Title: *The Witness*, January to December, 1996

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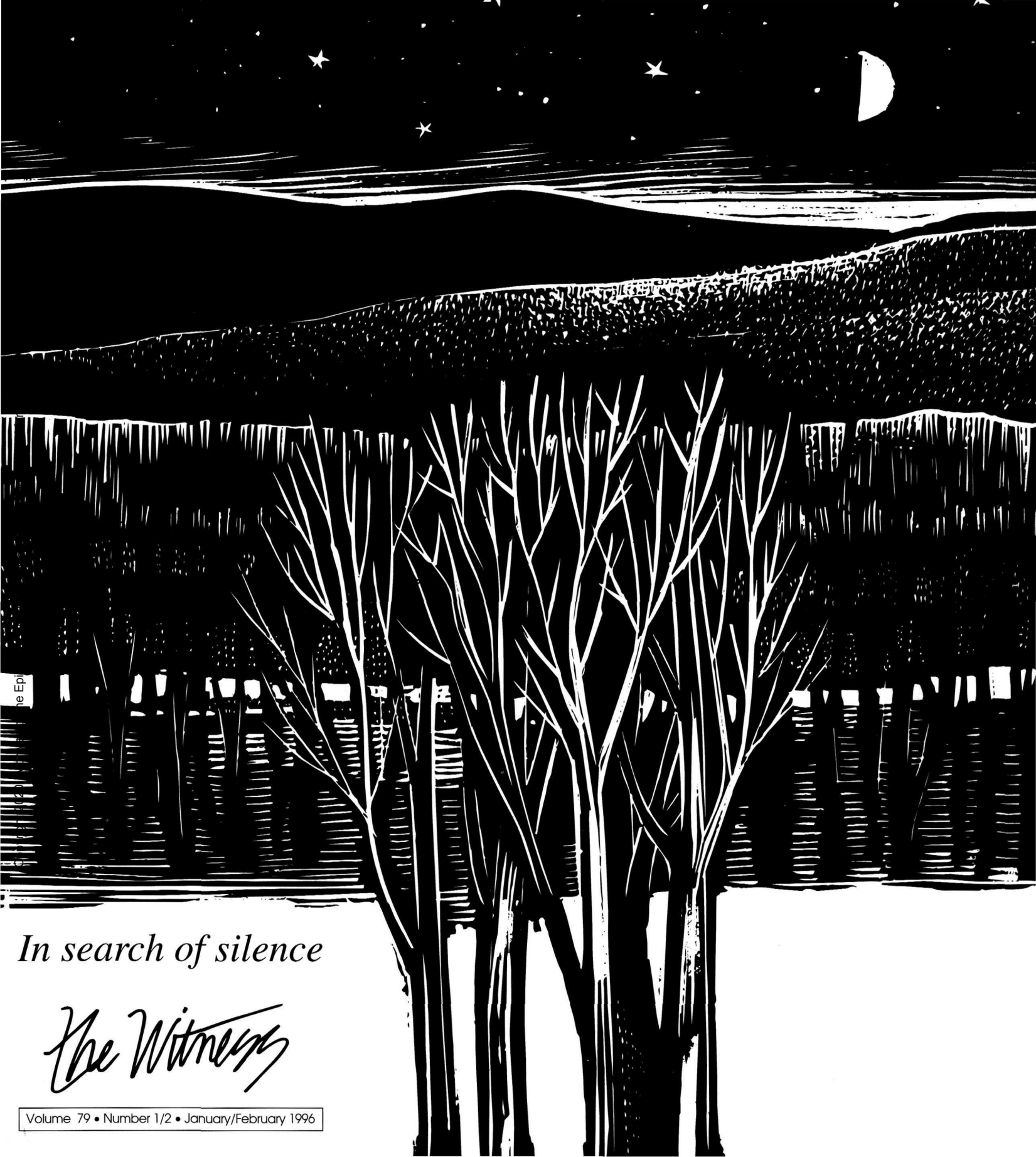

In search of silence

The Witness

Volume 79 • Number 1/2 • January/February 1996

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Heresy trial

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

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

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

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

Alexander Seabrook
Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sexual misconduct

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

James G. Carson
Evanston, IL

Hierarchies of theologians?

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

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

Billie T. Allan
Brookfield, CT

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

Witness praise

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

Martha P. Brooks
Manchester, NH

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

Diana Ruby
Reno, NV

ALLELUIA! A *VOICE* AT LAST!

Catherine Neely Fry
San Antonio, TX

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

Caralee Svoboda

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

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

Wendy Smith-McCarroll
Wash., D.C.

Clergy mailing

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

From Topeka, Kansas:

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

And from the same person:

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

From Fort Worth, Texas:

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

And from the same person another subscription form for:

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

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

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

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

Nancy Jerauld
Belfast, ME

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

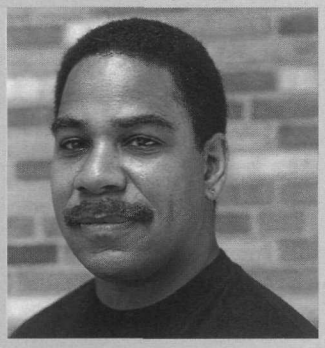
Mary Robb Mansfield
Waverly, NY

New ECPC board members named

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

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

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

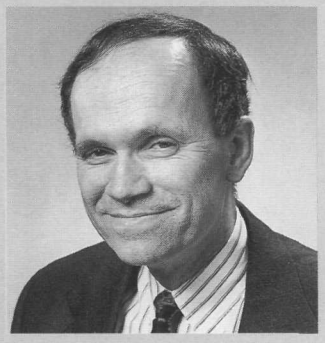


Harlan L. Dalton

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

Janice M. Robinson

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



John G. Zinn

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

Correction

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

Classifieds

God Help Us

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

Ministry of Rubber

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

Classifieds

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

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Since 1917

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

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

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Sheltering our minds

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

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

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

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

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

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

In making assignments for this issue, we realized that silence is almost always the result of having boundaries and rhythms.

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

In contrast, we've heard that Amata Miller, an IHM sent to study graduate economics, was allowed several hours for study, a time for prayer and a 9 p.m. bedtime. Whatever work she could do for school had to be completed or attempted within that narrow period. I contrast that with the all-nighters my friends and I would pull — studying, cramming, drinking coffee, speeding until the moment when that paper or exam was due. I'd have been glad for an external structure that helped me deflate the enormity of the demands — showing them in balance with eating, praying, exercising and sleeping.

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

After watching her mother and sister die of cancer, another friend, Clara Brower, committed herself to changing her life. She imposed her own discipline in her Franklin Planner. Her activities are color-coded with highlighters. If any element — prayer, exercise, pleasure or work — is out of balance she can see it in the threads of color snaking through her calendar.

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

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

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

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

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

continued on page 6

editor's note

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

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The Indians' early impressions

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

The Delawares sometimes amuse themselves by passing in review those customs of the white people which appear to them most striking. They observe, amongst other things, that when the whites meet together, many of them, and sometimes all, speak at the same time, and they wonder how they can thus hear and understand each other. "Among us," they say "only one person speaks at a time, and the others listen to him until he has done, after which, and not before, another begins to speak."

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

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

They believe, or, at least, pretend to believe, that the white people have weak eyes, or are near-sighted. "For," say they, "when we Indians come among them, they crowd quite close up to us, stare at us, and almost tread upon our heels to get nearer. We, on the contrary, though perhaps not less curious than they are to see a new people or a new object, keep at a reasonable distance, and yet see what we wish to see."

They also remark that when the white people meet together, they speak very loud, although near to each other, from whence they conclude that they must be hard of hearing. "As to us," they say, "we never speak loud when we come together, and yet we understand each other distinctly; we only speak in a high tone of voice before a public audience, in council, at the head of our warriors, or when we are met together for some important purpose."

'Sheltering our minds' continued from page 5

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

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

I like hearing my voice enter the medley. Waves of music support me, carry me, sometimes nearly swamp me. I feel time shifting, my mind moving with others and with the communion of saints. We sing about the coming of the spirit, the earth, beauty, waves on the sea, the grandmothers.

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

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

At times my tears flow with the music. I find harmonies, test dissonance and peaking high notes, sing words outside the rhythm — whirling and dancing my voice within the arcing strength of other voices.

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

The dead of winter seems the perfect time to reach for quiet, to carve time for reflection, to dream, to weave, to sit still, to chant for the sun, to praise God for all that has been and all that is yet to come, to align our heartbeats to the rhythm of the earth. TW

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Desert Places

by Robert Frost

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

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

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

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

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

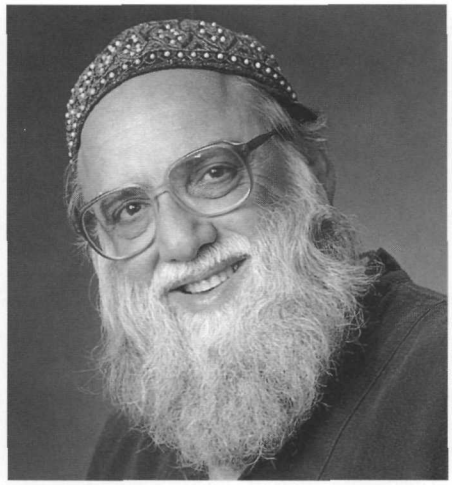
by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

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

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

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

Arthur Waskow: In the last 25 years, there has emerged a movement for Jewish renewal which is taking meditation



Arthur Waskow

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

The mystical root of the tradition, which is the one in all traditions that affirms *being,* is now much stronger than it was 25 years ago. There is a flowering of that outlook in the Jewish world. It is not big enough yet, but it is very much growing. Sometimes it has grown in strange ways. People have sometimes gone outside of Jewish life when they felt that modernity had infected Judaism. People found some of the eastern traditions' ways of reaccessing meditation, restfulness and being. Now there's a really interesting return in which Jews who have deeply experienced Buddhist or Sufi or Native American meditations and chantings are rediscovering the possibilities of this in Jewish life — both in traditional forms and in new forms.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A.W.: The Sabbath is the longest of the 10 utterances at Sinai — but it actually emerges in the consciousness of the people *before* Sinai. It emerges after the crossing of the Red Sea with the coming of the *manna*. The *manna* comes in such a way that when people try to gather too much it rots away — except on the sixth day when there's a double portion. When people gather the double portion it doesn't rot. The people are puzzled, so Moses explains that this is because this is the *Shabbat*.

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

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

Those two sentences I've just used come from the warning at the end of the Garden of Eden, right? It says that human history after the Garden is going to be one in which the relationship between human beings and the earth is almost warlike.

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

The whole sacrificial system is really about food and the relationship of human beings and the earth — in Hebrew *adam* and *adama*. Adam and adama — aside from all sorts of specific teachings of Torah — teach us that human beings and the earth are intertwined.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All of the natural cycles — the day, the month and the year — are observed in sevens. Each of the sevenths become the sacred day, month or year of reflection and being. This makes Jewish time into a spiral rather than a circle or a straight line. It does move forward, but it doesn't move forward in a straight line. You're always taking the past into serious account and you're always reinterpreting the past in order to move forward.

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

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

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

But if you never pause to make *Shabbat,* the tradition teaches that in a very serious way the blessing turns into a massive disaster. That is, over-making, over-producing, over-doing — without ever being. That means you stand on the precipice of nuclear holocaust, of global warming, of the shattering of the ozone layer, of Auschwitz. All that is a result of extraordinary feats of doing without any reflection, without any pause for being which can bring you back to a center and remind you to examine the purpose of the doing. That's what *Shabbat* is.

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

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

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

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Looking for sanity with the Amish

by Marianne Arbogast

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

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

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

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

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

The daughter of peace activist parents who took up organic farming, Jones grew up in an intensely political environment, surrounded by lively discussion of ecology, feminism and global justice. Her family's home was always full of students from the Methodist college campus ministry in Mt. Pleasant, Mich., where her father was pastor. She spent her junior year in high school in Washington, D.C., serving as a page to U.S. Senator Carl Levin.

Sarah Jones Lin Baum

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

Learning in Africa

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

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

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

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

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

European intellectual life

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At first, Jones' parents and friends were dismayed.

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

'A gendered culture'

Jones borrows Illich's controversial concept of a "gendered culture" to explain why she is not disturbed by the strict gender roles of the Amish.

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

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

"I feel the Amish do *walk humbly on the earth. You couldn't live this way and go out to all the marches and rallies, and lead peace groups."*

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

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

Because more men than women "go high," (i.e., leave the Amish), "there are a lot more older single girls" than boys in Amish communities, she says. But "it is felt strongly that God has given them this gift — there is a place for them."

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

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

'It is a sin to drive a car.'

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

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

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

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

Plain and simple

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

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

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

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

For me time was a burden.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Walking the walk

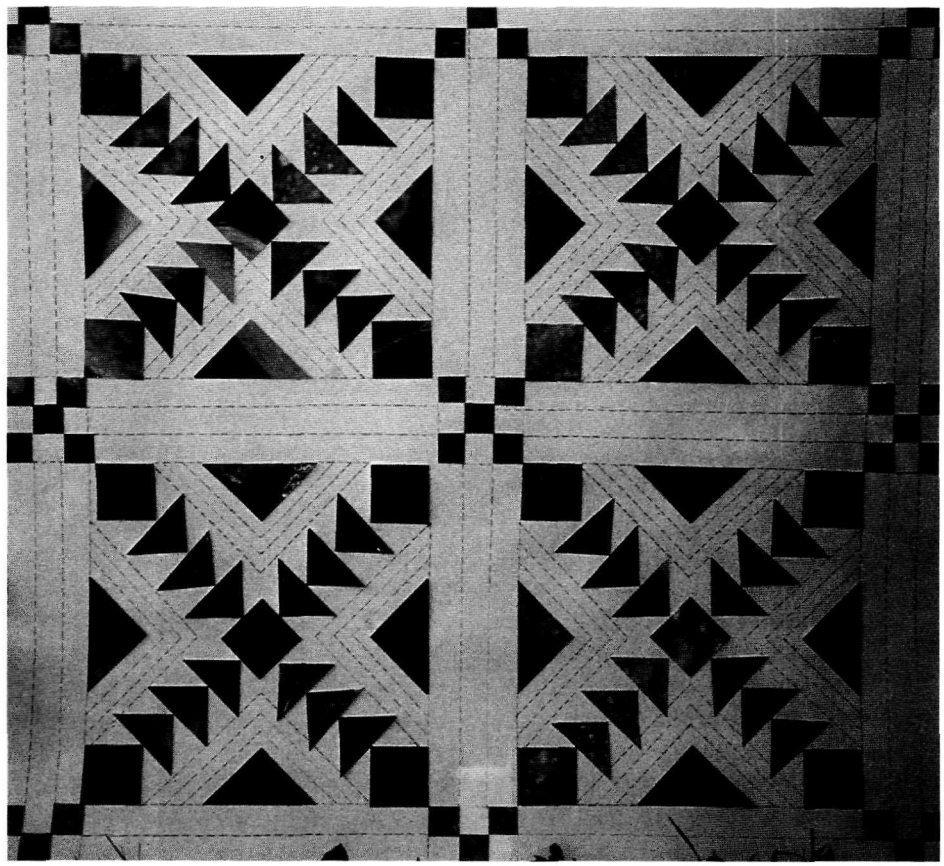
Jones has continued to wrestle with the question of contributing to society. She has deep respect for her parents' work, and acknowledges its impact on her own life. She retains an early childhood memory of a march against Dow Chemical: The image of a protester wearing a two-headed mask — symbolizing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

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

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

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

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



Odd Fellows Cross **quilt by Cheryl Phillips**

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

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

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

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

Asked about her future, Jones lists multiple options.

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

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Monastic listening

by Kate DeSmet

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

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

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

Unlike secular society's wrestling with noise on almost every level of experience from telephone to the television, communities of contemplative and monastic men and women continue to focus on silence as a necessary discipline for spiritual growth. Without facing the silence in ourselves, they argue, the noise of the world crowds out the voice of God. To those who say they have never heard God speak directly to them, the contemplative believer asks, "How can you hear God with all that racket going on?" Tune out distraction and you'll find discernment.

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

"How tragic it is that they who have nothing to express are continually expressing themselves," Merton wrote. "The reason for their talk is: death. Death is the enemy who seems to confront them at every moment in the deep darkness and silence of their own being. So they keep shouting at death. They confound their lives with noise. They stun their own ears with meaningless words, never discovering that their hearts are rooted in a silence that is not death but life."

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

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

Silence is the rule at the Kentucky monastery during meals (though readings aloud from various books are conducted during lunch), and there are no televisions or radios. Monks can talk if necessary during their work periods, but the house, library and refectory are considered places of quiet. Even during the Christmas holidays, says Kelty, "not a single decoration or single jingle is heard until Christmas eve."

> *Silence tends to be killing for me, it calls me to die to the things that I want but don't need, and it helps me to cherish what I already have.*
>
> *— Rusty Page, SSJE*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Beginners in the discipline of silence are warned to keep their initial periods of silence to only a few minutes. "Start slow," says Page, "and you'll discover whether you have something to be afraid of. There is stuff inside there that can be terrible but it is not unaddressable." If the silence evokes disturbing memories of childhood abuse or psychotic problems, Page advises that the discipline of silence may not be suitable. "If silence has meaning for you, if it can get you somewhere in your life, then it is fruitful for you. But if nothing happens, you may be standing in an empty desert. André Previn says his goal each day is to make music. If that comes out of silence, then that's what matters. But if you're a person who needs to make noise every day, then do it. No rule is good for everybody."

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

"Ten minutes a day would be beautiful," he says, adding that the setting can be a quiet bedroom, a church, a wooded lot or an early morning jog. The rewards for the Christian believer are unmistakable.

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

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

Gethsemani monastery in Kentucky

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

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

— The Book of Common Prayer

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Birthing a circle of silence

by Julie A. Wortman

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

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

Although the beauty of the place alone acts as a balm for the dispirited soul, the four women who live here year round — Maria Marta Arís-Paúl, Judith Carpenter, Constance Chandler-Ward and Rosanna Kazanjian — also offer an effective prescription of their own devising for what ails the steady procession of overloaded minds and worn-down bodies that has found its way here since Greenfire's women-focussed retreat ministry was incorporated in the autumn of 1990.

They call it "circlework."

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

"We wanted work that was truly feminist in purpose and style — that was committed to the empowerment of other women, to the freeing of their gifts, interests, etc. — and that was grounded in and expressive of our commitment to global and ecological justice," says Carpenter. "We felt that we were trying to give birth to a shared vision or model for ministry that could potentially support us all in a very simple life-style, a model that would intentionally stay small and personal, though connected to the whole, greater network of vision/ministries of other women, known and as yet unknown, in ever-widening circles."

> *"The reality is that you can't follow your own deepest path without other people."*
>
> *— Judith Carpenter*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"As we do this work in many contexts, we are continually touched by the hunger — and the yearning — people have for such ongoing circles in their own lives," writes Carpenter, noting that one retreatant told them, "Last night at dinner I saw the strength of community around the table and it touched off my deepest longings. Whatever I'm here for, I don't want to do it alone."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Living in eternity

by Virginia Mollenkott

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

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

I have discovered that if I need to know the answer to a question that is troubling my mind, I can ask that question when I am in a quiet, relaxed, and centered state of mind, and the answer will be given to me. Usually, for me, it works this way: I write the question in my journal, stating it as precisely as I possibly can. Then I write the words "*The Answer*" — after which I close my eyes and listen expectantly for the Spirit's reply. A beginning concept occurs to me (sometimes something very surprising to me), and I begin to write. Usually the words pour onto the page very rapidly; but if I get stuck I simply close my eyes and listen once again. I never hear any external voice, but certainly concepts occur to me that did not come from my ego; and sometimes alternatives are offered that had never occurred to me before.

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

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

The Answer: Virginia, you have correctly perceived that the problem lies in your attitude, not in the work load itself. You and I have all eternity to get done whatever really needs to get done. While you are in the human sphere, holding down a job, you must meet certain expectations — but it is not really those that are wearing you out.

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

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

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

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

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

So I know from direct experience what it is like to recognize the holy instant and know heaven on a personal and relational level. But what about structural evils, the injustices that assault human dignity by exploiting the many in order to provide obscene luxuries for the few? Or that exclude certain people from the respect, power, and privilege accorded to others?

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

Through the glimpses of the interconnectedness and spiritual unity of

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

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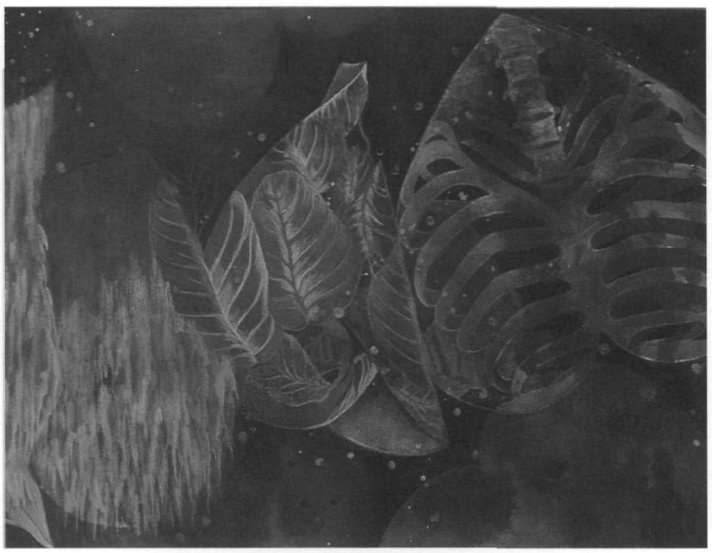
the larger picture, a sensuously spiritual being can receive instruction concerning her specific role for co-creating a more just human society. At the same time, she will be reassured by an outpouring of tenderness from the invisible spirit-world behind, beneath, and within that which is seen. And to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

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

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

Sacrifice of our peace and joy is *never* what the universe asks of us. Without peace and joy we become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. It is counterproductive to sleep on beds of thorn, never giving ourselves a minute's peace or joy because of our commitment to social change. As I have learned repeatedly, we work more efficiently when we work from the relaxed, humorous, gentle perceptions of the Self. We have a right to that relaxation, because we know that behind the scenes everything is working out as it should.



A heart transformed **by Cheryl Phillips**

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

Among other things, I was told:

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

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

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

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Rhythm, prayer and relationship:

Changing space and time through chants

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

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

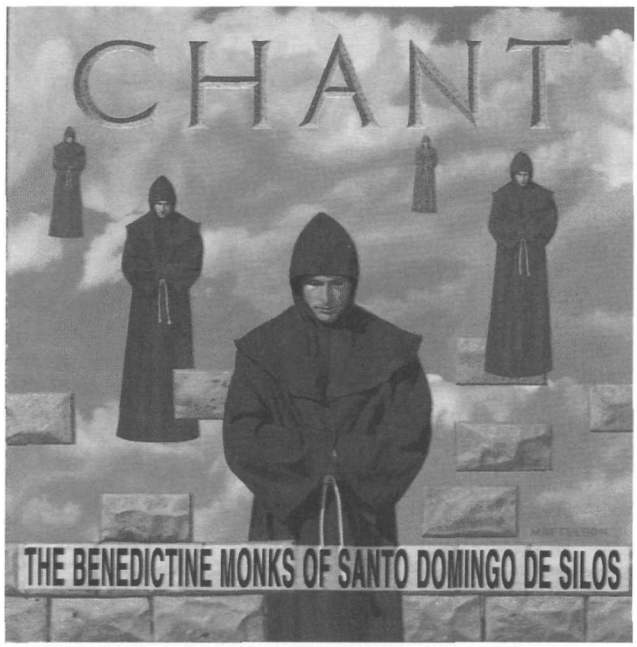
Remarkably, Gregorian chant is high on the charts. In fact, Angel/EMI's *Chant II* is number one and their 1994 Christmas blockbuster, *Chant: The Benedictine Monks of Santa Domingo de Slos*, is number two. Over six million copies have been sold in 42 countries.

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

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

Chanting as church

"Chanting circles have become church for me," explains Terry Zaydel, a Detroit mother of three grown daughters who describes herself as a recovering Catholic. "It feeds a very deep part of my spiritual being. It connects me to spirit. The drumming puts me into a different frame of reference. It shifts my reality. I believe that it's the relationship between the drum, my own heartbeat and whatever long-ago primal memory that surfaces in me, maybe in utero and maybe before that."



Chant **by Marvin Mettelson ©Angel Records**

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

Singing sometimes feels like "running energy," McFerrin told *The New Age Journal*. "I could actually feel a difference in the way my body felt at ease and lighter. When you're singing, you're employing the breath in a rhythmic way. It can do a lot to reduce tension and slow your thought process down."

An Episcopalian informed by Sufi spirituality, McFerrin produced *Medicine Music* which draws on many traditions. He spent time "reading about the music of the spheres and the use of voice as a barometer for one's inner self, using the voice as a bridge between the higher and lower worlds, the inner and outer selves. The fact that the Roman Catholic Church uses Gregorian chants, that Tibetan monks chant, and other cultures use music in dance and drumming to invite spirits, to expel demons — I find a lot of validity in that."

The communion of saints

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

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

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

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

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of the planet) are one and the same.

How it works

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

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

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

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

The number of intervals, seven, is a critical number in medieval numerology, Le Mée says. "It represents the coming together of the Trinity and the four elements of the earth." She adds that "Chartres has a design in it which represents the 1-3-4."

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

— Terry Zaydel

Sonic pollution

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

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

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

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

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

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Sacred sound and sheltered space

by Debbie Mast

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

—*Singing for Power*, R.M. Underhill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938).

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

If you were a Papago Indian living in the Southwest, everything I just described would be absolutely ordinary to you. The idea of healing with sound is an ancient one. Indigenous healers on every continent have used songs, chants and tones as a vehicle for personal transformation and ceremonial healing.

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

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

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

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

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

Music is a fundamental part of who we are. A fetus begins to hear at five months in the womb. At birth, we emerge with the three bones of the ear fully developed. These are the *only* bones in the body which are completely mature at birth, indicating the importance that sound plays for us as a species. By age two a kind of melodic memory kicks in and children begin to imitate songs they hear, both rhythmically and melodically.

Cellular song

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

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

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

The nervous system of all life forms on the planet are attuned to this fundamental 8 cycles/second frequency. The earth itself vibrates at 8 cycles/second. In other words, it is in our nature to vibrate in harmony with the Earth and all living things when we are in a healthy, relaxed state.

Sonic pollution can pull us out of our natural vibration.

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

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

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us in this age of sonic pollution.

Mutagenic sound

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

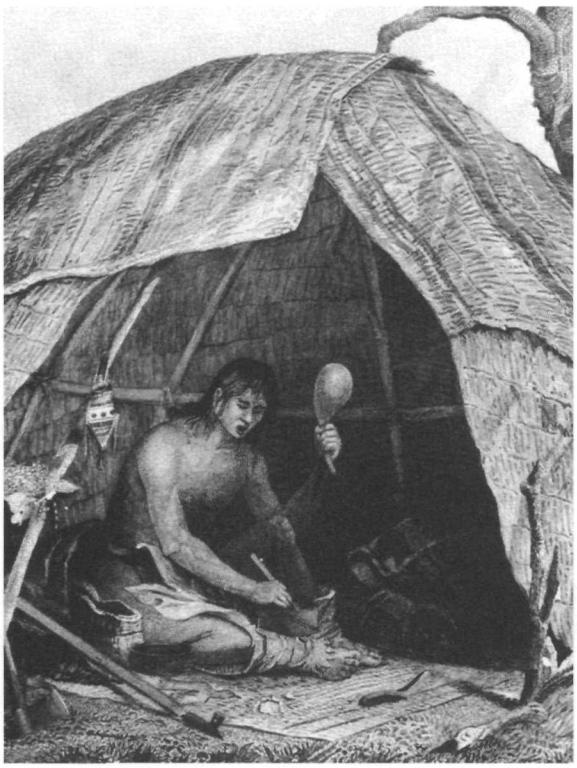
ELF radiation has been linked to memory loss, irritability, fatigue, increased incidences of leukemia and lymphoma and brain cancer. One study shows that electric utility workers die at a brain cancer rate 13 times greater than unexposed workers. Three separate studies have shown that a statistically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

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

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

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

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



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

Library of Congress

'A musical solution'

The German philosopher Novalis said, "Every disease is a musical problem, every cure a musical solution," and he may be right. Recent studies indicate that wound healing, bone regeneration, body metabolism and muscle activity can be accelerated by the application of frequency-specific sound waves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

by Julie A. Wortman

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

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

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

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

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

Take, for instance, last month's service for "people who care about people with AIDS," held at the Episcopal cathedral in the Diocese of Michigan. The cathedral's new dean, Stephen Bancroft, declined to participate unless the service was billed instead as a service for "anyone suffering from debilitating disease."

The organizers refused to make the change, largely because the December event has an 11-year history, but also because "this disease is also a civil rights problem," according to Rodney Reinhart, an Episcopal priest who has been a driving force behind the service from its inception.

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

— Stephen Bancroft

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

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

That view, says Jeff Montgomery, a member of both the diocese's committee for gay/lesbian concerns and of the cathedral chapter, "is probably more of a reflection of how the dean forms his own judgments of people," adding, "It surprises me that someone who has reached his position in the church would honestly believe that offering spiritual support to people indicates a political stand."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vital Signs

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Drawing a bead on the prayerbook

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

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

Yet, in light of the politics and demographic complexity of the U.S. church, it is unclear what sort of impact reports such as Newark's and the ADLMC event will have on the SLC's recommendations to the 1997 General Convention about prayerbook revision.

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

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

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

"I think it's time to rethink the statement that Anglicans are unified by the liturgy," says Morris. "We've never had liturgical uniformity. We've been unified by our world view and theology."

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

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

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

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

Irish to head Diocese of Utah

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

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

Caroline Tanner Irish

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

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

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

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Advocating for Vanunu

by Sam Day

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

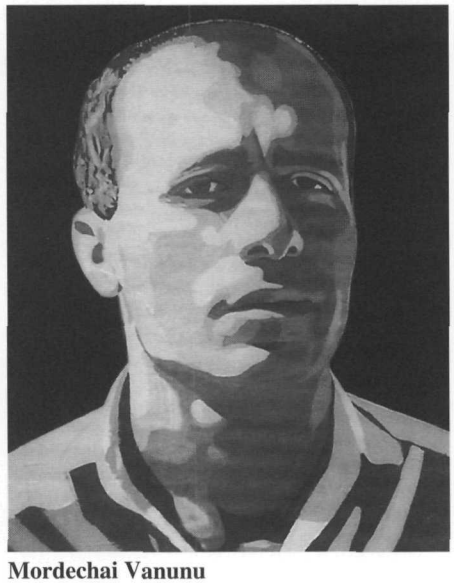
From New York, on the ninth anniversary of the prisoner's confinement, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church sends a letter promising that he will never be forgotten.

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

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

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

Vanunu, then 31, had wandered into the sanctuary of St. John's Church in Sydney, Australia, in the course of a spiritual quest that had taken him through India and Southeast Asia from his home at Beersheba in southern Israel. Amidst the books and shirts in his backpack he carried two rolls of film he had taken surreptitiously at his former workplace at Dimona, Israel's secret nuclear weapons factory in the Negev desert.



Mordechai Vanunu

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sam Day, is coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu. For information write the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, 2206 Fox Avenue, Madison, Wis. 63711, or contact the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 28156, Washington, D.C. 20038.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The bishops also spent the afternoon session of the hearing entertaining a petition to separate the two counts against Righter — in addition to the charge of holding contrary doctrine, he is accused of violating his ordination vows for ordaining Barry Stopfel, a non-celibate gay man living in a committed relationship. Arguments were also made that prior to the February trial the court should decide if the church has a doctrine about whether non-celibate homosexuals should be ordained. At the request of Connecticut's bishop, Clarence Coleridge, the site of the trial was changed to the Diocese of Delaware. Members of his diocese, Coleridge said, had reacted very negatively to holding the trial in Hartford.

— based on ENS reports

Executive Council committee investigates CPG

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

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

Urban Caucus assembly

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

CLOUT asks support

Christian Lesbians OUT Together (CLOUT), a five-year-old organization formed "to claim our spiritual and sexual wholeness, to proclaim the goodness of our lives, our ministries and our relationships, and to empower ourselves and each other to challenge the churches to which we belong," is asking financial support as it seeks to strengthen its regional organization and prepare for its fourth national gathering in 1997. Contributions may be sent to CLOUT, P.O. Box 10062, Columbus, Oh. 43201.

Strengthen advocacy, PB says

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

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

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

— based on an ENS report

Tutu named to Truth commission

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

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

— drawn from ENS

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Ontario general strike

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

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

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

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

Prison activist honored

Donations celebrating the life of Fay Honey Knopp can be given to Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) of which Knopp was a co-founder. Knopp was a prison abolitionist (her book *Instead of Prisons* is a classic) and an activist within prisons, befriending prisoners, chaplains and prison staff. Knopp died at the age of 76 last August. Donations can be sent to PVS, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia PA 19102 or Addison County Home Health Care, 20-1/2 Main St. Middlebury, VT 05753.

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

Same-sex blessings

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

This ruling, from the church's synod on November 3, 1995, makes the Lutherans, with more than 20,000 members, the second Dutch church to give official recognition to gay blessings. ***—ENI***

Beijing video

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

Bosnian Student Project

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

The Fellowship of Reconciliation has established a Bosnian Student Project. Its goal is to get as many students as possible out of the war zone and into U.S. schools, to prepare them to return and rebuild their country. The FOR is collaborating in this effort with the Jerrahi Order of America, a Sufi Muslim cultural, educational, and relief organization. In the former Yugoslavia, the World University Service and the Association of Students of Bosnia and Herzegovina to select Bosnian students of any ethnic background who would be likely to succeed in U.S. schools.

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

Short takes

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Stress surrenders to stillness

by Andrew Weaver

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

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

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

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

The book recommends that if we are to end our addiction to stress, prayer is a valuable, faithful ally. He intriguingly suggests that prayer has similar dynamics to a good friendship. He writes, "Five factors are apparent in friendship: appreciation of the relationship, deep confidence, mutual nurturing, awareness that the friendship is a special relationship for each of the two persons, and never-completed experiences, which will draw the friends back to each other's company at a future time." He goes on to note that these five marks of friendship parallel the five expressions of prayer taught for centuries by the community of believers: adoration, confession, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. When I completed this section of the book I found myself wanting to know more. Hopefully it was only the outline of a future book on prayer.

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

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

book review

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

Looking for a Lenten program?

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

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

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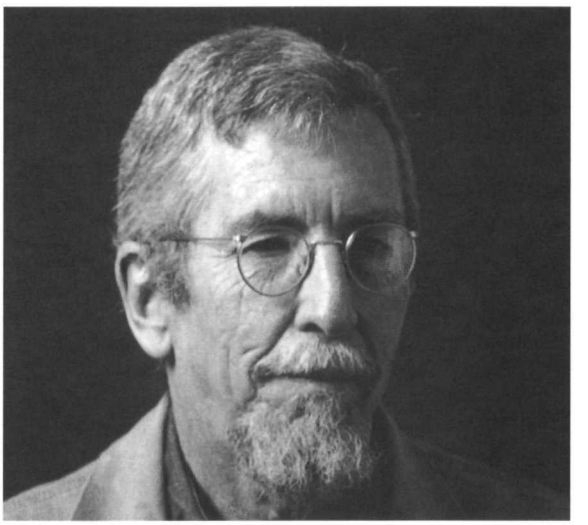
"From surface impressions, few would guess that Corbett is, to use his words, feral, untamed, gone cimarron."

— Maria West



Jim Corbett Sterling Vinson

Born in the wildlands

by Maria West

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

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

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

He comes by this vocation naturally. Corbett grew up in the Wyoming rangelands; his ancestors include a great-grandmother who was a full-blooded Native American. From early childhood, he and his family would go on extended outings away from their cattle ranch, camping in the Grand Teton Mountains with little more than a tent. These periodic withdrawals from the homestead and its conveniences and living in a natural environment was a welcome part of family life.

When he and his wife Pat went to live in a remote part of southeast Arizona, six miles from their nearest neighbor, they took on a herd of goats for the milk the animals provided. This time of dwelling in an untamed part of the country followed philosophy studies at Harvard and Berkeley, and coincided with a deeper exploration of his Quaker convictions and a simpler, more contemplative lifestyle. This journey put Corbett into contact with "certain harmonies" between natural and spiritual realities which before had been obscured by "the busyness of industrial living." Separating himself from a society he sees as managed by the profit motive and controlled by state force, he became immersed in the wilderness as a creature among other creatures, instead of as a manager or developer.

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

Witness, the quick and the dead

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For Corbett himself, a goatwalking education led to activism among Latin American refugees, as an escort across the borderlands between Mexico and the United States, and as a legal and spiritual advisor to those detained by customs. He has faced arrests and trials for this work. An early leader of the Church Sanctuary Movement, his sense of direction was as much a moral as a field compass, and drew him into being led by those he helped across the desert:

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

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

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

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

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

— Douglas Steere

Quaker spirituality (Paulist Press, 1984)

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What's in the church's intere$t?

The Witness

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Holy Matrimony

THANK YOU, THANK you for the December *Witness*. It is a major gift and the timing is as superb as the contents.

What I experienced as I read, I think, was a ministry of hospitality; the homes in which my sisters and brothers dwell were opened for me to enter and share for a time. The journey is easier because of their courage — it is very risky to share this much so openly.

Mary Miller
Episcopal Peace Fellowship
Washington DC

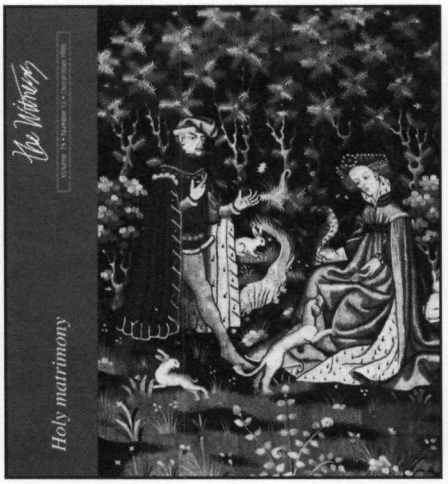
AS A MARRIED GREGORIAN FRIAR, and as president of the Catholic Fellowship of the Episcopal Church, I want to tell you how much I am enjoying our new subscription to *The Witness*. As you well know, much of what passes for orthodoxy is not orthodox, and if anything, gives orthodoxy a bad name. Your most recent issue on Holy Matrimony was especially revealing. My wife and I, as Catholics in the liberationist tradition within Anglican catholicism, are looking forward to many future issues.

John Michael Haney, n/BSG
Sunapee, NY

THANK YOU FOR THE CURRENT ISSUE on Holy Matrimony. It has been a concern of ours that the Church has not had the courage to address sexuality in its teaching or doctrine, except to intimate that it is somehow wicked and something to fear.

So many articles in this issue have talked frankly and clearly about so many aspects of sexuality. It is refreshing, instructive and just a ray of hope in a murky area.

We are anticipating our 50th wedding anniversary this spring, but even at our advanced ages we learned a lot, especially from Harvey Guthrie's article which was so theo-



logically helpful.

Albert and Nancy Jenkins
Whittier, CA

I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU for the December issue, especially for Julie Wortman's "On not making it official." After reading "Tending a sacred flame," I had myself all prepared to read this issue "holding heterosexual relationships to a standard as stringent as that applied to gay and lesbian relationships." I plowed through Julie's article impressed that a couple had so thoroughly evaluated the institution of marriage, noted the privileges extended to married people and decided (while maintaining a deep personal commitment) not to take part in them. As I am sure I was meant to do, I read almost the entire article with the assumption that this unnamed partner was a man ... to the extent that I had to reread (three times) the paragraph proclaiming it a lesbian relationship. That was somewhat embarrassing because I am a lesbian! What that much needed slap in the face did for me was make me aware of how defensive, presumptive, and self-righteous I evidently have been becoming. (YUCK!) Thank you for waking me up to see a part of me that needed recognition and changing.

Name withheld

IN THE INTERVIEW with Bishop Steve Charleston reference is made in passing to the financial strain some clergy families face. This is especially true in mission situations because the Episcopal Church apparently has a less-organized support system for those in full-time "mission" assignments than does the Roman Catholic Church. I served 16 years in a R.C. three-county mission in an East Kentucky coal-mining community. My salary was heavily subsidized, but that of the local Episcopal priest was not, even though his mission was smaller and poorer than mine.

I then pastored a predominantly black parish for 12 years, which received grants annually. But the pastor of the black Episcopal church two blocks away was a full-time university staff person.

Then I returned to the mountain mission portion of Kentucky to a two-county parish. Two-thirds of my salary comes from our diocese. The tiny Episcopal mission here lost its resident priest four years ago because of financial constraints. He was a former R.C. priest and co-worker of mine. He and his wife were not able to survive here though they were a perfect match for the place.

Even though there is an oversupply of Episcopal priests, these locations find it difficult to obtain pastors because of very low salaries (often with no job opportunities for spouses). Incidentally, the R.C. priest in the poorest U.S. mission is guaranteed the same salary as the priest in the richest parish in the same diocese (but not the same perks).

However, the financial problems seem destined to increase for everybody with "creeping secularism."

Bill Poole
St. Elizabeth's R.C. Church
Ravenna, KY

I ENJOYED YOUR ISSUE regarding matrimony. I would very much like a sequel in which you address some of the following:

• The biological conflict with theological doctrine. Specifically what is the role of the Anaphylactic Pheremone Response function to sexuality. More plainly, if your parents didn't mate, you probably won't either. The current research tends to indicate that sexuality is more genetic than moral choice. In addition, the original species of humanoid had a life expectation of about 18 years; therefore teenage sex is the biological norm, not the social norm. Legislation or morals to the contrary, saying that sex is for adults over

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21 is like trying to legislate gravity — the written wish is superseded by the scientific events.

• The various societal norms for choosing a monogamous significant other. Does the Episcopal Church or the Catholic Church forbid, disavow or renounce arranged marriages? Further, what should the church be teaching its youth regarding selecting a significant, monogamous other? We require sex education in school, but where or what should be taught about mate selection?

• Regarding divorce — what should we be teaching our congregations and youth? At what point in time do the ethics say the marriage is not salvageable? How do we deal with divorce? How does one avoid the "it was XXX fault" and "I have failed because my marriage has failed" syndromes?

I married my current wife of 25 years primarily because she made me feel good about myself. I hope that I have, over the years, been able to repay her in kind, at least to a fraction of what she has given to me.

I hope that YHWH has the following attitude:

"I have given you sexual pleasure as a gift to be enjoyed. Therefore, when you choose to enjoy the gift, be loving, spontaneous and relaxed — I won't intrude on your intimate privacy or judge your performance."

James A. Babb
Friendswood, TX

READING YOUR LATEST NUMBER on Holy Matrimony, I can see that it is a journal where I need my own personal copy.

Lloyd Moyer
Montpelier VT

Honoring Hugh White

The Witness is joining with others to celebrate the life and work of Hugh White on April 26. Between 1974 and 1984, White worked for the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (owner of *The Witness*) organizing with the Urban Bishops' Coalition, helping to draft a series of ECPC books on the economy, and hosting hearings regarding the Puerto Rican independence movement and in defense of Episcopalians jailed for not complying with Grand Jury investigations into the movement. Cards or queries about the dinner can be sent to John Hooper, Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, 4800 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48201.

The Righter trial

LET ME SHED SOME CLARITY ON SIN. Sin is when a former 815 employee who lost his job is reduced to borrowing money from friends to avoid a shelter, supplements meals by appearances at church functions and potlucks, and worries how he will survive while 10 well-fed bishops of the Church create a heresy trial costing another brother bishop possibly $200,000 in legal fees and the rest of the National Church up to $500,000 in legal bills. Sin is when these same bishops elect to use their power to punish, exhaust finances to make a point and determine that their theology is superior, all in the name of the gospel.

Frankly I believe a bit of simple Nancy Reagan advice is needed. "Just Say No" to this heresy trail. If dioceses refused to be part of this blatant act of sin and waste, perhaps the trial would not proceed. This trial should be delayed until a resolution at General convention determines if this is the will of the Church or a flagrant act of poor stewardship buoyed by overt hostility. Why let 10 bishops create a situation that costs the rest of the church almost a million dollars? If this ecclesiastical charade must go on, let the dioceses of the 10 bishops hurling the accusations pick up the tab for their folly and reckless character assault. Meanwhile, while these shepherds debate the necessity of a trial, my jobless friend faces an uncertain future. Sin is when the city of God neglects the people of God.

Patti O'Kane
Brooklyn, NY

Clergy promotion

[Ed. note: We mailed copies of the March, 1995 issue to all the clergy in the U.S.]

THE WORST "RELIGIST" MAGAZINE I've ever seen.

John M. Wallace
Stanfield, OR

THANKS FOR THE INTRODUCTORY COPY. Terrific approach to LIFE.

Thomas Schmidt
Bristol, ME

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

Nonviolence and the media

I am writing a book to be used by activists who are trying to promote nonviolence. What have you done to publicize an action, a speech, a demonstration, the very philosophy of nonviolence? Please send your stories. A share of all book sales will go to nonviolent resistance groups. Write: *If I had a pen* project, 12833E STH13, Maple, WI 54854 715-364-8533.

Russian ministry

Teleios is NT Greek for "whole, complete, lacking nothing," although often translated by the more rigidly defined word "perfect." *Teleios* in its original sense is what we at the Teleios Foundation are interested in nurturing in those we serve: our donors and travel program participants as well as elderly widows, orphans, children and seminarians. Funds received from our spiritually focused travel programs (to Russia, England, Ireland, Greece & Turkey, and the Holy Land) and from our donors provide food, clothing and medical care for "babushkas" without families and children from single-parent and very poor families, assistance to the 110 children of Orphanage #51, and support for Russian Orthodox seminarians, all in St. Petersburg, Russia. If you would like more information about the Teleios Foundation's work or travel programs, please call us at 1-800-835-3467.

Vocations

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

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Since 1917

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Cover: Wood engraving by Lynd Ward.
Back cover: *Market rest* by Edda Maria Bird. Card available through the Nicaraguan Cultural Alliance, P.O.Box 5051, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

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On being wisely invested

by Julie A. Wortman

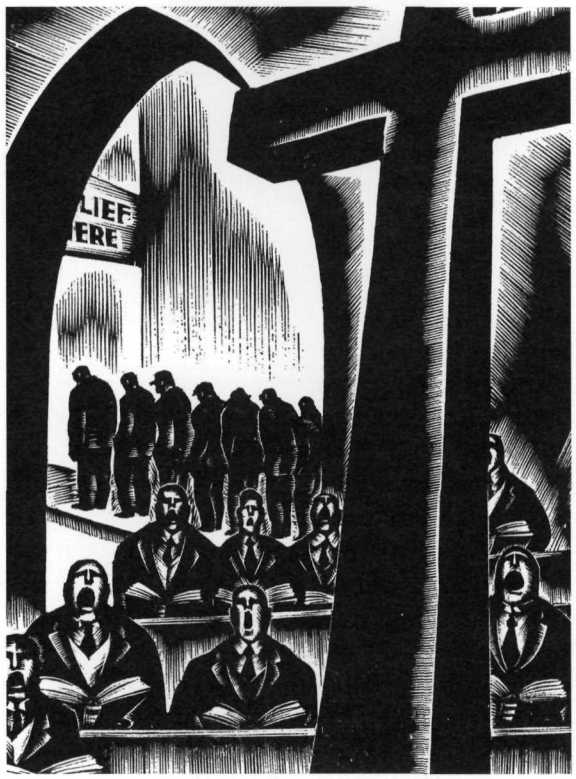
More and more financially-minded people of faith are pronouncing that there is very little for low- or no-income people in the North American church's current interest.

Instead of focussing primarily on capital appreciation and maximizing interest income to fund programmatic handouts, they say, the trustees of church funds could take the vast corpus of church money tied up in conventional stocks and bonds — representing billions of dollars — and actively and responsibly use it to liberate assets for people only too eager to liberate themselves through sustainable economic alternatives.

At the very least, they add, and without losing a dollar, they could insure that every conventional church investment portfolio is screened to promote good corporate citizenship and assume a higher profile in corporate democracy.

The problem, it would seem, is that the institutional church has become convinced that its investments can make it self-sufficient — and in the face of its riches has lost touch with its mission.

I've tuned into this only lately, after noticing that every time I see an empty refrigerator box in good condition by the side of the road I have an urge to stop, toss it into the back of my aging Ford Ranger pickup truck and haul it home. If I could save enough of these things, I would find myself thinking, I could fashion a well-insulated shelter that might eventually come in handy — a sort of hedge against an uncertain future in which, given the precarious state of my household's current finances and today's social Darwinist political climate, I nevertheless have no doubt I will be working hard to keep body and soul together.



Lynd Ward

Then I realized I had a number of friends who were feeling the same way. Most have (or are acquiring) the education, expertise and gifts to be getting by nicely right now, but how to secure an adequate retirement income, educate the children or pay off the mortgage still remains very much unresolved.

Despite the fact that we are for the most part people of racial and economic privilege, we seem to be taking to heart the question perennially on the lips of those who live at or over the economic and social edge — in what or in whom can we put our trust?

Over time we have formulated an answer which we have taken to rehearsing as we peer into the dark: Our trust is that death is not ultimate. Our trust is in our individual, God-given strengths and gifts. Our trust lies in the power that arises when we join together in community.

In effect, we are rediscovering what it means to be church.

We are attempting to realize this life in countless ways, but whether clustered together in a collection of households on two blocks in west Detroit, meeting regularly in circles for silent meditation or choosing to live in community under a single roof, we are committing ourselves not only to a life grounded in Spirit, but also to a shared fate and mutual accountability as to the Spirit's call.

No one, we assure one another, will end up living in a refrigerator box — our efforts to find economic alternatives should come to fruition before it comes to that. But even if, in the end, refrigerator-box life is all any of us can manage — the selling of souls will be out of the question — we will still have each other for warmth, both spiritual and physical.

Through such promises we are also learning, I suppose, what it means to be wisely invested — our resources committed to people and projects in which we are convinced there is something good and life-giving, something of which it is worth being a part.

editor's note

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.*

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'We do not believe in *money-lending* at interest'

The Catholic Worker
39 Spring Street
New York 12, N.Y.

July, 1960

Treasurer
City of New York

Dear Sir:

We are returning to you a check for $3,579.39 which represents interest on the $68,700 which we were awarded by the city as payment for the property at 223 Chrystie Street which we owned and lived in for almost 10 years, and used as a community for the poor. We did not voluntarily give up the property — it was taken from us by right of eminent domain for the extension of the subway which the city deemed necessary. We had to wait almost a year and a half for the money owed us, although the city permitted us to receive two-thirds of the assessed valuation of the property in advance so that we could relocate. Property owning having been made impossible for us by city regulations, we are now renting and continuing our work.

We are returning the interest on the money we have recently received because we do not believe in "money lending" at interest. As Catholics we are acquainted with the early teaching of the Church. All the early councils forbade it, declaring it reprehensible to make money by lending it out at interest. Canon law of the middle ages forbade it and in various decrees ordered that profit so obtained was to be restored. In the Christian emphasis on the duty of charity, we are commanded to lend gratuitously, to give freely, even in the case of confiscation, as in our own case — not to resist but to accept cheerfully.

We do not believe in the profit system, and so we cannot take profit or interest on our money. People who take a materialistic view of human service wish to make a profit but we are trying to do our duty by our service without wages to our brothers as Jesus commanded in the Gospel (Matt. 25). Loaning money at interest is deemed by one Franciscan as the principal scourge of civilization. Eric Gill, the English artist and writer, calls usury and war the two great problems of our time.

Since we have dealt with these problems in every issue of *The Catholic Worker* since 1933 — man's freedom, war and peace, man and the state, man and his work — and since Scripture says that the love of money is the root of all evil, we are taking this opportunity to live in practice of this belief, and make a gesture of overcoming that love of money by returning to you the interest.

Insofar as our money paid for services for the common good, and aid to the poor, we should be very happy to allow you to use not only our money without interest, but also our work, the works of mercy which we all perform here at the headquarters of *The Catholic Worker* without other salary or recompense than our daily food and lodging, clothes, and incidental expenses.

Insofar as the use of our money paid for the time being for salaries for judges who have condemned us and others to jail, and for the politicians who appointed them, and for prisons, and the execution chamber at Sing Sing, and for the executioner's salary we can only protest the use of our money and turn with utter horror from taking interest on it.

Please be assured that we are not judging individuals, but are trying to make a judgment on *the system* under which we live and with which we admit that we ourselves compromise daily in many small ways, but which we try and wish to withdraw from as much as possible.

Sincerely yours,
Dorothy Day, Editor

Dorothy Day Robert Lentz

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CHEE$E

Joyce Killer-Diller

I think that we should never freeze
Such lively assets as our cheese:

The sucker's hungry mouth is pressed
Against the cheese's caraway breast

A cheese, whose scent like sweet perfume
Pervades the house through every room.

A cheese that may at Christmas wear
A suit of cellophane underwear.

Upon whose bosom is a label,
Whose habitat: — The Tower of Babel.

Poems are nought but warmed-up breeze,
Dollars are made by Trappist Cheese.

— *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton*
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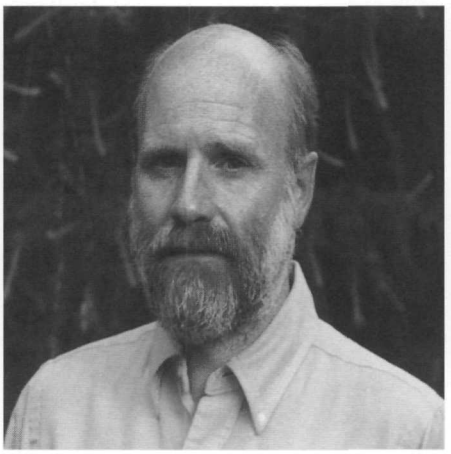
Liberating church investments:

an interview with Chuck Matthei

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Chuck Matthei has worked in alternative economics all his life. He was a founding member of the Institute for Community Economics, which is a resource for land trusts. He has directed the Community Loan Fund and now serves as president of Equity Trust, Inc., a non-profit organization with an innovative program of land reform and community development finance. Matthei advised those who set up the Economic Justice Program adopted by the Episcopal Church in 1988. His passion is for moving investors beyond socially responsible investing toward community development loans.



Chuck Matthei

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: What is your position on interest?

Chuck Matthei: Well, I come from an old Catholic Worker tradition. Dorothy [Day] was fond of reminding us all that moneylending at interest was a sin in the early church and strictly forbidden.

John Kenneth Galbraith in *Economics in Perspective*, which is a quick economic review over the ages, acknowledges that tradition, but says that the economy in biblical times was so simple that it almost can't be called an economy by modern standards. It was a traditional economy in which people labored to produce the basic commodities that they needed to survive. They had no occasion for borrowing, unless they were unable through the vagaries of weather or disability or other reasons to produce what they needed to keep them alive. In that case, they would turn to a neighbor for help. Galbraith says that in that context it seems quite inconsistent with the spirit of Christian community to exact an interest charge. You're taking advantage of your neighbor or brother or sister just at their moment of greatest need.

But then, he says, we went from that very simple economy to market capitalism. People began to borrow in order to make money. In that context, thinking about interest began to change. If it seemed inappropriate to take advantage of someone at a time of personal need, it seemed only fair to expect a share of the profit that they would make when they took your money to do business in the marketplace. Galbraith says that the prohibition against moneylending at interest — against usury — was no longer required as the economy evolved into modern merchant capitalism.

J.W-K.: Do you share Galbraith's view?

C.M.: No. It may be true that the economy as a whole has evolved and changed dramatically since biblical times, but the realities of life for millions of our brothers and sisters in our neighborhoods and around the world have not changed significantly. They're standing in front of us asking if we will make available to them the capital that they need to secure access to land and basic productive resources with which to meet the most basic needs of themselves and their families. We are confronted as investors with that appeal. In that context, the early principles are not any less relevant today than they were 2,000 years ago.

J.W-K.: When you approach church trustees, asking to liberate their investments for community development investments, what kind of response do you get?

C.M.: If I say to church trustees that I want to propose that they take a portion of the funds in their care and invest them in community development projects, the committee will almost invariably respond, "We certainly appreciate the intention of your proposal, but our responsibility as trustees is to maximize the return on our investments. We use the earnings to fund a variety of charitable programs. We're not only paying to maintain this edifice, we're also providing services to the community and to the needy and funding all those initiatives with the earnings on our investments, so we have to maximize those earnings."

J.W-K.: And that's a response that you aren't satisfied with?

C.M.: No, I'm not satisfied with it. It violates the most fundamental relationship between ends and means. My friend Wally Nelson likes to say: Of course it is necessary that the means be consistent with the ends, because there is no end. Life is about the means.

Multiplying economic outreach

We like to say to people, "Look, there are certain legitimate charitable purposes which can only be served through chari-

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

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table gifts. But there are any number of other equally important charitable purposes that can be accomplished through loans which not only meet peoples' needs today, but give them the ability to meet their own needs tomorrow. A combination of traditional charity and community investment can be a much more effective use of the church's resources to further gospel purposes."

For example, using simple interest for a simple discussion, if you had $100,000 invested in a conventional bond at eight percent, you would have $8,000 of earnings this year which you could then distribute as charity.

If instead you took that $100,000 and made it available through a community development loan fund for affordable housing, cooperative businesses or financing construction of facilities in which to carry on social services, you might have only $4,000 of earnings this year off that $100,000 investment. Which means your capacity to *give away* money has dropped from $8,000 to $4,000. You've lost $4,000 of traditional philanthropic capacity. But for every dollar you gave up in charitable giving, you have made $25 available for social development. Twenty-five-to-one is a very effective leverage.

And in some cases there won't even be a four percent difference between what you could get in a CD, bond or money market account and what you would get from a community development loan fund.

If the difference is three percent, then you've leveraged it 33-to-one. If it's a two percent difference, then you've leveraged it 50-to-one!

To suggest that somehow if we accept any reduction in earnings on church investments, we have given up or significantly diminished our capacity to serve gospel purposes is faulty reasoning, not only from a moral perspective, but from a business perspective.

Liberating the assets of low-income neighborhoods

J.W-K.: Can you put a human face on your commitment to putting investments at the disposal of people in low-income neighborhoods?

C.M.: Think about credit. All across this country, if you go into low-income communities and do a cash flow analysis, you find that they have more on deposit in financial institutions than those institutions are making available in credit for the development of those communities.

It's legitimate to say that people have to take responsibility for themselves and their families, but you have to make sure that they have full access to their assets.

A study was done in Brooklyn a few years back. They found that the discrepancy between deposits into the institutions and lending back into the community was something like $2 billion.

The underlying assumption, despite all the movement that has occurred in recent years in the churches, is that community-development investments are inherently high-risk, low-return, difficult to analyze, place and manage.

—Chuck Matthei

My friend Chuck Jacobs, who is a Lakota Sioux, lives on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. When he did a study of the reservation he found that there was no financial institution on the reservation and that it was very difficult for tribal members to obtain credit in bordertown banks. But at any given moment the tribe and its members had $25 million in deposits in those bordertown banks that wouldn't lend to Indians!

Politics within church groups

J.W-K: What is the best way for social justice advocates to approach trustees?

C.M.: In so many congregations there is a very substantial division between the social justice committee in the church and the trustees. They may be friendly, they may meet over coffee and cookies after services, but they've lost the ability to work together.

We recommend to social justice advocates that they learn the vocabulary so that they come in not simply speaking the language of social justice, but talking about risk, return, liquidity. They must be able to talk about the different kinds of investments that make up a church portfolio. They must know the difference between debt and equity, the difference between stocks, bonds and certificates of deposit. They must be able to do analysis of the effective and efficient use of church resources. They also need to utilize people outside their congregation who can talk with the combined group — the social justice people and the trustees — about community investment, economic performance and the development of the field as a financial discipline as well as talking with them about the tremendous impact that community investment has had in many low-income communities.

What you find is that in most cases people will very quickly concede or genuinely appreciate your motivation in proposing community investment, but they're skeptical about it as a business practice.

The underlying assumption, despite all the movement that has occurred in recent years in the churches, is that community-development investments are inherently high-risk, low-return, difficult to analyze, place and manage.

J.W-K.: And that's not true?

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C.M.: No, there are now established community investment intermediaries with strong track records that can provide secure, effective and simple vehicles through which the church can put these resources to work in serving gospel purposes. And the church should, in almost every instance, utilize those intermediaries as opposed to becoming a direct lender itself. The early community investment experience of the church was very mixed.

Fiascoes with church funds

In 1980 when I developed the Community Loan Fund which I directed for a number of years, church leaders would often say "Thank you for coming and for explaining your plans and your efforts to us. God's blessings be with you. It's a noble cause. But we've been down this path before, and frankly we've lost a lot of money."

The church made loans early on without first putting in place the kind of capabilities, structures and practices that a sound community lending program requires. You *do* need to do careful analysis. Not only asking, is there a social need for this project, but is the project well-designed? Does it project the right combination of debt and equity? Is the financing structured appropriately? Will this project succeed? Ultimately, if the project doesn't succeed financially, it won't succeed socially.

Current criteria for church loans

J.W-K.: What are the criteria when your loan officers consider a plan?

C.M.: We say during training, "What you must understand is that in our business as community investment practitioners, the conventional burden of proof is reversed. Listen to the applicants and look at their community. Is this project responsive to a need in the community? Are these people of integrity? If the answers are yes, then the burden of proof is on you, the loan officer, to explain why this loan cannot be made.

You may say the project responds to the need, but the plan for the project is not feasible. Fine. Help them prepare a feasible plan. That may mean a different combination of debt and equity. It may mean different loan terms. Help them prepare a feasible plan.

J.W-K.: Do you ever refuse loans saying, "You're not a person of integrity?"

C.M.: I don't know if I've ever said those words. I don't think we've rejected a loan for that reason alone. But one of the reasons why low-income people, ethnic minorities, women have traditionally had a hard time getting loans has to do with the character decision. The lender would look across the desk and say "But who *is* she? I don't know her. I don't know anybody who *does* know her. We don't mix in the same circles." That's where the class divisions have taken effect — it's not always conscious prejudice or malicious intent.

The church made loans early on without first putting in place the kind of capabilities, structures and practices that a sound community lending program requires. Ultimately, if the project doesn't succeed financially, it won't succeed socially.

J.W-K.: That's why I think churches probably run scared of dealing with borrowers directly.

C.M.: Sure, you need is to be able to make those character decisions, right? Not naively by just assuming that everyone is of good character. But not fearfully by assuming that you can't afford to do business with anyone who doesn't live in your neighborhood, look like you look, speak the language you speak.

One of our jobs as community development lenders is to make sure we have the range of experiences, familiarity with places and circumstances and a network of contacts at the grass roots that enables us to make those character decisions.

We don't have to divorce compassion from common sense. We don't have to divorce faith from finance. There's room to put these things together.

Beyond circled wagons

J.W-K.: What other implications are there if you hold faith and finance together?

C.M.: The church has to continue to look at *other* aspects of its financial life as well. Are the operating costs too high? Is the church overhoused? Are we spending more money than makes sense to meet our own institutional needs or to provide our own institutional comforts? That's an ongoing process.

There is the parable of the person who has a bit and gives it away — more comes, and you give that away and still more comes. We need to think about this not as a decision made from inside the circled wagons, but as a much more expansive and dynamic process by which the church becomes a part of the community and the community increasingly becomes a part of the church. It can have a lot to do with the vitality, and perhaps even with the economic survival, of the church as an institution. We don't always survive by adopting the most fearful and defensive projects.

A case in point

J.W-K.: Tell me one story that you would tell trustees about a church investment that made a difference.

C.M.: Several years ago, my colleagues at the Institute for Community Economics and I received a desperate appeal from a

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group of 95 households in a mobile home park in Massachusetts. Who lives in mobile home parks? Elderly people and poor people by and large, right? And of course the term "mobile" is something of a euphemism. The average length of stay was 15 or 20 years. People had built porches, garages and tool sheds. These homes were not mobile. If you ripped them off their sites and had nowhere else to put them, the value is reduced almost to scrap metal.

But these 95 households in an established, stable mobile park received notice that the corporation which owned the land was going to sell it to a condominium developer, who would order all of them, at their own expense, to remove their mobile homes.

Single lots in that town were $40,000 each. No one could afford one, and there was no other site available, large enough, to accommodate all of these households.

They were faced with losing everything. They wanted to make a counterproposal to the corporation that owned the mobile home park land that the residents buy it and turn it into a limited equity cooperative that would always be available and affordable to low and moderate income mobile home owners. But the only bank offer they *were* able to obtain was for a loan which would cost four points on closing, two and one half percent over prime variable monthly, no upper limit, three-year balloon. The most punitive of commercial loans.

They were desperate. The problem from our perspective was that they needed a very large amount of money. And not only was it not financially appropriate for us to keep such a large amount in a single placement for an extended period, but it also would affect our ability to meet the needs of many other organizations and individuals who would come along.

So we said to them, "We will make this loan, the largest we've ever made, and help you save your homes. But we don't have long-term funds available, so we will make this loan if together we can work to open up other sources."

He that putteth not out his money to usury, **The Stuttgart Psalter, c. 830**

We made the loan. They saved their homes and created this mobile home park cooperative. Within a year and a half, being able to document that they were making their payments on time and that the project was socially beneficial, we were able to persuade several banks to make loans. We were able to persuade the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency to open its home mortgage loan program to mobile home park cooperatives and ultimately the Massachusetts legislature passed a bill giving mobile home owners the statutory right of refusal before their parks could be sold to any other party.

Taking it personally

J.W-K.: In your own life, do you take interest on any savings that you may have from time to time?

C.M.: What savings? From time to time I've had a few hundred dollars, sometimes in a drawer and sometimes in a no-interest loan fund.

J.W-K.: How have you dealt with pension funds for people who work for you?

C.M.: Who work here? We don't have one. We live hand to mouth.

With a savings or pension, just as with insurance, you're always weighing your possible future need against the real present need of your neighbors.

I'm not saying that we should ignore our future needs altogether, although the gospel might talk about the birds of the air, but we it seems to me that your possible needs have to be addressed in relation to the real needs of your neighbors. If one had to take precedence over the other, it's awfully hard, from a philosophical perspective, to avoid saying that the immediate need ought to have precedence over the possible need.

But at a minimum, if we're going to try to provide for the possible needs, we ought to do it in such a way that we're also providing for the real needs. I think perhaps the most fundamental economic issue is: How much is enough? TW

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Socially responsible investing:

Concluding the search for profitable responsibility

by Julie A. Wortman

Let's say you are someone who cares deeply about preserving the natural environment and protecting wildlife. Imagine discovering that one of the environmental organizations you support, say your state's Audubon Society, invests its money in corporations that have a terrible track record when it comes to polluting wildlife habitat. You'd be outraged, right? You'd wonder, "How in heaven's name can these people put so much energy into fighting pollution while at the same time supporting companies that are among the worse offenders?"

But that is exactly what is happening, according to Chitra Staley, a senior vice president at Boston's Franklin Research and Development Corporation, one of a handful out of the more than 7000 registered investment managers in this country that exclusively do socially responsible investing (SRI).

"It's a scandal," Staley says. "The Audubon Societies and other environmental groups have not been the prime movers in SRI. They have boards of trustees who just don't see their responsibility as avoiding investing in companies that harm the environment. It is absolutely inconsistent."

Religious investors, Staley says, have done better.

"Church groups have been accepting [of SRI]," she says. "The Quakers have been most receptive and they have been the most congenial to work with. Roman Catholic and Episcopal Church investors have also been accepting." The Lutherans and the Presbyterians also do some screening, she added.

The call for anti-apartheid divestment in the 1970s renewed many church investors' awareness that their fiduciary role could — even should — include squaring their means of securing financial stability and growth with their institutional *raison d'etre*. As attorney William McKeown noted in a legal memorandum prepared for the Episcopal Church, "a charity's governing board must manage assets of an ongoing enterprise in order to carry out its purposes, not merely to conserve and generate income."

By 1971 denominational and religious entities were coordinating shareholder divestment campaigns through the newly formed New York-based Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility. The success of these efforts, according to Staley, "broadened people's vision of what could be accomplished through shareholder activism," so that while some institutional investors divested from South Africa and then went back to investing as usual, many others began to question corporate citizenship from other perspectives.

Victories through consultation

Sophistication in the area of social screening, in fact, has grown enormously in the last 25 years. Catholic Health Care West (CHCW), for example, a coalition of health-care organizations run by the Sisters of Mercy, the Adrian Dominicans and the western province of the Daughters of Charity, has scored impressive shareholder victories in the areas of tobacco advertising, equal credit opportunity policies and patient assistance — all issues related to an overall investment policy goal of "promoting health and healing," according to Susan Vickers, CHCW's director of advocacy.

She cites CHCW's efforts to insure that low-income patients can get access to needed, but expensive, prescriptions. "We bring together representatives of the pharmaceutical companies, other shareholders, health care providers and community clinics to look at the ethics of what is going on in the marketplace," Vickers says. This sort of consultation focuses on problem-solving rather than on adversarial sparring.

"Our first emphasis was negative screens, but we have now refined our screens to be less arbitrary — we do more balancing of pros and cons. We see our portfolio as a vehicle for advocacy."

— Susan Vickers, Catholic Health Care West

But CHCW doesn't shy from climbing into the ring, either. Recently it has invested in a California oil company, UNOCAL, specifically so that it could use its shareholder status to both protest the company's pollution of San Francisco Bay — an action that Vickers says is affecting the ability of low-income immigrants to catch fish to feed their families — and marshall shareholder opposition to the company's operations in Burma, permission for which it pays that country's repressive military regime.

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*.

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Casting out the money changers — Robert McGovern

The evolution of CHCW's SRI activism — what Franklin's Staley characterizes as a move from "negative" to "positive" screening — typifies that of other socially-concerned investors.

"Our first emphasis was negative screens, but we have now refined our screens to be less arbitrary — we do more balancing of pros and cons," Vickers explains. "We see our portfolio as a vehicle for advocacy."

'Appeal' process

CHCW even utilizes an "appeal" process that allows it to reconsider investing in companies that fail its basic screens — for example, its requirement that a company make no more than 10 percent in profits from tobacco-related sales — if they show good performance in other respects, such as in workplace safety, supplier standards or in environmental and hiring policies. If CHCW decided to invest in such a firm, it would then begin to work at the tobacco issue through shareholder resolutions or consultation.

But although CHCW places a premium on its SRI focus, financial concerns have in no way taken a backseat. In fact, CHCW has routinely exceeded its financial goals for its investments.

"We've never seen any evidence that SRI conflicts with our fiduciary responsibility," Vickers stresses.

CHCW's experience in this respect seems to be typical. According to Episcopal Church SRI consultant Harry Van Buren, SRI has increasingly become the province of experienced financial planners or money managers who share their peers' competitive desire to achieve the strongest possible financial performance for the portfolios in their care.

"The industry has matured considerably," Van Buren says. "In the past SRI money managers tended not to use effective market-timing strategies — they tended to be more conservative than was profitable."

According to the 1,500-member Social Investment Forum, an organization which promotes socially and environmentally responsible investing, an estimated $639 billion, or $1 out of every $10 under professional management in the U.S. today, is held in SRI portfolios (more than $142 billion is managed with three or more sets of screens).

"We don't want screened and unscreened investments to perform differently," stresses Geeta Bhidé, president and principal portfolio manager of Walden Capital Management, a firm exclusively devoted to the social screening of international stocks, a cutting-edge endeavor in the SRI field. Walden Capital is teamed with the highly respected equity manager, Brandywine Asset Management of Wilmington, Del. If Walden turns up research that makes a financially desirable stock unacceptable for social-justice reasons, Bhidé says, she and her counterpart at Brandywine, Paul Ehrlichman, work to find other stocks for investment that are equally valued and subject to the same beneficial trends of the rejected stock — a practice that responds to investors' desires for both risk-reducing diversification and portfolio growth.

Franklin's Staley acknowledges that performing the sort of complex social

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screening that SRI firms like Franklin and Walden perform comes at a cost that most conventional investment managers believe is too high. But Franklin's employees are willing to accept a lower profit margin, she says, because they are individually committed to creating positive social change.

"We are non-capitalists working in a capitalist world," she quips ruefully, though she quickly points out that the research Franklin does for its clients also pays off for them financially.

"We do a greater amount of research on qualitative as well as quantitative issues. We get to know how a company runs. We feel we get to know each company better than our non-SRI competitors do and so have a better idea of how they will perform."

Doing "the right thing," Staley and other SRI activists also believe, will produce "a larger bottom line" because good corporate citizens tend to operate more efficiently, with less waste and better employee commitment to quality.

"We believe the term 'social responsibility' is another way to say 'common sense,'" Steven J. Schueth, president of Calvert Distributors, Inc., a "family" of socially responsible mutual funds, told those attending ICCR's 25th Anniversary Dinner in New York last November. "We believe that socially responsible business is simply 'good business.' We believe that over time, the more enlightened, responsible companies will do better — better for us as investors and better for us all as members of a growing vibrant, healthy society."

Post-apartheid malaise

The public-relations tone of Schueth's remarks is unmistakable, however. While the field of SRI has emerged from the anti-apartheid divestment era as a real force in the investment arena — in good measure with the help of committed religious investors — the religious community has by no means yet put its full financial power to work on behalf of that "vibrant, healthy society" for which Schueth is hoping. The Episcopal Church's Harry Van Buren, for example, believes that most Episcopal Church dioceses ended any strong involvement with screening their investments or participating in shareholder activism once they divested from holdings that supported apartheid in South Africa.

"We do a greater amount of research on qualitative as well as quantitative issues. We get to know how a company runs. We feel we get to know each company better than our non-SRI competitors do and so have a better idea of how they will perform."

— Chitra Staley, Franklin Research

"I'm not aware of very many dioceses having carefully considered SRI investment policies," he says, "except, perhaps, with respect to tobacco, since the national church has a definite policy on not investing in the tobacco industry. And I have no sense of any broadly coordinated SRI activity among the dioceses."

Other denominations, Van Buren says, appear to be similarly passive at the regional and local levels even if, like the Episcopal Church, they are active in SRI nationally. About 70 religious entities, from Catholic religious orders to national denominations, maintain active membership in ICCR. If every Episcopal diocese joined, ICCR's membership roll would more than double. And if local bodies of other denominations joined there would be an even greater impact, giving ICCR considerably more clout in shareholder reform efforts.

Unfortunately, Van Buren says, there is still a perception among many who sit on church boards of trustees "that SRI means a lower rate of return on your money," despite considerable evidence to the contrary.

"Local church interest in SRI tends to be issue-driven and news-driven," Van Buren says, citing a call he received from a diocese following the Nigerian government's execution of nine Ogoni activists last November. The caller wanted to know how the diocese could become involved in efforts to pressure oil companies operating in Nigeria to take a proactive role in supporting democracy there.

Issuing a challenge?

Van Buren hopes local Episcopal Church entities can be challenged to be more consistently concerned about the social impact of their investments, but he acknowledges that most feel they lack the time and expertise to follow through. Using money managers that are entirely socially responsible — like Franklin, Walden, or the Calvert Group — could make a big difference, he said, "but the decision to use this type of manager would have to be justified in terms of financial performance as well as on social grounds" to satisfy most church trustees.

But, 25 years into the SRI movement, maybe it is time for socially concerned church people, like members of Audubon societies, to demand that the burden of proof be shifted. Can those entrusted with the church's investment wealth show that the financial performance of the portfolios they safeguard can be justified on social grounds?

It's just a matter of trying to make sure that the oil-coated bird we're hoping to save isn't one we're helping to kill. TW

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Jubilee 2000: a vision for debt relief

by Titus Presler

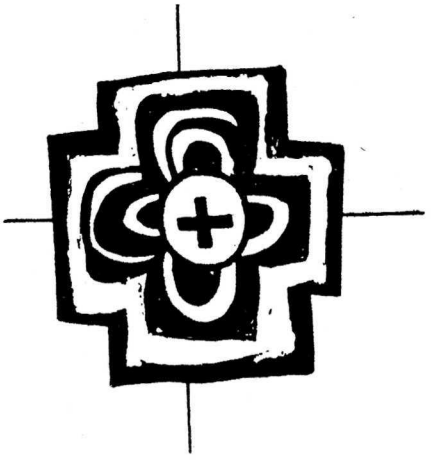
In 1994 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution "that the year 2000, which will commemorate two millennia since the birth of Jesus, the herald of God's Jubilee, be a Jubilee Year, to be known as Jubilee 2000."

In light of the global debt crisis that deepens poverty throughout the Two-Thirds World, the convention charged the church to "prepare for this Jubilee Year by seeking to implement the biblical Jubilee imperative of debt forgiveness by: affirming current initiatives to reduce and cancel [Third World debts] in the industrialized world and offering this church's voice and vision to the strengthening of such efforts."

The convention also committed the church to "participating in the development of sound financial plans for the reduction and cancellation of debts owed by the poor in our own society to financial institutions."

But the Executive Council has yet to respond to the convention's request that it develop plans to implement Jubilee 2000, which also emphasizes environmental renewal and human liberation.

Jubilee is a vision of liberation rooted in God's revelation to ancient Israel, a vision presented most fully in Leviticus 25, where the Israelites are instructed to celebrate a Jubilee every 50 years by forgiving debts, allowing the land to remain fallow and releasing economic slaves. Although there is little evidence that the Jubilee was implemented extensively in Israel, the vision offered a challenge. According to Luke's gospel, Jesus opened his ministry with a Jubilee announcement. Proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord," Jesus said the Spirit of the Lord had anointed him " to preach good news to the poor ... release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Jesus' ministry incarnated the Jubilee and the earliest Christians sought to live out Jubilee patterns of justice and sharing in community life (see Acts 2:43-47).



Mignon

The oppressive debts of the poor are the economic focus of Jubilee 2000. What is oppressive debt? It is debt that binds the poor ever more deeply over time rather than empowering them for financial self-reliance and freedom.

"We are a Jubilee people, and Jubilee in the Bible is giving people another chance," South Africa's archbishop, Desmond Tutu, declared at a General Convention forum in 1994. Obviously, judgments about "Jubilee eligibility" are not easy, but neither were they easy in Jesus' day, and we do have some tools with which to work. The United Nations uses a category of Severely Indebted Low-Income Countries (SILICs), 80 percent of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. At the end of 1993 only 42 percent of the SILIC's met contractual obligations; they accumulated arrears of $56 billion.

Offering three criteria that could guide Jubilee 2000, Tutu says debts should be cancelled for countries that demonstrate that they are moving toward democracy, improving their human rights record and will use the saved installments to benefit ordinary people rather than wealthy elites.

Debt buy-backs and debt-for-nature swaps are among the many methods that have been proposed for debt relief on an international scale, but with limited success.

A more recent proposal by the U.S.-Africa Business Council in Cambridge, Mass., is Direct Expatriate Nationals Investments (DENI). Under this plan, Africans living abroad (1.4 million in North America alone) would be invited to buy African government-to-government debts with hard currency at a 90-percent discount, for which they would receive full-value stakes in privatized utilities and industries in their home countries. Benefits for African SILICs would include debt reduction or elimination, investment in important enterprises, and the possible return of skilled managers and technicians who might follow their financial investments at home.

The year 2000 will be celebrated with hoopla throughout the world. Should not the church of Jesus Christ mark that occasion with the most striking, the most challenging, the most prophetic signs of discipleship to which Jesus calls us — the signs of the Reign of God? TW

Titus Presler is rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cambridge, Mass., where he lectures in Anglican, Global and Ecumenical Studies at the Episcopal Divinity School. He invites readers, parishes and dioceses to join a Jubilee 2000 Network now being formed. The address at St. Peter's is PO Box 390390, Cambridge, MA 02139; 617-547-7788; fax 617-868-6818.

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Investing in alternatives: the right place for church money

by Amata Miller, IHM

"The money in your vaults belongs to the destitute. All you might help and do not — to all these — you are doing wrong." Words like these of the early Christian writer, Basil the Elder, have over the past two decades inspired increasing numbers of people of faith as individuals and communities to direct a portion of their investments to those without access to capital from conventional sources.

In complex monetized societies, access to capital is key to being able to provide for oneself and one's family. Thus, the call of justice is to go beyond almsgiving to opening new avenues for participation in the marketplace. In addition, Christians are called to give witness to the coming of the Reign of God by creating new economic and social structures which embody the transformational principles of the Gospel.

So why are religious investors slow to respond to these calls as they make their investment decisions?

John Haughey, S.J. writes in a profound little book, *The Holy Use of Money: Personal Finances in Light of Christian Faith* (Doubleday, 1986), of the "mammon illness" which afflicts modern society. One of the symptoms of this sickness of the spirit is the split consciousness by which we situate God above this pedestrian world (especially that of money) and then get on with our lives in the other cordoned off segment of our daily lives in the real world.

What hinders financial decision-makers in religious bodies? There is lack of knowledge of the realities of alternative investors. These developments do not make it to the pages of The Wall Street Journal *and* Business Week.

Haughey summarizes the effects: We read the Gospel as if we had no money, and we spend our money as if we know nothing of the Gospel. Individual conversion to a unitary consciousness and church development of a theology and spirituality of secularity are required to cure this illness.

The activity of religious investors in the arena of alternative investing over the past 20 years exhibits a movement toward that unitary consciousness. Investing relatively small portions of their total investment portfolios, central church bodies, local parishes and congregations, and orders of men and women religious as well as individual investors have committed between $300 and $350 million in loans on favorable terms to enable low-income individuals and communities to move toward self-reliance. This has complemented similar kinds of investments by foundations such as Ford and Mott, and Program Related Investments (PRIs) of corporations.

Religious investors have provided major capital resources for an array of alternative economic institutions:

- community development banks such as Chicago's South Shore Bank, pioneer of reinvestment in decaying urban neighborhoods;
- community development credit unions such as Self-Help Credit Union making capital available for grass roots development efforts in rural North Carolina;
- worker-owned businesses like the Worker-Owned Sewing Company, preserver of the jobs of a group of textile workers in rural North Carolina;
- non-profit developers of service-enriched affordable housing like Denver's Mercy Housing, Incorporated;
- microenterprise lenders such as ACCION, implementer of the successful Grameen Bank model of lending small amounts to workers in the informal sector in Latin America and inner cities of the U.S.; and
- worker-owned cooperatives such as Equal Exchange, marketing agent for Third World farmers and cooperative coffee producers.

In addition to direct lending, religious investors have served as guarantors of loans, have authorized lines of credit and provided key bridge loans that have leveraged access to other funds for these alternative economic institutions. Increasingly sophisticated arrangements and linkages now increase the security of alterna-

Economist **Amata Miller, IHM,** is adjunct staff member of NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby and chief financial officer of Marygrove College in Detroit, Mich. A member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary based in Monroe, Mich., she has been involved in alternative investing for 20 years and sits on the board of Chicago's South Shore Bank and a variety of other alternative investment organizations.

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tive investments, improve the prospects of borrower success, increase the array of investment options for both lenders and borrowers and make possible international alternative investments in ways that minimize risks.

The religious pioneers in the alternative investment movement report repayment rates that conventional bankers would envy. For example, the Partners for the Common Good Loan Fund, a five-year $3.5 million partnership of religious investors for alternative investments, had a repayment record of 99.7 percent of the money loaned out. ACCION International, the microenterprise lender to the poorest of informal sector workers, reports a repayment rate of 98 percent.

Now is the time for churches and individual religious investors to build on the experience of the pioneers and commit much larger shares of their investments to alternative investments — to make their money speak their language about what is necessary for a just society.

The current political rhetoric emphasizes self-help, lifting oneself up by one's bootstraps. Alternative investors provide bootstraps for those currently without shoes. And they do it in ways that do not increase dependency, but move people toward self-reliance and sustained participation in the marketplace.

Reduced public support for systemic change in poor neighborhoods and poor nations challenges religious investors to do more.

As economic alternatives aimed at providing access to the currently excluded expand in scope and market sophistication, new needs appear. Today, successful community development banks like South Shore still need more equity capital in order to meet requests for replication of their model in other cities and nations. The initial investors of "patient money" put up the first equity capital and religious investors made deposits which initially paid below-market rates. Now, more equity investors are needed.

Earth Trade, an Oakland, California based company works with cooperatives and small farmers in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mexico and North America to market organic food products and foster sustainable development. Religious investors have been important sources of loans for Earth Trade's activities. But increased equity investment is now essential in order to meet the demands for expansion of work with small farmers — to enable them to finance their crops and to purchase processing equipment. Earth Trade has just completed a first stock offering, but found many religious investors reluctant to take the next step into this form of alternative investment.

Helen Siegl

What hinders financial decision-makers in religious bodies?

In addition to the split consciousness to which we are all conditioned in our society, there is lack of knowledge of the realities and achievements of alternative investors. These developments do not make it to the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week*. So, the definition of "fiduciary responsibility" is narrowly focused on conventional measures of financial return.

But "fiduciary responsibility" in any organization is related to the purpose of the monies being stewarded. In the case of religious bodies the mission (and indeed the legally specified purpose) embodies social responsibility. Trustees of church funds, to be faithful fiduciaries, have to take into account *both* the financial and the social return on the investments. A legitimate portfolio for a religious body should be structured so as to maximize both. Given the array of alternative investments with different rates of return, degrees of risk and terms of commitment, it is possible to "ladder" alternative investments as well as conventional ones.

Trustees of church bodies now have an experienced body of successful pioneers of alternative investments on whom they can rely for advice. To name but a few: Carol Coston of the Partners for the Common Good 2000; Mary Houghton and Ron Grzywinski of Shorebank; Peter Camejo of Progressive Asset Management; Patricia O'Roark of the Mercy Loan Fund. All of these people have years of experience and have developed impressive linkages and credibility within financial circles as well.

A whole world of exciting success stories about alternative investment is waiting to be shared with church bodies and individual church members. In a time of widespread pessimism, these signs of hope need to be shared — both to energize religious investors to move more aggressively into alternative investments and to give beneficiaries of church pension funds the comfort of knowing that their pensions are being earned in ways that correspond with their values.

What are the churches waiting for? TW

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L.A. pioneers diocesan credit union

by Marianne Arbogast

An unemployed AIDS patient just released from the hospital wanted $300 to repair his car.

A low-income mother asked for money to replace her broken refrigerator.

These requests, typical of the loan applications which cross Urla Price's desk, would have been rejected instantly by most financial institutions. But the Episcopal Community Federal Credit Union in Los Angeles, where Price is CEO, is not typical.

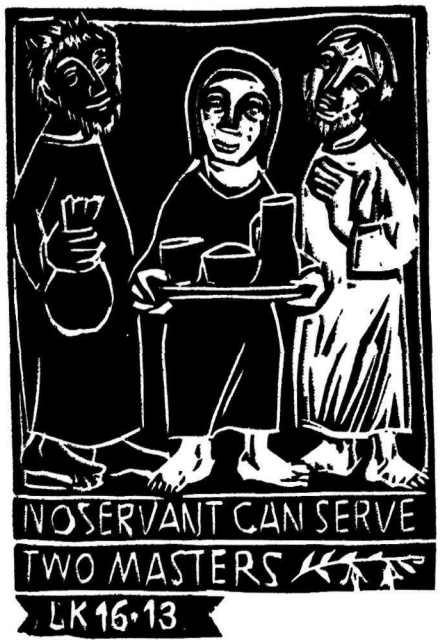
The car repair loan was approved, enabling the borrower to find and keep a new job. And when Price discovered that the latter applicant needed not only a refrigerator, but a stove and beds for her children, she offered her a loan large enough to purchase all of these.

"We lend to people on unemployment and welfare, as long as they have a source of income we can verify," Price said. "Members borrow for education, medical emergencies, bill consolidation, furniture and auto purchases."

Founded as part of the national church's economic justice program, the Los Angeles credit union is the first — and only — Episcopal diocesan credit union in the country. As a community development credit union, it is "designed specifically to work with poor people, providing economic services to a poor community," says Gloria Brown, former Economic Justice Officer for the national church.

Brown was loaned to the diocese to coordinate the founding of the credit union after the 1992 uprising in Los Angeles.

"The national church gave a grant of $300,000 to help the diocese deal with the unrest," she says. "The diocese decided to use the major amount of this money for the development of a credit union."



Helen Siegl

With Brown's full-time leadership, the groundwork was swiftly completed, and the credit union received its charter in just two years. Approved in May of 1994, the charter offers membership to any individual, institution, or affiliate of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. This includes participants in food distribution programs, after-school tutoring, AIDS ministry, and any other Episcopal church venture.

"We serve very poor people," Brown says. "Because credit unions are cooperative, non-profit agencies, they provide us a way to be in partnership, not just Lady Bountiful. A community development credit union is a federal financial institution owned and operated by poor people."

Currently staffed by Price and one part-time employee, the credit union offers share (savings) accounts, unsecured loans of up to $5,000, secured loans and new and used auto loans.

Poor people often fall prey to unscrupulous moneylenders, Price says, telling of a woman who had borrowed $6,000 from a financial company which charged her more than 20-percent interest, *and* required both her house and car as security. When she was offered a 12-percent credit union loan to pay off the debt, the company told her she would have to pay a $3,000 penalty over two years. Price intervened, and the penalty was reduced to $441.

"They always take advantage, especially in the Hispanic community," Price says. "When people don't have any credit, they charge 20 to 25 percent interest. People mean well, and want to pay off their loans, but it's eating up their money, and they don't have money for meals for their children."

"Because credit unions are cooperative non-profit agencies, they provide us a way to be in partnership, not just Lady Bountiful."

— Gloria Brown

Since the credit union — housed in a small office at the Diocese — is not yet equipped to cash checks, they have arranged for the checks they issue to be processed through the nearby Department of Water and Power Credit Union.

With over 2,000 members and $1.4 million in assets — of which $850,000 is currently loaned out — the credit union is already making a significant impact on the community it serves.

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.*

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But Price and the board have bigger plans. They would like to be able to offer "microenterprise" loans to small businesses, in conjunction with training programs for entrepreneurs. And they intend to develop a full-service financial institution — complete with share-draft (checking) accounts, debit/credit cards and ATM services — which can supply day-to-day banking services for all of the institutions and individuals of the Diocese.

"Banks are gouging people with checking fees," Price says. "A lot of poor people go out and buy money orders. They go to check cashing companies which charge them $10 or $12 per check."

For services to expand, the credit union must increase its retained earnings on loans and investments. They are appealing to endowed parishes throughout the U.S. to support the credit union from a mission standpoint by making long-term investments at a low rate of return.

Brown reports that the Los Angeles credit union has generated "a great deal of interest" in other dioceses.

She believes that it is one of the easiest and most effective initiatives the church can take for economic justice.

"It does not require a lot of money — it's mostly a people investment," she says. "It requires some person or persons willing to provide organizing time to put it together."

Credit unions range from small-scale operations staffed by volunteers to large establishments offering a full spectrum of financial services, says Diana Shaw, church credit union officer for the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions (NFCDCU). While agreeing that "minimal investment dollars" are required, she points out that strong funding enables a credit union to grow and to offer a wide range of services. Often banks and corporations are willing to contribute support to demonstrate their civic commitment, she says.

Shaw stresses the need for serious, long-term commitment.

Getting started requires "a lot of legwork," she says. "You need a strong marketing campaign, to notify those you wish to include in your field of membership. You need to go to financial institutions and large capital organizations to ask them to invest in the community. It's very important to have committed volunteers."

Organizers must obtain pledges from prospective members, develop a business plan, and create a charter that meets the approval of the National Credit Union Association.

But help is readily available. The NFCDCU (which received a grant several years ago from the national church to work with dioceses interested in developing credit unions) can "provide members with the tools they need to service the members they want to service," Shaw says.

Price is also willing to offer assistance. "There are a lot of experienced individuals who have set this credit union up," she says. "If others are thinking about this kind of project, we can help."

Shaw says that the need for credit unions is growing.

"The church is the only stable institution in a lot of communities, especially in large cities," she says. "Banks and businesses have moved out. The credit union is a vehicle for financial ministry."

Brown is proud that the board of the Episcopal Community Credit Union includes a diverse group of members from varying walks of life.

"The decision-people are not just professional bankers," she says. "The people making the decisions are drawn from the community that we are as a church. It really does provide a way for us to do the work we say we are about — a practical way to live out our baptismal vows, the responsibility of kin for kin." TW

ECPC investments

Two years ago, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (ECPC) board, which owns *The Witness*, learned they were owners of stock in top corporations engaged in weapons productions and nuclear power.

Board members quickly regrouped and moved the ECPC endowment from Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., a conventional money-managing firm, to one of the oldest SRI firms: Franklin Research & Development in Boston. Franklin shapes its screens according to the concerns of each client, generally avoiding corporations engaged in military research and production, nuclear power, or which fail to provide safe or non-discriminatory working conditions.

"The shocking thing was that we thought we were being socially responsible by giving Brown Brothers the don't-buy list from the Episcopal Church, but when we transferred, Franklin found that we had stock in 41 companies that did not fit the criteria," noted ECPC controller Roger Dage.

Franklin's and Brown Brothers' annualized rates of return for balanced accounts in a five-year period are 12.63 and 13.1 respectively.

The next challenge for ECPC may be to move more of its endowment into community development investments. In 1995, ECPC voted to invest $50,000 the McGehee Fund, an economic justice program run by the Diocese of Michigan.

"We're in competent hands at Franklin," Dage said. "We're more aware of where we're putting the money and we have more control over it."

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The 'social' and 'fiduciary' debate at the Church Pension Fund

by Mike Casey

The Episcopal Church's role in investing to reflect its social mission is once again becoming an issue — this time as part of the controversy over the church's $2.6 billion pension fund. The fund provides benefits for the church's 7,000 retired clergy, their dependents and some lay employees.

Questions about the pension fund came up at last September's House of Bishops' meeting. While most of the concerns dealt with management of the fund, the topic of socially responsible investing arose, too. Another issue concerned the disparity in pensions between pastors from wealthy parishes and those from poor ones.

These questions over the pension fund led to two meetings between a five-member committee of the national Executive Council and the pension fund's management and trustees. The council and pension fund are separate organizations; the church's national General Convention elects members of both groups.

At those meetings over the last six months, the special committee and pension official discussed a wide array of issues about rising costs of administering the fund and communication problems between the fund's management and the Executive Council. Although the committee has wrapped up its report to the council about the fund, concerns about it almost certainly will arise at next year's General Convention.

"I've not seen such a fuss over an (internal) issue," said special committee member Timothy Wittlinger about questions surrounding the pension plan.

Along with the concerns about the management of the fund, Wittlinger said he expects socially responsible investing to again become an issue. "Socially responsible investing by the fund is not an issue in this dialogue between the committee and the pension fund," he said. "But it is an issue that is somewhat ongoing with the pension fund. It's an issue that will come up again."

Long-standing questions

Indeed, questions about how to invest church funds have arisen for years. The biggest issue for the church in recent years had been over investments in South Africa. In that area the church and pension fund took steps to avoid investments in companies with ties to South Africa.

Now that apartheid rule has fallen, the issue of socially responsible investing remains, but it's more complicated without a clearly identifiable bad guy.

Over the years, the church's pension fund has examined socially responsible investing through its Social and Fiduciary Responsibility in Investments Committee. The two words "social" and "fiduciary" underline the debate over the proper role for pension fund investments.

The word "social" points to the church's mission of addressing economic and political injustices, and the word "fiduciary" points to the fund's mission to ensure incomes for retirees and their dependents.

Some people on the board and in the investment community believe the two goals are not mutually exclusive.

Trustee Amy Domini started as a stockbroker with the idea of maximizing clients' returns. She was schooled in the maxim that "anything that limits your universe for picking investments is bad." Eventually, she became interested in ethical investing and wrote a book on it in the mid-1980s. She also developed an index of 400 companies deemed to have good social records, and the Domini Social Index has been around for nearly five years. It has posted returns better than that of Standard & Poor's 500, a traditional index for large companies.

Domini said she sees a role for socially responsible investing for the pension fund.

"My argument is that the people who benefit from the pension funds have spent their entire lives addressing injustices," she said. Nevertheless, Domini said she'd be unwilling to apply her index to the pension fund's holdings because the index has not gone through a down market. Investment advisers often caution clients to watch a fund's return in up as well as down markets before placing their money with the fund.

A manager of one fund said the principles of picking the right investment can go hand in hand with choosing a socially responsible company. Farha-Joyce Haboucha co-manages the Nueberger & Berman Socially Responsive Fund.

The recently started fund, with $113 million in assets, recorded a return of 38.9 percent in 1995 compared with the Church Pension Fund's return of 22.5 percent. The Nueberger & Berman fund excludes companies with significant interest in alcohol, tobacco, weapons, gambling and nuclear power.

"First off I don't buy a stock that won't make money, and then I won't buy a stock that fails to meet our screen," she said. She said the same restrictions could be placed on a fund as large as the church's pension fund, though she noted it takesextra time to pick the right stock.

Mike Casey is a striking *Detroit News* business writer.

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Resisting SRI

That is one of the reasons why the pension fund has not screened its investments — outside of its South African policy. "It would create another layer of management," said Donald E. Bitsberger, vice chair of the pension board. That would detract from the fund's purpose "to meet the needs of its beneficiaries," he said.

Some board members have suggested that the fund cease buying securities in tobacco companies, but the move has fallen short of majority support, he said. Domini supports the idea, saying it makes good fiduciary sense. Eventually, a lawsuit will be decided against the tobacco companies for health problems associated with smoking, which "will ricochet through the stock market," she said.

Pension fund President Alan F. Blanchard said he believes there's another reason for not limiting the fund's investment possibilities. He said the fund could be sued by pensioners who would allege that the return on their money was not being maximized.

He pointed to a lawsuit filed in Minnesota. There, clergy members and a church sued the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and its Pension Board over its decision to avoid investments in companies with ties to South Africa while maintaining the fund's investment performance.

A state appeals court has dismissed the lawsuit, but the plaintiffs are appealing to the state supreme court to have the case reinstated, said Bonnie Fleming, a lawyer for the Pension Board.

Fears of lawsuits also have prevented the pension fund from exploring investments such as mortgages for low-income housing that would earn the fund a lower return than other investments, Blanchard said. Furthermore, Blanchard said he's not sure there's much support among retirees for such investments. "I don't think it's clear how many of our constituents want to do it," he said.

A Methodist witness

Despite the kinds of concerns raised by Blanchard and Bitsberger, Tim Smith at the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) says the trustees of

Helen Siegl

the United Methodist Pension Fund have placed $150 million in community development investments and the Lutherans have invested more than $10 million.

Pension fund trustees *are* held to a high standard, Smith added, since they manage money in trust for their beneficiaries. The standard must be traditional and conservative — the rule of prudence. But, within that restriction, Smith says all portfolios are diverse and include some lower-yield, reliable investments.

"The thing to do is to keep one eye on the lawsuit in Minnesota and another on the leadership of the United Methodists," Smith said.

Wittlinger said he believes that investments in low-income housing could be argued effectively simply because the Episcopal Church Pension Fund is $400 million over-funded. "To think [this would] affect the pension of the pastor on the street is ridiculous," he said.

Bitsberger and Blanchard are both agreed that the Pension Fund could take a more active role in the area of shareholder resolutions and proxies.

Bitsberger said his committee routinely studies shareholder proposals and makes recommendations to the board. For example, in 1995, the committee supported resolutions to review wages and benefits of U.S.-owned plants in Mexico, to report the companies' Equal Employment Opportunity programs and to disclose companies' foreign military sales.

Bitsberger said he would like the fund to be proactive in encouraging corporate boards to promote diversity, while Blanchard would like an increased focus on the environment.

Internal inequity

Critics note that pensions in the Episcopal Church are calculated on the basis of 1.5 percent of a salary for each year of service and then an average of the retiree's best seven years of salary. That means a person with 30 years of service would receive 45 percent (30 x 1.5) of the average of his or her best seven years of earnings.

Blanchard said the average pension is $20,000 a year, but acknowledged there is a great disparity. "This is because there is a wide range in salaries. Some make $15,000 while others make $100,000."

Other pension funds such as the United Auto Workers', take a different tack. For example, under the UAW contract, workers receive the same benefit based on years of service, without taking into account differences in salaries, which may be as much as 20-30 percent.

Blanchard said there is a move to raise the minimum pension — a point that the bishops said needed to be addressed. The pension fund routinely raises pensions to mitigate the effects of inflation.

Blanchard and Wittlinger have called the meetings between the Executive Council and Pension Board helpful. Both agree that further questions will arise at the 1997 General Convention. TW

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Endowments: a two-edged case study

by Michael Barwell

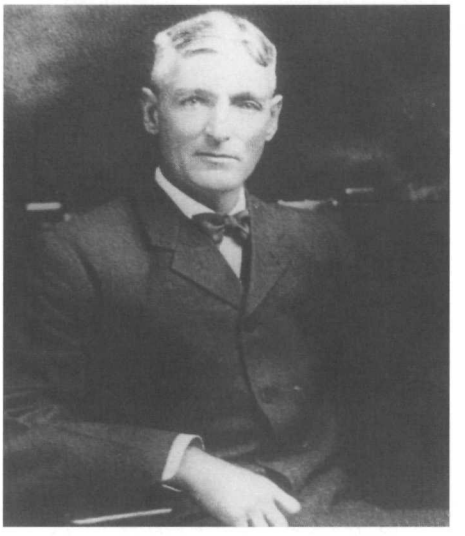
"Endowments are a two-sided sword: they enable creativity, but inhibit stewardship."

Succinct, prudent, and conservative advice is a hallmark of Chester Cavaliere, retired certified public accountant with KPMG Peat Marwick in Cincinnati, Ohio, and president of the Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio for a quarter of a century. As a trustee, he has advised four bishops how to make — and spend — millions of dollars for the "glory of God." Southern Ohio has a reputation in the Episcopal Church for being one of those "wealthy dioceses," never having to worry about money.

"We do have the reputation of being a wealthy diocese, and I suspect that we are, compared to other dioceses," said Herbert Thompson, Jr., who as diocesan bishop has more than $2 million a year at his disposal for "creative" projects.

Cincinnati was booming in the late 19th and early 20th century, producing strong lay church leaders among the industrial barons of the day. Churchmen such as Thomas and John Emery, William Howard Taft and Charles P. Taft, and William Alexander Procter and his son, William Cooper Procter, led their companies — and their parishes — to financial prosperity.

Belonging to a number of Cincinnati-area parishes, the Procter family left behind gifts in buildings and endowments from their successful consumer-products company. Ivory soap supposedly received its name during a service at the Church of Our Saviour, Cincinnati, when, legend says, William A. Procter, then president of the company, jumped up in the middle of the psalm and proclaimed, "That's it! Ivory!" and then departed in haste back to the company offices.



William Cooper Procter
courtesy Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio

William Cooper Procter

William A. Procter committed suicide in 1907, leaving his son William Cooper Procter the bulk of the family fortune. Procter and Gamble thrived under his forceful personality. The church also witnessed his leadership — he served as chairman of the General Convention in Cincinnati in 1910, and as deputy to six others. He also served on the National Council from 1931-1934, and in a variety of positions in the diocese. Along the way he endowed the Episcopal chaplaincy at Princeton University. Henry Wise Hobson, diocesan bishop from 1930 to 1959, reflected later, "William Cooper Procter was a crackerjack on efficiency."

Procter's involvement with Hobson is the stuff of legend. In 1929, the diocese had elected Howard Chandler Robbins as bishop. But Robbins, former dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, refused the election because he had recently taken a new academic post.

In his memoirs, Hobson recalled that Procter was "outraged by the fact they had spent all the time and money and effort to elect a man who wouldn't serve. He got 20 laymen together from all different parts of the diocese for lunch in Cincinnati. He said to them, 'These clergy are the most inefficient people in the world, as a rule. Let's make sure at this next election that we at least have a man that can accept if he is elected.'... So Mr. Procter wrote to some bishops, seminary deans and other people and divided up a list and then went to see them."

Procter found the 39-year-old Hobson in Worcester, Mass., and essentially offered him the job on the spot. To sweeten the deal, Procter agreed to further endow the bishop's salary so that it would be "commensurate with that of a senior vice president in my company."

The salary, endowed with an "unbreakable trust" of P&G stock, would pay more than $12,000 in the 1930s — when the average household income in 1936 was about $1,700. The endowment now produces more than $160,000 per year — far less than what a contemporary senior vice president of P&G makes, but more than most bishops and clergy in the Anglican Communion.

The Procter endowment

Procter died childless in 1934. His wife, Jane Matthews Procter, met with Bishop Hobson and worked out the terms of Procter's will — which Procter had discussed with Hobson before he died. Initially, Procter wanted to leave a sizeable amount of his fortune as a bishop's discretionary fund, controlled solely by the bishop. Hobson dissuaded him, saying it was too much responsibility for one man,

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suggesting that the trustees of the diocese assume responsibility and that funds be spent only after concurring with the diocesan bishop's recommendations. Notes made by Hobson in conversations with the Procters now serve as the criteria for making grants.

Jane Procter died in 1954, leaving a sizeable gift — 30,000 shares of P&G Common Stock worth more than $1 million — to the bishop and trustees. Today the fund principal totals more than $34 million — small in comparison with some foundations, but generous in church circles — generating more than $2 million annually. It is now one of 42 endowments held by the Diocese of Southern Ohio. Together, these others provide an additional $350,000 annually for special ministries or for diocesan operations.

Hobson, who retired in 1959 after 29 years, used the income generated by the Procter fund to bolster diocesan programs, develop the new conference center, and build new congregations. Hobson's successor, Roger W. Blanchard, used the endowment in part to help build new congregations near the campuses of the state's universities from 1959-1979. He also allowed the diocesan convention to vote on the Procter budget prepared by the trustees. The endowment funds also began to be commingled with the diocesan operating budget for desired programs, especially in the area of race relations after the 1968 riots.

John Krumm, bishop from 1971-1980, also focused the income into specific program areas, such as minority empowerment and race relations, vowing to "eradicate institutional racism" in Southern Ohio and dedicating $100,000 per year for "minority empowerment."

A 'welfare' mindset

The income from the fund had approached $1 million per year when Krumm's successor, William Black, assumed office. By this time, Black said, it was clear that "there was a certain dependency, expectation, and entitlement" that Procter funds would be used to "bail out parishes which were marginal and who hadn't exercised good stewardship. You had a [diocesan] convention voting on a budget to which [parishes] had contributed no money.

"Here we were, the Episcopal Church: middle- to- upper-middle class, predominantly Republican, and yet we acted within a welfare context and were perfectly happy to do it! 'Let the diocese do it, let someone else pay for it!'"

In 1984, Black hired consultants to examine the original charter and trust documents filed away in 1934 by the Procters. They rediscovered Hobson's notes on Procter's spending guidelines, and Black began extricating the funds from the diocesan operating budget — an unpopular move for which he received significant criticism.

"As I worked on that charter, it was apparent that if we were going to get any healing of the malaise of low mission giving" dependency on the Procter endowment would have to be reduced.

"Here we were, the Episcopal Church: and yet we acted within a welfare context. 'Let the diocese do it, let someone else pay for it!'"

— William Black

Resurrecting a mission focus

Procter's own guidelines, as written down by Hobson, put the focus on mission rather than institutional maintenance.

Emergency aid could be given to parishes, Procter had said, "in return for an agreement pledging those churches to an adequate support of the church's programs." He also had indicated that grants should be used "to take advantage of unusual opportunities for advance work in the church's program as distinct from the regular running expenses covered by the budget." In addition, "part of the annual income from the Fund shall be used for the work of the church outside of the Diocese of Southern Ohio."

As difficult as it was to withdraw the Procter Fund from the voting processes of convention, Black said, "there were a lot of people who said 'Right on!' because it is the mission of the diocese which should be the focus. The genius of that endowment was that it kept us focused on the mission of the church."

Black embarked on a series of ventures with the fund, traveling around the diocese with consultants. Together, they visited most of the programs and projects funded by the Procter Fund, which by 1987 was generating $1.3 million. They established grant applications, a timetable for making grants, set limits on the amount of grants and the number of years a program could recieve funding, and published annual reports delineating grants made and guidelines for future grants.

Supplying venture capital

While congregations continued to receive direct support, Black stipulated that the programs had to be parish-based, focused on outreach, and dedicated to the mission of the church through one of Procter's spending criteria. Funds could no longer be used as "pass-through" accounts into other community organizations. They also tried "venture grants" — similar to venture capital in business — where the bishop and trustees could say, "'We won't ask you to risk putting venture capital in, we'll do it,'" Black said. "That was Procter's vision, do it beyond the limits of the parish or the diocese."

Among the high-risk projects attempted during the 1980s were establishing a cooperative bank in a slum area of Cincinnati in which all of the major banks

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had pulled out and the savings and loan banks had failed. The Over-the-Rhine Cooperative Bank today is a thriving institution able to make loans and allow savings in one of the state's lowest-income neighborhoods. Other projects included starting literacy centers, food pantries, and other enabling ministries in low-income and rural areas.

Another advantage to the endowment income, according to Black, was the ability to "leverage" other funds from churches, community organizations and other non-profits, in essence saying, "This is important, we're willing to take a risk on this project, and we'll put up the first funds if you'll match it."

"The advantages of being an endowed diocese are just tremendous," Black said. "We had resources to do things we couldn't do without the endowment. There were a thousand and one things we could do! It did a lot in raising the consciousness in individual parishes to outreach maybe not even related to their parish. It galvanized a lot of people. That's an important piece — getting people in the pews galvanized for Christian mission."

Cavaliere agrees.

"I think the major benefit of having an endowment like this is that the bishop and thereby the diocese is permitted to respond to needs of the church, of society, as they are identified by or for the bishop without necessarily being concerned about whether or not the parishes of the diocese will support them," Cavaliere said.

"From my history of the diocese, it would be almost impossible for the Diocese of Southern Ohio to do any of these kinds of things on the support that comes" from the diocesan budget. "My experience at diocesan convention, as well as being involved in the budgets, is that, unfortunately, people will support their church and thereby the diocese depending on how they feel about whoever happens to be in power or whatever issues happen to be in front of them that they don't agree with. If they don't like what is going on, if they don't like a sermon, if they don't like a priest, if they don't like a bishop, then they don't support the church. That's unfortunate."

Never-ending battle

But boosting stewardship and fighting dependency are never-ending battles, according to Cavaliere.

"The diocese has looked on the Procter Fund — no matter how much I have tried to dissuade them at conventions — as a bottomless pit of money that should be available to them at all times, whenever the need arises," Cavaliere said. "I think it's a terrible deterrent towards stewardship on the part of parishes. It will always be a detriment to the stewardship of the individual — at least to the diocese."

A part of the challenge," said Bishop Thompson, "is to call people to give in the face of a gift the size of Procter's."

Trustee president Chester Cavaliere agrees — and offers a suggestion.

"Something comes to mind almost immediately, because I think it would overcome the inhibition towards stewardship presented by a large gift," Cavaliere said. "Let's assume my gift is a million dollars, and let's assume that the income from that gift is $60,000 a year. The recipient of that gift can only spend that portion of the income from my gift which is matched by the increased giving of the existing parishoners. Match it or you can't have it."

But in the end, Thompson notes, "we need to get unhooked from the notion that money is the key to successful ministry. Our faith is not in dollars." TW

Social concerns about P&G

Departing from a solid history of voting with corporate management, the trustees of the Diocese of Southern Ohio supported a 1992 shareholders' resolution asking Procter and Gamble to purchase coffee from small cooperative farmers in El Salvador, rather than large producers who were violently repressing workers' efforts to unionize. Pressure from shareholders, along with a consumer boycott of Folgers coffee, pushed the company to scrutinize its sources and to support the U.N.-sponsored peace process.

Although trustees examine all shareholder resolutions connected with social concerns, there has been no broad effort in the diocese to impact the company's policies on specific issues, said Nancy Sullivan, a member of the National and Worldwide Mission Commission of the diocese who has been active with Central American concerns.

"This is a very strong Procter & Gamble community," Sullivan said, adding that news of the coffee resolution vote was kept out of a major local paper leery of offending the company.

While Procter & Gamble scores well on most social issues, several areas of controversy remain.

The company's continued use of animals in household and consumer product testing has spurred a consumer boycott led by a California animal welfare organization, In Defense of Animals (IDA). While the company boasts of leading the effort to develop alternatives, Lauren Sullivan of IDA points out that "companies like Dial and Revlon — their competitors — are able to produce similar products without animal testing."

Procter & Gamble has also been criticized for "an almost obsessive concern for secrecy" (*Franklin's Insight*, 5/92) and heavy internal surveillance of employees. — *Marianne Arbogast*

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Former *Contra* units continue in Nicaragua

Dorothy Granada, an Episcopal woman from Oregon who founded and now runs a medical clinic in the Nicaraguan countryside, was recently roughed up and threatened with death by members of *Contra* forces. Her assailants asked her for $230 a day to protect her from death. Her answer was simply: "You can kill me right now. I do not have $230 U.S. a day and if I had I wouldn't give it to you."

Granada, who continues her work under the protection of the local military, said that former *Contras* continue to come from bases in Honduras to persecute and kill those suspected of Sandinista beliefs.

"The condition of Nicaragua under this government is the worst I have seen," she said. "The Chamorro government is deeply in debt to international banking and cannot fulfill its promises to return lands to the ex-*Contras.* Therefore, they roam the countryside in paramilitary units, causing all kinds of crimes against defenseless people."

Granada, a registered nurse, sees up to 100 people a day, many of them mothers of children who have died of starvation. Some have walked for days, risking their husbands' opposition to their desire for birth control.

A medical doctor from Managua recently offered to work at the clinic for three days each month. As medicines are hard to get, the clinic is teaching people to raise herbs and roots for medicinal purposes.

"Many people have come to the countryside without any means of sustenance, and we are unable to help all of them," Granada said. "Amidst all this tragedy I have yet to hear one of these peasants curse or doubt God. On the contrary, their faith is astonishing to me. 'We have only God,' is their favorite phrase when relating their situation. '*Solo Dios.*'"

— Nina Olmedo Jaquenod

'Suitable helpers'

Because "God is building a powerful army of Godly men," Cheri Bright of Denver, Colo., has formed a group called "Suitable helpers in prayerful support of Godly men." Here's her credo:

"A Suitable Helper:

- Has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, realizing her identity is in Christ and found worthy of her calling.
- Is committed to reading the Bible, God's Word, daily taking the time to develop a more intimate relationship with God.
- Is willing to make the changes God is telling her to make in herself and her life and is willing to be the first to forgive, reconcile and confess her sins.
- Is willing to submit to her husband out of reverence for Christ.
- Is committed to praying daily for the specific needs of her family.
- Lets go of control over family members. This doesn't mean failing to discipline her children, but offer first herself, then every family member back to God, backing off from trying to change them or the situation.
- Is willing to let God parent through her. Learn to see and hear her family through God's eyes and ears. She must raise her children to be men and women of God."

— Placed on-line in Feminist Perspectives by Sam Owen, pastor, Herington and Burdick (Kansas) United Methodist Churches. Owen adds, "Personally, I see much in the list that perpetrates patriarchal stereotypes and is fundamentally unhealthy. It has, in the patriarchal chain of thought, always been the woman's duty to be the first to 'forgive, reconcile, and confess' — whether it has been because of the man's infidelity (which is, of course, the woman's fault), or the man's physical, emotional, or sexual abuse (which is, of course, the woman's fault). For some odd reason, the man is never expected to be the first to forgive, reconcile and confess. In other words, it is never the man's duty to submit, but always the woman's."

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'A slow-motion Hiroshima'

Egyptian activist Abdel Azim El Naghrabi calls the U.S. economic embargo against Iraq "a slow-motion Hiroshima." During the last five years, over half a million Iraqui children have died from deprivation of basic foods, medicine and health care.

"Voices in the Wilderness" is a campaign to break the sanctions by openly and publicly sending medical supplies to Iraq while campaigning for removal of the embargo. More information is available by writing to Voices in the Wilderness, 1460 West Carmen Ave., Chicago IL 60640 or (e-mail) kkelly@igc.apc.org.

Short takes

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Dixon visits hostile parishes

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Never a fan of soft, white bread, Jane Dixon, suffragan bishop of Washington, has a new feeling for Wonder Bread.

At her visitation to St. Luke's, Bladensburg, Maryland on January 14, Dixon stood in a darkened sanctuary. Even the sanctuary lamp was extinguished. The congregation was notably absent.

Then an elderly woman came forward. She gave Dixon a loaf of Wonder Bread, a bottle of wine and a ceramic coffee mug — her gift so that the eucharist could take place.

"Are you," Dixon asked, "by any chance a member of this congregation?"

Speaking of it later, Dixon demonstrated how the woman had looked up boldly, responding "Indeed I am!"

"It means a lot to me," Dixon said. "I even think about the name, *Wonder* Bread."

Dixon has been sent by Ronald Haines, diocesan, to make visitations to the parishes in the diocese that still resist the ministry of ordained women.

At this point only two of the original handful of churches have refused Dixon's presence. One rector welcomed her reluctantly at Haines' insistence. Another parish received Dixon warmly after their rector retired. A third has consented to her visitation in April.

St. Luke's, on the other hand, sent a letter to Haines, saying: "The wardens and vestry of St. Luke's Parish unanimously and unequivocally consider such an action to be a gross violation of our rights as a parish.

"What you intend to do is not only illegal, but completely unnecessary and very mean-spirited. The straw vote of the House of Bishops in September serves only to indicate that you will be able in the near future to legally extinguish traditionalist ministries within this diocese of the Episcopal Church. In no way does it give you the right to do that now."

Jane Dixon

Some commentators on the Internet have expressed the same concern, wondering why Haines did not wait until after the 1997 General Convention.

But Dixon says, "It wouldn't have done any good to wait any longer. Waiting doesn't bring the healing that you hope for."

In fact, during the last three years, Dixon and Haines have attempted to arrange informal visits for Dixon to St. Luke's and Ascension and Saint Agnes in D.C.

"We have tried to arrange a visit for an evening program, a meal, a forum, something to begin to form a relationship," Dixon said. But their overtures were rejected.

Haines, in a January 2 letter to clergy, explained: "At one time I believed that time would resolve our disagreements regarding the ordination of women. Now, I've come to the conclusion that time will not solve but exacerbate our division. Currently, we have six women who had been elected bishop. ... Each of those bishops will regularly ordain both men and women into the sacred priesthood. Those so ordained, in turn, carry out the sacramental acts for the people of God on a regular basis. For those who deny the validity of the orders of ordained women, it means an ever growing body of fellow Episcopalians whose ministry they are not recognizing. It is building an ever widening gap rather than closing it."

The diocese has a history of radical action for inclusion, Dixon says.

"We just celebrated our centennial in 1995," Dixon added. "Bishop [Henry] Satterlee [1896-1908] came here intentionally to begin to work with African Americans and persons who were white, because this city is on the border of north and south and racially divided. Bishop [Angus] Dun [1944-1962] closed a church for a brief period of time because it would not prepare an African American child for baptism. The diocese continued to confront issues of inclusion with the election of John Walker [1971-1976], Bishop [William] Creighton's [1962-1977] ordination of women and Bishop Haines' and my support for the ordination of homosexuals.

"There has been marvelous support for the work that has been done in this diocese. It has been painful. It has been a struggle. It has not been accomplished with ease. But members of the diocese have been consistently asking for relationship."

In both visitations that Dixon has made this year, she officiated at only one service.

"We were not saying, 'This is the only mass of the day; you worship in your parish with me or not at all,'" Dixon explained. "That would be draconian. But for those who wish to experience my ministry in relationship with them, they now have the opportunity. In each of these churches, there have been people who wished me to come."

Dixon's next visitation to St. Luke's and the Church of the Ascension and St. Agnes, given the rotation schedule, will occur in three years.

Vital Signs

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Craig Anderson to head NCC

Bishop Craig Anderson, President and Dean of The General Theological Seminary, has been elected President of the National Council of Churches for the 1998-99 term. Shortly after his election, Anderson joined other NCC officers for a meeting with President Bill Clinton, to advocate for continued funding of government programs which benefit the disadvantaged.

Ellen Cooke pleads guilty

Former Episcopal Church treasurer Ellen Cooke pleaded guilty January 24 to charges of embezzlement and income tax evasion, but told Judge Maryanne Trump Barry that she does not recall committing the crimes. Plato Cacheris, Cooke's attorney, said that a psychiatrist has diagnosed Cooke as suffering from a bipolar mental disorder that causes memory blackout. Cooke said that, after reviewing evidence of her embezzlement, she accepts responsibility, and "can only assume" that she "knew at the time it was wrong." Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning expressed relief "that we have reached this almost final stage in the process," while noting that a civil suit is still pending. "I personally have faced the difficult fact that this was ultimately my responsibility," Browning said. "We have looked carefully at how it happened and took steps such that it can never happen again." Cooke, who will be sentenced April 29, faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine for the embezzlement, and five years in prison and a $100,000 fine for the tax evasion.

— based on an *ENS* report

Women and power

Wilma Jakobsen, chaplain to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, says she is returning to Capetown recommitted to her work as an ordained woman attempting to make inroads in a hierarchical church after attending the Consultation of Women's Leadership in the Anglican Communion held at the College of Preachers in early February.

"The conference was stunning!" Jakobsen said. "There was a wealth of experience and of role models. In South Africa, *we* are the role models — There is no one to ask, 'What do you wear? How do you feel?' Moving into ministry, one wants to go informed, equipped."

During the five days, spent in worship, skills exchange and conversation, women shared stories of rejection but also discussed theories of power and leadership, according to organizers Penelope Jamieson, Bishop of New Zealand; Janice Robinson, director of education at the College of Preachers; Erica Wood, president of the College of Preachers; and Fredrica Harris Thompsett, professor of church history at the Episcopal Divinity School.

"Women bring an authenticity to the church," Robinson said during an interview after the conference (which had excluded media). "This gathering affirmed things that women have been doing by intuition, like practicing inclusive decision-making which involves the people affected by the decision. Practicing power-with instead of power-over."

And these values are succeeding elsewhere.

"New management theory endorses working with integrity and encouraging the leadership of others," Jamieson said. "It was supportive to find that a lot of what we were doing is found to be successful by business leaders."

Women from England, New Zealand, the U.S., Canada and Northern Ireland were able to apply cross-cultural considerations to common problems. One small group addressed, "What can the experiences of giving up white privilege in New Zealand and South Africa teach us about helping men give up male privilege in the Church?" Their conversation is still in progress (now in e-mail), but Jamieson added a cautionary note, saying that while people need to move beyond scarcity fears, they also need to recognize that a lot of resources *are* finite. "There is a very real cost to sharing power," Jamieson said. "That's certainly something the New Zealand church (which has adopted Maori language and prayers into its liturgy and altered its governing structure to adequately represent Maori interests) is understanding."

Women left with a sense that they can change the environment.

"Women are opening the doors and windows and inviting people in," said Erica Wood, canon warden of the College of Preachers. "Frequently women are committed to truth-telling, to making that which has been previously private, public. We had a sense that the gifts of God and the ground of the church are truly equally ours." — *Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann*

Oasis/California established

Oasis/California, a new gay and lesbian ministry of the Diocese of California, was inaugurated Jan. 13 at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, with Bishop Walter Righter as guest speaker.

Founded by a task force led by David Norgard, former executive director of the Oasis ministry in the Diocese of Newark, the program represents "the continuation of the gay and lesbian ministry that began 15 years ago with the Parsonage," said Bishop Otis Charles, executive director of Oasis/California.

