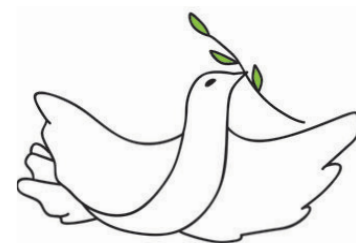


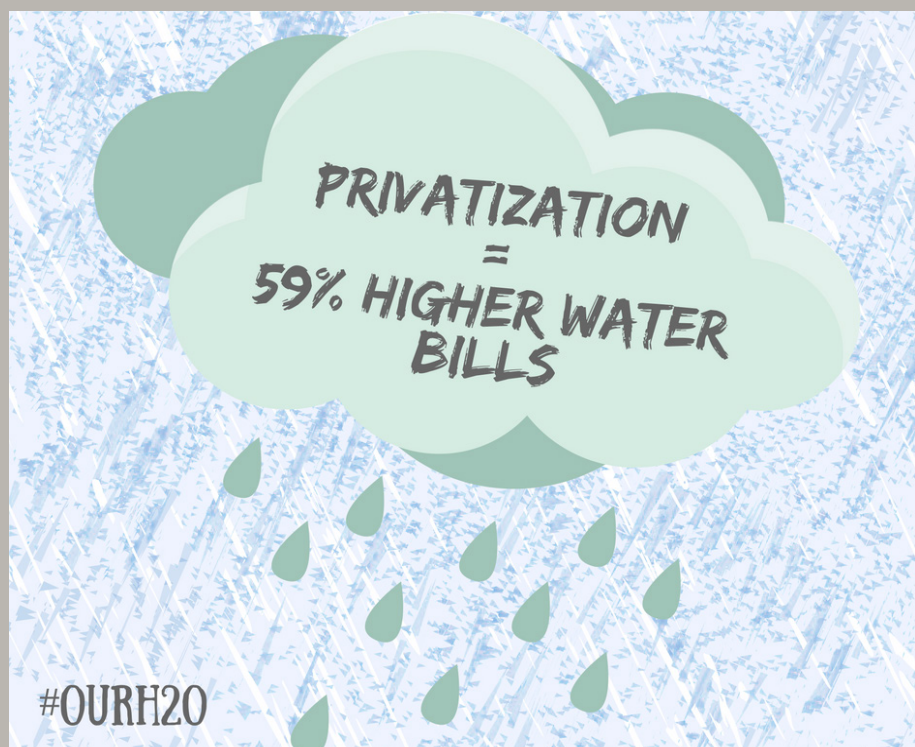
THE NEW PEOPLE

PITTSBURGH'S PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWSPAPER OF THE THOMAS MERTON CENTER



VOL. 48 No. 8
October 2018

(Photo: Our Water Campaign)



OUR WATER CAMPAIGN PUSHES FOR PUBLIC, AFFORDABLE WATER FOR ALL

BY NEIL COSGROVE

The Our Water Campaign is a broad community effort to ensure safe, affordable water while confronting the infrastructure, debt, and billing crises recently facing the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA). And the Campaign believes a lot has been accomplished over the past year or so.

"We're winning," proclaims the Campaign's literature. "PWSA has begun replacing lead lines, developed a Customer Assistance Program, fixed their billing system, taken steps to reduce lead in the water, and instituted a winter moratorium on water shutoffs."

But that doesn't mean the nine activist and environmental organizations running the campaign, which include the Thomas Merton Center, are feeling at all complacent. Big challenges remain, mainly involving keeping PWSA wholly public, and safe water accessible to those most at-risk of "shutoffs," such as low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Pressures to go private have been mounting in recent months, with People's Gas and Pennsylvania American Water Company both openly expressing a desire to take over PWSA's operations and Mayor William Peduto at least appearing to favor a P3 (a private-public partnership) in order to implement large-scale repair and replacement of Pittsburgh's water and sewer infrastructure.

Mayor Peduto argues that the more than \$2 billion needed for infrastructure is too much of a burden for PWSA's 80,000 ratepayers to take on, the *TribLive* news site reports, and that a private company could shoulder some of those costs. The Our Water Campaign doesn't see how such a partnership could possibly lessen ratepayers' burden, given a company's need for profits and the higher interest rates that accompany whatever private financing the company would obtain. Whether significant increases in water rates begin now, or a few years from now, they seem inevitable, and will be larger under privatization, the Campaign contends.

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2018 THOMAS MERTON AWARD: ARCH CITY DEFENDERS

BY GABRIEL MCMORLAND

The Thomas Merton Center is thrilled to present the 2018 Thomas Merton Award to the Arch City Defenders, for their visionary work towards racial justice and dismantling the violent criminal legal system. Past awardees include Angela Davis, Vince Warren and the Center for Constitutional Rights, Vandana Shiva, Noam Chomsky, Joan Baez, Malik Rahim, and Daniel Berrigan. The Thomas Merton Award honors people and organizations whose work for peace and justice makes a real impact in people's lives, and who call on us to embrace the uncomfortable truths of our past and present while breaking open the possibilities of a better future we can build today.

Pittsburgh knows all too well that police and state violence disproportionately impacts communities of color. We also know that the legal system often hinders justice and alienates the people who need...

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ANNUAL TMC MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Annual TMC Membership Meeting, Sat., Oct. 6, 1 – 3 PM at South Avenue United Methodist Church, 733 South Avenue, Wilkinsburg. All TMC members are encouraged to attend. Get updates from TMC staff, meet current board members and hear from TMC board nominees for 2019-21, get updates from TMC project leaders, learn about the 2018 Merton Award winning organization, Arch City Defenders, and hear from Darnika Reed from Pittsburgh's Coalition to End the Deadly Exchange, a coalition of local organizations committed to justice, uniting in opposition to police training exchange programs between the United States and Israel. Through solidarity, community-building and public outreach, they seek to raise awareness as well as to prevent local civic and community leaders from participating in these programs.

Best of all, you will have the opportunity to be with other TMC members and have a chance to win two free tickets to this year's Merton Award dinner. RSVP is requested but not required. Call 412-361-3022. (entrance and free parking at the rear of the Church on Ross Avenue; handicapped entrance is at the front of the church on South Avenue)

Would you like to nominate someone for the TMC board of directors election this fall? Send nominations to Ken Joseph; kjoseph15216@gmail.com

Please offer ideas on future events/activities!

Thomasmertoncenter.org/survey

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Saturday: Noon to 4PM

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The East End Community Thrift (Thrifty) is an all volun-
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tact us at (412) 361-6010 and ask for Shirley or Shawna,
or stop in at 5123 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.
Email shawnapgh@aol.com.

We are mission driven volunteers who look to build love
and community by serving others in times of need.
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The New People is distributed each month to 2,200 people
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To Submit Articles, Photos, or Poems: Visit [www.thomas-
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To Submit an Event to the TMC Calendar: Visit [www.thom-
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For more information and to help distribute the paper: Call
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(Partners are independent organiza-
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and justice mission of TMC. - Articles
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The Black Political Empowerment
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Economic Justice

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Pennsylvanians for Alternatives
to the Death Penalty
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TMC supports these organizations'
missions.

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OCTOBER STAFF UPDATES



We were joined by dozens of Thomas Merton Center members and community activists for the 2018 March for Peace, where Gabriel served as MC and Krystle led chants.



People's Gas CEO Morgan O'Brien wants to turn Pittsburgh's public water into a fountain of corporate profits.



Sister MaryClare Donnelly getting the Center ready for fall.

GOODBYE, KIM DINH



(Photo: Kim Dinh)

A little more than a year ago, Kimmy joined the TMC as our Operations and Technology Coordinator. In that year, we have been eternally grateful for their gracious presence, innumerable accomplishments, and razor-sharp perspective. The countless ways in which their contributions added to the TMC have not only served to bolster the work of the Thomas Merton Center; they have strengthened each of us to continue our peace work with as deliberate, honest, and critical vision as theirs.

Kim repeatedly excelled at everything thrown their way. They held primary responsibility for both of our annual fundraisers, redesigned our website and communications materials, improved our monthly newspaper, and led development of processes and documentation for our various data and technology needs. We are thrilled to see them move on while equally saddened to lose such an invaluable team member.

Kimmy has accepted the Pennsylvania Immigration & Citizenship Coalition (PICC)'s position as Western PA Program Staff. We tremendously admire both PICC and Kimmy and eagerly await to applaud both their continued work for fierce immigrant-led activism, immigrant rights, and justice.

OUR WATER CAMPAIGN

Along with our peace work, TMC's Our Water Campaign (OWC) canvassers knocked on doors in Hazelwood, Larimer, and Manchester. These conversations allow the OWC to educate families on the Customer Assistance Program we fought and won, to make water more affordable for lower and fixed income residents. These are also crucial opportunities to inoculate residents against the threat of privatization, as People's Gas continues to ramp up their aggressive campaign to "partner" with the PWSA. We brought out residents to the PA Public Utility Commission hearings, and testified about keeping water bills affordable, an end to water shutoffs, and stopping privatization.

