

The Hartford Catholic Worker



St. Martin De Porres House
St. Brigid House

Resurrection is the Practice of Imitating Christ.



Brian Kavanagh

*Let the heavens be glad and
the earth rejoice;
let the sea thunder, and all that
fills it;
Then shall all the trees of the
wood sing for joy
at your presence, O God, for you
come,
you come to judge the earth.
You will judge the world with
justice,
and the peoples with your truth.
Psalm 96*

Summer 2018

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published quarterly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are a 501c3 tax exempt organization. We do not seek or accept state or federal funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, purplehousecw@gmail.com and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Baby Beth Donovan, Charles Macaulay, Alaina DiGiorgio, Dwight Teal Jr., Keyanna Pettway, Jacqueline, Christopher, and Allen-Douçot.

Save the Date! *Friday, October 26.* We will be celebrating 25 years of the Hartford Catholic Worker at the Holy Family Retreat Center. We hope you can join us! *Details forthcoming.*

Friends: we will not be hosting dinner and mass in July or August. Please join us on the first Tuesdays of September, October, November and December for mass at 7:30 PM, preceded by dinner. Mass is celebrated at the St. Brigid House/the Green House, dinner is served at St. Martin House/the Purple House. If you plan on joining us for dinner maybe send us an email so we can prepare enough loaves and fishes.

Please accept this friendly reminder that the work we do utterly depends on your generosity. The gifts of your time, talent, and treasure keep our doors open. Please consider:

-  volunteering after school,
-  preparing a Saturday meal,
-  organizing a food drive,
-  contributing to the Daylon scholarship fund,
-  helping tend to the buildings and grounds,
-  becoming a regular monthly donor through your bank or retirement fund,
-  praying for peace with justice, justice with mercy, and life with dignity for all of God's children.

Pity The Nation

Khalil Gibran

*"Pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.
Pity the nation that wears a cloth it does not weave
and eats a bread it does not harvest.*

*Pity the nation that acclaims the bully as hero,
and that deems the glittering conqueror bountiful.*

*Pity a nation that despises a passion in its dream,
yet submits in its awakening.*

*Pity the nation that raises not its voice
save when it walks in a funeral,
boasts not except among its ruins,
and will rebel not save when its neck is laid
between the sword and the block.*

*Pity the nation whose statesman is a fox,
whose philosopher is a juggler,
and whose art is the art of patching and mimicking.*

*Pity the nation that welcomes its new ruler with trumpeting,
and farewells him with hooting,
only to welcome another with trumpeting again.*

*Pity the nation whose sages are dumb with years
and whose strongmen are yet in the cradle.*

*Pity the nation divided into fragments,
each fragment deeming itself a nation."*

Connect the Dots to Build a Better World. ³

Christopher J. Douçot

Our life at the Hartford Catholic Worker is simple: we are seeking shalom, right relationships, in the pursuit of the Beloved Community. We are facilitating, right relationships between the white people who visit here and the Black and Brown people who live here; between the well off and those who struggle to get by; between men and women; between heterosexual people and gay people- (Pope Francis recently told a gay man: “God made you like this and He loves you.”); between neighbors and strangers; between friends and enemies; between humanity and our planet; between society and our wealth; and, ultimately, between ourselves and our God.

Pursuing shalom on these varied axes might give the appearance that we are walking multiple paths. We are not. We cannot have a right relationship with our God if we do not have a right relationship with all of God’s people. We cannot have right relationships with God’s Black and Brown children without confronting the racist nature of our society. We cannot have right relationships with God’s poor children without examining our relationship with the wealth we possess. We cannot have right relationships with God’s gay children if we withhold our love from them. We cannot have right relationships with our enemies if we kill, or threaten to kill, them and their children. And we cannot have a right relationship with our God if we continue to destroy the home God has provided for us through waste, neglect, war, and frivolous mass consumption.

Martin Luther King made similar connections. In his most [important sermon](#), delivered exactly a year before his murder, King preached: “We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-

oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

During the last year of King’s life, he began to organize the [Poor People’s Campaign](#), an effort to unite the efforts of Americans working for civil rights with the efforts of Americans working to end the war on the people of Vietnam. King preached about how our War in Vietnam was a surrender in the War on Poverty: “A

B. Characterizations of the Catholic Worker

... the FBI agent characterized the group’s ideology as advocating “peace with a Christian and semi-communistic ideology,” “love and peace thru prayer,” “impeding [National Missile Defense] launches thru non violent civil disobedience,” and “a communist distribution of resources.”

“A Review of the FBI’s Investigation of Certain Domestic Advocacy Groups” Dept of Justice, Sept 20, 2010. P.167

few years ago there was a shining moment... It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program... Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything on a society gone mad on war. And I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.”

