

In search of silence

The Witness

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Heresy trial

HAVE JUST READ THE NOVEMBER issue — it is very good indeed. Harvey Guthrie's article is beyond praise — though I had to read it three times before I fully understood it.

Two thoughts about the Bishop Righter crisis. One, how about an article about Barry Stopfel, the quality of his ministry. I have been told that he is a fine parish priest.

Secondly, I fear that the trial of Bishop Righter will be an unparalleled, absolutely awful public relations disaster for our church. Maybe someone in journalism or in public relations could write about that.

I wish that you were weekly and *TLC* monthly!

**Alexander Seabrook
Wilkes-Barre, PA**

Sexual misconduct

I AM (AMONG MANY OTHER THINGS irrelevant to my present topic) an openly gay Episcopalian lay person, a child of a small-town clergy family, and a paid chorister in a parish music program which includes both adult and children's choirs. Wearing the latter hat, I recently attended the Diocese of Chicago's four-hour training program on prevention of child sexual abuse. We have in Chicago a wealth of relevant expertise on these matters, and the program impressed me as being very carefully and capably laid out and presented. Still, I and at least one fellow parishioner came away from the event nursing a vague, ill-articulated intuition that in the general area of sexual misconduct, the church is riding a pendulum which has swung a bit far past the midpoint of the continuum from carelessness to caution. I resolved to set myself the task of thinking through this intuition and the issues it raised, only to open the

October *Witness* and discover that Katherine Ragsdale has already done it for me. Bravissima!

**James G. Carson
Evanston, IL**

Hierarchies of theologians?

RECENTLY I WAS LOOKING through your publication trying to decide whether to subscribe when I came upon an interesting phrase in your October issue. On page 3 there is a small shaded piece by Verna Dozier. Underneath her name it says, "lay theologian." I am curious to know what a "lay theologian" is? Are there hierarchies of theologians?

I hope you will enlighten me on this matter, as I find something quite disturbing in the term "lay theologian." It definitely sounds second class.

**Billie T. Allan
Brookfield, CT**

[Ed. note: We erred. You'll notice we avoid titles — a decision made long ago in the spirit of your concern.]

Witness praise

DURING THE PROCESS OF MOVING from New Boston, N.H. I failed to renew my subscription to my most respected and loved publication. Please renew at once.

**Martha P. Brooks
Manchester, NH**

KEEP UP THE WONDERFUL WORK! I can hardly wait for each new issue.

**Diana Ruby
Reno, NV**

ALLELUIA! A VOICE AT LAST!

**Catherine Neely Fry
San Antonio, TX**

I WAS GIVEN A COPY of *The Witness* at the Catholic Women's Ordination Conference in Washington, D.C. a couple weeks ago. I really enjoyed it. Please sign me up!

Caralee Svoboda

I AM AN INTERN HERE AT *SOJOURNERS* who was introduced to your *WONDERFUL* magazine this past summer and felt the need to subscribe!

Thank you for all that you do to promote God's peace and justice in this chaotic world!

**Wendy Smith-McCarroll
Wash., D.C.**

Clergy mailing

The Witness mailed out 16,000 copies of our issue on Sin to the ECUSA clergy inviting them to subscribe. Our introductory letter stated that we have strong points of view, but enjoy conversation and even challenges. Many people have responded favorably, but some have responded with vitriolic notes that no doubt depend on their anonymity.

From Topeka, Kansas:

Don't need your unsolicited left-wing radical feminist trash in my mail box or house! Praised be God, *Father, Son & Holy Spirit*.

And from the same person:

Send your trash to Spong, Browning et al, but not to me.

From Fort Worth, Texas:

Subscription form for Ms. Satan, at *The Witness*' address. Under gender: No difference so why ask? Comments: I love this magazine!

And from the same person another subscription form for:

Fr. Carter Heyward at *The Witness* address "Depths of hell." Comments: "Cunnilingus is the highest form of spirituality."

Among the comments of those who decided to subscribe to *The Witness* in response to the mailing:

My husband recently received the March 1995 issue of *The Witness* and passed it along to me. In this climate of right-wing conservatives, I'm pleased to learn of the existence of a self-proclaimed "left-wing" publication!

I would like to read some of your back publications starting with April 1995. I'm especially interested in the articles dealing with clergy sexual exploitation.

**Nancy Jerauld
Belfast, ME**

THE MARCH '95 ISSUE you just sent was like coming home. Thanks!

**Mary Robb Mansfield
Waverly, NY**

Letters

New ECPC board members named

New members have been elected to the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company which owns *The Witness*! It's with pleasure that we introduce Janice Robinson, Harlon Dalton and John G. Zinn.

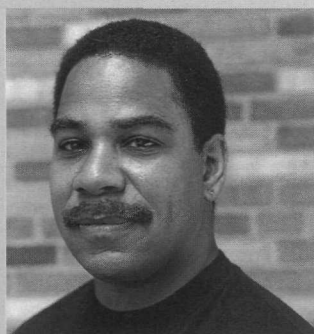
Rotating off the board at this time are Pamela Darling, Steve Duggan and Mary Alice Bird. We will miss their gifts. Darling was an excellent record-keeper who contributed clarity to the actions of the board. Duggan served as treasurer with a sense of humor and of quiet. Bird worked with the board on fundraising methods.

The ECPC board meets every Spring and every Fall to review the state of the magazine and its finances.



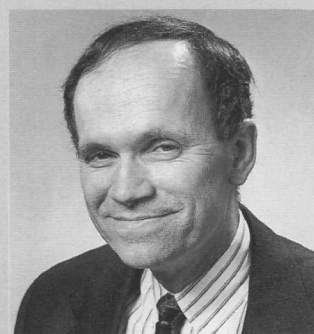
Janice M. Robinson

As Director of Education at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C., Janice Robinson has responsibility for preparing curricula and other college offerings. Prior to ordination in 1988, Robinson, a registered nurse by training and profession, spent 15 years advocating the establishment of community-based urban and rural health-care facilities. She came to the College of Preachers after serving six years on the staff of St. John's Church in Chevy Chase, Md.



Harlan L. Dalton

A member of St. Paul's Church in New Haven, Conn., Harlan Dalton is Professor of Law at the Yale University Law School. A graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law, he has been staff counsel to the nonprofit Legal Action Center in New York and an attorney in the Solicitor General's Office of the U.S. Department of Justice. From 1989-1993 Dalton served on the National Commission on AIDS and is most recently the author of *Racial Healing: Confronting the Fear Between Blacks and Whites* (Doubleday, 1995). He sings bass with New Haven's Salt and Pepper Gospel ensemble.



John G. Zinn

John Zinn is the chief financial officer of the Diocese of Newark. He is warden of St. Paul's Church in Paterson, N.J., and president and founding trustee of Economic Community Development, the Diocese of Newark's response to the Michigan Plan. Zinn also serves as senior vice chair of the Board of Christ Hospital in Jersey City.

Correction

In the December issue of *The Witness*, reporter Patricia Montemurri mistakenly referred to Scott Stoner as the "friend and counsellor" of Jason Samuel when referring to Stoner's professional role as Samuel's therapist and advocate.

Classifieds

God Help Us

The Miserable Offenders, who produced an amazing selection of Advent and Christmas music last year called *Keepin' the Baby Awake*, have released their second cassette. Titled *God Help Us*, the tape offers a variety of hymns in tight harmonies. To order call Morehouse Publishing at 1-800-877-0012. Cassettes cost \$10.95, c.d.s are \$14.95.

Ministry of Rubber

And we are not talking galoshes, either. M.O.R. Stamps is a new rubber stamp company that specializes in religious designs that can be used to create personalized stationery or decorate bulletins and newsletters. Many have an Episcopal Church (we've got EPF, Integrity and EWC images/phrases) slant. Retailers can now obtain counter-top packages of Easter, spring, bookplate and cross designs from M.O.R. at 1659 Larkmoor Blvd., Berkley, MI 48072 (810-543-1283). The company also does mail order sales to individuals. Call M.O.R. for a catalogue.

Classifieds

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

THE WITNESS

Since 1917

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Contents

- 8 **Re-creation of the Sabbath: an interview with Art Waskow**
by Bill Wylie-Kellermann
Working to repopularize Sabbath observances among Jews, Waskow argues that we need a rhythm that honors rest.
- 11 **Looking for sanity with the Amish** by Marianne Arbogast
Sarah Jones, raised by Methodists with active consciences and politics, adopted an Amish lifestyle when she turned 21.
- 14 **Monastic listening** by Kate DeSmet
How do 20th century men living cloistered lives understand silence?
- 16 **Birthing a circle of silence** by Julie A. Wortman
The Greenfire community of women in Maine was formed to create circles of listening, discernment and resistance.
- 18 **Living in eternity** by Virginia Mollenkott
For those of us who can't move to a monastery or a rural retreat center is there any hope for silence? Mollenkott describes the ways we are called to live as eternal beings as we deal with our chores and responsibilities.
- 20 **Rhythm, prayer and relationship: changing space and time through chants** by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann
At the close of this century people have a craving for chants — medieval, Asian, African, Native American and women's — that must have been shared by Europeans in the middle ages and by earth-based people everywhere.
- 22 **Sacred sound and sheltered space** by Debbie Mast
"Sonic Pollution" assaults us — sacred sound can offer a remedy.

2	Letters	7	Poetry	29	Book Review
5	Editorials	24	Vital Signs	30	Witness profile
		28	Short Takes		

The election of Carolyn Irish as bishop of Utah, the church's response to AIDS, calls for prayerbook revision and an update on Mordechai Vanunu highlight this installment of Vital Signs.

Cover: Engraving by Michael McCurdy of Great Barrington, Mass.
Back cover: *The Guardians*, by Mary Beckman, an artist in Boulder, Colo.

Sheltering our minds

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Sheltering our minds in order to feel silence, to know our own thoughts or to hear the voice of God seems nearly impossible in this culture. The staff became painfully aware of the constant intrusion of the media and commercial principalities into what we would ordinarily like to think of as our own thoughts when we were preparing the issue on *Media: colonizing minds* [9/95]. We wanted to offer an antidote.

This issue looks at the efforts many people make to find a sheltering silence—some live in monasteries, others choose to live with Amish or to build rural retreats. Some have remained in urban/suburban life while searching for contemplative moments.

A recurrent theme is that silence provides perspective which can deflate the illusion that we are responsible for *everything*. A friend who lived in Germany for several years notes that on monastic retreats, she saw monks drop their hoes and go to prayer. The work would wait. It was simply part of a cycle.

The desert fathers who took themselves out of society in the fifth century, teach over and over again that we need to “stay put,” to listen, to be content. Like us, these wilderness monks were desperately trying to get beyond the grip of an empire that intrudes even into dreams, telling us what to want and how to feel.

The desert fathers suggest that we *should* feel fear—the best read on this seems to be that God is bigger than we are, has a will and passion, looks to interact with us. God is awesome and, more to the point, we are not God.

In making assignments for this issue,

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

we realized that silence is almost always the result of having boundaries and rhythms.

Technological advances mean that we no longer need to respond to the rhythm of light and dark. We can insulate ourselves from the rhythms of seasons of cold and heat. We do not know the cycles of the earth's fruits, because produce from around the world is always in our supermarkets. In most cities we can shop in the middle of the night and any day of the week, if we want to.

In contrast, we've heard that Amata Miller, an IHM sent to study graduate economics, was allowed several hours for study, a time for prayer and a 9 p.m. bedtime. Whatever work she could do for school had to be completed or attempted within that narrow period. I contrast that with the all-nighters my friends and I would pull—studying, cramming, drink-

*What we are looking for
is a sabbath. A time set
apart. A time with
boundaries forbidding work.
A time for the heart.*

ing coffee, speeding until the moment when that paper or exam was due. I'd have been glad for an external structure that helped me deflate the enormity of the demands—showing them in balance with eating, praying, exercising and sleeping.

After watching her mother and sister die of cancer, another friend, Clara Brower, committed herself to changing her life. She imposed her own discipline in her Franklin Planner. Her activities are color-coded with highlighters. If any ele-

ment—prayer, exercise, pleasure or work—is out of balance she can see it in the threads of color snaking through her calendar.

Carving space and time for silence forces us up against the addictive drive inherent in spending every ounce of our strength and concentration on any one task. I like to speed through barriers, to do the insurmountable, to trip the light fantastic. I fancy I am good at it. But I'm unhappy to find these passions prominent in magazine self-tests for workaholics. And I know that in that mode, I can be beset by anxieties, dissipated by others' opinions, prey to the voices broadcasted by the culture tell us what to think, what to value, what to crave.

What we are looking for is a sabbath. A time set apart. A time with boundaries forbidding work. A time for the heart.

Arthur Waskow, a Jewish scholar interviewed in this issue, points out that without reflection, we cannot celebrate our accomplishments or choose how to direct our actions. (see page 8.)

Bill and I can easily use Sundays to finish our work by turning on a computer and shutting out our children and each other. We can do errands, clean and do laundry. Sometimes the only rhythm in our lives seems to be whether the children are in or out of school for the day.

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Detroit tries to spend one evening a week in their community without using any electric appliances. They eat and talk by candlelight. They do not use the telephone. If there is music, they make it themselves.

continued on page 6



editor's note

The Indians' early impressions

[Pennsylvania Indians converted by the Moravians as early as 1762 offer perspective on European attitudes and speech. These views are reported by missionary John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder in his book History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States, Arno Press & The New York Times, 1876.]

The Delawares sometimes amuse themselves by passing in review those customs of the white people which appear to them most striking. They observe, amongst other things, that when the whites meet together, many of them, and sometimes all, speak at the same time, and they wonder how they can thus hear and understand each other. "Among us," they say "only one person speaks at a time, and the others listen to him until

he has done, after which, and not before, another begins to speak."

