

TURNING POINT

The Need to Escalate the Struggle for LGBT Equality within the PCUSA

April 2, 2002

Bruce Hahne

"History reveals to us that those who oppose the movement for freedom are those who are in privileged positions who very seldom give up their privileges without strong resistance. And they very seldom do it voluntarily." - Martin Luther King Jr.

"Without a component of civil resistance, no legislation will ever pass that runs against the interests of the ruling class."
- Nonviolence educators Tom Hastings & Geov Parrish

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Historical and relational analogies to the current crisis
 - 2.1 Parallels to the U.S. civil rights movement
 - 2.2 Parallels to social movement theory
 - 2.3 Parallels to battering
3. The need for a mass, militant, strategic, nonviolent resistance movement
 - 3.1 Nonviolent
 - 3.2 Mass
 - 3.3 Militant
 - 3.4 Strategic
 - 3.5 Notes on Soulforce Inc.
4. Case studies: Early Quaker nonviolence and the KPFA/Pacifica struggle
 - 4.1 Quaker nonviolent resistance
 - 4.2 Nonviolence in the struggle for KPFA radio
5. Recommendations
 - 5.1 Formally endorse active nonviolence as policy
 - 5.2 Discuss the impact of nonviolence as policy
 - 5.3 Endorse same-sex marriage
 - 5.4 Form local nonviolence study and training groups
 - 5.5 Form alliances
 - 5.6 Promote social stigma against persecutors
 - 5.7 Declare and coordinate a yearly day of noncompliance
 - 5.8 Publish a white paper to assist churches interested in noncooperation
 - 5.9 Establish a fund to support victims of G6.0106b persecution
 - 5.10 Select a movement anthem
6. Red herrings and red-baiting
 - 6.1 "Terrorism"
 - 6.2 "Freedom of religion"
 - 6.3 "Tolerance"
 - 6.4 "Violence"
 - 6.5 "Attacking the peace, purity, and unity of the church"
 - 6.6 "You'll only make it worse by resisting"
7. Conclusion

- 8. Recommended reading
 - 8.1 Reading for local and small group study
 - 8.2 Reading for movement leaders

1. INTRODUCTION

It is April of 2002. Within the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (PCUSA), Amendment 01-A, which would have permitted churches to call openly gay candidates to leadership positions without risking prosecution, has recently been voted down by a majority of the denomination's Presbyteries, guaranteeing the amendment's failure. It is a major setback for the LGBT equality movement. Any church which attempts to call an openly gay candidate as elder, deacon, or pastor risks subjecting that candidate to a church-sanctioned heresy trial by a national church which seems determined to permanently nail a "no gays allowed as leaders" sign on the front door. The hopes and dreams raised by 01-A are dashed, the troops are demoralized, the leadership seemingly in disarray.

"Perhaps," begins the growing undercurrent of conventional wisdom, "perhaps if we could somehow be nice enough, if we could simply lie low enough, if we could be quiet enough, if we could stay out of the way enough, then perhaps they'll mostly leave us alone. Perhaps if we quietly nurse our wounds and simply continue in our attempts at verbal persuasion, despite the fact that the majority of Presbyteries have shown no interest in discussing our concerns, then maybe someday we'll eke out a few positive steps of ground. After all, it's best to turn the other cheek, a soft answer turneth away wrath, you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar, and if you can't say anything nice, you shouldn't say anything at all."

This language is the violence-legitimizing rationalization of the battered spouse, not the language of a justice movement. It blames oppression on the victim's vocal demand to be treated as a human being. It treats the failure of 01-A as the end rather than the beginning. It seeks hope in near-passivity. Such an approach is as self destructive as it is wrong.

Rather than representing the short-term end of hope for LGBT equality in the Presbyterian Church, the failure of 01-A has actually done a great service to the equality movement, in two ways. First, it has crystallized and clarified historical and relational analogies to the current climate of oppression. Second, it has demonstrated the need for a mass, militant, strategic, nonviolent LGBT equal rights movement which taps resources both within and outside of the PCUSA. My purpose in this essay is to bring the historical and relational analogies to light, as well as to argue for a policy shift that moves the PCUSA's LGBT rights movement away from strategies dependent solely on verbal persuasion and legislative change, and toward strategies based on active nonviolence.

2. HISTORICAL AND RELATIONAL ANALOGIES TO THE CURRENT CRISIS

2.1 PARALLELS TO THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

When we examine the history of the U.S. civil rights movement for parallels, we find that the current status of the PCUSA's LGBT equality movement strongly resembles the state of the civil rights movement in 1957. Whether future events mimic the past will depend heavily on what we choose to do next.

The events of 1957 took place just after the successful Montgomery bus boycott spearheaded by Martin Luther King Jr., which integrated the bus system in Montgomery Alabama in late 1956. The sit-in movement, the infamous police commissioner Bull Connor, and children being attacked with firehoses are still several years in the future. Cresting off of the tremendous energy of the nationally-known desegregation success in Montgomery, as well as Martin Luther King Jr's broad appeal and national recognition, the civil rights movement made a bid for new federal voting rights legislation; legislation which, it was hoped, would finally end voting discrimination in all states of the union.

The result, as Taylor Branch reports in his Pulitzer-prize winning history book *Parting the Waters*, was a dismal failure, as the equality movement found itself outmatched by an entrenched, militantly segregationist power bloc. The movement was "pitted against the powerful Southern Democrats in the Senate, who wanted no speeches, no hearings, no school desegregation, and no new civil rights bill... Senate debate on the first civil rights bill in 82 years consumed 121 hours and 31 minutes, with South Carolina's Strom Thurmond breaking the filibuster record by holding the floor for a little more than 24 continuous hours."

The outcome was a failure: the legislation passed, but with a poison pill amendment that effectively made the law impossible to enforce. Branch comments that "the NAACP's Clarence Mitchell was astonished to see the tough old-guard Minority Leader, William Knowland, break into tears in his office because of the setback to civil rights... Eisenhower called the [poison pill] amendment one of the worst political losses of his Administration." The result is that although there was in fact a "Civil Rights Act of 1957" and it did pass, the legislation was so useless that it doesn't even merit a mention in contemporary overviews of the civil rights movement.

In the wake of this dismal setback, key players in the movement came away with completely different interpretations of what the failure meant for the movement. To Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Branch writes, "the law meant that the NAACP's legislative campaign was making its first meager gains. Civil rights was no longer a 'virgin,' he said. To King, the lesson of the bill was that Negroes should place less reliance on white institutions and take more responsibility upon themselves." The day that the useless Civil Rights Act of 1957 passed the Senate, Martin Luther King Jr. called together the pastors who had worked together on the Montgomery bus campaign. Together the group founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which would become one of the most vocal advocates of active nonviolence during the civil rights years.

The NAACP had played, and would continue to play, a critical role as the organization which played by Washington's rules, working within the courts and the legislative process to facilitate change. However, it was only in conjunction with the nonviolent "street heat" applied by the sit-in movement, the freedom bus rides, the Birmingham Alabama desegregation marches, and other nonviolent campaigns, that beltway insider groups such as the NAACP found themselves with enough national momentum to gain passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Similarly, the history of failed attempts to remove PCUSA Book of Order rule G6.0106b has by now amply demonstrated that simple verbal persuasion coupled with attempts to work solely within the PCUSA legislative process are insufficient to win the equality that the LGBT movement desires. "It seems clear to us," admits the Covenant Network in its letter to supporters of February 20, 2002, "that legislation will not change the mind or polity of the church in the near term." The legislation will indeed come eventually, but it will take a persistent, strategic, nonviolent struggle to create the social climate for the eventual PCUSA legislative changes.

2.2 PARALLELS TO SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

The current status of the PCUSA's LGBT equality movement matches not only the specific historical case of the U.S. civil rights movement in 1957; it also matches extremely well with the theoretical framework for progressive social movements outlined by long-time activist Bill Moyer in his famous *Movement Action Plan* broadsheet, recently published in expanded form as *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements* from New Society Publishers. Auburn Theological Seminary professor Walter Wink of *Engaging the Powers* fame has called Moyer's original MAP publication "the single most important document to put in the hands of a social-change group". Moyer's material is studied academically in social work master's degree programs, and also appears in abbreviated form in the *From Violence to Wholeness* nonviolence training curriculum from the Pace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolence Center in Las Vegas.

The core of the Movement Action Plan document is an eight-stage theoretical timetable of social movements which works its way from stage one, in which a problem exists but no significant opposition has rallied, through to stages seven, "success", and eight, "continuing the struggle", in which the movement engages in follow-up to maintain the successes won in stage seven.

A review of Moyer's eight stages suggests that the PCUSA equality movement is presently at best in a late form of stage two, "Prove Failure of Institutions". This stage of a social movement, Moyer notes, is typically conducted by Professional Opposition Organizations: centralized and formally constituted groups which attempt to win reform through the traditional legislative process. Covenant Network, More Light Presbyterians, and That All May Freely Serve (TAMFS) all fit into Moyer's Professional Opposition Organization classification, though of course each of these three Presbyterian groups is also active in areas beyond simply seeking legislative reform.

Throughout Moyer's stage two, the movement documents its case and makes multiple, unsuccessful attempts for legislative redress through official channels. Few local grassroots groups exist in stage two, and there is no use of the extra-constitutional strategies and tactics advocated by active nonviolence. The level of serious popular opposition to the status quo sits at 10 to 20 percent, and the defenders of the status quo are easily able to fend off attempts at legislative reform.

Moyer lists four goals and two pitfalls of stage two of a movement's development. The goals are:

- Document the problem
- Document attempts to use the normal channels of participation; prove that these channels of redress don't work.
- Become experts on the problem.
- Build small opposition organizations.

As of the failure of 01-A last month, the PCUSA equality movement has met all four of these stage two goals. The movement has twice attempted to remove G6.0106b from the PCUSA constitution, and twice its attempts at legislative redress have been rebuffed. The problem of anti-LGBT discrimination has been well-documented, both in terms of its violation of Biblical principle, in books such as Peter Gomes' *The Good Book*, and in terms of its direct harm to individuals, in books such as *Called Out: The Voices and Gifts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Presbyterians*. A few small local PCUSA LGBT support groups exist nationwide, generally composed of concerned members in one of the 100-plus More Light churches.

The potential pitfalls of stage two, from Moyer, are:

- "Holding the belief that social problems can be corrected by Professional Opposition Organizations using mainstream institutions and methods without building a new social consensus, mobilizing wide-spread grassroots opposition, and engaging in a long struggle which uses extra-parliamentary nonviolent action."
- "Continuing to feel powerless and hopeless".

The stage within the PCUSA's pro-LGBT movement is now set for a transition to Moyer's stage three, "Ripening Conditions". Moyer suggests five sets of activities and conditions that characterize a social movement during stage three:

- "A growing consciousness and discontent among sub-populations of victims and their allies."
- "The growing numbers of discontented local people across the country quietly start new autonomous local groups, which as a whole form a new wave of grassroots opposition, which is independent from the established Professional Opposition Organizations."
- "Small local prototype demonstrations and nonviolent action campaigns begin to dramatize the problem, put a dim public spotlight on it, and set a precedent for future actions."
- "A few key facilitator-visionaries provide the new-wave local opposition with information, ideology, training, [and] networking."
- "Pre-existing networks and groups, which can provide support, solidarity, and participants for a new movement, need to become available to be used in the new movement."

It's worth noting that "verbal persuasion of existing powerholders to bring about legislative change" is *not* on Moyer's stage three activities list. The purpose of stage three is, rather, to prepare for one or more trigger events which catapult the movement into stage four, "Movement Take-Off". A "trigger event" as defined by Moyer is "a shocking incident that dramatically reveals a critical social problem to the general public in a new and vivid way." The movement must pre-organize itself, network with affinity groups to expand its base of support, experiment with trial runs of a variety of nonviolent tactics, and prepare itself to capitalize on its opponents' mistakes when the trigger event or events happen. Contrary to popular belief and popular history, the headline-grabbing events that we see in stage four don't spring out of thin air; they thrive only in carefully-cultivated soil. Walter Wink's analysis of the Rosa Parks arrest in *Engaging the Powers* makes the need for Moyer's stage three quite clear:

"Rosa Parks, whose arrest for refusing to sit in the back of the bus sparked the civil rights movement, was not just 'tired'; she was an officer in the NAACP and had attended training sessions in nonviolent resistance. And her arrest could act as the spark to ignite the civil rights movement because Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, an English professor at Alabama State College, had already, a year and a half earlier, threatened the mayor of Montgomery with a boycott if conditions on buses for black people were not improved. Months earlier the Women's Political Council, of which [Robinson] was president, had drawn up plans for the distribution of fifty thousand notices calling people to boycott the buses; only the specifics of time and place had to be added. When she heard of Rosa Parks' arrest, she worked through the night with the help of two students mimeographing tens of thousands of leaflets announcing the boycott. Thanks to a distribution system already set up by the women, practically every black man, woman, and child in Montgomery knew of the bus boycott within a few hours. Parks and Robinson were virtually lying in ambush for the trigger event that could launch their movement."

Because it's intended to be a generic template for all social movements, Moyer's *Movement Action Plan* framework provides only suggestions in principle about what actions a movement should take in each stage of the MAP timetable. In the recommendations section later in this essay, I'll provide specific examples of the steps that the PCUSA LGBT equality movement can take to shift the movement into the MAP's stage three.

2.3 PARALLELS TO BATTERING

Thus far I've suggested two historical analogies, one grounded in specific comparisons to the U.S. civil rights movement, the other grounded in comparisons to Moyer's generalized social movement timetable. However, I also want to suggest a third, relational analogy to the current state of the PCUSA LGBT rights movement: the relationship between a battered wife and her husband.

Although women's groups have done much to raise public consciousness about the prevalence of domestic violence in America, it's not as well known that violence within intimate relationships can take three forms: physical, sexual, and psychological. Here I want to touch briefly on some components of psychological violence against a spouse, and suggest that there are parallels in how the anti-LGBT forces within the PCUSA have treated the rest of the church. As a caveat, we need to be aware that analogies can only go so far. By suggesting that certain types of behavior within the PCUSA may constitute a form of "ecclesial domestic violence", I risk the accusation that such a label trivializes marital domestic violence, which very often includes a physical component and is dangerous to the physical well-being of the spouse. Nevertheless, the parallels between psychological domestic violence and the abusive behaviors we see within the PCUSA are disturbing enough that it merits exploring the analogy. Churches within the PCUSA, after all, often consider the denomination as "church family" or "extended family", and use relational terms normally reserved for biological family members, such as "our brothers and sisters in Christ". Covenant Network's recent mailing to members similarly uses the family analogy: "We hope that the church... will attempt to model to the larger community a body that acts as family even with disagreements."

