



Fall Issue 2011

# InterACT

The Newsletter of the Association of Christian Therapists: A fellowship of Health Care Professionals and Associates

**DATEBOOK... Save the Date!**

**Regional Meetings**  
Canadian Annual Retreat  
24th Hamilton ACT Day,  
February 11, 2012, Ontario.  
Speaker: Dr. Anthony Campo. Contact J.Dodson  
905.335.6902

**Los Angeles and San Diego Regions**  
Annual Conference: *The Joy of the Lord is My Strength*  
February 17-19, 2012  
Malibu, CA. Contact Rita Cornyn sun4kids@aol.com  
or 310-471-3427 and Georgiana Rodiger, PhD  
rodigercenc@aol.com or 626-792-3062

**Canadian Region**  
Annual Conference  
April 26-29, 2012  
*The Battlefield of the Mind*  
Niagra Falls, Ontario  
Contact Mary Salvador 416-497-7059 or Vince Kirton  
416-492-9593

**Southeast Region**  
Annual Retreat: April 27-29, 2012, *Into the Heart of God, John's Gospel and Spiritual Development*. St. Johns, FL  
Contact Ann Marie Porta (352) 750-9009  
portarj@juno.com

**Northeast Region**  
Annual Retreat: *Forgiveness & Healing*, April 27-29, 2012, Espousal Retreat & Conf Center, Waltham, MA. Pat Hurd 603.882.1503

**InterACT deadline: January 15, 2012**  
storysunday@optonline.net  
Subject line: InterACT.  
All submissions subject to editing. Photos welcome.



## CHRISTIAN CALL CARE FOR ENVIRONMENT

In my workshop at the Philadelphia ACT Conference, "Humans and the Environment: A resurrection view from God's Self-emptying love," I argued that we Christians need a new view of the importance of the environment for our own health and wholeness. Christianity has been accused of so focusing on human "dominion" over nature that it opened nature to exploitation. For many Christians, nature is reduced to a "means" for human salvation and use, not to be loved and preserved for its own sake.

Alerted to this danger, Matthew Fox and Thomas Berry and others redress this neglect of the environment by centering attention on creation itself, but to the neglect of the need for redemption. Fox advocates a "creation-centered" approach even though the authors he cites for creation (like Hildegard of Bingen, and even Eckhart) were clear about the need for redemption. Thomas

Berry would have us focus solely on the story of creation and leave the Bible out for awhile. But creation doesn't explain itself and there are powerful forces of history that continue to control nature for personal gain that we neglect to our own detriment.

The corrective lies not in creation itself but in the mystery of Christ's life, death and resurrection which reveals God's self-emptying love. The resurrection is not a reality apart from this world. It is a new relationship to this world. "Jesus is Lord" is the earliest creed. His oneness with God gives him "all authority in heaven and earth" (Mt 28: 18). The resurrection, as an eternal NOW, brings the roots of human nature into the inner life of God. It represents the final stage in cosmic evolution and thus reveals the ultimate ground of all creation as divine "self-emptying love." Such love preserves otherness even as it re-grounds it. It delights in the beauty and diversity

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## Dear ACT Community



"Care is being removed from healthcare," a comment made by Mary Jean Ricci, speaking at the International Conference in Philadelphia, stands in stark contrast to the energy and love manifest at the conference. From the opening poster session to the closing liturgy, care, deeply rooted in relationship with and reflecting God, was evident. The keynote speakers, Anthony Campo, Damon Owens, Mary Jean Ricci, Charles Zeiders and Julie Wegryn gave witness and voice to the various manifestations of God's loving care and healing occurring today. Encouraged by theory, witness and the experience of receiving personal healing many attendees will be returning to the marketplace equipped to boldly stand against forces that are trying to remove 'care' from healthcare.

