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DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

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# THE WITNESS

## DEFENSE

A gift we give  
one another

## First Detroit Issue

THANK YOU for the first issue [September] from Detroit. I found it to be both exciting and refreshing in style and content. As a past board member and Chair, I am proud at the continued good work and high quality of the *Witness*. I was most pleased to see that Aneb Kgositsile [aka Gloria House in the *Witness* at her request] is part of the staff. Aneb is a personal friend and sister in the struggle. We worked very closely together while I was with the Alexander Crummell Center for Worship and Learning. She will add a great deal to expanding the coverage and audience of an already fine magazine.

If I can be of any help, please do not hesitate to call me. May our Lord continue to keep your vision and strength high.

**Kwasi A. Thornell**  
Canon, National Cathedral  
Washington, D.C.

I WRITE TO CONGRATULATE you on the September issue: magnificent! The thought that went into combining reflections on confession of faith and of sin with an exploration of collective culpability for violence was well done, important

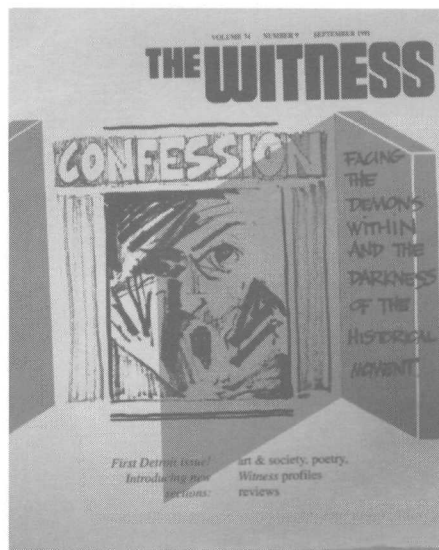
for the Church, and shows great promise for *The Witness* as an important voice in the Church. Glad you're doing it, and glad you're in Detroit. My Sustaining Subscription order is enclosed.

**Bill Melnyk**  
Sewanee, TN

FOR THE FIRST TIME, in a very long time, I have had the chance to read a magazine that touched my soul, one I could walk with when I go alone to the woods to meditate. For the first time, in a long time, I could read a magazine I would like to share with friends. A magazine that indeed strives for a

different world. How fascinating, when some are discouraged, when some have lost faith, you have chosen to invite us, all of us, to confess, as an act of faith. As a poem for the future. As a gift for the children who are enduring the tragedy of these days.

**Pio Celestino**  
Refugio Del Rio Grande  
Harlingen, TX



I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT the controversy swirling about the recent move of *The Witness*, but I do know a provincial, ultramontane statement when I hear it. E. Lawrence Carter (Sierra Madre, CA) thinks Detroit is out of the mainstream. Or does he mean out of the Philadelphia mainline?

We Detroiters are quite used to our city being bashed for not being New York City or Toronto and even for being what it is, but I don't think we consider ourselves out of the mainstream. If perceptive, up-to-date publishing cannot occur here in the *out-of-the-mainstream* Midwest, then Carter had better also alert the staffs of *In These Times* (Chicago), *The National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City), or *The Progressive* (Milwaukee) so that they can relocate to the coast.

Thomas Merton was one of the most incisive and prophetic Christian voices on social justice in this century. He wrote from a cloister and hermitage deep within the blue hills of Kentucky, disproving the notion that

social commentary has to be forged within the Big Apple or the Beltway.

**Gordon Judd**  
Detroit, MI

CONGRATULATIONS on your first issue - it looks fabulous! I'm especially responding to the esthetic impressions -- but also the content remains of high caliber. As a relatively new editor for a paper with a reputation, I salute your bold step in this first issue especially amidst the controversy that has accompanied your start. I'm convinced already that *The Witness* is in excellent hands!

**Karen Lindley**  
*The Voice*  
Newark, NJ

THANK YOU for my issue of *The Witness* and welcome to the great city of Detroit! I am a member of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul and I serve as a trustee of the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts, as well as various other community organizations.

Welcome to Detroit. We need *The Witness* in our urban setting.

**Kenneth M. Davies**  
Detroit, MI

## Questions of Allegiance

BILL WYLIE-KELLERMANN in his [September] review of Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon's book *Resident Aliens* writes that the authors "hadn't seen Generals Powell and Swartzkopf mount the pulpit of St. John the Divine."

I assume he refers to the Requiem for the War Dead held on June 9, which I happened to attend as a curious and perhaps naive priest of the Diocese of New York.

In my opinion, the service was indeed a requiem, not a victory celebration, and it was not at all unfortunate to have General Powell and General Swartzkopf reading what was essentially anti-war poetry.

The contrast with the other events that week in New York City was striking; I think it was remarkable to hear General Swartzkopf

THE WITNESS

Letters

say, in response to the protests, "No one hates war more than I do." At least now we have that on the record.

**J. Douglas Ousley, rector  
Church of the Incarnation  
New York, NY**

## Gay Representation

*THE WITNESS* MISSED the footnote that the 70th General Convention was the first at which openly gay deputies were seated and at which two publicly came out of the closet [in the July/August issue]. This shifted not only the tone of the debate among the deputies, but also their perception of all the sex talk. More and more realized that the issue is not homosexuality, but heterosexism, and that is a justice issue and not just one of sexual ethics.

When a gay bishop has similar courage, this shift in perception will also take place in the House of Bishops where, without it, the debate was far more acrimonious. But even without this happening, the terms of the dialogue can never be the same again. We might even get an audit of heterosexist attitudes in '94.

**L. Paul Woodrum  
Brooklyn, NY**

## The Sexuality of Jesus

I AM OFTEN FRUSTRATED BY a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible which reads "on the flat" and ignores the historical context of a text. But the article by Malcolm Boyd, "The Sexuality of Jesus" (July/August 1991), does the same thing in reverse: it begins with contemporary libertarian sexual mores and reads them back into first century Palestine. Little attempt seems to be made to see Jesus the Jew in his own rural Galilean culture.

Though Jesus was sexual like any other human being, the quotes suggesting that he was bisexual and expressed it in sexual relations with both men and women disciples is preposterous -- for a number of reasons.

First, Jewish law clearly forbade sexual relations between men. Any conscientious first-century Jew would not have practiced

same-sex sex, but would have regarded it as a pagan, Gentile practice.

Second, though the Pharisees and other religious leaders sought many ways to discredit Jesus, the gospels give no hint of them using any rumors of sexual scandal to discredit him. Sleeping around, especially with other men, would have alienated him from all classes of his own people and ruined his ministry.

Third, Jesus' call to discipleship was away from the encumbrances of domestic life to an itinerant ministry involving homelessness and poverty. In an age of no birth control, heterosexual sex was associated with marriage and family, since the possibility of pregnancy could not be avoided. For Jesus to have sex with Mary Magdalene or any other woman disciple would have been irresponsible and in complete contradiction to his call away from home and family.

Fourth, the very fact that the women and men disciples traveled in separate groups, and that only men were part of the Twelve is evidence of the propriety expected in that

*I believe gays and lesbians  
should be encouraged by  
the church, but to do so  
with a disregard for careful  
hermeneutics will not truly  
help anyone. --Reta Finger*

age. Otherwise, women would surely have been part of this inner circle.

By making these observations, I am not implying that Jesus was not sexual, or that he did not break various touching taboos. If it is important to us to have Jesus sexually experienced, it seems more logical to me that he married around the conventional age of 18 and that possibly the death of his wife and/or children was one catalyst propelling him into his itinerant ministry. (Pure speculation, of course, but more consistent with first-century Judaism.)

I believe gays and lesbians should be encouraged and affirmed by the church (though I have yet to be convinced that promiscuity

of any kind is healthy). But to do so with a disregard for careful hermeneutics and historical accuracy will not truly help anyone in the long run. Certainly an article like this will do nothing to break down walls of homophobia and heterosexism among more theologically conservative people.

In general, I have been a fan of *The Witness* for years, especially for the stands it takes on feminism, nonviolence, war tax resistance, and oppression of all kinds. Take care in undergirding these positions with adequate biblical exegesis.

**Reta Finger  
Editor, *Daughters of Sarah***

SALMAN RUSHDIE WAS MARKED for death for writing his *Satanic Verses*. I'm wondering what should be done with some of the writers of articles in *The Witness*. The July/August issue was almost the last straw!

When my wife read Malcolm Boyd's inferences about Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in his very "sick" article entitled "The Sexuality of Jesus" she deposited your July/August issue in the waste can. I thought that was a sensible act on her part but I went further. I took the waste can full of our trash (and Boyd's) outside and mixed it with our garbage to be burned at the county landfill.

I was tempted to cancel my subscription to *The Witness* today, but decided to wait a bit longer to see whether or not new leadership will reverse the magazine's downward slide toward a well deserved death.

**Charles M. Priebe, Jr.  
Mechanic Falls, ME**

*THE WITNESS* CONTINUES to stimulate and inform me because your writers are open-minded and non-dogmatic.

However your May issue carries an article (Church after Death) by Charles Meyer. In it he lists suggestions for returning to church after a bereavement. In #5 and #6 he says stay or leave a service depending on how you feel. Then he adds, "Either one is fine with God." I wish Charles Meyer would tell me how he knows!

**Joan Brewer  
West Lebanon, NH**

## THE WITNESS

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# THE WITNESS

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**Cover credit:** Photograph by Jim West; cover design, Barbara Barefield  
It is the policy of *The Witness* to use inclusive language whenever possible.

## Self-Defense

When the 1980 Republican National Convention nominated Ronald Reagan, I was told by the Associated Press (for whom I worked) to write about the murder of women in the Motor City. After several conversations with city police, I was persuaded that there was no surge of murders. The editor in New York responded, "What can I say? I like murders."

I wrote the story with the obligatory quotes from "women afraid to wait at bus stops," but I also included guidelines from a local self-defense instructor. Predictably, the self-defense options were edited out.

