

WITNESS MAGAZINE

THE GLOBAL CITY

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on the cover

New York City

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Since 1917, *The Witness* has been examining church and society in light of faith and conscience — advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those who, in theologian William Stringfellow's words, have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." With deep roots in the Episcopal Church, we are a journal of spiritual questing and theology in practice, always ready to hold our own cherished beliefs and convictions up to scrutiny.

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LETTERS

Under-reported issue

When it comes to war and other issues of conscience, faith-based publications often do much better than mainstream media do. But I think your magazine and others ought to do a much better job reporting the suffering that's caused by sanctions against Iraq.

Here are three facts that I believe all Americans should know but most of us don't know: (1) The war against Iraq is waged mainly by economic sanctions that were imposed August 6, 1990. (2) Thousands of Iraqi children die every month as a direct result of deprivation caused by these sanctions. (3) Our leaders already knew in 1991 that our sanctions were killing children.

Why don't we all know these facts? Seems to me the war against Iraq is the most under-reported issue of our time, and that magazines like yours should constantly report it even though mainstream media don't.

It's not that our media totally ignore the war against Iraq. Enclosed is a *Time* article that tells it like it is. Look at the date: June 1991. The sanctions weren't even one year old then and now it's more than 11 years. The suffering is even worse now and our print and electronic media occasionally report it.

But if sanctions were killing our own children, wouldn't we expect daily reports in every U.S. newspaper? And wouldn't we expect every faith-based publication to protest, protest, protest until a great wave of moral outrage got the sanctions lifted?

Marjorie Schier

Levittown, PA

[Ed. note: Please visit www.thewitness.org/agw for recent postings from/on Iraq.]

Some executions are justified

Many opponents of the death penalty (Bruce Campbell's September 2001 essay) argue that capital punishment is barbaric, sadistic, cruel and unusual punishment and "state-sanctioned murder." However, if the execution of a vicious serial or mass mur-

derer is state-sanctioned murder, then state imprisonment of rapists, child molesters, drug dealers, burglars and murderers is state-sanctioned kidnapping and state taxation on consumer goods is state-sanctioned theft.

Religious opponents of the death penalty use the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" to buttress their position. But the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is more accurately understood as "Thou shalt not murder." Indeed, a few passages after that commandment is given to man, there is a verse affirming that a murderer forfeits his own right to live.

Some killing is morally justified such as killing in self-defense or in a just war. If the state has the moral right to authorize its citizens to wage a just war against Adolph Hitler, then it likewise has the moral right to authorize the executions of sadistic murderers like Richard Speck, Ted Bundy, John Gacy, Jeffrey Dahmer and Timothy McVeigh.

Haven Bradford Gow

Eudora, AK

The best!

I never want to lose *The Witness*, which I consider the best religious publication out.

John M. McCartney

Detroit, MI

Sunday School reading

As a gift to several of our Sunday School teachers, we wish to give each of them a one-year subscription to *The Witness*. Thank you! We will learn from you and enjoy our reading.

K. Jeanne Person

Grace Church

Brooklyn, NY

Grist for the mill

Thank you. Your thoughtful articles/illustrations/themes/editorials are great grist for the mill of awakening — what hard work for us hobbits.

Elaine P. Morse

Birmingham, MI

Pondering national ideals in a post-September 11th world

by Julie A. Wortman

THE OCTOBER ISSUE was at the printer's and the November copy was flowing in when I got word of the hijackings and attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. As soon as it was possible to think, our staff began reshaping our editorial work in light of a post-September 11th world. We are still feeling our way.

Eerily, November's topic — how people of faith are fighting for the soul of our global cities — was very much germane to the question on everyone's mind: How could this tragedy have happened? As many pointed out, the World Trade Center and Pentagon were "national symbols." True enough, but what seemed crucial was that they were national symbols that to some had become so powerfully emblematic of the demonic that their bloody destruction could seem justified.

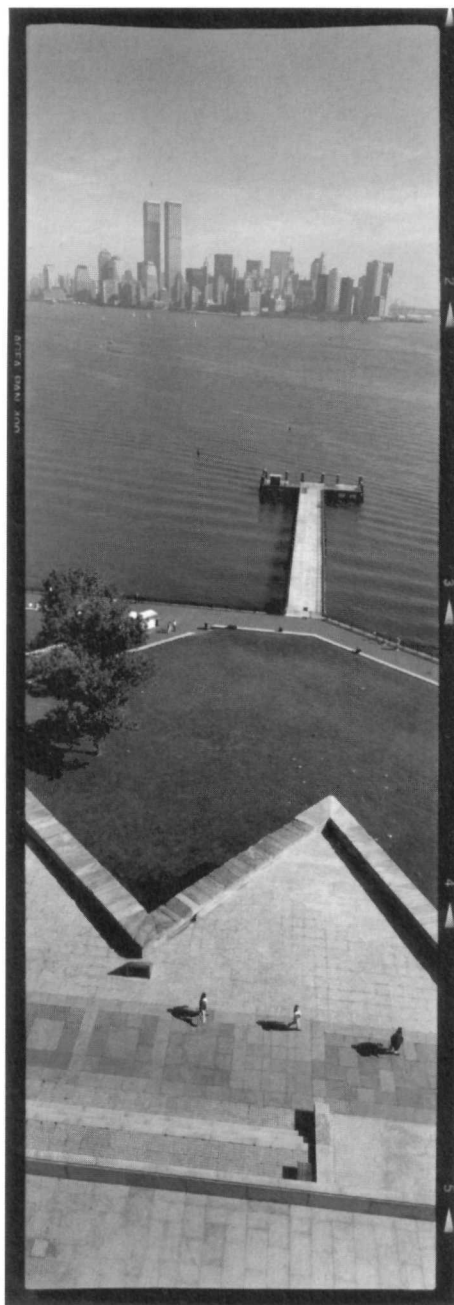
Longtime urban theologian and activist Laurie Green, the Bishop of Bradwell (in the Church of England's Chelmsford Diocese), writes in *The Impact of the Global: An Urban Theology* (2001) that "the crucifixion of Christ is to be found constantly in our urbanized world, for the commodification of people and things and the ruthless exploitation of technology and resources which [have become] the dominant values of globalized urban capitalism, threaten to enslave both rich and poor alike."

To many, the World Trade Center was synonymous with the values of which Green writes. The process by which those values corrupt, Green says, runs as follows: "The poor countries are awash with advertisements for and symbols of the benefits of the wealth of the rich developed world and so naturally look to that rich world for aid. The World Bank offers to assist them but only if they will emulate the values and priorities of the rich world. A loan will be offered only if the poor nation reduces its internal food subsidies, reduces spending on health and education and ploughs its

meager resources into engagement in the world market, seeking to earn foreign currency rather than maintaining its own internal local market. But the international market is so designed that a poor country may never be able to succeed within it. The terms of trade and the advantages which the already-wealthy countries have, lead to the poor new players being pushed ever lower down the league of trade; they eventually find that the initial promise of increasing wealth for all proves illusory. The poor country becomes ever more dependent and the vast majority of its population is driven to deeper anguish and worse conditions than even pertained in their previous wretched state. All this is far removed from the holy promise offered by Christ that when God's Reign comes there shall be a banquet prepared for all the nations. The evidence of the streets of Jakarta, Harare or Lima is that the promise offered by globalization is hollow, driving the rich to hardness of heart and the poor to destitution."

On September 11 the World Trade Center was a place of business inhabited by thousands of people trying to make a living. In the Pentagon thousands of people were working hard to protect that enterprise from coming to harm. Very likely no one in either place thought of themselves as caught up in activities or policies or processes by any stretch of the imagination brutal or demonic. But we here in the U.S. have become identified with an enterprise of globalization, urbanization and militarism which symbolizes death rather than life-giving possibility. We owe it to our beloved sisters and brothers who died in the September 11 attacks — and to all those who have endeavored to aid them and their families — to try to figure out how better to live the ideals we would hope would mark us as a people in the years to come.

Julie A. Wortman is The Witness' editor/publisher



Manifesto: A Mad Farmer's Liberation Front

by Wendell Berry

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.
And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a
card and shut away in a little drawer.
When they want you to buy something
They will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.
So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.
Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.
Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.
Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to carrion — put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap



Family in Park by Daniel Hall, age 9/Shooting Back (1991)

for power, please women more than men.
Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?
Go with your love to the fields.
Lie easy in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is highest your thoughts.
As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.

— "Manifesto: A Mad Farmer's Liberation Front" from
THE COLLECTED POEMS: 1957–1982 by Wendell
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Awaking to horror — and a new way to see ourselves?

by Edmond L. Browning

THE ROLLER COASTER of emotions I have ridden since the September 11 bombing of the World Trade Center is, I am sure, a close cousin of the one everyone else is on. Like everyone else, I find myself waking up at night for no reason, unable to concentrate sometimes. I have wept. I awaken in the morning to the sound of birds singing and the feel of fresh air, to the smell of pine, to the sight of majestic Mt. Hood, and I feel the blessing of being here in our beautiful state of Oregon. And then I

remember what has happened and it hollows out my stomach, as it has every morning, and I reach out and touch Patti lightly, so I won't wake her. She is still there. Thank God.

All this beauty. In the years since retirement, I have never regretted moving out here. Who could? It's wonderful. But, since the bombing, I have longed to be in New York, with New Yorkers. I miss my colleagues always, but never more than now. I miss the city's life in so many ways — nothing momentous, just the way it feels walking

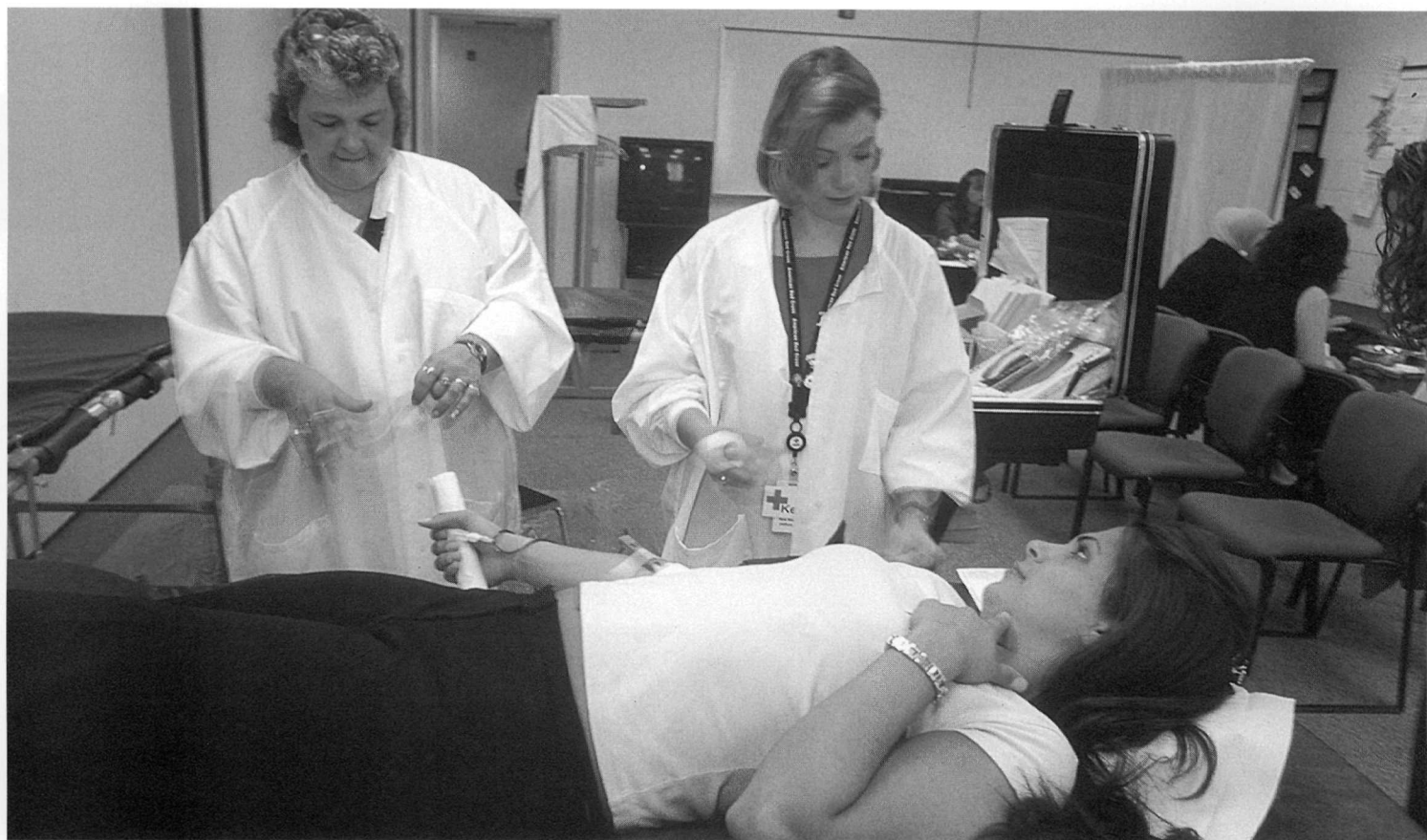
on the sidewalks, the energy, the mosaic of people, the enormity of it. I think of it all the time these days and its memory is precious. I had forgotten, I guess, how much I love the place. Who would have thought that the destruction of tall buildings would break our hearts? But it does.

