



# The Clarendon Connection

News of Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church April 2008

## *Sunday Schedule*

Choir rehearsal	9:45 a.m.
<b>Worship</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Children's Education</b>	<b>10:45 a.m.</b>
Refreshments and fellowship	11:30 a.m.
<b>Communion will be celebrated on April 6th.</b>	

## **April Calendar**

“Rites of Passage: The Mortality of Time” began at the Nave Gallery on Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, and runs through Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> (for more info, see page 2)

Joint Session and Deacon's meeting on Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>

ArtSomerville Yard Sale, Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 4)

Orders for Equal Exchange items will be taken at church on April 6<sup>th</sup> (for more info, see page 5)

Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, Adult Education on embodied spirituality, featuring meditation, right after coffee hour (for more info, see page 5)

RESPOND interfaith fundraiser concert, co-sponsored by Clarendon Hill, Temple B'nai Brith, First Congregational Church, Somerville, and the Muslim American Society, Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 5)

Peace, Justice and Mission will meet on Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, Young Adults meet at the church at 7:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 6)

Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, right after coffee hour, Adult Ed. on embodied spirituality featuring yoga (for more info, see page 5)



War, Madness and Delusion runs through April 15<sup>th</sup> at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, and is co-curated by Karl Gustafson, with a special talk on Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> (for more info, see page 6)

Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, Worship Committee meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Horizons Bible Study will meet at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> (for more info, see page 6)

Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, right after coffee hour, Adult Ed. on embodied spirituality featuring yoga (for more info, see page 5)

Book Group/Bible Study on Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 7)

Writing Group meets on Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m. (for more info, see page 7)

Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., the Nave Gallery, four rock and roll bands share the stage (for more info, see page 2)

Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, right after coffee hour, Adult Ed. on embodied spirituality (for more info, see page 5)

Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup> Save Our Homes Walk, 5K (3.1 miles), begins at 2:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 7)

Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. OpenSound at the Nave Gallery (for more info, see page 2)

COMING IN MAY: Somerville Open Studios, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

COMING IN JUNE: Gusti's graduation celebration! (for more info, see page 7)

## **Parish News**

Doris Fisher passed away on Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. A celebration of her life was held at the church on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. Burial followed the service, and a reception was held at the church after the burial. We wish for God's presence and peace, and the joy of happy memories to bring solace to the many friends and family members who hold Doris in their hearts.

Although the occasion was sad, we were delighted to have Kevin Gift join us on March 4<sup>th</sup> for Doris's funeral. It was good to catch up with him and hear more about the expanding family (4<sup>th</sup> child Jonah joined them in December). Kevin and Elizabeth have found a church home in New Jersey, and are happy with their community on the Pennsylvania/New Jersey border.

## **The Nave Gallery**

“Rites of Passage: The Mortality of Time”

March 29 through April 26, 2008

Curated by Kathy Desmond and Lauren O'Neal.

Curatorial Statement:

Rites of Passage: The Mortality of Time features contemporary art that explores issues of aging, time, mortality and death in a variety of media. Perhaps it is our inherent self-centeredness that makes these topics seem so germane and so urgent to our own personal life: What will happen when I get old? What will be like to die? Objects, materials, and moments have their own mortality as well—one material shifts into another, with a passing that is not necessarily commemorated with tears and wreaths, but that is certainly worthy. To consider mortality in any circumstance is to consider time, and the works in Rites of Passage all consider change as a marker of time: of time arrested, of action and inaction, growth, decay, and potential: What might happen next (time)?

The morality of the body is one area of focus. While this would seem a commonplace interpretation, the artists in Rites of Passage investigate not only the frailty of the body under stress of illness or age, but also the way we mark or record these changes in visual terms. The act of marking then is a way to participate in the very existence we hold so dear: it keeps us here, it identifies us, it allows us to process changes and explore new possibilities for being human.

Mark-making, as a challenge to, or sometimes an acknowledgement of, the passage of time, is ultimately a gesture of action and engagement, rather than of futility. The mark of a line becomes a map, a pathway, or a way to imagine the future. Marks also explore our awareness of time passing and the urge to capture or record it—a dual perspective on our physicality and our consciousness.

We have a contentious relationship with time. It is, after all, the thief of mortality. By the same token, we are endlessly fascinated by its effects. Artists in Rites of Passage: The Morality of Time investigate these themes through a range of media, including photography, video, painting, sculpture, and mixed media. Within the work there is curiosity, fear, contemplation, humor, and hope.

April 5th Flea market 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Donations sought! Restore your Feng shui. Clean out your house, attic, studio. Gently used clothes, books, CDs, records, household items requested. Any unsold items will be donated to Goodwill; so sorry, please no TVs, computers or used children's plastic toys.