“OUR KIDS. OUR COMMITMENT.”: A BALLOT INITIATIVE TO CREATE AN ALLEGHENY COUNTY CHILDREN’S FUND

BY EMILY NEFF

The November 2018 midterm elections mark a critical moment to show up to vote for candidates who support and further the issues we value at the Thomas Merton Center. If you reside in Allegheny County, there is another crucial vote to consider as you prepare to head to the voting booth.

The “Our kids. Our commitment.” initiative, composed of local education, health, and human services organizations, believes children must be a priority in our region. The initiative collected nearly 64,000 signatures to qualify for a ballot question that proposes creating an Allegheny County Children’s Fund through a property tax increase of \$25 on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. The slight increase in property tax will raise approximately \$18 million dollars annually. The funds will be solely directed to children all across Allegheny County in order to provide increased access to early learning programs, after school programs, and nutritious meals.

Investing in our region’s children, beyond being a social and moral imperative, provides brighter opportunities for our youngest citizens and ensures a stronger future for all. The Allegheny County

Children’s Fund initiative seeks to fund efforts proven to ensure the health and wellbeing of kids.

Early learning lasts a lifetime. Ninety percent of brain development occurs before age five. Kids who attend pre-k receive a solid foundation of academic, emotional and social skills. In addition to school and life success, pre-k saves families, schools, and taxpayer money. However, more than half of eligible three- and four-year-olds lack access to high-quality pre-k. Our kids deserve a strong start so they can reach their full potential.

Learning and development continues after the school day ends. After-school programs increase school attendance, reduce drug use, and help fuel our children’s passions while keeping our kids and neighborhoods safe. In Allegheny County 70% of parents say they would enroll their kids in after school programs if one was available. Our kids deserve enriching after school opportunities so they can stay safe and engaged even when the school day ends.

Every child should have something to eat. One out of every six children in Allegheny

County faces hunger. Kids can’t focus on school work if a basic need isn’t being met and without proper nutrition they are twice as likely to repeat a grade level. Our kids deserve nutritious meals so they can learn without worrying about when their next meal is coming.

While TMC does not work directly on issues of children or education, the Center’s mission and work focuses on causes that impact the health and wellbeing of children. In the pursuit of social justice and peace, and to ensure the dignity of all human beings, we owe it to our children to put them first and give them the opportunities they deserve.

The ballot measure statement is as follows:

“The Allegheny County Home Rule Charter shall be amended to establish the Allegheny County Children’s Fund, funded by Allegheny County levying and collecting an additional 0.25 mills, the equivalent of \$25 on each \$100,000 of assessed value, on all taxable real estate, beginning January 1, 2019 and thereafter, to be used to improve the well-being of children through the provision of services

throughout the County including early childhood learning, after-school programs and nutritious meals.”

If a simple majority vote ‘yes’ and the measure passes, the Office of the Allegheny County Children’s Fund will be established and guided by a volunteer citizens’ advisory council. While not directly determining allocation of the funds, public officials — and their constituents — will provide oversight, including participation in establishing the strategic plan and goals. Funding will be distributed throughout Allegheny County based on need, effectiveness, and fair and equitable allocation.

Are you willing to spend a little extra per year to build a strong future for our kids?

Make a commitment to our kids. Vote ‘yes’ on the November ballot measure.

Emily Neff is a board member of the Thomas Merton Center. She is a public policy associate at an early childhood education non-profit, Trying Together, which is a member of the Our kids. Our commitment. steering committee.

OUR WATER CAMPAIGN (CONT’D)

BY NEIL COSGROVE

In fact, PWSA is already seeking a 16.5% rate increase from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission for 2019, and must submit a long-term infrastructure plan as part of that request. Perhaps that plan should include seeking a variety of funding resources, beyond bond issues. Spending on water infrastructure by the federal government has been dropping for the past 30 years, and it’s time that trend was reversed through Congress passing an infrastructure bill that includes significant support of municipal water systems. And here’s a reasonable question to ask: If Allegheny County sales tax revenues can be used to build professional sports facilities, then why can’t they be used to build something as vital to the region’s economy as water and sewer infrastructure?

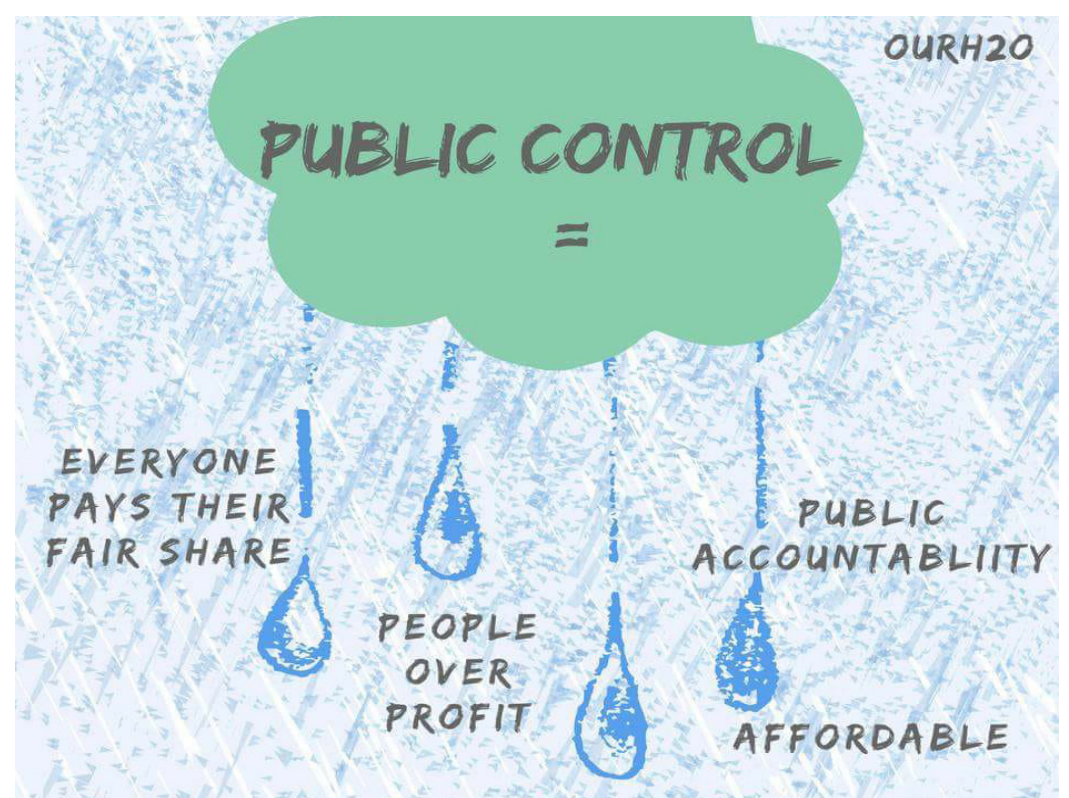
PWSA’s previous partnership with Veolia North America is also driving the Our Water Campaign’s deep skepticism about any form of privatization. Veolia’s contract greatly incentivized cost-cutting (Veolia “could keep 40% of every dollar it saved the city,” Jordana Rosenfeld wrote in *The Nation*), while leaving infrastructure maintenance completely out of the agreement. Consequently, 23 employees possessing much-needed experience were laid off, and cheaper caustic soda replaced soda ash as a means to prevent pipe corrosion. The ensuing spike in lead levels brought the state Department of Environmental Protection down on PWSA’s head.

“Government officials in Flint, Michigan and Plymouth, Massachusetts,” Rosenfeld adds, “have also charged Veolia with negligence in the wake of their own water and sewer disasters.”

The Our Water Campaign supports PWSA’s current rate hike request, and recognizes the need for more hikes in the future. To counter the impact of that necessity on shutoff-vulnerable customers, the Campaign wants the winter moratorium on water shutoffs extended to year-round, and eligibility for the Customer Assistance Program expanded to households with incomes at 250% of the poverty line, as opposed to the current 150%. Again, the Campaign is convinced that such support is more likely to exist if PWSA remains completely public, and the obligation to make a profit simply doesn’t exist.

What lies in the near future for PWSA and the Our Water Campaign? Mayor Peduto has told *TribLive*, “The city would seek proposals from private companies at some point during the last four months of the year,” and after he receives a proposal from PWSA on how it plans to “eliminate all lead water pipes and guarantee the city safe drinking water for the next 50 years.”

Our Water Campaign continues attending and monitoring PWSA board meetings, held the last Friday of every month, in order to keep pushing for the various affordability measures it is seeking.



(Photo: Our Water Campaign)

private partnerships involving water systems.

Neil Cosgrove is a member of The NewPeople editorial collective and the Merton Center board.