The professional counseling community has not yet adopted a single, uniform definition of what constitutes "psychological violence" in an intimate relationship. However, a number of theoretical models exist, and an overview of the major definitions is available in a pre-publication paper by marriage and family therapist Dr. Daniel Jay Sonkin, published on Dr. Sonkin's web site at www.daniel-sonkin.com/PsychAb.html. The most productive model for comparisons to anti-gay PCUSA activities is likely the Duluth Model, which is the outcome of efforts by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota. Sonkin's overview of this approach notes that the Duluth model is intrinsically profeminist and stresses battering as a sociopolitical problem rather than a psychological problem:

"The focus in [the Duluth Domestic Abuse] program is on the exploitation of women through men's use of techniques (physical, sexual, and psychological violence) that upset the balance of power between men and women. They view the main purpose for men's violence against women to be an effort to maintain control and power rather than a result of psychological deficiencies... [Such a] profeminist approach focuses on the sexist attitudes that are precipitant of violence."

If we substitute "LGBT people" for "women" in the above paragraph, and recall the strong ideological links between sexism and heterosexism, then the parallels to the current dehumanizing climate in the PCUSA, and most other oldline Christian denominations, should become evident. Just as the Duluth model suggests that a primary purpose of psychological violence against a spouse is to uphold sexism,

similarly I suggest here that a major purpose of the ongoing psychological violence by anti-LGBT forces within the oldline churches is an attempt to maintain heterosexual dominance and control within one of the last American institutional bulwarks of heterosexism.

The Duluth model uses an eight-segment "power and control wheel", viewable in its complete form at www.duluth-model.org/daippce.htm, to define various behaviors that constitute psychological domestic violence. As I list some of the major components of the Duluth power and control wheel below, consider how many of them might apply to actions taken by Presbyterian anti-gay forces against individual LGBT church leaders, against pro-LGBT churches, or against the entire denomination.

TABLE 1: FORMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST A SPOUSE
Extracted from the Duluth Model

1. Using coercion and threats, including:
 - Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt the spouse.
 - Threatening to leave her.
2. Using economic power:
 - Preventing the spouse from getting or keeping a job.
 - Taking her money.
 - Not letting her know about or have access to family income.
3. Using male privilege
 - Acting like master of the castle.
 - Being the one to define men and women's roles.
4. Using children
 - Threatening to take away the children.
5. Minimizing, denying, and blaming
 - Making light of the abuse and not taking the spouse's concerns about it seriously.
 - Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior, saying that she caused it.
6. Using emotional abuse
 - Putting the spouse down.
 - Making her feel bad about herself.
 - Calling her names.
 - Humiliating her.
 - Making her feel guilty.
7. Using intimidation
 - Making the spouse afraid by using looks, actions, gestures.

Anyone with even a cursory engagement in the struggle for equal rights within the PCUSA should begin to see, in this list, an eerie resemblance to the behaviors of the Presbyterian right over the past several years. A psychologically abusive spouse threatens to leave and take away the children; a psychologically abusive Presbyterian organization threatens to split the denomination. An abusive spouse calls the wife names and humiliates her; an abusive Presbyterian organization accuses the denomination of "apostasy". An abusive spouse asserts the right to define men and women's roles; an abusive Presbyterian organization asserts the right to define men and women's normative sexuality. An abusive spouse takes money away from the wife and denies her access to family funds; an abusive Presbyterian organization seeks to de-fund women's groups that it doesn't like. An abusive spouse blames the wife for the abusive

behavior; an abusive Presbyterian organization blames its abusive behavior on the LGBT rights movement. Our historians of the movement could doubtless extend this list tenfold.

If there is truth in the analogy, and I believe that the parallels are too striking to ignore, we would do well to apply some of the lessons learned by the battered women's assistance movement to the Christian LGBT rights movement. Perhaps the simplest piece of advice is one offered by the Domestic Violence Project of (California's) Santa Clara County: "CALL FOR HELP. Scream loudly and continuously. You have nothing to be ashamed of – the batterer does." Current expert advice is not to adopt naive (and, it turns out, unbiblical) notions of "turning the other cheek" or "forgive and forget", but rather to expose the violence and abuse to the entire community as a first step towards engaging the evil. As Wink notes in *Engaging the Powers*:

"According to the social workers I have consulted, the most loving thing a battered wife could do might be to have her husband arrested. This would bring the issue out into the open, put him under a court injunction that would mean jail if the violence continues, position him so that his self-interest is served by joining a therapy group for batterers, and thus potentially begin a process that would not only deliver the woman from being battered, but free the man from battering as well. I cite this suggestion because it is at the antipodes to our sentimental notions of what love entails."

Can the Christian LGBT rights movement develop conflict-exposure tactics which mimic those recommended by domestic violence experts? In my recommendations section, I take the first steps in this direction. Before we look at recommendations, however, I want to sketch the four qualities which a revitalized Christian LGBT equality movement will need.

3. THE NEED FOR A MASS, MILITANT, STRATEGIC, NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

If the historical analysis is correct and we are in fact currently in the movement's equivalent of 1957, then the way forward is not to fall back on false hopes of talking or negotiating our way to liberation. Rather, we can build the foundation for eventual success by forming a mass, militant, nonviolent, and strategic resistance movement. The first three characteristics come directly from Martin Luther King Jr's book *Stride Toward Freedom*, where King comments that "if the Negro is to achieve the goal of integration, he must organize himself into a militant and nonviolent mass movement. All three elements are indispensable." To King's three requirements I've added a fourth: the movement must employ active nonviolence *strategically* rather than simply tactically. Below I address each of these four characteristics in turn.

3.1 NONVIOLENT

First, the Christian LGBT equality movement should be *nonviolent*, by which I mean that it should employ the strategies and tactics of active nonviolence developed by both religious and secular theorists. Contrary to broad popular misconceptions, nonviolence is not inaction or passivity, nor is it pacifism, nor does it seek to avoid conflict. "Christians," notes Walter Wink, "have all too often called for 'nonviolence' when they really mean tranquility. Nonviolence, in fact, seeks out conflict, elicits conflict, exacerbates conflict, in order to bring it out into the open and lance its poisonous sores."

Because twenty-first century Christianity has to a large extent lost the message of active nonviolence intrinsic to the gospels, and with extremely few exceptions fails to teach nonviolence principles to its adherents, a brief overview of modern nonviolence theory is in order. My summary here is based primarily on the work of secular theorist Gene Sharp, with supplementary references to Christian theology and scripture as appropriate.

Active nonviolence, also called "nonviolent resistance" or simply "nonviolence" is, in Sharp's definition, "a technique of socio-political action for applying power in a conflict without the use of physical violence... This technique consists, not simply of words, but of active protest, noncooperation, and intervention." Wink's definition is somewhat more direct: nonviolence is "a new strategy for resisting evil without creating new evils and without becoming evil ourselves."

Active nonviolence exists as an often-ignored, poorly-understood, yet richly diverse set of strategies and tactics within a continuum of four possible categories of action: verbal persuasion, peaceful institutional procedures, active nonviolence, and physical violence. Active nonviolence in turn contains within it three broad methods of action: nonviolent protest, nonviolent noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention. As a diagram is in this case worth a thousand words, below I've created a table that displays each of the four basic types of action along with some examples.

TABLE 2: POSSIBLE TYPES OF ACTION IN A CONFLICT
Based on a taxonomy by Gene Sharp

1: Simple verbal persuasion, negotiation, and compromise.

Examples:

- Writing letters to congresspersons or to Presbytery delegates.
- Discussing an issue with somebody.
- Newspaper op-eds.
- Taking out a magazine advertisement advocating your position.

2: Peaceful institutional procedures

Examples:

- Voting.
- Proposing new legislation.
- Lawsuits to enforce laws or eliminate unconstitutional laws.

3: Nonviolent action or "active nonviolence"

Nonviolent action includes three subtypes of actions:

3.1: Nonviolent protest:

Examples:

- Picketing
- Street theater
- Marches

3.2: Nonviolent noncooperation

Examples:

- Strikes

- Boycotts
- Refusal to comply with unjust laws
- Offering sanctuary to people sought by authorities

3.3: Nonviolent intervention

Examples:

- Lunch counter sit-ins.
- Hunger strikes (Sharp categorizes this as "psychological intervention")
- Fill-the-jails tactics
- Nonviolent occupation of off-limits property

4: Violence against people or property

Examples:

- Conventional and guerrilla warfare
- Acts of terrorism
- Street-fighting with police
- Vandalism

An important point to notice is that neither attempts at persuasion nor attempts to pass (or undo) legislation are "nonviolent action" as defined by Sharp's taxonomy. While persuasion, attempts to legislate, and lawsuits contesting the legitimacy of existing laws might, and often do, occur in conjunction with nonviolent action, nonviolence itself falls into a different category. Nonviolence is what a social movement needs to add to its strategic mix when persuasion and intra-constitutional efforts to address grievances have failed.

Nonviolence is also Christlike. Wink's ground-breaking exegetical work in *Engaging the Powers* has revealed that in Matthew 5:38-41, which includes the "turn the other cheek" passage traditionally viewed as advocating NONresistance, Jesus was actually providing his listeners with a nonviolent set of tactics for resisting slavery, indebtedness, and Roman oppression. Wink has recently published several articles providing a capsule summary of his exegesis, and as the YES Magazine version is available online at www.futurenet.org/20spirituality/wink.htm, I won't repeat his analysis here.

We've now looked at a thumbnail summary of the types of active nonviolence and how nonviolence differs both from verbal persuasion and from formal institutional procedures. A second key component of contemporary nonviolence theory is an understanding of how a movement reaches its goals. How does the movement achieve success? The answer is that there are three distinct mechanisms for success: nonviolent *conversion*, nonviolent *accommodation*, and nonviolent *coercion*. In nonviolent conversion, the movement convinces its adversaries that they're wrong, and the adversaries change their minds and grant the movement its goals. Although Christian treatments of nonviolence theory tend to strongly stress conversion, conversion is actually the *least* common of the three success mechanisms. Much more common is nonviolent *accommodation*: the opposition hasn't changed its mind, but it grants the demands of the nonviolent movement anyway, often because the opponent would rather grant concessions than continue to endure the nonviolent sanctions applied by the movement. Nonviolent *coercion* is also a common success mechanism. In coercion, the opposition hasn't changed its mind and in fact still *wants* to maintain the oppressive social structures which the movement opposes. However, in the case of coercion, the oppressors have been stripped of their power to maintain the injustice; they can no longer prevent the movement from obtaining its goals.

To the detriment of a robust understanding of active nonviolence theory, practitioners of nonviolence who ground their understanding in religious frameworks, both Christian and non-Christian, often overstate the possibility of nonviolent conversion and either downplay or ignore entirely the more dominant realities of nonviolent accommodation and nonviolent coercion. Historical case studies suggest that the most common successes of active nonviolence involve a combination of all three mechanisms, with more accommodation and coercion than conversion. For example, most of the victories in the U.S. civil rights movement were partial nonviolent *conversions* of the U.S. population as a whole, but were nonviolent *coercions* of the southern segregationists who typically remained in power even after the movement had won its victories. To require that a movement achieve its goals *only* through conversion of the opposition is a serious strategic mistake which can severely limit a movement's ability to achieve its goals.

A final key aspect of active nonviolence, and one typically stressed more by Christian treatments than by secular treatments, is that it refuses to label oppressors as evil, instead placing the locus of evil within bad *systems*. Martin Luther King Jr. was quite clear on this point in his writings and speeches, as in this speech from 1961:

"One seeks to defeat the unjust system, rather than individuals who are caught in that system... This is the important thing, to get rid of the evil system and not the individual who happens to be misguided, who happens to be misled, who was taught wrong. The thing to do is to get rid of the system and thereby create a moral balance within society."

This systemic understanding of evil does not deny the existence of human oppressors or enemies, nor does it suggest that an oppressed people should somehow "be nice to your enemies" by allowing them to continue their oppression. Rather, a systemic understanding of evil sees the human beings who serve the unjust system simultaneously as oppressors and as capable of reform. In Christian terms, the oppressors are simultaneously fallen and capable of redemption. A nonviolent movement, then, must always couple its resistance activities, its "no, we won't cooperate with that", with an outstretched hand, an invitation, calling the movement's oppressors away from their service to the evil system and into a more complete understanding of God's will for the world.

3.2 MASS

The Christian LGBT equality movement needs not only to be nonviolent, it also needs to be a *mass* movement. Although nonviolence can sometimes succeed when used on a one-to-one basis, it takes a mass movement of thousands, sometimes tens or hundreds of thousands of people to engage entrenched systems of injustice and bring about lasting social change. It is precisely for this reason that Moyer's Movement Action Plan document recommends that movements network with and mobilize the already-organized. A nonviolent social movement is neither a stealth nor a guerrilla movement; the goal is to involve as many people as possible as long as they agree to adhere to the movement's policy of nonviolence.

3.3 MILITANT

Today's Christian LGBT equality movement also needs to be *militant*, a term which has nothing to do with weapons but rather speaks to the attitude with which the movement strives for its goals. Webster's offers "aggressive" as a synonym for "militant", and Wink in advocating militancy offers this explanation:

"For years nonviolence has been falsely caricatured as anemic, chickenhearted, and passionless, and there have been just enough proponents of it who acted this way to keep the caricature alive. We need to be able to bring anger, power, passion, and an iron intransigence to our nonviolence. Our inner violence, transformed, becomes an indispensable aggressiveness, a sense of strength, that prevents us from blowing our stacks out of a sense of powerlessness or impotence."

