

*The Episcopal Church in conflict:  
showdown or common ground?*



## Sports as a principality

I WAS INTERESTED IN YOUR ARTICLES on sports in the January/February 1998 issue of *The Witness*. You note that Bill Stringfellow saw commercial athletics as "demonic" in that sport diverted citizens from politics, providing a "vicarious involvement in the place of politics."

Exactly — and very necessary.

To Stringfellow and perhaps to you who engender hope of improving the society in which we exist and enabling persons to focus their attention on God and a higher mission, such a position is certainly logical. For very many citizens of this country, it is braying in the wind.

Commercial athletics are certainly corrupt today; the maddening attitudes of players, the greed of owners, the ridiculous salaries, the continuous rise of athletic-inspired violence and the sad example of Nike exploitation are difficult to stomach.

But the castle built of sand will tumble in the not too distant future. Citizens are beginning to refuse to allow their political chieftains to mortgage the farm for new stadia — witness Minneapolis, Pittsburgh and Boston. Soon ticket prices will disappear into the stratosphere — attendance at many college and professional contests is already dropping. Television is already sliding down the other side of the hill, having to make up income from other sources; witness the recent CBS Olympics.

The sport monument will fail of its own weight, as all monuments to greed always do.

But it will not be due to Mr. Stringfellow's politics. The political life of this country is already of little moment to a great many of its citizens. Examples abound: the enormous expenditure for entertainment, the loss of most of our newspapers, the wonderful "ratings" of the President and the pitiful performance of Washington (translation: My pay-

## Classifieds

### EDS president search

The Board of Trustees of Episcopal Divinity School invites nominations and applications for the administrative and educational head of the School.

Working within a structure of collegial governance, the President and Dean is responsible for the overall administration of the School, represents the School's heritage, insures planning and implementation of the School's mission and represents that mission in public relations and fund raising activities. The President and Dean is accountable to the Board of Trustees.

The purpose of Episcopal Divinity School is to educate lay and ordained leaders for Christ's Church and for the world who serve and advance God's mission of justice, compassion and reconciliation. Candidates must have enthusiasm for the School's vision and mission. They must possess superior leadership skills, excellent managerial abilities, proven effectiveness in fund raising, as well as interpersonal, communication and educational abilities to join in furthering a climate of intellectual, professional and spiritual growth. Candidates shall be ordained members of the Episcopal Church or other member churches of the Anglican Communion.

This appointment carries the rank of Full Professor and responsibility to teach occasionally in the area professed. The President and Dean, together with faculty, should be committed to working in community with a range of students and to continue the School's diligent commitment to anti-racism work, multiculturalism and diversity, evidenced by a comprehensive school-wide plan and specific goals, objectives and a time line; and continuing training of faculty and staff. This commitment stands with the School's ongoing dedication to feminist liberation and education of students of every sexual orientation.

Racial and other minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

Applications and names of promising candidates, with additional information and recommendations where possible, should be sent to The President and Dean Search Committee, Episcopal

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Communication consulting and evangelism training for progressive parishes and organizations. The Rev. Walt Gordon has 8 years experience as a diocesan communication officer and editor of the award-winning diocesan newspaper *SOUNDINGS*, and 10 years parish ministry experience. References, evangelism brochure available. 612-874-6887, <walt@storytellers.com>, 230 Oak Grove St. Suite 416, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

### Order of Jonathan Daniels

The Order of Jonathan Daniels is a dispersed religious community-information for persons of both genders, single, committed, or married, living and working in the world, who are evangelists for Scriptural justice and liberation. Contact OJD, 567-23 Sagamore Ave., Portsmouth, NH 03801-5550.

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Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1998-99 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

### Vocations

Contemplating religious life? Members of the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory are Episcopalians, clergy and lay, married and single. To explore a contemporary Rule of Life, contact: The Director of Vocations, Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Dept. W, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606-3499.

### Classifieds

*Witness* classifieds cost 75 cents a word or \$30 an inch, whichever is less. Due 15th of month, two months prior to publication.

Letters



check is rising; don't do anything to screw it up). Less than 50 percent of our populace vote in national elections; the figure falls every election. Soon the figure will be 40 percent or even 30 percent. People are not dumb — they know they have no representation in political life. The separation of national and state leaders from ordinary citizens is far greater than that of Michael Jordan and the NBA fan.

So ordinary people turn to sport, for all its failures and problems, because sport is a way to forget lobbyists, political chicanery, incessant campaigns that never stop — a way to forget that there are two kinds of people — those with money to buy political influence and those who cannot.

No, sports are very important to large numbers of people — for it is in sport that we can forget the futility of trying to believe we still have a government that is responsive to people. Sport provides a way to draw a curtain over the political mess; the baseball season starts in three weeks; thank God there is no team in Washington.

Sport in some form will survive; politics may not.

**Milton Coleman**  
East Syracuse, NY

### Witness praise

COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE EXCELLENT magazine ... The issue on Sports as principal-ity blew my mind. I thought I was the only person sitting in a stadium saying to myself "something is wrong here!" Thank you.

**Dee Binda**  
Cincinnati, OH

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL OUR lives? This is the first time I can say I am happy someone sold our name to another source. Your free copy of the issue on sports was so thought provoking. I am enclosing a check for a one-year subscription and six back issues.

**Peg Stokman**  
Grand Island, NE

I LOVED MY TRIAL SUBS.

**Jo Anne Brausewetter**  
Norfolk, VA



KEN STARK - GETTING THE PRESIDENT

3/23/98

ELIZABETH M. HILL/MIAMI HERALD SYNDICATE © 1998

Those Right-wing politicians who are celebrating because sexual behavior will be a criteria in future presidential elections are at a loss for why the American public doesn't share their glee, but in an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor*, Alan Wolfe, author of a new book on middle-class values called *One Nation, After All*, says, "We're not talking about a people without a moral bottom line. There is a moral bottom line: Don't be cruel. If Hillary were visibly upset or Chelsea was broken, people would react pretty differently."

**J.W.K.**

### An argument for God?

MY YOUNG SON, in his 30s, was raised in the church, confirmed, an acolyte, church camp. Then like so many young people, drifted away. He was and is a good kid. He married a girl he'd known since high school, daughter of a teacher — a friend of mine. She's a wonderful wife, mother, with a responsible job. They've got it made. They're outstanding parents. But this girl was raised without any Christian contacts or learning.

I'm super-careful not to make a point of my concerns, but of course a lovely four-year-old granddaughter adds to that concern.

How do you sell God/Faith to someone who's gotten along just fine without them all these years? I keep looking for the perfect, simple, little booklet to help me and I'm frustrated. This young woman thinks Christians are all like Ralph Reed, Jerry Falwell etc. She thinks we don't believe in evolution — I clear some of these up as we go along.

I've found: *The Episcopal Church Essential Facts* (1995). But it doesn't deal with "Why do I need a faith? Why should I believe in these ancient, unprovable myths?"

Can anyone tell me of a magic, simple, gently stated argument for God? One person I've asked recommended *Christian Believing*, by Holmes and Westerhoff, but it is out of print and unavailable!

**Louise Smith**  
Holt, MI

### Dissenting from race initiative

A SET OF 28 SHORT PIECES of "Advice to the Advisory Board [to the President's Race Initiative, chaired by John Hope Franklin]," by well known activists and thinkers, is available, without charge, from The Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 1711 Conn. Ave. NW, Wash., DC 20009. They appeared

*continued on back page*

# The Witness

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*The Witness* offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece of art.

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Manuscripts will not be returned.

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*Cover: Cain slaying Abel by Albrecht Dürer, 1511.*

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# Looking for signs of life

by Julie A. Wortman

Last autumn, the Sunday morning after Chilton Knudsen was elected bishop of Maine, the rector of an Episcopal congregation here in the midcoast region announced from the pulpit that the time may have come for the congregation to leave the Episcopal Church.

A well-known opponent of women's ordination, this man had been a member of the nominating committee that had voted — unanimously — to recommend the slate of nominees to the electing convention. Ironically, his vote in favor of that slate may have signalled to many that electing a woman bishop would not be a problem for the diocese's "traditionalist" Episcopalians. Apparently this man never expected his peers to pay more than lip service to a woman's eligibility, not to mention suitability, for the episcopate.

It may be that last year's General Convention decision to render invalid the appeal to "conscience," which for so many years had permitted bishops to refuse women access to ordination, marked a turning point in the ongoing struggle of women, gays and persons of color to free the church from its domination by straight (or at least straight-seeming) white men. This is evident in the disaffected statements and actions of allied conservative Episcopalian forces since. Their aim is to provoke a showdown on sexuality at this summer's Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops. American conservatives hope that the Western church's seemingly relentless movement in the direction of accepting the full humanity of women and gays can be inhibited by a clear show of support for traditional,

heterosexist, male-centered values by the communion's non-Western primates. Failing this, U.S. traditionalists hope to gain sympathy for their efforts to create a new province over which they would have control.

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a genius for accommodating  
incredible diversity in thought  
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have come to a watershed.*

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Although this month's issue is unabashedly focused on the Episcopal Church, with an eye forward to Lambeth, readers affiliated with other denominations will see parallels. And statewide battles over whether non-discrimination codes should be rewritten to include sexual orientation make clear that the struggle isn't confined to the churches. [It grieves me that this past winter a well-orchestrated effort by religious conservatives resulted in the repeal of Maine's non-discrimination policy. It is some consolation, however, that the Promise Keepers are on the edge of bankruptcy.]

Is schism inevitable? Are there ways of averting it by building common ground? Anglicanism has had a genius for accommodating incredible diversity in thought and belief. With the denomination's increasingly diverse racial/cultural composition this diversity of perspective can only increase. But perhaps we have finally come to a watershed. Those who ask that the presumptions of white patriarchy — a synonym, it would appear, for "biblical" and "Anglican" orthodoxy — be taken as gospel are drawing a line in the sand that makes

this a win-lose debate. Finding common ground requires that each side come to the table honoring that the other has a piece of the truth. As struggles in a number of Episcopal Church dioceses highlight, the sad reality is that it seems impossible to have meaningful debate with those who proclaim themselves "orthodox."

Liberals/progressives are as good at absolutizing our positions as the most traditionalist conservatives. It is genuinely hard, when we believe we are right, to believe that someone who holds another view could also be right. But I take some solace in the fact that an appreciation for ambiguity is a hallmark of a liberal/progressive perspective — as is the desire to break out of old orthodoxies.

Being Christian, I have come to believe, has much less to do with proclaiming Jesus as Lord than with living in the sort of non-hierarchical, caring, truth-focussed communities of peace and justice that Jesus sought to cultivate and inspire. That is why my love for "the church" is not a love for the institution, but for the "dream of God" — a dream that biblical theologian Verna Dozier says the institution carries, but routinely rejects. Our clericalism and hierarchicalism alone, so deeply rooted in Empire's white patriarchy, blind us daily to egalitarian alternatives.

From this perspective, schism could be a welcome sign of life — a sign that at least a part of Anglicanism will no longer deny the full humanity of some church members just to avoid institutional collapse. Most important, it would be a sign that the divine dream the institution carries has not been abandoned — however unorthodox its influence continues to be.

TVV

*editor's note*

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# Can our churches have a different kind of conversation about sex?

by Ched Myers

*Jesus looked up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" (John 8:10)*

*It is God who justifies. Who then will condemn? (Rom 8:34)*

Over the past two years I, like others, have had the unhappy experience of witnessing denominational deliberations on the question of whether to allow gay and lesbian Christians to serve the church as ordained ministers. It would all be merely wearisome if not for the fact that we must watch sisters and brothers stand in the dock while they are talked over, defamed and run out.

The patterns of polarization have become utterly *pro forma*, conforming predictably to the ideological battle lines of the wider culture wars. Thoughtful people on either side sense at this point that the church may well lose no matter who "wins" the ecclesial plebiscites. They suspect that it is the discourse itself that is dysfunctional.

They are right. What is happening is neither conversation nor discernment.

I believe that the famous story of Jesus and the adulterous woman (John 7:53-8:11) says something to the sorry state of our current debates about what constitutes sexual sin. (Although this text has second-class status, being widely regarded as a later addition to the gospel

tradition, its Jesus sounds every bit like the canonical one; it deserves to be regarded as Scripture).

For her accusers, the woman's fate is already scripturally settled; their "deliberation" with Jesus is really just a litmus test (Jn 8:4-6). Sound familiar? I love what happens next. Jesus says nothing, bending down to write something on the ground. When the accusers persist in pressing him to reveal his "position," Jesus stands up and invites those "without sin" to commence the execution. Then he bends down again and resumes writing on the ground (8:7f).

What is he writing? We are neither shown nor told. It is a delicious, mysterious, wry moment. One by one, the crowd dissipates (not jurors recusing themselves here, but judges!). The social point having been made, the story now makes the moral point. The One who according to orthodoxy was without sin — and therefore qualified to execute justice by his own criterion — refuses to "condemn" (8:11).

The same verb (Gk. *katakrinoo*) is used by Paul in his great argument for grace in Romans. The apostle anchors his case in the universality of human culpability, sounding very much like Jesus' ultimatum to the woman's accusers: "You are without excuse, whoever you are who would judge, for in passing judgment on the other, you condemn yourself, because you are practicing the very same things!" (Rom 2:1). His manifesto culminates with that famous evangelical declaration: "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).

Such does not appear to be the faith of our churches, where amendments and resolutions are flying like stones, with intent to kill. All protests to the contrary, the current debate about homosexuality has little to do with concern about character and everything to do with what we might call "hamartography": the compulsion to categorize sins. Denominations that have throughout their long histories embraced without shame robber barons, misogynists and militarists are suddenly concerned to draw the line.

Very well. The crowd is gathered, awaiting the adjudication. Jesus, meanwhile, is writing something on the ground. I suspect it is a suggestion for how we ought to handle such deliberation. It is a simple invitation to self-examination.

What a concept! Imagine if the discourse on sexual standards and mores in our churches followed one of the most basic rules of conflict mediation — enjoining all participants to speak only in "I" statements. What might happen if, as a modest spiritual discipline, we declared a moratorium on addressing other people's sexuality, and spoke only of our own?

We must demand a genuine, gospel conversation, in which each participant talks honestly about his or her own sexual experience, confesses his or her own sexual brokenness, and intimates his or her own sexual hopes and aspirations.

Given the difficult, predatory, deluded, and compulsive environment in which people of faith must try to discover sexual integrity and wholeness today, I suspect none of us, like the accusers in the gospel story, would be willing to stand before Jesus presuming to be "without sin" and willing to condemn. But we might be willing instead to talk together about healing, forgiveness and our common struggle for sexual wholeness.

That would be a conversation worth having.

TW

**Ched Myers** is a *Witness* contributing editor, <chedmyers@igc.apc.org>. He is a member of United University Church in Los Angeles, which is active in the struggle for the rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons in the United Methodist and Presbyterian traditions.



# Heaven is Not Closed

by Bessie Head

The missionary was a short, anonymous-looking man who wore glasses. He had been the resident missionary for some time and like all his fellows, he did not particularly like the people. He always complained to his kind that they were terrible beggars and rather stupid. So when he opened the door and saw Galethebege there, his expression with its raised eyebrows clearly said: "Well, what do you want now?"

"I am to be married, sir," Galethebege said, politely, after the exchange of greetings.

The missionary smiled: "Well come in, my dear. Let us talk about the arrangements."

He stared at her with polite, professional interest. She was a complete nonentity, a part of the vague black blur which was his congregation - oh, they noticed chiefs and people like that, but not the silent mass of the humble and lowly who had an almost weird capacity to creep quietly through life. Her next words brought her sharply into focus.

"The man I am to marry, sir, does not wish to be married in the Christian way. He will only marry under Setswana custom," she said softly.

They always knew the superficial stories about "heathen customs," an expression of disgust crept into his face — sexual malpractices had been associated with the traditional marriage ceremony and (shudder!) they draped the stinking intestinal bag of the ox around the necks.

"That we cannot allow," he said sharply. "Tell him to come and marry the Christian way."

Galethebege started trembling all over. She looked at the missionary in alarm. Ralokae would never agree to this. Her intention in approaching the missionary was to acquire his blessing for the marriage, as though a compromise of tenderness could be made between the two traditions opposed to each other.

She trembled because it was beyond her station in life to be involved in controversy and protest. The missionary noted the trembling and alarm and his tone softened a bit, but his next words were devastating.

"My dear," he said, persuasively, "Heaven is closed to the unbeliever ..."

Galethebege stumbled home on faint legs. It never occurred

to her to question such a miserable religion which terrified people with the fate of eternal damnation in hell-fire if they were "heathens" or sinners. Only Ralokae seemed quite unperturbed by the fate that awaited him. He smiled when Galethebege relayed the words of the missionary to him.

"Girl friend," he said, carelessly. "You can choose what you like, Setswana custom or Christian custom. I have chosen to live my life by Setswana custom."

Even Galethebege was astounded by the harshness of the missionary's attitude. The catastrophe she never anticipated was that he abruptly excommunicated her from the church. She could no longer enter the church if she married under Setswana custom.

The austere rituals of the church, the mass, the sermons, the intimate communication in prayer with God — all this had thrilled her heart deeply. But Ralokae was also representative of an ancient stream of holiness that people had lived with before any white man had set foot on the land, and it only needed a small protest to stir up loyalty for the old customs.

There was great indignation because both Galethebege and Ralokae were much respected in the community. People then wanted to know how it was that Ralokae, who was an unbeliever, could have heaven closed to him.

A number of people, all the relatives who officiated at the wedding ceremony, then decided that if heaven was closed to Galethebege and Ralokae, it might as well be closed to them too, so they all no longer attended church.

Galethebege could never forsake the custom in which she had been brought up. All through her married life she would find a corner in which to pray. Sometimes Ralokae would find her so and ask: "What are you doing, Mother?" And she would reply, "I am praying to the Christian God."

Was heaven really closed to the unbeliever, Ralokae? Or had the Christian custom been so intolerant of Setswana custom that it could not bear the holiness of Setswana custom? Wasn't there a place in heaven too for Setswana custom?

— from the short story "Heaven is not Closed," © Bessie Head, from *THE COLLECTOR OF TREASURES and Other Botswana Village Tales*, Heinemann, 1977.

# Lambeth 1998 and the 'new colonialism'

by Ian T. Douglas

This summer over 850 bishops from around the Anglican Communion and from churches in communion with Anglicanism, will gather at the University of Kent in the city of Canterbury Cathedral for the 1998 Lambeth Conference. This three-week meeting of bishops, which is held every 10 years at the invitation of the archbishop of Canterbury, has served as a point of unity, fellowship, and common prayer since its inception in 1867. Today, more than ever before, the Lambeth Conference offers the promise of new relationships, new understandings and new experiences in a rapidly changing global Christian community.