The Oasis model includes a focus on congregations, inviting them "to be open and out about their welcome and support of gay and lesbian people," Charles said.

Meanwhile, eight openly gay and lesbian clergy couples gathered Dec. 15-16 at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C. for a consultation convened and facilitated by Episcopal Divinity School's Congregational Studies program. Recommendations ranged from asking that members of the church resist the tendency to characterize a congregation as a "gay parish" simply because its priest is gay, open and in a committed relationship, to urging that the church authorize rites for the blessing of same-sex unions.

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Mourning the loss of a thinking patriot

by Katie Sherrod

My first thought, upon hearing of Barbara Jordan's death, was,"She was too young."

She was only 59 when she died. Yet she has long since become one of our society's elders, a wise woman for our national village, a deeply rooted moral touchstone for an increasingly rootless nation. She had always been wise beyond her years. She was only 29 when she became the first black woman elected to the Texas Senate, elevating the collective IQ of that chamber by several hundred points simply by showing up.

She was only 37 when, on the House Judiciary Committee, her eloquence lifted the squalid mess of Watergate up out of the shadows of petty partisan politics and into the sunlight cast by our Constitution. As the measured tones of this stolid young black woman pealed out across this nation, the oh-so-powerful white men of Watergate began to shrink into a foul-mouthed smallness totally unworthy of the offices they held. As she said then, Barbara Jordan was not willing to be an idle spectator of our nation's government. She knew to her bones that she WAS the government, she and the rest of us — We, The People. She was that truly rare thing, a thinking patriot.

Why did she touch us so? I think it was because she always connected her prose to this passion, and thereby exalted both. Her words always wore boots, treading powerfully into our hearts and minds.

While blacks and women especially were enlarged and empowered by her words and example, her wisdom and humor transcended race and gender. No one ever mistook Barbara Jordan for some mere token. She was wholly and completely herself. Moreover, she did not suffer fools gladly. I often saw her silence buffoons with a look — a skill that came in handy in the Texas Senate.

Anne E. Cox/M.O.R. Stamps

When her illness struck in the late 1970s, we were bereft, mourning what might have been — perhaps even the first woman and first African-American president.

But to mourn then was to underestimate Barbara Jordan. She had just come home, she hadn't given up. As she assumed the mantle of elder stateswoman and scholar, her influence continued to be felt, both in Texas and in Washington. Powerful men and women flew into Austin to sit at her feet. And she gave them all the same thing — unsparing honesty.

Her vast intellect was matched by her courage and integrity and, often, tempered by her wit. Even as her illness attacked her body, that magnificent voice went on. When he was about 4, my nephew Nicholas heard her on the radio and asked me, "Is that God?" I replied, "No, but it should be."

I think the idea of God as a black woman would have tickled Barbara Jordan. Now, I find myself imagining all the great conversations going on up there on heaven's front porch — Barbara and God, voices rolling like thunder, laughter sparkling like rain.

We're gonna miss her for a long long time. TW

Katie Sherrod, vice-president of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, lives in Fort Worth, Tex., where she works for public radio. This commentary aired on January 18, 1996, on KERA 90.1 FM, Pubic Radio for North Texas.

The Witness co-sponsors Stringfellow conference

The Frances Lewis Law Center, the Department of Religion at Washington and Lee University, *The Witness* and *Sojourners* are sponsoring three conversations based on the legacy of William Stringfellow on April 18-20, 1996 at Washington and Lee University School of Law in Lexington, VA. The discussions will focus on:

1. *How one lives a life in the law*, featuring: Doug Ammar, director of the Georgia Justice Project; Milbre Ball, Caldwell Professor of Constitutional Law at the Univ. of Ga.; Jeff Powell, law and theology professor at Duke; and Russell Pearce of Fordham.

2. *How to carry on faith-based politics*, featuring Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners*; Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun*; Pat Williams, law professor at Columbia University; and Murphy Davis, a partner in the Open Door Community in Atlanta.

3. *Resistance*, featuring Elizabeth McAlister, Nane Alejandrez, Kim Williams and Eugene Rivers, all of whom are committed to living in communities at the margin.

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Invested in the common good

by Michael H. Crosby, OFMCap.

Invested in the Common Good by Susan Meeker-Lowry, New Society Publishers, 1995, 258p., including annotated bibliography and index.

I would be less than candid if I said I was excited about reading a book promoting ways of challenging the existing economic system ("been there, done that, didn't work") and offering alternatives ("nice try, try again"). However, because of Susan Meeker-Lowry's experience-based approach as well as her wide range of clearly articulated step-by-step suggestions, I found myself saying, "If anyone is looking for a primer critiquing our political economy and offering sustainable alternatives, this is it." Whenever I found myself saying, "Yeah, but, she didn't even mention 'whatever it might be,'" invariably, 'whatever it might be' would show up in a few pages. This book is thorough!

Each of 10 chapters has several pages written by Meeker-Lowry. These set the theme or context for "case studies" or concrete examples of her theory which follow. Thus, one chapter addressing environmental issues highlights the CERES Principles. These offer institutions an objective, independent format with which they can be accountable as "environmentally friendly."

While I found myself disagreeing here and there (I think the Quakers preceded the Methodists as pioneers in socially responsible investing), this book offers readers step-by-step procedures for everything from developing responsible portfolios, to creating alternative investments, to executing a boycott, to community organizing tactics.

Meeker-Lowry does seem to presume her audience has the time, education, connections, resources, and commitment to implement her suggestions. I can't help wondering how well-minded people living in ghettoes would approach her ideas when so many see themselves as powerless victims of the system, especially if they are African American. Hers is a white-middle-class approach. Still, in community organizations and in groups committed to social change these often constitute the main actors, so a book apropos to them (I really mean "us") is useful.

Investing in the Common Good does offer extended examples of what some Native groups are doing in the area of economic and human development (such as artisan crafts and community development projects like the Lakota Fund). However, living in an urban area with other people of color, I would have been pleased to read creative ways other nonwhite peoples in our cities contend with the "system."

More than 15 years ago, I asked a coworker to critique a book I'd written. She strongly challenged my anthropocentric bias. No such criticism can be leveled at this work. On the contrary. Meeker-Lowry's aim has been to promote the importance of working in conscious partnership with Earth rather than in (un)conscious exploitation of it. She accomplishes this through the use of biographical examples and in the process she helps slower readers like me keep moving in our own effort to de-center our lives in this universe, to become part of its life rather than make it subservient to our own. She writes:

"If there is one 'message' I want to share with you by writing this book, it is this: We are not separate from Earth — we are part of Earth. We belong here. Earth is our home. The place we live on the Earth shapes and nourishes us, and this relationship needs to be reciprocal. When we become grounded in place, we know who we are, and we can take a stand for what we believe, for what we love. Becoming whole, then, means deepening our connection with the place we live and allowing ourselves to experience the implications this brings to our lives willingly and without reservation."

If I found myself looking for something that isn't that evident in this book, it's the need for support communities to sustain the reasoned, yet counter-cultural, strategies and goals Meeker-Lowry promotes. I live with others who are nourishing my efforts (and challenging me when I slack). To faithfully keep attempting the kind of things that Susan Meeker-Lowry has done and suggests in this valuable book necessitates "mediating institutions." Such alternative communities will bridge the gap between the exaggerated individualism and oppressive corporativism that is the driving ethos of our culture and political economy at this time. Outside of this disappointing omission, I wholeheartedly endorse this book TW

Michael Crosby is a Capuchin Franciscan living in Milwaukee. In addition to writing on contemporary spirituality, he coordinates the Tobacco Issue Group of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. His latest book is *Celibacy: Means of Control or Mandate of the Heart (1996).*

book review

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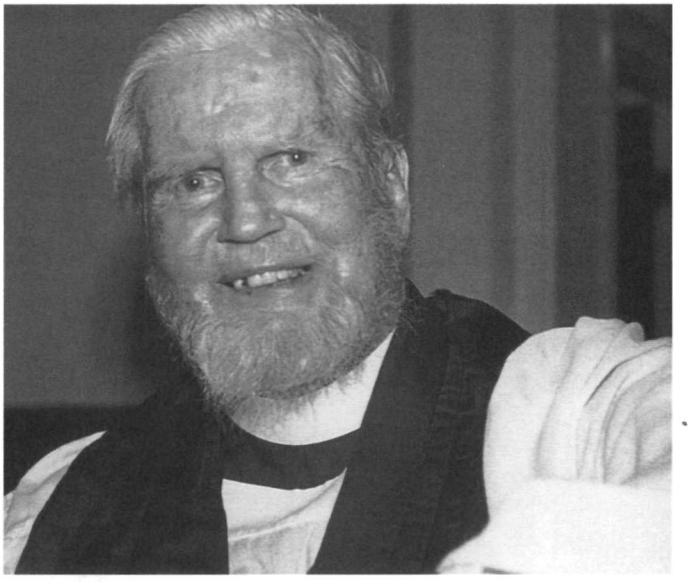
Realizing that the Episcopal Church had long been a player in the corporate world, he took his passion for justice directly into the board room.



John Hines Bob Kinney, Seminary of the Southwest

Exercising love in corporate society

by Douglas Theuner

When people weep and gnash their teeth about the ferment in today's church, they would do well to remember that it was ever thus, and often even worse. In recalling such times we may find insight and courage for today's struggles. It is encouraging to see the recent resurgence of interest in the life and ministry of John Elbridge Hines, 22nd Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. The 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1994 began with a Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Fund Banquet in honor of John Hines, and Ken Kesselus has just published a biography entitled: *John E. Hines — Granite on Fire* (Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, Austin: 1995).

Hines presided over the Episcopal Church during a remarkable period of ferment and change in both church and society, and he was determined that the church should share in the struggles of the culture and be an agent for constructive change within it. Remembered primarily for his commitment to racial justice, most dramatically manifested in the radical and courageous General Convention Special Program initiated at the Seattle General Convention of 1967, Hines was also committed to ecumenism, especially in support of the Consultation on Church Union, as well as to liturgical renewal and the reality of women's involvement in life and the church. But it was perhaps in the area of social responsibility in corporate life that Hines was at his most prophetic and creative. Realizing that the Episcopal Church, by virtue of the considerable investments of the denomination — its agencies, parishes and individual members, had long been a player — no matter how passively — in the corporate world, he took his passion for justice directly into the board room.

On May 21, 1971 Hines, dressed in his clerical garb, stood at one end of the podium before the assembled board of directors of the General Motors Corporation. Board chairman James Roche stood at the other end in front of the annual stockholders meeting of the giant corporation while Hines spoke to a resolution on behalf of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, which owned over 12,000 shares of GM stock. He urged the corporation to disengage itself from doing business in South Africa because such operations in effect supported apartheid. Hines told the assembly that, as Kesselus notes in his biography, General Motors had, by maintaining operations in South Africa, "assisted in strengthening the control of the racist dictatorship. Solutions to the great and complex problem of South Africa can only be reached by South Africans themselves."

Tim Smith, Executive Director of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, was present at that dramatic meeting which, he says, "made business and church history." In the days before the concepts of disinvestment and divestment became widely understood and accepted by people of liberality, the call for a corporation's withdrawal from a segment of the marketplace for moral reasons was a new and revolutionary concept, according to Smith. He gives credit to Hines for "plowing the ground" which helped launch the ecumenical corporate responsibility movement. At the height of opposition to corporate investment in South Africa, this movement generated more than $600 billion worth of invest-

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Doug Theuner is Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire and president of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

ments involved in divestment actions and the filing of shareholder resolutions around the issue.

Kesselus notes that offended members of the Executive Council labeled Hines' actions in this matter "judgmental, self-righteous, a stunt, ludicrous." In a television interview 10 years later, Hines remarked that "the church can only exercise its authority if it bears in its body the marks of the Lord Jesus ... if it has been crucified in the marketplace." He also said that "justice is the corporate face of love" and that "to seek justice in corporate society is about as close as the Christian can get to love in corporate society." The Episcopal Church worked side by side with other denominations, notably the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church and the United Methodist Church, in these early efforts at socially responsible investment but, as Smith points out, the Episcopalians were both better positioned and more at risk in making a witness because of the high percentage of Episcopalians in board rooms of corporate America. In walking into the General Motors Annual Meeting, Hines was literally bearding the lion in his (it was only "his," then) den. The resolution to which Hines spoke in his characteristically clear and powerful way carried less than two percent of the votes at that meeting, but a new and potent strategy had been birthed in a dramatic way by the courage and determination of John Hines.

Today, more than two years after the end of apartheid in South Africa, nearly $640 billion, or $1 out of every $10 in investment management in the U.S., is invested in a socially responsible portfolio of some sort, according to the Social Investment Forum. This translates into over 180 investing institutions which utilize shareholder activism, socially screened investment portfolios or community investments such as development banks and loan funds, program-related investments and economically focussed investments. This number does not include the investments of thousands of smaller investors such as socially responsible businesses, judicatories, congregations and other not-for-profit corporations.

Offended members of the Executive Council labeled Hines' actions in this matter "judgmental, self-righteous, a stunt, ludicrous." In a television interview 10 years later, Hines remarked that "the church can only exercise its authority if it bears in its body the marks of the Lord Jesus ... if it has been crucified in the marketplace." He also said, "justice is the corporate face of love."

Although socially responsible investment has from the beginning been an ecumenical venture, there can be no doubt how singular and significant John Hines' leadership was for the Episcopal Church and the wider community. In Tim Smith's words: "Without the Episcopal Church's initial leadership there would be no socially responsible investment movement." In this area, as in so many others, Hines was clear about the imperative and cost of pursuing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

Indeed, "to be engaged with the world," he steadfastly held, always "costs somebody something." TW

"To me, The Witness *is one of the gems of the Episcopal Church! I value your individual struggles to make sense of the hard issues. Some months I think I'm not interested in the subject chosen, yet before long there I am engrossed, challenged, stretched — and often squirming with discomfort. Clearly* The Witness *is fueled more by commitment to the gospel than by staff salaries or corporate profits!"*

— Sally Mitchell Bucklee, Executive Council of the Episcopal Church

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Our brothers and sisters are asking if we will make available to them the capital that they need to secure access to land and basic productive resources. We are confronted as investors with that appeal.

— Chuck Matthei

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The Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest
Austin, Texas

The Witness

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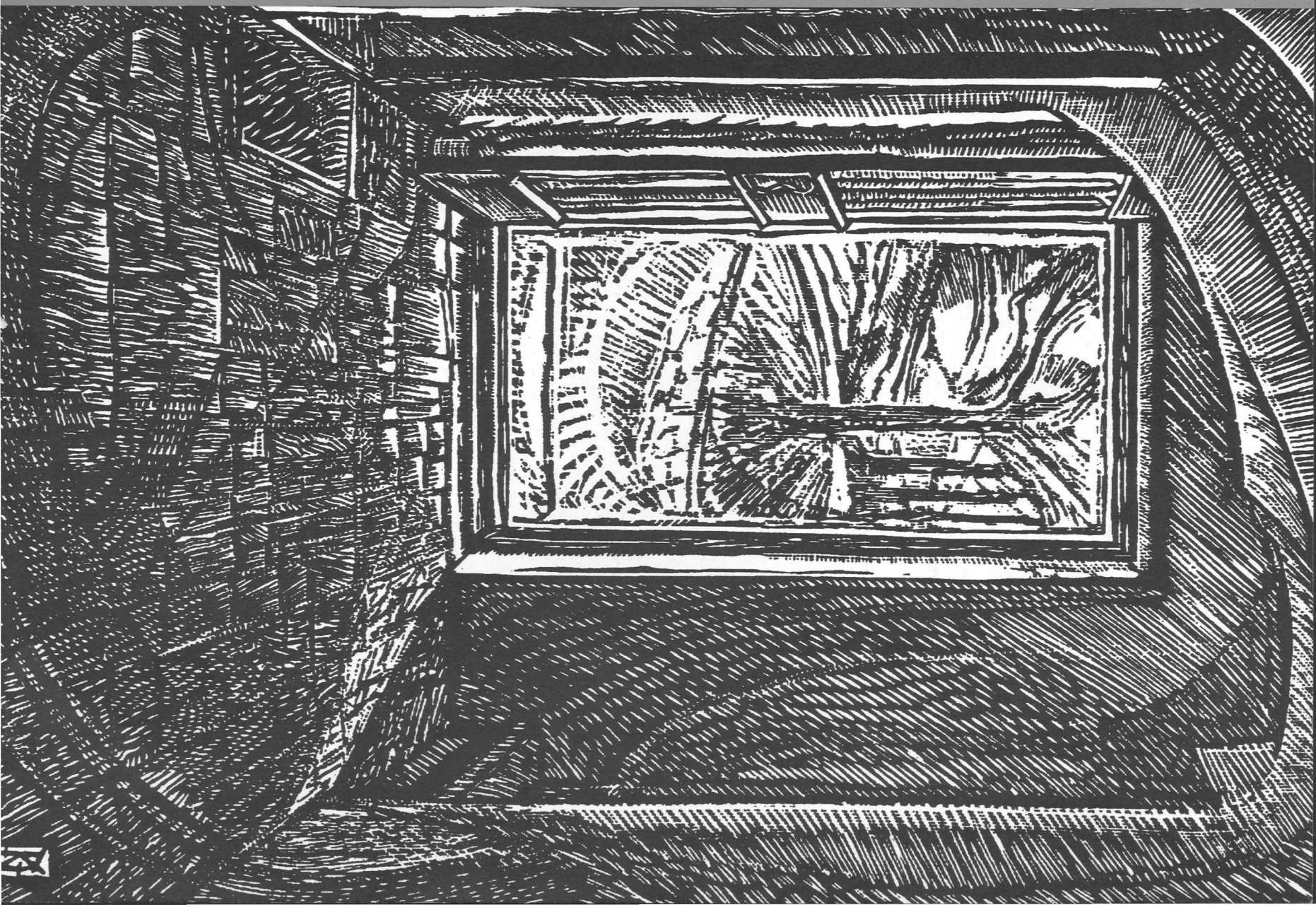
Is it ever okay to lie?



Silence

"BIRTHING A CIRCLE OF SILENCE" struck a chord deep within my soul. I thank the four women priest residents who provide this wonderful resource for hungry spirits. And I thank Julie Wortman for calling me to stillness.

Carol Rouillard Wolff
Portland, OR

AN EXCELLENT ISSUE OF *THE WITNESS* (the essay by Virginia Mollenkott was especially helpful for me) was spoiled by the deplorable lack of understanding of physics displayed in the discussion of "Mutagenic sound." Chants can be healing, and we have long known that "music hath charms to soothe a savage beast." Unfortunately, magnetic fields and electro-magnetic radiation are as different from sound waves as they are from each other.

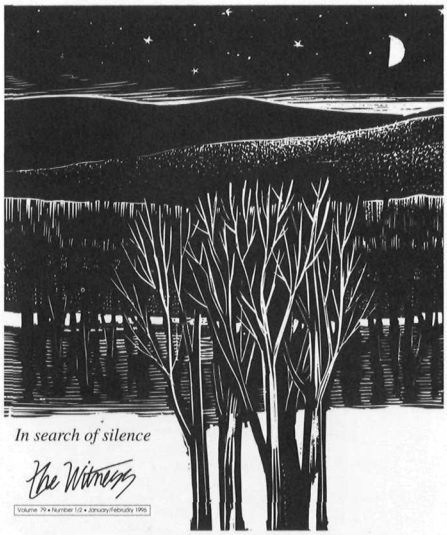
Electromagnetic radiation can do harm to living tissues — sunburn and genetic alterations are but two of many instances. A magnetic field, generated by moving electrical charges and capable of creating electrical currents, is a different phenomenon. The most recent scientific evidence negates the dire examples cited; instead, the hazards of ELF have not been unequivocally established.

My recommendation is for the author to seek assistance from the faculties of either of the fine universities in Detroit, while at the same time advancing the concept that "songs which lift your spirits, are smaller examples of the rhythms that sustain the world."

John S. McAnally
Port Townsend, WA

I LOVED THE ARTICLES ON "circle longing," chanting as prayer, and silence in the Jan./Feb. issue.

Jo Gillespie
Rochester, VT



YOUR JAN./FEB. ISSUE IS GREAT, though I missed an article by a Quaker.

Charles Demere
Washington, D.C.

THANK YOU *SO* MUCH FOR THE Dec. and Jan./Feb. issues of *The Witness*. They are wonderful. I'm especially taken with the Jan./Feb. issue on Silence. I have just finished Joan Chittister's *Wisdom* and the monastic life looks good to me — silence being one of the strong points of the rule. Can we really turn off the news in this election year??

Onieta Smucker
Lacey, WA

I FIND *THE WITNESS* THE MOST consistently challenging reading I've ever encountered. I don't know how you can put together such extraordinarily high quality material in such extraordinarily high quality form month after month.

The issue on Silence inspired me to muse about my own experience. Silence, for me, is a gathering in, a touching of spirits, sometimes a holding of and being held by spirit, a wrestling with demons, a confrontation with demons, a peaceful standing equal with demons, a wrestling with gods, a confrontation with gods, a peaceful standing equal with gods, a work of comfort — both in the popular sense of being enfolded in compassion and in the linguistic sense of being made strong with, a rhythmic flow of images — some of which invite me to pause and taste, a call to move in, with and from this silence into the noise, filth, struggle, monotony, confusion, sin, sorrow, pain, and mess of the world outside my silence, where the spirit also waits.

Pat Chaffee
Marks, MS

Holy Matrimony

THE MAGAZINE ARTICLES in the [Holy Matrimony issue] represented a *tour de force* for both thoughtfulness and clarity, in my view. I did want to quibble a bit with one statistic from one article, that statistic often parroted in the popular press; namely, that 50 percent of marriages end in divorce.

Hardly! There are about 2.5 million marriages in the U.S. each year and about 1.2 million divorces. The numbers for both were higher in the Seventies. Those who do not divorce within the first five years of marriage, when divorce rates are highest, are added to the total of 75 million married couples who have never been divorced. Compared to the total then, the divorce rate is 1.5 percent, not 50 percent. With 50 percent odds, no one would cross the street, much less get married. Yet, the myth persists.

It is also true that the age of marriage onset has increased from about 22 years in 1980 to 27 years in 1990. However, the divorce rate has stabilized since 1985 while the marriage rate has increased slightly. Consequently, there are now more married people who will never divorce, if trends continue, than ever before.

Indeed, matrimony is not only holy, but healthy and happy too for the most part. Yet it seems that much more is written about divorce than about marriage in the popular press and that is why Judy Wallerstein's text is to important (she has been married for about 49 years as of this writing), as is the work of John Gottsman. Both tell us what works to achieve stability and happiness in marriage. An exception would be Barbara De Angelis. She tells us how to be happy, but she has been married five times. She has a statistical data base which I have not quite figured out how to classify (maybe "persistence" comes close).

Jim McMahon
President, Marriage Assistance Through Educational Seminars
Ocean Grove, NJ

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ENCLOSED IS A CHECK given in honor of the marriage of Erika Meyer. Erika is not only a contributing editor but she is also an alumna of The Church Divinity School of the Pacific where the students continue to *greatly* appreciate having copies of *The Witness* available.

Fran Toy
Director of Alumni/ae and
Student Affairs, CDSP
Berkeley, CA

Righter trial

WHEN BISHOPS IN THE Apostolic Succession seek to deprive a committed homosexual couple of the fullness of love which married bishops enjoy, by seeking to deny the one ordination and to deny both sacramental acceptance as in marriage, and when these bishops seek to depose a bishop who does seek to allow ordination of the one and to allow both the fullness of God's love, those bishops might reflect upon the expansiveness of St. John's affirmations: "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (John 4:16). "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

John J. Hancock
St. Bede's Episcopal Church
Los Angeles, CA

Fort Worth

I RETURNED TO FORT WORTH, TEXAS a few years ago to retire. As a cradle Episcopalian in the "low church" mode, I have been virtually excluded from the worship I grew up with. Our diocese is so "high" and "near Roman" that I get thoroughly disgusted with what has happened during the 26 years I was away from Fort Worth.

After his retirement it seemed at first that there might be a chance to repair the havoc wrought by Clarence Pope. However, we have seen no improvement at all.

This diocese is the laughing stock of the rest of the Episcopal Church, as anyone living outside of it will tell you. The ranting and ravings of the ESA just bears this out.

These self-appointed "paragons" are a disgrace to the Church and an embarrassment to us all. While they decry homosexuals we understand that there are still some among the priests here who have not been ousted. Their stance against women priests is outdated and without theological basis.

Something else that should have been said long ago: The ESA and its puppets are not "traditionalists." The 98 percent of the rest of the Episcopal Church, embracing real Episcopalians like us, are the true "traditionalists" and true "Christians," because we are open to embrace with *compassion* all human beings, whatever their gender, sexual orientation, politics etc. The proper name for the ESA is "ultra right-wing radical fundamentalists."

We can only hope that this bishop observes the Spanish proverb, "A wise man will change his mind, a fool never will," and has the guts to either change his mind or quit our church.

Peter Tringham
Fort Worth, TX

Witness praise

BLESSINGS ON ALL OF YOU who work to bring *The Witness* to the rest of us. You nurture and nourish me and give me hope, strength and energy.

Joan C. Marshall
Asheville, NC

I LOVE GETTING *THE WITNESS*! The themes are usually interesting and covered from different perspectives, and the journal as a whole is uncompromising (principled).

Sarah Lawton
San Francisco, CA

New subscribers

OBOY! I'M SO GLAD I inadvertantly discovered *The Witness*! I'm so glad to discover I'm not the only left-wing slightly anarchistic Episcopalian. What a welcome antidote you are to the encroaching proliferation of conservatism and fundamentalism. I'd rather begun to wonder if I fit in at all with the Church I grew up in and love.

Carol-Lynn Rossel Waugh
Winthrop, ME

CAN'T TELL YOU HOW DELIGHTED I am to find that there is a journal for left-wing Anglicans. (Thought I was the only one). Some of our greatest people have been active in the labor movement, the middle-class British reforming movements (especially the suffragists), the Labor Party in Britain, the movement against nuclear weapons, and so forth and so on. Too bad more American Episcopalians aren't aware of our antecedents in the various movements for social justice — but perhaps a publication like *The Witness* can educate them a little bit.

Lawrence Swaim
San Leandro, CA

THE FACT THAT Virginia Mollenkott is a contributing writer to your periodical was instrumental in my deciding to subscribe.

Please send me the back issue on "family values." With Republicans spouting their support of family values and with the major proponents of such (Dole, Gingrich, Gramm and (flush) Rush Limbaugh — a group I have recently named "Newtie and the Blowhards") all having been participants in more than one marriage, I have come to the conclusion that I may not know just what family values are. Perhaps your publication will bring about clarification.

Theodore W. Hayes
Kingston, NY

Classifieds

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Since 1917

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Cover: *Open doors* by Robert McGovern of Philadephia, Penn.
Back cover: *The Resurrection of the Lord* by Helen Siegl.

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Truth or consequences

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Humor was alive in the first conversations held by *The Witness'* staff and contributing editors about whether it is ever okay to lie. We considered Miss Manners' belief that one must try not to lie outright, it being better to mislead. Several of us confessed to convenience lies — to thwart telephone solicitors, to return undamaged goods to a store, to abbreviate a bureaucratic process. None of these were lies that we would defend, nor ones for which we felt much regret.

The conversation got more dicey when we considered whether the truth can ever be enslaved to a lie. In court, for example, when one is asked a narrow question and forbidden to provide context, the answer can deceive the jury. In such cases, a lie might actually be closer to the truth. Or what about when a lie is used to accomplish a higher good?

And, of course, this conversation does not take place in a moral or political vacuum. We live in a society swirling with lies — lies about the supremacy of the powers and principalities, lies that coopt our language, sanctioned lies presented by the police and the CIA, lies that enforce ideologies of consumerism and violence.

Renouncing the culture's lies

What ethic should people of faith hold in such a system?

Americans on the political Right turn with urgent need to new purity codes. They are trying to define and enforce right conduct, real morality and family values. Like us, they know themselves to be spinning in the vortex of a culture that is practically without heart or conscience.

Witness readers also need a center, yet we do not want to replace manufactured chaos with militant fundamentalism. For us, fundamentalism becomes another serious problem. We suddenly have to defend ourselves from accusations that we are not sufficiently orthodox. The specter of a witch hunt causes us to invest time in protecting our own thoughts from scrutiny, while still trying to challenge the powers and live loving lives.

We are, as Virginia Mollenkott suggests on page 10, in occupied territory. We need to protect ourselves. Yet we know from our own experience that one lie can easily lead to another. Lies can protect us, they can also make us crazy. (See poem on page 7.)

Since *The Witness* has not found an inviolate standard to apply, this issue includes the views of those who advocate situation ethics, those who hold a narrower standard but will practice deception for a good cause, and others who have been hurt by lies and plead for truth. The search for an ethic we can embrace in this political climate can only be multifaceted.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says it is cynical to assert that the same statement uttered in the same way to everyone in all times is truth. The truth, he claims, is *alive*.

We are invited to engage life, relying on our reading of the Word of God and on our own exercise of sanity and conscience. No right answer will necessarily be right two times running. No wrong answer can be relied upon to never be right.

Magic and deception

Is it ever okay to lie for fun, to poke at people's sense of reality, to loosen their grip on a rigid truth?

Theologian and magic-lover Robert Neale suggests that all our worldviews are fiction. (See p. 16.) At best, they are tailored to allow us to live in ways that are healthy. But for this reason, deception, magic and disclosure have various and ambiguous roles in our life. A deception can betray, but it can provide a sense of challenge and entertainment; it can also move us into actual health, particularly when we understand the deception and either surrender a belief or choose to suspend our disbelief.

Since faith revolves around that which cannot be proven, it operates in a sphere where the lights and mirrors are at various angles. What of the believer who responds to a detracter saying, "You may be right, but I *choose* to hold this faith"?

We have little to gain by mimicking the Right. We need a lively ethic and a sense of humor.

In my own analysis of how to conduct a life with integrity, I turn again and again to William Stringfellow's essay on "living humanly in the midst of death" in which he writes that there is no code of conduct, no failsafe moral behavior with

continued on page 6

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

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which to face the powers. He also argues that any ethic that presents itself as righteously "biblical" will always become idolatrous.

We are invited, he says, to engage life, relying on our reading of the Word of God and on our own exercise of sanity and conscience. No right answer will necessarily be right two times running. No wrong answer can be relied upon to never be right. Our human freedom is at the root of our integrity and its exercise. No formula can replace it.

Jesus as trickster

And this is what Jesus models for us — a versatile relationship to truth and the authorities in a time when the occupying power was Rome, the complicit power resided in the Temple, the revolutionaries were drawing hard lines and the religious progressives were drafting a new purity code.

With a bridegroom's celebratory spirit, he claimed human freedom. He introduced the subversive values of God's kingdom in parables and in practice, eating and worshiping in ways that declared that the principalities were designed to serve humanity, not vice versa.

Sometimes Jesus spoke out clearly, sometimes symbolically. Sometimes Jesus laid low, swore people to secrecy and made clandestine arrangements. He chose his own timing.

Walter Wink reads Jesus' advice in the Sermon on the Mount as masterful examples of turning the oppressor's rules against the oppressor. For example, Wink writes in *Violence and Nonviolence in South Africa* (New Society Pub., 1987) that giving not only your cloak but your inner garment is a way of shaming someone who is ruthless in collecting your debt. If you surrender your inner garments as well as the cloak, which served as collateral for the poorest, you stand naked in court. And in Judaic law, it was not the one who was naked, but the one who sees nakedness that is shamed, Wink explains. Anyone in Jesus' contemporary audience would immediately grasp the import of his suggestions.

Likewise, Jesus is adept at turning aside the questions that are meant to entrap him. Or he will answer a question with a question, always turning the system's rules against the system's advocate.

Constantly, deliberately and intelligently, Jesus reshapes the debate, changes the forum or the venue, says the unexpected. Jesus' last reversal, of course, is his own death and resurrection.

Ched Myers writes in *Who Will Roll Away the Stone* (Orbis, 1994):

"At a crucial juncture in his mission, Jesus was confronted by members of the ruling Jerusalem establishment, who demanded that he present his political credentials (*BSM*:306f). *'By what authority are you doing these things; and who gave it to you?'* (Mk. 11:28). 'These things' refer to Jesus' dramatic challenges to the scribal status quo: his theatrical, militant march into the capital city, followed by his public disruption of commerce in the Temple (11:1-25). As far as the guardians of civic order were concerned, things had gone far enough....

"By what authority, and who gave it to you? In all times and places, this is the central challenge put by governments to dissidents. Those in power recognize no authority they have not defined, brokered, or mediated. Conversely, any who would contest their arrangement must justify themselves before the bench. It is the circular genius of State logic: There can be no protest except by permission. How will Jesus counter? He pauses, eyeing his antagonists. He understands that defending his practice is a losing proposition as long as they are framing the issue. Measuring his words carefully, he decides to go on the offensive.

" 'I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will answer you' (11:29). Here is Jesus' most powerful weapon, with which he lays siege to the citadel of self-referential authority: questions that drive a sharp wedge of inquiry into the cracks of the *status quo* in order to pry open its internal contradictions.

" 'Where do you think John's authority came from?' Jesus' opponents stiffen. The case of the recently martyred rebel prophet John is a delicate political matter indeed. They can hardly delegitimize the work of so popular a national hero; yet if they eulogize John, their own duplicity — as the administration that consented to his execution — will be unmasked (11:30-32). Jesus has, in effect, thrown the challenge back in their faces."

Practicing resurrection

Constantly, deliberately and intelligently, Jesus reshapes the debate, changes the forum or the venue, says the unexpected. Jesus' last reversal, of course, is his own death and resurrection. In that pre-eminent reversal of the rules, Jesus undoes the power of the greatest coercive threat of all time.

In ultimate freedom, may we take to heart Wendell Berry's advice in "Manifesto":

"Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts....
As soon as the generals and the politicos
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who make more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection." TW

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Trying to Find Out About Crazy Woman Creek, Wyoming

for Carolyn

by Christina V. Pacosz

First, I look up the definition of *crazy* and I become slightly crazed. Crazy Horse, it says in my American Heritage, was "killed while resisting arrest." Lies can make you crazy faster than anything else. This is not the first lie I have discovered in the dictionary, but I wish it was the last.

What would the last lie look like? How would it feel? Would we miss lies if we didn't have them? Living with lies is a shattering experience. The dictionary tells us the root word for *craze* is *krasa*, Old Norse meaning *to shatter*. This is not a lie.

During kiln firing ceramic bowls can become crazed and we admire them. There are crazy quilts to keep us warm and crazy weed, toxic to some animals. And there are crazy people. Crazy people are shattered, but unlike bowls, we do not usually admire them.

The skin of crazy people no longer protects them from an atmosphere of lies. Lies are corrosive like acid and without a tough skin lies do you in.

Murder, massacre, war. These are lies on a rampage. These are accumulated lies gone berserk, which is also a term from the Norse and means *bear's skin*. I would like to lie down and not think of such things. I would like to lie down with you and not think. But look! Lies spring up like sedge grass between our bodies, rough like bear's skin.

How is this so? Two people. Skin. A lying down that is not a rest, but offers rest, refuge. What are the lies doing here? Let us put on bear's skin and chase them out. Let us chase all the lies as far from the village as we are able. If we have to, we'll chase them all the way up to the sun. The sun laughs at lies and gobbles them up.

I have not forgotten the creek. There is one creek and two legends.

In one, Indians kill a trader who has sold them whiskey. The trader counts his money. But, what is this? The Indians are still thirsty. They want more whiskey. He has none. They are so drunk, so crazed, so shattered, they kill him. The money in his pockets does not save him. His young wife watches the Indians kill him. She escapes, demented, to wander the creek.

In the second legend, *Niobrara*, or Crazy Woman Creek is named after an Indian woman left alone after an attack on her village. In other words: she is the sole survivor of a massacre. Even if she had a bear's skin it could not help her.

We are not told if everyone is killed by whites or Indians, and it is too bad, in fact it is very bad, that wanting to know this is still important. Here is an example of too many lies in the world. We must chase them to the sun, again and again, no matter how tired we think we are. We must do this until all the lies in the world are herded together and burned up.

The Indian woman is called a squaw in the book. The dictionary notes this is a disparaging term. In other words: a lie. There are no squaws, only crazy women. On Niobrara, there are two crazy women, one white, one red.

The white woman wanders up the creek. Maybe a bear eats her. Or a cougar. Maybe she dies of exposure. We hear no more from her.

The red woman, we are told, lives in a "squalid wikiup" until her death. She can be seen on moonlit nights leaping the creek. The bear is her friend. The cougar keeps her warm at night. The Crows know she brings them good luck.

How can this be? A crazy woman? A squaw? The sole survivor of a massacre by whites or Indians? How can she bring anyone good luck? Isn't she shattered? *Yes*. But she stayed in her wikiup. She refused to run from death. She knew she was the only witness. To be a witness is to not tell lies.

We are not in a court of law, but out here under the sun by the creek. The bear is slapping fish out of the water and the cougar is licking its lips. The white woman is back. She's not dead after all. She is leaning over the creek, doing laundry, washing her hair.

The red woman, who knows she is not a squaw, but a witness, is roasting fish. It is the day the last lie has been chased to the sun.

— *Christina V. Pacosz*,
Some Winded,
Wild Beast,
Black and Red, 1985

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Plain speech and resistance

by Marianne Arbogast

In no branch of Christian tradition has truthtelling been prized more highly than it has within the Society of Friends.

Early Quakers suffered persecution and imprisonment for their refusal to take oaths in court and, rejecting the use of language to define rank, adopted a "plain" style of speech marked by a truthfulness so rigorous that it was sometimes perceived as rudeness.

"Some were not willing to say 'good morning' or 'your humble servant' — nothing except a salutation, 'Friend,'" says Jerry Frost, director of Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. "The Quaker testimony on truth is connected with the testimony against superfluous language."

Truthtelling is "basic to the whole Quaker theory of worship," Frost says. "A silent meeting demands absolute truthfulness. You say only what comes from the Spirit of God; if you 'outran your gift' with words beyond what the Holy Spirit directed, that was an untruth, and destroyed the experience of the inner light."

Although 19th-century Quakers dropped the distinctive language forms which till then had set them apart, the emphasis on truthtelling persisted.

American Quakers involved with the Underground Railroad accepted the need for secrecy to protect escaping slaves, but they often preferred to mislead their pursuers with truth, rather than lies.

"If someone asked whether a slave had passed that way, they would say something like, 'I saw no slave,' — because they didn't believe in anyone being a slave," says Margaret Walden, librarian at Friends school in Detroit. "Most Quakers were very scrupulous about truthtelling even in those situations."

Thomas Garrett, a Delaware Quaker who worked with Harriet Tubman, concealed fugitives in the bottom of bricklayers' wagons to get them across a guarded bridge. But while hiding the individuals he helped to safety, Garrett never hid the fact that he engaged in such activity. When confronted by angry and occasionally violent slave owners, he refused either to deny their charges or to give them information which would endanger others. Even after his property was auctioned to pay a slave owner who had won a lawsuit against him, Garrett proclaimed to the sheriff his intention of continuing his work.

There are also stories of Quaker parents entrusting to their children the responsibility for greeting and hiding refugees — which enabled the adults to truthfully declare their ignorance concerning the presence or whereabouts of illegal guests.

"If someone asked whether a slave had passed that way, they would say something like, 'I saw no slave,' — because they didn't believe in anyone being a slave."

—Margaret Walden

A preference for openness has persisted through subsequent generations of Friends.

Stephen Carey, former chair of the American Friends Service Committee, recalls that the AFSC was one of the few relief agencies in Germany after World War II which declined to maximize their resources by trading on the black market.

"On the black market you could get 100 German marks for the dollar, while we could get only 20 at the bank," he says. "But the rule of the Service Committee was not to operate under the table."

The AFSC has also steered clear of any involvement with espionage. Carey tells of being approached by an FBI agent who questioned him about a trip to Poland.

"He asked what ships we had seen in the harbor, and we told him if we had seen any ships, we wouldn't tell him," Carey says. "It would have been deceptive to the Polish government if we said we went in to help, but were spying for the U.S."

Carey believes that, in the long run, the AFSC's reputation for honesty has served their cause.

"Because we have tried to be trustworthy, we have often been able to get into places that others don't," he says.

Contemporary Quakers, engaging in civil resistance activities that "speak truth to power" (the AFSC motto), have also tended to choose a straightforward approach.

Friends' organizations have gone on record as supporting war tax resistance, declaring that "Quaker institutions have a corporate responsibility to assist their employees in responding as openly and honestly as possible" (*Friends Journal,* 3/87).

"In nonviolent actions, I think it is always critical to be honest," says David Hartsough, a San Francisco Quaker with a long history of resistance work. "In a society where there is so much lying and deception, it is important to be consistent, rather than buy into the disease the rest of

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*. Artist **Jeanette Winter** illustrated *Follow the Drinking Gourd* from which this illustration is taken (Knopf, 1988).

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society has."

For Hartsough, this means giving his name to police and being willing to suffer the consequences of civil disobedience.

"I've always felt I have nothing to hide," Hartsough says. "I'm glad to have my name associated with these actions."

Hartsough's principles do not mandate revealing the details of nonviolent actions in advance. In recent actions in which Hartsough and others have occupied houses slated to be bulldozed, they have notified the police of their plans while not disclosing the exact location.

Similarly, Jim Corbett and other Friends in the Sanctuary movement told authorities of their activities — but not till Central American refugees were safely across the border.

"We would notify the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) every time that we were helping someone to reach safety on the border," Corbett says. "We wanted to make sure that in the practice of civil initiative, we didn't simply become some kind of vigilante do-gooders. We felt we had to give the government every right to indict and make charges. But we didn't tell them when and where we were crossing, and we sent the letter of notification at the time we were going to help the refugees, so it didn't arrive till afterwards."

Corbett distinguishes between the Quaker principle of civil initiative — "trying to protect good laws from a government violating those laws" — and the kind of action that might be called for under a lawless regime.

"If we were in Nazi Germany trying to protect Anne Frank the circumstances would be different," he says. "Whether I speak as a Quaker or not, I don't know for sure, but I can see a lot of reason for subterfuge to keep people from being captured and killed."

Corbett's own experience has included "occasions when there was an element of subterfuge that I wasn't comfortable about or entirely clear on," he says.

When visiting refugees awaiting deportation in a Mexican penitentiary, the Mexican priest who accompanied Corbett used to sign him in as *"Padre Jaime."*

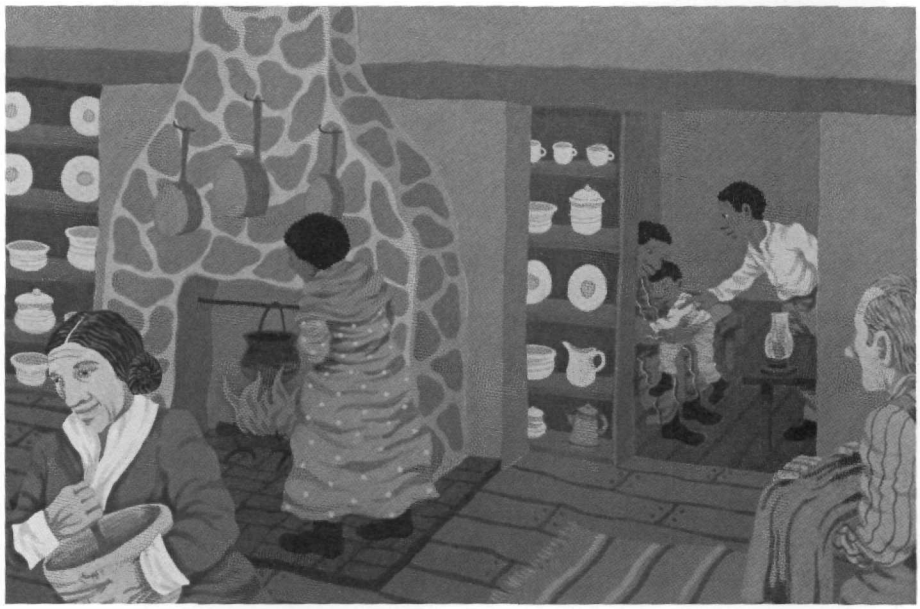
"Mexican law excludes the church from having a civil role, but in actual practice, a priest could get in readily, while someone out of nowhere couldn't," Corbett says.

"When I was asked about it, I was truthful, but not as truthful as I could have been. Folks noticed I said things like 'Good luck,' rather than 'Bless you, my son,' and asked, 'What kind of a priest are you?' I told them I was a different kind of *padre,* that I didn't hear confessions, that I was concerned primarily with the *Sociedad de los Amigos.* Clearly, I was misleading people. But as long as the forms seemed to be met, the jailers and the *commandante* of the prison didn't care about the rest of it."

Corbett would place the fundamental burden of truthtelling on the community, rather than the individual.

"It is extremely important for the church to maintain its integrity even when individuals who are members can't," he says. "I'm thinking of integrity as broader than truthtelling — not being hypocritical, not misleading people. With the underground railroad, when Quakers were hiding out slaves, it was important for the Society of Friends itself to be firmly on record against slavery. In Germany, under the Nazis, it was very important for the church to be firmly on record against Nazism. Perhaps individuals need to be underground, but as participants in the larger community they can participate in that broader integrity.

There is a strong tendency to want to shove off responsibility onto the individual. But real integrity is a community responsibility — ultimately, there is only one integrity." TW



". . . a hoot like an owl . . . opened the door to a Quaker farm." Jeanette Winter

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Practicing privacy and timing: an ethic for lying when necessary

by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

A person of faith's views on lying cannot be simplistic. Fortunately, the Bible is helpful in the development of a complex moral clarity if one avoids simplistic proof-texting.

If one limits the conversation to: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 12:22), the ethical discussion ends with a resounding thump. But when interpreted *contextually*, as every book deserves to be interpreted, the Bible is very helpful indeed.

Rebekah

Rebekah is told by God that she is pregnant with twins who are struggling in the womb and will continue to struggle after birth, with the elder serving the younger. "Armed with this information from God," points out Gwyneth Mapes, in an unpublished paper, "Rebekah becomes the only one who can see that this switch of inheritance-power takes place." So, how does one-without-power gain power? Rebekah shows us through teaching her younger son, Jacob, to become a trickster. Jacob first tricks his older brother Esau out of his birthright, and then with Rebekah's guidance and help, tricks his father Isaac into giving him the blessing and the inheritance of the older son.

"Jacob becomes the archetypal trickster, a role that is lauded in many cultures because it is so versatile and ultimately necessary in the survival of the species," Mapes says. "But what we forget is that Rebekah trained Jacob in this, thus forging the very nature of survival in him and in their descendants. What we also forget is that this trickster trait is the very quality for which women and minorities are lambasted throughout history: deception, subterfuge, lying, cheating, etc. These qualities are necessary qualities of any person or group who is denied social power and has to achieve it in ways other than the system allows. So, we laud Jacob in this story, but lambaste the Rebekahs of the world — unless we reinterpret the story and realize the important role Rebekah played and why she *had* to resort to lying and deception — in order to achieve God's plan for her sons."

Did Rebekah lack integrity because she subverted patriarchal custom in order to fulfill the countercultural will of God? I think not. Neither do contemporary women lack integrity when they must lie or deceive, perhaps by professing faith in an all-male trinity, in order to try to bring about the will of an inclusively loving God in a church that turns deaf ears to the words of the one they call *Lord*.

Rebekah had *to resort to lying and deception — in order to achieve God's plan for her sons.*

Situation ethics

I am aware of the dangers of espousing a complex ethic that includes the integrity of subverting injustice. I know all too well that the human ego can deceive us about our real motives, so that we can wrong ourselves and others while simultaneously assuring ourselves that what we are doing is necessary and good, indeed that we were guided to do it. Furthermore, I have heard various lesbian and gay leaders insisting that there must be *no* secrets in our lives.

But I would argue that there is a difference between emotional dishonesty to ourselves and our trusted friends, and the preservation of privacy in occupied territory. Despite the prying of talk show hosts and the news media, we do *not* owe the public complete disclosure about our lives; and in that sense, everybody has secrets — or ought to! I am arguing for a grounded, realistic, complex ethical vision that honors the integrity on *both* sides of the closet door.

I do so in fear and trembling because I remember the enraged debate that erupted when Joseph Fletcher published his rather subversive book called *Situation Ethics.* In certain circles, Fletcher's name became a synonym for unprincipled *im*morality. But the fact remains that *every* ethical decision *must* be made within a situation, and that even our most trusted moral absolutes must sometimes bend in the service of the common good, or in the service of the divine will as it is revealed to us by the voice of Sophia, the Wisdom of God.

I used to believe that killing was the one absolute that a person could never, never bend; but then I learned that the profoundly Christian Dietrich Bonhoeffer had taken part in a plot to assassinate Hitler. He took part in the plot not because he thought killing was right, but in order to try to save millions of innocent lives. And then I read accounts of people in the underground movement of French resistance to the Nazi forces occupying their country. Those people vowed to one another not only to lie about their membership in the resistance movements, not only to live a lie of pretending to accept

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the Nazi occupation, but also to kill any member who was being entrapped by the Nazis and who might reveal names of colleagues under torture.

It was at that point in my moral development that I realized that the categorical imperative developed by Immanuel Kant is an imperative that works well only to the degree that we are in control of our own destinies, only to the degree that we are privileged to share in the structures of power. Kant taught that we must always act in such a way that our action could be willed as a universal law. Thus, we should never lie or steal because it would be chaos if everyone lied to everyone else or stole from everyone else.

But for people who are living in occupied territory, the categorical imperative would lead to widespread death and the destruction of all that they value. Certainly if I had been a Jew in Nazi Germany or a member of the French Resistance movement, and if the Nazis had been hot on my trail, I would never have chosen to hide in Immanuel Kant's house! Fearing he would value his own moral stainlessness more than my life and the cause I was serving, I would prefer to hide with someone less grandiose, someone more gutsy, someone who would lie through their teeth to protect my survival.

Resistance conduct

We are living in occupied territory.

Racist, classist, sexist America is not really our country, and sexist and heterosexist churches are not in our control. To the degree that we have any public power, of course, we do remain responsible for the use of that power. For instance, most men have more public power in the church and society than most women because of the sexism that governs our incomes and our opportunities; so Christian men are therefore called to responsibility to use their power to move church and society toward greater justice for their sisters. And those of us who are white have more public power than those of other races, because of the racism that still governs our incomes and opportunities; so as white people we are called to combat racist structures. But to the degree that we are internally or externally disempowered by the inequitable systems of this world, to that degree we are in occupied territory and must recognize the presence of an underground or resistance-oriented situation ethic.

Even the apostle Paul espoused a relativistic situation ethic. In I Corinthians 6:12 he said, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. 'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be dominated by anything." How else can we decide what is beneficial for us, or when we might be getting addicted to something, except in specific situations and contexts? In I Corinthians 10:23 Paul said, 'All things are lawful' but not all things are beneficial. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other."

I was brought up to believe that it was a Christian's responsibility to avoid even the *appearance* of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22, KJV). It was many years before it dawned on me that in the story of the Good Samaritan, the two priests who refused their help to the man fallen among thieves were doing exactly that — they were abstaining from all appearance of evil. If they had helped the bleeding man, they would have gotten dirt and blood on their stainless garments.

Jacob blessing the children of Joseph **by Rembrandt**

The church and workable ethics

It is time, I think, for the church at large to become much more mature in its ethical stance, learning to show less concern for stainless absolutes and righteous images, and more concern for helping people

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in the often painful and messy realities of their lives.

John Milton, the great 17th-century Puritan poet and theologian, had something very important to say about integrity: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, *not without dust and heat.*"

What the church needs to learn, what we as the church all need to learn, is precisely that it is impossible to be active in this world while avoiding even the appearance of evil. No worthwhile race is run without dust and heat; no justice-oriented life is lived without mistakes, without occasional cooptation, without controversy, or without making some people angry. Some of us face anger and contempt because we are working for justice outside the closet, and I refer to all our beliefs and behaviors, not just sexuality; others of us face the distressing claustrophobia of working for justice inside various closets.

The important thing is that we Christians follow Jesus by working for justice. We also need to be careful of judgementalism and of seemingly innocent celebrations of the liberties of being able to be open about our beliefs and lives. These celebrations may unconsciously assault the integrity or courage of our more closeted, less privileged sisters and brothers.

The dictionary associates integrity with soundness or an unimpaired condition; with firm adherence to a code of moral or artistic values; with completeness, incorruptibility, and honesty. Our society and especially our churches have put a lot of pressure on feminists and other marginalized people, in many cases succeeding in polluting our consciences so that we think our subversive behavior is evil.

During her coming-out sermon, Jeanne Audrey Powers pointed out several strategies for subversion: deception when necessary; operating under pretense and making false claims when necessary; being careful not to get caught; not hesitating to confront when we know it is the right time; and fleeing when we have to. She said that although "the church has never used these words in any kind of a positive way at all, the fact is that the church is intended to 'overcome [the] powers and principalities of this world.' Therefore the whole Christian church is vocationally called to be subversive."

The Bible taken as a whole really does teach a situation or contextual ethic — not just Paul's remarks about all things being lawful even when they are not expedient, but the whole direction of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. For instance, Jesus told us that the whole law and the prophets hang on the first two commandments, to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. But as we all know, the idea of living lovingly provides us with a lot of latitude. It is up to us to decide, within each context, what is the way to love God and neighbor. Sometimes we only wish that a voice out of heaven would tell us exactly what to do! But in fact if we quiet ourselves and ask for guidance and then listen expectantly, the loving response eventually makes itself known to us in the dark still center of our being.

Jesus' lineage

Furthermore, not only does the Bible call us to a subjective and therefore relativistic love-ethic; it also provides us with many examples of people honored by God, who were nevertheless forced by the context of their lives to do things that would never pass the test of the categorical imperative. We have already looked at the example of Rebekah and Jacob. I

Huck tells a lie

[Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn considers turning in Jim, an escaped slave.]

My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it, "Let up on me — it ain't too late, yet — I'll paddle ashore at the first light, and tell." I felt easy, and happy, and light as a feather, right off. All my troubles was gone. ... When I was fifty yards off, Jim says:

"Dah you goes, de ole true Huck; de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim."

Well, I just felt sick. But I says, I *got* to do it — I can't get *out* of it. Right then, along comes a skiff with two men in it, with guns, and they stopped and I stopped. One of them says:

"What's that yonder?"

"A piece of raft," I says.

"Do you belong on it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Any men on it?"

"Only one, sir."

"Well, there's five niggers run off to-night, up yonder above the head of the bend. Is your man white or black?"

I didn't answer up prompt. I tried to, but the words wouldn't come. I tried, for a second or two, to brace up and come out with it, but I warn't man enough — hadn't the spunk of a rabbit. I see I was weakening; so I just give up trying, and up and says —

"He's white."

[*David Nyberg, author of* The Varnished Truth: Truth Telling and Deceiving in Ordinary Life *(The University of Chicago Press, 1993),* contrasts Huck's experience with that of André Trocmé (see profile, p. 30).]

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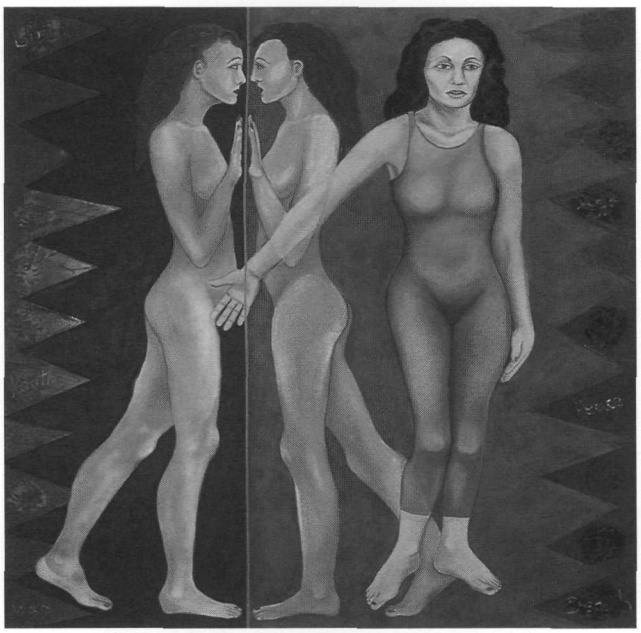
think also of the mother of Moses, who "lived a lie" by pretending to be simply a wetnurse and took money from Pharaoh's daughter for nursing her own son — a son whose life she had already saved by committing civil disobedience. Shiprah and Puah, the midwives whom Pharaoh told to kill all the Hebrew boy babies during the birth process, apparently agreed to do so. When it became clear that there were as many healthy Hebrew boys being born as formerly and Pharaoh confronted them, Shiprah and Puah told their ruler a very creative lie: "The Hebrew women are so lively that they deliver before we can get there." We are told in Exodus that God rewarded the midwives for their gutsy and subversive behavior.

Tamar, who entrapped her father-in-law into making her pregnant by pretending to be a temple prostitute, had been married to the man's eldest son, and when he died prematurely, was given to his second son. But when the second son also died prematurely, the man was afraid to give her to his third and only surviving son. When Tamar saw he had no intention of doing that, she took matters into her own hands and got pregnant through lying and subterfuge. Her father-in-law was going to execute her when he found out she was pregnant; but she had been smart enough to have obtained proof of her father-in-law's identity, and when she produced the proof, she was able to live and have the honored status in Israel that only motherhood could bring. She is mentioned in Matthew's Gospel as one of only five women named in the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah.

Then there's Rahab, the innkeeper who is identified as a prostitute in Scripture, who sheltered the spies Joshua sent to Jericho and who helped them escape safely over the city wall. By lying to her own government and betraying the city of Jericho to Joshua, Rahab was able to save the lives of her entire extended family. She is the second woman Matthew honors by naming her in the bloodline of Jesus, the Messiah.

Then there is Ruth, the woman of Moab who bonded with Naomi in the beautiful vow that has been used for centuries in heterosexual wedding ceremonies. At Naomi's suggesting, Ruth slept with Boaz on the threshing floor in order to stimulate him into acting his proper role as her kinsman-redeemer according to the laws of ancient Israel. And when Boaz responded by marrying Ruth and providing her and Naomi with a home, the women remained so closely bonded to each other that Ruth gave her first son Obed to be Naomi's own son. Like Tamar and Rahab, Ruth is mentioned by name in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. The other two women in that genealogy are Bathsheba, King David's partner in adultery, and Mary, Mother of Jesus, an unwed mother who has been gossiped about for centuries. If indeed the point of Christian living is to avoid even the appearance of evil, Matthew's Gospel is in grave error to honor such women as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and the mother of Jesus, every one of whom was associated in some way with sexual and moral irregularity!



Lines of existence **by Claudia Bach**

Even more to the point is the story of Esther, who was chosen as the Queen of the Persian King Ahasuerus. For the first part of her reign, Esther was "in the closet" because she never told anybody that she was Jewish. But when the egotistical Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews in Persia, Queen Esther saved her people by using the power of the royal diadem, power she had achieved during her closeted days. She risked her life by going into the king's presence uninvited, but not before she and all the Jews of Persia had fasted. Her petition was granted.

When Esther had at first hesitated to approach the king uninvited in order to come out of the closet and claim solidarity with her people, her uncle Mordecai urged her on with some words that are also memorable: "Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" (4:14). It is my personal conviction that each of us will know when the moment comes that we are to drop all subterfuge and utilize whatever public power we have achieved, on

Despite the prying of talk show hosts and the news media, we do not *owe the public complete disclosure about our lives.*

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behalf of ourselves and our people.

Finally, Jesus frequently told people to keep quiet about the miracles he had performed. Just imagine being healed of leprosy and then being told that you had to keep the whole thing secret (Matthew 8:4). What a closet! Furthermore, Jesus sometimes closeted the fact that he was even capable of doing miracles. He did no miracles at all when he was in a place where the people had manifested very little faith, and he refused to offer a sign to religious leaders who asked him for one (Mark 8:11, Matthew 13:58). He kept his own counsel in Jerusalem, too (John 2:23-25).

Please be clear that I am not denying our capacity for deceiving ourselves about our motives; nor am I asking anybody to stay in the closet about their behavior or their beliefs. It is true that social change will be brought about mainly through organized public community efforts, so that we need as many of us "out and open" as are able to be "out and open." But it is also true, as Thomas Merton said, that "political action is too often rendered futile by the massive corruption and dishonesty and faking which neutralize it everywhere." Better a prayerful, loving life that preserves its secrets than a dissonant brassy life with no secrets at all!

It is my personal conviction that each of us will know when the moment comes that we are to drop all subterfuge and utilize whatever public power we have achieved, on behalf of ourselves and our people.

Living without guilt

My point is simply that as long as we are sincerely listening for God's guidance and responding fluidly to it, we need feel no guilt about whatever degree of secrecy or subversion our work may require of us. It is the church's sin that forces so many people to be secretive if they want a ministry within it. And it is society's sin that forces so many teachers and business people into the closet and punishes so many people for being open about their feminism or their conviction that wealth should be redistributed.

All of us have integrity as long as we are doing our best to be whatever it is God seems to want us to be. I hope we will affirm the subjective, relativistic love-ethic of Scripture without shame and without embarrassment, holding our heads high as we celebrate the challenges of doing whatever is necessary to sustain loving lives and the cause of justice for all people. Freedom is coming tomorrow. All of us are moving the world toward that freedom.

We have come into our power for just such a time as this. TW

The 'living truth'

by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

An individual utterance is always part of a total reality which seeks expression in this utterance. If my utterance is to be truthful it must in each case be different according to whom I am addressing, who is questioning me, and what I am speaking about. The truthful word is not in itself constant; it is as much alive as life itself. If it is detached from life and from its reference to the concrete other man, if "the truth is told" without taking into account to whom it is addressed, then this truth has only the appearance of truth, but it lacks its essential character.

It is only the cynic who claims "to speak the truth" at all times and in all places to all people in the same way, but who, in fact, displays nothing but a lifeless image of the truth. One dons the halo of the fanatical devotée of truth who can make no allowance for human weaknesses; but, in fact, one is destroying the living truth between people. One wounds shame, desecrates mystery, breaks confidence, betrays the community in which one lives, and laughs arrogantly at the devastation one has wrought and at the human weakness which "cannot bear the truth." One says truth is destructive and demands its victims, and one feels like a god above these feeble creatures and does not know that he is serving Satan.

Every utterance or word lives and has its home in a particular environment. The word in the family is different from the word in business or public. The word which has come to life in the warmth of personal relationship is frozen to death in the cold air of public existence. The word of command, which has its habitat in public service, would sever the bonds of mutual confidence if it were spoken in the family. Each word must have its own place and keep to it.

It is a consequence of the wide diffusion of the public word through the newspapers and the wireless that the essential character and the limits of the various different words are no longer clearly felt and that, for example, the special quality of the personal word is almost entirely destroyed. Genuine words are replaced by idle chatter. Words no longer possess any weight. There is too much talk. And when the limits of the various words are obliterated, when words become rootless and homeless, then the word loses truth, and then indeed there must almost inevitably be lying. TW

Excerpted from **Dietrich Bonhoeffer's** "What is Meant by 'Telling the Truth'?" *Ethics,* Eberhard Bethge, ed. (MacMillan, 1965).

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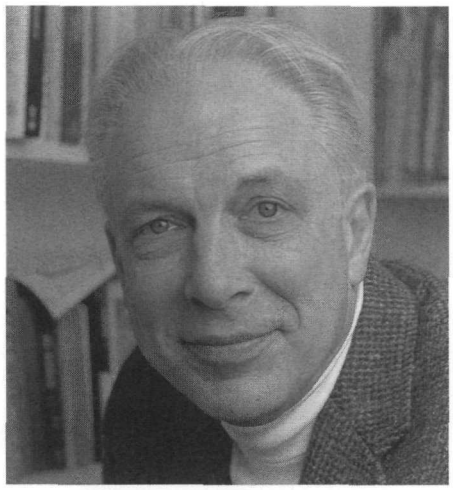
Illusion, magic and faith: an interview with Robert Neale

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Robert Neale began doing magic at a hotel when he was 12 years old. Adults would confide serious matters in him because he had successfully fooled them with a sleight-of-hand trick. Once ordained in the Congregational Church, Neale gave up magic tricks. But later, teaching at New York's Union Theological Seminary, he brought his enjoyment of magic back into tension with religious faith. His views tend to be personalist and irreverent, but then, as he says, "If you're going to play around with this theme of magic and religion, you're into powerfully ambiguous material."



Robert Neale

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: How were you drawn to the field of play and magic?
Robert Neale: There's a playful spirit in Zen and in the Christian mystical tradition. Christians tend to call magic primitive or childish. I see it as going on all the time. We use ultimate structures and ultimate beliefs to get things and that's okay.
J.W-K.: *The Witness'* reason for coming into the topic is that we're looking at whether it's ever okay to lie. It occurred to us that there are times when a lie may be closer to the truth than the truth would be. Can you say something about deception and truth?
R.N.: My favorite quote on the subject is from Wallace Stevens: "Final belief is to believe in a fiction, which you know to be a fiction, there being nothing else. The exquisite truth is to know that it is a fiction and that you believe in it willingly."
J.W-K.: Say a little bit more about why you're confident that there is only fiction.
R.N.: One of our great illusions is that we can know reality. A lot of stuff hits the eyeball and the brain turns it into something, puts it right-side-up and puts it back out there. That's an incredible thing the brain does. It's even turned right-side-up. So what we have to deal with is what we've constructed. The glory of it is that it helps us so well.
J.W-K.: Is this simply utilitarian — we made it up because it helps us?
R.N.: A human being is not like a beaver. A beaver's got things pretty well worked out. But a human being has to learn, develop patterns and get a general sense of the order of things. When this fails us, we get into trouble. We get demoralized, kill people, whatever.

This general sense of the order of things is a religious thing. What religion does is help make patterns real and viable for us.
J.W-K.: Does your belief that we made it up make it not real?
R.N.: Oh no! I asked my students to make up a story about God. The results were highly idiosyncratic. Reading them out loud was a spiritual occasion. We don't forget them. We just made them up and all of a sudden — boom! — they are very real, because they express so much.

When someone asks "Is it true or not?" or "Do I believe it or not?" they are leaving themselves outside. If you're in the middle of telling a story or hearing a story fully, you don't ask if it's real. The same is true when you play a game and participate in a worship service — then you are inside.
J.W-K.: Tell me about illusion.
R.N.: Basic tricks done by secular magicians were first done by clergy in so-called primitive religions. Magic is very strong in the shamanistic traditions and in a lot of healing rites. Native American Indians produced rabbits, not out of hats, but out of baskets. They would make a feather float.

But some theorize that religion is the one place where truth is the most important thing. Since human beings can lie, cheat and deceive each other, they believe there needs to be ritual that is so real that people do not lie and deceive. What you have in that case, on ritual occasions, is the strong need for absolute truth which is supported by absolute deception or trickery.
J.W-K.: Can you give an example in current liturgies?

Illusion means "in play." Something is in play, a reality that works.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*. Artist **Grisha Dotzenko** illustrated *African Folk Tales* (The Peter Pauper Press, 1963).

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R.N.: No, I don't think it occurs in the blatant forms. Let me give you some more examples from early traditions and then we'll move into the modern parallels.

In Australia, boys are trained to believe that there's a good spirit and a bad spirit. They're out in the wilderness where the older men are to take them through rituals but the boys get a tooth knocked out. They are told that the bad spirit did it and is going to come back and kill them. All along this is accompanied by a strange noise, a loud noise, that the little kids have never heard before. And then the bad spirit comes. They hear the noise and they're petrified.

Then all of a sudden they're shown what is making the noise. It's a stick on a string that you whirl around — a bullroar — and it makes this weird, wonderful sound. There's a process here — to create an illusion and then expose it. They're *disillusioned.* Then they're inducted into the society, turned into adults and told not to give away the secrets. They make their own bullroar which becomes a very holy object for them.

The problem is how to be healed and not kill your neighbor. How can you in this highly pluralistic situation —many different stories and games about these most serious things — enjoy something and be served by something without killing your neighbor?

In some Navajo ceremonies in the early days, the men would do a trick — like make the sun rise out of a basket — and the women watching this, *as a part of the ritual,* would be required to say "I see the thread by which you're moving the sun. You aren't fooling us."

The symbolic importance of this is what is crucial. If I say, "You've got a stomachache" and reach into your belly and pull out a black stone, which I simply palmed in my hand, you may know that I cheated, but that's not important. What's important is the symbolic meaning of it. So you have a very complex attitude here. You have trickery, acknowledgement that it is trickery and deliberate suspension of disbelief.

I have books on card tricks with very clever methods, because the audience wants to know how it's done. But suppose instead of pulling playing cards out of the air, I produce dollar bills? That grabs your interest more and you become less concerned about how I'm doing it. If you move from an intellectual puzzle to an emotional puzzle, the trick can be less elaborate. Supposing you predict the future? Magicians who do this don't have to be very clever, because the audience doesn't give a damn how it's done, the *issue* is what is important.

If you move all the way to a religious miracle or a spiritual trick of some kind, you don't have to do a damn thing. You can almost have no method; all you have to do is proclaim something. It's not just that the hand is quicker than the eye, because the magician is working with your mind, your feelings *and* your spiritual needs. The great magician doesn't have to do anything! He's just there and — boom! — all of sudden people are saying "Gee, miracles are happening."

Illusion and faith in Narnia

"One word, Ma'am," he said, coming back from the fire; limping, because of the pain. "One word. All you've been saying is quite right, I shouldn't wonder. I'm a chap who always liked to know the worst and then put the best face I can on it. So I won't deny any of what you said. But there's one thing more to be said, even so.

"Suppose we *have* only dreamed, or made up, all those things — trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. Suppose we have. Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones.

"Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours *is* the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play world.

"I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia. So, thanking you kindly for our supper, if these two gentlemen and the young lady are ready, we're leaving your court at once and setting out in the dark to spend our lives looking for Overland. Not that our lives will be very long, I should think; but that's small loss if the world's as dull a place as you say."

— *The Silver Chair* by C.S. Lewis

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J.W-K.: Are you saying that all miracles in the Bible are illusion?

R.N.: That's what I would assume. Does that diminish their power? By no means. Deception, carefully done, can heal people. Illusion means "in play." Something is in play, a reality that works.

My field is psychology. I've gone for psychological treatments that cost me $125 an hour! If you're the right sort of person you can get the same basic things from a fortune teller charging $20 an hour: Somebody cares about you; there is a possibility of help; there is hope for the future and an institution that helps you understand yourself. The basic ingredients run through all these different therapeutic systems.

J.W-K.: What magic remains in mainstream churches?

R.N.: Much magic in the traditional sense is word magic — charms. The focus on words, the benediction, and so forth, has very powerful effects.

J.W-K.: I wonder if the decline of the mainstream churches is partly because the churches have sacrificed a lot of the play and illusion?

R.N.: There have been new things, people creating their own services of worship. As individual and local symbols get involved, the sense of play is increased. I've known people who don't want any symbolism in their religion, not that it can be avoided. But then they get into magic, they love it. They feel free. Somehow there's been some kind of anti-symbolism going on in their religious upbringing.

J.W-K.: Or they're afraid of being fooled in an arena where they think it matters.

R.N.: The most powerful words we have are empty: God, love, humanity. They are powerful precisely because we all put ourselves into them.

J.W-K.: Where imagination, healing and rituals are thriving is in New Age circles.

R.N.: And there are dangers here. It can be a highly individualistic and isolating experience if pursued without a community to hold it together.

J.W-K.: How do magic and imagination relate to what you care about most?

Grisha Dotzenko

R.N.: I'm in love with making up things. When I was a little kid, I couldn't draw. My handwriting is ugly — it's illegible and I can't spell. But I started folding paper, origami, in my late twenties and all of a sudden I started to create things. I just recently got a book out on my paperfolds. Then I started making up magic tricks. What is it to be creative? Making up meaning is what's most important to me and most wonderful.

I started working with this in the classroom. I said, "Let's draw death or let's draw God. You don't have to believe in God, just draw whatever comes to you."

There are two sides to imagination — one is making things up and the other side is using what you created in the magical sense. How marvelous that we've made up all these things. It's absolutely incredible! I could say Christianity is the best nonsense I know. There is no taller tale. We made it up and it's glorious. And we keep changing it and people tell their own versions.

J.W-K.: Is there a relationship between this creativity and magic and a Judeo-Christian understanding of God? Is there affirmation for imagination in Scripture?

R.N.: I think there is. The institution tries to control it too much. What I get mad about is what I call the bureaucratic terrorism of belief and disbelief where a creed or any kind of belief structure is abused, is made to be something I have to assent to.

The problem is how to be healed and not kill your neighbor. How can you in this highly pluralistic situation — with many different stories and games going on about these most serious things — enjoy something and be served by something without killing your neighbor? This is a contemporary problem.

J.W-K.: Do you believe that the power of magic and ritual are rooted in the collective unconscious, in a kind of truth that's bigger than the myth that I might write?

R.N.: Good question. My answer is I don't give a shit.

J.W-K.: I was afraid of that.

R.N.: You want to make up a theory? I love to make up theories.

J.W-K.: You do care how magic is *actually* related to healing. Where I would go from the collective unconscious question — if you gave a shit, which you don't — is to an understanding of the will of God. My interest in magic would be minimal if

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I didn't think that I was interacting with some force, with God. So I am looking for whether the Creator's still got a playful relationship to what's happening. Is that something you would speak to?

R.N.: What I'm doing with creativity is no more firm than anything that you want to do with the collective unconscious.

J.W-K.: I'm trying to anticipate people's question, "What about God? What about doctrine?" Lots of people will find it alarming that magic can lead to healing.

R.N.: Magic is probably a dirty word for them. It's beyond rational. These things can work. They make you feel a little more comfortable. You can get in an airplane and kill other people if you are in a war — or gamble at Las Vegas. This is magical thinking that goes on in life.

J.W-K.: Do you believe in magical thinking?

RN: Entertainer magicians tend to be big-time cynics. They make a living exposing phony psychics. I'm a part of that too. I know all the research in paranormal psychology. Nothing holds up.

Something new comes up, the public keeps doing it, television keeps showing it and none of it holds up. The rationalists just throw fits. I say, "Loosen up, try to learn a little bit about what it is like to be a human being, not just a mind." So I'm kind of in the middle of the skeptics and the believers. The only way I can do it comfortably is with imagination.

J.W-K.: Imagination and acknowledging that it's made up.

R.N.: And maybe it's not, but I haven't got any hard-core evidence yet.

J.W-K.: The imagination you have been describing clearly relates to healing. Does it relate to justice?

R.N.: Let me just say what comes to mind. What concerns me so deeply is that we hurt ourselves with our bureaucratic terrorism and try to get rid of people who challenge our approach to our structures of meaning.

Maybe justice comes when you not only enjoy your own story but enjoy other people's stories — that's a start because then you aren't killing them or putting them down. Maybe justice comes when you can see that they are connected. It's the connection of stories where justice might really come in. How does your

Grisha Dotzenko

story connect? Can you learn from their story? And the stories change each other. That's where I think justice might come, or at least community.

J.W-K.: Your whole attitude and freedom is kind of antithetical to what's going on in the culture right now — where everything is shutting down into a need for right answers.

RN: Human beings are terribly limited. And, as my wife can tell you, I am free in a few, tiny little areas that aren't too interesting to anybody but me — except maybe you. But in other areas I am a hard hat. I talk about tricksters as the merry mess-makers, but actually I like things neat. My wife is the messy one and I don't like it.

Most of us can't tolerate very much freedom and imagination. One of the real problems that happened at Union Theological Seminary, I think, is that we prided ourselves on our pluralism, tried to increase it — while also dragging our feet as white, male, middle-aged people. We tried to get every brand of deviation in any realm. We got people there and then said, "We can't cope." I think we got overwhelmed. Anybody in the minority could sniff out our denials pretty quickly.

This country may be in some kind of circumstance where it can't cope well with freedom. I don't know a solution.

J.W-K.: Is there a reassuring thing to say to people who are busy trying to put up the bulwarks?

RN: You can say, "I don't blame you." In psychology the stupidest thing to do is to make fun of someone else's defense mechanisms. We can't live without them. We need to be able to say, "I'm protecting myself here. Hey, I'm a human being." We have to give ourselves massive protection. Let's respect that. I don't know if you can ever get a playful sense of protecting oneself. You could say in a ritual, "Let's create protections." Have some fun with it, make it in clay or whatever.

J.W-K.: I guess that's what New Age people are doing with angel cards. But they're too tame.

RN: Angels are in, huh? I like terrifying angels. And I write about the trickster tradition in religion: coyote, sacred clowns, con-artists.

J.W-K.: I guess the trickster's main role is breaking down rigidity, isn't it?

RN: Yeah! Mess-makers who come in and use the structure against itself. It can be very dangerous and destructive, but it can also liberate.

J.W-K.: Do you consider Jesus a trickster?

R.N.: Certainly Jesus was a trickster. Look at the parables. Tricksters take the system and use it against itself. TW

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Lying outside K-Mart

The first lie I ever remember telling was outside K-Mart. I cannot have been much more than three or four years old.

We had been browsing in the Garden Shop, and while my mother talked with a clerk, I wandered over to one of the displays. Examining it with a child's eye, I was irresistibly drawn not to the leafy branches, not to the colorful flowers, but to the layer of white pebbles in the base of the planter.

I must have been going through a rock phase, because there were already two other important pebbles in my pocket. I picked up one of these intriguing new white stones, which upon closer examination actually sparkled, and it suddenly hit me: I could take it. I remember justifying the act to myself: they would never miss it. K-Mart had so many, and I had none at all.

Was there a series of furtive looks? A small fist slipping the pebble slowly into the pocket? I don't remember. But after we hit the parking lot, perhaps 20 yards from the store, childlike enthusiasm overcame me and I suddenly cried out, unedited, unthinking, "I HAVE ROCKS!"

The second half of deceit, the calm controlling pretense that nothing has transpired: I had known nothing of that. The second the words were out of my mouth, however, my heart sank with the realization that I had exposed myself. To be a thief, one had to be a liar too.

"Where did you get them?" my mother asked, with seeming interest but in that tone that tells children that the game is up. "... I found some of them," I mumbled, jesuitically.

"Where did you get the others?" We stopped walking and my mother put out her hand. "Let me see."

Out came the two pebbles and the fairytale white stone, which any adult would recognize in a minute as belonging in a dreary K-Mart garden display. There was quick dialogue, and then we were hurrying back to the cashier. All the way in I was trying to convince my mother of the gross injustice of corporate America, lounging idly amidst huge, unappreciated piles of money and toys and pretty white rocks while denying me even one.

What did I say to the woman at the counter? "I stole?" "I took this rock?" And what did she do? Was she kind? Did she try to contribute to my mother's lesson-teaching by telling me if I did it again the police would come? I don't recall any of that. But 30 years later, that one moment in the parking lot, the moment I saw a need to hide myself, is still unforgettable.

— Beth Maynard is assistant to the rector at Trinity Church and Episcopal Chaplain at Marshall University in Huntington, W.V.

Tell us about lies in your life.
The Witness' invitation on the internet.

'Afraid to tell'

Back in the late 1960s, Carmella, a woman I knew, had kidney surgery at a large university hospital in the east. The surgeon was the chairman of the department of urology, an eminent practitioner. At the conclusion of the surgery, he met with the family in the visitors' lounge, and told them the following:

"One kidney is totally riddled with cancer, and the other is operating at less than 50 percent. It also is full of cancer. We checked everything, tried to think of some way to help her, and wound up sewing her up. I was unable to do anything for her. I expect that she'll live for another 6-12 months. I'm very sorry."

The patient was a very strong and dominant woman. The family was afraid to tell her that she was going to die. The eminent surgeon, who generally entered patients' rooms followed by 7-10 little doggie doctors, always sent the doggie doctors in first when he visited her. He, too, couldn't find the courage to tell her the truth about her condition and prognosis.

In fact, Carmella was never told the truth. She had no way of knowing that she was supposed to die of kidney cancer, so she didn't. Twenty-five years later, two years after retiring from a lifetime of heavy work in the laundry of another hospital, Carmella did die. I don't recall the diagnosis then, but she was in her mid-seventies, still unaware that she was expected to die a quarter-century earlier.

— John D. Lane is rector of Trinity Episcopal in Staunton, Virginia.

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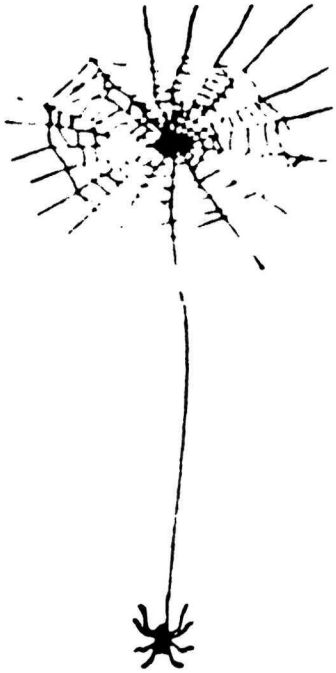
The web

My sisters and I used to play a game on rainy days making spider webs with yarn. One of us would fill a room with as complicated a web as possible and then the others had to untangle it. I was well into my thirties before I realized what a web of lies my mother had spun.

I first began to suspect something was wrong after I was married.Every time my parents visited I got sick. They greeted me with kisses and said they loved me, but they also said and did things that belied their pretty words. It took me years to realize there were deadly secrets being kept.

After my daughter was born I began to remember abuse at the hands of my father. A couple of years later I realized that my mother had also been abusive. My mother's lies made it difficult to unravel what had happened. Once I faced my mother's habit of deception I remembered many times she had lied to me—though at the time I had believed her. She had lied about our family's medical history, about her own history and about the circumstances of my birth. She had lied about my behavior as a child. It was staggering to discover the extent of her falsehoods.



Jean Church, CSJ

I am still unweaving the warped picture of my childhood. As the web comes down, the truth about my past comes to light. The truth has often been hard to bear. It has caused me much grief. But mostly it has freed me from the cycle of hurt and deception, the cycle of lies and abuse, that I grew up with. When I look in my daughter's face, I have no question that it has been worth it. When I look in the mirror I know it has been worth it, too.

— E.B. Iris

Tell us lies

Go fish

by Sean Twomey

I have an all-right singing voice; it can be quite good, but that's kind of rare. I get shy and that turns it all around and I go way off-key. I don't know what I was doing, but I took this job delivering a singing telegram to a group of old women who were playing cards by an outdoor pool. They had about 50 decks stacked up with rubber bands around them, some of them double- and triple-wrapped. There were about 30 cards at the bottom of the pool on account of the tremendous wind and their inattention.

I sang them the song. It was a really bad song. It didn't even rhyme. I should have gone over it before I got there. I was so embarrassed I started laughing hysterically. I'll do that — laugh so I don't have to cry. This really got their attention. One of them wrote on a napkin, "Would you please sing it again," and there was a lot of fierce nodding of approval. "But it's horrible," I said.

They just smiled, and the woman wrote on a score card that it felt good. "Not to me," I said.

She just looked at me, then wrote, "That's because you are listening and not feeling."

I looked at her blankly. She smiled and wrote, "We are all deaf."

"In that case I'll sing it twice," I roared. I had them almost falling out of their chairs. I had tears in my eyes from bellowing out this nonsense.

I was turning to leave when the woman who had been writing me the notes asked if I'd mind getting the cards from the bottom of the pool. The women were all quiet and giggly like schoolgirls. She had *asked* me, not written. I looked at her and pointed out that the cards were in the deep end. She smiled and said, "Does that mean no?"

"Shouldn't you be writing this down?" I asked.

"Why would I do that?" Suddenly it was quiet.

"Because you're deaf."

"I lied." The women really began to laugh, like only grandmothers can at the expense of someone a quarter their age. They were having a grand old time, and they still wanted me to go diving for those cards. I was a little ticked off. I thought it was funny and all, but who wants a bunch of fake deaf ladies laughing at you? So I slipped off my sandals and took off my shirt. You could tell they thought the shorts should stay on, but you can't let other people rule your whole life.

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The Sun Magazine.

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Detroit newspaper strike arrests

Episcopal bishops R. Stewart Wood and H. Coleman McGehee were arrested March 6 with Detroit's city council president in what may prove a string of community protests in support of the Detroit newspaper strike which is entering its ninth month.

In a nonviolent witness, 23 Detroiters, including two Baptist pastors, several lawyers, two welfare rights activists and a member of the Jewish Labor Council, blocked the driveways at the *Detroit News* building in an effort to keep the "permanent replacement" workers from getting to work.

The Detroit Newspapers (DN) have thrown 2,500 people out of work, while hiring 1,500 replacements who, executives say, claim their primary loyalty. Strikers will only have jobs as they open up, management says. This despite a $1 million a week profit during the year preceding the strike.

Protesters argued that the use of permanent replacement workers was both unlawful and unconscionable.

"It's a position that that the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church have consistently held," Wood said. "It is immoral to permanently replace workers who have gone out on strike."

The newspaper strike began in July when the DN refused to let workers, who had made concessions for three years running, continue working under the terms of the previous contract. In fact, *Detroit News* executive editor Robert Giles recently told a group of pastors that the DN refused to let workers stay on the job because they didn't want a strike to start in the Fall during their pre-Christmas rush. The DN was thinking ahead regarding police service as well, having paid the Sterling Heights police a half million dollars for extra presence at their suburban printing plant.

R. Stewart Wood, Bishop of Michigan, is arrested by Detroit police. Daymon Hartley, newspaper striker

The six affected unions have managed to stand in solidarity with one another, refusing to negotiate agreements with the company individually. However, due to the constriction of labor laws (which will be explored in an upcoming issue of *The Witness*), the unions' options are few. They have appealed to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and they have won rulings against the DN that should ensure that they get their jobs back, but the process takes two to three years. Meanwhile, any strikers that act out their frustration can be fired *and* lose their advantage with the NLRB. The DN has secured an injunction against protests at the suburban printing plant where their "scab" papers are produced.

The community has done much to stand in solidarity with the unions. Two hundred thousand people have stopped buying the papers. The city and county governments have pulled their advertising from the papers, as have many businesses. Two hundred religious leaders have signed a statement urging people not to read the papers because they are produced by permanent replacement workers.

However, the community is increasingly in crisis. Community groups cannot in good conscience request coverage of their concerns, their events or their fundraisers. Elected officials who are boycotting the papers cannot in good conscience grant interviews to reporters, even when the topic is a critical community issue. Residents who are not reading the paper are operating with an inadequate understanding of city development issues, schools, public health, and even deaths.

To underscore the importance of this labor-management struggle to the community, Readers United called for this direct action.

"We're taking this extreme action because the Detroit Newspapers has shown complete unwillingness to negotiate in good faith with the unions," Roman Catholic bishop Thomas Gumbleton explained.

The Witness' book review editor Bill Wylie-Kellermann and production assistant Maria Catalfio were among those arrested. A court date is scheduled at the end of March. Following the action, several constituencies including women, college faculty and members of unions not engaged in this strike, expressed interest in continuing protests at the Detroit Newspapers in the style of those that were held at the South African embassy. TW

— J.W-K.

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Debating core identity: a matter of search or certainty?

by Julie A. Wortman

[Walter Righter, retired bishop of Iowa, is facing possible trial for heresy because 10 conservative Episcopal Church bishops, with the approval of one-quarter of the church's other bishops, have officially charged him with violating the church's doctrine and teaching — and his ordination vows — by knowingly ordaining a non-celibate homosexual man a deacon in 1990 while serving as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Newark. A hearing this past February addressed the question of whether the church has sufficient doctrine on homosexual ordinations to proceed with a formal trial.]

No one denies that when Walter Righter ordained Barry Stopfel to the diaconate five years ago he was refusing to conform to a long-standing institutional practice of denying ordination to homosexual persons who decline to hide or renounce their committed relationships. Hotly disputed during an ecclesiastical court hearing in Wilmington, Del., on February 27, however, was whether Episcopalians should take that practice as an article of faith.

During the day-long public hearing Michael Rehill, the Newark chancellor who is serving as Righter's defense lawyer, was doggedly persistent in his "minimalist" argument that a person's fitness for ordination is not in itself a matter of doctrine.

Vital Signs

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.*

Rehill: a minimalist view

"Whether we agree or disagree on matters of human sexuality is not a matter of doctrine," Rehill asserted during his afternoon presentation to the nine-member court of bishops who must decide the case — like Righter, his accusers and their attorneys, all of them white men, middle-aged and older.

"Are you saying the General Convention cannot speak with authority regarding its interpretation of doctrine?" asked North Dakota's Andrew Fairfield, referring to General Convention resolutions that have affirmed "the traditional teaching of the church" on sexual morality.

Rehill, who had earlier noted that an often-cited 1979 General Convention resolution on human sexuality only articulates a negative position on ordaining "practicing" homosexuals, replied: "It can, but rarely does — doctrine has to do with what we believe and what our relationship to God is."

"Surely you're not arguing that the church doesn't have strong teachings?" pushed Los Angeles' bishop Frederick Borsch.

"We develop our rules based on doctrine," Rehill said.

"Can things of doctrine be open to interpretation?" New Hampshire's Douglas Theuner later asked.

"The Trinity is a doctrine but we all might have different visions of it," Rehill answered. "The Episcopal Church does not require absolute conformity of belief — even in the matter of doctrine."

In the hearing's morning session Hugo Blakingship, retired chancellor of the Diocese of Virginia, had sought to dispute such claims.

Blakingship: authority and order

"This case is first and foremost about authority, it is about the authority of Holy Scripture and the role it will play in our church," Blakingship began. "This case is about order. This case is about doctrine, the doctrine of Christian marriage. And it is about family values. This case is about faithfulness to knowing and proclaiming who we are."

> *"This case is about the doctrine of Christian marriage. And it is about family values. This case is about knowing and proclaiming who we are."*
>
> *— Hugo Blakingship*

He then proceeded to offer a litany of General Convention resolutions, reports and prayerbook citations intended to uphold the accusers' view that "the church has a clear doctrine on human sexuality" that holds that heterosexual marriage is the only acceptable context for sexual relations. But when asked by Borsch, "Would you argue that this is a core identity issue for the church?" Blakingship replied, "I would not want to be led down that path," quietly adding, "I'm just a lawyer stuck with this case."

Blakingship may also have unintentionally bolstered Rehill's argument in his response to a question from Delaware's Cabell Tennis that came late in the day.

In light of the accusers' argument that it is church doctrine that non-celibate homosexuals should never be ordained, Tennis asked whether that would "mean that all homosexual priests in this church who are living in committed relationships ought to be deposed."

"That's a very hard question," Blakingship responded. "I think you have to take each one of those situations and consider what the nature of the witness

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was and make a judgment. And that essentially is a diocesan problem, and not a national canon."

The spotlight shifts to discipline

Many observers left the hearing convinced that Righter's side had carried the day and that at least a majority of the court's judges would agree. Most were therefore surprised when on March 1 the court shifted its focus from doctrine to discipline, asking both sides to provide further argumentation in this area while summarily rejecting Rehill's motion to drop the charge that in ordaining Stopfel Righter had also violated his ordination vows. Two questions are to be addressed: "Do resolutions, statements and/or actions of the General Convention or House of Bishops constitute disciplinary authority, as distinct from doctrine, violation of which subjects a bishop, priest or deacon to Presentment under Title IV?" And, second, "With particular attention to the issue of discipline, does the ordination of a noncelibate homosexual person constitute a violation of the ordaining bishop's Oath of Conformity?" Each side will also have a chance to respond to the other's argument, a process which will not be completed until early this month.

If the court does rule that General Convention resolutions and statements have the force of discipline, it would be upholding an opinion issued by a committee of five bishops appointed in 1994 by the presiding bishop to review the claims of six priests and 29 lay persons in the Diocese of Michigan. They also had asserted that their bishop, Stewart Wood, had violated the 1979 General Convention resolution recommending that "it is not appropriate for this church to ordain a practicing homosexual" when he ordained a lesbian in a committed relationship to the priesthood. But a majority of the review committee concluded that the 1979 resolution's own wording did not clearly indicate an intention that the resolution be mandatory and the charges against Wood were dropped.

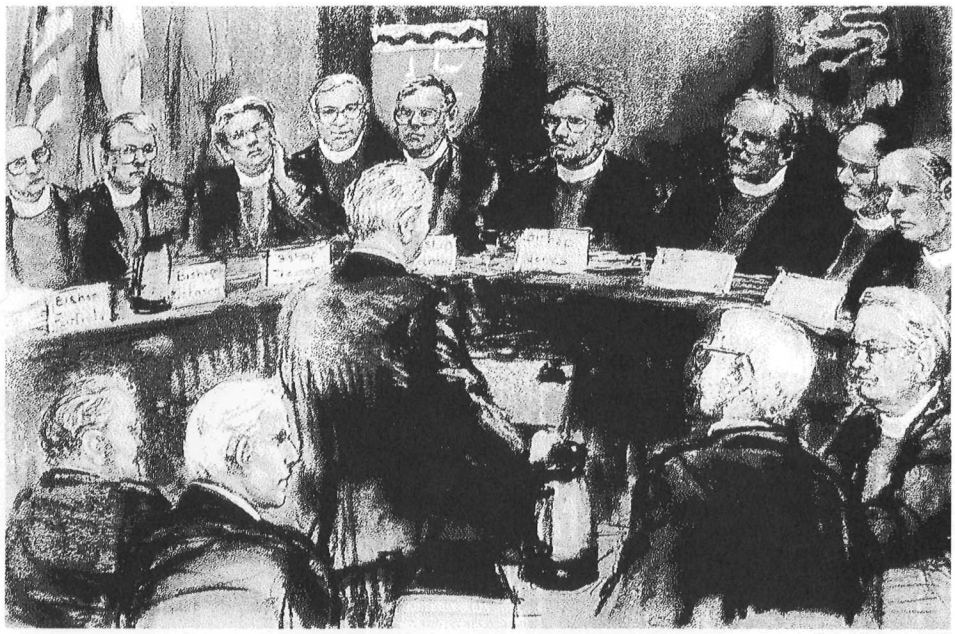
Throughout the Wilmington proceedings, however, Blakingship argued that the doctrine behind the 1979 General Convention resolution and other church statements was unambiguous.

"The church's position is understood and clear," he said. "[The bishops] are able to disagree and there can be honest disagreement, but until that is changed by the church — not by individual dioceses or by individual bishops — until it is changed by the church, it remains."

Looking to Philadelphia

As the church awaits the court's decision on doctrine and discipline and whether the Righter trial should go forward, most people on both sides of the case are mentally gearing up for the church's next General Convention — because if there is one thing both parties agree on it is that the General Convention is the authority of last resort on the question of who may lawfully be exluded from ordination in the Episcopal Church, whatever one's position on the nature of doctrine.

Already on the agenda for that massive church gathering — scheduled to be held in Philadelphia next year — is a package of legislation offered by the committee charged at the 1994 Indianapolis General Convention with finding a way to implement the canons on women's ordination. Following up on a "mind of the House" resolution passed by the church's bishops in 1995 declaring the 18-year-old canon permitting women acccess to the priesthood and episcopate mandatory and not permissive, the legislation will make explicit that a woman's "sex" alone cannot be the basis for denying her access to ordination or, once ordained, her ability to function as a priest. In addition, a resolution is included that would bar similar discrimination against persons who oppose women's ordination, but which says they are obliged to obey the canons of the church.



Susan Schary, ENS

Courtroom art depicts Church Advocate Hugo Blakingship addressing the nine bishops who make up the Court for the Trial of a Bishop meeting in Wilmington, Del., February 27.

For those who see a connection between sexism and heterosexism, it is not surprising that four of the 10 bishops charging Righter with violating church law and teaching are the final holdouts on complying with the canons authorizing the ordination of women.

But will the 1997 convention also put to rest the homosexual ordination question — and, if so, in what way?

The General Convention has consistently refused to prohibit gay ordinations, but it has always affirmed the church's "traditional teaching" about

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sexual expression within heterosexual marriage — however extensively these affirmations have been qualified. Even the 1979 General Convention resolution that the accusers want "enforced" was dissented to by 20 bishops, a list which included the man the bishops elected their leader in 1985.

Borsch pointed this fact out during the Wilmington hearing.

"Did the bishops think [Presiding Bishop] Browning was a heretic [when they elected him]?" he asked Blakingship.

"Perhaps it was prophetic of the trouble we're in now," Blakingship replied. "Perhaps the bishops should have done *something about the dissenting opinions*."

A 'common confession'

As this exchange suggests, those who believe bishops like Walter Righter should be stopped from ordaining partnered gay men and lesbians want to interpret doctrine broadly so that clergy and others in the church can be restricted in their freedom to act ahead of the rest of the church.

Two of Righter's accusers — Florida's Stephen Jecko and Dallas' James Stanton — have helped start a new coalition of persons and groups called the American Anglican Congress that would seem to reflect the sort of institution they hope for. Identifying themselves with "historic biblical Anglicanism" and espousing "biblical orthodoxy," the new group asks that people who would like to join up sign on to "a common confession of the Gospel" as a basis for "Godly fellowship." They are also asked to affirm a set of statements on "contemporary issues," that Patrick Buchanan would probably support.

Embracing search, not certainty

Those who approve of Righter's ordination of Barry Stopfel have a different vision. By interpreting the essentials of doctrine narrowly, they intend to make room in the institution for the widest possible range of beliefs — and debate. Their vision is reflected in the purposes of another new organization, the Center for Progressive Christianity (CPC) (see p. 27).

CPC's purpose is "to offer the message of Christianity to those for whom organized religion has proved ineffectual, irrelevant or repressive; to uphold evangelism as an agent of justice and peace; to give a strong voice in the churches and the public arena to the advocates of progressive Christianity; and to support congregations embracing search, not certainty."

Search versus certainty, in fact, very well defines what is at the heart of the outrage being expressed by people on both sides of the debate. In these millenial times people want their church, at least, to stand for "the right thing."

What is the right thing? That, of course, is the question which put the Righter proceedings into motion in the first place. One can only hope that at the next General Convention the debate will no longer be the sole province of the middle-aged white men who have shaped it so far.

The resolution at issue

[Ed.note: The meaning and weight of the resolution on human sexuality passed by the General Convention in 1979 is at the center of the debate over whether Walter Righter violated church doctrine and discipline when he ordained Barry Stopfel in 1990. The full text of that resolution is provided here.]

Whereas, we are conscious of the mystery of human sexuality and how deeply personal matters related to human sexuality are, making it most difficult to arrive at comprehensive and agreed-upon statements in these matters; and

Whereas, we are aware that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church must continue to study these matters in relationship to Holy Scripture, Christian faith and tradition, and growing insights; and

Whereas, the 65th General Convention recognized "... that homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church ..."; and

Whereas, all the clergy and laity of the Church are expected to render compassionate and understanding pastoral care to one another and to all persons; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 66th General Convention receive with gratitude and appreciation the Report and Recommendations of its Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health with special reference to the requested study of the matter of ordination of homosexual persons; and be it further

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That this General Convention recommend to Bishops, Pastors, Vestries, Commissions on Ministry and Standing Committees, the following considerations as they continue to exercise their proper canonical functions in the selection and approval of persons for ordination:

1. There are many human conditions, some of them in the area of sexuality, which bear upon a person's suitability for ordination;

2. Every ordinand is expected to lead a life which is "a wholesome example to all people" (Book of Common Prayer, pp. 517, 532, 544). There should be no barrier to the ordination of qualified persons of either heterosexual or homosexual orientation whose behavior the Church considers wholesome;

3. We re-affirm the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity and sexual chastity as the standard of Christian sexual morality. Candidates are expected to conform to this standard. Therefore, we believe it is not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual, or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage.

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Ordain homosexuals, Tutu urges

Accepting gay/lesbian clergy is a matter of "justice, of compassion, of consistency," according to Desmond Tutu, Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa. Tutu made the declaration in a telephone interview with *BBC Radio* last February. He also called for recognition of faithful gay and lesbian couples.

"The church has not got there yet, but if we were to say that in relationships it is desirable that there is fidelity between a couple, why should we not extend the same conditions to same-sex relationships?" Tutu said. "This is my personal position."

Tutu's comments came on the heels of claims made by a British newspaper that he and 300 other church leaders, including the Episcopal Church's presiding bishop, Edmond L. Browning, had backed a call for homosexual priests. The leaders had added their names to an advertisement honoring the "valuable contribution made to the continuing debate on sexuality and Christianity" by the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) on the occasion of the its 20th anniversary. LGCM supports the ordination of homosexuals in the Church of England.

— based on Anglican Communion News and Ecumenical News International

CIA use of clergy

In a letter to John Deutch, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning has expressed dismay at reports that a loophole in CIA regulations apparently permits the recruitment of clergy or missionaries overseas.

According to an article in *The Washington Post* newspaper, February 22, the CIA in "extraordinarily rare" occasions secretly waived a 1977 regulation prohibiting the use of journalists in intelligence gathering, and could use the same loophole to sidestep a similar ban on employing church workers. Intelligence officials declined to say whether clergy or missionaries actually had been used, the Post reported.

The Episcopal Church already has been concerned about a possible review of the "legal and policy restraints" on the CIA, recommended by the Council on Foreign Relations. "To read that a loophole has always existed is devastating," he said. "This loophole must be closed."

Churches played a prominent role in obtaining the 1977 ban, Browning noted, at a time when rumors of alleged C.I.A. involvement "touched many of our missionaries." The ban should not be opened to a new review, and the recommendation that "intelligence agents be allowed to pose as church workers should also be rejected," he said. "Our credibility is at stake."

—based on a Episcopal News Service report by James H. Thrall

The Native Episcopal Church of North America

Native peoples from 17 U.S. dioceses meeting in central Oklahoma in January have created the Native Episcopal Church of North America. The group believes the new entity will help indigenous Episcopalians take their "rightful place within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion," a purpose it articulated a year ago in a "Statement of Self-Determination."

"We do not leave our own dioceses or the Episcopal Church," said facilitator Martin Brokenleg, an Episcopal priest who is a Rosebud Sioux. "What we are doing is deliberately taking a bold step toward shouldering responsibilities for our own vision of ministry."

The dual affiliation will come easily, according to Frank Oberly, the Osage/ Comanche chair of the Episcopal Council of Indian Ministries, which sponsored the meeting.

"We have been citizens of our own tribes as well as citizens of the U.S.," Oberly said. "We can handle dual affiliations in the church."

The group was assisted in its decision to create the new church entity by five indigenous Canadian Anglicans, among them Gordon Beardy, suffragan bishop of Keewatin and the first Cree to become a bishop. The First Nations peoples of the Anglican Church of Canada have been successful in winning acceptance for self-determination in recent years. One of their goals is to create a special jurisdiction with its own bishop.

A 15-member task force will begin work on shaping the structure of the new Native Episcopal Church in May.

— based on an Episcopal News Service report by Owanah Anderson

National Forum for progressives

Created to unite "people who are trying to provide a place for those who have felt rejected by the church," the fledgling Center for Progressive Christianity will hold its first forum, "Out of the Whirlwind: Claiming a Vision of Progressive Christianity," June 13-15 in Columbia, S.C.

The center is particularly concerned about the failure of churches "to offer an approach to religion that respects other religious traditions," and their emphasis on "exclusive dogmas that cause divisions in society."

The forum will feature panel discussions. Among the topics will be "Prophecy in the progressive church" and "Redefining virtue."

The center's board and advisory committee include: Anne G. Amy, A.N. Barnard, Hugh Dawes, Joanna Etka, Jane Soyster Gould, Janice Gregory, Jorge M. Gutierrez, Gayle E. Harris, Helen M. Havens, Susan Blackburn Heath, Thomas H. Naylor, William W. Rankin, Janice Robinson, William S. Sachs, Cynthia Shattuck, Peter Sherer, Fredrica H. Thompsett, Robert W. Tobin, G. Richard Wheatcroft, Charles V. Willie and Ellen K. Wondra.

For more information contact: The Center for Progressive Christianity, 118 3rd St., SE, Washington, D.C., 20003; 202-543-8851; (fax) 202-546-3695.

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An apostle of urban mission

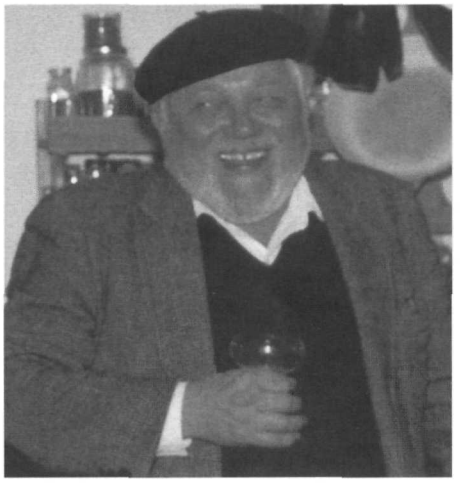
by Robert DeWitt, Coleman McGehee and John Hines

[Ed. note: On April 26 The Witness *will be joining others to celebrate the life and work of Episcopal Church social activist Hugh White. Ordained a priest in 1947, White first became involved in union organizing while on the staff at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Ypsilanti, Mich. His concern for the welfare of workers and workplace ethics led him to found the Detroit Industrial Mission (DIM), an ecumenical group of clergy devoted to ministering to workers and management alike in an effort to improve workplace conditions and communications on the model of similar work being done in England. He worked with the DIM from 1955 until 1967 and then became involved with the National Industrial Mission. Between 1974 and 1984 White worked for the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (owner of* The Witness*), among other things helping to organize the Urban Bishops Coalition and working on economic issues. At the request of Michigan bishop H. Coleman McGehee, he exercised critical leadership in organizing Michigan's economic justice proposal for the 1988 General Convention. White was a staunch advocate of women's ordination in the early 1970s and through the Detroit/Dearborn Alliance has endeavored to build positive inter-faith and inter-racial relations between and within those communities.*

Cards or queries about the April 26 event can be sent to John Hooper, Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, 4800 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48201; 313-832-4400.]

Robert DeWitt, retired bishop of Pennsylvania, lives in Maine. **Coleman McGehee,** retired bishop of Michigan, lives in Michigan. **John Hines,** retired presiding bishop, lives in Texas.

Hugh White was a man of early promise. A pacifist during WWII, he drove an ambulance in North Africa for the American Field Service. A religious awareness had been growing in him for some years, and by the time the war ended, he was afire with the desire to be an ordained minister. As with many of his contemporaries, the war had interrupted his plans for college, so he studied first at the University of Virginia before going on to Virginia Theological Seminary. He became a force in the seminary community, and was asked to represent it at inter-seminary conferences.



Hugh White

He also became a man of sartorial and tonsorial sensitivity, perhaps the mark of a frustrated thespian. How he dresses and how he shaves is a matter of conscious decision. For some time he wore a black beret. Some thought this began with his very real interest in the French worker-priest movement of the post-war period. He has a perennial penchant for plaid wool jackets, suggestive of his Scotch ancestry. He has a continuing interest in beards, and shows skill in trimming them to varying roles. One morning he was was approached by a youngster who called out with a smirk, "Hey! Are you Colonel Sanders?" (of Kentucky Fried Chicken). Hugh tossed his head with impatience at the impertinence, but he was obviously pleased that his make-up was getting across the footlights.

In the early years of his ordained ministry he served in a parish. His interests and contacts were innumerable, resulting from his deep interest in and concern for people. He was casual about schedules, prodigal with his time given for friends and others in need. In those days, a close friend was complaining about an appointment Hugh had had with him, for which Hugh had failed to show. The friend continued, "On the other hand, if Hugh *does* keep an appointment, you have his complete and undivided attention — even at the sacrifice of an appointment with someone else, which he has forgotten."

His cavalier handling of time and schedule were to change radically. His years with the Parishfield Community in Michigan, a training center for working people, led him to a new focus for his ministry. He gained a new appreciation for the crucial importance, and the many contradictions, of the world of work. Out of this concern was born the Detroit Industrial Mission.

Business and industry were a new world for Hugh. He learned to be punctual, and to plan and schedule his work with care. His talent for friendship served him well, and he came to be appreciated alike by workers on the line, and in the executive offices. One day he called the president of Chrysler, as a part of his program of getting to know the personnel and the atmosphere of "Motown." He said he would like a couple of hours of his time for an interview. The response was a blast. "I wouldn't give the President of the United States that much time. I'll give you half an hour!" When Hugh arrived at

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the Chrysler office, he told the executive he was trying to understand what people are coping with in their jobs, and said, "So I wish you would tell me about your job. What does a president of Chrysler do?" Two and a half hours later Hugh went on to his next appointment!

This immersion in the industrial world of his beloved Detroit was perhaps the most critical period in the shaping of Hugh's ministry. He had a way of getting inside the heads and hearts of people, and consequently gained a deep understanding of modern America, the tensions and trials of the times, and to know the forces, and the people, who were seeking change.

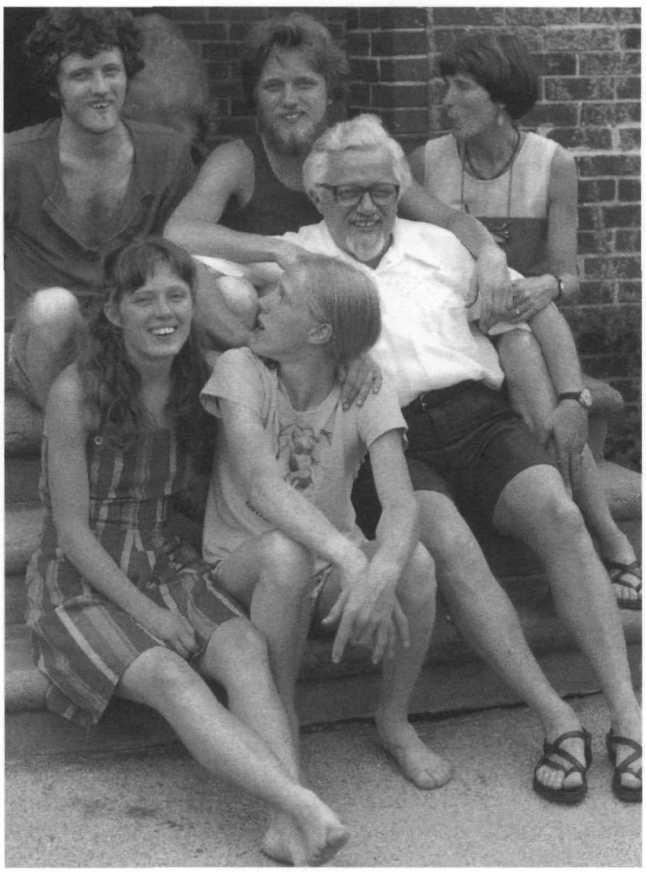
When the General Convention was held in Detroit in 1964, Hugh organized bus tours for the deputies. They visited assembly lines and ghettos, estates and slums, seeing first-hand the hallmarks of America's urban culture and industrialization. Many of the debates and decisions of the convention were influenced by that clinical experience.

Some few years later Bishop Hines was seeking to understand the meaning of Watts and the other explosions of America's racial tensions. Hugh invited him to visit Detroit, and arranged contacts for him. In cafes and on street corners, in kitchens and living rooms, Hines was able to talk one-on-one with African Americans who alone could interpret the signs of those chaotic times. The Special Convention on racism at South Bend, and the General Convention Special Program, were the direct results of that experience.

When *The Witness* magazine — a journal with a long tradition of bearing testimony to the social mission of the church — resumed publication, Hugh White's help was solicited. With his broad background in industrial mission and experience with social analysis, he was invaluable in reviewing articles for publication.

Likewise, when a group of bishops organized the Urban Bishop's Coalition, it was because they were concerned about the deterioration of America's urban centers, and wanted to inform both themselves and their people about the problems. They got in touch with Hugh for suggestions on how to go about the task. As a result of Hugh's initiatives, an ambitious series of open hearings was held in cities across the country, and beyond. People who were concerned, and those who were hurting found an arena where they could speak and be heard .

When Coleman McGehee, Bishop of Michigan, sought an advisor for public relations and social concerns, he turned to Hugh. For several years Hugh filled this staff position both for Coleman and then his successor, Stewart Wood. A native Detroiter, Hugh was utterly familiar with Michigan, its problems and dynamics, and with a veritable multitude of its people. How many bishops might serve their sees more effectively were they to have such a consultant!



Hugh White with his family in the early 1970s in Detroit.

How to define the vocational life of one who is only identified, not at all adequately described, by the above few citations? He is not the stereotypical parish priest, though he was a faithful and effective one for some years. He has not the title of theologian, although his pioneering work with industrial mission was "doing" theology vividly, dramatically, importantly. He is not a professor, yet many have sat at his feet and learned things they might have sought far and wide and never found. He is not a bishop—indeed he has serious reservations about the episcopal institution, feeling that without major changes it is in danger of sharing the fate of British royalty, the fate of irrelevance.

Yet in the historic meaning of the episcopate, and in the linkage of that office with the apostles, there is an unmistakable episcopal aura in the life and work of Hugh White. An apostle is "one who is sent," and one who is sent is accountable to the sender. Somehow the term "apostle" has a peculiarly strong fit for Hugh.

In his case it seems clear that the thrust of God's purpose has bypassed ecclesiastical categories and placed a man where, in the higher calculus of the divine will, he was needed. TW

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Clouding integrity

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

(integrity) by Stephen L. Carter, N.Y. Basic Books, 1996, 261 pages, $22.

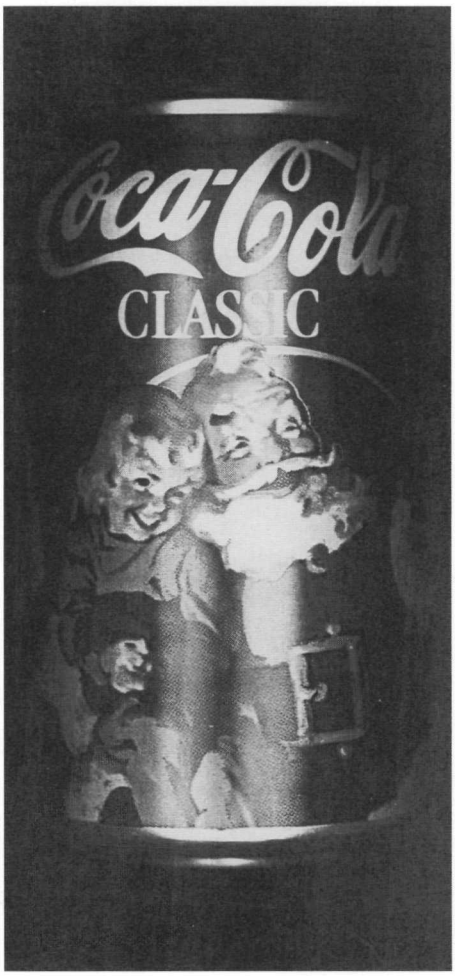
Anyone who contends that Coca-Cola's decision to keep producing the original (now classic) Coke is an example of integrity is difficult to take seriously.

If one persists on through Stephen L. Carter's book, one can glean occasional insights into the ethical dilemmas inherent in marriage, in professional sports, in the media and in law, but the cost is high.

The reader must struggle with what Carter advertises as a three-part test for integrity: Does the person in question: 1. exercise moral discernment? 2. act on moral discernment, even at a personal cost? 3. be clear and public about the action and belief? (A variety of lesser screens are also applied — compassion, steadfastness, etc.)

Yet in applying the multifaceted test in a hodge-podge of examples, Carter consistently flunks people whose beliefs and actions he dislikes. Most often he concludes that they did not exercise step one, because had they exercised moral discernment they never could have reached the conclusion they did. (Not to beg the question.)

"The person of integrity ... cannot be a person who blows up buildings to make a point," Carter announces in the first chapter. As a reader committed to nonviolence, I wonder nonetheless, do all soldiers in wartime lack integrity if they bomb enemy buildings? Do groups that have considered themselves at war, American revolutionaries, Palestinians, Puerto Rican nationalists, Black Liberation militants, right-wing militia members lack integrity because — after moral discernment — they conclude that violence is an appropriate tool in their struggle?



Likewise, when Carter tries to make a distinction between people practicing covert sabotage in Nazi Germany (whom he says pass the integrity test) from members of the militant right in the U.S. doing the same, Carter concludes the "rest of us are under no obligation to agree with the moral judgment of the fanatic." (Name-calling as a tried and true way to encourage respectful dialogue?)

Carter considers the National Rifle Association to have "unintegrity" because it endorses guns yet calls federal officials "thugs" when they act against people with guns. I'm appalled that Carter can't imagine that one could advocate gun proliferation (which I oppose) and still have a valid complaint against the federal government's actions against gun advocates.

In a more mundane example, which Carter indicates prompted the book, a football player "hit the ground, rolled over, and then jumped up, celebrating as though he had caught the pass" (p. 4). Commentators considered it a "heads-up play!" Carter was appalled and further disturbed when colleagues defended the player, suggesting that posturing is now part of the game. Yet in chapter 4, Carter writes "bargaining would be impossible if integrity required telling everything we know." In his view, saying something one knows to be untrue in this context still has integrity because it is understood to be part of the exchange. (Yes in bargaining, no in sports?)

If Carter were setting out to demonstrate that integrity is a complicated topic, one that cannot be confined within a narrow rubric, these examples would surely demonstrate this. But since his goal is the opposite, readers must work hard to see why Carter is not undermining his own argument as he proceeds. TW

book review

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

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André Trocmé and family

The righteous must often pay a price for their righteousness: their own ethical purity.

— Philip Hallie

A price for righteousness

by Marianne Arbogast

"The righteous are not exempt from evil."

These words are what Magda Trocmé remembered of the 1972 ceremony in Israel which posthumously awarded the Medal of Righteousness to André Trocmé, her husband.

"The righteous must often pay a price for their righteousness: their own ethical purity," explains Philip Hallie, who chronicled the story of Le Chambon, the small, Protestant town in France which hid and protected thousands of Jews during the Nazi occupation, under the leadership of Trocmé, its pastor (*Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, Harper Colophon Books, 1979).

A pacifist with a fiery personality and an unswerving commitment to the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, Trocmé was the founder of a secondary school which taught nonviolence and functioned independently of the state. When the Vichy government mandated a daily salute to the flag, his students did not take part; neither did the teachers sign a required loyalty oath. As the persecution of Jews intensified, and word spread that Le Chambon was a safe haven, refugees began to pour into the town. With little organization or planning, networks of hospitality spread out in the homes of villagers.

"The Trocmés and Le Chambon learned [that] they must *conceal* from the authorities and from unsympathetic citizens any help they were giving refugees," Hallie writes. "But in Le Chambon in the beginning of the 1940s, concealment meant lying — lying both by omission and by commission. It meant not conveying to the authorities any of the legally required information about new foreigners in Le Chambon, and it meant making false identity cards and ration cards for the refugees so that they could survive in Vichy France."

This raised serious moral problems for Trocmé and others. "None of those leaders became reconciled to making counterfeit cards," Hallie says, but continued to feel it as a necessary, if unavoidable, violation of their integrity.

"The spirit of Le Chambon in those times was a strange combination of candor and concealment, of a yearning for truth and of a commitment to secrecy," Hallie writes. "They were as open as love permits in a terrible time."

"The spirit of Le Chambon in those times was a strange combination of candor and concealment, of a yearning for truth and of a commitment to secrecy."

— Philip Hallie

Trocmé faced his own deepest crisis when he was arrested by the German police while running to catch a train. His 12-year-old son was waiting while he fetched their baggage. Though he was carrying a false identity card, and knew that his name was on a Gestapo death list, he could not bear the thought of a direct lie.

"Soon the German police would interrogate him and demand to see his papers," Hallie writes. "His identity card gave his name as Beguet, and they would

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

ask him if this was indeed true. Then he would have to lie to hide his identity. But he was not able to lie; lying, especially to save his own skin, was 'sliding toward those compromises that God had not called upon me to make,' he wrote in his autobiographical notes on this incident. Saving the lives of others — and even saving his own life — with false identity cards was one thing, but standing before another human being and speaking lies to him only for the sake of self-preservation was something different.

Telling the policeman a lie face-to face would mean crossing a line that stands between the false identity card that saves a human life and the betrayal of one's fellowman and of one's God. Trocmé had allowed the false identity card to be made for him only to give sympathetic French police an excuse for not turning him over to the German police. And in Le Chambon the false identity cards *for others* were a weapon against the betrayal of those who were being persecuted. Trocmé had never lied to Vichy or to the Germans about there being refugees in Le Chambon. He had told them frankly that there were, and he had just as frankly refused to tell them who and where they were. He had defended the defenseless, and he had not betrayed the people in his charge. Now he would be bearing false witness, lying simply to save himself.

"He decided that when the German police questioned him, he would say, 'I am not Monsieur Beguet. I am Pastor André Trocmé.' Having made this decision, he became calm; his conscience was quiet."

By chance or by grace, another option presented itself. Standing in a line at the station, Trocmé and his son were able to slip behind a pillar, merge into a crowd of arriving passengers, and escape.

While the community worried about the effect of their daily deceptions on their children, Trocmé's daughter told Hallie that "the children, as far as Nelly could see, never had the problem of unlearning lying. She remembers the children, among them herself, seeing the situation with the clear eyes of youth. She remembers their seeing that people were being helped in a desperate situation by these lies. And the children were convinced that what was happening in the homes of Le Chambon was right, simply right."

TW

Witness study guides

Join together with parishioners, classmates, adversaries, housemates, significant others, or a combination thereof, and explore a topic as addressed by a single issue of *The Witness.*

This can prove an ideal process for a small parish group, seminary class, campus ministry program or faith-sharing group.

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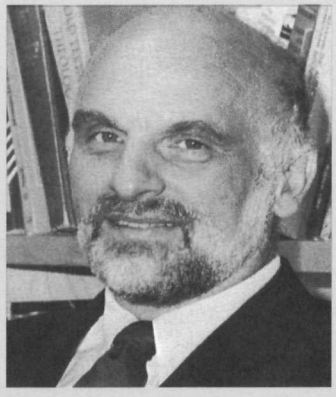
Packets of eight copies and a study guide are $25. Make checks out to *The Witness*, 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226.



It is clear that in the church things are going to become more conflicted and more demanding before they get better.