After King made these connections the FBI increased its surveillance on him while also trying to discredit him as a communist and an extremist. We, too, have been called extremists. During the early Aughts we were under FBI surveillance because of our nonviolent witness in opposition to spending billions of dollars on nuclear weapons at Electric Boat shipyard. Raymond Hunthausen, former archbishop of Seattle, once condemned Electric Boat’s Trident

submarine an “[oven without walls](#)” for its ability to incinerate millions of people. Our planning to pray outside Electric Boat as one of these death machines was to be “christened” (sic) was investigated by the FBI as a “domestic terrorism matter”- a designation that the Department of Justice concluded was justified in a [2010 report](#). We are not alone in having this libel levied against us. All manner of [nonviolent activists](#) from Quakers to [elderly nuns](#) are being watched as potential domestic terrorists. They can’t call us communists anymore

since no one under 50 remembers the Cold War- so instead we’re now suspected terrorists. I pause to even write this, knowing the damage this label is meant to inflict.

And, now, in a move that is a wicked echo of Nixon’s targeting of antiwar and Black activists via bogus drug charges ([an effort admitted](#) to by Nixon lackey John Ehrlichman in a 2016 interview) the [F.B.I. has coined](#) the term “black identity extremists” to [justify surveillance](#) of Black activists while discrediting them with this smear on their reputations. “A former senior counterterrorism and intelligence official from the Department of Homeland Security who reviewed the document... expressed shock at the language... ‘This is a new umbrella designation that has no basis,’ the former official said. ‘There are civil rights and privacy issues all over this.’”

Meanwhile, white supremacists from the KKK and the Aryan Nation to Neo-Nazis, are an ongoing threat that are [actually killing](#) people. As are male supremacists and their [less organized groups](#).

In truth, the threat posed by the Catholic Worker and Black Lives Matters is to a status quo that continues to concentrate wealth and power
(Please see: [Connecting](#), p8)

Annetra R. Jones

Know ye not that there is... a great man fallen this day in Israel. 2 Samuel 3:38

James Hal Cone, scholar, and father of Black liberation theology joined the cloud of witnesses on April 28, 2018. Many theologians, professors, pastors, preachers and seminarians all over the world were dealt a critical blow upon learning of the passing of the prophet who declared that “*God picks a side and God is on the side of the oppressed.*”

I was introduced to the work of Cone during my first semester at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary by my professor around the time Michael Brown was murdered by police in Ferguson, Missouri. My Professor referenced Cone’s book [The Cross and The Lynching Tree](#) as she made theological connections between Brown’s body laying in the streets for hours, Black bodies hanging on trees after being lynched, and Jesus’ crucified body hanging on a cross.

As a Black woman who grew up in the ghetto surrounded by poverty and familiar with Black suffering, yet possessing a conservative, fundamental interpretation of scripture, I was perplexed by the manner in which my professor talked about God. I thought “*how in the world, could this woman compare the bodies of Michael Brown, Black people and Jesus Christ?*” My professor’s critique of racism, and the centering of black bodies, opened up a new world of biblical interpretation, and it led me on journey to learn more about Black liberation theology and its founder, James Cone.

Cone was born on August 5, 1938 and grew up in Bearden, Arkansas during the age of Jim Crow. He attended a segregated school, drank from “colored” water fountains and watched movies from theater balconies. Cone’s Christian identity was shaped at an early age in the Macedonia A.M.E. Church where he learned that Jesus was the reality who empowered Black people to know that they were not worthless human beings that white people said they were. Cone grew up witnessing the seg-

regation of white and Black churches, and in knowing that Black people were not welcomed in white churches Cone had questions. Cone pondered. “*What kind of Christianity is it that preaches love and practices segregation?*” “*How could whites exclude Black people from their churches and still claim Jesus as their Savior and the Bible as their holy book?*”

Cone’s theological ponderings led him to seminary, and he became the

silent regarding the treatment of Blacks. Cone became enraged at their silence and felt a burden to speak up regarding the suffering of Black people in America, yet he found that his European-centered theological education initially left him ill-equipped to do so.

Also, during this time, the 1960s Black power activists, including Malcolm X, were shunning Christianity as the white man’s religion which created division between the prophetic voices and followers of [Malcolm X and Martin Luther King](#). Cone revered King who helped him to define his *Christian* identity and Malcolm X who helped him to define his *black* identity, and unwilling to part ways with either, Cone set out to prove that Christianity *is* Black Power.

Cone parted ways with European, and American, theologians in the summer of 1967 after 43 people were shot dead in the street during the Detroit riot. All the anger he suppressed about white supremacy while obtaining degrees from Philander Smith College, Garrett Theological Seminary, and Northwestern University burst forth out of him like an erupting volcano that had been dormant for many years.

In 2016 I had the privilege of hearing Cone lecture at Xavier University in Cincinnati when he said, “*I came out swinging at white theology and white churches. Jesus says in the [non-canonical] gospel of Thomas, ‘if you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.’*”

Cone’s anger at theological racism led him on a mission to decenter whiteness, and deconstruct white supremacy, as the dominant voice in theology. He began to write with the intent of rescuing Christianity from the hands of the oppressor and creating a new theology that affirmed blackness. King’s assassination fueled Cone’s rage and he wrote from 7 am to midnight, six days a week for five weeks, while listening to the spirituals and the blues. “*I write because*

God of the Oppressed



James H. Cone

first African American to earn a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Northwestern University. Cone experienced a theological awakening during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s when he came to the realization that the European theologians he studied in seminary had nothing to say about God’s concern for Black suffering in America. Cone understood that theology is not universal but is done in context, and based on the conversations that theologians were having about God during this time, according to them, God was

writing is the way I fight,” said Cone, and “teaching is the way I resist, doing what I can to subvert white supremacy.”

