

Following a God of peace through times of war and conflict



As our nation moves toward war ...

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The President's Corner

Call from Tomorrow

by Kent Winters-Hazelton, president

The Witherspoon Society's 30th anniversary conference is scheduled for March 6-8, 2003, in Louisville, Kentucky. I hope you have made your reservations! There is still space for you!

This is a critical time for our nation, for our church, and for the Witherspoon Society. The conflicts facing the Presbyterian Church (USA) are known to most of you; some of them are addressed in this issue of *Network News*. The challenges facing the Witherspoon Society may not be quite as obvious. We have an outstanding reputation among liberal Presbyterians for our voice on progressive and justice issues. There are many people over many years to thank for that. Our current board is honored and challenged to carry on the mantle of those who worked so hard for so long.

Despite our standing in the church, however, the Witherspoon Society is facing a crossroads. We find ourselves at this juncture for at least three reasons.

The first is **agenda**. We have always pursued a broad agenda, dealing with the many facets of a justice-oriented, prophetic-witness approach to the

issues facing our church and our society. Yet for many in our denomination, one primary issue has become the focus over the past few years.

While Witherspoon is very clear in its supporting and working for a more inclusive church, we want to resist the natural tendency for other issues of justice to get overlooked or pushed off the agenda. Especially in these days, as our world faces increased militarization, the war with Iraq, global economics and the troubling issues related to homeland security, we believe we must redouble our efforts to keep our church from turning inward toward its internal conflicts and neglecting the desperate needs of the wider world.

The second issue is **visibility**. When I first started getting involved in Witherspoon's activities (primarily as a commissioner to the 1996 Assembly), the Society had a more prominent role in the progressive wing of the church. Since then, many of our allies have grown significantly and new organizations have emerged. We rejoice in this diversity of the progressive witness, but we recognize a need to define more clearly our own focus and mission for the 21st century.

The third issue is **money**. Most of you



Kent Winters-Hazelton

have received several financial appeals from us over the last few months. We are *very* thankful for the impressive response we have received thus far. The Executive Board issued a matching-gift challenge to our members and we are happy to report that our challenge has been met. Thank you!!! In addition, we have received grants which will cover a good portion of our budget for special programming. While it looks like we will have a solid base for the work before us this year, we know that raising money will continue to be a challenge for us as it is for each of our progressive partners.

There is much dreaming, thinking, and planning still to be done. **One of our main efforts at our conference will be to think together with all who can be there about our agenda, our focus, and how more of our members can be mobilized for the coming years.** We need your



Witherspoon Issues Analyst Gene TeSelle has completed a survey of the 30 year history of Witherspoon. Entitled "**A Network of the Concerned**": *the Witherspoon Society and its Challenge to the Church*, it will soon be available. Watch for news of where and how you can get your copy!

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thoughts, your insights, your energy to help build our witness together! We promise that if you're there, you will have time to speak and to be heard.

And at the conference you'll also hear from an excellent line-up of speakers and workshop leaders to help us in our thinking about a progressive theology for the coming decade. See page 15 for details.

In planning this event, we were intentional in choosing Louisville as our location – first and foremost to offer support and encouragement to our national staff. Much of the initial leadership of Witherspoon came from national staff workers, and over the years they have been a tremendous help and resource for us, and for the whole church. Our national staff have endured under great hardships over the last several years. The Witherspoon Society is deeply appreciative of the saints and servants at 100 Witherspoon, and wishes to say in very clear terms, “Thank you for your efforts on behalf of all of us.”

I look forward to greeting old friends and meeting new ones as together, we listen for the “Call from Tomorrow,” in Louisville.

With the hope and dream for peace,
kwh



The Editor's Spot

Too much religion. Too small a God.

Reflections by Doug King

Not too many months ago we were all busy analyzing the religious tradition called Islam, trying to understand how this faith was nurturing the attitudes that could lead to actions like those of September 11th, 2001. It was easy to see religion, especially of the fundamentalist variety, as a threat.

Now we are being forced to recognize that religion isn't that simple. (Like, we should be surprised!) Even Christian religion, even strains of Christianity that are not so crudely absolutist in their claims, can be a threat as well. It can even be “compassionate” religion, and compassion's good, right?

It's been easy to blame fundamentalism for the religious rigidity and self-righteousness that makes so many wars “holy.” It's been easy to blame American patriotic piety for the ease with which the President is leading so many Americans down the path to war, with confident disregard of the opinions of the rest of the world.

Maybe it's the fault of “liberals” that our vision of the Divine has been so thoroughly domesticated that we (on left, right, or smack in the center) can comfortably claim God as “ours,” and claim our ideologies and values and ways of life as somehow “what God intends” not just for us, but for all of humanity.

It's we liberals, after all, who have labored to cleanse our religious language of those ancient echoes of monarchy and patriarchy. Those efforts are necessary, but our linguistic cleansing has brought some losses, too. To speak of God as Sovereign (and let's be blunt: even as King) becomes urgent when political leaders begin to claim imperial power and authority as their own. To respond that “I follow only one *Lord*” may be the only authentic Christian response to claims by the United States government to increasing power over its people in the name of “security.”

When leaders speak and act as if they carry the power of the Divine in their hip pockets – or perhaps in their six-shooter holsters – we need to speak clearly of a God who transcends *all* of our human imaginings, who stands above *all* our boundaries and our values and our certainties of faith.

Whether we are dealing with America's rush to war or the battles in our own church, we need to remind ourselves (and not just those other people who are – in our eyes – so obviously “wrong”) that God reigns, that the reality of the Divine extends infinitely beyond our ken.

If there is to be healing for our church, it must begin with such an awareness of a

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The Witherspoon Society Mission

We are a society of justice-seeking Presbyterians, responding to the God who calls us through the power of the Holy Spirit into wholeness, as a community that lives out the radical vision of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ in a world increasingly broken.

We profess our mission to be:

- nurturing the prophetic voice of the church through study, action and reflection,
- equipping faithful Presbyterians for responsible participation at all levels of the church,
- advocating for peace, justice, the integrity of creation, and the full inclusion of all God's people in church and society.

Through our witness we seek to revitalize the church's life and focus, so that it may be biblically and confessionally faithful in the world.

Witherspoon events planned for General Assembly

Friday afternoon, May 23

The 9th Annual Semper Reformanda Pre-GA Conversation

sponsored by the Witherspoon Society.

This year's Gathering will welcome representatives from the **United Presbyterian Church of Brazil**, which is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. The church will be represented by Ecumenical Advisory Delegate the Rev. Eser Téécio Pacheco, current moderator of the IPU. It is anticipated that the Rev. Ario Obispo, founder of the IPU and current president of the board of the ITEBA seminary, will also come to the GA. (See page 14 for more on the IPU.)

The Pre-Assembly Gathering will center on a conversation between two members of the Task Force for Peace, Purity and Unity, which is working on the issues confronting our denomination. **Dr. Barbara Wheeler** is President of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York, and a member of the board of the Covenant Network. **The Rev. Dr. Jack Haberer**, pastor of the Clear Lake Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas, is a former President of the Presbyterian Coalition and current member of the Board for Presbyterians For Renewal.

Their conversation will focus on the question "Crisis or Call – Have we outgrown decency and order?" These leaders will bring us together to see what might be done with this broken body of Christ. We'll compare our church's challenges with the experience of Presbyterians in Brazil.

There will be more information in our next (pre-Assembly) issue, and in the General Assembly registration booklet.

If you'll be at GA,
we hope you'll join us for these special events!

Friday evening, May 23

The Witherspoon Society Pre-Assembly Briefing

Following the Covenant Network dinner, we will host the annual briefing for Commissioners and interested observers. Looking at the work of the various committees, we will help prepare everyone for the debates and conversation of the Assembly.

Sunday, May 25

Annual Witherspoon Luncheon.

Speaker will be **Dr. Dirk Ficca**, Executive Director of the Parliament of World's Religions. Dr. Ficca's topic of conversation will be "**Finding Our Way: Christians in a Religiously Diverse World.**"

The Annual Whole Gospel Congregation Award will be presented to the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil, in honor of their 25th Anniversary.

Tuesday, May 27

Witherspoon Society Dinner and Annual Meeting

Our special guest will be **the Rev. Dr. Jack Rogers, Moderator of the 213th General Assembly**. In appreciation of his efforts on behalf of a more inclusive church, Jack will receive Witherspoon's Andrew Murray Award. Our Annual Meeting will be held right after the dinner, which will of course be followed (or is transcended the word?) by the ...

Witherspoon Society Party and Dance.



A new logo for Witherspoon

As the new year begins, Witherspoon begins a new phase in its history.

Justice, with its many faces, has always been at the heart of Witherspoon's mission. And joy - in doing the work we sense we are called to do.

So, raise the banners and let justice roll down! Join us as we begin a new year with anticipation, excitement and renewed commitment to the radical message which is God's love for all creation.



You've been getting letters!?!

You may have been receiving a lot of mail from us recently.

Please forgive us if we've sent you the same thing more than once. We are a small and humble staff and can't always crosscheck mailing lists and update the database as quickly as we would like to. Thanks for your understanding.

And *thanks* for your generosity in renewing your memberships and in adding extra gifts that will help us continue and expand our work for our church and our society.



How shall we speak peace in a world preparing for war?

By the time you receive this newsletter, we may again be at war. Words and acts of protest seem like “spittin’ in the wind,” yet many of us are compelled by conscience (and common sense) to do and say whatever we can to slow the rush to war.

Here are just a few glimpses of what Presbyterians and others have been doing and saying.

For more reports and reflections, go to www.witherspoonsociety.org, and click on the “War on Iraq” button at the top of the home page.

If you have news or opinions to share, please send a note to your editor! (See the inside back cover for his address and such.)

Moderator and Stated Clerk send pastoral letter to the church

They explain the decision not to call a special session of the General Assembly, and invite the people of our church “to join a growing chorus of voices across the country, calling for the United States to exercise restraint, to refrain from taking pre-emptive military action against Iraq, and to seek peaceful resolutions to the current crisis.”

January 31, 2003

To the congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We write to you with thankful and grateful hearts for the countless ways in which you as Presbyterians are sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed in this country and around the world. You are feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. You are welcoming strangers and visiting the imprisoned. You are doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God. You are carrying forth the mission of Jesus Christ, and for that we give thanks.

Yet, we write to you in the midst of painful days in the church. As Moderator, I decided not to call a special meeting of the 214th General Assembly. It was determined after a verification process that a petition submitted asking for a special assembly did not have the minimum number of signatures required by the *Book of Order*. An overture by the Presbytery of Redstone now insures that the basic concerns in the petition will be before the 215th General Assembly in Denver. We call on all Presbyterians to deepen our commitment to compliance with the church’s *Constitution* and forbearance with one another.

The strong witness of your congregations challenges us to lift up the much wider and much deeper concerns of Christian faith and discipleship before the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The world is waiting to hear the voice of the church speaking in a time of great risk. Peoples of all faiths around the world are waiting to see whether there will be war or peace. As Presbyterians, we confess that:

The church, in its own life, is called to practice the forgiveness of enemies and to commend to the nations as practical politics the search for cooperation and peace. This search requires that the nations pursue fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding (*Confession of 67, 9.45*).