The bishops will be meeting at a time of dramatic change in which the overt abuses and indignities of late 19th- and early 20th-century colonialism have given way to a "post-colonial" world where nations in the southern hemisphere are still subject to the economic, political and military whims of the industrialized West. This "new colonialism" infects all international conversations today and Lambeth is not immune from such pressures. The process by which the formal and informal agendas at the Lambeth Conference get developed is not unaffected by the maldistribution of power, both political and financial, within today's Anglican Communion. As such the 1998 Lambeth Conference is vulnerable to the new colonialism in which players from Western

industrialized nations, with their sophisticated communication, control of the media, and deep pockets, continue to have a disproportionate amount of control over the lives of sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in what has come to be known as the "Kuala Lumpur Statement" and its use and misuse leading up to Lambeth 1998. Unmasking Kuala Lumpur will help us to appreciate the subtle yet powerfully destructive nature of the new colonialism in the Anglican Communion.

## "A Trumpet from the South"

Ironically, the genesis of "Kuala Lumpur" began with good, well-meaning church leaders, primarily from the industrialized West, who became increasingly aware that they had a disproportionate amount of power and authority in inter-Anglican conversations on mission and church life. In December 1986, representatives of western Anglican mission agencies meeting in Brisbane, Australia, recommended that representatives of younger churches

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*The sins of the new colonialism are not so much in the funding and organization of the Second Anglican Encounter in the South but in the West's misuse of one article from the encounter report to fuel debates over sexuality in our own context.*

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of the Southern hemisphere gather to discuss issues of common concern free from the influence and presence of the older churches in the industrialized West. This idea was advanced in 1992 when the Mission Issues Strategy and Advisory Group (MISAG II) of the Anglican Consultative Council proposed a "South-to-South Conference of Anglicans" be held to "examine and define a basis of identity of Anglicanism outside of the Anglo-Saxon context."

Funded primarily by the older Anglican Churches in the West, the first "Anglican Encounter in the South" was held in Limuru, Kenya, in early 1994. There 72 lay people, priests and bishops from 22 countries and 23 Anglican Provinces gathered to discuss issues of mission, self-reliance and interdependence as Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Pacific Islanders. The encounter's final statement, "A Trumpet from the South," heralded the vitality and strength of an emerging Anglican presence outside of the Anglo-American context. The statement included specific suggestions to build on this initial South-to-South meeting including, but not limited to, a second Encounter in the South.

## G-CODE 2000 and rising tensions over gay/lesbian concerns

Responsibility for the planning and development of a second encounter rested with Cyril Okorocho, director for mission and evangelism at the Anglican Communion Office in London. As the evangelism officer for the Anglican Communion, Okorocho also oversaw the various responses of Anglican Churches to the Decade of Evangelism that had been initiated by Lambeth 1988. To review the Decade of Evangelism at mid-point, Okorocho coordinated the Global Conference on Dynamic Evangelism Beyond 2000, or G-CODE 2000, held at the Kanuga Conference Center in North Carolina in September 1995. The conference

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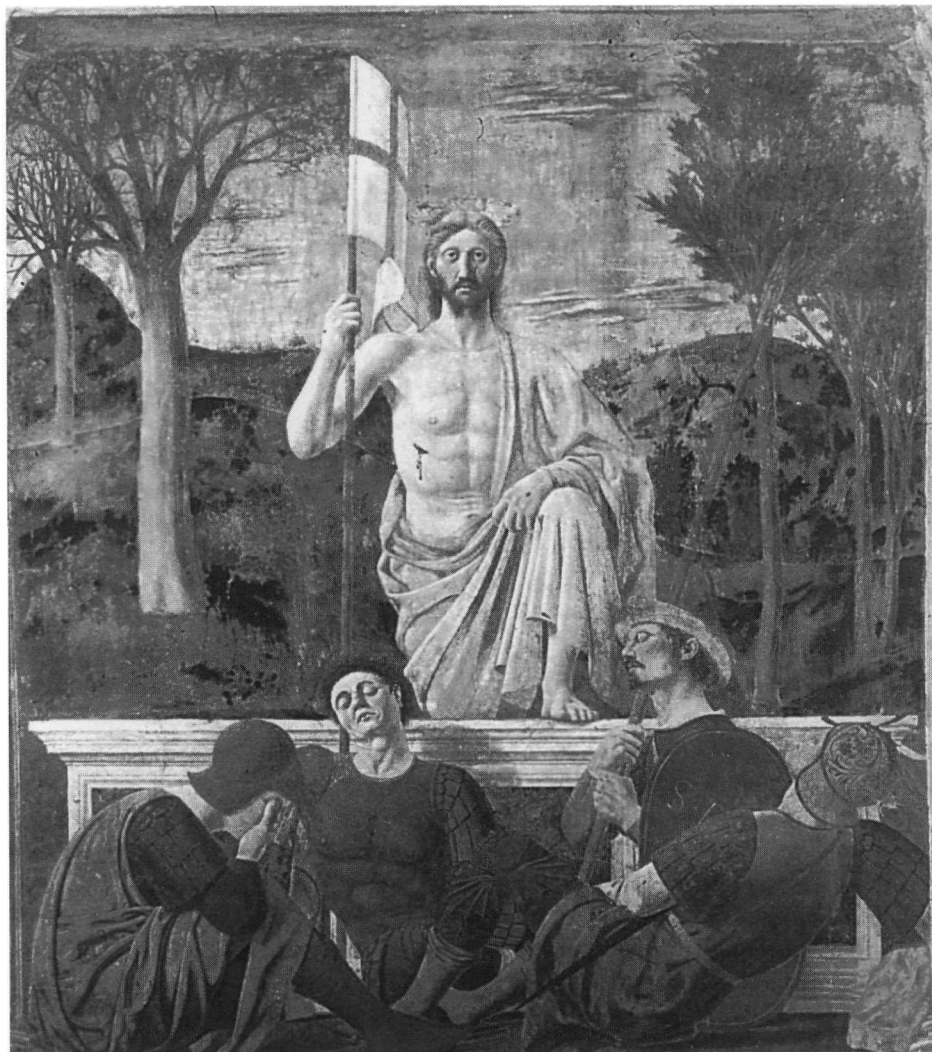


provided a forum for Anglicans the world over to witness to the work of evangelism in each church's context. It was also at the G-CODE 2000 conference that tensions over gay/lesbian concerns in the Western industrialized nations began to be played out at the global level.

### **The Ekklesia Society: recruitment of Third World allies**

Traditionalist Episcopalians in the U.S., who helped to fund and organize the G-CODE 2000 conference, began to appreciate the power and possibility of recruiting Third World church leaders to their position. Specifically, William Atwood, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Dallas, a member of the G-CODE Planning Group and a donor to the conference, saw the gathering as the catalyst for his Ekklesia Society. Ekklesia was designed as an international network of Anglicans committed to "counteracting the negative impact of revisionist teaching which seeks to undermine the historic faith of the Bible and the Creeds" and affiliated with the conservative American Anglican Council [see p. 14].

Meanwhile, planning for the "Second Anglican Encounter in the South" to be held in Kuala Lumpur in February 1997 continued. Some of the 80 participants in this second encounter, looking back on the experience, believe that the choice of the encounter's theme, "The Place of Scripture in the Life and Mission of the Church in the 21st Century" was deliberately chosen to chastise those in the West who take a pro gay and lesbian stance. It is no secret that the planning leadership for the second encounter was closely associated with traditionalist strongholds in the U.S., including the leadership of the emerging American Anglican Council and faculty at the Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Penn. It is thus no surprise that the "Second Trumpet from the South" from the Kuala Lumpur meeting would contain a state-



*Resurrection, c. 1463, Palazzo Comunale, Borgo San Sepalcro, Italy*

Piero della Francesca

ment in line with traditional standards of human sexuality.

### **The looting of the "Second Trumpet from the South"**

In June 1997 the Report of the Second Anglican Encounter in the South was distributed to various constituencies in the Episcopal Church concerned about world mission. It was noted in the report's distribution memo that the national program budget of the Episcopal Church had once again supported the meeting of Anglicans in the South with a grant of \$10,000. On first reading, the report, or

the "Second Trumpet from the South," did not appear as an overt chastisement of the West for a perceived errant position on human sexuality. Its eight articles, or major sub-headings, speak to challenges before the church in the southern hemisphere, including: prophetic and redemptive witness, mission, people of other faiths, youth, contextualization, the family and human sexuality, church unity, and practical next steps in South-to-South relationships. In its very first article the report decries "the crippling effect of international debt" and "calls on the

# The changing face of world Anglicanism

Understanding and unmasking the new colonialism in the Anglican Communion requires an appreciation of the radically changing face of the world Anglican community. In his address to the 1985 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Robert Runcie, past Archbishop of Canterbury, said: "We have developed into a world-wide family of churches. Today there are 70 million members of what is arguably the second most widely distributed body of Christians. No longer are we identified by having some kind of English heritage. English today is now the second language of the Anglican Communion. There are more black members than white. Our local diversities span the spectrum of the world's races, needs, and aspirations. We have only to think of Bishop Tutu's courageous witness in South Africa to be reminded that we are no longer a church of the white middle classes allied only to the prosperous western world."

## A Third-World church

The changes in contemporary Anglicanism, from a white, predominantly English-speaking church of the West to a church of the Third World is consistent with the changing face of Christianity over the last few decades. Anglican mission scholar David Barrett has documented that in the year 1900, 83 percent of the 522 million Christians in the world lived in Europe or North America. Today only 41 percent of the world's 1.5 billion Christians live in the same area and by the year 2000 that number will drop to 39 percent. Barrett predicts that by 2025 fully 70

percent of Christians will live in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific.

For the majority of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century the Anglican Communion (as it existed) was dominated by Western churches, chief among them the Church of England, the Episcopal Church in the U.S. and the Anglican Churches in Canada and Australia. Each supported and controlled their own missions around the world. The three biggest mission fields of the U.S. Episcopal Church in the 19th century were China, Liberia and Japan. From the 1850s to the 1950s mission was inextricably linked to Western colonialism and imperialism.

## Crumbling of 'colonial system'

All of this began to change, however, in the 1960s as the "colonial system" began to crumble. With political independence for countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America came the desire for ecclesial independence for the mission fields. Eventually the missions "grew up" into fully autonomous Anglican churches in their own right, ostensibly independent from their "mother" churches in England and the U.S.

With the advent of new Anglican churches in what had been the mission fields, Anglicans searched for new ways of coming together, new ways of relating one to another as the Body of Christ.

The Anglican Congress of 1963, held in Toronto, Canada, was a watershed for the contemporary Anglican Communion. This meeting of Anglican lay people, priests, and bishops from every corner of the globe embraced an influential and far-reaching vision: "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ" (MRI). MRI proposed a radical

reorientation of mission priorities and stressed mutual responsibility for mission between all Anglican churches as equal partners.

## Thirty-seven equal and autonomous churches

The real question for Anglicans today is how does this mutual responsibility and interdependence play itself out in a community of 37 equal and autonomous churches? What are the limits of our identity, now that we do not share a common language or culture? Where does authority lie in a global church that looks to the Archbishop of Canterbury as a titular head, but which accords this leader no legislative canonical power outside of England? These are the questions that are at the heart of the upcoming Lambeth Conference.

There are those in the Anglican Communion who believe that our identity lies in a shared British heritage and history. For such folk, the increasing pluralism and multiculturalism of the Anglican Communion is a threat to their Anglo-Saxon sensibilities. In their attempt to reclaim the Church of the British Empire, they draw boundaries and set tight doctrinal controls in order to define who is and who is not an Anglican.

## Anglican identity:

### Who gets invited to what meeting?

Another perspective on the locus of Anglican identity is offered by J. Patrick Mauney, director of Anglican and global relations at the Episcopal Church Center in New York. Mauney says that the marks of contemporary Anglicanism lie less in cultural or doctrinal agreement and more in who gets invited to what meeting by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is consistent with current Anglican polity that espouses "four instruments of unity," namely: the Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury as titular head of



the Anglican Communion, The Lambeth Conference of bishops meeting every 10 years, the biannual gathering of the Archbishops of the Anglican Communion known as the Primates Meeting, and the triennial meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council bringing together lay people, priests and bishops from each church in the Anglican Communion.

In addition to these four “instruments of unity” are a host of other international committees and commissions loosely related to, or called into being by all four. Examples of such extra-councilar commissions include: the Commission on Communion and Women in the Episcopate (popularly known as the Eames Commission after the archbishop of Ireland who chaired the group), the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC) and the Mission Issues Strategy and Advisory Group (MISAG).

We need not apologize for our Anglican identity lying in “who gets invited to what meetings.” For at the heart of such identity is a profound affirmation of relationship originating in the incarnation and lived out when “two or three are gathered together in my name.”

It is good and right that we Anglicans celebrate our instruments of unity as genuine vehicles for “mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ.” At the same time we must recognize that the making and unmaking of international Anglican meetings is subject to the political and economic forces of the new colonialism where those with money often have more power to set the agenda and control outcomes.

— Ian Douglas

churches of the West to put pressure on their governments and on the World Bank and the IMF to respond to the many appeals coming from various quarters worldwide to make the year 2000 a year of Jubilee, to remit the Two-Third World debt.” Sex does not appear until article six and as such is a subsection of the larger report.

The sins of the new colonialism are not so much in the funding and organization of the Second Anglican Encounter in the South but rather in the West’s misuse of one article from the encounter report to fuel debates over sexuality in our own context. In the hands of American traditionalist spin-doctors, what was originally presented as an eight-article “Second Trumpet from the South” soon became the “Kuala Lumpur Statement” on human sexuality. The wholesale looting of raw materials belonging to sisters and brothers in the southern hemisphere for our own use and misuse in the industrialized West had been effected once again. The mining and export of raw materials from the south for the benefit of the West’s industrial machine in the colonial era was not wholly dissimilar from the stealing of words in the new colonialism of Kuala Lumpur.

#### **Conservative misrepresentations of Kuala Lumpur**

Armed with the new abbreviated “Kuala Lumpur Statement” on human sexuality, traditionalists in the U.S. were quick to use the voice of sisters and brothers in the South to advance their own aims. Conservative media soon misrepresented Kuala Lumpur as an authoritative, unanimous, statement from all of the bishops in the Third World chastising the Church in the U.S. for ordination of gay and lesbian people and the blessing of same-sex unions. Because so many in the Episcopal Church, USA, are ill-informed and uneducated as to either the realities of the global Anglican Communion or the rela-

tional polity of contemporary Anglicanism, such misinformation about the Second Anglican Encounter in the South was not challenged as to its truthfulness or completeness. The fact that at least one participant at Kuala Lumpur, an archbishop no less, spoke forcefully against the report’s statement on human sexuality was never mentioned in the press.

The misuse of the “Second Trumpet from the South” as the “Kuala Lumpur Statement” on human sexuality came to a head at the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia when conservative deputies and bishops sought endorsement of the “Kuala Lumpur Statement” by resolution of the Convention. Although the resolution failed, there was little rebuttal by those who opposed the resolution as to the misuse of sisters and brothers in the Southern hemisphere to advance one camp’s aims in the U.S.

#### **Money for sex**

Soon after General Convention, Bill Atwood and the Ekklesia Society set about organizing an Anglican Life and Witness Conference to be held in Dallas/Ft. Worth in September 1997. The four-day conference had both a public and private agenda. Publicly the group of 50 Anglican Bishops from 16 nations preached and taught in a variety of parish settings in the dioceses of Dallas and Fort Worth. Privately, conservative theologians and biblical scholars met to draft a statement confirming what had been said in Kuala Lumpur on human sexuality. What these drafters had not bargained for was that the Third World bishops, who were enjoying a free trip to the U.S. at the expense of the Ekklesia Society and the Diocese of Dallas, had more pressing concerns than the West’s hang-up on sex, namely the sinfulness of Western capitalism and the international banking system. In a classic case of money for sex, the bishops from the Southern hemisphere traded their con-

cern about international debt relief for the American's statement regarding traditional, "biblical" norms of sexuality. What ensued was the "Dallas Statement," linking the traditionalist agenda on human sexuality with the call for debt relief in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. What most proponents of the "Dallas Statement" fail to realize, however, is that many of the African bishops who signed the "Dallas Statement" embracing "biblical standards" on human sexuality had been the key advocates at Lambeth 1988 for a more accepting position on polygamy! Politics makes interesting bedfellows.

### **Spong-Carey tit for tat**

It must be acknowledged, however, that the West's preoccupation with sex and the American attempt to make it the overriding issue at Lambeth 1998 is not limited to only the conservatives in the U.S. As the "Dallas Statement" hit the Anglican media waves, advocates of gay and lesbian ordination and the blessing of

same-sex unions in the U.S. struck back. In November, John S. Spong, bishop of Newark, N.J., and one not to shy away from controversy, issued "A Message to the Anglican Communion on the subject of Homosexuality," sending it to all archbishops. The "Message" took on various archbishops, including the archbishop of Canterbury and the "Kuala Lumpur Statement" as to their traditional views of human sexuality [See TW 1/2 1998]. The archbishop of Canterbury immediately responded, defending his position and showing his sympathy with both Kuala Lumpur and the "Dallas Statement." In the tit for tat between Spong and the archbishop of Canterbury, the importance of international debt relief in the face of grinding poverty for sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific, raised both in Kuala Lumpur and in Dallas, was never mentioned.

As we draw closer to Lambeth in July, the forces that want to push the Commu-

ion to take a stand, one way or another, on human sexuality do not seem to be diminishing. Recently a group of American Episcopal priests known as the "First Promise" signatories have advocated that the acceptance of the "Kuala Lumpur Statement" on human sexuality should be a condition of communion within Anglicanism. These "First Promise" signatories, along with other colleagues in the American Anglican Council, have further pledged \$50,000 so that bishops in the provinces of Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, the Sudan and Tanzania can meet ahead of time to prepare for Lambeth.

### **Disproportionate power of the West**

The American money and power of the new colonialism is a force with which to be reckoned. It is seldom acknowledged that the affluence of the West allows for a greater number of bishops per church than in the Southern hemisphere. Whereas the Episcopal Church can support upwards of 250 bishops for a church of 2.5 million members, a church of equal or even greater size in sub-Saharan Africa can afford one-tenth the number of bishops. Such disparity in the number of bishops in each church guarantees that a disproportionate number of bishops at Lambeth will come from the industrialized West.

