



Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience Volume 12, Number 2 October 1999

U.S. Tests Nuclear Weapon on Sept. 30, 1999

by Marc Page

On September 30, 1999, the same day as the Japanese nuclear accident at the Tokai Plant, the U.S. Department of Energy (D.O.E.) committed a similar non-accidental sin against all of life. This was humanity's latest subcritical nuclear assault against the Earth, committed by the U.S. D.O.E. on the last day of their fiscal year. This plutonium detonation (code named "Oboe 1") at the Nevada Test Site (N.T.S.) was the 7th U.S. subcritical nuclear test since Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. NDE helped the Shundahai Network and Healing Global Wounds organize several prayer-actions in resistance to this hidden violence.

The prayers began on the 17th of September at the D.O.E. building on Losee Road in North Las Vegas. Ten activists from almost as many organizations gathered to "Drum Down Babylon" outside of the D.O.E. building. We asked the employees

to join us in resisting the upcoming subcritical test. Corbin Harney, spiritual leader and elder of the Western Shoshone Nation joined me in our cordial conversation with Derek Scammell of the D.O.E. Corbin told (see *TEST*, continued next page)

Y2K: Danger of Nuclear Weapons Launch

What should we say about Y2K?

Much international attention is being focused on what will happen when the calendar turns from 1999 to 2000. There is widespread concern that the failure of computers to

recognize the year 2000 date change could affect command, control, communications and intelligence systems of nuclear forces.

Particularly alarming is the fact that (see *Y2K*, continued next page)

Millennium 2000

Walking the Ways of Peace



**RELIGIOUS ACTION
FOR DISARMAMENT**

(SEE POSTER, INSIDE)



BOARD & STAFF OF NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE

Standing (left to right): Louie Vitale, Tom Gumbleton, Anne Symens-Bucher, Wendy Kaufmyn, Michael Niece, Ian Zabarte, Chris Montesano (all Board of Directors). Seated: (left to right): Erik Thompson (Board), Marc Page (Las Vegas Coordinator), Paula Olivares (Board), Cindy Pile (Director), Allan Sawyer (Board). Board members not pictured: Marty Coleman, Nancy Lynch, Claudia Peterson. Staff not pictured: Amielle Zemach.

(Y2K, continued from front page)

the United States and Russia have about 5,000 strategic nuclear weapons on "hair trigger" alert. This means that these weapons can be fired within 15 minutes and reach their target city within 30 minutes. Given this situation, it is entirely possible for a commander who believes that his or her country is under nuclear attack to initiate retaliation when the supposed 'attack' is nothing more than computer generated false data.

Both Russia and the U.S. have already come close to launching nuclear weapons because of misunderstanding or poor data. One such instance occurred on January 25, 1995 when a U.S. weather rocket launched from Norway was initially interpreted by the Russian military as a possible attack on the Russian Federation. President Yeltsin and his advisors were given minutes to decide whether to launch a retaliatory attack on the United States. Thankfully, they decided against doing so.

Because the potential for a global catastrophe is even greater due to the Y2K bug, there has been a groundswell of voices urging governments of nuclear weapons states to take their nuclear weapons off "hair trigger" alert. In 1996, the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons recommended that all nuclear forces be taken off alert, preferably by physical separation of the warheads from delivery vehicles. Last year, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution advocating this same position. The American Medical Association and General Lee Butler, former commander of all U.S. strategic nuclear forces, have directed this plea to our own government.

De-alerting would give those who oversee nuclear weapons hours or days rather than minutes or seconds to decide how to respond to any signal they might receive. It costs nothing and can be done by a simple executive order. Such a precedent took place in 1991 when President George Bush removed hundreds of U.S. nuclear weapons from "hair trigger" alert and in response Mikhail Gorbachev did the same with hundreds of Soviet Weapons.

The United Kingdom has already taken this step by altering its 'notice to fire' from minutes to days. Russia and the United States have taken a few positive steps by de-targeting one another and establishing the Center for Y2K Strategic Stability in Colorado Springs, Colorado. From late December to early January, this center will be staffed

by both American and Russian teams that will watch missile launches and Y2K problems by monitoring satellite data, ground sensors, and data flowing from the nearby North American Aerospace Defense Command.

