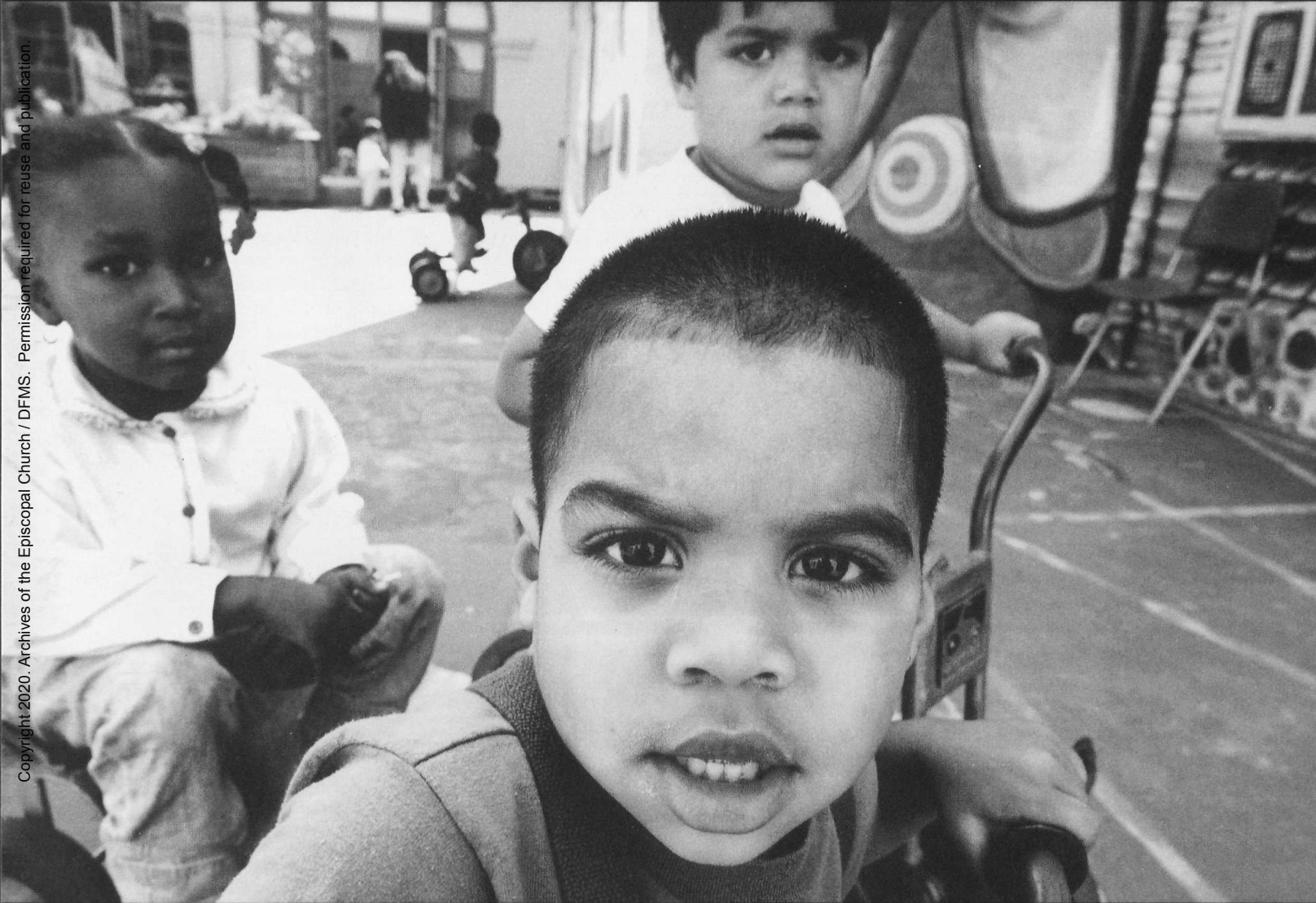


# The Witness

Volume 82 • Number 4 • April 1999



*A national disregard for children*

## Community food security

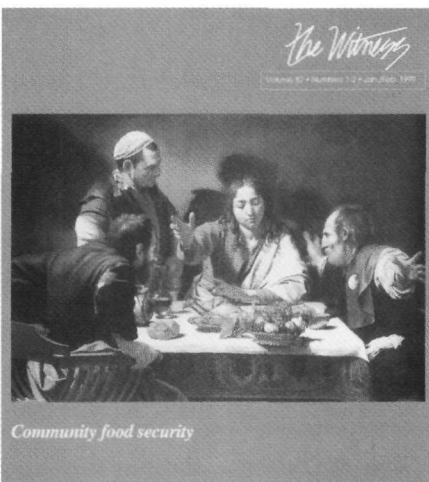
I'M WRITING IN RESPONSE to Anne Cox's "Editor's Note" in your Jan./Feb. issue, re "Community Food Security: just food."

I admire Anne very much — as I do all of you at *The Witness* — but I am tempted to ask, "So what?"

The Food Movement is the oldest of the modern movements. Indeed, all of the ones now are spiritual children of the Anti Corn Law League.

When the League succeeded in getting the Corn Laws repealed the movement fell apart into all of the other questions/concerns that people have. Abolition, Suffragism, Socialism, and the Irish Question come to mind.

But, where are all of those questions today? The English are still in Ireland. People who now have the vote may wonder how



much value it is. And those who aren't hungry may be eating contaminated food.

I'm not much for getting involved in the food movement. Not because I'm against people eating. I'm not even involved in the ecology movement. And I would definitely prefer to continue breathing.

Rather, I guess that I would say that everyone has their favorite movement and the place is still a mess.

I've been pestering people for years about sharing political power. And most folk have reacted as if that made me a quaint eccentric. While that might even be true, I prefer to think of myself as an ignored prophet.

Maybe what I should say is that we can go on ignoring each others' movements and the world will continue a mess precisely because we are ignoring each other. Or maybe we can begin to try to figure out priorities of the various movements. And maybe even begin to solve some problems.

To me it is a variation on the old argument as to whether to give a person a fish or teach them how to fish. And to me the answer is neither. Rather, to me, the answer is to divide the power so that there is a political structure that can enforce sane fishing regulation to ensure that there are enough fish for the future; and jobs so that folk can afford fish.

But! Maybe even we Church folk can begin to make some sense out of our part.

Another line of "movement" started when the earliest Church decided to solve two of its problems by creating the diaconate to do the work and appointed their Greek members the first of those deacons. Second-class Chris-

Letters

## Classifieds

### Executive Director opening

The Episcopal City Mission (ECM) is a faith-based ministry that promotes social and economic justice through congregations and community-based organizations to identify and eliminate the systemic causes of poverty and oppression through the sharing of resources within the Episcopal Church and our broader society.

ECM seeks an Executive Director to design and implement strategies to work effectively with community groups, foundations and other organizations within the Church and to manage its ongoing programmatic, fundraising and constituent-building activities.

Candidates must possess related community or faith-based activist experience and proven leadership and management skills. Call 617-482-4826 x691 for full job description and application instructions.

### Director of Religious Education and Youth

St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Day School, an urban parish of approximately 600 members and a private day school with approximately 450 students, pre-school through eighth grade, is seeking a qualified full-time Director of Religious Education and Youth. Familiarity with Episcopal or similar religious tradition is required, as is education and training or strong experience in Christian religious education. Ordination is not a prerequisite but persons who are ordained or anticipating ordination are encouraged to apply. Parish leadership has made a fresh commitment to a new emphasis on *Christian Education*. We need a person with strength and vision to take us into this new phase of our life together.

Please contact The Rev. Robert E. Wood, Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church & Day School, 11 East 40th St., Kansas City, MO 64111 or call 816-931-2850; fax 816-931-0072.

### Seabury-Western Young Adult Ministry Program

Seabury-Western Theological Seminary invites inquiries and applications for Young Adult Ministry: A Curriculum for the Postmodern Church. Students may choose MTS., M.Div. or Certificate curriculum. For more information, call 847-328-9300 x26.

### Order of Jonathan Daniels

The Order of Jonathan Daniels is an ecumenical religious order in the Anglican tradition of Vowed and Oblate lay persons of both genders, single, committed or married, living and working in the world, who are engaged in justice ministries. Write: OJD, P.O. Box 8374, Richmond, VA 23226 or <OrdJonDanl@aol.com>.

### Episcopal Urban Interns

Work in social service, live in Christian community in Los Angeles. For adults 21-

tianity is that old! Things haven't changed all that much when blacks and women are still tokens among the clergy within a church in which they make up the majority.

Black people started their march toward what we like to think of as "equality" with the question of baptism a few centuries ago. Just as women may eventually extend their recent ordinations to include political parity.

It would seem that the human needs some sort of religious conversion to make even small changes.

But! Can we speed the process?

If I might be permitted to borrow a bit from Julie Wortman's interview with Barbara Harris, "In that great gettin' up morning," Ms. Harris says, "Compared to the male bishops, we (women bishops) tend to be more outspoken, more forthright, more honest in what we say on the occasions that we speak."

That isn't surprising. Men never have been known to be all that honest; either with others or even with themselves.

Indeed! That is what the whole fuss of the impeachment is about. To give the right wing devils their due, they are correct when they say that there should be some measure of

30. Apply now for the 1999-2000 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. 310-674-7700.

### Beyond Inclusion

Be part of the advocacy for full inclusion of gays and lesbians within the church by attending "Beyond Inclusion: Making the Justice Connections," April 15-18, 1999 at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York. Presentations will be made by The Rt. Rev. Bennett J. Sims, From Conviction to Conviction; The Rev. Dr. Renee L. Hill, Homophobia, Racism, Sexism: A Complex Design; and Dr. Deirdre J. Good, The Use of the Bible in Debates about Same-Sex Unions. There will also be a variety of workshops conducted by an exciting line-up of leaders of the church. For more information and materials, contact: Beyond Inclusion, 132 N. Euclid Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101; (626) 583-2740; or check our website at <[www.beyondinclusion.org](http://www.beyondinclusion.org)>.



honesty. It is just that they don't volunteer to let go of their own versions of dishonesty. And I would be so impudent as to ask women: What are the limits of your own honesty?

It really doesn't make a lot of difference whether men waste their arguing about Impeachment or piddle along not solving other problems. Or, for that matter, women rationing their own honesty.

Whether it is women priests not noticing a next step in the logic of their ordination — political parity? — or men playing mental pocket pool as to whether honesty needs an oath before it becomes mandatory, the human problem is rooted in our habit of denial. Everybody seems to figure that nothing is important enough to do until the "right people" agree! I guess that the white power structure

will be fated to keep on bumbling because blacks and women (and whoever) are too timid to tell them that they are bumbling because they might get upset and deny somebody a crumb that they may — eventually — not have to bother giving them anyway. Maybe that is what is meant by "games people play."

I am also reminded of Ms. Harris' old saying: "The struggle, indeed, continues." I would just ask Ms. Harris, Ms. Cox, and the rest of you good folk at *The Witness*: How long?

**John Kavanaugh**  
Detroit, MI

### 1998 fundraising campaign

EACH YEAR'S END, I make up a contribution list. Each year I wonder if the result of the money I send to church budgets cancels the money I send to other organizations. It is not so with my contribution to *The Witness*. While much of the church might frown on the things I choose to fund, I believe you would rejoice! Thanks for the voice you bring.

**Martha Cornish**  
Atlanta, GA

### John Priesner

*The Witness* has received a contribution from Lucinda Martin in memory of John Priesner, "a wonderful [Episcopal] priest," who died in Kansas City, Kans., this past January. *The Witness* staff and the board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company is grateful that Martin has chosen to honor Priesner in this way.

*letters continued on back page*

# The Witness

Volume 82 • Number 4 • April 1999

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*More than 14.1 million U.S. children live in poverty, putting them at risk of malnutrition, homelessness, abuse and neglect. Welfare 'reform' is only making matters worse.*

**16 What is ailing America's adolescents? an interview with Patricia Hersch** by Julie A. Wortman  
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**21 Kids for sale: making profits from elementary school** by Rachel Brahinsky  
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**23 A do-or-die target audience** by Jane Slaughter  
*Almost 90 percent of tobacco smokers began smoking as teens, making adolescents the crucial audience for tobacco industry advertising. Despite some recent restrictions on ads, teens get the message all too easily.*

*Cover: Children at government funded preschool in San Francisco, Alain McLaughlin/Impact Visuals.*

*The Witness* offers a fresh and sometimes irreverent view of our world, illuminated by faith, Scripture and experience. Since 1917, *The Witness* has been advocating for those denied systemic power as well as celebrating those people who have found ways to "live humanly in the midst of death." We push boundaries, err on the side of inclusion and enjoy bringing our views into tension with orthodox Christianity. *The Witness'* roots are Episcopalian, but our readership is ecumenical. For simplicity, we place news specific to Episcopalians in our Vital Signs section. *The Witness* is committed to brevity for the sake of readers who find little time to read, but can enjoy an idea, a poem or a piece of art.

**Manuscripts:** We welcome multiple submissions. Given our small staff, writers and artists receive a response only when we are able to publish. Manuscripts will not be returned.

The editor whose editorial appears on page 5 crafted this issue.

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# What's in a name?

by Julie A. Wortman

**T**he *Witness* has always endeavored to keep the level of hope greater than the level of despair. But this month it has been a special challenge to remain sanguine as we've probed the dimensions and strength of the forces which are damaging the health and welfare of American children. As Children's Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman notes with justifiable, perhaps weary, outrage, "millions of children are growing up unsafe, unstimulated, under-educated, sick, hungry, neglected or abused." More scandalous still is that so much of this suffering has been cultivated and sanctioned by government social policies that stem from a national idolatry of market capitalism which relentlessly drums a mantra of profit, profit, profit into the public ear.

