



## JUSTITIA AND RELIGION

I decided to devote this edition of *Justitia* to religion. The reason for this theme is due to the politicalization of religion. I'm not one who is in attendance at church services on a regular basis, but go occasionally, when my godson has an event (first communion, etc.). Even though I'm not a regular attendee at services, I do think about the impact of religion on local, national and world events, my personal development and how one lives a life.

As I watch events unfold, I get more confused as people divide these events into good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral, legal and illegal, patriotic and unpatriotic, etc. I guess I'm tired of people using religion/faith as a means to validate their superiority and worth at the expense of others. I'm tired of a world that divides people to conquer and push their world view on others. I don't like using religion as a tool to support political power rather than use religion to support a dialogue among people to think about how we live our lives. I define religion as dialogue in attempting to assist people and communities in making decisions that are appropriate for their lives or collective/communal situation(s).

I'm tired of the use of religion to justify military action (whatever the side) especially when leaders articulate their belief in God and a righteous life. I keep wondering how they sleep at night as soldiers and civilians; neighborhoods and communities die as they say "God Bless America" or God (however they identify their God) Bless whatever nation they represent. I

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## THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ETERNAL LIFE

by Dennis Sullivan

What most people who embrace religion rarely think about is that the human being's belief in God, divine intervention, theology, and the like is based in a political economy no different from what Ruskin and Marx talked about or, for that matter, Kropotkin, Proudhon, Shelley, Blake, Allen Ginsberg, and J. G. Frazer. The political economy says: after-life is this life and, when lived fully, eternal life.

Some people will nod assent to such a statement right away, but others will feel a bit uneasy as if the soil of faith had been removed from beneath their feet, and so they protest the premises involved with great vehemence. But such protest is only a reaffirmation of a position that refuses to grant religion and political economy the same stage and to look into their shared genealogical beginnings—all the way back to the origins of the worship of the sun and sky—with the hope of obliterating distinctions created and reinforced by hierarchies established for the benefit of some at the expense of others.

How then shall I clarify what I am talking about because there is so much involved in the translation and transposition of terms that any such exchange can take on the appearance of condescending didacticism. I apologize if it sounds that way, but maybe I can start with an example to prevent such an occurrence, one you may be familiar with because it is found in the Greek Scriptures, Matthew 12: 47-50 to be exact.

In these verses, it says that Jesus was speaking to a throng who had gathered to hear him speak, a common occurrence during his public life, and that while he was speaking "his mother and his brother were standing outside, waiting to speak to him."

Clearly someone noticed them standing there and wanting to talk to Jesus, someone who had direct access to the teacher, and so made his or her way toward him to perhaps whisper in his ear, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside and would like to have a word with you."

At this point we might expect several different responses from the master, the most logical of which might be, "Is it an emergency? If not, would you ask them to wait a few moments until I finish?" But the gospel says nothing of the sort, rather that

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the incoming President of the Justice Studies Association, I have been asked to write - Something! Anything! I have struggled with this, putting it off for months while tending to other work. This hasn't all been attributable to procrastination on my part (though I've been known to be quite skilled at that particular art). I simply haven't known what to say. I was told that this issue was dedicated to religion and peacemaking at the same time as I watched the Middle East once again overwhelmed by violence that had religion(s) as justification. And while I understand the contradictions between religion and state, the fact that one of the religions being used to justify the violence was mine (or at least the closest thing I've ever known to a religion) left me feeling frustrated and inarticulate.

As summer turned to fall, a further act of violence moved me to the very core of my soul. As part of another highly publicized series of mass homicides in public schools (which would certainly be used to further restrict the rights, movement and freedom of children throughout the U.S.) five young Amish girls were killed, execution style. I was deeply pained, as were so many others, that such brutality could be introduced into the lives, not just of children, but of a people whose way of life appeared to be so gentle; youngsters who wouldn't otherwise have witnessed the 20,000 murders it is said most children will have viewed on television before the age of 18. But as so often arises from the deepest tragedy came something of a miracle in our society these days —forgiveness!