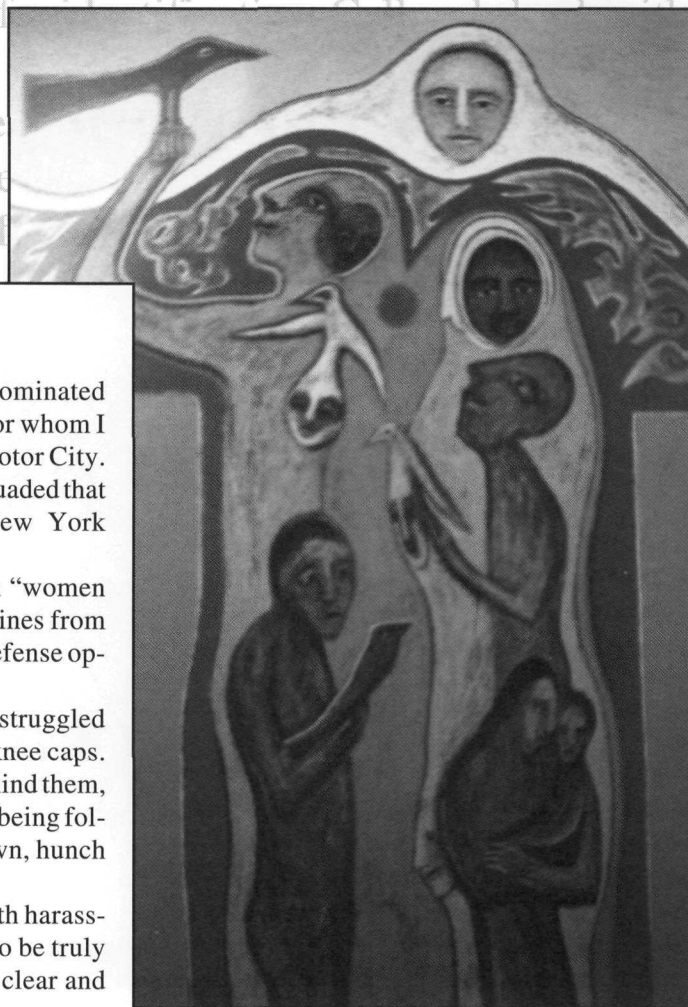
I later took classes with instructor Jaye Spiro, and struggled with whether I was willing to gouge eyes and smash knee caps. I stayed, partly because Spiro told us that men look behind them, assess the situation and act when they believe they are being followed. Women, on the other hand, typically look down, hunch their shoulders and hope nothing happens.

Spiro also said since women are uncomfortable with harassment, they often smile or laugh when saying "No." To be truly heard, she said, they need to learn the freedom to be clear and forceful in their demands.

I believe the word for our culture today must be "Love your enemies." A lot depends on learning that lesson. But for women "love of enemies" has too often translated into a willingness to endure abuse. Since so much of self-defense is learning a different way of thinking, a way that rejects being a victim, I think self-defense is often a necessary first step before a woman can truly learn to love her enemy.

Perhaps the clearest testimony I've heard is from a woman who lived through brutal abuse as a child and suffered debilitating nightmares as an adult. After taking Spiro's class, she found herself turning to face her dream attacker, taking a self-defense stance and fending him off. The dreams stopped. It's her contention that preventing abuse, even through trained physical resistance, *is* non-violent. --J.W.-K.

The self-defense guidelines are excerpted from a list prepared by Jaye Spiro. Artist Betty LaDuke produces multi-cultural images in Ashland, OR



Behind Walls Birds Sing

credit: Betty LaDuke

# A Nonviolent Approach to Personal Defense

by Marianne Arbogast

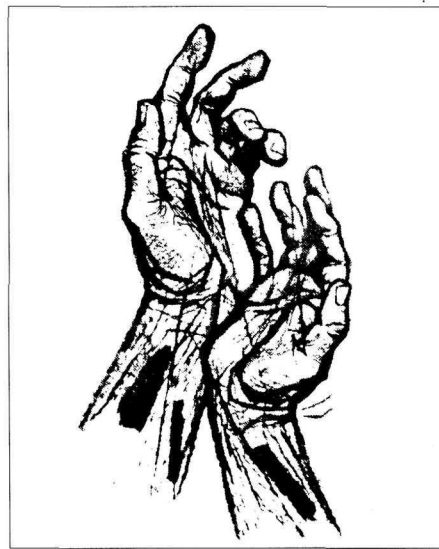
**E**ight years ago, we were faced with a crisis at the Detroit soup kitchen where I work. The number of guests was increasing daily, straining the 100-person capacity of St. Peter's Episcopal Church basement and exacerbating tensions among people who were already emotionally on edge. The composition of the gathering was also changing: Lining up with the older alcoholics and mentally ill street folk who had long relied on the soup kitchen were the young, jobless residents of some of the toughest areas in the city. Fights broke out regularly; 911 calls for the police or Emergency Medical Service began to seem as routine as placing orders at the food bank.

The violence challenged our commitment and our Catholic Worker philosophy. We agonized over questions of metal detectors and police injunctions. Another soup kitchen, we were told, had been informed that police would not respond to their calls unless they hired an armed security guard.

Stubbornly, we clung to the hope of a nonviolent solution, and struggled our way through, making changes that gradually restored a calmer environment.

The most significant change was the institution of "peacekeepers" whose role is to stay alert and ready to intervene in conflict situations. Three people do this each day; on most days two of the three are members of the Catholic Worker community which manages the kitchen.

We've learned some simple rules: Be assertive and fair. Speak in a calm and



credit: Robert Hodgell

respectful tone of voice. Don't physically touch someone who is angry, unless it is necessary to restrain them from harming another. Leave them space to walk away from an argument.

I learned that being a woman is not the disadvantage it might seem. I am not perceived as a physical or psychological threat, and my presence can give someone an excuse to back down from a fight without losing face. At the same time, I have had to learn to assert my own right to respect and freedom from harassment.

In conflict intervention, we try to follow the principles on which the soup kitchen is founded: Each person matters. Each is equally worthy of our respect. We are connected, one to another, at our core; we cannot harm another without harming ourselves.

I believe this attitude communicates itself to our guests, and is more effective

in minimizing violence than armed security personnel would be.

In her book *Safe Passage on City Streets*, Dorothy Samuel collected stories of people who had encountered threatening persons and emerged unharmed.

She tells of an elderly woman walking home from a night prayer meeting, the closing hymn, "Under His Wings I am Safely Abiding" replaying itself in her mind. When confronted by a gunman demanding money, she blurted out, "You can't hurt me! I am covered with his feathers!" Whether in fear of God or fear of a madwoman, the mugger fled. Either way, Samuel says, "a fearless consciousness disrupted the whole mindset, the entire game plan, of the criminal."

Samuel identified a fearless consciousness and a firmly rooted sense of self as common threads in the experiences of those who were able to de-escalate violence in personal encounters.

Angie O'Gorman teaches that the emotions of surprise, humor, and wonder can disrupt a violent dynamic. Often, as Samuel's stories bear out, the simple refusal to respond to threat with fearful cringing or attempted retaliation is sufficient surprise to short-circuit an attacker's program.

I find tremendous encouragement in these stories, and in the real effectiveness of a nonviolent approach in reducing violence at the soup kitchen. At the heart of my faith is a belief in the power of love -- as the Way, not just the goal. I believe, in the words of poet Ferdinand Lassalle, that the means we choose are "ends in embryo."

Nothing can offer us complete security. The potential for violence still exists at the soup kitchen, on city streets, and in any other place where wounded and alienated people gather. But I am convinced that our best hope against it lies not in preparing to meet it with further violence, but in preparing a watchful and gentle heart. **TW**

THE WITNESS

# May Our Right Hands Lose Their Cunning

by Denise Levertov

Smart bombs replace  
dumb bombs. "Now we can aim  
straight into someone's kitchen."

Hard rice  
sprays out of the cooking pot  
straight into the delicate jelly of eyes.

Invisible pellets,  
pointed blobs of mist,  
bite through smooth pale-brown skin  
into perfect bodies,  
chewing them into bloody mincemeat.  
This is smart.

There is  
a dumb fellow, a mongoloid,  
40 years old, who, being cherished,  
learned recently to read and write,  
and now has written a poem.

"Summer in the West when  
everything is quiet  
And clear, with everything  
beautiful and green,  
With wild flowers of all colors,  
and a small water creek,  
And a beautiful blue sky. And  
the trees," he wrote,  
forming the letters carefully, his tongue  
protruding, "are very still.  
And sometimes a small breeze."

He has been cherished,  
slowly learned  
what many learn fast, and go on  
to other knowledge. He  
knows nothing of man's devices,  
may die without discovering that  
he's dumb, and they  
are smart, the killers.

And the uncherished idiots,  
tied in cots, smelling  
of shit --

exquisite dumbness,  
guaranteed not to know,  
ever, how smart  
a man can be,

*homo faber* of laser beams, of  
quaintly-named, flesh-directed, utterly ingenious  
mutilating spit-balls,

yes,  
the smartest boys, obedient to all the rules, who  
never  
aimed any flying objects across the classroom,  
now are busy with finely calibrated equipment  
fashioning spit-balls with needles in them,  
that fly at the speed of light multiplied  
around corners and into tunnels to arrive  
directly at the dumb perfection of living targets,  
icily into warm wholeness to fragment it.



We who  
know this  
tremble  
at our own comprehension.  
Are we infected,  
viciously, being smart enough  
to write down these matters,  
scribes of the unspeakable?  
We pray to retain  
something round, blunt, soft, slow,  
dull in us,  
not to sharpen, not to be smart.

Denise Levertov: *The Freeing of the Dust*, ©1975, D. Levertov® Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

# Neighborhood defense: “It’s Recovery Time!”

by Betsy Schwarzentraub

**T**here is a vital connection between where we place our energy and resources nationally, and where we do *not* place them in our own local neighborhoods. Those ministering across the country live with the resulting threats. Yet some people in the inner cities are finding creative, nonviolent ways to defend against them.

Glide Memorial United Methodist Church stands in the heart of San Francisco’s Tenderloin district, in the midst of massage parlors and rundown hotels. Just three blocks from the business district’s prestigious Union Square and literally across the street from the Hilton, Glide serves the poor and the homeless who walk the streets by day and sleep on the sidewalks at night.

Under the leadership of minister Cecil Williams, who has served the church for 27 years, Glide has developed an array of programs which not only respond to the crises of the moment, but also help build a solid foundation for the future.

Seniors are bussed to the state capital to advocate for legislation affecting them. Youth gather to learn together and meet healthy role models for adulthood. A computer program gives children a taste of high-tech learning. The church works with the North of Market Coalition on concerns ranging from a street clean-up campaign to co-sponsoring a mayoral

**Betsy Schwarzentraub** is a United Methodist pastor in Davis, CA.

The videos, *It’s Recovery Time* and *Recovery in Tenderloin*, are available through Glide Church, 330 Ellis St., San Francisco, CA 94102.

candidates forum.

One of Glide’s most remarkable ventures has been to organize outreach

*“There’s too much emphasis on incarcerating people, taking people out of the community. We want to keep people in the community. Our sons and daughters need to come home, and we’re coming home to our sons and daughters, wherever you are.”*

*- Cecil Williams*

marches against drugs in the surrounding community. The marches urge residents to take control of their lives and their neighborhood. Over a thousand people at a time, singing hymns and carrying placards with the message “It’s Recovery Time,” have marched into areas such as the Valencia Gardens housing project.

