. Without doing so, my spouse would never have had the opportunity to work at a life-enhancing job in China; nor would I, since our assignments in Asia did not synchronize.

It's important to account for our strange behavior in the few times of great stress which we have faced — times when one of us has not been kind or loving or responsible. Miraculously, each of us when offended has experienced a double portion of God's grace to love the other when he was least loveable.

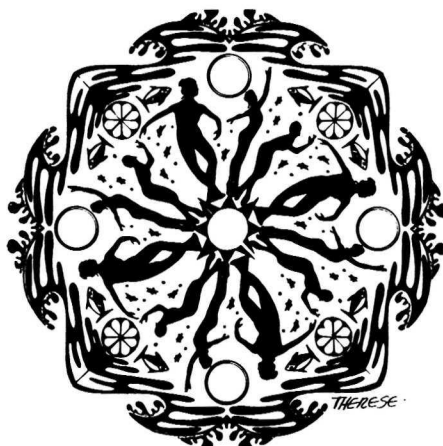
Though our marriage has been blessed almost all the time with much joy and kindness and with abundant material comfort, these do not mark a marriage as Christian. God values more what we have

**Louie Crew**, founder of Integrity and professor at Rutgers University, edited *A Book of Revelations: Lesbian and Gay Episcopalians Tell Their Own Stories*, Integrity, 1991. Artist **Therese Denham** is a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

given away than what we have consumed.

It's easy to look like good Christians, especially if you're a nice couple anyway. It's much harder to be good disciples. Many who call ourselves Christians live comfortably in mutually caring domiciles with little or no regard for the strangers outside our gates.

"If you love those who love you, what



Therese Denham

credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same" (Luke 6:32-33).

Lesbians are no less prone to deceive ourselves about the virtue of our marriages than are our straight neighbors. Since fewer of us are parents, we often enjoy a great deal more "disposable income" than most straight couples working the same jobs.

"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be

required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Luke 12:48). I sicken when I see lesbians, spurned by the church, turn and accept instead the invitation of moguls that we sell our souls for mammon.

Lesbians need strong preaching to call us into the riches of living in full community with all those in need. Instead, we have 76 bishops lined up to try a bishop for heresy for daring to ordain one of us at all.

"One issue which concerns me is the nature of the relationship the church is asked to approve," wrote a priest to me recently out of the blue. I was disconcerted at suddenly becoming a specimen, but I had to admit that I too scrutinize any two people who bid for my blessing of their union. Integrity/NYC won't even consider sponsoring a service of union until the couple has been coming faithfully to the chapter's weekly eucharists for at least six months, nor until they have been to counseling with one of our priest associates.

"I have always assumed that the intention was life-long as the Prayer Book vows seem to imply," my importuner went on. "I know there is some 'cheating' in hetero-sexual relationships, but I just don't know anything about the gay and lesbian ones." Ah, yes, back at sex again.

I am in a commitment for life. It is a monogamous commitment. I'm distressed, however, that almost every conversation about marriage stresses sexual criteria first. It's as if we really buy into St. Paul's no-

*Though our marriage has been blessed with much joy and kindness and with abundant material comfort, these do not mark a marriage as Christian. God values more what we have given away than what we have consumed.*

tion of marriage as essentially Lust Control. I disagree with Paul: We both see but through a dark glass, and each may be wrong. Through it I view sex as integral, but not definitive. Surely at least a dozen issues deserve higher priority if we want to evaluate the qualities of a good Christian marriage. Justice issues, for example. How will the couple spend its money or its time? What kind of equity will exist in deciding? How will the couple divvy up the messy chores? What will the couple do to assure the fullest realization of the talent of each partner and of any children that become their responsibility? How will the couple connect to the full community?

I question the integrity of some of the recent interest in getting lesbians to marry. Too often what masquerades as concern for lesbians' welfare, is merely self-interest: "Better they marry their own kind than have one of us risk marrying them!" There is wisdom there, yes, but wisdom devoid of good news, wisdom devoid of simple kindness.

I'd have more trust if I saw a concern for all lesbian persons, not just those who want to unite. Christian communities rightly encourage straight persons to date for years before they marry. Rarely do straights now talking about lesbian unions say a word about lesbian courtship, or lesbian dating. If straight youngsters need a long period of discernment about who they are and whom they would best connect with, should we expect less need for lesbian youngsters? Few couples come to priests for pre-marital counseling who have not already been involved intimately. It's important not to hold lesbians' courtships to a separate standard.

I'd presume good will if I saw welcome for lesbians committed to being single.

It is not a question for theology to answer, nor even an issue for Emily Post

or Amy Vanderbilt to arbitrate. We must be born again. We don't have to petition whether the servant is really a servant or maybe a boyfriend when the foreign out-

sider says, "Oh, I'm not worthy that you should'st come under my roof." We have only to speak but the loving word. Only then can we be healed. **TW**

## Rites for same-sex blessings

Blessings of relationships, same-sex unions, commitment ceremonies, lesbian/gay marriages — call them what you will, they have been around for a long time. Indeed, the late John Boswell said in his book, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, that such ceremonies began in the 8th Century and predate heterosexual marriages inside church buildings.

In the Episcopal Church, the history is varied. In the past, some couples simply used the marriage service from the Prayer Book without benefit of clergy (as did Louie Crew and his partner, Ernest Clay). Probably the most common "blessing" of lesbian and gay couples comes from using *The Book of Occasional Services*' form for a house blessing. In many areas of the country, the vast majority of Episcopalians who have their homes blessed are same-sex couples. *The Book of Occasional Services*' brief anniversary rite is also easily adapted to same-sex couples. (My partner, Scott Helsel, and I had our 10th anniversary celebrated at our parish's main Sunday service.)

Services approved by a diocesan date from 1975 when the Diocese of Rochester, under the leadership of Bishop Robert Spears, authorized Walter Szymanski (now in the Diocese of Pittsburgh) to conduct such ceremonies.

In 1987, both the Dioceses of California and Newark prepared reports supporting such ceremonies. Califor-

nia published a rite.

In 1993, an *ad hoc* group met at the Episcopal Divinity School to again look at this issue. They developed a proposed rite in early 1994 that celebrates life commitments by people of any orientation, but did not release it prior to General Convention that year. That convention approved a resolution (C-042a) directing the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Bishops' Theology Committee to present "a report addressing the theological foundations and pastoral considerations involved in blessing same-sex unions" to the 1997 convention. It went on to provide that the committees not develop a rite for such unions until authorized by a future convention. Some who oppose such rites contend that the ban applies to everyone in the church and severely attacked the EDS *ad hoc* group when it released its previously developed rite after the convention. [Copies of *An Illustration of a Rite for the Celebration of Commitment to a Life Together* can be obtained by sending \$5 to Charles Bennison at EDS, 101 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.]

In 1990, Integrity conducted a survey which revealed that some form of service recognizing lesbian or gay couples had been performed by an Episcopal priest in every domestic diocese.