LIES ABOUT LAND REFORM

HOW BIG “WHITE LIES” GET BIGGER

BY NEIL COSGROVE

In late August, President Trump displayed his characteristic disregard for truth, both current and historical, when he tweeted that his Secretary of State “closely study ... farm seizures and expropriations and the large scale killing of farmers” in South Africa.

Trump using ignorance and racial fear to distract from his own incompetence and inequality perpetuating policies is hardly “news.” But this instance also presents an opportunity to examine just how white supremacist and neo-colonialist propaganda gets disseminated and develops a kind of perverse legitimacy.

For Trump was also characteristically late in calling attention to a scurrilous narrative pushed for years by those bent on holding on to their privilege and power by any means necessary. As *The Guardian* has reported, “the ... idea of ‘white genocide’ in South Africa” gradually moved “from far-right websites and forums, into the rightward edge of mainstream media, and then into policy proposals.”

The process involved a leading member of the “white nationalist and survivalist group the Suidlanders” spending part of 2017 claiming to far-right and then to more cross-over American audiences that South African whites were in danger of ethnic cleansing. Eventually a white living in South Africa, Eve Fairbanks, received an e-mail from a concerned American friend restating reports that 400,000 whites in SA were “living in tent camps,” that white farms were being invaded by black “hit squads,” and that

“independent news organizations” were so protective of the sanctity of South African independence that they refused to report such news. Recalling the email in *Politico*, Ms. Fairbanks wryly commented that “it was all so far from the truth that it beggared belief.”

Aiding the promulgation of such outlandish claims was, of course, Rupert Murdoch’s NewsCorp and Fox News. Reports of suffering South African white farmers by Murdoch tabloids in Australia prompted that country’s Home Affairs minister to propose fast-tracking immigration for those farmers. Around the same time, in early spring of this year, Tucker Carlson of Fox News claimed on-air that land reform was leading to the disintegration of South Africa. It was Carlson’s revisiting the issue in August that apparently prompted Trump’s tweet.

Anybody who has traveled the highways of South Africa knows how ludicrous the claims of white deprivation are, no matter how neatly they fit into the racially blasted landscapes of white supremacist minds. Yes, you can find acres upon acres of shanty towns on the outskirts of the large cities, but their occupants are seldom white, nor are the desperate young men and women peddling household goods of various kinds on the street corners. Fairbanks mentions a 2016 study that found only 0.3% of white South Africans “live in ‘informal dwellings’ or home-built shacks, ... while nearly 15 percent of the black population does.”

Unemployment in the country stubbornly exceeds 25% and, as Fairbanks further points out, “the average household income for white-person-headed households ... is five times the average income of a black-headed-one.”

Nor is there evidence of a wave of “black hit squads” invading farms. In fact, *The Guardian* recently reported, murders of South African farmers “are at a 20-year low.” Moreover, some of those deaths were of black farmers and farmworkers. The killings could be more logically attributed to the generally high crime rate throughout the country, owing in great part to the aforementioned unemployment and widespread poverty, to the isolation of the farms, and to property such as livestock found within them.

As for land reform, it has been going on for years; some 85% of agricultural land was owned by white farmers when apartheid ended around a quarter-century ago, according to *The Guardian*, and that figure is now down to 72%. Whites make up slightly more than eight percent of the South African population. *The Guardian* reports “all major political parties now agree on the need for extensive land reform.” But the current process of buying out white farmers, then providing black ones with either land or financial restitution, has been painfully slow. Some white farmers seek exorbitant compensation, some impoverished blacks prefer receiving money rather than land. Other black farmers, the BBC has written, lack the capital or expertise needed to sustain

their farms.

Given land reform’s snail-like progress, the South African parliament began in February the process of amending the constitution to allow expropriating land without compensation. But President Cyril Ramaphosa has been conciliatory to white farmers, and it’s more likely the government will pursue a cooperative model of white and black farmers sharing equipment and knowledge, a model which has had some success among the sugar cane farms of KwaZulu-Natal province, as the BBC has reported. The country definitely wants to avoid the kind of massive economic disruption that occurred with Zimbabwe’s land reforms. (See accompanying box.)

What neither the Suidlanders, nor Tucker Carlson, nor the legions of neo-colonialists will consider is historical context. How did the white South African farmers get all that land in the first place? The Natives Land Act of 1913 gave only seven percent of the arable land to Africans, while whites got over 80% of the territory. The sale of land in white territory to blacks was prohibited. This was “land reform” that was truly violent and discriminatory.

Neil Cosgrove is a member of the NewPeople editorial collective and the Merton Center board.

LAND REFORM: NOT ALL CREATED EQUAL

BY NEIL COSGROVE

When Americans hear the terms “land reform” and “southern Africa” used in conjunction with each other, many are likely to think of Zimbabwe’s experience in the early 2000s, and to shudder. It was then that many large farms owned by white Zimbabweans were forcibly occupied, with the encouragement of Robert Mugabe’s government and with the participation of veterans of the guerilla war waged decades earlier against British and white minority rule of the country. The rapid shrinkage in agricultural production that followed, and the still later collapse of the country’s financial sector, dug an economic hole

from which Zimbabwe has yet to fully emerge.

However, to conclude that all land reform must proceed in a similar manner and have a similar result is to succumb to a kind of reductive, and frankly racist, mode of thought. In 1980, the Lancaster House Agreement gave Zimbabwe independence from the United Kingdom, thus freeing the people who lived there from an earlier, imperialist land grab. The Agreement further granted Zimbabwean authorities the right to redistribute land through transactions between willing partners. The British

government would supply half the cost of such transactions.

During the 1990s, the Mugabe government began awarding more and more of these redistributed lands to politically connected members of the ruling party. Whether this corruption provided Tony Blair’s government with a cause or an excuse, Britain ceased its support of the program in the late ‘90s, when money last allocated for it by the Thatcher government ran out.

With the agreement broken, Mugabe’s government began expropriating land without compensation, and the rest of

this particular land reform’s history unfortunately unfolded as it did. However, South Africa, with its multiple political parties, independent judiciary, and years of previous land redistribution independent of the participation of a former colonial master, is not Zimbabwe.

Neil Cosgrove is a member of The NewPeople editorial collective and the Merton Center board.

MARCHING TOWARDS PEACE



Vietnam veteran Pat Conroy reminds his audience that a country's wars begin with its citizens. "Your finger is on the trigger through your votes." Standing behind Conroy is Sam Hazo, Pennsylvania's Poet Laureate.



Jessie Medvan, lead organizer of Pittsburgh Veterans for Peace, speaking at the August 25th Peace March in Oakland.



"Welcome Home," a poem written by late ironworker and Vietnam veteran T.J. McGarvey, is mounted at the North Shore Vietnam Veterans Monument. McGarvey was commemorated at the monument following a conference on "Vietnam: A Working Class War," held at the Community College of Allegheny County on September 22nd. (Photos credit: Neil Cosgrove)

I AIN'T MARCHING ANY MORE BY BETTE McDEVITT

Because the three-part panel discussion entitled "Vietnam: A Working Class War" was taking place after this issue of the *New People* was laid out, we spoke to the organizers before the event, about their hopes for the program, and why it was important to look back fifty years. The conversations took place at the weekly breakfast meeting of the Battle of Homestead group, at the Waterfront Eat'n Park.

Mike Stout, local musician and activist, was clear about the "why" part. "In 1968, I and millions of others became aware of what we were doing internationally, not just Vietnam but all over the world. This conference should do the same thing, wake people up to what the US is doing. Even people in this room don't know that we're involved in eight wars, and how many troops we still have in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and on and on..What is going on today is 100 percent blanked out by the corporate media."

Charlie McCollester, local historian, one of the founders of the Battle of Homestead group, and a sponsor of this program, has been planning this conference for a year. "Fifty years before 1968 was 1918, the beginning of World War I, and who then gave a thought to World War I? It was not even in the public consciousness. Why then does Vietnam matter? First, because the deep political divisions that bedevil our American present time had their roots in the rice paddies, defoliated jungles and bomb craters of Vietnam and put hundreds of thousands of citizens in the streets to protest our nation's actions. Second, the US lost the war, something that an almost religious belief in our nation's manifest destiny held was not possible. Third, the Tonkin Gulf resolution of Congress, used to give political cover for the war, was based on a politically manufactured deception. This governmental deception was repeated in the "weapons of mass destruction" justification for the invasion of Iraq. Before John F. Kennedy's assassination nearly 77% of the American people

trusted our government; in 2017 that trust was 18%. Democracy cannot survive if people can no longer trust the people they elect to govern them."

Jacqui Cavalier, associate professor of history at CCAC, who handled the logistics of the conference, said "I can stand in front of my class and talk about history, but there is nothing like having an army veteran, like Jesse Medvan, describe what it was like to be in Iraq. From the perspective of an educator, there is a much greater impact from first hand experience" Ms. Medvan, whom Mike calls a "silver-tongued orator" didn't hold back during the planning sessions, in describing the death, agony and destruction we brought upon Iraq.