Meanwhile continued prayer and conversation become urgent as our best way ahead. The Witness *matters mightily to that conversation wherein none of us can see ahead clearly. And some of us will admit that* The Witness *moves into our prayer life as well as our conversation.*

— Walter Brueggemann
Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia

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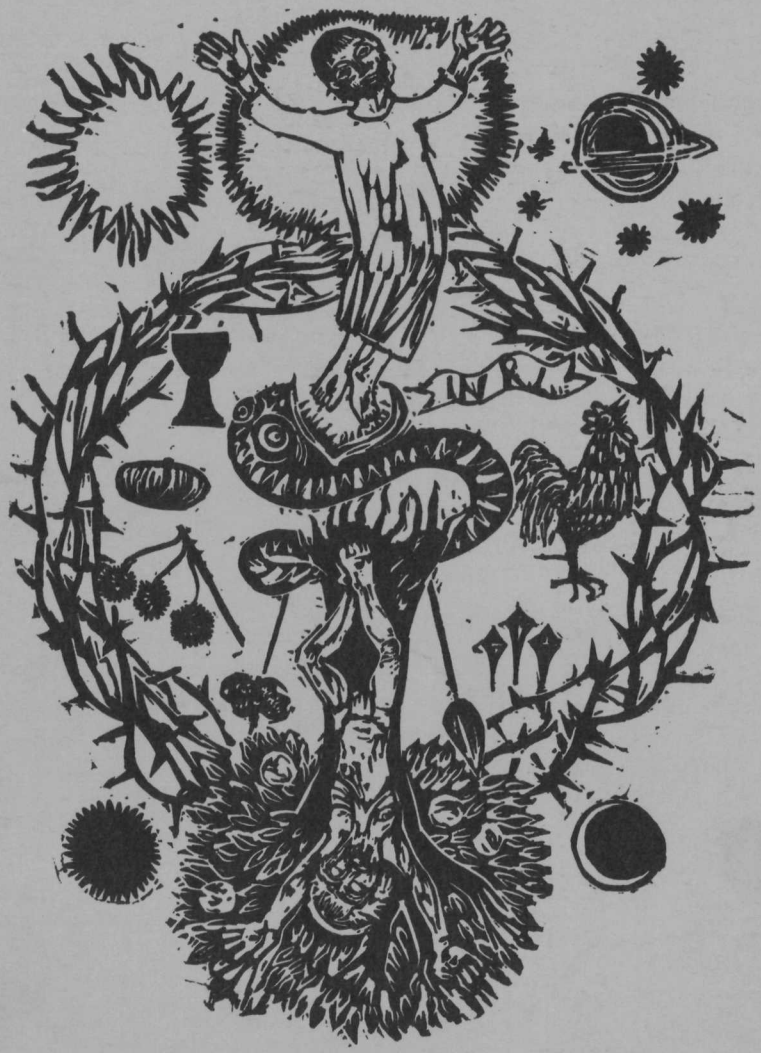

Magic has a prophetic significance, since it proclaims by its very absurdity that for human wholeness and social regeneration to take place, the existing conditions of power which make this impossible must be abolished. But magic does not have power to fulfill the truth of its insight and intention. Behind it we find a powerless person. The truth of magic will become reality only when one's impotence turns to power.

— Rubem A. Alves,

Tomorrow's Child: Imagination, Creativity and the Rebirth of Culture *(Harper, 1972).*

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The Witness

Volume 79 • Number 5 • May 1996

American faces of Islam

In the church's interest

JUST A NOTE TO COMMEND YOU on the magnificent job on the March issue. Focused, substantive, exemplary. To wit, any chance you could send a bundle so I could pass them out as I move around the country to speak. I'd like to get this issue around as it directly addresses things I regularly think about (sabbath economics).

Ched Myers
Los Angeles, CA

Come Spirit come

WE THANK YOU for the copies of the June issue of *The Witness*. America must be very far away, as this delivery has taken well over six months to get here. Thank you for the cheque. I can assure you it will come into good use.

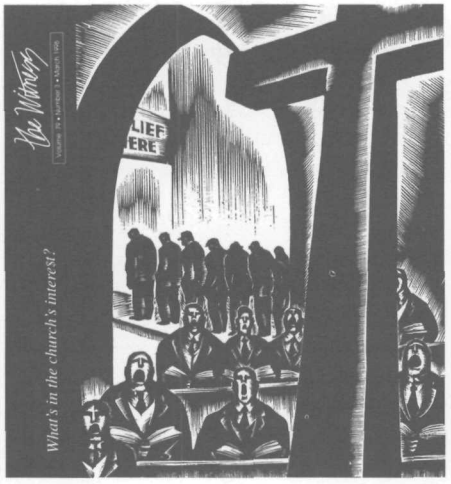
You have been singularly fortunate to have got me to speak at all. Being very private, I avoid the media like the plague, and often show some awkwardness of deportment.

We are struggling to develop a culture of human rights in this country. Botswana has been fortunate not to have the common experience of many African countries in this regard. Nonetheless, vigilance is called for. A Human Rights Centre has been established. It is a fledgling organization, acting as a watchdog at the same time, educating people about their rights. Recently we were visited by the Secretary General of Amnesty International.

Mercifully, the institution of Ombudsman is about to be established. An act of Parliament is on the statute book. Recently I attended a conference in Swakopmund, Namibia, where these public protectors from various neighbouring countries attended, to explore further means and ways of strengthening the notion of a fair deal for all, and good governance of the citizens.

Khotso Makhulu
Archbishop, Central Africa

Letters



Witness praise

I READ OF *THE WITNESS* IN THE *UTNE Reader* [1/96]. It sounds thought-provoking and stimulating. As a lifelong member of the Episcopal Church, I was proud of the boldness of perspective that this publication sounds like it speaks from. I look forward to my first copy.

Kim Moreno
San Diego, CA

THIS LETTER IS PROMPTED by my receiving the complimentary copy of your March 1995 issue [on Sin]. It is an excellent journal in every way. I am very happy to read that you still consider The Witness a "left-wing voice in the church."

On the subject of theology or community I have had a diverse experience. First of all as an Episcopal clergy person I have given countless confirmation instructions at both levels, youth and adult. However, in recent years my experiences have led me to examine more closely and radically many orthodox opinions and thus to find that I am no longer as absolute as I once was concerning some beliefs.

I was forced to express these changes after one of my better students at Ursinus College asked me to review with him a number of beliefs he no longer held to be essential; he asked as well whether he should continue on a course which would lead to ordination. His list of doubts included many tough calls — for instance, the Trinity, the virgin birth, the resurrection, the ascension, eternal damnation and the denial of salvation to non-Christian religious people. We took up his doubts one by one and I was hard put to mount a philosophical defense for any of them. He asked, "Then must I take it all on faith?" My only response was another question, "Did Jesus demand such a promise of his disciples?" Actually, Jesus never mentioned most of the beliefs my student questioner named, and the resurrection and ascension, acts ascribed to Christ with little explanation, are capable of varied interpretation. Explanation was left for later believers to put forward; thus some doctrines were delayed for several centuries. The essential Christian belief is in Jesus himself and his simple command, "Follow me." And I told my student of Bishop James Pike's compelling slogan, "more belief, fewer beliefs." Such an answer may not satisfy the absolutist, orthodox theologian, but it will certainly maintain a healthy community of seekers and disciples, as very few are turned away because of rigid orthodoxy.

William B. Williamson
Professor of Philosophy Emeritus
Ursinus College
Collegeville, PA

TODAY I RECEIVED A SAMPLE COPY of your magazine.

One of my earliest memories is of walking home from school (in a small town in Illinois in the 50s). I was about 6 or 7. The cement was wet from the rain, a shiny grey; the orange leaves against the grey, on the brilliant spring green grass. I was at the Episcopal Church front lawn, enjoying the air, the rain. I glanced to my right and saw the glass-fronted sermon box "Jesus Is Your Comforter." I thought of my satin maroon down comforter I slept under. It seems that my thinking of Jesus is a combination of this memory and a song I learned as a child at my aunt's Missouri Methodist church, "Jesus Loves Me..." and the picture of Jesus with the sheep on my Aunt's farm.

Name withheld
Fallbrook, CA

Free food — and poetry

IN OUR CITY we have a non-denominational organization of volunteers who feed

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the homeless. The practice of this group is to set up a table of donated food each day at a site adjacent to San Francisco City Hall.

My little boy was four when he came home from seeing Food Not Bombs distribute free food for the first time. He recited the enclosed poem to me at that time and I wrote it down.

Susan Word
San Francisco, CA

First Poem

— by Derek Word Raskin, age 4

I saw a lot
of food
next to silly hall
and the homeless people
ate it all.

Visiting Bosnia

I WENT TO BOSNIA FOR 10 DAYS in January, joining my son, Philip Smucker, a freelance journalist. I wanted to see what the Episcopal Church was doing in Bosnia.

Philip and I spent two days with Church World Service (CWS) in Metkovic. CWS is the operating arm of the Protestant churches in places like Bosnia, and receives monies from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.

CWS thought it had a contract with the State Department Bureau of Population, Migration and Refugees to purchase 12,00 pairs of shoes for children and senior citizens north of Sarajevo, but at the end of January this project had not yet been funded. CWS is also beginning its efforts toward economic redevelopment, such as assisting with loans to rebuild industry and farm livestock herds.

I also visited many agencies providing humanitarian services in Sarajevo. The work they do is unbelievable. With help from Jesuit priests in Austria, UNICEF is refurbishing the water system of the city. The International Rescue Committee has been working to reestablish gas lines. (Gas is now on every other day in Philip's apartment.)

On the day I visited the Red Cross, Sophie Ann Bonefeld explained that she had been tied up with press releases describing the demonstration by Muslim women in Tuzla who were demanding to know where their husbands, sons and lovers were. Everyone knows that their bodies are in mass graves.

Driving from Sarajevo to Tuzla, I saw nothing but shelled-out houses for 30 miles. I went through the square where 75 young people were killed last May 25.

Philip and I traveled to Bihac through the French and British zones. In the French zone just north of Sarajevo, a sniper had been killed because he had killed a civilian just two days before. We were told emphatically not to get off the road for any reason because of land and anti-personnel mines. We went by Mrkonjic Grad, a completely burned-out city into which Serbs were being relocated the next day. From the heights of the hill we could see shells of buildings and very few roofs. What were these people moving back to?

At a lunch with CWS and International Rescue Committee workers, I was assured that any humanitarian aid would be very worthwhile. Through prayer, and through the largesse of our government and the world — in particular, for us, through the Presiding Bishops' Fund for World Relief — we can help rebuild a country that should never have been torn apart in the first place.

John Smucker
Alexandria, VA

Ida May Sydnor video

I appreciate your interest in the work of Ida May Sydnor, a Philadelphia folk artist who is a founding member of the Southwest Community Enrichment Center's (SCEC) community art center (see June 1994).

Nearly 75 years old, she was born in Baltimore and raised an orphan. She spent 15 years in Byberry, a local mental institution, eventually left and was cared for by an older sister. Since 1990, Ida May has cultivated her innate, artistic talent and has become a prolific painter using cloth, canvas, paper materials and magic markers for her tools. Her work expresses her philosophy on life and reflects her child and adult qualities. She has exhibited in several Philadelphia art galleries and national magazines.

When I met Ida May, I was struck by her wit and candor and decided to use my medium — film and video — to bring her to a wider audience. I have received partial funding for this project from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. My main focus now is to raise $7,160 to complete all of the videotaping. I ask for your readers' support in this endeavor. Any contribution will be completely tax deductible since the SCEC is serving as the fiscal agent (checks should be made out to SCEC and sent to them at 1341 S. 46th St., Philadelphia, Penn., 19130).

In supporting this project, people will help create a video documentation of the life and work of a unique Philadelphia folk artist.

Elizabeth Lewis
Philadelphia, PA

Classifieds

Recovery Ministries gathering

Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church will hold its annual gathering in Sarasota, Fla., June 6-8, 1996. Speakers include Leo Booth, Dick B., and Betsy White. Contact Recovery Ministries, 876 Market Way, Clarkston, GA 30021; (404) 292-2610.

Seeking AIDS Ride sponsors

Deb Martin, who will participate in the July 1-6 Twin Cities-to-Chicago AIDS ride, a bike marathon to support AIDS services in Minnesota and Illinois, is looking for sponsors. Contributions are tax deductible. Contact Deb Martin, Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, 414 Social Science Tower, 267 19th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55455; e-mail marti050@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

Vocations

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

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THE WITNESS
Since 1917

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Daniel Berrigan, author of an imperative of resistance to U.S. militarism, turns 75 this month. Wylie-Kellermann celebrates another imperative authored by Berrigan — one that teaches us to take Scripture to heart.

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This month Vital Signs *offers an excerpt from a new book by Dick Doughty that gives his account of Muslim life in Gaza.*

Cover: Sisters studying math at an Arab community center in Dearborn, Mich., photographed by Daymon Hartley.
Back cover: An astrolabe used for making astronomical calculations, photographed by Daymon Hartley.

Islam, a living faith

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Islam means "surrender to peace." The second largest religion in the world, it is on the rise among African Americans and is the faith tradition of many U.S. immigrants.

Despite the voluble concerns of Christians living in Islamic states overseas, this issue is limited to Islam in the U.S., particularly Detroit, which is home to the largest Arab community outside of the Middle East and has an important role in the complex origins of African-American Islam.

In 1980 I met Aliya Hassan, a grandmother of Detroit's Arab community. I had read Malcolm X and been persuaded of the importance of Islam while in high school. And in 1979 I had shuddered at the biased coverage of the Iranian hostage crisis.

My heart warmed when Hassan welcomed me into her apartment. She enjoyed my surprise that she had grown up on a South Dakota homestead, chopping wood, weeding the garden and walking two miles to school.

What set her apart, she said, was that her living room was furnished with a Turkish carpet, low tables and cushions. And her evenings were filled with stories of honor, danger and courage rooted in 18th-century Lebanon.

Hassan's father was a peddler. His horse-drawn wagon or sled made the rounds each morning at dawn.

Hassan's eyes gleamed when she described her father as the best, the strongest and the most respected man in the community. He was skilled with a rifle and a sword and could recite family history from the 1700s forward. He had visited New York, Boston and Mexico in 1876, created his homestead in 1890 and finally welcomed his family to the U.S. in 1920.

Hassan once invited an Arab man into her family's home only to discover that he was her father's enemy. Yet, according to custom, her father told their unlikely guest that having eaten his bread and salt, "You need not be afraid."

When Hassan grew up, she became a licensed investigator for real estate securities, but living in Dearborn — just outside Detroit, she worried about Arabs who spoke no English and couldn't navigate U.S. customs. In 1971, Hassan started ACCESS, the Arab Center for Community and Economic Social Services.

Working the politics of life in the U.S. was possible for Hassan because of her faith.

"For me Islam is the most elastic, the most logical," Hassan said. "You know good from bad. You're not going to hurt anyone. It's the most practical for me *and* I question it."

Sixteen years later, Abdullah El-Amin visited *The Witness'* offices during preparation of this issue. I appreciated being able to question him, because Detroit's African-American Islamic community is increasingly visible in my own life. The food co-op where I shop, which was opened by hippies in the 1970s, is now largely governed by Muslims who understand the politics of clean food. Classmates of my daughter, when she attended a public Waldorf School, prayed five times a day.

And despite El-Amin's references to Satanic forces in American culture, I found myself in surprising accord with his views about the media's damaging influence. Like him, I have been trying to hold my children out of the gushing current of mindless consumerism and violence. Like him, I am doing this in a city that can seem devoid of compassion.

Yet, I have some lingering anxieties. I haven't caught the *heart* of the Islamic message even yet. I wonder about the role of women, even as I know that I would wear the veil if it identified me with cultural resistance.

I am disturbed that Julie Wortman's article in this issue about Muslim young women was considered so accurate that it might cause problems (page 10). Did I know, I was asked, that it is against Islamic law to criticize the faith or the community in front of outsiders?

Yet, as an outsider, Wortman's piece gave me hope for the future of Islam *because* teenagers struggled honestly with their concerns about sex and marriage, their interest in exploring some aspects of U.S. culture and their deep commitment to taking Islam with them wherever they go.

The tenacity and courage of the variety of people whom Marianne Arbogast interviewed for her piece, despite the cost they pay for their views, is encouraging (page 19).

Perhaps just as Jesus is the trickster to fundamentalist paradigms in Christianity, the answer to Islamic blinders is the vision of Muslim feminists and academics, Muslim teenagers and others who believe with Hassan that Islam is "elastic" — a truly living faith that can be questioned. TW

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

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Preaching Jesus to urban teens

by Ron Spann

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

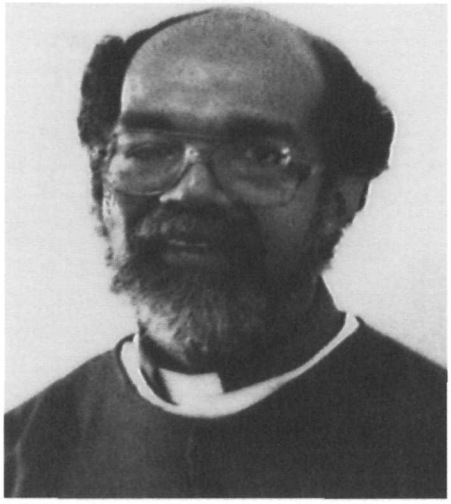
— Romans 1:16 NRSV

I am an African-American Christian pastor who seeks to work redemptively for the life of the black community in a distressed urban setting. While I am not in direct relationship or in proximity with an Islamic community initiative, the rumor of Islam is never farther away than another magazine article, celebrity news maker or album notes on the back of a Gangsta Rap CD. I am asked about the claims of Islam by impressionable young minds. So I, with the community I represent, am as much drawn into the dialectic of their identity formation as the acculturating forces abroad. Nation of Islam posters proclaim Savior's Day, meaning Elijah Mohammed's ascendancy at the beginning of their movement. Who do I say is Savior, and what does that mean? So I, with the community I represent, am drawn into their identity formation and its engagement by all those rumors.

During the Million Man March, the greater public heard what has been common fare on ethnic broadcasting over obscure urban AM bands for years: the teaching of Minister Farrakhan (a childhood Episcopalian) facilely moving between Biblical and Qur'anic texts using the common modality of black rhetorical conventions. It was a vintage sampling of the alternately subtle and specious case made for Islam as a natural fit for African-American religious aspirations.

Ron Spann is rector of Messiah Episcopal Church in Detroit

There is the subtlety of Islamic apologetics, which, for instance, presuppose the whole of Christology except its most core layer, the divinity of Christ. It is flattering, to be sure, when a Farrakhan calls Jesus "Lord and Savior," but he does not at all mean what Christianity does by the same words.



Ron Spann

Similarly, the moral vision of Islam is a sweeping one, and Islamic proponents in the black community show more astuteness in applying their prophetic tradition to the quest for justice in African America than is shown by their Christian counterparts. One has to look back to the student civil rights movement, for instance, to find the everyday heroics professional Muslim athletes show in adhering to their faith publicly when it collides with idols of the dominant culture.

I am asked about the claims of Islam by impressionable young minds.

Worldwide Islam has effectively duplicated every Western and Christian initiative in philanthropy and allied strategies. Louis Farrakhan successfully exploited the American press' excitability with his patent plays for Libyan and Iraqi cash. With no attention from the white press, Saudi and other monies have for years been endowing chairs and constructing major buildings (with Arabic dedications) on historic black campuses like Howard University on a grand scale. All this is timed with reductions in federal monies and shortfalls in alumni funds which have traditionally been the bread and butter of such campuses. The same largess is now being aimed at prison settings.

What's specious is the shoddy way Islam is depicted as an indigenous African religion more authentic to black people than Christianity. The actual history of Islam in West Africa is easily manipulated to obscure its decidedly junior status to Christianity in East African antiquity. Ironically, few urban black dwellers know the significance of so many Churches being called Abyssinian. (It is exceeded in irony, however, by the fact that *'ebed* — slave — is the common Arabic word for any black person, even one who adopts Arabic names and dress.)

For all Farrakhan's excesses, however, he is in step with the core tradition of Islam called *Dawa*, its religious imperative for apologetic witnessing and proselytizing. It remains a dynamic piece of contemporary Islam that politically correct, liberal white (and black) Christians do not apparently appreciate. Islam has a strategic vision of reaching black America by self-consciously seeking conversions.

In the last few years I have enjoyed a closer exchange with Muslim believers, from lifelong Nation of Islam (NOI) protegées to Sunni and Sufi adherents

continued on page 18

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And He is With Us

by Rumi

Totally unexpected my guest arrived.
"Who is it?" asked my heart.
"The face of the moon," said my soul.

As he entered the house,
we all ran into the street madly looking for the moon.
"I'm in here," he was calling from inside,
but we were calling him outside unaware of his call.
Our drunken nightingale is singing in the garden,
and we are cooing like doves, "Where, where, where?"

A crowd formed: "Where's the thief?"
And the thief among us is saying,
"Yeah, where's the thief."
All our voices became mixed together
and not one voice stood out from the others.

And He is with you means He is searching with you.
He is nearer to you than yourself. Why look outside?
Become like melting snow; wash yourself of yourself.
With love your inner voice will find a tongue
growing like a silent white lily in the heart.

— Islamic mystic Jelaluddin Rumi, translated by Kabir Helminski in *Love Is A Stranger*, Threshold Books (Brattleboro, Vt.), 1993

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Bringing Islam to Detroit

by Camille Colatosti

It's a cool morning in late March. The Dearborn, Mich., street is grimy with the remains of an early spring storm. Mud and dirty snow linger on corners. Two women, wearing traditional Arab *hijabs*—scarves that cover their hair and fold loosely around their necks—walk huddled together. One pushes a baby carriage. They are headed to the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). One has a doctor's appointment. The other hopes to improve her English and find work. "I don't have experience," she says. "But I can cook and I work hard."

The women are two of the 200,000 Arab Americans who live in the Detroit metropolitan area, the single largest congregation of people of Arab descent outside of the Middle East. This year, as ACCESS celebrates its 25th year of service to the Arab-American community, the Dearborn area marks the centennial of the first Arab American's arrival in Michigan.

The first wave of Arab immigrants, mainly Christians from Syria and what is now Lebanon, came to the U.S. in the 1850s. The decline of the silk industry and the collapse of the Ottoman empire led many to seek a better life in America. They gathered first in New York and then moved westward. This group still composes the majority of the two and one-half million Arab Americans in the U.S. today. Most are now third and fourth generation and have assimilated. According to the 1990 census, 82 percent of Arab Americans are U.S. citizens.

The second wave of immigrants, primarily Muslim, arrived just prior to World War I. "Many came to Detroit to work in what was then a subchaser plant—a plant that made something like a PT boat. This later became the Ford Rouge plant," explains Ismael Ahmed, the energetic director of of ACCESS which employs 80 people in 40 different programs.

A few blocks from ACCESS' main office stand the smoke stacks of Ford's Rouge Plant, the place where Henry Ford perfected the assembly line. He organized a complex that included a foundry, a stamping plant and an assembly factory—where steel was transformed from raw metal to a finished automobile. At its height, the Rouge Plant employed 80,000 to 90,000 workers. It's rumored that Ford encouraged Arab immigration because he had heard Muslims avoid alcohol. "People kept coming," says Ahmed. Immigrants no longer stopped in New York. They came directly to Detroit.

The third wave of immigrants arrived in the 1970s and 80s. Four to five thousand new Arab immigrants came to Detroit each year. Many were fleeing the war in Lebanon. Others came from Israel and Palestine to escape violence and occupation. Ahmed estimates that 3,000 new residents still arrive each year.

"Our children are confused. We have to work twice as hard as normal because we have to destroy the negative knowledge children have learned and then we have to build the new religious knowledge."

— Husham Al-Husainy

The Detroit Arab-American community differs somewhat from those in other parts of the country. "Of all the communities of Arabs in America," explains Ahmed, "the Detroit community is the most working class in its make-up."

Demographics show that, nationally, Arab Americans are more educated and more affluent than the average American. According to Samia El-Badry, president of International Demographic and Economic Associates in Austin, Texas, "The share [of Arab Americans] who did not attend college is lower than average, and the share with master's degrees or higher is twice the average. Eighty percent of Arab Americans aged 16 or older were employed in 1990, compared with 60 percent of all American adults."

While Arab Americans have prospered in the U.S. in general, this is not always the case in Detroit. Significantly, the third intense wave of immigration coincided with a decline in the auto industry. The Ford Rouge plant now employs just 11,000 workers. Ahmed estimates that 30 percent of Arab-American men in Dearborn are unemployed. "A lot of men are now deprived of work," he says. This affects their relationship to their families, their community and to themselves.

Culture

Ahmed insists that there is no such thing as the Arab family. Some are liberal, some conservative; in some the women run the household and in others the women have no voice. But, he adds, "In traditional Arab culture, the family is more important than the individual.

Camille Colatosti teaches English at the Detroit College of Business. Photographer **Daymon Hartley** is on strike from the *Detroit Free Press.*

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People can bring disgrace or honor to their family. Whether the man is successful or the woman is chaste—it sounds almost funny to say this here in the U.S.—is important."

The family is the essential unit through which Arabs interact with their community. This is as true for Christian Arabs as for Muslim. "For all are essentially an Islamic culture," Ahmed adds.

Traditionally, he continues, "the man is the outside ambassador, the person who works. The woman runs the household. And given that the culture is homebased, this can be a powerful position."

"In our religion," adds Fatima Abdulla, a 21-year-old woman who works as a secretary at ACCESS, "men and women are equal. We have different roles, but we are equal." Like other American women her age, Abdulla is, as she says, "still figuring out my role," but she believes that the Muslim religion helps her live her life.

"My religion helps me tell right from wrong," she explains. "The *Qur'an* has never changed. It's not going to change. It provides stability and guidance." Muslims understand the *Qur'an* as the speech of God to Muhammad, revealed to the prophet over 23 years (610-32AD). They believe that, since God himself is the author of the *Qur'an*, it is infallible.

Abdulla bases her life on her religion, praying five times a day: before sunrise; in the very early afternoon; in the late afternoon; immediately after sunset; and before retiring and before midnight. She also fasts during the month of Ramadan, refraining from eating, drinking and smoking from sunrise to sunset.

She finds solace in the fact that "there is a reason for everything." Ramadan is the month in which the *Qur'an* was first revealed to Muhammad, and in which Muhammad emigrated to Mecca. As Abdulla explains, "Following my religion makes me feel proud of myself."

Raised in a religious family, Abdulla believes that she became more committed to her faith as she reached adulthood. Still, she understands that she practices her religion differently than her parents do. "Because I was born and raised in this country, I mix it [the Muslim faith] with life here and they mix it with their life in the old country. For example, my mom doesn't feel it's appropriate to mix in with men and I feel I have no choice. And," she adds, "I feel that this is okay. My religion forbids dating without supervision and I agree but I choose to follow my religion in a different way than my parents because I live here."

Arab-American children often negotiate two cultures to see where they fit. Some are successful, as Abdulla has been. Others have difficulty.

Husham Al-Husainy, the director of the Karballa Islamic Education Center, explains the many negative influences that Islamic children face — influences from the media and from the society as a whole. As Al-Husainy put it, "Our children are confused. It is a great challenge to teach them religious knowledge. We have to work twice as hard as normal because we have to destroy the negative knowledge children have learned and then we have to build the new religious knowledge. This can be tough on us. Sometimes," he adds, "the TV is a colorful angel and sometimes a colorful devil."

But, he adds, "We should not keep condemning the media but compete with them." He discusses the importance of developing new techniques and new technologies to show children the value of religious practice. Al-Husainy points to the use of videotapes, cd-roms and the internet to attract the younger generation to the Muslim faith. "We have to listen to the American born generation," he continues. "They have a lot to teach us if we are willing."

Tutoring at ACCESS Daymon Hartley

Nancy Adadow-Gray, director of family counseling and community mental health services at ACCESS, agrees. "What worked in the old country doesn't always work here." She speaks not only about religious practice but about parenting in general. "There is a need to know how to be effective with children. For many, the old discipline needs to change."

Language barriers may also create family problems. "In many cases," says

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Holding to the faith

by Julie A. Wortman

A group of 20 Muslim girls aged 14-19 swarm around boxes of pizza and bottles of soft drinks late on a Monday afternoon in a private meeting room in a large western U.S. city where Arab Muslims have been known to get along for years at a stretch without needing to know English or interact with non-Muslim "Americans." It is a tight community, held together by immigrant traditions, mosques and shared economic struggle.

Three quarters of these teens wear the *hijab.* Perhaps because this head covering makes them look demure, I had succumbed, during our polite introductions, to the stereotypical idea that these young women would likely be quieter, shyer and more restrained than the outspoken teenaged girls at my own suburban church back home.

But the pizza proved me wrong.

As they grabbed for plates and poured out drinks they were just as exuberantly full of lively chatter, just as frequently inclined to small shrieks of surprise, just as self-conscious when suddenly the focus of some playful kidding.

Finally looking past their head gear, I could see that they also dressed pretty much the same — in the jeans, sweaters and jackets which have become standard teen issue across the continent.

But unlike the young women I know at home, who are as familiar with the local mall, movie multiplex or sports facility as they are with home and school, this community center is one of the few places where these young Arab-American women can respectably spend free time.

And outside of brothers and cousins, boys are off limits. Mixed school rooms are okay, but socializing with boys — especially through dating, but even on the phone — is out.

Tana Moore

Still, even though their community's traditional values of modesty prevent them from taking the sex education classes available in their public high school, sex, as for the teens of my acquaintance, is very much on these girls' minds.

But while the girls in my church focus on dating and think of marriage in terms of the far-off future, for these young Muslim women who are unlikely ever to go out to a movie or attend a dance alone with a boy, the intimacies of married life are an immediate concern. A quarter are already married and most of the rest will have husbands by their 19th birthdays.

This is a community norm they seem to take for granted, perhaps because they and their families still have strong connections with the Middle East — half were born there, as were all of their parents.

But they are sensitive to being labelled "boaters," a term for freshly arrived immigrants oblivious to this country's dominant culture. Knowing and operating in that culture, they understand, will be an inevitable part of helping their working-class families free themselves of dependence on the uncertain employment opportunities offered by downsized industrial and agricultural workforces.

This means some familiar norms must shift.

This afternoon these teenagers talk frankly about the choices before them. No matter what, they seem very clear, Islam will be their guide.

"When I tell people about Islam I don't emphasize what's prohibited," one group member says. Describing what sounds to me like a version of my own childhood experience of Catholic friends reciting lists of different categories of sins they were expected to confess before being able to take communion, she and others in the group speak of Muslims who know only the don'ts of Islam and none of the whys.

"A lot of people abuse the word 'forbidden,' " another girls says. "But Islam is a way to live my life happier, healthier, more secure."

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Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.* Artist **Tana Moore** lives in Southfield, Mich.

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Ahmed, "the parents speak Arabic and haven't learned English well. The kids interpret life for them. So, of course, the parents lose some authority."

To strengthen the community, to bridge gaps between the generations, ACCESS organizes programs that increase everyone's understanding of the positive attributes of Arab culture. ACCESS brought storytellers from Egypt, for example, to teach people about ancient oral traditions. ACCESS displays art works from all over the Middle East and brings in musicians from around the country.

Programs also validate the artistry of residents. Recently, for example, older women immigrants taught a needlework class to younger Arab-American women. "The needlework is intricate and labor intensive," explains Ahmed. "One of the teachers made a beautiful dress that took nine months to embroider. She used a fine pinpoint needlework. The breast plate of this dress tells everyone where the wearer is from—what her village is, what her traditions are. Another Arab could look at this dress and say to the wearer, 'Oh, you're from Bethlehem.' Or, 'you're from Galilee.' The dress is a work of art. But there is no market for this in the U.S. This kind of needlework was becoming a lost art. So we decided to try to preserve it by teaching another generation."

Along with art classes, ACCESS displays traditional Arabic artifacts. The dress that took nine months to embroider hangs in one of the many glass cases that line the walls of the center. One case is filled with Christian and Jewish artifacts from the Middle East; another displays Islamic artifacts; and a third promotes Islamic contributions to science and architecture.

Combatting stereotypes

Ahmed believes that the promotion of a positive cultural heritage is part of the "struggle to build a better life for our folks." By this he refers not just to Arab Americans but, as he explains, "to all low-income folks, to people who have to confront negative stereotypes all the time." Ahmed points to a store owner ACCESS recently picketed. "The guy was selling Arab masks for Halloween."

Turning toward Mecca Daymon Hartley

Negative images and stereotypes of Arab Americans result from several factors, explains Ahmed. He describes a Western "Orientalism"—a view that everything in the East is strange, exotic, different. "In this Orientalist view," says Ahmed, "Arab women are belly dancers and Arab men are sheiks. These images, of course, have nothing to do with people's real lives."

"In our religion, men and women are equal. We have different roles, but we are equal." — Fatima Abdulla

Ahmed also believes that U.S. foreign policy affects American images of Arabs. "After the 1967 Arab-Israel war," says Ahmed, "images took a much worse turn. At best, Arabs are seen as overemotional and angry people who can't be trusted. At worst, Arabs are seen as terrorists." To Ahmed, the stereotyping is akin to the portrayal of the Japanese during World War II. "There are some ideas that we are not quite human," says Ahmed.

This comparison is apt. According to James Abourezk, a former U.S. Senator from South Dakota and leader of the national Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), "In 1987, ADC obtained an Immigration and Naturalization Service memo which outlined a detailed plan to establish an internment camp for Arabs in the event of a war by the U.S. against an Arab country."

The goal of the ADC is to protect the rights of people of Arab descent, to end stereotyping of Arabs in the media and to fight discrimination in employment, education, and politics.

Negative media images include ones which may, at first, seem harmless. Disney's Aladdin, for example, sings of his "barbaric" homeland. In the film, only Aladdin and his princess speak proper English. All other Arab characters have thick, harsh accents.

Finally, an Arab guard threatens to cut

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Most of these teens, in fact, see themselves as becoming more observant than their parents as their lives unfold here in the U.S.

"We're more educated," one of the older ones offers in explanation. "We know more about Islam."

Too often, several complain, their parents mistake cultural customs for religious law. They are proud of being Arab-American, but not necessarily of the patriarchal assumptions embedded in that ethnic identity. Islam, they say, is not sexist.

One girl tells of an acquaintance whose parents wouldn't let her accept a scholarship to a prestigious university because that would mean she would have to leave her parents' home and move on campus.

"It isn't right," she says. "All her life they push for her to do well at school and then they don't let her go away to college."

Islam prizes education very highly, she points out, a fact which she believes should override a cultural assumption that an unmarried woman should live at home.

The leader of today's discussion, Lila Mohamed, agrees. A 26-year-old Muslim woman of Arab descent who works as a teen and HIV/AIDS counselor, she tells of her own experience of going away to college. Friends kept telling her parents that she would be "ruined" by the experience, that after graduation she would not come back home to live as an unmarried Muslim woman should.

She proved them wrong, she says, "but if a boy calls me up on the phone my father still doesn't want me to talk to him. If a girl calls my brother my father doesn't care."

The sexist double standard goes deep. These girls know they would be ostracized if they do not come to their wedding beds virgins, but virtually every one of them thinks their brothers or male cousins are sexually active.

"Our parents think teenagers here are rotten," says one girl. So they customarily send both sons and daughters back to their own mother countries to find "suitable" marriage partners on the theory that these wives and husbands will strengthen their children's ethnic and religious ties. Presumably, Muslims in countries that are Muslim will be more observant.

Some of the group members seem to have accepted this reasoning, as they reveal in the course of responding to a brief presentation Mohamed makes to them on the transmission and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

"If you marry a boy from this community, you could get infected," says one. "But [Muslim] boys in Arab countries are less likely to have it."

But another member of the group receives several nods of agreement as she counters: "Just because someone is from an Arab country doesn't mean they are a good Muslim. My husband is from Saudi Arabia and he doesn't follow Islam that closely."

Mohamed affirms this observation with the sobering statistic that there have been more than 150,000 cases of HIV/AIDS reported in the Middle East. The young woman who thought Arab boys were less likely to be at risk appears startled at the revelation.

Like many of her contemporaries in the group, she has seemed surprisingly well-informed about the details and risks of various types of sexual activity — Mohamed tells them they are light years ahead of their parents in this respect — but her apparent naiveté or, perhaps, ethnic loyalty, is also shared by many of her companions. Throughout the conversation, I've been aware of several young women who have been absolutely quiet, even embarassed, by the frank exchanges.

Every girl here, it seems clear, is attempting to hold in tension her desire to be a good Arab Muslim daughter with the need to fit sufficiently well into this Eurocentric, culturally Christian society to have a decent economic future. Several mention their plans for post-high school studies with pride.

As they feel their way, they say over and over, Islam provides trustworthy guidance. One stresses that it is up to them, in fact, as the mothers of the next generation, to instill in their children the life-giving pillars of the faith — God's oneness, the prayers, the charity, the fasting and Islamic unity — but not ncecessarily the cultural biases that contradict Islam's teachings.

Already, as this afternoon's discussion has hinted, some of those biases are under assault. I think, too, of a young Jordanian girl who seemed particularly outspoken at different moments in the discussion. At one point she asked, apparently thinking of herself: "What if a Jordanian girl wants to be with a boy whose family is from Kuwait? If he's a Muslim shouldn't that be enough?"

For this generation of young Arab-American Muslim women, still strongly influenced by parents who find stability and solace in ethnic identification with their birth countries, it may not be.

But what they teach their children will likely be something different.

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off a young girl's hand for stealing food for a hungry child. The ADC fears that such images encourage the false belief that Arabs are different and violent.

Even more dangerous, in 1993 the ADC learned of a U.S. military training film that presented Arab terrorism as the main threat to Americans. Albert Mokhiber of the ADC explains, "The film focused only on the Middle East, specifically on Arabs and Muslims. But a 1990 U.S. State Department report on terrorist patterns showed that only eight of 233 anti-U.S. incidents that year were attributed to residents of Middle Eastern countries."

The El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, which showed the film, pulled it in response to the ADC's concerns. But the association of Arab and terrorist in the minds of many U.S. residents and law enforcement officials plays itself out both locally and nationally. In Dearborn, where Arab Americans compose more than 25 percent of the city population, police have a history of treating Arab-American teens unfairly and sometimes ruthlessly. ACCESS recently won a five year legal battle against 17 cases of police brutality.

The immediate reaction of law enforcement officials and many Americans to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing provides an instructive example. Before Michigan Militia member Timothy McVeigh, a white man, was arrested, the police initially identified suspects who were, they said, "Middle Eastern looking." Later developments proved that these initial identifications were, at best, mistaken, and, at worst, fabricated from stereotypes. Nevertheless, Immigration and Naturalization Service Officials in Oklahoma and Texas detained three Arab-American men. A Jordanian-American man, Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan Ahmad, who was flying from Oklahoma City to Chicago, was stopped and questioned. Authorities held him for hours.

"I'm sure that hundreds left Oklahoma City that day," Ahmad told *The Los Angeles Times*, "but I was the only one stopped to be questioned. Because of my looks. It doesn't matter what citizenship you're carrying. It's just your look, your look."

Daymon Hartley

Arab child running home from school in southwest Detroit.

Ahmad is an American citizen, as are many of the hundreds of Arab Americans who reported harassment. Yaser Elmenshawy, executive director of the Islamic Public Affairs Council, told Reuters that the days immediately following the bombing were "a roller coaster ride for Muslims. Muslims are America's favorite whipping boy. When in doubt, blame the Muslims," he said.

The ADC's Albert Mokhiber agrees. "Any time there is a controversy involving the Middle East, there seems to be a backlash. During the Gulf War, there was a 300 percent increase in hate crimes against Arab Americans. Of course, none of them had anything to do with the Gulf War. Most of them were not Kuwaiti or Iraqi but Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinians of second or third generation."

ACCESS' Ahmed fears that the situation may get worse for Arab Americans before it gets better. He points to what he describes as "the huge, growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the country. There are legislative efforts to strip all immigrants of their rights, to deny them medicare and social security even if they have worked for these things."

So many Americans forget that they, themselves, come from families who originated somewhere else. "Whether their families came here by choice, or by force as slaves, they arrived and, with struggle, assimilated. There is now opposition to this American tradition," says Ahmed. In Dearborn, where Arabic is the native language of more than 40 percent of the student body, the school board recently refused a $4 million grant they had received to institute an Arabic/English dual language program. "There is opposition to learning other languages and learning about other cultures," says Ahmed. "Where will this end?" TW

> *"At best, Arabs are seen as overemotional and angry people who can't be trusted. At worst, Arabs are seen as terrorists. Where will this end?"* — *Ismael Ahmed*

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Beyond Malcolm X and Farrakhan:
the African-American experience of Islam

by Larry Gabriel

The image of African-American Islam in Detroit can be spotty for outsiders. Young men in dark suits hawking newspapers and bags of fruit on street corners, groups of women in long white dresses gathered outside a mosque.

Fueled by sensational media reports and a Judeo-Christian perspective, non-Muslims often view them with a mistrustful eye. Television brings us images of a strident Louis Farrakhan or intransigent Middle Eastern terrorists. Some conclude that Islam is about race hatred and death.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," said Abdullah Bey El-Amin, chairman of the Muslim Center in Detroit. "Islam is the religion of peace."

Until the last few decades, Islam was an unknown concept to most Americans —the foreign-sounding names of its practitioners attached more strangeness to it. As the Islamic population grows, people are beginning to understand Muslims on a more personal level.

The vast majority of Muslims lead quiet, worship-filled lives. Taslimah Bey found a loving community during her early contacts with Muslims in the mid-1970s, when Detroit was considered the murder capital of the United States.

"I remember around Joy and Dexter, that was the safest neighborhood because so many Muslims lived around there," said Bey. "You could walk down the street and nothing would happen to you. You never worried about getting mugged or anything. ... It was a community right inside Detroit. That's what attracted me to it."

Jazz drummer James Brown remembers the scene during the 1960s, when he first became interested in Islam through reading the newspaper "Muhammad Speaks."

"I was influenced by the moral character," said Brown. "The fact that there was unity there. There were businesses on Linwood near the mosque. From Chicago Boulevard to Davison there were restaurants, grocery stores, cleaners, barber shops, fish markets and bakeries."

A peek beyond the facade of this community gives a sense of the complexity of the world of Islam in Detroit. Brown belongs to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam (NOI), the most visible of the groups which splintered from Elijah Muhammad's NOI after his death in 1975. Their mosque is on Wyoming on Detroit's northwest side. Bey is more of a traditional Muslim. She prays at the Islamic Student Center at Cass and Forest because it is near her home.

There are numerous mosques and streams of Islam practiced here. John Muhammad, a brother of Elijah Muhammad, leads a Temple on Hamilton in Highland Park. He claims, as do several others, to be the true bearer of the message that Elijah Muhammad taught.

"I remember around Joy and Dexter, that was the safest neighborhood because so many Muslims lived around there. You never worried about getting mugged or anything." — *Taslimah Bey*

Among traditional, or orthodox, Muslims, there are Sunni, Shiite, Hanafi and Sufi sects. El-Amin, a Sunni who is also the executive director of the Council of Islamic Organizations in Michigan, says there are 25 mosques in the Detroit area. He estimates there are 6,000 to 7,000 African-American Muslims in Detroit who are predominately focused around seven or eight mosques in the city.

Islam among African Americans came to the United States with the Africans who were captured and brought here for slave labor. Probably more of the enslaved Africans were Muslims than adherents of the polytheistic animist religions that are associated with voodoo.

Mistaking African-American Muslims for animists has persisted. As late as 1937, researcher Erdmann Beynon's study of Elijah Muhammad's NOI published in the *American Journal of Sociology* was titled "The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit."

Although snippets of Islam survived among African-American descendants, Christianity became the dominant religion. The first organized Islamic groups among African Americans in Detroit didn't appear until the early 1900s. The Moorish Science Temple, founded in New Jersey by Noble Drew Ali in 1913, established temples in several cities, including Detroit.

Historian Paul Lee, who consulted with filmmaker Spike Lee (no relation) during the making of the movie "Malcolm X," reports another early effort: "Dousa Muhammad Ali visited here as early as 1919, and established

Larry Gabriel is a striking *Detroit Free Press* reporter. Photographer **Daymon Harley** is also on strike.

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Daymon Hartley

African-American women praying at the Muslim Center in Detroit.

a traditional mosque right here in Highland Park."

Ali's movement had a nationalistic response to American racism and claimed that Islam was the original religion of the so-called Negro. Nationalism was growing among African Americans; Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa movement, with its quasi-religious edge, garnered millions of followers in the early 1920s. But Ali's murder in 1920 splintered his organization, as did the Garvey movement after his 1925 imprisonment for mail fraud and his subsequent deportation in 1927.

It was into this nationalist consciousness that Wali Fard Muhammad stepped when he established his Nation of Islam, the most documented African-American Islamic community to date. "Racial prejudice is so prevalent in society, it's easy to want to embrace that kind of thinking," said El-Amin while conceding that the NOI was able to change some lives for the better.

Fard Muhammad brought his race-based message to Detroit in 1930, the second year of the Great Depression. He was a door-to-door peddler selling raincoats and, later, silks in the black ghetto. After gaining entrance to homes, Fard (also known as Farrad or Ford) would speak to African Americans about their home country and their true religion. The Bible, with which most of his contacts were familiar, served as his preliminary text although he made key interpretations. It was among former followers of Ali and Garvey that his message was most welcome. Soon, his informal meetings in homes grew to the point that collections were taken to rent a hall.

Detroit, in 1930, was a boom town that had just gone bust. During the past two decades hundreds of thousands of people had migrated to the center of the burgeoning auto industry for work. Southerners came in swarms.

Elijah Poole left Georgia for Detroit with his wife and two children in 1923 after a run-in with a white employer. In Detroit, he found work at the Chevrolet auto plant and worked there until 1929, the year of the stock market crash.

The unemployed Poole went to his first meeting in 1931 and shortly after began to study Islam. He quickly became a minister, was given the name Elijah Muhammad and became one of Fard's closest deputies.

By the time Fard disappeared in 1934, about 8,000 African Americans in Detroit had embraced his religion. But among the ministers he left behind, there was a power struggle that led to the splintering of the group.

"Elijah Muhammad claimed Fard Muhammad's mantle but he did so under the objections of the other students," said historian Lee. "He claimed that Fard Muhammad had left him in charge, and, as a matter of fact, had declared him to be the Messenger of Allah. Problem was no one else heard that. Fard Muhammad apparently didn't do this in the presence of anybody but Elijah Muhammad. So the movement split.

"I have reliable information that at least four of the splinters eventually evolved into traditional Islam. This makes one wonder about Fard Muhammad's actual intent. I would not be surprised if Fard Muhammad intended that the Na-

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Finding equality under Islam

Islam gives Abdullah El-Amin hope. He practices it in resistance to the assault of U.S. culture on everyone, but especially on children.

"You can't drive the freeway without reading messages that use sexuality and denigrate women. There are no movies you can go see except Walt Disney," El-Amin laments with a quiet smile. "Movies and rap boys denigrate women and language."

In response, El-Amin, the executive director of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Michigan, says that Muslims try to insulate their children from some of the media.

"We think it's a satanic influence that's trying to destroy our society," he says. "These kids really have a hard time exercising restraint. Islam forbids pork (including pepperoni), alcohol, adultery, fornication — these things that people think are a free lifestyle."

El-Amin contends that the discipline *could* come easily for children, if they were in a healthy environment.

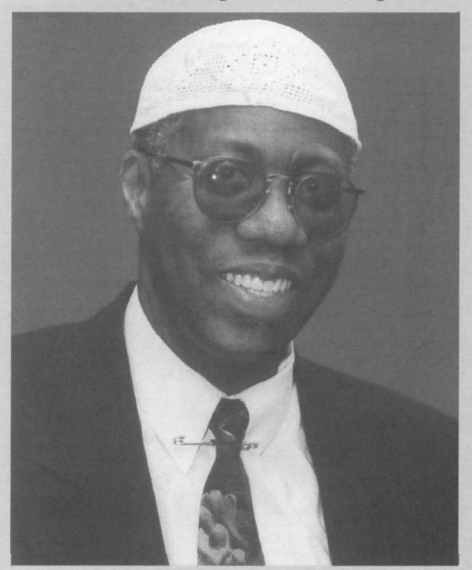
"We believe it's innate in children to want to live morally and in accord with nature," he says. But being constantly confronted with immorality presents "a tremendous struggle."

A struggle that may best be fought by adults who are people of faith.

El-Amin is inviting interfaith religious leaders to begin a pattern of prayerful gatherings at urban and suburban sites where women are denigrated or violence endorsed.

El-Amin's conversion took place in the mid-1970s, after a friend supplied books and tapes. But the pivotal image for El-Amin was of Imam Wallace Muhammad pointing to his head, saying "Man is mind." For an introspective young man, the image was hopeful.

"The single most important thing that can turn people around from immorality is adhering to the number one principle — there is nothing to be worshiped except God," El-Amin says. "The human being is the crown of creation. If you're on such a lofty level, that can only serve to overcome feelings of inferiority. The majority of African Americans have inferiority complexes brought on by the racism they experience in this country. Similarly, you can't find Caucasians that don't have superiority complexes.



Abdullah Bey El-Amin

"This religion equalizes — we are all equal under God. If you know this you're a lot less likely to do things that are destructive."

— Abdullah El-Amin

"This religion equalizes — we are all equal under God. If you know this you're a lot less likely to do things that are destructive. This faith fits my frame of mind and experience. I am able to connect spiritually with the creation."

El-Amin is circumspect when speaking of the Nation of Islam. He believes that the turnout for the Million Man March indicates the depth of "the great spiritual and moral void in this country — not only among black men but among all people. We need to be called back to morality and basic common sense."

And he recognizes Louis Farrakhan as "a great orator who gives the downtrodden some hope."

But he is critical of Elijah Muhammad's contention that Muhammad is God, a concept he says was borrowed from Christianity. Elevating anyone or anything to the level of God is the one sin, according to the *Qur'an*, that Allah will not forgive.

"Elijah Muhammad did some masterful psychology. He said the black man is God; the white man is demon. But it's artificial."

For El-Amin, conversion to Islam was not a conversion to a political agenda.

"So many people have misconceptions of the heart of a Muslim. People assume that I heard Malcolm X, that I was under that time of militant conversion. Or they assume that we change our names to drop the slave name. It might be a little of that, but we choose these names because they are attributes of God and Muhammad."—*Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann*

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continued from page 15

tion of Islam should evolve into traditional Islam. It appears to me that Elijah Muhammad's presentation was essentially self serving. His teachings put himself at the center of the religion."

During the power struggle, Elijah Muhammad was forced to flee Detroit and he eventually settled in Chicago, where he established the Nation of Islam, popularly known as the Black Muslims. The original Detroit temple eventually aligned with Elijah Muhammad's NOI.

While the Nation made no great gains in followers in the next decade, they certainly got the attention of authorities. In the mid-1930s they clashed with Detroit's Board of Education over Muslim children attending a then-unlicensed University of Islam.

In 1950, after two NOI Muslims fought with police outside the temple and were shot, *The Detroit Free Press* investigated the group. An internal memo reported that there were about 2,500 Black Muslims in Detroit. The memo further reported: "The only trouble comes when whites brush up against them too close. ... The number one asset of this bunch is that they are supposed to be very neat and clean. ... This is a crackpot group and may be a money-making racket for the top boys."

Whatever they were, after August 1952, when Malcolm X arrived in Detroit, the NOI would be taken a whole lot more seriously.

Malcolm Little was born in Nebraska and raised in Lansing, Michigan, where his Garveyite father was killed by a group of whites. After moving to the east coast, he became a thief and street hustler known as Detroit Red. In 1946, at the ago of 20, Detroit Red went to prison. When he was paroled in 1952, he was a Muslim.

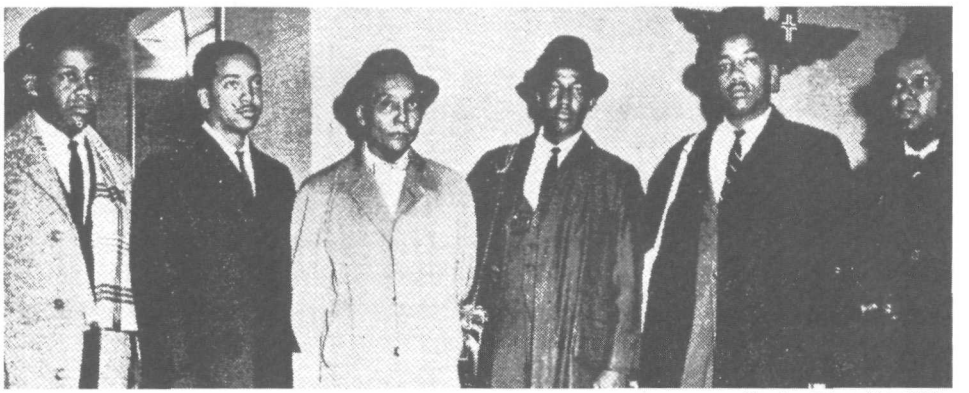
Malcolm X came to live with his brother Wilfred in Paradise Valley, a vibrant ghetto area full of hotels, bars and stores east of where the Chrysler Freeway now runs through downtown Detroit. The NOI was then still a small community. Many traditional African-American Muslims gravitated toward other mosques, particularly one on the far west side that catered to the Arab population of Dearborn.

The NOI had Monday, Wednesday and Friday meetings in a temple at 1474 Frederick. While Malcolm X was enthralled by the neat, respectful people he met there, he was disappointed that there were so few of them among the huge population of blacks in the city. He set out to change that by recruiting among the people in bars, poolrooms and on street corners — the very places he had frequented during his criminal life.

His strategy was successful, as he wrote in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*: "With a few months of plugging away, however, our storefront Temple Number One about tripled its membership. And that so deeply pleased Mr. Muhammad that he paid us the honor of a personal visit."

Within a year, Malcolm X was assistant minister at Temple Number One. Over that time he held a succession of jobs including one at a furniture store and another at Ford Motor Company. But his real work was propagating the NOI.

"Every day after work, I walked, 'fishing' for potential converts in the Detroit black ghetto. I saw the African features of my black brothers and sisters whom the devilish white man had brainwashed" (*Autobiography of Malcolm X*).



Courtesy *Salaam* (July 1960)

Elijah Muhammad flanked by sons Nathaniel, Wallace, Akbar, Elijah, Jr. and Herbert.

Over the next 10 years, with the help of Malcolm X's evangelism, the NOI would grow as it never had before.

Malcolm X's missionary skills proved so adept that he was sent from city to city to establish temples. By 1975, the year of Elijah Muhammad's death, scholars estimate there were 500,000 in his NOI. Of course by then, Malcolm X would be long dead, killed by an assassin's bullet after being ousted from the NOI.

During the power struggle, Elijah Muhammad was forced to flee Detroit and he eventually settled in Chicago, where he established the Nation of Islam popularly known as the Black Muslims.

In the early 1960s, Malcolm X's popularity as spokesman for Elijah Muhammad swelled. He was seen as the heir apparent to Elijah Muhammad's mantle and jealousies flared within the NOI. Trouble

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began when Malcolm X started talking about Elijah Muhammad's adultery and came to a head when he spoke publicly about President Kennedy's assassination. In March, 1964, Malcolm X was ousted from the NOI. On Feb. 21, 1965, Malcolm X was shot dead by a group of black men at the Audubon ballroom in Harlem.

During the 50 weeks between his ousting and murder, Malcolm X did what most NOI dissidents did — he led his followers toward traditional Islam.

But the NOI kept moving on. Minister Louis Farrakhan, who had been recruited by Malcolm X, took over his former mentor's duties. And the aging and increasingly enfeebled Elijah Muhammad still visited Detroit, where he had begun his ministry.

"In 1965, Elijah Muhammad came to Detroit and spoke at Cobo Hall," said James Brown, who later joined the NOI. "He talked about the harm that cigarettes, alcohol and eating pork did to the human body. I stopped smoking then."

The NOI was rocked again when Elijah Muhammad died in 1975. His son, Wallace Muhammad, then tried to lead the NOI toward traditional Islam. In doing that, he had to repudiate some of his father's teachings, and that turned off many of his followers. Most left the NOI with Wallace Muhammad, some left Islam altogether.

"The great bulk of the Muslims were able to accept the changes and embrace Wallace Muhammad's presentation of traditional Islam," Lee said. "Some didn't. One of my best friends, he works in a drug rehabilitation program in Detroit, says a number of the brothers he talks to in there say that they got on the streets following the revelations of '75 and '76. I'm sure that would replicate throughout the U.S."

During the 50 weeks between his ousting [from the NOI] and murder, Malcolm X did what most NOI dissidents did — he led his followers toward traditional Islam.

For many of those who held fast to Elijah Muhammad's message, Louis Farrakhan has led them into still another incarnation of the NOI. He is the most prominent and charismatic of those who claim the leadership that Elijah Muhammad once had.

"After Elijah Muhammad died I watched to see what happened," said Brown. "It faded away until Mr. Farrakhan started to rebuild. I've watched things come together."

But Farrakhan's followers are fewer than those who followed Elijah Muhammad. Some estimates put them at 50,000 nationally — a fraction of the half-million followers of his predecessor.

Still, the NOI grabs headlines with its sponsorship of the Million Man March and Farrakhan's recent tour of Middle Eastern countries. On the other hand, traditional Islam is quietly growing. El-Amin says that four or five people take the declaration of faith at his mosque each week.

"People are coming now not because of political reasons," said El-Amin. "They are joining because of their love of Allah and desire to serve the one God." TW

Preaching Jesus,

continued from page 6

who became Muslims as adults. I have sat spellbound under the allegorizing tutelage of a black Imam from Kansas, whose treatment of texts from Isaiah were worthy of Clement and Origen of Alexandria. I have been disarmed by the passion for justice of a community ally in Metro Detroit who is a Yemenite American who is also a world-music spin doctor. I am convinced of his vocation as a community developer.

These contacts have been crucial for putting a human face on my Muslim neighbor. They have been essential for me to recognize the resonances of truth that lie richly in the lived humanity of these Muslim friends. They have also kindled a deeper kind of burning within me to be able to share the depths of the gift of the indwelling Christ as I have come to know him and the intuitive vision he stirs in me of the possibilities of human community through the grace of human unity with God. It is something I cannot be indifferent to or treat as of relative value. It is a constant and unwavering certitude of my heart that Jesus is Lord.

There is a spiritual receptor in all human experience of whatever origins in faith that binds uniquely with the revealed love of God in Christ. Middle-class western Christianity must recover its confidence in that Christ, his salvation and its irreducible relevance to the entire spectrum of human existence.

I am intrigued by the idea of extending Niebuhr's image of Christ "in and yet over and against"culture into the inter-faith paradigm. There is something in every culture that requires his judgment, his corrective, in order that the human soul and community can grow true. In any case, the seeming humility of Christian repentance for being the source of all the world's ills, confuses things. It overstates itself to the point of dismissing the preeminence of Christ as if he is a mere function or conceit of their own cultural evolution. Because it is not true, it cannot foster authentic dialogue between Christianity and Islam.

Being true to ourselves evokes the kind of humility that will make us true seekers of peace and friendship. TW

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An Islamic theology based on justice and peace

by Marianne Arbogast

Around the time the *Witness* staff began to talk about an issue on Islam, a news brief appeared in a local paper, reporting that a Filipina teenage girl, working as a maid in the United Arab Emirates, had been sentenced to 100 cane lashings for killing her employer, who had raped her.

While I would like to believe I am free of the grosser stereotypes concerning Islam, I know that stories like this one have seeped into my subconscious, prejudicing my perceptions of the Islamic faith. I know that Christians are no less guilty of violence, vengefulness and repression of women — and have often defended them on religious grounds — but I also know that compassion, forgiveness and liberation are at the heart of the Gospel.

"People easily fall into the temptation of comparing the worst of Islam with the best of their own worldview," wrote Richard Deats in *Fellowship* magazine several years ago. Wanting to avoid that trap, I sought out some American Muslims who are working toward a theology and practice based on justice and peace.

Rabia Harris

Rabia Harris is the coordinator of the Muslim Peace Fellowship (MPF), an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

The daughter of a Jewish father and an Episcopalian mother, Harris was attracted to Islam by Muslims who "were so centered, so courteous, so morally acute, that I had no resistance." A member of a Sufi order (Sufism is a strain in Islam which emphasizes its spiritual core), she is pledged to a life of prayer and service, and speaks of "the center of reality" as "coming into touch with God."

Harris is committed to nonviolence, and contends that modern warfare cannot meet the strict standards for a just war laid down in Islamic teaching.

Rabia Harris

Through its literature and by its very existence, MFP challenges the notion that Islam condones violence.

"Every chapter of the *Qur'an* begins with the words, 'In the name of Allah, most beneficent, most merciful,'" Harris says. "Beneficence and mercy are those attributes that God takes most seriously. We are asked to say those words before we do anything.

> *"We believe that peace — Salaam — is one of the names of God."*
>
> *— Rabia Harris*

"We believe that peace — *Salaam* — is one of the names of God. It's a name we're supposed to invoke on one another all the time in the Muslim greeting. Our first responsibility is to bring peace into being by following the teaching that comes to us through the Prophet, who is described as having been sent as a mercy to the universes."

In its first two years, MPF has brought Bosnian students to the U.S. on scholarship, led a grassroots postcard campaign against the sanctions on Iraq, and worked with Muslims in U.S. prisons.

Zaineb Istrabadi

When the federal building in Oklahoma City was bombed, the telephone in Edward Said's office rang incessantly with calls from reporters wanting a "reaction" from Said — an Episcopalian of Palestinian heritage who has written extensively on justice for Palestinians.

"They didn't know who was responsible," says Zaineb Istrabadi, a member of MPF who works with Said at Columbia University. "They assumed it was Muslims or Arabs. It makes me angry and sad — as if someone were to stereotype Christianity based on the Spanish Inquisition."

Istrabadi was raised in Baghdad, but has lived in the U.S. for 26 years.

"It is very painful for me to hear Christians being critical of Islam without understanding it," she says. "Muslims have much more in common with Christians than differences."

Istrabadi deplores the situation in many countries that "claim to be implementing Islamic law.

"The law consists not only in punishment, but in mercy as well. The law says that, in times of famine, it is all right to

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Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

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steal from someone who has more than you. But in Somalia they were chopping off people's hands for stealing. [The authorities] were actually violating Islamic law."

Istrabadi sees attempts to restrict women's participation in public life as "a degeneration in the understanding of Islam.

"Men and women stand equally before God. We have no clergy as such; there is a direct relationship between men and women and God. What we have are *ulama* — people versed in theology and jurisprudence. Men and women can become theologians and jurists. In medieval times there were many women teaching in universities. Today, women are insisting on the rights given them by God, of which society has deprived them."

Nawal Amar

Nawal Amar, a professor of criminal justice at Kent State University who has also taught college courses on Islam, testifies to the unique obstacles faced by American Muslim women who insist on these rights.

Born in Beirut of a Lebanese mother and Egyptian father who both worked for the United Nations, Amar lived in Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and England before coming to the U.S. in 1982. After a period of religious questioning in her 20s, she returned to her Islamic heritage deeply convinced of its value for women.

"The *Qur'an* encourages the education of women," she says. "My mother received a masters degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1952. Islam was liberating for my own family.

"If you look at the history of Islam, during the Prophet's time and for the first few years after his death, women were highly liberated. The Prophet's wives worked. Only one had his child. Others worked in the political and economic arenas, and helped him in conversion. There were 200 women among those who created the *shari'a* [the body of law based on the Koran, the scriptural word of God, and the *hadith*, the sayings of the Prophet].

"Women are addressed in the *Qur'an*. Women are economic beings, allowed to inherit. Islam sees men and women as born from the same soul, brothers and sisters in belief."

Amar believes that a return to Islamic roots will uncover rich sources of liberation.

Nawal Amar

"Because a large number of Muslims are unaware of the original texts, *shari'a* is what gets to them," she says. "It has progressively been created to suit conservative ideologies."

But in her struggle for an Islamic "liberation theology," Amar feels as marginalized by non-Muslim feminists as she is by conservative American Muslims.

"I have paid a price for not bashing my own culture, for not saying Islam is a patriarchal religion. When I say, let's see what is liberating within the tradition, some feminists dismiss me completely."

Muslim women with a liberation perspective are "between a rock and a hard place," Amar says. "On the one hand are the Euro-centric feminists who want to unclaim us. On the other hand are conservative Muslim men who are highly integrated in this culture, who see us as dangerous because we are highly educated and in certain power positions. They know less about Islam than we do, but because we are attacking their power, they tell the American public we are not really Muslims."

She points to a peace and conflict studies program at a Christian college which has three Muslims on its board — all men.

"The idea of cultural diversity is in the American societal fabric, but it excludes women," she says.

Amar is currently embroiled in a controversy which she says is "symbolic of my entire life." A state college at which she taught Islam for several years has been offered $1 million to create an Islamic chair — on the condition that she not be included in the design or hiring process. She has been told that the benefactors — a group of conservative Muslim men — have made it clear that they expect the college to choose a Muslim man for the position, and are withholding half the money until a professor is appointed.

> *"If you look at the history of Islam, during the Prophet's time and for the first few years after his death, women were highly liberated."*
>
> *— Nawal Amar*

"The people on the faculty committee are my friends, but they are now afraid to talk to me," she says. "The chair of the department is a very liberal man who created the union at the university, but he

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is completely paralyzed. When I go to the feminists in that university, they say, we have nothing to do with that, an Islamic chair is not something we want.

"When you have an Islamic chair supported by a conservative agenda, Islam will be interpreted in a conservative manner. They're winning the fight because American liberals are willing to take the money and run."

Aminah McCloud

Aminah McCloud, an African-American professor of Islamic Studies at De Paul University in Chicago, was drawn to Islam as a teenager by its "sense of egalitarianism and sense of a personal relationship with God. There was not a favoring of one class or color or gender of people over another. There was also the sense that I am fully responsible for my actions — which forces a different kind of relationship with people."

While disavowing the brand of feminism that "has focused on the issues of the majority population, and has not prevented white women from being racist," McCloud is firmly committed to helping women "see themselves as human agents."

She recently took part in an International Women's Day in Paris sponsored by groups concerned about violence toward women in Iran.

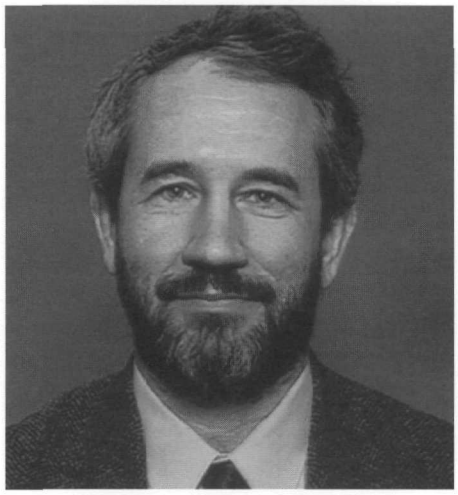
"They're literally executing women for not being dressed properly," she says, condemning the tyranny under "what is called an Islamic government." At the same time, she bristles at too quick a condemnation of the justice systems in Muslim countries.

"In the few countries that have Islamic justice systems, they function no better or no worse than the American justice system. I think it is inhumane to lock people up for decades, for whom there is no hope of rehabilitation."

For McCloud, discrimination against Muslims in the U.S. is a priority justice issue.

"There were hundreds of instances of assaults against Muslim women after the Oklahoma bombing, and a persistence in identifying the culprit as Muslim, even when it was known to be someone else. After the Iranian revolution, Muslim women were accosted and beaten.

"There is a refusal to acknowledge American Muslims as American citizens with the same rights and obligations that accrue to the rest of Americans. They have to live and raise their children in an atmosphere of attacks on all levels. In schools, teachers refuse to call them by their names, demand that they take off their scarves in classrooms, and read from textbooks which denigrate Islam. At work, they get docked for their holidays."



James Morris

"The word 'Islam' means 'surrender to peace,' the loss of our own will in surrender to the divine will."

— James Morris

In this atmosphere, she says, an issue like abortion rights is not a high priority.

While McCloud is distressed at "the singular focus on taking away the power of an individual agent to make decisions," she says that Muslim women tend to see the abortion rights controversy as "a Christian and Jewish issue."

"Islamic law says you should not sacrifice the mother for the sake of the unborn child. But because there is not a total moral breakdown, Muslim women don't see themselves as having to regulate their sex lives with abortion. When you're sitting in a group of Christian and Jewish women wishing to commit genocide on the Muslim community, abortion is far down on the list of concerns. To say their issue with abortion rights must become our issue is ludicrous."

McCloud stresses that customs which appear sexist may not always be experienced in that way.

"Gender separation can permit a kind of social interaction that doesn't normally happen in a mixed setting," she says. "It is an advantage for women to get together to pray or have discussion groups.

"African-American Muslim women have always been workers. For some, it is a welcome release to be married to a man who takes on the burden of responsibility.

"Islam has a complex history of very many cultures, so cultural-social hierarchies get embedded in the understanding of Islam. Some practitioners of Islam are repressive toward women. But the religion itself does not express that."

Jim Morris

Jim Morris, a Muslim professor of religion at Oberlin College and a translator of Islamic spiritual texts, was drawn to Islam as a college student by Persian mystical poetry in which he found "universality, spiritual emphasis and depth." He speaks of "the practice of the divine presence," quoting the Prophet's counsel to worship God "as though you can see

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Him, and even if you do not, to know that He sees you." To those who would like a better understanding of Islam, he recommends the poetry of Ibn Arabi, Attar and Rumi.

Morris stresses the importance of looking at the whole tradition, rather than simply its most vocal current spokespersons. Even in countries ruled by right-wing Islamic governments, he says, there is much diversity of thought.

"If you came into our society as an outsider, the first area in which you would see religion brought up is the religious right," he points out. "Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson are the exact analogues of Islamic religious movements in places like Saudi Arabia. That particular version doesn't represent one percent of the total history of Muslim culture."

The fact that it is the version most Westerners are familiar with is due in part to the predominance of well-to-do professionals among Muslim immigrants, Morris says.

"In the U.S., it is very difficult to meet Muslims from more traditional, less educated classes. You meet doctors, engineers, and business people, many of whom have caught on to a religious vision that is not unlike the right-wing mix of religion and politics in the U.S. They have little or no knowledge of the Islamic humanities, and tend to give the same kind of simplistic answers our own politicians are given to — which don't reflect historical points of view or the views of the underclass."

There is also a "natural immigrant conservatism" which seeks to preserve cultural identity, Morris says.

"Issues like women's position in society are tied into agrarian cultures, and it takes awhile to adjust to modern American society."

Morris speaks of "the inversion of the role of the media" in perpetuating misunderstandings about Islam.

"One of the impressions the media give is the military aftermath of colonialization. If you look closely, what you are seeing is not Islam, but injustices left over from the colonial period."

Also, he says, the media tend to focus on variants of Islam which are "exciting in their extremism.

"Take the highly politicized points of view of Louis Farrakhan. The vast majority of American Muslims, be they African-American or immigrant, not only strongly disagree with his basic understanding of Islam, but generally tend to disagree with the political positions with which he is affiliated."

Islam has historically developed "a variety of approaches to questions of justice and questions of violence," Morris says. "Some you might want to label pacifist. The word 'Islam' means 'surrender to peace,' the loss of our own will in surrender to the divine will."

"The critique of the angels"

According to a Qur'anic story quoted in a Muslim Peace Fellowship brochure, the angels objected to Allah's plan to create human beings, asking, "Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?" Allah replied: "I know what you know not."

"We are concerned that the critique of the angels should not be justified in us," the Peace Fellowship literature explains. It is a concern which many of us, Muslim or not, wholeheartedly share. TW

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Short Takes

Big Brother

Redwood City, Calif. — ...[I]n 1996, American law enforcement is watching you, and listening, using advanced technology to record what goes on in entire city blocks.

Since late December, the police in this bayside suburb of San Francisco have hidden sophisticated listening devices throughout a section of the city that has been plagued by gang shootings and random gunfire.

The listening system of the Redwood City Police Department is designed to detect gunfire, send a signal back to headquarters, then locate the shots within 10 yards of where they were fired.

As part of a Federal grant, a similar system may soon be installed in Washington or another major city.

In Baltimore, the police wired a 16-block area of downtown with enough video cameras to allow them to monitor every street, sidewalk and alley 24 hours a day. The system watches — and records — everything.

...[T]he Redwood City police say they could, with minor adjustments, focus their sensors on conversation inside houses instead of merely picking up high-decibel gunfire in public areas.

[But] the acoustic sensors are welcomed in the neighborhood where they have been installed.

"It's a great idea — long overdue," said Gregory Luis, a school bus driver.

The New York Times, 2/7/96

Bosnian Work Camps

The Fellowship of Reconciliation is organizing work camps in two Bosnian cities, Bihac and Banjaluka, this June 29 through July 16. Each work camp will be composed of 8-12 participants from the U.S. plus Bosnians from the two cities. The program is designed to give U.S. citizens first-hand, in-depth exposure to the people on several sides of the conflict and to provide some help in repairing the destruction caused by the war.

Cost is $2,000, including all expenses from New York to Bosnia and return. Contact FOR, Box 271, Nyack, N.Y. 10960.

Looking for a new standard of common worship

by Marge Christie

Anglican unity will find its liturgical expression not so much in uniform texts as in a common approach to eucharistic celebration and a structure which will ensure a balance of word, prayer and sacrament.

— consultation of Anglican liturgists in September of 1995

These words were music to the ears of the Diocese of Newark's Task Force on Prayer Book Revision, a group created to confront the philosophy and theology of the language of worship — and to devise ways in which to influence the "rationale and timetable" for prayer book revision now being developed by the national church's Standing Liturgical Commission. Only the General Convention, based on recommendations from the SLC, can revise the prayer book. But dioceses and individuals can try to influence and "nudge" the process along.

After much spirited discussion, our Newark task force has concluded that the primary theological issue in prayer book revision is whether the church's prayer book upholds a spirit of inclusivity — whether everything said and done in worship is inclusive of both God and all of God's people.

As preparation for its work, the task force circulated a questionnaire among all of the 130 congregations of the diocese. Its aim was to learn what was already happening throughout the diocese: who had liturgical committees; who was preparing worship booklets and how often; whether liturgies reflected racial diversity; whether prayers were sensitive to the needs of both youngsters and oldsters; how various seasons are handled; who prays the collect for purity; what hymnals are used; whether choir members are volunteer or paid; what Scripture translations are used; whether contemporary readings, drama, dance and non-organ music are employed on a regular basis; how are the Psalms prayed; whether special eucharistic prayers have been written; whether congregations kneel or stand for the prayers of consecration and for communion.

Once tabulated, the answers to that long list of questions will give vital information about practices already occurring throughout the diocese.

The task force is preparing a variety of experimental liturgies reflecting a theology of inclusiveness. More than 30 churches representing urban, suburban, rural, ethnic and blue collar congregations — with memberships ranging from 50 communicants to 500 — have volunteered to use these liturgies on six consecutive Sundays next fall. They have agreed to use the liturgies at all services in order to assure that the evaluations will reflect the opinions of a whole congregation. A summary of "user" responses will be prepared for the Standing Liturgical Commission and the 1997 General Convention.

We here in Newark believe that the philosophy of inclusiveness should be expanded to embrace more than just liturgical language — although the gender-exclusive language of the current prayer book adopted in 1979 is a clear problem. When the church gathers for worship, the language it uses should no longer deny the existence of half its members or limit God's voice and image, but neither should it overlook the ways in which members of different cultures find expression. Because they reflect the theology of modern times, contemporary readings can be an important and inspiring addition. Suggestions for such readings will be included along with the materials sent to all testing congregations, as will a listing of acceptable hymns, since the 1982 Hymnal also leaves a lot to be desired in the arena of inclusiveness.

A task force subcommittee is also looking at the feasibility of recommending that the next authorized book be in looseleaf form and/or on CD-ROM. While there are many parishioners who will continue to treasure the ability to hold their *Book of Common Prayer* in their hands, there are many others who covet the possibility of experiencing the broad range of liturgical language which can not be contained in a single book. Why not be able to "pull down" specific prayers for specific occasions? And print out an order of service tailored to the congregation and its requirements? In the 1979 prayer book there are two choices for the Lord's Prayer; our research has turned up at least a half dozen others, some of which have the potential of touching the worshipper's heart far more deeply than the familiar ones. A "book" which offers such a wide variety can enrich the worship life of the community in very special ways.

[**Ed. note:** A few other dioceses have expressed interest in joining the Newark liturgical experiment next fall and have agreed to find at least five congregations willing to participate. Others are needed, Christie says, noting that the broader the base, the more credible the results. Contact the Task Force on Prayer Book Revision at 24 Rector Street, Newark, NJ 07102, for materials and instructions.]

Marge Christie is chair of the Diocese of Newark's Task Force on Prayer Book Revision.

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Ramadan in Palestine

by Dick Doughty

[Ed. note: Dick Doughty, son of longtime Witness *subscriber Dee Doughty and an award-winning photographer, along with Mohammed El Aydi, is author of* Gaza: Legacy of Occupation—A Photographer's Journey (*Kumarian Press, West Hartford, Conn., 1995, $15.95). The following excerpts are taken from the preface and a chapter on the observance of Ramadan in the Gaza Strip.]*

It was over an Egyptian pizza in 1989 I learned of Canada Camp. I was a month into my first job in the Middle East, as a photojournalist for *Cairo Today* magazine. "It's the only Palestinian refugee camp in Egypt," explained my companion, a freelance reporter. "It's 5,000 people who were told they'd go back to the Gaza Strip after Camp David, but they were tricked. They're stuck on the Egyptian side of the border. Now there's an agreement to let back a few dozen families at a time over 10 or 12 years. This makes them the only Palestinians ever allowed back into Israeli-occupied territory as a community. Want to shoot it?"

Even before the injustice of Canada Camp's predicament sank in, I recall asking myself, "Who, given the choice, would move *into* the Gaza Strip?" Images flew by in my mind of teeming refugee camps, sewers like open sores, shouting men masked in checkered scarves, stones flying and Israeli soldiers shooting: *intifada* — the Palestinian uprising, literally, "shaking off," against Israeli occupation then two years old — the Gaza Strip of my hometown six o'clock news. "Sure," I said, curious.

The next day, eight bus hours northeast of Cairo, we found Canada Camp pounded under July's hammer sun. Our hosts plied us with endless glasses of tea. Talk here was of schools, of work and the lack of it, and of wanting — passionately — to go back to the Gaza Strip. "It's not home," one man said, "but it's Palestine."

We were shown The Calling Wall, or *el silik*, "the wire," as residents say, at the edge of Canada Camp. Here, on either side of the international border, stood people. Families have met here to yell across razor wire and no-man's-land since 1982. I never forgot the faces, nor the hands, reaching.

When I returned to the U.S. six months later, I found through research that the media picture of the Gaza Strip was indeed, at the time, much as I had thought over that Cairo pizza: a sinkhole of poverty, a wellspring of irrational hatred, a netherworld where life is either unimaginable or just pathetic.

Yet now, six years later, these Gazan lives have become central to the future of the entire region. One in eight of the world's 6.5 million Palestinians live in the Gaza Strip. Under the Palestinian Authority born of the 1993 Declaration of Principles, the Gaza Strip has become a proving ground for the uncertain future of Palestine.

In 1992 I returned to Canada Camp planning to portray Gazan life as experienced by the camp's few repatriated families. Arrangements came slowly. Trust preceded efficiency at every step. I had to work exclusively among Palestinians. Under the occupation — and particularly since the *intifada* — the Gaza Strip was in *halat harb*, a condition of war. Israeli contacts of any kind were unsafe for both myself and my hosts.

Life under Israeli occupation was exhausting and traumatic. Much of what I saw and heard and felt could not be photographed, sometimes for reasons of occupation, sometimes for reasons of Gazan culture. Increasingly I relied on written notes. Within weeks, I began to sense the seeds of a different story, one that would prove more telling of daily Gazan life: a personal account of what happens along the way to doing — or trying to do — a photojournalist's job. In this book I've distilled my experiences from among both Canada Camp residents and others from January to April 1993, months that now are being remembered as a particularly hard time, but a time, too, that is crucial to understand if one is to also begin understanding the immensely complex present.

From the day we met in 1992, Mohammed El Aydi's role as host, guide, cultural consultant and, more than anything, unflagging and buoyant friend, proved so determinative at every stage of this book that he has been, all along, a coauthor.

Ramadan

From minarets, watchers of the skies carried news to the Muslim world last night: the new moon gave way to the first brilliant trace of its waxing crescent. The ninth month of our year, 1,414 years since Prophet Mohammed made his

Bishops H. Coleman McGehee and R. Stewart Wood, of Michigan, met with President Yassar Arafat in Gaza in January following the consecration of Riah Abu el-Assal. McGehee commented that he was impressed by Arafat's commitment to the peace process.

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epochal flight from Mecca to Medina, has begun. Amidst the sullen decrepitude of the Egyptian border terminal, a tinselly garland tacked to a wall spells "*ramadan mabruk*," "blessed Ramadan." The mood is upbeat.

Ramadan is about purification. For the next 28 days there will be no food, drink, smoking, sex or unkind words from sunrise to sundown. As if to offset this deprivation, feasting and visiting is encouraged in the evening, making Ramadan the favorite month of the year for many. In the Gaza Strip, the hated night curfew has cut every Ramadan party short for five years. Among the young, angry and religious, the ideal of purification is often taken to also mean the liberation of stolen land. Furthermore, it is well known that the Muslim who falls fighting for honor or land while fasting achieves the highest of martyrs' ranks. Mohammed's explanation of this had been a warning: expect confrontations during Ramadan.

But today, nothing could feel more distant or implausible. Groves of low almond trees sprout frostings of delicate white flowers. In wide fields, men heft basketball-sized cabbages onto horse-drawn carts. The air fairly tingles. I crank down the window and breathe for the sheer pleasure of it. The army checkpoints at Muraj, Kfar Darom and Netzarim are open. Occupation weights lightly on this late February day, as if to tease at some unreal, bygone era.

At Mohammed's house in Khan Yunis Camp, I walk through the corrugated-metal pantry through the back door into a party. An enormous *iftar*, the fast-breaking dinner, is under way on the floor of the small television room: piles of tiny fried fish, rice, tomato sauce, hummus, cheese and fresh orange juice.

Mohammed rises to greet me, beaming, announcing, "Tonight we have three celebrations: one is Ramadan, two is your safe return from Egypt, and three — I have today received the news about my scholarship in Britain." Of several dozen overseas scholarships offered to Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the handful of British Council advanced degree awards are among the most prized. He'll start the one-year program in September, he says, directing me to the mat where four-year-old Sherif is poised to drape a sloppy hug around my neck. Ibtisam and the kids will stay behind, he adds. I tighten my face in concern.

"You know this is our experience as a people," he replies, dimming his enthusiasm into pragmatism. "Many men must leave their families for some time, to get work or training. It is our life here. It is not our choice, but it is the only way now to get a good education. Certainly there is nothing in Gaza."

In the morning, men on the street ask me if I am fasting, often with a twinkle in their eye. I'm trying it today, so yes, I say, and they smile. But by the time I meet Mohammed I feel dull. Ramadan days, especially in the first week, can be psychological black holes, grinding expanses of hours lived in low gear, back up to full speed only with the *athaan*, or call to prayer that begins the *iftar*.

Ramadan days, especially in the first week, can be psychological black holes, grinding expanses of hours lived in low gear, back up to full speed only with the athaan, *or call to prayer that begins the* iftar.

By the time Mohammed and I reach Tel el Sultan, Mohammed is shuffling, almost stumbling along one of Canada Camp's sandy streets, his eyes like slits. I may feel listless, but I'm not a two-pack-a-day smoker. "It's these first days that are so hard," Mohammed says, trying not to complain. I'm not sure we're in shape to pay visits. Who would be in shape to receive us?

Three *shabab* wave like dots from beneath an umbrella stuck into the open sand beyond the camp. Two long, warehouse-like buildings of an Israeli settlement rise in the distance. Walking in the sand, I'm suddenly much hungrier, yawning and craving a nap, right here in the soft, sun-warmed sand.

The guys under the umbrella are no better off. Talk is limp and aimless. One man walks me to another dune overlooking the Jewish settlers' road.

"Don't take your camera, " advises Mohammed. "Someone might see you and begin shooting. You never know."

I ask my escort if kids ever come to this place to — and I make a motion of throwing a stone.

"No, not here," he replies. "But sometimes when there is a strike, the Jewish bosses come down this road and the workers climb over this dune to meet them and go to work in Israel." General strikes of one or more days are called by Palestinian factions, sometimes separately, sometimes in coaltion, to commemorate dates in Palestinian history, and also to protest individual actions of the army and Civil Administration.

"Really? They break the strike by coming here?"

"Yes, it is officially forbidden by the *intifada*, but sometimes people understand a family needs money, needs the work so badly, the *shabab* pretend they don't see the workers coming here from all over Tel el Sultan and Rafah."

Only when we return to Khan Yunis, with the *athaan* just minutes away, does our energy pick up. We walk quickly now, weaving through the market packed shoulder-to-shoulder with men — they do the Ramadan shopping mostly — and dropping into a sweets shop where Mohammed buys a bag of something and I pick up a carton of candy bars for the kids. Ramadan is treat month. We reach the back door just as the call spreads over the camp like a magic wand, Cinderella's midnight in reverse. The streets go empty and 75,000 people in Khan Yunis sit down and eat at precisely the same minute, and in every other town and every other camp it is exactly the same.

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Daniel Berrigan

Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest, poet and longtime leader in the peace movement, will turn 75 on May 9, 1996.

In May of 1968, Berrigan and eight others burned draft files with homemade napalm in Catonsville, Md., to protest the war in Vietnam. After he was found guilty, he declined to turn himself in to serve his prison sentence, instead disappearing underground. For four months he eluded the FBI, writing against the war and surfacing occasionally to speak in public, before his eventual capture at the home of William Stringfellow on Block Island.

After 18 months at Danbury Federal Prison in Connecticut, Berrigan was released. Shortly afterwards, he joined others in a second draft board raid in Harrisburg, Penn.

Following the war, Berrigan increased his outcry against U.S. nuclear policy. He has been arrested and jailed repeatedly for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. In 1980 he initiated the first of a series of "plowshares" actions when he and seven friends entered the General Electric plant in King of Prussia, Penn., and hammered on missle nosecones. Berrigan has also spoken out against abortion, the death penalty, racism and oppression of women and gay people.

The author of some 40 volumes of poetry, journals, and biblical and political commentary, Berrigan has collaborated on books with Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh and child psychiatrist Robert Coles.

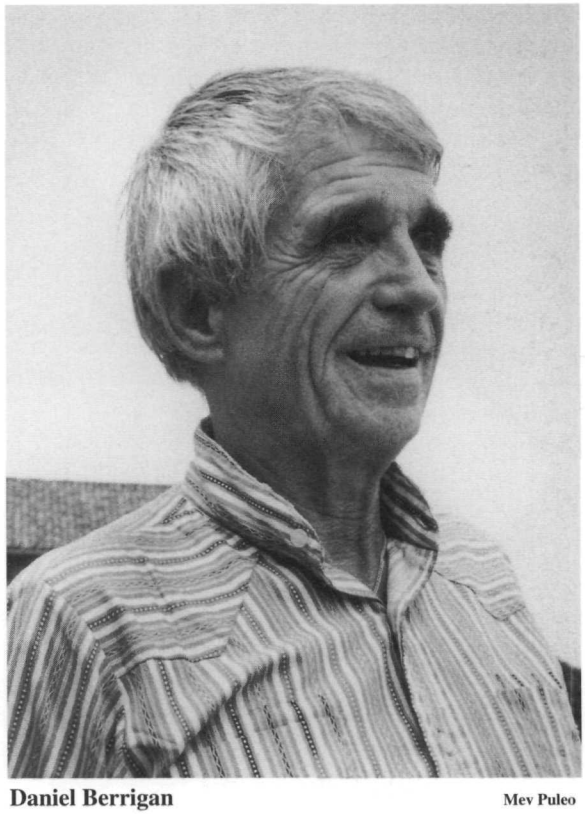
For many years he has worked with people dying of AIDS in a New York City hospice.

Celebrating 75 years

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

In 1972 I was a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. The antiwar and civil rights movements had already left their impression on my young politics. I was, to be sure, a seminarian, but expected to emerge some sort of community organizer with "a theological perspective." Frankly, much of what I believed was little more than sociology.

I recall at the time a course in the Passion of Christ from an eminent scholar. We were treated, among other historically critical data, to the latest in archeological evidence for the method of crucifixion, how the ankles would be turned and the nails driven, the excruciating mechanics of death. The accuracy was impeccable, but the passion was at a safe remove: past tense and lukewarm.



Daniel Berrigan Mev Puleo

As providence would have it (from my perspective like an intervention of the Word) Dan Berrigan just then walked out of Danbury Prison, where he'd done time in consequence of the 1968 Catonsville action, and into that Upper West Side academic fortress. With him came the scent of prison. The smells of the charnel house, of napalm and tiger cage tortures, were also in the wind. He stood before us and read the news with Jacques Ellul in one hand and the Revelation of John in the other. We recognized the passion. Present tense afire.

Never had I met any one who took The Book with such life and death seriousness. Who thought in its own idiom. Who read it from the inside out. Who expected to find therein the powers of this world demythologized and exposed; and who took recourse to the scriptures in hopes of imagining the real world. Who thereby resisted the former and bet his life on the latter.

I got knocked off my horse. A tidy worldview crumbled. I do not exaggerate: I was struck dumb and wandered the

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Bill Wylie-Kellermann is a Methodist pastor and author of *Seasons of Faith and Conscience* (Orbis, 1991). Photographer **Mev Puleo's** work is presented in *Apostle of Peace*, ed. John Dear (Orbis, 1996).

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seminary for a time more than a little lost. Berrigan noticed and one day called my name down a long basement hallway. Would I come up for Irish coffee? By and by: Did I pray? Or read the Bible for any reason but a paper assigned? Had I ever seen these books: Merton on the Desert Fathers or Dorothy Day on the Long Loneliness? What signposts in the landscape did I follow? I took up the questions, like signposts in the landscape, and made them my own.

I have seen him do this with others since, some virtually in the grip of despair or death. Don't die, he would say. Come along, we need you. Don't be a conscious integer in the empire's spiritual body count. He made it seem as if resurrection and discipleship were synonyms.

His most recent book, *Minor Prophets, Major Themes* bears consideration. To begin with, the book has a modern day context: Yet another war is in the air with its ever perfected mechanics of death: now cruise missiles, fuel air bombs, laser guided etceteras. Their shadows cross the page. Their victims cry out. Who would have thought that meditating on Haggai or Zechariah during the Persian Gulf War could preserve one's moral sanity? Yet that is precisely Berrigan's claim.

The minor prophets were almost exclusively word prophets, but Berrigan's commentary is shot through with present day deeds — at Pentagon and nuclear installations, in the streets and on the road of return with Salvadoran campesinos. Across the time, by grounded imagination and faith, the words and the deed, the text and community, illuminate one another.

Berrigan's work is stunning in its ability to evoke the humanity of the prophets. He reads the Word as their struggle with conscience, their burning tears, their prayer and choice. And in such wise, their humanity provokes our own. A conversation begins. Having heard them in their full humanness (with all the foibles and confusions, blind spots and shortfalls entailed) Berrigan claims a freedom to respond, to disagree and criticize, even to call these mentors to account before community and our God. Do they challenge our lives and hearts? Yes. But if we're truly in this thing together, then let us push back. Their sexism comes to mind, with Hosea a flaming exemplar. Has he reduced his wife Gomer to a theological metaphor? Berrigan names this nothing less than abuse, and turns things back on the prophet imagining a Book of Gomer which gives the silent nobody a voice. Is Hosea thereby written off and out? By no means. But in his exposure we are all made the better.

Berrigan asked: Did I pray? Or read the Bible for any reason but a paper assigned? What signposts in the landscape did I follow?

One matter is a repeated astonishment: that the prophets should be shown so univocal, so collectively relentless in their complaint against empire in all its forms. Does Berrigan inflate or inflict this on the prophets, imposing some politic of his own? Read the texts. They are uncompromising. Perhaps our amazement is evidence against us that the imperial spirit has deafened our ears to these voices for so long.

There is one thing which Berrigan does bring unapologetically to such reflections: the commitment to non-violence. It functions like the plumbline of Amos. He holds it out to us, out to the prophets. Its line goes straight to the heart of earth, straight to the heart of Christ. Of course, beside it empires are crooked and top heavy walls shown ready to collapse. But prophets too may be bent; even their ideas of God might suffer a twist.

Another way of saying this is that the gospels are never far from the page. The One who is the fullness of humanity, a prophet mighty in deed, steps from the wings now and again — not so much to speak as to show his wounds, to look the prophets in the eye and love them.

William Stringfellow used to inveigh against those who labeled Dan Berrigan a prophet (or a poet) in order to write him off, beyond the realm of ordinary people, ordinary responsibility, normative and human action. I suppose it is not unlike the tactic of confining the Word of God only to a sacred book — in order to banish it safely from our scene, as though it were not everywhere and always to be recognized in common history and our lives.

Dan Berrigan turns 75 this month. It's timely to celebrate that he *is*, in fact, both prophet and poet. His biblical theology and interpretation verify those vocations all the moreso. But let none of us thereby be off the hook of mere Christianity's demands, nor fear to recognize, and even partake, the bittersweet Word of God wherever it may be found. TW

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Western denial of a progressive, pivotal Islam must end

by Riffat Hassan

[*Riffat Hassan, Professor of Religious Studies and Humanities at the University of Louisville, is a leading Islamic feminist theologian. The following is excerpted from an address she gave at the 1995 U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing.*]

Since the 1970s there has been a growing interest in the West in Islam and Muslims. Much of this interest has been focused, however, on a few subjects such as "Islamic Revival," "Islamic Fundamentalism," "The Salman Rushdie Affair," and "Women in Islam," rather than on understanding the complexity and diversity of "the World of Islam." Not only the choice of subjects, but also the manner in which these subjects have generally been portrayed by Western media or popular literature, calls into question the motivation which underlies the selective Western interest in Islam.

Given the reservoir of negative images associated with Islam and Muslims in the collective unconscious of the West, it is hardly surprising that, since the demise of the Soviet Empire, "the World of Islam" is being seen as the new enemy which is perhaps even more incomprehensible and intractable than the last one. The routine portrayal of Islam as a religion spread by the sword and characterized by "Holy War," and of Muslims as barbarous and backward, frenzied and fanatic, volatile and violent, has led in recent times to an alarming increase in "Muslim-bashing" — verbal, physical as well as psychological — in a number of Western countries. In the midst of so much hatred and aversion toward Islam and Muslims in general, the outpouring of so much sympathy, in and by the West, toward Muslim women appears, at a surface level, to be an amazing contradiction. For are Muslim women also not the victims of Muslim-bashing?

Based on their life experience, most Muslim women who become human rights advocates or activists feel strongly that virtually all Muslim societies discriminate against women from cradle to grave. This leads many to become deeply alienated from Muslim culture. Muslim women often find much support and sympathy in the West so long as they are seen as rebels and deviants with the world of Islam. But many of them begin to realize, sooner or later, that while they have serious difficulties with Muslim culture, they are also not able, for many reasons, to identify with Western, secular culture.

Much attention has been focused, in the Western media and literature, on the sorry plight of Muslim women who are "poor and oppressed" in visible or tangible ways. Hardly any notice has been taken, however, of the profound tragedy and trauma suffered by the self-aware Muslim women of today who are struggling to maintain their religious identity and personal autonomy in the face of the intransigence of Muslim culture, on the one hand, and the imperialism of Western, secular culture, on the other.

Many Western analysts are still unable or unwilling to see Islam as a religion capable of being interpreted in a progressive way or a source of liberation to Muslim peoples.

While the West constantly bemoans what it refers to as the "rise of Islamic fundamentalism," it does not extend significant recognition or support to progressive Muslims who are far more representative of "mainstream" modern Islam than either the conservative Muslims on the right or the "secular" Muslims on the left. Even after the Iranian Revolution and the "Islamization" of an increasing number of Muslim societies, many Western analysts are still unable or unwilling to see Islam as a religion capable of being interpreted in a progressive way or a source of liberation to Muslim peoples. An even deeper problem is their refusal to understand the pivotal role of Islam in the lives of Muslims, the vast majority of whom — in a worldwide community estimated to be over one billion — are believers rather than unbelievers. Compelled by facts of modern history, some social scientists in the West are now beginning to concede that Islam is *one* of the factors which needs to be considered — along with political, economic, ethnic, social and other factors — in planning and development projects.

But Islam is not, in my judgment, simply *one* of the factors which impact on the lives of Muslims. It is *the matrix* in which all other factors are grounded. I do not believe that any viable model of self-actualization can be constructed in Muslim societies for women or men which is outside the framework of normative Islam deriving from Qur'anic teachings and exemplified in the life of the Prophet of Islam. Nor do I believe that any profoundly meaningful or constructive dialogue can take place between "the World of Islam" and "the West" without a proper recognition of what Islam means to millions of Muslims. TW

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The mystique of Islam

by Salih M. Harthi

Europe and the Mystique of Islam by Maxime Rodinson (translated from French by Roger Veinus), University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1991.

Maxime Rodinson is one of the most read French sociologists and students of Islam and the Middle East.

Europe and the Mystique of Islam is an attempt to explore the different images of Islam in the Western mind. The term "Image" Rodinson uses in his book stands for a system or constellation of ideas painting a perception about the other.

The term is somewhat similar to Michel Foucault's term *Episteme*. This Image or *Episteme* is not necessarily a collection of truths, rather it is mostly a system of facts and fantasies designed to serve an ideological purpose.

Europe and the Mystique of Islam is a social history of the images of Muslims and Arabs in the Western intellectual and political culture. What Rodinson tries in his book is to trace the different images of Islam and uncover the ever-changing underlying ideological agendas.

The book was published in French in 1980 on the wake of the Iranian revolution, when Paris was the exile capital of Ayatollah Khomaini before his return to Tehran. During that time the interest in Islam and the Middle East among the Europeans and Americans grew and a negative image of Islam had to be reinforced to mobilize public opinion to be in line with the political program of western powers:

There are many people who are afraid of Islam. It is terribly true that many frightening acts are committed in the name of Islam, but these are not worse than those committed in the name of Christianity, Judaism, freedom, and so on. Islamic people form a part of the world's underprivileged masses. They quite naturally want to improve their situation and will employ any means, right or wrong, to achieve that goal.

This is the fundamental rule of all human nature.

There have been several images of Islam in the European scholarly and popular mind since the 11th century. Each of them served a specific ideological goal. ... The most troubling is maintained by the colonial-imperial ideology. It has to be negative, so much so that any aggressive action by the Western powers is politically, economically and even morally justifiable.

The value of *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* stems from the method the author applies in his attempt to unveil the objective forces creating the image of the *them*, the Muslims or Arabs, in *our* Western mind.

Maxime Rodinson applies the wealth of structuralist and post-structuralist method of studying social history. The reader can discover easily the proximity of this work to Michel Foucault's ironic criticism of the social history of western thought and society.

There have been several images of Islam in the European scholarly and popular mind since the 11th century. Each of them served a specific ideological goal.

The first image was purely theological, intended to unite the Christian ideology through a common enemy, Islam.

The second most significant image was created after the fall of Toledo in Spain when Western scholars discovered the wealth of philosophical and scientific work of the Arabs in Muslim Spain. This image was the most positive one among all, in the mind of European scholars. However, the over-exaggeration of Arab poetry, palaces, gold and male promiscuity was intended to appeal to the "staid Westerner, disturbed by his own sexuality and beset by unconscious sado-masochist tendencies."

The third most troubling image is the one that is still dominant today, constructed and maintained by the colonial-imperial ideology. It is the image that has to be negative, so much so that any aggressive action by the Western powers is politically, economically and even morally justifiable.

Europe and the Mystique of Islam is one of the most objective and informative books available in English today. TW

book review

Salih M. Harthi is a psychologist who supervises the developmental disabilities program at the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services in Dearborn, Mich.

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Alysha Swaim Aziz — Tana Moore

"If my daughter becomes an observing Muslim, I will support that. I will support whatever in Islam is best and most liberating to her."
— Lawrence Swaim

Moving in two worlds

by Lawrence Swaim

There is a keen and luminous gentleness about her, this child of two worlds. Her nurturing instincts are so intense they are almost frightening: her consuming interest in animals (she insists that they understand her when she speaks to them), the displaced, the lost. There is an emotional resonance about her that is almost too precocious for a child of six.

At the supermarket we see a little boy walking fast, crying to himself. "He's old enough to take care of himself," I insist, hurrying to complete my shopping.

My daughter will have none of it. "We have to find out," she says firmly, and there is no dissuading her.

We hunt the boy down, and find that he is indeed lost.

"I was *concerned,*" Alysha says later, when the lost boy is reunited with his grandmother. She says it with a certain emphasis, her chin jutting forward.

Alysha Swaim Aziz: My beautiful daughter, child of two worlds, two cultures, two faiths.

Her mother is a Bengali-speaking Muslim woman from Bangladesh. Divorced, with joint custody, we struggle to parent this child, who so mysteriously embodies both our differences and our similarities, our loves and antagonisms, our joint deficits and our still-joined dreams.

We struggle to keep our daughter fluent in Bengali, the language of the people of Bangladesh and West Bengal. (The language of Rabindranath Tagore and the films of Sajijit Ray, the language of dreamers and poets, a Sanskrit-based language from a civilization where the writer is the quintessential culture hero.)

Sartaz Aziz, her mother, is teaching her to pray in Arabic.

Sometimes it seems like Alysha is on a perpetual quest for a magic door back to some lost Eden, some unbroken and perfect world, before all separations, marital and cultural.

At a service for World AIDS Day, a Catholic priest prays for those with AIDS. From somewhere I hear another voice, strange yet familiar. I glance at my daughter, who sits next to me. To my astonishment, she is praying Muslim-style, her small hands cupped in front of her. While we pray in English, she says *sura* after *sura* in pure and mellifluous Arabic, her head bowed reverently.

Outside the church, she murmurs, "Someday I'll discover a medicine that will cure sick people, like Babu." (Her mother's sister does research on genetic codes at Harvard.)

If Alysha decides to become a practicing Muslim, I will have one daughter who is a Jew, the other a Muslim. (My first wife was a Jew, and my adult daughter chose to become an observing Jew.)

How could this happen to a nice Episcopalian boy? ("I believe in ecumenism," says a friend, "but this is ridiculous!")

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Lawrence Swaim is an author teaching at Pacific Union College in Angwin, Calif. Artist **Tana Moore** lives in Southfield, Mich.

Alysha's mother Sartaz Aziz, descends from the Zamindar families, traditional land-owning aristocrats, who claim descent from Sir Roger Dowla and the Prophet Muhammad. Aziz was raised first in a castle, then in a compound in the Dhanmondi neighborhood of Dacca, surrounded by servants; each of her 12 brothers and sisters had their own private drivers, attendants, servants.

If Alysha ever wanted to live in Bangladesh, she would (as a *Baygum*, or princess) inherit this kind of privilege. She would also be in a position to do enormous good—for the poor, for those without education or health care, for women.

I am not a Muslim myself, and I am certainly aware of the dark side of Islam. But I do not believe that Christians have ever been able to get it right, either. Throughout the centuries the church taught hatred of Jews, of women, of Muslims, of the mentally ill; today the majority of churches still teach hatred of gays and lesbians. The real religion of America is capitalism, and the real object of worship on Sunday morning is not God, but a self-congratulatory middle-class respectability.

Still I am, for better or worse, a professing Christian. With a theology 10 times more liberal than most, but a Christian nonetheless. (The Jesus story is just too compelling, my need for a friend and brother too great.) I love the liturgy, the literature, and the culture of Anglicanism.

But where does that leave me and my daughter?

I read to her from C.S. Lewis' Narnia books, and hear distant echoes of the Crusades: I am disturbed by the Muslim-sounding names of those who would take away the freedom of Narnia, the scimitars they wear, their Arabic-looking dress. Alysha hears only the magic of Aslan, the Lion from beyond the sea, who gives such power to simple English children that they can defeat empires.

What will this rare and beautiful child say to Christians who ask her to believe that all Muslims go to hell?

What will she say to those Muslims who would ask her to believe that women are less than men?

This is the new California, mecca for immigrants, in which the inheritors of a thousand years of conflict struggle to imagine a better world, based on the best hopes of countless contending cultures.

We have no choice. We have to do it.

Otherwise our children will perish, victims of the blind hatred of the Old World and the blind addictive greed of the New.

What I really want, of course, is a daughter who could kneel beside me in the pew of some comfortably liberal Episcopalian church, and read along with me the sweet words of *The Book of Common Prayer* — that would be heaven, I sometimes think.

But there is no heaven on this earth, no Kingdom but what I am willing to help construct. In the end, what is good for my daughter is not what I want, but what she needs. If I witness my Christianity to my daughter, it will come not from what I say, but what I do—from what kind of father I am.

Finally, it will be what my daughter herself finds most important that I will find a way to love and support. If she becomes an observing Muslim, I will support that. I will support whatever in Islam is best and most liberating to her, not in spite of my Christianity, but because of it.

It is what I think Jesus would want me to do, and what I think he would do himself.

That is a mystery, but I believe it is a mystery I must embody, starting here, starting now: here in this new world, this cutting edge of California, this last best dream of America. TW

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Hospitals: quality, access and spirit

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Is it ever okay to lie?

YOUR APRIL ISSUE WAS VERY TIMELY for us in Christian Peacemaker Teams. On several occasions in the last year persons in Hebron (Palestine) and Haiti have asked what to do when local persons living under military rule (oppression) have asked us to withhold information or to lie so that they will not get into trouble. A taxi driver who had taken us to a location where we cut down a fence that settlers had put around someone's land asked us to tell soldiers, if stopped, that he had been driving us around Hebron instead.

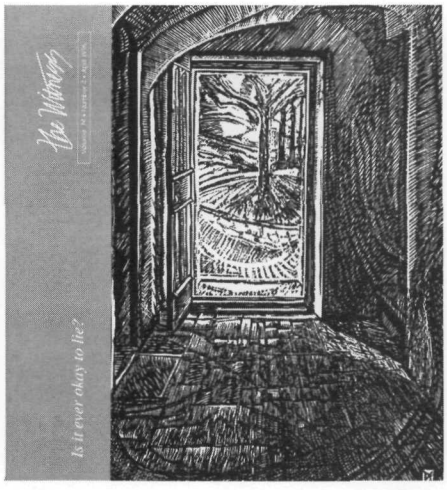
In Israel, when we go through airport security, we must figure out evasive answers in order to protect our Palestinian co-workers. We speak of being tourists going to the holy places and we are evasive about our final destination. Normally we give temporary neutral addresses in Jerusalem instead of our destination. It is widely understood that Israeli airport security has much more to do with collecting information on activist Palestinians and opposition Jews than on potential bombers.

Soldiers often ask "Why are you here?" to which we gladly reply that we are Christian Peacemakers. However if we are *en route* to another city we are careful of what we say at checkpoints.

Sometimes it is inappropriate to give any information at times of arrest. Instead of our names we may speak of Samson, the great and strong Old Testament character or another honored Biblical personality.

We believe that it is always best to tell the truth in the spirit of being "wise as serpents and gentle as doves." Our CPT workers generally do not come from institutionalized oppression and for many of us the withholding of truth is a disconcerting experience.

The work of nonviolence is the work of truth telling from the point of view of the bottom. Because our education and background taught us so little about life at the bottom, in oppression, we have to develop an



ethic in the trenches.

Thank you for helping us along the way.

Gene Stoltzfus
Christian Peacemaker Teams
Chicago, IL

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES — editorial was superb!

Michael Dwinell
Cape Elizabeth, ME

In the Church's Intere$t

THIS IS ONE HELL OF AN ISSUE. Sally Bucklee summarized my feelings about the magazine precisely when she said she was not interested in the subject matter some months, but always found herself inevitably sucked in by the quality of writing and thought. It's true. I haven't heard anybody intelligently dispute the morality of usury since I was in Sunday School with underpants which heralded the days of the week.

I loved Jeanie's interview with Chuck Matthei. You should be ashamed when you forget what a nifty job you have. You get to rub shoulders with human beings of authentic integrity... sometimes damn if I forget they EXIST!

Dierdre Luzwick
Cambridge, WI

Righter trial

I AM WRITING WITH REGARDS TO Julie Wortman's article on the Righter trial [4/96]. The only certifiable "heretics" in the whole affair would be the presenters themselves who seem to be insisting on a rarified version of Donatism.

Donatism was an aberration among some of the members of the early Church which held that priests had to be "sinless." The entire idea contradicts Christ's openness.

I quite appreciate that the presenters were actually reacting to the openness of the particular homosexual candidates. After all, as long as homosexuals acted ashamed by remaining silent most did not indicate a problem with the situation.

The anomaly, of course, is that what the Church has been doing is prizing dishonesty over honesty when it comes to sexuality. And especially so with regards to homosexuality.

It seems to me that Mr. Tennis of Delaware may have unwittingly half-elucidated the question when he tried to confine it to homosexual priests who "are living in committed relationships." I would suspect that the phrasing Mr. Tennis chose was an indication that he realized that to go beyond those in committed relationships would be unthinkable. The problem is that the Resolution ("practicing homosexual") upon which the trial is based does "go beyond" those of us in committed relationships.

What amuses me most comes at a point in the article where the "prosecutor" (a Mr. Blakingship) alludes that the case is about the "doctrine of marriage."

This does get to the core of the presenters' dilemma. They are searching for a doctrine upon which to hang their case and they simply shot from the hip. The "doctrinal question" is not ordination.

"Marriage" is the gay question! Ordination is the women's question just as baptism was the Blacks' question two centuries ago.

I suspect that the actual reason the presenters chose to attack at the point of ordination was that it would be easier to win an argument with people who are cowed into silence.

However, such a situation also reveals the fragility of the presenters' basic premise. If the traditionalists' concept of "Christian marriage" cannot stand the light which self-respecting homosexuals might subject it to, then it would seem to be a weak institution. Whatever the case, ordination would be apples

to marriage's oranges. Personally I feel quite comfortable suggesting that Christian marriage ends up looking like idolatry.

I came close to sympathy with Mr. Blakingship when he says that "you have to take each one of those situations and consider what the nature of the witness was and make a judgement — and that essentially is a diocesan problem and not a national canon." He couldn't have phrased Mr. Righter's case better.

I would quibble with Mr. Blakingship's reply as to whether the presiding bishop would have been considered a heretic for signing one of those intermittent Conscience Statements. Blakingship's "Perhaps the bishops should have done something about the dissenting opinions," comes across as an especially Episcopalian peculiarity when one recalls that it was the traditionalists who invented that device at the time of the votes on the new prayer book. If the traditionalists did not want the horses out of the barn, they should not have opened the gate.

John Kavanaugh
Detroit, MI

BISHOP RIGHTER AND I have been fellow servants of Christ in the House of Bishops since he entered the House 24 years ago. This trial and all the publicity calling him a "heretic" because of his ordination of Barry Stopfel as deacon moves me to say, "I would rather be a Righter than a Wronger!"

Ned Cole
Syracuse, NY

Come Spirit Come

I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED *THE WITNESS,* so you can imagine how thrilled I was to receive one [6/95] that brought back alive the sweet memories of our visit to South Africa [for the Conference on Afro-Anglicanism].

I quite appreciate your friendship and care; that you even thought of making a reference to my humble contribution on Faith Commitment and Christian Attitude to Life in the Community in *The Witness* editorial!

We are truly grateful for your interest in our church. Uganda is both rich and poor at the same time. Our country has resources and potential to grow out of rampant poverty. The people have energy and capacity to progress, but since Idi Amin's reign of terror, Ugandans have lived under pressure and struggle for survival. The church has to be a role model. The challenge is that church people have no special schools for their children, market place or work — they share in common struggle with the rest, but watchfully.

Grace N. Ndyabahika
Kampala, Uganda

Correction

The Witness mistakenly reported that Dan Berrigan was involved in the 1971 Harrisburg trial.

Witness praise

IT IS SATURDAY and not having time all winter, I chose today to clean out my large linen closet which contains nary a pillow case nor a dinner napkin. It is stacked with copies of *The Catholic Worker, Peace Work, National Catholic Review,* etc. Now, about two hours ago, while I was going through a stack of *C.W.s,* I came across a most marvelous magazine! A copy of *The Witness*, Political Prisoners [1-2/95]. The morning is gone. I have read every line in this issue and after mailing this, I shall re-read every line again.

Where this came from I have no idea or how long it has been buried in the pile. I do know that I must subscribe immediately.

Bill McYarry
Albany, NY

THE CONFERENCE ON THE Legacy of Stringfellow was a *great* day and a half. Thank you for the role *The Witness* played in helping to bring it about. It was a great complement to my studies at Sewanee! Tom Warne and I distributed 50 copies of *The Witness* when we returned from the Conference and already some of the articles have cropped up in class conversation. I look forward to seeing Bill and Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann again. They have helped open a new world of inquiry, theology, faithfulness and tension to me through their work at *The Witness* and on William Stringfellow.

Thomas R. Cook
Sewanee, TN

Classifieds

Integrity National Convention

Integrity, Inc., the national lesbian and gay ministry of the Episcopal Church, will hold its national convention in New York City on June 27-29, 1996. The convention will feature well-known speakers who will address such topics as lesbian/feminist spirituality, multiculturalism, liberation theology, evangelism, gay parenting and relationships. There also will be workshops on HIV/AIDS and bereavement. A concluding banquet with entertainment will cap the event.
For registration and further convention information, call (212)989-8173.

Vocations

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

Marketing Director

The Other Side, a Christian magazine onpeace and justice issues, is seeking a full-time marketing director to strategize outreach to new and current subscribers, conceptualize and produce creative marketing materials, and analyze results. Experience in marketing and/or magazine publishing desirable. Excellent benefits. Applications being accepted immediately. Contact Hiring Team, The Other Side, 300 W. Apsley Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144 (215-849-2178).

Classifieds

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

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Since 1917

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This month Vital Signs *explores the Lutheran-Episcopal Concordat.*

Cover: Laundry worker, Bellevue Hospital in N.Y.C. by George Cohen/Impact Visuals.
Backcover: Grace Cottage Hospital in Vermont photographed by Joan Seidel of Scarborough, Maine.

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Learning to sit with pain

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

A woman in a hospital in considerable pain told us she felt there were two kinds of people who came into her room. She said she noticed one kind of person could hardly sit down next to her, and when they did, 'they couldn't sit still at all. They would fluff my hair or put lipstick on me, or thumb through magazines. They would go to the window and open it if it was closed or close it if it was open. But they couldn't stay long with my pain.' She said they had no room in their hearts for her pain because they had no room for their own. 'But,' she said, 'there were others who could just come in and sit down with me. And if my pain was so intense or I was too fidgety and couldn't stand to be touched, they would just sit quietly next to me. They didn't need to take my pain away and they didn't make me feel that I needed to be different when I was in pain. They had room for my pain because they had room for their own.'

—Stephen Levine,
Healing into Life and Death

I'd like to be someone who can sit comfortably in a hospital room facing death and its lesser invasions with down home equanimity.

In truth, I am really ambivalent about hospitals. After avoiding them most of my life, I visited the emergency room twice during 1995 holding a sobbing five-year-old whose pain ran through me like fire.

The hospital officials who gauged her injuries — a broken arm once, then a lacerated wrist — put her in line for care. As I sang to my daughter Lucy, I prayed. I felt utterly dependent upon and grateful to the doctors and attendants who mended her wounds, told her she was brave and handed her an artificially flavored and colored popsicle when it was over.

Of course, like most others, I've also felt uneasy in hospitals, worrying about the degree to which I surrender to the opinions of doctors because medicine is so unfamiliar to me. Or feeling rude when I question their judgment. Like an animal caught in a trap, I vacillate internally between yielding and rebelling, unsure whether either or both will release me.

Lucy's aftercare for her broken arm involved repeated visits to the hospital's clinic. Twice they decided to put on a new cast, although it was arguable that she had healed. They said her anxiety concerned them. It meant little to them when I explained that her attitude was partly formed by how afraid she was of the buzz-saw they used to remove the cast. (When I had mentioned Lucy's fear to the nurse, she had held it against her own hand saying, "See it won't cut you, at worst if you hold it in one spot it will burn you." In Lucy's eyes I saw horror — loud *and* burning.)

Six weeks later, it seemed like a huge act of resistance to decide on our own that her cast should be removed. Lucy sat in her older sister's lap while her Dad read to her and I gently soaked her cast in warm water and unwrapped it.

Now, when she does cartwheels and climbs signposts, I give thanks.

In both hospital encounters, we, of course, had to withstand the bureaucracy — we got fed into computers, identified by number, evaluated by our insurance and our care was coded there. It's in this anonymous process, presumably, that people's medical treatments can get denied or confused, that a spirit of negligence can take hold.

WomenWise, a women's health collective publication, reports that, "In 1991 a Harvard University study estimated that 86,000 people a year die in U.S. hospitals from negligence. The government's Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently estimated that 80,000 people die from nosocomial (hospital-caused) infections each year. Studies suggest that at least half of these are preventable."

And, of course, there are economic questions — who has access to hospitals? How is it paid for? What kind of care does it entitle one to? And how does the movement of dollars nationwide influence the hospitals' approach to care?

Finally, each of these tensions flow into an amalgam of powers and principalities that can induce ill health and perpetuate it. Hospitals are temples of sorts, rife with idols, initiation rites and the deepest of prayers.

I hope this issue may lead toward developing some equanimity in the face of these forces. The issue doesn't attempt to offer a definitive evaluation of the state of health care in the U.S., nor about health insurance policy debates, nor about the professionalization and commercialization of medicine, nor does it address the vitality of alternative health care.

The issue simply attempts to serve as a traveller's guide through a foreign yet familiar temple in which birth can be facilitated, death abated or endured. A place where pain is a constant. While there, it is worth noting who is there too, the patients and staff, the advocates and the ones who pray. Perhaps in their company we can learn to sit still with other people's pain, because we have made room for our own. TW

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

editor's note

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In the waiting room

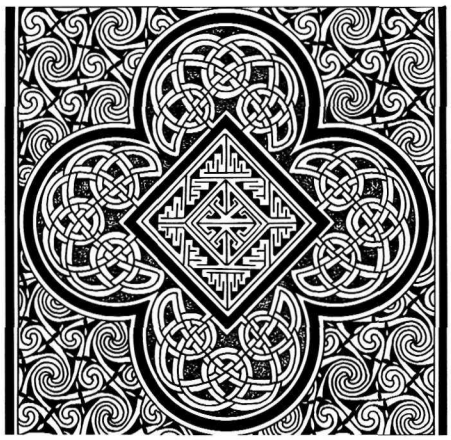
by Mary Alice Bird

Late February 16, 1993, we received one of those phone calls all parents dread. Two thousand miles away, our youngest daughter and her two-month-old son had been hit by a car. Sarah suffered a concussion, but Mason was undergoing his second brain surgery and it was doubtful he would live through the night. By early morning we were on a plane, but it wasn't until we reached Austin, Texas, late that day that we learned Mason was still alive.

All the way to Texas, we silently prayed, but I confess those prayers were ambiguous. We knew if Mason lived, he would be severely brain damaged. In our confusion, we didn't know whether to pray for his life or his death. As a mother, anguishing for my own child, my heart said to pray for life. A powerful image from Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* kept coming back to me — the bastard sister unclothing herself to lie in bed and cradle her dying sister, while the two legitimate sisters stand by paralyzed by fear.

When we arrived at the hospital, Mason was hanging onto life. He had been baptized during the night, while Sarah was still unconscious. Knowing this brought both reassurance and despair. Sarah's room, the surrounding hall, and the waiting room were filled with people. I lay beside my daughter but I did not bare my soul or touch hers.

We were all praying, but to ourselves, until God sent an "angel," a co-worker of Mason's father. This man kept pacing the hall. He asked several times if we were praying and we would all say "Yes." Finally he blurted out, "Are you praying *together*?" It was the simplest and most profound of questions. For without communion, how could we hope to experience the healing power of the Holy Spirit?



Celtic never-ending pattern.

This friend's simple question turned despair towards healing, not just for us and Mason, but I believe for several other families who joined the circle of prayer that evolved over the next three weeks while Mason remained in intensive care. For when we answered, "No," he brought us into a circle, joined our hands and helped us to express our fears and pains and ask for help.

Despair was always in that room. But for me, and I believe for all those who joined the prayer circle, grace was also present.

That circle grew. Initially, it was the few people who were at the hospital that day. Then, as the word spread, others would arrange their work schedule to join us for noon prayers. Gradually the circle encompassed other parents who shared the intimacy of the intensive unit waiting room, the place we all retreated to when we needed respite from the intensity of sitting with children hovering between life and death, attached to respirators, heart machines, etc.

Despair was always in that room. But for me, and I believe for all those who joined the prayer circle, grace was also present.

For example, I know that night after night as I sat with Mason, I was surrounded by a holy circle of calm but that just outside that circle, I could palpably feel the demons of death lurking — and I watched as that circle allowed an almost catatonic father of a severely abused child to begin to share his pain and love.

As one who grew up on liturgical prayer, that circle freed me from theology and rhetoric and allowed me to pray from my most basic need — to ask that Mason live, to ask that God keep me from despair. Mason did live, and in our family we call him the "miracle boy," but the miracle is not his physical but his spiritual life.

When Sarah was still recuperating, a parent of a severely brain-damaged child visited her. He shared that his child had profoundly made him realize that life is not about "cognition" but "spirit." I have meditated on that simple statement often.

In a world where we strain to identify our individual talents, often deluding ourselves that we do so for the greater glory of God, Mason is a reminder that Christ is everywhere, in all life. He is a reminder that Christ didn't die for a cause or a theology, but so that we might have life abundantly.

In the midst of the suffering and death of this world, if we choose the circle of prayer, then indeed communion in love can still the demons and bring that peace which passeth all understanding. TW

Mary Alice Bird is a former Episcopal Church Publishing Company board member living in Spruce Head, ME.

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New Witness *Poetry Editor:*

Leslie Winfield Williams

Leslie Winfield Williams is a writer and teacher in West Texas. She earned a Ph.D. in literature at the University of Houston in 1994, and has studied theology and church history at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Tex. In 1993, her poetry won *Radix* magazine's national contest, judged by Luci Shaw, Madeleine L'Engle, Walt Hearn, and Jean Janzen. Her work has been accepted by and published in a wide variety of periodicals, including *The Christian Century*, *St. Luke's Journal of Theology*, *Presbyterian Record, RiverSedge*, and the *Trinity Review.* Her book, *Night Wrestling*, is forthcoming from Word Publishing early in 1997.

Her husband, Stockton Williams, is rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Midland, Tex., and they have two children, Jase, 9, and Caroline, 6.

Elevator

by William G. Feeler

She rides straight up the wind
From the plane of the walking dead
To the plane of the fully living —
Sixth floor, south wing, nothing by mouth.
Here her sister sleeps in her tent
Seeing with the new eyes of near-dying,
Even in sleep. Last supper — no host,
No blood — drips into her arm soundlessly
As she sleeps ever deeper in the word of love.

As she steps into eternity's anteroom,
Crowded with guests patiently checking
Schedules, living each breath till departure,
She spies her sister at the end of the hall,
Bed nestled into the corner, one foot pushed
Through the bars of the bed, toes turning blue
From loss of communication. She sees
The eyes of recognition, the faint smile
Through the gurgle of the yellow tube.

Though the air smells of mucous, here is life
Lived in the face of death. Breaths span
Ever greater arches of time till the bridge
Evaporates into mist. untwinned
After seventy years and nine months,
She wonders how to return to the land
Of the entwining dead. *untwinned.*

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Competing for paying patients

by Michael Betzold

The walls are tumbling down in America's citadels of medicine. Not long ago, most hospitals were bulwarks against change. Now, spurred by intense economic competition, hospitals are reaching out, gobbling up or bailing out. They're even calling patients "customers" and paying close attention to what they say.

Business, not ethics, increasingly defines what hospitals are about. Yet, as business demands cost cutting, hospitals are finding involvement is usually cheaper than arrogance.

Consolidation, shorter hospital stays and more outpatient clinics save money. Outreach is cheaper than using emergency rooms for primary care. Prevention is less costly than disease intervention. And paying attention to patients, improving quality of services and involving employees makes good business sense.

For the poor, the picture is mixed. More people are uninsured. Nearly one in five Americans under age 65 lack health insurance. Poor people tend to use hospital emergency rooms for primary care services and to delay treatment until conditions are acute, two things that add considerably to health care costs.

