WITNESS MAGAZINE

The Witness

MINNESOTA: PROGRESSIVE POLITICS UNDER ATTACK

VOLUME 86
NUMBER 7/8
JULY/AUGUST 2003

IN THIS ISSUE

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on the cover

St. Paul, Minnesota: Children in *Cinco de Mayo* parade. May 5, 2000 ©Michael Siluk / The Image Works

Contributing editors

Ethan Flad

*On August 2, 2003, the Episcopal Church of Gethsemane in downtown Minneapolis will be the site of the General Convention reception co-hosted by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (ECPC/*The Witness*) and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. Gethsemane, only four blocks from the convention center, will host a wide series of events during the Convention: programs for children, a "locally grown" food banquet by the ecological community, musical concerts and much more.*

Gethsemane has a long, storied history and a unique connection to ECPC. Founded in 1856, the same year as the city of Minneapolis, in 1895 the parish hosted the first General Convention held west of the Mississippi. In the early 20th century the rector was Irving Peake Johnson, who was elected Bishop of Colorado in 1917 — the same year that he founded The Witness *magazine! An article about Gethsemane's history and ongoing ministry by senior warden Lou Schoen is posted on our "A Globe of Witnesses" website at www.thewitness.org.*

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Foreign subscriptions add $20 per year.

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CORRECTION

In the May/June issue of *The Witness*, the editorial states that Palestinian suicide bombings began three years ago. Suicide bombings have been reported from as early as 1994, during the period of the Oslo Peace Process.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Marching toward Minneapolis

by Ethan Flad

"WHY ARE YOU SPENDING so much time in Minnesota?" my friends have been asking me lately. It's a fair question; after all, I'd only been to the state once before this year. I've tried to explain about the upcoming General Convention of the Episcopal Church — two weeks in Minneapolis this summer, and endless preparatory meetings beforehand — but to the uninitiated, it can sound baffling.

General Convention is usually a world unto itself. More than 10,000 visitors will descend on the Twin Cities this July, and far too many will spend their only free time walking between the convention center and nearby hotels. With daily meetings during this whirlwind church event that often last from 7 A.M. until 11 P.M., and with Minneapolis' famed skywalk system — about 60 downtown blocks of interconnected skyways — some conventioneers may choose to never step outside!

That would be a shame. The state and the local church have a great deal to teach us. Personally, I've always been intrigued by Minnesota. Its tourist propaganda is obviously appealing for outdoors lovers: beautiful lakes, forests, rivers and wildlife (they downplay the mosquitoes, of course). But the urban culture is also enticing: Every child of the '80s grew up on the-artist-who-once-was-known-and-we-think-is-now-again-known-as Prince. He gave the Twin Cities instant credibility as a home for funky, multiracial music and culture. Moreover, with all due respect to this publication's episcopal-centric audience, he did more for purple clothing than centuries of bishops have (just check out my sister's wardrobe from that era).

Most of all, during the past half-century the state developed a reputation as a bastion for progressive politics — names such as Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale and Paul Wellstone represent elements of that legacy. The local church was a corresponding model of liberal faith-in-action: Ministries addressing anti-racism, environmental justice, peacemaking and indigenous concerns have all grown out of the Diocese of Minnesota and its partner religious communities.

Things are changing quickly, and not for the better, in the view of its progressive citizens. Over the past couple of years, conservatives in the state have assumed positions of political control, and Minnesota's lower and middle-class populations are struggling. Severe budget cuts mean that fewer social and educational resources are available to the indigenous peoples, long-time Euro-Americans and new immigrants who make up the region's growing polyglot of life. The ecology is also under attack, with pristine regions targeted for commercial use, and a nuclear waste fight involving native peoples, energy developers, environmentalists and legislators. These issues are not confined to one state, of course. Minnesota's political challenges reflect the economic and religious battles facing many of our communities.

This issue of *The Witness* raises up some

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.

of the justice and peace concerns in that land so that our readers will have a sense of the world laying just beyond General Convention — whether you are coming to Minneapolis or not. And don't think for a minute that we're ignoring the Convention itself. In this issue you will find commentaries that look toward the Minneapolis debates. Offering even greater depth is a series of 10 "position papers" that *The Witness* will be publishing this month. These papers, addressing some of the hot topics at the upcoming Convention, will be downloadable from our website and available in hard copy in Minneapolis. Church watchers should also print out and memorize "Do Justice, Make Peace, Be Accountable," the platform sponsored by "The Consultation," the coalition of progressive Episcopal organizations, of which we are a founding member.

Collaboration is indeed our key theme this summer. If you are coming to Minneapolis, join us for our reception and awards ceremony on August 2 (see ad on p. 7), which we will cosponsor with the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. Visit our booth, which we're sharing with the Episcopal Urban Caucus and other friends. Read *Issues,* the daily paper of The Consultation, and a new daily to be published by the Every Voice Network, both of which we'll be contributing to. Rejoice that the Convention will offset its CO_2 emissions by purchasing eco-friendly "wind tags," thanks to a partnership between the Regeneration Project and Native Energy, supported by our colleagues in the Episcopal Ecological Network. Participate in the Hiroshima Day observance on August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration. Support the Claiming the Blessing initiative so that God's equal love for all can truly be lived out in our church. Learn about our new internship at the Anglican United Nations office, and meet Ranjit Koshy Mathews, a seminarian who is the first person to work in this exciting ministry. Indeed, we are working together with progressives from around the church toward Minneapolis, and we hope that you will join us there, in body or spirit. ●

A new *Witness* for the 21st century

WE ARE EXCITED TO REPORT a groundbreaking partnership to expand the voice of justice in the Episcopal Church. Building on months of dialogue, in early June the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (ECPC, publisher of *The Witness* magazine), All Saints Church (Pasadena, Calif.) and the Every Voice Network (EVN) developed an historic agreement under the focus of a "New *Witness* for the 21st Century."

This collaboration brings together the creative ministry of one of the largest Episcopal parishes in the country, *The Witness'* 86-year heritage of addressing the gospel of justice and peace issues, and Every Voice's timely online newsletter and curriculum publishing. The partnership's mission is to broaden the voice of the progressive church, empower people in the pews to action, and develop new progressive leadership by working with youth and young adults.

Each of our three institutions will benefit in specific ways in this coalition. For *The Witness*, this builds on a tradition of deep theological reflection and advocacy journalism and offers a new focus on mobilizing parishes. For EVN, launched in November 2002, joining forces provides critical momentum to its goal of building an accessible movement for justice in the church. All Saints, with a 20-year history of incubating innovative ministries, will help construct the infrastructure so that the new effort will thrive.

However, our enthusiasm is especially based on an understanding of the many ways this collaboration will benefit the wider church. Our print and online partnership will serve to highlight the voices of respected theologians and thinkers at the same time grassroots ministry is profiled and practical ways for people in the pews to be involved are featured.

We are pleased to note that cooperative projects are already underway. For the upcoming General Convention in Minneapolis, *The Witness* has prepared a series of "position papers" on key issues before the Convention. Every Voice Network, through its new LEAP curriculum initiative (Liturgy, Education and Action for the Parish), is developing parish-based curricula from several of those papers. Together, these resources will not only assist people at Convention, but also help people in local congregations interpret the debates in Minneapolis.

Beyond Convention, the alliance will build a network of lay and ordained people working for justice in the church, and will target the educational needs of parishes. Drawing on the symbolism of this Pentecost season, we celebrate in this gathering of many voices dedicated to the liberation gospel of peace and justice. Join with us in celebration as we move forward into being a "New *Witness* for the 21st Century!"

Ed Bacon, rector, All Saints Church (Pasadena, Calif.)
Jane Holmes Dixon, president, Episcopal Church Publishing Company
Rosa Lee Harden, executive director, Every Voice Network

LETTERS

Vulnerability of dissent

I am concerned about the vulnerability of DISSENT; it seems threatened in our society today.

If I criticize the Israeli government — I am not anti-Semitic.

If I criticize the U.S. foreign policy — I am not unpatriotic.

If I criticize C. Powell & C. Rice — I am not anti-black.

You can criticize demonstrations — and still be for peace.

You can criticize the invasion of Iraq — and still support the troops.

Let us not put those who disagree with us in a negative box — make some slur about them. Dissent is essential to democracy; without it we would not be a free country. Let us value dissent and engage in it constructively.

Watchmen, keep not silence. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day or night; you that call upon the Lord, keep not silence." (Isaiah 62:6)

Charles Demere
St. Mary's, Md.

No women of color delegates

I shall not be renewing my subscription. You have a good magazine, and it is worth reading. Here in Massachusetts, we shall have no woman of color as a delegate to the Convention in Minnesota. White women do not speak for us. They USE us for their benefit. We shall send an observer.

Esther J. Burgess
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

Editing error

I am amazed to find in Ian T. Douglas' otherwise excellent article [*TW* March/April 2003] a reference to "predicting...the first half of the twentieth century." It seems about one hundred years too late for that. The error does not appear to be typographical or elliptical. I confess my confusion.

Joe Spaniol

Praise for *The Witness*

I'm always amazed by the diversity of the issues you tackle in *The Witness*. The pain, suffering, deceit, greed and lust for power are all non-stop — but so is the will to confront, educate, make change and build community ... which *The Witness* represents.

Betty LaDuke
Ashland, Ore.

Repression in the Philippines

I am edified to read your May/June 2003 magazine. I am the Program Secretary for Christian Unity and Ecumenical Relations of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. One of the areas under my unit are the indigenous peoples (IP's). Through the years, the plight of the IP's here has turned from bad to worse. The repression has claimed the lives of many. Just this morning, I attended the public launching of the Peasant Network for Land, Justice and Human Rights. I heard the testimonies of the relatives of victims of torture and summary executions — farmers and indigenous peoples. The work has to go on.

My congregation and I continue to be inspired by the magazine. Way to go.

Rex R.B. Reyes, Jr.
Manila, Philippines

CLASSIFIEDS

Seeking rector

SEEKING FULL-TIME RECTOR for growing parish church in the Diocese of New York. We have much to offer the right candidate: committed congregants, opportunity to solidify shift from pastoral to program model, beautiful location in recreation-rich Hudson River Valley, one hour north of NYC. Do our needs and goals match your strengths? Our top goals: strong sermons emphasizing practical Christianity, continued growth, physical plant expansion (now in planning stage), strengthening of Christian Education and youth/teen programs, development of mechanism to more fully engage laity in inreach/outreach. Housing provided. Generous compensation package. Expressions of interest welcome from all qualified candidates without regard to gender, age, race, sexual orientation or family status. Please send updated CDO profile and resume by June 20th to Search Committee c/o St. John's Episcopal Church, PO Box 477, Cornwall, New York 12518. Contact Phil Dutton at pdutton@hvc.rr.com if you have any questions.

Order of Jonathan Daniels

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.

Order of Christian Workers

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

What You Can Do to End Hunger

A FREE 12-page booklet with practical tips published by Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' movement that seeks justice for hungry people. To order your free copy, call toll-free 1-800-82-BREAD (1-800-822-7323) or visit the Bread for the World web site: www.bread.org.

The Witness @ General Convention

The Witness and Episcopal Peace Fellowship invite you to our

2003 Awards Reception

Saturday, August 2, 2003 / 4:00 PM- 6:00 PM

The Church of Gethsemane

(A short walk from the Minneapolis Convention Center) 905 Fourth Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Tickets are $40 / available from *The Witness* / email: alice@thewitness.org or call 207-763-2990

CALL TODAY SEATING IS LIMITED

VISIT US AT BOOTH #205 IN THE MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER

We will be sharing space with Episcopal Urban Caucus, Cristosal and Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates.

Stop by Booth #205 and pick up Witness special Convention papers on:

20/20 *by Pat McCaughan*
Anglican Identity *by Bill Countryman*
Anti-Racism *by Ed Rodman*
Cultural Imperialism *by Mark Harris*
ECUSA Budget *by Kevin Jones*
Globalization & Economics *by Kevin Jones and Jennifer Morazes*
Heterosexism *by Katie Sherrod*
Justice & Reconciliation *by Elizabeth Kaeton*
Preemptive Strikes *by Mark Harris*
Theology of Work *by Jim Lewis*

Keynote Speaker:
STEVEN CHARLESTON / Dean & President of the Episcopal Divinity School

Please join us to honor the life and work of these true-life witnesses:

The William Stringfellow Award, presented in honor of the theologian and lawyer to:
BARBARA HARRIS
Universally recognized as the first woman to be ordained to the episcopate in the worldwide Anglican Communion, Bishop Harris has devoted her life to social justice and prophetic ministry. She served as executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company and publisher of *The Witness* magazine from 1984–1988.

The William Spofford Award, presented in honor of the longtime *Witness* editor and outspoken labor advocate to:
TOM B.K. GOLDTOOTH
For over 20 years Goldtooth has been an activist, advocate, organizer and policy maker within the environmental justice movement and has worked to build coalitions between the Native community, people of color communities, and environmental and health organizations. He currently serves as the National Coordinator of the Indigenous Environmental Network.

The Vida Scudder Award, presented in honor of the feminist and socialist to:
BARBARA RAMNARAINE
Ramnaraine is a long-time advocate for rights for the physically handicapped. She has been the coordinator of the Episcopal Disability Network since 1992. An Episcopal deacon based in Minneapolis, her vision and her dream is to be a part of a church in which there will be no outcasts and in which all people will be welcomed to share their gifts and enact their ministries.

The William Scarlett Award, presented in honor of the labor activist and Episcopal bishop to:
VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS
Voices in the Wilderness functions as a network for nonviolent education and action — developing and practicing ways of nonviolent resistance. Since its founding in 1996, Voices in the Wilderness has campaigned to end economic and military warfare against the Iraqi people.

