



Pat Kozak, CSJ is the Congregational leader for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

## Personal and Communal Transformation

### BECOMING THE CHANGE

**h**is name is Nate, the nephew of a good friend of mine. Nate is 28, and studied forestry and wildlife in college. As part of his job as a landscaper on Cape Cod, he keeps an eye on the docks. As I heard the story from his aunt, Kathy, Nate was doing just that one summer day when he caught sight of three pilot whales swimming toward shore, on

course to beach themselves. With no time to consider options, he threw off his shoes and ran into the water, knowing well the danger to himself and to the whales.

Reaching the first of the thrashing ten-foot whales, Nate did his best to avoid being hit by the whale's strong tail. He instinctively put his hands on the thrashing whale and just held it there. No small task, but he kept himself in place, his hands on the whale. Amazingly, the whale gradually became calm.

With his hands still firmly on the whale, Nate slowly turned the whale around, heading him back out toward the sea. He wasn't sure whether he removed his hands first, or the whale simply swam off,

but Nate watched the creature head for the deep. He turned quickly to the next approaching whale. He again put his two hands on the whale until it calmed, and once more, slowly walked and turned the whale back toward the sea.

Looking for the third whale,

Nate saw that it was changing course on its own, following the others. Nate remained in the water until the whales were out of sight, then made

his way ashore.

Some weeks later, he shared the experience with his Aunt Kathy. In recounting the story, he included an awareness that had come to him as he stood in the water with the whale: perhaps never before had that animal been touched by a human! Nate had been so occupied with remaining calm

*...we are often  
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and steady, avoiding injury from the whale's frightened thrashing, he never had the opportunity to look into the whale's eyes. This profound regret existed alongside

his realization that he had prevented the whales from beaching themselves, and had likely saved their lives.

Nate's story captures the elements of personal transformation. Almost everything that can be said about personal transformation applies to collective transformation; personal transformation is a prerequisite for the collective.

### Receptivity to the Liminal

The liminal refers to threshold and boundary, to being on the verge of life and loss. Knowing well the danger, to himself and to the whale, Nate gave his decision no more thought. Liminality, an element of transformation, requires radical openness. It invites a positive acknowledgment, even affirmation, by the individual, "I am incomplete and unfinished," and recognizes the incredible possibility and potential inherent in that truth. We know it as an embrace of the paschal mystery.

Experienced communally, we are invited to surrender to life and to the great forces for union, harmony and diversity in contrast to our inclination to "beach ourselves." We beach ourselves with critiques, competition, and small efforts, because we are often afraid of the deep and the

unknown. We are afraid because we cannot control the waves and currents, nor be assured of outcomes.

### Contemplative Apprehending

While this may seem semantical, the language recognizes the *activity* of contemplation, actively attending to the

of self-gift that results in communion.

But how do we move to this maturity of ego? At the risk of ending where we began, the answer lies in contemplative apprehending, which is itself one of the riskiest activities a person can undertake.

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other with such abandon and freedom that the individual is fully engaged, and ultimately changed. In this context, Walter Burghardt, SJ's description of contemplation—"a long, loving look at the real"—shifts to what Marcia Allen, CSJ, calls "a long, loving look until it and we become real."

For this mutual apprehending to happen, one must commit to a long, slow seeing and breathing that receives without defenses. Such contemplation takes in reality with all of its pain, allowing it to be held, ultimately to be softened before being released as gift. What remains in its place is wisdom and compassion.

### Recognition of Communion as the New Paradigm: All is One

This third element is not for the faint-hearted. We are called to be like God. Taking our lead from the Trinity, we are called to love, because love is the fullest act of self-expression. It is who we are. At one and the same moment, my distinct and unique self wishes you the fullest possible life and expresses this through an act

The paradigm of communion reminds us that there is no thing, no one who is an object. All are subjects. Communion is the ongoing dynamic of self-acknowledgement and self-gift on be-

half of the other—whether it be creature-to-creature, culture-to-culture, or nation-to-nation.

### Growing the Evolving Consciousness

The final element is nurturing our evolving consciousness. Futurists as early as Albert Einstein have reflected that no problem can be solved on the same level on which it was created. Our ability to reason, imagine, and create has evolved over our species' thousands of years of life. In the face of major crisis, we must think larger and imagine more broadly if we are to respond in a way that genuinely addresses the problem. Evolutionary consciousness refers to the evolution and transformation of this core intelligence.

