

# ConnTact

United  
Church  
News



134th  
Annual  
Meeting

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Delegates, visitors, and clergy from every corner of the state came together on three beautiful autumn days to do the work and worship of the Conference: the 258 churches that together comprise the UCC in Connecticut. Meeting at Killingly High School in Danielson, Conn., the 134th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference heard from scholars of the Middle East and Islam, attended an array of 20 workshops, played UCC Jeopardy, approved a \$5.7

gations about Islam and nonviolence.

In an extraordinary suspension of the rules, delegates voted to allow a resolution to be brought from the floor, in light of special circumstances. A resolution "Safeguarding of Civil Liberties" was proposed by the Reverend Thomas MacMillan of Second Congregational Church in Coventry, who was an attorney prior to ordination. The resolution states that "legitimate security needs of our country can be achieved without erod-

ing the liberties and freedoms" we enjoy. The resolution "encourages our churches, our legislators, and our public policy

advocate to oppose any proposals that would (for example): permit indefinite detention of non-citizens without probable cause...permit the use of wire tapping and electronic surveillance without the normal safeguards that ensure privacy.... permit law enforcement officials to conduct secret searches."

## How Will We Be Christ's People?

In her annual address, Conference Minister Davida Foy Crabtree, asked the question, "How will we be Christ's People?" She paid moving tribute to Connecticut's clergy, who have faced one of the heaviest burdens in pastoral care giving not only for the bereaved, but for those who survived the events of September 11. And she announced programs for clergy that will help refresh and nourish them spiritually.

"It is absolutely critical," she asserted, "that our response be rooted in our Christian identity. She announced the creation of a new section on the Conference website (www.ctucc.org), which will provide different theological perspectives relative to Christian responses and also an interactive FIDO\* email discussion

*Continued on page A12*



*The Annual Meeting was punctuated by installation of Associate Conference Ministers (clockwise from top), a keynote from Dr. Jane Smith, direction from Board Chair Alan Green, preaching from Alice O'Donovan, moderating from Graham Davidson, inspiration from Laity Award recipient Samantha Leathers, keynote insights from Dr. Dale Bishop, and an impassioned address from Conference Minister Davida Foy Crabtree.*



## Simple Gifts, Differing Gifts

BY HAL CHORPENNING

million budget and a \$2.7 goal for Our Church's Wider Mission for 2002, voted two resolutions in the wake of September 11, and worshipped God together.

### Resolutions on Peace and Civil Liberties

Resolutions speak *to* our churches, rather than *for* our churches, so they require your congregation's consideration with care and intention. (Full text is available at [www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org) and will be sent to each church.) Two resolutions were passed at this year's meeting.

The Church of Christ in Yale University (a UCC congregation) brought a resolution to Annual Meeting calling for the Conference Board of Directors to communicate with the President, Secretary of State, and our representatives in Congress, "urging them to follow the force of law not the law of force," and recommending the "criminal justice system to bring perpetrators of this crime to justice rather than resorting to war." The resolution also urges congregations to hold special offerings for two separate appeals: the UCC's "Hope from the Rubble" appeal and the "Afghan Emergency Fund" and to educate our own congre-

# Thanksgiving Spirit



The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister

As I write this column, we have just concluded Annual Meeting. That always puts me in a thanksgiving spirit! Yes, in my exhaustion thankful that it is over, but much more profoundly, thankful for the life of this Conference and its witness. So many people pitch in and help the meeting go well. Even when there are rough spots, the delegates are very forgiving. Debate on resolutions takes place in a civilized manner – at least that is how it appears from my seat on the stage. Proponents advocate for adoption with conviction; opponents express their discomfort or their disagreement clearly and without apolo-

gy. In the end we usually have a stronger and more inclusive document than when we started. Our closing worship this year was moving as Alice O'Donovan preached on the new covenant written on the hearts of God's people, and communion was accompanied by Bill Zito on the piano. Toward the end, Bill spontaneously moved into "We Shall Overcome", and when we sang "We are not afraid" with our hands joined symbolically around Christ's table at which we had just communed, it was a powerful moment.

So I am in a thankful mode today. And as I look ahead to the week of November 18, I find myself reflecting on the renewed meaning of the holiday for us this year. I pray that as we approach Thanksgiving, we will keep our focus on God and God's great gifts to us and to all people. It is going to be very tempting this year to make the holiday a celebration of American civil religion, an indulgence in giving God thanks for the freedoms and virtues of America. And we are, of course, abundantly thankful for the privilege of living in this land! Yet thanksgiving needs to be an occasion when we touch down on the solid ground of God's grace and promise in a time that feels precarious and fearful for so many. As we celebrate the harvest, may our thoughts turn to those who have far less than we

do – to the many families with no source of income right now, to the Afghan refugees, to uprooted and displaced Colombians and the silent hungry of our world. Thanksgiving can be a time to get ourselves in perspective again.

*As we celebrate the harvest, may our thoughts turn to those who have far less than we do – to the many families with no source of income right now, to the Afghan refugees, to uprooted and displaced Colombians and the silent hungry of our world.*

I look forward to those days in late November when family gathers for a feast, for the last breath of autumn as winter hovers near, for hints about Christmas surprises and plans for time together. May your Thanksgiving be filled with a deep and true thankfulness for God's guiding grace and sustaining promise in our lives!

ORIGINAL SPIN • THE REV. HAL CHORPENNING

# Sacrifice Reconsidered

As those who study the world's religions will tell you, sacrifice is one of the basic characteristics of major religious traditions. I'm not just talking about the human slaughter of the Incas or the animal slaughter of Santería (or the Hebrew Bible). From a religious studies perspective, we sacrifice each Sunday in our churches.

Think about it: we give the first fruits of our labor in offering and then carry them to the communion table (which looks and acts like an altar), we sing while bringing them, and we say a dedicatory prayer over them. I've noticed that we're talking more about sacrifice since September 11, mostly in the nature of what sacrifices we are called to make on behalf of our national security. But discussion of sacrifice in the context of mainline Protestantism is virtually nonexistent.

Why? Sacrifice is "messy." Sacrifice is "ritualistic" and "non-Protestant." Sacrifice is "outdated." And the Letter to the Hebrews states that since Jesus was the "perfect sacrifice," no further sacrifices were needed...at least those of goats, bulls, and heifers. But I wonder if we're missing the point when we

dismiss the idea of sacrifice wholesale.

