



a matter of spirit

This issue: Culture of Fear

No. 71 Summer 2006



Sarah Putnam

Frances Moore Lappé is the author or co-author of 15 books, including *Diet for a Small Planet*; winner of the 1987 Right Livelihood Award; and co-founder/director of the Small Planet Institute.

Walking With One's Fear: Frances Moore Lappé

Edited by Wendy L. Call

You write about fear of conflict keeping good people silent, blocking us from full participation in real democracy. What kind of support do people need to prevent fear from trapping them?

I want to challenge the idea that fear is something we must overcome. We can't get *past* fear. I understand that fear is going to accompany me when I take risks. I try to ask myself: *How do I walk taller with my fear? How do I see it as a teacher and learn from it?*

Fear of conflict is fundamentally a fear of embarrassment. We fear not only losing in the conflict, but not knowing how to handle ourselves *during* the conflict. Little in our culture prepares us for creative conflict. We must acknowledge that we're deeply social creatures. Knowing that we will trigger people's judgment makes us fearful. That's the human condition.

All of the groups we're part of—whether an organization like IPJC or one's own family—can help us face our fears. If we can talk about fear, we can give ourselves the tools we need to address that

fear. The most effective organizations I know of prepare for public events at which conflict might erupt. They think through possible reactions ahead of time and often rehearse.

In this historical moment, government and media fear-mongering are of great concern. What is the antidote to the current culture of fear?

I recently learned a term that identifies something very real in our society: *fear entrepreneurs*. The work of these fear entrepreneurs is absolutely everywhere, whether it's engendering a fear of wrinkles, or terrorists, or avian flu.

There is only one antidote to fear, and that is being clear on one's own personal mission. Without our focus on what we are called to do, we are completely permeable to all of fear's slings and arrows.

Our materialist culture promotes the idea that the best we can do in society

is vote and shop. Our faith communities remind us—*no, human beings are so much more complex*

than that. They encourage people to look inside themselves to find their unique gifts. With a laser focus on how to express those gifts, fear recedes to the background.

What are the essential ingredients to building communities of hope?

At the end of our book *You Have the Power*, we present the idea of Courage Circles—gatherings that build on the strength of coming together. Courage Circles allow people to focus on their gifts,



on what we can do *right now*, allowing us to reconnect to our own power.

In writing *Hope's Edge*, *You Have the Power*, and *Democracy's Edge*, I've learned that the true crises affecting us are fear and the feeling of powerlessness. Fear is not a barrier, but simply *information*, and it's information that we use in creating power.

Power is something that we create together, not simply something that we oppose. We need to get away from the idea that all power is bad, just as we need to

There is only one antidote to fear, and that is being clear on one's own personal mission.

Fear is: False Expectations About Reality

get away from the idea that all fear is bad. We need to equate power with democracy.

How can we help people take the risk of becoming part of community?

I co-wrote a workbook in the early 1990s called *The Quickening of America*. We asked readers, *What are the things that you care most about? Which of those things can you do on your own? Which things can you only achieve working with other people?*

This series of exercises helped people see how much needs to be done in community, and to realize what is possible only as we work together. As they dialogue together, people's ideas about their own deepest interests change. We are stronger together. We must constantly seek others—even if it is one buddy—who will stand with us, encouraging us to walk with our fear.

You write in You Have the Power, “Staying with the questions, staying with my curiosity, has thrown me into the void, and from there new life has emerged

over and over again.” When you find yourself in that void, what do you do?

We think of the void as empty, but it is full of possibility, like the dark matter in the universe. Outer space seems empty, but we're learning that dark matter is *full* of energy.

Having gone through many periods of walking into the void, I've come to understand that the void is our own invention. We think to ourselves, “Yesterday I had this project, or deadline, or goal, and today I don't.” We see things as empty, but they are merely in flux. I must remind myself constantly that there is no emptiness or void.

say to myself, *keep walking*. When my daughter and I traveled around the world gathering the stories for *Hope's Edge*, we found that theme echoed again and again. People used the metaphor of *walking over and over*. If we just keep trusting, we will be protected. Stay in motion, but take the time, too, to sit and listen to the inner questions.

What suggestions do you have for facing the fears in other people?

We must ask of people who are feeling fearful, with whom we seem to be in conflict: *What is the question behind the question? What is the fear behind the fear?* Then we can all address the

We must constantly seek others who will stand with us, encouraging us to walk with our fear.

