

Winter 2006

How to rebuild a just
and green New Orleans

yes!
a journal of positive futures

Matthew Fox

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and the feminine face of God

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spiritual uprising

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Issue #36

Only your compassion and your loving kindness are invincible, and without limit. Thich Nhat Hanh

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Jesus

Kindness is the light that dissolves all walls between souls, families, and nations. Paramahansa Yogananda

None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself. Muhammed

An injury to one is an injury to all. The IWW

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

All things are our relatives; what we do to everything, we do to ourselves. All is really One. Black Elk

When you are kind to someone in trouble, you hope they'll remember and be kind to someone else. And it'll become like wildfire. Whoopi Goldberg

What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. This is the law; all the rest is commentary. Hillel the Elder



Linda Wolf

Dear Reader,

Perhaps before Katrina we could pretend we didn't notice the widening gulf between the wealthy and those left behind.

The hurricane made it impossible to ignore. The disabled, the elderly, and the poor—especially people of color—were left to fend for themselves with few resources to draw from. Many were even treated as criminals.

Today, well-connected corporations are winning huge, no-bid contracts for rebuilding the region, and the waiving of labor and environmental protections means that wages can be sub-par and water and soil left contaminated. Money is flowing, the powerful are making decisions, and the poor and displaced are once again missing from the table.

This is a moral crisis if ever there was one.

Shortly after the 2004 election, Zogby pollsters asked voters to identify the most serious moral crisis in the U.S. You wouldn't know it by listening to the pundits, but only 12 percent cited gay marriage and 16 percent abortion. For 33 percent, the greatest moral challenge was greed and materialism. For 31 percent, it was poverty and economic justice.

So why the deafening silence about poverty and the precarious position of the middle class? Political leaders clam up when they get accused of "class warfare." Campaigns, after all, require contributions from corporations and wealthy interests.

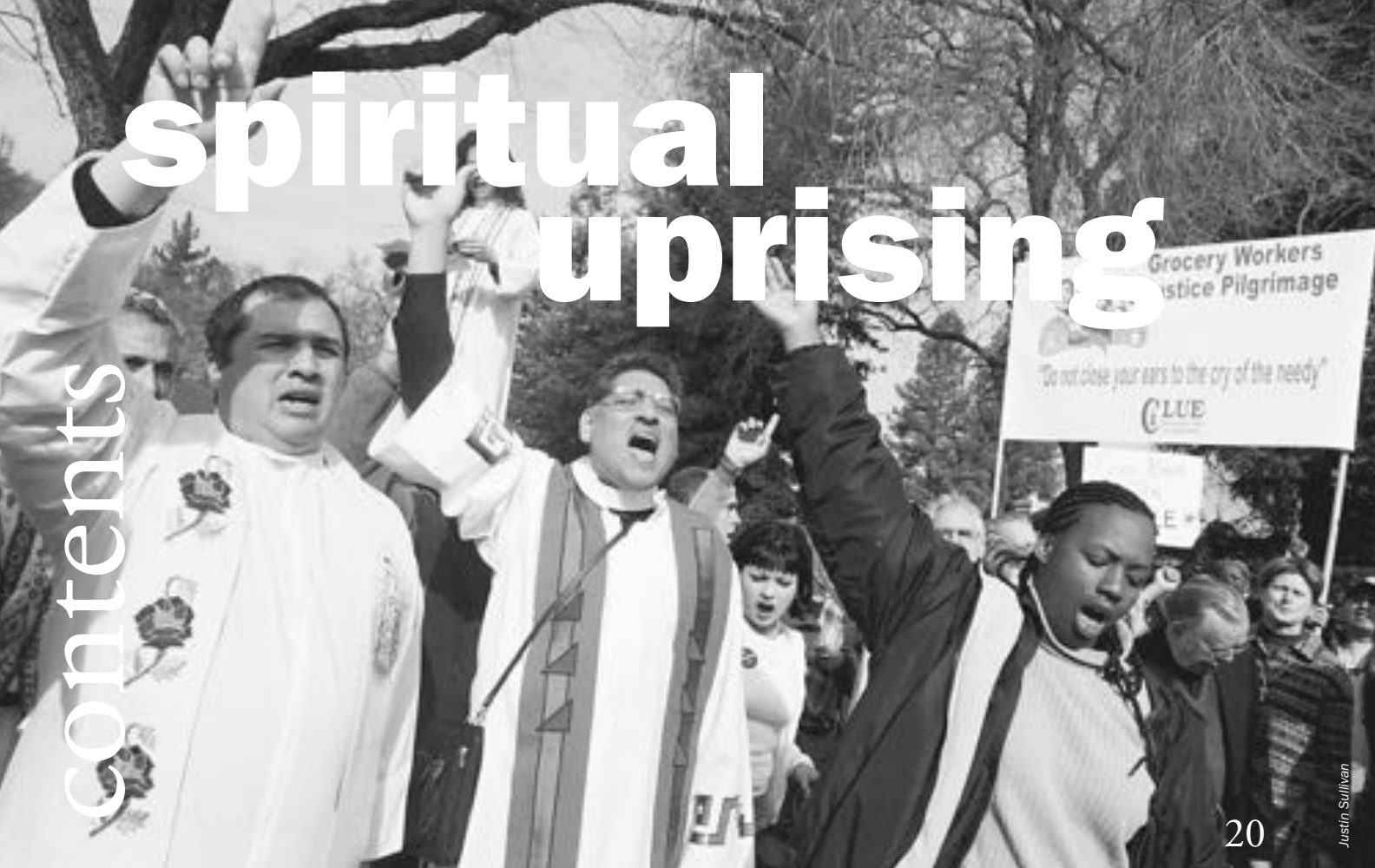
Religious leaders also are surprisingly quiet on economic issues. On the Right, they focus instead on hot-button social issues that assign blame for all manner of ills to gay people, women, and immigrants. They imply, contrary to the teachings of Jesus, that the poor are less worthy in the eyes of God. Meanwhile, progressive religious leaders seemed to have lost their voices—until recently.

There is, now, a spiritual uprising under way in the United States that is taking on this moral crisis. At its center are people like Rabbi Michael Lerner, who has been calling for a "new bottom line" based not on greed and materialism but on the well-being of people and the environment. And Reverend Jim Wallis has turned his book tour for *God and Politics* into a series of revival meetings for people looking for a prophetic response to the corporate/right-wing vision ruling our country.

Religions, through the millennia, have taken a strong stand on poverty and materialism, often to the discomfort of the comfortable. Muslim teachings prohibit usury because debt is so often the road to persistent poverty. The Old Testament proclaims the Jubilee, when debt is to be forgiven, slaves freed, and land returned. Northwest coastal tribes hold potlatches in which wealth is given away freely. And of course Jesus focused his ministry on the excluded, preaching good news to the poor about a transformation that would bring the Kingdom of God to Earth.

In this issue of *YES!*, diverse religious and spiritual voices issue a call for solidarity. As they have on other pivotal issues—from the struggle against slavery and child labor to the call to save the Earth—the religious community is rising up, proclaiming the spiritual truth that we are all one.

Sarah Ruth van Gelder
Executive Editor



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Listen to the Wisdom

I greatly appreciated your issue on elders. I am blessed at age 24 to still have four living grandparents. Witnessing them grow old has offered me many lessons. It has shown me how bodies deteriorate and how the smartest mind can be slowly, painfully lost to Alzheimer's. It has taught me that changes and choices do not get easier with age and burdens of pain become greater. It has also taught me what grace and dignity look like. My grandparents are brave people. Despite approaching death, they know how to live, how to take joy in the moment, and the people around them. They know how to respect their limits and then surprise us with what they can do. They know from decades of practice how to make themselves vulnerable to love.

I am also learning how to honor my elders and listen to the wisdom they have to offer. This can be as simple as the patience of walking at a slower pace. My grandpa has commissioned me to write down the history of his parents' lives and his own youth. In understanding how my predecessors went through the various stages of their lives, I am supported as I move through my own life stages. With time, my successes and mistakes, triumphs and travails will be history too. Then it will be my turn to quietly share my wisdom, patiently allowing someone to bring me my cane or something hot to drink.

Julia Richards
Madison, Wisconsin

Age Discrimination

Your "Elders" issue (Fall 2005), while presenting numerous worthy views, failed to include at least one vital area of concern: age discrimination. The reality, the enormity, and the impacts of this form of prejudice need to be addressed if the topic of older citizens is to be realistically discussed.

Your articles point out the value that elders can, and should, have in a society. But the tragic truth is that many elders have very little opportunity to be involved and productive, beyond such tasks as babysitting and helping close friends or relatives during a time of need. Many yearn to do so much more, and are simply unable to make it happen. A major reason is that many people in the autumn and winter of their years find it impossible to achieve any financial security. Their seemingly endless job applications are repeatedly ignored, even though they often have far more knowledge and experience than the people who are hired.

Many of us in our 50s and older can't just "do what Jimmy Carter did," as Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi suggests. We don't have the fame, the freedom, or the means, not to mention the sad fact that most people in a materialistic society such as ours simply aren't interested in what we have to say or offer.

Your issue would have been an ideal place for an overview of, and ideas for correcting, the waste of the resource represented by elders.

John Conners
via e-mail

A Blessing for the President

Mahalo nui for your quick response to the New Orleans and Biloxi tragedy. I do look forward to the stories and insight you folks put together for that specific issue. It vividly brings home how our lives are dominated by our adherence to an economic system that places diminishing value on human life, human relationships, and any sense of community.

We can damn our president or we can bless him for his extremism that has given more than just a few of us a wake-up call. As David Korten writes, the sustained need of some to dominate and have control of others has been going on for at least 6,000 years. I would like to think that this tragedy could be a catalyst for a new level of awareness and openness to creating a different and more inclusive paradigm.

Pete Bower
Honolulu, Hawaii

Graduation Pledge

I write to call readers' attention to a project called the Graduation Pledge Alliance. Students at more than 100 colleges and universities have signed the Graduation Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility, which states: "I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and

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will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work." Students define for themselves what it means to be socially and environmentally responsible.

Graduates who voluntarily signed the pledge have turned down jobs with which they did not feel morally comfortable; once on the job, they have promoted recycling, removed racist language from a training manual, worked for gender parity in high school athletics, and helped convince an employer to refuse a chemical-weapons-related contract.

The Pledge operates at three levels: students making choices about employment; schools educating about values and citizenship rather than just knowledge and skills; and the workplace and society being concerned about more than just the bottom line. The impact is immense, even if only a significant minority of the 1 million college graduates each year sign and live out the Pledge.

For more information, see <http://www.graduationpledge.org/>.

Neil Wollman, Ph. D.
Manchester College,
North Manchester, Indiana

The Politics of Sprawl

YES!'s Summer 2005 issue has almost a score of interesting articles on making "great places" to live in a nation devoted to "sprawl." None of these articles, however, considers the many laws that must change for these ideas to be implemented on a scale large enough to improve conditions for masses of people.

During the 20th century, some 200,000,000 additional people found places to live in the United States, mostly in metropolitan suburbs. The system that was invented to settle all these people created both the ubiquitous sprawl we know today, and the regional inequities discussed in *YES!*.

That system is firmly based on two things: (a) autonomous suburbs with exclusionary zoning authority and (b) domination of state and local governments by suburbanites who, in fact, constitute a majority of the population. Absent major political change, the system which caused the problem will determine how and where 100,000,000 more people will be housed in the next three or four decades.

Angela Blackwell, a leader in the fight for policies to ameliorate sprawl, told *YES!* that America lost its opportunity for greatness when "sprawl took off during the 1950s." I believe the opportunity was really lost about 1898, when the Anglo-American development community misread Ebenezer Howard's monumental *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path To Real Reform* with its proposals for sustainable agriculture, greenbelts, and a galaxy of garden cities in a socially responsible urban environment. Unfortunately they gleaned only pallid notions of garden cities stripped of Howard's original implications for economic and social fairness.

Unfortunately, as Carl Anthony notes (p.13) more than a century later, "new urbanists have been slow to engage advocates of social and racial justice, civil rights, labor, housing, and faith-based leaders concerned about the challenges facing marginalized city populations." A positive future for our metropolitan areas can only happen, I believe, through dramatic action to overhaul our state and local governments. But politicians seem loath to face the sticky economic and moral issues involved in sprawl: the topic hasn't seen the light of day since early 2000, when both presidential

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candidates talked about the need for change. Perhaps *YES!* could devote an issue to the politics of sprawl and to those brave political leaders willing and able to use their “political capital” to try to change the habits of their suburban constituent voters.

Alan Rabinowitz, Ph.D.
author of *Urban Economics and Land Use in America: The Transformation of Cities in the Twentieth Century*

Operation Homecoming

Erik Leaver’s argument in “Operation Homecoming” (Fall 2005) is not compelling; he offers no practical solutions for ending the occupation of Iraq. Leaver states, “With the withdrawal of the occupation forces ... the major target for resistance attacks will disappear.”

Leaver assumes that violence in Iraq will evaporate as a result of U.S. withdrawal but offers no evidence in support. An end to violence is a possible outcome of withdrawal, but not a reasonably certain one. Leaver admits to the uncertainty. Any prudent plan to end the military occupation of Iraq cannot be based on overly optimistic assumptions. Reliance on optimism, rather than reason, allowed the U.S. to needlessly invade in the first place. A U.S. pullout as early as January 2006 could be disastrous for the Iraqi people. A prudent person must accept that just because the situation in Iraq is bad does not mean it cannot get worse. As Leaver concedes, “It is likely that withdrawal of U.S. troops would lead to the collapse of at least some parts of the current government. ...” If that is the least we can expect, what is the most: famine, anarchy, widespread genocide? How much of a collapse is acceptable?

Leaver insists on reducing the number of troops and ending offensive operations. Reducing troop

strength when units are already overextended is unfair to the troops and tactically unsound. Arbitrarily ending offensive operations is equally unsound. U.S. forces must use appropriate force when necessary and not be hamstrung by orders from civilian politicians.

The invasion of Iraq was a mistake; a hasty withdrawal would be a mistake, as well. The U.S. is responsible for leaving the Iraqi people with a government capable of running Iraq equitably. Without a U.S. presence in Iraq, a void of power exists that could be filled by anyone with a little charisma and an AK-47. Leaver should consider a more realistic position regarding U.S. withdrawal and make his arguments more compelling if he expects to sway a reasonable person.

Caleb DiPeso
via e-mail

Erik Leaver responds:

It is not clear exactly what will unfold when the U.S. withdraws from Iraq; it is clear that the situation is getting worse as the U.S. remains. Suicide attacks have doubled since 2004; resistance attacks per month have doubled since the Iraqi elections; Iraq is a center for terrorist activity; the National Guard is losing more soldiers per month than ever; and (future) American taxpayers will foot a \$700 billion bill.

Democracy at the barrel of a gun has not been effective. Mr. DiPeso notes that the U.S. has a “responsibility to leave them with a government.” But there has been little input from Iraqi citizens in the process and far too much influence by the U.S. In fact, the Iraqi National Assembly released a report saying that the presence of the American military prevents Iraq from becoming fully sovereign. The notions of freedom, democracy, and sovereignty touted by our president

demand that the political, security, and reconstruction processes be for Iraqis and led by Iraqis.

Given the failure to properly train and equip Iraqi troops, the lack of a democratic consensus under the current process, the inability to reconstruct what we’ve destroyed—and, most important—no plan from the president outlining next steps, goals or benchmarks, there is little possibility that our country can do good staying in Iraq.

The proposed withdrawal plan involves measured steps to try to mitigate the dangers. But I wanted to be clear (unlike our president) that this plan does have risks: the government may collapse; Iraq could split apart; neighboring countries could be brought in. But all of these risks exist today, even while 140,000 U.S. soldiers are on the ground.

I agree with Mr. DiPeso that the U.S. has a tremendous responsibility to help the Iraqi people get back on their feet. But the best way to do this is recognize that the U.S. has a deadly reverse Midas touch and begin to withdraw our troops in a measured manner, offer financial resources, and help assemble support from the international community.

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Peace Movement Rallies as War Support Erodes



AP Photo/Haraz N. Ghanbari

Cindy Sheehan shares a moment with the Rev. Jesse Jackson during an anti-war protest, September 24, in Washington. Sheehan, whose son was killed in Iraq, was the first of many protesters arrested while demonstrating in front of the White House two days later

September 24, 2005 saw the first major American antiwar demonstration since the United States invaded Iraq. The largest march was in Washington, D.C.; while officials declined to make an official estimate of the crowd, D.C. Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey said the crowd exceeded the 100,000 expected; march organizers said more than 300,000 were present. Thousands of people also marched in San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, and other cities in the United States, and in London.

The march was a cross-section of America, including young and old, active and veteran military, military

families, long-time peace activists, and even a smattering of Republicans disenchanted with Bush administration policy.

Although the September 24 march was the most conspicuous part of a three-day program of events, the less-visible events may contain the seeds of sustained action.

On September 26, 1,000 demonstrators marched to the White House and requested a meeting with the president. When the request was denied, several hundred sat down on the sidewalk. After three warnings, police began arresting the demonstrators, starting with Cindy Sheehan. Four and

a half hours later, 370 people were in custody, charged with demonstrating without a permit.

The same day, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) and Progressive Democrats of America co-sponsored "Lobby Day," when 800-1,000 people representing 40 states met with 300 senators and representatives. Bill Dobbs of UFPJ points out that congressional support for the war has been bipartisan since the beginning; ending the war requires increased pressure on Congress.

The resurgence of a visible movement against the Iraq war is the product of multiple factors. UFPJ and International ANSWER put out calls in March for a September 24 demonstration. At the time, says Dobbs, support for the war was still strong nationwide. Over the summer, however, a series of events began to erode support: the release of the Downing Street memos, which showed that the Bush administration was set on war from the beginning; the electrifying appearance of British MP George Galloway before the U.S. Senate; and Hurricane Katrina's dramatic illustration of the true cost of the war to emergency preparedness.

But the most visible cause of the change in the public mood is one person: Cindy Sheehan. The gold-star mother, whose son, Casey, was killed in Iraq, held a 26-day vigil outside George Bush's vacation ranch, seeking to ask him a single question: what is the "noble cause" for which Bush claims her son died. Sheehan and her supporters were widely covered in the media; she

put a human face on questions about the war.

Dobbs anticipates major demonstrations around the March 20 anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. But he emphasizes that the backbone of the peace movement is not the big demonstrations; it's the local groups getting out information, keeping up pressure on elected officials, and carrying forward the work of ending the war.

—Doug Pibel

War on Terror: Coming to Your College Campus

Students are finding that the "war on terror" is not only being fought on distant battlefields. Now it has entered academia, invited by colleges and universities that have accepted money from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to include curricula about anti-terrorism. The majority of these are community colleges.

Since DHS was created, its annual budget has averaged \$3 billion per year for research and development, according to the *Washington Post*. This year, that budget grew to more than \$4 billion, with \$64 million from DHS going to college and university anti-terrorism programs, major research centers, and scholarships and fellowships—an appealing proposition for schools in financial straits.

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), 80 percent of community colleges now tap into DHS funds by offering coursework related to homeland security. At these schools, which already offer such programs as fire fighting, law enforcement, and criminal justice, the homeland security coursework seems similar to the original curricula. In fact, many people believe offering DHS studies at community colleges is a logical evolution. At a press conference in March of 2004, Hillary Clinton noted that "the infrastructure is already in place" for the two to meet.

But some educators worry that

DHS-specific coursework that includes such offerings as "Radioactive Materials" and "Terrorism Risk Assessment" will displace traditional programs. They fear narrowing the scope of graduates' expertise to fighting terrorism.

Minority students are disproportionately affected. Of those attending college, 56 percent of Latinos, 47 percent of African Americans, and 57 percent of Native Americans attend community colleges, according to AACC. For those struggling to pay tuition, the option of homeland security courses is appealing: DHS will give students \$1,000 per month and \$5,000 for a summer if the recipient indicates "a willingness" to accept DHS-affiliated employment after graduation.

—Valerie Doyle

Half of Americans Mulling Impeachment

An October poll shows a growing number of Americans are looking favorably on the idea of impeaching President George W. Bush.

Fifty percent of Americans in the survey agreed with this statement: "If President Bush did not tell the truth about his reasons for going to war with Iraq, Congress should consider holding him accountable by impeaching him." Forty-four percent of respondents disagreed; 6 percent had no opinion.

These results show a substantial change in just three months: a late-June Zogby poll asked a nearly identical question. In that poll, 42 percent agreed and 50 percent disagreed.

Internet activists, led by Democrats.com, had urged major polling organizations to include the question in their polls. When none did, AfterDowningStreet.org commissioned the non-partisan Ipsos Public Affairs to conduct the October poll. Funding for the poll came from 330 private donations averaging \$27 each.

By contrast, an average of 16 polls in the months before Bill Clin-

ton's impeachment showed support for congressional consideration of impeachment at 36 percent.

—Doug Pibel

Darfur Genocide is Rwanda in Slow Motion

In Darfur, the desolate western region of Sudan, a genocide continues to unfold. Some call it "Rwanda in slow-motion." The violence began two and a half years ago, when militias armed and trained by the government of Sudan started attacking black African farmers—killing, burning, and raping—in a systematic effort to drive them from their tribal lands and eradicate their culture.

Now most of the villages in Darfur have been destroyed. An estimated 400,000 civilians have been killed, some 3.5 million people driven from their homes or otherwise placed at risk.