They say also that the whites speak too much, and that much talk disgraces a man and is fit only for women. On this subject they shrewdly observe, that it is well for the whites that they have the art of writing, and can write down their words and speeches; for had they, like themselves, to transmit them to posterity by means of strings and belts of wampum, they would want for their own use all the wampum that could be made, and none would be left for the Indians.

They believe, or, at least, pretend to believe, that the white people have weak eyes, or are near-sighted. "For," say they,

"when we Indians come among them, they crowd quite close up to us, stare at us, and almost tread upon our heels to get nearer. We, on the contrary, though perhaps not less curious than they are to see a new people or a new object, keep at a reasonable distance, and yet see what we wish to see."

They also remark that when the white

people meet together, they speak very loud, although near to each other, from whence they conclude that they must be hard of hearing. "As to us," they say, "we never speak loud when we come together, and yet we

understand each other distinctly; we only speak in a high tone of voice before a public audience, in council, at the head of our warriors, or when we are met together for some important purpose."

They remark that when the white people meet together, they speak very loud, although near to each other, from whence they conclude that they must be hard of hearing.

'Sheltering our minds'
continued from page 5

I've known this kind of quiet when I visited friends on Lake Superior who had no electricity. What I loved most were the pools of darkness that eddied outside the reach of the kerosene lamps. There was something soft and indistinct so close by, something that could cover me like the clouds of autumn in a certainty of things unseen yet real.

Quiet has also washed over me when chanting with the monks of Taizé or with women in Detroit. Work and family concerns have dissipated.

I like hearing my voice enter the medley. Waves of music support me, carry me, sometimes nearly swamp me. I feel time shifting, my mind moving with oth-

ers and with the communion of saints. We sing about the coming of the spirit, the earth, beauty, waves on the sea, the grandmothers.

More than once, I've sensed a truth about myself or about the hopes or sorrows of my ancestors. Rocked by melody, my heart rises to doing the work that my grandmothers and grandfathers know needs to be done.

At times my tears flow with the music. I find harmonies, test dissonance and peaking high notes, sing words outside the rhythm — whirling and dancing

my voice within the arcing strength of other voices.

More than anything else chanting does something important to my sense of time. It is a place in the present, sheltered from the future yet deeply related to the past and to those who will follow.

The dead of winter seems the perfect time to reach for quiet, to carve time for reflection, to dream, to weave, to sit still, to chant for the sun, to praise

God for all that has been and all that is yet to come, to align our heartbeats to the rhythm of the earth. **TW**

The dead of winter seems the perfect time to reach for quiet, to align our heartbeats to the rhythm of the earth.

Desert Places

by Robert Frost

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast
In a field I looked into going past,
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it — it is theirs.
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count:
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less —
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars — on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.



Poetry

Re-creation of the Sabbath: an interview with Arthur Waskow

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

[Arthur Waskow was a policy analyst and an anti-war activist in the 1960s. It was that work which awoke in him a need to return to his Jewish roots, to the resources of spirit and tradition. In 1969 he published The Freedom Seder which intertwined Passover texts with modern passages on freedom and slavery. He subsequently became a moving force in the movement for Jewish renewal, helping to found New Jewish Agenda and the National Havurah Coordinating Committee (connecting small, joyful, participatory congregations of creatively traditional Jews). For a number of years he was on the faculty of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College outside of Philadelphia. Waskow's two most recent books are Down to Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex, and the Rest of Life (William Morrow, 1995) and Godwrestling: Round Two (Jewish Life, 1995).

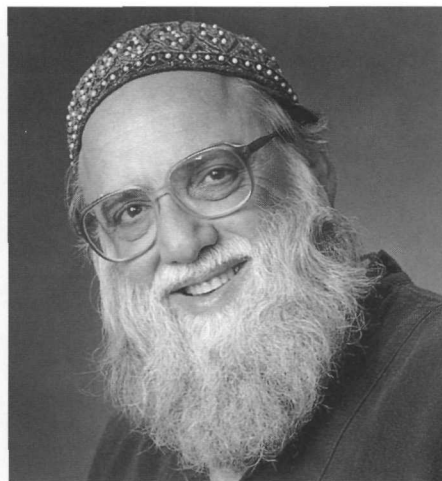
Currently Waskow directs the Shalom Center, which he founded originally as a resource for Jewish perspectives in preventing nuclear holocaust, and which now is part of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal.]

Bill Wylie-Kellermann: You have been active in trying to restore an understanding of the Sabbath in the Jewish community. Are you seeing a strong movement of renewal?

Arthur Waskow: In the last 25 years,

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is editor of *Keeper of the Word: Selected Writings of William Stringfellow*, Eerdmans, 1994. Artist **Judith Hankin**, of Eugene, Ore., is reviving the Eastern European Jewish art of papercutting.

there has emerged a movement for Jewish renewal which is taking meditation



Arthur Waskow

and the protection and healing of the earth much, much more seriously.

The mystical root of the tradition, which is the one in all traditions that affirms *being*, is now much stronger than it was 25 years ago. There is a flowering of that outlook in the Jewish world. It is not big enough yet, but it is very much growing. Sometimes it has grown in strange ways. People have sometimes gone outside of Jewish life when they felt that modernity had infected Judaism. People found some of the eastern traditions' ways of reaccessing meditation, restfulness and being. Now

there's a really interesting return in which Jews who have deeply experienced Buddhist or Sufi or Native American meditations and chantings are rediscovering the possibilities of this in Jewish life — both in traditional forms and in new forms.

B. W.-K: What kind of ways of marking and celebrating the Sabbath, both ritual and otherwise, do you commend to people?

A.W.: Traditionally the Sabbath was celebrated by not using artificial means of transportation. People walked. Given our situation where the automobile is one of the major contributors to global warming, it really would make sense to decide not to use gasoline, not use automobiles or airplanes, one day a week or a month. That's one absolutely traditional way of celebrating the Sabbath that would make good sense in our present context.

Now other aspects — borrowing from and transmuting Jewish tradition — the *Shabbat* should be a day on which people look at issues of wisdom, value and truth, justice and decency, whether they are using a so-called religious text or poetry or other stories. People need to do it — not on the mass media, but with each other — face to face in circles. People may choose a text and read it together. What does this teach? What are the problems that it stirs in me? What are its implications? The questions should have a special concern about how our lives affect the planet as a whole.

The *Shabbat* is also a day of celebration, for dancing and singing, of really taking joy in the world and the earth. It should be a day not of competition — not of exhibition dancing or star

*If you never pause to make
Shabbat, in a very serious
way the blessing turns
into a massive disaster.
That is, over-making,
over-producing, over-doing
— without ever being.*

dancing — but of folk dancing, of creating art together, of creating poetry and drama together, of reading each other's work together, of taking joy in each other's crafts. You might think of it as a miniature folk arts festival.

B.W-K.: My image of the Sabbath has always included the household gathering around candles to pray. What does this teach us?

A.W.: In Jewish tradition lighting lights is a way of bringing the Sabbath in an archetypal sense. In English, people speak of enlightenment as expanding one's consciousness, although the mystics always taught that there was mystery in darkness also.

The traditional story of the journey of the people in the wilderness is that there was a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. We sometimes forget that the point of the cloud is that it was dark and mysterious. In dark as well as in light there is a teaching. We might think about how we might meditate on both dark and light. Darkness enables us to see the world not as ignorance to be conquered (although that's partly true) but also to see mystery in the world that needs to be celebrated, not conquered.

B.W-K.: Could you say a little bit about the origin and history of the Sabbath?

A.W.: The Sabbath is the longest of the 10 utterances at Sinai — but it actually emerges in the consciousness of the people *before* Sinai. It emerges after the crossing of the Red Sea with the coming of the *manna*. The *manna* comes in such a way that when people try to

gather too much it rots away — except on the sixth day when there's a double portion. When people gather the double portion it doesn't rot. The people are puzzled, so Moses explains that this is because this is the *Shabbat*.

It's very powerful — the coming of this special food for which you don't have to work with the sweat pouring down your face in order to eat. This food that the earth gives — not grudgingly,

in which the relationship between human beings and the earth is almost warlike.

It's interesting that the crack in history that comes from Eden, comes as a result of an incorrect way of eating and that the redemptive possibility of *Shabbat* comes with a new kind of food, *manna*.

The whole sacrificial system is really about food and the relationship of human beings and the earth — in Hebrew *adam* and *adama*. Adam and adama — aside

from all sorts of specific teachings of Torah — teach us that human beings and the earth are intertwined.

Shabbat and the whole question of food are intertwined over and over again, not only the *Shabbat* of the seventh day, but the *shabbat* of the seventh year where the land becomes fruitful not *despite* letting it rest on the seventh year, but *because* you let it rest on the seventh year.

Leviticus 26 asks, what happens if you won't let the earth rest and make *Shabbat*? The answer is: the earth gets to rest anyway. The earth gets to rest through plague and famine and exile. The earth does get to rest. The only question is whether human beings learn to live with this law in a joyful and celebratory way or whether the earth rests at our expense.

B.W-K.: What are the implications of what is said about the Sabbath at Sinai?

A.W.: If you look at the two passages on *Shabbat* in Exodus and Deuteronomy, they are quite different. One says *Shabbat* is about the cosmic truth — remembering



Life cycle/Shabbat Still Life by Judith Hankin. Cycles of the Jewish calendar are depicted through vignettes of the holiday which form the border.

along with thorns and thistles — but freely.

Those two sentences I've just used come from the warning at the end of the Garden of Eden, right? It says that human history after the Garden is going to be one

the creation of the world. The other says *Shabbat* is about freedom — it's to guarantee the freedom in the future, just as it came out of freedom in the past. It's the guarantee that you and your maidservants, all the animals and all the earth get to be free.

My sense is that "remember" means a kind of deep emotional, intellectual acceptance and affirmation of the truth of the cosmic need for rest. The first version asserts the cosmic truth. The second version is a kind of prophetic "Don't just remember it, *DO* it! Take this cosmic truth into your lives and make it *REAL*."

B.W-K.: Christian scholars tend to downplay both the Sabbath and the jubilee as never really having been practiced.

A.W.: For the jubilee, it's probably rarely been practiced. But for the sabbatical year, there's lots of evidence. The Romans reported that they couldn't collect taxes in the seventh year, the sabbatical year, because the damn Jews wouldn't work!

With biblical Judaism under the pressure of Hellenism, there was an intense struggle within the Jewish people. What rabbinic Judaism did was to refocus from the seventh year *Shabbat* — which only worked if you had a land that you could make agricultural, economic and environmental policy on — to the seventh day.

B.W-K.: Invoking Jeremiah and Deuteronomy calls the Babylonian exile into this. The Sabbath became enormously important in the exile as well, right?

A.W.: Yes. Ezekiel spends a lot of time bemoaning the failure to observe the Sabbath which suggests that in Babylonia it became clearer to people how important it was.

B.W-K.: I can hear implications of this in our own time. Can you say something about the importance of not only the economics, but the liberation of the cosmic rhythm in our own time, and maybe

say something about the artificial rhythms of our own culture not really being earth-based?

A.W.: In my own work I've suggested that the deepest mistake of modern, industrial, technological life has been to treat *Shabbat* as if it were literally a waste of time.

All of the natural cycles — the day, the month and the year — are observed in sevens. Each of the sevenths become the sacred day, month or year of reflection

If there were a single piece of Jewish wisdom that was most important to impart to the human race at this very moment it would be the importance of Shabbat.

and being. This makes Jewish time into a spiral rather than a circle or a straight line. It does move forward, but it doesn't move forward in a straight line. You're always taking the past into serious account and you're always reinterpreting the past in order to move forward.

For the last 500 years the human race has not made a *Shabbat*. I mean this in the sense, the profound sense, of pausing to reflect — to absorb, digest and celebrate the great project of modernity instead of being addicted to it.

We have invented extraordinary ways of working, doing, making, producing, consuming, which have been in some ways a great blessing: producing much more food, much more housing, much more healing and many more people than has ever been true in human history before. At some level that's a blessing.

But if you never pause to make *Shabbat*, the tradition teaches that in a very serious way the blessing turns into a massive disaster. That is, over-making,

over-producing, over-doing — without ever being. That means you stand on the precipice of nuclear holocaust, of global warming, of the shattering of the ozone layer, of Auschwitz. All that is a result of extraordinary feats of doing without any reflection, without any pause for being which can bring you back to a center and remind you to examine the purpose of the doing. That's what *Shabbat* is.

In Jewish life *Shabbat* is the time when you stop doing — you study Torah, you sing, you dance, you celebrate and you reflect on what the previous six days have been. If there were a single piece of Jewish wisdom that was most important to impart to the human race at this very moment of its history it would be the importance of *Shabbat*. I mean the generally profound sense of pausing to be, to reflect, and to break the addiction to working, producing, making, inventing. We need to be able to say, "HEY! We *have* done extraordinary things, now let's pause."

Artists have said to me, "There's a moment in painting when you're laying brush stroke after brush stroke after brush stroke and each one's beautiful and each one enhances the painting. Then comes the moment when you put one more brush stroke on and it would seem *that* brush stroke was just as beautiful as any one before it, but suddenly you have ruined the painting." You've got to know when to stop, when to catch your breath and say "Whoosh! This one's over! I'll put up another canvas. But in the meantime, I have to pause long enough to digest what I've done. Otherwise, I destroy it."

That's where the world is right now. We have done this amazing painting of modernity and instead of taking it off the easel, looking at it, learning from it and then beginning some new project which will go in a different direction, we are still putting on brush strokes which, in fact, are making it uglier and uglier. **TW**

Looking for sanity with the Amish

by Marianne Arbogast

Like all the women in her Amish community, Sarah Jane Jones keeps her head covered and wears home-sewn clothing in subtle hues of blue, green, brown or purple. Like her neighbors, she sews and reads by the light of gas lamps attached to copper pipes in the walls. Her life, like theirs, is centered in community, Bible study, and the simple manual tasks of “plain” living handed down through generations.