The potential for global nuclear disaster still exists, however. The only solution with regard to nuclear forces is to take them off alert. An international campaign, spearheaded by Friends of the Earth Sydney, is asking individuals and organizations to fax this message to President Boris Yeltsin (7-095-205-4330) and President Bill Clinton (1-202-456-2461). Friends of the Earth is asking organizations and 'prominent' people, as well, to sign on to a letter to Clinton and Yeltsin. The text is on the Web at <http://homepages.tig.com.au/~foesyd/nuclear/bbletter.html>. To sign on simply e-mail the name of your organization to nonukes@foesyd.org.au. Over 380 groups, including the Nevada Desert Experience have

(TEST, continued from front page)

the D.O.E. officials that we need to respect the water and other life under the N.T.S.. I brought a heart-felt letter to the D.O.E. to request that they cancel the Oboe test. I asked if Derek could spread my message within his building. He instead took my letter to the D.O.E.'s Nevada Operations Manager, Kathy Carlson. During our short conversation the 10 drummers arrived with banners at the building's entrance. Then Corbin led us all in a short prayer in his native tongue.

Positioning themselves in sight of the employees leaving work for the day, the protestors continued to drum and vigil with banners and posters to stop the Oboe test. Free Radio Vegas broadcasted our propaganda on a 15 watt FM radio transmitter. Corbin spoke on the radio's microphone so that the employees and others would hear our message of nonviolence and respect for all life on the planet. I read my open letter to the employees of the D.O.E. over the radio airwaves after Corbin had finished. Passing motorists & exiting employees heard the drumming and saw the radio signs, so curious drivers used their car radios to tune in to our broadcast of peace, goodwill, and requests to stop the nuclear violence.

On the morning of the day of the Oboe 1 shot, 11 people gathered at the Mercury Gate of the Nevada Test Site for a Sunrise Ceremony led by Corbin Harney. Our prayerful group continued to vigil as the workers entered the gates and four of us were arrested

added their name to this important letter.

The potential for disaster also exists because nuclear reactors might malfunction in a variety of ways. There are 433 nuclear power reactors in the world, 103 are in the United States. External power failures could cause meltdown of reactor cores or used fuel rods since nuclear reactors require power from the grid to pass coolant through the core. In order to avoid the possibility of a meltdown, groups such as the World Atomic Safety Holiday campaign (WASH) are asking people to contact President Clinton and Greta Joy Dicus at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 (ph: 301-415-1759). Tell them to shut down all nuclear reactors from December 1, 1999 until after the New Year.

As a people of faith who reverence all life and seek peace for our world, we should have a lot to say about Y2K.

for crossing the line.

Later that day, about 30 minutes after Oboe 1 was detonated, over 30 activists gathered at the Foley Federal Building in downtown Las Vegas to continue to "Drum Down the Babylon Daze". They made the connection between nuclear weapons and waste. Each year, the 30th of September is Nevada Is Not A Wasteland Day, proclaimed by the Governor to be held until the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump is stopped.

The protestors pointed out the hypocrisy of Nevadans conducting nuclear testing while rejecting nuclear waste, because the testing produces some of the waste. These events received extensive local media coverage, reminding Las Vegans of the evils in their backyard.

Note: Members of Nevada Desert Experience, Tri-Valley CARE's, and Peace Action protested and leafleted outside Bechtel's International headquarters in downtown San Francisco the day (September 30) of the subcritical nuclear weapon test "Oboe 1".

Correction: In our last issue we incorrectly said Pete Seeger's birthday party was celebrating 70 years, it was his 80th birthday party.

Can't make the Millennium 2000 Event? Have your name read as we cross onto the Test Site (see poster)

The Experience Continues: NDE's Future Plans

by Cindy Pile

I spent several weeks in Europe this summer—attending the Hague Appeal for Peace, visiting several Catholic Worker communities and the only woman to come forward as a priest ordained in the “underground” church in the former Czechoslovakia. While there I received news that NDE was undergoing yet another shuffling of staff. When I returned to the States I accepted the position of Director and Marc Page came on board as Local Coordinator. Gary Cavalier agreed to continue with us as our accountant and Paul Colbert joined us as housing/hospitality coordinator for Millennium 2000.