The genocide is far from over, however. Sudan government troops and their proxy militias continue to attack the survivors, preventing them from returning to rebuild villages and plant crops. This has become a genocide of attrition. The UN estimates that nearly half the population of Darfur now lives at risk: wholly dependent on outside aid and threatened with starvation

A Nigerian member of the African Union forces observes a UN cargo plane being unloaded at El-Geneina Airport in West Darfur. African Union peacekeepers are making it possible for refugees to return to a few villages



Cris Bouroncle

and disease. The efforts of various organizations around the world—the UN and organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, International Rescue Committee, and others quietly engaged in providing humanitarian relief—are crucial to the survival of those in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps.

Hopes are focused on the African Union's tiny peacekeeping force, whose presence in a few villages has allowed IDPs to return. However, the AU role is narrowly confined to observing the on-again off-again cease-fire. Its mandate does not include protecting civilians or humanitarian aid convoys, which are

the AU's mandate, but foot-dragging makes this painfully slow.

The Save Darfur Coalition, an alliance of over 100 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations, is spearheading efforts to force action by the U.S. Congress. Their website, www.savedarfur.org, provides action updates and the latest news from Darfur.

—David Morse

David Morse is the author of *War of the Future: Oil Drives the Genocide in Darfur*, available on-line at <http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=14239>.

Man has become a tribe for some participants, with people coming from as far as Europe and Asia to attend.

There are few rules guiding behavior or self-expression at Burning Man. Participants decide individually how they will contribute and what they will give to the community.

Despite daytime temperatures of 100 degrees and winds up to 70 miles per hour, the spirit and determination of people attending Burning Man shows in the celebratory and welcoming atmosphere. Wild dancers, loud music, fire breathers, decorated golf-carts, meditation tents, cocktail bars and naked, colorful, dusty campers ("burners," in the parlance) are all part of the scene in this temporary desert community referred to by its citizens as Black Rock City.

Vending is not allowed at Burning Man; unconditional gifts are the norm. Interspersed among the art-based theme camps at this year's festival were people serving pancakes, giving massages, teaching yoga, and offering eco-friendly showers that use homemade evaporation systems to avoid introducing gray water into the desert. In 2003, the Bureau of Land Management declared Burning Man the largest Leave-No-Trace event in the world.

After sundown each evening, Burning Man's campground, with its thousands of colorful lights, sounds, and people on full display, becomes an odd mix between the parking lot at a Grateful Dead show and a Halloween party. In the surrounding desert, colorfully lit interactive artworks up to 80 feet tall draw moonlight explorers both on foot and bicycle.

As the festival winds down each year, and participants begin to pack up, people gather around a giant human effigy which is burned to the ground. For some, this represents the end of a life-changing week or a new beginning. For others, it resets the clock counting down to the following year's burn. By the time the volunteers complete their post-



Tristan Savatier

Two stilt-walkers at the 2005 Burning Man Festival, in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada. The festival of radical self-expression was declared the largest leave-no-trace festival in the world

increasingly coming under attack, not only by Sudanese government troops and militias, but by the rebels, as well, as the food shortage becomes ever more desperate.

As we go to press, the AU peacekeeping force—only 6,300 troops to police an area the size of France—is about to run out of money to meet its payroll. Efforts are under way in the U.S. Congress and in the UN to provide financial assistance and to broaden

Burning Man, the Leave-No-Trace Arts Festival

What began as an intimate gathering of 20 people on a Bay Area beach in 1986 has become a 35,000-person annual trek into the Black Rock Desert, 100 miles outside Reno, Nevada, for a celebration of radical self-expression. Many of the artists who attend work year-round creating the large-scale sculptures and interactive installations that rise from the desert floor. Burning

event cleanup there is no trace of the city that was, for a week, the fifth most populous town in Nevada.

—Corey Waggoner

For photos of Burning Man and more information go to www.blackrockarts.org/
www.burningman.com.

Corey Waggoner is a former Yes! intern

Work in San Francisco? No Sweat

Beginning in December 2005, the city of San Francisco will require all contractors to guarantee that any goods they supply are produced without "sweatshop" labor. Other cities, including Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Albuquerque, have passed similar laws, but San Francisco's is the most stringent so far.

The new ordinance has a rigorous definition of fair labor practices and features an initial enforcement budget of \$100,000. Further, the law calls for independent monitoring to ensure impartial enforcement. The legislation includes provisions against child, slave, and foreign convict labor, and requires that workers get at least minimum wage, safe working conditions, and the right to unionize.

The law also mandates a non-discriminatory work environment and requires contractors to guarantee their workers the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The legislation, which was co-sponsored by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and Supervisor Tom Ammiano, is to be phased-in gradually, beginning with garments and textiles and eventually extending to all products supplied to the city by contractors.

—Andrew Lovejoy

For more information, visit www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/sweatshops/sfbayarea.html

United Nations Anti-Corruption Tool in Place

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) will become effective December 14, 2005. Ecuador's re-



David McNew

Marty Bailey, vice president of operations at the American Apparel garment factory in Los Angeles, a company that aims to make T-shirts, sweatshirts and other clothes in the U.S. without relying on under-paid labor

cent ratification fulfills the convention's requirement of 30 ratifying countries. Two-thirds of the ratifications come from Central and South America and Africa. The United States and most European countries have signed but not yet ratified the UNCAC.

The UNCAC requires countries to implement anti-corruption legislation and the private sector to make accounting and auditing more transparent. On the international level the convention seeks to accelerate retrieval of public funds stolen by corrupt governments and encourages banking centers and tax havens to implement transparent practices to prevent money laundering.

Transparency International, the leading anti-corruption NGO, emphasizes that corruption is not a problem limited to poorer countries. "The G-8 needs to show that they are in this fight to win. Wealthier countries can hardly call on their poorer neighbors to take the fight against corruption seriously when they themselves are unwilling to act," says Transparency International chief executive David Nussbaum. "The next ratifications must include all the major industrialized countries, or the G-8's pledges will be worth no more than the paper they're printed on." According to the organization, preventing bribery around the world by Western

private corporations is as important as tackling governmental corruption in developing countries.

—Lilja Otto

For more information see *Transparency International*, <http://www.transparency.org>.

Department of Peace and Nonviolence

On September 11, 2005, 11 Minnesota Peace Alliance members met in the U.S. Senate dining room with Sen. Mark Dayton to ask him to sponsor legislation to create a Department of Peace. On September 22, Dayton did just that, introducing S. 1756, the Department of Peace and Nonviolence Act.

"Our members had been lobbying Senator Dayton," says Matthew Albracht, managing director of the Peace Alliance. "He had concerns about introducing another level of bureaucracy. After the September 11 meeting, he told his staff he'd made up his mind to sponsor it."

Dayton's bill, the counterpart to Rep. Dennis Kucinich's H.R. 3760, marks the first time this proposal has been before the Senate. Kucinich first introduced Department of Peace legislation in the House in 2001, and reintroduced it September 14 of this year. Sixty representatives have signed on as co-sponsors of the House bill.

Harold Linde, of the Rainforest Action Network, hangs from the side of the World Bank building to call for a stop to the oil pipeline between Chad and Cameroon. Amnesty International says the pipeline consortium is responsible for human rights violations

The 11 Minnesotans who met with Dayton were in Washington, D.C., along with hundreds of other people from across the U.S., to attend a conference on the proposed Department of Peace. Walter Cronkite, who, along with Kucinich, is a prominent advocate for a Department of Peace, urged the citizen activists to spread the word “among the people, so it becomes a more popular thing to be counted as one of the pilgrims, trying to lead us to this promised land of peace.”

The conference was organized by the Peace Alliance, which has been working since 2004 to promote creation of a cabinet-level Department of Peace. The organization coordinates grassroots lobbying activity and provides on-site training for activists; its website contains a broad range of resources including flyers, action guides, and tips on generating media attention. It has members in all 50 states.

The message of the Alliance—delivered by the Minnesota lobbying group that included a first-grader, a grandmother, two nurses, two union members, a sculptor, and a teacher—evidently resonated with Senator Dayton. Speaking from the Senate

floor, he said, “If we are to remain the world’s leader, and if we are to lead the world into a more secure and more prosperous future, we must become better known and more respected for our peacemaking successes than for our military forces.”

The legislation Dayton and Kucinich introduced calls for the Department of Peace to “research, articulate and facilitate nonviolent solutions to domestic and international conflict,” and prescribes a budget of at least 2 percent of the Defense Department budget—approximately \$8 billion at current spending levels.

“There is currently no overall organized approach by the U.S. government that aims at creating peaceful solutions to the problems we face domestically and internationally,” according to the Peace Alliance. While some federal programs address aspects of peace work, none “offer any overall structure to a broad-based approach to making the work of peace a national calling.”

Peace should have a cabinet position, says Albracht, “because it needs a seat at the president’s table. Principles of peace and nonviolence should have a voice equal to the departments of Justice and Defense in the search for solutions to violence, domestically and abroad.”

—Leslie Eliel & Doug Pibel

For more information, see www.thepeacealliance.org and www.kucinich.us. Leslie Eliel is a freelance writer and designer

Chad-Cameroon Project Violates Human Rights

One of Africa’s largest development projects, the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, is producing human rights violations along with its oil, says Amnesty International. According to a September report, the governments of Chad and Cameroon, and the ExxonMobil-led consortium that includes Chevron and Petronas, Malaysia’s state oil company, have been violating human rights and creating a climate of intimidation.

The pipeline runs 1,070 kilometers, from the Doba oil fields in southern Chad to Kribi, on the coast of southwest Cameroon, and includes about 300 oil wells. The oil-company consortium picked up 80 percent of the estimated \$4.2 billion cost of the project; the balance came from the governments, financed by loans from the World Bank and the European Investment Bank.

The inauguration of the pipeline prompted a national day of mourning by civil groups in Chad. Since then, villagers have been denied access to clean water, farmers have been denied access to their lands, and fish stocks off Cameroon’s coast have been destroyed.

More recently, according to a letter from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to president Idriss Déby of Chad, two former oil company employees were killed, three seriously injured, and 30 arrested by Chadian national police at a September 18 sit-in at ExxonMobil. The employees protested because 4,000 workers had not received promised overtime pay.

Human rights abuses could continue for the 70-year life of the pipeline, and Amnesty’s report notes a framework of agreements that could prevent companies from being held accountable. Cameroon and Chad have signed contracts with the oil companies recognizing that the governments may be liable for penalties for disrupting the pipeline or oil fields, even if the disruption is to protect human rights.

Andrea Shenberg, legal advisor to Amnesty International UK, called for amendments to the agreements, writing: “Human rights are not negotiable items that companies and governments are permitted to eliminate by contract.”

Chevron and Petronas responded by referring all concerns to ExxonMobil. ExxonMobil responded that it condemns human rights violations.

—Sarah Fort

Sarah Fort is a writer and human rights activist in Washington, D.C.



Average minutes children six and under spend using TV, video, DVD or computers per day: 118

Minutes reading or being read to: 39¹

Increase in hours the average middle-income married couple with children worked in 2004 compared to 1979: 500²

Number of TV commercials viewed by American children every year: 40,000³

Age by which a child can develop brand loyalty: 2⁴

Percentage of Harvard students who received average grades of B+ or better in 1950: 15%

Percentage in 2004: nearly 70%⁵

Average American CEO pay in 2005: \$11.8 million

Average ratio of American CEO salaries to production worker pay in 2004: 431-to-1

Ratio in 1982: 42-to-1

Lowest legal wage today if the minimum wage had risen as fast as CEO pay since 1990: \$23.03 an hour

Actual lowest minimum wage today: \$5.15 an hour⁶

Percentage of female authors listed as #1 on *The New York Times* bestseller list from 1955-1964: 18%

Percentage over the past decade (1995 to 2004): 46%

Percentage this year so far: 50%⁷

Approximate Army recruiting costs per recruit in 1995: \$ 8,000⁸

Approximate Army recruiting costs per recruit in 2004: \$15,000⁹

Price tag Costco put on the original Picasso drawing, "Atelier De Cannes" in August: \$129,999.99¹⁰

Percentage of search hits for the term "peace" versus the term "war" on *The New York Times* website on October 6, 2005: 26% peace versus 74% war¹¹

Percentage for *YES!* magazine: 97% peace versus 3% war¹²

Annual tax revenues a Wal-Mart store generates in Port Richey, Florida: \$75,000

Total salary for the three police officers the town needed to handle the extra calls the store generated: \$80,454¹³

Number of topics Vivienne, the virtual "girlfriend" made by Artificial Life can discuss: 35,000¹⁴

Percentage of Internet users who say being online has helped their ability to meet new people: 19%¹⁵

Estimated total cost of the current Iraq war by the end of the fiscal year 2005 (September 30): \$204.6 billion¹⁶

Cost of funding 4.1 million full four-year scholarships for students at public universities: \$201.7 billion¹⁷

Number of hybrid cars the Ford Motor Company plans to produce by 2010: 250,000¹⁸

Number of hybrids Toyota plans to produce by 2010: 1 million¹⁹

Number of gas pumps in Oregon as of September too old compute prices above \$3: 200²⁰

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A black and white photograph showing a line of soldiers in helmets and armor, looking forward. In the foreground, a person wearing a white hooded garment is visible, partially obscuring the lower part of the soldiers. The text is overlaid on the image.

spiritual activists tapping into
a tradition as old as scripture **are calling for**
a revival of **solidarity** and
compassion



spirit rising

Michael Nagler

In the spiritual folklore of India, there is a recurring image of Mother Earth, unable to bear the sufferings caused by human beings, going to Lord Vishnu to beg for relief. This image was invoked years ago by Ammachi, one of the most popular of India's living spiritual teachers, when she warned that the abuse of the Earth by modern economies would soon lead to a backlash if we did not learn to live sensibly—that is, lightly—on the planet that bore us.

Then came Katrina. At every level—from the global warming that likely increased the severity of the hurricane, to the ecological devastation that caused the flooding, to the shocking abandonment of the city's poor, to the severity of the deluge—this is a human-made disaster. And not the last. Bill McKibben now warns that “New Orleans ... very

much resembles the planet we will inhabit for the rest of our lives.” You cannot fault him for this pessimism; people who seem to be intoxicated with their own reckless folly have unleashed a wrecking ball of greed and violence against the miraculous life-support system that is our Earth, already causing damage at every level, from our DNA to the weather.

Like most myths, the story of Mother Earth going to Vishnu for help contains wisdom that can be translated into modern terms: When things get this bad, the story is saying, only spiritual energy can save us. There is evidence that many of us feel that way.

In July, 2005, Tikkun's Rabbi Michael Lerner, along with myself and many others, convened a gathering of more than 1,200 participants for a

Instead of “Get the troops—and corporations—out of Iraq now,” imagine the anti-war movement saying, “Get out of Iraq in X months or face massive civil disobedience”



Greg Tarczynski

Families of soldiers killed in Iraq gathered with their supporters in August outside President Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas

Conference on Spiritual Activism. The number would have been larger, but we had to close registration two weeks early because we filled the space.

The enthusiasm is not hard to understand. It was partly a pent-up reaction to the highjacking of Christianity by the Religious Right to support policies that are, in fact, condemned by the wisdom traditions of all cultures—not the first time this has happened to that otherwise fine religion. As Evangelical minister Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* magazine and a featured speaker at the Conference on Spiritual Activism put it, “When they’re stealing your faith, you fight back.”

But there’s a deeper and more positive reason, and that’s the growing hope that “spiritual activism” might just be the missing ingredient, the lightning rod, to galvanize the progressive movement and help it radically turn things around.

What is Spiritual Activism?

Spiritual activism arises from awareness of the interconnectedness—for some, the unity—of all life. This awareness may have little to do with your formal religious affiliation.

A powerful example is Third Party Nonviolent Intervention (TPNI), in which volunteers go into conflicts to intervene among, and, if need be, interpose themselves between, conflicting parties. There you will find explicitly faith-based groups, like Christian Peacemaker Teams, Michigan Faith and Resistance, and the Muslim Peace Teams recently formed in Iraq, working alongside secular ones like the venerable Peace Brigades International. But they are all doing the same, very spiritual thing: risking their lives for “strangers.”

People across a wide spectrum of political and religious belief have been moved by an experience of interconnectedness; a U.S. Marine who was handing out food to tsunami victims in Banda Aceh said, “I’ve been serving my country for 34 years, and never got anything out of it like I’m getting today.”

When the progressive movement learns how to harness the power of this vision, watch out. Because spiritual activism tends, among other things, to unite where religious identities divide, thus offering a “way out of no way” in today’s often sterile debates between “Left” and “Right.”

A Hundred Flowers in Search of a Garden

In fact, most progressives are already acting out of a sense that life is an interconnected whole. Take economic justice projects, for example. People who work on microlending, fair trade, and such efforts work from, and make manifest a profound sense of solidarity with their fellow human beings.

Further, those who are involved in simple-living experiments, intentional communities, local currencies and barter systems are not just redistributing wealth, but redefining it. Instead of defining their

personal wealth in terms of what they own, they are calculating their wealth by the quality of their relationships and their experiences of meaning. These are all spiritual activists in the sense just defined, and so are those working on progressive projects in many other areas.

Why isn't their collective energy prevailing? Because, I believe, we still lack a frame (à la my colleague George Lakoff) with which to embrace all these projects and give them meaning and coherence. But I don't think we are far from finding one.

If you read Gandhi's classic *Satyagraha in South Africa*, you will come across a deceptively simple remark from the very beginning of his politico-spiritual career in 1894: "The question of internal improvement was also taken up."

In other words, even as he was mobilizing his fellow Indians to resist exploitation by the European-based Natal government, he saw that there was constructive work to be done within his own community. So was born the famed "Constructive Programme" that informed and empowered his 30-year struggle to make the British give back the jewel in the crown.

Imagine it Gets Real

A Network of Spiritual Progressives has grown out of the July conference, with chapters in two dozen cities and groups of youth, professionals, and members of the Democratic and Green parties forming caucuses.

The Network is also developing a campaign to identify and label products that are healthy for people and the planet, produced in ethical ways. And a group is forming to counter "Consumption Frenzy," especially around the holidays.

Now imagine if we were to take the next step. Imagine if, instead of saying, "Get the troops and corporations out of Iraq now," we were to say "Get the troops out of Iraq in X months or face massive civil disobedience." In other words, imagine getting real.

Envision spending those intervening months in intensive training for civil disobedience, including outreach to uncommitted—or even hostile—parties to explain our alternative.

And now imagine that we actually realize that alternative, that we build sustainable lives with spiritual relationships among ourselves and the world, based on contact with our own deeper selves; economic justice; food security; restorative justice; a healthy tax base that draws on the resources of those

Why America needs a spiritual progressive Left

There is a real spiritual crisis in America. Tens of

millions of Americans feel betrayed by a society that seems to place materialism and selfishness above moral values. Most people desperately desire a way to build part of their lives upon a higher spiritual and ethical standard. Yet, because they have internalized the market consciousness as reality, they have resigned themselves to living in a world in which this selfishness is the only realistic possibility.

In talking to this hunger for meaning, we should not follow the path of those fundamentalists and evangelicals who want to bring their prayers into schools, teach creationism, criminalize abortion and gay relationships, and restrict access to information on birth control.

Our voices, instead, should be directed to the soft periphery around those "muscular Christians" and "settler Jews"—tens of millions of Americans who feel more recognized when their spiritual aspirations are explicitly

addressed, but whose deepest moral insights are actually not fully expressed in the "let the poor and powerless fend for themselves" policy implications of the Right.

Instead, Tikkun's Politics of Meaning proposes a universal spirituality and values not tied to any particular religion but foundational to all religions—recognizing that taking seriously the demand for a New Bottom Line of love, caring, generosity, gratitude, open-heartedness, kindness, sexuality based in mutual respect, and celebration of the sacred in other human beings and in nature could actually lead to a social transformation.

Excerpted from the January/February 2005 issue of *Tikkun* (Volume 20, Number 1). See www.tikkun.org.



Michael Lerner



AP / Pat Rouse

A Wake-up Call

Once after [Dr. Martin Luther King] was arrested, he wrote a very famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," addressed to the white clergy who were opposing him on the issues of racial segregation and violence against black people. Never once did he say that they were not people of faith. He appealed to their faith, challenged their faith, asked them to go deeper with their faith, but he never said they were not real Christians.



If Dr. King refused to attack the integrity and faith of his opponents over such a clear gospel issue, how can the Religious Right do it over presidential nominees and a Senate procedural issue known as the filibuster?

When someone has stolen our faith in the public arena, it is time to take our faith back. ... Those on the Religious Right are declaring a religious war to give their version of faith religious supremacy in America. And some members of the Republican Party seem ready almost to declare a Christian theocracy in America. It is time to take back both our faith and our Constitution.

It is now clear there are some who will fight this religious war by any means necessary. So we will fight, but not the way they do. We must never lie or misrepresent the facts or

the truth. We must not demonize or vilify those who are our opponents. We must claim that those who disagree with our judgments are still real people of faith. We must not fight the way they do, but fight we must.

A great deal is at stake in this battle for the heart and soul of faith in America, and for the nation's future itself. We will not allow faith to be put into the service of one political agenda.

This is a call for the rest of the churches to wake up. This is a call for people of faith everywhere to stand up and let their faith be heard. This is not a call to be just concerned, or just a little worried, or even just alarmed. This is a call for clear speech and courageous action. This is a call to take back our faith, and in the words of the prophet Micah, "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God."

