

# TROUBADOUR

The Newsletter of St. Francis House, New London, Connecticut



Summer 2003

Vol. 5, No. 2

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## SIMPLICITY + COMMUNITY = WITNESS

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

I went to the "Word & World School" in Philadelphia in June to learn more about community from people who've been doing it much longer than we have – and I learned a lot! Catholic Workers from Hartford and Washington, Plowshares resisters from Jonah House in Baltimore, members of The Simple Way in Philadelphia, anarchist communards, Anabaptists from Australia, people from the Church of the Savior in DC, and many others – all had something to teach. They were willing to share their trials and failures as well as their successes, because all of it is part of what it means to be community. Not only practitioners, but historians of community had something to share. I took a course on Paul and early Christian communities with Kathy Grieb, of Virginia Theological Seminary, and learned about the way the first Christian dealt with difficult issues. I studied with my old friend Murphy Davis, from the Open Door Community in Atlanta, who gave us our soup pot when Anne and I moved to New London in 1999. I heard Bill Wylie-Kellermann talking about Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church movement during the *Hitlerzeit* in Germany. My new friend Anthony Dancer, of New Zealand, returned with me from Philadelphia to New London in order to make a pilgrimage to Block Island where William Stringfellow, American Episcopalian witness against Empire, lived and died and is buried.

"Word & World School" was created by Ched Myers and his friends in the radical discipleship movement to study four "streams" of witness that are pouring into our life today. They include the US Civil Rights movement, liberation theology and base communities in the Third World, the Confessing Church and nonviolent resistance movements, and the feminist, womanist, and gay/lesbian and other "sexual minority" movements. The Philadelphia School used Martin Luther King Jr's Riverside Church speech against the war in Vietnam as a lens through which to examine the "Balkanization" of what we used to call "the Movement" into single-issue and identity political action groups. King's focus on "racism, poverty, and militarism" as aspects of a single struggle helped us look at resistance movements from World War II to the war against Iraq, at racial justice struggles not just in terms of the US Civil Rights movement



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but of immigrant rights in 21<sup>st</sup> century America, and the new global corporate Empire. What the world-wide peace movement is doing, what we're attempting at St. Francis House, and what congregations and community organizations are doing in their regions, all draw on the same inspiration that Christians call "radical discipleship" – living a different life from the US corporate ideal. It's not about having a *theory of revolution* but about *living a transformed life* today and tomorrow. There are communities doing that around the world, and St. Francis House is learning from many of them.

### What is the learning?

There is a Zen saying, "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will appear." I believe St. Francis House is ready to move to the next step in our life as a community, and the teachers I met in at the "Word & World School" in Philadelphia certainly gave me a lot of encouragement.

Anne and I started St. Francis House because we were ready to begin living this different life. We had the examples of St. Francis and Dorothy Day and Gandhi to guide us. The Franciscan influence is hard to nail down because Francis himself was such a complete follower of Jesus that almost any Christian (and even those who are not Christian) can identify with him. But there is a particular simplicity to Francis that attracts us.

My friend Tom Carey, a First Order friar and fellow poet, was ordained to the priesthood recently. Brother Clark Berge, SSF, preached the ordination sermon and said this about vocation, "... *our vocation as Christians is the same, no matter what we do. We all have the same vocation which is to make Christ known throughout the world. We each have our particular way of doing that. Basically we do it by being ourselves. It is that simple and that hard.*"

I can't begin to tell you how hard it has been for me to learn that "being myself"



was okay, and was enough for God! I've learned more of that these past few years at St. Francis House than all the years before. Francis was about simplicity, which is not a complicated way of doing things but trusting God enough to rely on his promises and "be oneself." That's true of our community as well. We are not everybody's idea of a community. We are Christians, not Jews or Muslims or secular folk. We are unabashedly Christian. And that's okay.

We are not a "program," we try to serve others but we don't "deliver services" the way an agency does. All the work we've put into drafting and re-drafting the "constructive program" comes down to this: we are here to live simply in community, to pray and try to be hospitable and do justice and peace with our neighbors. That is our "witness," and that witness is, by intention at least, Franciscan.

The Catholic Worker influence has also shaped our life. Not only Dorothy Day's writings, her peace witness and Christian commitment, but the example of Peter Maurin has drawn us as well. Anne especially hears Peter's counsel about living simply on the land. Being close to the earth and the natural world has a powerful appeal. St. Francis House is probably best known in New London because of our Friday night meetings for clarification of thought. These regular gatherings have drawn an "extended community" of friends and benefactors to St. Francis House who have helped us shape the life we seek to live. Dorothy's peace witness is part of what has helped us respond to the Iraq invasion and the new US national security state mentality so quickly and completely.

So when I met Liz McAlister of Jonah House at the Philadelphia School in June it was like meeting an old friend. I went to Baltimore later in the month for an Episcopal Urban Caucus meeting and visited Liz and the Jonah House community. It is so clear to me now that *the way they live is their witness!* The community lives in a lovely house on the grounds of a cemetery and part of their ministry is to care for the cemetery and grow vegetables in their



garden on the grounds. I ate one of the simplest, but most delicious, meals of my life in their dining room, looking out over the island of green in the midst of the Baltimore ghetto. Simplicity is a far greater thing than "inexpensive," as my Franciscan and sometime Catholic Worker friend Terry Rogers says. There is a richness, a natural virtue, to living simply, eating simply, that invites us by its witness to *simply being*. I saw that at Jonah House, and felt their community's welcome.