— Kim Byham. Byham is publisher of *The Voice of Integrity*

# The Righter trial: on the brink of the millenium

By Julie A. Wortman

There is something utterly appropriate about the fact that the Episcopal Church is gearing up for a heresy trial in early 1996. It has to do with the millenial tenor of American life right now. Who will we be in the new era? As writer Steven Langerfeld recently pointed out, we are "post" so many things these days — postmodern, post-Cold War, post-New Deal — but, he says, "we are pre-We Don't Know What."

Everyone is eager for a "better" future, but there is no consensus about which prophet to follow into which wilderness. People are clamoring for clarity through ballot referenda, newspaper strikes, Million Man marches, national and local elections, Supreme Court decisions and, yes, heresy trials.

But mixed in with the genuine call for clarity is a lot of double talk and sleight of hand. This is no less true in the church than in politics.

The most disingenuous claim about the Walter Righter presentment is that "it is not about homosexuality," but about church order. Some pro-presentment folks go so far as to claim that it is really about sex outside of marriage, gay or straight. If either claim were true, of course, the presenters wouldn't have wanted to confuse the issue by selecting a bishop who ordained a non-celibate gay man. Putting a bishop who had knowingly ordained an unmarried "practicing" heterosexual on trial — there are plenty to choose from, I would think — would have been more to the point.

The presentment may have something to do with church order, but it is absolutely about homosexuality. The question is

whether the Episcopal Church of the 21st century will find gay and lesbian people upfront acceptable and, if it will, whether its evolving sexual ethics and sacraments will reflect that position.

Also disingenuous is the presenters' claim that singling out Walter Righter was just a matter of rushing to beat the statute of limitations on presentments. They could have chosen Washington's bishop, Ronald Haines, who ordained Elizabeth Carl, an "out," non-celibate lesbian, to the diaconate in June of 1990, three months prior to the ordination Righter performed.

"No one in the group of presenters knew or talked about the ordination [Haines performed]," presenter James Stanton said when asked about this.

"The only reason for making the Presentment against Bishop Righter was simply that his action, which gained widespread publicity across the country, was the only one known to all of us."

But some of the presenters had pushed for censure of Haines at the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix, the same convention at which the bishops refused to censure Righter for ordaining Stopfel.

Righter was probably a more attractive target than Haines for at least two reasons. First, being retired, Righter lacks the status — and resources — of an "active" bishop. Second, putting Righter on trial is as close to putting the "king" of homosexual ordinations, Jack Shelby Spong, on trial as the presenters could get without actually risking taking

on the articulate, media-savvy Bishop of Newark directly. Righter was acting for Spong when he ordained Stopfel, the presiding bishop having persuaded Spong not to perform the ordination himself because of the unresolved furor over Spong's splashy ordination of the outspoken Robert Williams some months before. In this sense, as Righter and others have frequently noted, the presenters do bear some resemblance to schoolyard bullies trying to get at a rival through his underling associates.

Finally, given the extreme unlikelihood that Righter will be found guilty — Righter has clearly broken no church law, the General Convention has repeatedly refused to make "sex outside of marriage" an impediment to ordination and the 1979 resolution which speaks of the inappropriateness of ordaining non-celibate homosexuals describes itself as a recommendation — it is reasonable to conclude that an important, but unspoken, goal of the presenters is to smoke out who will qualify for the conservative vote when it comes time to elect the next presiding bishop.

"The present presiding bishop has taken sides [in this matter of ordaining non-celibate homosexuals] — he is not a moderator," West Texas' bishop, John MacNaughton, recently said. "The next guy is really going to have to be a moderator."

But the trial leaves little room for those who may wish to remain impartial. A vote is what those who wanted this heresy trial desired and

that is what they will get. And it will have everything to do with determining whose vision will guide the church as it moves into the millenial wilderness.

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# Views on the Righter trial

In 1979 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church said, "We re-affirm the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity and sexual chastity as the standard of Christian sexual morality. Candidates for ordination are expected to conform to this standard. Therefore, we believe it is not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage." The point of the presentment has from the start been to raise the question of order: What does it mean when the church reaffirms "the traditional teaching?" What does it mean when the church says persons are "expected to conform" to the standards of its teaching? Are bishops or others in leadership in the church free to act contrary to or in disregard of such declarations?

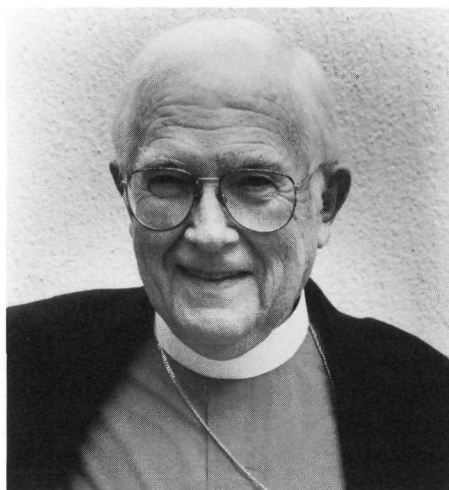
Order serves the mission and ministry of the church. Order minimizes confusion, frustration and division. Prophetic witness and challenges to change also serve the mission and ministry of the church. But when such witnesses and challenges work to break down order, rather than move through an ordered process, the result is brokenness, anger and pain.

If the court finds against Righter, I would hope that we would all refrain from following the course he took until and unless the church changes its teaching. If the court finds that Righter has not acted contrary to the teaching of the church, it would signal that the church has no teaching in this area of sexuality and that every bishop is free to do what is right in his or her own eyes. Such a finding, I suspect, would lead to greater division and dissolution. In any case, a finding in favor of Righter would not by itself establish a new teaching of the Church.

Many of us presenters and supporters of the presentment are committed to dialogue and to following the truth wherever it leads. At the same time, we feel bound to honor the processes and heritage of our common faith. Those who have sought to bring change in the church

by unilateral action are those who have resolved the questions to their satisfaction and sought to impose their answers on the church. They have departed from the agreed statements and affirmations of the church. That is schismatic. It is this move which has brought us to the present state of division and bitterness which infects our communion.

— James M. Stanton, the Bishop of Dallas and one of the presenters



Walter Righter, on trial for heresy early next year.

James Thrall, ENS

The most frustrating thing to me is that this debate encourages people to first see me in terms of my sexual orientation. There has been no effort to look at my ministry as a piece of the debate. I become nameless and faceless. That dehumanization enrages me most.

— Barry Stopfel, rector of St. George's, Maplewood, N.J., the man Walter Righter ordained

The great 17th century poet and theologian John Milton wrote (in *Of Christian Doctrine*) that people are "unjust and foolish" who "stamp with the invidious name of heretic and heresy whatever appears to them to differ from the received opinion without trying the doctrine by a comparison with Scripture." I wonder what he'd have to say about the bishops who are crying heresy where there is, in the

first place, no doctrine to compare with Scripture, where the received opinion (heterosexism) flies in the face of biblical and churchly injunctions toward justice and love, and, indeed, where an abundance of Scripture scholars support Bishop Righter's action? I am embarrassed for the Episcopal Church.

