

WITNESS MAGAZINE



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CHRISTIANITY AND GLOBAL CONFLICT

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on the cover

A dancer holds up a symbol of Christian solidarity with Israel during the Oct. 11, 2002, Christian Coalition Road to Victory conference at the Washington, D.C., Convention Center
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In keeping with our commitment to go forward in a way that ensures a future for *The Witness* and stays focused on its mission, with this issue we begin publishing on a bimonthly schedule. The next issue you receive will be the May/June 2003 edition, in which the board and staff of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company will continue to give voice to a liberation Gospel of peace and justice and to promote the concrete activism that flows from such a Christianity.

—*The Executive Committee of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, for the Board of Directors*

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An interfaith peace-building delegation organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation traveled to Lebanon and Palestine/Israel from January 27 to February 8, 2003. The trip was co-sponsored by The Witness and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and included seven Episcopalians, among them Witness contributing editors Winnie Varghese and Michael Battle and Witness staffer Ethan Flad. Find reports from the delegation, which visited individuals and organizations involved in nonviolence and peacemaking in the region, at www.thewitness.org and www.forusa.org.

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LETTERS

Share the wealth

The New Testament concept expressed in words attributed to Jesus, which clearly conveys the idea that a key to salvation is caring for those who are hungry, naked, etc., makes me think that Jesus would support the idea that those of us who are "among the more fortunate" should share our wealth with those who are "among the less fortunate."

Based on personal experience as a father of three daughters who by birth were half sisters and whose birth parents were just simply incompetent parents, I conclude that any person's ability is largely inherited and that those of us who are gifted can lay no claim to that as anything we earned. We were lucky. A logical consequence of that is that we should share our wealth with others who are "less fortunate."

This would be termed "socialism" by those on the right, today.

However, discussions about "Christian morality" by "Christians" tend to skirt this basic tenet of Christianity. Many "Christians" seem to become indignant about the sexual weaknesses of Bill Clinton in his escapades with Monica Lewinsky, but seem to accept the idea that "tax-payers" should not have to share our wealth with those who are less fortunate.

What rubbish and stupidity and blindness!

I think Jesus would not buy this rubbish! Jesus would pick up a whip and drive persons with that insensitive view out of his sight.

Mike Hayes

Springfield, IL

Call for honesty

I read the interview between Julie Wortman and Walter Bruggemann [TW 11/02] and was struck by the evasiveness of Bruggemann. Especially striking was the response to Julie's question: "Is it your experience that Scripture is the chief authority for moderate Christians and is it the chief authority for you?" His answer: "The answer to both of these is yes. It is the chief authority for moderates and it is the chief

authority to me as long as one can qualify that to say that it is the chief authority when imaginatively construed in a certain interpretive trajectory."

Is this statement to be translated as "as long as it agrees with what I believe"?

Then he was asked if practitioners of LGBT are sinners. Answer: "We are all sinners."

Another instance of evasive circumlocution. I think that theologians have the responsibility to be honest in their beliefs.

Raymond Ayoub

State College, PA

'Louie's Index' error

In the January/February issue of *The Witness*, on page 13, the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD) is erroneously described as both conservative and liberal. I feel sure that this is an editing or typing error, but it surely needs to be corrected. The IRD is so dangerous that I hope you will print a much more detailed article about their organized plans to destroy the existing Episcopal, Presbyterian and United Methodist denominations. In the same issue, Ray Gaston's excellent gospel-grounded call to faith-based worship/action, "Time to Resist," is one of the best I have seen.

Dotty Dale

Bellingham, WA

[Ed. note: A BIG proofing error, for which *The Witness*' staff repents!]

'Louie's Index': a quibble

I always enjoy "Louie's Index," being something of a statistics/trivia fan myself. One quibble with his Index that appears in the December 2002 issue of *The Witness*: Costa Rica was actually a diocese of ECUSA until 1976, when the bishop (Tony Ramos) submitted his resignation to the HOB and the World Mission standing commission recommended extra-provincial status for the diocese. (Curiously, however, I find no actual resolution approved by the 1976 General Convention, other than the acceptance of

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company, publisher of *The Witness* magazine and related website projects, seeks to give voice to a liberation Gospel of peace and justice and to promote the concrete activism that flows from such a Christianity. Founded in 1917 by Irving Peake Johnson, an Episcopal Church bishop, *The Witness* claims a special mission to Episcopalians and other Anglicans worldwide, while affirming strong partnership with progressives of other faith traditions.

Manuscripts: Writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Manuscripts will not be returned.

the bishop's resignation.) See the 1976 Journal of the General Convention: pp. B-160 and AA-236.

Patrick Mauney
New York, NY

Bringing blessing and justice together

I'm writing in response to a November 2002 essay titled, "What Does It Mean for the Church to Give Its Blessing?" identified as "prepared by the Claiming the Blessing theology committee." My book, *For Fidelity: How Intimacy and Commitment Enrich Our Lives*, is identified as one of the sources for this essay, perhaps

because I discuss the concept of blessing with some care in the last chapter. I both enjoyed and admired the ways in which my own thinking was both incorporated and significantly developed in this essay, and I hope you might have some way to let the committee know that. I especially liked the connections made to Eucharist and to baptism, and how blessing and justice are brought together. That's really great work! And it's fun to feel that I'm part of a conversation.

Catherine M. Wallace
Lilly Endowment Writer in Residence
Seabury Western Theological Seminary
Chicago, IL

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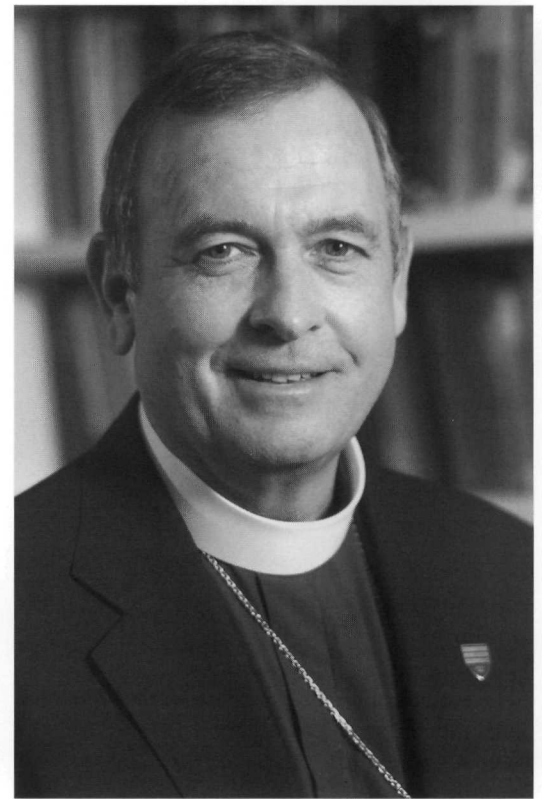
An Episcopal religious community-in-canonical-formation of brothers and sisters; single, partnered and married; either living-in-community or living independently; striving for justice and peace among all people. Contact: Order of Jonathan Daniels, St. Brigit's Hallow, 94 Chatham St., Chatham, NJ 07928.

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Welcome to our life/work in community, homelessness, immigrants, AIDS, Recovery, housing, spirituality, including "To Follow the Christ" poster, books, etc. www.orderofchristianworkers.org.

Word and World: A People's School #3

June 7-14 in Philadelphia, PA. Following in the pattern of remarkable gatherings in Greensboro and Tucson last year, this third school will focus on nonviolent resistance to militarism and economic injustice. Not a conference, these gatherings are for those already engaged in works of social transformation but ready to go deeper. In addition to others, partial scholarships specifically available for pastors and pastoral workers in need. For more information see www.wordandworld.org.



Fighting fundamentalism with fundamentalism won't bring peace

by John Bryson Chane

THE FAMOUS SCOPES MONKEY TRIAL that pitted creationism against evolution remains a "Mark Twain" in our nation's cultural history. Some 80 years later, Christian fundamentalists are still reacting against modernism and its role in redefining biblical theology. In recent years this reaction has become more far-reaching as fundamentalist leaders have claimed to find Bible-based reasons for opposing the creation of a Palestinian state, supporting the concept of military attack on Iraq and

resisting cultural diversification in the U.S. At the same time, the rapid spread of religiously fueled terrorism in the Muslim world has demonstrated the horrific consequences that can ensue when human beings claim divine authorization based on their particular reading of a sacred text.

Christianity, if it is to remain open to God's unfolding revelation and the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, must remain open to the impact of discoveries and advances in science, medicine and technology. If it is to understand how God's people endeavor to understand themselves, it must remain current in its comprehension of the social sciences, and if it is to speak comfort and challenge to new generations, it must cultivate a passionate engagement in the arts and humanities. But new knowledge and a broadened critical perspective also stir faithful questioning, and with faithful questioning comes the risk of having to rethink, reevaluate and restate one's theological worldview. Jesus' teaching that one cannot put new wine in old wineskins merits closer consideration from those who view Christian theology and biblical interpretation as static and inerrant. The ways in which Christianity and the other great theistic religions — Judaism and Islam — come to terms with the major intellectual and cultural developments of our time — testing all things and keeping what is good, as Paul said — will determine whether life on our ever more interdependent planet will survive or self-destruct.

The clash between al Qaeda and the West is a foretaste of what is in store for the global community if the forces of reaction cannot be reconciled to the new social, political and economic realities that have been emerging since the dawn of the machine age and the birth of democracy. The advent of radical Islam has given us a terrifying glimpse of a future in which religious fundamentalists feel themselves so alienated from the global community that they take up arms against societies committed to scholarly inquiry,

intellectual freedom, open and honest dialogue, equal protection under law and respect for the dignity of every human being.

Christian fundamentalists in this country enjoy levels of influence and affluence that render the embrace of violence — by all but the most radical anti-abortion activists — remote. Yet this comity is not without cost. Emboldened by their close ties to the Republican party, and supported by an exceedingly well-financed network of politically conservative foundations, publications and think tanks, religious

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traditionalists in the U.S. have mounted venomous campaigns against pastors, bishops, biblical scholars and theologians who have dared to examine our common Christian past through newly ground lenses. The vilification of men and women of good will is the first step in silencing opposing voices. It is also evidence of the ways in which religious fundamentalists attempt to co-opt the political life of their host nations. The current state of Islam in so many countries exemplifies the repressive nature of any fundamentalist theocracy. But fundamentalists need not dominate a polity to achieve their

ends. Consider the unholy alliance of conservative elements in Judaism and American Christianity that has exacerbated the tension between Israelis and Palestinians, and made hopes of achieving a two-state solution more distant.

The question that has made the rounds in Washington since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, is "Why do they hate us so much?" The answer, all too frequently, is that other countries and cultures hate us because we are economically prosperous and militarily strong. This analysis is of a piece with the conviction embraced by fundamentalists of every stripe who believe that they have cornered the market on truth and righteousness, and that those who fault them do so out of either ignorance or jealousy. But the gravity of our current situation demands a deeper analysis and a willingness to see ourselves as others see us.

To many people, the U.S. is a Christian nation that exports violence, promiscuity and luxury goods that the vast majority of people on this planet cannot afford. According to the UN, more than three billion people are living on an average of \$2 per day. Half of those people live on less than \$1 per day. If these people are familiar with classic Christian teachings, those that stress loving their neighbor, turning the other cheek and caring for "even the least of these," American Christianity must seem a peculiar thing indeed. For the world sees our self-interest too often and our altruism too infrequently. In our alliances with corrupt and repressive regimes, our willingness to provide sophisticated weaponry to whomever suits us, our abrogation of treaties, our economically one-sided trading policies with impoverished nations and our newly articulated policy of preemptive warfare, the poor of the planet behold behavior that is influenced more by the teachings of Machiavelli and Bismarck than by the teachings of Christ. Little wonder then that violent men, drunk on self-righteousness, have found an audience disposed to aim its rage at the U.S. and

its dominant religion.

Making this point is not an exercise in "blaming America first." I believe that President George W. Bush takes his faith seriously. I believe he sees his presidency as an opportunity to bring peace to a wounded and strife-ridden world. But in its war on terror, his administration has done too little to alleviate the material conditions that produce the despair, hopelessness and alienation on which bellicose fundamentalism must feed. He has also decided to fight fundamentalism with fundamentalism, embracing a vision of America as the successor of the biblical Israel, God's most favored nation, the embodiment of all that is good. But this view is as unsound as the radical Islamicists' view of the U.S. as the Great Satan.

Nations and leaders must understand that most of the world's conflicts today are fueled by systematically flawed religious ideologies — dueling absolutes embraced by fallible human beings who see truth only through a glass and darkly. Military action undertaken to quell religiously motivated conflicts will eventually intensify the cycle of violence that continues to destroy and demean the children of God throughout the world. In attempting to resolve such crises, religious leaders of sound learning and broad theological perspective, leaders who speak from the center of their faith, must be brought into the dialogue so that the global community can claim the peace that the Gospel tells us passes all understanding, but that is at the heart of every faith. ●

JUSTICEWORKS

Renewing the Church's Social Witness

MARCH 28-30, 2003 / ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

A National Conference convened by Protestant Justice Action (justice advocates from seven denominations), Eden Theological Seminary and Equal Partners in Faith

www.eden.edu/justiceworks.html

"Mainline" American churches have historically affirmed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls all who follow him to promote economic justice, work for peace, care for the environment and insist on equal treatment for all of God's children. In recent years, however, in the face of financial cutbacks and internal controversies, several of these churches have reduced their commitment to social ministries and muted their public voice. In response to this situation, unofficial social justice networks have been formed in the American Baptist Churches, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. Leaders of these networks are seeking ways to act ecumenically in order to renew and expand their churches' social witness.

JusticeWorks is a major step in this effort. Everyone is welcome to attend what promises to be an educational and inspirational gathering. A special invitation is extended to seminarians whose leadership is obviously crucial to the church of tomorrow.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: The Rev. Gregory Dell, Broadway United Methodist Church, Chicago, IL (During Dell's suspension for conducting a service of Holy Union for two gay men he was director of "In All Things Charity," a national movement within the United Methodist Church working to end the denomination's discrimination policies against gays and lesbians. Dell has a 37-year history of involvement in issues of social justice, especially issues of racism.)