Reclaim some space and support the arts in Somerville. All proceeds go to fund the Nave Gallery.

Donations can be dropped off at the Nave Gallery any of these dates or by special arrangement (i.e. let us know what works for you): Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., or Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Plus NEW:

If you have enough stuff to warrant your own table, rent a table for \$25.00 and sell your own goods. You keep 100% of the sales. You must man the table yourself and are responsible for removing everything brought into the building including trash at sale end.

Tables are limited, and distributed on a first come first serve basis.

Questions, email: [info@artsomerville.org](mailto:info@artsomerville.org)

Saturday, April 26th, 7:00 p.m., Jason Anderson and The Best, The Divorced, Math the Band and Hello Shark at The Nave Gallery  
Four great New England acts share the stage for a great night of rock and roll! All-ages! \$5.00 at the door.

Jason Anderson: [www.indiepages.com/wolfcolonel](http://www.indiepages.com/wolfcolonel)  
The Divorced: [www.myspace.com/thedivorcedmusic](http://www.myspace.com/thedivorcedmusic)  
Math the Band: [www.myspace.com/maththeband](http://www.myspace.com/maththeband)  
Hello Shark: [www.myspace.com/hellosharkvermont](http://www.myspace.com/hellosharkvermont)

Sunday, April 27th, 8:00 p.m., OpenSound at The Nave Gallery  
\$7.00 suggested donation. OpenSound presents the cutting edge in contemporary experimental music: Bebe Beard, video; James Coleman, theremin; Joe Burgio, movement; Lou Bunk, prepared guitar; Lou Cohen, laptop computer; Walter Wright, laptop with live movement and analog synth.

For more information on the Nave Gallery and other programs of ARTSomerville, visit our website: [www.ARTSomerville.org](http://www.ARTSomerville.org)

As always, thank you for your support.

The Nave Gallery is an important partner in Somerville's vibrant arts community. It is a project of ARTSomerville, a volunteer organization that draws upon the talents of local creativity, strengthening communication among artists and the public by presenting exhibits, performances, and educational activities, in collaboration with the Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church. The gallery is a noncommercial art space featuring work of both emerging and established artists. Run and staffed completely by volunteers, the Nave provides an important exhibition space for both local and regional artists.

All exhibitions are free and open to the public. Gallery hours are Friday 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

To see a schedule of events, which is updated often, please look at the website: [www.artsomerville.org/upcoming.html](http://www.artsomerville.org/upcoming.html)

## **We Need Your Help!**

Flea Market - Joint project of CHPC and Nave Gallery: Here is the information:

Saturday, April 5th Flea market 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Donations sought! Restore your Feng shui. Clean out your house, attic, studio. Gently used clothes, books, records, household items requested. Any unsold items will be donated to Goodwill; so sorry, please no TVs, computers or used children's plastic toys. Donations can be dropped off at the Nave Gallery any of these dates or by special arrangement (i.e. let us know what works for you): Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. or Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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If you have enough stuff to warrant your own table, rent a table for \$25.00 and sell your own goods. You keep 100% of the sales. You must man the table yourself and are responsible for removing everything brought into the building including trash at sale end. Tables are limited, and distributed on a first come first serve basis.

The Church will have its own table. We also will be selling coffee and baked goods. What do we need? We need:

1. Volunteers – please sign up for a 2 hour period on Friday, April 4th for set up and/or Saturday April 5th for the sale and clean up.
2. Donations of gently used items for our table (All proceeds go to CHPC.)
3. Donations of baked goods (These always sell well at the flea market!)

## **The Presbyterian Coffee Project**

Orders will be taken for Equal Exchange COFFEE (drip or whole bean) and TEA (English Breakfast, Earl Grey, Green, Rooibos), hot cocoa mix, baking cocoa and chocolate bars (\$3.00 per bar, or \$30.00 for a box of 12), at church on Sunday, April 6th. You can send orders to Katherine no later than the evening of April 6th by phone (617-628-6716) or email (kath.gustafson@gmail.com)

Due to higher organic cocoa prices, Equal Exchange has had to increase their chocolate bar and cocoa prices. The 12 oz cans of organic hot cocoa mix and the 8 oz cans of organic unsweetened baking cocoa will now be \$5.00 per can.

Remember that Equal Exchange makes contributions to the national Presbyterian Church

For every pound of fairly traded products that Presbyterians purchase, Equal Exchange donates \$0.15 to the Presbyterian Church USA. For 2006, that amount totaled \$21,012. The funds were used to support a reforestation and environmental sustainability project with a coffee cooperative in Nicaragua.