It is not that good people in every community and every state aren't addressing children's needs in countless imaginative and concrete ways. Here in Maine, Jim Hanna of the Maine Coalition for Food Security has been working on making sure that hungry children have non-emergency access to nutritious food. My friend Deborah Cotton has for several years been part of a cadre of Knox County adults mentoring adolescents caught breaking the law for the first time — shoplifting, drug possession, drunk driving — in the knowledge that some truthful talk, combined with respectful work on decision-making skills, can help shift kids away from self-destructive behaviors (the program's success rate is 98 percent). Our neighbor across the road, Jack Carpenter, has pioneered a program that brings at-risk

youth and local adults together for camping trips that provide a basis for moving from shared fun to sharing concerns about deeper issues. In affluent Camden, students in the alternative high school are getting help in establishing a shelter for homeless teens from advisors and community leaders who understand that many of the clients will be students at the school. In



Dierdre Luzwick

Lewiston, Norwich House provides a supervised setting for teen mothers (and their children, who otherwise would be taken from them) in desperate need of personal support and mentoring in life and parenting skills. Outright is a recently established Portland-based non-profit that already has a mushrooming program of support and drop-in services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth who need safe, positive and affirming environments in which to be themselves. And the faith-based Genesis Community Loan Fund

headquartered in nearby Bristol, invests in enterprises that provide low-income families with affordable housing and transitional accommodations for mothers with children suffering from domestic violence (see *TW* 12/98).

Every reader will have their own list of encouraging near-at-hand examples of people and programs concretely meeting daunting needs. Such witness is crucial in saving lives. But my pessimism is based on a suspicion that the bad-news statistics will continue to accrue unless more of us in this country have a radical change of heart that results in elected leaders and a public policy that value children's lives more than money.

I find myself engaged by author Patricia Hersch's (see p. 16) observation that each of us can begin to change a national climate that devalues the lives of children by making a point of greeting the kids in our neighborhoods by name. For my friends Deborah and Jack and for all the folks involved in programs we cite as causes for hope, it is the children and families they have come to know who keep them committed to the work. So it seems likely that the more children we each know by name, the more we will know of their lives. And such familiarity should make it less and less possible to remain content with politicians, government leaders and policy makers — perhaps even ourselves — who shrug off kids' reality with simplistic or dismissive generalizations, claiming as justification for budget cutbacks a cupboard-is-bare economy.

So what's in a name? Perhaps the strongest basis for hope. **TW**

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**Julie A. Wortman** is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*, <julie@thewitness.org>. Artist **Dierdre Luzwick** lives in Wisconsin.

editor's note

# Naming our demons?

by Holly Lyman Antolini

“I don’t think people understand what Marilyn Manson is about,” commented my 15-year-old daughter one afternoon last spring.

“Who is she?” I asked.

“Mo-hom,” she complained in disgust at my ignorance, “HE is a rock musician, heavy-metal, who’s put out a CD called ‘Anti-Christ Superstar.’ Lots of teens listen to him, especially guys. People think he’s some kind of Satan-worshipper but I think they just don’t get what he’s doing.”

I listened with respect: This teen has a lot of perceptive good sense. But I had no way to judge her remarks.

Oddly, within the week, there was a page-long article in *Time* describing Manson in some detail, including a story of some young men in Texas who, after listening intensively to the musician, had committed some violent acts for which Manson, when queried, declined any responsibility. Now I was curious to know more.

I borrowed a copy of “Anti Christ Superstar” (from a teen friend of my daughter’s who was a bit tentative about loaning it to a priest!). Its lyrics, twisting with irony and laden with violent and explicit sexual imagery, reeked of despair: despair over our American addiction to materialism, our abiding religious hypocrisy, our masochistic worship of the excesses of “stardom.” “His despair is not my despair,” I pondered, “but his questions are my questions!”

The music itself surged with all the energy the words might have sapped. Texts from the Books of Revelation and Daniel were turned on their ears. This

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**Holly Antolini** is an Episcopal priest living in Cushing, Me., <hantolin@mint.net>.

young man knew his apocalyptic Bible, but hated the evangelical tradition of good-versus-evil dualism from which his knowledge stemmed. He seemed in his lyrics to hold out no hope of release from the evils he named, yet the music itself, the sheer act of its composition and performance, embodied that hope in a shockingly confrontative mode.

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*Could it be that our youth are finding in Marilyn Manson a more honest and morally challenging truth-teller than they are finding in the churches?*

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I picked up a copy of Manson’s autobiography, *The Long Hard Road Out of Hell*, written with collaborator Neil Strauss and as saturated with disaffection, drugs, and sexual acting-out as Manson’s music. “As a performer,” Manson writes, “I wanted to be the loudest, most persistent alarm clock I could be, because there didn’t seem like any other way to snap society out of its Christianity- and media-induced coma.”

Can we Christians bear to hear the wake-up call? We are alarmed about the rate at which teenagers are declining to go to church or participate in church-related activities. But could it be that our youth are finding in Marilyn Manson, with his potent arsenal of angry and destructive imagery, a more honest and morally challenging truth-teller — albeit a truth-teller with no salvation to recommend — than they are finding in the churches which would presume to guide them into All Truth?

Consider the impact of the advertising which barrages these young people daily and hourly from TV screens, magazines, the Internet, buses, billboards, even school scoreboards and bulletin boards — images and messages designed to convince them that they can never consume enough. And for many teenagers sexualized romance has replaced God as the icon of salvation, with drugs and alcohol offering a way of dulling disappointments.

Perhaps we are unwilling to face these things because we are unwilling to look at how we ourselves participate in these same idolatries and wrap ourselves in a comforting cocoon of illusions — that petroleum resources will last forever, that nuclear weapons will never degrade or be detonated, that the disproportionate rate at which North Americans are consuming the world’s resources is OK, that we can technologically “fix” global warming before it’s too late. How can we ask our youth to put their faith in the freeing, forgiving and healing love of Christ if we do not let that love empower us to meet these questions and dilemmas head-on and convert us to a more humane and sustainable way of life?

The alarm Marilyn Manson sounds is indeed apocalyptic and terrifying, not because he is a Satan-worshipper, but because he names our demons. If his despair and its popularity are any indication, our children are at profound risk. As are we. Manson challenges those of us in the churches to resist chastising him and his listeners with religious platitudes and nostrums and take up our own crosses, heading for the Jerusalem of our own addictions, self-delusions and self-gratifications.

If we can find the grace of a deep trust in God that would enable us to step away from the temptations which absorb us, perhaps our children can do so also. Perhaps that Way of the Cross will open a way of salvation not just for them, but for us all. **TW**

# Our Children

by Aneb Kgositsile

Every child in this maze,  
this labyrinth of horrors,  
this no-way-out alley of a society,  
this carcass of a culture,  
every child runs through this terrain  
with fear in his heart.

Every child runs with fear,  
with fear in her chest,  
fear in her legs,  
with fear she is panting, panting.  
Her heart is pounding, pounding with fear.  
She cannot see,  
for fear floods her eyes  
like tears she dare not cry.

O, my sisters!  
O, my brothers!  
Our children are running, running,  
circling in traps that  
we must dismantle.

He is running the whole day,  
and when he collapses in bed,  
he sleeps like an old man ready  
for death.  
Is there peace in his dreams?  
Does he tumble in the park's lush green?  
Does the laughter in his throat  
throw his head back in abandon?  
Do his eyes glint when he giggles?

Oh, my brothers!  
Oh, my sisters!  
They are running, running!

She is running, running,  
colliding into each day,  
pretending to be a child,  
veteran of a desperate marathon.  
She is running for her life.  
She is fighting the maze for her life.  
She is staring down death in the faces  
of her playmates.  
She is surviving the planet's  
deadliest course.

Oh, our children are running, running,  
circling in traps that we must dismantle.  
Oh, my brothers, my sisters!  
Place a hand on her shoulder.  
Touch his pounding chest.  
Hold them till their legs come to rest.  
Give them safe harbor.



# Squandering the future: a nation of children living in poverty

by Camille Colatosti

“Children are the future,” says Mary Cooper, the associate director of the Washington office of the National Council of Churches. “If we do not care for children now and provide resources that will make them productive adults then we put our own future at risk.”

Unfortunately, putting our future at risk is exactly what we, as a nation, seem to be doing. The latest census bureau statistics, from 1997, show that approximately 20 percent of the nation’s 70 million children live in poverty. This means that more than 14.1 million children are poor, living in families whose income falls below the federal poverty guidelines of \$256.35 a week, or \$13,330 a year, for a family of three. Even in this boom economy, the number of children in extreme poverty — those living below one-half of the poverty line — grew by 400,000 in the last two years.

What does this mean for kids? The effects of poverty on children are devastating, says Greg Duncan, a professor of education and social policy at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University. “Poor children are almost seven times more likely to experience child abuse or neglect than the non-poor. Poor children are 3.5 times as likely to suffer from lead poisoning. They are 2.2 times more likely to experience violent crime. And they are twice as likely to repeat a grade or to drop out of school.”

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**Camille Colatosti** is on the English faculty at Detroit College of Business, <colakwik@ix.netcom.com>.

In addition, they are more likely to suffer illness, malnutrition, lack of self-esteem, and other dangers.

The childhood stage in which poverty occurs also matters, says Duncan. “Family economic conditions in early childhood appear to be far more important for shaping ability and achievement than are economic conditions during middle childhood and adolescence. Episodes of deep poverty early in childhood appear most

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*“Can an \$8.7 trillion American economy not afford decent jobs, quality child care, education, and health care for all its children?”*  
—Marian Wright Edelman

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detrimental to children’s cognitive development.”

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund, calls child poverty “unforgivable.”

“The rosy view of American prosperity at the top hides deep and dangerous moral, economic, age and racial fault lines lurking beneath the surface,” she points out. “Shamefully high child poverty rates persist and children are the poorest group of Americans.”

Poverty limits options and may deprive children of hope, Edelman adds. “When legitimate avenues of employment are closed, poor youths turn to illegitimate ones, especially the lethal underground economy of drugs and crime

fueled by out-of-control gun trafficking.”

The result is violence that often kills — and imprisons. In fact, says Edelman, who points to a fivefold increase in the U.S. prison population since 1970, the government’s investment in prisons suggests that incarceration is an expected option for poor youth.

“Almost one in three young black males and one in 15 young white males between ages 20 to 29 are under some type of correctional control (incarceration, probation or parole). Two-thirds of state prison inmates in 1991 had not completed high school and one-third had annual incomes under \$5,000.”

Joseph Califano, head of Columbia University’s National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, reports that if present trends persist, one of every 20 Americans born in 1997 will spend some time in jail, including one of every 11 men and one of every four black men.

“Is this America’s dream for its children and itself?” asks Edelman. “Can an \$8.7 trillion American economy not afford decent jobs, quality child care, education, and health care for all its children?”

## Children and welfare reform

The problem of child poverty has been exacerbated recently with welfare reform legislation. In October 1996, despite protests from Edelman and others, President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act [see TW 3/98]. This law, which took effect on July 1, 1997, replaced existing welfare programs with a new federal one — Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). This program places strict guidelines on benefits. Families may receive help for no more than two consecutive years and no more than a total of five years.

As Edelman sees it, the President eliminated one program without putting anything better in place. “The President signed



it and he negotiated it all along, so I give him full responsibility with the Congress for this extraordinary backward step. He understands these issues profoundly and could have put forth a better alternative. He and the Congress cut child and family nutrition programs and support for legal immigrants without touching a dime in corporate welfare and without touching a dime of Pentagon welfare. It is unfair and unnecessary.”

A monumental task now is to convince policy makers of the devastating impact of TANF. As Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ, of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby, explains, “Congress tells us that they need ‘documented pain.’”

To attain written proof that people are suffering, NETWORK is gathering data by surveying 10 states and 60 agencies owned or operated by a variety of religious orders — soup kitchens, shelters, clinics, schools, literacy programs and more.

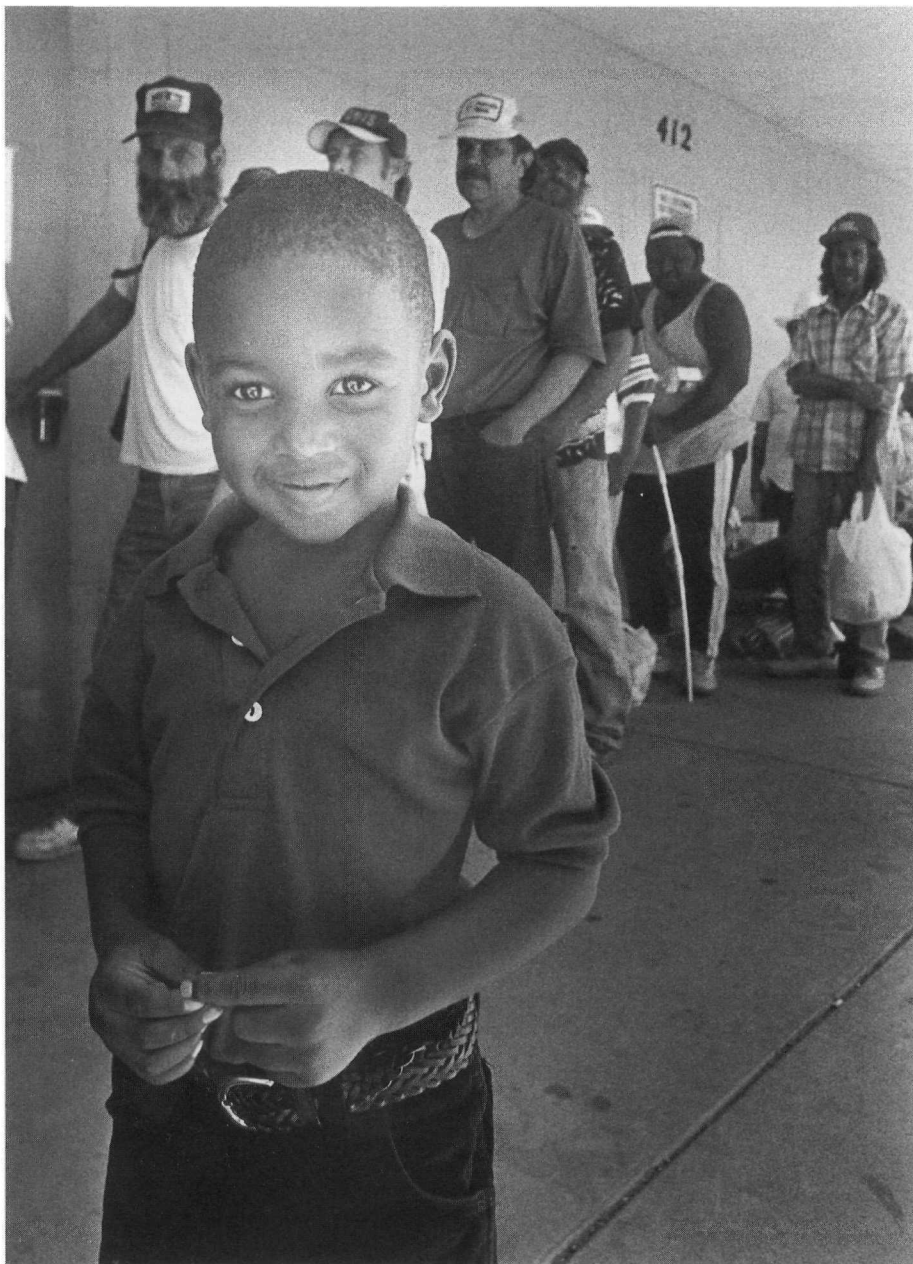
“There is a huge increase of people who are not receiving assistance and not working — and who are suffering,” Clark says. “We’re also finding that people who are working without assistance are not making it. They are using food pantries and soup kitchens more and more. In the last six months, there is a whole group of people who are newly homeless: mothers and children.”