To Wink's comments I would add that a "militant" equality movement is one that is willing to suffer physical, verbal, and financial attacks on the path to achieving victory. Militancy means hundreds of followers of Gandhi willing to suffer police attacks without fighting back in the Dharasana salt works raid in 1929. Militancy means waves of college students taking seats at segregated lunch counters, knowing that they're going to be beaten for doing so and that they're not going to fight back. Militancy means walking into the temple in Jerusalem and overturning the tables of the money-changers, knowing that you'll likely be executed as a result. Militancy means the willingness to be scorned, blacklisted, sued, forced out of your job, bombed, or even assassinated and to have the unassailable faith that whatever happens, God continues to work for justice; to have confidence that God will bring about meaning and transformation from your suffering; to know that beyond crucifixion there is resurrection. By this I am *not* advocating a masochistic "falling on your sword", nor do I in any way intend to suggest that people or groups in abusive relationships should stay and suffer in those relationships rather than transform or exit those relationships. Suffering an opponent's attacks can bring tremendous advantage to a social movement *when done on the movement's own terms*, whereas involuntary suffering inflicted against a movement on the opponent's terms often serves only the forces of injustice.

I need to make one final critical clarification on what it means to be "militant". The modern anti-globalization / fair trade movement occasionally uses the word "militant" as a euphemism for "willing to attack and destroy private property". The term usually surfaces with this implied meaning in discussions regarding, for example, the ethics and utility of smashing Starbucks or McDonald's restaurant windows at protests. I do *not* use the word "militant" with this meaning, and I strongly recommend against any tactics which involve physical attacks on property. Such tactics are, in almost every conceivable circumstance, counterproductive to the change mechanisms which lead to the success of a nonviolent movement. Likely for this reason, Gene Sharp does *not* list the destruction of others' property as a type of nonviolent action; rather, "violence against people or property" gets its own classification which is entirely separate from the class of "nonviolent actions".

The need for militancy, the need to risk being labeled as offensive troublemakers, doesn't come easily to comfortable, middle-class Presbyterians. I recall that in preparation for the San Jose Presbytery vote on the proposed "no same-sex holy union ceremonies" Amendment O in 2000, I advocated that we in the no-on-O organizing group stage an ecumenical no-on-O vigil and leafleting action outside the church prior to the Presbytery meeting. We could invite LGBT Christians from around the Bay Area, I suggested, and have a physical presence as voters entered the church for the day's meeting. More than one ordained member of the planning group bridled at the suggestion. "Vigil? Leafleting? But we have to work with these people on Presbytery committees; we can't do anything that might be seen as offensive! We'll lose the vote if we do that!" To be fair, my suggestion wasn't tactically sound; the best time to influence a Presbytery vote isn't on the day of the vote, it's in the long months and years prior to the vote. As it turned out in this case, we were able to win the "no" vote on Amendment O without a vigil. Yet my memory of the discussion has remained with me. In a denomination which somewhat jokingly refers to itself as the people who do everything "decently and in order", are we willing to adopt extra-constitutional strategies and tactics which will most certainly be viewed by some as "indecent and out of order", despite the fact that they're entirely consistent with Jesus' principles and actions? Are we willing to take actions which some Presbyterians will find outrageously offensive, just as Jesus took actions which the religious

orthodoxy of his own era found so offensive that they had him executed? This question is likely to be the critical point upon which the future success or failure of the PCUSA's LGBT equality movement turns.

3.4 STRATEGIC

Finally, in addition to being nonviolent, mass, and militant, the Christian LGBT equality movement must be *strategic*. This term isn't part of Martin Luther King Jr's list of necessary qualities because at the time King wrote *Stride Toward Freedom*, there was little to no conception of what it meant for a nonviolent movement to operate "strategically". In the past four decades, however, the academic study of nonviolence has advanced the theory to the point where we now have an initial set of strategic recommendations for a nonviolent movement. The principles are spelled out in detail in *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century* by Ackerman and Kruegler. Ackerman was the series editor for the PBS documentary *A Force More Powerful*, the 3-hour series which documented the use of nonviolence by justice movements throughout the 20th century. Kruegler is a past President of the Massachusetts-based Albert Einstein Institution (www.aeinstein.org), an organization founded by Gene Sharp to study active nonviolence. Below is a summary of six of the strategic nonviolence principles most relevant to the Christian LGBT equality movement.

1. Formulate functional objectives

The strategic objectives of a nonviolent movement should be specific and concrete, should lend themselves to a wide array of nonviolent sanctions, must uphold the key, uncompromisable interests of the movement, should be similar in principle to the interests of other groups, and should attract as broad a base of external support as possible. Many social justice groups fail this simple strategic task and instead only declare that their objectives are "freedom" or "justice". These terms are useful abstract concepts, but they don't represent specific, concrete strategic goals. To date the PCUSA equality movement has done a good job of articulating a long-term strategic objective because the target is so obvious: "Remove G6.0106b from the Book of Order".

Because G6.0106b is unlikely to go away in the short term, the movement will need interim objectives. Some examples could include "get 25 supporting churches to ordain openly gay elders all in the same month", "generate positive media coverage of our issue in the secular press", or "impose a public social cost on people who attempt to prosecute LGBT church leaders under G6.0106b."

2. Develop organizational strength.

Strength development can include both the creation of new groups and the formation of alliances with preexisting groups. Similar to this principle is Ackerman and Kruegler's recommendation that nonviolent strategists "cultivate external assistance". External assistance can take many forms, including financial, loans of staff or resources, public statements of support, participation in nonviolent sanctions, and more. Examples of potential sources of external assistance to the Christian LGBT equality movement include secular gay rights organizations, organized labor, human rights groups, racial/ethnic caucuses, and elected governing bodies and officials.

3. Expand the repertoire of nonviolent sanctions.

"One-trick pony" movements which only use a single nonviolent tactic are much easier to defeat than movements which use a variety of nonviolent tactics, since all that the oppressor needs to do is find a counterattack to the single tactic and apply it in a determined fashion. A related strategic principle is the *repeatability principle*: whenever possible, the nonviolent sanctions applied by a movement should be easy repeatable by others at diverse times and places, without extensive specialized training, by supporters who can take their lead from a carefully-planned and calculated initial action. The sit-in movement is a textbook example of the repeatability principle: once one small group demonstrated how easy it was to do a sit-in, weekly sit-ins broke out in dozens of southern cities in a matter of weeks.

4. Attack the opponents' strategy for consolidating control.

The core principle Ackerman and Kruegler advocate here is that to the extent possible, a nonviolent movement should seek to force the oppressors to have to resort to coercion every time the oppressors want something done. Oppression has a much easier time if its orders are automatically obeyed, and its desires fulfilled, without any questions from those who implement the orders. If, however, an oppressor is forced to use threats and coercion against the people responsible for carrying out its orders, this coercion begins to sow dissent within the ranks. Within the PCUSA, one application of this principle is that the LGBT equality movement should seek to create situations which force the Presbyterian right to repeat its threats to split the denomination. The more the right has to hold the "we'll leave the PCUSA if you do that" knife to the throat of the loyalists, the less power and credibility that threat will hold. Such an approach fits well a related Ackerman and Kruegler strategic principle, "alienate opponents from expected bases of support."

5. Sustain continuity between sanctions, mechanisms, and objectives.

This strategic principle calls a movement to engage in a constant internal sanity check to make sure that the choices of nonviolent campaigns and tactics really do promote one or more of the change mechanisms of nonviolent conversion, nonviolent accommodation, and/or nonviolent coercion. The movement always needs to ask itself "why are we taking this action? Will it help to convince more people that we're right, will it help to knock a pillar of support away from our oppressors, or are we instead either simply lashing out in frustration, or mindlessly parroting tactics that worked in a past campaign but won't work now?" The temptation to repeat the tactics of years past without regard to strategy, change mechanisms, or goals is particularly seductive because it requires little thought, no power analysis of the opposition, and is easy to argue, e.g. "This is what we did to protest the Vietnam war; it worked when we did it then!" Ackerman and Kruegler note as a warning that "There are many examples to be found of sanctions chosen and strategies pursued with blind disregard for the probable effects, symbolic or material, on both parties in conflict as well as the bystanders."

This principle does NOT mean that a movement should avoid doing anything that could possibly make anybody angry. To the contrary, any engagement with oppression will inevitably make supporters of that oppression extremely angry. If the Christian LGBT equality movement hasn't made die-hard supporters of heterosexism angry, it means we aren't doing our job. The continuity principle does suggest, however, that any nonviolent campaign or action must take into account its intended audience and seek to bring about conversions and accommodations which outweigh the inevitable anger generated in certain groups of untargeted observers.

To these five principles distilled from the original list of twelve offered by Ackerman and Kruegler, here I add a sixth principle which applies specifically to the Christian LGBT equality movement:

6. Avoid initiating any campaign in which it's likely that the side with the most money will win.

Anti-LGBT Christian organizations are one facet of American Christian evangelical subculture, a subculture which is large, well-organized, and capable of generating large quantities of cash sustainable over a long period of time. This is not to imply that evangelicalism is monolithic or exclusively anti-gay, nor do I mean to suggest that the pro-LGBT movement should, for example, avoid placing newspaper or magazine ads as part of a campaign. I do mean to suggest, however, that as the equality movement selects strategies, campaigns, and tactics, that we always bear in mind that our opposition can typically outspend us by somewhere between 10-to-1 and 200-to-1. One advantage of active nonviolence is that in many cases, nonviolence is more cost-effective at achieving the success mechanisms of conversion, accommodation, and coercion than either advertising, which falls into Gene Sharp's "simple verbal persuasion" category, or lobbying, which lies in Sharp's "peaceful institutional procedures" category. Persuasion and lobbying for legislative change are both still necessary tools of a movement, but when used in conjunction with active nonviolence, a movement gets more bang for the buck.

3.5 NOTES ON SOULFORCE INC.

In discussions I've had on the topic of introducing active nonviolence into the PCUSA struggle for LGBT equality, someone occasional raises the question "isn't this what Soulforce is doing?" Soulforce Inc. is an organization founded by Rev. Mel White, the former ghostwriter for Jerry Falwell who, after decades of struggle, both accepted that he was gay and realized that the fundamentalist community in which he had grown up wasn't accurate in its claims that he was "sick" and could be "cured". Soulforce gained national attention in late 1999 when 200 participants gathered in Lynchburg, Virginia, home of Jerry Falwell's flagship Thomas Road Baptist Church, for what became a public "nonviolence summit" held jointly with Falwell. The organization seeks to apply Gandhian and Kingian principles of nonviolence to challenge Christian-backed anti-gay policies.

Of the four attributes "mass", "militant", "strategic", and "nonviolent" which I suggested here will be necessary for an LGBT rights movement to challenge denominational heterosexism, Soulforce has done well at being militant and nonviolent, but has done less well at operating strategically or building a mass movement. The group's efforts since the Lynchburg summit have concentrated on arrest actions at major denominational conventions, including the United Methodist General Convention in Cleveland in May 2000, PCUSA General Assembly in June 2000, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2000, and the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meetings in 2000, 2001, and now (upcoming) in 2002. Several factors have limited the group's ability to generate mass action. Soulforce's choice to organize centralized arrests in a single city requires non-local participants to purchase plane tickets to reach the city where the action has been scheduled, which inherently limits the ability of Soulforce actions to reach critical-mass size and typically rules out the "jail, no bail" fill-the-jails tactics used during the civil rights movement. Since annual denominational conventions by definition only occur in a single city once per year, Soulforce's arrest actions also aren't locally repeatable by grass-roots local groups, minimizing the pressure that nonviolent sanctions apply to the target religious denomination. Until recently, Soulforce has made no significant attempt to nourish nationwide local groups, again limiting its potential impact.

Strategically, Soulforce's stated short-term goals appear to suffer from an overemphasis on nonviolent conversion as the only legitimate mechanism for bringing about change, ignoring the more common success mechanisms of nonviolent accommodation and coercion. Soulforce's online material also strongly suggests that nonviolence is simply an interim policy designed to bring about face-to-face negotiations, and that the real action happens during the negotiations. "Nonviolent Direct Actions," notes material on the Soulforce web site, "have one goal and one goal alone: to prove to your subject that you are serious about getting him or her to negotiate with you." This claim is entirely inconsistent both with Gene Sharp's theory of how nonviolence works and with many historical case studies. The desegregation victory of the Montgomery bus boycott led by Martin Luther King Jr., for example, was never solved through negotiations with the white segregationists who governed the city; it was solved by drawing sufficient national attention to the problem in Montgomery that the social space was created for the federal courts to rule that segregated buses are unconstitutional. The Montgomery bus boycott is an example of a successful nonviolent *coercion*, not a negotiation.

Sharp and other theorists would argue that the purpose of active nonviolence is *not* to force an immediate negotiation, but rather to undercut the sources of an opponent's power base. Only after nonviolent sanctions have been applied to multiple pressure points for an extended period will the nonviolent movement have weakened its opposition enough, and strengthened its own position enough, to have a reasonable chance of success at the negotiating table. Sharp is quite clear on this topic in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*:

"The practitioner of [active nonviolence] is much more realistic about the role of power than is his more naive friend who favors negotiations as a *substitute* for open struggle. Negotiations do not take place in a vacuum, and they are rarely resolved solely on the objective merits of the respective arguments and evidence. Behind every case of negotiations is the stated or silent - but mutually understood - role of the relative power positions of the negotiators; that is, what each can do if no agreement is reached. Gandhi said, for example: 'I do not believe in making appeals when there is no force behind them, whether moral or material.'"

By implying that the ideal strategy is to choose to negotiate as quickly as possible, Soulforce may be setting itself up for failure in negotiations. Powerholders, particularly entrenched Christian fundamentalist powerholders such as the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, presently have no reason at all to grant any of Soulforce's demands for change, and have every reason to maintain their current anti-gay policies.

Nevertheless, despite potential weaknesses in the ability to be "mass" and "strategic", Soulforce has done the Christian LGBT rights movement a great service through its strong advocacy of active nonviolence as a means of ending anti-LGBT policies in the oldline denominations. Perhaps the question for the future is: can the LGBT equality movement within the PCUSA combine the militant nonviolence advocated by Soulforce, the strategic planning capabilities of the boards of groups such as More Light Presbyterians and TAMFS, the base of existing local More Light and TAMFS chapters, and a much broader untapped base of support, to grow a movement which has all four characteristics: mass, militant, nonviolent, and strategic? To help us to understand how such a movement might operate, in the next section I offer two abbreviated case studies.