This century's work may well be the work of expanding our consciousness. A consequence will be our ability to address in a new and effective way the myriad, systemic issues we face. Only in this way can we effect collective and social transformation.

To nurture and "grow" our consciousness, we must begin at

the beginning: receptivity to the liminal, contemplation, and communion. It demands an attentiveness to the interconnections among the many and the one. It invites the largest discernment imaginable, engaged in individually and communally.

Once, in icy February,  
I watched a flock of geese  
land on a frozen lake,  
land and glide across  
in a great, silent dance.

Each bird put down  
one webbed foot,  
slid it forward,  
hesitated for an instant  
before shifting weight to it.  
They all did this:  
step, hesitate, slide.

Rising and falling together,  
the whole flock waltzed forward  
each one testing the ice,  
each one ensuring  
the other's safety.

Not birds of the air  
nor any creeping thing,  
nor beasts of the field  
nor human kind in God's image  
can safely dance alone.  
The ice is too thin;  
the dance is too dangerous.

"The Ice Dance"  
by Bonnie Thurston  
*Hints and Glimpses*, 2004

In the end, we will have placed hands on each other. In the most threatening of waves, we will see our confused thrashing calmed, our tendencies to beach ourselves healed. Seeing what Nate did not see, we will look into the eyes of the whale and recognize ourselves there, and then, individually and collectively swim for the deep. 🐋

# Effecting Social Change: What Works?

Wendy L. Call

**I**n this issue of *A Matter of Spirit*, we ask these questions: *What makes a person an effective agent of social change? More broadly, What makes an effective movement for social change?* Social movements, of course, are made up of people, who put their heads and their hearts together to try and improve something in our world. In her article, Sr. Pat Kozak describes the elements of personal transformation, which is a key part of effective involvement in social change work. We spoke with Sr. Jeannine Gramick about her ministry with gay and lesbian people, and what inspires her to continue it through diffi-

cult times. Professor of Theological Studies Gary Chamberlain looks at the primacy of conscience,



Nearly 400 people gathered for the Western States Center's 2005 "Community Strategic Training Initiative" in Oregon. At this annual three-day gathering, community activists from all over the Northwest learn how to become more effective social changers.

and how one can begin and continue to follow his or her conscience.

We also spoke with four longtime organizers for social change

about their experiences. Each of them has founded new organizations, trained countless other organizers and activists, in essence, been an "effective social changer." Collectively, they have 116 years of experience doing these things. In different ways, each of them said that effective work for social change must engage the heart as much as the head, and must center on communal principles.

*Disconnected. Scattered. Fragmented. Frustrated. Energized. Emergent.* Those words came to the minds of four long-time organizers when asked to characterize current social change movements in the United States. Francis Calpotura's observations



Wendy L. Call is the editor of *A Matter of Spirit*. She is a freelance writer and editor in Seattle.



**Francis Calpotura** has been a community organizer for 24 years. He recently founded the Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research & Action ([www.transnationalaction.org](http://www.transnationalaction.org)), based in Oakland, CA. TIGRA helps immigrant workers build their collective economic power.

When Francis was 11, his mother moved from the Philippines to the United States to work. "I remember my mom sending remittance checks as I was growing up in the Philippines. We waited for the brown envelope of money to arrive every month. It was great, but it was also an unhappy thing, because it signaled sacrifice." Four years later, Francis came to the United States, as well.

In 2002—nearly 30 years after moving to the United States—Francis returned to the Philippines for six months to help his mom retire there. "I spent time talking to people at the corner store in the town where I grew up," he remembers. "Every single one of the people I talked to had come back from another part of the world: doing construction in Dubai, domestic work in Hong Kong, or being a guest worker in the United States."

"Moving outside of one's country to work has a huge impact on the home community. Globalization has taken hold, and people are living transnational lives," says Francis. As a result of that time back in his hometown, Francis founded TIGRA to harness the economic power of immigrant workers who support families in their home countries. In 2005, an estimated 170 billion dollars was sent by workers in the global North to family members in the global South. The financial institutions that transfer that money earned an estimated 25 to 30 billion dollars in the process.