I suppose it depends upon how one defines sacrifice and one's motivation for making a sacrifice. The ancient Hebrews were especially fond of burnt offerings as a means of atonement or thanksgiving, yet the prophet Amos records the famous critique: "I hate, I despise your festivals" and God refuses burnt offerings, preferring justice and righteousness. Those sacrifices were empty, such that if one committed a sin, expiation could be gained through offering. A sense of *quid pro quo* "lite" seems to be what Amos (and God) find objectionable.

But what about us, who find ourselves as Christians in the 21st century? Our sacrifice usually comes in the forms of time, talent, and treasure. And while the idea of willingly giving up a chunk of our financial influence is profoundly countercultural, it has merit. It's not that our gifts provide atonement with God; rather, they help influence the justice and righteousness of which Amos writes. It's not that giving to the church establishes a linkage to God for the giver (as the smell of searing flesh was thought to please God), but that it is a significant way to use our energies to help bring in the kingdom of God here and now.

Why bother with sacrifice? Ask 11-year-old Sam Leathers, who won the Conference Laity Award this year, asking for charitable donations in lieu of birthday presents. Giving is a profound spiritual discipline for our culture. Not the kind of giving that allots expendable income, but the kind of giving that causes us to really think hard about what we're doing. If we give intentionally, we are engaged in sacrifice. And if we sacrifice, we become more deeply engaged in our communities of faith and in our relationship with God. Being willing to "go without" on behalf of justice, kindness, righteousness, and faith is a way that we can make a sacrifice that matters.

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# A Prayer at Ground Zero

## Let the Healing Begin

THE REV. DEAN C. AHLBERG

With his wife, Jennifer, and her sister, Robin, the Rev. Dean Ahlberg, pastor at First Church of Christ Congregational in Redding did Wednesday, Sept. 26, what so many bereft families of World Trade Center victims are doing. They went to New York City's Ground Zero in search of healing, for Robin's husband was one who died in the disaster. Below are excerpts from Mr. Ahlberg's subsequent sermon, "A Prayer at Ground Zero: Let the Healing Begin," in which he detailed this heartbreaking yet heartwarming experience.

On Wednesday of this past week, my wife Jennifer and I did one of the most difficult things we've ever had to do. We accompanied Jennifer's sister, Robin, into Manhattan, to the Family Center set up at the pier at 54th Street and 12th Avenue, to meet with attorneys to expedite a death certificate for Robin's husband, Tom. After accomplishing that painful but necessary task, we were ferried – along with 50 other victims' family members — from the pier down to the site of the World Trade Center disaster – now referred to as Ground Zero.

And I want to begin this morning by sharing the details of our story with you. Not to the end of making any of us feel more bereaved and sad than we already do. And not because I couldn't think of much else to say this week, although I suppose that's also true. But rather, I want to share this with you because I want us all to hear about the signs and symbols of healing, the genuine, heartfelt kindness of strangers, that we experienced on so many levels, on that wrenching trip.

Redding's First Selectman, Natalie Ketcham, brought to our attention that under the direction of Governor Rowland, the Connecticut State Police have offered to escort to the Family Center in New York the family members of any World Trade Center victims. So it was that on Wednesday, a Connecticut State Trooper came to our home, picked up Jennifer and me in his squad car, drove to Stamford to pick up Jennifer's sister, and then took the three of us to the city. Trooper Joe Pedevillano couldn't have been more helpful, more sincere, more willing to do anything and everything possible to make an unbearably sad trip bearable. He took us directly to the Family

Center and, with the exception of the ferry ride, stayed with us the entire day. He was at our disposal, he said, to accompany us, and to help us do whatever we needed to do for as long as it took to do it. It was totally opened ended. And I want you to know that reflected in the sensitivity and compassion of that officer, we felt the embrace and support of the entire State of Connecticut.

Once in New York, we experienced the organizational genius of the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management. The Family Center is an absolutely enormous, warehouse-like environment, packed with service agencies, caregivers, food providers and quiet areas to seek comfort. The United States Department of Justice had a victims assistance booth. There was a large booth filled with toys and crafts for children. There was a day care center. There was an international table filled with translators from more nations than I bothered to count.

The American Red Cross was everywhere, offering counseling, dishing out food and beverages; volunteers even walked around with trays of chocolate chip cookies. There were roving social workers and chaplains on the look-out for people in need. One long, long wall was filled with pictures and names of the missing, along with heart-breaking pleas from their families. Propped up on the floor below them, extending the entire length of the wall, there were hundreds of teddy bears, sent to New York by the people of Oklahoma City. A moving and healing gesture by people who know what it means to suffer.

Dozens upon dozens of screened booths were set up, each with a desk

and computer terminal, for the volunteer attorneys. The two attorneys with whom we met were both Yale Law School grads, and just as efficient and kind as they could be, as they expedited the affidavit that, in lieu of any physical remains, will (within two weeks time) yield a death certificate.

Not only was Wednesday the first day of that free legal service, it was also the first day the city had arranged for a ferry to take victim's family members to Ground Zero. The group was limited to fifty, and by the time we heard about it, the police said the boat was already full. When we shared that with our State Trooper, he disappeared for awhile, then reappeared to tell us that all three of us were now on the boat. I don't know what he said or did, but apparently it was effective!

We waited for the boat in one of several waiting areas created for the families. It was carpeted, filled with couches and comfortable chairs, coffee tables with fresh flowers, four television sets, and stores of bottled water and snack foods. It was just about as homey as such a place could be.

The decision to go to Ground Zero was not made lightly. But given that it's likely that such a visit will be the only physical sense of closure she's going to have, my sister-in-law needed to do it. And we needed to be with her. And again, the level of detail, the thoughtfulness and compassion was incredible. A lieutenant in the NYPD, a woman with a PhD in social work, briefed us on what we were going to experience, and told us that we were going to do this together, step by step, as a group.

They handed out donated sweatshirts to those of us who were underdressed for the weather. When we got on the boat, there were social workers and chaplains available. There were cases of bottled water and Kleenex. Two Connecticut state social workers approached us, and to our surprise, called us by name. They wanted us to know that they were on board for us, if we needed them. Jennifer joked that she and her sister had brought their own personal chaplain...me.