It is important that bishops attending Lambeth, especially those from the Anglo-American context, wrestle with the meaning of human sexuality today. It is equally important that such conversations do not overshadow the primary agenda of the majority of Anglicans in the world today, namely international debt relief [TW 6/98]. If we in the West control the agenda of Lambeth for our own ends, either overtly or behind the scenes, the sins of the new colonialism will continue to be perpetrated and our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific will slide further into poverty at the hands of international debt.

**TV**

## **Women bishops in for cool reception at Lambeth**

Margaret Duggan of London's *Church Times* reports that the 11 women bishops expected to attend this summer's Lambeth Conference may be in for a cool reception by brother primates who reject their ordinations.

"Two Anglo-Catholic traditionalists have already indicated that they will not be coming because they find it too difficult to accept the women. They are both expatriates in Madagascar, Keith Benzies of Antsirananana and Donald Smith of Toamasina," Duggan writes.

"Another traditionalist bishop, the Rt. Rev'd Noel Jones, bishop of Sodor & Man, has said he will not attend any service, Bible study or working group in which a woman bishop is taking part; nor will he walk in a robed procession

with the women nor be photographed with any of the women bishops."

Jones is president of the International Bishops' Conference on Faith and Order (IBCFO), the body at the center of the opposition to the women bishops. It was founded in 1990 by Clarence Pope, then bishop of Fort Worth, together with Graham Leonard, the former bishop of London (now a Roman Catholic), and Eric Kemp, the bishop of Chichester.

Duggan says conference organizers have been bending over backwards to make the women's presence palatable to those traditionalists who do attend. One sign of this is that "for the opening service at least, the procession into Canterbury Cathedral will be low-key, with the bishops in cassocks."



## Medicine comes full circle

"A Brief History of Medicine" offered by *The Utne Reader* (3-4/98):

200 B.C.: "Here, eat this root."

1000 A.D.: "That root is heathen. Here, say this prayer."

1850 A.D.: That prayer is superstitious. Here, drink this potion."

1940 A.D.: That potion is snake oil. Here swallow this pill."

1985 A.D.: That pill is ineffective. Here, take this antibiotic."

1998 A.D.: That antibiotic is artificial. Here, eat this root."

## Women's human rights

The impact of widespread protest against the repression of women in Afghanistan is evidence of significant progress in global consciousness of women's human rights, Maria Riley writes in *Center Focus* (3/98).

"Women around the world have condemned and demonstrated against the Taliban Islamic militia that took over Afghanistan and subsequently barred women and girls from schools, hospitals and public places," Riley reports.

"For the first time, the UN sent a 'Gender Mission' to investigate what was happening in the Taliban-held regions of Afghanistan. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton have both condemned the Taliban's policies toward women. The outrage of women's groups in the U.S. has kept the Clinton Administration from recognizing the Taliban government unless it radically changes its policies toward women. Without such recognition, the Taliban is unlikely to get financing from international lending institutions. And a current plan between Unocal, a California-based global energy company, and the Taliban to build a trans-Afghan pipeline is in jeopardy, if the Taliban does not change. Ten years ago, it would have been inconceivable that the violation of women's human rights could affect a foreign policy decision."

## Migrants' rights

A global campaign to persuade governments to adopt the UN human rights convention on migrants' rights was launched on March 20. The convention, adopted in December 1990 by the UN General Assembly, will enter into force only after 20 member states ratify it. To date, nine states have done so: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Morocco, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Uganda. Chili and Mexico have signed, the preliminary step to ratifying. Organizations represented on the campaign's steering committee include Human Rights Watch, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the World Council of Churches. For more information on the convention and the global campaign, contact Patrick Taran, Secretary for Migration, World Council of Churches, e-mail: <pt@wcc-coe.org>.

## The right to consume?

Americans "have come to believe, deeply, that it is our right to consume," Vicki Robin, co-author of the bestselling book on voluntary simplicity, *Your Money or Your Life*, told *Mother Earth News* (1/98). "If we have the money, we can buy whatever we want, whether or not we need it, use it or even enjoy it. After all, it's a free country. Beyond the constitutional rights of free speech, assembly, due process and so on, there is the right to have anything you want, as long as you are willing to pay for it ... or at least promise to pay for it on time."

## Alaska ruling on gay marriage

The Associated Press reports that in February Alaska Superior Court Judge Peter Michalski ruled against Alaska's ban on same-sex marriages, "ordering the state to show why it should be able to regulate who people marry."

The ruling requires that the state show "a compelling reason why such unions should be illegal." Choosing a partner is a

fundamental right, Michalski said, noting that the state Constitution protects both the "traditional choice and the non-traditional choice."

## Defense Secretary on faith

John Hamre, who became U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary last year, belongs to "a congregation with an anti-war history" and "struggles with" the tension between the gospel and public policy, according to a *Washington Post* profile described in *Initiatives* (2/98), a publication of the National Center for the Laity.

According to the profile, "Hamre was disturbed with the cheering that accompanied the U.S. victory in the 1991 Gulf War. He recalls a rabbinic story about the Exodus. 'After the waters closed on the Pharaoh's soldiers and chariots, the children of Israel were shouting, cheering and celebrating. And God said to Moses: 'Tell the people to be quiet. Can't they hear that my children are drowning?'"

## Weapon of mass destruction

Kathy Kelly, a co-coordinator of Voices in the Wilderness, a campaign to end the U.N./U.S. sanctions against Iraq, traveled to Iraq in February with a delegation carrying \$110,000 worth of medicines.

"From previous trips, we knew exactly where to find overwhelming evidence of a weapon of mass destruction," Kelly writes. "Inspectors have only to enter the wards of any hospital in Iraq to see that the sanctions themselves are a lethal weapon, destroying the lives of Iraq's most vulnerable people."

Voices has been warned that its members face 12 years in prison, one million dollars in fines and a \$250,000 administrative penalty if they continue to publicly violate the sanctions.

*Short takes*

# The Episcopal Church's Right wing: standing against 'relativism and revisionism'

by Jack H. Taylor, Jr.

They call themselves orthodox Anglicans or traditionalists. They are the arch-conservatives, the rabid Right wing of the Episcopal Church, a close-knit confederation of pressure groups whose core leadership is composed of the same bishops who tried unsuccessfully to bring Walter Righter to trial for heresy for ordaining Barry Stopfel, a partnered gay man. At times they spend lavishly to further their causes, but they have never been able to attract more than a tiny minority of Episcopalians to their ranks. At their gatherings men — mostly white, with a median age of 55 to about 62 — predominate. Publicly enthusiastic about "evangelism," they seem singularly focused on such issues as gay ordination, same-sex blessings and women priests.

Although each organization seemingly steers its own course, there are many overlaps in leadership and direction. They help one another, promote one another and champion each other's causes, sometimes even sending "shock troop"-style priests without canonical authority to "rescue" conservatives from the clutches of liberal bishops. Most have Internet web sites. Some sponsor web servers which link many of the groups and their manifestos, press releases, "dispatches" and publications. Some share executives and business addresses.

## American Anglican Council

James Stanton, the bishop of Dallas, says the American Anglican Council (AAC), which he heads, arose from prayers for

God's guidance "for those seeking to maintain and uphold biblically grounded faith and witness in the Episcopal Church" to "stand against the tide of relativism and revisionism in the basic beliefs and teachings of the Church." The group employs Roger A. Boltz for \$70,000 a year as its administrative director.

Explaining the AAC to nearly 700 people who gathered on March 23 for a "First Promise Lay Leaders Conference" at the Church of St. John the Divine in Houston's upper crust River Oaks, AAC trustee Geoffrey W. Chapman, rector of St. Stephen's in Sewickley, Pa., said the AAC has "pulled together dozens and dozens of organizations [which] are kind of joined together to bear influence and to share resources and to make an impact together."

He gave surprisingly candid insight into how the Right wing hopes to spread its influence through two specific projects: first, at Lambeth, and second, pumping its own brand of priests into the church by circumventing current procedures and possibly, some wonder, canon law.

On Lambeth, Chapman said, "We have put multiple tens of thousands of dollars

*"The ESA says 'our strategic goal is the establishment of an Orthodox Province of the Anglican Communion in North America, a province which is not connected with the institutional Episcopal Church.'"*

aside" and have two staff members to send to England to help "bishops of orthodox faith and values" at the decennial Lambeth conference this summer. (Stephen F. Noll, an AAC trustee and a member of the faculty at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, the seminary most affiliated with the church's Right wing, has authored a new book, *Handwriting on the Wall: An Appeal to the Anglican Communion*, which includes his plea to the Lambeth Conference that it adopt the Kuala Lumpur statement "as the Anglican norm for sexual behavior." It also includes an address he made to Third World bishops during a conference in Dallas in September 1997 in which he rallies the "fight over the sexuality agenda because it denies Scripture, dishonors marriage and introduces a pagan spirituality into the Church.")

Chapman also revealed that the AAC has devised "something of a national commission on ministry" to "break the embargo that exists in too many dioceses on men and women of orthodox faith and values" who face "unsurmountable obstacles" to ordination because they are too conservative. The AAC's program, which is expected to be in place in a year, "will circumvent that problem," Chapman said.

The AAC is cautious to avoid "either/or" actions of its members like, for example, the Episcopal Synod of America, which categorically rejects women priests. The AAC also pointedly does not endorse PECUSA, Inc. (formally known as Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Inc.) even though PECUSA's chief architect, William Wantland, is on the AAC's council of bishops. But the AAC wholeheartedly commends the affiliated "First Promise" group (its name is taken from the ordination vow to uphold sacred tradition).

The AAC sees its strength in the "support of many bishops [mostly the 10

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bishops who instigated the Walter Righter “heresy” trial] and its links with overseas bishops of the Anglican Communion [mostly in Africa].” In 1997 it reported \$550,000 in gifts, grants and other contributions, a figure that is dramatically higher than in 1996, when it reported \$37,185 in this category.

### **Ekklesia Society**

The Ekklesia Society was born with Stanton’s help in 1996. He was one of its founding directors, along with Stephen H. Jenko, bishop of Florida. Ekklesia received a \$75,000 start-up shot in the arm from Stanton’s AAC.

International in scope, the Ekklesia Society’s purpose is to fight “an incursion of secular humanism and a radical liberalism which has sought to change the faith and tried to redefine the meaning of orthodoxy” and declares that “the greatest areas of conflict in the U.S. have to do with human sexuality, particularly homosexuality; the nature and character of God; and the role of the Scriptures in the faithful community.”

William Atwood, rector of Trinity Church in Carrollton, Tex., is Ekklesia’s general secretary, a position for which he was paid \$86,000 over and above his roughly equal salary from Trinity in 1996. Ekklesia pays him about \$120,000 today. He no longer draws a salary from Trinity, although Trinity still is giving a \$36,000 no-strings “outreach” gift this year to Ekklesia.

Last September, Ekklesia co-sponsored the \$193,000 “Anglican Life & Witness Conference” in Dallas-Fort Worth. Promoters spent \$100,000 to bring

African bishops to Dallas — more than triple, for example, what the Episcopal Church has spent on projects to aid Ugandans in a rural health/safe motherhood project, or quadruple what was spent to help Ugandans combat the spread of AIDS, a project, ironically, dear to Stanton.

The Diocese of Dallas contributed

liberal trends in the church.

The ESA was incorporated formally in Texas in January 1990 as the ESA Missionary Society by Clarence C. Pope (then bishop of Fort Worth), William Wantland (bishop of Eau Claire, Wis.), John-David Schofield (bishop of San Joaquin), Edward H. McBurney (then bishop of Quincy, Ill.), and Donald Parsons (the retired bishop of Quincy). Wantland, Schofield and Parsons still are trustees. It also had initial help from A. Donald Davies, who was retired as bishop of Fort Worth but then left the Episcopal Church.

When the Synod originally applied for tax exempt status it told the IRS that its purpose was to serve as a “church within the church” as a way of preserving Evangelical faith and catholic order in the Episcopal Church. Today the ESA says “our strategic goal is the establishment of an Orthodox Province of the Anglican Communion in North America, a province which

is not connected with the institutional Episcopal Church” and the “strategic plan for reaching that goal is to be the church in a coordinated way without regard to the institutional Episcopal Church.”

Following setbacks to hard line conservatives at the General Convention in Philadelphia last summer, the Synod’s president, Donald P. Moriarty, complained in an open letter to the new presiding bishop that the last two conventions had “failed to uphold the biblical standards of sexual morality, refused to restrain or discipline those who flout such biblical standards and provided canonical authority for persecution of those sis-



*Two companions being slain together during the Inquisition, 17th century*

Anonymous

\$45,500 to the conference, which afterwards issued the so-called “Dallas Statement” on “a Christian moral stand on the issue of international debt,” and on “sexual ethics.” We “reject the identity politics which makes ‘gay’ a badge of pride that divides brothers and sisters in the Church and prevents many afflicted men and women from seeking healing,” the statement said.

### **Episcopal Synod of America**

The Fort Worth-based Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) was first organized in June 1989 as an association of conservative Episcopalians opposed to the ordination of women, among other so-called

# Living in an 'orthodox' diocese

When Pepper Marts retired from the Air Force in 1979 and moved to New Mexico, he recalls that the Episcopal Diocese of Rio Grande at that time "was comfortably far from homogeneous, with many theological and social positions evident in Annual Convention — Diocesan Council was no less diverse, yet despite the variety of views, discussion was generally civil. We'd argue across the table, then adjourn to the neighboring *cantina* for happy hour." Marts says that since the consecration of Terence Kelshaw as bishop in 1989, a man who sees himself as upholding "orthodoxy," Marts and others of a liberal disposition have detected "increasingly little room for differing theological interpretations and opinions — opponents have become enemies and argument is by assertion, with an implicit declaration of infallibility."

Obtaining accurate information about diocesan decision-making and the life of the national church became a vital concern. "It's hard to work for change if you don't know what's going on," says Marts. "Over these past nine years our diocesan newspaper has become more of a house-organ. The op-ed page has been eliminated and news of the larger church curtailed."

In response, Marts, Laura Hughes and a handful of others concerned about the situation formed the Episcopal Information Network (EIN). Through *Network News: Voices of the Rio Grande*, the group sought to offer news that would help Rio Grande Episcopalians feel more involved in the church's life.

The diocesan leadership has been hostile to EIN's effort, with Kelshaw calling *Network News* "a hate publication to ridicule me."

(A similar independent effort to provide news and opinion that runs counter to that espoused by diocesan leadership is the Council of the Laity in the Diocese of Fort Worth, an ESA stronghold led by Jack Iker. The editorial board of the Council's newsletter writes: "We, who disagree with the 'conservative Right,' are being totally ignored and berated by this administration.")

The most difficult aspect of being part of his diocese's liberal minority, Marts says, has been dealing with a sense of vulnerability within the institution. A case in point comes from St. Michael and All Angels parish in Albuquerque. Having outgrown its physical plant, in 1996 St. Michael's began a building program. After approving the parish's plans, the Trustees of Church Property and the Diocesan Investment Board committed to a \$350,000 loan to cover a part of the construction cost.

Meanwhile, partly in response to the ecclesiastical court's decision to drop the heresy charges against Walter Righter, St. Michael's offered a four-week adult education program on homosexuality and the church. Then, on July 10, 1996, the parish announced their intention to hold a special service — *Offering the Olive Branch: a Liturgy of Affirmation and Reconciliation for Gay and Lesbian Christians*. The announcement began: "Simple but powerful words will soon be said to homosexuals who thought they might never hear them: 'God loves you as you are. The church has hurt you and we are sorry.'"

A week later, citing "extreme polarization of the Rector and the leadership of St. Michael and All Angels from the Bishop and the leadership of the Diocese," the Diocesan Investment board abruptly withdrew the loan. According to

St. Michael's parishioner John Hunt, the board subsequently told St. Michael's rector and wardens that the loan had been rescinded because the rector had made public statements in the press supporting the Righter decision [Kelshaw was one of the bishops who pressed charges against Righter] and St. Michael's was planning the Olive Branch service. In addition, the board noted that members of St. Michael's belonging to EIN (including Marts) had shown open disagreement with the bishop in *Network News*.

The fourth reason given, Hunt says, was that "the loan was too large to begin with; some of the money was needed for other projects anticipated in the diocese."

The Investment Board's withdrawal of St. Michael's loan "came as a mighty shock," says Marts. "Many felt that the time had come for 'action,' by which we meant 'whatever it takes to get the money back.'" For some that meant legal action, for others a conciliatory approach.

"The most radical voices prevailed," St. Michael's parishioner Cathy Cox later reflected. "Ours would be the deliberate way of the cross. We sought and reached consensus, embracing the cost to us in pride and in dollars. We would not 'fight back.' We would continue to speak the truth as we perceived it, and to welcome into every part of our congregational life anyone who chose to share it with us."

Eventually, St. Michael's managed to obtain a commercial loan to finance the project.

"For me and for my parish, life under pressure has meant a new and broader sense of eucharist in all things," Marts says. "We offer up the good and the bad; they are given back to us raised up, made new and whole." — J.W.



ters and brothers in Christ who cannot accept the ordination of women as priests and bishops.”

The Synod claims that since its founding it “has grown to be the strongest and largest voice for traditional Anglicanism in the Episcopal Church.” It claims its membership is “steadily” growing and that it now has more than 200 chapters and parishes. But a hard look shows that such claims may be grossly exaggerated. The only chapters which could be located which were formally incorporated, like the main Synod group, were in Colorado, Tennessee and Nebraska and all no longer exist. In addition, the Synod’s own web site contains a long list of parishes listed simply as “conservative” but several aren’t even Episcopal Church parishes and only five are identified as Synod parishes. Not even Moriarty’s Placentia, Calif., parish is a Synod parish. William P. Murchison, Jr., the 56-year-old conservative columnist for *The Dallas Morning News*, who also is editor of the Synod’s magazine, *Foundations*, likewise says that the chapter once incorporated at his address is now inactive.

An analysis of Synod tax documents for the last three years available, 1994 through 1996, together with some additional information going back to 1990 contained in the documents, show that total gifts, grants, contributions and other revenue appear to be steadily declining — from a high of more than \$581,000 in 1990 to less than \$220,000 in 1996. At the same time, expenditures are increasing.

Today, the Synod spends on an average more than \$300,000 annually with a little over 10 percent for fund raising. Executive director Samuel J. Edwards receives a salary package of \$64,770 annually. The Synod puts out magazines, newsletters and slick publications such as “The Episcopal Church in Crisis” and distributes a video in its press kits. It also maintains a sophisticated web site com-

plete with bulletin boards, calendars, surveys and even a chat room.