So that is what I've learned. Expressed as an equation, it reads:

$$\text{Simplicity} + \text{Community} = \text{Witness}$$

The meal we shared is a witness. It was simple (and inexpensive) – homegrown greens in a salad, tuna salad and homemade bread, homemade jellies and jams, peanut butter, water to drink. The community made it, the community shared it, and in that shared meal they witnessed to the life I believe Jesus and Francis invite us to share.

Community life is always shared life. It's not only meals and shelter that we share. We share our very life, and life is better for everyone in the sharing. When Jesus told the rich young man to "go, sell all that you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me," Peter, already a follower, nervously reminded the Lord that "we have left everything, and followed you." Jesus replied: "*Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life*" (Mark 10:17-31). In community we seek to find our true self by sharing ourselves with others. The gift of community is more friends and family and nourishment and shelter and safety than we can possibly imagine, *with persecutions*, because the world does not want us to live this way, to enjoy such a wonderful life.



But God does, we believe, and that is why God has "*called us out of the darkness*" of self and alienation and possessions and fear, "*into the marvelous light*" (I Peter 2:9) of the Messiah's good news, the Reign of God, and the hard work of community. Now, at last, after the time of preparation and learning, we are ready, we believe, to begin to grow – *as community, in community.*

### What is to be done now?

We understand that simplicity is the content, community is the form, and witness is the end, goal, purpose and aim of our life. We are free now to live the life to which Christ is calling us. Now it is time to invite others to join us, to recruit new members of the St. Francis House community to share our life and work.

When Board member Bob Cosby saw the final version (TROUBADOUR Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 2003) of *The Constructive Program*, he said, "It's great, but can the two of you do all that?" The answer is, No, we can't, we need others to share the work as well as the life of St. Francis House.

My new understanding is that it is not only the work that will attract new members, it is the community life, its simplicity, its witness, that will draw others. So – *you're invited!* If you're tired of the maintenance mentality of institutional church "work," join us in doing the work of a disciple. If you know freedom is hard, but want to be free anyway, join us in a community of people who seek to share the freedom of the children of God.

On a Sunday in July, Tupper Morehead, MD, n/TSSF (see his article in this issue of TROUBADOUR) preached the sermon at St. James's Church, New London. He pointed out that he experienced in Haiti some years ago people who have few possessions to protect and who are therefore generous, free, able to respond to the needs of others and to Jesus' call to discipleship. This experience of the generosity of the poor led Tupper to Franciscan life and seminary at EDS and field placement this summer at





St. Francis House. The freedom of simplicity is hard to see, but when you see it, you want it more than any possession you may have.

Here is the St. Francis House recruitment poster: *Do you want to be free? Do you want to practice Biblical discipleship? Do you want a Jesus lifestyle?* Then join us at St. Francis House to pray, practice hospitality and work for peace and justice in the New London neighborhood where we live.

*Come to St. Francis House and learn to live in freedom under the Word of God. Experience liberating Bible study, Spirit-filled worship, loving relationships, creative work, joyful life, "free grace [and] undying love."*

In September there will be three apartments, as well as St. Francis House offices and meeting rooms, in the newly renovated house next door at 32 Broad St. Share expenses as well as joys, share meals and prayer and work. Come for a few months to try your vocation as a "radical disciple" of Jesus at St. Francis House.

Our preparation time is complete. Forty days in the desert of planning! Now it's time to recognize the Kingdom of God breaking in among us, "the dayspring from on high" (Luke 1:78). *Come and see!*



## SEMINARIAN IN RESIDENCE AT ST. FRANCIS HOUSE

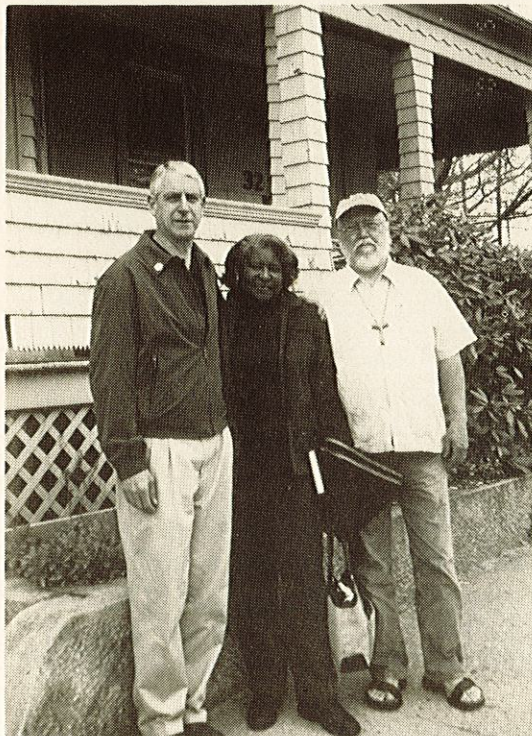
**Tupper Morehead, MD, n/TSSF**

I have a sense of joy about the approval of St. Francis House as a new field education site by the Episcopal Divinity School. I started at St. Francis House after Memorial Day, and will finish my field education unit in urban ministry in mid-August. As a novice in the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, as well as a candidate for a Master of Divinity degree, I feel that being at St. Francis House is a significant factor in my ministerial formation. I hope that with Emmett as my field education supervisor I will become better able to develop my personal approach to urban ministry modeled on Franciscan spiritual and theological foundations. My time at St. Francis House gives me an opportunity to observe and practice a ministry of hospitality in the setting of an intentional Christian community committed to the disciplines of prayer, study, and work.