— Virginia Mollenkott, author of *Sensuous Spirituality* (Crossroad, 1992)

[Walter Righter's conscientious decision to ordain Barry Stopfel and the invoking of conscience by some bishops to justify their refusal to ordain women] are not in the same ballpark. When the church decides to do something it has never done before, it provides for a conscience clause. It has always been possible to exercise conscience in such instances. With respect to the ordination of homosexual persons, we have said it is not appropriate, not admissible. Objecting to women's ordination is different from saying, "I need to be an exception to the moral 'no.'"

The purpose of the trial is to create a platform to lay before the whole church the split between the way we come at what Scripture says [about sexuality]. My fear for the church is that we will wind up doing something by deciding not to decide. The presentment focuses the issue. Then the church gets to decide if it agrees with the verdict. People will know a decision has been made and then they can decide what to do.

— John MacNaughton, Bishop of West Texas and a supporter of the trial

It is possible that the decision of a court and, ultimately, a vote of the bishops, will clarify things for people in the middle. Whatever the decision is, it won't change things for people on either end of the spectrum. The bishops ducked the issue [of homosexuality] in their pastoral "study document," *Continuing the Dialogue*. This is another chance for clarity, but it's an expensive way to get clarity.

— Jane Garrett, co-chair of the Committee for Dialogue on Human Sexuality

By default the church accepts diversity on this issue. That's okay for some but not others. The trial will fracture a fragile communion. I believe the presenters feel their own consciences have been deeply violated. There is no governing mechanism to address that except to defer to a final reckoning.

— Timothy Sedgwick, professor of Christian ethics and moral theology, Seabury-Western, Evanston, IL

The people prosecuting Walter Righter ought to be ashamed of themselves. Heresy implies orthodoxy, and we have no such thing in the Episcopal Church.

Civilized, educated, dignified people do not bash others — for any reason, including sexual orientation; nor do they hide behind a phony smokescreen such as presumed church order or presumed correct thinking.

— William Rankin, Dean, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

[Rankin wishes to make clear he is not speaking for the seminary; however, the seminary's board of trustees has formally declared its support for Walter Righter.]

I suspect that the presenting bishops think that the trial will help clarify various things — like the status of General Convention resolutions and whether the church has traditional teachings on sex outside of

*Regardless of the outcome of the trial I will continue to support gay/lesbian ordinations because almost since the day I became an Episcopalian I have been richly ministered to by gay and now lesbian priests who bear every mark of having been called by God to their ministry and who serve God and God's people extraordinarily well.*

—Elizabeth Downie,  
St. Jude's, Fenton, MI

marriage. They probably also hope the trial will deflect resources and energy from the "liberal agenda" which they think has the Episcopal Church in a death grip. If Ellen Cooke can't bankrupt us, this trial and the ones to follow will — and I do believe there will be ones to follow if this one doesn't turn out as they want it to.

owning her lesbian identity and committed partnership in a sermon preached to her parish on October 15.

"I wanted to be able to speak out about the Righter trial in the first person, not in the third person," Lind says. "I decided to take a dare — and see if others will take the dare with me."

Parishioners received the sermon with tears and a standing ovation.

While acknowledging the need to respect individual journeys, Lind hopes her action will encourage other gay and lesbian clergy to follow her lead.

"If we are in places where we can do it, it can have an incredible impact," she says. "If priests can't risk, who can?"

But there are other things a trial may be intended to accomplish, although no one will say this out loud: publicity for conservatives; further embarrassment and discouragement for the presiding bishop and other liberal bishops; clarification of the positions of a number of candidates for presiding bishop who serve either on the trial court or the appeals court.

What I am afraid the trial will accomplish: further division, despair and breakdown of communion within ECUSA; exhaustion of resources and energy on the Left; trivialization and disparagement of all the rest of what we stand for by association, on both Left and Right, inside and outside the church.

— Ellen K. Wondra, assistant professor of theological studies, Bexley Hall, Rochester, NY

Bishops have been knowingly ordaining gay and non-celibate people for a long time. The charge here is that Walter Righter did so publicly. Gay and lesbian people are not willing to hide so much anymore. The church has to adapt to that. The trial is trying to prevent the discomfort that arises when people have to acknowledge that things are not as they appear, i.e., many clergy are gay.

— Bill MacKaye, journalist

I think the presenters sincerely believe that ordaining [non-celibate homosexuals] is wrong. They'd like to bring order to the House. But it hasn't been my experience that the House of Bishops is an orderly place. When we were considering the ordination of women, there were views expressed against it and those who asked that no one act. And then Bob DeWitt and others went off and did it. There's no situation in which a bishop *has* to ordain anybody, but that doesn't mean the ordination process isn't open. A bishop's conscience cannot preclude the ordination of women or of homosexual persons. The church has refused to pass canons to bar homosexual persons from ordination. It is a matter strictly for the local diocese to decide.

— Coleman McGehee, Bishop of Michigan, retired

DECEMBER 1995

## Out for the church

While the upcoming heresy trial of Bishop Walter Righter has provoked a wide range of responses, few have been as personal or potentially costly as that of Tracy Lind, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Paterson, N.J.

Convinced by the presentment that her hopes for the quiet, gradual acceptance of gay and lesbian clergy were unfounded, Lind decided to come out publicly,



Tracy Lind

## Stephen Duggan is new church treasurer

Stephen Duggan, who has served on *The Witness*' Board of Directors for the past year, was named treasurer of the Episcopal Church October 31.

A certified public accountant, Duggan worked for 33 years with Arthur Andersen & Co. in New York before retiring in 1994. His career included four years in Brussels, where he headed the firm's audit division.

Chosen from among 200 applicants, Duggan is "extremely competent" and "has an open, easy-going manner and a collegial style," said House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis.

Duggan, 57, said he was drawn to the position out of a desire to serve the church.

"There's a lot of healing that has to happen, and credibility that needs to be re-established" after the embezzlement of over \$2 million by Ellen Cooke, the church's previous treasurer, he said.

The church will receive \$1 million from an insurance policy against theft, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning told the church's Executive Council October 31. He also announced that the church has filed suit to claim \$60,000 found in a bank account held by Cooke and her husband, Nicholas Cooke. In addition, the church will receive the proceeds from the sale of two pieces of property previously owned by the Cookes.

"The bottom line is that we do not yet know what the outcome will be regarding the serious criminal charges against Mrs. Cooke," Browning said. "Neither do we know whether the federal government will be able to bring about further restitution from Mrs. Cooke to the church."

David Beers, the presiding bishop's chancellor, said that federal prosecutors appear to be working on a plea agreement with Cooke.

— drawn from *Episcopal News Service reports*

## JPIC conference

A new creature took form in Columbus, Ohio last month. It is a creation of General Convention and a consequence of the

shrinking national church budget. Called Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), it includes what used to be the church's networks for anti-racism, environmentalism, economic justice, Jubilee and peace ministries.

"What JPIC hopes to do is to create a web. We have to find a way that the strands fit together," explained Will Wauters, consultant for JPIC, during the Nove. 2-4 conference.

JPIC's formation raises questions: What will happen to the merged programs and budgets? Can Economic Justice still issue grants? Can Jubilee? Will JPIC be more or less than the sum of its parts?

Underwritten by the presiding bishop, the conference provided time for 250 people affiliated with the church's justice ministries to discuss reports from the groups within JPIC and to working on a theology of justice.