And so forgiveness is what I want to talk about.

Forgiveness, or the act of letting go of anger towards another, helps to heal individuals and communities. Parables teaching forgiveness seem to exist in every religion. And here we are in a society where 86% of the population claims to believe in a god and 61% consider religion to be a very important part of their lives. Yet we can't even find it in ourselves to understand how others can forgive.

When I spoke with my students about the Amish, and their acts of forgiveness directed at Charles Roberts' family, students responded with a flood of emotions –

anger, frustration, even disgust. I reminded them of another class discussion. In a course last year I had asked students to read Howard Zehr's *Transcending*. As we talked about it over the semester, students were puzzled by the responses of those who had been victimized. Then one day a student acknowledged that it might be easier to consider forgiveness when you are faced with the harm. Most of us have no idea how we would respond under such trying circumstances; circumstances in which our anger could consume us. Perhaps, she suggested forgiveness would be a relief.

Forgiving is not easy. I imagine all of us struggle with it in our personal lives. By finding forgiveness for Roberts and his family, the Amish community set an example for the rest of us. It is a lesson we all would do well to embrace.

One last word on a more practical note. I just want to thank all of you reading this for your past and future support. Our numbers may be small, but our hearts are big and our minds are open. We hope you value what we offer, and that you will tell others. Perhaps someday our numbers will be as big as our hearts!

Susan

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## WE ARE A COMMUNITY: JOIN OR RENEW YOUR JSA MEMBERSHIP

Greetings from East Tennessee. As I am writing this note, the Justice Studies Association has 80 current members. I am glad to be a member of a community of 80 souls. But I know that the community is actually much *much* larger. So many of us are studying and working toward peace and justice without violence. So many of us are trying to figure out how to do non-violence in our direct and indirect relationships with others. Please take just a few minutes to join JSA or renew your JSA membership today. Go to <http://www.justicestudies.org/Justice-Membership-become.html> for all the information you need. You can pay membership dues on-line with a check or credit card or by mailing us a check. E-mail me at [lpresser@utk.edu](mailto:lpresser@utk.edu) if you have any questions about your current or future membership. And please also tell your friends and colleagues about this wonderful community.

Lo Presser, Membership Chair

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## THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ETERNAL LIFE

Jesus came back with a strange sort of non-sequitur question: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

Maybe he said this in a stage whisper so that those gathered heard and wondered, "Hey, what's going on here? The master of parables is asking who his mother and brothers are. Is this some kind of parabolic code, an in-family *koan*?"

Imagine the confusion. But Jesus does not wait for an answer (it was not a rhetorical question) but looks out upon the crowd (the *ecclesia*) and, pointing to them, says, "Here are my mother and my brothers." Enough said. Well hardly, for the chapter ends with a clarifying provision: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

In his very heavy (as in deep) volume *Love's Body*, Norman O. Brown took up this very issue of mother and brother and sister, pointing to how they band together to form communities (*ecclesiae*). Brothers and sisters come together (the definition? origin of? collectivity) after they have been expelled from the family. Ousted they head toward the wild and form or join a club, a brotherhood or sisterhood, and seek out a new family beyond the status quo.

This new family, the collectivity—which I will describe as *ecclesia*—becomes a substitute family that is the source of sustenance; it is an *alma mater* (nourishing mother), as Brown says. We know historically that in many cultures boys, once they reached puberty, were separated from their mothers and fathers and prepared for an initiation ceremony into adulthood where they were "given a new mother by initiation." (Brown, p. 32) In a Chinese ceremony in Singapore an oath was made: "I swear that I shall know neither father nor mother, not brother nor sister, nor wife nor child, but the brotherhood [and now sisterhood] alone." [my brackets] (*Ibid.*)