It is clear that the church’s calling is to be peacemakers—a critical priority for us in these days. We invite you to join a growing chorus of voices across the country, calling for the United States to exercise restraint, to refrain from taking pre-emptive military action against Iraq, and to seek peaceful resolutions to the current crisis. At the same time, we remember in our prayers the military personnel who may be in harm’s way, as well as their families and the military chaplains who minister in the armed services.

The peace we are called to serve includes extending hospitality. In the present climate in our country where those who are different from us are viewed with suspicion, let us be bold in our acts of compassion—welcoming the strangers in our midst, embracing new immigrant groups, and sharing the good news of the gospel.

As the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, “For Christ is our peace...he has ...broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:14). It is time to break down



dividing walls between nations, as well as in our personal relationships, our families, our workplaces, our congregations, our communities, and within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Friends in Christ, we are unceasing in our prayers for you, for our country, for the world, and for this church that we love so deeply. May we lay aside all that divides us, so that, together, we may demonstrate to the world the grace, mercy, and love of God, shown to us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In Christ's peace/salaam,

The Rev. Dr. Fahed Abu-Akel
Moderator of the 214th General Assembly

The Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

For those who are seeking additional pastoral and educational resources on the current situation with Iraq, please visit the PC(USA) Web site at www.pcusa.org/iraq.

What to do about military service?

During the Viet Nam war the Presbyterian Church prepared a resource for people considering the questions raised for them by the military draft and other issues surrounding service in the armed forces. The Peace-making Program has done a new edition of that very helpful resource, *Presbyterians and Military Service*. It is available online at: <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/military-service.pdf>

An appeal for peace from The Witherspoon Society

The Executive Committee of the Witherspoon Society has approved this brief statement as an expression of our concern and convictions.

January 27, 2003

Dear President Bush:

The Executive Committee of the Witherspoon Society, an affinity group of the Presbyterian Church (USA) dedicated to peace and justice, feels the urgent need to add our voices to the millions across the nation and especially within the religious community, in questioning the planned war with Iraq.

We come to this conviction out of concerns for the public interest and strong doubts about the strategic benefits of such a military operation, as well as our belief that this would in no way meet the historic criteria for a just war. But you and your advisors have heard all of those arguments before.

Rather we want to lift up the voice of Jesus, the Christ, who spoke of peace and of unity with all peoples of the earth. The Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrated less than a month ago, is watching us and expects nothing less of us than to witness to that peace and unity.

We join with myriad voices in the faith community: Methodist Women, the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Council of Bishops, Pope John Paul, the New Mexico Conference of Churches, the National Council of Churches and the scores of individuals and congregations in our denomination as well as others that have taken the courageous step of questioning the efficacy of this impending war. We stand in solidarity with those who feel compelled to witness to their faith in opposition to war in Iraq.

It is with saddened and troubled hearts that we issue this plea to you from the thousands in the Christian community: please reconsider this venture in light of Biblical teaching and Christ's message of peace.

In the spirit of Christ's Shalom,

The Executive Committee of The Witherspoon Society

Presbyterians opposing U.S.-Iraq war

Members finding many ways to back up Assembly's call for restraint

by Jerry L. Van Marter, Presbyterian News Service

Editor's note from PNS -- Mark Koenig of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program staff gathered much of the information for this story.

LOUISVILLE – February 5, 2003 – On Feb. 2, the half-dozen kids in the elementary Sunday school class at Crescent Hill Presbyterian Church here busied themselves scooping half-cups of rice into plastic baggies. When that was done, each child meticulously wrote the following letter:

Dear President Bush: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them." – Romans 12:20. Please send this rice to the people of Iraq. Do not attack them.

The kids then addressed padded mailers, put the stamps on, and tucked the letters and bags of rice in to be mailed to the President.

Similar scenes have been played out in Presbyterian churches from coast to coast as Presbyterian individuals, congregations, presbyteries and General Assembly (GA) officials have sought ways of dissuading the U.S. government from going to war in Iraq.

Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (PPP) officials in Louisville have been inundated with reports of anti-war activities in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Sunrise Presbyterian Church in Miami has adopted a program of advocacy that includes prayer, education and action. E-mail addresses and phone numbers are provided in each week's worship bulletin and in frequent email notices, enabling people to share their views with the President, Senators and Congressmen. The church encourages participation in peaceful public demonstrations and, with a number of active and reserve military members in the congregation, the Sunrise Church is offering a number of free services to service personnel, ranging from weddings to marriage enrichment classes. All ministries to military personnel and their families, including counseling by the licensed psychotherapist on the church's staff, are offered without cost.

In the expectation of a war with Iraq, Sunrise has informed its members that the congregation is to gather for worship on the evening following the day of the attack.

The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the General Assembly, and the Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel, the GA moderator,

this week sent a pastoral letter to the church, outlining the latest developments in the campaign to force a special GA. In the letter, they also called on Presbyterians to work for peace, promote understanding and pray for all who would be in harm's way in event of war. Kirkpatrick and Abu-Akel said they hope their pastoral letter will be read from every PC(USA) pulpit on Feb. 9. (See p. 5 for full text of the letter.)

Philadelphia Presbytery adopted a resolution on Iraq last week that echoes the concerns expressed in a resolution adopted last fall by Albany Presbytery.

Philadelphia Presbytery urged President George W. Bush "to exercise restraint by giving United Nations inspectors time to work, by intensively seeking alternative, peaceful means of achieving his announced objectives, through consulting seriously with other Arab nations and with other member states of the United Nations."

In its statement, Albany Presbytery affirmed "our commitment to peacemaking, and our insistence that every avenue of diplomatic resolution of issues related to Iraq be explored in order to avoid warfare, and that political rhetoric of saber-rattling be minimized in this time of tension." It urged all in the presbytery to communicate their personal reflections to U.S. officials.

Last summer's 214th General Assembly adopted a statement urging restraint on the part of the U.S. and a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

A number of seminaries and colleges have conducted special educational events around the impending war. McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, for instance, held a "Day of Dialogue" in December in which students and faculty gathered to worship and discuss the situation.

Presbyterians coast-to-coast have participated in marches, demonstrations and vigils. In Albuquerque, activities on Jan. 18 included a rally at the gates of Kirtland Air Force Base – home to a Stealth bomber squadron – and a march downtown and to the University of New Mexico campus. (See next page for a special report.)

Silent vigils have become weekly occurrences on street corners in Louisville, and Presbyterians have joined in large rallies in Washington, New York and San Francisco. Presbyterians in Pacific Presbytery reported a turnout of 15,000 for a Jan. 11 rally in Los Angeles that was backed by PC(USA) churches there.

More than 35 U.S. city councils have adopted resolutions opposing war. Many of those resolutions – in Kalamazoo, MI, Detroit, Philadelphia, Baltimore – were advanced by councils of churches with strong support from Presbyterians. The resolution backed by Presbyterians in Cleveland was adopted unanimously on Jan. 27. A complete list of city council resolutions is available at a Web site: www.citiesforpeace.org.



Presbyterian organizations including the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association have been active in peace activities. The executive committee of the Witherspoon Society sent a letter to President Bush on Jan. 27 in which it said it was "joining with myriad voices in the faith community: Methodist Women, the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Council of Bishops, Pope John Paul, the New Mexico Conference of Churches, the National Council of Churches and the scores of individuals and congregations in our denomination as well as others that have taken the courageous step of questioning the efficacy of this impending war."

A great deal of information and resources for Presbyterians about Iraq is available at the PC(USA) Web site, www.pcusa.org/Iraq.

Words of protest seen recently on placards in Washington, DC



- (With the Red, White and Blue) These colors don't run the world
- One nation under surveillance.
- How did our oil get under their sand?
- Go Solar, not Ballistic.
- Who would Jesus bomb?
- Start Drafting SUV Drivers Now.
- Don't blame me, I voted with the majority.
- (Pictures of sheep carrying flags) Stop Mad Sheep Disease Now.
- (UFW sign) Pick Fruit, not Fights.
- (On a five year old) More Candy Less War.
- War is expensive, Peace is priceless.
- The only thing we have to fear is Bush himself.
- How many Lives per Gallon?
- Peace Takes Brains
- Anything War can do, Peace can do better.
- Negotiation Not Annihilation.
- Another patriot for peace.
- Oh Say can You Cease?
- Star Spangled Bummer
- Don't do it George, Dad will still love you.
- Power to the Peaceful
- The last time we listened to a Bush, we wandered in the desert for 40 years.
- Body bags are a petroleum product.

Peace March Report from Albuquerque

Back in the Streets

a special report from Ann Euston, Witherspoon Society Program Coordinator

"Economy Bad? Have a War!" That was the first sign I saw last Saturday Jan 18. It was beautiful here in Albuquerque, warm with a clear blue sky. A perfect day for a peace march.

The day's activities had begun at noon at Kirtland Air Force Base, home to Stealth Bombers, with a speech by radio and TV commentator Amy Goodman. From there, marchers were to proceed to the University, then on to a downtown park.

We arrived at the University of New Mexico at about 1:30 pm. A crowd was gathering at the intersection of University and Central Ave - historic Rt. 66 as it is promoted here. It was a big crowd - final estimates put the numbers at 4000 total. There were people in wheelchairs, people on bikes, kids in wagons. There were lots of us old peace warriors, but lots of young people too. There were signs, flags, chanting, honking support by passing cars.

At about 2:30 pm, with Central blocked off, we took to the street and made our way slowly downtown, about a 1 mile walk. In the lead were American, Peace symbol and photoearth flags.. All the memories of earlier marches returned; shouts of what do we want? responsive shouts PEACE, when do we want it? NOW. Singing "All we are saying is give peace a chance." Waving signs, words of encouragement from the sidewalk observers, and the sea of hands, raised up with the familiar V for peace.

It took about 30 minutes for the march, and the crowd stretched for blocks. We were escorted at various times by police on horses, police on motorcycles, police in cars. And the everpresent police helicopter. There had been rumors of violence - at a Peace March? None materialized.

There were no more speeches, no politicians to exhort us. We all knew what we were doing there and our own personal as well as corporate whys. I came away feeling energized, and reminded that we common people, not politicians or the media, ultimately do have the right and the responsibility to express ourselves on issues that will affect us. I'm not sure what effect all the peace marches across the US and the world on January 18 will have in the end. But even the New York Times in Sunday's editorial had to admit that at least large numbers of Americans think it's time to reconsider our Iraq position, before time runs out.

Former President Jimmy Carter urges US government to pursue alternatives to war

A Statement By President Carter: An Alternative To War

By
Jimmy Carter

31 January 2003

Atlanta..... Despite marshalling powerful armed forces in the Persian Gulf region and a virtual declaration of war in the State of the Union message, our government has not made a case for a preemptive military strike against Iraq, either at home or in Europe.