In a culture which rejects individualism, she is like them in every way but one: Born and raised “English,” Jones is a 24-year-old American refugee seeking asylum from the oppressive ways of her native land.

“American culture is full of sick, violent things,” she says, contrasting video games to the homemade toys that entertain Amish children. “In the world there are extremes. There are extreme highs, like going out dancing, or to a good movie — things to get your energy pumping. But then there are extreme lows — depression, violence, rape.

“In Amish life there is the high of weddings, or first dates, simple highs. And there are lows — a family’s barn can burn down, or children can drown. But there is a *constant* peace.”

Jones’ decision to join the Amish two-and-a-half years ago came as a surprise to her family and friends.

The daughter of peace activist parents who took up organic farming, Jones grew up in an intensely political environment,

surrounded by lively discussion of ecology, feminism and global justice. Her family’s home was always full of students from the Methodist college campus ministry in Mt. Pleasant, Mich., where her father was pastor. She spent her junior year in high school in Washington, D.C., serving as a page to U.S. Senator Carl Levin.



Sarah Jones

Lin Baum

Attracted by a Peace and Global Studies program, Jones enrolled at Earlham College in Indiana, then changed her major to biology when she found that her real love was the natural world.

Learning in Africa

A turning point came in her junior year, when she spent three-and-a-half months as an exchange student in Kenya.

“I lived with people who lived so simply, so close to the earth and God — and were so happy!” she says. “To be a part of a people who were really enjoying life ...!

“I realized I enjoyed washing clothes by hand — it’s hordes better than listening to washing-machine racket. Now, you could call it work, or you could call it something to do, a peaceful pastime.”

She evolved a simple method of discernment: “Does it make me feel good or bad? Is it good for the earth?”

From Kenya, Jones went to visit a friend in Germany, whose father was a close friend and editor to social critic Ivan Illich. Sick with cancer, Illich was hosting a continuous stream of visitors.

European intellectual life

“Friends from all over the world came to his house and discussed books, writing, and social criticism,” Jones says. “It was an intellectual haven. Amazing things were being talked about.”

From her friend’s father — who had housed his family in a tent while building an ecologically sound home — Jones took the motto: “Walk humbly on the earth.”

From Illich, she took his parting advice to “just be.”

“That really affected me,” she says. “He is someone who has fought the crusade — and he told me, it’s more important to live how you’re supposed to be, than to write a book about how society is supposed to be.

“I thought, that’s exactly what I’m going to do. I love to live! I love to get dirty, to make things with my hands — not to sit in front of a laptop 22 hours a day.”

In deference to her parents’ wishes but against her own inclination, Jones returned to school for two more terms, eventually leaving three months before graduation.

While touring organic farms with a class, she visited an Amish farm where children tended horses while their grandfather talked of harvesting ice for the icehouse from a pond he had dug by hand.

“His English wasn’t perfect, but he was the wisest man I’d ever heard,” Jones says. “The things he was saying were so online. I thought, he has something I want — a joy, a peace, an understanding. I want to know what he knows!”

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*. Artist **Lin Baum** created this drawing; photographs are discouraged by Sarah Jones’ community. Artist **Cheryl Phillips**, RSM works in Detroit, Mich.

When she contacted an Amish family near Mt. Pleasant and asked if she could join their church, "They said, 'Yes, *but*.' They asked, 'Are you interested in the lifestyle or the faith?' For the Amish, there is a religious reason why we do things the way we do. When people come purely to get back to the earth, it doesn't work."

Jones began attending their small house church each Sunday. Though services were normally conducted in the unwritten, Pennsylvania Dutch language of the Amish (only recently transcribed for a translation of the Bible), the minister spoke in English for her benefit.

Eight months later, she moved in with an Amish family.

At first, Jones' parents and friends were dismayed.

"My dad said I'm not doing my part for society, and my mom was afraid it would be like a cult and they would never see me. My friends could not believe I was joining this faith where women had to be submissive to men."

'A gendered culture'

Jones borrows Illich's controversial con-

cept of a "gendered culture" to explain why she is not disturbed by the strict gender roles of the Amish.

"There's a big difference between a gendered culture and a sexist culture," she says. "What I want is respect, and in Amish culture there is a strong respect between men and women. There's no question that men and women are equal. But women are better at running homes, and men are better at hard physical labor."

"In American culture, there is still an ongoing battle between men and women — even at Earlham, which was the most p.c. place in the world. I didn't shave my legs, and it would have been hard to get some jobs. With the Amish I don't have to shave my legs. They don't even care what I look like. There's a teaching — that's not what women are for."

Though she admits that she once would

have "had a fit" if anyone referred to her as a "girl," she will now be a "girl" until she marries.

"In a sexist culture, 'girl' is a derogatory term, but here, I sense respect. It's a factual description — boys are called boys, too."

Because more men than women "go high," (i.e., leave the Amish), "there are a lot more older single girls" than boys in

Amish communities, she says. But "it is felt strongly that God has given them this gift — there is a place for them."

Acknowledging that the Amish prohibition of women from the

"I feel the Amish do walk

humbly on the earth.

You couldn't live this way

and go out to all the marches

and rallies, and lead

peace groups."

ministry is based on a literal interpretation of biblical passages, Jones also knows that the Bible attests to women's leadership in the early church.

Perhaps "nobody's ever pushed or confronted the issue," she says, and she is not inclined to do so herself.

'It is a sin to drive a car.'

For the most part, when she questions Amish practice, she would like to see it stricter.

"Amish people buy coffee, and I have a real problem with that," she says. She is also alone in rejecting polyester clothing.

And while her liberal Amish community may be on the verge of relaxing its prohibition against driving, Jones believes "it is a sin to drive a car."

Her objections are based on principles of ecology and nonviolence. A car can maim and kill. It is also expensive to own, and unlike her Amish neighbors, Jones keeps her income below taxable level, in order to avoid contributing to the military. She is appalled that people have killed for oil: "I would rather not drive a car than cause the Gulf War."

Plain and simple

The women moved through the day unhurried. There was no rushing to finish so they could get on to the "important things." For them, it was all important.

Perhaps they had inherited the same routine from their mothers and grandmothers. It was clear someone had spent time thinking and planning how to do each task in the most useful and efficient way. Now it was automatic, the repetition ingrained, no time had to be wasted questioning how it should be done — they worked relaxed, "unconsciously conscious." "We grew up learning to sew, cook, quilt, can, and garden," Emma said, "hardly realizing when it happened."

Which parts of today's process were a chore? Which were fun? There seemed to be no separation for them.

Time was full and generous. It was as if they had uncovered a way to be in time, to be a part of time, to have a harmonious relationship with time.

For me time was a burden.

There was never enough of it. In Berkeley Iran around breathlessly rushing toward impossible goals — and to that vague "something out there." When I explained how split I was, loving to do certain things and hating to do others, the women laughed and tried to understand.

— Sue Bender, *Plain and Simple: A Woman's Journey to the Amish*, HarperCollins, 1991.

She explains that the Amish have other reasons for not driving.

"We live as a community — there's not the sense of having to be an individual and have your own separate life," she says. "A car can break down the sense of needing each other — you are more apt to go places instead of being at home with your family. And you are more likely to be exposed to evil — movies and bars are more accessible."

The Amish accept public transportation and travel a lot, Jones says. Heading out west, or to Alaska for a camping trip, is common. She visits friends and family on a regular basis, and even returned for a short visit to Illich's home in Germany.

"I wanted to share what it's like to live this way," she says. "Also, I was asking myself, was it the right choice to leave the world of intellect? It was very clear to me — I just wanted to come home."

Walking the walk

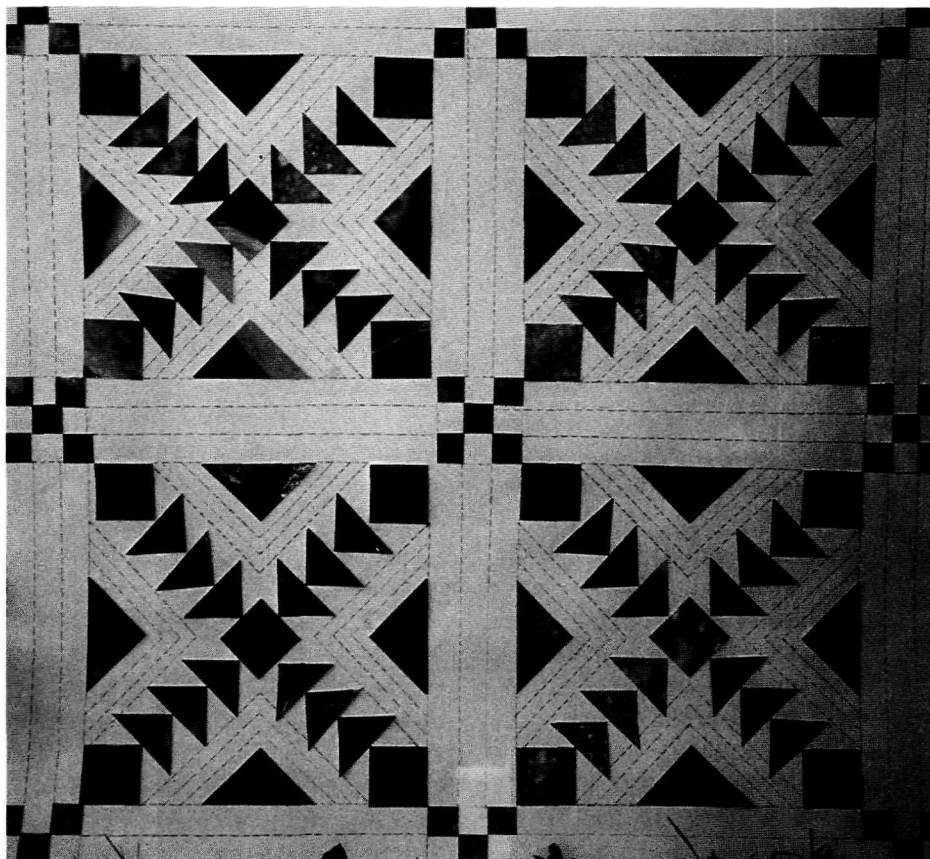
Jones has continued to wrestle with the question of contributing to society. She has deep respect for her parents' work, and acknowledges its impact on her own life. She retains an early childhood memory of a march against Dow Chemical: The image of a protester wearing a two-headed mask — symbolizing pollution-induced mutation.

But she questions whether much activism is not just "a lot of talk," distracting people from the concrete work of changing their own lives.

"My father taught me non-resistance, but it is not the teaching of the United Methodist Church," she says. "I couldn't be part of a faith that didn't believe in non-resistance. Amish boys wouldn't go to war or bear arms against anybody."

"I feel the Amish *do* walk humbly on the earth. They live with gentleness and care — sewing our clothes, growing our food, building our shelters, taking the teaching of children upon ourselves."

"You couldn't live this way and go out



Odd Fellows Cross quilt by Cheryl Phillips

to all the marches and rallies, and lead peace groups. I'm sick of fighting, trying to change people by force. Just live it! Simply live it! If we take responsibility for ourselves, and pay attention to what we're doing to ourselves, and others, and God's creation, it's not hard to see what's wrong and change it in a literal way."


Jones recently moved from Michigan to Ohio. She works in an Amish bulk food store, and has been living with one of the families who own it, but will soon move into rooms of her own in the adjoining bakery.

She is putting aside some money to help pay for her impending gallbladder surgery. With no medical insurance, she will follow the Amish practice of turning to the community for assistance.

"I will go have it done, then spread news of the bill," she says. "The people I work for have offered to pay it initially, then I'll pay them back. The church here will pay a chunk, the church where I'm from will pay a chunk, and I'll pay some."

"It's all voluntary. Occasionally people get monstrous medical bills, but the money comes. It works. I have to have faith in God."

Asked about her future, Jones lists multiple options.

"I love to learn, travel and do things I've never done," she says. "I could work in the Romanian missions, or on a goat farm. I don't want to get married now. I have complete freedom to do anything I want — and there's nothing I want that doesn't fit in with this culture." 

Monastic listening

by Kate DeSmet

In a large, rambling house in the city of Cambridge, Mass., a darkened sky and glowing street lamps still mark the early morning hours as 18 monks arise from sleep and sit alone in their cells for an hour of contemplative silence. The members of this Episcopal Monastery of St. John follow a rule of silence from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. every day. And in the silence, they are exposed to what one of the monks calls a “killing and life-giving” experience.

“Silence tends to be killing for me, but life-giving also because it calls me to die to the things that I want but don’t need, or the things I want but can live without, and it helps me to cherish what I already have,” says Rusty Page, an Episcopal priest who gave up parish ministry to join the monastery 16 years ago.

“It took me awhile to make that shift in my life where I could adapt to a daily schedule of silence. But it has changed me in ways I’ve noticed, and in ways my friends have noticed. I find that I use silence to distill the things that matter to me, the things that bother me, and the things I care about. I’m most grateful for that. And my friends notice that I don’t talk as much as I used to. By being silent a little more, my world is defined less by speaking and more through listening.”

Unlike secular society’s wrestling with noise on almost every level of experience from telephone to the television, communities of contemplative and monastic men and women continue to focus on silence as a necessary discipline for spiritual growth. Without facing the silence in ourselves, they argue, the noise of the

world crowds out the voice of God. To those who say they have never heard God speak directly to them, the contemplative believer asks, “How can you hear God with all that racket going on?” Tune out distraction and you’ll find discernment.