When I am not feeling these things, with the heightened awareness of how sweet ordinary life is that we all seem to have these days, I am thinking ahead. Thinking ahead, and looking into the past as well. I remember the beginning of the Second World War very well. The sinking feeling, the hollowed-out stomach — we all felt those things, too, just like now. I remember the internment of the Japanese. I remember how sensible it seemed to people at the time, how prudent. I was young: I thought it was unfair, but I know that my elders thought I was idealistic and naive.

Our family spent many years in the Far East. Two of our children were born in Okinawa. We travelled throughout the world a great deal. Parents and children, we learned a lot. One of the things we learned, though, was that, in many places, America and Americans are perceived very differently from the way we perceive ourselves. This could be a painful thing, and it made a deep impression. I remember a time when we had returned to the U.S. and one of our sons didn't want to go to school. "Why not?" we asked. He was crying. "The other kids'll be mean to us because we're Japanese." I should mention that this boy had the blondest hair and the bluest eyes you were likely to find in a human being. But he knew enough about the strength of prejudice, and had heard enough fearful things about life in



Then Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and his wife Patti joined thousands at a special service at Washington National Cathedral and a candlelight march to the White House prior to Operation Desert Storm in 1991.



Jim West

Detroit's Arab community mounted a blood drive to aid victims of the September 11 attacks.

an America of which he had no memory, that his Asian cultural heritage seemed to him a huge divide between him and his future schoolmates. He felt it must somehow *show*, that they would somehow know him, not as one of them, but as an Other.

I reminded Peter, our fourth son, of this moment just the other day, when he called me from his parish in Los Angeles. This parish has a day school attached to it and he has been spending a fair amount of time ministering to the children there. One child from a Muslim Indian family came up to him in tears. "Are they going to put me in a camp?" he asked in a terrified whisper. It is these memories, mixed with these current events, that continue to bring tears to my eyes. It is how little we have learned over the decades, how little we learn from our mistakes, how pervasive bigotry is and how easily fear brings it out. As Presiding Bishop, I spent a great deal of time in Palestine and became close to the situation there. So did

Patti, and we have remained close to it since I left office. Our hearts break every time an act of violence is reported, every time the U.S. misses a chance to show an even-handed regard for the legitimate concerns of both parties with a claim to the land we call Holy. As preparations mount for war, I mourn the missed opportunities for peace. We have let too many of them slip by.

But there are still things we could do in the Middle East to bring healing. Humanitarian aid always costs less than cruise missiles. We could drop the failed boycott of Iraq and "bomb" Afghanistan — with food, medical supplies. We could assist Pakistan at its borders, supplying money for the care of refugees that Pakistan's economy cannot supply. We could return to the bargaining table with the Israelis and the Palestinians with a more realistic vision of what is possible there, and stop being party to the death and destruction caused by the current Israeli version of Manifest Destiny.

Before September 11, I feared that our country was moving into the same isolationism that I remember before the Second World War. Is it really the case that the only thing we can work with Muslim nations on is the declaration of war on another Muslim nation? What about taking some notice of their reality before thousands die in another terrible event?

Make no mistake: The people who ploughed fully-fueled airplanes into two buildings full of innocent people committed a moral atrocity. They will answer for it before the judgment of God, and so will those who encouraged and supported them. But it may be that this horror will provide for us a new way to see ourselves, as citizens of the world rather than as a class apart. ●

Edmond L. Browning served as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, headquartered in New York, from 1986 through 1997. He now lives in Hood River, Ore.

MONEY MAKES THE WORLD

An interview with Barbara Garson

by Jane Slaughter

FROM THE NUMBER OF TIMES per day that newscasters treat us to the breaking news on the NASDAQ and the Dow Jones, you'd think that everyone had a consuming interest in following his or her investments minute by minute. The truth is that less than half of American citizens have anything to do with Wall Street, even as little as belonging to a pension fund that's invested in stocks.

But the doings of Alan Greenspan and the financiers do affect all of us, nonetheless. Author Barbara Garson, who became famous back in the 1960s as the author of the anti-war play *MacBird!*, decided to "get beyond the global babble" and find out how the rapid and massive flows of money around the world act upon ordinary people. The results are contained in *Money Makes the World Go Round: One Investor Tracks Her Cash Through the Global Economy, from Brooklyn to Bangkok and Back* (The Penguin Group, 2001).

Garson is the perfect person to attempt such a project: She's radical, she's funny, and she takes each person she meets, from Wall Street traders to Singapore nannies, at face value. "Everyone I met was surprising," she says, "but no one exotic." Garson wrote two important books about work, *All the Livelong Day* in 1975 and *The Electronic Sweatshop* in 1988.

Garson takes us through her own face-to-face learning process about currency crises, Eurodollars, Third World debt, and the International Monetary Fund. Her method is to deposit her publisher's book advance in (a) a local bank and (b) a mutual fund, and then follow her money as it wings its way

around the world. It helps build an oil refinery in Thailand, it finances a catalytic cracker in Singapore, and it's part of "Chain-saw Al" Dunlap's rampage that wrecked the Sunbeam Corporation in the U.S.

Although she's made herself an expert on money, Garson has resisted its fascinations in her own life. She works when she needs to and lives simply.

TW: Describe the project you set for yourself.

BG: When I was young, "one world" was a phrase that meant brotherhood, peace, Esperanto and the U.N., Eleanor Roosevelt. It was a vision that we would work to make the world better, and you were creating oneness by moving in the direction of equality, raising everybody up.

Suddenly, I look around 25 years later, and instead of "one world" the phrase is "global village." And what does that mean? Global village apparently means electronic banking and CNN, and as far as making the world good, that's just anathema; that's what you shouldn't do. Global village means information highways carrying unstoppable capital flows, and if you try to interfere with that, it'll be disastrous. You must just let the money do what it wants to do.

In other words, the worst people operating from their worst motives will somehow bring about good. Anyway, "good" is a word you don't want to use because that will slow things down. One Eleanor Roosevelt could stop all this progress.

So I decided to take a look at this global village and the mechanisms of how money was actually going to unify this planet. I

decided to follow two typical investments: money in the bank and money in a mutual fund. I got a book advance and I put the first half in a very lovely bank, the nicest I could find, because I had these prejudices and I wanted to counter them.

TW: I've always thought of you as a person who's chosen to not be concerned with money, to have a reasonably relaxed lifestyle. Certainly you were not an investor.

BG: My mother says the same thing. She keeps asking me, "You? What do you know about money?" I had this \$65,000 book advance, and I thought that was pretty good. But as the book went on and on, and it took five years ultimately, each year my mother, being a bookkeeper, would say to me, "So let's see, what are you earning now, \$19,000 a year? Getting into the fifth year, so what is this now — \$13,000 a year?"

TW: What happened to the money you invested in the nice little small-town bank?

BG: I thought they needed it, they wanted it, they'd give me some sort of service — and the first thing I knew, this bank had nothing to do with my money. That's because whoever holds my money has to receive some return on it. They could find something profitable to invest in, such as a factory. But when you enter what's called a "mature economy," like the little town of Millbrook, N.Y. — the buildings were already built. It's not that all the buildings that were needed were built and everybody's home was good. But everybody who could afford a mortgage

GO ROUND

already had their mortgage.

So that money becomes a hot potato. There was nothing for that bank to do with my money except pass it along to their correspondent bank, which happens to be Chase.

Now Chase had the same problem. The need to bring in a return means that that money has to go somewhere, and it's that "has to" that created the whole global economy. In other words, there used to be laws and restrictions on how money could be moved abroad, laws in this country and laws from other countries keeping it out. Then there came a time when investment in this country wasn't so profitable. All the factories after World War II had been rebuilt and workers weren't being paid enough to purchase everything that could be made. But the money had to go somewhere where it would bring in a return, and it was that money that created the so-called global economy.

TW: One of the people I liked best in the book was the fisherman who stops when he has enough. Why is there no such thing as "enough"?

BG: Let's say you make a successful investment. What does it give you? More money. You have to do something with that money. Money can't stop, it can't just sit in the bank, if you're a bank, because that's actually costing you money.

One of the things my money became invested in was a seafood importer in Brooklyn. He had a \$3-million line of credit from Chase, an amount that began to seem cozy and wee to me as I pursued my studies. He was importing black tiger shrimps.

I went to Malaysia to see my shrimp farms and I talked to the people who were

sending these shrimps into the U.S. and I saw what they were doing with the profits, which was creating jellyfish factories — and this was the most progressive and useful part of anything that happened with my money.

But let me tell you about shrimp farms. I thought of a shrimp farm as something like underwater farming, this kind of Jacques Cousteau-like scene, with people bubbling along and taking the shrimps and putting them in baskets. But in fact shrimp farms are huge pits stretching along the coast. Sea water comes in and the wastes from the shrimp are put back out into the water. The illegal immigrant Indonesians who worked on my shrimp farms were rowing through the pits putting down the food so it would be evenly distributed, so that the shrimp wouldn't have to swim and they'd be a uniform size, the kind you get in packages, 25 to 30 per pound. In order to do this they were tearing the mangroves out of the tropical coastlines.

Because of the enormous density of it and the chemicals they used, they were polluting themselves, so in three years they'd have to move up the coast a little further. And in fact whole coastlines were used up, and they'd move on to other countries.

Now, the pollution also caused the local fish to move farther out into the ocean, so that coastal fisherman who had been rowing out to catch fish now couldn't find any fish near the coast. They either had to go out of business, or tie themselves to the global economy, in the sense that they now had to get a motor for their boat.

Once you had a motor, you had to pay off the debt from buying it. Or if you went to work in a factory instead of fishing, either way, you had to keep doing it.



American International Building/Financial District ©Hurst Hamann

The case against sprawl

"Sprawl" is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as "poorly planned, low-density, auto-oriented development that spreads out from the center of communities." It creates that doughnut effect in some cities where acrylic and asphalt suburban shopping malls form a ring around the dead center, where the old downtown sits decaying. Between 1960 and 1975, the state of Pennsylvania lost a total of 3,600,000 acres of farmland. That's like losing a geographic area the size of Pittsburgh every six months.

When Iowa State University Professor Ken Stone examined the sales changes in Iowa small towns from 1983 to 1993, he discovered "a huge shift of sales to larger towns and cities, with substantial amounts captured by mass-merchandise stores." Stone estimates that the total number of businesses lost in small towns and rural areas was 7,326 in the decade studied. Iowans spent \$425 million more at discount stores, but \$153 million less at variety stores, \$129 million less at grocery stores, \$94 million less at hardware stores, \$47 million less at men's and boys' apparel stores, and so on. In the 11 store types studied, businesses lost more than \$603 million in sales. In this ten-year period, Iowa lost:

555 Grocery stores
298 Hardware stores
293 Building Supply Stores
161 Variety Stores
158 Women's Apparel stores
153 Shoe Stores
116 Drug Stores
111 Men's and Boys' Apparel stores

That may have seemed like a joke in 1994, but Wal-Mart now has more sales than the Gross Domestic Product of Israel, Greece, Ireland and Egypt.

A Price Waterhouse report says that by the year 2005 just 10 companies, including Wal-Mart, will control 50 percent of food-store sales.