A special plea is issued to drug pushers and users.

“We’re not going there to run folks out,” explained Williams. “There’s too much emphasis on incarcerating people, taking people out of the community. We want to keep people in the community. Our sons and daughters need to come home, and we’re coming home to our sons and daughters, wherever you are.”

Alex Humphrey, a top drug dealer in the projects at the time of a videotaped

march, is one of those who responded to the invitation. Coming out to speak with the marchers, he initially challenged Williams, accusing him of “making a circus out of this.”

When Williams responded with a promise of ongoing programs and support, Humphrey was won over.

“I guess this is what I was looking for for awhile,” Humphrey said. “I guess I was looking for a way out. I was tired of it.”

Soon afterward, Humphrey took the lead in organizing Valencia Gardens residents to paint their buildings.

“There was a good thing happening,” Humphrey said. “After the walls got painted, it wasn’t about the walls any more, it was about the people...People who don’t even talk to each other were lined up smiling, talking to each other. They just wanted to help make something good.”

The marches sponsored by Glide represent the culmination of months of organizing. Church members enlist the support of community groups, tenants’ organizations, substance abuse treatment centers, and other agencies which can provide assistance to community residents.

“What Cecil has been doing is not something geared for the 6 o’clock news,” said San Francisco mayor Art Agnos, who participated in one of the marches. “He is doing the kind of follow-through, day-to-day work that is going to make a difference.”

St. Vincent de Paul Church in Philadelphia is attempting to follow Glide’s lead. The church offers traditional outreach -- a soup kitchen and thrift shop. It offers a literacy program and has rehabilitated neighborhood homes. More recently it has offered a prayerful presence beyond the church walls.

“The worst drug corner in our section of the city is right behind our church,” said Vincentian brother Dick Taylor,



Parish Services Coordinator at St. Vincent's. "One of our African American members suggested going out and praying on the corner, for the neighborhood, for the dealers, for people who are involved in the drugs, for the neighbors who are fearful because of the drugs."

Simple as it seemed, the vigil was an act of courage for church members who feared a hostile response to their presence.

In a training session beforehand, participants were invited to imagine Jesus coming to the corner, encountering prostitutes, drug runners and addicts. People envisioned "a range of things," Taylor said, including "overturning tables at the temple.

"But more people imagined Jesus reaching out to people, trying to dialogue with them, saying there's a better way."

Fortified by prayer and nonviolence training, church members have ventured out twice a month to form a prayer circle on the threatening streetcorner. They have been joined by neighborhood children and residents of a nearby drug treatment program.

A 10-year-old girl watched them for awhile, then approached them and prayed aloud "that the murders and kidnappings and drugs in the community be stopped," Taylor said. "She had a very clear understanding."

The drugs are still there, but the fear has significantly diminished. And the church has been encouraged by the positive response from neighbors who have emerged from their homes to enlarge the circle of prayer.

Breaking down barriers of fear and isolation is a major goal of the churches' initiatives. Such efforts need not be large-scale.

Mary Lou Kownacki, a Benedictine sister and former Pax Christi coordinator, views walking through her neighborhood as a spiritual discipline and an

## Things you can't do alone

YOU CANNOT BE SAFE in your own living room. Safety leads the list of things you cannot accomplish for yourself. Nor can you assure your property values. It takes neighbors to do that. Nor can you solve the problem of poverty or drugs. That takes community organization. Everything important takes partners.

Now it will take more than a few individuals dialing 911 to allow us to be safe. The scale is tipped to the criminal: we all carry more responsibility for each other than is fair. Only because we have spent too much time in our own living rooms appreciating the size of the problem have we even fantasized that the whole problem belongs to us.

The renewal of scale is a fundamental social issue. Because the measure of individual has been given so much weight, and because we have all connected to large, impersonal televised communities more than we have connected to local, personal ones, our genuine powers as people have been wasted.

Neighborhood Watch works to keep people safe. Groups of parents keep teenagers from driving and drinking on prom nights. Congregations establish rules of

behavior for toddlers during their fellowship hours. It is possible to "love your neighbor," if you love your neighbor.

Even self-improvement, that grand ruse, has come to the end of its rope. Many people have found help in local groups of Alcoholics Anonymous. These same people began their help by understanding the matter of scale. *I am not on my own able to kick this habit.*

It is a national crime that so many people have to suffer unnecessary embarrassment at the loss of their jobs during a recession, as though they were personally inferior at the art of the bootstrap. It is a national crime that our local institutions can't provide the community that would keep people filled up sufficiently not to drink while flipping channels.

The places of happiness are church basements, coffee shops, taverns, PTA meetings, back fences, all places that resemble AA. They occupy that place on the scale called community. Community is first local, then national. You have to see people's faces before you can form community.

-- Donna Schaper, pastor of First Congregational Church, Riverhead, NY

act of community-building.

Her inspiration comes from her reading of the prophet Isaiah, who was required to spend three years walking through the neighborhoods of Jerusalem.

"He learned to walk gentle, to treat each person with gentle care," Kownacki says. "He learned that you grow in love when you are able to take on yourself the suffering and hatred of others.

"The art of walking is to discover something about nonviolence. It connects you to people. You get to see your neighborhood, and the deterioration taking place in the inner city. Every step makes you more committed to do something."

Kownacki finds walking an aid to

mindfulness. As she walks, she quietly repeats the mantra "Sanctus."

"Everything is holy," she says. "The crack houses are holy. The people in them are holy. The children are holy. The weeds growing up through the cracks are holy. It reminds me of the sanctity of life."

Walking demands time and patience, like the struggle for justice, Kownacki says. "Change will not come quickly. I'd like to see *one block* before I die that's what community *ought* to be!"

Yet it is our national policies which make community so difficult. "We need to stop spending so much money for the military and start investing it in the neighborhoods," Kownacki says. **TW**

# Calling All Brothers by Gloria House

"And the male children were deaf to the pleas of the mothers, and they couldn't see no men nowhere they had to respect..."

Calling all brothers!  
Calling all brothers!  
Calling you out  
from the hushed kingdoms  
of corporate comfort;  
calling you out  
of your Mercedes and  
your made-in-America commitment.  
Calling you out of your cognac bottles.  
Calling all my brothers  
to break out of  
your laid-off/unemployed blues,  
break out of your videohypnosis;  
calling all brothers, precious  
as you are to your women,  
cherished as you are by your sisters,  
calling you out of your daze  
of disgust with the family who sustains you --  
your mothers, your sisters, your own brothers.

Calling you now  
to *call off* your  
"I ain't got no money, no job, no power"  
dead-end trip. We see your anguish and  
we understand.

Calling you now -- nevertheless --  
to the defense  
of *your own life*.  
Calling you to defend  
your sons and daughters,  
calling you to the defense of  
humanity.

Dear Brothers, I'm calling you  
to rise in the vacuum where  
our African fathers used to stand  
resolute against American madness.  
I'm calling you to  
take a position against children  
with uzis and no daddies  
calling you to show the children  
what uzis are for.

Calling you to a Great Reawakening  
of African Fatherhood!  
Calling you to form the ranks of  
your own army --  
your own army --  
to take the streets from the babies  
so they can grow to manhood.  
Calling you to dare  
the babies to go on dealing drugs over  
your dead body!

This is our war,  
a war holier than the Eagle  
ever called you to fight.  
This is our Vietnam, our South Africa  
our Grenada, our Nicaragua,  
in the streets of Motown, Philly, New York, LA --  
on your block in our 'hood.

Calling you to dare  
the monster death dealers who hustle the children  
to face you down.

Calling all brothers,  
crying for brothers,  
moanin' for a brother,  
dying for a brother.  
Ain't no brothers nowhere?  
Calling the makers of babies  
to become their saviours.



credit: Eleanor Mill

# The Department of DEFENSE

by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer

**D**uring the 1980s, elite U.S. economic and military related sectors grew more rich and powerful at the expense of the U.S. people and at the expense of the country as a whole. Therefore, the end of the Cold War should have been greeted with a chorus of alleluias. The Cold War thaw offered hope that something new was possible, not only for people in Eastern Europe but for U.S. and Third World peoples shackled by poverty and economic inequality. Unfortunately powerful groups refused to join the choir. Defense industry journals and analysts warned of dire consequences if the peace dividend became a reality. Within the various branches of the U.S. military a palatable sense of panic set in as the Cold War thaw threatened to undermine huge budgets and the institutional

privileges they afforded. The search for new enemies began immediately.

The May, 1990 issue of the *Marine Corps Gazette* warned that “widely held perceptions” of reduced global conflict made a peace dividend almost inevitable. The head of the Marine Corps, General A.M. Gray, like other U.S. military leaders, highlighted new enemies in the Third World and trumpeted the necessity to hold the line on defense spending. The country couldn’t afford a peace dividend if it was to effectively respond to “low-intensity conflicts,” fight terrorists, and wage drug wars.

Investigative reporters Andrew and Leslie Cockburn in their book *Dangerous Liaison: The Inside Story Of The U.S.-Israeli Covert Relationship* write how Iraq was chosen as a new enemy months before it invaded Kuwait:

*Short-term domestic political considerations aside, there were very important institutional imperatives behind the push toward military confrontation in the Gulf...In April 1990 a seasoned Pentagon official lamented in casual conversation that the atmosphere at his place of employment was dire. “No one knows what to do over here,” he sighed. “The [Soviet] threat has melted down on us, and what else do we have? The navy’s been going up to the Hill to talk about the*

*threat of the Indian navy in the Indian Ocean. Some people are talking about the threat of the Colombian drug cartels. But we can’t keep a \$300 billion budget afloat on that stuff. There’s only one place that will do as a threat: Iraq.” Iraq, he explained, was a long way away, which justified the budget for military airlift. It had a large air force, which would keep the United States Air Force happy, and the huge numbers of tanks in Saddam’s army were more than enough to satisfy the requirements of the U.S. ground forces.*

## Imperatives of a National Security State

As the Cold War ended, the U.S. economy was cracking under the weight of growing contradictions between military power and social decay. The United States desperately needed to reorder priorities and to make judicious use of a post Cold War “peace dividend.” Instead of beginning a process of domestic economic and social renewal the United States with stunning speed shaped a world order in which new enemies were found, the “peace dividend” evaporated, and the military reasserted its primacy in American life.

The end of the Cold War offered two distinct paths to the future. The U.S.

**Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer** is author of *War Against the Poor*. Nelson-Pallmeyer, his wife and two children live in the community of St. Martin, Minneapolis. This article is excerpted from *Brave New World Order: Can We Pledge Allegiance?* Orbis Books, January, 1992.

Line artist **Eleanor Mill** is syndicated from Hartford, CT. Photographer **Mel Rosenthal** lives in NYC and is a contributor to Impact Visuals.

National Security Establishment, with presidential leadership, forsook economic revitalization in favor of militarism. To understand how and why this happened it is necessary to define the basic features of a National Security State. I have identified seven characteristics of a National Security State or National Security State doctrine.

The first characteristic of a National Security State is that the military is the highest authority. In a National Security State the military not only guarantees the security of the state against internal and external enemies, it has enough power to determine the overall direction of the society. In a National Security State the military exerts important influence over political, economic as well as military affairs. A second defining feature of a National Security State is that political democracy and democratic elections are viewed with suspicion, contempt or in terms of political expediency.

National Security States often maintain an appearance of democracy. However, ultimate power rests with the military or within a broader National Security Establishment.

A third characteristic of a National Security State is that the military and related sectors wield substantial political and economic power. They do so in the context of an ideology which stresses that *freedom* and *development* are possible only when capital is concentrated in the hands of elites. Money and wealth-producing resources are generally concentrated within three sectors: the private business sector, the state or state enterprise sector, and within the military itself. In National Security States the military and related sectors directly or indirectly exercise tremendous influence over political and economic affairs. One of the ironies of U.S. policy is that through the economic police functions of the International Monetary Fund the United States encourages concentration



**These art works were secretly put on two New York City billboards in February and remained there for four days.**

credit: Mel Rosenthal

of capital in the private sector. However, the overall impact of its foreign policy is to insure the predominance of military priorities which leads to the militarization of societies, including our own.

A fourth feature of a National Security State is its obsession with enemies. There are enemies of the state everywhere. Defending against external and/or internal enemies becomes a leading preoccupation of the state, a distorting factor in the economy, and a major source of national identity and purpose.

A fifth ideological foundation of a National Security State is that the enemies of the state are cunning and ruthless. Therefore, any means used to destroy or control these enemies is justified. This feature of a National Security State helps explain why U.S. foreign policies so often clearly violate stated principles and values.

A sixth characteristic of a National Security State is that it restricts public

debate and limits popular participation through secrecy or intimidation. Authentic democracy depends on participation of the people. National Security States limit such participation: They may sow fear and thereby narrow the range of public debate or in other ways restrict and distort information; and, they define policies in secret and implement those policies through covert channels and clandestine activities. The state justifies such actions through rhetorical pleas of “higher purpose” and vague appeals to “national security.”

Finally, the Church is expected to mobilize its financial, ideological, and theological resources in service to the National Security State. This helps explain why cultivation of religious legitimacy and/or persecution of progressive Churches is a common feature within many National Security States.

This summary of essential characteristics of a National Security State elicits a range of responses from disbelief to

horror. Some are troubled that U.S. foreign policy has often supported National Security States overseas in the name of promoting *freedom* and *democracy*. Few are willing to entertain what I am suggesting: that the United States is functionally a National Security State that has seriously undermined democracy both within and without.

Ironically, there may be light at the end of a very dark tunnel in places like El Salvador where people recognize the dangers of a National Security State and creatively struggle to wrest power away from the military. The peoples' efforts may succeed in reducing the power of the military and replacing the National Se-

curity State with something new. The prospects for the U.S. people may be bleaker. It seems we have entered the dark tunnel of a National Security State unaware and unconcerned, too busy waving flags to be bothered with the erosion of our democracy.

I believe the Gulf War will one day be seen as one of history's gravest disasters. The war directly and indirectly killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and reinforced the primacy of the U.S. military and related complex in U.S. and foreign affairs. It helped to condemn the U.S. and

Third World poor to places of permanent marginalization while sidetracking us from critical agendas such as overcom-

ing poverty and averting environmental catastrophe. World Watch Institute warns that we have 40 years to establish sustainable societies. U.S. democracy also failed a crucial test. It is now subordinate to the priorities of the National Security State.

While Church leaders expressed significant opposition to the Gulf War it must also be said that the Church failed a critical test. There are frightening parallels between the uncritical patriotism which swept through Nazi Germany and the patriotism that infects many of our Churches. The contradictions in U.S. society are deep and widening. In such a setting meaningful alternatives are possible. The Church will have a meaningful role to play in reshaping national and international priorities to the degree that it is able to proclaim that Jesus is Lord against the claims of competing gods, including the gods of the National Security State. **TW**

*It seems we have entered the dark tunnel of a National Security State unaware and unconcerned, too busy waving flags to be bothered with the erosion of our democracy.*

The thaw in the Cold War occurred after a decade that had witnessed three unprecedented transfers of wealth: from the Third World poor to the First World rich; from U.S. poor and working class citizens to the upper one to five percent of the U.S. population; and from the United States to Japan and Western Europe. Each wealth transfer challenges U.S. declarations of victory in the Cold War and



each has profound implications for understanding the reasons behind the Gulf War.

In brief, it must suffice to say that the Gulf War, among other things, reflects a U.S. commitment to shape a "new world order" in which existing inequalities within Third World nations and between Third and First World countries will be maintained. More importantly in the context of this article, the end of the Cold War presented the United States with a much needed opportunity for economic revitalization. This opportunity was quickly forsaken.

Two important contradictions accompanied the end of the Cold War. First, poor people within the United States and the country as a whole were getting poorer as the rich within the United States were getting richer. Second, our nation's economic decline was accompanied by and linked to the ascendancy of the United States as the world's unprecedented leader in military power. As the Cold War ended one of four U.S. children was born into poverty, the U.S. ranked 20th in infant mortality, was one of two industrialized countries (South Africa is the other) without a comprehensive national health system, and it ranked first in per capita prison population, military spending, Third World arms sales, reported rapes, and murders. J. N.-P.

**I**n the spiritual renaissance that I believe is coming to birth, it will not be the message of Paul that this time galvanizes hearts, as in the Reformation and the Wesleyan revival, but the human figure of Jesus. And in the teaching of Jesus, the sayings on nonviolence and love of enemies will hold the central place. Not because they are more true than any others, but because they are our best chance of checking humanity's suicidal rush to Armageddon.

I submit that the ultimate religious question today should no longer be the Reformation's question, "How can I find a gracious God?" but rather, "How can I find God in my enemy?" What guilt was for Luther, the enemy has become for us: the goad that can drive us to God. What has formerly

been a purely private affair—justification by faith through grace—has now, in our age, grown to embrace the world.

There is, in fact, no other way to God for our time but through the enemy, for loving the enemy has become the key both to human survival in the nuclear

**Walter Wink** is a professor at Auburn Theological Seminary, author of a trilogy on the Powers and Principalities and a contributing editor to *The Witness*. This article is excerpted from *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, to be released by Fortress Press in 1992.

Artist **Sr. Helen David** is an Immaculate Heart of Mary sister. She teaches art at the Southwest Community Center in Philadelphia.

age and to personal transformation. Relaxation of the Cold War has eased, not solved, the nuclear crisis, which now shows signs of proliferation to smaller states not constrained by the danger of total war. Now border disputes and acts of aggression can be settled by nuclear brinksmanship, terrorism, or holocaust. Today, more than ever, we must turn to the God who causes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, or we may have no more sunrises.

Jesus' teachings about nonviolent direct action and loving enemies are also the litmus tests of true Christianity. Just as in the lore of exorcism the Devil cannot bear to utter the name of God, so our false prophets today cannot tolerate mention of the love of enemies. Greg Dixon, a former state chairman and National Secretary for the Moral

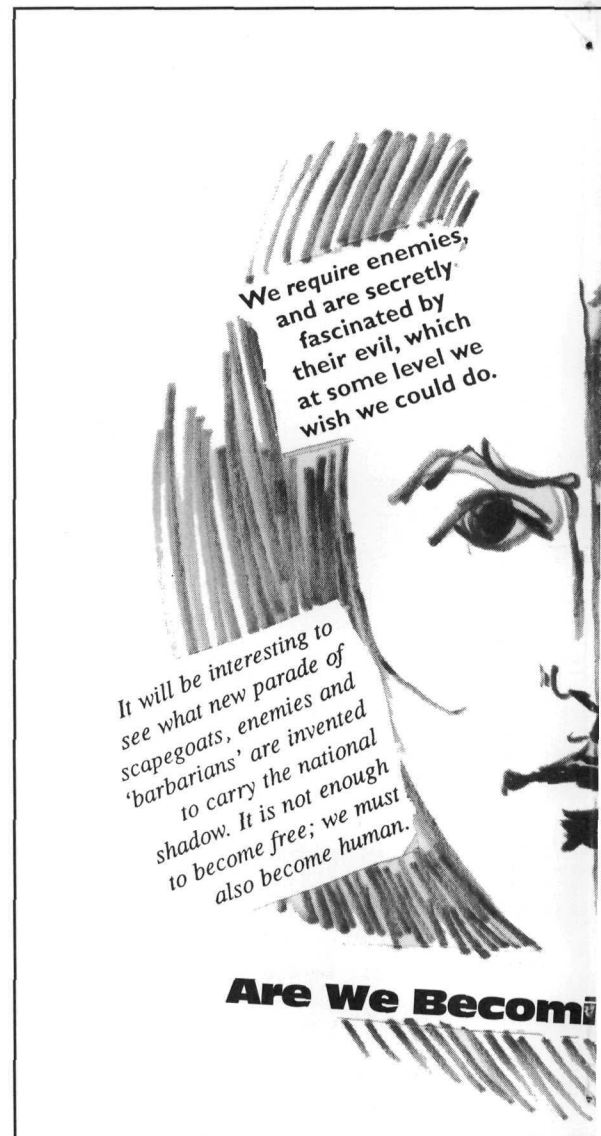
Majority, recently urged his followers to pray for the death of their opponents, claiming, "We're tired of turning the other cheek...good heavens, that's all that we have done." Jerry Falwell and his kind are champions of the warrior mentality and of peace through strength; Jesus' way of creative nonviolence is for them indistinguishable from supine cowardice. As James A. Sanders reminds us, no false prophet can ever conceive of God as God also of the enemy.