In those periods of unknowing, when you move from fixed to fluid, there are new opportunities and encounters. You can be more open because your attention is not fixed on that particular deadline, or job, or goal. Let go of the idea of emptiness.

question, *What is our common ground?*

It all comes back to careful listening, to asking ourselves again and again: *Is there anything here that we share?* We are all here in relationship. We can face the fear and defensiveness by listening, by going deep enough, by asking questions. We can find the common element.

And there is a *lot* of common ground. Many surveys show overwhelming agreement on labor rights, the environment and other issues that I care very much about. If we can find the venues where people feel able to agree, we can align ourselves with others. ~



Gene Kaiser

Six years ago I was in my own dark night of the soul. In spite of fear and self-doubt, I was able to

Casting Out Fear: Another Take on Pentecost

Gretchen Gundrum, Ph.D.

It's not hard to understand why the apostles and disciples locked themselves in the upper room after the death of Jesus: Fear of the authorities. They had been traumatized by the death of Jesus, their beloved friend and teacher, the Son of God. In modern terms, think of PTSD—post-traumatic stress disorder—flashbacks, insomnia, night sweats, heart palpitations, nausea, gut-wrenching fear. By mere association with the rabble-rousing Jesus, the political enemy of the state, the “one man who died for the good of the people,” they were at risk for their own lives. Better to hunker down, not make waves. Perhaps more than in fear for their own lives, they were also in deep grief.

Imagine their conversations and remembrances of his life and his death. Then they experienced his post-resurrection visits. “Peace be with you,” he said. Finally he was taken up, away from them again, and yet, promised to be with them always. *Always* and *all ways*. They let that sink in. They stayed together and prayed, reflecting on all he had said and done. Then a radical shift of grace happened. Their hearts and minds were opened. The fire of the Spirit took hold of them. Empowered with courage—the love that casts out fear—they were able to go out and teach in like manner. Ablaze with the passion of Jesus, they could speak in his name, using a language of the heart and mind that all could understand.

From the confines of walls of

the city of Jerusalem, God's Spirit propelled them out. The message of liberation that Jesus brought was for all people. No one was to be excluded. And perhaps surprising even themselves, they were able to speak truth to power. Such communication meant discerning when to speak and when to keep silent, just as their Lord had done. Not even the prospect of imprisonment, stoning, and their own crucifixions could keep them from witnessing to the truth of Jesus. What a transformation!

Perhaps the energy and going out of that Pentecost was much like the power of the recent immigration rallies that captivated our nation. Thousands marching peacefully, yet *con gusto*, speaking their own truth to power as they walked for justice.

Theologian Walter Wink challenges us, in a contemporary *Imitatio Christi*, to confront the powers of domination at work in our world today. These exist in all systems—government, education, the military establishment, business, health care, and yes, even our churches. Whenever these powerful systems forget the importance of justice and inclusion, it is our task to be their consciences. Systems are made up of human beings, and as such, can be both fallen and redeemed. They are certainly *redeemable*, but not without our effort, not without

our speaking up and acting with courage. Power and privilege can corrode hearts, lulling those who enjoy them into a sense of entitlement. Fear may keep us silent—fear of criticism, fear of loss of influence, fear of rejection, fear of *whatever*. Spending time with the Jesus revealed in the Gospels, letting his message of service and justice to the poor reverberate in our

hearts and souls, is the way we will be empowered with gifts of the Spirit to speak and act.

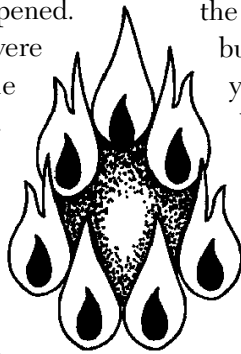
The Paschal Mystery, as Ron Rolheiser reminds us in *The Holy Longing*, is about death and resurrection. Jesus reflected on the importance of dying in order to achieve new life—the seed must fall and die before we can bring forth fruit; we have to die to egocentric egos in order to live in the life of God; he, though God, emptied himself for us. All losses are deaths, and all deaths, ultimately lead to resurrections. We have that promise. And that, in itself, should be enough to propel us into the courage and witness of our own Pentecost.

Where am I being called in my life, and times, and circumstances, to witness for justice, to speak truth to power, to move from impasse to action? In order to answer that question, we need to spend time in our own upper room, praying and reflecting in community, drawing from the strength and grace of the Spirit to know how and when to speak. Peace be to all of us—struggling, and discerning, and willing. Amen. ~



Gretchen Gundrum is a psychologist and spiritual director in Seattle who hopes for a new Pentecost in the Church.