In his mind-splitting (but eventually healing) treatise Brown turns to an assertion of Cyprian of Carthage (and remember Brown was a Greek and Latin scholar first and foremost) to clarify the relationship between community (*ecclesia*) and the divine (eternal life). Cyprian says, "*Habere non potest Deum patrem, qui ecclesiam not*

*habet matrem,*" that is, "It is not possible to possess God as your father if you do not have as your mother a community." In other words it is impossible to *possess* divine (eternal) life without creating and living within a sustaining community. Christians would narrowly translate *ecclesia* as church, but I am taking it in its more generic, catholic, global sense, that is, as a gathering of people, and I would add of like souls, people interested in doing things with and for each other, a mutual aid community, a community that enjoys each other's company—through the acceptance of its weaknesses.

I might point out here that I quoted Cyprian's assertion "*Habere non potest . . .*" despite the fact that he is the early church father who sang the saber-rattling anthem "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*" "outside the church there is no salvation." But that kind of ideological imperative is no drawback to our discussion as long as we refuse to limit our translation of *ecclesia* to church and take it to mean community, collectivity, family born-again, that is, families not limited to institutionally dogmatic sectarianism.

Well, if that is so, what then is the social ethic by which we can recognize such families, such *ecclesias*? For this we can turn to (and this will surprise only those who are not familiar with the Plinies) Pliny the Elder who in his *Naturalis Historia* brings us full circle. He not only tells us how to do the will of God but also how to be an *ecclesia* and what the relationship between the two is. Pliny's well-known proverb, if you will, regarding the political economy of eternal life is "*Deus est mortali juvare mortalem*" (ii.18) which means "for a person who is subject to death (and suffering, sickness, and old age, and all the other things that go into being human) to help another person similarly situated, that is God." Is God, not is possessing God or doing the will of God but *being* God.

What an extraordinarily liberating theology (political economy) of relationship, and one which is available to everyone regardless of talents and status, and whose basic ethic can be practiced anywhere, not controlled by any external source of power, for example, God as unitary abstraction. Not to be flip about this in any way but the equation says: the practice of mutual aid is God, to

be brothers and sisters is God. And outside of this there is no *salus*, not translated as salvation with a payoff in the future but *salus* as health, bodily and spiritual health, now. Otherwise death in all its multitudinous manifestations: fear, anxiety, stupidity, despair, ennui, depression, all the idioms we use for "life not worth living" takes a mortgage out on our being.

Thus we possess (*habere*) God, are (*esse*) God, live eternal life, when we create an *alma mater*, or better yet an *alma ecclesia* whose nourishing ethic is *mortali juvare mortalem*. In other words *mortali juvare mortalem* is the nourishing life of the *ecclesia* which we do not simply participate in or possess divine life through but create and, in so doing, live as an eternal being. Instead of "I saw Eternity the other night, / Like a great ring of pure and endless light, / All calm, as it was bright" Henry Vaughan might have said "I live eternity day and night . . ."

Of course, space is limited here so it is not possible to address the psychological parallels to the syllogism I have presented which provide experimental proof of the positive effects mutual aid offers. So be it, but there is an even more immediate and powerful way of gathering evidence, that is, by living a deeply and continuously reflective life as we practice *mortali juvare mortalem* and using the data presented by our failures to shine light on how to proceed to the future. It is a way that is every bit as rigorous and systematic as science and one that leads to the full acceptance of all that enters our life, which translated means, doing the will of God. That is my definition of it.

At this juncture it should be clear that religion is really the practice of a political economy of everyday life, that is, work directed toward the creation of an *ecclesia* which is a nourishing (*alma*) mother whose governing principle is *mortali juvare mortalem*, the source of godhead consciousness which equates being with eternal life. Imagine: eternal life within arm's reach.