Anglican Indigenous Network meets in Aotearoa/New Zealand

by Marianne Arbogast

A TRADITIONAL MAORI CEREMONY called a *powhiri* opened the 8th Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN) gathering in Aotearoa (New Zealand) in April. Near the shores of Lake Rotorua, a young Maori man in warrior's clothing came forward to test the guests' intentions. Malcolm Naea Chun, the Secretary-General of AIN, picked up a green fern leaf branch from the ground to announce that the delegations came in peace.

Participants included delegates from the Torres Strait Islands of Australia, the indigenous peoples of Canada, and native Americans of the U.S. and Hawai'i, as well as Maori delegates and observers. Five bishops from the U.S. and Aotearoa were among them.

"The Maoris were very welcoming — I can't even begin to describe their generosity," said Carol Gallagher, Suffragan Bishop of Southern Virginia and a member of the Cherokee nation, who took part in the gathering. "They were incredible hosts and also shared their culture in a very inviting and gentle fashion."

Host bishop Whakahuihui Vercoe of Aotearoa preached at the Eucharist on the morning of the first day of business, calling on delegates to be "storytellers, value bearers, community builders and spiritual journeyers" within the Anglican Communion.

For most of the week, delegates met in groups representing various concerns of AIN constituents, including youth, women, elders, clergy and theological educators.

"It was very powerful to gather with other native women living very different lives in very different cultures, and yet sharing some real complex issues," said Gallagher, who met with the group focusing on women. "Some of us come from very matriarchal cultures and some of us come from very patriarchal cultures, and yet most of our leadership folks that stand up for us are men. We honor where we come from and we honor the men in leadership — and at the same time I think there's a real awakening of women recognizing the need for more indigenous women clergy, more women in leadership to get the variety of voices heard."

A double rainbow over Rotorua blessed AIN participants.

Gallagher added that "there was a lot of excitement about having the first Anglican indigenous woman bishop in their midst."

Robert McGhee from the Poarch Creek tribe in Alabama, a member of the Episcopal Council on Indigenous Ministries, also noted common concerns among delegates focusing on youth.

"It was amazing, when I was talking to the Maoris, to find a somewhat similar culture, but also similar issues that they face," McGhee said. "Alcohol and substance abuse, the suicide rate, educational levels and things like that, I felt were pretty much the same."

The youth focus group began exploring the possibility of developing "a paper or proposal on the issues that impact indigenous youth worldwide" to take to the church with program ideas and funding requests, McGhee said. They are setting up a web page and considering an international youth conference.

Among eight resolutions passed by AIN, the most encompassing one called for the creation of a non-geographic province of the Anglican Communion for the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Rim.

"These are people of the land who rarely get their voice heard in the midst of larger gatherings," Gallagher explained. "A non-geographic province is a way to be present at provincial gatherings worldwide at which there is no representation or voices from the indigenous people in that part of the world."

Other resolutions pledged support for the position of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples on the settlement agreement between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Canadian government stemming from abuse in government- and church-run schools; support for the Gwich'in Nation and for the establishment of a permanent natural reserve and refuge from the exploitation of natural resources; and support for the development of the Anglican Indigenous Youth Network.

But for participants, the experience of community among the delegates was one of the greatest benefits of the gathering.

"We had an opportunity to worship together regularly in a variety of different languages," Gallagher says. "Sometimes some of the hymns were sung in different languages. And one of the great joys for me was to be in the midst of people whose faith is expressive. There was a genuine joyful curiosity in each other's ways, and constant learning from one another."

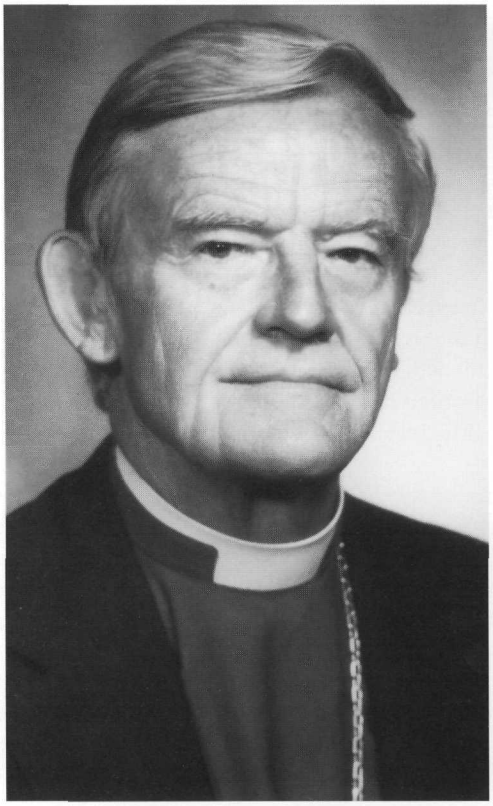
"Just the relationships that were made were a great outcome," McGhee says.

The next AIN gathering will be held in the U.S. in early spring of 2005 in either Southern California or Oklahoma.

[Parts of this report were based on an AIN press release from Malcolm Chun.]

Remembering Paul Moore

At the edge of politics and moral theology



PAUL MOORE JR., a lifelong advocate of social and economic justice and peace, died May 1 at the age of 83. Moore, who served as Bishop of New York from 1972 until 1989, was a decorated World War II hero who became an outspoken opponent of war. Just weeks before he died, he condemned the war in Iraq from the pulpit of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine at an Evensong for Peace on March 23.

"Over and against that force of millions of people of all faiths is one solitary man named George W. Bush, alone in a room, telling his staff he needed to be there alone for a few minutes of prayer," Moore said. "This has to do with two different kinds of religion, it seems to me. The religion that says 'I talk to Jesus and therefore I am right,' and millions and millions of people of all faiths who disagree."

Moore's involvement in the civil rights struggle was recounted by one of his sons, Paul Moore, at his May 10 funeral service.

"We overheard the hate calls and the threats of violence against him, but we never saw him back down," Paul Moore said. "In Mississippi, the danger was so acute that he was given an alias so those wiretapping the phones wouldn't know his identity. They called him 'The Big Fisherman.'"

Ledlie Laughlin, Jr., who gave the funeral homily, told a different story about Moore the fisherman.

"After he told his children and a few of his friends about his cancer, he went fly fishing for a week on the Amazon," Laughlin reported. "Who else in this church would do that?"

Moore, a longtime friend and advisor to *The Witness,* was the author of three books: a study on the urban work of the church, *The Church Reclaims the City* in 1964; *Take a Bishop Like Me* in 1979, on his ordination of a lesbian woman and the struggle for women's ordination and gay rights in the church; and a memoir, *Presences: A Bishop's Life in the City* in 1997.

"He was thrilled by that edge of politics and moral theology," his son, Paul Moore, said. "He excited us and made religion seem adventurous. He was teaching us the satisfactions of pursuing work that was meaningful to us, even if others didn't understand or agree."

Four of Moore's other children also spoke at the funeral service.

Rosemary Moore, a daughter, told of a lunch conversation with him near the end of his life.

"We talked about mystery and the unknowable," she said. "I talked about transformation, that irresistible thing that happens in my playwriting. Without skipping a beat he described transformation in his work. The Word made flesh — and how humanity, Jesus and the Eucharist are one." ●

[Based on an obituary by Neva Rae Fox of the Diocese of New York and transcripts from Paul Moore's funeral service, online at www.dioceseny.org.]

The truth about Iraq: Sifting through the media spin

by Bruce Campbell

WHAT JUST HAPPENED? Hope you didn't blink, because the story of the Iraq War is about to vanish, to be picked over, off to one side, by the historians. At least the effort will be made to dig up the kind of information we would have needed to question the war while it was going on and being sold to the public but which, of course, was unavailable at the time.

Unavailable, that is, on CNN. Or on any of the networks. Or most of the news sources most easily accessible to most of us most of the time.

How much time did you spend consulting alternative media in the weeks leading up to the war and while it was being conducted? It's too bad if you didn't, because the air waves and data lines that carried messages not penned by the Bush administration were buzzing. At the same time that the major media were lamenting the untimely death of U.S. network correspondent David Bloom, the names of equally innocent Iraqi women and children who perished directly at the hands of our forces were nowhere to be found — except via other media.

If you didn't take the time, you at least noted one conspicuous instance in which "our" media thought they could bring us "their" media — if only in a highly edited package of spin-control, lest they be deemed unpatriotic. This war brought us a twist in the usual categories of mainstream and alternative with the preeminence of a wholly professional major media outlet with views usually opposite those of the U.S. administration: Al Jazeera. The dance done with this news source was fascinating to watch. Our government impugned its integrity. Our major media covered that, but in the process showed us some of their clips. Before long, their live feeds from Baghdad were picked up by CNN. Their reporters, editors and owners began to show up in our media as spokespeople (undoubtedly due to their headquarters in Qatar, conveniently in the backyard of a battalion of American reporters). Their coverage itself became our news with increasing frequency. Their New York-based financial reporters had their credentials revoked by the New York Stock Exchange for "security reasons." The question of their legitimacy was completely overcome by the phenomenon of their fame (arguably the situation of their American counterparts as well).

But if you decided to learn for yourself what Al Jazeera was saying and discovering, assuming you could not get to them on cable, you had to turn to the Web. The day I did, in early March, I learned there was a new link to a first-ever English-language version of their news site, but I couldn't get it to load; it was announced shortly after that the site had been hacked and, as of early May, was still not operational.

It's unnecessary in these pages to hawk the need to seek alternatives to the published and often pre-packaged truth. With the presence of the Internet, we arguably have access as never before to the widest possible range of perspectives and ideas. We have to accept that our access is corruptible, whether through spin or high-tech attack, and these alternatives can become just as invisible to us as if we weren't looking around at all.

But if we stop looking, it's our own damn fault. It's impossible anymore to accept on face value the claim of the news media to be in pursuit of the truth. In the end, they pursue truth and publish that pursuit as long as they think anyone is reading or watching, and then they stop and don't pursue it anymore. The economics of media don't allow them to continue what they start. As it said in our algebra books, the proof is left to you.

Of course, "alternative" does not equal "true" in every case, any more than "mainstream" does. James Fallows, writing in *The Atlantic* in June, notes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, "With the Internet and TV, each culture now has a more elaborate apparatus for 'proving,' dramatizing, and disseminating its particular truth." Even so, the exercise of consulting a wide range of media gives you a better picture of all of the possible attitudes and biases, and that total picture is a better container for the truth.

It's not too late to start. Iraq may be "over," but the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is still roiling. Not thinking seriously about subscribing to one of those satellite services that gives you a la carte access to Arabic, Chinese, Turkish, Iranian or Korean channels? Get a teenager to Google around for you a little bit and find you a couple of websites that you promise to read daily or so, or at least every time you turn to mainstream media, as a way of providing your own balanced coverage. Or the Jews for Justice website has a page with

links to many sites maintained by organizations working for justice in the Mideast conflict resolutions (www.jfjfp.org/links.htm).

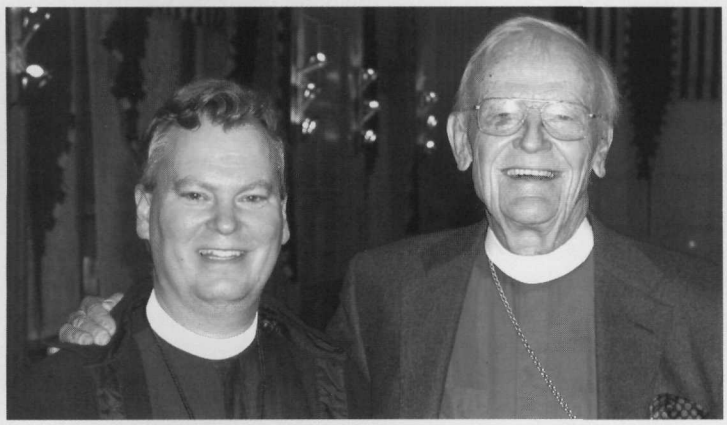
Getting to the truth is hard. It's really hard when the truth is far away, and even harder when there are culture and language barriers. But it's completely impossible when truth-finding and truth-telling are left to a spotlight that flashes across a landscape, blindingly illuminates with false daylight, and then moves on.

Reconciliation *and* justice

by Michael Hopkins

EVERY JANUARY 1ST I eagerly reach for the Style section of *The Washington Post* for the annual "What's In/What's Out" list. This past year I half expected to see "Justice Out/Reconciliation In," but then, who really pays much attention to internal Episcopal Church politics?

In the rhetoric of Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion leaders — liberals in particular — the word "reconciliation" currently figures prominently. "Waging reconciliation" is one of the new goals of being church, at least in the House of Bishops. Yet



Michael Hopkins and Bishop Paul Moore at the Episcopal Urban Caucus assembly in February 2003

one bishop was heard to say at the February 2003 Episcopal Urban Caucus meeting that he really didn't know what the term meant, and that it was an agenda imposed "from the top down." The other six or seven bishops in the room either rose to agree or were silent (although one did carefully state that no criticism of the presiding bishop was intended).

The response was in answer to the observation that "waging reconciliation" seemed to mask a political agenda of giving potentially divisive justice issues a back seat. At the very least the rhetoric seems to suggest that "being reconciled" must take priority over "doing justice," particularly when some are threatening to leave the church.