After the first month, I have become familiar with the elements of "The Constructive Program," with the vision of St. Francis House as place of prayer, house of hospitality, and center for justice ministry. I've been developing community organizing skills with United Action, a faith-based ecumenical organization, as well as participating in ongoing peace efforts related to US military involvement in the Middle East. I attended United Action's "issues assembly," where 300 members chose the three issues around which they'll be organizing in the coming years: discrimination, housing, and tax fairness. I'm also participating in urban gardening initiatives in New London. All of this work can be related to the three aims of the Third Order: to make our Lord known and loved everywhere, to spread the spirit of love and harmony, and to live simply.

I am a 56 year-old seminarian. Prior to matriculating at EDS, my vocational ministry was as an obstetrician and

*Board Members Dick Marks and Annie Brown with Emmett Jarrett were part of the "sweat equity" team working on rehabbing the new house at the May Board Meeting.*



## My Carpentry Apprenticeship at St. Francis House

*by Kimberly Giunta*

My story begins, like many stories, before I was born. It begins with a man named Francis who walked the quiet earth called Maine and, like his father and mother before him, began to grow food for himself and his new wife. He had children and needed to grow more food, and soon bought a hilly nest of land tucked into a mountain and set to growing fields of corn and potatoes, squash and beans, cabbages and tomatoes. He raised chickens and tapped maple trees. Living in and among the creatures of those forests and lakes, he hunted and fished and grew almost all of his food. He knew every wildflower and snake within walking distance of his home. As his family expanded to include eight children, he worked in a mill that imported wood—rosewood, teak, and mahogany—to make kitchen tools such as rolling pins, wooden spoons, cutting boards, knife handles.

Each June, as my father and sister and I left the bustling pavement and treeless skyline of Boston behind us, we headed directly for this man, my grandfather, and his farm in the lakes region of Maine. We would stay through the summer, until we left in August, only to return at every long weekend and school vacation. I remember my grandfather's hands most vividly—they were copper-colored and seemed enormous, with broad palms and long, wide fingers. But I remember other things as well—he told me stories of my great grandparents and their parents. He took me to their graves. He brought me to see bear cubs rolling around and wrestling with each other near a

gynecologist in Tennessee. I am married to Sheila, a family nurse practitioner, and we have four children ranging in ages from 21 to 31 — two boys and two girls. One son is married and the other engaged. Our younger daughter is a junior in college, and the older one has just graduated from community college.

I have become aware that urban ministry is a "ministry of presence." This is the model on which St. Francis House carries out its work. To pretend that one is an urban minister while living in the suburbs raises questions about the authenticity and commitment of the minister. Much of my ministry involves sitting on the porch with Otis (a four-legged urban minister who lives at St. Francis House) and talking with the people who walk down Broad Street.

The ecumenical work of United Action has been enlightening and a source of hope. Through listening, observing, and participating in the interfaith issues assembly that brought 300 people from 15 congregations together, I have learned organizing skills that will be vital in whatever community God places me in the future.

It is a joy to be at St. Francis House, and I anticipate that my time here will further introduce me to the realities of urban issues related to homelessness, gentrification, violence, community organizing, welfare rights, environmental justice, education reform, and healthcare accessibility. Through its Christian ministry of hospitality, nonviolent resistance to injustice, ecumenical and interfaith cooperation, and solidarity with those whom society has abandoned, St. Francis House is a community of faith, hope, love, and peace. Please keep St. Francis House in your prayers. Pray also for me in my ministerial formation and discernment. God give you peace!





Continued....

prominent food source—the town dump. He taught me how to plant corn. I learned to walk quietly and softly behind him so that we could peek at white-spotted fawns nestled in the grass while their mothers grazed farther away in the fields. I helped him boil the sugary water from maple trees into a thick sweet syrup. He showed me tiny, lacy white flowers growing at the base of immense pine trees.

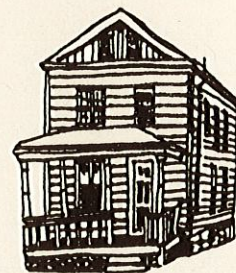
And so, in my mid-twenties, as I sat at a desk at a wildlife refuge working behind a computer something seemed terribly wrong. The computer screen and keyboard consumed me for hours every day. I was solidly separated from the land and the animals on it. I felt disconnected from myself and the people around me. This was not the work I wanted. I wanted to stand up and move around. I wanted to work with my hands. I wanted to work with people and within my community. And I wanted my efforts to yield a more beautiful and peaceful world. So I made a decision to change my path. I became a massage therapist. I moved to New London. And after a Peace & Justice meeting, Emmett encouraged me to pick up the most recent issue of *Troubadour* which is where I found Arthur Lerner's article *The Construction Program* and one of his wishes—"Wanted: Apprentice Carpenter, young(at heart), to make significant contribution to St. Francis House while learning basic carpentry." Well, that's me!

Arthur taught me a whole new vocabulary—full of joists and pennyweights. He is a very patient and kind teacher. So far, I've learned how to use 2 different types of electric saws. My hammering and drilling technique



improves every day. I learned the difference between eight penny and sixteen penny nails. Mostly, Arthur and I have worked together on projects. I've helped frame a kitchen ceiling in the second floor apartment, patched framing and surfacing for a small section of floor, de-nailed what seemed like a whole lot of trim, primed and painted a bedroom, cut through and ripped down a wall to make a doorway, worked with a group from Alternative Incarceration Center to clear the Cottage Street lot, and created several raised beds. But mostly I hope that I've furthered the spirit of my grandfather Francis and the Saint that he was named for. I've done my best to notice and nurture the ground I walk on and the community I live in. And, I've used my hands to do it.

