

DESERT VOICES

The Newsletter of the Nevada Desert Experience #6 Fall, 1989

Masculine Spirituality

By Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM

Perhaps the term sounds new, different, even wrong or unnecessary. Why would we bother speaking of a spirituality that is especially masculine or male? Is there anything to be learned here? Anything that can help both men and women to meet the Christ? I am convinced that there is.

A masculine spirituality is not just for men, although it is men who are most likely to have to rediscover and exemplify it. Strangely, it is an approach that many women are more in touch with today than men. Women have been encouraged and even forced to do their inner work more than men in our culture. In general, they are far ahead of us in integrating the masculine and feminine parts of themselves. Our sisters' pursuit of the authentic feminine has made the brothers aware that there is also an authentic masculine. But what is it?

Quite simply, it is the other side of the feminine energy. It is the other pole, the contrary, the balance, the ying that is the necessary complement to the yang. For the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is half of the image of God.

"God created humanity as a self-image, male and female God created them." Genesis 1:27.

I am not saying that males are characterized by exclusively masculine energy and women hold only feminine. Quite the contrary, although there has been a tendency in most cultures to stereotype, classify and hold the sexes in one predictable type of energy and behavior. Unfortunately, I believe this has kept us immature, unwhole, compulsive and unready for true love-making -- human or divine.

A man without his feminine soul is easily described. His personality will move toward the outer superficial world and his head will be his control tower. He will build, explain, use, fix, manipulate, legislate, order and play with whatever he bothers to touch, but will not really touch it at all. For he does not know the inside of things. He is trapped inside a false masculinity.

The myths of Western civilization are largely written by men who have controlled the power, the money, the corporations, the church, the military, the morality books. What we call "reality" and are almost totally addicted to, is largely a construct of men who frankly have not done their inner work. They have not gone inside, they have not learned trust, vulnerability, prayer or poetry. They, and the civilization we have inherited from them, are in great part unwhole or even sick, while calling themselves sane.

Until males and cooperating females recognize this unwholeness, this anti-Christianity posing as the real thing, we have no hope of making love to the full Christ.

We men must be converted -- to the no-me, to the other, the alien, the would-be-enemy that we must learn to love. Men must be converted to (continued on next page)

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Masculine Spirituality, cont.

the feminine, women to the masculine. Maybe that is why God made sexual attraction so compelling. If we are converted to the non-self, everything changes. We see the other side of things and forgiveness becomes possible. We see that the enemy is not enemy but spiritual helpmate. There is nothing more to defend and nothing more to be afraid of once we have met and accepted our inner opposite.

A masculine spirituality would emphasize action over theory, service to the human community over religious discussions, truth-speaking over social graces and doing justice over looking nice. Without a complementary masculine, spirituality becomes overly feminine (which is really false feminine!) and would be characterized by too much inwardness, too much preoccupation with relationship, a morass of unclarified feelings and endless self-protectiveness.

In my humble masculine opinion, I believe much of the modern sophisticated church is swirling in this false feminine. It is one of the main reasons that doers, movers and shakers and change agents have largely given up on church people and church groups. A false feminine spirituality is the trap of those with lots of leisure, luxury and liberal ideas. This liberalism becomes an inoculation against the whole and radical gospel.

I am convinced that the most fundamental reason why men and women have failed to love and trust their masculine energy is the overriding "Father Wound" that is carried by the vast majority of people in Western civilization.

Those have a Father Wound who have never been touched by their human father. Either he had no time, no freedom or no need, but the end result is children who have no masculine energy. Without the facing, feeling and restoring of this wound, I am sure that most people will continue to live lives of pseudo-masculinity: business as usual, dishonest power instead of honest powerlessness.

Desert Voices

Desert Voices is the newsletter of the non-profit Nevada Desert Experience. Your letters, articles, announcements of coming events, poetry or humorous pieces are welcome. Send them (and a stamped, self-addressed envelope) to Desert Voices, Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127-0487, phone (702) 646-4814.

Newsletter Staff: Mary Lehman, Peter Ediger, Leslie and Jon Klusmire

I believe there is a way out. We need to name the wound, feel and weep over the wound. Seek the face of the Father. Own and take full responsibility for your life and behavior. Don't blame, sit in shame or wait for warm feelings and miracles. Act as if. Do it. Go with it. Risk it.