### Episcopalians United

Episcopalians United for Revelation, Renewal and Reformation (EURR), as the coalition was called when formally incorporated in Pennsylvania a decade ago, is the biggest and often the most vocal of the anti-progressive Right wing of the church in terms of wealth, power, influence, longevity and unabashed heterosexism. But its wealth has never matched what it was in the beginning, its power is on the decline and its influence is questionable. The group lists as its chairman (though he denies he functions in the role) David H. Roseberry, a Stanton booster and rector of Christ Church in the Dallas suburb of Plano.

Although EURRR was initially incor-

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*On its Internet web site, where EURRR calls itself “an affiliate of the American Anglican Council” and encourages listings of parishes “that affirm the orthodox Christian faith,” only nine parishes are listed.*

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porated on June 4, 1987, in Pennsylvania, where it has had considerable support from old-line church conservatives and help from Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, it is now headquartered in Solon, Ohio, outside Cleveland. Todd H. Wetzel, EURRR’s executive director, earns \$44,480 a year to manage the group’s national education campaign of encouraging a strict adherence to a more rigid doctrine, discipline and worship in the church.

EURRR’s gifts, grants and contributions have declined since the beginning

when it collected more than \$1 million each of its first three years.

Wetzel concedes “there has been some decrease in contributions” but says “the overall trend is up.” He explained that interest in — and consequently donations to — EURRR increases just before each triennial General Convention and drops off sharply afterward.

Wetzel said that since its founding, EURRR has attracted about 30,000 separate contributors with an average of between 9,000 and 10,000 at any given time. Although there have been at least five other EURRR organizations scattered around the country, most no longer exist. Only Episcopalians United of Massachusetts, Inc. is still in business.

On its Internet web site, where EURRR calls itself “an affiliate of the American Anglican Council” and encourages listings of parishes “that affirm the orthodox Christian faith,” only nine parishes are listed. Oddly, not one is listed from Dallas — not even the parish of EURRR’s chairman, Roseberry.

EURRR seems singularly preoccupied with condemning homosexuals and resisting granting homosexuals rights in the church. In one of his recent pronouncements, Wetzel said that if Gene Robinson, an openly gay nominee for bishop in the Diocese of Newark, is elected to succeed outspoken John Spong, his group would actively oppose ratification of the election.

“We do not feel that an actively practicing, non-celibate homosexual is a godly example, any more than we feel that an openly practicing adulterer would qualify as a godly example. Behavior matters,” Wetzel told the *Newark Star-Ledger*.

The day after Frank T. Griswold III of Chicago was elected presiding bishop last July, Wetzel told *The Boston Globe*: “We’ve just knowingly elected a man who has openly supported the ordination

of practicing homosexuals and has made no secret of his support for same-sex unions. He's a revisionist, albeit a kinder, gentler version than others."

In addition to its frequent press releases, EURRR publishes printed and electronic versions of a newspaper, *United Voice*, edited by Douglas L. LeBlanc, a 38-year-old Louisiana State University-educated journalist who now lives in the Kansas City suburbs. LeBlanc's reporting tends to be even-handed, objective and sometimes even charitable, although with a largely single-minded focus on issues of homosexuality.

"We certainly focus on issues that would be of concern to Episcopalians United and its supporters," LeBlanc said during a recent telephone interview, "and that would include issues of sexuality, a language for God, etc."

#### **PECUSA, Inc.**

The man now marching to his own peculiar drumbeat behind PECUSA, Inc., is William C. Wantland, a 64-year-old former Seminole Indian tribal official from Oklahoma who now heads the tiny Episcopal Diocese of Eau Claire, Wis.

Wantland, one of the four holdout bishops opposed to women priests, quietly organized PECUSA, Inc. in Wisconsin in 1996, setting himself up as president and chief executive officer. Then, just as quietly, he proceeded to register PECUSA in 45 or so states with the help of supportive conservatives in individual parishes and Right-wing organizations around the country, including the Fort Worth-based ESA. In this way Wantland incorporated his sect under the name by which the Episcopal Church has been identified.

Wantland even appeared to have tacit support of the ACC's James Stanton, but when Stanton's involvement became known, he quickly put safe distance between himself and the renegades and has since tried to appear the

moderate peace-maker.

After national church leaders discovered Wantland's activity last December, the church's presiding bishop, Edmond L. Browning, asked him to stop, but Wantland refused. PECUSA's board of trustees have said they are resolved "to take immediate and prudent steps to prepare and make available the necessary structures for an Orthodox Anglican Province in North America by either the reformation of the Episcopal Church or by the emergence of an alternative."

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*"I would have to say to you if you got to a point where one side said you have to accept same-sex marriages, and the other side said you cannot under any circumstances accept same-sex marriages, then I'd say you've reached a point of mutually exclusive positions." — William Wantland*

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The statement did not elaborate on what "immediate and prudent steps" mean or on the definition of an "Orthodox Anglican Province." But the action is similar to that taken by the ESA following the national Episcopal Church's triennial General Convention in July 1997. The Synod voted to form a rebel province within the church as a haven for its supporters who also oppose women priests and condemn homosexuality. PECUSA officials have declined further comment but promise to issue more information in the form of future press releases from its Pawleys Island, S.C., headquarters, but at this

writing, have not.

In Houston in late March, however, Laurens Hall, rector of the Church of St. John the Divine and a vice president of PECUSA, defended the Wantland enterprise, explaining that "we are not attempting to become another church." He conceded that PECUSA, Inc. is "weak in terms of resources" and for now is simply waiting on the sidelines, a "paper corporation at this point, [available] to be called onto the playing field when needed."

On January 30 the two New Jersey bishops, John Spong and Joe Doss, sued PECUSA in federal court in Newark, N.J., claiming fraud, unfair competition and trademark infringement. Officials at national church headquarters in New York have not indicated the same legal concerns or even hinted at possible court action. David Beers, a Washington attorney who is the presiding bishop's chancellor, has said, in fact, that PECUSA's formation "does not have considerable legal significance" and that the real Episcopal Church's legal rights are "fully protected by law," even though it isn't formally incorporated.

(The issue about which many opponents of PECUSA do feel particularly uncomfortable, however, is that of the ownership of church property. Church law mandates that individual parish property used for worship is actually owned by the diocese in the name of the church. Although Wantland and PECUSA have not laid claim to any real property — and national church lawyer Beers said even if a formal schism occurred, it would be "unlikely they could take existing property" — those familiar with the church's history are not so sure. Some church legal authorities say rebellious parishes may be able to wage a successful court fight to wrest their building and property away from a diocese should that parish decide to bolt.)

After the New Jersey lawsuit was filed



against him, Wantland showed no signs of backing down. He told a Milwaukee newspaper that he hopes to reform the Episcopal Church, which he said needs a better, clearer method of defining doctrine.

"The whole question of defining doctrine is how broadly you allow differences to exist without getting to the point where you are mutually exclusive," he told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. "Are there ways and means that you could hold together in tension what appear to be mutually exclusive positions? I would have to say to you if you got to a point where one side said you have to accept same-sex marriages, and the other side said you cannot under any circumstances accept same sex marriages, then I'd say you've reached a point of mutually exclusive positions."

### First Promise

Jon Shuler, one of the church's leading conservatives, helped organize the so-called First Promise group of clergy as the senior convener of the first meeting in 1997. The group is so called because of the reference to the first vow articulated at the beginning of ordination which binds a priest to "be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them."

This group of clergy might be considered the backbone of PECUSA. PECUSA's January 6th press release, in fact, attributed its entire support to parishioners of these priests when it claimed that "many supporters of PECUSA Inc. are leaders of the largest and fastest growing parishes in the Episcopal Church. More than 150 clergy whose combined parishes represent more than 60,000 communicants have signed the 'First Promise' document."

After Wantland, Shuler has become PECUSA's leading spokesman. "The current leadership of the Episcopal

Church, at the national level, has been unwilling or unable to move forward boldly to proclaim Jesus Christ and His truth to this nation and the world," Shuler said when Frank Griswold became presiding bishop. "By God's grace, PECUSA Inc. is going to offer that leadership."

**Smaller groups**  
Some smaller groups, like the Concerned Clergy and Laity of the Episcopal Church Inc., a virtual one-man, small-budget show in Atlanta run by William H. Cheney, get more than their money's worth with links to the Right-wing network.

The CCLEC organized to educate Episcopalians about doctrine and teachings with a view "toward influencing the directions, activities and teachings of the national Episcopal Church for the purpose of returning it to more orthodox beliefs."

The group issues Internet press releases, with a distribution disproportionate to its size (startup funds in 1995 of \$249, more than half of which was spent on its IRS tax exempt application).

The Prayer Book Society of the Episcopal Church, a predominately lay group originally formed in Tennessee in 1971 as the Society for the Preserva-



Martin Schongauer

*St. Anthony tormented by demons, c.1480-90 (Met. Mus. of Art)*

tion of the Book of Common Prayer Inc., champions the same causes — "upholding and propagating historic Christian faith and order" — but focuses singularly on that which its name implies. As Peter Toon, president of the \$287,000-a-year, Philadelphia-based group, says:

"If the Church were to authorize the use of the 1928 BCP then the Society would have no further reason to exist, except to help people back into the habit of using it."

The Society's present patron is Keith L. Ackerman, bishop of Quincy, Ill., a trustee of the ESA and a board member of the Ekklesia Society and Stanton's AAC.

TW

# Ambiguity and conflict: an interview with Verna Dozier

by Julie A. Wortman

*[Last month biblical theologian Verna Dozier, 80, talked about how ambiguity is the essence of faith, noting that an insistence on an “orthodox” position comes out of a desire to exercise power over others. This month she discusses how the person who embraces ambiguity might step up to conflict.]*

**Julie Wortman:** You speak a lot about human connections, sometimes quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, “We must live together as brothers ...”

**Verna Dozier:** “... or die together as fools!”

**J.W.:** But you also talk about the value of difference. What does that suggest for us? So-called “orthodox” believers and people of a liberal/radical perspective seem worlds apart on most matters. Should we try to bridge those gaps or should we concentrate on the more limited circles where we can find common cause?

**V.D.:** I’m content with finding common cause with a few. I cannot embrace the whole world. But I can have good will toward the whole world. I can control my desire to destroy that which is against me and I do not need to see myself reproduced in every other person, either physically or intellectually or morally.

**J.W.:** I’m presuming that we are working for the coming realm of God. But how?

**V.D.:** Well, Jesus embodied the realm of God and I think that’s what we should do. Jesus loved people, which is not the same as doing good things for them. It is per-



Verna Dozier

fectly possible to do good things for people and not love them. I’ve known teachers who hated their students and I think many ministers hate their parishes. But Jesus loved people.

One of the things that loving people means is that you see other people equal to you because they are loved by God. How many people do you know who live their lives like that? Most Christians proclaim that, but I think Jesus really lived it. In fact, I believe that is one of the things that got him killed. He was a threat to the establishment because in him people saw a new possibility for themselves. When a whole lot of people begin to think like that, there will be a revolution. So you kill off the leaders of the revolution.

**J.W.:** The people saw a new possibility for themselves because they understood themselves to be loved?

**V.D.:** Loved and therefore worthy. You get a lot of people to think of themselves as worthy and they can tear up the world. I think that is why he was killed. Because the people who participated in his death were people in power. And powerful

people cannot stand a lot of other people thinking that they are significant.

**J.W.:** I have had a long and continuing conversation with a friend who holds a different position from me on abortion. We’ve sustained that conversation based on mutual respect — we know each other not to be fools and we are on the same side of most issues. But our bottom lines are different when it comes to this topic. As you embrace a world view in which you understand that there is always another point of view, do you have any bottom lines?

**V.D.:** I guess that’s my bottom line.

**J.W.:** Then where do you fall in these debates?

**V.D.:** I take my stand knowing that there are other people just as thoughtful and good as I who will take another stand.

**J.W.:** What does that do to ethics?

**V.D.:** It makes me leery of absolutizing any position I take on anything. There is no place in which I would stand that I would say this is where God would stand. I would hope that the stands I take would be close to somewhere God would stand, but I would never dare to say that my position is God’s.

**J.W.:** How do we bring up our children to know what is right and wrong?

**V.D.:** Well, what *is* right and what *is* wrong? I suppose that the thing that I would like children to understand is that they should always have room for another opinion. And that is very hard for children because they claw their way to some stand where they want to be and it is a tough struggle. To think there is another possibility is just too much. And I suppose they would always have to see that possibility lived out to see the value of it.

**J.W.:** We’ve been nurtured in this country on the idea of majority rule. We allow other points of view, but the majority always rules. Do the numbers who hold a certain point of view matter in the way you think about all of this?

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**Julie A. Wortman** is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*, <julie@thewitness.org>.

**V.D.:** I think that there has to be some judgment at some time that one way is better than another way. And you have to act on it, otherwise you'd never do anything. Holding room for another point of view doesn't mean that you don't stand by your opinion, but it will stop you from demonizing the other.

What you hope for, in the best of all worlds, is that you would have a conversation about it. And if at the end of the conversation there is no agreement, you would go forward knowing that you are opposing another human being.

**J.W.:** And not opposing a category or a label?

**V.D.:** Yes.

**J.W.:** But often I think that the other person is wrong, and that a majority of those holding the other point of view is wrong. But usually they have the power to change things their way. You've said that you would prefer a system of benevolent dictatorship — is that still true?

**V.D.:** Yes. Because I think the majority is often wrong! *[laughter]*

**J.W.:** You'll make room for another point of view, but it is often wrong?

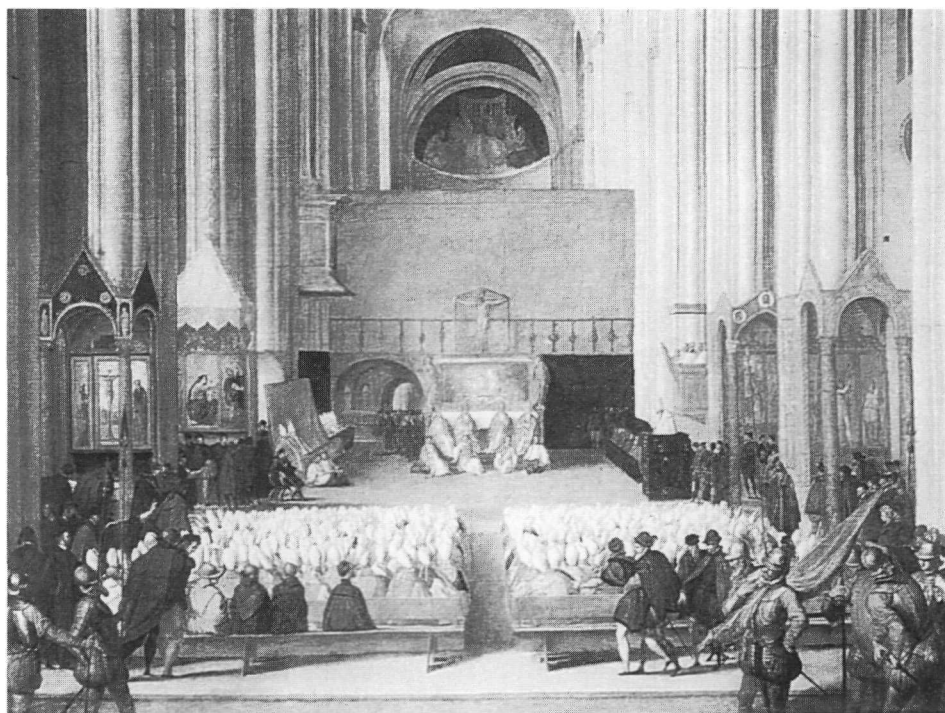
**V.D.:** What I think that you would do is to know that as far as you can see it now, you stand at a certain place. And you will fight for it. Other opinions might be wrong by every test that you have — that is why you hold your view — but you are not going to kill the other person over it. And if you pay enough attention to it, you may find that in that other position there is some truth.

**J.W.:** Isn't what you are talking about,

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*What the world needs are people who are humble enough to know they are not God and don't have absolute answers and are acceptable even though they don't. There are so many people now whose very being depends on their believing they have the final answer.*

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*Final session of the Council of Trent, 1563 (Louvre)*

Attributed to Titian

more than anything else, that there is truth out there that gets ignored or that we fail to respect or recognize because we are so busy being right or wrong? We

might find that there is quite a different position that everyone could hold.

**V.D.:** That's the search for common ground.

**J.W.:** Which wouldn't necessarily be a position of compromise, but it would come out of a process of discernment. Perhaps we don't do enough discernment in

decision-making?

**V.D.:** I think that's true. Because we have such a tendency to rush into easy answers.

Finding the truth takes time. Maybe if we talk enough we would find we are not so far apart, that there are certain values we do hold in common, but the issue may be how we express those values.

**J.W.:** What happens so often, though, is that many of the things we debate are life-and-death issues. We see people and creatures dying for the lack of will to stop it. So people become frustrated with too much talk.

**V.D.:** Yes. One of the things I say to myself in my most cynical moments is that human beings are more likely to be wrong than right. So we needn't be afraid to be wrong because we can be more sure that we're wrong than we're right. So often what human beings need in their contentions is just the hearing of a sane voice. To hear somebody say, "What are we doing to each other?" It is amazing how rarely that is heard when we get so fixed in our positions. This happens in church circles as well as in political circles. What are we doing to each other? We are



demonizing each other, surely. Absolutizing our position.

And Christians so often identify their position with Jesus' position — "If Jesus were here," they say, "he would take my position." But identifying ourselves with Jesus is a trap. We are not Jesus. When we disagree with someone we immediately attribute to that person ignorance or evil designs, but I don't think that's like Jesus. To entertain the possibility that we might be wrong, all you have to do is look at history to see all the occasions people fought and died for positions that were wrong.

**J.W.:** I find it hard to get hold of this idea of ambiguity.

**V.D.:** It is difficult, but it is a matter of life and death that we get hold of it.

**J.W.:** Why?

**V.D.:** Because people are killing each other for the lack of it. I don't think that civilization has progressed very far from a primi-

tive stage as far as ambiguity is concerned — I'm right and you're wrong and I will steal your wife and all that you have.

**J.W.:** You don't think that we've become any more tolerant?

**V.D.:** No. I think our intolerance is taking even more terrible forms. What the world needs are people who are humble enough to know they are not God and don't have absolute answers and are acceptable even though they don't. There are so many people now whose very being depends on their believing they have the final answer. That is what religion has degenerated into. There was a time in this country when we had more tolerance. We never got to the point of religious wars. But I think we are headed for that.

**J.W.:** How would you change the way we operate in the church?

**V.D.:** We have to face up to the fact that we play power games — power is our god. How we go about doing that, I have

no idea. But we have to begin talking about that, preaching about that.