Jesus' way of nonviolence and love of enemies has frequently been dismissed as impractical, idealistic, and out of touch with the need of nations and oppressed peoples to defend them-

*Jesus' teachings about nonviolent direct action and loving enemies are also the litmus tests of true Christianity. Just as in the lore of exorcism the Devil cannot bear to utter the name of God, so our false prophets today cannot tolerate mention of the love of enemies.*

## Loving our the litm

By Walter



Walter Wink's exploration of the "Domination System" contends that the dominant myth in our culture is a very demption comes through violence: when the bad guy die, nominator of children's cartoons, adult videos and Ame

# r enemies: us test

er Wink

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credit: Sr. Helen David

" is worthy of a more lengthy explanation. In brief, Wink ancient one, articulated in Babylon. It preaches that re- order is created. This myth, he says, is the common de- rican foreign policy.

selves. No such irrelevancy is charged against the myth of redemptive violence, however, despite the fact that it always fails at least half the time. Its exaltation of the salvific powers of killing, and the privileged position it is accorded by intellectuals and politicians alike, to say nothing of theologians, make redemptive violence the preferred myth of Marxists and capitalists, fascists and leftists, atheists and churchmen alike. Redemptive violence is the prevailing ideology of the Institute of Religion and Democracy and of the World Council of Churches, of *Christianity Today* and *Christianity and Crisis*, of much of liberation theology and much of conservative theology.

Then came 1989, the greatest year of miracles since the Exodus, when 11 nations comprising 1,535,100,000 people, almost 30 percent of all humanity, were touched by nonviolent revolutions that succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams in every case but China, and were completely nonviolent in every case but Romania and parts of the southern U.S.S.R. It appeared as if the nonviolent way articulated by Jesus as the heart of the gospel message had finally found an unwitting following, and that the dream of abolishing war, like child sacrifice and exposure, gladiatorial combat, slavery, cannibalism, colonialism and dueling, was finally approaching the first stages of realization.

Jesus was not the first to practice

nonviolence; indeed, he clearly learned it from his own people. But his manner of incarnating nonviolence marked an evolutionary breakthrough in the pattern of domination of the weak by the strong. He offers the weak a way of affirming their essential humanity, not sometime in the far-off future, but here, now, in precisely the situation of oppression itself.

Solidarity in Poland proved that Jesus' nonviolent way could be lived even under the circumstances of a communist regime and martial law. People said to one another, in effect, Start doing the things you think should be done, and start being what you think society should become. "Do you believe in freedom of speech? Then speak freely. Do you love the truth? Then tell it. Do you believe in

*We cannot come to terms  
with our shadow except  
through our enemy, for we  
have almost no other ac-  
cess to those unacceptable  
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our enemies hold up to us.*

an open society? Then act in the open. Do you believe in a decent and humane society? Then behave decently and humanely." This behavior actually caught on, leading to an "epidemic of freedom in the closed society." By acting "as if" Poland was already a free country, Solidarity *created* a free country. The "as if" ceased to be pretense and was actuality. Within ten years, Solidarity had taken over the government. This is not only a graphic example of a social revolution becoming a political revolution, but it constitutes, in Schell's words, a new chapter in the history of revolution: a revolution in revolution.

The rationale for Jesus' nonviolence

is neither the short-term effectiveness of nonviolent strategies, nor the long-term self-interest of the species, but rather the very nature of God.

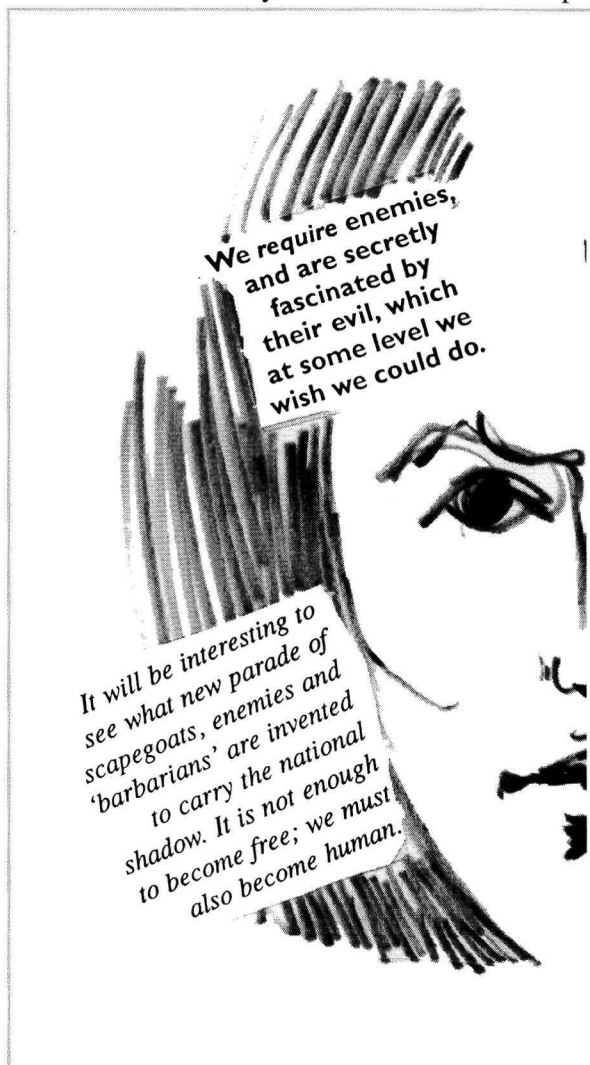
We are to love our enemies, says Jesus, because God does. God makes the “sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45). We are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, so that we may be children of this strange Father-Mother, who “is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked” (Luke 6:35).

We *can* love our enemies, because God does. If we wish to correspond to the central reality of the universe, we will behave as God behaves and God embraces all, evenhandedly. This radical vision of God, already perceived by the Hebrew prophets but never popular among the resident Powers, is the basis for true human community.

Our solidarity with our enemies lies not just in our common parentage under God, but also our common evil. God “is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.” We too, like them, live in enmity against what God desires for the world. We would like to identify ourselves as “just” and “good,” but we are a mix of just and unjust, good and evil. If God were not compassionate toward us, we would be lost. And if God is compassionate toward us, with all our unredeemed evil, then God must treat our enemies the same. As we begin to acknowledge our own inner shadow, we become more tolerant of the shadow in others. As we begin to love the enemy within, we develop the compas-

sion we need to love the enemy without.

If, however, we believe that the God who loves us hates those whom we hate, we insert an insidious doubt into our own selves. Unconsciously we know that a deity hostile toward others is po-



tentially hostile to us as well. And we know, better than anyone, that there is plenty of cause for such hostility.

When we project our evil out on others, we establish a symbiotic relationship with them as our enemies. We *require* enemies, and are secretly fascinated by their evil, which at some level we wish we could do. Secretly, worshipers of Order are always votaries of Chaos. Without an enemy, without con-

flict, without some transcendent threat to unify the people, there is no incentive to pay taxes for a standing army. Nothing threatens order so much as peace. Peace, as William Graham Sumner once remarked, is the problem that war is required to solve. It will be interesting, with the ending of the Cold War, to see what new parade of scapegoats, enemies and “barbarians” are invented to carry the national shadow. Saddam Hussein has already performed that role splendidly. Who will be next?

### The Enemy As Gift

Once the spell of the perfectionist reading has been exorcised, we begin to see just how far from perfect Jesus assumed we are. “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye” (Matt. 7:3-5//Luke 6:37-38, 41-42).

This is the earliest known teaching of projection. We have scarcely begun to trace the implications of Jesus’ discovery of projection; his entire understanding of evil is the fruit of it. The “splinter” in the other’s eye is a chip off the same log that is in one’s own eye. We see in the other what we would not see in ourselves.

In workshops on this theme [my wife and I] invite people to name an enemy and list all the things they dislike about that person (or group or movement or nation). Then we ask them to go through that list and ask how many of those characteristics are true also of them (or our group or movement or nation). The common elements identify our projections. These can be taken into our meditation, prayer, and spiritual guidance, to see what they have to teach us



about ourselves.

These “revelations” (and they are precisely that) need to be worked with carefully, because that is the gift our enemy brings us: *to see aspects of ourselves which we cannot discover any other way than through our enemies.* Our friends cannot tell us these things; they are our friends precisely because they are able to overlook or ignore this part of us. The enemy is thus not merely a hurdle to be leaped on the way to God. The enemy *is* the way to God. We cannot come to terms with our shadow except through our enemy, for we have almost no other access to those unacceptable parts of ourselves that need redeeming except through the mirror that our enemies hold up to us. This then is another, more intimate reason for loving our enemies: we are dependent on our enemies for our very individuation. We cannot be whole people without them.

How wonderfully humiliating: we not only may have a role in transforming our enemies, but our enemies can play a role in transforming us.

An understanding of the Powers makes forgiveness of our enemies easier. If our oppressors “know not what they do,” if they, too, are victims of the delusional system, then the real target of our hate and anger can be the System itself rather than those who carry out its bidding. “For 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” (Eph. 6:12).

We *need* our enemies. On purely sociological grounds, churches would be much healthier if they had a stronger sense of their enemies. Enemies define what the church is against. They give it definition and identity.

Loving our enemies has become, in our time, the criterion of true Christian faith. It may seem impossible, yet it

can be done. At no point is the inrush of divine grace so immediately and concretely perceptible as in those moments when we let go our hatred and relax into God’s love. No miracle is so awesome, so necessary, and so fre-



quent.

Ten years after the end of World War II, Hildegard and Jean Goss-Mayr met with a group of Polish Christians in Warsaw. At one point they asked, “Would you be willing to meet with Christians from West Germany? They want to ask forgiveness for what Germany did to Poland during the war and to begin to build a new relationship.”

First there was silence. Then some-

one vehemently spoke up: “Jean and Hildegard, we love you, you are our friends, but what you are asking is impossible. Each stone of Warsaw is soaked in Polish blood! We cannot forgive!” Even after ten years, the war wounds were just too deep.

Before the group parted for the evening, the Goss-Mayrs suggested they say the Lord’s Prayer together. All joined in willingly. But at the point of praying “forgive us our sins as we forgive...,” the group suddenly halted their prayer.

Out of the silence, the one who had spoken most vehemently said softly, “I must say yes to you. I could no more pray the Our Father, I could no longer call myself a Christian, if I refuse to forgive. Humanly speaking, I cannot do it, but God will give us his strength!” A year and a half later, the Polish and West German Christians met in Vienna. Friendships made at that meeting continue today.

The command to love our enemies reminds us that our first task toward oppressors is pastoral: to help them recover their humanity. Quite possibly the struggle has also dehumanized the oppressed as well, if they have demonized their enemies. It is not enough to become free; we must also become human. Nonviolence presents a chance for all parties to rise above their present condition and become more of what God created them to be. There is a spirit of generosity which is willing to submit to outrages and injustice, not in a cowardly fear of retaliation, but in order, if possible, to awaken God in the other’s soul.