"The call to do this work is in the language of the Church—honoring the labor of providing, and the jubilee for debt forgiveness," says Francis. For him, the work is highly personal. "My mom's identity was as a provider. She took on that responsibility, without necessarily thinking about the systems or structures that led to it. TIGRA is based on the deepest motivations that people have, love for family and love for community. TIGRA is a homage to my mom."

mirrored others' experiences. "When I talk to organizers," he says, "Each one has ambitions that are more transformative than our organizations' strategies. We tend to fall back on minutiae, or call for radical change without thinking it through."

In 2002, Francis spent six months in the Philippines, evaluating the infrastructure for social change organizing and comparing it to systems in the United States. "People there have a much more seamless integration

between electoral, service, advocacy, and policy-oriented strategies," Francis says. "Every project

ferent elements of social change work isolated from one another. "People with good hearts end up splintered. We need to enlarge both our visions and our hearts. Without that, we will win good fights, but we won't be contenders for the transformation that we all want."

At the same time, social services in our communities continue to be eroded, without much opposition from local and regional political leaders. "People have become extremely discontented with cowardly political leadership," says Dan Petegorsky, Executive Director of the Western States Center in Portland, OR. "We often look to the political leaders to *be* leaders, but they are *followers*. Community organizations need to lead, and when they have the strength, the elected leaders will follow."

How can each of us become a leader? Here are a few suggestions—boiled down from more than a century of organizing experience.

### Know Who You Are

**Don:** The most effective organizers know who they are, where they come from, and *why* they do what they do.

**Linda:** Everyone should think deeply about gender, race, and class, considering their own identity, and also issues of internalized oppression. That should be just a stage, though, and lead to building bridges to other communities.

### Know Your History

**Don:** Social movements need to get down to their roots, and reach out to people who are on the bottom. We would have a bigger,

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***Organizing means really getting to know each person as a human being, and helping each of them fulfill their own dreams.***

**—Don Elmer**

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should inform a larger vision." In the United States, he says, integration is often missing, with dif-



**Linda Stout** is founder of the Piedmont Peace Project in North Carolina, and Spirit in Action ([www.spiritinaction.net](http://www.spiritinaction.net)) in Western Massachusetts.

Spirit in Action helps organizations envision and realize more positive futures. One community they work with in Tallulah, Louisiana, has plans to convert a former youth prison into a community college. The community successfully pressured to have the youth prison shut down, and the space is temporarily being used as an adult prison. As part of a visioning process completed with Spirit in Action, people in Tallulah asked themselves: what do we really need? They have worked with artists to paint huge murals of their imagined community college, and with architects to draw up the actual plans, even as they continue their organizing work to make their dream into reality.

"I grew up in poverty and I really wanted there to be a different world than I experienced," says Linda, speaking of her motivation to work for social change. Early in her activist life, Linda realized that the local issues they faced in her home community of North Carolina were connected to national issues. "Low-income white people and farmers in North Carolina truly believed that Jesse Helms was on their side. If they had a problem with their Social Security, they could call his office and it would be solved, immediately. When we created a scorecard showing how Jesse Helms had actually *voted*, people could see that he didn't represent their interests at all." She worked to help people see the links between their local problems and national policies.

More recently, Linda's work has focused on the link between spirit and social change. "My spiritual tradition includes a real commitment to social change," says Linda, who is a 13<sup>th</sup> generation Quaker. "Spirit in Action is not *building* the movement, but working with groups that are looking to build *spirit* in the movement. Diversity is our greatest strength and our greatest challenge. We need to honor our diversity, and allow the spirit to be present in what we do."

broader movement if we understood our history.

### Know Who You Are Working With

**Dan:** Successful groups are very clear on *who* they are trying to organize, and *what* tangible victories they are trying to win.

***We often look to the political leaders to be leaders, but they are followers. Community organizations need to lead, and when they have the strength, the elected leaders will follow.***

**—Dan Petegorsky**

**Don:** Organizing means really getting to know each person as a human being, and helping each of them fulfill their own dreams.

### Withhold Judgment

**Don:** Jesus, Buddha and Mohammad all spent time with the poor and the outcast, and did not judge them. We must be open and inviting of all people. We must hold out for the possibility for transformation of all people. If we judge people so harshly that we can't even speak to them, we lose the opportunity to win them to our side.

### Accept Risk

**Dan:** Focus on the very issues that often divide people. If you avoid the split issues, they will split you. We want to create 'zones of comfort,' so that people who are traditionally marginalized have space at the table. On the

other hand, we want to create 'zones of discomfort,' so that people have to challenge themselves on issues that they would rather not.