Keynoter Bill Wylie-Kellermann, indicated that the struggle for justice is one that engages the principalities and powers. "The vocation of *every* principality is to praise God and to serve human life," he said. But, because of the Fall, that relationship is inverted to the extent that the principalities imagine they are God and enslave human life. "Sin is substantially our complicity in that reversal."

"The powers' greatest fear is death," Wylie-Kellermann added, "consequently they make survival their primary ethic and come to worship death, drawing on its power."

The challenge to the church is "to use its gifts of discernment to call a power to repentance, to summon it back to its vocation. Does a bank exist to make money or does it rightly broker resources so they can be available throughout the community?"

The role of the church is key both in terms of its gifts of discernment and in light of its freedom to die. "William Stringfellow, who catalyzed this work in the principalities, called the church 'the exemplary power' because it was free to die, free to risk everything.

"A church free to die is: free to stand and fight; free from bondage to other

powers; not beholden to the imperial state; not in bondage to Mammon; not divided by racism; not suppressing the gifts of its people because of sexism or homophobia. It is free to call the powers to their vocation, because it is fulfilling its own."

The role of principalities in the church's justice work was addressed in the presentations and small group discussions that followed.

Max Bell, of Delaware, giving one of the anti-racism presentations, spoke of a pilot congregation project with shared homilies that drew members of African- and European-American congregations together for eight weeks. Participants concluded that "our usual style of worship creates comfort rather than the discomfort required to deal with issues like racism. But if worship isn't used to address the issues that divide us, we are missing a great opportunity to reconcile ourselves to one another and to God."

Speaking for the environmental working committee, Jeff Golliher, canon for the environment at St. John the Divine, pointed out that the experiences of people in Appalachia are similar to those of people in L.A. or the South Bronx. "We are experiencing at the hands of big corporations a loss of land and environmental habitat. Black lung for miners is equal to asthma for kids in the city. In one way or another, we all know this already. This really comes down to self-respect. It's easier in churches to say 'I have sinned' than to say 'I don't know how to live.' The peace of God will not be realized as long as God's creation is being ripped apart."

Addressing economic justice, Urla Price, director of the Episcopal credit union in L.A., said "We reach out to the community and to people whom the banks will not touch." As an example, she mentioned that the credit union advanced money to a man on disability with HIV whose SSI check had not arrived.

Participants remarked that it was fascinating and deeply appropriate to be in conversations that began with racism, turned to the environment, moved into economic justice and Jubilee ministries and ended with peace.

# Bearing witness

by Patricia Klindienst

[Ed.note: Retired priest James H. Clark was deposed in July, 1995, after admitting to sexual misconduct. Robert Denig, former bishop of Western Massachusetts, began canonical proceedings against Clark following complaints of sexual exploitation and harassment by parishioners and church employees. (After Denig's death in May, 1995, Robert Rowley, bishop of Northwestern Pennsylvania, completed the proceedings.) Clark initially insisted that it was a misunderstanding, but later, according to the diocese's standing commission, he "waived a church trial, admitting to the truth of the allegations and voluntarily submitting to discipline."]

*...but the light insists on itself in the world  
a voice from the nondead past started  
talking,  
she closed her ears and it spelled out in  
her hand  
'you might as well answer the door, my  
child,  
the truth is furiously knocking.'*

*— Lucille Clifton,  
"the light that came to Lucille Clifton"*

The call came last December: Bishop Robert Denig had informed the congregation of Grace Church, Amherst, Mass., of formal complaints of sexual misconduct on the part of the retired rector. The bishop believed the allegations were "credible, clear and compelling," and would be returning in a matter of days for a second meeting.

I had thought I was finished with this, that I had laid to rest the turmoil of this priest's role in my life. I had endured enough and did not want to hear any more about him. But for weeks, it worked on me: *I was not the only one.*

Patricia Klindienst is a scholar, teacher and writer living in Guilford, Connecticut.

It has been exhilarating. I have been released from captivity to a lie and to the isolation I have endured since the summer of 1979, when, in my twenties, I had suffered a blend of sexual and spiritual violation. I had taken overwhelming responsibility for it all until 1982, when a wise psychiatrist named Clark's behavior for what it was.

I confronted Clark via the mail and was met with denial and subterfuge. The same year, I now know, other women confronted Clark. Some complained to their bishops.

He was confronted again and again over the years by women he would characterize to his defenders as unstable and untrustworthy. His abuses continued up to, and after, his retirement. An 18-year pattern of sexual misconduct.

I wept with rage and grief for days when I heard these things. Though I was no longer alone with my truth, the betrayal had been even more profound than I had thought. It had included not only a blinded congregation but other clergy and bishops who had been protective of Clark. He might have been stopped before he got to me, or to those who came after me.

I thought of the difference it might have made in my life, in my marriage, had the truth been accurately and publicly named and justice done in 1982. Perhaps my husband and I truly would have healed. Instead, we struggled on with the damage of "my relationship with Jim" buried between us, "forgiven," mis-named.

What has it been like to participate in a clergy sexual misconduct case? It has been exhausting. Hundreds of hours of thinking. Remembering. Grieving. It has been expensive. A good therapist costs money. Thousands of dollars — and not just this year. I have lost wages in order to make out-of-state meetings. And paid enormous phone bills. But these are the lesser, material costs.

A little at a time, feeling as if I would throw up, I narrated for my psychiatrist

the story of how Clark seduced and exploited me. Clark's pattern unfolded over time. He began by brushing his alb against me in passing, then progressed to tugging at my long hair before liturgy or afterwards, as I stood visiting with friends and former teachers. Soon, he touched my hand as he passed our pew. This early touching was done from behind with an air of the casual. I noticed how flamboyant, if not exhibitionist Clark's public behavior was — and how much people seemed to enjoy it. I heard no criticism of his dangling babies over his head at the close of baptisms, or striding down a pew in a hooded cape, or moving through the crowd, touching, hugging, teasing and flirting. An atmosphere reigned at Grace Church, one unfamiliar to me. Not just tolerance of the rector's style — implicit license to touch — but adulation.

Many times I had seen him come up behind someone and press his knee into the back of theirs. When, unbalanced, the person instinctively turned to see who'd touched them, Clark would put his arms around them for a prolonged full body hug, if it was a woman, or tease and laugh with them if it was a man. In time, I too was "kneaded," turned, and "hugged." My first Jim Clark hug included him pressing his pelvis to mine and rubbing his genitals against me — while dressed in his alb, with people all around. I was shocked and embarrassed, but assumed it must be unconscious or accidental, since no one else ever pushed him away. It became increasingly difficult for me to trust my own perceptions in the face of such acceptance by people I not only respected but loved.

The turning point in Clark's slow wearing down of my boundaries was the ritual cleansing he performed on me on my living room couch one day when he paid a pastoral call knowing my husband wouldn't be there. It was done to "help" me with my spiritual struggle with "demons" from my past. Quoting Jesus in Aramaic, Clark performed an exorcism on me which concluded, "Be gone, dark spirit. You have no place here," with his hand on my groin. "Do you trust me?" he

asked. When I stiffened and did not reply he said, "Yeah, you can trust me," then lay down on top of me, grinding his pelvis into mine while describing his theology of spiritual "gifts."