*[Excerpt from Slam-Dunking Wal-Mart by Al Norman (1999). Available online on the Sprawlbusters web site at:
www.sprawl-busters.com/caseagainstsprawl.html/].*

And the most subversive thing I heard in all my travels was when a fisherman said to me that what he had liked before, before the shrimp farms, was that you stopped when you had enough. You came in for the day when you had enough. It wasn't an easy life, but he stopped when he had enough. It was the most subversive thing I heard, because if many people stopped when they had enough ...

My money could not stop — it would back up, so to speak. The people who hold it have to bring in returns for other people.

But a shrimp farm, however awful it sounds, is economically productive compared to just buying and selling the shares in something, which is a pyramid scheme which has to end in a crash.

TW: The media presents investors as risk-takers, entrepreneurs sometimes, hard workers. These are the dynamic movers and shakers of our economy. But isn't investing literally making money off of someone else's work? When you own stock, aren't you taking the profit somebody else, a worker, has created?

BG: The word investment is a very broad word. It could mean I'm not doing the physical work but I take a risk in letting my money be used to build something new, and I don't know whether that project will be profitable or not. So it could involve risk and it could involve, if not work, then a commitment of something of yours that you won't have back if it doesn't work.

But what I discovered about the phase of capital that I was watching was that investors were not putting their money, for the most part, into something new. They weren't building anything. They were buying shares of things that already existed. The pyramid scheme was that if they could get someone else to buy shares, then the value would go up. And they weren't taking risks, because they were using the government to make sure any risks they took were covered.

You have to understand that when you buy a share, you're not paying money to a company. You're not giving it money with which it can employ people. No, you're buying a share from some other shareholder. They sold this share to you because they thought they had a more profitable use for the money. What are they going to do with the money? If they were poor people, they might buy something with it. But for the most part, they're not. They're going to buy more shares with it. They're going to bid up the price of those other shares, and you're bidding up the price of the share you bought.

You may seem to have more and more money — the value's going up every single day — but you've really only got the same underlying little factory that you hope will make enough money in the future to pay the shareholders.

As the price of the shares goes up and up and up, suddenly, somebody realizes, hey, the last guy we can draw into this has already come in. Somebody is the last guy in, and he can't find anybody to buy his shares. And then there's a crash.

That's why Wall Street wants to privatize Social Security — oh, a bunch of rubes to buy our shares so we're not the last people in.

You're damned if you do and damned if you don't in this system. I just described to you how harmful my shrimp farms were, but the money that went into them at least was producing shrimp farms. It's equally catastrophic when the money goes into producing nothing.

TW: Or maybe into actually destroying things. In your book you talked about that super-successful investor Michael Price and his philosophy of "unlocking the value."

BG: Michael Price would get up in these shareholder meetings and say, "I own 5 percent of the shares of Chase" or "I own 22 percent of the shares of Sunbeam. We're going to unlock the value." Michael Price wasn't faddish. He

studied what assets a company had. Say they owned a factory and the factory had so much money in the safe for reinvestment. So once he owns the shares of the company he can force the executives to open the safe and give the money to him. That is “unlocking the value.”

Now, it may not be money in the safe, because there rarely is. More likely, Michael Price says, “The total worth of your factories if sold separately is such and such. I’m going to make you sell the factories. I don’t care if the company no longer exists. The cash will be turned over to me and my investors will reap a profit.”

TW: It goes without saying that he doesn’t care what happens to the people who work in the factories.

BG: Oh, forget that. FORGET that! If they do worry, their concern may be for shareholders down the line, whether they can get out in time, but the workers — that’s just not part of the consideration.

TW: But Michael Price was already ridiculously rich.

BG: Oh, it’s a game. At that level, you score and you win. Other people brought in 18 percent and you brought in 20 percent. I don’t object to it except that their game has so much to do with us.

TW: You wrote about your money’s participation in the “Asian crash.”

BG: It was building a brand new refinery in Thailand for \$1.9 billion, in the same part of the world as my shrimp farms. It was no coincidence, because it was a time when money was pouring into Southeast Asia.

When I arrived in Thailand there were 9,500 people camped around my refinery working to build it. I talked to some of them, to the CEO, and I got friendly with a street vendor in front of the refinery, a fabulously interesting woman who I call “Squirrel.” She and another woman were saving to set up a permanent stand in a market, which would certainly be a move up for them. They had moved there from the country, and they weren’t sad. One of them expressed it very

forcefully. For a while she worked in what you and I would call a sweatshop. And she said that sitting in front of a sewing machine, no matter how long, didn’t bother her when she thought back to standing in the paddy fields with leeches on her legs.

In that phase everybody seemed to be moving up, and it was very exciting that these two were saving together to buy a market stand. They were like mother and daughter. I could get very sidetracked into the family stories — but it’s not a sidetrack, because these are the sorts of opportunities that my money was producing.

TW: It helped create the sweatshop that Squirrel’s family could send her to, which created her desire to never go back to the rice paddy again, and instead to be an urban person and part of the global economy.

BG: So these women vendors are now selling food in front of my refinery to these 9,500 workers. At that point, global capital looked like what all the people who are touting it say it is. Everybody was moving up. I could see at my refinery that the people from the country became welders and welders became foremen and foremen became contractors and contractors became bankers and these two street vendors were going to become entrepreneurs of their little stand. I called it a little stand, but it was a restaurant to them.

Then suddenly, through something that you will understand if you read my book, called a currency attack, the Thai bhat was worth half as much as before, in relation to dollars. Now, if you remember, we talked at the beginning about the fact that the beginning of the global economy came with banks in the U.S. demanding the right to invest abroad. Before the 1970s most countries had something called capital control laws. We did too. One very common law was that a country like Thailand would say to its own banks, you can’t borrow more than a certain percent of the money in a foreign currency. The U.S. government was very influential in making other governments end these rules about capital controls, so now all those rules were broken down.

After the currency attack, suddenly their currency is worth half as much, and they

have to pay back their loans in dollars. So the people in Thailand who borrowed from my bank in the U.S. really can’t pay it back. Just Chase alone had about \$50 billion in danger in Thailand at that point. So although these are private loans to private banks or private companies in Thailand, the U.S. government goes with the banks, and they say to the Thai government, “You are going to assume or assure that debt. You can try to get the banks to pay it back, but whatever can’t be paid back, you, the Thai government, are going to guarantee.”

Now we’re getting back to my street vendors. Thailand is a country that both exports rice and feeds itself very well with rice. It was rice rich. Now, the U.S. banks are saying to the Thai government, “We’re not going to lose any money on our loans. You have to come up with dollars to pay us back. “How are they going to get the dollars? They get the dollars by exporting something from the country and selling it in dollars.

So one of the things the Thai government does is to manipulate it so that the price of rice doubles. And then more of the rice they produce is exported and they get dollars.

So if my street vendor wants to keep in business — let’s say she finds a factory that’s still operating and goes and stands in front of it and sells a rice-based dish — she’s selling to people who hardly have any money now and she has to absorb more of the cost. She is just plain poorer.

The IMF [International Monetary Fund] was really worried for a while. They were thinking about putting in some traffic lights, some capital controls. But when the crash ended and none of the banks had lost any money, not a penny, they stopped thinking about those traffic lights. The bankers and the U.S. government and the IMF congratulate themselves and they say, “We got through that. We averted a crisis.”

They averted a crisis, but of the people that I got back to in Thailand, nobody is working in the same job or living in the same place. The street vendor, Squirrel, had disappeared. One of the oil refinery welders now didn’t have as much money and he couldn’t take care of his family and the money he earned was now very much useless. But he was studying English because so many of the projects in the area that survived were being

bought with American money.

Some people were going home to the country, but there was less country, because my oil refineries and my shrimp farms had taken up a lot of the land.

TW: Do you think we need more controls on trade?

BG: I would probably be for free trade if there really was free trade. Don't forget that what I studied was money. The free movement of money is very different from the free movement of goods. For one thing, it's harder to speculate in goods and services. You don't have this rapid in and out; you actually take possession of the goods.

We don't even know what free trade would look like, because these free-trade arrangements that we make have nothing to do with free trade. NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] is an 1,100-page document. If it was free trade it would just say, "Okay, no more tariffs." But the process with NAFTA was that each industry, the capitalists from all three countries, got together on making the terms that it wanted to protect that industry. They said, "What are the rules that would be most beneficial for us? Let those rules exist in all three countries."

For instance, how is it free trade to say that in every country that comes into NAFTA they have to have the U.S. 20-year patent law on pharmaceuticals? So that drugs that have already been being made in Canada and Mexico can't come across the border and they have to stop making them there. That's free trade? Where's the free? Where's the trade?

I think that I might be for free trade in the sense of the movement without tariffs of actual goods. Not of money, because money is just about speculation. I think I might be for free trade, because I'm not in favor of one group of workers in the world against another. But I know I can't be in favor of what's currently being called free trade, and I would never be in favor of the unregulated movement of money, now that I've studied it, because it leads to these enormous swings. That money has to be controlled. That money has to have stop signs.

The stop signs I'm talking about are actu-

ally the ones that the capitalists themselves should be wanting, the traditional ones. I can't believe it — I call myself a socialist, and right now I seem to be the only one who remembers just plain John M. Keynes — the way the capitalists used to know how to control the economy and make it more smooth and even. They don't seem to remember that.

It's simply traditional Keynesian capitalism that when the economy is expanding you give money to rich people. They'll build new factories, they'll open new restaurants. But in the midst of a recession, when there isn't enough money in people's hands and factories aren't being run to capacity and restaurants are closing because they don't have enough customers, then you give money to ordinary people in the form of salaries, so they will spend it. Because ordinary people spend money. When you give big globs of money to people who already have money, they invest it. And the last thing you want, during a recession, is for them to look for another place to put their money, at a time when the existing factories aren't producing enough and the existing restaurants are closed.

So this is traditional. This is not me — I'm a socialist. I don't want these decisions to be made by them at all. But am I the only person in the middle of a recession saying wait, wait, you capitalists—why don't you do your traditional thing?

TW: Many people say that one of the main things that makes this era different is the speed with which transactions and information exchange can take place.

BG: Let me speak to you about the speed of transportation. As far as speed of financial transactions, the previous global episode at the turn of the 19th century was far more revolutionary. Because they brought in the telegraph. What long distance communication was there before that? Smoke signals. It was a tremendous change.

The computer has not speeded communications up so much. Really what a computer has is the ability to process many, many transactions at once, to get the running total on many, many transactions. So it's increased volume, but not so much speed.

We talk about the time when there was a railroad boom — that was the key to expanding the economy at that time. A lot of people made money when the railroads were being built, and a lot of people lost money, just as people made and lost money on the computer boom. But once the railroads were built, the expanding economy was based on there being something to carry on the railroads. Trade was really increased. People could grow more in some parts of the country than they needed and expect it to reach to other parts of the country, and they would produce more because they could sell more. And then other people would produce things for them. And so the trade that the railroads facilitated actually increased the wealth of the world. You don't trade the same stuff, you start making more stuff. You grow the wheat for yourself and you grow the wheat for the other people because you can now ship it to them by train. So yes, it was a railroad era, but the continued expansion depended on there being real stuff to carry on the railroads.

And now we have something called the computer era. And yes, at the beginning of the era, people who bet on the right system or monopolized the right system, like MS-DOS, made fortunes. But if all you can carry on this new mode of transportation is economic commands—well, I don't know whether it's enough to facilitate a great future.

I was really shocked to travel around the world and realize that the actual product of the computer era was not economic control. The only thing actually being bought was entertainment and education — "content." And that had a limited period in which it could be a stop-gap to what has essentially been, since the 1970s, a decline in growth and production. So I didn't have to be so brilliant to know we were going to be moving into this decline that we're in now.

The cycles of expansion and crash are going to repeat themselves until all the other continents are used up for the expansion bubble, and then it's going to come home. ●

Detroit Jane Slaughter is a freelance writer who specializes in labor issues.

We aren't the world

by Bruce Campbell

YOU REMEMBER where you were when you heard we bombed Baghdad, when the Challenger exploded, when the stock market crashed or when O.J. was found innocent. But do you remember the moment you first heard cable TV would carry over 150 channels into your home?

You should, because that moment arguably had longer impact on you than any of the other events. Your very next thought might well have been to wonder how many times any of us were going to be able to watch Dagnet.

You needn't have worried. After quickly doing the math on 150 channels of either new productions or rerun residuals, the media powers knew that the only things they could afford to bring us would be 1) things that actually paid them to air, like specialty channels or infomercials or worship services, or 2) low- or no-cost TV channels from all over the place.