For those suffering from pie-in-the-sky skepticism and its consequent varieties of depression, I offer an opportunity to engage me in a conversation about how the political economy of eternal life I have talked about is the direct opposite of a

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# TEACHING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Thomas Cetrino

## WHY I TEACH SOCIAL JUSTICE TO TEENAGERS AT RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

When my son turned six years old, it was time to send him to religious instruction. Both my wife and I were brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, and, while we disagree with some of the church's teachings we felt it was important to expose him to religion and learn the teachings of Jesus Christ, particularly his message of social justice. While it doesn't get a lot of attention from the mainstream press and conservative politicians who claim to be Christians, serving and sharing with others, particularly the poor, the homeless, the troubled, the alienated, and those in prison, is a central and core teaching of Jesus Christ.

Every gospel in the New Testament, as well as books of the Old Testament makes numerous references to these teachings. My favorite is from the Gospel of Matthew (25: 31 – 46):

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

*"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

*"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

*"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

*"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

*"He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

There are thousands of similar passages in the Bible; an excellent book on the subject is by Joseph Grassi, *Informing the Future: Social Justice in the New Testament* and a good website is [www.restorativejustice.org/chapel/](http://www.restorativejustice.org/chapel/).

In any case, I felt if I were going to send my son to religious instruction at the church which is staffed by a group of dedicated volunteers that I should also volunteer to teach. I didn't want to teach young children like my son as I have little experience or training in teaching young children. However, I did take teaching courses in college and have taught several criminal justice courses at Hudson Valley Community College and other local community colleges for the last twenty-five years, so I volunteered to teach junior high and high school students. Apparently it is difficult to get volunteers to teach teenagers, so my offer was quickly and gratefully accepted. I was fortunate that a social justice class had been offered in the past for teenagers and that the previous instructor was too burned out from all his other volunteer work to continue teaching it.

## HOW I TEACH SOCIAL JUSTICE IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Originally the course was just a classroom course that met for an hour and a half once a week for six weeks. Generally there are eight to twelve students in each class. The class involved reading and discussing passages from the Bible that emphasized various aspects of social justice and relating them to current events in the community, state and world. For instance, there would be a section on feeding the hungry. Sections of the Bible relating to hunger and sharing were read and discussed, for example Matthew 25:31-46 and Luke 10:25-37. After the readings, a discussion was held on how well our society lived up to these teachings and what we, our church community, and our society in general could do better to implement these teachings of Christ. Other subject areas include homelessness, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, imprisonment, restorative justice, and the United Nations Millennium Declaration (which emphasizes the need for all countries to equally share in the benefits of globalization).

It soon became apparent that just talking about social justice and the Bible wasn't very successful in getting and keeping teenagers' attention and commitment to the subject. We soon decided that the class should spend half the time outside the classroom actually practicing Christ's social justice teachings rather than just talking about it.

Fortunately my church has an active Social Justice Committee and a number of active direct service programs. These programs include:

**Food for Friends**, which involves organizing and participating in a weekly food drive and delivering donated foods to locate charities and programs that serve the poor and homeless. In addition, this program collects, packages, and delivers food

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to families in the summer who receive free or reduced-cost lunch during the school year. The program also gathers volunteers to work for a couple of hours at the Regional Food bank in our area where we sort and repack frozen food, detergents, cleaners and personal care items that are donated and delivered to the Food Bank from local businesses.

**Furniture for Friends** which collects contributions of furniture and household goods, stores them in a warehouse, and uses them to furnish apartments of those in need. The donations are primarily used to help graduates of Hope House, a local drug rehabilitation facility. Volunteer workers from the facility work with volunteers from the church to collect, store and move the furniture.

**REACH** (Rural Ecumenical Action for Community Help) which provides clothing, case management and emergency services, as well as holiday assistance, counseling and referral to local families who request assistance.

My church has several other social justice programs including buying and selling fair trade coffee and cocoa, holding an annual crafts fair with crafts made by Third World craftspeople, and visiting people incarcerated in local jails.