"ACT, Where *God* and Healthcare Meet", is a bold assertion of our lived experience. Where else have you prayed, laughed and learned with such a diverse multidisciplinary and multid denominational group of men and women who know and love the Lord and desire to integrate this love in their professional practices and ministries? This experience of ACT, our heart expressed through our ministry to one another is most deeply experienced in our conferences and gatherings.

The ACT Board and Councils will be increasing their outreach, via the internet, to Christian healthcare providers inviting them into this full experience of ACT. The competition for providers' time and interest is tough. Join us in this outreach; visit us on Facebook and Linked-in to share your ACT stories or participate in a discussion; comment in the Journal of Christian Healing blog; post your ACT biography with your council chair; share your healing testimonies with your regional coordinators and the IC Chair; and forward your ACT newsletters and program invitations. Follow up electronic communication with phone calls and personal sharing.

As you continue to pray for ACT's members, vision, and mission, please pray that we cast our nets in accordance with God's will for ACT. God bless you for your faithful service, generosity and prayers.

*Cheryl*

Cheryl Marsh, APRN, BC  
President, ACT



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Gloria Doino, MA

"Happy are those, who while possessing truth, search more earnestly for it in order to renew it, deepen it and transmit it to others." Pope John XXIII's words could easily apply to those at the recent ACT International Conference. They came seeking more, wishing to go deeper, wanting to bring home the good news. They were not disappointed. It was a memorable time. Now, the psalmist tells us "My soul is longing for the Lord." Likewise, may you find more, go deeper, and share the Good News that is upon us!

## thought...

The more I can love everything- the trees, the land, the water, my fellow men, women, children, and myself- the more health I am going to experience and the more of myself I am going to be. (Carl Simonton) *Submitted by Jean Carr.*

## sights & sounds...

Order CD's and DVDs from the 2012 ACT International Conference through: [rcaccese@enter.net](mailto:rcaccese@enter.net) or 610-582-5571 and Vince Kirton 426-492-9593 or [wordofthespirit@sympatico.ca](mailto:wordofthespirit@sympatico.ca).

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**REMINDER: Use your member number (DIRECTLY next to your last name on the mailing label) to access the members only section of the ACT website at [www.actheals.org](http://www.actheals.org)**

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# THE HEALING POWER OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

Denise Dolff, MA

For many people, forgiving others is significantly easier than forgiving self. Retaining guilt for forgiven offenses is erroneously considered humility, and thus, mistaken for virtue. In truth, it is the opposite, and is a tactic of God's enemy, designed to keep the believer wounded and bleeding, rather than healed and restored to relationship with God. Why? The answer is simple. The longer an individual considers that "God may have forgiven me but I know that I don't really deserve to be forgiven" or "if I forgive myself I have made light of my sin", the more one walks in rejection of God's mercy, and persists in a false guilt that maintains division between self and God. This thinking places the emphasis on "me", rather than God's saving work and grace. In reality, it renders mere lip service to the acceptance of God's forgiveness, and suggests to God that God was wrong, God did not fully realize the full extent of one's guilt or sin, and that only oneself knows the truth about the offense. Rather than humility, this thinking is actually a form of pride. It suggests that the individual knows more than God. It is a form of idolatry, more specifically, self-idolatry. The critical question which clarifies this issue is: do I believe that Jesus' death atoned for my sins, or am I, not God, the one who is the arbiter of forgiveness?

It is true that none of us deserves God's forgiveness. Forgiveness cannot be earned or merited by our own actions, no matter what we could do. That is exactly why it is gift, God's gift to us, rooted in God's mercy. Stop and consider this truth for a moment. And then, think about an occasion when you may have purchased a special gift for someone – maybe for Christmas or a birthday, but perhaps simply because you wished to demonstrate your affection for that person in a tangible way. When the gift was opened and you saw the delight on the receiver's face, you rejoiced that your gift was accepted and valued as you had anticipated. But allow another scenario. Suppose that after that momentary delight, the recipient said "But I don't deserve this. I will put it away in the back of the closet until I can earn the right to receive it". Imagine your response!

