

ecumenical
task force*

of the

NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.

6431 GIRARD AVENUE
NIAGARA FALLS N.Y. 14304



photo by William D. Cecil, Jr.

*
to address
THE
LOVE CANAL
disaster

an interfaith response

PROGRESS REPORT II
OF
THE ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.

6431 GIRARD AVENUE
NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK
AUGUST 1, 1980 - SEPTEMBER 15, 1981

The Temple stands unfinished...
until all men are housed
in fairness and
dignity

PREPARED BY
EXECUTIVE BOARD
STAFF
AND ADVOCATES

COORDINATED BY
SR. MARGEEN HOFFMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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We are also grateful to First Presbyterian Church, Lewiston, for the use of their facilities in printing this report.

Perhaps most important of all are those who have gone the extra mile directly contributing to the creation of this report: Sr. Jane Frances Gregoire, OSF for the beautiful calligraphy used throughout the report; the efforts of Barbara Hanna and Betty Watts who typed copy upon copy with constant good will and patience; the highest accolades to Betty Watts for her steadfastness and good humor under deadlines.

We are ever grateful to Barbara Hanna, Betty Watts and Diane Sheley for their personal enthusiasm, attention to detail, talent for knowing what and how to do it---they are, quite simply, the best.

And we say thank you to all of the ETF families, and Sister Jane, Tonya, Ad, Harry, Brenda and Timmy who continue to love us.

*Permission is granted to quote from material in this report when due acknowledgement is given to the ETF or author.

**Additional copies of this report and Progress Report I may be purchased for \$8.00 by contacting the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, Inc., 6431 Girard Avenue, Niagara Falls, N.Y. 14304
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FOREWORD

Meanwhile, let us
go forward on the road
which has brought us
to where we are today.

Philippians 3:16

1980-1981: A YEAR OF STEWARDSHIP

*STEWARDSHIP: /to be entrusted/caretaker/to manage carefully/
to be responsible for/to reverence/to be accountable/a mission.*

If there has been a recurring theme in the deliberations and activity of the Ecumenical Task Force this past year, it has been one of stewardship. The maturing of the ETF can be attributed to a dedicated and committed team comprised of board members, staff, volunteers and advisors.

Throughout this report you will see persons and groups who reflect on and value this trust, who recognize that reverence for nature is compatible with a willingness to accept responsibility for a creative stewardship of the earth.

It is difficult then, to single out among the many, any particular individual who embodies and practices the kind of stewardship of which we are speaking. However, one such person repeatedly comes to mind, a woman of determination, compassion, conviction, sensitivity, articulateness: a woman who can speak with poetry about the land, the water, the air - but at the same time act with tough pragmatism about pollution, contamination, the dangers of toxic wastes to the health and safety of people.

It is, then, Barbara Morrison, Environmental Attorney, to whom we dedicate our second year Progress Report. Barbara Morrison - an authentic steward.

-the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier

*"I have called you by name....."
-Isaiah 43:1*

*"We cannot possibly give up speaking
of things we have seen and heard."
-Acts 4:20*

THE WAY I SEE IT ...
REFLECTIONS ON ECUMENISM IN ACTION

I had a fear at the beginning of the Ecumenical Task Force's existence that the broad differences we hold philosophically and theologically would someday catch up with us and become our undoing. The fear would come upon me when we seemed to be our most unified and successful: the time of the evacuation to motels; the time when our own political pressure was strongest; the time when the scientific community seemed to be joining our cause. However, along with that fear was a deep sense of trust in our common faith -- a vision that penetrated beyond personal needs and theologies.

Our Niagara-on-the Lake Evaluation Days (January 12 and February 23, 1981) demonstrated that the trust we have is real. The ETF can survive with those differences intact.

We were able to affirm a dedication to human needs; a dedication to recovering the land so badly torn by physical abuse. We could affirm dedication to involving the inter-faith community: at congregational, state and national levels in a problem of stewardship. We could affirm our responsibility to speak to government and to exert pressure for proper action at all levels of legislative, executive and judicial action.

We have looked at our collective self, and seen our needs. We do not have the scientific expertise to know all the answers to the many questions we raise. We do not have great political power. All churches do not hear us. Perhaps our biggest weakness is in our immediate geographical area with the people we represent. Many local people do not recognize the problem. It seems a whole segment of local society is in the denial phase of a situation that is truly a death process.

We have wrestled to make rational determinations based on ETF's size, expertise, limitations, and the problem itself. We study, pray, dialogue with one another -- inside and outside the Ecumenical Task Force, to come up with possible solutions.

With courage we tackle various phases of the problem: seek education and direction from scientific specialists, educate our local community, serve the greater church community by acting as a prototype, continue to serve human needs, and continue to work together in the harmony that has made the efforts of the past two years a joy.

We look back and see the people from Love Canal now relocating. The government did take action -- and it took combined force from all of us involved. We see the local administrators of Love Canal relocation and restructuring turning to us in some degree for assistance. But maybe our biggest accomplishment is that the Love Canal situation is called a disaster by the world now. The ETF named it, and others proceeded to act on our definition. From this point, man-made disasters must be recognized as disasters and treated as such.

We must seek new ways to address these disasters that do not occur all in a day, that creep up on a community, that drain it of life and spirit, that create denial as they grow, that do not fit neat definitions.

Those future disasters may be easier to identify because of us, but we cannot say with any certitude that they will be easier to solve.

We may be challenged in the months ahead as never before. The ways we meet these challenges will test the strength of our beliefs. We cannot say we will always resolve our own differences, but we will continue to work and grow. We will continue to treat our differences respectfully, and not let them impede the work at hand.

"And I said to you: Do not take fright, do not be afraid... Yahweh your God goes in front of you... In the wilderness, too, you saw him: how Yahweh carried you, as one carries a child, all along the road you travelled on the way to this place..."

--Deuteronomy 1:29-32

Terri Mudd
ETF Executive Board

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

EXECUTIVE BOARD STATEMENT

At a November 1980 meeting, the Executive Board of the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier affirmed the following statement:

The proper disposal of hazardous chemical and radioactive wastes is becoming a major world-wide problem. Its significance is especially clear to us, because such disposal has seriously affected those who live on the Niagara Frontier. Two of the major repositories for radioactive waste in the United States are located in Western New York. More than two hundred hazardous waste dumpsites have been identified in Niagara and Erie Counties. The only two licensed "secure" landfills for such wastes beginning in mid-November have prompted, in part, decisions by these companies to expand their facilities.

Recent New York State hearings concerning expansion of licensed disposal facilities have raised serious scientific questions re: suitability of sites and methods of disposal. One of the chartered tasks of the Ecumenical Task Force has been to advocate for the complete neutralization of chemical and radio-active waste as the only viable solution to the dumping of hazardous wastes.

We have been witnesses to the severe spiritual and emotional suffering of residents of the Love Canal community. In addition, we are especially aware of the distress of persons living and working near the proposed sites for new landfills. Such distress must surely be heeded and alleviated.

For these reasons, the ETF Executive Board has recently voted to go on record as being opposed to construction of or further expansion of any hazardous chemical waste or radioactive dumpsite on the Niagara Frontier.

Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Episcopal Book of Common Prayer

THE TURN OF THE NATIVE

J.F. Power

At a recent study-day, members of the Ecumenical Task Force Executive Board were asked to respond to the question, "Who Am I?". My answer began: "I am a native of the Niagara Frontier who is appalled by the violence done to our air, our water, and our land during my life-time, and by the effects--still but partially known--which that violence is having on human life." Now I am quite unaccustomed to thinking of myself as a "native", and, by comparison with those whose ancestors inhabited this region long before Europeans explored it, my claim to the title is slim indeed. Nevertheless, trusting that my spontaneous self-description pointed to something deeper than an accident of birth, I have been trying to let that part of me spell out its identity and indignation without the qualifications and nuances that would be necessary if I were writing as a citizen or as a theologian. Perhaps the native in me will be heard by the native in others, so that they may identify with, rather than be offended by, the direct and sometimes contentious language which a native may level at those who have invaded his turf. In any case, I propose to let this native have his turn to speak.

* * * * *

We always knew they were doing it to our air. Our eyes and noses provided evidence that could be overwhelming at times. It was, we assumed, the inevitable by-product of having the chemical industry at the base of the local economy, and with a little good fortune or foresight you could live in a neighborhood that was not directly downwind.

In the fifties we began to realize they were doing it to our water. I had taken swimming lessons in the Lower Niagara a few years before, and there was no thought of a problem. The river didn't look any different in the early fifties and we still swam there, but the word was out: it was polluted. It was hard to believe when you knew the sheer volume of water involved, but eventually nostrils and eyes would offer their evidence. After being away from the area for a number of years, I was walking down into the gorge at Devil's Hole; half way down I could smell the river, and as I got closer. I could see that the limpid whirling waters of my memory had become an opaque green lifeless mass. It was true: one fifth of the world's supply of fresh water--the contents of the Great Lakes system--was polluted by the time it reached the Lower Niagara.

In the seventies we discovered that they'd been doing it to our land!

Perhaps we should have known...but who'd have thought? Now that we have been forced to think about it, contamination of land turns out to be something more threatening than earlier forms, because it is far more lasting in itself and in its effects. And it is more disheartening. By the seventies we knew that the quality of air could be improved considerably through governmental regulation and incentives; a fresh supply of air was always coming from somewhere, and as soon as a little care was taken of what we put into it, it began to clear up. We'd even seen tangible results of efforts to clean up the Great Lakes, as marine life responded to the less polluted waters that came our way. But what do you do when your land is poisoned by deadly substances that won't go away? It won't help just to stop dumping and hope that nature will clear it up. A massive clean-up of upper Great Lakes water won't help here. We have only so much land, and parts of it are forever contaminated. The irreversibility of this violence--however vaguely perceived--may account for some of the anger that seeped to the surface in Love Canal very soon after the chemicals. When the land you live on is found to be hazardous, what do you do?

The general public today might see contamination of land as different from that of air and water in a way that could make it more excusable or even legitimate. Unlike open air and bodies of water, which are among "the best things in life" belonging to everyone, land is privately owned. Industry might think that the land they were "filling" was--in view of legitimate purchase--their private property to do with as they saw fit. Assuming for the moment that toxic waste could be contained within a given tract of land and prevented from contaminating air or water, this situation would seem to be different.

The native as native, however, admits no such distinction. He senses instinctively that the land, no less than the air or the water, is in some fundamental sense ours. If ancient custom decrees that it be parceled off in private tracts, the intent is that good use be made of it by one who is its temporary steward. The land remains ultimately ours, and ought to serve our common good and that of generations to come. So, even if I personally do not own a square inch of Niagara Frontier real estate, still I am part of a people who claim this land as our own; we cannot abdicate responsibility for what is happening to any part of it.

This native intuition, which could seem romantic and unrealistic, is being vindicated by recent scientific reports which raise serious doubts whether any existing landfills are in fact "containing" toxic chemicals in the earth. The evidence strongly suggests that contaminated land will continue to pollute underground waters and open waterways for an indefinite future, and that it always holds the potential for polluting air--especially if disturbed. The world we inhabit

is a total system where one element cannot be ruined without endangering all the others--to say nothing of the lives that depend on them--those millions of lives downstream from us in geographical space or in the flow of time.

* * * * *

None of us is very accustomed to giving the native his turn to speak, and that, perhaps, has been the root of our problem. We have been repressing his voice and his identity even within ourselves--repressing that part of us which is most in touch with our environment and our roots. Had we not been so estranged from the native within, we would not, perhaps, have been so insensitive to what we were doing to our environment.

Yes, however unconsciously, we have been doing it. If native indignation expressed itself above in terms of what "they" have done to "our" environment, a more inclusive view will acknowledge that we are all implicated to the degree of our awareness and our ability to change existing practices. In a democracy, wrote Abraham Heschel, "while some may be guilty, all are responsible."

We have to believe that it is not too late to give the native his turn to speak--not too late to listen attentively to what he is saying and to include it in the many-sided public discussion that must go on. Who knows, in listening to him we may be hearing the voice of the One who fashioned us and entrusted to our creative care the cosmos we inhabit.

Rev. Joseph Power, OSFS, Ph.D.
Vice-Chairman, ETF

I have often wondered what punishment the Great Spirit and our Mother, the Earth, would have in store for us should we violate the natural laws of this environment. And, I wondered out loud several times during my life about our current generation abusing the soil, and what does it--the soil--have to say? After seeing Love Canal and the terrible aftermath, I am convinced of those answers and what it has spoken. I shall now take those answers and speak them to the rest of our people.

--Statement of Spiritual Leader of Native Americans
upon seeing Love Canal, August 29, 1981

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Many the gifts ...
one in the Lord.

Romans 12:5

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*Until July, 1981

Disasters will continue. Calls will come to persons like ourselves, untrained and busy. But disasters cannot be planned any more than our opportunities to serve as Christians. God's call to us "to come over to Macedonia" (Acts 16:9), never has all its implications neatly arranged. But... it comes with the impact that we can do no other, but to go.

No, I wasn't trained, but we cannot wait to serve only in those areas where we feel a special competency. One must be prepared to follow the leading of the Spirit whenever it calls us.

-- James E. Tomlinson, Church of the Brethren

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Remembering Yahweh's achievements,
remembering your marvels in the past,
I reflect on all that you did,
I ponder on all your achievements.

— Psalm 77:11-12

"We're all merely a grain of sand on one huge beach,
yet each grain is capable of properly balancing the
whole."

— Hugh Kaufman

North Smithfield Ecology Festival,
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

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WHO WE ARE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, Inc., (ETF) is an association of the Interfaith Community of Niagara and Erie Counties and Western New York State, joined in a common effort to address community problems arising from chemical and radioactive wastes. While claiming no monopoly on ethical motivation, we believe that our religious perspective offers something unique to the situation and differentiates us from other groups of concerned citizens or agencies.

Goals to meet this Purpose are as follows:

DIRECT AID RESPONSE

To serve as an advocate for the relief of the physical, psychosocial and economic distress of persons living in areas affected by chemical and radioactive contamination.

PUBLIC POLICY RESPONSE

To provide an advocacy voice of the religious community on behalf of affected populations to insure that their total needs are met through government, private agencies, and religious organizations. This assumes a role based on the principle that justice is a God-given human right.

To provide an advocacy voice that will contribute to long-range solutions to the problem of chemical and radioactive wastes both on the Niagara Frontier and throughout the nation.

EDUCATION RESPONSE

To make local and national religious organizations and individuals aware and knowledgeable of problems which can result from the transportation, storage, and disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes.

To develop this awareness of our common responsibilities into an involvement and commitment of human and material resources which can result in a model for the religious community's response to manmade, technological disasters.

- While we make no claim to neutrality, but because we represent a general concern rather than a particular interest, we offer a mediating possibility in the midst of complex and emotionally charged situations and we strive to work for justice through understanding and reconciliation.
- Furthermore, even in the face of institutionalized violence to human life and well-being, we renounce for our purposes even the threat of violence, and we seek to employ means that are peaceful as well as effective.
- While thus offering our distinct perspective and contribution, we seek to work cooperatively with other organizations, agencies and officials dealing with the transportation, disposal, and storage of chemical and radioactive wastes. We urge the community-at-large to join in the various efforts that relate to controls, safety precautions and elimination of hazardous and toxic materials.

Objectives designed to meet our goals are the following:

- . To have available to residents Interfaith Advocates who are trained in skills of pastoral, family, and crisis counseling, information and referral services.
- . To provide residents with unduplicated financial assistance in the form of grants or loans if criteria of need is met.
- . To offer a mediation and reconciliation role to individuals and resident organizations.
- . To comment at public hearings on behalf of affected populations in the form of statements, public comment, as expert witness, or legal involvement. e.g., amicus curiae status.
- . To maintain formal and informal contact with government officials on behalf of residents relative to decisions or legislation.

- . To develop a network system with other groups or individuals who share our common concern.
- . To consult with our Scientific/Technical Advisory Board to determine what ETF policy should be in specific areas.
- . To hold a Consultation with national judicatory/diocesan personnel to discuss the ETF model of response to technological, manmade disasters.
- . To inform and communicate with residents, church groups, government officials, agencies, organizations and individuals through the ETF newsletter Common Ground, films, brochures, seminars, presentations, Progress Reports, etc., what is happening locally and throughout the nation on related issues of environmental concern.
- . To develop a resource library and bibliography of relevant data for use by individuals and organizations.

The major ways in which the ETF program objectives will be evaluated in 1981-82 are the following:

- . To conduct Evaluation Days in January and February for the members of the ETF Executive Board and Staff.
- . To consult with various judicatory/diocesan personnel and funding agencies throughout the year to determine how they evaluate program activities of the ETF.
- . To conduct and report a 1981-82 Consultation with national denominational representatives. This meeting is to discuss the ETF concept, its programs and activities to determine the most effective manner in which the ETF and the nation's religious community can cooperate and share with each other their common concern of responding to manmade/technological accidents and disasters.
- . To hold inservice sessions for the members of the ETF Board, Staff, Volunteers and Constituency.

- . To publish Progress Reports and Updates on program activities.
- . To conduct informal/formal surveys among residents, agencies, organizations, and others on the work of the ETF and its model for action.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND POPULATION SERVICE AREA:

The Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, Inc. (ETF), presently serves the geographical area of Niagara and Erie Counties in the State of New York. Niagara County encompasses a total area of 532 sq. mi., and according to 1980 Preliminary Census figures has a total population of 226,508. Erie County encompasses 1058 sq. mi., and has a total population of 1,014,926.¹

Within Niagara and Erie Counties alone, there are 215 dumpsites², 35 of which are considered to be as hazardous as Love Canal in that chemicals buried in these areas are known to cause mutagenic (altered chromosomes), teratogenic (abnormal birth defects), and carcinogenic (cancer-causing) problems.

AGE RANGE OF POPULATIONS

The age range of the populations described previously, is from 0-99. Of particular concern is the damage these sites with known contamination of suspected origin, may cause on women of childbearing age, unborn fetuses, children, and those families who suffer daily low-level exposure.

The psychological trauma caused by stress from worry about health, economic loss, relocation, and pressure of public attention is incalculable as to age definition.

¹1979 Commercial Atlas & Marketing Guide, 110 Edition by Rand McNally, pg. 379.

²State of New York Office of Planning Services, Interagency Task Force on Hazardous Wastes, Waste Disposal Sites, March 1979.

THESE TIMES....

Several thousand years ago, the Old Testament Hebrews, oppressed in a foreign land, cried out their need. One of their people, Esther, had been chosen Queen of Babylon, and Mordecai, her foster father, reminded her of her special opportunity in seeking the deliverance of her people.

*And who knows whether you have not
come to the Kingdom for such a time
as this? (Esther 4:14)*

These times over the past two and one-half years have been crucial for the people of the Niagara Frontier who are the owners of a Love Canal, a Bloody Run (Hyde Park Landfill), and two hundred and fifteen identified hazardous and toxic wastes sites.

These times have been no less crucial for the religious community on the Niagara Frontier called to serve and respond to the resident victims of these waste lands.

Why have we been called to these times? It is the province of the religious community to address the ethical questions underlying the disasters of Love Canal and Bloody Run. We are called, like Esther, to times like this to witness to creation, redemption, stewardship, justice and hope.

Our role is both pastoral and prophetic. We are called to examine technologies which sustain or destroy life. Choices about the rights of residents living near these life-threatening waste lands have brought us into the courts of our legal system, for intrinsically, these are matters of justice.

At times we are tempted to cry out with Moses: "Lord, why did you send me on such a mission?" (Exodus 5:22) But as echoed by others in this report, we have come to appreciate and even welcome the task, for our mission knows no denomination, or doctrinal limits. The mission of stewardship binds us together.

Utilizing its resources and power in the 1980's, the Church can be prophet and worker, teacher and lobbyist, healer and catalyst. Signing resolutions and nodding sagely is not enough. Speaking for the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, I hope that the ecumenical community will step ahead as a life-shaping institution, not only as committed conscience, but also as bold initiator of active attempts to solve the destruction of our environment. We cannot be too patient or too willing to compromise. We must seek justice for all oppressed persons demeaned by institutional structures and misguided priorities. We must as pastors answer those who cry out in hurt and hunger for justice.

An informed ecumenical community needs to become an articulate and diligent practitioner of stewardship. Churchpeople can confront not only in prayer and organization, but in discussion, debate, and effective political action on behalf of Creation.

Yes, Love Canal and Bloody Run continue to be profound challenges.

The urgency of the task before us is very great.

Our resolve to meet this challenge is even greater.

Rev. Dr. James N. Brewster
Executive Board Chairman
Ecumenical Task Force

THE CRISIS CONTINUES

We can have abundance and an unspoiled environment if we are willing to pay the price. We must develop a land conscience that will inspire those daily acts of stewardship which will make America a more pleasant and more productive land. If enough people care enough about their continent to join in the fight for a balanced conservation program, this generation can proudly put its signature on the land. But this signature will not be meaningful unless we develop a land ethic. Only an ever-widening concept and higher ideal of conservation will enlist our finest impulses and move us to make the earth a better home for ourselves and for those as yet unborn.

Stewart L. Udall
The Quiet Crisis, 1963

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It is my privilege to present this second progress report of the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier. Proclaiming stewardship as a denominating theme, the ETF has, during the past year, focused its efforts to responsibly articulate, and then act upon, the mandate that we are to be caretakers of Creation, not only for ourselves, but for future generations.

The work of the Executive Board, Staff, Volunteers and Advisors to the ETF has been marked by an industry and conscientiousness equal to its arduous task. The task, however, could not go forward without the moral and financial support of our member denominations and the unequalled donation of hours of work by our volunteers and persons from the legal, scientific and technical professions.

A History And A Blueprint

Because this report is both a history of our past year and a companion to our first progress report, as well as a proposed blueprint for the future of the ETF and the ecumenical community's response to human-caused disaster, it may appear to be slightly different than the usual annual report of an organization.

The ETF has developed an expertise and many resources to help a community and its people cope with the myriad of problems resulting from the discovery of hazardous and toxic wastes in their neighborhoods. From our experiences on the Niagara Frontier, we would like to share our commitment and conviction that people in every region of our nation, should have the availability of an interfaith task force, should a "Love Canal" or "Bloody Run" be found in their community.

In the Progress Reports you will see what we have done and why we have done it. After reading through and reflecting on the reports, we hope you will be as convinced as we are that our response can result in a model able to be creatively replicated for future interfaith organizations addressing human-caused disasters.

A Proposal

It is our conviction that the ecumenical community has the resources and the genius to provide the ministry needed by the victims of human-caused disasters. To date, no proposed legislation, legal or technical actions by government or corporate industry comprehensively addresses the human side of the hazardous and toxic wastes problem.

We therefore urge the ecumenical community to be their advocate until that time comes when justice and God-given human rights will also be recognized by government and corporate entities. The issues involved are not only scientific and technological, but moral and ethical, and it is incumbent on each segment of society to address itself seriously to these issues.

The approach must begin with the realization that these are not "natural" disasters, but insidious disasters requiring a long term response while the debate and technology on how to remedy and prevent these disasters takes place.