We look like the oppressors, dear sisters, but have no doubt we are also the oppressed. We believed the false promises of the system even more than you and now we are trapped at what is supposed to be the top. We need you, we need our feminine souls, we need fathers and brothers, we need an also masculine God to find our way back into the human circle.

We need ourselves -- from the inside.

.....
Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, is the Animator at the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

History

When Christ came to China he said
"the gentle will inherit the earth."
He lived and died his story.
They came with tanks and guns
and told their stories.
His story will not die.

When Christ came to South Africa he said
"the gentle will inherit the earth."
He lived and died his story.
They came with armored personnel carriers
and told their stories.
His story will not die.

When Christ came to El Salvador he said
"the gentle will inherit the earth."
He lived and died his story.
They came with machine guns
and told their stories.
His story will not die.

When Christ came to America he said
"the gentle will inherit the earth."
He lived and died his story.
They came with Bibles and bombs
and told their stories
His story will not die.

Peter J. Ediger

Toward a Feminist Theology of Peacemaking

by Mary E. Hunt

There are many styles of peacemaking, all of which need critical evaluation. I am aware that the goals of feminist and non-feminist peacemaking efforts may be similar. For example, to enact a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a common pursuit. But how it is done is what distinguishes these approaches.

I detect four marks of feminist approaches to peacemaking.

I mention each one with the full knowledge that an adequate and meaningful feminist theology of peacemaking calls for collective attention to and explication of each of these which is beyond the scope of this piece.

First, feminists put a great emphasis on full participation and empowerment of peace-seeking communities. Letting each one speak, although it is not always considered efficient, and teaching many people to do many jobs is a priority. Sometimes movements have serious internal problems when this feminist priority clashes with macho efforts to make things happen now.

Second, there is a non-hierarchical model of leadership in feminist movements. Those schooled in macho ways, especially in churches where leadership is usually vertical, have a hard time imagining that hierarchy is not necessary to the well ordering of a social change effort. Between constant consensus and rigid hierarchy there are many possible leadership options that remain to be tested.

Third, feminist efforts at peacemaking always include concern for children and land. Examples abound, but the case is made by those who live at the limits, specifically, on these matters, lesbian women and nuns.

Lesbian women are making headlines because the rest of society is just figuring out that many have children, whether their own biologically or adopted.

Nuns have led the way in the foundation of religious schools, hospitals and land reforms. They have tended children and the sick with the attention of good mothers. And they have tended the land with equal care.

Finally, feminist efforts at peacemaking always include fun and celebration. Women have developed a sense of humor and a commitment to enjoyment almost in self-defense. If we do not enjoy what we are doing, we may never know pleasure.

Likewise, we celebrate many occasions that have previously been ignored in an effort to embody the goodness of life. For example, child bearing, menopause and old age are occasions for rejoicing. Women's worship groups abound and women celebrate heartily.

Jokes, games, chants, music, flowers, candles are all simple things that dress up our peacemaking without diverting needed resources. They simply require time and attention. Dancing and ritualizing occupy a central place on our agenda. Attention to small details -- a well-set table and a festive if simple meal -- are not signs of bourgeois decadence but of spirituality, that is, of attention to the quality of our collective life.

These four marks of a feminist approach to peacemaking are by no means unique. But as they become integrated into the lifestyle and commitments of all peacemakers, we will be well on the road toward exchanging a nuclear lifestyle for an anti-nuclear one. It is in this latter environment that we will recognize ourselves and one another as peacemakers.

.....
Mary E. Hunt, a theologian, is co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) in Silver Springs, Maryland.

Peace Campers Evicted

The colorful tents, spunky pro-peace pronouncements and other signs of a friendly, peaceful presence in the desert are gone now. After more than two years of continuous presence near the Mercury Test Site entrance, the Peace Camp was forcibly evicted on June 22, 1989, after receiving a 24-hour eviction notice from the Bureau of Land Management. A squad of dump trucks, front-end loaders and bulldozers destroyed or hauled off every vestige of the settlement.