PREACHER: Alvin O'Neal Jackson, Senior Pastor of National City Christian church, Washington, D.C. and Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

BIBLE STUDY LEADER: The Rev. Mari Castellanos, Minister for the Just Peace Action Network, United Church of Christ

WORKSHOPS: Will focus on calling the church to renewal and will include as resource leaders representatives from the NAACP, People for the American Way, The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, The National Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice, The Center for New Community, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, The American Humanist Association and The American Civil Liberties Union. Representatives of denominational Peace Fellowships and national staff assigned to justice issues in Protestant denominations will join Roman Catholics, Muslims, Jews and secular justice advocates.

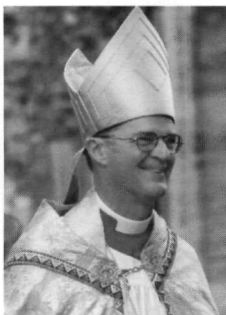
CONFERENCE LOCATION: Union Avenue Christian Church
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ask for JusticeWorks rate 314-427-5955

As we went to press...

This news digest was prepared from news and wire reports by *Witness* news editor, Pat McCaughan.



Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop blasts U.S. for foreign policy

In an interview with Religion News Service (RNS) on Jan. 10, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold III called the rhetoric of U.S. foreign policy "reprehensible" and condemned the government's blind eye toward poverty and suffering. Griswold also blasted the Bush administration for its wartime rhetoric, especially for labeling Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an "axis of evil."

"Quite apart from the bombs we drop, words are weapons and we have used our language so unwisely, so intemperately, so thoughtlessly ... that I'm not surprised we are hated and loathed everywhere I go," he said.

Griswold has argued that a pre-emptive strike against Iraq does not meet just-war criteria. A couple of days after the RNS interview, in a service at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Washington, D.C., (Washington National Cathedral) that marked his fifth anniversary as presiding bishop, Griswold characterized the AIDS pandemic as posing a far greater security threat to the U.S. because AIDS is creating a populace of orphans who live in abject poverty in fragile African democracies. The world, he said, rightly sees the U.S. "as greedy, self-interested and almost totally unconcerned about poverty, disease and suffering."

Pope says 'No' to war in Iraq

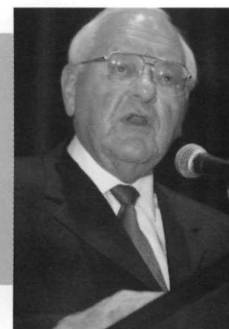
On January 13, Pope John Paul II condemned the possibility of a war in Iraq, saying it could be avoided and that it would be a defeat for humanity, Reuters reported. He made clear his opposition in his annual "State of the World" address to diplomats accredited to the Vatican. "War is never just another means that one can choose to employ for settling differences between nations," he said in a clear reference to the military build-up for a possible U.S.-led war against Iraq over its alleged weapons of mass destruction program. He said international law and diplomacy were the only means worthy of resolving differences.

Episcopal diocese advocates for Cincinnati living-wage ordinance

The Cincinnati City Council voted November 27, 2002, to enact a Living Wage ordinance which states that all full-time employees of the city and employees of private companies with city contracts must be paid a "Living Wage," an amount they concluded to be \$8.70 per hour for employees with health benefits and \$10.20 per hour for those not receiving health benefits. Among those speaking in favor of the ordinance was Nancy Sullivan, a new member of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio's Diocesan Council. Sullivan had served on the diocese's Task Force on Work, which last year won passage of a living-wage resolution by Southern Ohio's 127th diocesan convention. Sullivan brought the resolution with her when she spoke to the City Council.

Illinois Governor George Ryan empties state's death row

Following the pardoning of four death-row inmates on January 10, 2003, the governor of Illinois, George Ryan, handed out reduced sentences to all 156 inmates on the state's death row (153 inmates received life sentences without possibility of parole and three others received shorter sentences). Ryan, a former death-penalty supporter, had issued a moratorium on executions in 2000 and convened a commission to investigate the system. Since 1976, when the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty, Illinois has executed a dozen inmates. But another 13 death-row inmates were freed because they were found innocent or there were significant flaws in how they were convicted. "Because the Illinois death penalty system is arbitrary and capricious — and therefore immoral — I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death," Ryan said. The governor's move came two days before he left office.



California hate crime victim eulogized by LA Episcopalians

Author, poet and civil rights activist Malcolm Boyd challenged 100 Episcopalians at a Dec. 6, 2002, candlelight vigil to make the death of hate crime victim Jeffrey Owens, 40, "not a statistic but something very significant in terms of human justice." Boyd, along with other clergy and laity from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles were in Riverside, Calif., for the diocese's 107th annual convention. Owens, an Inland Valley AIDS Project employee, died June 6, 2002, after he was attacked outside a well-known gay bar. He had come to the aid of a friend who had been attacked. Before Owens was stabbed repeatedly, his attacker used derogatory language referring to his sexual orientation. He died the next day. Standing in the same parking lot where Owens was stabbed, Boyd told those at the vigil that Owens "isn't just another victim. He becomes a martyr and a symbol." Six suspects have been arrested in connection with Owens' death and face potential hate crime penalties.



Ethun Flood

Bush's faith-based initiatives give official blessing to religious discrimination

On Dec. 12, President George W. Bush signed executive orders that authorize federal agencies to allow religious groups that discriminate in hiring to receive federal tax dollars to operate social services. "His faith-based initiatives policy is designed to put religious groups on an equal footing. But he has created a special right for religious groups to discriminate using tax dollars, something other groups are forbidden from doing," said Ralph G. Neas, president of People For the American Way. "Far from championing equal rights, the president is endorsing tax-funded discrimination." The executive orders will ensure that religious institutions can receive federal tax dollars even if they refuse to hire employees because of their religious beliefs or lack thereof, an exemption from federal civil rights laws not available to non-religious charitable groups. Last year, the president failed to get his faith-based bill through Congress. Although the House passed the bill, the Senate could not muster enough votes.

Supporting conscientious objectors

by Marianne Arbogast

As the mobilization of troops to the Persian Gulf heightens the threat of war, peace groups around the country are mobilizing to support young people grappling with questions of conscience and military service. Their efforts include counseling for conscientious objectors (COs), outreach to young people who are targeted by military recruiters, and opposition to a new law that ties federal school funding to the schools' release of information on high-school students for military recruiting purposes.

"There's a lot more intensity around these issues," says Bill Galvin, Counseling Coordinator for the Center on Conscience and War (CCW) in Washington, D.C. "We've been getting calls to the GI Rights Hotline non-stop, and a lot more people are articulating reasons of conscience as their reason for wanting out."

The GI Rights Hotline, which CCW helps to maintain, was established primarily to work with people who became conscientious objectors after enlisting in the armed services. Although the process of obtaining a CO discharge is a lengthy one, the military has generally granted such discharges if applicants can show that their beliefs changed after they enlisted — not an uncommon experience, Galvin says.

The Center is also working to establish legal protection for military COs.

"We're trying to get a bill introduced in Congress that would strengthen the rights of COs in all the branches of the military," he says. "What happened during the Gulf War was that the military instituted 'Stop Loss' orders, and essentially didn't let anyone out for any reason. If you were a CO, your choices were go to war or go to jail."

For some COs, those may still be the choices. Although most mainstream

churches — including the Episcopal Church — support the right to selective conscientious objection based on the belief that a particular military action is unjust, U.S. law only grants CO status to people who object to any and all wars. Sometimes, Galvin says, people who think they are selective COs come to realize that — in today's world with today's weapons — the conditions for what they would consider a "just war" would never be met.

"To people who still say there are wars they would fight, we say we'll support you [in trying to obtain CO status] but you'll probably lose. There's a chance you'll set a precedent and broaden the definition of the law, but you can't expect that's going to happen."

Civilian COs are also a concern — though less pressing, without a current military draft. Still, Galvin and other counselors urge young people who believe themselves to be COs to document and formally register their convictions now — particularly since, under current policy, persons called up in the event of a draft would be given only 10 days to apply for CO status. CCW maintains a register for COs; so does the Episcopal Church.

Although most activists consider reinstatement of a draft unlikely, they don't dismiss the possibility. CCW is currently lobbying against a draft bill introduced by U.S. Rep.

Charles Rangel (D-NY). The bill — which, ironically, was intended to stimulate anti-war sentiment — would have disastrous consequences for COs, Galvin says, forcing them to serve in the military.

Other organizations are focusing their efforts on challenging military recruitment strategies.

"We do have a draft — it's called an economic draft," says Oskar Castro, a program assistant for the Youth and Militarism program of the American Friends Service Committee. "Military recruiters disproportionately focus on communities of color and rural, poor white areas. Junior ROTC programs target the people who don't usually go to college, who are economically and educationally disenfranchised."

To counter misinformation and undue pressure to enlist, the Youth and Militarism program is joining forces with the Blackout Arts Collective — a group that seeks to empower artists of color and raise social issues — in planning a road show featuring music, poetry and performance art for schools in low-income communities.

"Those young people traditionally have not had access to conversations about conscientious objection and selective service registration — or if they join the military and get a consciousness, what their rights are," Castro says. "We're looking to go into communities of color and share why we exist, what the history of conscientious objection has been, and how we can be a resource." The tour is tentatively scheduled to be launched from Philadelphia in April.

Castro is also working to raise consciousness concerning a provision of the "No Child Left Behind" Act, signed into law on Jan. 8. The Act reauthorizes federal grants to schools in low-income areas for such purposes as lunch and after-school programs, but also mandates — as a requirement of grant eligibility — that high schools turn over names and addresses of students to military recruiters. As the Act is written, parents must provide a written statement if they don't want their child's name included, though it is unclear how or whether they

For More Information

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For an Episcopal CO packet
Monna MacLellan at 800-334-7626
email: mmaclellan@episcopalchurch.org

would even be notified.

Jackie Lynn, executive director of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF), says that she has encountered a lot of interest in organizing around the issue of high-school recruitment. She also notes that more than half of EPF members are clergy, so part of their effort will be "to provide background information so that clergy are more familiar with conscientious objection and the questions they need to be raising with young people.

"For EPF, this has been a primary issue over the past 60 years," Lynn says. "We were one of the groups that went to Congress and worked to pass the act that established conscientious objection. We're on the brink of trying to organize more and more on this issue."

Peace activist Philip Berrigan dies

by Pat McCaughan

Philip Berrigan, a patriarch of the Roman Catholic anti-war movement whose conscience collided with national policy for more than three decades, died Dec. 6 of liver and kidney cancer. He was 79 and had lived at Jonah House, a communal residence of war resisters on the grounds of a West Baltimore cemetery, for much of the past decade. He led the Catonsville Nine, who staged one of the most dramatic protests of the 1960s. They lit a small bonfire of draft records doused with homemade napalm in a Catonsville parking lot and ignited a generation of anti-war dissent. More recently he helped found the Plowshares movement, whose members have attacked federal military property with hammers and were then often imprisoned.

In his most recent protest, in December 1999, Berrigan and others banged on A-10 Warthog warplanes at the Middle River Air National Guard base. He was convicted of malicious destruction of property and sentenced to 30 months. He was released Dec. 14, 2001.

A World War II army veteran who

achieved the rank of second lieutenant in the infantry, he publicly criticized the Vietnam War and U.S. foreign and domestic policy. He gained national attention in the 14-year period during which he wore the Roman collar and clerical garb of a Josephite priest. He eventually served some 11 years in jail and prison for his actions challenging public authority and the military budget.

Philip Francis Berrigan was born Oct. 5, 1923, in Two Harbors, Minn., to Thomas and Frida Berrigan. His father was a trade unionist turned Socialist who lost his job as a railroad engineer. After graduating from high school in Syracuse, N.Y., Philip spent one semester at St. Michael's College in



Philip Berrigan, at a Jan. 25, 1983, anti-military demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Toronto before being drafted into the U.S. Army in January 1943.

He earned an English degree at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., in 1950 and then followed his brother Jerome into the Society of St. Joseph. The order, known as the Josephite Fathers, serves African-American communities.

Ordained in 1955, he was assigned to New Orleans, where he earned a degree in secondary education at Loyola University of the South in 1957 and a master's at Xavier University three years later.

He worked with a host of civil rights organizations, including CORE [Congress of Racial Equality], SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee] and the Urban League, and took Freedom Rides. His first arrest was during a civil rights protest in Selma, Ala. His church superiors transferred him to the faculty of Epiphany Apostolic College, a Josephite seminary in Newburgh, N.Y., where he again led protests on behalf of the poor.

As the U.S. expanded its presence in Vietnam, he became more outspoken and visible. In 1964, he organized the Emergency Citizens Group Concerned About Vietnam in Newburgh and co-founded the Catholic Peace Fellowship in New York City. Frustrated by the church's failure to speak out against the war, he compared its stance on Vietnam to "the German Church under Hitler." Not long afterward, his superiors transferred him again, to St. Peter Claver Church in West Baltimore. There, he started the Baltimore Interfaith Peace Mission, lobbied Congress and federal officials and led vigils and peace demonstrations.

On Oct. 27, 1967, Berrigan and three others dumped blood on Selective Service records in the Baltimore Customs House, "anointing" them, he said. They were convicted of defacing government property and impeding the Selective Service. While awaiting sentencing, Berrigan began recruiting brother Daniel and seven others for a second draft board raid. They earned the name the Catonsville Nine for setting fire to Selective Service Board records with homemade napalm in the parking lot. They were convicted of conspiracy and destruction of government property in U.S. District Court in Baltimore, and remained free on bail for 16 months until the U.S. Supreme Court declined to reconsider the verdict. The day they were to begin serving their sentences, the Berrigan brothers and two others went into hiding. Twelve days later, the FBI found Philip Berrigan at the Church of St. Gregory

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the Great in Manhattan and he was taken to the federal prison in Lewisburg.

He had secretly married Elizabeth McAlister, a former nun, a member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, a year earlier. Later, they would face conspiracy charges together, accused of plots to kidnap presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger and to blow up heating tunnels in Washington. Ultimately, those charges were dismissed.