Many large public hospitals are closing. More hospitals are becoming for-profit and some close their doors to the uninsured. But many hospitals, especially urban non-profits, are incurring greater uncompensated costs. Hospitals absorbed $28 billion nationally in unpaid fees in 1994, according to the American Hospital Association.

Michael Betzold is a striking *Detroit Free Press* reporter.

To justify their tax status, non-profit hospitals must demonstrate they are doing work that benefits the community they serve. Uncompensated care is part of that. And even for-profit hospitals like the image of being community helpers.

"When for-profits were below a 10 percent market share, they were not significant, and they could act irresponsibly," said Gary Gunderson, director of operations of the Interfaith Health Program at the Carter Center in Atlanta. "As they grow, they get on the political screen and they have to accept some social consequences for their size."

Now, more than 70 percent of hospitals have long-term plans for improving the health of their communities. Not all are effective, and some are more for show than for substance. The most successful are those which abandon traditional concepts of dispensing medicine to address real needs in areas they serve.

Business, not ethics, increasingly defines what hospitals are about. Yet, hospitals are finding involvement is usually cheaper than arrogance.

"We don't figure out what the community needs, we ask the people in the community," says Brenita Crawford, chief operating officer of Mercy Hospital in Detroit. "We once treated symptoms; now we are repairing causes."

Knowing many women need prenatal care, Mercy pays a dollar for each woman referred from beauty parlors.

Recently, the hospital turned a former topless bar into a renal dialysis outpatient clinic.

A few hospitals even tithe. At Memorial Hospital of South Bend, in Ind., 10 percent of the hospital's net revenue is used to award grants to outreach projects that address unmet needs among a medically underserved population.

Managed care has spurred a quest to cut down on the expensive use of emergency rooms for primary care.

"We are seeing a lot of HMO-type plans being adopted by states to cover the poor," said David Berg, marketing director for Catholic Healthcare West, a northern California health system. It's part of cost-containment measures to reduce hospital visits. "The nice thing about managed-care coverage for people who are poor is that there is more emphasis on prevention."

Managed care also means shorter hospital stays and more satellite clinics for outpatient procedures. Outpatient visits have doubled since 1984. Clinics are cheaper and more efficient and part of a growing emphasis on preventive and primary care.

Rapidly, hospitals are losing old identities and merging into huge health networks. These networks compete to enroll independent physicians, especially in outlying parts of urban areas. Even hospitals that remain independent are launching joint ventures to provide hospice programs, home health care, psychiatric and rehabilitation services.

A record 735 hospitals were involved in mergers in 1995. The deals included a $5.6 billion acquisition of Healthtrust, a 115-hospital chain, by Columbia-HCA Healthcare Corp., a for-profit giant based in Nashville. By year's end Columbia owned 335 hospitals with $17 billion in assets. Religious hospitals were also consolidating, with a deal pending to unite

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Sisters of Charity Health Care Systems, Catholic Health Care Corp., and Franciscan Health System.

Some fear hospitals will become insensitive empires, but others believe patients can benefit from mergers. Consolidation reduces overhead costs through economies of scale so that staff doesn't have to be cut. "Just because it's big doesn't necessarily mean that it is out of touch with the needs of the poor," Berg says. His health system is involved with the Bakersfield basketball league, housing programs, job training and education.

"We've learned that of the basics of life, health care is not usually the highest priority."

In a more competitive marketplace, religious hospitals are forced to reexamine their role. In some places, such as New Orleans, managed-care networks have gobbled up so much of the market that religious hospitals have been squeezed out. In other areas, religious hospitals have survived by becoming more like their secular competitors.

"Religiously affiliated hospitals often have very nice flowery mission statements, but there is virtually no difference in the quality of care among patient populations," said Mel Hall, head of Press Gainey, the nation's largest patient surveying firm.

The demise of many religious hospitals has sparked concern over who will care for indigent patients. But Gunderson of the Carter Center believes that in markets where religious hospitals are "trapped by having to compete, it would be wise to sell out" and put the proceeds into an endowment for community-based services.

"Owners of religious hospitals may find that once they are freed from the constraints of running a hospital, they can focus on seeking the maximum health of the community and the poor," Gunderson says.

Many religious organizations are paying more attention to the leading causes of premature death: violence, especially involving guns, traffic accidents and family abuse, and substance abuse. "Few of these behaviors can be engaged by hospitals or medical professionals," Gunderson points out.

George Cohen/ImpactVisuals

Pediatric nurse's aide at Bellevue Hospital, N.Y.C.

"Parish nurse" programs often are aimed at behavioral health risks. More than 6,000 parish nurses nationwide work in disease screening, smoking, weight loss, well-baby care and immunization. Hospitals and congregations often share the costs.

In some communities, including low-income areas of Atlanta, volunteers from congregations have become "health promoters" trained in basic disease screening and referral techniques.

To survive, religious hospitals must confront the needs not of sectarian congregations, but of the areas they serve. "It gets to the heart of what our mission is about," said Kathy Garbarino, a spokeswoman for Detroit's Mercy Hospital. "Scripture didn't define who you served, it defined how you served."

For any hospital to survive, it must treat patients more like human beings. Since the late 1980s, hospitals have been required to measure patient satisfaction for accreditation. In addition, managed care has flattened cost differences between hospitals and helped spur an emphasis on meeting customer needs.

"Hospitals can no longer differentiate themselves by cost, so they distinguish themselves by quality of care. Said Hall of Press Gainey. "You can gain competitive advantage by being able to demonstrate quality of care."

Satisfied patients are more likely to comply with instructions and to take responsibility for their own care. They also are more likely to recommend their caregiver to others, so hospital officials now pay close attention to patient surveys. Some hospitals are tying bonuses and merit raises for nurses, physician assistants and department managers to scores they get on satisfaction surveys. Soon even the pay of physicians could be affected by patient feedback.

In response to surveys, some hospitals have changed meal delivery to keep hot foods hot and cold foods colder. Others have adopted standards on how quickly nurses must respond to call buttons. At Holy Cross Hospital in Chicago, employees get to take more responsibility for patient care.

It's still unclear what kind of hospitals will emerge if what patients say, rather than their ability to pay, becomes a driving force. But hospitals can't afford to keep doing business the old way. TW

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Touching into the beast: unionizing hospitals

by Camille Colatosti

"Right now, the health care industry is going through massive restructuring," says David Rodich, director of the local union organizing department of the Service Employees Industrial Union, the largest union of hospital workers in the country, representing over 300,000 health care employees. "A lot of corporations have moved into the health care field, displacing non-profit hospitals. Hospitals want to cut costs at any cost. They reduce staffing and overload workers. They assign nurses additional patients. They move patients out as quickly as possible. On the west coast, in some hospitals, women are having babies and checking out the same day."

The change in hospital management is motivated partly by shifts in health insurance to manged care programs. The payer is in charge, not the patient and not the doctor. Both public and private insurers limit the amount of money a hospital can receive for care.

Insurance companies no longer reimburse hospitals for each service they provide. Instead, hospitals are paid a set fee per patient.

The result is increased pressure to reduce costs by cutting workers. A *Modern Healthcare Magazine* survey found that 36 percent of hospital executives intend to reduce their total staffs in 1996. At the same time, there is an effort to replace licensed workers with lower paid staff. Particularly hard hit are nurses. According to a 1994 American Nurses Association survey, more than 66 percent of hospitals across the country had laid off nurses or were going to. At the same time, 45 percent of hospitals said that they were increasing their use of unlicensed assistant personnel. Not unexpectedly, staffing affects quality of care.

Helen Cyrulik, organizing director for the 3,400-member Buffalo-based organization Nurses United, affiliated with the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 1168, notes the changes she has seen in nursing during her 14-year career.

"Years ago, in the early 1980s, patients came to the hospital the night before an operation. Nurses would visit patients, telling them what they would experience the next day. We would answer questions for them and their families. Now both patients and nurses feel like we're on an assembly line: getting everything done as quickly as possible and seeing as many people as possible.

> *"Now nurses feel like we're on an assembly line: getting everything done as quickly as possible I don't have time to allay patients' fears."*
>
> *— Helen Cyrulik*

"I spend my time running around, getting patients ready. I don't have time to allay their fears. Then they go home after the procedure. I don't really talk to them."

Richard Sanders, a consultant for unions, explains that while the hospital industry says it cares about patients, it really doesn't. "The interest is in cost efficiency. Private, for-profit hospitals are increasing and bringing ideas into private non-profit hospitals and public hospitals. The differences between profit and non-profit hospitals have been narrowing for years — but may be obliterated now."

Sanders, who led a union organizing drive at the largest hospital in Rhode Island in 1993, argues that the hospital industry is essentially unregulated. "Hospitals now face far fewer regulations at the state level than ever before. In fact, the people who are deciding on how to restructure are the people doing the restructuring."

As hospitals deregulate, competition increases. Smaller, non-profit hospitals are being absorbed into larger, often for-profit hospitals and hospital systems. There are fewer and larger hospital owners than ever before. The large owners demand bulk discounts from suppliers; they win large contracts with health insurance companies and overwhelm the competition. Columbia Healthcare Corporation and HCA Hospitall Corporation of America, for example, is the nation's largest for-profit hospital chain. In 1988, Columbia/HCA owned 22 hospitals. By 1994, it owned 195 hospitals. It expects to own more than 400 hospitals by 1999. Sometimes Columbia buys hospitals simply to eliminate competition. The company has spent about $100 million acquiring facilities that it promptly closed.

Effect on workers

Restructuring has left the nation's 3.8 million hospital workers insecure. Nurses fear elimination. Janitorial, dietary and laundry workers worry that their jobs will be contracted out to an independent firm.

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"Workers have been offered no role in figuring out restructuring," says Rodich. "Hospital administrators make changes and workers have to go along or lose their jobs. Many workers now see that organizing into unions is really their only way to win a seat at the table."

While the percentage of hospital workers who are unionized is very small — only 15 percent of nurses are organized, for example — Rodich believes that the pace of organizing is picking up. "Workers are coming to us because they view collective bargaining as the only real vehicle they have to get a stake."

The SEIU recently won collective bargaining status at St. Bernard's Hospital in Chicago. Over 300 employers voted to join the union. "This is the first privately owned hospital that has been organized in the Chicago market in a number of years," says Rodich, "and it suggests that new organizing will develop. We had lost an election there a number of years ago, but fear of not being protected by collective bargaining outweighed fear of the employer."

Helen Cyrulik of Nurses United agrees. "Many employees have been afraid that if they join a union, or think about joining a union, the employer will retaliate against them. But fear of losing their jobs is replacing fear of employers."

In March 1996, Nurses United won their first organizing victory in two years. Nurses, technicians, social workers and dieticians at Renal Care of Buffalo, Inc., a dialysis center, voted to join the union.

Changes in National Labor Relations Board regulations regarding health care workers have benefitted unions. In 1989, the NLRB determined that unions may divide hospital workers into eight different employee units: registered nurses; physicians; other professionals; technical employees; skilled maintenance employees; business office and clerical employees; guards; and other nonprofessional employees.

Hospital administrators opposed this ruling, fearing that it would make it easier than ever for unions to win elections. For the smaller and more homogenous a unit, the greater a union's chances of success. But there are few victories. The intense resistance to unions on the part of employers still makes organizing difficult. Rodich believes that "the employers we face today are some of the wealthiest and greediest in America. They have massive resources to fight us."

Linda Lash, coordinator of the Organizing Technical Office and Professional Department of the United Auto Workers, agrees. "The hospitals have a tremendous amount of money and will spend whatever it takes to beat the union. The National Labor Relations Act is weak. Companies hire anti-union consultants. In the 30s, we called them company goons. They busted people's heads and shot them. Now they play psychological games. Goons make it clear to hospitals that it is okay to break the law, to lay people off, fire them, if they support the union. While these tactics are illegal, even if the board issues charges against the hospital, all the company has to do is post a notice. There is no fine. Companies can break the law again and again."

So what motivates hospital workers to risk their employer's anger and join a union? Unionized health care workers earn 10 to 15 percent more than non-union workers. But far more important than winning wages is workers' desire to have a say over their employment. Unions reduce management's ability to make unilateral changes in wages, hours and working conditions.

Hospital workers are concerned about the same things that all employees worry about: "how decisions get made," says union consultant Richard Sanders. While he agrees with Lash and Rodich that employers have been vicious in their anti-union campaigns, he also believes that unions have not always focused on what

George Cohen/Impact Visuals

Medical surgical technician and nurse's aide care for tuberculosis patient.

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matters most to workers. He explains, "Hospital workers aren't necessarily convinced that a unionized hospital means having a say — being an equal partner — in staffing, training, information."

Sanders led a successful campaign to organize the more than 3,000 workers at Rhode Island Hospital in Providence, in 1993.

"This was an important victory because Rhode Island Hospital is the largest in the state and will shape how the hospital industry looks there. It was also important," Sanders adds, "because there have been few victories of this size in the last 10 years. Finally, it showed that we have the ability to develop a strategic vision and plan to counter management's vision and plan.

"We won by building a large representative organizing committee. We identified early on the leaders in every area and department, people who had earned the trust and respect of their co-workers, people who work hard, who have good ideas, who are committed to their jobs. We tapped into workers' desire for change and personal and professional leadership. We trained them in union organizing but they organized their co-workers and developed the vision about their profession. They led the campaign. They are the leaders now."

Sanders is hopeful that unions will begin organizing on a much larger scale than they have before. In October 1995, the American Federation of Labor — Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the country's largest labor federation, faced its first contested election in its 40-year history, and voted in new officers. New AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, formerly president of the SEIU, promises to rebuild the strength of American unions by investing $20 million in organizing. The federation is establishing joint strategic campaigns to organize a particular region of the country.

Organizers foresee greater cooperation than ever before among the many different unions that organize health care workers. The largest of these are the Service Employees International Union, Local 1199, and the American Nurses Association. Other unions representing health care workers include the United Auto Workers, the Communications Workers of America, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. The SEIU and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE), for example, are working together to organize the health care industry, and the casino and hotel industries, in Las Vegas.

As Sanders says, "Only by organizing workers in a whole region, will we be able to deal with corporate restructuring. This is true in the hospital industry and really in every industry. Union building is not about tapping into anger and frustration. It's about building a democratic, powerful partnership between all the people in a community." TW

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Death penalty anniversary

The U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty 20 years ago (Gregg vs. Georgia, 7/2/76). To mark this occasion, the Abolitionist Action Committee is inviting concerned citizens to join them for their annual four-day fast and vigil in front of the U. S. Supreme Court building in Washington D.C. A program will be held from 10 p.m., until midnight on Friday, June 28. A dawn til dusk vigil and protest will follow on June 29. On Tuesday, July 2, the anniversary date of reinstatement, there will be a 24-hour presence from midnight to midnight. Fasting is not necessary for participation. Marietta Jaeger, anti-death penalty activist and circulation coordinator at *The Witness* will be there. For more information, please call her at 313-841-0544 or Rick at 214-768-3284 days.

New Party victory

The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that multiparty fusion voting is not unconstitutional. Once legal, fusion has been banned in 40 states. Fusion, or cross-endorsement, allows candidates to run simultaneously on several ballot lines, encouraging small parties to pool their efforts. For example, if fusion were legal in California, Ralph Nader could run as the candidate of the Green Party as well as for the Peace and Freedom Party, the Natural Law party and even Ross Perot's party, if they wanted Nader as their candidate. [See *The Witness* issue on the New Party, 11/95.]

Third force, May/June, 1996

Detroit newspaper strike: NLRB probes *The Witness*

More than 250 people have been arrested outside the offices of the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* while protesting Gannett and Knight Ridder's ten-month failure to negotiate a contract for their unionized workers.

Four city council members, five Wayne County Commissioners, a state legislator and candidate for the U.S. Senate have been arrested during Readers United's protests, as well as lawyers, nurses, union local presidents, youth advocates, bishops, nuns and Baptist pastors.

In April, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) made inquiry into *The Witness* magazine and Readers United in an effort to determine whether either was "an agent of the striking unions." Bishop Stewart Wood and six others went with Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann to the NLRB to express their outrage at the implications.

short takes

Advocating patients' rights

Patients' rights advocate Ellen Greenlaw, a woman in recovery from a severe auto accident three years ago, offers a variety of suggestions to people who may be facing hospital care.

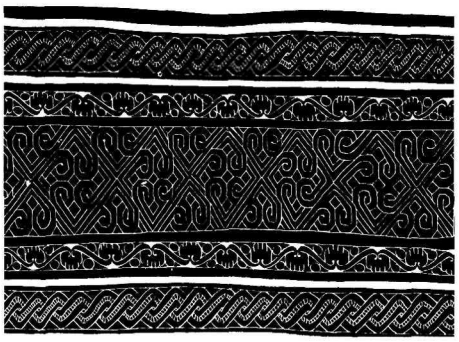
Have the attitude, "This is my body. I'll make the choices," whenever feasible. Ask questions. Make a list of what you want to discuss. You are in charge. Put out what you want. It may help to brainstorm questions and concerns with someone you trust. Don't assume that when you enter a hospital that you will be taken care of. You or your advocate may need to assert your basic needs, let alone preferences.

Medical staff duties tend to be fragmented, each covering a limited aspect of your needs. Educate yourself. Discover who does what and put together a package of providers to cover what you feel you need. Don't have unrealistic expectations regarding a particular individual's knowledge or skills. Shop around, whenever possible, for the best person to orchestrate your needs. For example, a diagnosis, or a type of surgery. Ask people whose judgment you trust for recommendations.

If you don't like the hospital staff assigned to you, ask for different people. Sometimes, however, a nurse can be a good advocate for what you want. After a serious accident, or diagnosis of major illness, you may want a therapist for emotional assistance. You can ask to see the hospital's social worker, and regardless of your religious affiliation, sometimes a clergy person can be helpful.

Greenlaw emphasizes that you don't have to allow resident doctors, other than your own, to examine you or interact with you. If you have doubts or don't understand your treatment, ask more questions. Make the decision to treat when you're ready. Request tests that indicate allergic reactions to dyes or chemicals used in diagnostic procedures before the process has begun.

Find out exactly what is to be gained from a procedure, including side effects, pain, clarification of your condition, and treatment recommendations. Ask beforehand about all possible reactions to any diagnostic medical procedures. Inquire



about alternative methods and painkillers. Ask what it means if you decline any procedures, so that you can carefully consider the benefits as well as the drawbacks, which will help you make an informed decision.

Sometimes the staff may not want to explain diagnostic tests or treatment procedures. Insist that they, or someone else, does. In our litigious society the medical community is very cognizant of lawsuits. This can be used as a tool. Unsurprisingly, the threat of a lawsuit may make your nurses or doctors take notice. Remember, it is legally considered assault if you receive a procedure or drug against your will. If you decide not to receive treatment, simply request that the practitioner write, "patient refuses procedure" on your chart, transferring the responsibility from the hospital to yourself.

It's helpful to get hospital permission to have your alternative health practitioner see you. More than likely, the hospital will not want this person to come in. However, you may be able to obtain permission if you sign a liability release form for the hospital discharging them from any legal responsibility regarding your alternative health worker's recommendations.

Ellen Greenlaw's general advice, for emergency care, is to let practitioners do their job. You will only be in an emergency room because you are in a life-threatening situation. If able, contact someone you want to be your advocate. Insist that this person stay with you whenever possible.

Carry identification on your person listing who to call in an emergency. Your instructions can include one or more people for your personal needs as well as medical support or advocate. It's wise to shop in advance of a catastrophe for a healthcare worker, skilled at interacting with doctors/practitioners, who knows your needs and preferences. Inform that advocate whom you want contacted as resource people, support, companions and visitors. The latter is especially important for people in same-sex relationships. Many hospitals will allow only "family members" (heterosexist definition) to visit patients, especially if they are in critical condition. You may arrange for someone to have medical power of attorney to make decisions for you, or be consulted by medical decision-makers if you are unconscious or mentally unable to communicate. Just as you cannot wait to die before writing a will, you shouldn't wait for serious illness to consider protection in advance of a medical disaster.

—Becca Harber is an herbal educator in Willseyville, N.Y. This article is adapted from WomenWise, *a quarterly publication of The Concord Feminist Health Center, 38 S. Main St., Concord, N.H. 03301; (603) 225-2739.*

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'An acolyte in hell': working in the ER

by Maria West

When I walk into the emergency department at the start of my shift, it is like stepping onto the stage of a sacred drama, already in progress, where suffering gets too many lines and redemption is an understudy. There are bright lights, a cacophony of sound effects and choreography for rolling stretchers. I never know how the plot may turn out — so I approach my job with a Zen flexibility and engaged detachment.

But this particular day, I was stunned mute and motionless as the nurse, going off-duty and turning over to me the care of my first patient, described how the paramedics, who usually transport their patients with cheerful equanimity, were weeping when they brought Angela in.

Angela was found wedged between her car and an automatic teller machine in a neighborhood riddled with gang violence, with one gunshot wound to the side of her face. She was transported rapidly by ambulance from the bank to the emergency department's resuscitation room. There, the trauma team worked on her aggressively: inserting a breathing tube through her mouth to her lungs and attaching the tube to a mechanical respirator; placing an IV line into a large vein in each of her arms; collecting blood specimens; taking X-rays and CAT scans of her head and face. But all the test results only confirm what the paramedics saw when they lifted her eyelids and waved a penlight back and forth in front of her eyes: the damage was lethal and irreversible. The neurology team was paged to begin the process of declaring Angela brain-dead.

After her first nurse completes her report to me, Angela is brought to the critical care area of the Emergency department, next door to the resuscitation room, and it is here that I assume her care. Because the initial attempt to save her life was so intense, she lies on a stretcher undressed and smeared with blood. The sheet that covers her up to her shoulders is littered with empty paper and plastic wrappers, tongue depressors and alcohol swabs. I take her vital signs and check the placement and function of every line, tube and wire connecting Angela to life support. I make a few notes in her chart. Then I run some warm water into a basin to bathe her.

A man rushes through the door, screaming for Angela. He stands, then kneels beside her stretcher, moaning. Only the beeping of the heart monitor answers. The man stands and faces the nurses, aides and security guards now gathered in the room. I try to think of how to say that Angela is mortally wounded. The man speaks first.

"She's not going to make it."

I want to apologize to the man for not having been able to clean and dress her before he arrived. The man, who identifies himself as Angela's husband, takes the basin of water from my hands, asks for some towels and begins to wipe her bruised, swollen face. The pink, sudsy water smells of antiseptic soap. It deepens in color as he sponges her hair. I hand him basins of clean water and piles of fresh towels, and continue to check her pulse and blood pressure, adjust her IVs and trouble-shoot the life-support machinery. Together we remove the torn clothing from beneath her, and place her in a blue and white print hospital gown, carefully threading the IV bags and tubing attached to her arms through the sleeves. We tie the gown at the back of the neck and secure the plastic coil that connects her breathing tube to the respirator. We change the linen under and over her, and place an absorbent pad under her head. As we work, I explain how each piece of equipment is taking over the work of her injured brain: airway control, breathing, circulation. Then he starts to tell me about her.

She was pregnant. She was planning for her young son's birthday party. She struggled financially but had a strong web of family members, people who would now have to decide whether to withdraw life support and whether to donate her organs. People who would have to live with the knowledge that Angela's assailants were children no older than her own.

The poor, including guests of the soup kitchens and shelters whom I have known, can best help me develop into the kind of nurse I want to become.

My experience with Angela and her family is distinct for me because during that long vigil, I felt suffocated by the horror of another random and meaningless murder. My role was of an acolyte in hell, sponging Angela's face clean of the blood and offering her family small sacramentals

Maria West is an emergency room nurse and freelance writer in Detroit. Photographer **Rebecca Cook** is on strike from the Detroit Newspapers.

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— coffee, the telephone, Kleenex, privacy.

Sometimes I am amazed to find myself working in the ER, yet for five years it has been where I belong. I never pretended to be a nurse when I was a child and I wasn't a candy-striper in high school. I did work for four summers as a nurses's aide at a place with the unhappy name of the Washington Home for Incurables. But not even then did I imagine I would become a nurse.

The truth is that the person who led me into nursing school was a young man who has worn the same faded jeans, plaid shirt, toothless grin and sunglasses every time I have seen him for 15 years. Ron lives on a small disability check. He is a regular guest/volunteer at the Catholic Worker soup kitchen and a patient at Cabrini Clinic, a small, parish-based free medical clinic where I helped out, first as a clerical assistant to the manager, then as the manager. I was the keeper of the keys, the coffee and schedule maker for the volunteer doctor and nurses. I delivered blood specimens to a volunteer medical lab and sorted tons of donated drug samples. But to Ron, I was a woman in a medical facility and that made me a nurse.

One summer evening, Ron appeared at my home and asked me to examine his foot. He said he had stepped on a nail, which had penetrated his worn tennis shoe and punctured the sole of his foot. He knelt on one knee on the porch and began to unlace his shoe, over my protests.

"You need to see a doctor and get a tetanus booster," I advised.

"I want a nurse," he replied.

"I am not a nurse."

Ron put his bare foot up, for emphasis.

"But you are my nurse," he insisted.

It occurred to me then that what I really wanted, was to take care of people like Ron — complex, likable people, with really lousy health habits and a haphazard approach to health care.

A year later I was in nursing school.

It would be untrue to say that I breezed through my nursing studies. But I enjoyed the clinical rotations. I intentionally chose placements at hospitals in the urban core of Detroit, places that typically serve the poor. I dreaded dissecting human cadavers and typing papers, but neither proved a major problem.

After a brief stint of medical-surgical nursing, I went to work in the emergency department of one of the hospitals in the city's medical center and have spent the last five years as an emergency-trauma nurse. The choice was a deliberate one. This is the setting where most of the poor, including guests of the soup kitchens and shelters whom I have known, get their health care. I believe that they, who led me into nursing, can best help me develop into the kind of nurse I want to become. I have not yet been disappointed. Hardly a work week goes by that there isn't a reunion. As one man from the soupline stated, "Whoever thought that when I saw you again it would be in this horizontal environment?"

And where else could one touch as many of the wounds that prostrate the wounded and healer both: gang wars, handgun violence, car jackings, domestic abuse, AIDS. In the emergency department these are not headlines, but faces, arranged in rows like flowerbeds.

Nursing is both high tech and high touch. The irony is that my hands sometimes hurt on the way to easing someone's pain. Inflicting pain by drawing blood or giving an injection is one of the unavoidable and difficult parts of the job I do.

Maria West at work in a Detroit emergency room. Rebecca Cook

What I say is as important as what I do and I never say, "This won't hurt a bit," especially if I'm holding a sharp object.

I try to make words instruments of healing, by addressing and referring to a patient by given name, not symptom or diagnosis. By giving the patient my name and by giving the patient the names for things in the alien world of medicine.

The hospital where I work is typical of urban trauma centers: unpredictable, almost overwhelming. It is like life-sized, high-stakes speed chess. Every move you make for a patient, whether it's a medication, a test or a procedure, has the potential for good or the risk of harm, so that I am always thinking several moves ahead,

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Overusing the ER

by Julie Wortman

Today's cost-conscious hospital administrators repeatedly point out that if more low-income people focussed on preventing or mitigating health care problems before they develop — by routinely visiting a facility where they can get pelvic exams, blood pressure readings, AIDS/HIV tests, mammograms, cholesterol readings and advice on how to practice safe sex — the financial drain on hospital resources, especially in terms of emergency-room care, would be significantly decreased.

As it is, for a huge percentage of under-insured people, an emergency-room visit is often the only sort of health care treatment they seek.

According to Cassandra Jackson, Michigan Public Health Institute's (MPHI) program director for public health practice, people who fall into this category don't make use of public health facilities because of what she calls "institutional barriers."

"We've found that for this population the primary barrier to accessing health care is the complexity of their lives," Jackson said, referring to a recently completed MPHI-sponsored study that focussed on the non-financial barriers to securing health care faced by low- or no-income people at 14 different public health agencies in both urban and rural areas. "Low-income people have so many needs that are difficult to get met that health care gets pushed to the bottom of the list. For them to pursue preventative health care, the health care facility must be geared to the realities of their lives."

But most institutions that provide public health care, Jackson said, see the client, not the institution, as the problem.

"Some clinics have the attitude, 'How *dare* these people not keep their appointments?' or 'How *dare* these people not come back for follow-up?' But the clinic itself might be open only during the day or might be open only one night a week or might be located in an inaccessible part of town." Prospective clients with poor reading and writing skills often feel overwhelmed by the number of forms they must complete when they come for an appointment, Jackson said.

"And for women the child care issue is very important, especially for women over 20. They'll neglect their own health care if necessary. If you can't bring your five kids to the clinic because there is no child care, you won't come."

Jackson said people will also avoid using a facility if they feel they are not understood or respected — or accorded a degree of privacy.

"One Planned Parenthood clinic in the study is located in a depressed area of town where low-income clients can get to it easily," Jackson pointed out. "That's a positive thing, but you walk in the door and you are immediately faced with bullet-proof glass barriers between you and the receptionist. You have to shout your business. Who wants to shout out that you're there for an AIDS test?"

Jackson also told the story of a Detroit woman suffering from hypertension who would not take her medication. "Her doctor didn't want to hear why. But the medication made frequent potty stops necessary and she had to take the bus — using two transfers — to get to work. In Detroit most doctors drive to work. They have no idea what commuting by bus can be like."

One of the problems the MPHI researchers encountered in rural Euro-American communities stemmed from a relatively high incidence of incest.

"The people exhibited a real aversion to any discussion of sex," Jackson said. This, combined with the community's strong anti-government bias, has kept a lot of people from seeking health services.

"The young girls are the big victims," Jackson said. "They don't know how to protect themselves."

The MPHI study also surfaced many problems associated with health care services directed at non-European ethnic groups.

"We found that Native Americans were basically invisible in the health care system," Jackson said. "Providers did not see native peoples as having a distinct culture and history" that influenced their health practices. Likewise, Arab Muslim women were inclined to avoid health clinics that were not staffed by women.

Jackson hopes the MPHI study will help government-funded health providers rethink some of their approaches to health care aimed at historically under-served populations. But she worries that preventative education and health promotion activities will be lost as agencies focus on cost containment.

"Health care is becoming more institutionally-based rather than community-based," she said. "This is a trend away from what people are saying they need. Institutions that want to be community-oriented still don't understand how to access the population in need."

Julie Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.*

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with a mental flowchart.

If I give an ordered dose of morphine into a patient's IV it could relieve his pain. It could make him nauseated. It could interfere with normal breathing patterns. For each possibility there is an appropriate response which has its own set of potential risks and benefits and sets the whole process in motion again. I give the morphine very slowly, watching his face, listening to his moans, counting his respirations, feeling the grip of his hand in mine and waiting for him to let me know what to do next.

It's unclear to me how long I'll continue to work in the ER. So far, it has been the most challenging and satisfying work I can imagine. But the American health care system is in the process of a rapid, radical overhaul. Providing uncompensated primary care in the ER to poor people like Ron is less feasible in an era of price controls and managed care. Fewer hospitals are willing to do it. County hospitals are closing. Suburban uninsured patients report being put in taxicabs by their local hospitals and instructed to seek care in the city. Providing the highest level of trauma care to critically injured patients like Angela is expensive and under close scrutiny by insurance companies and legislators. Where patients like Ron and Angela will get their care after the smoke of health care reform clears is uncertain. The role of a registered nurse is also changing, away from direct patient care and towards the management of patient care by others.

I may return to school to become a nurse practitioner so that I can help staff a street clinic since that seems to me to be the direction health care for low-income folks is going. I listen to the winds of change in health care feeling much as I do when I hear the rise and fall of an ambulance siren: tense and confident. The outcome isn't clear, but I will wait, watch and follow.

Community supports own hospital

Bucking the trend, a small community in Vermont has established and supported its own hospital, raising money through bake sales to ensure personalized care.

Grace Cottage is Vermont's only hospital with its own 24-hour ambulance service, which is staffed completely by volunteers.

"I believe that community support is so strong because we provide for the community whether we can afford to or not," says Director of Operations Effie Chamberlin, who has worked at the hospital for 34 years.

"We're very efficient, and we're very parsimonious with our resources," says Robert Backus, a physician who has been at Grace Cottage full-time since 1980. Unlike the physicians at most hospitals, Backus and the other three family practitioners at Grace Cottage often take their own X-rays and EKGs, run their own lab work, and drive the ambulance without any extra charge to the patient or community. They also donate their on-call hours in the emergency room.

Community volunteers act as hospital receptionists and couriers. Walter Meyer, who formerly drove the ambulance, parks cars at a flea market in nearby Newfane on Sundays during the summer. In place of a parking fee, he accepts donations to Grace Cottage, raising $1,000 per day. Local farms frequently donate tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, and other produce to the old-fashioned hospital kitchen.

To keep operating expenses down, CEO Al LaRochelle continually fights state and federal regulations which, he says, are usually designed for larger institutions. Recently, he won the battle over an expensive ventilation hood that the state claimed was necessary to vent fumes from chemicals used in chemotherapy and cytology preparation. Neither of these procedures is performed at Grace Cottage. LaRochelle lost the battle, however, over a $40,000 elevator to access the new administrative offices.

Diversification has been a key ingredient in the success of Grace Cottage, which boasts the lowest cost per patient stay of any Vermont hospital. The new Wolff building, constructed with money from Campaign '90, has freed up space for profitable, outpatient services such as orthopedics, urology, chiropractics, and podiatry, which help to compensate for operating losses due to inadequate reimbursement. These particular services were chosen because of the community's response to Leigh's mailed survey.

Many people worry that renovations will destroy some of the hospital's charm. As it stands now, Grace Cottage still features a wallpapered lobby that evokes the comfort of a living room. The hallways have sloping floors and stenciled walls. Country curtains, made by volunteers, adorn the windows in patients' rooms. A sunporch looks out on a green lawn bordered by begonias.

"Structurally, I think there's going to have to be some changes in order to comply and meet all the needs and regulations, but I don't believe it's going to lose its personal aspect," Effie Chamberlin says. "That's not only what attracts people here for care, it's what attracts our family practice physicians."

— Kathleen Koman is a freelance writer who lives in Winchester, Mass. This article is adapted from a longer piece in HOPE. To subscribe, send $24.95 to PO Box, Brooklin, ME 04616; 800-513-0869.

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Grace and the frog

by Robert Hirschfield

"The frog is cooking," Grace tells me. She says so matter-of-factly, and I nod and say nothing. The frog is the reason I'm at work so early, the reason Grace is sitting on her stoop across from the Projects waiting for me.

"The car will be here in a half hour to pick us up," I tell her.

"The car?" Grace's empty brown jaws orbit furiously around her cigarette. She is trying to take in what this means. A car once glided up to her and a policeman got out with his gun drawn. Grace was sharpening a steak knife on the curb. The super from her building rushed out and breathlessly vouched for her. The policeman uncorked a staticky lecture about menacing behaviour and holstered his gun.

"The car to Beth Israel," I say, "to see the frog specialist."

"Oh," she says, "the frog specialist."

Grace has been to Beth Israel before. The biopsy doctor stuck three long needles into her, and Grace was told she had cancer. She decided the place was evil. For a time, she would not even tolerate the mention of his name. But finally, owing to the endless sweet nagging of her case manager, she agreed to return one last time to Beth Israel to have her decaying breast poked and contemplated.

"I don't want them carving me up," she says. "That's crazy."

This expedition is to seek an alternative to carving. Grace has the idea that only in Nova Scotia is there a cure for her cancer. She cannot say why. But Nova Scotia is her heart's mythical healing land beyond the surgeon's knife.

Dierdre Luzwick

The 66-year-old woman lives in a 45-unit SRO near the East River in Manhattan run by a not-for-profit agency that houses the mentally ill. She lurches through the halls in baggy sweatshirts, arthritic, wrapped in the protective bubble of her own space.

Prior to this SRO, Grace lived in an apartment in the Bronx from which crack users banished her. Occasionally, she will reveal snippets of her history. She tells of the death of her mother in her infancy in Florida, of having five babies yanked from her by midwives, of being driven from her sister's home because she smoked, of being hounded by the government which smuggled Spencer the Frog inside her breast.

The car comes, and Grace rubs her back against the upholstery and smiles broadly. Luxury!

In a few minutes we're at Beth Israel. The new oncology clinic dazzles inappropriately. It is tiny. Even at this early hour, there is much gnashing together of elbows. Grace sits with her knees, elbows and face all flying in the direction of the door.

She begins looking for a cigarette. I say, "Not here." Nicotine is her angel.

I once asked her, "Grace, is there anything you love more than cigarettes?"

She said, "Egg nog."

Her name is called, and Dr. S, a young Jewish doctor with tiny, benign eyes waves her enthusiastically into his office. I take him aside for a hasty consultation. The word cancer is not to be mentioned, or Grace will bolt. The operative word is frog. Dr. S is agreeable. He tells Grace to sit down on the ominous diagnostic table not unlike a diving board.

He begins reading distractedly from her chart: "Arthritis, schizophrenia, high blood pressure ..." He could be reciting the items he's packed for a trip.

"Now let's see what kind of a frog this is," Dr. S says.

The broad spotted mass has eaten into her left nipple and spread beyond it. The doctor probes and measures it. Grace stares hard at the white wall. She'd like to disappear into it. She is unnerved by the sober travelling of the doctor's fingers.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" she asks at one point in the procedure.

Robert Hirschfield lives in New York City. Artist **Dierdre Luzwick** lives in Cambridge, Wis.

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"Not at all," Dr. S replies. "Just wait till I am gone, so I won't lose my job."

Sometimes, in the afternoon, Grace will camp beneath the medicine cabinet in the case managers' office, and wait to be served her Haldol and Cogentin along with her cup of Great Bear water. If she is in the mood, she will tell one of her long tales that no one can understand because she has no teeth, and because the words tend to skip haphazardly on the fractured loom of her memory. When she is finished, she may punctuate her tale with a high-stepping cackle that stops the chattering of the office computers and makes heads turn. Grace's cackle sounds like it comes from the depth of the earth, only streamered with joy.

Her humor can also be sly. One afternoon, a case manager was lost in feverish political discourse. Grace wordlessly turned to him and offered him her medication.

Dr. M, Dr. S's superior, joins us, and Grace presents her breast for re-examination like a school girl obediently opening a book for a teacher.

"Any pain?" Dr. M asks.

"Sometimes I feel he's gonna eat the veins, the heart and all."

Coached like his partner to avoid the C word, Dr. M rolls his eyes portentously, as if all this talk of Grace's frog is going to land him in a straitjacket.

"Grace," he says finally, "we may be able to help you shrink the frog. We can shine lights in the frog's eyes to make it smaller. It will hurt the frog, but it won't hurt you."

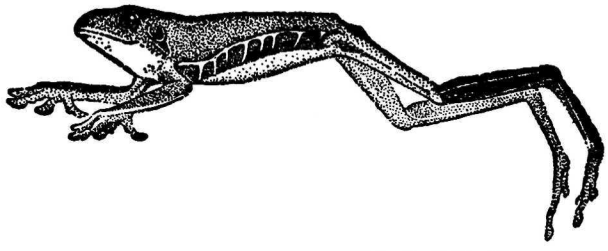
Grace is pleased. She is clearly terrified of these men and the power of their words, and is willing to accept as positive any verdict short of outright annihilation.

We are told to go across the street to Radiology and see Dr. K. Grace will not go until she's smoked two cigarettes.

Climbing down the two flights of stairs to Radiology, Grace remembers something.

"Next month, I got to go back for a scalp treatment." Her hair is snow white and quite woolly. "They get me sitting up there cooking, burning like fire."

In Radiology, dim as a crypt, Grace takes a seat next to a dark-haired young woman holding a briefcase. She sighs



Vivian Day/Rubber Stamps of America

ever so slightly when her name is called. She folds her *New York Times* with slow white hands, as though she'd like to drag the crease beyond this moment and this place.

"I'm just a frame," Grace mutters. It's a word I've never heard from her before.

"What's inside the frame?" I ask.

"Bones?"

"Nothing else?"

"That's all."

I think surely there must be a spirit burrowing through her like an inspired mole. I ask her what she thinks. She just laughs. She brings up Jesus who she says hangs out in the little Spanish restaurant where she goes for her coffee.

"Sometimes he speaks to me," she states simply, "and sometimes he don't."

A nurse comes and takes Grace to a cubicle where she navigates for her the slit and loops of her gown.

Finally, Dr. K appears with his round, friendly belly. He and another doctor immediately interest themselves in the frog's diameter.

The two men disappear for consultation. We are left alone amidst the white walls, jars, screens and sudden silence. Grace disappears inside herself. I am reminded of an endangered forest creature seeking the shelter of familiar shadows.

Dr. K returns with information about what radiation would entail.

"It's a five week course, five days a week. You would have to lay still during the treatments."

Grace listens hard. The slight easing of the bones in her face indicates she is receptive. She says nothing. She is not asked to say anything.

Dr. K motions me into the next room. He is having second thoughts. Grace's cancerous mass is too massive. Radiation won't do. He recommends surgery.

But what about Dr. M? I stammer. He probed the same mass, endorsed radiation. Dr. K won't respond. He is like a priest who refuses to be lured into schismatic debate. He writes down the phone number of the head surgeon at the surgery clinic.

"Grace does not want surgery," I say.

"She is not mentally competent," he answers. He is a busy man. He wastes no time playing his trump card.

"Grace," the doctor says finally, "we may be able to help you shrink the frog. We can shine lights in the frog's eyes to make it smaller. It will hurt the frog, but it won't hurt you."

I take Grace and we go. She suspects something is wrong. I don't tell her. I don't know how to tell her. She is kind, and doesn't ask me to tell her.

She is hungry. I buy us each a banana from a street vendor.

Grace steps out of the wind to light another cigarette. She takes a long drag. This new moment is without frogs. TW

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The powers in hospital ministry

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or sword? As it is written: 'For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are led as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the one who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Romans 8:35-39

How many times have pastors read this passage at a hospital bedside where the extremities of pain and fear and death hover. Here is compressed a confession of faith which serves in those moments as the preeminent word of pastoral care. Yet it's only in recent years that I've been struck over and over, how this practice actually names the principalities and powers (not to mention their main methods of operation) in a personal and presumably private word of comfort.

The implications are great for pastoral theology. The standard formula of pastoral care is altered. Instead of a schema in which the relationship of the pastor (or the pastoral community) to the person is featured as nurturing an uninterrupted relationship with God, we get a picture in which additional forces, visible and invisible are at work. Any pastoral work which is oblivious to these forces, is at best hampered in the work of nurturing whole personhood, and at worst may end up serving systems, structures and spirits that intervene designing to separate us from the love of God.

For example, in the hospital room, it is astonishing how many illnesses are actually attributable to the powers. Cancers and birth defects, allergies and immune deficiencies which are the assault of toxins loosed upon our bodies and earth. Addictions fostered in cold calculation by the powers of commercial greed. Corporate stress rupturing hearts. The hurry-up indifference to hazards of the workplace. All the grinding and chronic ailments of poverty. The epidemic of gunshot wounds pouring in the emergency room door which can be traced back to the shipping docks of the domestic armaments industry. Hell, the economics of the insurance industry and government policy turning certain people away, gradually or finally, at those hospital doors. And this is just to name a few. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine and sword — we are led like lambs to be slaughtered.

Florence Nightingale is reported to have quipped, "I may not know what a hospital is for, but I'm pretty sure it isn't the spread of disease."

The pastoral effort is modified if an illness may be understood not merely as the tragedy of happenstance, but as the assault of the principalities. Hospitals are probably the buildings in which the most prayer is uttered per square foot. But is it prayer that takes into account the work of the powers, creating a space for freedom and seeking to break their binding grip? Intercessions in this pastoral theology take on a new focus and fuse necessarily with advocacy or resistance. This is to say we are not mere passive victims in relation to the principalities. In so many instances — violence, stress, or addiction — we are complicit in our own bondage. We co-operate in our own crippling ailments. Pastoral ministry, witness the healing work of Jesus in the gospels, involves nurturing or affirming this renewed freedom in the victims: Take up your bed and walk.

A bridging analogy from the therapeutic community to this kind of pastoral theology may be found in the emergence of family systems theory. An addict, say, once treated in isolation as having an individual physical or psychological problem, has, by virtue of understanding co-dependency, come to be seen often holding a place in a dysfunctional family system. In such cases treatment apart from naming the pattern and addressing the whole family system is all but futile. In fact, as Anne Wilson Schaef has pointed out, the system is much larger than the family. The patterns and mechanisms of addiction are endemic to our culture — they are replicated and writ large in what she terms the Addictive System, a synonym for the cultural bondage in which so many of our illnesses occur.

All this means that pastoral work, in the hospital as elsewhere, relies heavily on discernment. As William Stringfellow aptly put it in *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land:*

"This gift enables the people of God to distinguish and recognize, identify and expose, report and rebuke the power of

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Bill Wylie-Kellermann teaches at the Whitaker School of Theology in Detroit. This article is adapted from a talk he's given to several Clinical Pastoral Education seminars. Artist **Dierdre Luzwick** lives in Cambridge, Wis.

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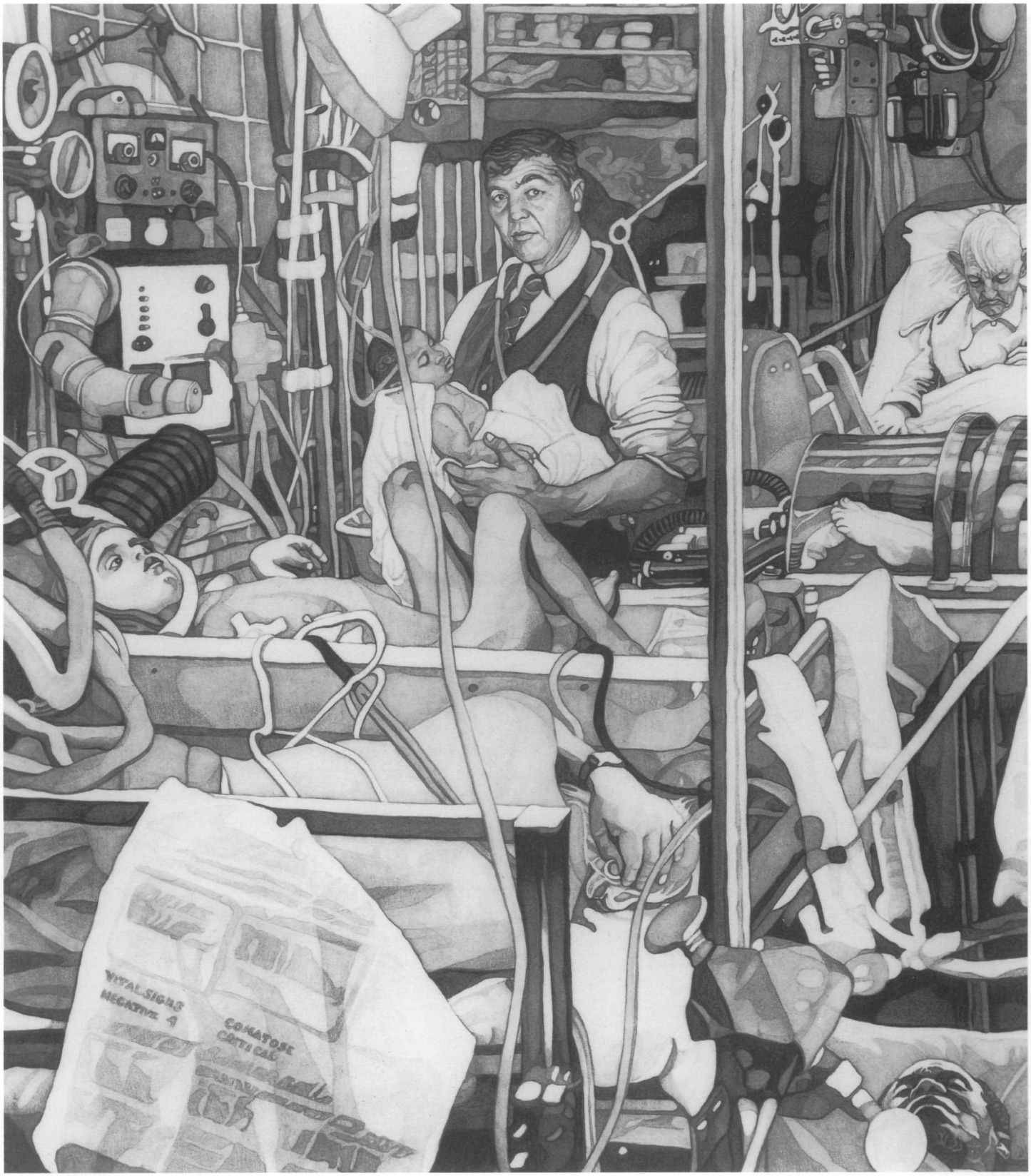

Life supports

Dierdre Luzwick

death incarnate in ... institutions or other creatures. ... The discernment of spirits refers to the talent to recognize the Word of God in this world in principalities and persons despite the distortion of fallenness. ... This is the gift which exposes and rebukes idolatry. This is the gift which confounds and undoes blasphemy. Similar to the discernment of signs, the discernment of spirits is inherently political while in practice it has specifically to do with pastoral care, with healing, with the nurture of human life and with the fulfillment of all life."

It is no coincidence that Stringfellow, who may be credited with reviving the current interest in the principalities, hammered out his theology of the powers partly from a hospital bed. He had been prompted to explore this biblical understanding first by the people of the ghetto with whom he lived and worked. The way they spoke of the police, the mafia, the social work bureaucracy, or absentee landlords as predatory beasts eating them alive pushed him toward the biblical texts. "In the wisdom of the people of the East Harlem neighborhood, such principalities are identified as demonic powers because of the relentless and ruthless dehumanization which they cause." But subsequently in the grip of dire illness, in his own experience of pain and even of commercialized medicine, he recognized the same forces at work. He described his experience of the 1960s in *The Christian Century* in this way:

"The decade locates me, at its outset, deeply in the midst of work as a white lawyer in Harlem, but it closes in fragile survival of prolonged, obstinate, desperate illness. It begins in social crisis, it ends in personal crisis. For me, these are equally profound *because* the aggression of death is the moral reality pervasive in both and, moveover, the grace to confront and transcend death is the same in each crisis. Indeed, I do not think the two episodes, which roughly mark personally the boundaries of the last decade, are essentially distinguishable."

The story of that illness is recounted in the second, and least known, volume of Stringfellow's autobiographical trilogy, called *A Second Birthday*. This book, if only for the theology of pain it articulates, ought to be a standard text in courses on pastoral ministry. It ought to be prominent, next to flowers and greeting cards, in hospital gift shops. When it names the powers, it includes the principalities of commercialized medicine. It names and exposes the hospital itself.

This is a key point for pastors, but even more for chaplains and for that matter any Christian working in the hospital system. In Stringfellow's thought the hospital must be regarded as a creature standing before the judgement of God with a life and integrity of its own, a living creature called to praise God and serve human life, but one whose vocation is distorted and confused in the fall.

This question of vocation is no small matter. It goes to the roots of creaturely identity. A hospital is called specifically to praise God and serve human life by ... what? Offering hospitality in an environment, spiritual and physical, of healing? Serving patients by nurturing their health and wholeness? It is equally important to comprehend the degree to which that vocation has been confused and forgotten in the fall.

Florence Nightingale is reported to have quipped, "I may not know what a hospital is for, but I'm pretty sure it isn't the spread of disease." The vocation of a hospital is distorted, often to demonic proportion, in a variety of ways. Certainly by the market mentality which puts profits before patients, seeing them virtually as servants of the hospital rather than vice versa. By the idolatrous inflation to which medicine, as a purveyor of life and death, is inherently subject. By turning the person from the subject to the object of care. By the rapid multiplication of

Working for change

People of faith who want to influence the current budget debate should let their congressional representatives know they oppose drastic cuts to Medicaid and Medicare,according to InterHealth, a Washington, D.C.-based "values-driven group that brings people together to share ideas and improve community health."

They should add that any anticipated savings achieved by cutting these entitlements should be used to maintain and expand services within the health and social service delivery systems to benefit the affected populations.

More than 30 million very low-income Americans depend on Medicaid to pay for their hospital care. Low-income elderly people depend on Medicare. But cutting Medicaid and Medicare has become a key element of current efforts to reduce the federal budget deficit.

Although some reforms to both programs may be warranted, InterHealth concedes, drastic cuts to either could be catastrophic because another 40 million Americans who do not qualify for Medicaid, but who cannot afford or qualify for medical insurance, are already looking to hospitals for charity care.

"It seems important for people to let their senators and representatives know that they don't want the budget balanced on the backs of those who have the least," said InterHealth staffer Brent Ewig. — *J.A.W.*

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technology and technique in the practice of medicine. By the competitive anxiety concerning institutional survival which supplants any and every other purpose.

Anyone working in a hospital setting will be asked to serve these distorted purposes, which Stringfellow saw in league with death itself. Who, for example, does the chaplain serve? Is his purpose to be alert to ethical issues, intervening mainly to prevent the hospital from being sued? Or does she intercede and advocate on behalf of the patient? Does she smooth things pastorally in large part for the efficient running of the operation? Or does he risk rebuking and challenging the hospital in the name of health? In short, does the chaplain look for ways to renew the hospital's true vocation, calling it back to itself, to its identity in the Word of God?

Does the chaplain look for ways to renew the hospital's true vocation, calling it back to itself, to its identity in the Word of God?

It is when I have raised these questions in Clinical Pastoral Education seminars, that I've gotten the biggest rise. Students already understand the ways in which they are actively constrained in their ministry by the spirits of the hospital which hover over their work, requiring their allegiance and hemming them in.

How these questions are answered is often predicated on who pays the chaplain. To whom is she accountable — to the church or to a medical bureaucracy? It's the difference between the jail chaplain who has the keys or one who waits the wait of prisoners in order to see those whom she serves. It's the seductive dilemma of the military chaplain whose career is measured by the stripes on his sleeve.

Frankly, people exercising "the grace to confront and transcend death," as Stringfellow put it, may find themselves in trouble. The gospels are adamant to the point of redundancy that real healing may get one into political straits. Think of those Sabbath healings which so gall the scribes and pharisees.

Recall how perturbed and provoked the authorities become should Jesus, God forbid, forgive sin to effect a healing. There is that long story of the man born blind, dragged before a grand jury of sorts and interrogated about the details of his recovery — eventually to be cast headlong out of the synagogue. And in John's gospel it is the raising of Lazarus which is the last straw in the arrest and execution of Jesus.

I believe this is so because one power or another is invisibly involved in each of these situations, be it the law (purity code and debt code) or the turf and dominion of certain rulers, not to mention the power of death itself. I believe the love of Christ is at work in each of these healings, subverting the domination of principalities which manufacture, profit by, or sustain illness. In our ministries, we simply witness that nothing in all of creation can separate us from that love. TW

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The Lutheran-Episcopal concordat:

No reason to panic, but you might want to fasten your seatbelt

by Julie A. Wortman

The church press has been devoting a lot of attention lately to the fact that in 1997 Episcopalians and Lutherans belonging to the 5.2 million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will vote on whether to be in "full communion" with each other by signing a "concordat of agreement" that would permit the "full interchangeability" of Lutheran and Episcopal clergy.

It's a formal arrangement that has been 27 years in the making, but let's face it, you are moving in rare circles if you have found very many church friends or colleagues who understand it. Almost no one I know can get through more than a few sentences of analysis — most of it quite enthusiastic, with commentators pronouncing it "revolutionary," "prophetic" and a "*kairos* in ecumenism" — before finding themselves befuddled.

The mind-numbing dryness of much of the discourse understandably leads most to believe that the concordat is largely an academic matter that will not have much impact on their daily lives. A few, in fact, hope rather desperately that this is the case, because the thought of any sort of deep, sustained contact with the other denomination brings on a panicky concern about identity.

The good news for such uneasy souls, according to Walter Bouman, a professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, who has made the Episcopal-Lutheran concordat a speciality, is that if by "identity" they mean matters of worship and spirituality, they can relax.

"The concordat is not calling for Episcopal and Lutheran congregations to merge," says Bouman. "Both confess the same Christian faith, but they do it in the context of their own traditions," traditions shaped by differences in historic and cultural origins. ELCA Lutherans are of German and Scandinavian descent, whereas Episcopalians tap into an English colonial heritage.

Future clergy of both denominations will be trained to understand both traditions, Bouman says, which should make them acceptable leaders of worship in the limited circumstances where they are invited to do so.

But outside of worship settings, prudent church members on both sides might well want to fasten their seat belts because it could be a bumpy ride.

For one thing, the concordat should mean the beginning of the end of inter-denominational competition for members.

"Both Episcopal and Lutheran churches do not have to be in the same place," Bouman says. If both churches confess the same faith, he says, insisting on the "Episcopalian" or "Lutheran" label is like insisting on a Ford or Mercury when all that is needed is a car.

In the 17th century, "denominationalism helped Christians stop murdering each other in the name of God," Bouman notes, but today it hampers cooperative activity that could have big implications for "the larger social picture."

It may also change the conversation.

"Broader membership means broader dialogue," Bouman states.

"One thing that will surely happen is that Episcopalian upper-class types will have to deal with middle-class Lutherans. Episcopalians will encounter a conservative group in Lutherans and Lutherans are already worried about signs of liberalism in the Episcopal Church."

Looking at the coffee table reading of the denominations, Bouman says, gives a strong clue as to what, in general terms, informs the likely fundamental conflicts the two denominations will face.

"Episcopalians tend to read the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker*," he says, while "Lutherans depend on their local newspapers, *Time* and, quite often, *Reader's Digest*."

Episcopalians are a more diverse group racially, Bouman says ("partly because Lutherans in this country never owned slaves"), and even in terms of class, but "the Episcopal Church has always been the unofficial church of the nation," partly because of its members' social influence.

"Being in full communion with the Lutherans could mute the 'justice' voice of Episcopalians because of Lutheran conservatism," Bouman admits, but in terms of public debate, the new alliance "will bring a very large constituency to bear on matters of social concern.

"Churches are being divided over the political and sociological issues being raised by electoral politics. They don't talk now because they fear competition. A broader commitment to each other reduces that fear. And arriving at a common mind may be a principle way to bring change. Unless our churches can *address* the culture wars, not avoid them, it will be a disaster."

In the meantime, the two denominations must still decide if the Christian unity that Paul extolled in Ephesians should be a priority. The debate will likely be dominated by questions of whether accepting Lutheran clergy who have not been ordained by bishops poses too grave a weakening of holy orders or whether accepting Episcopalians' treasured historic episcopate isn't an unacceptable concession to a hierarchial, insufficiently accountable, top-down institution.

But if the two churches can get past such concerns, Bouman believes, exciting times could be ahead for all.

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*.

Vital Signs

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Ordination: why cut back?

by Jennifer M. Phillips

Jennifer Phillips asks whether the church's quest for alternative models of ministry is leading us to devalue important aspects of the priestly vocation. While sharing her concern that "we not be driven into functionalism by our fear of the future or our perceived lack of resources," The Witness *staff believes that contemporary challenges to a traditional understanding of ordination are inspired by many valid concerns: the eclipse of the ministry of all the baptised, the needs of minority communities for culturally appropriate models, the problem of clergy burnout and the potential for clerical sexual abuse. Are proponents of alternative models throwing out the baby with the bathwater? We invite your response.*

Has the Church lost its theology of holy orders, or perhaps just lost its nerve? In dioceses across the country moratoriums on ordination are being declared, and candidates well advanced in the long process toward ordination have been dropped. There is widespread panic about dwindling financial resources which seems to be driving Commissions on Ministry, Standing Commissions, and bishops.

Models in which clergy are simply liturgical functionaries and consultants on itinerant circuits, or people ordained from and for a local mission without three-year seminary-level education, are gaining in popularity.

In my work on a Commission on Ministry, as a hospital chaplain and as a priest and rector in two dioceses and two provinces, I have heard many complaints about the oversupply of aspirants for holy orders. Almost no one is asking what God might be up to in the Church; just when resources seem so tight, many are being sent forward by their communities as worthy potential priests.

Screening bodies are rightly asking, in this age of individualism, how many aspirants are simply seeking to gratify their own needs to be useful, to have power and attention, or to feel closer to God through ordination. Along with seminaries, they may be doing less well at helping aspirants and parishes distinguish the call to ordination from the first, passionate questing for God which is the proper work of all the baptised.

It seems necessary to revisit our understanding of holy orders in tandem with our renewed attention to the ministry of all the baptised and to catechesis.

Priests are those who, first and foremost, are called to live lives woven in with those they serve, connecting people with the wider Church, both in place and in history. As sacramental ministers they help the people "daily lift life heavenward," and gladly point to the places where God is moving "usward" (to borrow Launcelot Andrewes' word). They are those who constantly come before God with the people on their hearts (Ramsey). They are those who are both deeply rooted in a particular community and also always passing through it.

In a nation with more people than ever who have never heard the Gospel, grown up in any sort of religiously observant home, or had any lived experience of community, are we right to be turning away priests because there are not traditional full-time jobs for them?

The parish priest at the Eucharist must be far more than a liturgical functionary. (S)he gathers the lives of the congregation on the corporal at the offertory along with the bread and wine of creation, and so must know those lives and pray her/his way through them. (S)he pastors not only the individuals in the congregation and its environs, but also the corporate Body. To do this (s)he combines knowledge of the people heard and observed at their prayer, in their homes and workplaces, in parish work, through their confessions and counseling sessions, and through knowing their parents and children and friends over time. Knowing the wealth of stories, pains, and celebrations, the parish priest is ideally situated to be able to preach to those persons in their lives and to gather their prayers for offering at the Lord's Table. The priest also is well-situated to mediate the concerns of the congregation to the structures of the Church at its councils, and to interpret the structures and councils to the people.

If, in a congregation, the various duties of the priest, rector, or vicar were to be divided up among a multitude of capable members, then who would put all the little facets of each person's and the Body's life together, so that they might be offered whole in the Eucharist? One of the most painful aspects of coming to the altar as a new parish priest is that sense of the poverty of not yet knowing and loving the people and having prayer emerge from those depths — of feeling one is stepping into an arranged marriage without having had time to fall in love and weather the first storms together.

The parish priest at the altar, in Anglican tradition, exercises a learned ministry and stands consciously among the cloud of witnesses as one able to tell their stories and transmit their passionate witness for God to the people now present. (S)he should know why every word and gesture of the Eucharist or other rite of the Book of Common Prayer is as it is, why we do one thing and not another, why the ancestors fought and sometimes died for

Jennifer Phillips is rector of Trinity Parish in St. Louis, Mo.

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their meaning, and how to balance the expression of the congregation's unique voice and life with the reliable, stable current of the Church through the ages. In our time and place, this is an extraordinarily complex, controversial task. Three years *of full-time study is a short time to learn* the basics. Most priests go on studying lifelong if their ministries are alive and thriving. Nor is such education procured as effectively in solitary self-study as in a community of learners which includes other pastors who have integrated the wisdom of books, languages, and ideas into their own veteran pastoral practice in parishes and other institutions.

The parish priest's servant ministry centered in baptism and eucharist breaks open her/his life, solitude, and privacy. There is a degree of exposure that would be neither salutory nor tolerable for most members of a congregation which is part of the particular calling of a priest. This differentiates the work of the priest from that of a pastoral counselor, chief executive officer, social worker, educator, or consultant, and makes the lives of clergy families so taxing.

Yet an astonishing grace comes with this priestly silkworm-like work of being *visible, and of taking in and digesting* every atom of life — personal and corporate — and spinning out a thread of meaning which is offered back to the community to weave into their tapestry of life with God.

As we re-examine the theology of holy orders it seems essential that we not be driven into functionalism by our fear of the future or our perceived lack of resources. The discerning bodies of the Church need to be extremely clear in saying to those whom God and the communities are calling to ministry that there may not be salaries to go around, that the places priests are needed may not be where they would choose to serve, and that they will have to live by their wits and skills in the days to come; even that they need a second profession. But in a nation with more people than ever who have never heard the Gospel, grown up in any sort of religiously observant home, or had any lived experience of community, are we *right to be turning away priests because* there are not traditional full-time jobs for them?

Can it be that all these calls are simply mistaken? Or does God have in mind, of which we may know little at present, a future need of the world in raising up these aspirants? The Church should instead be saying to those so called:

"Go out and proclaim the Gospel and gather a church where there isn't one; draw in the people from the marketplaces and office towers and streetcorners and colleges and shelters. If you are willing to walk the way of the cross and connect yourself to its life, we will do our best to equip you and support you with prayer. Go make disciples of all people."

A balm in Gilead

by Marian (Meck) Groot

To Heal the Sin-Sick Soul: Toward a Spirituality of Anti-Racist Ministry, edited by Emmett Jarrett, Episcopal Urban Caucus, Boston, Mass., 1996; 80 pages; $12.00.

If you are looking for balm in Gilead, read *To Heal the Sin-Sick Soul.* A collection of six articles written by and/or for members of the Episcopal Urban Caucus on the subject of racism and the Episcopal Church's response to racism, this little book is a great gift of vision, prophecy, and love.

In the opening speech, "Developing a Spirituality for Anti-Racist Action," Kenneth Leech describes an anti-racist spirituality as one which is "both radical and traditional"; "both materialist and transcendent"; and prepared to face "into the very heart of the mystery of evil." He then lays out eight very practical implications of such a spirituality, including the need to network, "the centrality of conflict and struggle," the importance of self-scrutiny, and the need for quiet contemplation and reflection.

In each of the following contributions, we see such an anti-racist spirituality in motion. It is clear that each of the contributers has been struggling against the sin of racism for a long time. Each brings a clarity about structural and systemic racism as well as a strong understanding of the participation of the church in those systems. What particularly stands out is the recurring call to the leadership of the Episcopal Church to *actively* and *concretely* strategize to create "a church for all races, a church without racism," to do more than pay lip service to its deepest values, to put more "than their toes into the icy waters of economic and political analysis." The contributors look to the leadership of the church to initiate action because racism is about access to resources, the power to create and carry out policy, and the clout to define and shape a theology which undergirds either oppression or liberation.

In the second essay, Byron Rushing describes the shifting paradigm that refuses to work out of the belief that racism is in our nature. This is followed by Paul Abernathy's sermon in which he points up God's willingness to help as soon as we are prepared to act rather than our waiting for God to create a crisis of conscience in our lives. Pamela Chinnis outlines recent changes in the structures and policies of the Episcopal Church which have concrete implications for the church's anti-racist (or racist) practices. Emmett Jarrett urges whites to give up the delusion of whiteness and with it the comforts and privileges that whiteness offers. Finally, in an open letter, Ed Rodman calls on the leaders in the Episcopal Church to initiate dialogue that attempts in concrete ways to address the racial divide exemplified most recently in the polarized reactions to the Simpson verdict and the Million Man March.

This book is not for the faint of heart. But, as Pamela Chinnis shares in her speech, those who believe they are not supposed "to make waves" were not born to live.

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Health benefits approved for same-sex partners by Canadian church

The governing council of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada has rescinded a national prohibition against extending health care coverage to the partners of homosexual employees.

According to Jenny Mason, director of the national church's pension fund, the recommendation to change the policy on same-sex medical coverage was driven by recent decisions of the country's Human Rights Commission in which businesses have been directed to pay such benefits.

Still, some council members opposed the action because it would appear to condone homosexual relationships.

"The law ... requires that we provide health benefits to a partner whether they be gay, straight or common-law," said the bishop of Toronto, Terry Finlay, during the debate. "That is all the pension committee is asking us to recognize."

A remaining barrier to obtaining benefits for partners of same-sex church workers will be local dioceses who disapprove of partnered homosexuals. The national church will recommend that they provide coverage for partners, Mason said, but it is up to the diocese to decide if it is willing to do so.

—based on an *Anglican Journal* report

Bishop of Maine admits betrayal of trust, resigns

Edward C. Chalfant resigned as Bishop of Maine on May 6, following the revelation that he was involved in an extramarital affair with "an unmarried adult lay woman."

Initially, Chalfant had announced he would take a year's voluntary leave of absence during which he would seek therapy, holding out the possibility that he might return to his post. In making that announcement Chalfant said he deeply regretted the "betrayal of trust placed in me by the church, the diocese, and my family." Chalfant and his wife of 36 years, Marydee, have two grown children.

The bishop subsequently decided to resign, he said, because "the diocese has complicated work to do in order to proceed with its mission and ministry, " and he didn't want conjectures about his possible return to impede that work.

Maine's Standing Committee agreed that Chalfant should resign. In announcing the misconduct, the committee had stated that Chalfant's behavior had caused "grave damage to the bishop's relationship with the diocese."

A diocesan convention on May 17was held to begin the process of deciding on next steps for Maine's life as a diocese and search for new episcopal leadership.

— based on an Episcopal News Service report

Conservatives riled by Newark suicide resolution

Some conservative Episcopalians are charging that John Shelby Spong and the Episcopal Diocese of Newark were demonstrating arrogant disregard for the rest of the church in passing a resolution taking the untraditional position that suicide, including assisted suicide, "may be a moral choice for a Christian" under certain limited circumstances.

The action, taken at the diocese's annual convention in late January, was based on the recommendations of a diocesan task force which had conducted a year-long study of assisted suicide and the theological and ethical issues involved.

"I am appalled that a diocesan convention felt itself competent to address so cavalierly this issue with a resolution stating a public change in the church's moral theology," opined one outraged cathedral dean in the conservative periodical, *The Living Church*.

Another irate-sounding commentator, this time writing for Episcopalian's United's newspaper, *United Voice*, noted derisively that "Newark seems to have a task force for any given issue." In addition to the one reporting on assisted suicide, the convention heard this year from a task force on prayer book revision (see *TW*, May 1996) and another on "Christian Mission in an Interreligious World."

Spong, however, claims that his diocese has spoken only for itself. He also rejects the charge that taking on controversial topics is a "public relations campaign to enhance our controversial reputation.

"What we seek to do is to speak to the people of our diocese and through them to the whole Church and then to the world at large," he wrote after the convention.

"Our goal is primarily to raise consciousness, to create an awareness of new aspects of reality, to call these concerns into public debate and to legitimatize these issues for discussion."

The report of Newark's task force on assisted suicide has been forwarded to the Episcopal Church's General Convention and to the New Jersey legislature "for their consideration."

— J.W.

Looking for 'some particular ministerial talents'

With the announcement that the high-profile James Parks Morton will be retiring as dean of the the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the search is on for a replacement. The list of qualifications is extensive, as a national mailing to all active Episcopal clergy recently stated. The right candidate will possess, in addition to "demonstrated skill in institutional leadership and financial development" and a love of New York City, the "ministerial talent" of being "comfortable with and able to minister with and to Jessy Norman, Carl Sagan, Vice President Gore, the waiter at the Amsterdam Café, the Duke of Richmond, politicians, priests, rabbis and homeless people." The new dean should also stand "fully and affirmatively within the Anglican and Episcopal Church tradition and is therefore open to the post-Christian religious reality of our city and world."

Got someone who fits the bill? Write the Search Committee for a Cathedral Dean c/o William McD. Tully, St. Bartholomew's Church, 109 East 50th St., New York, NY 10022.

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'Hospice and spital': the roots of hospital care

[Ed. Note: We've taken the liberty of substituting excerpts of this excellent work for a traditional review.]

Ordered to Care: The dilemma of American nursing, 1850-1945, by Susan Reverby, Cambridge History of Medicine, 1987.

The nineteenth-century hospital, in its appearance and social role, bore little resemblance to its modern equivalent. It was a marginal institution primarily for society's most marginal people: the sick, poor, or displaced members of the lower working class. Most 19th century Americans lived and died never entering, and perhaps never seeing, such places, for the country had only 120 hospitals when the first official national survey was taken in 1873.

The historical terms to define a hospital, a "hospice," or home for the destitute or sick, and a "spital," or foul and loathsome place, had real significance for Americans at that time.

Within the hierarchy of paid labor, the hospital nurse was considered very near the bottom, caught in a degraded job in a fearsome institution. Unlike the professed nurse who became a household member only for the duration of a patient's illness, the hospital nurse was confined to the institution for both home and workplace. Many were partially recovered patients who were pressed into nursing duties. Before the 1870s, no nurses had any formal training or schooling for the work. Hospital nurses were considered the dregs of female society — mainly women who drank themselves into oblivion to endure their seemingly thankless and wretched labors of cleaning, feeding, and watching over the hospital's inmates. In the pejorative words of Florence Nightingale, hospital nurses were women "who were too old, too weak, too drunken, too dirty, too stolid, or too bad to do anything else."

Nineteenth-century medical etiology as well as social welfare structured the hospital's existence. Sharp lines between individuals and their environment, between moral behavior and illness, even between disease entities, had not yet been carefully drawn. For the majority of the hospital's patients, the regimen meted out discipline as well as beef tea and rest. Disease and dependence were intimately linked, and "moral treatment," "Christian nurturance," and exposure to proper discipline were all part of the curing and caring.

Although most institutions served primarily a lower-working-class and semi-chronically ill population, the distinctions between public and voluntary institutions emerged in the 18th century. The public institutions, for the most part, became hospitals by increments as urban almshouses had to provide space for the care of the sick among their indigent inmates. Voluntary hospitals were established by wealthy benefactors because of personal ties to physicians, a belief in moral stewardship, and a realization that some central location had to be found, outside the almshouse, for the "deserving and respectable poor" who were ill. Curability also distinguished the patients of the institutions. Chronically ill or consumptive patients, or those with venereal disease, were often barred from voluntaries.

Hospitals, whether voluntaries or public institutions, were primarily charity institutions supported by funds collected from church societies, donations and bequests, and governmental outlays, although patients were encouraged to pay if possible. In most voluntaries some space was reserved for those who could pay extra for their care. Many hospitals had one or two handsomely appointed rooms with damask drapes and heavy cherry furniture for such "pay patients." But the very existence of such rooms, and the differential treatment afforded these patients, only served as a counterpoint to the institutions' more functional charitable nature. Filth and neglect, rather than fancy drapes, characterized many of the wards in institutions, particularly the larger public hospitals. The woodcut of rats crawling over the comatose body of a young female Bellevue patient that appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1860 drew attention to the worst problems of hospitals. Dirt, vermin, and rampant cross-infection, known as "hospitalism," were common. Benevolence did not necessarily mean comfort or cleanliness.

Public institutions became hospitals by increments as urban almshouses had to provide space for the care of the sick among their indigent inmates.

The necessity for creating institutions for the centralized care of the dependent sick came in part from the religious doctrine of moral stewardship. The doctrine held that divisions between rich and poor were natural and inevitable but that the

Susan Reverby is director of Women's Studies at Wellesley College.

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rich held their wealth in trust for the Lord. "The only sure way to reconcile labor to capital is to show the laborer by actual deeds that the rich man regards himself as the steward of the Master," Bostonians were reminded in a newspaper article on hospitals in 1879.

The attempt to enforce such class reconciliation was fostered by the link between moral and medical cures and the continual metaphorical reference to the hospital as a home. The effort to create strict order and discipline, in the name of home life, permeated the hospital as it did other 19th century social-welfare institutions. Rigid rules for behavior were established to regulate daily life; hours, visiting, and tobacco and liquor consumption were limited. Those who transgressed the regulations faced dietary restrictions and even punishment cells. The paternalism that pervaded the institutions sought to define the boundaries of the patients' daily lives as much as the high walls surrounding the institutions physically confined them.

Patients did not always accept such charity, or disciplining and incarceration, with deference and thankfulness. Most tried to avoid hospitalization. Others were willing to use the institutions. Women at the Boston Lying-In Hospital thought they could return whenever they wanted, leave their babies off while they went out looking for work, or use the hospital for lodging when nothing else could be found.

Trustees, usually male unless the hospital was built by women, controlled daily life in multiple ways. As required by moral stewardship and general business practices, their main responsibility was financial, although deficits were expected and served as indexes of the hospital's usefulness and service. In addition, the trustees were concerned with admissions, rates of pay, extensions of free care, and the screening out of incurable patients. Complaints by patients and staff were listened to by individual trustees who made frequent visits to the wards and clinics.

The hospital superintendent or steward was just below the trustees in authority. Usually male, he ordered supplies, hired and fired servants and nurses, and in general oversaw the running of the institution. If the hospital was large enough, there was also a matron (commonly the superintendent's wife) who organized the daily work of the nurses and servants and was responsible for supervising and for the cooking, washing, and cleaning of this enormous "household."

Sick Woman in Ward Overrun by Rats in Bellevue Hospital. Harper's Weekly, 1860

Most physicians never trained in, worked in, or brought their patients to be cared for in hospitals. A small elite, concerned with gaining more clinical experience or performing rare operations and treating unusual diseases, sought hospital positions. But even for hospital physicians, medical authority did not always translate into institutional power since the hospitals did not depend on the doctors for either their income or sense of purpose.

Hospitals had a very uncomplicated division of labor below the level of physicians. Nightwatchers, as their name implied, came into the larger institutions late in the evening to "watch" the patients until dawn. Head nurses, along with their assistants and orderlies, lived in the institutions and were responsible for whatever nursing care was given. Extra nurses were sometimes brought in daily from outside when needed. A number of laundresses, cooks, and kitchen helpers made up the rest of the work force.

Class and position linked the hospital's patients and workers together as much as it divided them from the trustees, matrons, and physicians. Patient, nurse, and servant were often one and the same person since ambulatory patients were expected to do much of the nursing care. In public institutions, the use of inmates from the near-by almshouse as nurses was common. The role of the public hospital, in particular, as a workhouse for the city's marginal population continued well into the 20th century. In 1913 a New York hospital survey noted:

"In the absence of other institutions where the periodic and semi-respectable drunks can live and work, they can, to the best advantage, both to themselves and to the City, be supported as workers in the City's hospitals."

[Reverby notes that the establishment of nursing schools toward the end of the 19th century transformed the quality of hospital care and caused hospitals to multiply. During the Depression, she adds, hospitals had become big business, and increasingly high-tech. Blue Cross emerged as a means of keeping hospitals solvent.] TW

book review

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Witnesses, the quick and the dead

'Nothing official and not the everyday thing'

by Julie A. Wortman

The official purpose of one of the small rooms in the neo-natal intensive care unit of New York's Columbia Presbyterian Hospital is to provide temporary storage for frequently needed medical equipment. But by pushing the machines close to the walls and drawing a hospital curtain down the center Euthemia Kenton and two of her nurse colleagues on the night shift have managed to claim a portion of this crowded space for a need that arises when technology reaches its limits.

"It's a clean, quiet place where parents can have some privacy as they grieve the death of their baby," the soft-spoken Jamaican Anglican says of the simply furnished space. "We've put down a carpet, some rocking chairs and a table with a vase of flowers. We give the parents a chance to bathe their dead baby, to dress it in something clean. I tell them, 'Look at your baby, touch your baby.' We don't want parents to leave the hospital without having held their children. If their baby was born sick they had very few chances."

Some parents will spend an hour in this "grieving room," the 57-year-old neonatal ICU specialist says, others as long as two or three.

What Kenton and her colleagues do on these occasions "is nothing official and not the everyday thing," she says. With chaplains available in the hospital 24 hours a day, there is often no need. And in the 20 years that Kenton has worked at this upper Manhattan hospital, the number of prematurely born babies who manage to survive the respiratory problems, infections, hemorrhaging, anemias and other ailments to which very pre-term cardio-vascular and immune systems are vulnerable has increased dramatically — to better than 90 percent. Kenton's own grandaughter, Brittany, who just finished her first year of elementary school, is part of that positive statistic.

In this country you have to be in an intensive-care situation to get A-1 care.

Euthemia Kenton

"Younger nurses just take the technology for granted, but I can see the difference between now and how it was when I began in obstetrics — when we had nothing like this unit and the survival rate for many of these babies was poor."

Kenton emigrated to the U.S. in 1968, armed with degrees in nursing and midwifery she had earned in the West Indies. Her highly specialized knowledge in neonatal care has come through courses, seminars, trainings, professional gatherings and, most importantly, continuous hands-on experience. Up until a few years ago, when she decided she needed a break from administrative responsibilities, she was the neo-natal ICU unit's head nurse.

But although the nursing care Kenton and her colleagues provide, whether part of the unit's official or unofficial offerings, meets high standards of excellence, the satisfaction she takes in that fact has begun to sour.

"In this country you have to be in an intensive-care situation to get A-1 care," she says, but outside of such situations "people are being neglected."

Kenton cites a recent conversation with an RN who works in a hospital AIDS unit. "She was really upset. She talked about coming to work and finding patients lying in urine-soaked beds, their call-lights having gone unanswered for hours at a time. She said the other nurses didn't seem to care," a phenomenon that

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.*

Kenton believes reflects a general situation of increasing demoralization among nursing professionals.

"Nurses are getting stressed out," she states bluntly.

Kenton speaks out of more than 10 years of experience as an official representative and officer of the union which represents the 1600 registered nurses who work at Columbia Presbyterian — a chapter of the New York State Nurses Association.

"I first got involved because of a restructuring in which my position was combined with another position. I ended up with with twice the responsibility and no increase in salary. It didn't seem fair."

With government cutbacks for Medicare and Medicaid, such "economizing" strategies have only increased, Kenton says.

"We've been negotiating a new contract for the past six months. The hospital would like to cut out everything it can to support big salaries at the top, some as much as $1 million when you count the perks." Kenton makes a base salary of $50,250.

In addition to reducing the length of time patients stay in the hospital, the hospital's administrators would like to "cluster" patients with different problems on the same floor in order to reduce the number of nurses needed, reduce continuing education funds for nurses by nearly 80 percent and eliminate the years of professional experience a nurse brings to the job as a factor in calculating his/her salary.

"Experience has been what has brought nurses' salaries up over the last 10 years," Kenton says with some frustration. "The hospital thinks that lower pay won't matter if there are fewer jobs, but experienced nurses won't work for nothing. A lot of people are taking early retirement to get out."

Those who can't retire and manage to keep their jobs face the continuing stress of too many patients and a diminishing sense of expertise.

"They work through their breaks because there is too much to do," says Kenton, "and the more they do that the closer they get to burnout. One nurse cannot cover all her patients and still have time to turn someone over, wash out a mouth, or rub a sore back."

To get that kind of care in today's big-city hospitals, Kenton advises, a patient needs to bring a loved one with them, "to be their hands and voice." Otherwise, the urine-soaked bedding which shocked Kenton's friend on her AIDS floor is an unpleasant, but not unfathomable, eventual likely result.

In fact, nurses who appear to be shirking their responsibilities or only going through the motions are sometimes themselves suffering from a deeply potent neglect, Kenton believes.

"I tell the younger nurses I work with that they have to remember that they are patient advocates, that the patient has rights," Kenton says. "But I also work hard to treat them with respect, letting them know they have a lot to bring to their work — a lot of knowledge, a lot to teach me and others."

Those she mentors in this fashion seem to appreciate the encouragement. "They seem surprised and pleased to think that an old experienced nurse like me could learn from them," Kenton says with amusement.

According people dignity in this way — or by offering them the sheltering privacy of a drawn curtain in an intensive-care-unit storage room — may not be the official, everyday thing a registered nurse is expected to do to reduce costs and maximize hospital efficiency, but it is a small, vital act of resistance to the dehumanizing effects of the balance-sheet forces which seem to have hospitals securely in their power. TW

Study guides

The Witness study guide packet contains everything needed to run a lively forum. This can prove an ideal process for a small parish group, seminary class, campus ministry program or faith-sharing group. Packets of eight copies of one issue and a study guide are $25.

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It isn't often one encounters a magazine like The Witness. *Strong stuff, this magazine, which invites the reader not to relax but to reflect. For* The Witness *is nothing if not challenging.*

— The Utne Reader

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"I believe that community support is so strong because we provide for the community whether we can afford to or not," Effie Chamberlain, director of operations, Grace Cottage Hospital in Vermont (Story on p. 17).

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Family reunions/family history

The Witness

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The Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest
Austin, Texas

Faces of Islam

PLEASE SEND THE MAY ISSUE of *The Witness* to Imam Djojic Osman in Underwood, Australia. He was most impressed with the Islam issue. It's amazing how every issue comes at a most opportune time. Please know how much my subscription is valued and treasured.

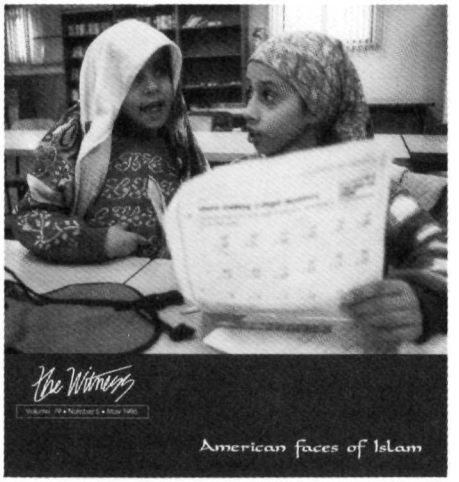
Maureen Clegg
Rosalie, Australia

'Left-wing Anglicans'

PLEASE SIGN ME UP. I was pleased to actually see the phrase "left-wing Anglican" in print [in your ad], as it is sometimes considered an oxymoron by the world at large. I have been both — on the democratic left and an Anglican in the historic catholic tradition — for years, but have despaired of ever finding a community where those two parts of my life are not seen as evidence of severe schizophrenia.

That's a view I find unfounded and unfair, of course. In the world's theory (after Marxism, as Ronald Aronson has put it) and theology (after Heidegger and Rahner), the two not only meet but almost seem to entail one another. It's just that I thought I might be alone in trying to trace out those implications.

And I have frankly gotten tired of what I call the pincer movement of praxis: on one side, sophomoric anti-religious rhetoric from the left, as though the core of Christianity — the crucified and risen Logo — could have anything to do with a semi-fascist ideology of obedience and obscurantism that has usurped its name and symbols in pursuit of money and political power. And on the other side, reactionary rants from Anglicans who seem to think that any admission of our tradition's essential ties to the catholic church, "the charms of the chasuble," somehow implies homophobia, Victorian smarm and the



Dickensian dystopia of the Republican party.

John M. Kappes
Cleveland Heights, OH

I RECENTLY USED ARTICLES from *The Witness* (economic justice and lying) for an ethics class I am taking at a Jesuit school. The articles met my need and the professor's response was positive. Thanks!

M.L. Scott
Silverdale, WA

I READ *THE WITNESS* FOR YEARS. In fact, I believe the long-term effect of reading *The Witness* helped me pass my G.O.E.s [General Ordination Exams] back in 1982. Just recently I received a copy of the sin issue, March 1995.

This December I went on retreat at a yoga center and began feeling bereft of Christian symbols. I just happened to bring the magazine along for reading. However, I used the front cover [by Marek Czarnecki] as my Christian icon. I propped it up on the window sill. As I prayed my way through the week, I found the image a source of great comfort.

I would like to subscribe again.

I would appreciate an article on the use of 401K or 403Bs. As someone in the regular work force these retirement plans mean a great deal, especially to small income earners. Some plans don't provide for socially conscious mutual funds, i.e. Pax World Fund. I am fascinated by the tension between money and social justice, and in particular how to live a spiritual life and yet be real enough to survive economically. Food for thought.

E. Louise Forrest
Forrest Landscape Design
West Roxbury, MA

Witness criticism

KINDLY ERASE ALL MY NAMES from your lists.

CEASE & DESIST from Further Mailings.

Thanks for past efforts.

I do not believe in the non-existent.

I do not believe in people who believe in the non-existent.

Q: Are religions insanity?

A: Yes.

C.C. Pool
Water Mill, NY

Witness praise

I AM CONSTANTLY GLADDENED at the high quality magazine which you produce month after month. It has got to be the best magazine of its kind in the country.

H. Coleman McGehee
Bloomfield Hills, MI

THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER YEAR OF thought-provoking articles, poems, news, etc. Thank you for enabling me and so many others to seek first God's kingdom and its justice.

Paul Butler
London, England

BEAUTIFUL MAGAZINE — both aesthetically and spiritually.

Robert J. Dobic
Springfield, PA

I GO BACK TO THE BILL SPOFFORD days with *The Witness*. I haven't been receiving it — probably expired during the many moves I've made. Now I would like to receive *The Witness*. It's always superb!

Roger Blanchard
Round Pond, ME

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Tribute to heroes

WHEN NEWS CAME OF THE assassination of President Kennedy, Dr. Howard E. Thurman (himself now deceased) said of this fallen hero in his eulogy given in Lagos, Nigeria: "The time and place of a man's life on earth are the time and place of his body, but the meaning and significance of his life are as vast and far-reaching as his gifts, his times, and the passionate commitment of all his powers can make it."

Recently, our beloved country in general, and the African American and Jewish communities in particular, sustained great losses in the passing of several of their heroes, whose names will forever and indelibly be etched on the pages of history as well as our collective memories.

On the very same day, we received "a double whammy" when word came of the passing of Carl Burton Stokes and Ronald Henry Brown.

Then less than two weeks later, we learned of the passing of Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld, retired, the spiritual leader of Fairmount Temple in Beachwood for 28 years.

No history of the civil rights struggle would be accurate, were it to exclude the contributions of these fallen heroes. Further, any African American who does not know and appreciate the work of Rabbi Lelyveld (and luminaries such as Rabbi Stephen Wise) is tragically and pathetically uninformed.

We know well how Ambassador Stokes rose from the public housing projects of Cleveland to local, national and international prominence. He shattered to smithereens the long-held but spurious notion that African Americans could not govern — and do so responsibly and compassionately.

We know well how Secretary Brown rose from Harlem to local, national and international prominence. With implicit trust in the essential goodness of people, they built coalitions and proved that people of divergent backgrounds and opinions can indeed "come and reason together" for the common good of all.

What is remarkable about Ambassador Stokes and Secretary Brown is that in their ascent to power and prominence, they never forgot their roots. They took their communities with them and made us all stand taller. They must surely have known well the words of Mordecai to his cousin, Esther: "Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for such a time as this."

The record of their valor refreshes African Americans, especially when we consider that national embarrassment who holds a lifetime seat on the highest tribunal in our land.

What many may not know is that Rabbi Lelyveld could have chosen to luxuriate in suburban comfort and isolation. He could have "passed by on the other side." However, his understanding of the compelling and prophetic urge and tenets of his faith would not permit him to make peace with the oppression of any race or class anywhere.

He knew what God required of him, as said the Prophet Micah, and he lived and acted on this knowledge.

Beaten in Mississippi in order that America might be freed from its "gloomy past," Rabbi Lelyveld identified in thought, words and actions, gifts and abilities, with the struggles of African Americans to be legally, politically and socially unfettered "in a land in which their fathers were strangers."

Seeing Cleveland, America and world as they were, and daring to envision what they yet could become, Rabbi Lelyveld acted on that "ominous stern Delphic whisper, 'they enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin.'"

Well said Lowell in "The Present Crisis":

> "Then to side with truth is noble,
> When we share her wretched crust,
> Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
> And 'tis prosperous to be just;
> Then it is the brave man chooses,
> While the coward stands aside
> Till the multitude make virtue
> Of the faith they had denied."

"Let us now praise famous men.....They made a name for themselves by their valor." We are all immeasurably the richer because they touched our lives.

In the Christian tradition we say, "inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Austin R. Cooper, Sr.
Past President,
Cleveland Branch of NAACP

Classifieds

Economic justice

The founding conference of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice is scheduled for Nov. 22-24 at Mercy Center in Burlingame, Calif. near San Francisco. Workshops will focus on the church's role in community development and with financial institutions. Contact John Hooper, Economic Justice Commission, Diocese of Michigan, 4800 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48201; 313-833-4413 for further information.

Vocations

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

Marketing Director

The Other Side, a Christian magazine on peace and justice issues, is seeking a full-time marketing director to strategize outreach to new and current subscribers, conceptualize and produce creative marketing materials, and analyze results. Experience in marketing and/or magazine publishing desirable. Excellent benefits. Applications being accepted immediately. Contact Hiring Team, *The Other Side*, 300 W. Apsley Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144 (215-849-2178).

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication. For instance, items received January 15 will run in March.

When ads mark anniversaries of deaths, ordinations, or acts of conscience, photos — even at half column-width — can be included.

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This month Vital Signs *reports on reactions to the decision of the ecclesiastical court to dismiss the "heresy" charges against Walter Righter.*

Cover: Mural in Philadelphia, Penn., commemorating the black family, artist unknown. Photographed by Deborah Moses-Sanks, Impact Visuals.

Back Cover: Harris family reunion in Iredell County, N. C. by Robert Amberg, Impact Visuals. Text by Trish Hanly of St. Helena, Calif. is reprinted from The Sun *magazine. See p. 22.*

Family histories as freedom tools

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Many of us will be asked to attend family reunions this summer — to visit those we do not choose but with whom we are linked forever.

Most reunions will include handouts, maybe even T-shirts, depicting the family tree. Someone who spends hours poring over census data will attempt to make vivid the lives of those long dead with whom you have a blood tie.

Preparing for this issue, Marianne Arbogast mentioned that she felt like she had been invited to watch another family's home movies — material would flicker by without context or meaning for any but those who had lived the lives. Can't a search for pedigree distract us from our ultimate identity? she asked.

Another friend, raised by adoptive parents and estranged from birth parents, asked, how do you define family? Aren't those you *choose* to live your life with family?

Linda Strohmier, Episcopal Church Evangelism officer, who shares my interest in family history even to tracking an ancestor through the records of the *Bibliotéque Nationale* in Paris, offers a definitive answer — through faith we have family, not by blood but by spirit.

I know that all three of these women speak truth.

Like each of them, I have good friends whom I call family and sometimes church. And yet, I return over and over again to genealogical libraries tracking my ancestors. When I find the name of a great-great-grandmother's parents, I feel the communion of saints opening out. I imagine the people whose lives became the flesh of my parents. Sometimes I think I can almost hear their sighs and songs.

For those who are adopted, I know the traditions of their adoptive parents are key, but I believe they also dream in the symbols of their blood lines. When people talk of past lives, I suspect they are recalling lives lived by their ancestors.

I suspect that there is even a desire on the part of the ancestors for our histories to be uncovered. It is common to hear that people found a homestead, a grave, missing records entirely by intuition. A good friend has dreams of African American families — she can see them through the wall. Only last year she learned that one of her ancestor's homes was on the underground railroad.

American history is more diverse, more dubious and more human than we have ever been taught. And we have a place in it.

Fascinated by a third great-grandfather, I found (through an impulsive flip through a card catalogue) a poem that he had written about his own life for someone in the generations to come. His story about himself is mixed. Lauded by others as a doctor, Christian and soldier, Atlee reveals himself as a risk-taker who gambled and had to be carried home from the bars before he found religion. His self-description is so much more alive than the stories told by those who use family history to justify themselves.

My experience with Atlee is just the beginning of the revelations promised in genealogical research. What's true for a great-great-great-grandfather is true for the nation. American history is more diverse, more dubious and more human than we have ever been taught. And we have a place in it that affects our current relationships. Not knowing our history — even denying it — can make us crazy and can help perpetuate myths, like those of racial purity (page 16).

During a visit to the Mormon genealogical library in Salt Lake City, Erika Meyer met people who discovered immediate relationships to the Salem witch trials and slave trading (page 12).

Gloria House Manana recently learned of her great-grandmother's death at the hands of the Klan — an incident her elders rarely discuss (page 20).

Nancy Wanshon has made a vocation of gathering pieces of American Indian history to restore her own connection to her people and to heal the memory of her tribe (page 30).

Knowing who we are and who we have come from can help us break free of the imperial version of history, according to Ched Myers (page 8). The particulars of our stories contain the nuance and the secrets that can break open not only family systems, but the imperial story that distorts the truth and limits our imaginations.

Honoring our actual history is a way of joining the prayers offered by those seven generations behind us with our own for those who will follow. TW

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

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Proud to be part of the family

by Anne E. Cox

In general, family reunions haven't meant much to me. When I was a kid we went to the Reeves Family Reunion and to the Pritchard Family Reunion. I think my great-grandmother's mother was a Reeves and my great-grandfather's mother was a Pritchard. My great-grandparents and my grandmother knew almost everyone. My role was to be polite when summoned by my elders to be introduced to Great-great-aunt Mary or Cousin Clyde. The food, I recall, was always good. Both of those large southern families know how to make fried chicken, country ham biscuits, deviled eggs, lima beans with corn and pound cake. The food and the stories my elders would tell on the way home about whose children were doing what and who is not looking like she'll make it to next year's reunion were the chief benefits of those annual excursions.

One of the Pritchards compiled a genealogy tracing the family back to Wales — probably stopping when a connection to royalty was established — pinpointing 1720 as when the first Pritchard landed in this country, immediately settling in Piedmont North Carolina, where most of the family still resides. On the other side, my mother's sister has traced out their ancestry, aided significantly by the Freedom of Information Act and computers, and presented copies to all concerned one Christmas. None of these tomes have held my attention longer than the time it took to make sure my date of birth was correct. (Though I did look up Anne Hairsine, my great-great-grandmother, for whom I was named — the family lore is that she was the youngest of 13 children who came with their mother from England after their father, a carpenter, fell to his death while working on building a church.)

I've had to look outside of the official family reunions and genealogical charts to find out about the silent branch of the family, those men and women who don't have spouses or children attached to their names, those bachelors and spinsters sprinkled throughout all of our family trees. I want to know their stories, because my suspicion is that their stories are somewhat similar to mine. Currently, in my aunt's compendium, I am one of those single relatives, caught in an endless childhood, since adulthood seems to be contingent upon marriage and children. My younger married sister appears more adult than I do, especially now that she has a daughter.

The history in which I am interested is the history of my gay and lesbian family. I have devoured books like *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past.* There is a whole sub-genre of "coming-out stories" that at various times have satisfied my craving for knowing how others have handled that right of passage for all gay and lesbian people. I read this literature to learn about the heroic as well as the silent, the joys and the struggles, the pioneers and the followers in my family.

I've had to look outside of the official genealogical charts to find out about the silent branch of the family, those men and women who don't have spouses or children.

Probably the greatest reunions of this great gay family are the various Pride parades around the country. Not being one for big parties, I've never participated in the parades, but it sure was a kick when I happened to be in San Francisco five years ago the day of their Pride Parade. The family is quite diverse. I felt a kinship with everyone that day.

I have small reunions, friendships with other lesbians who gather for dinner, and larger gatherings of lesbian and gay clergy. Every time this branch of my family comes together, I know I have something in common with every single person there. We've had to come out, acknowledge rather than suppress our sexual orientations; we are assaulted constantly by negative family images, hearing from legislators condemning our "lifestyle" and spewing anti-"special rights" rhetoric; we know we might be in physical danger if we even hold hands in public with those closest to us; we live in a world of "don't ask — don't tell"; those of us within the church have to figure out how to live with debates and trials to determine our fitness as dearly beloved children of God. And so we know we are kin.

I like knowing this history because I feel less alone. I know there are others who have made life-giving choices similar to mine; some have suffered, some have not. It's sort of like knowing about the history of the early church, when some were martyred because they were Christians, while others lived quiet, faithful lives, accepted and tolerated, and still others sacrificed to the Roman gods in public while professing Christian beliefs privately.

I also like knowing this history because it is about an irrepressible Spirit, an incarnational Spirit that takes life and love seriously. It's about a family and a spirit that lives in spite of the pervasive pressure to consign us to dead branches of other family trees. TW

An Episcopal priest, **Anne E. Cox** is a contributing editor of *The Witness.*

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Hotdogs, iced tea, forgotten promises, summernights

by Sherry Hewett

Mother
stands in the
driveway

eyes
waiting
bright
with all we have been,
heart
full
of what we might yet be.

We come home on hot, sultry July days
wriggling out of cars, tumbling in to and out of arms,
brimming with offerings:
t-shirts, sunglasses, cool pastasalads, warm hotdogs,
Fritos, wines, puppies, rubber rafts, sandals,
apologies, compliments,
clichés about having been remiss
in this or that,
all
interlaced with hopes of
new beginnings.

We are sanctified as
last year's disappointments, hurts
go down with
shared meals.

We become each other's seasons
marking the passing of time.

We wonder at the changes life has wrought;
help each other ignore those we are afraid of,
embrace the ones
that deliver us to
courage.

Sisters plant new flowers
on Daddy's grave at the
church cemetery.
I thank the
giant oak tree
for being his sentinel, heavenly marker.

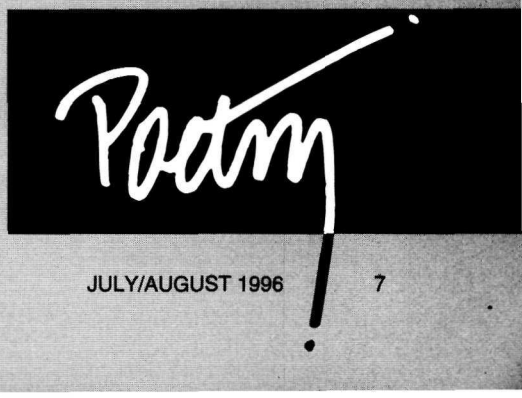
****

Reluctantly, yet ready, renewed, redeemed
we leave
one by one,
hallowed by one another's touch
Light kisses, moist hugs,
promises we know may be un-
fulfilled
mark our departure
til next year
when again,

Mother
stands in the driveway
consecrating us with her love
helping us to see what we are,
a family.

— Sherry Hewett lives in Midland, Tex.

Poetry submissions can be sent to Leslie Williams at 2504 Gulf Ave., Midland, Tex. 79705.



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Family history as political therapy

by Ched Myers

Ched Myers leads workshops on national spirituality and politics which include a focus on family history. Myers, a Witness *contributing editor, lives in Los Angeles.*

Most of us in the U.S. suffer from a profound alienation from history. In our imperial culture, inconvenient historical narratives have tended to be silenced while legitimating narratives have been mystified. We live with a peculiarly unaccountable, if not amnesiac, relationship toward the past.

Whether we recognize it or not, however, our past remains embedded in our present, an unbilical cord between the children of today and the parents of long ago. What Freud said about the self ("That which is unconscious is bound to be repeated") Santayana affirmed in terms of society: "Those who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it."

In light of this, I have found that family history work can be an important tool in deepening our commitment to the theology and practice of justice and peace. It enables us to discover how our ancestors participated in and were impacted by wider collective historical experience. In so doing we discover how trauma (economic displacement or flight from war), oppression (victimization by prejudice or religious persecution) or privilege has shaped our own family story. By grieving tragedy and celebrating goodness we can heal the alienated past.

The "geneagram" is a tool that family therapists look to for evidence of system-stressors in one's genealogy. While therapists look for alchoholism, suicide and divorce in order to determine intergenerational patterns of trauma, we should also include factors such as cultural tradition, social location and economics.

I encourage participants to try to trace their genealogy back to the generation(s) that emigrated to North America — a formidable but revealing task. We explore the following kinds of questions:

- Under what circumstances did the immigrant generation leave, and how voluntary was it?
- Who did they displace upon arrival in North America, in terms of land and or work?
- What discrimination did they experience, and what strategies of survival or accomodation resulted?

We then look at questions of "cultural erasure" and assimilation over time. When and how were native languages or dialects suppressed? How did traditional family patterns and distinctive ethnic practices atrophy? How many times did the family move regions? What about ethnic mixing, segregation or racial tensions?

Most of us in the U.S. suffer from a profound alienation from history. We live with a peculiarly unaccountable, if not amnesiac, relationship toward the past.

We next probe socio-economic issues. How, if at all, was land procured and wealth obtained and consolidated from generation to generation? What entitlements were passed on, and what internecine rivalries resulted? Was the family fractured along class lines? How was the family system shaped over time by experiences of unemployment or elite work, by poverty or affluence, by education or lack thereof? What kinds of opportunities were there for women?

Finally we look at political factors. What wars or revolutions impacted our ancestors? What relationship was there to slavery or to the many "Indian wars" across the continent?

This work can show us how the structures of gender, race, and class privilege or oppression have shaped our own families. But it can be difficult work. As significant as what we do know about our family stories is what we do not know, since much information has been suppressed or forgotten. Moreover, our families' self-narratives are inevitably layered with legends and half-truths, as certain things have been idealized, scapegoated, or covered up. For these reasons participants often feel frustrated in this inquiry, or are surprised at how the exercise provokes deep feelings of anxiety, confusion, or sadness.

At one workshop, a woman from New Orleans began to weep as she remembered her Cajun grandfather reading to her from the prayerbook in French. A priest grimaced as he told of the civil struggle in Ireland during the 1920s that resulted in his family's migration and of the anti-Irish sentiment they encountered in the U.S. A friend from Nebraska was deeply troubled when, at his family centennial, he discovered that his German immigrant great-great-grandfather had been given squatters rights on Indian land through the Homestead Act of 1862. A Canadian school teacher told about how his 19th- century Scottish ancestors were given cheap one-way tickets

Dierdre Luzwick is an artist in Cambridge, Wis.

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The Oracle

Dierdre Luzwick

to the end of the train line in western Canada, and seemed to understand that they were being used as a "buffer class" between the wilderness and the settled cities.

At another workshop I was impressed at the recurring phenomenon of "family jokes" that allude to "shady" circumstances in the immigrant generation. One woman spoke about her Italian grandfather's "Mafia" connections; another referred to her ancestors as "Irish rogues"; a third man shared that his Swiss grandparents were laughingly called "cow-thieves." My own father used to joke that his Mexican ancestors "should have stolen land instead of horses." These are all related as humorous family lore, yet one wonders whether they might not articulate an unconscious derogation of one's own immigrant roots. Might this subtle form of self-contempt be a way of distancing oneself from embarrassing class origins, or of coping with the pain of severance from the homeland — or both?

Therapists are beginning to recognize the ways in which contemporary immigrant families trade their mental health (which is embedded in cultural identity) for conformity, in order to survive both racism and economic marginalization in the strange and new land. What toll did these same trade-offs take on our ancestors? Does persistant anti-immigrant sentiment in America — a nation of immigrants — suggest that there is something unresolved in our collective unconscious about these traumas?

We have lauded the immigrant habit of remaking their names, their stations and their destinies. But Wallace Stegner reminds us that "the rootlessness that expresses energy and a thirst for the new and an aspiration toward freedom and personal fulfillment has just as often been a curse. Our migratoriness has hindered us from becoming a people of communities and traditions."

Excavating family texts helps unmask myth and reality in the American "melting pot" experience, particularly concerning social mobility and displacement. It also clarifies the socio-historical matrix of inherited family patterns. These can be as shadowy as secrets concerning miscegenation, as simple as why certain foods are enjoyed, or as fundamental as the tendency for one parent's cultural or class heritage to receive more emphasis in a family than the other's.

With this historical pedagogy, Third World students might not feel quite so alienated, for they would have equal place to tell their stories and vent their feelings about past injustices. Dominant culture students, on the other hand, would learn that history is about "open" wounds, not a closed and irrelevant past.

Connecting our own family texts with the wider historical context offers us an understanding of who we truly are. This is a different way of learning history from our rote memorization of the names and deeds of presidents and generals in school. It is historical narrative from the perspective of regular folk. In such an approach we assuredly encounter the main plot lines of the dominant history: in the case of my family, a major European war, the effects of the English industrial revolution and the saga of the transcontinental railroad. But we also meet rich ethnic variations, hidden stories, and regional sub-plots: Wisconsin farmers, Bavarians in New Orleans, and Hispanics in the gold fields.

How different the teaching and learning of history in school would be if it proceeded upon such inductive lines! Why not allow a portrait of bigger historical events and forces to emerge from the reconstructed texts of each student's family story? Rather than committing disembodied dates and names to short term memory, I suspect students would become interested in historical data that is linked to their family. This was certainly the case for me. As an anti-war activist I am interested in the Franco-Prussian war because it made some of my ancestors refugees and resisters. The Jacobs' emigrated from Bavaria to Louisiana to escape the emerging German empire and the Franco-German war in 1870.

As an advocate for immigrants' rights I am interested in the social history of early 19th-century England because it pushed my ancestors out. I yearn to know why a poor man would leave the Azores for California. Francisco Mendosa came to California in 1848 via Veracruz Mexico, and married a Mexican Californian. He ended up a day laborer in the Sierra foothills.

With such an historical pedagogy Third World students might not feel quite so alienated, for they would have equal place to tell their stories and vent their feelings about past injustices. Dominant culture students, on the other hand, would learn that history is about "open" wounds, not a closed and irrelevant past. Everyone would find things to feel proud about as well as to mourn. In short, such students would get to know the real America — one they would want to remember.

"In this way history can serve as cultural therapy, releasing for us and our students the repressed images of our full humanity," writes anthropologist Christopher Vecsey. I concur with him that by re-connecting with history we "envision ourselves darkly" so that we can in turn "imagine ourselves richly." TW

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Anti-immigrant vigilantes

Latino activists in San Diego have denounced a vigilante group calling itself the Airport Posse, which has been patrolling the San Diego International Airport looking for illegal immigrants boarding planes to other U.S. cities. The group's members, who carry video cameras and wear T-shirts with a logo which resembles the U.S. Border Patrol insignia, have been impersonating federal officers and intimidating people on the basis of their skin color, critics charge. A temporary restraining order barring the group's activities was secured at the end of May.

***The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/24/96**

Disarmament fast

Tom and Donna Howard-Hastings, jailed in Wisconsin for nonviolent civil disobedience at the site of Project ELF (a component of the U.S. nuclear missile-launching command structure), began a fast May 19 against the court's protection of a facility which they believe to be in violation of "international and natural laws." The fast is a relay, with Tom Howard-Hastings taking the first week and Donna Howard-Hastings continuing the second week.

"We are inviting any citizen who wants to participate in this effort to shut down Project ELF by nonviolent force to join in this disarmament community fast," Tom Howard-Hastings writes. "We will break fast when the judge acts to enjoin further ELF operations (except dismantlement), recuses himself or until October 9 [World Hunger Day]."

They ask that anyone wishing to participate write one of them in jail (221 E. 7th, Ashland, WI 54806) to let them know which days you will fast; write Judge Eaton, Ashland County Courthouse, Ashland, WI 54806; and contact media and/or elected representatives informing them of your act of conscience.

Eat what your ancestors ate

The healthiest diet for you may be the foods your ancestors ate, according to ethnobotanist Gary Nabhan. Nabhan's theory — that ethnic groups' metabolisms adapted to the foods available in their surrounding environments — has been supported by research among the native O'odham people of southern Arizona.

Although diabetes was virtually unheard of among the O'odham until 50 years ago, they now suffer the highest rate of diabetes of any ethnic group worldwide. Fifty percent of adults over 35 are affected, and the diabetes-related mortality rate is 10.8 times that of European Americans.

When O'odham individuals switched to the desert foods of their ancestors (including mesquite pods, cacti fruits, acorns and chia seeds), they lost weight and their health problems often disappeared. Many of these foods contain a high proportion of "slow-release" starch, and also slow the digestion and absorption processes. According to Nabhan, the sugar-absorbing metabolism of the O'odham evolved to match the foods they traditionally harvested.

***WomenWise*, Spring, 1994**

Stringfellow's influence

I attended the May conference at Washington and Lee University on the life and legacy of William Stringfellow. The conference was broken into three conversations: vocation, faith-based politics, and rebuilding the city — voices from the margins.

Vocation in Stringfellow's understanding, is nothing more than being human and celebrating human life within the event of the fall. Stringfellow lived this by moving to the margin. From the beginning of his life as a middle class Episcopalian youth, each step he chose led him to the periphery. Instead of pursuing the priesthood, he chose to remain a lay person who studied theology. Instead of taking up his place in a prestigious law firm after graduating from Harvard, he moved to Harlem and represented the poor, homosexuals, and people on heresy charges. His whole vocational life is seen as an attempt to bear witness to the reality of life while surrounded by the power of death and destruction. The job of the church is to claim the freedom to die and move to the margin.

In the second conversation we learned that for Stringfellow the Bible is a political book that undermines the ruling establishment. I felt that Jim Wallis' and Michael Lerner's presentations, although solid, seemed to suggest that Stringfellow would sanction their political agendas (the Call to Renewal and the Politics of Meaning respectively). Although Stringfellow may have, if he were alive to speak for himself, sanctioned their agendas, in all of my reading of Stringfellow I have never seen him give any hint of a political agenda. In most places, I read of resisting the dominant culture and the political agendas of the powers.

For me, the conversation on rebuilding the city was the most profound. The talk I keep coming back to is Eugene Rivers' comments on the reigning principality in the U.S.: white supremacy (See *The Witness,* 9/96). It is his contention and one that I am coming to believe that the ideology of white supremacy has influenced every area of cultural and social level to such an extent that our entire system, from our economic life to our social policy, has been adversely affected. He sited Saxton's book, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic, The Wages of Whiteness* by Roediger and *The Invention Of The White Race* by Ted Allen. He concludes, "A radical conversion to Biblical faith frees us from the irrational idolatry we have created."

—Joe Sellepack, Kalamazoo, MI

A package of six videotapes from the conference is available for $30. Contact Margaret Williams, Frances Lewis Law Center, Washington and Lee Law School, Lexington, VA 24450; (540) 463-8509

Short takes

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Tales from the quest:
visiting the Morman History Library

by Erika Meyer

The passage of time has always fascinated me. As a child I was awed by the notion that the present I currently resided in was once inhabited by other people; I told my mother that I would be an archeologist. As an adolescent I spent afternoons scrutinizing family pictures in my grandparents' basement, assigning mythic status to persons and events that caught my imagination. I especially remember an uncle who died young on faraway Iwo Jima. The past, a present which had slipped away, now shimmered with personal and ancestral gods and goddesses.

Recently, I spent two afternoons interviewing others about how they experienced the lure of the past, and their sense of connection to kin long gone from this life. I found my interviewees studiously searching books, databases and microfiche at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (commonly referred to as "the L.D.S." or "the Mormons") runs the modern four-story library free of charge for church members and non-members alike. As explained to me by a former member of the church, L.D.S. teaching holds that the unit of salvation is the family, not the individual.

"We believe that there is a perfect chain back to Adam for every human being," explains Stephanie Provo, a Family History Records major at BYU (Brigham Young University). "Our work is to figure out the links. Our church teaches that our ancestors who have not had a chance to hear the Gospel are in the spirit world. I can help my relatives by being their proxy here on earth. I can be baptized for each of them in the Temple and do other work on their behalf. This will link the family correctly. If we do our part on earth we can be together eternally at the end of time."

Almost everyone, whether Mormon or not, seemed earnestly engaged by their labors. I wanted to know what brought them to Utah, traveling from Texas or British Columbia or Switzerland to search for the name of a great-great-great-grandparent. What was behind the search? And why was almost everyone I spoke with so interesting to listen to?

"Genealogical research is the third largest hobby in the United States behind stamp and coin collecting," said Gordon (who asked that I not use his last name). His family had a Thanksgiving tradition of reading aloud each year their lineal descent from the Mayflower. At 11 he began doing his own family research and at age 22 with a history degree moved to Salt Lake City to pursue a career in genealogical research. He had definite ideas about what motivates people to do family history research and how that motivation has changed over time.

It was common for Scottish men to have two families, one with a white woman back in Scotland and one with a woman of African descent in Jamaica. — *Carol Smith*

"It used to be that a professional genealogist most often worked for clients trying to prove their pedigree for membership in societies like the Daughters of the American Revolution or exclusive clubs for Mayflower descendants. But since the 1970s and Alex Haley's book, *Roots,* knowing about one's family history has become an interest for its own sake."

Gordon cited the increase in mobility as a major factor. "There are no longer communities with four generations going back in that place." Mobility and a corresponding sense of rootlessness prompts many people to try to regain a sense of roots through family history research. A family history is something to hold on to in a time of rapid social change.

Going AWOL

Gordon's own family was supportive of his childhood hobby until he discovered that a 17th-century ancestor was illegitimate and enthusiasm waned. "People want to find out that they are descended from someone famous or who did something great, not someone infamous."

Gordon discovered an ancestor whom he respected for *not* being a hero. During the Revolutionary War, this ancestor was one of a group of teenage boys charged with the task of guarding a group of Loyalist prisoners. During what would be the only successful prison break of the war, the young guards ran off. Gordon unearthed their testimonies from the records of an inquiry into the affair. "I was asleep," testified Gordon's relative about the prison break, and "threw down my weapon to save my life." Gordon felt a kinship with this young soldier. "Growing up in the Vietnam Era, the issue of sending 18-year-olds to fight was a defining issue for my generation, and it was a similar situation back then. I am glad he was no hero and decided to save his life; if he hadn't, I would not be

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here."

Gordon introduced me to an acquaintance doing research at his table.

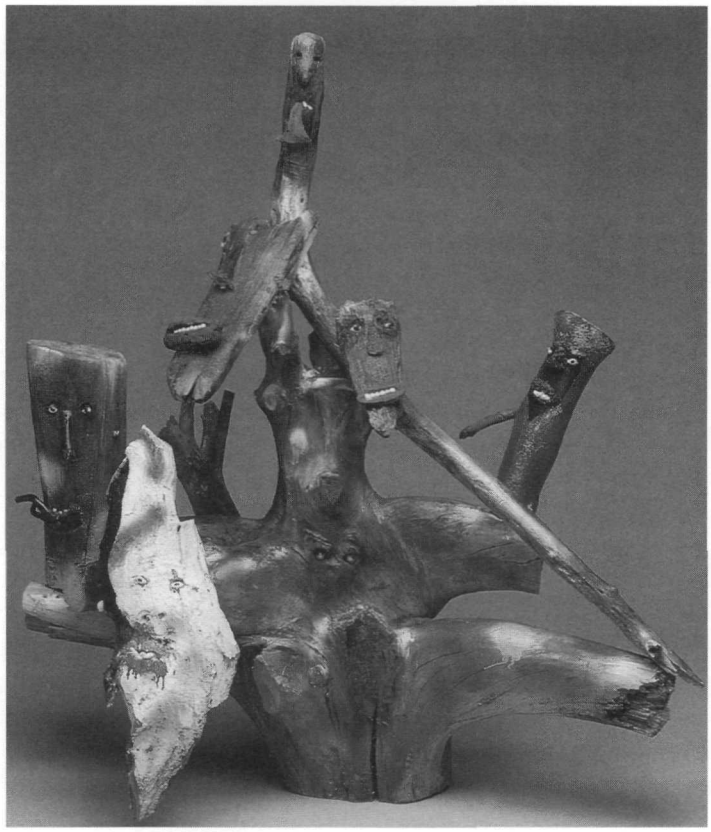
Pat Hatcher was from Dallas, and she too had gotten started doing her own family history 12 years ago.Noting her coiffed hair and casual but polished appearance, I wasn't surprised to learn that she gives regular talks on genealogical research and had just written a guide on the subject (*Producing a Quality Family History,* Ancestry Publishers). According to Hatcher, folks who get into genealogy are often people who enjoy puzzles. "A lot of us love solving puzzles. Doing family histories is like figuring out a puzzle except as you do the work, the puzzle expands. Many of us are into good mystery stories as well and we pass those back and forth to each other."

A friend of hers went through a grueling treatment for throat cancer. Hatcher credited the genealogy project the woman took on at the time with giving her the will to live. "It was something she wanted to finish for her children; it kept her up into the night and got her out of bed each morning. It gave her a reason to fight."

Hatcher encourages the people who ask her advice on research to find out about the context of the times in which their ancestors lived. "I believe in treating ancestors with respect by understanding what they did and why they did it. Food, crops, dress, education, entertainment — all of it is necessary to know about if we are going to respectfully understand those who lived before us. ... We need to know how powerful a motivator was the promise of owning land ... or when I read a two-page list with 40 entries of all a family owned and see a total of three bowls, it is important to ask myself, how did this family eat?"

Salem witch trials

Her own understanding was put to the test when Hatcher learned in her research that she was descended from a man who signed a document during the Salem witch trials.



The family **by Bessie Harvey**

He was one of several signers responsible for the execution of one of the accused women. Hatcher then found that a close friend was a descendant of the woman who was executed. "We've talked a lot about it. As a Methodist, I believe that forgiveness and acceptance are necessary, and I don't like what he did but I can't look at him as a totally bad person. At least I don't feel that the judgment is ultimately mine to make."

Carol Smith, another library user, enthusiastically talked about her research, calling it her addiction. "This is what I do instead of television." Born in Jamaica and raised in England, Smith converted to Mormonism at age 12, and later emigrated to Utah with her husband and children. She is a descendant of mixed Scottish and African heritage. "Out of many, one people," is the national motto of Jamaica, she informed me. Smith also explained that many Scots were kicked out of their homeland during the Jacobite rebellions in the first half of the 18th century.

"It was common for Scottish men to have two families, one with a white woman back in Scotland and one with a woman of African descent in Jamaica. Eventually the man could return to Scotland, which makes me wonder what became of their Jamaican families."

In her own case she was able to find out that she was descended from a Scotsman who had a relationship with his maid, a slave named Ann, but he did not appear to have had a second family. They had several children together and Ann took his name, Strachan, but they were never married. Later, all the children from the union were legitimized in their father's will.

"These offspring tended to marry children from other interracial unions," said Smith tracing her finger along her ancestral chart, "but it is the women I want to know about," said Smith. "There is much more information on the inheriting sons. I want my children to know about the women they are descended from."

Living with the dead

Smith also talked about a sense of living among the dead. "I can daydream back in

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time and imagine what these people were like. I get along better with the dead than I do with the living; live people aggravate me. If you live with the dead you cannot tolerate the living. My grandmother Lydia used to pinch me in church when I wasn't behaving and I used to hate her for it. Now that I'm grown up and a mother and she's dead, those pinches seems like nothing. Now I revere her."

Several people I spoke with mentioned their parents passing on to them a bug for doing research. Often a family story or two were handed down. Sometimes a story from the past would serve to make a claim on a person's behavior in the present. Catherine was a retired teacher from Washington State, living outside of Salt Lake City doing mission work for the L.D.S. Church as an employment counselor. She told me this story:

Her paternal great grandfather, Adam Reed, was a member of the 16th Indiana Regiment and fought in the Civil War. He served under General George B. McClelland whom he greatly admired. After the war he was allowed to keep the jacket from his uniform. One day he wore this Union jacket to the election polls to cast his vote for his former general who happened to be running against Lincoln. Outside the polls he encountered some ruffians who demanded to know who he was going to vote for. He declared for McClelland. To enter the polls to vote he was forced to fight his way in. To exit, he had to fight the same fellows once again. By the end of it, so the story does, all that was left of that Union jacket was the collar, one sleeve, and a strip down the front. Catherine added that voting had an almost sacred status in her family, a status now maintained by her five children.

There were a number of such stories throughout my interviews that served to personalize history, enlivening names and dates, and connecting the teller to the past. Occasionally there was a mystery that needed solving or a harsh truth to face: One woman's father had simply refused to ever speak of his family. Another found that her ancestors had once been slave traders, and upon finding the record of a sale of a three-year-old child, slavery was no longer simply history, but part of *her* history.

My own interpretation of the family historians I met is that they were on a quest. Their goal was to discover the particulars that put their own story inside of a larger story, a larger story to which they belonged and which also belonged to them. As the woman with the silent father put it:

"Now that I have answers about my grandmother and what a terribly hard life she endured, it means everything to tell her story to my granddaughter. I cherish this." TW

Identifying myself

Dolores Comeaux-Taylor has been studying her family history for a long time.

"I think I asked my first question when I was eight years old: Why we didn't have family," Comeaux-Taylor explains. "My mother got her pictures out to show me we did. I put them in an album and had her identify them. When I got older I got to know many of them."

Comeaux-Taylor was raised in Chicago because her parents, who had met in Lake Arthur, Louisiana at a roof garden ballroom, couldn't find housing in Detroit because her mother looked white. Her parents got back on the train and headed for Chicago.