I am writing this column from my apartment in Oakland, California, NDE's Northern California office, which is across the yard from Anne Symens-Bucher's house. Anne was one of the original founders of the Nevada Desert Experience. Given the location

of my house and my history with NDE, my decision to serve in this new capacity feels right. I first visited the desert in Lent of 1987 with several fellow theology students. Something about the desert grabbed me—its starkness, its silence, its beauty, its utter devastation. Jesus grabbed me as he showed me that he was being crucified in this desecrated place and that he was rising through groups like the one of which I was a part as we prayed and acted in resistance to such evil. Thus began my love affair with the desert and the Nevada Desert Experience. Since then I have participated in and helped to organize numerous gatherings at the Test Site worked as a field education intern and education director and served on the board. I have seen NDE at its high points as the part of the anti-nuclear movement which NDE represents—the faith-based community—turned out en masse for prayerful protest. I have wit-

nessed the lower points, as well, when only a handful of faithful followers continued the vigil for peace.

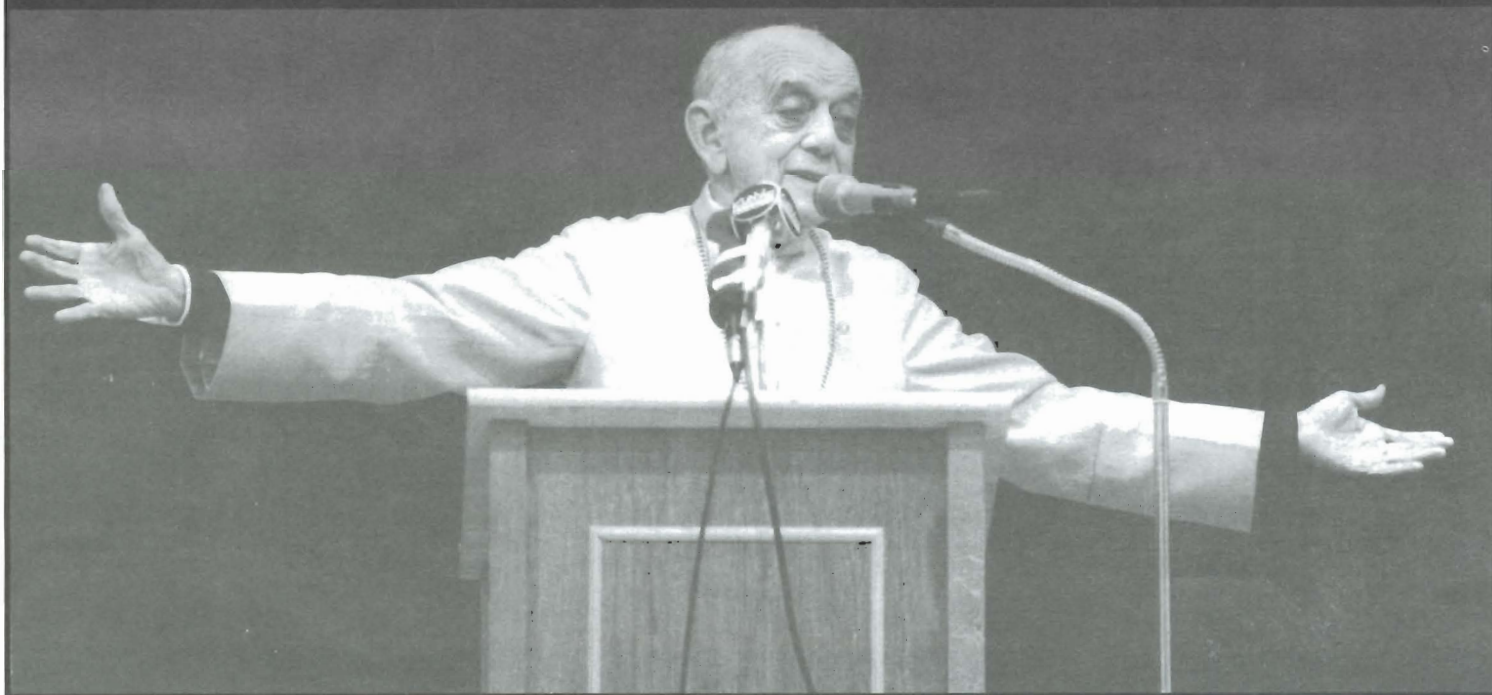
Perhaps NDE has currently been experiencing a somewhat delayed reaction to the end of the Cold War. When El Salvador's civil war drew to a close, sanctuary groups in the U.S. had to slow down and re-evaluate their work in light of this new situation. Many anti-nuclear groups reacted similarly when the Cold War ended. Some groups folded, others switched priorities, still others pledged to continue to work for a nuclear-free world.