Mike Stout part of the panel as an anti-war activist, knows how to tell a story, and he shared his own "baptism by fire" "A lot of us came alive in 1968, in the streets of New York. Our brains came alive, our spirits came alive. We realized that there was stuff going on that we didn't know about. I was 19 years old when I got off the subway at 7th Avenue and 42nd Street, to go sightseeing, and found myself in the middle of a 20,000 plus anti-war demonstration. I got swept up in it. There was Phil Ochs singing "I Ain't Marching Anymore" and people selling bus tickets to go to the Democratic convention in Chicago. We marched over to the Armory at Park and 34th, about ten thousand of us surrounded the building. The police brought the horses in, turned them around and moved them into the crowd, kicking us out of the way. I got the shit kicked out of me by the police force. And that was my baptism by fire, It's been anti-imperialism and anti-war work for me ever since."

Bette McDevitt is a member of the Editorial Collective and The Raging Grannies

2018 THOMAS MERTON AWARD: ARCH CITY DEFENDERS CONT'D BY GABRIEL MCMORLAND

it the most. Our national crisis of mass incarceration, police violence, and criminalization of poverty begins with the everyday injustices replicated in neighborhoods all across this country.

Arch City Defenders, based in St. Louis, is fighting back against this long-standing oppression in exciting and important ways. ACD is a civil rights law firm that uses a holistic approach to combat the criminalization of poverty and state violence. ACD strategically combines direct service, impact litigation, and advocacy to promote justice, civil rights, and systemic change on behalf of the poor and communities of color directly impacted by the abuses of the legal system.

You can find extensive coverage of ACD's work on their website archcitydefenders.org. Their work in St. Louis, Ferguson, and the surrounding municipalities has created systemic changes while fighting for the rights and dignity of individuals targeted by racist policing, debtor's prisons, and a criminal legal system that quickly spirals people's lives into chaos. ACD describes their holistic approach to legal advocacy, this way:

"We currently represent people in more than 1000 cases and are committed to helping people get off the streets and stay off the streets. Whether we are helping veterans, people escaping intimate partner violence or keeping families together and in safe housing, we will do anything we can to help our clients.

Often, the legal challenge our clients face is the least of their concerns. Our attorneys routinely take clients to doctor's appointments, help people move out of and into new apartments, give people rides to job interviews, and take kids to school. Our collaboration with social workers, organizers, and activists, and our trusted relationships with our clients is what distinguishes us from other providers of legal services to the impoverished."

The Thomas Merton Award dinner will be on Wednesday, November 28th at 6 PM at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Oakland, Pittsburgh. For information about tickets, sponsorship, or event details visit thomasmertoncenter.org/2018-thomas-merton-award or call our office at 412-361-3022.

Gabriel McMorland is the Executive Director of the Thomas Merton Center.

ANTI-WAR = ANTI-IMPERIALIST

ANTI-WAR IS NOT ENOUGH BY REV. PAUL DORDAL

I served thirteen years in the U.S. Army, including a consciousness-altering year of combat in Iraq. Upon my return in 2010, I began the process of becoming an outspoken critic against war, especially U.S. wars. As Dwight D. Eisenhower said in 1946, “I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity.” Yet, since re-engaging my anti-war activism I have discovered that hating war and being against violence is not enough. Because the causes of war are systemic, our whole way of organizing political and social life must change if we are ever really going to end war.

I know I am preaching to the choir when I repeat the immortal words of Jane Addams that “True peace is not the absence of war; it is the presence of justice.” This presence of justice, of course, can only be achieved when neo-liberal capitalist political, social, and economic systems, which create the impetus and machinery for war and the domination and subjugation of “weaker” peoples, are replaced by more equitable, human needs-based systems. Thus, true peace cannot be established by simply holding a moral stance opposing war or witnessing to end violence, but only by the more active engagement of joining the fight against imperialism—of intentionally opposing the neo-liberal capitalist system of the United States empire.

Recently, I have experienced push-back from some anti-war allies when I call for the expanded use of the term anti-imperialism. They say that the average person cannot understand the complexities of anti-imperialism. Yet, this elitist position contributes to conflating instances of war with the systems that cause war, which keeps the anti-war movement in an infantile position, where it doesn’t experience much success in thwarting or ending actual wars.

When I use the term imperialism, I mean when states, especially the United States, its allies, and their finance-capitalist handlers, attempt through huge corporate monopolies to exploit the resources of weaker nations. Michael Parenti defines imperialism as “the process whereby the dominant politico-economic interests of one nation expropriate for their own enrichment the land, labor, raw materials, and markets of another people.” If the weaker nations do not submit to the imperialist’s expropriation, then various forms of violence (military interventions, sanctions, blockades, etc.) are used to keep them in line or to punish them. In the U.S., where there is a significant labor aristocracy (a large so-called “middle class”), the imperialist system is seen as beneficial for the “majority” and thus must be maintained by scapegoating any nation or people group that is opposed to the imperialist’s will (through racism, xenophobia, sexism, historical revisionism, etc.).



As a Christian and an Eastern-Rite priest I have come to understand the evil of imperialism not simply through my experiences in war or even studying political theory, but also through the Scriptures, which are clear about God’s opposition to the oppression of the poor, violence, racism, xenophobia, sexism, and capitalistic greed. The church is complicit with the imperialists when it does not stand in solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, not just in our own backyards or communities, but also with those around the world. If the church is not the church of the poor and the marginalized, but supports the neo-liberal capitalist status quo, then it is not the church of God. It is part of the empire.

Nevertheless, being an anti-imperialist cannot only be based on a metaphysically derived moral position or personal experience. It must be based on the concrete needs of all people to live in safety and have their needs met in interdependent communities of mutuality. The anti-imperialist position is one that is also understood through the natural sciences, which empirically show that our humanity and our planet are sustainable only through cooperation, not “free-market” competition (the basis of neo-liberal capitalism). Thus, anti-imperialists promote the inherent dignity and interconnectedness of all of life. Anti-imperialists oppose racism, patriarchy, sexism, fascism, homophobia, and anything that undermines the dignity of the human person and the environment where we live. Being an anti-imperialist is to stand for and with the worker, the tenant, the immigrant, the transgendered person—all marginalized people—and for the protection of our sacred environment.

So, simply being anti-war is only the first step in coming to understand the more mature and intersectional anti-imperialist stance, which is the true basis of an effective mass-movement for peace and justice.

Rev. Paul Dordal is a member of the Thomas Merton Center and Veterans For Peace.

REMEMBERING VIETNAM, MEMORIAL DAY, 2017

BY CHARLES W. BRICE

“To all those who have established and are maintaining the right to refuse to kill. Their foresight and courage give us hope.”

**- Monument to Conscientious Objectors,
Tavistock Square, London, England**

Some went because they believed in their bones and blood, without filigree, that they were defending our freedom.

Others were too unimaginative to do anything else—metabolized propaganda with an M16—like cattle to the slaughterhouse, they followed their leaders.

Some served because their lives were disappearing down the swirling commodes of the universe, or because they were terrified not to serve. What would their families think if they didn’t go? What would God do to them?

There were those who knew they’d excel at killing people and couldn’t do that legally anywhere else. Ian and Gerry, brothers I played baseball with, competed for how many ears they could collect.

Some didn’t go. I didn’t go. I served as a Conscientious Objector, lucky to know that I couldn’t live with myself if I killed another human being.

We C.O.s deserve to be remembered today.

We served our country, not our government.

We tried to make the world a better place

and, like all the others, we failed.

Charles W. Brice is a retired psychoanalyst and is the author of Flashcuts Out of Chaos (WordTech Editions, 2016) and Mnemosyne’s Hand (WordTech Editions, 2018). His poetry has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and has appeared in The Atlanta Review, Hawaii Review, The Main Street Rag, Chiron Review, Fifth Wednesday Journal, SLAB, The Paterson Literary Review, Spitball, Plainsongs and elsewhere.

2018 WOMEN’S MARCH ON THE PENTAGON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2018 CONFRONT THE BI-PARTISAN WAR MACHINE

In response to the continuing march of military aggression by the USA, and to put an anti-war agenda back on the table of activists, a Women’s (and allies) March on the Pentagon on the 51st anniversary of the 1967 big anti-war event in Washington D.C. and subsequent 50,000 person march on the Pentagon has been called. The bloated military budget is draining our communities and families dry of blood and treasure, while desimating nations and peoples who have done nothing to us.

The Anti War Committee is planning for event transportation. To learn more go to www.marchonpentagon.com and to reserve a seat, call Joyce Rothermel at 412-780-5118.

SEX AND POWER BY JON ROBISON

Every day there is at least one story in the news about someone – a corporate executive, a media star, or a priest – misusing their position for sex. I think there is an underlying problem: our thinking muddles together sex and power.