And there was more. The city had arranged for specially trained crisis response dogs and a cat to be with us, to offer their own unique comfort to grieving families. To top it off, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani rearranged his entire

day so he could accompany the families on this first trip. And that busy, overworked man sat and visited individually with every family on that boat. He asked Robin about her three boys, and about her husband. He wanted her to send him an article she's written in response to the tragedy. He was authentic, focused, and caring, and his presence, too, was healing.

When we docked down by the site of the World Trade Center, every person on board was given a bouquet of flowers and a small teddy bear. And then, led by the Mayor, we walked to Ground Zero. And I mean right into the heart of darkness. Any closer and we would've been standing on top of the rubble itself. We passed tired construction workers and fatigued firefighters. And there we stood, tears streaming down our faces, trying to absorb what we saw. The utter, massive, beyond words to describe, destruction. The heroic efforts of rescue and construction workers. The American flags waving from cranes. A large banner, sent from a church in Tennessee, emblazoned with the words of Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength."

At one point, a man, a man who'd lost his son in the attack, began to talk loudly, above the din of the trucks and machinery. He was venting his grief, really, and directing it all at Rudolph Giuliani. "After the attack in 1993," he cried, "how could you have been so unprepared for this? How could you let this happen? My boy was in that building. Our lives will never be the same again. Never." On and on he went. It was beyond painful to hear. And although understandable, unfair, really, to the Mayor.

But as the man spoke, as he released his sadness and anger, Giuliani approached him. Touched his arm. And listened. He stood there, and as best as he could, he absorbed the grief of a heartbroken father. And that gesture, the embrace of that man in his sorrow, was, for me, healing.

After fifteen minutes or so, we walked to a small park between the disaster site and the river, and we laid our flowers at a makeshift memorial. Robin, Jennifer and I huddled together, and I offered a prayer at Ground Zero. And then we got back on the ferry, to begin the journey home. To begin the healing, and the journey to a new reality, to a new life.

Try the new toll-free number for the Connecticut Conference Office:  
**1-866-367-2822 (1-866-FOR-CUCC)**

**Windsor**

First Church is offering CPR and First Aid training to Sunday School teachers. As a commitment to the safety and well being of Sunday School children, volunteers are encouraged to take the opportunity for further education with a very helpful and practical skill.

**Danbury**

First Congregational Church Deer Hill Thrift shop provides a unique service to the local school. Volunteer parents borrow costumes for school performances and return them after the show. Costume items from black bow ties to pointy shoes may be found at the thrift shop and they are happy to provide the service. Several schools in the area are grateful for the resource provided by the church.

**Colchester**

Federated Church is looking to have rocking chairs available in the sanctuary for parents to rock their babies during worship. Imagine, parents could be present in worship and rock or feed their babies as well. They asked for donations of used rocking chairs for this purpose.

**Willimantic**

First Congregational Church offered a Baked Potato Sale following church one Sunday. Piping hot baked potatoes with a choice of delicious toppings was offered to eat in or take out. In addition they have a coupon box for church families to deposit unwanted coupons from the Sunday paper and look through for some they might be able to use.

**Bristol**

First Church held an April Foolish Foods and Myths Potluck dinner hosted by the Holistic Caring Committee. Participants were asked share favorite foods that are wholesome, tasty and good for you. A guest speaker was invited to dispel myths about food, herbs and vitamins.

**Hartford/New Britain**

Asylum Hill Congregational Church held a Lenten breakfast series. Breakfast was prepared each Wednesday by the Saturday Morning Men's Group. Members shared their faith stories at the breakfast. The men of First Church in New Britain held a bake sale to benefit the building of a horseshoe pit.

**Bethlehem**

First Church helped pay for their Bell choirs trip to the New England Hand Bell Festival in Burlington, VT by holding a Bells & Bread sale. On the Sundays the bell choirs performed during worship they had a bread sale during coffee hour. Homemade breads such as focaccia, sourdough, challah bread, multigrain and cinnamon/raisin were baked by hand bell ringers and sold.

**Danielson**

Westfield Congregational Church youth group served a pancake supper at Westfield Village. Youth prepared a meal of pancakes, sausage and fresh fruit to 23 residents. Entertainment was provided with old-time favorites being played on the piano and an impromptu sing-along erupted.

**North Guilford**

Congregational Church held a Funeral Service Workshop for families to reflect on what their funeral wishes might be. Options for music, scriptures, the committal, burial practices and other information was shared.

## What is an Associate Conference Minister for Local Ministries?

BY KATHY PETERS

As I begin this new position, there are many expectations and questions as to what this ministry will entail. In short, I am to be available to help resource churches with whatever they might need to do the work of the people of God in the local church! The "official" job description is long and all-encompassing with an emphasis on encouraging relationships among local pastors, educators, lay folks and churches. I see my ministry as being able to direct local churches toward the help that they need as they seek to be the church of Jesus Christ, to assist them in envisioning how they might broaden their ministries, and to help churches and individuals to discern and to share their gifts for ministry.

**The Local Church Ministries Team** will continue to do its work of enabling churches to join together in programs for their common education and ministry.

**The Partners in Education**, a group of educators trained and prepared to assist local church education programs, will be strengthened for its work as consultants to local church educators. Amy Beveridge has been hired as new director of the **Ruth Dudley Resource Center** (and Stewardship Specialist) and will work closely with Sarah Annis, our **Resource Coordinator** to make the print, video, audio and people resources of the conference more accessible to all of our churches.

**The Consultants to Congregations** will expand their skills to be available to congregations for conflict resolution, strategic planning and well congregation evaluations.

**The Church Development Committee** is continuing its work with the new church starts.

Plans are developing to help build stronger **Youth Ministries** in our churches and regions. And efforts will be made to support churches in the areas of worship, spiritual development, ministry of the laity, leadership development and evangelism.

This ministry is a partnership between the local church, the above mentioned staff and volunteers, me and you! None of us can do it alone, but together with a reliance on the love of God and the many gifts which we have been blessed we can envision and work together toward strengthening and expanding the work of our local churches.

I welcome your vision, your prayers, your thoughts and your energy as we work together in the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ.