I give my deepest appreciation to those that have gone before me.



#### Fall Meetings for Clarification of Thought

Reflections on the theme of resistance and solidarity in communities of transformation.

September 12  
September 26  
October 10  
October 24

November 7  
November 21  
December 5  
December 19

Friday evenings at 5:30 for Evening Prayer & Bible Study, supper at 6 p.m., followed by conversation from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Childcare provided.



# THE URBAN NETWORKER

Summer 2003

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## General Convention Special Issue

### BISHOP PAUL MOORE JR A Committed Life (1919-2003)

Br. John George Robertson, SSF

The son of a wealthy New York/New Jersey banking family, Paul Moore Jr. returned a Marine hero from World War II where he was wounded leading his company at Guadalcanal. His war experiences led him to ordained ministry. At General Seminary, in the excitement of the post-War explosion, he was inspired by the example of French worker-priests ministering in the poorest parts of the country. Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker commitment to peace and justice were also a great influence. During his seminary days, Paul visited Little Portion Friary and began a life-long association with the Anglican Franciscan movement.

After seminary, Paul decided to put his discipleship into practice by developing an urban ministry team at the failing Grace Church, Van Vorst, in Jersey City. By doing street ministry and maintaining an open door rectory the team built a new community at Grace Church. Grace became a center for open housing struggles in Jersey City with Paul and others leading marches through the city. His wife Jenny wrote a book, *The People on Second Street*, about their life and work in Jersey City.

After a time as Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis, he was elected Suffragan Bishop of Washington, where he became a leader in the Civil Rights

Movement and walked the streets of the city following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968. He became Bishop of New York in 1972. A leader in the peace movement, he was gassed in Saigon on a mission there. He also took risks in support of the women's movement in the Church and struggles for the rights of gay and lesbian people.

He went to jail, he preached everywhere, he marched, he spoke, he wrote, he prayed. He wrote two books about his ministry, *Take a Bishop like Me* and *Presences: A Bishop's Life in the City*. In 1980 he was a founding member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, and led the assembled Episcopalians on a picket line. He said over and over that the Church should not become a "donut," with lots of activity in the community and the world but an empty hole where the worshiping and witnessing community of believers was meant to be. He embraced in his life the vocation St. Francis received from Christ to "rebuild my church."

In his last few months of life Paul spoke every time he had a chance, always on the mystery of the Word becoming flesh. His last major speech was at the Episcopal Urban Caucus assembly in Chicago. He said that the enfleshment of Christ would lead us to a new understanding of what it means to be human, since all that we are is made holy in the taking of our flesh by Jesus.

Paul telephoned in October to tell me he was dying. He was very comfortable with this next step in his life in Christ. I had not seen him since the summer and was uncertain about his condition. In November I walked over to a peace demonstration in a



park in front of the UN. As I walked over I saw all the usual suspects standing again for peace at a time when it had become unpopular again. Over the loudspeaker I heard a familiar voice. Paul was reading a list of names of children who had died as a result of the UN sanctions against Iraq. A life well lived is always ready for death. Francis taught us that in his meditation on the skull. If this were our last day, what would we want to do? Bishop Paul Moore Jr. was there preaching and living the gospel justice of Christ to the day he was carried off. *May he rest in peace and rise in glory!*

Brother John George wrote this article for *The Little Chronicle*, the newsletter of the Society of St. Francis. He is a friend of Bishop Moore and of the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

### WHAT IS THE EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS?

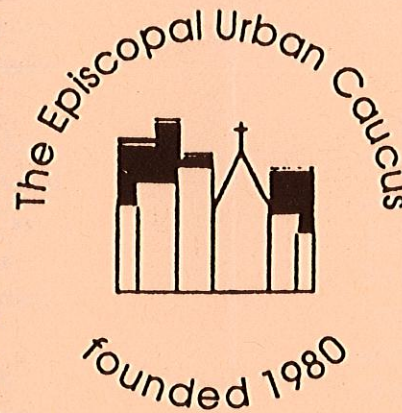
The Episcopal Urban Caucus was founded in 1980 in Indianapolis, when more than 500 Episcopalians gathered in response to the call of the Urban Bishops Coalition and the Church and City Conference. The energy generated by a series of urban hearings in 1977 was documented in *To Hear and to Heed*, edited by **Joseph Pelham**, which called on the Church to "stay in the city," and provide leadership in church and society. The issues in 1980 were identified as the arms race, energy, economic justice, and parish revitalization. **Lloyd Casson** was elected the first President and the Caucus was administered from his office in the Diocese of Washington.

Our first experience as a "caucus" of Christians within the Episcopal Church seeking to influence the direction of the larger body was at the General Convention of 1982, when a ministry *with* the poor and oppressed in America's cities was established and called **Jubilee Ministry**. With the support of the Caucus this ministry has grown to be the largest and most effective ministry of service and advocacy, outreach and evangelism in the Episcopal Church. The Caucus also published its first book, *Countdown to Disaster*, by **William Rankin** and *To Build the City: Too Long a Dream*, by **Bill Yon**.