4. CASE STUDIES: EARLY QUAKER NONVIOLENCE AND THE KPFA/PACIFICA STRUGGLE

4.1 QUAKER NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

Despite widespread public ignorance of its existence, active nonviolence as a means of conflict resolution has a long history in America. One example of the successful use of nonviolence by a religious minority seeking basic human and civil liberties is the case of Quaker resistance to the Massachusetts Bay Colony Puritan theocracy in the mid-1600's. This case holds particular relevance to today's struggle because it suggests that even in the initial absence of a larger community of supporters, a religious minority can, through persistent application of nonviolent strategies, carve out certain rights for itself.

In pre-Revolution America, Quakers were a religious minority whose religious beliefs and practices were legally banned by Puritan religious orthodoxy. Sharp notes that

"the Puritans regarded Quakerism as a 'sink of blasphemies' and Quakers themselves as 'ravaging wolves.' They were accused of defiance of the ministry and the courts, naked dancing, and a plot to burn Boston and kill the inhabitants... The Puritans believed they had a religious duty to persecute those who spread religious 'error'".

Similarly, anti-Quaker legislation in Virginia in 1660 referred to Quakers as

"teaching and publishing lies, miracles, false visions, prophecies and doctrines, which have influence upon the communities of men both ecclesiastical and civil endeavoring and attempting thereby to destroy religion, laws, communities and all bonds of civil society..."

Apparently the citizens of Virginia and Puritan Massachusetts hadn't yet discovered the accusations of "pedophilia" and "destruction of the family", but it's clear that the predecessors to today's defenders of heterosexism still succeeded admirably when inventing plagues of societal horrors.

Quakers won their freedom to worship over a 20-year period which involved both the relentless disobedience of Puritan religious law and tremendous persecution as a result. "They met in private homes," writes Sharp, "tried to speak after sermons in churches, spoke during their own trials and from their jail cell windows, issued pamphlets and tracts, returned to the colony in defiance of the law, held illegal meetings, refused to pay fines, and when imprisoned refused to work at the cost of food being denied them. Despite expulsions, whippings through towns, and executions, the Quakers repeatedly returned."

The result was a striking example of the partial conversion, via in this case the voluntary redemptive suffering of the oppressed, of an initially hardened opposition. Initially, persecution was intense and became worse as the Quakers disobeyed more laws. This pattern of intensification of oppression is extremely common, as powerholders increase their punishment of a movement in an attempt to destroy it. However over time, cracks developed within Puritan unity as public banishments, beatings and executions of Quakers increased with no effect on Quaker willingness to break unjust Puritan laws. Puritans later modified their anti-Quaker laws to make them somewhat milder, and it became more difficult to get the police to enforce the laws that did remain on the books. "By 1675," notes Sharp, "in Boston the Quakers were holding regular Meetings undisturbed. The Quakers were now included in the category of human beings... and religious liberty was then not far behind."

4.2 NONVIOLENCE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR KPFA RADIO

A much more recent example of the successful use of active nonviolence is the case of KPFA radio in Berkeley, part of a 5-station non-commercial national radio network held by Pacifica Foundation. KPFA, founded by pacifists in 1949 in part as an outlet for anti-war messages, has long been and remains one of the few radio stations in the U.S. which offers truly progressive news and programming. During the 1990's, the governing board of Pacifica, the top-level authority responsible for all five Pacifica stations, found itself commandeered by a coalition of nonprogressive democrats intent on stripping all Pacifica member stations of their progressive programming and replacing it with sanitized, center-left content reminiscent of National Public Radio. Tensions escalated throughout the 1990's as the local advisory boards of the member stations, particularly at KPFA, resisted the proposed changes. The Pacifica board adopted a take-no-prisoners attitude: it began to hold secret meetings, fired those who disagreed with the board's proposals to overhaul the content of the stations, and issued gag orders prohibiting all staff from discussing Pacifica policies during their radio shows. Labor disputes and firings intensified in 1995 through 1998, and by April 1998, Pacifica had fired over 300 members of staff and management.

At KPFA Berkeley, a station which has long prized itself for its tradition of free speech, the growing crisis was characterized by a constant refusal by staff to obey the gag orders. A pattern soon developed: a staff member would talk about Pacifica problems during his or her show, and Pacifica's management would then fire that staff member for violating the gag order, emphasizing to remaining staff that any mention of the firing was itself a violation of the gag order. More staff would disobey the orders not to talk about the firing, and be fired.

The crisis came to a head on the evening of July 13, 1999, when a Pacifica-installed manager informed veteran journalist Dennis Bernstein that he was being placed on administrative leave for broadcasting a public press conference which, management claimed, violated the gag order. The staff of Pacifica's regular evening news program, which was at that moment live and in progress, invited Bernstein into the KPFA broadcast studio to talk. Three armed security guards from IPSA security, hired by Pacifica in part due to IPSA's expertise in "hostile terminations", pursued Bernstein into the studio and began to shove him against the wall. The evening news anchor Mark Mericle at that moment made the fateful decision to switch from the taped evening news segment to the scene live from the floor of KPFA's broadcast studio. Bernstein's protests, broadcast live to thousands of listeners minutes before Pacifica-loyal management was able to pull the plug, guaranteed him a permanent place in KPFA history:

"I am a news reporter! I *belong* here! I am *supposed* to be here; I do my work here! Do not hurt me! Do not drag me out of here! Don't you dare come in here [with] armed guards and try and drag me out of here and threaten me!"

Bernstein had followed the same advice given to victims of domestic violence: "Scream loudly and continuously. You have nothing to be ashamed of – the batterer does." A few minutes later, the news transmission went silent. KPFA was off the air.

This was a classic "trigger event" straight out of Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan theory. The result was like throwing a match into a barrel of gasoline. Dozens of KPFA supporters from the Berkeley area rushed to the station, and on-duty staff refused to leave the building. It took the Berkeley police department five hours to process a total of 52 trespassing arrests that evening. Over the next several weeks, a broad diversity of nonviolent actions sprang into being. Sidewalk squatters set up tents and established a 24-hour "camp KPFA" outside the boarded-up station. Solidarity protests were held at sister

stations WBAI and KPFF. Activists began to picket the San Francisco offices of Fineman and Associates, the public relations firm hired by Pacifica to handle damage control. Two weeks after the Bernstein incident, 10,000 people from throughout the San Francisco bay area marched in Berkeley to oppose Pacifica policies. Many months later, I was walking near San Francisco's Embarcadero shopping center at noon and came upon a small band (literally, a band) of KPFA supporters exuberantly playing a rendition of "La Cucaracha" on baritone horns, while two supporters without instruments passed out pro-KPFA leaflets to the rather bemused lunchtime crowd.

The "save Pacifica" movement coupled active nonviolence with numerous civil lawsuits, including subpoenas of Pacifica financial records. The resulting struggle would take two and a half years, but in December 2001, lawsuit plaintiffs reached an agreement with Pacifica's board to install a new interim board which would give majority control to supporters of the save Pacifica movement. During the period between July 1999 and December 2001, KPFA Berkeley was the *only* station in the five-station Pacifica network whose staff was able to freely broadcast content uninhibited by gag orders. They won their freedom of speech because they were willing to fight for it, nonviolently.

The "sexy" trigger events such as Bernstein's live-broadcast encounter with armed security guards are often what win popular attention. However, it was only because a critical mass of KPFA staff militantly and repeatedly refused to cooperate with the gag order, and because in a crisis Bernstein and his supporters in the newsroom stayed nonviolent, that the movement reached its trigger point.

Both the case of Quakers in pre-Revolution America and the case of KPFA demonstrate a key insight: persistent, mass, militant, nonviolent refusal to cooperate with unjust laws can, with the right combination of supportive strategies, achieve goals which might initially seem impossible. Note that active nonviolence is not for the impatient; in the case of Quakers it took some two decades before they were safe from most types of persecution, and in the case of KPFA it took nearly two years of defiance of various Pacifica gag orders, and the building of networks of supporters, before the Bernstein trigger event took place.

At this point it should be obvious where I intend to go with this discussion. I now turn to some recommendations for the PCUSA's LGBT equality movement.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Two notes are important at this point before we dive into a list of ten recommendations for the PCUSA's LGBT equality movement. First, these are the first word on proposals, not the last. Once a movement decides to adopt a policy of active nonviolence, my first recommendation below, a broad range of previously unconsidered strategies and tactics suddenly becomes available. I've attempted below to sketch a combination of movement-building, defensive, and offensive actions which are consistent both with Moyer's *Movement Action Plan* theory and with Ackerman and Kruegler's principles of strategic nonviolence. However, obviously these aren't the only possible next steps for the movement.

Second, because I write this essay with no knowledge of whether it will be received with praise or derision, for the majority of recommendations I'm forced to use the overly nebulous term "the movement", as in "the movement should do this or do that". Such vagueness isn't acceptable in a detailed nonviolent campaign plan, but for this strategic overview it will have to suffice. A related difficulty is that it's impossible to predict whether any of the major PCUSA LGBT advocacy groups, More Light Presbyterians, TAMFS, and/or Covenant Network, will formally endorse a policy of active nonviolence

and step up to the plate to coordinate those nonviolent campaigns which require some central management, such as the yearly noncompliance day which I advocate later below. If no existing advocacy group is willing to formally advocate and coordinate active nonviolence, the movement will likely need to create a new organization that will, much as Martin Luther King Jr. formed the Southern Christian Leadership Council in part due to his realization that the NAACP was, in its organizational culture, an "insider" organization which believed that change could occur solely through verbal persuasion and legislative lobbying.

With these two points addressed, we can now take a look at recommendations.

5.1 FORMALLY ENDORSE ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE AS POLICY

To "officially" shift the movement into its next phase, the boards of directors of More Light Presbyterians and TAMFS should issue formal statements declaring that these organizations consider the principles, strategies, and tactics of active nonviolence to be legitimate, ethical, and useful for the struggle, and that these organizations intend to further explore ways both of integrating active nonviolence into their ongoing efforts, and of encouraging Presbyterians at the grass roots level to do the same. The release of a formal statement would demonstrate that the board members have met, discussed, debated the issues, concluded that the use to date solely of verbal persuasion and legislative lobbying has failed, and acknowledged that the movement needs to expand its approach to engaging the struggle. I intentionally don't list Covenant Network here because I see only minor chances of Covenant Network's board publicly embracing active nonviolence. Covenant Network's intentional public image is that of a "moderate" organization which seeks only the removal of G6.0106b via the institutional procedure of voting it out. A key role for Covenant Network, however, may be to avoid any direct public disagreement with other advocacy groups that *do* choose to formally endorse active nonviolence. If, for example, TAMFS were to issue an endorsement of nonviolence as policy, and Covenant Network were to issue a counterstatement rejecting active nonviolence and calling instead for "further dialogue, education, and compromise", it would severely damage the ability of the PCUSA LGBT equality movement to make forward progress. It is precisely because the past several years have proved the *failure* of dialogue, education, and compromise alone that we now need to adopt active nonviolence as policy.

To embrace "nonviolence as policy" does *not* commit any organization to any of the more specific recommendations that I propose below. "Policy" is, rather, a decision that must *precede* any decisions on strategies or tactics. One of the 50,000-foot policy decisions which any advocacy group must make is the decision of how to conduct the struggle. What broad classes of action will the organization use to pursue its goals? To "endorse nonviolence as policy" means simply to formally open the strategic playing field to a new range of choices much larger than the range of choices available to a group that only endorses verbal persuasion or lobbying for legislative relief.

As I gaze into my crystal ball, it seems clear that the organization most likely to rapidly endorse nonviolence as policy is TAMFS. Essays by various TAMFS staff members available on the www.tamfs.org web site strongly suggest that the leadership is prepared to advocate nonviolent noncooperation. "If there is now to be any confrontation against injustice," writes TAMFS Baltimore minister Rev. Don Stroud, "faithful presbyteries and churches and members must be willing to become involved in conscientious acts of ecclesiastical disobedience." Perhaps all that's needed in this case is a conceptual framework to nudge TAMFS into formalizing what its leaders are already saying. The stance of More Light Presbyterians, on the other hand, is more of an unknown. The LGBT equality movement's ability to conduct nonviolent campaigns would of course be stronger if two of the three main LGBT

advocacy groups formally announced a policy of active nonviolence, but even one is better than zero. Of course, if no existing national organization is willing to endorse nonviolence as policy, and if those at the grass roots of the movement feel that active nonviolence as policy is a good idea, then the movement will at some point need to create either a new national advocacy organization, or a coalition of multiple nonviolent local organizations.

5.2 DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF NONVIOLENCE AS POLICY

To formally endorse nonviolence as policy is only the beginning of a long road of reading, study, discussion, and strategizing. To facilitate the broader understanding of what it means to "endorse nonviolence as policy" and to explore the new active nonviolent options open to the movement, all supporting advocacy groups should incorporate presentations on active nonviolence theory and practice into their web sites and into their national gatherings. Even organizations which aren't willing to advocate nonviolence as policy can add educational sessions such as lectures and panel discussions on active nonviolence to their conferences. Covenant Network, for example, holds an annual conference; it would likely be easily possible for the conference planners to add content on nonviolence to the event schedule even though Covenant Network itself is unlikely to formally endorse active nonviolence.

5.3 ENDORSE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

The recent history of the secular LGBT rights movement strongly suggests that it has become, or perhaps always was, counterproductive to endorse equal employment opportunities for LGBT people without also endorsing equal marriage rights. "Marriage" is of course the most emotional, visceral, fear-promoting, and most-likely-to-switch-off-critical-thinking-skills word in the contemporary secular and religious LGBT rights debate, and it is precisely for this reason that supporters of heterosexual privilege constantly invoke it. It is no accident that G6.0106b is phrased in terms of upholding heterosexual-only marriages. "Who could possibly be against making marriage only for heterosexual couples?", its defenders can ask.

In past campaigns, both the secular and religious LGBT equality movements have attempted to ward off anti-gay legislation, in particular the barrage of "defense-of-marriage" ballot initiatives which the Christian right is pushing through on a state-by-state basis, with an argument that sounds like this: "Well, we don't support same-sex marriage either, but... we still don't like this proposed law, so you should vote against it." Such an argument plays directly into the hands of the anti-gay movement by accepting without challenge its fundamental assertion of heterosexual privilege. This rhetorical defense strategy was a contributing factor to the failure of California's LGBT community to prevent the passage of an anti-gay state DOMA ("defense-of-marriage") ballot initiative in 2000. If the LGBT rights movement continues to refuse to openly endorse same-sex marriage for fear of offending "the middle", all that the right needs to do is claim that any new pro-gay proposal is "just a stealth attempt to win gay marriage." The attempt to "not offend the middle by not talking about marriage" also makes the severe strategic error of treating "the middle" as some vast *fixed* quantity which can't be moved to change its mind.