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I welcome your vision, your prayers, your thoughts and your energy as we work together in the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ.

Wider than what? That's the question I'm usually asked about the somewhat peculiar title of the program I help run for the Connecticut Conference. Not that we have "narrower" church ministries, but Wider Church Ministries implies that there is a ministry that we, all of us, are called to beyond the local parish.

The word "mission" comes immediately to mind, and that is a good part of what I work on with the Wider Church Ministry Team, under the able leadership of Norma Comins of the Second Congregational Church of New London. We have a terrific group of dedicated lay and clergy members who look forward to "birthing and blessing" mission initiatives of local churches who want to share their mission programs with others. Earlier this year, the team held a successful mission-immersion event in Middletown, and we're looking for more ideas to help our churches connect to mission. I also work with our Korean and Colombian partnership committees.

## Wider Church Ministries

BY HAL CHORPENNING

Our missionary endeavors in Connecticut have made history, and today our work through the UCC points us in new directions in mission and ministry. In addition to global mission, Wider Church also implies that we are connected to one another through the association, conference, and national settings of the church. One of my aims is to help churches connect with their fellow UCC members across the Conference and beyond. Through Conntact, FIDO\*, and our website (www.ctucc.org) we are helping to keep you in touch with the UCC beyond your own congregation. I also continue to direct media relations for the Conference.

A key aspect of my position also includes helping people understand Our Church's Wider Mission - the program that enables local congregations to extend their reach beyond the local church to support the ministry and mission of the UCC here in Connecticut, across the nation, and around the world. In addition I work with stewardship and planned giving, and I am happy to announce that we have hired Amy Beveridge as our new stewardship specialist. (Amy will also be director of the Ruth Dudley Resource Center.) Currently, we are searching for a planned giving specialist to help our churches build financial resources for the future.

## Congratulations

to all these Connecticut Churches celebrating anniversaries in 2002

First Church of Christ, Congregational, Farmington	350th
First Congregational Church of Norwalk, Inc.	350th
First Congregational Church of Derby, Inc.	325th
First Congregational Church of East Hartford	300th
First Church of Christ, Congregational, Groton	300th
Buckingham Congregational Church of UCC, Glastonbury	275th
North Branford Congregational Church, UCC	275th
Rocky Hill, Congregational Church	275th
Somers Congregational Church	275th
First Congregational Church of East Windsor	250th
North Greenwich Congregational Church	175th
First Congregational Church of Essex	150th
Mystic Congregational Church	150th
Pilgrim Congregational Church, New Haven	150th
South Congregational Church, East Hartford	125th

The September issue of Conntact included this list, but did not identify their anniversary year as being 2002. We apologize for any confusion.

## The New Office of Justice/Witness Ministries

BY GORDON BATES

Greetings from the Office of Justice/Witness Ministries of the Connecticut Conference, created on July 1, 2001 on the basis of the decision of the Board to express ourselves organizationally in a pattern analogous to that of our national office in Cleveland. Consequently, 125 Sherman St. now has an office related to local church, wider church and justice/witness concerns.



*The Reverends Gordon Bates, Kathy Peters, and Hal Chorpenning staff the areas of Justice & Witness, Local Church, and Wider Church Ministries*

You may be saying to yourself, in your best French accent, "Plus ca change; plus de meme!!" "The more things change, the more they stay the same." Well, yes and no. Changes within the Church are often similar to the fact that the Gospel message is essentially and forever the same message expressed in a myriad of formats, languages and styles and its application will have the variety found in a field of wildflowers in summer, or the autumn foliage in October in New England. I could come up with similes from the other two seasons, but...you get the idea.

Justice issues, over the past four years, have been addressed at the Conference Office level, through the Office of Program and Resources and through the Regional Ministry Teams. Throughout those years, the approach was to observe and respect the ways in which those concerns were being realized in the local church, to give local churches support when requested and to stay active in the state legislature with the help of our Policy Advocate, Kim Harrison. We have tried to stay available to support what was going on and, occasionally, to give birth to what local churches indicated was needed. In a few instances, we initiated some form of advocacy around a critical issue

at the state or federal legislature based on past Conference and Synod Resolutions. All of that will remain the same in the new Office of Justice/Witness Ministries. We (myself, Cecile Gilson and the Conference-wide J/W Ministry Team) will continue to listen to and make ourselves available to local churches.

The changes have occurred in three ways: First, I will be part-time, 20 hrs/week but my sole focus will be on justice issues. Second, the regional J/W Ministry Teams have been consolidated into one team. Consequently, whereas I was usually unable to devote more than a few minutes a week to issues of justice while staffing nine ministry teams, in this new arrangement there will be one team, and more time to research and keep churches informed about national and global concerns, while still supporting Kim in her work at the Capitol. Third, we'll be greatly helped over the next eight months by the time and

energy of Todd Vetter, a 2nd year student at the Yale Divinity School, adding another ten hours a week to our staff.

My approach to this new office remains rooted in five convictions about Justice and Witness:

- That they are, separately and together, integral to the Gospel and to the whole Bible.
- That they have been and remain a central characteristic of the UCC.
- That they are interrelated with Local and Wider Church Ministries.
- That they permeate every aspect of Christian life and faith.
- That they have both personal/individual and corporate/systemic dimensions and implications.

I ask for your prayers as I assume the responsibilities of this office and look forward to working with you in the months ahead. My office phone is 860/233-5564, ext. 115; my email address at 125 Sherman St. is gordonb@ctucc.org; and my home email is <gbates@hartnet.org> if you need to reach me in an emergency on week-ends. My office hours will be Tuesday and Thursday from 9 to 5 and occasionally on Wednesday mornings depending on the evening meeting schedules.

## Sacred Journey 2002 Gearing Up!



In the summer of 2002, the Korean Partnership will coordinate sending up to thirteen youths (High School sophomores-seniors) and two adults to South Korea. The group will visit with partner churches in Kyungki Presbytery and Kyungki Presbytery South, as well as spend time at a rustic youth camp. Tentative dates are July 26-August 8. Estimated travel costs will be \$1,200/youth, plus spending money. Some partial scholarships are available from the Connecticut Conference and perhaps your local church.