A watershed was reached when we chose not to hire an Executive Director and become a traditionally staffed organization. **Byron Rushing** became president and the leadership of the Caucus shifted to Boston. **Ed Rodman**, the canon missionary of the Diocese of Massachusetts became national coordinator, and **Annmarie Marvel** became Caucus administrator. Other Caucus presidents include **Bishop Mellick Belshaw** of New Jersey, **Diane Pollard** of New York, **Emmett Jarrett**, then in Atlanta, **Bishop Barbara Harris** of Massachusetts, **Clara Gillies** of Buffalo, and our current president **R. P. M. Bowden** of Atlanta.

Over the years the Caucus has supported worthy urban mission programs continued the annual national Assembly as a forum for participation by clergy and lay urban ministers across the country. We have been a focus for interaction between Church policy makers and urban ministry practitioners. The EUC is a founding member of **The Consultation**, a coalition of progressive Episcopal groups which seek to influence General Convention decisions. We have sought to monitor policies and programs at the national Church level which effect urban ministry, particularly **economic justice** and the **Washington Office**. We supported the creation of a "ministry of economic justice" at the 1988 General Convention in Detroit, known as the **Michigan Plan**, and the **Episcopal Network for Economic Justice**, its successor, continues to meet annually in conjunction with the EUC national assembly. The **Episcopal Peace Fellowship** also participates in our assembly, hosting a luncheon each year to highlight peace action.

Perhaps the most important ministry of the Episcopal Urban Caucus has been to articulate a vision of *a Church without racism, a Church for all races*. At the 1991 General Convention we persuaded the Church to adopt a nine-year program of anti-racism training, which was renewed for another nine years in 2000. We published *To Heal the Sin-Sick Soul*, a book on anti-racist spirituality and ministry, which is still in use in dioceses that continue anti-racism work. The Caucus encourages the continued



use of the **Martin Luther King Day national dialogue** method of anti-racism training, which was developed under our auspices.

In 1999 the headquarters of the Caucus was moved to **St. Francis House**, a community of prayer, hospitality, peace and urban ministry in New London, CT. **Emmett Jarrett** and **Anne Scheibner**, of St. Francis House, became national coordinators. The move of our headquarters from a diocesan office to a local ministry was intentional. As national entities in both church and society become less and less effective and the globalization of the economy impacts more and more directly on local communities, the EUC is well placed to understand, effect and seek to transform and network with local communities from such a base.

To this end, the 2001 assembly in **New London** focused on globalization and the new urban paradigm. Our meeting in **Los Angeles** in 2002 experienced multicultural ministry in that city, and in **Chicago** this year we looked at the mission of the Church in the new millennium. Next year's assembly will be in **Baltimore**, February 18-21, 2004. The youth presence that has been growing at our assemblies for many years will be front and center next February, with two youth members of the Caucus Board helping plan the assembly.

The Caucus continues to be a **caucus** – seeking to influence the direction and purpose of the Church at large. We are still a place where intellectual reflection on the issues of the day in light of the Gospel and practical planning for radical discipleship take place. And we are more and more a **network** of urban ministers who encourage and support one another at our annual meetings and in between.

**You are invited to join us** – membership information is available in this issue of our quarterly newsletter, *The Urban Networker* – and to participate in the Baltimore assembly next year. Caucus thinking is both realistic and hopeful. We are not easily fooled by the obfuscation of the powers that be, in Church or society, but we know that hope is a decision, and we live in hope for the promised Reign of God.

### URBAN MINISTRY COURSE OFFERED IN NEW LONDON

An **Urban Ministry Course** on the Sheffield model will be offered during the academic year 2003-2004 at St. Francis House in New London, CT, by the Episcopal Urban Caucus and the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice. The course will be taught by **Geoff Curtiss**, of Hoboken, NJ, the president of ENEJ, who has many years' experience with the Sheffield, England, course model. It is designed for people who have local ministry settings and want to dig deeper into their context and their theological underpinnings.

There will be ten days of overnight residential class work spread over the academic year in two day segments on Mondays and Tuesdays. The Course will help participants know their local ministry settings by undertaking contextual and situational analysis, by exploring the nature of community ministry, by engaging in theological reflection on both ministry and context, as well as biblical paradigms for new ways of thinking and acting that will bring local people together for witness and action and define projects for the formation of discipleship groups.

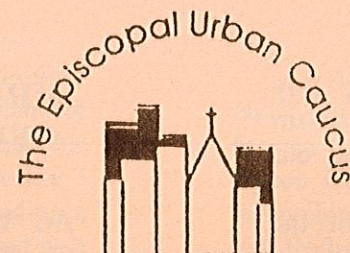
**Cost of the course** is \$500 and includes tuition, books, resource materials, meals, etc. Inexpensive local housing is available. A maximum of 12 participants can be accepted. For more information contact Geoff Curtiss directly by email at [gcurtiss@allsaintshoboken.com](mailto:gcurtiss@allsaintshoboken.com).



**TO HEAL THE SIN-SICK SOUL**  
Third Printing on sale at Convention or from EUC national office \$15 a copy.



# EUC PURPOSE STATEMENT



**The purpose  
of the Episcopal Urban Caucus  
is to be an instrument of the  
Gospel  
exercising radical discipleship  
in Church and society  
to hold the feet of the Episcopal  
Church  
to the fire of social justice.**

This statement of purpose was adopted unanimously by the 23<sup>rd</sup> assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus meeting in Chicago on March 1, 2003. It represents our commitment to provide leadership to the Church and in US society for racial justice, social change, economic justice, international peace and cooperation among peoples in the light of the Gospel. Join us and be on the cutting edge of urban mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*"Seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your peace."*