The Nevada Desert Experience was one of the latter groups. The experience continues. Yet, it was only at a board meeting last month that board and staff finally reflected extensively on the current status of testing laboratories, at the Test Site and with supercomputers, and what NDE's response should be. (see *NDE PLANS*, next page)

Archbishop Dom Helder Camara (1909-1999)

“This is the place of the greatest act of violence in the world, it should be the place of the greatest acts of nonviolence”.

—Dom Helder Camara speaking at the Nevada Test Site



Archbishop Dom Helder Camara went to the Nevada Test Site in 1987 & 1991 with Nevada Desert Experience.

Nevada Desert Experience presents: MILLENNIUM

Co-Sponsored by: Fellowship of Reconciliation, Healing Global Wounds, I

SCHEDULE:

Thursday, December 30, 1999

1:00 p.m.: Registration

7:00 p.m.: Opening Ceremony: Corbin Harney, Bishop Walsh of Las Vegas, and Cindy Pile, Music & Liturgical Dance: Jesse Manibusan & Carla De Sola, Keynote: "The Gift of Time" by Jonathan Schell
Evening Prayer (Muslim) Onaje Mu'id

Friday, December 31, 1999

9:20 a.m.: Keynote: Joyce Hollyday

10:20 a.m.: Music: Janice Freeman

10:30 a.m.: Response from various faith traditions: Tom Trimmer, Clayton Ramey, Mel Hecht & others.

1:00 p.m.: "The Human & Environmental Impact of the Bomb": Health Effects: Dr. Rosalie Bertell. Economic Impact: Rev. James Lawson. Downwinders: June Stark Casey & Claudia Peterson. Impact on Native Americans: Ian Zabarte.

2:15 & 3:45 p.m.: Two Sessions of Workshops: Sr. Martha Ann Kirk, Gregor Gable, Nancy Lynch, Ken Butigan, Cynthia Stateman, Mike Niece, Rosemary Lynch, osf & Louie Vitale, ofm and others.

7:00 p.m.: "The Hope" Dan Berrigan

7:30 p.m.: New Year's Eve Party for Peace: Thorn Coyle, Jesse Manibusan, Hennacy House Band

9:30 p.m.: Caravan to Nevada Test Site

11:00 p.m.: Liturgy, Commissioning & lighting of candles with Bishop Tom Gumbleton.
MIDNIGHT: Hundreds of people create a candlelight procession onto the Test Site.

Saturday, January 1, 2000

2:00 a.m.: Youth Eucharist, Fr. River Sims

6:00 a.m.: Sunrise Ceremony, Corbin Harney

10:00 a.m.: Catholic Mass: Tom Gumbleton

1:00 p.m.: "Our Brokenness, the Violence Within" (facilitator: Chris Montesano)

3:35 p.m.: Participatory dance: Carla DeSola

5:00 p.m.: Closing Prayer

5:30 p.m.: Dinner in transit to Las Vegas

6:30 p.m.: Vigil on the Las Vegas Strip

8:30 p.m.: Concert

Sunday, January 2, 2000

10:00 a.m.: Panel of Anti-Nuclear Organizations: John Dear, Jennifer Viereck, Dave Robinson, David McReynolds

Noon: Interfaith Closing Ceremony

LOGISTICAL INFORMATION:

Registration & Food: To receive a registration packet, register by Nov. 30. The registration fee is \$75. For children ages 6-12 the fee is \$38. This fee covers housing and eight meals prepared by Catholic Worker communities.