Sacred Journey 2002 will be led by the Rev. Linda Barnes of Franklin Congregational Church and Ray Holland III, DCE at Woodmont UCC in Milford. Both Linda and Ray have recently returned from visits to Korea - Ray traveled in April to renew the Partnership agreement during the Kyungki Presbytery's Conference; Linda visited more recently with a delegation in June. Both are excited to return to a faraway land full of friends, and wish to share the excitement with up to thirteen youths from Connecticut UCC churches.

Planning sessions will begin in January 2002 and firm commitments will be required by March.

Interested? Contact Ray Holland at 203-878-3885, or email ray.liz@juno.com.

## TWO SEMINARY INTERNS JOIN CONFERENCE STAFF



Deborah Blood



Todd Vetter

From Andover Newton Theological School, Deborah Blood will be our liaison with the Colombia Partnership Committee. In coordination with the Wider Church Ministry Team, she will be seeking churches willing to establish a partner-church relationship with churches in Colombia. She will also be available for adult education and preaching assignments relative to our work, with the Mennonite Church in Colombia, in fostering peace and providing resources to Colombian people. Hal Chorpenning will supervise her work with the Conference.

From Yale Divinity School, Todd Vetter will be working with the Justice/Witness Ministry Team to establish contacts for the Ministry Team. He will be determining which justice issues are motivating each local church and providing resources for justice ministry. He also will be available for adult education and occasional preaching on his work with the Connecticut Conference. His supervisor will be Gordon Bates.

# CT Women on the New-Cabin Bandwagon

During their two-day retreat at Silver Lake Conference Center in mid-September, the State Board of Connecticut Women of the United Church of Christ voted to sponsor a new cabin at Silver Lake. After a tour of the old cabins and the new construction underway for a double cabin, those assembled voted to sponsor a \$10,000 single cabin. The yearly offering will be dedicated to this endeavor, and the Board suggests that the collections done at District meetings might be added as well. Any Women's Fellowship can contribute by sending their check made out to "CT Women of the UCC" and writing in the memo space, "Silver Lake Cabin." These checks can be mailed to the Connecticut Conference Office at 125 Sherman St, Hartford, CT 06105, attn: Pam DiDio.

## Leave MORE than just an empty pew...Leave a Legacy!



*Include charities in your estate planning and make a difference in the lives that follow.*

"For everything there is a season...and a time for every matter under Heaven." Ecclesiastes 3.1

Leave a Legacy Connecticut is a statewide community program that encourages people to make gifts of accumulated assets to causes they care about. The Connecticut Conference, through its Planned Giving ministry, has participated in the Leave a Legacy program since its formation in 1999. Coordinated by the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, the program promotes awareness of charitable giving. Its message is clear: leave a gift in your will to a cause that is important to you.

Many people believe that they don't have sufficient assets to even have a will, let alone make a charitable gift. Unfortunately, statistics reveal that more than 50% of our population die "intestate" (without a will) and in Connecticut, less than 6% leave charitable bequests in their wills. Without a will, your property, personal belongings, and financial holdings are settled according to state law, not according to how you might have wanted it. Furthermore, nothing goes to charity! Having a will puts you in control of your possessions. You can indicate distribution to the people and the causes that you care for and believe in.

### WHO SHOULD HAVE A WILL?

Almost every adult needs a will regardless

of their life's season...from young couples with small children to older adults doing estate planning. As life's seasons and circumstances change, your will may need revising!

### WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO MAKE A WILL

Just as soon as you have something to leave to someone. What you leave becomes someone else's inheritance. The Bible speaks plainly and often about inheritance — both in terms of what we receive and what we leave behind...the latter SHOULD exceed the former!

### HOW DO I GET STARTED (MAKING A WILL)?

First, make a list of people for whom you are responsible. Then, list your personal assets (property, stocks, cash, cars, life insurance, etc.) Next, think of the individuals and/or charities you wish to remember. Finally, take your lists to a legal advisor who is qualified and preferably experienced in wills and estate planning. Doing your homework first can save you time and expense.

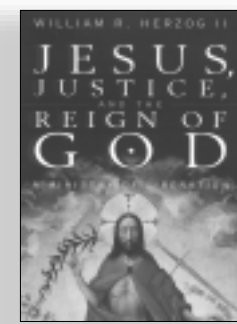
### ANYONE CAN LEAVE A LEGACY

Making a lasting contribution to a charity isn't just for the "wealthy!" Anyone can include a charitable gift in his or her will. In doing so they help make a big difference in the world for generations. Think of it: After providing for your family's needs, you can help fight disease. Inspire children. Feed the hungry. Shelter the homeless. Ensure important future programs at your local church, the Connecticut Conference or UCC national ministries All it takes is a legal will plus your vision and generosity to help make the important work of your church continue benefiting God's world well into the future.

For more information on Leave a Legacy Connecticut, please access the website at [www.CTphilanthropy.org/lal](http://www.CTphilanthropy.org/lal) or call the Connecticut Conference, UCC at 860-233-5564

# Shadowy Figure from Galilee

*Jesus, Justice and the Reign of God*  
by William R. Herzog II  
Westminster and John Knox Press, 2000



This 256 page volume, one of a number of recent books which are part of what is called the "third" quest for the historical Jesus, functions as both a survey of past "quests," and an example of the current desire to utilize new sociological research into the social and cultural context of first century Palestine. Like his previous New Testament study of the parables of Jesus (The Parables as Subversive Speech) this book is clearly written and well organized. It is also refreshingly honest about the limitations of any conclusions about either Jesus or his era. "It is impossible to study the historical Jesus without

doing Christology," a conclusion, Herzog reminds the reader reached by Albert Schweitzer early in the 20th c.

Given that caveat, Herzog is adept and forceful in testing his own thesis, based on his own textual analysis, that much if not most of Jesus' teachings and activities were motivated by two inter-related passions. The first was Jesus' deeply felt concern about the severely oppressive economic conditions of the peasants in Galilee and Judea under constant military domination, conditions that Jesus himself endured as part of that peasant class. The second was Jesus' conviction that the Jerusalem-based, Temple-centered religious leaders of Israel made the lives of those peasants even worse through religious taxation, ritual regulations and an exclusionary theology which reserved true covenantal worship for those who could keep the laws.