Nationally-known same-sex marriage activist Evan Wolfson, an attorney formerly with Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, was quite clear on this topic in a September 2001 essay published in *The Advocate*. Wolfson's audience was the secular gay rights movement, but his comments are equally applicable to the Christian LGBT equality movement:

"The attempt not to talk about marriage, to have a discussion without using the 'm' word, increasingly fails. The fierce right-wing backlash against civil unions in Vermont (and the right wing's use of marriage and civil unions as a club against us in campaigns in other states) shows that we do not gain much ground by calling it something else or running away from the debate. Our opponents are against us no matter what we seek. When we fight merely not to be beaten up in the streets, they are against us. If we were asking for oxygen, they would be against us. Our opponents will redefine everything we seek as "a slippery slope to gay marriage" and attack us with equal ferocity, no matter what. If we are going to have to face opposition and work to engage the middle no matter what we strive for, why not ask for all we deserve? Remember, it is no coincidence that the two states in which we have the most expansive protections and recognition for gay people are the two in which we framed the discussion in terms of full equality."

In public interviews, Wolfson has paraphrased it this way: "You don't get half a loaf by asking for half a loaf. You get half a loaf by demanding the full loaf you're entitled to, and when you get that, you continue fighting for the rest."

To the argument, then, that G6.0106b is unjust because it endorses employment discrimination and denies gay people their full expression of humanity, the PCUSA's LGBT rights movement also needs to add the argument that G6.0106b is unjust because it incorrectly assumes the heterosexist premise that "marriage" should be reserved to heterosexual couples.

A call for equal ecclesial marriage rights would put the PCUSA LGBT equality movement in direct alignment with the cutting edge of the secular gay rights movement, opening up a wide potential array of positive alliances. To put it bluntly, very few people in the secular LGBT rights movement care about whether they have the right to be ordained as leaders in the Presbyterian Church. But many in the secular LGBT rights movement *do* care about whether churches endorse same-sex marriage, because when religious institutions endorse religious same-sex marriage, it puts pressure on civil governments to offer civil same-sex marriage. Statewide same-sex civil marriage advocacy groups have been formed to date in Hawaii, California, Washington, New York, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Vermont, and we can be entirely certain that more are on the way. The time has come for America's Christian LGBT advocacy groups to openly endorse the right of pastors to conduct ceremonies of *marriage*, not simply separate-but-unequal "holy union ceremonies", for same-sex couples.

5.4 FORM LOCAL NONVIOLENCE STUDY AND TRAINING GROUPS

Active nonviolence is not a simplistic set of behavioral do's and don'ts, nor is it simply a set of protest tactics. Active nonviolence is a powerful way of overcoming evil without creating new evils and without becoming evil ourselves. It involves strategic, tactical, and spiritual components. It requires us to differentiate evil *systems* from the good-but-fallen people who are caught in, or act as servants to, those systems. It requires us to learn how to love our enemies, and to consider how to develop strategies which say "no" to evil while simultaneously offering a hand of reconciliation to our oppressors. Nonviolence is not for the weak or the cowardly, and it almost never comes without suffering.

To teach ourselves what active nonviolence means and to begin to create the "nonviolent shock troops" prepared to instigate nonviolent protests, noncooperations, and interventions, the Christian LGBT rights movement needs, nationwide, to form local study groups which read about the theory and history of active nonviolence, practice nonviolent technique in role-playing exercises, and put what they've learned into practice by planning and executing local test campaigns. I see no advantage, and multiple

disadvantages, to such groups being denominationally-based. Much more productive would be ecumenical or interfaith activist groups committed to the study and local use of active nonviolence to advance the cause of the Christian LGBT rights movement. Such local groups wouldn't need to be limited to campaigns within a single oldline denomination, but rather could make their skills available on an as-needed basis across all Christian denominations.

Study materials that I can recommend for local nonviolence study and practice groups include Staughton Lynd and Alice Lynd's *Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History*, Walter Wink's *The Powers that Be*, and the Pace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolence Center's 10-part study guide *From Violence to Wholeness*. I provide more detail on these books below in the recommended reading section.

5.5 FORM ALLIANCES

The fact that the majority of Christian denominations in the U.S. have been infected with the ideology of patriarchy isn't simply a Christian problem; it's everybody's problem. Heterosexism is, at its roots, incompatible with deeply-grounded American principles of equal protection and egalitarianism. As long as heterosexism is allowed to actively thrive within Christian institutions, those institutions will continue to seek to create a broader society that treats LGBT people as second-class or third-class citizens. To oppose this trend, Christian LGBT advocacy groups, both national and local, need to network and form strategic alliances with each other, with secular gay rights groups, and with supportive community groups, nonprofits, and governing bodies. To lay the groundwork for alliances, grassroots and national advocacy group leaders will need to develop presentation material which they can use for live presentations to non-Christian ally groups. I envision one or more sets of overhead transparencies with supplementary speaker's notes, publicly available in HTML and .ppt formats, each suitable for a 30-minute presentation to potential ally groups. Key points of an introductory presentation should include:

- An introduction to the Christian LGBT organization and its mission statement.
- Problem statement: heterosexist ideology is widespread within Christian churches.
- Consequences of the problem: tens of thousands of churches across America send a message which is harmful to gay children because it teaches them they're inferior, harmful to families because it stigmatizes non-heterosexual parents and denies them the legal rights that married heterosexual couples have, harmful to non-gay children because it teaches them prejudice, and harmful to society at large because it promotes discrimination against a broad class of people. This heterosexist message is intrinsically unAmerican because it rejects American principles of equal protection, equal creation, and inalienable rights.
- Solution statement: the solution is not to "eliminate religion", but rather to redeem the Christian churches.
- An overview of how the Christian LGBT organization seeks to reform the churches.
- An overview of potential areas of cooperation between the two organizations.

Note how in these suggested summary talking points I intentionally seek to reclaim the words "family" and "children" for the LGBT equality movement, and to truthfully affix the label "unAmerican" to heterosexist ideology.

This type of introductory presentation should end with an exchange of contact information between organizational leaders and, for local groups, should ideally lead to a joint agreement to join each other's local email announcement or discussion lists. The key element in early alliance formation is simply to open a communication channel to promote future discussion and partnering opportunities.

There exists an enormous range of potential ally groups, more than enough to keep the Christian LGBT equality movement busy meeting new allies almost indefinitely. Some example ally organizations include:

- PFLAG chapters
- ACLU and ACLU chapters
- Amnesty International
- Local gay-straight alliances
- Parent-teacher associations
- Any organization promoting safe schools
- Anti-defamation / anti-hate groups
- Marriage rights organizations
- Local peace centers
- Organized labor
- Any nonprofit concerned with children's health
- NOW and other women's rights groups
- Other Christian denominational LGBT equality groups
- Racial advocacy groups

This of course isn't even close to an exhaustive list. As we expand the list of potential and actual allies, we lay the groundwork for achieving one of the key attributes of a social change movement: that it be a *mass* movement, supported by a broad range of people representing a broad spectrum of society.

5.6 PROMOTE SOCIAL STIGMA AGAINST PERSECUTORS

All recommendations up to this point are foundation-builders designed to clarify the methods of the movement, educate ourselves in the methods of active nonviolence, and build a base of support. With this sixth recommendation I begin to build on that foundation by advocating specific nonviolent strategies. This particular strategy is defensive: it recommends a course of action to take when an LGBT-affirming church or church leader is legislatively attacked.

Just as our society imposes a social cost on people who make public anti-semitic or racist remarks, just as society imposes social stigma on husbands who batter their wives, so must the LGBT equality movement begin to impose social costs on individuals and churches who persecute others using oppressive church laws. Specifically, the PCUSA LGBT equality movement must begin to promote broad-based, public social stigma against individuals who file charges under G6.0106b. I'm not speaking here of a quiet, intra-denominational knuckle-rapping in which a few mild words of protest appear in one or more PCUSA news articles. Rather, I advocate broad-based public secular "outing" campaigns that document an oppressor's actions, argue why those actions are oppressive and harmful to society, name the oppressor and his or her actions to as many people as possible, and hold the oppressor accountable for the persecution. Activists should take dramatic steps to get news stories about the problem to appear in the secular press in the persecutor's home town. People in his community should be talking about what he's doing. Letters to the editor should appear in the local papers. Local non-governmental social advocacy groups should be taking public positions on the individual's persecution of others. This approach is consistent with the spouse-abuse model of anti-LGBT oppression which I proposed in section 2 above. Here the goal of the movement, acting in cooperation with and on behalf of the persecuted individuals or church, is to "scream loudly and continuously", just as battered spouse advocacy groups advocate the same for a wife during an attack. A driving principle of the approach is one of mock-helpfulness: "If

you're so proud about how you're using church law to discriminate, then let us help you share that pride! We want to tell the world about this wonderful persecution that you're engaged in!"

Any campaign to "out" a persecutor should follow a slow-escalation policy which continuously gives the persecutor ample opportunities to back down and save face. As always, a nonviolent campaign should seek not to crush an oppressor, but rather to redeem the oppressor, to call the oppressor back to a true right-relatedness with his or her fellow human beings. I recommend that in any such campaign, activists follow the four basic steps outlined by Martin Luther King Jr. in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail: documentation, negotiation, self-purification, and action.

In the documentation phase, the nonviolent campaign collects facts about what has happened and produces written materials, potentially for public consumption, that summarize events to date. Documentation typically needs to continue throughout all four phases of a campaign as activists update informational documents and respond to any statements issued by the opposition, but documentation is particularly crucial as the first step. During this phase, activists should also articulate their precise, concrete demands so that they know exactly what they're striving for.

The second phase, negotiation, gives the persecutor the first opportunity to peacefully withdraw the attack. This stage is characterized by meetings, discussions, and possibly some compromise on non-core issues, but no compromise on core principles. Within the context of the LGBT equality movement, this phase may often "fail" in the sense that a resolution of the problem won't be achieved, and the persecutor will continue with the persecution. The purpose of the negotiation phase is to demonstrate a good-faith attempt to use simple verbal persuasion and negotiation to achieve a resolution. This phase can last for weeks or even months.

Quite often, negotiation fails and the problem remains. Somebody is still pressing forward with anti-gay charges based on G6.0106b. At this point the campaign, in anticipation of the action phase, moves to the self-purification phase, a psychological and spiritual training and discernment period prior to a direct action campaign. Nonviolence training workshops are one recommended method of purification; movement participants can also couple training with fasting, special services of worship, reading and discussion, or a variety of other means of psychological and spiritual preparation. During the self-purification phase, movement leaders should also agree on the details of campaign strategy, solidify the set of nonviolent tactics and sanctions to be deployed, lay the logistical groundwork for the campaign, define ground rules for actions and conduct, and network with ally organizations to maximize the impact of the campaign. Details on how to construct and execute a direct action campaign are beyond the scope of this essay, but a wealth of information is available in Kim Bobo's book *Organizing for Social Change*, listed in section 8 below.

The action phase, phase four, represents the point at which the movement begins to employ nonviolent protest, nonviolent noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention tactics as a means of raising public awareness of the fact that a member of the community is using an unjust church law to attack another church or one of its members. It's not possible to recommend any specific tactics here, because tactics are always both strategy-dependent and situation-dependent. Protest tactics are the likely starting point: activists could for example distribute leaflets, hold public rallies, or picket the attacker's church, workplace, or home. In the category of nonviolent interventions, LGBT supporters could stage peaceful "nonviolent church attendance" Sundays where they all attend the aggressor's church and speak out during or after the service. An enormous range of nonviolent actions are available: Gene Sharp has classified 198 of them in volume two of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, and certainly his list isn't exhaustive.

Readers who are familiar only with the strident anti-establishment tone of many recent protests staged by the secular left may at this point raise concerns, and rightly so. The last thing that the Christian LGBT rights movement needs is a religious equivalent to the Seattle-esque window-smashing, street-fighting tactics promoted by extremist fair trade groups. Bill Moyer labels this type of so-called activist the "negative rebel":

"Negative rebels use strident rhetoric and aggressive actions and attitudes against powerholders, institutions, and policies. They promote militant protest actions that are driven and overtly accompanied by strong feelings of anger, hostility, and frustration. Negative Rebels advocate change by any means necessary, which usually means militant protests that are disruptive and destructive. At movement demonstrations, they characteristically engage in skirmishes with police, and vandalism and trashing - all with a rebellious, anti-authoritarian attitude driven by anger and mean-spirited emotions."

Of critical importance to any nonviolent protest, then, is the choice of message and choice of tone. If Presbyterian John Smith in Florida has filed charges under G6.0106b against Jane Doe in Wisconsin, we have no need of protest signs that say "John we hate you" or of late-night harassment phone calls. But what if protest signs said "John, John, why are you persecuting me?" or "Equality is American. Amendment B is neither", or "Why is John picking on Wisconsin"? These are off-the-cuff examples, but the difference in messaging and tone should be clear. Nonviolent protest can also involve a wide variety of actions other than sign-carrying. LGBT supporters could hold 24-hour vigils outside of John Smith's church, or hold a public mock funeral for the Presbyterian principle of freedom of conscience. The possibilities are limited only by local leadership's creativity.

Given that many of the charges filed under G6.0106b may come from individuals who move in social subcultures where "state's rights" ideology still runs strong, there may also be significant rhetorical mileage to be had by playing to the states-rights mentality: why is John Smith in Florida trying to control what somebody in Wisconsin is doing? Social progressives should also feel free to incorporate the U.S. flag into public demonstrations, just as the civil rights movement proudly carried the flag in support of deeply-held American principles of equality.