**TW**

# The PB and the President



Last January, Patty and Edmond Browning and Jim Wallis (right) joined thousands praying at the National Cathedral and vigilling outside the White House. credit: ENS, M. Broffman

**O**ne year ago, the U.S. stood poised for war. Troops were deployed. Massive armaments and fire power were strategically placed. Saddam Hussein and George Bush were threatening and demeaning one another.

Edmond Browning, drawing on his

**Asked by The Witness what it means to pastor the president, Edmond Browning said:**

It is a privilege and an honor that, by virtue of my office as the presiding bishop and chief pastor of the Episcopal Church, I am pastor to our president. The time I have spent with Mr. Bush has made it clear to me that he is a man of faith and prayer. We have prayed together on occasions and he knows that I hold him in my prayers daily.

In one conversation we noted that we have some different ideas, some different visions of our national life and our responsibilities in this global village. We discussed the fact that this is not likely to change. And we accepted that. Christian life isn't

role as primate of the Episcopal Church and thereby pastor to this nation's Episcopal president, attempted to call George Bush away from war.

"It is my personal calling and a function of my office to be a partner with the President," Browning told the House of Bishops in September, 1990.

about agreement, or disagreement. It is about being faithful, struggling to discern.

I have been forceful in presenting my views, and representing those of other Church leaders, when I have spoken or written to the President. I have always felt that he listened, and that he valued the opportunity to do so.

I think pastoring to the President, at some level, is no different than being a pastor to anyone. I have always believed in my ministry that presence is the basic element of being a pastor. Being with someone in a situation, and serving as a reminder of the loving presence of Christ, is sometimes about the best thing you can do.

One month later, Browning challenged Bush's rationale for war.

"For what reason has our nation unleashed the greatest military force since the Vietnam War?" Browning asked. "Have we not sent our young men and women to the Persian Gulf, as our President has said, to 'protect the American way of life'? But what way of life is it that allows the homeless and the unemployed to huddle on our streets and our inner cities to decay?"

In addition to praying for the president and for peace, the Presiding Bishop joined ecumenical leaders visiting Baghdad, Beirut, Jerusalem, Damascus and Amman just weeks before the bombing began.

There were voices within the Episcopal Church that called on Browning to silence himself. Certainly members of the Episcopal wing of the Institute for Religion and Democracy did. But others closer to home advised caution in order to protect his image.

On the night of January 15, the night before the U.S. began the war against Iraq, Browning presided at a prayer service at the National Cathedral and vigilled outside the White House.

The following day, the Presiding Bishop offered to pray with the President. George Bush did not have time. Only later did Browning learn that Bush had turned to Billy Graham to bless the war efforts.

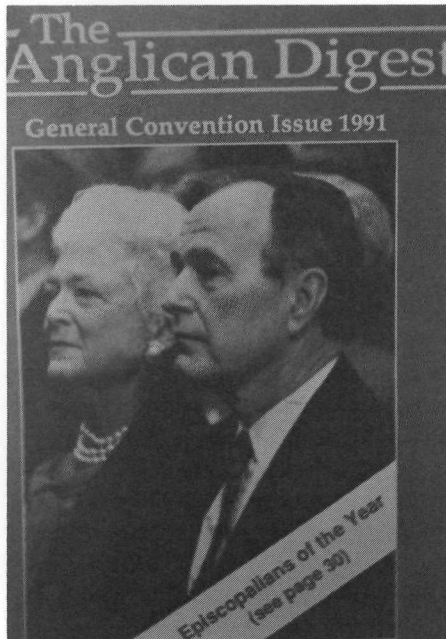
Asked how he survives and where he finds joy, Browning told the Episcopal Communicators last May, "I cry a lot. When I'm really tired, my emotions come up to the top. My wife is the greatest source of grace that I have. Prayer helps immensely."

Now, one year later, we have witnessed the high tech assault that killed thousands of Iraqis but let the U.S. return home feeling barely scathed. We hear the gradual reports that our troops buried Iraqi soldiers alive -- a stark

contrast to the early reports of very little “collateral damage.”

“Now, in a post-Gulf-war world, the Church must not grow timid in advocating for God’s new order,” Browning counselled delegates to General Convention. “Prophets are needed, and God will raise them up, even from among us. These will be prophets who are also evangelists, bold proclaimers of the new life in Christ. Do not shrink from that call when God lays it upon you. It may be a call to resist the spiritually deadly lure of consumerism, which so afflicts our society. The communist regimes of Eastern Europe have fallen, but this is no time for triumphalism in the West. Now is the time for humility. Now is the time for careful stewardship of the precious life on earth that we ourselves embody.”

Following the conclusion of the Gulf War, George and Barbara Bush were named “Episcopalians of the Year” by *The Anglican Digest*. The article quoted the president as praying, at St. Martin’s, Houston, “We are not an arrogant nation, a gloating nation, for we know, ‘Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.’” --J.W-K



November 1991

## The Ultimate Game

Stitched, scarred and smiling, Marine Sgt. Richard Smith spent his first full day at home in Maplewood Friday, taking congratulatory phone calls, and relating his strong impressions of war in the desert.

“At camp, in the field, we’d shoot blanks,” Smith said. “When we actually started shooting live rounds, and watching people drop, it was like hunting the ultimate game in life.

“I had a good time. It sounds sadistic, but it was the greatest feeling. Everybody’d been waiting, and once it started, we didn’t want it to stop.”

*Anathoth Community Farm News, Summer 91, reprinted from the Minneapolis Star Tribune, 3/91*

## Selective Empathy

[Accused of being overly sentimental, animal rights activist, Helen Dwyer, says:] Sentimentality is usually understood as an excess of emotional response, and as such it is more often attributed to women than men. I have come to believe that the essence of “sentimentality” is *not* the ability to respond readily to another’s pain, but rather, the ability to respond *selectively*.

Selective empathy operates in wartime to make it possible for “us” to kill “them” by declaring that they are really not *like* us; significantly, it often works by identifying “them” with some *animal* (a “vermin” animal, of course, like a cockroach, snake or rat; not a “noble” animal that we might want to identify with). Selective empathy allows some men to separate themselves emotionally from women, again often by identifying them with animals (cow, “meat”). Selective empathy allows people to shoot deer -- but not horses -- with arrows and track them while they bleed to death; to chain and box veal calves -- but not dogs -- for their whole short lives, and then eat them.

It is *less* likely to characterize women than men, and women ought to work to expose it wherever it appears.

**Helen Dwyer, *WomenWise*, Fall 91**  
Originally published in *Feminist Voices*

## The Cathedral and the War

“The one bit of hope for the Episcopal Church is that George Bush had to turn to Billy Graham because Bishop Browning wouldn’t play the [military cheerleader] role,” according to Rosemary Radford Reuther. “Although,” she added, “the Cathedral of St. John the Divine allowed itself to be the place that kicked off the Victory Parade.”

Dan Berrigan was also upset that the cathedral hosted the June 9 service that preceded the parade. He joined other religious leaders in a “service of atonement” at the cathedral August 4. Organizers of the atonement service described it

as a temple cleansing, “to heal the wounds and undo the damages done to the cathedral when it was desecrated by the militarists.” Cathedral officials objected, insisting that the June service was not a victory celebration and that the atonement service was unrelated to the earlier one.

The cathedral staff announced in September that it will not press charges against three members of St. Mary’s, Manhattanville, who were arrested for holding a peace vigil that protested the presence of General Norman Schwarzkopf, General Colin Powell, and Defense Secretary Dick Cheney at the invitation-only service.

*shoot taxes*

# Sisters of Survival: performing against nuclearism

by Blaise Tobia & Virginia Maksymowicz

“**T**he Sisters of Survival is not an order of Catholic nuns,” the publicity brochure for this group of performance artists states. But they are indeed a kind of sisterhood; they work collaboratively, share a common world view, and place a strong value on community.

Jerri Allyn, Nancy Angelo, Anne Gauldin, Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry make up the Sisters of Survival. They came together a decade ago through the Women’s Building in Los Angeles and since then have been active in organizing antinuclear cultural protests around the world.

In May 1982, S.O.S., along with another artist named Marguerite Elliot, staged a public action in front of Los Angeles City Hall and the U.S. Federal Building to dramatize the absurdity of the government’s civil defense plan for nuclear war -- which includes the suggestion that digging oneself underneath a car can provide adequate shelter against an atomic bomb. *Shovel Defense*, as the artwork was called, incorporated 50 white shovels planted in a triangular graveyard formation; each shovel also assumed the shape of a cross. Members of S.O.S., arrayed in their trademark colorful habits (symbolizing, in their form, a community of women acting in behalf of a



“At home in the nuclear age?”

credit: Sheila Ruth

higher ideal, and in their rainbow hues, the full spectrum of humanity), appeared among the “gravemarkers” and staged a performance that underscored the futility of trying to survive global annihilation.

As part of U.C.L.A.’s conference called “Artists and War” and at the Long Beach Museum of Art -- S.O.S. presented *At Home in the Nuclear Age?* This performance took place on a city rooftop. Images of atomic blasts taken from government file films and statistics showing how radioactive fallout from the Nevada test site passed over Los Angeles during the 1950s, were projected onto the sides of neighboring buildings. While the audience members were asked whether they had been at home when the fallout occurred, the “nuns,” with face and hands painted to look like skeletons, tried in vain to sweep up a powdery, white, “fallout” dust.

S.O.S. has not confined their activities to the West Coast. They participated in the historic June 12th peace march in New York City and embarked on a tour of Western Europe, visiting sites such as the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp. The culmination of these events (all grouped under the collective title “End of the Rainbow”) is a travelling exhibit of over 300 antinuclear artworks by artists in North America and Europe.

These committed women continue to speak out, based on what they see as their artistic responsibility (to create images that can bring about societal change) and as sisters in the world community. Their witness against war and violence, though



not specifically religious, uses symbols that can easily be appreciated by those who are dedicated to peacemaking from faith-based perspectives.

In their own unique way, the Sisters of Survival are giving voice and visibility to the cry for peace.

TW

art and society

# Civilian-based defense: Nonviolently changing history

by Marianne Arbogast

**J**ust days after the successful popular uprising which defeated the August coup in the Soviet Union, Gene Sharp, author and researcher of nonviolent civilian-based defense initiatives, addressed a conference on “Civilian-Based Defense and People Power” at Holy Redeemer College in Windsor, Ontario. The recent historic drama provided compelling support for Sharp’s conviction that nonviolent citizen campaigns offer a viable and realistic alternative to military means of defending a nation against internal coups or external aggression.

Since the late 1950s, Sharp has labored to document cases of nonviolent resistance around the globe and has argued for a more thorough exploration of their potential. It is only in recent years, however, that he feels he has been taken seriously.