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Jim Wallis

An environmentalist saving forests and an activist “crossing the line” at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning are already part of the same movement

who can afford it; “off the margins” experiments like non-money exchange; decentralized media and real communities; microlending and community banks; community supported agriculture; demilitarization; decommercialization—all the projects that are reported in the pages of this magazine.

We would be doing nothing more nor less than recreating Gandhi’s famous movement. We would combine Constructive Programme—for him, village uplift, cottage industry, women’s empowerment and the 15 other projects humming like his spinning wheel behind the threats and obstructive actions taken when the occasion demanded—with Satyagraha, or definite obstructive action. Seen in this light, an environmentalist saving forests and an activist “crossing the line” at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning are already part of the same movement. The time has come to be more aware of this. The knowledge of the interconnectedness of our work has power.

But something else has to happen if we are to capture the spiritual energy we want and keep those two modes of action in balance. Those involved in both obstructive and constructive work need better links with the overtly spiritual practitioners among us. These include the people of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, who have been active in prison work and against the death penalty since the group was founded by Thich Nhat Hanh in 1978; the young people of the more recent “new monasticism”—evangelical suburbanites who, inspired by students from Eastern University who joined 40 homeless families being evicted from a Philadelphia church in 1996, have begun to form intentional communities to counter materialism, living with the poor, themselves; even the meditators in their closets—or their ashrams, or their sanghas, or their “prayer of silence” retreats out in the desert. We should now understand that even when not engaged in outward action, these people are changing the world, if only by helping to keep our activism nonviolent and our constructive action relevant.

We are, in some ways, close to this kind of movement already. We only need to be more coordinated, even (dare we say it) organized, so that we can not only get over our mutual distrust, but also decide together when to take part in Constructive

Programme, when to invoke civil disobedience, and when to engage both modes.

In the kind of spiritual progressive movement we seem to be groping for, we would be “joined at the heart” not only by our sense of common purpose, not only by the overview that we would be able to articulate, but by our rootedness in a new spiritual vision (which we could also articulate) of what it means to be human and alive on this planet.

It is this movement which—in the words of Arundhati Roy—we can almost hear breathing in the spiritual activism trying to be born around us. I believe we can make it work.

It’s not like we can afford to fail.

Michael Nagler is the author of *Search for a Nonviolent Future*, *Inner Ocean*, and *Our Spiritual Crisis* (Open Court).

PAGE 12: Maria Itati, a Catholic nun, kneels in front of Buenos Aires police after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets into a crowd of protesting state workers. PAGE 13: Buddhist monks Kanaeda Shonin and Gilberto Perez of the Nipponzan Myohoji Seattle Dojo at the September peace march in Washington. PAGE 16: Catholic nuns at an anti-war prayer rally in Manila. BELOW: Masako Ishikawa at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo releases a dove in a prayer of peace at an event marking the 60th anniversary of Japan’s surrender in World War II



AP/Koji Sasahara

spiritual uprising

What do Americans believe?

Zogby Poll

What is the most urgent moral crisis facing the U.S.?

Greed and Materialism	33%
Poverty and Economic Justice	31%
Abortion	16%
Gay Marriage	12%

Newsweek and Beliefnet Poll

August 2005 poll of 1,004 Americans on what they worship and how they believe:

Described themselves as 'spiritual'	79%
Said 'religious'	64%

Which best describes you?

Spiritual but not religious	24%
Religious but not spiritual	9%
Religious and spiritual	55%
Not spiritual/not religious	8%
Don't know	4%

What is your current religion?

Evangelical Protestant	33%
Non-Evangelical Protestant	25%
Roman Catholic	22%
Other Christian	5%
Jewish	1%
Muslim	1%
Hindu	1%
Buddhist	1%
Atheist/Agnostic/no religion	6%
Religion undesignated	4%

Can a good person who doesn't share your religious beliefs attain salvation or go to heaven?

Yes

Evangelical Protestants	68%
Non-Evangelical Protestants	83%
Roman Catholics	91%
Non-Christians	73%

How often do you explore the spiritual ideas of other faiths?

Often or sometimes

Evangelical Protestants	30%
Non-Evangelical Protestants	31%
Roman Catholics	35%
Other	48%

Never

Evangelical Protestants	35%
Non-Evangelical Protestants	37%
Roman Catholics	36%
Other	12%

How often do you engage in these religious or spiritual activities?

Every day

Pray	64%
Meditate	29%
Participate in a spiritual activity not connected with church or house of worship	21%
Read a sacred text	20%
Attend church or services	2%

When do you feel the strongest connection to God or the divine?

When praying or meditating	40%
In nature	21%
In a house of worship	21%
When praying with others	6%
When reading a sacred text	2%
None of these/doesn't apply	6%
Don't know	4%

Sources: www.beliefnet.com/story/173/story_17353_1.html



Those fleeing Katrina
and Rita, those crossing
the U.S.-Mexico border,
refugees from genocide or
environmental disasters—
any of us could find we
suddenly must rely
on strangers

the stranger at the door

Ana María Pineda

On a December evening, children of every age join a procession down 24th Street in San Francisco's Mission District, some with lighted candles in hand and others carrying on their shoulders statues of Mary and Joseph.

At each of a series of stations, an ancient exchange is repeated. Those playing the role of Joseph approach the inn, knock on the door, and say in a loud voice:

“En nombre del cielo, buenos moradores, dad a unos viajeros posada esta noche.”

In the name of heaven, kind people, give some travelers lodging this evening.

From inside, a chorus of voices responds:

“Aqui no es meson; sigan adelante—yo no puedo abrir no sea algun tunante.”

This is not an inn; move on—I cannot open lest you be a scoundrel.



ABOVE: Children of St. Jerome Catholic Church sing as they visit homes in Richwood, Texas, during last year's procession of *Las Posadas*.

Photo by AP/Todd Yates.

PAGE 19: Oaxaca procession of *Las Posadas*.

As Joseph moves from one inn to the next, the innkeepers grow angry and even threaten violence, while the night grows colder and the young couple's weariness turns to exhaustion. Finally, Joseph even reveals his wife's true identity, begging for *posada* for just one night for *la Reina del Cielo*, the Queen of Heaven—to no avail.

For eight days, the scene is re-enacted. Finally, on the ninth day, the eve of Christmas, Joseph's request moves the heart of an innkeeper who offers the young couple all that he has left—a stable. Yet the stable is enhanced by the love with which the innkeeper offers it, and this humble place becomes the birthplace of Jesus.

In an outpouring of joy and festivity, those gathered on the final night celebrate the generosity of the innkeeper and the *posada* (hospitality) given to Mary and Joseph in song and dance, food and drink. Candy and treats from the *piñata* shower the children, and the community recalls anew how the stranger at one's door can be God in disguise.

Although *Las Posadas* is a beautiful ritual, the reality it addresses is a painful one: the reality of human need and exclusion. Many of the Mission District participants were once refugees themselves.

Make a living—with dignity

When religious leaders who were part of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) joined with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in 1994 to pass the nation's first living wage ordinance, no one realized that it was the beginning of a movement.

Since then, the religious community, labor unions, and community groups have come together to sponsor 122 living wage ordinances in towns large and small throughout the United States.

A living wage ordinance sets a wage level at a community standard, usually ranging from \$9 to \$12 per hour, for any contractor or subcontractor for a municipality or county. Earning a living wage affords people the opportunity to be self-sufficient and full participants in community life.

Congregations and people of faith have participated in this movement as a way to affirm the dignity and respect of all working people.

The ordinances are having an impact on poverty rates. The Los Angeles ordinance has increased pay for an estimated 10,000 workers, with minimal reductions in employment, according to a study published this summer that traces the experience of working people since the first

Los Angeles living wage law passed in 1997. The number of jobs with increased pay was among the largest in the United States.

For people of faith, living wage campaigns resonate with a history going back 100 years of supporting immigrant groups, labor struggles, and providing solidarity with low-income workers. In fact, the term, "living wage" has its roots in a book by that title written by Monsignor John A. Ryan in the early 20th century, arguing the principle that "employers had an obligation to pay a family wage, enough to meet ordinary family needs adequately."

Today's living wage movement in the United States draws on the social convictions of a variety of religious traditions and applies them so that all may have enough.

Michael Ramos is director of social justice ministries at the Church Council of Greater Seattle, and a member of the board of the Positive Futures Network, publisher of YES! You can download the study of the impact of the Los Angeles Living Wage Ordinance at www.LosAngelesLivingWageStudy.org.

Michael Ramos

Throughout history, there have been times when people were dislocated, becoming vulnerable as they journeyed far from home. Just as the human need for hospitality is a constant, so, it seems, is the fear of the stranger. The stranger seems to portend danger, the unknown, a challenge to the familiar constructs of our world. The healthy turn away from the gaunt, blemished faces of those living with AIDS. The prosperous avoid poverty-stricken neighborhoods.

Ironically, it is not just hospitality to the “stranger” that is in peril in our society. The elderly are often isolated from the affection and care of their own families, and, in many busy families, children find no after-school welcome home, and spouses find little time to host one another over supper.

Strangers, Guests, and Hosts in the Bible

In the traditions shaped by the Bible, offering hospitality is a moral imperative. The Hebrew Scriptures (called by many Christians the Old Testament) tell of the years of exile and slavery in Egypt, and of a refugee people wandering in a wilderness who are later forced into captivity and exile again.

As a result, their laws require them to deal justly and compassionately with the strangers among them. “You shall also love the stranger,” God instructs the people through Moses, “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19).

When it is most fully realized, hospitality not only welcomes strangers, it also recognizes their holiness. “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it,” says the Letter to the Hebrews (13:2). The stranger becomes a person dear to and made in the image of God, someone bearing distinctive gifts that only he or she can bring.

In spite of the difficulties and threats encountered on the streets of U.S. neighborhoods, Hispanic families want their children to know how to respond to the needs of the poor, the alien, and the physically challenged. Indeed, this desire undergirds the relatively low rate of homelessness in the Hispanic community. People do take one another in, taught to do so by example and by the annual return of *Las Posadas*.

Within the biblical story, it is clear that all God’s people are spiritually descended from migrants and wanderers, and that all are called to hospitality.

Ana María Pineda, a member of the Sisters of Mercy, is director of the Hispanic Ministries Program at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Excerpted from *Practicing Our Faith* by Dorothy Bass (1998) by permission of Jossey-Bass, a Wiley imprint. www.practicingourfaith.org.

altar your abode

Lori Hall Steele

Since ancient times, homes have been holy havens—Mayans and Toltecs built altars to deities, Egyptians displayed household gods like ferocious-looking Taweret and Mexican *altaristas* (altar builders) bedecked the Virgin of Guadalupe with bright flowers. Buddhists, Hindus, and Santerians also worship at home altars.

Until recently, however, many Americans shied away from such down-home manifestations of faith. Not so anymore. Sacred spaces are being created in homes from coast to coast, with closets, corners, and bedrooms converted to prayer and meditation spaces—places that often serve as soul-quieting antidotes to modern stress.

Make your own sacred space—even if it’s in a nook—by first clarifying your intentions, says San Diego spiritual coach Kamala Devi. What do you want? A place to pray? A safe haven for peace and quiet?

From there, you’ll need to think about a few things:

Location: Altars can be in bedrooms, attics, backyards, closets, or corners of rooms. Shy away from high-traffic and work areas.

Direction: Religious traditions like Vastu and Wicca suggest altars should be north- or east-facing, while Muslim altars, which are generally sparse, face Mecca (east-southeast for most of the United States).

Surface: Pretty much anything will work—a tabletop, dresser, or corner shelf. Often altars are covered with fabric, and some religious traditions prescribe particular colors or materials.

Objects: Candles, flowers, and images that are sacred to you—a cross, Buddha, Hindu gods—adorn altars, often along with objects that are personally symbolic. Devi brings new objects—a love letter, herbs, inspiring quotes, candles—to her altar.

Initiation: A prayer, burning sage, sprinkling salt water, or ringing bells can initiate your new sacred space.

Using your altar: Pray, meditate, daydream, write in a journal, or practice yoga.

holy impatience

On May 18, 2005, Reverend Matthew Fox, formerly of the Roman Catholic Church, nailed 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Some 500 years after Luther pounded his theses on the door of the same church, Fox is after a transformation just as radical

an interview with Matthew Fox

It is true that Reverend Matthew Fox has personal reasons for being angry. Pope Benedict XVI, when he was Cardinal Ratzinger, was among those responsible for Fox's departure from the Catholic Church—he is now an Episcopalian.

Ratzinger used the power of the Vatican to silence and dismiss those whose views did not fit those of Pope John Paul II, according to Fox, including theologians of Latin America's liberation theology movement. Fox himself came under criticism for his views on the role of the feminine in church teachings and creation spirituality.

But Fox's concerns go beyond the internal workings of the Catholic Church; the ex-priest is worried about the state of Creation itself. He points to the largest wave of extinctions since the disappearance of the dinosaurs; the growing divide between rich and poor; widespread violence; and the mistreatment of millions because of their race, sexuality, gender, or nationality. Fox believes that at a time when the church should be part of the solution, it is instead mired in its own corruption and ineffectiveness.

Executive editor Sarah Ruth van Gelder interviewed Matthew Fox shortly after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast.

SARAH: What impact do you think Katrina has had on our national consciousness?

MATTHEW: The Katrina experience at last put the faces and lives of the poor on television, into our living rooms, and this was a breakthrough. I think the press did a magnificent job in this crisis. Remember that the whole enterprise of advertising in America is about putting into our living rooms a thirst for

more goods; it's not about revelation of the poor—it's revelations about how to spend more money.

I think we've had a revelation about the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots, and it's time that we wake up. What is injustice is not sustainable, and what is unjust will eventually break open. In the Bible there is talk about the widow and the orphan—if they are treated unjustly, the whole Earth is off-kilter. I think people are beginning to sense that something is off-kilter here.

SARAH: Have you found concern for those left behind to be universal among spiritual traditions?

MATTHEW: Absolutely. Buddhism is explicit about compassion, for example, although I think that the Jewish and therefore Christian traditions are more explicit about justice—but justice is a part of compassion. The Western prophets bring a kind of moral outrage, what I call a holy impatience, whereas the East brings serenity and an emphasis on patience. I think there's a time for both, but I think we are in a time now of holy impatience.

SARAH: Given the awakening of a lot of people across the political spectrum, what possibilities do you see for some kind of a spiritual uprising?

MATTHEW: Well, nothing motivates people like bottoming out. I think what is happening now is a dark night of the soul and a dark night of our species. The question is, can we tap into that moral outrage? Can we channel it in a positive direction?

I think we are in for some shifts; I just hope that those opposing current policies have some positive directions to offer. I'm not sure they do; I'm not sure they're really talking about reform at the level needed—about literally creating new *forms* of religion, politics, economics, and education.

SARAH: Let's talk about the changes happening in the realm of religion. You recently went to Wittenberg, Germany to pound 95 theses into the door of the Castle Church, just as Luther did some 500 years ago. What were you protesting?

MATTHEW: The first question I was asked when the TV cameras arrived and I finished pounding the theses was: Is this about the corruption in the Catholic Church? Or is it also about the Protestant Church?

It's about both, but there are different kinds of problems. The Catholic Church is embroiled in its all-male, hierarchical privilege, and the pedophile situation. And the Protestants are stuck in apathy—the American Protestants especially—allowing the fundamentalist wackos to roll over them and not standing up in their moral outrage.

The progressive wing of the church, like the progressive political wing, has been taken for a ride by the fact that fundamentalists have bought thousands of radio stations and TV stations, and they are out stirring up a lot of hatred and a lot of anti-intellectualism and anti-science, and distorting the real political discourse around the most important issues, such as ecological issues, what kind of economics we are going to have, and how we treat the poor. These are real values as distinct from profit.

SARAH: You talk about the difference between eros—the love of life, and sloth or *couch-potatoitis*. Is the deeper condition of the Protestant church the sin of sloth?

MATTHEW: Well, actually, the word sloth is a narrow translation of *acedia*, and what *acedia* meant in medieval understanding according to Thomas Aquinas was a lack of energy to begin new things. It would include cynicism, despair, depression, *couch-potatoitis*, and so forth.

Zeal, he said, is the opposite of that. Zeal comes from an intense experience of the beauty of things. Rediscovering the beauty of existence, and of our planet, and of our own species—I think this is where we get the energy back.

SARAH: What are some of the practices you recommend for recapturing that energy?

MATTHEW: Meditation. We all have to deal with our reptilian brain, and meditation calms the reptilian brain. But it doesn't strike out to kill the reptilian brain, which is what some of the religious myths of



the West—like St. George killing the dragon—are all about.

I think we need to learn how to honor chaos. I think the fear of chaos is what really inspires the right wing and fundamentalism. And what is chaos? Well, chaos is nature's goddess, and in the goddess time she was honored and integrated, and she wasn't something you went around killing. We still have remnants of that with, for example, the dragon dances of Asia.

Reverend Matthew Fox nails 95 theses to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, calling for a new Reformation. Photo courtesy of Matthew Fox.

With patriarchy, religion took it upon itself to control chaos, and it offers many images of killing it, as in Saint Michael and Saint George.

Then science took over in the modern era, and scientists became the controllers of chaos. But in the 1960s, science discovered chaos and realized that it is integral to nature after all. Lo and behold, chaos is not something we kill, it's something we respect.

Because chaos is feminine, you'll notice all fundamentalists—the Taliban, the Vatican, Falwell—have a compulsion to control, and especially to control the feminine.

Of course, in the spiritual tradition, the psychic dimension of chaos is the dark night of the soul, and we're not dealing well with that. After 9/11, we lashed out, went to war in Iraq.

The deeper response to chaos comes out of the mystical tradition for dealing with the dark night of the soul. First you do purification, and then you find out what it is you really cherish and what you are really longing for.

SARAH: You've described two different views of God. Could you talk about what those are and also how people come to have one or another view of God?

MATTHEW: The punitive father-God—who has been named by George Lakoff, too—is the God of patriarchy and fundamentalists. It's afraid of chaos, of eros, and the lower chakras. And it's the God of original sin and empire. You build empires by getting people to shape up out of fear, guilt, and shame. There is a lot of that in religion, especially Western religion.

But the other face of divinity, or tradition, is a God that's both mother and father. And like any loving parents, love comes into the picture. It's interesting that the first name for God in the Hebrew Bible is Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God with us," not "God over us," not "God judging us," not "God condemning us," but "God *with* us."

The Christian tradition picked up on that very early with the name Emmanuel applied to stories of the birth of Jesus, a God *with* us. That kind of God is a God of justice and compassion, not a God of vengeance and exclusivity.

There's a wisdom tradition of Israel in the Hebrew Bible—which Jesus himself picks up in the Christ Jesus movement—and that is God as wisdom and wisdom as feminine. The first name given Jesus in the New Testament is that of Sophia, or Lady Wisdom. That was a shocker for first century Israel,

as well as for the first century Roman Empire. It was such a shocker that the church put a lid on it as fast as they could and talked about Logos instead of Sophia—Logos being the masculine principle of order, instead of Sophia, which is the principle of creativity and eros.

Organized religion needs to get its act together and bring in the feminine—the wisdom of Sophia; some churches are doing a far better job of that than others.

I think also that one attraction that the East has to Westerners is that Buddhist meditation has an experiential quality and does not dwell on deity—masculine or feminine. It takes people to new experiences and the *tasting* of wisdom. Wisdom is always taste—in both Latin and Hebrew, the word for wisdom comes from the word for taste—so it's something to taste, not something to theorize about. "Taste and see that God is good," the psalm says; and that's wisdom: tasting life. No one can do it for us. The mystical tradition is very much a Sophia tradition. It is about tasting and trusting experience, before institution or dogma.

SARAH: You said something else that I find very intriguing, which was that fundamentalists often have "father wounds."

MATTHEW: Oh, it's true. I know very few men who had really good, comfortable, open relationships with their fathers. A few, but a small minority. One reason is that the generation ahead of me was the war generation and the Depression generation. So our fathers went through a lot of insecurity.

And the other thing is that the modern era shut the sky down, because we were told the sky was a place of empty metal parts, or dead parts, all inert. The whole tradition of Father Sky was muffled and turned inward. I think, frankly, the main reason so many men of our time have so much violence inside of them is that they are unable to express their deepest feelings, including feelings of hurt and anger, in a healthy way—not being able to return it to the sky.

Now that the new physics is explaining how alive the sky is, however, it opens up the heavens again to the fact of a Father Sky.

Matthew Fox is the author of the new book, *The Next Reformation*, in which he discusses his 95 theses. Also see www.Matthewfox.org. You can find the full list of 95 theses on our website: www.yesmagazine.org.

An offer of unconditional love

“Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim”

These words mean “In the name of Allah, Infinitely Compassionate and Infinitely Merciful,” and they open nearly every chapter of the Qur’an.

My grandfather, Maulana Hedayatullah, a Sufi Muslim teacher and healer in northern Bengal, often reminded his students to be compassionate with themselves.

“If I cannot be compassionate with myself, I cannot truly be compassionate with others,” he said.

To be compassionate with self does not mean that you avoid or deny what needs to be looked at and worked on in aspects of your personality.

“Work on what is necessary in your personality, but with the quality of soul,” he said. “The primary qualities of the soul are mercy, gentleness, and graciousness. The soul makes no judgment and is filled with unconditional love.”

When you are locked in a just combat with a wrongdoer, remember you are fighting the antagonism, not the antagonist. Do what is necessary but do not banish the antagonist from your heart.