**J.W.:** Where do you see places where people might be appreciating that ambiguity is the essence of faith?

**V.D.:** I don't see it. When people speak of "the faith" they speak of it as an absolute.

**J.W.:** Even your skeptical parish of St. Mark's on Capitol Hill [in Washington, D.C.]?

**V.D.:** Oh, my skeptical parish has merely established another power base. You get your status by being the most skeptical.

**J.W.:** So you are saying that as soon as you accord another person a place of validity — accord them standing and dignity — that you have given up your own exclusive claim on the truth. You, by yourself, cannot define it.

**V.D.:** I suppose that's what I'm saying. You can only define your perception of the truth.

**J.W.:** If you accord someone's exclusivist

position dignity, it is hard to know how to proceed because their terms for inclusion involve someone else's exclusion.

**V.D.:** I can acknowledge that my truth will not be the whole truth without someone else's piece of the truth. But sometimes the way another person phrases their truth, I am wiped out, I have no standing. And I don't have to accept being wiped out. That's the fine line that I draw. It's not an easy position. It is a tension, because each one of us wants to claim absolute truth.

But both of us have to bow before a greater truth than either of us can verbalize.

**TW**

## BACK ISSUES WITH CONNECTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

**The following back issues of The Witness contain articles which may relate directly to The church in conflict or simply to the spirit of this month's topic.**

- Alternative ways of doing church (9/94)
- The Christian Right (10/96)
- Defying presumptions: gay/lesbian Christians (6/97)
- Fasting in Babylon (12/96)
- Holy matrimony (12/95)
- Staying in my denomination (10/94)
- When the church engages rage (12/92)
- Women's spirituality (7/94)

### Other available back issues:

- Africa: Come, spirit, come (6/95)
- Allies in Judaism (10/97)
- American Faces of Islam (5/96)
- Be Ye Perfect (3/93)
- Birthing in the face of the dragon (12/91)
- Body wisdom (5/95)
- Caesar, widows and orphans (4/93)
- Church structures and leadership (5/97)
- Christians and animal rights (10/93)
- The communion of saints (11/93)
- Disabilities (6/94)
- Economic justice (5/94)
- Economies of sin (3/95)
- Godly sex (5/93)

- Glamour (11/94)
- Hospitals: quality, access and spirit (6/96)
- Immigration: the flight into America (12/97)
- In defense of creation (6/93)
- In need of a labor movement (9/96)
- International youth in crisis (7-8/93)
- The Left (3/94)
- The New Party (11/95)
- Northern Ireland: winds of peace (11/97)
- Ordination: multi-cultural priesthood (5/92)
- Perspectives on Aging (1-2/93)
- Raising kids with conscience (3/97)
- Resisting sprawl (10-95)
- Silence (1-2/96)
- Sports as a principality (1-2/98)
- Unmasking the death penalty (9/97)
- Welfare 'reform' and poverty in the 1990s (3/98)
- What do you do with what you don't believe (4/98)
- Witness in the world (gen'l conv. issue, 7-8/97)

**To order a back issue, send a check for \$3.00 per issue ordered to The Witness, 7000 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210-2872. To charge your back issue to Visa or Mastercard, call (313) 841-1967, or fax (313) 841-1956.**

# Anglicanism as an ongoing argument

by Rowan A. Greer, III

[The following is an excerpt from scholar Rowan Greer's analysis of material issued by the American Anglican Council. His paper is titled "Reflections upon 'A Place to Stand: A Call to Mission' and other documents issued by the American Anglican Congress [sic]." From an historical perspective, Greer says, it is impossible to speak of "traditional" or "orthodox" Anglicanism.]

Authority in Anglicanism — or perhaps its apparent absence — has always been a problem. Richard Hooker's Puritan opponents often defied the ecclesiastical law of the land. Indeed, Queen Elizabeth felt obliged to sequester her second Archbishop of Canterbury, Grindall, because he supported the Puritan prophesying and the *classis* movement. In 1717 Bishop Hoadley preached a sermon on Christ's words "My kingdom is not of this world" in which he denied that Christ had left any vice regents on earth. The controversy that followed was a bitter one, and the impasse in Convocation between the largely Latitudinarian house of bishops and the largely High Church clerical house led to the total collapse of Convocation.

More recently, when the Church Doctrine Commission in 1976 published its report, *Christian Believing*, for the first time there was a public and official admission on the part of the Church of England that contradictory views were

being held by members of the church. The report described four attitudes towards the creeds ranging from insisting they must remain "a norm of Christian belief" to regarding "the essence of ... faith ... in a life of discipleship rather than in credal affirmation." And it drew the conclusion: "It is, to say the least, very difficult to explain divergences of this fundamental kind merely as complementary aspects of the many-sided wisdom of God."

Stephen Sykes' book, *The Integrity of Anglicanism*, responded to the report by arguing that the Church of England should take its stand on the basis of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Though such a plea seems sensible to me, I remain doubtful that the Prayer Book can resolve controversy in the church or that it can be treated as a confession. Prayer Book revision has meant that different Anglican churches have very different liturgies. The 1979 American Prayer Book, moreover, has clearly — and perhaps rightly — rejected the older principle of uniformity of public worship, and the options it makes available add to the Latin Western liturgical tradition Eastern elements. In addition, different Eucharistic prayers contain different, if not necessarily contradictory, understandings of salvation.

These ambiguities and others like them seem to me characteristic of Anglicanism. But one other factor may be involved. It is possible to argue that there are two foundational points for the Church of England. The first, of course, is the 16th-century Elizabethan Settlement. The second is the 17th-century Restoration Settlement when the sacraments tend to be emphasized more than justification, the demand for holy living begins to outweigh and alter notions of grace, and what Paul Avis calls

the "apostolic paradigm" places central emphasis upon bishops and the three-fold ministry. The revival movements of the 18th and 19th centuries appealed to one or the other of these foundational settlements, but not to both (the 18th-century Evangelicals appealed to the 16th-century church with its emphasis upon justification by faith, whereas the 19th-century Oxford Movement quite consciously appealed to 17th-century Arminianism and to the Restoration church). Needless to say, the ambiguity that results runs the risk of becoming an invitation to chaos.

The conclusion of my argument is a simple one. It does not seem likely that we can fully identify Anglicanism, far less speak of a single "orthodox" or "traditional" Anglicanism. All sorts of attempts have been made to define Anglicanism. The three-legged stool of Scripture, tradition, and reason can be thought to define Anglican belief. Or one can appeal to the Lambeth Quadri-lateral. But these attempts to define Anglicanism by the content of its faith have probably failed.

It is possible to shift the ground and claim that Anglicanism represents a theological method or an "ordered freedom." Here the problem of defining the ordering principles and the assumptions of the method immediately arises.

More persuasive to me is the idea of Anglicanism as a conversation — or even an argument — with different voices speaking for scripture, for tradition, for reason, and for experience. Or, to put it another way, it seems to me that conflict in the church need not be an evil and that the church needs both those who wish to preserve its heritage and those who are concerned that it move forward. The foot-draggers and the banner-wavers may well both be necessary.

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**Rowan Greer** is scholar-in-residence at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Charlotte, N.C. and former professor of Anglican Studies and Early Church Thought at Yale/Berkeley Divinity School.

# ‘Emerging Common Ground’: a Toronto experiment

by Chris Ambidge

**I**t was, I think, Gandhi who said, “Those who shout hear only their own voices.” Shouting is not, ultimately, an approach which works in trying to convince someone else of your own point of view. Too often, though, that is the approach taken by people on both sides as the vexing questions surrounding lesbians in the church are discussed.

As a gay man who is devoted to the Anglican church, I’ve been involved in those discussions for a long time; and, quite honestly, I don’t have time for the shouting any more. I’m not convinced that repeated assertion by either side of “points where I am right and you are wrong” is getting us anywhere. That shouting is tremendously debilitating, both for the shouters and the shouted at. I consider myself blessed to be part of a dialogue in Toronto that seems to be clearing a different path through the underbrush.

I’ve been active with Integrity, lesbian Anglicans and our friends, since the 1980s. In 1994, a group called Fidelity was formed in Toronto. Fidelity felt that the church’s traditional teachings around homosexuality were not being heard enough. Initially I was not pleased by their formation, selfishly wanting everything to go my own way. On mature reflection, though, I’m glad that they exist. Fidelity gives people who do not agree with me a locus for their feelings, where that theology and that viewpoint can be spoken.

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**Chris Ambidge** is on the executive committee of Integrity/Toronto and is editor of the group’s newsletter, *Integrator*, <ambidge@chem-eng.torontot. edu>.

Over the past few years, Integrity and Fidelity have come together in different ways — ways that I believe are truly advancing the Commonwealth of God.

Terry Finlay, bishop of Toronto, called a group of people together to engage in dialogue around the still-vexing questions. Six people, three from each “side,” have been talking with the bishop for nearly three years. At our first meeting, the bishop asked us, “How can we live together in the same church?” Our dialogue has continued with the hope that there is a way. Very early on, we realized that while we have obvious and significant differences, there is a great deal of material on which we agree. That shouldn’t be surprising, for the rock on which the church is built is common to all of us.

We spent a lot of time working out a statement of *Emerging Common Ground*, eight points which we could all affirm. We realize that no one individual has all the answers, simply from the limitation of their point of view. This means no one has a monopoly on truth. We agree, among other things, that Scripture is not to be mined for proof-texts to hammer against others; we agree that the Holy Spirit continues to lead the church. We agree that Christian tradition is very important and must be respected, and we agree that it is important to re-examine tradition occasionally, particularly when there is real human pain and anguish. These last two are not new, of course; but they are not often seen in the same document.

The statement was presented to the diocese at our synod last autumn in the form of a pamphlet available at both the Integrity

display and the Fidelity display. I think it is highly significant that any statement at all could be made which deals directly with gays and lesbians *and* which would in good conscience be distributed by both these groups. The document has been commented on by several news services, both inside and outside Canada.

The other way that Integrity and Fidelity have come together is at the eucharistic table. Last September, Paul Feheley, vice-president of Fidelity, was the celebrant at Integrity’s monthly eucharist. He preached, we prayed together, and all of us passed the peace of the reconciling Christ. Fidelity and Integrity members then circled the altar for the liturgy of the eucharist. “We break this bread to share in the body of Christ / we being many are one body, for we all share in the one bread,” we prayed and then administered the elements one to another around the circle.

The dialogue with our bishop is ongoing in areas where we may see things differently, and Paul Feheley will preside again at another Integrity/Fidelity eucharist next September. We’re continuing to live together in the same church.

I don’t want to sound holier-than-thou, but I really think that is why Integrity and Fidelity appear to be making some progress. Jesus Christ is the rock on whom we *all* stand. As we look at each other during the discussions, we are looking at our beloved’s beloved. The discussion table is also a eucharistic table. We must come to that discussion table believing that everyone is there in good faith.

Accepting the bona fides of the others is not enough, though. I believe we have to get rid of the idea of winners and losers, us and them. It’s not easy, for that bifurcation is deeply entrenched in our culture, from sports competitions to the law courts to party politics. I remember watching debates in General Synod 1989. Early on there was a vote on some matter where a decision had to be made. When the motion



passed, there was some applause, which was very quickly stopped by Archbishop Hambidge. "I don't want any of that," he said. "Applause like that after a motion means someone has won, and if there are winners, there are losers. I don't want any losers in this Church, so I don't want any applause."

Ann Carlson of Integrity/Tidewater put it this way: "When we talk of peace and community, we too often assume that they can be achieved only through victory, defeat or compromise. I think we need to expand our definition of peace. I can't be at peace with an enemy. I am not at peace when God is on my side and I view other faith community members as God's opponents. True peace may involve learning to live without God on 'my side,' because God is bigger than that."

Fidelity's Paul Feheley put it this way in his sermon to last year's joint Integrity/Fidelity service: "You and I both know that we are right in our thinking of what the church should do regarding all the ques-

tions about homosexuality. I wonder if we have the same conviction to admit that we could be wrong. How far are we prepared to risk our understanding of the truth? How open are we to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us? Too few of us are prepared to risk. We think our goal is victory, when it must be the pursuit of truth."

I would not want to minimize either the very real concerns of or the differences between Integrity and Fidelity people; but I am advocating moving away from a confrontational "P wins, therefore Q loses" model of debate. It's not helpful. Lesbians and gays in the church raise hard questions, and one joint eucharist and one pamphlet are not going to answer them. But we continue to talk, and we continue to pray together.

It isn't easy. There are people on both sides who say we've sold out. I've been called an Uncle Tom for making nice with my oppressors. That's debilitating. One of the things that keeps me going is the notion,

pointed out to me by a wise woman, that God will not allow the church to be destroyed by this one issue. Jesus gave his life for us, the church is his body, so something as relatively minor as this isn't going to cause the church to blow up. That does not mean we won't make mistakes as we journey. But the Body of Christ and its many members will survive.

The idea of "us and them" is pernicious, but very deeply ingrained. Think of the eucharistic prayer: "This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you and for many." That prayer has been around for centuries, with implicit distinctions between "you" and "the many," between us and them; but that dichotomy is not found in any one of the Gospel narratives. As we said in *Emerging Common Ground*, "It is not given to any of us to know the whole truth, and so we need to learn from each other."

If we ALL commit to more listening and learning, and less shouting, maybe the still, small voice will make itself heard. **TW**

## 'Our arguments are not moving people to tears'

Last December the third Burning Issues Conference sponsored by the Diocese of Virginia focused on whether the church's continuing debate over the sinfulness of homosexual relationships is "a gospel opportunity or a gospel threat." Conservative and liberal speakers made presentations before an audience of about 110 Episcopalians.

In an analysis of the event published in the March 1998 issue of *United Voice*, the newspaper of Episcopalians United (see p. 14), *Voice* editor Doug LeBlanc observed that the event "highlighted a pattern evident during open hearings at General Convention: the Right relies on propositional truth and often abstract theological principles, while the Left

appeals to people's emotions through powerful storytelling and firsthand experience."

LeBlanc concluded his analysis with this assessment:

"Burning Issues demonstrated that charitable discussion about sexual morality is not only possible but achievable. It also demonstrated that liberals hold a powerful trump card in personal stories that draw on people's empathy.

"Unless North Americans regain an appreciation for propositional truth, or conservatives have more dramatic personal stories to tell, conservative Episcopalians face a daunting challenge.

"Perhaps conservatives need to suffer, truly suffer, for what we believe. Perhaps we need to show the courage and the risk-taking that will lead to suffering.

"[Louie Crew and his partner, Ernest] took risks by living together in rural Georgia. Crew spoke of receiving regular death threats and of teenagers throwing rocks at his apartment. What sort of risks are conservatives willing to take that could lead to similar hostilities, albeit more polite, from their fellow Episcopalians?

"Perhaps conservatives simply must find a way to tell our stories more effectively — a way that is candid but not aggressive, dramatic but not self-pitying, faithful to abstract truth but compelling in its word pictures.

"For now, our arguments are not moving people to tears. This may not be a truth we want to face, but in today's Episcopal Church, that means losing not only hearts, but also the votes at Convention, of our fellow Episcopalians." — J. W.

# Seeking 'common ground' in Atlanta

by Emmett Jarrett

**L**ike many in the Episcopal Church, I found the Walter Righter trial of 1996 and its outcome distressing. Trial courts are not good ways to establish doctrine, but the open flouting of General Convention resolutions and House of Bishops statements by a growing number of bishops is not edifying either. When the court's decision left doubt in my mind about whether our church has any doctrine of Christian marriage at all, I spoke out in my congregation on the issues of homosexual marriage and ordination. I argued that the Episcopal Church has a workable and Gospel-based teaching on the subject, if only we would adhere to it faithfully.

There are two parts to this teaching: First, the General Convention of 1976 resolved that "homosexual persons are children of God, who have a full and equal claim with all other persons on the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church." Second, the 1979 General Convention affirmed that "the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity, and sexual chastity [is] the standard of Christian sexual morality. Therefore ... it is not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual, or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage." This may sound old-fashioned to readers of *The Witness*, but it is still the teaching of the Church and I believe it is true.

Since the Righter court's decision was construed by many to mean that the church had no such teaching, and that doctrine

could not be enforced except by canonical process, I joined with some others in proposing that the Diocese of Atlanta include this teaching in its canons at its Annual Council in November 1996. That resolution was defeated, but another resolution was adopted which called for a task force — subsequently appointed by the

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bishop, Frank K. Allan, and named "Common Ground" — to develop a process for parishes to participate in substantive discussions of these issues. The resolution recognized (1) that there is a teaching about marriage and sexuality in the Episcopal Church; (2) that some want to keep this teaching and others want to change it; and (3) that a substantive discussion of the issues, not just different folks sharing their feelings, was needed to promote ultimate resolution of the questions and (more proximately) reconciliation among those who have different views.

The Common Ground task force met regularly for a year. We shared laughter and tears about what is happening to the church all of us love because of honest differences on important issues. We tried to eschew labels such as "conservative" and "liberal." We were able to recognize, most of the time, that the revisionists on this issue are not arrogant elitists who don't read the Bible or love Jesus, and those who hold the traditional position

are not rigid redneck racists or uneducated fundamentalists who never change their minds about anything. At the end of a year of work we reported to the 1997 Annual Council that we had developed a "process for conversation" for parishes in the Diocese of Atlanta and were authorized to facilitate such discussions.

Our process envisions forming groups from different congregations to ensure diversity of membership and perspective. The "pilot group" included my own parish, St. Michael and All Angels, where there is a diversity of opinion on the subject but a general conservative tone, and St. Bartholomew's Church, which has an openly gay assistant rector and a generally liberal position on contemporary issues. Both are "good churches," deeply devoted to Jesus and the Anglican tradition, and committed to effective ministries in their communities and beyond.

At the first meeting of our "Common Ground" group, people introduced themselves. It quickly became apparent that the disagreement is not, strictly speaking, between gay and straight people. Many who are not gay are liberal on the issue, and many who hold more traditional views are neither ignorant of homosexual persons in their own life experience nor personally homophobic. There is a passion on both sides, and the issue is personal for everyone. There is also a genuine desire to seek the truth and to be open to new insight and experience.

We established a pattern of eating a meal together before getting down to discussion and concluding with corporate worship. The Common Ground process assumes that nothing much can happen if people merely talk; they must have fellowship, and they must pray together. At compline at the end of the first night's meeting, I sprinkled each person with baptismal water to remind us of our baptismal connectedness and integrity.

The second meeting was held at St.

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Bartholomew's, following the same format, and the focus was on Scripture. Presentations were made by facilitators after people had an opportunity to read articles by Victor Furnish and Richard Hays, from Jeffrey S. Siker's book, *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). In smaller groups people shared passages in the Bible that were important to each of them and talked about how they use the Bible in everyday life. Differences emerged as some affirmed the primacy of biblical teaching for them and others expressed the view that the Bible is an important source, but not their exclusive basis for moral decisions.