In the reflective essay by Father Guy Peek (pages 105-108), we are gently prodded in our thinking to realize that persons cannot hope to live their lives apart from, or in opposition to, the interconnectedness of humanity and to the non-human part of creation.

And, most importantly,

Is your brother in the land and is
he in need?...then go out to him
and answer him and help him.

Deuteronomy 15:7

Concretely, some of the ways in which the ETF has met and come to grips with a number of key issues and concerns during 1980 and 1981 have been through three major goal responses defined during ETF Executive Board and Staff Evaluation days in January and February, 1981. The three goals, defined on pages 18 & 19, are Direct Aid Response, Public Policy Response, and Educational Response. The major responsibility for carrying out these responses lies in committees comprised of Board and Staff members, Page 11. Some of the major activities of these committees approved by the Executive Board and endorsed by the voting membership of the ETF are as follows:

Formation and Expansion of a
Scientific/Technical Advisory Board

To date, there are twenty members who make up the Scientific/Technical Advisory Board (pages 12 & 13). In varying degrees, these professionals have contributed their knowledge and assistance in bridging the gaps of information faced by our Board, Staff, and the affected community.

The guiding philosophy behind the Scientific/Technical Advisory Board is that economic viability, environmental quality, ethics, science, justice, and a host of other values are complementary, not mutually exclusive. In forming this group, we recognize that the problems on the Niagara Frontier are not only local, but national in scope. This effort is seen as a model for emphasizing the coordination and cooperation all disciplines have to offer to a multi-faceted problem.

The Administration of Consulting Services
by the Scientific/Technical Advisory Board of
The Ecumenical Task Force for the Love Canal
Area Revitalization Agency.

In April, 1981, the ETF was officially contracted with the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA), to administer and develop the consulting services of scientific and technical experts affiliated with the Ecumenical Task Force to enable LCARA to have objective, expert advice on which to base decisions concerning the technical reports of the Environmental Protection Agency, the NYS Department of Health and other data received concerning the Love Canal Area. The intention is that the data interpretation and expert critique will enable LCARA to monitor present situations at the canal area and to make rational and sound planning decisions for its future.

To this end, we added an environmental engineer to our staff to coordinate these activities. On September 17, 1981, we submitted our first interim report on available data to the Agency.

Amicus Curiae Status-Hyde Park
(Bloody Run) Landfill Suit

On April 3, 1981, the Ecumenical Task Force was granted amicus curiae (Friend of the Court) status by U.S. District Judge John T. Curtin. Our motion to intervene in the proceeding was based on the argument that there were unique legal and scientific issues raised by a Settlement Agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (plaintiff) and Hooker Chemicals and Plastics Corporation, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, et al, (defendants). In brief, the U.S. EPA and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Hooker, et al, had agreed out of court that Hooker would pay \$16.5 million to clean up the Hyde Park Landfill site, and the company would monitor the situation for thirty-five years using requisite remedial technology.

Again, our Scientific/Technical Advisory Board was instrumental in the judge's decision: ". . .the extreme complexity of the issues in this case argues for the court's accepting the proffered assistance of ETF's 'Board of Technical Experts'. In this regard, the court notes ETF has already submitted a professionally prepared report..."

In joint amicus with two Canadian environmental groups, our attorney, Barbara Morrison, prepared and submitted a brief to the court on June 30, 1981. A public hearing was granted and the hearings began on September 9, 1981; they will resume again October 1 - 7, 1981.

ETF National Consultation - 1981
"Perspectives On A Long-Term Disaster"

Carrying out one of the major objectives of the Educational Response goal, is the conducting of a consultation September 27-29, 1981 with key judicatory/diocesan persons. The major areas of the consultation are governmental, legal, scientific, and psycho-social issues surrounding long term, human-caused disaster. The ETF will present portions of its response model and leave the participants to examine and critique their position on such a response. The proceedings of this consultation will be reported out in a future issue of Common Ground, the ETF newsletter.

The reader is also referred to Progress Report I, August 1, 1980, for other detailed aspects of the ETF program (Executive Director's Report).

The Chronology in the Progress Report combined with the one in Progress Report I gives a day-to-day summary of the ETF's activities and the history of events surrounding Love Canal.

The Direct Aid report gives statistical data and is the "heart" of the Ecumenical Task Force's response to the people affected by Love Canal.

* * *

Someone not too long ago asked me why and how I keep on working at Love Canal, Bloody Run, "S" Area . . . and my reply was an old Amish prayer I read somewhere:

God said it/Jesus did it/I believe it/And that settles it!

Sister Margeen Hoffmann OSF
Executive Director, ETF

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY: THE CORPORATE LEGACY OF LOVE CANAL

Timothy Schroeder looked out over his back land and shook his head. "They're not going to help us one damn bit," he said, throwing a rock into a puddle coated with a film of oily blue. "No way." So miserable had the Schroeder backyard become that the family gave up trying to fight the inundation. They had brought in an old bulldozer to attempt to cover pools of chemicals that welled up here and there, but now the machine sat still. Tim Schroeder had developed a rash along the back of his legs and often found it difficult to stay awake. His daughter Sherri needed expensive medical care; another daughter Laurie seemed to be losing some of her hair. His wife Karen could not rid herself of throbbing pains in her head. But the Schroeders stayed on.

Thus did the Timothy Schroeder family assume their fateful place in the tragic history of some 1,100 Niagara Falls families whose painful notoriety would eventually divide the scientific community, cause havoc for politicians and corporate executives, and, above all, raise the alarming spectre of precedent that could call for the allocation of billions of dollars to redress similar wrongs in the 32,000 potentially hazardous sites around the nation.

Undoubtedly, Love Canal is to be characterized by the pervasive record of governmental bungling and expediency, interagency haggling and shifting of responsibility. What called for a solution based on science came to be bogged down in political game playing, in which residents submitted to temporary re-location on three different occasions.

But the flip side of Love Canal's tragic coin reveals the corollary of corporate knowledge and cover up that first created this environmental time bomb and then, in the years to follow, carefully separated itself from the toxic reality that began to make itself known as early as 1954.

To adequately understand the contributory role played by Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation, Occidental Petroleum's chemical division and a wholly owned subsidiary since 1968, it is necessary to look to three critical areas: 1. the choice of the canal site as toxic waste facility, 2. deeding of the property to the Niagara Falls School Board, and most importantly 3. Hooker's corporate knowledge of developing problems at the site.

William T. Love, a 19th century visionary looking for a cheap source of power for developing industry in the Niagara Falls area, envisioned a seven mile navigable power channel connecting upper and lower Niagara River. Economic depression and the invention on alternating current doomed the project to failure and it was subsequently abandoned with only a mile long trench actually having been dug.

The abandoned waterway subsequently served the local populace as a welcomed swimming hole with artesian springs or streams at its bottom. Hooker Electrochemical Company purchased the watery site in the early 1940's and used it as a chemical landfill until 1953.

The selection of the Canal as landfill site has been singularly defended by Hooker executives; accordingly, Bruce Davis, then Executive Vice-President, testified before the Congressional Hazardous Waste Disposal Hearings of 1979:

*Thirty-seven years ago, the Love Canal offered a rather ideal, isolated site for chemical residue storage. It was in a sparsely populated area. The surrounding soil was an impervious clay through which buried residues would not migrate.*²

However, studies of 1938 aerial photographs of the site call into question such claims of ideal location. Dr. Charles H. Ebert, Soils Specialist, State University of New York at Buffalo, first points to the existence of "drainage arteries, persistent swales which, in contrast to streams, do not necessarily show a consistent flow direction and may even be dry during parts of the year. The swales are of particular significance to the Canal problem because they could, potentially, represent narrow areas in which toxic material could migrate faster and further from the Canal than in adjoining areas."³

Independent studies of the Cornell University School of Civil and Environmental Engineering confirmed that "surveys do show that the ground there should contain a number of sand and silt lenses, a high groundwater table and bedrock that probably has been infiltrated by drainage, factors that raise the possibility that chemical migration could be extensive."⁴

To further substantiate the erroneousness of the Love Canal as site for chemical landfilling, New York State Department of Health has reported that in excavating deeper than the original ten to twelve foot depth of William Love's canal, Hooker Chemical dug beyond the hard clay to the more permeable soft clay below, characterized as "silt fill." They further reported the existence of a geologic sand lense, four feet below the surface, **apparently** intersecting the landfill from east to west and providing "highly permeable soil as a likely path for chemical migration."⁵

In addition to such natural migratory routes, the U.S. Justice Department suit points to the existence of three distinct storm sewers that underlie the immediate area of the Love Canal landfill and flow away from the site to local creeks and rivers. Two of these were in place and in use by 1952, including that which flows into Black Creek, a small creek immediately north of the Canal. Dioxin has been identified in parts per billion (14ppb to 380ppb) in this area, resulting in EPA's announcement that the creek and associate sewer pipes would be the object of significant clean-up efforts.⁶

CANAL DEEDED FOR \$1.00

The existence of these two routes of migration, underground pipes and natural swales, is thus substantiated by careful examination of existing records, photographs, documents. However, for a decade, Hooker Chemical and Plastics used this uniquely unsuitable location to bury its chemical wastes. And we accordingly arrive at the Canal's infamous transfer for \$1.00, with its accompanying disclaimer in the deed of sale, repeatedly offered as legal claim to corporate non-responsibility. The pertinent portion of the caveat reads:

The premises ... have been filled, in whole or in part, to the present grade level thereof, with waste products resulting from the manufacturing of chemicals by the grantor at its plant in the City of Niagara Falls, New York, and the grantee assumes all risk and liability incident to the use thereof. It is, therefore, understood and agreed that, as part of the consideration for this conveyance and as a condition thereof, no claim, suit, action or demand of any nature whatsoever shall ever be made ... against ... the grantor ... for injury to a person or persons, including death resulting therefrom or loss of or damage to property caused by, in connection with or by reason of the presence of said industrial waste.⁷

Again, in the Congressional Hearings of 1979, Bruce Davis had indicated this represented "clear notification of the presence of these chemical wastes." The essentially cryptic nature of such language would undoubtedly confuse the non-scientific, non-technical members of the Niagara Falls School Board, especially when told by Hooker's Executive Vice-President, B. Klaussen:

Our officers have carefully considered your request. We are very conscious of the need for new elementary schools and realize that the sites must be carefully selected so that they will best serve the area involved. We feel that the Board of Education has done a fine job in meeting the expanding demand for additional facilities and we are anxious to cooperate in any proper way. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that since this location is the most desirable one for this purpose, we will be willing to donate the entire strip between Colvin Boulevard and Frontier Avenue to be used for the erection of a school at a location to be determined...⁸

Such ambiguity between "clear notification" and "best desirable location" is further clouded by Hooker Chemical's claim to have placed a clay cap over its landfilled chemicals. To this date, the Company has refrained from offering any documented proof of the existence of such a cap. Such proof was notably absent from the submitted documents and oral testimony offered before Congressional Hearings. In addition, the New York State Interagency Task Force on Hazardous Waste reported, "Hooker has alleged that, prior to its sale of the property, it placed a soil cap on top of the drummed and bulk wastes it had dumped

in the canal. However, Hooker could not confirm that such a cover had been placed on top of the wastes."⁹ And the trade journal, Chemical and Engineering News, in reporting contradicting reports from eyewitnesses, states:

Hooker claims that it placed a clay cover over the northern and southern ends of the landfill (it never used the central portion for dumping) when it closed it, and that disruption of this cover by road building, other construction, and removal of the dirt itself broke the integrity of its closure. In its lawsuit against Hooker, the Justice Department claims that the company 'did not place an adequate clay cap or other appropriate seal on the canal.'

No public documents have yet surfaced to support Hooker's claim of a clay cover...¹⁰

WHAT WAS BURIED IN THE CANAL

In addition to Hooker's initial choice of site and their verbal ambiguity regarding its appropriateness for use by school children, additional questions arise regarding corporate knowledge of what was actually buried in the canal, the 22,000 tons labeled in the industry as "still bottoms." According to data included in the U.S. Justice Department Suit, Hooker disposed of twelve principal types of chemical wastes which resulted in the chemical migration of, among others:

1. dioxin, the most toxic chemical known to man and cause of cancer, birth defects, mutations, fetal death in laboratory animals.
2. tetrachloroethylene, a carcinogen which also exhibits adverse effects on the central nervous system and the liver.
3. chloroform, a carcinogen which also causes narcosis of the central nervous system, destruction of liver cells, kidney damage, cardiac problems.
4. dichloroethane, a carcinogen whose toxic effects include central nervous system disorders, depression, anorexia, kidney and liver dysfunction.
5. lindane, a carcinogen which also attacks the liver, the central nervous system and causes adverse reproductive effects.¹¹

While Mr. Davis and other Hooker spokespersons have repeatedly told the public that their company had no way of knowing the adverse effects of these chemicals, scientific truth will not support such contentions. Dr. Beverly Paigen, formerly of Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Buffalo, New York, provides a listing of some fourteen scientific review papers, all of which were published before 1953, the year Hooker deeded the canal site to Niagara Falls. She concludes that "the

toxicity of lindane (hexachlorocyclohexane) had been well established in 1953." In addition to adverse effects in animals, she indicates the literature had included descriptions of serious human poisonings, irritation of the respiratory tracts, eyes and skin, and disorders of the central nervous system, all of which resulted from lindane exposure.¹²

Further, Dr. Robert Mobbs, who had conducted research into lindane some thirty years ago, was reported as furious over Hooker Vice-President John Riordon's contention of NBC's Today Show that we didn't know, nobody knew. Mobbs charged that Hooker "damn well knew" that the compounds it deposited in the Canal were extremely dangerous to human beings. As evidence to support his charge, Mobbs cited his studies on the chemical lindane. "I presented evidence that it was a possible cancer causing agent in 1948." Mobbs' finding had been published in the December 1948 issue of Journal of American Medical Association and had been publicized further by Washington columnist Drew Pearson. "Did Hooker come looking for evidence?" asked Mobbs. "Like Hell, they did. They ignored, minimized and suppressed the facts. If I found it (the danger) out, why couldn't they?"¹³

It therefore becomes clear that the acute toxicity of this chemical was known well before Hooker deeded its chemical landfill to the Niagara Falls community. Further, Hooker knew it had buried 6,900 tons of lindane per their own documented records. Recognizing that the toxic chemical lindane was eventually to be found in 75% of the sump pumps of homes in the wet areas (located on swales and immediately adjacent to the Canal), corporate claims that they knew nothing of toxicity lead one to pose two questions: (1) how could Hooker executives not know what the scientific world knew well before 1953 and (2) why did they choose to cling to corporate silence in the face of the developing series of tragic events surrounding the Canal.

The question of knowledge or purported lack there-of is further addressed in an opinion offered by Dr. Glen Paulson of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. He points to the obvious fact that chemical companies presumably know a bit about chemistry and adds:

The fact that such careless disposal practices were wide-spread in the chemical industry should not automatically excuse those responsible from liability ... If it can be demonstrated that the company could have done better had it cared to do so, then it is fair to say it 'should have known' its disposal practices were improper, and it should be held liable. In effect, the standard for past dumping practices would be negligence, but it would be negligence judged against a higher standard than the ordinary reasonable man. Just as we hold physicians to a higher standard of competence than laymen, and medical specialists to a higher standard than general practitioners, so we should expect a higher standard of chemists when they deal with chemicals.¹⁴

Industry Week adds the sobering thought, sobering for Occidental's legal department, that "courts, including some in New York have held that ownership is immaterial to negligence, that it is the creation of a dangerous condition that determines negligence."¹⁵

Significantly, this principle of law prevailed in the recent legal proceedings relative to Occidental Petroleum's attempt to take over an Ohio paper company, the Mead Corporation. The company successfully argued that "ownership or possession of a property upon which the condition is found, is not necessarily a prerequisite to responsibility for injury or damage which results therefrom", such precedent being taken verbatim from an earlier case of 1975, Merrick v. Merrick. Mead attorneys further questioned the legality of the Hooker deed clause by contending that it contravenes New York Public Health Law; they maintained that Hooker never told the Board exactly what was in the ground nor that the wastes were actual chemicals.¹⁶ While one could not conclude such legal contentions were validated absolutely, it should be noted that the Mead Corporation was successful and that the Courts ruled in their favor.

HOOKER'S DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Hooker Chemical repeatedly points to its 3,000 blue collar jobs it offers Niagara Falls, to its corporate philanthropy with which it endows the community. Lucrative tax incentives and the placement of a \$17 million Hooker headquarters in the heart of the tourist area at the expense of local hotel owners, are given in reward, and both sides benefit from this symbiotic relationship that is central to the Niagara Falls economy. Lost somewhere in the arrangement are the people who inherited Hooker's "dangerous situation." a situation that was known to corporate executives as early as 1954 and is witnessed to in their own documents and memoranda.

Accordingly, we begin with the 1954 excavation for the school in the central section of the Canal. While spokesperson Bruce Davis had testified before Congress that Hooker had not dumped in that area, the truth was that the Elia Construction Company made contact with a pit "filled with chemicals" and the location of the school had to be shifted by some sixty feet. More important was the warning by the school's architect who stated that, "the chemical dumps present an unattractive nuisance with a number of definite hazards to adjacent property owners and neighborhood children."¹⁷

Hooker memoranda from 1958 show that the company had been informed that children had been burned by exposed materials at the Canal site. The memo concluded, "Hooker should advise the School Board of the problems but not do anything unless requested by the School Board."¹⁸

In 1968, road construction at the southern end of the Canal unearthed drummed chemicals and construction was halted for reasons of worker safety. The drums were taken to a Hooker owned toxic dumpsite and the contents subsequently tested. This waste, tested a full eight years before the Love Canal stirred the public consciousness, contained benzyl chloride, a carcinogenic chemical which can cause lung, liver and kidney damage.¹⁹ This tragic lack of responsibility, implicit in Hooker's continued silence, was not lost to Rep. Albert Gore, House Subcommittee Member, who incredulously asked, "Were you legally responsible? You had transferred ownership. And you had done it with this fancy deed restriction which says that no lawsuits will lie. Why did you feel a

responsibility to move the waste for the workers and not for the kids?" Mr. Olotka (formerly Industrial Waste Supervisor, Hooker Chemical): "I have no answer for that one." Rep. Gore: "There are a lot of people who used to live there who would like to know the answer when you come across it."²⁰

In 1970, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers informed Hooker that chemicals were leaching into the river. On June 21, 1977, Hooker's Environmental Control Officer informed Hooker's Industrial Waste Supervisor that "chemicals were escaping the Love Canal and travelling laterally toward residences."²¹

And still, their corporate silence continued and still the people became sick and watched their lives enveloped by scientific haggling over which way is the best way to decide how sick they are.

In the Love Canal area, miscarriages, still births, and crib deaths are increased ... The frequency of miscarriages before moving to Love Canal was 8½% and this increased to 25% for women living in Love Canal homes in "wet" areas. This is a risk three times greater for women living in "wet" areas ... From 1974 - 1978, 16 children were born in homes in "wet" areas; 9 of these children had birth defects. This gives an incidence of over 50%, clearly an unacceptable health hazard.²²

Thus it was, in her testimony before the 1979 Congressional Subcommittee, that Dr. Beverly Paigen dared to address publicly what Love Canal residents had been living with and futilely trying to bring to the attention of authorities charged with protection of their health. Her courage and steadfastness would subsequently result in attacks on her methods, her choice of control groups, her epidemiological credentials. Limitations of space preclude accurate presentation of her findings or the eloquent persuasiveness of personal testimony that has been brought forward.

It may be sufficient to point out that while the New York State Department of Health has been noticeably conservative in its approach to adverse health effects and in that approach, has faulted Dr. Paigen's research, the department's Health Department Order of August 2, 1978, stated, "a significant excess of spontaneous abortions was localized among residents of 99th Street South (immediately adjacent to the Canal). A significant excess of spontaneous abortions occurred during the summer months of June through August."²³ Dr. Robert Whalen, then State Commissioner of Health, accordingly recommended that families with pregnant women and children under two years of age move immediately, that residents avoid all contact with their basements, and that they eat nothing taken from their home gardens.

And August 7, 1978, witnessed the official Presidential declaration of emergency, the first time in United States history that a man-made disaster was so labeled:

I have determined that the adverse impact of chemical wastes lying exposed on the surface and associated chemical vapors emanating from the Love Canal Chemical Waste Landfill in the City of Niagara Falls, New York, is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a declaration of an emergency under Public Law 93-288. I therefore declare that such an emergency exists in the State of New York.

I have authorized Federal relief and such actions as are necessary to save lives and protect property, public health and safety or to avert or lessen the threat of a disaster.

*Jimmy Carter
The White House*

This presidential declaration was subsequently broadened on May 21, 1980, to address the needs of an additional 700 families of the Love Canal area. Rationale for such Presidential action was offered by Barbara Blum, Deputy Administrator, EPA:

This action is being taken in recognition of the cumulative evidence of exposure by the Love Canal residents to toxic wastes from Hooker Chemical Company and mounting evidence of resulting health effects.

Health effects studies performed by others so far are preliminary. Taken together, they suggest significant health risks.

The Hooker Chemical Company's dumping of toxic wastes at Love Canal and the resulting health and environmental damages are a stark symbol of the problems created by the improper disposal of hazardous wastes by our society.²⁵

To date, we have seen publication of the EPA sponsored study relative to chromosome damage and the nerve conduction study of Dr. Steven Barron of State University in Buffalo. The purported inadequacies of both were delineated by Gov. Carey's "Blue Ribbon" panel established in 1980 to assess existing and potential health dangers. More significant perhaps, is their repeated indictment of what they labeled "a paradigm of administrative ineptitude" and "the appalling absence of communication for an articulated and coordinated Federal and State approach." In establishing that no conclusive health studies had yet been carried out, a failure they call "critical", they do not, at the same time, preclude the scientific possibility that such studies, when properly facilitated, could be illuminating:

Love Canal represented the chronic contamination of a whole community's living space, extending back over a period of decades, and most complex of all, involving not one but scores of different chemicals seeping through the earth and into households all at once ... It has now become a genuine emergency for psychological and socioeconomic reasons as well as for reasons of public health.

Something went wrong and now, two years after the printing of "Love Canal - Public Health Time Bomb", we face almost the same set of urgent questions as were posed at the first recognition of the problem, and we have almost no clear-cut, unequivocal answers.²⁶

Tragically, such "unequivocal answers" may never be realized. Before Congress adjourned in December, 1980, the \$3.8 million funding for the health study was not approved. Plans for such a study, to have been carried out by the Center for Disease Control, are presently captive of governmental bureaucracy.

TOXIC CONTAMINATION OF THE SITE

Central to declarations of emergency by both State and Federal bodies was the emerging evidence relative to chemical contamination of water, soil and air in the Love Canal area. As reported in the August 2, 1978, Health Department Order, air samples to monitor ten selected compounds were taken from basements in 88 houses peripheral to those built adjacent to the landfill site, in other words, outside the first immediate ring of homes. Results showed, among others, the presence of chloroform in 26% of the homes, trichloroethene in 84%, tetrachloroethene in 93% and benzene in 23%.²⁷ Benzene, a known human carcinogen, was an alarming indicator of the gravity of the situation and indeed precipitated the Department's order to one family that they not enter the first floor bedroom of their own home.²⁸ Detection of such toxic chemicals was further chronicled in the Federal and State lawsuits against the Company.