When we refuse God's gift of forgiveness by refusing to forgive ourselves, we demonstrate this same lack of understanding of the love offered through the gift, and the same ingratitude. God continues to love us and be present to us regardless, but we restrict our ability to benefit from that love. We restrict our ability to move more deeply into the

healing that God desires for us. We hold ourselves captive in a prison of doubt and self-loathing, despite God having already opened the door to our freedom. Is this truly the choice we wish to make in response to our loving and merciful God?

*Dear God. I have never really understood how my inability to forgive myself has blocked your healing in my life. I have always professed to believe that when I ask, You do forgive me. Please give me the grace now to love myself as You love me, and to receive the mercy You shower upon me. Give me the grace to forgive myself as You have already forgiven me, that I may be Your instrument of greater love and healing in this broken world. Thank You Lord. Amen. (D. Dolff)*

## WORD GIFTS

Antoinette McDermott



*Anne Behneman:*

It's not about what you do-it is what I do in you.

Let me mold you-make you into my image.

I have such plans for you-open wide the door of your heart and let me in-you are my hearts desire-make me your hearts desire.

There is nothing more that you need, abandon yourself to me.

Surrender to me your plans, your agenda, your hopes and dreams.

Say yes to my plan for you.

You will have all you need. Trust in me. I am your destiny.

*Jackie Sittie:*

Come to me daily and allow me to enter into your daily lives.

The world is filled with busyness. Do not allow the pressures of the world to steal your time with me. Come to me!

I am forever available to rejoice in you.

Come to me in all things. Allow me to show you the way! My way!

Together we can change the world.

*Denise Dolff:*

In the freshness of the morning I wait for you, my beloved. I wait and search for you to come to me.

As a deer pants for water, I thirst for you.

I, your Bridegroom, love you with an everlasting love.

Full union with you is my one hearts desire.

Come, my beloved. I wait for you to be one with me.

# DISCERNMENT OF ENERGY

Fr. Robert Sears, SJ

*"The earth is the Lord's and all it holds" (Ps 24:1)*

This year's conference brought up the topic of energy, discussed by Charles Zeiders and Julie Wegryn. For many Christians discussing energy raises the specter of New Age spirituality. Yet scientists are more and more aware of energy at the basis of all things, from quantum physics to energy medicine.<sup>1</sup> The topic cannot be avoided if we are to stay in touch with movements in our day. What this article offers is a basic theological principle that applies to every form of energy, and can help guide our discernment.



## I. I begin by considering two cases:

**A. Reiki.** In March, 2009, the US Bishops published a new evaluation of Reiki as an alternative therapy.<sup>2</sup> Their document basically called Reiki superstitious, with no scientific support or acceptance by the medical community. Jesus' healing should be enough for a Christian. On the other hand, a member of one ACT region, after careful discernment, became a Reiki master, and found that several of her clients returned to the sacraments. Two differing groups/individuals came to two different conclusions.

**B. The Enneagram** was introduced to our Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago around 1973 by Fr. Bob Ochs, SJ. I was intrigued by what I heard and was about to become a member of SAT (Seekers After Truth), when I heard the Lord tell me (not audibly but clearly), "**No, I'll do it.**" Jesus would be my healer so I got no further involved beyond finding out about the nine types and their implications so I could understand those who knew it. On the other hand, **Richard Rohr** has written a fine little book on the Enneagram, with good insights into traditional Christian spiritual growth.

In each of these cases, we have what could be treated as "scientific" approaches. The enneagram could be studied much as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Reiki relies on energy fields, not unlike fields discovered around living organisms. On the other hand, each of these methods has been dealt with in a "religious" way by many who turned them into "spiritualities" rather than mere psychologies. Reiki is pursued by many through Ascended Reiki masters;<sup>2</sup> the enneagram purports to be rooted in Sufi mysticism<sup>3</sup>. It would seem we cannot simply affirm these

approaches in the way they are often presented. They need study, but how are we to proceed?