Grandfather used to ask his students to add a word of endearment to their names and to use that affectionate term whenever talking to themselves. The truth is that we talk to ourselves very often and a lot of the talk is negative. Become aware of this internal conversation. Make it a practice to relate to yourself with affection and compassion. This practice, Grandfather claimed, encourages one’s divine identity to step forward.

Jamal Rahman is a Muslim and Sufi originally from Bangladesh and a minister at the Interfaith Community Church in Seattle. This piece is adapted from his recent book, *The Fragrance of Faith: The Enlightened Heart of Islam* (The Book Foundation).

Illustration by Michael Woloschinow

Jamal Rahman

How should spring bring forth
a garden on hard stone?

Become earth, that you may
grow flowers of many colors.
For you have been heart-breaking rock.

Once, for the sake of experiment,
be earth!

Rūmī





java justice

Dee Axelrod

Muslim, Jewish, and Christian coffee farmers make
mirembe kawomera—delicious peace

mirembe Kawomera coffee delivers a double jolt. First, there's the caffeine, but right behind that tang comes the jolt of learning that the arabica beans were sold by an alliance of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Ugandan farmers. This unique cooperative in the Mbale region of Uganda is Mirembe Kawomera—Delicious Peace. Their coffee comes to market fairly traded, distributed by Thanksgiving Coffee, a Fort Bragg, California, company specializing in organic and fair trade produce.

By banding together and by establishing a fair trade relationship, the farmers now realize enough profits from sales to meet their families' basic needs—a sharp contrast to the hardship of trying to sell as individuals to large corporate buyers in a



“We get along very much better. You can’t believe the peace and harmony that this community has enjoyed since the cooperative society was formed”

glutted world market. Better circumstances have, in turn, sweetened relations between the unique Mbale Jewish community and their more numerous Muslim and Christian neighbors.

The notion of forming a coffee cooperative was first conceived by Jewish community leader J.J. Keki as an economic survival tactic. In 1999, a worldwide coffee crisis developed as overproduction in new Brazilian and Vietnamese markets sent prices plummeting. The Mbale farmers were among the many growers who were hurt. Coffee farmers were forced to curtail children’s education so that the youngsters could go to work, or to sell off land their families had cultivated for generations.

In 2004, Keki went door-to-door, encouraging farmers of all faiths to band together. The alliance would be a first; interfaith relations had been strained since the establishment of the Ugandan Jewish community in 1919, when charismatic general Semei Kakungulu and followers converted to

Judaism, rather than embrace the Christianity professed by the British.

“The most serious problem for us is religious prejudice,” Keki said. “In Uganda, a Jew is referred to as a ‘Christ killer.’ Sometimes we have failed job interviews just because we are Jews.” And Muslim Ugandans, says Keki, believe that the Jews have been abandoned by God.

Keki can also recall how his father, during Idi Amin’s rule in the 1970s, narrowly missed punishment when he was caught studying the forbidden Torah. Fortunately, Keki says, the authorities were willing to accept a bribe of five goats in exchange for his father’s life.

But the history of prejudice would have to become less important than present concerns if the Mbale farmers were to survive in 2004. Keki, who had been supported by Muslims and Christians,

Left: Mirembe Kawomera children show off the blossom of an arabica coffee plant. The co-op’s shade-grown arabica beans are prized for their mild, sweet flavor. Photo by Paul Katzeff.

Above: Members of the Mirembe Kawomera Coffee Cooperative and a friend. The group comes together to celebrate a successful harvest of their beans and sale of their coffee

as well as Jews, in a successful 2002 bid for a Namanyoni Sub-County council seat, was widely considered a credible leader. Now, 400 farmers of all three faiths joined to form the coffee cooperative.

“We brainstormed,” Keki said, “and through participatory discussions we came up with the Mirembe Kawomera Cooperative.”

The diverse religious groups came together, Keki says, by focusing on what united them. “We looked to common things that were reflected in the holy books,” Keki said. “For example, we all acknowledge that we greet with the word of ‘peace’: *shalom, salaam, mirembe*.”

The next step was finding a market. Mirembe Kawomera got a break when American vocalist Laura Wetzler intervened. Wetzler learned about the Ugandan Jews in the mid-1990s when she heard their Hebrew-African music on public radio.

Wetzler said. “I wrote away and got the tape. I learned all the songs, and I started telling the Abayudaya’s stories in my concert work.” As coordinator of Kulanu, a Jewish nonprofit organizing community-development projects, Wetzler had a mandate to help Mirembe Kawomera find a coffee market. She made 40 phone calls before Thanksgiving Coffee’s CEO, Paul Katzeff, agreed to buy the beans.

Next, Wetzler found a cooperative near Mbale that had already obtained the expensive Fair Trade certification the coffee would need to be sold

through Thanksgiving. The Mirembe Kawomera Cooperative would buy farmers’ produce, which would then be processed through the nearby co-op and shipped to California.

Katzeff guarantees the farmers 20 to 40 cents per pound higher return than conventionally traded coffee. That makes their produce dependably lucrative for the farmers. There are other fair trade benefits, as well. Mirembe Kawomera can count on Katzeff’s commitment to an ongoing trade relationship, rather than having to cope with the insecurity of looking for a market each season. And Thanksgiving, like other fair trade buyers, contributes regularly to community development projects in Mbale. Thanksgiving’s contribution of one dollar for every package sold recently helped open and support a school there. The fair trade co-op has been so successful, Keki wants to see it duplicated.

“We hope to make the cooperative a model of championing development in communities,” he said. “We also hope that other cooperatives will emulate the principles of Mirembe and bring about peaceful coexistence. We get along very much better. You can’t believe the peace and harmony that this community has enjoyed since the cooperative society was formed.”

To learn more about Mirembe Kawomera, see www.thanksgivingcoffee.com, and www.kulanu.org.

Fair trade movement

Forging direct, stable, democratic trade

relations between producers and sellers for 50 years, the fair trade movement cuts out middlemen and creates alternatives to the imbalance of power and limited market access that have hobbled producers in developing countries. Fair trade today accounts for more than a million small-scale farmers and workers in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Many more farmers, however, are still forced to accept low prices from large corporate buyers. The recent coffee crisis, with world market prices too low to cover basic production costs, has affected 25 million coffee producers. The crisis has forced coffee farmers to remove children from school, sell their land, or turn to more profitable drug crops.

In contrast, fair trade is based on solidarity between consumers and producers—a mutually advantageous collaboration between farmers and their communities, on the one hand, and buyers and consumers, on the other. Fair

Trade certification guarantees that products meet these standards: Farmers get a fair price set by a recognized certifying body; buyers are committed to long-term trading relationships; farmers receive up to 60 percent advance payment to avoid debt at the start of a production season; buyers contribute a portion of profit to community development; information about product origins is offered to consumers; and ecologically sound farming is encouraged.

The fair trade movement supports democratic community-building in the South and encourages activism for economic justice in the North. The range of available fair trade products that can be purchased directly from producer cooperatives and businesses worldwide has expanded to include tea, chocolate, fruit, crafts, and clothing. The benefits of fair trade extend to consumers, as socially and environmentally responsible products are added to store shelves.

Lilja Otto

The biblical prophets once cried out against corruption and injustice, calling people to a higher purpose. What might that look like today?

the prophets vs empire

Rev. Richard Lang

My wife and I have two children who strengthen my hope for life. I remember well how anxiously we awaited their births. I remember the frenzy of activity as we prepared their room,

our house, and our lives for the great impact we knew was coming. The impact came and turned our lives upside down.

Today our children are teenagers and our life is frenzied with activity. And yet it is all worth it because of the great joy of watching the seasons of life change, evolve, and transform. What was once is now gone. What will be is not yet here. But in this moment, between the times, I live with hope.

I hope even in the face of so much wretchedness today. The America I grew up in is gone. The America I yearn for is not yet. In this moment of the in-between time I find myself brooding and worrying that what I yearn for will not come to pass. I find myself anxious about the future of my children. Will they become cannon fodder for an Empire committed to permanent war? Will they have life snatched from them by a global pandemic? Will they free fall into poverty if the economy collapses?

I have this wonderful dream of what life could be like. But I live in a reality that feels more like a nightmare. It is in the ancient wisdom of scripture that I find meaning for this present moment. It is in the ancient wisdom that I discover seeds for hope.

Dreams and nightmares

There is a story of dreams and nightmares told in the Jewish wisdom of Genesis. In the story a man named Joseph was locked away in an Egyptian prison (Genesis 41 and 47:13 ff). There he became known as a wise interpreter of dreams. His abilities came to the attention of Pharaoh, who had been having nightmares.

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's nightmares as a warning that a great famine was coming. If Pharaoh planned for the disaster, the people and Pharaoh's empire would be saved. Pharaoh was grateful for



Christ with the Children by Carl Bloch

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim liberation to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Isaiah 58:6, 61:1-2, Luke 4:18-19

The causes of Christ—love of enemy, forgiveness of sin, practice of generosity, openness to the stranger, resistance to Empire, liberation of the poor—are today being subverted

this interpretation and placed Joseph in charge of the economy. For seven years, the land and the labor of the people created surplus that Joseph wisely stored away.

After seven years the predicted famine came upon the land with a vengeance. Hunger ruled the nations. But in Egypt there was plenty. Nevertheless, Joseph, perhaps seduced by the privileges of Pharaoh's wealth, power, and philosophy, did not open the grain silos to share with the people. Instead he forced the people to sell their livestock to Pharaoh in exchange for bread. Then he forced them to sell Pharaoh their land, and finally their bodies until all were enslaved to Pharaoh. All, that is, except the priests, who continued to bless the power of Pharaoh.

The story is a snapshot of Empire, which plunders the commonwealth of the people while protecting the wealth of the elite, with religion going along for the ride. It is a story of hope betrayed.

Jubilee and resistance

But the ancient wisdom also tells a story of hope regained. Alongside the story of Empire, which rises up repeatedly in history, there is also a story of resistance to Empire. The story of resistance emerges from the vision of economic justice known as the Jubilee. The Jubilee is central to the Torah, the Prophets, and the ministry of both Jesus and Paul.

The Jubilee was a blueprint for a just economy. It put a floor under misfortune and misery, preventing generational poverty, even as it put a ceiling on wealth, preventing the emergence of an aristocratic dynasty. It did this through elevating ownership of land, which in those days was wealth, into the hands of God the Creator. Because God owned the land (the wealth), we human beings had no right to seize it for ourselves. It was to be shared for the benefit of all.

The first lesson of the Jubilee was articulated in the Creation story when God rested on the seventh day. Therefore, we human beings, created in God's image, were also to rest once a week.

This was great good news for the poor who are always easily exploited and sometimes (literally) worked to death. It was good news for all who married their work and lost relationship with their

community. The Sabbath was the great release from the incessant need to produce and to consume. It also extended outward into an ecological ethic that called for the resting of animals. Even the land was rested every seven years. But the most astonishing event occurred every 50th year when the economy was completely re-designed as wealth was redistributed, debts were forgiven, and land returned to its original owner.

It's not hard to see what this meant for agrarian societies, where families could be forced to sell their land in order to pay off debt resulting from a poor harvest or other mishap. Poverty reached its conclusion when landless peasants had to sell their possessions, and even themselves and members of their families as bond-slaves.

The great 50-year amnesty called for the return of the land to its original owners, therefore ending generational poverty. All debt was written off; slaves were freed, and, importantly, given the means to be economically self-sufficient.

This unilateral restructuring of the economy was to remind Israel that the land belonged to God and that the Israelites were chosen to be a counter-cultural people who must never return to an imperial system like Pharaoh's that produced slavery for some while enriching an elite.

The dying of the American empire

Some will say that the Jubilee is irrelevant today, that it was an economic strategy for a small, relational agrarian culture, nothing like today's complex global capitalist culture. Indeed, what does the Jubilee have to do with us?

The notion of Jubilee emerged from a commitment to live an anti-imperial life. The Jubilee was an economy set free from imperial ambition. Today, we live inside an Empire. We have chosen the path of Pharaoh: a path of domination rather than justice. Under the guise of priestly (Christian) rhetoric, the current administration has disrespected the Constitution, and made a mockery of our political process that balances power between branches of government. It has abandoned the rule of international law, disregarded human and civil rights, and unleashed economic chaos on the poor and on the

land. We are dealing with outlaws who are drunk on the blood of imperial power. Whether it be Afghanistan or Iraq, Venezuela or Colombia, the Philippines or Haiti, wherever brown-skinned people live, the dogs of war are unleashed. Whenever people claim their own livestock, land, or even their bodies, this administration steps in to suppress any that dare to rise as an alternative to Empire.

Meanwhile, the causes of Christ—love of enemy, forgiveness of sin, practice of generosity, openness to the stranger, resistance to Empire, liberation of the poor—are today being subverted by a hardening of heart. To put it bluntly, Christ is once again being crucified through the merger of privileged imperial wealth and the religious priests who benefit from Empire's plunder. We are, in other words, living in similar times to those betrayed by Joseph. Pharaoh wants our livestock, land, and labor.

But Empires contain the seeds of their own destruction. Today we are seeing the hollowing out of our institutions, the defeat of our military, the environmental consequences of our arrogance, and the bewilderment of our people. Truly we live in a time without vision. The Empire has run its course and is dying. The American way of life is dying: 6 percent of the world's population consuming 40 percent of the world's resources is neither sustainable nor just. We need to let the Empire die. And as it is dying, we need to build a parallel culture to replace it.

Today's Jubilee

What would this "parallel culture" look like today? What would it look like to be freed from Pharaoh's economy?

In the political world, imagine America reversing its economic policies so that we might spend as much on debt relief and economic redevelopment as we currently do on the military.

Imagine if we spent as much money on alternative energy sources as we do on fossil-fuel exploration and extraction.

Imagine if our food policy were centered around small-scale organic farming instead of large-scale corporate agriculture. Such a reversal of policy would radically reorient our relationships both internationally and within our own nation. Such a reversal would cause the trees to clap their hands.

Imagine how our personal and congregational lives would change if we, for example, withdrew our money from corporate banks that feed off the debt of others, investing instead in co-ops and community development banks.

Imagine the land that houses our church buildings and our own backyards becoming miniature farms growing fresh produce for food banks and the neighborhood. Imagine our faith communities and civic networks becoming organizing centers and creative think tanks for an anti-debt economy.

In the 1930s Myles Horton and others created the Highlander Folk School to train people of faith to organize labor in the coal mines and textile factories of the south. In the 1950s, they switched their priority to civil rights, training amongst others Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Clarence Jordan (who trained Millard Fuller of Habitat for Humanity),

What can congregations do?

Tell the truth

The way of Jesus and the American way of life are not compatible. We must choose whom to serve.

- In words, we need to lift up rituals of lamentation to mourn the increasing warfare and violence.
- In deeds, we need to lift up rituals of repentance that involve us in civil disobedience.
- In lifestyle, we need to create economic practices of sharing with each other.

Network

beginning with study and action circles that:

- Train Christians in the biblical language of Principalities and Powers, nonviolence, and the Jubilee so that participants can return to congregations as trainers and organizers.
- Plan and implement church-directed actions resisting Empire even as we create new lifestyle patterns of distributing wealth and practicing the Jubilee.

Interweave ourselves within the web of peace, environmental, and economic justice groups found outside the Church. Those movements need the Church to supply them with language and a vision larger than reform or revolution. We in the Church need the energy, creativity, fun, and moral sense of the movements.

Richard Lang

Drop the debt!

Religious organizations from around the

world have combined forces in a successful multiyear campaign to convince international finance organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank to cancel the debt owed by developing nations and to challenge the economic model that has given rise to the debt.

"We have seen a growing and unprecedented convergence of religious voices around achieving the Millennium Development Goals [of the United Nations], and full debt cancellation is a central part of those efforts," says Adam Taylor, co-chair of Jubilee USA.

The word Jubilee comes from the Biblical concept that every 50th year should be a "jubilee" year in which all debts are forgiven. Debt cancellation advocates argue that it is justice, not charity, that motivates their efforts. The developing world now spends \$13 on debt repayment for every \$1 it receives in grants, say Jubilee organizers; \$550 billion has been paid in principal and interest over the last three decades on \$540 billion of loans, yet there is still a \$523 billion debt burden, according to www.globalissues.org. Much of this money, say debt cancellation advocates, consists of "odious debt," or loans made to military governments and dictatorships that never benefited the citizens.

"We are creditors, not debtors," say organizers from Jubilee South, arguing that conditions imposed by international financial institutions for loans, as well as years of slavery and colonization, have shifted resources from the citizens of the South to the global corporations of the North.

"The debt really goes against the will of God because it kills thousands of children, youth, and adults who don't have



the resources that should stay in their countries," says Argentine evangelical Pastor Juan Pedro Schaad. Schaad was one of hundreds of religious leaders from 35 countries who participated in a church conference on the debt in Buenos Aires in September.

Also in September, representatives from 39 countries from the North and South met in Havana to discuss the debt and strategies to challenge it. Rafael Correa, former minister of finance of Ecuador, suggested an international debt tribunal, and Jubilee organizers are calling for "debt audits" in both the North and South.

International financial organizations have begun to respond to the pressure. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank recently agreed to forgive the debt of 18 of the world's poorest countries. Debt relief advocates applaud the cancellation, but say it does not go far enough. Jubilee USA is urging U.S. citizens to contact their congressional representatives to get them to support a more comprehensive debt relief bill, the Jubilee Act.

Like other organizers, Debayani Kar of Jubilee USA says it is not just the debt that needs to be challenged, but the current economic model. "The privatization and free trade policies that have weakened the social structures in the South have also hurt people in the U.S., causing poverty and loss of jobs," she said.

Lisa Garrigues

the Freedom Riders, and so on. Highlander, a little jewel in the Appalachian region of Tennessee, was a seed-factory that nurtured and sustained the civil rights movement, and it's still around today working on local issues. Imagine our faith communities as little Highlanders.

As my children move through the frenzy of their teenage years, I live with the hope that their tomorrow will be a time of fulfillment, abundance, and awakening. I hope that their world will embrace the values of Jubilee and resist the seductions of Empire. I hope that they will learn to share what is stored in the grain silos. I hope that they will build a better world.

I know that this hope for their tomorrow begins

with us today. It is in our dreaming and our willingness to sacrifice and create that the future will be born. If we cannot articulate and take simple steps into the world we want, then others, who care not at all for tomorrow, will impose the harshness of violence upon us.

I hope that we are still capable of great and noble things. I hope that we are still capable of creating life and celebrating its inevitable evolution. I hope that we are still capable of faith and hope and love. I hope for the year of Jubilee.

The Reverend Richard Lang is Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Seattle (www.tumseattle.org).

An indigenous woman invites us to learn how
America's rootless culture looks to a people who
are "dream and land together"

I stand with you against the disorder

Jeanette Armstrong

I am from the Okanagan, a part of British Columbia that is very dry and hot. Around my birthplace are two rocky mountain ranges: the Cascades on one side and the Selkirks on the other. The main river that flows through our lands is the Columbia.

My mother is a river Indian. The Kettle River people are in charge of the fisheries in the northern parts of the Columbia River system in our territories.

My father's people are mountain people. They occupied the northern part of British Columbia, known as the Okanagan Valley. My father's people were hunters. My name is passed on from my father's side of the family and is my great-grandmother's name.

I am associated with my father's side, but I have a right and a responsibility to the river through my mother's birth and my family education.

So that is who I am.

When I introduce myself to my own people in my own language, I describe these things because it tells them what my responsibilities are and what my goal is, what I need to carry with me, what I project, what I teach and what I think about, what I must do and what I can't do.

The way we talk about ourselves as Okanagan people is difficult to replicate in English. When we say the Okanagan word for ourselves, we are actually saying "the ones who are dream and land together."



Grey Young/ing

spiritual uprising

That is our original identity. Before anything else, we are the living, dreaming Earth pieces. Dream is the closest word that approximates the Okanagan. But our word doesn't precisely mean dream. It actually means "the unseen part of our existence as human beings." It may be the mind or the spirit or the intellect. We are mind as well as matter. We are dream, memory, and imagination.

Another part of the word means that if you take a number of strands of hair, or twine, place them together, and then rub your hands and bind them together, they become one strand. You use this thought

self to be. It is the great gift of our existence. Our word for body literally means "the land-dreaming capacity."

The emotional self is that which connects to other parts of our larger selves around us. We use a word that translates as heart. It is a capacity to form bonds with particular aspects of our surroundings. We say that we as people stay connected to each other, our land, and all things by our hearts.

The thinking-intellectual self has another name in Okanagan. Our word for thinking/logic and storage of information (memory) is difficult to translate



symbolically when you make twine, thread, and coiled baskets. This part of the word refers to us being tied into and part of everything else. It refers to the dream parts of ourselves forming our community.

I explain this to try to bring our whole society closer to that kind of understanding, because without that deep connection to the environment, to the Earth, to what we actually are, to what humanity is, we lose our place, and confusion and chaos enter.

When we Okanagans speak of ourselves as individuals, we speak of four main capacities that operate together: the physical self, the emotional self, the thinking-intellectual self, and the spiritual self. The four selves join us to the rest of creation.

Okanagans teach that the body is Earth itself. Our flesh, blood, and bones are Earth-body; in all cycles in which Earth moves, so does our body. We are everything that surrounds us, including the vast forces we only glimpse. If we cannot continue as an individual life form, we dissipate back into the larger self.

As Okanagans we say the body is sacred. It is the core of our being, which permits the rest of the

into English. The words that come closest in my interpretation mean "the spark that ignites." We use the term that translates as "directed by the ignited spark" to refer to analytical thought. In the Okanagan language, this means the other capacities we engage in when we take action are directed by the spark of memory once it is ignited.