At first, all over meant Atlanta, Chicago and New York. But in a few short years, all over has globalized. Now, courtesy of cable TV, Americans can watch the BBC, newscasts from most major European cities, Australian documentaries, Brazilian soap operas, South African soccer and Russian orchestras. Not that you would, as the current ad goes, but you could. This summer, Congress mothballed a pet project of Al Gore's to launch a satellite containing a single camera that would feed continuous video images of earth to everyone and not do a darn thing else — arguably the ultimate global TV.

From the very birth of modern media, the great myth has been that it was possible for humankind to achieve, apparently for the first time in history, global connectedness. Gone would be the barriers of culture, distance and civilization, and even though lan-

guage would be a hurdle, this, too, would be overridden by the image of a single human family with ultimately more in common than distinct. Each duly noted milestone in media history represented a marker of this myth: the first radio broadcast, the first satellite, the first intercontinental television transmission, globally televised sporting events, worldwide telecast of the moon landing, the World Wide Web. All of these say, "We are together, aren't we?"



The characters on Univision's Amigas y Rivalles are popular wherever the "telenovela" is broadcast.

But we aren't, and why aren't we? Why, when we have unprecedented access to global media, television in this case, are we still beset by parochialism and unable to see the big picture, even if we did have GoreSat?

The reason that TV has been unable to deliver on its promise of an electronic global city is simply that the act of making and delivering television enforces symmetry. When you finally have the chance to watch, without comprehension, newscasts from around the world, you are struck by their remarkable sameness. Those ebullient Latins may be highly emotionally expressive in their soap operas, but so are we. Sports are sports, dance is dance,

music is music, and political posturing is all but hard-wired. One hundred and fifty channels, and one thing on.

It's a huge let-down to think that, after all this work and expense to connect us, we're pouring mountainous sums of money into enterprises that strive to make us look like each other: relatively well-off, telegenic, heavily made-up, brassy, hip and breezy. The reality check comes when you realize that you are yourself perhaps not like that, that you don't know many people who are and that very, very many facets of life don't get on TV even once. If we have global TV, it is a depiction of a world which includes everyone, but which very few of us actually inhabit.

Almost the same words are used in describing the effect of global broadcasts of Princess Diana's funeral or the World Cup finals: These are said to be moments that unite us. How fascinating that the whole concept of unity can shift from one of some sort of intentional consensus or singular ideal, to representing the effect of all of us sitting at the same moment staring passively into a TV set. By this logic, Northern Ireland has undoubtedly been "united" several times over but we're damned if we know why it insists on blowing itself up.

The actual global city sure isn't the Global Village. It's a much more varied, nuanced, dynamic and unstable place. The extent of our differences greatly outreaches the different languages our game shows now come in. We are not only less equipped in our global understanding for having seen the TV version, we are actually ill-equipped, the more so because we believe that we do understand. ●

Witness media review editor Bruce Campbell commutes to work in midtown New York from Westchester County.

ENGAGING



THE GLOBAL CITY

One local struggle at a time

by Anna Olson

I GOT TO KNOW the airport awfully well during my first months of parish ministry in Inglewood, Calif. — bordered to the north and east by South Central Los Angeles and to the west by the mammoth Los Angeles Airport — and not because my job involved a lot of flying. I came to work at Holy Faith Church as a former union organizer, and upon arrival in L.A., began to poke around for ways to connect my former vocation with my current one. My first find was the “Respect at LAX” campaign: a multi-union effort to organize service and security workers at Los Angeles International Airport. When I joined the community committee in support of organizing airport workers the focus was on baggage handlers and security screeners employed by the Argenbright company. At the invitation of organizers and workers on the campaign, I began showing up for demonstrations, learning the ins and outs of the many terminals — which contractors had agreed to pay the living wage, which workers had a clean place to eat lunch, where the echo was best for making noise in protest, how long the airport police would allow a march to block traffic.

At a small gathering of clergy at my parish, I sat listening to one of the Argenbright workers talk about why he supported the organizing campaign. He was an African-American man in his early twenties who lived at home with his parents not far from my church. He earned slightly above the minimum wage. Health benefits, while offered through the job, were out of reach on his low salary. Sick days were only excused with a doctor's note. While he recited these

details at our request, the passion for organizing didn't flare in his voice until he began to describe the atmosphere in which he worked. Over and over, he repeated, “There's just no respect.” No respect. No respect for the workers who represent the protection against weapons and terrorists that the traveling public depends on. No respect for this

**I locked my eyes
on hers as I
prayed, and I
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young man from the neighborhood working hard to make a future for himself and to do a good job at an important task. Most of the time his job was routine, but every now and then came a moment when risking his own safety to question a suspicious person could make the difference between tragedy and safety for hundreds of people. He was willing to take the risks, but discouraged by the

humiliation, unfair discipline, arbitrary changes in work rules, questionable safety equipment and lack of training that characterized his job.

His story was in many ways a familiar one. As an organizer, I had spent countless house visits listening to the stories of non-union workers struggling to make a living in dangerous, low-wage jobs. The details differed, but the fundamental desire for fairness and respect was the same at the airport in Los Angeles as in the factories of Texas and Louisiana. What was different about this encounter was my perspective as a pastor to the youth of my parish. I saw sitting in front of me a good kid, just a few years older than the kids in my youth group. Here was one of the ones who had made it — finished high school, avoided the perils of the street, maintained a good relationship with his parents. He was intelligent, thoughtful, articulate: the embodiment of my hopes and the hopes of parents in my parish for our teenagers. But all this had won him a job with low pay, no healthcare and no respect. When asked about the future, his sigh was discouraged. He was a good kid who had done things right, and it had not produced much hope for the future.

My participation in the Argenbright campaign gave me a much deeper sense of the challenges facing youth and parents in my parish and the surrounding community. So many of the employees at Argenbright were young, even still in their teens. It was a powerful lesson for me on how tough it is to raise kids here, on why so many kids don't see the value in avoiding the many pitfalls, in stick-

Will faith communities keep faith?

by Peter Selby

It is very well known that the relationship between church and state is very different in England from what it is in the U.S. (and it is different again in Scotland). But some very similar issues are being thrown up on both sides of the Atlantic by contemporary debates on the role of faith communities in welfare provision, and a bit of our experience may be illuminating to Witness readers charting their way through these very difficult policy questions.

In the mid-1980s, when the Thatcher government was in full cry the Church of England published a report of which we remain justly proud, called Faith in the City.

Government ministers sought to rubbish the report (first calling it Marxist and then saying it would have been better if it had been Marxist!) that represented a call to church and state to attend to the needs of marginalized urban communities. Later a similar, rather smaller-scale, report, Faith in the Countryside, made a similar call in relation to the rural economy, and the life of rural communities and churches.

Without any question Faith in the City reasserted the call of the poor at a time when government was withdrawing huge amounts of previous grant aid and local services from urban communities. Its words, and the actions it precipitated in the church, came as a real encouragement to those who had struggled for many years to get their voices heard, and who were particularly suffering under the economics of the right. A whole culture of inventiveness ensued and some very imaginative urban programs resulted. To some degree the same is happening in the aftermath of Faith in the Countryside.

One of the fruits of Faith in the City was the creation of the Church Urban Fund. Church people subscribed heavily to that and as a result pump-priming grants, and some sustaining ones too, were made to a whole new generation of community projects, evangelistic initiatives and efforts toward justice. In the process a culture of self-help developed and many individuals and communities discovered resources within themselves and possibilities of making a real difference that they had not reckoned with before.

But there are important paradoxes that are very relevant to the current debate. First, this brought comfort not just to the urban communities but also to the advocates of New Right policies. "We told you so," they said,

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ing with lousy schools and graduating.

Along with their parents, I set out the hope and expectation that they will attend college. But I recognize that for many of them, the road to college will not be as easy as my own was. Whether because of economic constraints, family crises, poor academic preparation, lack of immigration documents, many of the youth I work with will have to enter the full-time workforce immediately after high school. And the jobs that are available to them will look very much like employment at Argenbright. Argenbright is not by any means the worst; in fact, it is probably fairly typical of what's out there for high-school graduates.

Unlike what the media might portray, most of the kids here make it more or less through without getting into much trouble. I have come to wonder if the real story is not so much gangs and violence and dropouts and incarceration — although these are also powerful realities in the lives of our young people — but the fact that for kids who do what they are supposed to, there is a job with no respect waiting at the end. A job that doesn't come close to allowing a young man or woman to move out of their parents' home, much less raise a family, get more education or buy a home.

As the Argenbright campaign wound down toward a resolution, I found myself back near the airport, at the intersection of Century and Sepulveda Boulevards. Traffic backed up as far as the eye could see in all directions, stopped by rows of police in full riot gear. In the very center of the intersection was a small group seated in a circle, facing inward. On each of their backs was a simple sign with a number of years printed on it: four, seven, 22, 18 — the number of years that each of these Latino immigrant workers had worked at the Wyndham Hotel as housekeepers, cooks, porters, drivers, dishwashers. The owners of the Wyndham had announced a few weeks before that the hotel was to be sold. The new owner intended to close the hotel for renovations, dismiss the entire workforce and re-open non-union with new workers. Union workers at the Wyndham, distraught at the loss of their jobs and at the loss of one of the few union hotels in the airport area, had turned out in substantial numbers for the demonstration. A gutsy few had staked out the center of the street and were waiting tensely to be arrested. My job was to stand at the head of the circle and pray, then get out of the way as the riot police closed in. (I had been arrested a few months earlier in another hotel labor conflict, and the terms of my release did not allow me to join in this time.)

I began to close my eyes as I prepared to pray aloud, but caught sight of an older woman sitting across the circle, one of those who had worked for years at the Wyndham. Her face was stoic, but her eyes showed fear. I locked my eyes on hers as I prayed, and I thanked God for the courage of these workers, holding the line for the promise of good jobs in our community. I prayed in the words of the prophet Amos for justice to roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream, feeling the words as I had rarely felt them before.

I never had the chance to speak to the woman whose eyes I held during the prayer. The police moved in, and I moved to the sidelines as the protesters were arrested one by one. She went bravely, her head

held high. The next day, other arrestees told the story of a long night in jail, far longer than I had spent on my one arrest in L.A. They said that some of the women had been afraid to tell their husbands they were going to be arrested, and watched with trepidation as the hour grew later and later, their unexplained absences lengthening. They said that some of them remembered seeing protesters arrested in their home countries and never coming back. I will probably never know the exact source of the fear in that one woman's eyes, but it was clear to me that both the stakes and the risk of this action were far greater for her than they have ever been for me in my life as an activist.

The workers from the Wyndham represented a different generation from most of the Argenbright workers. They were older, people with families, mostly immigrants, many with limited English. Many of them had been in their jobs for years, not because the jobs were great, not because the wages were particularly high, but because union jobs are hard to come by in the airport area and the security of a job with benefits and negotiated work rules was not to be given up lightly. In my own parish, the only Latino retirees with a measure of economic security are former union hotel housekeepers. Hotel housekeeping is hard physical work, even in the union hotels. But a union contract limits the number of rooms to be cleaned each shift, guarantees seniority rights, and provides for health and retirement benefits. Compared to their peers, who made a living in domestic work or non-union hotels and factories, the union retirees have at least earned some stability in exchange for their years of hard work.

It wasn't always true that there were few decent jobs in Inglewood and the other communities surrounding the airport. Inglewood was built on good union jobs in the aerospace industry, but during the 1970s and 1980s, those jobs gradually drained away. Now low-wage service jobs, domestic work, childcare and non-union electronics factories are the primary options for the Latino immigrants who make up the bulk of the area's current population. And although working life is tough in Inglewood, the options are far better than in the sweatshops

of downtown Los Angeles, where countless immigrant workers toil for less than the minimum wage.

My three years in parish ministry in Inglewood have provided an up-close look at the human consequences of the de-unionization I had witnessed from my perspective as an organizer. Working for the Southwest Region of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, I watched as factory after factory, union and non-union, closed their doors and moved their operations to other countries where unions were weak and labor was cheap (Southwest in the union's East-Coast-driven parlance meant Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana). In rural communities that often meant that jobs became scarce, and workers who had made decent money close to home were forced to commute long distances for far less money. In greater Los Angeles during the recent economic "boom," local jobs are still relatively plentiful. But the jobs that exist provide little of the security required to support dreams of home ownership and higher education for the next generation.

