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AIDS IN A GLOBAL AGE

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INSIDE

Contributors

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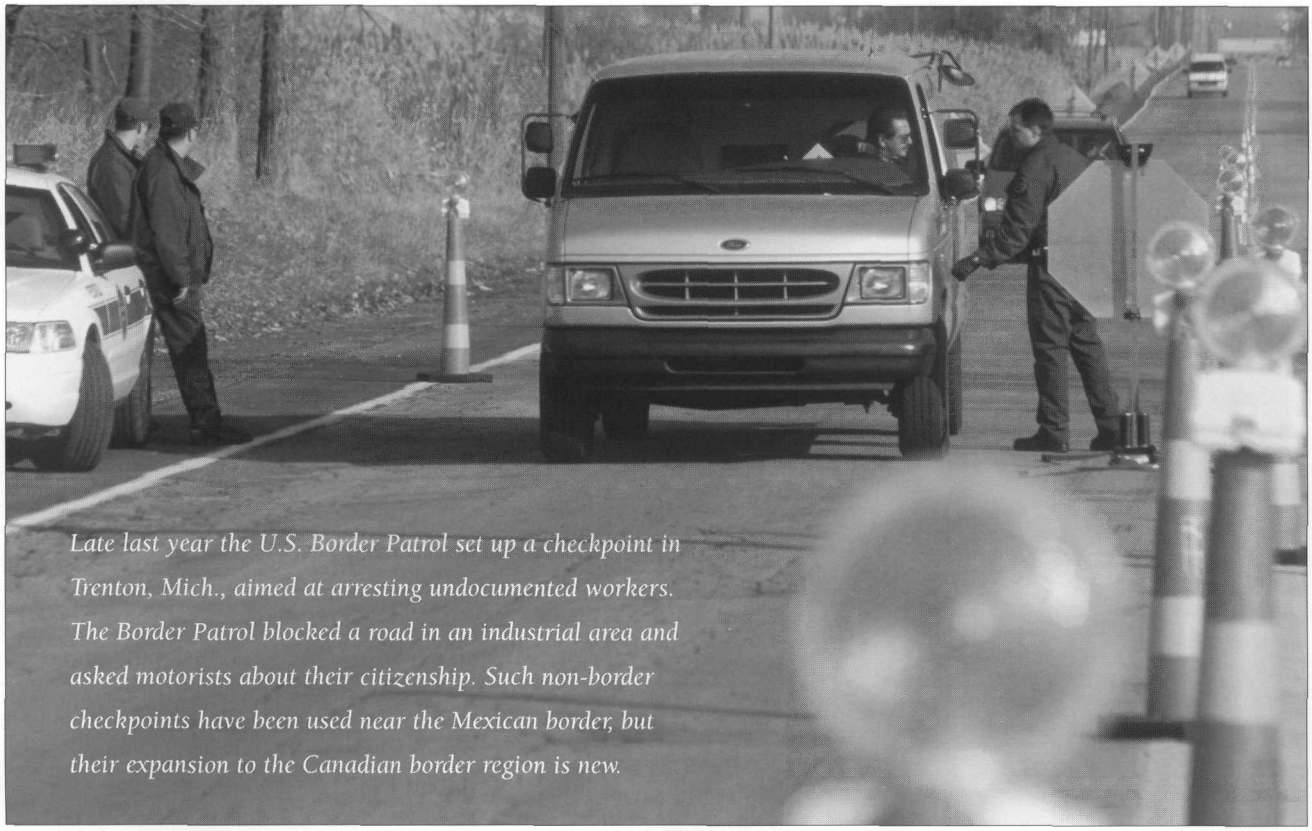
on the cover

Zimbabwe: The Gombedza kids are an orphan family of seven that lives alone in the house which belonged to their parents before they died. They are solely dependent for food and help from the neighbors and a young aunt who comes to visit them whenever she can. September 1999 © Karin Retief/ Trace Images/The Image Works

Contributing editors



Late last year the U.S. Border Patrol set up a checkpoint in Trenton, Mich., aimed at arresting undocumented workers. The Border Patrol blocked a road in an industrial area and asked motorists about their citizenship. Such non-border checkpoints have been used near the Mexican border, but their expansion to the Canadian border region is new.

Jim West

CONTENTS

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LETTERS

Crucial contribution

I genuinely appreciate *The Witness* and find it extremely refreshing and useful for working on peace and justice issues. Keep up the fine work, and be assured that the contribution you are making to help us make connections between our faith and the difficult issues of our time is crucial.

Jane C. Strippel
Oxford, OH

Claiming the blessing

Julie Wortman is precisely correct [*TW* 11/02]. Failure to approve rites of blessing for all committed relationships calls into question our church's claim that we collectively are defined by our Baptismal Covenant: To work for justice and peace for all persons.

For, of course, this is a justice issue. Those who would argue otherwise know that we cannot be "mostly just"; that a "little justice" is tantamount to no justice. Those who would deny or delay the full inclusion of all our brothers and sisters into our shared blessings also know that the Episcopal Church historically moves on justice issues, and that if "Claiming the Blessing" is named as a justice issue, our church will be much more likely to move to include. Hence, the disingenuous, "Let's not dignify this as a 'justice' issue" simply seeks to define this justice issue out of existence.

Those convening and attending the Claiming the Blessing conference know that until our church gets this right, then every other act of compassion and justice supported and carried out by the Episcopal Church will be contaminated with hypocrisy.

Now IS the time.

The Rev. Dr. Alan C. Miller
St. Barnabas Episcopal Church
Williston, FL

What would Jesus drive?

Thank you for sending me an examination copy of *The Witness*. I intend to subscribe based on your interview with Bill McKibben [*TW* 7/8-02]. I am in an Episcopal Community called Grace Church in Riverhead, N.Y., and have read several of McKibben's books.

As part of the "Turn the tide" program sponsored by the Center for the New American Dream, based in Washington, D.C., I decided to not drive my car two days a week. This meant abrubt changes in my life-style patterns about a year ago. Since then, I have come to look forward to those days without driving. I walk or bike and have reaped many benefits from this decision. This Thanksgiving, I've decided to do a seven-day walk on a path in my county called the Paumanok Path to bring attention to the path which is under-used and to use my feet as witness to say thanks for all the open space that has been preserved in a county that has a population in excess of 1.2 million people! My mission is to inspire people, even SUV drivers, to become embodied and think about the larger consequences of operating a vehicle that guzzles fossel fuel and spews out plenty of carbon dioxide. This is the kind of witnessing that is necessary not only by clergy, but by people of faith.

Tom Stock
Manorville, NY

Thoughtful overview of Palestinian struggle

I returned from Palestine in August as one of 13 United Methodists who went over on a Peace with Justice mission. I just came across your issue on the Palestinian struggle [*TW* 9/01] in *The Witness* (I used to subscribe and have since renewed).

Congratulations.

You have provided a great service by providing a highly readable, thoughtful, and comprehensive (within the constraints of your space, etc.) overview of the situation. I intend to draw upon this rather frequently in my conversations with Christians and Jews.

Les Solomon
Alexandria, VA

To cure ideological insanity and terrorism

The Israeli-Islam problem might be solved if all

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

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

religious authorities would teach the difference between "objective reality" and "subjective reality." "Objective reality" has to do with what is repeatedly demonstrable and so scientifically provable. "Subjective reality" has to do with religious or ideological or hypothetical beliefs that are not scientifically provable and are therefore subject to question, challenge or doubt, but are fervently believed by many people.

Extremes of belief in "subjective realities" and resultant inability to distinguish it from "objective reality" amounts to "ideological insanity" and inability to find pragmatic solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is the religious basis of terrorism.

Will religious leaders promote this potential Great Enlightenment to enable the benighted masses to see and respond to the significance of the difference between "objective reality" and "subjective reality"? Leaders might be impeded by fear that such enlightenment would weaken their authority for teaching religion and reduce their finances. Surely not! Such a service of enlightenment, curing ideological extremism and terrorism and opening the way for pragmatic solutions to ethnic and political conflicts, would elevate their public esteem and serviceability to humanity. It would facilitate President Bush's proposed solution.

Or could we "brain storm" for other solutions? Could President Bush set aside an Israel-size area in Texas and invite Israelis to emigrate there to build a Promised Land? Might other nations do the same?

Or could President Bush persuade the entire conflicted Israeli-Palestinian area that it is by natural geographical design a single geopolitical hegemonic entity and must therefore be democratically unified politically and economically according to pragmatic requirements without reference to or interference by ideological or religious prejudices?

The Rev. John Julian Hancock
Los Angeles, CA

EDITORIAL NOTE

'A new *Witness* for a new time'

These are desperate times. The drums of war rumble in the background of our lives, unemployment is reaching new highs, the economy is precarious, and the last national election gave evidence of a strong conservative backlash in this country. Many of the people in our churches reflect this reality, and it is sometimes difficult to offer the Bread of Life when so many have already been filled with the Bread of Anxiety.

Never has the need for the prophetic voice of *The Witness* been greater — or, under greater threat. The title of this essay, which was used in a recent staff report to the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (publisher of *The Witness*), was taken from a working paper prepared in 1989 to assist the board at that time in deciding how to go forward into the 1990s. Then, as now, the financial resources of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company were dwindling. Then, as now, the possibility the board and staff faced was the loss of *The Witness*' prophetic voice.

The new board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, working closely with the staff of *The Witness*, believes that God is doing a new thing. We are choosing to see opportunities even in the midst of danger. We are beginning to see the emergence of a vision for a new *Witness* for a new time.

This may mean that *The Witness*, as a magazine, begins to look different and have a different publishing schedule. We may need to provide an alternative print vehicle while expanding our capacities in cyberspace. We are beginning to explore cooperative ventures with affiliate organizations. Exciting new ideas for membership development are emerging.

Edmund Burke said, "Desperate people in desperate times do desperate things." As Christians, however, we are a people of hope. The board and staff of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company are committed to going forward in a way that ensures a future for this important voice of prophecy that, for more than eighty years, has challenged the church to stay focused on its mission. We intend to do that by staying focused on the sacred mission that God has given us as the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

We ask your prayers as we move forward into this time of challenge and discernment and decision.

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

As we went to press...

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

Jim West

'What Would Jesus Drive?' Not a gas guzzler!

The Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) launched its "What Would Jesus Drive?" advertising campaign to focus attention on fuel efficiency and environmental issues. Leaders of an umbrella group known as the Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign (ICEC) delivered a letter signed by more than 100 heads of denominations and senior religious leaders from 21 states, to Ford, General Motors, and DaimlerChrysler executives and leadership at the United Auto Workers in Detroit on November 20. They arrived in a caravan of electric-hybrid cars. The letter asked automakers to build more fuel-efficient cars. Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold was among those who signed the letter, which focused on the damaging effects of pollution from vehicles on human health and the rest of God's creation, its contributions to global warming, and added a concern about U.S. reliance on imported oil from unstable regions of the world.

First native bishop dies at 92

Harold Jones, retired bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, died Nov. 12 in Arizona at the age of 92. He was the first Native American to be ordained to the office of bishop by any Christian denomination. Bishop Jones was consecrated January 11, 1972. His consecration marked the highlight of a career that began in 1938 with his ordination to the priesthood.

World Council of Churches to cut staff by 15 percent in 2003

The World Council of Churches (WCC), faced with a financial shortfall of more than six million Swiss francs in 2003, has announced it will reduce staff by 15 percent, from 165 full-time positions currently to a total of 141 positions by year end. The WCC, the world's biggest church grouping, also will reduce its 2003 expenses and begin to discern new ways to fulfill its mandate of seeking unity and cooperation among its 342 member churches worldwide.

German Jewish community given 'milestone' status equal to churches

The German government's plan to give the country's Jewish community an equal legal status to the mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches has been hailed as a milestone by Jewish leaders. "This is a historic event," said Paul Spiegel, head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. "That Jews live here once again in considerable numbers is a fact that those who returned after 1945 can hardly imagine."

Sydney newspaper reports allegations of nepotism against archbishop

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen, has been accused of nepotism after appointing his wife to a ministry position in the diocese. Jensen commissioned his wife, Christine Jensen, along with five other women at St. Andrew's Cathedral, to lead a newly formed women's ministry. It marked a first in Australian Anglican history, with no previous records of an archbishop performing the "commissioning" of his own wife, the newspaper reported. Less than three weeks earlier, Jensen infuriated critics by nominating his brother, Phillip, as new Dean of Sydney. With the archbishop's son, Michael, already serving as St Andrew's School chaplain, there are four Jensens in key positions in the Sydney diocese. The newly commissioned women's ministry team consists of three laywomen, including Christine Jensen, and three female deacons, the highest rank a woman can attain in the Sydney diocese, which bans women's ordination.

Jim West / Impact Digitals

Interfaith group stages living-wage protest at Wal-Mart

Demonstrators rallied outside a Sam's Club (Wal-Mart) as part of the People's Campaign for Justice at Wal-Mart in Southgate, Mich., in late November. The Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues wants Wal-Mart, the largest private employer in the U.S., to provide jobs with a living wage and benefits and to end the trade in goods made in sweatshops.

Bid for 'Dress Down Sundays' defeated in Church of England

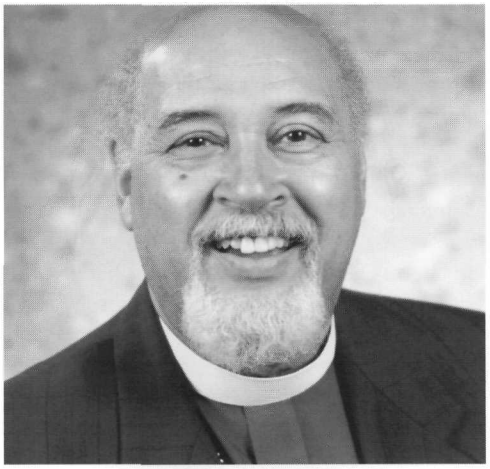
A proposal to allow Church of England vicars to opt for jeans instead of cassocks and surplices on Sunday mornings was defeated at the church's general synod meeting in London. The "Dress Down Sundays" plan was a bid to appeal to younger congregations. Some supporters of the proposal said they felt as though they were dressing in drag when putting on cassocks, the Guardian reported. Some clergy already conduct services in corduroys and sweaters. According to a study, the Church of England faces a marked reduction in attendance over the next two decades. By 2030, it is predicted that the number of adult parishioners will fall from 800,000 to 500,000. And for every 100 children in churches in 1930, there could be just four in 2030.

Restructuring of ethnic ministry unit draws scrutiny

by Pat McCaughan

Arthur B. Williams, Jr. says he'll begin his new role as the acting director of Ethnic Congregational Development by assisting national church staff with restructuring the unit, recruiting staff and communicating an ongoing commitment to ethnic ministry and anti-racism initiatives — all within an evolving process.

"The four ethnic desks will continue," said Williams, who retired Dec. 31 as Ohio's suffragan bishop and began the part-time interim position Jan. 1. He emphasized that



Arthur Williams

the voices of ethnic Episcopalians will continue to be heard within the national church.

"I certainly would not have taken the position otherwise," said Williams. "I am as committed as the Presiding Bishop for those concerns to continue to be heard. Each desk will have a staff person and there will be a full-time director. The difference is that, in addition to advocacy, there will be a congregational development component."

Less clear is the way the process will now evolve.

A 'dreadful' process

Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold announced the staff changes at the February 22, 2002 Executive Council meeting in San Antonio. He said the ethnic ministry unit would be refocused on congregational development and clergy recruitment rather than advocacy.

Carole Jan Lee, a member of the national church's Executive Council (EC) and of the council's People of Color Caucus, called the process flawed because people of color weren't included. She said the caucus, in particular, felt left out of the process and considered it doomed to failure from the start because of its approach. "[The plan was,] if they hired a Hispanic to head the department, then they would look for people of the other three ethnic groups to fill the other positions," she said. "So, the process has been, whatever ethnic group the director is, they'll hire three others from the other groups. But nobody applied for the director's position. So all the [incumbent] staff people have been in limbo. It's been dreadful, a poor personnel practice that shows insensitivity to people's lives."

Brian Grieves, director of Peace and Justice Ministries, said the practice of hiring a director who also has a programmatic work load is not new. "Since the 1994 budget cuts, program managers have supervised in addition to carrying their own workload. But," he added, "I don't know what the plan for ethnic ministries will be. Art Williams will come to help the Presiding Bishop and the program staff sort out what are the ministries of all of the ethnic desks, what makes sense for them to focus on for the future, related to the rest of the structure of the church."

Grieves acknowledged the long delay in filling the position and said Williams was recruited to begin in January because "it was only fair to the incumbents not to drag the process out any further. They had been told of the changes in February 2002." He said that Williams will conduct field consultations with constituent groups, to find out what they are thinking and feeling.

But Lee said that the lack of communication continues and that requests from the EC's People of Color Caucus to be kept informed of the process have not been honored.

"There have been so many bad feelings engendered about the way people have been treated. It's hard to undo. Three people are leaving and one is staying. That part I don't understand at all," said Lee, referring to the Dec. 31 retirement of Winston Ching, Missioner for Asian Ministries, and the year-end departures of Lynn Collins, Missioner for African American Ministries, and John Roberston, Missioner for Native American Ministries. Daniel Caballero, Missioner for Hispanic Ministries, remains on staff.

"They (the national church) have been wanting to do so much toward eliminating racism and practicing diversity, but the senior staff and management team are nearly all white," said Lee. "If they can't feel the need for sensitivity, who's going to bring it to their attention?"

Time to reflect church's 'new majority'?

Emmett Jarrett, national coordinator for the Episcopal Urban Caucus, agreed that it's time for the church's hierarchy to actively reflect its "new majority."

"There is a general understanding that the majority of people in the U.S. and among Christians, even among Episcopalians, are going to be people who used to be called minorities. They are the new majority and they need to set the agenda, not a top-down, white-male hierarchy," said Jarrett.

"I'd also like to see all of these people working on the fact that the U.S. is working on the process of starting World War III. Changing staff and reshuffling bureaucratic structures is not helpful to enabling the people of God to resist and to be in solidarity with the poor and oppressed," he said.

"The church needs to be a prophetic witness against the war, against racism. In 1991, the Urban Caucus and deputies for the consultation introduced the church's program to become a church for all races and a church without racism. We renewed it in 2000. There's still another seven years to go on that.

"That's the important work of the ethnic desks, to be raising up the ministries out there and they are out there, in Latino, Asian, Native and African American communities," Jarrett

said. "We will become a new majority church whether we like it or not and the structures we put in place now ought to be encouraging, anticipating and helping it happen."

Williams hopes to do just that. In his work with Ethnic Congregational Development, he plans to connect with the ethnic communities and networks to strengthen, grow and develop ethnic congregations, while maintaining an advocacy role within them.

A native of Providence, R.I., Williams is the former chair of the national editorial committee of *Lift Every Voice And Sing II* and of the Justice and the Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee, and vice president of the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE). He was also a co-chair of the committee that drafted the Pastoral Letter on Racism in the 1990s.

Carol Gallagher, bishop suffragan of Southern Virginia and the first native woman to be elected a bishop in the Anglican Communion, enthusiastically welcomed Williams' appointment and said she plans to be part of that ongoing collaborative process.

"It is important for the church to take responsibility and leadership in the area of inclusion and to make sure the voices of a lot of different people are heard in the church. We hope to find a way to make that continue to happen," she said.

Peter Ng, a former member of Executive Council and parish administrator at Church of Our Savior in New York City's Chinatown, also praised Williams' appointment. "We have tremendous respect for Bishop Williams," said Ng. "We look forward to working with him and to developing strong ethnic congregations."

Advocates gather to claim blessing rite

by Jan Nunley

(ENS) Nearly 200 advocates of a rite of same-sex blessing gathered at Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis over Veterans' Day weekend for a part pep rally, part prayer meeting, part strategy session, preparing for what will surely be the most controversial issue of the next General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

Claiming the Blessing (CTB) is a collaboration between three groups — Integrity, Oasis and Beyond Inclusion — with a primary witness to, by, and for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered (LGBT) individuals in the Episcopal Church. The group shares partnership with *The Witness* magazine as well as other organizations.

Former Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Bishop Jane Dixon, president of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, at the Claiming the Blessing Conference in St. Louis.

The gathering included representatives of 38 states, with almost a quarter of the participants serving as deputies to the 2003 General Convention.

The conference opened with a Eucharist at which Susan Russell, executive director of CTB, preached to what she called "a persistent people [who] belong to a most persistent God." In a pointed reference to the American Anglican Council's "God's Love Changed Me" campaign, launched at the 2000 General Convention in Denver, Russell said, "Our persistent God does indeed seek to change us ... but the change God desires for us is not our sexual orientation but our theological orientation. It's not our gender identity but our spiritual identity."

Still walking, after Lambeth

In her opening remarks, the Elizabeth Kaeton, a member of the CTB steering committee and rector of St. Paul's in Chatham, N.J., traced the origins of the gathering to the 1998 Lambeth Conference, which passed a resolution declaring homosexuality to be "incompatible with Scripture."

"We came away from Lambeth deeply wounded and limping, but still walking," Kaeton said. "We saw what they did. ... We came away outraged, and remain outraged, that some members of this elite group of people in purple shirts dare to claim that they, and they only, speak the mind of the worldwide Anglican Communion. What arrogance! What cheek! Last time I read the Outline of Faith [in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*] there were four orders of ministry: bishops, priests, deacons and the laity.

"At this moment, we are focused and coalesced around a single task: to obtain authorization for the development of a liturgical rite of blessing of the faithful, monogamous relationship between two adults of any gender at General Convention 2003," Kaeton said. "Would someone please tell the bishop of Pittsburgh that we do not bless 'sexual relationships'? We are blessing faithful, monogamous relationships!"

Mutual deference for the sake of unity

Michael W. Hopkins, president of Integrity and rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in Glenn Dale, Md., said that the shape of the rite of same-sex blessing that emerges from the next General Convention will not be all that advocates might hope for. "We know and accept that such a rite will not be used or even allowed to be used universally," Hopkins said. "We are quite deliberately advocating for a rite whose use would be optional for the sake of the unity of the church we love.

"We believe in our heart of hearts that our relationships are equal to heterosexual relationships, whether or not the term 'marriage' is appropriate for them, and so, in our heart of hearts, we believe the rite used to publicly celebrate them should be equal. But that is not what we are asking for. We are compromising, moderating our position, in the spirit of a resolution from the 1920 Lambeth Conference (Resolution 9:VIII): 'We believe that for all, the truly equitable approach to union is by way of mutual deference to one another's consciences.'"

Hopkins said he had several messages to deliver. To the Episcopal Church he said that gays and lesbians "are not going anywhere — gay and lesbian Christians make up a significant portion of the Episcopal Church," he pointed out. "We will continue to do so after General Convention 2003 no matter what happens. We will not attempt to get our way by threatening to leave. I ask those on all sides of this debate to make this commitment as well."

Hopkins assured conservative Episcopalians that "we do not desire for you to go away" from the Episcopal Church. He invited the president of the conservative American Anglican Council to sit down with him and "discuss ways we can proceed with the debate about our differences without tearing each other down or apart."

"We do not desire to force same-sex blessings on you or anyone," Hopkins added. "We do challenge you to stop scapegoating lesbian and gay Christians for every contemporary ill in the church, particularly for our current state of disunity or the potential for the unraveling of the Anglican Communion." He said that "scriptural interpretation and authority, including the very different polities that exist in different provinces of the Communion and whether or not local autonomy is a defining characteristic of Anglicanism," are "just one tip of that very large iceberg and if sexuality went completely away tomorrow, the iceberg would still be there."

Crime of silence

At a banquet on Friday night, Washington bishop John Bryson Chane delivered a stirring after-dinner address that brought participants to their feet. He blasted dioceses of the church for not following through on the sexuality dialogues mandated by several resolutions of General Convention. "Had open, honest, consistent dialogue, study, and debate been the norm within the Episcopal Church over the last 25 years in dealing compassionately, biblically, pastorally, and theologically with issues of human sexuality, then I believe we probably would not be meeting here tonight in preparation for Minneapolis in 2003," Chane opined. "In many ways the Episcopal Church has been guilty of one of humanity's greatest crimes — the crime of silence."

Chane challenged the Episcopal Church to answer three questions in Minneapolis. First, he said, the church must decide whether it is "fair, theologically sound, and pastorally appropriate to inhibit the informed judgment and pastoral care of good priests" with reference to same-sex blessings in their congregations. Second, he asked whether it is "an open and faithful pastoral response to the gift of the Holy Spirit when a congregation's discernment of a person's call to the ordination process is disregarded by a diocese simply because that person happens to be gay or lesbian and is living in a monogamous, committed same-sex relationship." Finally, asked Chane, "Is there any grace or compassion in forcing celibacy upon a gay or lesbian person as the only option if they are to be ordained to the diaconate or priesthood?"

Chane also criticized the Episcopal Church for "centering its will and vast resources on internal jurisdictional disputes and canonical conflicts" when the world is threatened by "pandemic disease, abject poverty, religious wars, racism, misogyny and illiteracy.

"In the last 24 hours, 15,000 people died from AIDS in Africa. Tomorrow and every day thereafter another 15,000 people daily will die of AIDS," Chane said. "How can we as a church be so engrossed in our own internal battles that we are immune from this horror?"

Classical Anglicanism

William Countryman, professor in Biblical Studies at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, gave the conference's final address. "I've noticed that people who object to what we are working toward here often speak of it as the work of a 'gay/lesbian lobby,' the functional equivalent of the 'outside agitators' of the not so distant past," Countryman said. "The church ought to be delighted, of course, if it found people outside the church clamoring for its blessing. But I don't see that happening," he added, to chuckles from the audience.

Countryman drew a distinction between the "Geneva tradition" of Puritanism, whose theological heirs, he maintained, are modern U.S. evangelicals, and the broad stream of "classical Anglicanism."

"For members of this theological tradition, purity of doctrine trumps God's mandate for Christians to stick with one another through thick and thin," he said.

"We look to some like radicals. In reality, we are in the odd position of being the principal advocates of classical Anglicanism today on this continent," Countryman proclaimed to applause from the gathering.

"Well-meaning people sometimes say to me, 'Why can't the gay and lesbian community just hold back on this point so the church can get on to more important things in its mission?'" Countryman continued. "To that, my answer is, 'Spiritually, there may not be anything more important.' This blessing of unions is not finally, for us, about social convenience, or status, or even justice. It is about our access to God."

Former Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning was the celebrant at the conference's closing Eucharist, with Robert Taylor, dean of St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, preaching. Browning was presented with Integrity's Louie Crew Award at the banquet.

[Ed. note: Sally Sedgwick and Kevin Jones contributed to this report.] ●

When religion goes bad

by L. William Countryman

When I read, from time to time, the anguished plea of a moderate Muslim that the rest of us not judge Islam by those who practice it as a religion of hatred and violence, I feel a certain resonance with my own experience as a Christian. More than once, over the past few decades, I have found myself trying to distinguish, in public settings, between the classical Christianity of, say, Anglicans, Lutherans or Roman Catholics and the repressive, hostile version of the religion proclaimed by fundamentalists and near-fundamentalists.

Occasionally, I've had broad-minded Episcopalians take me to task for saying that fundamentalism isn't real Christianity. They were mistaken, I think. Whether fundamentalist Islam is as much a misrepresentation of classic Islam as fundamentalist Christianity is of our faith I am in no position to say. But I think we would all do well, both Muslims and Christians, to think about what goes wrong in the teaching and practice of religion to produce this sort of hostile, life-destroying religiosity.

Jesus went to dinner once at the home of a very religious man, who met him without any great show of hospitality. A woman of questionable reputation came in and began washing Jesus' feet with tears and wiping them with her hair. The pious host was inwardly disapproving. Jesus rebuked him by pointing out that only the person who has been forgiven much can love much (Luke 7:36-50).

Despite this warning, Christians have been as eager as anybody else to place the cultivation of devout perfection at the heart of our religious life. I wonder if this is not exactly what lies at the root of all fundamentalisms. The search for this sort of flawless perfection breeds hardness; it breeds lack of hospitality; it breeds anger and a sense of entitlement and, if frustrated, sometimes violence as well.

An important part of the gospel is that God is much more generous than we are likely to be — even with ourselves. When we want to feel good about ourselves, we cloak our own faults and concentrate on those of our neighbors. When God wants to feel positive toward us, God manages to do it with full knowledge of exactly who and what we are. Somehow, God manages to love and forgive us anyway.

Perhaps there are contexts in human life where this message cannot be heard. I know there have been times in my own life when I could not hear it. I wonder whether this message is particularly difficult for young men to hear. Both in Christianity and Islam, young men seem to be particularly apt recruits to fundamentalism. Is that an age when we males are particularly in need, not just of ideals, but of absolutes? If so, how can the teachers of faith, Christian or other, enlist the attention of young men for other ways of understanding God, life and the world?

I do not mean to undervalue the tendency of young men to devote themselves to a cause. It is also a tendency toward idealism and self-giving. That is precisely why it deserves something better than to be employed in the interests of perfectionism, for perfectionism will eventually prove destructive to those who embrace it and often to those around them as well.

Do women have a comparable tendency to take the faith of Jesus in the wrong direction at some point in their lives? I think so. But I'm not sure when it is most likely to happen. I would guess that, in the American culture I know, it is a bit later than in the case of men and has more to do with responding to disappointed hopes in one's 20s.

However that may be, the wrong choices of both men and women are apt to remain with us for a long time. And as we grow older and assume leadership in the community of faith, we will propagate them — unless God has somehow gotten through to us and rescued us from our own misguided efforts to be godlike.

That, after all, is the great danger. Religion keeps confusing itself with God. We religious keep confusing ourselves with God. This seems to be a cross-cultural, multi-religious opportunity for sin. Fundamentalisms are expressions of idolatry, the terrible confusion of something this-worldly with the God who is never simply to be identified with even the most devout beliefs or claims of worshippers.

Islam seems to be the leading example of the moment. But it holds no patent. The Roman Catholic hierarchy's truly dumbfounding indifference to those sexually abused by priests has its roots in an idolatrous sense of the church. The self-styled Christian Right's indifference to truth and human suffering in its campaigns against lesbians and gay men has its roots in idolatry of their particular interpretation of the Bible.

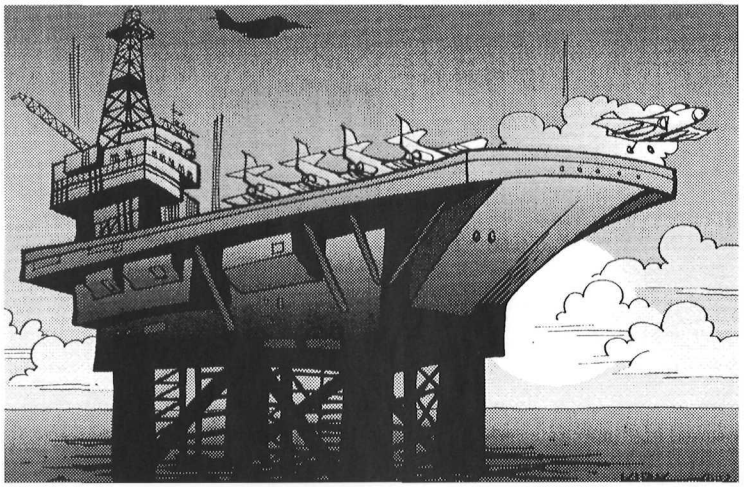
Episcopalians are not exempt. We can tolerate everything except "what simply isn't done." And we feel sure that God can't tolerate that, either.

To which I say, "Get forgiven." It will do us all a world of good.

Time to resist

by Ray Gaston

With the UN inspectors arriving in Iraq and the increasing likelihood of our country becoming embroiled in another U.S.–led war, how should Christians respond? [*Ed. note: Gaston writes from England.*] In recent weeks the Anglican church, through the House of Bishops, has expressed caution and the Roman hierarchy has questioned moves toward war, but is it not time for Christians to be bolder in our opposition to the move toward war? Our mild-mannered criticism often fails to address/recognize the "bigger picture" of a world dominated by U.S. imperialism. Our obsession with institutional church crises prevents us from drawing clear parallels between our existing context and the context of Jesus, presenting the radically relevant and challenging message of the gospel to our world and discovering its power afresh.



Jesus was a radical prophet who posed resistance to both Roman rule and the established religious authorities of his time. Jesus preached the good news of God's reconciling love, a good news that was not easy for those in authority to welcome but was a word of liberation to the poor and marginalized. His challenge to the religious authorities of his time was a challenge to the institutional tendencies through which the liberating message given to the people of Moses had been transformed into a legalistic ideology which now oppressed those people and itself collaborated with the oppression of Rome. He spoke, too, against the religious "terrorists" of his time — the Zealots and others who sought to defeat the Romans by indiscriminate violence against Roman authority and ordinary Roman people. He challenged people to "love their enemy," to "pray for their persecutors" — a truly radical perspective.

Jesus' call in the Sermon on the Mount to nonviolent direct action through shaming the oppressor was a creative response to Roman rule: "If someone strikes you on the right cheek turn to him the other also." Just as creative were his healings and his approach to the elitism of the temple, challenging the religious hierarchy of his time. These actions, aimed at political and religious authorities, were matched by a call to a way of life that was deeply challenging for individual Jews facing an oppressive and barbaric foreign power, whether they were rich or poor, powerful or powerless within the Jewish social structure.