This is a problem in human society, not just in the U.S. Confusing and entangling sex and power is an underlying cause of misdeeds from sexual harassment to rape.

Sex is a necessity, for fun in life as well as reproduction. If the good lord made anything better, she kept it for herself.

The most enjoyable sex is mutually enjoyed.. The measure of good sex is how much happiness you give to the other person. That relationship is reciprocal, of course. Your sex partner's pleasure gives you pleasure. That's positive feedback.

Power is a necessity for human civilization.. Without power, we humans would still be living in caves, freezing in the winter, and fleeing larger predators.

We need to distinguish two kinds of power. There is creative power, the ability to make something or to do something. This can range from the ability to build a fire on a cold night to building a skyscraper. The power can be very ancient or modern. It can require cooperation or not. We can create a beautiful oil painting or graffiti or a park. Creative power can be shared, or

taught, and its fruits can be shared.

In contrast, there is power over someone else, domination.

But the power of domination is not essential for civilization. It can destroy civilization, as well as relationships. Creative power helps bring healing; domination brings destruction.

It is true that creative power can involve domination. People, or at least trees, are likely to be uprooted to make way for a skyscraper. But we still need two different words to keep them separate in our thinking.

Sex offenses, such as rape and sexual harassment, generally involve the entanglement of sex and power. The rapist is motivated more by a desire to wield power than by a desire for sensual pleasure. What sensual pleasure comes from sexual harassment? Getting pleasure simply by exercising dominance is a perversion of the joy of a relationship. Child molesters are a perfect example of sex perverted by a lust for power. Child molesters are expressing a need for domination, not a need for sensual pleasure.

This analysis in no way diminishes or justifies sex offenses. It might provide some insight into curing the underlying mental health problems, and possibly preventing recidivism.

Here is another consequence of the muddling of sex and power, which is

generally legal and socially acceptable. Younger sex partners, younger by decades, are commonly supposed to be more desirable. Why do we assume that youth contributes more to good sex than experience? A strange aspect of this assumption is the supposed glory in introducing a young woman to sexual intercourse for her first time. (An example of this attitude is found in a verse from the widely known Mexican song, Chile Verde: "The mule I used to ride is now being ridden by my friend. But I don't care – I broke her in.") Again, this reflects domination based on greater experience, and has little to do with the shared pleasures of sex.

Bullying, with or without sex, is a misuse of power. It is domination, a lust for domination. It is not a creative use of power, and not shareable.

Those who seek or use power for domination should be opposed. Those who use it to coerce sex should have their power taken away, by their church or other organization, and possibly be prosecuted. But that is not enough.

We need a new, different word for one of the kinds of power. Changing the language takes years of effort. Consider how hard we have worked to create the word 'chairperson.' Our language should separate 'creative power' and shareable power from domination. This change in language seems necessary to extirpate sexual harassment, sexual oppression, and bullying from normal human

society. The goal is a society in which rape is rare, and child molestation is as rare as cannibalism.

Instead of a new word, we can just insist on using the word 'domination' for power over people, abusive power. Such a major change in our language implies a change in human society. (Obviously, this language issue is not peculiar to any one language.)

We would use the word 'domination' for power over others that is non-creative, a malignancy, and inherently hierarchical. Domination also encourages abusive sex.

The word 'power' would be reserved for power that is creative, shareable, or offers a gift to others. Power would become a positive force. Quantitative differences in power will happen. But to avoid hierarchy, differences should be consensual or at least electoral. They must be transparent and accountable.

Maybe I am supporting anarchism, which, as you probably know, does not advocate chaos or reject order. Simply put, anarchism opposes hierarchy.

Awareness that power should be creative and shareable not only benefits society. It facilitates a good sex life, replete with mutual enjoyment.

Jon Robison is a TMC member and long-time peace and social justice activist.

ABOMINATION BY DANIEL A. HELMINIAK

According to Leviticus 18:22, "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman: it is an abomination." Abomination sounds bad, but the Hebrew and its ancient Greek translation use words, toevah and bdelygma, that merely mean religious violation: unclean, impure, taboo—just as in sewing two different cloths into one garment, two seeds in one field, or having a menstrual flow or a seminal emission. Abomination implies religious uncleanness. It suggests something is askew: dirty. It does not necessarily imply wrong or sin.

According to the ancient Jewish conception, the going "science of the day," the essence of maleness is to penetrate, and the essence of femaleness is to be penetrated. One Hebrew term for "female," naqeba, means something like "orifice bearer"! But essences were not to be mixed. So sea creatures without fins and scales and non-cud-chewing, cleft-hoofed animals are aberrations, anomalies; they are unclean, not to be eaten. Similarly, penetrative sex between men is taboo, not to be done.

To depart from this Jewish worldview was to betray one's Jewishness and to misuse God's creation as it was understood. It was a violation of heritage and religion—but not of the inherent "nature" of sex. Not nature, but culture, is at stake; not ethics, but religious practice.

Revealingly, sex between women was not forbidden. It is not that women were forgotten. The very next verse about sex with animals mentions men and women. It is that two women cannot have sex that counts: they cannot penetrate. Furthermore, the Talmudic commentaries hold that the Torah does not forbid non-penetrative sex between men.

Jesus rejected those ancient purity laws: sin is in the heart, not on the unwashed hand (Mark 7:1-8). Taboo is not injustice, wrong, or sin. Custom and ethics are very different things. This was Jesus' challenging teaching—so relevant to our current world order!

"Unnatural"

Another key passage on male-male sex is Romans 1:26-27: "Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another."

The Greek term para physin has been translated unnatural, but it should read atypical or unusual. In its technical sense, yes, the Stoic philosophers did use para physin to mean unnatural; but this term also enjoyed widespread popular usage. The popular is the sense in Paul's writings, and it implies no ethical condemnation.

In Romans 11:24, Paul uses this very term to speak of God's doing. God grafted the Gentiles into the Jewish people, a wild branch into a cultivated vine. Not your standard horticultural practice! An unusual thing to do! Atypical! Nothing more. The anti-gay cry of "unnatural" rests on a mistranslation.

Besides, Paul uses two other words to describe male-male sex: dishonorable (1:24, 26) and unseemly (1:27). Neither are these terms ethical for Paul. In 2 Corinthians 6:8 and 11:21, Paul relates that even he was held in dishonor—for preaching Christ. Clearly, these words merely indicate social disapproval.

Paul is referring to Leviticus. He is talking about uncleanness, cultural taboos. He says so outright in 1:24: "God gave them up...to impurity." Contrast his words about sex—don't run them together—with 1:28's "things that should not be done," ta me kathekonta, another Stoic term meaning genuine wrongs.

Paul's point, with Jesus, is that impurity is irrelevant for Christians. Paul used male-male sex as his commonplace and hardly controversial example, taboo for the Jews but standard among the Gentiles. Paul himself is indifferent: "I know and am persuaded in the lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (14:14).

Far from condemning non-standard sex, Paul was reprimanding the Jewish Christians (2:1-4, 29) for dividing the Christian community over it: "As in one body, we have many members, and not all the members have the same function" (12:4).

Conclusion

Biblical matters are sometimes subtle; they require study and thought. That's too bad. Simple answers have popular appeal, especially in emotional matters. Thus, the literalist bandwagons roll on, honking and blaring about divine condemnation—but in light of the Bible's original intent, they're going down the wrong road.

Recently returned to hometown Pittsburgh, Daniel A. Helminiak is a retired Professor of Psychology, University of West Georgia. He holds PhDs in both theology and psychology, has taught Human Sexuality for over 20 years, and has published ten books on theology, psychology, spirituality, and sexuality. His What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality, the basis of this article, is an international best-seller, translated into seven languages.

ANOTHER GREEN IDEA MAKING A DIFFERENCE: TOILET PAPER, ANYONE?

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

Over the summer, a Merton Center member and friend of mine, gave me a gift of toilet paper. Now, when was the last time someone made such a gift to you! You may have guessed that this was no usual roll of toilet paper. It was made by a company called “Who Gives a Crap.” I did a little research and would like to share what I learned with you, our *New People* readers.

Simon Griffiths is the Co-Founder & CEO of Who Gives A Crap. He reports that he was looking for a new concept for a scalable social business with a product that everyone could buy. He spent a lot of time in Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa, looking at different developmental organizations to gain an understanding of what “good development” looks like. He observed that many organizations were trying to have as much impact as possible, but they spent roughly 30% of their time competing for limited pools of funds. He wanted to create a new channel to expand the funding pool and help accelerate development. As he tells it, “Why don’t we sell toilet paper, use

half of the profits to build toilets and call it ‘Who Gives A Crap?’” I called three friends, told them about the idea and they all said I had to do it. Hence ‘Who Gives A Crap’ was born!” Now his team is dispersed throughout the US, Australia and the UK, with three city “hubs,” Los Angeles, Melbourne and Manila.