The dissonance between what he was doing (touching my breasts, my belly, my groin) while wearing a priest's collar, and what he was saying ("Ephphatha," Jesus' speech-act: "Be opened") paralyzed me. It was over before I realized what was happening. But I would relive this moment, and those words, countless times, fixed by shame, horror and a sense that I could tell no one.

Clark had actively begun to court my husband and me a month earlier, in June of 1979, when we had been attending services for a little less than a year, and he had learned that we were soon to move to California. It was a time of major changes for us. We were leaving our families and oldest friends so that I could go to graduate school. My husband was giving up a job and facing the challenge of starting over again in a place where we knew no one. And I was struggling to understand a spiritual awakening I had experienced at my god-daughter's baptism (at which Clark had officiated) the previous summer.

At Pentecost, I had told Clark I wanted to become a Christian, and that I was experiencing a recurrent nightmare from childhood of a man who stalked me. When Clark pressed me for details of the nightmare, I hesitated — I had never told anyone, not even my husband. He urged me to tell him because it would be good for me. This became the pretext for his offer to "take him from me" by way of the private ritual that gave him access not only to my body but to my most private inner life. Until I heard the testimony of the other women, and their husbands, I blamed myself for having created this opening into my life.

This was part of the pattern: Clark made his moves on strong, smart, spiritually intense women in times (or places) of vulnerability. He used the spiritual opening that a life transition or crisis presented to sexualize his role as

employer, pastor or pastoral counsellor, sometimes over time, incrementally, as with me; sometimes with sudden, gross gestures.

He was adept at distorting reality by misnaming things. Presuming to speak in the plural, he framed "our relationship" as a "special friendship," a "gift from God" that "must be consented to" because it was "graced" and "holy." He used words to disarm our partners, his secondary victims, as well. Telling my husband how much he admired the integrity of our marriage, how wonderful the two of us were together — anyone could see that

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*Clark's pattern unfolded over time. He began by brushing his alb against me in passing.*

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— he assured him that there was nothing to fear in the "gift" of relationship our pastor was "sharing" with me.

This summer, when I wrote to tell my ex-husband, on the eve of his remarriage, of Bishop Rowley's sentence, he wrote back: "... the 'punishment' hardly seems sufficient — having to give up something he never honored to begin with."

Sixteen of us made a list of Clark's actions so that no woman would have to disclose her particular experience but rather could refer to everyone's testimony.

Here is the list:

- 'Full-body hugs' in which he would press his body to the woman from knees to shoulders or cheek, press his hardened genitals against the woman's groin, sometimes rubbing back and forth.
- Encircling a woman from behind and pressing his body against hers, sometimes in the sacrament of confession while she was kneeling, pinning her against the kneeler.
- Lying on top of a woman, clothed or naked, pressing himself against her and performing what was presented as an act of healing, while quoting the words of scripture.
- Pulling adult women onto his lap.
- Sexualizing everyday parish life,

verbally and with actions.

- Reinforcing silence with his verbally abusive temper.

Each of these happened to more than one woman.

Why did it take so long to bring him to justice? Because there were — and still are — people at Grace Church and in the church hierarchy who were being protective of him. Then there is the larger church's failure: like most other dioceses, Western Massachusetts had no official clergy sexual misconduct policy until 1994. As recently as 1992, when Clark and a bishop were once again confronted with allegations of sexual misconduct, a witness was betrayed and turned back in confusion. [Sexual misconduct policies are now in place in all dioceses that purchase sexual misconduct liability protection from the Church Insurance Company.]

Why do I feel so little resolution when the sentence given was precisely what I asked for? Because I worry about others still out there who were hurt by Jim Clark, or someone like him. And because I am angry for the spiritual and psychological costs we have borne, each alone, for so many years. I want to hear more about "justice" and less about "healing." The sentence is not the end. It is the middle.

What has it taken to bear witness? The courage to remember, to name the truth and to speak it out loud and persist in the desire to be heard. The strength to overcome the humiliation of having been taken advantage of. The patience to wait for those who judged us, sometimes those we loved the most, to get it.

What have we gained by bearing witness? Our freedom, our dignity, a new sense of self-respect. For me, a community of strong women. Release. Gratitude. Joy.

It is the vulnerable and the exploited we have stood up for — for ourselves as we once were and now are not. We are no longer victims. We have never liked being "complainants." We are *witnesses*: to the church, for the church, even those of us who, like me, choose to remain outside.

**TW**

# Standing accused

by Patricia Montemurri

When he first learned he was under investigation for sexual abuse of a minor, Jason Samuel says he was stunned and disbelieving.

Only three months into a new job as rector of a suburban Milwaukee Episcopal church, he continued to minister to the small parish while the investigation was underway.

Roger White, Bishop of Milwaukee, told Samuel to tell no one while the investigation continued.

For the next six months Samuel, while ministering to the 42 families of St. David's, New Berlin, received counseling, cooperated with the investigation and, he says, prayed for his accuser.

Samuel and his superiors were confident the investigators would find no merit to the accusation that he had sexually abused the 13-year-old stepson of a fellow seminarian at Wisconsin's Nashotah House in 1987-1988.

But in October 1994, Samuel was charged in what became known as the Nashotah House scandal. In total, five former seminarians have faced charges that they abused the same boy. White, even as he publicly said he believed Samuel's proclamation of innocence, now told the young priest "he couldn't be my pastor anymore; he had to be my judge."

In the face of similar accusations, clergy say they are branded with an immediate assumption of guilt, rather than innocence. Experts say that while the overwhelming majority of cases that have been tried result in convictions, there is the potential for injustice in the few cases where clergy confront accusations that are false.

That's what Samuel says happened to him before a jury acquitted him in July 1995.

Clergy feel increasingly vulnerable to

**Patricia Montemurri** is a Detroit journalist who is currently on strike from *The Detroit Free Press*.

character assassination. In the past, the devastating misdeeds of clergy were covered up to a fault. But in its push to deal with the problem, Jason Samuel says the church has failed to be a pastor to ministers falsely accused.

"I'll put it real bluntly. From the first day, I was on my own," said Samuel. "Completely on my own."

On the day before he was to be fingerprinted and photographed at the police station, before his name would be smeared in newspaper articles, Samuel called an emergency meeting of his church's vestry to tell them about the pending charges. He also had to reveal to parish leaders, some of whom knew and some of whom didn't, that he is a celibate gay man.

Scott Stoner, Samuel's friend and counselor who is an expert in counseling both victims of abuse and offending clergy at Milwaukee's Exodus Counseling Center (no relation to Exodus International Ministries), came with Samuel to the meeting in St. David's rectory.

Stoner told the nine-member vestry, "I have no doubt that this man is innocent and you have every reason to stand behind him."

Samuel told the vestry he would voluntarily step down from priestly functions. If he hadn't, White could have imposed the restrictions on him. It was up to St. David's vestry to decide whether to continue Samuel's stipend while he was suspended. They did so.