Cone’s first two books [Black Theology & Black Power](#) and [A Black Theology of Liberation](#) shook the foundation of theological hallways across America as Cone boldly identified God and Jesus as Black asserting that both are involved in the Black freedom struggle. Whites and Blacks objected to Cone’s theology. In *Black Theology and Black Power* Cone explains, “the task of Black Theology, is to analyze the Black man’s condition in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ with the purpose of creating a new understanding of Black dignity among Black people and providing the necessary soul in that people to destroy white racism.”

Cone asserted, “it is a theology which confronts white society as the racist Antichrist, communicating to the oppressor that nothing will be spared in the fight for freedom.” Cone mentioned in his lecture, “the gospel of Jesus is God’s word of liberation to the Black poor. Whites had turned Jesus’ message to a gospel of white supremacy...which used Christ to serve the interest of power rulers in America and in Europe.” Cone places a strong emphasis on “love” as the foundation for Christianity and Black Power and because LOVE is the foundation, it is love that holds his argument together. God is love and it is God’s love that caused God to send Jesus to reconcile the world to Godself. In this process of reconciliation, Christians have a moral, and theological, obligation to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, therefore Black Power (affirming ones blackness and humanity), and resisting racism is to walk in Christian love. Cone quotes Paul Tillich, “that it is the strange work of love to destroy what is against love,” and because many white churches tolerate and perpetuate racism, denying the Incarnation and Christianity, they do not love and are therefore unchristian.

Black theology also shook me to my core and challenged me to question the white theology I inherited which ignored the oppressive social conditions of poor and marginalized people caused by systemic and institutional racism while keeping me focused on spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts and getting into heaven. The nondenominational

church responsible for my spiritual formation taught from a post-racial perspective teaching me to not see color, while blaming the conditions of the poor and marginalized to be the result of their refusal to accept Christ as savior and their inability to grasp Christian principles for living.

Black theology caused me to shift from a mindset that ignored the underprivileged, poor and marginalized to a strong conviction that I have a responsibility as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ to resist all forms of oppression while offering good news to the poor. My Christian convictions have shifted from a prosperity gospel, centered around obtaining material wealth and maintaining strong spiritual disciplines, to liberation theology centered around the gospel offering liberation to all people. Liberation theology gives me hope and a vision for a better America where justice is truly for all and America is truly the land of the free.

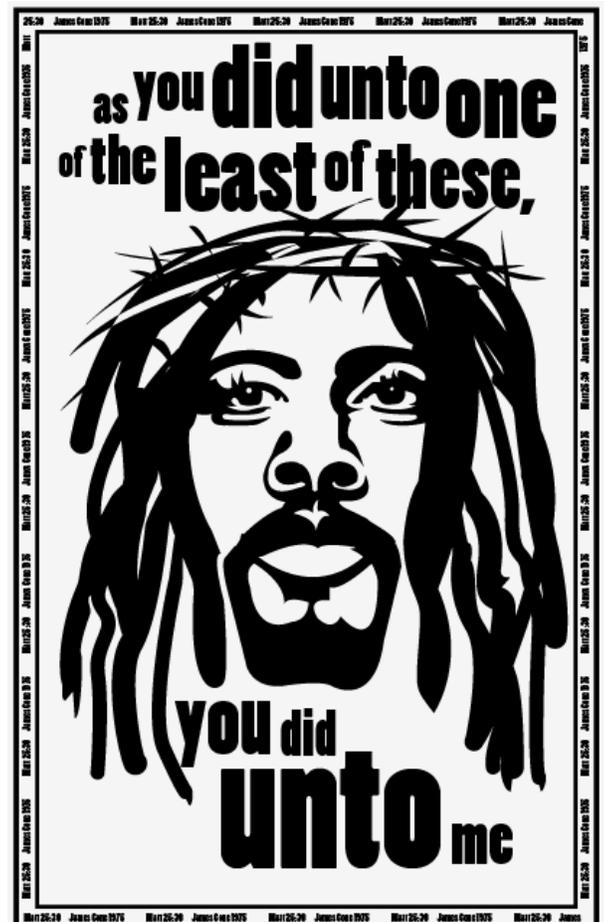
Cone joined the faculty at Union Theological Seminary in 1969 and was named the Bill and Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology in 2017. He authored 12 books, 150 articles, and received thirteen honorary degrees. His latest book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* earned him the 2018 Grawmeyer Award in Religion, a \$100,000 award from the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the University of Louisville.