Who Gives a Crap started after Simon learned that 2.3 billion people across the world don’t have access to a toilet. That’s roughly 40% of the global population and means that around 289,000 children under five die every year from diarrheal diseases caused by poor water and sanitation. That’s almost 800 children per day, or one child every two minutes. Toilets are proven to be a great solution—they provide dignity, health and an improved quality of life. And in case that wasn’t enough, it’s been shown that a dollar invested in sanitation yields \$5.50 in increased economic prosperity. Toilets are really important.

In July 2012, Simon and his friends launched Who Gives A Crap with a

crowd funding campaign. Simon sat on a toilet in their draughty warehouse and refused to move until they had raised enough pre-orders to start production. Fifty hours later, and with one cold “behind,” they had raised over \$50,000. Their first product was distributed in March 2013 and they have been growing ever since. Not only because it is a good product, but also because they donate 50% of their profits to help build toilets and improve sanitation in the developing world.

They were determined to prove that toilet paper is about more than just wiping bums. They make their products with environmentally friendly materials, as well as donating half their profits for toilets for those in need.

They have partners in non-profit organizations who work to improve access to hygiene, water and basic sanitation in developing countries, donating to Water Aid in Australia, Sanergy, Shining Hope For Communities and Lwala Community Alliance — incredible organizations with deep experience and skill in

implementing high impact sanitation projects throughout the developing world. To date they have donated \$1.2 million, which is enough to help tens of thousands of people in need, while saving lots of trees, water and energy.

While most toilet paper is still made with virgin trees, Who Gives a Crap makes all their products without trees, with 100% recycled materials. No inks, dyes or scents are used. It is soft and strong (3 ply). They believe “Trees should be for hugging, not wiping!”

If you are interested in trying out this toilet paper, go to www.whogivesacrap.org and place your order. The people at Who Gives a Crap inform us, “More people in the world have mobile phones than toilets. Think about that the next time you’re texting in the bathroom!”

Joyce Rothermel is a member of the Editorial Collective and the Board of the Thomas Merton Center.

SICK MIND OR SICK SOCIETY?

BY MICHAEL DROHAN

This is a review of *Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression and The Unexpected Solutions* by Johann Hari, 2018.

Whether we have ever experienced depression and anxiety or not, we have all likely heard the diagnosis of these experiences as a lack of serotonin in the brain or, more recently, that one’s brain is not generating enough dopamine, which is supposed to be the substance that regulates your mental states.

Depression is thus reduced to a chemical deficiency in the brain. At least that is what I heard from sufferers of mental depression throughout my lifetime, until I read Johann Hari’s powerful book.

Hari himself suffered from depression for many years and is very familiar with the psychiatric establishment and its diagnostic model. It would still be rare to meet a psychiatrist who told a sufferer anything other than that he had a chemical imbalance in his brain and the solution was some of the slew of drugs that Big Pharma has rolled out to restore the balance.

Setting the balance right has been a phenomenally lucrative source of revenue for the big pharmaceutical companies and they have the entire psychiatric establishment in thrall.

Hari attacks head-on the diagnosis that depression and anxiety are the result of a default in the brain or a chemical imbalance in it.

He explores the origins of this diagnosis, which go back to 1952 when in a British hospital a drug called Marsilid was given to TB patients. It made them dance down the corridors but did not help their TB. The medical profession latched onto the idea that this may be the silver bullet to cure depression.

Tipper Gore, a sufferer from depression, popularized the myth that clinical depression was due to a deficiency of serotonin. In pretty great detail, Hari lays out how the myth of a serotonin deficiency got currency in the medical profession.

Above all, chemical deficiency theory proved to be a blockbuster for the pharmaceutical companies, as they pushed it into every psychiatric office and department, first in the US and then in the world.

The greater part of Hari’s book is taken up with exploring the real causes of the widespread phenomena of depression and anxiety in contemporary society. In considerable detail, he outlines eight causes of the phenomena of depression and anxiety.

These causes are of a psycho-social nature and have little to do with chemical imbalances or brain function. He calls them “disconnections.”

The first cause is disconnection from meaningful work. It is the phenomenon which Marx spoke of in the 19th century as alienation.

Ever since the industrial revolution and

the invention of the assembly line, most work is routine, boring and unfulfilling. The worker is not in charge of his work but is a cog in a machine.

The second cause which he investigates is disconnection from other people. In contemporary society it takes the form people in a restaurant all glued to their cell phones, with no communication even with intimates at a table.

The third cause he identifies is disconnection from meaningful values. Our situation can be described, he says, as a move from the Golden Rule to the “I-want-golden-things-rule.” Modern society is obsessed by materialism and status. The unfulfilled wants it creates depress us.

The other disconnections, which space does not allow us to explore, are: disconnections from childhood trauma, from status and respect, from the natural world, from a hopeful and secure future and from understanding the real role of genes in brain changes.

In the latter part of the book, Hari explores the reconnections that are necessary for overcoming depression. A very engaging part of the book is how he explores these reconnections. He does it mostly through stories and experiences that he personally investigated

One arresting example is that of a depressed farmer in Cambodia. The farmer became depressed after his leg was blown off in a rice paddy by a mine left over from the Vietnam War.

He became depressed because, as well as the pain, he could no longer work in the rice paddies. The community came together and bought him a cow so that he became a dairy farmer. A cow became his anti-depressant.

Hari concludes that depression and anxiety have three kinds of causes: biological, psychological and social. This has been known to scientists for decades but one would scarcely believe it from the form psychiatric practice takes. He insists that the social dislocations of modern society are the primary reason for the widespread phenomenon of depression.

The society we live in is highly disordered and one could say depression inducing. We live in a society which metaphorically we could describe as sick. Most of those who are identified as suffering from depression are in fact exhibiting healthy reactions to a sick society.

If there is one defect in Hari’s book, it seems to me to be that in addition to the disconnections he could have given more emphasis to the sickness that living under capitalism induces.

Michael Drohan is a member of the Editorial Collective and of the Board of the Merton Center.

FAITH-BASED ACTIVISM

ASSOCIATION OF PITTSBURGH PRIESTS SPEAKERS CONTINUE ON OCT. 15

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

All are welcome to enjoy the upcoming talk by Sr. Barbara Reid on Monday, Oct. 15 at 7 PM at the Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd. in Allison Park behind the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Divine Providence and adjacent to La Roche College. Her topic is “Reading the Scriptures with the Mind, Eyes, and Heart of a Woman.” She will address: “What is feminist interpretation? When did it begin and Why does it matter for both men and women?” She will also focus on her most recent book, *Wisdom’s Feast: An Introduction to Feminist interpretation of the Scriptures*.

Sr. Barbara is a Dominican Sister of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and has served on the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) faculty since 1988. She was Vice President and Academic Dean and has been actively involved in the Association of Theological Schools, including service on their Board of Directors. She has led many of CTU’s Israel Retreats and Biblical Lands Study and Travel Programs in Greece, Turkey, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Jordan, and Egypt. A former Spanish teacher, she has given presentations in México, Bolivia, Perú, Uruguay, Brazil, Guatemala, and Santo Domingo. She has also lectured in Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the Philippines, Thailand, and Rome.

Sr. Barbara is one of the leading scholars in feminist interpretation of the Scriptures and serves as General Editor for the Wisdom Commentary Series, a new 58-volume feminist commentary on the Bible published by Liturgical Press.

Sr. Barbara has been past President of the Catholic Biblical Association,(2014-2015). She was inducted into Aquinas College Hall of Fame in 2016 and has received the Yves

Congar Award for Theological Excellence from Barry University (2017), St. Martin De Porres Award from the Southern Province Dominican Friars (2016), Jerome Award from Catholic Library Association (2012), Theological Award for Distinguished Women Theologians from the College of Mount St. Joseph (2010), the Sophia Award from Washington Theological Union (2000).

The final talk will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 7 with Rev. Tony Flannery, CSsR. His topic is “Christian Teaching: New Images and Language for Contemporary Believers.”

The fee for the upcoming talks is \$20 each. Participants can register at the door the evening of the talks. For more information and questions, contact Fr. John Oesterle at 412-232-7512 or johnoesterle2@gmail.com. You are also invited to visit www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com Pre-registrations can be made to the Association of Pittsburgh Priests, P.O. Box 2106, Pittsburgh, PA 15230.

The Association of Pittsburgh Priests is a diocesan-wide organization of ordained and non-ordained women and men who act on our baptismal call to be priests and prophets. Its mission, rooted in the Gospel and the Spirit of Vatican II, is to carry out a ministry of justice and renewal in ourselves, the Church and the world.



STATEWIDE INTERFAITH ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE, OCT. 27

BY MARIANNE NOVY

On Saturday, October 27 from 11:30 to 4:45, the faith-rooted climate response organization Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light will hold its annual state-wide conference in the Pittsburgh area for the first time. “Facing the Climate Crisis: Called to Save our Sacred Home” will be at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Mount Lebanon.

