



# LOGOS

a publication of CAPSR,  
the Community Association of the Pacific School of Religion

October  
2006



**Activism at PSR and beyond.** Here, PSR students join the Los Angeles protest for immigrant rights this month. At left, Elizabeth Griswold, Israel Alvaran, and Ryan Baum pose with signs reading, "I am a human being." At right, Griswold and Baum sit in the streets in an act of civil disobedience.



## Becoming Hot to Injustice

by Elizabeth Griswold

*"I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth."  
-Revelation 3:15-16*

These verses entered my mind to condemn me as I sat for the second time, in my still very short experience here at PSR, in the Business Office. My two visits had two very different motives, but both caused me to ponder how I may gauge the way I am living out my Christian convictions in terms of these gradations in Revelation. My first visit was to pay my fees, which caused me to shudder to hand over so much money going towards even more higher education for myself, when I know what such an amount could do, for example, in the indigenous Guatemalan village where I lived last year. Then I visited the Business Office a second time after being directed there as the place to go to receive PSR's homeless policy and referral list.

*(Homelessness and PSR continues on page 7)*

## Global Activism, Living Out Solidarity By Noel Andersen

How can we live in peace knowing that as US citizens we are inadvertently complicit in the imperialistic past and present of US trade and foreign policies? It's an unsettling question, to which there is no justifying rationalization. Although many plead ignorance, we don't have that luxury as we attempt to live out our faith in the search for social justice. Instead, we must pay attention to the seed of disturbance

*(Sharing Solidarity continues on page 6)*

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### From the Editor

Happy Fall to all my loyal readers! I trust the mid-term stress is winding down, the OTNT exam went well, and that you all are looking forward to nine days of sleeping in, relaxing, and not thinking about school at all this Fall Break. I know I am! Just as soon as I get through with a steering committee meeting and writing my next sermon and cleaning my apartment, I intend to really enjoy my three hours of free time this Reading Week! By that point, I may be ready for the break I get when all I have to do is go sit in a classroom and take notes on other clever people's lectures.

Amidst all the busy-ness in life at PSR, where is the time for activism? The nominal theme of this month's Logos is 'Activism at PSR,' and the answer to my question may lie in the unusual dearth of submissions this month (see the back page for more details on that).

But I would argue that there really is activism all around us, and we oughtn't discount its power on us. It may be more a kind of environmental or lifestyle activism, but it is a crucial living out of the Kingdom we hope to help build in this world.

At PSR, our social environment silently shapes our days and our identities as budding ministers. I find 'activism' in the smiles shared by students and staff and faculty, as they pass each other on the sunny sidewalks. How many places in urban California can you get this many smiles and personalized 'helloes'?

There is activism at PSR also in the psychological experience of this holy hill: we who live and study and work here are not exposed to billboards on a daily basis! Yes, this is an anomalous bubble in a capitalist consumer-crafting world, but one that is absolutely critical for the healthiest development of our open, learning minds. The self-esteem drop I am NOT subjected to everyday, by NOT having to stare at ads for makeup or diet microwave dinners or America's next top model is tremendous. And this wonderfully ad-free mini-world we inhabit teaches us, implicitly, the possibility of making spaces for humans, not corporations, in the future churches and organizations we may lead.

In addition, I try to not underestimate the power of being in a place where some people who are usually relegated to the defensive margins of society are actually treated with a modicum of respect – and are even heard as potential leaders! This Fall Break, I return to Chicago for a meeting of the Women's Caucus of my Church of the Brethren. The meetings of this group remind me of the deep need for their work, which is, in part, to aid women pastors facing the inordinate challenges they do, even in our fairly liberal denomination. PSR hasn't figured out how to be inclusive and nurturing for all, admittedly, but it's a heck of a lot better than lots of places I've been, and it's one place where many of us can find enough allies to yell out and hold the institution accountable to the ideals it has stated for itself.

I hope that Logos can continue to be a forum for the PSR community to mobilize activism, to call out oppressions (even those furthered by editors and newsletters), to express hope for the world we are creating, and to build community, which is the root of any sustainable Earthly change. I invite you to help make it so.

-Audrey deCoursey

## Logos Submission Guidelines

### Who can submit

All members of the Pacific School of Religion community are invited to submit to Logos: students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, family members, and supporters of PSR.