I organize three volunteer social justice projects for my students to participate in

and ask them to volunteer to work on one other social justice project. The week before my students and I go to the volunteer project we discuss what the program does, who it serves and, how it is related to the teachings of Christ and the Bible. In order to make Christ's social justice teachings more relevant to teenagers, I have brought articles in discussing Bono's (of U2 fame) work to eliminate extreme poverty in the world, shown videos of the 2005 Live 8 concert, which includes footage of children starving to death in Africa, and have asked the students to bring in songs, videos, or articles that they think emphasize social justice themes.

Most of the time I get a high participation rate among my students even though most of the volunteer work is done on a Saturday. They seem interested in helping the less fortunate and try to make a connection to the church through helping the less fortunate.

## WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY TEACHING TEENAGERS SOCIAL JUSTICE IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Teenagers today face a much different and more difficult world than the world we faced as teenagers (in my case forty years ago). They face greater challenges than our generation in living the social justice teachings of Jesus Christ as the world and culture they live in, particularly in the United States, emphasizes the individual over community and greed over sharing.

Many teenagers recognize the hypocrisy that permeates our society and our collective failure to live up to the ideals upon which the United States was founded. Many of these ideals emanate from Christ's social justice teachings including individual freedom coupled with respect for others, protecting the rights and freedoms of minorities, and an emphasis on collective action and empowerment over "every man for themselves." I think many teenagers realize the world cannot continue on its current path if they are to reach their full potential and life expectancy. My goals for teaching social justice are for my students to come to understand and recognize these problems and issues and realize that they can do something to change the course of our world. Every individual act of service to others, particularly the poor, the homeless, the troubled, the alienated, and those in prison, will make our world a better place by living the social justice teachings of Jesus Christ.

A prayer based on Luke 22:24-27 sums up my goals for my social justice students:

Dear Jesus, you made it clear that those who are greatest are the ones who serve, not the ones who have fame, fortune, or authority. Help me adjust my priorities to put others first. Place within me a genuine desire to serve. Enable me to recognize the daily opportunities I have to reach out to those in need in my family, in my school, and in my community. Guide me as I strive to follow your example to become a servant leader. Amen.

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political economy based in credit (deserts-based personal credit and credit-card credit), usury-based economics, and how a political economy of eternal life can prevent the penalties that banking institutions (and we ourselves in our everyday lives) impose on others through the *alma*-desiccating violence of interest (usury). The desire of the personnel of such institutions is that people remain indebted to a body-less future so

they can wield and profit from the imposition of ever-increasing late fees, not eternal life but life-timed-by-a-clock fees. Yes I know, that at its core, this is a very serious social structural matter that anyone interested in justice needs to take as a priority, but it is one that can easily be dissolved for now—eternally—through the practice of *mortali juvare mortalem*.

I thank *Justitia* editor, Peter Sanzen, for

inviting me to share these ideas and feelings on how I strive to live.

Dennis Sullivan is a poet who lives in Voorheesville, New York with his wife Georgia Gray. He has recently published with his long-time collaborator, Larry Tiffit, *Handbook of Restorative Justice: A Global Perspective*. Interestingly, 15 copies of the book were just sold in Iran.

# A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Beverly Quist, Mohawk Valley Community College

Writing about the religious roots of restorative justice is a daunting task for a nonbeliever, in the United States, in 2006! I was raised in the United Church of Christ, a mainline Protestant denomination whose social justice actions are at the heart of their Christian practice. Although I have not been an adherent for years, I am enormously grateful for having been part of this community. Most of my experiences with the JSA, too, have been warm examples of how believers [and others!] practice their beliefs. But I come to restorative justice in a more secular way, if you will—by way of criminology. I found in the restorative explanation for the problem of crime that "click" experience so familiar to second-wave feminists [once you've heard the click, you can't un-hear it!]. Therefore, I am writing through the lens with which I am most familiar—teaching and learning about restorative justice formally, with undergraduate criminal justice students.