Cone continued to write until he could write no longer. His final book, [Said I Wasn’t Gonna Tell Nobody](#), was completed before his passing and will be released later this year. Black liberation theology paved the way for other scholars to find their voices resulting in several of Cone’s students becoming leading scholars of [Womanist Theology](#), which centers the life experiences of [Black women](#). “He didn’t want his students to be his disciples...” says woman-

ist scholar Kelly Brown Douglas during Cone’s funeral service. “...he wanted them to do the kind of work that mattered and made a difference in the lives of those who were most ‘spit upon,’ the crucified those on the margins.”

As a seminarian, a minister and a Black woman in America, I am eternally grateful to the life, legacy, boldness and prophetic voice of James Hal Cone which has forever changed the way I read, interpret and preach the Bible. In the words of Cone, “If the Church is to remain faithful to its Lord, it must make a decisive break with the structure of this society by launching a vehement attack on the evils of racism in all forms. It must become prophetic, demanding a radical change in the interlocking structures of this society.” I am convinced that our world is a better place because of the unselfish loving, contributions of James Hal Cone. *Well done, good and faithful servant.*

([Annetta Jones](#), a native of Louisville, is a Masters of Divinity student at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary who is soon to be ordained in the United Methodist Church.)Ω



We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches. We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake.

It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, geography—our identity in Christ precedes every other identity. We pray that our nation will

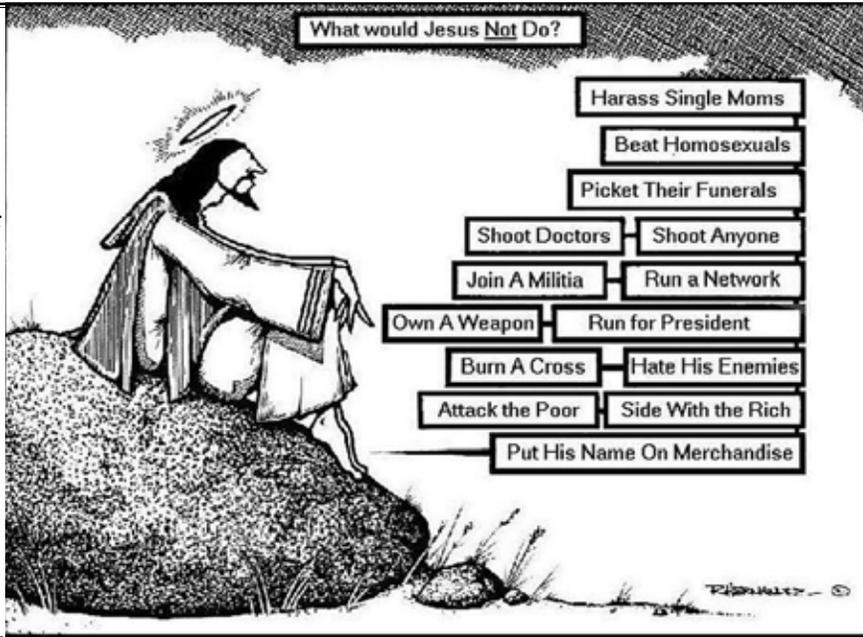
see Jesus' words in us. *"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35).

When politics undermines our theology, we must examine that politics. The church's role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ. The government's role is to serve the common good by protecting justice and peace, rewarding good behavior while restraining bad behavior (Romans 13). When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out...

It is often the duty of Christian leaders, especially elders, to speak the truth in love to our churches and to name and warn against temptations, racial and cultural captivities, false doctrines, and political idolatries—and even our complicity in them. We do so here with humility, prayer, and a deep dependency on the grace and Holy Spirit of God.

This letter comes from a retreat on Ash Wednesday, 2018. In this season of Lent, we feel deep lamentations for the state of our nation, and our own hearts are filled with confession for the sins we feel called to address. The true meaning of the word repentance is to turn around. It is time to lament, confess, repent, and turn. In times of crisis, the church has historically learned to return to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord. That is our foundational confession. It was central for the early church and needs to again become central to us. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar



In particular, we reject white supremacy and commit ourselves to help dismantle the systems and structures that perpetuate white preference and advantage. Further, any doctrines or political strategies that use racist resentments, fears, or language must be named as public sin... Racial bigotry must be antithetical for those belonging to the body of Christ, because it denies the truth of the gospel we profess.

II. WE BELIEVE

we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race,

gender, identity, or class (Galatians 3:28). The body of Christ, where those great human divisions are to be overcome, is meant to be an example for the rest of society. When we fail to overcome these oppressive obstacles, and even perpetuate them, we have failed in our vocation to the world—to proclaim and live the reconciling gospel of Christ.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment, and assault of women that has been further revealed in our culture and politics, including our churches, and the oppression of any other child of God. We lament when such practices seem publicly ignored, and thus privately condoned, by those in high positions of leadership... We support the courageous truth-telling voices of women, who have helped the nation recognize these abuses. We confess sexism as a sin, requiring our repentance and resistance.