What is EQUAL EXCHANGE? In 1991, Equal Exchange became the first U.S. company to adopt international fair trade standards as guiding principles on 100% of their products. By working with democratic farmer cooperatives around the world and paying a fair price, Equal Exchange supports efforts to improve local communities, putting more control and greater income in the hands of impoverished, small-scale farmers in developing nations. We also serve freshly made Equal Exchange coffee at Clarendon Hill's coffee hours!

## **Adult Education**

This coming Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be beginning our class on embodied spiritual practice. I would advise people to come if they are interested in learning about Christian practices of faith and in having an opportunity to engage some of those practices at Clarendon. This Sunday will probably be a guided meditation class, followed by two weeks (4/13 and 4/20) with Liz Cavano that relate to yoga. The final week (4/27) is to be decided, but will continue along the same path of exploring faith practices. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Glass.

## **Interfaith Fundraiser for RESPOND**

Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church, Congregation B'nai Brith of Somerville, First Congregational Church of Somerville and the Muslim America

Society invite you to an interfaith concert to benefit RESPOND, Somerville's domestic violence program. (All proceeds will benefit RESPOND directly.) The concert will be at the First Congregational Church, 89 College Avenue, Somerville. The church is handicapped accessible. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The suggested donation for tickets is \$10.00- \$20.00. (If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please speak with Ellen.) There will be a reception following the concert. The performers are members of the Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble, A Besere Velt: The Yiddish Chorus of Workingmen's Circle and El-Nour Ensemble, a Moroccan spiritual chorus. Please plan to come and hear wonderful music as well as supporting this interfaith event!

## **Young Adults Group!**

After our super awesome first meeting on Leap Day, the Young Adults Group has decided to continue meeting once a month (more or less) for fun, relaxing, social adventures together. It is our hope that this group will continue to help Young Adults to get to know one another and form a strong community within the Clarendon Hill Community.

This month, we will be meeting on April 11th at 7:00 p.m. at Clarendon Hill Church for our monthly outing. We will likely be going bowling (rides will be provided) but we are open to suggestions if there is something that people would rather do. The idea is to have fun with one another, so if you have suggestions please contact Sarah Glass ([glass.sarah@gmail.com](mailto:glass.sarah@gmail.com)) or Sarah Donovan ([ferggie4@aol.com](mailto:ferggie4@aol.com)).

Do YOU qualify as a Young Adult?

The CHPC Young Adults group is open to anyone, particularly those within the age group of 20-40, but we certainly aren't limited to this age bracket. If you think you would enjoy the activities we plan, please come! We would love any opportunity to hang out with fellow CHPCers. Also, if you have friends that you think would enjoy coming, they are always welcome. You don't have to go to Clarendon to have fun with us!

## **War, Madness and Delusion**

A Juried Exhibit at Andover Newton that runs through Tuesday April 15, 2008. Karl Gustafson is a co-curator for this exhibit.

Andover Newton Theological School will host the art exhibit "War, Madness, and Delusion", through April 15, 2008, in the Meetinghouse and Wilson Chapel Galleries. The purpose of the show is to address the experience and contested morality of war in our times. It will be displaying works from 33 selected artists (featuring several Somerville artists) whose work directly addresses the nature and meaning of recent wars, and the challenges facing those committed to making peace in the midst of the conflict of war. It is the presumption of this show that art holds a peculiar ability to confront the public with the complexities and moral ambiguities of war.

## **Friday afternoon Horizons Bible Study**

On Friday afternoon at 3:00 p.m., April 18th, all interested in a once a month Bible Study are invited to come to Salam Lebbos' house in Arlington. We will be using the 2007-2008 Horizons Bible Study: Above and Beyond - Hearing God's Call in Jonah and

Ruth, published by Presbyterian Women. We are now studying Ruth. If you are interested in participating, please contact Gusti Newquist, Katherine Gustafson, or Salam Lebbos. Get in touch with Katherine if you need a ride or directions.

### **Book Group/Bible Study**

The bible study group will be a book group this month. The group will be reading Mark Allen Powell's book Loving Jesus. (Check the book review for more information on the book.) All are welcome to join us on Wednesday evening April 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

### **Writing Group at Clarendon Hill--all are welcome!!**

After exciting and productive meetings in the fall and early winter, the writing group will meet on Wednesday, April 23rd, at 7:30 p.m. in the Green Room. Please join us!! We will begin with a group check-in, move through 1-2 writing exercises, share as we feel moved, and finish with a group check-out. We are open to everyone, regardless of previous writing experience and will tailor each session to the needs and interests of those who show up. Contact Gusti or Liz for more information: [gusti\\_newquist@yahoo.com](mailto:gusti_newquist@yahoo.com) or [Cavatorta1@hotmail.com](mailto:Cavatorta1@hotmail.com)