## II. World Sacral and Grace Sacral:

I wrote an article in the *Journal of Christian Healing* (vol 21, #1, Spring, 1999, pp. 15-34) about "A Christian Approach to Discerning Spiritualities." There I distinguished between "world sacral" and "grace sacral," which describe the traditional, rather static, distinctions between nature and grace, from a dynamic, developing point of view. **Nature** ("world sacral") describes a **process of unfolding** to ever greater experience, understanding and expanded choice. It beckons through "**fascination**," motivating us to grow in knowledge, to seek love, to explore the unknown.

**Grace** ("grace sacral") is also dynamic. It comes from God (not nature) through Christ and returns to God. It is like the "still small voice" that Elijah heard after he did not find God in the wind or fire or thunder (1 Kgs 19:11-13). There is *one major difference between the two*: **World sacral** is always reaching for what is "not yet." We naturally reach for love, but when we find it, it is not enough. **Grace sacral** rests in the presence of the future, the "*already*." Graced love rests in its eternal truth, even as we open to receive it ever more fully.

However, **both nature and grace deal with the same realities and at the same time!** In fact, *all natural fascination is ultimately grounded in grace*. God creates us as free human beings that we might surrender to grace. *Nature by itself is ultimately empty*. It must die to its independent existence to be united to God (see Rom 8:20, "Creation was made subject to futility...that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God").

## III. Energy and energy healing methods are creatures, not God.

Energy healing is a way of cooperating with nature for its full development and healing. We are free to fully investigate all aspects of creation. On the other hand, being a creature, energy can be used by good or evil powers. One needs to be discerning. We can understand God ever more deeply and widely as we open to the mystery of creation, the expanse of the universe, the beauty of healing energy in all things. On the other hand, if we only see creation or how it will enhance our human influence and power, then it becomes an idol, a substitute for God. We must learn to discern what spirit is at work in each form of energy healing.

## Conclusion:

Jesus said in Mk 9:40 "Whoever is not against you is for you." He is open to all truth unless it opposes

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God. True science can never oppose God, the creator of all. What opposes God is making a creature the only truth. The Spirit of Christ risen is a step beyond creation, it is "grace sacral." That Spirit must be our foundation. We do not seek human growth or healing for their own sake, but for the glory of God. Only God glorifies God, so each of us individually has to discern what God wants for us. I was pointed away from studying the enneagram whereas Richard Rohr was led to write about the enneagram in a Christian way. One view of Reiki saw it as superstitious, another experienced its healing power and the good fruit of increased faith when grounded in Jesus' risen power. In every case, what God wants is that "you believe in the one He sent" (Jn 6:29). Does studying energy draw one closer to Jesus or not? Each person must discern that before God.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See *The Field: the quest for the secret force of the universe*, by Lynne McTaggart (Harper Perennial, 2001) for a very readable presentation of many different forms of energy today. The author interviewed, sometimes many times, various cutting edge scientists, and had them OK her presentations.

<sup>2</sup> See "Guidelines for Evaluating Reiki as an Alternative Therapy," published by the US Conference of Catholic bishops (USCCB) Committee on Doctrine, which is chaired by Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

<sup>3</sup> This is questionable since its history points to recent origins. See Mitch Pacwa, *Catholics and the New Age*, for an accurate picture of recent developments of the Enneagram.

### *Christian Call, from page 1*

of all creation, and restores to humans a new understanding of "dominion" (Gn 1:26-28) as co-working with God in service of creation. That calls for conversion on our part since God's love works with creatures like ourselves through persuasion, not coercion. We have to do our part or nothing will happen.