Berrigan authored several books, including *No More Strangers*, *Punishment for Peace*, *Prison Journals of a Priest Revolutionary* and *Widen the Prison Gates*. In 1996, he wrote his autobiography, *Fighting the Lamb's War*, and with his wife wrote *The Times' Discipline*, a work on their life together at Jonah House.

In addition to his wife and brother Daniel, he is survived by three children and three other brothers. In a final statement released by his family, he said, "I die with the conviction, held since 1968 and Catonsville, that nuclear weapons are the scourge of the earth; to mine for them, manufacture them, deploy them, use them, is a curse against God, the human family, and the earth itself."

Justice network celebrates 20 years of organizing work

by Ben MacConnell

The Direct Action & Research Training (DART) Center, a national network of local faith-based community organizing groups, has reason to celebrate. Last month, they passed a milestone: 20 years of fighting for justice and building community. Founded by Holly Holcombe and John Calkins during a small organizing effort in Miami, Fla., the DART Center has developed 20 metropolitan affiliates spread throughout six states.

"Injustice takes many forms in our nation's cities," reflects Calkins, who is now DART's executive director. "When we take a close look we see healthcare for the few, inequitable education within our public schools, lack of affordable housing, absence of living-wage jobs, police misconduct,

unfair treatment of new immigrants and countless others. These things rightfully make us angry. However, simply getting angry when facing injustice doesn't mean things will change. I have learned that we need to hold accountable the systems that make important decisions affecting our lives."

Over the last two years alone, local DART organizations have won victories on a broad set of issues including reform of public-school suspension policies, job source agreements, expansion of community-oriented policing, improved support for job training for those coming off public assistance and fair immigration policies.

Calkins attributes DART's success, in part, to its principle of self-determination and leadership within the community. Each DART affiliate is a coalition of local congregations and neighborhood groups committed to building a powerful, diverse, broad-based, multi-issued and democratically run organization devoted to economic and social justice. While each affiliate will have a professional staff of organizers, it's the unpaid leaders from the local community that make the decisions and ultimately run the organization. They are responsible for surfacing and researching issues, developing campaigns, making organization-wide decisions through their board of directors, and speaking and acting in the public arena. DART organizers provide the facilitation, training and leadership development needed to make it happen.

Another key to DART's success has been their ability to mobilize people through intentional relationship building processes. Cristina Fundora, DART's Immigrant Organizing Director, lays out DART's approach. "The theory is simple — injustice exists and without power we don't stand a chance of changing it. Our power comes from organizing people. Those of us in low- to moderate-income communities do not have to be powerless to change things. We need to get connected. Conducting intentional relationship building allows us to do this."

Finally, DART relies heavily on the "faith-based" part of faith-based community organizing. "A shift in power is happening across

the country for those who have been traditionally excluded from the democratic process," says John Aeschbury, a clergy person who is the lead organizer for DART's affiliate in Columbus, Ohio. "It's happening in the basements of churches, synagogues and mosques because we find common values for justice, fairness and equality." DART's network now includes over 400 local congregations (Christian, Muslim and Jewish).

For More Information

To learn more about DART and its affiliates visit their website:
www.thedartcenter.org

Virginia Seminary's library chosen as archive for African-American Episcopalians

by Pat McCaughan

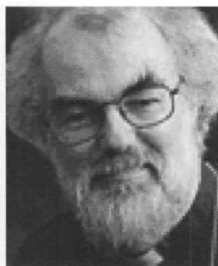
The Virginia Theological Seminary and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, the seminary's library in Alexandria, have agreed to house documents illustrating the history of the church's African Americans.

In the new archival project, the African-American Episcopal Collection will include a variety of media — oral histories, institutional records and other documents, as well as photographs — chronicling the lives and experiences of African Americans in the church. The agreement also includes a plan to expand the collection, obtain additional funding and materials, and improve its accessibility. This summer the library will construct additional archival space to accommodate the collection. The seminary library is named in honor of the Bishop Payne Divinity School, a seminary for the education of African and African-American Episcopalians that merged with Virginia Seminary in 1953. The primary goal of the new collection is to make its materials available for both scholarly research and education of the wider church. ●

Canterbury 104: Rowan Williams

by Peter Selby

It will not surprise *Witness* readers that the appointment of an Archbishop of Canterbury has a different “feel” this side of the Atlantic. Although his role in the Anglican Communion is going to be important — I remember Bishop Edmond Browning saying to a gathering of English bishops about a previous Archbishop, “He’s our Archbishop too” — Episcopalians are bound to feel a certain ambivalence: The fact that the “primate among primates” has to be the bishop of a diocese in England is not an altogether welcome piece of history; the fact that he is by virtue of the conventions of the Church of England a senior member of the English establishment and an *ex officio* member of the UK legislature; the fact that his appointment was by a process that has evolved historically but in its involvement of the head of the UK government is not that easy to defend; the fact that he has, under current English canon law, to be a man — all these things put a question against any suggestion that *Witness* readers should regard Rowan Williams as “our” Archbishop.



Rowan Williams

Of course that does not necessarily say all that *Witness* readers might feel: This Archbishop is a radical thinker — “conservative in doctrine, liberal in social matters” is an only partially true one-liner that has been used to describe him — with a strong commitment to public engagement. He has, as it happens, many close associations with the Episcopal Church, and of course was famously only two blocks away from the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks; but that understanding is at the same time a critical one, as those who have read his comments on the Western responses to those attacks and to the prospect of war with Iraq will know well. At the same time, he has already said things that make clear that he feels a responsibility to the Anglican Communion as a whole, which means that even on issues where he would personally differ from the majority view he will work within that view — and not all *Witness* readers will want an Archbishop of Canterbury who does that.

My concern in this short article, however, is to speak without apology from an English perspective. There is no doubt that something very unusual has been happening since Rowan Williams’ appointment. The press coverage has been massive, in a nation that does not produce nearly as many churchgoers as the U.S. More than that, there has been a fascination with his ideas: *The Times* described his Dibleby lecture as the most intellectually challenging statement by an Archbishop of Canterbury in 30 years, and the “liberal” press has produced pages of opinion and published some of his poetry. That has not happened in far longer than 30 years! I have spoken to people of many different opinions and at varying distances from the life

of the Church, and their testimony is eloquent. They feel led into the world of the spirit in a new way, and find their and others’ horizons expanded as a result. On the day on which his appointment was announced, Rowan Williams expressed a longing that our culture be once again intrigued by the Christian message, a statement that stands to give evangelism a wider and deeper set of echoes than has been the case.

And although there has been a very rough period of attack from the theological right wing, something that will have been very distressing for the Archbishop and indeed for the rest of us, the fact is that the attempts to destabilize his position before he had even begun have run up against the undoubted fact that his appointment, his style and the range of his commitments are such as to reveal such attacks as the driven and narrow outpourings of voices that are loud in volume and small in number. And it has to be good that those attacks and the person at whom they were aimed have combined to generate a lively and welcome — some would say overdue — debate among evangelical Christians, many of whom are not prepared to let their more stridently reactionary elements have it all their own way.

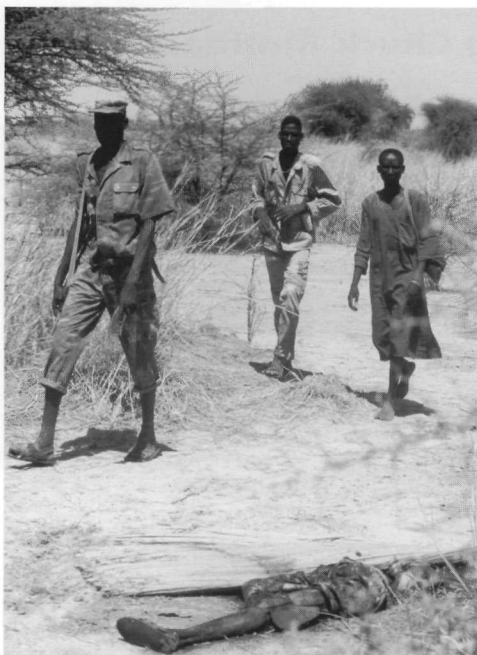
The religious scene in Britain is and remains notably different from that in the U.S. But there are signs in the response to the appointment of this Archbishop that there lurks below the surface of our consciousness here a genuine desire for a spirituality that is deep in its roots and engaged with the issues of the day with the same depth. This will not bear the quick results of a religious revival, nor be as accessible, perhaps, as some of the products of the spirituality industry. But depth can produce a hundredfold harvest, and it is for that kind of harvest that, like Rowan Williams, many of us long.

‘We are keeping the faith alive here ... where are you?’

by Roy Nielsen

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO I accidentally came across iAbolish.com, the website for the American Anti-Slavery Group. Reading about the 27-million slaves throughout the world took my breath away. I called the Boston-based AASG and asked if I could volunteer. Charles Jacobs, the Group’s founder and president, told me about Sudan and the two million Episcopalians facing genocide and said, “If you could get the Episcopal Church more involved in helping the Sudanese, that would be significant.”

The Episcopal Church in southern Sudan is said to be the fastest growing church in the Anglican Communion. These Episcopalians, along with non-Muslim blacks in the south, are victims of the Khartoum government’s proclaimed jihad against non-Muslims. (See p. 23 for more on Muslim-Christian conflict in Sudan and elsewhere.) Sudan has become the greatest case of religious persecution and ethnic cleansing since the Holocaust. Like the Holocaust, the indifference of the international community has made this genocide possible.



Opposition soldiers walk past body of a woman killed in a government raid in southern Sudan in 1998.

The magnitude of the atrocities in Sudan is astonishing. Their 20 years of violence is the longest uninterrupted civil war in the world. The viciousness of the National Islamic Front government in Khartoum rivals the most oppressive regimes in history. Along with the war's two million dead, more than four million have been displaced and the Sudanese have become the most uprooted people on earth.

The Khartoum government uses slaves as payment to their mercenaries. The U.S. government and scores of the most credible international observers have documented this. The government's militias march through towns slaughtering the men and dragging the women and children off to be gang-raped and enslaved. Sudan is the only place in the world where the government routinely bombs civilian targets: hospitals, relief centers, market places and churches. The result is a situation U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell calls the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world. No other

continued on page 14

LOUIE'S INDEX

Diocese of Texas' ranking among domestic dioceses in terms of percent of income shared with ECUSA: 93rd out of 100

ECUSA domestic diocese that ranks last in reported income: Western Kansas (\$189,067)

Diocese of Western Kansas' ranking among domestic dioceses in terms of percent of income shared with ECUSA: 14th out of 100 (Note: Navajoland Area Mission did not report income and also gave ECUSA nothing.)

The five domestic dioceses which report no women clergy: Fort Worth, Quincy and San Joaquin (whose bishops will not ordain women), plus Oklahoma and Eau Claire, who deploy none.

The six domestic dioceses that report more than one-third of their parishes led by women clergy: Navajoland (50 percent), Eastern Oregon (45.5 percent), Idaho (42.9 percent), Iowa (38.5 percent), North Dakota (36.4 percent) and Vermont (35.6 percent)

Domestic diocese that deploys the largest number of women clergy: Massachusetts (156 or 29.7 percent)

Portion of Episcopal congregations that is female: 69 percent (according to a report by Kirk Hardaway prepared for ECUSA's Office of Congregational Development in 2002)

First woman ordained a priest in the Anglican Communion: Florence Li Tim-O (She was ordained by Bishop R. O. Hall in Hong Kong for service in Japanese-occupied Macao during World War II.)

Country in Africa with the most Anglicans: Nigeria (17 million, 23 percent of all Anglicans in the world, based on 1997 data)

Who is the supreme interpreter of the resolutions of ECUSA's General Convention? The General Convention itself. The Episcopal Church has no supreme court. The two courts for the trial of a bishop have authority to interpret only those canons related to the trial. Executive Council is empowered to act on behalf of General Convention between conventions.

CORRECTIONS:

In the Jan/Feb 2003 issue, a proofing error led to a misidentification of the IRD (Institute for Religion and Democracy) as both a conservative and liberal think-tank and activist organization. The IRD is a think-tank and activist organization of political and religious conservatives. The IDS (Institute for Democratic Studies), on the other hand, is a think-tank and activist organization of political religious liberals.

In the December 2002 installment of Louie's Index, Costa Rica was identified as a Central American diocese that had never been part of the Episcopal Church USA. However, Costa Rica was a diocese of ECUSA until 1976, when the bishop (Tony Ramos) submitted his resignation to the House of Bishops and the World Mission standing commission recommended extra-provincial status for the diocese.

Witness contributing editor Louie Crew, founder of Integrity and a longtime Episcopal Church leader (he currently sits on the Episcopal Church's Executive Council and the Diocese of Newark's deputation to General Convention 2003) is a well-known collector and disseminator of statistics and little-known facts about the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion. His website is www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew.

government has been accused of genocide by so many knowledgeable observers. For two decades, the world has turned a blind eye.

The U.S. Episcopal Church is involved in aiding Sudanese refugees and lobbying the federal government to provide diplomatic pressure to achieve a just peace. The 2000 General Convention, meeting in Denver, Colo., passed Resolution A130 "Human Rights: Solidarity with Persecuted Christians in Sudan." One line of that resolution states that "Episcopalians are encouraged to give generously to enable the people of Sudan to rebuild their lives." My diocese of Massachusetts and other dioceses have passed similar resolutions. More recently, the Episcopal Church divested its holdings in Talisman Oil and Fidelity Investments (two companies with business ties to the cruel Taliban-like regime) and last fall pushed for passage of the Sudan Peace Act.

Nevertheless, in truth, we Episcopalians have been shamefully indifferent to the fate of Sudanese Christians. As long as 10 years ago, the church leaders of Sudan began asking the Episcopal Church in the U.S. for help, particularly with food and medicine. In 1998, Margaret Larom visited Sudan on behalf of the U.S. Episcopal Church's Anglican and Global Relations office. Upon her return Larom said, "They say we are all one family but they don't understand why we are not there for them. ... They are saying, in effect, 'We are keeping the faith alive here — where are you?'"