III. WE BELIEVE how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself. (Matthew 25: 31-46)... God calls us to protect and seek justice for those who are poor and vulnerable, and our treatment of people who are "oppressed," "strangers," "outsiders," or otherwise considered "marginal" is a test of our relationship to God... If our gospel is not "good news to the poor," it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18).

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the

was not—nor any other political ruler since. If Jesus is Lord, no other authority is absolute. Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of God he announced, is the Christian's first loyalty, above all others. We pray, *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:10). Our faith is personal but never private, meant not only for heaven but for this earth.

The question we face is this: Who is Jesus Christ for us today? What does our loyalty to Christ, as disciples, require at this moment in our history?...

What we believe leads us to what we must reject...

I. WE BELIEVE each human being is made in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). That image and likeness confers a divinely decreed dignity, worth, and God-given equality to all of us as children of the one God who is the Creator of all things. Racial bigotry is a brutal denial of the image of God in some of the children of God... Racial justice and healing are biblical and theological issues for us, and are central to the mission of the body of Christ in the world. We give thanks for the prophetic role of the historic black churches in America when they have called for a more faithful gospel.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership. We, as followers of Jesus, must clearly reject the use of racial bigotry for political gain that we have seen. In the face of such bigotry, silence is complicity.

most vulnerable children of God. We strongly deplore the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees... and we need to remind our churches that God makes the treatment of the “strangers” among us a test of faith (Leviticus 19:33-34). We won’t accept the neglect of the well-being of low-income families and children, and we will resist repeated attempts to deny health care to those who most need it. We confess our growing national sin of putting the rich over the poor.... Budgets are moral documents. We commit ourselves to opposing and reversing those policies and finding solutions that reflect the wisdom of people from different political parties... to seek the common good. Protecting the poor is a central commitment of Christian discipleship, to which 2,000 verses in the Bible attest.

IV. WE BELIEVE that truth is morally central to our personal and public lives. Truth-telling is central to the prophetic biblical tradition... A commitment to speaking truth... is foundational to shared trust in society... The search and respect for truth is crucial to anyone who follows Christ.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life. Politicians, like the rest of us, are human, fallible, sinful, and mortal. But when public lying becomes so persistent that it deliberately tries to change facts for ideological, political, or personal gain, the public accountability to truth is undermined... The normalization of lying presents a profound moral danger to the fabric of society...

V. WE BELIEVE that Christ’s way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. Jesus said..., “*whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant*” (Matthew 20:25-26). We believe our elected officials are called to public service, not public tyranny, so we must protect the limits, checks, and balances of democracy and encourage humility and civility on the part of elected officials. We support democracy, not because we believe in human perfection, but because we do not. The authority of government is instituted by God to order an unredeemed society for the sake of justice and peace, but ultimate authority belongs only to God.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger that threatens democracy and the common good—and we will

resist it. Disrespect for the rule of law, not recognizing the equal importance of our three branches of government, and replacing civility with dehumanizing hostility toward opponents are of great concern to us. Neglecting the ethic of public service and accountability... raise deeper concerns about political idolatry...

VI. WE BELIEVE Jesus when he tells us to go into all nations making disciples (Matthew 28:18). Our churches and our nations are part of an international community whose interests always surpass national boundaries. The most well-known verse in the New Testament starts with “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). We, in turn, should love and serve the world and all its inhabitants, rather than seek first narrow, nationalistic prerogatives.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT “America first” as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal. We reject domination rather than stewardship of the earth’s resources, toward genuine global development that brings human flourishing for all of God’s children...

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED for the soul of our nation, but also for our churches and the integrity of our faith. The present crisis calls us to go deeper—deeper into our relationship to God; deeper into our relationships with each other, especially across racial, ethnic, and national lines; deeper into our relationships with the

most vulnerable, who are at greatest risk⁷

The church is always subject to temptations to power, to cultural conformity, and to racial, class, and gender divides, as Galatians 3:28 teaches us. But our answer is to be “in Christ,” and to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable, and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

The best response to our political, material, cultural, racial, or national idolatries is the First Commandment: “*You shall have no other gods before me*” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus summarizes the Greatest Commandment: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets*” (Matthew 22:38). As to loving our neighbors, we would add “no exceptions.”...

Lament, repent, and then repair. If Jesus is Lord, there is always space for grace. We believe it is time to speak and to act in faith and conscience, not because of politics, but because we are disciples of Jesus Christ—to whom be all authority, honor, and glory...

Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, President and CEO, Global Alliance Interfaith Network

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church et al. (for a full list of signers [click here](#))Ω



into the hands of wealthy, white men at the expense of the poor, people of color, and the environment. This concentration of wealth and power also comes at the expense of middle class, working, and poor white men, producing a disconnect between the individual experiences of many white men and the social experience of white men. Straight, white men are still the dominant group in America; meaning the vast majority of CEOs, politicians, religious leaders, and decision makers are straight, white, men. In [2016 the NYTimes](#) found that of “503 of the most powerful people in American culture, government, education and business... just 44 are minorities” (A review of their findings also reveals that just a handful are women.)