We learn from Jesus how we are to cooperate with God regarding creation. All creation is the Lord's (Lev 25:23), yet it is to be submitted to human dominion. It responds with blessing and fruitfulness when humans obey God, but with sterility and famine when humans sin (Dt 28). Humans are created in God's image, to reveal God's glory. Everything else is created for humans to help them glorify God. Jesus saw God in creation, in the sun and rain given to good and bad alike (Mt 5:45). His calming of the sea and

multiplying the loaves shows the dominion over creation intended by God for humans *in order* to bring right order to nature. Jesus' dominion was service of God and creation. It led to his death on the cross because of human sin, but affected a new birth for humans and the earth through his resurrection. Rom 8:21 indicates that as humans find God's freedom and peace, so will the earth, and Mk 16:15 says the Gospel is to be preached "to every creature." As Francis of Assisi lived, in Jesus we are now called to be brothers and sisters of all creation, as Adam and Eve were before sin.

But we have neglected that vision and are bringing destruction to creation through exploiting it for human goals. Human intervention is destroying species of animals and plants at an alarming rate, decimating the beautiful diversity of God's creation. Where nature recycles, first world countries are consuming limited world resources and mortgaging our children's future. Efforts to change have been largely ineffective. We are addicted to our destructive way of life. As with every addiction, we are powerless alone, but with God's power at work in Jesus' resurrection we can, and must, turn things around toward health, for human health and wholeness depends also on the earth's. It will require conversion on our part, a simpler, sustainable life style especially of the affluent, and a loving concern for all God's creation as the revelation of God's love for us.

The Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin, had a vision of the Eucharist spreading out, penetrating and enlivening the whole Universe, for Christ now indwells all creation, gifting and serving us. Creation is not God but a poor creature in need of our care. Our eyes must be opened to see God calling not just in the poor of the world, but in creation, gifting us with God's love, but calling us to respond with gratitude and care.

*Fr. Robert Sears, SJ, PhD*

("Resurrection Spirituality and Healing the Earth" by R. Sears at [www.familytreehealing.com](http://www.familytreehealing.com) "Earth Healing: a resurrection-centered approach" by R. Sears and Al Fritsch. available on Al Fritsch's website: [www.earthhealing.info](http://www.earthhealing.info).)

## book review...

INTO THE SILENT LAND: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation by Martin Laird. A "different book... sharp, deep, no cliches, no short cuts... a rare treasure."

R. Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

# THE GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

Douglas Schoeninger, PhD

*Hank Kankowski, MD is retired from general medical practice in San Diego, CA. A long time member of ACT, former Board member and Regional Coordinator, San Diego, Hank has been a blessing and inspiration to many regarding healing prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit in his medical practice.*

## A Physician's View of the Healing Prayer in Medical Practice

Hank Kankowski, MD

My first exposure to the healing through prayer came when I was given a book, *Healing* by Francis MacNutt. I enjoyed the book and considered it to be credibly written. A short time later, I had the opportunity to attend a healing workshop with Francis MacNutt. I made a conscious effort to observe physical changes as they occurred as we prayed for conference participants. For example, a man we prayed with had a leg lengthen about 3 inches. Another lady's hearing was restored. About a month later, I had occasion to attend a School of Pastoral Care given by Agnes Sanford in Three Rivers, California. Again, I observed physical healings.

The time spent at both of these workshops was very informative and inspiring, but I still wondered how I could incorporate this new modality, prayer, into my busy family practice in San Diego, CA. None of my medical training touched on this modality. I had been a good Catholic all of my life, but I never considered the possibility that I could pray *with* my patients and expect that these prayers would bring any discernable results.

There were many doubts and fears – doubts that anything would happen when I prayed and fears that patients would be “turned off,” that other physicians would consider me practicing “fringe medicine” and that my practice would suffer as a result of my taking such an approach. The solution for me was, I felt, praying quietly with my patients as I examined them. This could be done very inconspicuously and many times I received insights that helped me with my diagnosis. I would begin each day with prayer, Mass and receiving the Eucharist, asking God's help for me throughout the day.

As time went on, I became a little bit bolder, and, if an occasion arose and the timing and circumstances

seemed appropriate, with the patient's consent, I began praying verbally with the patient. I also began seeing healings occur.