But for the first few weeks, Samuel felt he couldn't even worship at the church he had been pastoring. Church leaders counseled him to stay away. But parish members petitioned Bishop White to allow

Samuel to worship with them.

"They told the bishop, we want to go through this together as a parish family," Samuel recalled.

A few families left the parish.

"People thought I was a dead fish. If you're gay and you're accused, there's no way of winning. People just assume you're capable of doing those things. I went through a year-and-a-half of hell. My whole life was taken away from me."

Until the trial in July 1995, Samuel lived in the rectory, produced the church bulletin and newsletter. He found an attorney on his own, chosen from a list provided by the church.

"I experienced feelings of extreme isolation, even abandonment," said Samuel, even as he received support from individuals and many parish members.

He had to pay his own legal fees, which totalled about \$32,000. After his acquittal, the Church Insurance Corporation refused to pay his legal fees, saying he wasn't covered because the case stemmed from his time in seminary.

The victim in the Nashotah House cases had a history of being sexually abused. Samuel's accuser had been abused by at least two other seminarians, Eugene Maxey and Charles McCray, who are serving prison terms.

The accuser's past sexual victimization, says therapist Stoner, likely

*"If you are gay and you're accused, people just assume you're capable of doing those things. I went through a year-and-a-half of hell."*

— Jason Samuel

contributed to the false accusations levied against Samuel. "There was a clear history of abuse. This kid's life was so out of control. He was confused by all that had happened to him," said Stoner.

It is not unusual for parishioners, for

example, to develop strong attachments and inappropriate feelings toward their pastors. Sometimes when the priest sets boundaries, a rebuffed suitor may turn the behavior around and accuse the priest

of inappropriate conduct, explains Stoner. Most of those allegations are proved groundless by the local diocese or church vestry, and don't end up in a criminal trial.

"I think false accusations usually stem from, and I think this was the case for Jason Samuel, from a person who is rebuffed," explained Stoner.

During the trial, Samuel testified that his accuser had made a sexual advance, which Samuel rebuffed. That testimony was bolstered by a witness who said he saw an angry Samuel turn away the boy at the door of his seminary apartment. Moreover, a therapist testified that Samuel had told him years before any accusations surfaced about rebuffing the boy's advances. His accuser also never mentioned to police that Samuels had a six-inch hernia scar near his genitals, as evidenced in photographs.

"Unfortunately, with sexual misconduct you're guilty until proven innocent," says Stoner. "That's how the church treats it. That's how society treats it."

Another defendant in the Nashotah House case, Russell Martin, says that has been his experience. A month before Samuel's trial, Martin went to Waukesha County Circuit Court on charges that he had abused the same boy while a seminarian. Martin, married and the father of two, was the Canon for Youth and Christian Education at St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida when he learned he was being investigated in February 1994.

The cathedral dean placed Martin on immediate paid leave. After a few months, even before he was formally charged, cathedral leaders demanded his resignation. He went to work at a phone company to help pay legal fees of over \$50,000.

At his trial in June 1995, it was Martin's word against that of his accuser, who claimed Martin engaged in sex acts three times in one day in Martin's home and car.

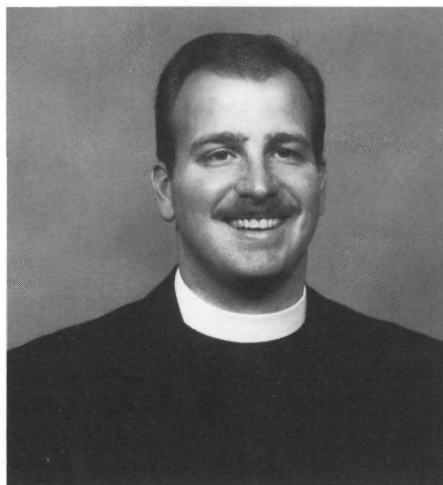
A jury found Martin guilty. In a somewhat unusual move, the judge has allowed Martin to remain free while his case is on appeal. Martin steadfastly maintains his innocence, and says he

believes the emotions involved in the case, and the previous admissions of guilt by Maxey and McCray, influenced the jury's verdict.

Another priest, Anthony Miller of Connecticut, is awaiting trial in the Nashotah House case.

Both Samuel and Martin feel they were abandoned by the national church.

"It would have been nice to have an advocate from the church to guide me about how to get a counselor, how to get



**Jason Samuel**

an attorney, what steps I needed to take," said Martin. "I could be that person for the next person in line."

Samuel feels betrayed by some church leaders. For example, he says he never was contacted by the national church's Office of Pastoral Development, which oversees many of these cases. That office appointed an advocate for his accuser, "but where was my advocate?" asks Samuel.

"Nobody ever called me to hear my side of the story, not before the case, and not even after," says Samuel.

Harold Hopkins, the bishop who directs the office, says it's up to the individual dioceses to provide support for accused clergy members.

Samuel also fears that it will be "open season" on clergy come January, when the statute of limitations on clergy sexual exploitation cases will be suspended for two-and-a-half years. The suspension is part of the implementation of revisions to

the church's disciplinary canons passed by the last General Convention.

"That means someone can claim something happened 50 years ago," says Samuel, "and who's going to be around from that period to defend the clergy?"

Hopkins says he understands why clergy feel vulnerable. "There are some who feel the pendulum is swinging too far back against the clergy, and I think in a couple of cases that's true."

But Hopkins defends the upcoming suspension of the statute of limitation, saying that changes which make it easier for a person to bring a complaint, "will not jeopardize due process for the defendant."

"It's very, very difficult to make sure you give pastoral support to the accused. You must make sure they have recourse to legal counseling, so they know what their rights are and they don't feel trapped."

But Hopkins understands why some clergy feel betrayed by church superiors.

"The clergyman feels betrayed by the bishop, often because the bishop has had to go forward according to canonical regulations," he says. "Many bishops are saying 'I can't be your pastor, but can I provide somebody who can be there.'"

Whether a clergy person found guilty in such cases can minister again, says Hopkins, depends on who is involved and what the accusation is.

"The problem will be knowing when a priest is a predator and has a deep psychological problem that makes him or her seek out vulnerable people, or when a person showed one-time bad judgment, such as when his or her own marriage wasn't going well," said Hopkins.

Susan Moss, rector of St. James on the Parkway in Minneapolis, Minn., and a longtime instructor of seminars on boundaries, said she understands why so many priests feel under siege. As ministers, they routinely enter very intimate settings. They go to parishioners' homes, to their bedsides when they are ailing, to counsel them when marriages are failing.

"What we need here is a really good superhighway and a really good map. The fact is we've got some highways, but also some dirt roads and foot trails." **TV**

# 'Loving the heterosexual'

By Tobias S. Haller, BSG

**T**he church is faced today with a pastoral problem of some gravity. It has become more and more apparent that many heterosexuals now consider themselves faithful members of the church, while committing acts at variance with the church's solemn teaching. The problem is far from new; the Scriptural witness, and the unbroken tradition of the church, attest to the ongoing nature of this tragic discontinuity.