When forty years of stagnant wages, evaporating pensions, increasing costs for health care and college, and an ongoing upward shift of the retirement age, and the combined gains made by women and minorities over the same period are considered from a zero sum, individualistic perspective, the toxic conclusion is “we’re (ie white men) doing worse (than our fathers) because they (ie women and minorities) are doing better.” After 8 years of a Black presidency, and the “specter” of the first female presidency, this unwitting Malthusian understanding was exploited by a multimillionaire posing as a man of the people.

It has been further stoked by white and male identity extremists and violently exacerbated by many of the (almost entirely white and male) mass shooters of the last decade. This caustic misunderstanding rests on the implicit fallacy of “all things being equal”: but women and people of color have never been equal to white men in America. White male supremacy is sustained by ongoing racial segregation in housing and



NyNy hanging out at the Green House. photo by Mike Poirier

gender segregation in our social lives which reinforces white, male ignorance about the lives of non-white Americans, and of women (beyond the women in our immediate families). In our highly individualistic society we are generally hostile to any systemic analysis of social ills. It is nearly impossible for us to wrap our minds around the notion, articulated by sociologist [Michael Kimmel](#), that “men’s experience of powerlessness is real... but it is not true”. Yes, very many white men have been harmed by changes in our economy. Nonetheless, very wealthy white men have reaped tremendous benefits from these changes while consolidating their political and economic power. The scenario becomes even more toxic, and intractable, when racists, misogynists, xenophobes, and homophobes disseminate narratives that blame various “others” for the problems in our society and with our economy.

Divide and conquer- it’s the oldest, most effective, trick in “[How to Dominate for Dummies](#)”. On these shores wealthy, white, men have been pitting poor and working people, men and women, against each other since [Bacon’s Rebellion](#) in 1676, through the [racist split](#) in the Suffragette movement after Black men gained the right to vote, to the legal exclusion of Black and brown people from unions

xenophobic rantings from Breitbart, the “[manosperc](#)”, and the [alt-Right](#).

If we are to create a “more perfect union” we will need to pursue the Beloved Community and fight nonviolently for what is right. This has been the impetus behind the [New Poor People’s Campaign: a National Call for Moral Revival](#). Under the direction of Rev. William Barber Jr., and Rev. Liz Theoharis, this movement is uniting those of us left behind by the economic rapture of the last 50 years to reclaim the [moral narrative](#), dismantle the evil triplets of racism, militarism, and economic exploitation, as well as put an end to their offspring: environmental destruction.

It will take extremists for this movement to succeed. Which is why we agree with Dr. King’s rebuttal of those moderate, white ministers who castigated him while he sat in a [Birmingham jail](#):

“Was not Jesus an extremist for love: ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.’ Was not Amos an extremist for justice: ‘Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.’... And John Bunyan: ‘I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.’... So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary’s hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.”

Please join us in our creative extremism for a gentle, just, world. Ω

Wangari Maathai: She Who Shaped Hope

Shai Cassell

"Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking so that humanity stops threatening its life support system. We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds. And in the process, heal our own. . . In the course of history there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness. To reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now."

-Wangari Maathai's Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, 2004

These words from 2004 might give pause to anyone today who is dismayed by recent roll back on environmental regulations and the blatant disregard for the fragility of our planet. Were Wangari Maathai alive, there is little doubt that she would have some harsh words regarding those actions.

In 1940, a peasant woman, and her husband, welcomed a daughter, their third of six children. Born in a mud-walled hut in a small village in central Kenya, with no electricity or running water, she was named Wangari (In Kikuyu cosmology Wangari is the daughter of Mumbi: "*she who shapes*"). Wangari would become an esteemed educator, a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and a tireless activist for the environment.

Wangari loved the outdoors and had a fondness for fig trees. Her village was abundant with shrubs, creepers, birds, trees and other indigenous plants. Water was clean and plentiful, and the land was fertile. In this environment, Wangari thrived. She loved spending her days gardening and working the land. She fell in love with the earth and its abundance.

Wangari was fortunate to continue her education with relatives who sent her on to high school. Recognized for her intellect, she was selected to be a recipient of a U.S. education under President Kennedy's Education Scholarship Program for foreign students. She attended and graduated from Mount St.

Scholastica College in Kansas with a degree in Biology and then completed a Master of Science at the University of Pittsburgh. She returned to Kenya and in 1971, as the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Nairobi. At 38, she held the first female professorship at the University of Nairobi, and she was the first woman chair of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy. During this period, she married, bore three children



and divorced in 1979.

Those are the bare facts of an incredible woman whose vision, strength, and determination would change a country. What's more important is the bond she formed as a young child with the earth, and how that bond would drive her actions later. Maathai discovered the deeper truth of her life's work by reconnecting with rural women from her community and listening intently to the hardship they endured to simply survive.

Due to overdevelopment and/or poor farming techniques, the land was being stripped of its trees and vegetation, the soil was thinning, and clean water was becoming scarce, necessitating longer and longer walks to find. Many children were suffering from malnutrition, and living off the land was no longer a given for many Kenyans who once enjoyed the fruits of their labor.