### **"Save Our Homes" Walk**

The Somerville Affordable Housing Organizing Committee (AHOC) needs your help. We are holding our 5th annual "Save Our Homes" walk to raise money to protect Somerville families and individuals from homelessness. While we are fortunate to have a wide range of high quality homelessness prevention and affordable housing services in our City, one significant gap that remains is cash grants that can be acquired quickly enough to prevent a family from becoming homeless. Cash payments are needed to assist families who have fallen behind on their rent because of sudden unemployment, domestic violence or disability, and who face eviction without access to these funds. The "Save Our Homes" walk in Somerville raises emergency funds, 100% of which are employed in directly assisting needy families and individuals, thus allowing them to either remain in their homes or relocate. Last year the "Save Our Homes" walk was a tremendous success. Working together, we raised just over \$28,000 and helped more than 100 Somerville residents avoid homelessness. We are now planning our 5th annual "Save Our Homes" walk, and we hope you will be a part of this important event. This is a 5K walk on Sunday, April 27th at 2:00 p.m., starting and ending at Somerville High School. We will walk by examples of our city's affordable housing to raise awareness of the wonderful work that our community has done.

**Clarendon Hill will be putting a team together to do this 3.1 mile walk.** Enjoy coffee hour and/or bring your own lunch, and then we will head over to the high school to walk. If you are interested in participating, please contact Ellen ([ellends@verizon.net](mailto:ellends@verizon.net)).

### **Graduation Party for Gusti!**

Please join Gusti's out-of-town friends and family in "Celebrating the Mastery of Divinity" on Saturday, June 7th, 4:30pm at the Nave Gallery. It will be a light reception to toast and roast those graduating from Harvard Divinity School and to say a special

thank you to a wonderful network of support and encouragement. RSVP to Emily Redington Modak at eeredington@hotmail.com.

## **One Great Hour of Sharing**

Congratulations! So far we have raised \$1,327.48 for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. This is a little more than we raised for the offering last year, so thank you for your generosity!

## **Thank you from Doris's family**

How can we say thank you for all you have done for our mother? She loved her church so much and when she was no longer able to be there physically, you brought her the tapes of the messages. Many of you came to visit...some very faithfully. She loved getting her flowers from Richard. It made her feel very special. We were all there at Christmas to enjoy the Christmas carols and meet a lot of you. She said many times that was her "best Christmas." She said so many people hugged her and told her they loved her. Thank you so much for making her last Christmas on earth the best one. Rev. Gustafson and Pat and Tom Kepler visited and prayed with us and with Mom and she really looked forward to their visits. She even called Pat her "angel". Many thanks to those of you who prepared food for the reception after the funeral. That was so appreciated.

We miss Mom but we take comfort knowing she is with the God that she loves very much. She always said "God is good." Now she is experiencing that more than she ever could on earth and we know that we will be reunited with her someday. So please accept our heartfelt thanks for being so good to our Mom. God bless all of you.

Lauraly Stanford (for all of the Fisher children)

## **Donations for Somerville Early Head Start**

We are still accepting donations for Somerville Early Head Start. Those items most needed include:

crackers  
cereal  
macaroni  
canned black beans  
rice in boxes ( rather than plastic bags)  
Baby Formula  
diapers  
peanut butter

Thank you in advance for your donations!

## **Per Capita and Initial Envelopes**

The offering envelopes for 2008 have arrived, and you will find them on the table at the back of the church, near the door. Please pick yours up.

The amount of per capita for this year has been calculated as well: It is \$60.79. This is the amount our church will be sending to the national church for each member of our congregation. Please do all that you can to help us send the full amount – we must send it whether or not we are reimbursed from you. Please remember when figuring out your per capita that it includes all members of your family who are members of the church, even if they are away at school or living and working elsewhere.

Due to diligence, we have been able to cut back on the amount of envelopes that we have ordered in recent years. The initial offering envelope is to help with the cost of the giving envelopes.

If you don't currently have envelopes, and would like to have some, please contact Ellen.

### **Rental Space Available!**

Teen Empowerment has recently left their rental space at the church, so there is room available! If you know of a group or organization that is in need of office space, please have them get in touch with the church right away.

### **A Call to Knit and Pray our Way to the GA in San Jose!**

Something anyone or everyone can do right now...If you are interested, please get in touch with Ellen (ellends@verizon.net), and we will plan at least one get together to begin this project. I have made many scarves, and this can be as easy or as complicated as you would like (depending upon the pattern you choose.) Please let me know if you prefer to knit or crochet. I am not a crocheter, but I will get the instructions for crocheting. I am also willing to procure the yarn needed for the project.