Leaving it up to the national church to aid millions of our brothers and sisters in the Sudan is not enough. Individual Episcopal dioceses must get involved. Episcopalians must make sure Resolution A130 and similar diocesan resolutions are more than just ink on paper. In Massachusetts, the diocese's Committee on Peace and Justice is now in the process of developing a campaign to increase awareness about the crisis. In addition, we hope to bring food and medicine to Sudan in the near future.

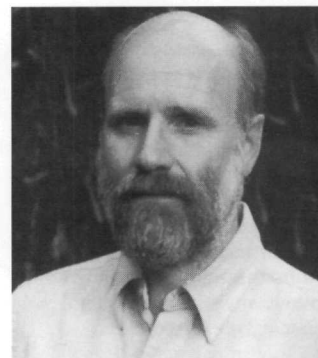
Start something in your congregation or diocese. You can find out more about the crisis in Sudan by visiting the AASG website iAbolish.com. Journalist Maria Sliwa also has a website devoted to Sudan, FreeWorldNow.com. Contact Professor Eric Reeves (ereeves@email.smith.edu) and ask to be placed on his mailing list. Margaret Larom at the Episcopal Church Center will provide information about what the Episcopal Church USA is doing to aid Sudan: mlarom@episcopalchurch.org. I speak at church and community groups throughout New England and will also provide information and updates on the progress of the Massachusetts diocese as we move forward, wr.nielsen@worldnet.att.

Looking back at the perverse hatred that inspired the Nazis, we are still aghast. When a true genocide is being committed, we can see in the violence the kind of hatred that drives a multitude of crimes against humanity. It is there in Sudan. Someday we will look back on this genocide and ask the familiar question: "How could this happen?"

Remembering Chuck Matthei

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE for Chuck Matthei (1948–2002), Bill Wylie-Kellermann quoted a poem of Denise Levertov's that referred to Chuck as "intransigent Chuck Matthei." Every one of the hundreds of people gathered in the First Baptist Church in Providence, R.I., laughed at that description, because they knew it was true. Chuck was one of the most determined men I've ever known. ... The poem in question was written in 1968–69, at the height of Levertov's participation in the resistance to the Vietnam War. That's how she met Chuck. ...



Chuck carried with him a copy of another poem by Levertov, on the back of which he had added these thoughts in his own words:

"This is your only life — live it well!

"No one man can bring about a social change — but each man's life is a whole and necessary part of his society, a necessary step in any change, and a powerful example of the possibility of life for others.

"Let all our words and our actions speak the possibility of peace and cooperation between men.

"Too long have we used the excuse: 'I believe in peace, but that other man does not — when he lays down his arms, then I will follow.' Which of us deserves to wait to be the last good man on earth; how long will we wait if all of us wait?

"Let each man begin a one-man revolution of peace and mutual aid — so that there is at least that much peace ... a beginning."

Reading these words 35 years later, I was overwhelmed by the consistency of his vision. Chuck Matthei was, quite simply, "a one-man revolution of peace and mutual aid."

Chuck Matthei was born in 1948 in Chicago. As a teenager he became involved in the civil rights movement and brought Martin Luther King, Jr., to his high school. Instead of going to college, he burned his draft card, waited to be arrested, and met Dorothy Day. He spent a number of formative years in the Catholic Worker and peace movements. From Gandhi he learned the philosophy of *ahimsa* and the practice of nonviolence as a way of life. His interest in land, affordable housing, affordable farms and community-supported agriculture were part of his vision of a life as it might be lived, if we gave life a chance. (For a profile of Matthei see TW 12/98.)

From 1980–1990 Chuck served as director of the Institute for Community Economics (ICE) in Greenfield, Mass. ICE pioneered the modern community land trust and community loan fund as models of economic development. With others, he guided the devel-

opment of 25 regional loan funds, helped to create hundreds of permanently affordable housing units and organized the National Association of Community Development Loan Funds. A man who lived a life of voluntary poverty, Chuck was a genius at raising money and using it for humane purposes to benefit whole communities. In 1991 Chuck moved to Voluntown, Conn., and founded Equity Trust (see TW 1-2/97) ... [where he focused on] alternative models of land tenure and economic development. ...

Chuck's witness gives me hope. Hope, as he knew, is not optimism, not a naive assumption that "things will somehow be okay." Hope is a decision. It is a choice made daily in the ways we live our lives. Gandhi said, "We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed, but we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make strong progress toward it." We may not be able to do everything we want to do, but we can do what we can and refuse to be defeated by cynicism and despair. Like Chuck, we can "choose life" day after day. And by the grace of God we may, in our turn, be faithful to the truth and shine its light out brightly in the darkness where we live.

(A longer version of this reflection appears in the Winter 2002 issue of *Troubadour*, *The Newsletter of St. Francis House*, New London, Conn., which also contains the Episcopal Urban Caucus' newsletter, *The Urban Networker*. For a copy write St. Francis House, PO Box 2185, New London, Conn. 06320-2185 or email stfrancishouse@mindspring.com.)

Loving our terrorist enemies

by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

LAST SUMMER at a Kirkridge event, I mentioned my belief that when every knee bows to the sovereignty of Jesus' name (an occurrence promised in Philippians 2:10), it will not be because an iron fist has forced resistant people to their knees but because God's grace has somehow caused even the hardest hearts to open themselves toward Love. A young participant became very agitated: "Surely you aren't implying that the likes of Saddam Hussein will eventually enter heaven? He's incredibly brutal!" I replied, "Yes, he is brutal; and yes, I believe that sooner or later Eternal Love will melt every barrier. Saddam, Hitler, Osama bin Laden — all of us will be drawn Home by that inexorable Love."

What I didn't say, not wanting to embarrass the young man, was that his thought-pattern was similar to that of his nemesis: namely, that a line of exclusion must be drawn; that some people are so evil that they deserve cruel retaliation; and that I am qualified to decide who those people are.

Granted, there is a huge quantitative difference between feeling horrified that someone brutal might eventually reach heaven, and actually slaughtering friends or family who seemed critical of you — or engineering the sudden death of thousands of unsuspecting strangers. But the quality of the reasoning is similar, and it is terror-

ist reasoning: These enemies are not at all like me and they deserve the utmost punishment.

In my own spiritual discipline, what I have been learning is that even a twinge of resentment is a sign that I am off-center. My ego has taken control and is demanding that things can only be right when done my way. And the more I indulge that sense of being separate from others — the more I assume my judgments to be accurate and those who differ to be wrong or evil — the more my spirit resembles a terrorist spirit. (On the ultimate plane, hatred and rage and even the slightest irritation are all manifestations of fear — and fear and love are mutually exclusive.)

I doubt that Saddam Hussein congratulates himself on being a terrorist. I would guess that he sees himself as a deserving potentate surrounded by danger who must therefore protect himself to continue his work and retain his power. And on videotape I have heard Osama bin Laden claim that his violence is the counter-violence that is the only resort for people who are profoundly oppressed. How does that thinking differ from my own rationalizations when I seethe because someone has failed to meet my expectations?

Undoubtedly, terrorist actions will affect many more people than will my irritable fuming; but the judgment that I am innocent and deserve the best, whereas someone else is guilty and deserves retribution is nevertheless terrorist thinking.

According to Neil Douglas Klotz, in Aramaic Jesus' admonition to love our enemies implies "uniting with your enemies from the inside," first bringing ourselves back into spiritual rhythm and then seeking to share that rhythm with our opponents in a secret and inward fashion (see *Prayers of the Cosmos*, Harper & Row, 1990, p. 84).

So, then: What is it that calms my self-righteous turbulence after someone has offended or disappointed me? It is remembering that I am not so different from them, in that I would not appreciate being judged as I have judged them. Would I accuse myself of doing this? If not, I should not accuse another person of it. I do not know their motives any more than they know mine. And knowing that the memory of our human similarity is what silences my inner turbulence, through prayer and meditation I can project that same sense of reunion toward the minds of others.

Even the mind of Saddam Hussein. Or Osama bin Laden. Or that irritating next-door neighbor. Or American officials.

"Love your enemies" does not mean I cannot seek redress when I have been treated unjustly. It does not mean I cannot campaign for more just policies in the public sphere. It does not deny a nation's right to take reasonable steps toward preventing future assaults against itself and its citizens. But it does mean that followers of Jesus may not imagine ourselves or our group or nation as embodying a purity under attack from others who in their guilt are totally different from ourselves. Indulged persistently, such imaginings breed terrorist acts. ●

SOCIAL EXORCISM

Lifting the Powers to God for transformation

by Gabrielle Chavez

TWELVE CLERGY in full regalia surrounded by women and men toting candles, crosses, icons in their hands and simple faith or curiosity in their hearts faced the federal building in Portland, Ore., on an uncannily bright and warm November morning. As baffled media and police watched and photographed, we invoked the Trinity, read scripture, sang “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and then began a prayer of deliverance for the Executive Branch of our federal government from a long list of spirits, headed by the spirit of war. A determined spray of holy water and a loud amen from the assembly punctuated each prayer. Following the service, the whole group processed around the building behind priests waving thuribles of fragrant myrrh and frankincense, pausing to pray the Lord’s Prayer at each corner. The ceremony closed with enthusiastic singing of “Joy to the World” and a jubilant trumpet blast.

How did this come about? Earlier in the month, six pastors representing five denominations gathered at the campus ministry house of Portland State University for some biblical and theological study. We had been running into each other at various peace marches, lobbying efforts and interfaith services and were asking ourselves, “What more can Christians bring to the peace table?” The purpose of our meeting was to discuss and plan what George McClain, former director of the Methodist Federation for

Social Action, calls a “social exorcism” to support the peace movement. Though it was my idea, there was no way I was going to undertake this alone. We made sure we recruited at least eight faithful members of the body of Christ to ground our ambitious prayers.

Discerning angels and demons

We could not begin to plan such an event, however, until there was some common understanding of what we were doing. No one who is not convinced that every nation, tribe, church or other grouping is organized around an invisible, spiritual beingness, called (in a significant secondary biblical use of the term) an “angel” would even consider attempting this form of prayer. We had all read Walter Wink on the “powers and principalities” and were inspired by his brilliant discussion of the angels of the churches in the book of Revelation and their need to be set right. From our own experience we knew that our congregations manifested the strong traits of a collective “personality” that entrained the personalities of individual members for good or ill. It isn’t much of a leap to see that an intractable problem in any institution might be caused or worsened by distortion at an inner, constitutional level of such a collective “personality.”

While the Bible calls such distortions “demons,” moderns might recognize them as negative institutional habits or culture,

pathological patterns, energy fields, memes, mass delusions, addictive behaviors, group-think or other such meta-phenomena of organizations which have long been observed and described by psychologists and sociologists. However one names such collective spiritual afflictions, the biblical remedy is prayer. As Wink writes in *The Powers That Be*:

“Prayer that acknowledges the Powers becomes an indispensable aspect of social action. We must discern not only the outer, political manifestations of the Powers, but also their inner spirituality, and lift the Powers, inner and outer, to God for transformation. Otherwise, we change only the shell and leave the spirit intact.”

Following Wink, McClain, in his book *Claiming All Things for God*, traces this seemingly novel Christian ritual to Jesus’ overturning the tables of the money changers in the Temple, which he calls a “social exorcism with broad social implications. There are situations in which it is clear that institutions serve either God or the Great Deceiver. Jesus’ action confirms the appropriateness of social exorcism by those of us called to continue his ministry to the principalities and powers.”

Convinced that we might be recovering an ancient remedy for a newly recognized problem, we sifted the New Testament for guidance. Christ is unequivocally the ruler of all created Powers in heaven and earth (Colos-



Clergy representing more than seven denominations organized a service of 'social exorcism' at the statehouse in Salem, Ore., on Jan. 15, 2003, the third such public service in the Portland/Salem area.

sians 1:16). One of the first and easiest decisions we made was that the social exorcism we were planning would not be an interfaith service, as we knew that our prayers would be in the name of Christ. The public was invited to look on, for we understood our witness to also be an act of evangelism. In the interest of good interfaith relations, other interested spiritual communities were welcomed to pray alongside as they wished.

'Spiritual warfare?'

The more deeply we studied, the more it seemed that exorcism is a powerful Christian vocation abandoned by the Protestant church since the time of the Reformation. In Luke 9:1-2, Jesus gives the twelve authority over demons and sends them out to preach and heal. Facing the mighty Roman Empire, the believers boldly prayed for God to heal and an earthquake answered (Acts 4:29-31). Ephesians expects that "through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (3:10). I don't know about anyone else, but my seminary training equipped me to preach but not to heal, let alone do exorcisms.

It was through my interest in healing that I first encountered phenomena that seemed to call for deliverance prayer in the name of Christ. I learned that many systems of spiri-

tual or energy healing — not all of them Christian — recognize a need for cleansing of negative energies or entities that might infest or infect a person. Indeed the growing interest in the Pentecostal and evangelical wing of Christianity in "spiritual warfare" is partly fueled by the encounter with indigenous religions in the mission field that were never inside a Western rational worldview and freely traffic in the spirit world or astral plane with sometimes dire consequences. In *The Powers That Be*, Wink makes an interesting point in this regard:

"Is my understanding of prayer similar to the 'spiritual warfare' practiced by some evangelicals or charismatics? Yes, to the extent that I agree that prayer should be imperative and aggressive. We should be engaged to alter the spirituality of families, corporations and nations. ... I differ, however, in my understanding of the demonic. I do not believe that evil angels seize human institutions and pervert them. ... Therefore, I would not attempt to cast out the spirit of a city, for example, but rather to call upon God to transform it, to recall it to its divine vocation. My spiritual conversation is with God, not the demonic."

It seemed to us that fixation upon Satan and Jesus-style commanding of demons might not be the best theological or psychological modeling. Who among us is strong enough to contend directly with the prince of this world and not get

caught in the loop? Nor is such a risk necessary, for a prayer of faith that calls on Christ and his angels and is spoken in his name is perfectly sufficient.