It was this triple challenge — firstly, to Roman authority, secondly, to religious authority and thirdly, to the prevailing popular culture that encouraged personal hatred of anything or anybody Roman — that led to his crucifixion. By saying this, I am not saying that Judaism was inherently legalistic and oppressive, but in Jesus' time the institutional tendency had taken over from the more prophetic tradition that sought to call the community back to its original radicalism. Similarly, in the face of Roman oppression, the temptation to resort to a limited interpretation of the "chosen" people in favor with God over other peoples, rather than responsibility to God in relation to all humanity, was too great. Jesus was a prophet in a new key. His gospel drew on that prophetic tradition, challenging institutionally dominated perspectives and racial prejudice, whilst moving it in new directions.

The crucifixion is central to this, as Paul says "foolishness to the Greeks, a stumbling block to the Jews." The self-giving, risk-taking love demonstrated in that act is what leads us as Christians to talk of Jesus as a new revelation of God, a revelation of the true Love and vulnerability of God in a world of violence, expediency and hatred. This risk-taking God answers human violence with love and the risk of vulnerability and, through that offering, opens a new way via resurrection. Christians are called to live this way of self-giving and risk-taking love that opens the way to personal and communal experiences of the hope of the peaceable Kingdom to come.

The early church recognized this with its militant pacifism. This slowly became watered down as the church became more and more incorporated into the state and the Roman Empire particularly. Christian attitudes to the violence of war became more pragmatically orientated. Augustine began the development of a "just war" theory, later developed for a different context in the 13th century by Aquinas and others, as the church increasingly became an institution of the state and a powerful "political" force in the sense of wielding influence with, and being used by, those in power. As with the Judaism of Jesus' time, so with Christianity in the post-Constantine era, the tendency toward institutionalism has had a stifling and negative influence upon the proclamation of the true gospel.

We are in a period of time in which parallels can be drawn to Jesus' own context. The Gospel is a challenge to us in three ways. Firstly, there is the challenge to U.K.–backed U.S. imperialism. Pax Americana is akin to Pax Romana in that it proclaims liberation and peace through violence and oppression, a violence that is waged through war and through the horrendously unequal distribution of the earth's resources and a neo-liberal economic philosophy — a violence of which we are a part. Secondly, the gospel challenges our own religious institutionalism where, like the High Priests, we fear what we might lose, rather than risk letting go and living in the hope of transformation. Thirdly, it is a challenge to the violence of the oppressed, to the embittered terrorists whose rage has led them to a hatred that refuses to see the humanity of the oppressor.

The three-way challenge of Jesus is the challenge we face as Christians today and is the gospel we are called to proclaim. Firstly, to expose U.S. imperialism for what it is — violent and terrifying, in the grip of the principalities and powers and not to be seen as a benevolent force. Secondly, to push for renewal in the church and for our ecclesiastically centered preoccupations to be cast aside in favor of a confident proclamation of a radical gospel. This will lead us initially to increasing marginalization, "irrelevance" and numeri-

cal church decline but also, God willing, to a growth in discipleship. And finally, to challenge the prevailing culture of violence, whether in the form of imperialism or its opponents. In our case that means facing up to the challenge of refusing to be dominated by calls for national security in the face of the terrorism of the oppressed. It means resisting the temptation to side with the terrorism of imperialism, but challenging ourselves and others to walk the way of love. And, in response to 9/11, that means the challenge to place the search for justice for all peoples above safety, security and vengeance for ourselves and those "like us."

Christians can pick up this challenge by engaging in nonviolent direct action (NVDA) against the War on Iraq and the "war on terrorism." I accept such action is not open to everyone. However, engaging in NVDA should be a communal activity, embracing not only those who take the action in an obvious way but also the wider community of people who support them in a variety of ways — with prayer, financial support, court support, vigils, etc.

The vast majority of mainline U.K. Christians would perhaps disagree with this and consider in our present climate that war might be a necessary evil. It is a view held by perhaps the majority of Christians. However, I do not think it is a tenable Christian position. I would go as far as to say that in light of the above to support a U.S.–backed war is to sup with the devil. But even without that shocking recognition, if we look at the options the tradition offers us, it is hard to see how support for the war on terrorism and Iraq can be theologically justified.

In Christian history, as I have said, two options have been open to Christians — a radical nonviolence and various versions of a "just war" theory built upon the work of Augustine and Aquinas. The "just war" theory just does not hold up in contemporary context: Modern warfare with its civilian casualties cannot be thus legitimized. Thankfully, things are not as they were in 1914, when bishops and clergy were actively involved in recruiting soldiers to the war and claiming God was on our side. In the war of 1939–1945, a more humble church blessing was offered, however. Toward the end of the war, Bishop George Bell questioned — by application of a "just war" theory — the continued morality of the war, in the light of the blanket bombing of German cities and the Allies' refusal to countenance a negotiated peace with anti-Nazi Germans. In recent years, the church is one of the last voices in society willing to support war, confining itself to maintaining a largely cowardly silence, a hand-wringing reluctant support, as it did for the war on Afghanistan, or mild-mannered caution in relation to war on Iraq. I have yet to hear a theological justification for war post 9/11. No one speaks of a "just war." I have heard many Christians pragmatically accept that there seems to be no alternative and so reluctantly support the "war on terrorism," but I would maintain this is because of our lack of confidence in the gospel. We listen instead to our own fears and concerns for security. Who can blame us? It is a terrifying world. Fortunately Jesus does not allow us to get away with that and calls us instead to listen to him.

The ancient tradition of Christian nonviolence has not disappeared in Christian history and has been kept alive through the post reformation peace churches especially. But it has also been growing in the mainline denominations since 1900 — our own Anglican Pacifist Fellowship is an example. There has also been a marked change in its interpretation from rather passive personalized absolutist pacifism to a more engaged militant nonviolent perspective more akin to the politics of Jesus. The Christian component of the anti-Vietnam War movement associated with the Berrigan brothers, which has continued in the anti-nuclear "ploughshares" movement of the 1980s and 1990s, is a stunning example of this.

The time is now ripe for the church again to take a strong anti-war stance and it can do so now by church communities signing up to the Pledge of Resistance organized by anti-war groups ARROW and Voices in the Wilderness. In signing the pledge, people agree to undertake nonviolent direct action if and when war is declared by the U.S. on any other nation. People can sign either as active resisters or supportive resisters. The House of Bishops could issue a statement supporting all Christian people who, through an examination of their conscience, decide to participate in nonviolent direct action against war. Wouldn't it be a refreshing change if the *Church Times* were filled, not with letters debating the "orthodoxy" of our new Archbishop over homosexuality, but with debates on tactics for anti-war activity? This then would be a church really exploring living the Kingdom in the present world crisis, a church being "foolish" for Christ's sake.

[*The Pledge to Resistance can be signed online at www.j-n-v.org or by contacting: ARROW, c/o NonViolent Resistance Network, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ.*]

Claiming the Blessing – A rite of passage

by Elizabeth Kaeton

There are events in the life of a community which become rites of passage as well as marks of maturity and growth. Like a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or Confirmation for the individual, the gathering known as "Claiming The Blessing" was one such event which marked the spiritual maturation of the movement for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the life of the Episcopal Church.

For the first time since the movement to ordain women, many justice-seeking groups — including the Episcopal Women's Caucus, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, the Union of Black Episcopalians, and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship — gathered together with Beyond Inclusion, Integrity and The Oasis with a single purpose and focus: to secure, at General Convention 2003, the authorization

of a liturgical rite of blessing for two adults of any gender.

It has been over 25 years since this level of collaboration has been attained with such enthusiasm and energy. Clearly, a new generation of the progressive movement is being launched in the Episcopal Church and it is emerging with a clear, unified and prophetic voice. The excitement about that rebirth was palpable and began to grow at every liturgy, workshop and plenary session.

Moreover, it was abundantly clear that the LGBT community has not only made great strides in the work of justice, we have also reached a level of spiritual development previously unseen and considered by many to have been unattainable. Now, some in our community would "pooh-pooh" that as evidence only of our "assimilation" and our "aping the cultural stigmata." I suppose that's as valid a perception as any other, but it comes from a particular location "on the fringe" that does not even have in its sight a pew in the Episcopal Church — or, if it does, it's one that has neither been comfortable nor welcoming. Acknowledging the blessing of our baptism is one thing — being able to claim that blessing for ourselves is an undeniable mark of maturity.

That spiritual maturation was visible on the faces of the people in attendance who listened to the presentations. It was in our eyes as we sang, "I want to follow Jesus" at Morning Devotions and in our tears as we sang, "Just as I am" at the altar call. It was in the enthusiasm in the room as people were making plans to go home to organize. It was in the commitment to take responsibility for our own lives.

Even the two members of the conservative press who were in attendance were not unaffected by it. Indeed, the press coverage in those venues has been fair and balanced. I don't think that would have been possible if they, too, hadn't seen and experienced the level of this community's spiritual development and growth for themselves.

As one attendee said to me, "We may not have 'come a long way, baby' but we cer-

continued on page 14

LOUIE'S INDEX

Which Episcopal bishop is a descendent of a murderer of an Archbishop of Canterbury?
Most Rev. Frank Tracy Griswold is a direct descendant of William de Tracy, one of the four knights who murdered Thomas A'Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170.

State with the highest percentage of citizens of Hispanic/Latino origin:
New Mexico (42.1%)

Percentage of Episcopal Church clergy of Hispanic/Latino origin in New Mexico's Diocese of Rio Grande:
1.4%

The Episcopal Church diocese that grew the most during the Decade of Evangelism:
Vermont (50.3%)

The Episcopal Church diocese which grew the least during the Decade of Evangelism:
West Tennessee (-39.9%)

If a gay priest is elected bishop in the elections scheduled between April 1, 2003 and General Convention, who will need to approve that election for it to be accepted by the whole Episcopal Church?
Persons elected as bishop within 120 days of General Convention must receive consents of a majority in each House of General Convention. Persons elected bishop at other times, must receive consents by mail of a majority of the House of Bishops and a majority of the diocesan Standing Committees.

What is the difference between the church organizations IRD and IDS?
The Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD) is a think-tank and activist organization of political and religious conservatives. The Institute for Religion and Democracy is a think-tank and activist organization of political and religious liberals.

What is the difference between ECW and EWC?
The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) is a service organization dating back for more than a century, with a chapter in almost every parish. The Episcopal Women's Caucus (EWC) is an advocacy organization for women's ministries and came into being to promote women's ordination as priests before that was possible.

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

 continued from page 13

tainly have come a pace, though, haven't we?" Indeed. We have made it through a rite of passage to claim a liturgical rite of blessing. No matter what happens in Minneapolis at General Convention 2003, our spiritual goal is this: that we may become even more of the blessing we seek — for ourselves, our church and the world.

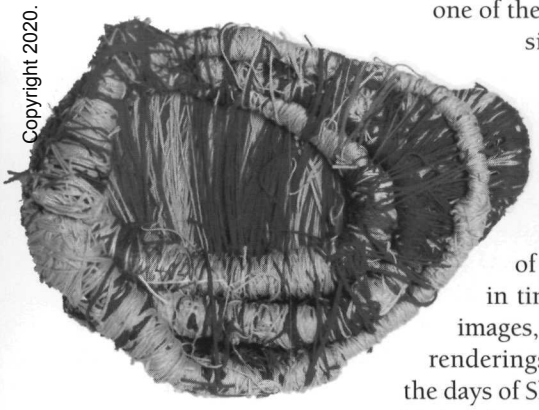
Outsider Art: Just another put-down?

by Bruce Campbell

The phrase is almost irresistible: Outsider Art. It sounds sufficiently rebellious, yet also decorative. In case you're one of those people who must have been sleeping instead of reading fine art journals, Outsider Art is definitely in — so in, in fact, that some are making real money at it, begging the question of its outsider status. In a word, Outsider Art is one name given to artworks made by non-mainstream, untrained and/or unexhibited artists. Politically, the term is supposed to embrace artists who have worked without interest — and presumably without hope — of entering the fine art marketplace. Other terms for the same art have been "naïve," "art brut," "self-taught," "visionary," and — is this offensive? — "southern."

At least one semi-prominent northern institution, the Chicago-based Intuit ("The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art"), has built a non-profit business plan behind the phenomenon. Their website says that Outsider Artists have come to include "rural African Americans, eccentrics, isolates, compulsive visionaries or the mentally ill" — or, more generally, artists not in New York.

Good church people, like you and me, might say we have been acquainted with this stream of creativity perhaps all too well. It has been easy to feel sentenced to life, for only the crime of parish membership, amidst an unending parade of banners, murals, crèches and festive vestments whose sole claim to beauty or greatness was their intention. If you have ever felt this, you're on to something, because one of the significant tracks of Outsider Art is art with religious or devotional imagery. Unlike most (but not all) Parish Art, these works have an obsessive quality: highly detailed diagrams of heaven, words or phrases in tiny scrawls lacing through images, exorbitant or psychedelic renderings of eternal judgment. In the days of Shaker "spirit drawings" or Native American sand paintings, such works as these used to be referred to as folk art, which for a long time meant you couldn't buy them because nobody would sell them.



Cocoon by Judith Scott, courtesy Ricco Maresca Gallery

But now there is a market for them, and by all accounts it is growing. Undoubtedly some people are seeking authenticity at a modest price, relative to the inflated price they paid to dry-mount, matte and frame that Picasso show poster. For others, this is an aesthetic protest against non-representational art they don't like, don't understand and don't want around the house. More depressing is the possibility that people are awed at art from people who aren't expected to make any.

The basic appeal, according to the website of *Raw Vision* magazine, may go back to the roots of this category of art: the paintings and drawings of asylum patients in the early 1900s. People seemed to want to see these "raw" expressions of untrained artists as a way of knowing the unknowable visions of the mentally ill, a pure pipeline straight from the brain without the shapings of acculturation or even consciousness. This sentiment was an echo of the persistent stereotype of the mentally disabled as somehow more truthful or wise than the rest of us, a praise as limiting as any other stereotype.

Judith Scott, an Oakland, Calif.–based sculptor, has made her name through her creation of "cocoons," which are everyday objects she has proceeded to wrap elaborately with fabric, ribbon and other small found objects until they are large, retaining the vague shape of the original object. She has had an exhibition at a New York gallery, but this summer, her stuff wound up at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, a local museum of "science, art and human perception." Why there? Because, as a press release explained, "Judith Scott's work is even more remarkable because Scott is a 59-year-old woman with Down's Syndrome [*sic*]. In addition, she cannot speak or hear."

There are enough –isms in that descriptor to launch a diocesan task force. In the case of mental retardation, the fact that we find artistic output "remarkable" is in the end an indictment of our culture. The only truly remarkable thing is that Scott's work is being publicly exhibited at all.

The fascination with unacknowledged creativity is understandable, but in the end probably more so to art consumers than to artists. Artists know that the quality of their creative urge is not a function of their consciousness or lack of it, or the LSD generation would have brought us the next Dutch Masters. They also know that everything they make is an expression, with a shape and a purpose, so that lauding Outsider Artists for unconsciousness or naïveté is at best insulting. People of faith should know this, too. The fact that these artists bust apart our categories for what comprises art is arguably their greatest contribution, one they probably did not set out to make. The challenge is left to us to accept — or not — yet another display of the unquenchable creativity of God and, thereby, the children of God.

[Ed. note: Two extensive directories of web sites featuring Outsider Art are:http://www.janesaddictions.com/jadmain.htm and http://www.interestingideas.com/out/outlinks.htm] ●

AIDS IN A GLOBAL AGE

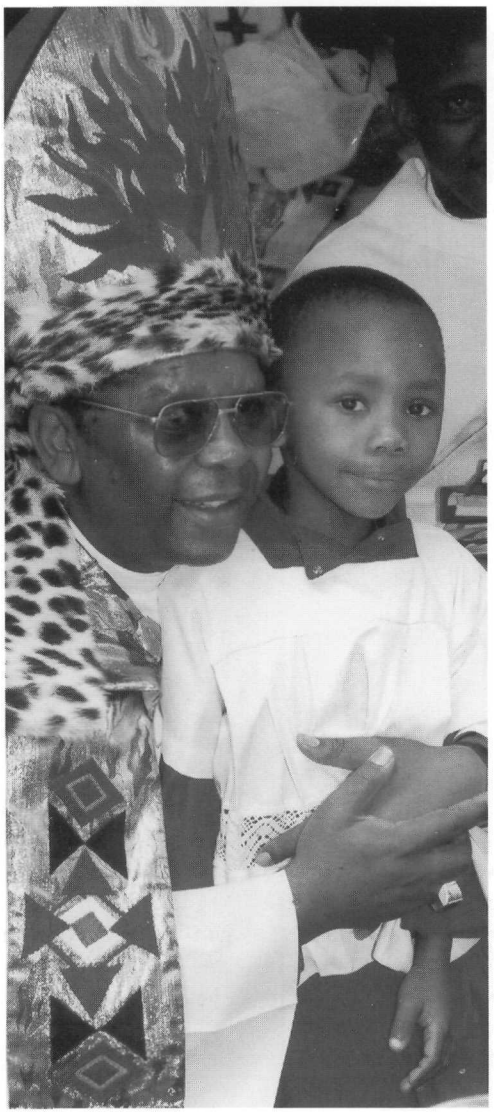
A Pastoral Letter from the Archbishop of Cape Town, His Grace, the Most Reverend Njongonkulu W.H. Ndungane, D.D., F.K.C.

BELOVED IN CHRIST: When measured in the cost of lives lost and lives yet to be saved the HIV/AIDS pandemic across sub-Saharan Africa and around the world is calling us into relationships and commitments never before imagined. We are facing global annihilation of some of our most vulnerable people on earth and social chaos unprecedented in human history.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is decimating communities and nations. It is tearing apart families and creating millions of orphaned children. Who will build the future, which is on loan to us from our children? Who will guarantee the hard-won gains of our freedom if no one is educated or able to work and protect the rights of millions who will come after us?

We know that prevention can and does work. We know that anti-retroviral treatments can further prevent the deterioration from disease and subsequent death that tears our families asunder. We know that people of goodwill can band together to form networks of care and support. And we know that there are enough resources in the world to stop this killer in its tracks, if only we have the passion and the will to make it so. Thus we must make ending the AIDS pandemic and ensuring survival for those most at risk a crucial part of national strategies for change and development.

This naturally means addressing the root causes of poverty on a massive scale and forgiving the indebtedness that is strangling our fledgling nations of the global South. By freeing some of these financial burdens, alone, we can do vast amounts of this work ourselves. We must also come together in a new consensus to put an end to the crushing effects of gender inequality. We can change our cultures of enslavement of women and commit ourselves to equal opportunity in order to bring the promised reign of God "on earth as it is in heaven." And then, together, we can usher in a new age of hope for Africa.



Ethan Flad

In many parts of our continent, the Church is one of the only institutions with both the historic continuity and core of willing and able volunteers to make the changes real, amidst globalization and threat of unending conflict between nations and peoples. In our Church of the Province of Southern Africa, the 2003 HIV/AIDS focus is: "Our Struggle, Our Hope — Working for a Generation without AIDS." I am calling on people of faith everywhere to join us in saving humanity.

The moment is in its fullness. The God of history is beckoning us to enter a larger understanding and enact our basic humanity. Around the world people have rediscovered that we are, indeed, a global community. This is supremely manifested by the global consensus of what each nation should be doing. With the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, the nations of the world have stated that we have a stake in the well-being of each other. This recalls our

Christian roots and the words of St. Paul, "We are members, one of another. When one part of the body suffers, we all suffer."

The response of the faith community is straightforward and simple. It means committing ourselves daily in prayer for saving the world. I invite you to build a tapestry of hope through prayer that will alleviate the suffering of those stultified by the overwhelming tasks which lie ahead.

We know this can work wonders as we can personally give witness to as we peacefully ended our "struggle" against apartheid. We can also prevail upon our governments to give their unconditional support to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other government-sponsored relief and development efforts that can and will make a difference in people's lives. We can become vigorous advocates, lobbying our governments for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

We can extend our reach through our churches by supporting the International Anglican AIDS Fund, administered by the Anglican Communion Office. We can work for justice in our own communities and partner with those living with HIV or AIDS. For we have learned that without a personal relationship to someone living with HIV or AIDS, one can easily become elitist and discriminatory, even with the best intentions to do otherwise.

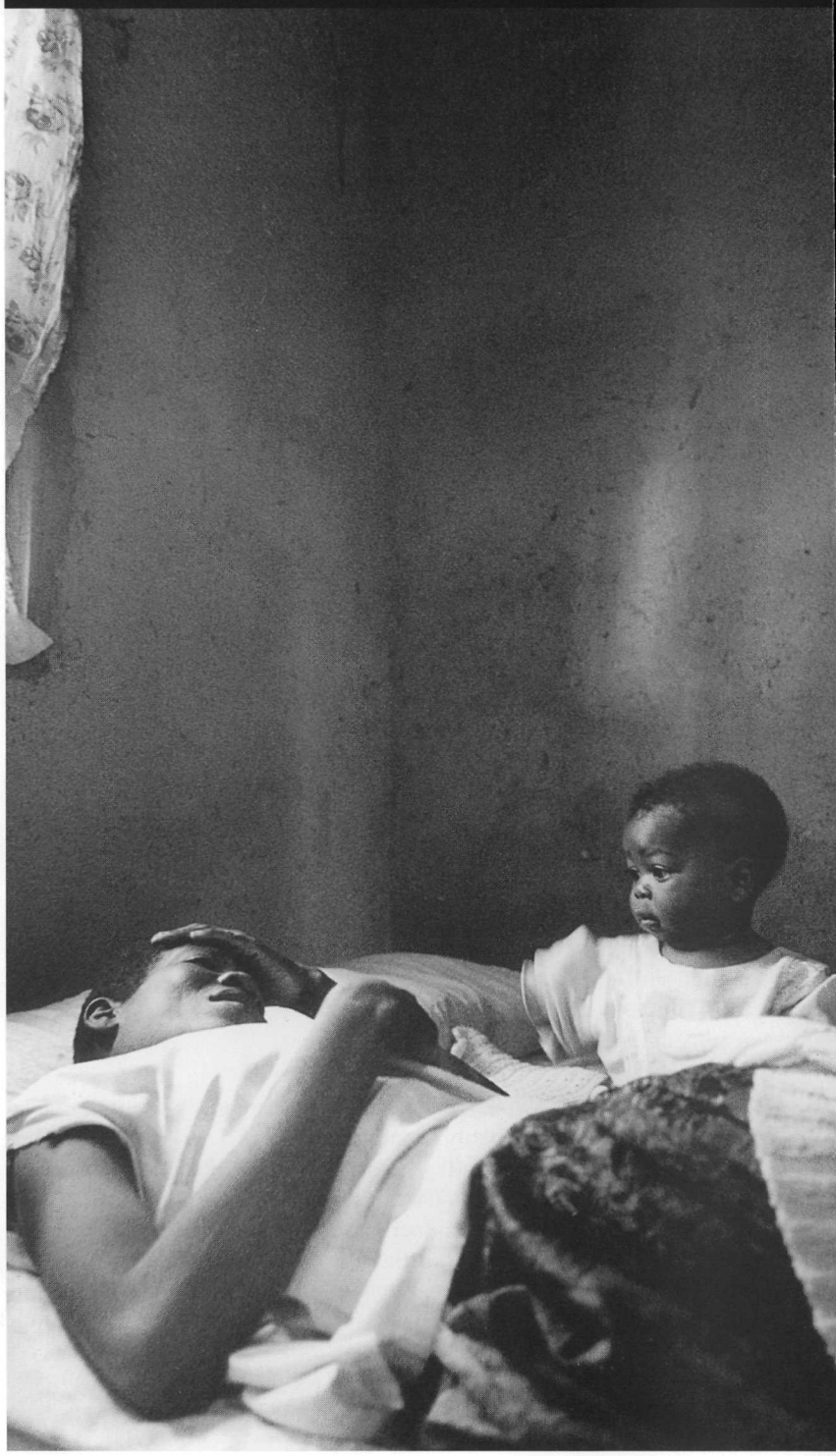
Finally, we can learn the fine art of companionship. That is, of traveling this difficult highway to hope with one another. We must learn again, too, that we do not travel alone, but the Lord of history, Jesus Christ, travels with us all along the way. He is willing to guide and strengthen us by the power of His life-giving and eternal Spirit. He is able to comfort us in sorrow and loss. And he is willing to dine with us and give us rest when we are hungry and tired. What more do we need?

And so my friends, I invite you into this Partnership for Life with your prayers and your support. Please do not let the birthplace of our humankind become the graveyard of our humanity. Please stand with us and among us as agents of hope and commitment. We must keep our eyes on the prize by working together for a Generation without AIDS.

—Njongonkulu, Cape Town

Njongonkulu W.H. Ndungane is Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the 10-million-member Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA), comprising the nations of Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mocambique and the islands of St. Helena and Ascension. He is chair of the HIV/AIDS Board of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA) and holds the HIV/AIDS portfolio for the Primates of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Well-known across the Communion for his leadership on justice issues, for nearly a decade he has spearheaded efforts on international debt forgiveness, poverty alleviation and gender inequality. Formerly he was Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa and Provincial Executive Officer of the CPSA during the tenure of Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu as Archbishop of Cape Town. ●

A CALL



A call from the church of the global South to respond to the AIDS pandemic

by Ted Karpf

WHEN THE PRIMATES of the Anglican Communion met in Canterbury last April, they declared a word spoken from the church of the global South to the church of the global North. They proclaimed that "AIDS is not a punishment from God." The Primates described the church as being "too often a voice of condemnation," which has led to neglect and abuse of those living with AIDS and those who survive them. They went on to describe a way forward which called for "coordinated and joint action [with governments, development programmes, health and pharmaceutical agencies and NGOs] to address the enormity of this challenge."

To Nesta, a 34-year-old mother of four, these words came too little and too late. She now lies buried with her miner husband and two of their children in a shallow grave behind their mud hut in South Africa's Valley of Thousand Hills.

To Thembe, a grandmother in Botshabelo Township in the Free State of South Africa who is raising eight grandchildren since the death of her two daughters due to AIDS, these words could be the difference between hope and hopelessness. Two of her grandchildren are HIV-positive, and more may become so for lack of education and employment.

For Gareth, age 14, growing up in the streets of Cape Town, these words could help him access the help he needs, if his church is listening and ready to minister.

And to Margaret, a priest, these words point the way to engaging her people in ministry, but until they have a means of making a living, along with food, potable water and sanitation, they are great ideas with little or no content just now.

The canary in the pandemic

In a profoundly simple way, 20 years of stigma and denial addressed at Canterbury marked the end of the silence of the quiescent church of the South. The full extent of the AIDS pandemic in Africa alone has been described by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan as "a tragedy of biblical proportions." Thirty million of the 40 million worldwide who are infected live in sub-Saharan Africa. In a word, Africa is dying.

The numbers also point to grotesque gender inequalities. Some 58 percent of these sufferers are women between the ages of 15–49. Altogether in Africa, only 30,000 people have access to the life-extending anti-retroviral treatments (ARVs), which illustrates the concurrent pandemic of poverty.

Africa is not alone. United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS Stephen Lewis has described southern Africa as the "canary in the pandemic" for the rest of world. New predictions of pandemic in Eastern Europe, India, China and Russia are lifting the estimated worldwide numbers of HIV infections to as many as 100 million by 2020. To give that number perspective, the Black Death in 14th-century Europe killed more than 40 million and the 1918 flu epidemic claimed 45 million lives.

This catastrophe, in slow motion, is being played out against the backdrop of the effects of globalization. It is often seen in systems: multinational pharmaceutical companies making policies on costs, distribution, manufacture and profit of life-saving medications; international mining, resource-management and agricultural corporations making daily life-and-death decisions about treatment and health care; generations of disrupted development due to climactic changes and shifting agricultural conditions; massive unemployment and underemployment; inept and incapable fledgling national governments overwhelmed by the need of their people for basic systems of clean water, food security and public health care; and the relative neglect and indifference to the burgeoning destruction by the most powerful and wealthy nations of the developed world. Indeed, the issues are enough to make one's head swim.

Karin Rolfe / The Image Works

Louise Gubb/The Image Works

Mother with AIDS prays by husband's (who died with AIDS) grave with three of her children.

Organizing a response at Boksburg

Nonetheless, the response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic has coalesced around the leading figure of the International Debt Forgiveness Movement within the Anglican Communion, Njongonkulu W.H. Ndungane, Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, comprising Angola, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mocambique, St. Helena/Ascension Islands and South Africa. These are some of the hardest hit areas in Africa where poverty, famine, tuberculosis, malaria and AIDS are always intertwined.

In April of 2001 the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, and his fellow Primates charged Archbishop Ndungane to lead the Communion's response to the AIDS pandemic. In August 2001, the first-ever All Africa Anglican Conference on HIV/AIDS was held in Boksburg, a suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa.

This grassroots effort has come about, in part, because the losses are beginning to manifest in other tragedies like the present famine, caused by lack of farmers to plant and reapers to reap, as well as political and social upheaval and drought; the slowing of growth and development to near-stop; the failure of governments to deal with the unfolding panoply of social and economic issues; the swelling of the ranks of orphaned children — now estimated to hit 25 million in the next seven years; and the breakdown of education systems due to ever-increasing teacher and pupil deaths. What exists in the way of a public health system is on the verge of collapse.

Financial and moral support for the conference began with the Compass Rose Society, followed by Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), along with UNAIDS, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association (PhRMA).

More than 54 nations from the 12 Anglican provinces of Africa were represented at Boksburg. Over the course of three days, a consensus statement was drafted and adopted along with a template for strategic planning and reporting on the church's HIV/AIDS activities. The meeting also brought together international donors, NGOs, Christian charities, pharmaceutical companies, religious leaders and people living with AIDS to create a model or template for strategic planning and community development that could be supported and sustained by donors.

At its conclusion the archbishops of Africa declared, "We pledge ourselves to the promise that future generations will be born and live in a world free from AIDS." Such is the nature of hope in Africa where faith leaders can lay claim to the future, standing firmly in the agonizing present.

Beacons of hope

Small beacons of hope continue to give witness to what is possible in a place where the equivalent of two 9/11s occur every day of the week. Canon Gideon Byamugisha, an Anglican cleric from Uganda, is a living witness as an HIV-positive person of what ARVs can do. He nearly died in 1998 due to opportunistic diseases. Today he and his HIV-positive wife, who was also widowed like Gideon due to the virus, are the proud parents of an HIV-negative daughter made possible by an 80-cent treatment of Nevirapine, a drug that cuts by 50 percent the chance of HIV transmission between mother and child. He is the image of a resurrecting Africa as he daily expends his energies giving witness to and garnering support for people living with AIDS across Africa and around the world. It was his testimony at the Primates' meeting in Kanuga in 2001 that moved them to declare AIDS the "number-one priority of the worldwide Communion."

Faithful witnesses to the power of hope and commitment are galvanizing the collective will of people across the continent. Communities are coming together to orga-

nize their responses. Youth are actively participating in and leading seminars with their parents and elders to talk prevention, which is to discuss the tender issues of sexuality, tradition, community values and mores. Hospices, in nothing more than mud huts, abandoned garages and saloons, are the sites of many efforts to relieve suffering. Even the matter of more cost-effective ways to respectfully lay to rest the dead and care for their survivors who mourn are being examined.

Women's groups, particularly the Mother's Union, Anglican Women's Fellowship, and the men's Bernard Mizeki Mission Society are initiating efforts for home-based care and wellness management. The church is actively engaged in organizing ministries to respond to the burgeoning numbers of orphaned children. Yet for all the work that people are doing, many families struggle from day to day without food and access to clean water, which makes many efforts futile. How can an overstretched family take on orphaned children when they, themselves, cannot sustain life?

Finding resources

The reality is that without adequate resources to enable communities to work on issues of prevention and treatment, food and water, their hopes will be scattered on the heaps of broken promises to the people of Africa. A new sustainable and compassionate mission effort is needed. The church in Africa prevails in telling its story and now asks the Communion worldwide for support: financial and human resources and technical assistance. The Synod of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, after unanimously approving its first $2.5 million three-year plan of action — developed with the support of USAID, ERD and a small cluster of participants from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington — drew up a list of 23 short-term projects and activities based on their strategic plan, costing no more than $5,000 each, to move their agenda forward immediately. But who will support them?

At the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Hong Kong last September, the African–led HIV/AIDS initiative called for the worldwide Communion to become companions to the churches of the global South in a Partnership for Life. The Communion responded by approving the creation of an Anglican Communion International AIDS Fund, to be administered by the Anglican Communion Office in London.

Current need stands at $2.5 million for the first three years of what must be a 20-year commitment. The first to contribute was the Japanese Church. ERD is rapidly organizing efforts through a newly created 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation to assist the AIDS-stricken African continent.

Hospices, in nothing more than mud huts, abandoned garages and saloons, are the sites of many efforts to relieve suffering.

Africa is organizing all of its resources, but more are needed. The very infrastructures of churches and communities, where hundreds of thousand have already perished, are being taxed by the burden of care and death. Clergy in many communities have gone without paychecks for months at a time, because parishioners are frantically meeting the demands of funerals, child support, unemployment and now hunger. In a recent visit to famine-plagued southern Africa, UN World Food Programme head James Morris noted that food was only part of the problem; the heart of the problem was AIDS.

Images of a modern apocalypse

For nearly two years, I have been privileged to be at the heart of the continent-wide effort across Africa to engage the Anglican Church and the worldwide Communion in our struggle against the ravages of HIV/AIDS. I have visited dozens upon dozens of communities and congregations, particularly in southern Africa, where people have come together to fortify their faith in plotting their tactics against AIDS. I have met with faithful folk who have struggled day and night to eke out livings, raise their children, pay tuition for primary school — universal education is not a fact of life here — and feed their families amidst the growing horror around them. Life goes on, much as it always has. People rise in the morning to fetch water from a well, sometimes as far as 10 kilometers away, returning at sunrise to wash and clothe and feed a family. They go about the business of living, often singing hymns of praise to the Creator, who called this land and people into being as the birthplace of humankind. I am constantly inspired by the faith that allows people to dream of a better day and offers unstinting hospitality in a place of scarcity and deprivation.