Yet at a recent Reconciliation Conference in Los Angeles people who know what they are talking about put a different understanding of the relationship between reconciliation and justice forward. The conference was entitled "A National Conversation about the Conflict in the Episcopal Church," and was sponsored by the Diocese of Los Angeles' Hands in Healing Initiative and the Reconciliation Institute headed by Brian Cox. Cox himself is a conservative, but sees reconciliation as the only way forward for the Episcopal Church.

"Reconciliation is a process of establishing justice in the heart or soul of a community or nation," says the Institute's materials. I suppose that translates into "Waging Reconciliation=Waging Justice." Not a bad General Convention button.

If Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold truly intends to lead a church "waging reconciliation," he needs to attend one of these reconciliation conferences. Among other things it would teach him that the only way to reconciliation is through the conflict, honestly and openly. Any other way simply will not work. Reconciliation is not about setting aside agendas or identity politics or avoiding getting mired in divisive issues. Reconciliation is about laying all those things on the table in the light of day and negotiating a just solution for all sides. If he does not take the risk to do this open negotiating, or at least allow it to happen, he will only succeed in handing the current ecclesiastical sex war to his successor.

No class system among Christians

by Robert V. Taylor

DOES THE EMBRACE of God's blessing extend to all people, or only to some? General Convention will speak decisively to this question in its action on whether to permit the creation of liturgical text for the blessing of unions. It is a decision that will speak loudly about how we understand baptism, whether our church chooses to have an effective pastoral ministry to those seeking unions, or whether we choose to become a church built on the model of a medieval city.

Our baptismal liturgy expresses a theology of God's rich blessing bestowed upon every member of the church. It also expresses our commitment to the dignity of every human being, and speaks eloquently to honoring the complexity and variety of human relationships as we seek to serve Christ in one another. Baptism allows no room for a class system of Christians or Episcopalians. Baptism invites and commits us to a life in which we enter into the vulnerability of Christ and the surprises of the Holy Spirit. In a church where we have long blessed a variety of relationships, it seems decidedly odd to be debating whether the union of two people who love each other is worthy of God's blessing.

In many congregations, including my own, the blessing of

Ethan Flad

Jerry Smith, Robert Taylor and Mary Miller (convener of The Consultation) at the Claiming the Blessing conference in November 2002.

unions is part of our pastoral care to our members, and an expression of the generous blessing that God bestows through a rich array of relationships. While some apparently fear angry reactions — and even division — if the blessing of unions is approved, the truth is that there will be deep sadness, anger and a sense of betrayal felt by many in our pews if this permission is not granted. If we do not move in this direction our proclaiming of God's abundance and blessing will be difficult to do with integrity.

George Werner, leader of the House of Deputies, has challenged us to think about our model of the church. If the creating of texts for the blessing of unions is rejected, that will declare that we are a modern version of a medieval, walled city, where some are invited to come inside to work during the day but are then expected to go home at night, unable to enjoy full participation in the city's life and richness. A modern-day caste system in the name of Christ. Alternatively, we have the opportunity to be vulnerable, in Christ, to the love and joy that exist between those who, for a variety of reasons, are not able to enter into marriage.

It is a defining moment for our church. My own prayer and hope is that we find a way to provide permission for the blessing of unions, while acknowledging that we may not all have the pastoral need to perform them or necessarily be fully in support of such unions. Such honesty will allow us to hold a diversity of opinions while celebrating, in a variety of ways, the blessing of the one who is our blessing, Jesus Christ.

Supporting a just international order

by Winnie Varghese

THREE YEARS AGO in Denver, the 73rd General Convention passed a resolution (D033) that challenged dioceses and congregations in the Episcopal Church to "set aside 0.7 percent of their annual budgets to contribute to international development programs that address the root causes of poverty, ill health, illiteracy and economic justice." A few months ago, a group of church leaders, economists and grassroots justice activists came together out of concern that little follow-up to the resolution has taken place in the church. Formed in Cambridge, Mass., it has been named the "Cambridge Consultation" (www.cambridgeconsultation.org).

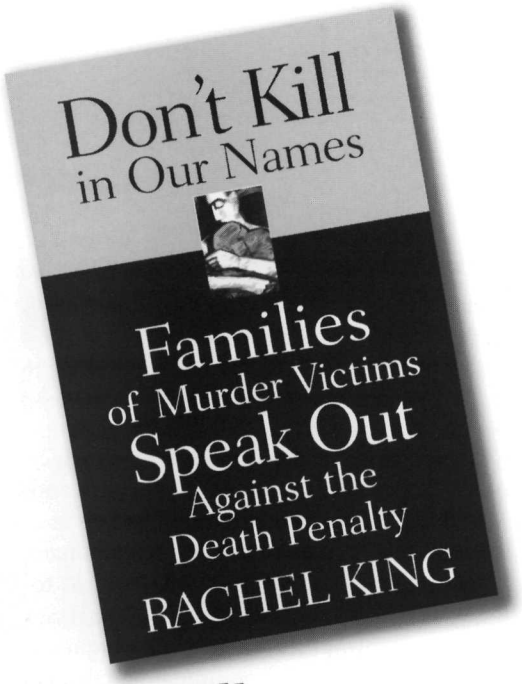
The Cambridge Consultation is supporting a resolution being brought to the 74th General Convention in Minneapolis (A034) that encourages the church to endorse the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These eight goals call us to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental stability and develop a global partnership for development. For 30 years a pledge of 0.7 percent of the U.S. Gross National Product to international development aid to address these goals has not been met. We all know how crippling unmet pledges can be to the programs of our own parish, diocesan and national institutions. This resolution asks our dioceses and the national church to model this 0.7 percent goal of giving to international development, though many of us in ECUSA would be well past that in our present contributions.

But the Cambridge Consultation is not merely a group gathered to pass a resolution. Its purpose is also to "bring about a re-consecration of the Episcopal Church to the most profound and challenging task that Christ places before us — to love our neighbors near and far as ourselves."

This consultation does not believe that our internal ECUSA issues are irrelevant or that the status quo domestically is acceptable, but rather, that we have lost perspective.

We have taken the embarrassing position in this church of siding with the most reactionary elements in developing countries to justify our shaky, often irrelevant moral agendas, most notably on the issue of sexuality and same-sex blessings. We have exploited the voices of our brothers and sisters to make our point and soothe our consciences. We seek to add to our numbers through the neo-missionary movement, which parades the persecution of Christians at the hands of Hindus or Muslims, but never speaks of the economic and political forces so often encouraged by our government that create those climates of hate.

For these sins we must more than repent, we must be about the business of restoring a just international order. The U.N. MDGs are a manageable (the money is there), though politically tricky, set of expectations of both donor and recipient countries that would go far to move us into greater equitable communion with one another. This consultation is working to organize our church to offer international leadership in supporting and implementing these goals as absolutely essential signs of our true global communion. ●



Don't Kill in Our Names

Reviewed by Joseph Wakelee-Lynch

Don't Kill In Our Names:
Families of Murder Victims
Speak Out Against the Death Penalty
by Rachel King
Rutgers University Press
New Brunswick, N.J., 2003
304 pp. $27

IF PEOPLE whose family members have been murdered oppose the death penalty, then how much moral ground is left to stand on for those who support it?

That question is one of the most intriguing in the U.S. debate about capital punishment. It fascinates because it raises the issue of the role of morality in the death penalty debate. Most Americans who question the practice are not doubtful because of its moral status.They are disturbed by the prospect of executing innocent people. (Indeed, since 1973 at least 108 people on death row have been exonerated because they were wrongly convicted.) Those who categorically oppose capital punishment for religious or moral reasons are fewer. Yet, most movements for social justice have had at their core devout religious people who recognize and act against injustice, even when they face overwhelming odds.

Don't Kill In Our Names may become a crucial resource for the religious movement against the death penalty, much like Helen Prejean's *Dead Man Walking*. It offers the stories of people who oppose the execution of killers of their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters. But more provocative is the fact that almost all of these family members underwent what in Christian terms is called a conversion. They not only oppose capital punishment. Most of them met the killer of their loved one and offered forgiveness. In almost each case presented by author Rachel King, these people have been converted to forgiveness as a way of life.

Maria Hines' brother Jerry was a Virginia state trooper who was murdered on a roadside. Hines, a Catholic, eventually contacted David Eaton, who was convicted of the murder. She befriended and forgave Eaton, helping him with his ultimately unsuccessful requests for clemency. "For when we have forgiven, we truly have no need to kill."

In December 1986, SueZann Bosler and her father Billy Bosler, a pastor, were attacked by James Campbell in their Church of the Brethren parsonage. Her father died and SueZann was stabbed repeatedly. Her recovery required months of rehabilitation, but she forgave Campbell and pleaded for his life.

In November 1986, Cathy O'Daniel was abducted and murdered by two boys who asked her to give them a ride. Cathy's mother, Linda White, gradually decided to work on prison reform and restorative justice, and she became a volunteer mediator. But 13 years passed before she and Cathy's daughter, Ami, visited Gary Brown, one of the murderers, in jail. When they did, they were able to offer forgiveness to a man whose life, Linda said, "was just a train wreck."

Few books can be both as despairing and inspiring as King's. The murders that are described are occasions of devastating trauma, sundering families and leaving pockets of emptiness in those caught in its wake. And the spiritual journeys of Hines, Bosler, White and the others in King's collection are long, torturous and wrenching.

Don't Kill In Our Names has enormous potential to advance the movement against the death penalty for several reasons. These testimonies shatter the illusion that families of murder victims all seek retribution. They also contradict the notion that family members have a right to retribution, a concept that distorts our justice system away from justice and toward revenge.

In America's religious communities, however, these stories will challenge believers to live out the ethics that they claim to hold. If American Christianity takes Jesus' message of peacemaking and loving the enemy only partly to heart, it is even more reluctant to obey his call to forgive.

Hines, Bosler, White and most of the others in King's book take Jesus' teaching about forgiveness seriously. SueZann Bosler said at James Campbell's third sentencing trial, "I forgive James Bernard Campbell for what he has done. I respect his life and value it here on earth. I believe in life. I've tried for ten and a half years to bring some good out of this. I'm doing it the best way I know how. I'm at peace with myself."

King's book, by focusing on conversion stories of people who offer forgiveness as a way to redeem adversity, can drive a wedge between a believer's notion that retribution is fair and his or her faith in a God who wants to redeem sinners. *Don't Kill In Our Names* should be used in church book-reading groups nationwide, where it is sure to anger, horrify, provoke, inspire and maybe even convert Christians into being followers of Jesus.

Questioning Faith

Reviewed by Rima Vesely

Questioning Faith:
Confessions of a Seminarian
A documentary by Macky Alston
www.riverfilms.net
Distributed by Frameline
www.frameline.org/distribution
56 minutes, $54 nonprofit rate

VIBRANT PERSONALITIES stand out in filmmaker Macky Alston's searching documentary about his own anguish in the aftermath of a friend's death. Alston, an ordination-track student at Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, articulates the emotionally charged journey that he embarked upon as he grappled with God's presence in the midst of suffering.

When Alston's friend Alan dies from AIDS, Alston begins to ask questions of the people around him about their experience of God, particularly in times of grief, fear and anger. The film begins with a journey to the U.S. South to visit Alan's family and an attempt to understand how they explained Alan's death. As he touches upon the context in which Alan — like Alston, a white, gay man — was raised, Alston becomes even more curious about his deceased friend's life, and spends a great deal of time in conversation with Alan's past lover.

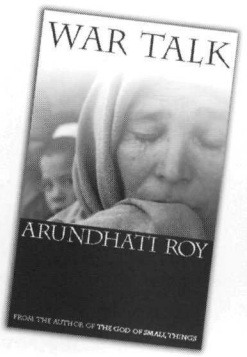
Alston's questions about Alan's faith as he entered the last stages of grappling with AIDS spur him to contemplate the magnitude of suffering and the depth of relationship that suffering individuals are able to have with God. His questions lead him to develop friendships with four women whose spiritual lives deepen in the face of overwhelming uncertainty and pain.

These four women are the heart of the story as they share their experiences with God in the contexts of their Muslim, Buddhist and Christian faiths. They are a mother and her teenage daughter, both of whom experience deep fear and deep faith; a college student whose father was suddenly killed; and a seminary pastor grappling with cancer. Alston spends time in their homes, takes long walks with them and visits them as they are confronted with illness, operations and death.

The film is inherently personal and relentless in its pursuit of experiences of faith. As a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, I was able to enter the film on a number of different levels. Having asked many of the same questions, having been challenged by the same powerful personalities at Union, and, like Alston, having been a hospital chaplain, I was struck by a sense of a parallel inner journey as I watched the documentary. Yet I also felt a great distance from the film in that many nuances that seem important to me were not explored. Most obviously, all of the women profiled by Alston were African-American or Asian, but this is never explicitly part of Alston's musings about their way of experiencing the world. And while the film begins with Alston's questions about how, as an ordained minister, he would maintain faith and shepherd his congregation in their painful experiences, the film never returns to this, and instead continues on its deeply personal path and shies away from the focus on vocation. Lastly, I felt disturbed by some of the cinematography, especially parts that focused on portraying the interviewed women at unattractive angles.

Thus, while I was able to identify with much of Alston's journey, I couldn't help but wonder how he grappled with the inherent privilege with which he moved in the world as a white, well-educated man. I had no sense that he was conscious of his social location. The film would have been much stronger had he articulated a self-awareness and a sensitivity to race, class and gender dynamics as he explored his inner life.

War Talk



Reviewed by Winnie Varghese

War Talk
by Arundhati Roy
Cambridge: South End Press, 2003

"The only thing worth globalizing is dissent."
— *Arundhati Roy*

ARUNDHATI ROY'S *WAR TALK* is a collection of essays and public talks from 2002 and 2003 on the topics of nationalisms and state-sponsored violence. Roy is the consummate public voice from the developing world to the west on the human impact of globalization. She continues her scathing critique of the politics of identity and fundamentalisms, while upholding the right of all people to access to the basic building blocks of life. Her topics range from the government of India's nuclear program to the "war on terror" response to September 11.