And yet what seems simple enough — to merely tune out noise for a few minutes or an hour — can be a terrifying experience, even for those who have incorporated the discipline directly into their life’s vocation. Among those who recognized the fearsome aspects of silence was Thomas Merton, the late Trappist monk who celebrated silence as the source of “the rhythm of life.” In his book *No Man Is An Island*, Merton said “life is not to be regarded as an uninterrupted flow of words which is finally silenced by death.” Instead, life bobs and weaves through periods of silence and necessary expression until the “final declaration” and entrance into the “silence of Heaven which resounds with unending praise.” Merton declared that persons who did not believe in a life after this one would resist silence because it ultimately confronts death.

“How tragic it is that they who have nothing to express are continually expressing themselves,” Merton wrote. “The reason for their talk is: death. Death is the enemy who seems to confront them at every moment in the deep darkness and silence of their own being. So they keep shouting at death. They confound their lives with noise. They stun their own ears with meaningless words, never discovering that their

hearts are rooted in a silence that is not death but life.”

Merton was the novice master in 1960 for a 45-year-old Roman Catholic priest who decided to leave missionary work to enter monastic life at the Trappist abbey in Gethsemani, Ky. Matthew Kelty, now 80, has practiced the rule of silence at Gethsemani for 35 years and admitted he struggled mightily to erase distractions and sit still. What was fearsome then remains troubling to so many now, he says: Silence forces us to confront reality.

“You face reality and you face your own self. The first thing that will happen to you when you begin the practice of silence is to confront the messy side of your life. It’s the first thing to surface. And it’s part of the life of silence, but so is healing — silence is not always delightful, but it is always healing.”

Silence is the rule at the Kentucky monastery during meals (though readings aloud from various books are conducted during lunch), and there are no televisions or radios. Monks can talk if necessary during their work periods, but the house, library and refectory are con-

sidered places of quiet. Even during the Christmas holidays, says Kelty, “not a single decoration or single jingle is heard until Christmas eve.”

The monks deliberately culti-

vate silence as a way of listening to God through the heart and spirit, setting them apart from the rest of society that is immersed in noise. But they are not, says Kelty, “a monastery full of creeps who are trying to move away from anybody they can’t tolerate. We are naturally active and have a strong community life. We try to balance our need to be extro-

Silence tends to be killing for me, it calls me to die to the things that I want but don’t need, and it helps me to cherish what I already have.

— Rusty Page, SSJE

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

verts with our need to be introverts. In many places, the extroverted side is over-emphasized. Today we have to work hard to get silence, even in the monastery where there is a lot going on. But we make an issue of silence."

The hard work and rewards of silence are the focus of many monastic retreat houses in the country. External noise, including casual conversations, are kept to a minimum. Sometimes even reading is discouraged. At the Trappist monastery in Snowmass, Colo., the offer of guidance in the way of silence to those living outside monastery walls has resulted in a schedule of retreats that are fully booked all year long, according to longtime resident Theophane.

The monastery, located in the Colorado mountains, also offers retreats in centering prayer where a single word or mantra is used, not to disturb the silence, but as "an indication of your intention to be receptive to God beyond all your ideas," Theophane said.

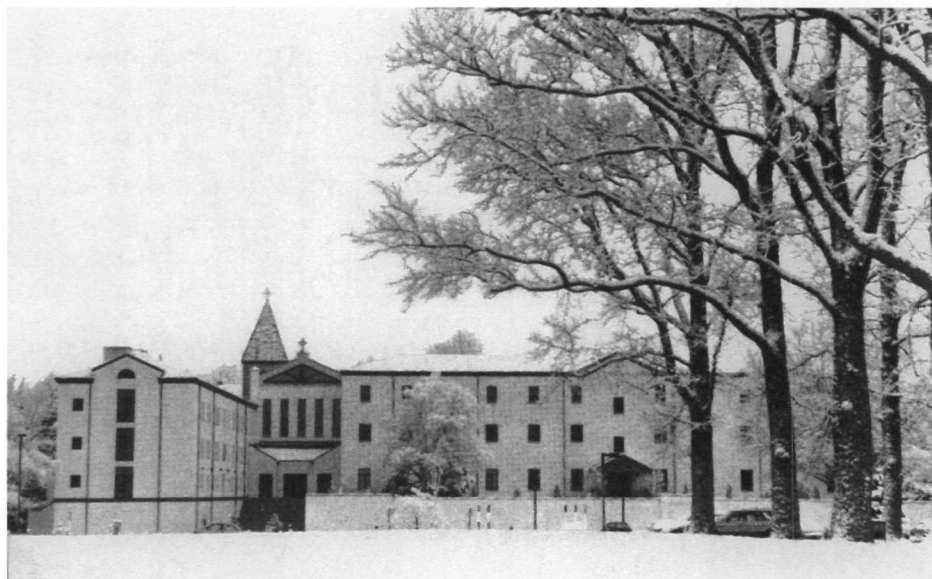
"God is beyond all our words because God is beyond all our thoughts. If we only deal with God in words then essentially we have been removed from God. So centering prayer comes out of the world of the monks' silence and uses a word or mantra while at the same time disconnecting thoughts and images in favor of reaching out to touch God, to touch God beyond all concepts. Silence is an introduction to the infinite and all words are finite."

Beginners in the discipline of silence are warned to keep their initial periods of silence to only a few minutes. "Start slow," says Page, "and you'll discover whether you have something to be afraid of. There is stuff inside there that can be terrible but it is not unaddressable." If the silence evokes disturbing memories of childhood abuse or psychotic problems, Page advises that the discipline of silence may not be suitable. "If silence has mean-

ing for you, if it can get you somewhere in your life, then it is fruitful for you. But if nothing happens, you may be standing in an empty desert. André Previn says his goal each day is to make music. If that comes out of silence, then that's what

be a quiet bedroom, a church, a wooded lot or an early morning jog. The rewards for the Christian believer are unmistakable.

"It can be rough at the start but just hang on and in the end, it will turn out to



Gethsemani monastery in Kentucky

matters. But if you're a person who needs to make noise every day, then do it. No rule is good for everybody."

Kelty advises that one practice silence as a discipline for health, much the same way as one practices disciplines of diet and exercise.

"Ten minutes a day would be beautiful," he says, adding that the setting can

be fruitful," Kelty said.

"Silence shows us that we're not living in Disneyland but in reality, and that redemption is really serious. The reality of God's mercy becomes very real. That's the revelation of silence. It's not an exercise in showing off or being tough. Pay attention to the quiet side of life and you can hear the voice of God." **TW**

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

— *The Book of Common Prayer*

Birthing a circle of silence

by Julie A. Wortman

[Ed. note: Across the nation small enclaves of women are forming rural communities where they can tend and take note of the earth. Newsletters from these communities, that carry names like *Morningstar* and *Wellspring*, speak of the changing seasons, transitions in human lives, quiet and the power of circles. Located on Maine's Atlantic coast, *Greenfire* is a community of priests who are drawing strength from the roots and fruit of the earth.]

The Greenfire community's comfortable 200-year-old farm house with its attached barn-like guest wing and assorted outbuildings sits on 59 acres of gardens, fields, woods and marshland in Tenants Harbor, Maine, on the state's mid-coastal St. George peninsula. Guests are free to ramble these picturesque grounds at will. The St. George River is only a short walk across the road to the west, while a few minutes away at Seafire, the farm's annex, the tidal rhythms of a shallow cove beckon those who love the sea. At nearby Mosquito Head last spring I spent an entire afternoon baking in the sun, absorbing earth and ocean energy on the granite rocks.

Although the beauty of the place alone acts as a balm for the dispirited soul, the four women who live here year round — Maria Marta Arís-Paúl, Judith Carpenter, Constance Chandler-Ward and Rosanna Kazanjian — also offer an effective prescription of their own devising for what ails the steady procession of overloaded

minds and worn-down bodies that has found its way here since Greenfire's women-focussed retreat ministry was incorporated in the autumn of 1990.

They call it "circlework."

"The Greenfire community emerged as we friends deepened our friendship and began to focus together on our shared longing for long-term communal life (for growing old creatively and together) and for some kind of shared ministry with women that utilized our gifts, experiences and interests," writes Carpenter in the Doctor of Ministry thesis she completed about the community in 1995. She, along with Chandler-Ward and Kazanjian first conceived of Greenfire in 1987. In 1989 they were joined by Alison Cheek, who does not live in Tenants Harbor, and in 1994 by Maria Marta Arís-Paúl. All five are Episcopal priests.

"We wanted work that was truly feminist in purpose and style — that was committed to the empowerment of other women, to the freeing of their gifts, interests, etc. — and that was grounded in and expressive of our commitment to global and ecological justice," says Carpenter.

"We felt that we were trying to give birth to a shared vision or model for ministry that could potentially support us all in a very simple life-style, a

model that would intentionally stay small and personal, though connected to the whole, greater network of vision/ministries of other women, known and as yet unknown, in ever-widening circles."

As their small circle sat together weekly trying to figure out, as Thoreau would

say, how to live the life they imagined, Chandler-Ward came up with the idea of doing "work/vision consultations" with other women who were trying to do the same thing. As priests, they were experienced in focussing on theology and the "spiritual core" of people's lives. In addition, a strong piece of their corporate credentials was psychological and other forms of counseling. But they eschewed the one-on-one models of spiritual direction and counseling they had been trained to use, out of a growing commitment to keeping this new work a "circle" endeavor.

"From the first time we were very clear that this was not 'counseling' and that we were committed to working communally, not one-on-one," Carpenter reflects in her thesis. "We wanted to avoid the expert/client model and to develop instead a model which would be more consistent with feminist insights."

In so doing they stumbled on a way to overcome the "power-over" conundrum at the heart of much counseling work, both within and outside the church. As one of their early work/vision clients later reflected, "What I had modelled for me were two really important things: one is you all don't have the answer for me (it's impossible to combat that in therapy with one person); the other thing is I realized that there wasn't any one answer to [my

"The reality is that you can't follow your own deepest path without other people."

— Judith Carpenter

questions] — that probably each of you had a slice that was useful. It put the accountability and the ownership directly on me. This is how life decisions

are really made."

Carpenter says the Greenfire women also discovered something compelling for themselves: "We began to see that we were really doing what women have always done for one another: offering a circle of friends in which one woman can

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*. For more information on Greenfire write the community at HCR 35, Box 439, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860.

have her turn — her time to work through her needs/concerns — in the context of focussed, committed listening and perhaps of creative self-expression.”

The work/vision efforts may be among the most intense circle work the Greenfire women do, but nearly everything about Greenfire today is in some way about circles. Those visiting the farm on retreat inevitably become part of a circle as the Greenfire women invite them into daily sessions of meditative silence, and gather them around the dinner table for thoughtfully prepared organic menus featuring garden-fresh vegetables or salads, whole-grain breads, savory casseroles, delicately spiced fish dishes and hearty soups. Dinner is unrushed, with wide-ranging, lively conversation.

On Sunday evenings, as many as 20 women who live in Tenants Harbor and other neighboring communities gather in the barn’s beamed common room to form a circle of shared silence, reflection and intercession followed by a pot-luck dinner around the farmhouse’s extended dining room table. “At first we considered adding other worship elements to the silence,” remembers Carpenter, “but wise [Greenfire board member] Adelaide [Winstead] said, ‘For God’s sake, just hold the silence! This is what people need and there are too few places left where they can find it.’”

The women who come to Greenfire for respite and renewal, in fact, evidence what the Greenfire community has come to recognize as a deep “circle longing” that transcends simple affection for this beautiful place and the women who have made the farmhouse and barn scenes of life-giving exchange.

“As we do this work in many contexts, we are continually touched by the hunger — and the yearning — people have for such ongoing circles in their own lives,” writes Carpenter, noting that one retreatant told them, “Last night at dinner I saw the

strength of community around the table and it touched off my deepest longings. Whatever I’m here for, I don’t want to do it alone.”

“Circle longing,” the Greenfire community believes, is a strong motivating force among women today. Says Carpenter: “The reality, acknowledged over and over again in the various circles of which we are a part, is that you can’t follow your own deepest path without other people. This life is not a solo journey; in fact, we



need more than dyads to hold the pain and facilitate the healing. Everything we do has repercussions within the interdependent, interconnected web of the whole planet and all its systems.”

This type of analysis has led the Greenfire community to think seriously about the limits of — and call to — their largely first-world “social location.” They have embraced Asian theologian Chung Hyun Kyung’s speculation that a “theology of letting go” may be the liberation theology of the first world. “I cannot see how — without this letting go — you have any empty space to worship God or spirit,” Chung says.

And so they are trying to let go — especially of their own privilege as priests in a hierarchical church that at the same time espouses a “priesthood of all believers.”

“We tell churches and individuals who want us to work with them,” says Carpen-

ter, “that they can go many places for assessments, goal-setting, strategic-planning, etc., all of which is fine and good, but that what we offer is something else: creating contemplative space in the circle to speak/listen at the deepest levels and thus be changed at those levels. We all are absolutely clear that we do not want to give away our energy to the institution’s agenda anymore, because as [Latin American liberation theologian] Pablo Richard [told us], it is simply not good for any of us. Hope for us all lies on the margins and in the resistance.”

Community member Kasanjian underscores this sentiment: “Our particular message to and with the church is to encourage and create new models for ministry that include co-operation, collaboration and interdependence. We are living that commitment in our community.”

And so, although each time I have journeyed to Greenfire I have arrived tense and exhausted and departed restored to some semblance of inner balance, I have never considered my visits here to have been “retreats” in the usual sense. Instead, my stays in Tenants Harbor have had more the flavor of occasions for touching base with fellow conspirators in an underground resistance movement aimed at undermining oppressive systems. As Guatemalan-born Greenfire community member Aris-Paúl frequently points out, Greenfire is a hopeful first-world example of a base community, what Carpenter, in turn, calls “an emerging feminist liberation community,” where the goal is social change and the means is deep spiritual awareness.