From the frontlines, I can report that there are not yet mounds of dead bodies awaiting burial where I can see them. There are not millions of sick and dying folk where I can smell the stench of death. There are not armies of starving orphaned children roaming through and pillaging the countryside in a frantic search for food and shelter, ready to risk all for a crust of bread. Yet all these images of a modern apocalypse are at hand, just beyond what I can see today.

The structures and leadership of the church have moved and committed Anglicans around the world to ministries of hope. What remains is the long-term material, financial and human support of the churches of the North for the people of the South. Archbishop Ndungane summarizes the situation this way: "We know of the goodwill of our sisters and brothers. We also hold to the basic facts that no one should care alone and no one should die alone. We need everyone to press their faith communities and governments to the task of walking with us in this journey through death into life. For we are all working for a Generation without AIDS." ●

AIDS, ECONOMICS,

A conversation with African women

by Pauline Muchina
Mabel Katahweire
and Lyn Headley-Moore

Sean Sprague / The Image Works

[Ed. note: Pauline Muchina is a theologian from Kenya who is currently working for the AIDS Resource Center in the Episcopal Diocese of Newark. Mabel Katahweire, an Anglican priest from Uganda, recently spent nine months doing AIDS ministry in Johannesburg, South Africa. Lyn Headley-Moore, the executive director of the AIDS Resource Center, a mission of the Diocese of Newark, facilitated a conversation between them in November.]

Lyn Headley-Moore: I thought we'd start with looking at the impact of AIDS in Africa. Why is southern Africa so severely affected?

Mabel Katahweire: AIDS in southern Africa is not worse than in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Southern Africans are waking up to the reality of HIV and AIDS after being in denial. Some people still think that it is a curse — that is why there is much killing and stigmatization of those who are known to be HIV-positive.

Pauline Muchina: You have to put it within the context of the whole continent, where you have 28 million people who are carrying HIV/AIDS and where you have 2.8 million people dying every year of HIV/AIDS. You have to look at the different factors that play a role, and some of them go back to the early stages of the disease. When the disease started in South Africa they were still under apartheid. I strongly believe that racism played a major role in the way HIV/AIDS was handled — in matters of assigning resources to combat it, education, providing knowledge for communities and how the media addressed it in black communities.

You look at a country like Angola, like Mocambique, like Zambia. And then you come to east Africa and you look at Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and all these countries with very poor economies and with governments that are not even able to take care of their people in other areas — then you expect them to be able to take care of them on the issue of health and HIV/AIDS.

The other major part is the issue of urban migration. There is a lot of migration in southern Africa into urban centers.

Mabel Katahweire: When people migrate they are hoping to get a job. When they come to urban areas the reality is quite the opposite. They don't get jobs, so some young girls just end up selling their bodies in order to support themselves. And in the process they have children who become infected also. Because HIV/AIDS is more severe in poor neighborhoods, when people get infected they deteriorate very fast because they don't eat well and they have no medical care. So you end up burying more people every day.

Lyn Headley-Moore: Mabel, you've just been in South Africa. What did you see in terms of poverty, in terms of education, in terms of HIV and AIDS?

Mabel Katahweire: Many people are poor, but in ways that are different according to the country. In southern Africa, for example, the economy is mainly a money economy, so if you have no cash in your hand, you can't eat. Whereas in Uganda or Kenya you may not have cash in your hand, but at least you can grow fruit and you can put up a house. In southern Africa people are helpless if they have no job.

Pauline Muchina: When you think about the economy of South Africa and how they are tied up with the global market economy — and the way that none of the African countries today can operate without being tied up to the global econ-

omy — then you will begin to understand how globalization has been so devastating for us. Over 60 percent of the population of most African countries live below the poverty level of one dollar a day. They don't have access to proper housing, food, clean water, health care, education. Or if they do, it's very limited.

It makes me so angry because most of our African countries are also paying massive amounts of dollars in debt repayment because of the international debt. For example, a country like Kenya spent more money paying debt back than providing health services for citizens. When you look at the Structural Readjustment Program, which is implemented by the World Bank and the IMF, to try and help poor countries to repay their debt — those programs affect the poor, you know. They dictate to governments that they have to cut government spending, and so the first things to go are the resources that would be helpful to our communities, like health services, education. And women are the ones who are mostly affected, because they have to take on the burden of taking care of their families and they are the first ones to be cut off from their jobs.

Lyn Headley-Moore: What has been the role thus far of multinational pharmaceutical companies, and what are some of the things that could help that aren't happening yet?

Pauline Muchina: As you know, there have been a lot of advances of technology in countries like the U.S.A. and some countries in Europe, where drugs that help people with HIV/AIDS live a longer life are available, and where prenatal care and anti-retroviral drugs are available for mothers who are pregnant, and they are able to give birth to children who are not HIV-positive. But when you come to a region like Africa, those drugs are not available. Most people who get HIV/AIDS die within a period of six years. It's compounded by lack of good nutrition, poverty, but also lack of access to health services, medication and treatment. Pharmaceutical companies have been challenged to make those drugs available to poor countries. And some of them have said, okay, we're going to provide those drugs at a cheaper rate — but how is that going to help if it is being taken to a country where poor people who are infected are not even able to buy food? And at the same time, the World Trade Organization has this rule that local companies in places like South Africa, Brazil, India, cannot produce or manufacture generic drugs. If they were manufactured locally, they would be priced in a way that local people, poor people might be able to afford.

Lyn Headley-Moore: And government could subsidize.

Pauline Muchina: But that's impossible now, because of the World Trade Organization. Talk about globalization and imperialistic attitude! They are the owners of the knowledge of HIV medication and they will make some concession and lower the prices. But how are people going to buy anything? Let alone HIV medication, they can't even buy condoms. They can't even buy malaria tablets — malaria is the number one killer in Africa today and we're still wrestling with it. So the pharmaceutical companies have a moral obligation when it comes to sharing resources and sharing knowledge, and the international community needs to hold them accountable.

Lyn Headley-Moore: Why does HIV/AIDS have so great an impact for women?

Mabel Katahweire: One reason is poverty — women are poorer than men. And yet their families depend on them. They have to struggle to support the family and one of the ways they do that is to sell their bodies.

Another problem is that once a woman is married, she can't say no to a man even if she is aware that the man is infected. Also, when husbands die and widows have no income, they have nothing to support their children. And they will be forced into marrying some man who they know is infected in order that their children may get care.

Lyn Headley-Moore: What about women's choices within relationships, within marriage, about prevention options?

Pauline Muchina: We just had a meeting of African women theologians in Ethiopia in August to look at HIV/AIDS and African women and religion. And one of the things that came out so clearly to me was that marriage is not a safe haven for women. Most of the African women who are HIV-positive contracted HIV in marriage. You have to look also at women's rights in the whole society — and here you have to look at the three major religions that operate in Africa, which are Islam, Christianity and African religion, and how they view women, where women have no rights. Women's holdings do not belong to them, they belong to the man they are married to or to the men who are their fathers or their

GAIA call to action

The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA) was created in the summer of 2000 within the context of the United Religions Initiative (URI), a San Francisco-based project that brings people of different religious traditions together to respond to common local problems around the globe (see *TW* 12/01). Under the leadership of William Rankin, vice president of URI and a former Episcopal Church Publishing Company board chair, GAIA has pursued its mission "to facilitate HIV prevention strategies in developing countries by working through religious and inter-religious organizations and/or their health care systems and native faith communities" (www.thegaia.org).

GAIA'S PROJECTS IN ITS FIRST TWO YEARS INCLUDE:

- initiating a comprehensive training program on HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, including two major conferences which brought together Christian and Muslim religious leaders, health care representatives, and non-profit organizations for workshops and action planning. GAIA's follow-up work in Tanzania has included an emergency grant for purchase of medicines and the dissemination of a theological paper to help de-stigmatize ill people.
- the creation of a consortium of religious organizations in Malawi and in Mocambique to become part of the United Religions Initiative, each of which have sponsored training sessions similar to those in Tanzania. GAIA sponsored a second training conference in Malawi in October, 2002, which brought together 75 religious leaders to report their successes and challenges in HIV/AIDS prevention and care efforts and to plan for the future.
- supporting training programs in Kenya for rural clinic nurses and other community-based health workers, as well as an international conference in Nairobi to respond to the crises of AIDS-related family disintegration by strengthening community and church-based educational and support systems.
- taking part in the All Africa Anglican Conference on HIV/AIDS in Boksburg, South Africa in August, 2001.
- assisting an HIV-prevention training session for pastors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- supporting a program for STD and HIV testing and counseling in Ghana.
- supporting a week-long support and de-stigmatization strategy planning conference in Zimbabwe for 120 religious leaders living with HIV from 13 sub-Saharan countries.
- providing consultation to NGOs, governmental agencies and researchers interested in understanding or connecting with developing country religious organizations.

GAIA maintains a website (www.thegaia.org) which offers updates on their work, as well as links to other sites offering HIV/AIDS information and resources. They offer the following suggestions on what you can do to help:

- Become knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS and how it affects all of us. It's not just a problem "over there" or somewhere else.
- Develop an awareness of the issues surrounding AIDS in the larger community, the world community, and be willing to talk about them with friends and family so that we all become familiar with this crisis and its impact.
- Remember in our intentions and prayers our sisters and brothers everywhere who are living with AIDS and those who are caring for them.
- Add your name to receive monthly updates on GAIA activities.
- Join GAIA's call-to-action email list that will notify you when there is action pending by our elected officials that may impact U.S. decisions in AIDS-related matters. You will be asked to write, call or email our concerns and opinions to Washington.
- Make a tax-deductible donation to GAIA's HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in sub-Saharan Africa or other developing countries (GAIA, The Presidio of San Francisco, P.O. Box 29110, San Francisco, CA).

brothers. You have to look at this whole issue of their right to choose. That doesn't even exist in most communities in Africa, where sexuality is tied so closely with reproduction. That was the cultural perspective, but then Christianity encouraged that. You realize rape in marriages is very old, because a woman has no right to say no, she has no right to negotiate a condom. And if she does, she is subjected to violence by her husband and also condemned by the community, because her body belongs to her husband.

Mabel Katahweire: I came across a woman who knew that her husband had died of HIV/AIDS. The woman had known the husband was infected and she wanted to get out of that marriage, so she went to talk to her pastor and the pastor said, "You can't do that! You made vows in health or sickness, you have to stay with your husband." And this woman told me, "This was between life and death and I didn't want to die. I decided to get out of the marriage anyway. I got out of the marriage but I was stopped from having Holy Communion. I was punished for leaving my husband, for breaking the vows."

Lyn Headley-Moore: I heard a story when I was in South Africa last year about a woman who had been badly beaten by her husband because she had learned that a condom could be helpful. She knew that her husband was sexually involved with other people, so she had asked him to use a condom — which he took as meaning that she was sexually involved with someone else. Apparently that is not an uncommon experience.

Pauline Muchina: In Kenyan communities, a lot of men go to the cities to look for jobs. The women are left in the country where they take care of their families and work on their farms. When the husband comes back the woman doesn't know what he has been doing in the city. But it is possible that he engages in sexual activities with other women and especially prostitutes who are poor women trying to make a life. This man comes back to the village with HIV/AIDS and the woman cannot say no to him, and she gets infected. The next thing you know, the husband dies and she has to be inherited by the next of kin of the husband. So the cycle of HIV continues.

Mabel Katahweire: I wanted to go back to the role of the church, especially in Uganda, because the church's stand is that a condom is not to be used unless it is in a marriage setting. The church feels that it encourages immorality if you allow the use of condoms, which I really think is unfortunate.

Pauline Muchina: I agree with those who view the church as a movement capable of facing the challenge to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS through massive sensitization of communities. The church has been quite effective in teaching about the subordination of women. I

believe they can undo the negative socialization by teaching respect and dignity, women's rights to choose, empowerment of women to be all that God intended.

Lyn Headley-Moore: What are the opportunities for being tested in most of Africa? Here in the U.S. a big part of the population that we're pretty sure is infected is untested even though there are opportunities for confidential testing. That's the hardest piece to break through, to get people tested.

Mabel Katahweire: Well, in Uganda we have been lucky, because the government has really spearheaded these programs to help eliminate HIV/AIDS. So testing is available. It used to be free. But today you pay for it and many people do go. And what education has done in Uganda is to get people to be open about AIDS. People are no longer ashamed. And that has been very helpful because people find out if they are infected. And they are not victimized through their jobs. There are many centers in the rural areas where people can go for treatment, and there are many people who go for testing, because they want to know their status and plan their future.

Pauline Muchina: That's so encouraging because my feeling has been the opposite — a lot of people don't go and get tested because they are afraid to know, because of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. But the government is saying, you have to go for testing. And they do provide a clinic. But that kind of testing is very limited where the health services are very poor. NGOs are the ones who are picking up the funeral costs in Kenya, especially in the Nairobi area, and it is NGOs that are leading the way in counseling, educating people and encouraging people to go for testing.

But I have known cases like my own cousin who died of HIV/AIDS about four years ago. He was tested by his doctor, and they didn't tell him he was HIV-positive. They were afraid of how he was going to react. So he didn't know until it was too late for him to take care of himself. But he, in turn, even after he knew he was HIV-positive, never told his wife. So everybody is implicated.

Mabel Katahweire: I think people are also afraid that when they are diagnosed with HIV, that's the end of their sexual life. They don't know that with protection they can still be sexually active. And most men will not go for testing because of that.

Pauline Muchina: And I think the church has to expect that people are sexually active outside marriage. Give young people a way to protect themselves, even if they are given knowledge to abstain or postpone sex. By not helping them to protect themselves, you are denying them abundant life which Jesus promised to us. I've been asking this question a lot — what does abundant life mean in the context of HIV/AIDS, especially in Africa? We talk all the time about abundant life, yet we as the church also stand in the way of people attaining abundant life by the rules and regulations that have been placed on people's sexuality.

Lyn Headley-Moore: Overall, do you have any idea how well educated people are about HIV and AIDS?

Pauline Muchina: I think people who have access to radios and TVs and newspapers hear more about HIV/AIDS than people who don't have access to that kind of knowledge. I think the problem with our whole system is we are not teaching about HIV/AIDS. They are afraid of addressing the issue of sexuality in school. In Kenya, the most educated people are dying of HIV/AIDS. I was talking to someone who was saying, do you know that even doctors are dying from HIV/AIDS? There is a group in Kenyan society which is dying not because they do not have knowledge of HIV/AIDS, but because they're in denial. They don't want to admit that they themselves are at risk. But I think the majority of the population are dying from the lack of knowledge.

Lyn Headley-Moore: I think that applies here, too. The populations being hardest hit currently with new infections are the poorest people, people of color, youth, seniors and women. Part of it is a lack of accurate, useful information. Part of it is a certain amount of denial of their risk potential, genuine ignorance of their risk, and ignorance on the part of doctors who are assuming that certain populations are not at risk, when in fact they are. It's not only men who have sex with men, it's not only injection drug users, it's women who are at risk of heterosexual transmission. And so doctors are very late recognizing the symptoms. Also, women still represent a very small percentage of clinical trials for treatment. And women are much later going for testing, getting a diagnosis and being available for treatment. So all of those things contribute to the death of women.

Pauline Muchina: You know, we all like to say that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate, but I've been just shocked working with the AIDS Resource Center and finding that most of the people who are affected are African Americans.

Lyn Headley-Moore: And now Latino numbers are rising.

Pauline Muchina: Right. But the face of HIV/AIDS is a problem of color. I know that initially it was primarily gay men, but now it is people of color who are the most affected. I mean, look at Haiti.You go to Asia, it's people of color. You go to South America, you go to Africa. Racism definitely has something to do with it.

Lyn Headley-Moore: Well, certainly racism has had a role in economic status, in opportunities for education and in choice. We're so aware these days — thank God — of the impact, for instance, in Africa. But people are not aware that in the state of New Jersey we still have six new infections every day despite the fact that we have some education. The infection rate is much higher than it should be and in the African-American community nationwide, it's one out of every 50 African-American men and one out of every 160 African-American women. In the city of Newark, though, we're talking like one out of every four to five people who are infected. It's impossible to stand at a bus stop with 20 people and find one person in that crowd who has not either been infected themselves, lost a close family member to AIDS, or who is at present a caretaker for someone who is living with HIV/AIDS. And although people are living healthier and longer, again medications are an issue for the African-American community. Partly because of the Tuskegee Syndrome [fear of racist medical experimentation], partly because of a general distrust of entire systems, and because poverty is a barrier to receiving the very services that are set up for you to access.

Pauline Muchina: A man from USAID was speaking to us at a con-

A resolution on response to the explosion of AIDS worldwide

[Ed. note: The Episcopal Church Responds to AIDS Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia (Washington) won approval of the following resolution addressing the global AIDS pandemic at Olympia's annual diocesan convention last November. The Episcopal Church's national Standing Commission on Anglican & International Peace with Justice Concerns plans to submit a resolution on AIDS to next summer's General Convention.]

Whereas, throughout the world and especially in Africa, HIV/AIDS has become one of history's most devastating catastrophes, and

Whereas, despite aggressive prevention programs and ever-improving treatment programs, the number of people in our own country who are living with AIDS continues to increase; be it

Resolved, That this 92nd Convention of the Diocese of Olympia urge each congregation to designate annually an appropriate Sunday as Worldwide AIDS Sunday; and be it further

Resolved to urge congregations to dedicate this day to prayer for all people living with HIV/AIDS and to learning more about this epidemic worldwide and ways to help; and be it further

Resolved to urge congregations to respond to AIDS in Africa and other heavily affected parts of the world by supporting AIDS service organizations in these areas that have proven records of success; and therefore be it

Resolved to urge congregations to respond to AIDS locally by supporting AIDS service organizations in their communities.

Explanation: Although people everywhere suffer from AIDS, Africa has been especially devastated. While sub-Saharan Africa comprises 3 percent of the world's population, it is the home of 70 percent of those infected with HIV/AIDS. Of the 40 million people infected worldwide, 28.5 million are Africans.

Other heavily affected areas include the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and South and Southeast Asia. The resolution spotlights Africa, however, because it remains the heart of the tragedy.

In our own country, the public perception is that HIV/AIDS is no longer a significant problem. Yet more than 950,000 Americans are living with HIV/AIDS. Among our neighbors, those infected are increasingly the young, women, substance abusers, the mentally ill, African-Americans and Hispanics, along with young gay men.

In his letter on AIDS of September 13, 2002, the Presiding Bishop suggested several appropriate days for Episcopalians to focus on AIDS. The Feast of Constance and her companions (September 9), St. Luke the physician and healer (October 18), and World AIDS Day (December 1) were examples, or Sundays near these days.

In response to such pervasive suffering far away and near at hand, our baptismal vow to seek and serve Christ in all persons calls us as Episcopalians, to seek and support effective ministries that relieve the sick, the dying and those orphaned by this disease.

Episcopal Relief and Development and The Episcopal Church Responds to AIDS Committee have developed strong connections with some AIDS organizations in Africa. They are able to connect congregations with proven ways to offer specific and practical support to people suffering from AIDS in Africa, and in other parts of the world.

Submitted by: Earl Grout, Episcopal Church Responds to AIDS Committee, Diocese of Olympia.

Co-Sponsored by: Holy Spirit, Vashon; St. Clements, Seattle; St. Stephen's, Seattle; Clergy of Color; Commission for the Church in the World; Episcopal Relief and Development; St. Mark's Cathedral.

ference in New Haven at the Yale Divinity School and he said that they went to the U.S. government to ask for additional money to fight HIV/AIDS, and they were told that there was no funding. And the same week, the U.S. government allocated two billion dollars to war. Are we missing something here? They need to look at their priorities much more.

Lyn Headley-Moore: And stewardship of resources. That brings me to another question. War is also an infection factor for people.

Pauline Muchina: I think a lot of women who live under war or have experienced war will tell you that their governments have spent millions of dollars fighting wars that were not helping them in any way. They were actually condemning them to death. Because the resources were taken away from things like shelter and the infrastructure of the country. They will also tell you that they have lost mostly all the males in their communities, either to death or they've run away and left them behind. And women are left with the burden of taking care of their children and that puts a lot of pressure on them to look for money in different ways. You know, the greatest number of refugees in Africa today are women and children, women running away from war and going to a country where they're left at the mercy of the local community that receives them, and that has not always been a positive experience.

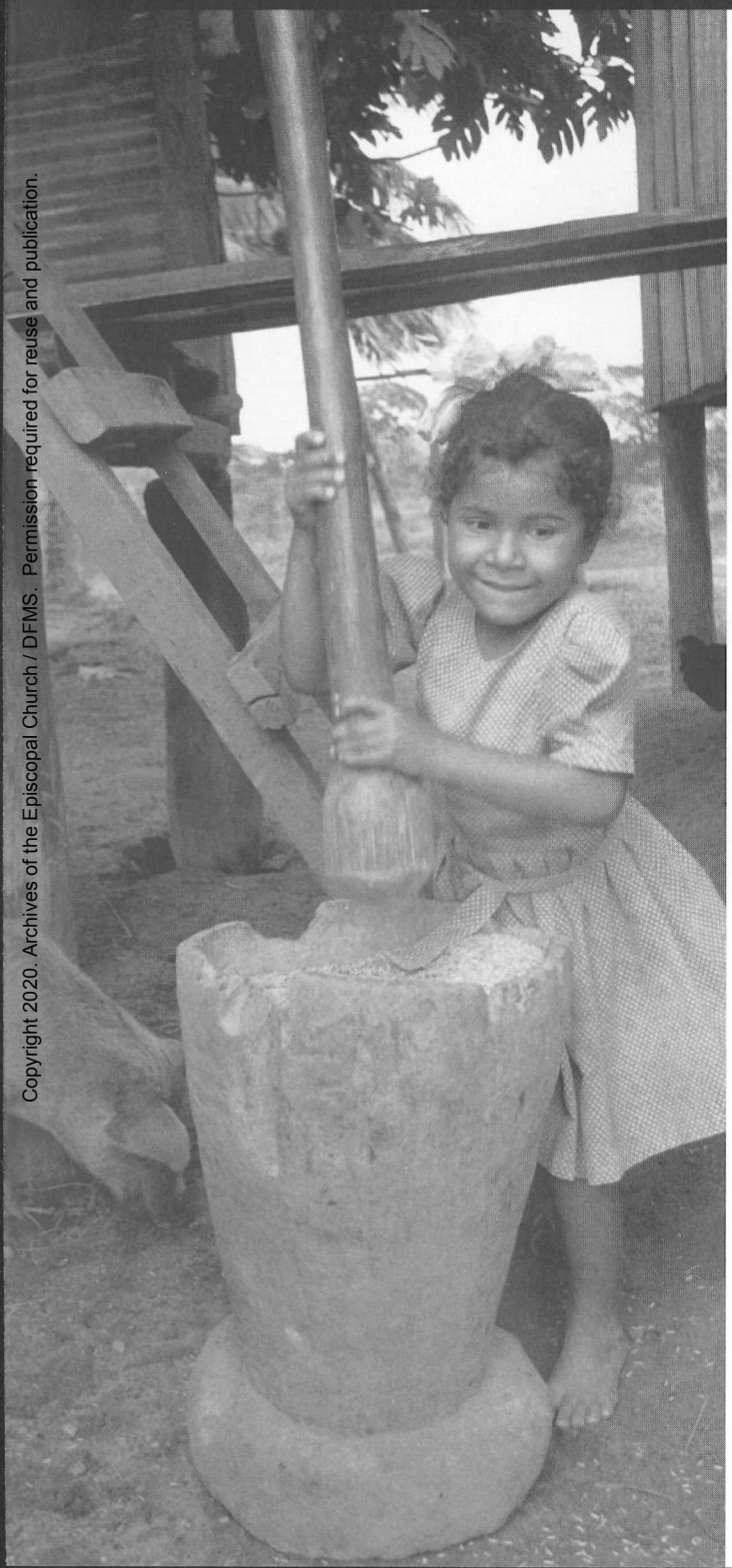
Lyn Headley-Moore: And what about rape as a spoil of war?

Mabel Katahweire: Violence against women increases when people are at war. You know, women are raped to punish the men in the other communities. Women are raped by men who have been in the bush fighting war and have not had the opportunity to be with women in their own community.

Pauline Muchina: For example, Somali women were raped by Kenyan soldiers in a refugee camp in northern Kenya. Refugee women are also sold by the staff of some of these organizations that are working in refugee camps to exchange sexual favors in return for food. So war is a major factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. ●

Sean Sprague/The Image Works

LIVING WITH AIDS IN EL SALVADOR



One woman's story

by Susana Barrera

MARÍA DE LA PAZ CALLEJAS is 29 years old and the mother of three children between 10 and 15. She smiles often and is known for her lively personality. She realizes that she is living in the last days of her life. Each day that passes is a struggle against time. Callejas is one of the few people in El Salvador who is facing up to HIV.

The telephone rings. It is the confidential line of the National Foundation for the Prevention, Education and Accompaniment of Persons with HIV/AIDS, known as FUNDASIDA. Callejas answers the phone; without revealing that she, too, is a carrier of the virus, she lets the caller know that she understands perfectly.

Callejas came to FUNDASIDA in 1998 after receiving her diagnosis from a physician in the most grotesque way possible.The physician briskly gave her the news, telling her that she had only five years left to live. Since then, she has had to confront humiliation, denigration and the need to prepare her children and the rest of the family for her final days.

"The virus came to my house," Callejas says. "I didn't look for it. My husband died of AIDS. He transmitted it to me."

El Salvador — the smallest country in Central America with a population of six million people, the majority of whom are poor — since 1984 has had to confront, along with the other countries of the region, the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic.

These days, according to national statistics, 6 percent of the adult population in El Salvador is infected by HIV. More than 2,000 persons died of AIDS in 2001. Eighty-six percent of infections were related to sexual activity, 4.6 percent were infants who became infected through their mothers, and 1.5 percent resulted from needles shared by drug users.

According to official statistics in El Salvador, 24,000 persons are carriers of HIV, and more than half are not aware of it. El Salvador has the fourth highest number of cases among Central American countries. Since 1984, 13,000 children have become orphans as a consequence of AIDS. Organizations involved with HIV/AIDS estimate that by the year 2004 we will have one member of each family infected with HIV.

FUNDASIDA, an organization which has existed for the past 10 years, receives 12–15 patients daily, the majority of whom are male and test positive. Dr. Julio Alfredo Osegueda, executive director of the organization, says that each month two to four of his patients die.

Callejas has been involved in every program that the organization

offers. She participates in the Help Groups, which offer a weekly time of reflection and sharing. Parents of patients attend, as well as the persons who live with AIDS. Patients are adolescents, rural peasants, heterosexuals and homosexuals, all of whom appear to be in good health.

"They come from all strata of society, day workers and physicians alike," says Dr. Guadalupe Flores, a psychologist at FUNDASIDA. "The virus is no respecter of persons."

Callejas listens attentively to the group discussions. She is standing because she also has to attend to the telephone, which rings constantly. She explains that, each day, between 15–22 persons call, the majority of whom are men. Some admit that they are carriers of the virus, others don't. Mondays and Tuesdays are the busiest, with the most calls. She thinks the reason is that on weekends the callers had unprotected sexual relations with possible carriers.

Callejas has already begun to take anti-virus medicine — the famous cocktails which the Social Security Institute (Public Health) offers.

"I do not ask God that I be healed, only I pray to God that I will have time to see my children grow up," she says. "My children already know. It has been difficult because they were almost expelled from the school. I had to talk with the teachers of the school, and the director, to explain to them that I was the one with AIDS, not my children. I asked for 15 minutes, and the meeting lasted over an hour."

Callejas lives west of the capital city, in Lourdes, Colón, a semi-urban zone. She lives in the open-country part of the area. Her neighbors are people of little education. When rumors came about her sickness, some wanted to expel her from the neighborhood. At that time she worked selling food, such as tamales and pastries. Some of her customers stopped buying from her, saying that she was "*una sidosa*," (a bearer of "SIDA," the Spanish acronym for AIDS). She says that many times the rejection of her neighbors has hurt her more than the sickness.

Four years have passed since Callejas learned that she was a carrier of the virus. She is dedicated full-time now to the task of education and prevention. Her dream is to form an association of women who carry HIV. She believes that it is the women who suffer most from the pandemic.

Callejas is the third person with HIV to have appeared on the local media. She was on a talk program of a local TV station. Clear, sure and precise, she shared her testimony eloquently and with courage. She announced that the use of preventative measures was almost totally safe. "I have a partner and we use condoms, and my partner has not gotten the virus," she said.

She says that her daughter has been educated in prevention. Her daughter told her that she says to her boyfriend that if they are to have sexual relations, they have to use a condom. "Because of this sometimes my boyfriend says he doesn't love me anymore."

In El Salvador there are more than 20 organizations to support persons who live with HIV. All of them form a network called Prevention Network. The Anglican/Episcopal Church, along with these other organizations, offers pastoral support to some of the groups that watch over those who suffer from the virus.

"We have strong commitments to those in our society who suffer," says Bishop Martin Barahona of the Anglican/Episcopal Church. "Sometimes it is difficult to care for them, because we lack sufficient means to offer for the clinical needs. At times we have contributed to the prevention campaigns. We have offered condoms to some of the organizations, and our dream is to offer a clinical pastoral ministry to those who live with HIV/AIDS."

Discrimination continues to abound. In the hospitals, if someone dies of AIDS, the parents are forced to clean the body in order to be permitted to take it from the hospital.

Patients who arrive at the hospital with AIDS sometimes find a public sign on their beds announcing "Patient with AIDS." Most family members of those who have died of AIDS hide the diagnosis for fear that there will be repercussions.

Paradoxically, Callejas has been able to find employment, thanks to being a carrier of HIV.

During the week, in addition to working with FUNDASIDA, she visits support groups in the public hospitals and works with a group called Live with Condoms. "I would wish that all who live with HIV would have the same good luck as I have had, that they might be able to obtain work as I have," she says.

In the legislature, a "Prevention and Control of Infection Caused by the Virus HIV" law is currently being discussed. In this proposal, a directive mandates an HIV examination for workers when the employer or administrative authorities require it. This remedy has awakened the concern of human rights organizations, since the situation of persons with HIV is already so vulnerable.

Callejas has to consume 15 doses of antiviral medicine daily. In order to receive this medicine, patients need to present to the hospital authorities two witnesses who will guarantee its correct administration. The price of the medicine in private pharmacies ranges from $500 to $1,000 monthly. Medical exams that determine the advance of the disease cost between $10 and $15 in some laboratories; in other labs the cost is much higher.

It costs $5–10 million annually in El Salvador to maintain each person hospitalized by AIDS. The cost could increase greatly. This indicates an economic expense that is more than the entire health sector in El Salvador could cope with. And William Pleitez, an economist for the United Nations Development Agency, recently said that the loss of productive manual labor in consequence of HIV/AIDS sickness is equal to a reduction of 2 percent of the Gross National Product of the nation.

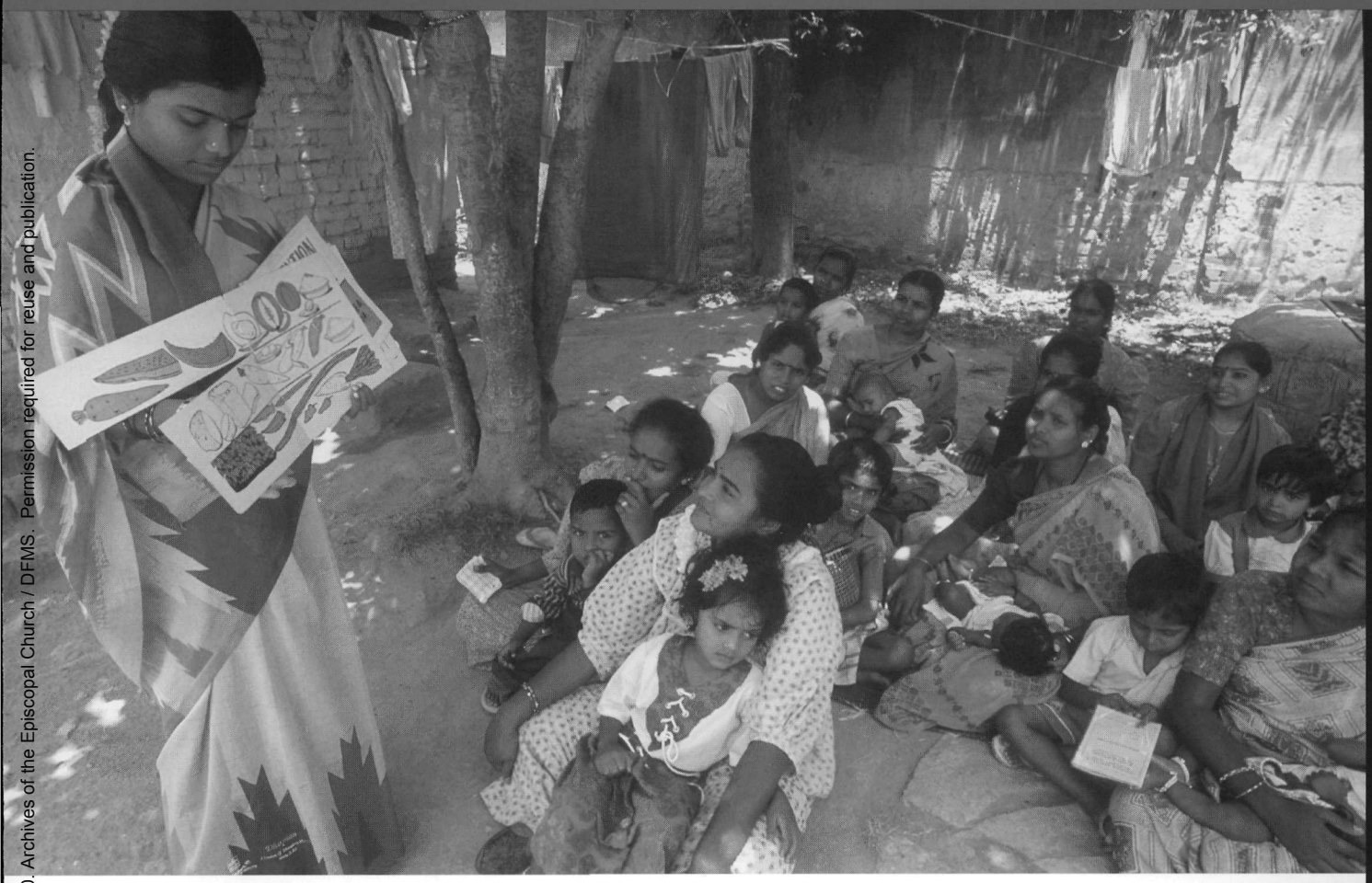
For the second time El Salvador has proposed to the annual assembly of the World Health Organization a request for $40 million from the member countries to help raise awareness and increase attention for those sick with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and lung disease. As yet, there has been no response.