Last summer the Lutherans held their Churchwide Assembly. Before that gathering, Lutherans Concerned/North America, More Light Presbyterians sister organization, proposed to their supporters the knitting of lovely rainbow scarves to mark their hopes and prayers for that assembly. Now it is our opportunity to combine the truth of GLBT inclusion and the beauty of handcrafted creativity into an unmistakable visual sign of God's all embracing love. The GLBT supporters were clearly marked at the Lutheran Assembly—let's be marked too at our GA!

#### **Challenge from Janet to Knitters/Knitting Groups across our land:**

This is a social justice project, knitting us all together, compassionately, with our GLBT sisters and brothers who suffer so from the rejection of gifts for service to the church, judgment of loving relationships and silencing of voices among us. More Light Presbyterians challenges you to create as many rainbow scarves as you can, according to the directions below, between now and June 9, 2008. Experts and beginners, like me, can pray and knit our way to San Jose, establishing a solid fabric of spiritual support for the efforts at our General Assembly for full inclusion of GLBT faithful.

<p><b>Yarn: Red Heart Supersaver Multicolor; the color is Mexicana (0950).</b></p>
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The yarn is online at the following website, [www.coatscollection.com](http://www.coatscollection.com). If you type in the search engine on the page DB010527 (both are zeros, hope they don't look like Os) it takes you to the type of yarn and then you can find Mexicana (color 0950). If the site won't let you see all the pages of yarn, you can select on the page, see all (as

opposed to 12 yarns per page) and Mexicana is listed. Also online on Joanne's Fabrics and available at their stores and Michael's. Please use only this yarn, as this, along with Jesus's love, is the thread running between us all!

#### Knitting Instructions:

The scarves can be any size between 3 to 6 inches across and 48 to 68 inches long, using needles between sizes 8 and 11. Remember as you choose your stitch that these will be used in summer in San Jose, mostly inside the air conditioned conference center.

**Comments from Tammy Besser, one of the veteran Lutheran knitters:** For straight knit on size 10 and 11 needles I'm casting on 10-14 stitches. Everyone is welcome to use whatever stitches, patterns, etc. you wish for these...it is a great project for trying out something new! My favorite to date is made with seed stitch, cast on 13 stitches on 10.5 needles alternate stitches (knit, purl) beginning with Knit on each row.

## **Mayor, Aldermen Pledge Support for Solar Energy Challenge**

March 14, 2008

Fund-Raising Effort Benefits Clean Energy Development: Support from Residents and Businesses Needed to Achieve Goal

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone and the Somerville Board of Aldermen announced today that Somerville is participating in a state-sponsored program to support the development of renewable energy. Effective immediately, Somerville residents and businesses have the opportunity to display their commitment to renewable energy

by taking the "Solar Energy Challenge." Participating sponsors may sign up to make either a one-time or monthly donation to the "New England Wind Fund."

"This program will further the cause of making new sources of clean energy available to the City of Somerville and its residents," said Mayor Curtatone. "I am pleased we are able to participate in this opportunity to promote renewable energy, and hope that all of our residents and businesses will consider supporting the Fund."

If Somerville can attain its goal of 150 signups by April 30, 2008, the city would be awarded a 2 kiloWatt (kW) solar photovoltaic system by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, which administers the program.

"Now is the time for Somerville to register its support for clean, renewable energy," said Ward 7 Alderman Robert Trane. "The skyrocketing energy costs we have all experienced this winter really brings home the need to diversify our energy supply in whatever ways we can." Trane, who chairs the Board of Aldermen's Special Committee on Energy & Environment, recently presented a unanimously-approved resolution supporting the Challenge, which is sponsored locally by Somerville Climate Action.

Environmental Program Manager Peter Mills added, "It would be great to add a 2 KW solar PV system to the other renewable energy commitments Somerville has already made. Combined, these efforts will help us begin to exert our energy independence here in Somerville. Moreover, support for renewable technologies demonstrates Somerville's long term commitment to address its greenhouse gas emissions, which is something

that benefits all of us." A 2 kW PV system could be expected to decrease the City's emissions of carbon dioxide by roughly 5,500 pounds annually.

Vanessa Rule, Chair of Somerville Climate Action, said "By contributing \$5 a month to the New England Wind Fund, Somerville residents and businesses can help insure that we have clean, reliable, and affordable energy for our future." To contribute, please visit <http://www.newenglandwind.org/wind/challenge.somerville.php>.

For more information, please contact Environmental Program Manager Peter Mills at 617-625-6600 ext 2106.

## **Easter's Challenge to Empire**

(by N.T. Wright) from Sojourner's online

Monday, March 24, 2008

The Cost of War

Jesus came with a job to do, to complete the work to which Israel was called. This work, from the call of Abraham onwards, was to put the human race to rights, and so to put the whole creation to rights. As the gospel writers tell the story, this task was to be accomplished by Jesus bringing about the sovereign healing rule of the creator God. Jesus was addressing the question, "What might it look like if God was running this show?" And answering, "This is what it looks like: just watch." And then, "just listen." In what he did, and in the stories he told, Jesus was announcing and inaugurating what he referred to as "the kingdom of God," the long-awaited hope that the creator God would run the whole show, on earth as in heaven.