In one case our daughter sustained a fractured humerus (broken arm) which normally requires about six weeks to heal. We prayed with her as a family and in two weeks she had a complete healing. Jesus sped up the natural healing process.

In another case, my secretary was told that she had a cancer of the colon and would have to have surgery. She had rectal bleeding, diarrhea and generalized fatigue of several weeks duration. This diagnosis was made on x-ray. My wife, sister-in-law, and I prayed with her, and as we finished praying she said that she felt more peaceful and also that she felt heat where I had placed my hand over her abdomen. I had occasion to pray once again with her the day of her surgery, and again she experienced a deep peace and said she felt that she would be well. She had her surgery and her husband phoned to say that the lesion was much smaller than it appeared on x-ray and that grossly it appeared benign. The final tissue diagnosis was “adenoma” – a benign lesion (not a cancer). I received a phone call from the surgeon who was baffled by his surgical findings as compared to the x-ray findings. The patient was overjoyed and shared with the hospital staff about her being prayed with and the healing power of Jesus.

Physical healings when they occur are indeed dramatic and I praise Jesus for them. Even more dramatic are the inner healings that release people from fear, guilt, anxiety, hostility, and a host of other negativities. They are dramatic to me because I can see lives change within a relatively short period of time right before my very eyes.

As a physician and scientist, I was very much a skeptic and proceeded cautiously in this healing ministry through prayer. I have personally experienced the healing power of Jesus in my personal life through inner healing, as well as in my patients. I think that it is important that we use prudence and good judgment and respect the wishes of our patients by being sensitive to their needs and not “force ourselves” on them with prayer. I feel we should first of all be excellent physicians, dentists or whatever field we're in, and that we should use all of the talents and available modalities that God has given us. Most of all we should follow the dictum, “Do No Harm.” And always confirm a healing for two reasons; 1) to verify that in fact the illness is healed and 2) to build the faith of the patient, the patient's family and friends, oneself as healthcare practitioner and of other involved healthcare providers. Never tell the patient, “You're cured, throw away your medicine or stop taking your treatment,” unless it is verified medically

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# INSIDE ACT

**SPECIAL THANKS to Father Edward Waters** for his generous donation of the Monstrance that was used at the ACT conference this year during the healing

service with **Fr. Ubald** and at Adoration. The monstrance is now available for all future conferences and is the property of ACT. The second thank you is to **Mr. Frank Labue** for building a shipping crate for the tabernacle and table. He built the crate at no cost to ACT. It was much needed as the previous one was destroyed in transit. This is a hidden donation that has great significance. Both men are from **REGION 17**, Florida, kind friends of Ann Marie Porta. **REGION 1 and 2's, Julie Woodley** from Restoring the Heart Ministries ([info@rthm.cc](mailto:info@rthm.cc)) announces a retreat for those who are seeking healing from having had an abortion called, Into My Arms on January 26, 29, 2012 at Tabor Retreat Center, Oceanside, NY. **REGION 43, Psychologist, Friar Joe Scerbo** conducted a workshop on Saint Francis: Insights into Conflict Transformation, at the

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center, Garrison, N.Y. **REGION 5, Mary Jo Duddie**, Coordinator of the ACT Nurse's specialty group invited fellow ACT members to join her at a conference at Goodwin College, East Hartford, CT on Fighting HIV. **Mary Salvador invites all to attend the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Conference on April 26<sup>th</sup>-29, 2012: The Battlefield of the Mind**, Niagra Falls, Ontario. **REGION 16**, Gail Paul's trip to Israel was a great success. Consider joining her, this September 4, to Italy. **REGION 10 Jenni Dodson** announces the 24th ACT HAMILTON Day, Feb 11, 2012 with **Dr. A. Campo. Cheryl Marsh, ACT PRESIDENT**, had deep praise and thanks for outgoing **Board Member, Bob Rohde, Secretary**, commenting on the vast amount of work he has done for ACT. **Congratulations to Joe Duddie** who will serve as the **incoming Secretary** and to **Mary Chakkalackal, Marilyn Dolcetti** who were elected **At-Large Board Members**. **Royce Johnston** will continue as **Chair of Special Council. Nominating Committee** will be led by **Dean Ehrecke, Julia Gendron. Father Bob Sears** is our **PRESIDENT-ELECT** and **Cheryl Marsh** our **PRESIDENT**.