"Today, more than ever, I take care of my health," Callejas says. "I have a partner who takes care of me, children who love me, and a mother who understands me."

Callejas dreams of seeing her children grown and married and continues her work, hoping for a better policy for distribution of medicines for persons with HIV/AIDS and for an end to discrimination against them, so that they might live their lives as normal persons and write their own history. ●

[*This article, originally written in Spanish, is available in the author's native language at www.thewitness.org/espanol.*]

EMPOWERING



Empowering communities in North India

by Sanjana Das

"MY HUSBAND IS A GOD-FEARING MAN. He loves our children and me. He goes out to earn for himself and the family for months together. I have no idea as to whether he goes to any other women for fulfilling his sexual urge. I can never even question him, even though I have my own doubts. Now I know that the best way of keeping myself protected is to practice safe sex. But how can I even talk of condoms since I have already got myself operated. Moreover, we have never discussed about condoms nor do we talk about sex. In a situation like this, how can I protect myself from HIV/AIDS?"

A woman raised this question during a women's fellowship training workshop sponsored by the Church of North India. This group of women hailed from very interior rural areas of the state of Orissa. It was a tribal group with little access to information and communication. They had known only one means of birth control — tubectomy. Most had between five and nine children. Their

husbands worked mostly as labourers, migrating out to the neighbouring states or to other parts of Orissa.

The Church of North India, through the Synodical Board of Health Services (SBHS), is focused on HIV/AIDS prevention by supporting awareness programs and working to bring about attitudinal changes. Training workshops are organized for youth and women's fellowships of all 26 dioceses. Participants become core trainers who train others from their parishes and communities.

The spread of HIV/AIDS in India

In India, HIV/AIDS is spreading like a wildfire throughout the length and breadth of the country. Over the next decade, the HIV virus is likely to be the highest cause of death among India's adult population.

Eighty-nine percent of the reported cases are in the sexually active and economically productive age group of 18–40 years. Over 50 percent of all new infections take place among young adults under 25. Twenty-one percent of new infections are among women — a majority of whom do not have any risk factor other than being married to their husbands. This adds to mother-to-child HIV transmission.

Persons in traditionally high-risk groups, including women in prostitution, injecting drug users, and men who have sex with men, have been shown to have alarmingly high rates of infection. In several states of India, such as Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the epidemic has spread to the general population.

There are various factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in India. These include poverty and low economic status, a high prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases which mostly go untreated, gender disparity, double standards of morality and gender norms, population mobility, migration and rapid urbanization, injecting drug use, lack of information and failure to observe mandatory Universal Precautions and screening of blood.

As is known, infection by the virus is preventable, and the spread of the epidemic can be stemmed if prevention strategies are put into action on a large scale. There are strong links between incidence of infection and the economic and sociological vulnerability of specific groups, and there is ample evidence that those who have information and choices can protect themselves from exposure to the virus.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is not just a health issue but also a development challenge. It impacts the social, economic, cultural, political and legal parameters of society. Therefore, it is important to empower communities not only in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention, but also in the wider context of socio-economic development and basic human rights.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is not just a health issue but also a development challenge.

Breaking the silence

My work takes me to different parts of the country and I meet with adolescents, youth, women and men. As I work with these different groups I sense the urgent need for people to "break the silence" and to talk. It's not just talking about HIV/AIDS, but talking about a whole range of issues.

The adolescents need to cope with peer pressure and to understand sex and sexuality. This group is highly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. They need an environment of trust and openness and to be able to talk without being judged or condemned.

The women I come across during my field visits have made me understand women as a disadvantaged group socially, economically and biologically. Their vulnerability is a major concern in our society since this is a major factor influencing the spread of the epidemic. Trafficked women and girls represent the most vulnerable category as far as sexual violence is concerned. There is an integral connection between HIV/AIDS, gender and trafficking through the nexus of vulnerability and sexual violence.

Women face greater risks of rejection, ostracism and neglect if they get infected, making them even more vulnerable. Indeed, the shame, blame, fear, distrust and dangers that surround these issues, and the difficulty of discussing them in present-day cultures, are major problems. The stigma surrounding the AIDS pandemic is in fact helping to fuel the spread of the virus.

Church initiatives

Community mobilization and empowerment are critical to HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Thus, the effort of the SBHS is geared toward trying to create spaces for facilitating greater community action. Its activities include workshops for pastors and lay leaders, prayer vigils, a Teen Peer Educators Program, college seminars, and mass awareness programs.

The SBHS has an ongoing project in the states of Assam, Orissa, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. This project is primarily being supported by DANIDA, the Danish Embassy. Its objective is to empower communities to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic in a more comprehensive, systematic and humane way. The project aims at increasing awareness, motivating people to take preventive measures, providing testing and counseling facilities for those affected, and persuading communities to support affected individuals and their families.

In Madhya Pradesh, we are beginning to work with a tribal community called Banchra. Among the Banchras, prostitution is openly practiced, promoted and protected, not withstanding the law and international convention against it. This community migrated from Rajasthan centuries ago and has engaged their daughters in prostitution, making them the principal breadwinners of their families. The men mainly solicit clients for their daughters and sisters. They live in 35 villages with a population of more than 6,000 people. Official estimates say that over

600 women are engaged in prostitution in this belt. The Church of North India through its AIDS wing of the SBHS has started working in this area. The main objectives are to increase the level of awareness, bring about change in behaviour of women in prostitution, bring about change in community attitudes, empower women in prostitution to make decisions about themselves, their profession and their health with an open mind and without pressures, provide alternative sources of income through self-help groups and networking with governmental and non-governmental organizations, work with truckers on the highway who are their major clients, build hospices and provide care and support to people living with HIV/AIDS.

In Assam, the Assam State AIDS Control Organization (ASACS), which is operating under the National AIDS Control Organization of the Government of India, has given us their School AIDS Education Programme for one district covering 30 schools. A targeted intervention project for the truckers on the National Highway of Assam has been submitted to ASACS and is in the process of being sanctioned.

We have networked with the government, with UN bodies and NGOs as well as with various other churches. On June 4, 2002, a National Consultation of Church Leaders in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in India was jointly organized by SBHS, the Church of North India and the Lutheran Church. UNAIDS has assured this network of its support. We are working with different denominations even at the grassroots level, such as the Baptist, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist churches and the Church of South India.

An epidemic is an extraordinary situation. It demands extraordinary efforts. I am reminded of what Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the first Vice-President and second President of Independent India, once said: "Christians are very ordinary people claiming to do extraordinary work." The entire team of AIDS Wing, SBHS, Church of North India asks for your support in prayer as we take small steps in fulfilling this great mission.

Radical hospitality

by Joseph Wakelee-Lynch

Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love by Daniel Homan, O.S.B., and Lonni Collins Pratt (Paraclete Press, Brewster, Mass.)

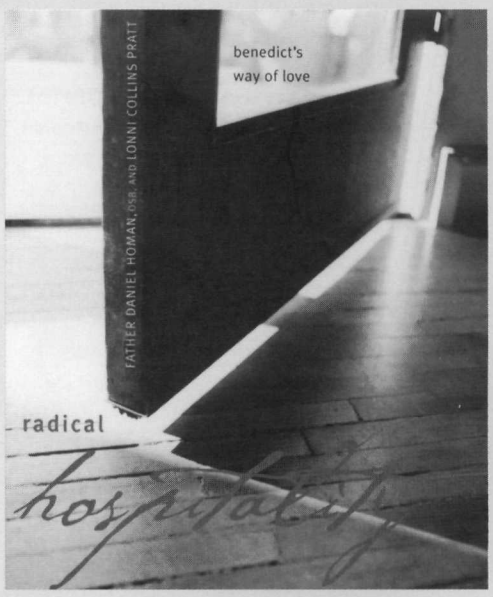
With the title *Radical Hospitality*, this volume conjures images of blessed ministries of those who shelter the homeless. But *Radical Hospitality* is only partly about working with homeless people, being a welcoming host or treating the stranger justly. And although the authors are intimately familiar with the work of a Benedictine monastery, the book is only partly about monkish hospitality. Instead, *Radical Hospitality* — a friendly, readable, gentle spiritual primer — offers a stark and radical message: If we truly try to follow Jesus, our outlook on the world — especially its strangers, its poor, its homeless, its injured, its helpless, its needy, its enemies — will be forever changed. *Radical Hospitality* is about conversion.

Daniel Homan, O.S.B., who has lived more than four decades as a monk, is prior of St. Benedict Monastery in Oxford, Mich. Lonni Collins Pratt is a writer and frequent visitor to the monastery. Pratt and Homan lead retreats, and their book, in fact, is much like a retreat. Filled with common-sense wisdom and both uplifting and whimsical anecdotes, *Radical Hospitality* reads like an inspirational tape. One seems to hear it more than read it. With the enduring wisdom of St. Benedict's life and Rule as a guide, the authors lead us through the work of hospitality: accompanying those in pain, setting boundaries, listening to one's self and others, welcoming despite the risk of danger and other courageous acts.

Benedictine hospitality, Homan and Pratt tell us, is based on listening to and acceptance of the other, and on the Christian conviction that every life is sacred. But acceptance is not synonymous with condoning all about the other, or agreeing with the other. "[W]e confuse [acceptance] with tolerance, and even approval. But acceptance is about receiving, rather than judging."

In Benedictine spirituality, the monks need the "other," the stranger. The stranger brings another face of Christ into their lives, and therefore practicing hospitality is to welcome Christ. Radical hospitality leads to a provocative degree of acceptance — acceptance not only of the poor, the stranger, the injured and the needy, but also of the enemy or opponent. This is the same challenge Jesus presented: the challenge to love the enemy.

This is the point where *Radical Hospitality* becomes a wisdom book with profound theological implications. "Benedict's conviction," the authors write, "was that all of us are headed together toward God. We are headed toward union with God." Their focus primarily is on the enemy as defined by the political order in which we live. But implicit in their challenge, too, is the ideological enemy within our churches as well. Can we find a degree of acceptance that is real — even if minimal — and that allows us to offer a genuine word of welcome to those who disagree with us at our theological foundation? If so, we will find out for ourselves that the hospitality of Benedict truly does have power — a much-needed power for both church and world.



THE BODY OF

Responding to a gendered pandemic as an embodied community

by Denise Ackermann

AFRICAN THEOLOGIAN TERESA OKURE startled her hearers at a theological symposium on AIDS held in Pretoria in 1998, by saying that there are two viruses more dangerous than the HIV virus because they are carriers enabling this virus to spread so rapidly. The first virus is the one that assigns women an inferior status to men in society. The second is the virus of global economic injustice that causes dreadful poverty in many parts of the developing world. Picking up on Okure's observations, I argue that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a gendered pandemic exacerbated by poverty that is having a devastating impact on our ability to sustain people-centered development.

How can the Body of Christ, itself infected with AIDS, find and bring hope into this context?

First, I suggest that we begin by acknowledging that our social reality is an embodied reality. So is HIV/AIDS and poverty. So is the degrading of our environment. As the Body of Christ we are an embodied community of people. Why is this important? It is the starting place for our sense of community — when one limb of the body suffers, we all suffer. The body carries our scars, our memories, our hopes and the clues to our identities. The recognition that sustainable development is about people's bodies is the place to start.

Stigma and the body

Women who are HIV-positive are at the receiving end of prejudice, social ostracism and violence. Countless women in South Africa who are HIV-positive have been the victims of sexual violence, perpetrated within a cultural order in which power is abused and women are used for male purposes. In a patriarchal system, women's cries of distress are insufficiently heard and they often disappear under a veil of silence. Breaking the silence about one's status can be life-threatening. Gugu Dlamini became South Africa's first AIDS martyr when, in December 1998, she was stoned to death for speaking out about her HIV status.

When the HIV virus enters, lurks, then makes forays into the immune system of a person, life changes forever. The body is not only diseased but becomes the focus of stigmas. Stigmas are socially constructed ways of marking people. Stigmas brand or disgrace individuals or groups, tainting them and making them alien to the dominant culture.

The question of stigma is particularly poignant when it is attached to persons suffering from HIV/AIDS. Ignorance, prejudice, stereotypes, issues of power and dominance all conspire to stigmatize sufferers and in so doing to label them and to distort their true identities. You simply become "an HIV-positive," a statistic whose identity is now subsumed in your status.

Fortunately, within the body of people living with HIV/AIDS there is an increasing band of people who are slowly gaining power by defining their experiences and claiming their reality, speaking out and breaking the silence around the disease. There is also a new brand of social activism emerging in South Africa, as bodies march in the streets demanding affordable treatment for HIV/AIDS. We cannot sustain any form of just development in communities which are a breeding ground for stigmas. As members of the Body of Christ, we ourselves have to demonstrate the truth that all members are equal in value and dignity.

Awakening from virtue

In South Africa today there is much talk, and very necessary talk, about abstinence, prevention and medication in the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis. The Roman Catholics say abstinence is the only answer. The Anglicans say yes, but if you must, use condoms. There is very little being said, however, about the moral and ethical issues raised by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. So far the church has not grasped this nettle. The recognition that the Body of Christ is a community of sexual human beings is slow in coming and centuries of ignoring any matter related to human sexuality is merely feeding the

CHRIST HAS AIDS

silences around HIV/AIDS. It is simply not good enough merely to preach fidelity and abstinence in sexual relations. This message cannot be heard, understood or followed as long as it is communicated without a properly constructed debate on what constitutes a moral community. This is a debate in which both men and women must take part. Moral choices and moral accountability and a community in which women are respected as equal partners in the church itself, as well as in their sexual relations, are essential to this debate.

What makes a moral community? Christian ethics are communal ethics. How people live with one another and our faithfulness to God are two sides of the same coin.

To put it differently, a moral community is one whose goal is the common good of all. Common good makes sense if it is translated into sustained people-centered development. A moral community upholds the integrity of life, values the dignity of the human person, includes those who are on the margins or excluded, while not avoiding the reality of structural sin.

Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen in their book *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* tell the story of Dom Helder Camara meditating in the middle hours of the night about the attitudes of the rich toward the poor and then writing a poem. This poem speaks to those of us in the church who are not HIV-positive and who may be tempted to feel virtuous about our status, perhaps even indifferent to those who are infected:

I pray incessantly
for the conversion
of the prodigal son's
brother.
Ever in my ear
rings the dread warning
"this one [the prodigal]
has awoken
from his life of sin.
When will the other
[the brother]
awaken
from his virtue?"

The bodily practice of grace

I see a link between the violated, hungry and diseased bodies of countless people and the crucified and resurrected body of Jesus Christ whom we remember and celebrate in the bread and the wine at the Eucharist. Deep inside the Body of Christ, the AIDS virus lurks.

The Eucharist is the bodily practice of grace. Nancy Eiesland writes: "Receiving the Eucharist is a body practice of the church. The Eucharist as a central and constitutive practice of the church is a ritual of membership. The Eucharist is a matter of bodily mediation of justice and an incorporation of hope." Because God chose to live with us in the flesh, sacramentality takes physical reality very seriously. We are bodily partakers of the physical elements of bread and wine, Christ's presence in our lives and in our world. The very bodiliness of the celebration of the Eucharist affirms the centrality of the body in the practice of the faith.

The communion meal mediates communion and true life-giving relationship with the crucified one in the presence of the risen one. It becomes a foretaste of the messianic banquet of all humankind. It is the meal at which the bodies of all are welcome. In Christ's Body, the Eucharist is the sacrament of equality. Only self-exclusion can keep one away. At the communion table we are offered the consummate step in forging an ethic of right relationship, across all our differences. "We who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread." This visible, unifying, bodily practice of relationship with all its potential for healing is ours.

As long as WWSD [World Summit on Sustainable Development] or NEPAD [New Partnership for Africa's Development] or any other grand design does not address the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa there will be no sustained development for African people. This places a heavy burden on the Body of Christ to be a voice of truth in the midst of denial and prevarication. We can speak into the moment by acknowledging the central role of gender in this pandemic and holding fast to the truths of our faith which we must put into practice day by day. HIV/AIDS is our kairos because as long as we are unable (even unwilling) to deal adequately with this scourge, development that is truly sustainable, gender-sensitive and people-centered will not come about. It is a time when the ordinary rhythm of life is suspended. Will it be a time of doom or will we find a new unveiling of God's presence and love for us here and now? ●

Social Worker holding the hand of a n AIDS patient. © Sean Sprague / The Image Works

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on the cover

A dancer holds up a symbol of Christian solidarity with Israel during the Oct. 11, 2002, Christian Coalition Road to Victory conference at the Washington, D.C., Convention Center

In keeping with our commitment to go forward in a way that ensures a future for *The Witness* and stays focused on its mission, with this issue we begin publishing on a bimonthly schedule. The next issue you receive will be the May/June 2003 edition, in which the board and staff of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company will continue to give voice to a liberation Gospel of peace and justice and to promote the concrete activism that flows from such a Christianity.

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

Contributing editors

Ethan Flad

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

CONTENTS

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LETTERS

Share the wealth

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

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

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

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

What rubbish and stupidity and blindness!

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

Mike Hayes
Springfield, IL

Call for honesty

I read the interview between Julie Wortman and Walter Bruggemann [*TW* 11/02] and was struck by the evasiveness of Bruggemann. Especially striking was the response to Julie's question: "Is it your experience that Scripture is the chief authority for moderate Christians and is it the chief authority for you?" His answer: "The answer to both of these is yes. It is the chief authority for moderates and it is the chief authority to me as long as one can qualify that to say that it is the chief authority when imaginatively construed in a certain interpretive trajectory."

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

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

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

Raymond Ayoub
State College, PA

'Louie's Index' error

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

Dotty Dale
Bellingham, WA

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

'Louie's Index': a quibble

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

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

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

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

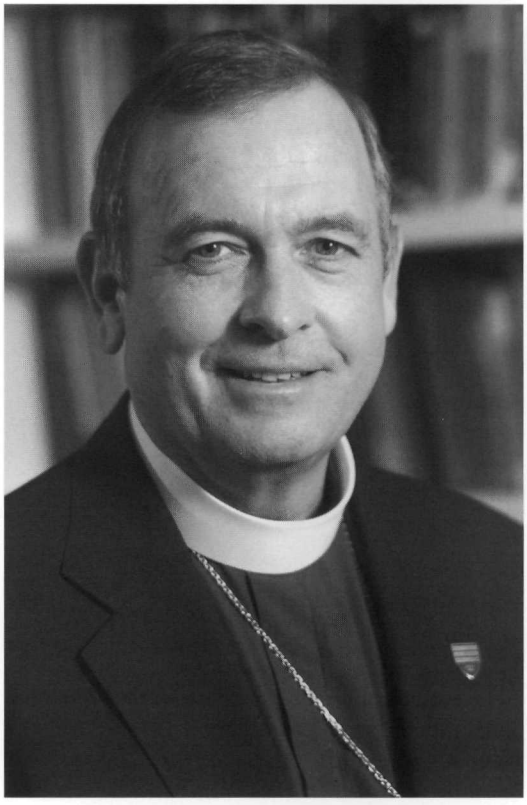
Patrick Mauney
New York, NY

Bringing blessing and justice together

I'm writing in response to a November 2002 essay titled, "What Does It Mean for the Church to Give Its Blessing?" identified as "prepared by the Claiming the Blessing theology committee." My book, *For Fidelity: How Intimacy and Commitment Enrich Our Lives*, is identified as one of the sources for this essay, perhaps because I discuss the concept of blessing with some care in the last chapter. I both enjoyed and admired the ways in which my own thinking was both incorporated and significantly developed in this essay, and I hope you might have some way to let the committee know that. I especially liked the connections made to Eucharist and to baptism, and how blessing and justice are brought together. That's really great work! And it's fun to feel that I'm part of a conversation.

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

EDITORIAL NOTE



Fighting fundamentalism with fundamentalism won't bring peace

by John Bryson Chane

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

 continued from page 5

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

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

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

Christian fundamentalists in this country enjoy levels of influence and affluence that render the embrace of violence — by all but the most radical anti-abortion activists — remote. Yet this comity is not without cost. Emboldened by their close ties to the Republican party, and supported by an exceedingly well-financed network of politically conservative foundations, publications and think tanks, religious traditionalists in the U.S. have mounted venomous campaigns against pastors, bishops, biblical scholars and theologians who have dared to examine our common Christian past through newly ground lenses. The vilification of men and women of good will is the first step in silencing opposing voices. It is also evidence of the ways in which religious fundamentalists attempt to co-opt the political life of their host nations. The current state of Islam in so many countries exemplifies the repressive nature of any fundamentalist theocracy. But fundamentalists need not dominate a polity to achieve their ends. Consider the unholy alliance of conservative elements in Judaism and American Christianity that has exacerbated the tension between Israelis and Palestinians, and made hopes of achieving a two-state solution more distant.

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

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

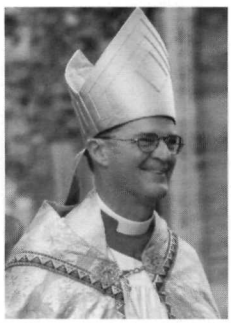
its dominant religion.

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

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

As we went to press...

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



Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop blasts U.S. for foreign policy

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

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

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

Pope says 'No' to war in Iraq

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

Episcopal diocese advocates for Cincinnati living-wage ordinance

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

Illinois Governor George Ryan empties state's death row

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

Ethan Flad

California hate crime victim eulogized by LA Episcopalians

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

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

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

Supporting conscientious objectors

by Marianne Arbogast

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although most activists consider reinstatement of a draft unlikely, they don't dismiss the possibility. CCW is currently lobbying against a draft bill introduced by U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY). The bill — which, ironically, was intended to stimulate anti-war sentiment — would have disastrous consequences for COs, Galvin says, forcing them to serve in the military.

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

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

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

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

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

For More Information

CENTER ON CONSCIENCE AND WAR (NISBCO)
202-483-2220
www.nisbco.org.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
www.afsc.org/youthmil/choices/coresource.htm

EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP
312-922-8628
www.episcopalpeacefellowship.org

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

would even be notified.

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

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

Peace activist Philip Berrigan dies

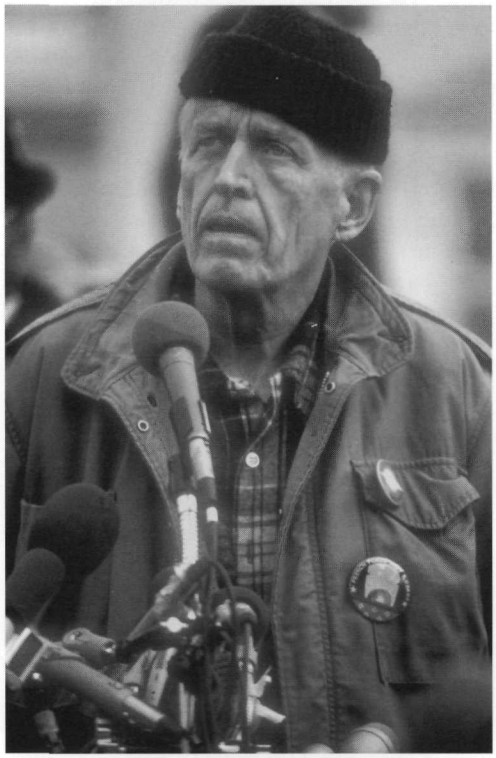
by Pat McCaughan

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

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

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

Philip Francis Berrigan was born Oct. 5, 1923, in Two Harbors, Minn., to Thomas and Frida Berrigan. His father was a trade unionist turned Socialist who lost his job as a railroad engineer. After graduating from high school in Syracuse, N.Y., Philip spent one semester at St. Michael's College in Toronto before being drafted into the U.S. Army in January 1943.



© Rick Reinhard/Impact Digitals/1983

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

He earned an English degree at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., in 1950 and then followed his brother Jerome into the Society of St. Joseph. The order, known as the Josephite Fathers, serves African-American communities. Ordained in 1955, he was assigned to New Orleans, where he earned a degree in secondary education at Loyola University of the South in 1957 and a master's at Xavier University three years later.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Justice network celebrates 20 years of organizing work

by Ben MacConnell

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

"Injustice takes many forms in our nation's cities," reflects Calkins, who is now DART's executive director. "When we take a close look we see healthcare for the few, inequitable education within our public schools, lack of affordable housing, absence of living-wage jobs, police misconduct, unfair treatment of new immigrants and countless others. These things rightfully make us angry. However, simply getting angry when facing injustice doesn't mean things will change. I have learned that we need to hold accountable the systems that make important decisions affecting our lives."

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

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

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

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

For More Information

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

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

by Pat McCaughan

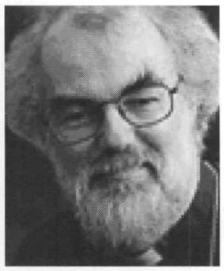
The Virginia Theological Seminary and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, the seminary's library in Alexandria, have agreed to house documents illustrating the history of the church's African Americans.

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

Commentaries

Canterbury 104: Rowan Williams

by Peter Selby



Rowan Williams

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

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

My concern in this short article, however, is to speak without apology from an English perspective. There is no doubt that something very unusual has been happening since Rowan Williams' appointment. The press coverage has been massive, in a nation that does not produce nearly as many churchgoers as the U.S. More than that, there has been a fascination with his ideas: *The Times* described his Dimbleby lecture as the most intellectually challenging statement by an Archbishop of Canterbury in 30 years, and the "liberal" press has produced pages of opinion and published some of his poetry. That has not happened in far longer than 30 years! I have spoken to people of many different opinions and at varying distances from the life of the Church, and their testimony is eloquent. They feel led into the world of the spirit in a new way, and find their and others' horizons expanded as a result. On the day on which his appointment was announced, Rowan Williams expressed a longing that our culture be once again intrigued by the Christian message, a statement that stands to give evangelism a wider and deeper set of echoes than has been the case.

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

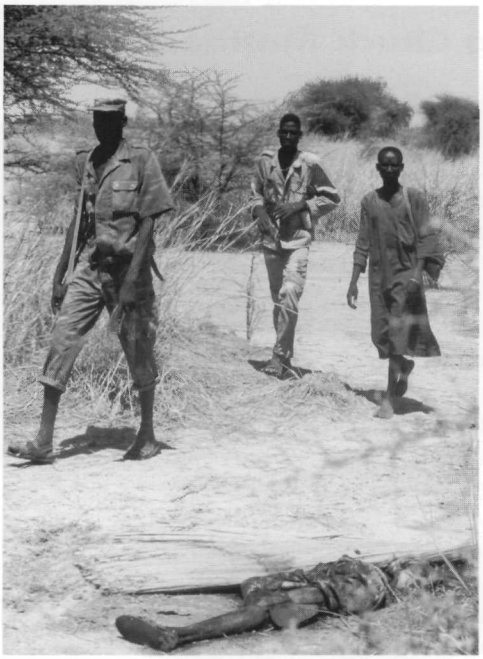
The religious scene in Britain is and remains notably different from that in the U.S. But there are signs in the response to the appointment of this Archbishop that there lurks below the surface of our consciousness here a genuine desire for a spirituality that is deep in its roots and engaged with the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

'We are keeping the faith alive here ... where are you?'

by Roy Nielsen

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

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



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

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

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

continued on page 14

LOUIE'S INDEX

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CORRECTIONS:

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

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

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

 continued from page 13

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

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

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

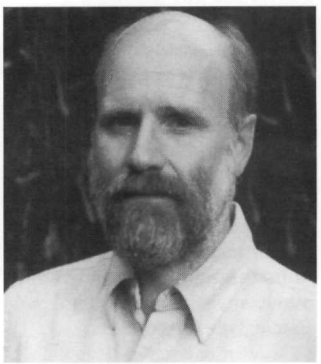
Leaving it up to the national church to aid millions of our brothers and sisters in the Sudan is not enough. Individual Episcopal dioceses must get involved. Episcopalians must make sure Resolution A130 and similar diocesan resolutions are more than just ink on paper. In Massachusetts, the diocese's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

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

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

Remembering Chuck Matthei

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF



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

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

"This is your only life — live it well!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Loving our terrorist enemies

by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

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

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

Granted, there is a huge quantitative difference between feeling horrified that someone brutal might eventually reach heaven, and actually slaughtering friends or family who seemed critical of you — or engineering the sudden death of thousands of unsuspecting strangers. But the quality of the reasoning is similar, and it is terrorist reasoning: These enemies are not at all like me and they deserve the utmost punishment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOCIAL EXORCISM

Lifting the Powers to God for transformation

by Gabrielle Chavez

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

How did this come about? Earlier in the month, six pastors representing five denominations gathered at the campus ministry house of Portland State University for some biblical and theological study. We had been running into each other at various peace marches, lobbying efforts and interfaith services and were asking ourselves, "What more can Christians bring to the peace table?" The purpose of our meeting was to discuss and plan what George McClain, former director of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, calls a "social exorcism" to support the peace movement. Though it was my idea, there was no way I was going to undertake this alone. We made sure we recruited at least eight faithful members of the body of Christ to ground our ambitious prayers.

Discerning angels and demons

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

While the Bible calls such distortions "demons," moderns might recognize them as negative institutional habits or culture, pathological patterns, energy fields, memes, mass delusions, addictive behaviors, groupthink or other such meta-phenomena of organizations which have long been observed and described by psychologists and sociologists. However one names such collective spiritual afflictions, the biblical remedy is prayer. As Wink writes in *The Powers That Be*:

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

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

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

Thomas Chavez

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

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

'Spiritual warfare?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

Preparatory worship and research

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

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

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

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

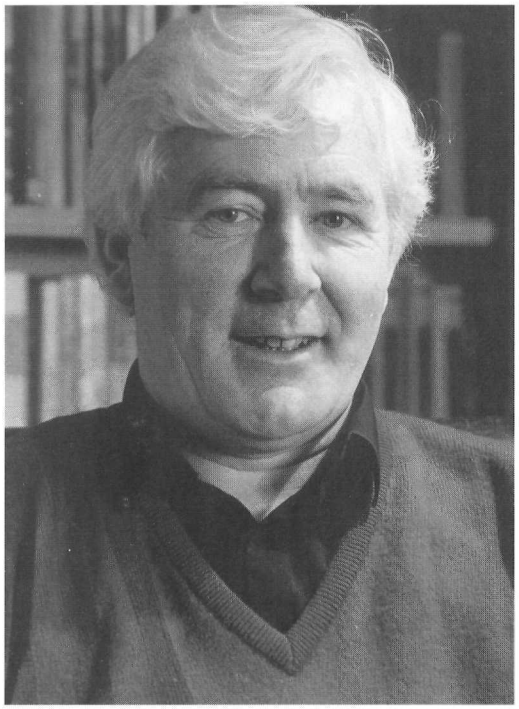
This formula was also carefully constructed to avoid the problem of leaving a vacuum for spirits to re-grow or return by filling the place of the cleansed vice with its opposite virtue. We believe our prayers were truly an act of love, invoking the power of God to cleanse, heal and restore our government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

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

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

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

CHRISTIANS AND ZIONISM



An interview with Michael Prior

by Marianne Arbogast

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Michael Prior: Political Zionism is a 19th-century European export, carrying all of the arrogance that one associates with the European nation-states in their colonial zeal. The founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, a non-religious Jew, and his supporters — the vast majority of whom were not only utterly secular but anti-religious — saw it as being necessary to escape the manacled life that was imposed upon Jews in Europe in the ghettoes. At the time, the whole enterprise of political Zionism was regarded by the chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, whom Herzl visited around 1896 or 1897, as an egregious blunder. Several of the chief rabbis in Europe were of the same mind — that this enterprise was contrary to Judaism and contrary to the sacred scriptures. Today, you would not get a chief rabbi anywhere who would hold that position. There are other Jews, mostly secular, who take a much more moral stance, in my opinion, but the majority of the leadership of the Orthodox communities throughout the world support Zionism now in an overtly enthusiastic way. So Zionism has gone from being a secular, anti-religious enterprise despised by the religious establishment to becoming virtually an integral part of the self-definition of Jews.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness: Why do you say that?

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

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

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

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

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

Marianne Arbogast is associate editor of The Witness.

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CONFLICT

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

Two women look beneath the surface

by Pat McCaughan

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

Take the November Miss World Beauty Pageant riots in Nigeria, for example.