Recent vituperative attacks on U.S. policy by famous and respected men like Nelson Mandela and John Le Carré, although excessive, are echoed in a Web site poll conducted by the European edition of TIME magazine. The question was "Which country poses the greatest danger to world peace in 2003?" With several hundred thousand votes cast, the responses were: North Korea, 7 percent; Iraq, 8 percent; the United States, 84 percent. This is a gross distortion of our nation's character, and America is not inclined to let foreign voices answer the preeminent question that President Bush is presenting to the world, but it is sobering to realize how much doubt and consternation has been raised about our motives for war in the absence of convincing proof of a genuine threat from Iraq.

The world will be awaiting Wednesday's presentation of specific evidence by Secretary of State Colin Powell concerning Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. As an acknowledged voice of moderation, his message will carry enormous weight in shaping public opinion. But even if his effort is successful and lies and trickery by Saddam Hussein are exposed, this will not indicate any real or proximate threat by Iraq to the United States or to our allies.

With overwhelming military strength now deployed against him and with intense monitoring from space surveillance and the U.N. inspection team on the ground, any belligerent move by Saddam against a neighbor would be suicidal. An effort to produce or deploy chemical or biological weapons or to make the slightest move toward a nuclear explosive would be inconceivable. If Iraq does possess such concealed weapons, as is quite likely, Saddam would use them only in the most extreme circumstances, in the face of an invasion of Iraq, when all hope of avoiding the destruction of his regime is lost.

In Washington, there is no longer any mention of Osama bin Laden, and the concentration of public statements on his international terrorist network is mostly limited to still-unproven allegations about its connection with Iraq. The worldwide commitment and top priority of fighting terrorism that was generated after September 11th has been attenuated as Iraq has become the preeminent obsession of political leaders and the general public.

In addition to the need to re-invigorate the global team effort against international terrorism, there are other major problems being held in abeyance as our nation's foreign policy is concentrated on proving its case for a planned attack on Iraq. We have just postponed again the promulgation of the long-awaited "road map" that the U.S. and other international leaders have drafted for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is a festering cancer and the root cause of much of the anti-American sentiment that has evolved throughout the world. At the same time, satellite observations of North Korea have indicated that nuclear fuel rods, frozen under international surveillance since 1994, are now being moved from the Yongbyon site to an undisclosed destination, possibly for reprocessing into explosives. It is imperative that this threat to Asian stability be met with aggressive diplomacy.

Since it is obvious that Saddam Hussein has the capability and desire to build an arsenal of prohibited weapons and probably has some of them hidden within his country, what can be done to prevent the development of a real Iraqi threat? The most obvious answer is a sustained and enlarged inspection team, deployed as a permanent entity until the United States and other members of the U.N. Security Council determine that its presence is no longer needed. For almost eight years following the Gulf War until it was withdrawn four years ago, UNSCOM proved to be very effective in locating and destroying Iraq's formidable arsenal, including more than 900 missiles and biological and chemical weapons left over from their previous war with Iran.

Even if Iraq should come into full compliance now, such follow-up monitoring will be necessary. The cost of an on-site inspection team would be minuscule compared to war, Saddam would have no choice except to comply, the results would be certain, military and civilian casualties would be avoided, there would be almost unanimous worldwide support, and the United States could regain its leadership in combating the real threat of international terrorism.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter is chair of The Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga., a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization that advances peace and health worldwide.

For the Common Good

by Jane Hanna, former president of the Witherspoon Society

My religious values and the public policies of my country are at odds. This conflict is uncomfortable. The biblical message I learned over a lifetime of Presbyterian teaching is that God loves all humanity, the whole of cosmic creation and we are to do likewise. We are born citizens of the world. That we are also born in nations is humanity's doing, not God's.

As the cost of running for public office has risen with each decade, administrations and congress are more strongly influenced by the interests of campaign contributors than by public interest. Large corporations whose leaders give the biggest share of these "donations" then exercise power to shape and control legislation. The question becomes, and perhaps has always been, by what criteria should public decisions be made? How do we evaluate the policies and practices of societies? It seems to me that the biblical message, in simple terms, would be to judge by what is best for the "common good."

Most religious faiths are based on the need to create just and harmonious communities. The most fundamental beliefs within spiritual/theological traditions are grounded in how people treat one another, that God requires justice, equity, and compassion. Peace and social justice would be the natural hallmarks of societies following God's will. That history has not adhered very well to these traditions and intentions is no reason for discarding the ideals. It is not too late, although some would say the world is getting close. How would America's relationship to the rest of the world look if biblical values were strictly adhered to? How would our own communities fare? I don't mean that someone or some authorities would monitor behavior. We seem to be headed in that direction for entirely different reasons and goals. I mean structuring our economic and political systems in ways

that ensure basic necessities for a meaningful life would be available for all, both within our nation and worldwide.

The United States currently has the power and means to lead the nations in such a direction. American interests control the most relevant economic and political decisions affecting the globe. Our nation dominates the world economy, the United Nations Security Council, military power, and all the global institutions in which the U.S. participates. US influence over major decisions impacting the economies and levels of conflict in the world have never been so great. Too

The time is right, while we have the potential, to develop an economic system and trade agreements for the benefit of the "common good."

often, however, policies claimed in the "national interest" are frequently for commercial interests.

Rather than withdraw from international treaties, a biblically based response would be to strengthen them and hold nations accountable to one another for compliance. The US once led efforts to contain the proliferation of weapons and their escalating capacity to kill, to keep space free of weapons. There no longer seems a commitment to the destruction of landmines littering the landscapes of previous conflicts, or decreasing environmental abuse. We refuse to cooperate in an international justice system and no longer support international agreements on biological and chemical weapons. Pledges for relief of poor country debts and monetary assistance for AIDS afflicted populations have not been as forthcoming as promised.

Regrettably, we have accepted ideological mythologies that help drive and support economic injustice and military dominance in much of the world. There is the notion that democracy and free

markets go hand in hand, particularly that capitalism will automatically be followed by democracy. Close observation indicates that until people are economically secure, their democratic rights are clearly curtailed. Does a culture of individualism, free-market economics, unbridled consumerism and survival –of-the-fittest social policies define the values of our citizenry? Do we really believe that "free trade," competition, and economic growth will benefit all?

Many of the dimensions of globalization can benefit humanity and have created great possibilities for people around the world to join hands for the wellbeing of all. Unfortunately, the most powerful aspect of globalization, a corporate-led economic system, is having an enormous negative impact on people everywhere.

World trade was extolled as the means by which millions would be lifted from poverty. Instead, the number of desperately poor increases daily while the wealth of the world is controlled by an

ever-smaller percentage of the human family. Unjust trade agreements such as NAFTA are to blame for much of the contrast to the affluent future that was touted. This is largely because of the way trade agreements are written and enforced. They are heavily weighted in favor of rich countries and transnational corporations who dominate world trade and write the rules to protect their markets.

The current economic system searches for the cheapest labor, taking jobs and adequate pay from richer countries to the poorest. Protections for labor and the environment are missing in most agreements and seldom enforced. The spread of huge market chains and fast-food restaurants wipes out the family owned businesses that traditionally supported a middle class in poorer countries. The welfare of workers and consumers is low on a list of priorities when profit is the predominate value.

When 35,000 people die of starvation every day, can we blithely thank God for our blessings as though we're more

deserving than are those who struggle and perish? Early in the biblical narrative of God's relationship to humanity, we read of manna which nourished the Israelites on their long desert trek. The heart of that story is God's command that there be enough for everyone, that food rot for those taking more than needed. God's instructions included a Sabbath Day and Jubilee Year for canceling debts to free people from the bondage of poverty. The prophets consistently called the people to honor God's intentions for the well being of all. They spoke out against the political, economic and ecclesiastical systems that caused poverty and injustice. Jesus began his ministry by quoting the words of Isaiah about bringing good news to the poor, liberty to captives and setting free the oppressed. His sermons and parables addressed the evil of injustice.

A biblically modeled economic system would affirm the eradication of poverty as its major goal. Because the United States is presently the most powerful nation in the world we can and should be the leading proponents for more equity in the way nations interrelate. The time is right, while we have the potential, to develop an economic system and trade agreements for the benefit of the "common good." A strengthened United Nations represented by people rather than nations would be the democratic and transparent way for major global decisions to be made. Allowing the richest nations to have the most influence neglects the needs of the poorest. Indigenous people and those in highly populated countries are marginalized and seldom heard.

Together, the international community should be assessing the world's resources upon which all life depends and plan together how to allocate them so all people have access to enough clean water, nutritious food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work at a living wage. Some say it is naïve to think it could be achieved. How do we know when it has rarely been tried? The Bible indicates it is God's intention. I trust God's promise that there is enough for all.

Jane Hanna

Yellowstone — among many presbyteries — urges that US exercise restraint and work with UN in dealing with Iraq

The Rev. John Shuck has reported that on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2003, the Presbytery of Yellowstone passed a resolution calling on the President and government of the United States not to engage in a "pre-emptive strike" against Iraq, but rather "to exercise restraint and to work with the United Nations toward a peaceful resolution of this crisis."

The vote was 23 for, 21 against the resolution.

Shuck continued, "There was a substitute motion to table it without discussion but it was defeated. Then we had 20 minutes or so of discussion. Folks who

spoke against felt that church governing bodies should not be involved in politics.

"I frankly didn't think it would pass. I just wanted to get something out on the table. What I said after I introduced it was something like ... 'I would hate to have history look back on this moment as the possible eve of World War III and wonder why when we had the opportunity that we didn't even bother to debate the issue.' There wasn't much debate at this time but perhaps it will spur some more bold acts by other individuals and governing bodies."

The text of the resolution:

As members of the Presbytery of Yellowstone, we believe our faith dictates that we voice strong opposition to a pre-emptive strike by the United States against Iraq. While many of us hold that a state is justified in using force in certain situations, we believe that a military strike by the United States against Iraq at this time is not morally justified.

While we deplore the past actions of Saddam Hussein, he poses no clear and immediate threat to the United States or the nations of the world. A unilateral, pre-emptive strike by the United States would be viewed by the vast majority of the world's population as an act of aggression on behalf of U.S. self-interests, even if self-interest is not our motivation. If the U.S. sets this example, other nations might claim justification for attacking their weaker neighbors.

Peaceful alternatives have not been exhausted, but must be pursued through the United Nations. Iraq has been and can continue to be contained by a cooperative effort led by the U.N. If Saddam is a threat, he is a threat to the world not to the United States alone.

An attack against Iraq would lead to the deaths of thousands of innocent people, including children. It would further destabilize the entire Middle East. We cannot afford to increase tensions between the West and the Arab world, or escalate the spiral of violence around the globe.

Peaceful alternatives to war are not flashy or terribly exciting, but war will not lead the United States nor the world to the security we seek. Peacemaking is hard work, but the way of peace is the narrow road that leads to life.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Presbytery of Yellowstone joins other governing bodies within the Presbyterian Church (USA) and our ecumenical partners in urging the President of the United States to exercise restraint and to work with the United Nations toward a peaceful resolution of this crisis.