We know that in our traditional Okanagan methods of education, we must be disciplined to work in concert with the other selves to engage ourselves beyond our automatic-response capacity. We know too that unless we always join this thinking capacity to the heart-self, its power can be a destructive force both to ourselves and to the larger selves that surround us. A fire that is not controlled can destroy.

The Okanagan teach that each person is born into a family and a community. No person is born isolated from those two things. As an Okanagan you are automatically a part of the community. You belong. All within family and community are affected by the actions of any one individual. The capacity to bond is critical to individual wellness. Without

it the person is said to be “crippled/incapacitated” and “lifeless.” Not to have community or family is to be scattered or falling apart.

The Okanagan refer to relationship to others by a word that means “our one skin.” This means that we share more than a place; we share a physical tie that is uniquely human. It also means that the bond of community and family includes the history of the many who came before us and the many ahead of us who share our flesh. We are tied together by those who brought us here and gave us blood and gave us place. Our most serious teaching is that

The discord that we see around us, to my view from inside my Okanagan community, is at a level that is not endurable. A suicidal coldness is seeping into and permeating all levels of interaction. I am not implying that we no longer suffer for each other but rather that such suffering is felt deeply and continuously and cannot be withstood, so feeling must be shut off.

I think of the Okanagan word used by my father to describe this condition, and I understand it better. An interpretation in English might be “people without hearts.”



community comes first in our choices, then family, and then ourselves as individuals, because without community and family we are truly not human.

Language of the land

The Okanagan word for “our place on the land” and “our language” is the same. We think of our language as the language of the land. The way we survived is to speak the language that the land offered us as its teachings. To know all the plants, animals, seasons, and geography is to construct language for them.

We also refer to the land and our bodies with the same root syllable. The soil, the water, the air, and all the other life forms contributed parts to be our flesh. We are our land/place. Not to know and to celebrate this is to be without language and without land. It is to be displaced.

As Okanagan, our most essential responsibility is to bond our whole individual and communal selves to the land. Many of our ceremonies have been constructed for this. We join with the larger self and with the land, and rejoice in all that we are.

Okanagans say that “heart” is where community and land come into our beings and become part of us because they are as essential to our survival as our own skin.

When the phrase “people without hearts” is used, it refers to collective disharmony and alienation from land. It refers to those who are blind to self-destruction, whose emotion is narrowly focused on their individual sense of well-being without regard to the well-being of others in the collective.

The results of this dispassion are now being displayed as nation-states continuously reconfigure economic boundaries into a world economic disorder to cater to big business. This is causing a tidal flow of refugees from environmental and social disasters, compounded by disease and famine as people are displaced in the expanding worldwide chaos. War itself becomes continuous as dispossession, privatization of lands, and exploitation of resources and a cheap labor force become the mission of “peace-keeping.” The goal of finding new markets is the justification for the westernization of “undeveloped” cultures.

Okanagan landscapes
by Dean Cebuliak

Indigenous people, not long removed from our cooperative self-sustaining lifestyles on our lands, do not survive well in this atmosphere of aggression and dispassion. I know that we experience it as a destructive force, because I personally experience it so. Without being whole in our community, on our land, with the protection it has as a reservation, I could not survive.

The way of creating compassion for ...

The customs of extended families in community are carried out through communing rather than communicating. Communing signifies sharing and bonding. Communicating signifies the transfer and exchange of information. The Okanagan word close in meaning to communing is “the way of creating compassion for.” We use it to mean the physical acts we perform to create the internal capacity to bond.

In a healthy whole community, the people interact with each other in shared emotional response. They move together emotionally to respond to crisis or celebration. They “commune” in the everyday act of living. Being a part of such a communing is to be fully alive. To be without community in this way is to be alive only in the flesh, to be alone, to be lost to being human. It is then possible to violate and destroy others and their property without remorse.

With these things in mind, I see how a market economy subverts community to where whole cities are made up of total strangers on the move from one job to another. This is unimaginable to us.

I do see that having to move continuously just to live is painful and that close emotional ties are best avoided in such an economy. I do not see how one remains human, for community to me is feeling the warm security of familiar people like a blanket wrapped around you, keeping out the frost. The word we use to mean community loosely translates to “having one covering,” as in a blanket.

I see how family is subverted by the scattering of members over the face of the globe. I cannot imagine how this could be family, and I ask what replaces it if the generations do not anchor to each other. I see that my being is present in this generation and in our future ones, just as the generations of the past speak to me through stories. I know that community is made up of extended families moving together over the landscape of time, through generations converging and dividing like a cell while remaining essentially the same as community. I see that in sustainable societies, extended family and community are inseparable.

The Okanagan word we have for extended family is translated as “sharing one skin.” The concept refers to blood ties within community and the instinct to protect our individual selves extended to all who share the same skin. I know how powerful the solidarity is of peoples bound together by land, blood, and love. This is the largest threat to those interests wanting to secure control of lands and resources that have been passed on in a healthy condition from generation to generation of families.

Land bonding is not possible in the kind of economy surrounding us, because land must be seen as real estate to be “used” and parted with if necessary. I see the separation is accelerated by the concept that “wilderness” needs to be tamed by “development” and that this is used to justify displacement of peoples and unwanted species.

I know what it feels like to be an endangered species on my land, to see the land dying with us. It is my body that is being torn, deforested, and poisoned by “development.” Every fish, plant, insect, bird, and animal that disappears is part of me dying. I know all their names, and I touch them with my spirit. I feel it every day, as my grandmother and my father did.

I am pessimistic about changes happening, but I have learned that crisis can help build community so that it can face the crisis itself.

I do know that people must come to community on the land. The transiency of peoples crisscrossing the land must halt, and people must commune together on the land to protect it and all our future generations. Self-sustaining indigenous peoples still on the land are already doing this. They present an opportunity to relearn and reinstitute the rights we all have as humans.

Indigenous rights must be protected, for we are the protectors of Earth. I know that being Okanagan helps me have the capacity to bond with everything and every person I encounter. I try always to personalize everything. I try not to be “objective” about anything. I fear those who are unemotional, and I solicit emotional response whenever I can. I do not stand silently by. I stand with you against the disorder.

Jeanette Armstrong (Okanagan) is an author and director of the En'owkin Centre, Okanagan Indian Educational Resources Society. This article was adapted from *Paradigm Wars: Indigenous Peoples' Resistance to Economic Globalization*, edited by Jerry Mander and Victoria Tauli-Corpus and published by the International Forum on Globalization, www.ifg.org.

Listen

with the night falling we are saying thank you
we are stopping on the bridges to bow for the railings
we are running out of the glass rooms
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
and say thank you
we are standing by the water looking out
in different directions.

back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging
after funerals we are saying thank you
after the news of the dead
whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you
looking up from tables we are saying thank you
in a culture up to its chin in shame
living in the stench it has chosen we are saying thank you

thanks

over telephones we are saying thank you
in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators
remembering wars and the police at the back door
and the beatings on stairs we are saying thank you
in the banks that use us we are saying thank you
with the crooks in office with the rich and fashionable
unchanged we go on saying thank you thank you

with the animals dying around us
our lost feelings we are saying thank you
with the forests falling faster than the minutes
of our lives we are saying thank you
with the words going out like cells of a brain
with the cities growing over us like the earth
we are saying thank you faster and faster
with nobody listening we are saying thank you
we are saying thank you and waving
dark though it is

W.S. Merwin



Resources for a spiritual uprising

Andrew Lovejoy

Getting out there

American Muslim Voice, a San Francisco-based civil rights group organizes against INS round-ups and offers a hotline to assist victims of round-ups, racial profiling, and hate crimes (1/866-490-8900), 650/387-1994, www.amuslimvoice.org

Buddhist Peace Fellowship encourages activism rooted in Buddhist teachings. Publishers of *Turning Wheel: The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism*, BPF also runs study/practice groups, prison programs, and youth retreats. 510/655-6169, www.bpf.org

Campaign to Defend the Constitution is a web-based grassroots organization dedicated to protecting the separation of church and state and individual freedoms against the religious right, while still respecting the beliefs of all religious and spiritual people. www.defconamerica.org

Christian Alliance for Progress works to advance a progressive understanding of the Christian faith, and to promote political activism according to the core values of peace, tolerance, and social justice. 888/381-0108, www.christianalliance.org

The Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART), based in Miami, offers resources and training

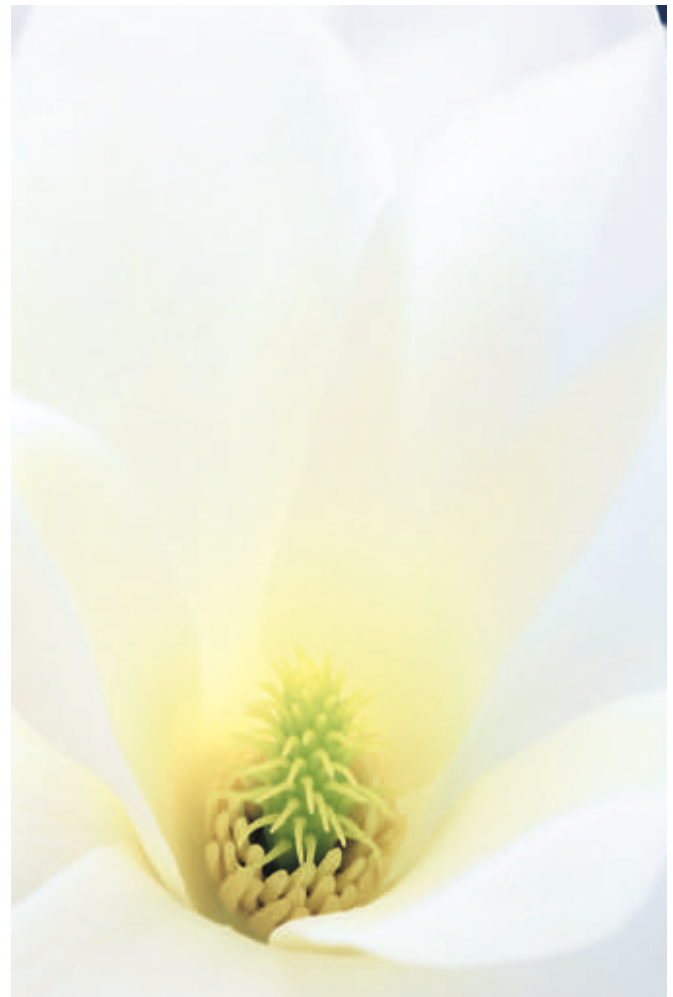
to help congregation-based community organizations of all faiths work for social justice. 305/576-8020, www.thedartcenter.org

The Gamaliel Foundation helps to establish and sustain interfaith and interracial organizations working for social, economic, environmental, and political change. 312/357-2639, www.gamaliel.org

Muslim WakeUp! is an online magazine covering topics from sexuality and gender issues to civil liberties with an open, modern outlook. www.muslimwakeup.com

Muslim Watch on Empire—A Forum for Muslims Committed to Social Justice is a part of Z Net (publisher of Z Magazine). Thought-provoking news and commentary are central here, as well as links to related sites. <http://www.zmag.org/muslimwatch/muslimwatch.cfm>

Pax Christi is an international Catholic nonprofit organization working on disarmament, human rights, economic justice, and the environment. They publish *Catholic Peace Voice*, a bi-monthly magazine, and *Locusts and Wild Honey*, the quarterly publication of their Young Adult Forum. 814/453-4955, www.paxchristi.net, www.paxchristiusa.org



Progressive Muslim Union of North America provides a forum, voice, and organizing mechanism “for those in the Muslim community who wish to pursue a progressive religious, intellectual, social, and political agenda.” 646/485-1163 or www.pmuna.org

Sabbath Economics Collaborative is a coalition of faith-based individuals and organizations dedicated to economic justice. They sponsor retreats and facilitate cooperation among member groups. More information at www.sabbatheconomics.org

Spirit in Action is a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization dedicated to spiritually

grounded social change. The Spirit in Action website includes resources and guidelines for forming “Circles of Change”—small, community-based groups. 413/256-4612, www.spiritinaction.net

Starhawk's Activism Resource Page provides resources for Pagan activists such as listserves, training tools, and essays, by the author of *The Earth Path*, and *Webs of Power*. See www.starhawk.org

Stone Circles is a small organization dedicated to spiritually driven social activism. Their website features articles, essays, and links to resources for spiritual activists. www.stonecircles.org

Sustaining the Common Good: A Christian Perspective on the Global Economy by John B. Cobb Jr., offers a critique of the contemporary, market-driven economic system. Cobb's book proposes that a sustainable economy based on the needs of the community is not only more faithfully Christian than the current system, but also is truly feasible. The Pilgrim Press, 1994

Sojourners Magazine is a progressive Christian magazine featuring articles about politics, faith, and culture. 202/328-8842 or 800/714-7474, www.soj.net

Tikkun is a bi-monthly Jewish/interfaith progressive magazine with articles on politics, faith, and culture. Tikkun organizes the Network of Spiritual Progressives (www.spiritualprogressives.org). 510/644-1200, www.tikkun.org

Journey inward

Engaged Buddhist Reader, edited by Arnold Kotler, brings together 60 writings from the movement for socially engaged Buddhism. Contributors include the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Jack Kornfield, Joanna Macy and others. Parallax Press, 2005

Faith Works: Lessons from the Life of an Activist Preacher by Jim Wallis, is a "call to renewal" by Wallis, an evangelical preacher who challenges Christians of all stripes to merge faith with a progressive social activism. A personal story well told, Wallis' book details his own struggles and his progression toward a faith imbued with progressive activism. Random House, 2000

The Fragrance of Faith: The Enlightened Heart of Islam, author Jamal Rahman invokes

the teachings of his grandfather and parents to craft a portrait of the Muslim faith. The Book Foundation, 2004

Pagan Institute Report is an inclusive resource for socially conscious Pagan scholars and activists. The book features essays about Pagan activism. <http://paganinstitute.org>

Prayers for a Thousand Years is an engrossing compilation of poetry and prose with roots in spirituality, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, HarperCollins, 2005. Visit www.harpercollins.com

Spiritual schooling

The Archdiocese of St. Paul, Office of Social Justice Website features key documents of Catholic social teaching in English, Spanish, and condensed form. Resources for educators include a reading list and links. www.osjspm.org/cst/q_eja.htm

The Center for Progressive Christianity seeks to encourage inclusive, progressive church culture through networking opportunities, forums, and resources for educators, artists, and activists. 617/441-0928, www.tcp.org

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, Tzedek Resource Guide offers extensive resources for educators and activists focusing on the social justice implications of the Jewish faith. 617/457-8600, www.jcrcboston.org/TzedekResources/index.shtml

Living the Questions, edited by Sam M. Intrator, is a collection of essays on education and spirituality inspired by Parker J. Palmer, educator and author of *A Hidden Wholeness*, *The Company of Strangers*, and more. Jossey-Bass, 2005

SocialAction.com is an online magazine for Jewish activists, featuring listings for social action, jobs and internships and resources for educators. 617/965-7700 or 888/458-8535, www.socialaction.com

Together at last

Center of Concern is an interfaith organization for economic and social justice based on principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Articles on corporate accountability at: 202/635-2757, www.coc.org

The Interfaith Alliance, representing over 70 faith traditions, provides opportunities for activism through 47 local alliances. Call 202/639-6370 or 800/510-0969, or visit the Interfaith Alliance website at www.interfaithalliance.org

Interfaith Voices for Peace and Justice provides an online directory of over 700 faith-based peace and justice organizations maintained by Focus of Concern. For more information, visit www.interfaithvoices.org

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life provides news, polls, and reports on issues where faith and politics intersect. 202/419-4550, www.pewforum.org

U.S. Interfaith Trade Justice Campaign mobilizes faith groups on fair trade issues. Information about CAFTA, corporate responsibility, the need for readily available generic medicines, and similar topics can be found at www.tradejusticeusa.org or by calling 202/635-2757x134

PAGE 34 PHOTO: Tom Sheeter

YES! and The Film Connection

Spiritual Uprising Film

Sister Helen

After losing her husband and son to drug abuse, Helen Travis becomes a Benedictine nun and fights her own war on drugs as director of a halfway house for recovering addicts in the South Bronx.



You can hold a film festival in your home with this free film.

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Brought to you as an ongoing partnership of YES! and The Film Connection.

www.thefilmconnection.org

Questions? E-mail: info@thefilmconnection.org
Referral code: YES! magazine



Resurrect New Orleans:

In post-Katrina New Orleans, will casinos, big business, and tourism displace people and the culture of the Big Easy? How will the city protect itself from future storms and rising seas? New Orleans could be rebuilt to serve its residents, poor and rich, and prosper in harmony with its watery ecosystem

THE NEW ORLEANS OF THE FUTURE: New Orleans can be rebuilt on higher land built up from Mississippi sediment to protect it from future high water. The city rises up like a hill, protecting its inner streets from high winds with one hardened outside shell against the storms. Restored bayous break the waves. Rooftop restaurants, gardens, and promenades can be cleared when storms approach.

Illustrations by Richard Register

The best qualities and the worst features of U.S. society were on full display in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. And today we are still witnessing a frenzied tug-of-war between opposing aspects of the American character—with the final fate of New Orleans hanging in the balance.

This dynamic will continue throughout the long years of recovery, reconstruction, and renewal in the Gulf Coast region. The outcome is uncertain. But we can do a lot to help tip the scales.

Looking back: heartbreak and horror

The winds of Katrina blew back the curtain on some of the worst features of U.S. politics, culture, and society. No one can forget the heartbreaking images of our most vulnerable citizens abandoned to a horrific fate, trying to survive in a city under water. Nor can we erase the image of a fly-over U.S. president,

local officials had offered no help to those who were too poor or too feeble to flee. And for days, media coverage served up racial stereotypes, simultaneously promoting sympathy for the white “survivors” and fear of the black “looters.”

The president’s “property-over-people” ethic, the media’s chronic racial bias, and the nation’s knee-jerk disdain for the poor are negative aspects of the American character. And they all came to the fore during the crisis.

Looking back: hope, renewed

But the better side of America also came into view. As the days wore on, reporters, editors, and news producers finally recovered some of the backbone they lost after 9/11. They started challenging the White House’s preposterous spin that evacuation efforts were going along fine. (Let’s hope this spirit extends into, and improves, mainstream coverage of the disaster in Iraq.)

The fundamental decency of the American people

A better city is possible

by Van Jones

indifferent and detached during an unprecedented national catastrophe.

The misplaced priorities of the Bush White House were made clear when the president announced a policy of “zero tolerance for looting”—but never declared “zero tolerance” for starvation, dehydration, drowning, or medical neglect. So for five days, live television showed thousands of Americans struggling to survive a disaster—without one scrap of food, or a single bottle of water, from the richest and most powerful government on Earth.

And the disappointments were not limited to official Washington. We learned—to our horror—that

expressed itself in widespread disgust and shame at the government’s bungled, slow-motion response. Bush’s poll numbers plummeted as even conservatives turned their backs on him—appalled by the spectacle of a U.S. president happily attending fund-raisers while a major American city drowned.

By the end of the week, the humanity and the suffering of New Orleans’ impoverished and abandoned African-Americans touched the nation.

Ordinary people of all classes and colors opened their hearts, homes, and wallets to the displaced families of the Gulf Coast. And progressives were at the forefront of the charitable response. For

instance, Moveon.org and other progressive groups established HurricaneHousing.org—our very own “underground railroad” that helped tens of thousands of evacuees find new homes.

Celebrities and other notables did fundraising concerts and telethons. In the spirit of the brash, young Muhammad Ali, rapper Kanye West courageously accused Bush of not caring about black people.

His controversial words struck a chord, because for the first time in more than a generation, caring deeply about the fate of the black poor seemed—at

least for a moment—like the American thing to do.

Tens of millions of U.S. citizens and residents acted from a place of renewed compassion and concern for the poor. And that fact gives us something hopeful upon which to build as we face the challenges of reconstructing the Gulf Coast.

And those challenges are monumental. One million displaced people have been evacuated into more than 30 states. A major production center—for both oil and culture—has been destroyed. And the emotional trauma suffered by the direct victims (let

Reaching for higher ground

No-bid contracts. “Opportunity” zones. Massive federal spending. Big decisions are being made about the Gulf region, but what do residents and evacuees want? **YES!** editor Sarah van Gelder asked Russell Henderson, a resident of New Orleans and a convener of the Rebuild Louisiana Coalition.

Sarah van Gelder: Were you in New Orleans when Katrina hit?

Russell Henderson: Actually we evacuated. It was the first time I’d ever left the city for a storm. My children had been calling and telling me to get the hell out. So I left along with Jim Hayes from the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, and we’ve been staying with my cousin in Baton Rouge.

Sarah: Tell me about your background. What did you do before Katrina?

Russell: I was a lobbyist for children’s issues, pro-choice issues, and a lobbyist for the Sierra Club. And I was teaching social policy and community organization at Dillard University, an historically black college, until Katrina hit and the university was shut down.

Sarah: What have you been doing since then?

Russell: Somewhere after the fourth or fifth day, I started talking to friends in Houston and Baton Rouge, and we organized a meeting in Houston and later another one in Baton Rouge. And people showed up. We put

together a coalition of businesspeople, neighborhood association leaders, advocates. We weren’t starting from scratch. Between us, we had a lot of contacts.