### What to submit

Original work of interest to the PSR community:

- Articles: opinion pieces, news, feature stories
- Reviews: books, movies, concerts, albums, lectures
- Poetry, Prayers
- Event and group announcements
- Drawings
- Photography: artistic, news-related, social events
- Questions for columnists

### How to submit

Email: [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu)

### When to submit

Upcoming Priority Deadline: **November 13**  
November Theme: **Thanks-giving**

### Issue Spotlights 2006-2007:

December: Family

February: Love and Conflict

March: International Women

April: Fun

May: Reflection on the Year Gone By

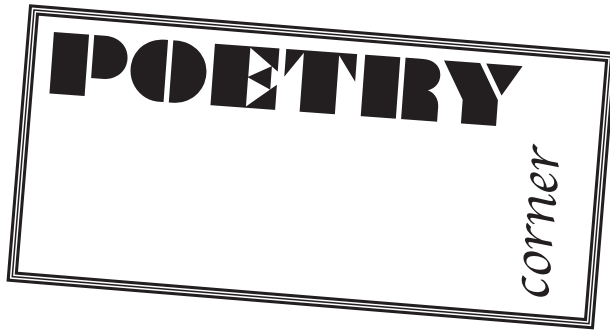
### More guidelines

-Please limit submissions to 1,000 words.

-Publication is subject to the needs of the newsletter and the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief and Logos Editorial Board. The Editor-in Chief and Editorial Board reserve the right to edit submissions for publication.

-If you have any questions about submissions, feel free to talk with the Editor-in-Chief or email her at [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu).

Thanks. We look forward to hearing from you.



## Greet the Dawn

Let go the fog and mists of night  
Make the way for dawn's delight  
First light expose and send away  
The darkness of the night to stay

Pastel sky of pink and gray  
Create afresh your blue array  
There by the road two deer do eat  
A gentle gift - a view so sweet

The orange glow builds as if to say  
Behold the glory of God's display  
Then it breaks and the sun appears  
Promise renewed across the years

I hit the crest and take in the sight  
A full moon hangs still shining bright  
The fog is back, its thickest here  
I'm nearing home - the ocean's near

Turning into the valley I see  
This day's new sun it waits for me  
Breaking through atop the crest  
The sun does pause as if to rest

I am safe at home I pause to say  
Thank you God for this great day  
And if it is my last I swear  
I shall not have missed the beauty there

-Tim G Agar  
October 8, 2006

### Prayer for Baptism

I want to welcome baptism  
To be born of spirit  
As well as water  
To be touched by the dove and the fish.

I want to welcome baptism  
As I welcome the sun, and the rain.  
I want to welcome baptism  
As I welcome  
Rivers, lakes, and streams of thought;  
Pouring into my consciousness;  
Emptying into the ocean that is my mind.

I am made of faith  
Just as I am made of water  
Both are a gift  
May I receive gracefully.  
Like a bird diving down to find a fish  
just under the surface of the water.

Alleluia

Amen.

-Kathleen Soboleska

[Ms. Soboleska wrote this prayer as part of the liturgy for her baptism this month. (Congrats, Kathleen!)]

[Mr. Agar is a second-year commuter student at PSR. He lives in Pacifica, California, just south of San Francisco, and this poem was written on an early morning drive from Santa Rosa to Pacifica. He has several collections of poetry and prose, including "He Lives in You My Friend," "Enable Me to Be," and "You Did That on Purpose"]

# EMILY'S INTERVIEW: MAYRA RIVERA RIVERA

*Hey you! Yeah, you! Get to know your fellow PSR community members a little bit better. Below is an interview I, Emily Joye McGaughy (Ejoye), conducted with Professor Rivera (MR). There will be more to come, with other PSR students, staff and faculty in the future. Readers enjoy!*

*Ejoye: Where did you move from?*

MR: Madison New Jersey. I was teaching at Drew University.

*Ejoye: With Catherine Keller?*

MR: Yeah, I was actually substituting for her; she was out on sabbatical.

*Ejoye: Has she had an impact or influence on your theology?*

MR: Oh yeah, in more ways than I'm aware of. For instance, people have noticed the influences of process theology which is something I've never explicitly engaged, but her thought has influenced me, since she's a process theologian. More evident is the constructive theology and the willingness to engage ancient sources in post modern philosophy and other contextual theologies.