Empowered with courage—the love that casts out fear—they were able to go out and teach in like manner.





Daniel Liechty is associate professor of social work and a member of the graduate faculty at Illinois State University.

The Social Psychology of Fear

Daniel Liechty

We speak of fear negatively, as something to be avoided. Yet we easily find examples when fear is encouraged and willfully sought: horror films and thrill rides illustrate our ambiguous relationship to fear. *Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. A deeply ambiguous relationship to fear is rooted in our very human nature. Fear is essential to the survival of all higher species: the tense and adrenalin-soaked state of freeze/fight/flight. But human beings have an added difficulty, which is the root of our ambiguity. Hence, it is important to understand not only what we share with other animal species, but also how we differ psychologically from other species.

Ernest Becker's Social Psychology

Ernest Becker, one of the most important social theorists of the past 50 years, gave us cogent ideas in regard to the social psychology of fear. Becker focused on the creative power of abstract thought (imagination), which eventually freed the human species from passive adaptation to the environment and allowed us to shape the environment to suit our survival needs. For example, a number of higher mammals may know that fire is hot and a cave gives shelter from wind and rain. But human beings developed the ability to combine these thoughts abstractly, imagining something new—a cave with a fire in it—and set about to create in the world that which until had only existed in the imagination. This had obvious survival advantages, and our human species success-

fully populated every terrain and climate. As far as we know, abstract imaginative thought is unique to the human species.

Imaginative abstract thought, like all survival mechanisms, has a downside; it allowed us to comprehend and understand death, our universal mortal condition. Becker saw that human consciousness of mortality clashes fundamentally with the survival instinct

we share with all animal species. The anxious 'fire in the mind' provoked by this clash fast propelled our species from hunter-gathering toolmaker-primates into culture-creating and symbol-consuming *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Like all species we are pushed to survive, yet we alone know death is inevitable. This results in the uniquely human psychological structure, in which a large measure of denial, repression and illusion-preference is necessary for normal mental health. The body does not know the difference between a real, immediate danger and the countless perils that occur to our imagination. Consequently, without successful mechanisms of psychological defenses against reality, we would be constantly, uncontrollably susceptible to the hyper-alert freeze/fight/flight state.

Our deepest thinkers have always known the hold that fear of death has in our species mentality, especially the more ongoing and abstract sense of existential mortality awareness we associate with terms like *dread*, *anxiety*,

and *angst*. Becker saw our reactions to mortality awareness—the mechanisms by which we keep it from consciousness, and the defenses we employ when it breaks through—as the very key

Human spirituality is rooted in the physical, emotional and psychological natures out of which it emerges, and is a powerful source for transcending personal and communal practices for coping with anxiety.

to human psychology. I describe Becker's view as a theory of *Generative Death Anxiety*. Though rooted concretely in fear of actual death, death very soon becomes a complex psychological symbol in the imagination, and the denial and defeat of death become expressed in complex symbolic forms. In this view, many of the most significant aspects of cultural and religious life emerge directly out of our human need to sustain death-defeating ideologies. We soothe the terror of death by fostering direct or vicarious participation in symbolically transcending, larger-than-life endeavors.

A Culture of Fear and Death

That which we prize most about the human species—our creativity, ingenuity, ethical altruism, sense of spiritual connection—are intimately contoured by our urge to connect to transcending values and visions that affirm life against death and stagnation. Yet so long as the mechanism for this urge remains largely unconscious, we are prone to symbolically demonize

all opposition to what we perceive as the Good. Social philosopher Sam Keen, in *Faces of the Enemy* (1976), dramatically demonstrated how this tendency is manipulated in wartime propaganda. We see this same polarizing manipulation in our present society, with the rhetoric of Red vs. Blue, Progressives vs. Conservatives, Greens vs. Polluters; in short, Good vs. Bad, each side claiming to be good while demonizing the opposition.

In his book *The Gift of Fear* (1998), Gavin de Becker emphasized how our natural combination of fear and intuition keeps us out of the way of harmful people. Three things undermine this. Socialization teaches us to mistrust our intuition—we are taught to ‘be nice’ even to those from which our intuition tells us to flee. Secondly, the media, having learned that danger situations immediately demand attention, fill our daily news with fear-provoking violence. Thirdly, the ‘violence as entertainment’ industry reaches new extremes each year. Thus, our intuitive gift of fear becomes completely distorted,

backwards from what hard statistics indicate are the real sources of danger.