**Francis:** In life, you don't win all the time. Failure can be at every corner. To engage the process of social change, regardless of the outcome, is to engage with life.

### Enjoy Yourself

**Linda:** Working for balance is essential. I take the time for a bubble bath every single day.

### Take the Long View

**Linda:** There are many hopeful

examples: seed banks for sustainable agriculture, hybrid cars, alternative economic models. We just need to imagine these things growing into big parts of our culture. Big changes *do* happen. Twenty years ago, very few people thought about recycling. Now it's just expected.

### Put Your Heart Into It

**Linda:** Deeply held values motivate people to work for social change. We need to work more spiritually. We need to work from our *hearts*. ~

Don Elmer is a United Methodist Minister who has worked for 18 years as a trainer of organizers with the Center for Community Change ([www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)) in Washington, DC.

While Don was in seminary in Chicago, Saul Alinsky came to the school and spoke about community organizing. Don was fascinated by his words. After being ordained as a Methodist minister, Don decided to take one year off to work with a community organization in Chicago. "I planned to go back and be a Methodist pastor in North Dakota, but I never got back to it," Don says. More than three decades later, Don still works as a social change organizer.

For many years, he focused on what he calls "the external"—running effective campaigns, building new community groups, and training new activists and organizers. Then he went through a very difficult personal time, and realized that he needed to balance his internal and external lives. "I was getting dried up inside," he says. A friend introduced him to meditation—a practice he has maintained for 16 years. "It is still somewhat risky in the United Methodist Church to talk about meditating. In the beginning, I was afraid I might be thrown out for it. Now, I include it in my reports." As a result of his personal experience, his work as an organizer became less based on concrete issues, and more focused on mentoring. "I work with the executive directors of many organizations, helping them bring balance to their work. In my mind, I am introducing them to a spiritual tradition, but if people are uncomfortable with that term, I don't necessarily call it that."

Don grew up in an evangelical, fundamentalist tradition. "Part of that tradition was trying to be 'pure,' not contaminated by the world," Don says. "Fundamentalism has become a rigid system to make people feel secure in a crazy world. It's trying to control the external world, rather than trying to find its spirit."



Gary Chamberlain, PhD is a Professor of Theological Studies at Seattle University.

# A Matter of Conscience: From Jiminy Cricket to King

Gary Chamberlain, PhD

“I believe that when statesmen forsake their own private conscience for the sake of their public duties, they lead their country by a short route to chaos.” While these words may well have been spoken recently by Congressman John Murtha, Democrat of Pennsylvania, in relation to the war on Iraq, the speaker is Sir Thomas More, as portrayed in Robert Bolt’s dynamic play, “A Man for All Seasons.” More is being challenged by Cardinal Wolsey to “come along” with him and others in supporting Henry VIII’s desire for a divorce in order to remarry and produce an heir to the throne. For Wolsey, the divorce is a slight inconvenience, but for More, the matter is of great consequence to his soul, to his very self.

More’s statement illustrates two fundamental meanings of the Latin root word, *conscientia*, conscience and consciousness. For More, the weight of conscience and consciousness often challenges those with vested interests such as Cardinal Wolsey who says to More: “If you could just see facts flat on, without that horrible moral squint; with just a little common sense, you could have been a great statesman.

What is conscience? First, let’s look at what it is not. It is not “God’s will,” sudden insight, intuition, a feeling, a whim, or any one of a hundred

varieties of someone’s subjective disposition. And conscience, when invoked, can be weak, dull, wrong, or proven wrong by additional information, by a change in circumstances, by greater discernment.

For Protestant theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, conscience is the self judging in the presence of others, a court of final recourse. In *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, the bishops at Vatican II stated: “In the depths of their conscience humans detect a law which they do not impose themselves, but which holds them to obedience. The voice of conscience can speak to their hearts more specifically... Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of humans. There they are alone with God.”

The language surrounding conscience reveals the difficulty in narrowly defining what conscience is: an inner law, a voice, along with God, speaking to hearts.

What we can detect here is the sense in which conscience is a unique aspect of each person, directing him or her to profound attunement to moral value in an awakening to consciousness and impelling to action. We can all come to a conclusion regarding what we

ought or ought not to do, but there is still what Karl Rahner calls an “existential gap” between our *knowledge* of what to do and what we *actually do*. Conscience plunges us into that gap.