What is most daunting to me now is discussing "religious roots" in an analytical way in class. Many of my students seem to be unfamiliar with religious belief systems other than their own, so it is especially difficult to help them see that *it matters* that restorative justice is explicit about its varied religious roots. Let me give an example. Prior to my first real encounter with restorative justice [and just after using the wonderful *Criminology as Peacemaking* for the first time in a criminal justice course, in 1992], I asked penology students to read Bo Lozoff and Michael Braswell's *Inner Corrections*. Wow! It was an adventure for all of us...making our way through the incredible combination of painful descriptions of the daily lives of incarcerated men and the discussions of heart-felt and demanding spiritual practice. I was enormously uncomfortable asking students [and myself] to not only understand the concept of "spirituality" but also to see its relationship to life in prison. How does one lead a class in the discussion and application of someone else's beliefs? How does one address the intimate encounters between Bo and his inmate correspondents without feeling like a spiritual Peeping Tom? I wasn't ready for this!

On the other hand, I have taught *about* the role of religion and religious beliefs in introductory sociology and the sociology of gender with less angst. Those subjects lent themselves fairly easily to analysis and useful questions [and sometimes to controversy]; I even felt I could maintain my professorial objectivity in leading discussions! But mixing "religion" and "justice" and "restorative justice" and "criminal justice" brought the sacred into the secular with quite a *JOLT*. Not to mention that *teaching* restorative justice means *practicing* restorative justice, with the resulting impossibility of hiding behind professorial Oz-curtains.

The contributions of the Catholic Worker community, the Mennonites, Presbyterians, Quakers, First Nations peoples, the Maori, and others are well-documented foundations of restorative justice. Our borrowings from Buddhist and Hindu beliefs are addressed in powerful books and articles. And the concept "spirituality" plays a key role in bridging the gap between religious and secular. [I admit that I do not understand the term "spirituality," although I know its definition, so I am often at a loss.] But one issue remains for me: what about the 27.49 million of us in the United States who claim no religious affiliation—how do we make sense of the religious roots of restorative justice? Are these roots—or our emphasis upon them—a barrier to implementing the profound public transformations which restorative justice makes possible?

Acknowledging that the wonderful concept "restorative justice" has such unmistakable and unavoidable religious roots feels dangerous. Far too often in American society today, religiosity passes for a code of ethics and this worries me. (I have probably read *The Handmaid's Tale* too many times!) "Faith based" initiatives are part of the United States Department of Justice's work in crime prevention, so it would make sense to assume that restorative justice is carrying the day! However, our current political climate seems to take *faith* and *religion* to mean judgment, exclusion, exclusivity, cruelty, selfishness, and conformity—values which are the antithesis of a restorative view. Here is a dilemma, then:

do the most basic requirements of a restorative perspective—empathy, forgiveness, amends, peace, inclusion, compassion, reconciliation, responsibility, and personal, interpersonal, and societal transformation—gain credibility in a criminal justice context only when they can claim religious roots? Will these principles, co-opted and critiqued and skewed, become part of a political effort to bring religion into previously secular social policies?

It follows that we must ask: Whose religion? Whose definition? Which group's spirituality do we claim and which do we reject? On what grounds? This leaves me feeling torn between identifying "good" religious roots and "bad" ones. Or being asked to pick and choose among religious or spiritual beliefs which support restorative goals and those which do not. Certainly supporters of restorative justice do not advocate the death penalty, for example, but it is a punishment which has religious roots in a variety of belief systems. Should I, as an adherent of restorative justice, support the work of Charles Colson's Prison Fellowship *because* it has religious roots? Which Native spiritual tradition must I overlook in order to claim those which "fit?" I need help working this all out—if only in order to then make sense of it with students!

From a purely selfish standpoint, I wonder if we could not begin to emphasize the moral and ethical roots of restorative justice and address the question of its religious roots as a historical one. In this way, one could honor each contribution, weave it into the larger fabric and still be able to open as a question whether justice depends upon religion for its existence. Perhaps it is time for the restorative justice movement to claim a set of common principles, such as United Nations human rights covenants and declarations, which transcend our religious roots and open the conversation to believers and nonbelievers as well.

# CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) invites proposals for its 57th Annual Meeting, to be held August 10-12, 2007 at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York, NY. Theme: **RESEARCH MATTERS: CREATING KNOWLEDGE, POLICY, AND JUSTICE.** Papers or extended abstracts (2-3 page summary of your intended presentation) for presentations at division sponsored sessions must be sent electronically to session organizers no later than January 31, 2007. If your paper does not fit into one of the sessions listed in the Call for Papers, send your submission electronically no later than January 31 to Program Committee Chair: JoAnn Miller, W: 765-494-4699, [jlmliller@purdue.edu](mailto:jlmliller@purdue.edu). Questions relating to the program should be directed to her as well. When sending an e-mail, please place SSSP in the subject line. For further information, visit <http://www.sssp1.org>.

The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) is recruiting applications for the 2007 Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship. Persons accepted into an accredited doctoral program in any one of the social and/or behavioral sciences are invited to apply for the \$12,000 Racial/Ethnic Minority Scholarship. Applications are due by and must be received no later than February 1, 2007. Applicants will be notified of the results by July 16, 2007. All applicants must be a current member and a citizen of the United States or permanent resident when applying. For further information and an application, visit <http://www.sssp1.org>. Contact Shirley A. Jackson, chair, with all questions (Department of Sociology, Engleman Hall C011A, Southern Connecticut State University, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT 06515; W: 203-392-5676; F: 203-392-7087; [jacksons1@southernct.edu](mailto:jacksons1@southernct.edu)).

*Sanzen, continued from page 1*  
**JUSTITIA AND RELIGION**

keep listening to world leaders who articulate religious values but act in manners that seem antithetical to the values they preach. I've come to the conclusion there must be many Gods because the God these leaders speak of and speak to surely is not my God. I listen to leaders of various organized groups (militias, family values, etc.) and see them act in a manner similar to the organized political leaders. Both groups use religion/faith to support an agenda pushing towards theocracy and intolerance.

Religious discussions shouldn't be used to divide, but should become vehicles for compassion and addressing the needs of people within our communities. Religion shouldn't be used to further the power of political parties but should be one of many means for addressing the principles that should guide our individual, collective, community and national consciousness. We should be having discussions relating to the need to forgive and the necessity to love for this is how we care for each other and our communities. Our leaders, as well as citizens, actions should be reflecting compassion and caring, not power and the acquisition and maintenance of power.

What I remember from my religious education is that we are all God's children and that God loves us all regardless of our actions. If that is the case then God does not take sides and may not be too happy with how we use his teachings in vein for political gains. Or as Neil Young states in his song *When God Made Me*:

**WHEN GOD MADE ME**

*Was he thinking about my country,  
 or the colour of my skin?  
 Was he thinking about my religion,  
 and the way I worshipped him?  
 Did he create just me in his image,  
 or every living thing?*

*When God made me.  
 When God made me.*

*Was he planning only for believers,  
 or for those who just had faith?  
 Did he envision all wars  
 that were fought in his name?  
 Did he say there was only one way  
 to be close to him?*

*When God made me.  
 When God made me.*

*Did he give me the gift of love  
 to say who I could choose?*

*When God made me.  
 When God made me.  
 When God made me.*

*Did he give me the gift of voice  
 so some could silence me?  
 Did he give me the gift of vision  
 not knowing what I might see?  
 Did he give me the gift of compassion  
 to help my fellow man?*

*When God made me.  
 When God made me.  
 When God made me.*

People make many choices regarding their life and living arrangements and even if we may disagree with some of them it does not give us the legal right to exclude them from the human rights that all citizens possess.

I like to thank Dennis, Beverley, and Tom (Director of Research, Public Employees Federation) for their contributions and insights regarding politics, social justice, and religion.

Peter Sanzen



## SELECTED READINGS

In conversations with Michael L. Hadley (contributor to the *Handbook of Restorative Justice*), he recommended the following book as a great read related to religion and politics.