Our peculiar psychology makes us hyper-alert to dangerous and violent situations.

We can’t take our eyes off of them! Thus media news becomes ever more bloody, while television, movies and video games become alarmingly more gruesome. Meanwhile, political campaigns focus

all but exclusively on images of terrorist violence and homeland ‘security,’ rather than the very real economic and ecological crises we face. It is not without cause that many speak of the current spiral as a culture of fear and death.

Grounds for Hope?

Are we doomed then, by our peculiar psychological nature, to dance forever to the tune of a culture of fear and death? A group of social psychologists have been investigating Becker’s ideas through empirical research, under the rubric of *Terror Management Theory* (referring to psychological, not political, terror.) One hopeful finding is that while thoughts of death stimulated in a laboratory setting provoke xenophobic reactions within a general population group, in groups of people selected for their high valuation of tolerance, this same stimulation actually produces even more tolerant attitudes and behavior. Another hopeful finding is that xenophobic reactions are negated when the mechanism is explained to people, that is, when

their unconscious death anxiety is made conscious to them. It appears, therefore, that it is not the conscious fear of death that gets us into trouble, but rather the unconscious fear.

The old psychoanalytic maxim, “Where there was Id, let Ego be,” may be our best hope yet.

We also see hope in the spiritual nature of human beings. Human spirituality is rooted in the physi-

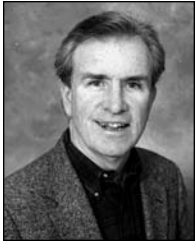
cal, emotional and psychological natures out of which it emerges, and is a powerful source for transcending personal and communal practices for coping with anxiety. Through spiritual practices such as spiritual activism, compassionate behavior, and meditation and prayer, we learn to befriend and live *with* the anxiety of mortality awareness, seeking meaning and purpose in our mortal condition, allowing that anxiety to wash over us, rather than displacing and scapegoating it frantically and violently onto others.

We are a species that has learned habitually, over thousands of years, to resort to warfare and violence in reaction to what are mostly symbolic and imagined threats. We are now in a race against time to unlearn this habitual reaction before our own violence overtakes us. Even while admiring the survival success afforded us by imaginative abstract thought, Ernest Becker also reminded us that our species history is actually quite short and that we might not prove to be a viable species at all. But his ideas do give us at least a vague outline of the unconscious forces at work in our nature, while our great spiritual traditions provide us with practices and imaginative visions of deep compassion conducive for human survival. Meanwhile, we continue to hope for things not yet seen. ~

It is that moment when fear dictates run and the mind dictates stay, when prudence says keep quiet and conviction says speak out, when the body shouts no and the soul cries go—these are the moments of choice, the moments to take courage.

—Olive Luena, Tanzania

We are a species that has learned...to resort to warfare and violence in reaction to what are mostly symbolic and imagined threats.



Patrick Higgins is a parishioner of St. Mary's, Seattle, and a Fund Developer for the Archdiocesan Housing Authority. He and his wife Elizabeth live in South Seattle.

What Are We Afraid Of? Immigration and the U.S.

Patrick Higgins

Immigration reform and the status of millions of undocumented residents in the United States are currently subjects of acrimonious national debate, even punitive legislative proposals. Five years ago, the discussion was energetic, but not so divisive. What has heightened the pitch of the argument?

September 11, 2001, war, and the national security mentality have played a part. Latent national racism cannot be overlooked, either. What else is involved in the hard feelings that seem to have unbalanced our dealing with this long-term social tension?

Fear hides behind the harshness. Nearly all immigrants pose no threat to U.S. security; they come here out of necessity—sometimes just to survive. The large majority is respectful and hard-working. Antagonism toward immigrants, however, is a human phenomenon and current problems exist worldwide. We all, to some degree, are afraid of the other—personally and culturally.

Fear can literally paralyze us. We all know that Jesus' encouraging salutation, "Be not afraid," is easier said than done. Others in this issue of *A Matter of Spirit* write about ways we can become acquainted with our fears and—while never

overcoming this natural human response to our vulnerability and mortality—learn to walk ahead with conviction accompanied by this ever-present shadow.