The Presbytery instructs the Stated Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to President Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, members of Congress representing the portion of Montana covered by the Presbytery of Yellowstone, any relevant media, and to the churches of the Presbytery, encouraging them to share it with their members.

Issues before the coming General Assembly

by Gene TeSelle, Witherspoon Society Issues Analyst

It is too early for even a sampling of overtures that might come before the 215th General Assembly. Those that have been filed are briefly surveyed below. But we do know about other business that is coming from agencies and committees after being directed by past Assemblies to make studies and come back with recommendations.

The Theological Task Force on the Peace, Purity, and Unity of the Church will make a progress report on its deliberations thus far. An overture has been sent by the Presbytery of Mississippi, asking that representatives of five other Reformed denominations be invited to sit in and offer advice. All five have a more conservative stance than the PC(USA), two of them dramatically so, still arguing, for example, about the ordination of women. If this overture should get favorable consideration, other churches in the Reformed tradition, including the United Church of Christ, should get equal consideration.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is bringing no fewer than five documents to the Assembly.

The biggest one, the result of several years of study, drafting, and redrafting, is a policy statement on **“Living Faithfully with Families in Transition.”** It looks at the many meanings of “family” in our time and explores how these varied kinds of families can raise children faithfully and responsibly.

There will be a resolution calling for the abolition of for-profit private prisons; a resolution on Africa, dealing with issues of fair trade and economic development as well as the AIDS epidemic; a resolution on Israel and Palestine, calling for international peacekeeping efforts; and the annual Human Rights Update, eagerly awaited by churches throughout the world as a document they can show their governments to prove that people in the U.S. are watching.

A task force on disenfranchisement of

people of color in the electoral system, assisted by the Advocacy Committees for Racial Ethnic Concerns and Women’s Concerns, and by ACSWP and the Washington Office, will bring a comprehensive report and recommendations, including a request to Congress to renew the “preclearance” requirement of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (this requires that state or local governments get federal approval before implementing changes in voting procedures, showing that it does not have a racially discriminatory purpose and would not make minority voters worse off than prior to the change).

There will be much discussion of the **Mission Initiative**, a campaign to raise \$40 million over five years for international mission and racial/ethnic church development. And the National Ministries Division will bring strategy papers for the church’s activities in higher education and Hispanic/Latino constituencies.

We can expect a number of debates around polity issues. Decisions must be made about how to implement **biennial Assemblies** (skipping from 2004 to 2006), e.g., by changing the number of commissioners and adapting terms of office to this two-year cycle.

But that’s the easy one. Much more tense issues have been raised by the commissioners who called for a **special session of last year’s General Assembly** to rehash its decisions. Specifically they have wanted the Assembly to give continued “oversight” to the Presbytery of Northern New England as it deals with Christ Church in Burlington, VT; more generally they want the Assembly to do something about “defiance” around the church, and to exercise “all necessary powers” to direct “officers, agencies, and governing bodies” on how to deal with these issues. In commentary, it has become clear that this means telling the Stated Clerk to become an enforcer. But it also includes directing all the presbyteries and sessions how to carry out their responsibilities.

None of the three issues is stated in a form that really specifies what the GA might do (for example, a proposal to reconsider the Shenango action might have given a stronger case for reconvening). But we know that even without the special session of the 214th GA, these issues will come before the 215th. Already there has been a proposal to change “may” to “shall” in G-6.0502, and to shift the wording from “work disapproved by a governing body” to “work disapproved by the church.” Such language seems to give a hunting license to those wanting to force a presbytery or a session to take action against some person; at the same time it is vague about what “disapproved by the church” means, for in addition to the Constitution there are interpretations of it by the Permanent Judicial Commission and the General Assembly, and these are not very specific about “work” that is “disapproved.” There are sure to be other such proposals.

Redstone Presbytery has submitted an overture that deplores the various acts of “defiance” and the unwillingness of presbyteries to deal with them, but it also deplores the demand that the Stated Clerk take actions that are beyond his authority. It tosses the hot potato to the synods, on the principle that they have a more direct authority to oversee presbyteries (G-12.0102), asking that they “adopt guidelines or amend their standing rules” to address issues of noncompliance.

Interestingly, the same people who want stricter enforcement on some matters are defending sessions that refuse to pay per capita assessments, and they have not raised questions about women elders and other features of the Book of Order. One hopes that these issues will also be discussed by the GA as it deals with the Redstone overture and others like it.

Of the overtures that have come in thus far, several come out of **allegations of sexual abuse**. One from Donegal would extend the time for investigating committees when civil authorities become involved, and one from Hudson River would put ministers on “administrative leave” when an allegation is made.

Overture to delete G-6.0106(b) is passed by Des Moines Presbytery

The Presbytery of Des Moines passed on January 18 an overture to remove G-6.0106(b) from the Book of Order. The vote was 47 to 32 in favor of adoption. Since then a number of other presbyteries have acted to support the overture.

The text of the overture:

Shall the presbytery approve an overture to the 215th General Assembly (2003) the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding amendment of G6-0.106b to amend G-6.0106a, to delete G-6.0106b, and to approve an authoritative interpretation as follows:

The Presbytery of Des Moines respectfully overtures the 215th General Assembly (2003) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

a. Shall G-6.0106b be stricken.

b. Shall G-6.0106a be amended by adding a new sentence to the end of the paragraph to read as follows: "Their suitability to hold office is determined by the governing body where the examination for ordination or installation takes place, guided by scriptural and constitutional standards, under the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ."

2. Approve the following authoritative interpretation:

"Interpretive statements concerning ordained service by homosexual persons by the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the 119th General Assembly (1979) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and all subsequent denominational affirmations thereof, shall be given no further force or effect; and Section G-6.0106a of the Form of Government, together with the other prerequisites for ordination expressly stated in our Book of Order, hereby are affirmed as the sole and exclusive standards for ordination by ordaining bodies acting in prayerful discernment of the leading of Almighty God."

Rationale

We believe that the presence of G-6.0106b within our Book of Order has created a hostile and divisive environment in our church that is contrary to God's reconciling love and the spirit of our Reformed faith. We are greatly saddened over the increasing number of accusations and judicial cases that have arisen in recent months as a result of this measure. These trials are causing the church to spend inordinate financial and human resources defending an exclusionary policy that is not an essential of the Reformed faith, drawing precious resources away from the

primary mission of the church.

The effects of compliance with G-6.0106b run counter to the sentiment of G-5.0103 that "Each member must seek the grace of openness in extending the fellowship of Christ to all persons." Failure to do this, it continues, "constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the gospel." We would honor Christ's last prayer with his disciples that all may be one (John 17:11) and would heed the admonition of the New Testament writers that we avoid needless controversies lest the body of Christ be divided.

Presbyterians have historically valued the rights of governing bodies to make decisions that affect them the most directly, seeking unity in the essentials of faith but not necessarily in "truths and forms with respect to which [people] of good characters and principles may differ." (Book of Order, G-1.0305) Biblical interpretations differ, and the church should therefore leave it to local governing bodies to act out of their own faith as discerned together in prayer when such interpretations over nonessential matters are in conflict.

The confessions of our church are valuable guides in our decisions about ordination and many other issues, but they are always subordinate to Jesus Christ and the authority of scripture. (Book of Order, G-1.0307 and G-2.0200; Book of Confessions, 3.18-.20, 5.011-.014, 6.010, and 9.03) Our constitution affirms that "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship." (Book of Order, G-1.0301; see also G-1.0305 and G-1.0307; Book of Confessions, 5.010-.014, 6.109, 6.174-.175, 7.215, and 8.20-.21)

The church "is called to be a sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ," reflecting that "(1) Sin is forgiven. (2) Reconciliation is accomplished. (3) the dividing walls of hostility are torn down." (Book of Order, G-3.0200). This leads to an affirmation of diversity and the welcoming inclusion of all people (Book of Order, G-3.0401, G-4.0203, G-r.0401-.0403, G-5.0202, and G-9.0104; Book of Confessions, 9.06-.07, 9.10, 9.19-.20, 9.22, 9.29, 9.31-33, and 9.44).

We understand our polity and system of ordination to mean that leaders are called by God and confirmed by the people, and that all members whose manner of life demonstrates the gospel and who possess the gifts and training for leadership have opportunities to participate in leadership. In faithfulness to our call to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us, we would affirm and enable ordained service and outreach by all in whom we discern a call to serve (Book of Order, G-1.0306, G-4.0402, G-4.0403, G-6.0102, G-6.0107, G-7.0103, G-10.0102l, G-14.0201, and G-14.0204).

In our continuing struggle on these issues, the Church is called to be open to God's continuing reformation "according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit" (Book of Order, G-2.0200; see also G-e.0401, G-4.0303, G-10.0102j, and G-18.0101; Book of Confessions, 9.03 and 9.29).

No special Assembly — petition drive falls short

Moderator Abu-Akel says petitioners' issues will be dealt with by 215th Assembly

by Jerry L. Van Marter, Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — January 27, 2003 — There will be no special meeting of the 214th General Assembly.

In a carefully worded Jan. 24 letter to all 554 commissioners to last year's Assembly, moderator the Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel said that a petition submitted to him Jan. 14 by Alex Metherell, a Presbyterian elder in Laguna Beach, CA, does not contain enough signatures to force the calling of an unprecedented special meeting of the 214th General Assembly.

At a Jan. 27 press conference at the Presbyterian Center, General Assembly stated clerk the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick said it is his ruling that "no further petitions are in order" because the 215th General Assembly will convene before a special session of the 214th Assembly could be held.

Metherell has insisted a special Assembly session — which would be the first in history — is needed to "enforce" the constitutional ban on the ordination of sexually active gay and lesbian Presbyterians to church office.

The Book of Order requires that such a petition be signed by at least 25 minister and 25 elder commissioners from at least 15 presbyteries and five synods. Metherell's petition included 26 ministers and 31 elders, but when the Office of the General Assembly set about verifying the signatures, six ministers and seven elders withdrew their support, leaving the petition short in both categories.

A flurry of activity surrounded the verification process. Immediately after he received the petition, Abu-Akel sent a letter to the signers asking them to reconsider. He cited the expense of a special Assembly session (\$500,000 or

more), questioned whether the General Assembly has the authority to circumvent the church courts and pointed out that the earliest a special session could occur is May 15, less than 10 days before the 215th General Assembly is scheduled to convene in Denver.

The session of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Canton, OH, lodged a complaint with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission on Jan. 21, charging denominational officials with "conspiring" to block the special Assembly petition. Also on that date, Metherell handed Abu_Akel a letter while the moderator was attending a meeting of San Diego Presbytery, threatening to sue Abu_Akel in civil court if he failed to call the special Assembly. The next day four former moderators wrote an open letter to the church, calling Metherell's threats "deplorable" and "defamation of character."

The pitched battle over the special Assembly, Abu-Akel wrote, has made it "even more obvious ... that there are people who are in great pain in our denomination, and for that I have great concern and compassion." He said "there are no winners in this situation."