Four generations back practically all her ancestral surnames are French — Comeaux, Girouard, Baptiste, Lorins (later Lawrence), Jacquemimn, Broussard, Chanet, and Guillaume.

Her ancestors are French, Indian, African, Jamaican, French Candian, German, and Irish. Yet Comeaux-Taylor finds that her identity is usually defined as African American.

Dolores Comeaux-Taylor

"People might choose to identify me one way, but that might not be the way that I choose to identify myself," she says emphatically. "I have respect for all the cultures that are part of me and I give them equal time."

Comeaux-Taylor believes that her search for her ancestors is divinely led.

"We have a gift in our family that I don't question. I used to take the bus to the Burton Librry. One day in the middle of winter, I walked up to the post office to catch the bus. It was too cold, five degrees below zero. I decided to go home. Coming out of the post office I had a spiritual visitation from my mother. She said, 'If you go today, I'll help you find what you need.' I was led to two volumes of southwest Louisiana that I had already looked at. I found 32 names that day."

— J.W.K.

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I LEARNED TO SEW

by Mitsuye Yamada

How can I say this?
My child
My life is nothing.
There is nothing to tell.

My family in Japan was too poor
to send me to school
I learned to sew
always I worked to help my family
when I was seventeen years old
and no one made marriage offer
a friend in our village who was going
to Hawaii a picture bride
said to me
Come with me.

I did not want to
my parents did not want me to
my picture was sent to a stranger anyway
a young man's photograph and letter came
I was already seventeen years old
I went to the island of Hawaii to marry
this photograph.

This man came to the boat
he was too shy to talk to me
the Immigration man said to him
Here
sign here for her
He walked away
The Immigration man came to me
Don't you have relatives in Hawaii?

I said
Yes I have that man who will marry me
He said
Go back to Japan on the next boat
I said
I will wait here for my man
The Immigration man said
No
your man is not coming back
he told me he does not want you
he said you are too ugly for him
why don't you go back to Japan
on the next boat?
I said
No
I am not going back
I am staying here

Just
A minute
My child
Put that pen down
Do not write this
I never told this to anybody
Not even to my oldest son, your father
I now tell this story
To you first time in sixty years

I sat at Immigration for a long time
people came and people went
I stayed
I could not see the sky
I could not see the sun
outside the window
I saw a seaweed forest
the crickets made scraping sounds
the geckos went tuk tuk tuk
sometimes a gecko would come into my room
but I was not afraid to talk to it
it came and it went as it pleased.

I was thinking about Urashima Taro
you know the story?
Urashima disappeared into the sea
lived in the undersea world
married a beautiful princess
returned to his village
a very old man
I was thinking
I will leave this place
only when I am an old lady.

Pretty soon the Immigration man came to me
We found your cousin
In two weeks a cousin I met once
in Japan came for me
I stayed with him and his wife until
my cousin found a job for me
I worked doing housework
I did this for one year.

My cousin found a husband for me
he was a merchant
we had a small store
and sold dry goods
my husband died after three sons
your father, my oldest son was six years old
I could not keep the store
I could not read
I could not write
the only thing I knew how to do was sew.

I took cloth from our store
sewed pants and undergarments
put the garments on a wooden cart
ombu the baby on my back
we went from plantation to plantation
sold my garments to the workers
I was their only store
sewed more garments at night
I did this for five years.

Your father grew up to love study and books
my friends called him the professor
he was then eleven years old
I said to him you need a father
He said I want to go to college
I said to him I will marry any man you say
I will marry any man
who will send you to college.

One day he came home and said
I went to a matchmaker and found a husband
for you
he will marry a widow with three sons
will send them to college
he is a plantation foreman.

I married this man.

By and by my oldest son went away
to college in Honolulu
but my husband's boss told him
I need workers
your three sons must work
on my plantation like the others.
My husband said
No
He kept his word to my oldest son
and lost his job.

After that we had many hard times
I am nothing
know nothing
I only know how to sew
I now sew for my children and grandchildren
I turn to the sun every day of my life
pray to Amaterasu Omikami
for the health and
education of my children
for me that is enough

My child
Write this
There take your pen
There write it
Say that I am not going back
I am staying here.

—from *Camp Notes and Other Poems,* Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Brooklyn, 1992.

Mitsuye Yamada was born in Kyushu, Japan and raised in Seattle, Washington, until the outbreak of World War II when her family was removed to a Japanese concentration camp in Idaho. She is the founder of the Multicultural Women Writers of Orange County, California.

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'Are you blood?': hope in race relations

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

How many times have you heard a person of European descent say, "My family is not directly responsible for slavery or for killing the Indians"? And if they are liberal, they may add, "But I take responsibility for the actions of my race."

I have said these words myself.

But considering that most Americans can't even name their great-grandparents, how would any of us know what our ancestors may have been responsible for?

It's too convenient that we feel no personal responsibility for American history. Who do we think condemned Salem's "witches," transported slaves, fled England's jails to emigrate or planned the decimation of Indian villages? Were these people related to no one?

Many people's eyes glaze over when genealogy is the topic. But their disinterest can be rooted in a fear that their ancestors will not be honored. They may even be afraid that their ancestors participated in some atrocity or that their ancestors carry some unacknowledged blood line.

Atrocities

Two years ago I wrote in *The Witness* that I had just figured out that my Scotch Irish ancestors in southwest Pennsylvania had driven out the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) in order to be the first white land patent holders in that area.

Since then, I've discovered worse.

An ancestor of mine, Robert McCombs, was in the militia that massacred 96 Moravian Indians in 1782. Nausea moved me to search out missionary David Zeisberger's journal, missionary John Heckwelder's description of the customs of the Lenni Lenape and any other histories I could find.

It seems that the Indians, having been converted by the Moravians, lived in community in the Tuscarawas Mountains, refusing to join either side of the many wars that swept over Ohio and Pennsylvania. Forced out (for the third time) by hostile European neighbors who envied their prosperity and immunity to the wars, the community staggered through a northern Ohio winter with little shelter. In the spring, the Lenni Lenape went back to the Tuscarawas to harvest the corn they'd been forced to leave in the field.

A small band of militia members told the Indians they would escort them to Fort Pitt. These "Christian Indians," who outnumbered the militia, voluntarily gave up their guns and followed. To their horror, the Indians learned they would be executed the next morning. Women and some 40 children were locked in one building, men in another. They prayed during the night and forgave one another their sins.

In the morning, they were brought into a third building where one by one their heads were smashed with a mallet. It's reported that the mood among militia members was raucous.

I've walked through the Gnadenutten mission, prayed at the mass grave, wept by the Tuscarawas River.

I have written to the Lenni Lenape in Oklahoma looking for those who remain in Pennsylvania. I want to meet the "Delaware" who planted a peace tree at Gnadenhutten in 1992. And I want to advertise in Washington County for descendants of the militia who would like to join me in planting a tree that says we honor life and are deeply sorry.

I need to do this.

But I'm also relieved that my genealogical research progresses, because I continue to learn the history. I learn of European families killed during Indian raids in the late 1700s and of the French soldiers who joined in the torture. I have distant relatives who were killed and others taken captive. I've learned that the Lenni Lenape sometimes raided Scottish farms and returned home via the mission, hoping to pull the Moravian Indians into the conflict.

Some say that anyone whose European family dates back to the 1700s in this country is likely to carry Native or African American blood. Across the racial and ethnic divide, we often look into the faces of cousins.

I do not want "white guilt." And exaggerating the virtue of people my ancestors fought against will not honor them. I want to understand, with as much detail as I can, what happened and how each side understood it. I am also researching the conditions in Scotland and in English prisons that made it seem worthwhile to my ancestors to step into ships in which many of the passengers would die and others would arrive in the Pennsylvania wilderness to fight through war after war.

In a history of the Cross Creek Presby-

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Rebecca McCombs Fleming c. 1880

Vinet Jane Cowen c. 1880

terian church, I learned that 18 members of the militia opposed the massacre — one so strongly that he had his dissent carved on his tombstone. Was my ancestor one of these? McCombs quit the militia a year later. Did he quit in disgust? If he was, as I suspect, part Indian himself, did he participate in order to allay suspicion that he was an Indian lover?

I will continue to search. (I am astounded at the volume of data that has been preserved and I am hugely grateful to the folks that historians call "antiquarians" who keep and catalogue it.) But in the meantime I know that my flesh and blood was present when 96 men, women and children were killed. I am able to say with conviction that I am sorry, not for generic cruelty by those of European descent, but for a particular act. I am not my ancestor, but I can speak for the honor of my family.

Questions of color

A lot is being written these days about "white" not being an ethnic group. African American scholars are asking "whites" to examine when they traded off their ethnic heritage for privilege and "whiteness."

Others say that anyone whose European family dates back to the 1700s in this country is likely to carry Native or African American blood. Certainly many African and Native Americans carry European blood. Across the racial and ethnic divide, we often look into the faces of cousins.

Hollywood is busy presenting stories of confused identities (see reviews on page 28), while many people are making the same discovery in their own lives.

Irene Browne, 1912

Beatrice Wylie, 1936

Indian Blood by Richard Pangburn (Butler Books, Kansas) is a genealogical resource that lists European and Indian blood lines that connect. The author explains that the Indian tradition of allowing white prisoners to take the place of a slain husband or brother was not just a custom, but a necessity for the tribes that were being decimated. Pangburn says that by the time the Shawnee were driven to Oklahoma, they were three-quarters white. Tecumseh himself was said to have hazel eyes and olive skin.

Gregory Howard Williams carries two histories in his blood. Raised in white Virginia, he was taught to honor his father's "Italian" heritage. But when his nuclear family collapsed, he and his borther were suddenly dependent on his black grandmother in Indiana where they "learned to be niggers." (*Life on the Color Line,* Plume, 1995).

A friend with Tennessee roots recently told me of her aunt, a 60-year-old woman steeped in white racism, who began a genealogical hunt. What she learned explained some of the "niceties" of this poor white family: the women carried a kind of aristocracy in their bones, turning down the beds at night and making fine lace. It turned out that their great-grandfather had lost a southern plantation in the aftermath of the Civil War. It also turned out that he had had two sets of children — one with his white wife and another with a black slave. All the children, together, had been moved to Tennessee. The aunt's great-grandmother was the slave. Voices in the shadows tormented her while she struggled to reinterpret her life.

While I search

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, 1984

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through census data, burial records and early county histories, my husband notices that the people sharing the table space with me are of all races and classes. Blue collar folks in flannel shirts sit next to people dressed like blue bloods. Detroit's Burton Historical Collection contains lots of data on the Cherokees, because so many African Americans carry Cherokee blood.

Called by the grandmothers

"These days everyone wants an Indian grandmother," complains a friend.

And he's right. The trend can be faddish. If it's arrogant to fight to be listed in the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), it's no less so to look for politically correct ancestors.

But the truth is, many, many people have Indian grandmothers. So is it a New Age popularity issue or could it be something in our blood that is asking that women whose histories have been suppressed be honored?

My own interest in these questions is not only political or politically correct.

All my life, my coloring has been a confusion to me. I've loved having dark curls and olive skin, but when people asked me my nationality and I responded "Scotch Irish," they looked at me in disbelief.

I remember when I was 10 and had spent a month riding the waves in the Atlantic, my father turned to my mother and said, "We've done the impossible. We've given birth to a black child."

Eight years later, while interning at Common Cause in Washington D.C., people stopped me on the street to claim me as part of their people — surely Greek, Italian, Arabic, Jewish?

A young Indian man defending the Yellow Thunder Camp in 1981 in the Black Hills of South Dakota turned to me, "Are you blood?"

This suited me fine. As my political allegiances were developing in the 1970s and 1980s, I was glad for a more easy passage into communities of resistance that staked their identities in non-European history.

But I felt uneasy when people did a double-take when I said, "I'm Scotch Irish." I worried that they believed I had a grandmother I would not acknowledge.

Their doubt began to work on my family mythology. All that I had been told was that on both sides I was primarily Scotch Irish and a little bit English. My mother proposed that when the Spanish Armada crashed on the banks of Ireland, they might have brought their genes into our blood line.

So I pored over photographs of people in Scotland and Ireland, looking for the "Black Irish," but I was met by blue eyes and freckles, black hair perhaps, but pale skin.

Soon I was writing to every older living distant relative I could locate. Their descendants interested me little, but the fragments of memories of the older generations, the weathered photographs, the family trees gave me a strange excitement. I started praying for my ancestors. When I noticed that a series of children had died in an epidemic, or that a woman had been left alone with young children or that my distant uncles had died in any of America's wars, I prayed. I believe that their pain is already resolved in the communion of saints, but I wept anyway.

The actual history and the blood lines do not define reality. But Christ entered history to liberate us from something specific.

When I visited Southwest Pennsylvania and searched for information about the Indians whom area histories simply referred to as "savages," it crashed over me that these pioneers on my mother's side, stretching back more than 200 years, probably did not travel with European wives. Nor would "white" wives have been easy to find.

I was surprised to learn that there had been a lot of interaction between the Lenni Lenape and the settlers. The settlers had walked into the area on Indian foot paths. Government agents and traders boarded in Indian villages and asked permission for their work from Indian councils. Those negotiating treaties learned Indian etiquette and came to speak eloquently of the moons, the grandfathers and the buried hatchet that means peace. Women of the tribe offered to sleep with these men and sometimes married them. I do not know if these offers were voluntary or the last resort of a subjugated people. The "European" grandmothers who were given false names and even places of origin in Europe, but were not honored for their own people's gifts concern me. Their children, if they were dark enough to raise questions, were instructed to say that they were part Italian.

Rural Valley, Penn.

Under a full October moon in 1994, I drove my mother back to Rural Valley, Penn., where her mother and grandmother had grown up. On my way out the door I had turned to a wall of ancestral photos and said, "Hey, I'll need your help" and grabbed a photo of my mother's grandmother's mother, Rebecca McCombs Fleming, and her children. (My coloring seems to descend most clearly through that matrilineal line.)

In Kittaning, we found that road crews had filled all the hotels. We were steered to a Bed & Breakfast. Welcomed in, we found a marriage certificate on the wall for a Rebecca Fleming. It turned out that

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my mother and our host were second cousins. The photograph I had brought showed their grandparents as children. Our host's shoe box of photos in the garage included my ancestors.

I don't have definitive answers. I know that there are Indian graves in the area and some town residents have shared stories of Indian great-grandmothers. I know some dark-skinned folks have married into the more recent Italian immigrant community. A scrap book of old photos and tin types at the local historical house shows a Scottish family, then a dark man with straight black hair playing a violin, later a mulatto man in a business suit.

Knowing that the underground railroad ran up through this area and that the Lenni Lenape populated it before the Scotch drove their way in, I sometimes hope that this isolated rural community found a way for different peoples to live in intimacy.

I'm impressed that the Presbyterian Church in Glade Run has tunnels for the underground railroad and a "well-loved" Indian student in the cemetery. And while it seems peculiar to me that my ancestors spent all their Sabbath hours in church, I respect their schools and provisions for civil war orphans. There is even something nice about their elder councils considering whether one could be readmitted to the fellowship (again) after drinking and dancing. One man had to plead forgiveness for a habit of exaggerating, a crime the community apparently took seriously.

Warp and woof

Weaving together the fragments of my ancestors lives requires attention. I'm struggling to warp with lines of families —Cowens, Flemings, McCombs, Atlees, Brownes and Carpenters, then to throw across a shuttle marking an event in our national history. How did the French Indian War, the American Revolution, the Underground Railroad, the Civil War intersect with these families?

The Fleming graves in Rural Valley, Penn.

When my Pennsylvania ancestors gave federalism its first challenge in 1794, another ancestor rode from Philadelphia to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion. Also some ancestors with relatives in the south countenanced slavery, while another was an abolitionist in Cincinnati.

I struggle to see the pattern.

Is genealogical research required?

Quentin Kolb, an Ute Indian on *The Witness* board, suggests that for his people genealogy is not so important. They know who they are and to which piece of earth they belong. This piece of knowing is sufficient, particularly since it was passed on to him by his grandmother who also taught him to pray.

But when you've lost your place in land (driven out by war or famine) someone needs to take the role that the poets have played through the ages to keep the people's history alive.

Stories of the people and events that shaped a group's identity need to be retold. The poets could string these stories together in a way that had meaning.

In America we are singularly without these stories. We have little sense of ourselves belonging to any "people," much less any imagination about what personal freedoms we might surrender to serve them.

How do the missing pieces change our story? Change our biases? Change our understanding of privilege? Change what we might be willing to do?

And most importantly, can our understanding that our ancestors were directly involved in this country's history — for better and for worse — help us to reach across racial and ethnic divides for a conversation that might be worth having? Can we participate in an accounting that may lead to reconciliation?

The actual history and the blood lines do not define reality. They are not all that there is. But Christ entered history to liberate us from something specific. In this spirit we can repent, we can be forgiven and we can speak in tongues that other communities can understand. TW

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Invitation

by Gloria House Manana

Tampa, Florida: an ordinary birthplace in a time of world war. A beautiful young mother who would admit only her Seminole heritage. She made me question her, "From what other race come children with dark skin and hair like mine? Isn't it only the African race?" And she responded with angry silence.

Shall we recall the girlhood of our race? Shall we understand the full blossoming of our womanhood? Shall we know it when it is achieved? Shall we understand our full-grown breasts and the longing in our thighs as the longing of the race for a New Time?

Memory. If one takes its hand and follows the path of vaguely recollected sounds and smells, where will it lead? To almost forgotten secrets? To the womb, the pulsing heart, the pungent damp of earth and greenery after rain? Here is where it leads: to myself and you and away again, only to return, and in that manner accomplish the great circle of history, myth and heritage.

from *Blood River*
Broadside Press (Detroit), 1983.

'Asking for our grea

Gloria House Manana, a Witness *contributing editor and English professor, interviews her cousin, Gloria Lyons, a former deputy district court administrator in Detroit.*

Manana says she is interested because: "For me, the search for family history yields much more than the details of the family tree. The foreparents, whom we come to dream about as a result of hours of asking the elders and days in dusty archives, take us into a deep knowledge of the interaction and struggles of individuals and groups over the centuries. These determined spirits whose names we decipher in the historic records are somehow reborn in our own lives and come to illuminate our day-to-day actions in the world."

Gloria House Manana: What can you tell me about Lucretia Hankerson? My mother, her granddaughter, used to describe herself only as Seminole.

Gloria Hankerson Lyons: Lucretia Kimble was born in Sardis, Ga. in 1854. Her husband, Primus Hankerson, was very dark with "the skin coloring of people from India" is the way my Daddy described it. They lived in Lake City, Florida.

When I asked questions about Lucretia, the family was very secretive. My father, 85, said he didn't remember anything. My Aunt Mae, 90, told me lots of stories about Primus, but Lucretia, she said, was "just a plain old cracker." She seemed to have an attitude about her. She wouldn't answer any questions.

When I visited my father I was asking him a million questions as usual. On this particular day, he said, "Sit down. Let me give you this information and then I'm not talking about it any more because it makes me nervous."

He told me what his father had told him. Lucretia had opposite skin coloring from Primus. Her mother was Seminole and African, but her father was white. She had long blonde hair and blue eyes.

It is believed that that is why the Ku Klux Klan killed her. The story is that two white gentlemen, and I don't know that they be gentlemen, came and told Primus that they had killed his wife. They took him to her — she was all shot up.

He asked if he could get some sheets or blankets to wrap her body in. He went home and got these blankets

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grandmother'

and hid a rifle under there. He went back to where they were and shot them up. He took her body and I assume the family buried her. Then he gathered his family and ran to Stark, Fla. which was about 50 miles away. I thought that was too short a distance for him to have run without being discovered, but the family members from Lake City said, "No, back then there were no roads, no transportation." He did all of that on foot with seven children.

I asked my grandfather's first cousins who lived in Ocala and they clammed up about it. Eloise said, "We understand that she died of pneumonia or something." She added, "I don't know what stories you heard but I don't want to talk about it."

G.H.M.: Why do you think people need to forget, deny or create new stories?

G.L.: I think it's shameful for them. And I think they still have a fear that the KKK would come and get them.

G.H.M.: They were taught to be silent for protection and then it became a habit? It makes me think about how the Japanese, after they were put in concentration camps in the U.S., wouldn't talk about it at all. Their children in the 1970s and 1980s were the ones who said, "What really happened?" But for them it was a matter of pain and some shame.

G.L.: Aunt Novella was in an exceptionally good mood a few weeks ago when I called. She started talking. I didn't ask any questions because I didn't want her to clam up. She said Lucretia's father was a slave owner. He took a liking to Lucretia's mother and sold her husband off. She worked in the slave-owner's home making beds and fluffing up their pillows. Aunt Novella said she didn't want to talk about it before because she thought it was terrible.

G.H.M.: As if she had any choice about her parents. Did the history make a difference to you?

G.L.: Ironically, in high school history was not an interest of mine. Now I try to picture myself back in that time and it's just terrible the way they treated us. I try to think about what our family endured and that they had no choices.

G.H.M.: But we survived.

G.L.: It shows how strong we were. Things have changed but that undercurrent is still there. We're not equal. You can be very successful but you have to be careful because society wants to make believe that we are the inferior race. When I go to the store I don't just wear jeans because if they think you don't have money they think you must be there for something else.

G.H.M.: Is there more research that you would like to do?

G.L.: I would like to contact the white Kimbles and see if they have any records. I would like to know what Lucretia Kimble's and Primus Hankerson's names were before. Many times the inventories of slave owners listed their names and where they came from.

G.H.M: What has this meant to you personally, spiritually?

G.L.: Spiritually I feel God had a plan for those great-grand children because part of us comes from every one of those people. It made us into the strong, proud people that we are. Overcomers. TW

Lucretia Kimble's sister, great-great aunt to two Glorias.

Gloria Lyons

Gloria House Manana

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Going home: views on reunions

When I was growing up, Mother's Day was the day we left church early, got in our 1956 Chevrolet station wagon, and drove two hours to my grandparents' farm for the annual family reunion.

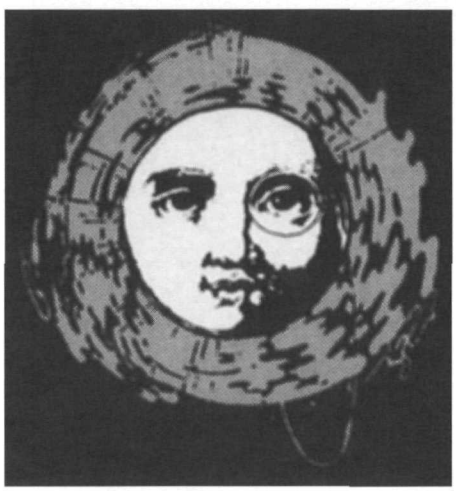
We'd arrive in the warm May sun, pull off the dirt road into the yard, and stop next to the long tables set up underneath the mimosa trees and covered with soft, slick oilcloth sheets. While the women set out platters — fried chicken, ham biscuits, green beans, chocolate cake, persimmon pudding — and shooed off kids who tried to steal a chicken leg, the men sat on the front porch talking and smoking unfiltered Camels. We kids played hide-and-seek, and new parents showed off their babies. Sunlight played hopscotch over everything, and laughter filled the air.

When the heat had melted the meringue on the lemon pie and the flies had figured out from which direction the rolled-up newspapers would strike, we'd all be called to dinner. Grandpa stood at the head of the longest table and said grace. Then we ate and ate, each aunt insisting we taste what she had cooked.

After dinner, as the women cleared the tables, a few of the men led us children to the family graveyard hidden deep in the woods behind the barn. It was a small plot surrounded by a low stone wall that was help together more by ivy than cement. The graves were marked by cracked headstones bearing names like *Horace* and *Miranda* and dates from 1800 to 1925. In a small corner of the yard, a few graves had only large, unmarked stones at the head. "Those were slaves," our fathers said, and spat expertly through their teeth.

We jumped and danced around the stone wall that encircled our family laid to rest, and no one asked why the slaves' graves had no names.

Sally Whitney
Overland Park, Kansas



THE SUN

I first met my friend James' grandmother Norma when she and his mother visited from Louisiana. James had received explicit instructions from his mother to keep his homosexuality a secret from Norma. "She just wouldn't be able to handle it," James's mother had said.

As we crossed the Golden Gate Bridge on the way to Muir Woods, James commented on each male bicyclist we passed and winked at his mother, who was crouched low in the seat beside him. I sat in the back with Norma and could see James peering into the rearview mirror as each muscular rider receded behind us.

That day James bought a redwood burl and brought it home, where he planted it in a clay pot and watered it diligently.

A year later, they visited again. This time we went to the Filoli estate, a mansion in Woodside, Calif. As we walked through the magnificent garden, James told me to distract his mother while he and Norma went off together. I paused near a beautiful bed of roses and commented to James' mother on the varieties and colors: Crimson Glory, Lavender Girl, Yellow Sunshine.

When James told Norma he was gay, she said she had already guessed. She was also correct in her fear that he had AIDS.

"When she phones now," James said several weeks later, "we discuss our illnesses. She talks about her arthritis. I talk about my opportunistic infections." Norma told James that she rubbed holy water on her hands at church and prayed that his herpes would disappear.

"Just don't let anyone see," James said.

"I rubbed a little extra on my belly," she told him.

I saw Norma again in April 1992. She and James' parents wanted to visit the place on Mount Tamalpais where we'd scattered James' ashes. Later we went to the AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park. James' redwood tree, planted there among a grove of giant redwoods, now reached Norma's chest. A foot of new, lime-green growth rose delicately into the forest air.

We gathered around the tree for a photograph. With a sly grin that reminded me of James, Norma extended her arm toward the small tree. "My grandson," she said proudly.

Laura Siegel
Pacifica, Oregon

These vignettes are excerpted from The Sun *magazine's READERS WRITE section in which readers address subjects on which they're the only authorities. Subscriptions to* The Sun *are available by sending $32 to Sub. Dept., P.O. Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834-3000. Artist Ellen Moore lives in Fredricksburg, Virginia.*

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As a child growing up in the New York melting pot of Elmhurst, Queens, I had the unshakable conviction that every human being was bilingual. One language was reserved for the privacy of the home (Spanish, in my case); the other — English — was for the rest of society. My peers, first- and second-generation Americans, also spoke their own "private" languages — Spanish, Polish, Italian, Yiddish, or Japanese — as well as English.

We learned English virtually by osmosis. It was English that we heard on Saturday-morning Bugs Bunny cartoons and on "The Ed Sullivan Show," English that was spoken by the Mr. Softee ice-cream truck driver and the soft-pretzel vendor on the corner, English that was whispered by Santa Claus at the Macy's toy department as we sat on his lap. By kindergarten we had mastered the language, while many of our immigrant parents were still struggling through night classes in English as a second language.

In the 1970s my family relocated to all-American, middle-class Willingboro, N.J., a suburb of Philadelphia. Here there were no more "private" languages, except for ours.

Today, at our family reunions, my parents speak to my seven-year-old and six-month-old sons in Spanish. More often than not, my older son responds in English. Yet, he is gradually learning the language of my childhood — as if by osmosis — from the conversations of his loving grandparents.

Susana Rosende Gillotti
Orlando, Florida

Extended families in L.A. Donna DeCesare/Impact Visuals

I was standing in the snow at the edge of the driveway waiting for Jamie. We had agreed to meet that morning at 10:45 and she was late. Heavy snowfall the night before had made the roads treacherous, and I paced back and forth, checking my watch and straining to see the cars inching up the winding, hilly road.

Jamie was three days old when I gave her up for adoption. Now, four months shy of her nineteenth birthday, we were reuniting. We'd both begun looking for each other on her eighteenth birthday. A data-bank search registry had finally matched us just five days ago, and we had decided to meet at the home of my good friends, who happened to live just ten minutes from the house where Jamie had grown up.

Again I looked at my watch. Jamie was more than half an hour late now. Remembering how I'd barely made it up the incline a half mile down the road, I got behind the wheel of my car and began driving slowly down the icy street. I knew that she could drive right past me and I wouldn't know it, but I had to try. Two cars passed and I peered into them. After a mile — and three more cars — another vehicle approached. Once more I strained my eyes. Behind the wheel was a young woman. She looked straight into my eyes. *My eyes.* She had my eyes. We both slammed on our brakes, then stared at each other through the snow and soot on our windshields. The next thing I knew, we were out of our cars and skidding on the ice trying to get to each other. We collided into each other's arms. "Are you —?" she asked. "Yes," I answered. "I am."

Victoria Gallucci
Brooklyn, New York

No way was I going. My Dad must have been kidding. Spend four hours in a hot car, forced to listen to country music, while Dad criticizes every life choice I've made? And do all this to go to his family reunion? Not me.

Ever since Mom died, things had been difficult between Dad and me. Without mother as our shock absorber, the two of us were like bumper cars haphazardly ramming into one another, leaving irreparable dents.

He was putting on the hard sell for this

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reunion: pleading, mailing personal letters to my two brothers and me six months in advance so we could put the event on our calendars. *Right, Dad. I'm busy. I don't know your side of the family. I didn't even know you had a sister until three years ago. They're all strangers to me, just like you.*

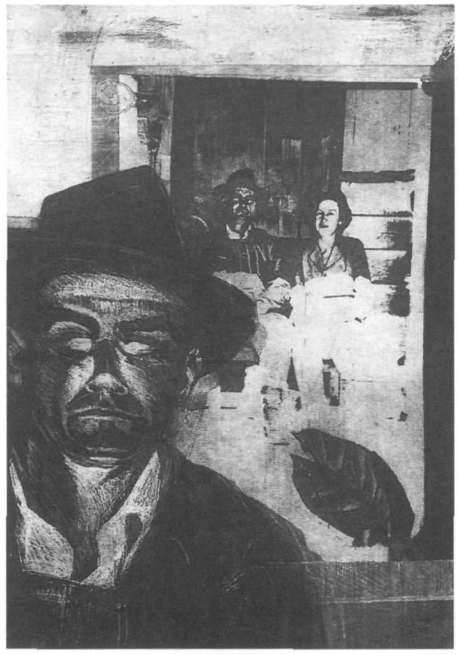
Two weeks before the reunion, my little brother called. He'd buckled under the pressure. So had my older brother. I gave in.

As we piled into his car, Dad directed us on where to sit and how to act, lecturing us on his rules of the road. I immediately defied one of his rules and opened a bottle of pop and a bag of chips. My brothers looked on in disbelief, pleading with me not to start so soon. There was an awkward silence in the car when we pulled out.

We hadn't been together for an outing in years, and all of us were still hurting from Mom's death. Somewhere during her ordeal, we had lost each other. As the miles passed, we stumbled in and out of conversations, forcing ourselves to break the silence that should have been filled by Mom's voice. I brought up one of our horrendous family vacations, and even Dad began to smile. I studied his face — who was this man?

We were the first to arrive at the park. While Dad waited for other relatives to show up, my brothers and I decided to "check things out" — our code for getting away from Dad. We walked in silence awhile; then, for the first time, we spoke of Mom. Now, two years after her death, we were trying to see what had survived. Whose reunion was this, anyway?

The dinner bell clanged, and we headed back to the gathering. Dad waved us over to the center table he had been saving and introduced us to his relatives. Again I studied his face as he bragged about our various achievements. He looked so proud, distinguished. Loading up the car to go home, I drew a huge sigh of relief; there had been no arguments, no fights, no tears.



Ellen Moore

As the miles passed by, Dad and I talked about the people I had met that afternoon. Who was this sister of his, and why had she been such a secret? My dad told a tale of poverty, heartache, risky adoption, and courage. He looked vulnerable and afraid as he poured out this painful part of his history to me. A comfortable quiet filled the car. I cranked down the window to breathe some fresh air and laid my head against the door. Dad popped in his favorite country-hits cassette.

I drew a huge sigh of relief; there had been no arguments, no fights, no tears.

The humming began, soft and low. Was that my foot tapping, my lips forming the words "You picked a fine time to leave me, Lucille"? Gaining confidence, my brothers in the back seat joined Dad and me in harmony. We were trying to find our voices once again.

Mary J. Cushman
River Falls, Wisconsin

I was the first of four children. My parents looked to me to set an example for the younger kids. My father fashioned an adult-apprenticeship program for me, assigning me certain chores around the house, for which I was paid an allowance. I was also expected to get good grades in school and monitor my younger siblings.

I was enthusiastic about keeping an eye on my siblings. I took to it like a seasoned fascist, cultivating a stiff, authoritarian manner, bossing them around indiscriminately, just like my father.

My siblings all resented my new role - none more than my sister Arden, who was only eighteen months younger than I. Arden and I fought viciously.

When I reached high school, I was accepted to a private boys' boarding school in a distant part of the state — the same school my father and his two brothers had attended. While I was there, I lost touch with my sister; she was like a stranger when I came home for the holidays.

One day toward the end of my second year, I was called to the headmaster's office. He told me he knew that I was growing marijuana. I was expelled.

My dad picked me up at the airport. I don't think he said a word to me on the way home, but he drove very fast. When we got home, my mom was in her bedroom crying, her eyes the color of cranberries. I went upstairs to Arden's room. My sister was surprised to see me — she hadn't heard yet. As I told her what had happened, she looked at me with incredible sympathy. "I'm glad you're back," she said.

E. Perrin Bucklin
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Righter no heretic, court rules; accusers vow G. C. showdown

by Julie A. Wortman

By a majority of seven to one, an ecclesiastical court of white male Episcopal Church bishops ruled on May 15 that retired bishop Walter Righter did not commit "heresy" when he ordained Barry Stopfel, a partnered gay man, while Righter was serving as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Newark in 1990.

Two conservative bishops on the panel opposed to the ordination of non-celibate gay men and lesbians, Roger White of Milwaukee and Donis Patterson, retired bishop of Dallas, sided with the majority opinion that Righter had not violated any "core doctrine" in ordaining Stopfel or in signing a statement supporting such ordinations in 1994. A third conservative bishop, Andrew Fairfield of North Dakota, issued a dissenting opinion arguing that a 1979 General Convention resolution [see *Witness* 4/96] recommendation that it was "not appropriate" to ordain non-celibate homosexuals carried doctrinal weight. Under fire from Righter's accusers for having approved the ordination of a non-celibate gay man last January, court member Frederick H. Borsch of Los Angeles, did not cast a vote.

Although they said they had grounds for challenging the ruling, the 10 male bishops who brought the charges against Righter said they would instead focus on persuading the 1997 General Convention to issue a ban on the ordination of persons who engage in sexual relations outside of heterosexual marriage.

In a May 28 statement responding to the court's decision they said they would create "a fellowship" of Episcopal parishes and dioceses committed to their position and called upon like-minded church members "to join us in repentance for our past inattention and inaction in teaching, proclaiming and upholding the apostolic and catholic faith" and "to direct their personal resources, as a matter of stewardship, to those ministries that proclaim the historic and biblical Christian Faith."

The ruling

In its 27-page decision the ecclesiastical court emphasized that it was not "giving an opinion on the morality of same-gender relationships" or "deciding whether life-long committed, same-gender sexual relationships are or are not a wholesome example with respect to ordination vows" or offering an opinion on whether dioceses should ordain partnered homosexuals.

"Rather, we are deciding the narrow issue of whether or not under Title IV [of the church's canons] a bishop is restrained from ordaining persons living in committed same-gender sexual relationships," the court said.

The only doctrine affected by Title IV, the court said, was its unchangeable "core doctrine," something less extensive than Righter's accusers claimed.

Kerygma* and *didache

"The Court holds to the ancient distinction between the Core Doctrine which is derived from the Gospel preaching, *kerygma*, and the Church's teaching, *didache*, of those things necessary for our life in community and the world," the ruling stated.

"The *kerygma* is found in the life and teaching of Jesus and the preaching and evangelistic action of the church revealed in the New Testament and other early Christian documents."

Citing C.H. Dodd's 1936 *The Apostolic Preaching*, the court listed the "basic contents" of the *kerygma* as: "God in Christ fulfills the scripture. God became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Christ was crucified. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. Christ was exalted to God. God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit. There will be a day of judgment. Therefore repent."

The court said the church's core doctrine is to be found in the Book of Common Prayer and in the creeds, adding that the church's doctrine is "not found but rather grounded in Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture is the story of our relationship to God. It is not at heart a rule book of doctrine or discipline."

The ordination of non-celibate homosexuals, the court ruled, was not a matter of doctrine in the "core" sense. However, it might be a matter of *didache* or "communally authoritative teachings regarding belief and practice that are considered essential to the identity and welfare" of the church. "Some doctrinal teachings of the Church have been found to be so important to the ordering of the life of the Church that they have been made mandatory, with disciplinary consequences defined in canon law for failure to conform," the court said, but "no such written constraint is contained in the Canons that forbids the ordination of persons because of homosexuality, in orientation or practice."

Period of indecision

The court did suggest that it might be possible to discipline a bishop in cases where a doctrinal teaching "has not been seriously questioned or challenged," but "at this time the Church, in spite of its reaffirmations of traditional teaching, is in a period of

Holy Scripture is the story of our relationship to God. It is not at heart a rule book of doctrine or discipline.
— the opinion of the Court

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*.

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indecision with respect to its moral doctrine concerning same-gender relationships and we do not find sufficient clarity in the Church's teaching at the present time concerning the morality of same-sex relationships to hold that ordination of a non-celibate homosexual person violates a bishop's ordination vow to uphold the discipline of the Church."

Only the church's General Convention, not its bishops acting unilaterally, can establish a doctrinal teaching that has disciplinary repercussions, the court said.

On a "pastoral" note, the court reminded the church "that this issue will not be resolved and the Church unified in its faith and practice by presentments and trials, nor by unilateral acts of bishops and their dioceses, or through the adoption of proclamations by groups of bishops or others expressing positions on the issues."

Separate opinion

In a separate opinion, White and Patterson said that while they agreed, technically, with the majority, they found no support for ordaining partnered homosexuals in Scripture, or in teachings accepted by the corporate church or in the Book of Common Prayer. They called ordinations such as Righter's ordination of Stopfel "presumptive and preemptive."

"Such individual action by a bishop or a diocese can only threaten the unity of the church and question the nature of the church itself," White and Patterson said. "For unity is critical for God's mission and it is to that mission that we are called and must attend."

Diverse Reactions

Predictably, reactions to the ruling abounded. The following suggests the range and passion of views expressed:

NOW IS THE TIME for mutual reconciliation and healing.Integrity, Inc., the lesbian and gay justice ministry of the Episcopal Church, is deeply grateful that the Church has listened to the Holy Spirit and has reaffirmed the inclusivity of the Gospel. The judgment also reaffirms the historical inclusivity of Anglicanism.

The decision to dismiss the charges against the Rt. Rev. Walter Righter for both alleged heresy and his alleged violation of his ordination vows is amply supported by the Canons of the Episcopal Church. We rejoice with Bishop Righter and his wife Nancy, long-time Integrity members, who have borne the pain of these charges at heavy personal price. We rejoice with the Rev. Barry Stopfel, also an Integrity member, and his partner, Will Lecke, who have faced the charges in a more personal way but collectively with hundreds of other lesbian and gay Episcopal priests. We rejoice with the Episcopal Church, and hope that the decision will aid in evangelism by our church, not only in the lesbian and gay community, but in the broader community as well, especially among the young, who long to see a loving church reaching out to their complex world.

The church is now in a position to fully embrace the ministry of its lesbian and gay clergy.

We reaffirm our support for historical Anglican inclusiveness — a church that allows a diversity of opinion — and we hope that we will be able to continue in mutual ministry with those who have opposed us. There is so much more that unites than divides us. **— Integrity**

BY DISREGARDING the Church's doctrine of marriage, this court has condemned the Episcopal Church to still more anarchy and conflict.

This ruling is a tacit validation of homosexuality. Both Holy Scripture and The Book of Common Prayer clearly teach the doctrine that Christians are to reserve sexual intimacy for the sacrament of marriage. The practice of homosexuality is a flagrant violation of this long held Christian belief. The Episcopal Church cannot abandon this essential doctrine without wreaking havoc in the lives of its members. The court did not have authority to change the Church's teaching and their action serves as further evidence that the bishops are out of touch with both the Church universal and the overwhelming majority of faithful Episcopalians. In declaring that the Church has no basis under Title 4 to restrain a bishop from ordaining a practicing homosexual, they have loosed a prescription for ecclesiastical chaos.

Some may believe that this acquittal of Bishop Righter spares the Episcopal Church bad publicity regarding a so-called heresy trial. The fallout from this disastrous ruling will be far worse than bad publicity.

Now that the door has been opened for the Episcopal Church to deny the sanctity of marriage, on what basis will it ask priests or laity to honor the sanctity of marriage?

Episcopalians will remember this ruling when they choose where to devote their energies and their finances. With this ruling, the Episcopal Church as a national entity will continue to fragment and devolve.

— Todd Wetzel, executive director of Episcopalians United

THE EPISCOPAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS rejoices at the decision rendered by the Court for the Trial of a Bishop in dismissing both charges against retired Bishop Walter C. Righter. We especially rejoice with our lesbian sisters and gay brothers in this affirmation of the gift of their ministries in our Church.

The decision expressed in the Opinion of the Court not only clarifies what constitutes the core doctrine of our Church, but also reaffirms the essential faith claims of Christianity. We believe those faith claims free us to proclaim that the Gospel message is an inclusive message.

We give thanks that the Church is not now compelled to drive out large numbers of faithful and effective clergy who are lesbian and gay along with the bishops who ordained them. God calls human beings to God's service, and the Church ordains human beings, not categories. This decision brings us one step closer to a whole priesthood, to the time when all of us can fully live out the Baptismal invitation to live as part of Christ's eternal priesthood.

The Court's Opinion clarifies an important distinction about when use of the presentment process is appropriate.

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In its Opinion, in Section III.E, the Court writes: "Some doctrinal teachings of the Church have been found to be so important to the ordering of the life of the Church that they have been made mandatory, with disciplinary consequences defined in canon law for failure to conform. Some of these understandings, as for example what constitutes eligibility for ordination, are incorporated in the constraints found in Title III of the Canons concerning age, *gender*, and prior ordination, and *which are binding* upon bishops, standing committees, commissions on ministry, vestries and presbyters." [Emphasis added]

"No such written constraint is contained in the Canons," the Court continues, that would forbid "the ordination of persons because of homosexuality, in orientation or practice."

This clarifies something often overlooked in recent heated debates: that there are two parallel struggles ongoing in the Church — the ordination of women and the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons. While the presentment process is not appropriate to resolve situations in which neither doctrine nor canon exist, it can be appropriate in matters which General Convention, as the legislative body of the Church, has codified in canons which carry disciplinary consequences, such as the eligibility of women for ordination to the priesthood and episcopate.

As we work through these issues in General Convention in 1997, we pray that the Church will continue to interpret received history, moral tradition and Biblical texts in light of the principles of fundamental human value and equality as expressed in our Baptismal Covenant when we promise, with God's help, "to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." The Church cannot be fully human or fully reflect the image of God without all of God's people.

Former Caucus president, the Rev. Carol Cole Flanagan, perhaps best characterized the impact of the Court's decision when she said, "The Church has always acted its way into new ways of thinking. It has never thought its way into new ways of acting."

— Episcopal Women's Caucus

THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF civil rights on the one hand, or prejudice against gays and lesbians on the other. Of course homosexual persons need the love and care of the Christian community! Of course they are to be treated with respect and compassion!

Our Diocesan Board has spent much time considering what would constitute the Episcopal Church's "abandonment of its own teaching," and what action should be taken by this diocese, should that occur. On May 23 the Board determined that the decision of this Court is indeed an official pronouncement of the Episcopal Church, and that pronouncement constitutes the abandonment of orthodox, biblical and traditional Christian teaching. The Board voted (with one dissent) to act

Press crowd around Walter Righter and his wife, Nancy, moments after the Court for the Trial of a Bishop announced its decision to dismiss charges against Righter. James Solheim/ENS

What concerns Episcopalians and other Christians today is the brand-new argument that openly homosexual individuals should be ordained, while living with their sexual partners in the rectory in an entirely new kind of role modeling.

... Knowing [that the exoneration of Bishop Righter] was a possible outcome of the presentment process, our Diocesan Convention voted back in January to attach a "Letter of Conscience" to our pledge to the National Church of this calendar year. In it we said, "Should the Episcopal Church abandon its own teaching we will, in conscience, be required to reconsider or rescind our pledge."

in accordance with our Letter of Conscience sent to the Presiding Bishop and the Treasurer of the Episcopal Church on February 5, 1996.

Prior to the General Convention of 1994 there was a clear distinction between two different parts of the "asking" of the National Church to each of its dioceses. The *Assessment* supported the General Convention itself, and the office of the Presiding Bishop and his staff. The *Apportionment* then funded the programs of the National Church that were authorized by the General Convention of the coming Triennium. The *Assessment* has always been considered "mandatory," i.e. the dues each diocese pays for being

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a part of the Episcopal Church USA, while the *Apportionment* was truly an "asking." Dr. John Booty, the chief historiographer of the Episcopal Church, wrote back in 1979, concerning this *Apportionment* or "Program Budget:" "Dioceses and parishes can indicate their approval or disapproval of [the Church's] policies and activities by giving or withholding the money necessary for its work. At crucial moments ordinary people in parishes are able to exert their power in telling ways, indicating that they of the holy community provide the basis upon which all else exists."

In 1994 the two sections of the National Church's budget were combined into a single "asking," (which the President of the House of Deputies considers to now be entirely voluntary). They are, however, still separate in the canons, and distinguishable from each other in the formula behind the "combined asking." The math is a bit complicated, but it works out as follows: The *Assessment* portion of the National Church's asking — that is, the "dues," the mandatory portion of the asking for this diocese $43,000 — is for this current year. The *Apportionment* — that is, the historically voluntary portion of the National Church's asking — is $164,000. At its May 23 meeting the Diocesan Board voted to:

• pay the *Assessment* in full for the present year (actually, we have already paid more than that amount in the first five monthly installments on our pledge), and

• redirect the balance of the *Apportionment* (approximately $100,000 remaining) to be divided equally between the Diocese of Honduras (our companion diocese of long standing) and the Great Commission Alliance, a new umbrella organization that works to spread the gospel and plant churches through the South American Missionary Society, the North American Missionary Society, and Anglican Frontier Missions, which is dedicated to planting churches among 25 of the most neglected and least evangelized peoples today.

The official name of the Episcopal Church is "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society." That name ought to be descriptive of the mission and ministry oft he Episcopal Church, but we believe its mission and ministry have been diverted in a direction we cannot support. Thus, we propose to redirect the *Apportionment* monies from this diocese to agencies that will more faithfully carry out both the domestic and the foreign mission and ministries we are called to support.

It was the sentiment of the Board that this action should be a clear sign of our desire to remain loyal to the historic teaching of the Episcopal Church, our continuing desire to be a diocese in good standing in this branch of Christ's church, and at the same time a clear protest against the Court's decision. We believe that decision constitutes the abandonment of historic, biblical and Anglican orthodoxy, the authentic "Core Doctrine" of our heritage.

If any congregation dissents from the decision of the Bishop and the board, the vestry is invited to request that the *Apportionment* monies from that congregation continue to be sent to the National Church, and this office will implement that request. It is my fervent hope, however, that we will be united in this important witness.

— Excerpted from a June 2 pastoral letter from presenterJohn Howe to his diocese (Cen. Fla.).

WE EPISCOPALIANS, we Anglicans, are not fundamentalists. By that I mean that we have not and are not likely ever to read the Bible only in a literal sense. For us Scripture is foundational, it underlies everything we believe. It informs our praying and our thinking today. We go for the essence, and part of that essence, as we see it in the Incarnation of God in Christ, is liberality of love.

That is also what gets us into trouble. For in every place, in every generation, that experience of incarnational liberality has caused us to open our hearts, our minds, whatever is closed in us, to consider some one or ones who are the lepers of that day in a new light, to seek and serve the Christ in them. And whatever the new nudgings, those of us in the fold at that time will begin to argue whether or not those someones have the Christ in them, whether their beings or their behaviors are sinful, whether that liberality of love is intended by God for them. And intended, mind you, through us. It would be all right if God could find some nice way to do it without dragging us into it, but things do not usually work that way. For one, very few human beings (if any), can dare to believe the Christ is in them unless some very human others let them see their reflections in our eyes. For another, when any one or many of us stop seeking the Christ in others, we lose sight of it in ourselves. Like it or not, that is part of the economy of God's creation.

This liberality of love, this daringly incarnational living, when central to our mission, has always gotten us Episcopalians, us Anglicans, into trouble with each other and with the world. The Civil War, the anti-racism struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, the role of women in the councils of the Church in the 1960s and the ordination of women scarcely more than two decades ago are all matters and events which called up everything in us, from our deepest fears to our grandest hopes. And we had trouble loving one another. Unless we change the emphasis in our theology, that is, unless we give up on this radical doctrine of Incarnation, this outrageous confidence in God's loving, we shall have new disagreements from time to time—each time we are nudged to consider loving and serving the Christ in someone(s) we have never loved and served before.

My prayer is that we may, in response to this decision of the ecclesiastical court, move beyond what my mentor John Krumm calls this "blessed rage for order," and instead live into the longing to be of one heart. When God gives us the gift to be of one heart, we can agree and disagree, we can fight and argue, we can do all sorts of things without causing even deeper wounds in our passion for truth or justice.

— Excerpted from a message to his diocese from James Jelinek (Minn.), a bishop opposed to the trial.

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Family on the silver screen

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

To the extent that Hollywood movies are any measure, family history is on the American cultural mind. There are in release this past year a number of films on the topic.

The best of them is *My Family, Mi Familia*. Set in East L.A, it spans four generations, beginning with the old man "born in Los Angeles when it was still Mexico." The story is carried forward on the strength of five marriages. The first involves the "Jefe," who walked north for a year and crossed the bridge from East L.A. to take a lawn job at a wealthy home, there to fall in love with another servant and raise their children through the deportation horrors of the Depression.

Then the marriages of their children: one daughter in a huge East L.A. fiesta, another as a nun to a priest while both are doing solidarity work, and yet another arranged by those two between her brother and a *compañera* to prevent her deportation to Salvador. Lastly, the lawyer son who sheepishly brings his gringo fiancé and her parents on a visit back to the *barrio*. For him, the old Mexican is not buried in the backyard beneath the plot of beans and corn. He waves off the suggestion quickly as the quirky quaintness of "an old family story."

All this, including a shooting by the police, transpires beneath the bridge from East L.A. which hovers mythically over all, confirming and spanning the great cultural, economic divide.

The film is full of struggle, weaving history and family in a narrative voiced by the middle brother who proves to be the writer. It's all well acted, especially by Jimmy Smits who manages not to overshadow.

In another "burial" and reunion, Robert Duvall plays an Arkansas farm equipment salesman who discovers that his real mother was African American and sets off to locate his half-brother (James Earl Jones) in *A Family Thing*.

Crossing that family divide is no small task — the American crisis writ fine — and the fact that in the end they pull off the meeting of hearts (without undue sentimental manipulation) makes this a truly hopeful film. Duvall and Jones both can act and do. The story has an easy southern pacing into which one may relax.

Flirting with Disaster casts the family search and reunion motif as a comic road movie. Ben Stiller, a yuppie entering fatherhood, is suddenly urgent to locate his birth parents, having been adopted quite young. He gathers up his wife (Patricia Arquette) and the kid, accompanied by a inept adoption agency bureaucrat, to undertake the cross-country hunt, complete with false leads and sight gags.

Mary Tyler Moore and George Segal play the neurotic adoptive parents, anxious about this whole endeavor, while Lily Tomlin and Alan Alda wait at the end of the road as the biological parents — aging hippies who also prove devious cons.

Another comedy, directed by Jodie Foster, is built around the annual family trek back for Thanksgiving. *Home for the Holidays* puts Holly Hunter at the table with her parents (Anne Bancroft and Charles Durning) and assorted other family members, kookie and straight.

Around that table, old patterns kick in and old wounds surface, so the humor is full of snipes and petty cruelties, like the fun of being crammed close into a telephone booth. When Hunter asserts, "We don't have to like one another, we're family," it's part of a plea for love. Robert Downey, Jr., the gay son, slips away to call his partner at a serene seaside party elsewhere and asks, "How's my real family?" In the end, however, mostly, the excruciations do resolve in love.

Finally, in *How to Make an American Quilt*, the most impressively casted of the lot, Wynona Ryder has gone home for the summer to write her thesis on women's tribal culture and brood on a marriage proposal while a southern quilting bee of family and friends stitches her wedding present. Among others around the quilting rack are Anne Bancroft, Ellen Burnstyn, and Alfre Woodard. Each square is a narrative window flashing back personal stories of love and loss which each edify Ryder's decision. Maya Angelou, the former servant girl with an illegitimate mulatto daughter (Woodard), appropriately orchestrates the project with deep wisdom and artistic aplomb. The film is an ambitious and complex narrative fabric, hinting the richness of American family history itself. TW

> In *Home for the Holidays*, old patterns kick in. When Holly Hunter asserts, "We don't have to like one another, we're family." it's a plea for love.

review

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is a Methodist pastor and author of *Seasons of Faith and Conscience* (Orbis, 1991).

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Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Searching for Indian records

by Marianne Arbogast

Children who behave in disrespectful ways are "acting like they have no family," according to a Native American saying. Nancy Wanshon, a Detroit-area genealogical researcher of Odawa heritage, would apply this critique to the dominant American culture.

"I feel very sorry for Americans, because they have no identity," Wanshon says. "Culture is where morals and values come from. I don't believe in this big melting pot — I think it is important for all people to know who they are and where they come from."

Such knowledge may be prized most highly by those who have been forcibly deprived of it. Wanshon's mother, like many Native Americans of her generation, was separated from her family by a government intent on "civilizing" Indian children. Taken from her northern Michigan family at the age of three, she was placed first in a Wisconsin orphanage, then in a series of rural foster care homes.

"They would teach children to forget about being Indian, and wouldn't let them know where their families were," Wanshon says.

When her mother was released from state custody at the age of 16, she began to search for her relatives. On the advice of an Indian who recognized her name, she moved to Michigan, but never accomplished a reunion. Though she married a German man, she instilled a strong sense of Indian identity in their children.

Many Indian people were not being accepted because they didn't have tribal membership certification.

Nancy Wanshon

"I grew up knowing I was Indian and was very proud of it," Wanshon says. "We never watched cowboy and Indian movies, and when we saw a Hollywood version of Indians, my mother would clarify it.

"I've often wondered how she was able to maintain her self-pride. I think she was abused so badly by the orphanage and foster homes that she was determined not to be like those people."

Although her mother obtained some family records after a law was enacted mandating their release, they were burned after her death by inlaws who were embarrassed by their brother's marriage. When Wanshon applied to university in her mid-20s, she had to compile the records from scratch to prove blood quantum for a tuition waiver.

"In college I got very involved in Native politics," Wanshon says. "AIM [the American Indian Movement] helped me to recognize what was happening to the earth and our people."

One of her discoveries was that many Native Americans who wanted to go to college were having problems verifying their identity. She also noted the discrepancy between official census reports and unofficial Indian awareness of their numbers.

"Many Indian people were being counted as white, and many Indians were not being accepted because they didn't have tribal membership certification," she says.

Realizing that she had learned how to access information that many did not have, Wanshon began to help others trace their lineage.

She had a copy of the Durant Roll, a 1910 Michigan census of Indian communities, and knew that similar lists existed in other states. She knew how to obtain copies of census field notes and older

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Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

annuity payrolls — "proof of the theft of Indian land" — from the National Archives. She keeps a copy of an 1870 payroll which lists her great-grandfather among those who lost their land through government extortion.

Two years ago, at an Indian genealogical conference, she overheard a young girl telling one of the speakers that she was trying to locate a relative.

Wanshon realized that the girl's lost great-aunt was her own mother. She embraced her cousin, relieved to learn that her mother's family had never stopped looking for her.

In one of her frequent trips to Indian gatherings in northern Michigan, Wanshon met an elder who had known her grandfather. She learned that he and her grandmother, who spoke no English, had been married in a traditional Native ceremony, and refused to give in to incentives to be married in church.

"The church would register the birth of a Native child and give the family food and clothing if they would have that child baptized," Wanshon says.

"The community was poor and malnourished. My grandparents had 10 children, and they allowed the last six to be baptized. On each baptismal record the church would write 'illegitimate.' But they wouldn't take a can of beans or a blanket and allow the church to marry them; they felt their marriage was blessed by the Creator and didn't need any other blessing."

Wanshon also learned that her grandfather, who sometimes traveled great distances to find work, always sent money back home.

"Indian people were very communal," she says. "They worked to make life better for the whole community. Things like that make me proud of who I am and where I come from."

She is equally proud of her traditional faith, which she distinguishes from the "Sunday religion" of mainstream America.

"We live our spirituality every day," Wanshon says. "We know that when we do something good for one another, that is part of spirituality. At any time, we can burn some sage and pray, and the burning of sage and sweet grass takes our prayer up to the Creator."

Wanshon participates in sacred fire ceremonies, listening to the teachings of Indian elders, and ghost suppers, in which plates are set for the dead. She looks forward to reunion with her ancestors after death.

Wanshon's people, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, won federal recognition in 1994, after some 200 years of struggle. This status allows them to establish an independent system of government in their homeland, in the Petoskey-Charlevoix area of Michigan.

"We know we have been here from time immemorial, but we had to prove that our people were here before European Americans, and existed as a legitimate governing body," Wanshon explains. She traveled north in September of 1994 for the Reaffirmation of her people's sovereignty.

Though Wanshon remembers her father's German immigrant parents with fondness, they were "eager to get involved in the melting pot, and just become American," she says with regret. In one corner of her dining room hangs a cuckoo clock — a reminder of a clock brought from the Black Forest by her paternal grandparents. It is surrounded by an abundance of Native symbols and images.

Wanshon also carries sweet grass and other Native objects in her car, and takes care to drive with extreme courtesy. She hopes that people will notice, and that her graciousness will reflect well on the Indian community. She knows she has a family. TW

Back Issues

The following back issues of *The Witness* are available:

Africa, come spirit come, 6/95
Alternative ways of doing church, 8-9/94
"Be ye perfect", 3/93
Birthing in the face of a dragon 12/91
Body wisdom, 5/95
Christians and animal rights, 10/93
The communion of saints/ ancestors, 11/93
Dialogue, 4/94
Disabilities, 6/94
Godly sex, 5/93
Hiroshima and nonviolence, 7/95
Holy matrimony, 12/95
In defense of creation 6/93
International youth in crisis, 7-8/93
The New Party, 11/95
Rage in the 1990s, 11/92
Resurrecting land, 4/95
Resisting sprawl: the hope of bioregionalism, 10/95
Staying in my denomination, 10/94
When the church engages rage, 12/92
Women's spirituality, 7/94

Just mark the issues you would like and mail a check($3 per copy) made out to *The Witness* to 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226-1822.

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I am finally alone. They flew in from all directions like a flock of geese. There was a great commotion, much chattering and fluttering, people scattered about the yard like confetti, the laughter rising from them like bright balloons. The summer night fell slowly, bringing just the slightest relief from the heat of day. Then, one by one, they began to leave. Everyone had to be hugged one more time, the last few pictures snapped against the fading light.

This is how healing works. It is not always as dramatic as a surgeon's incision or the laying-on of hands. Sometimes it is as simple as feeding people, seeing two relatives talking in a corner, or holding the newest baby cousin and remembering holding his mother.

— Trish Hanly
St. Helena, California

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The Witness

Volume 79 • Number 9 • September 1996

IN NEED OF A LABOR MOVEMENT

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Hospitals

YOUR "HOSPITALS" ISSUE [6/96] WAS *excellent*!! I am in the midst of my CPE program and your issue could not be more relevant! Please send me a study packet as soon as it is available. I am passing it on to my CPE group. Keep up the great work!

Kurt J. Huber
San Francisco, CA

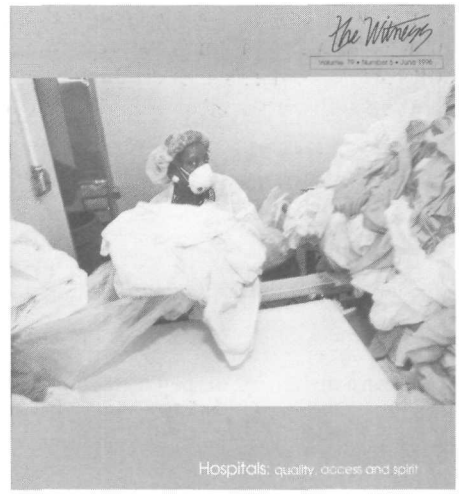
Is it ever OK to lie?

IN A RECENT SERMON VERNA DOZIER said she increasingly has become convinced that "the power of darkness is our need to be right." Virginia Ramey Mollenkott's attempt to provide "an ethic for lying when necessary" verifies for me Dr. Dozier's statement.

Ms. Mollenkott invokes several Biblical stories that are important to the development of the Jewish and Christian peoples and that include acts of deception, subterfuge, lying, cheating, and other behaviors generally presumed to be unethical. Because these stories are part of our story, however, does not, as Ms. Mollenkott asserts, justify either those actions or similar actions by any other persons, whether those persons are oppressed or not.

Instead of fully facing the costs of unethical behavior, which include a loss of integrity, separation from each other, and possibly separation from God, Ms. Mollenkott says that the institutional church and society *force* people to behave in unethical ways and that because of this we need feel no guilt for our secrecy or subversion. This is not justification, it is blaming, and it is dangerous because it denies our fundamental capacity to choose our own course of action in any given situation.

A far clearer vision is indicated in the article included in the same edition of *The Witness* on the actions by the Trocmés and their town of Le Chambon which hid and protected Jews during the Nazi occupation.



"None of these leaders became reconciled to making counterfeit cards," says their chronicler Philip Hallie, even though they continued to make and use such cards.

As human beings, we want to make "right" decisions, and we justify our actions on many grounds. Ms. Mollenkott's examples concentrate on justifying actions that bring desired outcomes. But the problem with self-justification is that it involves self-deception — that is, it involves an unwillingness to accept responsibility for the totality of our action and a failure to acknowledge that in each action we take we could be mistaken.

Janice M. Gregory
Washington, D.C.

ANYTHING VIRGINIA MOLLENKOTT writes for has to be good. She has had a profound, positive influence on me. I am blessed that she is my friend.

Elizabeth Baglivo
Philadelphia, PA

Holy matrimony

YOUR ISSUE ON MARRIAGE and relationships was useful and refreshing. Especially encouraging was the page on unmarried people by Kay Collier-Slone. I really wish our diocese were as actively supportive of unmarried members.

Thanks for the flyer about *The Witness* study groups. I plan to post this on the bulletin board and to ask around to generate interest. *Dialogue: Conversing with Adversaries* [4/93] would be relevant to us, since we live in an area with a press hostile to us. Do you have experience with other churches whose local paper runs anti-Episcopal columns?

Francis F. Smith
Pleasant City, OH

Witness complaints

NO THANK YOU. I am a liberal Christian, but am not interested in reading about a narrow Feminist/Lesbian agenda. Wake up! There are more effective ways to bring souls to Christ than yours. But then maybe you are so "left wing" that you are not interested in the above.

Gail Evans
Denver, CO

Witness praise

IN BOTH ISSUES I HAVE RECEIVED SO far I have found at least one thing to pass on to others. I plan to leave my next copy in my parish tract rack, when I'm finished, to let others discover your magazine. Your sober, balanced coverage of the recent U.S. heresy trial provided fresh understanding of an issue covered here only cursorily — or in lurid detail by newsletters of the fundamentalist "ain't it awful" school of journalism.

Mary Finlay
Toronto, ON

Classifieds

Vocations

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

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

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Question of ordination

I AM WRITING IN RESPONSE TO Jennifer Phillips' article on ordination [6/96]. I respect her theological view of the priesthood, and she rightly raises the question whether financial pressures should determine what the leadership of the church will be. She contrasts the oversupply of qualified candidates for ordination with the church's inability to find paid work for them, and eloquently articulates the spiritual role of the priest as the sacramental presence in a gathered community. But I operate on the basis of a different set of presuppositions than she does. I have been a rural dean as well as a parish priest, and have served on a committee that worked on mission strategy for a diocese. Unfortunately, financial resources do dictate the limitations the church faces, but they are also a call to evaluate how we are doing business. I have learned from our foremothers who could not be ordained though they felt called to ordained ministry, that if God calls to ministry, there will be ministry, with or without a paycheck from the church, with or without ordination, for all Christians are called to be agents of God's healing in a broken world. Candidates need to learn the difference between God's call to ministry and the needs of the church as an institution.

My perception of the financial pressures of the church is that they will get worse, not better, because they are part of the larger issues of the secularization of society and the deconstruction of the Constantinian church, not simply a matter of failure to do evangelization or stewardship. Since the fourth century, the church has played an important role in society and society was based at least loosely on the values of the church. Those facts are no longer true. Already in many places the model of an educated priest as the sacramental presence in each congregation has become an unaffordable luxury. But the good side of poverty is that it gives us an opportunity to abandon the "lone ranger" model of hierarchical ministry. The only things that a priest can do that laypersons cannot do are absolve, bless, and consecrate. One does not need a theological education to do any of these things. Thus the church is inventing new models, such as local priests. But Phillips is correct: we need to think very carefully about what we need, and I do think that we need and will continue to need some educated priests. I think that the future ministry of the church will be done in teams of lay and ordained persons, and priests both local and educated. I see each team member bringing different skills, with the mix enriching all. I would envision several parishes in a cluster with local priests, laypeople, and educated priests all serving the same parishes. Some of the reasons for such team ministries are the breaking down of hierarchy, the better utilization of gifts and skills, the decrease of isolation especially in rural areas, and accountability, in addition to financial savings. But I see the need for education for priests differently than Phillips does.

I have learned from our foremothers that if God calls, there will be ministry, with or without ordination or a paycheck from the church.

I will thus argue the case for educated priests of a different kind. First, Christian education for adults in all too many parishes I know, especially in the rural areas where few educated clergy are willing to go, is abysmal. I think that many people go to seminary because, if one is an educated, serious Christian, where else is one to learn more? Even in rural areas Episcopalians tend to be educated people and professionals. Poor sermons do not serve them well, and the sermon, practically speaking, is the major educational event in most parishes. I don't see this changing. A team enriches everyone's preaching. Laity sometimes are reached better by laity than clergy, but it is critical that sermons be theologically and biblically literate. That takes education, either seminary, continuing, or preferably, both.

Second, one of the major responsibilities of clergy is leadership. There are three critical areas of leadership: the first is spiritual leadership; the second is bureaucratic leadership; and the third is transitional leadership. The role of education in part is to broaden one's perspective and to teach alternate ways of doing things. Those are essential elements of preparation for leadership.

Spiritual leadership is and will increasingly become a critical function of clergy. It is the only thing clergy have to offer that some other profession does not offer. Spiritual leadership means being a person of prayer so that one can teach others how to pray. People are starving for spiritual leadership and turning everywhere but the mainline churches to find spiritual direction. It doesn't take an education to learn how to pray, and many who are educated don't pray any more. But our people need educated leaders who pray, who have thought beyond simple answers and who have a broader perspective than "Jesus and me."

Bureaucratic leadership is a major role of the priest in a parish currently. Primarily it means having a vision, a mission, and bringing others to share it or to build another. That usually takes some education and a broader perspective than a single parish or region. I greatly fear the increase of parochialism — which is endemic in the church anyhow — without educated clergy. And I have never been in a parish where there was no serious conflict. Conflict is necessary in a healthy parish, just as diversity is necessary, and the two go together. The role of the parish priest today is mediating between groups so that everyone who wants to share responsibility can. Some distance is necessary for mediating disputes. Local clergy may not have enough distance or power to be successful.

Transitional leadership is the vision that the church needs now to get us from where we are to new models of church. I cannot envision that kind of leadership without education, simply because it requires a sense of the larger picture, and again, some freedom from ties to the congregation.

The reality of the post-modern world is forcing us to examine anew what is necessary for a congregation to exist, and ways of meeting those needs. We need to think intentionally about designing leadership for the church in a new world, especially because the church has a record as one of the worst employers in terms of compensation for skills and education required and work done.

Leona Irsch
Toronto, ON

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THE WITNESS
Since 1917

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Cover: Protesting the Detroit newspaper strike. Photo by Daymon Hartley.

Back Cover: Worker at A.E. Staley's corn-processing plant in Decatur, Ill. Workers were locked out on June 27, 1993. Photo by Jim West.

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Trampling the grapes of wrath

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Job News Good; Wall St. Shudders, the headline read on the Internet in July. The story explained that with the creation of 250,000 new jobs, Dow Jones dropped nearly 115 points.

What an irony that good news for workers is bad news to Wall Street, but then the last decade has proved that the steady withdrawal of employment and benefits has been good for stockholders and CEOs. More clearly than has been true for several decades, the interests of American workers are at odds with the interests of the rich. (See Manning Marable's article on p. 8.)

At *The Witness* we received this letter from a woman in the southeast who receives a gift subscription:

"I was laid off from my position as administrative secretary for two small Episcopal churches. Excellent references have been little help in view of the severe unemployment in this rural area. I've learned first hand the frustration of dealing with the welfare system.

"For every dollar I earn in a part-time job as receptionist in an insurance office, I lose more benefits. As soon as I worked just 12 hours a week my SSI [Supplemental Security Income] was cut in half. When my employment was increased to 18 hours a week, my SSI went down to $6 a month, and my food stamps to $10 a month. My employer has offered me six more work hours a week, but I can't accept, because I'd lose Medicaid and a rent subsidy (for which the increased wages would not compensate)."

In a country where people cannot find work or can work full-time at minimum wage and still not pay their bills, we need a union movement.

Most church activists turned their attention away from the unions in the 1950s. Incomes were increasing. Unionized labor seemed almost fat with the nation's prosperity and many of its leaders were openly hostile to women, racial minorities and people with anti-war sentiments.

But we can no longer afford to dismiss the union movement. Since 1980, times have changed radically. *Business Week* editors forecasted then that the average American was going to need to pay for the retooling of American industry.

The churches and unions have assets, infrastructure and a vocation to serve, but both are largely disabled by fear and pomp.

"It will be a hard pill for many Americans to swallow — the idea of doing with less so that big business can have more," the editors wrote. "Nothing that this nation, or any other nation has done in modern economic history compares in difficulty with the selling job that must be done to make people accept this new reality."

And with a deftness and surety of purpose that was unrelenting, the affluent altered the balance in the economy.

The labor movement, which had cut deals with corporate leadership, was unprepared and did not fight. There are signs of hope that it is mending its ways. But whether it is or not, the churches are going to have to begin monitoring the needs of workers and the strategies of labor. If necessary, they must call the labor movement that we need into being.

As *The Witness* sets out to uphold unions, we are not naive. (See Jane Slaughter's "malcontent's view" on page 16.) Sometimes during the Detroit Newspapers' strike I have been appalled at the inaction, fear and subservience to protocol that can bind union leaders, but then I am struck that many must feel the same frustration when they look toward the church. Both institutions have assets, infrastructure and a vocation to serve, but both are largely disabled by fear and pomp.

The unions are bound by labor laws that curtail where and when workers can be organized, what strikers can do to demonstrate the urgency of their needs and what redress is available. The arbiter is the National Labor Relations Board, a bureaucracy *par excellance* that wobbles slowly to rulings that can always be appealed. (Some labor attorneys argue that unions would be better off if the whole body of labor law were dumped.)

I feel for the union leaders in Detroit's newspaper strike. I suspect they are good people who want to do the respectable thing. So they reign in their troops to ensure there is no suspicion that they've engaged in "misconduct" and have thereby given up the fight, because they cannot win against the newspapers simply by picketing the merchants that advertise in them.

Religious leaders can act more freely

continued on page 6

editor's note

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

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Industrial mission hero

by Scott Paradise

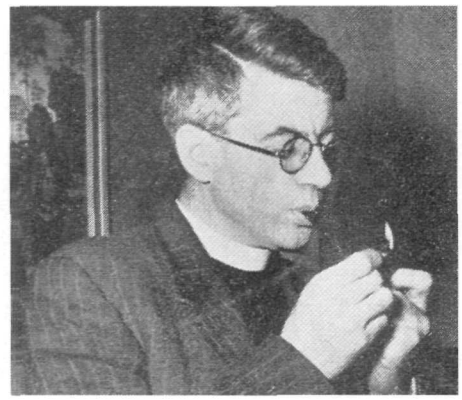
Ted Wickham died last year. The news brought sadness and memories flooding back from the mid-1950s when he was my colleague, mentor and friend. In those years his was the voice of a prophet speaking the truth about the church in industrial England.

He was a cockney, of short stature, with a pipe in his teeth, glasses sliding down his nose, and perennial bad hair days. But he was energetic, eloquent, and winsome, quick with repartée, with an imaginative way of articulating the Gospel in secular contexts, and a gift for involving unsuspecting industrial workers in serious theological discussion.

In his youth he had been a worker employed in the chemical industry, while reading for a degree in theology from the University of London.

Wickham was appointed Industrial Missioner for the Diocese of Sheffield in 1944.

The Sheffield workers in the black mills lining the River Don took pride in the tradition of steel-making there since the days of Chaucer. But only one percent of them would voluntarily darken the door of a church. The rest held the opinion, usually colorfully expressed, that the



Ted Wickham

Christian faith was for children, the church was for hypocrites, and religious life was irrelevant. These workers became the "parishioners" of the Sheffield Industrial Mission.

It took all the creativity, energy, commitment, persistence, and strategic shrewdness that Wickham could muster to win from managers, unions, and the workers access to the shop floors of the Sheffield mills. It took quickness of wit, a comic flair, and a gift of open, sympathetic listening to win the hearts of the men who worked in them. In winning both these things Wickham began to evolve a way of reaching across the chasm between church and industry.

Shop floor discussion groups proliferated. The staff of the Sheffield Industrial Mission grew. Industrial missions inspired by the Sheffield model sprang up not only in other industrial centers in Britain, but also in Detroit, Boston, and elsewhere in the U.S., Australia, Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, and some of the cities of Africa.

Wickham's work in Sheffield was not without its enemies. Traditionalists criticized it because it was not based in parish churches nor did it bring workers to occupy their pews. To this Wickham responded that his critics did not appreciate the gap between the culture of the churches and the secularism of most workers. Not only was the coloration of the church definitely middle or upper class, but the thought forms in which its message was expressed were pre-industrial and pre-scientific. Wickham's classic study, *Church and People in an Industrial City,* documents his claim that industrial workers had not been lost to the church at some time in the past, but rather, they had never been part of it. Five years after Wickham left Sheffield to become Bishop of Middleton in Manchester, the work in Sheffield was eviscerated.

Church leaders criticized Wickham because he insisted that the church take the structures of industry seriously and amend its own structures in order to engage them. It was a bitter pill for him that his plan to do that, which the Church Assembly accepted in 1959, was never fully funded or properly implemented.

But for many of us he spoke prophetic truth about the remoteness of the church from the market place and the mass of people in the world of work. And he inspired many of us with much needed hope by demonstrating how that might be changed. TW

Scott Paradise, retired Episcopal chaplain at MIT, worked in Detroit's Industrial Mission.

"Grapes of Wrath," cont'd

because they are not directly subject to the National Labor Relations Act. They can be charged with trespass if they engage in civil disobedience on behalf of workers, but cannot be fined for "striker misconduct."

But community activity will never be a sufficient shield for workers. Labor leaders have to find their strength.

In the meantime, the churches have to educate themselves about the strikes currently taking place, about labor law, about life on minimum wage. If we help do the work and cry out loudly enough for strong partnership from the unions, perhaps we'll see a day when we can recognize that Solidarity Forever and the Battle Hymn of the Republic may not only share a tune, but contain something of the same truth. TW

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THE PEOPLE, YES

by Carl Sandberg

The people will live on.
The learning and blundering people will live on.
They will be tricked and sold and again sold
And go back to the nourishing earth for rootholds.
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback.
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.
The mammoth rests between his cyclonic dramas.

The people so often sleepy, weary, enigmatic
is a vast huddle with many units saying:

"I earn my living.
I make enough to get by
and it takes all my time.
If I had more time
I could do more for myself
and maybe for others.
I could read and study
and talk things over
and find out about things.
It takes time.
I wish I had the time."

The steel mill sky is alive.
The fire breaks white and zigzag
shot on a gun-metal gloaming.
Man is a long time coming.
Man will yet win.
Brother may yet line up with brother:
This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.
There are men who can't be bought.
The fireborn are at home in fire.
The stars make no noise.
You can't hinder the wind from blowing.
Time is a great teacher.
Who can live without hope?

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief
the people march.
In the night and overhead a shovel of stars for
keeps, the people march:
"Where to? what next?"

— from *The People, Yes,*
Harcourt Brace & Co., 1936, 1964

Poetry

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Fighting for a decent wage

by Manning Marable

In the summer of 1969, my first real job was working in a large warehouse, unloading box cars and cleaning toilets. I earned the minimum wage, which at that time was $1.60 an hour. In today's wages, that was equal to $6.45. By working all summer, I earned enough to cover most of my first year's college tuition.

Today, millions of Americans work over 40 hours each week, and never take home enough money to feed and clothe their families. Minimum wage workers have been making $4.25 an hour, or approximately $170 for a 40-hour week. Almost 60 percent of these workers are women. Nearly two-thirds are adults who are trying to support their families.

In the 1980s, millions of new jobs were created in the U.S. economy, but relatively few were at wage levels that could support families. Eighty-five percent of all new jobs were located in low-pay or part-time service work. Nearly two out of ten workers had no health insurance, and two out of five had no pension. Economist Lester Thurow observes that "median household incomes have fallen more than 7 percent after correcting for inflation and family size, to $31,241 in 1993, from $33,585."

What is most significant about this decline is that the country's per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was rising. Moreover, the share of wealth held by the top 1 percent of the U.S. population *doubled* in the last 20 years. As Thurow states: "In effect, we are conducting an enormous social and political experiment — something like putting a pressure cooker on the stove over a full flame and waiting to see how long it takes to explode."

Not only have American workers witnessed a decline in their standards of living, but they also face an increasingly uncertain future. In 1995, a study about employment trends in the metropolitan Chicago area was completed as part of the MacArthur Foundations' Working Poor Project. The study indicated that during the next 10 years, about 140,000 new jobs will be created in Chicago. One half of these jobs will be available to workers with a high school education — but none will pay more than an annual wage of $23,000, which is hardly enough to maintain a family. And the competition for skilled blue-collar jobs will be higher than ever before.

Losing white privilege?

Another factor is the *racial* dimension of the class struggle. In unprecedented numbers, millions of white people are confronting what many African-Americans and Latinos have known for years — unemployment, poverty and hunger. A recent study by Isaac Shapiro, of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, documents the growing crisis of non-Hispanic whites. One-half of all Americans living in poverty, nearly 18 million people, are white. For white female-headed households, more than one in three are poor. Between 1979 and 1991, the poverty rate for white families headed by an individual between 25 to 34 years old nearly doubled.

For millions of white Americans, "whiteness" used to mean a relatively privileged lifestyle, a standard of living superior to that of most racial minorities. Now as they are losing ground, they are desperately trying to understand why their "whiteness" no longer protects them. Alienated, angry white workers are finding the "American Dream" has become a nightmare. Politicians like Pat Buchanan offer them easy scapegoats — immigrants, blacks, Latinos, welfare recipients, the homeless — to explain their misery. But the empty rhetoric of Buchanan won't reverse the class warfare that is destroying millions of American households.

The unions

A half century ago, at the end of World War II, American unions and capital reached an agreement about the future of labor relations. The union movement essentially agreed to expel radicals and Communists from its ranks, and to limit strikes and militant actions. In return, the corporations shared their profits in the form of higher wages and benefits. By the early 1970s, American workers enjoyed the highest living standard in the world. As AFL-CIO president George Meany declared, "We believe in the American profit system."

Today, millions of Americans work over 40 hours each week, and never take home enough money to feed and clothe their families.

But as global competition increased, capitalists cut costs, lowered wages and fired workers. Millions of jobs were shipped abroad to exploit low-wage, non-unionized labor. In many factories, occupational safety standards deteriorated, and employees lost many of their health benefits and pensions. But most unions had collaborated with the bosses for so long,

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Manning Marable, director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, has been a long-time contributor to *The Witness.* Photographer **Jim West** works at *Labor Notes.*

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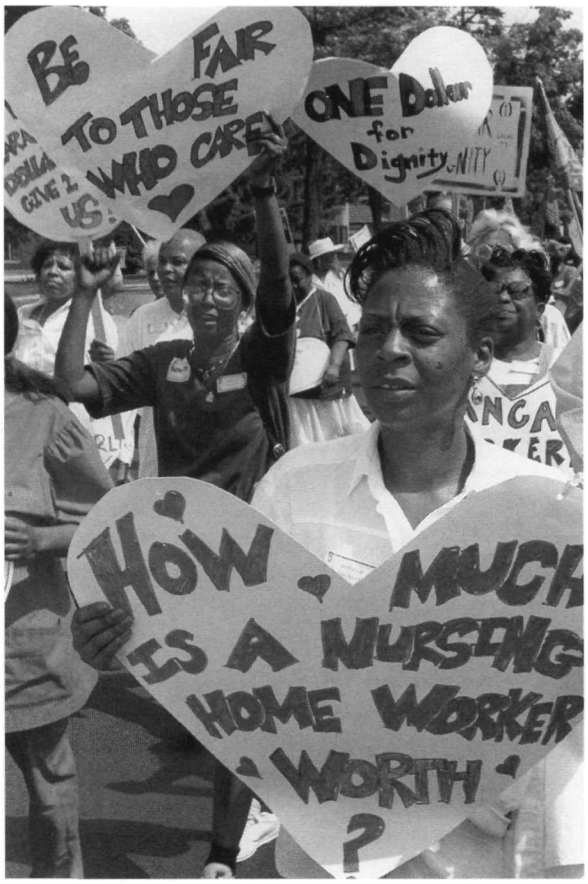
they were unable to mount a counteroffensive against the corporations.

When President Reagan smashed the air traffic controllers' union during its 1981 strike, it sent a clear message to the corporations that union busting was on the immediate agenda. By 1987, nearly three-fourths of all contracts that covered 1,000 or more workers included wage concessions. Approximately 200,000 workers became non-union due to decertification elections in the 1980s. By the end of the decade, union membership declined to 16 percent of the American labor force. Workers lacked an effective, progressive labor movement which could fight for higher living standards.

Another reason that millions of American workers feel betrayed is the widespread wave of corporate layoffs. In the 1990s, as Wall Street stocks reached all-time highs and corporate profits soared, millions of workers were thrown out of work. In December, 1991, General Motors announced that it was firing 74,000 workers.

Barely one year later, Sears, Roebuck and Company fired 50,000 employees. Soon other corporations began to fire thousands of workers to improve their profitability. In 1993, Boeing dismissed 28,000 workers, Philip Morris cut 14,000, and IBM slashed 60,000 jobs. The next year, Delta Air Lines announced 15,000 layoffs, NYNEX cut 16,800 jobs, and Scott Paper fired more than one-third of its total work force, over 11,000 people. This January, AT&T Chief Executive Officer Robert Allen announced that his corporation was firing 40,000 employees. Coincidentally, Allen's annual salary at AT&T was $3.3 million.

Who can expect American workers to feel any loyalty to companies that only are concerned about profits and not people? Corporate executives pay themselves millions of dollars in salaries, fringe benefits, bonuses and stock options, while millions are losing their jobs. In 1975 the average chief executive officer of a corporation received about 40 times the salary of an average worker. Today that ratio has jumped to *190 times as much.* The typical CEO of America's 100 largest corporations receives about $900,000 in annual salary, and $3.5 million in overall compensation.



Fighting for a $1 raise in Detroit. Jim West

A living wage

We need governmental policies which create jobs and promote income growth for working people. One essential step toward that goal is the reallocation of government expenditures from wasteful military spending into the social and economic infrastructure that makes productivity possible.

We urgently need to make massive public investments in housing, streets, highways, railroads, bridges, hospitals and clinics, public schools and universities to create new jobs.

One national organization that is leading the fight for decent wages is ACORN — the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. Last year, ACORN participated in the Chicago Jobs and Living Wage Campaign, a coalition of over 40 community groups, labor unions and religious leaders. The Campaign has called for a city ordinance requiring businesses that receive subsidies or hold city contracts to pay their workers at least $7.60 an hour. The majority of Chicago's City Council now supports the living wage ordinance, but it is opposed by Mayor Richard Daley. ACORN is also pushing for a living wage in St. Louis, Mo., and Houston, Tex.

However, the effort to achieve decent wages for working people will not be won without a struggle. In St. Paul, Minn., last year, a local initiative that would have required any company that received over $25,000 in public subsidies to pay their employees at least $7.21 an hour was defeated. Activists from ACORN, the New Party, religious and labor groups were viciously attacked by politicians and the press. A sophisticated campaign was orchestrated by one of St. Paul's largest public relations firms to mobilize opposition. Advocates for a living wage were smeared as "Stalinesque" and "job killers."

We cannot wait for Congress or Clinton to "do the right thing." Labor unions and civil rights organizations must lead a national campaign for a significant hike in the minimum wage, as well as for full employment legislation. TW

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Anatomy of a strike

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Thousands of union members forced the Detroit Newspapers to airlift their Sunday edition from its suburban printing plant last Labor Day. Skirmishes with police were frequent. Militance was high.

Today the strike is in its fourteenth month. Strikers are juggling part-time, low-wage work with strike duty. Their families are stressed. They haven't yielded, but they can't tell if they are winning.

Meanwhile the AFL-CIO is pouring in money. The Sweeney-Trumka leadership understands that this strike is a showdown they can't afford to lose if their claims of a new militance that can win the hearts of the unorganized are to hold.

A string of big strikes have been lost recently, at Caterpillar, Staley, Firestone. People are seriously asking whether unions still have any clout. Can unions get busted even in Detroit?

At issue

Initially the intent of the Detroit Newspapers (DN), which administer *The Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News* under a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA), was to win concessions. It may also have been then, as it clearly is now, to destroy the unions.

"The unions made a lot of concessions in the last contract, and rather than work through a reasonable contract this time, the company wanted a lot more concessions," explains labor negotiator Dan O'Rourke, who negotiated a new electrical workers contract with the DN prior to this strike.

"It appears that management had planned for months, if not years, in advance of the contract," O'Rourke added. "They had put together a lengthy and detailed strike plan. Their parent companies are willing to put in millions of dollars to win."

The two unions most affected by management's demands were the Newspaper Guild and the Teamsters, but the four other unions negotiating contracts stood in solidarity and struck unanimously on July 13, 1995 when management refused to extend the previous contract.

An issue for the Guild is merit pay. The DN already had merit pay bonuses but was now attempting to make annual 2-6 percent increases dependent on merit evaluations, according to labor analyst Steve Babson.

"Criteria was murky," Babson explains. "Eric Freedman, a reporter who won a Pulitzer Prize, earned the lowest merit pay possible because management said he was not a team player."

The DN also wanted to put workers on salary so they could not claim overtime pay.

"For drivers and printers, the issue was job security," Babson adds. "New technology and work organization would reduce jobs. The unions are willing to respond to this technology but not at the accelerated pace that the company insists upon. The union had already agreed to a reduction of 400 jobs when the DN was losing money [at the time of the creation of the JOA]. When the DN started earning money, the union didn't expect a continued crisis atmosphere."

But Wall Street dictates that newspapers should make 17 percent profit. The $54 million the DN earned on both papers in 1994 was good, but not good enough. Apparently even the $100 million in profits that analysts projected for 1995 weren't good enough.

Raising the profit margin can only be accomplished by filling the newshole with syndicated material and getting rid of staff.

Striking reporter John Lippert says, "The DN demanded that management be allowed to transfer work to nonunion workers at a pace determined by management without bargaining, the right to take away union jurisdiction in the composing room at the company's discretion and more use of part-time workers.

"It would be easier for me to accept if I thought that the companies would make a stronger paper because of the strike," adds Lippert. "But they are not serving the community. They've taken a bad situation and made it worse."

The *News'* editor/publisher Bob Giles admits that his paper twists its strike coverage because the TV coverage, he says, is pro-union. And the *Free Press* has dropped 30 of its 59 city desk reporters.

> *"We're going to hire a whole new work force and go on without unions, or they can surrender unconditionally and salvage what they can."*
>
> *— Bob Giles*

Management

Management has been unabashed.

The DN refused to extend the terms of the old contract, produced the paper by flying in employees from other corporate papers when the unions struck, then hired "permanent replacement workers" to continue production.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness* and active in Readers United. Camille Colatosti contributed to this report.

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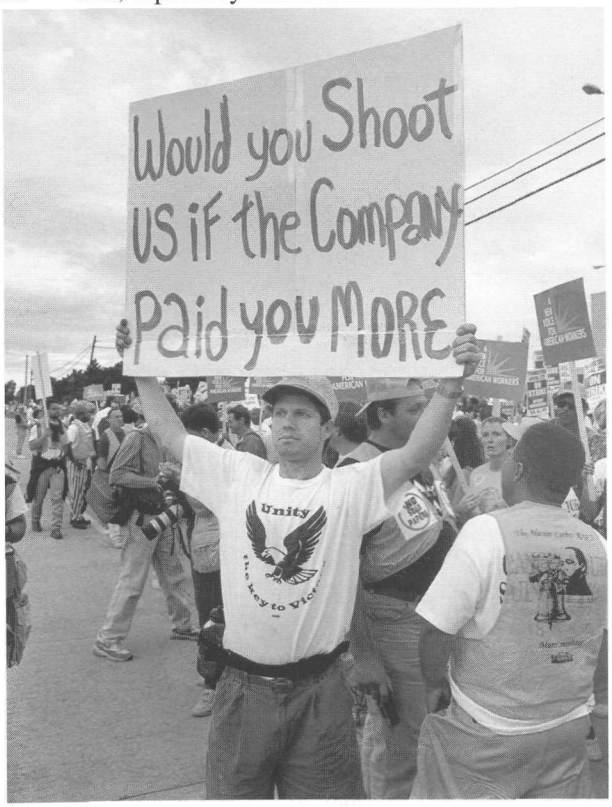
Sterling Heights police spray pepper gas on striking newspaper workers. Daymon Hartley

Giles told *The St. Petersburg Times*, "We're going to hire a whole new work force and go on without unions, or they can surrender unconditionally and salvage what they can."

Company security operations are in the hands of John Anthony, former director of the FBI in Detroit. Four to six months prior to the strike, the DN was negotiating with Sterling Heights and Detroit police, offering money to increase service. While Detroit refused, the suburban community has accepted more than $2 million so far.

The nationally-known Vance Guard was hired "to protect the property," according to Susie Ellwood, spokesperson for the DN. But Vance's own ads refer to their superlative ability to videotape striker misconduct. In fact, they were famous during the Pittston Coal strike for riling, then videotaping, the crowd in order to persuade judges to issue injunctions against the strikers.

Vance's provocations were often violent, especially last fall. In a brawl at the Clayton Street distribution center, during which strike supporters broke the car windshields of replacement workers, striker Vito Sciuto was beaten so badly that he is now permanently mentally impaired.



Jim West

At least as bad, the DN buys air time for Vance's carefully edited footage and misrepresents events to the public. One ad in Detroit portrayed enraged strikers near a burning DN truck. Another showed strikers slamming their picket signs (cardboard and sticks that are one-eighth inch thick) into a *Detroit News* truck.

It would be months before a court would decide that strikers did not ignite the DN truck; in fact there was considerable reason to suggest that the Vance guard did. In the latter case, an unedited tape would have shown people in the driveway, several DN trucks crashing through the gate without warning and running through the crowd at 35 miles

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an hour. As the last truck passed, strikers took out their fear, their anger and their disbelief with the only weapon they had — their lightweight picket signs.

The silk-stockinged set has been imported, too. Smith-Henan, the law firm used by Pittston, is maneuvering the DN through the byzantine regulations in the National Labor Relations Act. They've also advised the company in its pending RICO suit under which anyone who repeatedly disrupts another's business can be charged with racketeering.

"There is a whole industry that specializes in union busting," observes business writer Lippert. "It's not just Vance but lawyers and a public relations apparatus. There are textbooks written on the subject."

Absentee corporations

Detroit's two papers are owned by Gannett and Knight Ridder who produce some 108 other papers as well, only 15 of which are unionized. Already they have been able to force concessions elsewhere by pointing to the situation in Detroit.

The cost is not low. Everyone suggests that the corporate boards underestimated the Detroit community's sense of investment in this strike.

Subscriptions have fallen at least one-third. The DN refuses an audit, but admits it has lost 30 percent of its readers. It's suggested that their losses are greater. Advertising is down one-quarter. The DN acknowledges losing $100 million in 1995 and $50 million in the first half of 1996. These figures don't reflect the loss of profit that the papers could have anticipated which was projected at $100 million a year.

Management continues to claim an openness to resolution, but is unwilling to dismiss its replacement workers.

"From management's standpoint, the issues are really the long-term need to adapt to changing technology," says Joe Stroud, editor of the *Detroit Free Press*. "We were not trying to make dramatic changes in the negotiations that led to the strike. We were willing to make incremental changes. My own view is that the unions misunderstood some tactics that management used," Stroud adds.

A vacillating liberal voice on the *Free Press'* editorial page, Stroud says that he'd still like to see a negotiated settlement, but adds, "The law is that we are within our rights to hire replacement workers. We had argued editorially that Congress ought to change the law. This is not a management position but it is my editorial position. Every person we hired was a painful decision. We told strikers that we intended to operate and had to hire. I think we took on an obligation to those people. We're not going to fire replacement workers."

The unions

By most accounts the six striking unions were unprepared for a strike. Members were still closing on new homes the month before the strike; they were utterly vulnerable financially.

"We didn't see the danger we were walking into," Lippert says. "We underestimated the willingness of the company to go for broke. We were not prepared the first weekend the way they were. There were 18 months of collapsed negotiations before the strike and we didn't see the danger signs."

"The solidarity of 2,000 workers in six unions is amazing. In the past, one union or the other would cross the line."

— David Elsila

Friends of the unions credit union leaders for holding a united front.

"The solidarity of 2,000 workers in six unions is amazing," comments David Elsila, editor of UAW Solidarity Magazine. "In the past, one union or the other would cross the line. Here there is no union crossing."

The unions have mounted a serious campaign to boycott the papers and to pressure businesses not to advertise.

"We've been able to put into motion the most effective newspaper boycott that has ever happened," says Roger Kerson, media spokesperson for the striking unions. "We were not able to stop the production of the paper, but we didn't expect that in this day and age. We have caused economic pain to the employer."

Labor advocates are reluctant to criticize the unions publicly. But privately many question decisions made by the Metropolitan Council of Striking Newspaper Unions.

Some question whether walking out was the best response when management refused to extend the existing contract.

"In the 1990s, we have to look at alternative ways to win labor battles," says labor negotiator O'Rourke. "Without legislation that reforms replacement worker laws, we have to think about whether to use strikes or to design in-plant strategies."

Others complain that the union leaders, out of practice with militance, were afraid.

Word is that in the first month, the Council of Unions rejected three proposals presented by strikers and supporters. The first was for a strike paper that could hit the streets two weeks after the strike began. The second outlined a campaign that called for a public spokesperson, use of billboards and public action. The third, drawn up by a striking reporter, listed ways to reach out to the religious communities in Detroit. In the last case, the writer was reportedly told that he was "insubordinate" for pre-

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senting suggestions that had not been solicited. Three months into the strike that reporter crossed the line — at about the same time that the unions finally started a strike paper and hired a press spokesperson. The religious community wouldn't be organized for another two months.

Many believe that the mass actions at the DN's two printing plants should have continued. Buttressed by UAW members and other supporters in the community, strikers stood in crowds of thousands when they blocked the driveways and faced down the police.

But when an injunction was issued at the Sterling Heights plant and the company complained to the National Labor Relations Board about striker misconduct, the unions called off the mass demonstrations. The penalties for misconduct would be high. But in the Pittston strike, the United Mine Workers violated injunctions and got most of their penalties dismissed in the settlement.

Rumors abound as they do in all crises. Some say, although press person Roger Kerson will not comment, that most of the union presidents continue to draw full salaries and therefore lack incentive for militance. Some say there are union leaders in the pay of the company. And if the company is willing to lose $250 million breaking the unions, there is money to spare. But it is as likely that six separate unions simply find it difficult to act in concert. Internal politics are touchy.

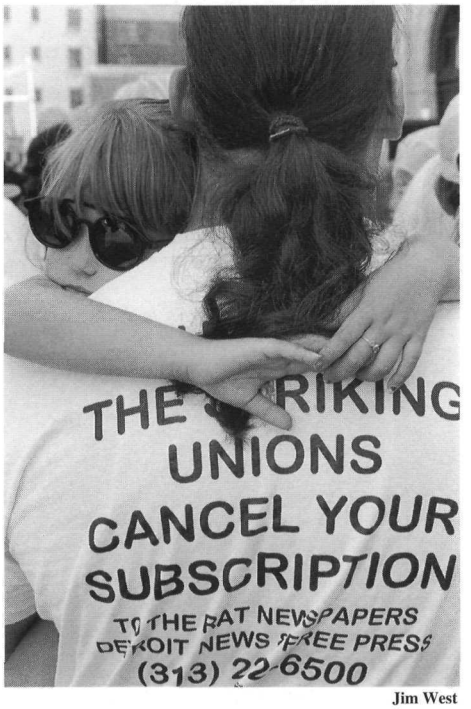
"Teamster Council 43 has been a real disappointment," says historian Babson. "Council 43's opposition to Teamster reform president Ron Carey affects their willingness to mobilize Teamsters" to win this strike during Carey's tenure.

The AFL-CIO

Sweeney and Trumka are believed to be unable to afford a loss in Detroit. The defeats at Caterpillar, Staley and Firestone could be blamed on previous leadership, but the Detroit newspaper strike is happening on their watch.

In January, they sent Eddie Burke, a Teamster who helped run the Pittston coal strike campaign of civil disobedience.

Burke's crew of eight AFL-CIO staffers has organized a 5,000-person rally addressed by union leaders, invited sympathetic nonstriking unions to march and has organized 800 members of the religious community to sign a pledge condemning the use of replacement workers.



Jim West

Locally they have reorganized the daily pickets so that they are deployed from a central point where they can gain information and encouragement before picketing key advertisers and distribution points. Strikers' duties have expanded to include joining rallies or marching through the neighborhoods of management. But critics note that Burke has not prepared the strikers for nonviolent action.

Nationally, the AFL-CIO has sent some $18 million in strike benefits in addition to staff and legal help, according to Burke. The AFL-CIO has also initiated a national boycott of Gannett's USA Today which is observed by United Airlines and several hotel chains.

"It's down to a marathon," says Burke. "Who will break first?"

Labor-community relations

Official union structures were established for community involvement. But many who tried to participate reported that the union presidents shot down their ideas.

"Those meetings were very, very frustrating," claims former staffer Cheryl Buswell-Robinson. "We had noted that after the cancellation of the Saturday protest actions, there was a lull in activity. We were fearful that people would drift away, so we proposed a rally. A rally is not some radical idea — Republicans hold rallies." But the union presidents wavered for weeks, sometimes endorsing and sometimes refusing the rally — finally approving it four days before the event.

Dissident strikers

The Unity Victory Caucus (UVC) is composed of strikers from all six unions. Their stated goal is to supplement the leadership of the unions and to win the strike "by any means necessary." Early on, UVC called for a strike paper, more AFL-CIO investment and mass protests.

"I've always been heavily involved with the Teamsters and was working with Al Derey to get people motivated," explains Rick Torres, a striking driver who worked for the DN for 18 years. "But I was alarmed by the rate of decline in activities going on. The leaders were losing heart and losing their fight."

UVC organized a demonstration at the north plant on a Saturday night last fall.

"But the Metro Council leaders were concerned and upset that we were doing something different from their tactics," says striking *Free Press* photographer Daymon Hartley. So UVC regrouped,

conducting a low-profile leafletting campaign, before going public again several months later.

Frequently demonized by union leaders, UVC members have still managed, over the last 10 months, to distribute a vivid slide show about the strike, leaflet, engage in a coordinated slow-down protest on Detroit freeways and help organize another demonstration at the Sterling Heights printing plant when it was learned that the Metro Council simply planned a picnic on the first anniversary of the strike.

Unofficial community efforts

Finally, several community groups decided to work independently of the striking unions. They attempt to communicate with the Metro Council from time to time, but they do not ask permission to act.

The WILD women (Women Involved in Labor Disputes), composed of strikers and strikers' wives, organized in October.

"When you're on strike, the whole family is on strike," explains Carol O'Neal. "I'm a striker and my husband is a striker. We saw that some families were suffering. Wives and husbands were fighting. "We meet every week. It is very successful. Spouses — wives and a few men — come to meetings. They learn about the labor movement and this stops the fights. Spouses work fundraisers; they work on the picket line.

"When someone is on strike, there are so many emotions. The money isn't there. The children may get flack in the classroom. We've brought families together. I'm very proud of the WILD women."

Readers United (RU), organized in late September, formed to allow the community a voice.

"We were concerned that a certain apathy was developing in the community," says long-time community activist Grace Boggs. "The unions were not addressing the needs of the community. The strike was seen as a labor struggle and it wasn't seen that the community has a real stake in the strike. We wanted to support the strikers *and* put forward the interest of the community. We also wanted an alternative newspaper."

Boggs adds that for community groups, the strike is lethal because they cannot publicize their activities or learn about other efforts.

Readers United action, fall 1995. Jim West

"We want to rebuild Detroit, but we can't put news in scab papers so no one knows what we are doing," Boggs points out. "Knight Ridder and Gannett don't care about Detroit, but we do. They don't respect our culture. This is a union town."

With an impressive list of endorsers, Readers United made demands on both the unions and the company.

RU requested that the unions provide a strike paper and train all their striking members in nonviolence.

The *Detroit Sunday Journal* began publication in November, but mass nonviolence training has not happened. At a minimum, proponents argue, nonviolence training might teach some strikers why using racial and gender epithets to insult scabs hurts their cause.

Readers United's demands to the DN include: negotiating a fair contract, dismissing replacement workers and apologizing to the community.

RU held three demonstrations in the fall, including a newspaper burning outside the offices of the *Detroit Free Press*. It is also investigating whether a community-owned, unionized newspaper can be created that would make Detroit independent of the absentee conglomerates.

In the spring, when the company seemed to be claiming victory, RU initiated a series of 10 nonviolent civil disobedience actions outside the offices of the *News* and *Free Press*.

The first wave of arrests included three bishops, the president of the Detroit City Council, two Baptist pastors and a retired attorney who helped write much of the earliest labor law.

"There is a drive on the national level to break unions," protested city council president Maryann Mahaffey. "We have a right to bargain, to organize, to strike and to expect management to participate. I was the last one to sign onto the resolution for the JOA. I did so with great pain. But we had been promised that there would be no further loss of jobs."

RU's demonstrations, which have included advance nonviolence training, are not characterized by verbal abuse of police or replacement workers. Clear that the struggle does not have to be against the Detroit Police, RU has worked with commanders to ensure that demonstrations are respectful. Some strikers complain they are too tame.

Snared in the legal trap

Inevitably, the DN moved against Readers United, asking the NLRB to declare RU "an agent of the union." If it had, RU would have been constricted by the NLRA just as the unions are and the unions (as well as RU) could have been fined for any violations. Members of RU attempted to

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explain to the NLRB that this strike affects not only management and labor, but the whole community. When the NLRB issued its complaint against the unions, RU was not named.

Ten waves of protest resulted in 288 arrests. By July, the city dropped all charges. (The National Lawyers Guild, which provided legal assistance, declared the dismissals a public vindication.)

But alarmed that some union leaders, like Don Kummer, administrative officer of the Guild, were saying publicly that "the community would have to win this strike," RU pulled back after informing the Council and the AFL-CIO that its purpose had been to bring attention back to the strike, but that it was looking to the unions to provide training and leadership for its own nonviolent campaign.

In late May, the UAW's RADD team (Rapid Action Disciplined Deployment), along with some strikers, blocked traffic outside the *News* and *Free Press* offices and barricaded the driveways with old cars. Since then, presumably because the UAW has been named in the DN's RICO suit, RADD has been described by some as being in an "inactive phase."

The anniversary

It's too soon to call this strike.

When noises were made in July about offering an unconditional return to work — a motion that requires the company to either rehire (on its own terms) or, at the end of the strike, pay everyone back wages (less whatever they earned at part-time jobs) — the union presidents refused, saying their reserves weren't that low. The strike still had life.

The NLRB is back in session considering union evidence that the company precipitated this "unfair labor practice" strike. A decision in the union's favor would certainly be appealed, but the courts generally are more lenient about striker misconduct in an unfair labor strike and they *can* require the company to fire all replacement workers. A decision may not be issued until fall.

"The appeals process is there to allow everyone due process rights," according to the NLRB's William Schaub, Jr. "However, it is conceivable, if the court declares this an unfair labor practice strike, we could go back to court and ask for some kind of interim injunctive relief to put everyone back to work."

The *News* and *Free Press* claim to have written off thousands of boycotters as a permanent loss. Meanwhile, it's stunning how many No Scab Paper lawn signs there are, even throughout the northern reaches of the state.

But the community suffers with the strikers. Ideas and initiatives that should be given pubic consideration through the papers are not.

Community groups refuse to talk to the scab papers: soup kitchens refuse promotional stories; organizers for the Stand with the Children demonstration refuse coverage. Nuns, lawyers, Readers United and even President Clinton, passing through on a whistle stop, have refused comment.

Strategies to win the strike abound. The UAW's David Elsila would like to see a one-day general strike. The Unity Victory Caucus wants a national labor march and nonviolence training. "After they've arrested every priest and nun, every UAW member and city council member, it's time for strikers themselves to take arrests," Hartley says.

Readers United blocks the Detroit Newspapers' driveway in early March. (L to R) Bill Wylie-Kellermann, United Methodist pastor; Selma Goode, Jewish Labor Committee; Emmanuel Giddings and Ed Rowe, Methodist pastors; Marion Kramer, head of Michigan Welfare Rights; Coleman McGehee, retired Episcopal bishop; Maryann Mahaffey, president of the Detroit City Council; and Maria Catalfio, *The Witness*. Daymon Hartley

As we go to press, many are mobilizing in hopes that John Sweeney will call a national march in Detroit for Labor Day.

In the meantime Detroiters can be thankful.

As Cheryl Buswell-Robinson points out, "Through this whole strike, people have been mobilized and activated. There is a whole layer of folks in Detroit who know each other now who didn't know each other before. We should be in pretty good shape the next time trouble comes down the pike."

And the strike's not over. TW

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A malcontent's view of labor

by Jane Slaughter

Since 1974 I've been a union member who has prodded the unions to shape up. Inspired by socialist politics, I always assumed that unions, as the biggest and potentially most powerful organizations of working people, were the right place to organize. Yes, top union officials were overpaid, sluggish, concerned about their own members (if them) and nobody else. Yes, unions had a bad rep among members of my 1960s generation for being slow to oppose the Vietnam War, indifferent to racism and organizing women, concerned only with the paycheck, not liberation. But I was part of the wing of the labor movement that wanted to change all that. As a new auto worker and UAW member, still wet behind the ears, I helped write a newsletter that criticized my local union officers for not standing up to management. I ran for convention delegate on a reform slate and won.

For 16 years I worked for an independent reform-minded magazine called *Labor Notes*, calling for more democracy, more militancy, more class consciousness, less hobnobbing on the golf course with corporate execs. Because of my books and articles criticizing labor-management cooperation and contract concessions, I've been vilified by UAW officials and others as an irresponsible malcontent.

I take it as a compliment.

New leaders

Now, in the mid-1990s, we see signs that the labor movement may be getting off its arthritic knees and taking some of the steps that thousands of us malcontents have advocated for so long. Last year, even the aging bureaucrats at the top of the AFL-CIO began to stir. They elected John Sweeney president on a platform promising "a new voice for American workers." Sweeney and his running mates had campaigned in union halls and on picket lines across the country, vowing to organize thousands of workers, especially people of color, women and immigrants.

The new leaders took some aggressive steps right off. They vowed to pump $35 million and thousands of volunteers into key Congressional races in 1996. They launched Union Summer, modelled after the 1960s' Freedom Summer for civil rights. Out of 3,000 applicants, a thousand young people were chosen to work on union campaigns, from contract fights to voter registration.

For union activists, it was a breath of fresh air. Many hoped that the new leaders would be more open to militant strategies and less quick to crush dissent.

A Labor Party

Another movement within the unions was taking a different tack. Bucking a media black-out, 1,400 delegates from a variety of unions met in Cleveland in June of this year to proclaim the founding of a Labor Party. "The bosses have two parties, we should have at least one," the T-shirts read. It was the first time in this century that American workers had proclaimed their own, independent voice in politics.

The labor movement is a sleeping giant with the strength to disrupt business and to mobilize millions.

The Labor Party calls for a constitutional right to a job, a 32-hour week to create more jobs, an end to hate crimes, affirmative action, universal health care, free university education, and the banning of scabs.

But I'll remain a malcontent within the labor movement, because these two developments are not nearly enough. I'll list just a few problems:

• ***Most labor observers are circumspect about what Sweeney can accomplish from on high — even if he wants to.*** They know that protocol is the ruling energy in intra-Fed dealings; the AFL-CIO cannot tell an affiliate union what to do, and Sweeney is unlikely to try. Perhaps because Sweeney broke decades of encrusted protocol by running for the top job, he will be careful about offending union presidents now. Word is that he was willing to keep his promise to aid the A.E. Staley workers of Illinois, who had been locked out for two-and-a-half years, and make their cause a nationally known crusade. But their international president, Wayne Glenn of the Paperworkers, said no thanks. Glenn just wanted the Staley struggle over with, and Sweeney did not ride in on a white charger.

The same seems to be true in the Detroit Newspapers strike. Despite AFL-CIO investment in the strike, the local union presidents here continue to make the most important decisions: to honor an injunction against mass picketing, to shun civil disobedience, and thereby to keep the strike from moving off dead center.

I'd rather see the national leader of the labor movement *lead*.

• ***Sweeney often seems to misunderstand the conflict of interests between employers and employees.*** Since his election, he has spoken before a number of employer groups, reassuring them that

Jane Slaughter, former director of *Labor Notes,* is a writer in Detroit.

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the labor movement seeks cooperation.

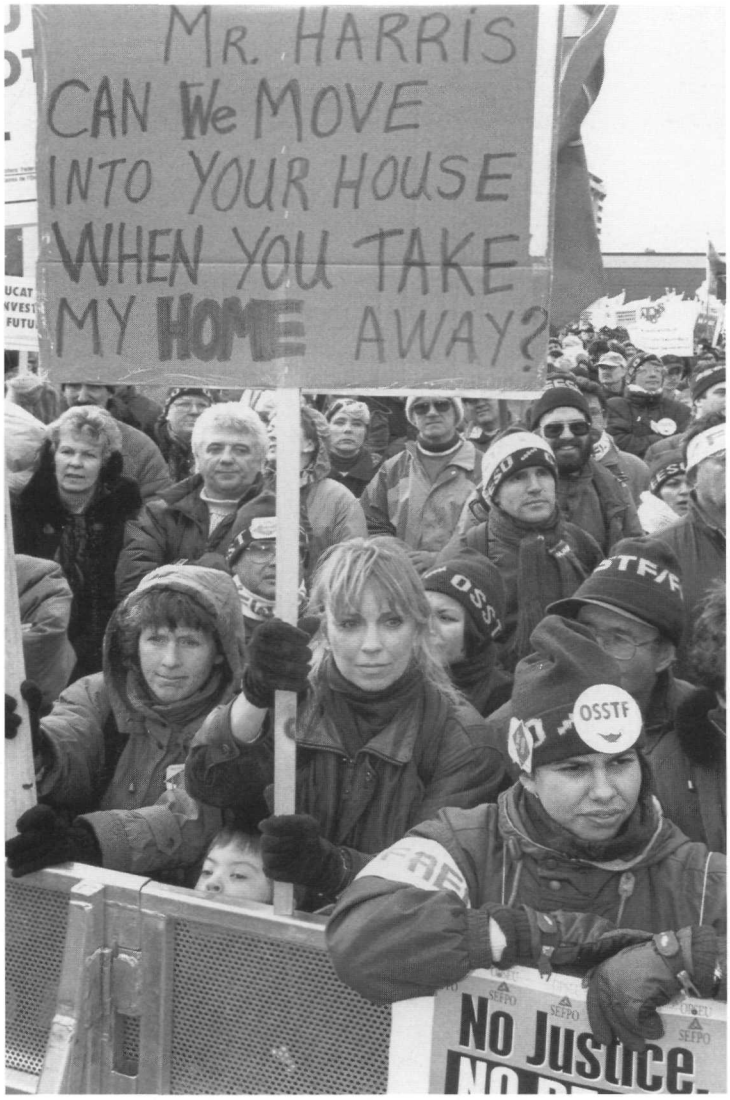
For the last 15 years a wave of worker cooperation programs has swept the workplace. Beginning in the auto industry with Quality of Work Life, moving on to Employee Involvement, by 1990 Total Quality Management was everywhere. In 1994 the AFL-CIO finally took notice, issuing a report from its Committee on the Evolution of Work (of which Sweeney was a member). The report assures us that unions can benefit from these employer programs: "An increasing number of employers ... have been open to joining with unions ... to create partnerships to transform the work system."

The Fed goes on to list five principles and four guidelines for a successful program. Most seem to refer to employers on some other planet. Guideline #1 is "mutual recognition and respect"; the committee notes that employers who try to smash organizing drives in plant A while promising jointness in plant B "lack a full commitment to partnership."

The number of employers who pass the "respect" test could probably be counted on the fingers of a worker who has lost a hand in a workplace injury. On top of union-busting are the massive outside contracting and privatization that have decimated union membership.

What makes the "partnership" rhetoric so insidious is that it has become a cover for the introduction of "management-by-stress" or "lean production" techniques. These include elimination of job descriptions ("flexibility"), deskilling ("multiskilling"), speed-up ("continuous improvement"), and stealing workers' job knowledge ("worker participation"). In the auto industry, the result is that the rate of workplace injuries has multiplied five-fold (from 1980 to 1992).

An important facet of this degradation of work is the question of work time. "Flexibility" means, in the words of Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, that "relatively few people actually work for the high-value enterprise in the traditional sense of having steady jobs with fixed incomes." Part-timers and temps are preferred; and the remaining full-timers shoulder as much overtime as they can bear. Often they don't even get premium pay, as "Alternative Work Schedules" become widespread.



Union members stage a general strike in Hamilton, Ontario, to protest the government's social service cuts and anti-labor legislation on Feb. 24, 1994. Jim West

• ***It's hard to believe that the workplace is becoming more unhealthy and more tense as the dirty industrial jobs die and the computers take over. But it's true.*** Repetitive strain injuries that cripple arms and hands are epidemic in many white-collar workplaces; they have shot up 800 percent in the last 10 years.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health says stress is a major culprit. The Clerical-Technical Union at Michigan State University reports that "the number of MSU employees reporting [such injuries] grew dramatically after 1988. Computerization of tasks, the lack of ergonomically appropriate equipment, and downsizing contributed to the increase."

Yet the new AFL-CIO has not said word one about the new "lean regime."

• ***If Sweeney does succeed in organizing thousands of new union members, what is he organizing them into?*** He and others at the top appear uninterested in changing the way unions run. He wants them bigger, but downplays the importance of democracy and rank-and-file control.

I think of what happened to the Los Angeles janitors of SEIU Local 399, many of them immigrants. Salvadoran cleaners used civil disobedience to disrupt busi-

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Reactivating labor

Bob Wages is president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) which is known for its work founding a labor party, fighting for single-payer health insurance, and working with environmental groups. Wages is a leader of the new Labor Party.

Wages rose through the union ranks rather quickly, as these things go, to become International president at the age of 41. He was one of the early backers of the palace revolt that led to John Sweeney's election as AFL-CIO president last fall. Cold-shouldered, till then, by most of his counterparts in the federation, Wages was recently added by Sweeney to the AFL-CIO's Executive Council.

Q: Many people question whether the unions can still win victories by calling people out on strike. Can you call your members out with confidence that they will not be replaced?

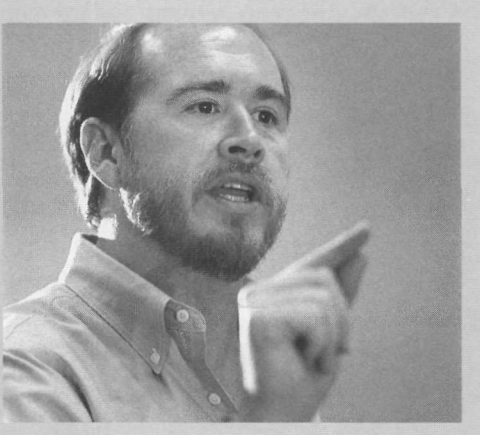
A: No. But I can call them out with confidence that I know what I'm going to do if they're threatened: put them back, and then call them out someplace else with the same employer. And if they threaten them there, put them back.

Q: What are some of the alternatives to calling workers out on strike?

A: In-plant strategies, or corporate campaigns, are successful when you know what you're doing. An in-plant strategy is a work-to-rule, engaging in concerted protected activity on the plant floor which has the effect of aggravating the boss to no end. Instead of doing some of the things that the boss wants you to do to be efficient, you do them by the book, because generally the book is cumbersome.

Q: You haven't always been a union radical. What happened?

A: The time from 1983 to 1987 helped define my union politics. I thought the road to oblivion was to continue not to be



Bob Wages Jim West

aggressive on social and political issues. The union movement had stood for nothing but compromise, cutting deals, and all the things that Kirkland, Meany, *et al,* stood for. In the meantime we had gone from representing 35 percent of the workforce down to 15 percent, and now it's down to 12.

Q: Why has union membership in the U.S. fallen so low?

A: It's reflective of the tremendous loss of manufacturing jobs. There's a lot of short-term work, temporary work, piecework. It's very hard to get your arms around people in those industries. Also, the labor movement has lost a great deal of its appeal to people. There's a legitimate question being raised by workers as to what unions really stand for.

Q: What should unions be doing to regain legitimacy?

A: The key to our future is refocusing our efforts on organizing. We have to get out of this mind-set that the law is going to help us. We've got to be in the streets, we've got to be visible, and we've got to take on some fights and win.

We need to focus on creating a mind-set among workers that there's a fundamental imbalance — they're being victimized for the sake of stockholders.

Q: President Clinton got an extremely warm welcome at the AFL-CIO convention last October. You wouldn't have known this man bought votes to push through NAFTA, did nothing on the anti-scab bill, campaigned for GATT, proposed a health care reform package that favored insurance companies. Why are union leaders committed to Clinton?

A: Because they're not willing to fight for an alternative.

Q: Why do union leaders prefer to not fight and be sure to lose, than to fight?

A: They don't see it that way. They are people who are comfortable, people who believe *they* know how to play this game. By supporting a winner, they perceive themselves as having a role to play.

Q: Given the climate, how did Sweeney get elected?

A: Many people felt betrayed that the federation didn't do more on NAFTA and on striker replacement/labor law reform.

Q: Were people concerned about the unions themselves being in danger?

A: I don't know that it goes that far.

Q: The buildings can still exist no matter how weak the actual union?

A: The churches are proof of that!

Q: Many union members I talk to say that things need to get worse before people will start to fight back.

A: People will start fighting back when they see that there's leadership.

— *J.S.*

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LABOR MALCONTENT,
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ness as usual in Century City's luxury office buildings, even invading the bars frequented by the resident executives and lawyers. They won a contract.

But then they were dumped into a 25,000-member citywide local run very much in the old style. In 1995 they and others organized a dissident slate called the Multiracial Alliance for the local's first contested election. When they won, and the local's old guard resisted, Sweeney's International threw the local into trusteeship. "The rank and filers had violated the understanding that their organizing was to stop when they became members," commented *Labor Notes.*

• ***Labor's internationalism still needs a lot of work.*** The AFL-CIO maintains its overseas institutes that *Business Week* once called "labor's own version of the Central Intelligence Agency."

Funded by the U.S. government, these institutes helped set up sham union federations in the Third World, to compete with more militant ones that challenge U.S. corporations abroad. The AFL-CIO always refused to work with COSATU, the leading black federation in South Africa, for example, because of its alleged Communist ties. Sweeney indicated obliquely during his campaign that he would shift the focus of the AFL-CIO's international policy, and he is consolidating the several regional institutes into one. But its future policy is still an open question.

• ***The newborn Labor Party is already divided on a crucial question:*** Many see it as solely a pressure group on the Democrats, never to run candidates of its own. And the heads of most unions remain committed to the Democrats no matter what indignities they heap on workers' heads. Even if Sweeney's committed to Clinton for 1996, now would be the perfect time for him to start serious third-party talks. But he won't.

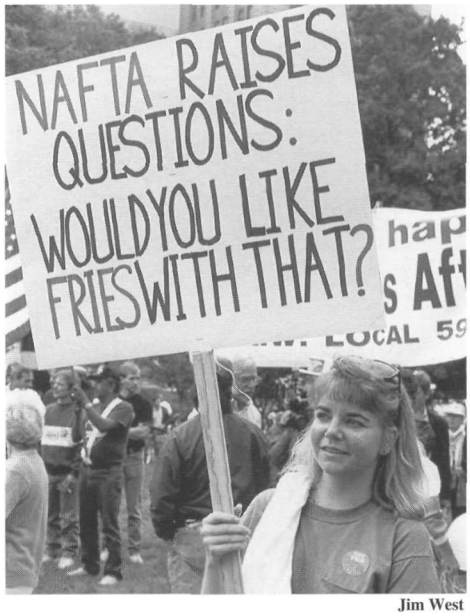
Sticking with the union

Why do I stick with the unions?

Here are three reasons:

The labor movement is a sleeping giant, with the strength to disrupt business as usual and to mobilize millions. Not too many other potentially progressive organizations have 15 million members.

Take the United Auto Workers, whom I've written about for 18 years. Given the sluggishness of the UAW and what seems like complacency on the part of many members, I'm amazed that the Big Three don't try to smash the union outright, as



Jim West

the Caterpillar corporation did. But contract after contract, they don't, and I have to believe it's because Big Three execs understand the power of the sleeping giant and fear to wake it.

Second, I'm not alone. There's a reason that *Labor Notes'* organizing manual, *A Troublemaker's Handbook,* is our biggest seller. Thousands of salt-of-the-earth unionists and supporters slog along in the day-to-day. And thousands of others find their singular time to fight and inspire the rest of us — the Hormel and Greyhound and Pittston Coal strikers in the 1980s, the Staley and Caterpillar strikers and the Detroit newspaper workers in the 1990s. Say these names to any active union member, and you'll see a flash of pride.

Third, those flashes of inspiration and solidarity are peak moments for me. When I stand in front of the *Detroit News* with hundreds of strikers singing "Solidarity Forever," tears come to my eyes, and I say, "I will never give this up." I think about bragging to my grandkids.

I believe that 1996 is an excellent time for people who aren't union members themselves to make common cause with the unions once again. Here are some practical suggestions:

• ***Support changing the labor laws that hamstring unions and make winning a strike next to impossible***. Ask your denominational lobbying office to request legislation, like the bill that failed in 1994, that would make it illegal to use "permanent" replacement workers during a strike. On the congressional docket this summer, unions supported the bill to raise the minimum wage, which passed in July. They are opposing the TEAM act, that would permit company unions, and the National Right to Work bill which would outlaw union contracts that require all employees to join.