*Jeremiah 29:7*

## Join the Episcopal Urban Caucus Today!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Office) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose \$40 as dues for the year 2003-2004. This entitles me to membership at the 24<sup>th</sup> national assembly in Baltimore, February 18-21, 2004. Please put me on the mailing list for the Urban Networker and news of the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**24<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY – BALTIMORE**

**FEBRUARY 18-21, 2004**

### The Caucus Board

#### Officers

<b>President</b>	R. P. M. Bowden, Atlanta
<b>Vice President</b>	Robert Graham, Washington
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Constance Morehead	Olympia

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Nell B. Gibson	New York
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Butch Gamarra	Los Angeles
Jane Gould	Massachusetts
Terrence Taylor	Southeast Florida
Angela Moscoso	Delaware

#### Consultants

Barbara C. Harris	Edward Rodman
Bert Jones	Byron Rushing

#### Coordinators

Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, and Anne Scheibner  
EUC, PO Box 2247, New London, CT 06320  
Phone 860 437-8890 Email  
stfrancishouse@mindspring.com

## IN CONVERSATION WITH CHUCK MATTHEI

**Note:** This is the third of four parts of the tape we made on February 1, 2002 when Chuck was leadoff speaker for our Clarification of Thought series "Living in Community." He died the following October. *Troubadour* issues Winter 2002 and Spring 2003 include reflections on how and why to opt for living in community and stories from his Catholic Worker experience at the farm in upstate New York

.....I always thought it was quite a striking achievement that Dorothy (Day) died in her own bed, in her own community and it wasn't substantially different in character or charism almost 50 years after the founding than it had been at the beginning. That's quite an achievement. Very few of the saints can claim to have lasted that long. (*shared chuckle*) The Franciscans are certainly a far cry from what Francis was. The Catholic Worker still to a large degree maintains its character - for the better, for the most part and also, to a degree, for worse. (*chuckle*)

There have been a couple of Catholic Worker farms before the one in Tivoli. The first farm attached to the New York Catholic Worker was in Easton, Pennsylvania. They bought the farm, I think around 1936 - 2 or 3 years into the life of the Catholic Worker. The Catholic Worker was definitely established by urbanites. But Peter's theory (Peter Maurin - co-founder with Dorothy Day of the CW movement) included the grandiosely named "agronomic universities." Anyway, Peter kept talking about farming and farming communes and that didn't mean much to Dorothy who wasn't a farmer and had no particular inclination to become one! But Peter kept talking about it so they thought about it and the opportunity came along and for a very modest sum



they bought this farm. Then, of course, the question was what are we going to do with it?

For many years, the principal farmer was John Hildegard. Farmer John came from a farm family in Vermont and had been a merchant seaman. In 1936 the seamen went on strike and the Catholic Worker set up a second soup line on the docks. They were feeding several thousand striking workers a day. John was temporarily unemployed by the strike and he'd been feeding off the soup line on the docks. One day he and some friends, some other sailors, decided to go to the home base for the folks who brought all this soup to the docks and find out where all the soup was coming from. So they went up to visit the Catholic Worker headquarters and the editorial offices.

Nobody knows whether this is true, but what John always said is that he got drunk a day or two later and came back. They had just acquired this farm and someone found out that he'd grown up on a farm. So he always told visitors that Dorothy having discovered that he was by birthright a farmer got him drunk and the next thing he knew he woke up at the farm and he never left. (*laughter*) Now whether that is true or not, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't put it past her. (*more laughter*) But anyhow, John ended up at the farm and spent the next 40 some years there as the principal farmer. So they had the farm at Easton.

They left Easton because one family who had come to reside there came more and more to act as though it were their personal property. Now this was a property acquired by the Catholic Worker which was a Catholic Worker community. People came from all different circumstances and they lived



together there and they grew food there for themselves and for the city and they had their discussion groups and provided hospitality and whatever.

Catholic Worker farms have always been more houses of hospitality than serious farming enterprises. But things were being grown there. Anyway, a couple of families but one in particular got themselves rooted in there and in spite of the fact that they had no more claim to this place than anyone else, they began to act as if it were theirs and they became progressively more inhospitable. And ultimately they wouldn't leave and people didn't like the character that they had brought to the place and so the Catholic Worker walked.

Dorothy never yielded the title, but they left the place and got another farm. It was either call the police and have these people evicted which they weren't willing to do or let this private, inhospitable spirit prevail which they weren't willing to do or leave and start over. So they started over.

And I remember one day in the 1970's when Dorothy said to me, "Do you know what happened yesterday?" She said, "I got a call from an attorney. The last member of that family left that old property in Easton and it's still in my name. And it's coming back to us." (*responsive "wow"*) They had kind of run their course there. Functionally, they'd treated it as their own, but they'd run their course and it came back. I don't know what happened after that, but the Worker went from there to Newburgh to Staten Island to Tivoli to Marlborough. So the farm continues.

The number of people who knew something about farming varied greatly from time to time. It was not a stable cast of characters. There were people at

the farm for many, many years like John who literally spent the bulk of his life there. Stanley Vishnewski who would tell people he'd come to the Catholic Worker at age 16 and hadn't decided whether to stay yet. Even at 65 he would tell you he wasn't sure. For all I know he may not have been sure and just wanted to keep his options open. But he wasn't about to leave. So there were people who came for many years and there were people who came for a day, a week, a month or a year. Dorothy used to say, "The Catholic Worker is a school" by which she recognized that most people would come and go.

And that was a decision. If you want to join a Catholic order, there's a formal process of preparation, reflection, training and commitment. It doesn't mean that they'll stay either as we've found out and many of them left. But relatively speaking there's a kind of preparation and a stability of commitment, a constancy that you can count on or build upon.