Three peace campers, citing permits from the Western Shoshone nation, refused to be evicted, were promptly arrested and will be tried in federal court. Even bulldozers, thank goodness, can't seem to eradicate the pesky campers. Several have relocated to Department of Transportation land on the rally site near the Mercury entrance. Several others are negotiating with the BLM for a new permit that will allow Peace Camp II to blossom somewhere in the desert near the test site.

NDE Urges Bush to Remember All Nuclear Victims, Push for Test Ban and Conversion of Test Site

August 9, 1989

Dear President Bush:

On this 44th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, we people of faith gathered at the Nevada Test Site join with many thousands of people around the world in prayer and protest over the continuation of nuclear weapons testing.

We particularly note with hope the emergence in Kazakhstan of the "Nevada Movement" to end nuclear testing in the Soviet Union.

We mourn not only the death of the quarter million people of Hiroshima-Nagasaki, but also the numberless victims in our own land: atomic veterans, downwinders, workers in and residents near nuclear facilities, and our poor and homeless whose needs go unmet.

We are all Hibakusha.

We urge you to move quickly in negotiating a comprehensive nuclear test ban, and in planning for the economic conversion of the Nevada Test Site and other nuclear facilities.

Nevada Desert Experience Las Vegas, Nevada

*"If there is no struggle, there is no progress.
Those who profess to favor freedom and yet
renounce controversy are people who want
crops without ploughing the ground."
---Fredrick Douglas (1817-1895)*

Soviet "Nevada Movement" Commemorates Hiroshima-Nagasaki

(Editor's Note: The following telex came tumbling into NDE's office on July 24.)

Dear Friends:

It is quite evident that the striving of one country to stop nuclear war and nuclear testing, and to achieve disarmament is not enough today. Only joint action can help us to save our planet. Only by coordinating our activities and uniting our efforts can we avoid the nuclear holocaust. The "Nevada Movement" group in Kazakhstan, supporting an international peaceful action in commemoration of Hiroshima-Nagasaki, is planning to hold a meeting against nuclear weapons on August 6-9, 1989, at the Semipalatinsk test site.

Regards:

Olzhas Suleimenov, Murat Auezov
Nevada Movement (See the Spring 1989 Desert Voices for more on the Soviet Nevada Movement.)

Response from Nevada Desert Experience

Dear Friends:

Greetings to you -- our brothers and sisters in the quest to stop nuclear weapons testing. As we remember Hiroshima-Nagasaki with actions at the Nevada Test Site August 6-9, we will celebrate with appreciation your movement for disarmament.

Regards:

Mary Lehman, Peter Ediger
Nevada Desert Experience

Test Ban Wheel Takes Another Slow Turn

The test ban wheel took another slow turn recently with the conclusion of negotiations over how the United States and Soviet Union can verify each other's nuclear bomb tests.

The negotiations were wrapped up in mid-August and featured a Soviet offer to accept U.S. monitoring of Soviet tests above 75 kilotons by the Corrtex monitoring method, which involves elaborate on-site verification procedures dictating a virtual continual U.S. presence at the Soviet test site.

Although the USSR favors monitoring via seismic monitors, which most experts feel is more reliable, it is now willing to accept the more intrusive Corrtex verification method. But the Soviets' willingness to accept Corrtex is contingent on the U.S. allowing installation of a network of Soviet seismic stations near the Nevada Test Site.

Any final agreement will probably require a minimum number of on-site inspections so both sides can physically verify that tests are being kept to less than 50 or 75 kilotons, the two thresholds that have been suggested.

Newsnotes

"When Stones Cry Out"

The theme for Lenten Desert Experience IX -- Feb. 28 to April 15 -- will be "When Stones Cry Out." Dates have been set for Franciscan Weekend, March 23-25 and a weekend with Friends, Brethren, Mennonites, March 16-18. Other group sessions are being planned. If your group wants to co-sponsor a special weekend or is planning to bring a large contingent to the test site during Lent, please call Mary or Peter at NDE, (702) 646-4814, for information, insights, support and general help with making the most of Lent, 1989.

Peacemaker Needed

And speaking of getting the most out of Lent, one way to make sure you don't miss a single day of the entire Lenten Experience is to become an Intern with NDE for the Lenten season. Of course, there will be some work involved, but there will also be fascinating people, moving events, great tunes (thanks to Peter) and all the other rewards that go with being a peacemaker. So, if you're ready for a brief stint (Feb. 1 to April 18, 1990) as a full-time peacemaker, contact Peter or Mary. Housing and a small stipend are available.