The overwhelming pastoral reality in my parish work stems from the pressures on families who must work multiple, stressful, lousy jobs to survive. In my experience, persistent economic stress is the single factor that most accurately predicts domestic violence, alcoholism, kids with troubles in school, kids who flirt with gang life and the myriad other problems that afflict this community. Parents are sleep-deprived and often have few hours left in the day to spend with their spouses and children. High housing costs and low wages combine to pack families of five, six, and seven people into one- and two-bedroom apartments. Families are amazing in their ability to survive and even thrive under tough conditions, but the human cost of the much-trumpeted "new economy" is high. The Wyndham workers, huddled in the street in protest, understood this reality and were willing to take substantial risks to resist it. They have not prevailed so far, but their struggle touches the very heart of the community they live in.

Some months after the Wyndham demonstration, my rector, who had stood beside me in support as I prayed in the street, received

a call "regarding his associate." The caller was a consultant to a convalescent home down the street from the church, and she professed deep concern over a recent "incident." She was sure that the rector would want to know what had taken place and take appropriate action. The incident in question involved my presence the day before a union election at the home, in which I stood with workers and organizers during a shift change and distributed a letter affirming Holy Faith's commitment to the workers' right to vote for or against a union without threats or intimidation from management. The worker standing with me was a Certified Nurse Assistant, motivated to unionize by her load of several dozen psychiatric patients as the lone CNA on the night shift in her unit. She shook her head, saying that she did not know what would happen should one of the patients experience a severe psychotic episode. She knew that one person was not enough to handle that eventuality, not with so many other seriously ill patients needing attention as well. As we chatted with one another and with workers leaving and arriving for work, the home's management team stood silently on the porch, watching each person to see if they stopped to speak with anyone connected to the union. The consultant who called my rector, and later spoke with me at his recommendation, expressed "shock" that I would suggest that there had been intimidation, and further said that she had thought a "person of God" would "take the high road" and remain neutral in a conflict such as this one.

The election at St. Erne's Convalescent Home was part of the Campaign for Quality Nursing Home Care, a multi-faceted campaign seeking to address both working conditions and patient care in Los Angeles County nursing homes. I became interested in nursing homes when I noticed a number of uniformed nursing home workers standing in line each week at our parish food program, waiting to receive bags of groceries. As I became involved in the campaign, I learned that the average wages for nurse assistants in area homes hovered under seven dollars an hour and that nursing home workers suffer on-the-job injuries at rates equaled only by high-risk industries like mining. Grossly

"removing government grants and subsidies has liberated local communities from the heavy hand of the state." The fact that removing those grants had also precipitated huge quantities of misery only slightly alleviated by the new charitable money was something they conveniently overlooked.

Secondly, hard-worked community volunteers now have to spend a higher and higher proportion of their time finding ingenious ways of raising funds and negotiating their way through the private charity maze. And thirdly, we have in the process moved further and further away from the belief that it was the responsibility of the community as a whole to make basic welfare provision toward a world where tax cuts benefit the wealthy while the poor are reduced more and more to dependence on charity.

What has this history to say to faith communities today? Understandably those within them who are seeking to alleviate poverty are glad to have the prospect of some matching funding from public sources. Such funding produces not only a reduction in the effort needed to finance worthwhile projects, but also a sense of the affirmation of the role of faith communities in society at large. Looking from afar at the U.S. context there seems to be (ironically) a movement towards the "establishment" not of course of a particular religion, but of religious faith generally as the bond that holds society together and the means whereby much needed provision for poor people is achieved.

An individual congregation or faith group faced with the offer of assistance to do valuable work among the poor will feel that it is an offer it can hardly refuse. The need is there, and they have the means to meet it with public assistance, gaining credibility for themselves and their faith in the process. But within the same process lie the seeds of the destruction of the witness of faith communities — and particularly the Christian communities — to a God who is judge of our society and its provision for its most vulnerable. It is hard to remain prophetic while you make yourselves more and more dependent on those against whom you have a call to prophesy.

There are no easy solutions to these dilemmas. But faith communities need to be very circumspect — wise as serpents and innocent as doves — if they are not to find that they have gained a whole world of charitable opportunity and meanwhile lost their own soul. That faith communities have huge potential for doing good is not in question. The question to those who would do good in that way is, will your community of faith keep faith? ●

Peter Selby is Bishop of Worcester, England.

inadequate staff-to-patient ratios like the one described by the CNA at St. Erne's lead in many cases to serious inadequacies in patient care.

Around the time I got involved with the Nursing Home Campaign, I found myself speaking with a new parishioner, who confided her dream of finishing a certification program as a nurse assistant. She explained that she had worked for several years caring for disabled elderly people in their homes, and shyly suggested that this work had made her think that she might have a gift for caring for others. She was struggling to pay for the certification program and worried that her English might not be equal to taking the exam, but with encouragement from her husband she was persevering. Given the economic pressures and limited opportunities that many of my parishioners face, I don't have conversations about vocational discernment often enough. It was exciting to hear someone who was able to match her gifts with her career aspirations so clearly. At the same time, I felt some trepidation, given what I was learning about working conditions for so many certified nurse assistants.

I did not voice my concerns in our conversations about vocation, and I shared in the celebration when she finally found the money to pay off her tuition and passed the certification exam. Within a month or so, she had found employment in a local nursing home. She was disappointed by the low starting pay, but nonetheless optimistic about this opportunity to put her hard-earned certification to work. Within six months, she caught a patient as he fell, preventing him from injuring himself but straining her own back. When her injury proved difficult to heal, she began to suspect that her supervisors were setting her up to be fired. She is now unemployed, pursuing a workers' compensation claim, and unsure what her employment future will be with her inability to lift patients. She remains positive, but it is impossible to miss the deep disappointment in her eyes.

This parishioner, along with many of the nursing home employees I have met, represent a particularly heartwrenching failure of the classic American Dream. They are immigrants and U.S.-born workers with limited educational backgrounds, who have struggled to go back to school while raising children, working and often learning English. They are motivated not only by a desire to earn a living, but by a sincere desire to care for those most often forgotten and neglected by our society. They have willingly taken on jobs that include contact with the most intimate realities of sick and dying human bodies. For some lonely people, they represent the only loving face or word of comfort in each long day. And at the end of their shifts, they are standing in line for food in front of my church.

When I initially sought out opportunities for involvement in the Los Angeles labor movement, I did not anticipate how deeply my labor activism and parish ministry would come to inform one another. I jumped into the struggle because I missed the excitement of picket lines and demonstrations, the satisfaction of standing up in the face of clear injustice. I missed having an easy answer to the classic labor question: "Which side are you on?" Especially in my first months in the parish, I found day-to-day life in the church to be filled with mundane details and lacking in clear connections to larger questions of justice. I figured I was lucky to arrive in L.A. at a time when the labor movement was vital and committed to organizing, and the call for

clergy and religious leaders to participate added legitimacy to my desire to be on the front lines from time to time.

More than anything else I have done in these three years, labor activism has taught me about the larger context in which my ministry exists. The small corner of the Los Angeles area where I work, and to a much greater extent the L.A. area as a whole, mirrors the global reality of increasingly diverse collections of people caught up in increasingly rigid economic realities that allow little possibility of socioeconomic stability or mobility to the majority of the world's people. My bishop has commented on several occasions that he believes the region served by the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles is the most diverse the planet has ever seen. People come from all over the world to make their homes here, driven in most cases at least in part by economic pressures in their homelands. The result is a region characterized by small pockets of tremendous wealth and vast stretches of poverty and economic struggle.

The progressive movement in L.A. is strongly driven by workers' issues, and I'm by far not the only priest nor the first who has turned to involvement in local labor struggles as one avenue for confronting the injustices of the global economy. The basic need for

good jobs and fair working conditions is fundamental in the communities we serve. There is a substantial group of clergy and religious leaders in Los Angeles who agree that prosperity is built far too readily on the backs of workers. Seeing the struggles of working *Angelenos* to survive and thrive in economic boom times, we fear for the coming economic downturn. While it is easy to romanticize the excitement of ministry in such a multicultural region, we cannot truly celebrate our diversity until the second half of the Lucan promise is fulfilled in our communities: "Then people will come from east and west, and will eat in the kingdom of God."

While it has become clear to me that the realities I encounter in my parish demand a commitment to stand with organizing workers, I find it a far greater challenge to know how to integrate the insights of labor struggles into the life of my congregation. It is much easier to represent the church in the struggle than to make the struggle central to the life of the church. While I manage to weave references to economic injustice and the call to organize into many of my Sunday sermons, prayers and Bible studies, my parish remains far from the activist community of my dreams. I fear that too often my own activism and that of other clergy errs on the side of using the (limited) power that we

have as representatives of religious authority to advocate on behalf of workers, rather than taking on the greater and I believe more important challenge of being agents of empowerment, of creating a sense of urgency in our parishes, and of communicating that questions of who finds a place at the table are central to the life of the Gospel.

Despite my occasional misgivings and frustrations with parish life, I'm "sticking with the parish" in my quest to be a part of the larger struggle for justice. I believe that discovering ways to become activist communities on the local level is essential to the larger project of hastening the Kingdom of God. In *The Impact of the Global: An Urban Theology*, Laurie Green, Bishop of Bradwell in the Church of England, writes about the value of what he describes as sacramental actions — actions on the local level that serve to illuminate and challenge global realities. Only as we who have come from around the world to dwell in this particular manifestation of the global city find local ways to bring about fulfillment of the Gospel promises of human dignity and thriving do we truly take our place as one small part of the body of Christ.

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URBAN MINISTRY

A conversation with Andrew Davey

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

NEW YORK is no longer merely an American city. It has become, in the emerging world order, one of the first-tier global cities, a hub in the worldwide network of financial flows. When the very technology of the global economy, airline jets in this case, were turned into weapons against it in September, it was surely to be accounted as much an attack on global headquarters as it was an attack on the U.S. Indeed, not surprisingly, the missing and dead include citizens from England, Germany, Japan, and Canada but also from Mexico, India, Australia, China and some 30 other nations. Barely a few weeks prior, Andrew Davey of the Church of England and *Witness* contributing editor Bill Wylie-Kellermann had spoken by phone between Detroit and another global city, London. Their conversation meandered through the chapter headings of Davey's new book, *Urban Christianity and Global Order* (SPCK, 2001; American edition to be published by Hendrickson in 2002). It touched, analytically and theologically, upon the ways in which globalization is altering the face of the city and thereby of urban ministry. Ironically, it came to rest on a prescient point: the vulnerability of the global city to terrorism and collapse. The attack on the World Trade Center may indeed have changed everything, including how we hear and read this conversation. It is our hope, in turn, that this conversation might alter to some degree how we read the attack on the World Trade Center, how we sift through the rubble for its meaning and consider the future.

BWK: Someone recently said to me that churches throw up web sites and think they've become global participants. Here in the U.S., globalization has been an agenda of theological education for a decade or more, with seminaries requiring some kind of exposure. But basically the focus has remained little more than multicultural internationalism. The kind of analysis that you're talking about really isn't being taught. So, what is globalization from where you're sitting?

Atlas, Rodineller Center ©Harst Hamann

IN A GLOBAL AGE

AD: You're right that globalization means so many different things to different people. One of the things I've tried to do is to tie it down quite tightly to the way in which certain forces are reordering our world. The particular aspect of this is the compression of space and time. Things happen almost instantaneously throughout the world and that takes us both into the world of the media and into the world of financial movement. There are, indeed, aspects of globalization which are to do with the movement of people, but I think it's important to see it firstly in terms of a changing ordering in the world.

BWK: I know that you'd include, as part of this neo-liberalism and deregulation, the technological movement of capital with the barrier-free movement of resources and consumer goods as well.

AD: That is also part of the way in which our world is being reordered in favor of certain groups and people. But we do not yet know where this project is going to end. The world is still globalizing. We haven't suddenly had the advent of globalization and we can't speak yet of "before and after globalization." The world's resources are beginning to form new clusters around certain points in the world, primarily cities, and we are seeing resources shifting away from certain other regions, be it Africa or parts of Latin America.

BWK: You're raising here the connections between globalization and the city. How is the technological infrastructure as well as the neo-liberal political agenda affecting the urban landscape around the world?