“Women come to Greenfire because they find it to be a deep, quiet, safe place — a container — in which to make the connections they need to make and to grow strong,” says Carpenter. “Those of us in the community know we need this kind of place, too.”

TW

Living in eternity

by Virginia Mollenkott

[Virginia Mollenkott writes about *Holy Instants*, moments when we are most ourselves, when we understand that “*The Ultimate, the Sacred, God Herself is everywhere at the core of everything and everyone.*” She writes here about the need for balance.]

I have learned that when I am centered in my Self and feeling loving, joyous, and peaceful, I am completely reliable and trustworthy. But when I am disturbed, fearful, anxious, or angry, I know that my ego is at the helm. At such times, I try never to make important decisions, and I urge my friends and students not to take any advice I might offer them in that frame of mind. Then, as soon as I possibly can, I bring myself back to the point of willingness to be filled with all that is loving. It isn't easy; the human ego dies *hard*. Dan Millman tells this story on himself: He said to the Holy Spirit “Please fill me. Why don't you fill me?” And the Holy Spirit responded, “I *do* fill you. But you keep *leaking!*”

I have discovered that if I need to know the answer to a question that is troubling my mind, I can ask that question when I am in a quiet, relaxed, and centered state of mind, and the answer will be given to me. Usually, for me, it works this way: I write the question in my journal, stating it as precisely as I possi-

bly can. Then I write the words “*The Answer*” — after which I close my eyes and listen expectantly for the Spirit's reply. A beginning concept occurs to me (sometimes something very surprising to me), and I begin to write. Usually the words pour onto the page very rapidly; but if I get stuck I simply close my eyes and listen once again. I never hear any external voice, but certainly concepts occur to me that did not come from my ego; and sometimes alternatives are offered that had never occurred to me before.

Here's one example of my own question-answer process:

I have been feeling overwhelmed with work, so I am going to ask for help from my Inner Guide concerning my work load. My question is, *What can I do to lower the pressure upon myself?* There are always letters to write, speeches to research and write, materials to sort and file, people to call or see, so that there never seems to be time to relax and be contented, just to enjoy being still. This isn't right. I *know* it isn't right — and yet it is human need I'm trying to respond to. What should be my attitude? What is the God's-eye view of my work load?

The Answer: Virginia, you have correctly perceived that the problem lies in your attitude, not in the work load itself. You and I have all

eternity to get done whatever really needs to get done. While you are in the human sphere, holding down a job, you must meet certain expectations — but it is not really those that are wearing you out.

When you get a letter or card from someone, you should not automatically

assume that you have to answer it. If you want to finish projects that come from your own center, you cannot drive yourself to meet everybody's needs who asks you to do so. When you try to do that, you are trying to love your neighbor more than yourself, and are doing so because of your early training that your mother's needs were more important than your own.

Please ask me what needs to be answered and what simply filed or discarded. I will help you to discern. Your work load will be transformed when you remember to allow me to be your partner in it.

You are an eternal being, as I am. You have all the time in eternity. Remember that. Work in a relaxed manner at all times. There are angels at your elbow!

Let's clean up the surface mess in your office now, as much as is possible in these crowded conditions. Then you will feel more like working on your [current research], which is going to come together like magic. Be still and know that I am God!

I *did* proceed to clean up the surface mess in my office, and the research I had been doing did come together with relative ease. Better yet, ever since I received that answer I have felt more relaxed and unpressured and have worked with increased efficiency.

So I know from direct experience what it is like to recognize the holy instant and

You are an eternal being. You have all the time in eternity.

know heaven on a personal and relational level. But what about structural evils, the in-

justices that assault human dignity by exploiting the many in order to provide obscene luxuries for the few? Or that exclude certain people from the respect, power, and privilege accorded to others?

Through the glimpses of the interconnectedness and spiritual unity of

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott is a contributing editor to *The Witness* and professor at William Paterson College in N.J. This essay is excerpted from *Sensuous Spirituality: Out From Fundamentalism*, Crossroad, N.Y., 1992. Artist **Cheryl Phillips, RSM** is an artist in Detroit.

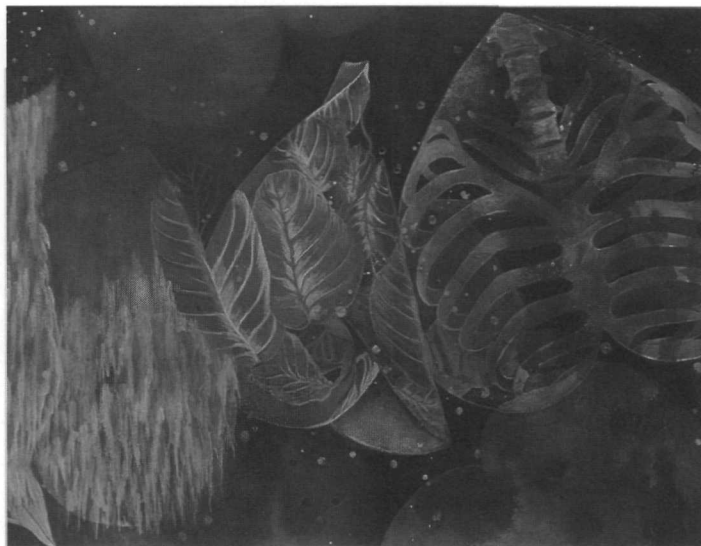
the larger picture, a sensuously spiritual being can receive instruction concerning her specific role for co-creating a more just human society. At the same time, she will be reassured by an outpouring of tenderness from the invisible spirit-world behind, beneath, and within that which is seen. And to the degree that she can keep herself centered, she will be enabled (by the angels at her elbow?) to do most of her designated social-justice work in confidence and joy, even in the midst of warring egos or warring nations. As multitudes of feminist and ecological writers have pointed out, concern for the body and the earth is concern for justice.

Admittedly, it is difficult to look at a world full of poverty, militarism, and all sorts of systems that favor the few at the expense of the many; it is difficult to work for social change in the direction of greater equity, and to perceive how slowly that change proceeds and how many are the setbacks; it is difficult to be realistic about all that and still to live in the quiet confidence that at some deeper level, everything is going as it should. That's why we need to spend some time each day in stillness, remembering who we are, practicing the presence of God Herself.

It is easy to assume that chaos is all there is. Several times each day, we would be wise to meditate. We must carve out time to look underneath the chaos to assure ourselves that even if the design is very incomplete and we cannot *imagine* what the artist has in mind, nevertheless things are progressing.

Sacrifice of our peace and joy is *never* what the universe asks of us. Without peace and joy we become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. It

is counterproductive to sleep on beds of thorn, never giving ourselves a minute's peace or joy because of our commitment to social change. As I have learned repeatedly, we work more efficiently when we work from the relaxed, humorous,



A heart transformed by Cheryl Phillips

gentle perceptions of the Self. We have a right to that relaxation, because we know that behind the scenes everything is working out as it should.

On the other hand, it has occurred to me to wonder why anybody should lift a finger for social change. If everything is really working out as it should, why should I do anything other than eat, sleep, and be merry? Or perhaps read books on spirituality, meditate, and feel peaceful? When I asked that question of the Holy Spirit, I was told that asking that question reveals that I have forgotten that *I* am one aspect of the universal process that is working according to plan. The process will not be aborted if I fail to do my part in it, but in some infinitesimal way the process will be changed — and above, all, I will miss out on the blessing of playing my position on a team in a universal game in which everybody wins.

Among other things, I was told:

A great shift in consciousness is occurring in the world, and you are part of that shift. ... I work in different people in different ways, and despite your passionate commitment to an activist way, you must allow other people to respond in ways that feel right to their natures, for thus the whole pattern is made perfect. ...

To phrase all this another way, it is your privilege to be an agent of the social changes that are occurring. With you or without you, what should occur will occur. If you feel an impulse toward activism, you would be denying your own nature if you became privatistic and passive; so in that sense, it is essential for you to cooperate by being one of my activist channels into the world. On the other hand, it is impossible for you to make a mistake because even your

apparent errors will be learning opportunities for yourself and others.

But it is a special blessing to play your position willingly, because then your heart is able to feel the tenderness and supportiveness of my angels and Spirit Guides who surround the world in eagerness to help. "We know that all things [even your "errors"] work together for good for those who love God [i.e., who willingly open themselves to channel Her love into the world], who are called according to [Her] purpose" [Rom.8:28, NRSV]; that is, everyone is called to come home to a kingdom of mutuality and peace-with-justice, but some remain alienated at this time and cannot sense or enjoy the benefits of loving God. They too will eventually come home, but those who offer God their willingness to become awakened and consciously aware that they are part of God's purpose enjoy a truly beautiful, blessed state of mind!

TW

Rhythm, prayer and relationship: Changing space and time through chants

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Detroit's public television station recently launched a fundraising evening with video of monks in full-length brown robes singing Gregorian chant in Latin by candlelight. Periodically, a man in a suit would burst in, saying to send money because this "magical, mystical, unique" programming was only available on public t.v.

Remarkably, Gregorian chant is high on the charts. In fact, Angel/EMI's *Chant II* is number one and their 1994 Christmas blockbuster, *Chant: The Benedictine Monks of Santa Domingo de Slos*, is number two. Over six million copies have been sold in 42 countries.

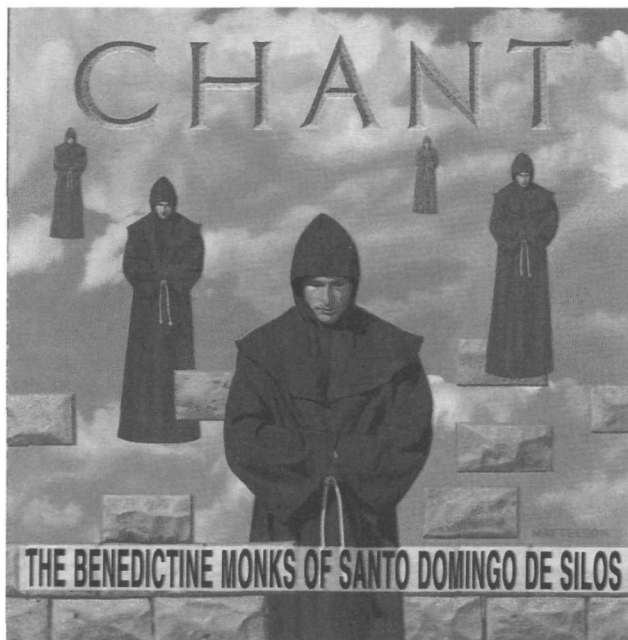
Other chant c.d.s are on the market — chants from Tibet, from Africa, from American Indian tribes, from women's groups. Interlacing circles of melodies with words that run round are profitable.

What is it that makes this music in such demand? What urge in the middle ages was satiated by Gregorian chant? Is it the same one that makes 20th century hearts respond to it. What is it that people of so many cultures know about drumming and singing repetitive phrases?

Chanting as church

"Chanting circles have become church for me," explains Terry Zaydel, a Detroit

mother of three grown daughters who describes herself as a recovering Catholic. "It feeds a very deep part of my spiritual being. It connects me to spirit. The drumming puts me into a different



Chant by Marvin Mettelson ©Angel Records

frame of reference. It shifts my reality. I believe that it's the relationship between the drum, my own heartbeat and whatever long-ago primal memory that surfaces in me, maybe in utero and maybe before that."

Bobby McFerrin, whose chanting cascaded up and down the walls of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco during a 24-hour chant for healing a few years ago, says much the same thing.

Singing sometimes feels like "running energy," McFerrin told *The New Age Journal*. "I could actually feel a differ-

ence in the way my body felt at ease and lighter. When you're singing, you're employing the breath in a rhythmic way. It can do a lot to reduce tension and slow your thought process down."

An Episcopalian informed by Sufi spirituality, McFerrin produced *Medicine Music* which draws on many traditions. He spent time "reading about the music of the spheres and the use of voice as a barometer for one's inner self, using the voice as a bridge between the higher and

lower worlds, the inner and outer selves. The fact that the Roman Catholic Church uses Gregorian chants, that Tibetan monks chant, and other cultures use music in dance and drumming to invite spirits, to expel demons — I find a lot of validity in that."

The communion of saints

Some say that weaving their voices through the medley of the whole is similar to being carried on the sea. The everyday concerns wash away, while their awareness of belonging to a community that Christians would call the communion of saints expands.

"Our ancestors were a lot closer to the earth, a lot closer to the elements and had a reverence for life that we're losing rapidly," according to McFerrin's interview

in *New Age Journal*. "They were a lot closer to spirit realm, but because of technology and the cities where we live and the onslaught of media, we're losing touch with a really valuable part of ourselves, which is our ancestral memory — the genetic memory of the old songs, the old chants, the old rhythms, the things that our ancestors used to bring these spirit things up. It sounds otherworldly, but what I'm talking about is actually of this world."

For McFerrin, as for many others, chanting and prayer (for healing of ourselves and

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

of the planet) are one and the same.

How it works

Katharine Le Mée, author of *Chant: The Origins, Form, Practice and Healing Power of Gregorian Chant* (Bell Tower, N.Y., 1994) believes people are turning to chant because they are “totally stressed and this affords relief. A lot of people don’t understand the Latin and don’t feel any particular need to understand what it is being sung. They turn it on because it is stimulating to the mind — the envelope sound in Gregorian chant has all of the range of an octave but tends to emphasize higher sounds that stimulate the brain’s activity in a positive way. These sounds have been used with people with learning disabilities. They are stimulating yet quieting. A lot of people use it as background. Some people receive a certain amount of solace from the beauty of it. If people sing it, they need to control the breath. You can’t sing Gregorian chant in a frenetic way.”

Le Mée, also an Episcopalian, says her own interest is in the way that the Gregorian chants conform to the liturgical seasons.