But the problem was, and is, that other people are still running the show. Other kingdoms, other power structures, have usurped the rule of the world's wise creator, and the forces of evil are exceedingly powerful and destructive. Jesus' task of inaugurating God's kingdom therefore necessarily led him to meet those forces in direct combat, to draw upon himself their full, dark fury so as to exhaust their power and make a way through to launch the creator's project of new creation despite them. That is one clue at least to the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion, though that event, planting the sign of God's kingdom in the middle of space, time, and matter, remains inexhaustible. But let's be clear. As the gospels tell the story, Jesus' death was the culmination of several different strands: a political process, a religious clash, a spiritual war, all rushing together into one terrible day, one terrible death. And in the light of that, according to Jesus himself and his first followers, everything in the world looks different, is different, must be approached differently. With Jesus' death, the power structures of the world were called to account; with his resurrection, a new life, a new power, was unleashed upon the world. And the question is: How ought this to work out? What should we be doing as a result?

If we are to think Christianly, then we must think according to the pattern of Jesus Christ. And that means that the first place we should look for God in the "War on Terror" would be in the smoldering ruins of the Twin Towers, and then in the ruins of Baghdad and Basra, the shattered homes and lives of the tens of thousands who have through no fault of their own been in the wrong place at the wrong time, as the angry superpower, like a rogue elephant teased by a little dog, has gone on the rampage stamping on everything that moves in the hope of killing the dog by killing everything within reach.

The presence of God within the world at a time of war must be calibrated according to what Paul says in Romans 8, that the Spirit groans within God's people as they groan with the pain of the world. The cross of Jesus Christ is the sign and the assurance that the God who made the world still loves the world and, in that love, groans and grieves.

But God wants his rebel world to be ordered, to be under authorities and governments, because otherwise the bullies and the arrogant will always prey on the weak and the helpless; but all authorities and governments face the temptation to become bullies and arrogant themselves. The New Testament writers, like other Jews at the time, saw this writ large in the Roman empire of their day. Those with eyes to see can see it in other subsequent empires, right down to our own day.

It is the task of the followers of Jesus to remind those called to authority that the God who made the world intends to put the world to rights at last, and to call those authorities to acts of justice and mercy which will anticipate, in the present time, the future, coming, final victory of God over all evil, all violence, all arrogant abuse of power. And where the world's rulers genuinely strive for that end, the Christian church declares as the ancient Jews did with the pagan king Cyrus, that God's Spirit is at work—whether the authorities know it or not.

Insofar as the last five years have constituted a wake-up call to sleepy western Christians to think urgently about issues of global justice and governance, we can see God, I believe, in that new stirring, warning us that we have a task and that we haven't been doing it too well. In particular, we must face the deeply ambiguous question of the present power and position of America. I am not anti-American when I criticize some policies of some American leaders, any more than I am anti-British when I criticize some of the policies of my own elected leaders. To suggest otherwise is simply a cheap way of avoiding the real questions. The creator God allows societies to rise and fall, empires to grow and wane. And though things are massively more complicated than this, we could see in the rise of America as the current sole superpower some great possibilities for bringing justice and mercy, genuine freedom and prosperity, to the whole world. Empires always carry that possibility. But empires also face the temptation to use their power for their own prestige and wealth. The challenge now is to provide a critique of American empire without implying that the world should collapse into anarchy, and a fresh sense of direction for that empire without colluding with massive abuses of power.

Where then is God in the war on terror? Grieving and groaning within the pain and horror of his battered but still beautiful world. Stirring in the hearts of human beings the desire for a more credible structure of global justice and mercy. Burning into the imagination of human beings a hope that peace and reconciliation might eventually win out over suspicion and hatred, that the world may be put to rights and that we may anticipate that in the present time. The Christian gospel, revealing the mysterious God we discover in Jesus and the Spirit, offers a framework for discerning where God is at work in the midst of the dangers and opportunities that confront us. All of us in our different callings are summoned to this task; some of you, perhaps, to make it your life's work. Jesus is Lord. The Spirit is powerful. God is doing a new thing. Let's get out there and join in.

Dr. N.T. Wright is a New Testament theologian and the Bishop of Durham in the Church of England. He is the author of many books, including *Surprised by Hope*, and *Evil and the Justice of God*. This post is adapted from his lecture "Where is God in 'The War on Terror?'" and is used with permission by the author.