More than one of the pastors questioned the need to use the word "exorcism" with its connotations of medieval misunderstanding and sensationalized movie scenes. It is a strong word, which in the Greek literally means a "strong word" or oath. Yet "social exorcism" is the current term for what we were proposing. And serious evil does call for a strong word. After some debate, the group agreed to risk being mocked or misunderstood and to focus on our own sincere intent to pray as Jesus taught us for deliverance from evil using the term exorcism for its attention-getting value, if nothing else. We were clear that we had engaged ourselves in the double purpose to pray with faith and power and to do so as publicly as possible. Our idea was to take our spirituality into the streets in both a prayerful and a public witness. Hence the liturgical art and furnishings usually confined to our sanctuaries were carried into the plaza across from the federal building where we convened. We even handed out bulletins with an order of service.

Preparatory worship and research

In his rite of social exorcism, George McClain suggests that those gathered take time to orient themselves to the ritual and its presuppositions. We followed his advice carefully and met together three times to plan and carry out a full-length private worship service including the sacrament of Holy Communion before finalizing our plans for the public exorcism. In that preparatory worship, we used the breastplate prayer of St. Patrick and "put on the whole armor of God" as urged in Ephesians 6. One among us who had thoroughly researched the intended beneficiary of our prayers, the Executive Branch, took time to describe the scope of that institution and its overall pressing problem, i.e., a headlong rush to empire through arrogating the right to attack another nation. We then spent 20 minutes in centering prayer and silence, asking for discernment to

label the particular spirits needing to be released. Another of our number then began the prayers of deliverance with these words:

"We perceive that there are influences and spirits which have strayed from the ways of God and which are preying on the Executive Branch of our government. They deceive as they have been deceived; they accept what is false and lead others to accept falsehood as well. War, greed, mass consumption, destruction of life and the excuse that 'I'm just doing my job' are all symptoms of a deeper deception influenced by these deadened spirits. Those who are held captive by these spirits are largely ignorant of their influence. We therefore pray for their release and for God's healing power to return them to full life."

'God, deliver the Executive Branch and all of us from the spirit of war'

Ephesians recognizes "our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (6:12). None of us wished to fall into the same trap of demonizing individuals or nations that has caused our own current administration to stumble. Neither did we self-righteously presume we were above the need for cleansing and healing. The exorcism formula we used was: "God, deliver the Executive Branch and all of us from the spirit of (war, fear, greed, etc.) in the name and power of Jesus Christ. We pray that this spirit may depart and that (peace, love, generosity) may return."

This formula was also carefully constructed to avoid the problem of leaving a vacuum for spirits to re-grow or return by filling the place of the cleansed vice with its opposite virtue. We believe our prayers were truly an act of love, invoking the power of God to cleanse, heal and restore our government to its right mind. As we said in our introduction at the federal building:

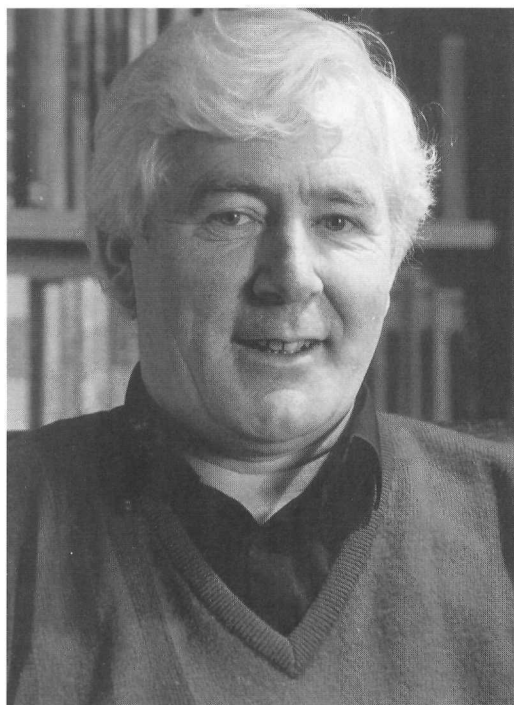
"We the people are gathered here to pray for a radical change in the spiritual condition of our federal government. The Christian clergy

who have organized this service hold the biblical belief that every nation, tribe and organization maintains a collective reality or angel, which may become oppressed or distorted by negative patterns or powers from without or within. We believe that our own government, particularly the Executive Branch, is in the grip of certain mass delusions and addictions interfering with rational purpose and choice as it steamrolls toward invading Iraq. We believe that the radical remedy for illness at this level is prayer for deliverance from evil. We welcome all who are here to pray with us or stand in silent solidarity with the intended outcome of our prayers: the cleansing, healing and renewal of purpose of our government that it be of the people, by the people, and for the people, with liberty and justice for all."

Did it make any difference? The Executive Branch of the federal government is very large and it would be impossible for anyone to know all particular effects. Yet within hours of our first service, we heard that the lame duck Congress had dealt a sudden and surprising blow to the administration by voting down the so-called "Bankruptcy Reform Act," an Orwellian piece of legislation much favored by the banks and easily expected to pass. Sixty-five Republicans unexpectedly broke ranks and voted with the opposition. Did our prayer to cast out the "spirit of greed" make it more difficult for the administration to pressure another branch of government to conform to a greedy agenda?

We do know that an ecumenical group of pastors were emboldened to do something we had never done before, to make a public witness to our faith that "Christ rules the world with truth and grace." Since then, some of us have gone on to plan social exorcisms of media organizations, the School of the Americas, and a special Christmas Eve prayer for the cleansing and healing of the angels of the nations of Israel and Palestine. We hope that our story will inspire others to reclaim this powerful form of prayer, for the need is very great and the possible beneficiaries nearly endless. The Spirit and the gifts are ours. ●

CHRISTIANS AND ZIONISM



An interview with Michael Prior

by Marianne Arbogast

ON THE PLATFORM, an Israeli student is telling thousands of supporters how the horrors of the year have only reinforced his people's determination. "Despite the terror attacks, they'll never drive us away out of our God-given land," he says. This is greeted with whoops and hollers and waving of Israeli flags and the blowing of the shofar, the Jewish ceremonial ram's horn. Then comes the mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, who is received even more rapturously. ... The placards round the hall insist that every inch of the Holy Land should belong to Israel and that there should never be a Palestinian state. These assertions are backed up by biblical quotations. It could be a rally in Jerusalem for those Israelis who think Ariel Sharon is a dangerous softie. But something very strange is going on here. There are thousands of people cheering for Israel in the huge Washington Convention Centre. But not one of them appears to be Jewish, at least not in the conventional sense. For this is the annual gathering of a very non-Jewish organization indeed: the Christian Coalition of America. — Matthew Engel, *The Guardian*, 10/28/02

The influence of Christian Zionists on American foreign policy is cause for concern among many who see their worldview — with its unqualified support of Israeli land rights — as potentially contributing to the outbreak of the world-engulfing apocalyptic battle they predict. Michael Prior, a Roman Catholic priest and biblical scholar at St. Mary's College, University of Surrey, England, describes and critiques the development of political Zionism and the "dispensationalist" Christian theology which has embraced it. Prior, who is the author of *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield, 1997) and *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (Routledge, 1999) and editor of *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal* (Continuum, 2002), visited the U.S. in November 2002 on a speaking tour sponsored by Friends of Sabeel and other Palestinian advocacy organizations.

The Witness: How did you become involved with the issue of Zionism and justice for Palestinians?

Michael Prior: Probably the first time I became conscious of the situation in any kind of gripping way was during the 1967 war when I was a theology student. I remember gobbling my supper each evening in the seminary to watch the replay of what had happened that day or the night before. And at that time I was delighted by the victory of Israel — a little country which I understood to be under siege from a whole bunch of predatory and rapacious Arab neighboring states.

Then in 1972 as part of my post-graduate biblical studies I visited the land, and even though the concentration was entirely on examining artifacts from the past, I did absorb that I was witnessing some kind of

apartheid system. And in 1981, I went with a group of students from my university in England to the University of Bir Zeit, which is about 18 miles north of Jerusalem, and the university was occupied by the Israeli military the day before we arrived. We couldn't gain legal access to the campus, although we did get in surreptitiously. The university put a bus at our disposal, so we drove up and down the West Bank and into Israel proper. And being in the company of Bir Zeit students I began to appreciate much more readily the nature of the Israeli occupation and how it was impinging upon the indigenous Arab population.

In 1983 and 1984, I was living in Jerusalem for a year. It was very tense all the time, and I was shocked one morning in the spring of 1984 when I turned on the radio to hear that Jewish settlers had climbed over the wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock compound, and they had guns and bomb equipment and hand grenades, and they were attempting to blow up the site of the third-holiest shrine in Islam. That was happening just down the road from me. And then, while they were in court, some of them were reading from the Psalms. So I was beginning to say to myself, good heavens, the oppression that I had begun to perceive in 1972 and that I was getting a better knowledge of from the inside — is it possible that this is being driven by religious zealotry of some kind?

I began the task of reading the biblical narrative from the point of view of the land—to do so adequately would have taken me altogether away from the subject of my study (the “Pastoral Epistles”)—but in the early 1990s, again in Jerusalem, I returned to that subject much more systematically. I started typing out those texts in the biblical narrative that were about land in any sense — the promise of it, how it was related to the covenant, etc. What really shocked me was that the people entering the land — which was already inhabited by Canaanites, Hivites, Hittites and so on — were to exterminate the indigenous population. That came through in a number of texts, especially in the Book of Deuteronomy. It was bad enough to find that the business of genocide or ethnic cleansing was legitimate, but I was actually reading that it was a requirement of fidelity to the commands of God. And for some crazy reason I hadn't noticed that in my previous reading of the biblical narrative — perhaps I became more sensitive by the recognition that, in fact, some of these texts formed part of the background for the maltreatment of the indigenous population.

And then, over the years I was becoming much more sensitive to what happened in 1948. I don't think that I had known in any significant way that people had been kicked out of their homes in 1948 and 1949. I certainly didn't know that 418 villages were destroyed to make sure that those who were kicked out would not be able to resume occupancy in their home villages.

The Witness: Where did the ideology of Zionism come from?

Michael Prior: Political Zionism is a 19th-century European

export, carrying all of the arrogance that one associates with the European nation-states in their colonial zeal. The founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, a non-religious Jew, and his supporters — the vast majority of whom were not only utterly secular but anti-religious — saw it as being necessary to escape the manacled life that was imposed upon Jews in Europe in the ghettos. At the time, the whole enterprise of political Zionism was regarded by the chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, whom Herzl visited around 1896 or 1897, as an egregious blunder. Several of the chief rabbis in Europe were of the same mind — that this enterprise was contrary to Judaism and contrary to the sacred scriptures. Today, you would not get a chief rabbi anywhere who would hold that position. There are other Jews, mostly secular, who take a much more moral stance, in my opinion, but the majority of the leadership of the Orthodox communities throughout the world support Zionism now in an overtly enthusiastic way. So Zionism has gone from being a secular, anti-religious enterprise despised by the religious establishment to becoming virtually an integral part of the self-definition of Jews.

I have recently been examining the place of the state of Israel in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. One of the principles of Jewish-Christian dialogue — or indeed, dialogue between any two faiths — is that each faith acknowledges and respects the self-definition of the other. The Jewish partners in the dialogue are invariably religious Jews, and the dialogue has been tainted by the philosophy of political Zionism. You find the most extraordinary claims being made for Jewish rights in the land, and you find regularly a fundamental distortion of historical reality concerning the circumstances under which the state of Israel was brought into being — particularly the propaganda view that it was never the intention of the Zionists to expel the indigenous Arab population, and that this only happened in the context of the trying circumstances of war.

Not only is it absolutely established that hundreds of thousands were expelled at gunpoint with threats after massacres, but all kinds of horror tactics were used to expel the people from their villages and homes. It's now emerged in the last 10 years from the study of the Zionist and Israeli archives that there is a clear line of development of the notion of what they called “population transfer.” From the beginning, the prevailing and majority view was that, in order to establish a state, Israel must get rid of the non-Jews from the area.

The Witness: How did that process of transformation of a political philosophy into a religious idea come about?

Michael Prior: In the beginning of the 20th century there was a small group of religious Jews who identified themselves very quickly with the Zionist secular project. But probably most significantly was the coming to Palestine of a rabbi called Avraham Yitzhak Kook, who became chief rabbi in Palestine from 1921 until he died in 1935. He reinterpreted Jewish history and Jewish eschatology. He

was moving away from the strictly Orthodox position that the restoration of the Jews to the land is the work of the Messiah, so any “scaling the wall” before the Messiah comes is blasphemous. He was saying that what these Zionists are doing, even though they don’t know it, is actually in conformity with God’s will. He established a center for the training of rabbis and, under the direction of his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, virtually all the major religious ideologues in the West Bank or in the settlements have come through that particular rabbinical school. And of course they were using the biblical narrative, “Wherever you put your foot is land that belongs to us,” and also claiming that the biblical narrative determined the dimensions of the land.

The Witness: How did a version of Christianity that holds Zionist ideas come to develop?

Michael Prior: There were several strands within some of the wings of the Reformed churches that saw the restoration of Jews to the land as being a preliminary to the Second Coming of Christ. Much of it is due to the theological speculation of a man called John Nelson Darby, who was a minister in the Church of Ireland, but he left the church and joined forces with other people in establishing the Plymouth Brethren. He said that all of human history is divisible into seven dispensations, from the period of creation to the final period, which will be the reign of the Messiah. And the final stage requires the return of the Jews to the land. Darby fell out of favor with some of his co-Plymouth Brethren and came over to the States and began to have a strong influence on a number of critical evangelical preachers here — Dwight L. Moody, William E. Blackstone, C.I. Schofield and several other people. And that strand of dispensationalism and Armageddon theology has run down all the years. It’s represented nowadays by Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell and other people in that Christian Right evangelical constituency.