Our *modus operandi* at the Rebuild Louisiana Coalition is inclusiveness. At our first meeting everyone spoke about what they were doing when Katrina hit and what they wanted to see happen. But the most important part of the conversation was sharing what positive things occurred.

Sarah: Can you tell some of those stories?

Russell: My oldest son’s best friend is Ritchie Kay. He goes out in the mountains by himself for a month at a time, and he knows how to survive. He stayed in the Biwater neighborhood through the storm; he got some water in the house and some roof damage, but he had a canoe, and he spent his time rescuing people—hundreds of people. He got drinking water out of water heaters. People gave him keys to their homes, and he got out food and fed people, and he rescued people.

Another hero is a long-time activist and friend, Dyan French Cole. The media has dubbed her Mama Dee. She lives in a neighbor-

hood that had five, six feet of water, but she lives upstairs, and so she got no water in her house. I was there on Wednesday. She had young people sleeping in tents at her place who were out cleaning up the neighborhood. She collected food, and she was cooking, and she had a generator set up in the back and she was doing interviews, and she had this whole community set up in the middle of this disaster.

There was a guy named Jimmy Dalry, who I’ve known for a long time. We were doing a rescue mission, we got to a beachhead—which was an intersection in uptown New Orleans—and I saw he had sores all over his legs. For 10 days, he’d been out rescuing people in uptown New Orleans—300 and some people, without the police or the National Guard.

I saw so many negative images on television that were in stark contrast to what I saw when I was in New Orleans.

Sarah: What do you see as the next step for your organizing work?

Russell: We’re going to have to fight Halliburton, Blackwater USA, and Bush. We’re going to have to fight the vultures that are circling the city right now.

We in the Rebuilding Louisiana Coalition need to have a vision, but we are not at the point where we have agreed that we want to go in certain directions.

We *have* been clear from the get-go that we are going to be diverse, and the conveners are black and white, male and female.

Jim and I in Baton Rouge have been mov-

alone the millions of TV witnesses) may take years and decades to fully heal.

Averting disaster #2: No Big McEasy

Worse, the same slowpoke forces that botched the evacuation are now moving at lightning-speed to profiteer on the region's reconstruction. Bush's administration has suspended environmental safeguards for fuel production. He has canceled affirmative action and living wage protections for workers who will rebuild the region. The White

House has also passed out no-bid contracts to the likes of Halliburton and Bechtel, creating a multi-billion dollar bonanza for corporate giants—who now have no obligation to employ local workers or pay anyone a decent wage.

And then, to add insult to unspeakable injury, Republicans plan to pay for this boondoggle not by reversing tax breaks for the rich, but by slashing social services to the poor. If the GOP has its way, it will be people like the ones we saw suffering on TV who will wind up footing the bill to rebuild New Orleans.

ing around from coffee shop to grocery store, and just talking to people. You can tell just by the expression on someone's face, the clothes that they are wearing, the state of shock that they are in, that they are evacuees.

We ask them, Where did you live? What neighborhood? How did you get out? And I always tell people to get to higher ground.

The people with means, they're gone. They're taking their money out, and they're getting to higher ground, whether that's in New Orleans or some place else.

We need to help the other folks get their money out of their houses—to get their insurance, because the insurance companies are trying not to make settlements that are in favor of the homeowner or the renter.

Sarah: When you envision the New Orleans of the future, do you see certain areas that were low areas becoming ...

Russell: Swamps. Returning back to the swamps that they were before. Jimmy is 72 years old, and he talks about going fishing and going hunting when he was a kid—in New Orleans East, in the swamps. And when they started to build houses out there, he said the swamps were going to come back and take these places, and that's what happened. We need to get people to higher ground.

Right now, all public housing in New Orleans is shut down whether it flooded or not. There's a project called the Iberville, right across the street from the French Quarter. It was built in the '30s and it was well construct-

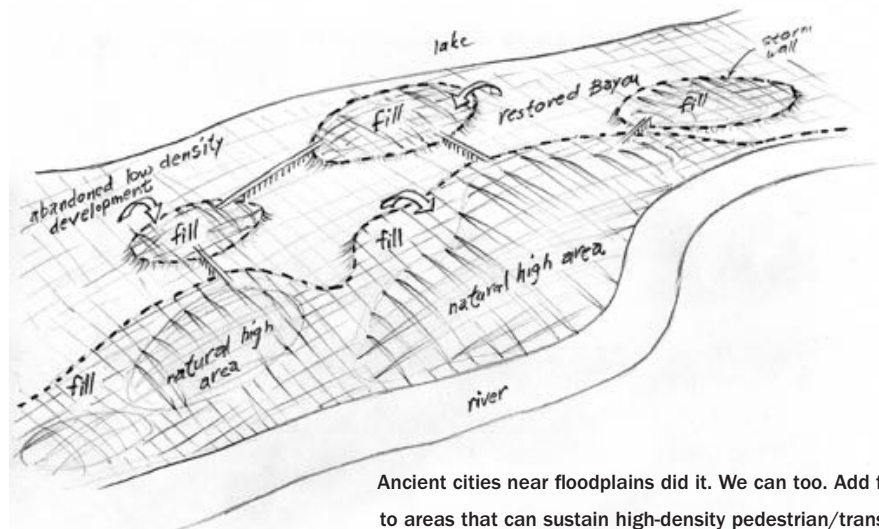
ed. It had a lot of older people living there, and the developers have been salivating over that land for 20 years, and now it's empty. If there is any water at all on the floors of the Iberville Project, they're going to use that as a rationale to tear it down and get rid of more poor people, and when you talk about poor people in New Orleans, you're talking about black people.

White supremacy is the organizing principle of policy and politics in Louisiana. Hope-

fully one thing that comes of this is that we are able to make changes in that area.

I believe the people need to be brought onto higher ground. We have parking lots downtown that we can use to put housing on, for example—housing that is safe and secure, and that is part of the community fabric.

You can learn more about the Rebuilding Louisiana Coalition at www.dotwirth.com/RebuildingLACoalition.html



Ancient cities near floodplains did it. We can too. Add fill to areas that can sustain high-density pedestrian/transit development. Build higher. Link centers with pedestrian, bicycle, and streetcar routes. Remove development from lowest density and damaged areas and let the wetlands return. Reduce car dependence.

Illustration by Richard Register

Worse still, New Orleans ultimately could re-emerge as a cartoon version of itself: the Big McEasy, a corporate-controlled Disneyland for yuppies, with no room for the original population to return—ever. The region's African-descended people, with their unique cultural heritage and deep roots in the area, would become a new black diaspora, scattered to the winds. New buildings might rise from the rubble, but the spirit of New Orleans would be forever lost. The damage to those displaced peoples, and to the worlds of music, art, and culture, would be incalculable.

Fortunately, the better parts of America are already rallying to avert what would be a second catastrophe in the Gulf Coast region.

Many organizations and funds have sprung up (or reoriented themselves) in the past month, trying to make the very best of a bad situation.

It would be impossible to list all of the efforts, but some key groupings stand out. Community Labor United (CLU), a New Orleans coalition of more than 40 grassroots organizations working for justice, has emerged as a central player. CLU quickly established the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition to meet the needs of those impacted by Katrina and ensure "that there is local, grassroots

leadership in the relief, return, and reconstruction process in New Orleans."

National organizations of progressives, including the Vanguard Foundation and True Majority, support CLU as a major activist voice on the ground.

Across the country, folks took up the challenge of supporting survivors and pressing for a just reconstruction. The Web came alive with new sites and portals, including: KatrinaAction.org, NewOrleans.Indymedia.org, NewOrleansNetwork.org, RebuildGreen.org, and ColorOfChange.org (which I helped to launch). FusionConsulting.org posted a list of vetted charities and political responses, including efforts to save the culture of New Orleans.

Defend evacuee rights

The main pivot of this activism is the fight to protect the evacuees' three most fundamental rights: to survive, to thrive, and to return to their homes. In the short term, evacuees should not be crowded into substandard housing or FEMA camps, nor strangled in red tape, while they await their return.



Shelter from the storm

For the Reverend Lee T. Wesley, whose Baton Rouge congregation helped shelter 500 displaced New Orleans residents, the flood washed up more than the detritus of a city. The receding waters revealed hard truths about poverty and racism. *YES!* senior editor Dee Axelrod spoke with him by phone at his Community Bible Baptist Church.

Dee: What have you and your congregation learned from helping people from New Orleans?

Lee: We've learned, number one, that we are a generous congregation; although some of our folk don't have much themselves, they're still willing to share. We've never seen folk who've felt so hopeless. You've got to reach way within to comfort folk like that and to say to them, our dependency is on God, and some way, somehow, God is going to work this thing out.

Number two, there appeared to be a lack of concern, particularly on the part of the fed-

eral government. Therefore, they were very slow in responding. We've learned out of this that racism is alive and well—it's pretty clear. When you have a community right outside of Baton Rouge whose parish council goes on the record voting not to put trailers there, that tells you where folks' minds are.

Dee: What can the rest of us do?

Lee: We've got to stand up and say this is morally wrong. We say we are a nation of the people and by the people. Let's be that. Plans are being made to rebuild New Orleans, but the

folk who are going to live there are not being included. Grassroots are going to have to rise up and say, "Look, we know the game. This time we're not going to play the game. We will be heard. We will be part of rebuilding our city, and our state." I think that a lot of good people out there who were touched by this—white, black, Christians, non-Christians, Jews, you name 'em—have given from their hearts to help. But unfortunately it appears that those who are in leadership positions have not caught up with the masses of our people.

I think the second thing that we learned from this, as a nation, is that no one is exempt from disaster. "We're all in it together" is the bottom line.

At the local level, schools need to provide emotional support services. Evacuees should get free or reduced-fare access to public transportation. Some landlord/tenant laws should be relaxed, so that friends and relatives can take in evacuees without risking eviction.

But the big fight is to ensure that evacuees are able to participate fully in decision-making about who rebuilds the region and how they do it. Congress should ensure that community organizations have a role in planning where federal dollars are in play. And governments and charities must ensure that all evacuees maintain an effective right to vote in the Gulf Coast until they can return.

Rebuild New Orleans “green”

These will be tough battles, requiring coordination and determination. But already, some passionate visionaries are looking beyond mere survival or a seat at the table.

They want to set a bold agenda for reconstruction, ensuring that the new New Orleans is resurrected, not as a corporate theme park but as a thriving eco-city—designed in accordance with the best ecological thinking and built largely by local labor.

As utopian as the idea may sound, such an outcome is still possible. In her book, *The Limits of Power*, Christine Rosen explores the way that three cities—Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore—responded to devastating fires. Chicago and Boston rebuilt the way they had been, recreating all the old structural and political dysfunctions.

But Baltimore rebuilt on new principles because the city had already been working on a positive vision of what it could become. Guess what? So was New Orleans. Enlightened business and community leaders had been laying plans for a green urban revitalization years before this disaster struck. They already have a compelling, eco-friendly road map.

One of the long-standing proponents of a green renewal of New Orleans is Alan AtKisson. In his well-reasoned and comprehensive essay entitled “Dreaming of a new New Orleans,” he lays out a powerful, workable vision for an ecologically sound, people-friendly, and prosperous city.

His ideas, posted at WorldChanging.com, are simple and straightforward:

1. Work with nature and technology to protect the city from future worst-case scenarios.
2. Use rebuilding to lift the poor to safer economic and social ground.

3. Create an economy of creativity.

4. Become a clean, green showcase.

The underlying ideas were gaining support in parts of New Orleans before the catastrophe struck. They should not be trampled underfoot by Halliburton-style profiteers now.

AtKisson’s group is not alone. Global Green is working with Habitat for Humanity to build 10,000 green homes in the region. Eco-City Builders has elaborated a set of principles that could make New

If we meet this challenge, progressives will help rebuild an American city in a way that reflects our deepest social and ecological values

Orleans the greenest city on Earth. RebuildBetter.org is committed to implementing an excellent set of green ideas. And a new organization, New Orleans Rebuild Green, has emerged, giving these ideas grassroots legs and credibility. Rebuild Green is led by long-time black activist, Malik Rahim. (You can support these efforts at RebuildGreen.org.)

A better city is possible

Environmental justice luminary Carl Anthony is right when he says that activists must rapidly make the transition to thinking proactively about a positive vision, not just reacting to all the horrors. People of conscience must move beyond charitable aid—beyond even just opposing the corporate carpet baggers—and into a position of vision-driven leadership.

If we meet this challenge, progressives will help rebuild an American city in a way that reflects our deepest social and ecological values.

During the high point of anti-globalization protest, we used to shout proudly: “A better world is possible!”

And it is. Let’s work together to build a better New Orleans—and show the world what we mean.

Van Jones is the executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and an occasional contributor to YES!

WEBSITES in addition to those listed above:

www.neworleansnetwork.org—Connecting New Orleanians

www.metroequity.net—Ideas for rebuilding New Orleans, just and green

www.gov.state.la.us—The state of Louisiana

www.katrinaaction.org—“Real relief, a just recovery, and nothing less”

www.communitylabor-united.net—CLU’s People’s Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition

<http://neworleans.indymedia.org>—People’s media

<http://katrinahelp.info/wiki>—Help keep it up-to-date



Karine Daisay/ Marlena Agency

We feel the crunch as “clock time” splinters into nanoseconds.
Could the cure for time scarcity be a vision of the Eternal?

Out of Time

Jonathan Rowe

If you have lived in a Third World village, then you probably have experienced a strange—to us Americans—absence of time. There is a rhythm to daily life. People rise early to beat the sun. They

prepare meals, wash clothes, visit, rest. All this proceeds at its own pace. In my wife’s village in the Philippines, I do not recall ever having seen a clock.

Nor do I recall a lack of time. To the contrary

there is an abundance. The less time is measured and packaged, it seems, the more of it there is. To which a skeptic might reply, “Well of course. These people are poor. They don’t have anything else to do.” But that’s the point. They are poor in one sense and yet rich in another. That other sense happens to be the one that we Americans increasingly lack.

We are obsessed with time. We assault it, seek to tame and manage it, the way our forebears once did the frontier. We measure our progress largely by the amount of stuff we turn out per hour of work, which we call “productivity” (without regard to whether we really need the items produced). Yet striving to conquer time we end up having less of it and feeling miserable as a result.

For decades people have suffered their temporal poverty in silence, as though it’s all their own fault. But that is changing, and partly as a result the nation’s politics are changing, too. Political debate in America generally has centered on the distribution of money and material goods. Now, slowly, it is starting to be about the distribution of time. We are starting to think about temporal wealth, as well as the financial kind. Frank Luntz, the Republican message Merlin, says that time emerges as a major concern in his focus groups. Celinda Lake, a Democratic counterpart, says the same. The brushfire enthusiasm for Take Back Your Time Day suggests that they are right.

Demands for more time “off”—to attend to kids and communities, or just to rest—are going to become a staple in American politics, and this is good. It is insane to pour increasing amounts of time into the market when most of us have accumulated more things than we need already, and when so many needs in our families and communities are going unmet. But a few more holidays, and a few more days off, are not going to do the job. There are more basic questions lurking here, and a great opportunity to reach across the political-cultural divide as well.

Metronome of the marketplace

To be out of time, in the way that traditional societies are, is, in large measure, to be out of the market. It is to dwell in a world in which the market is a place one goes to, not an ambient force field that defines all of life. Clock time is the market’s metronome, the central regulatory device that entered daily life through the factory. Turning work into a commodity called “labor” created the need to measure it, just like wool and grain. And as produc-

tion became more complicated, there was a need to coordinate the factors that comprised it. There had to be hours of business. Meetings had to occur.

Hence the clock. Where once the task defined time, now time defined the task. Yes, the microchip now is making the old metronome somewhat obsolete. But it is doing so not by eliminating clock time, but rather by accelerating it to warp speed. Do you really feel more rested and rich in time in an

To be out of time, in the way that traditional societies are ... is to dwell in a world in which the market is a place one goes to, not an ambient force field that defines all of life

economy rushing to the pulse of the microchip? If so, you should tell the rest of us your secret. From the factory, clock time spilled out into the society at large along with the products it helped produce. The temporal organization of work became that of the home, as households had to synchronize with it. Then the market itself entered the home and planted its metronomic flag there. Television in particular partitioned the flow of life in the household into half hour segments. Inch by inch, people internalized their new master and identified with it. The body became a productive “machine.” A big-ticket “Alpha Mom,” profiled in *New York* magazine, said that her baby was something she and her husband “really dedicated time in our schedules for.”

She said this with pride, as though she had identified a hot strategic opportunity. The schedule rules, and kids get fitted to it. Chances are her child, like others, soon will become hyper-scheduled as well. Kids today are getting day planners at age six. Their days consist of a sequence of lessons and supervised sports, all governed by the clock. Unstructured outdoor play has dropped by 50 percent since the late 1970s. (A letter-writer to *New York* suggested that Alpha Mom start to set aside money for the psychiatry bills that are coming.)

Scarcity in abundance

It might seem a paradox that the desperate quest to cram more into time has caused it to diminish. But time is the awareness of space between events. More events really do mean less time. Besides, the tendency to conjure scarcity out of the abundance it helps create is a central feature of the market itself. The textbook definition of a market economy is: a system for allocating scarce resources. The corollary, usually unspoken, is that for a resource to be so allocated it must first become scarce.

There is a psychological dimension to this. A sneaker is a sneaker. Put a Nike swoosh on it, spend millions to build an aura around that swoosh, and you can sell it for a great deal of money. Branding is psychologically induced scarcity. The simple fact of immersion in a product culture causes us to feel a chronic lack. No matter how much we have already, there is always something that we don't.

Then there's material scarcity. In the use of natural resources such as oil, land, and air, the market tends to be an appetite without a shut-off switch. By the time the price system clicks in, the damage usually has been done. Things once abundant become scarce, with the result that people have to buy commodified substitutes. Befoul the water and then sell bottled water for drinking and pools for swimming in; that's the basic pattern.

As with oil and water, so with time. A growing portion of this thing we call "the economy" is devoted to selling people substitutes for time, such as calming drugs, fast food, and the many "services" that have displaced the normal functions of the home. Upscale parents are contracting out the tasks of putting on birthday parties, helping kids with homework, even teaching them how to ride their bikes.

Economists call this "growth." For the rest of us it sounds more like pathology. But our strange notions regarding time help to obscure this simple fact.

A sanctity has grown up around the assault on time. It is as though temporal exhaustion, and the self-exhaustion it involves, is a devotional act, almost a form of communion. The kind of pride a medieval monk might have felt, or been tempted to feel, at his endurance in prayer, people today feel at their capacity to multi-task, to cram more in. Few traits so signify competence; the media reported breathlessly on President Kennedy's speed-reading and on Bill Clinton's lack of need for sleep.

The parallel to the monastery is not accidental. Clock time took root in the Benedictine monasteries before the factory owners got hold of it. St. Benedict had declared war on idleness. "Toward this end," Jeremy Rifkin observed in his book *Time Wars*, "the Benedictines organized every moment of the day into formal activity." They revived the Roman concept of the hour, and arranged their day around it. Eating, prayer, even the call of nature, had an appointed time. Devotion was seen in regularity in every sense of the word.

When this form of temporal management came over the wall, it kept a certain pietistic quality. The monk prayed at an appointed time; the man of business arrived at work. The center of gravity shifted from the church to the counting house, and the pursuit of the absolute became the service of Mammon. But punctuality was now the issue, not the cause it served.

Eventually this all became part of the strange amalgam we now call the "Protestant Ethic," in which fitness for the Kingdom was seen in the ability to acquire this world's goods. The destruction of time became a secular version of the destruction of sin and the supposed virtue of the destroyer became a veil for the destruction itself. Thus the Republican Party today, with its awkward alliance between the moneychangers of Wall Street and the purported followers of the exemplar who whipped them out of the temple two millennia ago.

In some segments of the Left there has been revulsion, not just for the alliance but also for the churches that comprise it, and often for the whole Judeo-Christian tradition as well. There has been a resort to teachings that seem as far away as possible, from Native American spirituality to Zen. This is understandable but also tragic, because it has separated activists from the roots of their own culture and from the inner reference points they need to reach. Instead of refuting the ideologues from the standpoint of scriptural teaching they attack "religion in politics" and thus tighten the bonds between the preachers and their flocks.

The best of the Good Book

The truth is, it would be hard to find a text more subversive of linear and clock time, and the ideologies built upon it, than the Bible. This is not just a matter of Jesus' denunciations of empire and greed, his demand that we "take no thought" for our lives, and the like. It goes deeper, to insights about the ul-

timate nature and reality of things, including human consciousness itself. If reclaimed from the preachers, these insights could help break the spell of both the market and its metronome.

The Judeo-Christian scripture was written at many levels. At first it seems an historical narrative, and not always an appealing one. But these people understood something about pedagogical indirection, and latent in the history is a dimension that is out of time. It comes through in passages that can seem a little off-the-wall, but that in fact go to the core.

There is, for example, this passage in Ecclesiastes: “That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been.” And this one from Isaiah, in which the prophet portrays the Absolute as “declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.” This thread continues through the works of Jesus up to Revelations, where the ultimate reality—that is, “God”—is described as “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending ... which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

This is not linear or clock time—and there are many passages in this vein. As Maurice Nicoll, the late Jungian psychiatrist, pointed out in his book *Living Time*, the words translated as “eternal” in both the Old and New Testaments do not mean what the English suggests: extending forever into linear time. They do not mean the kind of eternity that biochemistry can give us.