*Ejoye: Has the word "context" always had such broad application in your academic past? Or is it just a PSR thing?*

MR: I'm kind of ambivalent towards the use of the term "contextual" regarding theology because on the one hand it's supposed to foreground important relationships from which theologies emerge, but at the point that it frequently is used to identify some theologies and not others tends to imply that some theologies are

contextual and some are not.

*Ejoye: What was lecturing here last spring like for you?*

MR: It was really exciting. I think at PSR a lot of streams of thought and issues that I'm interested in come together both in faculty work and the interest of the student body. It's a unique experience to be able to present my own work with people who were willing to engage it in so many perspectives.

*Ejoye: What's PSR's reputation like in the larger sector of theological education?*

MR: It's hard to tell. It's definitely seen as a very liberal institution and committed to challenging the status quo on many different fronts.

*Ejoye: Are you committed to challenging the status quo?*

MR: Yeah, I guess in many areas.

*Ejoye: Any you'd like to tell us about?*

MR: I think gender issues and issues of imperialism have been my main commitments in theological work.

*Ejoye: And you see relational theology as a relevant discourse in those areas?*

MR: Yeah, it's one of those discourses that goes to the root of some of the paradigms that feed both into patriarchy and imperialism—ideas about power, autonomy that have been constructed in ways that have been damaging to others. Relational theology is relevant to those in that it shatters those paradigms and envisions new ways of engaging creation and the future. It doesn't stay with critiques but it tries to



## EMILY'S INTERVIEW: MAYRA RIVERA RIVERA

offer new ideas and new ways of looking at the world.

*Ejoye: I took a class with John Cobb last summer. He says that we should look at Jesus' life as a model of empowering power. What do you think about that?*

MR: Not knowing the context in which he made the statement...I don't know. But thinking about his broader project and other process theologians, both the idea of challenging ideas about omnipotence in the ways that they been identified with controlling power and looking for others ways we know power is experienced—ways that can be luring rather than controlling and that show vulnerability in the process of relations, it does exert a certain kind of power. We don't want to abandon the concept of power completely, but we want to rethink it. Cobb seems to be looking for those paradigms in the life of Jesus and that was one of the crucial moves that liberation theologies made...looking at the life of Jesus and recovering aspects of empathy and taking side with the weak...to think about God from that aspect of Jesus.

*Ejoye: I love Catherine Keller's inclusion of mother-daughter relations in her theology. Can you share where you've experienced the divine either being a daughter or being a mother?*

MR: It's interesting that you ask that question because frequently when I think of my work around divine transcendence, and how it's encountered in everyday life, I frequently think about my relationships with my daughters--relationships that are very intimate and yet I know that I can not completely understand them or predict how they will become. There is always

that element of surprise and wonder even in such an intimate relationship. It makes me think that there are ways in which one can envision divinity being this surprising and unpredictable presence that doesn't have to be far away or unengaged or completely inaccessible.

*Ejoye: Do you like Berkeley?*

MR: Yes. I used to live in a place that was very homogenous and everything seemed to be controlled and so I feel liberated in Berkeley. There's a multiplicity of cultures represented in the community, but the city itself, the institutions and the way things are, do reflect that it has allowed all cultures to affect and shape it.

*Ejoye: What's the number one threat to womyn in our world?*

MR: Violence. Not only the violence that shatters someone physically in a moment, but the kind of violence that works slowly and surely in disempowering womyn.

*Ejoye: Do you see education as a viable tool to fight that violence?*

MR: Yes. I think all structures of oppression have been grounded in ways of thinking. In as much as we're able to change ways of thinking, we'll be moving away from those effects. It doesn't mean the process will ever end, but we will always need to keep revising our ways of thinking and the effects they have in society.

*Ejoye: In 200 years from now, what are your hopes for the children in your lineage?*

MR: I'd like to see structures providing more role models for girls so that they can envision themselves as fully participating in the societies in which they live.

we feel every time we pick up the newspaper. But how?

Activism has many different faces at PSR, as it does everywhere. I chose to act by working through a non-governmental organization called the SHARE Foundation that works in advocacy, rural local development of post-war communities, women's empowerment and solidarity building with sistering communities in the US and in El Salvador. I was fortunate to have the backing of PSR Field Education department that supported my adventurous notions of working in El Salvador, where I spent all of Spring Semester 2006.