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

Christian/Muslim global hot spots

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

Nigeria

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

Sudan

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

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

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

Indonesia

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

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

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

continued on page 25

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

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

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

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

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

Counter-productive political climate of us-versus-them

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Western propaganda campaign

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

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

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

continued from page 24

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

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

The Philippines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Where are the moderate Muslims?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some good news, even in the hot spots

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

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

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

"There is something compelling about all this for us as Christians. If it's important for us to live into Jesus' mandate that we love our neighbors as ourselves, that means treating our neighbor in the press as we would have them treat us in the press. It means that we model relationships in a way that we would want them lived out here and elsewhere. If we cannot do that, we can't expect Muslims to do it either.

Created diverse 'that we might outdo each other in good deeds'

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

Al-Marayati agrees.

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

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

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

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

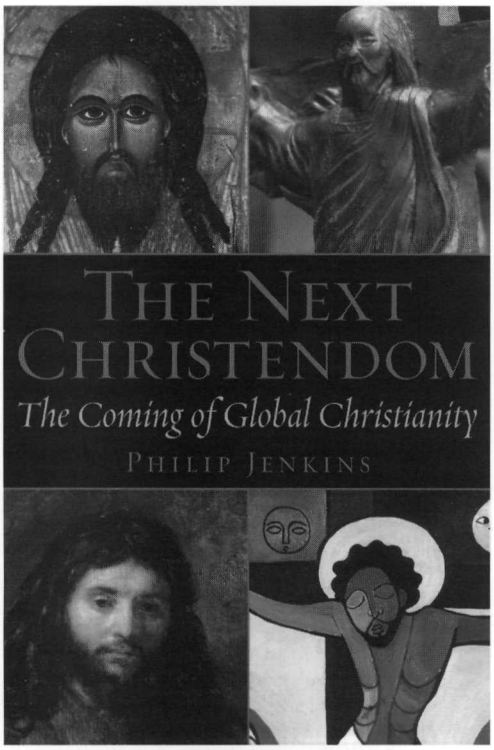
She especially encourages people to seek multiple sources of information and news.

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

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

THE COMING OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

by Ian T. Douglas



THE NEXT CHRISTENDOM:
The Coming of Global Christianity
Philip Jenkins
Oxford and New York:
Oxford University Press, 2002.

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

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

The centerpiece of *The Next Christendom* is Jenkins' attempt to describe the contours and characteristics common to the next Christendom in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For Jenkins, the growth of such churches as the Brazilian-based Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, or The Full Gospel Central Church in South Korea, or the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth of the Prophet Simon Kimbangu in Congo, is directly connected to the healing power of the sprit of God in the midst of difficult and oppressive circumstances. The promise of the new churches is that the emphasis on access to the Spirit of God, the reliance on strong charismatic leadership, and a clearly articulated set of beliefs and/or social mores help new Christians to find a sense of direction, connection, future promise and life in otherwise unsettling and difficult lives.

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

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

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

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

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

In his critique of Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory and its proponents in post-9/11 discourse, the Palestinian, Christian-raised, post-colonial thinker Edward Said states: "Huntington is an ideologist, someone who wants to make 'civilizations' and 'identities' into what they are not; shut–down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and countercurrents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing. This far less visible history is ignored in the rush to highlight the ludicrously compressed and constricted warfare that 'the clash of civilization' argues into reality" (*The Nation*, October 22, 2001). Philip Jenkins' embrace of Huntington's theoretical constructs leaves him open to the same critique.

I find Jenkins' descriptions and conclusions about the emergence of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America to be too simplistic. To wash together Latin American Pentecostalism and African Initiated Churches as being uniformly charismatic and fundamentalist does not give due credence to the many and various ways that the Holy Spirit is working in the lives of Christians in the diverse cultures, languages and peoples of these great continents. As difficult as Christian and Islamic relations are, to say that these two great Abrahamic faiths cannot coexist is to overlook profound efforts, often exercised at the grassroots and in unseen and unacknowledged ways, toward reconciliation and the struggle for human dignity and community. And to say that there is a normative Southern Christianity, that speaks with a unified conservative voice consumed with and committed to chastising the errant West over issues of human sexuality, does not give full credit to the depth and breadth of the many diverse voices in the South and the particularities of their own cultural and ecclesiological contexts. Even among Archbishops and Primates who head Anglican Churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America there are differing perspectives on the West's hot-button issue of homosexuality.

I find Jenkins' descriptions and conclusions about the emergence of Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America to be too simplistic.

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

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

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

Religion and foreign policy

An interview with Roland Stevens Homet, Jr.

by Julie A. Wortman

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

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

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

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

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

Julie Wortman: How do we change attitudes?

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

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

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

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

Roland Homet: That may be the exception that proves the rule. It was an alliance between the church and committed lay people who brought their respective strengths to the fray. The church said, look, this is a very simple issue of indebtedness and being perpetually imprisoned in that state. The Bible speaks to that very clearly. But there were a lot of particulars to be worked out between the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Treasury, other countries and so forth and that was largely carried out by lay people with the needed expertise. What helped was that this movement was biblically grounded and very simple at its core.

We should be interested in how things work out — not just our declarations of high purpose — always leading in a direction that will promote and sustain peace.

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

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

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

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

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

ple better understand foreign policy?

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

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

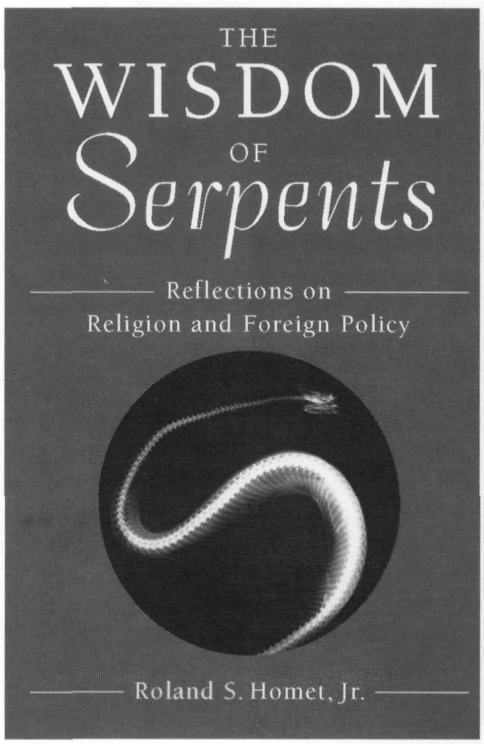
Roland Homet: Our political and spiritual heritage in this country has to do with modesty, clarity and submission to God. Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer is well known: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know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

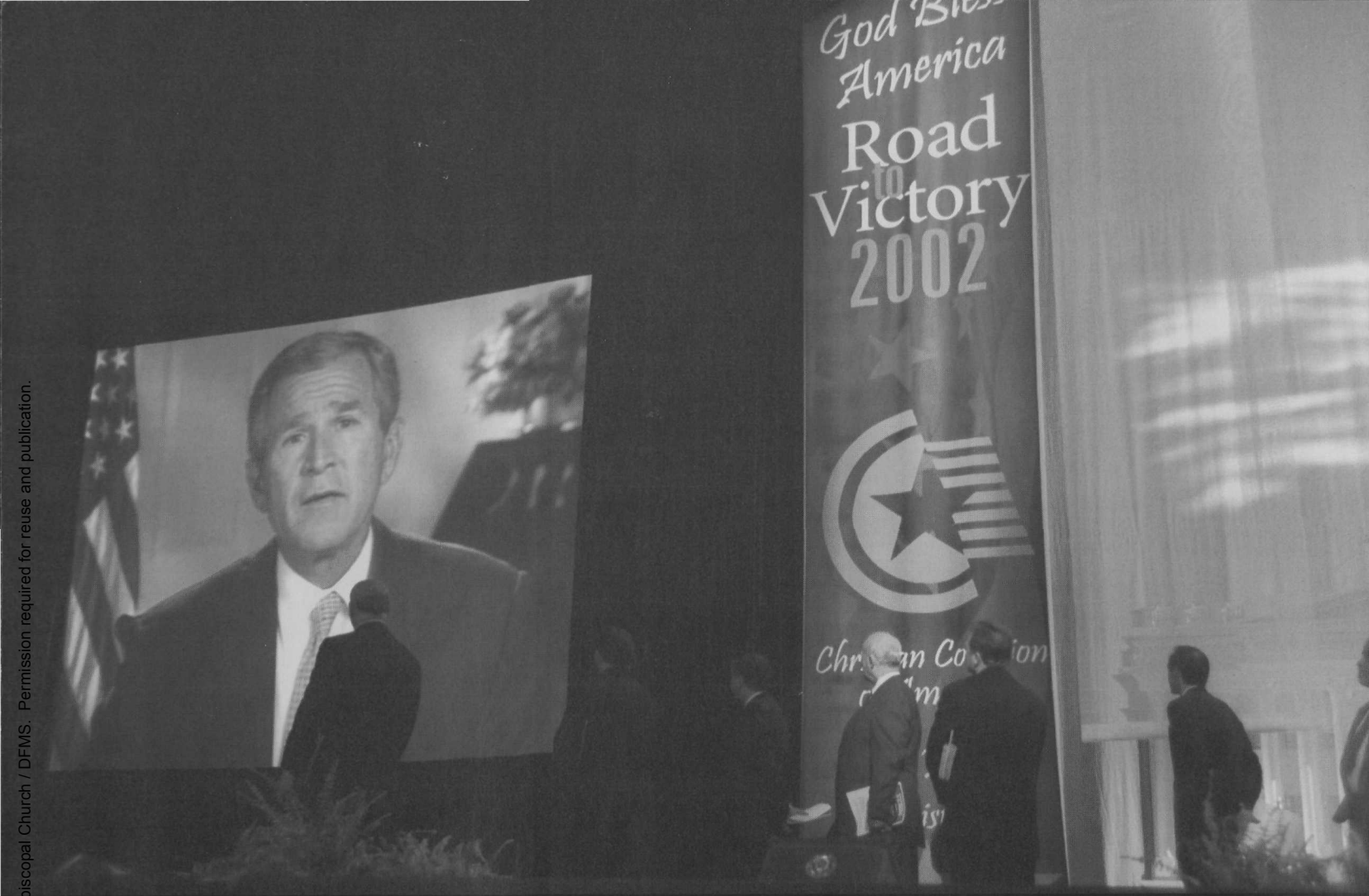
Results achieved by force don't hold nearly as well as those arrived at by mutual interest. That is something that we used to know, but now we have the tendency to think we can impose our will on anything or anyone and produce a result. Sad to say, what we are producing right now is more terrorists.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

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

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

Julie Wortman is editor/publisher of The Witness.





Oct. 11, 2002, Christian Coalition Road to Victory conference at the Washington, D.C., Convention Center © Rick Reinhard /Impact Digitals 2002

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on the cover

Palestinians carry the body of Hani Marzouk, 38, through the streets of Jenin on Sat., Nov. 11, 2000. Marzouk died after being wounded during a clash with Israeli soldiers. ©Jack Fistick/ Imapress/ The Image Works

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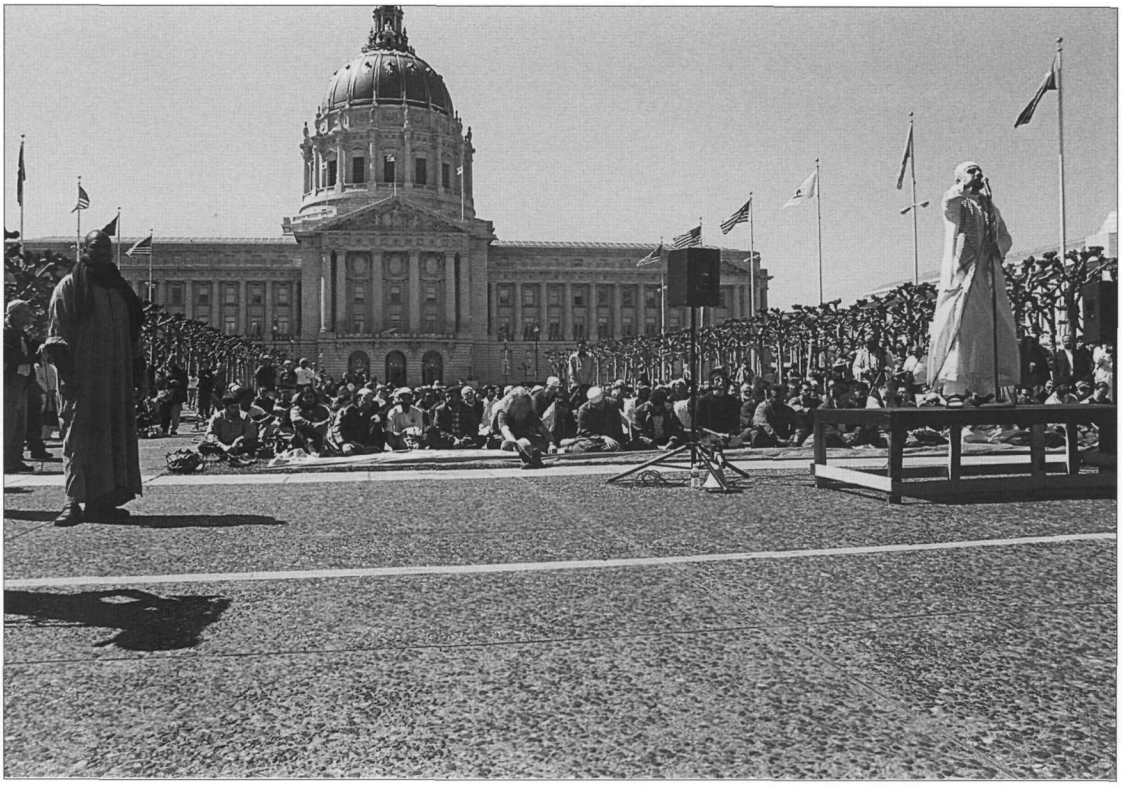

Emily Rosenberg

On March 28, 2003, shortly after 83 interfaith leaders were arrested at the San Francisco Federal Building, more than 300 religious activists attended an Islamic worship service held in front of San Francisco's City Hall. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf led the call to prayer.

CONTENTS

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EDITORIAL NOTE

A martyr for peace?

by Ethan Flad

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, I believed that the best way for me to help create peace in the Middle East was to die. In Feb. 2001, a few months into the second Intifada, I visited the Gaza Strip. My Palestinian Christian hosts escorted me around the northern section of this small territory, indicating how much worse things had become since my previous visit in 1996. The heady days of the Oslo Peace Process were long gone — by 2001, the conflict had become much more visible and oppressive.

We walked along the main north-south road that runs through Gaza, and came to a roadblock. Less than 200 meters away there was an illegal Israeli Jewish settlement. The roadblock, and another one about 100 meters down the road, had been built by settlers and Israeli soldiers. They did not want Palestinians to go along that road. This effectively shut down commerce within most of Gaza.

Even worse, it prevented Palestinians from getting medical care. My hosts ran the Ahli Arab Hospital, one of only a couple of hospitals in the region. (This is the Anglican-run facility whose church was bombed by Israel in Jan. 2003.) They pointed out that the roadblocks prevented ambulances from getting to the hospital. An injured or sick patient on the other side of the roadblock had to get out of an ambulance, go down a hill to the beach, go along the beach (carried by a donkey, usually), go back up the hill, and then catch another ambulance to get to the hospital. It seemed inane.

We had been standing about 10 meters from the roadblock, and couldn't really see the Israeli settlement. I wanted to have a better look, and to try to get a couple of photos with my cheap camera. So as my hosts kept talking about the situation, I walked over to the roadblock. A couple of them shouted at me, "Don't get too close!" and one yanked me back. "The settlers will shoot you!" They said the settlers would shoot without warning, as they considered anyone on the road to be hostile.

At that moment, I considered going back to the roadblock and crossing it, with the intention of getting shot and, presumably, killed. It was an emotional reaction, but the idea stayed with me for the next several months. I reasoned to myself: Palestinians and Israelis are dying every day, and the rest of the world doesn't seem to care. Our U.S. government is supporting the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, including the growth of these illegal settlements, and doing little to create a just peace in the region. Perhaps if someone from the U.S. died as an innocent victim, the media and international community would finally take notice. Wouldn't there be an uproar if I were shot, simply for walking along a road, unarmed, in the "Palestinian-controlled" Gaza Strip? Wouldn't that lead to a crackdown on Israel, and to a re-engagement of the peace process? Would I become a martyr for peace?

In popular understanding, a martyr is a person who is put to death or endures great suffering on behalf of a religion, belief or principle. The most controversial interpretation of martyrdom nowadays concerns suicide bombers in the Middle East. This phenomenon began less than three years ago, and has become a central topic of debate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dozens of suicide bombings have killed hundreds of Israelis, mostly civilians. This February I visited Laniado Hospital in Netanya, Israel. The hospital has treated hundreds of victims of suicide bombings, including the infamous attack at the Park Hotel on Passover Seder 2002, killing 31 Israelis. A suicide bombing in late March 2003 injured almost 40 people in a Netanya café. One of the Israeli doctors that spoke to my group blamed the practice of suicide bomb-

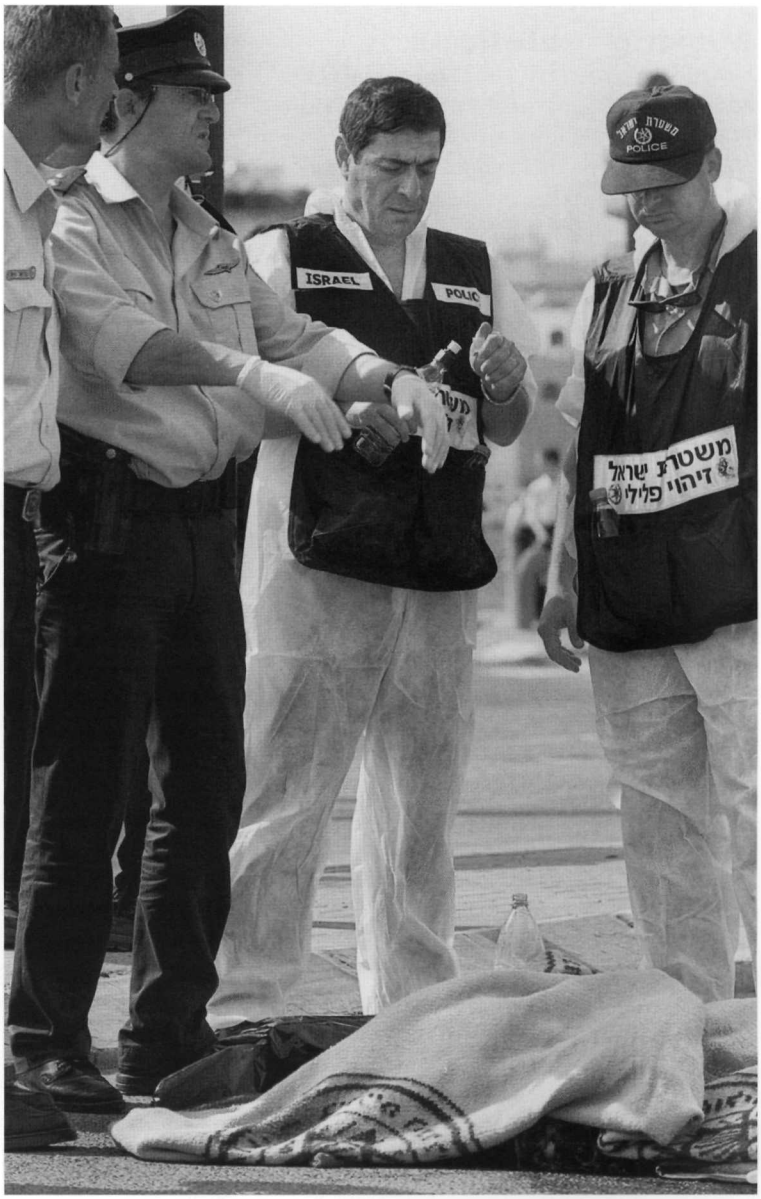
ings on Palestinian parents who "train their children to kill Jews."

Now this risk has emerged as a new threat in the war in Iraq. An Iraqi suicide bombing just killed four U.S. soldiers, and Iraqi officials have announced that thousands more Iraqis are prepared to become "martyrs," sacrificing their lives in order to kill their enemies. The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad has offered to send hundreds of fighters into Iraq to commit "martyrdom operations" in the struggle against the invading forces.

I considered going back to the roadblock and crossing it, with the intention of getting shot and, presumably, killed.

In the midst of war, this issue of *The Witness* considers the concept of martyrdom in a range of ways. Palestinian and Jewish perspectives are highlighted, including perspectives on the biblical story of Samson, whom some call the "first suicide bomber." We discuss recent religious martyrs, and speak with Christians who are committed to an ethos of self-sacrifice — in Iraq, Palestine/Israel and elsewhere. And we even look at hip-hop culture in the U.S. — a part of my very soul for the past two decades, as my close friends know — since some people hold that music responsible for encouraging our youths to engage in violent, dangerous lifestyles.

As Christians, we are called to uphold the memory of all who die seeking peace. A few weeks ago, U.S. citizen Rachel Corrie was tragically killed by an Israeli bulldozer just a mile or two from the spot in Gaza where I had approached the roadblock two years ago. Corrie did not seek to die, much less to kill others. She stood with countless Palestinians and Israelis who have been steadfastly committed to resisting the occupation through nonviolent direct action, many of whom have died with little notice. I have come to believe that my potential suicide would have done little to create peace in the Middle East, simply adding one more statistic to an endless death count. But I am emboldened by the witness of these martyrs, and call on all of us to recommit ourselves to choosing nonviolence and life in the midst of war and death. ●



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Israeli police officers stand over the body of a Palestinian suicide bomber who blew himself up near a bus stop in Jerusalem March 27, 2001.

THIS ISSUE OF *THE WITNESS* is my first as Editor. My colleague Wes Todd, our new Publisher, and I are honored to take the staff leadership at the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (ECPC) at this critical point in our organization's history. For more than 85 years ECPC has provided a prophetic Christian perspective on liberation and justice, and we will seek to continue to offer that needed progressive voice. Now, more than ever, we need alternative media like *The Witness* to provide in-depth analysis on the issues of the day.

We are especially grateful to our former Editor/Publisher, Julie A. Wortman, who faithfully served ECPC for more than 12 years and led our staff for the past four years as Editor. In the footsteps of *The Witness*' long legacy of prophetic leaders, including Julie Wortman, Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann, Barbara Harris, Mary Lou Suhor, Bob DeWitt, Bill Spofford, and founder Irving Peake Johnson, we will continue to serve as a "public theology" forum, in print and online, for the church and the world. ●

Missing solutions

I read with interest your uncritical and admiring interview with Fr. Michael Prior [*TW*, 3-4/03]. I got his abhorrence of Zionism and Zionists, his avoidance of Middle East history, and his displeasure with the text of the Hebrew Bible, but I missed any suggested solutions. Does he favor pushing all Israeli Jews into the sea, or merely shipping them anywhere else in the next available container ships?

Steven A. Bookshester
Annapolis, Md.

AIDS witness needed

I am chair of our Diocesan AIDS Task Force. We are having our annual Diocesan Convention at the end of the month. The DATF will have a table at the convention. I want to have copies of the Jan./Feb. 2003 issue for handouts.

This is a diocese that NEEDS to have *The Witness* coming to as many households as possible.

We have a resolution which is gaining strength, based on the UN rep's comments to the House of Bishops last fall. A member of our AIDS Task Force asked his parish to sign on as a co-sponsor to it. The rector never allowed it to get to the table in a vestry meeting because Integrity had signed on to it. That should give you an illustration of the kind of uphill battle one has to deal with in most of the churches in this diocese. My church, the Cathedral of the Advent, has never signed on to any such AIDS-related resolution. God bless the witness of *The Witness*.

Frank Romanowicz
Birmingham, Ala.

Slavery hurt poor whites

In Jennifer Harvey's interesting article, "Whites and reparations," [*TW*, 12/02], appears the idea that whites gained from slavery because, she writes, slavery provided whites with "the freedom to access a job as a paid laborer." In fact, quite the opposite was true. Slave labor effectively put the damper on free labor because it provided cheap labor to industrialists who therefore did not need to go in the free market to obtain labor. For example, the Tredegar Works, the large industrial complex in Richmond, Va., which was the largest such works in the South before the war, actually owned quite a number of slaves. According to Larry Daniel and Riley Gunter's Confederate Cannon Foundries: "By November 1864, the free labor force had been cut by more than fifty percent, while the slave labor population had more than doubled. Ed Taylor, a slave belonging to [Tredegar owner Joseph] Anderson was highly skilled in hammering out the iron bands for Parrott and Brooke guns." Tredegar was typical in that most Southern manufacturing concerns used great amounts of slave labor to reduce labor costs. As well, public works projects were commonly performed by slave labor hired from local planters rather than by free white laborers competing in an open market.

What this meant was that effectively laboring class whites in the South until the end of the Civil War were all too often unable to compete for skilled jobs, thus forcing them to remain working poverty level farms unless they moved to free territories. At the same time, immigration of laborers from Europe, who largely sought factory and mill jobs, were at much lower rates in the south, where they would have had to compete with slave labor, than in the North where such jobs were readily available. For example, according to Dean Mahin's *The Blessed Place of Freedom, Europeans in Civil War America,* "The vast majority of German immigrants — 1,229,144 persons — lived in the Northern states, with only 71,992 in future Confederate states."

The result was that chances for members of the poor white working class in the South to improve their status was greatly limited by the system of slavery which really benefited only a small exploiting class. As Southerner Hinton Rowan Helper wrote in his *The Impending Crisis of the South* in 1857, "illiterate poor whites [are] made poor and ignorant by the system of slavery."

Philip Katcher
Devon, Pa.

A grace-filled ripple effect

Today I received in the mail a photocopy of your "Editorial Notes" from the April 2002 issue of *The Witness* — "Women confronting violence." I am so pleased to read it. It is

Trailblazing civil rights activist Walter Dennis dies

Walter Decoster Dennis, retired Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, died March 30 in Hampton, Va., after a long illness. He was 70 years old. Priest and lawyer, well-known and well-loved, Dennis was deeply involved in civil rights and race relations. His lifelong commitment to justice and peace ranged from giving aid to the freedom riders to helping found organizations whose goals were the pursuit of equality, including the Union of Black Episcopalians and the Guild of St. Ives, which provides legal assistance with a "pastoral dimension" to Episcopalians in canon or civil law.

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

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

beautiful. I was completely unaware of the editorial and issue because I am no longer at my Milford address and have been unable to afford a subscription — both of those being the result of a divorce. (Healing and recovery has led to the truth-telling and "radical reformation" you mention in your editorial.)

And the odd thing about finding out about your column and the issue devoted to women and violence — besides that it is eight months after the fact — is that it came from my former therapist. I believe she may have begun a subscription to *The Witness* when I shared with her my initial letter to you. However it has happened, I am grateful to you and all at *The Witness* for breaking the silence, and I can't wait to read the April, 2002 issue.

There has been a grace-filled ripple effect from your "Recovering from human evil" issue [12/99] and my response letter. Thank you for being faithful in ways I haven't experienced anywhere else. You are truly witnessing, breaking the silence. And, as you wrote, it is "earth-shattering."

Mary Eldridge
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Preemptive war

Our being "first in war and first in peace" does not include preemptive war, lest we be like Hitler's Germany which launched a preemptive war against Russia, thus spreading World War II and labeling Hitler a war criminal. The World War II Japanese preemptive strike against Pearl Harbor "will live in infamy." Preemptive war smacks of "gangland ethics." Lest President Bush *et al.* end up in history classified with war criminals, the U.S. must seek peace guaranteed by the United Nations.

John Julian Hancock
Los Angeles, Calif.

Committed focus

It is with joy and respect that I renew my subscription to *The Witness* magazine and express my confidence that the Spirit is speaking to the churches in the forthright words and committed focus of the magazine on the dynamic action of faithful people to bring liberation and reconciliation to a world full of hostility, exploitation, divisiveness and imprisonment of all kinds. Keep it up!

Holly Antolini
Cushing, Maine

Corrections

The email address for Roy Nielsen, who wrote the commentary on Sudan for the March/April issue of *The Witness,* was given incorrectly. Nielsen's email address is: wr.nielsen@worldnet.att.net.

Also, our Jan./Feb. story on the restructuring of the national church's ethnic ministry unit quoted a statement that "nobody applied for the director's position." Ernesto Obregon alerted us that he had himself applied, so the information was mistaken.

CLASSIFIEDS

Order of Jonathan Daniels

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

Order of Christian Workers

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

Living Prayer, Living Justice

"LIVING PRAYER, LIVING JUSTICE: A NATIVE APPROACH TO INTEGRATING SPIRIT AND BODY" is the title of a conference to be led by The Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher, Bishop Suffragan of Southern Virginia. The conference will be held at Adelynrood Conference Center July 18–20, 2003, sponsored by the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross. For registration information call Tish Brown at 410-563-1231 or erv.brown@earthlink.net. Or write: Adelynrood, 46 Elm Street, Byfield, MA 01922. Or email: KateNoury@Adelynrood.org.

As we went to press...

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

Two COE bishops call war 'justified'; Palestinian bishop calls allies 'Christless Christians'

While two Church of England (COE) bishops broke ranks with the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Anglicans, calling the attack on Iraq morally and legally justified, the Bishop of Jerusalem characterized the allies and their supporters "Christless Christians." In an interview with *The Church of England Newspaper,* John Oliver, Bishop of Hereford, said Saddam Hussein had been responsible for the deaths of up to a million of his own people. "Casualties in a quick-strike war are likely to be something like one-tenth of that figure. If he is let off the hook again the next 12 years may well see the death of half a million people at least." But Bishop of Jerusalem Riah Abu-el-Assal called the British and Americans "aggressors" in the war and noted that Israel would be the main beneficiary of the conflict in securing aid from America as part of the war budget. The allies will bear the responsibility of the loss of innocent lives, claimed Abu-el-Assal. "I continue to believe that whoever thinks that they can bring about a new world order with the power of the gun will be defeated," he said.

'Peace pins' available through EDS

The Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Cambridge, Mass. has come up with a helpful way to remember the Iraqi people, by wearing the name of an Iraqi child. At press time, the seminary had received requests from around the world for nearly 33,000 "peace pins." A white dove is featured on the light blue pins, along with an olive branch and the name and age of an Iraqi child. To order, contact Nancy Davidge, 617.868.3450 x302, fax 617.864.5385, email: ndavidge@episdivschool.edu.

Ethan Flad

What's happening with the war? It depends on who's watching

All the news that's fit to watch depends on the audience, and surveys show that an increasing number of Americans believe the war in Iraq is a just war, while most of the world's Arabs and Muslims see it as a war of aggression. "The difference in coverage between the U.S. and the rest of the world helped contribute to the situation that we're in now," says Kim Spencer, president of WorldLink TV, a U.S. satellite channel devoted to airing foreign news. "Americans have been unable to see how they're perceived." Media watchers say the European press has tended to be more balanced than the U.S. media, in part because Europe is closer to the Muslim world. "There are really two stories unfolding here, one is the war and its progress and the second one is the progress of world opinion," says Tom Patterson of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. "That second dimension is there in the American press, but it's clearly way underreported." For instance, U.S. media outlets don't devote many resources to covering in-depth the growing anti-American sentiment — even among American allies — or its implications for the future, says Professor Patterson. (source: *Christian Science Monitor*)

New Kenyan anti-AIDS campaign seeks increased role for churches

Kenya's government, in announcing an aggressive new campaign against AIDS, is seeking to increase collaboration with church organizations to fight the spread of the disease. A main component of the campaign will be to "scale up" HIV/AIDS programs that various churches offer, a government official said. For example, the Archdiocese of Nairobi will receive about $24,000 for its AIDS programs. Government and church officials said they believe the collaboration is essential to the program's success due to the churches' extensive networks. "We realize that they have got their own policies for their church members and training programs for their own staff people. We wanted to bring these people together so that we can learn from each other and inspire one another," said Micah Kisoo of the National AIDS Control Council, the government body that coordinates national HIV/AIDS initiatives.

Put churches before gold, Romanian clerics urge

Romanian church leaders have protested against plans to bulldoze eight churches and nine cemeteries to make way for Europe's biggest-ever opencast goldmine. "We don't agree to this act of destruction and will insist our demands are met," said Andrei Andreicut, Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of Alba Iulia. The plans for mining at Rosia Montana in Transylvania's Apuseni Mountains have already raised a storm of protest from local residents, environmental groups and historians. The project was put forward by a Canadian-Romanian joint venture called Gold Corporation.

Indigenous Anglicans reject agreement to settle school abuse claims

A group of Anglican indigenous people in Canada has rejected an agreement by the church and the federal government to settle abuse claims filed by former students of schools for indigenous children because the agreement does not cover claims of emotional or cultural abuse. Under the accord, signed in March 2003, the Anglican Church of Canada and the government will share the cost of compensating indigenous students who suffered sexual and physical abuse in residential schools operated by the church on behalf of the government from 1820 to 1969.

Episcopal Urban Caucus plans General Convention strategy

by Ethan Flad

"We are not where we want to be, further than we used to be, but as always, in jeopardy of losing it all," Ed Rodman warned 200 progressives attending the Episcopal Urban Caucus (EUC) at its national assembly in late February.

Ethan Flad

Paul Moore lays hands on Susan Russell, director of the Claiming the Blessing initiative.

War was on the horizon and the memory of the Republican Party's capture of the U.S. Congress was fresh. This quickly shifting political landscape has put the social activist community on notice: A quarter-century of progress is in danger of being reversed. With the Episcopal Church's General Convention only a few months away, a re-energized EUC constituency arrived in Chicago worried that the rightward move in the government could soon be reflected in the church too.