Arloc Sherman, the senior researcher for the Welfare Monitoring Project of the Children’s Defense Fund, the most comprehensive assessment to date of the impact of welfare reform on children, agrees.

“The data tell a consistent story,” Sherman explains. “Lots of people are moving from welfare to work and most of the time at below poverty-level jobs. Some people do move from welfare to something better. Many more, though, move from welfare to worse.”

### **Moving from welfare to worse**

Among former recipients who find work,



**Michael Freeman waits for his mother to get his family’s allotment of food from the church-run Povarello House food program in Fresno, Calif.**

Thor Swift/Impact Visuals

71 percent earn below the poverty level for a family of three, averaging about \$250 a week. A joint report from the Children’s Defense Fund and the National Coalition for the Homeless, entitled *Welfare to What?: Early Findings on Family Hardship and Well-Being*,

examined more than 30 state and local studies to conclude that, by March 1998, 19 months after welfare reform went into effect, “only 8 percent of the previous year’s recipients had jobs paying weekly wages above the poverty line, barely up from 6 percent in March 1990,” before

welfare reform was enacted.

At the same time, the report revealed that the percentage of those with weekly wages below 75 percent of the poverty line was up from 6 percent to 14.5 percent. Only 22 percent of recent recipients had combined household earnings that brought them above poverty.

TANF allows for former recipients to maintain food stamps and Medicaid even after they find work, but many people do not know this. Sherman explains that “states are not doing enough to keep people informed.” In most cases, he believes, this is unintentional, more the result of bureaucratic mix-ups and miscommunications than a malicious attempt to deprive people of benefits. “But not in New York,” says Sherman. “New York is famous for making it deliberately hard for people to continue to get food stamps.”

States have likewise done a poor job of disseminating information about CHIP, the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Each state received a block grant that was intended to provide health insurance for all poor children, but lack of information about the effort has kept enrollment low. Today, 11 million children in the U.S. remain uninsured. More than 90 percent of these children have working parents.

“More and more families have emergency needs as a result of welfare reform,” points out the NCC’s Cooper. “People who lose welfare and their food stamps need assistance, like funds to pay utility bills or emergency food for their children.”

### **The impact of chronic hunger**

Almost 10 million American kids suffer every day from chronic hunger. According to Second Harvest, the largest chari-

table hunger-relief organization in the U.S., children compose 38 percent of the 26 million hungry Americans.

To alleviate the suffering, Second Harvest operates 200 Kids’ Cafes as part of its Childhood Hunger Initiative, a campaign to eliminate child hunger in the U.S. These cafes, located in 21 states, serve as foodbanks for children. Their goal is to feed and train today’s needy children to enable them to become self-sufficient adults.

The need for such programs is tremendous, says NETWORK’s Clark. “We’re



Well-child clinic in Colebrook, N.H.

Dan Habib/Impact Visuals

finding that parents are not able to feed their children adequately. They are trading off: going to soup kitchens or shelters to eat because they do not have enough money for their children. Soup kitchens used to have a stereotypical male population. Now, soup kitchens are overwhelmingly female with children.”

The Children’s Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program, a collaboration of pediatric specialists and advocates from six medical institutes, is also concerned about the quality and quantity of food that poor children eat. Founded to monitor the impact of welfare reform on the growth and health status of young children, the program, known as C-SNAP, is located in Boston’s Medical Center and exam-

ines children in Arkansas, California, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Minnesota.

The goal, says Anne Skalicky, C-SNAP’s multi-site coordinator, “is to link those at risk of growth or nutrition problems to clinical, social or other services, as well as to monitor and analyze data collected.”

Using a “health and hunger scale” from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, C-SNAP assesses whether or not children always have enough to eat, and whether or not they have the kinds of food that they require for proper nutrition.

As Skalicky states, “This is the only study right now that is measuring kids and asking detailed food security questions.”

Why is this important? Because “malnutrition is a key issue for children,” says Deborah Frank, the director of the Growth and Development Program at Boston Medical Center and one of C-SNAP’s principal physician investigators.

Most obviously, the malnourished child will be underweight and will not grow to be as large as a child who receives proper nutrition. (Although, Frank adds, “if you can refeed a malnourished child, you can get him to where other kids are in terms of size.”) But the more long-lasting effects of malnutrition concern what Frank terms “cognitive depletion.”

“Think about how you feel when you are fasting,” she explains. “You are cold, and achy and grouchy. You may lack energy. A child who is underweight may feel this way all the time. Learning suffers even before physical growth. Malnutrition may actually alter brain transmitters. Kids who are malnourished as infants are likely to have serious problems

in school through high school.”

The anti-hunger programs currently in place are inadequate, says Frank. The federally-funded Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) provides only enough formula for a child’s first four months. After that, kids need more than WIC provides and poor parents may have few options.

“The assumption of WIC — and all of these programs,” says Frank, “is that these will supplement people’s cash income, but in cities with high utilities and rent, like Boston, that supplement becomes people’s total food budget — and it is not enough.”

### Homeless families

When poverty reaches extreme levels, families may struggle not only for food, but also for shelter. Extreme poverty — 50 percent or more below the poverty line — frequently leads to homelessness.

Barbara Duffield, the director of education for the National Coalition for the Homeless, a non-profit advocacy network seeking to end homelessness through education, policy and grassroots organizing, explains that “homeless families are one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. Poor families are getting poorer.” According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, homeless children compose about 25 percent of all the homeless.

“Homelessness,” Duffield explains, “disrupts virtually every aspect of family life and disrupts education. With every move or change of school, three to six months of education is lost.” Kids may need to change schools because of short periods of homelessness, or because the district says that the child is no longer a resident.

The National Coalition for the Home-

less, along with other organizations, seeks the adoption of a federal law that gives homeless children the right to stay in school.

“Currently,” says Duffield, “there are some laws in place, but they need more teeth.” The school situation has improved for homeless children, though. “In the mid-1980s, 50 percent of homeless kids



Harvey Finkle/Impact Visuals

**The Kensington Welfare Rights Union staged an economic human rights bus tour to over 30 cities during the summer of 1998 as part of an effort to gather economic human rights violations by the U.S. to submit to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. The union is joining with other organizations in a campaign to pass a 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution that provides all citizens with a job and a living wage.**

were thought not to be in school. Now, roughly 75 percent are in school. But still a sizable number are not.”

For homeless children, school can pro-

vide a stability that is missing in every other aspect of their lives.

According to the Institute for Children and Poverty, “more than half (53 percent) of homeless children transferred schools at least once during the last school year; 7 percent of homeless children transferred three times or more; 27 percent of homeless children missed at least 10 days of school during the last year; 12 percent of homeless children missed more than 20 days of school; one in five (21 percent) homeless children have repeated a grade in school, a rate more than double that of all school-aged children nationwide. One in 10 are in special education classes.”

In 1998, the Institute for Children and Poverty completed what it terms the first widespread study of family homelessness. Looking at 10 cities across the nation — Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Eugene, Milwaukee, New York City, Norman, San Antonio, San Francisco and South Bend — the Institute concluded, “Homelessness today is a family issue.” The study interviewed 777 families, representing 2,049 children including 1,508 children in shelters and another 373 in alternate care.

The findings are disturbing. Over half (58 percent) of homeless families are African-American, compared to 12 percent in the general population, followed in frequency by whites, who compose 22 percent of homeless families and 74 percent of the general population.

Eighty-one percent of homeless families are headed by a single parent. Seventy-eight percent are headed by a single mother. Sixty-two percent of these mothers never married. Only 5 percent are not citizens but green card holders. Less than 1 percent are undocumented immigrants.

# What are working parents to do?

“Whether it is child care, Head Start, pre-kindergarten or afterschool activities for school-age children, far too many American children and families are not getting what they need because good programs are often unaffordable and difficult to find,” says Children’s Defense Fund founder and president Marian Wright Edelman.

The most recent census information, from 1997, shows that almost two-thirds (65 percent) of women with children younger than six and more than three-fourths (78 percent) of women with children ages six to 13 are in the labor force. In addition, 59 percent of women with children younger than three are working. For most, employment is not a luxury, but essential. Fifty-five percent of working women in the U.S. bring home half or more of their family’s earnings. But even with this effort one-third of the children of working mothers are poor.

The 7.7 million children under age five whose mothers were employed were being cared for by someone other than their parents while their mothers worked: 33 percent were in child care centers; 21 percent were in family child care; 33 percent were cared for by relatives; and 6 percent were cared for by nannies in their own homes.

For many families, child care costs are unaffordable. Full-day child care costs anywhere from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year, and about half of America’s families with young children earn less than \$35,000. A family with both parents working full-time at the minimum wage earns only \$21,400.

Helen Blan, the child care director of the Children’s Defense Fund, notes that parents face higher tuition costs for quality child care than for public college.

“While many parents believe college costs will be the biggest expense they face for their children, in fact many will spend more in a year on quality child care than on public college tuition.”

Many advocates also express concerns about the quality of child care. Much of the care that is available isn’t regulated. Only 23 states have training requirements for child care teachers and there are no federal requirements. In addition, the turnover among child care workers, the second low-

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*Full-day child care costs anywhere from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year, but half of America’s families with young children earn less than \$35,000.*

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est paid occupation in the U.S., is extremely high. The three million child care workers in the country — 96 percent of whom are women — average less than \$12,000 annually. Fewer than 30 percent receive employer-paid health insurance. Most earn no paid vacation and fewer than one in five has a retirement plan.

## Head Start

One of the most successful federal programs concerning young children’s welfare is Head Start, a preschool program for children at-risk. As Blan, of the Children’s Defense Fund, explains, “Head Start works. Research shows that children who participate in Head Start are less likely to be held back in school or be assigned to special education classes, and they tend to be healthier. Studies also show that Head Start has immediate effects on children’s self-esteem, achievement, motivation, and social behavior.”

Unfortunately, Head Start is underbudgeted. Only about one-third of all children who are eligible, or 752,000 children, are able to attend due to funding limitations.

Perhaps more troubling than the federal government’s underfunding of Head Start and child care programs is the reluctance of some states to make use of the federal dollars available. The federal government provides funding for child care through Child Care Development Block Grants — grants given to the state to ease the cost of care for parents. But, says Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ, of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby, “a lot of the money for child care just sits at the state level because the state has to match it and states are unwilling. They may say that they are saving funds for a rainy day, or they may mandate a co-pay so high that people can’t afford it. The state of Ohio actually sent back money that they said they didn’t need.”

## “Self-care”

For older school-age children, the care options diminish. The Children’s Defense Fund estimates that nearly five million children leave school each day for empty homes. According to the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College, children in “self-care” are more likely to have poor self-adjustment, to exhibit poor academic performance, to experience increased isolation and loneliness, to have decreased self-esteem, to have increased susceptibility to problem behavior and to be significantly more likely to use cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reveals that students who spend no time in extracurricular or afterschool activities are 50 percent more likely to have used drugs and 37 percent more likely to become teen parents. A 1990 University of California study showed that unsupervised children are at significantly

higher risk of truancy, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior and substance abuse.

Michelle Seligson, executive director of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, believes that without programs for middle and high school students, the majority of children in this age group spend their out-of-school time watching television. "We know the impact of that on kids," Seligson says. "Kids read less, play less, and are more aggressive. On average, American children spend 40 hours a week watching television and playing video games, more hours than they spend in school, and children in low-income households are estimated to spend 50 percent more time watching television than their privileged peers."

The necessary ingredients for healthy kids, Seligson argues, are caring relationships and constructive activities.

"Kids do better in school, are more self-assured, if they attend carefully planned but flexible programs where the primary work of the adults is caring about and for the kids. We develop a sense of self not in a vacuum but in relation to others."

But the creation of such programs is expensive. Few school districts have extra funds. Most afterschool programs — 83 percent — depend on parents for their survival, and many parents simply cannot pay. As a result, poorer children may not have the same exposure to ideas, skills and positive relationships with adults and peers as wealthier children. With fewer opportunities in childhood, poor kids may grow to feel isolated, constricted and full of self-doubt.