The solution was obvious to Wangari and came in an instant: PLANT

TREES! Trees would offer shade, firewood, prevent erosion, create an undergrowth and provide nutritious fruits. The idea took off and groups of rural women began to come together to plant trees. And as word spread, more and more women joined in. From this simple, brilliant idea, Maathai had formed the [Green Belt Movement](#) in 1977.

As this grassroots movement of rural women grew, other changes followed. In coming together to plant trees, information and opinions were shared. Issues about poverty, political repression, the assault on the land through deforestation and other challenges facing rural families throughout Kenya were discussed. Soon the desire for political change emerged and the regime of Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi became the target of much discontent and criticism. Among other tactics, Moi established one party rule, suppressed opposition groups and arrested and imprisoned political opponents. Wangari spoke out against Moi and was now perceived as a threat not just some innocuous professor spouting the benefits of planting trees.

Protests erupted as word spread that the government planned to sell development rights to a corporation desiring to build a 60-story building in Uhuru Park. The area in question was fenced off to the public and comprised over 60 acres of land, Wangari and 20 women staged a sit-down strike in the center of the park and as word spread, thousands joined in, largely organized by the Green Belt Movement.

In addition, following the negative international publicity regarding Kenya's one-party rule (orchestrated in no small part by Wangari), the government agreed to introduce a multi-party system.

Throughout the 1990's, Wangari's Green Belt Movement spread, resulting in thousands upon thousands of trees
(Please see: Wangari, p11)

The New Poor People's Campaign

1. We are rooted in a moral analysis based on our deepest religious and constitutional values that demand justice for all. Moral revival is necessary to save the heart and soul of our democracy.

2. We are committed to lifting up and deepening the leadership of those most affected by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation and to building unity across lines of division.

3. We believe in the dismantling of unjust criminalization systems that exploit poor communities and communities of color and the transformation of the “War Economy” into a “Peace Economy” that values all humanity.

4. We believe that equal protection under the law is non-negotiable.

5. We believe that people should not live in or die from poverty... Blaming the poor and claiming that the United States does not have an abundance of resources to overcome poverty are false narratives used to perpetuate economic exploitation, exclusion, and deep inequality.

6. We recognize the centrality of systemic racism in maintaining economic oppression... Poverty and economic inequality cannot be understood apart from a society built on white supremacy.

7. We aim to shift the distorted moral narrative often promoted by religious extremists in the nation from issues like prayer in school, abortion, and gun rights to one that is concerned with how our society treats the poor, those on the margins, the least of these, women, LGBTQIA folks, workers, immigrants, the disabled and the sick; equality and representation under the law; and the desire for peace, love and harmony...

8. We will build up the power of people... to serve as a vehicle for a powerful moral movement in the country and to transform the political, economic and moral structures of our society.

9. We recognize the need to organize at the state and local level—many of the most regressive policies are being passed at the state level, and these policies will have long and lasting effect, past even executive orders. The movement is not from above but below.

10. We will do our work in a non-partisan way...This is not about left and right, Democrat or Republican but about right and wrong.

11. We uphold the need to do a season of sustained moral direct action as a way to break through the tweets and shift the moral narrative. We are demonstrating the power of people coming together across issues and geography and putting our bodies on the line to the issues that are affecting us all.

12. The Campaign... embrace[s] nonviolence. Violent tactics or actions will not be tolerated.



Martin Luther King puppet by Jackie Allen-Douçot and Dwight Teal

The Hartford Catholic Worker is a “seamless garment” community. We embrace the idea that life is precious from the womb to the tomb. Over the years we have welcomed several teenaged girls who were pregnant and homeless to stay with us. We welcome Pope Francis’ recent declaration from [“Rejoice and Be Glad”](#): *“Our defence of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned.”*

As I type, Jackie is busy advocating for a week old baby, and his teenaged mom. The mom is ready to leave the hospital and DCF just told her she needs to either get on a bus to Georgia or have the baby taken. We agree that the baby and mother would not be safe living with the father, nor would it be in the father’s best interests to have them live with him, but a 26 hour bus ride, days after giving birth, is far from a just solution!

The situation is very complicated and unfolding rapidly. That resources to protect the baby and mother are scarce is a moral- not political- decision. Budgets are moral documents.

Jackie has just negotiated with DCF that mother and child will spend a night or two with us, while DCF gets the mom a state i.d., so that we can then purchase an airline ticket for them. The father, who has been oft written about on these pages, is downstairs weeping. This is no way to welcome a new soul to our community. A baby’s cry was heard at the Hartford Catholic Worker; there is mourning and great weeping by his parents. We, too, weep for the children, and we refuse to be comforted, until the spirit of compassion rules our land (Jer 31:15). Please pray for this family.

Notes, cont.



Nick threw out the first pitch at the Yard Goats.

was our lead Camp Counselor for the last few summers.

In April our board chair Shai arranged for a training for our volunteers and extended community. It was called "Training In Trauma Response" and was given by the Justice Resource Institute. About 15 of our volunteer workers attended. At the end of the program the trainer agreed that just about every child in our program has been traumatized by the racism and poverty that surrounds them.