Housing: Sleeping bag space is provided on wrestling mats for this event at Bishop Gorman HS. Housing (with beds) in the homes of local supporters is available on a limited basis for elders and others in need. Call Pat Bell at Horizon Travel (702) 451-0406 for RV rentals.

Transportation: Please make your travel arrangements TODAY. The airline tickets to Las Vegas are excessively high. Pat Bell at Horizon Travel (702) 451-0406 has arranged discounts on 3 major airlines for this event. If you live more than 1000 miles away, you may want to fly to San Francisco, Los Angeles, or Phoenix, and join the existing caravan or rent a car to drive from there. To organize a caravan or carpool for yourselves, please check the ride-board on our website: www.shundahai.org/nde. NDE will not be able to provide transportation to and from the airport. Bishop Gorman High School is at 1801 S. Maryland Parkway. Directions to Bishop Gorman High School will be in your registration packet.

December 30, 1999

Bishop Gorman High School
& the Nevada



Religious Action

ENDORSERS: ASCENSION PARISHIONERS (PORTLAND, OR), BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP (BERKELEY, CA), BUTTERFLY GARDENERS ASSOCIATION (CA), CAMPUS WORD (TX), CAMPAIGN FOR A NUCLEAR-FREE WORLD, CATHOLICS AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY (SOUTHERN CA), CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT (CA), COMMITTEE OF ATOMIC BOMB SURVIVORS IN THE U.S.A., DEATH PENALTY FOCUS (LOS ANGELES), DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SAN RAFAEL (CA), EAST TIMOR RELIGIOUS CHURCH (SAN FRANCISCO, CA), EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP, FRANCISCAN FRIARS JPIC-ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFERENCE, FRANCISCAN FRIARS of CALIFORNIA, FRANCISCAN OFFICE FOR JPIC of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PROVINCE (OH), FRANCISCAN PROVINCE of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (CINCINNATI, OH), FRANCISCAN RETIREMENT HOUSE—LEADERSHIP TEAM (MN), FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE, GAIA HOUSE (FRESNO, CA), GELOS HOUSE (OAKLAND, CA), GRANDMOTHERS FOR PEACE (CA), HOLY REDEEMER CENTER, (OAKLAND, CA), INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE (ST. LOUIS, MO), LAS VEGAS CATHOLIC WORKER (NV), LUTHERAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP (CA), EDUCATION AND ACTION (HI), METHODIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP, MID-MISSOURI FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION, THE NUCLEAR RESISTOR, NUCLEAR WEAPON BAN CAMPAIGN (CA), CHURCH (PASADENA, CA), OAKLAND CATHOLIC WORKER, ORANGE COUNTY CATHOLIC WORKER (CA), THE OTHER SIDE, PACE E BENE (NV), PEACE & JUSTICE COMMISSION (CA), OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, PERALTA STREET CW (OAKLAND, CA), PHILADELPHIA CATHOLIC WORKER, PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (LOS ANGELES), CHARITY (DUBUQUE, IA), SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD, U.S. PROVINCE, SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD (DAYTON, OH), SOJOURNERS, SOCIETY OF BENEDICT HOUSE CW (FRESNO, CA), ST. BONAVENTURE CHURCH (CONCORD, CA), ST. CAMILLA'S CENTER FOR CATHOLIC PASTORAL CARE, ST. RAPHAEL'S CHURCH (CA), TWO BY TWO PRODUCTIONS (ALAMEDA, CA), UNITED METHODIST CHURCH GENERAL BOARD OF CHURCH & SOCIETY, VISION OF MICAH AFFINITY GROUP (CA), SHILOH INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES (LA VERNE, CA), WELLSPRING RETREAT HOUSE (NV), WESTERN SHOSHONE NATIONAL COUNCIL (NEWE SEGOBIA)