## **Wicked Times**

This op-ed appeared in The Boston Globe on Tuesday, September 15, 2007 and was written by Gregory Maguire, the author of the book Wicked. Maguire's book is a retelling of The Wizard of Oz, from the perspective of the Wicked Witch of the West. Wicked is also the title of a musical, which is based upon the book.

That Emerald spectacle, "Wicked" the musical, carts its *son-et-lumiere* magic back into town this week. The occasion allows me to consider whether the themes have acquired new meaning since they showed up first in my 1995 novel, and have been theatrically enhanced, besequinned, and popularized in the dozen year since.

"Wicked" is a story about an awkward girl, one with nascent magical powers and a steely sense of righteousness, who come up against a ditzy opportunist named Glinda and a megalomaniacal dictator calling himself the Wizard of Oz. I modeled the green-skinned witch, Elphaba, after my heroines. The idealistic nerdess bears some chromosomal resemblance to the young Virginia Woolf, for her acerbity and intellect, and to the young Laura Nyro, for her invention and energy, and to the older Emily Dickinson, for her willingness to retire when the going gets unseemly.

The play crystallizes into a pink-and-green music box what in my novel more obscurely put: The cost of the choices one has to make may bankrupt even the morally soundest among us. And weirdly, in the dozen years since "Wicked" was first published, my somewhat heavy-handed tropes about power and corruption, about hubris and need, about individuals and institutions, have come to seem less exaggerated.

In 1995, we had successfully concluded Operation Desert Storm. We were giddy with prospects of a peace dividend and were reducing the national debt. The trouble spots were still trouble, but they were mostly Over There. Therefore, as I drew it, the political situation in Oz was not only obvious, but I admitted, even a bit quaint.

The novel hearkend back to Pinochet's Chile and Hitler's Deutschland, seasoned with a bit of Orwell's "1984." The Wizard was more Idi Amin than Lord Voldemort (Harry Potter was still two years out). I felt, and hoped, that I was writing about a kind of sordid American exceptionalism that we might just be outgrowing.

How naïve we writers are, forgetting the endless inventiveness of evil.

When the play was in development, the horror of the attacks in 2001 detonated our fragile national sense of equanimity. Still, the work continued, and Winnie Holzman the brave dramatist and Stephen Schwartz the tunesmith, and the first out-of-town tryouts were held only 10 weeks after US forces and allies marched into Baghdad.

In the nearly five years since, the musical has gone from strength to strength. Is it self-delusion on my part to believe that the appeal of feminine strength and moxie, though a real draw to the play, distracts from another reason that "Wicked" found its unexpectedly stratospheric flight path?

Since the book was first published, think what we've been through: the 2000 contested presidential election, the attacks on American soil, Afghanistan, Iraq, Katrina, Darfur, you name it. And the character of our national discourse has grown so shrill that it now borders on the hysterical. I used to fault the court of Incurious George and his cronies. Now I find the lack of civility and the evaporation of respect for different points of view to be rampant all over the political spectrum, including the soapbox I comfortably occupy.

The public, observable face of evil keeps changing; that's how it survives. It employs an endless series of disguises, curtains, puppets, to distract the unvigilant, trumpet voluntaries to swell the patriotic heart. But recently, in *The New York Times*, Michael Ignatieff wrote, "Good judgment in politics, it turns out, depends on being a critical judge of yourself." He is reconsidering his early support of the war in Iraq. (Let me put that more clearly: He is examining his conscience about how and why he took what he now considers the wrong position on the war). He is reminding us that we should demand that our leaders *prove* themselves trustworthy, not just declare themselves so.

"People with good judgment listen to the warning bells within," Ignatieff continued. But we are all screaming so loudly we can't hear one another, let alone our own interior alarms.

Five years since the Broadway opening, a dozen years since the book was first published, "Wicked" still examines the heady narcotic of believing one's own press releases too earnestly. No one in "Wicked" demonstrates perfect judgment – certainly not the heroines, Elphaba and Glinda. The danger isn't just that one's noble aims might justify questionable means, but that the very quality of one's moral zeal, the rightness of one's cause (and by extension how very flattering the rightness of one's self) might justify the means.

That self-confidence is the root of fundamentalism of any stripe. In its jovial, tuneful way, "Wicked" still says: Beware dispatching the flying monkeys too fast. The powerhouse chanteuses in the musical still belt that cautionary message. We can stand to hear it again.

## **Book Review**

This is the book that book group will be talking about this month.