The third meeting introduced the topic of tradition. Everyone agreed that both they and the church have "changed" in the past. The question was whether a particular change with respect to gay marriage and ordination of gay clergy was right. We made two lists: specific issues on which the church has changed, e.g., ordination of women, use of the vernacular in liturgy; and broad areas of continuity, which included the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation, baptism and the eucharist. The broader the perspective the more common ground was apparent; the more narrow the focus, the more sharply disagreement manifested itself.

The fourth session will look at reason and what we know about human sexuality from perspectives other than theological, and the fifth will be a "wrap up" session for people to share what they have learned — about the issues and about one another, about their church and about themselves. All of this will be reported to the Annual Council in November 1998. So far, no one has changed his or her mind on "the issues," but there is increasing understanding of different people and their ideas, and an awareness of the broad areas of agreement that we

share as well.

The essence of the Common Ground initiative in Atlanta is recognition that we do have a position in the Episcopal Church on these issues, even though some want to change it, and that changing the position is a serious business. Those who are in favor of the ordination of sexually active homosexual persons and of gay



*Disputa* (detail), 1509, Vatican

Raphael

marriages are people who are nourished in their life by the grace of God in Scripture and the sacraments.

Those who are opposed to such changes are also devoted to the Bible and the Episcopal Church's sacramental life, and would not be more at home in fundamentalist sects. They are not homophobic people who will change their convictions when they learn that gay folk are people, too. Our learning leads me to think that we shall have to live with the ambiguity of our present situation for some time and not opt too quickly for excommunicating our opponents whenever we can muster a majority at General Convention. But we have work to do if we are to learn how to live faithfully.

As a priest I have ministered with and to gay people all of my life. I used to be a "liberal" on this issue, because I thought that was "the loving thing." But my experiences in ministry, and my reading of Scripture in light of those experiences, convince me that the church will do no one any favors by abandoning its theology of marriage and its discipline of seeing marriage as the exclusive context for sexual expression. The issue, for me, is not a matter of recognizing gay people but of resisting societal pressure to reduce people from full human status of women and men to a partial identity based on sexual attraction. I believe we have failed to face up to far more basic issues of the relations of women and men. Gay people must be welcome in the church, and, like everyone else, gently invited to repentance and faith, the all-inclusive call of Jesus to sinners. I don't think sexual sins are worse than other sins, but they are sins. And I fear that we are rushing toward an individualist ethic that turns sex into a commodity and sells the illusion of satisfaction to the highest bidder. Families are dearer than that.

A friend in Boston, shortly after the birth of my first child in 1985, said to me angrily: "You see, you get married, and you have a baby, and society says you are all right. They won't do that for me!" I agree that society (and more importantly the church) should affirm marriage and child-rearing in ways both practical and theological. My friend was a baby once, and his mother and father struggled to make a marriage and a family, by God's grace. Society's approval is not what the Gospel is all about. So I said to my friend: "When I wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, society's approval does nothing to allay my anxiety. Only Jesus can do that, and he will do it for you, as well as me."

Then and now, our only true "common ground" is Jesus. **TW**



# Resolving conflict when no one's in charge

by Carol Bell

The vestry of an Episcopal church votes on a motion about use of the church building. On both sides of the issue, there are strong feelings, but one side carries the majority. Then, those who have won the vote say, "No, we don't want to proceed with this. We don't have consensus yet."

At a diocesan convention, it is impossible to distinguish those who are ordained from those who are not ordained; only the bishop, who is the official presider of the meeting, wears a clerical collar. Even congregational delegations are hard to spot, because there is no formal seating arrangement. Every congregation, regardless of size, has the same number of voting delegates. Ordained persons may or may not have been elected to serve as delegates; there is no voting by orders.

A resident of a small midwestern town asks a friend who is an Episcopalian, "Tell me, who exactly is in charge over there at your church?" The answer, "No one; we all are; all of us are the ministers."

These are snapshots of life in the Diocese of Northern Michigan. For the past 15 years, many of the women and men who make up this small, somewhat isolated, diocese have questioned, debated, changed, and changed again their approach to leadership and to conflict resolution. With the encouragement of our bishop, Thomas K. Ray, a number of congregations have undertaken the difficult task of implementing a circular model of leadership, and that model has had a

profound effect upon how these congregations deal with conflict.

## Every voice heard

Marion Luckey says of her parish, St. John's, Munising, "Everyone's gift is honored; everyone's voice is heard." In Munising and elsewhere, ministry is neither the job of a stipended priest, nor the full-time vocation of a non-stipended priest ordained under the Canon 9 "local ordination" provision of the Episcopal Church. Ray and others in Northern Michigan would call either of these options a non-circular, hierarchical model of leadership.

Likewise, what happens when decisions are made in Trinity Church, Gladstone, is the antithesis of the top-down model. "Every person's opinion is truly valued," says church member Carol Clark. "We know that not everything can be resolved, and we can live with that. We give each other the freedom to hold different points of view. Because everyone

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*"We give each other the freedom to hold different points of view. Because everyone is respected, no one feels he or she has to jockey for position; there's room at the table for all of us."*

— Carol Clark

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is respected, no one feels he or she has to jockey for position; there's room at the table for all of us."

Clark recalls an occasion when a group of Trinity parishioners tackled an issue that was causing great conflict in the city of Gladstone: the possible construction of a limestone plant. "At Trinity, we chose to have a dialogue about the issue, knowing that it was a very hot topic. Why didn't we avoid such a volatile discussion? Because it was real, because it affected everyone," Carol says. "And it was painful, but we came through it fine. We got our emotions and our opinions out on the table. We knew it wasn't about changing people's opinions; it's always about being honest and respectful of one another."

## Mutual ministry

Clark indicates that the high trust level she and others experience at Trinity has come about as the result of 10 years' intentional work on what the diocese terms "mutual ministry." A church that embarks on this program calls a number of people from its midst to form a covenant group. For about three years, the group studies together, learns about one another, faces conflict, and practices shared leadership.

At the end of the preparation period, with the approval of the bishop and Commission on Ministry, the members of that covenant group are commissioned as a ministry support team, with several of their number ordained as priests and deacons. Others are commissioned to roles such as catechist, stewardship coordinator, priestly ministry coordinator and preacher. But the ministry support team does not now become a team that "does the ministry." Rather, the goal of these men and women is to encourage and enable the ministry of the entire congregation.

If this approach sounds chaotic, it's because, to some extent, it is. If it sounds time-consuming and unwieldy, Jack

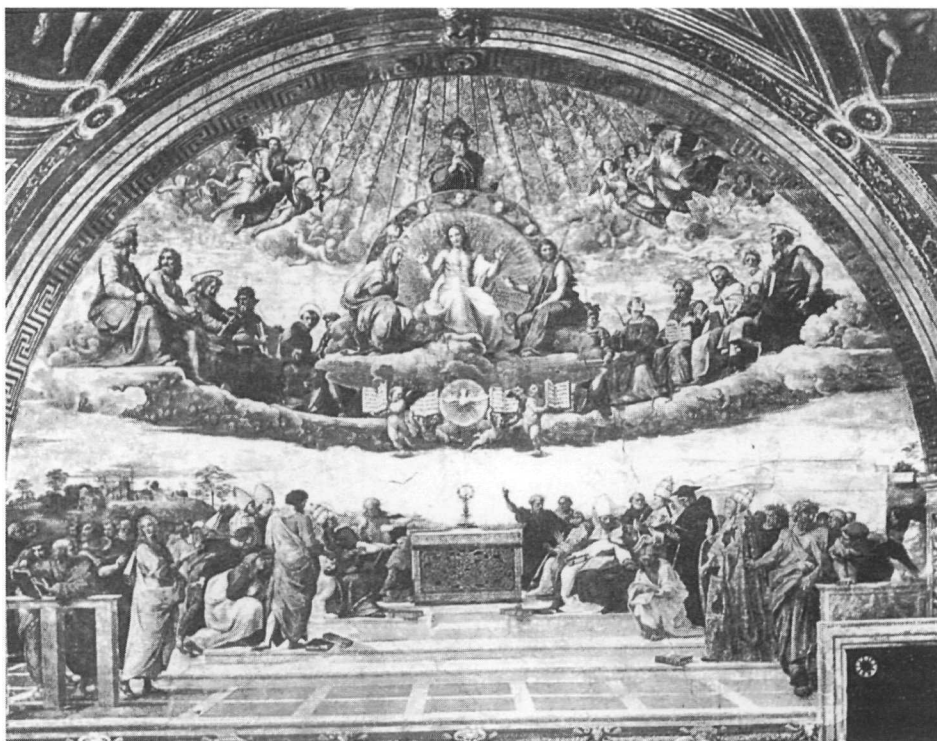
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Carol Bell is a freelance writer living in St. Ignace, Mich., <cedars1@northernway.net>.

Glascock, a member of the ministry support team at All Saints' Church, Newberry, would agree. "Before we even get to the point of conflict," he says, "we discuss it a long time, and by that, I mean a very long time. Several years ago, our presiders [locally affirmed presbyters] said they would like to have the altar moved out from the back wall; they wanted to face the congregation. It took us a year-and-a-half to two years before anything was moved. We talked about it openly with the entire congregation; everyone's opinion was listened to. One of the [diocesan] missionaries, Charlie Piper, came and met with the church for three hours. He gave us some historical background about liturgical space. And when finally we did move the altar, the ministry support team stood ready again to hear people's response, to change our minds. I think, because we took a long time and sought consensus, there was little or no problem; the new arrangement was embraced."

According to Tom Ray, facing conflict in a non-hierarchical structure involves not just patience, but also speaking — and hearing — the truth in love. "It is my experience that the further you ascend in a hierarchy, the less likely you are to hear the truth. When I have a very good idea, I bring it to a group of people and I disclose my emotions and my investment in that idea. Then I marvel at how the idea gets changed, shaped, and improved beyond anything I ever could have devised."

Ray cites an incident that took place when he was rector of St. Luke's Church, Evanston, Ill., as the turning point in his thinking about non-hierarchical decision-making. He had brought a plan to the vestry which received lengthy discussion, but which ended up pretty much the way he, the priest and therefore the authority figure, had hoped it would. Afterwards, a woman commented, "If this is the way we're going to handle things, we don't even have to meet." When Ray



*Disputa*, 1509, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican

Raphael

became bishop of the Diocese of Northern Michigan, he was determined that no one would feel as this woman did about how the church community makes decisions. He wanted to be ready to hear the truth, to refrain from any and all micro-management, and to encourage communities of Christians to take adult responsibility for their ministries.

#### **Non-hierarchical diocesan decision-making**

Clark says that in Northern Michigan a non-hierarchical model of decision-making and handling of conflict takes place on the diocesan level, as well as on the parish level. "It is the method employed by Diocesan Council, the Episcopal Churchwomen, and the Ministry Development Strategy Team [an advisory group that assists parishes in discovering how best to engage their unique ministries]". Bonnie Turner, of Grace Church, Menominee, who serves on a number of diocesan committees, adds that the

strength of a non-hierarchical, collegial model of leadership is shown particularly in reflecting on issues together and benefiting from everyone's insights and points of view.

"It has become the way we do things," she says. "People are empowered to do what they do best."

Not every parish in the diocese uses the leadership-in-a-circle model. Three parishes have a traditional rector, and there are several other communities that have not embraced the mutual ministry program. Turner comments on her experience of the recently formed Discernment Committee, which brings together representatives of every region as the diocese moves toward selection of a bishop to succeed Ray when he retires in 1999.

"We make decisions by consensus and we take turns facilitating," she says. "Subgroups have tasks to do, but no one person is in charge. People from congregations who approach decision-making in a

more top-down way express discomfort; the collegial approach seems chaotic. They indicate they are fearful that the sub-groups will not accomplish their tasks and people won't know what is going on."

### **More communication, not less**

For Ray, decision-making and conflict are best handled with more communication rather than less, with more information, not less. In the diocese there are six seminary-educated persons who work with local congregations as missionaries; their job is to consult, to assist, to offer education, to facilitate groups when needed, but never to be in charge. They are companions.

"They are part of the group, not leaders of the group," Clark says. One of the missionaries, Manuel Padilla, says, "Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. Differences must be addressed and the process always involves building relationships."

Jim Kelsey, Ministry Development Coordinator for the diocese, has made communication a high priority. With his assistance, dozens of people in the Diocese of Northern Michigan are linked by computer networks. He adds that Roland Allen's insights about the mission field pertain here, too: "Whenever possible, decisions and issues should be discussed openly, in the light of day, with as many of the community gathered as possible. Individuals should not have to grapple with tough decisions. The more input there is from the community, and the more consensus we have, the more prepared the community will be to deal with the conflict that must and will come along."

Parishioners, bishop, and missionaries agree that this model of shared leadership requires a great deal of hard work; it involves a lot of pain. Groups have discovered that when they refuse to let decisions be made unilaterally, the immediate result is likely to be ambiguity, unre-

solved issues.

### **Practicing on the choice of carpet**

Jack Glascock tells of another incident from the life of All Saints', Newberry: New carpet was needed in the nave. Several months ago the debate over what color carpet to install seemed to be polarizing the congregation. Emotions were

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*"We designed a way to avoid a win-lose situation and have a responsible discussion — but, thereby, we also designed a process by which we were able to avoid taking a stand."*

— Thomas Ray

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verbalized, votes were taken. Then the vestry decided the time wasn't yet right to decide.

"And we still don't have a decision on that. We simply won't go forward until everyone can live with the final choice. No lines are drawn in the sand; rather, we see ever-changing wave-marks that show the ebb and flow of our conversations."

Isn't the color of carpet a not-so-earth-shattering issue?

Glascock agrees. "But what we're doing is practicing. If we can resolve the little things, if we can build community and really listen to each other, then we are likely to be able to deal with the really tough issues. It's good training for us."

Living with ambiguity, speaking the truth in love, disclosing personal agenda and emotional investment, seeing conflict as potentially creative, even bonding — these are the marks of a diocese that daily struggles with great challenges: small numbers, financial difficulties, and geographical isolation. Mutual ministry,

at least partially, began as an answer to the question: How can our worshipping communities have a full sacramental life when we are financially unable to hire full-time clergy? According to many of the men and women in the diocese, these practical considerations quickly led to the development of a transforming model of leadership that Carol Clark describes as "exciting, energizing, affirming, and healthy." Jack Glascock says, "This seems to me to fit very well into our Episcopal heritage: praying about the issue, taking time to decide, giving due consideration to different points of view, and — most of all — listening to, and being open to, each other. It may take years to make a decision, but isn't it worth it?"

### **When justice is the issue**

"Worth it, in terms of fostering and maintaining a relatively healthy community, yes," says Martin Bell, missionary in the diocese. "But the thought that we might take years to make decisions about justice issues is not a happy thought; we simply cannot afford to wait years before enacting justice."

Ray references an instance: Diocesan convention in 1996 included a long, open, and honest discussion of whether or not to urge the Standing Liturgical Commission to develop rite(s) for the blessing of committed same-sex unions. "We designed a way to avoid a win-lose situation and have a responsible discussion — but, thereby, we also designed a process by which we were able to avoid taking a stand."

The convention decided not to bring the resolution to a vote. "In issues of conscience, we can't always wait for consensus," Ray points out, "and certainly collegial deliberation does not exonerate the individual." Perhaps in this model of leadership, where conversation is respectful and compassionate, where diverse viewpoints are welcomed, the individual has a particularly poignant responsibility to call the community to take a stand. **TW**



# Post-war Guatemala: what does solidarity mean now?

by Nancy Button

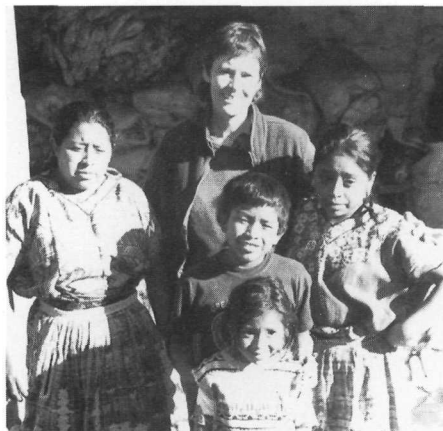
Last February I joined a 12-person delegation to Guatemala sponsored by Witness For Peace. All Mainers, we were an ecumenical group that included Episcopalian, Quaker, Catholic, Buddhist, Presbyterian, Mennonite and Jewish perspectives. But we were bound together by a common interest in "post war" Guatemala, the Guatemala which dates from the peace accord signed by the Guatemalan government and guerrilla forces on Dec. 29, 1996.

We were all aware that the U.S. government had been involved in many critical aspects of the 36-year civil war, first through a CIA-staged coup of democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 and then, once fighting broke out six years later, through financial support, training and supplies provided to the Guatemalan military. By 1990 there were an estimated 150,000 dead, 50,000 disappeared and 1 million people internally displaced, this in a country with a population of 10 million.

As U.S. citizens — and persons of faith — we hoped to be part of an alternative diplomacy. We wanted to know if and how an end to the civil war was changing people's lives.

We also hoped to gain a better understanding of our changing role as solidarity workers. The mission of Witness For Peace, "To change U.S. policies which contribute to poverty and oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean and to promote just alternatives," remains the same today as when the group first began responding to the Contra war in Nicaragua in 1983. But at that time this involved the

dangerous work of accompaniment of civilian populations living in war zones. With "peaceful" governments reigning in Central America, what are we now to do?



The author with host family in Comalapa

We talked to teachers and health-care providers, widows' groups and promoters of Mayan identity, labor organizers and land reformers. One of our host families in Comalapa was that of Rosalina Tuyuc, a founder and leader of the widows' group, CONAVIGUA. Rosalina lost her father, brother and husband to "the violence" in the early 1980s. She has been targeted with threats and accusations for her leadership and advocacy for indigenous and women's rights. Elected to the country's congress in 1995, she believes the peace accords provide an opportunity for more general participation in government and that this opportunity must be seized.

Every day we met people actively struggling to create better lives for their families and communities with very limited resources. A health care worker we met in Comalapa noted the difficulty of meeting the peoples' basic health-care needs. Although his clinic's care providers are trained in Western-style healing, they have little access to Western medicines.

Constantly in financial crisis, the clinic draws on traditional forms of healing to meet the demand for care.

Back in the capital, we met with Rodolfo Robles, a man who has been involved in union organizing at a Coca Cola factory since the early 1970s. When the plant closed down in 1984, the workers occupied the plant for 13 months and, with international union support, negotiated its reopening.