That wing of the evangelical world viewed the establishment of the state of Israel as the first clear sign of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and the final countdown to Armageddon. Later, Israel’s “miraculous” victory over Arab armies in 1967 confirmed the prophetic scenario. The October War of 1973 gave further fuel to Armageddon theology. Jerry Falwell’s “Friendship Tour to Israel” in 1983 included meetings with Israeli government and military officials, a tour of Israeli battlefields and defence installations. His “Prophecy Trips” to Jerusalem heralded the immigration of Jews into Israel as the sign of the imminent Second Coming of Christ. Jesus would rapture true Christians into the air, while the rest of humankind would be slaughtered below. Then 144,000 Jews would bow down before Jesus and be saved. This could even happen while the evangelical pilgrims were in Jerusalem, giving them a ringside seat at the Battle of Armageddon. Biblical prophecy was striving toward its fulfillment in the Middle East today. Thus, Saddam Hussein was reconstructing Babylon, and the city would ignite the

events of the end times.

The Witness: Is contemporary Christian Zionism primarily an American phenomenon?

Michael Prior: Well, it’s particularly prominent here. Christian Zionists number perhaps some 25 million worldwide, but their influence is greatest in the U.S., where they number some 20 million. I understand that includes several members of the cabinet of George W. Bush.

The state of Israel is prepared to work with these people — even though it’s part of their theology that Judaism will disappear, that only those Jews who recognize Jesus as the Messiah will be saved. When he came to power in 1977, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, realizing that the mainstream U.S. churches were growing more sympathetic to the Palestinians, directed Israeli lobbyists in the U.S. to work on the evangelical constituency. His Likud Party began to use religious language, and determined efforts were made to forge bonds between evangelical Christians and pro-Israel lobbies. Begin’s example has been followed by every Prime Minister since.

The Witness: How much influence do you think this has had on U.S. policy?

Michael Prior: The evangelical Christian constituency was a major factor in the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976. However, his call for a Palestinian homeland in 1977 precipitated his downfall, and the evangelical right’s switch to Ronald Reagan in 1980 was a major factor in Carter’s defeat. The combined efforts of the Israeli lobbies and the Christian Right have continued since, and reached their climax in the present incumbent in the White House. While acknowledging the underlying oil interests, one cannot ignore the extent to which the Christian Right influences the administration’s worldview regarding the “war on terrorism” and appetite for “regime change” in Iraq.

The Witness: How do you see the involvement or complicity of the mainstream churches?

Michael Prior: I think “complicity” would be too strong a word, because by and large the mainstream Christian churches have never been sympathetic to the Zionist project. But whatever desire the Christian churches might have had to criticize the project of Zionism and its determination to expel the indigenous population, they weren’t going to voice that criticism, for fear of appearing to be supporters of the Nazi determination to rid Europe of its Jews. And it’s only as years have gone on, I think, that the extent of the disaster done to the Palestinian people has become more apparent, and Christians have begun to have a bit more sympathy for the Palestinian plight.

The Churches in the Holy Land manifest virtual unanimity with respect to the situation in Palestine. The first intifada which erupted in 1987 stimulated a new sense of unity, marked by ongoing ecumenical cooperation, and issuing in a number of significant joint statements, not least in criticism of the excesses of the Israeli occupation. And such views are mirrored in the mainstream churches outside.

But most of the mainstream Christian churches have settled — I think in a rather unprincipled way — for an accommodation between the oppressor — in this case the Zionists — and the oppressed. They talk about “balance.” But there has been no systematic or moral critique of the ideology of Zionism, which I think is what the situation demands. Christian morality has some very clearly expressed fundamental positions — like, for example, if you do damage to somebody else, you must apologize for the damage you have done, you must make good the damage you have done insofar as that is possible, you must compensate the person who is disadvantaged insofar as that is possible, and you must commit yourself to working toward non-exploitation in the future. But, in the case of Zionism and the state of Israel, those principles are left aside. Instead we have church leaders advocating accommodations between the victim and the oppressor without demands for any of those kinds of things — like, for example, in practical terms, the return of refugees, which is a right under international law.

And if that is the situation in the churches, I am afraid that the situation in the educational academies is even worse. There is presently a serious programmatic attempt to mute any criticism of the state of Israel or of the Zionist project. The World Zionist Organization, at its Congress this summer, called on its members to challenge anti-semitism, anti-Zionism and Holocaust denial. Anti-Zionism, in that view, is put into the same category as the other two — whereas, in fact, Zionism is a 19th-century political project that has wreaked enormous havoc on the indigenous population of Palestine. Not only do I think it is legitimate to protest against this project, but I think it is a moral imperative to do so — as I would think it a moral imperative to protest against the policy of apartheid. And incidentally, I consider Zionism to be an evil of far greater profundity than apartheid.

The Witness: Why do you say that?

Michael Prior: Well, first of all, even though the apartheid regime did all kinds of injustices to the indigenous population of South Africa, it didn't expel 80 percent of them. The Zionist project is much more severe — the Zionists wanted, simply, ethnic cleansing. I'm sure there are many people in Israel today who regard the Zionist project as having made their first major blunder in not getting rid of all of the Arabs in 1948. They got rid of 750,000, leaving behind approximately 150,000. That 150,000 has grown to a million. And there are very strong voices in Israel now that say the only way for-

ward is to expel all the Arabs.

And, of course, we're now in a situation where we could have a very, very serious war. We've had a whole pile of wars in the region, many of them related to the existence of the state of Israel, its policies of expansion and its militarism. I think it's very easy to demonstrate that a lot of the militancy and the expenditure of the resources of the surrounding countries on arms has got to do with the fact that Israel is so well-armed. So it has brought a great sense of belligerence to the whole culture and it has seriously undermined the credibility of the United States' foreign policy. Something like one-third of all American foreign aid goes to the state of Israel.

The Witness: Insofar as Christian religious ideas or interpretations of the Bible are used to justify this, how do you think we can confront them?

Michael Prior: This is a profoundly difficult task, since we are not dealing merely with the interpretation of texts, but, rather, with a whole worldview, and also, of course, with a personal philosophy and value system. There are obviously technical questions to pose about the nature of the biblical narrative. Crudely, not everything in the Bible in the “past tense” is necessarily history, and not everything in the “future tense” is necessarily calling out for fulfilment in political terms in each generation. But I consider the moral question to be even more fundamental. To begin with, I would wish to inquire into what picture of God is behind their particular interpretation of things — a God who rejoices in the slaughter of people in the Armageddon disaster? The God they portray looks to me to be a militaristic and xenophobic genocidist who would not be even sufficiently moral to conform to the Fourth Geneva Convention. How, I constantly ask myself, are such people so unconcerned about others being kicked out of their homes, children being shot, people struggling for survival against very oppressive forces of occupation? Instead of trying to give food to the hungry and sight to the blind, as Jesus exhorted, these people support institutions that make seeing people blind, put free people in prison, and make the poor poorer. But it is extremely difficult to make progress in the face of worldviews which are held tenaciously, and considered to be in conformity with the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. I go back to the fundamental question: Is God moral? Is God just? Is God a God of love, compassion, tenderness and justice? Or, rather, is God the great ethnic cleanser? Those are fundamental questions that I would like the evangelical Zionist constituency to consider.

I think that this particular question about the Holy Land — the cohabitation of people of three faiths and two nationalisms in the land — is presenting a massive challenge to the integrity of religion. If Christians don't contribute to getting that right, I think they do a serious disservice to the whole religious project. ●

Marianne Arbogast is associate editor of The Witness.

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CONFLICT



About a hundred protesters picketed outside the JFK Federal Building in Boston on Jan. 9, 2003, demonstrating against the Immigration and Naturalization Service's "Special Registration" program, which they claim is a form of racial and religious persecution (as evidenced by recent arrests and detentions of Middle Eastern men and teenagers in California after they had tried to comply with the regulation).

Two women look beneath the surface

by Pat McCaughan

IN NEARLY EVERY "HOT SPOT" on the globe where Muslim and Christian conflicts have been widely publicized, "religion plays just one role — [and] often it is irrelevant," says Laila Al-Marayati, a California physician who has served on the U.S. Commission for Religious Freedom and is active in local Muslim affairs. More important factors than religion, she says, are economics, politics, racism, greed, power and cultural context.

Take the November Miss World Beauty Pageant riots in

Nigeria, for example.

The world was stunned and confused after hundreds of people were killed, thousands injured, thousands more driven from their homes, and 22 churches and mosques destroyed — over hosting a beauty pageant? The Western press characterized the conflict as Muslim versus Christian, triggered after a local newspaper article speculated that the Islamic prophet Muhammad might have married one of the contestants.

Christian/Muslim global hot spots

Some of the most intense Christian-Muslim conflict has occurred in such places as Nigeria, Sudan and Indonesia. Nonetheless, experts say they cannot simply be reduced to religious infighting because they also involve issues of race, class, culture, economics and politics.

Nigeria

The Miss World Beauty Pageant highlighted Christian-Muslim clashes in Nigeria, where 30-year-old census data, the most recent available, indicates Muslims make up one-half of the estimated 120 million population. Most are Sunni. Another 40 percent are Christian. Violent clashes between Muslims and Christians in 2001 resulted in the death of more than 2,300 persons. There is a strong correlation between religious differences and ethnic and regional diversity. The north, which is dominated by the large Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups, predominantly is Muslim; however, there are significant numbers of Christians in the Middle Belt states and in urban centers of the north. Both Muslims and Christians are found in large numbers in the Middle Belt. In the southwest, where the large Yoruba ethnic group is the majority, there is no dominant religion. Most Yorubas practice either Islam or Christianity, while others continue to practice the traditional Yoruba religion, which includes a belief in a supreme deity and the worship of lesser deities that serve as agents of the supreme deity in aspects of daily life. In the east, where the large Igbo ethnic group is dominant, Catholics and Methodists are the majority, although many Igbos continue to observe traditional rites and ceremonies.

Sudan

"In Sudan, the context determines the conflict," says Laila Al-Marayati, who has served on the U.S. Commission on Religion Freedom. In its 2001 report, the commission noted that the government of Sudan "violates the religious freedoms of Christians and followers of traditional African religions as well as Muslims who dissent from the government's interpretation of Islam. Sudan's oil wealth has become an increasingly important factor in intensification of the conflict." Sudanese scholar Ambassador Francis Deng also noted that the role of religion is often intertwined with ethnicity in the Sudan, because "for northerners, Islam is not only a faith and a way of life, it is also a culture and ethnic identity associated with Arabism" that excludes the black Africans of the southern part of the country, who are also Christian and adherents of indigenous religions.

Says Al-Marayati: "There are also issues at stake related to religion, ethnicity and resources, namely water and oil. So you have a despotic regime that oppresses anybody no matter who you are. If you oppose the government and you're Muslim, you've had it. There is a desire on the part of the people in the south for some form of independence. But the people in the south are black African and ... recently they've discovered oil in the south. Whoever controls the south gets to control the resources there. So it's about the north now wanting to use that oil to help finance and promote its own agenda. There are so many factors at play that never get discussed. It's a lot more complicated than simply, 'The Muslims hate us because we're Christian.'

"But the issue is totally manipulated in this country in a way that seems to be completely uninterested in reconciling the groups so everyone in Sudan can prosper."

Indonesia

The Oct. 12, 2002, bombings of several entertainment establishments in Bali killed 200, including several Americans, and focused the world's attention on this country's interreligious conflict. Some reports estimated that 5,000 have died in religious violence and another 300,000 have been forced to relocate in this largest Muslim nation in the world. According to Robert W. Hefner of Boston University, the Islamist faction of Indonesia's military was hoping to exploit the religious conflicts in order to topple the country's unstable democratic government.

Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, one of Indonesia's leading young Muslim scholars, is head of the Liberal Islam Network and has said that religious conflict is being used by politicians and other opportunists. "While these radicals make up only a tiny minority of the Muslim population, their views have been given a boost since Sept. 11 because of the development of the seemingly unbridgeable gap between Islam and the West," he says. Indonesia's new government must support moderate Islam but "ferret out" the extremists, he adds.

"In Indonesia in particular, Islamic expression is very different from the puritanical brand that has been nurtured in Saudi Arabia, germinating the likes of Osama bin Laden," says Malaysian Karim Raslan, a lawyer and author of *Journeys Through Southeast Asia: Ceritalah 2*. He characterizes Islamic expression in Southeast Asia as overwhelmingly moderate, tolerant and progressive largely because Islam spread

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Anglican Bishops Josiah Fearon of Kaduna and Ben Kwashi of Jos denounced the violence as deliberately planned and orchestrated for a variety of reasons, not the least of them being political.

"Nigeria is very volatile right now," says Al-Marayati. "This instability and volatility is simmering right beneath the surface; it doesn't take much to set it off. You can't just look at just the beauty pageant. You have to look at Nigeria over the past year or so, where there's been conflicts between people and between groups and a huge number of deaths on both sides, and destruction of property on a huge level.

"Some would say it's because Muslims want to impose Islam on others. But others would say the cause is corruption, Nigerian politics, the problems with coming out of a dictatorial system and trying to manage a democracy. Talk to someone from Nigeria about tribal issues. In the southern part of Nigeria, Muslims and Christians get along fine. Often, it has to do with who has the most resources in any place. If one group feels the other one is doing better economically, it becomes a problem.

"To attribute it to religion alone is to vilify and demonize certain groups. It's hard, because I don't ever want to excuse violent acts," she says. "That kind of behavior is always wrong. But my effort would be to try to get people to look beneath the surface and understand the issues going on and to try to figure out ways reconciliation can actually take place."

Both Al-Marayati and Lucinda Mosher, chair of the Episcopal-Muslim Relations Committee of the Diocese of New York Ecumenical Commission, agree that the way news and issues are spun in the national media often drives the conversation.

Counter-productive political climate of us-versus-them

They warn that strident us-versus-them and axis-of-evil posturing is counter-productive and that the very nature of Islam itself is much more complex than media reports suggest.

A huge contributing factor is the current political climate in the U.S.

"When you paint an us-versus-them pic-

ture, it may sound good in our environment, where you're trying to create a good-versus-evil picture," says Al-Marayati, "but it doesn't go very far to help the people in Nigeria or Pakistan or Indonesia to improve their lives or to make it safer for everyone."