The need for additional programs is great. Today, only 30 out of every 100 schools offer some kind of extended-day program, and in rural areas, only 18 out of every 100 schools do. — C.C.

The typical homeless family in the U.S., then, is composed of a single African-American mother, about 30 years old, with between two and three children, whose average age is five.

Most people are not homeless forever, but neither is homelessness brief. Duffield explains: "Most are homeless for about eight months. But more people go through homelessness than ever before, and many go through it two or more times. Homelessness is a bigger problem than most people realize because homeless children are invisible. They are not the people on corners or in the media. But they are there. Look around your community and you'll see them."

To Duffield, there is nothing inevitable about homelessness. "It hasn't always existed and it doesn't have to continue. If we think about the history of homelessness, we'll recall the hobo figure or the man on Skid Row. Family homelessness is a product of the early 1980s and onward. In Los Angeles, for example, the number of shelter beds for families tripled between 1986 and 1996."

"Now, we're at the end of the 1990s and people are used to it. But we shouldn't be. We're at the largest affordable housing gap since 1970. Between 1990 and 1995, we lost one million units of affordable housing. There was a shift in resources."

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that households with housing costs exceeding one-third of their monthly income are at risk of losing their home and eventually becoming homeless. A recent study of the homeless in Newark, N.J., for example, found that one in every four households had housing costs greater than 50 percent of their monthly income.

The primary reasons families cited for becoming homeless were doubled- and tripled-up living situations. Cydelle Fox, a research associate at the Institute for

Children and Poverty, explains that "this is common among low-income families unable to afford their own housing. They begin a nomadic journey, living with relatives or friends for some period of time before having to finally go to a shelter."

Along with housing costs, Fox also found that welfare reform has contributed to homelessness. "Nineteen percent of families in shelters had their benefits cut in the six months prior to arriving at the shelter. As a result of the cuts, 50 percent said they became homeless. We were shocked because we didn't expect to find results from welfare reform that quickly."

"A few months ago, in San Diego and Washington, D.C., we saw that up to one-third of the homeless had their benefits cut. Of those, 77 percent said that they became homeless as a result."

"Of those whose welfare benefits were reduced or cut, 31 percent found a job, but 64 percent lost that job within the year; and 11 percent surrendered at least one child to alternate care as a result."

### Foster care

There is a strong link between homelessness and foster care. Many foster children grow up to be adults who suffer homelessness. Fox explains, "Among homeless adults in New York, 20 percent had been in foster care as children." In addition, poor parents are at risk of losing their children because poverty is a reason for having a child removed.

"The sudden increase in foster care placement in San Diego in the last year reflects these findings," says Fox. "While foster care placement remained constant at around 200 between 1994 and 1997, in the last year that number has more than doubled to 409."

There are times when Child Protective Services (CPS), which oversees the foster care system in the U.S., must step in

and remove a child from an abusive parent, but, for more than 25 years, the effectiveness of state and local Child Protective Services has been questioned. Agencies have been accused of both interfering in family affairs and failing to act to protect children.

The story of Kayla McKean, a 6-year-old Florida girl who was killed by her father in January, is not unique. Social workers ignored all the signs, including Kayla's black eyes and the fact that she was tied up when they visited her home just days before her murder. Jack Levine, president of the non-profit Center for Florida's Children, says, "Give me a reason not to be outraged. A series of mistakes turned out to be a death sentence for this little girl."

Seeing Child Protective Services as itself a "series of mistakes" is not uncommon for children's advocates. Leroy Pelton, a social services expert, explains, "The structure of CPS links a helping mission to support families with a coercive mission to investigate families and remove children." These contradictory roles may make it impossible for CPS workers to do their job. Add to this the almost three million reports made to CPS annually, and agency underfunding, and you have a recipe for failure, says Pelton. About one-third of the reports made to CPS each year are substantiated. Of these, about half (52 percent) are for neglect and 25 percent for physical abuse. The remainder are for sexual or emotional abuse.

As Pelton explains, "Caseworkers' decisions about specific cases are the heart of child protection, but the CPS system has only a limited capacity to tailor its response to individual condi-

tions: Fewer than one-third of CPS direct service staff hold social work degrees. Turnover is high and job satisfaction — and salaries — are low. In 1997, the median salary for caseworkers with master's degrees in social work was under \$33,000.



A.J. Wolfe/Concord Monitor/Impact Visuals

**Roy Higgins holds a fish he caught at Drakes Park in Pittsfield, N.H. Many youngsters in this area live in families experiencing cycles of poverty.**

"Large caseloads in CPS and cuts in community services curtail agency efforts to help troubled families, and the effects of treatment programs on families with differing risk profiles are not well understood," says Pelton.

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*"Family poverty makes maltreatment [of children] more likely, especially if parents are unemployed, use drugs, or lack parenting skills. Government efforts to reduce poverty could help to prevent maltreatment."*

— Leroy Pelton

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Pelton proposes a solution. "Family poverty," he says, "makes maltreatment more likely, especially if parents are unemployed, use drugs, or lack parenting skills. Government efforts to reduce poverty could therefore help to prevent maltreatment and relieve pressures on CPS."

Unfortunately, government efforts have moved in the opposite direction. Welfare reform legislation has left the most vulnerable population in the country — children — more vulnerable than ever.

Saving children's lives, says CDF's Edelman, would require an honest examination and determined transformation of "the values and priorities of the wealthiest nation in history," a nation which condemns its children to poverty.

"How do we reverse the prevailing political calcu-

lus that would rather pay three times more to lock children up after they get into trouble than to give them incentives to stay in school and out of trouble through good afterschool and summer programs, jobs and service opportunities? How do we make it easier rather than harder for parents to balance work and family responsibilities and to get the community and financial support they need to carry out the most important role in America?"

With poor U.S. children worse off now than they were two years ago, there seems little national will to find acceptable answers to such pointed questions. But for those seriously committed to the well-being of this nation's children the proper focus seems clear. As Edeleman says simply, "I'm for ending child poverty as we know it, not for just ending welfare as we know it." **TW**

## Creating a Hitler

The comparison of Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler, invoked to justify economic sanctions against Iraq, may be a self-fulfilling prophecy, according to Dennis Halliday, who resigned his post as head of the UN Oil for Food program in Iraq last fall in protest against the sanctions.

"National Socialism grew up because of the Versailles Treaty and the harshness of the conditions we placed on Germany after the First World War," Halliday said in an interview with *The Progressive* (2/99). "The conditions that are being placed on Iraq are rather comparable, and we're getting the same kind of results. And that's very dangerous. If Saddam Hussein is gone tomorrow, the system can continue: The party is there, the military is there, his people are still there. There's not necessarily going to be a dramatic change. And because of the sanctions, we are building a new generation of Iraqi leaders who are as mad as hell, who are inverted more of the Taliban model."

In March, Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Mairead Corrigan Maguire of Northern Ireland and Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina traveled to Iraq as part of a Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) delegation. The delegation delivered nearly 1,000 "Covenants of Peace," signed by North American religious and secular communities, apologizing for the way the U.S. has treated the Iraqi people. According to UNICEF, at least 200 children are dying each day as a result of the economic sanctions.

## Rethinking curriculum priorities

Standard curriculum guidelines are inadequate for addressing the needs of at-risk students, says teacher Charlie Ross, who has worked with children in crisis for 27 years.

"There is a common perception even amongst those of us in the alternative schools, that somehow our curriculum should be running parallel to the district's so that our kids will be kept up to speed in terms of their writing skills, math and

science," Ross says (*Timeline*, 11-12/98). "The reality is that if you increase their reading level from 5th grade to 10th grade, you've done a wonderful service for that student. However, you will not solve their primary problem. That's not the solution to the issues they're facing. ... But who in any junior high would say that we're going to devote the semester to parenting skills, conflict resolution, communication skills, and violence prevention? What board would approve that? Very few.

"But look at the economics of what we're doing. If you save four kids a year from \$40,000 incarceration, then you can justify the cost of your whole program. It seems to me that fiscal conservatives would look at that and say, 'Wow, prevention is cost effective, it would work.'"

## CAT scans and salsa bands

Research has demonstrated that "exposure to music in early childhood opens neural pathways that facilitate pattern recognition and other basic mental processes," Jim Carnes reports in *Teaching Tolerance* (Spring 1999). "Educators fighting the erosion of arts from the curriculum can now bolster their arguments with CAT scans."

Carnes writes that "the State of Georgia is attempting to institutionalize the so-called 'Mozart effect' by sending every newborn home from the hospital with a classical tape or CD. The idea raises provocative questions: Of what value is music for children beyond its power to boost IQs?

"What distinguishes the European focus in recent cognitive research on music from earlier 'evidence' that we now call scientific racism? What resources — at home and at school — does a meaningful music curriculum require?"

Reporting on a program that brings Puerto Rican salsa bands into low-income Philadelphia schools, Carnes reflects that "the stated premise of the Philadelphia salsa project needs no scientific proof: '*Qué triste sería un pueblo sin música*' — How sad would be a people without music."

## The art of community

A weekend on "the art of community" will be held June 4-6 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Open to members of neighborhood associations, intentional communities, co-op houses and co-housing groups, the weekend will include workshops on conflict resolution, sustainable communities in urban neighborhoods and fundraising. For more information contact MidAmerica Housing Partnership, 701 Cedar Point Road NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402; 319-365-3501; <gathering@ic.org>.

## Amnesty targets U.S. police brutality

Police brutality in the U.S. is a "widespread and persistent problem," according to a recent report released by Amnesty International as part of its first worldwide campaign on human rights issues in this country.

"The human rights situation in the U.S. is bad, and our research shows it is getting worse," Amnesty's secretary general, Pierre Sané, told *Z Magazine* (1/99). "It is getting worse because there is a sort of warlike mentality in this country. There is a war on crimes, there is a war on drugs, there is a war on illegal immigrants, there is a war on terrorism. Law enforcement agencies are given a lot of scope to deal with these issues, which are presented as national threats. ...

"Certain groups can be targeted today, which gives police officers a sense of impunity, a sense of being above the law. Tomorrow it could be members of 'good society' who will fall victim to a police force which will not be held accountable, and that is not being sanctioned when abuses are being committed."



short takes

# What is ailing America's adolescents? an interview with Patricia Hersch

by Julie A. Wortman

*Journalist Patricia Hersch is author of the widely acclaimed A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence (Fawcett Columbine, 1998). A former contributing editor to Psychology Today, Hersch has written and reported about adolescents for many years, most notably about homeless adolescents in San Francisco and New York. A Tribe Apart offers an in-depth look into the lives of eight teenagers living in Hersch's own community of Reston, Va., where she and her husband have raised three sons. For three years she immersed herself in the lives of these young people, observing them in and out of school, listening to their stories and probing their thoughts, feelings and actions in an effort to understand the realities of their lives — and the ways those truths put their well-being at serious risk. Her subjects speak frankly about their "double" lives as teens who appear to be conventional students but who also live in a world where teens commonly are sexually active, well acquainted with drugs, alcohol and peer violence, and frequently suffer from domestic abuse and neglect.*

**Julie A. Wortman:** Do you have an impression about why *A Tribe Apart* has attracted so much attention?

**Patricia Hersch:** Yes, it provided the missing piece. It provided people with the feeling that they finally had a basis for a conversation about issues surrounding adolescents. I felt frustrated with myself that it took so long to write — six years —

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**Julie A. Wortman** is co-editor/publisher of *The Witness*, <julie@thewitness.org>.

but it takes a really long time to get to know people well and to discover the very complex inner workings of adolescents. And once that was on the table, people just grabbed it. It's immensely satisfying to have been able to begin to create a conversation.

**J.W.:** The book is called "a journey into the heart of American adolescence." The way you present their lives is highly imaginative, almost like reading a novel. What led you to decide to package your findings this way?

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*We have put a very unfair burden on parents, saying that parents have to do everything. I believe it is society's job to be a healthy presence in the lives of young people growing up.*

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**P.H.:** The approach I chose was one of the things that made the book take so long. I literally transcribed every word of every interview, so I had these eight humongous notebooks filled with not only what they said, but with what I said. At first, I tried all these different charts, chronologies, columns for different people. But finally I said this is ridiculous; I just have to immerse myself into the texture of their lives, the flow of their lives as they lived it and see what comes into my heart about it. The thrust of each person's story was there in these interviews. It was not something I made up. I

wanted people somehow to get the essence of these kids the way I was getting it, and also to sense their maturing over time.

**J.W.:** I'm interested in knowing your picture of a healthy adolescence.

**P.H.:** Number one, children need, as Cornel West has put it, that sense of being in the guts of their parents' lives. Kids need to know that they are the most important thing to their parents, more important than their work or anything else. Children need to feel a sense of love and security and that they can trust their parents to be there when they need them to be there to support them and to guide them through growing up. What that means is not necessarily that the parent always physically be there, but it's a sense of availability any parent can convey if they feel it. And if they don't feel it, the kids can pick that up in an instant.

I also feel that there should be some sense of time-appropriate growth and development. I don't think that requiring a child to be basically independent at age 10 is appropriate. I think that kids need to have the time and space to mature physically, psychologically, emotionally, and to get their work done at school. Those are the primary tasks of childhood.

It is important to stress that other adults besides parents have a key part to play in the growing up of children. We have put a very unfair burden on parents, saying that parents have to do everything. I believe it is society's job to be a healthy presence in the lives of young people growing up, meaning that as a society we must get our act together on values and morals. I don't know why this is so hard, why it has to be a political or religious battle. If you sat down a group of this country's adults and asked them what they think should be the basic qualities of a decent, happy human being, most would come up with similar lists.

**J.W.:** You say, "Adolescence is a jour-





**Slam dancing at a New York park concert**

Andrew Lichtenstein/Impact Visuals

ney, a search for self in every dimension of being.” And you say that young people need adults as role models, not moving targets, as they make that journey. Does the fact that so many adults in our culture seem themselves to be engaged in a search for self make them moving targets?