AD: Well, I think early commentators on globalization interpreted globalization as the

end of the city. We had a lot of talk about telly-cottaging or the ability to work from home in the paperless office. But what we are witnessing is the fact that business, financial business, cannot operate without the proximity that's possible within a city and without the type of infrastructure that "informational capitalism," to use writer Manuel Castells' term, demands. Informational capitalism requires a certain level in the quality of communication. Yes, you can access things like the web from remote desert villages, but if we are to talk about the quality of infrastructure that is needed, we will be dependent on cities for a long time to come. And it's not just an issue of the concentration of resources, but the concentration of what is called "connectivity." In the global south, in Africa and Latin America, we're witnessing capital cities that have a certain concentration of those resources. But you'd set up your internet company which serves Zimbabwe in the northern hemisphere because the speed of your resources there will be so much quicker. It is in this sense that observers like Castells talk about the "disinformation" of Africa, the way in which whole parts of the globe become excluded very quickly because of the quality of the resources they have.

BWK: Aren't we talking about several tiers of global cities here?

AD: Yes. Saskia Sassen would be very specific that there are only three, possibly four, cities in the world now which warrant the title "global city." Those would be London, New York and Tokyo. It is those cities which really have concentrated the command aspect of the global economy. And then you would see different hierarchies emerging below. Most of the American cities and most of our cities outside of London would be in that second hierarchy.

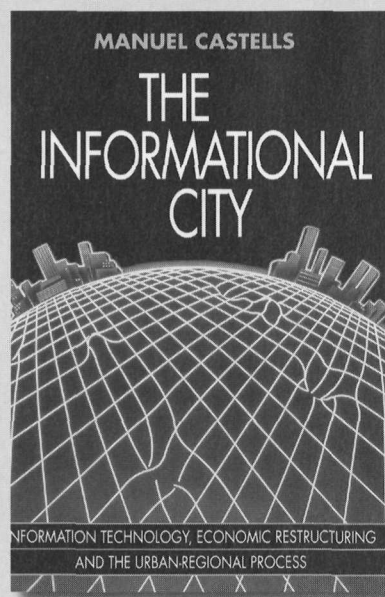
BWK: Sassen writes from Chicago, which does have a strong global connection. At present it's experiencing a huge housing boom and gentrification, much of which is based precisely on this phenomenon. On the other hand, I live in Detroit, which is essentially the loser. What Detroit's grasping at for an economic base is casinos and ball parks.

AD: That's very similar to what we've seen happening in Britain. Birmingham is probably a second-tier city. It still has a reasonable industrial base, but the types of industry have shifted over the years from heavy engineering to more hi-tech industries. Outside of the key cities, as with Detroit, you see an increasing assumption that they will be dependent on tourist and lesser industries. So you see cities putting in their bid as the "music capital" of Britain or the "space-and-technology capital." And all this is primarily based on multi-million-pound tourist attractions which they hope will regenerate the cities primarily through visitors, but also by possibly attracting allied industries such as music recording or high-technology communication. Globalization is very definitely about some part of the country over-heating because there is such a concentration of activity and other parts declining.

Economic activity then restructures cities socially. One of the key concepts from Saskia Sassen is the issue of "valorization," the way in which in the global economy certain activities, certain people, and certain places become over-valorized. We see this in London in the way in which financial districts have astronomical rents and land values and these are then passed on through the rents in the sectors that support them. At the same time other activities are under-valorized, often in the public services. It's very difficult at the moment in inner London to maintain our health and education services because

Acting on behalf of place

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann



Manuel Castells

The Informational City:

Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

MANUEL CASTELLS, the Spanish sociologist who's taught urban planning at the University of California Berkeley for 20 years, is best known for his 1500-page magnum opus, a trilogy under the overarching title of *The Information Age*. Responsible scholars have compared the work to those of Max Weber and Karl Marx. It can be dense, sweeping, abstract, theoretical, and insightful. Certain of its themes were anticipated in this 1991 volume specifically outlining the impact of informational capitalism on the city. Like Saskia Sassen, Castells argues against those who've foreseen the city

disappearing in the face of decentralized informationalism, that is, the dispersal of labor and withdrawal of capital into cyberspace. In his view, the network economy structures the informational megacity as a "space of flows." This term encompasses the material processes, the technological hardwiring, for the electronic flow of information and capital as well as the corporate headquarters for the flow of command and control decisions. It also includes the concentrated location of specialized service firms and, finally, the reorganization of living space for the managerial elite and specialized personnel.

In fact, this process does represent an assault on the city as "place," a reality layered with history and collective memory. "People live in places, power rules through flows." The social meanings of the city as place tend to evaporate as the flows dominate space. The loss of individual identity for the city is threatened. Castells is in effect calling for a certain kind of resistance, for cultural strategies and new social movements that act out of and on behalf of place. Labor, for example, which is learning to think globally, must become more aware of the power of the local. "Labor — and indeed, individual citizens — must develop an awareness of the precise role of their place-based activities in the functional space of flows" if an alternative is going to be reconstructed.

Even as the nation-state is diminished by globalization, Castells foresees the space of flows actually generating a kind of renaissance for city as local state. And cities have the opportunity to seize control over globalization's spatial logic, but that will involve not only consciously reclaiming identity in pursuit of change, but encouraging democratic participation and community organization. All somewhat rare. ●

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those who work in them are paid so differently from the people involved in other activities in the city that they then can no longer afford property prices even in some of the less gentrified areas. The irony is that those office lots or service areas which are so over-valorized are very dependent on under-valorized labor groups.

BWK: Right. People get under-valorized. The poor and working poor.

AD: Not least the cleaners. Offices could not exist and are not sustainable without the assumption that a very underpaid, undervalued group will be willing to clean, to provide security, to work in the canteens, providing basic services on which those high-tech office blocks depend. And looking on your side of the Atlantic, the janitors' strike and the public transport strikes in Los Angeles are maybe an example of the way in which those dependencies can be forced upon the groups who dominate the city.

BWK: Shifting ground to the biblical, you do a really wonderful and fairly quick survey of ancient Hebrew communities as well as of Jesus and early church issues related to urban ministry.

AD: I guess that comes out as a slight dissatisfaction with the way the Bible has been used in urban debates of the past, the way in which it has always been assumed there was a grand narrative here: Either the people of faith are seen as those who were in control of the city or the city gets a very bad press with the "city of man" (I use the term very advisedly) based upon the blood of Cain and therefore a cursed environment from which we'd best withdraw or leave other people to run.

BWK: In that connection let me raise the city of Babel. The traditional reading is that the arrogance and pretension of the tower issued in the curse, almost as though the diversity of language and culture were itself a curse! Of course, a more post-modern reading could see the single language, the dominant culture, as central to the imperial project. You know, kind of like English-only,

or Babylonian-only, and that what is a curse to the centralized project, in fact, is the multicultural diversity of the workers, cultural resistance of the brick makers, that brings down the centralized project. And God's at work in that.

AD: One of the things that we've failed to deal with in the past, too, has been the urban contact of Jesus or the urban context of the first Christians, a lot of which involves reading between the lines or filling in the gaps. We have a memory of Jesus which doesn't always acknowledge the urbanization that was happening in Galilee or the globalization project along which the first Christians were able to connect. I guess most of our generations were brought up with images of the Gospel coming in at the right time and being able to spread on the back of the Roman Empire. We do find the early Christian communities exploiting the infrastructure of that globalization project, but at the same time being very aware of the corruption of its ordering. Rome was a globalization project solely based on sustaining the city of Rome.

BWK: For me the language of the powers has been important in thinking about the city theologically. I'm just starting to use it as a lens for thinking more about the global principalities.

AD: I was struck in the second volume of Max Stackhouse's series, *God and Globalization: Religions and the Powers of the Common Life* (2000), how he uses "the authorities" as language for the professions. There are indeed challenges that these face from globalization, but the integrity of the profession which he is trying to maintain is the integrity of the professional expert. I think that's where someone like Leonie Sandercock (*Towards Cosmopolis*, 1998) comes into this discussion very quickly. She takes on particularly the professionalism of planners and architects, those who are remodeling the cities in a very interventionist way. And one of the problems about intervention is that you do not come in to listen to the stories, the expectations or the hopes of the people who live there, but you

come in with solutions already mapped out from above. I suspect that there is an element of this within the Stackhouse book as well — that education, the law, health, are very much about professional competencies, about professional integrity and not about how these professions might actually be challenged by the people they are there to serve. Sandercock is very much about rediscovering an insurgent practice for the planner and the architect which engages them with the communities which then become the protagonists of their own reshaping.

BWK: I like that. It strikes me that what you are saying about the professions is pretty much how Stackhouse would view the profession of theological ethics. I suspect he'd imagine that a circle of ethicists, basically from the top, could nudge and tweak and somehow help shape the globalization project, whispering a few words in the ears of the rulers and powers.

AD: I think this also connects with what we see in this whole movement termed public theology or global ethics. One of the things that we have to be reimagining at the moment is the church's ability to provide neutral space, or what Ed Soja, the California geographer, would call third space, an environment, a forum, a space in which insurgent alternatives for society can be reimagined. I think as far as the church goes, we might also provide some of the spaces in which such experiments take place. However, that involves opening space not only for the experts, but involving the people that actually are the communities in which we are presently working.

BWK: You are opening up the whole question of urban practice in relation to globalization. Do you know a book called *Grass Roots Post-Modernism*? The authors are Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash. They're arguing against the commonplace, "Think globally, act locally." In a certain sense their concern goes right to the heart of the challenge you're putting to the church. They're raising the temptation of grandiosity in anti-globalization. They reject the notion that it's possible to build a global

counter-force to globalized capital. They argue, in the tradition of Gandhi or Wendell Berry, say, that we need to be thinking locally, with the premise that this will generate not so much a common "no" to global capitalism, but a multiplicity and rich diversity of alternative "yeses."

AD: One of the things which I fear about efforts to do "global ethics" is the notion that religious leaders can make a difference at that level. I think we see all too well, whether it's in Palestine or Northern Ireland, that regardless of what the religious leaders do, the tribal politics of the street remain the strongest. And the creation of unethical communities is just as much a local reality as the creation of ethical communities. That also connects with the way in which we encourage people to think globally and act locally.

What we've witnessed with Jubilee 2000 is that only when it caught the local imagination, when it took people onto the street, did it really began to have an effect. It wasn't about religious leaders having quiet words with the director of the World Bank. It was actually about religious leaders taking it to the world as a matter of urgency because they had so much pressure coming in from their own constituencies.

Mobilizing that kind of movement is absolutely critical to the way in which we relate between the local and the global. Maybe we'll also witness something like this with the environment and climate change in the next few years, because we're going to need to do it somehow! We must use the church as the opportunity to operate both locally and globally because many of the networks already exist for us. We are proclaiming the simultaneous possibility of global and local connectivity. But a word of caution: We may also find ourselves sidetracked by some who would wish to see "global" in terms of centralization rather than the dispersal of the network.

BWK: I'm interested to know whether you would see parish (and I understand we have different histories here), as representing a useful sense of turf, you know? Parish is very much a turf-based approach to min-

istry, and so an entrée to local struggle. It has the very feet-on-the-ground approach which ends up actually engaging the global forces from a community base. It's like David Korten arguing that a key response to globalization is to build what he calls "social capital," essentially a community of real relationships. Or like Jeremiah telling the "resident aliens" (in Greek, the *parachoi* from which parish, right?) to put down local roots even in exile, even in Babylon.

AD: We come to this in the Church of England with a certain amount of ambivalence because we are still very strictly divided up into geographical parishes. When that's the only thing you're concerned with, the pejorative sense of "parochial" creeps in very quickly. But I do think knowing what is happening underneath your own nose on your own turf is the beginning of any sort of ethical discourse, of any ethical actions. And it is quintessentially how we learn to live together as community. We, in the Church of England, are always very cautious to distinguish between the parish and the church, because the parish, the place where everyone lives, is the pastoral concern of the church. It isn't who shows up on Sunday morning. It is in true celebration on behalf of the parish that the roots of Anglican liturgy begin.

BWK: I think you're quite right. The need in the U.S. is to push local congregations that are often disconnected from their context to think in terms of actually having a geography, a place that needs to be honored, developed, a space where community is built. But I'm not aware of people who are doing church-based organizing thinking of that work in relation to globalization. This organizing essentially develops new, alternative, democratic structures at the moment that state and national structures are being disempowered.