Mosher, who teaches Christian-Muslim relations at Episcopal seminaries in New York City and Sewanee, Tenn., says her "pivotal starting point" is a paraphrase of Christian ethicist James William McClendon, who says there's an inherent complexity to the Christian moral life not safely to be disregarded by anyone who wishes to get the story straight.

"And I contend the same must be said of Islam ... and the straight story is that Islam is all about living a moral life, about lifting up the beautiful. And it's hard work.

"Just as Americans have difficulty sorting out and remembering there are a variety of expressions of Islam, so do people on the other side of the globe have difficulty sorting out that all Christians don't hold the same theology as Franklin Graham or Jerry Falwell."

'Why do you assume hate will be preached there?'

Mosher's efforts have earned her cyber-darts and angry emails, particularly when the New York diocese partnered with a Flushing mosque to rebuild a mosque near Kabul, Afghanistan that was mistakenly targeted in U.S. bombing shortly after Sept. 11, 2001. The mosque was scheduled for rededication this past February.

"A lot of people are very puzzled about why the diocese is doing that," said Mosher. "They are very disturbed that we would help to replace a house of worship for another people when there are churches in Manhattan that need roofs repaired. 'Why don't you fix them?' they ask. Or, 'Why should you build a place in Afghanistan where hate against Americans will be preached?' My response is always, why do you assume hate will be preached there?"

"The people in that community are so thrilled to have the mosque back, they are very grateful. I reply, 'Why do you think they will then teach their children to hate the people who made it possible for them to have their house of worship again?'

"Or, there are the 'Islam is nothing but evil' emails and they describe how we are somehow maligning our savior by not trying to convert Muslims," Mosher adds. "Someone on the committee answers every one of them with a biblically based pastoral letter. We just keep saying to them that, as we read our baptismal covenant, we are to see the face of Christ in every person. And so we treat each and every Muslim as if we are seeing the face of Christ in them and that is bearing witness to Christ. It is the Holy Spirit's job to convert that person if that's what the Holy Spirit desires."

Al-Marayati has also received her share of angry emails. The Los Angeles-born obstetrician-gynecologist is a spokesperson for the Muslim Women's League and a member of the board of the Muslim Public Affairs Council.

"Since Sept. 11, it's much easier to generalize about Islam and Muslims in racist terms," said Al-Marayati. "At the Muslim Women's League, we posted something on the website about hate crimes increasing exponentially toward Muslims. Someone responded saying, 'You have no right to complain when your people all over the world are carrying out violent crimes in the name of your religion.' Sometimes you have to remind Americans that we in the U.S. have the highest murder rate in the world. It's unbelievable how bad it is.

Western propaganda campaign

"For some people, it is impossible to apply the same standards toward Muslims as they apply toward themselves. You can't characterize an entire group based on the actions of a few. Take the recent bombings in Israel. The media reported that they happened after six weeks of relative calm. Well, during those six weeks, 50 Palestinians were killed — men, women and children, but it didn't get reported that way. And that's what affects American public opinion," she said.

Traveling outside the U.S. offers a much different perspective, partly due to the superficial nature of the Western press, she said.

"I am becoming very cynical about the media now. It is functioning not just to promote itself and to make money but as a mouthpiece of the government. We are in

continued from page 24

there through peaceful traders and preachers during the 14th and 15th centuries, not by conquest. Second, in Indonesia, home to the vast majority of Southeast Asia's 230 million Muslims, there is a yearning for education and for reform — both religious and political.

"The war against terrorism essentially boils down to a conflict between moderation and extremism, between what is decent and what isn't," he concludes.

The Philippines

The U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom 2001 report on the Philippines noted that socioeconomic disparity, the effects of colonialism and ethnic and cultural discrimination are all contributing factors to clashes between the country's Christian majority and the Muslim minority.

With a population of 76.4 million, over 85 percent of citizens of this former Spanish colony claim membership in the Roman Catholic Church. Other Christian denominations together comprise approximately 8.7 percent of the population. Followers of the Islamic faith totaled 4.6 percent and Buddhists 0.1 percent. Indigenous and other religious traditions accounted for 1.2 percent of those surveyed.

Government efforts to integrate Muslims, who are concentrated in the most impoverished parts of western Mindanao, into political and economic society have achieved limited success, the report concluded.

Leaders in both Christian and Muslim communities contend that economic disparities and ethnic tensions, more than religious differences, are at the root of the modern separatist movement that emerged in the early 1970s.

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) claims to seek the immediate establishment of an independent Islamic state in the southwestern part of the country, but its religious affiliation is rejected by mainstream Muslim leaders, most of whom do not favor the establishment of a separate state, and who overwhelmingly reject terrorism. Mainstream Muslim leaders, both domestic and foreign, have strongly criticized the actions of the ASG and its renegade offshoots as "un-Islamic." Reports of the highly publicized kidnapping and murder of a California man and other foreign visitors in the Mindanao region of the Philippines implied the attacks were the work of Muslim extremists, but in truth they were carried out by ASG criminals who have turned to kidnapping for profit, says the commission's Laila Al-Marayati.

Christian and Muslim communities live in close proximity throughout central and western Mindanao and, in many areas, their relationship is largely harmonious, the report said. — P.M.

the middle of a huge propaganda campaign, and you get a better sense of it when you leave the country.”

Al-Marayati said the us-versus-them mentality surfaced during a guest appearance on the Fox Television Hannity and Colmes public affairs show.

“It was clear that the host, Hannity, was on the offensive against me as the Muslim guest,” she says. “It was clear that the whole purpose of the discussion was again to create this us-versus-them mentality. His attitude was, ‘You’re violent. Even if you condemn this, you only represent a minority of Muslims. The majority are violent, aggressive people who hate everybody.’ Radio commentators and even our own U.S. government give mixed messages.”

‘Where are the moderate Muslims?’

Mosher observes that in the Western media, the word Muslim is so often paired with such words as fundamentalist, or terrorist, or extremist that, in some circles, it’s hard for Americans to think about Muslims any other way, much less to separate religious conflicts from more complex issues.

“I get asked constantly, ‘Where are the moderate Muslims?’ I say, ‘Look around you, they’re your neighbors. They are part of the fabric of our society and elsewhere and they are highly under-reported.’ We always have to be careful not to paint with too broad a brush. In every single hot spot there are thugs, people who do horrible things,” said Mosher.

“But it’s wrong to suggest that all Muslims think violence is appropriate. Because the people who are on the fringes, those richly deserving to be labeled extremists, have been so over-reported they now set the definition in some areas as to who is legitimately Muslim. I am now seeing an urgency in certain Muslim circles to reclaim the right to define who is Muslim.”

Al-Marayati is intimately acquainted with that sense of urgency.

“The way these issues are reported in this country and elsewhere takes on a life of its own,” she says. “It’s as if the media is trying to make a bigger point that people from different faiths can’t get along, that Islam can’t tolerate people of other faiths, that we want to hurt them.”

A significant omission in the coverage of the Dec. 30 killings of three missionaries in Yemen, she says, was the number of Muslims who attended the services for the missionaries and the condemnation of those attacks by their Muslim neighbors and friends.

“It has a lot to do with the influence of the Christian right in particular, because when you go to the Southern Baptist Convention and hear them talk about Islam, we’re the devil incarnate and any other image that reinforces that view is used and exploited to a large degree. The media picks up on that and it makes good news.”

But she also noted the efforts of Robert Sieple, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, who has started the Institute for Global Engagement. “He comes from the evangelical community, having headed World Vision. Their philosophy is to show by example. There are people in the evangelical community that are not hostile to working with Muslims.”

Some good news, even in the hot spots

Mosher says that, despite the grim reality of Christian-Muslim conflict around the globe, there is also plenty of good news, even in the hot spots, if you seek it.

“My favorite story is about the Sudan. We hear plenty of news about the horrible things that happen and the horrible things people do to each other there. But in the southern part of Sudan there is an organization called Together for Sudan, a group of Muslims, Anglicans and Roman Catholics working together, that there might be peace.”

She has served for three years as chair of the Episcopal Muslim Relations Committee of the Diocese of New York, which was founded on Sept. 11, but 10 years before Sept. 11, 2001. The group is “trying to be good neighbors, to understand that we have a national and international role and to live into it,” Mosher says.

“There is something compelling about all this for us as Christians. If it’s important for us to live into Jesus’ mandate that we love our neighbors as ourselves, that means treating our neighbor in the press as we would have them treat us in the press. It means that we model relationships in a way that we

would want them lived out here and elsewhere. If we cannot do that, we can’t expect Muslims to do it either.

Created diverse ‘that we might outdo each other in good deeds’

“It’s a matter of where we start,” Mosher says. “The Koran says that if God had so desired, God could have made all of humanity as one tribe and nation but God made us diverse that we might outdo each other in good deeds. If what drives the conversation all the time is who’s picking on whom, I don’t see how we move to outdoing each other in good deeds.”

Al-Marayati agrees.

“What helps me is dealing with people one-on-one and finding people of all faiths that can share what we all have in common, the basic values of our faith, integrity, honesty, fellowship, forgiveness.

“It helps me in terms of not feeling alone and feeling I have hope for what we as human beings can accomplish.

“Muslims and Christians in America could do a lot if we come together to show the model we have for coexistence and respect for one another’s beliefs. We could be a model for people in other parts of the world to show how we can get along. We should be at the forefront of efforts to enable groups to reconcile themselves by being aware of the limitations of the political context.

“Anytime people can work in conjunction with one another, it helps. We can start locally in our own communities. Asking the questions is very important. People in churches could invite Muslims or other experts to discuss issues of faith, to have heart-to-heart discussions so people get a better picture.”

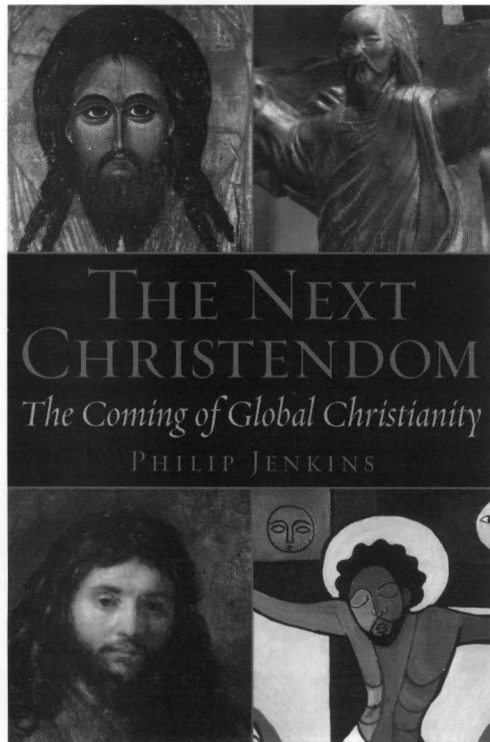
She especially encourages people to seek multiple sources of information and news.

“To get impressions from various media from around the world is to get a better idea of what’s involved in some of these hot spots. But it requires initiative to go one step beyond the dialogue that may be taking place.”

Pat McCaughan, who is an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Los Angeles, is The Witness’ news editor.

THE COMING OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

by Ian T. Douglas



THE NEXT CHRISTENDOM:

The Coming of Global Christianity

Philip Jenkins

Oxford and New York:

Oxford University Press, 2002.

PHILIP JENKINS' NEW BOOK on the incredible growth of Christianity outside of the industrialized West in recent times has captured the imagination of even the most strident secularist. With appearances on major national radio programs and coverage in major monthly magazines, Jenkins has become the harbinger of the next wave of "the West verses the rest" ideology sweeping the post-9/11 United States. For Jenkins, the emergence of a powerful, dynamic, and growing form of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America, characterized as "traditionalist, orthodox and supernatural" (p.8), is all too often overlooked by those of us in the West caught in the fault lines of the current "clash of civilizations." The author concludes that the rise of Christianity in the Third World will exacerbate the confrontations between "jihad" and "crusade" around the world while drastically challenging the presuppositions, power and politics of declining liberal churches in the West.

Jenkins adroitly uses demographic data to describe the emergence of the Third Church (the churches in the Third World) and to make predictions about its continued growth in the first half of the 20th century. He emphasizes that by 2050 only about one-fifth of the world's 3 billion Christians will be "non-Hispanic Whites." As the author imaginatively states: "Soon the phrase 'a White Christian' may sound like a curious oxymoron, as mildly surprising as 'a Swedish Buddhist.' Such people can exist, but a slight eccentricity is implied" (page 3).

The centerpiece of *The Next Christendom* is Jenkins' attempt to describe the contours and characteristics common to the next Christendom in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For Jenkins, the growth of such churches as the Brazilian-based Universal

Church of the Kingdom of God, or The Full Gospel Central Church in South Korea, or the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth of the Prophet Simon Kimbangu in Congo, is directly connected to the healing power of the spirit of God in the midst of difficult and oppressive circumstances. The promise of the new churches is that the emphasis on access to the Spirit of God, the reliance on strong charismatic leadership, and a clearly articulated set of beliefs and/or social mores help new Christians to find a sense of direction, connection, future promise and life in otherwise unsettling and difficult lives.

A corollary to the generalization that most of the churches of "the next Christendom" are Pentecostal of one stripe or another is Jenkins' assertion that many of these churches follow a more conservative theological trajectory with a close and even literalistic reading of the Bible, what the author often characterizes as "fundamentalist." Jenkins thus sees a gulf opening up between older churches in the industrialized West with their biblical criticism and cultural accommodation and the new churches and sects in the South that "are fundamentalist and charismatic by nature and theologically conservative, with a powerful belief in the spiritual dimension, in visions and in spiritual healings" (p. 137).

And if this fault line between the West and the next Christendom is not bad enough, the real battle lines for religious strife in the near future will be the armed conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the swelling countries of Africa and Asia. Jenkins posits: "In one possible scenario of the world to come, an incredibly wealthy although numerically shrinking Northern population espouses the values of humanism ornamented with the vestiges of liberal Christianity and Judaism. ... Meanwhile, this

future North confronts the poorer and more numerous global masses who wave the flags not of red revolution, but of ascendant Christianity and Islam” (pp. 160–161).