The callousness of Hooker Chemical's corporate attitude toward the tragedy of Love Canal is perhaps best seen in their public denunciation of the seriousness of even these scientific findings. Accordingly, in the Hooker Factline, a public relation tool nationally distributed, readers are told that "... the outdoor air in the Love Canal area compares favorably with outdoor air in Los Angeles, Oakland, Phoenix and a number of cities in Texas and New Jersey."²⁹

Their denial of existing danger from the presence of toxic chemicals was reiterated by Occidental's corporate and legal executives before a meeting of the Financial Community Representatives from New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Hartford held at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York, July 31, 1980. Donald Baeder, Hooker Chemical President, stated that "most of the chemicals measured at Love Canal and elsewhere in the studies

are considered ubiquitous", a direct contradiction of evidence offered by the New York State Department of Health. He further added the incriminating "... it is interesting to note that chloroform, trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene were probably not deposited in the canal by Hooker."³⁰ All three are carcinogens and are listed in EPA documents as present in Love Canal.

This Waldorf-Astoria approach, in providing additional instances of Occidental's distortion of truth, is indicative of the central premise of their Love Canal response to date -- Public Relations! To cite but two of their statements from that occasion:

1. Regarding existing litigation, "... in the S Area, there is virtually no population." FACT: Statement refers to a Hooker owned toxic dumpsite, constructed on fill reclaimed from the Niagara River a mere 200 yards from the Niagara Falls Water Treatment Plant, source of drinking water for some 100,000 people. Toxic chemicals, including mirex and benzene, have been found in intake pipes.
2. "In Hyde Park, there is a negotiation going on now with the government and experts on both sides. It has nothing to do with liability, just whether we can work out a program to put in the necessary technical things to provide a solid remedial program." FACT: As of September 1, 1981, Federal Judge John Curtin refused to sign into law the negotiated settlement re Hyde Park, the Hooker owned landfill which contains the largest deposit of dioxin in the world. His unprecedented action followed upon presentation of scientific data and legal opinion by the local Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, Inc. advocating for Love Canal residents. Based on their Amicus Curiae Brief offered to the Court and dissatisfied with Hooker's reply, Judge Curtin ordered Public Hearings to be held. Belying their earlier disclaimers about liability, Hooker Chemical, in papers submitted in response, asserted that "...they would withdraw from the proposed agreement if forced to remove the waste materials,"³¹ and that "...they will not be voluntarily associated with any remedial effort which includes such a plan."³²

PUBLIC RELATIONS -- OCCIDENTAL'S FINELY HONED RESPONSE

"It's communication at the local level", CMA President Robert A. Roland says, "that will make this program work." A national communications campaign can achieve penetration and lasting impact only if backed by local, person-to-person communication.

Negative public opinion sets the stage for increased legislation and regulations, mandating tighter and more costly controls on the industry. Also affected are industry sales and profits, product innovation, plant siting and capital investment.³³

This "national communications campaign" called for in the national in-house publication of America's petrochemical industry, Chemical Manufacturers Association News, thus became the rationale, the PR program, the veritable Bible for Hooker Chemical's response to the horrors of Love Canal. Buffalo and Niagara Falls papers carry full page ads proclaiming "Try Telling Bruce Davis Hooker Doesn't Care." "You're About To Be Untricked", another full page ad, invites readers to send for their free copy of Reason's "Love Canal: The Truth Seeps Out." The lengthy publication, placed in the Congressional Record by U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, has been Corporation distributed by the thousands. The advertisement also states that the truth will be clear to "anyone who has examined the actual documents", undoubtedly such examination to be selective and exclusive.

Mistakenly identifying corporate philanthropy for corporate responsibility, Niagara Falls continues to be the recipient of Occidental's largess, as do other communities, and indeed nations. Public relations disclaimers aside, a far different truth emerges when one does consult those "actual documents" proclaimed in their ads. Accordingly, in addition to Love Canal documents already cited, we find that Hooker Chemical presently owns three additional toxic landfills in the Niagara Falls area, one containing more dioxin than was used in all the Agent Orange of the VietNam War; one that has contaminated portions of the city's Water Treatment Plant intake system and threatens to enter the drinking water; and a third, whose toxins critically injured residents in the mid 60's, and Hooker's environmental engineer wanted to sell the city in 1974 to "... relieve Hooker of the \$9,200 a year property taxes."³⁴ It should be noted that such a sale was contemplated after Hooker had been warned by the Army Corps of Engineers and their own Insurance Company of environmental and health problems at the site, after serious explosions, after identification of toxic chemicals as present at the site, and most importantly, after the developing tragedy of Love Canal was known to the company.

Such corporate disregard for the public health and safety is compounded by parallel actions, in additional states, all of which are documented in evidence offered to the Congressional Hearings on Hazardous Waste Disposal:

1. In Florida, Hooker broke pollution laws in a cost-cutting campaign and the company's top echelon knew and approved of the local manager's violating the plant's emissions permit.
2. On Long Island, Hooker dumped 1,600,000 pounds of waste, including vinyl chloride contaminants, and kept such information from the local County Health Department.
3. In California, Hooker documents show that the company did not inform the Regional Water Quality Board that it had been discharging pesticides from 1964 to 1976. Additional documents show that their own environmental engineers were pleading for funds to stop the dumping that had destroyed wells in a three-mile radius. All such requests were denied.

A Los Angeles Occidental document dated December 11, 1978, provides the most chilling clarification of the company's disdain for the health and

welfare of the human beings it touches. A three page memorandum carefully and strategically balances the profits to be gleaned by re-entering the production market for DECP, a banned pesticide, against future legal judgments, inevitable because the chemical was a known carcinogen. The document states that the Company should "... determine the number of potential claims for sterility and cancer. Based on the Insurance Department's (or legal department's) estimate of the probably average judgment or settlement which would result from such a claim, calculate the potential liability including 50% for legal fees and other contingencies." Occidental's conclusion: "Should this product still show an adequate profit meeting corporate investment criteria, the project should be considered further."³⁵ The recommendation was signed by Occidental's Vice-President for Environment, Health and Safety.

CONCLUSION

*"Furthermore, there exist a great many factors which historically have resulted in no more than a small fraction of potential penalties being imposed."*³⁶ In its July 10, 1981, Report, Occidental Petroleum thus assures its shareholders that the Company will successfully handle existing environmental lawsuits, adding that they have legal history on their side. They have to date, consistently clouded such monetary realities, resulting in the Security and Exchange Commission's formal charges that the Company had failed to disclose millions of dollars of potential liabilities, stemming from its environmental practices.³⁷ Furthermore, the Mead Paper Company successfully argued that Occidental had hidden from its shareholders the truths of such liabilities, including the fact that the total assets of Occidental itself are far less than amounts represented by existing and pending lawsuits.

Indeed, Occidental's implicit attitude that it lies outside and operates beyond the ordinary legal and ethical guidelines that govern the rest of us has been central in their response to ICCR shareholder action: unanswered correspondence and unhonored commitments; disconnected microphones and forceful removal of a shareholder speaker at annual meetings; refusal to respect existing California Corporate Law; disdain for the shareholder process itself as evidenced by repeated but futile objections to Security and Exchange, most recent of which an attack on shareholders' right to label as toxic the chemicals in Love Canal.

The tragedy of such corporate behavior, however, has meaning far beyond the shareholders' individual, personal dimension. For if it were to impact on that level alone, its long-lived tragic repercussions would pass unnoticed by the media, the courtroom, the Church sanctuary. But they have not passed unnoticed and the question must then be asked: how many men, women and children would lead normal lives today if Hooker Chemical had only warned us in time, if Hooker Chemical had not clung to its protecting silence in the face of mounting evidence, if Hooker Chemical had not hidden its toxic legacy behind self-serving and legalistic public relations...if Hooker Chemical had told the truth.

Joan F. Malone, OSF
Chairperson, Western New York Coalition ICCR
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
ETF Executive Board Member

NOTES

FOR AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY: THE CORPORATE LEGACY OF LOVE CANAL by Joan Malone OSF

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CHRONOLOGICAL UPDATE

There is an appointed time
for everything, a time for every
purpose under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

HISTORY OF DISASTER AT LOVE CANAL

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS - PART II

Events integral to the problems of chemical and hazardous wastes in the Ecumenical Task Force service area and ETF's response are highlighted in the following chronology. "A History of Disaster - Chronology of Events" from 1836 to July 31, 1980 is summarized in the 1980 Progress Report of the ETF.

August 1, 1980

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that 20 organic chemicals and several toxic metals were detected in the blood of some Love Canal residents. Blood tests were a companion to an earlier chromosome study. Although 20 of the chemicals and all of the metals were found in the blood of some of the residents, the levels "are below those values at which acute toxic effects occur", according to an E.P.A. statement. "It is not possible to state what potential the Love Canal residents tested have for experiencing oncogenic (cancer) teratogenic (birth defects) or reproductive effects", the EPA statement said.

August 1, 1980

A \$50,000 grant announced this week to the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) will allow for completion of a study started in June on growth and maturation rates among Love Canal children.

August 1, 1980

Dioxin identified in sewers leading from the Love Canal directly into the Niagara River. State officials said they took 6 samples in the sewer lines south of Read Ave. and found 3 with levels of dioxin under 29 parts per billion, 2 with levels of 120 parts per billion (ppb) and one with 312 ppb. That compares with samples from Black Creek with a level of 31 ppb.

August 5, 1980

State officials formally told Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that the offer of a \$15,000,000, 30-year loan to resettle Love Canal families was unacceptable.

August 5, 1980 Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA) appointed earlier to purchase Love Canal homes with federal and state funds and provide for revitalization of the neighborhood, established a "priorities committee to determine the order in which families will be relocated".

LCARA authorized Mayor O'Laughlin to choose an Acting Director, set up an office in the Love Canal neighborhood and set an October deadline for appointment of a permanent director. LCARA asked the State of New York to have a property acquisition team ready to move in when State and Federal officials agree on funding.

August 5, 1980 Center for Disease Control (CDC), Atlanta, Georgia sends team on-site to begin its two-level health testing. Telephone contacts to set up interviews.

August 6, 1980 *ETF presentation to St. James Lutheran Church in Bergholtz, "On-Going Needs at Love Canal".*

August 6, 1980 The first 10 of approximately 175 Love Canal families being housed and fed in area motels notified that their benefits have been terminated because of their failure to seek more permanent housing in apartments

August 6, 1980 State authorities discovered abnormal quantities of radioactive Cesium-137 in 99th St. School yard soil.

August 12, 1980 *ETF accepted a request for an internship for social work student, Edward Smith, from Niagara University during 1980-81 academic year.*

August 14, 1980 Love Canal residents picket Democratic Convention in New York City.

August 17, 1980 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to make 150 Section 8 certificates available to renters of low income housing units (LaSalle Development) who want to leave Love Canal neighborhood.

August 18, 1980 EPA testing of air, soil and water started in Love Canal.

August 22, 1980 State and Federal officials reach accord in relocation funding.

August 24, 1980 Hooker Chemicals and Plastics Corp. holds Open House for community in attempt to offset adverse publicity.

- August 24, 1980 Dr. Barry Commoner, biologist and presidential candidate for Liberal Party visits Love Canal
- August 27, 1980 LCARA voted to give residents three years to sell their homes. LCARA voted to seek "clarification" from State Task Force Director, William C. Hennessey, on the availability of 3% mortgages to help residents buy new homes. LCARA moved to contract with New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) to handle Love Canal home acquisitions.
- LCARA approved 12-member priorities committee. LCARA appointed Richard Morris, a career DOT official, as temporary Executive Director of the Agency.
- LCARA set up office at 1003-98th St., across Colvin Boulevard from the northern end of the canal proper.
- September 1, 1980 *Diane Sheley joined the staff of ETF as Family and Neighborhood Services Coordinator after serving as volunteer social worker for ETF for three months.*
- September 7, 1980 Niagara County District Attorney's office orders probe into contracts awarded for the first phase of Love Canal remedial work.
- September 8, 1980 State Assembly Task Force hearings held in Buffalo to investigate reported United States military chemical/radioactive waste dumping in Love Canal.
- September 10, 1980 Federal Judge ordered that N.Y. State be made a plaintiff, rather than a defendant in the Federal Government's \$124 million suit against Hooker Chemicals and Plastic Corp. and others.
- September 13, 1980 Annual city audit revealed today that Love Canal lawsuit claims against the city government have grown from \$3 billion to \$16 billion during the last year.
- September 15, 1980 The U.S. House of Representatives begins debate this week on legislation designed to establish a \$1.2 billion "Superfund" to clean up abandoned hazardous chemical dumps such as Love Canal.
- September 17, 1980 *Sisters Margeen, Joan Malone, and Rosalie Bertell present program at D'Youville College entitled, "Religious Women Involved in the Human Concerns, Problems of Love Canal and West Valley".*
- ETF presentation to Fayetteville United Methodist Church regarding Love Canal.*

- September 19, 1980 The House of Representatives voted to establish two \$375 million "superfunds" over the next five years to deal with oil and chemical spills into the nation's waterways.
- September 20, 1980 *Members of ETF attend initial meeting of "Oxy" Shadow Board in New York City.*
- September 22, 1980 *ETF presentation at National Conference of Catholic Charities in Rochester, N.Y. Presenters: Rev. Wm. J. O'Connell, John A. Lynch, Sister Margeen.*
- September 23, 1980 House of Representatives passes \$1.2 billion "Superfund" to finance the nationwide cleanup of abandoned toxic waste sites.
- September 23, 1980 *Donna Ogg presented an opening statement on behalf of the ETF at the CECOS Hearings. Text of the statement gave the theological basis for our concern for human life, as well as protection of our soil, water and air.*
- September 25, 1980 *Eleanor Conmy of the Sabre Park Peoples' Association attended ETF Executive Board Meeting to enlighten the Board on the Chemical and Environmental Conservation Systems (CECOS) problem. ETF voted to cooperate with the Sabre Park Association.*
- September 30, 1980 *Gibson Roberts Zimba of Zambia, the Zambian Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with journalists from the Dominican Republic, Nepal and government officials from Sierra Leone, Egypt and Swaziland visit Love Canal.*
- October 1, 1980 *President Carter and Governor Carey sign the State/Federal relocation agreement at Niagara Falls International Convention Center. Sr. Margeen, ETF Executive Director, attends.*
- The Niagara Falls Board of Education approved a measure allowing the Federal Government to use a portion of the 93rd St. School property for environmental testing at the Love Canal.
- October 3, 1980 *Residents of LaSalle Development, low income housing at Love Canal, angered over being left out of \$20 million State and Federal Agreement.*
- Report by Stephen Lester of Clement Associates, Inc., consulting firm hired by NYS to advise Love Canal Homeowners' Association, stated that workers taking part in the remedial program at Love Canal site were sometimes needlessly exposed to danger, and government response to the chemical contamination problem was not adequate.*

- October 5, 1980 *ETF presentation at St. Peter's Church in Lockport.*
- October 6, 1980 *Residents of LaSalle Development notified ETF of possible riot ensuing over residents being left out of \$20 million State/Federal agreement. ETF in turn contacted New York State Assemblyman Arthur Eve and requested his help in negotiations with State and Federal officials. Assemblyman Eve met with residents and members of ETF Executive Board and staff until 1:30 AM and were successful in averting a riot. Subsequent action by Assemblyman Eve guaranteed \$500,000 being allocated for moving expenses of residents.*
- October 7, 1980 *An investigation into remedial work at the southern end of the Love Canal has apparently prompted the Federal Government to hold up payment of \$4 million in project reimbursements to the City of Niagara Falls.*
- October 7, 1980 *ETF Executive Board voted to go on record as being opposed to further expansion of any hazardous waste chemical and radioactive dumpsites in the Niagara Frontier.*
- October 8, 1980 *Sister Margeen presented a prepared statement for the record at CECOS hearings expressing concern for emotional and psychological trauma that could result from the proposed expansion of this NYS licensed toxic waste "secure landfill". This is the first time that Permit Hearings of N.Y. Department of Environmental Conservation have admitted testimony concerning emotional and psychological effects on persons.*
- October 9, 1980 *Four African Journalists toured Niagara County's hazardous waste disposal firms and voiced the hope their countries will be able to learn from America's problems when they begin to industrialize.*
- October 9, 1980 *The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) refused today to offer special low-interest mortgage loans to Love Canal families to buy replacement houses elsewhere.*
- SCA Chemical Waste Services, the second NYS licensed toxic waste operation in NYS - both of which are located in Niagara County - received its court-ordered permit for construction of its 5-mile waste pipeline to the Niagara River.*
- A Blue Ribbon Panel of physicians appointed by Governor Carey leveled severe criticism at bungling of Love Canal health and environment studies and said there is no conclusive evidence of adverse health effects there.*

- October 10, 1980 *ETF Executive Board and Staff played host to members of the United Methodist National Church Agencies. The purpose of the consultation was to provide an on-site evaluation of the problems at Love Canal and other environmental hazards in Niagara County. As a result of this day, the ETF received a further grant of \$10,000. to be used for Direct Aid to Love Canal residents.*
- October 13, 1980 *ETF staff members met with Assemblyman Eve, New York State officials and representatives of LaSalle Development residents at the State Office Building in Buffalo, N.Y. Purpose of the meeting was to discuss special problems experienced by the residents in trying to locate adequate housing. As a result of this meeting, New York State entered into a 30month contract with Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) and Housing Assistance Center (HAC) to provide an on-site office with personnel available on a daily basis to assist the residents.*
- October 23, 1980 *The Executive Board of the Ecumenical Task Force in recognizing the dichotomies which exist between residents of the Love Canal requested the Executive Director to prepare a statement expressing the need for the Love Canal Revitalization Agency to address the issue of the future use of the Love Canal neighborhood. This statement was presented by Sister Margeen at the LCARA public meeting offering ETF assistance in carrying out responsible action in the future in whatever way most appropriate.*
- October 24, 1980 *President Carter announced he would ask Congress for a special \$3.8 million appropriation to fund health studies of Love Canal residents, which will be carried out by the State University of Buffalo Medical School and Center for Disease Control.*
- Lockport, N.Y., Landfill found to be leaking toxins into area groundwater.*
- October 28, 1981 *ETF Board toured CECOS Landfill Facility.*
- ETF Executive Board accepted with regret the resignation of Rev. Charles Lamb.*
- ETF accepted with pleasure, Rev. Richard Donoughue, representative of the Lutheran Church in America, as member of Executive Board.*

- October 30, 1980 Vice-Presidential candidate, Patrick Lucey, met with ETF Board members, staff, and volunteers for briefing on Love Canal work of ETF. He was given a tour of the Love Canal area by John Lynch and Donna Ogg, and met with residents at Wesley United Methodist Church in Love Canal.
- November 5, 1980 Federal environmental officials stated that the Love Canal treatment facility is "satisfactorily filtering out chemical contaminants contained in the leachate" from Love Canal. Sludge stored in holding tanks, however, reveals Dioxin (TCDD) in the low parts-per billion range.
- November 14, 1980 First two homes in Love Canal boundary area purchased by LCARA.
- November 18, 1980 ETF presentation at Holy Ghost Lutheran PTA meeting in Bergholtz.
- November 19, 1980 New federal regulations in effect today to monitor toxic material handling from "cradle to grave" in "properly suited" approved landfill or disposal site. (Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA))
- N.Y.S. charges that chemical wastes at the S-Area Landfill and the 102nd. Street ~~deposits~~ are two of the four landfills in Niagara County for which Hooker is charged in lawsuit by U.S. Justice Department and New York State.
- November 20, 1980 Canada's Parliament is considering a request today that the government seek a full-scale inquiry by the United States into toxic contamination of the Niagara River.
- N.Y.S. legislative aides stated this week that a search of old federal records indicates that TNT wastes may still be under thousands of acres at the Lake Ontario Ordinance Works (LOOW) in Lewiston. This announcement led both Canadian and U.S. lawyers to demand the reopening of the SCA Chemical Waste Services, Inc. Permit Hearings to expand a toxic disposal site. The attorneys claim the site overlies the pipes containing TNT.
- November 21, 1980 ETF presentation to UPCUSA Synod of the Northeast and tour of Love Canal.
- November 22, 1980 Lois Gibbs announced Love Canal Homeowners Association will end their five-month boycott of health studies.
- November 24, 1980 Senate approved a \$1.6 billion hazardous waste cleanup, "Superfund", which will do nothing to compensate individual victims.

- November 25, 1980 NYS DEC ordered to prove it was not in error when it determined last July that CECOS had properly completed its application for permits to construct and operate two new hazardous waste landfills in the Town of Niagara.
- Town of Niagara Board passed a new ordinance to control landfill operations.
- ETF accepted with pleasure, Mrs. Joann Breitsman, as Presbyterian representative on the Executive Board.*
- December 3, 1980 U.S. House of Representatives today approved a \$1.6 billion "Superfund" bill to cover the cost of cleaning up abandoned hazardous chemical waste dumpsites and spills that get into navigable water or ground water.
- The approved bill does not call for the payment of any medical expenses or lost earnings suffered by victims of hazardous waste.
- December 3, 1980 Toronto Ontario Globe and Mail carried an article stating, "The Niagara Falls area is the most environmentally contaminated in North America, and scientists now believe they have found its toxic wastes as far away as Toronto and Kingston (Ontario, Canada) "
- December 4, 1980 Niagara Falls Board of Education passed a resolution to ask E.P.A. and the N.Y.S. Health Department to investigate allegations of contamination in sewer system running under LaSalle Senior High School.
- Article in Niagara Gazette revealed how Hooker Chemical was given permission by NYS DEC to temporarily exceed its State Air Quality permit limitations from its incinerator over a four-month period in 1979. During this period, Hooker incinerated dioxin tainted leachate from Love Canal and later from another Hooker dump, the Hyde Park Landfill.
- December 10, 1980 *Ecumenical Task Force provided a Christmas Open House for residents of Love Canal. Approximately 70 children attended and visited with Santa and Mrs. Claus.*
- A representative from Citizens Against Dumping visited the ETF office seeking advice on how to prevent the development of a disposal site in Amherst, N.Y.*

December 12, 1981 Niagara Falls Waste Water Treatment Plant begins processing sewage for the first time in more than two years. (Activated carbon beds ruptured at the plant more than two years ago, forcing the city to pump millions of gallons of partially treated sewage into the river which has 60% of the chemicals removed with the help and cooperation of the pretreatment done by the chemical plants in the city.)

December 12, 1980 Love Canal Homeowners' Association announced today that they will close their present office on January 15th., hoping to re-establish at a later date elsewhere.

December 17, 1980 Congress refused to pass \$3.8 million health study bill.

Richard Morris named permanent Executive Director of Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA).

ETF Executive Assistant, Donna Ogg, attended Hazardous Waste Management Conference, Albany, N.Y. - a conference designed to encourage conversation between government, industry, environmentalists. (Question: Should not "church" be a participant in future conferences of this sort in order to present theological perspective?)