In contrast with our most famous social critics — people like Paul Moore and Howard Zinn, who claimed combat experience in World War II or a comparable imperial war project as their starting point in critiquing the Vietnam War and American foreign policy — Roy represents the voices of the many who have been impoverished and brutalized by the myth of American goodness.

Wars, she argues, "are never fought for altruistic reasons. They're usually fought for hegemony, for business."

In defense of our progressive patriotism we are inclined in this country to say, like Martin Luther King, Jr., that the founding ideals of this country are noble; we are patriots because we believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness — even if our foundational stories are of slavery and genocide. Roy reminds us of Gandhi's famous "wooden loaf," the non-violent Indian Independence Movement followed by the violence of parti-

tion, to argue that as long as we restrict ourselves to national identities we will not see and resist the brutality and violence done in our names.

Do even we believe that we are more generous abroad than we are at home? As we watch the pillaging of the cultural institutions of Iraq explained to us as the misguided but honest energies of freedom, Roy asks us if our government would be as generous if the poor of Harlem looted the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is absurd and provocative, and we are being asked to believe absurd truths because they are printed or pronounced in legitimate venues.

"Yours is not a great nation, but you can be a great people" was the shocker of a lead Roy used in response to Howard Zinn's defense of the ideals of American democracy at her May 13 talk at Riverside Church.

The message in our "free" media today — and there are not enough voices countering the fundamental flaw in the argument — is that we as Americans have more value than other human beings. Arundhati Roy, like Vandana Shiva and other writers from developing countries, reminds us of the human cost of our rhetoric. The wars we are fighting strengthen global capitalism, which by definition compromises democracy. Hundreds of thousands die at the hands of our corporations, our embargoes, our quest for stabilization. We are callous to the human cost of economic stability, which slightly improves our quality of life and massively increases profit for the largest transnational corporations.

As people of faith we are peculiarly positioned to understand the centrality of the value and dignity of all human beings. It is the essence of our faith. We are all, all of us, created in the image of God.

Many of us have joked in the last year and a half of peace protests that as much as we love "We Shall Overcome," particularly our parents' voices singing it, we need some new protest songs. I need some new language of justice. If you have been looking for new words of truth in these difficult times, language specific to 2003 that deals with the anti-globalization movements and responds to the nationalisms and identity-based language of justice of the last 30 years, please read *War Talk*.

Lighten Up! A Religious Response to Global Warming

Reviewed by Ethan Flad
Produced by the Regeneration Project
www.theregenerationproject.org
and GraceCom
www.gracecathedral.org
20 min., $15

OUR ROLE IN GLOBAL WARMING is a topic many people don't understand and would probably prefer to ignore. So how do you get the average churchgoer to pay attention to climate change? How about the Confession of Sin! A new video from the Regeneration Project, a Christian environmental organization, makes the unlikely choice of beginning with this short penitential prayer — words that many Episcopalians know by heart but may hardly ever consider. Over a backdrop of dark images of smoking power plants and polluting cars, voices acknowledge our complicity in hurting God's Creation.

In *Wizard of Oz*-like style, the video then dramatically changes from its somber, black-and-white start. Kids' faces and the beauty of the natural environment jump out in vibrant color, and narrator Sally Bingham — an Episcopal priest who works on ecological justice issues — turns into a humorous, Mr. Rogers-like "Come with me!" host. Driving her hybrid, energy-efficient car around northern California, Bingham points out environmental challenges and describes simple ways that we can make a difference. Although decreasing our energy use can provide financial savings, "the church has led social movements," she says, reminding us that foremost we have a moral obligation to work to save the Creation.

While SUV drivers may be turned off, this accessible resource has several strengths. We see this is a social justice issue, as Pacific Islands are in danger of disappearing and poor communities in the U.S. suffer disproportionate environmental degradation. Images remind us how the consumptive practices of the 1950s and '80s have led to energy crises in the '70s and modern era. Most of all, we see that we can actually do something, individually and through our collective religious voice.

Women of the Table

Reviewed by Ethan Flad
Produced by the Episcopal Church Women
22 min., $10

"ENGAGE GOD'S MISSION" is the theme of the 2003 General Convention. For countless years, women in the Episcopal Church having been doing just that, and a new video provides a myriad of examples of these powerful ministries.

Produced by the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) and narrated by the legendary Barbara Harris, the first female bishop in the Anglican Communion, one might expect this to be a political tool promoting the ordination of women. On the contrary, the resource profiles women from three very dif-

ferent dioceses: Lexington, Los Angeles and Fort Worth. Church observers know full well that the latter diocese still does not permit the ordination of women. Rather than challenging this situation, the video lets the stories of no less than a dozen inspiring women speak for themselves. "For both ordained and lay women, ministry is to other work as gardening is to yard work: What defines it is the motive behind it," Harris comments.

The video's strength is its diversity of faces and voices, and the captivating manner in which they are interspersed. Stories of ministry in central Los Angeles run seamlessly with work in West Africa; work with children in a camp setting flows with hospital chaplaincy, the Altar Guild, labor organizing and work in the LGBT community. "Every single day at every single level there is something you can do," offers Alice Callahan of L.A. This new resource will be motivation for people throughout the church — both women and men — to take up that challenge.

Pandemic: Facing AIDS

Reviewed by Ethan Flad
Directed by Rory Kennedy; Produced by Moxie Firecracker Films
www.pandemicfacingaids.org
42 min.

THE RAPID GROWTH OF HIV/AIDS around the world is finally getting people's attention — but some fear it may be too late. If current infection rates continue, in three years the country of India alone will have 37 million people living with HIV/AIDS. The swift spread of the pandemic in Asia, Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa combined with the ongoing stigma attached to the disease around the world creates a tragic scenario.

All is not lost. In the Episcopal Church, a new coalition of congregations and Episcopal Relief and Development (www.er-d.org) are developing a strategic plan to address AIDS in Africa in partnership with Anglicans on that hard-hit continent. New resources are being produced to educate people about creative initiatives like the Alliance of Episcopal Parishes/ERD campaign. One example is *State of Denial* (www.stateofdenial.org), a PBS/POV film on the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on South Africa.

HBO, similarly, is sponsoring "Pandemic: Facing AIDS," a collection of five compelling stories from different parts of the world: India, Uganda, Russia, Brazil and Thailand. The film is also being distributed with a large educational package of curricula to congregations and communities nationwide. Narrated by musician Elton John, the stories address sensitive topics — sex workers, drug addicts, AIDS orphans and how people with HIV are being ostracized from their families and communities.

Despite the immense problems, the film still manages to find hope: young people leading educational campaigns among their peers; families who move from brokenness toward reconciliation; and the prospect of distributing inexpensive drugs that can help people combat the virus. With a worldwide church suffering from the pandemic (see Jan/Feb 2003 issue of *TW*), this is a valuable resource to help raise consciousness and provoke our churches to needed action. ●

An anti-poverty creed from South Africa

by Edwin Arrison

We believe in God who created human beings to live life in all its fullness.
We believe that all people have the breath of God in them
And therefore have a God-given dignity that must be respected and affirmed.
We believe that people living in poverty are a denial of who God is.

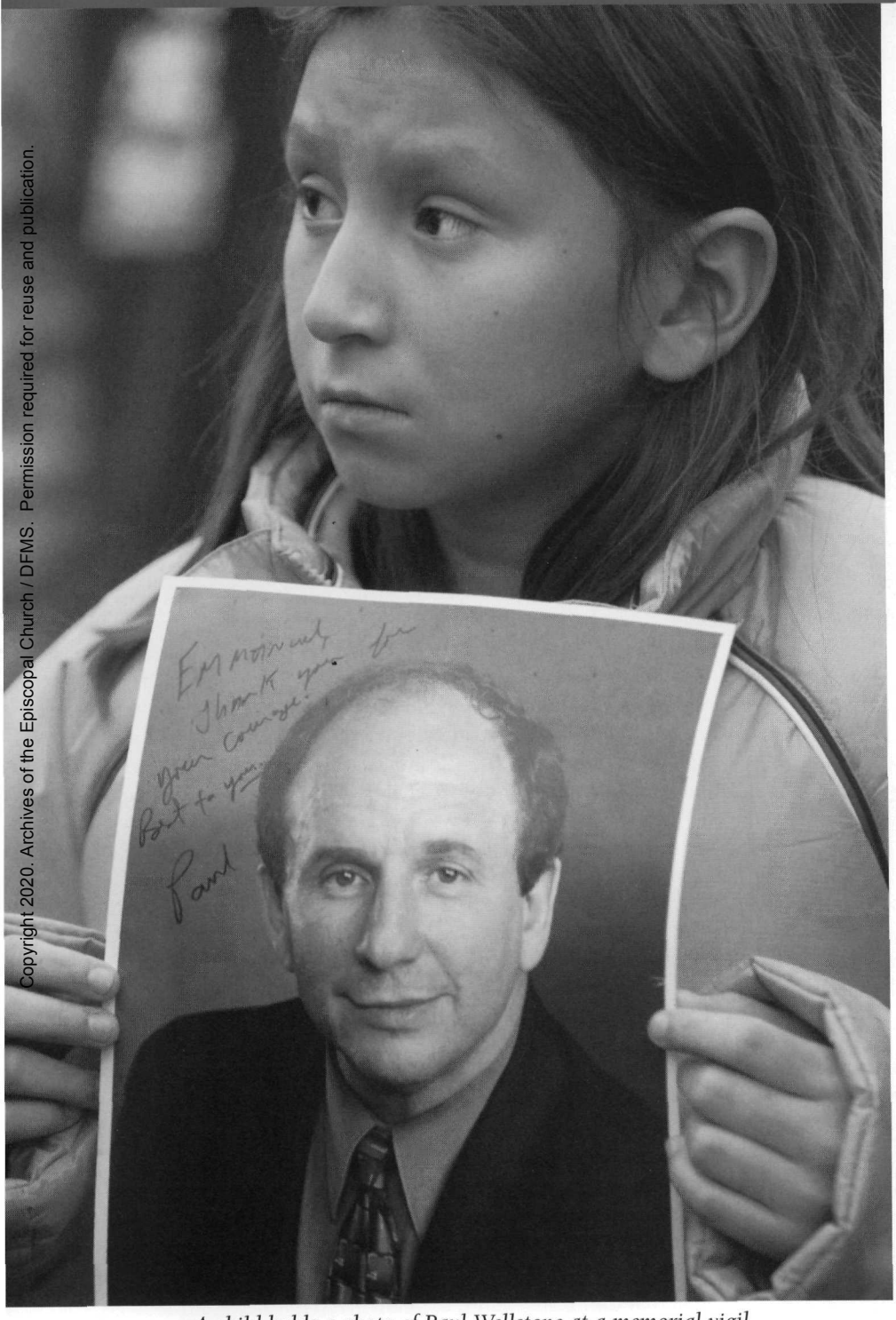
We believe in Jesus who put the poor, the children, the women and the marginalized at the center of his concern and compassion, thereby redeeming them from the crosses they face each day.
We believe that Jesus preached a Gospel of good news to the poor
And that when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit those in prison
We are doing it unto Jesus.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who empowers us to believe that poverty will be overcome.
We believe in the Spirit of *ubuntu*, which is a spirit of sharing and compassion.

We believe that the Church is the hands, feet, ears and eyes of Jesus
And that even as a wounded Body we are called to bring healing and wholeness to God's wounded and broken world.
We believe that poverty is the greatest challenge towards us becoming one with Christ and one with each other.

We believe in the vision of the kingdom of God where there is no distinction between people, and where we shall all be one in Christ.
We believe in working for this kingdom now, and living that kingdom in embryo. Now.

MINNESOTA CONSENSUS?

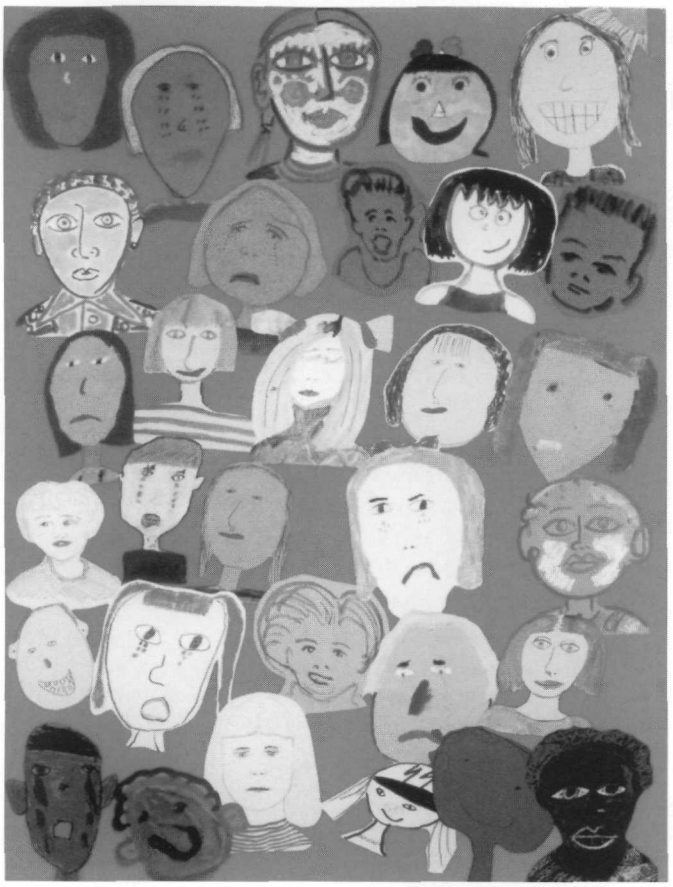


A child holds a photo of Paul Wellstone at a memorial vigil.