• ***Support strikes.*** Unions don't strike on a whim these days; educate yourself on the issues, and you'll likely find that it's a pretty clear-cut case of corporate greed v. human working conditions. A union on strike should be seeking the churches out. If it is not, volunteer.

• ***Join campaigns to raise the minimum wage.*** Unions and community groups (including the New Party) have joined hands to create ballot initiatives that would raise the minimum wage. These campaigns need basic legwork, letter-writing and door-knocking.

• ***Check out the local chapter of the Labor Party.*** Though it won't be running candidates yet, it may be considering local campaigns. (National office of the Labor Party: 202-234-5190.) **TW**

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The Witness' labor crusade

by Marianne Arbogast

If you had walked into the *Witness'* office on certain days during the past few months, you might have wondered whether we were running a magazine or a strike support headquarters. The fax machine was sending off press releases on civil disobedience actions in support of the Detroit newspaper strike; papers scattered around the xerox machine bore the letterhead of Readers United—a grassroots strike support group which Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann played a large part in founding; and phone callers were as likely to be asking about demonstration plans as subscription information. You would not have found our editor herself, who would have been meeting with union leaders or police representatives, to return at an ungodly hour to write an editorial or plan a layout.

But though some of us grumbled about the disruption to our schedule, we know deep down that *The Witness* has only been enriched by this connection with the strikers whose chants drift up through our windows from the *News* and *Free Press* buildings a few blocks away. Besides, it has precedent.

Standing with the workers

For many years after its founding in 1917, *The Witness* consisted of 16 newsprint pages of minuscule type, sparsely sprinkled with photographs of clergymen and cathedrals, published weekly and dispersed to Episcopal congregations nationwide through a "bundle plan." But amidst ads for pipe organs, reports of clergy postings, and some unfortunately stuffy sermons, a spirit of sharp social criticism pervaded the magazine from its earliest days.

This charism was crystallized in the person of Bill Spofford, managing editor of *The Witness*, who was also secretary of the Church League for Industrial Democracy (C.L.I.D.).

In a 1931 *Witness* article explaining C.L.I.D., Vida Scudder wrote that they "stand where we think our Master stood, with the workers and the poor," then proceeded to catalogue Spofford's journeys to industrial hot spots.

Early *Witness* readers benefitted from Spofford's first-hand accounts of miners' strikes, sharecroppers' attempts to organize, and experiments with worker cooperatives.

"Six pine coffins, made out of raw lumber, containing the bullet ridden bodies of men still clad in the only garment they have ever worn, overalls, leads me to suggest that we are paying too great a price for cotton print," Spofford wrote in October, 1929, after a trip to Marion, N.C., where striking cotton mill workers had been shot while fleeing tear gas. After a detailed report of the workers' grievances, Spofford—predicting that he "shall doubtless be told that such a story has no place in a paper of the Episcopal Church" — appeals for donations of clothing and money. "It might help to let them know that there is a Christianity of a different sort than that preached from the mill owned pulpits."

> *"Six pine coffins, made out of raw lumber, leads me to suggest that we are paying too great a price for cotton print."* — *Bill Spofford,* The Witness, *1929*

Such appeals were frequent and often specific. A request sent in by A.J. Muste for clothing for an Anthony Ramuglia, president of the National Unemployed League, included Ramuglia's jacket, trousers and shoe size.

"The measurements are not those, you will note of a skinny brother," Muste writes. "Maybe some Bishop's measurements will correspond."

In January, 1931, Spofford wrote of his trip to Danville, Va., "where four thousand textile workers are striking for the right to bargain collectively through an organization of their own choosing. ... I was given the real privilege of addressing their meeting last Sunday afternoon. ... For half an hour before the meeting these workers raised the roof with old Gospel hymns, led by a Salvation Army officer, with 'Throw Out the Life Line' apparently their favorite since they sang it three times. ... They ended their song service by singing the National Anthem, the colors raised before them, with a gusto which put to shame the well-fed patriots who are using the troops and the courts of Virginia to crush these workers. ... I have never felt myself in a more religious atmosphere than I was in last Sunday afternoon."

Spofford's weekly columns were full of news from the labor front, such as a December, 1935 report that "six men, arrested in Tampa, Florida, were bundled into automobiles, beaten, tarred and feathered. Those doing the job are said to have worn the uniforms of the city's police. One of the men died in a hospital on December 10th. ... Their 'crime' was an effort to organize the unemployed. None were communists but members of a union that is affiliated with

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Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.*

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the American Federation of Labor."

Critiquing the church

Church pronouncements against child labor and in support of collective bargaining and employment security were given prominence in *The Witness,* but Spofford took the church sharply to task when it fell short.

In 1926, when a Canadian priest was refused access to the pulpit of the Detroit Cathedral Church of St. Paul unless he agreed to say nothing about labor, Spofford called it "a sign of the decadence of the Church in Michigan."

The same year, he published an article charging that "if the National Commission on Evangelism wished to drive every trade unionist out of the Episcopal Church they could not have done better than they have done ... [in] the Leaflet ... which I have just received [condemning violence by strikers]."

In another issue, Spofford lamented that "if laborers went to church in New York last Sunday (Labor Sunday) expecting to have their movement receive the sanction of the Church they were doubtless disappointed," and contrasted the church's timidity with the courage of radical friends who had done jail time for "attempting to put into practice the ethical teachings of Jesus."

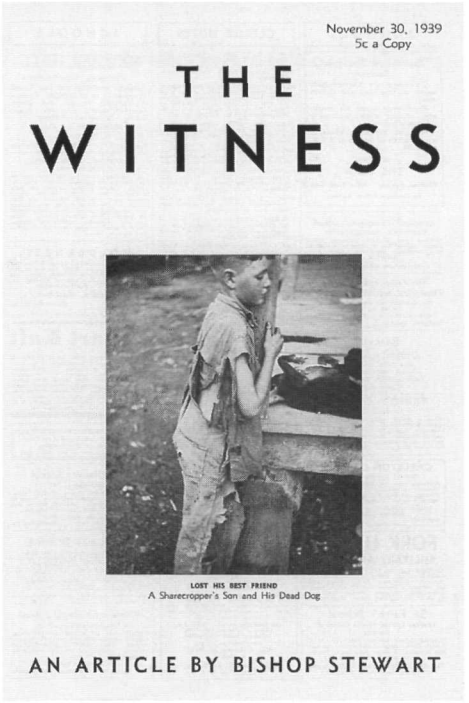
Spofford admired the church's more progressive stance in England, and included English labor news and the writing of English church leaders in *The Witness*. A six-part series by an English priest in 1936 was entitled, "An Intelligent Employer's Guide to Christianity."

Charged with communism

Throughout the Depression era, when *The Witness* regularly proclaimed the demise of capitalism, Spofford frequently answered to the charge of communist sympathies.

In September, 1937, as C.L.I.D. was organizing General Convention events, he responded to a public accusation "that my name was not Spofford at all but Spotoffski, and that in reality I was a Russian Jew, financed by Moscow gold and trying to deliver the Episcopal Church to the communists. ... I was required to prepare a statement for the press by our executive committee. This I present to you with the suggestion that if you are as sick of this silly business as I am that you skip to more important news."

"When [radical friends] press me for the fundamental reason for my social and economic radicalism," Spofford wrote in another issue, "I recite the first affirmation of the creed: 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty.' Of course I am greeted with loud and prolonged guffaws, and we invariably split right there, turning to more congenial subjects in order that friendships may not be too severely strained."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THE WITNESS

LOST HIS BEST FRIEND
A Sharecropper's Son and His Dead Dog

AN ARTICLE BY BISHOP STEWART

"I am not a communist," he declared flatly in September, 1938. "I am trying hard to be a Christian."

Editorial staff conflict

In his dedication to the cause of organized labor (as on many other issues), Spofford found himself in conflict with *The Witness*' editor, Bishop Irving Peake Johnson, which made for a riveting dialectic in the pages of the magazine.

Johnson attempted a detached stance from the messiness of union struggles; Spofford wrote that "what Bishop Johnson says about the clergy's lack of economic knowledge may be correct, though I rather suspect it is one of the myths fostered by the laity to keep the parsons from saying unpleasant things about this industrial world."

Johnson was critical of revolutionary violence and leery of joining forces with professed atheists; Spofford, himself a pacifist, was committed to working with anyone seeking social justice.

"As a matter of fact Mr. Spofford and I constitute the management of *The Witness* and are pretty nearly at the antipoles in our political and economic views," Johnson wrote. "I think that he is a Mr. Micawber who thinks that he can wish radicals into reasonable conclusions and he thinks that I am a hopeless reactionary who worships the god of things as they are. ... [W]e agree only in our devotion and love to the Master. ... If you get angry it is just too bad. We hope that there are enough readers who like this sort of thing to keep the paper out of the red in finances even if it is not always out of the red in politics."

Spofford admitted that "there are occasions when I suspect that those with whom I fight are going to pin my ears back once they attain power. I haven't any illusions about mankind — well maybe I have — anyhow, just because he won't give me that freedom which he now seeks for himself is no reason why I should not fight for his freedom now. ... And of course there is nobody in the Church who believes in freedom more than does Bishop Johnson. He has disagreed with me for twenty-three years and yet has given battle to rather impor-

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tant people in the Church in defending my right to speak my piece."

When C.L.I.D. was given two pages in the magazine for its monthly bulletin, Johnson was besieged with complaints about the "propaganda."

"So long as radicals use arguments instead of bullets I want to know what they are thinking," Johnson responded.

Social thought and action

Readers of *The Witness* under Spofford would have been well-schooled in the thinking of many leading social critics of the time, including Joseph Fletcher, Vida Scudder, A.J. Muste and Harry Ward, as well as attempts to implement the social Gospel.

A September, 1926 issue includes a report by Joseph Fletcher, then a student at the Berkeley Divinity School, about his C.L.I.D.-sponsored summer of factory work, and issues from the late 1930s include regular updates on the Delta Cooperative Farm, an experiement in interracial, cooperative farming in Mississippi. ("Exactly 136 readers of this paper have so far contributed to the Cooperative Farm," Spofford proudly reported in May, 1937.)

***Witness* cover from the July 23, 1931 issue.**

"When friends press me for the reason for my social and economic radicalism, I recite the first affirmation of the creed: 'I believe in God.'

— Bill Spofford

The July 1939 C.L.I.D. bulletin includes Spofford's testimony before U.S. Senate and House committees on the National Labor Relations Act.

Spofford was heavily involved in C.L.I.D.'s extensive educational programs, and served on the faculty of the School for Christian Social Ethics at the yearly Wellesley Conference. It was a rare issue of *The Witness* that did not include some announcement of a conference or lecture on labor issues.

Thumbing through *The Witness* of the 1920s and 1930s (occasionally distracted by reports of controversy over the new *1928* Prayer Book or photos of Spain's bishops giving a fascist salute), I imagine Spofford's office filled with trunks of clothing *en route* to mining towns and his desk littered with C.L.I.D. correspondence. I imagine his schedule as erratic. But 70 years later, the yellowed magazines still brim with vitality. It makes me feel glad to share office space these days with Readers United. TW

Witness awards

The Witness received nine awards for journalistic excellence in this year's Associated Church Press (ACP) and Episcopal Communicators competitions. *The Utne Reader* also nominated *The Witness* for an award in the "special interest" category in its 8th Annual Alternative Press Awards.

A series on clergy sexual exploitation edited by *Witness* managing editor Julie A. Wortman won awards of excellence in both ACP and Episcopal Communicators competitions for in-depth coverage of a topic. The ACP judges said: "[The series showed] an amazing lack of bias. ... the thoughtful and comprehensive approach to the subject makes this coverage a wonderful resource and reference." The ACP judges also called the March 1995 issue, "Economies of Sin," an "excellent resource for congregational discussion."

The magazine won a Polly Bond award for "General Excellence" in the Episcopal Communicators competition, the judges commenting that, "the magazine contains an interesting blend of pure political articles and those of theological news."

Other ACP awards:

- Award of Excellence for Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's editor's note, "What Can I Say? We Like Murders," 9/95.
- Award of Merit for the theme issue on "Economies of Sin," 3/95.

Other Episcopal Communicators awards:

- Award of Excellence for news story, "Embezzling Power: The Ellen Cooke Affair," by Jan Nunley, 6/95.
- Award of Excellence for original graphic, "On-Line Insurrections," by Anne E. Cox, 9/95.
- Award of General Excellence for the October, November and December 1995 issues.
- Award of Merit for Bill Wylie-Kellermann's critical book review, "The Resurrection of the Body," 5/95.
- Award of Merit for Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's interview, "Practicing What We Preach: An Interview with Steve Charleston," 12/95.

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A history of religion and labor

Washington Gladden, a pioneer of the social gospel in the U.S., was preoccupied with a question that vexed an increasing number of Protestant clergy: Why do the workers avoid our churches? In *Applied Christianity* (1886) Gladden reported that workers avoided church because they were "chiefly attended by the capitalist and the employing classes." This worker's response summed up the feeling of many: "When the capitalist prays for us one day in the week, and preys on us the other six, it can't be expected that we will have much respect for his Christianity."

C.A.I.L.

The Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor (C.A.I.L.), formed in 1887 by Episcopal Church leaders including W.D.P. Bliss (founder of the Society of Christian Socialists, 1889), proved to be a significant step forward by the Church in addressing the conflicts between labor and capital that shook the country in the last decade of the century. The involvement of Episcopal Bishop Henry Codman Potter in C.A.I.L. in 1893 led to the formation of a panel to mediate labor disputes between employees and employers.

The Labor Church

Herbert N. Casson founded the Labor Church in 1894 in Lynn, Mass. This former Methodist concluded that all existing denominations were unable to meet the needs of workers. Elaborating on Marx, Casson said that "many a church is nothing but a spiritual opium joint." The first two articles of faith of the Labor Church were equally uncompromising: "1. God is the cause and strength of the Labor Movement, and whatever institution or individual opposes the Labor Movement opposes Him. 2. All who are working for the abolition of wage-slavery are consciously working together with Him, and are therefore members of the real Church."

Lynd Ward

Religion and Labor Council

The National Religion and Labor Foundation was founded in 1932. The foundation organized community-centered Religion and Labor "Fellowships." These local chapters, a number of which were based at seminaries, provided members with the opportunity to meet and discuss labor concerns. Annually, the foundation sponsored inter-seminary conferences at AFL and CIO national conventions.

Labor Temple

The Labor Temple was the brainchild of Charles Stelzle, who bemoaned the seeming unwillingness of the Presbyterian Church to evangelize among workers in the city in 1910. So when the 14th Street Presbyterian Church in N.Y.C. merged, Stelzle convinced the Board of Missions and New York Presbytery to let him experiment with a new type of urban church that would reach out especially to workers. The Labor Temple School, which opened in 1921, at its peak had a yearly enrollment of 40,000 people.

Catholic Worker Movement

The Catholic Worker movement began in the 1930s with the creation of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper by Dorothy Day. Dorothy Day, a Catholic convert, along with a Frenchman of peasant roots, Peter Maurin, started the paper which was written for people of the working classes, a number of whom were unemployed during the Great Depression.

People came together, first in New York, and then in cities all around the country to form Catholic Worker houses that function as shelters for poor and homeless people, but also serve as bases for a growing movement.

Farm Worker Movement

Religious involvement with the farm workers began in the 1920s with direct aid programs sponsored by the Council of Women for Home Missions: day care centers for young children of laborers in Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey. Programs were expanded in 1926 when the newly created National Migrant Ministry, a ministry related to the National Council of Churches, began providing health, vocational and religious services at labor camps. By 1939, migrant ministry programs had been established in 15 states.

During this period, the California Mi-

Ken Estey, a doctoral candidate at Union Theological Seminary, contributed the earliest history in this report. The rest of the material is adapted from ***Faith & Work***, an excellent congregational study guide prepared by Regina Botterill for the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. ***Faith & Work*** can be obtained by contacting the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice at 1607 W. Howard St., Suite 218, Chicago, IL 60626; 312-381-2832; FAX 312-381-3345.

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grant Ministry (CMM) was experimenting with ministry in "rural fringe" areas. CMM staff received training from Fred Ross and Cesar Chavez, both of whom had been trained by Saul Alinsky of the Industrial Areas Foundation. This alliance resulted in religious support for the first grape boycott in 1965.

Catholic Labor Schools

The Catholic Labor Schools were a unique and practical expression of Catholic Social Teaching in the field of labor from the 1930s to the 1960s in the U.S. The Labor School movement was a way to train union rank-and-file leaders the social teachings of the church and provide skills for building effective unions.

The Sanitation Worker Movement

In late 1967, Memphis' sanitation workers established a local chapter of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees to improve their wages and working conditions. But the city refused to recognize the union and to negotiate a contract with its workers' union. On February 12, 1968, Memphis' sanitation workers — nearly all African American — went on strike.

On March 18, Martin Luther King, Jr., flew to Memphis where 17,000 people welcomed him at Mason Temple. In his speech, King recognized the indignity of their conditions and called on the entire community to join them.

At a later march, King explained, "The question is not what will happen to me if I stop to help these men. The question is, if I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?" The next day, April 4, James Earl Ray shot King. On April 8, Coretta Scott King led 19,000 people in a silent memorial march through Memphis in King's spirit. Eight days later, the city recognized the sanitation workers' union. TW

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Prisoners form union

Prisoners in Texas are working to establish a labor union for those who are incarcerated.

The Texas Prisoners Labor Union, founded last year by Ricky Long and Willie Milton, is trying to secure wages and a safe work environment for prisoners who are required to work. Milton charges that many prisoners have suffered work-related injuries and health problems.

"We are still handicapped by the fact that labor unions are not common to the work forces here in Texas and we must educate and re-educate those persons who are here confined," Milton says.

Although a U.S. Supreme Court ruling forbids prisoners to promote lockouts or strikes, Milton hopes to build enough outside support to call outside picket lines in response to prisoners' concerns.

U.S. blocks justice in Haiti

The U.S. continues to impede justice in Haiti, according to Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPA) delegates recently returned from a trip there. By refusing to turn over the full set of documents confiscated from FRAPH (the CIA-backed paramilitary organization which terrorized Aristide supporters) and Haitian army offices during the invasion which restored Aristide, the U.S. is blocking investigation of human rights abuses and location of caches of arms imported during and since the coup period, they claim. In addition, the recent release of FRAPH founder Emmanuel Constant from a Maryland prison has outraged Haitians who believe it was motivated by the desire to conceal evidence of extensive U.S. government collaboration with death squads.

— Pierre Gingerich

Poultry Workers' Project

A fact-finding delegation of the National Interfaith Committee on Workers Issues has reported numerous abuses at Case Farms' Poultry Processing Plant in Morganton, N.C., which predominantly employs Guatemalan workers recruited by the company.

Workers' concerns include dangerous line speed, dangerous carbon dioxide levels, lack of medicine for routine injuries, and repetitive motions injuries caused by no rotation of roles. In addition, workers say that Case Farms has illegally required them to purchase their own basic safety equipment, checked the ID of workers talking with members of the delegation, fired workers for trying to organize a union, and cheated them of wages. They also report a lack of respect evidenced by limited bathroom breaks and the unavailability of Spanish-language materials (such as safety guidelines) and a Spanish-speaking company nurse. Workers average $6.85 an hour, are not provided with family health insurance, and pay high rent and transportation fees in Morganton.

To receive further information on the work of the Committee, write the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, 1607 W. Howard, Suite 218, Chicago, IL 60626; (phone) 312-381-2832, (fax) 312-381-3345.

Protecting holy ground

The struggle to halt the University of Arizona's telescope project on *Dzil Nchaa Si'An* (Mt. Graham) in Arizona, sacred to the Apaches, has gained the support of several Tucson churches. A Service of Repentance and Apology is planned for a Sunday in mid-October, at which religious leaders will express their regret "at not having come sooner to the aid of the San Carlos Apaches, and for the historic failure of the church to speak out and act in defense of Native American tradition and culture."

Activists were encouraged by an Executive Order to protect sacred Indian sites, signed by Bill Clinton May 24.

short takes

Former church treasurer sentenced to five years for embezzlement

by James H. Thrall

Dismissing claims of former Episcopal Church treasurer Ellen Cooke that mental illness combined with stress caused her to embezzle more than $2 million from the church, United States District Court Judge Maryanne Trump Barry departed from court guidelines, July 10, to hand Cooke a stiffer than usual sentence of five years in prison.

While Cooke's attorney, Plato Cacheris, had argued that the sentence should be less than normally stipulated by the guidelines because Cooke suffered from a type of "bipolar" mental disorder, Barry called the psychological defense "spurious" and instead condemned Cooke's efforts to avoid responsibility.

"This defendant deliberately and meticulously, and with knowledge then and now, looted the national church over a period of years with one reason and one reason only — to live the life of someone she was not," Barry said. Noting that she has rarely ordered a stiffer sentence than the sentencing guidelines recommend, Barry nonetheless said that the circumstances of Cooke's case "scream for an upward departure."

'Is nothing sacred?'

Asking "Is nothing sacred any more?" Barry said the crime was particularly heinous because it involved a church. Cooke, she said, was no different from a common thief. "She did not wear a mask or use a gun," she said, but did not need to because of the trust placed in her as a top official of a religious institution.

Barry said she based her decision on the loss of confidence that resulted for "an institution that performs an essential function in the care of the needy," the disruption caused in the church's ability to "support its ministry at home and abroad," and on the "flagrant" nature of the abuse of trust.

Barry ordered Cooke to report to the Federal Prison Camp for Women at Alderson, W.V., to serve her sentence, which is to be followed by an additional three years of supervised release. She also ordered Cooke to pay $75,000 to the church in additional restitution.

For the purposes of restitution, Barry accepted the church's claim that the theft totaled $2.2 million, rather than the approximately $1.5 million claimed by Cooke, but noted that "restitution can only be made according to the ability to pay." To date the church has recovered about $1.6 million of the stolen funds, including a $1 million insurance settlement, sale of properties owned by Cooke and her husband, Nicholas, and other cash and assets claimed from the Cookes. A civil suit brought against the Cookes was settled by the church in March.

Ellen Cooke after sentencing. ENS

Sitting in the same Newark, New Jersey, courtroom where she pleaded guilty in January to tax evasion and transporting stolen money across state lines in the embezzlement, Cooke sat impassively through the two-hour hearing, rising once to say "No, your honor," when asked if she had any comment to make. She was accompanied by a few supporters, but by no members of her family.

In a memorandum to the court, Cacheris said that Cooke's psychiatrist diagnosed her as having an obsessive-compulsive personality disorder as well as suffering "periods of hypomanic behavior and periods of depressive symptoms." Those disorders, he said, combined with the high stress of serving in a position for which she was not qualified during a time when she carried the personal burdens of suffering a miscarriage and assisting her parents who were being treated for serious illness.

But Barry agreed with Assistant United States Attorney Robert Ernst who called the defense ploy "a charade," and pointed out that Cooke was able to function quite rationally and competently throughout the four years of the embezzlement. Her claims to have forgotten the specific events of her embezzlement because of the personality disorder, he said, in particular was "selective" and a "carefully calculated" fabrication.

"I am absolutely convinced that the defendant did not suffer from a significantly reduced mental capacity when she committed the crime she committed," Barry said. "She performed every task very well, including embezzling $2 million."

Letter plays key role

Barry read aloud most of a one-and-a-

James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

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half-page letter written by seven members of the senior staff of the national church, including Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis, to support her assessment of the harm the embezzlement caused the church's ministry. The staff were invited to offer input into the sentencing process.

"While we have no desire for retribution or the imposition of more hurt on Mrs. Cooke's family," the staff members wrote, "it ... is our collective belief that a lenient sentence would add further to the damages that we have suffered."

Financial contributions to the national church have declined, and even other denominations have reported that "their contributions have suffered because of the ripple effect of Mrs. Cooke's actions," the letter stated, but "the psychic impact on our staff and organization has been more debilitating."

Former staff members who lost jobs "due to economic retrenchment, cannot be convinced that there is no direct correlation between her actions and the loss of their employment," the letter stated. "Beneficiaries of ministry programs that have been closed due to declining income share the same impression."

Cacheris challenged the letter as making unsubstantiated claims, but declined, after conferring with Cooke, when Barry asked if he wanted to hold a separate sentencing hearing to review the letter's statements. Following the hearing, Cacheris said Cooke had not wanted to endure an additional hearing.

Commenting after the sentence, Browning noted that since the theft was discovered the task of national staff, "has been restitution of what has been stolen, the restoration of confidence, and the assurance of a financial operation of soundness and integrity." Browning added, "We have faced the equally difficult task of coming again and again to our knowledge of sin, repentance, redemption and healing. My prayers are with Ellen Cooke and her family."

Cacheris said on July 22 that Cooke will appeal the sentence.

Seminaries face crisis

If someone doesn't do something fast the 11 Episcopal Church seminaries that prepare the vast majority of the church's clergy may soon fold, according to a recent statement by the church's Board for Theological Education. These institutions are getting smaller and costing more to attend, the board pointed out, making it less and less likely that future Episcopal priests will be educated in the "traditional" way — by going away to a residential seminary for three years to be "formed" by both scholarly training and a regular diet of Anglican worship.

"In the long run, without a stable institutional and scholarly basis for providing the theological core of the education of clergy and scholars, how can the church maintain quality theological education?" the board asked. And will non-Episcopal theology schools or unaccredited local programs be acceptable alternatives?

"In our view, the overall church community is largely uninformed about the established system of theological education and the changes taking place in it," the board said.

It plans to ask the 1997 General Convention to address the issue. "By the year 2015, the church must find successors for 5,000 (60 percent) of today's active clergy," the board said. "What the church is turning toward in meeting this challenge is uncertain, but it has seemed to be turning away from its established seminaries."

— Julie A. Wortman

Ndungane to succeed Tutu

Winston Njongonkulu Ndungane, who for three years was incarcerated on Robben Island as an anti-apartheid political prisoner, will be enthroned this month as Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa. Njongonkulu, 55, who was elected to the position on June 4, is succeeding Desmond Tutu.

Tutu retired down from his position as Archbishop at the end of June. He will continue as chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission which has been investigating atrocities committed during the country's era of apartheid.

— based on an Ecumenical News International report

National retreat for Episcopalians affected by AIDS/HIV

The National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC) is sponsoring a retreat for those affected by AIDS/HIV in the Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., October 10-13. The retreat will coincide with the display of the Names Project AIDS memorial quilt, whose 45,000 panels will cover the mile between the west front of the Capitol and the Washington Monument.

"This retreat is not another NEAC conference," according to the retreat's organizers. "There are no workshops, affinity groups or special meetings. This retreat offers the opportunity for those who have worked hard and long in the AIDS/HIV pandemic to be comforted in the presence of God and each other. There is ample time to pray, to sing, to work, to share with others, to make notes to yourself, and to listen to what God is saying to you."

Retreat leaders include Edmond L. Browning, Pamela Chinnis, William Countryman, Minka Sprague, Kelly Brown-Douglas, Martin L. Smith, Holly McAlpen, William Wallace and Jesse Milan, Jr.

For information write NEAC, 2025 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 508, Washington, DC, 20006.

Opponents of women's ordination say their views hold to the death

Some Anglicans opposed to the ordination of women priests are now carrying cards warning that in emergencies they wish to be cared for by a "a male Priest," according to the *Church Times* in London.

— Ecumenical News International

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A rant on 'Father-creep'

by Anne E. Cox.bapt

Okay, time for what might seem like a picayune issue to some, but actually reveals a major theological problem for our church. The topic is Father-creep. Father-creep is the increasing incidence of "Father" being used before the name of an ordained person. The usage seems to be creeping out of Anglo-catholic pockets into the church mainstream.

Generally, Father-creep seems to be a disease of the Episcopal branch of Christendom. "Father" is too pervasive in the Roman Catholic Church for it to be creeping in; and pure protestants run instinctively from "Father" language.

We Anglicans, claiming to be both catholic and protestant, are susceptible to Father-creep. Perhaps it is because we have a fondness for things formal, especially in ecclesiastical matters. I'm sure the fact that we are a hierarchical denomination — after all, "episcopal" means "bishop" — contributes to our degraded immunity to the disease. We are used to separating out clergy from the rest of the body of Christ, and within the clergy, to distinguishing a variety of ranks: the Rev., the Very Rev., the Ven., the Rt. Rev., the Most Rev. And there are probably more such ecclesial modifiers than I (with my "anglo-baptist" forebears) know. This contributes to our willingness to separate clergy out as the "fathers" among us.

So the issue of Father-creep.

I grew up calling the rector of St. Matthew's in Hillsborough, N.C., "Mr. Pettit." So I admit it wasn't until I was into my 20s that I heard Episcopal clergy called "father." Many folks, however, have grown up in more so-called anglo-catholic places where they were probably introduced to "Father Pettit." Early childhood conditioning influences all of us.

But part of what rankles me about Father-creep is the problem of how to refer to ordained women. The director of the day care center at St. Paul's, Englewood, N.J., called me Father Anne, because as a Roman Catholic, that was the only way she knew to refer to clergy. The children at the day care center called all of the staff "Miz" — (blurring the Miss and Mrs. distinction into one title) or "Mr." So we had Miz Carol and Mr. Bob. One day, Carol paraded the children past my office door and told them to say hello to Father Anne. In unison, a dozen small voices droned, "Hello, Miz Father Anne." They figured out how to deal with Carol's contradiction.

The other phenomenon that accompanies Father-creep is the increasing prevalence of "name-plus" signatures. Far too many clergy have taken to putting a plus after their names.

In many places where calling male clergy "father" is the norm, female clergy are called "mother." That's a compromise many of us are forced to make simply to be recognized as priests in the church. But I'm also suspicious that insisting on the "father" title is a way of ignoring the increasing numbers of ordained women.

I can trot out good scriptural reasons for halting father-creep, although those who feel otherwise are no doubt able to run out scriptural references on the other side. "Call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father — the one in heaven" (Mt. 23:9). That's what Jesus says when he's slamming the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocritical piety. So my reasons for not calling a male priest "father" are rooted in scripture, gender-parity, and my own personal tradition.

But here's the real reason I would like to vaccinate all of us against Father-creep. It has to do with the value each of us has as a member of the body of Christ. Ascribing a parental role to clergy turns the rest of the members of the church into children — that is the image when we call someone father. This is not an appropriate image or role to encourage since it implies that the clergy parents know more than the lay children, that they are older and wiser, more mature in the faith. While our relationships with our parents change as we mature (hopefully), the parental model implies an imbalance of power, with the parent always being able to get away with "because I'm the parent" reasoning. It also allows us to focus on clergy as the ones who do the real work and take this faith business seriously while the children engage in play.

The other phenomenon that accompanies Father-creep is the increasing prevalence of "name-plus" signatures. Far too many clergy have taken to putting a plus after their names. It's supposed to be a cross, and there may be some gnostic meaning behind the practice of which I am unaware. Perhaps the Internet is to be thanked for the proliferation of name-plus activity, for many clergy (male and female) sign themselves as Anne+ and bishops as +Robert (I have yet to see a posting from a female bishop). Why, pray tell, is it important for people to know whether you are a priest, a bishop or (simply) a layperson?

In my household and among some of my friends who share this rant, we are promulgating the alternative convention of signing our names on the internet as "Anne.bapt", thereby letting the world know we are baptized Christians — with all of the ambiguity and commitment that entails. *That* is what is important. The cross comes into our lives at baptism, not at ordination.

An Episcopal priest, **Anne E. Cox** is a *Witness* contributing editor.

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Back Issues

The following back issues of *The Witness* are available:

Africa, come spirit come, 6/95
Alternative ways of doing church, 8-9/94
"Be ye perfect", 3/93
Birthing in the face of a dragon 12/91
Body wisdom, 5/95
Christians and animal rights, 10/93
The communion of saints/ancestors, 11/93
Dialogue, 4/94
Disabilities, 6/94
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Resurrecting land, 4/95
Resisting sprawl: the hope of bioregionalism, 10/95
Staying in my denomination, 10/94
When the church engages rage, 12/92
Women's spirituality, 7/94

Just mark the issues you would like and mail check($3 per copy) made out to *The Witness* to 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226-1822.

Remember the future

by Uncas McThenia

Justice in the Coalfields, (1995) An Appalshop film directed by Anne Lewis; 606-633-0108.

When the contract between the United Mine Workers and the Pittston Company expired in 1988, Pittston terminated the medical benefits of 1,000 pensioners, widows and disabled miners. This precipitated a bitter nine-month strike in West Virginia and southwestern Virginia. Justice in the Coalfields *documents the events that followed.*

Justice in the Coalfields is a provocative film. It begins as a stock lefty labor film. The answer is clear, isn't it? *Justice in the Coalfields* means our side won. The first victory for a reawakening labor movement following the Reagan era. Solidarity between miners in Appalachia and Poland? The image of resistance so popular in *Mother Jones* or *Z* or *The Nation* — workers confronting a villainous multinational energy industry — is there on the screen. But there is something else. There is much more. What unfolds is a complex journey into blindness and finally, I think, a second sight.

There is clarity in memory of the past. Flashbacks to the golden days of John L. Lewis. Earlier strikes in the region. Scenes of confrontation between miners, their families and state police. The only difference between 1989 and the 1940s is in the film quality and the dress.

Memory is what so often keeps people in the region keeping on in spite of the present. I recall a young child with a sign at one of the rallies in the 1989 strike proclaiming that he was the son of a coal miner's daughter whose father worked low coal. And that memory opens the door to a rich sense of community. One of the most poignant features of the film is the contrasting vocabulary. Striking miners and family members talk of neighbors and kin and obligation to the community, while the coal company officials and the public relations guru at the National Right to Work Committee talk of individual rights and competition for global markets. "The changes in world markets require that we adjust to new realities," says the President of the Pittston Coal Group.

But memory, as important as it is, can lead to nostalgia and a false sense of optimism. Following the tentative settlement in 1989 people talk of carrying on the solidarity. It will be different this time. But a few frames later this optimism is dashed with the reality that some four years later only 470 of 1,400 strikers in Virginia are still employed in the mines. And the film closes with an ironic rendition of "America" composed by a woman in West Virginia, the wife of a miner, which is a true lament.

There is no rose colored lens on Anne Lewis' camera. She moves beyond the strike and back to the question of *Justice in the Coalfields*. Is there any? And the film tells the truth about that. The strike was over health benefits and the final caption of the film answers that question: "Mine workers were among the first to get a comprehensive health plan and among the first to lose it."

One might walk away from this film in

Uncas McThenia, a professor at Washington & Lee Law School and chair of *The Witness'* board, studied the Bible and was arrested with Pittston strikers in 1988.

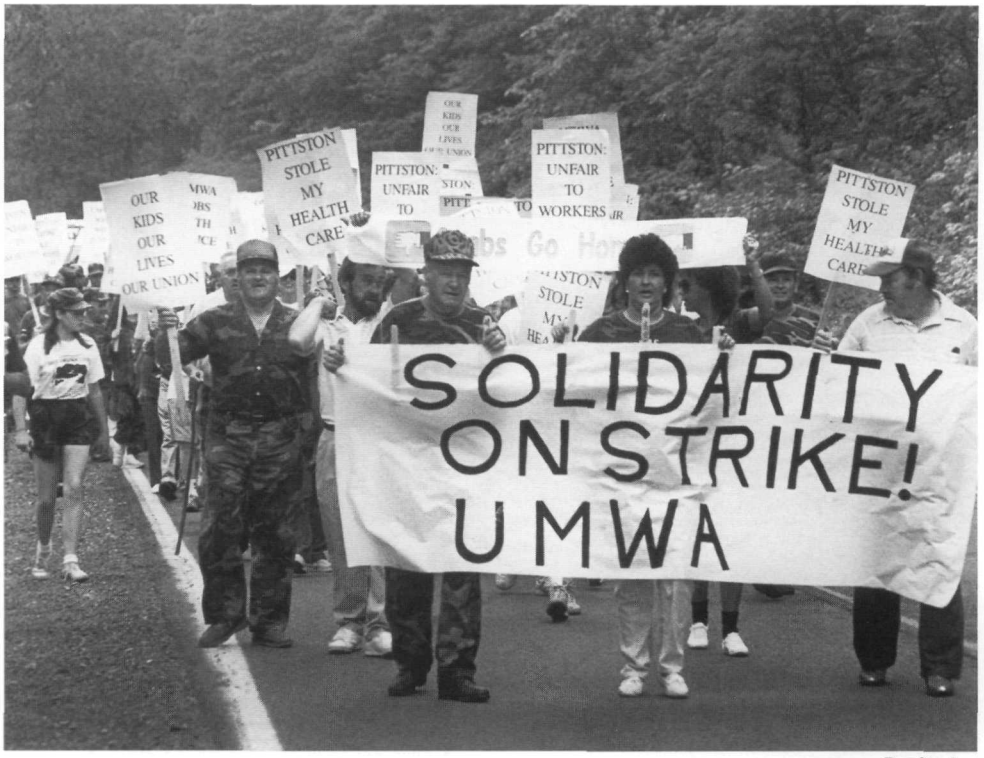
despair. But that would be a mistake. Lewis asks a young nonunion miner who was active in the strike while still in high school: "Where does it end?" And he answers with the clarity of one who refuses to succumb to either nostalgia or despair. "When all the coal has left here. They won't worry about us anymore. We'll go back to making it like we did before. That's when it's over, when every lump of coal is gone."

Here is a young man who will be there for the long haul. To be aware of the struggle, to face life as it is, is to have a vision of what the world is really like. No false promises, no slogans, no great visions of a Phoenix-like labor movement rising from the ashes of the Reagan-Bush era. No Chamber of Commerce huzzah, no paeans to a global economy. Nothing but simple human dignity. And the powers and principalities cannot take that away. That is what takes this film beyond tragedy.

Both Lewis and this young man are able to remember the future. And that is an act of hope.

It is no accident that many of Jesus' parables are set in the workplace and deal with wages, working conditions and relations between workers. New studies are showing the extent to which Jesus was involved in the economic controversies of his day, in protesting the "tribute" which peasants had to pay to aristocrats, temple priests and Roman colonizers. In challenging the honor and purity codes and in crossing ethnic, gender and class boundaries in his life, Jesus was challenging the inherited social and economic systems that keep the landless laborers in poverty.

— The Employment Project
Paul K. Chapman, Director



Ron Skeeber

Another theme the film explores is that of our imprisonment in role and class structures. A white male Republican Federal Judge (a Nixon appointee), could talk about shared suffering, yet still levy several million dollars in fines against the UMWA and call for law and order.

On the other hand, striking miners are quite clear that the courts are "enforcing their version of the law and we are enforcing ours" by sitting in the road and blocking coal trucks — a view which though once anathema to Judge Glen Williams is considerably less threatening now, I think. The interview with Judge Williams is a masterful study in ambivalence about community, law, and finally about self in relation to community.

I think the film should be seen widely among lawyer audiences. It would help the profession come to terms with the way in which it tends to idolize law. The candor of Judge Williams' struggle is refreshing. All too often we who are charged with administering the justice system believe we also dispense it. Who knows? Maybe one might see that justice and law are at best distant cousins. And the two are not likely to be united without listening to voices in those communities where the impact of law seems pretty oppressive on occasion.

The film is important for activists who think that the struggle is fruitless in this era of the contract on America. The call to resistance, the clarity of the young man who, with 99 others, took over the Pittston coal preparation plant, saying, "I reckon the state police are going to come in here and arrest us sometime," and the man who knows he will be there for the long haul. These are images of hope which dispel the despair of the present. TW

review

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Collective power is a religious idea. It's the idea of communion, that you are not alone. That's why I love the unions so much. I love the idea *of it."*

Kate DeSmet JAW

Called into a world of struggle

by Julie A. Wortman

It is the day before the one-year anniversary of the Detroit Newspapers strike. Kate DeSmet, a striking *Detroit News* religion reporter, sits in a torn and frayed blue-plaid easy chair ("The cats won't leave it alone," she says apologetically) that is the only note of disarray in her neatly furnished, "country-style" living room home in Harper Woods, an inner suburb not far from where she spent her childhood. A bright red-and-white checked quilt hangs on the long wall behind the couch.

"I hope it doesn't rain during the march tomorrow," she says, referring to the big union demonstration called to commemorate this disappointing milestone in the strike. There's a "No *News* or *Free Press* wanted here" sign in the front yard. This is one of the few homes in the immediate area that displays one. Many of her neighbors, she says, disagree with the strike or think it's a lost cause.

"That's troubling to me, that they can see one of their own neighbors go through this and still won't stop the paper," she admits. "But I don't want to keep arguing this — I need peace somewhere."

Outside this quiet neighborhood DeSmet's current calling is, however, exactly that — to keep arguing the strike. Most days she can be found in some radio or television studio or at a public meeting debating *Detroit News* and *Free Press* management with a clarity and passion that have made her a leading striker spokesperson.

"This strike had been about voice, about giving workers a say," she says. "I guess I've just found a way to articulate my rage."

Not only has *Detroit News* editor/publisher Bob Giles "publicly admitted to slanting their reporting about the strike," DeSmet says, but the newspapers have also "set their own trucks on fire and blamed it on the strikers" to feed stereotypes of picket-line violence.

"I was a union officer for 11 years," DeSmet adds. "We had a huge number of grievances. It was clear that management wasn't respecting our contract. I'm firmly convinced that eventually everything is going to be owned by six white guys in suits. They'll be seated on one side of the table. Nobody is going to be seated on this side of the table unless we fight for it. It's all about voice."

One of six children born to a Flemish father and Irish mother, DeSmet was raised Roman Catholic. She didn't find out until recently that her late father — who worked with computers and data processing in the infancy of the technology — worked for Chrysler before she was born, and was a member of the UAW.

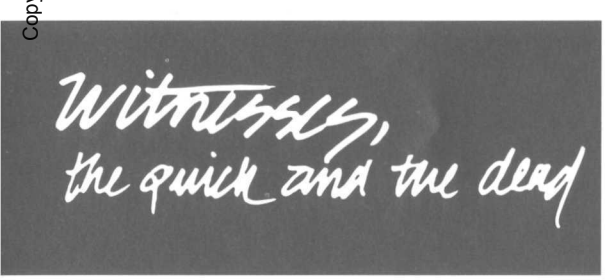
"I showed my mom a film of the picket line. She said, 'Wow, that reminds me of your father during the sit-down strike at the Chrysler-Jefferson plant in 1937.'"

In the 1950s her father worked for a firm where there was no union.

"When he was non-union his work life was at times pretty awful," DeSmet recalls.

"One of the few times I saw my father cry was when he was trying to get a promotion. The person who got the job was the boss's son. He had no experience, but he was the boss's son and the boss's son came first."

DeSmet's great uncle on her mother's side was a teamster organizer in the 1920s



Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness.*

and her grandfather was a pressman for the *Detroit Free Press* for 50 years.

"My mother's sister married the son of the managing editor of the *Detroit News*. I can remember the distinction — and animosity — between my uncle and my grandfather.

"I grew up knowing that you never, ever, cross the picket line — just like laundry gets done on Tuesdays and Wednesdays you have spaghetti."

But it shouldn't take a personal history like hers to support union efforts to negotiate with employers, DeSmet stresses. The problem, she says, is that so many people "worship at the altar of individualism."

DeSmet gets up and goes to the front door to let in a dusty-colored cat named Lucy (her sister is Ethel), one of many such trips she has already made in the course of the interview. Near the foyer a crucifix is mounted on the wall, some palm fronds tucked behind it.

"Collective power is a religious idea," she continues as she resumes her seat. "I've come to see Jesus as a guy who hung out with people. Like César Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi. These were all people seeking to change things for the group they were *part* of, not just for themselves. It's the idea of communion, that you are not alone. That's why I love the unions so much. I love the *idea* of it."

A 17-year veteran in the field of journalism (she got her journalism degree from Detroit's Wayne State University and then worked in local community newspapers for five years before joining the staff of the *Detroit News*), in 1993 DeSmet won a Knight Fellowship, given annually to 12 "mid-career" journalists, for a year's study at Stanford University.

"I arrived nearly brain dead," she says, "and then Stanford blew my mind open. I thrived on the highly charged intellectual atmosphere."

She received training as a volunteer chaplain in a children's hospital and took religion courses. Campus worship life and fiction writing fed spiritual and creative cravings. A book project on women in religious leadership brought particular focus to issues of largely male-dominated corporate power.

"Seeing where women were set me up for seeing the labor perspective," DeSmet reflects.

The time at Stanford also gave her a chance to think about journalism.

People think "picket line" and they think violence. But when they think "corporate board room," why don't they think violence?

"As a journalist I had begun to see that there were so many restraints on me, not the least of which is the corporate restraint. In religion writing, for example, the forces I was up against saw religion as a drug for idiotic people, people who needed easy answers. I would always fight for my stories, but they can wear you down — you end up fighting for inches, for which edition your story runs in, for page one. The time constraints were horrendous. We had become assembly-line workers."

Commercial journalism may no longer be the right path for someone who wants to help readers truly understand what is going on in their community, DeSmet believes. She cites Pulitzer prize winner Roy Gutman about what fair journalism requires.

"Gutman said you cannot quote the Bosnian Serbs in the same way you quote their victims. You cannot quote the Nazis in the same way as you quote Jews. If your story says, 'The Jews have said there are these extermination camps, however Nazi spokesmen officially deny those camps,' do you leave it at that and let the reader decide? Good journalism, I see very clearly now, requires that you go way beyond that."

She reminds people who equate all unions with Jimmy Hoffa's Mafia-connected teamsters, that most of their ideas about unions are based on media reports.

"People operate in a vacuum about labor. They rely on a press that doesn't want to report on labor, that thinks it's a business topic rather than a social topic. People think 'picket line' and they think violence. But when they think 'corporate board room,' why don't they think violence? Assumptions need to be challenged and in this media climate they are not being questioned."

DeSmet looks forward to the day she can walk back into work with her striking brothers and sisters, but she hasn't resolved "where I'm headed with journalism." Living now on strike pay of $160 a week, care packages from friends and some support from a *Boston Globe* union that has "adopted" her (she did an internship at the *Globe*), she knows she doesn't need much to get by except a community committed to mutual sacrifice.

"I'm living more cheaply than I could ever have imagined," she says. "It's very freeing."

In this sense and many others, she says, the strike has been a blessing.

"There is such a wonderful way of looking at this strike through the way it has blessed people, given them the chance to work together with friends, to see something as a higher cause in their life. It's empowering."

Before the strike, she admits, she was "getting itchy" to live out her faith life — a life that until then had been largely a matter of prayer.

"God knows, I've gotten that chance," she laughs. "I don't know what's next, but I think I've been called into a new world — a world of struggle." TW

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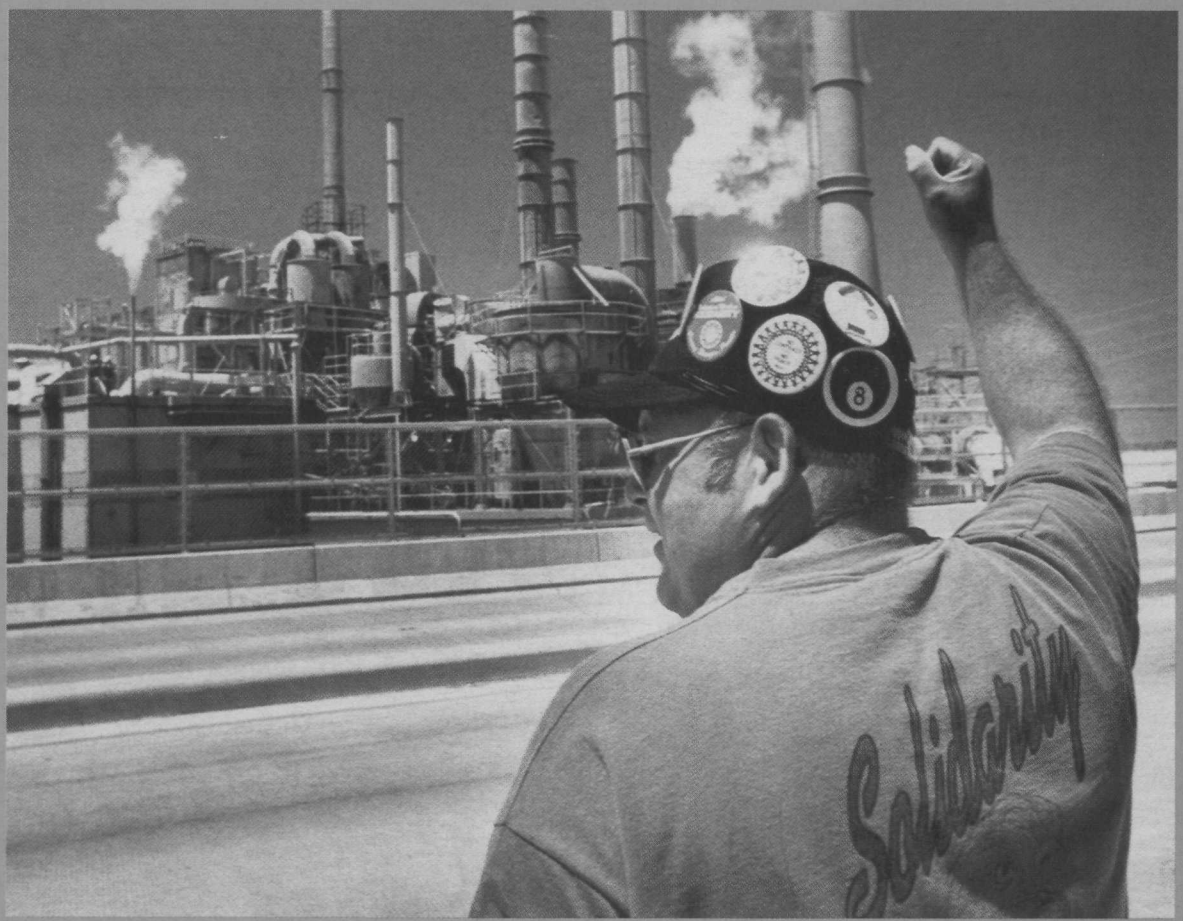

"Some unions worry that ignoring injunctions can result in huge fines that could break them. The only answer one can give is that if unions do not continue to mass picket and stop production, they will be broken anyway."

— Randy Furst, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*

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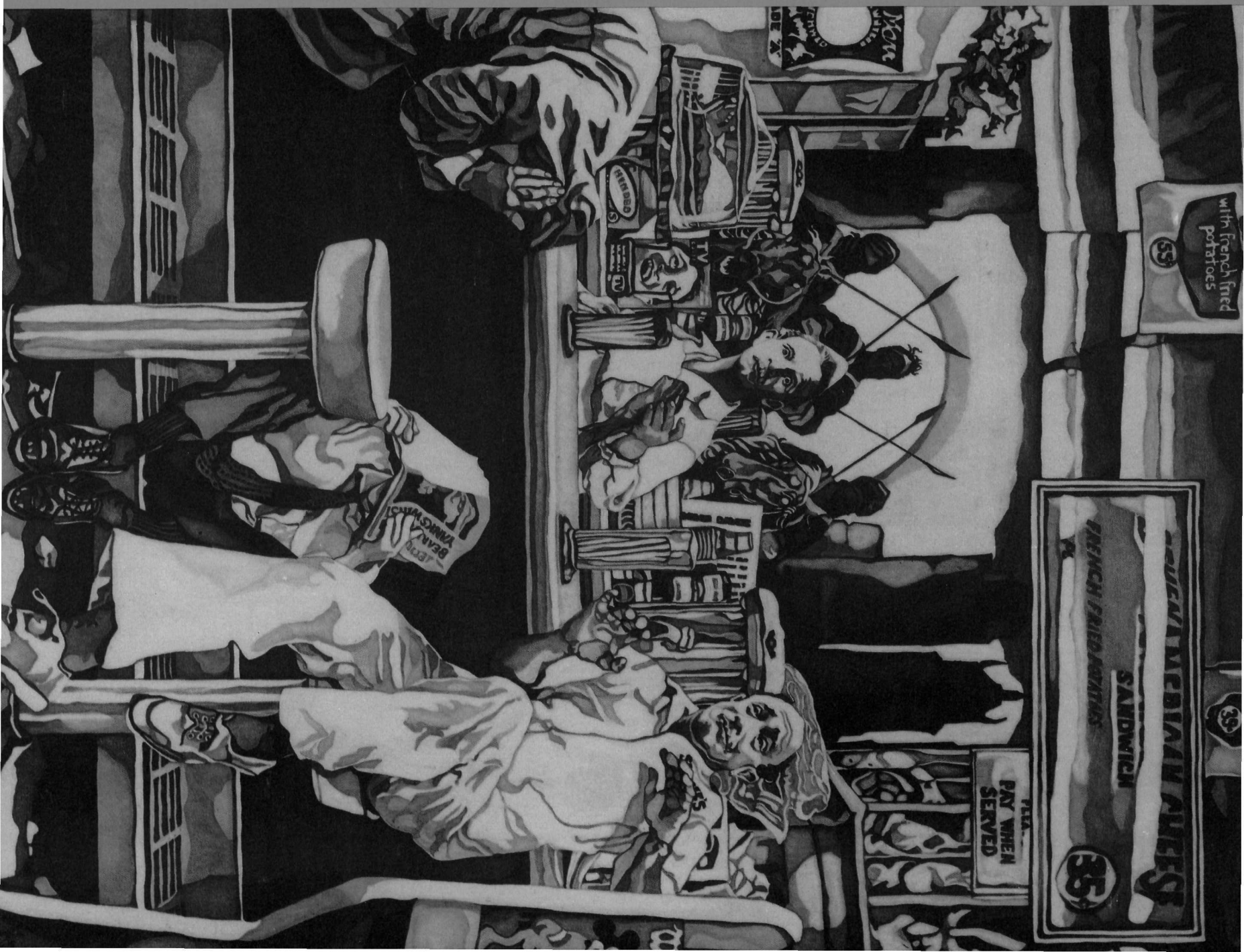
The Christian Right: What is there to fear?

The Witness

Volume 79 • Number 10 • October 1996



Family reunions

LOVED YOUR ISSUE ON FAMILIES. Nancy and I leave Monday — with my parents, sister and aunt — to visit the tiny village of "Sehested" in northern Germany, near the Danish border. It will be our first visit. We didn't even know it existed until a few years ago, when my Dad started doing serious family research. The only other time Dad was in Europe was to participate in the initial wave of the D-Day invasion.

Ken Sehested
Baptist Peace Fellowship
Lake Junaluska, N.C.

WHAT GOOD TIMING! Your issue on Family Reunions arrived at a time when I was preparing to attend three reunions this summer. I read with so much interest all of the articles and could relate and relate and relate.

It was wonderful to read the definition of family in so many different ways.

Having been a subscriber for at least 15 years, I have retained every copy because they all carry such good messages and information. How anyone in the Episcopal Church cannot appreciate your kind of coverage is beyond me. I find it so refreshing!

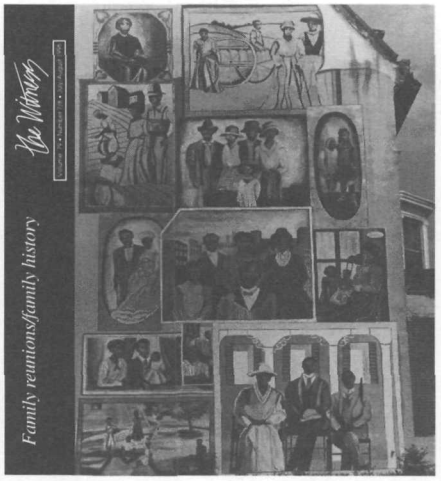
Inez L. Harris
Yankton, S.D.

THE WITNESS has consistently done a fine job, but Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's account of tracing her roots was surpassing.

Bill Rankin
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, MA

Hospitals

I APPRECIATED YOUR THOUGHT-provoking articles in the June issue about health care. I was pleased to read about Grace Cottage near my home. (The man in the back row of the back cover photo is Archer Mayor, a



local novelist who writes mystery thrillers set in this part of the state.)

John C. Morris
Wilmington, VT

Fundraising

I DO NOT VERY OFTEN SERIOUSLY wish that I were rich, but this is one time that I do. I would give you a million dollars if I could — and probably ruin the magazine.

Not to worry— that is not an imminent danger you need be concerned about.

Thank you again and again for this splendid magazine.

Sara Duren
Atlanta, GA

On the conservative side

I HAVE SUBSCRIBED to *The Witness* for 10 or 15 years and where the publication has ventured into areas involving God, Gospel, Man, and Divine-Human relations, I have enthusiastically disagreed ... especially during the Barbara Harris years.

I am amazed, however, that at least on the Conservative side, there are apparently so few who would welcome a magazine so opposed to their convictions. This is no way to get an intelligent handle on controversy.

R.E. Thrumston
San Diego, CA

Witness praise

I ALWAYS READ *The Witness* in one or two sittings, then savor it for weeks, dipping back in and reading the best parts over.

Lynda Foster
Adelynrood, MA

THE WITNESS IS WONDERFUL as always. I'm still enjoying the issue on silence. My young cousin wrote the enclosed. To think a nine year old has such ideas and hope!

Margaret Howard
Middletown, N.Y.

What if nobody cared about the color
differences between each other,
It could happen.
What if everybody loved each other, and
there was peace, not war.
It could happen.
What if women did the same job as men,
and could get paid the same,
It could happen.
What if there were no drugs in the world,
It could happen.
What if there were no gangs in the world,
It could happen.
What if everyone had a home,
It could happen.
What if there were no starving people,
It could happen.
If we could all just put our heads together
and work as one.
If we could stop the hatred and war — and
think more toward peace and love,
what a better place the world would be.
The sick wouldn't be afraid.
The hungry would have food.
The homeless would have shelter.
Color differences would be as beautiful as a
rainbow.
If we would all work together
IT COULD REALLY HAPPEN.

— Lindsey Steinwand, age 9

Renewal letter

I AM MOVED TO THANK YOU for the best renewal letter I have ever seen. It's good to be treated intelligently and truthfully. Keep up the enlightened work of *The Witness*. Not only do I read each issue carefully but also my friends and companions and I have many

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good conversations inspired by something they or I have read there.

Betty Sawyer
Alfred, ME

YOUR LETTER IS WORTHY of comment and praise for its common sense and clarity. Thank you. I have written other worthwhile but persistent causes and begged them to send me one renewal notice a year. If they don't, I'll drop them from my list. It is a waste of money, paper, etc. as you said so well.

Ann McElroy
Cupertino, CA

Classifieds

Vocations

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

Recovery ministries

Recovery Ministries publishes a newsletter and recovery literature, sponsors diocesan commissions, and holds an annual gathering and celebration of recovery. Memberships are needed to support this work ($25 individual, $100 parish). Send contributions to Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 6594, Helena, MT 59604.

Vestment exchange

Donate unneeded vestments and other liturgical articles for use in mission churches. Contact Eileen Elias Freeman, 908-232-5240 or 800-862-1350; fax 908-233-1339; e-mail EileenEF@aol.com.

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

Christmas gift offers!

The Witness, a gift subscription — Why not send *The Witness* — a simple gift — to someone you love? To show our appreciation, we'll send a back issue of your choice to either of you. Just send $25 for each gift to *The Witness.*

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: A Conversation with Adversaries — The *Witness* video documenting our visit to Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, a seminary noted for its focus on Scripture, conservatism and mission work. This six-segment video shows both constituencies working to understand one another. Panelists are Chester Talton, suffragan of L.A., Mary Hays, Scripture professor at Trinity, Virginia Mollenkott, English professor at Paterson College, and Bill Frey, retired bishop and dean of Trinity. Workshops are led by Verna Dozier, Butch Naters Gamarra, Mary Meader, Quentin Kolb and Andrew McThenia. The video costs $40.

My Story's On: Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives, 212 pages — This amazing collection of women's stories, edited by Paula Ross, includes stories and poems from women with children, women in jail, women in crisis and women finding their freedom. Copies are available for $6.

Catalogues of M.O.R. Stamps can be purchased for $2 sent to Julie A. Wortman at *The Witness.*

Any of these gifts can be mailed directly to the recipient with a card or shipped to you. Please send a check made out to *The Witness* with your address and phone number, include the address and phone number of the recipients if you want the gift shipped to them by us. *The Witness*, 1249 Washington Blvd., Suite 3115, Detroit, MI 48226-1822.

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The hope of bioregionalism, 10/95
Women's spirituality, 7/94

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The Witness

Volume 79 • Number 10 • October 1996

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Diamond argues that more attention should be paid to the Christian Right's variant forms of dominion theology.

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As fundamentalists on the Religious Right are becoming politically 'savvy', Mollenkott recommends action to Christians on the Left.

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Liberals make a mistake, Lerner says, if they don't understand that part of the Right's message is true.

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A Christian feminist examines the promise — and patriarchy — of Promise Keepers.

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Sölle reflects on why liberal Protestantism could not avert the rise of Nazism.

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Back Cover: Family values *by Ron English of N.Y.C.*

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

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Poetry can be sent directly to Leslie Williams, 2504 Gulf Ave., Midland, Tex., 79705.

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Facing down our fears

by Julie A. Wortman

Evangelical Christians didn't begin getting politically active until 20 years ago, when significant numbers started registering to vote. In 1980 they helped put Ronald Reagan into the White House. Today the "Christian" or "Religious" Right's ability to get Republican candidates elected to state and local office has made them key players in setting that party's political agenda. In fact, the "family values" terms of the religious cultural war that Pat Buchanan declared on this country in 1992 have been a touchstone of public debate ever since.

Frankly, I can't fault the Christian Right's rapid rise to political power. It has shown the will and the discipline to effectively play the game that passes for democratic process in this country.

But it makes me nervous. As Sara Diamond points out in her piece on the Christian Right's dominionist theology (p.8), the Christian theocracy this powerful political constituency is aiming to "reconstruct" would likely condemn me to death or imprisonment, if not for my anti-capitalist, pro-choice, eco-feminist views, certainly for my "practicing" homosexuality. Even my straight Christian friends who stand on the "pro-life" side of the abortion issue would not be immune to such a government's censure — for their commitment to nonviolence, their activist opposition to the death penalty and nuclear weaponry, for their practice of Zen meditation.

Knowing how best to respond requires spending time considering what those who would dismiss my being and beliefs as blasphemy think — and why.

Contributions by Virginia Mollenkott, Michael Lerner and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen have helped free me from the usual stereotypes. I'm left feeling a lot of sympathy, in fact, for the perspective that inclines many Christians to the Right. I too, want to live a life of meaning grounded in God's reality. I, too, live in expectation of the Second Coming and the promised judgment on the social/political order. I, too, believe that Satan is at large and must be resisted.

This is precisely what frightens me.

The motivation to engage the fallen powers and principalities in my case and in theirs is the same, and I recognize its power. But I feel revulsion at the uses to which the Religious Right has put the Gospel. I agree with New Testament scholar Reta Finger (p. 30): I cannot comprehend a reading of Scripture that does not lead to a deep critique of this country's economic/political system, a system in which, according to Holly Skar writing in *Z Magazine*, "the top 1 percent of families have an astonishing 42 percent of American wealth" and "average CEO compensation comes to more than $72,000 a week."

And I do not recognize, let alone embrace, a Gospel of glorified atonement or "righteous" violence and social domination.

I want so much to stand in complete opposition to the Religious Right's agenda, in fact, that I find myself shying away from speaking out of an explicitly Christian frame of reference. But this is the only frame of reference that gives me sufficient clarity about what I see happening in the world to empower my resistance.

I don't believe I am alone in this. As Dorothee Sölle reminds us (p. 24), left-of-center Christians were coopted by this very contradiction as fascism swept Europe before World War II. I fear this moment in history is much the same. Real deprivations, real economic inequities, real immoralities and, for good or ill, real losses of privilege abound. And stadiums are full of earnest people willing to be led by those who can offer an authoritative antidote.

The powers are not overlooking the opportunity.

I'm grateful for Christian leaders who are publicly disputing the Christian Right's claim of religious mandate. Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's testimony in favor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act amendment to the Defense of Marriage Act last month is a case in point. "To disrespect the dignity of any human being through discrimination," Browning said, "is to disrespect our Creator."

But the rest of us also have a powerful resistance to offer. Some serious Bible study in the mode of base community would go a long way to countering the narrow, misappropriated "biblical" tyranny that would insinuate itself into this society if it could. It is time to face down the fear of insufficient distinction between our Gospel and theirs, our theology and theirs, our Christian history and theirs and immerse ourselves more deeply in all three.

Digging deeply might also help us find something else we badly need — a clearer sense of the society the Bible *does* call us to create. TW

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*.

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Marching ever Rightward

by Katie Sherrod

In 1994, the Texas Republican Party woke up to find itself taken over by the Religious Right. School boards and county governments across the state were discovering the same thing.

By 1996, Texas ranked fourth in attempts to pull "unChristian" books from libraries and public school classrooms, according to People for the American Way, and Republican Party officials found themselves in the astonishing position of having to negotiate with the Religious Right to get Republican Senators Phil Gramm and Kay Bailey Hutchison accepted as delegates to the party's National Convention.

This intermingling of religion and politics is not new in Texas, the Buckle in the Bible Belt. For decades, Southern Baptists dictated what the Texas Legislature would do on issues such as liquor-by-the-drink and Sunday closing laws. As the state became more urban, the Baptists' political power waned. But it never completely died out. As urban ills such as drugs and gangs soared, people's fears also soared. The state's conservative religious political history provided fertile ground for these seeds of fear.

What *is* new is that Episcopalians — who historically looked down their noses at religious conservatives — have begun to flirt with the Religious Right.

Our diocese's brief history made it ripe for seduction. In 1982, the Diocese of Fort Worth was formed out of the western half of the Diocese of Dallas. Dallas Bishop Donald Davies became the new diocese's first bishop. Given Davies' conservatism, his commitment to an exclusively male priesthood, and the number of like-minded male priests already clustered in the western half of the Dallas diocese, Fort Worth was ripe for plucking. Ignatius' statement that "Wherever the Bishop appears, there let the people be ..." was to become the mantra of Davies and his successors, Clarence Pope and Jack Iker. They embraced the idea of an Imperial Episcopacy as a bastion of orthodoxy protecting an uninformed laity from an apostate National Church.

As Jack Iker and his supporters struggle to maintain a diocese untainted by female priests, inclusive and expansive language, and by "practicing homosexual" priests, the "muscular Christianity" of the Religious Right draws them like a siren song. "Onward Christian Soldiers" seems to be their favorite hymn, and The Church Militant the image they most cherish. The unabashed androcentrism of the fundamentalists, the clear-cut "biblically ordained" roles for men and women, the patriarchal hierarchy — all this already is embraced by the leadership of this diocese.

Bishop Iker and several priests trekked off to Atlanta along with 40,000 other pastors to a Promise Keepers rally where they shared grape juice and wafers with evangelical and fundamentalist ministers from across the country. Plans are being made for a large Episcopal presence from Fort Worth at the upcoming PK rally in Dallas.

Promise Keepers, and other manifestations of the Religious Right, reassure them that men are in charge because that's the way God Himself wants it. And while PK at least acknowledges that racism is a sin, sexism isn't even on their radar scope. In their universe, what we see as sexism, Promise Keepers see as The Natural Order Ordained by God. And heterosexism is a virtue.

This is comforting to our diocesan leaders, who claim to feel unwelcome and shunned at General Convention, House of Bishops meetings, etc. Wearing the mantle of martyrdom to the cause of orthodoxy is great for recruiting purposes, but it must be nice to take it off every now and then and just hang out with like-minded guys, cheering for Jesus in a football stadium. However, there *are* limits. No one is suggesting the Episcopal faithful give up drinking alcohol.

When the laity see the few who do speak up in protest being demonized, labeled "unChristian troublemakers," "bad priests," and apostates, the incentive to be quiet is high. Acquiescence by silence is easier since overt attacks on the ordination of women has given way to hysteria over homosexuality, always an issue ripe for fear-mongering.

So, while the leadership marches ever rightward, the isolation increases. Talk of "taking the diocese out of the Episcopal Church" continues. Our bishop will not recognize female priests or bishops and has announced that we are "out of communion" with dioceses that ordain "practicing homosexuals."

What other dioceses now take for granted — the ministry of female priests or bishops and inclusive liturgies — is viewed as evil, or at best, risky. Congregationalism is on the rise, people are drifting away, and respect for local and national leadership decreases.

But none of that matters. Our diocesan leaders are lost in admiration — the Religious Right has pulled off in the Republican Party exactly what they hope to pull off in the National Church, or at least in General Convention. Like the Republican Party platform, there is no room for tolerance here. TW

Katie Sherrod is a producer/commentator for PBS and NPR outlets for north Texas, and is vice-president of the Episcopal Women's Caucus.

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The law of the Lord is perfect

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives
wisdom to the innocent.

The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives
light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous
altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, more than much
fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

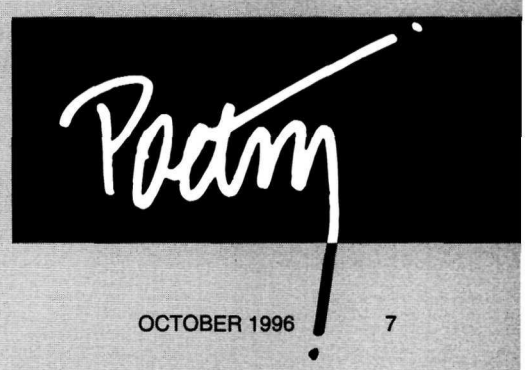
By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can tell how often he offends?
cleanse me from my secret faults.

Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me;
then shall I be whole and sound,
and innocent of a great offense.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

— Psalm 19: 7-14



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Aiming to take dominion

by Sara Diamond

The political situation today is that the Republican Party cannot win elections without the Christian Right in many parts of the country, raising the question of just how much power the movement hopes to amass. Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition says his organization wants nothing more than a representative voice in government, "a place at the table," as he puts it. Other movement leaders are more sweeping in their calls to make ours a Christian nation, a Kingdom of God on earth.

As we assess the Christian Right's future prospects, the movement's political theology is one big piece of the puzzle. Included in the movement are people with diverse viewpoints on the degree and means through which Christians ought to "take dominion" over every aspect of society. The motto of the secular Heritage Foundation, taken from the title of an influential conservative book of the 1940s, is "ideas have consequences." Yet in the past few years, with the growth in public awareness of the Christian Right, the movement's variant forms of dominion theology have attracted only scant attention.

Most of the attention has come from a new crop of researchers working on the Christian Right. Most of these people are political liberals who seek to shore up the prevailing "two-party" system by portraying their opponents — in this case, those of the Right — as aberrations on the U.S. political landscape. Liberals' writing about the Christian Right's take-over plans has generally taken the form of conspiracy theory. Instead of analyzing the subtle ways in which political ideas take hold within movements and why, the liberal conspiracy theorists use a guilt-by-association technique.

Conspiracy theorizing about the Christian Right's "secret" agenda also involves highlighting the hate-mongering and bizarre ideas of a handful of Christian Right players while neglecting the broad popularity of dominion theology.

A mandate to take charge

The Dominionist idea is that Christians alone are biblically mandated to occupy all secular institutions until Christ returns — and there is no consensus on when that might be. Dominionist thinking precludes coalitions between believers and unbelievers, which is why many Christian rightists will have a hard time compromising with some of the very same Republicans they help to elect.

The Dominionist idea is that Christians alone are biblically mandated to occupy all secular institutions until Christ returns.

The idea of taking dominion over secular society gained widespread currency with the 1981 publication of evangelical philosopher Francis Schaeffer's book, *A Christian Manifesto*. The book sold 290,000 copies in its first year and it remains one of the movement's most frequently cited texts. In the 1960s and 1970s, Schaeffer and his wife Edith ran a retreat center in Switzerland, where young American "Jesus freaks" came to study the Bible and learn how to apply Schaeffer's dominion theology to the political scene back home.

In *A Christian Manifesto*, Schaeffer's argument is simple. The United States began as a nation rooted in biblical principles. But as society became more pluralistic,with each new wave of immigrants, proponents of the new philosophy of secular humanism gradually came to dominate debate on policy issues. Since humanists place human progress, not God, at the center of their considerations, they pushed American culture in all manner of ungodly directions, the most visible results of which included legalized abortion and the secularization of the public schools. At the end of *A Christian Manifesto*, Schaeffer calls for Christians to use civil disobedience to restore biblical morality, which explains Schaeffer's popularity with groups like Operation Rescue.

A Christian theocracy of Old Testament law

Reconstructionism is the most intellectually grounded, though esoteric, brand of dominion theology. Its leading proponent has been Rousas John Rushdoony, an obscure figure within the Christian Right. Rushdoony founded the Chalcedon Foundation in California in the mid-1960s. One of the Foundation's early associates was Gary North who eventually married Rushdoony's daughter. North had been active within secular libertarian and anti-Communist organizations, particularly those with an anti-statist bent.

Rushdoony and North had a falling out

Sara Diamond is the author of *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (South End Press, 1989); *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (The Guilford Press, 1995); and *Facing the Wrath: Confronting the Right in Dangerous Times* (Common Courage Press, 1996). She teaches sociology at California State University at Hayward. A longer version of this article appears in *Facing the Wrath*. Photographer **Jim West** lives in Detroit.

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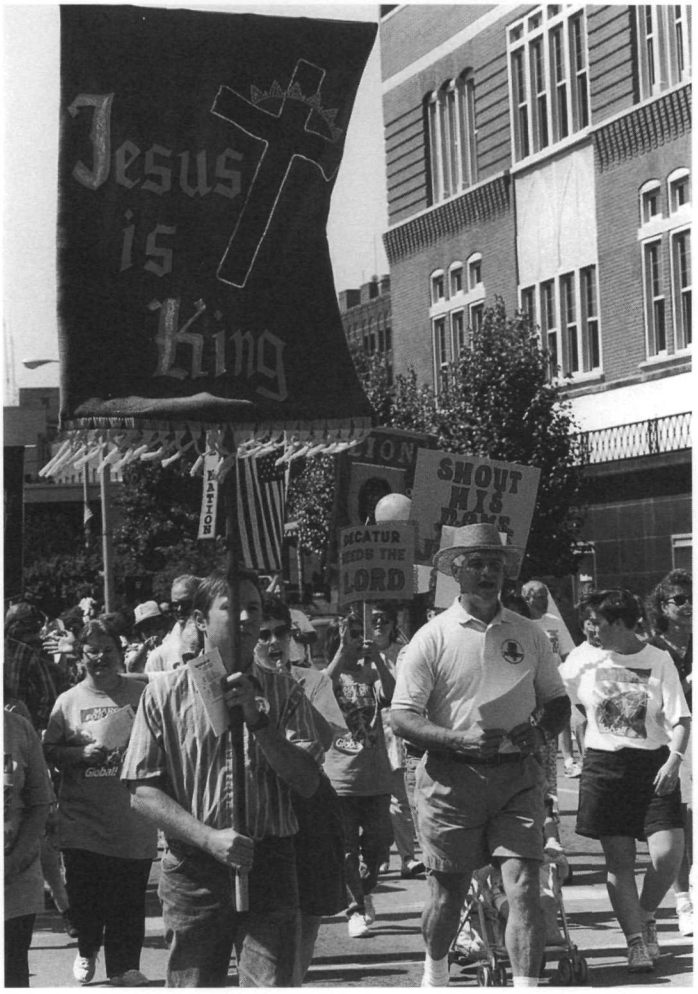
and ceased collaboration years ago, North starting his own think tank, the Institute for Christian Economics in Tyler, Texas. Rushdoony, North and about a half dozen other reconstructionist writers have published countless books and journals advocating post-millenialism (the kingdom of God must be established on earth now because Christ will return only after Christians have been in charge for 1,000 years) and "theonomy" or the application of God's law to all spheres of everyday life.

It was Rushdoony's seminal 1973 tome *The Institutes of Biblical Law* that articulated Reconstructionists' vision of a theocracy in which Old Testament Law would be reinstated in modern society. Old Testament law classified a wide range of sins as punishable by death; these included not only murder and rape but also adultery, incest, homosexuality, witchcraft, incorrigible delinquency by youth and even blasphemy. In the Reconstructionists' vision of a millennial or "kingdom" society, there would be only local governments; there would be no central administrative state to collect property taxes, nor to provide education or other welfare services.

Aside from Rushdoony and North, Reconstructionism boasts only a few other prolific writers, none of whom are major figures within the Christian Right. They are quoted more often in liberal reports than in the Christian Right's own literature.

The unabashed advocacy of a Christian theocracy has insured a limited following for the most explicit of the Reconstructionists. Perhaps even more than the punitive legal code they propose, it is the Reconstructionists' religion of Calvinism that makes them unlikely to appeal to most evangelicals.

Calvinism arose in Europe centuries ago in part as a reaction to Roman Catholicism's heavy emphasis on priestly authority and on salvation through acts of penance. One of the classic works of sociology, Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, links the rise of Calvinism to the needs of budding capitalists to judge their own economic success as a sign of their preordained salvation. Calvinists justified their accumulation of wealth, even at the expense of others, on the grounds that they were somehow destined to prosper. It is no surprise that such notions still find resonance within the Christian Right.



March for Jesus in Decatur, Ill. Jim West/Impact Visuals

Conflict with evangelicals

The hitch comes in the Calvinists' unyielding predestinarianism, the cornerstone of Reconstructionism and something at odds with the world view of evangelical Christians. The problem is that evangelicals (a category including Pentecostal charismatics and fundamentalist Baptists) believe that God's will works in conjunction with free human will. Evangelicals believe strongly that humans freely choose sin or salvation and that those already converted have the duty to go out and offer the choice they have made to others. Calvinism, in contrast, undercuts the whole motivation for missionary work and it is the missionary zeal to redeem sinners that motivates much of the Christian Right's political activism.

Calvinism is an essentially reckless doctrine. If God has decided what's going to happen, then the Dominionists do not have to take responsibility for their actions. (They can kill abortion doctors "knowing" it is the right thing to do.) Evangelicals, even those on the Right, still believe they as individuals are capable of error.

'Only the righteous shall rule'

Evangelicals do find appealing, however, the views of David Barton of WallBuilders, Inc. From Aledo, Tex., Barton has successfully mass marketed a version of dominion theology that has made his lectures, books and tapes among the hot-

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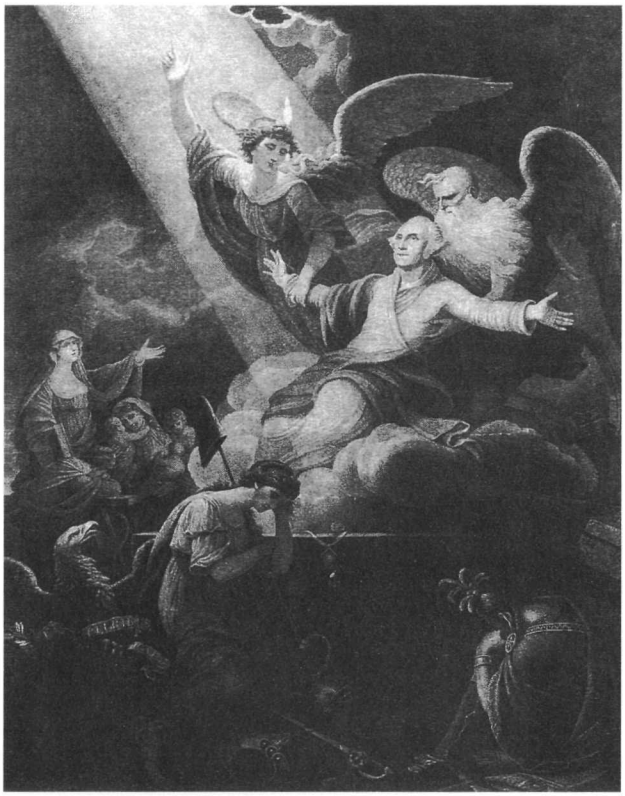
test properties in the born-again business. Barton's pitch is that, with the possible exception of Benjamin Franklin, the Founding Fathers were all Evangelicals who intended to make this a Christian nation.

Crowds of home schoolers and the Christian Coalition go wild with applause for Barton's performances. With an overhead projector, he flashes slides of the Founding Fathers and reels off selected quotes from them saying things like "only the righteous shall rule." For the years following the Supreme Court's 1962 and 1963 decisions against public school prayer, his charts and graphs show statistical declines in SAT scores and rising rates of teenage promiscuity, drug abuse and other bad behavior. Apparently no one has ever explained to Barton that a sequence of unrelated events does not add up to a cause and effect relationship.

Barton's bottom line is that only "the righteous" should occupy public office. This is music to the ears of Christian Right audiences. To grasp Barton's brand of dominion theology, unlike with reconstructionism, one does not need a seminary degree. Barton's pseudo history fills a need most Americans have to know more about our country's past. His direct linkage of the deified Founding Fathers with contemporary social problems cuts through the evangelicals' theological sectarianism and unites them in a feasible project. They may not be able to take dominion over the whole earth or even agree about when Jesus will return, but they sure can go home and back a godly candidate for city council, or run themselves. Barton tells his audiences that they personally have an important role to play in history and that is what makes his dominion theology popular.

What do conservatives want?

Barton's message flies in the face of the Christian Coalition's public claims about wanting only its fair share of political power. In his new book, *Politically Incorrect*, Coalition director Ralph Reed writes: "What do religious conservatives really want? They want a place at the table in the conversation we call democracy. Their commitment to pluralism includes a place for faith among the many other competing interests in society." Yet the Coalition's own national convention in 1994 opened with a plenary speech by D. James Kennedy who echoed the Reconstructionist line when he said that "true Christian citizenship" includes a cultural mandate to "take dominion over all things as vice-regents of God."



***Sacred to the Memory of Washington* by John J. Barralet, c. 1800** Historical Society of Philadelphia

Barton's pitch is that the Founding Fathers were all evangelicals who intended to make this a Christian nation.

Who is telling the truth about the Christian Right's bid for power, Ralph Reed or the popular Dominionists who speak at Christian Coalition gatherings? Liberal critics of the Christian Right would have us believe that Reed and Pat Robertson are just plain lying when they say they want to work hand-in-hand, like good pluralists, with non-Christians in government. To bolster the "stealth" thesis, liberals have to resort to conspiracy theory: Barton and Kennedy spoke at the conference, so Reed must secretly agree with them.

A better explanation is that the Christian Right, like other mass movements, is a bundle of internal contradictions which work themselves out in the course of real political activism. Ideas have consequences, but ideas also have causes, rooted in interests and desires. The Christian Right is in a state of tension and flux over its own mission — part movement to resist and roll back even moderate change, part reactionary wing of prevailing Republicanism. The Christian Right wants to take dominion and collaborate with the existing political-economic system at the same time. Liberal critics, who also endorse the ruling system, can recognize only the Christian Right's takeover dimension. Radicals can see that the dominion project is dangerous because it is, in part, business as usual. TW

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Hebron's wheat harvest

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), an initiative among Mennonite and Brethren congregations and Friends meetings, are being sent into Hebron where the expansion of Jewish settlements threatens Palestinian lives.

Dianne Roe and Anne Montgomery accompanied Mosallam Ali Shreateh, his brothers, and their families from Yatta to his wheat fields next to the Israeli settlement of Susia last May. The settlers had previously seized a section of this land to plant trees, had poisoned another section, grazed sheep on the growing wheat, and threatened Palestinians attempting to work in their own fields.

They report: "When we reached the field adjacent to the trees, a group of settlers approached, filmed us, and were soon followed by two soldiers who, after a lengthy argument, informed the brothers that the plot of land now belonged to the settlement. When the family began harvesting the wheat next to it, two other soldiers arrived and shouted at the Palestinians, threatening to shoot us all if we did not leave in five minutes. We moved to a field farther from the settlement. Shortly the same two soldiers reappeared and repeated their five-minute warning which was ignored. For the next two hours, men, women and children gathered as much wheat as possible to save it from the burning sun."

—Christian Peacemaker Teams

P. O. Box 6508 Chicago, IL 60680; 312-455-1199; e-mail: cpt@igc.apc.org.

Mordechai Vanunu

Demonstrations throughout the world marked the tenth anniversary of Mordechai Vanunu's incarceration in Israel on September 30. Vanunu, a former Israeli nuclear technician, released information about Israel's secret nuclear weapons program to the *London Sunday Times* in 1986 and is now serving an 18-year sentence in solitary confinement in a cell measuring six by nine feet.

— U.S. Campaign to Free M. Vanunu
Madison, Wis.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney (in suspenders) was arrested with 19 others just before Labor Day outside the offices of the Detroit Newspapers. The group protested the continuing strike that has idled 2,000 union newspaper workers for 14 months. Four presidents of the six striking unions also were arrested. Rudy Simons

World Court examines nukes

Alyn Ware, executive director of the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, presented the legal counsel of the U.S. Department of Defense with sunflowers following the July ruling of the International Court of Justice that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally illegal and that states have an obligation to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Ware referred to the action by U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry who planted sunflowers on a former Ukrainian missile site on June 4, the day Ukraine officially gave up nuclear weapons.

Legal challenges to nuclear weapons are critical because despite massive international protests France has resumed nuclear testing in the South Pacific. In addition, France, China, the U.S., the U.K. and Russia continue to threaten to use their nuclear arsenals which could encourage other countries to develop nuclear weapons. (Contributions can be sent to Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, 666 Broadway, Rm 625, N.Y., N.Y. 10012.)

— Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, N.Y., N.Y.

Security issues

Sabotaged or not, TWA Flight 800 raises security issues because it evokes painful memories of Pan Am 103, Oklahoma City and the recent terrorist bombing of Saudi Arabia.

Security specialists say more sophisticated technologies are ready for airport use, but they fear a public outcry against their intrusiveness.

New screening technologies include imaging methods that can see through clothing — and produce an image of the body underneath — by exposing a passenger to low-level radiation. Alternative chemical trace-detection techniques involve person-to-person contact or direct contact between trace-chemical sensors and passengers.

— Aviation Week & Space Technology, 7/22/1996

Short takes

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A time to bear witness

by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

Fundamentalism as a world view only really began as a movement in the 1920s. The term was coined in 1921 by Curtis Lee Laws, a Baptist, to identify someone who stood for what Laws called "the historic doctrines of the Christian faith" — as opposed to modern religious liberalism.

The conservative Inter-Varsity publication, the *New Dictionary of Theology*, defines a fundamentalist in several ways: 1) an evangelical Protestant (that's not accurate as far as I'm concerned); 2) an anti-modernist, meaning somebody who subscribes to the traditional, supernaturalistic beliefs of biblical Christianity; and 3) someone militant in this anti-modernism and militant in anti-secularism. So most recently what has been under fire from fundamentalists like Pat Robertson has been the Supreme Court's ban on prayer in public schools, any tendency to liberalize laws or attitudes towards homosexuality and any tendencies toward equal partnership between women and men in church and society. This latter part is especially focussed on taking away women's reproductive freedom.

Historically — that is, since the 1920s — fundamentalism has been the term to refer to those who hold the "five fundamentals" of the supposedly historic Christian faith: the miracles of Jesus taken literally; the virgin birth of Jesus taken literally; the substitutionary atonement of Jesus (which was not important to the church until Anselm developed the idea in the early 12th century); the bodily resurrection of Jesus; and the word-for-word inspiration of the Bible.

The fundamentals

Even before fundamentalism had the name, two California oil millionaires, Lyman and Calvin Stewart, had begun to spread the movement by funding 12 booklets called *The Fundamentals*. Between 1910 and 1915 they mailed these to more than three million pastors and other Protestant Christian leaders. The booklets denied Darwinian evolution, attacked the higher criticism of the Bible and affirmed the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. They also affirmed the five fundamentals. The rest of the booklets took issue with Roman Catholicism, socialism, atheism, Mormonism — and, above all, they took issue with naturalism. So, for instance, anybody who would explain Jesus' walking on water by suggesting that maybe there was a sandbar would be accused of gross unbelief.

But as somebody who came out of the fundamentalist camp, I want to say that the literalism is exceedingly selective. I'll just give one illustration: the Hebrew prophet, Joel, who said that God's spirit speaks and says "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28). Fundamentalists accept the Book of Joel as part of the verbally inspired scriptures, but they don't take Joel's words literally; in fact they *do not* believe that God's spirit could be poured out on all flesh. Because if God's spirit could be poured out on all people, it would include Mormons! It would include feminist theologians! It would include Muslims, Jews and atheists.

Surprising statistics

The fundamentalist movement is so decentralized that it's very hard to pin down. For instance, many journalists or critics of fundamentalism assume that the term is synonymous with the Religious Right and you will very frequently hear it used that way. Some see the Religious Right as a reincarnation of Jerry Falwell's now defunct Moral Majority. Some see the Religious Right as a continuance of the conservative political campaigns of Pat Robertson and Patrick Buchanan, and others see it as a kind of broadbased, socially conservative, inter-religious, inter-racial coalition.

The Religious Right scores points with the American people by playing on their ignorance of Scripture. That's a vacuum into which they can pour all the interpretations that are the most patriarchal.

I think the truth lies somewhere in the middle of these definitions. A Gallup poll taken at the end of 1994 for the Princeton Religious Center came up with some very interesting statistics, such as that only 18 percent, at that time, of American people identified themselves as members of the Religious Right. I would think that the shift to the Right in this country would make it slightly larger now. Seventy-four percent were able at that time categorically to deny that they are members of the Religious Right. And then there were about 8 percent that weren't sure whether they were in the Religious Right or not.

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Of those who identify most strongly with the Religious Right, 21 percent are women, 23 percent are college graduates, 26 percent are Southern people, 30 percent are African Americans, *16 percent are Democrats* and 24 percent are Republicans. Only one person in three who claims to have been "born again," also considers himself or herself a member of the Religious Right. I should remind you that during the last presidential election all the Republican and Democratic presidential and vice-presidential candidates identified as "born again," which right away should warn us not to make too easy an equation between born againism and the Religious Right.

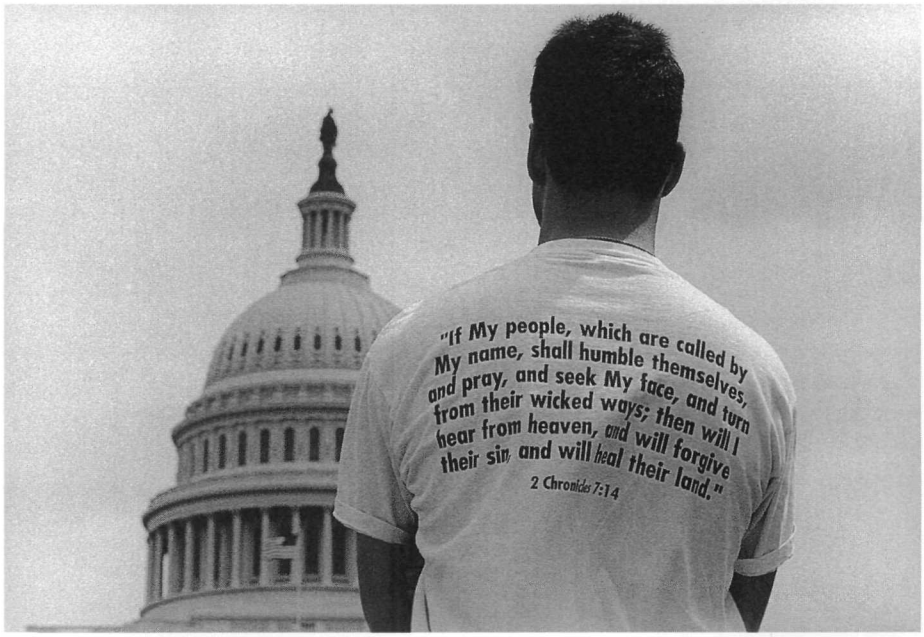
It's not correct loosely to identify the Religious Right with fundamentalism. Is it accurate to relate it with Republicanism? Clearly not, although it's important to note that the Religious Right currently is very influential in the Republican Party and certainly several organizations are actively trying to take over the GOP. Fifteen percent of the people who identify with the Religious Right call themselves ideologically "liberal." Another 14 percent call themselves "moderate."

Right-wing organizations

Despite these complexities, there can be no doubt that a lot of fundamentalists are deeply involved in the organizations of the Right. And I would like to note now some of the organizations and talk a little bit about their agendas.

Accuracy in Academia and *Accuracy in the Media* are two watchdog groups. They fight what is called "liberal bias." According to these groups, we college professors are terrible — we are, they say, trying to rob all young people of their faith.

Then there are the "big three." First, *The Christian Coalition,* founded by Pat Robertson and now led by Ralph Reed. It is developing greater political sophistication as it attempts to infiltrate school boards all over the country. It claims to be non-partisan, but the IRS is now seeking to take away its tax-exempt status because of its political maneuvering. The goal of the Christian Coalition is to put 10 trained workers in each of the nation's 175,000 precincts. As of 1995, they had almost two million members and more than 100,000 precinct leaders in place.



Washington for Jesus rally, April, 1996. Jerome Friar/Impact Visuals

Another of the big three is *Concerned Women for America,* which is the nation's largest conservative Christian women's organization. It supports male headship in the home and in the church. The group's focus is, of course, on anti-feminism. They promote themselves as the conservative alternative to the National Organization for Women. The male corollary is *Promise Keepers,* which is sweeping the country.

The other member of the big three is *Focus on the Family,* led by James Dobson out of Denver. It seeks to defend traditional "family values," but it doesn't seem to know or care that there are at least 40 different forms of family described or implied in the Bible, including equal partnership marriages, commuter marriages, single-parent families, communes and so forth.

From anti-ERA to gay executions

The Eagle Forum, led by Phyllis Schlafly, almost single-handedly defeated the Equal Rights Amendment and is still around. *Exodus International* is an organization that claims to have converted thousands of gay men and lesbians to heterosexuality. *Family Life Ministries,* led by Tim LaHaye, seeks to save America from secular humanism. LaHaye, of course, was formerly a Moral Majority leader. *The National Right to Life Committee* opposes abortion and women's reproductive freedom. *Rockford Institute* in Illinois opposes the erosion of traditional values resulting from an increasingly pluralistic society, so it sees multiculturalism as the enemy. *The Traditional Values Coalition* is active in anti-homosexual legislation and opposes even school-based counselling programs for gay and lesbian teenagers. *Scriptures for America* is really out there on the right. It's a racist, anti-semitic group. It espouses Christian

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identity theology, which claims that Anglo-Saxons are the Bible's true chosen people and Jews are interlopers! They also believe gay people should be executed.

Increased political savvy

Two years ago, Ralph Reed, head of the Christian Coalition, released what he calls a "contract with the American family." Among other things, this contract called for a tax credit of $500 for each child and the right of homemakers to contribute up to $2,000 annually toward a tax-sheltered annuity. These are initiatives intended to help the middle-class American family, initiatives I liked. But what's especially interesting to me is that the contract does not frontally attack homosexuals, even though that group has raised a lot of its money by anti-homosexual rhetoric. It also takes a fairly centrist position about abortion and moves away from suggesting compulsory prayer in the public schools.

These modifications from the usual fundamentalist positions indicate a growing political awareness that the American people will tolerate only so much forcing of views onto other people. Don Browning, who is a professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, was so impressed by this document that he argued in *The Christian Century* that mainline churchpeople ought to discuss it seriously and think about throwing their votes toward it as a way of keeping America from moving even farther to the Right. This is the way liberals are getting co-opted.

Ironically, it is the militia movement that has pushed many Americans back a little bit more toward the Left, especially since the Oklahoma bombing. I watched with fascination one night as David Koresh went on and on about his understanding of the Bible — the most amazing composite of biblical literalism and his own mad read on himself. It was astonishing! And of course the Weavers of Ruby Ridge also hold a view of biblical inerrancy. The militia movement sees itself as the last line of defense against a government that is hellbent on taking away all traces of opposition to its own policies. There's a great deal of racism and anti-semitism involved: They argue that the "Zionist Occupation government" is taking over America and that argument seems to be gaining ground among many people. It seems meager right now, with about 10,000 members, but it has to be closely monitored because it is so full of violent enmity.

If you've got any energy, run for the school board. But also be there for the debates and when you hear the deceptive rhetoric, expose it.

Beware of the innocuous

So where do we go from here?

Several lines of action are essential for people such as ourselves. If we want to preserve America's civil liberties and historic church-state division, we'd better keep ourselves well-informed. Furthermore, we better learn to read very carefully, because Religious Right literature is getting more and more sophisticated and often sounds exceedingly innocuous.

Here's an example: Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition has been pushing a religious equality amendment to the Constitution. The first section reads: "Neither the United States, nor any state, shall abridge the freedom of any person or group, including students in public schools, to engage in prayer or other religious expression in circumstances in which expression of a non-religious character would be permitted, nor deny benefits or otherwise discriminate against any person or group on account of the religious character of their speech, ideas, motivation or identity."

This sounds like the good old American freedom of religion. But in point of fact there are a couple of very glaring problems in it. For one thing, it's redundant. We already have the establishment clause in the first amendment, which protects the rights of minorities and dissidents by placing certain matters like religion outside the reach of transient majorities.

But secondly, to guarantee freedom to engage in prayer or other religious expression wherever expressions of a non-religious character would be permitted would allow teachers to proselytize students in their classrooms. It would allow students to disrupt class sessions with their religious convictions. It would allow judges to proselytize in their courtrooms. The other hidden political agenda is that the clause forbidding denial of benefits is in there to force taxpayers to pay for vouchers for attendance at religious schools.

Run for school board

We have to be aware that the current primary strategy of the Religious Right is, as I said earlier, to infiltrate school boards, because these positions influence education and therefore eventually could provide a *cadré* of political candidates in the future who have been governed by this particular perspective.

Well, what's the best way to try to transform that strategy? If you've got any energy, run for the school board yourself. But also be there for the debates and when you hear the deceptive rhetoric, expose it. Many Americans are voting for these candidates without having the vaguest idea that they are Religious Right candidates.

We must remember that the bulk of

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Religious Right activists are committed to the use of conventional politics. We can be grateful for that. They are not committed to the use of bombs and guns to get what they want. The best obstacle to that is our own political activity.

We also need to oppose the racism and anti-semitism that is sometimes expressed by the Religious Right, not by everybody, but by enough people to make us nervous. I think of Tim LaHaye's comment that by rejecting Jesus, Jews brought God's curse on themselves and on Palestine, and Pat Robertson's heavy reliance on well-known anti-semitic literature.

Some of us have lived through the holocaust and we have seen what happened there and it was very largely traceable to Christian theology. So we can't sit still and let this happen again, be quiescent or apathetic about it. Pat Robertson complained, for instance, that "cosmopolitan, liberal, secular Jews are involved in the ongoing attempt to undermine the public strength of Christianity." And he has made similar charges against Islamic leaders.

A liberating hermeneutic

Above all I think we have to work in our local congregations and secular communities to teach people a liberating and inclusive way of interpreting the Bible. The Religious Right scores points with the American people by playing on their ignorance of Scripture. That's a vacuum into which they can pour all the interpretations that are the most patriarchal. I think it is vital that we don't lose the battle for the American mind by sheer default because we are too lazy to learn how to read Scripture in a more liberating way. When we're sufficiently outspoken about the radical insights of Scripture, we can help move society in a more healthy direction.

Why have the churches not taught a liberating interpretation of Scripture? I have a feeling that many of the mainline churches are so embarrassed about what happened in the 19th century with slavery, when some leaders defended slavery from a scriptural base, that they don't want to talk Bible study anymore. But if we aren't willing to study a liberating hermeneutic, by default we leave other people to tell the American people what the Bible says. So we could teach through discussions, public forums, neighborly conversations, letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines, and lots of other ways.

If you can say — "This is what I believe, this is my experience" — that should not be offensive to anybody, because it is not the same as talking for somebody else; it is simply bearing witness by standing in your own truth. TW

Creating a Better Future **by Nivia Gonzalez** Courtesy Galleria Ortiz

We have to work in our local congregations and communities to teach a liberating way of interpreting the Bible. It is vital that we don't lose the battle for the American mind because we are too lazy to learn how to read Scripture. We must be outspoken about its radical insights.

The Institute for First Amendment Studies profiles important Christian Right organizations in its 1993 publication, *The Top Ten: A Freedom Writer Fact Sheet.* The Institute also runs The Freedom Writer Network, a non-profit educational and research organization that publishes *The Freedom Writer*, a newsletter devoted to "defending the separation of church and state." Annual membership costs $25. Contact the Institute at PO Box 589, Great Barrington, MA, 01230.

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The need for a politics of meaning

Michael Lerner

[Last May* The Witness *was co-sponsor of a conference on the life and legacy of theologian/lawyer William Stringfellow held at Washington and Lee University. In a presentation on the "politics of meaning," Michael Lerner spoke about why people drift to the Right.]

From 1976 to 1986 I worked in California as a psychotherapist and set up the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. These were years when many middle-income, working people were moving to the Right and a lot of my work in that period became focused on trying to understand why. The therapists that I worked with came from liberal, progressive or anti-war backgrounds and as we listened to the stories we heard something emerging that we had not expected.

The first thing we heard was that people were moving to the Right in large part because they were in deep pain in their lives. We expected some pain in peoples' lives, in part because we knew about the lack of power and control that people have in the work world. But what we discovered was that the pain was also connected to the fact that people felt their lives lacked any kind of framework of meaning and purpose — the pain and oppression that they experienced in the world of work was very much connected to their inability to serve the common good, to do something that would be of value.

Michael Lerner became involved with the progressive social change movements of the 1960s, having been a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Abraham Joshua Heschel. Artist **Lucinda Luvaas** lives in San Marcas, Calif.

Learning 'realism'

From what we had learned in the liberal world and in academia we expected to think of middle-income Americans as though their bottom line was money; if people were moving to the Right it was only because they were racist, or sexist, or homophobic. But what we learned was that these people wanted a framework of meaning and purpose for their lives and that that framework was systematically denied. They said they were learning, in the world of work, that their desire for some higher ethical and spiritual context for their lives was unrealistic and that to be realistic one had to focus on the bottom line.

So they had both parts of themselves, a part that wanted to go for their own highest vision and a part that was saying, "I have to live in the real world and what I really need to do is to learn the skills of the market. And the skills of the market, as they saw it — I think correctly — were that the way you advanced yourself was to learn how to manipulate and control other people. The bottom line of the market is money and power. The common sense of the market is looking out for number one.

We learned that people drifting to the Right wanted a framework of meaning for their lives and that that framework was systematically denied.

An ethic of self-interest

So people find themselves surrounded by an ethos of selfishness and materialism. People find themselves surrounded by a rip-off consciousness that permeates the society from the very top — where some small sector of corporate leaders think it is perfectly appropriate to rip off the resources of the planet without regard to the future survivability of the planet — all the way down the class ladder, affecting everyone in the society.

This ethos of selfishness is manifested not just in crime, but also in human relationships, because more and more every relationship becomes infected by market consciousness so that even in loving relationships people ask, how much you can satisfy my needs? When that becomes the sum and substance of relationship, when people are no longer able to see other people as fundamentally deserving of love and caring by virtue of who they are as embodiments of the spirit of God, then you get a society in which human relationships are, by and large, assessments of self interest.

As a psychotherapist, and now as a rabbi, I have had people come to me when they were breaking up a relationship and present the trump line: "I met somebody who can satisfy more of my needs." There is nothing more to be said, as far as most people are concerned, once that has been said. But if that is what it is all about, nobody can feel deeply secure in their relationships.

The crisis is real

Now the Right comes forward and articulates this and says there is a crisis in ethics, there is a crisis in crime, there is a crisis in family. And the Right is entirely correct. There are such crises. But then, tragically, the Right goes on to blame these crises on the alleged selfishness of the traditionally demeaned others of the society — African Americans, gays and lesbians, feminists, Jews, immigrants, the "other" — aided and abetted, allegedly, by big government liberals who are using big government to take from the rest of us

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and give to these special interests.

Liberals deeply misunderstand the reality of all this, if they only hear the Right's analysis and think that people are responding simply to the analysis. Because there are two parts of this reality, there is first the calling of the issue, and secondly the Right's analysis of it. Hate radio, for example, is popular, in part, because it says to people, *you* are not getting the respect, the caring, the recognition, the love that you deserve. And the reason you are not getting it is because the liberals are taking it from you and giving it to these others.

Liberals make a deep mistake here if they don't understand the part of this message that's true. Most people are *not* getting the love, the recognition, the caring that they deserve in this society. They hunger for it and they hunger for a framework where something is going to be valued, intrinsically, not just for what it can produce in the way of personal consequences. They hunger for some higher ethical and spiritual framework and the Right, at least, is articulating that there is a problem.

Meanwhile, of course, the Right is in this incredible contradictory position, because while it talks about the crisis in ethics and selfishness, it is the primary champion of the ethos of selfishness and materialism in the world of work. It is the force that says that the best way to serve everybody's interest is to go for maximizing individual interest: Take care of yourself, do not try to impose responsibility on corporations.

Now how does the Right get away with this? Well, the way they get away with this contradiction is because the liberals aren't even in the relevant ballpark.

Facing into people's pain

Liberals and progressives, in my view, do not have a clue as to what is going on in American society today, and that is why they are in deep political trouble. They do not have any understanding of the pain that the vast majority of Americans are in.

On the contrary, liberals have a framework of understanding that deals with economic entitlements and political rights. For a large part of the 20th century these *were* the central issues for the vast majority of Americans, but today, for the vast majority of Americans, the central crisis is the *meaning crisis* and that crisis is not being addressed by liberals.

Tikkun magazine came out of the work we did at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. We attempt to address the crisis of meaning not by blaming, but by looking at its roots in the economic and political structures of the society and by calling for a different kind of politics which would require a transformation of social institutions.

In short, a politics of meaning is a call for a change in the bottom line in American society, from an ethos of selfishness and materialism to an ethos of caring and idealism.

Parallels with feminism

The paradigm shift that I am talking about is of monumental proportions, as was the monumental transformation that was proposed by women 30 years ago in the emergence of the second wave of feminism. At that time, people began to talk about a struggle against patriarchy. People asked, "Can you please name us a society in the history of the human race which hasn't been patriarchal, in which women have had equal power in the world of work or equal power in the bedroom or in the kitchen? Please show us such a society. ..." And women couldn't. But luckily for us a lot of women did not buy the argument from realism and instead bought the argument from the standpoint of their need to live in a different kind of society even though such a society seemed unrealistic. I don't mean to suggest that patriarchy has been defeated, but I do mean to suggest that over the course of the past 30 years dramatic transformations have happened.

Similarly, I want to argue that it is now on the political agenda of this country to

Hellgate **Lucinda Luvaas**

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have a politics of meaning, a politics that recognizes that every human being is created in the image of God and works from there.

Covenant with American Families

At *Tikkun,* we've put together two documents. One is a Covenant with American Families — a progressive alternative to the Right's Contract with American Families. We say that the Right, although it addressed the correct issue — there *is* a crisis in families — offers solutions that have nothing to do with preserving families.

For example, one of the major tenets of the Right's contract is the elimination of the Department of Education, but I can tell you from my own experience as a therapist and a rabbi, I've never yet had a couple that came to me and said the problem in their relationship was the Department of Education. It is rather the ethos of selfishness and materialism that is central. So in our Covenant with American Families we challenge the way the ethos of selfishness and materialism works in this society and try to show you how you could build a progressive, pro-families movement around that notion of challenging selfishness and materialism in all aspects of American life.

A second concrete political program that we've developed is called the Social Responsibility Initiative. The individuals who are signing this commit to taking individual responsibility in our own lives to lead a life with greater moral integrity and greater sensitivity to the consequences of our actions on other people. But a second point of the Social Responsibility Initiative calls upon corporations to assume certain levels of responsibility for the consequences of *their* actions, in terms of their personnel policies, their downsizing of work forces, their advertising and their products.

Shifting the focus

There is a difference in focus here from the focus that I have heard from some of the people in the Christian religious world. I hear in the Christian world, among the people with whom I identify most, a preferential option for the poor. But what we are saying in the politics of meaning movement is: We support that and see that as flowing from biblical principles, but the way to be preferentially for the poor, at this historical moment, is to build a cross-class alliance between middle-income people and the poor. It is not really substantively being for the poor to spend your time preaching about how terrible conditions are for the poor. Instead we need to speak to the pain of middle-income people and be able to understand that pain and link that pain with the issues facing poor people.

When we talk about a politics of meaning we are saying that the deprivation of people's ethical and spiritual needs is as fundamental as the deprivation of economic and political rights.

In other words, we need a shift in focus. This would sometimes mean, for example, that at a political meeting, instead of asking how many of the oppressed group we have in the room and then saying that if we don't have enough we're not the real thing, we would be asking how many white middle-class men do we have in the room? Because those are the people that we need to be reaching.

When we talk about a politics of meaning we are saying that the deprivation of people's ethical and spiritual needs is as fundamental as the deprivation of economic and political rights.

Consequently, we say to religious people that instead of buying into what liberals have been telling religious people for a long time, "If you want to be part of a liberal alliance, leave your religious paraphernalia at the door and enter into a secular arena," we say that the progressive movement desperately needs the insights that come from the spiritual and religious traditions of the human race, that those insights are desperately needed in progressive politics. TW

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Soft patriarchy or servanthood?

by Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen

In 1992, well before the Christian men's movement known as Promise Keepers became front-cover news for American journalists, Gloria Steinem — the founding editor of *Ms.* magazine — wrote: "Make no mistake about it: Women want a men's movement. We are literally dying for it. If you doubt that, just listen to women's desperate testimonies of hope that the men in our lives will become more nurturing towards children, more able to talk about emotions, less hooked on a spectrum of control that extends from not listening through to violence, and [that they will become] less repressive of their own human qualities that are called 'feminine.' ... Perhaps the psychic leap of 20 years ago [when feminists announced that] *women can do what men can do*, must now be followed by [the announcement that] *men can do what women can do*."

These days the North American men's movement has almost as many faces as are found within feminism, but sociologist David Blankenhorn, author of the 1995 best-seller, *Fatherless America*, has characterized Promise Keepers as "the largest and most important men's movement in the United States today." The most public and media-covered feature of Promise Keepers is its two-day sports stadium rallies held annually throughout the U.S. Beginning in 1991 with a single gathering of 4,200, the rallies expanded over five years to 13 weekends and over 700,000 attendees. In the same time period, the organization's paid staff more than doubled yearly to almost 300, its budget rose to $65 million and its branch offices expanded to include 28 states and provinces.

Promise Keepers in Pontiac, Mich. Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

McCartney and the seven promises

The original moving force behind Promise Keepers is Bill McCartney, a former Catholic who is now a member of the charismatic Protestant Vineyard Fellowship, and erstwhile head football coach at the University of Colorado. McCartney's own experience reflects many of the concerns expressed in the "seven promises" to which movement members commit themselves. For all its defects, organized sport is one of the few North American institutions which is fairly successfully integrated by race, and McCartney's track record in this regard is impressive: He was the only Division I-A head coach to have equal numbers of black and white coaches working for him, and on resigning his post in 1995, he publicly protested (with the help of Jesse Jackson) the fact that the long-time assistant coach in line for his position, a black man, was passed over for a less experienced white candidate.

Hence McCartney's concern for promise #6 ("reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity"). Moreover, 25 percent of the organization's paid staff are people of color; it draws about half its rally speakers from the ranks of minorities, and its leaders repeatedly press the mostly white rally attendees to reach out to minority men once they return home to form accountability groups (promise #2).

But the dark side of sport also took its toll on McCartney's pre-Promise Keepers life. His unmarried daughter gave birth to two children, each fathered by one of McCartney's varsity football players. In the process of producing a national championship college team he became, by his own admission, a workaholic absentee husband and father who expected his family's life to revolve around his professional priorities. Hence the concern for promise #3 ("practicing spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity") and promise #4 ("building strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values").

The remaining promises more specifically reflect the evangelical character of the organization — "honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's word," "supporting the mission of the church" and being obedient to the

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Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen teaches in the Department of Psychology and the Center for Christian Women in Leadership at Eastern College in St. Davids, Penn. A longer version of this article will appear in *The Journal of Men's Studies*, vol. 5 (1996-97) and can be obtained by writing the *JMS* at PO Box 32, Harriman, Tenn., 37748.

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"Great Commission" (to evangelize and disciple all nations).

Statistics gathered by the National Center for Fathering based in Shawnee, Kans., showed (as of 1995) that while 88 percent of rally attendees were married, 21 percent had been divorced and close to 20 percent had parents who divorced. Attendees' median age was 38 and 84 percent were white. Over a quarter reported having become Christians after age 24 and a third attended Baptist or Southern Baptist churches. Half reported that their own fathers were largely absent while they were growing up.

The real test of Promise Keepers' success is not the drawing power of the stadium weekends, but the staying power of the local accountability groups which men are sent home to form. But these groups are too recent to have had any systematic evaluation research done on them to see, for example, if they really do foster cross-racial fellowship or if they strengthen local congregational life. What is not in question is that Promise Keepers has tapped into some strongly felt needs in a certain segment of North American men.

New Man

Despite the lack of systematic research showing how Promise Keepers is working at the level of local groups, one can sense how the organization hopes to influence its members during the off-rally season by looking at its official magazine, an eight-times-a-year glossy called *New Man*. Begun in 1994, by mid-1995 its publisher (Strang Communications) reported a paid circulation of 100,000. The magazine has a regular column exegeting and applying the Promise Keepers' promises and columns giving tips on such topics as leading a men's group, monitoring children's T.V. viewing, losing weight and fighting off incipient baldness. It features profiles of men who are Christian athletes, evangelists, missionaries and entrepreneurs; stories of individual conversion or struggles in sanctification; and advice on the cultivation of Christian virtues such as courage, honesty and perseverance.

Unlike fundamentalist and evangelical magazines of the pre- and post-World War Two periods, which were characterized by an aggressively masculine rhetoric that upheld the boundary between the domestic (female) and public (male) spheres, *New Man* seems enthusiastically to embrace the image of the "sensitive new age guy," albeit with a distinctly evangelical slant. Such a man is more than just a good provider: He is friend, counselor, servant and enabler to his family, colleagues and fellow Christians. He can, it seems, rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

Promise Keepers project an image of being "weekend weepers" not "weekend warriors." The group appropriates the feminist critique of stereotypical masculinity and reclothes it in a biblical theology of "true manhood."

Forces behind the movement

Why should such a movement have arisen at this particular time? First, men are pondering the meaning of masculinity in these new economic times. The economic upheavals of the late 20th century — a "peace dividend" that never materialized, the expansion of multinational corporations and the consequent flight of North American capital to cheaper labor markets, and technological shifts — have heightened the risk of unemployment for some and wage stagnation or decline for many others. While these changes have added to almost everyone's insecurity, their effects are compounded for men in a society which has traditionally identified masculinity with economic power, an idea tinged with memories of the era before the industrial revolution when 90 percent of free men in the U.S. owned their own shop or farm (today, less than 10 percent do) and worked in close daily contact with their families. Today the very identification of "breadwinning" with masculinity is under siege, as even middle-class, intact nuclear families often need two adults in the waged workforce to survive economically.

Second, there is the feminist factor. Almost nothing is said, either positive or negative, about feminists in Promise Keepers' assorted literature, and yet it is clear that feminism is in large part what these men are responding to. Like the mythopoetic wing of the secular men's movement, Promise Keepers appeals to the same historical and psychological analysis of troubled manhood, but rejects the mythopoetic movement's tendency to blame women for men's feelings of insecurity and disempowerment. Promise Keepers instead sends a strongly evangelical message of personal repentance and conversion — if divorce, sexual irresponsibility and father absence are running rampant in society, it is individual men who must confess complicity and ask family members for forgiveness. Far from blaming women for men's current role confusion, Promise Keepers board member Gary Oliver praises them for keeping important institutions functioning: "Let's face it: if it weren't for women, there would be no prayer in many churches, missionaries would not get ongoing support and there would be a lot fewer Bible studies. There has definitely been a vacuum of men doing what God has called them to do in the church."

Promise Keepers thus project an im-

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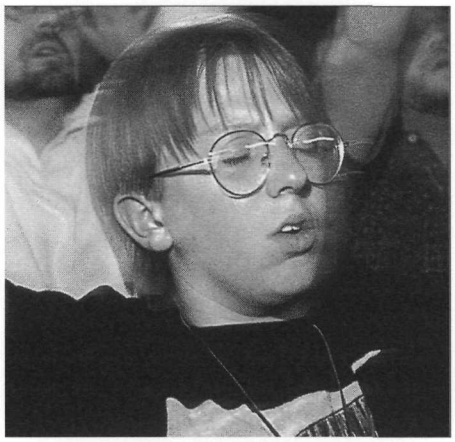
age of being "weekend weepers" not "weekend warriors." The group appropriates the feminist critique of stereotypical masculinity and reclothes it in a biblical theology of "true manhood." Thus Promise Keepers are enjoined to reject the profile of the "friendless American male" and instead to practice the biblical virtues of encouragement, forgiveness, mutual confession and mutual aid. Changed individuals, working together in a visionary parachurch organization, is seen as a vital component of social transformation.

Church-based criticism

Some of Promise Keepers' church-based criticism can be understood in terms of the historic tension in evangelical circles between revivalist and separatist impulses. Those of a revivalist bent — and Promise Keepers is nothing if not revivalist — are concerned mainly with preaching the Gospel to the unconverted and renewing commitment among the previously converted. Revivalism is highly experiential in tone, focussing on the need for a personal encounter with God. Eager to reach as many people as possible, revivalists tend to focus on the basics of the evangelical message (personal repentance, salvation by faith alone, self-discipline and service as a witness to God's transforming power), and to tolerate some ambiguity on other issues. "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty and in all things charity" might well be the motto of the revivalist, and this helps to explain Promise Keepers' ecumenical outreach.

However, the boundary between doctrinal essentials and non-essentials is a matter of debate in biblically focussed churches, and those of a separatist bent tend to have a much longer list of essential markers of a true church. This longer and more complex list (which includes matters of church order, family structure and interaction with society at large) inclines them towards fundamentalism — a kind of works righteousness of intellectual assent in which the capacity to state sound doctrine (based on literalist readings of the Bible) overshadows any religious experience as a source of authority. Separatist fundamentalists examine the Pauline epistles for minute rules of church order, then go on to create a hierarchy of



religious authority which almost always features male elders and pastors at the top.

Thus G.I. Williamson writes in the monthly magazine of the conservative Orthodox Presbyterian Church that Promise Keepers "usurps the prerogatives that our Lord has given only to his church" by encouraging mere laymen to help each other be accountable instead of appealing to their church elders, whom "God himself has provided ... to watch over the flock." He also criticizes the ecumenical character of the Promise Keepers' rallies, where evangelicals rub shoulders with Catholics and members of "apostate denominations."

More moderate evangelicals critique the group for different reasons. Writing in *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought*, Rebecca and Douglas Groothuis point out that there is nothing in Promise Keepers' seven promises that does not apply equally to all Christian believers. Thus, to the extent that the seven promises are held up as a description of godly masculinity, they imply that "there is something distinctively masculine about godliness. ... Defining masculinity as though it were the same thing as godliness can lead to a devaluation of femininity. If Christian men are like Christ not simply because they are Christians, but also because they are men, then men are simply more Christlike than women."

Ambiguous call for repentance

Even Promise Keepers' emphasis on men's personal repentance might be construed as a declaration of men's greater importance for the building of God's kingdom and a renewed society. If the problems of our time are due to men's neglect of God's calling, does this mean, the Groothuises ask, that "the moral and social order [is] falling apart for lack of the spiritual leadership that only men can adequately provide? Or are things degenerating simply because men have not been carrying their share of the load, having left family, church and social responsibilities entirely to women (many of whom have been wearing themselves out doing double duty)?"

The ambiguity of this call for repentance was also noted by *Ms.* magazine's avowedly secular reporter, Donna Minkowitz, who infiltrated a Promise Keepers' rally disguised as a teenaged boy. Having listened to Randy Phillips affirming God's concern for "the cries of our wives, the cries of our mothers, the cries of our daughters," Minkowitz writes that "if this sounds like a grandiose assessment of individual men's effect on everyone, it is. The Promise Keepers spend the bulk of their time telling men how to refrain from abusing because they think men ought to be good masters, not abusive ones. They don't doubt for a moment that the ultimate responsibility for the world — for men's and women's lives both — is men's. This fantasy of benevolent domination is at the core of

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A cross-cultural comparison

Anthropologist Elizabeth Brusco has studied the explosive growth of evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Colombia and their effect on gender relations among converts. As a feminist trained in Marxist thought, she is conscious of the fact that religious ideology could be "a powerful tool of patriarchy ... reinforcing women's subordination and mystifying it." This possibility seemed all the more likely given the strict gendering of the public/private dichotomy in Latin American society, the high degree to which women identify with their roles as wives and mothers, and the strong cult of *machismo* which draws men into habitual public displays of aggression, drinking and womanizing.

At the same time, as an anthropologist Brusco was committed to hearing and respecting the accounts of her female informants regarding the place of Pentecostal evangelicalism in their lives. What she has found is that women are often the first to convert, and that as husbands and other male kin follow them into the evangelical movement, the material conditions of households improve markedly. The evangelical proscriptions on drinking, smoking, gambling and keeping mistresses leads to a redirection of the husband's resources and time back into the home.

Moreover, even though (or perhaps because) the evangelical and Pentecostal Churches are male-led, they provide male converts with an alternative to the dysfunctional aspects of *machismo* which is at once face-saving and woman-friendly. Because of the "house church" character of the movement (services usually being held in a front room of the pastor's residence) leadership is functionally — even if not formally — in the hands of a "pastoral couple," with strong women's group activities complementing both men's groups and gender-integrated worship. Brusco thus concludes that "in some ways, Colombian evangelicalism can be seen as a 'strategic' woman's movement, like Western feminism, because it serves to reform gender roles in a way that enhances female status. ... In reforming male values to be more consistent with female ones (i.e., oriented toward the family rather than toward individualistic consumption) the movement provides a 'strategic' challenge to the prevailing form of sexual subordination in Colombia."

Part of Brusco's point is that what counts as "feminist" depends greatly on the cultural context in which women are operating. Without oversimplifying parallels between the two societies, it might be said that many North American women also perceive a need to "reform male values to be more consistent with female ones," living as they do in the midst of high rates of divorce, the resulting feminization of poverty, and a heavily sexualized culture of consumption which draws male resources away from households towards everything from pornography to spectator sports and substance abuse. The Promise Keepers movement provides a supportive yet challenging environment in which — much as in a 12-Step program — men can turn over a new leaf as they respond to its calls for sexual purity, moderation and attentiveness toward wives and children. This may not be a liberal feminist's notion of gender utopia, but it cannot — at least not yet — be labelled anti-feminist. — *M.V.L.*

the Promise Keepers' vision."

Racism is evil, sexism doesn't exist

Other observers have noted that Promise Keepers' concern to understand the pain wrought by racism has no real parallel in an organizational concern about sexism. Rebecca and Douglas Groothuis conclude that for Promise Keepers racism is evil but sexism doesn't exist: "While even traditionalist women acknowledge the existence of an unbiblical and hurtful prejudice against women in many evangelical churches, awareness of this problem seems to be missing from the PK agenda." They praise Promise Keepers' attempts to educate white men to understand the pain felt by men of color due to racism, but add that it "is a shame that they are not also learning to hear, uncritically and nonjudgmentally, the pain that women of all races have experienced in a male-dominant church." And although *Ms.* magazine's Donna Minkowitz defends the personal-change focus of Promise Keepers, she agrees that it needs expansion to include a concern for institutional changes in gender relations. At this point in time, she notes, "for the Promise Keepers, the loving care of devoted husbands is the only thing required to improve women's lives."