“The idea that a society can be successfully defended by nonviolent non-cooperation and defiance was once considered to be in the realm of kooks and naive romantics,” Sharp acknowledged. In the past decade, however, it has been the subject of serious consideration by public policy makers in a number of countries. Nonviolent direct action by civilians is an accepted component of defense policy in Sweden, Switzerland,

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**Gene Sharp** is founder of the Albert Einstein Institution, a non-profit organization which supports work on civilian-based defense and related issues. His latest book is *Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System*.

Austria and Yugoslavia, and this past February the government of Lithuania officially declared it to be their primary line of defense in the event of “active occupation” by Soviet forces.

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*“The improvisational use of nonviolent struggle has been growing in political importance in diverse parts of the world, and has revealed sufficient power to challenge, if not defeat, the existing regimes.” -- Gene Sharp*

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“The improvisational use of nonviolent struggle has been growing in political importance in diverse parts of the world,” Sharp said, including Poland, Iran, the Philippines, Burma, Madagascar, South Africa, South Korea, and the occupied Palestinian territories. In each of these places, “people have confronted regimes with both the capacity and expertise in inflicting violent repression,” he said, and in each instance, their resistance has “revealed sufficient power to challenge, if not defeat, the existing regimes. Even unsuccessful nonviolent struggle has demonstrated more power than organized violence could possibly produce.”

Given the potency of even spontaneous, hastily organized popular movements -- what Sharp terms “primitive prototypes of what a researched, planned

civilian-based policy can offer” -- why are there not more widespread attempts to harness such energy in national defense planning?

Sharp blames “ghastly distortions” by the media as one factor.

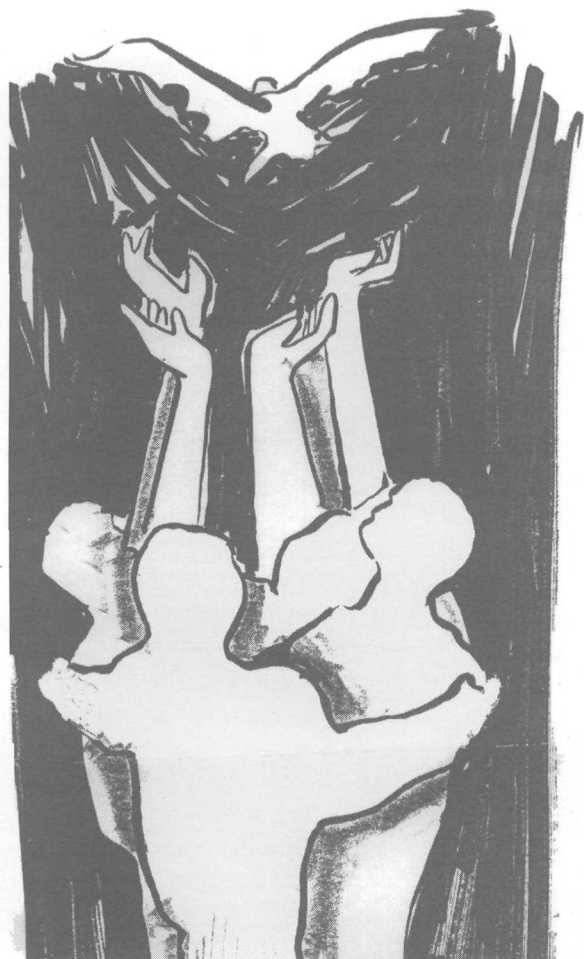
In covering the defeat of the Soviet coup, for instance, the U.S. media asserted that “Yeltsin did it almost singlehandedly,” or that “the coup was ill-planned and doomed from the start,” or that its leaders were not brutal enough in squelching opposition. What was not properly credited, Sharp believes, was the courage of ordinary people in nonviolently confronting soldiers, who lacked the will to kill unarmed protesters, even under orders.

Another factor that “weakens the appeal of nonviolent options” is that they “challenge the assumptions about power and defense made by most governments, military establishments, media representatives and others,” who believe that “violence is still omnipotent if enough of it is used, and that popular movements only win by default.” On the contrary, Sharp believes, “people without guns, with courage and non-military weapons, can at times be more powerful.”

Sharp stressed repeatedly throughout his presentation that nonviolent defense should not be associated with philosophical pacifism or particular ideologies of radical social change. The connection is unnecessary and harmful, he said, and dooms practical nonviolent initiatives to rejection by the mainstream.

“Nonviolence can be accepted by people of widely diverse beliefs and political programs,” Sharp argues.

“For decades we have been willing to risk nuclear war because there was nothing else we could do,” Sharp said. But “people power struggles have demonstrated there *is* something else we could do. We must continue to seek a substitute for the vast destructive potential of the military system -- how to defend without



credit: Sr. Helen David

destroying that to be defended?”

In a 1980 essay entitled “Making the Abolition of War a Realistic Goal,” Sharp describes some of the forms civilian-based defense might take. Journalists and editors could refuse to submit to censorship and continue to publish. The broadcast media could hide transmitters to broadcast free radio programs. Police could refuse to arrest resisters. Civil servants could defy orders and maintain normal government functioning. Judges could declare the invader’s government illegal, and continue to operate by pre-invasion laws, even if this meant closing the courts. Teachers could refuse to present propaganda, closing the schools if necessary and holding private classes in homes. Others could refuse to recognize the invader’s organizations and en-

gage in strikes and boycotts.

Nonviolent defense options can be advanced through several avenues, Sharp said. In countries with a strong military, such as the U.S., civilian-based defense can be introduced as a component of predominantly military systems. “They did not abandon bows and arrows one day and then look for an alternative,” Sharp says. “The military system will be abandoned only to the degree people see a superior means by which to defend against dangers.”

A civilian-based defense policy could play a larger immediate role in small countries with few other alternatives, Sharp said, listing Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Costa Rica and Iceland.

It also has potential as a carefully-focused plan of defense against coups, which constitute “a widespread problem in most parts of the world, and the way most dictatorships come into existence.”

Another possibility envisioned by Sharp is the development of civilian-based defense treaty organizations. Participating nations could provide a threatened country access to printing and broadcast facilities or medical supplies, or impose economic sanctions on an aggressor.

Finally, nonviolent struggle for national liberation from dictatorships is a “highly important companion” to civilian-based defense, Sharp said. Both can be aided by research into the weaknesses of dictatorships and by the preparation and dissemination of simplified literature on nonviolent resistance.

Sharp responded with characteristic pragmatism to questioners who chal-

lenged the relevance of nonviolent defense to struggles against economic injustice, or for nations with firmly-entrenched dictatorships.

It is not a panacea, he stressed; it will not solve all the world’s ills. It “demands severe sacrifices -- as war has always done.” It addresses one issue: “How defend the relative freedom you have against external and internal threats?”

But Sharp is firm in his conviction that the world has reached “a new point of history” which can lead to peace.

“Effective steps can actually be taken to move the world toward a drastic reduction, if not the elimination, of major violence and war,” Sharp declared. “The struggles of many brave people, most of whose names will never be known, have led to the recognition of the potential of civilian-based defense by hard-headed strategists. We have a responsibility to use our resources to make the task of future ordinary people less difficult and less dangerous for them.”

TW

In promoting civilian-based defense of national security, Gene Sharp is careful to clarify that national security “is not identified with ability to secure from other parts of the world all desired economic resources on one’s own terms, nor with capacity to control the economies, politics and military actions of other countries and to intervene militarily throughout the world” (*National Security Through Civilian-Based Defense*, ATS, 1985). Such capacity, in Sharp’s view, is likely to provoke hostility and in the long run make a nation which possesses it *less* secure.

Though Sharp did not specifically address the U.S. situation, it seems clear that civilian-based alternatives to the military presume objectives very different from those of our “Defense” Department, and that non-violent means would not be effective in pursuing a policy of Third World domination.

# Love of enemies: an invitation to the abused

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

**V**irginia Ramey Mollenkott - English professor and theologian -- has recently considered what it means for abuse survivors to love their enemies. She draws on her faith despite being raised in a religious environment that denied women the right to even *pray* publicly.

Born in Philadelphia in 1932, Mollenkott was sexually violated by her mother before the age of three. Her father, a chiropractor, moved out when she was nine. She says the Plymouth Brethren Assemblies taught her to “silence herself.” Her brother was assured a college education and she was not because of her gender.

Eventually, Mollenkott got herself to Bob Jones University, where she struggled with her sexual identity. She felt that “the only way out from living with my family was to get married, so I did. Professors told me that once I had shown God my willingness to behave like a decent Christian woman, the feelings would come.

“I can remember the morning after my wedding -- the utter greyness. I thought, ‘If I die, I die.’”

The 17 years that followed, during which Mollenkott believed that if she was subservient enough her husband would love her, were worse. “He told me that if he told God not to listen to my prayers, God wouldn’t.”

Mollenkott left her husband and

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Interviewee **Virginia Ramey Mollenkott** is a feminist theologian and an English professor at William Patterson College in New Jersey.

adopted the Episcopal Church during the 1960s. She chose the Episcopal Church because she wanted weekly communion and because she wanted a Church environment in which to raise her son. She became straightforward about her sexual preference for women and began a relationship that has lasted 11 years.

The cost of that move was that her brother forbade her to see his children.



credit: Sr. Helen David

And her father (whom she stayed in contact with through the years) rejected her when he “got right with the Lord. That really stung. His second wife talked him into believing that was a terrible thing.”

When challenged by a friend to work on Christ’s admonition to love enemies, Mollenkott saw two avenues. The first was political; the second personal.

In political instances, Mollenkott said she stressed the importance of challenging the system rather than “going after people.” She added that she is not a pacifist; she feels sympathy when critics challenge any violence in Nelson Mandela’s resistance to apartheid, but overlook the violence inherent in the system.

(And she adds that outing -- the practice of exposing people’s homosexuality -- may be necessary when people in power abuse power to hurt the lesbian and gay community. She proposes a Biblical confrontation -- first individual, then by a group and only later, and only in a spirit of love, before the courts or media.)

Mollenkott said addressing the experiences of the abused is difficult.

“It’s a very dangerous thing to tell an abused person that forgiveness is important because it can easily be one more form of abuse.”

At the first workshop she offered on the topic, a woman revealed that she had been ritually sexually abused by her mother and a group of women. She did not feel she could forgive.

Mollenkott said she responded, “You will forgive your enemies... It may be centuries from now but you will be able to forgive.”

The woman’s face lit up with relief.

The key, Mollenkott says, is to say to the Holy Spirit, “‘I am willing to see this a different way.’ We should never go beyond our comfort zone. All we need to do is to clear away the resolute refusal.”