**P.H.:** The reason most adults remember their adolescence with a twinkle in their eyes, even as they complain about it, is because developmentally, as adolescents are questing, they are feeling their own power: that power to discern, the power to make decisions, the power of knowing and relating to a larger world and knowing that that world will keep on getting bigger as you get more access to it. And I think many adults today are continuing

to strive to grow and change and remain curious. I’m not at all comparing that quest for the full life with the mass confusion of not knowing which end is up that characterizes society today. I think that’s a loss of basic values; what the kids are doing is seeking basic values.

Kids see being grown up as a horrible state of being because it looks like such drudgery. While parents, especially women, may feel like we’ve overcome lots of barriers and now have access to great opportunities, all the kids see is wiped-out, stressed-out parents and it looks awful and unsatisfying. Not to mention that most of the kids feel really gypped. I can’t tell you how many kids tell me that they’re going to have the old-

time traditional marriage because they think that kids should get more of their parents’ time.

**J.W.:** Are you advocating the old model of stay-at-home mothers?

**P.H.:** The model of a mother at home in the kitchen waiting for the kids with freshly baked cookies was an aberration. Prior to the 1950s and 1960s, a mother’s role had never been solely to be in the kitchen, but children were never left alone so much because if mom wasn’t there, there was an extended family member or a boarder in the house or the children were brought out into the fields with the parent. One way or another — and I know we can criticize many aspects of this — children’s lives were structured so that

there was a great deal of adult involvement in them. The prosperity that came after World War II was also the basis of the tremendous mobility in American life. Families no longer were together, and patterns that had been in place were changing. Moms in the kitchen smoothed over the transition. So we tend to think that it is mothers in the kitchen that make healthy kids, but it is just that somebody in the kitchen helps to make healthy kids.

For the past 25 years we've been a working society and nobody has really taken that into account. Women aren't out there working because of women's lib. They're out there working because it takes two incomes to support a family and because women are as well educated as men. So it is not a parent issue. When parents start leaving their kids alone at age 10 it is because as a society we have not put our great inventive American heads together to figure out what we need to do in terms of the children. In Israel, when they needed men and women to fight a war and develop the land, they designed the kibbutz. I'm not saying that we should have the kibbutz system here, I'm just saying that societies do have an obligation to raise their children and this society is acting as if this problem is going to take care of itself.

**J.W.:** So it is too simplistic to blame "the breakdown of the family" for the problems that face teens?

**P.H.:** Right. My youngest son had both parents working at home for almost all of his school years. So he had every opportunity: a nice peaceful community and two parents who love each other and who could take him anywhere he needed to go. And yet, when he was a young adolescent and he wanted to run outside in the wonderful areas he had to play in, he had nobody to play with because his peers were told to stay in the house until their parents got home and, as they got older, many then had to take responsibility for

younger siblings. So my son was as stuck in front of the television set as any other child. That's a perfect example of why individual families cannot do it alone. We have to do something as a society to remedy the situation. A lot of parents would be more than happy to spend more time at home, but that requires that the work place be more accommodating.

**J.W.:** You talk about the difference between the world adolescents grow up in today as opposed to the world their parents grew up in?

**P.H.:** Today's kids are just in total freefall. Until I began researching *A Tribe Apart* I would have found certain aspects of their lives unimaginable. They don't have cur-

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*There's not a kid that I've been in contact with that has not seen one and usually several deaths of young people in their social circle.*

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few. They see parents sleeping around. As their hormones begin raging they have empty beds in empty houses available to them every day. Some parents think it is cool to smoke dope with their kids. Others let their kids stay home alone when they go out of town — eighth graders. There's no similarity of expectations or morality across the board. So it's confusing for the kids.

**J.W.:** I was interested in two scenarios in your book. The first involved some of the kids going to a community-hosted forum on ethics where at one point they shock the adults present by offering their view that in some situations cheating on an exam is the best option. The other involved the student newspaper and the outraged reaction of teachers and adults to a front-page story on two teens who had recently become mothers. In both cases I'm wondering about the issue of

moral decision making and where you see we are with a community consensus about that.

**P.H.:** Punitive acts against cheaters or teenage moms don't seem to have much effect. The kids just get more clever at cheating. I think kids need help in understanding life a little bit better.

That gets me back to where we were before: the basic tenets of a decent and fulfilling life. If you talk honestly with kids and give them the chance to learn from others' stories about the ramifications of certain choices, they can make better choices for themselves. I don't think it does anything for anybody to keep saying that if a person does thus and such they're bad, they're evil. I think that we need to really get into the heart of things. We've got to discuss values with them or else they're going to just try to make sense of it with each other and you can't expect teenagers to get it right.

**J.W.:** Are there adults trying to have that conversation with young people?

**P.H.:** I don't think so. If people were engaging in the larger issues, I don't think some of the political things that have happened lately would have happened. People are so inundated with things that they know are kind of seamy or not quite right that they don't even pay attention any more.

The thing that I feel so badly about is that I think kids are missing a lot of wisdom and very meaningful connections they could make with each other that will enhance their lives. For example, there's very little, for lack of a better word, courtship. Boys and girls stay away from each other and then they hop into the sack. Romance is none of the gradual holding hands. Any of it that happens happens in the third grade, and that's insane. So kids aren't learning about intimacy, about love. That's really sad. But they are learning about loss. There's not a kid that I've been in contact with that

has not seen one and usually several deaths of young people in their social circle.

**J.W.:** From suicide?

**P.H.:** There are suicides. There are drug- or alcohol-related accidents, even murder.

**J.W.:** This double life of kids. You bring that out very strongly in the book. These kids are good students, reasonable students, active in athletics and other activities, and then they are leading these lives where they're doing drugs at lunchtime, cutting classes, helping their friends get abortions, getting drunk at parties, roaming the streets at 3 a.m. It seems like most adults don't have any picture of that.

**P.H.:** I didn't know it was going to be like that either. But that's what I found. It is outside the realm of our imaginations that such a life has developed, although I should clarify that what looks like a double life to us is lived as one integrated life by them. I think maybe one of the roles my book is serving is to help us see this. It's pretty undeniable. Statistics and certain good studies back it up. It's not just the kids in Reston, it's kids everywhere. It's why, when I go to locations to speak, I like to spend some time with young people in the area. Within minutes we are talking about the whole realm of things that are important to them, not just the bad things. And then I can go to the adults I am speaking to later in the day and not only say this is what I discovered in my book, but I can also bolster it and say, look, this is what your kids told me.

**J.W.:** Are people horrified?

**P.H.:** Well, yes. They just don't want to believe it.

**J.W.:** What is your sense of the religious community's impact on the lives of adolescents?

**P.H.:** People seem to be surprised when I say that six of the eight kids in my book had a tie to formal religion. And not meaningless ties. They went to church. One was bar mitzvahed. Some were more

## Addressing deadly consequences

***Deadly Consequences: How Violence is Destroying Our Teenage Population and a Plan to Begin Solving the Problem*, by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D. (with Michael Weissman), Harper Perennial, 1991.**

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, former Commissioner of Public Health for Massachusetts, gained national recognition in the late 1980s for her work in violence prevention among adolescents. Her interest in the topic was stimulated by her work as a medical resident at Boston City Hospital. The typical "stitch them up, send them out," medical response to patients injured by violence led to her examination of violence as a societal "disease" that could be prevented through public health strategies. She developed and wrote the first violence prevention curriculum for schools and communities, entitled *Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents*. *Deadly Consequences* followed, presenting the public health perspective to a mass audience. In this book she writes:

*Educating students about violence is not an easy process. Not in this society, but if we do not tell kids that it is alright not to fight, no one else will. I think often about a young man I taught in one of my early violence prevention courses. The student talked about a friend of his who had been stabbed in a fight. The ambulance took about 20 minutes to arrive. The friend bled to death while waiting for medical help. The student was terribly hurt and angry about this death, which he felt was preventable. During the dis-*

*ussion that followed I understood not just with my head, but with my whole body, what I mean when I tell students that the violence prevention curriculum challenges them to claim their anger as normal and to use it to better themselves and their families.*

*In class that day we listed the young man's options:*

*1. He could beat up the ambulance driver.*

*2. He could slash ambulance tires and break ambulance windows.*

*3. He could take out his anger on a cat or dog.*

*4. He could beat up a little brother or sister or someone else.*

*5. He could write a letter to the city. (This is the typical adult, middle-class response, which has little meaning to poor kids. Letter writing, however, can work and adults should offer to help teenagers do it.)*

*6. The young man could get so angry that he decided to finish high school, become an ambulance driver and hope to chart the response times of ambulances in every neighborhood in the city. If the response times in poor neighborhoods were longer than in rich ones, he could blow the whistle.*

*This last option is a strategy of the oppressed which works. All of our great black leaders, from Harriet Tubman to Martin Luther King to Nelson Mandela, have channelled their anger at injustice into a force to reshape the world. This is what the violence prevention curriculum is all about. It is not about passivity. It is about using anger not to hurt oneself or one's peers, but to change the world.*

active than others. What I found is that they're hoping that answers will come to them in church. They're always looking for a place to get some real perspective about values that is based on a knowledge of their lives. And that, of course, is the real bugaboo, since most adults have no idea what's going on in their lives. The kids end up being frustrated. However, I think that church can be a very positive venue for kids to find some meaningful links. It's a great place for kids to get intergenerational contact. It is a place where the heavy issues could be addressed. Just putting kids in a youth group isn't good enough. Kids want to have a meaningful role. A reason that Habitat for Humanity works so well is that it is extremely tangible; it puts generations together to work on a common goal; it makes life better for people. Most kids have very big hearts.

Kids need a *community* of worship to which to belong, a place where practices of faith are visible and really lived. They need adults who are able and eager to explain what the practices mean — whether they involve worship, daily prayer or works of charity and justice — and how they invoke and respond to a larger reality. The adult members need to invite the youth to participate in everything the faith community does to impart order and meaning to life. And the religious community also needs to be strongly connected to the larger community that surrounds it.

**J.W.:** What about school? It seemed like some of the school experiences you describe were fabulous, but in other cases school sounded like prison.

**P.H.:** Schools are very individual. And, like always, there are some really wonderful teachers and some really terrible teachers. But I would say that the main problem is that school is not integrated into the other circles of kids' lives. For example, a sad example, I was speaking

to sixth graders about things they might want me to tell their parents at this meeting we were to have that night. A little sixth grade girl raises her hand, sighs and says, "I have to take care of my two little brothers every morning for two hours and 15 minutes and sometimes I would just like to go up to my room and be alone before I go to school."

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*Helping adolescents keep from self-destructing could be as simple as learning to call the kids in your neighborhood by their first names. The most important thing is to be real.*

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But my mom says I have to stay with my brothers every single minute until we go to school." She was 11 and her brothers are something like 8 and 10, and I thought, that's a huge responsibility for a little kid. I'm sure her parents just have no other options. But after doing that for two hours and 15

minutes, how's she going to feel in school? These days, too, there are so many lost kids. I see smart kids acting out in school, getting really terrible grades, just to say to their parents, in your face, in your face. During previous decades, those who dropped out were just a footstep away from stepping back in, but today's kids are so much more self-destructing in a lot of more subtle ways that I'm afraid that it's not going to be so easy for them.

**J.W.:** What would you say to average people about how they can help adolescents today keep from self-destructing?

**P.H.:** It could be as simple as learning to call the kids in your neighborhood by their first names. The most important thing is to be real. Listen to what the truth is about adolescent life and face it squarely. And then be available. Kids need to know that there are people around to help talk through things, their own particular things, without being judged. And be involved. Go to kids' activities, help create fun and meaningful options for them. Even if you don't have kids yourself, understand that these kids are the next grown-ups. **TW**

Percentage of gay, lesbian and bisexual students who attempted suicide in the past year: 36.5

Percentage of heterosexual students attempting suicide: 8.9

Percentage of gay, lesbian and bisexual students threatened or injured with a weapon at school in the last year: 66.7

Percentage of heterosexual students threatened or injured: 28.8

Percentage of gay, lesbian and bisexual students who have used cocaine: 31

Percentage of heterosexual students who have used cocaine: 11.8

Average age of self-awareness for gays, lesbians and bisexuals: 10-12

Average age of first disclosure for gays, lesbians and bisexuals: 16

Sources: 1995 Mass. Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Penn State University papers  
— *Maine Times*, 11/12-18/98

# Kids for sale: making profits from elementary school

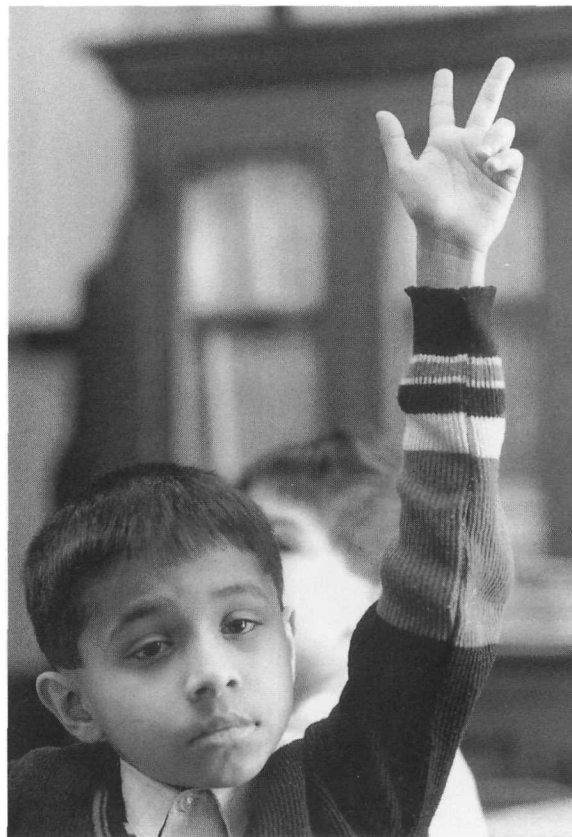
by Rachel Brahinsky

Donald Fisher is well-heeled and well-positioned to invest large sums of money where he sees fit. As founder and CEO of Gap, Inc. — which includes the Gap, Old Navy and Banana Republic — and as a high level political consultant, Fisher is one of the most influential businessmen in the country. In the past he has invested in timber land and biotechnology. Recently, the khaki tycoon turned his eye to public education.