The inability of heterosexuals to form lasting, stable relationships has long been noted. A survey of the biblical material provides a sad witness to this inability. One explanation for its source is God's judgment upon Adam and Eve. This judgment provides a climax to the creation account in Genesis (3.16), and may therefore be taken as substantive testimony to God's eternal plan for humanity. This passage explains the tragic inability of heterosexuals to work together as equals: The female is cursed by being placed under male rule, rather than coexisting as the full and equal partner that a healthy and life-giving relationship requires. This order or hierarchy — a veritable "civil war of the sexes" — fosters the incapacity for mutuality that renders stable heterosexual relationships nearly impossible.

The rest of the biblical material portrays the unfortunate consequence of this constitutional incapacity. Even the patriarch Abraham, who in all other respects was a model of fidelity, was willing to

deny his wife and turn her over as a potential concubine (Gen. 12.13). The overwhelming majority of heterosexual relationships portrayed in Scripture are devoid of any appearance of human care, affection, mutuality, or concern. Few of the heterosexual relationships that do evince a degree of personal commitment (e.g., Elkanah and Hannah) are monogamous. One is hard pressed to find even a handful of faithful, loving, lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual relationships in the whole of Scripture.

We must remember, however, that God's power is perfected in weakness. The people of Israel departed from the true path time and again, yet were capable of repentance and redemption. So too, God will be patient with erring heterosexuals who repent of their sinful behavior and return to God.

## Disease and heterosexual acts

It would be irresponsible of the church not to warn heterosexuals of the dire medical consequences their behavior might cause. When medical conditions (childbed fever, sexually transmitted disease, ectopic pregnancy, etc.) can so clearly and directly be linked with a form of behavior, the church is obliged to provide at least warning and counsel.

Many today would argue that the injunctions placed upon heterosexual contact in the Law of Moses are no longer relevant to a discussion of homosexuality. We must point out, however, the general ritual opprobrium attached to heterosexual acts. All heterosexual acts render both parties unclean at any time, due to emission of semen (Lev 15.18), and abominable at other times, due to contact with menstrual blood (Lev 15.24,

20.18). The continued condemnation of the latter in the prophetic literature (Ezek. 18.5-13; 22.10), and in early church tradition (e.g., the *Didascalia*, Jerome, Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, and Thomas Aquinas) warrants our caution in disarding the Mosaic material as simply "cultural baggage."

## Marriage and ordination

Given the statistics on infidelity, divorce, abortion, rape, and the abuse of spouses and children by heterosexuals, it would appear that few heterosexual persons are capable of the fundamental, mutual self-giving required to support a lifelong, committed relationship.

The question of the ordination of active heterosexuals is not a new one. While it appears that some apostles were married (Mark 1.30), Paul clearly regards the whole matter with unconcealed condescension (1 Cor 9.5). The Deuteropauline material relents slightly, and allows bishops to be married "only once" (1 Tim. 3.2). The catholic church, however, in its wisdom, determined within the first few centuries of its institutional life that bishops (and in the West, all clergy) should permanently abstain from all heterosexual activity. Since the Reformation, some churches have decided once again to permit avowed, open and active heterosexuals to serve as ministers, sometimes with disastrous consequences, as the natural tendency toward infidelity and instability evinced by so many heterosexuals emerges in socially and morally inappropriate ways.

After all is said and done, we must affirm that heterosexuals, despite the sinfulness of their behavior, are children of God, and worthy of our care and pastoral concern. They are more to be pitied than censured. With the pastoral care and counsel of the church, they may grow to that "full stature of mature manhood in Christ" promised to all faithful believers. **TW**

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**Tobias Haller** is a Gregorian friar, a second-year seminarian (GTS) and sometime satirist. This essay is an excerpt from a larger ironical work-in-progress.

# Re-inventing marriage

by Jan Nunley

**Re-Inventing Marriage: A Re-View and Re-Vision** by Christopher Webber, Morehouse Publishing, 1994, 275 pp.

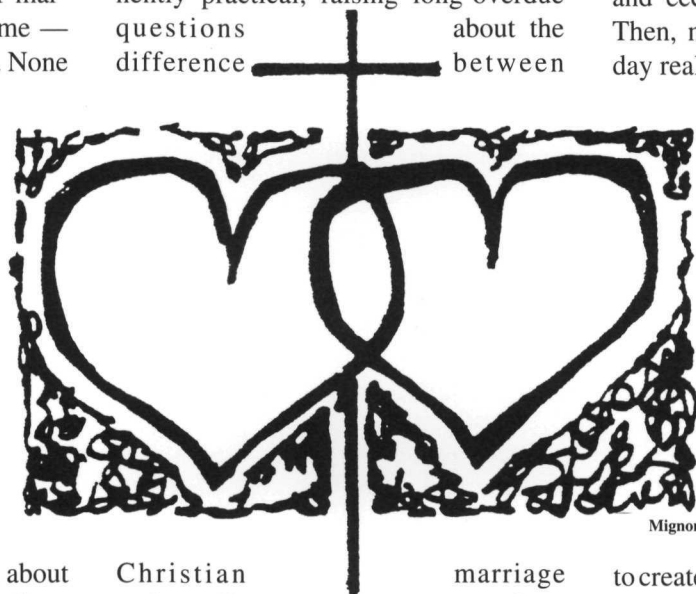
Last July, right around the time I was ordained as a priest, it seemed all of my friends who'd been dancing around the issue of marriage suddenly decided it was time — and that I was the perfect officiant. None of these couples resembled the fresh-faced, starry-eyed dreamers of domestic bliss assumed by some of the clergy "marriage manuals" I consulted. All had some degree of familiarity with how youthful illusions can be shattered by divorce, their parents' or their own. All were heterosexuals, but none believed that marriage in its deepest sense — two distinct persons becoming an ultimate unity — is the prerogative of heterosexuals alone. What could I say to them about marriage that would honor what I believe are its essentials, yet make room for its diverse expressions?

That's when I picked up Christopher Webber's *Re-Inventing Marriage: A Re-View and Re-Vision* — a book which has become the inspiration for my wedding homilies these days, and should be in the library of anyone who's doing serious thinking about sexual ethics and the church's blessing of relationships of all kinds. Webber states his purpose as providing "a voice in the middle of [the]

Jan Nunley serves as assisting priest at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Tiverton, RI. She is also newscaster for National Public Radio's environmental journal "Living on Earth." Artist Mignon lives in Chicago, Ill.

conversation" about the purpose of Christian marriage, "saying first, 'Wait a minute; let's look at how we got here in the first place,' and second, 'Now that we've got that clear, how about re-building this way?'"

His project is at once radical and eminently practical, raising long-overdue questions about the difference between



Christian marriage and state licensing, the relationship between marriage and procreation, the sacramental nature of marriage, and the possibility of reviving church-sponsored betrothal as a kind of novitiate for the modern Christian marriage.