How a state moved away from spending for justice

by Wy Spano

FOR PERSONS INTERESTED in social justice issues, like the readers of *The Witness*, the decision three years ago by the Episcopal Church to hold its 74th General Convention in Minnesota must have seemed ordained, even blessed. Granted, at the time Minnesota had an odd, bombastic, off-the-wall governor, a former wrestler named Jesse Ventura; but it also had the most liberal member of the U. S. Senate, Paul Wellstone. And it had a deserved reputation for an excellent quality of life. *State Rankings 2003* shows Minnesota ranking number one in voting, number one in percent of women in the labor market, number three in the per capita state appropriations for the arts, number four in SAT scores, number four in the rate of home ownership, seventh in the rate of high-school graduations. It ranked 49th in poverty and 49th in the percentage of its population in jail; it was 47th in the percentage of the state's population not covered by health insurance, 50th in age-adjusted death rate due to diseases of the heart, 46th in the rate of births to unmar-



The Children's Faces Project

Artist Nell Hillsley of Minneapolis, Minn., created The Children's Faces Project as a way to provoke reflection and action on the growing problem of homelessness. Professional artists worked with children from 14 different churches and schools to paint 1500 portraits of children's faces to represent homeless children in their community. Mounted on foam board, the Children's Faces have hung at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, the Minnesota State Capitol, various metro-area churches, and at community celebrations, conferences and gatherings.

"The children's faces represent only a portion of the 3000 homeless children living in emergency shelters or transitional housing on any given night in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area," Hillsley says. "The average age of these children is 6. A parent — often a single mother — who holds down a job accompanies most of these homeless children. Lack of affordable housing has created a new class of working homeless families."

For guidelines on replicating this community art project, contact St. Mark's Cathedral at 612-870-7800.

ried women as a percentage of all births. (All these rankings are based on data from 2001, sometimes even from 2000. There's always a considerable data-gathering lag when state-to-state comparisons are involved.)

Minnesota had something else to go along with these excellent quality of life rankings: high taxes and a high rate of spending. In 2000 Minnesota ranked fifth in the nation in terms of per capita state and local taxes collected, fourth in per capita state and local expenditures. Minnesota also has a good record in terms of non-governmental funding of social and religious services: It's seventh in the nation in the United Way's Caring Index.

There exists in every state in the U.S. a debate between those who think governmental spending can bring desired social outcomes and those who think that, generally, government spending is wasted. In Minnesota, the spending-can-do-good group was in the ascendancy. Adherents of this philosophy thought they had good proof and, in 2000, there still appeared to be a Minnesota political consensus — an agreement that good social outcomes were important and that those outcomes could be purchased, or at least encouraged, through adequate spending. Minnesota was a high tax/high service state and (relatively) proud of it.

Social programs slashed

Now, three years later, *The Witness* readers and all Anglicans interested in progressive politics have a right to feel like the victims of a gigantic bait and switch. The Minnesota you thought you were coming to back in 2000 has changed dramatically. Something on the order of 20 percent of the state's spending on social services was cut during the state's last legislative session, which ended a few days after Memorial Day, at the end of a two-week special session. Programs to provide at-home services to seniors and shut-ins were slashed 27 percent. Middle income people saw $1000 to $1500 monthly increases in what they were expected to pay for early childhood care. About 15,000 people have lost or will soon lose their government jobs, with many more layoffs occurring in the nonprofit and even business sectors because of the welter of program eliminations. Domestic partner benefits, negotiated for state employees by their unions, were removed by the Legislature. The state's sheriffs were required, much to their dismay, to issue gun permits to virtually anyone who asks for them, which will result, officials estimate, in a nine-fold increase in the number of legal concealed weapons in the next two years, to about 90,000. Some political leaders began discussing the previously un-discussable in Minnesota, bringing back the death penalty after nearly a 100-year absence.

Despite all of this bad news on the social justice front, Minnesota still hasn't caught up to the rest of the country. It remains possible for Minnesotans to argue about, for example, sliding fee child care and the income level at which Minnesota families ought to pay 100 percent of the costs. There are states in this union where the very idea that the "state" ought to be involved in early childhood educa-

tion is anathema. Minnesota is still not one of those states.

A political culture based on the common good

Nonetheless, Minnesota has changed and become, at least temporarily, more like the rest of the country. Daniel Elazar, the now-deceased political scientist who created the widely studied and restudied idea of differing state-level political cultures, found Minnesota to be the purest form of what he called a "moralistic" culture, i.e. one in which the real purpose of politics was providing for the common good, as opposed to those states where the purpose of politics seemed to be the provision of individual or small-group benefits for those favored by the system. This cultural orientation led to the widely accepted tenet in Minnesota politics that government could be a positive force in people's lives.

Early in its history, Minnesota provided extensive community services to its citizens, usually through local governments. To this day the state has the most active local governments in the nation, providing a bewildering array of services to citizenry simply because the citizens needed and wanted the services and, when they were instituted, no one save the local municipality was willing to provide them or able to provide them at an affordable cost.

Minnesota's governmental activism moved to the state level in the early 1970s when a Democratic governor supported and passed the proposal of good-government Republicans who had first suggested that education spending ought not to be dependent on the property tax wealth of the various school districts. The "Minnesota Miracle" became law after a long special session in 1971. It equalized education spending through the use of state-level revenues instead of just the property tax. Minnesota was one of only two states in the nation which were able to achieve education-related equalization without court intervention.

The idea of equal school opportunity soon crept into other local government services and state support for local governments in property-poor areas became a staple of the state's communal approach to politics. There were other staples of this approach:

■ Minnesota had high benefits for those receiving various forms of public assistance. Generally the rhetoric surrounding "the welfare issue," at least at the state Capitol and in the media, focused more on what recipients needed to survive than on how the state could cut costs.

Early in its history, Minnesota provided extensive community services to its citizens, usually through local governments. To this day the state has the most active local governments in the nation.

■ The idea of privatizing public services rarely receives much support in Minnesota. For example, there are no toll roads in the state. The idea of paying as one goes on a public highway seems un-American to the average Minnesotan.

■ For the most part, Minnesota has been committed to a progressive tax system. Food and clothing are exempt from sales tax, on the theory that poorer people, who spend greater percentages of their total incomes on food and clothing, can't afford it. The income tax rate goes up with income level. Until recently, even the property tax was progressive. The rate for more affluent homes was higher than the rate for lower-valued homes.

There was, in short, what some called a "Minnesota Consensus." It was based on the belief that an active and expansive role for government eventually led to better social and economic outcomes. Not only did Minnesota kids generally score better on national tests than the kids from other states, Minnesotans enjoyed higher income and the state had higher population growth than most other states, despite being in the Midwestern "rust belt." Minnesota ranked fourth in median household income in 2001, with a level 12 percent above the next Midwestern state, Illinois, which was in 14th place.

Minnesota, it seemed, had a better economy and less social pathology not in spite of its high taxes and high spending but because of them. There was a relationship between governmental activism and quality of life. Much of the governmental activism was actually carried out by non-government employees, from nonprofits and faith-based groups, using government money — sometimes direct grants, more commonly, contracts with the state or counties to provide specific services.

If things were going so well, if high taxes and lots of services left Minnesota with a superior quality of life and a superior economy, why change things? Why cut taxes and services?

Republicans pledge no new taxes

Before answering that question Minnesota-specifically, it's important to note that Minnesota was not alone facing a 2003 budget crisis. The National Conference of State Legislatures estimated that every state faced a budget shortfall in 2003; as of late April the total amount was calculated at about $53.5 billion. Minnesota had, however, set itself up for a harder fall than most other states. Through the period of rapidly increasing state revenues, driven by the surge in capital gains taxes, Minnesota slashed taxes while keeping services funded with the boom money. From 1997 to 2001 Minnesota cut taxes every year. In three of those five years, Minnesota cut taxes more than any other state. When the boom stopped, when the stock market turned down and capital gains, which brought in lots of extra money, suddenly turned into capital losses, which were

Faith communities address "shabby public stewardship"

by Brian A. Rusche

The people of Minnesota are now confronting the fact that our state's political makeup has changed and our civic engine is sputtering. Minnesota may still lead the nation in many quality-of-life indicators, but in many ways the quality of life here is a dividend of past investment, departed leadership, and a former willingness to shoulder relatively high taxes. Once a national model of state governance, Minnesota is stepping back from its commitment to education, child care, health care, racial justice, affordable housing and care for the environment.

Yet I am optimistic that Minnesota will recover a healthy civic climate and once again pursue justice-oriented policies. Being good citizens and living in a good state are at the core of our identity. For many reasons, the faith community will have a role to play in reawakening that identity.

First, Minnesota traditions, character and values run deep. Minnesota remains a highly "churched" state with about 62 percent of its population claiming religious affiliation. Religious congregations and scores of ecumenical agencies are vital touchstones for a people that always responds generously and effectively when people are hurting. When the consequences of shabby public stewardship are felt, Minnesotans will demand reform.

Second, leaders in faith communities are talking openly about what isn't working and building new strategies. We now know it is not sufficient for church bodies to pass resolutions nor for bishops to issue pastoral letters on pressing social issues. Key leaders are now committed to building a leadership base within congregations and then linking them to leaders from other sectors to knit together a strong political base that can push a policy agenda within the next five years. This cross-sector base is called the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (www.activecitizen.org).

"We are learning how to work at a systemic level as church leaders," says Neysa Ellgren, rector of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Plymouth, Minn., and one of the leaders of Active Citizenship. "We have many public leaders in my congregation already — educators, public safety officials, judges. Now we are developing the language, resources, leadership and vision to help them connect what they do in the world with action for God and the common good — in other words, how to live out our church's mission of 'manifesting Christ's love to the world.' " Ellgren, along with a dozen others, is leading the "Renewing the Public Church" effort fostered by the Minnesota Council of Churches and is organizing faith communities to participate in the Active Citizenship table.

Third, people are clearly agitated. Each year the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC) in Minnesota convenes a legislative briefing

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then used to offset some taxes on ordinary income, Minnesota's pickle was bigger and more sour than nearly any other state's. An indication of Minnesota's difficulty: In the tax bill passed in late May 2003, the federal government committed $20 billion to help the states solve their $53.5 billion deficits. In other words, the federal government gave the states a sum equal to 37.4 percent of the collective state deficit. Minnesota, with its $4.2 billion shortfall, received $362 million of that largesse, or 8.6 percent of its deficit. Minnesota's hole was clearly deeper and wider than the rest.

For many Minnesotans, the answer to the budget deficit was clear. It would require a combination of spending cuts, tax increases and various accounting shifts. That isn't how it worked out, however. The new Republican governor and a number of Republican legislators signed a pledge that

Minneapolis soup kitchen

Minnesota would solve its budget deficit without raising state-level taxes. Despite the fact that the pledge was made long before the full extent of Minnesota's budget deficit was known, the governor stuck to it and permitted no increase in state-level taxes. Spending cuts, fee increases and accounting shifts were the only means used to balance the '03–'04 biennial budget. Tax cuts in boom times had stemmed the money flow during more difficult times — stemmed it to the point that choosing not to raise state-level taxes meant very large cuts had to be made. Conservatives who disagreed with the Minnesota consensus were suddenly able to dramatically reduce the size of government in the state. The Minnesota high tax/high spending consensus — at least temporarily — was undone.

"Charity is no substitute for justice withheld"

The new, lower tax/lower service consensus (if, indeed, it

exists) did not happen without opposition. Of special note was the activity of the state's nonprofit and religious sectors. Minnesota's Joint Religious Legislative Conference (the nation's first interfaith social justice state lobbying group) had more than 900 people at their February 2003 Day on the Hill. [See sidebar, p. 20.] JRLC's attitude about slashing government spending was summed up in its brochure promoting the day: "As the new governor calls religious communities to serve more and more of the social safety net, we must remember the ancient wisdom of Augustine of Hippo: 'Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.' " The Minnesota Council of Churches, one of the four constituent groups comprising JRLC (together with the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and the American Muslim Council–Minnesota Chapter) issued a statement in early May, when the fight over taxes and services was growing more intense, calling the no-new-taxes plan of Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty "extreme" and reminding Minnesotans of the biblical call for social justice and civic stewardship. (The Episcopal Church, Diocese of Minnesota, is a member of the Minnesota Council of Churches.)

Why did this move away from paying for justice happen in Minnesota?

1. The 2002 election in the state was catastrophic for Democrats, who generally tend to favor the Minnesota high tax/high spending consensus more than Republicans. The death of Senator Paul Wellstone in October 2002 demoralized many Democrats. And his memorial service, viewed as too partisan by some, gave those on the right, especially those on talk radio, hours of anti-Democratic fodder. Democrats in Minnesota had been on their way to doing quite well in the 2002 election. They did badly, losing the Wellstone Senate seat, losing the governorship, and losing the House of Representatives by an 82–52 margin. Democrats maintained a slim lead in the state Senate, 35–32. The results of the election meant that a majority of Minnesota's state-level policy-makers didn't agree with the high tax/high service consensus of just a few years ago.