Almost a century ago, xenophobic American white men were known to support women's suffrage in order to offset the votes of immigrants and people of color. Are we now witnessing a development of the reverse attitude among Promise Keepers — that is, a willingness to sacrifice female empowerment to the goal of cross-racial male solidarity?

A nonpolitical movement?

Promise Keepers leaders have repeatedly stated that their movement is nonpolitical. Minkowitz has quoted Promise Keepers' press secretary, Steve Chavis, as saying: "We are dedicated to uniting men. We are not prescribing what party this is done through, or what ballot measure."

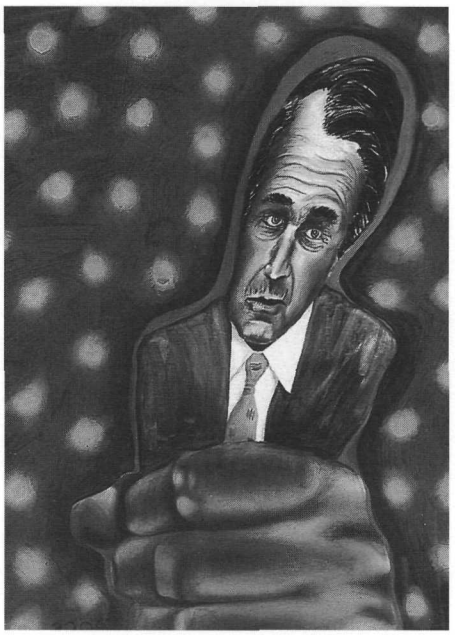
Although no statistics have been compiled on the group's political preferences, observers of the Christian Right such as Russell Bellant caution against the assumption that Promise Keepers are uniformly of a Right-wing bent, noting that "committed trade union supporters and social justice supporters" attend the stadium rallies.

Although founder Bill McCartney has avoided using the Promise Keepers' podium to promote a particular political agenda, as a coach he allowed his name to appear on the fund-raising letters of Colorado for Family Values, sponsor of the famous Amendment Two aimed at blocking civil rights guarantees for homosexuals. He has taken similarly public stands against abortion, although not as a Promise Keeper.

Promise Keepers have sponsored talks by Jerry Falwell, their leaders have been interviewed on Pat Robertson's *700 Club* and their books have been published by James Dobson's Focus on the Family. Minkowitz observes that, with resources such as mailing lists, phone banks and voter lists, "an evangelical men's movement with as many as a million members could be a fertile ground for Right-wing organizing." Equally troubling is the image of "men who, in their eagerness to reform, have declared a willingness to be commanded" — by God, by their movement leaders — even while taking loving command as servant-leaders in their own homes. "It is possible," she states, "that the depth of emotion and loyalty created in the Promise Keepers would be used to fuel a Right-wing movement."

Servanthood *and* soft patriarchy

At this point in its organizational development, Promise Keepers is nothing if not contradictory in the messages it sends forth about gender relations. In *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper,* an unwieldy volume featuring 18 contributors, men are urged in one chapter to "take back the reins of spiritually pure leadership God intended them to hold" and in another to recognize that "equality of leadership" between men and women is "the way God intended the church to operate ... male and female leaders sharing the burden for their families and their community." It is likely that Promise Keepers has grown so quickly that its leaders have spent little time thinking through the movement's basic stance on gender relations. "Much is assumed and very little is discussed or debated when it comes to such questions as the validity and meaning of the concept of masculinity, how (or even if) a godly man's behavior is distinguishable from a godly woman's behavior and how women fit into the 'masculine' Christianity being promoted by PK," point out Rebecca and Douglas Groothuis.



Marc Ross

Promise Keepers have sponsored talks by Jerry Falwell, their leaders have been interviewed on Pat Robertson's 700 Club *and their books published by James Dobson's Focus on the Family.*

Ambiguity also allows each listener to hear what he or she wants to hear in Promise Keepers' messages about male responsibility, which suits the aims of a revivalist organization to reach as many people as possible. In addition, as the Groothuises note, Promise Keepers is typical of mass evangelical movements in that its "overall tenor ... does not appear to be conducive to thoughtful reflection. Promise Keepers typically offers men answers, not questions; catchy slogans, not difficult alternatives to study and evaluate."

While it may be that Promise Keepers' deeper tendency is to become an organization which proclaims not only a gender essentialism along traditional, stereotyped lines but also a strong gender hierarchy in family, church and society, it is also possible, as *Ms.* magazine's Donna Minkowitz asserts, that Promise Keepers may be irreversibly shaped by the 30 years of second-wave feminism that preceded it.

"The group's ethic of mutual responsibility and mutual support is perpetually at odds with its conviction that domination is ordained by God," she writes. "It would be a mistake to conclude that PK's religious-right leaders are somehow immune to the progressive ideals that they themselves are promoting through this organization. In creating Promise Keepers, they may have themselves been caught in a quasi-feminist whirlwind."

As I leaf through future issues of *New Man*, I will be inclined to affirm Minkowitz' optimism if I see two yet-to-be-written articles by the magazine's male writers. The first would be titled something like, "What I Learned the Year I Stayed Home With My Kids." The second would be, "My Daughter the Seminarian." TW

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Auschwitz did not end in Auschwitz

by Dorothee Sölle

More than 51 years ago, on Jan. 27, 1945, the camp of Auschwitz was liberated. This date has a subjective biographical meaning for me. Like a red thread, the event of the Shoah marks my attempt to reformulate the Christian faith.

In my well-thumbed diary of Anne Frank, one passage is underlined. On October 9, 1942, she wrote: "What a people, these Germans! And I am one of them. Now Hitler has declared us stateless. There is no greater enmity in the world than between these Germans and the Jews."

How often I wished that Hitler would have also made me "stateless"! That I would not have been one of them! Anne Frank made a distinction between "these" Germans and others. This attests to her ability to differentiate and express herself precisely. For me as a German, this is not so simple. Ultimately all who did not offer resistance were involved, bound in different forms of believing, following and profiting. Among these "accomplices" in the broad sense of the word were also those who practiced the arts of not seeing, not hearing and remaining silent.

I spent almost 10 years of my young adult existence with the question of my generation: How could that happen? What did my parents do against that? On what side were my teachers? Which traditions of my land had prepared "that"? Was Luther involved, Wagner, Nietzsche or Heidegger?

Dorothee Sölle is a German feminist theologian and socialist. This essay was translated by Marc Batko.

The worst answer to our many questions was the denial of reality. "We knew nothing about that. We had no contacts with the Jews. 'That' did not happen among us in the village. One heard terrible things about concentration camps but they were only for criminals, homosexuals and the Jews." This answer heard in a thousand places made shame even more unavoidable. Sometimes I responded helplessly: "Have you read Anne Frank's Diary?"

'The Nazis were not so bad.'

As a young teacher in the Adenauer era, I recognized immediately that in my school German history ended with 1914. Nothing was taught about German fascism. One day I used the example of the Nazis to explain something to my 14-year-old students. A week later, the children came into class and said to me: "My father says that the Nazis were not so bad. They built the autobahn/superhighway." Then I noticed that not only my class but the students of the whole school wanted to know nothing about the Nazi time. That was the reality of the 1950s.

My step to theology was joined politically and historically with a feeling not conscious to me at that time, that liberal Protestantism and the German culture of my parents' home where people read Goethe more than the Bible were helpless and could not avert 1933. They were naive when they thought in 1945 that we could begin again where we were before.

Where I need forgiveness is for catastrophic things which we as a society do to the poorest and to our mother, the earth.

At that time in these years of teaching, I learned to ask: Why did the German bourgeoisie capsize and betray its liberal thoughts and ideas? How could parents and teachers assume that the middle class which met its definitive end in Auschwitz could be saved through reconstruction, re-education and restoration of the old property relations? Were the Nazis only a nightmare for them from which one awoke? Not the consequence of this German history? How could they hope to be renewed without a radical incision?

Destructive apathy

I found their relation to Christianity too cool and irresolute. What I found attractive in Christianity was the high esteem for every individual life: You can gain or lose your life. When people want to remain in apathy, this pre-political consciousness of the three famous monkeys who did not want to hear, see or protest anything, that is a destruction of human dignity.

The development of Germany confirmed my mistrust.

At my first public appearance in 1965 I said, "After Auschwitz, I do not know how one should praise God who over all things so wondrously reigns." Two basic theological questions, the questions of sin and God's omnipotence, had changed for me. My book, *Political Theology: Conflict with Rudolf Bultmann*, was published in 1971. It arose from the experiences in our group of "Political Night Prayer" in Koln since 1968, from experiences in the light of the Vietnam war and the student move-

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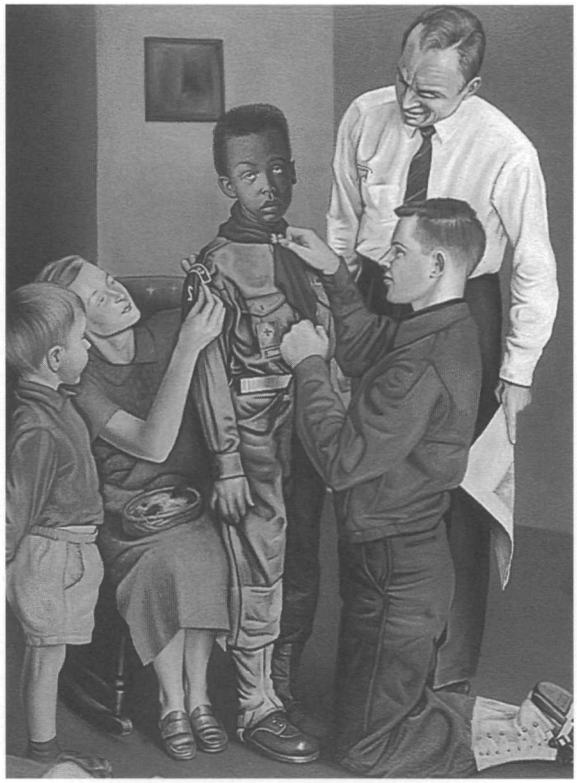
ment. It reflects the theoretical background of our praxis at the end of the 1960s. Bultmann wrote me a critical four-page letter about the book from which I would like to quote a passage: "I agree with you that the number of pressures which force us to sin today could be reduced through certain changes of social structures. But what is the meaning of sin? According to my 'individualistic' understanding, sin is not caused by the coercions of social structures. I understand sin as an offense of person to person, for example as a lie, breach of trust, seduction and the like, not as a collective crime against what is commanded. You are right in your intention. However I call guilt what you call sin. To exemplify this in your banana example, there is a distinction whether I rob and kill a banana grower or obtain bananas through the mediation of the United Fruit Company. If the banana grower is paid miserably by this company, he could take the course of law or strike."

I laughed but also had to cry about this. The greatness of liberal thinking is its hope, which is a fragment of the inheritance to which we must hold fast. This hope is absolutely naive and does not have the least access to reality because this banana grower, this *campesino,* this exploited slave can neither strike nor take the course of law.

A false division

The distinction between guilt and sin cannot be understood by defining guilt as collective and sin as only individual. I regard this as a very false division from my experience and reflection on the fate of our people, the German question and German existence after Auschwitz. I can identify what separates me from Bultmann in this one word: Auschwitz.

My pursuit of theology is marked by consciousness of living after Auschwitz. In contrast, Bultmann thinks in the spell of a middle class understanding of science as objectivized and suspended above time.



Color corrected Ron English

One of the consequences is that sin is involved and that we cannot dissociate from a personal sin considering the six million murdered Jews. My consciousness of sin rested on the collective things that happened in my land, my city and my group. The individual sins for which I reproach myself and which are naturally conspicuous in my life are far more trifling. Where I need forgiveness is for catastrophic things which we as a society do to the poorest and to our mother, the earth.

My parents made nothing as clear to me as the impossibility of imparting to my offspring what Auschwitz means for my generation. Naturally I attempt it and find it outrageous when people who can explain quantum theory do not know the words: selection, ramp and zyklon B. Again and again I have asked: How can I hand down the feelings of shame and disgrace so that they are not forgotten? How can a national identity arise which does not "elaborate" but represses this past?

I struggle against my own aging, that my experience becomes a throw-away experience and also against the plain denials of the feeling of collective shame.

Prayer contradicts death

Auschwitz did not end in Auschwitz. What can we do? The Jewish tradition teaches that we should pray and do what is just. No one should not know. This means not allowing everything but resisting, giving bread to the hungry instead of ever more sophisticated weapons. Praying means not despairing. It means concentrating, meditating, gaining clarity over the actual purposes and desires of our lives, remembering and therein becoming like God, having wishes for ourselves and our children, expressing these desires loudly and softly, together and alone and becoming more and more like the people we imagine.

That the picture of the heavenly sovereign, the omnipotent one enthroned in heaven who allowed events like the Shoah changed with these theological changes became increasingly clear to me. "Power in relation" is different from omnipotent power of domination dependent on no one.

God was very small 51 years ago. God's sun didn't shine; God's spirit had no home among us. God had few friends.

Perhaps only the mystical language which does not speak *about* God but *to* God is able to name this God who needs us. As Jacob Bohme said, God is "the nothingness who seeks to become everything." TW

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Former treasurer Ellen Cooke begins prison sentence

Ellen Cooke, former treasurer of the Episcopal Church, began serving a five-year sentence for embezzlement at the Federal Prison Camp at Alderson, W.V., at about noon on August 26.

Cooke pleaded guilty to tax evasion and transporting stolen money across state lines January 24 in connection with the embezzlement over a five-year period of more than $2 million from the church. On July 10, U.S. District Court Judge MaryAnne Trump Barry departed from federal guidelines to impose a stiffer than normal sentence, referring to the "flagrant" abuse of trust the crime represented.

Plato Cacheris, Cooke's attorney, has filed an appeal of the sentence. His request that Cooke be allowed to delay her incarceration pending the appeal, however, was denied, his office reported, and Cooke presented herself to the camp on the date set by the court. The appeal process is expected to take between six and nine months.

Richard Russell, executive assistant at the Alderson camp, described the facility as a minimum security prison built in 1927 for female federal offenders. Cooke will eventually be assigned to a work or education program.

While parole is not offered under current federal sentencing guidelines, Cooke may reduce her sentence by accumulating "good time."

— Episcopal News Service

Absalom Jones Center

Stimulated by the 1992 bicentennial celebration of the African American presence within the Episcopal Church, efforts are underway to raise funds for the construction of an Absalom Jones Historical and Cultural Center on the campus of Philadelphia's St. Thomas Episcopal Church. St. Thomas, where Jones was the first rector, is the first of the Church's African American congregations. Born in slavery and self-educated, Jones was the first African American to be ordained an Episcopal priest. St. Thomas will be hosting a celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jones' birth November 9-10.

"The center will provide a facility for exhibitions, historical research, and the collection of writings and memorabilia that pertain to the church's African-American history," said Frances I. Clark, president of the Absalom Jones Center's board. "We hope to encourage dialogue on the church's history. We want to hold conferences, classes and seminars."

The Diocese of Pennsylvania will match funds raised for the project, Clark said. "This is our first public request for financial support," she added.

Checks in support of the center should be made payable to "AJHCC" and sent to Clark c/o A. E. Church of St. Thomas, 6361 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia, PA, 19151.

— Julie A. Wortman

Role of church in community development to be examined at November conference

A participatory look at what's happening in the American economy called "The Growing Divide: Inequality and the Roots of Economic Insecurity" will kick off the organizational meeting of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ) scheduled for Nov. 22-24, at Mercy Center, in Burlingame, Calif. Conference workshops will focus on the "how-to-do-its" of forming community development banks, credit unions, loan funds and micro-enterprise programs and funds.

The ENEJ will honor Gloria Brown during a Saturday luncheon. Brown served as staff to the Episcopal Church's Economic Justice Implementation Committee during the Committee's early history, in the first years following its creation by the 1988 General Convention. Formalization of the new network's structure and election of a steering committee will occur during a business meeting following the lunch.

For more information contact John Hooper, Economic Justice Commission, Diocese of Michigan, 4800 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48201; 313-833-4413.

Consultation urges rite for same-sex couples

Some 50 lay and ordained Episcopalians from 25 dioceses and nine seminaries — all funding their own attendance — participated in a consultation on the development of a church rite of blessing that can be used for couples of the same gender held in Washington, D.C., last summer. Guest presenters included Andrew Sullivan, senior editor of *The New Republic* and author of *Virtually Normal*, a book about homosexuality, and Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and co-counsel for the legal case challenging Hawaii's denial of marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples.

Consultation participants focused much attention on further development and revision of "An Illustration of a Rite for the Celebration of Commitment to a Life Together," the product of a similar consultation held three years ago. In addition to providing a sample rite, the document provides theological reflections on the need for such a rite as well as suggestions regarding education for those proposing to use it.

The consultation also developed a resolution for presentation to the 1997 General Convention asking the Standing Liturgical Commission to develop a rite for possible official use by the church.

— based on a press release distributed by the Second National Consultation for Episcopalians on the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions

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Yet with a steady beat

by Paul M. Washington

Yet With a Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church, by Harold Lewis, Trinity Press International, Valley Forge, Penn., 1996.

Harold Lewis has given readers valuable information about the history of the Episcopal Church that has been omitted from seminary courses and unavailable in religious bookstores.

He begins with a quote from Booker T. Washington: "If a black man is anything but a Baptist, someone has been tampering with his religion." But in his concluding chapter he writes: "If a black man is an Episcopalian, he has been tampering with the white man's religion."

Throughout this work, we are confronted with an anomaly, for after the emancipation, blacks, who had been baptized in the church of their largely Anglican masters, defected *en masse* to the Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches. The Board of Missions to the General Convention of 1877 reported that "while in 1860, South Carolina alone claimed more than 3,000 black souls, not even one half of that number of blacks could be found in *all* the dioceses of the church, north and south."

In his sermon at the 1894 centennial celebration of the founding of the first black Episcopal church, St. Thomas', Philadelphia, Bishop Henry Coleman Potter of New York said, "I do not think that it would have been very strange if the colored race, after it had been freed, should have refused to follow the white people's God. It shows a higher order of intelligence and an acute discernment in the African race, to have distinguished the good from the evil, in a religion that taught that all men were brothers and practiced the opposite."

In addition to the anomaly of "how possible is a black Episcopalian" is another anomaly — the white man's fear that enfranchisement of blacks would rob whites of what they perceived as "their inalienable right to exercise authority in all things spiritual and temporal." Colonel Miles, attorney general of South Carolina and one of the lay delegates to a specially convened congress of Southern church leaders held in 1883 at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., reportedly "spoke against admitting colored ministers to the diocesan lists on the same basis as the white clergy, since it was possible, with the great majority of negroes in South Carolina, that they might come into the Church in such numbers as to be able to outvote the white clergy, and the Church would be practically in their hands." According to *The Churchman*, Mississippi's coadjutor, Bishop W.M. Green, added that "the Church had nothing to do with the question of social equality."

In addition to the anomaly of "how possible is a black Episcopalian" is another anomaly — the white man's fear that enfranchisement of blacks would rob whites of what they perceived as "their inalienable right to exercise authority in all things spiritual and temporal."

"Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died, *Yet with a steady beat*, have not our weary feet come to the place for which our fathers sighed."

In 1794, St. Thomas' African Episcopal Church of Philadelphia was founded, the first black Episcopal Church, and the first black church of any denomination. This was followed by the founding of St. Phillip's, New York, in 1818, St. James', Baltimore, in 1827 and St. Luke's, New Haven, in 1844. When Henry L. Phillips began his ministry in Philadelphia in 1875 there were only two "colored" congregations. When he retired as archdeacon in 1947, two months after his 100th birthday, there were 18 black churches.

Bishop John Burgess, who became the bishop of the largest American diocese, has observed that the vast majority of black Christians — whose forebears chose to leave the Episcopal Church and other white-dominated denominations — have tended "to ignore or minimize the accomplishments of those black Christians who have chosen to stay within the white church structures." This leads Lewis to comment:

"The fact that the first black Christians in America were Anglicans and that it was the Episcopal Church that established the first black school and trained the first black teacher, that Absalom Jones was the first black minister ordained in the United States in any major denomination, and that St. Thomas' Church, Philadelphia, was the first truly constituted black congregation are forgotten if they were ever known; and such ignorance makes it possible for observers to believe that a quest for an enhanced social status is the only factor responsible for attracting blacks to the Episcopal Church."

As Lewis hopes it will, *Yet With a Steady Beat* does much to correct such misunderstandings. "The theological and ideological position of black Episcopalians," Lewis rightly points out, "has always been that they are, by virtue of the Church's being a catholic institution, part and parcel of the membership of the Church, for whom no sort of special patronizing treatment is deemed necessary."

Paul Washington, a longtime champion of social justice for blacks and women in both church and society, is rector emeritus of The Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, Penn.

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Our readers tell us ...

Hiroshima condemned in 1945

by Leo Maley III

Many suggest that while we may *now* believe that the atomic bombing of Japan was wrong, it is a mistake to judge history by present standards.

But many leading theologians, ethicists and religious editors wasted no time in speaking out against the atomic destruction. In August 1945 *Christian Century*, the Protestant weekly, editorialized against "America's Atomic Atrocity," and *Commonweal*, the Catholic magazine, argued that American victory had been "defiled" by "American guilt and shame."

One of the most important early statements on the moral implications of atomic weapons was "Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith," the March 1946 report by the Federal Council of Churches' Commission on the Relation of the Church to the War in the Light of the Christian Faith.

They called upon churches "to urge ... that all manufacture of atomic bombs be stopped, pending the development of effective international controls," and to urge that the U.S. government "affirm publicly, with suitable guaranties, that it will under no circumstances be the first to use atomic weapons in any possible future war."

The commission deplored the manner in which the bombs had been "loosed without specific warning, under conditions which virtually assured the deaths of 100,000 civilians." Even if the atomic bomb had shortened the war, by using it in a manner that resulted in the "indiscriminate slaughter of non-combatants," the U.S. had "sinned grievously against the laws of God and against the people of Japan."

"Whatever be one's judgement of the ethics of war in principle," the report continued, "the surprise bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are morally indefensible." The commission called upon American Christians to be "deeply penitent for the irresponsible use already made of the atomic bomb." "Plain justice" obligated Americans to make "specific amends for damage that has resulted from our wanton acts of destruction." They called upon churches to raise funds to rebuild Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "those two murdered cities."

It should be emphasized that these strong statements were made by

a commission of leading Protestant theologians and church leaders, including John Bennett, Angus Dun, Georgia Harkness, Reinhold Niebuhr and Henry P. Van Dusen. By one count only seven of the twenty-two commission members were pacifists. That some, like Niebuhr, were known for their ethical and political "realism" makes the report's strong condemnation of the bombings all the more striking.

Recovering the findings of "Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith," as well as other early reflections on our use of the atomic bomb, should lay to rest the historically false claim that critics of the Hiroshima bombing are imposing 1990s morality on a 1945 decision. The bombings have always been criticized on moral grounds. For those who struggle to prevent the future use of nuclear weapons, how we remember Hiroshima matters. TW

Leo Maley III is currently engaged in a long-term study of the impact of Hiroshima and nuclear weapons on American culture.

Dancing and hammering for the children

Before dawn, four women poured their own blood, danced, sang and swung hammers on a torpedo test cylinder used in fast-attack nuclear submarines on July 27, 1996 during a "Weep for Children" plowshares action at the Naval Sub Base in Groton, Conn..

Base personnel stood nearby while an officer said over the loudspeaker, "They are Plowshares. They are nonviolent peace protesters."

Kathy Shields Boylan, of the Washington D.C. Catholic Worker and Sisters Liz Walters, Carol Gilbert and Ardeth Platte said they were encouraged that U.S. Naval officers have come to understand the intent and the spirit of these actions.

They were scheduled for a court appearance Sept. 30.

Four other plowshares activists received prison sentences from a federal judge in Norfolk, Va. on September 6. Amy Moose, Michele Naar-Obed, and Rick and Erin Sieber — who were arrested Aug. 7, 1995 at Newport News (Virginia) Shipbuilding — were given sentences ranging from eight to 18 months without parole, followed by three years of supervised probation.

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The end of the age

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

***The End of the Age,* by Pat Robertson (Word, 1995).**

Pat Robertson is no novelist. Nor could a stable of ghostwriters make him so. This book is testimony, at least in that regard.

Robertson has, however, understood the import of the popular in culture wars. And he has probably hungered after the market tapped in recent years by Frank Peretti, whose *This Present Darkness* has sold two million copies, becoming something of a handbook in the worst of the spiritual warfare movement. Where Peretti's scale is local (small college town possessed), Robertson has cast his narrative as global millennial apocalypse.

In *The End of the Age,* a meteor (which could have been shot down had not the president vetoed a certain nuclear missile appropriation) strikes the Pacific, washing California from the face of the earth. In the waves of chaos which ensue, a satanic conspiracy pulls off a U.S. coup, masterminded by one Tariq Haddad — the shadowy friend called upon by an overbearing, new age feminist first lady. In an ongoing narrative conceit, the Thornberrys, an amiable ad executive and his wife going through a timely conversion, are tutored in Bible study which provides a running blow by blow from Revelation of events taking place on CNN. By a series of providences they are led to Rev. Jack Edwards (yes, descendent of Jonathan) whose shrewd investments have graced him with a comfortable mountain hideaway, equipped with the latest in communications technology, from which he is able to coordinate the Christian resistance movement via satellite and worldwide web. In fact, generally, when these fundamentalist Christians circle the wagons for apocalypse, they pull up driving RVs and BMWs.

Robertson's audience is one which comes hungry for the material trappings of justification and success, in combination with a gamut of fears (for which that dark and formless meteor hovering somewhere in space is a suitable metaphor). Robertson, as on *The 700 Club*, deftly feeds both in his novel.

Robertson's audience is one which comes hungry for the material trappings of justification and success.

Certain fears are more than legitimate: like the centralized, cashless, electronic global economy against which he elsewhere rails (more or less accurate, in my view). But others are xenophobic innuendo, a kind of spiritual hit list more easily novelized than footnoted: like the new Satanic cabinet composed of a Harvard professor of Eastern religions, a Buddhist monk in saffron robes, a Lebanese Shiite Muslim who ran a filling station in Dearborn, Mich., a militant black feminist, and a host of Shiva worshipers. The *New York Times* reporter is a Marxist fan of Ché and Fidel. The new president himself is a 1960s radical, experienced in hallucinogens, who was first possessed achieving enlightenment at the feet of an Indian guru. And the center of the new world government will be housed in the extravagantly completed palace begun by Saddam Hussein in Babylon itself. This is paranoia beyond parody.

Certain racial and ethnic inclusions are interesting. Early on the Thornberrys hook up with Dave Busby, a Bible-believing African American (but wouldn't you know he's a power forward for the Lakers — and in a book whose names are fraught with allusion and double entendre, is it actually possible that his is contracted from "bus boy"?). Manuel Quintana (from "recruitment of soldiers by lot"?) and his family survive the blast and heat to join the enclave (but then he's a skilled communications technician, fitting in as the community's electronic handyman).

Another matter of interest in the narrative text: The Secretary of Defense is one person inside the government neither replaced nor seduced in the coup. The Pershing missiles which he is able to marshall on God's side, however, prove puny and superfluous alongside the destructive power of angel legions when they begin to kick butt.

The politics of demonization is one fundamental issue raised by this volume. We must confess that it is not a tactic limited to the Religious Right. William Stringfellow once described "cursing and conjuring" as itself a demonic tactic in a book put out by this same publisher 20 years ago. The "condemnation to death and damnation" is a method of dehumanization. Stringfellow saw in it a common tactic of the principalities and powers. Moreover, he recognized a basic idolatry (from which we all suffer more than we'd like to acknowledge) in presuming to know the judgment of God. TW

review

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is a Methodist pastor and author of *Seasons of Faith and Conscience* (Orbis, 1991).

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Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Scripture cuts two ways

by Marianne Arbogast

Reta Finger is a pacifist and war-tax resister. For many years she edited *Daughters of Sarah*, a magazine which issued an early, steady challenge to sexism in the church. But these days, much of her resistance work takes place in a classroom, as a teacher of the New Testament.

"I feel that I've been called to be a student of the Bible, to responsibly understand it and teach it," Finger says.

At a time when biblical texts are being commandeered to support a Right-wing political agenda, it is no easy vocation.

Finger encountered controversy during her first term at Messiah College in Pennsylvania last fall, after members of a nearby evangelical church came upon an article she had written on feminist interpretation of the Bible. Missing the nuance that she was not necessarily endorsing the wide range of approaches she discussed, they fired off an anxious letter to the school's administration, expressing the fervent hope that they had not known what Finger was like when they hired her.

Finger soon discovered that simply highlighting the leadership or assertiveness of certain women in the Bible raised red flags with some of her students — particularly younger, male students from fundamentalist backgrounds.

"I run into problems with some of the conservative students who may not know what's in the Bible any more than students to the Left of them," Finger says. "They think they do, but with the sort of literalism with which they approach it, they do very little contextualizing. I've had to rethink how I introduce biblical interpretation. I can't hit them head-on with some of this stuff — they're not ready to hear it."

"I don't ever want to harden my position on the Left to the point where I cannot talk to people on the Right, especially youth."

Reta Finger

Keeping lines of communication open is a top priority for Finger.

"What I think we shouldn't do is polarize," she says. "I don't ever want to harden my position on the Left to the point where I cannot talk to people on the Right, especially youth. I want to listen to them, to try to understand where they're coming from, and to concede as much as I can."

What she always can concede is a deep reverence for Scripture.

"When I'm interacting with people on the Right, what I have behind me is the Bible," she says. "I know it as well or better than they do, and I respect it as highly without saying it's inerrant."

She believes that the Religious Right has taken root within the evangelical tradition, in part, because of the evangelical emphasis on biblical authority.

"There is certainly a connection between the Religious Right and a high view of scripture," she says. "They say, this is the word of God without any error — but then they also assume that the way they interpret it is without any error. This kind of view leads to the attitude that 'We're right, and if you don't think the way we think, you're wrong.' "

Finger laments the evident lack of biblical knowledge revealed by the results of a recent survey, published in *Christianity Today*, which reported a high correlation between religious faith and political conservatism.

"People said religion affected their

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*. *The Witness* wishes to celebrate the life of *Daughters of Sarah*, which Reta Finger edited for 15 years, in this final year of its publication.

views on homosexuality and abortion a lot more than it affected their views on the poor and the environment. That makes me see red! Teachings about the poor and use of wealth run throughout both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament."

A Mennonite, Finger comes out of a tradition that takes the Bible seriously, while maintaining a skeptical distance from state power. Far from advocating a forced imposition of biblical law, Mennonites — the horrors of religious persecution deep in their historical memory — renounce violence and cherish freedom from government interference.

"From the time of the Reformation, the whole anabaptist movement stood for the separation of church and state," Finger explains. "They refused to take up the sword. From the beginning, Mennonites have not gone along with any idea that the state is the new Israel, or that America is a Christian nation. We have assumed it *wasn't* a Christian nation."

Those who insist otherwise "don't know their history," she adds. "The founding fathers were anything but evangelical Christians. They were deists, and they wanted the separation of church and state."

Finger grew up in eastern Pennsylvania in a traditional Mennonite community, where women wore head coverings in church and rarely spoke during worship. It was not until the early 1970s that Finger, by then married and the mother of two sons, began to seriously question gender discrimination in the church.

When she moved to Chicago in 1976, she joined the small circle of mostly evangelical women who, after meeting for a year's study and reflection on women's issues, had begun to publish a newsletter called *Daughters of Sarah*.

"Up until that time, evangelicals had assumed that women should be silent in church and accept a much more restricted role," Finger says. *Daughters of Sarah* offered a forum for women to faithfully question those assumptions. In 1979, Finger became editor of the publication which would grow into a Christian feminist magazine reaching over 7,000 subscribers, until financial pressures and loss of staff forced it to shut down this year. Finger left the magazine in 1994 in order to teach and to continue her doctoral studies.

In her current setting, Finger often finds herself challenging Right-wing intolerance, but she stresses that "people on the Left can be just as narrow and unable to hear any position but their own."

It is common, she believes, for liberal Christians to underestimate the difficulty involved in changing one's mind on an issue like same-sex relationships.

"For me, it was probably the largest conversion I've had since I was a Christian," she says. "It took me awhile; it wasn't till I did a study from a biblical perspective, and met some gay and lesbian people who were not at all the way I'd imagined them, that I could accept the value of same-sex relationships. People need to recognize what an emotional and conceptual leap it is."

She also recalls a difficult editorial meeting at *Daughters of Sarah* following the 1993 Re-Imagining conference.

"Along with our support, I felt there were some challenges we should make to the theological content of the Re-Imagining conference, but others did not want to deal with that at all," she says. "It seemed to me that people on the Right could only see what was wrong, but people on the Left could not admit that anything that was said there could be questioned.

"I want to be free to challenge anyone's statements on either side, Right or Left, if what is said does not reflect the biblical or ethical values they claim for it or is illogical or inconsistent theology. I think that commitment helps me avoid knee-jerk reactions, so perhaps I can be a mediating influence." TW

Dorothee Sölle

The Witness *represents the voice of "the other America," different stories other than the official ones, burning questions and, best of all, a spark of hope and resistance.* The Witness *contradicts my lamentations and moves me into "taking my bed and moving on."*

— Dorothee Sölle
Hamburg, Germany

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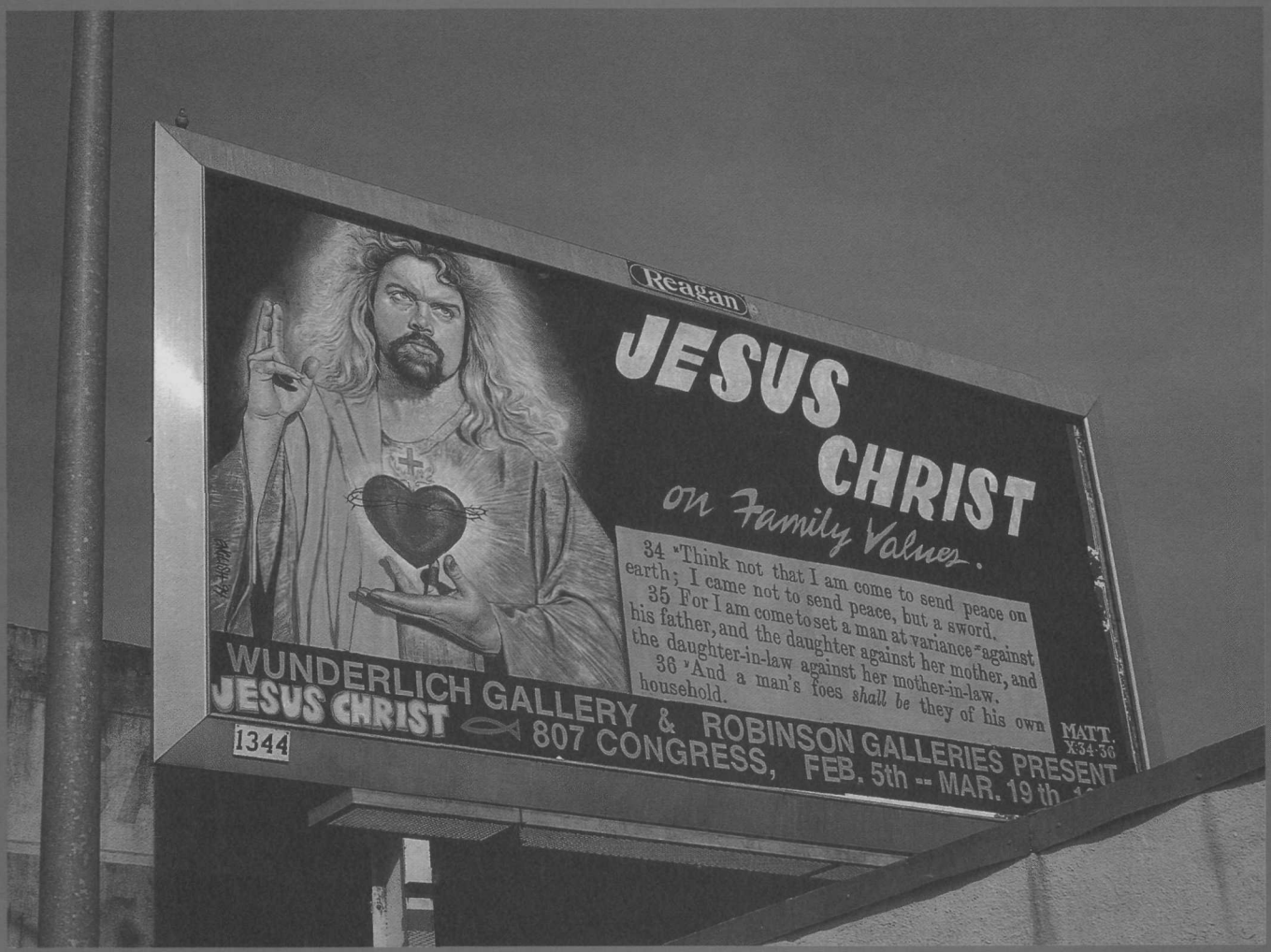

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The Witness

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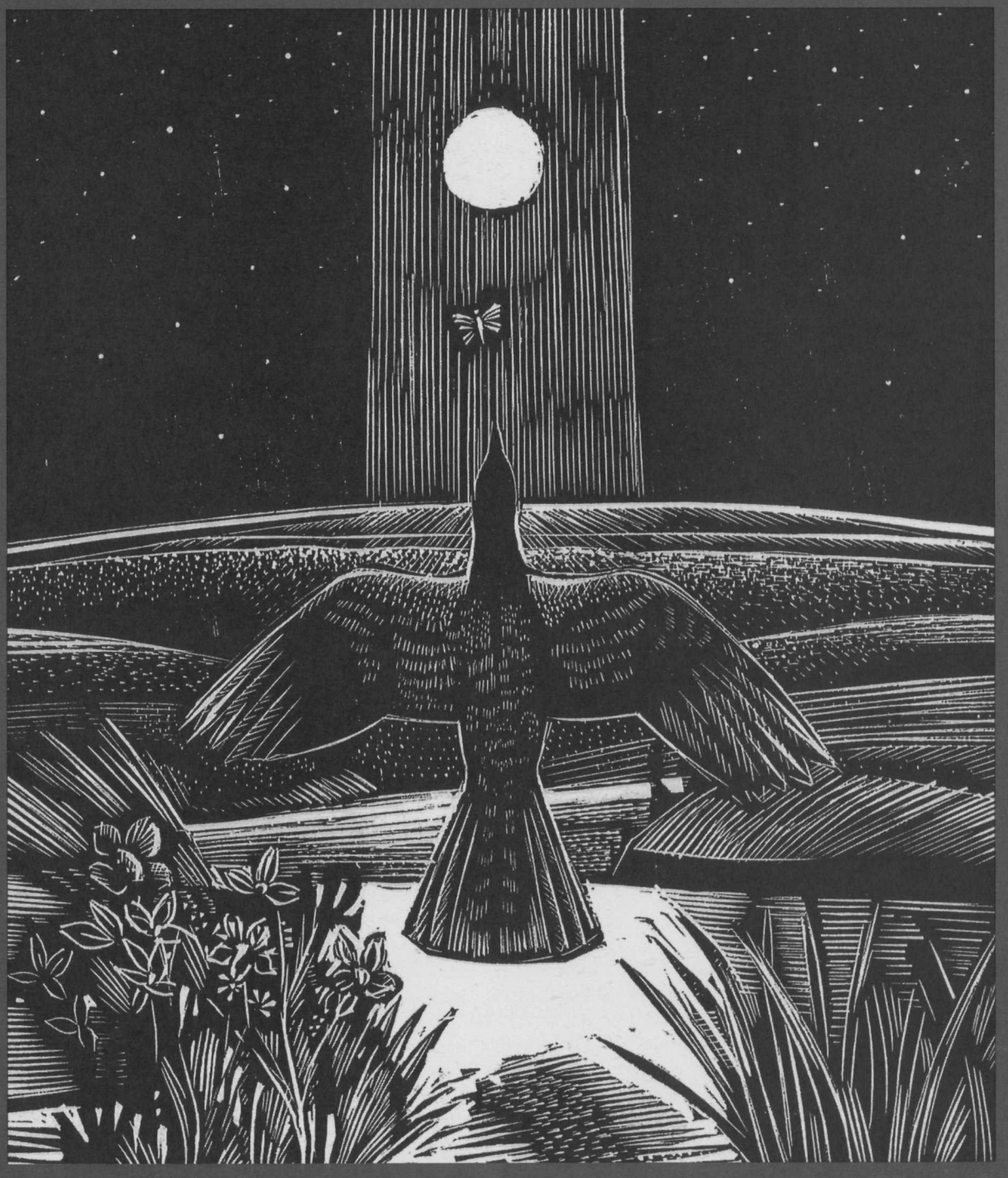

Acting in faith:
Responses to the Right

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In need of a labor movement

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE and Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's "Anatomy of a strike" especially, deserve praise and wide exposure in the labor movement.

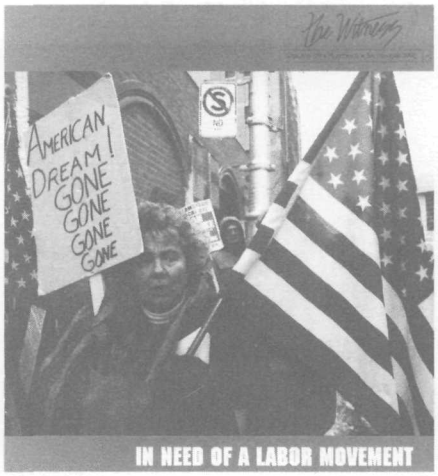
You didn't avoid labor's own shortcomings — an excellent balance from my perspective. I'm a union member and "been there and done that" when it comes to contracts, labor/management disputes, etc.

My bi-vocational role puts me as a pastor in the church and a supervisor in the workplace. With typical Anglican/ Episcopal background and skills I find myself trying to keep a working middle ground between labor and management. A great issue. I'm passing it on to the union steward here at work.

Ed King
Channel 50
Detroit, MI

A BACKGROUND COMMENT on "A history of religion and labor" — it was the Christian Church in England who first fought for the rights of workers, against child labor, etc. in the 19th century and who eventually formed the Labor Party. If I remember correctly, it was Methodists who followed up on the Wesleys' concern for the lower classes (so overlooked by the 18th century bishops and clergy in the Anglican church), and also many Anglo-Catholic priests who worked in such places as London's East End, and both men and women in the new monastic communities, as well as certain very social justice minded evangelicals in the C. of E., who struggled for the dignity and rights of the industrial workers. The labor movement grew out of a theology based on Old Testament prophetic calls to social justice, and on Jesus' extremely clear statement that if you did it to the least, you did it to him.

Chapter two of my personal soap opera is that I was laid off from my part-time receptionist job January 1. The tiny firm I worked



for was bought by a large company and the little local office was to be reorganized with only licensed agents. Then began the saga of trying to get my SSI upgraded in accordance with my economic status, my rent likewise, and my food stamps. I'm able to live and pay all my ordinary bills, but I go into debt (and panic) when my 15 year old car has to have work! My elderly teeth need more attention than I can afford to give them. I finally paid for new glasses. The three things that the elderly most need — sight, hearing and teeth — are not covered by Medicaid.

I'm now working as an office volunteer for a local housing coalition, partly doing intake telephone interviews with people who may have no plumbing, no electricity, or whose houses are barely more than shacks. The housing coalition is in financial difficulty, I don't know if it will last. I know some of the wealthy of the county (they go to my church!) and they could save the coalition. Thus far, I see no indication that they will.

Name withheld
Former church secretary cited in 9/96

YOUR EDITORIAL, "TRAMPLING THE grapes of wrath" [9/96], began with a reference to a woman laid off by two Episcopal churches. Yet in calling for the churches to educate themselves about the labor movement, you did not pick up on the point and exhort us to start with a long, hard look at our own employment practices.

As actors in the economy, the churches give a witness to their true values. Those two churches may have had no choice but to let that woman go. But all too often, our economic decisions are at odds with the gospel. I have written elsewhere that the best union-busters I ever met were a group of nuns who owned a hospital. Furthermore, the prevailing business philosophies always seem to drive the managerial logic of the churches. For instance, the reform of the Episcopal Church structure in 1919 mirrored the thinking of what were then new-style corporations like U.S. Steel. Or again, it is no coincidence that last year's record number of terminations of clergy (1995) occurred in the high point of the downsizing craze.

Union and church leaders often focus more on their income (dues structures/ pledge unit) than the real needs of their members (rank and file/ parishioners).

We have a great deal of work to do if we are to build a labor-church bridge. First, we might start asking whatever happened to the economic justice initiative known as the Michigan Plan. The speed with which the Episcopal Church dropped it is indicative of how much learning we have to do. Or maybe the operative word should be not learning, but repentance.

Pierre Whalon
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church & School
Fort Pierce, FL

AS A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT and trainer, and as an Episcopal priest, I read your issue "In Need of a Labor Movement" from cover to cover. I'm provoked, which is good.

I'm still searching for what kind of a labor movement is needed for whom and the issue left that question wide open. Corporate and labor leaders both are stuck in an old adversarial paradigm which is not only outdated, but also destructive to worker and manager alike.

What the issue did not address is how the nature of work itself is changing, as well as what people expect from work. Labor leaders can't seem to deal with the fact that, whatever the color of the collar (blue, pink, white) workers want their work to mean something. No labor union can make that meaning. What union leaders seek often is irrelevant to what workers today want, so workers don't find

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unions to be of much help in their aspirations, especially when even industrial work is based much more on brain than brawn. Here in Peoria, during a bitter strike at Caterpillar, more than 60 percent of the union workers either crossed picket lines or simply ignored the strike because the union's priorities did not match their own (but they certainly didn't love the company either).

Corporations can't seem to deal with this change, either. In downsizing, workers are treated as so many depreciating assets that can be expended, rather than as a massive talent pool to be developed. As front-line workers carry management responsibility in team settings, the line between management and labor is blurred. Workers are frustrated when companies and unions both view them as pawns in a larger struggle which has no bearing on how they live their lives and do their work.

John R. Throop
President, The Summit Group
Peoria, IL

I WANT TO RAISE ONE QUESTION about the historicity of your history article. When the Farm Worker Movement Programs were expanded in 1926 with the newly created National Migrant Ministry, the Federal Council of Churches was in existence (founded in 1908), but not the National Council, which was founded in November of 1950 in Cleveland, Oh. "Chris" Hartmire, Union Seminary '60, left the East Harlem Protestant Parish (NYC) to direct that Migrant Ministry program in California in 1961.

Robert I. Miller
Duarte, CA

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE IS SUPERB.

John G. Rodwan, Jr.
Detroit, MI

"Father-creep"

ANNE COX'S PIECE ON FATHER-CREEP is a treasure.

I am a Virginia Seminary high-churchman and enjoyed being called "Father" in the early days of my ministry. Then I stopped liking it, mainly, I think because I caught hold of my own personal authority and no longer needed to be acknowledged as an authority by church people or others. I still genuflect now and then and make the sign of the cross, but now I prefer to call priests "brother" and "sister," perfectly wonderful and totally non-hierarchical, egalitarian titles. My own rector, who is called "Father," is beginning to like it as well.

Eugene Monick
Dalton, PA

WHILE I NORMALLY FIND *The Witness* engaging, thought-provoking, and insightful, I must admit that I found the article "A Rant on 'Father-Creep'," both offensive and condescending. It is all too clear what the Rev. Ms. Cox. bapt. thinks of those who are less than "pure protestants" like herself. In the past, the Episcopal Church has been able to tolerate diversity in the ways in which clergy are addressed without labelling one or the other tradition as a "disease."

There are, of course, arguments that could be made in defense of the use of the titles "Father" or "Mother" that rely on scripture, tradition and pastoral considerations. Paul, for example, is not afraid to remind the Corinthians that he is their father in Christ (1 Cor. 4: 14-15). Note also that Paul elsewhere describes himself as "giving birth"to a church he has founded (Gal. 4: 19-20.). In addition, in John's version of the crucifixion, Jesus himself commands the beloved disciple to take Mary as "his mother." In terms of pastoral considerations, there have been times in my life when I WANTED to speak to someone who was "older, wiser and more mature in the faith" than I. In addition, the prohibition of these titles is no adequate defense against the misuse of power. There are as many demagogues that call themselves "Reverend," or even insist on first names only, as there are who call themselves "Father." For some people, myself included, the use of "Mother" or "Father" is a meaningful and helpful part of their tradition.

Gerard F. Beritela
Syracuse, NY

Classifieds

Prisoners need stamps

California prison chaplain needs postage stamps to distribute to indigent inmates for use on Christmas cards. Send donations to Christian Williams, FSP-D18367, Represa, CA 95671-5071.

Vocations

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

Classifieds

Witness classifieds cost 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication.

I LIKED YOUR "RANT ON FATHER-CREEP" and I completely approve. Retired, I worship at St. Aidan where the vicar is a woman. She uses the term "pastor."

Howard Kunkle
Tulsa, OK

THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING the article by Anne E. Cox.bapt. A few years ago, I was chaplain at our Diocesan All-Ages/Family Camp. For our week-long conference, we chose the theme of "Sisters and Brothers" and we tried to incorporate this theme into all of our studying, singing, playing, praying and worshiping.

One challenge I put before the camp early in the conference was to see if everyone could go for the entire week without calling me "Father." Instead, I encouraged people to call me — and all other males in the camp — "Brother." The same with "Sister."

John C. Morris
Wilmington, VT

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Cover: Bird Ascending *by Michael McCurdy, Great Barrington, MA.*

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

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Poetry can be sent directly to Leslie Williams, 2504 Gulf Ave., Midland, TX. 79705.

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An imperative not to despair

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

The recent political successes of the Religious Right have been frightening to many of us.

My sister-in-law shocked us a few years ago when she told us that the Christian Right had stealthily taken over her local school board and that already some teachers had been told they couldn't read Halloween stories that included the word "witch." We breathed a sigh of relief when she added that several members of her Presbyterian congregation, intending to counter the Right's influence, had volunteered to serve on a school board values committee and, by the luck of the draw, were even chairing it.

Daniel Cantor, director of the New Party, says it is small surprise that the Right is quite successful. Members of the Left feel generous if they send a $25 check to an environmental or political action group. Meanwhile, he adds, some Christian Coalition chapters require a $30-a-month commitment.

As the Christian Right wins elections, gains credibility in the Republican Party, packs stadiums with Promise Keepers and teaches Americans to tithe for perhaps the first time, it's easy to feel inadequate.

Many of us feel tongue-tied even identifying ourselves. Are we Left? Are we known as Christians or do our liberal values prevent us from claiming Jesus as Lord in public? And, if we're not committing enough, why do we already feel so tired all the time?

I found it reassuring to learn that Diane Knippers, director of the Right-wing Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD), believes the IRD's work began because "our founders were concerned about church support for Marxist-Leninist groups and movements." Read: church support for the Sanctuary Movement which brought Central American refugees into this country, for the peace process in El Salvador, and for an end to U.S. interference in Nicaragua after the Sandinista revolution.

Interestingly, Knippers added that liberation theology no longer seems to be "the prevailing trendy theology of the leadership of the mainline churches." Now, she says, "various forms of feminist theology are cutting-edge."

We forget, I think, our real victories. And sometimes we minimize the beliefs that create them. The media, of course, is eager to help us forget by refusing to publish or air our efforts.

But we have accomplished a great deal and we come out of a tradition that we can claim and rely on.

In deciding what to do next, *The Witness* staff would urge each of us to weigh our own health and energy — to make sure that we are rooted — and then to act in a way that is consistent with our hearts. Our actions may range from civil disobedience to running for school board to praying in a consistent way. We are persuaded that there is no correct answer. We are also convinced that it will be the Holy Spirit that leads us — in different bioregions and in different time frames — to act.

We can discern with one another when our desire for roots is interfering with our willingness to act. We can offer one another respect in the process.

If there is any imperative, it is simply not to despair. It is our vocation to praise God in this time and for eternity. Our voices are joined by a choir of others.

The elders I trust most are the ones whose eyes express great love and humor and a certain detachment combined with a provocative query — what will *you* do? They do not give permission for laziness, but they seem to hold a confidence grounded in the greatest secret — perhaps that we are all loved by God.

This issue examines some of the many, and sometimes contradictory, ways we can respond to narrow-minded and rigid overtures from the Christian Right. It also relies on the knowledge that the far Right is not the source of our main problems. They are simply the agitating voice that often supports the deep and subtle force of economic and military powers that advocate profit over human life and power over compassion. Joe Agne suggests that the Right is to the center as the Gestapo was to the Third Reich.

We do well to keep our hand on the pulse of the banks, the corporate powers, the agricultural conglomerates and the development fiends. If Nazi Germany is a prototype example, some of those among conservative Christian evangelicals may help sustain our courage in resisting the powers. They may do it, as they did in Germany, by declaring Christ as Lord or, as they did in South Africa, by proclaiming that we are one in Christ.

Somehow we must recognize the word in hearts and on our lips. We must find a way to witness and to take root for the long haul. We can offer our commitment, our time and money, our hearts and minds to the claims that the Gospel makes on us in this time when it feels to us as though wolves in sheep's clothing abound. TW

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

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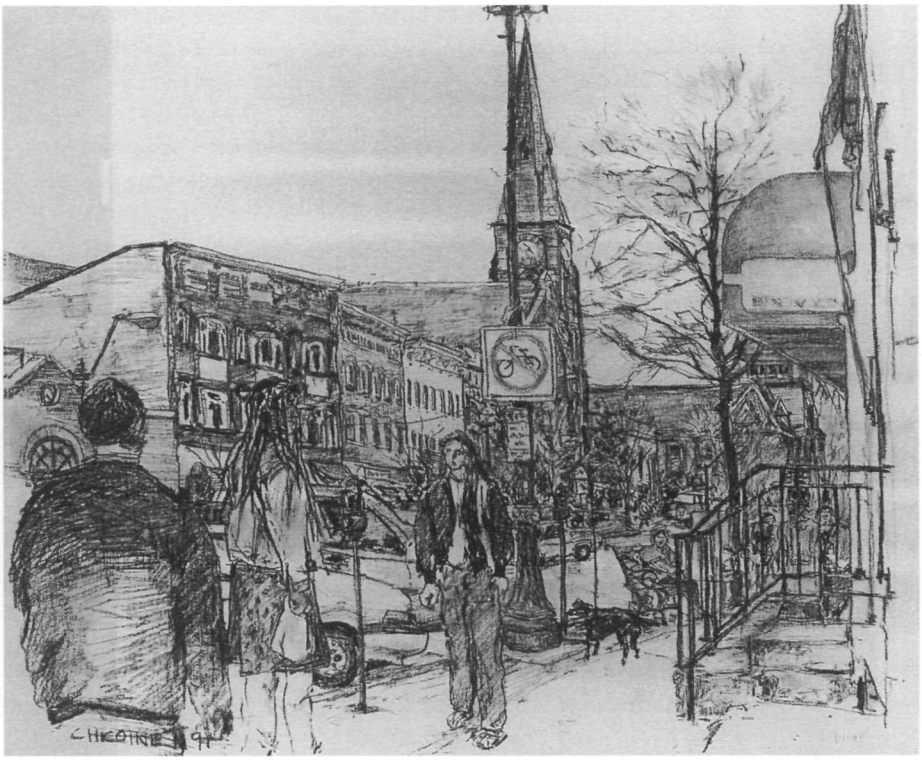
'God don't want you to smoke'

by Kendal Franceschi

I was driving down the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway on my way home from work one day and I had these "Honk If You Love Jesus" type bumper stickers plastered all over the rear of my car (I was really into being a "Jesus Person" — it was the 1970s). I was just cruising along the highway with my window open, happily puffing away on a Camel, when I heard someone tooting his horn behind me. I thought, "Now ain't that nice, a brother in Christ is signaling his Christian love. We're truly one big family." I turned in my seat to wave a friendly hand of brotherhood to this fellow sojourner. As he drove up beside me I flashed him my most joyous ain't-Jesus-cool smile. The man looked at me like I was Jack the Ripper or something, shook his finger and yelled out his window, "God don't want you to smoke!"

God don't want me to smoke? That was his greeting? "God don't want you to smoke?" I thought I was saved. I thought we were fellow pilgrims on this earthly road to Heaven. How about a "Hello, brother," or a "Praise the Lord!" Even a simple "How ya' doin'," would have been okay, but this mysterious message from a total stranger was so totally unexpected, I was speechless.

My newfound spiritual joy was shattered, my bubble burst. The first thing this person saw when he saw me was what I shouldn't be doing. Wasn't that dumb? I knew right then and there that being "saved" may give you a new soul, but judging by this guy's remark, apparently it don't give you a new brain. If you're a lost moron, chances are you're gonna be a saved moron.



Wendy Chicoine

That was his greeting? "God don't want you to smoke?" I thought I was saved. I thought we were fellow pilgrims on this earthly road to Heaven.

Does God want me to smoke? Probably not. It's unhealthy. His "messenger" there on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway that day was rather on the chubby side. I bet God wouldn't want him to be an overweight, artery-clogging, cholesterol-sucking, heart attack-baiting, Dr. Pepper-slugging chowhound, eating large, double cheese, pepperoni pizzas, with his only form of physical exertion limited to reaching for the Gummi-Bears while he's jacked up on the couch watching endless reruns of "Leave It To Beaver" either. It's unhealthy.

On any Sunday morning, after church, you can see a good many church-folk at the local Shoney's breakfast bar scarfing down scrambled eggs and sausages with side orders of bacon and grease-laden Home-Fries like there's no tomorrow. I'll bet God don't want them to do that.

Until all of us Christians are doing absolutely nothing that "God don't want us to do" I think it would be a novel idea to get on with doing what He *does* want us to do. TW

Kendal Franceschi is a songwriter in Hendersonville, Tenn.,who writes articles about Christianity, music and horses. Franceschi says he is Episcopalian — "or as I call it, Catholic-Lite, 98 percent guilt-free." Artist **Wendy Chicoine** lives in Northampton, Mass.

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When the Rooms

by Johannes Bobrowski

When the rooms are deserted
in which answers are given, when
the walls and narrow passes fall, shadows
fly out of the trees, when the grass
beneath the feet is abandoned
while soles tread the wind —

the bush of thorn flames,
I hear its voice,

where no question was, the waters
move, but I do not thirst.

— translated from the German by Ruth and Matthew Mead. From East German Poetry, *ed. by Michael Hamburger, E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., N.Y., 1973.*

"On the edge of cultural change"

by Julie A. Wortman

There has been an upsurge of "cultural creatives" in this country during the last ten years, according to a 1995 survey on American values. Paul H. Ray of the San Francisco research firm American Lives, estimates that this group includes 44 million Americans, people who are "operating on the leading edge of cultural change."

Cultural creatives value different cultures, strong neighborhoods/communities and family. They want to stop violence and abuse of women and children and work for ecological sustainability. They distrust the power, wealth and profit-orientation of big corporations. Not confined to any one part of the country and slightly better educated than most other Americans (30 percent are college graduates), cultural creatives, Ray says, desire spiritual lives of voluntary simplicity, self discovery and service.

Putting these people in touch with one another could lead to a movement that would revitalize society, Ray believes. "It would be similar to a values-based social movement in its appeal to deeply held values," he says, "but it differs strongly in that it seeks to move off into the new, rather than to return to an idealized past, or to restore old ethnic and religious 'purities.'"

A role for churches?

Could Christian churches be instrumental in developing such a movement? Not as long as the face of Christianity most familiar to Americans is that worn by the leaders of the Christian Right whose proud proclamation that "Jesus is Lord" seems to be code for a check-your-mind-at-the-door sort of religious/social agenda that squelches rather than encourages the free exchange of ideas.

That was the consensus, at least, at a gathering of about 100 self-proclaimed "progressive Christians" held at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, S.C., last summer. Sponsored by the fledgling Center for Progressive Christianity (CPC), a group founded by James R. Adams, recently retired rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., the Columbia forum sought to claim "a vision of progressive Christianity" that would, in Adams' words, "take back our symbols" and "redefine what it means to be a follower of Jesus in terms of each being a person for others. We are looking for trouble-makers, people who want to be in on the beginning of a movement."

Cultural creatives, Paul H. Ray says, desire spiritual lives of voluntary simplicity, self discovery and service.

Across the country a variety of groups are making similar attempts (see sidebar on p. 11). At this assembly, participants seemed intent on proving that the Minnesota-based Church Ad Project has been right all these years — there *is* a place in the church for people who believe "there's a difference between being baptized and brainwashed," and that "in a religion that was born in a barn, an open door goes without saying."

Offering rootedness and 'welcome'

The key thing the church can offer such folks, philosophy professor Robert Kane told one workshop group, is a sense of "rootedness" in a world in which people find themselves feeling that "not only are there many views, but I can't show mine is right and theirs is wrong." People feel this way, he said, because "the pluralism and uncertainty [of the modern world] break apart our spiritual center." To heal the breach, "we need to find our roots, to go back to our tradition."

While Christian conservatives also are going back to their roots, Kane said, their inclination is to declare the traditional teachings of the past to be today's "Truth." But such an approach often ignores modern realities. Christians can begin with their religious roots and, embracing the modern notion of openness, proceed with the conviction that "I don't have the whole truth, but I have something indispensable to the whole."

The church can also offer spiritual seekers something researcher Ray says cultural creatives value very highly — community. To that end, in addition to offering workshops on the distinctive attributes of communities that display an openness to "all sorts and conditions of people" (a sizeable contingent from Adam's former Capitol Hill congregation testified to their own successes in this department) the forum's CPC organizers announced a plan to publish a directory of Christian congregations that self-identify as progressive in an effort to provide people who have moved to a new community or who are visiting a strange city with a list of "welcoming" churches.

Where's the blood?

But there was also an undertone of restlessness among some of the Columbia forum's participants as individual after individual expressed a strong desire to "move beyond" Left and Right categories to find some "common ground" with religious conservatives. ("I'm not interested in an adversarial stance," said Erin Saberi, a graduate student at Yale Divin-

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*. For a Church Ad Project catalog, call 800-331-9391.

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ity School who explained she wanted "to heal" the culture war divide. "I'm looking for transformation.")

"I'm sensing timidity in the group around sexuality issues facing us right now," observed feminist theologian Carter Heyward in one what-have-you-heard-so-far plenary check-in session. "We need to have something to say about the movement against gay men and lesbians in this church and country today."

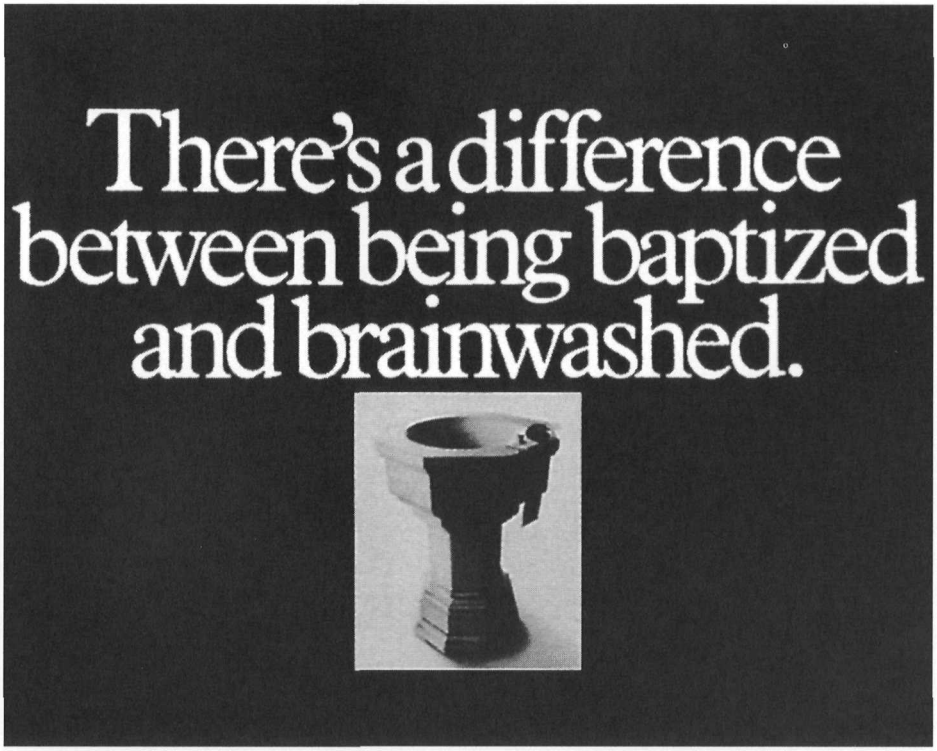
Heyward's colleague at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Fredericka Thompsett, concurred. "I'm not looking for community," she said. "I've *got* one. I am looking for coalition to counter Religious Right politics."

A participant from Georgia also pushed a workshop group on racism. "As progressive Christians," she said, "we *have* to deal with white supremacy."

"My movement, as a person who came of age in the 1970s, has been out of ambiguity into something I can hold onto," said Michael Burke, a newly ordained priest from Rochester, N.Y. "I want clarity, tangibility, particularity. I have to have more of a sense of what is at stake here. I respect the Right for its passion and sense that progress is not inevitable. I think of a lyric from Bruce Coburn — *When everything is ambiguity except the taste of blood.* My fear is to go away feeling there isn't anything to feel passionate about."

A call for costly action

An attempt to dispel that fear came at the end of the Columbia meeting when, during a report-back from small groups, Ellen K. Wondra, an associate professor at the Rochester Center for Theological Studies, presented a request from "Group 10" that CPC commit itself to "working concretely, actively and in a costly manner" over the next three years against the evils of racism and homophobia. She explained that "evils manifest in multiple ways, including the apparent indifference and/or silence of self-styled moderates, liberals and progressives." The CPC forum organizers said they would take the request under consideration.



Church Ad Project

Predictably, a brief July press report in the Right-leaning Episcopal Church weekly, *The Living Church*, focussed on Group 10's acknowledgment that, among other things, "civil disobedience and ecclesiastical disobedience of various sorts" could be involved. "Disobedience is a sure way to fracture further this portion of the body of Christ," a September editorial subsequently chided, while praising a passive-aggressive proposal by Philip Turner, dean of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, that the next presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church "ought to call for a moratorium on all resolutions and canons having to do with disputed theological and moral issues for the entire time he or she is in office."

But in his lengthy report on the forum, Douglas LeBlanc, who writes for Episcopalians United, a conservative group, chose to discount CPC's importance through a not-so-subtle put-down. Playing on an opening remark by CPC's Adams that, "Here we are, a group of 90 people gathered to talk about transforming an institution [the Church] with a 1,900-year history of oppression and exclusion," LeBlanc concluded his story on the Columbia gathering thus: "They sang the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,' after some on-the-spot group editing changed the opening line to 'Dear Lord and Creator of Us All.' Then they went home, saving their scrappy reformation of the 1,900-year-old oppressor for another day."

Ant-and-spider resistance

Whether the future will validate LeBlanc's prediction that, just as Group 10 feared, this loose array of "self-styled moderates, liberals and progressives" won't find

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A view from the Right

When the Center for Progressive Christianity sponsored its first national conference, participants were deeply divided about the limits of dialogue.

Andrew Getman pressed for dialogue even with members of the Ku Klux Klan. Norene Carter responded that she would talk with anyone, but that members of the KKK are better known for violence than for intellectual discourse. I smiled in quiet agreement with Carter's point.

But I also know that some progressives feel the same caution about me and my friends. Is dialogue any more plausible between the traditionalist and progressive Episcopalians? My answer is a vigorous yes, with only one qualification: The dialogue should begin with individuals, not committees.

I know and love friends in Integrity, the Episcopal Women's Caucus, the Standing Liturgical Commission, the Association of Diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions and the Episcopal Church Center.

I am skeptical of dialogue by decree — the idea that General Convention can, through enough resolutions and funding, make dialogue break out like so much peace. Dialogue by decree often leads to laundry lists of "talking norms," prohibitions on appeals to Scripture and the smiling control of sensitivity consultants.

The only worthwhile dialogues I've ever known are based on glorious trust, the ability to say whatever is on my mind — and granting the same freedom to the other — without fear of rebuke by a speech sheriff. Serious Christians normally will show such courtesy, knowing that other people are fellow creatures made in the image of God. We don't need a consultant to enforce that respect.

Dialogue by decree has been a largely tedious and exhausting exercise because it reverses the model given us by Jesus Christ for resolving conflict within the church (see Matthew 18:15ff). Dialogue by decree involves the entire church in what is most appropriately an individual discussion.

True dialogue can only emerge as individuals freely but graciously describe their deepest convictions. Any effort at lowest-common-denominator agreement, or a relativistic insistence that truth is as subjective as taste in music, cuts off real dialogue and declares peace when there is no peace.

I believe real dialogue leads to these goals:

• Greater understanding of one another. Whether a person agrees with me or "respects my opinion" is less important than whether we can describe what the other believes, and why.

• Greater clarity about what divides us. Our discussions about sexuality and marriage are important, and we dodge those at our peril. Nevertheless, we also need to face our real differences about the nature of God, our understanding of sin and redemption and our conflicting visions of eternal life.

I would love to conduct a straw poll of Episcopalians, asking a simple, non-directive question: What is the heart of the Gospel? I've heard many Episcopalians describe the Gospel as "the all-inclusive love of God." Most evangelical Episcopalians would answer with "the cross and the empty tomb of Jesus Christ." Such significant disagreement cries for more discussion.

• Greater clarity about how we might achieve spiritual unity. Timothy Sedgwick of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary has observed that the painful debate about sexual morality and marriage not only will, but must, someday reach a conclusion. What some Episcopalians have called "discontinuities" between teaching and practice will tear at the fabric of our church until General Convention makes real decisions with real consequences.

No matter what Convention decides, some Episcopalians will rejoice and some will mourn. To his credit, Sedgwick already urges that those who rejoice show grace to those who mourn. Some will make their peace with Convention's decisions. Others may feel compelled to find a Christian community where they feel less spiritual dissonance.

I worry about how quick some Episcopalians may be to shoot their own wounded. I have seen traditionalists treat converts to Roman Catholicism as if they have left the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, rather than moving to another expression of it. I have seen self-described inclusive Christians trash evangelicals as "Pharisaical" or "fundamentalist" if they dare stand for truth. Traditionalists have done their own motives-bashing and name-calling, and I find that just as disturbing.

We can all do better than this — not only as Episcopalians, but above all as people who recognize the lordship of Jesus Christ.

— *Doug LeBlanc edits* United Voice *for Episcopalians United.*

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sufficient common will to create change in the church is anyone's guess. It would be a mistake to be monitoring stadium-size religious gatherings, however, for signs that he is wrong. In the mode favored by the cultural creatives that researcher Ray describes, CPC seems more likely to align itself with the "ant-and-spider" path of resistance described by Korean feminist liberation theologian, Chung Hyung Kyung in a lecture she delivered at Detroit's Wayne State University last winter. Ants, Chung said, bring change by loosening the soil as they dig away in many places at once, while spiders are adept at creating intricate but loose webs of connection.

This seems to be borne out by CPC's board of advisors' recent decision to continue focussing on cultivating and linking Christian congregations that want to build community across difference, to be open to free enquiry, to strive for social justice and, in acknowledgment of last summer's "Group 10" request, to commit to a faith "that entails costly discipleship, renunciation of privilege and conscientious resistance to evil."

Also on the agenda is the coalition-making and denominational-level "acting out" Heyward, Thompsett, Burke and others called for in Columbia. CPC is planning another forum for May 1-3 in Houston at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. In the meantime, similar conversations in other groups are exploring these same concerns in a spirit of freedom and care that Ray says is typical of cultural creatives.

The tension between prizing questions over answers and coming to some common mind about where to stand firm in the face of oppressive politics will likely continue to play itself out at this second effort to test the waters for signs of the church's ability to attract today's growing crop of cultural creatives into the Christian fold. TW

Christians witnessing to an alternative

The following local and national groups are some among many working to build an alternative to the Religious Right:

Alabama Christian Faith Alliance: "We support the diverse ways by which Christians deal with public issues. No person or group within the Christian community possesses the only 'Christian' response to matters of public concern." 1430 Thirteenth Place South #2. Birmingham, AL 35205.

Call to Action: An independent and member-supported organization of Catholic lay people, religious and clergy working together to foster peace, justice and love in the spirit of Vatican II and the U.S. Bishop's 1976 Call to Action. 4419 N. Kedzie, Chicago, IL 60625, 312-604-0400.

Call to Renewal: "Our commitment is to diligently apply spiritual values to the questions of our public life and to offer a Christian alternative to ideological religion." Led by Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* magazine. 2401 15th St. NW, Wash., D.C. 20009;202-328-8757.

Evangelical & Ecumenical Women's Caucus: National network of Christian feminists who take Scripture seriously yet struggle with "traditionalist" views. Reta Finger, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen [*TW* 10/96] are all members. Box 9989, Oakland, CA 94613-0989. Annual dues include a subscription to *Update* ($35; $15 for students or low-income).

Foundation for Ethics and Meaning: Based on Michael Lerner's "Politics of Meaning," the foundation works on organizing local summits, training activists, countering Religious Right campaigns, and serves as a think tank policy institute. 251 West 100th St., New York, NY 10025, 510-528-4974.

Inclusion Task Force, All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena, Cal.: "Beyond Inclusion: Celebrating Gay and Lesbian Commitments and Ministries" conference planned for April 11-13, 1997. Speakers including Andrew Sullivan, Marilyn McCord Adams, Michael Battle, L. William Countryman, Patricia Beattie Jung, and Juan Oliver will address the history, theology and practice of gay and lesbian participation in the Episcopal Church. "Join with action-minded people to share ideas and support as we journey toward the July 1997 General Convention." 132 North Euclid Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101, 818-583-2752.

The Interfaith Alliance: National network seeks "to mobilize the religious community to become more involved in the political process, to promote the positive role of religion in American public life, and to provide an alternative voice to that of religious-political extremists." Suite 738, 1511 K Street, NW, Wash., D.C. 20005. www.intr.net\tialliance, 202-639-6370.

We Are Family Foundation: "Our vision is to experience a world where we are integrated and whole, individually and societally, and where diversity of all kinds is valued and celebrated." Acceptance of gays and lesbians as full members of society is a key goal. Charleston, S.C. 29417, 803-856-0577.

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Divided vision?: a conversation with Jim Wallis & Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

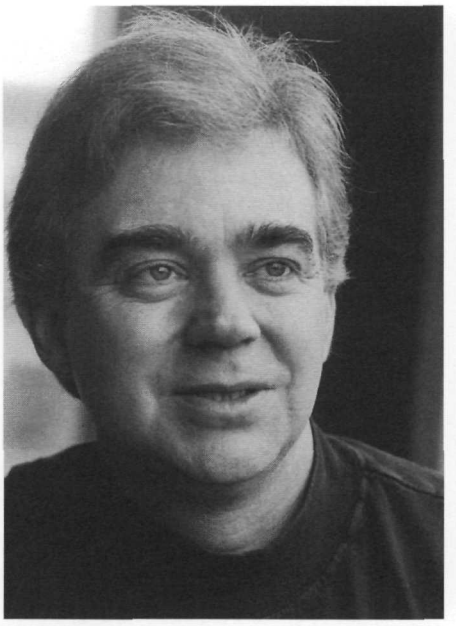
For decades *The Witness* and *Sojourners* have tread similar ground. Staff at both magazines discern evil in many of the same institutional abuses of power. Articles in both magazines examine Scripture in an effort to see how Christians might witness against the powers of death.

While there have always been differences in style and in some particulars, *The Witness* and *Sojourners* recently defined themselves in opposite ways.

Sojourners is launching Call to Renewal, a movement that attempts to break the grip of polarities by creating a new paradigm in which the labels "Left" and "Right" fall away as people coalesce around issues of import that cut across the old boundaries. The editors of the conservative journal *First Things* have condescendingly referred to this approach as "beyondist."

At the same moment, *The Witness* staff decided to advertise *The Witness* as a Left publication, believing that — in the maelstrom of media images and capitalist claims of worldwide victory — we hold fast best by reminding ourselves of our heritage in the Left.

A conversation between Jim Wallis and Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann seemed in order.



Jim Wallis

The Witness: *The Witness* staff, after a recent period of discernment, concluded that it would advertise itself as a Left journal. At the same time, *Sojourners* has decided that it is beyond Left and Right. What's at issue here?

Jim Wallis: Left and Right are old categories. I don't think they work on the ground in the lives of ordinary people. I work with a lot of young people who are leaving gangs. They are trying to end the violence in their communities. At gang summits they are asking, how do we transform our lives, our neighborhoods, our politics, and ultimately our nation?

I hear young gang leaders, women and men, talking about the need to take personal responsibility, the need to be good parents to the kids they've brought into the world, to rebuild family systems, to make different moral choices. Those are the kind of things you often hear conservatives talking about. And I've been in gangs summits where it almost sounded like a Young Republican self-help convention. Then they talk about racism and how a changing global economy has ripped 70,000 jobs out of south-central Los Angeles. They talk about the need for community-based economic development. They talk about police brutality and then they sound like radical neighborhood organizers.

They're talking about transformation. They don't care a whit about traditional Left and Right. They want something that will work.

We need a new configuration of partners. We need a new social policy paradigm that is community based. When I was arrested in the Rotunda with 55 pastors on December 7th in the middle of the welfare debate, *The New York Times* got it right. They said the pastors were there to challenge both the Republicans and the Democrats for variously demonizing or bureaucratizing the poor. I think the Democrats support systems that control poor people and maintain poverty. Republicans support solutions which

> *I hear young gang leaders talking about the need to take personal responsibility, the need to be good parents, to make different moral choices,* and *about police brutality. They don't care a whit about traditional Left and Right.*
>
> *— Jim Wallis*

Artist **Irene Duffy** lives in Pullman, Wash.

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would abandon the poor altogether. We have to find some new solutions beyond liberal and conservative, Left and Right.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: I believe as the Christian Right goes on the warpath, there's a value in holding ground with the Left. We need to hang onto and raise up the traditions of the women's rights movement, the anti-war movement, the civil rights and labor movements. There is a real value in the socialist critique of capitalism.

I share Jim's view that the Left has often ignored issues of personal responsibility, but I want to acknowledge that my politics have been largely shaped on the Left.

The Witness magazine has been around since 1917. The editor who held the position longest was Bill Spofford, a socialist who took a lot of risks in the labor movement and covered it regularly. Like *Sojourners* in so many ways, *The Witness* has taken risks for women's rights and for Puerto Rican revolutionaries. It has put forward the views of people like Angela Davis, the Black Panthers, the American Indian movement and gay and lesbian Christians.

The Witness has tried hard to present the views of people who aren't going to make it on NBC or CBS. Its orientation and its roots are Left. That's the commitment that it holds. It's also true that it is really committed to speaking respectfully with people from traditions that don't share the values of the magazine and we welcome critiques from other communities. We don't believe that we have the whole truth.

I'm not sure there is any one program that's an answer. Instead, I look to the groups that rise up as a consequence of some local injustice and then connect with one another, wellsprings that have the potential organically to work for nonviolence, sustainable economics, cross-cultural respect.

Often the allies that I find in this process are on the Left. I look to groups like ACORN, labor unions, women religious and folks practicing liberation theology, all of whom are people who traditionally have been identified as allies in both *The Witness* and *Sojourners.*

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Jim, I know you share a lot of these commitments. Is it really fair to say that you're beyond Left and Right if you do draw on a socialist critique of capitalism?

J.W.: My critique of capitalism is still very strong, but I also have a critique of top-down command economies which have been the socialist answer to capitalism, which in my view have failed and failed miserably.

For a while I thought each next revolution might be better. We thought maybe in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas, since they have more of a Christian tradition than a Marxist-Leninist one, might do well. But the Contra war was not the only reason that the Sandinistas failed. They failed miserably internally. They turned over their security apparatus to East European security forces. They abused the Miskito Indians. They violated human rights.

The Left can't say on the one hand that concentrated economic power, corporate capitalism, is abusive and then say concentrating political power in the hands of self-appointed elites is a solution to that. And the Right can't say, we're against big government because it becomes abusive, but then say nothing about concentrated economic power. Let's go beyond both capitalist economy and command economy.

J.W-K.: Most folks on the Left gave up their belief in centralized power decades ago. Certainly when the Communist Party decided to stand behind Stalin and then discovered his atrocities there were huge splits in Left communities. A lot of folks realized that centralized power was problematic. At the same time, they continued to offer a critique that exposes capitalism's drive to amass more wealth at the expense of workers.

I believe as the Christian Right goes on the warpath, there's a value in holding ground with the Left. We need to hang onto and raise up the traditions of the women's rights movement, the anti-war movement, civil rights and labor movements.

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

J.W.: I find an awful lot of people on the Left *have* been supportive of large scale concentrations of political power. I've had arguments with people who said, "We're against nuclear power, but not when it's in the hands of socialist governments."

In the 1980s, I was in the heart of the

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anti-Contra War movement and we fought on a regular basis with Central American solidarity groups who refused to publicly acknowledge the mistakes of the Sandinistas. They would attack me, *Sojourners,* and Penny Lernoux for critiquing the Sandinistas. They said we gave aid and ammunition to the Reagan administration to fight the Contra War.

J.W-K.: The critics you cite are not defending centralized power; they are resorting to a dubious strategy of refusing to acknowledge the mistakes on their own side. This is a strategy that cuts across ideology — plenty of people on the Right also refuse to admit the errors and abuses in their struggles. There will always be people who are too arrogant to acknowledge them. There will also always be a lot of people who pretty readily acknowledge the mistakes. I think of the Quakers, whom I would place on the Left, who are self-reflective and capable of reexamining their commitments or styles of leadership.

J.W.: I'm not willing any more to go along with middle- and upper-middle class intellectual liberals from universities taking the leadership of guerilla movements and then ruling in the name of poor people. I don't want those people to win anymore. I want the ordinary people to win.

J.W-K.: Jim, neither you nor I have ever identified ourselves as liberals. We have considered ourselves radical Christians — people I understood to be making real sacrifices on the Left. This was a third option I learned, in part, from *Sojourners.* Where do you identify yourself now?

J.W.: I'm talking about radical Christianity. Look, it's a new day. The cold war is over, the Berlin Wall has come down. The old ideological combat between the Soviets and the U.S. — that's past.

If we care about radically Christian transformational politics — Gospel rooted vision that puts the poor, community and women's rights at the center — then I want to get shed of the old Left, socialist tags. Those secular, political solutions fall short of being radically Christian.

Now, my bias — biblically, theologically — is workers over management in every strike situation I've ever heard of. I think what you all are doing in Detroit is extremely creative. But even there, you're creating an independent citizens' voice that is advocating on behalf of the workers, the readers and the community. You're insisting on being able to critique union bureaucracies when they become corrupt.

Socialism is a dead word in this country and I don't have any commitment to resurrect that word. It's baggage that I don't want to carry around with me. — *Jim Wallis*

J.W-K.: It doesn't seem alarming or surprising to me that we need to critique the Left. Most movements make huge errors. I guess the value of staying within the Left for me is identity. It's important to me to remember how my ideas evolved and which people were helpful in forming those views.

When we called the first demonstration at the *Free Press* and *The News,* there was something wonderful about the folks who showed up. I hadn't seen some in 10 or 15 years and while I wouldn't align myself with them on all issues, there's still a shared perspective about the way power is exercised in this culture.

For instance, this group shares an intelligent critique of the media and has an immediate grasp on what it means when a few corporations own all the outlets that reflect back to us a corporate idea of who we are. With other friends, I can't count on that shared understanding. We can break ground on the topic and we might well come to the same conclusions, but it would be a construct that they would have to struggle with.

Also, it can be useful to my adversaries to know that I am on the Left. The identification provides them with a sense of what biases I may bring to the conversation.

J.W.: It's an identity question, a language question and also a tactical question.

I was always more comfortable in the civil rights movement which was black church based and not just the Left. In the secular anti-war student movement at Michigan State, the lack of a spirituality was devastating. So when I met Dan and Phil Berrigan and the religious peace movement, I was relieved. But I think the strongest part of the religious Left is their religion and not their Left.

How you and I approach a lot of questions is very similar. I'm not aware of any substantial or structural disagreement.

But my identity is with spiritually based movements for social change. In my study I've got pictures of the people who are my identity, my family tree — Beyers Naude, Sojourner Truth, Malcolm, Martin and Gandhi. All of them had a spiritual and religious dimension that critiques the Left.

I think socialism is a dead word in this country and I don't have any commitment to resurrect that word. You could be socialist and talk about community economics, but I don't choose to use the word. It's baggage that I don't want to carry around with me.

I think you cut off dialogue. There are people in this country right now who weren't part of the movements that I was part of and yet I've discovered that many of them really do care about poor people. They care about racism. Yet they're from more conservative places in this society.

J.W-K.: But none of the people you

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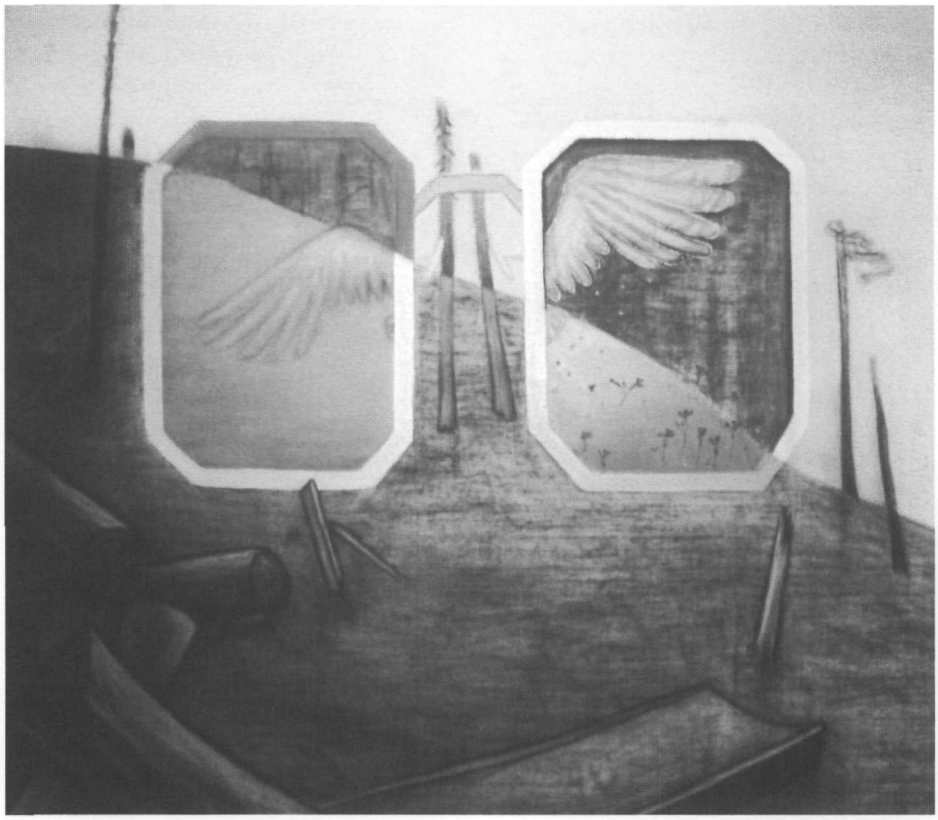
name as allies could be defined as Right-wing. They are the people that Joe McCarthy would have hunted down as communists because of their compassion and interest in justice.

As for socialism being dead, part of what socialism represented was another economic way. The powers are quite content to have our imaginations narrowed to a confidence in capitalism, but keeping socialist vision in the conversation broadens our options.

If I'm looking for information, there are people, organizations and newsletters that I turn to. I could name the folks that I would turn to if I wanted to look at current events in any country, the activities of the CIA or the way that police surveillance works in this country. There's a whole network of folks that I draw on to do analysis and I feel very comfortable relying on them. I talk to people who don't share that point of view, but I rely on the people and organizations with whom I have history.

The Witness: *Sojourners* has supported the Sandinista Revolution, the Sanctuary Movement and blood-pouring actions against militarism. Is it disingenuous to say now that you are forging "an independent Christian vision of faith and political responsibility that's beyond the Right and the Left"?

J.W.: That's what the Right wing says. I was raised in an evangelical church, so I was born and raised in a conservative cultural and political environment. The movements with which I've been associated are poor people's movements, racial justice movements, peace movements, now anti-violence movements among young gang members. That has been defined in my political life on the Left side of the political spectrum. I come from the progressive political world. I don't apologize for that at all. I've never written an article yet that repudiated my opposition to the Vietnam War; I have people who want me to do that. But I can't say to be Christian puts you on the Left.



Limited vision **Irene Duffy**

The Witness: Jeanie, Jim's focus in Call to Renewal is on building a movement. Do you feel that your insistence on identifying yourself as Left needlessly limits your audience?

J.W-K.: Jim said earlier that the three issues in this are identity, semantics and tactics.

There may be a tactical advantage in dumping the language, but I'm not convinced. The national debate is polarized in the media, but I believe that the people of this country are smart enough to understand that they can work with members of other constituencies. Some will even remember positively the populist banks, the Communist soup kitchens during the depression, the Black Panther day care programs and the Sanctuary movement.

Also, I'm not trying to build a large-scale movement. This is a big difference between Jim and me. Sometimes I wonder if it's a limitation in my imagination, but other times it seems like a biblical understanding of politics. I expect to be struggling against the principalities, often with people I am politically aligned with and sometimes with people whose values are very different. I'm not looking for one over-arching movement. In fact, I'd be anxious that before long, such a movement would show signs of the abuse and deception that Jim was sorry to detect amongst the Sandinistas.

The Witness: Jim, we notice that you recently joined the Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed in signing a statement against abortion which was published in the May '96 issue of *First Things.* For us it raises some of the identity questions. Could you say what led you to sign that statement?

J.W.: I like the Common Ground move-

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ment. On the pro-choice side, Naomi Wolf is trying to get the pro-choice movement to take abortion more seriously by saying, "There's a real death here." I also hear pro-life people, even some conservative politicians, saying, "Let's stop talking about criminalization. Let's talk about changing the moral climate. Let's recognize the anguish of women who are in difficult situations. Let's talk about male irresponsibility."

But I do favor the kind of restrictions they have in Pennsylvania, a public policy which doesn't ban abortion, but discourages it. Most of western Europe has that in place. We're the only western democracy that has absolutely no restrictions on abortion.

J.W-K.: *Witness* readers know that I've had some serious reservations about abortion, particularly when it's used for convenience or in the quest for the perfect baby. But I find this particular statement really troublesome.

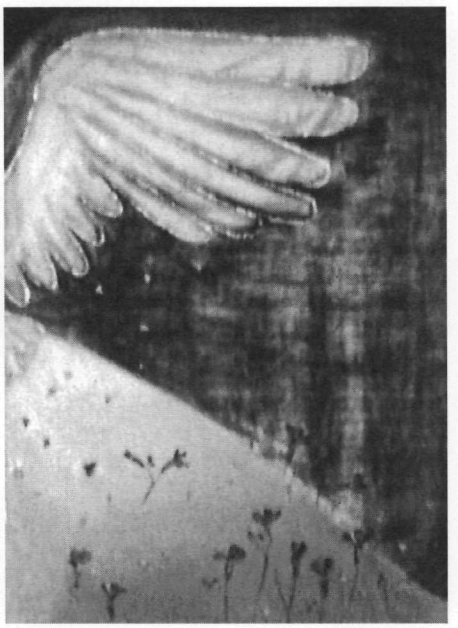
It's wrapped in the American flag, misrepresents the support available for pregnant women, seems to include patriarchal assumptions and has a strong bias toward heterosexual, nuclear families.

The statement says that because of abortion, democracy is wounded. They make it sound as though abortion became legally available through some undemocratic process rather than admitting that we live in a democracy; abortion became law; they want the law changed.

Jim, I can't imagine that you felt comfortable with the language that they use. They talk about "the bulwarks" of American society being lawyers, academics, teachers, civil servants and doctors.

Is it partly your goal to set down the baggage of the Left and identify yourself across Left-Right lines that would make it seem appropriate to sign this kind of statement?

J.W.: I didn't do this to gain favor with the Right wing or to show I wasn't a Leftist after all. I signed it personally, not institutionally, because I thought there was enough in it indicating a different direction in the pro-life movement that I wanted to affirm and be in dialogue with those people. I feel part of my calling is to try and help build some common ground between people and constituencies that have been divided, but who might begin to move in some similar directions. I want to affirm those directions in different constituencies.



Part of what socialism represented was another economic way. The powers are quite content to have our imaginations narrowed to a confidence in capitalism.

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

The Witness: Lastly, Jim, please comment on the statement in *Call to Renewal's* literature that says "the wall between public and private solutions must come down in favor of new partnerships and configurations that involve everyone."

J.W.: The Left has relied too much on the state to solve our problems. And the Right has over-relied on the marketplace. The problems are going to be solved by the civil society—the non-profit sector, family, community, schools, projects in synagogues and churches.

I'm doing retreats these days for some big city mayors and their staff people. All they want to talk about is new politics, new configurations. They know the federal government isn't going to be the answer any more, even if they wanted it to be. So how do you find new solutions at the local level?

J.W-K: A lot of the best ideas *are* on the local level and formed in non-profits. But, if public money is being used in organizations that have a religious orientation, how do you protect the interests and rights of people who are not Christian?

J.W.: You prohibit public funds for religious activity, but where religious groups are on the ground doing the work, you don't discriminate against them because they are religious.

Stephen Carter makes it clear that we've gone too far with this. The separation of church and state is meant to keep religion from being intruded upon by the state; it's not to keep religious values and institutions out of the public square.

J.W-K: If the public–private distinction is erased, what's to stop the public square from being dominated by a great big nativity scene that's offensive to a number of folks in the community?

J.W.: We've got to bring our religious convictions to the public square unapologetically in a context of a democratic and pluralistic society.

We accept the discipline of not imposing our religious sensibilities on fellow citizens.

J.W-K.: That's a challenge! TW

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Neo-fascist culture

"There are few literary critics who take writers to task for being cynical. Amusing cynicism. Clever cruelty. Urbane selfishness — these are generally treated by literary critics as amiable qualities.

"The converse of this is that almost anybody who speaks earnestly about justice is accused of being sanctimonious. I've noticed that even *The New York Times* seldom uses the word 'righteous,' though it calls social critics 'self-righteous.' It's as though you can't even speak of righteousness without automatically being termed self-righteous. ...

"What we have here is a set of literary criteria that would have been eminently suitable to art and culture in Germany in the 1930s. Now, let me make it clear that when I say this, I'm not equating our society with Nazi Germany. As a Jew I know what the Holocaust really meant and I don't want to make sloppy or reckless comparisons. But there *is* an element of neo-fascist cruelty in our culture at the present."

— Jonathan Kozol, in an interview with Christopher Zimmerman, *The Plough,* Spring 1996

Disability rights

"On July 19 of this year, the ABC 'news' program *20/20* aired a report calling the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) excessive, expensive, and 'grossly complex.' Reporter John Stossel then urged repeal of the federal law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Stossel claimed that the ADA makes life difficult for beleaguered business owners, echoing the rhetoric of conservative politicians who frequently cite the ADA as an example of an 'unfunded federal mandate.' It was a perfect example of scapegoating, a right-wing tactic of which people with disabilities are increasingly the targets. ...

"Disability issues are usually absent from the progressive agenda — this despite the natural affinity between our concerns. The disability-rights movement, in its radical form, measures human worth by uniqueness and connection, rather than by productive potential; it favors the empowerment of people over the sanctification of profit. It insists on viewing disability in social contexts — the classroom, the workplace, the community. It values nonconformity. In all these ways, the disability-rights movement poses fundamental challenges to the capitalist-patriarchal status quo, just as the radical progressive movement does. ... Overall, however, the left ignores our presence, our participation, and our concerns."

— Laura Hershey, *Resist*, 9/96

"Headed for disaster"

At the same time the federal government is shifting responsibility for social services to the state and local level, many U.S. cities are restricting the operation of agencies providing the services, says Maria Foscarinis of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty.

Recent zoning changes in Hartford, Conn. represent "an extreme example of the national trend," Foscarinis said. The new rules, which restrict the location of homeless shelters, hospices, treatment centers and soup kitchens, will force new providers to locate in areas that are inaccessible to those in need, critics charge. Some 30 cities across the country have enacted similar legislation.

"What we're seeing is two trends on a collision course and most likely headed for disaster," Foscarinis said.

— *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 8/20/96

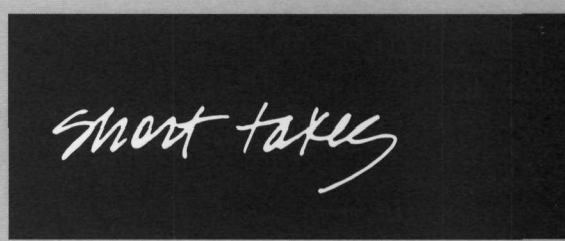
Toxic racism

- Minorities are twice as likely as whites to live near a hazardous waste site.
- "Treatment" of waste at contaminated sites, rather than mere "containment," has been chosen (by the Environmental Protection Agency) 22 percent more often in white neighborhoods. Containment has been chosen 7 percent more often in minority neighborhoods.
- Fines and penalties are much higher when waste sites are in white communities. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act fines have been over 500 percent higher in white areas.
- It has taken 20 percent longer to have toxic waste sites located in minority areas placed on the National Priority List.
- 57 percent of whites, 65 percent of African Americans and 80 percent of Hispanics live in counties with substandard air.
- In families with annual incomes over $15,000, 38 percent of African-American children and 12 percent of white children had unsafe lead levels in their blood (in 1988). For those earning less than $6,000, the rates jumped to 68 percent of African-American and 36 percent of white children.

— John G. Rodwan, Jr.

Death row defense

Roger Peter Buehl was sent to death row at the age of 22. Buehl was accused of a 1982 robbery-murder which occurred in a Villanova, Penn. mansion. One of two prosecution witnesses, when confronted with his failed lie detector tests in 1992, recanted his trial testimony. Donations can be sent to: Death Penalty Defense Fund; c/o Schuylkill Friends Meeting; 37 North Whitehorse Road; Phoenixville, PA 19460 U.S.A. For further information about Buehl, feel free to write to him: Roger Peter Buehl, AM-7936: SCI-Greene, Death Row, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090, U.S.A.



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Resisting Mammon theology

by Chung Hyun Kyung

The greatest religion of the world is capitalism. Not just capitalism, but savage capitalism. Corporations don't care how many workers they lay off, if they make more capital. This is survival of the fittest; it is unlimited production and consumption. We are all going to die because of ecological disaster in our time.

So today's major religion is not Buddhism, Christianity or Islam. People worship capitalist religion in the sanctuary. Great world market is their sanctuary. They worship their god — Mammon.

When American missionaries came to Korea, they were often symbols of American opulence. They said, "We have to civilize the savages of the world." So the savage, like me, became a Christian. But it was a capitalistic Christianity that came to our land. The Christianity we received was McDonald/Coca-Cola Christianity. They didn't pay much attention to the poor. The majority of Korean church didn't pay much attention to justice work.

In this time, we ask, do we have to discard our religion because it is so patriarchal and capitalist?

I don't think so. We have to seek very, very diligently the renewal movement in the institutional religion. We have to pay attention to people's popular religion.

When we study theology and religion in the academic setting, we think long about institutionalized, so-called great religions of the world. We study classical Buddhist text and classical Christian text. We compare these.

Chung Hyun Kyung J.W-K.

But if you look into popular religion among the oppressed in the world, you have a totally different story. Most of the popular religions — Catholicism in Latin America and the Philippines or Buddhism in Sri Lanka, in China, in Korea — they have a totally different theology, different symbols, different teachings. Amazingly many leaders of popular religion are women, because in popular religion all is connected — cosmic spirituality and everyday needs of women's life.

When you look at popular religion, you can see a revolt of symbols and a reinterpretation of the Bible.

When you go to the Philippines, you see many black madonnas, but when the missionaries brought Mary, it was a lily white Mary from Spain. For a long time, Filipinos changed the madonna into a black madonna because they are dark. When they demonstrate they put their madonnas in their carts and they march.

So I asked when they collapsed the Marcos regime, "Why did you use a woman — this madonna — more than a Jesus figure?" And they said, "We have a matriarchal tradition and all Filipino men, even when they have to make a final decision, have to ask their mother. This is a great time to change our history, so we have to have our mother."

It is a revolt of a symbol. People are never passive recipients of sacred texts or given symbols.

In Korea, we use these scripture verses: Wife, you must obey your husband because your husband is your head, right? Most of Korean churches are very conservative, fundamentalist churches. The wife of a very conservative church minister suddenly got this revelation: God told her, "You have to go around and speak the gospel."

Do we have to discard our religion because it is so patriarchal and capitalist? I don't think so. We have to seek very, very diligently the renewal movement. We have to pay attention to people's popular religion.

We feminists ask this question: "The Bible said the husband is your head and you are his body, so you have to obey your husband. Is that true?" In Confucian Korean culture, the father is the head of the family. You have to obey your father and when you marry you have to obey your husband. When you become older, you have to obey your son. So this kind of Bible teaching and Confucian teaching are the best match.

Chung Hyun Kyung is a feminist, liberation theologian from Korea. Chung recently accepted a faculty appointment at Union Theological Seminary in New York. This essay is adapted from an address Chung gave at Mercy College in Detroit this year. Artist **Robert Lentz** has his icons distributed by Bridge Building Icons, 211 Park St., Burlington, VT 05401.

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This woman answers, "Yes, everything in the Bible is right. There's no fault in the Bible. Of course your husband is your head. And you are his body. But you know you are his neck, so wherever the neck goes, the head must come. That is our interpretation."

This is a great woman from the Methodists. I like her. Even in the fundamentalist church, she has this freedom to reinterpret the Bible to have some dignity in her life.

I spent some time in a Filipino community all the way out in the mountains. They say they are holy Catholic, but when you go there they speak something very different. They have a *prima* — she's a pope and all their priests are women. They believe in Father, Mother, Son Jesus and Holy Spirit. For those in the matriarchal Filipino tradition, you cannot just have Father, Son and Holy Spirit — it's not complete. You should have a Mother. So they make — not a trinity — but four deities: Father, Mother, Son and Holy Spirit. They say the second coming of Jesus should be as a woman to balance the whole thing.

I thought, "My gosh, I spent 20 years of my life to get to the conclusion that a woman has a right in Christian history and the Christian church, concluding that we have to change Christianity even more with the feminine experience of the divine, et cetera, but these people, they have lived it the last 350 years!"

That is the power of popular religion. So I encourage all my students in feminism and religious studies, "Look into every religion, but also learn popular religion — people's symbols, people's stories, people's paintings and their devotions. What do they say? They say one thing to their priest and their institutional catechism, then they live another thing in their life. There's a hidden theology." We have to be very clear about our criteria to discern any kind of sacred experience and spirituality. I have three criteria. First, whether this experience of the sacred promotes survival and sustenance of the most oppressed people in the society. It's a litmus paper. If it promotes the survival and sustenance of the most wounded people in that society, that sacred experience has something real there.

Protectress of the Oppressed **Robert Lentz**

The second criteria is whether it is liberating or life-giving. If it makes you more oppressed — dying inside, suffocated, colonized — it's not a good spirituality. Get rid of it.

Third — a very important thing — community building. You can have all kinds of individual spirituality and say, "I don't care what other people feel." Some kinds of New Age spirituality say if you change your inside, everything will be fine. But no! So many New Age people pray, but the President of France still conducted all these nuclear tests in the Pacific islands. I have more respect for Greenpeace people who risk their lives doing something in the Pacific.

Your spirituality must be renewed and connected with your participation, your commitment to change the system by working for the common good, working for justice and for solidarity.

We have to choose what is life-giving in Christianity. I don't want to take a Greek, Hellenistic, German or American interpretation of Christianity. I need an Asian perspective.

What I accept is the stories of Jesus — the Jesus movement, the kindom of God (we don't want a king) and radical equality in which there is no Jew, no Greek, no free, no slave, no male, no female.

You have to make a decision about what makes Christianity Christian with the wisdom of your community. Just talking about Jesus doesn't make Christianity Christian. The German church supported Naziism during the holocaust. So you can be Christian and make all sorts of bad things. To really think about what makes Christianity Christian, you have to choose the healthy Christianity, not the Coca-Cola, patriarchal, homophobic Christianity. TW

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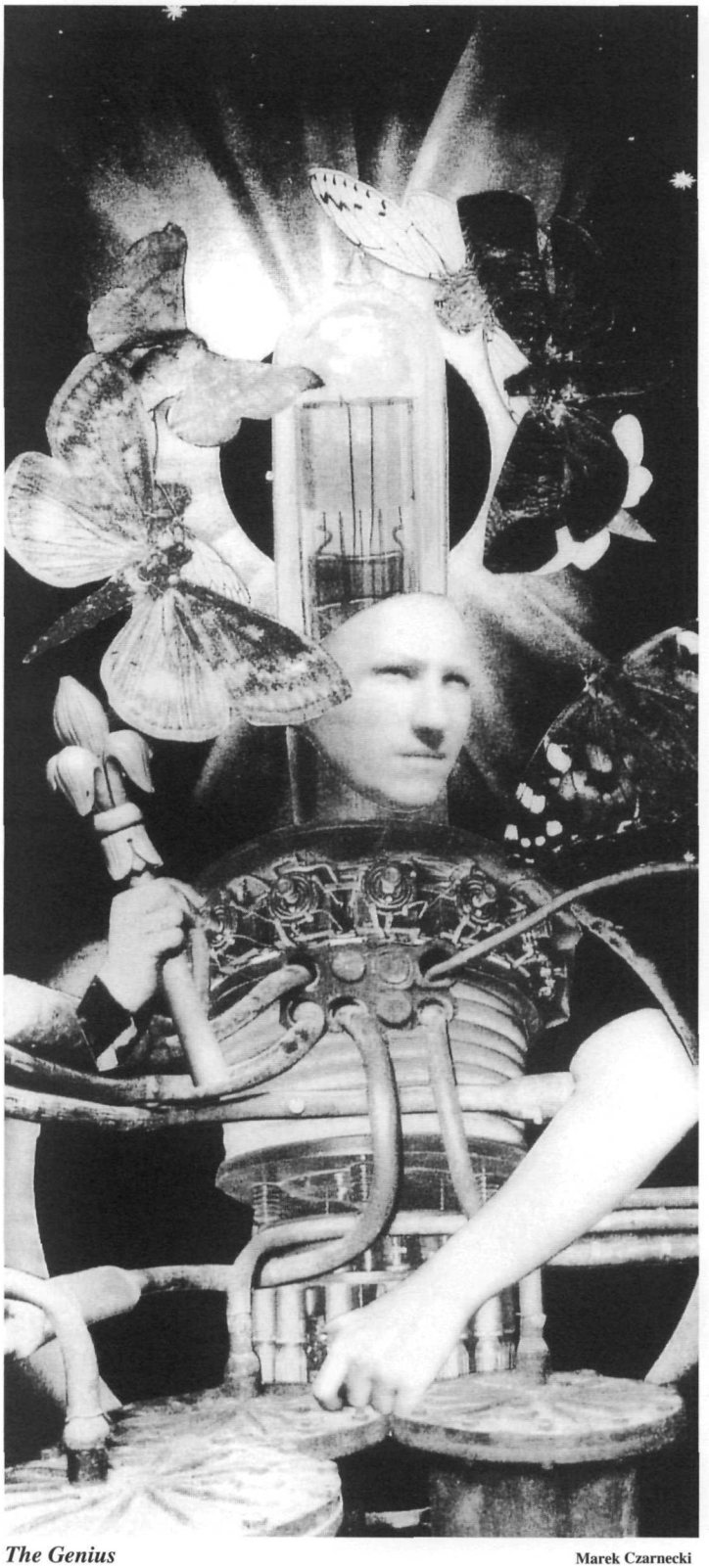

The Genius Marek Czarnecki

Trying to remain human: views on political action

[We asked a variety of people to comment on some of the myths put forward by the Christian Right and to explain a way they are resisting narrow-minded, rigid ideologies. Most agree that the Right in this country is simply symptomatic of a deeper and more centrist threat to our lives. The demons are as they have ever been in the U.S. — economic exploitation, racism, sexism and environmental destruction. We offer here a variety of ways to free ourselves from constrictive thinking and fear.]

Calling on spiritual roots

Jim Carnes, acting director of the Teaching Tolerance Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center:

I find that simply identifying myself as a Christian with an alternative point of view is a step toward breaking up the image of a monolithic Christianity that the Right seems to want to create. Here in Alabama we have an organized Christian alternative to the Christian Right, called the Alabama Christian Faith Alliance. I think so-called liberals have been squeamish about blending political and religious action because we want to defend the separation of church and state. But it's an exciting challenge to maintain belief in separation while letting ourselves talk openly about our faith in a political context.

The Southern Poverty Law Center is perhaps best known for its litigation against hate groups, which are few in number but make a lot of noise. They give the impression that they're gaining ground and that hate is dividing the country more and more deeply. But we at the Teaching Tolerance Project find that there are countless teachers all around the country who are really concerned with laying the foundation for children to be self-respecting and respecting of others.

I recently visited a school in Denver which, judging by its location and the statistical profile of the student body, meets the stereotypical criteria for a school which would have low performance and a high rate of truancy. But there is a kindergarten teacher there who has created an oasis for her children, using the simplest means available. She greets the children in a formal, respectful way each morning. She teaches them simple manners. She obtains flowers free from a local wholesaler, and teaches them how to arrange flowers in a vase. She helps them learn about each other's cultures, and the particulars of each others' families. She fosters an appreciation for

Artist **Marek Czarnecki** lives in Bristol, Conn. Artist **Helen David Brancato** lives in Philadelphia, Penn.

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beauty and silence and their own inner thoughts — and it is transformative! The children are consistently performing above grade level in reading and other skills. This school is one of thousands I see that give the lie to the prevailing prognosis that we're going down the tubes.

Modeling respectful, caring behavior towards others is the most direct and powerful way of communicating to children. We have to examine the way we treat friends and acquaintances and perfect strangers. We have to make an effort to reach out beyond our narrowly defined groups, to bring people of varied backgrounds into our own lives and our children's lives.

Demythologizing our origins

Paul Buhle, co-author of *Images of American Radicalism*:

It's clear those on the Right are developing a version of history in which the Founding Fathers were godly men and America's revolutionaries were fighting with sober integrity for family values and moral virtue.

But history is, of course, more ambiguous. In fact, one could conclude that the most essential message of those early days is that pluralistic coalitions and rebellion are truly American.

In 1776, there was a clear anti-monarchial movement, as well as discontent among working people, Indians and slaves. Without the upsurge from below and the propaganda campaigns of radical intellectuals, the Revolution would never have begun. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1775), one of the greatest political pamphlets ever published, went to the core of the problem — and the solution: "We have in our power to begin the world all over again," he wrote, by overthrowing the aristocracy and the monarchy. The unrest of "Jack Tar" sailors against impressment (forcible enlistment on ships), long preceding the revolutionary crisis, set the stage for the Stamp Act Riots of 1765. The upper-class leadership of Boston carefully guided the campaign, but relied upon craftsmen and unskilled workers meeting at taverns or social clubs to organize direct actions.

It was ordinary folk who took the bullets in the "Boston Massacre" of 1770, and the same class who did nearly all of the fighting in the war to follow. The "vagabond army of ragamuffins" fought to victory, finally demanding discharge when the war ended. Many went home to participate in food riots and even uprisings, like Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786 or Pennsylvania's Whiskey Rebellion in the 1790s.

Indians took the brunt of the postwar expansion — including those who had been promised benefits for fighting with the colonists. And black slaves were bound more tightly through a new national government. And yet, the principles of rebellion against authority, once established, could not be extirpated by the demands for "order."

Living for inclusion

Linda Strohmier, former Evangelism officer for the Episcopal Church and currently serving three parishes in New Jersey:

Stonewall happened in 1968, the shot that started the lesbian/gay revolution. Our daughter was born — multiply handicapped — in 1970. After her birth, my husband, always "moody," began a long slide into the depths of clinical depression. He slept more and more, was less and less interested in life. Only rage, it seemed, in occasional flashes, could energize him. After a couple of years, he even lost his voice: chronic laryngitis. This decline lasted nearly four years.

Like so many marriages of the sixties, we were "soul mates," each other's best friend and confidante, but it finally got to be too much for me. I pushed him into therapy. Over the next months, working with a psychiatrist, he began to unravel his agony, his darkness, his rage. After about a year, late one night, he choked out his deepest, most agonized confession: he was gay. He had come to face it in therapy. He was sure I would abominate him.

My first reaction: relief. The dysfunctions of our marriage, the depths of his depression were not my fault. This confession felt deeply truthful, as if it were something I had always known but never acknowledged. I told him it was okay, I loved him.

From that time on, his depression lifted, almost miraculously. The first to heal was his laryngitis. Freud was right: since David couldn't speak of his truest self, he couldn't speak at all! As his voice returned, so his spirit burgeoned. He grew stronger, surer, confident. As he began to accept himself, he regained energy for work, for living, for our daughter.

David died of AIDS in 1989. He died as a man who knew himself and could be honest with himself and everyone else. He was gay and proud, a good father and a good friend.During the years of hiding his true self from himself, he was miserable and unable to respond fully to life, anxious, bound. When Maggie was born with so much damage, his crippling guilt told him it was punishment for his being gay. Unable to live with that guilt, he offloaded it onto me, secretly blaming me for what happened to Maggie. Guilt and blame kill and maim a whole family. It was terrible for us all.

As he grew able to accept himself as he was created, absolved and set free, we all bloomed.

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Why do I campaign for the church's full acceptance and embrace of gay and lesbian people? In David I witnessed the gospel story of the Bent Woman, whom Jesus healed and freed. I've seen with my own heart what it meant to a whole family for that bound man to be set free.

The "good news of God in Christ" is that we are all loved and forgiven, called to live into who we are created to be. As a priest, sworn to "nourish Christ's people by the riches of his grace," how can I not stand firm and proclaim that "for freedom Christ has set us free"?

Love in the congregation

Butch Naters Gamarra, rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Boston, Mass.:

The place where I am focussing a lot of energy to combat some of the Religious Right is in teaching and education, trying to help St. Stephen's congregation understand that the Gospel has so much to do with our daily living and politics.

The way the Gospel addresses politics is very straightforward. Jesus is not netural; he takes sides. We forget that and we try to become so democratic that we are wishy-washy.

The context hasn't changed much. We are still dealing with oppression, class, race, economics and gender. When Jesus dealt with women, his own disciples asked, "Why is he sitting by this well and talking with a woman? Is he crazy?"

As we look at the Gospel today, God is speaking to us. We have to see how it addresses *our* context. At St. Stephen's we do that in a dialogue sermon.

Scripture is inviting us to take certain action. We have to name the demon. In the case of "welfare reform" or changing immigration policies, we have to say this is not "expedient"; this is not "fiscally responsible"; it is immoral. These policies affect the very ones with whom Jesus took sides.

Peter asked how many times we have to forgive. A woman in the congregation explained that she has a friend whom she has forgiven many times. She said it is hard and she broke out in tears. The people answered her back saying what they heard in the Scriptures. By the end she felt ministered to by everyone in the congregation. That's, I think, a very good way to deal with some of the mean-spirited evil in our society.

Love in General Convention

Pamela Chinnis, president of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies:

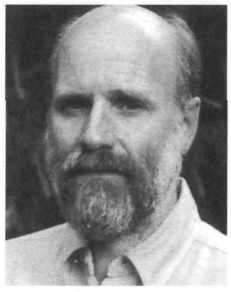
With all the political talk of "family values," I'm concerned that so many people don't demonstrate a commitment to those values in their own lives. Within the church, I'm convinced the House of Deputies could be a microcosm of the community we'd like to foster in the society at large. I'd like people to look at the way we work together and be able to say, "Look, see how they love one another." If people like Louie Crew [a gay deputy from Newark, one of the church's most liberal dioceses] and Judy Mayo [a deputy from Fort Worth, one of the church's most conservative dioceses] can stand on the floor of the House and give a common witness as they did at the last General Convention, then we've really got something.

The disagreement over sexuality, structure and other issues is so strong in the church these days that there is great potential for divisiveness at next year's General Convention in Philadelphia. There has to be an honesty on everyone's part about their differences, otherwise the discourse is superficial and there's only a veneer of civility. Our legislative process allows everyone, even those with a minority position, to have a voice. But it is essential that everyone be treated with respect. I have great faith in the leadership of the legislative committees to set the tone for constructive debate.

I'm passionate in my belief in the church and what it can accomplish, but we're not doing nearly enough. I would like to see it taking more of a leadership role in society generally. We've abdicated responsibility in that area and many feel the church is irrelevant. I think we can change that.

Pursuing political action

Chuck Matthei, president of Equity Trust, Inc., a non-profit organization with an innovative program of land reform and community development finance:



When Gandhi sent thousands of people into the villages to help with community projects, he understood that the movement was building skills to take the victory and do something with it.

It wasn't the media that persuaded impoverished peasants to relate to a larger political ideal; it was the thousands of people sent into villages — they formed a communication network and also showed a face to the network.

Working for social change depends on your personal character, your contribution to the community and your track record. My experience in the movement here is that there has never been a deliberate effort to integrate these three pieces.

I get frustrated with the Clam Shell Alliance's debates about property destruction. The issue is not whether you cut the fence, but whether you use discipline and order: Don't rush the fence; cut the fence

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'Audaciously trusting God'

by William Stringfellow

There is no convenient set of rules, no simple blueprint, no simplistic ethics of decision for the Christian. The Christian witness in society does not consist of praising and practicing the "Golden Rule," which, after all, is a secular ethic of self-interest that demeans the essence of the Gospel. But there are at least some clues about the style of witness characteristic of the Christian life in the world, both for the Church as such and for the individual member of the Church.

1) *Realism*: Christians are those who take history very seriously. They regard the actual day-to-day existence of the world realistically, as a way of acknowledging and honoring God's own presence and action in the real world in which human beings live and fight and love and vote and work and die. And Christians know, more sensitively and sensibly than other people, that this world is a fallen world, not an evil world but the place in which death is militant and aggressive and at work in all things. Of all people, Christians are the most blunt and relentless realists. They are free to face the world as it is without flinching, without shock, without fear, without surprise, without embarrassment, without sentimentality, without guile or disguise. They are free to live in the world as it is.

William Stringfellow was a lawyer and theologian in the Episcopal Church before his death in 1985. This article is excerpted from *Dissenter in a Great Society,* 1966, reprinted in *Keeper of the Word,* Eerdmans, 1994.

2) *Inconsistency*: Christians, in their fidelity to the Gospel in their witness in this world, will appear inconsistent to others in public views and positions. They cannot be put into a neat pigeonhole, their stances and conduct are never easily predictable. They know that no institution, no ideology, no nation, no form of government, no society, can heal the brokenness or prevail against the power of death.

3) *Radicalism*: That means, of course, that the posture of Christians is inherently and consistently radical. Christians are perpetually in the position of complaining about the *status quo*, whatever it happens to be. Their insight and experience of reconciliation in Christ are such that no estate in secular society can possibly correspond to, or much approximate, the true society of which they are citizens in Christ.

The Christian political witness is the audacity to trust that God's love for this world's existence is redeeming, so Christians are human beings free to live in this world by grace in all practical matters and decisions.

They are — everywhere, in every society — aliens. They are always, in any society, in protest. Even when a cause which they have themselves supported prevails, they will not be content but will be the first to complain against the "new" *status quo*.

4) *Intercession*: Christians are concerned, politically, for all people in all the diversity of problems and issues of public life. Characteristically, the sign of the inclusiveness and extremity of Christian concern is represented and embodied in their specific care for those who, in a given time in society, are the least in that society, for those whom all the rest have ignored or forgotten or cast out or otherwise have abandoned to death.

Christians know that their passion for the world, their involvement in society, their stand in politics, their witness in the present age, encompass even their own enemies, even those whom they oppose in some specific controversy, even those who would deny the freedom of their witness, even those who hate them, and especially those who are threatened by Christian witness.

The Christian political witness, for the individual Christian and for the body of the Church, means demonstrating in and to the world what the true society is by the living example of the society of the Church.

The Christian political witness is affirming and loving the essential humanity of all in Christ in the midst of humanity's abdication of human life and despite the whole array of death's assaults against human life.

The Christian political witness is the audacity to trust that God's love for this world's existence is redeeming, so Christians are human beings free to live in this world by grace in all practical matters and decisions.

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in waves. One of the reasons I haven't liked plowshares actions very well is that they depend on an element of secrecy. It's easy to turn everything into a guerrilla exercise where the physical becomes predominant. We must be careful not to suggest that we have to match power. If we do, then they're going to win. This has to be a process of changing people. Cutting fences or burning draft files is fine, if it accomplishes that.

When I worked at the Institute for Community Economics I used to say that the projects we worked on were useful, but we were building a foundation that would take at least 10 years. And we've now proved that ICE offers credible proposals and constructive contributions.

Taking time

Joe Agne, former Racial Justice Program Director for the National Council of Churches and current outreach coordinator for Sojourners:

As an evangelical person who grew up in the Evangelical United Brethren Church but who is now a United Methodist pastor, there are many positions of the radical Religious Right with which I disagree. Their positions on many issues are grounded in a not very thinly veiled sexism. Their recent conversion on racism is a tad disingenuous.

Yet, it makes no sense to lay all the hate of the nation at the feet of the radical Religious Right. We on the Left are tempted, among other things, toward quick fix ideas. The temptation of magic says somehow everything will be made right. It won't take struggle, commitment, resourcefulness, faith, solidarity, generations, centuries. Life becomes a problem to be solved rather than a mystery to be entered. We just need to use a little Yankee ingenuity. The scientific method will work. Define the problem. Conjure up some models of response. Pick the right one. Implement it. *Presto*!

A number of years ago I served a pastorate in the south suburbs of Chicago. Among the ministries of the congregation was a concerted challenge to the real estate industry for its racial steering, i.e., showing homes to African Americans in certain communities and to whites in other communities. Working with other groups under the leadership of an open housing organization, realtors were tested, sued and found guilty. Agreements were gained and signed by realtors, municipalities and open housing advocates.

In spite of this work, both the suburb and the congregation continued to lose white residents and members. The flight was on. But who was moving? There are exceptions to the following generalization, but when I was invited back for an anniversary celebration I discovered many of the white open housing advocates had moved to other nearby communities and congregations which had lower percentages of black persons in them. They had contributed lots of energy, time, expertise and finances to confronting the real estate industry, but when racism in housing did not immediately go away they moved on to other places and issues.

Our efforts against racism and poverty are divided by sexism and homophobia. Our efforts against militarism and homophobia are divided by classism and racism. With our quick fix-ation we don't take time to see the disconnections, connections and intersections.

So we end welfare as we know it, dismantle affirmative action, and undercut voting rights. People who were never for these things in the first place declare them unsuccessful or no longer needed. And the rest of us go along, looking for the next cause to undertake.

What would happen in this country if movements joined together in key times and places, and workers, women, people of color, homosexuals, environmentalists, pacifists and anti-colonialists somehow found a way to struggle together against oppression?

It is long, hard and dangerous work to join struggles in timely coalitions (please — not one big movement). It seems especially difficult for white people to be followers, not leaders, in such coalitions. So often we lead or leave. We prefer single issues with focused, winnable goals. Then we can declare victory and go on to something else, or just go home. It is easier to blame the radical Religious Right for injustice than to deal with our own fickleness and lack of stamina.