“The more you listen to it, you realize how variant it is — there are over 3,000 different melodies. It’s just one line of music, but it’s very extraordinary. Sometimes the music goes right along with the thought in ways that are very, very subtle.

“The music doesn’t have very large jumps. It stays generally within eight notes — a musical octave. The octave is understood as seven intervals. This is reflected in the mass which is also based on this same kind of octave development. I also trace an octave through the monastic hours — lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline, and matins.”

The number of intervals, seven, is a critical number in medieval numerology, Le Mée says. “It represents the coming together of the Trinity and the four elements of the earth.” She adds that

*Drumming puts me into a
different frame of reference.
I believe that it’s the
relationship between the
drum, my own heartbeat
and what long-ago primal
memory surfaces in me.*

— Terry Zaydel

“Chartres has a design in it which represents the 1-3-4.”

Sonic pollution

Recovering from the onslaught of sound and electromagnetic fields emanating from home and office appliances and from high tension wires is another reason to chant.

Some believe that this barrage of vibration forms a kind of sonic pollution that leads to ill health and depression. Chant can be the antidote, according to Debbie Mast, a nurse, therapist and chant leader.

“Scientific thinking is shifting from a Newtonian view of the body as a complex machine to an Einsteinian paradigm of humans as vibrating fields of energy embedded in other fields of energy — human and non-human,” explains Mast. [See Debbie Mast’s article on page 22.]

“We are beginning to understand that breath and sound are simple but powerful tools which can be used by everyone for healing,” Mast concludes.

Small wonder that there’s a market for anything that might teach us to breathe less frenetically, to understand our relationship to the earth and our ancestors, and to heal our bodies.

RAY

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Sacred sound and sheltered space

by Debbie Mast

"Do you see, my younger brother?
Now I sit down.
My gourd rattle moves in a circle.
Evening rushes out
and yonder goes sifting down.
An earth crack,
An earth Crack!
Out of it comes Elder Brother
And takes me to the sky."

—*Singing for Power*, R.M.

Underhill (Berkeley: University of
California Press, 1938).

I imagine that you become ill and your family sends for the local healer. He arrives at your bedside carrying his eagle feathers, gourd, and crystals. He sits crosslegged before you, smokes a ceremonial cigarette, and begins a low hum (*Heyyayayaya Ho yayaya* ...). Now he begins singing his medicine songs. These are songs of great power which he has learned in his dreams, songs so powerful that they can bring rain to the parched desert or death to an enemy. He repeats these songs over and over, traveling on the sound of his dreams into an altered state of consciousness, to the place where power can be captured. In this trance state he looks into his crystals and sees the cause of your illness. This is a great relief to your family, who can now send for the appropriate specialist, who knows the specific songs which will cure the identified disease.

If you were a Papago Indian living in the Southwest, everything I just described would be absolutely ordinary to you. The idea of healing with sound is an ancient

one. Indigenous healers on every continent have used songs, chants and tones as a vehicle for personal transformation and ceremonial healing.

We are fortunate to live in a time when many cultures have chosen to release their teachings to the general public. Unfortunately, this sharing of ancient wisdom is often motivated by a recognition that we are at a critical time for the Planet. Among Native Americans, aboriginal Australians, Buddhists, Sufi masters, African shamans and others there is a commitment to share what they know in a "last ditch" effort to reconnect us to the Earth and to all her Children.

Fortunately this offering is matched by a new receptivity among Americans to non-Western approaches.

Scientific thinking is shifting. We are beginning to understand that the vibrating human energy system is subject to the influence of *other* vibrations — that our health can be profoundly affected by "sonic pollution," leading to problems ranging from irritability to birth defects to life-threatening diseases such as cancer.

And we are beginning to consider the possibility that ancient peoples may be on to something when they treat illness by prescribing the healing vibration produced by sacred sound.

Music is a fundamental part of who we are. A fetus begins to hear at five months in the womb. At birth, we emerge with the three bones of the ear fully developed. These are the *only* bones in the body

which are completely mature at birth, indicating the importance that sound plays for us as a species. By age two a kind of melodic memory kicks in and children begin to imitate songs they hear, both rhythmically and melodically.

Cellular song

So sound in general and singing in particular is innate to us as a species. In fact you might say that we are sound, in visible form, since we are made of vibrating atoms, and everything which vibrates produces a sound.

Every atom in the body has a frequency or vibratory rate which is determined by the sum total of the electrons vibrating within it. Your cells, organs, your whole body is literally singing, whether you open your mouth or not!

You may not hear it, because the human ear hears only those frequencies which fall within the range of 20-20,000 cycles/second. But our entire body in its most relaxed state is vibrating at an inaudible 7.8-8 cycles/second. The brain in an alpha meditative state vibrates at 8-12 cycles/second.

The nervous system of all life forms on the planet are attuned to this fundamental 8 cycles/second frequency. The

earth itself vibrates at 8 cycles/second. In other words, it is in our nature to vibrate in harmony with the Earth and all living things when we are in a healthy, relaxed state.

Sonic pollution can pull us out of our natural vibration.

We are natural resonators or bio-oscillators. Because the whole body is vibrating, our cells automatically shift their vibration in response to incoming vibrations, whether those vibrations are audible to us or not. This poses a problem to

*The responsiveness of the
body to vibration raises
the possibility of healing
ourselves through the
deliberate use of sound.*

Debbie Mast is a therapist, who has worked as an oncology nurse, and has extensive experience in ceremonial work.

us in this age of sonic pollution.

Mutagenic sound

We have known for a long time that extremely high frequency waves, such as X-rays which vibrate a million trillion times per second, are mutagenic. It was once thought that ELF (extra-low-frequency) radiation was not harmful but evidence now suggests that it is. The magnetic fields produced by high-current power lines and computer monitors vibrate at 60-15,000 cycles/second. These magnetic fields can penetrate almost anything in their way, so it is difficult to shield against them.

ELF radiation has been linked to memory loss, irritability, fatigue, increased incidences of leukemia and lymphoma and brain cancer. One study shows that electric utility workers die at a brain cancer rate 13 times greater than unexposed workers. Three separate studies have shown that a statistically significant number of children who died of cancer lived in homes near high-current wires. ELF radiation emitted by computer monitors is linked to significant increases in miscarriage.

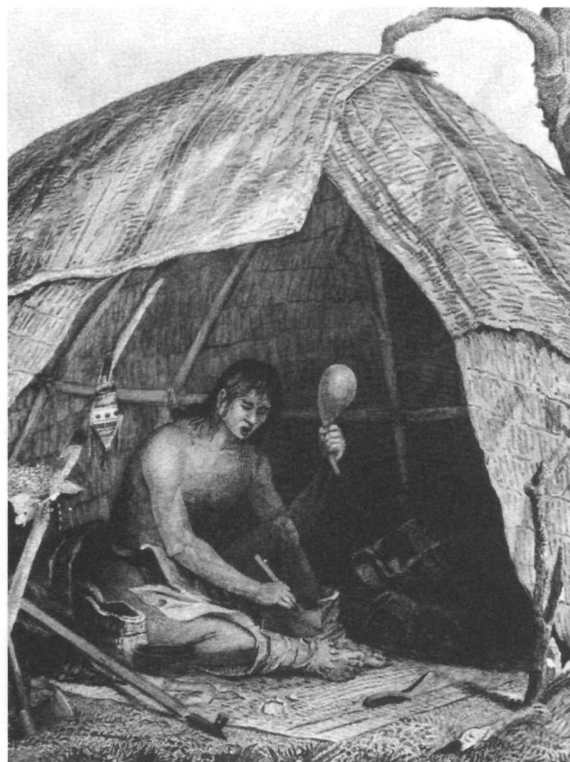
Appliances such as toasters and hairdryers give off strong magnetic fields, but they are used for only minutes each day, unlike the continuous exposure we are subjected to if we live near high-current power lines, sleep under electric blankets all night or work in front of a computer monitor all day.

It is not clear how ELF radiation damages the body. Scientists have proven that DNA oscillates in the presence of low-level microwaves and ultrasound waves; this may lead to gene mutation and disease. It is also possible that ELF fields suppress the body's immune system, thereby promoting rather than initiating cancer.

To language it another way: We can

go "out of tune" with ourselves when the frequency of outside stimuli is powerful enough and consistent enough to shift our vibration to that of the outside source. In this case, we lose our natural rhythm and may become physically ill or emotionally out of balance.

On the positive side, the responsiveness of the body to vibration raises the possibility of healing ourselves through the deliberate use of sound.



An early drawing by a U.S. Army officer of an Algonquin shaman making medicine. The effectiveness of the brew was said to be derived as much from the shaman's songs, accompanied by the shaking of the rattle in his left hand, as from the ingredients.

Library of Congress

'A musical solution'

The German philosopher Novalis said, "Every disease is a musical problem, every cure a musical solution," and he may be right. Recent studies indicate that wound healing, bone regeneration, body metabolism and muscle activity can be

accelerated by the application of frequency-specific sound waves.

This raises exciting possibilities about the role of sound in healing. It also suggests an explanation for the effectiveness of sacred singing. The notes and words of a healer's chant may have the sustained vibratory power and frequency needed to alter the physical structure of the cells in the direction of "reharmonizing" a diseased body part with the rest of the body.

Breath is the most obvious and important musical element in the body, because without breath the body has no vibratory resonance. This is why every spiritual path will include some disciplines regarding breathing.

Early forms of sacred singing were single tones, because sustained tones have the sustained vibratory power needed to heal the body by restoring its natural resonance. The point of the tone is not to make the sound, but to allow the physical body to vibrate with empowerment.

Chants can be thought of as sound mantras. They are less complicated than songs. They repeat a phrase over and over on one or a few tones. The words may have literal meaning or be sounds without real translation. The power of the chant is in its seed sounds, held within the vowels; each vowel sets into motion a vibratory pattern that modifies physical patterns out of alignment with balance and health.

Lama Anagarika Govinda, a Tibetan monk, says "All mantras are modifications of an original underlying vibration which sustains the whole energy pattern of the world."

All the songs which inspire hope and strengthen you to carry out whatever intent you have, songs which lift your spirits, are smaller examples of the rhythms that sustain the world.

TV

Progress — and politics — in the church's response to HIV/AIDS

by Julie A. Wortman

Last fall a large array of Episcopal Church organizations met to discuss ways they could minister to persons affected by HIV/AIDS. They included Episcopal Church Women, Union of Black Episcopalians, United Thank Offering, United Episcopal Charities, Daughters of the King, and the Hospital Chaplains Association.

While the Episcopal church has been in the forefront in AIDS ministry, many were excited that such diverse groups were now involved.

"Some of these groups had never been invited to talk about this issue before. And they want to help," said Diane Porter, executive for program at the Episcopal Church Center.

The organizations met prior to a National AIDS conference, "Hope and Healing," in St. Louis in September. The interfaith gathering, hosted by the Diocese of Missouri and its bishop, Hays Rockwell, marked the beginning of a partnership between religious groups and the government's Atlanta-based Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC's statistics indicate AIDS is the number one killer in this country for persons ages 25-44. Eighteen-and-a-half million are HIV-infected worldwide.

But there are those in Episcopal Church leadership still reluctant to become too visibly involved in church efforts to respond to the epidemic.

Take, for instance, last month's service for "people who care about people with AIDS," held at the Episcopal cathedral in the Diocese of Michigan. The cathedral's new dean, Stephen Bancroft, declined to

participate unless the service was billed instead as a service for "anyone suffering from debilitating disease."

The organizers refused to make the change, largely because the December event has an 11-year history, but also because "this disease is also a civil rights

"People get judged in terms of their involvement [in AIDS healing services and ministries] as being in favor or not in favor of gay rights. I don't like being judged."

— Stephen Bancroft

problem," according to Rodney Reinhart, an Episcopal priest who has been a driving force behind the service from its inception.

"The service is calling on God for healing and on the church to stand up for the rights and freedom of people cruelly targeted by society as scapegoats and pariahs," Reinhart says. "AIDS is a moral issue for the church because it affects so many people who are social outcasts."

Asked why he wouldn't participate in the healing liturgy even though the Episcopal church has practiced leadership in this area, Bancroft said he thinks the church's leadership role has been exaggerated because "some bishops of the church have stepped forward with the gay and lesbian issue." He added: "In a lot of people's minds [HIV/AIDS] has become politicized. People get judged in terms of their involvement [in AIDS healing services and ministries] as being in favor or not in favor of gay rights. I don't like being judged."

That view, says Jeff Montgomery, a member of both the diocese's committee for gay/lesbian concerns and of the cathedral chapter, "is probably more of a

reflection of how the dean forms his own judgments of people," adding, "It surprises me that someone who has reached his position in the church would honestly believe that offering spiritual support to people indicates a political stand."

But Bancroft says proof that services like Detroit's annual AIDS event are politicized lies in the fact that *The Witness* would call to ask him why he was not participating.

"People wouldn't be wondering about my motives if a group wanted to hold a service in the cathedral for people suffering from cancer and I told them I wouldn't participate unless it was for all people with life-threatening diseases," he said, noting that that is what he would do if such a request came to him.

"I think he's very mistaken," Montgomery responds. "When someone in a position of spiritual leadership like a cathedral dean refuses to participate in a special healing service of any kind there would always be people wondering how he squares that with his duty and calling as a minister of the church. I don't believe for a minute that his lack of participation would not be noticed, whatever the disease in question," Montgomery said, adding, "I also don't believe that he would say 'no' to a group of lay people and clergy who wanted him to participate in a service where a thousand people who wanted to pray for people with cancer were expected — now he'll have to because we asked him first."

A parish priest in Houston before coming to Michigan, Bancroft claims a strong record of "pastoral" support for homosexual persons and opposition to anti-gay diocesan resolutions — despite his belief that noncelibate "homosexuality is not a viable alternative Christian lifestyle."