PA IPL coordinates faith-based responses to climate change as a moral issue: the conference’s theme will nourish both spirituality and activism and will call special attention to Pittsburgh-based work.

Keynote speakers include Dr. Charles McColleston and Rev. David Carlisle. Charles McColleston, a labor historian and author of *The Point of Pittsburgh: Production and Struggle at the Forks of the Ohio*, will speak on “Embracing a Blue-Green Religious Vision,” asking “How can we build on our history to establish a vision of health and solidarity now and with generations yet to come?” Rev. David Carlisle, for many years the pastor of Springdale Presbyterian Church, will speak on “Listening for the Voice of the Earth,” considering an environmental ethic of interdependence that builds on the work of Rachel Carson and his frequent dialogue partner, Patricia DeMarco. Their talks will lead to further discussion moderated by Rev. Moni McIntyre, a professor of sociology at Duquesne University, who has written and taught about ecological and health care ethics.

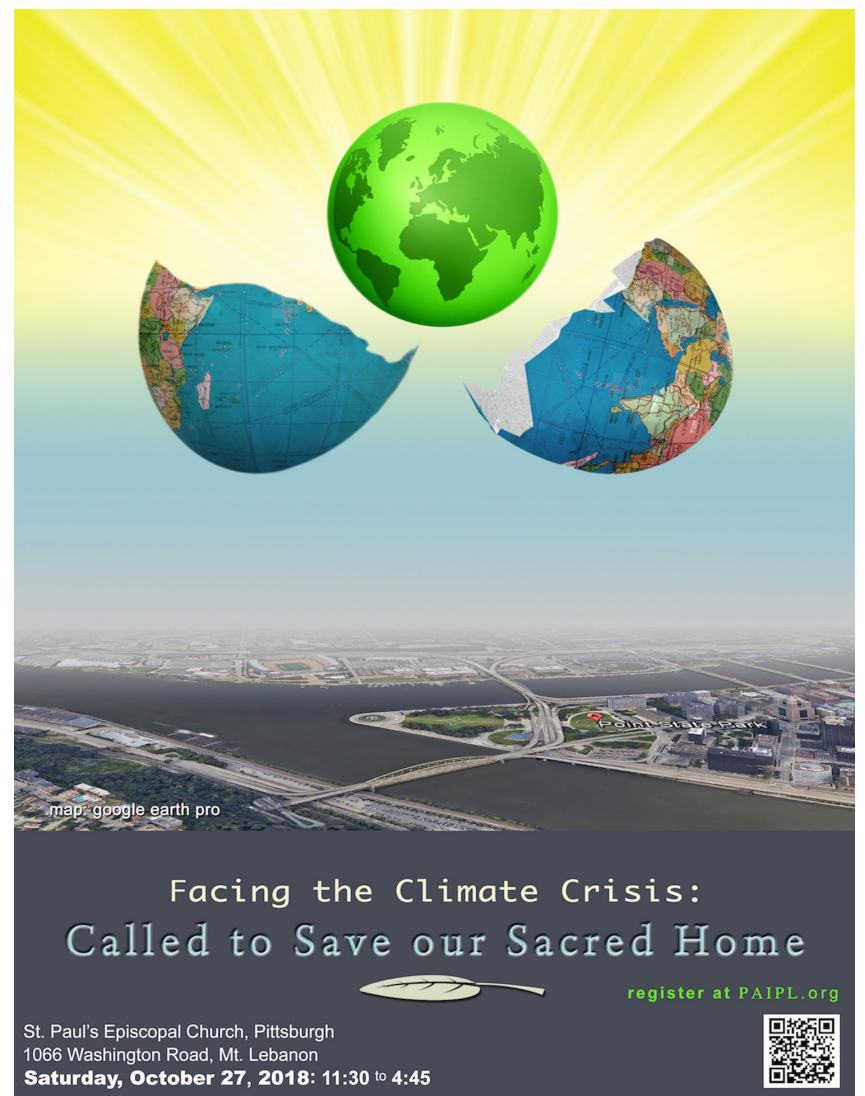
Attendees will choose among six workshops. Two will focus on traditions and examples of environmental spirituality not commonly discussed. Lakeisha Wolf, executive director of the Hill District collective Ujamaa, will join with her colleague Frankie Harris in “Asase Ye Duru: The Earth Has Weight,” to explore examples of how coming into alignment with Africana cultural

principles can lead to a more just, healthy and joy-filled life. Dr. Ellesa Clay High, founding member and past coordinator of the Native American Studies Program at West Virginia University, active in Cherokee, Shawnee, and Methodist communities, will share her experiences in reconnecting with the sacred landscape through Native American traditions, providing rituals that those of her tradition and others can share.

Various possibilities for action in Pittsburgh and elsewhere in Pennsylvania will be discussed in other workshops. Kari Pohl of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, coordinator of Justice and Peace for her congregation and a community health nurse, and Thaddeus Popovich, an engineer and co-founder of Allegheny County for Clean Air Now (ALCAN), will discuss the petrochemical industry’s increasing presence in Pennsylvania, particularly the implications of the Shell cracker plant in Beaver County, just north of Pittsburgh. The workshop will explore this expansion’s purpose and likely effects, and how to protect God’s creation in the midst of these events.

Rev. John Creasy, Associate Pastor for the Open Door Church and Director of Garfield Community Farm, and Rev. Noah Evans, Rector and Pastor of the conference host, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, will discuss their experiences in engaging congregations and larger units of their respective denominations, Presbyterian and Episcopalian, in environmental issues. These will include such efforts as divestment, urban farming, sustainable practices of caring for church buildings and property, and parishioners’ own conversion to environment-mindful lifestyles.

Kirsi Jansa, a documentary filmmaker, will give a workshop called “Finding our Power—Community Conversations,” in which she will show two short documentaries in her series



2018 PA Interfaith Power and Light Conference, happening on October 27, 2018

Sustainability Pioneers – one of them dealing with two low-or-no energy use houses in Pittsburgh and nearby, and the other with the re-building of Pittsburgh’s Frick Environmental Center into one of the world’s most sustainable buildings. These short films and one other will be springboards for discussion about moving to positive action about climate change, with guides available for participants to initiate similar discussions in their own communities.

Dr. Paul Nelson, for many years director of the International Development Program at the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and now GSPIA’s Associate Dean, will discuss how international development aid programs address climate issues, promote energy access, and support

adaptation by the communities most affected by climate change, and then explore the opportunities there are for Pittsburghers to impact these issues as citizens, voters, and investors.

The registration fee includes a vegetarian (non-gluten,) locally-focused lunch. Doors open for lunch, registration and information tables at 11 am. Standard pre-registration is \$35 but the conference is committed to availability for those who can pay less.

Marianne Novy is a member of The NewPeople Editorial Collective.



Information provided by VoteAllegheny

2018 Elections Calendar

October: Monday **10/1/18**—Verify your registration

<https://www.paVoterServices.state.pa.us/Pages/VoterRegistrationStatus.aspx>

Tuesday **10/9/18**—Last day to postmark registration for general election.

Tuesday **10/23/18**—Board of Elections meeting before election

Wednesday **10/24/18**—League of Women Voters publishes Voters Guide in New Pittsburgh Courier

Tuesday **10/30/18**—Last day to apply for civilian absentee ballot

November: Friday **11/2/18**—Last day for county to receive civilian absentee ballots

Tuesday **11/6/18**—General **election** for US Senator (Casey's seat), US Representatives in Congress, Governor, Lt. Governor, State Senators (even # districts), State Representatives in Assembly.

Polls open 7am–8pm. www.VotesPA.com for your polling place

Monday **11/26/18**—Board of Elections meeting to certify election

VoteAllegheny is a group of volunteers committed to ensuring that citizens of Allegheny County have safe, reliable, accessible, recountable, voter-verifiable elections. Join us at our weekly meetings on Sundays at the Smallman Street Deli on Murray Ave at 4pm, or visit us online at VoteAllegheny.org

TMC FALL MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

Annual TMC Membership Meeting, Sat., Oct. 6, 1 – 3 PM at South Avenue United Methodist Church, 733 South Avenue, Wilkinsburg. All TMC members are encouraged to attend.

Get updates from staff, meet current board members and hear from board nominees for 2019-21, get updates from TMC project leaders, and more. RSVP requested but not required. Call 412-361-3022.

November Potluck and Speaker, Sat., Nov. 10 from noon to 2 PM at the Merton Center, 5129 Penn Avenue, Garfield.

Guest speaker: Kathleen Tarr, a Merton scholar, was born and raised in Pittsburgh and now lives in Alaska. She will speak on her new book, *We Are All Poets Here*, the first book to delve into the intimate details about Thomas Merton's journey to the wilds of Alaska in Sept. 1968 only months before his death, Dec. 10, 1968 (50 years ago next month).