December 18, 1980 Niagara Falls Community Development Department filed a supplemental grant application for \$6.5 million in Federal money for continued Love Canal land acquisition and support.

Sister Margeen gave presentation on Love Canal to the National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee at the O'Hare Inn, Chicago, Illinois.

December 19, 1980 1980 Editorial in Niagara Gazette revealed testimony to the House Commerce Oversight and Investigations Committee in Washington this week which alleged that organized crime is becoming involved in the waste-disposal business.

December 20, 1980 1980 State Department of Environmental Conservation announced plans to close down the Niagara County Landfill in the Town of Lockport in one year. The 27.5 acre landfill has been found to be leaking toxic chemicals into the water table.

Hooker Chemical has applied for a Federal permit to burn 200 tons a year of hazardous chemicals from the Hyde Park Landfill at its Niagara Falls incinerator.

- December 21, 1980 Editorial in Niagara Gazette revealed that N.Y.S. Health Department and Department of Environmental Conservation have promised to look into charges that leachate from the CECOS International, Inc. site at 56th. St. and Pine Avenue poses a health threat to students at various Niagara Falls schools.
- December 22, 1980 The Niagara Falls City Council has urged to press Niagara County and NYS officials for the creation of an "oversight committee" to stop the continued importation of hazardous and toxic wastes into the area.
- January 5, 1981 Niagara Falls City Council informally agreed to city participation in an "environmental oversight committee" that would be formed by local governments and environmental groups in the area.
- January 6, 1981 EPA revealed today they will not issue a statement as to habitability of Love Canal neighborhood. Test results as promised January 1st. will not be revealed until mid-March.
- January 6, 1981 *Eight Notre Dame University students visited ETF office for orientation to Love Canal as part of their experiential learning program during their semester break. They expressed amazement at the problems faced by persons in neighborhoods potentially exposed to toxic/hazardous waste disposal. One student, who will enter medical school in the Fall, has volunteered to work for the ETF this Summer.*
- January 7, 1981 The Environmental Protection Agency issued new rules requiring every hazardous-waste storage treatment and disposal facility, regardless of size, to buy liability insurance, establish trust funds or bonds, and otherwise guarantee their sites can both be closed down safely and then regularly inspected for 30 years after closure. The rules go into effect in six months.
- January 8, 1981 NYS Environmental Commissioner, Robert F. Flacke, suspends SCA Chemical Waste Services' toxic and hazardous waste disposal operating permits.
- January 9, 1981 Federal Judge John T. Elfrin issued a temporary restraining order overruling the State Department of Environmental Conservation's decision to shut down operations of SCA Chemical Waste Services, Inc.
- January 12, 1981 *ETF Executive Board members and staff held the first of a two-day Annual Evaluation at the Niagara Institute on Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario.*

- January 13, 1981 The New York State Environmental Board has voted to require all owners of hazardous-waste dump sites to post bonds as insurance that harmful substances will not leak into the air and ground water after the dumps are permanently closed. Operators of toxic disposal sites also will be required to post bonds against accidental leakage from operating sites, and companies that transport hazardous wastes to the dumps will have to post bond to insure against leaks along the way to disposal site.
- January 13, 1981 LCARA today approved a program to aid renters moving from the Love Canal area that includes relocation expenses and purchase of appliances.
- January 15, 1981 *Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA) devoted time at its work session meeting to discuss the long-range future of the Love Canal area. They expressed a desire to review data available from the members of the ETF Scientific/Technical Advisory Board, in order to assess whether ETF's advisors could help LCARA in interpreting test data and making decisions on future use and habitability of the area.*
- ETF accepted second internship for social work student, Ann Druck, from Niagara University during 1980-81 academic year.*
- January 20, 1981 Governor Hugh Carey in his budget message recommended cutting more than \$1.5 million from last year's appropriations to deal with chemical contamination at Love Canal. He also asked for an \$80,000 reduction in State assistance to Niagara Falls.
- January 21, 1981 City Council declined to take part in environmental oversight committee, as previously agreed on January 5, 1981. Reason given was that the Council feared the committee might favor programs the city would object to.
- Russell Hartzler, Chairman Michigan Interfaith Disaster Relief Committee, and member of the Church of The Brethren, visited the ETF office. ETF staff gave him an orientation on the work of the ETF and a tour of the Love Canal area.*

January 31, 1981 NYS Assembly Task Force report reiterates:

- (1) The U.S. Army pumped 37 million gallons of radioactive chemical wastes into the aquifer beneath the Town of Tonawanda, during work on the World War II Manhattan Project.
- (2) Wastes from the Army's TNT plant at the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Niagara County were never fully decontaminated, creating the possibility of an explosion on the site. Property now owned by SCA Chemical Wastes Services, Inc.
- (3) The disposal of hazardous waste from Army and government-related chemical production contributed significantly to the contamination of Love Canal.

February 1, 1981 *ETF Executive Board authorized a letter be sent to Dr. Healy, Superintendent of Lewiston-Porter School Board offering our assistance in averting panic among parents and students.*

ETF Executive Board authorized telegrams to be sent to our legislators, Governor Carey, Commissioner Flacke, Lieutenant Governor Cuomo, and Attorney General Abrams indicating that ETF supports halting all new construction at SCA until potential TNT dangers can be evaluated.

ETF Executive Board authorized telegrams to be sent to Department of Energy and all Federal agencies to take immediate appropriate action to determine whether or not TNT is present and follow up with immediate appropriate action if it is present at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site.

February 3, 1981 Five families refused to send their children to classes at Lewiston-Porter School because of their fear of the potential hazard of explosion at the former LOOW site.

ETF Executive Board accepted with regret the resignation of Mrs. Donna Ogg from staff. Donna will continue on voluntary basis to assist ETF with talks and research.

February 7, 1981 Rev. James Brewster, ETF Chairman, introduced a statement at the public hearing on the Hyde Park Landfill/Bloody Run Agreement, on behalf of the ETF, supporting the residents in their claim for health studies.

- February 9, 1981 Lewiston Councilman, Alvin Ogg, requested a re-vote on the Town's resolution accepting the proposed settlement on the Hyde Park Landfill/Bloody Run Agreement.
- The Town of Porter Board passed a resolution supporting a State proposed concept to develop high technology hazardous waste treatment facilities in the State outside Niagara and Erie counties.
- February 11, 1981 *LCARA voted to seek the advice of the ETF's Scientific Advisory Board members in determining habitability of the Love Canal community.*
- Sister Margeen Hoffmann and Mrs. Barbara Hanna gave a presentation at LeMoyne College in Syracuse, N.Y.*
- February 12, 1981 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released today that funds for a \$1 million project to scour deadly dioxin from sewer lines in and around Love Canal have been withdrawn by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Court of Appeals ruled today that SCA Chemical Waste Services, Inc. may discharge treated chemical wastes into the Niagara River through a five-mile pipeline across the Town of Porter. Discharge is not to begin, however, until April 15th. and is subject to State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) water quality checks.
- February 14, 1981 EPA announced today that environmental test results from Love Canal will be delayed until the end of March.
- February 23, 1981 *ETF Executive Board held the second of its two-day evaluation at the Niagara Institute on Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario.*
- February 28, 1981 DEC announced today that close monitoring of toxic chemicals in the Niagara River will begin this Spring.
- March 6, 1981 EPA announced a further delay in test results. Results now expected in mid-April.

March 6, 1981

ETF today received Amicus Curiae (Friend of The Court) status for the forthcoming hearings of the United States of America versus Hooker Chemical and Plastic Corporation, Hooker Chemical Corporation, Occidental Petroleum Investment Corporation, and Occidental Petroleum Corporation.

This Amicus Curiae status is a landmark in the work of an Interfaith Task Force and could be the beginning of our bringing issues of liability, responsibility and justice to bear for the first time in our courts, on the issue of hazardous wastes. It will allow us to bring pertinent information to the Judge and appraise him of issues, and also raise questions that might not otherwise be introduced.

Father Jack Keiffer, S.J., D.Sc., P.E., joined the ETF as a consultant. He will also serve as coordinator of the ETF Scientific/Technical Advisory Board and their work for the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency.

March 11, 1981

The Reagan Administration's revised budget for fiscal 1982 provides about 20% less money for the cleanup of hazardous wastes sites (Superfund) than had been proposed by the Carter Administration in January.

March 12, 1981

Due to an error in Superfund writing, New York State will not receive credit for the \$25 to \$30 million it has spent on the Love Canal cleanup. As a result, New York will only be able to apply this credit to future work in Love Canal.

March 13, 1981

Through the Direct Aid program of the ETF, in response to the Renters' Association at LaSalle Development, a city-wide problem of utility overages in public housing was uncovered. This led to our advocacy with the Niagara Falls Housing Authority for leniency in payment for renters in public housing and further pursuance of payment for overages through H.E.A.P. (Heat & Energy Assistance Program) grant payment to the Niagara Falls Housing Authority. (As of this date, H.E.A.P. funds have not been paid to the Housing Authority.)

ETF attorney, Barbara Morrison, asked Judge Curtin on behalf of the ETF to turn down the draft now before him for a \$16.5 million-plus contract running 35 to 38 years on the Hyde Park Landfill/Bloody Run.

President Reagan announced the dismissal of EPA Regional Administrator, Charles S. Warren, head of the New York City office.

March 14, 1981

Center for Disease Control (CDC) ordered the State University of Buffalo Medical School to close its Niagara Falls office on March 31st and mothball the records (see August 5, 1980 entry) because it is becoming increasingly unlikely Congress will release \$3.8 million for planned Love Canal health studies.

Environmental Conservation Commissioner, Robert F. Flacke, announced that New York State will put a team of inspectors in the Buffalo area starting in July to oversee transportation of hazardous waste into the Niagara Frontier.

March 19, 1981

Robin Miller Productions of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, spent the day with ETF staff filming in Love Canal area for the Presbyterian Synod of the Northeast.

March 20, 1981

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, Robert Flacke, today denied a request by CECOS to build two more Niagara County landfills, but he allowed the company to expand an existing one. CECOS was given permission, however, to reapply for the permits and would be required to submit a 10-year plan.

March 24, 1981

Officials for CECOS International, Inc. requested permission from the Town of Niagara Board to expand a present landfill.

March 31, 1981

Sister Margeen made a presentation to members of Operation Clean on how a health study could be developed.

March 29, 1981

Mr. John F. Riordan was named today as successor to Bruce Davis as President of the Industrial Chemicals Group of the Hooker Chemical Co., Niagara Falls.

Lois Gibbs, President of Love Canal Homeowners Association, took up residence in Washington, D.C.

April 15, 1981

Niagara Gazette reported that the Federal Government apparently plans to reject the City of Niagara Falls application for \$6.5 million to finance eight steps in revitalizing Love Canal area. (See December 18, 1980 entry).

April 22, 1981

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, Robert Flacke, denied an expansion permit for SCA Chemical Waste Services. Commissioner Flacke said that before the State grants any new landfill permits, companies are going to have to submit 10-year plans showing how they will shift from the burial of contaminants to high-technology destruction.

April 23, 1981

Mr. Masai of Asahi (main newspaper publication of Japan) and Aileen M. Smith, co-author and photographer of Minimata visited ETF office and met with staff and residents re Love Canal and Hyde Park / Bloody Run situation.

April 25, 1981

Sister Margeen and Barbara Hanna made a presentation to the Western New York Conference of the American Lutheran Church in Medina, New York.

April 28, 1981

Sister Margeen and Barbara Hanna made a presentation to the University of Buffalo School of Social Work and also a presentation to the Niagara Deanery at St. John's Episcopal Church, Youngstown, New York.

April 30, 1981

Mrs. Janet Osborn and Ms. Fia Scheyer of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Boston, Mass, visited the ETF's office and met with members of the Board and Staff regarding the ETF's objectives and the problems of toxic and hazardous chemical wastes in Niagara and Erie County.

The State Power Authority sold 48.7 acres of land to the City of Niagara Falls for a sludge burial site. Sale is contingent upon approval from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Environmental Conservation for the city to bury the sludge from its wastewater treatment plant in a 28 acre landfill on the southern end of that property. Public hearings will be held.

May 1, 1981

Niagara Falls Mayor Michael O'Laughlin and other city leaders visited Washington today to meet with HUD leaders to push for special aid to renew Love Canal area. (See April 15, 1981 entry).

HUD agreed to allow the city to rework and refine their proposal, cutting the dollar amount and number of priorities.

May 1, 1981

The Mayor also will have a chance to redefine and strengthen his argument that Love Canal qualifies as a disaster area.

May 4, 1981

Sister Margeen made a presentation to Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. in Cincinnati.

May 6, 1981

The Federal and State Governments filed a joint lawsuit against the City of Niagara Falls to repair its wastewater treatment plant and to stop discharging polluted wastewater into the Niagara River.

New York State Senate passed a bill which will allow municipalities to hire their own expert to monitor local chemical dumps or treatment centers at the cost of those using the facility.

May 7, 1981

Vandalism discovered today to SCA Chemical Waste Services, Inc.'s 5-mile waste-discharge pipeline which was to begin tomorrow to discharge the first of some 7 million gallons of detoxified chemical wastes into the Niagara River. Damage estimated at \$50,000 caused by holes punched in the pipeline.

May 11, 1981

Arson is blamed for two fires at two vacated Love Canal homes.

May 13, 1981

CECOS International Inc. and Rochester Gas and Electric Co. announced plans to build a sprawling chemical-waste disposal and treatment complex on the shores of Lake Ontario between Rochester and Syracuse.

May 14, 1981

The LCARA voted to call on the state to remove the green fence that surrounds the Love Canal site and to demolish the first two rings of homes:

In what was described as a "vote of confidence for the area", the Executive Director of the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA), Richard Morris, announced plans to purchase a home in the Love Canal neighborhood.

May 15, 1981

Contract was signed between ETF and LCARA for consulting services by ETF Scientific/Technical Advisory Board on EPA test results.

- May 17, 1981 *Sister Margeen with Stan Wirsig, Environmental Management Council, gave a presentation in the Emmanuel United Methodist Church, Lockport concerning "The Human Aspects of Environmental Problems".*
- May 19, 1981 *The Niagara County Legislature agreed to ask State and Niagara Falls officials to include homeowners on Deuro Drive, Mueller Court and Brookhaven Drive in state legislation that awarded others in the designated Love Canal area county, city and school tax rebates. Their motion also asks the Niagara Falls City Assessor to review property assessments on the three streets on the northeastern edge of the Love Canal. (The three streets were excluded in the Emergency Declaration)*
- ETF Executive Board voted to send a communication to Richard Morris, Executive Director of Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency, advising him that his intended move into the Love Canal neighborhood was thought to be premature until habitability is established. At this point, adequate data is not available to declare the neighborhood habitable.*
- May 20, 1981 *United Cerebral Palsy Association and the Association for Retarded Children announced plans to enter into a joint contract to do lawn cutting and maintenance in the Love Canal neighborhood for LCARA.*
- May 22, 1981 *Sister Margeen attended a Press Conference at Oil and Chemical Workers Union where Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere distributed the "Right-to-Know Bill"*
- May 27, 1981 *Sister Margeen, Roger Cook, Diane Sheley, met with Mr. Tom Glair of Association for Retarded Children and Mr. Joseph Mineo of the United Cerebral Palsy Association re the advisability of accepting a contract for lawn maintenance at Love Canal.*
- May 29, 1981 *City of Niagara Falls submitted a revised proposal to HUD for aid for Love Canal in the amount of \$780,000. (See May 1, 1981 entry).*

June 2, 1981

ETF sent an urgent telegram to Governor Hugh Carey, Senator Daniel Moynihan, Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Congressman John LaFalce, Senator John Daly, Assemblyman Matthew Murphy and Assemblyman Joseph T. Pillittere, requesting an immediate release of the EPA air, soil and ground water testing of Love Canal.

Sister Margeen and Sister Joan Malone taped a television program for Person to Person, Channel 29.

June 3, 1981

Love Canal residents temporarily located at Falcon Manor were notified by the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency that they must vacate the premises by June 30, 1981.

June 5, 1981

Rev. James Brewster and Sister Margeen met with Mayor Michael O'Laughlin, as directed by the Executive Board, to discuss the lack of adequate low income housing available for tenants of Love Canal.

June 6, 1981

Congress has voted to approve \$950,000 to carry out an abridged version of the \$3.8 million Love Canal health study.

Richard Morris, Executive Director of the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency, announced plans to move into a house in Love Canal on July 1, 1981.

A General Meeting of the ETF was held at First United Methodist Church in Niagara Falls.

ETF Executive Board accepts with regret the resignation of Rev. Bruce Stearns.

June 9, 1981

An apparent second act of sabotage on the SCA Chemical Wastes Services Inc. pipeline was discovered today. (See May 7, 1981 entry).

June 10, 1981

Mr. Paul Argenti and Ms. Eva Lind Schetector of Amos Tuck Business School, Dartmouth, Hanover, New Hampshire, visited the ETF office for orientation on Love Canal and Hyde Park/Bloody Run. Mr. Argenti will prepare a case study for the Business School.

June 11, 1981

The CBS News Magazine, "60 Minutes", came to the Niagara Falls area to do a program on pollution in the Niagara River.

- June 11, 1981 State Health Officials released results of a study they conducted at the Love Canal which shows that residents there faced a higher occurrence of lung cancer than in average neighborhoods nationally.
- June 12, 1981 *The Western New York Conference of the United Methodist Church voted today to abandon the Wesley United Methodist Church in Love Canal as of July 1, 1981.*
- June 15, 1981 Almost three years after the first applications were filed, SCA Chemical Services Inc. opened the valves today, releasing the first liquids through its controversial chemical waste pipeline.
- The Canadian research ship, the Advent, was in the lower Niagara River to monitor the river discharge.
- Of special concern to Canadians is the ability of wastes to dilute with river water before reaching drinking water intakes at Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario.
- Aquatic biologists from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation were also on hand with a mobile laboratory to monitor the toxicity of the discharge.
- June 18, 1981 Congressman John LaFalce replied to ETF telegram asking for EPA test results in Love Canal. (See June 2, 1981 entry). "... It now appears as if the environmental assessment will not be released until mid-summer at the earliest. I consider the long delay in releasing their report unconscionable."
- June 22, 1981 *At the request of Mayor Michael O'Laughlin, and responding to the relocation needs of the large low-income families in Love Canal, the ETF presented a housing study to the Niagara Falls City Council. The impact of this study was acceptance of twelve substantially rehabilitated units of scattered site housing. His housing will allow large families, who now feel trapped at Love Canal to relocate.*
- June 23, 1981 *ETF Board member, Sister Joan Malone, OSF, was keynote speaker and Barbara Hanna, ETF Administrative Assistant, participated on a panel discussion for the General Assembly of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Buffalo, New York.*

- June 26, 1981 City of Niagara Falls application for federal money to help renovate the Love Canal area, under HUD's community development program, was denied. (See April 15, 1981 entry).
- June 28, 1981 *ETF Board members and Staff attended the closing "celebration" service at Wesley United Methodist Church. Wesley members "celebrated" the past opportunity of their ministry and the on-going ministry of their members as they join other churches in the area. (See June 12, 1981 entry).*
- July 1, 1981 *The ETF filed a joint Amici Curiae brief with Pollution Probe of Toronto, Ontario and Operation Clean-Niagara, with Federal Judge John T. Curtin, stating the proposed settlement agreement for Hyde Park Landfill is fundamentally defective and unable to accomplish its intended purpose of providing protection for human health and environment. (See March 6, 1981 entry).*
- July 2, 1981 The State Department of Environmental Conservation applied for a \$1 million grant from the U.S. EPA to build a pilot plant, possibly on the Niagara Frontier, to treat wastes from Love Canal.
- July 4, 1981 Three citizen representatives on the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency protest move by Richard Morris into Love Canal house. They contend Morris should have waited until EPA test results were made public.
- July 8, 1981 Local industry accidentally discharges large quantities of Phenol into the Niagara River.
- July 9, 1981 *ETF issues press release stating its support of the position that neither the LCARA agency director nor anyone else should move into the Love Canal neighborhood until scientific and technical evidence indicates such a move does not jeopardize health, safety or welfare of individuals.*
- July 11, 1981 Results of DEC testing at LaSalle Senior High School shows no particular problem (see December 4, 1980 entry).
- July 16, 1981 The EPA announced it will spend \$4 million in "Superfund" money for a major sewer and creek cleanup project at Love Canal.

- July 16, 1981 *Members of ETF Executive Board attend meeting at John's Hotel Niagara held by New York State Attorney General's office relative to negotiation proceedings between the United States of America and the State of New York against Hooker Chemicals & Plastics Corp., Hooker Chemical Corporation, Occidental Petroleum Investment Corporation, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, and the City of Niagara Falls, New York, dealing with the S-Area Landfill. Marsha Cleveland of the Attorney General's office stated that, "Western New York is designated as a sacrifice area for corporate health".*
- July 17, 1981 *CECOS International Inc. given permission by DEC to proceed with construction of two new landfill sites for toxic chemical wastes at its 100-acre Town of Niagara site. (See March 20, 1981 entry).*
- July 21, 1981 *ETF played host to 12 college students and 3 professors from St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y. Five former Love Canal residents assisted Sr. Margeen in relating the Love Canal events.*
- July 25, 1981 *Sister Margeen presented statement at OSHA/Clean Air Coalition press conference at Tiffit Farms supporting Clean Air Act.*
- July 28, 1981 *In response to Amici Brief of ETF (see July 1, 1981 entry), Hooker Chemicals & Plastics Corporation stated in a Brief filed with Judge Curtin: "That plan cannot be taken seriously, and Hooker will not be voluntarily associated with any remedial effort which includes such a plan."*
- August 5, 1981 *Niagara Gazette article quotes Mayor O'Laughlin, Chairman of Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency, as saying ICARA can no longer wait for the federal government to release its long-delayed report on environmental conditions in the Love Canal area and will begin its renewal planning this month. Mr. O'Laughlin said he envisions the Love Canal area eventually returning to its previous status, a generally residential area consisting mainly of single-family homes.*
- August 6, 1981 *Federal Judge John Curtin announced his decision to schedule a public hearing to air the terms of a proposed settlement in the Hyde Park Landfill lawsuits.*

August 6, 1981

The State University of Buffalo Medical School sought \$1 million from the federal government to maintain a long-term watch on the health of Love Canal residents, but it disclosed today that the bid was rejected.

EPA representatives, Kenneth Stoeller and Dr. John Deegan, announced at a Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency meeting that a \$4 million Superfund-sponsored clean-up of sanitary and storm sewers, Black Creek and Bergholtz Creek, in the Love Canal area will begin in the spring of 1982. The entire program will take two to three years to complete. (See July 16, 1981 entry).

August 8, 1981

Niagara Gazette reported that excavation inside a building at TAM Ceramics, Inc. has led to the discovery of chemical migration from Hyde Park Landfill to the north. Robert Matthews, City Utilities Director, theorized that wastes from the landfill were entering the city sewers through the TAM sewer system.

August 23-25, 1981

Sister Margeen participated in the North Smithfield Ecology Festival in North Smithfield, Rhode Island.