A constant human question is "Who am I and who are we?" We strive within our culture to create and sustain an identity. Whatever disturbs that process scares us. Immigrants put us face to face with "the other." We think we know who we are, and then someone

moves in next door, not like us, and makes us wonder all over again: *Am I who I think I am? Will they change or will they change me? What will*

become of me, of us, of our neighborhood, our country? Normal concerns, but the fears they articulate can grow into group or national sentiment. Sometimes fears engender laws.

What are some fears about immigrants? There is the simple visual, verbal and behavioral distinctiveness of immigrants (or

we might fear the loss of our work, our employment. Will newcomers affect our economic well-being, our educational system, the physical health of our community? Will they actually change the makeup and future of our families? These are honest, undeniable concerns that must be investigated. We must practice walking with these concerns and fears on a daily basis, and not react solely on an emotional level.

Let's think for a minute from the perspective of an immigrant. What are the fears that drive her/him to risk danger, even death, to migrate to a different land? Would they have similar fears but in a reverse order? An immigrant fears lack of work, lack of education, lack of health care "at home." On top of that, she fears leaving family, community and culture. A new visual, verbal and behavioral environment would be alien to him. Language, food, and recreation would all require difficult adjustments. These are typical fears that preoccupy anyone thinking of moving to a different country.

Our fears can be manipulated, and such manipulation continues a cycle: immigrants become settled and then discriminate against newcomers. Sadly, our "selfish gene" of preservation does not naturally mutate into one of right relation. We must learn to understand our fears, and the ways of dealing with them. It is a crucial time; U. S. racial

and ethnic demographics are changing dramatically.

Chi-Doooh Li, a columnist for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*,

We must practice walking with these concerns and fears on a daily basis, and not react solely on an emotional level.

Migration is with us forever...if we recognize it as a call to self- and social awareness—and ultimately love—it can be a threshold to a greater level of justice and cultural transformation.

of anyone perceived as "other"). From this can arise a fear of change, or loss of our secure community. Within that community,

wrote recently “If the quest for individual identity can sometimes be a torturous process, how much more complex is the search for national identity in a country of 280 million souls brought together in a true melting pot of ethnic groups, religions, cultures and socio-economic mixes?”

But there is hope; Emmanuel Levinas, a favorite philosopher

with us forever, and the pressure of population and economics will cause friction, even outright conflict, at points of contact. If we think of the phenomenon as a problem, it will remain cumbersome so. Alternately, if we recognize it as a call to self- and social awareness—and ultimately love—it can be a threshold to a greater level of justice and cultural



Thousands marched for immigrants' rights on May 1, 2006 in Seattle.

of Pope John Paul II, said that our encounter with “the Other” offers the greatest challenge to our stability and sense of self. It tests our identity at the same time as it offers us the chance to grow by helping us question our “complacency of the self”—as persons or societies. The other calls us to greater perfection and salvation—as individuals and as nations. We can learn to withhold judgment, to listen and learn, to actively become acquainted with others. And we can investigate our own fears diligently, with others, and find their fount within.

Migration of peoples is not a “problem;” it is a natural, historical phenomenon. The Other is not a leper, nor sinful, nor sick. No human being is illegal. Migration is

transformation.

Meanwhile, immigration reform in the United States must be fair. Along with local and national reform groups, the U.S. Catholic Bishops and Catholic agencies cite components necessary for reform legislation to be just: a pathway to residency, the reunification of families, an individual right of petition, and third-party oversight of employers of immigrants.

As Dr. Li reminds us in his commentary, “The legislation approved by Congress will no doubt be imperfect in letter and execution, but this imperfect democracy of ours is all about finding our way collectively...” We have nothing to fear but fear itself. Therefore, be not afraid. ~

Magdaleno “Leno” Rose-Avila is Executive Director of the Seattle-based Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP). His pen name is Juan Valdez.

A Poem by Juan Valdez



He was frightened
By the difference
In their language
Their dress
Their food

Nothing looked right
And everything seemed wrong
They had come from some place far away
Another land ...another culture ...another people...

His dreams were shattered
That spring
When the tulips were blooming
When colorful birds were singing their mating songs

His one
His only child
His Daughter
Fell in the deepest of love
With one of them

In spite of his strongest opposition
In spite of his greatest fears
She continued to shatter his dreams one piece at a time...
A castle he had created in his room of hopes
Only the best for his princess
That was his ultimate desire

Eventually she married this man
From another world
From another culture
With different dreams and chants
With different ways of praying...