Webber begins with an engaging, historically accurate account of the evolution of marriage in all its variety in human cultures, most often as a contractual relationship. He moves through the understanding of matrimony in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and into the early Church's increasing assumption of responsibility for the supervision of a primarily secular institution. There are some surprises here: I wasn't aware, for ex-

ample, that the early Church broke definitively with the surrounding culture's rigid class divisions by blessing "illegal" unions between slaves and free citizens — as controversial in its time as the blessing of same-sex relationships today — while, sadly, never actually challenging the institution of slavery itself. Through the medieval period, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution, Webber delineates the relationship between European folkways, secular law, and ecclesial accommodation to both. Then, moving from history to present-day reality — the "re-vision" of the title — he skillfully separates the time-bound cultural chaff from the more enduring, and more biblically sound, purpose of Christian marriage: to serve as a sign of God's faithful, steadfast love for the world.

Although Webber is clearly addressing heterosexual marriage, his theology of relationship presents worthwhile guidance for the Church's thinking about what it means to create a sacramental honoring of same-sex unions as well, by cutting through the historical misconceptions and cherished illusions about marriage that form so much of the polemic surrounding this issue. And everyone, conservative or liberal, who's concerned about "family values" can learn much from Webber about the real source of those values — not in human customs and structures but in the love of the living God. **TW**

*book review*

Reaching the sermon at a friend's ordination, Barbara Schlacter juggled three bean bags — representing her relationship with God, with her spouse and family, and with the church.

"If you have to let one go, let the church go," Schlacter counseled.

Schlacter's husband and co-rector at Trinity Episcopal Church in Troy, Ohio, shares her priorities.

"Clergy often put commitment to priestly vocation above commitment to family," Mel Schlacter says. "A lot of bishops want us to. A family systems person said a long time ago: For clergy, time invested in family always helps the church, but not vice versa. That's mostly true."

"We have seen too many clergy and their families get eaten up by the system," says Barbara Schlacter, now president of the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations.

For the Schlacters, who helped found the Episcopal Clergy Couples Association in 1986, their marriage commitment is at the core of their spiritual lives.

"We've come to see it as a spiritual discipline or spiritual path comparable to a monastic path," Mel Schlacter says. "It has all the same features: a call, vows, demons along the road. Like any spiritual path, it gives a framework for the rough road we will encounter. It has to do with the way God wants us to grow and change, to leave our neurotic baggage and childhood attachments behind."

*"We've come to see marriage as a spiritual path comparable to a monastic path."*

— Mel Schlacter



Mel and Barbara Schlacter

## Marriage and the church

by Marianne Arbogast

Barbara Schlacter points out that the basic elements of the Rule of St. Benedict are equally applicable to Christian marriage: stability — "to see a relationship over time"; continuing conversion — "constantly being aware of God's presence, and growing"; and obedience — recognizing that "we are living under God," a context "bigger than what the two of us, or either one of us, wants."

"Another element is community," Mel Schlacter adds. "The household and extended family is our community."

Married 28 years, the Schlacters are quick to name points of tension and growth.

"Finding the balance of how much togetherness and how much apartness goes into the relationship" is important, Mel Schlacter says.

Because they face the added intensity of working together, "we have to give each other quite a bit of room," says

Barbara Schlacter. "We are independent — we each have our own ideas and opinions and they don't always coincide."

On occasions when they have to work through conflict in the fishbowl of a vestry meeting, she believes they can offer "a model of how to appreciate differences without being threatened by them, being willing to disagree and live together till a clear idea emerges."

"One of the things I had to let go of was thinking that what Mel did was an extension of myself," she says. "If Mel was praised, I felt good; if Mel was criticized, I felt criticized. It was very co-dependent."

"Everyone should have a real self before they get married, if possible. The trend toward waiting is a healthy one. And I think we need to be aware that living together [before marriage] is perhaps not such a bad thing. Maybe there needs to be another way of legitimizing or recognizing other ways to be together

*Witnesses,  
the quick and the dead*

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

that are okay in Christian life besides marriage. To me, Christian marriage is a unit of ministry, a unit of spirituality."

A family counselor, Barbara Schlacter believes that "often people give up at exactly the moment when God is saying, 'Now the real marriage is going to begin.'"

"Faithfulness means valuing the other person and valuing the commitment made to that person to hang together for the long haul. When we've had dry periods, we've believed God would see us to the other side of the desert."

Spouses need to realize that "our partner can't be everything," Mel Schlacter adds, recalling his early disappointment that his wife didn't share his enthusiasm for running each morning at sunrise. "It was the beginning of the realization: She's not sculpted quite the way I had in mind!"

"We've been able to laugh about most of these things," he says. "Having a sense of humor is a *sine qua non*."

In addition to letting go of romantic images of each other, the Schlacters have had to cope with others' inflated expectations of them as clergy.

"It's inevitable we're going to get idealized," Mel Schlacter says. "You know you're going to be an example, but you have to live as if you're not."

"We try hard to be ourselves," says Barbara Schlacter. "We need to be different from each other, and from all the projections of each of us and our relationship. A lot of clergy couples have gone down the tubes because others' expectations have dictated what they expect of themselves."

The Schlacters — both of whom work as counselors outside their parish — try to support each other's individual pursuits, while carefully structuring time together into their schedules.

"One of the things that has been very helpful to us is a sense of trust," Barbara Schlacter says. "If one of us was working with another person or set of colleagues

*"There is a real fight for the human soul. People haven't figured out what to give up yet, and go year round at breakneck pace. The church needs to offer a counter set of values. So many times the church puts more burdens on families, pulling people out for youth group meetings, vestry meetings."*

— Barbara Schlacter

and needed time away, that was okay, our marriage could withstand that."

Once, shortly after the Schlacters had taken a parish together, Barbara Schlacter was offered a fellowship from the College of Preachers. Though she assumed she'd have to decline the invitation, her husband urged her to accept, taking full

responsibility for the parish and their two young children for six weeks. On other occasions, she has reciprocated.

But time apart is balanced with time together.

"We need to keep our friendship," Mel Schlacter says. "What does it take to stay interested and have things we share as friends?"

They recently took a sabbatical month together, traveling to the British Isles to explore their common fascination with Celtic spirituality.

Taking time to maintain relationships is an endangered value in today's world, they believe.

"We live in an achievement-oriented culture," Barbara Schlacter says. "There is a real fight for the human soul. People haven't figured out what to give up yet, and go year round at breakneck pace. The church needs to offer a counter set of values. So many times the church puts more burdens on families, pulling people out for youth group meetings, vestry meetings."

"We need to teach people the importance of coming to the family table just as they come to the church table, with the awareness that this is sacred time, sacred space." **TW**

## ***In memoriam: John Krumm***

John McGill Krumm, retired Bishop of Southern Ohio and early member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's board, died in California October 23. He was a lifelong advocate of justice causes in both church and society.

During the McCarthy era, Krumm petitioned President Eisenhower for amnesty for prisoners jailed under sedition laws. He also lobbied for passage of civil rights legislation and helped organize the church's Committee on Institutional Racism.

Krumm was among the first bishops to speak out in favor of ordaining

women.

Last month, he presided at a eucharist commemorating victims of AIDS.

"He was one of the most significant persons in the church in my time," said Coleman McGehee, retired Bishop of Michigan. "He was knowledgeable and intelligent, conscious of feelings and very concerned with ecumenical relations. In terms of vestments and worship, he was a minimalist. But he had a deep spirituality."

Krumm once expressed to McGehee his intention to "die with my boots on." Active until his death, he did so.

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