AD: There's a certain parochialism whether the campaign is to amend living wages or the immediate environment or the immediate power structures of the city. We need models that actually connect issues of living wage in North America or Europe with issues of living wage for those who supply

us. We're beginning to see networks emerge concerning what might be termed "globalization from below." Something we need to look at is how the churches can underpin some of that with the connections which they already have. For example, within the Anglican Communion we've talked for years about partnership between dioceses, but have we ever looked at what economic activity connects those dioceses? I cite one very pioneering venture we have going on at the moment between a very poor part of Britain and community groups in Manila and the way in which through the personal encounter these issues are being raised on a larger scene.

BWK: What's the name of that campaign?

AD: That is the group that connects Christian Aid with Church Action on Poverty. These are two groups who have worked independently in the past, one concerned with the international development agenda, one concerned with the domestic poverty agenda, but who are recognizing now the two are so inextricably linked that they cannot work without each other.

BWK: Let me raise a question about the use of the global technological infrastructure. There are obviously all sorts of ways in which the social movements can be networked. But I do think that the technology is somehow determinative, that it does have a life of its own and that it does shape us. The technology itself draws us systematically into its system, so I'm quite wary. I want the church to be thinking critically about the technology instead of just jumping on the bandwagon. I don't see that critical thinking.

AD: Oh, I can see this operating on so many different levels as well. One takes us back to the scriptures. We could never advocate a complete withdrawal from globalization just as we could never advocate a complete withdrawal from the city, although we can be ambivalent and derogatory about some aspects of it. After all, the first Christians didn't say "We're not going to use roads because they're built by the Romans!" Sounds like a Monty Python line! I think

that sort of technophobia rather frivolous. But it does take us into the debate about at what stage does connectivity become a human right, because if you exclude people from it, you are excluding them from a major aspect of social life in the world today.

BWK: I understand. The famous digital divide.

AD: This is also a civil society point: When local authorities begin to put key information on web sites, on certain types of access, you're beginning to exclude people immediately. And once again, the whole issue of connectivity in Africa and other parts of the world immediately comes up.

So I see the issue as who controls the technology. Obviously you have the ongoing debates on that concerning Microsoft in the U.S., but it also focuses in on the physical nature of that technology — where are some of the key components being sourced in the world? It's the issue of fair trade, of sweatshops and whatever. I mean, what happens when all this copper wire is being sourced from Namibia, but being processed in Europe and the Middle East? So there are a whole host of questions that go way beyond the infrastructure and the power control of information technology to some of the key aspects of capitalism.

BWK: Here's a big question: To what extent is the whole emerging system vulnerable and will it continue to be vulnerable, even to collapse, because it's so locally dependent and it's got its feet on the urban ground?

AD: I think vulnerability comes from a number of areas. I think of the whole power crisis in California as a supreme example of the way in which we assume that things are impregnable, but very quickly are proved to be highly dependent. I suspect that also this could lead us into some environmental issues, things we cannot control or have been unwilling to admit that we do have an impact on. In terms of London, one of the phenomena, probably ten years ago now, was when we had a lot of IRA activity in London and the two key financial sectors were targeted by IRA bombs. What looked

like impregnable fortresses from the outside were quickly breached and the cities very literally shaken by it.

BWK: Does that foretell the tightening of exclusion which is exemplified by the gated and vertical communities?

AD: Yes, we're very quickly seeing the equivalent of gated cities in the centers of our cities. In London at the moment we have a number of 1950s, 1960s office lots in prime locations being converted into accommodations, to lofts and flats and condominiums. And these are very, very secure communities. Actually, "communities" is completely the wrong word, because it's a very individualistic way of living — fine views of the River Thames but no need to relate to the person living next door.

It's related to the way in which some of the most repressive places in Southeast Asia have chosen to throw in their lot with a high-tech future. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur have very definitely gone down a high-tech route where the cities have been completely remodeled around assumptions of technology and the skills base. The Kuala Lumpur high-tech experiment put everyone on to the connectivity of the city, but at the same time maintains tight controls on some of the opposition, some of the dissident groups within that society.

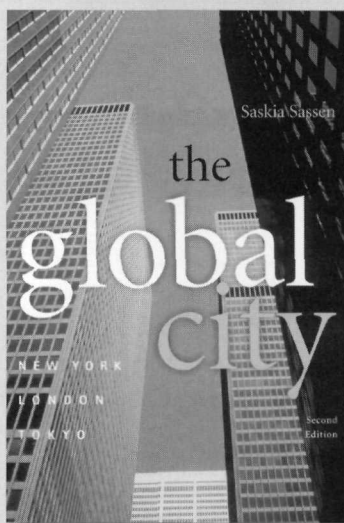
BWK: It doesn't bode well! Do you remain hopeful, particularly about the church?

AD: Yes, if Christians can muster the audacity to believe that they can evangelize the global processes through their own local and transnational witness! ●

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Globalization and its discontents

By Clinton E. Stockwell



The Global City:

New York, London, Tokyo,

by Saskia Sassen (Princeton University Press, 1991)

THE NEW CENTURY seems to be challenged by at least four realities: the increasing development of cities, especially mega-cities; the international migration of peoples that is resulting in a more culturally diverse world; the internationalization and globalization of finance capital into a world economic system dominated by transnational corporations; and growing resource scarcity and environmental stress. Key to the new order of things is globalization. Professor Saskia Sassen, of the University of Chicago, wrote the definitive book on the nature of globalization, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton University

Press, 1991), a decade ago. A revised edition is widely anticipated. Many thought that globalization would lead to radical decentralization, and would therefore work against urbanization. Sassen showed this to be absolutely not the case. The new globalization process has not only contributed to growth of cities, but has required such. While manufacturing and production has been dispersed to third world nations, the control of information and the administration of finance has found its ways to key cities. This constitutes the reality of the global city.

Cities are places where "producer services" can be found. Sassen connects globalization to the information society and to the rise of the service economy. Such services include advertising, accounting, business law, insurance, banking, real estate. She argues that global cities are interconnected units in a world economic system and "producer services" provide the infrastructure necessary.

Sassen also makes a distinction between first-tier and second-tier global cities. The former specialize in producer services necessary for the smooth operation of the transnational corporations disproportionately headquartered there. In more peripheral cities or regions dependent on the global city, there is a greater concentration of consumer services. Consequently, the new economy tends to devalue industrial and manufacturing workers who are pushed to the periphery of the system. And a radical distinction in wages emerges in the service sector. On the one hand, wages for professionals and specialists are higher, even luxurious; whereas the wages of routinized service workers, like clerical workers, are severely depressed. So not only has the new economic system contributed to economic concentration in global cities, but it has also produced increased inequality between the professionals who manage the system and those who serve it. ●

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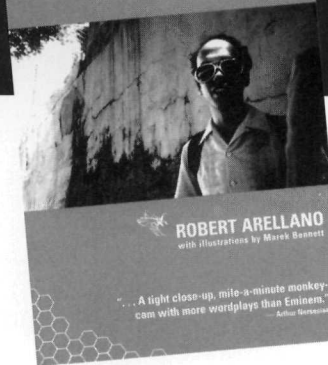
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Fast Eddie, King of the Bees



DIG CITY

by Robert Arellano

the deepest troughs like sinking into an altogether-other medium.

"Take a minute out for mini-magic!" Shep barked. We drew droves of dupes to our spot among the mandrakes by the stump of the old hanging tree, our only props a pair of miniature steel manacles, a shrunken strait-jacket, and a mysterious box beneath a sheet. "It's the babe in bondage!"

Shep provided for his orphan cadets in a cozy, condemned candy factory near Kendall Square. After an old sign on the roof that had lost a letter or two, rats called his flophouse the Nec — rhymes with "mess." Gone were the days when homelessness had been more or less an exception and the most destitute had had access to shelters, group homes, orphanages and adoption programs. Health care had become something for the ultra-rich. For rats, medical attention meant fly-by-night storefronts operated by drunken quacks with expired licenses who were nevertheless enough in demand to require all-day waits. Prevention meant not letting oneself get run over or shot. Shep was pretty fair compared to the dozen or so alternatives available to boys in the Beast. (Although occasionally a pack master might arrange a back-alley mixer with a matron and her mice, there were no coed crews. Guardians for both genders agreed packs produced more income without the drama of that most distracting difference.) By enlisting with Shep, we knew we could depend on him to supply the basic necessities: a leaky roof, our daily grub, and a bed of old Globes.

When the buzz told Shep he had assembled a good-sized gallery, he slapped them with the bondage routine. "Baby Eddie defies the confounding kiddy camisole!" Over my head went that cuffless canvas shirt, size: small/chico. I was fettered, crossed sleeves tied behind my back. Shep invited the volunteer to tighten the straps. Pointing blindly in my vicinity, Shep cried, "Eddie's been a bad

boy — let's put him in the crib!" Off came the sheet at Shep's feet. What lay beneath was less like a cradle than a diver's cage, the kind that keeps out sharks. A rat had found the old lobster trap washed up beneath the dilapidated docks of Inner Harbor. I climbed in.

Shep kept everyone idling until it was time for me to scramble for the jingling metal confetti, detaining them with his trademark slogan, which lulled even the sharpest cynics with its matter-of-fact ingenuousness: "What have you got to lose?" The point was: plenty. While Shep and I supplied distraction, the other rats marked the pigeons in the pack. With the pedestrians-turned-patrons pressing close in a circle, I amazed and astounded while my orphan siblings conspired to lighten the burden of select pockets. When the show ended and the crowd dispersed, our agents would tail their marks out from the axis along their trajectories across the hub. Since the beginning, I had understood the practices surrounding my pediatric profession to be a little unorthodox, but I managed to convince myself that, however bastardized by my orphan brothers to promote the conditions of easy crime, my prestidigitation preserved its integrity. Besides, growing into it as I had from an impressionable age, the career appeared to me not just as the only possible job, but as a sort of calling.

Shep padlocked the top and draped the sheet back over the crate. Buckles clinking, bars rattling, the struggle began. "No way the wound-up wonder child can get out of this one!" A couple of rat assistants hauled the whole contraption over to the edge of the Frog Pond and heaved me in. The Frog Pond's only a few feet deep, but as Shep would say, forebodingly, "It only takes a teaspoon." Portentous bubbles rumbled up from turgid turquoise depths. ●

Contact Akashic Books at PO Box 1456, New York, N.Y. 10009; 718-399-8466; <Akashic7@aol.com>.

CUBAN-AMERICAN novelist Robert Arellano's *Fast Eddie, King of the Bees* (2001), is part of the *Akashic Urban Surreal* series of books which explores the shifting social boundaries in our urban future. *Fast Eddie* is about an abandoned child on the streets of near-future Boston in the aftermath of the Great Devaluation, where squatters have turned the tunnel system into an underground hive known as Dig City.

"STEP RIGHT UP!" Shep called on the Common. "It's Baby Eddie, preschool pretzel-boy!" I puttered around on the heels of my hands, grinning goofily at anyone whose attention strayed, sneaks flopping like crimson elephant ears. Shep, a sightless hustler from Southie, was my makeshift Fagin, my only pal. He trained the youngest by pretending grift was a game, supplying his own billfold. If Shep detected promise then off you went, an independent contractor in his ranks of sticky-fingered freelancers.

The Beast was one big Chinatown that had sprawled into South Station, the financial district, and what had formerly been known as the North End. Sooty, sparking skyscrapers loomed above our barrel-bottom domination in ominous, opulent decadence, but you can bet a road rat never stopped to notice their gothic majesty. It was not in our wiring to admire, much less look up. So little sunlight filtered down to the street that reds and yellows got subtracted from the spectrum. If a helicopter ran out of juice, missing all the pads on the way down, and let a rich man descend upon the Beast, the city might seem to him like some awesome Atlantis, the indigo hues that come along with plumbing

Disappointed in Durban

by Ethan Flad



Indigenous peoples protest on September 3 against their exclusion from the WCAR deliberations

Photos by Ethan Flad

**“Reparations,
reparations,
reparations!”**

— Desmond Tutu

ON THE MORNING OF September 7, 2001, with only 36 hours remaining in a two-week conference that had been over a year in development, Mary Robinson announced, “I have said before, and now believe more than ever, that Durban is the beginning of a long, serious road. This is not the end, but a beginning.” I sat among a crowd of several hundred non-governmental organizational representatives (NGOs) who listened in disbelief, as the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights — the convener of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR) — seemed to suggest that she had never expected this massive event to emerge with significant agreements. With millions

of dollars and countless working hours of activists around the globe having been invested in the process, this normally inoffensive quote was received as a slap in the face.