Two years later to the date
He was presented
With a most special of gifts
Something he could not
Should not refuse

He was given
A grandchild
With the biggest of eyes
With beautiful olive skin
And a forest of dark
Black shiny hair on her little head

This child from another place
Reached in to the deepest
And darkest part of his heart
And changed
His everything for ever....



Amanda Smith

Rebecca Nappi works as associate editor and columnist for *The Spokesman-Review*.

A Marine's Mother Refuses to Give in to Fear

Rebecca Nappi

*m*ary DeLateur's final wait for her son, a Marine corporal, lasted seven hours. Not so long, compared with other times of waiting. When Mary brought Andrew into the world 21 years ago, she labored for 18 hours.

When Andrew was sent to Iraq for the first time, in March 2003, Mary lit a candle in the window each night. She prayed and waited. Her son returned safely home.

When Andrew was sent to Iraq for the second time, in February 2004, Mary waited along with dozens of family and friends who kept e-mail vigil with her. Andrew returned to yellow ribbons and welcome-home reader boards at his Millwood-area home.

When Andrew was sent to Iraq for a third time, in August 2005, dozens kept virtual vigil again, but a few people withdrew from Mary, afraid Andrew would not return.

Mary refused to let fear take her over. She crossed her arms over her heart and prayed in gratitude for the son given to her. She prayed her memories of him, including the day the 3-year-old Andrew climbed into a bin of uncooked rice. When caught, he said to his mother, "I just had to do this. I've been wanting to for a long time."

After praying the memories, Mary let go of any illusion of control over her son's fate. Mary, 51, then engaged in active waiting.

She had placed her teaching

career on hold for 20 years to raise her three boys. After her youngest, Emmett, went off to the University of Michigan last fall, Mary enrolled at Eastern Washington University. She is working toward a master's degree in social work, and Wednesday, she'll begin an internship at the Spokane Vet Center in the Spokane Valley.

Andrew risked so much to become a Marine. His example freed Mary to risk a new career. His decision to enlist and serve led directly to Mary's plan to work with veterans still carrying the physical and emotional burdens of war.

And now, to that final wait. At 3 in the afternoon last Sunday, she and her husband, Tony, along with their oldest son, also Tony, waited at Camp Pendleton in California. They waited with 150 family members attached to the Weapons Company of the First Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

A Marine officer announced the young men's plane had landed in Bangor, Maine. Mary remembered hearing about older veterans who greet every homecoming plane that lands there. Indeed, they met her son's plane, too.

Mary waited with young mothers with babies who had never met their fathers. The families bonded over Mexican casseroles, hot dogs and cookies.

The families waited several more hours. Word finally came that the plane had touched down at March Air Reserve Base in

California. The young men then boarded buses. About two hours later, they arrived at Camp Pendleton, but the wait continued as they surrendered their weapons.

At 10 p.m., the families moved outside. Giant spotlights lighted a roadway. The families saw their young men, their desert fatigues illuminated by the lights, marching in formation toward them.



Tony DeLateur

Mary DeLateur welcomes home her son, Andrew.

The two Tonys spotted Andrew first. "Mare, over there," her husband said. Mary followed his voice and soon fell into the hug of her son. She cried and laughed at the same time. And thus, Andrew returned for the third and final time. He will finish his four-year Marine commitment in late summer; he hopes then to enroll at Gonzaga University.

Later, in the hotel room, Mary felt an incredible quiet inside. Her son again shared with her the same U.S. soil. Her mother's heart was full. She slept in peace once more. ~

Copyright 2006. Reprinted with permission of *The Spokesman-Review*. Permission is granted in the interest of public discussion and does not imply endorsement of any product, service or organization otherwise mentioned herein.

Book Review: The Courage the Heart Desires

Jeanie Robinson

What is it that keeps us from fully inhabiting our lives with joy and freedom?

What if the psychic rooms of our daily life hold more fear than hope? And what if we had a wise and holy mentor who could help us enter those rooms and gently but practically come to terms with what ails us? Reading Kathleen Fischer's book *The Courage the Heart Desires* was that kind of experience for me. The wisdom of her many years as a therapist and spiritual director is distilled in this book. Her goal is "to uncover the wealth of spiritual resources available to us as we seek to bring hope into our frightened world." Indeed each chapter is rich with spiritual resources from almost every tradition, as well as literary and personal examples and current

research in psychology.