The Catholic Worker never had a formation process, it never had a formal membership, no commitment was required, no vows were taken and therefore no expectations were applicable and so while some people made commitments that were every bit as deep and lasting as any priest or nun ever made, others would come and go. And Dorothy always saw one of the functions of the Worker as being an experience in life, a time in life that would help to shape people as they went into other places and other circumstances.

One thing I really appreciated about Dorothy was her sense that there are many vocations and her respect for those different vocations. She understood family life to be a vocation.



## MOURN, THEN ORGANIZE: Resisting the Hijackings of 9-11

by Chris Nelson

Engine House 33, Ladder Company 9, was the first to respond at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, after the first plane struck. Firefighters gathered in the lobby, which became an impromptu command center as their leaders struggled to come up with a plan for attacking a fire that, even before it was recognized as a deliberate attack, was uniquely serious – a fire three-quarters of the way up in the city's tallest building.

As the firefighters awaited instructions they began to hear thuds outside. A documentary film made by two Frenchmen who were following a rookie for a film about joining the FDNY records the firefighters wincing with each thud. They recognized them as the sounds of bodies hitting the pavement, as people trapped in the stories above chose to leap to their death rather than suffer immolation.

The New York Fire Department is the nation's oldest and it prides itself on being the most aggressive. Leaping deaths are not just tragic in the manner of any untimely death; they are an affront to the history of the department because they indicate that someone in a fire was alive, unhurt and fully conscious, and abandoned hope before the firefighters could reach them.

Given the high number of casualties suffered by the department on that day, the full details of whatever plan was hatched will probably never be known. But it does seem clear that a number of firefighters, unwilling to stand in the lobby and listen to the sound of bodies dropping, simply started climbing up the stairs towards the fire. A photograph taken by a civilian survivor in the stairwell shows a lone firefighter, visibly exhausted and burdened with gear, trudging upstairs past an orderly line of civilians heading down. Last radio contacts with some of the deceased firefighters indicated that they disobeyed explicit orders not to venture higher than a specific floor.

Is it the only vocation? No, it is not. Is it a good vocation? Yes, it is. It has its own unique set of opportunities and responsibilities.

I was telling someone the other day about a remarkable priest that I met in Kenya who had run afoul of the Vatican during his work in Italy and was in a sort of exile and had become the pastor of the second largest squatter settlement in Nairobi. Well, he got there and to make a long story short, he sold the car and opened the doors of the school and increased the number of students from 500 to 8000. Then he left the rectory, this nice modern house on the edge of an appalling slum and he moved into a single mud room in the poorest part of the settlement.

So I was going with him down to his mud hut with my Kenyan attorney friend who was leaning over my shoulder and saying, "Stay on his heel; I don't care if you step on him. This place is dangerous for Kenyans and the rest of you are going to get killed."

At one point my Kenyan friend turned to this Italian priest living in the midst of one of the toughest situations you could imagine and said, "You're going to get murdered one of these days down here." And Alex turned to him and said, "Why do you think it is that priests are single? We are expendable." And I really appreciated that because I thought, "In this narcissistic society of which we are a part, we're treated to these endless, useless discussions about celibacy as an issue of morality. Celibacy is an issue of freedom."





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The firefighters have been universally hailed as heroes, yet little attention has been paid to the nature of their heroism or of the conditions that produced it. New York's firefighters work in an environment that is increasingly rare – unionized, localized and traditional. The centerpiece of Washington's effort to bolster domestic security in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup> was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security – a new centralized bureaucracy whose employees, after the tepid and inarticulate resistance of the Democrats was overcome, will not have the right to bargain collectively.

Few commentators noted the irony that the new Department would be structured in a way that is diametrically opposed to the FDNY's organization. A few defenders of the right to unionize protested that the firefighters were courageous even though they were unionized. After all, it is not as if they checked their contract or consulted their union steward before charging up the stairwells!

Such an argument misses the point. The firefighters performed so well, particularly in comparison with some of the other key responders to 9-11, namely the baggage screeners (non-union) and the FBI (a cumbersome bureaucracy) not despite their unionized and localized work environment but because of it.

New York City firefighting jobs are highly coveted (as the struggles of women and people of color to win entry to the department attest) in part because they are relatively well-paid – pay and benefits that were won only after a long struggle with the City, which included the defeat of a

company union created by the City. Turnover among firefighters is very low, in sharp contrast to the low-paid baggage screeners. The workplace, in contrast to many government bureaucracies, is very localized, centered around a neighborhood firehouse with a crew of approximately 40 firefighters. Each firehouse has its own traditions, which include custom logos painted on each of its trucks. One engine company in the South Bronx, in a neighborhood that suffered decline and widespread arson after Robert Moses bisected it with the Cross Bronx Expressway, features a drawing of a nun smoking a cigar. Underneath it says, "Nun Tougher."

It is arguably the combination of these factors – unionization, localization, and tradition – that produced the type of pride and solidarity that leads to the acts of heroism displayed on 9-11. Perhaps the firefighters charged up the stairwells of the WTC because they did not want to let down those who went before them. That the same politicians who hailed the firefighters as heroes then went about creating a Department tailored to stifle the very conditions that contributed to that heroism suggests that Washington is in the hands of ideologues who exploit every crisis as an opportunity to privatize, centralize, and de-unionize.