The new dean said he would be willing to participate in an AIDS service in the future if it were "the official" national church day of prayer, but not at any other time, out of a desire for "inclusivity."

As in years past, the officiant at the crowded December service was Michigan's bishop, R. Stewart Wood.



Drawing a bead on the prayerbook

Delegates to the Diocese of Newark's annual convention this month will be receiving a report from a task force on prayerbook revision whose major charge is "to help the [church's national] Standing Liturgical Commission (SLC) be aware of the varieties of experimentation that are already going on all around the church," according to task force chair, Marge Christie. "Our major concern is that the language of our worship be inclusive of everyone — inclusive of the worshipped as well as the worshipper."

Fans of the Anglican church of New Zealand's lively, unapologetically contemporary, multivalent prayerbook will be glad to hear that Newark's is not the only voice clamoring for liturgical reform. Next November the Association of Diocesan Liturgy and Music Commissions (ADLMC) will be exploring "The Renewal of Liturgy: shaping our worship for the next century," as part of the group's ongoing effort to redress liturgical inculturation and class biases.

Yet, in light of the politics and demographic complexity of the U.S. church, it is unclear what sort of impact

reports such as Newark's and the ADLMC event will have on the SLC's recommendations to the 1997 General Convention about prayerbook revision.

"As I travel around talking with people about new music, new liturgies and same-sex blessings I find that people of privilege in the church are content to ignore all three," says national church liturgy expert Clay Morris.

Calling for changes and additions to the texts, forms and rites allowed in Episcopal Church worship thus becomes an issue of whether to maintain or challenge male Anglo-European cultural supremacy in worship.

Many fear there could be a loss of "church unity" if the SLC inclines toward prayerbook revision in these contentious, heresy-trial times — even though the practical reality is that Episcopalians celebrate the eucharist each Sunday in at least 20 different languages and indulge in the widest range of liturgical styles and practices.

"I think it's time to rethink the statement that Anglicans are unified by the liturgy," says Morris. "We've never had liturgical

uniformity. We've been unified by our world view and theology."

The question for the Standing Liturgical Commission is whether, in the face of the church's diversity of culture and practice — not to mention its variegated array of constituencies that transcend culture, class and gender — it will encourage or discourage local church communities from experimenting with new texts and forms that serve their own specific needs and could be useful to the wider church.

If it does, the range of possible innovations would likely be so great that sorting through them in an effort to draw together a definitive, authoritative prayerbook compilation acceptable to the whole church would likely be impossible in the short term. New Zealand's widely celebrated prayerbook, for example, took 25 years to develop before it was finally issued five years ago.

So Morris and others prefer "liturgical development" to "revision" as the term that might better describe the work ahead.

"Maybe we will never have a single prayer book again," Morris observes. Instead, he says, an ever-expanding "shelf" of liturgical resources might be more realistic for the Episcopal Church of the future.

— Julie A. Wortman

Irish to head Diocese of Utah

Carolyn Tanner Irish was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah December 2 at a special diocesan convention. Upon the retirement of George Bates, Irish will become the 10th Bishop of Utah and the third woman diocesan bishop in the Episcopal Church. This brings the total number of bishops in the U.S. church to six. Canada and New Zealand also have women in the episcopate

Pending the necessary consents to the election, Irish is expected to be consecrated bishop May 2 in Salt Lake City, the headquarters of the Mormon Church, which bans women from



Carolyn Tanner Irish

ordained ministry.

"My election as an Episcopal Bishop in Utah seems both a completely natural and a completely surprising outcome of my life and ministry," said Irish, who was raised in Utah in a prominent Mormon family.

Irish was elected on the fourth ballot, with Hartshorn Murphy of the Diocese of Los Angeles as the runner-up. Bishop Bates noted that the four ballots showed "strong and early" support for Irish's election.

Since 1988 Irish has served on the staff of the Shalem Institute in Washington, D.C. Before that she served parishes in Michigan, Virginia and Washington, D.C. She is divorced and the mother of four.

Advocating for Vanunu

by Sam Day

In a chapel of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem the newly consecrated Anglican bishop coadjutor of that city prays for a fellow Christian locked in an isolation cell at Israel's maximum security prison.

From New York, on the ninth anniversary of the prisoner's confinement, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church sends a letter promising that he will never be forgotten.

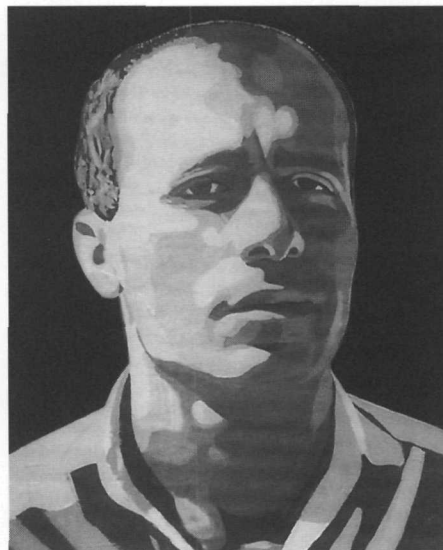
In Washington, the executive secretary of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship brings the 91st Psalm, with its message of shelter and safe-keeping and God's care, to be read over a bull-horn at a rally in front of the Israeli embassy.

And in Tucson, Arizona, children and adults of St. Michael's and All Angels Church fold a thousand paper peace cranes for shipment to Israel as a plea for mercy and a token of good will. The cranes would be received by Riah Abu Al-Assal, bishop coadjutor of Jerusalem, who promises support.

Those are signs of growing support within the Anglican community for a former nuclear technician, Mordechai Vanunu, who 10 years ago leaked the story of his government's secret nuclear weapons program, in which he had worked for eight years. He blew the whistle on nuclear secrecy as a service to his fellow Israelis, but his conversion to Anglicanism, which occurred about the same time, has isolated him from some Jews who might otherwise aid his cause.

Vanunu, then 31, had wandered into the sanctuary of St. John's Church in Sydney, Australia, in the course of a spiritual quest that had taken him through India and Southeast Asia from his home

at Beersheba in southern Israel. Amidst the books and shirts in his backpack he carried two rolls of film he had taken surreptitiously at his former workplace at Dimona, Israel's secret nuclear weapons



Mordechai Vanunu

factory in the Negev desert.

Attracted to the job because the pay was good and the work was steady, Vanunu had become politicized by his contacts with Palestinian students in night classes at nearby Beersheba University and by Israel's bloody 1982 invasion of Lebanon. He began to question the weapons project and his role in it. In 1985 he took the photographs with the thought of some day sharing his government's secret with the world.

That opportunity came in Sydney, where St. John's priest and parishioners welcomed him and invited him to join a discussion group which was studying nuclear war. Vanunu developed his film and began a slide show on Israel's nuclear weapons work. This attracted the attention not only of the press but also of the Mossad, Israel's version of the CIA. In the meantime, Vanunu had been baptized at St. John's.

"Christianity seemed to give him

something he was looking for at a crucial time in his life," a friend of the family told me on a recent visit to Israel. The friend speculated that the Gospel may have given Vanunu the extra push he needed to go public with his story.

A London newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, flew Vanunu to England, interviewed him at length, checked his facts and photographs with experts, and prepared a story describing Israel as a major nuclear weapons power, with 100 to 200 warheads of advanced design. But before the story could be published, Mossad agents kidnapped Vanunu in Rome, and returned him to Israel, where he was convicted of espionage and treason.

The Church of England, regrettably, has played little part in world-wide efforts by such groups as the European Parliament and Amnesty International to call attention to Vanunu's plight as an imprisoned whistle-blower caged for years in a 9-by-6-foot cell, isolated from other prisoners. But Episcopalians have been in the forefront.

Supporters worry about the prolonged isolation's effect on Vanunu's physical and mental health. Two brothers who visit him say he looked thin and pale in October after a seven-day hunger strike to protest prison censorship. Prison authorities have refused the family's request that independent doctors be allowed to examine Vanunu. The Israeli government shows no readiness to release or ease the conditions of Vanunu's confinement.

British physicist Joseph Rotblat, winner of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize, recently said there ought to be a law to protect whistle-blowers like Vanunu. And Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Egeland called for Vanunu's release as part of the Middle East peace process.

In a letter to Suzannah York, the British actress whose visit to Israel with other supporters at the end of 1994 prompted Vanunu to break three years of self-imposed silence, he writes, "Now, after the cold war, there are no enemies for democratic states. The only enemy left is secrecy. Democracy and secrecy can't live together."

Sam Day, is coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu. For information write the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, 2206 Fox Avenue, Madison, Wis. 53711, or contact the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 28156, Washington, D.C. 20038.



'Heresy' trial court rejects motion to disqualify four judges; Delaware to host trial

The nine bishops on the court who will be deciding whether retired Iowa bishop Walter Righter is guilty of "holding and teaching ... doctrine contrary to that held by the church" rejected a motion to disqualify four of the court's members because they signed the "A Statement of Koinonia" at the 1994 General Convention.

The bishops made the ruling during a preliminary hearing held at the Episcopal cathedral in Hartford, Conn., in December.

Signed by 71 bishops, including Righter, the Koinonia statement states that "homosexuality and heterosexuality are morally neutral," that faithful, monogamous same-sex relationship "are to be honored," and that homosexuals in committed relationships should be eligible for ordination. Those accusing Righter of heresy use his signing of the 1994 statement as proof.

The four bishops cited are Edward Jones of Indianapolis, Arthur Walmsley, retired bishop of Connecticut, Douglas Theuner of New Hampshire and Frederick Borsch of Los Angeles. The other members of the court are Andrew Fairfield of North Dakota, Robert Johnson of North Carolina, Donis Patterson of Dallas, Calvin Cabell Tennis of Delaware and Roger White of Milwaukee.

Hugo Blankingship, the trial's prosecuting attorney, had argued that the four bishops on the court who also signed the Koinonia statement could not be impartial about Righter's standing as a heretic.

The bishops also spent the afternoon session of the hearing entertaining a petition to separate the two counts against Righter — in addition to the charge of holding contrary doctrine, he is accused of violating his ordination vows for ordaining Barry Stopfel, a non-celibate gay man living in a committed relationship. Arguments were also made that prior to the February trial the court should decide if the church has a doctrine about whether non-celibate homosexuals should be

ordained. At the request of Connecticut's bishop, Clarence Coleridge, the site of the trial was changed to the Diocese of Delaware. Members of his diocese, Coleridge said, had reacted very negatively to holding the trial in Hartford.

— based on ENS reports

Executive Council committee investigates CPG

A committee of the Episcopal Church's national Executive Council is investigating concerns raised from a variety of quarters of the church about the operation and management style of the Church Pension Group (CPG). CPG is responsible for clergy and lay pensions and for insurance coverage for a significant number of Episcopal dioceses and congregations.

At issue are the size of managers' salaries, perquisites they enjoy, a decision to purchase new office space, pension inequities and CPG's decision not to collect pension assessments for three quarters of a year in a one-time "gift" to the church.



Urban Caucus assembly

The Episcopal Urban Caucus will hold its 16th annual assembly March 13-16, 1996 in Cleveland, Oh. The conference theme is "A Church for all races ... A Church to end racism: Living the vision." For information or registration contact EUC, 138 Tremont St., Boston, MA, 02111.

CLOUT asks support

Christian Lesbians OUT Together (CLOUT), a five-year-old organization formed "to claim our spiritual and sexual wholeness, to proclaim the goodness of

our lives, our ministries and our relationships, and to empower ourselves and each other to challenge the churches to which we belong," is asking financial support as it seeks to strengthen its regional organization and prepare for its fourth national gathering in 1997. Contributions may be sent to CLOUT, P.O. Box 10062, Columbus, Oh. 43201.

Strengthen advocacy, PB says

Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning is calling for a "renewed energy and commitment" for public policy advocacy.

"These are difficult times for [the mainline churches'] public policy witness, Browning said in an address to the National Council of Churches on Dec. 7. "We need to recapture the language of morality and Christian values from the radical right [who] do not have monopoly on family values."

Browning also urged the churches to reach out to conservative Christians who "have found something comforting in the radical right's message." He acknowledged that conservative Christian groups have spoken to people's fears about jobs and violence, but provided answers of "division, scapegoating and hate." He added that he believes that "many Americans are uncomfortable with those answers, but haven't been presented with any alternative."

— based on an ENS report

Tutu named to Truth commission

Calling for investigations that lead toward healing and not reprisals, Desmond Tutu, the Anglican archbishop of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, says that "South Africa cannot afford a Nuremberg-type situation."

Tutu was named chair of South Africa's 17-member Truth and Reconciliation Commission which will investigate atrocities committed during the former era of apartheid South African in late November, 1995

— drawn from ENS

Ontario general strike

In an action largely uncovered in the U.S. media, the Ontario Federation of Labor held a successful general strike in London, Ontario on December 11 which closed auto plants, Labatts' brewery, Kelloggs' and city services, including garbage collection and bus service.

The Federation was protesting government attacks on social services and labor law. Drastic cut backs in health care are in the works. Legislative changes ending labor's protection against "permanent replacement" employees and making elections for union certifications more difficult have also been initiated.

"These changes are identical to ones that have been taking place in our country, but in Canada it is much more shocking," commented Jim West, of *Labor Notes*. "Canadians are used to a more civilized way of life. They have had things so much better than we do here."

A second strike is planned for another Ontario city in an effort to build toward a province-wide general strike, West said.

Prison activist honored

Donations celebrating the life of Fay Honey Knopp can be given to Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) of which Knopp was a co-founder. Knopp was a prison abolitionist (her book *Instead of Prisons* is a classic) and an activist within prisons, befriending prisoners, chaplains and prison staff. Knopp died at

the age of 76 last August. Donations can be sent to PVS, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia PA 19102 or Addison County Home Health Care, 20-1/2 Main St. Middlebury, VT 05753.