Leaning into rigidity

Verna Dozier, champion of lay power and author of The Dream of God*:*

I think a word has been left out of the serpent's temptation. I think the serpent said to Eve, "God knows when you eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

The word that has been left out, I think, is "absolutely." You will be like God, knowing *absolutely* what is good and what is evil.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul told them that they had been rescued from the power of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

What is the power of darkness? I am increasingly convinced that the power of darkness is our need to be right.

In the kingdom of God's beloved Son, we are always accepted. Paul Tillich's great sermon, "You are accepted though unacceptable," echoed an earlier great Paul, "Nothing in all creation will separate us from the love of God" — not even our rightness. TW

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Episcopal Women's Caucus at 25: a bittersweet celebration

by Julie A. Wortman

About 150 members of the Episcopal Women's Caucus (EWC) made a pilgrimage to the organization's birthplace in Alexandria, Va., last September 27-28 to celebrate 25 years of sustained struggle to open the priesthood and episcopate of the Episcopal Church to women — and to develop an agenda for the future. The gathering proved to be a bittersweet reminder, however, that continuing the good fight for "a church that honors and rejoices in the ministry of all women" will likely require dealing with prejudices and assumptions within EWC's own ranks that some meeting participants said may be preventing it from being an effective advocate for lay women and women of color.

In her keynote address, Pamela Chinnis, one of those present at the 1971 conference on women's ministries held at Virginia Theological Seminary that launched the EWC, enumerated the changes women in the church have seen during the past 25 years. "In 1971 there were a handful of women in the diaconate; today there must be nearly 2,000 in the diaconate and priesthood, and six women are part of the historical episcopate in this country," she said. "Then there were about two dozen women among the 800 members of the House of Deputies [which had only begun seating women the previous year]; now nearly half the lay deputies and more than 70 clerical deputies are women and, as you know, I am in my second term as President of the House of Deputies. Then we had a prayer book and a hymnal with unrelievedly patriarchal language about people and God; now our official worship texts have cleaned up much of the 'people' language and a growing number of resources for inclusive 'God' language are authorized."

But Chinnis also noted that "there are still places in the church where the ministry of ordained women is devalued, dismissed, denied" and where "women's participation in administration and governance is token, where our labor is exploited and underpaid, where we are ignored or patronized."

Episcopal Women's Caucus delegates from Fort Worth, Tex., lead the procession at the 25th anniversary celebration.

A companion keynote presentation by Los Angeles priest Carmen Guerrero pointed to another challenge, this time for the EWC itself.

"Only God knows what the next 25 years hold for the Episcopal Women's Caucus, but if it is to move into the future with a vision for mutual responsibility with and for all women of the world [and not just white women], it will have to be willing to walk into the desert where nothing is familiar," Guerrero said. "My question is this: Can you respect the dignity of every woman to discover who she is for herself, even if it turns out to be totally different from your idea of consciousness?"

Panel discussions focussing on remembering the past 25 years and inviting members' visions for the future raised questions about the effects of the EWC's largely single-minded focus on winning women's access to the ranks of the ordained.

"The irony is that [although lay women worked very hard for women's ordination], the leadership roles for women in the church coming up won't be lay roles — they will be ordained," said Ann Scheibner, a lay EWC activist who helped orchestrate the historic vote for women's ordination at the 1976 General Convention in Minneapolis. "Are we attracting the energy and commitment of younger, *lay* women?"

Byron Rushing, a longtime General Convention deputy from Massachusetts who dated his first involvement with the EWC to the 1974 Philadelphia ordinations held at the inner-city black parish of the Church of the Advocate ("I came because I was afraid that those black

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*.

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folks were going to get in trouble for hosting the ordinations," he confided), spoke of his vision for a church that can now begin to end its "clerical captivity."

"The women's ordination debate began when there was also beginning to be talk about the ministry of all the baptized and not just of the clergy," he pointed out. "But women needed *the option* to choose ordination." Now the EWC can begin working for a church where "we all understand that we are *all* ministers as an intentional part of our daily lives and work."

Some of the few assembly participants of color spoke to EWC's almost exclusively white membership (two board members are African Americans). "When you look around this room, who is not here?" asked Dawn Conley. "I don't see many women of color."

Conley's mother, Judy Conley, a past president of the Union of Black Episcopalians and a member of the national church's Executive Council, echoed her daughter's concern. "I am not part of your history," she said, "but I would like to be part of your future. Unless some things change, that won't happen."

Other EWC members pointed out that it may also be time to question long-held assumptions about the efficacy of hierarchical leadership.

"We need to look at new ways of being leaders," remarked Jane Dixon, suffragan bishop of Washington. "I know I'm speaking from my position as a suffragan bishop, but I think two heads can be better than one."

No one knows what the next 25 years will be like for the EWC, but the conversation at this anniversary gathering seemed clearly to signal that the future will see an entirely new array of issues on the organization's agenda. Still, for women like EWC vice president Katie Sherrod, who told this gathering that "for some of us it's a daily decision to stay in the church" because of the overwhelming sexism she and others who live in dioceses that won't ordain women experience, the old issues are still relevant.

"You need to remember," she told her EWC sisters in Alexandria, "you're past is still our future."

Title IV revisited

Last month the Episcopal Church's bishops had their first chance to discuss revisions to the church's national canons that would formalize the procedures for disciplining members of their house who are charged with wrongdoing. The proposed changes, presented during the bishops' interim meeting in the Poconos by their chief drafter, Minnesota chancellor Sally Johnson, on behalf of the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons, are aimed at requiring that bishops be held to a similar level of accountability for their actions as other clergy, especially in the area of non-doctrinal offenses.

"We've been in a place where collegiality [between bishops] has been more important than accountability," said Robert Royce, a consultant to the Commission who was the principal drafter of the first round of revisions to the Title IV disciplinary canons passed at the 1994 General Convention in Indianapolis. The bishops have relied on an informal, behind-closed-doors procedure of settling disciplinary problems that depends on the "pastoral" leadership of the presiding bishop and his appointed episcopal advisors, Royce explained.

"The question that lurks is what happens when the informal procedure doesn't work out" because a bishop-offender refuses to cooperate. A proposal that the presiding bishop be given the power to temporarily inhibit a bishop while an accusation of wrongdoing is being addressed could be helpful in such situations, he said, noting, however, that such "metro-political authority" has been something this province of the Anglican communion has avoided giving its primate out of a fierce belief in equality among bishops.

The Commission's proposed revisions also respond to repeated requests from priests and deacons that there be some parity between how they and the bishops are treated.

Under the current system it is entirely possible that a bishop who sexually exploits a member of his diocese, for example, could be allowed quietly to retire or take an extended leave of absence without being forced to give up episcopal orders, while the rector of a congregation who has done the same thing to a church member could be tried in ecclesiastical court and deposed.

"The proposals clearly reduce what has been called a 'double standard' of accountability under which bishops and other clergy receive quite different treatment in disciplinary matters," a press release issued by the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations (NNECA) before the bishops' meeting stated.

The NNECA endorsement and another one from the Episcopal Women's Caucus passed during its 25th anniversary meeting in Alexandria, Va., came a little more than a month after Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's chancellor, David Beers, faxed a series of strong objections to the draft revisions to the Commission during a three-day meeting in Portland, Ore., in late August, after a deadline for comments had passed.

Many proponents of improved disciplinary parity — and of such provisions as a review committee and a trial court for non-doctrinal offenses that would be made up of, in addition to bishops, lay people and priests or deacons — had feared that Beer's criticisms of the revisions might be shared by many of the bishops. Johnson, however, reported no "groundswell of opinion against seeing how parallel the disciplinary canons can appropriately be made" at the bishops' October meeting.

"We asked the bishops for feedback on the proposed revisions and we've begun to receive their comments," Johnson said.

"We are also in the process of setting up a meeting with the presiding bishop and Mr. Beers to make certain that we are all listening to one another's points of view."

— Julie A. Wortman

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'Bishop-bashers' push for accountability

by Katie Sherrod

Two years ago a group of lay people and clergy in the Diocese of Rio Grande became concerned about their bishop, Terence Kelshaw, and his increasing public hostility toward, and distorted portrayal of, the national church. They also expressed concern about reported instances of repressive behavior towards individuals, vestries, and clerics who differ with Kelshaw's conservative views and authoritarian style of leadership.

Kelshaw is one of the 10 bishops who brought charges against former bishop of Iowa, Walter Righter, for ordaining a partnered gay man in 1990.

When attempts to meet individually and collectively with the bishop were either rebuffed or met with animosity, the group formed the Episcopal Information Network (EIN). EIN describes itself as "an organized group of concerned clergy and lay persons in the Diocese of the Rio Grande" who intend to "gather and distribute accurate and factual information that will contribute to a balanced view of the Episcopal Church and the place of the diocese within it."

EIN said it would also encourage church members to take a more active part in diocesan affairs and "offer a forum in which opinions and concerns may be freely shared."

EIN began publishing *Network News*, a quarterly publication, to "publish news and opinions that shed light on the health of this Diocese and the nature of its relationship to the National Church. We invite thoughtful discourse regarding church life, moral choice, and the manner in which decisions are made and carried out in this Diocese."

The group also set up a home page on the World Wide Web (http://www.nmia.com/~ein/) and began connecting with the larger church electronically via ECUNET.

Within weeks of its birth, EIN was attacked by Kelshaw and his supporters for being "unChristian" and for "bishop-bashing."

Undaunted, EIN held its first diocesan-wide meeting this past September. It was attended by more than 90 people.

The theme of the gathering, held on a rare rainy day at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, was "Keeping the Faith — Proclaiming the Truth."

Laura Hughes, EIN president, opened the assembly by reasserting the group's commitment to nonviolence, offering this distinction: "The revolutionary attempts to force change. The nonviolent are willing to allow truth to be the agent of change."

Hughes said EIN also believes "that to remain apathetic in the face of a lie is worse than being violent."

But as EIN member Arnold Padilla pointed out during a panel on issues of power, authority, and accountability, "the church is not very good about holding bishops accountable."

Among the abuses of power EIN is protesting are "discrimination and exclusion in the ordination process" and "canonical violations and distortions."

During his luncheon address, Louie Crew, founder of Integrity, an Episcopal Church group which works for justice for gay and lesbian church members, urged gathering participants to work to distinguish between personal injustice and systemic injustice, and to focus their energies on the systemic injustices.

"Sometimes the whole point of pain is to shock us into hearing God," Crew said. "I believe the first two gifts of the Spirit are a sense of history and a ticklebox. Keep your sense of humor."

Gail Joralemon, a United Church of Christ minister, echoed that sentiment in an afternoon panel on ways of both staying connected with the larger church and getting it to understand and care about what is happening in the diocese.

"I believe you are called to be a thorn in the side of the institutional church," she said, adding that servanthood is a rejection of *abuse* of power, not a rejection of power, and that EIN must make its case on the grounds of justice, not pain.

Joralemon urged participants to keep in focus that this battle is not about the bishop, but about the church.

The day ended with the group reaffirming its commitment to the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Rio Grande, in the world beyond, and especially to the Episcopal Church's General Convention. In a pointed gesture, the offering at the closing eucharist went to the national church to support the budget that, while approved unanimously by the deputies the Diocese of Rio Grande sent to the 1994 General Convention, has since been ignored by the diocese's own convention.

Katie Sherrod, vice-president of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, lives in the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth where Jack Iker, diocesan bishop, refuses to ordain women to the priesthood. EIN can be reached by "snail mail" at P.O. Box 36688, Albuquerque, NM, 87176-6688.

Wales to ordain women

The Anglican Church of Wales approved the ordination of women to the priesthood by the necessary two-thirds vote in September. Bishops and laity voted in favor of the change two years ago but it failed with clergy. This time it passed by a single vote among clergy.

Archbishop of Wales Alwyn Rice Jones said that continuing to oppose women in the priesthood would leave Welsh Anglicans isolated from the rest of the church. The Church of England, the Church of Ireland and the Scottish Episcopal Church have already ordained women to the priesthood.

It is estimated that nearly 80 women deacons will be ordained in Wales in the coming months.

— Episcopal News Service

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Restoring the soul of a church

by Gay Jennings

***Restoring the Soul of a Church: Healing Congregations Wounded by Clergy Sexual Misconduct,* Nancy Myer Hopkins and Mark Laaser, editors, The Alban Institute, Collegeville, MN 1995.**

This is a book about despair and hope, betrayal and accountability, loss and restoration. It is a book about the destructive nature of secrets and the redemptive power of truth telling. It is a book that should alternately make you weep, make you angry, and give you confidence in the healing power of justice-making and the promise of new life in Christ. It is a book you should read, especially if you are a bishop who has vowed to "defend those who have no helper."

Restoring the Soul of a Church is a compelling collection of essays by nationally known experts in the field of clergy sexual misconduct. Editors Nancy Myer Hopkins and Mark Laaser have assembled therapists, physicians, educators, consultants, denominational executives, and journalists who approach the issue sensitively and with compassion for all parties.

Collectively the contributors provide a wealth of information along with effective strategies for those who are confronted with clergy sexual misconduct on any level. The book's core theological premise is that the Church, as an agent of God, is called always to pastoral response and compassion, accountability and justice, and healing and restoration for everyone affected. The book's institutional premise is that the Church must be a place where people can come with their deepest wounds and vulnerabilities and be safe.

This book is not only about victim-survivors. It provides a comprehensive look at everyone affected by boundary violations in church settings: victim-survivors, offenders (called "unhealed wounders" by one contributor) as well as the host of "secondary victims," including the families of victim-survivors and offenders, non-offending clergy, congregations and their afterpastors, and the wider church.

There appears to be an undercurrent of weariness and resentment in the church today that so much time and energy is spent on clergy sexual misconduct. The newly revised disciplinary canons, background investigations, and whether or not clergy are fairly treated are the hottest topics of discussion, not the damage done to the people of God. I still hear people strike out at that "terrible woman who caused us to lose our poor beloved pastor through her seductive and manipulative ways." One congregant not only blamed the victim but suggested she should be destroyed in the same way she destroyed the priest. Still others believe all this attention distracts us from the mission of the Church—to which I counter, if the mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ, this is not distracting work. It is essential ministry.

I understand why some might want to avoid this book like the plague. Sexual misconduct in ministry makes us uncomfortable. Many do not want to believe, in fact will do almost anything not to believe, that clergy sometimes take advantage of another person's vulnerability. Discomfort or disbelief should not lead anyone to believe this is a bad news book. It is a Good News book that calls the Church to respond with compassion and justice for all the parties affected. Both victim-survivors and offenders need to be assured that there is not retaliation on a spiritual level, that neither God nor we have abandoned them.

Sexual misconduct by clergy takes a devastating toll. We must find hope for those victimized, the offenders, and the congregations affected and we must respond to the enormous spiritual, emotional and systemic pain. I recently received a letter from a man who was sexually abused by a priest when he was a teenager. He wrote about the Church's response, saying he learned, "God was not punishing me for anything I did wrong ... I learned God would never harm me when I found God would inspire those doing the right thing. ... It is not the story of 'my abuse.' It is bigger than that. It is a story of how God knows right from wrong, God does not forget those of us who get lost. God hears the poor in spirit and God liberates people from their distress."

This is what it means to restore the soul of a Church.

Gay Jennings is the Cannon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Ohio and serves as the case manager for sexual misconduct in the diocese.

"I do not like your magazine worth a damn but I feel that I cannot be well informed without it so keep on printing the articles I despise, think unfair and pejorative, believe to be incendiary and at times borderline in the truth department. As long as I am alive and have $20, I will be a subscriber."

— Sam T. Cobb
Letter to the Editor, May 1993

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Healing apocalyptic visions

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

***The Coming of the Millennium*, by Darrell J. Fasching, Trinity Press International, 1996**

Karl Barth is reported once to have said that a Christian would be crazy to teach universal salvation, but impious not to believe it. In his view, the final and irresistible word is God's grace.

Some will say that Darrell Fasching is crazy. He has set out not merely to teach universal salvation but to preach it as the essential form of the gospel for "the coming of the millennium."

His little book by that title, a thoughtful and popularly readable tract, is mindful that this "good news for the whole human race" goes against not only that imperial gospel of evangelical conquest characteristic of the millennium now passing away but also of the xenophobia so widespread at the moment and particularly fed by the judgmental apocalypticism current on the Right and represented popularly by the likes of Pat Robertson (see *Witness* review 10/96) or Hal Lindsey.

Christians, Fasching contends, have set out to eliminate strangers, first by conversion, making them over into our own image, but also, barring that, by consigning them to the fire of damnation — for which the holocaust stands as literal emblem in the 20th century. (Fasching himself comes to this book from two substantial works on that topic, *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz* and *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima*.)

"Christians are called to be the salt of the earth, not to turn the whole earth into salt. Spiritually speaking that would be a major ecological catastrophe."

Since there is sufficient scriptural warrant for some being cast into the outer darkness where wailing and gnashing of teeth, not to mention flames of fire, are the order of the day, Fasching's book is largely a biblical argument. It lifts up a neglected set of texts (like 1 Tim. 4:10, where Christ is said to be "the Savior of all people, especially those who believe"), while it reworks other passages.

He is not the first to reread the Babel account with a postmodern take, but he marshals it well. The pretention and sin of Babel is its centralized conformity, the cultural imperialism of sameness, all in the service of power. God's remedy to this idolatry is not so much the curse of confusion but the blessing of diversity which indeed undermines and subverts the imperial project.

"Christians are called to be the salt of the earth, not to turn the whole earth into salt."

God comes to us, Fasching contends, in the guise and difference of the stranger. Did you know the most often repeated command of Torah, 36 times no less, is the admonition to hospitality? Think of Abraham welcoming the very presence of God in those three unknown messengers. Sodom's sin is not the strangeness of homosexuality so assaulted today (partly by means of this very text), but the hostility and violent assault which that city shows those strangers of God. There is Jacob wrestling with the stranger at Piniel, the one who cannot and will not be named, but who yields a wound and a blessing.

To those who say that we can be saved by "no other name" than that of Jesus, Fasching replies that "Jesus" means "YHWH saves" which means in turn precisely that we are saved by "I am," a God who can be neither named nor imaged.

Though we tend to make him over in our own images, Jesus is himself the stranger: despised, rejected, cast out and assaulted by the violence of city and empire. Fasching may miss a small bet in his discussion of crucified love, not to draw in the letter to the Hebrews. The book which commends Christians to practice hospitality "because in this way some have entertained angels unaware," also underscores Jesus being crucified "outside the gate."

Baptism, Fasching observes, is the sacrament not of exclusion but of universal salvation. Infant baptism testifies especially in this regard. There we welcome the one unknown, the newborn stranger, and we witness that the grace of God's saving power proceeds beyond all human decision. There has never been a child born who could not be baptized.

This is the gospel which Darrell Fasching has nailed to the door of the next millennium, his theses for a new reformation. It is not a gospel which will be welcome in communities fond of declaring God's judgment and consigning enemies to darkness or death. It will seem strange to many of us. That, however, may yet prove to be part and parcel of its saving power. TW

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is a Methodist pastor and author of *Seasons of Faith and Conscience* (Orbis, 1991).

review

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I grew up in a very close faith community and took to heart the social gospel. If we viewed our communities as our families, that would serve to address a lot of issues.

Pat Clark

Resisting the politics of fear

by Marianne Arbogast

One of the hardest things Pat Clark ever did was to visit an African American woman whose son had been lynched by a Klan group, to ask her to request that the state not pursue the death penalty for her son's killers. Dispatched on the errand by the Southern Poverty Law Center — which had just won a civil suit on behalf of the victim's mother — Clark considered the disproportionate number of African Americans on death row, and the unlikelihood of white victims' families being asked to forgive them.

Bracing herself for a difficult conversation, she was amazed to find that the woman already shared her own abhorrence of the death penalty.

"Her reason was powerful and simple," Clark recalls. "She said she never wanted another mother to experience the agony she had experienced in losing a child."

Clark — now the National Criminal Justice Representative for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) — is committed to fostering the kind of human connections that can build resistance to vengeance-oriented Right-wing criminal justice agendas.

"You can't kill folks who have mothers and brothers who love them — you can only kill them if you consider them to be monsters," Clark says. "We encourage people to write or visit folks on death row. When people are able to put human faces on inmates, it is much more difficult for them to advocate killing."

Clark, who recently developed a set of radio public service announcements entitled "Stop the Politics of Fear," says that the Service Committee is "mounting a public media campaign to try to address the rhetoric that focuses on more harsh, punitive measures for people who are incarcerated."

The ads — featuring the level, commonsense voice of actress Peg Phillips (Ruth Anne of *Northern Exposure*) — attempt to counter uninformed support of measures such as "three-strikes-and-you're-out" laws, mandatory sentencing and the death penalty.

Clark's passionate opposition to the death penalty began in her childhood, when an uncle and first cousin were murdered in separate incidents six months apart. Her grandmother — while mourning her youngest son and oldest grandchild -- taught her that "it was not for us to seek vengeance, that only God could make judgement on the situation. We're all children of God. Who has the right to say who lives or dies?

"I became aware of the need to create a better understanding of what community is," Clark says. "I grew up in a very close faith community, and I really took to heart the social gospel. If we viewed our communities as our families, that would serve to address a lot of issues."

Clark's expansive understanding of family drew her to Zaire to work with Habitat for Humanity, to the Alabama Klanwatch Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, to anti-death-penalty organizing in California, then back to the Northeast and her current AFSC position.

For Clark, to fight the death penalty is to confront the taproot of community-denying policies.

"When a society can kill its citizens,

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.

then it is free to do anything it wants to the people who comprise it," she explains. "If we can make everyone feel that killing is immoral, whether by the state or the individual — if we can begin to agree that life is valuable and we all have a contribution to make — that would affect how we go about providing educational opportunities and how we think about welfare."

Clark has a deeply personal motivation for her work. She is raising two nephews and a niece, ages 8, 9 and 12, in a household that also includes her mother, a sister and the sister's two children.

"When I see statistics on how many young black males have come under the criminal justice web, and how difficult it is for young black men to stay alive in this culture, I know I have to try to create a society that will allow them to function as the total human beings they are," she explains.

For Clark, taking in her sister's children seemed the natural outcome of her life commitments.

"I can't work on social justice issues and not be responsive to a family crisis," she says. "You can't do social justice work in a vacuum. My kids and my mom have provided me with a lot of insights. I've experienced what it means to adjust my desires and needs to what's best for all involved. And they're a lot of fun, too — they're incredibly witty and bright."

When Clark is home, she spends much of her time at school meetings, basketball games or church activities. Her mother cares for the children during her frequent speaking tours on the death penalty and other criminal justice issues.

Despite the growing outcry for capital punishment, Clark believes that "support for the death penalty is a mile wide and an inch deep" — a gut reaction based on false assumptions, such as the belief that families of victims want eye-for-an-eye justice.

"People just assume that the families of victims are drawn to the harshest punishment possible, but many come to the conclusion that they don't want to lose their sense of humanity, or project that kind of rage and bitterness."

Though it is necessary to confront false assumptions and Right-wing rhetoric, it is even more vital to move liberal Christians from talk to action, Clark believes.

"As horrified as I am to hear religious groups on the Right state that the death penalty is all right, I am even more horrified by denominations which say it is immoral but are afraid of lifting their voices and challenging it in a much more unified way," she says. "Many mainline denominations have made very powerful statements of condemnation, but are not actively engaged in communicating the message to their constituency."

As horrified as I am to hear religious groups on the Right state that the death penalty is all right, I am even more horrified by denominations which say it is immoral but are afraid of lifting their voices and challenging it in a much more unified way.

She is currently enlisting church leaders around the country to organize death penalty study groups, based on a study guide funded by the Presbyterian Church. Using questionnaires which participants will fill out before and after the series, Clark and others will then analyze what it takes to change people's minds. A national conference of religious anti-death penalty organizers is planned for November, 1997.

"We are hoping to create unified, active opposition from the faith-based community," Clark explains.

"We also want to help religious groups form networks of support for family members of victims. I know a deeply spiritual Roman Catholic woman in California whose husband was murdered. She was opposed to the death penalty, but when she went to talk to the prosecutor, she was told she didn't have any choice in the matter. She was already traumatized, and faced the further traumatization of adding several more deaths to the tragedy. In that situation, where was the church?"

Clark is working to ensure that her niece and nephews will grow up in a strong community of family and faith. "One of the reasons I moved back to New Jersey was that I wanted my kids to be close to extended family," she says.

She would like them to learn that family extends far beyond the narrow boundaries that too often confine it today.

"I get infuriated when I hear folks espouse family values, who then turn around and want to cut welfare or don't want to provide educational opportunities or put out services to immigrant families. It makes me question how they define family. And whose family? That's not my notion of the support and love and compassion that family entails." TW

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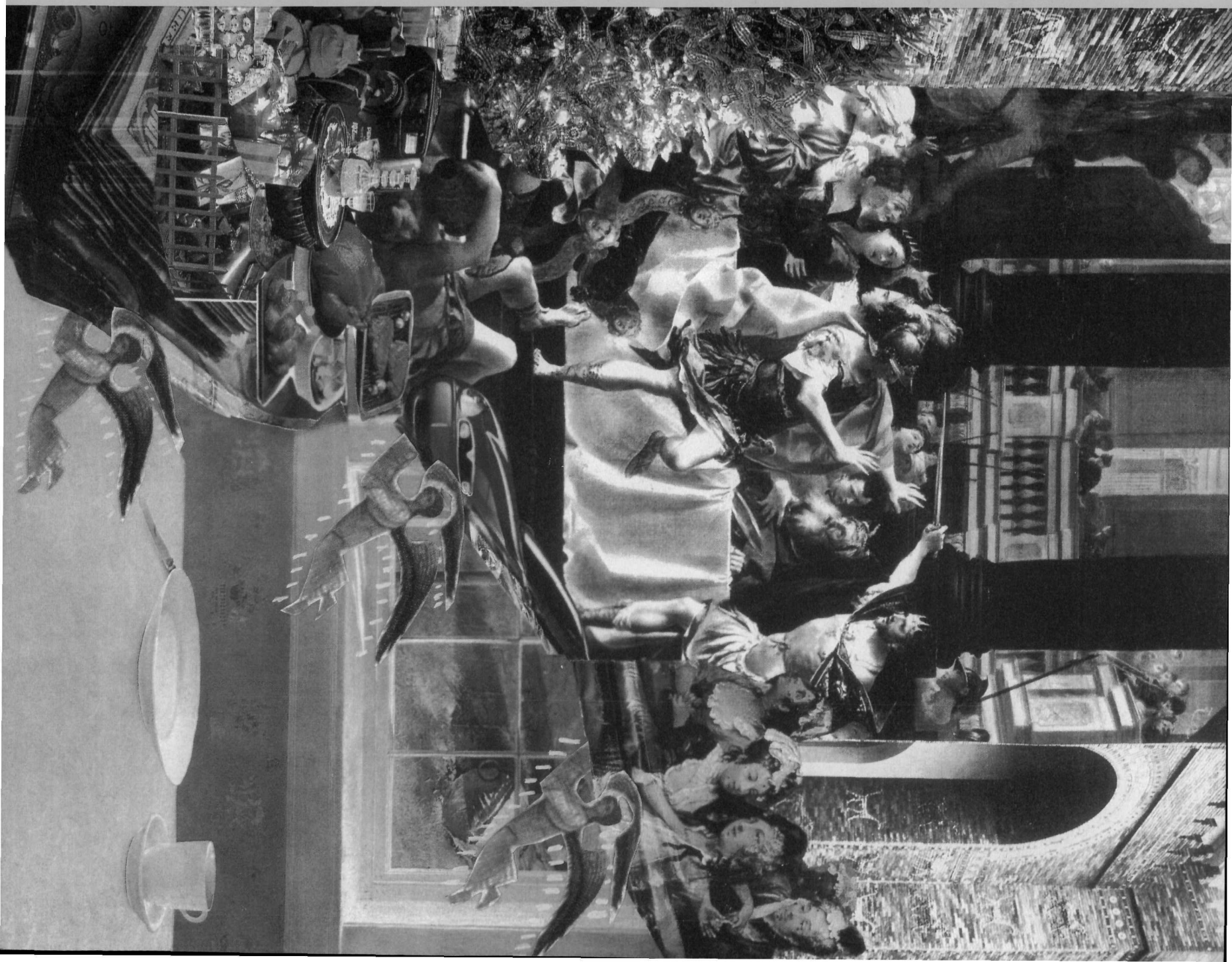
Fasting in Babylon: getting the life you want

The Witness

Volume 79 • Number 12 • December 1996



The Christian Right

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT there'd be nothing to interest me in *The Witness,* you produce two thought-provoking and, to me, highly relevant issues in a row. "In need of a labor movement" was superb, particularly the article on Ms. DeSmet. Inspiring. I loved her unsanctimonious language and attitude. What a remarkable person. This current issue on the Christian right is equally powerful and timely. Michael Lerner's piece is a refreshing bit of confession, and it rings with truth. The great irony is that the mainline denominations of Christianity (and of Judaism) have worked so hard to be unexceptionable that they have become unexceptional. Yet they have the most to offer people searching for meaning *and* freedom.

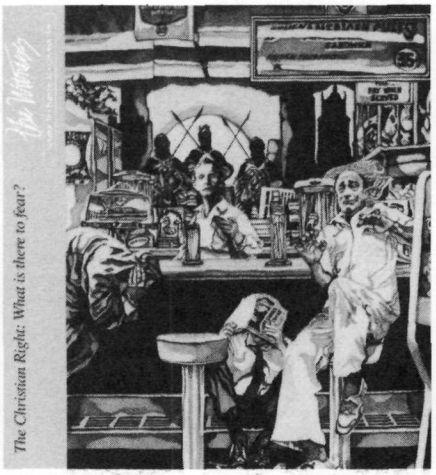
As a marketer and advertising professional (please don't hate me), I am reminded that the essence of good marketing is telling a story and telling it well. The liberal wing of the church (and synagogue) has been a victim of its own inept marketing — bad story-telling, which is highly ironic and not a little despressing, given the raw material we have to work with.

Perhaps the problem is the envisioning and selling of utopian futures that are as remote as heaven and as unpromising as a drunkard's IOU.

Certainly the stridency of the Left's rhetoric is no less tiresome than that of the Right. And behind it lies all too often the assumptions of a higher level of spiritual development, which Mr. Lerner deftly exposes. No less obnoxious — and prideful and inaccurate — than the Right's incessant call for "morals" and (God save most of us) "family values."

Anyway, thank you for two wonderful issues — and their calls to action, implicit and explicit.

Terence D. Hughes
Akron, OH



Thank you for Marianne Arbogast's profile of Reta Finger in the October *Witness*. I wish to add my accolades for the fine work Finger has done as editor of *Daughters of Sarah* and for her scholarly interpretation of the Bible from a feminist perspective.

Elaine Sommers Rich
Bluffton, OH

I ESPECIALLY APPRECIATED SARA Diamond's informative dissection of "dominion theology" in the October issue. Noteworthy, for a different reason, is Michael Lerner's speech in the same issue, a real *tour de force* even by his own standards of ceaseless self-promotion. Could anyone besides Lerner summon up the egotistical arrogance to place a bunch of empty cliches and banal platitudes, which he strings together as "the politics of meaning," on a level with the women's movement's struggle against patriarchy?

David Finkel
Detroit, MI

In need of a labor movement

"IN NEED OF A LABOR MOVEMENT" was a great issue. Like the one you did on prisons, it truly spoke the gospel in specific witness.

I knew I was in the right place when I read Marianne Arbogast's historical perspective on *The Witness* and labor issues. She mentioned Vida Scudder's articles in the early part of the century. I just finished reading Scudder's 1937 autobiography, *On Journey*, and was thrilled by her passion for women, socialism ... and the church. Her support of Lawrence textiles strikers, which almost cost her job, particularly struck me.

Molly Lovelock
Eastham, MA

YOUR MAGAZINE IS WELL-WRITTEN. I am always impressed by Jane Slaughter, of course. Your Editor's comments about "fear and pomp" separating the labor movement from organized religion was correct as far as it went. What the Editor fails to point out is that we need each other and we are becoming increasingly irrelevant to large numbers of people. Often the mainstream media ignores what we do or what we say. Our principles demand we side with the poor and the soon to be poor. The Media and those who enrich themselves while others suffer tend to look away from us, or look at us with jaundiced eyes. We are called names, assigned labels and risk further irrelevancy. This is not easy. But, the philosophical treatises which form the foundation of our principles do not include the word easy.

George Searfoss
Labor in the Schools Program
Indiana University

WHILE I CAN CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND that unjust labor practices in our nation, and indeed in the world, force us to take action, there is a larger truth which screams out to be heard in this arena where the church is concerned.

The institutional church, and those who presume to speak for it through magazines like *The Witness*, with its banner-carrying and speech-making, forget that, in order to see the speck in labor's eye, we must first remove the plank in our own. We belong to a church which has been ordaining women for more than 20 years, and yet we still have incredible double standards when it comes to deployment of priests.

It is no small wonder to me that the institutional church can do little more than pay lip service to the needs of those who are stripped of their worth by unfair labor practices. Until we grapple with our own justice issues as regards labor practices, we will never be

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taken seriously in other segments of society. Perhaps *The Witness* might devote some time and space to our own labor issues in the future.

Barbara Mays-Stock
America on Line

Family history

I WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY the "Family reunions/family history" [7/96] issue. In striking contrast to modern fads on genealogies, where we delight in tracing some of "the glorious past" in the lives of our ancestors, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's "'Are you blood?: Hope in race relations'" refers to some of the more bloody past of her white ancestors who were apparently responsible for the massacre of American Indian tribes, among other acts. She writes of both the good and the bad in her ancestral past — in other words, she tries to face up to the truth in her family history. In this respect, she is true to what is best in the Scriptures where both the heroic and the shameful deeds of the founding fathers such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are laid out in the open for all to understand.

I am convinced that the present in God's time can be dealt with creatively only as we are honest about both the good and the bad in our ancestors. Our facing up to the sins of our forebears in their times can do much to fortify us to participate in the divine process of repairing what is terribly wrong in our society today. Related to this, in the Hiroshima/ Nagasaki anniversary issue [7/95], I was particularly impressed that Wylie-Kellermann dug up her late father's letters as an Armed Forces chaplain expressing his gratitude for the ending of World War II; he wrote to his family back home that dropping the A-bomb was necessary. The adult daughter and now mother Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann does not now agree with her father, who later was to become the dean of General Seminary and an Episcopal bishop. Nevertheless, she chose to publish her father's opinion as a part of reality of the past of one American patriot and Christian chaplain. Such honesty is what keeps *The Witness* such an outstanding publication particularly for the ecumenical reading public.

Seichi Michael Yasutake
Evanston, IL

Classifieds

Travel education

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THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING my reunion story on reuniting with a daughter I gave up for adoption. Birth mothers speak a very specific language and this language is not taught or even acknowledged by the larger part of society. We are not seen as honorable mothers. We are not validated and many of us live lives full of shame, guilt and fear.

I am available to any woman who needs to be listened to, encouraged to search or validated as a good mother. Surrendering a child to adoption is an act of love, searching for that child — an act of courage.

Victoria Gallucci
570 Union Ave.
Belleville NJ 07109

Faces of Islam

THE EXTENT OF THE INTEREST in your publication was illustrated to me when I shared my copy of *The Witness* with a member of the Islamic Community here at the Augusta Correctional Center. He was so impressed with the quality of your issue on Islam that he asked my permission to post several of the articles on the Islamic bulletin board.

You are doing an excellent job in supporting the views of those of us who feel that Episcopalians should be able to think for themselves!

James Martin Brown
Craigsville, VA

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The Witness

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

Manuscripts: We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Poetry can be sent directly to Leslie Williams, 2504 Gulf Ave., Midland, TX. 79705.

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Fasting and fulfillment

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Charles Williams observed that while there are religious orders that attempt to mirror nearly every attribute of Jesus there are none upholding Jesus as "glutton and wine bibber." *The Witness* staff, in the main, could claim to be such an order. I state that at the outset in case any readers imagine that we thrive on moderation or that fasting comes easily for us.

Yet this issue is dedicated to the idea that for Americans who want a life with meaning, the very first step may be fasting (see page 8). We need to clear ourselves of the cultural imperatives to consume mindlessly.

Money managers are often preaching these days. A variety of them are attempting to teach us that if we reflect on our choices, we may actually be able to have much of what we desire. First, of course, we'd have to cut loose from the idea that there is something nebulous and ill-defined, some product, that we *need* to be whole.

If we pull back and reflect, the life that follows may be simpler and deeper than any we foresee. Marsha Sinetar (interviewed on page 14) writes books on self-actualizing and the spiritual dimension of entrepreneurship that promise to help readers get "the life you want." She uses biblical language, speaking of discernment and vocation.

In all likelihood, we will learn that much of what we think we want, we don't. (That's the wisdom of the money managers who say if you see something at the store that you suddenly want, go home before making another trip to buy it.) We may also find that our deepest desires are for things that we already have. All we need to do is free our lives of illusion and compulsion, so that we can re-order our lives intentionally.

The gift in such a life, the thing that makes it "what we want," may be simply that we will be present to it. Like the Buddhist monk who practices simply drinking tea, not planning over tea, not reading with tea, not washing the dishes between sips. We can practice simply being present in our lives.

Our hope is that people will step back, practice discernment, name the life they want and tend to it, trusting God and creation.

The obvious question is: Does this invitation to get the life you want only apply to the privileged? Can it translate for people of color and people whose educational opportunities and means are deliberately circumscribed by the system? Interestingly, some politically savvy observers believe that this approach *can* cross class and race lines. But we have to acknowledge that *everyone* can only get the life they want through a nationwide simplication of lifestyle.

Whether people who get the life they want will move toward a sense of social responsibility is an open question. Discipleship, we know, is more than choosing for our *own* health in the swirl of a death-dealing imperial center. Several contributing editors stress that we have to acknowledge that people are dying; there is an urgency. And, they add, there is an irony in heading back to the land for a simple life, by virtue of a stock portfolio.

The Witness staff is aware of the dangers inherent in this topic. Yet, we believe that given the enormity of the horrors and abuse we are all aware of, people *need* to find and shelter a sense of meaning and wholeness in their lives before they can act.

Julie Wortman often argues that we have to dig deep where we are. People who live in privilege may be able to help call in the kingdom; they too have a vocation. And if their social geography actually makes Christian discipleship so difficult that it is unlikely, there is still nowhere else from which they can begin their journey. They need, Wortman says, to dig deep, to learn the contours of their physical environment, to listen to their hearts and to their neighbors. For each of us, this is the first step.

It's a first step that many are taking. Paul H. Ray identifies this as the rise of "cultural creatives" [*TW* 11/92]. Ray notes that as many as 44 million Americans believe in community, environmental stewardship, family, feminism, altruism and voluntary simplicity. Even *The Wall Street Journal* recognizes this trend, though much more cynically, in its recent article describing Madison Avenue's scramble to figure out how to sell to "oppies" (older professional parents) who are choosing to stay home with their children in the evenings and preferring durable goods to status-filled throw-away items. They report: "As many attempt to juggle career and family, any semblance

continued on page 6

editor's note

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

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Upholding creation by praise

by Anne Cox

Suppose benevolent praise,
Coming into being by our will,
Had a separate existence, its purple or azure light
Gathering in the upper reaches, affecting
The aura of morning haze over autumn fields,
Or causing a perurbation in the mode of an asteroid,
What if praise and its emanations
Were necessary catalysts to the harmonious
Expansion of the void? Suppose, for the prosperous
Welfare of the universe, there were an element
Of need involved.

("Suppose," *Firekeeper,* Milkweed Editions, 1994)

Constance Keith Alford

Pattiann Rogers says she wrote this poem to counter the feeling of despair, of saying that there isn't any meaning, that everything is accident and that we can't be significant, we're so tiny compared to the universe around us. But what if, she wonders, what if the universe somehow needs what we are capable of giving so that the universe might become itself? This would mean that we, as unique human creatures, matter a lot, that we have things, even small things we can do that contribute to the well-being of the universe.

Rogers writes about the power of praise. Do we choose to align ourselves with this particular power or do we join forces with other less harmonious emanations?

Children need praise, encouragement for jobs well done, for efforts attempted and for just being. And we know that without praise, we don't really blossom forth into our full potential.

There's also praising God, as in when we "praise God from whom all blessings flow." It's an attitude that comes from appreciation, from waking up one morning and noticing the world, noticing the beauty of last night's rain still clinging to the grass, delighting in reflections off the remaining puddles.

More than simply making us feel better, what if praise, many more times than negativity, were what the universe really needs so that it can become fully itself, just as children need praise to become fully themselves?

"We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves," Paul reminds us (Romans 14:7). The actions *we* take, the feelings *we* harbor, have consequences for others because in neither *our* living nor *our* dying are we separate.

From chaos theory, we know that the flutter of a butterfly's wing in one hemisphere can start a hurricane in another. We are connected; indeed, the whole universe is connected.

Not only does my behavior affect my relationships, but it also affects the expansion of the universe. So, too, can our attitudes affect everything. They're just as concrete.

The life I want is one guided by praise. And I am coming to believe that this desire is exactly the one thing that the universe needs so that it might become itself. TW

Anne Cox , is rector of Nativity Episcopal Church in Bloomfield Township, Mich. and a *Witness* contributing editor. Artist **Constance Keith Alford** lives in Port Gibson, Miss.

Fasting, *continued*

of a balanced life has become a status symbol. It helps to become a gourmet cook, play an instrument, rediscover religion and attend fund-raisers. It's also chic to chuck a stressful career" [*WSJ* 9/30/96].

Walter Wink introduces a harsh reality to this conversation. He notes that the boomer generation doesn't extend its resources very far beyond its own immediate gratification or debt (page 21). In the meantime, children are dying. There are real stakes.

The Witness will examine some of the Gospel's further claims in the January, 1997 issue on Jubilee economics. But, in this moment, our hope is that if people step back, practice discernment, name the life they want and tend to it, if they trust God and creation, they will be better able to imagine how they might respond to their neighbors' and the world's needs.

We were startled to receive a promotional copy of *Christianity Today* — just as this issue went to press. We applaud *Christianity Today* for tackling rampant consumerism in their "Why the Devil takes Visa: a Christian response to the triumph of consumerism."

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Destination

by Carol Hamilton

Through the desert nights
we bump and doze with
the Wise Men, study the
heavens and secure the
precious gifts in hopes
of a destination.

With the Shepherds
we face blazing
darkness, cacophonous
silence, shattered
routine and leave
our duties in shocked
search for a reason.

With Mary we hear
the mixed promise of
a joy that will pierce
with sorrow, of a tiny
flesh which shall be scattered
to fall like snowflakes,
sustenance flung afar.

Open this small fist
and unleash secrets.

Carol Hamilton lives in Midwest City, Okla.

Reflection

by Lucy Taft

A child shines out
like foil fresh
torn from the roll,
reflecting a face,
making the sound of
tambourines in motion.
(Listen!) The
shimmer slows to
ear-ringing quiet
when you are
molded to a mask
crazed with little
worry lines, rigid,
the light eclipsed.

Lucy Taft lives in Austin, Tex.

Poetry

Fasting in the imperial center: being restored to God's creation

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

A demonic flip takes hold of us in this culture and nowhere is it more evident than in Christmas.

Advertisements, which are relentless — the *New York Times* estimates that the average American sees 3,000 some ads a day — tell us that we are special. A media critic, who watched TV for a year as part of an experiment, says that the unvarying message is, "You are very, very special."

Of course, there's a twist.

You are special *but* you are not getting what you deserve. "It's a shame," the advertisers tell you, "that you don't have what makes these people so happy. You deserve it. And with credit, you can have it now."

God's promise

At *The Witness*, we suspect that this message is compelling because it is so close to what is true. In God's economy, we are all very special and God does want the world for us — in fact, God created it with an eye to us enjoying it and being in right relationship to it.

To gain clarity about what it is that God offers us, it may be necessary for those of us living in this most affluent country to fast. The remedy in other countries is, no doubt, different. But here, we have an acute need to untwine the voice of God from the voice of over-consumption. This applies even to Americans with the fewest resources, because we are all held captive by what Madison Avenue would have us believe.

Walter Wink describes the power of fasting in *Unmasking the Powers* (Fortress, 1986) when he examines Daniel 10. Daniel lives in the Babylonian court; he eats its fine food and is exposed to its gods. When he appeals to Yahweh for guidance, he begins a fast. At last an angel of the Lord appears to him, saying "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me 21 days. So Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and have come to help you understand what is to happen to your people at the end of days."

Wink suggests that, as the angel explains, the powerful spirituality of the empire did keep the word of God at bay. But he adds that, at the same time, the ethos that Daniel lived in — the perfumes, the foods, the opulence — kept the word of God from Daniel. Daniel was captive to the imperial spirit.

The ethos of Babylon that Daniel lived in — the perfumes, the foods, the opulence — kept the word of God from him. Daniel was captive to the imperial spirit. As are we.

As are we. And how could we not be? We live in the wealthiest nation on earth, which consumes about 40 percent of the world's resources although it holds only six percent of the world's people. We make this amazing grab at resources successfully because we have the most powerful military in the world.

I remember hearing a story that may have been apocryphal, about three rabbis coming from Israel 20 years ago. When they reached the U.S., they recoiled because they found it such a very hard place to pray. Similarly, Malidoma Patrice Somé reports that when he accompanied his African tribal leaders into a city for the first time, they were upset. In their culture, truly great people worked hard not to draw attention to themselves. Gesticulating at skyscrapers, an elder said, "Whoever did that must be very sick!"

Christmas

We're entering the sickest time in our cultural calendar. We are also entering one of the holiest moments in our liturgical year. Untwining the two is our challenge. How do we discern the spirit behind the tears that come to our eyes because Christmas carols recall home, resurrecting in our memories the faces and touch of people we love. Is it a right memory, as it often is, or a nostalgic fantasy that strips the present of its value? How do we untangle the feelings that arise when we are shopping and, depending on our bio-region, the snow is falling and carols are piped through the loudspeakers? What is at work when we pause before the Christmas displays where miniature people celebrate outside miniature villages that look German or Swiss, but are made in China by teenagers who are underpaid and sometimes hostage in factories?

It's enough to make one mad.

And perhaps we are. People running out their credit card debts to the limit to purchase toys that are supposed to pro-

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

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vide their children with wonder would know better if they were not surrounded by a thick, palpable ethos that whispers the demonic to them in the very words that God might use: "You and your loved ones are special. You deserve the best."

Taking on Santa

A good-faith attempt at clearing the demonic from the sacred in this season requires, among other things, a stark look at Santa Claus. Like Jesus, Santa is coming. Unlike Jesus, Santa will make sure the rain only falls on the just. At Santa's invitation, we enter a cultural headlong rush toward all that we "deserve" if we have been good. This Calvinist idea underpins the entire capitalist system. It is the only rationale that can make us believe that we *should* claim toys from the hands of Asian children who manufacture them at such a high cost to their humanity. We have been good. We desperately need a God who offers this reassurance.

I visited Haiti in 1983. As with most people of faith who visit a third world country, I was in agony trying to figure out what it meant that people living in tin sheds over sewage channels were treasuring empty plastic bottles (which we would call trash) as prized vessels for water. The imperative to change the way resources are distributed was overwhelming. So, in a way it was small surprise that at the Protestant, English-speaking mission (not that of the Sisters of St. Margaret), the pastor literally preached, "God gives America such abundance because we are a Christian nation. If the Haitians would quit doing Voodoo, God could love them too." Simple remedy. The shortage that so many experience is God's work. We have so much because we are loved by God. God would like to love them too, but they make this impossible.

Stepping up to our cultural figurehead for this belief, we step up to Santa. (Can you see Natalie Wood's dismay?)

The only remedy I can imagine is to pull Santa back into the council of hosts over which Yahweh presides. The Bible is straightforward that there are many spirits. The fact that Yahweh is one God and claims our hearts does not mean that there are not a number of gods making competing claims. In repeated references (see Walter Wink's trilogy on the powers), God is described as presiding over a council of the hosts.

Detail, *Temptation of St. Anthony* by Hieronymus Bosch

We do not have to destroy Santa. Saint Nicholas has a right vocation in the council. We can help by restoring him, as is possible, to his own historic roots in a geography, in a time. By that simple act, we dispense with the North Pole and a middle eastern landscape comes alive. The struggles of the poor and the reality of persecution of Christians comes alive. (Nicholas was imprisoned for his faith by Diocletian).

In a children's book that I wrote for my daughters, Saint Nicholas is presented as a saint of God who overhears the needs of his neighbors and intervenes because he knows what it is to suffer, having been a wealthy, but orphaned child. This is the vocation of all the saints — a vocation that binds us to them and to one another.

Taking this posture is a good start. Holding it in the face of the onslaught of advertisements and store displays is tough and places one in danger of becoming rigid and losing the playfulness and joy that the season appropriately calls for in relation to the advent of Jesus.

So how do we cleanse ourselves further of the imperial spirit which has become our familiar? How do we break free enough to even see where it has laid its claims on us?

A fundamental step is to rebuke the voices that insinuate "you are so special you deserve more" by proclaiming that because we are loved by God, we *know* that God will provide. In fact, God *has* provided.

The rewards that God intends for us are not being withheld. They are not something we must look to the future for — they are in our own histories, our own geographies, the landscapes we face, the neighbors in need and the interventions offered by the saints and by one another.

We need to examine the craven desires that are spoonfed to us, the impatience, the sense that something better is happening just beyond our reach, the sense that we are entitled and yet deprived. This attitude has been cultivated in us by the

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advertising industry. Cynics in the government and military may have consciously thought it could be used for population control — the ferment of the 1930s and 1940s made over into a tranquil and consumption-oriented 1950s.

'Entitled, yet deprived'

Today, of course, this attitude has flowed into rage. The combination of craven desire, gluttoning consumption and continuing dissatisfaction yields a population that has no patience and takes no responsibility. How many parish priests face vitriolic attacks from people who feel they weren't adequately pastored during a crisis? How often is it true that the parishioners never felt responsible to even inform the pastor of their situation or to *ask* for help?

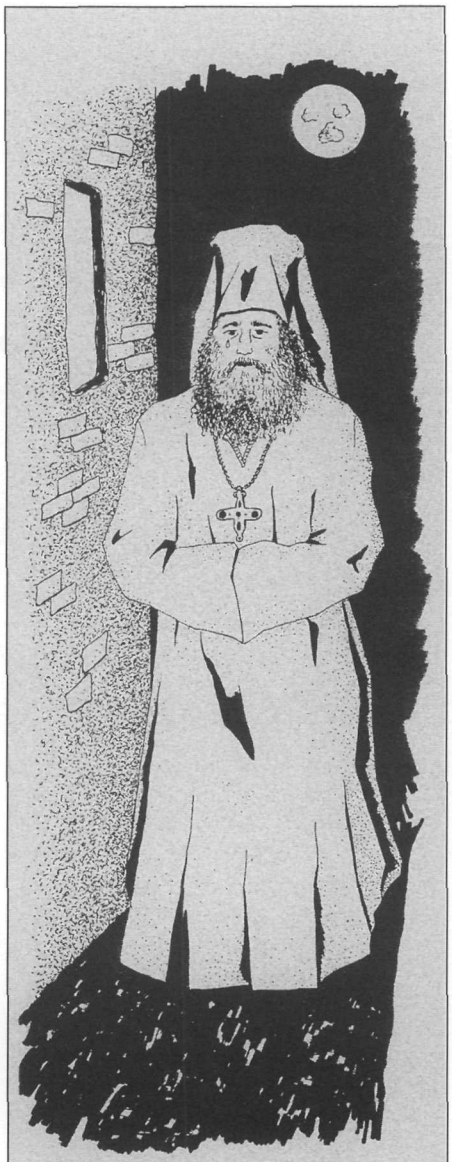
My sister teaches in New Jersey's public schools. She says that her principal speaks of families as "consumers" and promises complete customer satisfaction. Why, my sister asks, can't the principal say, "We have some difficult problems to engage and fewer resources. We will need to work together to decide where to put our resources and then acknowledge that some children's needs will not be adequately met at this time"?

Actually we know why the principal can't speak straightforwardly — there is no tolerance in the U.S. for delayed gratification or for sustained work toward a goal.

Rage unleashed

What was intended to control the population has made it ungovernable and has fueled its feelings of being deprived, taken advantage of and in need of redress.

Rage makes the work of people in service professions practically untenable and it increases the hostility toward people with special needs or a past that includes criminal convictions. Prisoners, many suggest, are coddled — are they getting the elusive something to which the rest of us are entitled but deprived? End rehabilitative programs and throw away the key. Cut taxes because maybe the extra thousands of dollars in a household budget will buy that elusive thing that keeps us from being whole. If you are angry enough, you can join a militia or put on fatigues and shoot up a fast food restaurant.



At our house, we remember Saint Nicholas on December 6. We think of the good bishop listening in the night to the cries of those who are afraid or lonely or tired. We remember him searching his heart for what he might do to help.

— illustration by Virginia Maksymowicz and text by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann.

The consumerism into which we are invited is utterly death-dealing. There is nothing benign about it.

So what can we do?

We can pull our sphere of reference down to a more local geography. We are not the generic American depicted on T.V. We have histories and local problems and orientations. We have histories that include working together toward community health. We have blessings we can count and histories that we must rehearse, just as the Jews in captivity sang the songs of Zion (and refused to surrender them when their captors called for a song).

We are a people of the Bible and the Bible has much to say about money and consumption. We can struggle with economics. (The January 1997 *Witness* will offer tangible interpretations of Jubilee economics.) We can try to shield ourselves with a litany of credos offered in Scripture, including, for one, that the rain falls on the just and the unjust — wealth is not an indication of God's favor. We can remind ourselves that all that we are is God's gift and one of which God has expectations.

And we can call for God's help. We can cry out for God's presence in this smoke-and-mirrors fun house of cravings, gluts and real need.

We can rebuke the power of the temptations by fasting. What forms a fast may take can vary. Most of our corporate experience of fasting is rooted in Lent — giving up desserts, giving up alcohol, smoking or swearing. Some fast one day a week from all foods as a continual

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discipline. Any of these methods may help to free us.

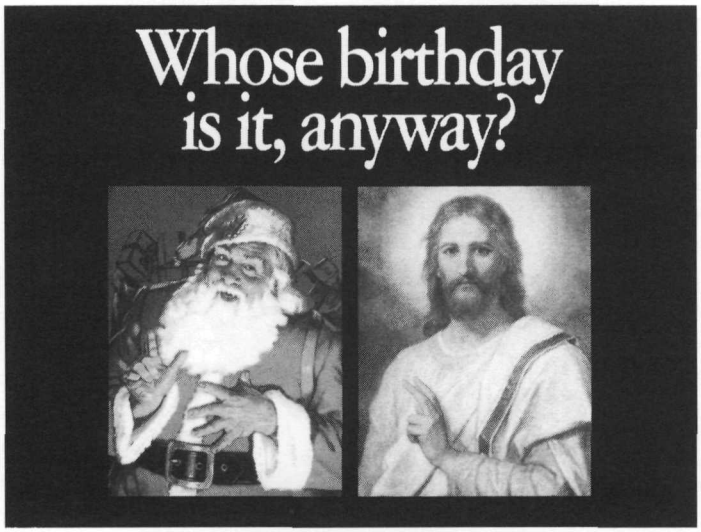
Sharpening our longing

Daniel's fast was long-term — it cried out, "Come or surely I will die." His was a fast that created a longing so great, so urgent that it was greater even than the imperially generated cravings and it was directed entirely toward God. Daniel intentionally linked the need in all of us to the source of our well-being. He redirected the needs through which he had been manipulated toward the One who can know us, form us, delight in us and ask the world of us.

Which brings us to a consideration of longing, but not without the insertion of an aside. Fasting from all foods can also be twisted into a manipulative idolatry, so it must be engaged in with discernment, prayer and community. One wonders if anorexics begin to refuse food from a right impulse to clear their bodies and hearts of the ethos that has created their despair. Yet, alone with it, the refusal becomes a means of exerting power over others and a way of flirting with death, multiplying the power of death in the hearts of all those close to the situation. A friend who leads vision quests, Debbie Mast, asks women to consider whether fasting is a healthy act for them. The transcendental quality in fasting might be the opposite of what many women need, she explains. The damage done by cultural stereotyping of female beauty and people's experience of having their bodies mishandled will make some women eager to shed their bodies in any way possible. In these cases, Mast encourages women to do whatever it takes, including eating, to ground themselves in their bodies by choice.

Whether one is refusing food or requiring oneself to be fully present in one's body despite the fear or discomfort, one is creating an awareness of the longing that lives in human beings.

Longing does not have to be a desire that causes us to become involved in various forms of death. Unfulfilled desires can be holy.



Church Ad Project

In *Sense and Sensibilities,* the story is excruciating simply because two characters have so much longing for one another and so much discipline in their sense of virtue. Critics have noted that their abstinence is more erotic than the action in sexually explicit movies.

We do not have to destroy Santa. We can help by restoring him to his own historic roots in a geography, in a time. By that simple act, we dispense with the North Pole and the elves. The struggles of the poor and the reality of persecution of Christians comes alive.

Longing arises when we have a moment apart, time with music, art or memories. Prayer is longing; it is calling our longing by its true name. Love is longing; it is an engagement with all that *is* while sensing what is being called into being by God.

The sense of almost, but not yet, is what sears our faith with ecstasy. We can almost see the way out of no way. We can feel in our feet the very pulse of creation singing God's praises, an ancient hymn that persists even as humanity fetters and poisons its powers. God's wholeness is promised and we believe. We feel its absence even while we trust its coming. We can wait and long for and glimpse it.

C.S. Lewis describes this longing as joy. In *Surprised by Joy*, he writes:

"As I stood beside a flowering currant bush on a summer day there suddenly arose in me without warning, and as if from a depth not of years but of centuries, the memory of that earlier morning at the Old House when my brother had brought his toy garden into the nursery. It is difficult to find words strong enough for the sensation which came over me; Milton's 'enormous bliss' of Eden comes somewhere near it. It was a sensation, of course, of desire; but desire for what? not, certainly, for a biscuit tin filled with moss, nor even (though that came into it) for my own past. Before I knew what I desired, the desire itself was gone, the whole glimpse withdrawn, the world turned commonplace again, or only stirred by a longing for the longing that had just ceased. It had taken only a moment of time; and in a certain sense everything else that had ever happened to me was insignificant in comparison."

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These moments of longing, Lewis finally realizes, are actually fleeting evidence of God, "not the wave, but the wave's imprint on the sand."

In this longing, we are affirmed. We understand that we are very special and that we can claim the biblical language that asserts that we are children and heirs of One who is all powerful. As heirs and stewards with dominion, we can *anticipate* fulfillment and we can work for the dream of God without a sense of deprivation. Presumably we can interact with teachers and pastors without expecting *them* to recreate and reward *us*. Beyond doubt, we can resist the urge to indefinitely lock up or annihilate people we are angry at.

Ironically, it is when we can give ourselves to longing that we suddenly are able to see and value what we have, to cherish those things given into our hands, as we would wood or stone that a hundred hands have smoothed.

In this effort to live in right relationship while anticipating the reign of God, we have an ally. The earth itself.

Restoring creation

A tremendous number of people in this culture are finding ways to prepare with a group and then take time apart to sit with creation and to listen. In Scout campouts, Outward Bound programs and New Age vision quests, people are learning to recognize plants, to distill clean water, to light fires, to sleep on the ground. They are not just acquiring survival skills. Often they are also coming home with a changed sense of themselves, sometimes a new name.

The Witness' newest board member Jolly Sue Baker speaks of the trees and mountains in Washington state. "The spirits," she says, "are still alive. You *can't* ignore them." She suspects that overuse of the land back east has altered people's ability to recognize the spirits.

But Tom Brown, a naturalist and author of several books that weave survival skills with American Indian mysticism, grew up in New Jersey. He managed to learn the tracks of animals, to learn to trust creation, in the Pine Barrens — a wilderness area in the heart of industrial New Jersey.

The spirits are there for the knowing. The earth contains a pattern of the will of God, a rhythm, an ancient truth. Just as in C.S. Lewis' Narnia chronicles the trees are the decisive warriors in the Last Battle, creation is our ally and guide.

New Age creeds

When Christians, conservatives and liberals, make disparaging remarks about New Age devotees, I suspect they don't really know what they are condemning. For all the self-centeredness that New Age spirituality can engender, it is also moving powerfully to restore people to their relationship to the earth and to a belief in an interactive dance between the universe and our lives. It is, in many quarters, making faith real for people. Sometimes it successfully recovers some of the ancient wisdom held by earth-based people around the world.

Conservatives screaming, "Pagan!" can't be heard by New Agers as offering anything more valuable than what they are learning about themselves and the earth. (C.S. Lewis, so widely respected among conservatives, doesn't hesitate to include in his children's books the river god, the wood nymphs and Bacchus with the maenads in the victory romp when God prevails. In fact, Lewis writes that when he was searching for a religious tradition, he wondered, "Where has religion reached its true maturity? Where, if anywhere, have the hints of all Paganism been *fulfilled?*")

Unfulfilled desires can be holy. The sense of almost, but not yet, is what sears our faith with ecstasy.

Christians may have more to learn from New Age devotees than they have to teach. We in the church have willingly surrendered all ties between our feasts and the cycles of the earth. To a large degree, we have minimized miracles and direct communication with God. But what we do have to offer, if we watch and understand, is a limited intervention when beliefs begin to twist into idolatries. We can proclaim that in the heavenly host, Yahweh prevails. Petty sacrifices and intricate rituals are not *required* by God. No demi-god can claim our hearts. We do not *need* secret societies or handfuls of crystals. We can embrace creation and the heavenly hosts in full freedom.

Matched praise

Earth-based people around the world attest to a spirit in the earth that welcomes us and provides. People experience a matched understanding, a matched longing. How else could "the very stones cry out" and "trees clap their hands for joy?" On the verge of starvation, people testify to being alerted to a food source or a spring. In the Philippines, where the dolphin is a Christ symbol, a friend reports that a man, clinging to the remnants of his storm-damaged boat, feared that he and his daughter would die of thirst. A dolphin approached, pushing a coconut. The man broke a tooth cracking it open, but its milk and meat saved his life and the life of the child. The remedies are always simple; no opulent banquets, just what we need.

To understand that a coconut is *life,* Americans need to strip down, to do without, to fast. And when we do, we will find an abundance that may have nothing to do with material security, yet it may be more than we had hoped for. God has decreed that we are special and that we can have what we most desire, now and always. TW

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'Recognizing the deep movement of life'

by Steven Charleston

For those indigenous persons who still seek to follow the traditional ways of their ancestors, fasting is as integral to a spiritual life as prayer. Every tribal community in North America, from Hudson Bay to Baja and from Oregon to the Okefenokee, practiced fasting in its religious life. The variations were many, but the central spiritual theme was the same: Voluntarily abstaining from food was considered a pathway to follow to draw nearer to God. It was a path to vision and truth.

Fasting was part of both communal and private worship. It was part of the rites of passage for adolescent girls and boys. It was a vital aspect of the powerful experience of the "vision quest," the intentional search for a deeper communion with God through prayer, meditation and physical discipline. Fasting was also a common step in the novitiate of those who sought tribal ordination as spiritual healers, the medicine men and women of the Tribe.

In all of these ways, fasting was an expression of Native traditional theology. It was as respected in the "old testament" of Native America as it was in the "old testament" of Israel. Just as early Hebrew culture recognized the intimate connection between food and faith, so too did the original spiritual wisdom of Native People make this fundamental linkage. The simple act of eating, of taking in nourishment, became for both Israel and Native America a ritual understanding that had profound theological meaning. Certain foods were to be avoided, while others were to be eaten only on special occasions. Communal or family feasts (the source of our Christian "Communion") were structured ways to integrate food with prayer and relationship. Both cultures spent time on the selection and preparation of certain sacred foods, especially those that would be thought of as offerings to God. And ultimately, abstinence from food itself became a subtle but sophisticated way of completing the circle between what we consume and what we believe.

Why all of this attention to food? I believe the answer escapes affluent America because for this culture food is a convenience, not a contemplation. But for wiser cultures, not only in ancient Israel and North America but throughout the indigenous world, the deep meditation on the meaning of life led religious men and women to consider the intricate bond between life in all of its subtlety. Life grows, life dies. Life emerges, life is harvested. Life moves through one part of creation to the next: from plant to person and then from person back to the earth. Life, therefore, is constantly transforming itself: moving in great cycles through all creation. The genius of the Hebrew tribes, just as the genius of Native American tribes, was in recognizing this deep movement of life through the everyday world for what it is: an access point for human beings to connect to the Creator who set all of this in motion.

Fasting is one way to step out of the natural cycle, even for only a brief time, to focus more clearly on the inner truth and beauty of the process that is sacred life. In doing this, a person gains a vision of life (of its many cycles and connections) that deepens human perspective and draws human awareness nearer to the intention of God. When Native People fasted, they did so for a purpose — for an encounter with a God who is truly living and incarnate. Because God was not only the Creator, but the Sustainer of all life, then focusing on that sustaining-nourishing-transforming principle gave Native People a vision of God which could be fully appreciated in no other way.

Two quick images can help to illustrate the depth of the Native theology in both its Traditional and its Christian form. First, consider the creation story of the Hopi of Arizona. The Hopi People, called the Peaceful Ones, tell of God gathering all the tribes of human beings together at the dawn of time and offering them the lifegiving nourishment of sacred ears of corn to sustain them on their many migrations around the world. Those peoples who were greedy grabbed for the largest ears of corn, leaving only one small ear for the Hopi to take for themselves. But the Hopi, because they understood the wisdom which said "the last shall be first," were blessed by God for their forbearance and humility: because they knew that taking from the earth is a holy act which must only be done with great care and reverence, they became a holy nation in themselves, a chosen People.

Webster Wise, a Seminole man from Oklahoma, was once interviewed about how Christian Native People in his tribe understood the old ways of the vision quest. He explained that the thread to the past was unbroken; when the church needed wisdom, its members would fast together, seeking God's truth. In Webster's own words:

"Back in those days they all went out in the woods. If they had anything coming up in the church that was to be settled, they'd have to go out there, telling God to lead that business, whatever it may be."

Fasting opens the heart to wisdom. In both ways, Native America has offered us a reminder that the sincerity of the search for God can often be measured by the sincerity of the intention to fast. TW

Steven Charleston, former bishop of Alaska, is chaplain at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn.

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'Life ever surpassing itself': an interview with Marsha Sinetar

by Julie A. Wortman

In the course of participating in the planning of this issue of *The Witness*, I found myself thinking that a perfect cover image would be a photograph of surfers in southern California riding waves at dawn — a score or so of wetsuit-clad figures sitting on surfboards in the early morning mist like some strange species of gull or aquatic mammal, drawn to the same spot for the same reason, but each engaged in a solitary response to nature's beckoning. Such a picture likely would have played into peoples' knee-jerk expectation that the life people instinctively want is nothing more than a life of irresponsible self-indulgence, something no justice-minded publication should be espousing.

But there's more to this image of early morning surfers than that, which was why I liked the idea of using it on the cover. I'm not a surfer, but I can understand the desire to be in tune with the metabolism of the earth's larger rhythmns, to give oneself over to the ocean's power, to punctuate one's days with an attentive tracking of wind, currents and tides.

I am aware that there is a dark side to surfing, like anything else, but I respect people who can figure out a way to regularly nurture their souls in such ways as this. Some give themselves over to the life so fully that they eschew work that might promise greater material benefits in favor of employment that offers more flexible hours and a way to live close to the beach.

Marsha Sinetar

The trick, says Marsha Sinetar, is to honor one's enthusiasms and live accordingly. Sinetar, who lives along a different stretch of California coastline than the one I've been describing, is an organizational psychologist, mediator and educator whose research in the area of "self-actualizing" has been the subject of numerous books, among them, *Do What You Love, The Money Will Follow* [Dell Publishing, 1987]; *Ordinary People as Monks and Mystics* [Paulist Press, 1986]; and, most recently, *To Build the Life You Want, Create the Work You Love* [St. Martin's Press, 1995]. She would be among the first to point out that "enthusiasm" means "filled with God" and includes authentic vocation and the pursuit of wholeness.

> *Inner health stimulates the need to express one's God-given gifts. The healthier we are, the more compelled we are to follow the truth of our own being.*
>
> *— Marsha Sinetar*

"Wholeness exists to the extent individuals are conscious of and receptive to his or her innermost self," Sinetar writes in *Ordinary People* . The call to wholeness involves, first, "an awareness that something in one's customary way of living doesn't work, isn't health-promoting, isn't life-supporting. This initial awareness is experienced in various ways and at different times and isn't unusual even in the general population. What *is* unusual is that socially transcendent individuals *do* something, alter their lives, as a result of their awareness, in such a way that furthers the development of the person they sense they could be."

These days I seem to be surrounded by such "socially transcendent" people. One friend took a dramatic cut in pay as an administrator for a large visiting nurse agency to join a smaller agency that was willing to let her pursue non-traditional forms of therapeutic healing. She has more "drudge" work to do, but finds the improved sense of personal fulfillment worth the sacrifice.

Another acquaintance, dispirited by the working conditions at her church communications job, finally quit to go it on her own doing freelance work. A single mother with a nine-year-old daughter to support, working for herself has given her more time for her daughter in addition to peace of mind — and a reasonable income.

I'm also impressed by two people I know who operate a small cleaning business. Both come from working class backgrounds and lack college degrees. They

Julie A. Wortman is managing editor of *The Witness*. Photographer **Sandy Lejeune** is an organic farmer in Santa Barbara, Calif.

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dislike the work they are doing, but take pride in doing it well as long as they depend on it for paying their bills. The freedom they have as their own bosses makes up for the frustration they experience around the high cost of medical insurance and tax laws that seem to penalize them for their initiative. Both have been investigating coursework at a local community college in preparation for a change.

As Sinetar points out, the entrepreneurial spirit and the desire for self-definition are no respecters of social or economic privilege. Many people assume, she says in *Ordinary People*, "that in order to have the courage and ability to take on the so-called 'higher' needs of the personality, people had to be financially secure. In fact, that doesn't seem to be the case. They have to *feel* secure before facing the work, but that is another matter."

Several years ago I heard the social critic and scholar of American culture, bell hooks, say much the same thing. She told a standing-room-only audience of working-class students in Detroit — most of them men and women of color, and most of them juggling families and multiple jobs in addition to their studies — that unemployment can be one of the most creative times in a person's life.

"An unemployed person lacks a job," she said, "not a mind. You can use unemployment to strengthen yourself, to develop a sense of purpose, to *learn* something."

Why couldn't the community open an empty movie theater, hooks asked, and make it into a community education center — a place for people who can't read to learn how; a place to discuss history, politics and literature; a place, above all,where people can claim and cultivate their sense of dignity and purpose in the face of demoralizing circumstances?

Indeed, why not?

Julie Wortman: In preparing this issue our thought has been that people should be able to get the life they want — the "good" life, if you will — but that "fasting" of a special kind will be needed. Your latest book has a lot to do with both ideas.

Marsha Sinetar: I like the definition of the "good" life that Paul Tillich gives us. He says the good life is "life ever surpassing itself." My book is both stern and encouraging about this. It doesn't do for us to be brutal with ourselves when we're trying to hear what's needed. By "brutal" I mean overdoing the punitive messages that we give to ourselves or comparing ourselves in some measly way with people whom we admire. But at the same time it doesn't do to indulge ourselves. So what I've tried to say to people is, "Let's take the creative process one step at a time and be responsible to the obligations that we already have — but *also* responsible to the more abundant life that we want." It could be that less is more: Less fear, less striving, less pressure, less idealized achievement bring more order, discipline, gratefulness.

J.W.: You equate creating the life you want with finding your "authentic vocation." What do you mean by this?

M.S.: "Vocation" is a religious word — or it's a religious word to me. I define vocation as the process or summons of becoming whole and distinctive in a particular way *within our life in community*. I feel that one of the greatest services I can offer my community — whether you define that term by the household, the neighborhood, the village or the global village — is simply to develop a high personal presence, that functional wisdom or righteousness that we possess within our own hearts. That sort of prayerful state serves everyone. When you're at peace, you help establish peace in your community. By the same token, to the extent we are centered and give our full attention to work, we serve the greater community. The Buddha, for example, taught that *right livelihood* was work done consciously, with pure intent and as service. A vocation helps us grow as persons while we meet our own needs and those of others.

J.W.: This seems like the basic call issued by the early Christian community — a call to Christian vocation.

M.S.: Yes, that's right. But the church usually defines only certain, legitimized roles as a "vocation" — ordination, being a member of a religious order. There's very little today of the early spirit of the church, the desert mothers and fathers, although I do see that coming as people catch "fire" to use themselves in a vocational way.

J.W.: Does this apply to only a specific profile of people?

M.S.: The books I have been writing are addressed to everyone. These say, in transcultural and intergenerational language, that if you have just average intelligence and average drive and average gifts, you, too, can have "the good life," even with economic or other limitations — it's not too much for us to expect that of ourselves. Neither is it enough just to think positively. The creative process is demanding. People who are building the lives they want demonstrate old-fashioned virtues: thrift, hard work, pride of workmanship; love of service and community. They've committed themselves to invest in their talents. They seem to work for something larger than self. These values — and not merely monetary aims — fuel their drive, raise self-esteem and ultimately insure occupational achievement. For this reason, what I'm writing about may appeal only to a specific profile of people.

J.W.: You say in *To Build the Life You Want* that a requirement for realizing authentic vocation is inner healthiness. Why?

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M.S.: Inner health stimulates *the need* to express one's God-given gifts. The healthier we are, the more compelled we are to follow the truth of our own being. But some people may be too injured or too easily discouraged or depressed to build the skills they will need. They'll need to acquire soundness of mind first.

J.W.: How much of the population would you say has a sense of authentic vocation?

M.S.: Probably around 10 percent feels a radical, direct call to vocation — the rare experience of being their own person. Maybe between 10 to 50 percent fall somewhere in the middle. I'm fairly hopeful about that larger block of individuals — they feel something's "pressing" them. I find that people who feel restless about their lives and have begun a "searching" process long to embody the qualities and standards of their vocation.

J.W.: Some of your ideas make me think of a time when I did some academic counseling at a university and used to meet with students who were fearful about what would become of their lives. I used to ask them, "What gives you joy?" Often, they would act as if no one had ever asked them that before.

M.S.: I've asked that question, too, and get that same response. It's amazing to me.

J.W.: And it's heartbreaking, because it seems like this pursuit of authentic vocation is for the young.

M.S.: Vocation is for the young, but also for everyone. People in their eighties and older — close to death as they are, savoring every day — understand that joy is not the same as situational happiness. Joy is deep gratitude or enjoyment — rapture, really.

J.W.: Theologian William Stringfellow talks about humanity's vocation to celebrate God and serve human life. He talks about living humanly in the face of death. You speak of global economic, social and political change and uncertainty as the context that calls for a pursuit of authentic vocation.

M.S.: In terms of this global rupture or transformation that we're experiencing, one kindness we can offer one another is to encourage each other to take the bull by the horns, vocationally speaking, and identify how we might serve ourselves and others, and how we can be ingenious enough to make a few bucks at it. Because it's from our ingenuity that we'll stabilize ourselves as individuals and stabilize our communities, too.

People will gain lasting "job security" only as they become self-reliant, creatively resourceful and fully engaged with their process of creative enterprise — all the more so as they tune into their lives' genuine purposes. We also gain job security by getting our mind to move beyond the notion that someone else should give us a job, find it for us, tell us what do with our life. As we find authentic vocation, we transcend the idea that we lack unique gifts or service to offer others.

One of my enjoyments — it's both a luxury and a necessity — is the daily reading of Scripture. We read these exact promises in Scripture: that we have access to the mind of Christ and that the wisdom of God is formed within us. We find continual references to prayer being answered, read that we live in the midst of an untapped wealth of divine resources and grace. The 21st century is here, now. It's time for people who pray and people who reflect deeply on God's word to embody those promises, to rely on those spiritual resources as tools. Our old processes have disappointed many, and made victims of people who were easily crushed by the powers that be. But nobody can crush you, except physically, when you are in prayer. And that takes us back to building the life we want. The 21st century will introduce a major awakening: Larger and larger numbers of people will realize that within us lives a holy resource.

I feel that one of the greatest services I can offer my community is simply to develop a high personal presence, that functional wisdom or righteousness that we possess within our own hearts. When you're at peace, you help establish peace in your community.

J.W.: It seems like much of what you speak about would be encouraging to people who are on welfare or unemployed.

M.S.: I agree. I'm interested in working with those in the helping professions: clergy, health care workers, teachers, etc. These people best serve the population you're describing. For individuals with an interest to function at the level of transformation, my work can be quite helpful. It is to this that I now turn my attention — to the mentoring of mentors.

Many unemployed people feel too discouraged to go "looking for jobs." Who could blame them? Most human beings can take only so much rejection before giving up, especially when they don't really want what they're looking for. Ideally what we want is not simply a job, but to discover our life's vocation. A mere "bill-paying job" offers little genuine, intrinsic reward. True, a bill-paying job is fine if it supports our real purposes as parents, artists or hospital volunteers. But after we meet our security needs almost all of us begin dreaming of our vocation.

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J.W.: Your involvement with business leaders interests me. I don't think of business, especially big business, as a spiritually based endeavor or as a context where you could do the work you are doing.

M.S.: Within every larger business enterprise exist people. And these human beings have hearts, feelings, aspirations, love and vital spiritual lives. I speak a language that is highly respectful of the frame of reference of the other — and, because I do, people sense that they can open up. And so we move from our conversations about strategy and planning to, "Well, what's keeping me from doing this or that?" and to, "Well, if I really have the faith of my convictions, or if I really was a person of integrity ...." and then we are engaged in a spiritual dialogue.

J.W.: Why would big business pay you to lead workshops if you believe that the best chance for people to get fulfilling work is in small and medium-sized businesses?

M.S.: First, I don't lead workshops. In corporate settings, I function as a strategist and corporate development type. Next, I don't believe fulfilling works comes *only* in small and mid-sized business, but that fulfilling work relates to fulfilling the dictates of our vocation. To your point, corporations bring me in to help them become more entrepreneurial, to help them envision creative, responsive and resourceful solutions since we're in an era that demands these qualities from all who wish to be gainfully employed. The old, assembly-line mentality of following lock-step orders from above is gone.

As proof of that point, no one knows (not even the census bureau) how many people are working at home — in kitchens, in garages — starting up little enterprises. A case in point that we're only just hearing about is what's happening in India, whose laws are now favoring entrepreneurial outreaches. Computers are helping that happen. A whole new population of entrepreneurs in India is starting little businesses and serving U.S. ventures.

Witness **contributing editor Ched Myers riding a wave** **Sandy Lejeune**

The reason this entrepreneurial phenomenon is so promising is that it puts into the hands of the workers the processes and controls of their labor and doesn't render them slaves to impersonal bureaucracies. Assembly line workers or those who get fired just before they retire or who are let go from a longstanding position because a company is downsizing are often alienated in a big way from self-reliance and security. Even pension plans are taken away from some. So working in an entrepreneurial venture — either by yourself or in a family business or in a small start-up business or in a large entrepreneurial corporation — has the advantage of giving you more autonomy over what you do.

J.W.: Many people worry, though, that such workers can't afford their own pension funds and benefits, nor can they unionize. How do you respond?

M.S.: I acknowledge that that is a concern, and the Mary-Martha debate goes on in me, too. But the body of my work emphasizes contemplative ascent — the purification and annointing that accompanies progressive union with God. You tell me: What do pension plans and benefits have to do with our journey to God? I write for people thirsting for the divine, for a richer, more abundant life. A vocation is, in my view, Christ — the sacred, hidden, haunting image within — summoning us to be real, knocking at our doors of perception. Can you imagine asking Jesus Christ, when he whispers, "Follow me," " Yes, but who will pay my dental plan?"

Also, considering the increasingly depersonalized world we live in, where soon we'll be fingerprinted at every turn, where reliable friendships with trusted, old neighbors are a thing of the past, it's

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A vocation for churches

by Grace Lee Boggs

We will have to create a new economy in order to renew our cities — an economy which meets not only the material but also the psychological and spiritual needs of human beings. I am convinced that we cannot depend upon large corporations to provide us with jobs. It is now up to us — the citizens — to put our hearts, our imaginations, our minds and our hands together to create a vision, and concrete programs, for developing the kinds of local enterprises that will provide meaningful jobs and income for all citizens.

We have been learning that there is nothing inherently progressive in large-scale, high tech production for the world market; it produces a permanent underclass for which the system no longer has any use and which resorts to drugs and violence to compensate for its powerlessness and irrelevance.

If we truly care about these human beings, we have to begin creating an economy for which they are needed and which enables them to meet their own needs and the needs of the community. The best economy for this purpose is a self-reliant economy of small enterprises, producing goods and services for the local market. Instead of destroying the skills of workers and making people expendable, these small enterprises will combine craftsmanship with the new technologies which provide flexibility and make small batch production economical. This alternative economy will not try to compete with GM, Ford, Chrysler etc., because its purpose will not be purely economic. Its purpose will be the holistic development of the person and the culture of the community. For precisely that reason I believe it can become the wave of the future.

We also need fundamental changes in our concept of education. Children are warehoused in schools for 12 years, with no function except to study and get good grades so that they can get the diplomas which will enable them to get a job. What kids learn in school has little if any rela-

Grace Lee Boggs has been an activist living in Detroit for 50 years. Syracuse Cultural Workers' catalogue is available for $1, P.O. Box 6367, Syracuse, N.Y. 13217.

***Sinetar**, continued*

invigorating to preserve at least something under your authority, something close to your heart — and know that you can sustain yourself with it.

J.W.: In some ways it's a return to an old way.

M.S.: That's right. It's a return to pre-industrial times when people worked in villages, rode their bikes, apprenticed in little stores or service places or learned the family business. We're returning to that in some ways. And then also, on top of that, we have these multinational cities within cities of corporations. Realities within realities.

J.W.: Do you think that in those large multinational corporations it will be possible for people to save their souls?

M.S.: I'm not much of an utopian, yet I always know that within Alcatraz, a university, the IRS or the Pentagon exist people who shine. God is there, too. We tend to imagine corporations as spiritual black holes but I'm saying God is everywhere, even if it seems more in some places than in others.

J.W.: "You are always and only in business for yourself, no matter for whom you work or where," seems like one of your key concepts?

M.S.: For the spiritually emerging entrepreneur it certainly is. Young people who embrace that idea early will be well served by the business world. It's not just that they'll serve their corporate managers and shareholders by that attitude, but it's also that they'll serve themselves with it.

J.W.: And you also say that the kind of entrepreneurialism that is focussed on authentic vocation is also going to be quite socially transformative?

M.S.: Definitely. But the power of any transformation depends on the integrity of each individual. Spiritual transformation is not something one does according to a party line. Transformation happens as one stays wide open to the inner call, when one determines, "*I am* — I am a journalist, or an artist, or a parent, or a business leader." It's not that I wish I was one of these or that I'm going to exploit you so that I can be one of these.

I *am* God's workmanship — I like that phrase. And to the extent that I am, you benefit.

It's predicted that before long we'll live in a largely jobless society, without enough employment to go around. Futurists tell us the rise of part-time, temporary employment and job sharing are but symptoms of this trend, that profitable corporations "downsize," that is, terminate employees. I contend that even if finite, narrowly focused functions do grow scarce, our optimal life requires meaningful vocation — some active, contributive, relational engagement to help us become unique, whole persons. Until we achieve this integration, we live but half a life. TW

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tionship to their daily lives. While they are growing up, they are like parasites doing no socially useful work, spending their time playing and watching TV. Then when they become teenagers, we blame them because they have no sense of social responsibility.

This kind of schooling has little appeal to most kids in the inner city because it requires that they blind themselves to the devastation all around them. Those kids who do well in the system are groomed to "succeed" by moving out of the community, which means more deterioration, while the nearly 50 percent who drop out express their frustration in acts of vandalism and violence.

We have to restructure schools so that they are no longer institutions designed to promote individual advancement but to serve the community. The core of the school curriculum should be the economic and social development of the community, with the faculty, citizens and students working together to achieve this goal. In this process children will learn through practice — which has always been the best way to learn. While they are absorbing naturally and normally the values of social responsibility and therefore developing morally, they will also be developing academically because they will be stimulated to learn skills in order to solve real problems.

Instead of just being fed information, they will be involved in solving problems which require value judgments as well as factual knowledge and skills. Working collectively, rather than as isolated individuals, they will discover that multiple answers are possible and therefore learn how to live in a pluralistic and constantly changing society. For example, how can we serve food in the school cafeteria which is both nutritious and environmentally friendly? How can we conserve energy in our school buildings and recycle materials? How can we utilize local resources for products needed by people in the area?

The church is in a unique position to help build the movement to restructure our cities, both practically and conceptually. In the first place, the church has never accepted the purely economistic philosophy of human beings. Man/woman, it has always insisted, does not live by bread alone. The weakness of the church is that it has too often accepted the separation between the material and the spiritual, taking responsibility only for the spiritual and leaving the material to the economic and political power structure. The crisis of a city like Detroit provides the church with an extraordinary opportunity to develop and practice a vision of a new economy and a new educational system which meets both the material and spiritual needs of human beings.

***Lifeline: Creating a Healthy Community*, mural in Los Angeles** David Fichter/Syracuse Cultural Workers

Churches are in an excellent position to develop small enterprises that provide models of how to meet the needs of the community and *teach young people the importance of skills, process and respect for nature.*

Churches remain the most stable urban institutions with human and material resources which no other institutions have. They are in an excellent position to develop small enterprises that provide models of how to meet the needs of the community and the city and at the same time teach young people the importance of skills, process and respect for nature. Young people in cities like Detroit, which have a lot of vacant land, could witness land being used by churches for organic gardens to supply produce for local needs or to plant Christmas trees for sale at Yuletide or greenhouses where vegetables are grown year-round. The idea of a self-reliant living economy to meet the material and spiritual needs of people would begin to come alive. TW

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What?! Did he say 'tithe'?!

by Walter Wink

Each day, 35 thousand children five years and younger die of starvation, malnutrition, and related diseases. The death toll is almost 13 million a year. Compare that figure with the toll from warfare. In this entire century, wars have claimed the lives of some 109 million people. Horrendous as that figure is, it is eclipsed every eight years by the death toll of young children. A war with casualties so high would be denounced as genocidal. But these deaths go on, inexorably, day after day, and the public is silent. Dying children have few advocates, for their parents are dying as well. Our world may finally be saying no to war, but this evil beggars war. The most immense sacrifice ever perpetrated in human history is going on right now—a gigantic holocaust in which Mammon is killing far more people than Mars.

Deaths of that magnitude do not happen by accident. They are engineered by the mighty Powers that preside over the fate of nations. These Powers are not, for all that, mysterious. They are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the United States and other First World countries, huge corporations and compliant politicians. All these Powers have been integrated into a single overarching system of Powers, the Domination System. It is characterized by unjust economic relations, oppressive political relations, biased race relations, patriarchal gender relations, hierarchical power relations, and the use of violence to maintain them all. And for that system, 35 thousand children's deaths are an acceptable cost of doing business.

As Brazilian worker-unionist and presidential candidate Luis Ignacio Silva put it:

I tell you that the Third World War has already started — a silent war, not for that reason any less sinister. This war is tearing down Brazil, Latin America, and practically all of the Third World. Instead of soldiers there are children dying, instead of destruction of bridges there is the tearing down of factories, hospitals, and entire economies. ... It is a war by the United States against the Latin American continent and the Third World. It is a war over the foreign debt, a war which has as its main weapon interest, a weapon more deadly than the atom bomb, more shattering than a laser beam.

Most of those deaths are preventable. There is enough food in the world to feed everyone, with food left over. A mere $2.5 billion a year could end a majority of childhood deaths. Many countries have made headway with immunization; some Third World nations have a higher immunization rate than Washington, D.C. Deaths from hunger have actually dropped from 40 thousand a day 20 years ago to a still unacceptable 35 thousand today, and the only two places in the world where hunger has increased over that period are Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States. Bread for the World President David Beckman insists that hunger in America could be wiped out in six months by a relatively modest increase in the WIC program (Women, Infants and Children's Supplemental Nutrition Program), Food Stamps, and the School Meals program. Everyone agrees that WIC works; it is Bob Dole's favorite program. Yet in 20 years it has never been fully funded. Everything else comes first. By the time farm subsidies and other items have been settled, there is simply not enough money left, and no clamoring constituency to mollify.

No constituency, that is, except Bread for the World, and Oxfam, and other marvelous nonprofit organizations that are attempting to reduce human suffering in the world. As governments have withdrawn funds for alleviating poverty, these nonprofits have stepped in to do what they can with far too limited resources. Remember how Ronald Reagan called for individual philanthropy to make up for government withdrawal of support? And how an examination of his income tax forms showed that he himself was giving almost nothing to charitable causes? According to the research organization Independent Sector, if the 258 thousand churches in the United States were to make up for what our government has withdrawn from the social net, each church would have to increase its budget by some $220,000.

Tithing is one of the best ways known for feeling solidarity with others in their struggles for justice and their full humanity.

For the time being, however, churches and individuals are going to have to make up for some of that difference. Yet the portion of the population that gives is dwindling each year. Leonard Sweet notes that the Baby Boomers are notorious for living beyond their means. Their credit cards are maxed out to the limit, their credit lines are used up, they are crushed under the weight of college loans, and many of them are finding less oppor-

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Walter Wink, who actually gets a kick out of giving, has written *Engaging the Powers* and other engaging books. Artist **Claudia Nietsch-Ochs** lives in Merching, Germany.

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tunity to increase their wealth than their parents had. They hardly give away any part of their income at all.

By contrast, their parents, whom Sweet calls the Boosters, have a deep abhorrence of debt. They try to pay with cash, or pay off their debts early, if they can. These Boosters have been big savers and givers. When these Boosters die, there is going to be the biggest transfer of wealth in the history of the world. And the Boomers, with their pockets full of credit cards, have already spent it!

Those Boosters are the main source of income for outfits like Bread for the World. Their kids are so deeply in debt that they can hardly imagine giving as a regular part of their check-writing regime. When the Boosters are gone, who is going to support these essential nongovernmental groups—outfits like Amnesty International, Habitat for Humanity, Handgun Control, or your local church's meals program? These Boomers need to learn to give, and it is none too soon to begin trying to persuade them of that fact.

When I speak of Boomers, I am thinking of my own kids. Given the enormity of the need worldwide, we can scarcely settle for halfway measures. A pittance—a dollar in the plate if they get to church—will not cut it. We need to be talking tithing, and not just to the Boomers, but to the Boosters as well.

Tithing? Surely not. Ten percent of our income, given away? Are we to base it on our net income, or our gross? Does giving to a political candidate count? Does it have to be tax deductible?

The intimates to whom I showed this article gagged on the word "tithing." It apparently conjures up altar calls and hard-sell evangelists, preachers exhorting the flock to share out more of its fleece, legalism and quotas and obligations uncheerfully assumed.

Forget all that. We aren't talking law but grace. We are talking about the incredible satisfaction of knowing that our money is doing a little bit of good in the world. And that we are giving enough to really make a difference. It doesn't matter how you figure the tithe, but 10 percent is a nice figure to shoot for. Let's not call anything less than 10 percent a "tithe." ("Tithe" simply means "tenth.") I think it's valuable to keep it that large so that it is significant. We are not interested in obeying a biblical commandment (it's not found in the New Testament anyway), but in making a difference in the world. We want to alleviate suffering. We'd like to reshape the system so that it does less harm.

Singing passionately about life Claudia Nietsch-Ochs

A new and welcome development is the phenomenon of corporate tithing. Companies like The Body Shop are giving 10 percent of their profits to environmental causes. We should be in dialogue with businesses and corporations to encourage more of this kind of giving.

I need to get personal about this. I'm not trying to lay a heavy discipline on anyone. For me it is a matter of great joy to be able to give. Each year we give a bit more. We are up to 20 percent of net income. Some give a larger percentage, others can only do less. It is a matter of record, however, that *ability* to give, and the actual amount given, do not correlate. Poorer people have consistently given a larger share of their income to charity, churches and social needs than the wealthy. In fact, as income rises, the percentage of giving shrinks. Those who can most afford to give actually give a smaller proportion of their income.

There are great benefits to be derived from tithing. I have already mentioned the sheer joy of giving. It is one of the best ways known for feeling solidarity with others in their struggles for justice and their full humanity. It is a way of expressing gratitude. In full awareness of how much has been given us by so many so often, tithing can be a way of responding with thanksgiving.

Some people argue that God will bless us if we tithe. I don't care for that kind of tit for tat. It's not that we obligate God. But it is true that God blesses us through our giving. And one of those blessings is to get our economic priorities in order. Tithing is an act of trust that God will sustain us even if we do not lavish all our earnings on ourselves. Like fasting, it is a way of experiencing liberation from the

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compulsion to make and spend. It is a way of bringing ourselves under spiritual discipline, so that we get first things first.

Tithers have long known that the best way to handle one's tithe is to make it the first check you write, or the first automatic withdrawal you program. Never wait to see if you have something left that you can give. You won't. There's almost never anything "left." There are always other needs clamoring to be paid. But if we pay the tithe first, we can usually juggle the other bills somehow.

But the real issue goes far beyond benefits. The reason we need to tithe is because the world screams out to us for help. We tithe because we care. We want to make a difference in the world's suffering, however small our own part might be. Joined with the giving of thousands, however, our part can be significant to a very high degree. Maybe then we can help whittle that figure for childhood deaths down from 35 thousand a day.

So, Boosters (most *Witness* readers are Boosters, I'd bet), send this article to your Boomers kids and see if you can start a conversation. Perhaps in the process you will find yourself increasing your own percentage of giving. Try it.

It's a kind of liberation and exhilaration not often experienced in our consumerist world. TW

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Short takes

Campaign finance and human rights

Revelations that Bill Clinton benefitted from campaign contributions made to the Democratic Party on behalf of Lippo, an Indonesian-based banking and commercial empire, illustrate the ease with which corporate entities can attain access to elected officials and thereby influence policy in their direction.

Indonesia is not just another trading partner, but one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world. In 1975, Indonesia illegally invaded and annexed East Timor, killing one-third of the indigenous population—some 200,000 people. Tight political control, including arrests without warrants of dissidents, extrajudicial executions, and frequent use of torture, continues in both East Timor and Indonesia proper, according to Amnesty International and other watchdog groups.

Clinton won election in 1992 specifically promising to get tough with chronic human rights violators like China and Indonesia. While Clinton initially blocked some arms transfers to Indonesia and voiced support for UN resolutions regarding East Timor, the overall policy, especially in the past two years, has been to increase trade. In February, 1994, Clinton's Trade Representative, Mickey Kantor, stopped a formal review of Indonesia's trade status; and in 1995, Clinton warmly received President Suharto, the dictator who has overseen political brutality in Indonesia for the past three decades, at the White House. Arms sales to Indonesia in Clinton's term now total some $470 million.

A principled opponent might have taken a stand on both aspects of the scandal: the selling of access to the highest corporate bidder, and the policy result of helping to cement Indonesia's brutal human rights practices. However, Bob Dole was in no position to make either of these charges with any credibility. Dole in Washington was a living monument to the practice of inserting loopholes into legislation to benefit particular corporate interests contributing to his coffers.

So instead, Dole used the scandal as yet another occasion to bash foreigners. Tops on the list of his 4-point plan for campaign finance reform was banning contributions by foreigners (including those living in the U.S.), even though the total sum of such contributions is easily dwarfed by the hundreds of millions donated by American corporations, and even though the U.S. has historically felt little compunction about making large donations to influence other countries' elections.

The bottom line is that this scandal is likely to do little to bring about change in the deep problems of American politics. Clinton will bear at most a very marginal political price, and Dole failed to illustrate in a principled way the manner in which *corporate monies take policy-making out* of the realm of democracy and into the realm of gladhandling and special-access cocktail parties.

— Thad Williamson
New York, N.Y.

CIA-crack-*Contra* connection

An investigative story in the *San Jose Mercury News* in late August detailed how massive amounts of cheap cocaine were funneled into South Central Los Angeles by a well-known CIA operative as part of a fund-raising plan for the *Contra* Army in Nicaragua. Since the story broke, outrage over the accusations has been swelling in the Black community. ...

The three-part *Mercury News* report was released just after passage of the welfare-reform bill. It was sandwiched between the rhetoric-laden Republican and Democratic Conventions, where speakers talked about living in a land of equal opportunity with liberty and justice for all.

The view from the street is different. The U.S. government has been working hard to keep you down by allowing massive quantities of cheap, highly addictive crack cocaine into your neighborhood, dismantling social programs and passing get-tough-on-crime laws that will put many Black, nonviolent drug offenders behind bars for life.

— Andrea Lewis,
Third Force, *11-2/96*

Indigenous Anglicans: an Australian view

by Anne Pattel-Gray

The aboriginal branch of the Anglican church in Australia is in crisis. The strained relationship between Australia's churches and its indigenous peoples is a result of the oppressive role missionaries played in colonization. The Western invasion of the "Great South Land of the Holy Spirit" led to the dispossession, rape, genocide and domination of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. The churches enforced racist laws and legislation, and segregated aboriginal people into compounds where their lives were literally dominated, and their children stolen and locked away in other compounds. The Christian message became fraught with an oppressive and racist god imposed upon the indigenous people.

Today, in contemporary Australia, the indigenous people have not forgotten this history. This is made clear in their calls for justice, independence, and freedom from the dominant oppressive church and society.

It is also found in the struggle to develop the National Aboriginal Anglican Council, which has widespread community support amongst not only indigenous Anglicans but also indigenous members of many other denominations (i.e., the National Aboriginal and Islander Baptist Council of Australia, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, etc.). The council also has the tacit support of *some* dioceses, the Bishop's Council and General Synod.

The National Aboriginal Anglican Council, however, has no power and it has no money. It meets, if it has the funding, once per year; it has no funding for indigenous staff, national programs or ministries. The Anglican Church professes that all churches should be self-determining, self-governing and self-sustaining — this, in the context of a people who, through colonization, have been dispossessed of any economic base and are marginalized and contained to "fourth-world" poverty in a hegemonic "first-world" society.

Each and every year, the only aboriginal bishop has to find even his own salary, because the Anglican Church does not ensure it. Over the past three years, the indigenous ecumenical body, the Aboriginal and Islander Commission of the National Council of Churches in Australia, has helped provide the necessary funds to sustain the aboriginal bishop, providing one-third of his salary, most of his office equipment and supplies, and a significant portion of the costs of programs, travel and other expenses.

If finances are any kind of indicator of the Anglican Church's commitment to their indigenous brothers and sisters, then, sadly, they leave a great deal to be desired. Not only is the Anglican Church's aboriginal branch grossly underfunded, it also comes under enormous attack from all sides, particularly from the conservative sector.

The National Aboriginal Anglican Council also has to endure the paternalism of white staff appointed to serve it. It has to combat the racist attitudes and ideology found in the personnel and inherent in these structures.

Another crisis is faced by indigenous Anglicans in the area of theological education. A two-tiered system is offered: one (white) is bachelor-of-theology level, funded, resourced and recognized, while the other (indigenous) remains associate diploma level, under-resourced and under white, male control. The ideology behind this kind of "education" keeps indigenous people a subjugated underclass. It does not allow for the development of indigenous exegetical or hermeneutical methodologies or praxis. It rejects the notion that indigenous culture has any significance or value in a white, hegemonic world.

Our struggle is to take control of our own theological education, and transform it so that it builds up the aboriginal and islander leadership so desperately needed in our communities. We desire a theology that draws upon our ancestral narratives, culture, tradition, values and kinship — one that addresses our social, political, racial and economic oppression.

There are those in the Anglican church who have aligned themselves with the fight for the emancipation and recognition of the human dignity of the indigenous people. Archbishop Keith Raynor, for example, recently assisted the indigenous people of northern Queensland and Carpentaria in restructuring their dioceses to facilitate the development of indigenous leadership. Bishop Bruce Wilson has encouraged and supported the ordination of Gloria Shipp, the first ordained aboriginal Anglican woman in Australia.

But the white majority remains critical and full of animosity toward the aboriginal church.

New Zealand's model

So, what is the way to go? Perhaps we could learn from the Maori model: a national Bishopric structure and a *tikanga* system. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Anglicans have made the church far more inclusive. First, the Maoris have their own national Maori bishop, whose area and authority covers Maori concerns across the whole of the country. Second, they have developed the *tikanga* system — a three-part church structure of shared, equal authority and participation of Maori, Pakaha (white) and Pacific peoples [*TW* 5/93]. This is how they define church and

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Tempering realism with hope: ARC-USA

by Ellen K. Wondra

About a year ago, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith proclaimed that the ordination of only men is an infallible doctrine. Since then, many friends and colleagues have asked me how I, a woman and a priest, can serve on the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the USA (ARC-USA).

It's not a new question. I've been asked it — and asked it of myself — ever since I was appointed to ARC-USA almost five years ago. And the dilemma doesn't arise just from the two churches' very different official positions on the ordained ministry of women. Even without this, there are issues concerning freedom of thought and inquiry and expression concerning church doctrine and discipline (remember Charles Curran?), how church teachings are developed (as well as what they say), and, of course, papal infallibility.

These are all questions about the proper understanding and exercise of authority in the church. And, despite 30 years of constant, persistent, and often very wise and creative dialogue, these questions continue to divide us. The much-heralded "ecumenical spring" following Vatican II seems to have turned into a long and sometimes dreary "ecumenical winter." And the Vatican's pronouncement on ordination last fall did not seem to herald a thaw.

But while the signs of progress may be small and quiet, they are nevertheless there, and they are important. This month, for example, the Archbishop of Canterbury will make an official visit to the Vatican, as the Pope's guest. This is the first time Archbishop Carey has made such a visit — which makes it also the first official visit since the Church of England began ordaining women, and since last year's Vatican pronouncement. Such official visits give concrete evidence of the two churches' recognition of each other as "sister churches" (who can be united without one being absorbed), rather than "separated brethren" (where the return of the one who has strayed outside the church is necessary). This sort of evidence at the highest level confirms what many of us already know through our daily lives, where Anglicans and Roman Catholics live, minister, and pray with each other all the time: there is already a great degree of communion between our two churches.

It's because we experience this communion in our daily lives that the official diocesan, national, and international dialogues are important, and that they are continuing. What the official dialogues can do is draw on our concrete and ordinary experience with each other to show where our unity is already strong, and to discover ways in which it can be made stronger. All of this is substance for theological and ecclesiological reflection, and for the formulation of proposals and policies which, we hope, will bring us closer together, and move us toward full unity.

This is not to say that there aren't real obstacles, and that they won't be difficult to overcome. We have to be realistic. But there is hope.

For me, at the most basic level, it's hope founded in necessity. The most basic reality to me is that we are all in the church together, like it or not. We live on one planet; we profess to worship one God. We live in a time when we're increasingly faced with our interconnections, globally and locally, sociopolitically and ecclesially. We can't really get away from each other, although we may use a lot of time and energy pretending we can. But that doesn't change the reality that we're involved with each other, and we need each other.

Now, if that's the case, then the important question is, How are we going to be involved with each other?

The ecumenical movement takes as its charter Jesus' prayer on the night before his passion: "... that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am

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Indigenous, *continued*

ministry — from their own context, each of the three respecting and learning from one another. Because the power and resources are all shared equally, all are able to be self-determining, self-governing and self-sustaining.

This model and ecclesiology are that for which the National Aboriginal Anglican Council is striving, although in Australia, Anglicans are hostile to this model — they see it as a disempowerment of their hegemonic control. The aboriginal Bishop, Arthur Malcolm, is recognized by indigenous people throughout Australia; yet, in terms of ecclesiastical power and authority, he is limited to only one diocese. The situation is further undermined by the church confining him to the role of assistant bishop. If he is called upon by indigenous people outside of his own diocese, he has to seek authorization from the bishop of that diocese for permission to enter and to deal with the requests of his own people. The non-indigenous bishop has the power to interfere in specifically indigenous matters. This can create cross-cultural nightmares because, often, the diocesan bishops have no understanding of indigenous culture, protocol or politics.

Australia's experience highlights the unique difficulties imposed upon indigenous Anglicans. The indigenous people have been dispossessed of land and the resources upon which they could build an economic base. They have to settle for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's [sic] table. And yet, they are expected to develop and sustain their own church and ministries.

In Australia, the future of the church for indigenous Anglicans is dependent upon the ability of the dominant church to transform and renew itself in light of the Christian message.

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in you, may they also be in us, ... so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20-23 NRSV). What I notice here is that the unity that Jesus prays for is a unity that involves cherishing and preserving differences: Jesus and the One he calls Father are not identical, but they are united — or, better, in communion. Their relationship is full, complete, with no division — but also with no loss of distinction or difference, either. Indeed, distinction or difference is what makes the relationship possible at all.

And *that's* the kind of unity that Jesus seeks for us. *That's* the kind of way human beings ought to be involved with each other, and with the whole of creation. At its best, *that's* what the ecumenical movement is working toward among the churches.

The challenge facing ARC-USA and all the folks who serve on it is how to work toward unity when the differences that divide us seem so intractable. It's quite clear now that the Episcopal Church and the rest of the Anglican Communion is not going to decide that the ordination of women was a mistake; instead, we are increasingly willing to say that the ministry of ordained women is a blessing and a benefit. That hasn't always been the case. For over 25 years, it's been said repeatedly by some Anglicans that it's the ordination of women that has slowed or even blocked the progress of dialogue with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. But it's now increasingly customary to acknowledge that these churches' ordination of only men is as divisive as the Episcopal Church's ordination of women. "Going home to Rome" on other issues isn't any more likely.

What the official Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues can do is draw on our concrete and ordinary experience with each other to show where our unity is already strong.

At the same time, the Vatican's pronouncement of a year ago makes it clear that, at the official, policy-making level, the Roman Catholic Church sees the ordination of only men as a matter of doctrine, not discipline. Doctrine doesn't change easily, and there are no signs that this one is going to change soon. Nor, for example, is the claim of papal authority and infallibility likely to be softened or set aside.

Unity requires either that we figure out how to live with these mutually exclusive differences, or that we set them aside— either by one church's relinquishing of a doctrine or discipline it discovers it can live without, or by both churches' changing to a new, common position. Figuring out how to do this is extremely difficult, and it requires a lot of time and energy. And a lot of hope.

It also requires honest and accurate facing of differences of practice and belief and of all that underlies them. For ARC-USA these days, that means looking at how the two churches understand authority — not just the authority of persons and institutions, but also of texts and traditions. For example, does the fact that a tradition is apparently so constant for two thousand years as to be virtually universal mean that it's an expression of the providence and will of God? Is it then unchangeable? What role do context and experience play in the church's exercise of authority? How do we answer those questions? And who is the "we" who answer them?

Last year's Vatican pronouncement on ordination made it clear that the question of authority is the primary one that faces Anglicans and Roman Catholics in their dialogue with each other. If we are to proceed with that question honestly and accurately, we need before us the whole range of beliefs, practices, and understandings of the two churches. The actual presence of women in the dialogue — in their persons, and not merely as a topic of study — not only makes sure that a particular range of perspectives is represented, it also serves as a witness to the actual nature of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. This is particularly important in this discussion because Anglicans have decided that we can change a virtually universal practice, that we do as a church have the authority to do so. We may need to give an account of that authority that is clearer and more persuasive to our dialogue partners and to some elements of our own church. But our practice shows that we do believe we have that authority. And that is something Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues need to study and discuss before we can realistically look for much more official progress toward fuller communion.

Sure, right now, I don't see much possibility for significant official progress on the immediate horizon. What I do see is the possibility to help lay the groundwork for some advances to occur eventually. I think my church has something important and valuable to contribute to laying that groundwork and creating those advances; and I am willing to do what I can to make sure that contribution gets made.

Argentine Indian land rights

Following a peaceful protest by the Wichi and Chorote Indians of the North Argentine Chaco, the provincial government has agreed to sign an agreement giving them the title deeds to their land.

The Indians camped for 23 days on the site of a bridge built on their land without their permission. They feared that the bridge was part of a road project designed to link North Argentina with Paraguay and Brazil. A frontier town would have replaced an existing Indian village and the road would have gone through a site occupied by the Anglican Church.

Anglican Bishop Maurice Sinclair and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Salta took the Indian concerns to the governor.

— Ang. Com. News Serivce

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Penthouse violations

The Episcopal Church needs to walk a fine line in response to the recent *Penthouse* expose of an alleged cross-dressing sex ring of Long Island Episcopal clergy [*Penthouse* 12/96]. A variety of temptations present themselves.

Twenty-seven bishops have already succumbed to the temptation to treat *Penthouse's* expose as "news" and as grounds for a wholesale condemnation of all gay and lesbian Christians. These bishops wasted no time in pronouncing that the story demonstrates "that, even for church people, long-term faithful monogamous relationships among homosexuals are extraordinarily rare" and that the "homosexual lifestyle, especially among young males, is a compulsive, promiscuous addiction that leads almost inevitably to illness and death."

This conclusion is patently ignorant. Bishops of the church should have enough life experience to view *Penthouse*'s report with some skepticism. And they must know that aberrant sexual behavior and ritual abuse are not the property of any particular sexual orientation. Sick and manipulative sexual behaviors cross lines of orientation, race and class. They are even acted out in the privacy of the heterosexual marriage bed.

The other temptation to which church folks may succumb is the flip side of the first — to minimize the events described in order to try to protect the church's reputation. Even though the two priests named in *Penthouse* have resigned their church jobs,

The Witness asks that the Diocese of Long Island take the presiding bishop's call for an investigation seriously and conduct a thorough one.

The easiest course of action might appear to be to attack *Penthouse*'s journalistic standards (which needs to be done) and then to hint that the priest who is named and pictured in the magazine, William Lloyd Andries, is unjustly maligned. Andries is already insisting (on the Internet) that his sexual escapades were limited to intimacy with one person, that all the other allegations (group sex and cross-dressing) are lies and that his greatest error was in naively imagining that his young lover could really have cherished the union between them as deeply as he did himself. We find his claims self-serving, particularly since rumors are circulating among people who say they have reason to know that some aspects of the story are true. If Andries engaged in even a fraction of the activity described in such graphic detail, he does a phenomenal disservice to all gay and lesbian couples when he paints himself as like them.

Suppressing the allegations would also buttress the backlash against all survivors speaking publicly about ritual abuse. Those who are so shocked or embarrassed that they prefer to conclude that the allegations can't be true, do additional damage to those whose life stories include these traumas. The Episcopal Church has done some excellent work in the area of clergy sexual exploitation. We hope the openness and honesty demonstrated in many dioceses — Massachusetts comes readily to mind — will prevail in this case as well.

Meanwhile, we find *Penthouse* appallingly disingenuous. Its editors get entirely too much satisfaction out of revealing the "shocking story of a secret cadre of gay and bi-sexual cross-dressing Episcopal priests whose private lives include the most bizarre rituals imaginable". The core spirit of *Penthouse* is one that thrives on sexual subjugation and the exposure of what might otherwise be intimate and sacred. Its editors are hardly ones to throw stones at alleged participants in this sex scandal. It is the spirit of power, money, addiction and distortion that drives *Penthouse*; whenever this spirit manifests elsewhere, *Penthouse* might best acknowledge it as a mirror image of itself.

The sanest responses to date have been from Oasis and Integrity, both of which issued short statements, saying that the sex acts described are "inconsistent with a Christian understanding of love" *and* recommending a cautious approach which allows for testing the validity of *Penthouse's* claims. Lastly they urge people of faith to pray for all those named in the article, all those implied to be involved in the sexual improprieties and for the church itself.

— The Witness *staff*

'Silent under apartheid'

A section of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) — long dubbed the apartheid regime at prayer — has confessed that it kept silent when many South Africans suffered intimidation, torture and murder under the National Party's racist policies.

The Stellenbosch ring (a ring is a grouping of about 12 congregations) was the first church to make a submission to the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by retired Anglican Archbishop and Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu.

Ring chairman Dr. Hannes Koornhof made his submission at commission hearings in Paarl, near Cape Town, in October, saying:

"We confess that, although we did at times try to protest against the unjust treatment of people, we often did so only with great timidity and circumspection."

The ideology of nationalism had "left a substantial imprint on Christians' way of thought," Koornhof said. This made them insensitive to the injustices and suffering inflicted by the former government's apartheid policies.

After the submission, Tutu, whom observers described as "clearly emotional," praised the DRC ring for its courage in making its confession before the Truth Commission.

— *Ecumenical News International*

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Ecstatic sensibilities

by Marianne Arbogast

***The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos: Humanity and the New Story,* by Brian Swimme (Orbis, 1996).**

A cartoon I once saw pictured an ordinary street corner — a sidewalk curb, a sewer grate and a fire hydrant. The caption read: "*The Milky Way" (detail).*

This is Brian Swimme's outlook. Like the cartoonist, he seeks to widen our perspective to take in something of the cosmic mystery of which we are a part.

The modern divide between science and religion has "broken apart the ancient cosmological enterprise," Swimme writes. While science shuts out questions of meaning and ultimacy, religion too often focuses on humans in isolation from the whole.

"When we do ponder the deep questions of meaning in the universe, we do so in a context fixed in the time when the classical scriptures achieved their written form," he writes. "We do not worship or contemplate in the context of the universe as we have come to know it over these last centuries, a context that includes the species diversity of the Appalachian mountains, the million-year development of the enveloping ecosystem, the intricate processes of the human genome, the stellar dynamics that gave birth to Earth five billion years ago, or anything else that is both specific and true concerning the Earth and universe."

The resulting void has been filled by the deadening, dominant world-faith of consumerism. Swimme decries not our wealth, but our impoverishment.

Consumerism conflicts radically with our innate longing for communion with all of creation. "Any ultimate separation from this larger and enveloping community is impossible," Swimme writes, "and any ideology that proposes that the universe is nothing but a collection of preconsumer items is going to be maintained only at a terrible price."

That price, Swimme believes, is alcohol and drug addiction.

"I think that hoping for a consumer society without drug abuse is as pointless as hoping for a car without axle grease," he writes. "It is simply not human finally to live a life sealed off from all conscious contact with those powers at work throughout the Earth and universe and within every one of our cells. ...

"The quick and mindless way of transforming this deprived state of being is to ingest mind-altering chemicals that dissolve the thin veneer of consumer culture and bring one swimming into the primary processes at last. Thus, if only for a moment, and sometimes at horrendous cost to self, family, friends and community, one can be at home again in the great flood of beauty."

The antidote Swimme offers is cosmological education, and the challenge of developing "new cultural forms for initiating ourselves into an ecstatic sense of involvement with the community of beings that is the very universe."

I'm personally skeptical about a daily morning ritual honoring the Sun — even as I am impressed to learn that "the Sun, each second, transforms four million tons of itself into light," manifesting a self-giving impulse at the heart of everything.

On the other hand, Swimme's recommendations that we learn to know our life place, contemplate the Milky Way, and teach our children to perceive a sunset in a post-Copernican mode — as the earth rotating away from the sun — seem simple, enjoyable and realistic.

Perhaps Swimme's best contribution is to further the halting contemporary effort to integrate the scientific and spiritual quests.

For a reader with little scientific inclination, even his non-technical explanations of contemporary findings in physics can be a stretch, but it's worth the effort. I am awed by his discussion of the quantum vacuum, for instance, and the implications of the discovery that elementary particles literally emerge out of emptiness.

"If material stuff is understood to be the very foundation of being, we are quite naturally going to devote our lives and our education to the task of acquiring such stuff, for humans have an innate tropism for being. ... To now suggest that material is not the only foundational reality in the universe throws some doubt upon one of the philosophical justifications of consumerism."

Swimme's book raises some big questions which remain outside its scope. His theological framework is unclear, and while he affirms the value of historic faith traditions, he does not elaborate on how they might connect with an earth- and universe-centered spirituality. The same would be true of concrete political commitments. But as "a first step out of the religion of consumerism" (Swimme's stated intent), *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos* offers a solid foothold, based on wonder rather than guilt. TW

review

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness.*

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'Doing the things our hearts tell us'

by Marianne Arbogast

Getting in touch with Wally and Juanita Nelson is complicated by the fact that they don't have a telephone. But that doesn't stop countless visitors from showing up at their door — in fact, it's part of what draws them. For many who seek a simpler, more just and sustainable way of life, the Nelsons offer living testimony that it can be found.

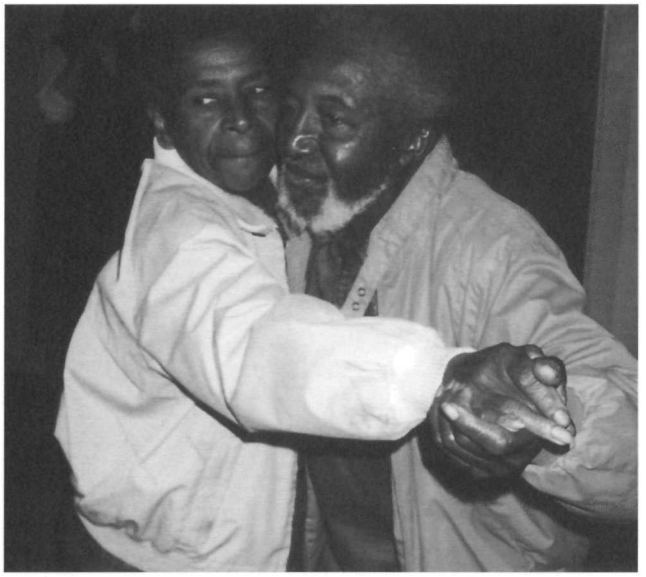
For more than two decades, the Nelsons have lived in a small home on land owned by the Woolman Quaker Conference Center in Western Massachusetts. They cook and heat with wood, draw well-water by hand, use an outhouse and rely on two gas lamps for light. Their entire income — about $5,000 in a good year — comes from the sale of their garden produce.

Lifelong activists, the Nelsons share a passion to implement their ideals in their daily lives.

"What I'm striving for is an integrated life, to make of one piece what I believe and what I am doing," Juanita Nelson says. "I think that trying to live more and more simply is at the core. We seem to think that we can just keep getting more and more and more — and then maybe everybody else can get more and more and more. It just doesn't work that way. And the other thing is — more and more *what*?"

"I can't think of any good, sensible reason why so many people in this country are without food, without housing, without clothing," Wally Nelson says. "In this society, we're encouraged not to think seriously about other people. I want to think more about them, and participate less in the reasons why they are suffering."

"Every once in a while, we think, suppose we can't work, what are we going to do? We can't figure it out, so we just stop worrying about it."
— Juanita Nelson



Juanita and Wally Nelson dancing at a wedding reception

The Nelsons met during World War II, when Juanita Nelson, then working as a newspaper journalist, visited the prison where Wally Nelson was serving a three-and-a-half-year term for draft refusal. Both were veterans of civil rights campaigns: Juanita Nelson had been part of a campus struggle to desegregate a restaurant near Howard University, and Wally Nelson had joined in hunger and work strikes which ended the prison policy of racial segregation.

After they were married, the Nelsons became involved with Peacemakers, a group founded in 1948 which advocated non-registration for the draft and non-payment of military taxes. Their commitment to tax resistance and social change shaped the pattern of their lives. Unable to work for employers who withheld taxes and unwilling to sacrifice political work for career goals, they worked at a variety of jobs which paid enough to support their activism.

"When I was about 23, I made a very conscious decision that I didn't want to be a professional, I didn't want to be tied to a job, and I've been a ne'er-do-well ever since," Juanita Nelson laughs. At one point she earned a masters degree in speech therapy, but worked only briefly in that field when she found that only full-time jobs were available.

In 1970 — when Wally Nelson was nearing the age at which most people retire — the Nelsons' convictions impelled them to leave their home in Philadelphia for a simpler, rural life in New Mexico.

During a three-week fast in support of

Witnesses, the quick and the dead

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the United Farmworkers' grape boycott, Wally Nelson had developed a sharp awareness of the web of unjust social relationships.

"It hit me very hard that every time we went to the food store and bought some produce, we were exploiting the people who were working in the fields," he explains. "I thought, if we couldn't do anything else, at least we could crawl off the backs of those farmworkers. We could learn how to grow food ourselves and bend our own backs."

"I wanted to break away from the corporations, getting things from way off somewhere, dealing with huge conglomerates," Juanita Nelson says. "In the city you are completely dependent, but in a rural setting we could get more control of our own lives. I prefer not to be connected with the utility companies, for instance. If I'm heating with wood, I can cut my own or get it locally."

After a short time in New Mexico, the Nelsons moved to Massachusetts, building their own home with scrap material from a demolished house and the help of like-minded friends.

The process of crafting a lifestyle they can believe in has been liberating and exhilarating, the Nelsons report.

"The improvisation of making do with what you have has its great satisfaction — and not just ideologically," Juanita Nelson says. "It's just fun to try to be imaginative. The sense of adventure is one thing that really keeps me going."

They do not miss things that many would consider necessities.

"We haven't had a phone in the house since 1970, and I don't know if I could even stand one!" Juanita Nelson says. "I have stopped my participation in communications technology with a manual typewriter, and I don't feel any lack because I don't use a computer and faxes. I feel I'm living a very full life."

A solar-battery-powered radio provides them with news and music.

"We might be sitting at the table eating, and if some music comes on, we get up and start dancing," Juanita Nelson says.

"We believe in having a pretty good time," Wally Nelson agrees. "If we go to a party, they often wait for me to get started dancing, because they know I will. We associate for the most part with younger people, and oftentimes we forget that we are older. They're quite lively, and they make me think that I'm lively, too."

"There is a wonderful community around us, so we would not go hungry in any case. I think our security lies in each other and in people."
— Juanita Nelson

Juanita Nelson, now 74, confesses that there are days when she is tired, and would rather not face the demands of gardening. "But if I were working in an office, think how much worse it would be!"

In the past few years, she has faced some serious health problems without insurance. Once, she paid a surgeon two strings of garlic and a small book she had written.

"Every once in a while, we think, suppose we can't work, what are we going to do?" she says. "We can't figure it out, so we just stop worrying about it."

She quickly adds that "there is a wonderful community around us, so we would not go hungry in any case. I think our security lies in each other and in people."

The Nelsons profess no religious faith.

"I'm around people who always talk about spirituality, but I simply don't know what they're talking about," Wally Nelson says.

The Nelsons speak instead of nonviolence, justice, equality and community. They do not vote and harbor a deep mistrust of big government.

Juanita Nelson laughs about finding some commonality with the radical right.

"This is almost like the very conservative viewpoint that we know better how to use our money than to send it up some blind alley to support big bureaucracies and high salaries. I believe in a more personalist approach.

"I don't really have a blueprint for society," she explains. "I don't know what form of government I would support — it certainly would have to be much more decentralist than what we have. I think we need to learn to say no to what there is, and maybe we'll find something better to replace it. It's how we get there that's the most important thing."

At 87, Wally Nelson admits that he would not have anticipated his current lifestyle.

"I really had thought that at my age I'd be like the average person with a retirement income. My life just developed differently."

Though they love company, the Nelsons worry that people may think they are unique.

"We're not doing any more than anyone could do," Juanita Nelson says. "I wish people knew that we could find happiness in just being together and making our own entertainment, and not be so afraid! If we do the things that our hearts tell us to do, that's satisfaction." TW

"The Witness is especially helpful to me as a Christian educator."
— Anna K. Comer, Pittsburgh, PA

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