Herzog reads in the Gospels a Jesus who demonstrated a new way, based upon prophetic insights of Isaiah and Jeremiah and other ancient voices, a way that proclaimed God's justice and forgiveness. He analyzes in detail numerous key passages, primarily in the Gospel of Mark, to illustrate the new information uncovered in the past quarter century about the economic and religious difficulties facing the bulk of the people of Israel.

The result is a fascinating blend of politics and theology that discusses how Jesus may well have proclaimed his message and performed his deeds of mercy and healing precisely in order to challenge both "the internal elites and the colonial overlords." Moving beyond the role of the traditional prophet, Jesus thus presented himself as a "broker of Yahweh's justice and covenant favor...a mediator of God's healing and saving power, demonstrated by his own healings." This Jesus preached a Gospel that by-passed the Temple and all the hierarchy that participated in the economic woes of the ordinary person and in so doing brought down on his head the wrath of both Rome and Jerusalem. In so doing, Herzog attempts to move away from much current Jesus' scholarship which tends on the one hand to see him as an apolitical healer or aphorist, or on the other as so obscured by the early church's agendas as to be undecipherable.

I recommend the book highly. Herzog leads the reader throughout in a journey that is acknowledged to be tentative and uncertain, but one in which he is convinced is both possible and fruitful. I found his thesis compelling, as one might expect from a Justice/Witness advocate. As Herzog acknowledges, we are all prone to see our own views reflected in Scripture. But I also found his scholarship thorough and well documented. Most important, I found it profoundly satisfying to read a scholar who can take seriously all the various biblical "criticisms" (form, literary, historical among others) and still find more than enough material preserved in the Gospels to attempt, once again, to view more clearly the shadowy figure from Galilee who inspires his followers in each generation to revere as their Christ of faith.

### Positions

**BLOOMFIELD** — The Spiritual Life Center of Bloomfield is seeking an individual for the part time position of Development Director. Some of the qualifications should include strong sense of ministry, relational skills and computer skills. Some development experience is preferred however applicants with experience in public relations and marketing should apply. Submit a cover letter of intent and resume. Contact: The Spiritual Life Center, 120 Mountain Avenue, Bloomfield, CT 06002, Attn: Sr. Cathleen Murtha [1/02]

**CHESTER** — The United Church of Chester is seeking an enthusiastic part time organist/choir director for its adult choir. Major responsibilities include 10 am Sunday service. Flexible schedule-usually rehearsals before and after service plus seasonal weekday evening. Fun-loving, loyal choir members. Very fine organ and baby grand piano. Excellent salary. Contact: Organist Search Committee, United Church of Chester, PO Box 383, Chester, CT 06412 Call the church for more details. 860-526-2697. [11/01]

**COLOMBIA** — Columbia Congregational UCC is looking for a Church School Coordinator for birth through 6th grade. Approximately 30 hours per month for mid-August to mid-June. Salary \$4500. Contact: Jackie Kittle, 860-228-9306 [11/01]

**COLUMBIA** — Columbia Congregational Church is seeking an interim Organist/Choir director to enhance worship with spirit-filled music. Applicants should be familiar with traditional and some contemporary music. Would direct adult choir (20-25), and children's choir (10-15). American Organ Builders electronic organ with 2 manuals and a set of chimes. 15 hrs. per week. Salary is \$11,000-13,250, commensurate with experience. Would be considered for regular position if desired. Contact: David Pearce at (860) 228-4669 or husky58@yahoo.com [1/02]

**HARTFORD** — Historic Black Congregational church is seeking a skilled organist and choir director for interim P/T position. Candidate must be familiar with back church hymnody, sacred anthems and display competence on the pipe and Hammond organs. Candidate must also be proficient in voice and piano music. Previous experience in directing church choirs desired. Interim will rehearse the Chancel choir once weekly and direct the choir and play the organ on two Sundays of the

month. Degree in music preferred. Competitive salary offered. Contact: Music Search Committee, Faith Congregational Church, 2030 Main St. Hartford, CT 06120, Attn: Dr. Headley [1/02]

**HARTFORD** — Youth Ministries Specialist sought to serve as a resource to the churches of the CT Conference with a major emphasis on initiating and strengthening the youth ministries of local congregations and conference-wide. The position will be for 21 hours per week and will replace the three seven hour regional positions. Position begins January 1, 2002. For a complete job description and to apply please contact the office of the Rev. Kathy Peters, Associate Conference Minister for Local Church Ministries at 125 Sherman Street Hartford 06105. Telephone: 860-233-5564 Ext. 121. E-mail [kathyp@ctucc.org](mailto:kathyp@ctucc.org)

**NEW HAVEN** — Dixwell UCC is looking for a Director of Music/Organist. Responsibilities include directing the Amistad Choir, holding weekly rehearsals, playing for Sunday worship service as well as special services held during the year. Some weddings and funerals as well. Send or fax resume. Contact: Dixwell Avenue Congregational UCC, 217 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511 203-787-5839, fax 203-777-7341. [11/01]

**ORANGE** — Orange Congregational Church is seeking an interim Director of Christian Education for 20 hours per week to give leadership to a church school of about 130 students in grades N-8th. OCC is a 900+ membership church in suburban New Haven. The interim could become permanent depending upon circumstances. Contact: Rev. Tod King 203-795-9749 [1/02]

**RIDGEFIELD** — Ridgebury Congregational Church, a friendly country church, seeks a part-time organist/choir director. Benefits include music-loving congregation, wonderful organ and acoustics. Primary responsibility is leading music for Sunday service. Additional opportunity to increase the musical involvement of young people. Position starts 1/1/02. Contact: Music Search Committee, Ridgebury Congregational Church, 602 Ridgebury Road, Fidgefield, CT 06877 Fax (203) 748-3568 or Michael Taylor (203) 431-8278 [1/02]

**SOMERSVILLE** — The Congregational Church of Somersville is seeking a part-time organist/choir director, adult and youth choirs. Rehearsals and 10 am

Sunday service. An Allen Renaissance model R-230 organ was recently purchased. Contact: Johanna 860-763-1717 or fax resume to 860-749-5132. [1/02]