A review of *We Are All Poets Here*, part-memoir, part-biography, appeared in the spring 2018 issue of The Merton Seasonal. Ron Dart, a member of the Canadian International Thomas Merton Society writes: "...*We Are All Poets Here* is a fast paced yet delicately woven tapestry of events, thoughts and images of Kathleen's ever deepening journey with Merton in her own 'spiritual seeking.' The confessional style of writing in which Merton ever bids, calls and draws Kathleen to new and deeper places in her imagination and soul makes this delicately textured autobiography of sorts worthy of many a meditative read. In fact, *We Are All Poets Here* has, in style and content, unique affinities with Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain*, although Kathleen amply draws from a wide range of Merton's writings in this most readable, accessible and transparent of books (quite like Merton himself)."

(*We Are All Poets Here* is available on Amazon or can be ordered through your favorite bookstore. Kathleen Tarr can be reached at ktarralaska@gmail.com, or at www.kathleenwtarr.com.)

Bring some food or beverage to share. RSVP requested but not required. Call 412-361-3022.

Joyce Rothermel serves as Chair of the TMC Membership Committee.

THANK YOU WITH LOVE

Dear Friends of The East End Community Thrift Shop,

Many times in life we are reminded that good things so often spring from the bad. This is one of those times.

Recently we put out a call for help to cover the expenses our store is facing to repair a damaged sewer line.

Fifteen thousand dollars! That seemed quite a daunting sum!

In the few weeks since soliciting the assistance of the community this entire sum has been donated.

The generosity of our shoppers, the loyal and true members and supporters of The Thomas Merton Center, and local community organizations and institutions have been remarkable.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for this generosity. A million thanks to one and all. We are renewed and refreshed by the reminder that there really is so much love in the world, and that we are all in this together.

The Dedicated Volunteers of the East End Community Thrift Shop

40TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET ON TV

On November 8, 2012, at the 40th Anniversary banquet, the Thomas Merton Center presented Medea Benjamin, co-founder of CODE PINK, with the Center's Peace and Social Justice Award. Benjamin gave a speech about the ongoing war in Afghanistan and the proliferation of drone warfare during the Obama administration in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Somalia. She spoke of having met with people whose family members had been innocent victims of some of the strikes. She also mentioned ICE raids and the need for immigration reform.

PCTV21 will re-air the footage from the TMC Banquet, in September and October.

For more information on CODE PINK, please go to www.codepink4peace.org

ON TV EVERY THURS @ 9pm DURING SEPTEMBER/
OCTOBER

COMCAST Channel 21 & VERIZON FIOS Channel 47
PCTV21 at www.pctv21.org

Progressive Pgh Notebook TV Series Rebroadcasts their
2012:

"MEDEA BENJAMIN, CODE PINK VS DRONES" at the TMC
banquet.

Videographer and Editor: Rich Fishkin

[YouTube.com/richfishpgh](https://www.youtube.com/richfishpgh)

Community Producer PCTV21: C S Rhoten

tvnotebook@gmail.com

412-363-7472



OCTOBER 2018 EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, Oct. 3 - Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP) Meeting, 7:00 PM at First Unitarian Church (Ellsworth/Morewood, Shadyside.) For more information call 412-384-4310

Friday, Oct. 5 - Living from the Heart in a Confused and Troubled World: An Evening with David McKay, 7:00 PM at First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh, 605 Morewood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Saturday, Oct. 6 - TMC Annual Membership Meeting, 1 – 3 PM at South Avenue United Methodist Church, 733 South Avenue, Wilkinsburg.

Sunday, Oct. 7 - Southwest Chapter of Healthcare for All PA, 7:30-8:30 PM at 2010 Murray Avenue, First Floor

Sunday, Oct. 7, 14, 21 - Book'em Meets First Three Sundays of the Month for a Book Packing Session, 4:00-6:00 PM at Thomas Merton Center.

Monday, Oct. 8 - Amnesty International #39 Monthly Meeting, 7:00-9:00 PM at First Unitarian Church, 605 Morewood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Monday, Oct. 8 - Association of Pittsburgh Priests, 7:00-9:00 PM at St. Pamphilus Church, 1000 Tropical Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Tuesday, Oct. 9 - Black Political Empowerment Project Meeting, 6:00 PM at Hill House Association, Second Floor

Sunday, Oct. 14 - Women in Black, Monthly Peace Vigil, 10:00 AM at Ginger Hill Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Monday, Oct. 15 - Monthly PUSH Meeting, 6:30 PM at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Squirrel Hill

Monday, Oct. 15 - APP Speaker Series, Sister Barbara Reid, Reading the Scriptures with the Mind, Eyes, and Heart of a Woman. Current Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd. 7PM

Saturday, Oct. 20 - Fight for Lifers West Meeting, 1:00-3:00 PM at the Thomas Merton Center Annex

Saturday, Oct. 27 - Interfaith Environmental Conference, 11:30 AM - 4:45 PM at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mt. Lebanon.

Saturday, Oct. 27 - Anti-War Committee, 11 AM at the Thomas Merton Center.

REGULAR MEETINGS

Sundays:
Book'Em: Books to Prisoners Project
First three Sundays of the month at TMC, 4-6pm
Contact: bookempgh@gmail.com

Mondays:
SW Healthcare 4 All PA /PUSH Meeting
3rd Monday, 6:30 —8 pm
Squirrel Hill Library
Contact: bmason@gmail.com
Association of Pittsburgh Priests
2nd Monday, 7—9 pm,
St. Pamphilus Parish
1000 Tropical Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILP)
2nd Monday, 7:00 PM
Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave
Amnesty International #39
2nd Wednesday, 7—9 pm
First Unitarian Church, Morewood Ave. 15213

Tuesdays:
Green Party
First Tuesday of the month at Panera, Blvd of the Allies, Oakland, 7pm

Wednesdays:
Darfur Coalition Meeting
1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm,
Meeting Room C Carnegie Library, Squirrel Hill
412-784-0256
Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP)
1st Wednesdays, 7-8pm, First Unitarian Church, Ellsworth & Morewood Avenues, Shadyside
Pittsburghers for Public Transit
2nd Wednesday, 7pm, 1 Smithfield St., lower level

Thursdays:
International Socialist Organization
EveryWednesday, 7:30-9:30 pm. Contact isopgh@gmail.com for location.
Global Pittsburgh Happy Hour
1st Thursday, 5:30 to 8 pm, Roland's Seafood Grill, 1904 Penn Ave, Strip District
Green Party Meeting
1st Thursday, 7 to 9 pm, 2121 Murray, 2nd floor, Squirrel Hill
Black Political Empowerment Project
2nd Thursday, 6 pm: Planning Council Meeting, Hill House, Conference Room B

Fridays:
Unblurred Gallery Crawl
1st Friday after 6 pm, Penn Avenue Arts District, 4800-5500 Penn Ave., Friendship and Garfield 15224
Hill District Consensus Group
2nd Thursday, 6pm - 8pm, Hill House Conference Room 2
People of Prisoners in Need of Support
3rd Friday, 7:00pm New Hope Methodist Church, 114 W. North Ave, Pittsburgh 15212

Saturdays:
Project to End Human Trafficking
2nd Sat., Carlow University, Antonian Room #502
Fight for Lifers West
1st & 3rd Saturday, 1 pm, TMC Annex
Anti-War and Anti-Drone Warfare Coalition
4rd Saturday at 11:00 am at TMC, 5129 Penn Ave., Garfield, PA 15224

The Thomas Merton Center works to build a consciousness of values and to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, classism, economic justice, oppression and environmental justice.

TMC engages people of diverse philosophies and faiths who find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring about a more peaceful and just world.

BECOME A MEMBER

Subscribe to The NewPeople by becoming a member of the Thomas Merton Center today!

As a member, The NewPeople newspaper will be mailed to your home or sent to your email account. You will also receive weekly e-blasts focusing on peace and justice events in Pittsburgh, and special invitations to membership activities. Now is the time to stand for peace and justice!

Join online at www.thomasmertoncenter.org/join-do-nate or fill out this form, cut out, and mail in. Select your membership level:
____\$15 Low Income Membership
____\$15 Youth / Student Membership
____\$25 Introductory / Lapsed Membership

____\$50 Individual Membership
____\$100 Family Membership
____\$500+ Cornerstone Sustainer Membership
____Donation \$ _____
____Monthly Donation– Become a TMC Peacemaker \$ _____

Or Become an Organizational Member:
____\$75 Organization (below 25 members)
____\$125 Organization (above 25 members)

____ I would like to receive the weekly activist Eblast
____ I would like to receive The NewPeople newspaper mailed to my house
____ I would like to receive The NewPeople newspaper via email

Please complete and return to TMC. Thank you!
Name(s):
Organization (if any):
Address:
City:_____State:____Zip Code:_____
Home Phone:_____
Mobile Phone:_____
Email:_____

Mail to TMC, 5129 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15224
Call 412-361-3022 for more information, or visit:
www.thomasmertoncenter.org