In some profound way, conscience is intimately related to character. Conscience concerns not only *what* we do, but *who* we are, the sort of persons we are becoming. Conscience is a developmental phenomenon. In our

earliest years, “conscience” takes on the form of a Jiminy Cricket, an external agent sitting on the shoulder of our developing

Pinocchio self. That development from external authority to inner voice, is precisely what we call the “formation” of conscience.

That sense of formation came home to me with great clarity when I was working with Lawrence Kohlberg’s concept of moral development. Interviewing high school sophomores in the Boston area, we asked them, in the case of a man prosecuted for stealing a rare drug to save his wife’s life, whether the judge should take into consideration that the man acted “out of conscience.” I was puzzled when the students said they did not understand the question until I realized that for that age group, conscience was the feeling, usually of guilt or relief, which *followed* an action, not the self discerning value in making a judgment *to* action.

The formation of conscience can be seen vividly in the life of a

**Conscience is intimately related to character. It concerns not only what we do, but who we are.**



Martin Luther King, Jr., who arrived at his principled actions after years of deliberation, challenge and conflict with others. While a strong conscience is indeed formed over the years by friends, family, and society, often a “good” conscience demands acting against those very people or institutions. Today the influence of media, especially television, plays a key part, for better or for worse, in the active formation of conscience and reveals the importance of images and imagination in the forming of good consciences. The Gospel images of Jesus became the formative “media” for King in his approach to non-violence.

Conscience, then, is formed, acquired, challenged, at times seemingly spontaneous, at times a drawn out, agonizing process. For Catholics to challenge authority is an especially agonizing process precisely because of the central place of authority, both in the person of the Pope and in doctrine. Yet even here and in all cases of conscience, it is simply not enough to state that, “I am acting out of conscience,” when acting out of deeply held feelings on some matter. Although the movement of conscience is ultimately not a matter of reason alone, the formation of a “good” conscience demands that feelings be informed by evidence, reason and principles for action. For conscience involves a judgment leading to action. Often so-called “conscience” is too easy, weak, or even dull, uninformed by the injustice and violence surrounding us daily in the world in which we live.

King struggled to awaken the

“conscience of the nation” as did those in the Vietnam anti-war movement. The process was slow, deliberate and painstaking, involving great sacrifice and even death. All too often our consciences are dulled by habit, by a comfortable religiosity which overlooks the plight of the marginalized when they are different. The task of a prophetic church is to afflict the comfortable while comforting the afflicted.

While the words of the Constitution or the message of the Gospel were important and key elements in forming the national conscience, it took the sight of Bull Connor’s dogs and fire hoses turned on peaceful demonstrators, or the television picture of a young woman running aflame down a road in Vietnam, to rouse national consciousness and conscience. Imagination is another key element in the formation of conscience. What are the images people see, what stories do they hear and read? It takes people of conscience to narrate those stories.

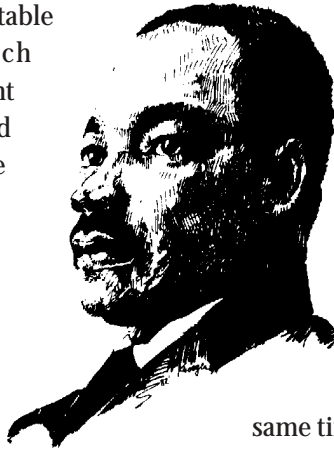
The most powerful story for Christians is of a man who challenged the priestly caste of his day, opted for a non-violent rebellion against the Roman occupiers of his land, and paid the price by death. In the Catholic tradition with imbedded hierarchy, conscience assumes a special importance that it may not have in other Christian and religious

traditions which do not have such a centralized teaching authority. Vatican II’s *Declaration on Religious Freedom* recognizes this struggle when it states: “In all their activity humans are *bound* to fol-

low their consciences faithfully. It follows that they are not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to conscience. Nor are they to be restrained from acting in accordance with their consciences, especially in matters religious.” At the

same time, the *Declaration* also notes that “in the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the church.” But ultimately conscience must serve as “a sacred and sovereign monitor,” in the words of Cardinal Newman, who argued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that conscience trumps church authority, a heady notion at that time.