Nevada Desert Experience, P. O. Box 46645, Las Vegas, NV 89114-6645, P

ANNIUM 2000: *Walking the Ways of Peace*

Los Angeles Catholic Worker, Pax Christi USA and the Shundahai Network

9 - January 2, 2000
High School, Las Vegas
Nevada Test Site



for Disarmament

MINISTRY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE
ATION (NM), CHAPLAINCY TO THE HOMELESS (CA)
OUTREACH of FIRST ST. JOHN'S UNITED METHODIST
FRANCISCAN MISSION SERVICE OF NORTH AMERICA,
NEWAL CENTER (AZ), FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF LITTLE
INTERNATIONAL, HIGH DESERT CATHOLIC WORKER
ELLOWSHIP, MALU AINA CENTER FOR NONVIOLENT
NS ABOLITION MINISTRY of ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL
MISSION of DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY, PAX CHRISTI
S), REDWOOD CITY FRANCISCANS (CA), SISTERS OF
THERN CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF SCIENTISTS, ST.
CH (SAN RAFAEL, CA), TEMENOS CATHOLIC WORKER
UP (CA), WALLACE E. CHRISTENSEN, PRESIDENT OF

*All persons of conscience, mark your calendars!
Please consider joining us.*

*Organize your congregation, peace center, uni-
versity or religious order to come to the desert to
ring in a new millennium of Peace and Justice!*

Y2K INFO: After researching the Y2K problem, NDE has decided, in accordance with the Red Cross Guidelines, to make moderate preparations for potential problems. We will stock up on food, water, and flashlights and will have a generator available. We urge you to prepare by bringing extra water, cash and warm clothes, and if you are driving, fill up your car when you arrive in Las Vegas.

**SCHEDULING NOTE: SPECIAL YOUTH EVENTS THROUGHOUT WEEK-
END. FOR MORE INFO, CALL FR. RIVER SIMS AT: (415) 922-7553**

Please clip and return to:

Nevada Desert Experience, P. O. Box 46645, Las Vegas, NV 89114

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Organizational Affiliation: _____

☐ Enclosed is my registration fee of \$75. (\$38 for children accompanied by adults)

☐ I can't attend, read my name as people cross the line. A donation is enclosed.

☐ I would like to become a **Friend of the Desert**. I will donate \$ _____
_____ monthly _____ quarterly _____ annually

☐ I will only need sleeping bag space (at Bishop Gorman High School.)

☐ I will need alternative housing: a bed away from Bishop Gorman High School.

☐ I will arrive by train or plane in Las Vegas on _____ and leave
by _____ on _____.

☐ I will drive a car to Las Vegas (with extra room for _____ people).

☐ I am organizing others to come: carload, vanload, busload, etc. (circle one)
of people: _____

☐ Enclosed is a medical emergency permission signed by my guardian, (I am
under 18 years old.)

☐ Send me more brochures so I can help publicize..

☐ I can help with set up and clean up at the event..

☐ Please send a T-Shirt, here is \$12 for each shirt. (M _____) (L _____) (XL _____)

Phone: (702) 646-4814, Web: www.shundahai.org/nde E-mail: nde@igc.org

(PLANS, from previous page)

We came out with a strong strategic plan. Most importantly, we pledged to re-vitalize the faith-based anti-nuclear movement. We need to draw on those of you who have been to the Test Site who have written Congress, who are members of church-based social justice groups, peace centers or fellowships, religious orders or Pax Christi groups, to join with us in a new capacity by becoming NDE Affiliate Groups (NAGs). Our goal is to organize 100 such regional groups over the next three years. These groups will make NDE part of their agenda by working to end nuclear weapons testing. NDE will provide educational packets, a video, speakers, action and legislative materials.

If you are interested in helping to rebuild the base of support which is necessary to stop the testing, contact me at (510) 261-6120 cindypile@juno.com or our Las Vegas office. I would very much like to visit your community and offer a presentation or a homily!

Secondly, since the testing has moved to other places, NDE commits itself to bringing people not only to the Nevada Test Site, but to Lawrence Livermore Labs in Livermore, California, as well. As all of you know, from December 30-January 2 NDE is hosting **Millennium 2000: Walking the Ways of Peace!** in Las Vegas and at the Test Site. On Ash

Wednesday, March 8th, we will move to the San Francisco Bay Area when Bishop Tom Gumbleton preaches at local masses and NDE supporters repent of the sinfulness of building the National Ignition Facility (NIF) at Livermore Labs. The NIF seeks to design miniaturized nuclear weapons which will not require plutonium triggers, thus making them much easier to build and use.