THANKS to ACT IC HOSTS, REGION 3 for a GREAT SUCCESS!

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that the need no longer exists. Remember – “Do No Harm.”

If you are skeptical as I was that the Lord could use you, you may want to begin praying in a small, quiet way as I did. Jesus is faithful and will not let us down as we step out with love and concern for our brothers and sisters who are in pain. He keeps His promise to us as He says in John 10:10, “I have come so that you may have life, and have it to the full.” He wants us to be childlike and step out in faith and be that channel of His healing love for our brother and sister. Will you accept that challenge and “set the captives free?” *Hank Kankowski, MD, is retired from general medical practice in San Diego, California. He is a long time member of ACT, a former ACT Board member, former regional coordinator of the ACT San Diego Region and has been an inspiration to many regarding healing prayer in medical practice. (JCH1:1 updated article/interview)*

## RENTERS ON GOD'S LAND

The Book of Numbers is not among the literary high points of the Old Testament. A great deal of space is devoted to legal and organizational minutiae-making it unattractive to the modern reader.

However in the midst of it all there suddenly appears a form of blessing which is elemental in its grace, eternal in its comfort: *The Lord Bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*. Besides this prayer there are interesting lessons that can be drawn from the book of Numbers. When dealing with God, all things are to be done decently and in good order. The jealousy of God is also an important idea in Numbers. God is not indifferent to allegiances outside the relationship to himself.

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# keep connected

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## MIRACLE

Jim Wheler, SJ

Stars appear on the nightly canvas  
Splashed across the eternal heavens  
In a burrow under the earth,  
a chipmunk is born, begins to squirm,  
people move in forever crowds  
down Fifth Avenue, past Grand Central  
in a surprise nightly glee.  
The moon rises once again,  
where did it come from,  
where will it ever end?  
The mystery of eternal creation  
the miracle of all that is  
confronts us in fields of daffodils  
or swiftly rising tulips.  
I am the lone observer of me  
grateful that I am and continue  
to be, to live, to walk, to run.  
Out of the sea of the miraculous  
creation runs rampant and full  
for my Creator always sings  
and with his song the explosion  
of new life springs from the  
infant earth. Jesus, the worker  
of so many miracles, heals  
the sick and raises the dead,  
showing that miracles will  
not die, but explode through centuries  
and the miracle of my being,  
advanced by the God of Love,  
resurrected in the Child of love,  
lies secretly enclosed in my heart.

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A lesson I found particularly interesting is that, in Numbers, human life on earth can be characterized by renting space, not owning. The land is presented as a devine gift to Israel. As a sign of this, the first good harvest, indeed the first of everything, must be offered to God. These offerings can be regarded as rent.

Numbers clearly says that humans are only tenants of the land that falls to their lot, not its real owners. To symbolize this, there was a law that stated that, for the whole of the seventh year, the land must remain fallow so that it could return to its natural state. It was regarded as being given back into the hands of the creator. The hold on the land of its "human owners" should be realized as something provincial and transient. Man must always remember that he is not the real owner, but a tenant who must release his lease every six years, and for the seventh year he must leave the whole property in the hands of its real owner.

Thus, Numbers characterizes human life on earth as renting space, not owning land and the image of being a tenant on God's land involves an image of accountability. We can be unworthy tenants. We should look upon all of life as being on loan to us. During our stay we are to be model tenants, people who desire that God's will be done in us and through us. (Dr. T. Hicks, Professor Emeritus, Sacred Heart U)

**fyi...**

Next issue of InterACT will be an e-newsletter!  
Mailings available for \$10 annual fee, if preferred.