Jenkins draws heavily on the clash of civilizations theory advanced by Samuel Huntington. This theory posits that future world conflicts will not be between the power-blocs and military axes that we have known in the 20th century but rather between cultures and “civilizations” with radically different world and religious views. The “clash” between Christian civilization and Islamic civilization is one of the most acute and risky before the world today. While appropriating and supporting Huntington’s theory, Jenkins does point out that Huntington has underestimated the rising force of Christianity in the South (p. 5). He then goes on to describe the ethnic and religious warfare taking place on the fault-lines between Christianity and Islam in Africa.

As an Episcopalian/Anglican, Jenkins was first drawn to the story of the emergence of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America while reading news reports of the 1998 Lambeth Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion. This decennial meeting of all the bishops from across the worldwide Anglican Communion was characterized in both the secular and religious press as the comeuppance of Western liberal bishops and their liberal stands on homosexuality by their brothers in the South. Jenkins points out that the conflict has only become more acute as Archbishops from Anglican churches in Rwanda and Southeast Asia have begun to consecrate American conservatives as “missionary bishops” to advance traditionalist causes and concerns in the U. S. Episcopal Church.

In his critique of Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” theory and its proponents in post-9/11 discourse, the Palestinian, Christian-raised, post-colonial thinker Edward Said states: “Huntington is an ideologist, someone who wants to make ‘civilizations’ and ‘identities’ into what they are not; shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been

purged of the myriad currents and counter-currents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing. This far less visible history is ignored in the rush to highlight the ludicrously compressed and constricted warfare that ‘the clash of civilization’ argues into reality” (*The Nation*, October 22, 2001). Philip Jenkins’ embrace of Huntington’s theoretical constructs leaves him open to the same critique.

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sions about the emergence of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America to be too simplistic. To wash together Latin American Pentecostalism and African Initiated Churches as being uniformly charismatic and fundamentalist does not give due credence to the many and various ways that the Holy Spirit is working in the lives of Christians in the diverse cultures, languages and peoples of these great continents. As difficult as Christian and Islamic relations are, to say that these two great Abrahamic faiths cannot coexist is to overlook profound efforts, often exercised at the grassroots and in unseen and unacknowledged ways, toward reconciliation and the struggle for human dignity and community. And to say that there is a normative Southern Christianity, that speaks with a unified conservative voice consumed with and committed to chastising the errant West over issues of human sexuality, does not give full credit to the depth and breadth

of the many diverse voices in the South and the particularities of their own cultural and ecclesiological contexts. Even among Archbishops and Primates who head Anglican Churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America there are differing perspectives on the West’s hot-button issue of homosexuality.

Why is it that policy-makers, pundits and politicians, both inside and outside of the Church, latch on to the ideas of such thinkers as Samuel Huntington and Philip Jenkins? Could it be that their theories fit the worldviews of those who rely upon the oppositional constructs and dualistic either/or thinking of the modern mind? Whether it be the “evil empire” or the “war on terrorism,” modern man (and I use this non-gender-inclusive description deliberately) needs to objectify the other, the different, as some kind of normative, unified, problematic to be subdued, overcome, terminated. To see the other, or more appropriately “the others,” as a whole constellation of multi-voiced, multi-cultural, pluralistic realities, undermines the project of modernity.

The emergence of the many and diverse voices of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America is not “the next Christendom” but rather a new Pentecost. The amazing growth of these churches is not dependent upon, and cannot be fully explained, by the categories of the past, those of Christendom or some other form of the project of modernity. Rather God is indeed doing a new thing in Africa, Asia and Latin America as the power of the Holy Spirit is blowing over these regions making all things new. Consistent with the experience of the early followers of Jesus, as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, God’s ongoing revelation and intervention in the world is being made real in the many and diverse tongues and cultural realities of a new Pentecost. ●

This review is excerpted from a longer version which first appeared in The World and I, a monthly publication of The Washington Times (Washington, D.C.), www.worldandi.com.

Religion and foreign policy

An interview with Roland Stevens Homet, Jr.

by Julie A. Wortman



ROLAND HOMET is the author of a new book from Forward Movement Publications called *The Wisdom of Serpents: Reflections on Religion and Foreign Policy*, which draws on the work of a Forum on Religion and Foreign Policy (for copies contact Forward Movement at www.forwardmovement.org or call 513-721-6659). Meeting 10 times a year from the winter of 1999 through 2001, the Forum had a multidisciplinary membership that included international lawyers and business people, senior retired diplomats, scholars, nonprofit leaders and clergy from the Jewish and Islamic as well as Christian faiths. Presenters from a wide range of backgrounds — among them a commandant of West Point, the senior diplomatic hostage taken in Iran and a president of Common Cause — addressed the group and also participated with Forum members in press breakfasts with leading U.S. reporters who cover international affairs for print and broadcast media. The participants questioned the presenters and debated the issues among themselves. Written summaries of these discussions, along with other readings, appear on the Forum's website, www.relpol.org (click on "papers"). Homet, who serves on the Peace Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, is a lawyer and author who has been engaged abroad in matters that involved NATO integrity, arms control and the reconciliation of competing cultures. He organized and directed a foundation-sponsored project called "American Specialists on the Soviet Union" that resulted in his book *The New Realism* (1990), which proposed a path to post-Cold War diplomacy.

Julie Wortman: You speak in your book about what a foreign policy would look like that is based on "the wisdom of serpents and the innocence of doves." And I note that when the Forum on Religion was organized it aimed to look for ways of "recovering spiritual direction." What kind of a process did you and your colleagues imagine for that?

Roland Homet: To put it simply, we talked about attitudes and how they are typically shaped by religion, which may be well-founded religion or ill-considered religion. That is, any public policy, whether domestic or foreign, is going to reflect a view of ourselves in relation to the world, to others and to a higher power. We found a great deal of evidence that the American attitude in these days is not what it once was — it is not consistent with the

mainstream of religion and it is not effective. So in the first instance, the task is to change the attitude and go back to the idea of humility and modesty. There's plenty of support for that in the Bible and in our religious histories and traditions.

Then that will reorient the direction of foreign policy. Of course, right attitudes alone are not enough. You have to apply intelligence and you have to apply experience. Then you'll come up with some answers that are consistent with proper religion and effective in upholding the national interest.

Julie Wortman: How do we change attitudes?

Roland Homet: I've written a fair number of things in my life that come up against the question, "Do we have to encounter some sort of destructive cataclysm in order to go back to the right orientation?" I hope that's not true. But supposing this book is on to something, supposing it gets into the hands of thoughtful and spiritually oriented people, supposing they engage in discussion groups — this could move in the direction that is needed. In addition to this, if we could get the book into the hands of the many Episcopalians in positions of power and authority in our government and in society we could start to move things both at the top and at the bottom.

Julie Wortman: So often we encounter church people who feel that it is not the role of the church to be involved in politics. But are you arguing that it is very much the role of the church to be involved in politics?

Roland Homet: Well, I think the role of the church is to keep people true to religiously oriented attitudes. It is not the role of the church, in the main, to say what we should do on North Korea, for example. The church has no particular expertise there. I wrote a pamphlet about this some years ago, *The Role of the Church in Public Policy* (Forward Movement). As with so much in our faith, it reflects a balance between engagement and detachment. Roughly speaking, I would say church leaders should engage on

framing right attitudes and detach on devising the specific policies to embody those attitudes.

Julie Wortman: How does that view match up with your praise of the Jubilee 2000 campaign in which the faith communities played a very prominent and effective role in changing public policies about debt relief?

Roland Homet: That may be the exception that proves the rule. It was an alliance between the church and committed lay people who brought their respective strengths to the fray. The church said, look, this is a very simple issue of indebtedness and being perpetually imprisoned in that state. The Bible speaks to that very clearly. But there were a lot of particulars to be worked out between the World Bank, the International Monetary

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Fund, the U.S. Treasury, other countries and so forth and that was largely carried out by lay people with the needed expertise. What helped was that this movement was biblically grounded and very simple at its core.

Julie Wortman: What about today's growing peace movement, which includes many people of faith who are urging a peaceful resolution to the foreign policy challenges this country faces? Is that an arena where you would see the church having an important role?

Roland Homet: These are almost exclu-

sively lay people who are drawing on their religious values to express the view they have, which I think has a great deal behind it, namely to say that we've had an almost casual politics involved in this determination to go to war and that sounds like bad government — but it is also contrary to the whole idea of the religious tradition, which is that the taking of life is not a casual affair. Now the church itself can hold prayer services like the one which occurred last January at the National Cathedral, after which many of those in attendance, of their own volition, marched to the White House. That seems to me to be a good relationship of clergy and laity.

Julie Wortman: What about resolutions on foreign policy passed by diocesan conventions and by the Episcopal Church's General Convention? The General Convention resolutions that are passed provide the church's Washington office with a basis for lobbying legislators and others in government around a particular policy. Is that a useful way for the church to be engaged?

Roland Homet: The tendency is to push these resolutions through without considering sufficiently how their objectives could actually be realized. I think that diminishes and demeans the office of the church. So I'd like to see fewer resolutions and greater attention to the realization of the dreams and hopes that are voiced in those resolutions. That would make the church more effective. Right now, the church is dismissable too readily and that bothers me.

Julie Wortman: I found your evaluation of a number of foreign policy issues very helpful — especially, your assessment of the effectiveness of economic sanctions and U.S. policies toward North Korea and Iraq. The questions you raised in the book, which was written before September 11, 2001, and before the North Korea and Iraq crises, were very good questions and predictive of what has happened since. Do we need to hold forums of the sort you participated in throughout the church to help church peo-

ple better understand foreign policy?

Roland Homet: After the Forum disbanded, I spent a good few months trying to interest seminaries and other institutions of higher religious learning around the country to continue this work and produce periodic papers or other materials to report on the issues discussed and any conclusions that were drawn. But I couldn't find anybody who was prepared to do that, which is quite a disappointment. There were individuals who expressed interest, but after looking into it they came back to me saying they couldn't find any support in their institutions for doing this. Whether they thought it would be too controversial, I don't know. That was unfortunate because I do think this is the kind of issue that lends itself to and really calls for continuing attention by the combination of clergy and laity that we had in our group.

Julie Wortman: You end the book with a call for a return to the allegiances that shaped this country at the beginning. What are those allegiances?

Roland Homet: Our political and spiritual heritage in this country has to do with modesty, clarity and submission to God. Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer is well known: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." But the last line of that prayer, which is seldom used, includes this: "Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is and not as I would have it." It takes true humility to leave error uncorrected.

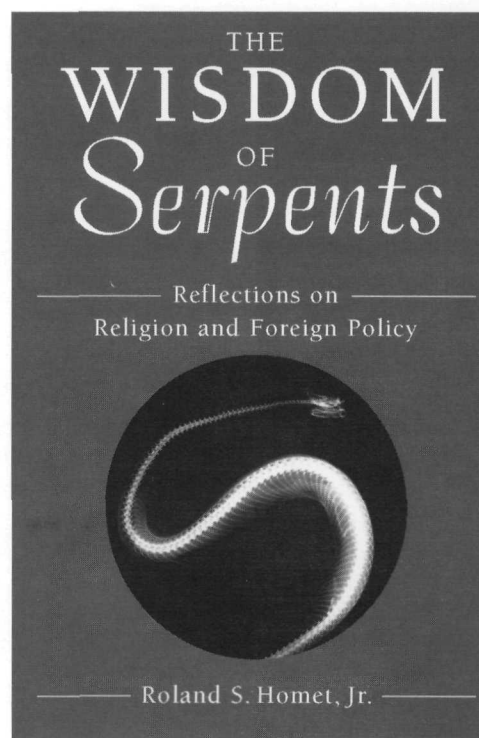
Results achieved by force don't hold nearly as well as those arrived at by mutual interest. That is something that we used to know, but now we have the tendency to think we can impose our will on anything or anyone and produce a result. Sad to say, what we are producing right now is more terrorists. When we speak of our nation's interests, I want us to be speaking about our enlightened self-interest. We should be interested in how things work out — not just our declarations of high purpose — always leading in a direction that will promote and sustain peace. We need to find

the proper combination of idealism and self-interest and then we will be on the right track.

Julie Wortman: You speak a great deal in the book about detachment. I appreciate detachment as a spiritual practice. But how do you practice detachment and deal with the terrible pain and suffering there is in the world? Is that where you would see people of faith acting in a more independent or NGO-ish sort of way — outside the political sphere, but like the Jubilee 2000 campaign?

Roland Homet: That's right, or like Doctors Without Borders, which I think has been a great success. And when it's the church that's directly involved, its good works should not be confused with conversion. (When Jesus was healing the woman at the well, he did not condition his help on her conversion.) The key word for us is "example." As a nation or as individuals or as groups, if we set a good example, that will have a conversion effect. ●

Julie Wortman is editor/publisher of The Witness.



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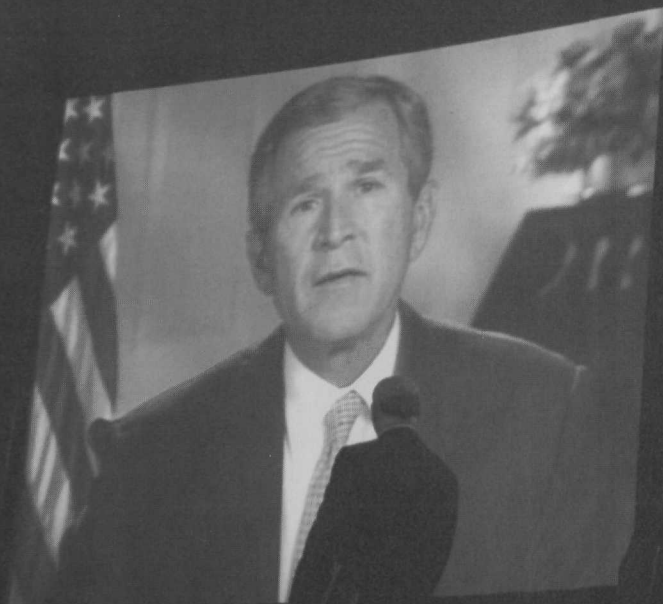
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