As we all work toward total abolition of nuclear weapons, we plan to expand our witness at the Test Site. NDE will continue to hold the annual Holy Week Walk. Through the development of the new NDE Affiliate Groups we hope to bring people to the desert for every weekend in Lent, 2002.

Finally, NDE commits itself to galvanizing the necessary resources to implement our new plan. We will be returning to you, our supporters, for assistance in this area. Our hope is to expand greatly our Friends of the Desert program by obtaining monthly, quarterly or yearly financial pledges from our mailing list of 4,000 individuals. We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to working for nuclear abolition and look for your help in the future. The new millennium is upon us. As the recently deceased but still "present!" Dom Helder Camara once exhorted us: "Together let us bring the greatest acts of nonviolence to bear on the Nevada Test Site, on all test sites and our whole world!"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Dec. 30, 1999 - Jan. 2, 2000: Millennium 2000— See poster inside this issue for more info.

March 8, 2000, Ash Wednesday with Bishop Tom Gumbleton at Lawrence Livermore National Labs. Bishop Gumbleton will also preach at local San Francisco Bay Area parishes.

April 16-22, 2000: Holy Week Walk, Las Vegas to Mercury. Call Marc Page of NDE at (702) 646-4814.

May 7-13, 2000: Shoshone Walk & Run For the Damaged Land, Warm Springs to Mercury. Call Johnnie Bobb of the Western Shoshone Nation, Yomba Tribe (775) 964-2210.

May 12-15, 2000: Mothers' Day at the Nevada Test Site, Contact Healing Global Wounds, or the Shundahai Network (702) 647-3095.

QUESTIONS

by Nakajima Hiroshi

*If I shriek
who will hear me
if I don't
break the silence in which diatribes
pile up, who will
hear me
if I speak in normal
words in the normal order

who will hear me

if I make poems*



*of what I saw and heard on the road
from Hiroshima
will I disturb
the dead*

*will I
be a merchant of our disaster*

*if I fail
to work all the horror
into a play
of voices in which the living and the dead
live again*

who will forgive me

TABERNACLE OF THE DESERT:

Building A House of Prayer for All Peoples

by Amielle Zemach

I am new to Nevada Desert Experience (NDE), recently hired for six months to do "development," a catch-all term for raising money, awareness, money, support, and money. But I cannot do this well without a solid idea towards which to strive.

As I read through the stack of material, both promotional and poetic, the single strongest image I found is one of reclaiming the land. As a species, we have intricately developed and tested devices of unimaginable horror and desecrated our own home in doing so. With the help of God and personal commitment, NDE and Friends of the Desert (supporters who make regular financial contributions to NDE) will reclaim and re-consecrate what is, in fact, holy ground.

When we "test" bombs in a supposedly empty desert, we attack our roots. The desert lies at the core of half the religious thinking on the planet. The Fertile Crescent is surrounded by desert.

For years now, people connected to NDE have been going to the desert, to the testing ground, holding vigils, crossing the line, risking arrest. For the police who give orders to or actually do arrest people, this can become a routine, acceptable and not especially thought provoking. At a recent NDE board meeting for the Millennium 2000 event, someone suggested reading the names of supporters and donors after "crossing" to bring their presence along into the new century.

Beautiful. This idea really caught me, and we can certainly gather a multitude of names by midnight, December 31. But what comes next? Sadly, in today's world, raising people's consciousness around the issue of nuclear weapons testing is a long-term project.

Images of Tibetan prayer flags started to go through my mind. Banners, with names written on them. During Sukkot,

the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles, Jewish families all over the world build a Sukkah, or tabernacle, in their backyards. The floor is covered with carpets or soft things, and the ceiling with branches of palm, if available, or other branches, and hung with fruits, vegetables, pictures of Jerusalem, children's art. We eat there, sleep there, invite our friends. And every night we invite our ancestors to commemorate our years in the desert and to celebrate our freedom now.