Such a nonviolent campaign to expose an injustice as it occurs is entirely consistent with the nonviolent principles that Jesus articulated in Matthew 5:38-42. Walter Wink's exegesis of verse 40, "if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well" notes that Jesus here advocates a shame-based tactic that could be used by any member of his audience dealing with severe indebtedness. If one of them is sued and forced, as was permitted under Jewish law, to hand over his outer garment as a punishment for his inability to repay his debts, he should instead strip naked in court and hand over both his outer *and* inner garments, nonviolently protesting the injustice of the oppressive economic system that has left him penniless. From Wink's *Engaging the Powers*:

"There stands the creditor, covered with shame, the poor debtor's outer garment in the one hand, his undergarment in the other. The tables have suddenly been turned on the creditor. The debtor had no hope of winning the case; the law was entirely in the creditor's favor. But the poor man has transcended this attempt to humiliate him... Nakedness was taboo in Judaism, and shame fell less on the naked party than on the person viewing or causing the nakedness... So the debtor parades his nakedness in prophetic protest against a system that has deliberately rendered him destitute... The entire system by which debtors are oppressed has been publicly unmasked. The creditor is revealed to be not a legitimate moneylender but party to the reduction of an entire social class to landlessness,

destitution, and abasement. This unmasking is not simply punitive, therefore; it offers the creditor a chance to see, perhaps for the first time in his life, what his practices cause, and to repent."

I have had discussions with LGBT-supportive Christians who have said with a shock of dismay, "Oh, I could never protest at a church, that's just not right! How offensive!" Such an attitude demonstrates the deep, drastic disconnect between the Jesus of history who advocated, taught, and practiced active nonviolence, and the domesticated, spiritualized, personalized, afterlife-oriented Jesus of popular piety. What precisely is it that we think Jesus was doing when he stormed the temple in Jerusalem and overturned the tables of the money changers? This action was a one-man nonviolent intervention, a direct assault on the corruption and toxic theology symbolized by, and dictated from, the Jerusalem temple. If contemporary Christians are unwilling to advocate the use of active nonviolence to reform the church itself, then we should admit that we're unwilling to be Christlike and go find some other religion whose core teachings don't call its adherents to agitate for internal reform. Christianity came into being as the result of one man who nonviolently intervened in the workings of the fallen religious system of his day. If we claim to be followers of Jesus, we must be prepared to do the same.

Current PCUSA polity does impose one significant barrier to this public-stigma approach: because polity allows any single Presbyterian anywhere in the U.S. to file a complaint against any other Presbyterian, often we may find that the persecutor is located in an entirely different region of the country from the person or church attacked. One single angry member of the Presbyterian right is effectively able to "launch a homing missile" by filing a complaint without so much as telephoning the persons charged, much less meeting them face-to-face. This PCUSA polity violates the spirit of the U.S. Constitutional principle that grants to the accused the right to confront her accuser, but for the time being this is the mode of attack that we must learn to expect. The result is that it is insufficient for a local More Light church to provide for its own defense by building a local base of social support and working with a local action group trained in the practice of active nonviolence. Rather, it suggests a need for precisely the nationwide network of local nonviolence study and action groups which I advocated in the fourth recommendation above. In my hypothetical example of a Presbyterian in Florida filing heresy charges against a gay elder in Wisconsin, what the LGBT equality movement will need are one or more pre-organized, pre-trained, nonviolence-savvy groups in Florida which coordinate tightly with supporters in Wisconsin to plan a defensive campaign which simultaneously rallies support in Wisconsin and "outs" the persecutor in Florida.

Recent history shows us that the strategy of protesting or "outing" hostile, anti-LGBT theology has been successful. In his essay "Sources for Body Theology: Homosexuality as a Test Case" in *Homosexuality in the Church*, Christian ethics Professor James B. Nelson relates the following story of how Riverside Church in New York City officially became an LGBT-affirming church. On May 5, 1985, associate pastor Channing E. Phillips preached an anti-gay sermon which took the well-known approach of using the "male and female God created them" text of Genesis 1:27 to argue that heterosexuality is normative and all other forms of sexuality are deviant. Nelson continues the story:

"Following the sermon, the sacrament of Communion was celebrated, with Dr. Phillips presiding. After Communion, however, a young straight man from the congregation stood up and walked to the Communion table, interrupting the service. Speaking to the congregation, he stated that he could not support the words from the pulpit that morning. He declared that he would stand by the table during the singing of the last hymn, standing there in support of gay and lesbian people. He invited anyone else who shared his concern to join him. Dr. Phillips said 'I don't mind.'"

"About five hundred of the worshipers, including members of the choir and other clergy staff, left their seats to crowd around the chancel to sing the last hymn together. The *New York Times* would report the event in a prominent story."

Over the next few weeks, Riverside Church accelerated a process of discernment on the ethics of sexual orientation which had already been in progress, and several weeks later the congregation voted to become the first congregation affiliated with the United Church of Christ to declare itself "open and affirming" to GLB people.

It took one brave individual's nonviolent *interruption of a church service* to bring Riverside Church to its senses, encourage the solidarity of other members of the congregation, and pressure the congregation to take a pro-LGB stand. Words are usually not enough. Negotiation and discussion are not enough. To bring about lasting positive change against entrenched hostile ideologies, social movements need to use active nonviolence.

5.7 DECLARE AND COORDINATE A YEARLY DAY OF NONCOMPLIANCE

The national LGBT advocacy groups which adopt a policy of active nonviolence should orchestrate a yearly "Noncompliance with Amendment B Day" which gives Presbyterians nationwide the opportunity to demonstrate how foolish G6.0106b really is. Unlike the social stigma recommendation above, which is a defensive strategy for use against a G6.0106b-based attack, this recommendation for a mass Noncompliance Day is an offensive tactic, not in the sense that it's calculated to offend (though it may do that as well), but in the sense that it's proactive rather than reactive. The national emphasis for this particular event should not be to encourage churches to ordain openly LGBT leaders, though of course some churches might choose to do so. Rather, the purpose of Noncompliance Day is to encourage LGBT supporters to plan and participate in as many technical violations of G6.0106b as possible. Such a coordinated set of events has several benefits: it encourages solidarity and mass action; it builds morale by allowing supporters to violate Amendment B with minimal threat of reprisal; it publicly establishes the principle, both for the movement and in front of all Presbyterians, that G6.0106b is unethical and should be ignored or openly flaunted; it delegitimizes Amendment B by making fun of it; and it creates a dilemma drama for Amendment B's supporters by presenting them with hundreds of technical violations of the law which they can't prosecute without looking foolish.

One historical precedent for a noncompliance day lies with Gandhi's Salt March of 1930, during which Gandhi staged a pilgrimage to the sea to make salt, a technical violation of the British monopoly on its manufacture. The march was widely publicized and covered heavily by both the Indian and foreign press. Participation in the noncompliance was easy; anyone with the ability to boil sea water could violate the law. Also, as Ackerman and Duvall note in *A Force More Powerful*, the campaign set up a lose-lose situation for the British: "If they arrested the salt lawbreakers, they would create martyrs for the nationalist movement and confirm Gandhi's claims about their oppressive intent. If they let the salt resisters alone, they might sow doubt that they had the will to enforce their own laws in the face of Indian resistance."

G6.0106b is, thankfully, so grossly overbroad in its reach that coming up with technical violations of the law is a trivial exercise. Amendment B literally treats the entire Book of Confessions as if it were a gigantic catalog of vices, and forbids all PCUSA church leaders from unrepentantly committing any of these alleged sins. "Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament."

Has anybody actually cataloged what this sentence means if we're foolish enough to take it seriously? There are hundreds of pages of dubious doctrine, culturally-conditioned behavioral rules, and blatant anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish prejudice in the Presbyterian confessions. My brief walk through the confessions turns up the following example rules, any unrepentant violation of which is presumably a violation of G6.0106b:

- The Scots Confession chapter 23 declares that church members should be publicly and individually "examined" before they receive permission to take communion. Any pastors who decline to so examine their members are in violation of the Scots Confession and therefore of Amendment B.

- The Heidelberg Catechism questions 97 and 98 forbid any depictions of God "in any way", including in picture books for the illiterate. This rules out the display of any number of classical artworks, such as Michelangelo's famous "Creation of Man" artwork from the Sistine Chapel ceiling. The Second Helvetic Confession chapter 4 and the Larger Catechism question 109 go significantly beyond this, banning all images of Jesus, saints, and "the making any representation of God, of all, or of any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness..." This confessional rule bans any children's books that picture Jesus, outlaws the content of most stained glass windows in PCUSA churches, and declares any showing of *Godspell* or the TV miniseries *Jesus of Nazareth* to be an act of sin. The simple act of reading a children's book or putting up a Jesus poster becomes a practice that violates Amendment B. For the uninspired, a trip to any nearby "Christian bookstore" will reveal that these veritable dens of iniquity are ready and waiting to help eager pro-LGBT Presbyterians violate G6.0106b, featuring shelves filled with a wide assortment of Jesus books, Jesus keychains, Jesus flashlights, Jesus comic books... the mind reels at the limitless possibilities for the sinful display of images of Jesus!

- The Second Helvetic Confession chapter 23 declares that "public prayers in meetings for worship are to be made in the common language known to all". This rules out most forms of incorporation of foreign languages into worship services, a practice I've seen quite often in my years attending various Presbyterian services. The same chapter of the Second Helvetic Confession also outlaws Gregorian Chants... sing a Gregorian Chant and you violate Amendment B.

- The Second Helvetic Confession chapter 24 refers to vegetarianism as "the doctrine of demons". Any self-affirmed, unrepentant, practicing vegetarians are hereby put on notice that you're living in sin and are in violation of G6.0106b.

- The Larger Catechism question 117 declares that Presbyterians must refrain from "such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful"; question 119 extends this rule by explicitly stating as sinful "all needless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly employments and recreations." This rule quite literally fits Orwell's definition of thoughtcrime. Having a conversation about what you did at work the past week, or about what you plan to do for your summer vacation, is sinful if you have the conversation on Sunday. In fact, it's sinful even to THINK about your summer vacation on Sunday. Point your web browser to www.disney.com on a Sunday, violate Amendment B.

- The Larger Catechism question 139 contains the infamous ban on the sins of "lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, [and] stageplays." Since this Catechism was written in the mid-1600's, we can be fairly confident that its author would consider any contemporary mass-market film rated PG-13 or above to be "lascivious". See a movie, violate Amendment B.

These examples are only the beginning. Much more creative minds than mine will doubtless be able to come up with much more creative "sins" which can be "practiced unrepentantly" so as to violate G6.0106b. Technically, G6.01016b only applies to ordained PCUSA leaders, but to maximize participation, the national event coordinators should encourage all LGBT-supporting Presbyterians and even non-Presbyterians to participate. After all, any violation of Amendment B by a member who declares that she is "unrepentant" still technically disqualifies that member from ordination.

Noncompliance Day should be billed as a party; as an outlet for movement creativity. The national coordinating organizations should offer prizes: largest number of people simultaneously violating Amendment B in one group, largest number of distinct violations of Amendment B in a single worship service or event, most creative previously-undiscovered confessional sin, perhaps a mock prize for "largest number of logical fallacies and errors of fact in a right-wing essay that condemns Noncompliance Day", and so on. There should be a web site dedicated to the event that describes various easy ways of organizing a group noncompliance activity, publicizing it to the local media, and optionally turning it into a fundraiser or a church membership growth activity. The web site should include spotlights on some of the more ambitious local plans in various presbyteries, should provide a web form for G6.0106b-violators to declare their intent to participate, and should publish pictures of various Noncompliance Day activities after the day is complete.

The attitude to Amendment B I seek to invoke here is reminiscent of the 1940's song "Der Fuehrer's Face". The song, which brought band leader and comic musician Spike Jones one of his first national hits, was performed in Jones' classic irreverent style and featured kazoos, banjos, and high-speed clarinets in a production which reduced fear of oppression by making fun of the Nazis. Similarly, organizing a national day of action in which LGBT supporters mockingly "sin" by singing Gregorian chants, putting up Jesus posters, and fraternizing with vegetarians both decreases public fear of G6.0106b and increases awareness of how incredibly stupid this law really is. Noncompliance Day is the movement's opportunity to have fun at Amendment B's expense. "The Powers That Be literally stand on their dignity," notes Wink in *Engaging the Powers*. "Nothing depotentiates them faster than deft lampooning."

Equally importantly, the national coordinating organizations should encourage all participants in Noncompliance Day to mail, fax, or send in via web form a "declaration of unrepentant sinful practice". The coordinators can web-publish template documents that offer the basic framework for the declaration: names of the participants in the local noncooperation activity, names of the churches that they attend, and a description of the "sinful" activity in a "describe your sin here" section. This template document might begin: "We, the undersigned, hereby self-acknowledge that we have unrepentantly indulged in the following practice or practices which the confessions call sin..."

The national coordinators should then take these "sin declarations", print all of them on paper, make copies, and mail a full set with a polite cover letter to the Presbyterian Lay Committee, to Presbyterians for Renewal, to the Presbyterian Coalition, and to any other relevant organizations affiliated with the G6.0106b-supporting anti-LGBT movement. An informational copy could also be sent to the Stated Clerk of the PCUSA. The purpose here is not to say "in your face", but rather to present the anti-gay organizations with a clear choice: do they or do they not believe that G6.0106b is a legitimate law? If they support the confessional orthodoxy mandated by Amendment B, then they must prosecute every one of the hundreds of violations conveniently dropped on their doorsteps, documented in writing, with names and home churches attached. If they don't prosecute, then they demonstrate their hypocrisy: they demand enforcement of the law only when it's convenient, only when it prevents a scapegoated class from having jobs. Refusal to press charges against hundreds of G6.0106b violations could also potentially be used as supplementary evidence at future trials of LGBT church leaders. "If the defenders of Amendment B

declined to press charges when these hundreds of violations were brought directly to their attention", goes the hypothetical court argument, "then clearly they seem to agree with the defense that G6.0106b is an illegitimate law."

My final recommendation on this topic is to suggest a plausible date for the yearly Noncompliance Day: Solidarity Sunday, the yearly day of support and affirmation initiated by Dignity, the Roman Catholic LGBT advocacy organization. Dignity USA started the tradition of Solidarity Sunday in 1995 as a means to raise public awareness about anti-LGBT violence and hate crimes. The date occurs every year on the Sunday prior to October 11, National Coming Out Day, so in 2002 Solidarity Sunday falls on October 6. Dignity encourages those churches participating in Solidarity Sunday to speak out on the issue of anti-LGBT hate crimes during worship, and provides simple liturgical and prayer material that can easily be worked into a Sunday service. By scheduling Presbyterian Noncompliance Day on the same day as Dignity's Solidarity Sunday, the PCUSA LGBT equality movement would play to obvious synergies, facilitate cooperation and build working relationships with Dignity, and increase the ability of both Presbyterian and Roman Catholic LGBT advocacy groups to get secular press coverage of the day's events.