Loving Jesus by Mark Allen Powell

ISBN – 13: 9780800636760

### Synopsis

The essence of spirituality is loving God, says Mark Allan Powell. The Bible, the Talmud, and the Qu'ran all direct their followers not merely to believe in God, to trust God, to obey God, or to serve God...but to love God. But how does one do that? Can we learn to love God? In this biblical spirituality for today, Powell's earnest plea is for Christians to revisit their faith, not blazing in evangelical enthusiasm but harboring a steadier flame and deeper commitment. Cultivating a mature spirituality means living in a different religious space than most people do today. Living at the poetic heart of faith, he argues, entails seeing the coordinates of religious life—love, understanding, truth, hope, and especially devotion—in a new way. Powell espouses the old-fashioned idea of piety.

Drawing on his wide knowledge of the bible and Christian tradition, as well as insights from his own journey, he shows how simple religious practices like Bible reading and meditation and devotions move us beyond the old certitudes of a naïve and youthful faith into the less certain but more bracing terrain of a second naïveté, a closer walk with Jesus. Author: Mark Allan Powell is the Leatherman Professor of New Testament Studies at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. His many publications include *Jesus as a Figure in History* (1998), *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels* (1997), and *God with Us* (1995).

Body and Soul by Frank Conroy

ISBN –13: 9780385319867

I am through most of this book, and it is a wonderful story, not only for artists, but for anyone who has ever felt that they didn't quite belong.

### Synopsis

In the dim light of a basement apartment, six-year-old Claude Rawlings sits at an old white piano, picking out the sounds he has heard on the radio and shutting out the reality of his lonely world.

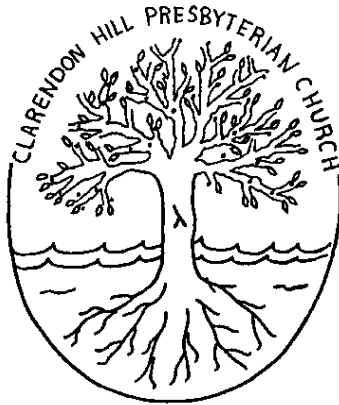
The setting is 1940s New York, a city that is "long gone, replaced by another city of the same name." Against a backdrop that pulses with sound and rhythm, *Body & Soul* brilliantly evokes the life of a child prodigy whose musical genius pulls him out of squalor and into the drawing rooms of the rich and a gilt-edged marriage.

But the same talent that transforms him also hurtles Claude into a lonely world of obsession and relentless ambition. From Carnegie Hall to the smoky jazz clubs of London, *Body & Soul* burns with passion and truth--at once a riveting, compulsive read and a breathtaking glimpse into a boy's heart and an artist's soul.

***The habit of giving only enhances the desire to give.***  
***–Walt Whitman***

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 Augustus Kwaa, Parish Associate/Evangelist..... Arnie James, Sexton  
 Sarah Glass, Seminarian

**LECTIONARY TEXTS**

**Apr. 6:** Acts 2: 14a, 36-41; Ps. 116: 1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1: 17-23; Luke 24: 13-35  
**Apr. 13:** Acts 2: 42-47; Ps. 23; 1 Peter 2: 19-25; John 10: 1-10  
**Apr. 20:** Acts 7: 55-60; Ps. 31: 1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2: 2-10; John 14: 1-14  
**Apr. 27:** Acts 17: 22-31; Ps. 66: 8-20; 1 Peter 3: 13-22; John 14: 15-21  
**May 4:** Acts 1: 6-14; Ps. 68: 1-10, 32-35; 1 Peter 4: 12-14, 5: 6-11; John 17: 1-11  
**May 11:** Acts 2: 1-21 OR Num. 11: 24-30; Ps. 104: 24-34, 35b; 1 Cor. 12: 3b-13 OR Acts 2: 1-21; John 20: 19-23 OR John 7: 27-39  
**May 18:** Gen. 1: 1-2:4a; Ps. 8; 2 Cor. 13: 11-13; Matt. 28: 16-20  
**May 25:** Isa. 49: 8-16a; Ps. 131; 1 Cor. 4: 1-5; Matt. 6: 24-34

**Church Assignments**

	Scripture	Focus on Mission	Coffee hour	Nursery backup
Apr. 6	P. Auger	S. Lebbos	Schemerhorn	K. Gustafson
Apr. 13	L. Cavano	P. Beran	Siggers	V. Donovan
Apr. 20	J. Bray	G. Newquist	Jirmanus	E. Schemerhorn
Apr. 27	S. Donovan	A. Kwaa	Augers	N. Jirmanus
May 4	R. Winchester	H. Rantisi	Milanesi/Kumpa	A. Chapman-Adisho
May 11	E. Sweeney	R. Liberace	Camelio/Braga	K. Gustafson
May 18	C. Milanesi	K. Graf	Reynolds/Graf	V. Donovan
May 25	M. Reynolds	D. Anderson	Nequist/Glass	E. Schemerhorn