He also called commissioners' attention to an overture to the 215th General Assembly from Redstone Presbytery that he said "assures that the matters in the petition will be before the commissioners to that Assembly."

The overture highlights the role of synods in the church's judicial and disciplinary processes. Metherell's petition appears to bypass synods in favor of the General Assembly taking direct action in more than two dozen cases. The overture also asks the

General Assembly to "urge synods to establish guidelines or amend their standing rules to provide for the appointment of (synod-level) committees" to address issues of non-compliance in their presbyteries.

"The moderator and I share a commitment to honoring the constitution," Kirkpatrick said. "When as some have done, the constitution is openly defied, we dishonor Jesus Christ. The next Assembly will have to address these issues — the decision not to call the 214th General Assembly into special session in no way reflects a lack of concern (over non-compliance with the constitution)."

Reflecting on the call for a special session of the 214th General Assembly

Who's in Charge Here?

A comment by Barbara Kellam-Scott, member of the Witherspoon Executive Committee

If we didn't have a constitutional crisis before, it would seem one was created by the petition spearheaded by Elder Alex Metherell with his call for a special meeting of the 214th General Assembly. Although that call has failed through the process of verifying the signatures, the demand that the church focus its attention on the concerns of one portion of the church will profoundly affect our life together in the Body of Christ.

We cannot go back to a time before an officer of our church, traveling from California to Louisville with a prepared portfolio of petitions, alerted the Associated Press of his intention before he informed the General Assembly Council's executive committee and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, whose joint meeting he was about to disrupt. We cannot go back to a time before that same officer inserted himself into the stated meeting of a neighboring presbytery to confront the General Assembly moderator, who had been invited by that presbytery, with a written threat of civil suit if the officer did not get his way. [See "More salvos fired in Special Assembly battle: Petitioner threatens lawsuit; former moderators decry treatment of moderator," release from Presbyterian News Service, 1/24/03 <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/03046.htm>] We cannot go back to a time before a moderator of the General Assembly felt compelled to plead with commissioners not to impose an extraordinary half-million-dollar burden on the straining finances of the denomination to throw a meeting together less than 2 weeks before the convening of the next Assembly.

What can have brought decent, orderly Presbyterians to such personalized tactics? It is apparently a frustration with the very decency and order of our connec-

tional system. The "petition" that Metherell circulated has no definition in our constitutional standards, and it contains no orderly presentation of business for a special assembly -- no overture from another governing body, no motion to reconsider a specific action of the Stated Meeting of the Assembly. The petition's three complaints, however, and Metherell's threat of civil action against Moderator Fahed Abu-Akel, charge other governing bodies with neglect in enforcing constitutional standards. They seek to somehow, without changing those standards, supererogate to the General Assembly the constitutional responsibilities of the governing bodies that commission the decision-makers of a General Assembly.

Perhaps the real frustration expressed in these extraordinary acts is with the failure of a piece of legislation to impose a particular view of the Gospel, as once for all received, on those who find that legislation a scandal to the Gospel. It might have been supposed that the presbyteries' ratification of amendment 98-B would have closed the issue of ordained service by certain classes of "sinners." But people in those classes appear to continue to hear a call to serve, and a call to community in the flawed institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Those who thought they had "won" and closed the issue are understandably frustrated. So are those who hear those calls and are driven by those calls to stand firm before the condemnation of their brothers and sisters in Christ, and those who support the called.

What is less understandable is how we express our mutual frustrations. One side tends to speak of "justice," the other of "righteousness." One tends to lift up individual cases and to point to tolerance

of these behaviors by the wider world that exceeds the tolerance of the church. The other side tends to be more concerned that the church stay within the boundaries they perceive God has set down, and that it impose those rules on its members. How individuals' ecclesiastically determined lives fit into the world or how the church fits into a world that is unavoidably pluralistic often appears to be of very little interest. They tend to define "mission" as drawing the world into the existing church, while the other side understands mission as reaching out to the world — mission as proclamation or mission as service.

What is probably most false, and most provocative of frustration on both sides, is setting these principles in opposition to each other. Justice is meaningless without a concept of our own righteousness as an expression of God's will as we can discern it. The purpose of mission as service is, in the end, proclamation — sharing the good news that we have heard. We should not look for a resolution of our differences. God has already resolved them, in reconciling the world to godself in Christ. And we have discerned God's call to an institution in which neither the General Assembly nor any other governing body is constituted as a "*magisterium*" with power to impose on the rest of us one view of what God would have us be and do. We are called to struggle, together. We are called to see our peace and unity in the purity of God's love for us, all of us. We are called to love one another as God has loved us, as God so loved the world.

We will bear scars from this struggle. But we must touch each other's wounds and turn our attention from blame-laying for the wounds to binding them up. We must become so close that when one weeps, the other tastes salt.

What happens when the religious right takes over?

The Story of Brazil's United Presbyterian Church (IPU)

by Bert Campbell

The Rev. Robert J. Campbell is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington, PA.

"God works in mysterious ways God's wonders to perform."

In the 1960s Brazil was torn apart after the military took over control of the government. The mission-founded main-line Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPU) moved to the political right, supporting the coop. Influenced by the fundamentalism of Carl McIntyre, the denomination crushed its progressive youth movement, disowned its university students, and purged its seminaries of their progressive professors and students, seeking to exclude large numbers of its local churches and pastors who stood on the side of the poor and marginalized.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the United Presbyterian Church (IPU) was formed. It immediately petitioned the United Presbyterian Church USA to adopt our Book of Confessions, including the Barmen Declaration.

Jim and Anita Wright, and Bill and June Rogers, fraternal workers from the UPCUSA, were part of the struggle. The story has been told in detail in a book by Joao Dias de Araujo entitled *Inquisitions Without Burnings* (1982).

As the IPU struggled to train new ministers, it saw the need to reach out to other Protestant churches engaged in similar struggles, and to scholars in the Roman Catholic teaching orders, to found the first entirely ecumenical Seminary in Brazil, the Institute for Theological Education in Bahia (ITEBA). The Seminary was to be a free space where an older generation of theological professors and pastors could once again "do theology" with a new generation of students.

Remarkably, ITEBA soon became "free space" for the poor Afro-Brazilians of

Salvador, and particularly women, as they put their lives together, developed a theological framework, and tried to help others toward liberation.

Since 1993 the First Presbyterian Church of Washington, PA, has worked to build a support network of progressive congregations, committed to mission focused on justice. Two mission trips totaling 95 persons representing over a dozen churches have resulted in significant new support for ITEBA and the IPU.

The most valuable time was spent helping a new group of North Americans relate to and understand the reality of our Brazilian friends' struggle, and specifically to help them find ways to pursue an education at ITEBA under the most difficult circumstances (money for transportation, for example, has become a major issue). In spite of constant effort amidst poverty they remain hopeful.

We are blessed as a church to have been given this opportunity to share the spirit engendered by the leadership and students at ITEBA and their founders, the IPU. Recall that this Seminary arose from the midst of an oppressive military dictatorship; a reactionary church and a restrictive economy with few options. Many of the conditions of social injustice and economic oppression persist not only in Brazil but everywhere. I believe we are asked to resist!

These are difficult times in our own beloved Presbyterian Church (USA). The spirit of fundamentalism, judicial threat, censorship, and purging lurks in the shadows. The efforts of the network of congregations with the IPU and ITEBA Seminary are often called "Muturao", in partnership. Truly this unique and courageous band of brothers and sisters in our faith and the tiny ecumenical

seminary committed to living as well as teaching the inclusive and compassionate love of a God of justice and freedom can teach us much for "the living of these days" in the time and place to which we have been called."

Cont. from Editor's Spot, page 3

truly transcendent God. Only that awareness can give us a proper humility that might enable us to deal with one another as sisters and brothers, not just as enemies or "others" who are so different that we're afraid of each other. That kind of humility is not self-abasement, not a denial of human worth, but a knowing of our place within a very very big universe.

This is a time to proclaim clearly the basics of our Reformed heritage: That God stands above all our little gods, our loyalties, our commitments. That God is beyond our understanding, beyond our doctrinal formulations and moral principles. That God's love which we have seen in Christ encompasses the whole of God's creation. That God calls us, invites us, commands us to follow the divine example into loving all of the creation, respecting all creatures even when our little gods would have us condemn some of them as beyond the reach of God.

In the name of God, then, we must say No to those who claim that God is wholly and simply on their side. We must say No to those who would divide the world (or the church, for that matter) into Us and Them, Good and Evil. We must say Yes to all who would be lovers of the world, delighting in the wonders of the creation, thankful that for all its messiness, it is good.

The Witherspoon Society invites you to our 30th Anniversary Conference and Celebration

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Doug Ottati, Union Seminary/PSCE

Workshops:

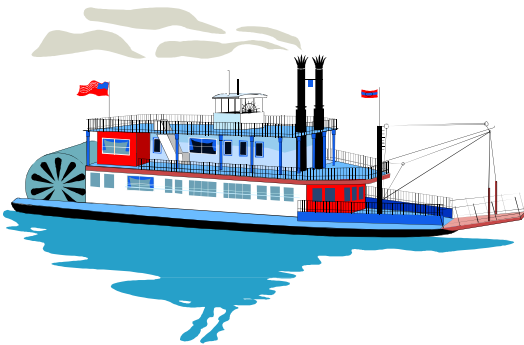
Strategies for Progressive Witness
An Insider Looks at the Confession of 1967
Finding a New Generation of Progressive Presbyterians
The Witherspoon Society for the next 30 years

Saturday March 8 Special Event:
A Conversation with Wendell Berry,
prize-winning author and farmer

PLUS **A GALA CELEBRATION**

A riverboat cruise to celebrate Witherspoon's
first 30 years
and welcome the future!
(Part of the "Call from Tomorrow" conference)

When: March 7, 2003
Where: Louisville, KY



For more information, contact

Program Coordinator Ann Euston:
Phone (505) 296-4885
E-mail: sustainann@earthlink.net
or visit our website: www.witherspoonsociety.org

A Calendar for Progressive Presbyterians

We present here information about any events we've heard about that might be of interest to progressives in the Presbyterian tradition.

If you have events to add, please contact
 Doug King
 1418 Clarendon Drive
 Wayzata, MN 55391-2103
 Phone (952) 473-2711
 FAX: (952) 472-2716
 E-mail: dougking2@aol.com

This calendar is also on the Witherspoon website, where it is updated frequently. (Just go to www.witherspoonsociety.org/coming_events.htm) There you will find links to the sites that will provide more information on many of these events.

2003

March 6-8—“THE CALL FROM TOMORROW: Whole Gospel Presbyterians Act in the Third Millennium”—a major conference on the future of the progressive witness in the Presbyterian Church, sponsored by the Witherspoon Society, Louisville, KY. Featured speakers include Wendell Berry, prize-winning author and farmer; Jack Rogers, moderator of 213th PC(USA) General Assembly; Joseph Hough, President, Union Seminary, NY; Doug Ottati, Union Seminary (VA). And we'll celebrate with a river-boat cruise on the Ohio River! See page 17.