Assembly organizers chose the conference title "Church Growth or Discipleship: Whither the Episcopal Church?" as a method of exploring this concern. The theme drew on a program called "20/20," a controversial proposal that has challenged the denomination to double its membership by the year 2020. Since many previous evangelism initiatives have been sponsored by political conservatives, social activists have historically kept a wary distance. In a keynote address, Ian Douglas, professor of World Mission & Global Christianity at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., argued that this is a false dichotomy. "I have a problem with the binary, oppositional placement of being either for more bodies in the pews or for human rights and social justice," declared Douglas.

Two pieces of the assembly sparked extra energy. Paul Moore, retired bishop of New York, appeared as the banquet speaker, just one month after being diagnosed with inoperable lung and brain cancer. Moore is widely considered to be one of the church's most prophetic witnesses to the struggles for racial, economic and sexual justice over the past half-century, and his reflections on ministry and justice provoked a response of tears and laughter from the audience. "It's the cracked ones who let the light through," Moore said more than once, enthusing, "The thing about this stuff is it's a lot of fun when you're doing it!"

One of the founders of the EUC, as well as several earlier civil-rights-era church groups, Moore focused on the pressing need for the justice community to build a revitalized, stronger movement. A World War II veteran, he expressed optimism that the current political climate could actually be useful: "I think this war may be a time when we can impact others." To encourage this, Moore called each person to think of the moment when they were transformed into a social justice activist. "I think we have to understand why we are here. How do we get more people who are as weird as we are, or as sane as we are, or as committed to the word made flesh as us? How can each of us touch someone else?" His opinions about building movements also looked forward to the upcoming General Convention. With several fellow members of the episcopacy in the audience, Moore challenged them: "May I say to my brother bishops: Get there [to General Convention] the night before [it starts] and organize. It doesn't take very many of you to be effective!" He received a standing ovation.

It was indeed the upcoming General Convention that was on everyone's mind. In an EUC strategy session, Convention veterans Diane Pollard and Byron Rushing took pains to explain the confusing and occasionally tedious aspects of what will happen in Minneapolis, noting that seemingly uninteresting topics are often the most important ones. "Please pay lots of attention to the budget!" warned Pollard. More than 30 "hot topics" were raised by workshop participants as areas of concern. On the final morning of the assembly, some of these issues — addressing diverse concerns like living-wage legislation, prison building, and the war — emerged as resolutions adopted by the 23rd EUC assembly.

For More Information

Text of EUC assembly keynote speeches are posted online at: www.thewitness.org/agw and www.episcopalurbancaucus.org. Additional coverage at www.everyvoice.net

Remembering Linda Strohmier

by Kevin P.J. Coffey

About 80 friends from the west, north, east and south gathered at St James' Episcopal Church in Great Barrington, Mass., on Saturday, March 22, for one of many memorial services for Linda Lucille Strohmier, who died suddenly from a heart attack on Friday, March 14, 2003.

Born Oct 31, 1945 in Brazil, Ind., Strohmier was the daughter of William and Wanita Hamm Shearer. In 1966, she graduated Indiana University, cum laude, with a B.A. and from The General Theological Seminary, cum laude, with an M.Div, in 1984.

LOUIE'S INDEX

The number of bishops of color who have been consecrated during Frank T. Griswold's term as Presiding Bishop: 4 (Michael Curry, Bishop of N.C., Wendell Gibbs, Bishop of Mich., Gayle Harris, Suffragan Bishop of Mass.,and Carol Gallagher, Suffragan Bishop of Southern Va.)

The number of those consecrations which Presiding Bishop Griswold has attended: 0 (Thanks to Kwasi Thornell for calling this to my attention.)

Number of Anglican provinces in the worldwide Anglican Communion: 38

Number of domestic (U.S.) dioceses in the Anglican province of the Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA): 100

Number of non-domestic dioceses in ECUSA: 9 (Colombia, Central Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Europe, Haiti, Honduras, Litoral Ecuador, Taiwan, Virgin Islands)

Number of non-domestic dioceses applying for re-admission to ECUSA: 2 (Puerto Rico and Venezuela)

Number of overseas Anglican provinces with which ECUSA currently hold covenants: 5 (Brazil, Central America, Liberia, Mexico and the Philippines. See http://www.episcopalchurch.org/agr/covenant.html for details.)

Number of dioceses in the Anglican Province of Mexico: 5

Number of Mexican diocesan bishops who have ended ministry in that Anglican province in the past six months: 4 (Samuel Espinoza-Venegas, Primate and Bishop of Western Mexico and German Martinez-Marquez, Bishop of Northern Mexico, are both under investigation for allegedly stealing more than $1 million US dollars from the church, some of it gifts from ECUSA to honor our covenant with the church in Mexico. Sergio Carranza-Gomez left the Diocese of Mexico to become Assistant Bishop of Los Angeles. Martiniano Garcia-Montiel has left his position as Bishop of Cuernevaca, and is serving as the interim primate of the province during this transition period.)

Number of U.S. Presidents since the declaration of the republic: 43

Number of U.S. Presidents who have been Episcopalians: 11 (source: www.adherents.com)

Number of Episcopalians in the 108th U.S. Congress: 45 (10 in the Senate, 35 in the House of Representatives)

Number of grandsons of U.S. presidents in the current Episcopal House of Bishops: 1 (Clifton Daniel, Bishop of East Carolina, grandson of Harry S. Truman)

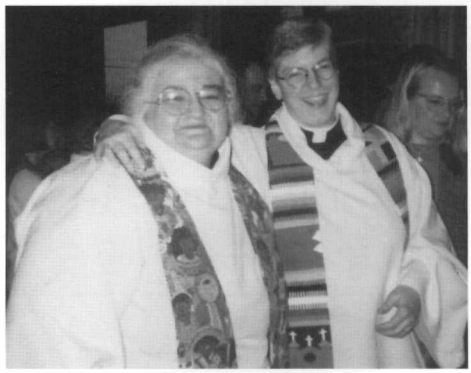
Number of Episcopal bishops who served as generals in the Army of the Confederacy: 1 (General Leonidas Polk, Bishop of Louisiana, 1841–1864)

Q: Did the Episcopal Church split during the Civil War?
A: Officially "no." Unofficially "yes." The dioceses of the Confederacy met four times during the war, the last two of them as The General Council of The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Confederate States of America. They never officially withdrew from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

CORRECTION:
In the March/April installment of Louie's Index, Oklahoma was identified as a domestic diocese which reports deploying no women clergy. This information was taken from data officially collected by Executive Council. However, several women clergy are deployed around the diocese.

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

UPDATE continued from page 9



Linda Strohmier (left) with Ellen Barrett at Strohmier's farewell service from the Bergen Episcopal Area Ministry in the Diocese of Newark

After her ordination to the priesthood, she served parishes in the Dioceses of Bethlehem, New York and Olympia before being appointed by then Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning to be National Evangelism Coordinator. She also served several years on the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, publisher of *The Witness*.

Strohmier later served congregations in the Dioceses of Newark and New Jersey. Since the 1st of this year she had been serving as cook with Life Needs Co-op, a "life-sharing" extended family setting for individuals with disabilities, where her daughter, Margaret "Maggie" Strohmier, has lived for many years.

A funeral service was held for the members of Maggie Strohmier's household in Great Barrington on Monday, March 17. The Eucharistic prayer used at the memorial service was one Strohmier had crafted while serving on the drafting panel working on the supplemental eucharistic texts for the Standing Liturgical Committee. Following the memorial service, Strohmier's family and friends returned to Maggie Strohmier's home for both a repast and, honoring Strohmier's Native American heritage, a potlatch — a term, corrupted from a Nootka Indian word for "gift," for a ceremonial custom among some Indian tribes of distributing an individual's property among friends and neighbors.

Bill Lewellis, communication minister and editor for the Diocese of Bethlehem, said, "Linda brought to the world a love of theater

and community. Her singing was inspiring and vibrant, and her laughter was hearty and infectious. People sought Linda out for counsel, understanding and warmth. She will be greatly missed by her daughter and by her many friends." Bishop Stephen Charleston, president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School, described Strohmier as "a teacher, a healer, a prophet and a mystic."

Strohmier's "non-church" life experience included founding the Thetford Parish Players, a community theater in Vermont that recently celebrated its 30th anniversary; working as manager with The Big Apple Circus; serving as production coordinator with the Vivian Beaumont Theatre; and working as a script writer with Jon Bankert.

Witness releases statement on war

In the war in Iraq we see "the exploitation of the myth of redemptive violence," a March 25 statement by *The Witness* in response to the war declared. "The U.S. government unleashes righteous war and violence in order to rid the world of the threat of war and violence."

The statement — prefaced with words from William Stringfellow rejecting "the claim of a nation, ideology or other principality" to rule history and to give moral significance to human life — offered five Christian responses to the war: rejecting demonization of the enemy and religious prejudice; calling our nation to turn from violence; assisting victims of war and opposing the use of especially destructive weapons; supporting nonviolent resistance, including civil disobedience; and calling for just and equitable relationships between individuals, communities and nations. ●

For the complete text of this statement (along with an interfaith statement on the war also endorsed by The Witness*), see our website, www.thewitness.org.*

Commentaries

Occupation is our story, too

by Winnie Varghese

MY OWN FILTER ON THE WORLD as a South Asian American is through the lens of colonialism. Israel looks like colonialism from my perspective. Here in the West it can be more difficult to see what is fundamentally flawed with that system. It is the founding myth of our own country: an unoccupied land that can be occupied by good — for us, Christian — hardworking people. We now acknowledge that as a destructive myth. We know the cost to native peoples, and to people of color from around the world who were brought here to prop up that myth for a privileged few.

Ethan Flad

Witness *contributing editors Winnie Varghese (left), Samia Khoury (second from right) and Michael Battle (right) flank Sabeel Liberation Theology Center director Naim Ateek at the Sabeel office in East Jerusalem.*

In Israel, the "empty land" was not empty. It is in this century that people have fled, and they are still alive to tell the story. In early February, an interfaith peace-building delegation to the Middle East sat in stunned silence as Palestinian priest Naim Ateek told us of his family's displacement and his liberation theology. "It is a story of land," he reminded us. It was like our story in the U.S. and like South Africa. Who has a right to work the land? To own it? To travel it safely? Or better yet, who does not? Ateek writes, "The land belongs to God; we must share it."

We met a lot of gracious Israeli Jews, good people, some of whom didn't know there were still Palestinian refugee camps or displaced peoples. They just wanted to live peacefully. They were themselves Holocaust survivors or descendants of survivors. But the violence of one generation does not excuse the violence of another one, as many Israeli activists we met reminded us.

I believe our discomfort and our quickness to hide behind the fear of being perceived as anti-Jewish is in part our desire to be good. Not good to Jews, but to deny our own privilege in living here, whether we claim a 300-year legacy in this country or a recent immigration story.

The Israeli story is one of fleeing persecution, often at the hands of the church, throughout most of Europe. We know that story. It is the immigrant story around the world. But

when it is combined with the reality of peopled lands, and the truth that other people occupy almost all land that is desirable for immigration, we come upon the murky history of colonialism, the missionary movement, imperialism and globalization. Our isolationist nation resists all of those words as too big or complicated — it is the rhetoric of the left. The truth is that these large abstract ideas are foundational to our American Christian identity. They create the story we tell about who we are and how we understand God at work in our lives.

As our nation wages a war with Iraq, remains on the ground in a slightly re-ordered Afghanistan and considers an armed response to North Korea; as we face the overwhelming plight of AIDS in Africa and all the issues facing our own communities; we may not seem to have the time or energy to re-engage Palestine and Israel. After all, being called unpatriotic is bad enough, but being accused of anti-Jewish prejudice is intolerable. (Our church is not free from the legacy of anti-Jewish prejudice, and I write with that caution in mind.)

The Israeli government is building a wall eight meters high and one-to-two meters thick to divide Israel from the occupied territories, which will further prevent the free movement of Palestinians throughout their own lands and into Israel. The effect is like that of ghettoes or reservations. We in the U.S. have just watched a wall come down. No longer is our nation just afraid of a bomb from overhead, but now we are afraid of our neighbors. No wall or piece of duct tape will seal us off from the effects of the violence being done on our behalf.

Our government and U.S.-based charities donate billions of dollars each year toward the Israeli government's chosen policy of defense. Without the U.S. government's financial support, Israel could not maintain the occupation. Israel/Palestine is not far away. It is our story, too.

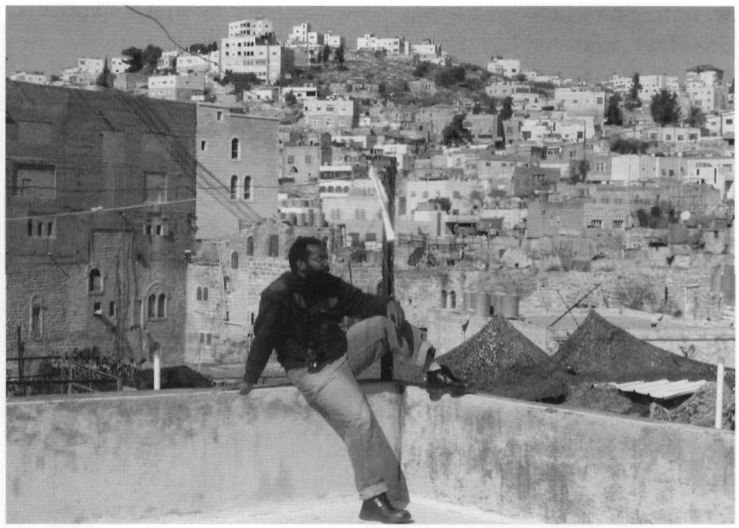
[Ed. note: Winnie Varghese and Michael Battle participated in an interfaith peace-building delegation to the Middle East in Jan./Feb. 2003, cosponsored by The Witness. *An Episcopal statement concerning the delegation's findings is available at www. thewitness.org.]*

Creative solidarity

by Michael Battle

THE BEST EXPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY is through being present with the other. To show solidarity with Palestinians who nonviolently resist occupation, and with Israelis who seek a homeland without the victimization of any persons, requires creative presence.

It only takes common sense to realize the truth of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, axiom that an eye for an eye leaves us all blind. When we become present to Palestinians and Israelis alike who advocate a just peace in the Middle East, we participate in the theological notion that we are all God's children. By understanding the other as a child of God, we no longer understand otherness; rather we are creating relatedness.



Ethan Flad

Michael Battle sits on the edge of a rooftop in downtown Hebron, surveying a silent city suffering its 81st consecutive day under curfew.

The Dalai Lama states, "We have seen many times that today's enemies are often tomorrow's allies, a clear indication that things are relative and very interrelated and interdependent. Our survival, our success, our progress, is very much related to others' well-being. Therefore, we as well as our enemies are still very much interdependent. Whether we regard them as economic, ideological or political enemies makes no difference to this. Their destruction has a destructive effect upon us."

Now, our interrelatedness to Palestinians and Israelis as children of God inspires us to end the main causes of the conflict — the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel and the tragedy of "suicide bombings" by Palestinians. Israeli control cripples the economy and destroys the social fabric. The desperate attempts of "suicide bombers" only increase a vicious frenzy of military control.

Legitimate questions must be asked at this point. How can I realistically show creative solidarity for a people so far away? Why in the world do you think I am related to "those people" over there?" The short answer is to join a Middle East peace delegation such as those offered by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. By going there you do two things: First, you lessen the spiritual distance; and second, you begin to see persons instead of statistics or TV images. To go there and see for yourself transforms the stranger into a relative, which is

the ultimate form of solidarity.

Of course, travel to the Middle East may be unrealistic. So creative forms of solidarity from afar would include supporting Palestinian and Israeli nonviolence initiatives. That support could be financial, or hosting educational events, or doing advocacy with your elected representatives. Another creative form of solidarity would be to pressure corporations that do business in the Middle East to use their financial power to help change the situation.

An interesting example of creative solidarity I would highlight is Ta'ayush (translated from Arabic as "Living Together" or "Life in Common"), an Arab-Jewish Israeli organization. One of our peace delegation members, Jennifer Kuiper from Oakland, Calif., wrote us on March 2: "Ta'ayush led our international group of 17 peace workers to the [villages of Twena and Susiya] in order to determine how we could work together in offering protection to villagers from the increasing frequency and intensity of weekend settler attacks. We decided to develop a rotating schedule of four internationals to sleep and 'live' in the village each weekend, hoping to deter or at least document the incidents."

By supporting creative groups like Ta'ayush, we, too, can learn to sleep and live in a village, one inclusive of all persons, regardless of race, religion, nationality, or any other kind of particularity. On that day in which we learn to be such a family, no longer will difference keep us apart; it will instead be our creative source of solidarity as children of God.

Ending the inevitability of suicide bombing

by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

WILLIAM BLAKE ONCE REMARKED, "I was born in 1757 and have died many times since." I too have died many times since my birth into this world: deaths of being abused or abandoned by someone I loved, deaths of bereavement or humiliation, deaths of knowing there were people who believed me worthy of execution. Fortunately for me, as for Blake, each of those deaths brought with it a resurrection into a quality of life that would not have been possible without the extreme experience that accompanied it.

In my work with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, I am often privileged to witness some of those resurrections. On my desk is a recent letter from a lesbian friend who writes, "I am glad to be coming alive, [overcoming] the fragmentation and disconnection that has kept me unalive." She quotes Sam Keen: "The transformation that takes place when numbness is replaced by a capacity to feel ... is momentous. ... The inspirited or resurrected body begins to resemble a tuning fork more than a guarded fortress."

Yes! Coming alive can be difficult, but it is very, very sweet.

How then to understand the willingness, even the eagerness, of many Middle Eastern people literally to fling their lives away on suicide missions designed to take with them people they don't even know? Clearly they are seeking eternal reward as martyrs for their cause. Pondering those suicide/martyrdom missions, I have often thought about John Milton's play *Samson Agonistes,* which raises the issue of whether Samson's tearing down a huge pillored edifice, killing both his Philistine captors and himself, was martyrdom or suicide. I am not the only one to whom this parallel occurred: Since Sept., 11, 2002, the *Times Literary Supplement* has been embroiled in a controversy over an Oxford professor's statement that *Samson Agonistes* should perhaps be banned because there are so many similarities between Samson's death and that of the airplane hijackers.

As a Milton specialist, I despair of those who would ban a classic that is so electrically relevant that it raises all the important contemporary concerns for discussion and clarification. (What's next, banning the Bible?)

To Milton, Samson's death was not suicide but martyrdom because of its inevitability, a word that appears several times. Blinded and chained, Samson's only hope is to tear down the roof over his own head in order to destroy the leaders of the government that has occupied his country and enslaved the people. Even then, Milton is careful to say that only the Philistine leaders perished; the ordinary folks (who lacked the status to get seating inside the building) were spared.

On April 28, 2002, the Neopagan priestess Starhawk posted on the Internet her essay entitled "Heresies in Pursuit of Peace." In it she writes, "Full human beings placed in a situation of utter despair may turn to suicide bombs and retribution. Human beings, humiliated beyond bearing, may turn to revenge. But full human beings are not mindless agents of hate. Given hope and dignity and a future to live for, human beings will tend to choose life."

Here then is the agenda for a genuine war against terrorism: to work toward a world in which nobody is so humiliated, deprived and filled with despair that suicide/martyrdom missions appear to be their only and inevitable recourse. Israelis need their own state, but so do Palestinians. Starhawk suggests standing with Israel's true interests by "demanding an end to the occupation, the dismantling of the settlements, by calling for the intervention of a neutral peacekeeping force and by pressuring the U.S. government to stop covertly supporting and funding Israeli aggression."

So Starhawk suggests, "a flourishing and happy Palestine would be Israel's best security measure, might even become her closest trading partner." Such a Palestine would certainly offer its youth a more promising future than becoming human bombs. And perhaps Israel and Palestine together could teach other governments how to become sensitive tuning forks rather than fearsome fortresses, how to come alive again after so many seasons of numb and wintry death.

Commentaries

A martyr's bones

by Robert Hirschfield

THE 13-LINE DISPATCH FROM HONDURAS, appearing in *The New York Times* (1/30/03), stated that remains found in the jungle near the Nicaraguan border may be those of Father James Carney.

One wonders, 20 years after his death, what the remains will say, whose sleep will be thrown into disarray by the silent chatter of bone fragments, if they are, in fact, Carney's bones?

In July of 1983, James Guadalupe Carney, 58-year-old Jesuit from St. Louis, peasant organizer from Honduras, martyr-to-be, crossed over into Honduras with approximately 100 guerrillas led by Jose Maria Reyes Mata. Carney was their chaplain.

Honduras, at the time, hosted a force of U.S. military and CIA personnel, there primarily to train and supply the Contras in their war against the Sandinistas. The Reyes Mata didn't stand a chance. By September, it was wiped out.

Carney was captured in the jungle (his family believes on the third or fourth day of September). The Honduran army claimed it never captured him. It claimed he most likely starved to death in the jungle. John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to Honduras, backed the army's claim. But in 1987, death squad deserter Florencio Caballero admitted to Eileen Connolly, Carney's sister, that her brother was brought to the U.S.-run base El Aguacate after his capture and interrogated, then thrown alive from a helicopter. Caballero has since died. Lucas Aguilera, a Honduran Christian Democrat, has since come forward with his own first-hand account. Last year, in a sworn statement to the human rights prosecutor in Tegucigalpa, he testified that he saw Carney at the Nueva Palestina prison, while being held as a subversive. Aguilera, in a conversation with Joe Mulligan, a Nicaraguan based Jesuit and human rights activist in the Carney case, mentioned that the priest looked like he had been tortured.

In his autobiography, *To Be a Revolutionary,* Carney writes that he lived "in a poor *champa* (a shack with a dirt floor) in the village of Camalote." Anonymously. Like the peasants he worked with. Many politically active peasants in Honduras ended up as Carney did. So why, of the many, choose to write about one? And why the one who would choose to disappear into the many?

Because he was irresistibly perverse. Maybe that's why. The recipient of a football scholarship to St. Louis University, educated to be a "Catholic bourgeois gringo," Carney was transformed into a Christian Socialist, into a vision-guided peasant leader who leaped beyond the limitations of his own culture.

In Honduras, he managed to crystallize the limitations of those in power. When the Sisters of Notre Dame wanted to build a swimming pool for the nuns, and not the students, he protested to the sister superior, who said he had no right to stick his nose in her affairs. When his peasant organizing became too much of an irritant, the Honduran government expelled him from the country. When he was captured in the jungle by the army, he was subjected to the reptilian ceremony of interrogation, torture and annihilation.

This human rights case that has not gone away can stand for all the human rights cases that have.

"If he was captured alive," said Mulligan, "he should have been tried. Extrajudicial killings are in violation of international law."

In Michael Ondaatje's novel, *Anil's Ghost,* the skeleton of one of the disappeared of Sri Lanka becomes the obsession of forensic anthropologist Anil Tissera. She calls him Sailor. She goes about trying to turn a statistic back into a life.

A fungus of silence surrounds the remains of the disappeared in Central America. Political killings are turned into private acts witnessed by birds in flight.

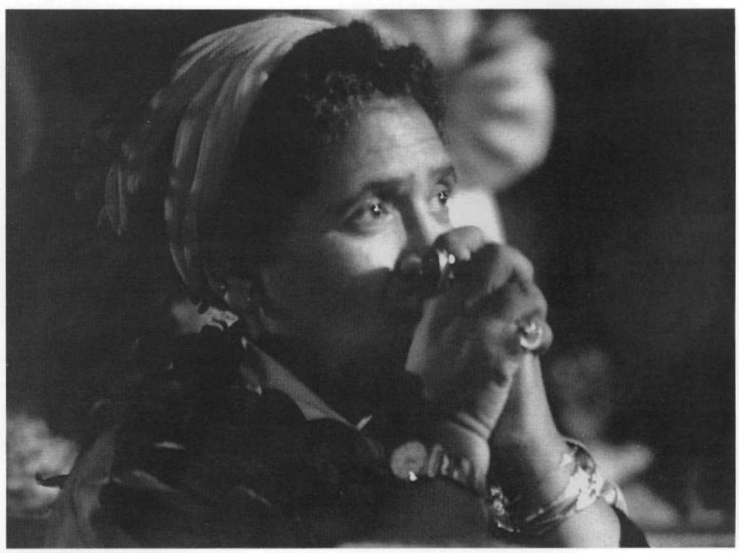
Carney's relatives, along with Mulligan, still demand to know who killed the priest. They want more light shed on the U.S. involvement in the case. Declassified CIA and Pentagon documents have been released, with important information blacked out, buried in the shallow graves of the censors. Twenty years ago is now.

The Edge of Each Other's Battles: The Vision of Audre Lorde

by Rima Vesely

AUDRE LORDE (1934–1992) has been intrinsically important to the development of second-wave U.S. feminism. She consistently challenged racism, sexism, classism and homophobia, serving as a catalyst for change within and among social movements. Author of 15 books of poetry and prose, she was poet laureate of New York state from 1991–1993.

Warriors battling to claim the authentic fullness of daily life are



jean weisinger

given an inside view into the person and legacy of Lorde in *The Edge of Each Other's Battles,* a recently released documentary produced by Jennifer Abod. The film, which depicts a four-day conference held in 1990, highlights the enduring relevance of Lorde's work in international, feminist, and lesbian/gay movements. At the center of *The Edge of Each Other's Battles* is the complexity of women's relationships with one another, particularly the personal and political dynamics that race, culture, class and sexuality create amongst all women committed to liberation from a patriarchal status quo.

The 60-minute film is meant as a way to use Lorde's work in oppressed communities today. In the 10 years since Lorde's death from cancer, her poetry and prose continue to be a dynamic force in organizing across differences in order to honor the complexity of our individual selves as well as form a united movement in a racist, misogynistic America. The documentary begins by recognizing Lorde's desire that the conference be intentionally focused on bringing together women who were traditionally separated by race, culture, class, nationality and sexuality, to speak to one another about the truth of their lives.

Interspersed with Lorde's words, clips from the conference, and poetry by women attending the conference are interviews with conference organizers whose process of organizing the event revealed just how deeply Lorde's commitment to difference impacted them. White organizers spoke of the need to step back and listen to women of color, and the disappointment they experienced at the failure of various white women to respect the organizers' commitment to a gathering that was 50 percent women of color and low-income women. The event was, for many, an expression of resistance to the middle-class mainstream women's movement, as space was intentionally made for women of color rather than white women to be primary speakers, presenters and voices. Several women of color, through poetry, spoke of being attacked through economic policies made by white men, as well as their ability to claim their persons in a violently racist society.

For those of us who listen to Lorde's challenge as Christians listen to biblical text, the film provided a necessary experience of the intensity of her words. I am now able to read her words and hear her voice, envision her face and body as she was interviewed and speaking on stage. Despite the fact that Lorde's poetry and essays were not quoted in the documentary, the film gives us, in its entirety, a vision of what the world might be if we were to talk about the truth of our lives and express without fear our commitment to freedom. ●

[Ed. note: A longer version of this review appears online at www.thewitness.org. For more information, see www.jenniferabod.com].

implosions

i blow myself up
on u

because i want u to understand
what occupation does
to hemoglobin:
transforms it to hemlock.

unwinds its dna double helix
into the shape
of my only son's
perfectly round mouth
stuck
in a pose of terror
watching his father's
dignity implode.

have u ever seen
a man collapse
into
him
self?

the eyes fall
first
cascading
beneath
his epidermis, past
his cheek and chin
into his throat
when he realizes
he is unable
to protect his family
or feed them. or speak.

words are meaningless, when ur eyes
are lodged
in ur esophagus.

action
becomes ur native
tongue.

next, the left ventricle
attacks
the right:
internal fratricide.

the purest form
of self-hatred.

finally, the large intestine
divides
and tightens into
4,000,007 military
square knots, each one
the size of
a hand grenade.

i am a walking bomb.

no need for dynamite
i just meditate
real hard
on my history
since I met u.

concentrate
on being uprooted
from my father's father's farm
and squeezed
into the gaza strip.

recall
how u claimed mine
as urs
and called me
a terrorist
when i fought
to get mine
back.

give me liberty
or join me
in death.

i blow myself up
on u.

SUICIDE BOMBERS

A Palestinian Christian perspective

by Naim Ateek

THE ISSUE of Palestinian suicide bombings has become a familiar topic to many people throughout the world. It is easy for people to either quickly and forthrightly condemn it as a primitive and barbaric form of terrorism against civilians, or condone and support it as a legitimate method of resisting an oppressive Israeli occupation that has trampled Palestinian dignity and brutalized their very existence.

As a Christian, I know that the way of Christ is the way of nonviolence and, therefore, I condemn all forms of violence and terrorism, whether coming from the government of Israel or from militant Palestinian groups. Having said that clearly, it is still important to understand the phenomenon of suicide bombings that tragically arises from the deep misery and torment of many Palestinians. For how else can one explain it? When healthy, beautiful and intelligent young men and women set out to kill and be killed, something is basically wrong in a world that has not heard their anguished cry for justice.

The Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip took a very important turn since the early 1990s. Young Palestinian men, and more lately women, started to strap themselves with explosives, make their way to Israeli Jewish areas and blow themselves up, killing and injuring dozens of people around them. Between the beginning of the second intifada in September 2000 and February 22, 2003, Palestinian militants carried out 69 suicide bombings in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank including Jerusalem, as well as inside Israel, killing, according to Israeli statistics, 341 Israelis including soldiers, men, women, and children. In the same period, the Israeli army killed 2,106 Palestinians including police, men, women and children.

For the last 35 years, the Palestinians have been engaged in resisting the occupation of their country. For many years they have worked through the international community to bring an end to the Israeli occupation, but they have been unsuccessful.

For these young people, daily life has become an experience of death.

Historically speaking, the Palestinians did not begin their resistance to the occupation with suicide bombings. There were no suicide bombings before the Oslo Peace Process. It is the result of despair and hopelessness that started to set in when an increasing number of Palestinians became frustrated by the deepening Israeli oppression and humiliation.

Breeding ground for suicide bombers

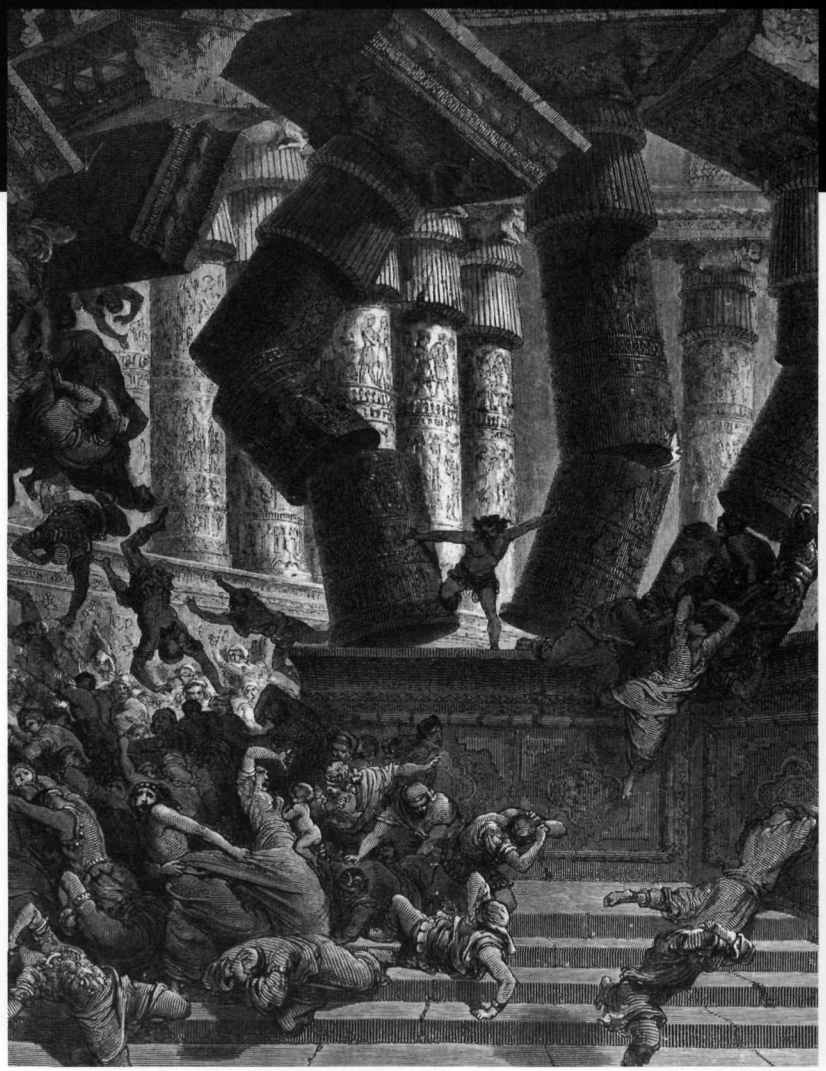
Besides the basic political injustice and the oppressiveness of the occupation, there are four major areas that constitute the breeding ground for suicide bombers. To begin with, many young men have become permanently unemployed.

Moreover, it is the young men more than others who are humiliated, harassed and provoked by the Israeli soldiers.

Furthermore, there is hardly any Palestinian family in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that has not experienced some kind of pain or injury. Many families have lost their loved ones. Almost every aspect of Palestinian life is controlled by the Israeli army and many people have lost the ability to dream of a better future or envisage a better life.