And in the end, matters of conscience are not matters of reasoned debate, of intuition, or of whim, but as Thomas More’s character asserts: “Well, finally, it isn’t a matter of reason; finally it’s a matter of love.” Love of the divine as surely as love of self and others. Conscience calls us forth to be our most true selves in pursuit of a higher value and the willingness to pay a price, if necessary. We may not be called to be a More or King in giving our lives, but we are called to remain true to our selves and our calling to do justice, to speak truth, to make peace. ~





Sr. Jeannine Gramick, PhD, co-founded New Ways Ministry, a national, Catholic social justice center working for the reconciliation of lesbian/gay people and the church.

## Conscience: Following One's Deepest Beliefs

### **What inspired you to work with gay and lesbian Catholics? Was there a moment of transformation?**

A gay man, Dominic Bash, first inspired me. I met him when I was a grad student at the University of Pennsylvania; he became an early organizer for AIDS research funding. "What is the Catholic Church doing for my gay brothers and sisters?" he asked me. In 1971, the answer was, "Nothing."

Dominic had been in religious life, and thought that because he was gay there was incompatibility. There *isn't* incompatibility, but that was the thinking at the time. Dominic had a lot of gay friends who were former Catholics. At the time that I met them, I had lots of preconceptions about gay people that were wrong. Talking to Dominic and his friends, I realized that all these people are just as normal as everyone else.

### **Can you tell us about your experience attending film showings of "In Good Conscience"?**

I am amazed by the people who speak up at the film showings—they are *hungering* to follow their deepest beliefs. People *know* that the right thing to do is to follow their conscience, regardless of the consequences. That knowledge comes from their relationship with God. I knew this, of course, but it gives me renewed hope.

I have heard from many gay Catholics who have left the church. Seeing the film has given

them a new vision of the Church as the people of God, not ecclesiastical authority. A desire to be part of that community has inspired them to return to the church.

### **You have had to take risks in your work. What advice would you give to others facing risk?**

Pray for the courage to take the risk. For whatever reason, God put in my heart a desire to work on behalf of gay and lesbian people. When I followed that call, I feared that I would be dismissed from my community. I was separated from that community, but I

wasn't dismissed. In joining another community [the Sisters of Loretto], I have found greater peace and freedom. I am now part of a community that shares more of my values of risk-taking.

I am in a better space.

Talking to God is the most important thing for me. The hub of my prayer is the Gospels. Meditating on the paschal mystery of dying and rising has been important for me. If you take a risk, not knowing what's going to happen, there is great anguish and pain, but the flowering will be much lovelier and greater.

Following one's conscience is the most vital part of being human. Primacy of conscience is the most important tenet, or teaching, not just of our church, but also of other faiths. If you believe in God, you need to talk things over with God. You can call it prayer, or meditation, or coming into touch with the spirit or with the divine.

**What would you say to some-**

### **one called to take an action that his/her community doesn't support?**

Acknowledge that one is called to do something, and pray for the courage and grace to do it, and also to be in a lonely place. One should not feel guilty if one feels that one *can't* do it. If one *can* do it, the grace will be there.

### **How would you characterize Catholic movements for social change?**

I see so much passivity in my church. People, including me, grumble about things that we don't like, but then we don't take action to change them. Our training to be obedient seems to come into play. We haven't thought about ecclesiastical disobedience.

We collaborate with the oppression that we feel. We say, "The pastor won't let us do this...." I say, "Do it anyway." Seek others and organize.

The civil rights movement and women's movement grew from acts of civil disobedience. In the civil arena, we have crossed over, but within the church, we haven't.

Jesus set aside lots of the rules and regulations of his time. If we are to find some sort of movement for change in the church today, it has to come from the same sorts of actions. In Boston, people organized round-the-clock sit-ins to protest the closures of the parishes. As a result, some of the positions have been reversed. It took ecclesiastical disobedience. ~

*In Good Conscience* is a documentary that chronicles Sister Jeannine Gramick's ministry and journey of faith.  
www.ingoodconscience.org

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# Book Review: *Cloud of Witnesses*

Gretchen Gundrum, PhD

*Cloud of Witnesses* (Orbis Books, 2005), by Jim Wallis and Joyce Hollyday, recounts the lives of saints in our times. The theme that runs through each chapter is a bedrock commitment to the message of the Gospel: doing justice for the poor and those who have no voice. Many names will be familiar: Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Henri Nouwen, Sojourner Truth, Oscar Romero, Jean Donovan, Thomas Merton, Dom Helder Camara, and Daniel Berrigan. But others—perhaps not so well-known—will equally

inspire and stir the reader.