March 17-29—Presbyterian Delegation visits Colombia to study the impact of US aid in that deeply conflicted country. Sponsored by the Witherspoon Society and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. See page 23.

March 20-22 — Encircling Care: A New Vision for Congregational Care Giving. Louisville, Ky. A conference for clergy, specialized ministers, parish nurses, pastoral counselors, church leaders, seminarians and caregivers covering mobility issues, Alzheimer's, AD/DR, frail elderly and aging, sponsored by Health Ministries USA, a mission program of the National Ministries Division and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

For additional information, please contact Patricia K. Gleich, associate for Health Ministries USA, PC(USA) at (502) 569-5793 or go to <http://www.pcusa.org/health/usa/conference/index.htm>

March 28-30—JusticeWorks: Renewing the Church's Social Witness. A national conference presented by Protestant Justice Action, St. Louis, MO. The event “is designed to strengthen connections among Protestants concerned about social justice in areas of health care, sexuality, military spending, economic justice, welfare reform, and criminal justice.”

April 23 - 26— Churchwide Theology Convocation on theme, "We Believe in One God." Pittsburgh, PA. Sponsored by Office of Theology and Worship, PC(USA). Call Nohra Carrillo at 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5335. Ore-mail djackson@ctr.pcusa.org

**May 24 - 31 —
 215th General Assembly,
 Denver, Colorado**

July 9 - 13 — 2003 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women. Louisville, KY. "God's Vision -- Our Calling"

July 22-26 -- Presbyterian Peacemaking Conference, Montreat, NC. “A Force More Powerful, Embracing Jesus' Way of Nonviolence” is the theme. The plenary leaders will be Walter and June Keener Wink.

Aug. 4 - 10 — Ghost Ranch seminar on A Biblical Vision for the Future. In partnership with The Witherspoon Society, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and Presbyterians for Restoring Creation. See page 26 for details.

Sept. 11-14 - Voices of Sophia 2003 Gathering in Louisville, KY. The theme: Racism, Whiteness and Resistance. Materials will be available soon for local organizing to prepare in advance for this Gathering. Check out the website at www.voicesofsophia.org for these materials and a reading list.

Nov. 6-8— Covenant Network Conference at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC. Theme: “The Church God Calls Us to Be & to Become.” Check Covenant Network website for more details.

Got events to add?
 Please send them to
dougking2@aol.com
 or
 Doug King
 1418 Clarendon Drive
 Wayzata, MN 55391-2103

Witherspoon goes to the PHEWA conference — Exploring a multiethnic church in good company

A special report from Ann Euston, Witherspoon's Program Coordinator

As usual, I approached this conference with a combination of anticipation and trepidation. Going to the biennial conference of the PHEWA held in San Antonio last weekend as an “official” representative of the Witherspoon Society placed two specific tasks before me: to introduce and explain WS to the many who didn't know about us (and to get them to join us!) and to get a working knowledge of PHEWA, its mission and membership, quick! But when I wrote down my first quotable quote – “If we are rejected by society we have been chosen by God” – I knew I was among kindred spirits.

In 2 ½ whirlwind days I think that I managed to accomplish both of my goals. I spoke personally with over half of the almost 200 attendees and received incredible support and enthusiasm for WS and its mission. I also ended up as Co-Moderator of PHEWA's newest network, PACT - Presbyterian Association for Community Transformation – thanks to a nomination for the position from a fellow Witherspooner and friend, Les Stansbury.

There were powerful and moving worship services, including the closing worship with communion, led by WS Executive Board Member Trina Zelle, numerous workshops, plenary sessions, and business meetings. And there were many hours of eating together and fellowship – to me the best times for heartfelt conversation and discussion on the issues facing our denomination and the larger world.

The centerpieces of ongoing conversation at the conference were two plenary speakers: Fr. Virgilio Elizondo, Director of Catholic Television of San Antonio and considered by many to be the father of US Hispanic theology, and the Rev. Dr. James Noel, Associate

Professor of American Religion at San Francisco Theological Seminary, where he focuses his research on African American Christianity and its roots in social, cultural and intellectual history.

Both focused on their respective cultural identities and how those identities mold their “place” in the dominant American culture of today. Fr. Elizondo has spent over 25 years researching and teaching on the “mestizaje” experience – what happens when cultures collide and new cultures emerge --and its importance in how we, as a nation and a church, are evolving. Rev. Noel spoke to the challenge of bringing understanding of the relationship among religious experience, social identity and historical events.

Both were challenging and engaging speakers. Rather than trying to summarize their talks, here are some loose quotes to give a flavor of their words:

- [There is] the propaganda of the deed.
- We must give from enoughness, not just give as extra.
- In this postmodern world, we are always asking what's the truth.
- My truth cannot be normative without being oppressive.
- We are moving from mono-cultural to multiethnic. This is a new challenge with no roadmap.
- Self interest over service is a structural sin.
- Income levels beyond “enough” is a public sin.
- We need each other; we are agents of a new creation.
- and
- Little things do make a difference.

In association with these ideas of trying to find a new American cultural identity,

one workshop, led by the Rev. Jill Martinez, pointed out how the “places” from which other ethnic American groups view the world and their place in it differ from what she termed the dominant culture (essentially white, northern European, male). Through a cross-cultural values grid, major differences were graphically illustrated. And she mourned the dominant culture's lack of a clear identity bound in tradition and geographical roots. That she feels is our task – to figure out what other groups already know about themselves and their cultural identities and in so doing come to discover who we are. Unless and until we, as the “dominant” culture, figure this out, we will be unable to help in the evolution toward the new, multicultural and multiethnic culture which America is bound to become.

In another workshop the leader, Bob Brashear, pastor of West Park Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, mentioned an interesting and challenging anecdote which may sum up the whole dilemma. He told of how one of his congregation took him to task after worship for saying “We welcome you, *regardless* ... etc.”. “What do you mean, regardless?” she demanded. “That's exactly *not* the point.” Hmmm.

Needless to say, I was grateful to spend time eating and talking about less demanding challenges like the potential of a reconvened 214th General Assembly and the clouds of war!

What does this mean for Witherspoon?

I came away with much food for thought. Many whom we might consider Witherspooners in their hearts are unaware of Witherspoon's existence. And if they are, many wonder what's the difference between us and other “progressive” affinity groups. Many wanted to know what it is we *do*. Although it is a vital job, there aren't many who are moved to join because WS works so effectively at GA. They



want, and need, to know others in their presbyteries and congregations who are committed to issues of peace and justice.

PHEWA leaders were really glad that Witherspoon had sent a representative to this conference. I believe I may have been the only person introduced on the floor of a plenary, and that introduction came specifically because I was sent by Witherspoon. I was also encouraged to speak at the roundtables for each of the networks. Some people joined immediately and I passed out close to 100 brochures. The overt link between the two organizations is perceived as a great step forward. I feel certain that I was asked to fill this co-moderator position precisely because I represented Witherspoon out loud. There were other groups represented – TAMFS, perhaps Covenant Network and More Light. But none actively identified themselves with their groups. This is interesting to me. Why?

Of course this is a link with great potential for both groups. But within PHEWA there continues to be the struggle for linkage among the networks. In other words, networks have problems networking. And this will be a challenge for Witherspoon as well – to maintain and foster links between ourselves and PHEWA, and to act to support and help each other where and when the need arises.

The emphasis at the conference was decidedly multiethnic and multicultural. There was no sense of tokenism in it; it was active and vital. People of all “makes and models” filled the plenaries and workshops. And of course to have a Roman Catholic priest as one of the keynote speakers brought a refreshing breath of ecumenism to the group. People of all ages were there as well, the youngest I estimated to be in their mid 20s. Of course, older folks dominated but I felt an energy of youthful outlook and urgency among the participants. This is one dedicated group!

I met with a wonderful woman from San Antonio, Alyssa Burgin, before the con-

ference. She is committed to starting a local WS chapter in her area. Others at the conference offered to do the same. This is a place where our membership sees itself participating in WS’s work. In the last few months, I’ve had 10 requests for info to network and start local chapters. That will bring the total to 14. This is an exciting turn for the Society, I hope. We need to figure out how to support these efforts in other places. People have told me that it is very important for those “in the field” to feel they aren’t alone in their presbyteries.

Finally, people at the PHEWA conference see Witherspoon as a “good” thing. They want to support and work with us wherever we can. I hope that we can keep that connection going. And, for me, being there reinforced one of the cornerstones of WS – that we do also understand that laughter and “lightening up” is really a great tonic.

Thanks to you all for sending me.

A Gift can Make a Difference to You and to the Witherspoon Society

As we face new challenges and opportunities in this new year, please consider a donation to the Witherspoon Society. We’ve got a variety of ways you can help make a difference:

- *Direct donations:* Please send to : WS, PO Box 14069, Albuquerque, NM 87191.
- *Endowment:* WS has set up an endowment fund with the Presbyterian Foundation. A particularly attractive option is the charitable gift annuity which provides lifetime income to you and to Witherspoon.
- *Will:* Do you want to leave something to continue your progressive voice for future generations? Again, please consider the Witherspoon Society as part of your legacy by mentioning it in your will.
- You can add to the Endowment through the Presbyterian Foundation or with a direct contribution earmarked to Witherspoon.

Whatever you decide, remember that Witherspoon is a non-profit organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Your gifts, if finalized by December 31, may allow you to take advantage of the charitable contribution if you itemize deductions on your federal tax return.

Want more information? Contact Ann Euston, Program Coordinator, 505 296 4885. sustainann@earthlink.net. She’ll help you get started!

The Society thanks you!

La Vida en el Espíritu – Hacia una Teología de la Globalización

Brice Rogers

*Spanish a little rusty?
Turn the page for an English translation!*

En que se parecen un niño de la calle de Austin, un indocumentado de México, y una refugiada de Iraq? Me hice esta pregunta un domingo por la mañana, frente al Town Lake en Austin, Texas, durante un culto conmemorativo dedicado a las víctimas de las calles de Austin de este año. Sesenta y dos personas fallecidas en 2002. Actualmente viven de cuatro a ocho mil personas en las calles de la capital de Texas. Me encontré rodeado de gente de distintos niveles sociales, económicos y políticos, gente de negocios, músicos profesionales, gente de la calle... todos juntos en el aire frío, al lado del lago, con los rostros inclinados, orando a Dios. Un retrato perfecto del pueblo de Dios como debería de ser: una comunidad sin barreras.

Desafortunadamente, ese culto se realiza solamente una vez al año y está enfocado en “el problema de la gente sin casa,” como si ellos fueran el problema. En la última semana he participado en varias actividades que tienen que ver con los problemas de un grupo de personas u otro: dos conferencias sobre la guerra contra Iraq que nos amenaza y que probablemente dejará a millones de personas como refugiados, clases de Inglés para los inmigrantes en Austin que solamente hablan Español, y el culto conmemorativo de los que no tienen casa. Contextos diferentes, mundos diferentes. En un mundo que comprende muchos mundos, Cristo nos dice, “buscad primeramente el reino de Dios y su justicia, y todas estas cosas os serán añadidas” (Mateo 6:33). En cual de estos mundos, entonces, debo buscar el reino de Dios?