There is another group of young Palestinian men and women that must be mentioned. Many of these have been arrested and tortured in Israeli prisons and "concentration" camps. In fact, Israeli prisons have become the "factories" for creating and "manufacturing" collaborators. Young men are detained for indefinite periods of time and are pressured into becoming spies and collaborators. They are simply trapped and some of them do not know how to shake it off. This phenomenon causes some of them to exist in constant self-contempt and scorn for having betrayed their own people. They are ready to become suicide bombers in order to purify and redeem themselves and express their utmost loyalty and patriotism for their country and people.

For these young people, daily life has become an experience of death. Indeed, many of them feel that Israel has practically pronounced a death sentence on them. They feel they have no options and very little to lose. Consequently, they are willing to give themselves up for the cause of God and the homeland (*watan*), believing that with God



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Death of Samson.
Engraving by Gustave Dore after Holbein the Younger.

there is so much to gain.

From the perspective of those who believe in and carry out these suicide operations, there is a simple and plain logic. As Israeli soldiers shell and kill Palestinians indiscriminately, Palestinian suicide bombers strap themselves with explosives and kill Israelis indiscriminately.

Muslim perspectives

The suicide bombings become a more powerful phenomenon when their religious underpinnings are emphasized. It is difficult to determine whether the religious dimension followed and enhanced the political decision for its use or whether the religious significance preceded and prompted it. It is most likely that both went hand in hand, since any Palestinian killed by Israel, whether a militant or an innocent bystander, was regarded as a martyr. Consequently, groups like Hamas were referring to these acts not as suicide bombings but as "martyrdom operations" and "martyrdom weapons." Nationalism and faith have been fused together and imbued with power. People regarded the suicide bombers as martyrs and believed that paradise awaited them.

Other Muslims argued strongly that Islamic law forbids the killing of non-combatants and, therefore, the killing of innocent Israelis is wrong.

Effects of suicide bombings

Although Israel was deeply hurt by suicide bombings, the consequences that the extremists were hoping would happen did not take place.

First, Israel had many more options than the Palestinians thought they did. As it turned out, Israel had a good number of military options; and due to its successful media campaign, everything it did was justified as self-defense.

Second, the West Bank is not southern Lebanon. Hizballah was, indeed, successful in driving the Israeli army from southern Lebanon after 22 years of occupation (May 25, 2000). The West Bank is different. Religious Jewish settlers and right-wing Zionists find strong biblical and historical roots in the West Bank and it will not be easy to evict them from there. The presence of the illegal settlements is one of the most difficult issues in the struggle for peace.

Third, the U.S. is the only great world power today and has an unflinching commitment to the well-being and security of the state of Israel. It will come to its rescue politically, militarily, and economically whenever it is needed.

Fourth, Israel was successful in its media campaign internationally. Many countries in the world are against suicide bombings.

Fifth, the Israeli society did not crumble economically in spite of hardships.

And sixth, the vast majority of the Israeli people, perceiv-

ing the struggle as a fight for the very existence of the state of Israel, supported Sharon and his right-wing policies.

Palestinian condemnation

Although suicide bombings were condemned by some Palestinians, including the Palestinian Authority, they were accepted popularly by many as a way of avenging the Israeli army's daily killings of resistance fighters and innocent Palestinians. And while the American government rushed to condemn suicide bombings and expected the same from the Palestinian Authority, Israel's killing of Palestinian leaders and ordinary civilians did not abate and was not condemned publicly by the U.S.

Be that as it may, it is important to reiterate clearly that the Palestinian community is not totally in support of the suicide bombings. On Wednesday, June 16, 2002, 58 Palestinian men and women, Muslims and Christians, among whom are well-known personalities, signed a public statement published by the most read Arabic daily, *Al-Quds,* asking for a halt to all suicide bombings. They made it clear that such operations only widen and deepen the hate and resentment between Palestinians and Israelis. They also destroy the possibility for the two peoples to live in two states side by side. The statement mentioned that the suicide bombings are counterproductive and will not lead to the fulfillment of the Palestinian national aspirations. They only allow Israel to justify its increasing vicious attacks on Palestinian towns and villages. The statement was published in the paper on five consecutive days before it was transferred to the website with hundreds more signatories.

Israeli reaction

There were voices inside Israel that were calling for more drastic and severe measures to curb the suicide bombings. One of those was Gideon Ezra, the deputy public security minister who openly on television on August 19, 2001, called on his government to execute the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. He argued that if potential suicide bombers know that their families will be wiped out then they will refrain from committing the act. Apparently, Ezra was basing his suggestion on a Nazi practice that used to arrest and inflict suffering on the families of those who were suspected of undermining the state. Shockingly, Ezra's words did not draw any protest or criticism from the Israeli government.

By contrast, there are courageous voices that called on their Israeli government to examine its harsh policies against the Palestinians that breed suicide bombings. In one case, Rami and Nurit Elhanan lost their 14-year-old-daughter who was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber in September 1997. In spite of the tragic loss, the parents became actively involved in peacemaking. They blamed the Israeli occupation, saying, "Our daughter was killed because of the terror of Israeli occupation. Every innocent victim from both sides is a victim of the occupation." The couple established the Bereaved Family Forum with Izzat Ghazzawi, a Palestinian whose 16-year-old son Ramy was killed by Israeli troops.

Was Samson a suicide bomber?

In discussing suicide bombings from a religious perspective, it is worthwhile to reflect on the story of Samson in the book of Judges (13–16). It is a story of a strong young man who rose up to save his people who were oppressed by the coastal powerful neighbor, the Philistines. Obviously, from the perspective of the Israelites he was regarded as a hero and a freedom fighter while from the perspective of the people of power, namely the Philistines, he was, in today's language, a terrorist.

According to the story, Samson was very successful in his brave adventures against his enemies. Eventually, he was captured by the Philistines and tortured. They pulled out his eyes and kept him in jail. In order to celebrate their victory over their archenemy, Samson, the Philistines brought him to a big event attended by 3,000 men and women, including their five kings. His final act of revenge took place when he pushed the two main columns of the building and pulled it down, killing himself and all the attendees. Samson's final prayer seems very similar to the prayer of a suicide bomber before he blows himself up. "Lord God, remember me and strengthen me only this once, O God, so that with this one act of revenge I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes."

Read in the light of today's suicide bombers, how do we evaluate the story of Samson? Was not Samson a suicide bomber? Was he acting on behalf of the God of justice who wills the liberation of the oppressed? Was God pleased with the death of thousands of men and women of the Philistines? Is it legitimate to tell the story today by substituting the name Ahmad for Samson? Is the dynamic under which God operates that of Jew versus other people or is it that of oppressor versus oppressed? Is the story of Samson legitimate because it is written in the Bible while the story of Ahmad is rejected because it is not and therefore he is condemned as a terrorist? Do we have the courage to condone both as acts of bravery and liberation or condemn both as acts of violence and terror? Or do we hold a theology of a biased God who only stands with Israel whether right or wrong?

Why we condemn suicide bombings

Although some people in our Palestinian community admire the sacrifice of the suicide bombers and although we understand its deeper motivation and background, we condemn it from both our position of faith as well as a legitimate method for resisting the occupation.

First, we condemn suicide bombings because they are a crime against God. Ultimately, it is only God our creator who gives us life and who can take it. Those who love God do not kill themselves. Moreover, those who love God do not kill themselves for the sake of God. Indeed, they should be ready to die and even be killed for God's sake, but they will not do it themselves.

Second, we condemn it because we believe that we must refrain from inflicting suffering or death on others. From a Christian point of view, the tragedy lies in the fact that these young men and women do not only kill themselves, they cause the death of others,

many of whom are civilians and innocent. We must hasten to add that we equally condemn the state of Israel's killing of Palestinians. Indeed, it constitutes the underlying cause of the conflict. Be that as it may, from our position of faith we say that even when the cause for which a person kills himself/herself is noble, as it is in the case of Palestine, nothing justifies the killing of innocent people. Christ accepted suffering on himself and did not inflict it on others. In fact, from a New Testament perspective, when Christians suffer, it should make them more compassionate for the suffering of others rather than bitter and vengeful. In the struggle for civil rights in the U.S., Martin Luther King, Jr., recognized the heavy price that needs to be paid for freedom but refused to accept any violent method to achieve it. He said, "Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood." King insisted on the teaching of Jesus and Gandhi that unearned suffering is redemptive. Furthermore, for the Christian, suffering endured can serve as evidence of Christ's victory over suffering and death. It can also be a way of exposing the evil and the injustice that must be resisted.

Third, we condemn it because we believe that when we are confronted by injustice and evil, we must resist it without using its evil methods. We bear it but do not accept, submit or succumb to it. Some Christians have developed nonviolent direct action as a method of resisting unjust governments and systems. Martin Luther King, Jr., expressed it well when he wrote: "The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it."

It is our faithfulness to God that drives us to work for justice and for the ending of the occupation of Palestine. But it must be carried out through nonviolence, no matter how long it takes. It is only nonviolence that can guarantee the restoration of the humanity of both sides when the conflict is over. Moreover, nonviolent resistance contributes to a speedier process of reconciliation and healing because it does not violate human dignity.

Fourth, for the Christian, the supreme example is Christ. "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly" (1Peter 2:23). This is not passive resignation. It is total surrender to the God of justice who established this world on justice and who is going to make sure that injustice does not have the last word.

We condemn suicide bombings because they are trapped with the same violent logic exercised and perpetrated by the Israeli government. It is based on the law of revenge expressed in "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Although it is very difficult for us as humans, we are still encouraged as Christians to seek a higher law.

'The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it.'

Fifth, it is probable that Prime Minister Sharon (and the right-wing religious extremist ministers and settlers around him, including some Christian Zionists) believes that the war against the Palestinians can be justified biblically because he is doing exactly what Joshua did in the Old Testament. Therefore, as Joshua's actions (Joshua 1–11) pleased God so must Sharon's actions. Similarly, the suicide bombers believe that by blowing themselves up and killing those around them they are fighting in the cause of God by ridding their land of the injustice inflicted on it by "infidels," and so earning for themselves a place in paradise.

Our basic problem with both lies in their concept of God. We reject any understanding of God that reflects war, violence or terrorism. God is a God of justice, but God's justice is not expressed in violence or in terrorizing people. God's justice is expressed supremely in love, peace and forgiveness.

Sixth, in the midst of the injustice, suffering and death inflicted on us, we believe that God in Christ is there with us. Christ is not in the tanks and jet fighters, fighting on the side of the oppressors (although many Jewish and Christian Zionists believe that). God is in the city of Gaza, in the Jenin camp and in the old city of Nablus, Ramallah and Bethlehem suffering with the oppressed. God has not abandoned us. We reject suicide bombings because, from a Christian perspective, they reflect feelings of total despair and hopelessness.

Seventh, we condemn suicide bombings because they practice, in essence, collective punishment against people, many of whom are civilians. They are guilty of the very things Palestinians detest in the Israeli government. When suicide bombers commit collective punishment, they become what they loathe. When the Israeli army incarcerates whole towns for long periods of time or a suicide bomber blows himself up in a market place and indiscriminate killing ensues, both are collective punishment directed at largely innocent people.

Eighth, although people may be ready to die for their faith or even for their country, they need to do everything they can to stay alive and witness in life rather than kill themselves. So long as they are alive, they have the opportunity to witness to the truth. Indeed, they need to remain faithful until death but they must not give up on life and kill themselves. We reject suicide bombings because we believe in life before death as well as life after death. In spite of the despairing situation, these young men and women deserve to live.

There cannot be room for hate if we want to live together. And live together we must. Ending the occupation will certainly end the suicide bombings. All peace-loving people, whether people of faith or not, must exert greater concerted effort to work for the ending of the occupation. ●

DYING FOR CHANGE

Self-sacrifice in nonviolent action

by Marianne Arbogast

SHORTLY AFTER SEPT. 11, 2001, political satirist Bill Maher outraged sponsors and got his ABC talk show, "Politically Incorrect," cancelled by agreeing with a guest's observation that people who are willing to die for their cause cannot be called cowards. Rather, lobbing missiles from a safe distance is cowardly, Maher suggested. In the storm of patriotic controversy that followed, much of the anger seemed to focus on the idea that there could be any comparison between the suicide attacks and U.S. military action. But whatever distinctions may exist between terrorism and legitimate armed struggle (and these seem harder to draw as modern warfare blurs the distinction between civilian and military targets), or between different contexts in which suicide bombing missions have been carried out (Hamas is not Al-Qaeda), it seems hard to deny that the willingness to lay down one's life for God, country or political convictions has significance.

This willingness — taken for granted in armed conflict — has also been honored by those who embrace nonviolence. The history of nonviolent movements includes many who knowingly risked their lives, such as U.S civil rights workers who faced brutal assault and, in some cases, death. It includes leaders who, like Martin Luther King, Jr., were acutely aware of the likelihood of their own martyrdom. It also includes a number of "suicide resisters" who have taken their own lives and generated their own controversy.

Self-immolation

The majority of nonviolent activists — especially those with roots in Christian faith — would condemn self-inflicted violence as well as violence directed toward others. Yet there have been some who, while rejecting any act that would take others' lives, have accepted the deliberate ending of one's own life for the sake of a cause. The classic modern example of self-inflicted martyrdom is the self-immolation of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc, on June 11, 1963 — an act which, according to University of Illinois sociologist Michael Biggs, brought self-immolation into "the global repertoire of protest." (Biggs is the author of "Dying without Killing: Protest by Self-Immolation," a chapter of a book on suicide missions edited by Diego Gambetta, now under consideration by Oxford University Press). Quang Duc set himself on fire at a busy intersection in Saigon to protest the U.S.-backed Diem government's repression of Buddhists.

"The impact of Thich Quang Duc's fiery death was immense and immediate," Biggs writes. "Within Vietnam, it galvanized popular discontent in the cities. ... Four monks and a nun burned themselves to death before Diem was toppled by a coup at the beginning of November. This did not end self-immolation. ... Many more were to die in 1966, protesting against the American-backed military regime and the war destroying their country."

Several Americans — including two Quakers and a member of the Catholic Worker movement — also immolated themselves during the Vietnam war years.

While American peace movement leaders spoke out forcefully against self-immolation, Vietnamese Buddhist leaders praised it. In a 1965 open letter to Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hanh declared that "this is not suicide."

"What the monks said in the letters they left before burning themselves aimed only at alarming, at moving the hearts of the oppressors, and at calling the attention of the world to the suffering endured then by the Vietnamese," he wrote. "To burn oneself by fire is to prove that what one is saying is of the utmost importance. ... The monk who burns himself has lost neither courage nor hope; nor does he desire nonexistence. ... He does not think that he is destroying himself; he believes in the good fruition of his act of self-sacrifice for the sake of others" (Thich Nhat Hanh, *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire,* Hill and Wang, 1967).

Biggs, who defines self-immolation as "an act of public protest, where an individual intentionally kills him or herself — without harming anyone else — on behalf of a collective cause," says that there have been more than a thousand acts of self-immolation worldwide (not all by fire) since 1963. These have included Czechs protesting the 1969 Soviet occupation of their country, Indian citizens protesting a 1990 government proposal for caste-based reallocation of places in universities and government employment, and Kurds protesting Turkey's capture of Abdullah Ocalan in 1999.

In Biggs' analysis, the core motivations of those who immolate themselves focus on advancing their cause — either by appeal to the perceived oppressor or to public opinion, by inciting other sympathizers to bolder protest, or as a plea for divine intervention. He also notes the role of despair for those who feel that all roads are blocked and, in some cases, a desire to avoid capture or trial.

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Self-immolation of a Buddhist monk in Saigon in 1963.

He mentions — though downplays — the possibility of selfish motivations or psychological disturbances. (Biggs relates the findings of a psychiatric study of 22 survivors of self-immolation in India, which noted "manifest psychopathology" in only one of the cases.)

Biggs says that while "most acts of self-immolation fail to generate any collective response," there are some, like Quang Duc's, which have "brought thousands or tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people together — to express their rage, grief and commitment." Even today, he reports, a memorial on the spot where Quang Duc died is always adorned with flowers.

Fasts and hunger strikes

Biggs distinguishes self-immolation from hunger strikes on the basis that, for hunger strikers, death is not intended. In fact, he says, hunger strikers rarely starve to death.

A well-known exception was the 1981 hunger strike of 10 Irish Republican prisoners, who died protesting the British government's denial of political prisoner status. More recently, 12 Kurdish prisoners died in a 1996 hunger strike for more humane conditions in Turkish prisons.

Many hunger strikers have not been committed to nonviolence, except as a temporary tactic. But fasts — of varying lengths and degrees of intensity — have been a traditional practice of many nonviolent leaders. Both Mohandas Gandhi and Cesar Chavez fasted in appeals to their supporters for adherance to nonviolent means of struggle, as well as in appeals to their opponents. Washington, D.C., anti-homelessness activist Mitch Snyder fasted for 51 days in 1984 to pressure the federal government to fund renovation of a shelter. (The outcome was successful, but Snyder committed suicide several years later.) Activist Dick Gregory undertook frequent fasts, and served as advisor to a group of protesters who began an open-ended fast in 1972 to draw attention to American involvement in Vietnam.

"At the time, American soldiers were no longer dying in large numbers, but there was a lot of bombing going on," says Tom Lumpkin, a Detroit Catholic priest who was one of the fasters. "We wanted to make the suffering visible here in the U.S."

Participants in the fast believed they might die, Lumpkin says, but they eventually decided to stop fasting after 40 days, seeing a ray of hope in the Democratic presidential nomination of anti-

Risking proactive nonviolence

In the third week of March, as UN representatives, embassy personnel and others were pulling out of Iraq in anticipation of the U.S. attack, Jerry and Sis Levin, Episcopalians from Birmingham, Ala., were travelling in the opposite direction. As part of a delegation to Iraq sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), they expected to visit schools and hospitals, meet with representatives of various agencies, and help document the effects of war on the Iraqi people.

Preparing to leave, Jerry Levin acknowledged that their plans might well be disrupted by the U.S. invasion. They might or might not be able to return home in two weeks. They might not return home at all.

For the Levins, the journey was a natural outgrowth of a commitment that began in 1983, when Jerry Levin — then a broadcast journalist who had just been named CNN bureau chief in Beirut, Lenanon — was taken hostage by Hizballah militants and held for nearly a year. During that time, his wife, Sis Levin, engaged in a process of investigation and dialogue on the roots of the conflict that eventually led to a meeting with the foreign minister of Syria, shortly after which Jerry Levin was allowed to escape.

Levin, who entered captivity an atheist, came out a Christian with a strong belief in nonviolence. The experience convinced him of the "futility of violence — not just the violence of the so-called bad guys, but the violence of the so-called good guys, too. That's how I understand the meaning of the gospel, and especially the Sermon on the Mount."

The Levins interrupted a two-year CPT commitment in Israel/Palestine to respond to CPT's call for experienced Middle East volunteers to join the March delegation.

In Israel, Sis Levin, who holds a doctorate in education with an emphasis on teaching peace, has been working on curriculum development at the Mar Elias Institute in Galilee, a school that teaches Jewish, Muslim and Christian students together. Jerry Levin has been working with CPT in Hebron.

"We're a violence-reduction organization — our slogan is 'Getting in the Way,'" he explains. "We're constantly doing two things: documenting the excesses of the occupation and its effects, and also going to where the problem of harassment and violence against the Palestinians is at its worst and trying to help relieve that problem, challenging soldiers when what they are doing is out of line."

In the process, he has been punched, kicked, spit upon, stoned, shot at and chased by an army tank. When he focuses on risk reduction, however, it's in a much larger context than personal safety.

"We have procedures, as best we can, even under the most difficult circumstances, to try to stop and look at what we're doing — if it's right, if it's effective," he says. "One of the questions, when we go into a potentially violent situation, is will we, by our presence, make the situation worse or better? How does one approach an Israeli soldier or settler at a volatile time in such a way that it doesn't inflame them more?"

Levin is uncompromising in his condemnation of all violence, whatever its source.

"When our people drop bombs that kill civilians in Afghanistan and in Iraq, naturally we won't call it terrorism," he says. "I am so weary of all the rationales we officially put out for doing the terribly violent acts we've done fulfilling our obvious national ambition to dominate the world. It's interesting that we call it fanaticism on the part of Palestinians when these kids are willing to blow themselves up, but we don't call it fanaticism when our own soldiers are willing to go into battle and take the chance of getting killed, too."

What of the risks he takes in attempting to prevent violence?

"I do it because of the conversion process I went through in Lebanon," he says. "Sis and I passionately believe that the times do not call out for any more Christian soldiers. Instead the times cry out for Christian peacemakers, who are willing to risk proactive nonviolence." — *M.A.*

war candidate George McGovern.

Peace teams

While most nonviolent resisters in the U.S. have measured risk in terms of jail time, loss of property or personal inconvenience, a new form of nonviolent action has emerged in recent years which clearly involves the risk of life. Beginning with delegations to Central America in the early 1980s and continuing today with peace teams in Iraq and Israel/Palestine, Americans and others have travelled to war zones, particularly those in which there is some U.S. involvement, with the goal of nonviolent witness and solidarity.

On March 16 of this year, Rachel Corrie, a student from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., was crushed to death by an Israeli army bulldozer in Gaza as she stood in its path, attempting to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian home. Corrie was a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), a Palestinian-led project which invites international volunteers to join in nonviolent direct action challenging the Israeli occupation.

Corrie was "the first International Solidarity Movement volunteer to be killed in this intifada," an ISM press release stated. "The rationale of international protection rests upon the assumption that Israel cannot remain unaccountable for the killing of international civilians as it is unaccountable for the killing of Palestinians. Today this assumption has been challenged."

Corrie's letters home expressed her conviction that, as an American, she was far safer than the Palestinians with whom she engaged in nonviolent resistance. But peace team volunteers have never assumed immunity.

In a 1984 speech to the Mennonite World Conference which laid the foundation for the creation of Christian Peacemaker Teams, Mennonite theologian Ron Sider declared that "we need to prepare to die by the thousands" in nonviolent conflict intervention.

"What would happen if we in the Christian church developed a new nonviolent peacekeeping force of 100,000 persons ready to move into violent conflicts and stand peacefully between warring parties in Central America, Northern Ireland, Poland, Southern Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan?" Sider asked. "Everyone assumes that for the sake of peace it is moral and just for soldiers to get killed by the hundreds of thousands, even millions. Do we not have as much courage and faith as soldiers?"

Although a force of 100,000 has yet to be marshalled, many peace teams under a variety of auspices have engaged in impressive violence-reduction projects around the globe. This past November, 110 delegates from 47 countries met in New Delhi to launch what is perhaps the most ambitious such project yet, establishing an International Peace Force

to intervene nonviolently in conflict areas around the globe.

"The intention is to to form a nonviolent standing army, which was the vision of Gandhi," says Janet Chisholm, vice chair of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, who participated in the gathering. Plans call for the initial recruitment of 200 full-time salaried peace workers, whose numbers would grow to 2,000 within 10 years, with volunteer reservists augmenting their forces. Sri Lanka — which has suffered recurrent conflict between Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus — has been selected as the site of a pilot project to begin in June. The peace force will "attempt to create a safe space so that people will feel they can begin to have elections," Chisholm says. "There is going to be land reform, and that could evolve into great conflict. It is a time when the different parties in Sri Lanka may be able to develop a peaceful way of co-existing."

This past year, the risk involved in the work of peace teams has perhaps loomed larger than ever, as peacemakers have travelled to Iraq.

A February journal entry by Elizabeth Roberts, a member of an Iraq Peace Team (IPT) delegation sponsored by Voices in the Wilderness (www.iraqpeaceteam.org), reflected on questions delegates were asked to consider. The first was, "In the event of your death, do you agree to your body not being returned to your own country but being disposed of in the most convenient way?" The second inquired if they had written a letter that could be sent to their loved ones in such an event.

"Some people here say the survival odds given to the American peaceworkers staying through the invasion is about 30 percent," Roberts wrote. A core of peace team members is committed to remaining in Iraq for the duration of the crisis.

Yet, although they have considered funeral arrangements and assembled "crash kits" (bottled water, dried food, flashlight, passport, water purification tablets, ace bandage) for emergency use, IPT volunteers make it clear that they do not wish to die. They reject the "human shield" label claimed by other peace delegations, saying that they "refuse to incorporate military language or ideas to describe the peace witness of IPT members."

Radical freedom

For Christians, the willingness to risk one's life flows from the cross, nonviolent activist and theologian Bill Wylie-Kellermann says.

"The call to discipleship is 'take up your cross and follow me,' which clearly is a question of risk."

Wylie-Kellermann stresses the link between the cross and engaging the powers, describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as a freely chosen confrontation that resulted in his death.

"There is certainly an element of choosing his timing, and freedom, but on the other hand it's consequence. It's not suicide because there are all sorts of freedoms at play around it — people and authorities and powers could respond differently to what he's offering walking into town."

The word "sacrament" comes from the Latin word "sacramentum," which was the Roman military oath to Caesar, Wylie-Kellermann says, and the Roman authorities understood the Christian sacraments as signifying an alternative allegiance.

"In baptism you die — it's a baptism into the death of Christ as well as the resurrection, and in many ways it's like the induction and the naming of this freedom. You've already died, you're free to die. It means you're able to go into any situation — you're not only authorized but free."

But there was also a "heresy of seeking martyrdom" in the early church, Wylie-Kellermann says, with some Christians insisting on being put into the arena.

"There's kind of a line between this element of radical freedom, and throwing yourself on the fire or lining up to take your cross. It's the difference between choosing risk within the context of something else — risking in order to serve human life in some way — versus taking a risk for your own justification. It leads toward a kind of idolatry — idolatry of death, I suppose.

"I think of the Buddhists who immolated themselves and the really careful self-purifying preparation they went through, and it really was rooted in compassion and a desire to light up the history and make visible the suffering of other people for the sake of peace. But I do think it's so easy to mix a fascination with death with an exposure of death, or a kind of despair with an act of ultimate hope, and when you get pushed to that extreme, they're subject to confusion."

In some ways, self-sacrifice in nonviolent action can be compared to a soldier's self-sacrifice, Wylie-Kellermann says.

"The folks who are on the ground in Iraq at the moment have to have dealt with the prospect of their deaths, and made arrangements and said goodbyes, the same ways that soldiers going off to the Middle East are saying goodbyes. There is a kind of analogy between the risk of the cross and the willingness of soldiers to die in battle."

But there is also a fundamental difference, he says — as there is between nonviolent self-sacrifice and the self-sacrifice of a suicide bomber. "There's a similar freedom obviously involved, and the connection of the political powers to that element of risk, but there's an enormous difference between suicide bombing and the nonviolent way of the cross — just like there is between a nonviolent army and a military army. There's just a categorical difference between freedom to die in order to kill, and freedom to die in order to offer life or justice or put a choice to people. They are not the same thing." ●

For More Information on Peace Teams

Iraq Peace Team/Voices in the Wilderness
www.iraqpeaceteam.org
773-784-8065 / email info@vitw.org

Christian Peacemaker Teams
www.prairienet.org/cpt/
Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680
773-277-0253 / email cpt@igc.org

Witness for Peace
www.witnessforpeace.org
1229 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005
202-588-1471

Peace Brigades International
www.peacebrigades.org,
email info@peacebrigades.org

International Nonviolent Peaceforce
www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org

HIP-HOP MARTYRS

Youth, violence and transformation

by Pat McCaughan

UNTIL RECENTLY, Luis Garibay spent Monday nights working at Hope in Hollywood where as many as one hundred Los Angeles-area youth aged 12 and older showed up for b-boy/b-girl ("breakdance") practice sessions and a different kind of church. There, amid the vibe of Run-D.M.C. and other old school break beats, amongst the soul claps and appreciative cheers, the fancy footwork and head spins on a worn gymnasium floor, hearts opened up space for acceptance, relationship and transformation.

For Garibay, 27, it was payback.

"When I was growing up, there were no jobs, no Hope in Hollywood, nothing to keep young people interested. Nothing," he declares emphatically. Consequently, by age 7 he had gravitated to living *la vida loca,* the "thug life," and gangbanging seemed not only acceptable, but normal.

"Everybody fell into it. The homeboys would say, 'I'll give you 25 cents or a dollar. When the cops come, just let us know,' " he recalled. By age 13, two older brothers had died in gang violence. Garibay escalated to smoking pot, selling PCP. Later, he graduated to guns and jail time.

"It rolled, like a snowball," says Garibay. "I just rolled into it. I ditched school, I never paid attention. I was too busy thinking, how am I gonna get home, will I get jumped? Sometimes, I thought about going back, learning a little trade, but it never happened. Everything got too busy. But this is different."

Globalization of thug life

From Boston to California, programs like Hope in Hollywood and individuals like Garibay strive for a "different" way to stem the sacrifice of young people to gang violence and drugs, the thug life frequently glorified in popular culture.

Few statistics exist to confirm their suspicions that gang activity, which peaked in the 1990s, is on the rise again in large urban areas like Chicago and Los Angeles. They all assert emphatically: There simply aren't enough such programs to go around. Funding is scarce, says Jaime Edwards-Acton, the rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, which hosted the breakdance program, formally known as the Jubilee Consortium Inc., a West Coast version of the Houston-based Youth Advocates Inc.

'They have a whole new set of values, a worldview almost like religion in intensity and scope.'

This particular Monday night Edwards-Acton, on "cigarette patrol," wrestles with how to tell b-boys & b-girls the program will fold in a few weeks when funding runs out. Ironically, its insistent priority on developing relationship over traditional services doomed it.

"It's a hard program to get funding for because people are so preoccupied with providing services. What we provide is relationship and, through that, transformation." He says these Monday nights are a way of being church.

"The community gathers," he said. "It's a celebration about expression, health, wholeness, fellowship, creativity, music, and then they go out again. I see a lot of parallels with what happens in church. The goal is transformation of young people's lives."

Unlike some youth advocates, he believes that instead of popularizing violence, hip hop is a way to reach the African-American and Latino youth likely to become its victims.

But Kenneth Johnson, executive director of Boston's Ella J. Baker House, calls it "globalization of thug life."

"Youth violence occurs in the absence of youth development," says Johnson, who supervises a host of programs from life coaching skills to homework help and job referrals, yearly serving more than 2,500 youth ages 8 to 21, including ex-offenders.

"They have a whole new set of values, a worldview almost like religion in intensity and scope," says Johnson, a Harvard graduate who left the private sector three years ago for public service. Baker House, founded by the Azusa Christian Community in 1988, was declared a "Boston miracle" for its role in helping decrease homicides and other violent crimes. It was part of a Ten Point Ministry coalition forged by Eugene Rivers that has spread to such cities as Baltimore, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Memphis and Tulsa.

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A member of the Hip Hop Nation dance troupe breakdances at the Shift party at the Trocadero on Wednesday, August 2, 2000, in Philadelphia.

Johnson says the advent of thug life was sparked by economic and educational disparity, media images of violence, faltering family structures and the lack of involvement by churches, whose voice is still "silent and ineffectual."

"I have seen 'learning disabled' youth recite with exact precision a very complicated series of misogynist, violent rap lyrics, which tells me their cognition is just fine. It's not Shakespeare, Proverbs, or poems. It's DMX or Tupac."

Tupac Shakur: Martyr?

The late emcee (rap artist) Tupac Shakur is considered to have popularized "Thug Life," the name he gave to a rap group, an album, and later tattooed across his stomach.

Seven years after his 1996 murder, Shakur remains an enigmatic figure, a larger-than-life cultural icon, considered by some a martyr to societal forces that spawned his lifestyle. His songs, "In the Event of My Demise" and "How Long Will They Mourn Me?" seemed to anticipate Shakur's untimely death at 25.

Still, Internet chat roomers speculate that he is alive. Previously unheard music, a biography, and *Tupac: Resurrection,* a documentary, are all slated for release this year. A museum in suburban Atlanta is under construction as a memorial by his mother, Afeni Shakur, a former member of the Black Panther Party. Nikki Giovanni, a 1970s forebear of hip hop who recorded her poetry, dedicated a poem to Shakur and tattooed "Thug Life" on her forearm. They'd never met but she said "it was a way to say that this young man cannot be forgotten."

Emmy-winning HBO director Lauren Lazin previewed her documentary about Shakur at the Sundance Film Festival and in a March *Rolling Stone* interview said she was motivated by "this welling feeling for Tupac among younger viewers … identifying with him, feeling connected to his story."

Shakur, in a 1995 *L.A. Times* interview, said he was a revolutionary, not a gangster, but the media did not get "who I am at all. Or maybe they just can't accept it. It doesn't fit into those negative stories they like to write. I'm not down with people who steal and hurt others. I'm just a brother who fights back. I'm an artist," Shakur said.

When asked why his music popularized violence, Shakur replied: "A perfect album talks about the hard stuff and the fun and caring stuff." He characterized

law enforcement, religious and political groups as gangs. "Everybody's got their own little clique and they're all out there gangbanging in their own little way."

Still, Mister Davey D, a San Francisco Bay area deejay and webmaster and friend of Shakur, says that the slain rapper is more a symbol than a martyr.

"People miss him because he kept it real. If he talked about violence, it's because it was real. What about the promoters and the media conglomerates who produce it? The radio stations that decide which music to play on the air? The media glorifies all kinds of violence, including [the TV show] *The Sopranos,*" Davey D says. "Why don't they talk about Tupac's social activism?"

Cristina Verán, a New York City journalist, says hip hop inspired her to consider journalism and other creative expression. "It isn't coming from outside. It's not a government or charity program that came and taught kids how to have that voice. It's something that came from within them, something really powerful."

Similarly, hip-hop cultural values extend well beyond media images, to "the concept of making something from nothing," says Verán, a contributor to *Vibe* magazine, the book *Hip Hop Divas,* and *The Vibe History of Hip Hop,* published by Crown Publishing Group.