ETF Executive Board votes to assume Intervenor Status in the S-Area suit.

August 29, 1981

DEC announced that faced with legislative and federal aid cutbacks it has scrapped its program to clean up scores of abandoned toxic waste sites in Erie and Niagara counties. Dropping of the hazardous-waste program comes at a time when the state has identified 150 sites within 3 miles of the Niagara River which potentially could be contributing to toxic contamination of the international waterway.

September 3, 1981

Ms. Ann Druck and Mr. Vincent Scherber, students in the Niagara University School of Social Work, began their field placement with ETF.

September 4, 1981

Niagara Gazette reports seven tons of formaldehyde was accidentally discharged into the Niagara River by an area industry. Formaldehyde, usually sold in liquid form blended with methanol - is considered a "moderately dangerous" fungicide that is suspected carcinogenic according to industry experts.

September 8, 1981

ETF accepted with pleasure, Father Joseph Levesque, Dean of Studies at Niagara University, as an at-large member of the ETF Executive Board.

September 9, 1981 Hearings commenced in Federal Court on the proposed agreement between the U.S. Justice Department and Hooker Chemicals and Plastics Corp., relative to Hyde Park Landfill/Bloody Run (See August 6, 1981 entry).

September 15, 1981 As we go to press:

The hearings on the proposed settlement agreement between U.S. Justice Department and Hooker Chemicals and Plastic Corporation will continue October 1,2,5 and 6th. in U.S. District Court before Judge Curtin.

The EPA test results in the Love Canal area are still not available.

"In adopting SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review Act), it was the Legislature's intention that all agencies conduct their affairs with an awareness that they are stewards of the air, water, land, and living resources, and that they have an obligation to protect the environment for the use and enjoyment of this and all future generations."

Part 617, Adopted Sept. 1, 1978

SEQR Amendment, Dec. 12, 1978

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

FAMILY AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

We have gifts that differ ... it may
be the gift of ministry; it should
be used for service.

Romans 12:6-7

Lord, let me not live to be useless.

John Wesley

"As the families move, it's important to not forget them. They have been through so much worry, pressure and fear, nor do they know what problems they will encounter in the future".¹

These words by Father David Lee, expressly describe the Ecumenical Task Force Advocate Outreach Program to Love Canal families.

Beginning in September 1980, the Ecumenical Task Force launched the outreach program, with an intense telephone effort by ETF Advocates to reach all families of the Love Canal community. This program had a three-fold purpose:

1. To reacquaint the entire population with the Advocate role of the Ecumenical Task Force.
2. To identify problems of the residents.
3. To assist residents in problem solving through direct crisis counselling and referral.

The goal was to reach all families, homeowners and renters. We strove to assist those who had specific, immediate problems, and to keep lines of communications open with others, for, *"we do not know what problems they will encounter in the future"*.

In the Love Canal area in September 1980, there were a total of 862 families.² 558 of these families lived in single-dwelling homes. Most of these were homeowners, with about 38 individual homes being rented from absentee owners. The population included working class homeowners, retired city and industry employees and young middle-class professional people.

The remaining 304 families lived in a public housing development. This development included 250 family units and 54 apartments specially designed for Senior Citizens. In the 250 family units, approximately 95% were Black families. Most of this population was on fixed income, i.e. Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Public Assistance.

Initially, the Ecumenical Task Force had mainly addressed the problems of Love Canal residents on a group or organizational basis during the crisis period of 1979-80. But as the months went on, it became more evident that personal problems and the ability to cope with these problems required undivided attention and direct intervention.

¹Lee, Rev. David, WNY Catholic Visitor

²An additional 239 families were evacuated from rings 1 and 2 in 1978, making total families in area 1101.

SEPTEMBER (1980), - the month when families in our country traditionally "resettle" after the rejuvenation of summer. Such was not the case in Love Canal in September 1980. Over 300 families were still in "temporary" relocation, as a result of the May 21, 1980 Federal Emergency Declaration. They had spent a tense summer, first in motels, followed by "conventional temporary units". Most were no longer in the same school area. They still did not know when or if permanent relocation would be a reality. Worry, pressure, fear were the common denominators for Love Canal residents.

OCTOBER 1³, 1980 - a very important day. The Federal/State Agreement³ was signed in Niagara Falls by President Jimmy Carter and New York Governor Hugh C. Carey. This agreement provided for permanent relocation. Finally, the end was in sight. BUT THE PROBLEMS WERE AND ARE NOT OVER - THEY ARE JUST REFOCUSED.

"As the families move, it's important to not forget them."

The Advocates continued calling, listening, reaching out. The questions and concerns which were uppermost on the minds of the residents were:

- . How can I move?
- . Interest rates are tripled.
- . Mortgage money is scarce.
- . I can't replace the home I have for less than \$60,000.
- . What do I do now???
- . If I stay, will the neighborhood be safe from vandals, etc.
- . Will there be definitive health studies?
- . Will the area eventually be cleaned up and safe to live in?

And there are groups not provided for in the Agreement:

- 250 Families renting at LaSalle Development
- 54 Senior Citizen families at LaSalle Development
- 5 Businesses
- 2 Churches
- 2 Parsonages
- 35+ Renters in private homes

³See Chronology, pg. 45

How can these families relocate? How do businesses stay viable in a vacant neighborhood? Why is a Pastor and his family exempt from the "Health Emergency"? How does a church minister with no members?

For most families, the decision was to stay in the temporary housing and enroll the children in new schools as necessary. They did not choose to move back to Love Canal. The ETF Advocates could not offer everyone a solution to this dilemma, but they could offer to listen.

The 500-plus families still in their homes and apartments were no less troubled as Fall 1980 approached. Worry, pressure and fear had engulfed their lives and, for many, was even more pervasive. The children, who had been bussed to the Cleveland Avenue School for the 1979-80 school year, were now being sent to other city schools. Many would no longer be bussed, but had to walk to 79th Street School through abandoned Love Canal streets. The uncertainty about the future was with all families.

Love Canal is not over - for many it will never be. However, for many, there is hope now.

SEPTEMBER 1981 - Many families have found it a struggle, but they have moved - permanently. To date, 267 homeowners have sold their homes to the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency⁵ and are beginning to rebuild their lives. Relocated residents have many needs - physical, emotional, financial. Their fears are not gone, but they have found the strength to start over. The ETF Advocate still calls - the attentive listener who cares.

Some renters, too, have found they can leave. There is \$500,000 available to assist them in relocation expenses and 150 HUD Section 8 Certificates.⁶ To date, (September 1981), approximately 150 families and 31 Senior Citizens have found permanent housing. The remaining families are having great difficulty in finding suitable housing in the Niagara Falls area. The ETF continues to assist and refer these families to appropriate agencies.

Remaining in the Love Canal emergency declared area are approximately 50 families who do not want to leave. They are hoping the Environmental Protection Agency studies will show that their neighborhood is able to be revitalized and, once more be repopulated. These families continue to meet, question and hope. The ETF Advocates continue to listen and wait with them.

⁵A quasi-governmental agency charged with the purchasing of homes and future use of the Love Canal neighborhood.

⁶Federal program for housing subsidy based on family income. May be used in private homes or complexes which meet HUD standards.

"As the families move, it is important to not forget them. They have been through so much worry, pressure and fear, nor do they know what problems they will encounter in the future."

The ETF, the church response to this human suffering caused by environmental disaster, was begun to respond to the need of the Love Canal victims; we will remain here until this crucial mission to the human dimension is fulfilled.

Diane D. Sheley
ETF Family & Neighborhood
Services Coordinator

"The task of those who care is to articulate a vision of needed change and to demonstrate courage in the face of obstacles. Those who care formulate or influence official policy. They focus attention on essential concerns rather than following the issues of the moment. They take humanity as their ultimate constituency. Those who care represent the poor and forgotten with tenacity and steadfastness. They talk with kings and they walk with paupers. They provide a bridge between conflicting groups. They are sensitive to the just demands of both tradition and innovation. They preserve and protect the environment. They back up their beliefs by investing all of their resources and they solicit others to do the same. By pointing to pressing needs they call forth the consciousness of others. They lead, organize and help to channel energies in the most productive directions. They think globally and act locally."

— IMAGE, A Journal on the Human Factor

A FINAL BENEDICTION

It occurred on June 28, 1981. It didn't make national headlines. To most people it was just another happening at Love Canal.

"As of midnight, Tuesday, this building will be abandoned and Wesley United Methodist Church will be no more!" Those were the words spoken from the pulpit of Wesley United Methodist Church that memorable June 28th.

To myself and others in that church that morning, it meant the end of a two and one-half year struggle. A sense of defeat overwhelmed me. At this our last service, the Sanctuary was filled to capacity, the "roof was raised" in song and across the pulpit came beautiful caring words -- yet, "Wesley United Methodist Church would be no more".

In the week that followed, we watched as the furnishings were removed and the boards put over the windows. Why? Why, did this happen to my church? Is that what it is all about? Would people just forget? Was the personal agony of the past two and one-half years worthwhile?

The agony came over our decision to follow the mandate in our Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, which states: "It is the function of the local church to minister to the needs of persons in the communities where the church is located..."

When first dealing with the issue of Love Canal in March of 1979, we were at a loss as to what was happening. We were directly across the street from the Emergency Declared area (later in the designated area) and yet were unable to comprehend the magnitude of the effect it would have on Wesley. Our members from Love Canal had been strangely silent! As the months went on, we were able to understand that this silence was an indication of the fact that our Sanctuary was serving as a refuge for these members. For whatever time they spent there, they didn't have to think about Love Canal!

When approached by the Love Canal Homeowners Association to allow the Association to hold their public meetings in the building, we agonized,

"Church and politics don't belong together."

"The building is not the church. The people are the church."

"Our Sanctuary is Holy ground, not a meeting place."

"These people in our community need a place to meet."

"I'll not step into the church again if you allow this."

"If the church is here to serve me, help me to get out of Love Canal."

"There's nothing wrong here. They're just a bunch of rabble-rousers!"

"They're just making a big thing over nothing. We've all had illnesses in our families. Why, my sister in Minnesota, had two miscarriages..."

and so on... as feelings came to the surface.

Our Sanctuary came to be the public meeting place for not only the Homeowners, but the Renters Association, the State, and even the EPA. It provided a strangely calming influence over the meetings many of which up to this time had been quite unruly. When someone would begin to get especially loud or abusive, a quiet reminder that "we are in the House of God" served to calm the situation.

However, this decision played its toll on Wesley. Members who simply couldn't understand our purpose, left the church. Those who wanted to remain in the Love Canal area believing nothing wrong, felt we were siding with those who wanted to leave. And yet, another side appeared. As our Pastor would make his hospital visits, strange names appeared on his roster of patients. When visiting them, he learned that they had attended a public meeting at Wesley and since they didn't have a church -- "I didn't think you would mind if I put down Wesley as my church". Another interesting development was a sudden surge in requests for Baptisms and Marriages in our Sanctuary.

The United Methodist Connectional System functioned very well in giving financial support to Wesley, but the problems presented by a "Love Canal" are of such magnitude that the local pastor and lay leadership also need reinforcements from trained personnel who are not laboring under the feelings of "heart".

Fortunately, throughout my own experience at Wesley, I was able to debrief with personnel at ETF. To be present at the ETF Boardroom table Tuesday mornings and watch the interaction of the Executive Board served as a spiritual uplift for me which I could no longer experience at Wesley. The ETF personnel were there to cry with and rejoice with as we moved along each step of our struggle.

Why my church? Perhaps we will never understand!

However, my vision has been enlarged. I've come to understand what "church" means. Although it hurt to have the beautiful building boarded, I know the Wesley United Methodist Church will never die. It will carry on in the hearts of all of us as we make a new commitment with another congregation of our choice.

Barbara Hanna
ETF Administrative Assistant

Coordinator of Wesley United
Methodist Church Task Force
On Love Canal

A disaster is that graced moment
when God touches us through
the sufferings of others
and allows God to touch us
through our ministry.

-Fr. William O'Connell

"What other institution in society can speak to the moral and ethical problems in society other than the church? Some see the church dealing only in intellectual things. But that doesn't get us out of bodily action.

"We have environmentalists, lawyers and biologists who can speak to the issues and help make the churches aware and responsible.

"The one thing the church can do is be a consciousness raiser. Social action for the sake of social action outside the gospel is wrong. Our responsibility is to minister to the needs and souls of the people and to be stewards of God's creation."

-Father Guy Peek,
Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church, Youngstown, N.Y.

LOVE CANAL - A BARREN NEIGHBORHOOD

Once seen as an ideal suburban-like neighborhood, the area of Niagara Falls which also housed the Love Canal, has, since August 2, 1978, been transformed. Prior to this date, the area bustled with the business of living. Now it stands all but barren.

It has been said that numbers speak louder than words, and the numbers describing the Love Canal transformation continue to mount. Each day another family moves - an exodus of three years.

In 1978, there were 1043 families living in the area now included in the emergency declared Love Canal boundaries. On September 18, 1981, there were only 185 families remaining in the area. The Love Canal neighborhood stands all but barren.

The Love Canal neighborhood has never been a homogeneous one. The statistics demonstrate this in the types of dwellings found: 739 individual homes, and 304 federally subsidized low income apartment units, 54 of which are Senior Citizen units, 250 of which are family units.

Today, following the events of the Love Canal disaster:

640 individual homes are vacant. 237 are in the inner rings, and 403 are in the outer rings. Of these:

237 were purchased in 1978 by the State of New York
and

368 have been purchased by the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency.

35 are vacant, but not eligible for purchase as they were not owner-occupied.

28 homeowners are awaiting purchase.

189 of 250 family units at LaSalle Development are vacant and boarded.

29 of 54 Senior Citizen units at LaSalle Development are vacant and boarded.

The families who have moved, those who are waiting to move, and those who at this time have decided to stay, have experienced loss, fear, uncertainty. Many will bear the scars of Love Canal for their lifetime, others will heal, but none will forget the events of the last three years.

GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

*Revised January 20, 1981

RATIONALE:

*"I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you received me into your homes, naked and you clothes me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me...
'I tell you, indeed, whenever you did this for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me'"*

- Matthew 25:35,40

Financial contributions given by individuals and organizations have been entrusted to the Ecumenical Task Force for distribution to residents of the chemically contaminated neighborhood of Love Canal, Niagara Falls, New York. It is the mandate of the ETF to dispense these gifts with the same generous spirit in which they were given and with a sense of responsibility.

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING NEEDS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

1. Need for financial aid must be causally related to residency in Love Canal area.
2. Requests for financial aid are considered only after all other resources for assistance have been exhausted.
3. Any person or persons on a fixed income, insured under Social Security or another system, but who have lost large amounts of personal property and are not able to financially compensate the loss.
4. Any person or persons (family/household) who have used available resources and are experiencing financial hardship because of added expenses caused by the Love Canal.
5. Any person or head of household who is unemployed because of disability and has little or no cash income.
6. Interest-free loans are available to resident victims to maintain a sense of dignity and to provide responsible use of ETF funds.

* The Guidelines were revised to include Residents of the Hyde Park Landfill Area.

ETF FINANCIAL REPORT

Let each of you,
according to the gift
he has received,
share it with the rest.

1 Peter 4:10

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

The accounting policies followed by the Corporation in the preparation of the accompanying financial statements are as follows:

Revenue and Expense - Revenue and expense are recognized generally on a cash basis, as described in Note 2. A substantial portion of the Corporation's revenue is received from major church denomination grants, and certain of these grants are restricted in their use to direct aid for indigent families.

Depreciation - Provision for depreciation is based upon various asset lives using the straight-line method.

Taxes - The Corporation has applied for tax-exempt status as a private foundation under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Under this provision, the Corporation is exempt from federal and state income taxes as a not-for-profit corporation.

2. BASIS OF ACCOUNTING:

The Corporation's policy is to prepare its financial statements generally on a cash receipts and disbursements basis of accounting; consequently, certain revenues are recognized when received rather than when earned, and certain expenses and purchases of assets are recognized when cash is disbursed rather than when the obligation is incurred. Financial statements prepared on this basis of accounting are not intended to present financial position and results of operations in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

3. CONTRIBUTIONS:

All contributions are considered to be available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donor.

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
RESULTING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS

MARCH 31, 1980

	CURRENT FUNDS		TOTAL ALL
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>FUNDS</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>			
<u>Current Assets:</u>			
Cash in Bank and On Hand-----	\$17,543.52	\$ --	\$17,543.52
Prepaid N.Y. State Withholding Tax-----	193.60	--	193.60
Total Current Assets-----	<u>17,737.12</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>17,737.12</u>
<u>Equipment:</u>			
Office Equipment-----	564.00	--	564.00
Total-----	564.00	--	564.00
Less: Accumulated Depreciation (Note 1)-----	63.07	--	63.07
Total Equipment-----	<u>500.93</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>500.93</u>
Total Assets-----	<u>\$18,238.05</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>\$18,238.05</u>
 <u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</u>			
<u>Current Liabilities</u> -----	<u>---</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>---</u>
<u>Fund Balance:</u>			
Current Unrestricted Fund--	\$18,238.05	\$ --	\$18,238.05
Total Fund Balances-----	<u>18,238.05</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>18,238.05</u>
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	<u>\$18,238.05</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>\$18,238.05</u>

See Accompanying Notes to Financial Statements

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.
STATEMENT OF REVENUES COLLECTED AND EXPENSES PAID
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1980

	CURRENT FUNDS		TOTAL ALL FUNDS
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	
SUPPORT AND REVENUE COLLECTED:			
<u>Support</u>			
National Churches-----	\$25,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$33,000.00
Local Denominations-----	21,630.14	--	21,630.14
Local Churches-----	621.33	--	621.33
Local Organizations-----	979.06	--	979.06
Service Organizations-----	2,500.00	--	2,500.00
Individuals-----	662.32	--	662.32
Total Support-----	<u>51,392.85</u>	<u>8,000.00</u>	<u>59,392.85</u>
<u>Revenue</u>			
Interest-----	350.98	--	350.98
Total Revenue-----	<u>350.98</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>350.98</u>
Total Support and Revenue--	<u>\$51,743.83</u>	<u>\$ 8,000.00</u>	<u>\$59,743.83</u>
EXPENSE:			
<u>Administration</u>			
Publicity-----	39.69	--	39.69
Dues and Subscriptions-----	49.09	--	49.09
Disability Insurance-----	64.19	--	64.19
Travel, Room, Board & Air Fares	2,225.00	--	2,225.00
Postage-----	502.30	--	502.30
Office Equipment - Rental-----	1,688.46	--	1,688.46
Office Equipment - Repairs-----	85.81	--	85.81
Supplies-----	1,374.41	--	1,374.41
Telephone-----	2,071.51	--	2,071.51
Printing-----	1,357.01	--	1,357.01
Entertainment-----	9.30	--	9.30
Salaries-----	8,679.46	--	8,679.46
Professional Services-----	13,871.81	--	13,871.81
Bank Charges-----	39.33	--	39.33
Depreciation-----	63.07	--	63.07
Payroll Taxes - FICA-----	8.17	--	8.17
Miscellaneous-----	205.55	--	205.55
Total Administration-----	<u>32,334.16</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>32,334.16</u>

See Accompanying Notes to Financial Statements

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.
STATEMENT OF REVENUES COLLECTED AND EXPENSES PAID
 AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1980

	CURRENT FUNDS		TOTAL ALL FUNDS
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	
EXPENSE (CONT'D):			
<u>Direct Aid</u>			
Printing and Copying-----	---	100.00	100.00
Telephone-----	---	162.16	162.16
Utilities-----	---	885.16	885.16
Clothes-----	---	38.48	38.48
Material Assistance-----	---	551.05	551.05
Rent and Housing-----	---	2,475.93	2,475.93
Transportation and Moving-----	---	1,595.68	1,595.68
Medical-----	---	1,765.00	1,765.00
Food-----	---	1,598.16	1,598.16
Total Direct Aid-----	---	<u>9,171.62</u>	<u>9,171.62</u>
Total Expense-----	<u>32,334.16</u>	<u>9,171.62</u>	<u>41,505.78</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSE-----	19,409.67	(1,171.62)	18,238.05
OTHER CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE:			
Transfer of Unrestricted Funds to Restricted-----	<u>(1,171.62)</u>	<u>1,171.62</u>	<u>--</u>
	18,238.05	-0-	18,238.05
FUND BALANCE, APRIL 1, 1979-----	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
FUND BALANCE, MARCH 31, 1980	<u>\$18,238.05</u>	<u>\$ -0-</u>	<u>\$18,238.05</u>

See Accompanying Notes to Financial Statements

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
RESULTING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS
MARCH 31, 1981

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>CURRENT FUNDS</u>		<u>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</u>
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	
CURRENT ASSETS:			
Cash in Bank -----	\$ 1,870.61	\$ --	\$1,870.61
Total Currents Assets-----	<u>1,870.61</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>1,870.61</u>
EQUIPMENT:			
Office Equipment-----	1,234.00	--	1,234.00
Total-----	<u>1,234.00</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>1,234.00</u>
Less: Accumulated Depreciation-----	309.87	--	309.87
Total Equipment-----	<u>924.13</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>924.13</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 2,794.74</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>\$2,794.74</u>
 <u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</u> 			
CURRENT LIABILITIES:			
Federal Withholding Tax Payable-----	\$ 252.90	\$ --	\$ 252.90
N.Y. State Withholding Tax Payable---	27.60	--	27.60
Professional Services Payable-----	3,333.33	--	3,333.33
Total Current Liabilities-----	<u>3,613.83</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>3,613.83</u>
FUND BALANCE (DEFICIT):			
Current Unrestricted Fund-----	(819.09)	--	(819.09)
Total Fund Balance-----	<u>(819.09)</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>(819.09)</u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance-----	<u>\$ 2,794.74</u>	<u>\$ --</u>	<u>\$2,794.74</u>

See Accompanying Notes to Financial Statements

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.
 STATEMENT OF REVENUES COLLECTED AND EXPENSES PAID
 AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1981

	CURRENT FUNDS <u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</u>
SUPPORT AND REVENUE COLLECTED:			
<u>Support</u>			
National Churches-----	\$22,075.00	\$8,000.00	\$30,075.00
Local Denominations-----	10,950.00	--	10,950.00
Local Churches-----	225.00	--	225.00
Local Organizations-----	1,853.25	--	1,853.25
Service Organizations-----	450.00	--	450.00
Individuals-----	4,604.59	--	4,604.59
Total Support-----	<u>\$40,157.84</u>	<u>8,000.00</u>	<u>48,157.84</u>
<u>Revenue</u>			
Interest-----	453.18	--	453.18
Total Revenue-----	<u>453.18</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>453.18</u>
Total Support and Revenue-----	<u>\$40,611.02</u>	<u>\$8,000.00</u>	<u>\$48,611.02</u>
EXPENSES PAID:			
<u>Administration</u>			
Publicity-----	25.00	--	25.00
Dues and Subscriptions-----	67.90	--	67.90
Disability Insurance-----	94.30	--	94.30
Travel, Room, Board & Air Fares-----	2,279.57	--	2,279.57
Postage-----	533.08	--	533.08
Office Equipment - Rental-----	2,722.94	--	2,722.94
Office Equipment - Repairs-----	205.50	--	205.50
Supplies-----	2,790.55	--	2,790.55
Telephone-----	3,740.82	--	3,740.82
Printing-----	2,299.22	--	2,299.22
Consultants-----	201.74	--	201.74
Salaries-----	23,024.24	--	23,024.24
Professional Services-----	20,000.00	--	20,000.00
Bank Charges-----	73.19	--	73.19
Depreciation-----	246.80	--	246.80
Miscellaneous-----	435.83	--	435.83
Total Administration-----	<u>58,740.68</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>58,740.68</u>

See Accompanying Notes to Financial Statements

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, INC.
STATEMENT OF REVENUES COLLECTED AND EXPENSES PAID
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1981

	<u>CURRENT FUNDS</u>	<u>TOTAL ALL</u>
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u> <u>FUNDS</u>
EXPENSES PAID (CONT'D):		
<u>Direct Aid</u>		
Printing and Copying-----	---	57.35 57.35
Telephone-----	---	475.60 475.60
Utilities-----	---	402.99 402.99
Material Assistance-----	---	1,163.01 1,163.01
Rent and Housing-----	---	3,010.20 3,010.20
Transportation & Moving-----	---	1,594.65 1,594.65
Medical-----	---	2,173.68 2,173.68
Food-----	---	50.00 50.00
Total Direct Aid-----	---	<u>8,927.48</u> <u>8,927.48</u>
Total Expenses-----	<u>58,740.68</u>	<u>8,927.48</u> <u>67,668.16</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF SUPPORT AND REVENUES OVER EXPENSES-----	(18,129.66)	(927.48) (19,057.14)
OTHER CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES:		
Transfer of Unrestricted Funds to Restricted-----	(927.48) <u>(19,057.14)</u>	927.48 -- <u>-0-</u> <u>(19,057.14)</u>
FUND BALANCE APRIL 1, 1980-----	<u>18,238.05</u>	<u>-0-</u> <u>18,238.05</u>
FUND BALANCE (DEFICIT) MARCH 31, 1981--\$	<u>(819.09)</u>	<u>-0-</u> <u>\$ (819.09)</u>

See Accompanying Notes to Financial Statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

The accounting policies followed by the Corporation in the preparation of the accompanying financial statements are as follows:

Revenue and Expense - Revenue and expense are recognized generally on a cash basis, as described in Note 2. A substantial portion of the Corporation's revenue is received from major church denomination grants and certain of these grants are restricted in their use to direct aid for indigent families.