Chuck Matthei, an activist who saw the connection between economics, non-violence, and justice, encouraged others to find their own inner light. Jon Sobrino, the one Jesuit who escaped murder in El Salvador because he wasn't home when the death squad came for his household, continues to fight oppression and poverty. South African Albertina Sisulu combated apartheid all her life. Sr. Dianna Ortiz, a school teacher in Guatemala, was raped and tortured by operatives connected

to the CIA. Getting to the truth of her own torture, and that of the Guatemalan people, has shaped her soul. Fr. Elias Chacour, a Palestinian and Catholic priest, has spent his life working against hatred and divisions between Israelis and Palestinians. He has built libraries to give hope and combat violence.

These are a few of the ordinary yet extraordinary people whose stories continue to change lives. Reading one each day could be a very helpful spiritual practice. ~

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## Book Resources

### **Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story**

Christina Baldwin

New World Library, 2005

Whether we are building community, healing generational wounds, or creating stronger organizations, sharing our individual stories is essential and powerful. Using stories of hope, the author shows us how to tell our stories.

### **The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century**

Thomas L. Friedman

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005

For Friedman the world is “flat,” meaning that we are “connected” instantaneously with billions of other people across the planet. In reality, the global economy is being driven by individuals all over the world who are competing for and winning jobs.

### **Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate—The Essential Guide for Progressives**

George Lakoff

Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004

Lakoff outlines the traditional American values that progressives hold, but are often unable to articulate; breaks down the ways in which conservatives have framed the issues; and provides examples of how progressives can reframe the debate.

### **Restoring Hope**

Cornell West

Beacon Press, 1999

Through interviews with leading politicians, writers, musicians, journalists, and scholars, West shows how hope and meaning in the African American community can be created and maintained.

### **Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future**

Margaret J. Wheatley

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002

“The intent of this book is to encourage and support you to begin conversations about things that are important to you and those near you,” Wheatley writes. Her 10 “conversation starters” are designed to begin conversations capable of healing everything from personal relationships to organizational dysfunction to world discord.

### **The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth And Transformation**

Frans Wijsen, Peter Henriot, Rodrigo Mejia, eds.

Orbis Books, 2005

Explores the use of the pastoral circle, a four-step process that moves from discernment to action, in which social analysis is a key step.



## Women's Justice Circles

**Toppenish—Mujeres Fuertes**, "Women of Strength," a Latina organizing group was formed to address family support in the public arena.

**Spokane—Transitional Living Center** will participate in advocacy training in preparation for meeting with state and national legislators.

**Sunnyside—Nuestra Casa**, organizing to insure the community center meets the needs of the Latino community.

**Seattle—Cristo Rey Parish**, meeting with legislators about the "Dream Act" and immigrant rights issues.



*Renton Women's Justice Circle*



*Toppenish Women's Justice Circle*

**Seattle—Jubilee Women's Center**, addressing the root cause of lack of access to housing by designing an advocacy process on living wage that involves low-income women.

## The Power of ONE: Faith and Global Justice Conference at Seattle University

Over 500 people attended the Seattle November 19<sup>th</sup> event—the largest of its kind organized in the country. IPJC served as the local organizer and co-convened the conference with Bread for the World. Keynote speakers Rev.



Mpho Tutu and Rick Steves (above) focused on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Six workshops were offered with sessions on individual goals, including Jacquelline Fuller's (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) presentation on MDG 6 entitled, "Pitfalls & Progress in Fighting AIDS & Other Diseases of the Poor."



*Jacquelline Fuller*

## Same Fate as the Poor



*Cast of Same Fate as the Poor*

To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church women martyred in El Salvador, IPJC co-sponsored a play written by local playwright Ellen Cooper. Proceeds from the play are supporting healthcare, education and Base Christian Communities in El Salvador through the ministries of the Maryknoll Sisters, Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and Sisters of Providence.

# peace & justice center

Who doesn't love a bargain? That's why over half of us shop at Wal-Mart each week. However, increasing numbers of us are becoming aware of why Wal-Mart can guarantee *Always Low Prices!* We are realizing that low prices come at a high cost to workers in the US and globally, to small businesses, to taxpayers and to the environment.

The week of November 13-19, in over 7,000 churches, schools, community centers homes and theaters, concerned citizens gathered to view and discuss a new documentary, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*. The Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment (NWCRI) sponsored screenings in Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, and Oregon.