Throughout our travels, we grappled with our shame and sense of responsibility as U.S. citizens, feeling that since our government had facilitated the violence, we should have the power to "fix it." One morning, during one of our daily spiritual reflection periods, a Catholic member of our delegation shared a quote from the Talmud, "It's not your obligation to complete your work, but you are not at liberty to quit."

Economic and political globalization has pushed the Central American solidarity movement to work on international economic, labor and environmental issues, moving well beyond our anti-interventionist and anti-war roots. Participating in this sort of "reality tour" is a life-changing experience and a good way to combat the effects of too little — or overwhelming amounts of — information. With the support of the church community and friends, the trip was financially quite possible, even for those of us with limited incomes.

Witness For Peace also has a call-a-week program through its National Grassroots Response Network. This enables individuals across the country to provide input in a timely way to legislators and decision-makers. To find out how to participate or to obtain more information about reality tours, contact Witness For Peace at 1229 15th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 588-1471, <witness@w4peace.org>.

Nancy Button is a potter who lives in Warren, Maine, and attends St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Rockland.



# EUC grapples with racist truths, consequences

by Anne P. Scheibner

In the late 1960s a cartoon appeared in *The New Yorker* showing a middle-aged white couple sitting on their apartment balcony overlooking Harlem from Morningside Heights. The woman is looking troubled and her husband raises his head from his paper to reply with some irritation, "The ghettos, my dear, are not the problem; they're the solution." As the Episcopal Urban Caucus (EUC) met in Boston for its annual assembly last February, this punchline seemed uncomfortably up-to-date. It became clear that many of the problems faced by urban ministers also seem to represent "solutions" for the emerging global economy in the U.S. The assembly was marked by the attendance of Frank Griswold, the new presiding bishop, and continued the EUC's emphasis on anti-racism work.

In his keynote address, Manning Marable of Columbia University pointed out that racism is neither a problem in the sense of an easily remediable oversight nor even a regrettable accident. "Intolerance is a social consequence of how society is organized," he stated, "and we cannot uproot bigotry unless we are also willing to examine seriously the economic and social environment which fosters and perpetuates social inequality and unfairness." Given the violence underlying racism, Marable was less than sanguine about the prospects for a national conversation about race.

"If the presidential commission truly wants to understand the contemporary dynamics of racism," he commented, "it should go first to the prisons and jails across this country, conversing with black, brown and poor inmates."

He saw the growth of prisons as the "solution" to the problem of what to do with

young black and Latino men for whom there are no industrial, corporate or community jobs. Marketing this group as prime "consumers" in this industry is trumpeted nightly in what passes for local evening news. There the latest violent crimes are reported complete with pictures of handcuffed perpetrators, mostly black. In 1983 the prison population of the U.S. numbered some 650,000, second only to South Africa. In 1996 that number was 1.6 million, doubling at a rate of once every seven years.

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*"What lynching was in the South in the 1920s, the death penalty and life sentences without parole have become in the 1990s." — M. Marable*

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"The criminal justice system today has become our chief means of regulating and controlling millions of unemployed and under-educated black and Latino young men," observed Marable. "What lynching was in the South in the 1920s, the death penalty and life sentences without parole have become in the 1990s."

At its current level of \$14 billion per year, the prison system is one of the biggest industries in the world, with 150 new cells being added every day. "More Americans work full-time for the prison industry than for any Fortune 500 corporation but General Motors," Marable noted.

In the panel discussion following Marable's address, Sandra Peters, consultant for the Episcopal Church's Anti-Racism Dialogue Project, suggested that what she called the "Prison Industrial Complex" is part of the War on Crime, replacing the Cold War and War on Drugs and certainly the War on Poverty.

"The creation of a new 'enemy' is needed to fill a psychic and political void," she declared. "Young black and brown men

are prime candidates for this 'enemy' role."

She also observed that the use of prisoners as cheap labor for license plate production and highway maintenance has now expanded through privatization, with at least one major airline using prisoners to answer phones. Phone banks are also being staffed by prisoners for state Medicaid and motor vehicle departments.

"The wealthy and powerful almost never go to prison for the crimes they commit," Manning also pointed out. "For the most oppressed, however, prison is frequently an improvement in their life's circumstances: free health care, three meals a day, shelter, some modest training programs. Today, there are hundreds of thousands more black men in prison or stuck in the criminal justice system than are enrolled in colleges or universities."

Is the Episcopal Church positioned to grapple effectively with this emerging reality? Panelist Barbara Harris, suffragan bishop of Massachusetts, thought not based on her involvement in prison ministry over many years.

"The Episcopal Church has had a 'we-they' attitude towards those in prison and very much a chaplaincy model of prison ministry," she said. "This attitude contrasts markedly with the Muslim approach which sees the prison as an extension of the mosque. Until Christian churches can come to see prisons as an extension of the congregation, there will be no real change in approach."

Assembly participant John Midwood, Archdeacon of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, reported that an exciting alternative to the chaplaincy model is taking place in Philadelphia where there is now a vicar for a prison congregation.

Various forms of the institutional violence connected with racism were highlighted throughout the rest of the assembly. Marable detailed the exposure of three-out-of-five African Americans to toxic waste disposal sites. "U.S. industries today are pumping 2.4 billion pounds of toxic chemicals into our air and billions more into our water supplies," he stated.

Sandra Peters reported that 150-200 black and multiracial churches were burned

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Anne Scheibner served as staff to the Urban Bishops Coalition in the late 1970s and was a founding board member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

in 1997, but that the Justice Department is refusing to track these occurrences because it has determined that there is no "racial conspiracy" involved. "How can such a determination be made," she asked, "when there is ongoing evidence that young white men engage in arson and other acts of violence as part of the initiation process into white supremacist organizations?"

"Unequal access to technology will be the next form that racism will take," Marable predicted. "The old forms were those of colonialism and Jim Crow. Twentieth century America developed more subtle, sophisticated ways of defining people as not being worthy — in the instance of redlining that translated as not being credit worthy. Today the question is who will have access to the Internet?"

An assembly participant noted that if 100 people represent the world's population, 57 would be Asian, 21 European, 14 North and South American, 8 African; 70 would be non-white and non-Christian; 70 would be illiterate; 1 would have a college education; not one would own a computer.

Differences between whites and blacks in position and wealth are readily apparent in spite of the gains made since the civil rights movement. "If housing and vehicles owned are included in the definition of 'net wealth,'" stated Marable, "the median middle-class African-American family has only \$8,300 in total assets, to \$56,000 for

a comparable white family."

Affirmative action may have reached the political limit of viability, but not because it achieved its objectives. Marable quoted Jesse Jackson's speech to the National Press Club noting that white males still account for "80 percent of all tenured professors, 92 percent of the Forbes 400 chief executive officers, and 97 percent of all school superintendents."

Declaring that change comes from the margins, Marable gave credit to the work done by the Right wing through think tanks and the mass-based Christian Coalition in remaking basic political assumptions of the mainstream. He recounted a recent conversation he had with Ossie Davis, actor and advocate for progressive causes. "Every generation needs a moral assignment," said Davis. We have yet to define that moral assignment for ourselves and in our time." Marable suggested that the task of this generation may be "to speak truth to power."

In a Town Meeting at the end of the assembly participants used a nine-page case study of the City of Anywhere to identify where passion and workable strategies might lie. Each participant chose a group focused on issues including economic and environmental justice, criminal justice, politics and acts of hate and deliberated solutions to the problems facing Anywhere.

Stressing the need to focus on "do-able"

solutions, Byron Rushing, moderator and Massachusetts State Assemblyman, reminded participants of the institutional change model represented by Associated Parishes. Associated Parishes began in the 1940s with 12 priests who were willing to do something radical — making the eucharist the central service — by starting with their own parishes and sharing the results of their experiment with each other. "Starting small is not a problem," declared Rushing. "The important thing is never to propose a collective action you wouldn't do yourself."

Participants emerged from their small groups with a variety of possible avenues churches might pursue. Some encouraged parishes and community institutions to make connections with schools and to be open after school hours to make safe and constructive havens for children. Others urged increased numbers of non-white clergy. The Diocese of Massachusetts reported that half their postulants are now people of color and Harris is involved in a series of conferences on the campuses of historically black colleges to encourage vocational exploration. However, they noted that it is still almost impossible to name more than one predominantly white congregation with a black rector.

In his closing remarks to the assembly, Frank Griswold, the church's new presiding bishop, encouraged the EUC to ask the House of Bishops to issue pastoral letters on issues of concern to the Caucus. "The House of Bishops has lost a sense of the larger picture," he said. "The House appears to be obsessed with sexuality."

The Caucus later took action formally to request the House of Bishops to complete their anti-racism training and to address a number of related issues, starting with criminal and economic justice.

In other action, the EUC elected Clara Gillies of Buffalo, N.Y., its new president. The EUC addressed racism on a global level by joining the Jubilee 2000 effort to persuade banks forgive a major part of Third-World debt in the year 2000. Today interest payments prevent the poorest countries from making needed social investments.

## Promoting dialogue: Oasis study guides

The Oasis, a ministry with and to gay and lesbian Episcopalians based in Newark, N.J., now has available two new study programs concerning homosexuality. *All Love is of God*, a program created by The Oasis, encourages congregations to use dialogue to explore faith issues surrounding homosexuality. *Claiming the Promise*, a project developed by an ecumenical team under the direction of the Reconciling Congregations Program, focuses specifically on the study of biblical

references on homosexuality.

Each teaching series comes with an individual Leader's Guide and Participant's Manual. Leadership training is also available to familiarize the leader with the content of the programs as well as provide helpful resources for group facilitation of what can sometimes be a difficult topic of discussion.

For more information or to place an order call Oasis education coordinator Barbara Davis at 973-430-9909; <TheOasisNJ@aol.com>.



# Peace in Israel/Palestine: Now is the time

by Joseph H. Summers

This year is the 50th anniversary of the war of 1948. The Israeli government has proclaimed this year to be a Jubilee celebration to mark the founding of the State of Israel. For Palestinians, the year of 1948 is remembered as "Al Nakba," Arabic for "the catastrophe," the time when Zionist forces drove three-quarters of the Palestinian population out of their homes and lands. In the context of Israeli policies that are clearly leading to the creation of permanent "bantustans" for Palestinians and of a Palestinian executive authority which has shown itself to be anti-democratic politically and morally bankrupt, God's liberating word was heard and proclaimed in Bethlehem.

Sabeel, which in Arabic means "the way" or "a channel of life-giving water," is an ecumenical, grassroots, Palestinian liberation theology movement whose conference this year focused on "The Challenge of the Jubilee: What Does God require of us?" As described in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, the Jubilee is the time designated for the restoration of the people and the land through the redistribution of land, the forgiveness of debts and the freeing of captives. Eight hundred and fifty people from around the world, representing a wide variety of Christian denominations, gathered to reflect on the challenge of this vision and how it could become a reality in Israel/Palestine. Much of the conference focused on what the Palestinians need to do to lay the ground work for a diverse and healthy democratic society. In this article, however, I am going to focus on what Palestinian Christians told us about their

situation and what its implications are for me as a Christian from North America concerned about the well-being of all the people in the area, including Jews, Christians and Muslims.

## The victims of the victims

It was European anti-semitism and ultimately the holocaust which gave birth to the reality of the State of Israel. It has been guilt over the Holocaust and our legacy of anti-semitism which has kept most Western Christians from being willing to listen to the plight of the Palestinian people.

Few in America understand that the Israeli state that was created on the lands seized in 1948 was in essence an apartheid state. It had two principles. The first, that Jews anywhere in the world, no matter what their circumstances, would be welcome to come and reside in this new land. (This was done at the same time Palestinians were not allowed to return to their homes.) And the second, the recognition of the Jewish National Fund as a private entity which would own the land seized by the state and which would then lease these lands only to Jews. The whole political legal framework that has subsequently been established maintains this legal apartheid.

To compound matters, Israel has permanently occupied the western half of Palestine since the 1967 war. The evidence of this occupation is graphically evident, with soldiers and checkpoints at regular intervals. Security forces can detain people for two years without even bringing charges. Amnesty International has found that the Israeli forces routinely torture Palestinian prisoners and the Israeli government has justified these practices. In the midst of this military occupation the same pattern of land displacement has continued. There is not enough space here to describe all the methods used to do this, but the results are that Palestinians are forced to leave their homeland daily. Palestinian attempts to challenge their

treatment go nowhere in Israeli courts, for such matters are viewed as security matters.

In the process of the Sabeel conference all these realities were brought home by visiting various parts of the country and talking with the people living in the midst of these realities. We heard from Palestinians who spoke of what it is like to grow up near the lands one's ancestors cultivated, to hold the title to the land and still have the keys to your house, but not to be able to live in it. We met with the Mayor of Beit Sahour (Shepherd's Field), one of many whose lands were seized to build Har Homa, a new Jewish settlement in the midst of the Palestinian lands around Bethlehem, which is being built to house 50,000 people. (Israeli law allows 40% of any individual's lands to be seized without compensation.)

We met with a family whose 12-year-old son died in his mother's arms, shot by a settler firing into Palestinian houses. We traveled past the shrine erected to honor Bernard Goldstein, the young man who massacred dozens of Muslim worshipers in the mosque in Hebron, who is now viewed as a saint by people in the settler movement. We met with a Muslim grandfather who had recently built a house for his children only to have it bulldozed down because it did not have the proper setback from the roadway. He currently has 37 family members living in his small house. We heard from a young Jewish woman who told of learning one day that the home she had grown up in had been seized from a Palestinian family and her courageous journey of opening her life up to them and dealing with the ethical imperatives of that situation.

## Oslo and the betrayal of peace

The good news is that, despite 50 years of displacement and domination, the Palestinian people have survived. Further, that despite their treatment they are willing to embark on an inclusive future—a future in which both Jews and Palestinians are respected and affirmed so long as there is some basic degree of justice. In a gesture that one can scarcely conceive of for a people rooted in the land, the Palestinian

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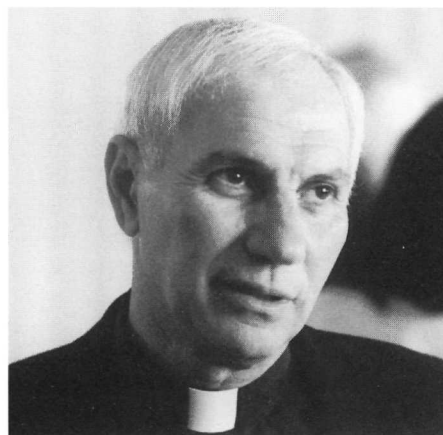
**Joseph H. Summers**, vicar of Incarnation Church in Pittsfield township, Mich., recommends that all denominations work in partnership with Sabeel to help promote the justice that will yield peace. Photographer **Herb Gunn** is editor of *The Record* in the Diocese of Michigan.

people came to the point of deciding they would give up their claims to the lands seized in 1948 in exchange for Israel's acceptance of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. (This means settling for 23% of what was once their land.) This is the position they took in the Oslo peace talks. The bad news is that Israeli leaders have clearly rejected this offer and have instead used the peace process to push things closer to what they see as the ultimate solution: the creation of *bantustans* — small isolated areas, often immensely overcrowded, in which Palestinians can exercise some limited degree of self-governance. Many of us had the sense that the hardships imposed by the Israeli government — the new travel restrictions, the economic strangulation of Palestinian areas (the already low per capita income of Palestinians has declined 30 percent in the five years since Oslo), the ongoing process of land seizures and house demolitions — are designed to push the Palestinian population into a new war which can then be used as the pretext for justifying this solution.

### What can be done?

First, it is clear that no political solution will emerge in this situation unless the U.S. begins to pressure Israel to make peace. The estimated 10 billion dollars in aid the U.S. annually sends to Israel through donations and tax write-offs has been what's sustained the Israeli government in its intransigence. Israel's current GNP is around 90 billion dollars, so this aid is no small factor in their economic success. Though no major leader in our political establishment is currently willing to go this way, Americans need to insist that our government's aid be linked to respect for human rights and international law. (Instead the U.S. has vetoed a wide variety of U.N. Resolutions that have called on Israel to adhere to international law.) We also need to insist IRS tax deductions

should not be given for projects or organizations whose work would be illegal here in the U.S., such as the purchase of lands that only one particular ethnic group can live on or be employed on, or of



Naim  
Ateek

Herb Gunn

"Those people who are supporting Israel's intransigence and arrogance, do not love Israel," says Naim Ateek, director of Sabeel, a center devoted to peace in the Middle East. "If Israel continues in the way it is in today, I believe it will destroy itself." During a recent U.S. tour, Ateek said that no one in Israel or in Gaza has the power to force Israel to comply with the documents signed in the peace process which the U.S. witnessed; the U.S. must insist on Israeli compliance. Ateek thanked the former presiding bishop, Edmond Browning, for "turning the attitude" of the Episcopal Church toward an understanding of the justice issues involved. Ateek served as canon of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem before devoting himself to working for Sabeel full time.

settlements, which represent one of the biggest obstacles to peace. There seems little question that Israel would begin to negotiate seriously if aid were cut off. Given the disparity of power between Israel and the Palestinians, there is little likelihood of any resolution to this crisis without such leverage being exercised.

For this to happen, Americans need to come to know the Palestinian people and their story so they will no longer be invisible to us or demonized by politicians. Just as Americans of good will have committed themselves to hearing the story of the Jewish people and the Holocaust and

letting that story transform them, so too, we now need to hear the story of the Palestinian people. There is a powerful photo exhibit on the story of the Palestinian people since the turn of the century which

was put together for the conference and which is now available in this country. The Palestinians we heard understand that if they are going to be successful in overthrowing the policies of those who are willing to maintain a state of permanent war, and find their way to peace, it will have to be a peace built not only on justice and human rights but also on a willingness to accept and affirm those they have struggled with. In our approach to this issue in this country we can do no less. We must come to understand the way the tragedies of these two peoples are interrelated so that we will show understanding and compassion towards both parties and not fall into the trap of projecting innocence onto either. We can no longer afford to let an open and honest dialogue about these issues be silenced by those who fear that it will perpetuate anti-semitism. Given the history of anti-semitism in this country, this is an understandable fear, but at a time in which politically reactionary forces in Israel have made common cause with some of the

most anti-semitic Christians in this country, mainstream Christians and Jews must step forward to confront those in their respective communities who are laying the groundwork for disaster.

In the Sabeel conference keynote speech, Edward Said called for a new politics based on integrity and inclusiveness for Jews and Arabs. He stressed that though the challenges ahead are immense, such a politics can win. To settle for anything less is to settle for what we have now, a situation which is sowing the seeds of tragedy for generations to come.