5.8 PUBLISH A WHITE PAPER TO ASSIST CHURCHES INTERESTED IN NONCOOPERATION

Today various PCUSA churches are, naturally, at various stages in their willingness to refuse to cooperate with unjust Presbyterian laws. Some operate under a de-facto "don't ask don't tell" policy, some will ordain openly LGBT elders and deacons, some have passed covenants of dissent, and a few will conduct same-sex marriage ceremonies and actually call them "marriage". Any national LGBT advocacy groups endorsing active nonviolence should collaborate to produce a "G6.0106b noncooperation white paper" which lists potential methods both for skirting and for openly defying G6.0106b, suggests preparations to be made prior to each level of noncooperation, describes possible consequences, lists other documents and organizations which can offer support, and in general provides as much information as possible about various types of refusal to cooperate. The intent of the document is twofold. The first purpose is to offer a range of disobedience tactics that a variety of churches can use, wherever they are in their journey toward active nonviolence. The second purpose is to openly promote the thesis that G6.0106b is unjust and should morally be disobeyed. We need no whispered phone conversations, no quiet inquiries amongst ourselves about how we can ordain gay leaders. Disobedience to G6.0106b should be as public as possible, to such an extent that we're publishing open documents on web sites that explain in precise detail the various means of ignoring it.

This approach to facilitating nonviolent noncooperation is consistent with the strategic principle that says you should always maximize the ability of your supporters to participate. It also parallels some of the work being done within the United Methodist Church LGBT advocacy movement. Some months ago, I had the opportunity to meet an attorney who, in her spare time, provides church legal counsel, advice, and training to UMC clergy and supporters who want to hold same-sex civil union ceremonies, ceremonies which are currently banned by the United Methodist Church. As I listened to her training material, it became apparent that she had cleverly designed a range of noncompliance options suitable for the quietly noncooperative church that simply wants to offer a service of blessing for two of its members, for the openly defiant church that wants to publicize its noncooperation to the world and invite the press, and for churches somewhere in-between. The UMC has its churches that simply want to provide for the basic spiritual needs of their lesbian and gay couples, and then the UMC also has people like Rev. Don Fado of the "Sacramento 68", who drew national attention when he and 67 other UMC clergy conducted a public

holy union ceremony for two lesbian Methodists. Similarly, the PCUSA will have its quietly disobedient, its openly disobedient, and its loudly disobedient. The Presbyterian LGBT equality movement should seek to facilitate all levels of noncompliance with G6.0106b while at the same time encouraging open disobedience over disobedience by stealth.

5.9 ESTABLISH A FUND TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF G6.0106b PERSECUTION

One or more of the national PCUSA LGBT advocacy organizations should coordinate the creation of a victim's fund to provide transition grants and zero-interest loans to LGBT Presbyterians who are forced out of jobs due to G6.0106b-based persecution. The fund should be administered by a publicly-known board of directors and should be formed with the assistance of legal counsel to minimize the possibility of predatory lawsuits launched by anti-LGBT forces trying to raid the fund. Applicants should be able to apply for job-transition grants and loans both after a G6.0106b-based attack, and anonymously in advance of an anticipated attack or dismissal. For example, a closeted gay pastor who is considering coming out should be able to apply anonymously to the fund in advance of doing so, as a means of establishing a short-term financial fallback plan if either his congregation fires him, or if he is driven out by legal action using G6.0106b.

The "Amendment B Victims Fund" should *not* be funded out of the standard yearly budgets of any of its sponsoring organizations; most likely the fund will need to be separately incorporated and do its own fundraising. The existence of such a fund could potentially facilitate financial participation by high-net-worth pro-LGBT individuals as well as secular gay rights organizations such as HRC (Human Rights Campaign). Such groups and individuals might shy away from making direct contributions to a religious advocacy group such as More Light Presbyterians, but could be attracted to the possibility of contributing to a trust fund that directly supports victims of anti-gay church harassment. There is a long tradition within nonviolent movements of providing financial support for those at the front lines of a conflict who suffer the most. Labor unions, for example, have long used "strike funds" to ease the financial pain for those strikers who are hit hardest by management retaliation.

5.10 SELECT A MOVEMENT ANTHEM

The Christian LGBT equality movement needs to choose one or more simple, well-known songs which represent the movement's hopes and dreams. Coming in the wake of nine calculated and occasionally clinical recommendations, this suggestion may sound like a surreal non sequitur. However, the history of past struggles teaches us that the morale of movement participants, their ability to express hope and courage even in the midst of short-term tactical defeats, and their ability to summon courage when faced with intense opposition and retaliation, is an issue of great importance. Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall note in *A Force More Powerful*, in their coverage of Danish resistance to Nazi occupation, that morale-boosting songs were a key factor in the eventual success of the nonviolent resistance movement:

"[The] rising wind of [Danish] national spirit blew most publicly at community song festivals, which were often huge regional events. On July 4 about 1500 people near the town of Alborg sang hymns about the war with Germany in 1864, soldiers' bravery, and the girls they left behind. Throughout August and September three-quarters of a million people sang in similar festivals. On the king's seventieth birthday on September 26, thousands crowded the streets of Copenhagen to sing birthday songs to the man who embodied the nation... Cultural assertions of Danish honor and character could be offered at face value, as ostensibly nonpolitical. Implicitly, however, they

contested the idea of German dominion, at a time when the popular mood might otherwise have been depressed. Although the resistance movement would not really take shape until 1941, the songfests and other daily acts of symbolic protest laid the psychological groundwork."

As the labor movements of the early 20th century had their sit-down strike songs, as the U.S. civil rights movement had its "we shall overcome", so the Christian LGBT equality movement needs one or more songs, widely-recognized as symbolic of the movement, to articulate its joys and its sorrows.

Naturally I have my own preferences, which I do suggest here, however the key concern is to choose one or more songs which are well-known, easy to learn and sing, representative of the feelings and goals of the movement, and usable in a variety of circumstances. One possibility is the well-worn "They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love", the first verse of which I'll transcribe here for the benefit of the two or three people reading this essay who have never been to a Wednesday-night Christian youth group meeting:

We are one in the spirit, we are one in the lord;
[repeat stanza]
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

This verse stresses several important themes: it acknowledges common elements uniting all Christians, it implicitly states that today there is *no* unity, and it looks forward to a day when unity and wholeness are restored; when the churches have been redeemed.

A better choice for mixed-faith groups might be "When the Saints go Marching in", which has its historical roots as a jubilee song celebrating the end of slavery. The following additional verse, based on words by Ann Patrick Ware, also works well as a supplement to the traditional verses:

This time is new; our lives have changed.
We cannot sing the same refrain.
This is not a time for silence
As we work to heal earth's pain.

Several constructive themes are present here: the emphasis that the movement seeks healing, not destruction, that the time has come for change, and that regardless of oppression, the movement won't be silent.

6. RED HERRINGS AND RED-BAITING

There may be a variety of legitimate arguments that can be raised against the use of active nonviolence by the Presbyterian LGBT equality movement. The history of social movements, however, also provides a number of illegitimate arguments which we can expect to see trotted out in response to any movement's nonviolent engagement of oppression. So that we can avoid wasting our time discussing these bogus arguments, I address six of them here.

6.1 "TERRORISM"

American social movement history adequately demonstrates that those powerholders who are vehemently opposed to a justice movement will inevitably seek to construct a smear-by-association which plasters the movement with whatever demonic label happens to be in vogue. Early union organizers were dismissed by wealthy business interests as "bolsheviks". Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement were called "Communists". More recently, pundits have referred to the U.S. anti-war movement as "objectively pro-fascist". It is inevitable, then, as surely as the sun rises in the east, that some people will refer to any mass, militant, nonviolent LGBT equality movement or its leaders as "terrorists". Such a label is nearly always chosen as a dismissive tactic to switch off critical thinking and silence debate. Let us learn to see such labeling attempts for what they are, acknowledge them as smear tactics, and move on to topics that matter.

6.2 "FREEDOM OF RELIGION"

The buzzphrase "freedom of religion" is occasionally brought forth both by supporters of oppression, and sometimes by those weakly opposed to oppression who somehow think that the oppression will go away if we simply wait long enough, as a shorthand way of asserting the claim: "you're not allowed to criticize my religious belief, nor by extension are you allowed to criticize any oppressive rules that I make, words that I speak, or actions that I take if they're grounded in those religious beliefs." So if, for example, I make the statement "The Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Faith and Message statement is both sexist and heterosexist; Southern Baptists should change it," then a supporter of the current Baptist Faith and Message statement might respond "you're trying to interfere with my freedom of religion." Such an argument incorrectly twists the U.S. Constitution's protection from state-decreed religious doctrine into the assertion of a non-existent "protection from criticism of religious beliefs." The U.S. Constitution provides no protection against criticism of belief, nor does it protect an oppressor either from nonviolent sanctions applied by a movement, or from any social stigma applied against the oppressor by society at large. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, for example, ground their racist ideology in part in appeals to Christian scripture, yet we don't commonly hear claims that we shouldn't criticize or stigmatize the KKK because to do so would "deny them freedom of religion".

A similar ploy is the appeal to "freedom of speech" in an attempt to deflect criticism or to ward off justice movements. Such an approach is part of a growing, and increasingly sophisticated, manipulation of progressive rhetoric to support anti-progressive causes. A case study of the use of this tactic took place a few years ago during the Stop Doctor Laura campaign. When in 2000, Paramount Domestic Television produced and marketed a prime-time national TV talk show by Laura Schlessinger, an intensely sexist and heterosexist radio talk show host, activists mobilized a national campaign to nonviolently get the TV show off the air. The Stop Doctor Laura campaign successfully weakened key pillars of Schlessinger's support by convincing advertisers to refrain from buying ad time during the show, picketing TV stations that aired the show, and maintaining a public web site that documented Schlessinger's anti-gay statements and increasing misrepresentations of the truth. As the campaign began to have a real impact and advertisers began to pull their ad spots, Schlessinger and her handlers accused the Stop Doctor Laura campaign of "interfering with her freedom of speech." Here was an attempt to appeal to a deeply-held progressive value by invoking an intentional distortion of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Constitution protects citizens from *government-imposed* speech controls, not from social or economic sanctions imposed on an oppressor by a mass movement. Had the Stop Doctor Laura campaign petitioned Congress to pass legislation banning Schlessinger from access to the public airwaves, that would have been an attempt to use unconstitutional legal means. The campaign, however, did not choose a legislative

approach, but rather designed a campaign based on active nonviolence which successfully resulted in a nonviolent coercion: in March 2001, Paramount announced that they had cancelled production of the program. Schlessinger's charge of "violating my freedom of speech" was nothing more than a red herring. As the Stop Doctor Laura campaign aptly put it, "she has the right to freedom of speech, but not the right to a TV show."

6.3 "TOLERANCE"

Over roughly the past ten years, we've seen a general trend of the elevation by social progressives of an ethic of "tolerance" to the point where it trumps the ethics of justice and right-relatedness. Such an approach to ethics is a mistake when "tolerance" is used to mean "ideological tolerance" or "tolerance of all ethics or beliefs". To elevate the principle "we should tolerate all religious beliefs" above the principle "we should work for equality" allows anti-progressive, anti-egalitarian movements to provide rhetorical cover for their goals by invoking the magic word "tolerance". Consider the following not-so-hypothetical conversation:

LGBT supporter: "I believe that the Roman Catholic Church should stop teaching that homosexuality is 'objectively disordered', and I'm going to work to get them to change that teaching."

Anti-LGBT person: "That's very intolerant of you! People should be allowed to believe whatever they want! Any attempt by you to change Roman Catholic doctrine is religious intolerance!"

Here we see an argument quite similar in form to the "freedom of religion" argument I discussed above: a principle which on its face appears to be progressive is subverted to provide ideological support for an anti-egalitarian belief system.

A cursory reading of the Christian New Testament, however, reveals a striking truth: *Jesus was intolerant of toxic religion*. Intolerance of harmful ideologies is Christlike. Some day I'm going to start a 12-step recovery program, "toleraholics anonymous", for people who feel it's so important to tolerate every belief system that they find themselves unable to criticize even the most oppressive of ideologies. "Step 1 to recovery: repeat 10 times every day, 'Jesus was intolerant of toxic religion.'" As a corollary, universal tolerance of all ideologies, whether those ideologies are based in religious doctrine or not, is *not* Christlike. Consider the following exchange from Matthew 15:1-14 (NRSV):

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands before they eat." [Jesus] answered them... "You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said:

"This people honors me with their lips
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines."

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit."

This passage is one of dozens in the gospels in which Jesus rejects the Israelite purity ethic, asserting that a person's quality as a human being can't be measured by one's level of adherence to standards of physical cleanness or uncleanness. Although the end of purity is of critical importance in any discussion about homosexuality and Christian ethics, my point here is not to discuss purity per se, but rather to point out that in this passage Jesus is openly hostile towards a particular set of religious teachings. He sharply and publicly criticizes the teachings of a religious group which had, in his view, distorted the true intent of Judaism and perverted it into a system of privilege for themselves. What we do *not* see from Jesus is any hint of 21st-century liberalism's "universal ideological tolerance" ethic. Jesus does not say "now, personally I disagree with what Pharisaic Judaism teaches, but since we need to tolerate all belief systems, I won't criticize their teachings, nor will I attempt to change those teachings." Jesus asserted that he was right, that the Pharisees were wrong, and that they, not he, needed to change.

In response to his first round of criticism, Jesus' disciples attempt to bring him around to 21st-century kindergarten speech ethics: if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. "The Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said," warn the disciples. "Perhaps," they might be thinking, "we need to send Jesus to a sensitivity training or religious tolerance workshop. Clearly, he's gone too far. He's criticizing people's religious beliefs!" Jesus' response to his own disciples' criticism is not to mitigate or backpedal from his words, but to strengthen them. The Pharisees are blind guides of the blind, and God will eventually "uproot" their religious ideology. This intolerant approach to toxic ideology is so alien to most American progressives that it can seem incomprehensible. But there it is, straight from Jesus' words in scripture.

My intent here is not to argue for Christian triumphalism, nor is it to argue that contemporary religious practices that incorporate purity rituals are in error. Rather, my claim here is much simpler: not all religious beliefs are good; not all religious beliefs are consistent with God's will for creation. Some religious beliefs are "plants which God has not planted". We should feel free to engage in criticism of toxic religion as the first step towards uprooting it.