In December NWCRI members filed shareholder resolutions with Wal-Mart on the following issues:

**Compensation Disparity** calls on the board to review and report on the comparison of senior executive compensation and the company's lowest paid workers, and whether the former is excessive. In 2005 the CEO's compensation was approximately 1,000 times the *average* pay of Wal-Mart employees.

**Report on Public Health Impact of Wal-Mart Stores** requests the board to report on the public health services used by Wal-Mart employees. A confidential memo to the Board, leaked to the media in October, found that almost half of employees' children are on public assistance or uninsured.

## Take Action!

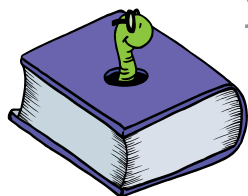
**Consider changing your membership** from Sam's Club to Costco.

Average Pay	Company Health Insurance
Wal-Mart: \$9.68/hr	Wal-Mart: 48%
Costco: \$16/hr	Costco: 82%
Resource: <a href="http://www.laborresearch.org/print.php?id=391">www.laborresearch.org/print.php?id=391</a>	

**Join IPJC for Church Advocacy Day on February 23** and talk to your legislators about the Washington State Fair Share Health Care Bill, which would apply to employers of over 5,000 full- and part-time employees.

## Young Adult Justice Book Club

Join us to read, discuss and act on an issue of justice. Young adults include people from college age to their 30's. For details contact IPJC: 206.223.1138 or [ipjc@ipjc.org](mailto:ipjc@ipjc.org)



## Church Advocacy

### Honor the Vision—Justice for All

Olympia: **February 23, 2006**

10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Columbia Room-Capitol Building

The day will include:

- ✓ Presentations by Governor Gregoire, Bishop Elizondo and legislators
- ✓ Legislative Briefings
- ✓ Appointments with our legislators

**Contact us ASAP** to join us for the day, 206.223.1138 or [ipjc@ipjc.org](mailto:ipjc@ipjc.org).

### Additional Briefing Days

**Spokane:** February 21, 2006

**Everett:** January 26, 2006

**Vancouver:** January 28, 2006

**Bellingham:** February 4, 2006

**Yakima:** February 11, 2006

### Catholic High School Advocacy Day

Thursday, March 2, 2006

## Parenting for Peace & Justice

This winter parents with young children will be meeting in South Seattle. For details contact IPJC: 206.223.1138 or [ipjc@ipjc.org](mailto:ipjc@ipjc.org)



# New Year Reflection

## COMMUNITY AND CONVERSATION: BECOMING THE CHANGE

**Set Up:** Arrange chairs for participants around a ritual table. Put on the table a cloth and small candles, one for each participant. Have soft instrumental music ready.

**Setting:** Gather a small group—church, family, friends, co-workers—and welcome people to participate in a time of contemplation and conversation for transformation. Prior to the gathering, give each person a copy of Pat Kozak's article from pages one and two of *A Matter of Spirit*.

### Gather

**Read:** Story of Nate from the front cover of *A Matter of Spirit*.

(Note to facilitator: prepare to hand out the reflection question and elements)

**Quiet:** Play soft instrumental music. Invite people into a time of quiet to reflect on their own story, a significant experience that invited transformation. Invite people to consider the following elements of their experience:

- ∞ **Liminality:** How was I able to embrace the unknown, or be open to possibility?
- ∞ **Contemplation:** In what way did I "hold" the experience that enabled me to receive it as a gift?
- ∞ **Communion:** Did I experience a sense of communion, that all is one in the situation?

### Sharing

Invite people to:

- ∞ briefly share their story
- ∞ include the elements of liminality, contemplation and communion
- ∞ share how they were invited to personal transformation.

As each shares his/her story we invite you to attentive, appreciative listening.

**Facilitator:** Let's take a few minutes of quiet to consider what we have heard.

- ∞ What are the common elements in our stories?

**Quiet:** 3-4 minutes

**Sharing:** Let's share what we have heard, and the common elements in our stories.

**Group process:** As we reflect on the common elements that emerged from the individual transformation stories, how might we go about creating and encouraging those elements of transformation in a communal context?

**Closure:** Read the poem on page two and then ask each person to identify one way she/he hopes to support communal/collective transformation in the New Year.

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

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Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia  
Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, Western Province  
Tacoma Dominicans

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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

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## Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

1216 NE 65th St  
Seattle, WA 98115

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