Muchos estamos conscientes de que vivimos en un mundo bajo el proceso de globalización. A partir de la generación de mis padres, por primera vez en la historia humana, hemos vivido en un sistema económica global que toca casi cada país del mundo de una manera u otra, facilitado por redes globales de comunicación y transporte. Una vez

Martin Luther King Jr. dijo, “después de haber desayunado, ya has dependido de la mitad del mundo.” Cada día nuestra vida depende del trabajo de millones de personas en otros países cuyos nombres no conocemos. Millones de trabajadores con o sin documentos llegan a nuestras ciudades en los Estados Unidos cada año, listos para construir nuestras casas, preparar nuestras comidas y cuidar a nuestros hijos por un sueldo casi ridículo. Simplemente es imposible no participar en el sistema mundial - pues el mundo ha llegado a nuestras puertas.

A pesar de que vivimos en un sistema mundial, nuestras iglesias todavía no reflejan esta realidad. Cuando llegué al seminario, esperé encontrar una comunidad consciente de la realidad global del mundo y de nuestro país, y preparándose para enfrentarla a través de las iglesias. En cambio, me hallé en una institución confundida siguiendo a iglesias que no entienden su contexto y que buscan la forma de regresar el reloj cincuenta años hacia aquel tiempo en que “tuvimos gente.” En el seminario hablamos de iglesias rurales y urbanas, iglesias grandes y chicas, y del “desarrollo de iglesias étnicas,” pero no tomamos el tiempo para considerar lo que significa vivir en un mundo global, en el cual matamos a nuestros enemigos (o más bien a sus niños y abuelitos) a través de sanciones económicas y embargos de medicinas, y en que nuestros enemigos pueden matar a tres mil personas sin tirar una sola bala. ¿Qué significa ser Iglesia en este mundo?

Creo que es tiempo para desarrollar una teología de la globalización. Quizás suena raro hablar así, pero me parece que solamente una teología global puede enfrentar a un mundo globalizado. Y solamente una teología que se dirige a la realidad actual mundial puede sostener a los hacedores de paz, los discípulos que Cristo mandó al mundo con el propósito de hacer discípulos de todas las naciones. Para contestar a mi pregunta original,

solamente una teología global reconoce que los que viven en la calle en Austin, los indocumentados de México, y los refugiados de Iraq son iguales porque todos son hijos de Dios y ninguno de ellos merece vivir con miedo de una muerte provocada por la maldad sistematizada.

¿Qué diferencia habría entre una teología globalizada y una teología que ya tenemos? No estoy seguro, porque la teología globalizada aun no se ha aparecido. Pero tal teología debe incluir lo siguiente:

1. La injusticia dondequiera amenaza a la justicia en todo lugar, porque Dios es un Dios de justicia.
2. No hay ninguna lucha contra la maldad en este mundo ya sea ambiental, de labor, de derechos humanos, o político, que no merece la atención y apoyo de los Cristianos.
3. La experiencia de Dios de cualquier creyente dondequiera importa al igual que la nuestra.
4. Ningun creyente puede estar bien con Dios y tener “paz” mientras que nuestros hermanos en otros países sufren pobreza y persecución. Y especialmente cuando la política de nuestra nación contribuye a su sufrimiento.

¿Qué será la base de una teología de la globalización? Pienso que hay que basarla en la presencia del Espíritu Santo. Hay que creer, como sugiere Gustavo Gutierrez, que el Cuerpo de Cristo existe dondequiera que el Espíritu está presente. Y como dice Jurgen Moltmann, solamente el Espíritu de Dios puede juntar a los víctimas de injusticia y a sus abusadores y guiarnos en la restauración de nuestras sociedades y de la misma naturaleza.

Bueno, seguiré estudiando en el seminario y buscando una teología de la globalización. Y mientras tanto, voy a estar aprendiendo de los que viven en la calle, y a los indocumentados, y a los refugiados, porque yo creo que de tales es el reino de Dios. Y cuando ellos lo heredan, quiero que se acuerdan de mí.



English Translation:**Life in the Spirit:
Toward a Theology of Globalization**

What do a child living on the streets of Austin, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico and a refugee from Iraq have in common? I asked myself this question one Sunday morning, before Town Lake in Austin, Texas, during a worship service of remembrance dedicated to the victims of the streets of Austin this year. Sixty-two people died in 2002. Currently there are between four and eight thousand people living on the streets of the Texas capital. I found myself surrounded by people of different social, economic and political backgrounds, business people, professional musicians, people living in the streets – all together in the cold air next to the lake, with heads bowed, praying to God. A perfect image of the way the people of God should be: a community without barriers.

Unfortunately, this service happens only once a year and is focused on “the problem of the homeless,” as if they were the problem. In one week I have participated in several activities that have to do with one group of people or another: two conferences about the war with Iraq that threatens us and that will probably leave millions of people as refugees, English classes for immigrants in Austin who speak only Spanish, and the worship service for homeless people. Different contexts, different worlds. In a world that is made up of many worlds, Christ tells us, “seek first the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6:33). In which of these worlds, then, should I seek the kingdom of God?

Many of us are conscious that we live in a world that is in a process of globalization. Since my parents’ generation, for the first time in human history, we have lived in a global economic system that touches almost every country in the world in one way or another, facilitated by worldwide networks of communication and transportation. Once Martin Luther King Jr. said, “by the time you eat breakfast, you have already depended on half the world.” Every day, our life depends on

the work of millions of people in other countries, whose names we do not know. Millions of workers with and without documents come to our cities in the United States every year, ready to construct our houses, prepare our meals and take care of our children for almost ridiculous wages. It is simply impossible not to participate in the worldwide system, because the world has come to our door.

Despite the fact that we live in a world system, our churches still do not reflect that reality. When I arrived at seminary, I expected to find a community that was conscious of the global reality of the world and preparing to confront it through the churches. Instead, I found myself in a confused institution following the lead of churches that don’t understand their context and that seek a way of turning back the clock about fifty years to the time when we “had folks.” In the seminary we talk about rural and urban churches, big and small churches, and “ethnic church development,” but we don’t take the time to consider what it means to live in a global world. A world in which we kill our enemies (or better said, their children and grandparents) through economic sanctions and medicine embargoes, and in which our enemies can kill three thousand people without firing a single shot. What does it mean to be Church in this world?

I think it’s time to develop a theology of globalization. Maybe it sounds strange to say it this way, but it seems to me that only a global theology can confront a globalized world. And only a theology that directs itself to the current global reality can sustain the peacemakers, those disciples that Christ sent to the world with the goal of “making disciples of all nations.” To answer my original question, only a global theology recognizes that those who live on the streets of Austin, the undocumented immigrants from Mexico, and refugees from Iraq are all equal because they are all children of God, and none of them deserves to live in fear of death caused by systematized evil.

What difference might there be between a globalized theology and the theologies

we already have? I’m not sure, because a theology of globalization has still not appeared. But such a theology should include the following:

1. Injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere, because God is a God of justice.
2. There is no struggle against evil in this world, be it environmental, or labor, or human rights, or political, that does not deserve the attention and support of Christians.
3. The experience of God of every believer everywhere is just as important as ours.
4. No believer can be good with God and have “peace” while our brothers and sisters in other countries suffer poverty and persecution, especially when the politics of our nation contribute to their suffering.

What would be the basis of a theology of globalization? I think that it must be based on the presence of the Holy Spirit. We must believe, as Gustavo Gutierrez suggests, that the Body of Christ exists wherever the Spirit is present. And as Jurgen Moltmann says, only the Spirit of God can join the victims of injustice and their abusers and guide us in the restoration of our societies and nature itself.

Well, I will continue studying in seminary and seeking a theology of globalization. And in the meantime, I will be learning from those who live on the streets, and the undocumented, and the refugees, because I believe that the kingdom of God is theirs. And when they inherit it, I want them to remember me.

The author

Brice Rogers is a senior at Austin Presbyterian Seminary. He worked with Presbyterian Border Ministry at Reynosa, Mexico for 5 ½ years, and is originally from Jacksonville, Florida.

Presbyterians Concerned about Colombia

Sponsored by
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
and Witherspoon Society



The Impact of U.S. Aid in Colombia

Under the auspices of Witness for Peace

Delegation to Colombia March 17-29, 2003

One of the delegation planners, Betty Kersting, adds this update on Feb. 10 –

There are 19 presently registered and there is room for more! We all look forward to sharing our experience at the Peace Fellowship booth at GA in May.

Colombia has endured almost four decades of brutal armed conflict between the national army, leftist guerrilla movements, and right-wing paramilitary forces. Overwhelmingly, the victims of this conflict have been civilians — primarily community and church leaders, human rights workers, and local labor organizers. Into this situation, the U.S. Congress has approved several billion in mostly military aid — ostensibly to fight the “war on drugs” but in fact to expand our military influence.

- Meet with a wide range of experts to hear analyses of the impact of U.S. policy in Colombia
- Hear personal testimonies from displaced people and others directly affected by the conflict
- Travel outside Bogotá to see the impact of military assistance on farmers and other civilians
- Meet with Presbyterians and hear their stories about the effects of U.S. policy on civilians
- Gather tools and skills needed to educate and influence U.S. policy makers

Estimated Cost: \$1,400 plus airfare. This includes all meals, accommodations, translation and transportation in Colombia (including in-country airfare). Your fee also covers briefing materials and extensive training in Miami. Scholarship funds are limited, but fundraising consultation is available. Past delegates have a very successful track record of raising the needed funds.

Applications: Due February 15, 2003 with a \$100 deposit. Space for 20 participants

For an application and more information, contact:
Betty Kersting (505) 982-4548 sfkerst@rt66.com
Anne Barstow (212) 662-8209 annebarstow@peoplepc.com

Another anniversary worth remembering:

For Witherspoon it's 30 years, but for the Presbyterian Workingmen's Department it's 100

Richard P. Poethig

The 30th anniversary celebration of the Witherspoon Society on March 7th is one marker on the Presbyterian Church's journey of witness for the social justice in the last century. An earlier predecessor of the Witherspoon Society, the Presbyterian Fellowship for Social Action was organized in October 1934 in Buffalo, New York (see *Network News* of September/October 1989). This year is the 100th anniversary celebration of the creation of the Workingmen's Department in 1903. With the organization of the Workingmen's Department the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. moved into the stream of the social gospel in its recognition of the challenges presented by the massive European migration and the industrial and urban changes taking place in American life.

In 1903 the Board of Home Missions under the leadership of Charles Thompson called Charles Stelzle from the Markham Presbyterian Church in St. Louis to head the newly created ministry to working people under the Workingmen's Department. By calling Stelzle to this work, the Presbyterian Church established the first such office among Protestant Churches in the United States. Stelzle, who had grown up in the tenements of New York's lower East Side, was the proper choice for the task. He possessed an evangelical spirit and was a member of the International Association of Machinists (I.A.M.) who understood the issues of working people. During the ten years that he served as superintendent of the Department of Church and Labor (the name was changed in 1906), he also served as the first head of the newly organized Department of Immigration in 1908 and the organizer of the Labor Temple in 1910. The Labor Temple, a unique experiment in neighborhood house work, was established in the midst of the multitudes of Russian Jewish, Greek Orthodox, and Italian immigrants on the lower East Side. In the ten years of his ministry, Stelzle was to lay the foundation for a wide range of ministries in which the Presbyterian Church became involved in the next century.