The 20th and 21st-century reluctance by social progressives to engage in criticism of toxic religious doctrine has been noted by a variety of scholars. Roman Catholic LGBT scholar John J. McNeill, in his essay "Homosexuality: Challenging the Church to Grow" published in *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate*, paraphrases sociologist Robert Bellah's book *Habits of the Heart*, writing that "[Bellah and his co-authors] point out that the liberal middle class has a therapeutic mentality which is uncomfortable with moral argument. Those who share the therapeutic attitude embrace pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual, and conclude that there is no common moral ground and no publicly relevant morality." McNeill argues, and I would agree, that such an individualistic approach to ethics is dysfunctional in the long term because it has led its adherents to compromise on basic issues of human rights and human dignity. The compromise on principles of equality in the name of "tolerance" is a mistake. The ideology of white supremacy, for example, is not an ideology that we should tolerate, nor is it an ideology with which we should compromise. We don't negotiate a deal with segregationists that allows non-whites to sit at the lunch counters on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while allowing segregation on Tuesdays and Thursdays. White supremacy is an unacceptable, unChristlike ideology every day of the week; we shouldn't tolerate it at all. We should treat with similar intolerance any ideology of heterosexism, regardless of whether that ideology claims to ground itself in religious teachings.

We need to move beyond an ethic of "tolerance" and shift to an ethic of "acceptance" and "rejection". We need a society that *accepts* people regardless of race, biological sex, gender, or sexual orientation. We

need a society that *accepts* diversity in non-harmful religious beliefs and practices. But on the other side of the same coin, we need a society that *rejects*, not tolerates, anti-egalitarian ideologies that seek to discriminate on the basis of race, biological sex, gender, or sexual orientation. We need a society that *rejects* toxic religious beliefs and practices, not legislatively, but through the collective nonviolent actions of the entire society.

Post-9/11 discourse in the U.S. provides some hope that a broad spectrum of Americans have started to realize that not all religious ideologies are morally equivalent. We now have a good understanding that toxic religion exists and that we shouldn't ask people to "tolerate" it. We've seen such an approach applied not only to Islamic fundamentalism, but also to some forms of anti-gay Christian fundamentalism. As an example, Jerry Falwell was widely castigated by writers from throughout the political spectrum for his September 2001 comments scapegoating gay and lesbian people for the World Trade Center attacks. On the September 13 edition of Pat Robertson's 700 Club television program, Falwell said:

"I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle... I point the finger in their face and say "you helped this [terrorism] happen."

Falwell's comments were based on his deeply held religious belief in "covenantalism", the Christian fundamentalist assertion that the U.S.A. is in a special covenantal relationship with God, and that God will punish the United States when its citizens fail to adhere to God's rules by violating the sexual behavior codes which fundamentalism reads into the Christian canon. Yet despite the fact that Falwell's scapegoating was based on strongly-held religious beliefs, the response he received wasn't one of tolerance, it was one of rejection. Social progressives need to continue to cultivate similar societal rejections of anti-gay theology and ideology wherever it occurs.

6.4 "VIOLENCE"

There is a high probability that supporters of heterosexist systems will assert that any nonviolent movement to dismantle heterosexism is guilty of "violence". Soulforce Inc's coining of the nebulous term "spiritual violence" has unfortunately aggravated the problem, since supporters of anti-gay doctrine are now able to claim that any attempt to change their theology is "spiritual violence" against them.

The history of social movements tells us that powerholders will quite often accuse justice movements both of violence and of violations of the powerholders' rights. Business owners claimed that the labor union movement violated their "right" to control their property and to dictate the terms of employment. Segregationists claimed that the sit-in movement was "violence" against storeowners because it deprived the owners of the "right" to determine whom they would do business with. We need to recognize that any class of people who benefit from a system of privilege will always see attempts to dismantle that system as both "violent" and "in violation of their rights".

6.5 "ATTACKING THE PEACE, PURITY, AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH"

This is a popular one in the PCUSA. The argument asserts that those who seek equal treatment for LGBT people are rabble-rousers, troublemakers, or perhaps "outside agitators", a charge leveled with equal disdain against Martin Luther King Jr's Southern Christian Leadership Council. Even as the Presbyterian right threatens to split the PCUSA if the denomination takes one step closer to equal rights for gay and

lesbian leaders, they simultaneously blame progressives for the fact that the *anti-gay* forces have threatened the split. "Stay down there where you belong, in your second class status," the LGBT community is told, "because your demands for equal treatment will wreck our fragile peace and unity."

We've heard this argument before, raised in the 1950's against participants in the Montgomery bus boycott. King responded to this argument in 1961 in a speech to Fellowship of the Concerned, and his response is as applicable today as it was then:

"I remember when I was in Montgomery, Alabama, one of the white citizens came to me one day and said - and I think he was very sincere about this - that in Montgomery for all of these years we have been such a peaceful community, we have had so much harmony in race relations, and then you people have started this movement and boycott, and it has done so much to disturb race relations, and we just don't love the Negro like we used to love him, because you have destroyed the harmony and the peace that we once had in race relations."

"And I said to him, in the best way I could say, and I tried to say it in nonviolent terms: We have never had peace in Montgomery, Alabama; we have never had peace in the South. We have had a negative peace, which is merely the absence of tension; we've had a negative peace in which the Negro patiently accepted his situation and his plight, but we've never had true peace, we've never had a positive peace, and what we're seeking now is to develop this positive peace. For we must come to see that peace is not merely the absence of some negative force, it is the presence of a positive force. True peace is not merely the absence of tension, but it is the presence of justice and brotherhood."

As King put the white community on notice in 1961, so we need to put the PCUSA on notice today:

We have never had peace in the Presbyterian Church. We have never had peace in Christianity. We have had only brief intervals of negative peace, intervals of the absence of overt conflict, in which those decreed by church doctrine to be second-class citizens silently accepted their oppression. Peace within the Presbyterian Church will not come until after all people are free to fill leadership positions without regard to their biological sex, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Peace will only come when there is justice, and that justice will not come as long as the PCUSA values the idol of unity more than the gospel.

A mass, militant, nonviolent, strategic movement to redeem the PCUSA from its entrenched heterosexism is no threat to the peace, purity, and unity of the church. Rather, such a movement would seek not King's "negative peace", but would seek the true peace of God. Any claims to the contrary suggest a deep misunderstanding of how God works through open conflict to bring about positive change.

6.6 "YOU'LL ONLY MAKE IT WORSE BY RESISTING"

Victim-blaming is a popular sport in American culture, particularly when the victims are members of a disliked class of people. A final specious argument commonly used to criticize social justice movements is the assertion that the oppressed are to blame for their own oppression; had they simply stayed silent and not asked for their rights, they would have won them eventually. Attempts to make this argument are already well under way, as Rev. Don Stroud noted in a recent essay on the TAMFS web site:

"Some have suggested that GLBT and allied activists' 'untoward' advocacy for the equality of the GLBT members with the other members of the church caused a predictable backlash from the fundamentalist/reactionary element in the PC(USA). It was suggested that we had only ourselves to blame for the growth of the so-called 'confessing church movement,' which was offended by the prospect of a fully inclusive church."

It's an unfortunate commentary on our historical ignorance that these types of arguments keep coming up again and again. Martin Luther King Jr. faced identical criticisms throughout his civil rights work. In response to the victim-blaming argument by numerous critics who charged that King's nonviolent tactics caused violence, King wrote the following response in his famous Letter from Birmingham City Jail:

"You [have] asserted that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But can this assertion be logically made? Isn't this like condemning the robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth... precipitated the misguided popular mind to make him drink the hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because His unique God-consciousness and never-ceasing devotion to his will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see... that it is immoral to urge an individual to withdraw his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest precipitates violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber."

Social movement history teaches us that in a struggle for justice, the oppressors nearly always intensify their attacks in the early stages of a conflict. "When the Domination System catches the merest whiff of God's new order," writes Walter Wink, "by an automatic reflex it mobilizes all its might to suppress that order... The Powers are seldom content merely to win; they must win overwhelmingly, in order to demoralize opposition before it can gain momentum. Always there is the gratuitous violence, the mocking derision..." Fundamentalist backlash within the PCUSA is not, then, a sign that the LGBT equality movement is doing something wrong; it's a sign that the movement is doing something right. As Gandhi's thumbnail summary of social movements puts it: "First, they laugh at you; then, they ignore you; then, they fight you; then, you win."

7. CONCLUSION

"Whenever people discover that they have rights," notes Sister Joan Chittister, summarizing Pope John XXIII, "they have the responsibility to claim them." For some 20 years now, LGBT people and their allies in the PCUSA have repeatedly sought to claim those rights via persuasion and the legislative process. These attempts have successfully raised the issue, but have failed to secure equality. If we believe that the ideology of heterosexual supremacy is as firmly entrenched within major segments of American Christianity as the ideology of white supremacy was entrenched within the former states of the confederacy in the 1950's, it then takes no great leap of logic to conclude that it will take a mass, militant, nonviolent movement of the same magnitude as America's civil rights movement to cure Christianity of its malaise. Are we ready to build that movement? Are we ready to adopt nonviolence as policy? Are we ready to recover the active nonviolence taught by Jesus? Are we ready to put in the long hours necessary to network and form alliances with dozens, hundreds of potential ally organizations? Are we prepared to treat prosecutions based on G6.0106b as a form of domestic battering, and encourage society to impose social stigma against the attackers? Are we ready to love our enemies while at the same time refusing to cooperate with their unjust laws? Are we prepared to "scream loudly and continuously"? If we are, then there remains hope for the Christian LGBT equality movement. If we are not, if we instead fall back on

the naive hope that continued attempts solely at persuasion and legislation will lead to justice, then we may wake up one morning to find the PCUSA's own equality movement crushed by a well-oiled, well-funded patriarchal machine which has no qualms about leaving a trail of brutalized lives in its wake.

The time has come for us to awaken to a new means of engaging the struggle. Active nonviolence has succeeded in dozens of historical case studies where persuasion, legislation, and even violent insurrection had all been tried and failed. Active nonviolence is what Jesus taught his followers as a way of resisting Roman oppression, economic exploitation, and slavery. Active nonviolence drove the British empire out of India. It broke the back of American racial segregation in the 1960's. It is, today, the best hope for the future success of the Christian LGBT equality movement.

8. RECOMMENDED READING

8.1 READING FOR LOCAL AND SMALL GROUP STUDY

I list these three texts in the order that I'd recommend reading them.

Staughton Lynd and Alice Lynd, editors, *Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History*, Orbis Books, 1995. An excellent collection of 56 essays. Most are quite engaging and easy to read. This book would work well as a half-year study in which participants read 2 essays each week.

Ken Butigan with Patricia Bruno, O.P., *From Violence to Wholeness: A Ten Part Program in the Spirituality and Practice of Active Nonviolence*, Pace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolence Center, 1420 W. Bartlett Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89106. (702)648-2281. Web: www.paceebene.org. The *_From Violence to Wholeness_* text is a Christian-grounded study program suitable for ten weekly two-hour study sessions. It covers both nonviolence as a spiritual practice as well as basic nonviolent social movement theory. References to Christian theology are generally low-key enough that the text could easily be used by an interfaith group. The text suffers from occasional vagueness in the specification of some of the exercises, as well as from what appears to be an incorrect description of the nonviolent change process in portions of chapter 5, but overall the content is a good overview of basic nonviolence principles.

Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*, Galilee / Doubleday, 1998. This book is a lay reader's version of Wink's award-winning Christian scholarly treatment of nonviolence, *Engaging the Powers*.

8.2 READING FOR MOVEMENT LEADERS

Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*, Praeger Publishers, 1994. The first two chapters propose a series of strategic principles for nonviolent movements; most of the remaining chapters are case studies.

Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max, *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists (3rd edition)*, Seven Locks Press 2001. A widely-used, well-written, in-depth secular treatment of how to build an organization and a movement that brings about positive social change. Places a heavy

emphasis on how to sway politicians to get legislation passed. This is not a text on nonviolence theory or practice, but its material on campaign planning is crucial.

Robert Bray, *SPIN Works: A Media Guidebook for the Rest of Us*, available from the SPIN Project at www.spinproject.org. This is a training manual that teaches activists critical media communications skills.

Bill Moyer, *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements*, New Society Publishers, 2001.

Martin Oppenheimer and George Lakey, *A Manual for Direct Action: Strategy and Tactics for Civil Rights and All Other Nonviolent Protest Movements*, Quadrangle Books, 1965. Now out of print but still available from used book resellers, this 130-page paperback was one of the early "bibles" of the civil rights movement.

Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Porter Sargent publishers, 1973. This is a 3-volume series, so be sure to buy all three books. The series is Gene Sharp's classic in-depth presentation of secular nonviolence theory. Unsurpassed to this day.

Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, Fortress Press, 1992. Wink's award-winning scholarly treatment of Christian nonviolence theory.

Walter Wink, editor, *Peace is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation*, Orbis Books, 2000. Reprints of 55 essays taken from 85 years of FOR journals. A good mixture of theory and practice.

COPYRIGHT: "Turning Point" is copyright 2002 Bruce M. Hahne. Non-profit, noncommercial electronic redistribution of this essay is permitted and encouraged. For all other forms of reprint or redistribution, please contact the author.

The additional verse to "When the Saints Go Marching In" in section 5 is reprinted here with the permission of Ann Patrick Ware.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Bruce Hahne is a mostly-armchair student of the use of active nonviolence for social change. He lives in Sunnyvale, California and is a member of the More Light church First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto. He can be reached at hahne@netcom.com

REFERENCES: To avoid making this essay longer than it already is, I've intentionally refrained from including footnotes and a formal bibliography. If you need page numbers for any of the material that I quote in this essay, please contact me.

DISCLAIMER: This essay represents my opinions. I don't speak for any of the organizations mentioned in this essay, nor do I speak for my church.

WEB AND EMAIL FOLLOWUP TO THIS ESSAY: Text and PDF (Adobe Acrobat) copies of this essay will be available at www.newvisionsproject.org/turningpoint.html until at least the end of 2002. To subscribe to a public email list created for public discussion of the issues raised by this essay, send any email message to turningpoint-subscribe@topica.com