The ease of the read—a gentle, storytelling approach—uplifts while offering a variety of spiritual pathways for living an unburdened life. Chapter titles such as, "Understanding Fear," "Living in the Here and Now," "Praying When We're Scared," and "The Love that Casts Out Fear," draw us into clear and practical methods for dealing with strong emotions. Her final chapters helped me understand how the power of our small actions and courageous attitudes do effect change in the current scientific understanding of a universe that is "profoundly social," where "every-

thing is implicated in everything else." In this distillation of years of experience, Fischer is speaking to all of us whatever our age, gender or political stance, about the com-

mon fears that imprison us. She comes out of the Christian tradition though she says, "I write for spiritual seekers everywhere, whether or not they belong to a

church or synagogue or attend religious services... How we encounter world views different from our own constitutes a crucial aspect of peace and justice as we begin the twenty-first century." This is a practical handbook for daily living; certainly one I have already passed on to many others. ~

Fischer is speaking to all of us whatever our age, gender or political stance, about the common fears that imprison us.

Jeanie Robinson is a spiritual director and a retreat facilitator in the Seattle area. E-mail: jeaniepie@earthlink.net

The Culture of Fear Book Resources

Democracy's Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life

Frances Moore Lappé
Jossey-Bass, 2005

Guide for reclaiming democracy for those who don't like what is happening to their lives and their country, and feel isolated and helpless.

Fear's Empire: War, Terrorism and Democracy

Benjamin R. Barber
Norton, 2004

Offers an alternative foreign policy to the one of unilateral military action. Barber contends America's aggressive force operates outside the accepted precepts of international law and policy.

Forgotten Among the Lilies: Learning to Love Beyond Our Fears

Ronald Rohlheiser
Doubleday, 2005

Offers hope that we can move beyond our fears to appreciate what we have and who we are.

If You're Afraid of the Dark, Remember the Night Rainbow

Cooper Edens
Chronicle Books, 2002

A storybook of reassurance and hope for children and adults.

The Courage the Heart Desires

Kathleen Fischer
Jossey-Bass, 2006
See review above.

The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times

Pema Chödrön
Shambhala, 2002

Practical tools for transforming anxieties and negative emotions into positive living.

We Are All The Same: A Story of a Boy's Courage and a Mother's Love

Jim Wooten
Penguin, 2004

The story of a courageous South African boy's battle with AIDS; it puts a human face on a pandemic that grows worse daily.



Women's Justice Circles

Mattawa—"Join with me; I can not do it alone." This spring Women's Justice Circle participants in Mattawa asked community leaders for their help. They invited representatives from area health clinics, churches, and local agencies staff to join them in creating the Mattawa Food Bank Ad Hoc Committee.

Since November 2005, when volunteers set up a temporary food bank to serve the needs of the community, they have distributed food to more than 200 families each month. Many former and current participants of the Justice Circles comprise the pool of 30 volunteers. In April they met at Villa Santa Maria, a Diocese of Yakima housing site, with staff from Northwest Harvest and food banks in Ellensburg and Toppenish, to learn the tasks necessary to run a food bank. This summer they will work with community members to re-establish a permanent food bank. The WJC in Mattawa collaborates with *Entre Mujeres* of the Northwest Justice Project.

Women's Justice Circles took place at the following sites this spring:

- Kent—Appian Way Apartments
- Seattle—Recovery Cafe
- Seattle—North Seattle Family Center
- Seattle—St. Mary Parish
- Vancouver—YWCA
- Yakima—*Amigas Unidas*



Young Parents Have Questions

Have you ever caught yourself asking, "How can we talk to the grandparents about their choice of gifts? We already have too many battery-operated toys in our house!" Or, "The messages our kids get from TV and from the children at daycare/school are so different from the values we want to instill in them. What can we do?"



environment, respecting diversity in all of its forms, and more.

At meetings we share a potluck meal, reflect, pray, and give and receive support from each other as we strive to build families that do justice and work for peace. Children are welcome.

This is an intentional community. We invite parents who can commit to joining us once a month, starting in September. Dates and times TBA. Space is limited. Please call Lynn at (206) 223-1138, or email ipjc@ipjc.org for more information or to register.

We have an answer! Consider joining the IPJC Parenting for Peace and Justice Group. We discuss the above issues and more! Our goals include building community, becoming more conscientious about how we raise our children, and sharing a spirituality that does justice. Other issues include non-violent communication, caring for the



Intercommunity Peace & Justice

We are grateful for all of you who joined us for JUST PEACE, the celebration of our 15th Anniversary at Seattle University on April 27, 2006. The evening was highlighted by IPJC program participants sharing their stories and experiences with 300 loyal supporters.



peace & justice center

White House Recognizes NWCRI

In recognition of the work of our Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment (NWCRI) on the issue of HIV/AIDS, Judy Byron, OP was invited to the White House on March 13, 2006 by Laura Bush. Since 2000 we have been addressing the issue of access to treatment and medicines for people affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic with pharmaceutical companies and corporations with operations in countries ravaged by the virus.