Stelzle saw as one of his major tasks the bridging of the gap between the working class and the churches. Stelzle's connection to the labor movement was crucial in his reaching working people in U.S. cities. One of his first efforts was to bring pastors into a greater understanding of the lives of working people. He organized lunch time workshop meetings as a means of drawing local pastors into conversations with workers. By 1906 his program had developed 1000 such shop meetings in six cities reaching 200,000 workers. From this base he organized a plan for the exchange of fraternal delegates between central labor bodies and local ministerial associations. By 1910, 157 ministers were serving as fraternal delegates to trade unions in 117 cities.

Stelzle had developed a strong relationship with Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.). In 1905 he was the first clergy person to be invited to address the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor meeting in Pittsburgh. He attended twelve successive A.F.L. conventions, in his latter years as representative of the Federal Council of Churches.

One of Stelzle's long-term influences came through the role he played in keeping alive the social issues in U.S. industrial society. In 1908, Stelzle was a Presbyterian representative at the organization of the Federal Council of Churches. The major presentation at the meeting was Dr. Frank Mason North's speech on "The Church and Modern Industry." Stelzle was called upon to give the address supporting the social resolutions in North's speech. Following Stelzle's speech, the resolutions were unanimously adopted by the Council. These resolutions became "The Social Creed of the Churches," which centered on the rights and conditions of working people in an industrial society. The Social Creed became the first among many social statements passed by the member denominations of the Federal Council of Churches. In 1910, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. passed its first social pronouncement essentially following the resolutions set down in The Social Creed. It was upon this foundation that our own history of social statements and social policy have been established.

The resolution passed at the 214th General Assembly (2002) called for a recognition of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Workingmen's Department by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., by designating a special day of remembrance on Labor Day 2003, which will celebrate the ongoing influence of the social ministry begun in 1903. It also called for a review of the current social ministry of our church in the light of this past history. The January /February issue of *Church & Society* carries the stories of the wide variety of ministries which have been carried out over the last century.

The Labor Day remembrance is an appropriate action, since in 1906 Stelzle introduced the concept of Labor Sunday in order to win recognition of the importance of industrial work among the larger body of church members. He called upon pastors to use the Sunday before Labor Day to explore the Biblical theme of work at it related to the U.S. industrial system. In 2003, we have opportunity of following in this tradition to review our current economic system and its effects not only on the lives of our own citizens, as well as impact upon the lives of people globally.

The author:

Richard Poethig has devoted his ministry to urban-industrial mission with work with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (1957 - 1972) and as director of the Institute on the Church in Urban-Industrial Society based at McCormick Seminary (1972



- 1982). He has also served on two General Assembly task forces on "Economic Justice Within Environmental Limits: The Need for a New Economic Ethic" (1976) and on "God's Work in Our Hands: Employment, Community, and Christian Vocation" (1995).

Church & Society Magazine, in its January/February 2003 issue, will celebrate the founding of the Presbyterian Workingmen's Department 100 years ago, with a focus on "The Church and the Working Poor." It will include questions for discussion and a liturgy for Labor Day Sunday.

Nominations Sought

Once again, our Nominating Committee is seeking a few good people to serve the Witherspoon Society as officers for the coming two years.

As our Annual Meeting at General Assembly we will elect the following officers:

Vice-President — for a term of 2003-2005
 Secretary/Communicator — 2003-2005
 Treasurer — 2003-2005
 Issues Analyst — 2003-2005
 At least two Members at Large — 2003-2005

The Nominating Committee will be seeking candidates who will bring diversity of gender, age, race and geography. They will also seek candidates who have (and use!) e-mail access.

Don't be shy: If you feel ready to play a leadership role for Witherspoon, put yourself on the list for consideration! Or suggest a friend!

Please send nominations to the Chair of the Nominating Committee:

José Olagues
 4423 N. 24th St. - Suite 200
 Phoenix, AZ 85016
 Phone 602-468-3820
 E-mail: jose@pbygc.org

New Presby Legislative Action Center promises convenient information and contacts for advocacy

The Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has announced that it has added a new Legislative Action Center to its Internet site to enhance its advocacy efforts with CapWiz, the nation's premiere online political action tool.

CapWiz is the driving force behind online grassroots democracy for nearly 1,000 associations, corporations, media outlets, state organizations, and 80% of *Fortune Magazine's* Washington Power 25. CapWiz will allow the PCUSA Washington Office to add a content-rich, interactive government-relations area to its Web site, where visitors can make their voices heard in the U.S. Congress and regulatory agencies.

CapWiz allows Web site visitors complete access to their elected officials by simply entering their ZIP code. Visitors may view their senators and representative's pictures, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, staff, committee assignments, voting records, and more. In addition to elected officials, visitors may also locate local and national media contacts in all 50 states.

Several compelling free features have recently been added to CapWiz that will assist the PCUSA Washington Office's advocacy efforts: ElectionWiz with Voter Registration provides information on candidates, key races and issues and includes an optional component for facilitating online voter registration; Alert Stickers allow you to post topic-specific alerts on affiliates' or supporters' sites, allowing their site visitors to easily link back to the Presby Legislative Action Center and take action on issues the Washington Office promotes.

A little note from your editor:

You can access this promising new channel for on-line legislative advocacy by going to the Washington Office home page <http://www.pcusa.org/washington/index.htm>, then clicking on "Presby Legislative Action Center" on the right of the home page.

Or you can scroll down the page till you find a box on the right side of the page that says "Contact Congress." Key in your ZIP code and you'll go to the CapWiz page for your district (senators and representative).

Or go directly to the CapWiz page:
<http://capwiz.com/pcusa/home/>

Ghost Ranch seminar — August 4 to 11, 2003

A BIBLICAL VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Plan now for a special event this summer!

***In partnership with
The Witherspoon Society,
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
and Presbyterians for Restoring Creation***

- ◆ Many people seem to view economic globalization with a near-religious faith that it will bring a better life to all.
- ◆ How does the gospel of free-market capitalism USA-style compare with the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- ◆ Is this promise of expanding prosperity for all ignoring increasing poverty and environmental degradation?

Three eminent leaders will share an alternative global vision as we address the economic, social, political and environmental needs of the planet and its people.

We will examine issues of poverty and injustice, militarization and corporate economic domination, exploitation of labor and resources, and analyze how our society works as a system compared with a biblical perspective.

We will envision what a just future would be and how we might get there. Military escalation may somewhat shape the tenor of our discussions. Time will be given to plans for response in our churches and communities.

Jennifer Butler directs advocacy and education programs for the Presbyterian United Nations Office, serves on the executive councils of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), co-chairs the Justice for Women Working Group of the National Council of Churches and is Vice President of ECPAT-USA (End Child Prostitution). A frequent speaker on religion and human rights, she co-authored both *New Sheriff in Town: The Christian Right Shapes US Agenda at the United Nations*, and an action and study guide, *When We are All Strong Together: Understanding Gender Discrimination, Building Gender Justice*. She is co-founder of Ecumenical Women 2000+ and was a Peace Corps volunteer in Belize before earning an M. Div. at Princeton and Masters in Social Work at Rutgers

Joseph Gerson is Director of Regional Programs, American Friends Service Committee, New England Regional Office (Middle East and Peace & Economic Security Programs), and was founder and Director of Arizonans for Peace. He served on the staff of Clergy & Laity Concerned during the Vietnam War, and was Staff Coordinator for War Resisters International, London and Brussels. He received his Ph.D. in Politics and International Security Studies at Union Institute, is a frequent lecturer on peace and justice issues, a campaign organizer against military activities, author of numerous articles and books, the most recent *With Hiroshima Eyes: Atomic War, Nuclear Extortion and Moral Imagination*, 1995.

Carol F. Johnston is Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), she received her Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate School in California, her M. Div. from Union Theological Seminary in NY. She has worked on environmental issues for the PCUSA and Episcopal Church, has been an adjunct professor at San Francisco Theological Seminary and teaching assistant at Claremont School of Theology. Author of *The Wealth and Health of Nations*, she has taught and lectured on issues of economics and environment, justice, Bible and nature, and the public roles of churches.

Coordinator: Jane Hanna

More information is available from Ghost Ranch. The Summer 2003 catalogue is not yet available, but you'll find lots of other information (and nice pictures!) on their web site: <http://www.ghost ranch.org/index.php>

The
Next
Network
News

Our next issue of *Network News* will be sent to all commissioners and advisory delegates to the 215th General Assembly, offering them information, analysis, and a taste of Witherspoon.

If you have business going to the Assembly — or concerns about somebody else’s business — that you’d like to discuss with commissioners, here’s your chance!

Just send us what you’d like to share, and let’s see what we can work out. We want to do all we can to help commissioners gain a progressive perspective on their work as they prepare.

**Deadline for submissions
is
April 1, 2003**

**Please let us hear from you!
(And please note the new address and phone numbers!!)**

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1418 Clarendon Drive
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**Don’t miss
three major
Witherspoon
events!!**

**Our 30th Anniversary
Conference on
“The Call from Tomorrow,”
in Louisville, KY
March 6 - 8, 2003
(see page 17)**

**A Presbyterian delegation
visit to Colombia
March 17 - 29
(see page 23)**

**A Ghost Ranch seminar on
“A Biblical Vision for the
Future”
July 28 - Aug. 4
(this one’s pretty easy: page 26)**

**OK, that’s a lot to do!
But try to join us for *at least one*
of these exciting and
challenging events!**

ORDER EXTRA COPIES!!

If you find the *News* helpful, others may find it so, too. Order as many as you can use!

For 1 to 5 copies (of the same or different issues) \$2.00 each
For 6 to 10 copies \$1.50 each
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We’ll pay the postage unless you want express shipment.
Use this form to order, or call Doug King at (952) 473-2711, fax (952) 473-2716.

Please send me

- _____ **copies of this issue (Winter 2003)**
- _____ copies of the Fall 2002 issue, with reflections on the conflicts in the Middle East and in the PC(USA)
- _____ copies of the Spring, 2002 issue, with discussion of issues going to the General Assembly, and Doug Ottati on C-67 and the Book of Confessions
- _____ copies of the Winter, 2002 issue, with material from the Stony Point Conference on the Confession of 1967
- _____ copies of the special Fall ’99 issue on **Working for Economic Justice**

(For other back issues, please call or send a note.)

I would like to recruit new members, so please send:

- _____ copies of the Witherspoon Society membership brochure, or
- _____ **one copy** of a master sheet so I can make my own copies.
(No charge for these!!)

TOTAL: \$ _____

My check to “Witherspoon Society” is enclosed

Name: _____

Address: _____

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