2. Minnesota's Republican Party had become as conservative as many Republican parties in other parts of the country. Favoring a high tax/high service consensus just wasn't possible for most active Minnesota Republicans. (The fact that this was a change in Minnesota's Republican philosophy was highlighted by the words of four former governors, three of them Republican, who criticized the current governor, Tim Pawlenty, for abandoning the high tax/high service Minnesota consensus. The last five finance commissioners, two serving in Republican administrations, two in Democratic and one in an Independence Party period, all offered similar criticisms. So did prominent state economists, including a vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank located in Minneapolis.)

For many Minnesotans, the answer to the budget deficit was clear. It would require a combination of spending cuts, tax increases and various accounting shifts.

3. In the contest for the gubernatorial endorsement by the Republican Party, now-governor Tim Pawlenty was seen as more moderate than businessman Brian Sullivan. Pawlenty had to appeal to the right to get the governor's job, since convention delegates for both major parties are notoriously more conservative or liberal than the public at large. The method which Pawlenty used to look conservative was a pledge not to raise taxes. The pledge came from a new interest group that dominated the election and the budget-setting period. Called the Taxpayers League, the group was comprised of a number of very conservative and wealthy Republicans who had previously become active in setting the direction of the Republican Party through a political action committee they called the Freedom Club. The Taxpayers League was a new phenomenon in Minnesota politics. It asked all candidates to sign no-tax-increase pledges. The group followed up the campaign period with aggressive advertising during the legislative session, keeping up pressure so that none of their pledgers would think about returning to the Minnesota consensus of the past.

4. Minnesota's political rhetoric has changed, looking more and more like national political rhetoric. On the national scene, it is not seen as particularly surprising that a war was conducted over weapons of mass destruction when it must have been evident to the administration that these weapons didn't actually exist or at least didn't exist in anything like the volume that was implied. The use of indirection and subterfuge are apparently accepted in the service of some greater good, however defined. An analogous process happened during Minnesota's budget debate. Governor Pawlenty kept assuring Minnesotans that the budget he had proposed was larger than the budget passed two years ago, even though huge cuts in hundreds of programs had to be enacted to make the budget balance. Technically, the governor's statement was accurate. The state budget he proposed for 2004–2005 was slightly larger than the one passed for 2002–2003. The '04–'05 budget, however, had more items in it, items which local governments used to pay for, so the comparison was actually not true. There were also considerably more people in need of the various programs the state provides, as always happens when a state's population grows and it is in a bad economic time. As described earlier, Minnesota had a budget deficit because of its series of large tax cuts passed during

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A JRLC interfaith prayer vigil was held outside the Minnesota House chamber April 16 to protest budget cuts.

and lobby day. For the last five years attendance hovered around 450. This year 1,000 pastors and lay leaders showed up representing 62 out of 67 state senate districts. In addition, the Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim leaders of JRLC helped lead over 35 regional "budget blitz" meetings, published letters and editorials in the state's leading newspapers, and held a prayer service that received statewide television coverage.

Fourth, faith communities in Minnesota are rediscovering the meaning of "demonstration." This means less emphasis on placards and chanting and more emphasis on the Gandhian idea of "being the change." Faith communities see themselves as proving-grounds for new policy initiatives. We are demonstrating within our institutions and in partnership with other sectors that fair employment practices, energy conservation, violence and abuse prevention, community supported agriculture, supportive housing development and child care operations all make sense and build stronger communities. These demonstrations give us the credibility, standing and power to shape future public policies.

It is still too early to know who the next Harold Stassen or Hubert Humphrey or Paul Wellstone might be, but such leaders are always those who crystallize new imaginations and ride the waves of change. Active citizens are intentionally laying the groundwork to bring about Minnesota's next wave of progressive politics. Religious activists, especially those in congregations, are asking the right questions and implementing the deep organizing that will help push the next swing of the political pendulum. Faith communities are stirring people's civic imagination and offering a faithful vision of justice, prosperity and peaceful habitation.

We must come up with new designs and that takes courage — but we know God will not leave us alone to fail. So if we organize for justice, demonstrate the changes that we feel God calls us to make, and witness our work and our agenda to the world, then our efforts will mean less poverty, more harmony, prosperous communities and something closer to *shalom* for all of our residents.

[More information on JRLC can be found at www.jrlc.org.]

boom times. The governor, however, kept assuring everyone that Minnesota had a "spending problem not a taxing problem."

5. Minnesota was a bit late catching on to the intellectualization and sanctification of conservative thought, but the state did eventually catch on. The Center of the American Experiment, a highly successful conservative think tank, was founded in 1991 in Minnesota and has had enormous influence on Republican policy-makers in the state. More importantly, the Center has successfully cast conservative ideas as mainstream and middle of the road, providing room for even more conservative groups, like the Taxpayers League, to push Minnesota's political consensus rightward.

Confronting conservative dominance

What can progressives do about the conservative dominance in Minnesota and elsewhere in the nation?

In keeping with the five points above, progressives might wish to consider:

1. Don't be afraid to work in elections. Who you elect matters a lot.

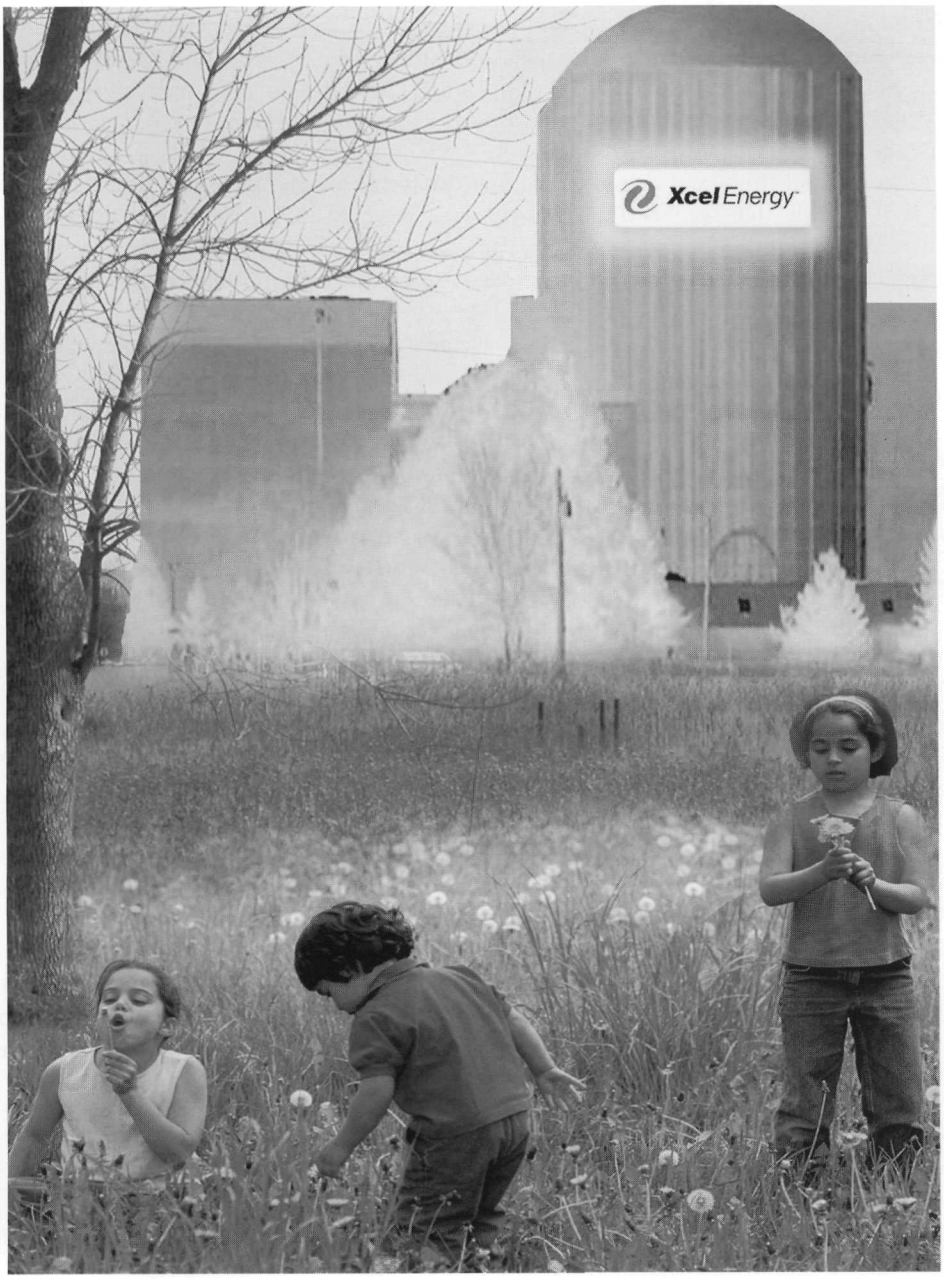
2. Don't be afraid to work on political party activity, in whatever party you choose. The more people active in politics whose orientation is social justice, the better our system will be.

3. Don't be afraid to support or, if necessary, organize an interest group that advocates for poor, disadvantaged or discriminated-against persons. American democracy is based on interest group representation. If you care about folks who have little representation, you'll need to help them achieve bargaining power.

4. As activists or active observers, make sure that the words of your candidate and of your candidate's opponent are accurate. It's not that hard to figure out the difference between truth and falsehood, and the end does not justify the means, even if the great philosopher Machiavelli seems to suggest it does.

5. Help organize a liberal think tank. Liberals have been lazily allowing conservatives to suggest there is no intellectual vigor in liberal thought. The self-evident truths of liberal thinking need to be constantly reinforced; the amoral outcomes of conservative thought need to be constantly exposed, especially by those animated by a sense of the religiously inspired seeking of social justice. ●

[For more ways to get involved, contact The Interfaith Alliance (www.interfaithalliance.org), People for the American Way (www.pfaw.org) or The episcopal public policy network (www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn/).]



Catherine Whipple, *The Circle*

Nuclear waste on sacred ground: the Prairie Island controversy

by Marianne Arbogast

A SMALL DAKOTA INDIAN community was at the heart of one of the most contentious issues in the Minnesota state legislature this spring. The Mdewakanton ("those who were born of the waters") tribe shares Prairie Island — a small island southeast of the Twin Cities — with a double nuclear power plant operated by Xcel Energy Corporation (formerly Northern States Power, or NSP), which opened the plant in 1973 less than half a mile from their homes. Xcel, which has stored nuclear waste in above-ground dry casks on the island since 1995, announced last year that it needs additional storage space for the radioactive spent fuel. Without permission for expanded storage, Xcel said, it would be forced to shut down in 2007 — six to seven years before its current licenses expire.

For the Mdewakanton, Xcel's request represented a betrayal of promises by both Xcel and the federal government.

For the environmental community, it represented the danger of reversal of state policy favoring a gradual transition to renewable energy.

And for advocates of justice for native communities, it represented one more instance of a native group bearing the brunt of U.S. energy policy.

Living in the shadow of a nuclear plant

The plant's siting on Prairie Island was itself a betrayal, many believe.

The federal government "ignored its trust responsibility to act in the best interest of the tribe" by allowing the plant to be built there, says Jake Reint, a spokesperson for the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC). "At first they were led to believe that it was perhaps a steam-generating plant and that it would provide jobs for them and that it would be a good thing. Well, quickly it turned into something they weren't sure of, something that was clearly sited there because of who they were, because they didn't have the resources that would have allowed them a voice in the process."

For 30 years Prairie Island residents have lived, physically and psychologically, under the shadow of the nuclear plant, says Audrey Bennett, president of the Prairie Island Tribal Council.

"You know how, after Sept. 11, there was this heightened alert and this code orange? Well, imagine that a thousand times more. That's how the people of Prairie Island have lived their lives for the last 30 years — always on the alert. You know, any noise we hear over there, it's like, oh, I hope it doesn't blow. We prayed every day about it."

Prairie Island has traditionally been considered a sacred place, says Eric Buffalohead, an anthropologist at Augsburg College in Minneapolis who is a member of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma and a board member of Minnesotans for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ME3), an independent nonprofit.

"It has spiritual significance to the Dakota that goes back probably as long as they've been in Minnesota. In 1862, when the Dakota were removed, people came back and hid out and camped at Prairie Island even with a threat to their lives, for years and years, until Congress finally set aside the present acreage they have."

Bennett — who says that "the whole state of Minnesota is sacred to the Dakota people" — describes changes the tribe has witnessed.

"We have noticed that a lot of our traditional medicines are weaker. The food we ate is no longer there. The people will not eat anything that comes out of the river anymore, and the wild deer and the muskrats and the beavers that we grew up on aren't there anymore."

Cancer rates seem to have increased.

"There has been a relative who has died of some form of cancer every year, every other year," Bennett says. "Is it eating the food that we plant in the soil there and drinking the water? Is it the air that we breathe every day? We're having a difficult time proving it, but we're in a process of trying to start some type of baseline studies."

"There are elders who say they were born and raised down there, our dead are buried there, and they would never leave Prairie Island no matter what."

For many years, the community felt that its concerns about the plant — from health problems to the difficulty of evacuating an island with only one road leading on and off — were overlooked. In the early 1990s, when NSP sought initial approval for dry-cask storage of the nuclear waste on Prairie Island, the tribe worked with environmental groups to fight the proposal. In 1994, the state of Minnesota and NSP reached an agreement that authorized the company to store waste on the island, but limited the number of casks to 17. The tribe was given legal authority to enforce this agreement. At the time, NSP's president promised never to ask the legislature for more storage space. As part of the deal, NSP was required to contribute to a fund to explore renewable energy alternatives. No money was allocated to address the concerns of the people living on the island.

"The environmental community received considerable payments for renewable development on the order of $500,000 per cask per year — I think it's currently generating something like $8.5 million a year," Reint says. "The tribe's health and safety needs were completely ignored."