**STAMFORD** — North Stamford Congregational Church seeks a part-time Christian Education Director to supervise the Church School, deliver weekly inspirational messages and lead the Sr. Youth Group. The ideal candidate is a creative, energetic person with prior experience working with teens, good communication skills, and a sense of humor. The position requires a commitment of approximately 15 hours a week from September through May. Please submit letter of interest and resume. Contact: Board of Christian Education, North Stamford Congregational Church, 31 Cascade Road, Stamford, CT 06903. (203) 322-1255, Fax (203) 968-8432. [12/01]

**TERRYVILLE** — Director of Christian Education needed to prepare teaching materials and events, recruit and train teachers/youth advisors, select curriculum and work with youth groups. Flexible 25-hours week, 40-weeks per year. Must work Sundays and Summer Vacation Bible School. Compensation is competitive within Conference guidelines. Prefer ACE certification or equivalent, plus curriculum selection experience. Send profile/resume to: Contact: DCE Terryville Congregational Church, 233 Main St. Terryville, CT 06786. (860) 589-0182. [1/02]

**THOMASTON** — First Congregational Church is seeking a part time Youth Director for newly developing youth ministry program. Approximately ten hours per week. Must have some youth ministry experience. Please send resume and brief statement of belief. Contact: First Congregational Church, 135 Main Street, Thomaston, CT 06787 c/o Youth Director Search Committee [first.congregational@snet.net](mailto:first.congregational@snet.net) or Carol Pytel, 860-283-4937 [11/01]

**WEST HARTFORD** — Anyone interested in working with the First Korean Congregational Church in the World? Anyone interested in working with wonderful kids who can speak at least two languages? Anyone interested in working with a 100 year old dream now unfolding? Anyone interested in working with covenant? 3 - 4 hours per week, \$500 per month. Contact: Rev. Chang Ho Jun, First Korean UCC 860-582-0342 [11/01]

**WOODSTOCK** — Associate Minister for Youth/Director of Youth Ministries: The congregations of the East Woodstock

Cong'l and the First Cong'l Churches of Woodstock seek a charismatic leader for the thriving senior high youth ministry and youth group they share, preferably ordained or preparing for ordination. Strong focus on spiritual growth of youth, of three to four lay youth leaders and 12 member youth ministry team. Involvement in worship life of the churches. Part time: 20 hours per week at \$15 to 20 per hour, 10 months per year, rate to be based on education and experience. Contact: Search Committee First Cong'l Church PO Box 147 Woodstock, CT 06281 860-928-7405 [1/02]

### Sell or Give

For Mac Computer: from subscription service, three years of church newsletter text material and graphics, including two years ('98 & '99) on monthly CD's. Contact: Lee Collins 860-435-0051 [12/01]

**CANTON CENTER** - Free for the taking, woden hymnal racks for pews (painted brown). Available: 66 each of 28" long x 8 1/2" deep and also, 32 each of 30" long x 10" high x 2 1/2" deep. Contact: 860-693-4581.

**MANCHESTER** — Free! Glass communion cups, 30 dozen. Wooden storage racks included. Contact: Church Administrator, Center Congregational Church, M-F, 9 AM to 3 PM. (860) 647-9941 [CenterUCC@aol.com](mailto:CenterUCC@aol.com) [1/02]

**NEWTOWN** — The Newtown congregational Church has curriculum they would like to give to a church in need. There is "Whole People of God" and Augsburg Press curriculum. Contact: Ester Nichols, Superintendent, 203-426-2897 or 203-788-1398 [1/02]

**SEYMOUR** — Free 18 medium blue Junior Choir robes with collars in good condition. Contact: Cherie@sutherlandins.com, Cherie Wiess, Director of Music, (203) 729-4177. [1/02] Service Correctional Enterprises of Connecticut offers a Church Pew Refinishing Service. MacDougall-Walker C.I. will refurbish church pews at a fraction of the cost of purchasing new pieces. Excellent workmanship and quality finishing are offered at reasonable prices. Work done by inmates provides training and a sense of accomplishment. Contact: Fax 860-692-7628, Telephone 860-842-1146, Correctional Enterprises of Connecticut, 24 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109 [11/01]

## EVENTS

Nov. 3, 2001 9 AM – Noon Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Asylum St. Hartford Workshop on Rotational Model, An Innovative and Interactive Church School Program, includes Rotational Model overview, hands-on experience and discussion. Cost: \$10 Contact: 860-525-5696

Nov. 3, 2001 • Walker Center 171 Grove St., Newton, MA • Working it out: Conflict Resolution Skills for High School Youth Leaders • High School youth leaders will learn practical skills to engage their youth groups in peacemaking. Cosponsored with the Youth Ministries Program of the MA Conference of the UCC. Lisa Cureton, Educators for Social Responsibility. For more information call 617-969-3919 Contact: walkercenter@rcn.com

Wednesday, November 7, 11 AM - 2 PM • Stratford Congregational Church • Does Your Church Need Bifocals? • The Rev. Marian Shearer New York State Conference Minister Upstate Region will be the keynote speaker at CAUCE Covered Dish Luncheon & Annual Meeting Cost: Covered Dish Contact: Marji Hughes 203-729-3037

Nov. 9-10, 2001 • Walker Center 171 Grove St., Newton, MA • Ecumenical Initiative to Counter Racism • Uses the Episcopal Diocese curriculum to dialogue and participate in workshops to break down barriers of race. Cosponsored with the MA Council of Churches. Joan Murray is one of the co-facilitators. Cost: For more information call 617-969-3919 Contact: walkercenter@rcn.com

Friday, November 9, 2001 • South Church, New Britain • King Singers • The Six Englishmen know as the King singers enjoy the distinction of being one of the world's most sought-after and acclaimed vocal ensembles. They perform a varied program 16th century madrigals to Japanese flossing to popular hits. Cost: \$30 premium designated seating, \$20 general, \$15

senior/student Contact: 860-223-7555

Second Sundays October through April Noon to 12:30 • South Church New Britain • Second Sundays at South • Performances by members and friends of the Music Series at South Church Cost: Contact: 860-223-7555

Saturday, November 17, 2001 9 AM to 2 PM • The South Congregational Church, Middletown • No Name Workshop • A play day in the arts for people of all ages. Draw a cartoon with Bob Englehart - Swing Dance - Beat a drum - try making music by waving your arms in the air with the theremin - be a clown - play in the gamelan. Cost: Free Contact: Phyllis Bruce 860-346-5006