Mollenkott was reconciled with her mother.

"I held her in my arms when she died. I felt I delivered her back. She had delivered me here and I delivered her back. I continue to feel tremendous strength coming from her."

After years of journaling, she came to see her mother differently. "It's like *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*," she said. "He was looking at the water snakes and he thought they were so ugly -- and all of a sudden they are beautiful."

"I saw her background and the repression she lived with. When you have no power, you are going to try to steal power from those around you -- from children. But none of that would have changed my feelings. I had to present the willingness."

Her mother came to accept her daughter and her partner.

"She was learning to love," Mollenkott said. "She accepted my lesbianism, which was a huge thing for a fundamentalist."

At the funeral, Mollenkott offered

the eulogy. Her partner and her brother read the Scripture.

Reconciliation with her brother followed his divorce, Mollenkott said. When she invited him for Christmas, he came.

She greeted him at the airport saying "Don't tell me about your views and I won't tell you about mine. Let's just be brother and sister."

"It didn't work to perfection," she added. "I took him to St. John the Divine because he's an artist. At the end, he said 'They haven't finished it. That's a sin.'"

When she explained that the Cathedral staff had opted to provide a training ground for artists and to serve neighboring Harlem instead, he answered "Well, that's wrong."

But he has come for Christmas three

years in a row and he has thanked her for understanding him.

"The fact that we're both people of faith gives us something to step out onto," Mollenkott said. "That's true even though if we talked about our belief systems, we'd go crazy."

"Everybody is at their own leading edge," Mollenkott said. "I believe the universe is resolving itself. It doesn't mean I am right and they are wrong. We need to learn to care about each other, to keep emphasizing the human element."

"I believe the essence of faith is constant and total reliance on the inner guide, on the Holy Spirit within. I'm trying to learn at every moment to ask 'What is the truth about this?' I really think that a faithful life is such a simple life, a joyous and peaceful life." **TW**

*The key is to say to the Holy Spirit, 'I am willing to see this a different way.' All we need to do is to clear away the resolute refusal.*

## Lines in the Sand

Who defines national security for us? When press acts as a partner with government, what happens to dissent? When TV coverage shows us all the glory of war and none of the heartache, are we at risk of becoming a more dangerous nation?

These questions are raised in a new video essay on the role of the media in Operation Desert Storm.

*Lines in the Sand*, written and produced by activist/writer Ed Griffin-Nolan, explores the information control strategies employed by the U.S. military, and largely accepted by mainstream media, during the war.

Featuring footage shot in Iraq shortly after the war, *Lines in the Sand* offers a troubling look at some of the human faces censored by the Pentagon.

The 10-minute video, recommended for classrooms, community groups, and churches, is available for \$19.95 plus \$2 postage and handling from Griffin-Wirth Associates, 168 Parkway Drive, Syracuse, New York 13207; (315) 471-4953.



# “In defense of conscience”

by Bill Wylie-Kellermann

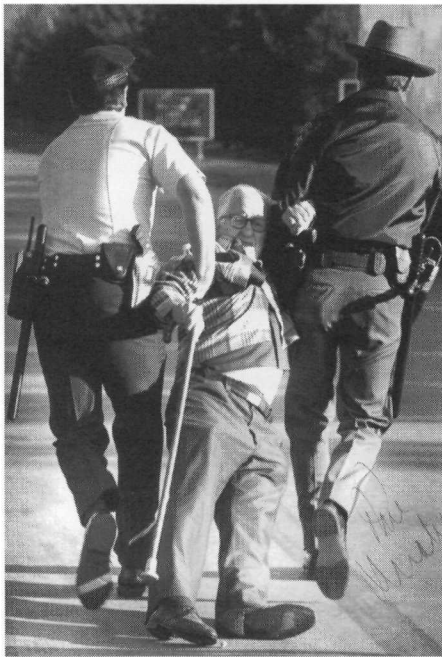
*Building the Beloved Community*

Judith A. Bechtel and

Robert M. Coughlin

Temple University Press, 1991

**I**t was Pentecost Monday, 1983. Two hundred forty-three people had been arrested at the Capitol Building for praying against the nuclear arms race. Maurice McCrackin, in keeping with his longstanding principle of not cooperating with unjust arrest, had refused to walk. He was, nonetheless, treated deferentially by Federal Security cops who transported him gingerly to the D.C. City Jail, employing a stretcher. But now a jurisdiction was being crossed. The jail deputy was going to have none of this “crap,” dumping Mac abruptly face down on the black top. “You gonna walk, old man?” As McCrackin begins a calm explanation, the officer yanks him upwards by his hand-cuffed arms, eliciting groans of pain. (It will be discovered that his arm was thereby fractured a hair-line.) I step forward off the jail elevator in an attempt



is fetched for McCrackin. The other three of us walk.

Reading *Building the Beloved Community*, the new biography of Maurice McCrackin by Bechtel and Coughlin, is a little bit like going to jail with him. It is an adventure which lays an unforeseen claim upon you. By virtue of his actions and commitments, you are suddenly faced with choices in your own life. Just reading harbors its own moment of truth.

Good biography is always at least good history (if not finally also good theology). Given Maurice McCrackin’s spiritual and political instincts, this one is an entre into the eras and movements of the past 50 years, from the pre-war missionary fervor (he served in Iran, then called Persia), to the early days of the civil rights movement, from the McCarthy era (he was vilified for his part in Highlander School sessions with Martin King, Rosa Parks, Myles Horton and other “communists”), to the several anti-war movements, and the struggle

for community-based economic justice. He followed his conscience into his time and urges us to follow our own.

Bechtel and Coughlin clearly recount the history. It’s well-documented, but without intrusive footnotes. All in all, it hooks like a novel.

At the close of World War II, McCrackin was called to St. Barnabas church, a dually aligned Presbyterian-Episcopal congregation in Cincinnati. Beyond the expectation (and even desires) of his superiors, he successfully integrated the congregation and by 1948 was leading a campaign to break down the barriers of segregation in private educational and recreational institutions. It came to be his first experience of risking “disrespectability.”

Like all action with a moral trajectory, that campaign led into another. The community which gathered to carry off the former soon initiated “Operation Freedom” - a campaign of support for sharecroppers in Haywood and Fayette counties, Tennessee. They were being evicted (and suffering what today we would call state terrorism and low intensity warfare if it were located in a more distant region) because they were registering to vote. Mac rallied help with an impassioned plea:

*They do not need to have people tell them what they ought to do. They know, they are doing it. But they do need to have friends and to meet those friends face to face from time to time. Go and share a bit of the danger. Stand watch for a few nights at a store which may be dynamited during the night. Let the weary owner get a few nights’ rest.* (p.139)

McCrackin did. For his frequent trips bearing money and clothes to the dispossessed he was jailed on fabricated charges for 45 days. He fasted and non-cooperated, but also was building jail-house community, as was his pattern.

book review

to intervene gently but am yelled at: “Back off, son.” It is a sudden moment of moral decision. The two young charismatics from Cincinnati who are with us go down instinctively on their butts signalling their own further non-cooperation. I quickly join them. “Oh God,” opines the deputy, deciding to phone for help in a situation sliding out of his control. In the end, a wheelchair

His first and longest prison experience, however, was in connection with his refusal to pay federal taxes for war. He had faced a moment of truth packing Christmas boxes for kids at the church's neighborhood center. As they sorted out the guns and weapons, his Peacemaker friend Wally Nelson asked: "Do you ever think that next March 15 you'll be paying for *real* guns?" The question stung and stuck. Once again his conscience was set afoot. On Christmas Eve, 1958, after a series of resolute non-cooperations with the IRS, Maurice McCrackin began a six-month prison term. It was for him a baptismal experience, clarifying vocation and strengthening his conscience. Here was where he developed his principles of non-cooperation. Reasoning that if the tax was unjust, then so were the measures to exact and enforce it, he refused to participate in any legal proceeding, to walk, even to eat for periods.

It also set him to the life-long work of ministry among prisoners. Perhaps his most notorious and intriguing imprisonment was for contempt in refusing to cooperate with a Grand Jury. An inmate friend of his escaped with two other prisoners coming to Mac for help. In essence he was made a hostage and his car taken, but maintained his demeanor of friendship throughout. When the prisoners were recaptured he refused to testify, instead drawing public attention to the prison conditions which they had fled. His open-ended contempt sentence developed into a test of wills with the judge, but in the end he proved incorrigible, a thoroughly indigestible and unrehabilitatable specimen of humanity.

If anything gets short shrift in the book, it is his development work of the last decade or so. Against the gentrification of his Cincinnati neighborhood, McCrackin and friends have pioneered in experimenting with the urban land trust movement creating a new form of



community control and neighborhood-based economic alternatives.

An edifying and troubling theme throughout the story is his relationship to the Church. Sadly, he received little or no public support from Church hierarchy for these difficult and risky ministries. Episcopal Bishop Henry Hobson visited him in jail - - to explain that the Diocese was moving to remove him as director of the Findlay Street Neighborhood House. After a long judicial process the Presbyterians defrocked him in 1962, essentially for holding to his conscience above civil and ecclesiastical authority. It was in the course of that trial, over against the theological abstractions and churchly legalities, that McCrackin first told what he eventually called (and often recounted as) "the Pilgrimage of a Conscience." (This book is the documented elaboration of that spiritual autobiography.) It stunned the committee with its concreteness and passion. In the end, however, their official sensibilities prevailed.

It needs be stressed that in the course of the ecclesiastical investigation it was never found that he was pastorally remiss in his duties. Indeed, for all his trips and jail bits, the congregation's personal

responsibility for ministry was deepened and its lay leadership empowered. When the churchly verdict came down, a core of St. Barnabas members, without rancor of any sort, withdrew to form Community Church where McCrackin's ministry abides to this day.

In recent years, Mac's conscience has been more openly recognized and honored. The Presbyterians have reinstated his orders and even "repented" of their judgment. Now 86, McCrackin has slowed a step but not ceased his witness. (The Gulf War landed him in jail again

*Witnesses,  
the quick and the dead*

this year.) He enjoys a perspective in which "retirement" has been rendered meaningless.

And now this blessed biography. Beware, dear friends. It opens and closes with a bite. It puts questions and choices before the reader. Thanks go to Bechtel and Coughlin for this good book. And to McCrackin (not to mention the Lord of his conscience) for this good life. **TW**



Papua New Guinea: Fertility spirit

credit: Betty LaDuke

(Originals of the art work by Betty LaDuke here and on page 5 are done in four colors.)

# The December issue: *Birthing in the face of a dragon*

Revelations 12



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