Perhaps 25 years of living with the constant presence of the devastating effects of poverty on the children we love was the reason that I jumped on board to be a coordinator for

Wangari, cont.

being planted. In 1998, the decision was made to plant only indigenous trees. Protests continues against the Moi regime and Maathai became more and more a political figure of opposition. Finally, in the elections of 2002, Moi was defeated and Wangari Maathai was elected to Parliament receiving 98% of the vote.

In 2004, Maathai was awarded the Noble Peace Prize for her contribution "to sustainable development, democracy and peace." She became the first African woman,

the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call For Moral Revival. This campaign is the beginning of a uniting of tens of thousands of people that are organizing to challenge the evils of systemic racism, militarism, materialism, and environmental devastation. 50 years after MLK's assassination, the statistics of people of color in poverty are even more harrowing. You can download the tragic assessment from the [Institute for Policy Studies](http://www.instituteforpolicy.com) site for free. As the school year winds down, we begin preparation for getting the children signed up for days in Voluntown at Ahimsa, and our summer program. We pray for sunny days and a safe summer. We hope that all of you know how grateful we are for those who keep us going with your support. We apologize for the donations that come in and don't get acknowledged...

God knows of your goodness even when our human errors don't get you the thanks you deserve. In these last months our food pantry has many times been down to the last boxes of pasta. We are thankful for St. Tim's, Holy Trinity in Hartford, St. James' Episcopal, and the individuals that give to us so that we can give to the ever increasing number of hungry families that come to the door. Summer is when the pantry really dries up so sauce, beans, and small canned hams mean a great deal. Please keep us in your prayers, especially those in our community who struggle with addiction. I end with a few words from Pope Francis...

["No, to an economy of exclu-](#)

and the first environmentalist, to receive this prize.

Maathai went on to receive more national and international awards for her practical solution to over-development and her bravery in standing up to corruption in the ranks of government.

We can do no better than to embrace the pragmatism and courage this woman displayed in the face of many obstacles, both personal and professional. Her Green Belt Movement continues, and Maathai's legacy lives on through the improved environment- both natural and political- she left behind. Ω



Olivia and Enaijha at the Yard Goats fund raiser. That's Olivia's "naw, I'm not cold," face. It was freezing!

[sion](#). No, to the new idolatry of money, No, to financial system that rules instead of serves, No, to the inequality which spawns violence." Amen!Ω

Pity The Nation (After Khalil Gibran)

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

*Pity the nation whose people are sheep
And whose shepherds mislead them
Pity the nation whose leaders are liars
Whose sages are silenced
And whose bigots haunt the airwaves
Pity the nation that raises not its voice
Except to praise conquerors
And acclaim the bully as hero
And aims to rule the world
By force and by torture
Pity the nation that knows
No other language but its own
And no other culture but its own
Pity the nation whose breath is money
And sleeps the sleep of the too well fed
Pity the nation oh pity the people
who allow their rights to erode
and their freedoms to be washed away
My country, tears of thee
Sweet land of liberty!*

Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

Hello Worker family. We have been very busy since our last newsletter. The new basketball court has been paved! Both houses are being painted. On Earth Day, Holy Cross alumni and many of our stalwart volunteers did an amazing clean up job on the Green House. Folks also helped plant and weed gardens at both houses. Some of our best guys (Chris, Ammon, Charlie, HuskySport Chris and the Wlochowski boys) spread gravel and built an awesome 4 square court on what was once a mud pit. We had a fundraiser at the Yard Goat stadium/game that was a blast of fun despite 40-degree temps. On Good Friday we celebrated the Nonviolent stations of the cross at the Sub base in Groton where we were joined by friends from the Peace Pagoda. Baby Beth returned from visiting her son Cullen in New Zealand and Brian is back from a few weeks in Ireland (or the ole' sod as he calls it). We are so very grateful to the folks who came to pitch in while they were gone...in particular Judy, Diane and Shai. We are still in need of cooks for lunch on 3 or 4 Saturdays this summer. If there is anyone ready to donate time or energy to our summer program in Hartford, Charlie and the other volunteers would be quite happy. Beth, Chris, Dwight, and I will be at Ahimsa with about 40 kids over the course of the summer.

June 15th will be our annual graduation party. This year we have only 3 grads to celebrate. We are hoping that instead of the usual gift cards our supporters will be interested in making a donation to the Daylon Fund. The Daylon Fund is a scholarship program that we set

up in honor of our friend, and Hartford High basketball star, Daylon Ore who was killed by gun violence 3 years ago. We use the money in the fund to help our Green House college students. This year we helped Saniah Sanders to graduate from nurses aid training. If we know Saniah (and we sure are glad that we do) she will most likely end up going back to school to pursue a further degree in nursing. Come to the party and meet her and her beautiful son Jojo. We have also helped Dawn who will be a junior at Eastern this coming year. Dawn grew up at the Green House and



Tailyn at Saturday program

(Please see: Notes, p11)