Last year Fisher invested \$25 million in the Edison Project, a for-profit corporation that manages public schools. He tells reporters that he thinks education should be more uniform nationwide. And he believes strongly in the power of market capitalism. A company that ties the two together wins his approval — and his cash. “There’s a problem when each school has its own philosophy,” he confessed to *The San Francisco Chronicle* last fall. “They need to be more like our stores.”

By investing in the Edison Project, Fisher lends strong support to a company that has brought standard corporate strategies into the realm of public education. With the primary goal of making a profit, the Project strives toward uniformity in its products (from test scores to morality), weeds out teachers who don’t buy the corporate line, and

avoids students whose needs don’t fit into the money-making formula. And partially because many Edison schools



Bosnian refugee student at a Chicago elementary school.

Loren Santow/Impact Visuals

are charter schools, partially because they know how to strike a deal, the Project has nimbly shied from public accountability.

## Elementary schools — the new emerging market

Edison is the brainchild of Chris Whittle, probably best known for his earlier venture into the education-as-business world,

a company called Channel One, where he provided schools with technology free of charge. His “free” satellite dishes and televisions were given on the condition that students watch a 15-minute broadcast of news and commercials (including ads for Snickers and Coca-Cola) each morning. In 1991, Whittle sold that enterprise to fund his new project. Eight years later, Whittle’s Edison Project manages 51 public schools in 12 states. Most are

early elementary academies, to be followed by middle and high school programs as the Project expands. Whittle has schools in cities as diverse as Chicago and Battle Creek, Mich.; Worcester, Mass. and Sherman, Tex. The schools are funded primarily with public dollars. Each district gives the share of its funds earmarked for its school to the Project, which then divides its holdings among its schools. Once the company boasts at least 100 schools Whittle’s stockholders will begin to make good on their investments. This year Whittle hopes to open 30 new schools; by 2004, his goal is 250. To pique communities’ interest in Edison, Whittle offers computers for children to take home and provides increased technology in the classrooms. To follow through on this promise, in the first eight years of its existence, the Project has accepted millions in private donations and investments which have helped buoy the corporation. (It hasn’t been too hard to attract investors. In Donald Fisher’s case, it must

have helped that his son John, who owns 4 percent of Edison’s privately held stock, stands to profit from his father’s generous donation.) But while the company acknowledges the generosity of its donors, Edison literature defines the schools as public-private partnerships, claiming that they, as a private entity, can make

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more efficient use of public funds.

San Francisco school board member Jill Wynns is not deceived by the Project's PR. "What the privatizers will tell you is, give us the same money and we can do a better job," she says. "But what Edison is doing is un-leveling the playing field in favor of a for-profit company, to the detriment of other public schools."

In making the Project affordable — and potentially profitable — Edison's financial planners took a tip from Donald Fisher. Each school has matching materials and goals, taught in the same manner. "The schools are run with identical guidelines," says Gaynor McCown, Vice President of Corporate Strategies. "We'll earn money by having a very set curriculum."

#### **A McDonalds style education**

It might save money for the company in the long run, but in San Francisco's Edison school this fast-food approach has created an array of problems. Teachers have been "de-selected," in the words of the administration, and nobody knows who sits on the Edison advisory board required of all charter schools. And, despite the fact that the Project was brought in because the Thomas A. Edison Elementary School (the name similarity is a coincidence) once had some of the lowest test scores in the city, some troubled students have been rejected, or "counseled out."

"When we're talking about improving education for the students who were at the school before, we're not really seeing that," says Lindsay Hershenhorn, a former teacher at the school. "I don't see it addressing the deeper problems [like poverty and unemployment]. These people have no intention of improving the public schools. That's not their goal."

Jill Wynns agrees. And when she read about Fisher's chain-store philosophy of education, she was dismayed. "Do we believe that an effective way to run

schools," Wynns asks, "is to run every school in exactly the same way, using the same words on the same days with the same pictures on the walls?"

When pressed, both McCown and Edison Principal Barbara Karvelis counter that the curriculum is flexible. In fact, they say, every classroom is different because, though students read the same books and take the same tests, theirs and their teachers' personalities differ from those in the next classroom.

"Everybody knows," Wynns returns, "that when you walk into The Gap in San Francisco or Wichita, Kan., it's exactly

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*"The schools are run with identical guidelines. We'll earn money by having a very set curriculum."*

— *Gaynor McCown, VP of Corporate Strategies*

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the same. And that's how [the Edison Project] is."

McCown defends the rigidity of the curriculum, emphasizing that it is "research based." Perhaps for some students the \$40 million that Edison spent researching their program was well spent. But critics in San Francisco say that a cookie-cutter Edison curriculum won't work for their kids.

"The very idea of profiting from schools is based on the notion that when they have enough schools they will begin saving money, using the same materials on a national level," Lindsay Hershenhorn explains. "But this concept fails to recognize that communities are not all the same, communities have different needs."

This particularly raises problems for low-income and special needs students with whom Edison has a poor track record.

The Boston Renaissance Academy, one of the corporation's earlier ventures, was slapped with a Civil Rights lawsuit when one student was found to have been physically restrained on a regular basis throughout the school day. José Alicea, a parent elected to the school's advisory board, told the *Phi Delta Kappan* last March that school officials were arrogant and careless in relating to the low-income families whose children traditionally attended the school.

"The people at Edison didn't understand what they were coming into, and they didn't do their homework," he said. "They don't have a clue to handling people from non-mainstream, non-privileged backgrounds."

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) produced a report last year which alleges that not only don't Edison administrators understand the needs of low-income communities, they make a concerted effort at reducing the low-income, special needs population at their schools in order to save money. Parents point out that Edison's recruitment posters appear directed towards middle-class families.

The AFT report also contends that Edison has a pattern of seeking out middle-class kids in order to boost its test scores. The report demonstrates that the number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunches at a school tends to drop when Edison takes over, that in the five schools studied by the AFT, the percentage of low-income students dropped between 6 and 10 percent in the first few years. Their conclusion: "Since there is a strong correlation between student achievement and socioeconomic status, fewer poor children at Edison schools would probably increase the likelihood of higher test scores."

San Francisco parents and teachers are concerned that the same will happen there.

Presently the school is nearly half African American and half Latino; the lion's share of these youth reside in the Mission District and Bayview Hunters Point, two of the city's poorest neighborhoods. In order to serve these children — after all, these are the kids whose low test scores prompted the district to hand the school to Edison — Hershenhorn says that an educational atmosphere is needed that acknowledges their needs.

But children requiring special attention have already been “counseled out” of the school. That is, Edison officials told parents that the school was not capable of dealing with their “problem” children.

Jill Wynns tells one story: There was a kindergarten kid that lived near Edison, a recent immigrant. On the first day of the school year, his mother brought him down the street to enroll. With the assistance of a friend who works for the school district, the enrollment papers were filled out and the boy was accepted on the spot. Within a few hours, however, both his mother and her friend received word that there was a problem with the paper work, and that the boy could not stay at Edison elementary. Under pressure from the district official, the Edison faculty eventually admitted that the truth was the child was acting out in class and the teachers were not capable of handling the situation. When further pressed, the staff permitted the boy to attend school, but only for two hours each day.

McCown defends the practice, stating, “If we can serve their needs, we do. If we can't, it's only the responsible thing to do to counsel a student to move on.”

Wynns contends that since Edison re-

ceives public money to run the school, it should be required to accept every student, just like a regular public school.

“This should not happen,” she declares. “Edison accepts the money from the district that is supposed to go for special services for these kids but then does not provide the services. So where does the money go?”

In fact, because Edison is a private entity, it's hard to find out how they spend their money. In general, financial



Ronald McDonald visits a public elementary school in Ukiah, Calif., nominally to discuss safety.

Evan Johnson/Impact Visuals

information about the school is kept quiet; no one knows exactly how the district's money funnels through the corporation down to its students. And the channels that are supposed to make information more readily available to the public are not in place. All charter schools are supposed to have an advisory board that provides oversight for the program. Six months after the school opened its doors it was not possible to acquire a list of board members.

### Get with the program, or get off the bus

The growth of Edison's programs has introduced a new approach to labor relations in education — one that is decidedly non-union. Most of the nation's public

school teachers are represented by one of several unions; Edison teachers do not benefit from union protections and guarantees. The San Francisco Edison school pays teachers based on its own scale, bypassing the established union contract, even though their teachers are district employees whose salaries come from public monies.

As with students, when staff members aren't the Edison “type,” they don't last long. Lindsay Hershenhorn says that she

was asked to leave last spring when principal Barbara Karvelis felt she was not “on board” with the goals of the Project which was then involved in negotiations with the school district. After Hershenhorn's departure the Edison Charter Academy lost approximately 10 teachers in the first half of its first year as a private academy, the majority of whom still will not speak about the school publicly. Of these “de-selected” teachers, Karvelis says simply: “They weren't right for the program.”

Even in the wake of public criticism, the San Francisco school district leadership has embraced this take it or leave it management style, reinforcing Edison's decision to make staff and students conform. In a *San Francisco Bay Guardian* article last September, Superintendent Rojas made it clear that he won't put up a fight if Edison's labor practices don't meet union standards.

“If you have a disagreement [with Edison management], you can leave and go to a school that has binding arbitration,” Rojas told the *Guardian*.

“If a grievance procedure and binding arbitration are what make you an educator, transfer out now.”

TV

# A do-or-die target audience

by Jane Slaughter

**T**he tobacco industry may have gotten its biggest boost in years from the movie *Titanic*. It was probably historically accurate to show Leonardo DiCaprio's character puffing away, and Kate Winslet using cigarettes to defy her mother. But the message this blockbuster sent, that smoking equals freedom, must have gladdened the hearts of Philip Morris marketing execs.

Every day, 3,000 American kids become daily smokers. That's not "3,000 kids take a puff for the first time." (That figure is 6,000.) It means that 3,000 girls and boys under 18 — more than a million a year — become regular smokers, well on their way to addiction.

Anti-smoking activists argue that a big part of the reason teenagers smoke is that tobacco companies aggressively market directly to kids. Using the unyielding logic of capitalism, the companies *have* to do so: They need replacements for their current customers, who either quit or die. Since practically no one over the age of 18 takes up smoking (almost 90 percent of adult smokers began at or before that age), teenagers are cigarette companies' do-or-die target audience.

It appears to be working. While adult smoking has generally been decreasing, over the past 10 years the number of kids under 18 who become daily smokers each year has increased by over half a million, a greater than 70 percent increase. Thirty-six percent of high school students smoke (as compared to 25 percent of adults), and 16 percent of high school boys use smokeless tobacco. Over 250 million packs of ciga-

rettes are illegally sold to kids each year. If current trends continue, almost a third of these underage smokers — five million people — will ultimately die from tobacco-related causes.

Of course, kids aren't thinking about "ultimately." Who's cool today looms far larger. The tobacco companies know this and exploit it to the max.

## Industry still effective in court

But isn't the industry on the run? What about that multi-billion-dollar settlement they signed last year?

In some senses, yes, the industry is on the defensive, but Philip Morris, RJR and Brown and Williamson still hold enormous influence in politics — and enormous influence on kids' perceptions. In 1996, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued strong rules to restrict marketing of tobacco and young people's access to it. But the industry blocked most of those rules through court challenges. (The only FDA rule now in effect establishes 18 as the nationwide age for purchasing tobacco and requires retailers to check photo I.D. of anyone who appears younger than 27.) In 1998, the industry succeeded in defeating the McCain bill, which would have subjected tobacco to FDA regulation.

At the end of last year, 46 states signed an agreement with the tobacco industry, to settle lawsuits that had been brought by states' attorneys general. Although the amount of money the companies will have to pay sounds large — \$206 billion between now and 2025 — apparently they can afford it; none is threatening bankruptcy. The industry spends \$5.1 billion a year on marketing and advertis-

ing to increase cigarette consumption.

The settlement, which will not fully take effect for months, does prohibit some of the tobacco companies' favorite ploys such as billboard ads; brand-name sponsorship for concerts, football, hockey, baseball, soccer, or events where contestants are under 18; free giveaways of cigarettes or spit (smokeless) tobacco products; sales or giveaways of merchandise, such as caps, T-shirts or backpacks, that carry tobacco brands or logo (30 percent of 12-17 year-olds, both smokers and nonsmokers, own at least one tobacco promotional item).

The settlement fails to prohibit, however, some important marketing strategies:

- Selling cigarettes in vending machines and self-serve displays (Some anti-smoking advocates argue that marketers like self-serve displays because they encourage kids to shoplift.);
- Displaying advertising where tobacco is sold and at sponsored events;
- Using human images that appeal to kids, such as the Marlboro man (cartoons are banned—no more Joe Camel);
- Advertising in newspapers and magazines, including ones with large youth audiences such as *Sports Illustrated* and *Car and Driver*;
- Using cigarette brand names to sponsor auto racing and rodeos, even when televised.

The FDA rules would have prohibited these tactics, and also:

- Prohibited the sale of single or loose cigarettes and required packages to contain at least 20;
- Limited all outdoor and all point-of-sale advertising to black-and-white text only;
- Limited tobacco ads to black-and-white print only, in publications that have more than two million readers, or 15 percent of their total readership, under 18 years of age.

## Stronger than peer pressure

Even if the more severe restrictions on

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advertising someday go into effect — anti-smoking groups are pushing for new legislation this year — will they really reduce teen smoking? The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids cites a study published in *The Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, which concluded that teens are more likely to be influenced to smoke by advertising than they are by peer pressure. The researchers called up kids who said they'd never taken a puff, and then matched up those kids' recognition of cigarette ads, their reports of smoking among their peers, and their willingness to say they might try a cigarette some day. The study is not terribly convincing. A telephone survey where Mom and Dad might be listening? What kid won't at least try it once?