November 3, 1995, makes the Lutherans, with more than 20,000 members, the second Dutch church to give official recognition to gay blessings. —ENI

Beijing video

Joan Chittister, OSB is presenting *Beijing: The Next Step For Women* in a two video set. Chittister went to Beijing aboard the Peace Train, a cross-continental tour sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which travelled 7,000 miles through nine countries meeting with women's groups along the way. All 12 major topics of the Beijing document, including health care, poverty and the rights of the girl child, are discussed. The set of two tapes cost \$45 and can be ordered through Benetvision/Beijing, 355 E. Ninth St., Erie PA 16503; 814-459-0314.

Bosnian Student Project

The war has caused hardship and suffering for all students in the former Yugoslavia, but it has had a devastating effect on Bosnian students. In the spring of 1992 there were 30,000 Bosnian students attending university. By the fall of 1994 only about 1,000 were still in school.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation has established a Bosnian Student Project. Its goal is to get as many students as possible out of the war zone and into U.S. schools, to prepare them to return and rebuild their country. The FOR is collaborating in this effort with the

Jerrahi Order of America, a Sufi Muslim cultural, educational, and relief organization. In the former Yugoslavia, the World University Service and the Association of Students of Bosnia and Herzegovina to select Bosnian students of any ethnic background who would be likely to succeed in U.S. schools.

Donations can be sent to The Bosnian Student Project, FOR, P.O. Box 271, 521 North Broadway, Nyack, NY, 10960.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1996



Members of Readers United support Detroit's striking newspaper workers by burning issues of the papers produced by "permanent replacement employees." The Detroit News Agency, which produces both the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News*, are engaging in a union-busting effort that has cost the DNA millions, according to Readers United. The strikers have recently launched a strike paper called *The Detroit Sunday Journal*. Jim West

Same-sex blessings

The Dutch Lutheran Church has decided to allow official church blessings of gay relationships. The church has declared that "there are no theological arguments against blessing two people who are strongly committed to one another, faithful and dedicated."

This ruling, from the church's synod on

short takes

Stress surrenders to stillness

by Andrew Weaver

Why Stress Keeps Returning: A Spiritual Response by Douglas C. Vest, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1991, 176 pages (paper) \$10.95.

The author, an Episcopal priest residing in Los Angeles, arguably the capital of hyperactivity and its attendant stress, was trained as an applied physicist before he entered parish ministry and later studied spiritual formation at Duquesne. His book does not suffer from the all too familiar fuzzy, baffling language that is to be found in many attempted writings in the area of spiritual direction. It is a clearly written, reader-friendly book, rich in the wise counsel of an experienced and discerning pastor. It is the most thoughtful and useful book this reviewer has read on the subject since Abingdon published Mary Ellen Stuart's *To Bend Without Breaking* in 1979.

Vest counsels us to listen anew to St. Augustine's confession, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord and our heart is restless until we find rest in Thee." (*Confessions*, Book 1, Section 1). The author suggests that our modern helter-skelter living, marked by the frenzy of constantly redoubling our efforts while forgetting where or why we are bound, is a stressed-out attempt to escape the nagging spiritual discontent recognized by Augustine in the fourth century, and put to modern lament by Mick Jagger, "I can't get no satisfaction, I tried and tried and tried, but I can't get no satisfaction."

The author believes that the beginning

place for coping with our stress, which is responsible for so much emotional distress and physical dis-ease, is staying still long enough to recognize the voice of our restlessness. If we stop and listen to our restlessness, it will, like a cosmic homing device, guide us back to our true selves and the Grace we covertly crave. His spiritual guidance is in accord with Thomas Merton, who wrote in *Seeds of Contemplation*, "The only true joy is to escape from the prison of our own selfhood ... and enter by love into union with the Life Who dwells and sings within the essence of every creature and in the core of our minds."

The book recommends that if we are to end our addiction to stress, prayer is a valuable, faithful ally. He intriguingly suggests that prayer has similar dynamics to a good friendship. He writes, "Five factors are apparent in friendship: appreciation of the relationship, deep confidence, mutual nurturing, awareness that

the friendship is a special relationship for each of the two persons, and never-completed experiences, which will draw the friends back to each other's company at a future time." He goes on to note that these five marks of friendship parallel the five expressions of prayer taught for centuries by the community of believers: adoration, confession, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. When I completed this section of the book I found myself wanting to know more. Hopefully it was only the outline of a future book on prayer.

Most of us have a list of "spiritual guides" we have met over the years through their writings. My list includes Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, Monica Furlong, Howard Thurman, Don Shelby, Sam Keen, Alan Jones and Fredrick Buechner. To my list, and I suggest yours, can be added Douglas Vest. **TW**

book review

*Yuletide is here again, yes yuletide is here again
and happy days we'll have til Easter!
No this is not the truth, no this is not the truth
for in between come Lent and fasting!*

Looking for a Lenten program?

Try *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism!* This video presents Christians who disagree in conversation and in worship. In this context, study group participants are often willing to articulate their own beliefs even when they suspect they are in the minority within their parish or seminary. Study guide is included. The cost is \$40. The video is in six segments—perfect for a Lenten series!

Or try a *Witness* study guide packet which provides eight copies of a designated issue along with group guidelines and questions. These can be used in a single session or throughout a series. Our issue on *Understandings of Sin* would be a natural for Lent and lends itself to interesting and nuanced discussions! The cost is \$25. Call 313-962-2650.

Andrew J. Weaver is director of Pacific Center Community Counseling Service in Los Angeles, Cal.

After I finished Jim Corbett's book *Goatwalking*, I closed it, laid it aside on my desk, and looked out the window in front of me to the large shade tree beyond. This tree in my front yard is one of the reasons I took my apartment; in August, its thick green foliage was soothing to the eyes. Now I found myself counting the barriers between my eyes and the tree. There were five: contact lenses, miniblinds, a pane of glass, a storm window. And a sixth barrier, ignorance: I did not know for certain what kind of tree it was.

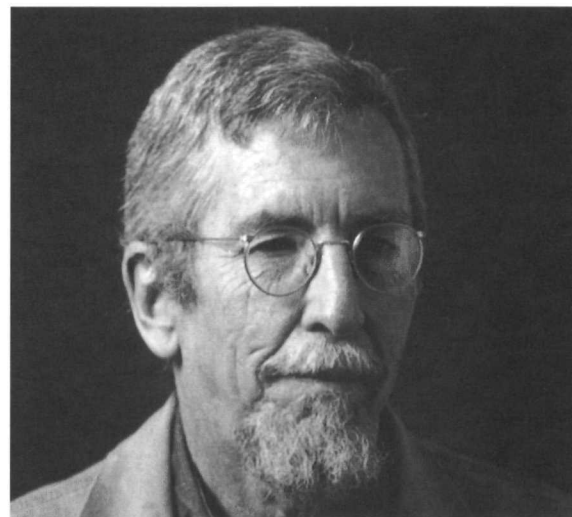
From his photograph and from his voice over the phone, Jim Corbett seems to be the kind of person most at home in a setting like the one in which I read and write — a library with an old oak desk, books, journals, correspondence, clocks, consoles and keyboards. From surface impressions, few would guess that he is, to use his words, feral, untamed, gone cimarron. Jim Corbett is a goatwalker.

He defines goatwalkers as "members of industrial civilization who sustain themselves for a few weeks or months in a wildland environment" (*Goatwalking*, Viking, 1982). It is, he writes, a form of errantry, "sallying out beyond a society's established ways, to live according to one's inner leadings."

He comes by this vocation naturally. Corbett grew up in the Wyoming rangelands; his ancestors include a great-grand-

"From surface impressions, few would guess that Corbett is, to use his words, feral, untamed, gone cimarron."

— Maria West



Jim Corbett

Sterling Vinson

Born in the wildlands

by Maria West

mother who was a full-blooded Native American. From early childhood, he and his family would go on extended outings away from their cattle ranch, camping in the Grand Teton Mountains with little more than a tent. These periodic withdrawals from the homestead and its conveniences and living in a natural environment was a welcome part of family life.

When he and his wife Pat went to live in a remote part of southeast Arizona, six miles from their nearest neighbor, they took on a herd of goats for the milk the animals provided. This time of dwelling in an untamed part of the country followed philosophy studies at Harvard and Berkeley, and coincided with a deeper exploration of his Quaker convictions and a simpler, more contemplative lifestyle. This journey put Corbett into contact with "certain harmonies" between natural and spiritual realities which before had been obscured by "the busyness of industrial living." Separating himself

from a society he sees as managed by the profit motive and controlled by state force, he became immersed in the wilderness as a creature among other creatures, instead of as a manager or developer.

As Corbett demonstrates with his words and his experience, a person with a small herd of goats and some knowledge about indigenous plants can live in the wilderness indefinitely. A significant part of Corbett's writing is practical advice: how to milk a doe, how to locate safe water, how to prepare wild greens. He describes the relationship between the goatwalker and the goat as a "symbiotic partnership," allowing a person, by way of goat's milk, access to plant nourishment that would be indigestible otherwise. Attempting to live as part of the herd, dependent on the animals for essential nutrients and fluids, understanding the norms of herd behavior and abiding by them, is a conscientious reversal from a first world citizen's usual relationship

*Witnesses,
the quick and the dead*

Maria West is an emergency room nurse in Detroit, Mich. Corbett's book *Goatwalking*, Viking Press, 1982, is currently out of print. Copies are available from the author, (520)212-6853.

with the natural world, which is one of manipulation and domination. By this "different order of interaction" a person finds his/her true place in creation.

This is not a way of following the example of John the Baptist living off locusts and honey, or that American icon of solitary independence, the Marlboro Man. Goatwalking, as Corbett has lived and taught it, is essentially an adventure in community building. His own sources of inspiration and illustration include Francis of Assisi and Don Quixote, each of whom pursued his ideal as a partner, not a loner. Corbett believes that "human beings essentially adapt as communities:

"Learning how to cut our ties with the commercial life-support system will not change our cultural identities any more than learning Chinese will make us Chinese. Nonetheless, many of the characteristics of a tribal band do emerge in a group that lives on its own for a few weeks. ... Small groups living on their own tend to make decisions by consensus, become more concerned with one another, and readily contribute according to ability and share according to need."

Corbett also sees goatwalking as an heir to the tradition of biblical nomadism and of the Sabbath. The descendants of Abraham and Moses, unlike their urban neighbors, did not fear the seventh day's open spaces; rather they could celebrate and thrive there:

"Like the Egyptians, the peoples beyond the Jordan feared the wildlands that threatened their world of fields and settlements. They labored unceasingly to tame and maintain a place to live, and then they worshiped the work of their hands, *baalim* — owners-masters — and dreamed of the day when their labor would triumph, all wilderness would be destroyed, and the earth would be wholly tamed. Born in the wildlands, the covenant-formed people would cross the Jordan knowing it is, instead, the man-made world that must be

brought into harmony — into *shalom* — with the rest of Creation."

For Corbett, this return to harmony/*shalom* is supported by observing the Sabbath and the Jubilee year, that is, regularly spending time out of lockstep and in roaming, away from accumulation and towards the redistribution of material goods, dependent not on the relationship between the managers and the managed, but on that of Creator and creature.

*Born in the wildlands, the
covenant-formed people
crossed the Jordan knowing
it is the man-made world that
must be brought into shalom
with the rest of Creation."*

Corbett suggests that everyone's education ought to include how to feed oneself and how to live in the wilderness. He has lectured widely and guided groups on goatwalking trips; often these groups have been students from the John Woolman School. For some students, goatwalking was at first a great escape from the routine of school. After the initial novelty faded, the pangs of withdrawing from post-modern addictions to cable television, video games and microwaves sometimes threatened to divide and conquer the group. But Corbett remembers two Woolman students who, having successfully completed a goatwalking tour, found the readjustment to their regular lives a difficult transition. For a time they refused to live in the dormitory, preferring to remain outdoors.

For Corbett himself, a goatwalking education led to activism among Latin American refugees, as an escort across the borderlands between Mexico and the United States, and as a legal and spiritual advisor to those detained by customs. He has faced arrests and trials for this work. An early leader of the Church Sanctuary

Movement, his sense of direction was as much a moral as a field compass, and drew him into being led by those he helped across the desert:

"... Good news is reaching us from the pueblos of Latin America. ... The good news is the formation of basic communities, capable of going free. ... In solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Latin America, Anglo America needs to build the Church. Our response to the refugees has not yet developed beyond programs for welcoming them to Babylon. We may cry solidarity and write it on signs, but we aren't yet living it, nor have we even realized that we, too, are living in exile.

In recent years, Corbett's circle of activity has both expanded and contracted. His love for the wilderness has led to the formation of the Saguaro-Juniper Covenant, an effort to purchase land and hold it in common with others and protect it from overdevelopment. A plan from the militia movement to build a firing range was defeated. On his own land, a compound of hermitages is being prepared. Corbett sees a hunger for solitude and contemplation, especially among writers and artists.

Arthritis in his hands and back limit some of his activities. He and his wife now keep a herd of cows instead of goats, because it is easier to skim the butterfat off cow's milk. He believes that aging involves "not just a diminishment of powers," but an even more Sabbatical relationship to the world.

"As you get older, you are ready to sit still and take things in. Much of my time is spent musing, especially when I'm with the herd," Corbett wrote in a letter this summer. "Whenever I think of things I should be doing, there's a simple remedy: the society of ruminants, where the urgencies fade away. That's one of the priceless virtues of being old. It's okay to get out of the press of human affairs and spend your time musing."

FW



*The manner of entering the
silence varies widely and
each person must find his or
her own way into it.*

— Douglas Steere

Quaker spirituality (Paulist Press, 1984)

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