*PROPHETIC POLITICS: Christian Social Movements and American Democracy* by David S. Gutterman. Cornell University Press, 2005

Below is a description of the book that is provided in the jacket cover:

*"What are the relationships among religion, politics, and narratives? What makes prophetic political narratives, congenial or hostile to democratic political life? David S. Gutterman explores the prophetic politics of four twentieth and twenty-first-century American Christian social movements: the Reverend Billy Sunday and his vision of "muscular Christianity"; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement; the conservative Christian male organization Promise Keepers; and the progressive antipoverty organization Call to Renewal.*

*Gutterman develops a theory based on the work of Hannah Arendt and others and employs this framework to analyze expressions of the prophetic impulse in the political narrative of the United States. In the process, he examines timely issues about the tense and intricate relationship between religion and politics.*

*Even before George W. Bush "Faith-based initiative," debates about abortion, family values, welfare reform, and environmental degradation were informed by religious language and ideas. In an interdisciplinary and accessible manner, Gutterman translates the narratives employed by American Christian social movements to define both the crises in the land and the path to resolving these crises. The book also explores the engagement of these prophetic social movements in contentious political issues concerned with sex, gender, sexuality, race, and class, as well as broader questions of American identity."*

David Gutterman (Assistant Professor) is a member of the Political Science Department at Linfield College.

Books from Seven Stories Press

*THE LIFE OF MEANING: Reflections on Faith, Doubt, and Spirituality.* Edited by Bob Abernethy and William Bole

*"In this thoughtful collection, guests from the celebrated PBS show Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly describe how faith is possible amid the tragedy and senselessness of contemporary existence. With Chris Hedges, Marilyn Robinson, Jimmy Carter, Desmond Tutu, Studs Terkel, and Madeleine L'Engle, among others."*

Available in April 2007

*RIGHT AND WRONG, AND PALESTINE, 9-11, IRAQ, 7-7...* by Ted Honderich

*"Philosopher Ted Honderich insightfully relates four shattering current events in this articulate, well reasoned moral and political analysis."*

*AGAINST RATZINGER* by Giacomo Papi

*"Addressing some of the most dramatic and pressing issues of our time, Against Ratzinger studies Pope Benedict XVI'S responses to birth control, abortion, and sexual abuse in the Church and charts Ratzinger's rise to power, from his arrival in Rome in 1981 to his close relationship with the late Pope John Paul II."*

Available July 2007

## FOCUS ON MEMBERS

Susan T. Krumholz received her PhD in Law, Policy and Society in 2001 from Northeastern University. She is presently an Associate Professor and Director of the Crime and Justice Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. Prior to teaching, she was an attorney in private practice in Massachusetts. Her research interests include intimate violence, restorative justice and alternatives to incarceration, and women as students and practitioners of the law.

Javier Treviño is Associate Professor of Sociology at Wheaton College in Massachusetts where he teaches courses in Social Theory, Law and Society, Criminology, Deviance and Social Control, and Latino Community. He is an Associate Editor of *Contemporary Justice Review* and serves as General Editor of the *Law & Society Series* for Transaction Publishers. Javier has published numerous articles and several books including *Classic Writings in Law and Society: Contemporary Comments and Criticisms* (Transaction Publishers 2006), George C. Homans: *History, Theory, and Method* (Paradigm Publishers 2006), *Understanding Crime: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (edited with Susan Guarino-Ghezzi) (LexisNexis/Anderson Publishing 2005), *Goffman's Legacy* (Rowman & Littlefield 2003), *Talcott Parsons Today: His Theory and Legacy in Contemporary Sociology* (Rowman & Littlefield 2001), and *The Sociology of Law: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* (St. Martin's Press 1996). Most recently he was Visiting Research Fellow in Sociology at University of Sussex, in England. Javier served as the first President of the Justice Studies Association, 2000-2002.

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