But if this attempt at scientific proof is not persuasive, the sales evidence is: Eighty-six percent of kids who smoke prefer Marlboro, Camel and Newport — the three most heavily advertised brands — while only about a third of adult smokers choose these brands. Marlboro, the biggest advertiser, takes almost 60 percent of the youth market, but only a quarter of the adult market. One study showed kids to be three times as sensitive as adults to cigarette advertising. Most of the nonsmokers in the survey cited above could name a "favorite" ad.

Between 1989 and 1993, when advertising for the new Joe Camel campaign jumped from \$27 million to \$43 million, Camel's share among kids increased by more than 50 percent, while adults showed no switch to Camels.

A 1994 article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* documented a rapid and unprecedented increase in the smoking initiation rate of adolescent girls in the late 1960s, after the launch of women's cigarette brands like Virginia Slims.

The smokeless tobacco people have

successfully turned "chaw" into a product whose main market is young men rather than old ones. They did this partly through introducing "starter products." "Cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I'm saying," said a former U.S. Tobacco sales rep.

#### Analyzing messages

Some middle school kids in New Jersey have produced a sophisticated analysis of cigarette ads. On the C.O.S.T. (Children Opposed to Smoking Tobacco) website, they reproduce an ad for Kool, which shows a girl seated behind a guy on a motorcycle. Surely the guy is cool; "after all, he's on a motorcycle. ... But notice how his picture is

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*"Cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I'm saying," said a former U.S. Tobacco sales rep.*

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faded out. Doesn't that signal he's on the 'way out' as far as this girl is concerned? Why is she ignoring him? The people at Brown and Williamson would like you to believe it's because he doesn't smoke. Notice that her eyes are on the guy with the cigarette."

Kool is running a whole series of print and billboard ads with this theme. Note that the message goes beyond "girls want guys who smoke" to the even more insidious "girls don't want boys who don't smoke."

The makers of Misty cigarettes use the slogan "Slim and Sassy" — what two qualities could possibly appeal more to teenage girls? In a Virginia Slims ad, a very confident-looking young woman is leading a young man by the hand. "Think about it," argue the kids from COST. "When a woman smokes, she gives up

her sense of independence, because she becomes dependent on nicotine."

The industry fights any restrictions on advertising tooth and nail. An internal Philip Morris document from 1981 says, "Today's teenager is tomorrow's potential regular customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke while still in their teens. ... The smoking patterns of teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris."

**Smoking can do more than kill you** Eric Lindblom of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids says a multi-faceted approach is needed to keep kids from picking up the habit. "It's much more complicated than telling them 'smoking will kill you,'" he acknowledges. "You need to tell them the immediate health and cosmetic and social impacts.

"You also need to make tobacco harder to get, at higher prices. The more inconvenient you make it, the more likely smokers are to stop. Smokefree workplaces have a good impact, for example.

"All these things that work somewhat work a lot more powerfully when they're combined."

The Campaign is asking concerned parents to do two things this year: First, pressure your state legislators and governor to allocate a hefty portion of the tobacco settlement money for smoking prevention programs. Polls show that most people want at least half this windfall to go for anti-smoking programs, but state governments may use it for whatever they choose. Second, lobby Congress to designate nicotine a drug and therefore cigarettes, as a drug-delivery device, under the jurisdiction of the FDA. **TW**

*For Children Opposed to Smoking Tobacco, contact Mary E. Volz School, 509 W. 3rd Ave., Runnemede, N.J. 08078; <www.costkids.org>. For The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, call 1-800-284-KIDS or <www.tobaccofreekids.org>.*

# Theological education for a new century?

by Carol Bell

*Steven Charleston, chaplain at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., is former Episcopal Bishop of Alaska and a longtime advocate of culturally relevant theological education grounded in the needs and realities of local faith communities.*

**Carol Bell:** As we enter a new century, what kind of direction do you think theological education for Episcopalians should take?

**Steven Charleston:** It seems to me that if the church is to move forward, we will need a coherent, cohesive, and comprehensive look at theological education — from Sunday School all the way through and beyond retirement. It's something a person needs to feel engaged in, and excited about, at every stage of life. Sunday School is the ground level of theological training. Theology isn't something we suddenly come to as adults. If a man or woman has not had some in-depth background before becoming an adult, that person either will be always playing catch-up, or will be just plain ill-equipped to understand why theological education is important at all. Theological training is a process that goes on throughout life; it renews us, gives us new insights and new skills as our ministries change through life.

**C.B.:** When you speak of theological education, what exactly do you have in mind?

**S.C.:** When I speak of theological education, or theological training, I'm talking about it in the traditional sense of "equipping the saints." Theological education, whether it's for lay persons or ordained persons, has the same purpose: to give us the knowledge and skills that



**Steven Charleston**

we need in order to carry out the ministries we are called to do. So to me it is a very pragmatic issue for the church. We need leadership in the church at all levels, and theological training is the primary way in which we can help people claim the ministries or gifts that they have.

**C.B.:** How and where is such broad-based theological education taking place in the church today?

**S.C.:** I'd say it's taking place primarily in the many dioceses across the U.S. where we have really been forced to confront the fact that we can no longer provide seminary-educated priests for every single congregation. It's taking place because communities that cannot rely on the traditional model of one parish/one priest have to think of new models. And these communities begin to experiment. And we begin to see some very creative new ways of designing education. By necessity, these folks have come to the realization that theological training is a community effort. They now realize that

theological education is something that's localized within the life of a community. And it is also something that must be made culturally relevant for people.

Those two insights, localized education and education that is culturally relevant, are going to be two paths, two highways, that will carry us into the 21st century. The more we bring theological learning to the very heart of our communities, with local people involved as both learners and as teachers, the more it will have the ripple effect that we need — which is to engage people of all age levels, of all backgrounds, and of all offices or callings, in one common enterprise.

And that's what's starting to happen. It is happening in different dioceses in different ways, but it is happening all across our church.

**C.B.:** What are some specific examples?

**S.C.:** Well, it's happening in Province I, and it's happening in Northern Michigan. In Minnesota and South Dakota, there has been some very creative work bringing theological training out into the reservations. In Alaska, they are working hard on the idea of involving the whole village, the whole community, in the process. (Whether the village is a rural town or a suburb or a city, the village is a model of the place where training occurs.) New models of education are also being designed in many of the dioceses in California and throughout Province VIII. It's happening in Navajoland and in Florida; African-American training is taking place in Atlanta. There are many others; I'm only trying to point to a few that I personally know better than the rest. Within reach of most of our church communities are all sorts of resources and many, many people engaged in such alternative theological education.

**C.B.:** In a community-based model, how is theological education introduced, and how does it take place?

**S.C.:** Teams of people go to local communities from the diocesan center where there are resources and training for people to do the work. Teams of people, both lay and ordained, go out into the village and conduct the training on the

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Writer **Carol Bell** lives in the Diocese of Northern Michigan,  
<cedars1@northernway.net>.

local level. Folks of the community come to the training, and among them, there might be one or two who are looking toward ordination, either to priesthood or diaconate.

**C.B.:** Does it happen, in these alternative models, that a person who is headed for ordination might change her direction as the education process goes on?

**S.C.:** That's exactly right. And that brings up an interesting point. Theological education is unlike education for any other vocation. Most of our education in this culture is product-oriented. That is to say, it trains you to do a particular job. You're being prepared, and when you're done, you can now do the work. Theological training is not product-oriented, it's development-oriented. And that's quite a different proposition.

Theological education may well change your vision of yourself — and of your vocation — as you're going through the process. We come to theological training open-minded and open-hearted, not at all sure what God has in store for us, just enjoying the journey. Then the process begins to shape us and transform us. Theological education, at its best, is a transforming experience; its whole purpose is to transform our lives.

**C.B.:** So how do you begin the process?

**S.C.:** I think the very point of genesis for theological education is in spirituality and worship. Transformative education emerges from the Spirit, emerges from within the worshiping community. The workshop arises out of worship. Consequently, we must begin our theological education very intentionally with spiritual formation that is done in the context of worship. People must feel, in the deepest sense possible, a connection with God and with one another. Without such a spiritual center, our theological education will not hold. We may be momentarily excited about a particular piece of information, or by an idea, but it doesn't integrate. It is spirituality that integrates knowledge into a person's life, and that's why spirituality is so central, so important.

**C.B.:** You mentioned local community participants as both learners and teachers?

**S.C.:** Yes. We never learn better than when we're teaching what we know. People whose spiritual formation has already begun, will then go into theological training, and as they are educated, they will gain new information and new skills, and then, I think, the logical and organic next step is for them to teach. We become teachers and learners simultaneously. So local people become trainers, and eventually these folks become a source of continuity for theological education in that place. Certainly, local folks will continue to teach others in that place. But they can also travel into new communities

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bringing their ideas and their fresh insights with them. Eventually it becomes a wonderful cycle of people who are both learning and teaching and doing on the home front, and enjoying the excitement of going somewhere different and sharing with others in a community that is not their own.

Once this kind of cycle begins to move within the life of a diocese, I think it takes on new energy, refreshing, renewing and exciting church members all across the diocese.

**C.B.:** In this alternative model are there special courses for those who will be ordained?

**S.C.:** People going on to ordination might be learning deeper skills, say in church history or in the Bible, but they will work

together with men and women who are becoming Christian educators or evangelists or youth ministers or the like. We might not be able to take every single person off to seminary, but we can bring much of the quality of seminary education out to the grass roots, where community-based education will be available to everyone. The theological education process carries people along as partners. In an ideal setting, we really could not distinguish among those sitting in the room as to which ones might want to become diocesan workers or Sunday School teachers or priests or evangelists or deacons. Such an educational process follows the ancient scriptural model that suggests we are all called together to exercise our different ministries and gifts.

**C.B.:** What role can the seminaries play in this?

**S.C.:** Often we have thought that the alternative training I've been describing is in conflict or in competition with our great institutional centers of theological education. That's a big mistake. If we are to have a strong future, we must recognize a cooperative spirit between the seminaries and the local alternative models. It is important to understand the seminaries as partners with dioceses in developing local leadership. And we need to be able to see our seminaries as centers of deep spiritual formation, as well as centers of education.

Furthermore, we must renew our understanding that seminaries are not just for educating ordained leadership. They are really educational centers for all the people of God — lay and ordained. And because of that, perhaps by virtue of that, the seminaries become cultural centers as well, open marketplaces that allow people to speak to one another in their own idioms; the seminaries become vibrant and exciting and inclusive centers where people have a sense of ownership and involvement in the transformative process.

**C.B.:** How can alternative models of education be sure to honor a variety of cultures and make them part of the educational experience?

**S.C.:** On the grass roots level, we need to make sure that our trainers represent what we are trying to teach. Our theological education needs to be a multi-cultural experience, and that means we must involve teachers from many cultural backgrounds. Are we really looking at theology from a holistic viewpoint of the many different ways that our various cultures have come to understand the Gospel? In the materials used, in the list of readings, in the examples cited, we must make sure we are integrating the best of every culture because, in doing so, we not only broaden the base of our education, but we also open another door through which people may come in and participate.

**C.B.:** If a congregation, or diocese, is not very culturally diverse, are there ways in which local communities can draw on the rich traditions, insights and theologies of other cultures?

**S.C.:** Here's something that I think is very hopeful: If you and I were having this conversation even 20 years ago, we would have been hard pressed to come up with ways by which we could experience this rainbow coalition of many cultures — especially in some small parish that is fairly homogeneous. But today we have an absolute wealth of resources. We have the theologies of African Americans, feminists, Asians, people of Latino background, and Native Americans. We have had an enormous renaissance of cultural contributions to Christianity in this last century. It started with liberation theologies in the late 1950s and 1960s and it has just mushroomed to a point where we now have vast amounts of material and information, in a variety of media, available and accessible to us all.

And now that we have this wonderful warehouse of knowledge from which to draw, we also have the means to bring it into even the most isolated community — through technology, through the Internet, through satellite communications.

I find it exciting that at the threshold of a new century we have all the tools needed for a major breakthrough in theological training.

## Religious leaders urge Palestinian human rights

Over 1,000 clergy, including over 145 Protestant and Catholic bishops, as well as numerous lay religious leaders have called on the Clinton Administration to press the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian Authority, headed by Yasir Arafat, to cease violating the human rights of Palestinians.

The statement was delivered in late January to U.S., Israeli, and Palestinian officials in New York, Washington, and other cities by SEARCH for Justice and Equality in Palestine/Israel, a Boston-based human rights group seeking a just Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The human rights petition calls on President Clinton to “publicly urge Israel and the Palestinian Authority to abide by international law and human rights conventions” and to link U.S. financial aid to Israel and the Palestinian Authority to their “compliance with human rights covenants.”

In Israel's case, the Clinton Administration is asked to adhere to U.S. law which prohibits economic or military aid to nations “engaging in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”

Clinton is asked to “urge Israel to dismantle all settlements except where settlers are willing to live as equal citizens within a Palestinian state,” and “to return all land and water resources confiscated from Palestinians since 1967.”

The religious leaders cite Israeli violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention, both signed by Israel and the U.S. These violations continue despite Israeli-Palestinian agreements at Oslo and Wye, and include torture, settlement expansion, destruction of homes, confiscation of land and water resources, prevention of family reunification, and collective punishment. The statement also deplores the use of torture, secret trials, and press censorship

by the Palestinian Authority.

Charges of human rights violations by Israel and by the Palestinian Authority are based on reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, the State Department, the International Committee of the Red Cross as well as Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups.

The petition calls for an undivided Jerusalem where Israel and a Palestinian State will have their respective capitals in West and East Jerusalem.