Rather they suggest a past and future that exist all-at-once as an “overshadowing Totality.” Nicoll quotes Tayler Lewis, a 19th century American scholar, on the point. In the Hebrew concept, “the future world does not come to us and acquire reality by being present but we are going into it,” Lewis wrote. “The future has as real an existence as that through which we have passed.”

This is a large subject, but the point here is this: The West’s own traditional teachings regard clock time—and therefore market time—as a kind of sleep from which we have to wake. It is sin in the original sense of that word—that is, to “miss the mark” or misapprehend the point of one’s existence. When one sets to work to grasp this larger concept of time, the way the prophets did, internal changes start, including change in the way we relate to money, stuff, and this world’s goals.

Could there be a better starting point for raising questions about temporal poverty and its sources in

America today?

I am not suggesting a frontal assault based on scriptural metaphysics. Big ideas such as this have to be broached in small steps. But there’s a bridge here, a way to speak from inside a tradition and teaching that many Americans identify with. The basic question in politics is: “Does this candidate (or cause) think pretty much the way I do? Can I hear something of myself in him or her?” Here’s a way to get closer to “yes.” We are not going to return to the temporal abundance of Third World villages, and most of us would not want to. But we can learn something from it and look for ways to recreate it in our own society. It certainly would help to carve out more temporal enclaves within the market—more vacations, more days off for purposes of children and family, and the like. But if we just use that time for shopping, then the market still has us.

To get the market out of our lives we first have to get it out of ourselves. We need to make this shedding an object of desire. To start with something people desire already is a big help.

Jonathan Rowe is a YES! contributing editor.



Karine Daisay / Mariana Agency

Finding Safe Harbor

Lynne Ballew is at home in the sanctuary she created to serve homeless Alaskans

Debra McKinney

Safe Harbor isn't a homeless shelter or a housing project. It's more simple than that. It's a non-profit hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, a kind of sanctuary where people coming out of shelters or off the streets can stay while they work some things out. More than a hotel, even, it's a neighborhood.

Safe Harbor offers no social services on site, so people's problems don't define who they are. They must, however, be referred by social service agencies hooked into the Safe Harbor mission.

Even so, they're guests, not clients. They arrive to find chocolates on their pillows, private bathrooms decked out with tub toys and people behind every door going through some of the same struggles they are.

With capital funding and startup costs behind it, Safe Harbor operates on very little public money—only about 6 percent. The rest comes from rent and the private sector.

Behind the extraordinary network of private and public partners that makes Safe Harbor work, there's a woman, a dog, and a truck: project director Lynne Ballew and her old dog, Emma, and her even older truck, Lefty, a 1988 workhorse of an F-150 Ford with 180,000 miles on it that helps guests move out of Safe Harbor and into places of their own.

For Ballew, Safe Harbor has been a dream more than 25 years in the making. Although many have contributed to the creation of this place, she's the wizard behind the curtain. She wanted a place for homeless people that wouldn't have the life smothered out of it by government rules and regulations. Above all, she wanted a place that radiated dignity.

"I think of it more as a work of art than a project," she said. "It has elegance, beauty, and simplicity, all the things that make for a proper work of art."

Ballew didn't just help create this place and move on. She moved in. When her day is done—which it never really is, because she's always on call—she heads home to her room, a stone's throw from the office, to do the books and other computer work, usually until about three in the morning.

Everything she has ever done for Safe Harbor since the board formed five years ago has been volunteer. This is a woman who moves proverbial mountains, as well as the dressers, beds, and couches people donate.

What few Safe Harbor guests know is that she's a former philosophy professor with a Ph.D. in classical philology who, if she has any brain power left at the end of the night, pulls out Greek or Latin poetry because, as she says, "you can never read Homer too many times in Greek."

She has worked on a wide range of community improvement projects in Alaska and other states. Many of those who have seen her in action call her an organizational genius.





Ballew could be making the kind of living that affords a big, fancy house with walk-in closets as big as the room that's now her home. Instead, Safe Harbor is where she wants to be.

"It's the least phony place in the world," she said.

An activist is born

Ballew grew up disliking the consumer society she saw around her. "I was raised by people who had too much money, and it made them miserable," she says. "So I learned from very early on that money didn't buy happiness."

Ballew can't remember a time when she wasn't aware of the suffering of others. Coming of age in the '60s, she did what activists did; hid draft dodgers and got tear-gassed at demonstrations.

She went to college at Vanderbilt, then attended graduate school at Yale, and became a single mother in 1970, when her daughter, Leesie, was born. She

was, as she puts it, a "welfare mother" for six months before returning to Vanderbilt and finishing her doctorate in 1975.

In 1977, Ballew was teaching philosophy and social action at Boston College, as well as volunteering at a soup kitchen, when she felt the need for a road trip.

That summer she and seven-year-old Leesie drove up the Alaska Highway. Ballew was smitten with Alaska. She was also moved by what she saw in downtown Anchorage. It didn't take her long to figure out that all the homeless people had nowhere to go but the streets.

She and Leesie returned to Anchorage the following summer to do something about it. Ballew got a job in the Anchorage Community Council office, started making connections, and set about founding Bean's Cafe to be a place where those with nothing could be fed, be warm, be safe, and feel welcome.

Staff and unofficial Safe Harbor mascot take advantage of a sunny Anchorage day to gather in front of the Safe Harbor building. Photos courtesy of Safe Harbor

Safe Harbor journey

Ballew left Alaska in fall 1980 to return to teaching and other pursuits in the Lower 48. After she had a second child, Ballew often had several jobs to support her family. Working for the Federal National Mortgage Association, she helped create the low- and moderate-income housing program now known as Fannie Mae's National Housing Impact Division.

When Ballew returned to Alaska in 1995, she set about making Safe Harbor happen. What she had learned at Fannie Mae was how uncomplicated such a project could be.

"The secret to our success can be summed up by saying that we are not in the social service business; we're in the hospitality business," she said. "It's so simple."

In October 2001, Ballew bought a local inn, and the venue, renamed Safe Harbor, opened a month later with 21 units, later expanded to 55, with from 120 to 130 people in residence, about half of them children. Ballew knows every single one by name.

By having the necessities covered, and with Bean's Cafe delivering two meals a day, guests' time and energy are freed up for more important things. That has made a big difference for residents like Angela Murphy, who came to Safe Harbor from a shelter with her four-year-old daughter, MacKenzie. It has allowed her to concentrate on her plan to become a certified nursing assistant.

Or Neil Olson, who came Safe Harbor's way through the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center. After decades of drinking and living on and off the streets, he got sober with the help of willpower and a drug called Naltrexone that curbs the craving.

Just having a key in his pocket took some getting used to, let alone having a real bed. He checked in 11 months ago with nothing but a rucksack. He has since amassed quite a pile for the day he moves out. He even has stuff like bath towels.

"This place is just a godsend for me," he said. "This is the longest I've ever been sober. It's a combination of the Naltrexone and this place and that dog," he says of Ballew's golden lab, Emma, mayor of Safe Harbor. Olson has been a huge help around the place, going on grocery runs for people, helping Ballew pick up and deliver furniture.

"That Lynne, she's strong," he said. "You wouldn't think so since she's not very big. But she gets on one end of that couch and me on the other

and away we go. The more I hang around her, the more she amazes me. I asked her here some time back 'What's your deal? How come you're here? You don't drink, you don't have problems.' 'Workaholic,' she said. She is, though. I don't know if she ever quits. I doubt she even does when she's asleep."

Ballew, unlike guests, who have real beds, sleeps on a platform made of boxed-up books, papers and old grants, with a mattress on top. There's no closet, so she owns only two pairs of jeans. Her room is small, but not too small for the stuff that really matters, like a floor-to-ceiling wall of books.

"Lynne has lived like a graduate student her entire life," her old friend, Ann Newbury, said.

No matter what anybody thinks, Ballew is quite happy here.

"She worked so hard for this to happen, it was natural for her to move in," her daughter, Leesie, said. "It's the meaning of her life. It's what gives her the most joy."

Bolstered by Safe Harbor, most guests like Olson ultimately move into their own housing, but Ballew has no plans to live anywhere else, except maybe in a yurt on a nice piece of land someday.

"I guess I'm just fortunate in that the things I really love and enjoy and I think make life worth living don't cost anything," she said. "I just love to read. I love baseball. I love being with people and just being hospitable as a way of life."

"The travel writer Bruce Chatwin had this piece in his book *The Songlines* about how nomadic people are happier than settled people because they only take with them what they absolutely need. Their riches are all their stories, their memories, and their interactions with other. I think it's an enormous mistake, a metaphysical mistake and an ethical mistake, to assume that stuff is the key to happiness."

Ballew's knowledge of Greek philosophy applies, she said: According to the ancient practice of gift-giving, anything that comes to you as a gift has to be passed along, since, as Ballew points out, "An accumulation of wealth is almost an oxymoron. Your wealth is what you give away. And your most sacred and important obligation as a citizen, as a human being is to welcome strangers and give them what you have that they need. Not to do that, literally for the Greeks, was a crime against nature, a crime against the gods. And when you think about it, that's very good social policy."

Excerpted with permission of the *Anchorage Daily News*. Debra McKinney has been a feature writer for ADN for 20 years.

Kids, Unconditionally

UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason

by Alfie Kohn

Atria/Simon and Schuster, 2005, 264 pages,
\$24.00

reviewed by Jennifer Rubin Dixey

Scan the parenting bookshelves at your local library or bookstore, and you'll find them overflowing with new ways to control the behavior of children. The toolbox for parents today includes "logical" rewards, "time-outs" for serious infractions, and, most importantly, lots of praise to ensure self-esteem and compliance.

Alfie Kohn's approach is radically different and simple: Don't try to control children, just love them—unconditionally. For Kohn, that means respecting kids' needs and feelings, taking time to explain reasons for requests, and being honest about our own emotions and intentions.

Kohn is quick to acknowledge that this is not an easy task; it's harder to make sure children feel loved unconditionally than it is just to love them. It's harder to respond to them in all their complexity than it is to focus solely on behaviors.



Jim Cummins

"Working with" asks more of us than does "doing to." In light of this admitted difficulty, Kohn's recommendations come across more as invitations than prescriptions—invitations to get to know your child, and yourself, better. "Be reflective," he writes. "Reconsider your requests. ... Keep their ages in mind. Attribute to children the best possible motive consistent with the facts. Don't stick your 'nos' in unnecessarily."

Kohn has published nine previous books on parenting. *Unconditional Parenting* focuses specifically on parenting without the punishment/reward paradigm.

Kohn, the parent of two young children, shares personal anecdotes and backs up recommendations

It is harder to make children feel loved unconditionally than it is to just love them

with results from numerous studies. The research reveals that some popular parenting choices—like praising children for a job well done—can actually be counterproductive.

Kohn concludes that praise is just the flip side of punishment; it does nothing to truly raise a child's self-esteem. Instead, Kohn encourages parents to put their relationship with their children first and



foremost; to show a genuine interest in their activities, likes and dislikes, and ideas; and, above all, to respect them.

"The most destructive form of praise," Kohn writes, "is the kind explicitly intended to reinforce what the child is doing." Studies have shown that praise doesn't really do anything to encourage a child's actions or motivate them to do better—it merely trains them to look for more praise.

If "good job" isn't such a great idea, what about those "time-outs"? Kohn calls this strategy "love withdrawal."

"When you send a child away", Kohn writes, "what's really being switched off or withdrawn is your presence, your attention, your love." It is not a preferable alternative to physical punishment, Kohn believes, since a change to emotional punishment is ultimately just as destructive—possibly even more so—to a child's self esteem. The question, Kohn says, is not whether emotional isolation "works," but whether the long-term negative effects are worth the resulting, usually temporary, behavior modification.

Many popular parenting authors take as their point of departure the presumption that the parent is right, the child is wrong, and the parent's job is to get the child to conform to the adult's expectations. Kohn asks parents to start by questioning their assumptions and demands—to help children become self-governing, ethical adults through trust and respect, genuine empathy, and collaborative solutions.

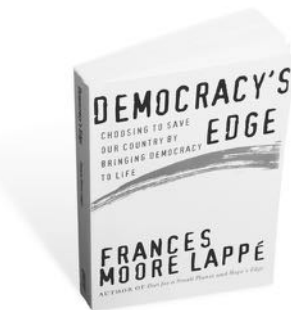
Alfie Kohn's wit, insight, and quiet insistence on thoughtful reflection offer a welcome change from prescriptive, discipline-oriented parenting books. That meditative quality gives this book resonance beyond the usual parenting manual. Written in a low-key,

conversational style, and short on academic posturing, *Unconditional Parenting* has much to teach about the quality of our relationships with our children. A companion DVD, featuring Kohn lecturing on the subject of unconditional parenting, can be purchased online at the author's website, alfiekohn.org.

Jennifer Rubin Dixey is a poet, an infogeek, a former multimedia programmer, and a future librarian. She lives near Bellingham Bay with her husband and son.

DEMOCRACY'S EDGE: Choosing To Save Our Country By Bringing Democracy To Life

by Frances Moore Lappé
Jossey-Bass, 2005, 496 pages
\$24.95
reviewed by Doug Pibel



"The heart of democracy, I finally came to understand, is *voice*—the capacity of citizens to have a say in those critical choices shaping their lives and their futures." So says Frances Moore Lappé in her new book, *Democracy's Edge*.

Nearly 35 years ago, Lappé wrote of a way to eat that would allow all humans to satisfy their physical hunger. Now she writes of a way to live that will fill the emptiness at the heart of modern America and allow all to satisfy their hunger for connection, for meaning, for voice.

Consider Marge Mead, a re-

tired schoolteacher with no political experience. She became a key figure in passing Arizona's clean election financing law. When Charlie Johnson led a successful drive to amend the South Dakota constitution to limit corporate ownership of farms, his life work was farming, not lobbying. The four founders of ShoreBank were neither wealthy nor bankers; the bank is now an internationally recognized model for community development banking, and has loaned more than \$2 billion for projects and people conventional lenders wouldn't touch. In each of these cases, and in the many more Lappé details in *Democracy's Edge*, the capital is commitment, the power is the people, and the dividends are the development of human values and connections.

Those are the things for which humans truly hunger. Neuroscience is now confirming what anthropology has long said: the natural human condition is cooperation and connection.

We are feeding our political and social lives, she says, on the unappetizing gruel of "thin democracy"—a substance that claims to offer citizen participation but actually affords merely the appearance of it. Disaffection from participation in governance is epidemic: fewer than half of eligible voters cast ballots, three-quarters of Americans believe that the country is run by and for big business.

Lappé offers a vision of democracy as a hearty, satisfying potluck stew: everyone pitches in; everyone shares the meal. It's not, she says, just politics. Democracy is a way of life; it's just not much lived in America. We've been trained for years that life is dog-eat-dog, that there are more losers than winners, and that we must all grab what we can, any way we can.

That competitive way of life

demands and produces imbalances of power. It creates distorted ideas of what power is, makes it seem a rather tawdry thing, best left to those ruthless and amoral enough to debase themselves by its use.

This book tells a different story. "In fact," Lappé says, "power simply means our capacity to act." Americans have been told for a long time that their capacity to act is pretty much limited to consumer choices and periodic, mostly symbolic exercises in voting for the people with the real power. Lappé gives us a rich helping of stories that say otherwise.

Real democracy is people working together to make decisions about the things that affect their daily lives: family, food, school, work, security, and justice. From large issues to small, our current story is that wisdom and power lie with the experts, the politicians, the movers and shakers. But across the country, people are demonstrating that the deepest wisdom lies with those who directly experience problems and solve them by joining with their neighbors for the benefit of all.

Lappé offers a vision of democracy as a hearty, satisfying potluck stew: everyone pitches in; everyone shares the meal

Lappé calls this "living democracy" and sees it growing as people realize that they are the ones who know what needs to be done. Teachers found schools that break the regimented model and teach children the value of lifetime questioning. Farmers join a resurgent cooperative movement; commu-

nity-supported agriculture provides fresh organic vegetables to millions; urban farmers reclaim unused city land. Living-wage, anti-sweatshop, and buy-local movements work at breaking the corporate stranglehold on commerce. Citizens reclaim politics by demanding clean-money campaign statutes, instant runoff voting, and fusion balloting.

The leaders of these movements are extraordinary only because their passion leads them to challenge the reigning story that the little people have no power. They come to their expertise in the process; they don't start as experts. Their power is not monetary wealth; it is the power of human connection.

We have lived long enough—perhaps too long—by the story that, as Lappé puts it, "we humans are nothing but selfish, calculating schemers in the marketplace." The signs are clear, from ecological disaster to a nation beset by anomie, that it's not a way of life that works.

Lappé says, "The mid-20th-century psychologist and social philosopher Erich Fromm wrote eloquently about humans' deep

need to count, to 'make a dent' in the larger world. Remaking Descartes' famous line, Fromm wrote, 'I am, because I effect.'" For too long, Americans have believed they don't count, that those who effect are the few in high places. It's left us with a deep hunger, an emptiness we've tried to fill with consumer goods.

This book says it needn't be so. Its wealth of stories of effective action by real people, of living democracy at the grass roots, is a recipe for filling the hunger to connect, to make a dent, to have an effect.

AN UNREASONABLE WOMAN: A True Story of Shrimpers, Politicos, Polluters and the Fight for Seadrift, Texas

by Diane Wilson

Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2005

400 pages, \$27.50

reviewed by Jodie Evans

Diane Wilson never set out to become an environmental activist. A fourth-generation shrimper in Seadrift, Texas, she wanted nothing more than to be left alone on the water, communing with the bay she considered a grandmother. After a fellow shrimper appeared at the docks with an article that named their county the most polluted in the nation, Wilson tried to forget the news, but found she could not.

Her remarkable memoir chronicles the personal journey that led her to challenge Formosa Plastics, a multinational, multibillion-dollar company discharging lethal chemicals into Lavaca Bay. Dismissed and threatened at every turn, Wilson continued to speak up for the water she loved and the people whose living and life depended on it. In the process, Wilson, a mother of five, became a fully radicalized and empowered activist.

A silent child, an adolescent so shy that she left the podium without delivering the salutorian speech she was chosen to deliver at her junior high school, Wilson could not have imagined that one day she would speak in front of thousands of people at protests and conferences, or directly confront political and industrial leaders.



But, as she wrote: “There comes a time when the home needs protecting and the line needs drawing and anybody that dares cross it acts at their own peril.” When that time came for Wilson, she quickly found her voice and its immense power.

Wilson’s voice rings out clear, strong, and fiercely original in the pages of *An Unreasonable Woman*, from her peril-at-sea prologue to her victorious epilogue. Her narrative is peppered with Texas dialect—“sure” is often “shore,” for example. But for all this down-home talk, Wilson’s writing also encompasses stunning metaphors and finely detailed observations. She writes, “I was beginning to discover the difference between women and other women, and it wasn’t measured by filling in their weights or their shoe sizes on a piece of paper. A woman’s difference was measured by whether she listened to herself at all.”

Wilson listens to herself deeply. Her actions as an activist are profoundly intuitive, guided by dreams, gut instinct, synchronicity, and a great deal of pluck. After spontaneously deciding to stage a protest outside a formal Formosa event, she writes: “It was only the sheer audacity of this protest that rattled anybody at all. That and the fear I might do something *worse*. ... That was how I realized the power of action. Didn’t matter what kind. Planned, unplanned, misbegotten, undone. Action could make you

believe. Actions could make heroes of us all just by saying ‘It is so’.”

Wilson’s actions make her a hero. Since tackling Formosa, she has continued to fight for environmental justice around the globe, and she is one of the founders of CODEPINK: Women for Peace. She joined Cindy Sheehan in protesting the Iraq war. When she writes, “sometimes all it takes is one unreasonable woman and nature in alliance,” she reminds us that we, as individuals, have the power to make a difference. She reminds us that sometimes being unreasonable is the most reasonable path we can take, if we want to change the world.

Jodie Evans has been a community political organizer for 30 years and co-founder of CODEPINK.

OTHER LANDS HAVE DREAMS: From Baghdad to Pekin Prison

by Kathy Kelly, AK Press, 2005

173 pages, \$14.95

reviewed by David Smith-Ferri

The ongoing wars and occupations of Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan leave people across the globe asking themselves—some for the first time, some for the hundredth—“What now? How do we move forward, and where do we find the energy, the spirit?”

Kathy Kelly’s book, *Other Lands Have Dreams: From Baghdad to Pekin Prison*, is a guidepost pointing a way to sanity. The book gathers 10 years of activist Kelly’s writings, from the 1995 founding of Voices in the Wilderness (vitw.org)—the campaign to end economic and military warfare against the people of Iraq—through the invasion and current occupation. It includes a beautiful and provocative series of essays written from Pekin Prison, where Kelly was incarcerated for

protesting at Ft. Benning’s School of the Americas.

The first section of the book details Kelly’s development as an activist. A student of Ammon Hennacy and Dorothy Day, Kelly was deeply influenced by Maryknoll, Franciscan, and Jesuit friends; the doorway to Kelly’s political activism was framed and hinged by Christian spirituality.

Like Day and Hennacy before her, Kelly speaks with prophetic power. She denounces the war being waged against the Earth, and the U.S. policies that punish and kill innocent people, proclaim freedom while enslaving, seek to establish peace through destruction, and aim to end terrorism by terrorizing.

In Baghdad on the eve of war, she ponders nonviolent opposition to the growing threat of invasion, even as explosions thunder overhead: “Crucial days ahead offer people throughout the world a momentous opportunity to prevent bloodshed and destruction. ... It could usher all of us toward the political maturity required to survive our shameful capacity for annihilation.”