It struck me: what if we had a canopy and wrote the names on it? What if we could construct a tabernacle that could be a House of Prayer for All Peoples? It could be a circular, perhaps spiral shape that would simply expand as names, prayers and poems were added. It would be on poles, just a top with no sides so that all could enter. It would have to be sturdy and secure and portable. It could go to the desert, to Livermore Labs, or even the Bikini Atoll.

Then, when the police arrive, they would be met by people in a house of worship. They would be forced to enter a sanctified space. Then what? The level of their dilemma is automatically raised. And the level of shame. I am not among those who think that all guilt and shame are an assault on our freedom. Hardly. If we look at all squarely at what

we as a species have done to this earth, we must feel both horrified and shamed. The task is to neither wallow in it nor to numb out, but to meet that feeling with a change of behavior and then with taking action.

I believe that names are powerful. For each person that crosses the line onto the Test Site, we could carry a thousand names, dedications, ancestors, grandchildren. Prayers, blessings and poems could be added. Churches and synagogues could sponsor whole congregations; religious orders could sponsor all of their members; a grandchild could sponsor an entire family tree.

I see this as a potential unifying image for Friends of the Desert that could greatly expand participation for the people who cannot physically join us but who want some tangible spiritual connection to the process of achieving peace on this planet. This idea is in a nascent stage now but I will move on it with all available speed.

If anyone is interested in discussing it, offering ideas, energy, and donations, please be in touch. My e-mail (checked twice per week) is azemach@gtu.edu. Letters can be sent to P.O. Box 7849, Oakland, CA 94601. My home number is (510) 649-8138. I welcome calls, letters, thoughts, prayers and dreams. Let's see what we can do.

Have your name read at Millennium 2000!

We will inaugurate this new House of Prayer at Millennium 2000. Please join us in spirit by letting us carry your name "across the line" at the Nevada Test Site. The Tabernacle Of The Desert is a long-term project through which you can support peacemaking, even at a distance. Friends of the Desert will provide the finances for this project. If you are unable to attend Millennium 2000, please send us your name so we might invoke your presence with us at the Nevada Test Site (and other nuclear proving grounds). And please consider joining our growing list of Friends of the Desert, by offering regular timely financial support. (Please sign-up on form located in 2000 poster)

SENATE DEFEATS COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY!

As we are going to press, we learned of this tragic decision. Contact your Senator and express your outrage. (202) 224-3121

**MILLENNIUM 2000
EVENT T-SHIRTS
AVAILABLE: \$12**

(See order form on poster inside)

Nevada Desert Experience

FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF CALIFORNIA

P. O. Box 46645

Las Vegas, NV 89114

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

U. S. TESTS NUCLEAR WEAPON!

An underground "subcritical" nuclear
weapon was tested on Sept. 30, 1999

Nonprofit Organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Las Vegas, NV

Permit # 1009

Largest Civil Disobedience ever at Los Alamos National Labs

by Marc Page

(LOS ALAMOS, NM) — Peace Action held a conference in Albuquerque on the weekend of Hiroshima & Nagasaki Days, August 6th-9th. The gathering of 400 people from around the U.S. culminated in the largest act of nonviolent civil disobedience in the history of Los Alamos National Labs (LANL). Several people came from other nations, including two Japanese Hibakusha. Hundreds of employees stood on the roof and outdoors and inside the windows at LANL for over an hour to watch the protestors as they arrived and stepped out of the "protest zone" box which LANL provided for the Peace Action folks. Upon stepping out of the protest zone, the anti-nuclear activists were warned that

they ought to get back in their box, or they would be taken into custody by the LANL security forces. Martin Sheen was first to step out of the box and pray the Our Father. After Martin came NDE volunteer David Buer, ofm, then 66 others, including NDE's Las Vegas Coordinator Marc Page. The nuclear resisters were then identified, searched, handcuffed, and bussed back to the rally site (the park from which they had just marched). Security forces then released the detainees as quickly as possible.

Right: David Buer, ofm, of Las Vegas, Nevada being arrested outside Los Alamos National Labs in New Mexico.