In releasing the statement, SEARCH's Executive Director Edmund R. Hanauer noted that past resolutions of the major mainline Protestant and Orthodox churches as well as the Roman Catholic church agree with many, if not all, of the statement's concerns for Palestinian rights, including a halt to Jewish settlements, self-determination for Palestinians, and religious and political equality in Jerusalem.

“If President Clinton heeded Judeo-Christian values and international law,” Hanauer said, “his policies would reflect the positions of U.S. religious leaders and Israeli human rights groups, not those of the Israeli government and the Israeli lobby in the U.S.”

Signatories include Edmond L. Browning, past Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church; Herbert W. Chilstrom, past Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; over 145 bishops from the Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Antiochian, and Catholic churches; and five past Moderators of the Presbyterian Church, USA.

— *SEARCH for Justice and Equality in Palestine/Israel, a Boston-based human rights, public policy organization committed to a just Palestinian-Israeli peace. For a text of A Clergy/Religious Leaders' Petition on Palestinian/Israeli Human Rights contact Laurel Nelson of SEARCH, P.O. Box 3452, Framingham, MA 01705-3452; <lnelson@peakpeak.com>.*

# Safe passage

by Lucy Abbey, IHM

*Safe Passage: Making It Through Adolescence in a Risky Society*, by Joy Dryfoos, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Reading Joy Dryfoos' book, *Safe Passage*, is like walking with an experienced sage on a kind of three-dimensional journey through what she calls the "Safe Passage Movement." I walked with her geographically across this country to visit programs and places where the journey of growing "through adolescence in a risky society" is intentionally structured to be holistic for youth, their families and the communities in which they live. I walked with her historically, hearing about what has been done, what is being done now, and what needs to be done in the future. And I heard her analysis, coming out of her experience as a social analyst, policy maker and activist in the field of teen pregnancy prevention. I felt myself to be at a huge display of programs dealing with the real life situations of today's adolescents, what Dryfoos calls the "new morbidities" — sex, violence, substance abuse and depression.

Despite being written by someone who has written for the research community, the book is not full of jargon. Dryfoos has accomplished her goal of reaching a much wider audience, which I take to be people like me, on the front lines of community work — people with a great deal of experience, some good ideas and insights and a

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Lucy Abbey, IHM, currently does pastoral ministry in Detroit, Mich., and works with a community action organization which is part of the congregation-focused network of the Gamaliel Foundation.

lot of frustration. She has 15 pages of references and I found the index helpful when I wanted to revisit something in light of later reading.

In the heart of the book, Dryfoos describes five outstanding "safe passage" programs already up and running in different parts of the country. She relates these efforts to the larger concept of "full service community schools," institutions that draw on both school resources and outside community agencies. In this approach, the school building becomes the place where previously fragmented programs are made available on a "one-stop" basis.

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*In the "full service community school" approach, the school building becomes the place where previously fragmented programs are made available on a "one-stop" basis.*

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Yet I question Dryfoos' easy expectation of social reform taking place from within the systems (educational, political and social) that have historically not been open to reform, either from within or without. I read the book during the same week in which I attended an intensive four-day workshop on "Undoing Racism," so I read with a strong awareness of being white and, by that reality alone, part of the oppression that keeps other people shut off from making decisions about their own destiny. Dryfoos talks about and presumes community involvement, dialogue and collaboration. However, I believe that we as a society with a white power structure cannot presume that this dialogue and collaboration will be either easy or straightforward.

One omission that kept registering with me was the lack of recognition of the role of churches in the Safe Passage Move-

ment. This red light kept blinking every time Dryfoos mentioned the "wrap around" that must include schools, health services, case management, law enforcement, community agencies, etc. Until page 262, where churches make a 10-line debut as one of seven "non-governmental organizations" that could have a role, I could count on one hand the number of times churches are mentioned. I see this as a "for instance" of the lack of awareness of the structure of a separate society that whites too often do not even know about. As noted in the book, the Quantum Opportunities Program (one of the five models singled out from across the nation) grew out of the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) which was founded 34 years ago in Philadelphia by cleric Leon Sullivan. However, Dryfoos does not make the connection that I know from my years in Philadelphia, that Sullivan did not initiate the OIC apart from his role as a pastor. Indeed, a survey of the African-American society in any large industrial city will reveal that some of the most comprehensive and holistic approaches to the needs of African Americans (jobs, education, job training, tutoring, residence for the elderly and others) come from the African-American churches. It is there that the organization, leadership, wisdom and strategic planning that respects and preserves the values of African-American culture and history can be found.

One person can only do so much. I personally am grateful for what Dryfoos has done. I urge others who are concerned about the future of our youth to read the book. Then, let's talk. And let's get busy. One thing we all can agree on is that there is no time to lose.

IVV

review

Those who have read Jonathan Kozol's *Amazing Grace* may recall Kozol's first impression of Martha Overall and the Episcopal church she pastors in the South Bronx.

"Walking into St. Ann's Church on a hot summer afternoon, one is immediately in the presence of small children," Kozol writes. "They seem to be everywhere: in the garden, in the hallways, in the kitchen, in the chapel, on the stairs. The first time I see the pastor, Martha Overall, she is carrying a newborn baby in her arms and is surrounded by three lively and excited little girls. In one of the most diseased and dangerous communities in any city of the Western world, the beautiful old stone church on St. Ann's Avenue is a gentle sanctuary from the terrors of the streets outside."

Four years later, St. Ann's is more than ever a children's sanctuary. Its massive driveway — unneeded for parking, since virtually none of the parishioners are affluent enough to own cars — has been painted green and decorated with a labyrinth and children's games. A large garden, which Overall calls "one of the few safe places in the neighborhood," boasts a new swing set, a rare commodity in the crowded and desperately poor community. An afterschool literacy program has doubled in size, and now includes a computer lab and math program.

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*Witnesses,  
the quick and the dead*

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*, <marianne@thewitness.org>. *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*, by Jonathan Kozol, was published by Crown Publishers, Inc. in 1995.

*"It's the only church I know of where children come without their parents. They come here and consider it their own."*



Martha Overall

## Creating a safe place for dreaming by Marianne Arbogast

"It seemed to me the essence of St. Ann's, that the thrust of its ministry had to be for the children," Overall says. "Most of our neighborhood is children — unfortunately, most of the poor are women and children.

"There are many Sundays when we seem to have more children in the congregation than adults — it's kind of bubbling with spirit! It's the only church I know of where children come without their parents. They come here and consider it their own. To me, that's what Jesus meant when he said, 'I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.' The real thrust of our ministry is for these children to have abundant life."

Overall's own relationship with St. Ann's began more than 20 years ago, when she was working as an attorney with a Manhattan law firm and attending St. James' Church on Madison Ave., a sister church to St. Ann's.

"One day the community ministry officer called me up and said that some people from St. Ann's were having a sit-in because somebody was ripping off poverty programs that were supposed to be helping their neighborhood," Overall says. "He asked me to help them, and I started coming up here. I was enchanted by how much they cared about helping people who were in many ways helpless."

She was convinced that "the best thing I could do was make as much money as possible and give it all to St. Ann's." But a family crisis intervened. Her brother, to whom she was very close, contracted AIDS and Overall moved to San Francisco to be with him.

"I was caring for him, but he was teaching me a lot about spirituality and a lot about empowerment," Overall says. "Like many people I know who have AIDS, he radiated a godly presence. With this disease — which I think is the most horren-

dous ever encountered by the human race — he was able to say before he died that the last months of his life were the best months of his life. I learned that the essence of our being, and what we give to one another from our humanity, is far more important than the materialistic or ephemeral things that we seem to give value to these days.”

After her brother died, Overall returned to New York and enrolled at Union Theological Seminary. She did field work at St. Ann’s, and the day after her ordination, began ministry there as a transitional deacon.

Asked about the needs of the children in her neighborhood, she answers simply: “Food. Clothes. Boots for when it rains. Just the basic necessities of life. We have one child that we managed to get into boarding school, and he has received some awards. The dean of his boarding school, in one of his most recent report cards, observed, ‘This child thrives on routine.’ That’s exactly it. When he doesn’t have to worry about being fed, when he doesn’t have to worry about his mother’s welfare case being closed and having to advocate for her at the welfare office because she speaks only Spanish, when he doesn’t have to worry about their being evicted from their apartment, he does wonderfully.”

Quality education is a critical need.

“To me, the top priority is education, because that’s what gives children a chance for a future. A classmate of mine in seminary was a black woman from Soweto, and she described to me that the education there was designed to give blacks nothing more than enough education to become domestic servants. Unfortunately, that’s the kind of education that the children in our poor areas are receiving.”

Racism and denial block meaningful change, Overall believes.

“These kids are pushed into the ghetto, more than they ever have been before, out of view and out of the newspapers. I can’t tell you how many people who read *Amazing*

*Grace* called me up or wrote me and said, ‘I didn’t know it was like this.’ We’re just three subway stops from Manhattan! There’s also the current trend towards social darwinism — thinking that it’s good to just let everybody fight it out, and let the fittest survive, when in fact these children have their hands tied behind their backs.

“We need desegregation of schools and, really, of housing, because that’s where segregated schools come from. We need a total commitment to our public school system, not siphoning off kids from public schools, but rather a commitment to cutting class size, improving materials, proper buildings and equipment.”

Overall points to St. Ann’s afterschool program as an example of what can happen with sufficient funding and dedication.

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*“We have a child who was in special education, and everybody thought he wouldn’t be good for anything in later life, but he’s now on the honor roll.”*

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“The first year, the literacy program results were so terrific, every child but one had his or her standardized reading test scores go up significantly. We have a child who was in special education, and everybody thought he wouldn’t be good for anything in later life, but he’s been in our afterschool program and he’s now on the honor roll. Since we’ve gotten the computer lab he’s really found his niche.”

The children in the afterschool program “feel safer in dreaming of going to college,” Overall says. “We have a whole cadre of little girls who want to be doctors.”

The spotlight that Kozol’s book turned on the neighborhood brought some positive changes, Overall says.

“The Department of Housing and Ur-

ban Development has taken back those 38 buildings which are described in the book, including the one where the little boy died in the elevator shaft. They put security guards in them and renovated them.

“The book really has moved people’s hearts. A wonderful man replaced our 30-year-old play equipment with some up-to-date, durable equipment. We were able to renovate our basketball court. And the spring before last, an Episcopal parish in Barrington gave us some money to polish our church floor and to paint the church, and that brightened everybody’s spirits.”

But in other ways, the challenges have increased.

“One of Jonathan’s main themes was, if life is this way for these children now, how can they tolerate it being made worse by budget cuts? And indeed, some of those cuts have come to pass. Since the welfare cuts, our pantry program has been deluged, primarily by families with children. And the privatization of medical care has had some horrendous effects.”

Overall is aware of her own need to set limits and find ways to avoid burnout.

“My temptation is to take a lot of the children and have them with me all the time, and I know I can’t do that — it wouldn’t be good for either of us. I try to get a certain amount of solitude, because I find that very important.”

But she also says that her six years at St. Ann’s have made her “a whole lot more optimistic.”

“The children are just constant surprises. For the past three weeks, I’ve been wearing a crucifix made out of a wire hanger with a pair of pliers. It’s a beautiful, elegant thing, and it was done by one of the children who seems disturbed, and sometimes even has a tendency to violence. So it’s saying to me, don’t give up.

“The children know that they’re loved here — I think that’s the most important thing. They know that they’re loved, they know that they’re looked for.”

**IN**

*continued from page 3*

### Off-the-grid resistance

THANKS SO MUCH for the extra issue of the December issue of *The Witness*. Now I have one to keep and one to pass on!

I thought it was a terrific issue. I thought Peter Selby's article was so good that I sent him an e-mail about it. I've been doing a lot of talking about the Lambeth Sexuality Resolution and I always do it in the context of world debt and third world poverty. Selby's article will help me make the connection all the more clearly.

Keep up the good work.

**Catherine Roskam  
Dobbs Ferry, NY**

[Ed. note: Roskam is suffragan bishop of New York.]

### Katherine Parker

IN THE JAN/FEB ISSUE of *The Witness*, I was elated to have read of the gift of stock ("over \$10,000") in memory of Katherine Parker, "an active Episcopalian, who felt called to priesthood all her adult life ... however, the Episcopal Church did not

allow women priests in time for Parker" to be ordained. In choosing *The Witness* for her mother's memorial, Betsy also honored THE publication which was primary advocate for women's ordination and inclusiveness in our church. It is a perfect choice, in value with Kit Parker's life and ministry.

Kit was a beloved member of All Souls, Diocese of San Diego, who enthusiastically supported her call to priesthood. The Rev. Arnold Fenton, rector, presented her to Diocesan standing committee as a first woman to apply in late 1970s. The bishop and standing committee had been elected because they opposed ordaining women, so Kit was denied. She was told: "Come back next year!" Fr. Fenton asked: "After she grows a mustache?"

**Mary Eunice Oliver  
San Diego, CA**

### The prison-industrial complex

THANK YOU FOR THE FREE COPY of the issue on the prison-industrial complex; I heard about you from my son, who is in Jackson Prison Parnall Corr Facility. His case is like some of the ones in story books. Hard to believe, being that he is a black male.

I am going to subscribe to *The Witness*. You tell it like it is.

**Birdes Gardner  
Ypsilanti, MI**

I JUST READ YOUR NOVEMBER ISSUE which dealt a lot with prisons and prison issues. I found the information to be true as I have experienced it, working in a prison with prisoners. The information was well presented and thought provoking. I was inspired to continue to work to create change in that system. The prisoners who have read the magazine felt hope that someone understands their situation and is helping to create needed change also. Thank you!

**Barbara Lambert  
<blambert@voyager.net>**

### Witness praise

I ALWAYS ENJOY *The Witness*. It is the only magazine which deals with tough issues in some depth. You provide a real service to the church in making us think and continue the dialogue.

**Jim Wilson  
Louisville, KY**

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