"What's promoted on television — rappers with yachts and supermodels and platinum jewelry — is a negation of the original aesthetic." That original aesthetic is so exciting for youth in the city because "if you couldn't afford $300 shoes, you could take an ordinary pair of shoes and paint or do something unique to them that came from your own mind or creativity."

Johnson believes many impressionable youth both identify with and consider Shakur a martyr, an identification that invites desperation and nihilism. "Anecdotally, we hear of an increasing number of attempted suicides by some black and Latino youth, which could represent undiagnosed mental illness, but also may represent this desperation," he says.

Taking responsiblility

Johnson says the violence will stop when everyone — the church, record producers, rappers, individuals — take responsibility.

"Record producers and artists say that hip hop and/or gangster rap is a morally neutral witness or observation of life, that they provide a product people buy, but aren't responsible for how it's used. That's ridiculous. They are amoral in the sense that they want to make money or make believe that there is some positive value to gain from this type of art that often devalues the positive things about black folks," says Johnson. "We all make choices.

"Most poor black youth are not violent," says Johnson. "But the question remains, what is the role of personal responsibility and effort for each of us?"

Unfortunately, socially progressive hip-hop alternatives — which have existed in the culture for a quarter-century — don't garner the same appeal. "Its voice seems inauthentic. They have never been able to match the scope and depth and vigor of the hip-hop gangsta rap thug life worldview which, among other things, is about money, things — less about relationships. It's you and your buddies against the world," Johnson says. "They don't know how to talk with youth in their idiom and be believed."

In Chicago, Dorothy Papachristos, a Loyola University social worker and founder of Communities Dare to Care, believes she's discovered a relevant way to talk with at-risk youth. "It's called mother love," says Papachristos.

Her focus is "to get kids out of gangs, to reconnect them to families, communities and schools," even taking rival gang members, two at a time, into her home, offering structure, love and respect, with just one caveat: They have to share a bedroom.

She estimates thousands of young people have passed through programs she oversees, including basketball camps, mentoring and tutoring staffed by Loyola students, counseling and anger management. But there simply aren't enough programs or funding. "Society's approach is incarceration, zero tolerance, not intervention and prevention," she says.

"Our budget?" She laughs. "We get maybe $10–15,000 through donations. Our average yearly spending is $75,000, through begging and borrowing." Local churches donate office and program space.

She got involved after gangs torched her Rogers Park family-owned restaurant. "I had to see who they were," says Papachristos. "I found them, and I said, 'Oh my God, they're just children.'

"You have to have somebody in your life spiritually that keeps you going. They had nobody, except the gangs who give them a sense of family. But they don't realize what they're getting into. The two major things kids in gangs want are structure and love, a place to belong. They aren't stupid; some are very smart. No one's ever taken time to develop them."

She mourns those lost to prison; two were murdered a few months ago. "I tell them, when they're on the street, gangbanging, selling drugs, there are consequences. I haunt them. I yell and scream and take away their drugs. I get involved in their lives. One told me he had a gun in his hand, aimed at a policeman across the street. 'I could have killed him,' he said, 'but I didn't because I knew you'd be disappointed in me.'

"Another young kid stopped drinking. He said, 'Every time I pick up a bottle of beer, your face is at the bottom.' They fall, I pick them up. No one else has done that for them. They always ask what they can do for me. I say go do it for somebody else."

She, too, thinks rap has detrimental effects. And like Johnson, she believes mainline churches have to change: "Somebody once said that, if every church opened their doors one day a week and did something for kids, we'd have no more gangs."

'I want to live'

In 1988, the Dolores Mission in East Los Angeles, with seed money from hip-hop radio station KPWR 106FM, started Homeboy Industries Inc. Its five businesses now employ 70 young men and women, former rival gang members who work side by side.

Operations Director Carolyn Gold said program founder Gregory Boyle sought a new approach after burying nearly 80 young people killed by gang violence. Homeboy Industries does graffiti removal, silk screening, maintenance, recycling and has launched a capital campaign to rebuild a sixth business, a bakery, that was damaged in a fire. Its Jobs for a Future program offers counseling, referral and community service opportunities to more than 600 youth monthly, including ex-offenders and gangbangers.

Gold says the agency is a symbol to the city that its population is worth the effort. "Not all gang members are shooting people or actively hurting others," Gold said. "They want to do something different. Given other opportunities, they would.

"If the prison system did more rehabilitation and training, rather than just sending them back into the same environment with no new skills, they'd be more equipped to be productive when released. And there'd be more money invested in doing what we do."

Money is also on Edwards-Acton's mind at Hope in Hollywood, who hopes "to regroup and begin again."

Bruce Ham, 20, the program's youth advocate, says it was "an acceptable way out" of drugs and depression for him, and for many young people. The Houston-born Ham says the music attracted him; the relationships sustained him. A mentor helped him apply for college, fill out financial aid forms. Now he does likewise, accompanying youth to job interviews, to HIV-tests. One youth's brother died.

"We hung out a lot," says Ham. "One day, he said he'd considered suicide but changed his mind. He thanked me for hanging out with him. 'Now, I want to live,' he said. They come here because they know they're accepted. No matter what they wear or look like."

Garibay also understands relationship and paying it forward.

"I needed help to change my life. My brothers were gangbanging; it was impossible to get out. I thought I was going to die too," he said.

He got help when a neighborhood church sent a member to his school to recruit volunteers to make repairs. Garibay responded; the relationship developed. Later, the church member visited him in jail and offered him a job. Garibay jumped at the chance and has never looked back.

"When you live it, you are blinded by the violence. You can't see beyond it," said Garibay. He participated in a 2002 Diocese of Los Angeles anti-violence initiative called Hands in Healing. It brought youth together with public and private advocates across the country to seek alternatives to violence.

"Now, I can see it," he says. "I never thought I'd get out of the neighborhood. The incredible part of Hands in Healing was that here I was, driving all the way out, across the country. It made a big change in my life." ●

Anti-hate efforts blossom after Matthew Shepard's death

WHEN MATTHEW SHEPARD WAS MARTYRED in 1998 in a lonely field in Laramie, Wyo., his death gave anti-gay hate crimes a human face and put the nation on notice that "the war is far from over," says Episcopal priest Malcolm Boyd, an outspoken gay and civil rights activist.

"He humanized the cause of gays ... he made a sacrifice that was totally unjust," said Boyd, poet-in-residence in the Diocese of Los Angeles. "Unfortunately, without the blood of martyrs, maybe there wouldn't be many changes."

Shepard, 21, a University of Wyoming student, was tied to a split-rail fence, beaten, pistol-whipped and left for dead in near freezing temperatures by two men he met in a campus bar. A cyclist who found him 18 hours later at first mistook Shepard for a scarecrow. He died five days afterward without regaining consciousness.

His death rallied the gay community nationally and inspired the rural community of Lander, about 220 miles southeast of Laramie. Located in Fremont County, it borders the Wind River Reservation, where about 36,000 Shoshone and Arapaho live, including Two-Spirit people, a Native American designation for gays.

"When people said, 'We're not like that here,' I replied: 'If we're not like that here, let's prove it,'" said Debra East, director of the Wind River Country Initiative for Youth, an alliance of LGBT and non-LGBT people created in 2000 by United Gays of Wyoming. Prior to that, there was little cross-cultural interaction, barely "a glimmer of understanding of how all those forms of oppression had hurt all of us together and some of us most profoundly," East said.

Later that year, through its coalition-building efforts, the agency helped rally the community against Church of the Creator, a white supremacist organization that moved its headquarters to Lander.

"Together, people are standing up to them," said East. "They are also struggling with the next question — if 'we're not that kind of people,' then what kind of people are we?"

The Initiative offers tools "to figure out how to interrupt those daily times when people say things that are oppressive or hurtful or unaware, to be respectful of all people and yet to allow for change in a positive way. We all know how to be adversarial — the question is, how do we actively engage in building relationships that don't add another stone to the wall that we've taken centuries to build?"

East is headed to Laramie, where she and colleagues Blaire Wetchie and Yolanda Hvizdak will present a workshop at the Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, an annual event sponsored by the Shepard family. "By being present, three gay people who are Shoshone, Arapaho and white, we are showing shared leadership and teamwork. We're trying to break down old constructs by modeling working together."

They also teach prejudice reduction and empowerment skills — ways to listen and inquire by "building on where we're similar, where we're different, how to tell our own stories, express our outrage at particular events, how our lives are affected by sexism, homophobia, classism, racism.

"Ironically, people perceive gay liberation, cross-cultural work as somewhat marginal, when it's central," says East. But she hopes to reach 10 percent of the population within five years, adding, "If we can do the work well here, it will shift thinking outside of our area. Hopefully, it will grow."

— Pat McCaughan

KEDUSHAT HASHEM

Sanctifying God's name

by Lynn Gottlieb

"Has it ever been heard or seen?
Who can believe what we have witnessed?
Children led to the slaughter.
O Most Highly Exalted
When such things happen
How can you hold your peace?"
R. David Bar Meshullam from the time of the Crusades (11th century)

BEFORE EMBARKING UPON REFLECTIONS about martyrdom in Jewish life and narrative, I pause to offer the above lamentation for the innocent children who have died upon the violent altars of history. The children mourned in this *Selicha,* or penitential prayer, were killed by the hands of their own fathers to avoid being slaughtered at the last moment by the zealous Christian soldiers of the Crusades. If we could ever count the graves of all the earth's children who suffer our endless wars, perhaps amazed silence would melt our hearts and turn all our efforts toward saving lives. As a mother and rabbi who has shepherded one son and many students through the tender years of their lives, there is little in this world that can justify the death of children. I have stood over open graves and recited burial prayers over children in the presence of their families. The sorrow of this loss runs so deep, nothing can ever heal the wound.

In the legends of Abraham, there is a story about Sarah, mother of Isaac. On that fateful morning when Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac on the altar, Sarah awakes in a panic, calling for her son. In a vision, she sees him bound on the altar, her husband's knife above his tender heart, and she wails to the heavens. Some commentators say her voice is the voice of the angel that cried out, "Abraham, Abraham do not harm your son in any way."

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb (right) stands with members of Women in Black during a vigil in Jerusalem in January 2003.

Other commentators say God demanded a sacrifice, and Sarah offered her life in place of her son. The text recounts that upon Abraham's return to the city of Beer Sheva, he learned that Sarah had died. Another interpretation identifies the sound of the shofar we blow on the New Year as the sound of Sarah's voice admonishing us of the potentially brutal side of absolute surrender to what we believe is God's will.

Kedushat HaShem is the technical term for sanctifying God's name which, in extreme cases, requires the giving of one's life. *Kedushat HaShem* refers to right action. Behaving well towards others in all the spheres of one's relationships is the way Judaism understands the meaning of holiness and the way to worship God. Every deed one performs can be seen as a positive or negative witness to God's demand for a holy life. Giving witness to God through acts of loving-kindness is the highest religious ideal. Each person is created in the image of God; each person is deserving of love, fairness and dignity, regardless of their religious or ethnic identity. The Talmud regards the saving of one life as equivalent to the saving of the whole world, and the taking of one life equivalent to the destruction of the whole world.

According to Talmudic sources, there are only three situations when one is obligated to take one's own life rather than transgress a commandment. If a persecutor or perpetrator demands that one murder another person, commit sexual violence against another or publicly deny one's faith, one is obligated to surrender one's own life rather than commit murder, sexual violence or idolatry. One cannot kill another in these circumstances to save one's own life. However, in the medieval period of the Crusades and Inquisition, another more moderate stance developed toward the practice of a foreign faith, and persisted through contemporary times. Some rabbinical sages acknowledged the dire need of Spanish and Portuguese Jews to hide the practice of their faith while publicly pretending to be Catholic. Concealing one's identity to save one's life became an accepted practice. Jewish law permits, even requires the breaking of rules for the purpose of saving a life.

Does the sanctification of God's name ever refer to the killing of one's enemy to glorify God? Unfortunately, some voices in our tradition see the killing of others for theological purposes as a legitimate form of Jewish practice. Every faith tradition contains multiple voices that are in struggle to discover God's will in their own particular time. In the Passover Seder, for instance, we initiate our prayers with an invitation to all who are hungry and oppressed to join us in a feast of liberation. On the other hand, the liturgy also contains the phrase: "Pour out your wrath upon the nations that oppress us."

The body of 5-month-old Yehuda Shoham, draped in a prayer shawl, is carried by his father in front of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office during a funeral procession in Jerusalem Monday, June 11, 2001.

Once we acknowledge the contradictions inherent in these sentiments, we are obligated to choose which parts of our religious traditions we raise up as beacons of God's light in the world and which parts of our tradition we retire to the past.

I believe that Judaism's most Godlike expression is faithfulness to the struggle for justice and peace through methods of compassion and nonviolence. Therefore, I cannot accept the legitimacy of those voices that claim God desires the desecration and murder of other human beings for any purpose.

Jewish voices throughout our generations wrestle with the contradiction inherent in the affirmation of God is love and the claim that God punishes the wicked through acts of vengeance. This contradiction surfaces in the narratives about the tribe known as Amalek. Amalek is mentioned twice in the biblical narratives (Exodus 17:8–16; Deuteronomy 25:17–19) as the tribe that attacked the most vulnerable and weakest members of the people of Israel as they fled slavery. God requires an eternal war with Amalek: to blot out the name of Amalek generation after generation. Later generations had many responses to this *mitzvah*. Some said that the man known as Amalek hated Israel because the patriarchs rejected his mother when she desired to convert. This Midrash (rabbinical commentary) uses the Amalek story to admonish Jews to be hospitable to converts and strangers. Another interpretation declares the war over, since the tribe of Amalek disappeared long ago. Others however, transmute Amalek into the archetypal enemy that seeks to destroy Jewish people in every generation. That is why Baruch Goldstein could enter the tomb of Abraham on the Feast of Purim, February 1994, and commit mass murder, and why his community could see him as a martyr. Goldstein identified Palestinians with the nation of Amalek and saw the killing of innocent worshippers as an act of God.

Early Hasidic thought evinced another approach. Rather than seeing Amalek as a flesh and blood people living in the external world, one should see Amalek as an inner quality within one's own soul. Amalek is the part of ourselves that causes us to hate others. Amalek is the constellation of fear, ignorance and arrogance that drive us toward acts that hurt others. Blotting out the name of Amalek becomes a spiritual practice focused on our own state of being. The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, counseled his disciples: When seeing something in another one does not like, find where that place lives inside one's self and work to transform it into a positive spiritual quality.

What does this mean in the face of Israeli occupation of Palestine and the ongoing siege against Palestinians inside Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza? For me personally, it means a continuing witness before my own community about the nature of our relationship to Palestinians. We are occupiers and oppressors. We have become Amalek. We have displaced millions in our drive for security and nationhood. We are building great walls of separation that are ruining agricultural communities and forcing millions to go hungry. We have supported policies of breaking bones, torture, humiliation and economic deprivation. We have taken away the hopes and dreams of millions and replaced them with hopelessness and despair. This is what we must fearlessly confront in ourselves as we ask how best to give witness to God's presence in the midst of overwhelming tragedy.

The Jewish community in Israel and throughout the world must work toward acknowledging the ways we treat Palestinian youth to seek revenge. We must acknowledge the ways in which we are sacrificing our own children to the god of national expansionism, brutality and dehumanization of our cousins and neighbors. Sanctifying God's name can only be accomplished on the path of compassion, justice and peace. ●

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Candlelight vigil for peace, St. Mark's in the Bowery Episcopal Church, New York City. © Stacy Walsh Rosenstock

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MINNESOTA: PROGRESSIVE POLITICS UNDER ATTACK

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IN THIS ISSUE

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on the cover

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

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Ethan Flad

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

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

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CORRECTION

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

EDITORIAL NOTE

Marching toward Minneapolis

by Ethan Flad

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

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

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

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

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

This issue of *The Witness* raises up some

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

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

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

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

A new *Witness* for the 21st century

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

Vulnerability of dissent

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

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

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

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

You can criticize demonstrations — and still be for peace.

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

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

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

Charles Demere
St. Mary's, Md.

No women of color delegates

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

Esther J. Burgess
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

Editing error

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

Joe Spaniol

Praise for *The Witness*

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

Betty LaDuke
Ashland, Ore.

Repression in the Philippines

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

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

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

CLASSIFIEDS

Seeking rector

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

Order of Jonathan Daniels

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

Order of Christian Workers

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

What You Can Do to End Hunger

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

The Witness @ General Convention

The Witness and Episcopal Peace Fellowship invite you to our

2003 Awards Reception

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

The Church of Gethsemane

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

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

CALL TODAY SEATING IS LIMITED

VISIT US AT BOOTH #205 IN THE MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anglican Indigenous Network meets in Aotearoa/New Zealand

by Marianne Arbogast

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

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

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

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

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

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

A double rainbow over Rotorua blessed AIN participants.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

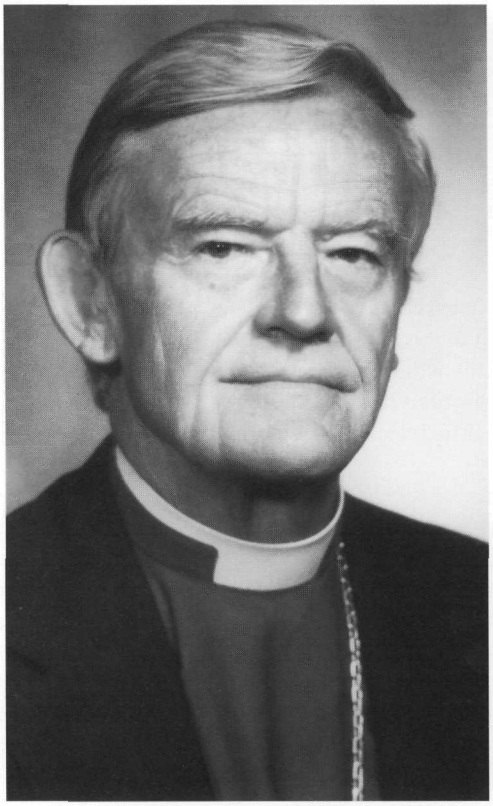
"Just the relationships that were made were a great outcome," McGhee says.

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

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

Remembering Paul Moore

At the edge of politics and moral theology



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The truth about Iraq: Sifting through the media spin

by Bruce Campbell

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

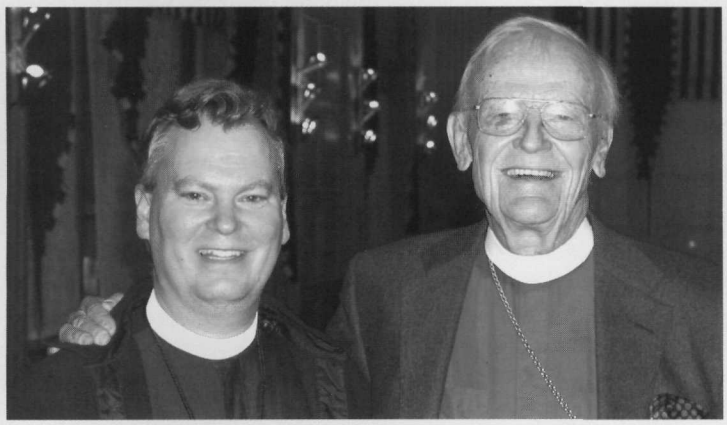
Getting to the truth is hard. It's really hard when the truth is far away, and even harder when there are culture and language barriers. But it's completely impossible when truth-finding and truth-telling are left to a spotlight that flashes across a landscape, blindingly illuminates with false daylight,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

Reconciliation *and* justice

by Michael Hopkins

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

No class system among Christians

by Robert V. Taylor

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

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

In many congregations, including my own, the blessing of

Ethan Flad

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

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

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

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

Supporting a just international order

by Winnie Varghese

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

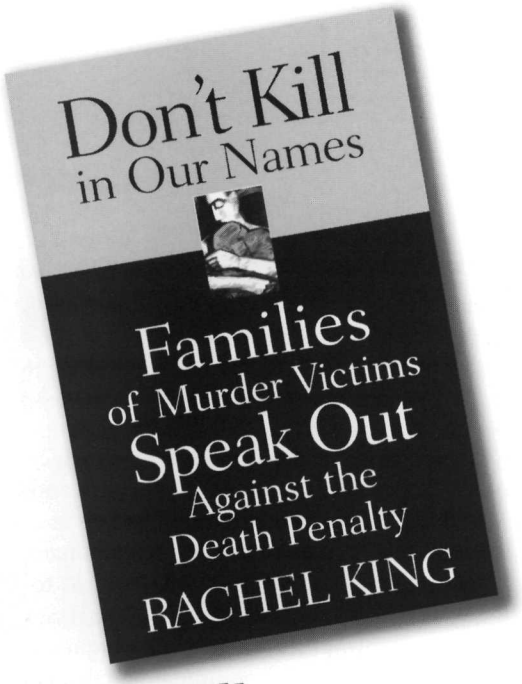
The Cambridge Consultation is supporting a resolution being brought to the 74th General Convention in Minneapolis (A034) that encourages the church to endorse the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These eight goals call us to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal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

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

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

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

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



Don't Kill in Our Names

Reviewed by Joseph Wakelee-Lynch

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questioning Faith

Reviewed by Rima Vesely

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

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

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

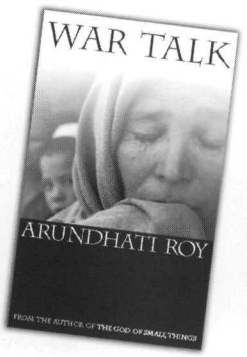
Alston's questions about Alan's faith as he entered the last stages of grappling with AIDS spur him to contemplate the magnitude of suffering and the depth of relationship that suffering individuals are able to have with God. His questions lead him to develop friendships with four women whose spiritual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

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

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

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

War Talk



Reviewed by Winnie Varghese

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lighten Up! A Religious Response to Global Warming

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

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

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

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

Women of the Table

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

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

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

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

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

Pandemic: Facing AIDS

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

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

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

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

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

An anti-poverty creed from South Africa

by Edwin Arrison

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

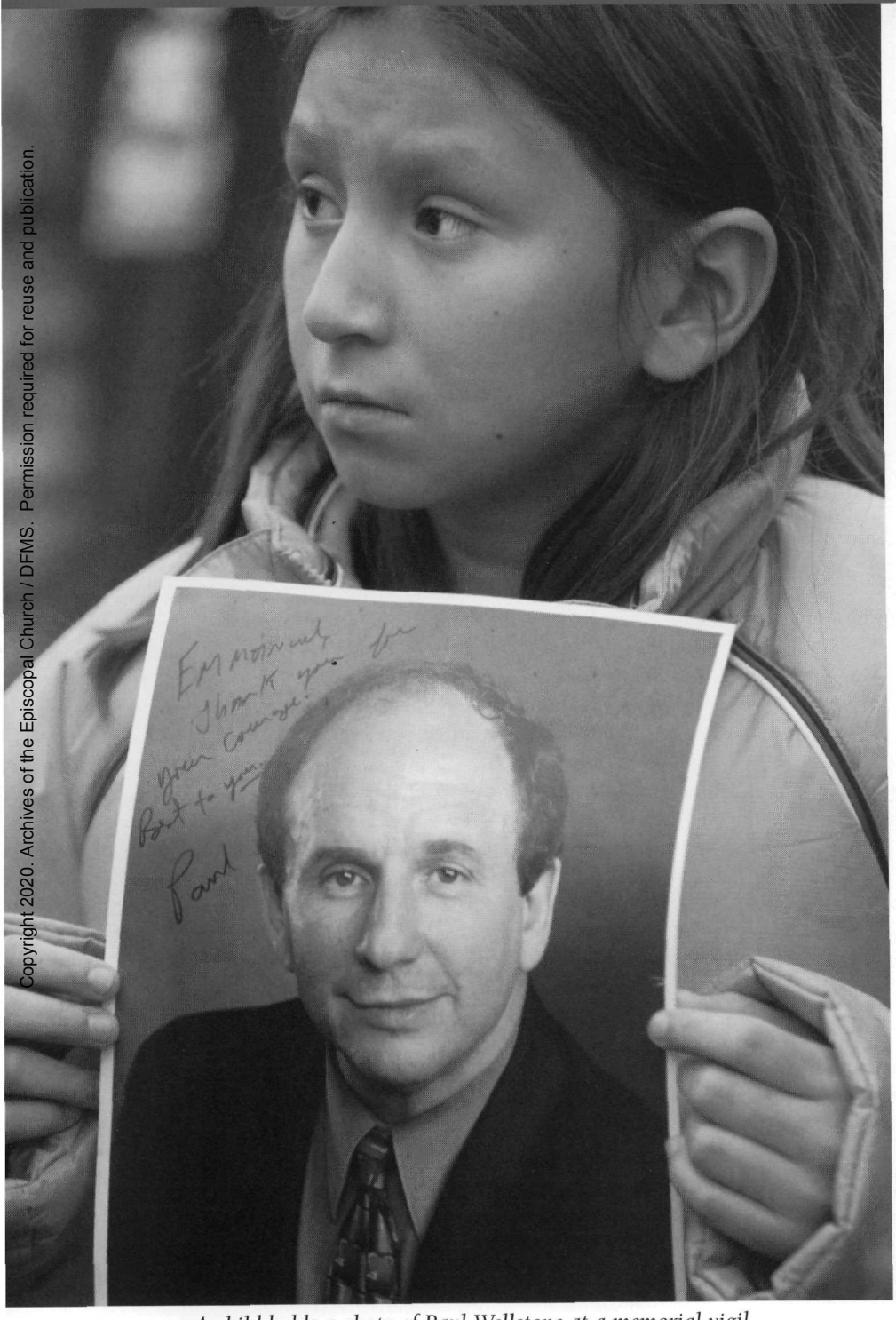
We believe in Jesus who put the poor, the children, the women and the marginalized at the center of his concern and compassion, thereby redeeming them from the crosses they face each day.
We believe that Jesus preached a Gospel of good news to the poor
And that when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked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

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

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

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

MINNESOTA CONSENSUS?

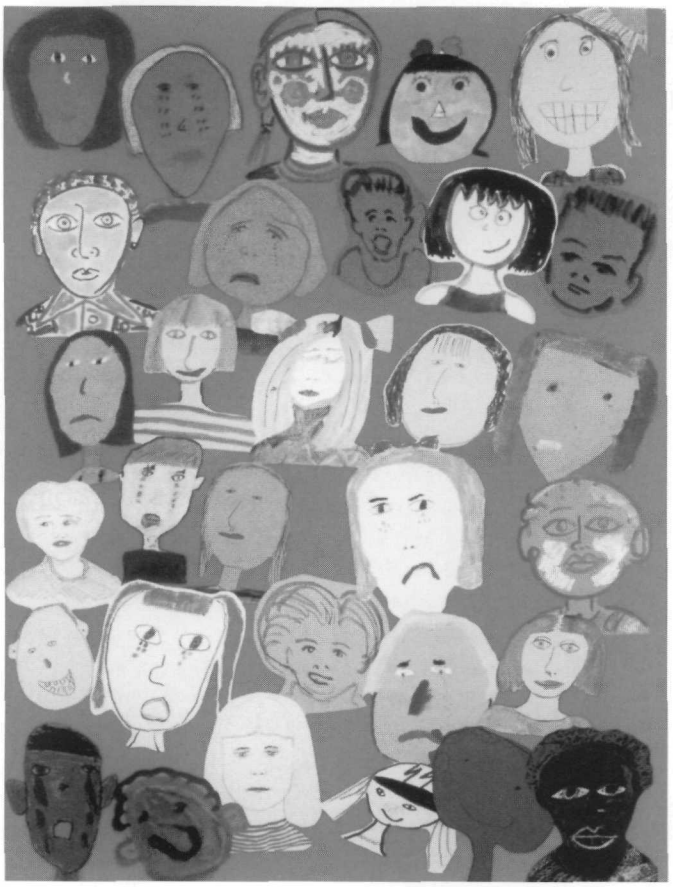


A child holds a photo of Paul Wellstone at a memorial vigil.

How a state moved away from spending for justice

by Wy Spano

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



The Children's Faces Project

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

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

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

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

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

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

Social programs slashed

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

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

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

A political culture based on the common good

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Republicans pledge no new taxes

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

Faith communities address "shabby public stewardship"

by Brian A. Rusche

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

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

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

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

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

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

➤ *Continued on page 22*

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

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

Minneapolis soup kitchen

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

"Charity is no substitute for justice withheld"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

➤ *Continued from page 20*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Confronting conservative dominance

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

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

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

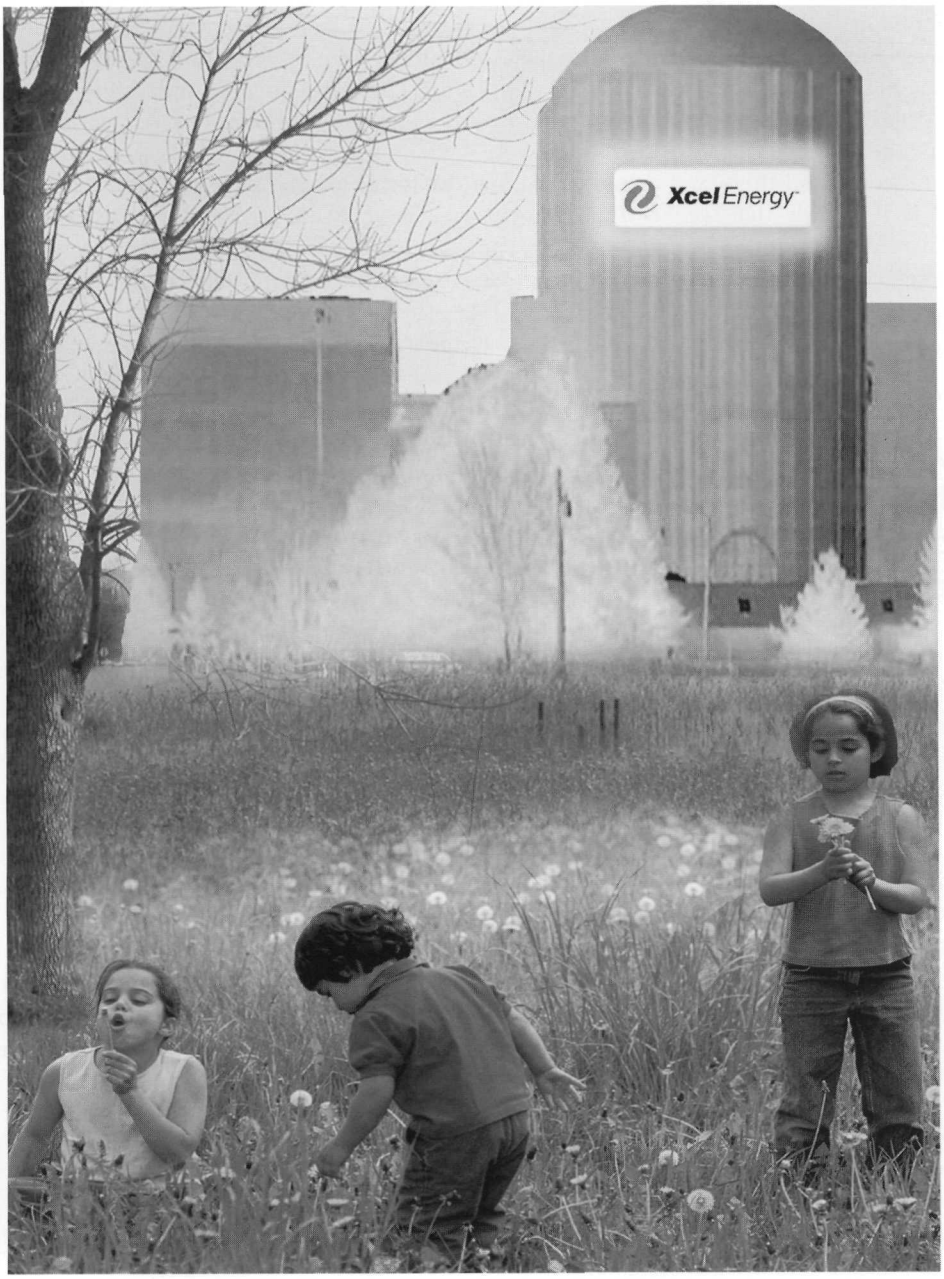
2. Don't be afraid to work on political party activity, in whatever party you choose. The more people active in politics whose orientation is social justice, the better our system will be.

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

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

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

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



Catherine Whipple, *The Circle*

Nuclear waste on sacred ground: the Prairie Island controversy

by Marianne Arbogast

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

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

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

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

Living in the shadow of a nuclear plant

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cancer rates seem to have increased.

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

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

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

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

A national waste storage site?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Negotiating for land and safety

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

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

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

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

The agreement was bittersweet, Bennett acknowledges.

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

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

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

Potential for renewable energy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Legislative gains and losses

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

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

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

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

But Noble says the bill was not all bad news.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Environmental stewardship

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

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

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

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

Paying the price for energy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information:

Prairie Island Indian Community
www.prairieisland.org

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

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

Battle Lake, Minnesota: Old red school house on prairie

Changing communities: Rural challenges for the upper Midwest

by Bernard Evans

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

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

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

Fewer and larger farms

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

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

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

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

Pastoral challenges and justice concerns

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

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

Rural emigrants and immigrants

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

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

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

Spring in Minnesota

than was the case a generation or two ago.

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

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

Responding to change

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

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

COLONIAL LEGACIES IN THE

Getty Images

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

by Eleazar S. Fernandez

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

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

Turbulence in the Pacific

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

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

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

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

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

Global connections: The Pacific and Minnesota

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

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

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

The beginning of idolatry

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

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

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

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

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

Eleazar S. Fernandez

LOUIE'S INDEX

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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