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3. CONTRIBUTIONS:

All contributions are considered to be available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donor.

4. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PAYABLE:

These services were recognized as a payable when incurred due to their contractual nature rather than when paid. This is a deviation from general Corporate policy but because of its ongoing nature, the expense for professional services would be distorted if the payable was not recorded.

THE DENOMINATIONS SPEAK

You are my witnesses, says the Lord,
my servants whom I have chosen.

Isaiah 43:10

Give us courage, O Lord.

Alan Paton

WHAT IN THE WORLD...?

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the current, endless lists of problems to be solved if our world is to survive can be attributed in part, at least, to the fact that we are nearing both the end of a century and the end of a millenium.

I suspect, however, that the endless lists exist mainly because numerous, serious, civilization-threatening problems exist.

The agenda-makers tell us that, in order to survive, we have the rest of this century to accomplish a one-hundred-and-eighty degree turnaround in the practices and systems that have contributed to:

- ... the near depletion of natural resources,
- ... the headlong drive toward international confrontation in war,
- ... the conscienceless destruction of the planet's eco-system,
- ... the rising specter of dehumanizing poverty,
- ... the oppressive denial of human rights,
- ... the wretched plight of starving millions,
- ... the continuing and severe world-wide economic crisis.

Quite a list, isn't it? But that's not all! In addition, we are challenged to

- .. end unemployment,
- ... stop the nuclear arms race,
- ... destroy racism,
- ... restore and protect our environment,
- ... reduce military spending,
- ... deal sexual discrimination a death-blow.

The lists go on, and on, and on.

The agenda-makers' proposals for action leave me breathless, trembling and immobile. I am convinced that ordinary people lack the power or the knowledge, and perhaps even the will, to alter the practices and systems that feed these results of evil in the world in such a short period of time.

WHAT TO DO?

What, then, shall we do? What in the world shall we do?

- Shall we wring our hands in panic?
- Shall we run and jump and shout in a frenzy?
- Shall we 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die'?
- Shall we deny the reality of the problems?
- Shall we, in frustration and anger, deny the existence of God?
- Shall we -- thoughtful, intelligent beings -- choose despair as the only rational response?

Of course not. Certainly not. None of those options would be in any manner productive. Nor would any of those options be a fitting choice for one who is called 'a Christian'.

What, then?

We might acknowledge the reality of the problems but deny that the Christian has any responsibility to act to solve the problems encountered in the world. But that is to misrepresent the teaching of scripture.

We might admit the existence of severe worldwide problems and our limited ability to change the problems, then concentrate upon being good, and insist that everyone else emulate our definition of 'goodness' in order to receive acceptance and approval. That is to pervert the gospel.

Or we might recognize that we live in deeply troubled times, perceive our feeble ability to effect changes in the malignant practices and systems of the world, yet -- from deep within our beings -- affirm the conviction that to follow after Jesus is to be prepared to take positive action in what may appear to be impossible situations. Then, led by God's own Spirit, we would seek to determine from the history of the church and the words of scripture what is the Christian ethic, what it is that the Christian is responsible to do in the world.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The parable of the Good Samaritan offers great help in illuminating the Christian ethic for us.

We are all familiar with the occasion that prompted Jesus to tell the parable and with the details of the story:

A certain lawyer asked Jesus what one must do to gain eternal life.

Jesus, in good Jewish fashion, referred his questioner to the law and asked him to specify what the law requires.

The lawyer correctly summarized the essence of the law as requiring both love of God and love of one's neighbor.

And Jesus indicated that, if the lawyer would do just that, he would live eternally.

But the lawyer--possibly desiring to keep the floor a bit longer, possibly piqued at the textbook answer he had received--asked a further question, "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answered with the story of the Good Samaritan: Somewhere along the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, two men--both eminently qualified to know Jewish law--passed by a fellow Jew seriously wounded and in need of assistance. Both the priest and the Levite, upon seeing the severely injured, perhaps dead man, crossed to the opposite side of the road. In that act they not only ignored the injured person's need, but actually went out of their way to avoid him.

Enter the Samaritan. Jesus' listeners might have expected the third traveler to come upon the scene of the beating and robbery to be another Jew. All of them must have been greatly perplexed and a bit disgruntled when the hero of the story turned out to be a Samaritan. The Jews and Samaritans had despised each other for years, and the Jews regarded Samaritans as heretics after the Samaritans broke away from post-exilic Judaism as a result of the reforms of Nehemiah. Alexander had later placed Samaria under Jewish control, and the Samaritans were required to comply with a number of exacting Jewish demands. So deep was the animosity between the two peoples that sometimes it would cost a Jew his life if he ventured into Samaritan territory. Thus, to be told that it was a lowly Samaritan who had compassion and who met the law's requirements was bitterly ironic, especially since that compassion was shown a Jew.

How stunning it would have been considering their history of strong disagreement and distrust for each other

- ... to have happened along and seen a Samaritan on his knees by the side of that hot, dusty road administering first aid to the limp form of a Jew,
- ... to have seen that Samaritan gently place the Jew upon his own donkey then carefully but quickly lead the donkey straight to the portal of an inn,
- ... to have observed that Samaritan seated beside the bed where the Jew lay, caring for his every need throughout the night, and then

... to have watched as the Samaritan made careful arrangements for the other's care before he took his leave--reasonably certain that the life of the one he had helped was no longer in danger!

How risky for the Samaritan to have stopped by the Jew at all! The injured man, had he been able, might have rejected the Samaritan's assistance. Worse yet, another Jew appearing along the road might have believed the Samaritan to have been the attacker and have brought charges against him. Still worse, another Samaritan journeying by, who held great loathing for all Jews, might have seen the act of kindness and done the benefactor serious physical harm, for being a Jew lover.

You remember that the question the lawyer had originally put to Jesus was, "Who is my neighbor?" When he had ended his story, however, Jesus turned to the lawyer and asked, "Which of these three proved to be a neighbor?" Jesus was not about to answer the lawyer's question, because it was the wrong question. The correct question was, instead, "Do I behave as a neighbor? Do I act as a neighbor, performing acts of love?"

Finally, Jesus instructed the lawyer that to inherit eternal life, he should, "Go and do likewise." He did not advise the lawyer to first fight the systems and practices that drive persons to beat and rob others, that allow such hatred to exist between peoples as between the Jews and Samaritans. Instead, his advice was to actively love the victims of the systems and practices. In loving the victims, one actually begins to resist the evil systems and practices by affirming the utter pricelessness of human life.

The parable, then, has informed us so that we may more fully understand and even begin to practice the Christian ethic:

- ... Knowledge of the requirement to love is vastly different than the performance of loving acts.
- ... Those who need help the most may be unable to ask for that help.
- ... Differences between people, however deep, must not cause us to ignore the needs of another.
- ... Caring for another in a truly loving manner is likely to require our talents, time, possessions, and financial resources.
- ... Exhibiting love for others may be a very risky business.
- ... We should expect no applause for our acts, for there will probably be none.

... The fact that some other human being is in need should be the only motivating force behind our loving act.

THE PARABLE APPLIED

I have recently become familiar with the story of the people of a tiny village in France where the parable of the Good Samaritan was applied, a village where the Christian ethic came vibrantly alive.

The Place: Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, in the Haute-Loire district of southern France. A remote village on a plateau high in the mountains.

The Time: The first four years of the 1940's at the height of World War II when the Vichy government was in power during the Nazi occupation of France.

The People: French Huguenots, an infinitesimal Protestant minority holding to the Calvinist tradition, poor people, conscientious human beings, persons who had themselves suffered, persons fully convinced of the preciousness of all human life.

The Story: Simple, factual, deeply moving.

During the most terrible years of World War II, when inhumanity and political insanity held most of the world in their grip unchallenged, a marvelous series of events took place in Le Chambon. There, quietly, peacefully, and in full view of the Vichy government and a nearby division of the Nazi SS, the Chambonnais and their clergy acted to save more than six thousand Jewish children and adults from certain death in ways known to all of us at the hands of the Nazis.

It was in September, 1934 that the Huguenot congregation of Le Chambon welcomed its new pastor, Andre Trocme, and his family. Le Chambon was a village that seemed alive only during the three months of summer when the tourists were there. The other nine months were winter months with severe cold, little work, and almost no money. The mood of the residents was passive--more dead than alive. When yet another misery was heaped upon these people who were no strangers to suffering, the typical Chambonnais' response accompanied by a shrug was, "Que voulez-vous?" "Well, what do you expect? What can you do about it? Nothing, that's what."¹

¹Hallie, Philip, Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1980, p. 78.

In the early months of his ministry the new pastor sensed that Le Chambon was a village moving toward "death, death, death", so he tried to think of enterprises that would breathe life into the place. He was finally convinced that he had the answer: a school. One with no ties to the public school system. One that would prepare students for the university and would draw students from around the world by virtue of its excellence. One that upheld a spirit of nonviolence, a spirit of peace and internationalism.

The presence of students and faculty in the village would necessitate services that would provide work for the Chambonnais and introduce a new vitality during those long, cold months. The school would also signal the beginning of Le Chambon's service to the world as it sent students into the world who understood the meaning of nonviolence in a violent world. In the fall of 1938 the school opened with Edouard Theis as its director and part-time pastor of the Huguenot temple. Theis was later to lead Jews from Le Chambon across the dangerous mountains to Geneva and safety. Theis, like Trocmé, subscribed to nonviolence based upon his understanding of God's love for the human race.

Both men helped instill a spirit of resistance among the Chambonnais. Chambonnais' resistance to the hatred, betrayal, and naked destruction that were the hallmark of Nazi Germany first assumed a symbolic form: refusing to comply with an order to ring the temple tower bell in celebration of a French holiday, refusing to sign an oath of allegiance to the leader of the French government who was collaborating with the Nazis, refusing to require students at the school to salute the French flag.

From the summer of 1942 on, the Chambonnais confined themselves to their most dangerous commitment of all: sheltering and saving the persons most despised by the Nazis, the Jewish refugees. The Chambonnais were making their village a "city of refuge" according to the manner of those same cities of the Old Testament concerned with safeguarding the persecuted. Unlike the Old Testament cities where those who received protection were guilty of having committed involuntary manslaughter, the persons who were hidden in Le Chambon were guilty of no crime. They were the objects of Nazi persecution simply because they were Jews.

The spirit of the Old Testament passages about the cities of refuge required that the residents of those cities not only refuse to do harm themselves, but also act to prevent others from doing harm. The Chambonnais coupled the Old Testament passages with the New Testament account of the parable of the Good Samaritan where the love of neighbor was an active, dangerous love as they embarked upon what was to be the village's great adventure.

The residents of the tiny haven regarded their activities on behalf of the Jews as "what had to be done." They sought no acclaim for sharing their inadequate supplies of food and clothing with the others who arrived at their doors. In fact, they saw nothing at all remarkable about what they were doing. They turned no refugee away, believing that to refuse assistance was to do harm oneself. The answer, when someone knocked at a door seeking refuge, was always the same as Magda Trocme's had been when the first refugee in Le Chambon appeared at the door of the presbytery, "Naturally, come in, and come in."²

The Chambonnais attempted to maintain a lifestyle that was as normal as possible and had their guests share household responsibilities with them. Some of the Jews who were qualified to do so took on teaching responsibilities at the school. Most of the Jewish children were able to live rather normal lives, attending school, even playing outdoors upon occasion where they blended into the groups of Chambonnais children.

Of course, danger was ever present, and the danger grew more acute with each new group of refugees who arrived. The people of the village did not know which houses had guests and which ones did not at any given time, for it might have been nearly impossible to have withheld information from the officials if one had possessed a great deal of information. Therefore, the people simply did not discuss the events which were occurring in their village, even with each other. The leaders of the resistance had established a plan for the "disappearance of the Jews" which was set into action when the government officials seemed to be growing impatient and a raid of all the village homes was believed to be imminent. The plan, when it was employed, always worked.

During those four years, Le Chambon was the epitome of goodness, the embodiment of hospitality in the midst of supreme cruelty. The Chambonnais were not the recipients of widespread fame. In fact, their story remained practically unknown until Philip Hallie, a professor of philosophy and humanities in the U. S. told it in 1979 in his book, Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed. The story was unknown because "there are many friends for the rescuers of nations, but there do not seem to be many sympathizers for the rescuers of a few thousand desperate human beings." Dr. Hallie continues, "From the point of view of the history of nations, something very small happened there."³

Indeed, Hallie is entirely correct if we view the numbers of people affected by the events of World War II. But those who

²Ibid, p. 120

³Ibid, p. 8

were themselves saved by the Chambonnais and the relatives of those who were saved are inclined to concentrate upon the excellence of what happened there.

One woman who was saved as a young girl has written:

If today we are not bitter people like most survivors it can only be due to the fact that we met people like the people of LeChambon, who showed to us simply that life can be different, that there are people who care, that people can live together and even risk their own lives for their fellow men.⁴

And in the words of a French woman now residing in the United States whose three children were saved by the villagers of Le Chambon, "The Holocaust was storm, lightning, thunder, wind, rain, yes. And Le Chambon was the rainbow."⁵

CONCLUSION

Is it merely naive optimism, to believe so, or are the agenda-makers who harp about all that must be accomplished during the next twenty years exaggerating in order to awaken us from our slumber, to jar us to mobility, to shock us into action?

We who are fully aware of the magnitude and complexity of the problems we face in the world today, we who know that evil systems and practices are almost unshakeably entrenched, would do well to remember the Samaritan and the enlivened Chambonnais. Who among us, in remembering, can lifelessly ask, "Que voulez-vous?" while other human beings, other precious lives are made to suffer?

Instead, unless we have hearts turned to stone, we with Magda Trocme must cry out to the one in need, "Naturally, come in, and come in."⁶

⁴The Hastings Center Report, June 1981, p. 27

⁵Ibid, p. 28

⁶Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed, p. 120.

Donna H. Ogg
Consultant, ETF
July 26, 1981

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE RESOLUTION

Adopted May, 1980

IN LIGHT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST YEAR OF ITS EXISTENCE, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE ETF RECOMMENDS TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

- BE IT RESOLVED that we continue as an interfaith task force to respond to the human dimensions of the Love Canal disaster through direct aid where needed, through advocacy for the rights of all residents, through education of church members and of the general public, and through advocacy of a clean and healthy environment; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that during the coming year we will intensify our response to the human needs of residents and also seek to "be with" residents as they leave the area, offering continued support and service insofar as this is possible; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we gradually and insofar as our human and financial resources permit, we will extend the range of our activities to people in other parts of Western New York affected by chemical or radio-active dumping; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in addition to our pastoral ministry to victims of inherited disasters we will undertake a more explicit prophetic ministry: speaking against the irresponsibility that continues to produce man-made disasters, and speaking for all efforts to develop the technical means, the legal constraints and the moral purpose required for the complete neutralization of toxic wastes.

RESOLUTION ON THE PROBLEM OF HAZARDOUS WASTES

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

Adopted November 8, 1980
Annual Meeting

INTRODUCTION

Industries in the State of New York currently generate 1,300,000 tons of chemical and other hazardous wastes each year; of this, firms in the counties of Erie and Niagara produce 550,000 tons or 42% of the state total. 600,000 tons of this material is disposed of in as responsible a manner as our current technology allows. The disposal of 700,000 tons of hazardous wastes produced each year in our state is unaccounted for. Some of these wastes may be disposed of on site, sent to small waste processors (who currently do not need to report to N.Y. S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation), or sent out of state for disposal, but it may be that a large percentage of this material is disposed of in an improper fashion.

The Love Canal situation in Niagara Falls has called national and international attention to the human suffering and other problems which can be caused by the inadequate disposal of hazardous wastes. Members of the A.B.C.N.F. have been involved in the ministry of the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier (formerly the Ecumenical Task Force to Address the Love Canal Disaster) and the World Relief Committee of the A.B.C.U.S.A. has contributed \$22,500 to the Ecumenical Task Force for aid and ministry to those residents of the Love Canal area whose lives have been so greatly disrupted by this unfortunate situation.

Within the Niagara Frontier there are 238 known and suspected hazardous waste dumpsites and at least two sites known to contain radioactive wastes.

WHEREAS, the problems associated with hazardous wastes and their disposal calls for responsible action on the part of all concerned persons, and

WHEREAS, God has called us to join in a concerned community to be stewards of His creation to insure the right use of resources so that all may be assured a secure and healthy environment, clean air, pure water, and an earth that can nurture and support present and future generations.

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER
(Continued)

- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we will recognize that as consumers who use products which produce hazardous wastes, all of us bear some responsibility in solving the problems associated with hazardous wastes; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will recognize that industry faces a real problem in finding suitable sites for hazardous waste disposal; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will encourage legislation to provide incentives (such as tax credits) for industry to clean up existing inadequate disposal sites and to stimulate safe disposal in the future; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will support the strict enforcement of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA), the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act (HMTA) and other pertinent federal legislation concerning the transportation and final disposal of hazardous wastes; and also
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will support the provision of resources to the Environmental Agency and those other federal agencies responsible for the enforcement of these acts in order to insure the safe and secure disposal of present and future hazardous wastes; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will support the provision of resources to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to enforce the "Solid Waste Management" law (6NYCRR-360) and the sections of the State Environmental Quality Review Act dealing with hazardous waste disposal; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will encourage the implementation of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act at the State level as expeditiously as possible; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will support those provisions of the Conservation and Recovery Act which encourage the recycling and/or reuse of manufacturing by-products in order to reduce the amount of hazardous waste for ultimate disposal; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will encourage the development and use of substitute materials which currently generate highly dangerous hazardous wastes; and

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER
(Continued)

- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will encourage legislators to develop a fund which will be adequate to locate and clean up abandoned sites where hazardous chemical and radioactive wastes have been dumped, should such removal be necessary and environmentally advantageous; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will recognize the human needs of persons who have been adversely affected by past unsafe disposal of hazardous wastes; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will support the efforts to provide for the perpetual care of sealed hazardous waste disposal sites to insure that situations similar to the Love Canal do not arise in the future; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge New York State and the United States Government to develop more adequate treatment facilities and to work for the elimination of hazardous wastes and control hazardous waste transportation into our state and county.

RESOLUTION ON THE LOVE CANAL CRISIS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE
NEW YORK STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Adopted June 1980

WHEREAS, the residents of the Love Canal continue to suffer unprecedented and unresolved physical and mental anguish due to chemical contamination; and,

WHEREAS it is the task of the Church to participate in relieving the suffering of persons and to insure that the victims of man-made disasters receive just recompense; and

WHEREAS, Governor Hugh Carey, Senators Jacob Javits and Daniel Moynihan, and Congressman John LaFalce have implored President Carter and Federal Agencies to immediately and permanently relocate families of the Love Canal neighborhood;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Public Policy Committee of the New York State Catholic Conference petition the President of the United States and Federal Agencies for a permanent and voluntary relocation of the affected residents of the Love Canal area;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Public Policy Committee of the New York State Catholic Conference urge the clergy and members of the churches to also petition said officials regarding this issue; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the New York State Catholic Conference seek the assistance of the United States Catholic Conference, Social Development and World Peace Committee in effecting federal participation in resolving the Love Canal crisis.

DISCIPLES/UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THE 1980 ITHACA JOINT CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

Adopted June 8, 1980

ON BEHALF OF PEOPLE PRESENTLY OR POTENTIALLY EXPERIENCING EXTREME STRESS RESULTING FROM CONDITIONS CAUSED BY THE EXISTENCE OF TOXIC CHEMICAL WASTE DUMPS, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE DISASTER IN THE LOVE CANAL AREA, NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.

- WHEREAS, Our nation and New York State in particular have recently become aware of the existence of thousands of hazardous chemical waste sites whose extent is not yet fully known--though we do know of more than 50,000 across the nation, over 600 in New York State and over 200 in Erie and Niagara Counties in Western New York; and
- WHEREAS, The Love Canal site has contained a wide variety of these deadly chemicals since they began to be deposited in the 1930's, and a City Board of Education and private developers created this as a residential area in the 1950's, and complaints by residents of health hazards began to arise in the years following but were not validated until 1977, and a health problem was not admitted until August, 1978--and then for only a two-block ring of residences; and
- WHEREAS, Residents outside the two-block ring evacuated by action of the Governor of New York State (over 700 homes plus a Federally financed housing project in a ten-block area surrounding Love Canal) experienced continuing and mounting stress in terms of health and psychological or emotional problems made worse by the continuing governmental delays; and
- WHEREAS, Affected residents, especially those whose homes are proximate to the underground streams or swales, continue in a state of uncertainty as to their futures even after the Federal Environmental Protection Agency has apparently found further health evidence confirming their hazard, and governments and other parties involved continue their hesitation to provide remedial relief due to the lack of scientifically verifiable knowledge in the health and scientific communities and due to their fear of providing financially expensive precedents;

DISCIPLES/UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST(Continued)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Governor Hugh Carey, President Jimmy Carter, and the chief officers of the New York State Health Department, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency be urged to give first priority to the development of policies that will bring relief to persons affected by toxic chemical wastes and that, as a precedent, immediate steps be taken to provide for permanent relocation for all residents of the Love Canal area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the above listed State and Federal agencies, together with corporations producing hazardous and or toxic chemicals, develop policies and plans that will assure no further production of such chemicals unless and until full provision is made for safe and ecologically sound disposal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Northeast Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), together with their local churches, develop programs of education and involvement that will enable their members to become informed about this problem and empowered to work for adequate solutions to the problem of toxic waste disposal.

A RESOLUTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN NEW YORK

Adopted October 7, 1980
143rd Annual Convention

ON BEHALF OF THE NIAGARA DEANERY AND THE EASTERN ERIE DEANERY
(Submitted by Rev. Guy R. Peek)

WHEREAS, Our Lord has called us to be fellow workers in the stewardship of His Creation to issue the right use of resources so that no one will suffer from their abuse, and also, that generations yet to come may praise Him for His bounty, and

WHEREAS, Bishop Harold Robinson has demonstrated his pastoral concern for the residents of the Love Canal by being a major force in the creation of the Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, and

WHEREAS, the Presiding Bishop's Fund has contributed \$5,000 in fiscal year 1980 to the Ecumenical Task Force for direct aid to Love Canal residents, and

WHEREAS, some of these sites have already caused unprecedented and unresolved physical and emotional anguish to human life and to the ecology, as demonstrated by local, state and federal proclamation, and

WHEREAS, it is extremely difficult to assess the future ecological impact of the present methods of disposing hazardous chemical and radioactive wastes on the present generation and generations yet to come;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Diocese of Western New York supports efforts to establish and further develop reasonable and practical methods to eliminate the known dangers of landfill waste sites; and also, the Diocese advocates and supports all efforts to isolate and contain radioactive waste within the environment until such time as the technology is available to render such waste inert; and

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN NEW YORK
(Continued)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Diocese of Western New York urges the appropriate local and state governmental agencies, and the appropriate business communities to develop a common management plan which seeks to protect and monitor the environment of Western New York from further threat and contamination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the 143rd Annual Convention of the Diocese of Western New York recommend to the Diocesan Council the establishment of a Commission for the study of the moral and ethical issues related to the foregoing problems and their solutions, and to recommend such action and participation in such activities as may be necessary and proper and in consonance with the foregoing points and positions of the within Resolution.

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

An Enemy of the People, written by Henrik Ibsen in 1882, is one of the most compulsive of plays. The truths it expresses have not dated over the past 100 years, and are not likely to as long as there are town councils, politicians, majorities of power, and money to be made. But there are, also, in every era, Dr. Stockmann's - that minority of pioneers--men of ideals with spiritual and intellectual freedom.

.....from An Enemy of The People:

- Dr. S.: "...These Baths are a whited sepulchre - and a poisoned one at that. Dangerous to health in the highest degree! All that filth up at Noellerdal - you know, that stinking refuse from the tanneries--has infected the water in the pipes that feed the Pump Room. And that's not all. This damnable muck has even seeped out onto the beach---"
- Mayor: "...the whole of the water system?"
- Dr. S.: "...Of course. The intake is too low. It'll have to be raised much higher up."
-
- Dr. S.: "...Yes, bacteria."
- Mayor: "...But no one can see them. Isn't that right?"
- Dr. S.: "...Of course one can't see them!"
- Mayor: "...the pollution of the water is a result of impurities in the soil?"
- Dr. S.: "...How else can you describe it? Just think! That water's poisonous even if you bathe in it, let alone drink it!"
- Mayor: "...And your conclusion is that we must build a sewer to drain away these impurities from the swamp, and that the whole water system must be relaid?"
- Dr. S.: "...Can you think of any other solution? I can't."
- Mayor: "...This morning I called up the town engineer. In the course of our discussion I half jokingly mentioned these proposals as a thing we might possibly undertake some time in the future."
- Dr. S.: "...Some time in the future?"
- Mayor: "...Have you ever troubled to consider what these alterations you suggest would cost? According to the information I received, the expense would probably run into several hundred thousand crowns...the work would take at least two years...and what do we do with the Baths in the meanwhile? Close them? Yes, we'd be forced to. You don't imagine anyone would come here once the rumour got around that the water was impure?"

*This translation was commissioned by the Nottingham Theatre Trust, Ltd., and first performed on April 3, 1962 at the Nottingham Playhouse.

Dr. S.: "...But, it is!"

Mayor: "...And for this to happen just now, when the whole enterprise is coming to fruition! There are other towns around with qualifications to be regarded as health resorts. Do you think they won't start trying to attract the market? Of course they will! And there we shall be! We'll probably have to abandon the whole expensive scheme, and you will have ruined the town that gave you birth...It's only as a health resort - a spa - that this town has any future worth speaking of. Surely you realize that as well as I do."

Dr. S.: "...But what do you propose we do?"

Mayor: "...Your report has not completely convinced me that the situation is as dangerous as you imply."

Dr. S.: "...Oh, if anything it's worse! Or at least it will be in the summer, once the hot weather starts."

Mayor: "...As I said, I believe that you are exaggerating the danger. A capable medical officer must be able to take measures - He must know how to forestall such unpleasantnesses, and how to remedy them if they should become obvious. ...The existing water system at the Baths is a fact, and must be accepted as such. However, in due course I dare say the Committee might not be inflexibly opposed to considering whether without unreasonable pecuniary sacrifice it might not be possible to introduce certain improvements."

Dr. S.: "...A fraud, a lie, a crime against the community, against the whole of society "

Mayor: "...As I have already pointed out, I have not succeeded in convincing myself that any immediate or critical danger exists. ...The question is not merely one of science. The problem is complex. The issues involved are both technical and economical. ...And suppose you were right? If I do guard my reputation with a certain anxiety, it is because I have the welfare of our town at heart. Without moral authority I cannot guide and direct affairs as I deem most fit for the general good. For this, and diverse other reasons, it is vital to me that your report should not be placed before the Baths Committee. It must be suppressed for the general good. At a later date I shall bring the matter up for discussion, and we shall discreetly do the best we can. But nothing, not a single word, about this unfortunate matter must come to the public ear!"

Dr. S.: "...Well, it can't be stopped now."

Mayor: "...It must and shall be stopped."

Dr. S.: "...It can't, I tell you. Too many people know."

Mayor: "...Know? Who knows? You don't mean those fellows from the People's Tribune-?"

Dr. S.: "...Surely if a man gets hold of a new idea it's his duty as a citizen to tell it to the public?"

Mayor: "...People don't want new ideas. They're best served by the good old accepted ideas they have already."

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the Norwegian playwright, in his drama, "An enemy of the People" (1882)*, describes the dilemma of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths, when he learns that the lucrative waters are polluted. After several visitors to the Baths die of typhoid, Dr. Stockmann has samples of the curative waters tested by the research laboratory at the local university and discovers that the Baths are dangerously contaminated by wastes from the tanneries upstream. At first local residents praise the doctor as a public benefactor, but when they learn that in order to purify the watering-place the Baths must be closed for several years and that the town's economy will seriously suffer, they turn against him. When the doctor calls for a public meeting to present his findings, he is rejected and branded as "An Enemy of the People."

A member of the solid middle-class majority of property owners rises to his feet at the meeting. He speaks:

"I propose a resolution as follows: 'This meeting declares that it considers Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Baths to be an Enemy of the People.'"

This resolution is met with a storm of cheers and applause.

A number of men surround the doctor and hiss him.

Young schoolboys taunt the doctor's sons.

As the doctor leaves the meeting, the whole crowd howls after him, shouting:
"Enemy of the People! Enemy of the People!"

Devastating reprisals follow:

The liberal-minded, independent press refuses to publish the doctor's damaging report which spells out the extensiveness of the contamination of the Baths.

The doctor is dismissed from his position as Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths.

His daughter, Petra, is fired from her teaching post.

His sons vilified.

His patients, *en masse*, refuse to employ him.

His wife's adoptive father, owner of the tannery, alters his will, removing the doctor's wife and children as beneficiaries.

An angry mob stones the windows of the doctor's home.

The honest doctor who has stood for the truth, speaks:

"The most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom are the majority! Yes, the solid, liberal, bloody majority--they're the ones we have to fear!...Who form the majority in any country? The wise, or the fools? I think we'd all have to agree that the fools are in a terrifying, overwhelming majority all over the world! But in the name of God it can't be right that the fools should rule the wise! Yes, yes, you can shout me down. But you can't say I'm wrong! The majority has the power, unfortunately--but the majority is not right! The ones who are right are a few isolated individuals like me. The minority is always right!..."

To be a witness to the truth is to live in danger.

"Truth", says Kierkegaard, "is in the minority."

To be a witness to the truth, therefore, is to be a minority, and to be a minority is to be in danger of the majority, since the majority always identifies the minority as "An Enemy of the People".

Jesus Christ was The Witness to the Truth. When he stood trial before Pilate the Governor, he said.

"My task is to bear witness; I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth."

As a witness to the truth, Jesus preaches the truth.

He does not soft-pedal the truth.

He is not timid.

He is not afraid to live in danger.

He does not fear being a minority.

He can stand alone against the majority.

He tells the truth about the Only True God, His Father, from whom all things come.

His words are true: they are not His; they are His Father's.

He does not accommodate His message to placate His audience.

As a witness to the truth, Jesus' lifestyle does not contradict his preaching.

He speaks out of poverty, out of a lowly position of weakness.

He has no wealthy backing.

He has no political pull.

He has no ecclesiastical prestige.

He has no clever strategy.

He does not manipulate, intimidate, connive or scheme.

He does not twist, shade, distort or compromise the truth.

He speaks the whole truth out of weakness and he suffers for his witness.

The Gospel calls us to bear witness to the truth. Christ hurls to us the challenge.

Dare to tell the truth, He urges.

Dare to stand against the evil power structures of this world!

Dare to stand alone without wealthy backing, without political clout, and without the support of the authorities.

Dare to stand for the truth: in your community,

in the workplace,

in your church,

in your home.

Dare to stand against the popular majority.

Dare to take the lonely and abased position of the minority and you will discover that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2Tim. 3:12).

- Excerpts from a Communion Meditation by
Dr. Paul L. Moore,
First Presbyterian Church, Lewiston, New York

LIFE IS ALL OF ONE PIECE

Eight months ago, those of us involved in the ecumenical ministry to the people and families of the Love Canal disaster, spent a few days evaluating our efforts, formulating plans and goals for the future. I was at one of those depressing low points, which frequently occurs during this kind of social-political ministry.

But a lot happened to me during those days - and since then. I'd like to share some of my thoughts because a little passage in Second Isaiah has spoken to me and given me new insights on God, nature, history and myself.

Every day the newspaper offers up its smorgasbord of news, bits and pieces, scraps of the world around us: a news release from Albany, the weather forecast, the scores of the Bills and Sabres games, the latest tragic murder, and Ann Lander's advice to the morally bewildered. Bits and scraps of life. What does each scrap have to do with the other or with the whole confusing business of life?

The newspapers give us the world of nature: Medflies in California, toxic waste dumps and a Love Canal, flooding and drought in Ethiopia and earthquakes in Italy. What do they have to do with Christ?

The newspapers give us what we call history: obituary columns, a press release from the White House, the latest developments in the Middle East, Iran or Peking. What does this have to do with the God of nature?

What does the God of nature have to do with Christ?

What holds it all together? What gives some meaning, some basic encouraging hope to the whole business?

The Biblical view of life - every bit and scrap of it in nature, history, God, Christ - sees it as all of one piece. And rarely so clearly as in a little prophecy buried deep in the Old Testament sometimes called "Second Isaiah", a prophecy addressed to the people of God somewhere along toward the end of their exile in Babylon.

Consider, for a moment, the situation to which the Prophet Isaiah addressed himself in this prophecy. The parallels or analogies to our situation today are among the most vivid and remarkable in the whole account. Fifty years earlier, the cream of the people of Israel had been taken captive at the fall of Jerusalem and carted off to Babylon as exiles. There they had been forced to find a new life under strange and radically different conditions.

Fifty years - that would take us back to the Great Depression to the days when our nation's economy was in its downward slide that finally hit bottom in mid-1932.

Carted off to Babylon, the Israelites had to learn to live without the symbols of their old securities: the land, the hills, the Temple, which held their world together. Uprooted, they were surrounded by a culture alien to all they had known. Their life split into fragments. Fragmentation was a way of life.

Like so many junior executives or migrant workers or Cubans and Puerto Ricans searching for a better world, a better life. Modern exiles facing adjustments to urbanization, automation, liberation, cybernetics, inflation and the energy-oil crunch.

And as for God, Yahweh, though He was not dead to these exiles, He was surely quiet, if not absent! His power, even His presence, so they thought, was localized in Judea, far, far across the desert. A sense of spiritual impotence began to take hold.

Like so many Americans today, they were not theoretical atheists, but probably practical atheists. God could no longer do anything about their situation as once He had been able - or at least as people had once thought He was able to do. The end result was that fragmentation allowed the kind of split-level thinking we also have today which chooses "what is a religious matter and what is not a religious matter".

For fifty years there had been no clear indication of His power or His presence. So some of them turned to idols - gods who could be used and manipulated to give them peace of mind, material security, status, or good luck. With these gods surrounding them, they gathered nostalgically by the waters of Babylon and sang their sad songs to the mild amusement of their Babylonian captors. All that was visible to them was the obvious power and might and wealth of Babylon, an affluent society complete with hanging gardens. At night, the dark oriental sky was dotted with Babylonian gods, like so many satellities in space (*like the daily horoscopes in the newspapers*). So they lived, older ones mostly, dreaming of the good old days when in Jerusalem God was as near as the Temple, and everybody (and I mean, everybody) went! A time when life was all of one piece. Others, the younger, I suspect, adjusted to this new modern age in Babylon and made a go of it, busy buying and selling, raising their families, paying little attention, if any, to Yahweh. Fragmentation creates that kind of spiritual attitude.

It is to this situation, so like our own, that the prophet speaks a message of hope to those who had lost, or had almost lost, hope. Some of our theologians, sensitive to the absurdities of this fractured world you and I live in are saying that the Christian Gospel, "must be made understandable as a message of hope. . .that for Christ's sake the morning will come, and we can look forward to the morning and may expect much from it." This may be true, but only if we view life as all of one piece. It makes no sense if one's world-view is fragmental.

The prophet begins, strangely enough for our modern ears, with the God of nature. We protest - that may be okay for kids, but as sophisticated adults, we are accustomed, you and I, to start closer to home, with our individual selves, with personal relationships, community projects or group dynamics, as our points of contact for an experience of the living God.

But the prophet begins with the sovereignty of God over nature, the "theater of His glory". And it comes to us in one vivid picture after another: "marking off the heavens with a span", calling out the stars by name, ordering them into nightly formation, weighing the hills in a jeweler's scales. It all adds up to a picture of God the Incomparable, the Almighty God, the Creator.

But can this imagery say very much to us today? Not very much, I suppose, if we are hung up on the image of God as "out there" out of touch with the latest in genetics, astrophysics and nuclear fission. Nor can it say anything to us if we are hung up on a personal-individual salvation, a sort of "me and God" attitude.

What shall we do with all those images in the New Testament which point Our Lord Jesus Christ's involvement in the total cosmos? Write them off as images no longer meaningful or useful for us?

- . . . the star at His birth
- . . . the earthquake and the darkness which covered the earth at His crucifixion and, in between
- . . . the water into wine
- . . . walking on water
- . . . the stilling of the storm at sea
- . . . the suggestion to go fishing when any good fisherman knew it wasn't the right time
- . . . the healings of the physical body
- . . . the resurrection. . .and the most difficult of all the New Testament passages, the Ascension.

Whether any or all of these "miracles" happened precisely as they were recorded, is beside the point. Their significance to the writers and to the first hearers is what is important. For they all point to Jesus and His life and death as a cosmic event. Nature responds with a mysterious star at the Nativity, nature responds with mysterious darkness at the Crucifixion, and in between, He is seen as "Lord" of the world of nature, of which He is Incarnated---God in the flesh in nature.

If Jesus is the picture for us of what it means to be truly human, to be the Man for Others, then we Christians cannot slice that part of life-our life-from the world of nature. We cannot, in Biblical terms, at least, slice off the world of the spirit or the world of ethics from the natural world of stars and earth and air and water and electrodynamics and nuclear and chemical waste.

This is what the prophet was singing about in the fortieth Chapter of Isaiah. Yahweh, the Lord God is not a tribal, parochial God, sectarian, denominational, effective only within the confines of Judea or that cozy little religious life separated from the rest of life. He is God of the whole natural world, including the Babylonian deities dotting the sky at night and the bottom line on a company's financial report.

For all the difficulties we clergy may have with teaching images of God, we do not solve problems humans face today with a Jesus divorced from the total cosmos, all of creation, the "theatre of His glory," or anything else for that matter.

Life is all of one piece under God: the world of nature, the world of history, and what we call our spiritual or religious lives. For surely God, in the Biblical sense, may be discerned within the clash of arms or in the rise of new nations in Africa or in the struggle for justice and decency for the Blacks, the Puerto Ricans, the Chicanos, the Indians, and somehow in the legislative struggles for housing, the needs of the inner cities, rural poverty, transportation and the pollution of the air and water and earth and animal life, government and industrial ethics.

Life is all of one piece. And it is this God - Lord of nature and Lord of history - whom the prophet pictures in those unforgettable lines at the close of Isaiah 40:

But those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.

-Isaiah 40:31

Yes, this passage is a prophecy of hope for the Hebrews exiles in Babylon and for us. For there are days when life soars and mounts up on wings like eagles, but not that often. And there may be days when we can "run and not get weary" caught up in the business of life. But the days that get us down are the ordinary days when we don't soar or run, but just plain exist; when the days of death and sickness, pettiness and alienation, loneliness and grief, the days when the morning papers bring the dreary tales of the slow and thorny road justice takes through Congress, when the economy frightens us, when our jobs are in jeopardy, days when the best we can manage is simply to "hang in there".

Even then, those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will run and not get weary. Because all of life, every scrap of it, all of nature, all of history, no matter how absurd, or baffling or rewarding, is in the hands of the Holy one.

Do you not know or have you not heard?
The Lord is the eternal God, Creator of
the ends of the earth.

-Isaiah 40:28

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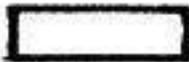
APPENDICES

What we call the beginning
is often the end and to make an
end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

T.S. Eliot

Toxic Waste Danger Zones



- Alarming 
- Serious 
- Potentially Troublesome 
- Relatively Safe 

THE CALL

In the beginning of time, God fashioned the earth a lovely, living thing of exquisite beauty fitted by ingenious design for His highest creation- the human family - to live, move, have their being, and, in cooperation with their Creator, fashion a social order grounded in justice.

God declared His individual acts in creation to be good, and viewing the creation in its wholeness, pronounced it very good. He gave mankind dominion over the whole creation, which is to say that He appointed mankind as care-takers over the whole of that creation. As caretakers we are charged to

- ... accept custody of that creation,
- ... accept responsibility for all that is part of that creation,
- ... protect that creation from others who would defile it,
- ... allow no one or no thing to mar the pureness, freshness and exquisite beauty of that creation,
- ... love that creation as its Owner loves it, for we do not own the earth: we are but care-takers of the earth.

If, as caretakers, we find others corrupting and marring that creation, we are required by God to challenge the injustice of such cruel, irresponsible and arrogant behavior. Indeed, we are to speak for those other parts of creation-- to cry out for them. We are to speak the words of God...

THE PROBLEM

"There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings. The town lay in the midst of a checkerboard of prosperous farms, with fields of grain and hillsides of orchards where, in spring, white clouds of bloom drifted above the green fields...

*From a homily given by Mrs. Donna Ogg, Ecumenical Task Force Executive Assistant, August 19, 1979.

"Along the roads, wildflowers delighted the traveler's eye through much of the year. Even in winter the roadsides were places of beauty, where countless birds came to feed on the berries and on the seed heads of the dried weeds rising above the snow...People came to fish the streams, which flowed clear and cold out of the hills and contained shady pools where trout lay. So it had been from the days many years ago when the first settlers raised their houses, sank their wells, and built their barns.

"Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community...Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children...

"There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example - where had they gone?...It was a spring without voices...

"The roadsides, once so attractive, were now lined with browned and withered vegetation as though swept by fire. These, too, were silent, deserted by all living things. Even the streams were now lifeless. Anglers no longer visited them, for all the fish had died...

"No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves."¹

Rachel Carson continues in her book, Silent Spring, "I know of no community that has experienced all the misfortunes I describe...(but) this imagined tragedy may easily become a stark reality we all shall know."

The following words from the same book, accurate in 1962 when they were written, "This town does not actually exist..." became inaccurate in August, 1978. The community in Carson's fable does exist. This community has experienced all the misfortunes she describes. The imagined tragedy has become a stark reality. That community is the Love Canal neighborhood of Niagara Falls.

HISTORY OF LOVE CANAL

Forty years ago the Love Canal neighborhood, located at the southeasternmost corner of the city which is called 'The Honeymoon Capital of the World' enjoyed a semi-rural setting. Trees of large peach and apple and apple orchards spread their abundant branches over much of the one and one-

¹Carson, Rachel, Silent Spring, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1962

half square miles of verdant land bounded by Bergholtz Creek on two sides and the mighty Niagara River on the third side.

Crystalline streams fifteen inches in depth meandered their way through the sparsely populated neighborhood and provided a welcome habitat for the graceful fishes that swam there.

All of these streams met a larger body of water, from twelve to thirty feet deep, which had been intended as a means for water-going vessels to bypass the Falls on the American side of the river. That inviting body of water - used by people from the neighborhood, from other parts of the city and from the surrounding countryside for swimming and fishing - was called the Love Canal.

It was to this neighborhood that young couples came with their children to build modest homes and it was to this same neighborhood that older persons came in their retirement years, for it was a good place to live.

Others came also. First, trucks from the City of Niagara Falls came to dump their garbage. Then chemical corporation trucks came to dump the drums filled with chemical waste products. Soon, the canal existed no longer. It had been covered over and was now like a long empty football field.

Still others came. The Niagara Falls Board of Education allegedly decided the vacant space would be a good place to build a school for the large and still growing numbers of neighborhood children. The chemical corporation that owned the property insists that it demurred at the offer to purchase the land but relented when the city threatened condemnation of the property, and that it included a disclaimer clause in the deed along with a recommendation not to interfere with the condition of the soil on the former canal area. Regardless of what the truth was in that situation, a school was built, a school playground was constructed, and some of the rest of the property was sold to developers who built additional residences. The modest size of the homes in the area attracted two major groups of people: young families purchasing their first homes whose children would spend many of their childhood years in the neighborhood, and retirees who - in some instances - placed their life's savings into the home which would house them so long as they were able to care for it. A third major group was to move into the large, neat complex of low-income apartments. These people lived happily, innocent of the creeping, underground menace until August, 1978..

"Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change." Something was happening to the neighborhood. The people spoke of much illness among the members of

their own families and their friends' families. In the city the doctors and hospital nurses became more puzzled by new sickness appearing among their patients and were sometimes unable to diagnose the illness or malady. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, miscarriages were common, large numbers of children were born with birth defects, many in the area were treated for or died from some form of cancer, types of illnesses seemed to be found in clusters of homes. Even the animal and bird life did not escape the menace. Domestic pets died at young ages in the neighborhood, and birds had been seen to fall out of the sky - dead.

Browned and withered vegetation replaced much of the once-green playground cover; the playground was no longer smooth, but great ridges now marred its surface; in the playground and in back yards, black, gooey material oozed from the ground in round patches resembling the size of the top of drums which had been buried there 25 years earlier; the health department - called in by concerned residents - covered over those patches and left; most of the residents - unaware of the impending disaster - remained.

Then on August 2, 1978, the New York State Commissioner of Health declared a public health emergency and the Governor ordered 239 families - from homes closest to the former canal - evacuated from the area. Residents of Western New York were the owners of our country's first human-made ecological and public health disaster attributable to the disposal of chemical wastes. What Rachel Carson had warned of in 1962 had occurred 16 years later ...

Isn't the Love Canal problem unique, you wonder? Sadly, no. Its only uniqueness lies in its being the first. Beyond the Love Canal lie an estimated 50,000 other chemical dumpsites in the United States. All those other thousands may be spewing unimaginable quantities of poison into our water, land and air. The bitter harvest of that which has been planted is now being reaped - ecological disaster and human tragedy.

THE RESPONSE

So, today, I speak for the other human beings who live in that area of devastation. I speak for them because they suffer -- emotionally, physically, economically. When their cries are regarded with suspicion, I dare not hold them suspect. When they are denied the right to choose where they shall live, I dare not remain silent. When their pleas for help are rejected, I dare not ignore their plight. When their life is in turmoil, I dare not rest comfortably.

I speak, further, the words of God which He gave to the prophet:

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

If you take away from the midst of you
the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking
wickedness,

If you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.

- Isaiah, 58:6, 9b,10.

THE LAND IS CURSED

I speak as a Christian charged by God in the Scriptures with a cultural mandate to be a careful, meek and responsible steward of this good earth which in the beginning came from the hand of the Creator pure and fresh and clean - a lovely, living thing of exquisite beauty, a magnificent habitat fitted by ingenious design for God's highest creation - the human family - to live, move, have their being, and - in cooperation with their Creator - fashion a social order grounded in justice.

Therefore, as a creature made in the image of God and charged with the responsibility for the protection of the earth

- ... I am not to pollute its waters,
- ... I am not to befoul the air,
- ... I am not to defile the land.

And when I find others corrupting our common environment, I am commanded by God to challenge the injustice of such cruel, irresponsible and arrogant behavior.

I speak for the Earth - our loving mother who gave us birth and faithfully sustains us. I speak for her, because she cannot speak for herself. When, as a vulnerable woman, she is ravaged and raped by brutal exploiters and heartless profit-takers, and then discarded as a worthless, spent thing-wounded and sore - it is my duty to stoop to her weakness, bind her wounds, and heal her hurt;

I speak for the Earth, because wholesale pollution of the air, water and land goes on - often times unchecked and unprotested by local, state and federal governmental officials.

Therefore, as a representative of the religious community, I call upon our officials charged with the responsibility for protecting our social and physical living space to be better caretakers of our common environment.

Citizens deserve the right to breathe safe, clean air,
the right to drink safe, pure water,
the right to safe, environmentally
clean housing,
the right to a safe, clean environment
in which to work.

When citizens are denied these basic rights of man and nature - then the government officials - local, state, and federal - should be called upon to assume their full responsibility in assuring that these basic rights for all its citizens are guaranteed.

I am reminded of the apt, but sobering words of Isaiah: "The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants, for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes. Therefore a curse devours the earth and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt. There is an outcry in the streets... desolation is left in the city. The earth staggers like a drunken man, its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it fails, and will not rise again" (Isaiah, Chapter 24).

The prophet's biting words sting: "...the inhabitants of the earth have broken the laws, disobeyed the statutes, and violated the eternal covenant."

This is God's good earth, not ours. We do not own the earth; we are but stewards of the earth. God has established an eternal covenant with the dwellers on the earth: "Take care of my earth, and you will live; exploit it, and you shall surely die."

In Niagara County, God's law has been broken, his eternal covenant violated, and we are reaping the bitter consequences - ecological disaster and human tragedy.

Will we yet honor the eternal covenant, and live? Or are there more Love Canals in the making?

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THE CHURCH: UNPOPULAR VOICE - PROPHETIC VISION:
RESPONSE TO MAN-MADE DISASTERS

An outstanding American once said: "Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change..."

I believe those words, spoken by the late Senator Robert Kennedy, point to a basic need in our time--the need for moral courage. I believe that we have neglected, if not abandoned, the concept of moral courage and have adopted a complacent, almost apathetic attitude toward some of the major issues of our time.

Man-made disasters are among those major problems or issues that demand moral courage for us in order to respond to them. All too often such moral courage is absent.

In a recent magazine interview, Fr. Thomas Berry said: "The bottom line is not profit, not even what is happening to our society--it is what is happening to our planet." Man-made disasters and the potential for continued man-made disasters is what is happening to our planet. And moral courage is necessary to muster a moral, ethical response to what is happening.

While we are here because of the immediate reactions and concerns engendered by the Love Canal disaster, we are here for another reason too. We are here to examine what more than 50,000 such Love Canals could do to the Planet Earth and what the Church's role is in response.

Father Berry, Director of the Teilhard Association for the Future of Man, also states: "The human community has taken over control of the planet through science and technology, which have in nature, no limiting factors." And in this we find a fundamental problem.

The only limiting factor is our understanding that all things have a sacred domain that demand our reverence. All things on this Planet Earth, all things which make up the rich resources of our nation--all these things have a sacred domain. In our profit-oriented, indifferent society, we must question whose responsibility it becomes to uphold the sacred domain of all things that demand our reverence. Would it be too bold to presume that it is the responsibility of the Church?

UNPOPULAR VOICE

In his speech to the Mexican bishops at Puebla in 1979, Pope John Paul II said:

The voice of the Church, echoing the voice of human conscience...deserves and needs to be heard in our times...when the growing wealth of a few runs parallel to the growing poverty of the masses...It is then that the Church's teaching, according to which all private property involves a social obligation, acquires an urgent character... With respect to this teaching, the Church has a mission to carry out: she must preach, educate individuals and collectivities, form public opinion and offer orientation to the leaders of the peoples. In this way, she will be working in favor of society, within which this Christian and evangelical principle will finally bear fruit...Christ did not remain indifferent in the face of the vast and demanding imperative of social morality. Nor can the Church...it must be emphasized once more that the Church's solicitude looks to the whole man."

It is the voice of the Church saying there can be no indifference to the imperative of social morality that questions the existence and even the possibility of man-made disasters

The words of Amos and of Jeremiah, the Prophets, speak clearly to this. The words of the parable of the Good Samaritan and of the Judgment scene of Matthew 25 speak clearly too. They teach that it is the duty and the obligation of the church--concerned about the needs and suffering of humankind, not merely to address these needs in the esoteric language of a theological conference--but to address these needs in the bold, direct language of confrontation and advocacy.

The Church would fail in its mission if it confined its comments to a Sunday or Sabbath service. The Old and New Testaments were not written merely to script a worship service! They were written to be applied in our lives--to be lived by those who believe in them. To apply them and to live them demands moral courage, "a very rare commodity".

In the area of natural disasters the role of the Church, as a helping servant, is now more easily understood. In man-made disasters, the role of the Church is most often misunderstood, if not rejected. Why? I believe the answer is basic, elemental. In man-made disaster someone is at fault. Someone has erred. The scientific and technological system has broken down, failed. The Church then enters this arena. Not merely to give blankets or hot soups to the victims. She enters to call the society that has allowed this failure to task. And no one wants to be called to task! No one wants to take the blame. No one likes to be reminded to mistakes. And thus, the Church's voice is an unpopular one when it questions, "How did this happen? Why did it happen? Who allowed this to happen?" I offer these are legitimate questions to affirm reverence for the sacred domain that all things have.

But soon there arise murmurings and complaints about "Naivete", about "do-gooders", about "not knowing what is good for our society, our town, our city", about...well, you all know the litany.

It is spoken by government agencies, by industry, by politicians running for office, and by many common people who are not directly affected. In an almost unanimous assent they state that the Church should stick to worship services. In fact, the anger generated by the Church's voice calling society to task can give rise to these verbalizations: "If they don't shut up, we'll all stop contributing. They need our money. That will teach them to interfere." Or again: "Maybe we should tax all church property. That would teach them not to meddle in what doesn't concern them". Unfortunately, many think the Church is good for very little but as a place to pray, as an organization to sop the anxieties of the elderly.

Such crass naivete! The Church is not called to be an aggregate of mute shepherds. Its vocation is to voice the unpopular teachings of Scripture. It is to be a prophetic voice, giving prophetic vision to our day. Prophetic voices are always unpopular. Why? Because they, in calling us to task, cause us to experience discomfort. This unpopular voice says things we would rather not hear. The Church proclaims truths to live by. That is, it proclaims the moral standards of what is right to live by. That is, it proclaims the moral standards of what is right or wrong--the Ethic of the Act. But the mediocrity of our age has conditioned us to live in perpetual gray. This causes us to forget that there is indeed black and white--everything is not all gray. There are definite norms that point to what is right or wrong. However, all too frequently, the subjective fog of what is seemingly "good or bad", at this moment, overrides what is morally right or wrong.

Certainly political advancement, community development, steady jobs, corporate profits can all be good--most frequently they are. But the Church must take the risk and ask: Are they always right? As she must question others: Are they always wrong?

Unfortunately historical circumstances seem to give the sad answer that our system has equated good with right. But, as they sang in the famous old song, "It ain't necessarily so!" In fact, the "immediate good" philosophy can often inflict longlasting social wrongs and harm on peoples.

In this milieu, there is no way that the Church voice, daring to proclaim--even as a prophet--the teaching of what is right and wrong can be anything but unpopular.

There is a point, however, that cannot be overlooked. It is a given that must be maintained in any advocacy or confrontation for what is right, over and against what is wrong. That given is this: The prophetic voice must always be honest.

A dishonest prophetic voice, no matter what right ends it might seek to attain, is always wrong!

How easily our emotions can cloud our perspectives! How essential it is no matter what the disaster we are dealing with, that our voices remain reasoned, even if they might not always remain calm! Our words, our directions, our pointing out of failures and mistakes that cause man-made disasters must always manifest honesty. Why? Because we as Church are teaching, stating principles, reminding our communities of moral standards. To abandon this stance of moral responsibility is to forfeit our vocation as Church! We have to exercise a responsibility towards the environment, towards the community, towards our economic system, towards business and profit, but above all towards a known people. The victims of man-made disasters are not anonymous faces in a nameless crowd. The Church, as unpopular voice, must see that this is never allowed to happen to any victim.

Despite threats of economic boycott, of taxation, of coercion of any sort that would seek to hinder its mission, the Church remains the one sure voice for the rights and the dignity of infants and children, of parents and grandparents, of singles and widows, of the lonely and forgotten. No one can be allowed to fall between the cracks because of the Church's limited concerns or fear of consequences. Ours, then, is a moral voice responsible to all segments of society, to maintain human dignity and to insure the inherent human rights of each and every person.

Certainly this voice is poorly served when it is only strident. But fear of being strident should not silence us before we have spoken against the wrongs that man-made disasters inflict on the rights and dignity of our brothers and sisters.

According to Father Berry, "We have to have a beautiful world, or else we are not going to have beautiful people."

Our unpopular voice in man-made disasters is raised to create, or to re-create a "beautiful world". Systems that perpetuate man-made disasters project results that destroy the "beautiful world" and thus, the possibility of "beautiful people". Such actions are morally wrong and ethical failures.

If the Church speaks out now in hopes of preventing future man-made disasters of a similar nature to Love Canal, perhaps it will be heard. I personally am less hopeful. Profits, progress and politics have a way of deafening even the most ardent plea for what is right. It is only when the message is repeated loud and clear in defense of people and, where necessary, is condemnatory of that which destroys the environment in which we live, that the message may begin to be heard and heeded.

For too long the Church has accepted as carte blanche what the rest of society accepted. Those things that are hidden deceitfully in such explanatory phrases as "Results from the latest tests are inconclusive", "They're just a couple of neurotics", or "Don't destroy a vital tax base"

So easily we allow our sensitivities to be detoured if not deadened, until we come face to face with the reality of the man-made disaster with all of its destructive force (a black, bubbling ooze that destroys genes, and people and life).

On October 4, 1979, in Des Moines, Iowa, Pope John Paul II said,

You who live in the heartland of America have been entrusted with some of the earth's best land: The soil is rich in minerals, the climate is favorable for producing bountiful crops, the fresh water and unpolluted air are available all around you. You are stewards of some of the most important resources that God has given to the world. Therefore, conserve the land well, that your children's children and generations after them will inherit an even richer land than was entrusted to you.

We know that his words are true. We also know that he had to fly half-way across America to speak them. His words were spoken in that ideal setting of Iowa countryside, because so much of our natural beauty has been defiled. The absence of fresh water and unpolluted air would have given lie to his message.

Yet Niagara Falls, the Hudson River, Oakland and San Francisco Bays, the hills of West Virginia, the back country of Kentucky, the desert lands of Nevada and Arizona, the plains of Wyoming and the Dakotas are all natural resources we have received. The Church's unpopular voice says, "Conserve them well. Protect them from the debacle of man-made disaster. Why do such pleas for preservation continue to fall on deaf ears? If you defile or destroy them we will demand to know how and why and to what purpose!"

We must speak out in confrontation against the causes of man-made disasters, because it is a matter of basic justice. To be mute, to be fearful would be to be unjust ourselves. Simply put, the unpopular voice of the Church is to call those responsible for man-made disasters to task, to make them feel discomfort for the wrongs that have been perpetuated.

But who is called to task, made uncomfortable? Industry, business, politicians, apathetic citizens--and, the Church herself. Dostoevsky stated: "We are all responsible

for everything that happens to any of our brothers (or sisters) ...". Indeed, we share a common guilt for having been silent, for having done little for all too long. The Church's voice, as I have stated again and again, is that of moral responsibility-- even when it seems reprehensible. Its duty continues to be to teach what is right and what is wrong.

Certainly this responsibility is best exercised in conjunction with the other social entities involved: science, industry, business, government. Together they should formulate an ethic that meets the need to preserve the environment, to preserve our resources, and above all to protect our people -- those born and those yet to be born. Even if others do not join her, it remains the Church's duty to do this!

I have spent an inordinate amount of time on the subject of the confrontative voice of the Church in response to man-made disasters. I have done this because I think that this is an important facet of the Church's ministry of justice to all hurting people. And because we too easily draw away from such confrontation--for some of the reasons mentioned previously--or for others perhaps better left unmentioned.

But remember when the Church's voice is raised in advocacy, it is also unpopular. This is true in nature as well as in man-made disasters. Again, our advocacy is to insure that the victims of man-made disasters receive just recompense, just help from the government and compensation from the cause of the disasters that have affected them.

This unpopular "advocate voice" will go on far longer than the confrontative voice. The needs of the victims are not known nor met within a short span of time. Most particularly when we are dealing with the effects of a chemical or nuclear disaster, the basic needs may not arise for months or years afterwards.

And even at that late date, the Church must still be there to speak for the victim--to speak to his or her needs, to stand with the victim against whatever Goliath the opposition may be. As Robert Kennedy said, this takes "moral courage", because the vocation of advocacy is seeking "to change a world, a society that yields so painfully to change".

Here too, there are a thousand and one reasons why the Church should not be involved: a political process, socialism, radicalism, etc. Perhaps too, it is the latent fear that we as Church will not be popular. But is the Church a society of popular people doing nice things? Isn't it rather people who are caring for the needs of the least of their brothers and sisters--no matter what the cost? I am idealistic enough to hope so--to believe so!

PROPHETIC VISION--THE FUTURE

It would seem that the experience at Love Canal should show that there is a need:

...For ecumenical or church task forces to be available as viable and working entities at times of man-made disasters. If the churches are set on developing such teams for natural disaster, they should have the same dedication to the man-made disaster site.

The difference is that such a task force is not 18-months oriented as in a man-made disaster. Its job can go on and on and on... until all the confrontation and advocacy has attained the results necessary to insure the rights of the victims.

...For effective response the National Council of Churches, the United States Catholic Conference, and the American Jewish Conference should designate knowledgeable representatives to informally discuss joint ventures in this field.

After these initial dialogues, the three major religious groups should then move to form a unified response:

1. To include policy statements as to why they are in the field.
2. To undertake training of task force coordinators, and to provide advocacy training adapted to the particular circumstances of man-made disasters.
3. To initiate a campaign to make the public aware of the potential dangers of man-made disasters at dumpsites and nuclear sites that exist around the country through Religious News Service, National Catholic News Service, National Jewish News Service and whatever other media sources are available.
4. To suggest that every State Council or State Association of Churches have an ad hoc committee to be familiar with the hazards of disasters in their state, either man-made or natural. The National Governor's Association has excellent materials delineating potential disaster of hazard areas. There is no reason that Church State Councils should not avail themselves of this information to help their constituents, and to prepare for any eventual disaster.

5. To alert local Councils of Churches to the existence of potential disaster sites and to suggest that the local Council take an interest in any health problems, physical or emotional, that people living near the site may be incurring.

Again, according to Father Berry, "One survey estimates 20% of all living species could be extinguished by the end of the century: that includes thousands of plant species..."

The Church's prophetic vision at this late hour should be to preserve as many of the living species as possible by being able to alert people to the potential of man-made disaster, in hopes of forestalling the same. The Church must act

- ... by motivating people to demand the protection of the law through strict, uncompromising enforcement of existing government regulations to prevent the potential of disaster
- ... by raising the consciousness of the unaffected as to the harm that the planet is suffering with each such man-made disaster.

"Moral Courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence, yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change..." (RFK)

It is incumbent upon all of those who are Church people--upon all of us--to exercise the moral courage necessary to change a society that fights so desperately against change.

After all, the bottom line is what is happening to our planet. And about this we cannot be silent.

Reverend William J. O'Connell
Consultant, Domestic Disaster Office
Church World Service

May 22, 1980 at a Conference on
Man-made Disasters: The Church's
Response--Sponsored by the ETF,
"What is the Moral Thing To Do?"

TIME TO RISK

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Niagara County Legislature:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. As the Executive Director of The Ecumenical Task Force of the Niagara Frontier, I am speaking on behalf of the churches and Jewish community of Western New York for the Citizens of the Love Canal neighborhood, City of Niagara Falls, County of Niagara, New York.

Our concern today, April 1, 1980, is that you deliberate wisely and justly on a situation of physical, psychological and moral crisis that has suffered for 2 ½ years the impact of the kind of trauma that is experienced by any community stricken by the forces of tornado, hurricane, flood or nuclear disaster.

The living patterns of the people of the Love Canal neighborhood have not had a normalcy since August 2, 1978. People there cannot think about the future--but function on a day-to-day basis. Each day their stamina, resilience and determination like that of a natural disaster survivor is tested. People there have lost control and command over the ordinary decisions made by people in a "normal" neighborhood. They are--the victims of a disaster.

Access to relief is tangled in a maze of bureaucratic red tape, agency-run around, medical tests, soil sampling and governmental and corporate denial of responsibility. Control over their own destinies is minimized--the fate of the victim persons rests in the hands of outsiders. However, our purpose today is not to question the rightness or wrongness of the situation. It is to bring relief and a solution which will lead to recovery of a torn apart people and community.

If a community is not in control there is no opportunity to get "back on its feet". Therefore, unhealthy and inappropriate behavior is exhibited in both individuals and in the whole fabric of the neighborhood--its families and organizations.

It only makes good psychological sense for a community to care for itself, to deal with the changes and losses which have occurred, to make decisions concerning rebuilding, and to plead on behalf of those members who have been ignored, forgotten, or damaged emotionally and physically.

I am not speaking today from what I have read in a book, but from practical experience from my work with disaster victims in other parts of the country. (Cite examples of depression, suicide, marital and family breakup, vandalism, delinquency and illness)

What part do the churches play in all of this activity?

Why the Ecumenical Task Force? Why am I addressing you today? Churches are grassroots institutions which are looked to for help, comfort and leadership in times of stress and crisis. Research has proven that persons with personal problems are almost twice as likely to seek counsel from a clergy than a mental health counselor. In time of disaster, this is no exception. Here, too, the churches and their leaders are regarded as resources; they are looked to for help, counsel, and comfort. Moreover, we can be trusted. We have nothing to gain in the present situation either financially or politically.

Second, churches have a mandate: they must be concerned with the welfare of the individuals. They must address the concerns of the poor, the needy, and the victimized. They, as institutional representatives of God, must be active and responding to the needs of people. Government as representatives of the people must no less respond to those needs. Both then, the church and government must be actively involved in the recovery process of the individuals within the community.

Last evening your Finance Committee heard and discussed the legal and long-range plans of a Corporation designed to revitalize and stabilize the area of the Love Canal. The immediate task of this entity would involve acquisition of homes. We understand the ramifications and liabilities involved, but where the needs of people victimized by circumstances beyond their control are involved, the risk is minimal--it is for this generation of children and the children yet to be born that we ask you to take a risk.

The County you lead and speak for now has the opportunity to design a means whereby the human problems at Love Canal can be alleviated. If the present entity is unacceptable to you--redo it--have the drafters of the bill work with you; they are your spokespeople in the State. Demand that the State provide you with the proper data on which to base your decisions. At a World Council of Churches meeting, in May, in Austria, I will represent North America and how we are confronting the problem of toxic waste. This County of Niagara, State of New York, City of Niagara Falls, and churches have a unique opportunity to show the country and the world that we took an "unmanageable" problem and faced it squarely with compassion, wisdom, and technology.

Churches like government are among the basic institutions within any social unit. As institutions, they have several characteristics. They represent groups of people. They have "territories" within which they have social, physical and economic, as well as "spiritual" concern. They have some visibility and strength which their individual members do not have. As a cornerstone of any community,

churches should assume responsibility in working with other institutions such as local, county and other governments and the business community in the rebuilding process.

But neither the Churches nor the local units of government have the personal, social, or even technical resources needed to deal with all the problems which are the consequences of the disaster or crisis situation in addition to the ongoing concerns they deal with.

So, recognizing this inability to deal effectively with the complexities inherent in long-term recovery, the churches have learned to pool their resources--financial technical, professional personal and to work together to address the problems which they ought to be addressing. We respectfully and urgently now ask the government of the County of Niagara to join in like manner with the other units of government to aid in the recovery and rebuilding of human lives and the community.

Thank You

Sister Margeen Hoffmann
Executive Director, ETF

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck
up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time
to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to
dance;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to
cast away;
a time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time
to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8