Working in community organizations with rural people of El Salvador who were displaced by the US-backed Civil War of 1980-92, it was shocking to hear countless stories of how the Salvadoran government burnt down villages and massacred women and children in the name of grounding out communism. Many innocent Salvadoran lives were taken victims of a Cold War they had little to do with.

Now there is no more civil war in El Salvador, but like all Central American countries, urban gangs and street violence is an increasing problem because of unemployment and extreme poverty. The violence and suffering continues, but El Salvador's government only preaches a profitable relationship with US free trade initiatives, called the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Like NAFTA, this trade agreement favours large companies' imposition, exploiting natural resources and cheap labour market.

Supposedly, CAFTA creates more jobs, but at what cost? Few are able to stay working long term at such strenuous and low paying positions. Instead, CAFTA brings industrialization and urbanization to a historically agrarian society. "Campesinos" (rural people) whose ancestors worked the same land for thousands of years now look to move to the city to escape poverty. El Salvador's exports in 1990 were seventy percent agriculture, but are now only five percent. The high levels of urbanization and industrialization also create emigration to the US where they can do the same work for ten times the wage. It is no coincidence that closing the Mexican borders came only months after Central American implementation of CAFTA.

All of this I learned from living in rural areas, working in community organization with impoverished post-war villages. I marched in political rallies with my Salvadoran co-workers and advocated for the left political party (FMLN) during elections. In all I did as an activist in El Salvador, it became overwhelmingly clear that the majority of significant Salvadoran societal problems come from the history of colonialism and oppression that the US has imposed.

It is here that we have to do something to create just policies that affect other countries. As North Americans, we can't just sit in the numbness of material wealth while sipping soy lattes and skipping off to work or school. WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!!! Knowing all we know, we must act, not just for our own country, but for all those the US affects - which is the whole world. No longer can we stand by in complicity. What will you do?

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If you would like to learn more about the SHARE Foundation or see about possible internships, please contact Noel Andersen, Ginny Chase or visit their website at [www.share-elsalvador.org](http://www.share-elsalvador.org).

*(Homelessness and PSR, continued from page 1)*

My main issues of discernment in coming to PSR were not over what degree to pursue, deciding whether I wanted to be ordained, or in what denomination I belonged, since I know that I came here to get an M.Div to become an ordained UCC pastor. My struggle was with whether to come at all. I struggled greatly with whether spending three more years at school to obtain another degree was ultimately the best way for me to serve God, or whether it would just add to the list of privileges that further separate me from solidarity with the poor and further temper my lukewarm response to suffering in my midst. And my second visit to the Business Office fed my doubts about having made the right decision.

Five sentences on homelessness, on the back side of an "Important Resident Information" sheet, right after a section on campus security, basically warn "us" against feeding "them." One other place where this issue is addressed amidst the slew of orientation paperwork is in the Student Handbook, this time actually as a direct subsection of the topic of Campus Security. "Homeless Concerns" are discussed right after listing crime statistics in arrests for Liquor Law, Drug Abuse, and Weapons Possession on page 44, and the implied potential correlation is not subtle. To its credit, the policy does state a "concern for the plight of the poor," but then goes on only to enumerate restrictions and regulations regarding student contact with said poor.

So I dutifully went to the Business Office to request the homeless referral list to see what options exist on the positive side of the issue. Yet my request was met with confusion as to why I sought such information there, and ignorance as to its whereabouts. [As a disclaimer: By no means do I wish to malign staff of the Business Office or any other office. It is only because students have not been requesting homeless information that staff would be unaware.] After consultation with the supervisor, the document was produced, and I left cordially, but not before having been told of an incident during which a homeless man spit into a meal at D'Autremont. My first reaction was, "Yes, I agree that's disgusting." But my second was the quote from Revelation...

I am not naïve to the problems homeless (or any individuals) may cause. Years of working directly with homeless people in San Diego, LA, and San Francisco have shown me more than enough drug abuse, prostitution, and theft on the streets. Yet they have also cemented my formation as a Christian like nothing else has. Themes of economic justice and serving God in the poor abound in Scripture and Christian tradition, and we acknowledge such in our communal worship and collective mindset. But where is our commitment? Are we lukewarm?

The referral sheet had not been updated since October 1997. Under the assumption that some of the information may have changed within the last decade, I went and picked up updated copies from the public library and supplied the Business Office with them. I have personally pledged to continue seeking local service opportunities with groups like the Catholic Worker, YEAH!, and Food Not Bombs. I want to try to use the gift of my time at seminary to gird my convictions with wisdom in the tradition, useful leadership skills, and a supportive community.