At the White House reception, Mrs. Bush honored the Mothers to Mothers-To-Be Program that she met in Cape Town, South Africa in July 2005. Their work includes helping to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV; combating the stigma within families and communities; supporting mothers in adhering to treatment; and reducing the likelihood of children being orphaned by AIDS.

Mrs. Bush also announced a new initiative of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief: Building a New Public-Private Partnership for Pediatric AIDS Treatment. The US Government, mainline and generic drug companies, and international organizations will work together to maximize access to currently available pediatric formulations and accelerate access to new formulations for children living with HIV. Treatment for the 2.1 million children under age 15 worldwide is almost non-existent.

At the annual meeting of Gilead Sciences on May 10, NWCRI presented a shareholder resolution requesting the company to report on its efforts to develop pediatric formulations of its drugs; to register them in countries affected by the pandemic; and to license its drugs to generic companies. Our resolution received an unprecedented positive vote of 25.4%.

Center Celebrates 15 Years!

Your donations, and those of people who were not able to attend, will support and sustain the work of peace and justice into the future. Thank you!



Kite Runners for Peace

The last meeting of Just-Us Reading was held at Gas Works Park on May 6th and consisted of a talk by Jeff Siddiqui, a potluck and flying kites for peace. Jeff grew up in Peshawar, where the book *Kite Runner* takes place. He shared the history and his experiences of growing up in Pakistan, and of the political unrest that was and still is apparent. It was an engaging conversation between the group and Jeff. His knowledge shed light on the history and relationship between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S. It opened up the connection between the book and the history of the Middle East.



We closed our gathering by flying our kites in the name of peace alongside some of our friends and family and others at Gas Works Park. It was the Opening Day of boating season and plenty of people were out with their children and friends. Our group was there to fly kites and be witnesses for peace in our community and world.

Seven Old and New Thoughts About Fear

OLD THOUGHTS	NEW THOUGHTS
Fear means I'm in danger. Something's wrong. I must escape and seek safety.	Fear is pure energy. It's a signal. It might not mean stop, it could mean go!
If I stop what I'm doing, I'll be lost. I'll never start again.	Sometimes we have to stop in order to find our path.
I have to figure it all out before I can do anything.	We don't have to believe we can do it to do it; the very act of showing up, even with our fear, has power.
If I act on what I believe, I fear conflict will break out. I'll be humiliated, ineffective, and rejected.	Conflict means engagement. Something real is in motion. It's an opening, not a closing.
Our greatest fears are our worst enemies; they drag us down and hold us back.	Our worst fears can be our greatest teachers.
If I'm really myself, I'll be excluded. If I break connection, I'll be alone forever.	To find genuine connection, we must risk disconnection. The new light we shine draws others toward us, and we become conscious choosers.
I'm just a drop in the bucket. My effort might make me feel better, but I can't do much.	Every time we act, even with our fear, we make room for others to do the same. Courage is contagious.

Reprinted with permission from *You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear*, by Frances Moore Lappé and Jeffrey Perkins (Tarcher/Penguin, 2004).

A Matter of Spirit is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

SPONSORING COMMUNITIES

Adrian Dominican Sisters
Oregon Province Jesuits
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Washington Province
Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province
Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, Western Province
Tacoma Dominicans

AFFILIATE COMMUNITIES

Benedictine Sisters of Cottonwood, Idaho
Benedictine Sisters of Lacey
Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel
Religious of the Sacred Heart
Sinsinawa Dominicans
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary of Oregon
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon
Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union

EDITORIAL BOARD

Judy Byron, OP
Gretchen Gundrum, PhD
Linda Haydock, SNJM
Patrick Higgins
Beth Taylor, CSJP
Roger Yockey, SFO

Editor: Wendy L. Call

Layout: Michael Schwindeller

Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

1216 NE 65th Street
Seattle, WA 98115-6724
return service requested

Send us
your change of address
before the post office does.
It will save us \$1.09!!!

phone: 206.223.1138
fax: 206.223.1139
email: ipjc@ipjc.org
web: www.ipjc.org