Nov. 17, 2001 • Walker Center 171 Grove St., Newton, MA • Youth Peacemaker Institute • High School youth will learn skills for conflict resolution and peer mediation to use in their youth groups and schools. Bonnie Marden, Parish Consultant for the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church for 8 years. Cost: For more information call 617-969-3919 Contact: walkercenter@rcn.com

Tuesday, November 20, 2001 9-5 • First Church of Christ Congregational, Glastonbury • Official Training Event on Ministerial Misconduct Prevention • For UCC Authorized Ministers (Ordained, Commissioned, Licensed) Persons who attend will receive a formal certificate indicating they participated in the all-day session. Cost: \$45 includes lunch, materials and a workbook Contact: Rev. Carole Carlson, carolec@ctucc.org

Sunday, November 25, 2001 4 PM The Congregational Church of Naugatuck, Division Street, on the green, Colonial Concert with Orchestra New England, James Sinclair, Conductor. Presenting a charming and entertaining re-creation of music-making as it might have been in 1780's New England-candlelight, wigs, waistcoats, Bach, Handel, Haydn and Mozart. Cost: Free will

donation. Contact: 203-729-3037 Scott Lamlein.

December 1, 9 AM to 3 PM • First Congregational Church of Wallingford • Homespun Holiday Fair • In keeping with the church's Advent theme of Simple Gifts—an Appalachian Christmas, the Fair will highlight hand-crafted, country gifts and decorations reflecting the joy and simplicity of memories of bygone years with delicious homemade food to enjoy midst the colorful sights and sounds of the Fair. Special attraction Model railroad display by Railroad historian Dave Peters. Contact: 203-269-1821

December 7 - 9, 2001 7 PM • Silver Lake Conference Center 223 Low Rd. Sharon, CT • Come Celebrate Christmas at Silver Lake • Join in the fun filled weekend celebrating Jesus' Birthday with old and new friends through games, worship and winter activities. 5th & 6th grades, or 7th & 8th grades. Cost: \$60 Contact: 860-364-5526

Sunday, December 9, 2001 1 PM to 5 PM • Silver Lake Conference Center 223 Low Rd. Sharon, CT • Christmas Dinner at Silver Lake • Cost: \$15 Adults, \$12 Youth, \$8 Children 9 & under Contact: 860-364-5526 December 13-15, 2001 • Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City • Paul Winter's Winter Solstice Celebration • Grammy Award winning artist Paul Winter and friends celebrate the annual return of the sun. One of the most popular events of the year at the Cathedral Contact: Brandon Smith 212-316-7563

Sunday, December 23, 2001 4 PM • South Church New Britain • A candlelight Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols • Once again the Christmas season is celebrated in a warm and glowing fashion - in the candlelit South church sanctuary with music of the season provided by the South Church Chancel Choir under the direction of Richard Coffey and David Westfall, organist. Contact: 860-223-7555

## Simple Gifts, Differing Gifts

*Continued from page 1*

about these perspectives. (You can sign up for FIDO\* at the same website.)

Offering her own personal perspective, Dr. Crabtree said, "In every cell of my body and every fiber of my being, I believe that meeting terrorist violence with more violence simply escalates the hatred and feeds the poison." (The full text of the address is on [www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org))

### Keynotes Inform & Enlighten

In light of the events of September 11, the Conference staff and Annual Meeting Planning Committee opted to find keynote speakers who would address topical concerns of Islam and global perspective. Dr. Dale Bishop, executive minister for Wider Church Ministries in the UCC, gave Saturday's address. Dr. Bishop leads our denomination's mission efforts and is a scholar of the Middle East, especially Iran. He was formerly on the faculty of Columbia University and was one of a handful of individuals invited to be present at the signing of the Oslo Peace Accord. Dr. Jane Smith is codirector of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary and is a recognized authority on Islam in America; she is also a member of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Farmington.

Bishop invited those gathered to "explore questions we ought to be asking in light of our Christian faith," and he also contended that "some of the wrong questions are being asked." Bishop asserted that "nothing

can justify this horror [of September 11]," while at asking us to look at situations around the world where people are desperate and have no means of redressing political or economic oppression.

Quoting the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Bishop said that "Just when we should be going religious, we go political; and just when we should be going political we go religious." Why did the U.S. use Islam as a lever in supporting the mujahedeen in Afghanistan? And why did Israel initially support Hamas, again using Islam as a lever?

Bishop said the primary question we, as Christians ought to be asking ourselves is the same question Jesus asked Peter: "Who do you say that I am?" Bishop claimed that at this point, "We need to go religious, rather than political," seeing the current events as a spiritual challenge to our own identity as Christians. He also identified the struggle between common sense and what Jesus told us, and he claimed that we should be "doing something apparently futile and manifestly faithful: taking up the cross."

Jane Smith spoke about American Muslims in the face of extremism, and described their current situation as "crisis mode." While there are more than 6 million Muslims in America (more Muslims than Jews), they are a very heterogeneous group, with roughly one-third immigrants or their children, one-third African American, and one-third other converts.

Dr. Smith identified five ways American Muslims are reacting: disbelief and horror, fear, solidarity, outreach, and introspection. "All the Muslims I know have had

the initial response of disbelief and horror," she said. The element of fear comes from worrying about local reprisals against them. Smith recounted a 10-year-old American Muslim girl who asked her mother, "Is this the end for us? Are we going to be killed?" Solidarity is expressed through women adopted Islamic dress to express their pride in being Muslim and closing ranks between Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds. Outreach is being accomplished by entering into dialogues with leaders of other faith traditions. Introspection is a further reaction, asking how Islam will be changed by the events of September 11, and going back to the Qu'ran to see what it says about war and violence...along with a deep desire to interpret that it does not support violence.

On an encouraging note, Dr. Smith said that for the most part, Connecticut Muslims were getting three to five positive phone calls or affirmations from Christians, Jews, and others for every call or gesture of derision.

To learn more about Islam, go to [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com) and click on "Understanding Islam." Dr. Smith and her Hartford Seminary colleagues are among those contributing to the information on that website.

The Annual Meeting was not what anyone on September 10 thought it would be, but in recasting the gathering, the UCC churches of Connecticut came together to address the issues that we all have been grappling with since that sunny Tuesday morning in September when our lives were forever altered.