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Those who are dissatisfied with Washington's response might do well to look to the firefighters as a truer way of attaining genuine security. One of the most fascinating documents to emerge out of 9-11 can be found at the Unofficial Web Page of the New York Fire Department



([www.NYFD.com/tradition.html](http://www.NYFD.com/tradition.html)). In an essay entitled "Tradition," the webmaster considers the 9-11 attacks:

Every tragedy for some reason, like the fire triangle, has three elements to it. If at any time you can identify two of the elements of an imminent disaster about to happen, do everything possible to eliminate at least one of the two before the third one comes in.... We must all ask ourselves what were the three key elements that led to this disaster and horrendous loss of life. Was it a breakdown in our intelligence community? What caused the catastrophic structural failure of the building? Should civilians and the fire department have more say in the building codes?

These questions are fascinating, in part because they are so different from the questions Washington started asking after 9-11, which went along the lines of "Whom should we invade first?" Extending the metaphor of the fire triangle yields a whole new model for protecting ourselves from terrorism. Rather than fight a succession of wars abroad in a futile effort to hunt down every last terrorist, perhaps we should focus on the pods of the terrorist triangle that are in our own backyard, especially our explicit policy of monopolizing global power and the doctrine of preemptive war that this policy entails.

To suggest that civilians and the fire department have more say in the building codes is in part to say that we should not build structures like the WTC, erected under the auspices of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and a monument to the coalescence of corporate and political power which is the hallmark of our age. New York City's building code was relaxed in 1968, a few years before construction

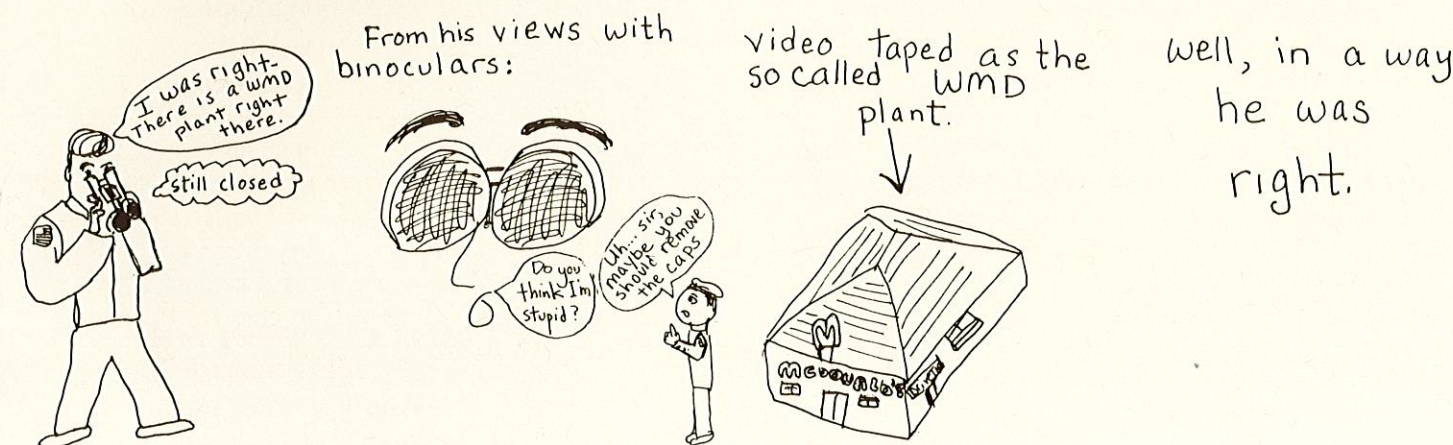
began, to allow the use of a spray-on fire retardant rather than traditional cement. It was the failure of this retardant that caused the steel to melt and the towers to collapse. The fire department expressed reservations at the time of the towers' construction both about the efficacy of the new retardant and about corners being cut in its application.

More civilian input would mean that our skyline would reflect, not simply the quest to maximize profits by building as big as possible as cheaply as possible, but a broader array of concerns, including safety, and perhaps human-scale aesthetics. We would see fewer buildings that produced the seemingly impossible effect achieved by the WTC, that of being both mind-numbingly ugly to those who live with them every day and insanely provocative to those who wish us harm.

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The tragedy of 9-11 has been turned, with deft swiftness by the Bush Administration, into a pretext for launching an agenda, large chunks of which, such as the Patriot Act and the neo-conservative dream of overthrowing Saddam Hussein, were actually drafted years before the WTC fell. We are told that these sacrifices, which entail Washington's further monopolization of both domestic and global power, are necessary because now we are at war. The example of the firefighters who were the first to respond to 9-11 suggests an alternate response. The just sharing of power – in the workplace, in the nation, and among nations – is not a peacetime luxury; it is the bedrock of any true security.

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## Fireflies in Winter: Imagine Peace

Think of a baby, sucking at his mother's breast,  
her eyes, half-closed, brimful with satisfaction.  
Or the urgent yearning of a boy to discover,  
touching the body of a girl, an answer.

Imagine a man at work in the heat of day:  
he digs the ground where the vine is planted,  
prunes  
the bare brown arms that reach into the arbor.  
See him stretched out under the fig tree, tasting  
its fruit.

Think of a woman walking through her garden:  
she stoops to pinch the suckers from tomatoes,  
pick blueberries, gather an apron full of peas.

Imagine an old man and woman, in front  
of the fire on a winter night. They look out  
at the cemetery: the moon shimmers  
on the ancient snow. Headstones peep out  
from the white carpet like houses on a village  
street  
lit from behind by fireflies.

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