Ched Myers to Visit

The Pace E Bene Nonviolence Center is sponsoring the following two meetings with Ched Myers in Las Vegas:

- Nov. 11 -- A seminar on Mark's Gospel titled "To Read the Gospel 'Politically.'" Pre-registration cost: \$10, and \$15 at the door.
- Nov. 12 -- a meeting to plan nonviolent resistance strategy with people and organizations throughout the Southwest.

For more information, contact Pace E Bene, 1420 W. Bartlett, Las Vegas NV 89106, or call (702) 648-2798.

Do You Need an Oasis?

"Oasis in the Desert, Oasis in the City" is the title of the personal retreats being offered by the Pace E Bene Center, this fall and winter. For more information, contact PEB at the above address.

Staff on the Road

NDE staff will be "on the road" this fall to connect with other groups/persons working for peace and justice. Mary Lehman is planning to go to Oregon in mid-October and will be trekking through Nevada in September. Peter Ediger will be in the San Francisco Bay area, Nov. 6-8. Contact Peter or Mary before they hit your area if you would like to join them or can help them in their travels in any way.

Fiscally Speaking

NDE begins a new fiscal year Oct. 1. To meet our budget and program goals, we need contributions in October resembling the following:

100 people	\$10 each	\$1,000
50 people	\$20 each	\$1,000
20 people	\$50 each	\$1,000
10 people	\$200 each	\$2,000
5 people	\$500 each	\$2,500

Are you able and willing to help?

HO-HO-HO For Peace

Plan now to celebrate Christmas with nonviolence! NDE's Notes on Nonviolence is a perfect stocking-stuffer for family, friends and anyone else who makes their socks available to you. Single copies, \$2.50; five for \$10; and 10 for \$15.

Model Radioactive Waste

The National Nuclear Waste Transportation Task Force met near Reno, Nevada, in August to plan a high-profile tour of the Southwest this spring with a truck carrying a life-sized model of a high-level radioactive waste cask.

Representatives from eight states along the proposed WIPP and Yucca Mountain routes want to show how waste trucks rolling through town will impact communities.

For more information, contact Bob Fulkerson, Citizen Alert, P.O. Box 5391, Reno NV 89513, telephone (702) 827-4200. Californians can contact Chris Brown, Citizen Alert, P.O. Box 1681, Las Vegas NV 89101, telephone (702) 649-4384.

Return to Holy Trinity Chapel

The Holy Trinity Chapel in the test site town of Mercury was the scene of an Aug. 9 prayer service which resulted in three arrests. Fr. Louis Vitale, Br. Gary Sponholz^{so} and presidential candidate Erik Thompson* entered the chapel to conduct a prayer service in commemoration of the bombing of Nagasaki.

The chapel building was originally built as a place of worship, but currently houses the offices of Los Alamos National Laboratories, a nuclear weapons design center. On Holy Saturday of this year, a small group entered the building and rededicated it as a place of worship.

"This seems to us a great blasphemy," the three said in a prepared statement. "As we look at the bombing of Nagasaki, we are struck that the bomb landed in the very center of the Christian community of Japan. In fact, ground zero was the Catholic cathedral. To mourn this horrible event, we felt it important to return to the chapel site and hold a prayer service there." The three were arrested for violating federal law, held overnight and released. They will be tried in federal court.

The Trinity action took place during NDE's fifth August Desert Witness, Aug. 4-9. Fifty-two persons were arrested at the test site entrance on Hiroshima Day, Aug. 6. Nineteen more arrests occurred on Nagasaki Day, Aug. 9. All those arrested were cited for trespass and released. It is anticipated that all charges will be dropped. In addition to the actions at the test site, the August Desert Witness also featured stimulating presentations by two provocative speakers. Richard Barnet of the Washington-based Institute for National Policy addressed "The Tyranny of the Bomb." Fr. Barry Stenger of the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley probed how "Nuclear Realities Challenge Our Moral Thinking." Cassette tapes of both talks are available from the NDE office for \$4.50.

* For more information on Erik Thompson's quest for the White House, contact the Erik Thompson for President Committee, Box 200, Milan, MN 56262.

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