# In memory of the martyrs of Acteal

**[The following statement, released March 24, was signed by 338 religious leaders around the world, and sent to President Clinton and President Zedillo of Mexico.]**

*When all the prisoners of the land are crushed under foot, when human rights are perverted in the presence of the Most High, when one's case is subverted — does the Lord not see it? ... All our enemies have opened their mouths against us; panic and pitfall have come upon us, devastation and destruction. My eyes flow with tears because of the destruction of my people.*

— Lamentations 3:34-36, 46-48

WE CRY OUT IN GRIEF, joining our voices to the worldwide clamor prompted by the December 22 massacre in Acteal, Chiapas, Mexico. The 45 victims, mostly women and children murdered in the very act of praying for peace, were members of a Christian group, *Las Abejas* (The Bees). They had chosen the path of nonviolent love in their unceasing struggle for justice, a commitment for which they paid the ultimate price.

We call on the governments of Mexico and the U.S. to examine official policies that have resulted in stalled peace talks and repeated explosions of violence in Chiapas. Resolute action is urgently needed to demilitarize the conflict and achieve a negotiated resolution.

The Mexican government has recognized repeatedly that the intolerable situation of indigenous peoples in Chiapas is rooted in centuries of oppression and discrimination. Recent years have seen the rise of organized opposition, including everything from political parties to non-governmental organizations to an armed insurgency. As representatives of the religious community, we lament that historic injustices have at times been exacerbated by the intolerance of various religious com-

munities. We deplore the rise of paramilitary groups in this conflictive context and the enormous cost in human suffering — hundreds of deaths, thousands displaced, untold deprivation and disease.

We are encouraged that the Mexican government reacted to the massacre and resulting outcry by arresting members of a paramilitary group, including the local ruling-party mayor. In addition, the governor of Chiapas and the federal Interior Minister were replaced. However, there is evidence of a pattern of government tolerance — and even support — for such paramilitary groups:

\* Recent media reports revealed an October 1994 Mexican Army document calling for “the advising and support of the self-defense forces or other paramilitary groups” in order “to break the support relationship that exists between the population and the [Zapatista Army].”

\* Mexican and international human rights groups have documented the growing number of paramilitary groups operating with impunity in Chiapas since 1995.

\* In July 1997, the Chiapas state government provided the notorious paramilitary group “*Paz y Justicia*” with \$580,000 in assistance, ostensibly for agricultural projects.

\* Raul Vera, coadjutor bishop in San Cristobal de las Casas, wrote to the Mexican Interior Minister in October 1997: “We have information that ... ruling party congressmen are sponsoring the sale and the trafficking of weapons, acting as protectors and coordinators of the various paramilitary groups.” He received no reply.

We are further troubled that after the massacre, the military increased its presence in Chiapas by 5,000 troops and staged aggressive maneuvers in Zapatista areas.

The U.S. must also examine its role in

the increasing militarization of the conflict. Key military officials in Chiapas responsible for counter-insurgency strategy have been trained at the U.S. School of the Americas. Most of the Mexican Army's weapons come from the U.S.

Any attempt at a military solution in Chiapas will only lead to more bloodshed and unrest, a loss of credibility for the Mexican government and strained U.S.-Mexico relations.

WE CALL FOR PEACE, pledging our solidarity with the suffering people of Chiapas. We call upon the U.S. government to re-examine the appropriateness and legality of further U.S. military assistance and training in light of the widespread human rights abuses attributed to the Mexican Army by Amnesty International and other human rights groups and in light of the Army's reported ties with paramilitary groups.

We call on the Zedillo administration in Mexico to act decisively to achieve a negotiated solution and specifically: to take immediate steps to disarm completely the paramilitary groups in Chiapas; to implement the February 1996 San Andres Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture without further delay as a necessary prelude to renewed peace talks; to refrain from any military action that might threaten peace talks.

Inspired and challenged by the witness of the martyrs of Acteal, we commit ourselves to: continuous prayer and effective advocacy for a just and lasting peace; support for existing ecumenical dialogue initiatives in an effort to create a positive environment for trust and cooperation among the indigenous people of Chiapas.

May the sacrifice of the many martyrs of Chiapas be the last shedding of innocent blood in that suffering region. May their vision and their commitment to nonviolence be an inspiration that spurs renewed efforts in the search for a community of peace on earth.

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# The apostle

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

***The Apostle* (1997), written and directed by Robert Duvall. Starring Robert Duvall, Farrah Fawcett, Miranda Richardson, and John Beasley.**

**I**t is a church schism which sets in motion the narrative plotline of Robert Duvall's Oscar-nominated film, *The Apostle*. Sonny Dewey returns from a whirlwind evangelistic tour, a montage of diverse settings with genuine pentecostals playing the extras, to find himself legally ousted from his Texas pastorate. The stage is set for a fight, with congregational factions aligning, not along doctrinal lines, but over personal-ity allegiances.

The faultline runs down his marriage as well. He has discovered his wife in bed with the rival minister. For a time Sonny holds himself in agitated restraint, shouting prayers to Jesus through the night. Eventually, drunk at his kids' little league game, he erupts in violence and flees for his life.

In Duvall's honest and loving portrayal of this pentecostal preacher, there is a level of violence acknowledged just below the surface throughout the film. Both a gun and a Bible may be found in his car glove compartment. When he confronts his wife Jessie, played well by Farrah Fawcett, her wary recoil makes clear that she's been hit before—her firm exit now from the marriage may truly be the sane step of self-preservation.

In the conviction that God is hovering just beyond the frame, it seems Sonny

always finds that the doors of providence swing open. In flight, he circles his car uncertainly at an intersection, stops an instant to kneel and pray, then rushes off headlong toward he knows not what. After ditching the automobile in a river, he begins again empty-handed, rebaptizing himself in those same waters, rededicating and rechristening himself "The Apostle E.F."

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*The charismatic pastor, suddenly locked out of his church and barred from his flock, simply begins again in irrepressible perseverance — schism and evangelism being two sides of the same coin.*

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His steps lead to a small backwater town in the Louisiana bayou. There he covenants with a retired and skeptical black pastor, Brother Blackwell, to start a new congregation in the weathered shell of an abandoned church. In so many respects this is a version of the old pentecostal story: The charismatic pastor, suddenly locked out of his church and barred from his flock, simply begins again in irrepressible perseverance, schism and evangelism being two sides of the same coin.


With a little yellow school bus and some radio preaching spots, the "One Way to Heaven" Church flourishes. And, lo and behold, without demographic design, a cross-racial congregation, with cross-racial leadership, emerges.

Is this realistic and true? It's certainly true to the original Pentecost, where language and race and culture, prove no barrier whatsoever to Spirit and Word. And it's true to the origins

of modern pentecostalism at the turn of the century on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. But it's by no means certain. There are racist varieties of pentecostalism, which is to say it may be wildly subversive in its freedom, or thoroughly conformed to structures of oppression. As William Stringfellow put it with respect to the charismatic and the demonic; it is commonplace for the one to be mistaken for the other. But in "The Apostle," the Spirit witnesses to racial reconciliation. And even non-violence of a sort.

In a remarkable scene with an unexpected twist, a racist redneck (Billy Bob Thornton) whom the Apostle has previously pummelled in a fistfight, returns with a bulldozer to level the church. The congregation stands its ground before him and when Duvall lays down the Bible, daring him to risk the judgement by rolling over it, Thornton breaks down and virtually suffers a conversion surrounded by the congregation's embrace.

In a strange parallelism to the film, Duvall struggled in isolation to make what he has called "the most important project of my life." Abandoned, at least in this regard, by friends and backers and, needless to say, the major studios, he labored long and hard to bring it to reality. His own performance is nuanced and stunning.

As the credits roll, the Apostle has begun yet again in prison. Swinging his scythe with the road gang, he leads the rhythmic chant song, an endless flow of questions. In unison they offer over and over their answer: "Jesus!" 

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**Bill Wylie-Kellermann** is director of the M.Div. Program for the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education in Chicago.

*review*

Reflecting on the current threat of schism posed by conservative forces in the Episcopal Church, Robert DeWitt, 86, says he's never thought the Episcopal Church was likely to split — not now, and not during his tenure as bishop of Pennsylvania during the volatile 1960s and 1970s, a period when racial divisions, the Vietnam war and feminist struggles brought into question every cultural assumption of mainline society.

"I think it is awfully tough to split something as amorphous as the Episcopal Church," he says with a wry laugh. "If it were brittle it would split much easier, but Anglicanism is so much more a habit than a doctrine."

He doesn't underestimate the depth of passion behind today's church debates, but believes they are part of an old pattern.

"The gay issue feels like a lot of other things we've had to face up to over the years," he says. "And we're still fighting the demon of ignorance and the demon of fearfulness."

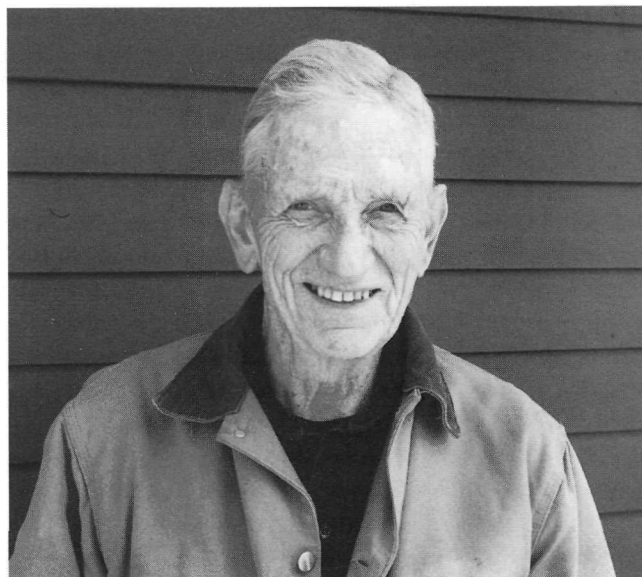
DeWitt's introduction to deeply divisive controversy occurred toward the end of his 12-year tenure as rector of Christ Church Cranbrook, then a large and very lively congregation in a well-heeled suburb of Detroit.

The issue?

"R-A-C-E," he says bluntly.

DeWitt had come to Michigan in 1940 following undergraduate work at Amherst College and seminary at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Mass.,

*"I think it is awfully tough to split something as amorphous as the Episcopal Church."*



Robert DeWitt

## Embracing controversy as God's will

by Julie A. Wortman

where he "lapped up" the day's cutting-edge theology.

"It was a period of intense theological excitement," he recalls with relish. "And there was a great resurgence of interest in religion" that swelled congregations.

But by the late 1950s awareness of racial injustice pressed in on the consciences of liberal Christians.

"I joined with some local clergy in putting an ad opposing racial discrimination in the local newspaper," he recalls. "It stirred up quite a hornet's nest."

Having been at Christ Church for so long — he had also served there as curate from 1940 until 1944 — DeWitt defused his congregation's surprise and agitation by capitalizing on his "insider" status.

"We had the congregation broken up into 50 neighborhood groups that met regularly to discuss the lectionary and study current issues," he says. "So I just went around to each of the groups and

talked to church members face-to-face."

Soon after, DeWitt was elected suffragan bishop of Michigan, a position that placed him squarely in the midst of the social upheaval that had begun to tear Detroit apart. Then, in 1964, he was elected Bishop of Pennsylvania. Immediately, he was swept up in the civil rights furor gripping Philadelphia.

"I arrived to find four of our priests in jail!" he recalls. Siding with the priests, who were protesting Girard College's discrimination against blacks, DeWitt became a controversial public figure over night. DeWitt, his wife Barbara and their five children were subjected to bomb threats and menacing phone calls and their home was placed under police protection.

Within the diocese, criticism of his civil rights stands were nonviolent, but strong and bitter.

"As the world goes, so goes the church," DeWitt shrugs. "The issues are

*Witnesses,  
the quick and the dead*

Julie A. Wortman is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*, <julie@thewitness.org>.

the same for the church and for the world and this was a great issue for our country at that time. So it is not surprising that it impinged upon the life of the sleepy old traditional Diocese of Pennsylvania.”

As the years passed, the focus shifted from civil rights to Vietnam — and the divisions in the church increased. But DeWitt did not see his role as institutional peacemaker.

“The Vietnam War was a big issue that was very divisive,” he says. “But so many of those things are categorical to me. And you don’t hedge on a clear decision about right and wrong. You know, ‘one with God is a majority,’ which can be very seductive and self-deluding — but still compelling.”

He tells a favorite story to illustrate his point — and his own fallibility: “On the night before the ordination of the women in Philadelphia we were working on a press release. The other ordaining bishops had asked me to draft something for them to look over. And I had something in there like ‘*clearly the will of God*,’ and Dan Corrigan said, ‘I think that sounds just a little presumptuous. Why don’t we say something like, *It seems to us a clear issue of justice*?’ I was John Brown and he was ... well, he was Dan Corrigan!”

The 1974 ordinations of the first women priests, in which DeWitt, freshly resigned as Pennsylvania’s bishop, was joined by Edward Welles and Daniel Corrigan as ordaining bishops, rocked the church. Some celebrated the renegade action while others decried its defiance of church law. Pressure to bring DeWitt and the others to trial was great, but the Board of Inquiry responsible for looking into the charges refused jurisdiction. Their brother bishops, however, censured DeWitt and the others — and proclaimed the women’s ordinations “invalid.”

He admits that the church would probably eventually have gone ahead with women’s ordination if the 1974 ordinations had not taken place, but believes they

did the right thing in forcing the issue.

“Justice deferred is justice denied,” he points out. “A majority of the house of deputies and a majority of the house of bishops had gone on record as being in favor of women’s ordination [even though a vote “by orders” prevented the measure being passed]. The mind of the church was very clear. The decision could have

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been stretched out for another two or three conventions. How many women would have been demeaned in the process? I saw this as a pastoral problem.”

DeWitt says he prizes the Episcopal Church’s democratic process “in which you allow an issue to be settled by a vote, knowing some people will go down voting against it.” But, he stresses, there is a difference between counting and weighing votes.

“The spirit of the Episcopal Church is to be democratic, which sounds like majority rule. But majority rule can be a very dangerous thing because you have a lot of people voting who are ignorant of the issues or have distorted perspectives. Some votes make more sense than others. I’m willing to abide by majority rule, but not if those voting don’t understand what they are doing!”

Throughout his life, DeWitt has shown a passion for education. Casting about for something to do after resigning as bishop (“I had always said I wouldn’t stay in that position longer than 10 years — you get set in your ways while the world changes around you”), he went to a vocational counselor. “He had me write

down all the things I love doing and the skills I displayed while doing them. Then he had me write a description of my ideal job.”

He said he wanted to publish “a newsletter for the bishops of the church on the issues of the day.” Shortly after, he was offered the job of editing *The Witness*, a position he held until 1981.

His new role did little to remove him from controversy, as when in January 1980 he decided to run William Stringfellow’s famous “open letter” to Presiding Bishop John Allin calling for Allin’s resignation.

“When you were elected at the Louisville general convention a void opened in the leadership of the Episcopal Church, which has been filled by management,” Stringfellow wrote. “To management, substantive controversy is perceived as threatening *per se*, rather than as a sign of vitality.”

These days, living on Isle Au Haut, Maine, in a community of about 60 families, DeWitt is seemingly removed from the “big issues” which once had him making headlines. But he continues to satisfy his passion for education via the internet. Right now he is taking a class in Latin — keeping one step ahead of an island teen whom he is tutoring in the subject.

As always, too, he maintains a keen interest in the politics of his community. He says the island’s lobstermen’s association, which he helped form, is now hotly debating issues of marine ecology.

“When I say ‘ecology,’ I don’t mean these guys are tree huggers,” DeWitt stresses. “They are interested in marine ecology because it’s their livelihood. There’s an authenticity to their concern that I appreciate.”

With a note of pleasure he adds, “The will of God so often is in accord with the welfare of people!”

It’s a theology that has guided him for decades. TW



in the Nov./Dec. 1997 and Jan./Feb. 1998 issues of PRRAC's bimonthly newsletter journal *Poverty & Race*. You must provide a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope (with \$1.47 postage).

The essays depart from the Initiative's shallow "dialogue/racial harmony" approach, urging an analysis and set of recommendations that stress institutional racism and the theme of racial justice.

Among the authors are Julian Bond, Frances Piven, Peter Edelman, Jonathon Kozol, Karen Narasaki, Herbert Gans, Leon Higginbotham, Sam Hussein, Fred Harris, Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, The National Council of La Raza, David Shipler, Benjamin DeMott, Manning Marable, Howard Zinn and Hugh Price.

If you prefer to have it on a disc or on e-mail, let us know — our email address is <prrac@aol.com>.

**Chester Hartman**  
Washington, D.C.

### Renewals

SORRY I LOST TRACK OF THE renewal date — life would be diminished without *The Witness* arriving at my door!

**Barbara Cheney**  
New Haven, CT

### Irreverence

THANKS FOR THE TWO ISSUES that have arrived in my letterbox recently as a bit of a taste of the magazine. So far the views expressed in the articles fit well into the description of the magazine outlined in the promotional material. I would perhaps add only one comment — I was particularly attracted to the word *irreverent*, a left-leaning magazine that doesn't take itself or life too seriously — that I wanted to see. Perhaps it is just the difference that comes from seeing things from the other side of the world, but I'm still hoping to see a glimpse of the lighter side. Then again, maybe my distance means I misunderstand a more subtle form of irreverence. Either way, it isn't a gripe. I'm looking forward to reading over the next year.

**Mark Finley**  
Westbourne Park, Australia

### *Spirit of the revolution*

I RECENTLY AGREED TO TAKE ON the responsibility of coordinating the *Spirit of the Revolution* column that appears in the *Peoples Tribune*. I am writing to introduce myself to you and solicit your readers' ongoing suggestions, ideas, and contributions for this column. I currently live in San Jose, Calif., with my wife and 13-year-old daughter. I work for a commercial roofing company by day and

volunteer with Community Homeless Alliance Ministry and other community groups.

I believe our society today is disintegrating. New means of production and old forms of distribution are clashing on a world scale. Polarization of wealth is accelerating so sharply, it is unleashing a plague of poverty and desolation.

The task ahead of us is too great for any one church or political organization. We have to engage the least among us, those who are being cast aside by capitalism. They are the stone which the builder rejected. We have to unite them with everyone else who is hard-pressed and becoming disillusioned with the system. Together we can isolate the purveyors of profit, strip them of their power, and build a cooperative society, based on the abundance made possible by modern technology. Many millions in America and throughout the world share this aspiration deep in our hearts.

The time has come to unite all who love justice and truth, be they Muslims or Jews, Christians or atheists. We cannot afford to exclude anyone. The time has come to fight for clarity of purpose. It is my goal to see the *Spirit of the Revolution* column further this process.

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