A national waste storage site?

In recent years, PIIC leaders have worked to pressure the federal government to honor its commitment to open a national waste storage site — a controversial plan, given the hazards of transporting radioactive material and the objections of others on whose land the waste would be stored. Plans for national storage at Yucca Mountain in Nevada have drawn opposition from members of the Western Shoshone tribe there.

"They're just pitting one tribal group against another tribal group," Buffalohead says. "Quite frankly, I don't think Yucca Mountain will ever happen. There's going to be a huge backlash if they try to send that stuff through communities. And these casks that they have for storage are not suited for transportation. They'd have to take the stuff out of the old casks and put it in new casks, which some environmentalists say could lead to an accident."

Moreover, even if the Yucca Mountain site is opened, it is uncertain whether it would ever take waste from Prairie Island, according to J. Drake Hamilton, science policy director for ME3.

"The federal Department of Energy has now said that the storage site will be full by 2009," Hamilton says. "There is more nuclear waste that exists now in this country than could ever be stored at Yucca Mountain. If you can't be assured that it's going to move out, then you should stop producing it."

Bennett says that nuclear material has been transported for many years without incident, and emphasizes that her tribe is

"the only community in the U.S. that lives 600 yards away from a nuclear reactor. We respect other tribes' sovereignty — and just like other countries, we're not always going to agree. But in my mind, what's right for my people is not to have it sitting next to us."

Negotiating for land and safety

Given the uncertainties around a national storage site and the unfeasibility of ending reliance on nuclear power by 2007, the tribal council negotiated a deal with Xcel that allows the company to store additional nuclear waste on Prairie Island in exchange for compensations that address the tribe's longstanding concerns. The multimillion-dollar agreement was ratified by the tribe in late April, clearing the way for state legislative action.

"Probably the biggest component of the agreement is that it provides compensation to acquire and develop new land for tribal members who wish to live a safer distance from the plant," Reint says. "It will also help with emergency management procedures on an ongoing basis, which includes the casino located on the reservation and several hundred tribal members who live there. It also includes research looking into any possible links between the power plants, the nuclear waste storage site, power lines and health issues that exist on the island."

Many younger members of the tribe wish to move, Bennett says.

"There are elders who say they were born and raised down there, our dead are buried there, and they would never leave Prairie Island no matter what," Bennett says. "Then you've got the 20-somethings, the 30-somethings who — knowing all that they know now — would like the opportunity to relocate to an area that's farther away from the plant and still have that sense of community."

The agreement was bittersweet, Bennett acknowledges.

"You know negotiations are give and take — this is the best I could do for the people of Prairie Island for now," she says. "Some kind of compensation is better than none, and the tribe has received nothing all these years. At least that's money that we can put away for the future."

"Even if the plant were to close tomorrow, there still is all this nuclear waste," Reint points out. "And politically, either they get nothing, or they get something with the caveat of keeping the plants going the next 10 years, at least. In a perfect world, we would never have to worry about nuclear waste again. This makes a bad situation more manageable."

As part of the deal, the tribe agreed to remain silent on the prospect of relicensing until such time as Xcel might request it.

Potential for renewable energy

The 1994 legislation that authorized dry-cask storage on Prairie Island also mandated gradual decreased reliance on nuclear power, Hamilton says.

"It's actually the official policy of the state of Minnesota that we're going to transition away from nuclear power," she says. "We know it's not going to happen overnight and we're not advocating shutting plants down until there are viable substitutes. But I don't think we need to know 100 percent how we're going to get completely nuclear-free. We need to say, what is our next big energy decision? And then we need to say, are we making the cleanest possible decision for future generations?"

Hamilton says that Minnesota, like the country as a whole, gets about 20 percent of its power from nuclear energy.

"What you're looking at is eventually replacing long-term about 20 percent of the power. Studies done by our federal Department of Energy have said that we could easily, at low cost, get to 20 percent renewable energy in about 20 years."

Hamilton says that for 10 years, ME3 has been on record supporting compensation for the Mdewakanton. They have also been working with the Labor Institute, a national think tank on labor issues, to help address workers' concerns.

"If you look at labor statistics for who's working in nuclear power plants, the number of employees is declining, because power plants are becoming more mechanized," she says. " We are very interested in people who have good labor jobs in power plants and finding ways to help them make a transition to a job at the same or higher level of pay."

Hamilton expresses skepticism about the timing of Xcel's appeal for authorization of more storage casks.

"I think Xcel looked at the politics of the election and they thought, boy, we can get whatever we want from this particular legislature and governor."

Legislative gains and losses

Along with increased storage capacity, one of the things Xcel wanted — and achieved — was the transfer of authority over nuclear waste regulation from the state legislature to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

"I think Xcel views that as a direct path for relicensing of the three nuclear reactors in Minnesota — the two at Prairie Island and the one in Monticello," said Michael Noble, executive director of ME3. "Minnesota was the only state in the union that had state legislative authority over the operation of nuclear power plants. Our opponents used that as evidence that Minnesota was kind of far-out, but I think it's a good thing for the citizens of the state to have accountability over something as risky as nuclear power."

After initially pushing for adherence to the 17-cask storage limit, ME3 conceded that the plants could run to the end of their licenses, and focused on maintaining legislative authority.

Noble considers the transfer of control to the PUC the worst feature of the bill that was finally passed during a special session of the Minnesota legislature, after a series of earlier versions fell by the wayside. The other regrettable provision, he says, simplifies the regulatory process for a coal gasification plant in northern Minnesota.

But Noble says the bill was not all bad news.

"There were several good provisions in the bill," he says. "Number one, all the electric companies in Minnesota are supposed to add 10 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2015 — and Xcel is required to. Xcel is about half the electricity in the state, about 1100 megawatts. That's about a $1 bil-

lion investment in renewable energy — and primarily windpower — in Minnesota.

"Another good thing is a special program to provide financial incentives for farmers and small rural businesses to own their own wind turbines. So it's not just big national and international wind developers that will develop windpower in Minnesota."

Beyond that, Xcel will double its contribution to a renewable development fund, which will be administered by a separate nonprofit. Also, there is funding for a think tank at the University of Minnesota to work on producing hydrogen from renewable sources.

Noble was encouraged by a speech given by Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty during the legislative debate, which he describes as "pro-environment, pro-renewable-energy, pro-efficiency." Pawlenty also spoke out in favor of retaining the legislature's authority over nuclear power plants.

"I was very disappointed that the governor accepted a bill that did not meet what he called his minimum expectations," Noble says. "But in fairness to him, he helped us make a very, very bad bill much better. So in that I see a seed for bi-partisan partnership on improving our state's energy future."

Environmental stewardship

Wanda Copeland, rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Elk River, Minn., and a member of the Diocese of Minnesota's Environmental Stewardship Commission, says that while the church did not take a specific stand with regard to the Prairie Island legislation, the Commission has been working to raise awareness of the need for clean energy alternatives.

"We've tried to say, let's get churches and church members on board with at least proclaiming that, as people of faith, we feel like there needs to be more green power in the mix. It seems like that should be a non-issue, but it is a pretty big task. I was at a congregation two or three weeks ago, and out of maybe 400 or 500 members I got three or four people who said, this is great. And out of that, I got maybe two who will sign up for green energy. So we are not making huge strides."

Copeland is sympathetic to the Prairie Island Indian Community's predicament.

"The agreement with Xcel Energy is not only to store more nuclear casks on that site, but to allow them to buy land so that they don't have to live next to the nuclear power plant. How could you in good conscience want to turn down an offer like that?"

Paying the price for energy

The Mdewakanton will continue to reap the consequences of past energy choices, despite the minimal compensation they will now receive.

"It's really probably a no-win situation for the Dakota people," Buffalohead says. "You have a site that has spiritual significance that, in my opinion, is destroyed. You build a nuclear power plant there, you've wrecked it — you can't clean that mess up.

"It's just the latest example of the native community paying the price for energy. Nobody wants a nuclear plant by them, so they tend to end up in places where reservations are. Look at the damming of rivers in this country for hydro-electric power. If you look at all those dams on the Missouri River, they have had a huge impact on the flooding of Indian reservations. It's the same thing in the Pacific Northwest, in Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, the James Bay project, the Cree in Manitoba."

Buffalohead is on the Advisory Committee of Just Energy, a project of ME3 which works to raise awareness of the problems caused by Manitoba Hydro in Canada, which sells energy to Xcel. Severe flooding from the dam has caused major disruption in the lives of the Pimicikamak Cree who live there.

Buffalohead says that the project was built with promises of economic benefits for the tribe, but that environmental devastation has outweighed any economic gain.

"There are a few jobs that a few people have, but the quality of life has gone down from what it was 25 years ago," he says. "What you see is a community that before the development of the hydro was probably considered to be a poorer community, but they had a lot of natural resources that they could supplement their lives with. That's ruined now.

"And that's the same all over northern Canada. You see people who were poor but could supplement their earnings with hunting and fishing and gathering. These hydro-electric projects have ruined that. They've wiped out the animal populations, they've poisoned the water. Statistically, their per capita income may be higher. But you don't have to be a genius to figure out that they're not better off."

Just Energy was established after Cree leaders traveled to Minnesota to appeal to Xcel's customers there.

"A number of elders drove down to Minneapolis a couple of years ago," Hamilton says. "They wanted to make Xcel's ratepayers aware of the fact that we were getting hydropower, and hydropower was causing significant socio-economic dislocation and problems for their community. It was news to us — we hadn't heard about these issues. To get down to Minneapolis from where they live in northern Manitoba they followed the power lines down. It's very visceral evidence."

Just Energy has initiated a campaign asking Xcel consumers to withhold a symbolic $5 from their energy payment each month, to pressure Xcel to demand greater responsibility from Manitoba Hydro toward the Cree.

Buffalohead says that in Minnesota, 28 percent of the energy that Xcel sells comes from either its Prairie Island plant or from Manitoba Hydro.

"Native Americans are 1 percent of the population in the U.S., and in Canada their population is relatively small, too," he says. "But we're paying the price for 28 percent of the energy." ●

For more information:

Prairie Island Indian Community
www.prairieisland.org

Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy (ME3) **www.me3.org**

Diocese of Minnesota Environmental Stewardship Commission
www.env-steward.com

Battle Lake, Minnesota: Old red school house on prairie

Changing communities: Rural challenges for the upper Midwest

by Bernard Evans

IN THE CENTRAL MINNESOTA VILLAGE in which I lived as a teenager, residents today talk about the new people who have moved in — people with no relatives in the village, people from Minneapolis, even a family from outside of the U.S. The population is not what it once was. Three miles from this village my nephew is preparing for an auction on his moderate-sized dairy farm. He has concluded that the current agricultural economy, especially the milk prices, do not allow a medium-sized family farmer to prosper. Experts tell him he needs either to expand his herd to 300 cows or settle for 30 cows and take a job off the farm. Neither option strikes him as a sane plan. Two miles away his brothers have just sold several acres of wetlands to a person from outside the area. Nobody in the neighborhood knows this land buyer nor what he plans to do with this land.

Rural areas of the upper Midwest are undergoing many changes today. Some of these changes are similar to those experienced by residents of the larger cities as the differences between rural and urban are shrinking. Other changes are unique to rural. Among

the more important challenges facing this region, three stand out as particularly important for rural areas. One is the changing structure of agriculture; a second is the changing rural population; and a third is the change taking place in the small towns themselves.

Fewer and larger farms

In this region, as throughout the U.S., agriculture is changing in many ways, most notably in the fact that the numbers of farms are decreasing while the size of farms is increasing. In Minnesota the number of farms is 79,000, down from 88,000 10 years ago. The majority of these farms are small operations that contribute relatively little to the production of food and fiber. At the other end of the spectrum are a relatively small number of very large farms that are responsible for a large portion of the state's agricultural output. In between are the moderate-sized farmers who are trying to make their living from farming without having to hold down a job in the nearby town. These are the farmers who are struggling the most, who are under incessant pressure from low prices as well as from larger farmers, lenders, suppliers and marketing agents.

It is worth noting that the majority of rural people in this region are not engaged in agriculture. In Minnesota only 12 percent of rural employment is agriculture-related — 7 percent employed directly on farms and another 5 percent employed in supplying, processing and marketing of farm goods. Two out of every three jobs in rural communities are found in service and manufacturing.

Nonetheless, the farm economy is vitally important to the region and to individual rural communities. New issues related to farming practices and policies concerning the structure of agriculture are certain to ignite public discussion among area residents who are not among the 12 percent employed in the agricultural system. A recent example of this is the proposed legislation to allow financially backed foreign citizens to buy Minnesota farms being vacated by financially pressed local farmers. Another is the proposal to establish livestock-friendly counties, fueling fears of large livestock facilities and a loss of local control regarding environmental and other regulations.

As moderate-sized farms shut down and as families move off the land the retail base of nearby towns is affected. Fewer people means fewer purchasers for local businesses and services, and some of the retail and service entities must close. This results in a loss of people from the community, both farmers and small business persons in the nearby towns. If there is a nearby source of alternative employment the people moving from farms or small businesses may find jobs that allow them to continue living in the area. Those rural communities, however, that are heavily dependent upon agriculture and are more distant from larger urban areas are likely to suffer from the changes in the structure of agriculture.

Pastoral challenges and justice concerns

These changes in agriculture can also create new demands for churches and persons engaged in ministry. As farmers or business persons struggle to change their livelihood, many people are found hurting and in need of both social services and pastoral care. This comes at a time when many local churches are experiencing cutbacks in staff and financial resources. In recent years a particularly difficult challenge for churches has formed around the development of large-scale livestock facilities. When one or more families seek to establish a huge hog confinement they often meet resistance from neighbors. This tension can be felt within parishes and congregations whose membership includes persons on both sides of the issue.