Kelly argues that, although the Bush Administration lied and exaggerated Iraqi military capabilities, opposition to the war should have stemmed from the invasion’s predictable brutality, which landed most heavily on women, children, the elderly, and the poor. We should have opposed this war because its cost is measured in enormous environmental destruction, and massive theft of resources that rightfully belong to health care, education, and environmental restoration. We should have objected, she says, because war is a poison that engenders terrorism and puts some of the best minds to work at the business of killing

rather than the very necessary business of creating a more just society.

In a central passage in the book, Kelly writes from prison: "I feel haunted by the infants, the toddlers, the young teens and their heartbroken mothers and fathers whom we met at bedside after bedside in Iraqi hospitals. Walking on the oval track here in prison, I whisper the names and recall the sweet faces of the little ones I grew to know, fleetingly. All of them were condemned to death."

In a poem written in the 1980s, Daniel Berrigan talks about "learning a new language." He isn't referring to Spanish or Chinese, but to listening to the voices of the dead. Kelly embodies this idea. Through all the death and heartache, she holds fast to her conviction that each of these children, "each of their stories, had something to say to us," that the economic embargo would have crumbled if those stories had seen the light of day.

The same, she contends, is true of the present war and occupation in Iraq, and of our prison system. Shrouded in secrecy and lies, operating on the remote edges of our consciousness, the policies of sanctions, war, and imprisonment grind people, slowly or rapidly, to death. Only when these policies and their consequences are brought to the center of our consciousness do we have the chance to act with conviction and power.

The longest letter in her book is a vision of society without prison—the product of a fruitful, months-long conversation with other inmates.

The power of Kelly's ideas is magnified by the other voices, the other people we encounter in her narrative. One compelling reason to read *Other Lands Have Dreams* is the opportunity to meet some of the remarkable, ordinary people

Kelly meets in Iraq and in prison. These are modest people, who, under insane and dehumanizing circumstances, find within the spiritual resources to remain human and sane, to be compassionate and intelligent and loving. Encountering these people, and taking them seriously, as Kelly has, can be life-changing.

The word "freedom" has been placed, heavy-handedly, at the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda, and brutalized in the process. Kelly effectively resuscitates it, describing a form of authentic personal freedom that translates into communal action. Abstract terms like "compassion," "courage," "love," and "hope" are concretized in real-life situations; they live, breathe, and speak.

Reading this book, we encounter a world where life and death struggle openly, where actions and events are charged with significance. The rub, of course, is that these are contemporary people and events; no matter who we are, no matter where we live, we are part of the story. Kelly reminds us of that throughout, without a hint of self-righteousness.

Kelly speaks with the power of the insider. In her letters from Iraq during war, for example, Kelly writes from the perspective of someone whose life is at risk, because, in fact, it is. "[I]n March and April of 2003, I saw how children suffer when nations put their resources into weapons and warfare rather than meeting human needs. All of us learned to adopt a poker face, hoping not to frighten the children, whenever there were ear-splitting blasts and gut-wrenching thuds. During every day and night of the bombing, I would hold little Miladhah and Zainab in my arms. That's how I learned of their fear." Trying to comfort a frightened

child as bombs explode nearby, she has a different perspective than the pilots dropping the bombs, than the lawmakers authorizing war spending, than those of us safe at home. The same is true of her letters from prison.

We need this perspective. We will not change, she suggests, until we empathize with the people upon whom the bombs fall, the people who have been "disappeared." That is where the long trek to freedom begins. From that place where we see the consequences of our overconsumption, of our war tax dollars, and of our "adjustments" to a war-making, prison-building state, we can begin to see that our future is inseparable from the future of people in Iraq, in Palestine, in prison. From that place, real and consequential changes are possible.

David Smith-Ferri is a freelance writer and author of *Battlefield Without Borders: A Poet's Journal from Iraq*, forthcoming from Haley's Publishing. He has traveled to Iraq twice.

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Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of **yes!**



Linda Wolf

There's urgency in the air. Everywhere I go, I sense that more people understand that many facets of our society must change and increasingly feel we can't wait.

Katrina is partly responsible. The hurricane was not simply a disaster in a particular place. It was a disaster that ripped away a veil of

When people are feeling an urgent need for real change, a positive vision can have an especially powerful effect

denial. It exposed the level of racial injustice in this country, the terrible consequences of global warming, the faulty structure of cities that leave poor people stranded, the depths of political corruption, the vulnerability created by our dependence on oil, and more.

With the veil torn away, millions are able to see the need for deep change. And while the current administration uses this as another opportunity to enrich the wealthy, outside that circle more and more people are finding ways to meet the challenges head-on.

At the end of September, I was in Washington, D.C. for the protest march against the war in Iraq. I expected the mood of the crowd to be angry, but what I found was a spirit of camaraderie, undergirded by a sense of urgency. The "make levees not war" slogan on many signs embodied the need to get out of an ill-conceived war and get on with work on real problems. I also attended the Green Festival, where businesses displayed wares based on renewable energy, recycling, organic production, and fair trade—representing the positive future we are building right now.

While I was in D.C., my husband, Dave, was in Hawaii, where he got a taste of how ready people are for a powerful, positive, proactive message. He was speaking on his forthcoming book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. He found people responsive to his call to localize economies, decentralize political power, and shift the culture from dominator to partner relationships—and serious about moving these ideas into the mainstream culture.

At a time like this, when people are feeling an urgent need for real change, a positive vision can have an especially powerful effect. As a reader of *YES!* you know that a posi-

tive vision isn't a single document. It emerges from the ideas and actions of many people. It's about learning to live without oil, redefining the "good life," democratizing the media, healing the wounds of our own history, creating living economies.

Those are topics we've examined in recent issues of *YES!*, and we'll keep showing the multiple dimensions of a practical, grounded vision of a world that works for all. We're about to celebrate our 10th anniversary, and we have big plans to step up the power of our communications. Here's a preview of what we'll be rolling out over the next year:

- **The *YES!* take on timely news.** On yesmagazine.org—in addition to our archive of more than 1,000 *YES!* articles—you'll soon find blogs by some of your favorite authors and timely web-only content. You can sign up for regular e-mails on signs of an emerging culture.
- **Changes in *YES!* magazine.** We'll keep the same great content, but we'll update the design so it tells stories even more powerfully.
- **Special coverage** of David Korten's newest book, *The Great Turning*, which is due out in May. His work will be featured in the Summer 2006 issue of *YES!* magazine. On yesmagazine.org we will

Events & Announcements

carry a calendar of Dave's upcoming appearances, text of recent speeches, and lots of "what to do now" references.

- **Expanded education program.** We already reach over 4,000 teachers nationwide; we'll continue to grow our education outreach, providing thousands of students with inspiring stories of people taking action for change.

- **YES! Circles.** We are currently piloting YES! Circles in 12 communities across the country. We help facilitate the startup of these Circles in which YES! readers gather to explore issues, support one another, and take action.

- **Podcasts** of in-depth interviews. You'll soon be able to hear interviews with authors and others who are advancing justice and sustainability in these turbulent times.

- **10th anniversary celebration!** Next summer, we'll celebrate our 10th anniversary with an event where you can meet other YES! readers, authors, board, staff, and volunteers. Stay tuned for details.

You—our readers and supporters—are the reason we're able to celebrate a 10-year anniversary. Without you, we would not be here.

If you are a subscriber, you'll soon receive a letter from me in the mail. It's your year-end opportunity to give gift subscriptions and provide much needed financial support for this work. I look forward to receiving your generous response. You may also choose to donate online at www.yesmagazine.org.

Together we can seize the urgency of this time. A positive future is possible and it's up to us all to make it happen.



Fran Korten
Executive Director

Sustainability Conference

January 9-12, 2006, Hanoi, Vietnam. Second International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability. See www.sustainabilityconference.com

Hearts that Yearn for Justice

January 23-26, Tijuana, Mexico. Third World Opportunities: Developing Hearts that Yearn for Justice. The Gospel as it relates to poverty, immigration, environment, economics, hospitality, and resistance. YES! board chair David Korten will be a speaker. See www.bordermatters.net/DHYJ/index.htm

World Social Forum—2006

The World Social Forum will take place simultaneously in Venezuela, Pakistan, and Mali from January 24 to 29. See www.forumsocialmundial.org.br for details on the WSF and other forums happening throughout the world throughout the year.

Independent Press Association

January 26-28, San Francisco, CA. Independent Press Association conference, features speeches by journalists Amy Goodman and Greg Palast. YES! Magazine staff will attend. See www.indypress.org

Race, Class, Gender, and Ethnicity

February 18, Chapel Hill, NC. This year's conference centers around the theme of prisons. See www.unc.edu/crcge/archives/2006/index.shtml

Building Green 2006

March 7-9, Boston, MA. Northeast Sustainable Energy Association's conference focuses on green building and energy production and use. See www.nesea.org.

Eco-Films

March 16-26, the Washington, D.C., Environmental Film Festival will feature 106 films from 22 countries. See www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org. The other Washington: March 23-26, Leavenworth, WA. 2006 Hazel Wolf Environmental Film Festival. See www.hazelfilm.org/2006leavenworth.html

Spiritual activism

May 17-20, Washington, D.C. Building on the July conference in Berkeley, the Spiritual Activism conference will also celebrate the release of Rabbi Michael Lerner's new book *The Left Hand of God*, with its proposed Spiritual Covenant for America and the release of Jim Wallis's *God's Politics* in paperback. See www.tikkun.org/community/spiritual_activism_conference

Living Economies

June 8-10, Burlington, VT. The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) Conference: Creating Sustainable Communities. Keep capital re-circulating in your community and learn about innovative public policy solutions for creating a positive future. See www.livingeconomies.org/events/conference06

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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B) Paid circulation:		
1) Paid/Requested Outside-Country mail subscription stated on Form 3541	24,209	22,000
2) Paid In-Country Subscriptions:	0	0
3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution:	6,434	10,860
4) Other classes mailed through the USPS	616	475
C) Total paid circulation:	31,258	33,335
D) Free distribution by mail:	247	154
E) Free distribution outside of the mail:	5,158	1,667
F) Total free distribution:	5,404	1,821
G) Total distribution:	36,662	35,156
H) Copies not distributed:	5,441	11,524
I) Total:	42,103	46,680
J) Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	85.26 %	94.82 %

16. This Statement of Ownership is printed in the Winter 2006 issue of this publication. 17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete: Frances F. Korten, publisher.

Earth Charter, *EarthLight*, and more

Earth Charter for youth

Pollution, climate change, and deforestation are routinely in the news, but students may not know that people all over the world are taking action every day to address these problems. The Earth Charter is one source of inspiration for this work.

The Earth Charter was created through a 10-year process that included thousands of people in countries ranging from Argentina to Zambia. The result is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society—perhaps the closest thing there is to an international consensus on protecting the Earth and all its inhabitants.

The YES! for Youth Education Program is helping young people get to know the Earth Charter and get excited about our shared responsibility for the well-being of humanity and the larger living world. Our new online YES! *Earth Charter Curricular Module* makes the Earth Charter come alive by tying inspiring stories directly to the Charter's principles.

The module is available online to download free from the YES! Education Connection (www.yes-magazine.org). It includes YES! articles, questions for students, glossaries, and dozens of related resources.

—Kim Corrigan

Earthlight transition

In recent years, we at YES! have mourned the passing of *Whole Earth*, *Hope Magazine*, and *A Real Life*. We were equally saddened to learn that *EarthLight Magazine* will mail its final issue in November 2005.

For 15 years, *EarthLight* was an invaluable resource and spiritual home for people longing to live in

right relationship with the Earth.

YES! is honored to have been chosen by the *EarthLight* board of directors to fulfill the subscriptions of *EarthLight's* readers. YES! shares a common vision with *EarthLight* about supporting a culture and spirituality that respects the interdependent web of life. We look forward to collaborating with *EarthLight* staff, and we offer our warmest welcome to the *EarthLight* readers.

For information about *EarthLight Magazine*, its article archives, and new directions for the EarthLight organization, please visit www.earthlight.org.

—Susan Gleason

Intern spotlight

YES! is indebted to the talented interns who help out in all departments of our nonprofit organization. They often arrive from far off distances, but current interns Valerie Doyle and Lilja Otto may have set the record, joining us from Ecuador and Spain, respectively. YES! marketing & outreach manager, Susan Gleason, did a quick over-the-water-cooler interview with these dynamic young women:

Where did you come from to join us here at YES!?

Lilja Otto: I was in Spain, though I was born and grew up in Germany. I had been working with a fair trade organization and more recently with an organic food co-op, doing research and workshops on sustainable consumption. I am also finishing up a guide book and directory to sustainable consumption in Andalusia, in the south of Spain.

Valerie Doyle: I came from Ecuador where I was teaching English.

What are some things you're working on at YES!?

Lilja: I do proofreading and fact checking, and I wrote short pieces for "Yes! But How?," "Indicators," and a sidebar story.

Valerie: Researching and writing for "The Page that Counts" and editing audio for the new YES! podcast.

Where will you go next?

Lilja: I am planning to volunteer on organic farms in Canada next summer and then return to Spain to the food co-op. I hope during this internship to learn enough about editing and publishing and about the positive action-inspiring journalism YES! is doing to decide if that is a field that I will move into once back in Europe. I certainly think we need more of it.

Valerie: I plan to go to Europe to work on Spanish and French, meet up with some friends, and maybe go back to school.

Any additional comments about interning at YES!?

Lilja: I am very impressed by how well-organized the office is, how well communication seems to flow, and how warmly I was welcomed by all staff. It really seems like you have found a balance between being effective and human.

Valerie: The experience is invaluable mostly for the people with whom I interact daily. Rarely do you have the occasion to live and work with such interesting, interested people from various corners of the world! YES! has been more an affirmation of the lifestyle I hope to lead than solely an editorial experience.

Searching for simple and practical ways to live sustainably?
Want to be part of the solution? Here are answers to the questions
you're asking about creating a safer world for yourself and your family

Yes! But How?

Sunscreen Safety

Skiing season is coming up, and I am wondering which sunscreen to use on my kids and myself. Some types in my organic store have mineral filters rather than the chemical ones I've used for so long. Could you recommend one that is safe and actually works?

Sunscreens have either chemical or mineral filters, though sometimes you find a mix of both. Mineral filters form a physical barrier on the skin, deflecting the sunlight like little mirrors before it actually reaches the cells. Chemical filters, which are absorbed by the skin, trap the sun's radiation and convert the potentially harmful rays into heat.

There are serious concerns about the safety of chemical filters. Swiss toxicologist Margret Schlumpf found that they have hormone-like effects, altering sexual development and reproduction in rats. While further research is needed to confirm the effects on humans, the results are disquieting. Endocrine disruptors from cosmetics have been found in the environment and can accumulate in our bodies. Research from Goethe University in Frankfurt indicates that mere traces of chemical sunscreen have affected aquatic wildlife in Switzerland's Lake Zurich, and German scientists Jurgen Hany and Roland Nagel of Dresden's

Institute of Hydrobiology have found chemical sun filters in breast milk. According to Silvia Schauder, a dermatologist and professor at German University Hospital in Göttingen, chemical UV filters in sunscreens are also the most common cause of photoallergic reactions in the United States and much of Europe.

Mineral filters appear to be a better choice. They protect against both UVA and UVB rays, begin to work immediately after application, and rarely cause allergic reactions. When choosing a sunscreen, look for the ingredients titanium oxide or zinc oxide, both mineral filters. Common chemical filters you might want to avoid include oxybenzone, avobenzene, octinoxate, homosalate, and octocrylene.

The best protection, however, is limiting exposure to direct sun, especially for children.

Lilja Otto

Sustainable Fashion

I want to be a socially and environmentally conscious consumer, but I often find it difficult to know which companies to buy from, especially when it comes to clothing. Is there any way to know whether I'm buying my clothing from a company that uses sustainable materials and manufacturing practices?

Your question is one that is often on the minds of socially responsible consumers. There's good news and bad news, so we'll get the bad out of the way first: As far as we know, there's no comprehensive list of which companies are eco-friendly and which aren't, nor is there any industry-wide standard that clothing companies are held to. This often makes it difficult to find much information on a given company's practices other than what it posts on its own website (which you may want to take with a hefty grain of salt).

Fortunately, there's plenty of good news. For one thing, the industry as a whole is moving in a more sustainable direction, with many companies working to phase out sweatshop labor, and reducing their use of dangerous pollutants such as PVC. Even Nike has come out with a new line of sustainable shoes, called "Considered" (see nike.com for more info), which uses recycled rubber and eliminates plastics and adhesives from the construction process.

Of course, many consumers are still justifiably leery of buying from companies like Nike or The Gap. The second annual "Corporate Social Responsibility" ranking from Canadian financial news source Globeinvestor.com indicates a great deal of improvement on the part of companies like

Adidas, Reebok, and Nike. But there is still a very long way to go before these companies could be considered “green.”

Luckily, there are alternatives. Many online stores carry extensive lines of eco-friendly apparel. Veganessentials.com and Global Exchange's online store (www.gxonlinestore.org) are two sites with good selections. Another useful website, responsibleshopper.org, rates many well-known companies on both environmental and social issues. Unfortunately, it mostly rates larger corporations, so it won't direct you to smaller, independent companies.

If you're looking for information on smaller companies, there are a few good resources to point you in the direction of independent, sustainable, and socially conscious brands. Co-op America's “National Green Pages” (go to www.coopamerica.org and select “National Green Pages” from the “publications” menu) lists thousands of eco-friendly businesses and their products.

Another good site to check is www.sweatshopwatch.org. Clicking on the “Shop With a Conscience!” link on the left of the page gives you a list of clothing companies whose products are produced either by unionized workers or in co-ops.

Most of the brands you'll find on these pages are available online, but if, as a socially responsible consumer, you want to put your money into your local economy rather than shopping online, look for these brands in your local stores, or check out their websites for information on where they may be available in your area.

Andrew Lovejoy

Losing Power

I've been hearing for years that the appliances in our homes use small amounts of electricity while they're

not turned on. At first I didn't think that usage could be significant enough to do anything about. Now I am trying to be more conscious, not only of my money but also of the energy we use at home. Could you tell me if appliances do drain electricity when turned off, and what can be done about it?

Your question is more pertinent to the average American than most of us know, what with ubiquitous computers, cable boxes, answering machines, microwaves, and the like in our homes. The amount of electricity these appliances waste is not insignificant.

According to the California Energy Commission, home appliances that function in a standby mode, such as answering machines, cell and cordless phones, and electric razors, continue to draw energy after they're turned off. Of those appliances that deplete electricity without our knowledge, video products—cable boxes, satellite dishes, VCRs, etc.—are the biggest culprits, accounting for 35 percent of energy lost. Home audio equipment accounts for 25 percent and 10 percent is burned by communications devices. Amazingly, since most people only use their small audio systems for an hour a day, 93 percent of the units' total energy usage happens while they are ostensibly shut off, but continue to draw about 9 watts per hour.

In 1998, a Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory study showed that the average American household continually leaks about 50 watts of electricity. Eliminating that trickle, would save \$1 billion annually in wasted electricity.

The only fail-safe strategy to avoid leaking energy is to unplug your appliances or turn off the switch on the power strip. Energy-saving circuits that

have a hard-off switch can save 90 percent of the potentially lost electricity. Look for the EnergyStar label on products such as office equipment, light bulbs, dishwashers, and air conditioning units. This EPA-backed program's mission is to set a high standard on energy-saving appliances; TVs with the EnergyStar sticker can cut standby electricity losses by 75 percent.

By the way, the EPA has extended the label to cover new homes, commercial and industrial buildings to cut down on energy waste across the board. See www.energystar.gov.

Valerie Doyle

Send your questions to our YES! But How? researchers:

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Male Companion

The following is a singles ad that appeared in a local newspaper, according to internet reports:

SBF (single, black, female) seeks male companionship. Age and ethnicity unimportant. I'm a young, svelte, good-looking girl who LOVES to play. I love long walks in the woods, riding in your pickup truck, hunting/camping/fishing trips. I love cozy winter nights spent lying by the fire. Candlelight dinners will have me eating out of your hand. Rub me the right way and watch me respond. I'll be at the front door when you get home from work, wearing only what nature gave me. Kiss me and I'm yours. Call 555-2525 and ask for Daisy.

The phone number was that of the Humane Society, and Daisy was an eight-week-old black Labrador retriever. They received 643 calls in two days.



The Most Harmful Books in America

Looking for harmful books? The folks at www.humaneventsonline.com can help. They polled 15 conservative thinkers to identify the most dangerous books of the last 200 years. Marx, Hitler, and Mao—the obvious suspects—top the chart. But for harm you might have missed, check out:

The Kinsey Report

by Alfred Kinsey. The experts see through the jargon to find a book “designed to give a scientific gloss to the normalization of promiscuity and deviancy.”

Democracy and Education

by John Dewey. The title alone gives away the book that “helped nurture the Clinton generation.”

The Feminine Mystique

by Betty Friedan. Humaneventsonline bases its review on a review of a book about Friedan. Any closer, and they might have fallen under the spell of the Feminine Mystique.

General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money

by John Maynard Keynes. This economics classic gets the blame for FDR’s Depression-era spending, which is at fault for the size of today’s U.S. budget deficit—never mind tiny pre-Reagan deficits and the Clinton-era budget surplus.

No one should read these deviant books, but, just in case, the site helpfully has a link from each one directly to Amazon.com, for easy ordering.