Some believe that progress was made in Durban. Robinson referred to the conference’s attempts to reinforce international commitments: supporting migrants, opposing caste-based discrimination, recognizing ethnic and cultural groups like the Dalits in India (once known as “Untouchables”) and the Roma (informally called Gypsies), guaranteeing religious freedom, and supporting judicial systems. But there was a sense of betrayal. Many people had come to the WCAR expecting landmark decisions on a wide range of issues, and felt that little was ultimately accomplished.

The level of dismay was obvious. With less than two days remaining, underrepresented groups mounted a series of protests: Dalits commenced a hunger strike; indigenous activists demanded that all references to indigenous peoples be removed from the documents, as they felt that the language being used would actually set back their work; and advocates for reparations held a candlelight vigil. [At a religious press conference on the top priorities for the WCAR’s final days, Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared, “Reparations, reparations, reparations!”] On the final day, governments agreed that slavery and the slave trade were “appalling tragedies in the history of humanity” — and we were forced to wonder, why did it take a year of work to say this?

Three key problems were evident. The first was disorganization. Any churchperson who has ever attended a national denominational conference (like the Episcopal Church’s General Convention) knows what a massive, chaotic event those political events can be. Multiply the logistics a hun-

dred-fold, throw in several other languages, and you have the WCAR. I lost a full day (over eight hours) standing in line to get the accreditation pass to enter the government event — and then learned I would need an



Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Durban

extra “special” pass to actually enter the main building! At the NGO Forum that preceded the governmental conference, workshops were never where the paperwork indicated, signs were absent, knowledgeable volunteers were nowhere to be found. The morning NGO briefings were dominated by people complaining about logistics, rather than discussing programmatic themes. Isaac Miller, rector of the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, Penn., offered an opinion being expressed by many: Behind the scenes, some people were intentionally supplying mis-information. Clearly, creating anger and confusion worked to the advantage of those who did not support the aims of this conference.

The second obstacle was the Middle East topic dominating the public debate. The withdrawal of the Israeli and U.S. govern-

ments from Durban was the focus of international media coverage, but surprised few NGOs. (One young U.S. activist stated, “This is not new; this does not surprise me at all. The U.S. has NEVER been here!”) Even for people who support the Palestinian cause for justice, the focus on it to the exclusion of many others was depressing.

The third and perhaps most important concern was the overall theme of the conference. Since it was not simply a conference on racism, but rather one on “Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance,” the agenda was all over the place. People who hoped to concentrate on matters of colonialism, white supremacy, and institutional racism saw their concerns de-emphasized in this process. Tissa Balasuriya, a Roman Catholic cleric from Sri Lanka, advised, “We are discussing small issues here, not the overall racist and colonialist context. Indeed, the UN itself is based on a racist world structure, and reflects it.”

However, there were those who seemed unconcerned that the document language would not be perfect. Basil Fernando, a Sri Lankan staff member of the Asian Human Rights Center in Hong Kong, said, “If the whole focus of this process is to get treaties signed, this will not matter. Countries in our region DO sign these documents, but then do nothing.” Madonna Thunder Hawk, an American Indian, agreed that the conference needed to be assessed differently: “Let us not forget this is all about networking — meeting with people in similar situations. That is the real way things can change.”

In that sense, the WCAR was an unqualified success. Thousands of activists and government reps from around the world engaged one another in critical dialogue, and built lasting relationships with one another. This appears to be the greatest mistake of the U.S. government’s departure from Durban.

By not simply saying, “We disagree with you, and are going to debate these points,” but rather, “We have no wish to discuss this with you,” the U.S. effectively removed itself from building relationships and trust with other international participants — even (or perhaps especially) those with whom it significantly differs. The Durban experience — and the devastating terrorist attacks on the U.S. three days later — must be viewed within a continuum of isolationist U.S. policy decisions (the Kyoto climate change treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the land mines treaty, etc.) it has made in 2001.

What will be the way forward? For people of faith, there are a number of specific tasks that lay ahead. The World Council of Churches has begun an anti-racism survey of all its member denominations. Local and national church groups are commissioning their own studies of specific issues — many U.S. groups have been energized on reparations to support Congressman John Conyers’ bill HR40, for instance. Some are even reviewing church land holdings within this context. Mostly, the community of faith must contextualize these contentious issues by offering spiritual education, community dialogue, and theological discourse, leading to action. As Fernando says, “One firm conviction I have is that it is the private citizens that can really make a change. If they speak out their minds and if they intervene to assert what they think is right and wrong, there is hope for a transition to peaceful times.” With a lack of major victories from Durban, and the current spirit of mistrust and uncertainty, we must hope that Fernando’s optimistic perspective will prove to be correct. ●

Ethan Flad, who lives in Oakland, Calif., is editor/producer of “a global Witness” (new name pending) at <www.thewitness.org/agw>

Vulnerable to Apocalypse

The smoke and ash still rise from the rubble as these words are written. The anguish of lives lost hovers over city and nation. My present fear is that shortly ashes and rubble will be made elsewhere in the name of the dead. My present hope is that the Word of God may be discerned standing in the shadows of these very events.

The attack on the towers has been called evil. It is. The temptation is to imagine thereby that the U.S. is the very embodiment of good. It is not. Conspicuously fused with the current language of war is a "theology" — a rigid dualism of good and evil. It is a dualism equally suited to terrorists and war-makers.

Our broken hearts are indeed the proper place to begin theological reflection. Wounded hearts, the tears of suffering and death, however, can lead divergent ways. I think of the holocaust, a truly innocent suffering on a vastly different scale, but theologically edifying. So many of those who passed through that horror witnessed to a renewed vision of humanity, a moral passion on behalf of all those who anywhere suffer violence and injustice. But that same history, the same anguish of suffering, can also be invoked to sanction exclusion, demolition, assassination, air strikes and Palestinian apartheid. The meaning of suffering and death is partly a moral choice, theologically put.

In the search for the meaning of these events, the temptation is to be justified by suffering. "Justification" is employed here firstly in St. Paul's sense, of constructing a self-righteous idolatry. This is a pastoral issue to which congregations who gather round those in grief ought to be alert. And it is a political issue for a nation that would justify the next round of military build-up, continuing construction of the largest war machine on the planet. In fact, our congregations must recognize that the political maneuver provokes a pastoral crisis of major proportion. When nations intervene, manipulating grief, they offer idolatrous, nationalistic, vengeful substitutions for the grace of God and true community. They preempt the forgiving love of the Gospel.

As the South Africans have taught us so well, reconciliation and forgiveness require

truth. But if recent days are any measure, the truth would stun many Americans. For most, the innocence of victims is one with the innocence of the nation. And yet it must be said that the U.S. has been pioneer and master of targeting civilians. Be it instruments of mass destruction or antipersonnel weaponry or the slow terrors of low-intensity warfare. From Hiroshima to Vietnam to the contra war in Nicaragua to the infrastructure bombing of Iraq, and more, civilians have been not merely "collateral damage" but target. The question is: Can we look on the rubble of Manhattan and see Baghdad or Beirut or Ramallah? Do the eyes of our heart open or close?

There is likewise the truth of Osama bin Laden — and others like him — trained and supported and used by the CIA in the Afghan war against the Soviets. When we reap the whirlwind, do we see what we have sown?

And this barely begins to touch on the truth of the global economy, for which the Trade Towers were both a literal and symbolic headquarters. How to even evoke this gathering system, which excludes and crushes the poor, strip-mines culture and assaults the earth.

The image of the falling towers, played over and over, has been quite literally apocalyptic. It even prompts certain fundamentalists, with their concomitant dualisms and judgments, to claim the will of God, and see endtime signs. Apocalyptic, of course, is not about timelines, but truth. Apocalypse means "revelation," means "unveiling," means pulling aside the curtain of delusions that cover history's meaning. We do, indeed, need to look deep in reading this sign of the times.

I've been led to think on the apocalyptic dream of Daniel 2. There the towering imperial image of gold and bronze and iron is overwhelmingly strong and glorious above, but it's got to stand somewhere and what it stands upon is actually its vulnerability. Clay feet. If it doesn't stand on a foundation of justice it's vulnerable even to collapse. In the dream it crashes down like this heaving emblem in history. Such an image raises the question: What are we actually standing on? What is the real source of our continuing vulnerability? Is it

inadequate security machinery and inadequate military power, or is it inadequate justice?

If a Word of hope is in the rubble it may be the choice clearly put: Will we sow yet again the whirlwind or lay with our lives a new foundation?

— Bill Wylie-Kellermann (*An earlier version of this piece appeared in Sojourners, www.soj.net.*)

War is not a game

Now is the time in the game of war when we dehumanize our enemies. They are utterly incomprehensible, their acts unimaginable, their motivations senseless. They are "madmen" and their states are "rogue." Now is not the time for more understanding — just better intelligence. These are the rules of the war game.

Feeling people will no doubt object to this characterization: War is not a game. It is real lives ripped in half; it is lost sons, daughters, mothers and fathers, each with a dignified story. This act of terror was reality of the harshest kind, an act that makes all other acts seem suddenly frivolous, game-like.

It's true: War is most emphatically not a game. And perhaps it will never again be treated as one. Perhaps Sept. 11, 2001, will mark the end of the shameful era of the video game war. Watching the coverage on Tuesday was a stark contrast to the last time I sat glued to a television set watching a real-time war on CNN. The Space Invader battlefield of the Gulf War had almost nothing in common with what we have seen this week. Back then, instead of real buildings exploding over and over again, we saw only sterile bomb's-eye views of concrete targets — there and then gone. Who was in these abstract polygons? We never found out.

Since the Gulf War, American foreign policy has been based on a single brutal fiction: that the U.S. military can intervene in conflicts around the world — in Iraq, Kosovo, Israel — without suffering any U.S. casualties. This is a country that has come to believe in the ultimate oxymoron: a safe war.

This conviction has, until Tuesday, allowed Americans to remain blithely unaffected by — even uninterested in — international conflicts



in which they are key protagonists. Americans don't get daily coverage on CNN of the ongoing bombings in Iraq, nor are they treated to human-interest stories on the devastating effects of economic sanctions on that country's children. After the 1998 bombing of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan (mistaken for a chemical weapons facility), there weren't too many follow-up reports about what the loss of vaccine manufacturing did to disease prevention in the region.

And when NATO bombed civilian targets in Kosovo — including markets, hospitals, refugee convoys, passenger trains and a TV station — NBC didn't do "streeter" interviews with survivors about how shocked they were by the indiscriminate destruction.

The U.S. has become expert in the art of sanitizing and dehumanizing acts of war committed elsewhere. Domestically, war is no longer a national obsession, it's a business that is now largely outsourced to experts. This is one of the country's many paradoxes: Though the engine of globalization around the world, the nation has never been more inward looking, less worldly. ...

Like an amnesiac, the U.S. has woken up in the middle of a war, only to find out the war has been going on for years.

Did the U.S. deserve to be attacked? Of course not. That suggestion is ugly and dangerous. But here's a different question that must

be asked: Did U.S. foreign policy create the conditions in which such twisted logic could flourish, a war not so much on U.S. imperialism but on perceived U.S. imperviousness?

— Naomi Klein, <http://www.inthesetimes.com>

No technical solution

We must hold, as if to life itself, to a fundamental truth that has been known to all thoughtful people since the destruction of Hiroshima: There is no technical solution to the vulnerability of modern populations to weapons of mass destruction. ... It is to politics that we must return for the solutions that hold promise. That means returning to the treaties that the U.S. has recently been discarding like so much old newspaper — the one dealing, for example with an International Criminal Court (useful for tracking down terrorists and bringing them to justice), with global warming and, above all, with nuclear arms and the other weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical. The U.S. and seven other countries now rely for their national security on the retaliatory execution of destruction a million-fold greater than the Tuesday attacks. The exit from this folly, by which we endanger ourselves as much as others, must be found.

— Jonathan Schell, *The Nation*, 10/1/01

For more commentary on the September 11 attacks, see <www.thewitness.org/agw>.

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