I know many at PSR have similar commitments, and I am inspired by the February 1998 memo attached to the referral sheet that encourages all members of the PSR community to "talk about this matter with other members of the community to achieve solutions that both help our homeless neighbors and foster safety and well-being on the PSR campus." It is not a simple issue with an easy answer. We are accountable to maintaining a professional learning environment, not putting any extra burdens on facilities staff, and also to serving our neighbors in need with compassion. I believe we can and should continue this discussion as one more commitment in our Tradition of Boldness, which should not be lukewarm.

I end thinking of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s conclusion to his Letter from Birmingham Jail: "If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me." May we see the struggles of poverty and racism in our day and rise up anew, hot to the challenge set before us.

LOGOS Lite  
by Audrey deCoursey,  
Editor-in-Chief

Have you noticed that this issue is only eight pages, down from its usual twelve? That is a sign of distress, an SOS signal, meaning we need YOUR submissions, of articles, poetry, drawings, photography, columns, confessions, and other forms of expression, to make this publication a true reflection of the community it seeks to serve. By YOU, we mean any of you reading this right now: students, spouses, children, staff, faculty, administrators, neighbors, trustees.... Submission guidelines are always listed on page two, for your reading pleasure.

Each month we suggest a theme, not to constrain submissions or limit what comes in, but to inspire, and to frame the offerings we might receive. Non-thematic submissions are also always invited, and if they will fit a future theme, we will hold onto them until the best time to print them.

I made the decision to cut this issue to eight pages instead of filling the excess space with the texts from my latest sermon, because I would rather conserve paper if the community has no more to share than what is freely offered. When I signed up as Editor-in-Chief, I decided that I wanted to limit my own submissions to my page-two editorial reflections, because you all would be better served by hearing from as many campus voices as possible. I would love to get the rest of the year's issues back up to their allotted twelve pages (or more!), but I can't do it without your contributions!

What lies ahead in the future of Logos? Will it become the personal mouthpiece for its editor? Will it shrink month after month, until it disappears? Or will it expand and grow and blossom, with new, radiant petals emerging every month? The choice, my friends, is yours.

VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

**Scarier than the Boogie-Man: Proposition 85**

Tuesday, 31 October 2006

D'Autremont Small Dining Hall, PSR

12:10-12:30 Discussion

12:30-12:55 Q&A

You are invited to a brown bag discussion with Planned Parenthood-Golden Gate's Chaplain Lisa Sargent, to learn about this election's Proposition 85. If passed, California's Proposition 85 would require a waiting period and parental notification before a person under age 18 can have abortion. Come and learn why voting 'NO' on Proposition 85 this November 7th will protect our sisters, daughters, and mothers. The discussion is hosted by the GTU chapter of Seminarians for Choice.

**Do-It-Ourselves GTU Voter Education Luncheon**

Thursday, 2 November 2006

D'Autremont Small Dining Hall, PSR

12:40-1:30 pm

- *Find out about the issues we'll be voting on!*
- *Share what you know about candidates and measures!*
- *Help create the Unofficial GTU Voter's Guide to share with the rest of our GTU community!*
- ***Bring your lunch and any voter's guides you trust!***

This luncheon is co-sponsored by CAPSR, TREES, Seminarians for Choice, the Beatitudes Society, Not by the Sword, and your concerned fellow citizen-students. Have questions? Want an electronic copy of the Unofficial GTU Voter's Guide? Contact Audrey deCoursey at [adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu](mailto:adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu).

VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

Car-Less Drive In

Starr King School for the Ministry

Sunday Evenings, starting at seven o'clock

Films screened in the courtyard behind Starr King – bring a lawn chair and a blanket! (We will be inside if the weather is inclement.) For more information contact Neal Anderson at [nanderson@uua.org](mailto:nanderson@uua.org).

Sunday October 29 – Scared Sacred

[www.scaredsacred.org](http://www.scaredsacred.org)

Sunday November 12 – The Future of Food

[www.thefutureoffood.com](http://www.thefutureoffood.com)

Sunday November 26 – Iraq for Sale

[www.iraqforsale.org](http://www.iraqforsale.org)

Sunday December 10 – End of Suburbia

[www.endofsuburbia.com](http://www.endofsuburbia.com)