The changes also raise questions of a more systemic nature. Four primary concerns regarding the agriculture and food production system are before us. The first concern is about food itself and whether these developments we are witnessing here in the upper Midwest will assure us of an ongoing supply of food that is both safe and accessible to all. A second concern relates to caring for the environment and whether farming practices give adequate attention to protecting soil and water. A third question is how the changing agricultural system impacts rural communities. The larger the farming operation becomes, the more likely it is to bypass small town businesses in purchasing, processing and marketing farm goods. Finally, there is a range of justice questions such as the below-cost-of-production prices that moderate-sized farmers receive for their products and the situation of farm laborers, especially new immigrants working on larger farms.

Rural emigrants and immigrants

In a July 2000 report, the Minnesota Planning state agency cites a number of important developments within rural Minnesota's changing population. First, it is an aging population. While 30 percent of the state's population lives in rural areas, 41 percent of those 65 and over live in these locations. The second development related to the rural population is the exodus of young adults from rural communities. Lack of employment opportunities and social amenities as well as a lack of higher education in rural areas contributes to the movement of young adults to the urban areas such as the Twin Cities and its suburbs.

This growth of the population in and around the larger cities contributes to the rising concern about urban sprawl. Suburbs expanding into rural areas means more acres of agricultural land permanently removed from food production. It means the rural character of some communities is changed. Urban sprawl also challenges metropolitan governing agencies to provide services and infrastructure to suburban communities stretching farther into rural areas.

Other towns in this region experience a rise in their populations for various reasons. Some people choose to move to "the country" for quality of life reasons — better atmosphere for raising a family, lower cost of living, less crime. Retirement to recreational areas, such as lake country, is another reason for the increase in rural populations. In some rural areas there is enough economic growth to attract workers from outside the area. With cable television and the Internet along with improved roads, there is less isolation associated with living in rural areas today

Spring in Minnesota

than was the case a generation or two ago.

Another group of persons who contribute to the rise in population of some rural communities are those who are "returning home." This may include well-educated, stable young adults who are returning to their home rural communities to take good positions in schools, government offices or businesses. They are eagerly welcomed back to the small towns as a counter-sign to the more prevalent flight of young adults. There is another group of returnees — young adults who left home some years ago to seek their fortunes in the bigger cities but without success. Now they are returning to their home town or county to try to start over, sometimes in need of family support. Some may be on public assistance; many are in search of a cheaper cost-of-living location.

Perhaps the most dramatic impact on rural communities from rising populations is that resulting from immigrants. The upper Midwest is experiencing a rapid rise in the immigrant population with newcomers arriving from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota are among 12 states that experienced more than 144 percent increase in the Hispanic population from 1990 to 2000. While the largest numbers of the immigrants are in cities, the highest growth as a percentage of the local population is found in the small towns and rural communities. Immigrants are drawn to rural communities by the hope of employment in various areas of the food industry. This includes meatpacking plants and, more recently, larger dairy farms. These are not migrants who follow the crops according to the seasons and are gone after a few weeks. They are immigrants, individuals and families who are settling into our rural communities. They come to improve life for their families and to offer their children better education.

Responding to change

All of these changes — in agriculture, in the rural economy, in the shifting rural population — leave their mark on the character and quality of life in smaller rural communities. Rural communities traditionally have enjoyed a sense of place and a shared sense of identity. As their members leave and newcomers move in the shared sense of identity may be threatened.

Many churches and congregations in rural areas are working hard on the local level to be part of the effort to deal in a wholesome way with the changes. The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition [see sidebar, p. 20] works on social justice issues at the Minnesota State Legislature, which include various topics of concern to rural residents and communities. There is also a statewide Ecumenical Rural Concerns Group that initiates efforts to engage faith communities in analyzing and responding to the issues they are facing. Churches can have a major influence on how well communities respond to the challenges confronting rural Minnesota. ●

COLONIAL LEGACIES IN THE

Getty Images

U.S. troops landing from an LST (Landing Ship Tank) in the Marshall Islands during war in the Pacific.

by Eleazar S. Fernandez

WHEN FERNANDO MAGALLANES, a Portuguese navigator, sailed across the widest and the deepest of the earth's oceans in 1520, he called it Pacific. Magallanes thought that it was a fitting name for this peaceful and largest body of water, with more than 30,000 islands, which covers more than a third of the earth's surface. Magallanes and Captain James Cook both found the place and people quite peaceful.

On a pleasant day, the Pacific Ocean can, indeed, be pacific or peaceful. The islands in the Pacific Ocean are a paradise. But anyone familiar with the Pacific Ocean, with its huge waves, strong currents, and destructive typhoons, knows that the Pacific Ocean is not totally peaceful. As a child of the Pacific, I have witnessed both its oceanic calmness and its fierce whimsy.

Turbulence in the Pacific

The peaceful and paradisal Pacific is just one side of the story. Aside from tidal waves and typhoons, the Pacific Ocean has been an area of contest by colonial powers. The encounter with European navigators and colonizers altered the socialscape of the region as well as its geography, and life has not been peaceful for its inhabitants. The indigenous people resisted the foreign colonizers. Both Magallanes and Cook were killed by the inhabitants of the Pacific. In retaliation, the colonial powers conducted what is called a "pacification" campaign.

These days, if there is one major area in the world where decolonization is incomplete (recognizing the similar fate of some Caribbean islands), it is the Pacific region. Even though the colonizers are gone from many of the islands, the colonization process has produced socio-political disharmony and the marginalization, if not the obliteration, of the indigenous inhabitants. Yan Celene Uregei describes how colonizers carried out a "policy of massive systematic immigration of populations foreign to the Pacific" ("The Kanak Struggle for Independence" in *Pacific Peoples Sing Out Strong*, ed. William Coop). To suppress the Kanak people's struggle for self-determination, France pushed Vietnamese refugees into New Caledonia. This practice has been called "genocide by substitution." The crisis between Indo-Fijians and the native Fijians is another example of this altered socialscape, caused by the history of British colonization.

During the Cold War era — which actually was a "hot war" in many Third World countries (N.B. In this essay the term "Third World" will be used to reflect that our peoples have been "third-worldized" by the global economy) — the Pacific Ocean was not peaceful. It became the testing site for the deadliest nuclear bombs by the U.S., France and the former Soviet Union. The Marshall Islands suffered the most, as the U.S. conducted 67 tests there from June 30, 1946, to August 18, 1958. In 1954, the U.S. detonated what it dubbed Bravo bomb, which was 750 times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The result has been nuclear fall-out on islands and atolls. One of the effects is the birth of "jellyfish babies." The only reason we know that they are human babies, said one Marshallese parent, is their brain. This callous disregard for human life and for all habitat in the region is part of the U.S. legacy.

Now we may ask, where are the indigenous peoples of the Pacific? Where are the Kanaks of New Caledonia? Where are the Chamorus of Guam (*Guahan*) and the rest of the Mariana Islands? Where are the indigenous Hawai'ians (*na Kanaka Maoli*)? As one native Hawai'ian friend of mine said: "They are in the lei stand and in prison cells." They have become the new

minority in their own land. They are on the "reservations." Their survival and identity as a people are at stake. Many of them have already migrated to New Zealand, Australia and the U.S.

Global connections: The Pacific and Minnesota

Diaspora has been the plight of many Pacific islanders: a plight they share with many people of the Third World. Diaspora usually follows conquest, colonization and exploitation. Most often they end up as diaspora minorities in the belly of the empire. Globalization has accelerated the growth of this diaspora. To my surprise, the rural region of southwestern Minnesota has drawn newcomers from the Third World because of jobs provided by corporate agribusiness. However, they are perceived as a threat by long-term residents of that region and have become the target of anti-immigrant sentiment.

The plight of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific is shared by indigenous peoples around the world. It took me years to discern the connections between the struggles of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific and the American Indians of my new place of residence, Minnesota, and the neighboring Dakotas. Though separated by an immense geographical distance, they share a common struggle for land and identity. Both of their histories follow a "trail of terror," and of dispossession and genocide. They are also both victims of "radioactive racism" or "environmental terrorism." Grace Thorpe writes that 80 to 90 percent of uranium mining and milling in the U.S. has taken place on or adjacent to American Indian reservations, with serious consequences to the health of American Indians ("Our Homes are Not Dumps: Creating Nuclear-Free Zones" in *Defending Mother Earth: Native Perspectives on Environmental Justice,* ed. Jace Weaver).

The war on terrorism that has followed the September 11, 2001, tragedy has only diverted our attention from addressing the unjust practices that have characterized U.S. relations with the indigenous peoples of the Pacific and the continental U.S. The legitimate demands of indigenous peoples have been set aside. Rather than making us realize that terror has been the plight of the indigenous peoples, we have become obsessed with our own security and the pursuit of terrorists.

The beginning of idolatry

If the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, then fear for security is the beginning of idolatry (Proverbs 1:7). Idolatry is an expression of our attempt to doubly secure ourselves, but in doing so we fall into false securities. Idolatry results in our giving mundane goods — such as economic wealth, technological advances and military might — the status of eternal securers. Idolatry makes us cling tenaciously to these mundane and vulnerable duct-tape securities.

I am reminded of Jesus, who wept over Jerusalem, saying: "If you only knew today what is needed for peace!" (Luke 19:42). It may be possible through sophisticated technology and military power to track down international terrorists, but they are not going to be totally deterred. If this were true, Israel would be the safest and most secure nation today. The social elites may create "fortress communities" to insulate themselves from the outside world, but they will soon realize that they are not completely invulnerable. We may be wired to the global market through cyberspace, but we do not know our local neighbors. And terrorists are aware of this vulnerability. A peace that has walls in our highly globalized world is no peace at all. We seem not to understand, or we seem to refuse to understand, that lasting security can only be secured through just peace, not by "just war."

Just relationships are the foundation for peace and security. Justice or righteousness is the foundation of cosmic harmony and order. YHWH (God) created the world according to *sedaqâ* (righteousness). "When *sedaqâ* prevails," notes Douglas Knight, "the world is at harmony, in a state of well-being, in *salôm.* An act of sin in the religious sphere or injustice in the social sphere can inject discord and shatter *salôm.* It then takes a decisive act of *mispat* (justice) to restore the *salôm* and reestablish the *sedaqâ*" ("Cosmogony and Order in the Hebrew Tradition," in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics,* ed. R. Lovin and F. Reynolds).

"*Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono*" ("The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness"), runs the state motto of Hawai'i. Without *pono* (justice or righteousness), there is no peace and harmony in the land (*aina*). Only the practice of just relationships and the righting of wrongs can restore harmony and bring security.

When will we learn the ways of peace and true security? When will we understand and gain the courage to address the roots of terrorism? When will we learn to let go of our false securities and to truly trust in the God who became incarnate in the crucified One? God of *shalom*, show us the way. ●

Eleazar S. Fernandez

LOUIE'S INDEX

Number of bishops who will need consents to their elections at General Convention 2003: 10 (Bishops elected in Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Milwaukee, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon and Texas [Suffragan]. All these elections fall within 120 days of Convention and therefore require consents of a majority in the House of Deputies and a majority of bishops with jurisdiction. At other times, diocesan standing committees provide consents, instead of the House of Deputies.)

Number of current diocesan bishops who were already diocesan bishops at the 1991 General Convention: 20 (There are 109 dioceses in ECUSA.)

Amount of additional money ECUSA would have for missions if dioceses not now paying the 21 percent asking were to do so: $4,330,321 (Based on official reports for 2001. See http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/2001dio.html for a full reckoning.)

Percentage of annual income given by the Diocese of the Rio Grande to support the mission of the Episcopal Church Center to the world: 2 percent (Based on last year reported, 2000. This was the lowest percentage of annual income given by a diocese to support this work; the Diocese of New Jersey was second lowest, giving 4 percent of its annual income.)

Amount in U.S. dollars of the 1999–2002 budget of the Anglican Communion Office paid by the Episcopal Church (USA): $1,314,378 (This represents 29.3 percent of that budget.)

Number of employees listed in the directory of the Episcopal Church Center in NYC: 233

Number of employees listed in the directory of the Washington Office of the Episcopal Church: 5 (This Office of Government Relations was started in 1982 by the General Convention in New Orleans, La.)

Number of missionaries sent by U.S.-based Episcopal agencies: 142 (Approximate. The most recent public reports indicate that the Episcopal Church Center sends 85; the South American Missionary Society sends 35; Episcopal World Mission sends 4; and Anglican Frontier Mission sends 18.)

Number of organizations that form The Consultation, a coalition of social justice and advocacy ministry groups in the Episcopal Church who work together at General Convention: 12 (The members are: Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission [APLM], Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates [EAMA], the Episcopal Church Publishing Company [ECPC, publisher of *The Witness* magazine], the Episcopal Ecological Network [EEN], the Episcopal Society for Ministry in Higher Education [ESMHE], the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice [ENEJ], the Episcopal Peace Fellowship [EPF], the Episcopal Urban Caucus [EUC], the Episcopal Women's Caucus [EWC], Integrity, Province 8 Native American Ministries Network, and the Union of Black Episcopalians [UBE].)

Number of "special meetings" held by the General Convention, which normally meets every three years: 2 (The first was in 1821 in Philadelphia, and the second in 1969 in South Bend, Ind. The right of calling special meetings is invested in bishops.)

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.*

The Witness

The Witness Magazine
P.O. Box 1170, Rockport, ME 04856

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